

## HOUSE Denver Concerns & Areas of Growth

1. Church Structure–Biblical Accountability & Governance
2. Church Environment–Repentance, Wise Counsel, Training, Support & Inner Healing
3. Church Finances–Transparency, Proper Legal Structure of a Church & Healthy Financial Decisions

### Concerns

1. Lack of pastoral care, shepherding & transparency that creates confusion and trauma for the sheep.
2. Sin: pride, deception, lying, flattery, deflecting blame onto others, manipulation & control. Many have personally witnessed these tactics.
3. Spiritual abuse: using tactics to preserve pride and image. Putting the “mission” and “vision” of the church before the sheep’s heart.
4. Processes/Policies: Leadership’s damaging, immature, abusive and manipulative responses to the sheep when they bring concerns to the table.
5. Refusal to listen, admit there is a major problem within our church, a desire to change, seek wise counsel (from an outside source) & repent publicly for the sake of the body of Christ.

### Spiritual Abuse

Listed below are concerns about church structure, environment and finances, with permission by those who have left HOUSE Denver to use their personal examples and stories. One resource that has been helpful for many is a book called “Bully Pulpit” by Michael Kruger. This is a great resource that sums up what many feel is happening at HOUSE Denver. Another resource is a book called, “When Narcissism Comes to the Church” by Chuck DeGroat.

*Spiritual abuse is when a spiritual leader—such as a pastor, elder, or head of a Christian organization—wields his position of spiritual authority in such a way that he manipulates, domineers, bullies, and intimidates those under him as a means of maintaining his own power and control, even if he is convinced he is seeking biblical and kingdom-related goals. (Bully Pulpit, Dr. Michael Kruger PHD, M. Div, MACC)*

Many people have encouraged leaders to reflect on the questions below:

- Have I myself experienced this from other leaders?

- Have I myself committed these tactics?
- Has information been withheld from me to make decisions that affect my role as an elder and protector of the church?
- Have I neglected my role as an elder and blindly trusted and protected the leaders instead of the sheep?"

### **Spiritual Abusers do the following:**

- Build a coalition of defenders (and control the narrative)
- Insist that proper process wasn't followed (change the focus to procedural rather than substantive issues)
- Claim to be the victim of gossip/slander
- Attack the character of the victims
- Tout their own character and accomplishments
- Play the sympathy card
- Masters at "flipping the script"
- Having an elder team made up of loyal friends and young people that have allegiance to the leader
- Have a unanimous agreement rule to create illusion of unity
- Flatter and love-bomb

### **Concern #1: Church Structure**

#### **1. Elder Accountability**

- a. **Belief System: Ephesians 4:11** says, "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers." We know the church can function in a beautiful and healthy way when all these roles are seen as equally important and valued. One role is not "higher" or "more important" or "more gifted" than the other. We need the fivefold ministry within our churches.
  - i. Many feel there is a belief system at HOUSE Denver that puts certain leaders "above" others. "God's anointed" may be gifted and talented, but that does not mean they cannot receive correction or are "untouchable." Many leaders have caused an immense amount of pain for the sheep and need serious wise counsel and accountability before being restored back to the pulpit. We see a huge lack of accountability for the wounds, pain and hurt they have caused.
- b. **1 Timothy 5: 19-20** says, "Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. But those elders who are sinning you are to reprove before everyone, so that the others may take warning."

