

mars hill church

a miracle of
JESUS



A letter from Pastor Mark Driscoll
November 8, 2007

Dear Mars Hill Church Members,

I grew up in Seattle not knowing Jesus. Thankfully, Jesus saved me when I was nineteen years of age while a college freshman. Shortly thereafter He led me to my first church, where a humble and godly pastor was used of God to change my life by teaching me about Jesus from the Bible. While attending my first men's retreat with that church, God spoke to me for the first time in my life. He told me to marry Grace, preach the Bible, train men, and plant churches. It was then, at the age of nineteen, that I began preparing to devote my life to obeying His call for me.

I studied speech in my undergraduate work to prepare for preaching. I joined as many as six Bible studies a quarter to learn Scripture. I began reading nearly a book a day, which continued for many years. I married Grace while still in college. In addition, I began recruiting college friends to one day be part of the core group for Mars Hill Church, which I intended to see planted in Seattle. Following graduation from college, Grace and I moved back to Seattle where we got jobs and started settling in as a broke young couple trying to figure out how and where to plant Mars Hill Church.

By the age of twenty-four we were gathering the core group for the church plant while I was working part-time at Antioch Bible Church and a Christian bookstore that was open in Greenwood at the time. Joining me in the plant were two godly men named Mike Gunn and Lief Moi who were very much devoted to the work and, although young and inexperienced, I praised God for the support of those men who remain friends to this day by God's grace.

At the age of twenty-five I had the privilege of preaching the opening sermon at Mars Hill Church and I have remained the primary preaching pastor ever since. I have learned a lot over the years. Much of that learning has been through mistakes, failure, and pain. The early years of the church, chronicled in my book *Confessions*, were very difficult in every way. In more recent years, our fast growth has been a wonderful blessing but also fraught with difficulties.

For me personally, everything culminated at the end of 2006. Despite rapid growth, the church was not healthy and neither was I. My workload was simply overwhelming. I was preaching five times a Sunday, the senior leader in Mars Hill responsible to some degree for literally everything in the church, president of the Acts 29 Church Planting Network which had exploded, president of The Resurgence, an author writing books, a conference speaker traveling, a media representative doing interviews, a student attending graduate school, a father with five young children, and a husband to a wife whom I have adored since the first day I met her and needed my focus more than ever. I was working far too many hours and neglecting my own physical and spiritual well-being, and then I hit the proverbial wall. For many weeks I simply could not sleep more than two or three hours a night. I had been running off of adrenaline for so many years that my adrenal glands fatigued and the stress of my responsibilities caused me to be stuck "on" physically and unable to rest or sleep. After a few months I had black circles under my eyes, was seeing a fog, and was constantly beyond exhausted.

Nonetheless, the demands on me continued to grow as the church grew. We added more campuses, gathered more critics, saw more media attention, planted more churches, purchased more real estate, raised more money, and hired more staff. It was at this time that I seriously pondered leaving Mars Hill Church for the first time ever. I still loved our Jesus, loved our mission, loved our city, and loved our people. However, I sunk into a deep season of despair as I considered spending the rest of my life serving at Mars Hill Church. I simply could not fathom living the rest of my life with the pace of ministry and amount of responsibility that was on me. Furthermore, the relational demands of the church and its leaders depleted me entirely. In short, I had lost my joy and wanted to lose my job before I lost my life. Tucking my children in bed at

night became a deeply sorrowful experience for me; I truly feared I would either die early from a heart attack or burn out and be left unable to best care for my children in the coming years. I have met many pastors who have simply crossed the line of burnout and never returned to health and sanity and that was my frightful but seemingly inevitable future.

One of the problems was that Mars Hill had essentially outgrown the wisdom of our team and needed outside counsel. The church had grown so fast that some of our elders and other leaders were simply falling behind and having trouble keeping up, which was understandable. To make matters worse, there was a growing disrespect among some elders who were jockeying for and abusing power. The illusion of unity our eldership had maintained over the years was kept in part by my tolerating some men who demanded more power, pay, control, and voice than their performance, character, or giftedness merited. While this was a very short list of men, as elders they had enough power to make life truly painful.

At the same time I began receiving other lucrative job offers that would allow me to study, preach, and write without all of the administrative duties and burdens for which I am not sufficiently gifted to be responsible for. For the first time in my life, the thought of leaving Mars Hill sounded very relieving. Since I had given ten years of my life to the church and love the people desperately, it was obvious to me that something was deeply wrong that such offers would even be intriguing.

So, I began pursuing counsel from godly men outside the church that I respected. I spoke with Tim Keller about the difficulties of an urban church, John Piper about how to sustain longevity in the ministry, C. J. Mahaney about bitterness that had grown in me against some elders of Mars Hill and my need to grow in humility, D. A. Carson about how to best study so as to become an even better Bible teacher and writer, Gerry Breshears about how to best train other men for ministry to share the load, Pastor Larry Osborne about how to best architect a multi-campus church, and Pastors Craig Groeschel and Ed Young Jr. about how to lead a church of thousands and possibly tens of thousands. On top of that, I pursued counsel from a Christian doctor regarding my health and what needed to change in my diet, exercise, and schedule. In short, I sought wise outside counsel regarding if I should stay at Mars Hill and make changes in my life and our church, or simply move on to another church and start over.

The consensus was that Mars Hill was poorly architected to be a multi-campus, multi-elder, multi-thousand person church. My administrative gifts had simply reached their capacity and the church needed to be re-organized so that campuses could be led by elder teams to ensure that our people were best cared for, our doctrine best taught, and our mission best led. This meant that I needed to give up a great deal of power and trust other elders, deacons, and members to care for the church with the same passionate affection that I have for our people.

To begin this process I had to go first and divest myself of a great deal of power. In the history of the church I have held the three positions of greatest authority. Legally, I was the president of Mars Hill Church the organization. Practically, I was the preaching pastor and primary voice of Mars Hill Church. Administratively, I was the president of the elder board and highest authority on the staff. So, I resigned as the legal president, resigned as the president of the elder board, and resigned as the highest authority over the staff. I have retained the position of primary preaching pastor but have also started a preaching cadre to train many other elders in preaching so as to begin sharing that load roughly twelve times a year with other gifted men.

Having shared power, I was then able to establish a new Executive Elder board to architect the future of Mars Hill. I remained one of the men on that team to help lead the church but came under Pastor Jamie Munson, the team leader. I simply did not have the giftedness or time to architect something as complex as our church, which intended to grow to multiple campuses, possibly even stretching out of state or out of country. Yet, I wanted to ensure that our church remained theologically precise and committed to not just growing but also caring for our people. So, the new Executive Elder team sought outside counsel from bigger churches that we respect. At this time, Pastor Tim Beltz also became a valuable asset thanks to his many years of nonprofit

management experience for ministries much larger and more complex than ours, along with Scott Thomas who had pastored at many other churches, and Pastor Bubba Jennings whose leadership and management gifts would allow the Ballard campus to become a center of excellence and equipping center for new campus launches.

The newly formed Executive Elder team began working on proposed new bylaws that would serve as the architecting document for a better Mars Hill. The big issue was empowering our campus pastors to lead elder teams. This would ensure the best care for the people at each campus by being accessible and able to make decisions quickly. Simply, we could not care for our people across multiple campuses with one large and fast-growing elder team that had to meet to make decisions across campuses many of us had never even attended. So, the bylaws had to be rewritten to break the elders into teams with campus areas of oversight as well as accountability. As an aside, the rewriting of our governing bylaws is something we had done on other occasions throughout the history of Mars Hill, so this was not a new experience.

Sadly, it was during the bylaw rewriting process that two of our elders, who curiously were among the least administratively gifted for that task, chose to fight in a sinful manner in an effort to defend their power and retain legal control of the entire church. This included legal maneuvering involving contacting our attorney, which was a violation of policy, one elder who is no longer with us disobeying clear orders from senior leaders about not sharing sensitive working data with church members until the elders had arrived at a decision, which has caused much dissension, and that same elder accusing Pastor Jamie Munson, who was the then new Lead Pastor of Mars Hill, of being a deceptive liar in an all-elder meeting with elder candidates present, despite having absolutely no evidence or grounds because it was a lie. This was heartbreaking for me since I have seen Pastor Jamie saved in our church, baptized in our church, married in our church, birth four children in our church, and rise up from an intern to the Lead Pastor in our church with great skill and humility that includes surrounding himself with godly gifted older men to complement his gifts.

To make matters worse, this former elder's comments came after my more than one-hour lecture in that meeting based on a twenty-three-page document I gave the elders as a summary report about what I had learned from the other pastors I had met with in addition to months of researching Christian movements. I had just explained the cause of the pains we were experiencing as a leadership team as largely tied to our growing number of elders and campuses, as well as ways that my research indicated men commonly respond by sinfully seeking power, money, preference, control, and information as ways to exercise pride and fight for their interests over the interests of the team, church, and mission of Jesus Christ.

The elder who sinned was followed up with following the meeting by a rebuke from a fellow Executive Elder, but repentance was not forthcoming. To make matters worse, some vocal church members ran to that elder's defense without knowing the facts, made demands upon the elders, acted in a manner that was not unifying or helpful, and even took their grievances public on the Ask Anything comment portion of our main website for my forthcoming preaching series. Of course, this was done under anonymous names to protect their image in the eyes of fellow church members while maligning the elders publicly. Some church members even began accusing the other elders of grabbing power and not caring for the best interests of our people, which is nothing short of a lie and contradictory in every way to the entire process we were undertaking. It broke my heart personally when amidst all of this, a member asked me on behalf of other members if the elders really loved our people. Now having given roughly half my life to planning for and leading Mars Hill Church, the questioning of my love and the love of our elders, some of whom even got saved in our church, for our people was devastating.

