

Presentation to BBC Elder Council

Steve and Janette Takata

For April 6, 2021

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Agenda

- Introduction
- Sheep gates
- Jan QSM motions
- Grievances and process
- Summary
- Upcoming Motion
- Questions

We are going to give a brief introduction, name some sheep gates or ditches, talk about the two motions we brought to the Jan QSM, talk about our grievances and how they were handled, summarize and share with you an upcoming motion we plan to present at the April 25th QSM. We have only been given 45 minutes to speak tonight. We plan to take up the entire time. We expect no answers from you tonight as a council. We pray that you receive as the gift we intend it to be. You'll all be given an electronic copy of our notes this evening. Please do follow up with us at a later time.

Introduction

Steve

I am Steve Takata, I came to Bethlehem with my parents Rod and Martha around 1990 when I was in 2nd grade.

Janette

I am Janette Takata, I came to BBC, upon the recommendation of Dr. Tony Preston from Midwest Baptist Theological Seminary, in January 2003 during my internship to complete my bachelor's degree.

Naming and Closing Sheep Gates

[Steve]

I know that at this moment you have adjectives and nouns in your minds when you hear our names. I ask you to consider where and how those descriptors were formed. Were they constructed by a personal relationship with us - by talking to us? Or have they been shaped by conversations, statements and assumptions - by talking about us?

I know there is therefore now no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus. But I have heard from so many different angles that we are divisive, attacking, malicious, unwilling to reconcile. We have been treated as unshepherdable and unclean.

One sheep gate I want to be explicit with from the beginning, is we are for you and we are for Bethlehem. We want fellowship with you together with our Savior. Bethlehem is my home, I grew up here. I have no bitterness toward you or toward our church. Andy specifically - I have no bitterness against you. I want, we want to be reconciled with you.

You are going to hear passion tonight. You will hear anger. But from the very beginning I want to be perfectly clear - we have no ill will toward any of you. We do not desire anyones destruction. We are ready and willing to reconcile with those that are ready and willing to repent. And we are ready and willing to admit to and repent of our own sin.

Tonight is the first time we're talking to you and you didn't initiate it. We had to ask for it. Brothers, this is not the way shepherds are supposed to lead. Finally, the context for our 3/10/21 Peacemakers Meeting with Andy was only to talk about the personal offense to us. No one else's concerns were included at that time. The context in which we were invited to speak tonight is to talk about our Motions, talk about the grievance process and talk about how we've been treated by the elders. Do not assume that we are the only two people with grave concerns.

Jan 2021 Motions

Background

For the past 2 years or longer I have left QSMs feeling like I should have said something - never on a single topic. When I received the weekly newsletter around Jan 7 of this year, I felt clearly from the Holy Spirit - this is my deadline.

After procrastinating several weeks, the weekend prior to the QSM, we talked for several hours about a wide range of topics. The following Tuesday I emailed Jason Meyer, Ming-Jinn Tong, Richie Stark, and Jared Wass, an email covering three broad topics: Racial/Ethnic Harmony, Hyper-headship and women in ministry, and BBC's relationship with other ministries. We emailed stating we would be speaking at the QSM and asked for their council and feedback on bringing a motion to the church.

In a 2.5 hour conversation with Jason and Ming-Jinn we discussed primarily the task force and ethnic harmony because that is our heartbeat. We spoke for some time regarding Women's Ministry and the fact that 50% of our downtown campus does not have full-time representation in leadership. There are 0 female deacons serving the DT campus. We spoke even more briefly about BBCs relationships with BCS and DG.

Our Intent for the Motions

In the briefest summary - we brought two motions to the January QSM because the Holy Spirit was leading us to do so.

Our intent in the statement motion was to give freedom of conscience for elders and congregants with a plurality of views on that episode. To clarify that a professor of BCS does not represent the only acceptable view on that topic.

We meant to help the elders by giving a more lenient timeline than the EHTF motion.

We meant to give the congregation an opportunity to have a conversation, in the only means possible - a motion - after elders didn't respond to requests for shepherding regarding this episode. There are no forums for simply a congregational conversation with elders.

We meant to practice being a congregationally governed church.

We meant to open-handedly present 2 motions before the congregation, for a quorum of the membership to vote up or down.

[Janette]

We meant, in the EHTF motion, to hold our elders accountable to a motion they unanimously voted for and participated in with lay members. We learned on January 26th, that Jason asked Kurt to put the EHTF motion on the agenda at a QSM, but that Kurt disagreed. As a co-leader of a ministry who was interviewed by the EHTF, I repeatedly asked to see the portion of the reports that pertained to Women's Ministry and/or MOMS. All requests to see the reports were denied. Members in support of the EHTF didn't know what we could or couldn't talk about with the membership and members of the EHTF seemed bound to confidentiality during and after the EHTF was dismantled.

We knew that all elders were not in favor of the EHTF and that your silence about it was creating division, gossip, slander and wounded people leaving the church. Kenny said people were leaving the church because we talk too little or we talk too much about Ethnic Harmony. It's a contentious issue in the church and yet that motion passed quickly, with minimal discussion, except for Steven Lee's quick attempt at smoke and mirrors.