- i. There have been not just two or three witnesses that have brought accusations against elders, but dozens of witnesses. The lack of accountability within the elder team is causing severe emotional damage within the church. The lack of empathy and care about these accusations is causing even further damage. This is why many people feel it is important to make this public and call for a third party investigation.
- c. **Lack of Plurality:** After talking to former elders, it is very apparent that elders are not a part of big decisions. It also appears that there is a lack of important information between the elders. It seems that Brian, Grace and Troy make all of the decisions and then tell the elders the information without any room for disagreement or change. When Brian asked Jonathan Wield to be an elder in 2023, Jonathan said no for a few different reasons (one of them being trust issues) and Brian stated, “My elders don’t really do that much.” This is concerning because it seems that he sees elders as “accessories” or “sidekicks” and not people that can hold him accountable. There are also concerns that because there is no “congregational say” as mentioned by HOUSE Denver elders at a newcomers meeting, this gives the church to be set up more like a dictatorship and not a democracy as the church should be. Lack of church membership where sheep do not hold any weight or insight when problems arise is unhealthy and dangerous.
- d. **Lie:** Troy has lied about how often the elders meet. He stated to one couple that the elders meet once a week. Scott, Laurie and Rick have confirmed that they only met once a month.
- e. **Handling Conflict with the Sheep:** There are many instances and scenarios where conflict has been handled negatively. This has caused so much harm within the Body of Christ and has forced many sheep to leave. There are many examples of elders and other leaders mishandling situations and/or conflict for the sake of protecting a leader’s image and pride.
- f. **Asking Questions:** Leaders see the sheep as “combative” when they ask deeper questions or try to seek clarity in situations.
  - i. Troy stated to one former sheep, “Thanks for staying faithful and not asking questions.” He also stated to a former elder, “We like you because you don’t ask questions.”
  - ii. The church should be a safe place to ask questions, seek clarity and bring concerns to the table without fear, pressure or intimidation. There are many stories of sheep asking questions and then immediately seen as combative, emotional or accusatory.

## 2. Policies & Procedures

- a. Unanimous Voting Agreement:** Although this type of voting agreement has the illusion of unity, the “unanimous agreement” rule is something spiritual abusers have in place to silence an opposing view. The elders defend Brian because the current team in place has fostered an environment where different opinions are not celebrated, but is quite the opposite where opposing viewpoints are discouraged. Challenge and confrontation isn't safe to do so with a rule like this. If a unanimous agreement cannot be reached, now what? We are concerned that this type of setup would cause more conflict, division and hurt. We have encouraged elders to think about the following questions.
- i. How does this foster courage to speak up in disagreement?
  - ii. Why was it the three elders that confronted and challenged Brian were ones that felt resigning was their best option?
  - iii. How is this a healthy family dynamic?
  - iv. Can people agree to disagree with certain philosophies without being cut off from the family?
  - v. Does this foster a safe environment for elders to voice disagreements without fear of being excluded?
  - vi. Does the culture of honor for leaders blind the team to see abuse being committed by the elders?
  - vii. Is the team of elders also a team of defenders of one another?
- b. Bylaws:** It is concerning that HOUSE Denver bylaws are written vague enough that elders can generalize everything and make it so you can do a lot without a vote. We have concerns that these bylaws don't add value, protection or proper policies/processes to our church.
- i. **Concerning Example #1:** Withholding these bylaws from Abby Randall (a former ministry/worship leader) when she asked them for them in March 2024. The bylaws state they were “created” in January 2023, when HOUSE Denver was established. We are concerned and puzzled as to why the elders did not share those with Abby when she asked for them.
  - ii. **Concerning Example #2:** Troy’s email disclaimer to a former sheep stating: “This email and contents are for your eyes only and not to be distributed, shared, or forwarded.” Why is Troy trying to keep these bylaws a secret? While they may not be “public knowledge or listed on the website,” church bylaws are not a secret and should be in the hands of every sheep.