Today, I remain deeply grieved by and for one man, but am thrilled that what is best for Jesus and all of Mars Hill has been unanimously approved by our entire elder team because I do love Jesus and the people of Mars Hill. Furthermore, my physical, mental, and spiritual health are at the best levels in all of my life. Now having joy and working in my gifting I am beginning to see

what a dark and bitter place I once was in and deeply grieve having lived there for so long without clearly seeing my need for life change. My wife and I are closer than ever and she is the greatest woman in the world for me. I delight in her, enjoy her, and praise God for the gift that she is. She recently brought me to tears by sweetly saying, "It's nice to have you back," as apparently I had been somewhat gone for many years. Our five children are wonderful blessings. I love being a daddy and am closer to my children with greater joy in them than ever. In short, I was not taking good care of myself and out of love for our church I was willing to kill myself to try and keep up with all that Jesus is doing. But, as always, Jesus has reminded me that He is our Senior Pastor and has godly other pastors whom I need to empower and trust while doing my job well for His glory, my joy, and your good.

The past year has been the most difficult of my entire life. It has been painful to see a few men whom I loved and trained as elders become sinful, proud, divisive, accusatory, mistrusting, power hungry, and unrepentant. It has, however, been absolutely amazing to see all but one of those men humble themselves and give up what is best for them to do what is best for Jesus and our entire church. In that I have seen the power of the gospel, and remain hopeful to eventually see it in the former elder who remains unrepentant but to whom my hand of reconciliation remains extended along with a team of other elders assigned to pursue reconciliation if/when he is willing. Furthermore, sin in my own life has been exposed through this season and I have also benefited from learning to repent of such things as bitterness, unrighteous anger, control, and pride. As a result, I believe we have a pruned elder team that God intends to bear more fruit than ever. This team of battle-tested, humble, and repentant men is now both easy to enjoy and entrust.

Emotionally, I told our Board of Directors recently that I felt like I walked Mars Hill down the aisle and married her off so that she could be best cared for and loved in the next season of her life. I remain her father who loves and cares for her and is vitally involved in her growth and well-being, but now trust the elders to take good care of her thanks in part to a structure that enables her to be loved well. Subsequently, for the first time in my tenure at Mars Hill I am able to work in my area of gifting with men I trust on a mission I believe in with church members I love and a Jesus I worship. That harmony is priceless.

Personally, I want to thank Pastor Jamie along with the other elders who worked so hard to provide answers to the questions that were gathered from our members. Today I write this letter after finishing my studies for my upcoming sermon on Philippians 2:12–30. In God's providence it is incredibly timely. There was a conflict in the that church with two leaders (4:2), which is akin to our recent discipline of two elders. Paul said that the people in the church were "grumbling" against and "questioning" the church leadership that were dealing with the conflict. He tells the church to not nitpick over details, but rather be "blameless" and "innocent" and work for unity so that the world will not think less of Jesus. To remedy things Paul sent a letter to the church he planted and cared for, which prompted me to write this letter to you.

In that letter, Paul commends Timothy as a good leader, which reminds me of Pastor Jamie. Timothy was a young man saved under Paul's ministry and personally trained by Paul, much like Pastor Jamie who was saved under my preaching and has been personally invested in by me for a decade. Timothy is commended because his first allegiance is to Jesus and he also both cares for the people and respects the leadership of Paul as the founding pastor, which is exactly the kind of man Pastor Jamie is. Furthermore, Timothy's example shows the two sides of leadership that eldership requires. Your elders have been dealing with pain caused by one-sided leadership by some only caring for the people but not respecting fellow pastors. Some translations also say that Paul and Timothy were "like-minded" in their philosophy of ministry, which curiously enough is the root of all of our conflict recently and led to what Paul called "grumbling" and "questioning." In light of that, I want to thank Pastor Jamie and the other elders who put so much time into this document as they love you and Jesus and are hoping to quiet any "grumbling" and "questioning" by being open and truthful. In Philippians 2:12–30 Paul also lifts up Epaphroditus as a good example of a faithful church member who gives and serves generously. My prayer is that you would be an Epaphroditus for us.

Lastly, I felt it was important to write this preface to our lengthy document so that you would understand what has transpired behind the scenes and in my heart over the past year. Had I simply left Mars Hill, the hearts of some elders would have virtually guaranteed crippling division in the church. So, I have stayed to grow in my own repentance and not abandon the work Jesus called me to nearly half my life ago because I love you. Today, I am weary but elated and confident that Jesus who began this work will see it through to completion. I am confident that I will be able to remain with you for the rest of my life serving as my gifts permit. Subsequently, I am rejoicing in what Jesus has done, is doing, and will do both in and through Mars Hill Church.

For Jesus' Fame,
Pastor Mark Driscoll

A letter from Pastor Lief Moi
November 9, 2007

Dear Mars Hill Members,

The following is a brief account and explanation of what has transpired with me and Mars Hill Church over the past few months. I hope this gives comfort and answers to those of you who have been concerned.

In June of this year I was asked to step down from the executive team and the role of campus pastor at Ballard. The primary reason, and I believe a valid one, was that I do not have the administrative skills to run a campus the size of Ballard. Although I agreed with the assessment of my lack of Kingly skills, I felt that I was being removed from a role that God had called me to and as a result I resigned from the elder board. There were many elders who spoke with me and asked me to reconsider, but at the time my heart was hard and I was not interested. After much contemplation, prayer and speaking with Pastor Mark, I asked to be reinstated as an elder and the vote was unanimous with one abstention to reinstate me.

Because of a major role change and the re-org, it was determined that my salary was to be cut by almost 40%. At that time I told Pastor Jamie that I would not be able to stay on full time but would consider a part time position so I could work on other means of providing for my family.

So as of today I am working 20 hours a week in Ballard counseling on Sundays and Wednesday evenings. I need you all to know and I ask your forgiveness for times during this process that I have not thought about the gospel first but considered my feelings most important and therefore have sinned. This has been one of the most difficult times of my life but am now looking to the future with my hope in Jesus and trust in the elders of Mars Hill to lead us into what Jesus would have us do and be. And it is this that I would ask you to do as well. These men love Jesus and they love you. We might not always agree on the method but we can always agree on Jesus.

Blessings,

Pastor Lief

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Mars Hill Church - A Miracle of Jesus

“And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.” –John 1:16

God is big and we are little. He is persistent both in His love for us and in His continual blessing poured out on His children. If you are reading this letter, you are a part of a miracle of Jesus, a miracle that no person can take credit for. Mars Hill Church is a product of God's good grace and is built, pruned, and sustained by our Lord Jesus Christ and nothing else. The favor we are experiencing is unique and, to be honest, a coveted experience by many around the world. Thousands of people have met Jesus and had their lives transformed by Him in what can be described as nothing short of a movement by the Holy Spirit. Does that mean we are better, more righteous, or worthy than other churches? No, not at all. It does mean we have been entrusted with much and will be held accountable for much. We are humbled and thankful for the grace that has been shown to us, and we must covenant with each other to never take that grace for granted or grow complacent. The elders of the church are responding to Jesus' leading by making changes within the church to better position ourselves for what is next. The purpose of this document is to further articulate the vision of your elders, and to answer the questions you submitted on the Ask Your Elders Anything forum.

Boasting in Jesus

*“For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption. Therefore, as it is written, ‘Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.’”
–1 Corinthians 1:26–31*

This passage accurately describes all of us. Without Jesus we are lost, unwise, without power, and of ignoble birth; we are foolish, weak, low, and despised. We have no room to boast in ourselves and what we have accomplished, only room to boast in the Lord and what He has accomplished. The blessings we have experienced as a church should lead us all to constant boasting in Jesus.

A faithful response

“Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.” –Luke 12:48

Much has been given to us as a church, not by right, but by an act of God's grace to us. Therefore, what we have is not ours to sit back and enjoy as if we have earned it. Rather, what we have is ours to steward; God has entrusted us with much, and therefore much is expected of us. God needs nothing from us (Acts 17:25), yet He chooses to love us, empower us, and use us as part of His plan to save many from their sin. What He has given us and blessed us with over the last eleven years could just as easily be taken away. Therefore, we must continually respond through humility and thanksgiving to His grace. We must continually repent of our sin and the ways that our pride and selfishness stand in the way of Jesus' mission.

Sprinting for years

Mars Hill Church is eleven years old, and in many ways the leaders and members who have participated in the journey have been on an eleven-year sprint. As Pastor Mark put it recently, we are like a kite caught in a hurricane. We continue to feel a sense of urgency in proclaiming the Gospel, and we desire to see everyone in the church settle into a marathon pace: steady and

consistent in our love for Jesus, using our gifts but not burning them out beyond all usefulness. The desire to persevere and finish well has led to a recent reorganization: a distribution of authority and responsibilities amongst the elders of the church so that we can more effectively lead and shepherd the body of Mars Hill.

The elders of Mars Hill Church

“Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them. We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things.”—Hebrews 13:7–18

As your elders/pastors we take this passage to heart knowing that we must lead the church by following Jesus faithfully and living our lives in such a way that they can be imitated by the rest of the church. We also know that not only are we accountable to Jesus for our own lives, but we must also give an account for those who are under our care. We are far from perfect and have made many mistakes, but we do desire to act honorably in all things.

Our current circumstances

“Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel...”—Philippians 1:27

The last month has been very heavy for some people in our church. Leadership changes have taken place, new campuses have launched, systems have been modified, and policies have been altered to facilitate the mission of Jesus. In short, we are in the process of re-architecting many aspects of the church which will take several more months to complete. The elders have spent countless additional hours working hard to make these changes, and we want to fully communicate them to the members of the church by articulating the vision clearly and answering your questions so that we can move forward together, unified as one body for the good of the Gospel. We have compiled your questions regarding recent elder discipline, multiple campuses, bylaws, finances, membership, eldership structure, the pulpit, the ground war, church planting, and a few others. This is a lengthy document, but important for the members as it answers many important questions regarding our future as a church.

Re-planting Mars Hill Church

Call it what you want—re-group, re-organize, re-launch, re-define, re-distribute, re-plant—it is a continual process. The church is a living, breathing organism that grows and changes. The reformers called it *semper reformanda*, always reforming. What must always stay the same is the headship and authority of Jesus Christ and His Word. Through this what must change: our methods, our systems, our organization, and our strategy. The church changes, the world changes, the technology changes, the leaders change, the ministries change, and that’s more than okay. In fact, change is actually healthy because the church is a living organism and as such

it should grow and change. And, that change must be lead by continually asking the question, "How can we be more faithful in stewarding what Jesus has entrusted to us?"

In this season where we're all renewing our commitment to Jesus and His mission, we are asking every member to consider these questions. We encourage you to discuss them with your family, your friends, and your Community Group.