We believe that the elders failed to practice truth and transparency (Jason's words), approachability and accountability (Kurt's words) by 1. Not informing the congregation of the motion to form the EHTF that was unanimously voted for. 2. Not informing the congregation of the work of the EHTF in partnership with elders on all three campuses. 3. Not updating the congregation on the conclusion of the work of the EHTF and 4. Permitting gossip, slander, false accusations and distrust to grow against lay members of the EHTF.

We honestly thought that the Statement Motion would be a quick up or down vote because most people would not have known about the episode. We honestly thought that the EHTF Motion would be the most contentious and time consuming motion of the evening. I asked Steve to bring the harder motion. I asked Steve if I could bring the fast motion first, so that it would be over quickly. We had a brilliant plan. It worked swimmingly.

Impact of Elders' Responses

[Steve]

You have fostered a culture sensitive to trigger words and catchphrases, “cancel culture,” “systemic,” “abuse,” “woke,” “social justice.” Anyone hearing key words or phrases immediately assumes the worst of the person raising a concern and can dismiss their perspective out of hand. Please pause to consider your knee-jerk reactions and the fears that support them.

Elders have been talking about our intent for two months. But you haven't once talked to us about our intent. Downtown pastors were told to pursue us to find out why we brought the motion. You must have assumed that we “ambushed” the elders at the QSM and that we didn't talk to elders about our concerns.

For 2 months you have allowed Andy's misrepresentation of the Statement Motion to stand as the only written statement from the elders. His letter to the congregation speaks for all of you implying there is only one right way to vote on the motion, reiterating his intent to resign if the motion passes. We have repeatedly asked for a chance to speak for ourselves, to rightly represent our intentions and our meaning in the language of the motion. Kurt has cited to us that he's relied on Anthony Bushnell's help to get the wording of the motion out. Kurt has implied to other members of the congregation that Andy has wanted to or has offered to send another email out, but Kurt told him not to. Kurt's explanation was that he didn't want to “throw Andy under the bus.” **Substantiated in a phone call between this member and Jason Meyer 4/12/21.**

[Janette]

I have spent the last two months asking the Lord why he had me write a motion in 2021 about a statement regarding an episode of an Amazon Prime show that I last watched in 2019. I still don't know the answer to that question. I have spent the last 2 months asking the Lord why did he have me write the motion in the way that I did, instead of being more clear about the inconsistencies I saw in the June 1, 2019 seminar of Recognizing and Responding to Abuse Together vs the Man Rampant Sin of Empathy episode. Why did I comb through the biography of every elder to see a connection between BCS and BBC elders? The Lord granted an answer to that on Sunday night, 4/4/21. I'll share it with you in a few minutes.

We have been called divisive, attacking, malicious, punishing, dragging people's name through the mud, punishing Joe Rigney for his beliefs, forcing the elders to make a statement, having something take a hold of us that is resulting in us causing harm to ourselves, our family and many others, determination to have our own way no matter what, disobedience to pastors and elders, factionalism, disrespect, slander, refusal to reconcile, blind to our own sin, taking our values from the world and not from the Word, leading the opposition to the church, etc

False accusations of insubordination to a pastor have been shared broadly in BCS meetings, 1-on-1 phone conversations between elders and lay members, emails and stand entirely unrefuted. Let's be crystal clear - Jason would you be willing to relay to the elders what you told

us in our Zoom call with Ming-Jinn on January 26th with regard to bringing a motion to the January QSM? Ming-Jinn, is that the way you recall that exchange?

Two incompatible truths about what elders have said have been permitted to co-exist and the most damning one toward us is accepted as THE truth.

I have pursued conversations with congregants, small group leaders and with elders whenever I have had concerns or questions. I have followed all appropriate channels of praying for the church, ministering within the church while not spreading my thoughts with those under my leadership in ministry. I have fulfilled the relational commitments while being a member here for the last 18 years.

[Steve]

Jason, would you be willing to repeat to the elder council what you told Tom Lutz and Ken Currie on Friday, March 26th about mine and Janette's character throughout this entire process?

(Steve didn't read this on 4/6/21. Jason referred to the membership relational commitments.)

Bryan, would you be willing to repeat to the elder council what you told Tom Lutz and Ken Currie on Friday, March 26th about Janette's anger during that particular meeting? (Steve didn't read

this on 4/6/21. "From Bryan Pickering: In their apology letter, the Takatas have asked for forgiveness for their sinful anger. However, because some may be tempted to consider all of Janette's anger to be sinful, I wanted to clarify that when we met on March 26, I noted that I believe much of the anger you heard in our sister is in keeping with Ps 4:4 and Eph 4:26. She is seeking to honor the command of our Lord to 'be angry and not sin.' In seeking forgiveness for unrighteous anger, I see the Takatas honoring God and responding to his grace. In seeking to honor God with righteous anger, I likewise see the Takatas aiming to keep in step with his Spirit.")

Bryan, Jason and Ming-Jinn, would you be willing to share with the elder council tonight if and when you have seen us participate in any of the sins we have been accused of, whether intentionally or not? Would you be willing to share with the elder council tonight if we've sought your reproof and correction for sins? Would you be willing to share with the elder council tonight how we've confessed and sought forgiveness of sin or whether we have resisted repentance in blindness or hard-heartedness?

