

My Final Statement on the Todd Bentley Investigation, January 3, 2020

Now that the leadership panel has released its statement, I wanted to explain my own role in the process. In short, while I totally support and affirm the panel's statement, I did not serve on the panel, nor was I part of the decision making process, other than to be sure that everything was conducted in an impartial and fair manner before the Lord.

As for the relevant history, after a lengthy series of accusations against Todd Bentley was posted on Facebook in August, 2019, I was asked by a number of charismatic leaders to help oversee a process where these accusations against Todd could be evaluated by other, respected leaders in the Body, fairly and with due process. (We were not being asked to evaluate his doctrine or ministry style but simply to evaluate the charges against him.)

As much as I wanted to see this handled privately rather than online, I was reluctant to accept the assignment. First, as with many other leaders, my schedule was already intensely busy. Second, I had not supported Todd's ministry for more than a decade and had no connection to his ministry at all. Why should I get involved now?

Serious concerns about Todd's ministry had been brought to me in 2005 and in 2013, and in both instances, I had passed those concerns on to Todd's board or to other leaders whom he respected for accountability and discipline. I was also on public record in 2009, speaking against his divorce and remarriage. And in my book *Authentic Fire*, which came out in 2014, I had shared my deep concerns about Todd's ministry in Lakeland.

Suffice it to say, then, that I did not feel it would be right for me to sit on a panel rendering an opinion about Todd's qualifications for ministry. At the same time, I was absolutely committed to ensuring that there would be a fair and impartial process, and so the moment I accepted the responsibility to lead the process, my stance before the Lord was that I did not know whether these other charges were true or false. I wanted everything to come to light.

I also love the mercy of God and believe in restoration. I know He forgives and cleanses, and I recognize that it is not our role to condemn. And just as I have received the Lord's abundant mercy, I desire to show mercy to others. At the same time, leaders have great responsibility in the Body because they represent Jesus and because they can impact many lives for good or for evil. If the charges against Todd were true, that meant that many people had been seriously hurt and wounded. Who would speak up for them? And if he was being falsely accused, how grave was that?

As soon as I agreed to take the lead, I began to assemble a team of nationally (and even internationally) respected leaders. It took many weeks to assemble the five leaders, since men and women of this caliber are also extremely busy, and this would be a thankless, difficult task. Plus, each of them needed to assure me that they could be impartial in the process, which they all did, to my satisfaction.

Once I had begun the process of assembling other leaders, I asked for input from a leading Christian attorney, wanting to be sure that everything we did was ethical, biblical, and legal. Then,

I asked for a meeting with Todd, wanting him to know how we would proceed and also wanting to give him the opportunity to respond to the accusations that had been posted online.

We met on September 8 for three hours, together with my wife Nancy and Todd's friend, Pastor Louis DeSiena. We agreed to keep the details of that discussion private, but my stance has been consistent and clear: If he was not guilty of the charges, I would be there to defend him. If he was guilty, I would hold his feet to the fire. (For the record, to my knowledge, this was the first time Todd and I ever sat face to face and talked for any length of time.) The next night, I spent two hours with Stephen Powell, who had posted the accusations against Todd on Facebook, assuring him that a fair investigation would be carried out and encouraging him to turn his evidence over to me for the panel. (This was the first time we had ever talked or met.)

As for the investigator, whom we'll call Robert, he was referred to me by a Facebook friend who had attended the same church and had previously traveled with Todd. Robert had served on the police force for more than 20 years and had spent his last year investigating sex crimes. After getting his resume and feeling good about his qualifications, I asked him to get involved. To this day, we have not yet met face to face but have communicated by phone, text message, and email.

Robert was burdened to help in the situation, having spent three days praying and fasting about it, and he assured me that he would conduct his investigation in the fear of the Lord with completely impartiality. His role was simply to reach out to individuals whose names were given to him by various concerned parties, about 60 names in total, seeking to get statements from them directly by email or phone or, when possible or necessary, meeting with them face to face.

Of those he was able to reach, most were willing to provide statements, and he simply recorded the data and presented his findings to us, offering no opinion either way. If someone had a positive report about Todd, he passed that on. If it was negative, he passed that on. However, there was one very sensitive situation, requiring two out of state visits and delaying the whole investigative process by many weeks. That is one reason why things took so long.

So, it took time to assemble the panel and find the investigator. It took time to contact the many witnesses and get statements, especially in this one, very sensitive situation. Then it took time for the panel to evaluate the evidence and put together a statement. To all who prayed during these months, I express my heartfelt appreciation.

As for Todd's involvement, he initially said that he welcomed the process and signed on to it, but then, in October, I received a letter from his attorney, ordering me to cease and desist from the investigation, and Todd made clear he would no longer be participating in the process. While I regretted Todd dropping out, primarily for his own sake, we continued with our investigation without interruption, since we were doing nothing illegal, let alone unethical or unbiblical. And what we were doing was for the Body as a whole, not just for one individual.

Still, even though Todd opted out of the process and insisted that all communication be carried out through his attorney, we wanted to give him the opportunity to respond to his accusers. On November 11, after several days of emails exchanges, I wrote to Todd, "Please confirm with a

simple YES or NO if you want the investigator to send his questions to your attorney, based on my response to your email here.”

He responded that same day, “Yes, please send all questions to my attorney.”

The investigator then sent the attorney a list of 60 questions for Todd, but he declined to respond, either directly or through his attorney. I have had no contact with Todd since November 11, other than to send him a personal email with the statement from the panel yesterday (January 2).

The five leaders, then, came to their conclusions based on the evidence submitted to them, covering the years 2004 to 2019, with interviews conducted by the investigator that focused on the years 2008-2019 and with additional evidence provided by eyewitnesses from 2004 to 2008. If you have not read the leadership panel’s statement, you can find it [here](#). And while we all believe that God forgives our sins through the blood of Jesus when we turn to Him in repentance and faith, repeated, prolonged patterns of sinful behavior do have consequences, especially for leaders.

If you have any questions about the statement or the process involved, I will be very happy to answer your questions during a live Facebook chat on Monday night, January 6, starting at 8:00 PM, EST, on the AskDrBrown Facebook page. Feel free to send your questions to me at info@askdrbrown.org, and I’ll respond to as many of them as possible during the live talk.

Our goal, before the Lord, was to bring everything into the light, to restore trust in leadership, to call for greater accountability, to expose false charges and confirm true charges, and to stand with those who may have been sinned against. Above all, we were jealous for the reputation of Jesus and the health of His Body, and all that we did – I can speak for myself as well as the panel – we did out of love for Todd, out of love for those who brought charges against him, and out of love for Jesus. We believe that the way leaders and individuals respond to the panel’s findings will be very revealing.

May Jesus be glorified mightily in the days to come, and may purity, honor, respect, and dignity flow through His family. He deserves nothing less. May God’s light shine brightly!