Are you following and growing in Jesus?

Every one of us is in a place of continual need for God's grace, the Holy Spirit's guidance and conviction of sin, and Jesus' Lordship and atonement of our sins through His death, burial, and resurrection. Jesus is alive today, leading, loving, and caring for His Church.

Are you connected to a campus?

It used to be pretty easy to answer the question, "Where is your church located?" For many years, anyone at Mars Hill could simply respond, "Ballard." But now the answer is far more complicated; we have expanded to six campuses in the last two years. As each campus spreads out and establishes its local mission, we want everyone, as much as possible, to choose a campus. This means plugging in and supporting the work of Jesus and the local campus pastors as they lead and establish the local mission of Jesus.

Are you investing in the transformation of others?

Mars Hill Church is committed to building disciples of Jesus. Our primary model for discipleship building is Jesus and how He built disciples. Jesus spent most of His time with a small group of people, and He invested in them and their transformation. Our primary outlet for discipleship building is our Community Groups. These groups are the place where people are connected with each other and cared for through Jesus-centered Gospel partnerships. In Community Groups, friendships are built, the Bible is studied, prayer for each other takes place, and people are connected on mission together to see more lives transformed.

Are you being a missionary?

Jesus has sent us into the world to be His ambassadors of His redemptive love and truth to those around us. Regardless of your marital status, your occupation, your age, or where you live, Jesus can use you in the transformation of others. By loving Jesus and walking faithfully with Him, He gives us the desire to share our lives and our hope with others. This is a great privilege and should bring us great joy, as we are used in the redemptive life-changing process of others.

Are you using your God-given gifts and talents?

God has richly blessed us and empowered us as His children, and we have the joyful right and responsibility to use our gifts for His service and Kingdom. Wherever you are called to serve, whether you are a seasoned veteran of taking out the trash or a novice web designer, your time and service are needed. Check with the leadership of your campus and see what you can do to help.

Are you giving sacrificially of your finances?

Mars Hill Church is 100 percent supported by the financial gifts and sacrifices of its body. If this is your church, then you need to do your part to support the mission financially. The Bible calls us to give cheerfully, sacrificially, and regularly so that more people can come to know Jesus and experience life transformation. We need everyone to do their part. Jesus identified money as a potential idol. And, the Apostle Paul urged the members of the church to give as an act of grace, similar to the grace Jesus gives to us as our Savior.

Are you praying for your church and its mission?

Everything we do should be about seeing people come to know Jesus. In the Puget Sound region the vast majority of people do not worship Jesus and are living their lives absent of Him; our mission field is ripe with opportunity to see lives transformed. We're asking everyone to commit to regularly praying for Mars Hill and the mission that Jesus has given us, which is to live for Him as

a city with within the city: knowing culture, loving people, and seeing lives transformed to live for Him.

Clarifying the Mission and Vision

This is a major mission-clarifying season for the whole church. We are asking every member to prayerfully consider the questions above and take this time to renew their commitment to Jesus and His church. We care deeply for the members of this church and desire for you to actively participate in what Jesus is doing through our body. As we re-plant and implement necessary changes, we know that some will make the decision that Mars Hill is no longer their church home. Whether you remain at Mars Hill or not, we want you to be involved with a local church that loves Jesus and preaches His word. If you do plan to move on from Mars Hill, we ask that you please notify us so that we can pray for you and bless you wherever Jesus calls you.

The elders are working hard to lead and shepherd this church faithfully in response to the grace we have received. We are all a bit weary, and more than ever we must be dependant on Jesus' empowering grace to press on. Despite the current challenges, the elders are excited about the future direction of the church and are better positioned to care for you and those Jesus is calling us to reach. We've compiled nearly 150 pages of vision, resources, and answers to your questions. We intend to continue the practice of communicating the truth to our members regardless of the messiness of the situation. Lastly, as you read you will notice that the document has not been professionally edited as our aim was to get the answers out as quickly as possible regarding family matters so please overlook the areas which could have benefited from a thorough editing.

For Jesus' Fame,

The Elders of Mars Hill Church

Dear Member of Mars Hill Church,

The following document and its appendixes are intended to speak to internal family matters at our church. They contain much information that would not be appropriate to distribute to those outside of our church membership. So, we entrust them to your care for your benefit and ask that you not distribute them beyond the membership of Mars Hill Church.

THE MISSION OF MARS HILL CHURCH
responses submitted by Pastor Jamie Munson

Q: Where does Mars Hill see itself in five and ten years from now?

A: That's a great question. The one thing we can say for sure is that we want to be worshipping Jesus and living faithfully for Him. That means those that call Mars Hill home now are growing in their relationship with Jesus and those that we have yet to reach will begin to worship Jesus. If we tried to answer this question five years ago, we would have never predicted the specifics of where we are today. We love Jesus, we seek to follow Him and wherever He leads. As of right now the elders feel deeply convicted that there are more people Jesus wants us to reach and we plan to facilitate this by planting new campuses, new churches and establishing more community groups.

Q: "Re-plant" Mars Hill? That's the first I've heard we were "re-planting". Is that just a reference to the reorganization? Re-planting sounds much more involved than re-organization. This is unsettling. What does this mean?

A: This was addressed in the opening letter of this document. Churches are not intended to stay stationary in their existence. They grow and blossom, they change, they mature and develop, weeds are pulled, branches are pruned, new seed is scattered and some churches even close and all of these are under the authority and headship of Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 4, John 15, 1 Peter 5). We will continually evaluate as a church how we can more effectively steward what Jesus has entrusted to us and do whatever is best for the forward progress of the gospel.

MULTIPLE CAMPUSES

responses submitted by Pastor James Harleman

Mars Hill Church – a church with multiple campus congregations

Vision

Mars Hill Church is committed to establishing multiple campuses throughout the Pacific Northwest and beyond as Jesus leads. This involves continually establishing expanding beachheads from which to know the culture of that city, love people in that neighborhood, and see the lives of neighbors and community transformed to live for Jesus. Campuses are essential in our church's "ground war" for gathering, discipling, inviting others to participate with us, and incarnating the communities in which God has called his missionaries to live and breathe.

In Matthew 28, Jesus' words are clear in that the gospel should spread, not be hoarded in a huddle inconvenient to new hearers; he tells Christians to "go". Considering our region's geography, transportation issues, zoning laws, and cost of living, a multi-campus vision strives for that great commission and ensures more people will have the opportunity to hear about Jesus.

Strategy

Mars Hill Church has determined to not allow the size of a building to limit the size of our growth. As we have looked to scripture for the name and inspiration for our church and mission (Acts 17), we also look to Scripture to see how movements expand. In the early days of the church in the New Testament, the apostles' letters were read in various churches as the authors could not possibly travel enough or be in multiple locations simultaneously. Some of these letters were inspired by the Holy Spirit to be scripture; others were heartfelt addresses from Paul and others, often read as a form of long-distance preaching.

Paul traveled through the region of Galatia and the gospel took root there. When he writes his epistle to the Christians there, he writes "to the churches in Galatia", a letter sent to multiple congregations that had sprouted following his missionary journey, unified by the gospel and gathering in different locations for Jesus' fame. It's easy to surmise that distance and gathering size contributed to their regional clustering, with an equal understanding that Jesus' commission was that his gospel spread to all ends of the earth. They were doing their part to glorify His name and magnify His fame.

If the church 2,000 years ago had had access to our present technology, Paul might have considered a video feed in exchange for a written letter. Leveraging the benefits of technology to broadcast unifying preaching to multiple locations (where every other aspect of the Sunday service is live) eliminates the need for one large, centralized building and allows Jesus' church to spread throughout a region, having various locations and incarnations. The multiple-site model reinforces the truth that the church is people and not a place, and wherever God's people gather in Jesus' name, church is happening.

This strategy also creates distributed opportunities for people to better be involved and serve in ministry, and concurrently allows distributed leadership to better know, interact, and lead each congregation with servant hearts like Jesus. It opens leadership opportunities for new elders, worship leaders, children's ministry and others to use their spiritual gifts and natural talents to the full extent of their capacity. This is especially true for emerging leaders who, for example, need to start by leading hundreds of people instead of thousands and greatly benefit from the opportunities a smaller campus provides.

This means building a strong campus model which allows each "front line" of our ground war to be more focused in mission where Jesus has placed them. The lead campus pastor is freed from weekly preaching to focus more on membership, disciple-building, local mission and his flock.

Desired Results

Our desired result is exponential growth, with Mars Hill Campuses spread from greater Seattle throughout the Pacific Northwest and however far God determines we will grow. Within each campus, growth is the desired result, though growth takes multiple forms:

- Growth as **more people meet Jesus.**
- Growth as **more people mature in their walk with Jesus.**
- Growth as **each campus contextualizes and expands the way it ministers to the community** around them.
- Growth as **each congregation becomes self-sustaining and strong enough to send people and resources to start new campuses** or church plants.
- Growth as **Jesus' name is glorified and magnified** by more lips and lives.

What is needed of the members

- Members need to embrace the multi-campus concept and pray humbly about how best each household can truly reach out to neighbors and community. For many, this will mean shifting to attend and support the campus nearest them, abandoning a consumer mindset traveling for a preferred experience.
- Members need to lead by example in their community groups, realigning themselves by campus so that we are truly building intentional relationships with the people we are on mission with, walking throughout the week instead of picking “buffet style” from services, groups, and midweek activities.
- Members need to examine where God has gifted them and come forward humbly for leadership positions needed at new campuses: providing counsel, prayer, teaching, coaching, and administration for growing campuses.
- Members need to plan their finances as if they are church planting cores instead of an attendee at a stereotypical mega-church, looking for ways to sacrifice above and beyond basic giving to truly build a localized movement of expanding missional opportunities.

Prayer

The church needs to pray for the following:

- Pray for the hard work of existing leaders as the systems and resources are molded to make a multi-campus structure a reality.
- Pray for our existing campuses as they send out many leaders and resources.
- Pray for launching campuses (Wedgwood, Eastside, Downtown) and that these early endeavors will teach us many lessons for launching additional campuses in the future.
- Pray for unity as distance, differing size and resources, and less frequent communication can easily create occasions for mistrust and friction.
- Pray that all members will see the opportunities this provides for enhanced community, relationship, and outreach.
- Pray for the campus pastors as each one will take on significantly more accountability, authority and responsibility for the congregation they are overseeing.
- Pray for the people God is already preparing in campus communities – and the communities He has already planned beforehand for us to expand to – to hear and respond to His gospel of grace and become part of our family, the church.