### 3. Oversight Team

- a. **Lie:** According to the Wiolds, Michael Miller, told them in person back in March 2024, “I’ve never met at all and I don’t even know what we are supposed to do.” Rick Fernicola also stated, “I don’t believe Brian had any oversight meetings as of the time I left (at least not all together), not sure about after that. We never met with the oversight team.” The Lanes stated they had also never heard of any oversight meetings happening. However, Troy stated in March 2024 that the oversight team met once a month. This is another lie. We are finding out Brian never met with the oversight team and did not disclose that with his elders.
- b. **Oversight Team:**
  - i. There is still confusion in regards to the purpose of this team. On January 15th, 2023, UPPERROOM Denver officially became HOUSE Denver. Brian stated in regards to Michael and Lorissa Miller, “They aren’t going anywhere, they will remain on our oversight team. They will be overseers of our church...they will help to guide us, just like in families, fathers and mothers will help us fill those gaps.... Etc.” You can find the exact statements at minute 30 on Youtube.
  - ii. Michael Miller also stated, “I’m a father in this house and I’ll remain that. It is like a bridge between Dallas and Denver, merging of, not something splitting, but something multiplying. It is a longing fulfilled.”
  - iii. Initially, it seems that the purpose of the oversight team was to protect the church and as Brian stated, “to help fill in the gaps.” It seemed that the oversight team was intended to help the family of HOUSE Denver, aka the Body of Christ/sheep and for the overseers to be more like “mothers and fathers” of HOUSE. Brian stated, “The oversight team exists only for the purpose of any conflict between the elders.” This is very different from what was communicated from the pulpit, when UPPER ROOM Denver became HOUSE Denver.

#### 4. Conflict of Interest

- c. We are concerned that having four main pastors who all rely on income from HOUSE Denver, hold too much power and control as elders.
- d. We are concerned that Troy Lee can serve as the registered agent for “HOUSE Denver LLC,” Executive Pastor at House Denver, Elder at House Denver, and is one of the three to four members of the finance committee. This feels like an unhealthy setup and gives a pastor too much power in finances and other areas.

- e. We have concerns that Shannon Lin, who serves as the bookkeeper and associate pastor for HOUSE Denver, has no proper finance background and is not a trained accountant. We also have concerns that Troy and Brian have too much power and control in finances. Many other churches have a third party finance group or someone who is properly trained in finances, such as a trained accountant or a finance team that is set apart from the elders/pastors.
- f. It has come to our attention that HOUSE Denver owns 3 non-profits and 1 LLC. The former elders did not know about this which is concerning. We have also seen a lack of transparency with how these non-profits are being utilized.

## **Concern #2: Church Environment**

### **1. Lack of Transparency & Lying**

- a. When former elders and sheep stepped down and transitioned out of HOUSE Denver, leaders twisted their reasons for leaving to minimize and suppress the conflict.
- b. Labeling many sheep's hurt and pain as bitterness, complaining and "petty".
- c. Leaving sheep with ambiguous answers to protect their own image.
- d. We are concerned that Brian took his name off of the Advocate Group (this is the group who came together to support the IHOPKC victims) document and lied about why he did. He told the IHOP Advocate Group that his elders told him to take his name off and this has been confirmed to be false by former and current HOUSE Denver elders.
- e. **Mike Bickle:** Allowing him to serve on the oversight team when Brian and Corey both knew he was in sexual sin. They allowed a wolf and a sexual predator to "oversee" our church.
- f. **Misty Edwards:** Allowing her to teach at the UPPER ROOM Denver DTS in 2022, even though Brian and Corey knew what was going on in her life and still allowed her to preach. We also know that HOUSE Denver removed her teachings from Youtube when the allegations of Mike Bickle became public.

### **2. Pride**

- a. Leaders not repenting when they have been encouraged to do so in front of the congregation.
- b. Leaders using DARVO tactics to avoid responsibility.

### **3. Slander & Gossip**

- a. Inappropriate and demeaning comments towards staff and sheep.
- b. Using slander as a way to "flip the script" and accuse the sheep of being spiritually abusive, unhealthy people and/or disgruntled congregants.

#### 4. Flattery

- a. This is an abuse tactic that the Bible is very clear on. Flattery and encouragement are both positive content, but the difference is the motive behind the words. (Romans 16:8, Proverbs 29:5, Proverbs 26:28, Psalm 12:2)
- b. Many have experienced flattery, partiality and exclusiveness by Brian and Grace and then realized down the road that it was manipulative. It's puzzling because it is always incongruent to the relationship and the partiality (favoritism) is a form of manipulation.

#### 5. Lack of Care & Empathy

- a. Removing people from their roles without being told or given an explanation.
- b. Having no regard or remorse for causing pain or hurt.
- c. Not responding
- d. There have been many times elders have said statements to the sheep saying, "You can ask us anything." However, 80% of the questions people ask remain unanswered or ambiguous. The elder's willful ignorance and lack of curiosity is not exemplary of leading and living above reproach.