We have suspected that we would be brought up on charges of sin for church discipline. We have thought since the first week of February as elders huddled around Andy, protecting him, defending him, excusing him, enabling him and refusing to hold him accountable, that it would be easier to remove two people from membership than to confront a systemic problem in the elder council. Kurt Elting-Ballard stated that in a phone call on 2/23/21 and in a Zoom meeting with _____ on Saturday, 4/3/21 that we haven't done anything wrong by bringing the motions. Kurt also stated on 2/23/21 in our phone call that "Cancel Culture doesn't have anything to do with it" (it being our Statement Motion). Furthermore, Kurt told us in that conversation that only DT elders can discipline us and that he would "step down before he let that happen because we haven't done anything wrong."

Grievances and Process

Background

[Steve]




After the QSM on Monday morning, February 1, I emailed several elders, campus pastors and leadership asking for their perspective and expressing my concern regarding Andy's behavior at the QSM. I wanted to start by checking my own interpretation and response to see whether anyone else experienced concerns, or if I was the crazy one.

_____ said he shared some of my concerns and had independently reached out to Andy prior to my email. Sam Crabtree asked if I had met with Andy to share my indictment of his heart. Steven Lee said that Andy hadn't sinned, but had used unwise words. Kurt Elting-Ballard has said that there's only been 1-2 occasions that people are referencing with concerns. **This was in a conversation with Steve and Janette on 2/23/21 when Kurt asked about surprising words that he had heard about "abuse and power." Kurt also stated this to a different member in a 1:1 phone call when the member called into question Andy's fitness to be an elder. Janette further described about 12 times that Andy had been reproofed or asked to apologize, repent. Those instances were minimized by Kurt, in the Takata's opinion.**

We believe Andy's words at the QSM, to elders individually and corporately, to us personally and to the QSM attendees displays a pattern of behavior and a pattern of unrepentance. Furthermore, actions by the elder council have minimized, excused, supported or hidden Andy's lack of repentance and/or have abdicated accountability on the following occasions:

1. Andy was rebuked by M-J at the January 31 QSM with an honor/shame cultural approach. He did not repent and doubled down when he spoke at the microphone again, further compounding his attack against Janette.
2. Andy was rebuked privately by _____ in text messages on 2/1 and/or 2/2. He did not repent and further maligned our character and intentions in bringing the motion.
3. Andy was corrected by K E-B by Wednesday 2/3/21. According to _____, Andy agreed to publicly apologize at the next QSM. According to Kurt, Andy did not repent.
4. Several elders received phone calls, emails, texts of concerns over Andy's behavior at the QSM. He was "prompted" to apologize to the elders even though he and Steven Lee both said he had not sinned. Without the admission of guilt, no true apology nor repentance can come.
5. He emailed the elders an (lackluster) apology, showing no sign of repentance and asking for no forgiveness from the elders. Unless one is seeking forgiveness, there is no "need" for repentance. Steve was told by a lay member on 2/6/21 that Andy had apologized to the elders and that we were unwilling to reconcile with Andy.
6. The whole council of elders spoke at the summit. None were able to persuade him of the hurt he had caused, let alone persuade him to repent. He and several elders said that the Takatas had attacked him. Blame shifting does not take responsibility for his

response to the perceived attack. and defended the Takatas against Andy's accusation of perceived hurt. His perceived hurt is a distractionary issue from his lack of repentance.

7. Andy emails us on Sunday, 2/7/21 with his only apology being "I'm sorry for effectively shutting down the conversation." He gave more of an apology to the elders than he did to us. He sought neither forgiveness nor reconciliation, nor did he address his perceived attack by us, seeking reconciliation between us and him in line with Matthew 18.
8. Andy emails a draft of his letter of apology to 7 elders/pastors. 5 of them urge him to edit it and they believe that conversation around the letter is still ongoing. Andy emails us after the letter has been submitted to Communications to be sent out, stating that he's sure we would prefer it was worded differently, but never once asking us more, nor waiting until our scheduled meeting on March 10 to talk and to pursue reconciliation as WE suggested. Andy also submitted the letter to Communications implying to the congregation that he had elder support for his actions, views, and "apology" when in fact 5 of the 7 elders who previewed it, didn't approve of the wording and/or content of the letter.
9. Andy wrote 4 pages on 2/7/21 of what he really intended to say at the QSM. Andy emailed those 4 pages to all BCS faculty and staff on 2/10/21, along with his apology that went to the QSM attendees. We were not made aware of this email until 2/27/21.
10. In a BCS Faculty and Staff meeting on 2/11/21, Andy slandered, maligned, falsely accused and gossiped about Janette as well as former colleague and member **Johnathon** Bowers. We were not made aware of this until Monday, 3/15/21. 
11. [Janette]
meet for 90 minutes on Friday, 2.12.21 to talk about how the email went out, to talk about the charges of sin and elder disqualification that Steve had presented to most of them except for . Kurt was tasked with calling or meeting with Andy to ask him to recant his letter and state that his views do not represent the council of elders. Ironically, this is exactly what the Statement motion is asking for. Kurt speaks with Andy on 2.13.21 when Andy refuses to see how he has harmed the members of the church and fellow elders. Andy refuses to repent.
12. Emergency DT Elder meeting on 2/16/21 with K E-B present. K E-B tells all DT elders (present at the meeting) that K E-B asked Andy to resend an email with him, but AN refused. This meeting concludes with the action ~~step~~  that Andy will be asked to co-author an email to the QSM attendees with . Wednesday, 2/17/21, AN refuses to co-author an email.
13. Friday, 2/19/21, BP is told to go to AN 1:1 in accordance with Matt 18:15. 
and will meet on Wednesday, 2/24/21.
B. Friday, 2/19/21, DT elder emails DT lay member who expressed further concerns on Tuesday, 2/16/21 stating "I had tried to extend AN charitable judgement for as long as possible - I kept hanging on and hoping. However, though I love him and pray blessing over his family, his wife and him, I settled in my heart and mind shortly after our conversation that loving rebuke is the way of wisdom, and I trust the way of restoration."
14. Monday, 2/22/21, AN and ; meet 1:1 for SM to express concerns directly to AN. AN falsely accuses Janette and Steve of bringing the motions after JM told us not to