QUESTIONS

Q: Is this one small step from the campuses being jettisoned from Mars Hill Church in the future?

A: In short, no - we are not looking to turn campuses into spin-offs. Mars Hill Church by definition is now multiple congregations meeting in multiple locations. Every location is a campus, including Ballard, and while it is the largest and may seem like a “mother-ship” presently, only Jesus knows which campus will be the largest as we continue to grow and expand. “Jettisoning the campuses” would literally mean no more church body, as EVERY congregation of our body is a campus.

If the intention of the question was driving at what might happen if a campus wanted to “break off from Mars Hill Church”, this is simply not the intention for campuses or a likely outcome. A dissenting campus would have legal obligations to the corporation. Our goal is to create a stable multi-campus environment unified by Jesus, doctrine, distinctives, preaching, and shared missional objectives. In the future a member should be able to transition their membership from one campus to another and expect the same distinctives that mark a Mars Hill congregation. The “clothing” might be different – color, context, various missional expressions – but the core will remain stable and linked by overarching philosophy, systems, and relationship.

However, Mars Hill is equally committed to church planting. In general, the Elders of our church will work in advance to determine if a leader or core group’s passion is for church planting or campus planting early in assessment and development phases, establishing transparency, efficiency, and best planning practices from day one. The only caveat we would allow for is that Jesus is on the throne and we will not hold a system above His will. Someday, if a congregation had discerned a calling to become a separate church, the elders would consider that request and, though unlikely, it is not impossible that it might become a separate entity and part of our Acts 29 church-planting network. This is not likely to happen, but we will not stand in the way of our King.

Q: Is this church committed to trying to keep the multiple campuses under the Mars Hill Church umbrella, or are we all looking at being Mars Hill ‘spin-offs’ some day in the not-so-distant future?

A: To further clarify this frequent question, our combined efforts and goals are focused on uniting all campuses under the MHC umbrella. The truth is that we are not looking, or planning to turn campuses into independent spin-offs. There is precedent for this in our history as one of our founding elders, Mike Gunn, preached a Mars Hill service in South Seattle until it was sent out as a separate church plant. Mars Hill sent people, leaders, dollars, and equipment to help establish what is now Harambee Church. While not part of our plans, we rule nothing like this completely out of the question as God will often surprise us with His direction for His church. However, as stated, the plan we are walking in, through prayer and discernment, is that Mars Hill campuses will all continue to be Mars Hill Church, gathering in various beachheads in the region, unified in mission. We hope this encourages any members who may be concerned with being “disconnected” in some fashion. The intentional connectivity between cross-campus leadership will fortify this and continually reinforce this vision.

Q: Has our elder board carefully and prayerfully considered all of their options before creating independent elder boards?

A: There has been much prayer, and thought, and discussion about this issue... all of which is not finished but remains ongoing. To be clear, each campuses elder team will have many delegated responsibilities and authority but the term “independent” is not accurate. There will still be interdependence, cross-campus accountability, as well as oversight by the Executive Elders and Board of Directors. Each campus team will be accountable to the Board of Directors. Roles and jurisdiction will be defined in a working document over the coming season as a proposal drafted by the campus pastors and submitted for approval by the Board of Directors. The lead Campus Pastors gather together regularly for vision, strategy, and tactical congruence.

Q: Have the Elders researched how other 'mega-churches' make one large elder board work?

A: Mars Hill Elders have had the chance to connect with Elders from other mega and multi-campus churches to see how they run both their operations and their leadership. This is an ongoing relationship; through the Leadership Network, all the campus pastors are heading to a conference in Dallas in November to network with other multi-campus leadership teams. In 2008, Mars Hill Church will actually be the host for one of these conferences. The reality is that most large churches delegate and distribute authority to smaller subsets and teams, and that is precisely what we are continuously working toward as we more fully embrace a multi-campus structure.

Q: As the church is being replanted and each campus will have their own governing body, campus specific ministries and future campus member's site - are there motions in place that will allow/prevent a campus from separating with Mars Hill?

A: Campus Pastors will have their own team of elders with a range of authority and decision-making to lead their flock and lead their people in mission. However church governance lies with the Board of Directors and they gather together with leaders of other campuses to stay united in mission and to rely on the wisdom and discernment of their peers. Notions of separating are unlikely in the way we have structured our meetings and relationships between campuses. In such an unlikely case, a campus leadership team would need to formally propose any such separation. This would not be something a campus would have the independent freedom to simply determine and enact. Our goal is unity in philosophy and general practice, with the exception of contextualized outreach for the community in which each campus is planted. In this paradigm, members can commit to the campus in their neighborhood to more authentically be on mission in their region without concern that they wake one day to find themselves suddenly disconnected from Mars Hill Church.

Q: Doesn't the current form of the by-laws apply only to the executive body and decisions it makes on behalf of the congregation as a whole and not necessarily to individual campuses?

A: The current form of the by-laws does speak to the power of all the elders, which includes every pastor at every campus, as well as the executive body and the board, and ways in which they govern the church body. It does not specify the delegated decision-making of the Campus Pastors but states that the Board will delegate and distribute many of these decisions. This document will be the next major step in our reorganization as mentioned previously.

Q: Does this mean that individual campuses will require their own by-laws as subsidiary organizations in a way comparable to the national and then territorial subdivisions of The Salvation Army, for instance?

A: Each campus is not its own separate or subsidiary organization. All campuses will have a shared document of their decision-making power and policies behind it for everything from discipleship expectations to elder training and member discipline. The Campus Pastors already meet bi-weekly to discuss shared best practices and decision-making. These will culminate in documentation ratified by the Board of Directors so that the similar governance is clearly established and even variances on lesser issues are known.

Q: If the elders at a campus choose to no longer play broadcast sermons and instead use its elders for preaching can they? If so or not so why?

A: This may be the very definition that distinguishes between an Acts 29 Church plant and a Mars Hill Campus. A Campus Pastor and his elder team would not simply be allowed to unplug and switch to live preaching without consultation with the Board and a compelling reason. Most men who feel called to do this would, at the outset, want to pursue church planting with Acts 29 and build a church as a partner in the gospel but not with the Mars Hill title. In a case where a

man manifest an incredible preaching gift, or an unexpected context where the video preaching seemed in some way to impede growth it is likely the Board of Directors would work with the Campus to examine the options and make the best decision to spread the gospel.

Q: What if something happens to Pastor Mark?

A: Pastor Mark is young, in good health, and has committed his life to being a pastor at Mars Hill. Therefore, we hope and pray that God gives him many more years of fruitful ministry. But, if something tragic should happen to him, the distributed site concept is much easier for Mars Hill to maintain than one large room. Because each service and site will have a lead pastor who covers the pulpit there the twelve or so times a year Pastor Mark is out, that pastor could simply take the pulpit there full-time in an emergency. This is much easier to do than replace Pastor Mark with someone who could week-in and week-out preach to thousands and maybe tens of thousands of people in a large stadium-type facility. In addition, Pastor Mark is actively using his gifts as a preacher and teacher to train the campus pastors, elders and Acts 29 pastors in the area of preaching. He meets monthly with this group to invest in and develop their preaching.

Q: Has any thought been given to having regular members meetings (most likely by campus) to allow members to know what's going on and to have open discussion with their pastors as a body about what being 'on mission' with MHC means?

A: This is a fantastic idea, and some Campus Pastors have already tried as they build their core and launch their campus. Going to a multi-campus context allows us to regain some of these opportunities we lost as we grew so large so fast. Accessibility of pastors to church members, and the ability to meet in campus congregations to vision-cast and discuss mission, is one of the great benefits of the campus model and I suspect we will see much more of this in 2008.

Q: What if I have more questions about the multi-campus plans?

A: This is the perfect time to keep in step with the multi-campus vision, and... ask your campus pastor. He or one of his co-laborers is certain to have the information that will help equip you. Members can expect the answers to be congruent across our campuses as we will be developing this plan together - multiple campuses on the same mission for Jesus Christ our Savior.

PULPIT AND PREACHING

responses submitted by Pastor Mark Driscoll

Vision

The vision of the pulpit of Mars Hill Church remains unchanged: to honor the gospel of Jesus Christ by faithfully preaching the Scriptures to as many people as possible.

Strategy

The Bible simply tells us to “preach the Word” (2 Timothy 4:2) and does not tell us exactly how this should be done. Upon occasion we do see Jesus preaching very long sermons (Matthew 15:29–31), and Paul as well (Acts 20:7–11), but we do not have the transcripts of their sermons to see exactly what was said or how their arguments were arranged. Therefore, how we “preach the Word” methodologically has many faithful options that we have used and will continue to use according to what best serves the principle that we faithfully “preach the Word.” These methods include expository preaching, textual preaching, and topical preaching.

Expository preaching – going through a book of the Bible verse by verse. The Bible never commands, illustrates, models, or even mentions this method, which means that while it is a good method, it is in no way the only method of faithful preaching. Sadly, some people, without any biblical grounding, have made this kind of preaching a sort of legalism, as if it alone is the only faithful method. Furthermore, some books of the Bible (e.g., Proverbs) would be unfaithfully preached and ruined through expositional preaching, as they were never meant to be slavishly forced into such a model of preaching. Therefore, while we tend to primarily use the method of expository preaching, we must always keep in mind the truth that there are many methods by which Scripture can be faithfully preached. Still, we find many reasons that motivate our use of expository preaching, including the following:

- Because all Scripture is God-breathed and for our benefit, there is not a page of Scripture that is not helpful to our faith, so we should examine it all (2 Timothy 3:16–17).
- From church history we do know that influential preachers such as Justin Martyr preached expository sermons that went through books of the Bible line by line.
- It allows non-Christians and new Christians to follow along more easily than if the preaching jumps around the Bible.
- It doesn’t allow the preacher to avoid difficult texts and issues.
- It helps teach the congregation to study the Bible for themselves.
- It helps show the importance of context in Scripture.
- It helps people read and study along with the sermons each week.
- It makes it easier for people to refer back to what they have learned in Scripture.
- It forces the authority to reside in the text and not the teacher.