#### 6. Using the Pulpit to Manipulate & Control: We are concerned that leaders potentially use their personal experiences, emotions, thoughts and conflicts with the sheep to manipulate and drive a narrative in their sermons. There seems to be subliminal messages behind the words preached from the pulpit. We have listed two examples below, but are aware of other sermons like this.

- a. **July 7, 2024: "THE DIFFICULTY OF WALKING IN LOVE"** preached by JR Polhemus
  - i. JR Polhemus was one of the mediators that was part of the May 2024 mediation meeting between the Wiolds, Lanes, Fernicolas and all HOUSE Denver elders. During this meeting, his response, statements and behaviors were incredibly damaging, abusive and manipulative. One statement he said was, "I had a situation like this one time at my church. But God took care of it, they died."

The Wiolds, Lanes, Fernicolas and Peter Young immediately asked for JR Polhemus to be removed from the LCT (Leadership Counsel Team) and not participate in mediating or investigating the accusations brought against the Kims. He was "apparently" removed, but then two months later was allowed to preach at HOUSE Denver. His sermon was also very inappropriate and manipulative, as he talked about his past as a pastor

and accusations brought against him. It feels so hurtful and dangerous that the elders of our church (who are supposed to be shepherding and caring for the sheep), let this pastor preach at our church after making such a damaging statement and basically staying, “God murders bitter people.” This is another example of how Brian and Troy use the pulpit to manipulate.

**b. February 2, 2025: “OH PRECIOUS IS THE FLOW” preached by Brian Kim**

- i. On February 2nd, Brian preached on reconciliation, just one week after two families met with the elders. The heart of the message was that Jesus’ blood covers conflict, and does the work of reconciliation for us, therefore we are already free from guilt, shame, condemnation in these areas. Brian stated, *“It doesn't matter what you've done. So many of us want to hold even other people hostage to what they might have done to...you know whatever...didn't even do it to you , but you want to hold them hostage, but the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.”* He goes on to say, *“If He's made you righteous, who gets a vote to say otherwise in your life? Not even your sin today gets to say otherwise in your life and it's by the word of their testimony that they've overcome.”* and then *“Have you applied his blood? If you are reconciled to the Father already, not by anything you've done, but through the shed blood of Jesus, what are we still arguing about? What are we still arguing about?!”* While we understand that of course it is true that the blood of Jesus’ covers all sin and that we are justified by grace through faith and therefore redeemed and made righteous in Him, that does not excuse any of us of the necessary responsibility to love one another as God has loved us, and to carry out reconciliation among the body of Christ for the peace of the brethren. It felt that there were some subliminal & hidden messages throughout the sermon that would suggest that reconciliation of ongoing conflict between brothers and sisters in Christ is not something we need to worry about, nor take responsibility for -as if to say Jesus’ blood and work on the cross does it for me, accusers who oppose my viewpoint have no voice, because I’m righteous. It is also concerning that Brian used the exact same scriptures that Mike Bickle used during his last sermon in October 2023 right before the accusations against him went public.

**7. Discarding and Discrediting the sheep**

- a. Deflecting blame and not taking responsibility for problems.



- b. When the Randalls' brought concerns to the elders about the spiritual abuse happening within our church, elders labeled it as, "projecting." This is not only inappropriate, but incredibly damaging as it discounts the testimony of a witness bringing a charge to an elder.
- c. When sheep come to the table with their concerns, they are often immediately dismissed or shut down. There is no working through problems because they are always right in the conflict. They will state things like, "We never asked anyone to leave." Then we find out later what they have really told people leaving is, "You need to find a different church." This seems to be a tactic to discard and discredit anyone.