- because it would be divisive. AN also tells _____ that someone shared a FB post of Janette's with AN where she puts down Man Rampant and mentions AN with sarcasm. Tuesday, 2/23/21, _____ texts Janette to ask if either of those claims are true. Both are denied. This information is immediately forwarded to _____.
15. Wednesday, 2/24/21, _____ meet. BP hands a written letter to AN and reads it asking AN. _____ confronts AN on misrepresenting his words to Steve and Janette in the meeting before the QSM. AN denies saying those words to _____. AN refuses to step down. All other content of the meeting is unknown to Takatas.
16. Wednesday, 3/10/21, _____ meet for reconciliation between AN and the Takatas. Takatas charge AN with sin and ask him to step down as an elder in repentance. Andy came to the meeting with "proof" from Jason DeRouchie that he did not commit unintentional sin. Andy refuses to apologize and seek forgiveness for the impact of his words and actions. Steven Lee suggests that 1. The congregation could benefit from teaching on whether and how to repent of impact and 2. That things, like emails, can be read charitably or uncharitably.
17. Tuesday, 3/16/21, the elder council meets under the context of forming an investigation process for the grievances brought by 13 members in good standing. Instead 2 motions are presented to dismiss the charges as not true or substantial. Andy is permitted to speak and to vote in the meeting (he abstained), which was held in executive session. Only 1 of the members who aired a grievance was permitted to attend the meeting, because he is an elder. 6 hours later, both motions passed with an overwhelming vote.
18. Wednesday, 3/17/21, a member of BCS faculty/staff reaches out to DK about the addendum that he shared with the Takatas grievances. How did a non-elder, BCS faculty or staff obtain that information?
19. Wednesday, 3/17/21, all elders were exhorted not to talk to the Takatas, nor _____, nor _____. We were to wait until we heard from K E-B about the meeting. For one week, no elders talked to us unless it was in an unsanctioned conversation.
20. Thursday, 3/18/21, a former BCS student who lives out of state spoke with DK about having been told there were grievances filed against AN. This former student was asked to write a character statement on behalf of AN and to submit it by Friday at 5 p.m. Meanwhile, all lay members in the 3/10/21 Peacemakers meeting were bound to confidentiality and held it.
21. By Saturday, 3/19/21, all members who gave a grievance had heard from K E-B. Their grievances were either not considered or were lumped under the Takatas grievances and dismissed by vote. _____ was told that AN was and is being held accountable.
22. Friday, 3/26/21, TL and KC met with _____ and as many members who aired a grievance as could meet. 24 hours notice was given before the meeting. _____ was not permitted to attend. _____ for "truth and transparency" invited _____, but he was not permitted by other elders to speak. **Based on an email from _____ to those who aired a grievance, it was incorrectly assumed that _____ was not permitted to speak because he was not permitted to attend on 3/26/21. When _____ stated _____ could come to the meeting, it was incorrectly assumed by several members that _____ could attend but wouldn't be permitted to speak.** Elders stated that the Takatas needed to accept that their grievances were dismissed as the "sovereign will of God."

Efforts toward Relational Commitments

Members have been held to a higher standard of keeping the Relational Commitments throughout this process than Elders.

On 2/23/21, Kurt Elting-Ballard asked us to meet with Andy according to the Relational Commitments. Kurt's explanation, though we already had a meeting scheduled with Andy for 3/10/21, was that if Andy heard from us directly, we would have a beautiful example of Gospel grace that Kurt could summarize in an email and send to the church.

On 3/26/21, Tom Lutz told some members who gave a grievance that one reason their grievances weren't considered was that to his knowledge, those members had not gone to Andy in a Matthew 18:15 approach per our Relational Commitments. _____ tearfully interjected that he had and that's when Andy gossiped and slandered the Takatas. _____ cited Tom's referral to the Relational Commitments and particularly Andy's behavior in the meeting as Abuse of Power.

[Relational Commitments | Bethlehem Baptist Church](#)

A. Accountability and Discipline Are Signs of God's Love

B. Most Corrective Discipline Is Private, Personal, and Informal

C. Formal Discipline May Involve the Entire Church

If a member persistently refuses to listen to personal and informal correction to turn from speech or behavior that the Bible defines as sin, Jesus commands us to "tell it to the church" (Matt. 18:17). This first involves informing one or more church pastors/ elders about the situation. ... Our elders may approach the member privately to personally establish the facts and encourage repentance of any sin they discover. We intend to give the member every reasonable opportunity to explain and defend his or her actions. If the member recognizes his sin and repents, the matter usually ends there, unless a confession to additional people is needed.