Textual preaching – preaching on one section of Scripture without preaching it in the middle of the entire book as is done with expository preaching. Examples would include a series on the “I AM” statements of Jesus from John’s gospel, a series on songs of the incarnation sung in Luke’s gospel at the birth of Jesus, or a series on elder qualifications from 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Some practical reasons also make this method popular:

- It shows the consistency of Scripture by linking sections together.
- It allows the preacher with a revolving church to hit the highlights of central truths every year.
- It allows the preacher to work in smaller chunks of four to eight weeks, providing flexibility to deal with issues as they arise.

- It allows the preacher to work around the Christian calendar with mini-series on the incarnation around Christmas, crucifixion in the dark winter months, and resurrection around Easter.

Topical preaching – using several texts from one or more books of the Bible or biblical authors to speak on an issue from many places in the Bible. Examples would include a series I did on the atonement called “Christ on the Cross,” and another I did called “Vintage Jesus.” Scriptures were pulled from multiple places in the Bible for each sermon. While we do not have the full transcripts of the sermons preached in the Bible, the portions we do have tend to show that topical teaching was common. Some practical reasons this method are favorable include:

- The ability to trace a theme through multiple books of the Bible, thereby showing the consistency of Scripture.
- The ability to address most thoroughly questions and controversies that arise.
- The ability to select the most appropriate verses from Scripture on a given topic.

In conclusion, the preaching at Mars Hill has always used each of these faithful methods and will continue to do so. We will likely continue to use expository preaching as our most often used method. Some of the history of our preaching at Mars Hill will help to illustrate this point.

Expository preaching (all by Pastor Mark Driscoll, unless otherwise noted)

- Genesis
- Exodus
- Ruth
- Nehemiah
- Proverbs
- Ecclesiastes
- Song of Songs
- Obadiah
- Jonah
- Habakkuk
- John
- Romans
- 1 Corinthians
- Galatians
- Ephesians
- Philippians
- Colossians (Pastor Steve Tompkins)
- 1 Timothy
- 2 Timothy
- Titus (multiple Mars Hill pastors)
- 1–3 John
- Jude (multiple Mars Hill pastors)

Textual preaching

- A series that walked through nearly every book of the Old Testament over the course of many months examining each messianic prophecy about Jesus Christ.
- The heavenly scenes of the book of Revelation in a series on worship.
- The first two chapters of Luke as a holiday series around Christmas.

Topical preaching

- A short series on spiritual disciplines
- Vintage Jesus
- Christ on the Cross
- A series on marriage
- A series on spiritual warfare

Desired result

The goals of preaching are to glorify God, aid Christians in their maturation, and aid non-Christians in becoming Christians.

Prayer

The preaching calendar has become very complicated and prayer for wisdom regarding how to best organize the preaching schedule according to the following variables is appreciated.

- How can we help both those who have been with us mature and also keep reaching the many non-Christians and new people that God brings us?
- How can our preaching best serve those who are with us only for a year or two until they leave Seattle to move elsewhere?
- How can we organize the preaching schedule so as to not only serve those campuses that are open, but those that are also opening and consequently are not best served by coming into a preaching series that is already underway?
- How can we best serve what is soon to be nearly twenty services on six campuses?
- How can we be sensitive to also addressing issues related to major holidays such as the birth and resurrection of Jesus and still maintain momentum in a preaching series?
- How does my travel, writing, and vacation schedule synchronize with the preaching schedule and various books and series?
- How can we best serve what could easily be even more services and campuses in the coming years?
- In light of our fast growth as the twenty-third fastest-growing church in America, how can we best get so many new people up to speed each year on core beliefs that older church members have already been taught?
- How can we also serve the listening audience online, which is much bigger than our Sunday church attendance and includes a lot of missionaries, pastors, and other Christian leaders who are being blessed by our preaching ministry, while also faithfully serving our own church?

QUESTIONS

Q: Will we continue to practice expository preaching? It seems with the ask anything series followed by another topical series followed by summer that we are looking at over half of 2008 without an expository series.

A: We have not had a topical series since "Vintage Jesus" in the fall of 2006. The nine week "Ask Anything" series will take us from January to Easter of 2008. Then, after Easter, the plan at present is for me to preach a completely edited and revised version of the Gospel Class content. I am working with Dr. Gerry Breshears, who is the head of theology at Western Seminary, to format the series as an overview of the storyline of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. The hope is that people will see how the entire Bible fits together and which major themes are introduced at various places along the process of progressive revelation throughout redemptive history. This series will then allow those who attend on Sunday to become members. Following the series, the content will be published as a book with Crossway and we will also have the lectures online. That will allow anyone to begin the process of church membership at any time by reading the book and watching the lectures. This can be done alone or in a community group format. The campus leadership will follow up with the members-to-be so they can ask questions, be interviewed, and get plugged in. This will allow more people to become members at Mars Hill. It will also give the campus pastors the main room at their campuses back for Wednesday night programming to use as they desire. This would include allowing them to have a midweek service at which they would preach live to grow in their gifting and serve their people. The campus pastors also have the freedom to also continue a Gospel Class live if they so choose.

Q: Why have the elders chosen to do the Ask Anything series instead of preaching through the Bible? I understand answering questions our community has, but wouldn't they eventually be answered anyways just by simply preaching through the Word? I am uneasy about this upcoming series because it seems far from the Gospel and focused on Mark.

A: I actually got this idea from the Bible. In 1 Corinthians, Paul was answering a number of questions he had received. As I was preaching through 1 Corinthians, I thought it might be interesting to see what some of the big questions and issues are in our own day. In answering the questions I will preach through the Word, as I always have, and do so with a textual or topical method as mentioned above. The sermons will focus on the Gospel of Jesus Christ as that is always my aim. But, with the increased buzz that comes from the viral marketing, now even more people will be encouraged to listen to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I do believe the entire series is faithful to 1 Corinthians 9:22–23 where Paul says, "I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings." So, we are using the online means that many use for the sake of the gospel to reach as many people as possible with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Q: Can we make requests for books of the Bible to go through? I've been waiting for us to go through Luke ever since Pastor Mark mentioned we might a few years ago and ever since he preached his sermon on christus exemplar.

A: I don't mind recommendations, but as I said above, juggling all the complexities of the preaching schedule makes it difficult. I have been looking forward to Luke; when it fits I do intend to preach that book and am personally very excited to as I have not preached a gospel since John. My preliminary studies have begun and with a book of that length it takes a lot of time to prepare well.

Q: Can we go through one of the Major Prophets? My personal vote is for Isaiah because the promise of Christ is so much clearer in it and there's so much great poetry in it.

A: My answer would be the same as above. But, with sixty-six chapters covering more than forty years and the reign of multiple kings, it will take many years to get ready to preach that book. For

example, it took me nearly ten years of study on the side to get ready for 1 Corinthians and Genesis as they have some very complex issues to wrestle through. Isaiah would require even more focused time and one day by God's grace I pray I am up to the task of preaching it well.

Q: The preaching time from the word seems to be getting shorter, we want more of the bible, straight through so that the humans find it harder to get in God's way.

A: On Sundays I am awake for twenty-one hours and spend five to six of those hours preaching. I go over my allotted time every week and jam up the parking and kids' ministry at every campus. I'm not sure who the "we" you speak of is, but perhaps you should also study the Bible for yourself as I try and feed our people well but also encourage them to feed themselves.

Q: Could we do less topical and more biblical teaching? That particular question has been gnawing on me for a while now, and I have been downloading Genesis and listening to such meaty preaching and it was amazing how Mark would bring it back to Jesus constantly. I feel that topical sermons do have their place but it seems like every other church uses topical preaching as their bread and butter and we have always been more about pure scripture.

A: The answer to this question is found in the above section where I explain the difference between principle and method in the strategy section. Since it will have been well over a year between topical series, we still have our "bread and butter" in expository preaching.

Q: Is it a good idea to allow people to vote on what Mark preaches? To be honest, it just seems more like a fun trendy thing to do when it would seem wiser to pray and meditate and listen to what the Holy Spirit would lead our pastors to preach.

A: The assumption here is that I did not pray and listen to the Holy Spirit. I trust God to give me the topics He wants me to preach and then I will preach them. We've never done this before, may never do it again, and until it actually occurs it seems a bit premature to reject it. Lastly, fun and trendy is not always bad as long as it points to Jesus. For example, letting members post questions like this is fun for them and trendy too.

Q: Is Mars Hill moving away from pure expository preaching?

A: We have never been a purely expository preaching church since we seek to avoid legalisms that the Bible does not prescribe, as I mentioned above. While I do prefer expository preaching and hope to preach every book of the Bible before I die, I intend to continue preaching in the various three methods that I mentioned above. Lastly, sometimes a slavish service to expository preaching can be quite odd. One example is a preacher I know who was so devoted to expository preaching that one year his Easter sermon was on whether or not the sin of Onan in Genesis was masturbation, which made for a very odd celebration of Jesus' resurrection.

Q: Is the "air war" and the vision of reaching beyond the local congregation a distraction from the teaching and growth that needs to happen first in the local body at MH?

A: I am not sure I understand the point of this question. I preach and the campus pastors have an opportunity to open the service, close the service, and call people to respond to Jesus through such things as repentance, communion, song, giving, etc. As our campuses spread and more people tune in online from around the world, so long as the campus pastors are in place they can contextualize the sermon in a loving, pastoral manner for our campuses. The "air war" is already global and has been for many years. It does not change what we do, but rather allows what we do to reach more people and live longer thanks to the internet.

Q: Will we get to hear Pastor Lief preach again some time soon? I haven't heard him preach since the Mother's Day sermon and while I can understand why that sermon got pulled I hope he gets to preach some more in the future if he's in better health (I read the prayer request that said

he was in bad shape and his wife was not in good health, either). My hope is that we get to hear at least a little preaching from all our pastors at some point. I haven't heard a sermon from Pastor Tim Smith in a while or from Pastor Bubba at all and Pastor Bill's sermons on Jude were fantastic.