## 8. Isolation

- a. **Lie:** The Randalls wrote a letter and emailed it to all HOUSE Denver elders in May 2024. Both Roman and Abby Randall were heavily involved at HOUSE Denver, leading small groups, connecting with people and Abby leading as one of the main worship & prayer leaders. They left for similar reasons that many others have experienced and communicated all of this in their letter. The elder's lack of response not only left them feeling isolated, but extremely hurt.

As mentioned under "Lack of Empathy/Pastoral Care", we asked the elders why they had not responded to the Randall's exit letter. They acted like they had not received the email and stated, "Oh this is news to us that they are expecting a response." The elders told us, "Oh the LCT (Leadership Counsel Team-made up by Peter Young, JR and Mike Polhemus (JR now off of the team due to inappropriate behavior during the mediation meeting) told us that all communication goes through them." This is a lie because the Randalls never agreed to have their communication funneled through the LCT and those within that team were not asked to be involved with their personal conflict. Peter Young, one of the LCT members, was CC'd on their email and sent a heartfelt response to the Randalls. Not one elder responded or even acknowledged their email. It is now more than eight months later and the Randall's have confirmed that they have not received a response from the elders.

## 9. Dreams

- a. It is deeply concerning that over a dozen people from HOUSE Denver are having dreams related to control & manipulation, deception, lying and fear. All these

dreams have similar patterns and themes in regards to the unhealthy behaviors, patterns and tactics of HOUSE Denver leaders.

### **Concern #3: Finances**

#### **1. LLC & Non-profit Concerns:**

- a. See Meyer's Finance Letter

#### **2. Lack of Transparency within Finances**

- a. **Tithing:** There have been inappropriate comments made about people tithing and/or not tithing. Brian has also bragged about his list of "top givers" which feels incredibly immature and inappropriate.
- b. **Anonymous Donation:** In 2018, there was a 1 million donation given to UPPERROOM Denver with the intention of gifting/saving it towards a church building. While there was no "strings attached" or written word on how it was to be spent, there are still questions and concerns related to how it was used when the Kims came to Denver. Multiple people have asked about how this 1 million dollar donation was spent and are curious as to why it is completely gone. Many have voiced their concerns about where the money went, and why we started a building fundraising campaign at \$0 when there was 1 million in the bank set aside for a future building. To this day, no one has received a clear answer. Brian has stated, "I don't know what to tell you, it was spent." We understand not all expenses were remembered when asked and he didn't have the books in front of him, but after learning that the donation was 1 million dollars, we are concerned as to why the finance committee and elders would not openly share how this money was used and the impact it made on our church. We feel that they are purposely withholding this information.
- c. **Books & Financial Statements:** Multiple people have asked for financial statements over the years. There was one released on March 16th, 2025, but before that there were not any others released publicly. We understand this is not required by law to post financial statements, but it is another red flag as to why they would choose not to share the books.
  - i. Another person who left HOUSE Denver in 2023, asked leaders about the books and did not receive an answer. One staff member approached this person saying something along the lines of: "Why are you asking about the finances, do you not trust us?" After this member asked questions, he had less privilege to speak with leaders and had less input into small group & church needs.

## Conclusion:

Many are devastated to feel that their only choice is to find a new church community after listening, praying, seeking wisdom and confronting elders in a mature and biblical way. Many have spent time listening to former sheep, former elders, current sheep and current elders and have come to the conclusion that our church structure, environment and finances need to be **seriously evaluated by a third party investigation.**

We love HOUSE Denver and want our community to be whole and healthy again. We are continuing to pray for our leaders to walk in the light, repent and seek professional help.

The IHOPKC Final Report sums up the feelings, thoughts and concerns of many in these two quotes:

1. **“IS #15** stated that she left IHOPKC hurt and confused, advising, **“Mike Bickle, Stuart Greaves, and Dave Sliker had an utter disregard for anyone's wellbeing.”** This statement sums up what so many sheep are feeling. Leaders at HOUSE Denver have an utter disregard for the sheep when they question, challenge or express their hurt/disappointment.
2. IHOP KC-One witness characterized the culture as, **“You are Holy if you don't talk. If you talk, you are toxic,”** the report stated. “This statement was made many times throughout the investigation by other victims.”