If an offense is likely to harm others or lead them into sin, or cause division or disruption, our elders may accelerate the disciplinary process and move to protect the church (Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; Titus 3:10-11).

As the disciplinary process progresses, our elders may impose a variety of sanctions to encourage repentance, including, but not limited to, private and public admonition, withholding of the Lord's Supper, removal from office, withdrawal of normal fellowship, and, as a last resort, removal from membership (Matt. 5:23-24; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; Matt. 18:17).

If the straying member does not repent in response to private appeals from our elders, they may inform others in the church who may be able to influence that individual or be willing to pray for him or her, or people who might be harmed or affected by that person's

behavior. This step may include close friends, a small group, a Sunday school class, or the entire congregation if our elders deem it to be appropriate (Matt. 18:17, 1 Tim. 5:20).

Commitment to Biblical Counseling and Confidentiality:

“God calls the leaders in His church to set an example “in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12). If any leader should not live up to this standard in any counseling situation, the counselee should report to the leadership team any conduct that fails to meet this standard.”

Does this only apply to leaders in a counseling situation? How many times have elders violated confidentiality by sharing elder privileged information with lay members? How many times since just Jan 31st? How many times has AN shared elder privileged information with his students, BCS faculty and staff, in 1:1 meetings with lay members?


On Sunday, 4/4/21, the Lord finally drew a connection for me between why I combed through the biographies of all 44 elders and learned that 32% of BBC elders have a connection with BCS as a former or present student, as a former or present faculty or staff, or as a Board of Directors for BCS. **How many times have BBC elders heard BBC members slandered, gossiped about, maligned, falsely accused, etc? How many times has that behavior been permitted, ignored, dismissed, rationalized, endorsed or supported? EHTF members were treated the same way. In April 2019 Andy told his students that the EHTF motion presenters were “unteachable” and “divisive.” Doing so, he spoke of a colleague. Janette stated on 4/6/21 that she believes a reconciliation meeting between AN and the former colleague occurred.**

Response of Elder Council

[Steve]

Separate, Isolate, Cover, Silence, File Away, Minimize, Dismiss, Rationalize, Attack

- Elders have intentionally and craftily created confusion by minimizing, dismissing and in some cases hiding concerns brought by members in good standing. Instead of looking into the pattern of domineering behavior that is well documented by not only Andy Naselli, but by other elders, the Council has instead weaponized Matthew 18:15 with no exit loop to vs 16 or vs 17. Meanwhile, Andy and other elders are permitted to say whatever they want to lay members in the congregation and to a larger context of people literally across the country. Furthermore, those words are agreed with, endorsed, repeated and believed as more honest and more Christ-like than lay members who tell the truth.
- Kurt Elting-Ballard determined we would be too intimidated to speak to the whole council of elders. That alone is worthy of repentance. Intimidating is nowhere near the qualifications of an elder. We weren't asked. Assumptions were made. If members are too intimidated to come to their elders, then you have a culture of domineering. You don't have a culture of Christ-like shepherding.

- Kurt Elting-Ballard determined he didn't think the council of elders would need us at the March 16 extra meeting "to more clearly state our opinions." Andy was permitted to more clearly state his opinions. A "thorough investigation" was completed with a motion to dismiss the charges as not true or substantial, with no witnesses interviewed, no explanations nor clarifications sought, grievances not included in the documents given to the elders, grievances not considered on a technicality or because the Chair didn't believe they fit with the others as a grievance.
- Documents were provided, but there was no confirmation that documents were read by all elders before the votes were cast. At least one elder didn't read all the documents until the following day. Some grievances have yet to be seen by the Council.
- Assumptions of all grievances being the same or about the same concerns. This assumption may have been part of the false accusation that Steve is the leader of the opposition to our church. It was assumed that we shared 1. That we were bringing grievances against Andy Naselli and 2. That we had shared our grievances with others in the church. We had not.
- No elders asked the members about the process by which they wrote nor submitted their grievances. Elders have assumed that we have slandered and gossiped about Andy and other elders when in fact, we have chosen a lonely, painful road of not allowing others to walk with us prior to March 26th when all who shared a grievance met with  who wasn't permitted to speak. See correction above.
- None of these behaviors by the Chair, by Andy Naselli, nor by other elders is new behavior. It has been happening for years. The same tactics to dismiss our concerns, make us fear discipline and wear us out so we would leave the church have been used in the past against other members and are being used now to current members who brought grievances and concerns.

Impact of Response

[Janette]

- Elders played strategy games by removing elders who were shepherding us from key conversations. Little advance notice was given to us about adding and removing previously agreed upon participants to the meeting.
- We were asked by KEB what we meant by "surprising words" of "power and abuse." We tried to explain the 12, then 15 times, now over 20 times that Andy was asked to apologize, repent, resend an email, etc and he refused. Still the concerns were minimized to 1-2 occasions, when we have learned during the last 2 months of many, many more concerns about the domineering behavior that not only Andy, but other elders have engaged in, explicitly and implicitly endorsed, and have enabled.