A: First, please do pray for the health of my friend and brother Pastor Lief. He has had very painful back problems for many years and he still suffers from constant pain. Second, I have a monthly preaching cadre where multiple Mars Hill pastors, along with potential elders, potential church planters, and some Acts 29 church planters, are trained in preaching. My hope is to raise up a great number of godly and gifted Bible preachers for our church and other churches. Third, not all our pastors can, will, or should preach, just as not all our pastors should lead worship and no one wants to hear me sing. Each pastor on our team works in his area of gifting, and not everyone is gifted in preaching. Yet I do agree that we have some very good preachers who are getting even better. Furthermore, I am taking roughly twelve weeks off a year for vacation, writing, study, conference speaking, and one annual international preaching tour. This will allow many men to preach what is roughly two hundred sermons a year and growing as we add services and campuses. Having more preachers allows our pastors to teach large classes, conferences, retreats, midweek services, and other events at our campuses, so there is plenty of need for many good preachers, which is why I am investing in helping to train them.

Q: Since the pastors have covenanted to provide teaching that will span the whole counsel of God's word can we get sermons from the Psalms and the major prophets? In the eight years I have been at Mars Hill I have not heard us go through these great parts of the biblical literature and I pray we can do so some time in the next few years.

Q: Especially since Pastor Mark has said from the pulpit that Mars Hill sucks at singing I feel at liberty to say that based on the membership covenant the pastors have not yet fulfilled their obligation to preach through the whole of God's word by teaching from the Psalms and I look forward to hearing sermons from the Psalms in the future. If we really suck at singing and worship why haven't the pastors gone to the Scripture God has provided that can most help us as a church in an area of weakness?

A: This answer will serve to address the two questions listed above. First, I have purchased roughly three dozen books and commentaries on the Psalms and have begun slowly studying the entire book so as to one day be ready to preach it. A 150-chapter book is a wonderful and daunting task. Second, when I am ready, by God's grace, I intend to preach the Psalms, but that is not yet and will take some time. Third, Pastor Tim Smith is also devoting considerable time to studying the Psalms. In fact, his department is studying a Psalm a week together and his hope according to some of our conversations is to put more Psalms to music and use his preaching times to preach through portions of the Psalms that our musicians are studying together. Fourth, the Psalms are wonderful but so are the heavenly scenes in Revelation that reveal Jesus being worshiped in all His glory and I did do a series on the subject of worship and singing there. Fifth, regarding the Major Prophets, the issue is again that I will not preach a book of the Bible until I am confident that I can do so in a way that is faithful to the text. I am working through some of the Major Prophets and am drawn especially to Jeremiah and Lamentations. I am not yet ready to preach the books but am putting the hours in to be ready.

If anyone thinks of it they can pray for me on all of this. For example, in 2008 I am preaching about forty Sundays which is about two hundred sermons, publishing six books, teaching classes, preaching at multiple conferences and events around the nation, coaching a lot of pastors, and preaching for a week and a half in Australia. On top of all of that I write multiple articles, do a lot of media interviews, still serve as an Executive Elder at Mars Hill, am President of Acts 29 and Resurgence, and have five little kids. On top of it all I am finishing my last class to conclude my Masters in Biblical Theology and am considering pursuing a PhD in theology also. I study a lot, and still wish I had even more time. Studies report that the average pastor needs about twenty

hours a week to prepare a sermon and by God's grace I require only a fraction of that or I would be able to do even less.

Q: I was wondering what would happen if for whatever reason Mark was no longer a pastor at Mars Hill, what would become of the video preaching? Is someone all ready designated to fill that role, or would the preaching then be passed down to the specific campus pastors?

A: First, my hope, prayer, and plan is to be at Mars Hill for the entirety of my ministry unless God should call me out in a clear manner. My health is good and my family genes indicate living to age one hundred is not unlikely, so I pray I still have some good years left as I am now thirty-seven. Second, if something did happen to me such as an illness or injury, the campus pastors would be able to step in and preach immediately. They are gifted and growing in their abilities through experience and our preaching cadre. At some campuses, such as Ballard, there are actually multiple gifted preachers who could team together to cover the pulpit and also provide backup for the campus pastors at other campuses. Third, if something did happen to me then the campus pastors in conjunction with the board of directors and campus pastors would need to decide if their long term plan would be to simply let the campuses have their own live preacher or pull up someone to assume my role as primary preaching pastor across all campuses via video. Fourth, if they decided to replace me then they could either call up one or more of the other preaching elders to assume my role, or hire a preacher from outside Mars Hill such as a preacher from our Acts 29 Network where doctrine and philosophy of ministry are closely related to Mars Hill. Therefore, that decision would need to be made at that time by the elders. Mars Hill is growing and expanding so fast that the decision would be best made at the time. Either way I do believe we are in a far safer and better position than if we did not have campus pastors, other gifted preachers, the preaching cadre, and the Acts 29 Network. The good news is that we have many good options. Lastly, since I will have an end some day I assure you that I will work hard to have a good succession plan. C. J. Mahaney, who did this with Joshua Harris, is a dear friend and mentor to help me do this as well as he did when the day comes so that our church is best served even after I am gone. However, I pray this is not for many years.

Q: My question is was Mark talking about Pastor Bent and Pastor Paul in the sermon [The Sunday before Bent and Paul were fired Mark preached the "Fathers and Fighting" sermon. In it he mentions wanting to follow Nehemiah's lead]? "And beat some of them! Now, he's an older guy and he's beating up certain members of his church. What do we do with that? I'll tell you what I'd like to do with that. I'd like to follow in his example. There's a few guys right now, that if I wasn't going to end up on cnn, I would go old testament on them, even in leadership in this church."

Q: Did Pastor Mark really say this?

A: I don't remember what I say word for word in a sermon since I don't follow a manuscript so there is variation from service to service. I do remember saying something like that (if not those exact words) but I don't remember thinking about Paul and Bent at the time. Paul and Bent and their families have been friends for many years to the degree that we have even enjoyed vacations together, which illustrates that I do love them, care for them, am concerned for them, and desire what is best for them providing it is not at the expense of the well-being of the entire eldership and entire church. Throughout our recent dealings with Paul and Bent I have been mostly discouraged and depressed by their sinful actions and attitudes, but not angry with them in the manner that Nehemiah was angry. My anger, however, has been with a few church members who were acting very disrespectfully, sinfully, and proudly toward some of the elders who were dealing with Paul and Bent and thereby making it very complicated and difficult to seek reconciliation with Paul and Bent. My point was that sometimes all that God has accomplished and the people have worked for can be undermined by a few unrepentant sinners who have lost sight of the needs of the many and that is cause for anger. On that point I completely understand Nehemiah's anger and have on occasion shared it but have never acted out physically as Nehemiah did.

CORPORATE WORSHIP

responses submitted by Pastor Tim Smith

Q: Can we get more psalm settings integrated back into or corporate worship? Trust me, I'm not turning into some regulative principle freak but I miss the Psalm 63 and other Psalm settings we used to sing as a congregation sometimes.

A: Thank you for all your questions. As we move forward in this next season of Mars Hill Church I believe humility and trust will be the primary threads that hold us together. This trust is not blind compliance but rather a patient dialog and discourse where we all give each other the benefit of the doubt and do not jump to the worst conclusion prematurely. This has to be acknowledged in this current discussion as it is very difficult to ask questions of leadership and vision without sounding suspicious and it is equally difficult to answer your questions as pastors without sounding heavy handed and authoritarian. This season, like all others, requires a great deal of grace.

That said, I am very excited about the future of the Mars Hill worship department. I have been at Mars Hill for 8 years now, 7 as the worship pastor, and I feel like our work has only just begun in many ways. Up until 6 months ago I was responsible for all aspects of corporate worship at Mars Hill except for preaching. That included all the music, bands and recording as well as all aspects of productions and the technology that supports them. As we reorganized Mars Hill over the last 6 months, my world significantly changed. I, like many other leaders, moved to a more specific position focusing on music with production coming out from under my leadership and being divided up between campuses and central/pulpit support.

For the first time in a number of years I have the opportunity of investing deeply in the theology, philosophy and practice of corporate worship. This has always been what I am most passionate about and now my team and I are able focus exclusively on this. We have already brought a number of projects to fruition that have been sitting on the back burner for years.

First and foremost, we installed the first elder besides myself in the worship department, Matt Johnson, with Joe Day soon to follow barring any objections from the congregation. Second, two months ago, we hosted the Continuous Worship conference which saw roughly 500 pastors and leaders gather from all over the country (even the world as there were people from England, Japan, and Canada in attendance). Third, we have our first full length studio album in 4 years on track for release in December of this year. The album is a collection of various hymn arrangements called the "Rain City Hymnal". Last, and definitely not least, we have totally revamped how we train up bands and launched a new process with 7 new bands currently in development.

In addition to all these projects we have launched a new web site at www.doxologist.com as a portal into our ongoing discussions of worship, theology, culture and seeking the glory of God in everything. We are also working with Resurgence to launch "Re:Sound" a missional musical collective highlighting theologically unified and stylistically diverse musicians from around the global church.

The goal of all this is to build the church, first locally at Mars Hill and, second the greater global church through Acts 29 and Resurgence. We work week in and week out to discern an appropriate response through music to God's initiation among us through preaching and the word. We build bands, write and arrange music, and try to offer anything that might be encouraging or useful to other churches to help them to the same.

As we move forward we are in constant need of leaders and musicians to build bands for all our campuses. Right now we have a very specific need for drummers and bass players. We need at least a few of each to complete the bands we are developing.

We also need your prayers in a number of areas. Pray for the developing band leaders that they will grow in knowledge, skill, leadership and humility to be ready to ease the burden of our new campuses. Pray for the Worship Department Lead Team which consists of myself, Deacon Joel Brown, Luke Abrams, Nathan Burke and our new pastors Matt Johnson and soon to be pastor, Joe Day. Lastly, pray for wisdom and discernment as we evaluate where to go with our music outside of Mars Hill. We are evaluating a number of record label and distribution options which are incredibly complicated and, if not done right, have the potential to undermine much of what we have built over the years.