- Lay members were bound to confidentiality, but not elders. Grievances and addendums were shared by elders with lay members, character witnesses/testimonies for Andy were sought from non-members who live outside the state. But no other grievances were sought.
- One member was told that the reason previous concerns were dismissed about Andy Naselli was because the student positive reviews outnumbered the student negative reviews.
- Andy stated some grievances against him were “laughable.” This is hearsay. 1 Tim 5:19-20 speaks of trembling, not laughing. How arrogant to laugh at charges of sin being brought to an elder. And yet, how many concerns have been brought and dismissed or rejected or silenced? If those tactics worked in the past (dismiss, separate, ignore on a technicality, hide from other elders, seek character witnesses and testimonials to outweigh the concerns, keep discussions in executive session so that the membership can’t find out about them, etc) why wouldn’t those same tactics be used again? To be clear, it wasn’t only Andy who used those tactics. It was other elders endorsing Andy’s behavior, covering it up, excusing it and refusing to call it sin.
- This is not a Takatas vs Naselli conflict. Our church body doesn’t have an issue with one elder. We have a shepherding issue that is systemic.
- By dismissing all charges as not true or substantial, there is no opportunity to hold Andy accountable for any of his words to us or about us. There are congregants stating that they understand why he reacted the way he did (in anger). There are congregants who have talked to us about the motion and the episode. In each of those conversations, we have affirmed Andy and told them that we have understood, apologized for and sought forgiveness for the impact of my motion on him. Their response each time was they hope he apologized too. We had to answer that we were bound to confidentiality. Furthermore, it makes us out to be liars and divisive by bringing false charges.
- Note that elders are assuming that we’re slandering Andy, gossiping about Andy, when in fact, we have either said nothing about Andy, nor the way we have been treated by deacons, elders and lay members who’ve heard information from elders, OR we have affirmed Andy. Note that we have made it our daily prayer to Walk by the Spirit so that we don’t satisfy our flesh. Note that we have prayerfully and humbly sought to honor the elders, even when we absolutely disagree with them, and have upheld the relational commitments. We have multiple elders who have not modeled upholding the relational commitments of talking to one another and not about one another. Note that I co-lead the MOMS ministry and have access to a microphone and a captive audience. I have not once shared about the QSM or any of my concerns with women at MOMS. I have merely reflected back to women what they have approached me and told me. Or, I have submitted their anonymous words to the DT elders for consideration.

- Note that no one else has read this document nor heard this summary to date. Note that we have pages of notes, several emails, notes from phone conversations, etc, all gathered since the January QSM.
- All elders were exhorted not to talk to me and Steve. Additionally, elders were exhorted not to talk to [redacted] and [redacted]. Since ours were the only grievances considered by the council, that was retaliatory, punitive and rendered us unshepherdable. That skipped over the process of church discipline laid out in our bylaws and we were treated like unbelievers. Even if any of you thought we had sinned, refusing to permit us to be shepherded was not in alignment with Galatians 6:1. **Takatas weren't officially told when elders were no longer having "unsanctioned" conversations with them. Takatas were told that some elders thought that we should be shepherded for reproof and correction for bringing the motion and the grievances.**
- On March 26th, Ken Currie told [redacted] that it was evil for elders not to shepherd him after bringing a grievance. Ken made no apologies to Steve or me for us not being shepherded after bringing a grievance. [redacted] asked Ken to make commitments to go with his apologies that evening. Ken made no specific commitments in light of his apologies.
- On March 26th, Ken Currie apologized to [redacted] for the ways that [redacted] had been physically and mentally feeling that past week from the recent events. Ken Currie stated he felt bad that [redacted] felt that way. The only elders who have reached out to shepherd us since January 31st are Bryan Pickering, Jason Meyer, Ming-Jinn Tong and Darin Brink. [redacted] has asked one time how we're doing. I have called [redacted] and he has accepted my calls.

Truth and Transparency, Approachability and Accountability

[Steve]

- We are being asked to submit to elders who are permitted to say whatever they want about us, to anyone, in any context. Meanwhile the relational commitments continue to be waved at us with growing numbers of accusations of sin due to the false information that has been spread by elders to lay members.
- We have stated multiple times that we have not been given the chance to talk about our motion as we intended it. We have stated to multiple elders that Andy's representation of our motion in his Feb 10 email is not only a misrepresentation, but is also a domineering way of telling the membership to vote against the motion because either A. a positive vote would cause Andy to resign and/or B. the elders wouldn't endorse the motion. And, because none of you have publicly written otherwise, you are teaching our membership that we are not congregationally governed and elder led, but rather elder governed.

- We are being asked to overlook, as you have, the great numbers of people who are also grieved by the elders' behavior toward not only us, but toward the body.
- We are being asked to submit to elders who have been a shoddy representation of our Great Shepherd. Or, if we can't do that in good conscience, to go, just like so many others who have left Bethlehem, not in a silent exodus, but rather as silenced sheep, some of whom were offered NDAs regarding their time at BCS.
- You are worried about us driving a wedge between BCS and BBC. You have created a grand canyon between your shepherding and the Great Shepherd.
- What we are being asked to do is to wait on the Lord. He tells the oceans how far to come and no further. He tells the sun when to rise and when to set. He sovereignly permits children to be abused, police officers to kneel on necks for 8 minutes and 46 seconds (new information from the trial indicates 9 minutes and 29 seconds), Ravi Zacharias to sexually abuse women behind closed doors and in private texts while publicly evangelizing. We understand that the comparison to sexual abuse and other "scandals" in churches made it hard for some to hear what we are saying. For examples of pastors/ministry leaders accused of arrogance, pride, etc, please see CJ Mahaney, Mark Driscoll, James MacDonald, etc.
- Like the President of USAG hid complaints of abuse in a file drawer and never exposed them, never reported them, never acted on them, Elders at BBC have hidden away complaints, concerns, grievances, prophetic warnings. This church doesn't have 4 years to keep hiding. This is the point we're trying to make in the comparison above.
- Some of you have said that we need to accept that our grievances were dismissed as "the sovereign will of God." Brothers, the sovereign will of God permits some heinous things to happen to God's Beloved. And just because justice, mercy or righteousness don't prevail right away, doesn't mean that Christ won't have the bride for which he laid down his life and took it up again. Just because you've dismissed our grievances and all the ones that came before them and the ones that are still to come, doesn't mean that you won't be accountable to God. Why do you fear me? What can I do to you? What can I do to Bethlehem? What can I do to BCS? What can I do to anyone by telling the truth? Even if I could do harm, why do you care more about any perceived harm I could bring than the One who will judge you elders to a higher standard, and who has the authority to kill both body and soul.

Revisit Sheep Gates

[Janette]

We desire no one's demise. We desire no one's harm. We desire repentance and reconciliation for each of you who has been cunning, crafty, concealing, creating confusion, stirring up division, domineering, defensive, sinful in your speech, abdicating, slandering, gossiping, attacking, showing the sin of partiality, committing the sins of omission. Brothers, you have not been above reproach. Rather, you have held yourselves above reproof. I don't know how long the Lord will sovereignly permit you to sin and to lead the church astray, but I do know his

victory is sure and his judgment is coming first to the church according to 1 Peter 4:12-19. Repent and believe, that God may have mercy on your souls.

Turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in His wonderful face. And the things of earth (your power, fame, authority, pride, domineering behavior) will grow strangely repulsive, in the light of His glory and grace.

On Saturday, 4/3/21, Kurt told _____ and us that he believes our motion has been misrepresented. I tearfully told Kurt that I don't trust him to communicate to the congregation in his wording that we have been misrepresented. I tearfully told him, with _____ in the meeting, that we have asked multiple times to be rightly represented, to have Andy's email not stand alone as the church's interpretation of our motion and he has denied all of our requests.

We asked _____ what he meant when he told us in a previous meeting that he would help us as a congregation have the conversation we wanted to have. Here's what _____ said he believes needs to happen and he will help Kurt write the statement so that:

1. Our reputations need to be rehabilitated and we need to be represented justly.
2. It needs to be expressed that elders and Takatas have met to help serve the church together, that working on the motion has not been a quarrel or a fight.
3. Members should not be seen as rebellious, disobedient or putting elders on the spot when they bring a motion.

We asked Kurt what he intends to do to change the culture of BBC in regards to the relationship between lay members and elders, in light of how he believes we have been misrepresented. He said he can't change the culture of BBC, and I countered, but you can change it going into and during the April QSM.

Kurt's response that he hopes to include some of this in his email:

1. The church needs more regular communication about what the elders are doing.
2. The elders have managed communication so much that there is little to no approachability and a lot of suspicion of the elders.
3. He wants to increase approachability and accountability.

I believe Kurt wants to see some good healing happen tonight where we feel heard and some healing can happen. I personally don't think he understands that repentance is what will heal our church. I was very clear to say on 4/3/21 that God is my defense. I don't need nor want Kurt to defend us to the congregation because we need that. Rather, our defense and righteousness is in Christ. What he can do to the congregation is change the culture at BBC by stating that we have been misrepresented and by owning the ways conversation has been shut down and suspicions of elders have increased.

My name is graven on Christ's hands. My name is written on his heart. My name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life. I am not sharing any of this to restore my name. Rather, to point you all to Jesus with humility. His grace is costly; but yet, it's free. Grace will cost you your pride, your title, your reputation, your power. But, oh, by grace, through faith alone, you can gain Christ.

The last sheep gate I want to close is the comment in our letter to Andy saying this is a perversion of the gospel. Joe Rigney retweeted Neil Shenvi's tweet saying "Don't apologize for doing wrong if you know you haven't done wrong because:

1. You're lying.
2. You're undermining your trustworthiness.
3. You're showing you can be manipulated.
4. You're patronizing the person who has wrongly taken offense.

Is it assumed that we're seeking or deserving of any of the above?

We're at a crossroads. After hearing us share only the way we have been treated by you as individual members and as a council, you can A. go back to Feb 1 and say no one has sinned. Go back to March 16 and say all of this is not true or substantial. Ming-Jinn has called that unethical. B. go back to Feb 3 and say that Andy does need to make a public apology at the April QSM. But, does he alone need to apologize, and only for his words on Jan 31st? Or C. Look at the Word of God as a mirror to the behaviors outlined above.

Kurt, you've said that members are suspicious of the elders. Do you wonder why? Some elders have said this is really confusing. Will you look through the smoke and confusion to see the light of Christ? This is only a partial list of the ways we personally have been treated by the elders. I will not participate in your impression management email to the congregation unless you as a council repent for how you've treated us, as a chair repent for how you have led this council regarding these matters, as individual elders repent for your sins. Repent and believe. Walk in the light.