As for the specific question that was asked of me regarding incorporating more Psalm arrangements into corporate worship I would say that I'm totally open to the idea. There has been no conscious movement away from the Psalms, in fact we are going through the Psalms as a staff team and I may begin a devotional series on them at www.doxologist.com. You mentioned Psalm 63. That song was intentionally retired as it was written by someone who is no longer at Mars Hill and there are some legal issue surrounding that song that make it very difficult to play it in clear conscience. That said, I know I have a couple Psalm songs in my band and I know of at least 4 or 5 others in different bands including a new setting of Psalm 8 by our newest band "The Sons of Thunder" led by Rose Johnson and Pastor Matt. Maybe Psalm arrangements have waned a bit with the bands at the campus you attend, but overall I think they are still going strong.

Again, thank you for your questions. In the future, as questions arise about music and corporate worship at Mars Hill first check out www.doxologist.com. We are constantly adding content to that site and we have an extensive FAQ section. If you don't find what you are looking for there feel free to contact me and my team at pastortim@marshillchurch.org. You can always post on the members site as well.

GROUND WAR

responses submitted by Pastor Mike Wilkerson

Vision

A people who are being transformed into the image of Christ in real and practical ways, amidst the messy details of life. (2 Cor 3:18, Rom 8:29, Col 3:9-10, Phil 1:6) Transformation takes place at the level of each individual member, as well as at the collective level in various groups and ultimately at the level of the entire church. As each member of the body grows in maturity and does its part to function, the whole church, the body, images Christ to our City. Mars Hill is a city filled with transformed citizens individually and collectively bearing Jesus' name and showing his image to the larger city all around (Col 3:12-17, Eph 4:12-16, Rom 12).

Strategy

Our primary strategy is Community Groups. This is the primary place where the members of Mars Hill connect in community for vital relationships and to grow in Christ together. It is also the primary conduit for pastoral care through the Community Groups care structure, which involves care from Community Group Leaders, Coaches, Head Coaches, and Pastors who are committed to the shepherding of specific groups and regions of groups.

A secondary strategy is our collection support groups, most notably Grace Groups, for those who have suffered abuse, and Redemption Groups, for those battling some habitual sin like drug or alcohol addiction. These groups exist to provide more focused care in particularly difficult seasons of life, with the goal of equipping participants to walk in ever increasing freedom and gospel impact for life.

Counselors are available for individual counseling. Counselors will emphasize involvement in groups as the primary means for care. Counselors include both elders and deacons, both staff and volunteer.

What is needed of the members?

We need members to commit to being a part this body and to find a fit and a function in the community, using their God given gifts to help meet the overwhelming needs for ministry, in both formal and informal ministry capacities (Rom 12:6-8).

We need each member to commit to carrying his own load, while also being prepared to help a brother or sister shoulder the burdens that may fall upon any one of us from time to time. (Gal 6:2-4)

We need members to see themselves as active servants of one another, as ambassadors of Christ to the world around, and not as customers waiting to be served.

We need members to find their own life purpose within the bigger picture of God's kingdom work in Seattle, and see that He has fit them into this particular body in this time and place to advance the kingdom.

Prayer

Pray for a harvest of many leaders with gifts in shepherding, leadership, administration, teaching, and mercy, to name a few.

Pray that the Holy Spirit would bestow, awaken, and empower the spiritual gifts that will be necessary for ministry.

Further questions

Please follow up with your Campus Pastor with additional questions.

QUESTIONS

Q: I would like to know more about how to assist the others, like providing more support during a period of tremendous transition?

A: Thank you. You can support us by engaging in Community Group and putting your spiritual gifts to work. We need many leaders, coaches, and counselors.

Q: Going forward, will there be accountability, discipleship, follow up provided for deacons under their overseeing pastors? Some ministries are not campus specific (at least now anyway), so the deacons & leaders who serve in those areas sometimes get lost in the shuffle. It seems a shame to wait until those people are in crisis before they are attended to, and regular "checking in" by the pastors who oversee the leaders just makes sense to ensure the overall health of the body. It seems logical to me that the flow would go something like: Elders take care of other elders. Elders take care of their deacons. Deacons take care of their ministry leads and assigned community group leaders. Community Group leaders and ministry leads take care of those in their groups. Community groups take care of new attendees.

A: The Community Groups and Grace Groups leadership structures are good examples of ministries that are structured for regular communication and support between ministry leaders and overseers. In Community Groups, Leaders regularly meet with their Coaches individually, and also meet monthly in groups for training and support at the monthly Community Group Sync. All ministries are being designed to include regular communication like this.

Furthermore, the leadership of the Ballard campus has developed Communication Plans for every department which ensures that all staff elders and deacons are adequately connected to appropriate lines of communication for both individual and team interaction involving community and discipleship as well as ministry direction and personal development. Similar Communication Plans are being clarified for the volunteers in each ministry as well.

With our reorganization around a campus based model this summer, nearly all ministries are tied to a particular campus. Any volunteer or ministry leader that has found himself/herself lost in the shuffle could bring that to the attention of the appropriate Campus Pastor to be connected to the right ministry overseer.

Q: I also hope to hear how the ground war support is continuing to be supported, in this season, it appears needed more so than the air war. We appreciate that How People Change and the Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands training, and need more of this ongoing.

Q: Mark has said on more than one occasion that the "air war we are winning, the ground war we are not fairing so well" That is easy to see. When we talk about Jesus we sound different than the world but how do we live so differently that we look different to the world? And please don't tell me it's by what we don't do. It is exactly by what we don't do that makes us look so much like the world. How do these new changes translate into our leadership serving the body of Christ at Mars Hill so that our members are maturing in Christ and serving one the other and the community's we live in outside the confines of our campuses during the week?

Q: I'm grateful that Mars pulled together the 'How People Change' series and had vision enough to see its need, however what other steps will be taken to strengthen the ground war? Our hearts are very interested in seeing this area of Mars grow to the capacity our air war is at now and we will be stepping up our game to help out any way we can.

Q: To use Pastor Mark's analogy, how is the Elder Board working towards closing the gap between the air war and the ground war?

A: Our first round of seminars for How People Change and Helping Others Change was merely the tip of the iceberg. Our long term goal is to see all members work through the How People Change material, and for many to also work through the Helping Others Change material. We are working on how to implement this on a large scale. Some Community Groups have committed to working through How People Change together. And some of our ministries, such as Marriage Groups, are now using How People Change for their base curriculum.

Furthermore, the Executive Elders have recently cast fresh vision stating that the 'ground war is vital', and priority is being given to the building of Community Groups as the primary Ground War strategy. Time and energy is also being applied to strengthening and growing support group ministries such as Grace Groups and Redemption Groups.

We are also working to clarify what we think effective discipleship should look like across all of our ground war ministries. We believe that this will help us to gain greater momentum in the ground war by ensuring that each ministry, though each in its own way, is working toward a commonly understood vision for discipleship.

Q: I am interested in hearing about the future of grace groups, counseling, and children's ministry as well. These have been absolutely vital in the lives of so many people I know, and I hope these ministries will continue to have a vital role in our plan moving forward.

A: Grace Groups are continuing to grow in Ballard, and some other campuses are likely to begin Grace Groups within the coming year. Pastor Mike Wilkerson is the elder overseeing Grace Groups in Ballard, with elder candidate Kerry Michaelis acting as the ministry's point leader.

In Ballard, individual counseling continues to be handled by 3-5 staff elders and deacons, and some additional volunteer counselors. With the loss of Bent Meyer and Paul Petry as staff counselors, we are considering alternative approaches to care for the needs that they might have cared for.

Q: Does Mars Hill have any kind of plan for major catastrophes such as fires, flood, earthquakes, terrorism, etc? I would imagine that a fair number of people might come to Mars Hill to seek solace and help in case of some kind catastrophe happened and I was just curious if (in the case one or more of the campuses were still standing) there had been any thought put into how to organize relief in a proactive way. If so, is there ways to communicate that to the Members so we know what we can do in case of disasters and how we can help and/or get help?

A: There is an evacuation plan for the building if it is occupied during a major catastrophe. We are working to ensure that all the necessary staff and volunteers are trained to know what to do according to the evacuation plan.

As far as using the building as a shelter resource for people after an event, I imagine that would fall under the discussion of each Campus Pastor with what they would deem what would be the best use of their building. It is easily imaginable and very possible that we would open our doors and be a resource to our community. For example, at the Ballard Campus we could organize the chairs in the main room to work as beds and try to care for the communities basic needs for shelter. We would also communicate with and encourage community groups to reach out to each other and to members in the community as well as be knowledgeable of what resources are in the area. A sketch plan can be in place but it is impossible to architect very specific details depending on the nature of the disaster.

Q: Since both of the pastors in question were our shepherding pastors, who now fills these much needed roles at Mars Hill? Who should we as the body be contacting?

A: We have many, many people in the body who are heavily involved in shepherding, in addition to what Bent and Paul provided. They continue to serve as counselors and group leaders. We

also still have 3-5 staff elders and deacons whose jobs largely consist of individual pastoral care. We are working on refining our processes for connecting members to the care that would best meet their needs. Presently, the best way to begin that process is to email care@marshillchurch.org, or to call the Ballard campus and ask for Deacon Jen Latvala.

Q: There are a lot of people who were under the shepherding care of Bent and Paul, but when they were terminated as employees, it left several people feeling disconnected and unsure of where to turn to for help. I don't even know if this is possible, but I think it would really be awesome if there was a way to connect with all the people that Bent and Paul were shepherding and make sure they were connected with another Pastor or they were doing ok or they were able to find another avenue of help.

A: Many of these concerns have been addressed and continue to be addressed as those who'd been in Bent or Paul's care contact the office to ask for clarity on how to move forward. Many of these people have been reconnected for pastoral care. Some have been put on a waitlist while we consider alternative ways of caring for them.

Pastor Mike Wilkerson is the Pastor of Biblical Living in Ballard, the department in which Bent and Paul served. Any concerns that might have been directed to Bent or Paul can be directed to Pastor Mike.

Q: I would like to know why the Elders at Ballard decided to cancel Paul Petry's Tuesday morning men's prayer ministry? As a participant, I thought it was a valuable time of men getting together and praying for our church. Is there any discussion to bring back this ministry at Ballard?