Upcoming Motion for April 2021 QSM

[Steve]



We will work with _____ to craft a 2 part motion that is in order and says something along the following:

I move that Bethlehem Baptist Church commission an independent investigation into any and all grievances or concerns that were brought to elders, in regards to any BBC elder, between January 2019 through the present and to investigate the church's process for handling members' concerns. A subcommittee of lay members and elders shall be formed to identify an independent investigator such as XXXXXXXX or XXXXXXXX. At the conclusion of the investigation a report shall be presented to the members of Bethlehem. In order to contract these services, up to \$50,000 be added to the 2021 budget for these services.

As a point of reference, \$50k is 0.5% of our \$10.2M 2021 approved budget.

_____ offered us three options for members to respond when they believe that a grievance hasn't been handled according to the bylaws.

1. We asked _____ if it would be out of order to ask for an independent investigation. It is not, but would take a two part motion. One: move for the independent investigation. Two: seek additional funding from the church by vote when funds outside the approved budget are needed.
2. Form a sub-committee of lay members and/or elders to look into how the grievances were handled. Because the elders' thorough investigation happened in executive session, it is unlikely that lay members will have access to any details from the 3/16/21 extra elder meeting.
3. Form a sub-committee of lay members and/or elders to look into changing the bylaws regarding how grievances are handled. This would only impact future grievances. This would not rectify the situation we are currently in. Furthermore, that will not lead to Truth and Transparency, nor Approachability and Accountability for our church.

Questions

- If all elders agreed, as Tom Lutz said, on Jan 31 that there would be no campus specific conversations about the Statement of Separation Motion, nor about the episode, why is it permissible for BCS to discuss it A. as professors to their students, B. as faculty and staff, C. with lay members of the church at BCS who are students and/or faculty?
- Jan 31 QSM attendees who received Andy's email on February 10th were supposed to read the email and understand what Andy didn't intend. Why then did Andy write a 4 page paper dated Feb 7th, the day after the elder summit and then share that 4 page paper with all BCS faculty and staff stating what he really intended? Why was that permissible without repercussions?
- When that 4 page letter was given to the DT elders, why did some elders co-opt it as further fodder for why we were wrong in bringing the motion, and share those reasons with other lay members, STILL without having had a single conversation with us personally about the motion or our intentions or meaning of the motions?
- Why was there no reproof for Andy speaking disparagingly of us to students and to faculty at BCS? Both instances were immediately addressed with concerns by _____ and by _____. 6-7 faculty or staff emailed _____ back to say they agreed with him. What consequences were put in place for Andy's behavior that concerned a colleague and a student who is a fellow elder?
- Why were _____ and _____ not permitted to attend the meeting for reconciliation between Andy and us?
- Why was _____ originally not permitted to attend the meeting with _____ and those who brought a grievance? Why was _____ given a gag order and not permitted to speak during the meeting? **See above.**
- If elders have 2 different understandings of a confidential and/or elder privileged conversation between an elder and a lay member, why is that information permitted to be spread without fact checking first?
- Are elder privileged conversations about lay members able to be shared with other lay members without the parties involved in the conversation present to share their firsthand account?
- Who shared Daniel's addendum? Who shared our grievances with lay members? Who told others that grievances had been filed and to submit a character testimony by Friday at 5 p.m?
- Since this grievance process is unprecedented, what church grievance experts were consulted in deciding the process you would take?

- has asked multiple times for permission to send a response email to Andy's email. He has been denied every request and hasn't sent one because he doesn't want to be "insubordinate." Andy has been asked at least twice to resend an email and he has refused both times. How is that not insubordination?
- What attempts were made to identify and to eliminate any assumptions, of us or any member who aired a grievance, that were made through the process?
- Kurt led a member of the congregation to believe that he didn't want another email sent after Andy's because he didn't "want to throw Andy under the bus." What accountability will there be for Kurt leading a member to believe that Andy wanted to resend an email to the QSM attendees but that Kurt didn't permit it, when the agreement was with 8 elders that Kurt would ask Andy to resend the email and Kurt would have veto power over Andy's second email? Where is the accountability for Kurt leading a member of the congregation to believe that he wouldn't permit Andy to send another email after all DT elders agreed that Andy should be asked to resend an email co-authored by the 3 campus pastors? Pastors were told Andy refused to write both emails.
- Kurt and Steven Lee have both said that Andy has been and is being held accountable. Steven Lee said during the first week of February that Andy hadn't sinned. Rather, he used unwise words. Andy himself has said that he hasn't sinned at all. What specific standards did Andy not meet that he needs to be held accountable to? What specific ways is Andy being held accountable? Ken Currie said that he trusts the N Campus pastors who have had some hard conversations with Andy? What fruit have you seen that bears with repentance? What fruit has the congregation seen that bears with repentance? What reproof or correction has the congregation seen that aligns with accountability?
- When grievances are "laughable" and dismissed without having read or heard them all, and are hidden from other elders, what actions are going to be taken to remedy those sins of omission and/or partiality?
- Why is this still considered a conflict between Andy and us when he has talked about us to far more people than we have? Why is this still being considered an irreconcilable difference between the three of us when the other church members who have continued to express concerns about this situation? On February 10th, Andy apologized to elders "for complicating your already full shepherding ministries." Have your full shepherding ministries become any less complicated since Feb 10th when Andy's email went to QSM attendees?
- How many elders talk about members of the congregation with uncharitable judgements, assumptions and false accusations? **How many elders have these types of conversations with lay members about other members? Why is this permissible and held unaccountable?**