A: The Ballard Strategic Leadership Team, led by Pastor Bubba Jennings, Ballard Campus Pastor, spent some time this summer combing through all programs, events, ministries, and uses of the Ballard facilities. We set priorities on the use of our resources, especially the facility. We determined that while we value organized prayer among our men, the Tuesday morning men's prayer in Ballard was not an effective use of the building, and not the way we'd like to see a prayer ministry structured for a church of our size and geographic spread. We have encouraged the men who participated in that ministry to consider how they might structure the prayer effort in ways that might be able to spread the concern for and practice of organized prayer through out the body, perhaps through the Community Groups. In our new campus based model, the use of the campus facilities is determined by the leadership of each campus. This decision only affects the use of Ballard's facilities without placing restriction on how other campuses might use their facilities.

Q: What measures are being taken to ensure that the Mars Hill body is maturing in faith and not just growing in numbers?

A: The ground war is a metaphor that we use that, in part, refers to 'maturing in faith'. The elders are deeply committed to building out the ground war through Community Groups as the primary strategy. We are constantly looking at how to strengthen and grow our Community Groups to connect more and more members in groups that play a vital role in the spiritual formation of its members.

Q: Has a list of Bent and Paul's current "clients" been requested so that they can be connected with a new pastor/deacon?

A: (answered, in part, above.) Many of those who had been in communication with Bent and Paul for counseling have been contacted, and many cases, reconnected with other pastors. In some cases, we don't yet have a good alternative means of caring for them, and we've asked them to wait on a waitlist.

Q: A specific example, while I am delighted that we are working towards a downtown campus, it saddens me to see cutbacks in the area of teaching such as weekly capstone classes (not to mention the lackluster participation in those classes, another problem), marriage-related classes, biblical family classes, and regular events to encourage fellowship at a corporate level. (I fully understand and participate in the ground-war through community groups and regular accountability to other members).

A: The Leadership at Mars Hill is constantly on the hunt for the best way to equip our people. We offer midweek courses at present, offered a Saturday four hour class on a Saturday this Fall, and have made extensive theological training available through resurgence website and conferences. What we are trying to figure out is how to help people learn within their community. We are not committed to information as much as we are to transformation. We are very much of the conviction that transformation is more of a team sport more than an individual sport.

In the near future we will unroll a profile of a disciple's lifestyle and will challenge each ministry shepherd (departments to community groups) to develop a strategy for leading the people in their immediate oversight to express this lifestyle.

We are also working on developing coaching materials that will allow people at Mars Hill to pursue a disciple's lifestyle – with personal resources, 1-1 coaching, community and corporate gathering.

So, the observation that we are cutting back in the area of teaching is not the whole picture. We are trying to serve both those who want to learn by offering resources as well as those who want to teach by developing materials.

We find ourselves experiencing growth pains on every front. But we are not less committed to serving Jesus and mobilizing those who will love and serve him.

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

responses submitted by Pastor Jamie Munson

As we continue to spread out to multiple campuses we need to continue to build the local church leadership of each campus. This includes a team of qualified elders, teams of deacons and hundreds of members. These three roles must function together in a way that is faithful to scripture, unified and working together for the good of the church and those it needs to reach. Mars Hill is committed to raising up biblically qualified leaders in the church. To begin this section we have include several chapters of Pastor Mark's leadership book that outline the theology of spiritual authority, Jesus and the elders.

[Chapters copied from Pastor Mark Driscoll's Church Leadership Book to be published by Crossway in 2008]

Introduction

In the fall of 1996 we officially launched Mars Hill Church in Seattle. I was twenty-five years of age and had been a Christian since the age of nineteen. Our city was among the least churchd in the nation with more dogs than either children or Christians. Our church was about as big as a Mormon family. Our budget was meager. Our leadership structure was informal. And, as a result, our ministry was painful.

In the first few years our church experienced a great number of tensions. Many of them were about conflicting theological beliefs on everything from the Bible to Jesus, hell, women in ministry, mode of baptism, and the return of Jesus, which I hoped would happen soon so I could get out of the mess I had made by starting a church.

Without formal leaders and structures in place, it was not long before the most vocal, networked, and pushy people started asserting themselves as leaders of our little church and causing a great amount of division. Their varying demands quickly sidetracked the mission of our church to love our city and see it transformed by the power of Jesus. Our internal church strife quickly overshadowed our external cultural mission.

At the root of all of our troubles was the issue of authority. Our people, most of whom were young in both age and faith, did not have a biblical understanding of or respect for authority. The issue of authority begins with Jesus Himself. During His earthly ministry, those who heard Jesus teach were astonished by His authority,¹ which included the authority to forgive sins,² cast out demons,³ heal sickness,⁴ and mete out our eternal judgment.⁵ After His resurrection from death, Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."⁶

Today, Jesus is seated on His throne in heaven as glorious, exalted, supreme King, Lord, and God in authority. There is not one inch of creation, one culture or subculture of people, one lifestyle or orientation, one religion or philosophical system, that He does not possess full authority over. Jesus is in the place of highest authority, as Paul says, "For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority."⁷ The authority of governments and rulers,⁸ husbands,⁹ parents,¹⁰ bosses,¹¹ and church leaders¹² all proceed from Jesus.

¹ Matt. 7:28–29

² Matt. 9:6–8

³ Mark 3:15

⁴ Luke 9:1

⁵ John 5:27

⁶ Matt. 28:18

⁷ Col. 2:9–10

⁸ Rom. 13:1; 1 Peter 2:13

⁹ 1 Peter 3:1–7

¹⁰ Ex. 20:12

¹¹ Col. 3:22–25

¹² Heb. 13:17

Not only does Jesus possess all authority, but while on the earth He also gave us the perfect model of what it means to respect authority. On this point, 1 Corinthians 11:3 says, “But I want you to understand that the head of every man [or husband] is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.” The meaning of the word “head” in this verse has been hotly debated. But its most common use in Scripture is in reference to a position of authority. Jesus is called the head of the church because He has authority over the church.¹³ If Jesus is not our highest authority, then who is?

Furthermore, Jesus is ruling today through the authority of both Scripture and God the Holy Spirit, who has been sent to teach us Scripture and empower us for obedient, regenerated lives. Scripture itself claims to be God-breathed or inspired: “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.”¹⁴ Jesus Himself also taught that “Scripture cannot be broken.”¹⁵ This is because the Scriptures are from God and therefore come with His authority and power. Furthermore, the early church treated the apostles’ New Testament teaching as authoritative, just like the Old Testament teaching of the prophets.¹⁶ Because of this we are told that the church is “built on the foundation of the apostles [New Testament] and prophets [Old Testament], Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone.”¹⁷ Subsequently, Christians, including myself, rightly believe that Scripture (Old and New Testament) is our highest authority, or metaphorical Supreme Court, by which all other things are tested. Practically, this means that lesser courts of reason, tradition, and culture are under the highest court of truth, which is divinely inspired Scripture. During the Protestant Reformation, the slogan *Sola scriptura* became popular to summarize this conviction; it means Scripture alone is our highest authority. This should not be confused with *Solo scriptura*, which is the erroneous belief that truth is only to be found in Scripture and nowhere else. Scripture itself tells us that God reveals truth to us in such things as creation and our conscience, but that the beliefs we may subscribe to from such forms of lesser revelation are to be tested by Scripture.

Therefore, Jesus is our example of how we should both act when we are in authority and react when we are under authority. First Corinthians 11:3, which says, “the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God,” is one of the key texts for what theologians call *functional subordinationism*. It is the biblical teaching that our Trinitarian God exists as a community of equals with different roles and deference for authority within the Trinity. For example, throughout His life we see Jesus constantly speaking of His submission to the authority of God the Father; Jesus continually states that the Father sent Him to earth on His mission and that He was doing what the Father told Him to do and saying what the Father told Him to say. Other Scriptures also illustrate this principle, showing how Jesus Christ recognized the authority of God the Father while remaining equal to God the Father.¹⁸

While the authority of Jesus is always perfect, earthly authorities can at times be imperfect. If an authority is indeed acting sinfully and breaking the laws of a higher authority, rather than abandoning authority systems altogether, we should appeal to a higher authority for justice. For example, a husband is to both submit to the authority of God and His church leaders as Jesus submitted to authority, and also lovingly exercise authority over his family in a way that is loving and gracious like Jesus exercises His authority. However, if that man should become harsh with his wife or children, they should appeal to the higher authorities of church leadership and God’s Word for justice. The answer to abusive authority is not an absence of authority but rather righteous authority that rules under the authority of Scripture and Jesus. The right response to abusive authority can be calling the church and even the police. Sadly, it is all too common that people in the church are guilty of the sin of Diotrephes, “who likes to put himself first, [and] does not acknowledge our authority.”¹⁹ Perhaps the poor bloke got that way by finger-

¹³ Eph. 1:10, 22; 4:15; 5:23; Col. 1:18; 2:10, 19

¹⁴ 2 Tim. 3:16–17

¹⁵ John 10:35

¹⁶ Acts 2:42; 15

¹⁷ Eph. 2:20

¹⁸ John 3:17; 4:34; 6:38; 8:29; 12:49

¹⁹ 3 John 9

painting his doctrinal statement after logging on to an emerging church website to discover that, according to postmodern pundits, the use of authority is an act of emotional violence and that a more non-systematic hermeneutic of suspicion would tell you that, because there is no metanarrative or truth that proceeds from an objective authority and corresponds with reality, you can give your pastor the finger to show the world that you are just like Jesus.

Anyway, getting back to our struggling little church of anarchy and dissent, it was at that time when I realized that I needed to install qualified leaders and empower them with the authority to help lead the church by disciplining some people, kicking others out, training the teachable, encouraging the broken, empowering other leaders, and reaching the lost before the lunatics completely overtook the asylum/church plant. We needed leaders so we could execute on our mission of bringing the gospel of Jesus to our city in word and deed.

The obvious need for biblically based, formal, and qualified leadership led me on a lengthy study of how a church should be organized. I had never been a pastor in a church or even a formal member of any church in my life. So, I began studying Scripture, reading dozens of books on church government (which was as exciting as watching ice melt), read dozens more books on church history and Christian movements, and met with pastors of various churches to hear how they were organized.

In the end, I arrived at what I believed was a model of church government that was both biblically sound and practically effective. I taught our little church on these matters and before long we had implemented the kind of church government that I was convicted was most faithful. Immediately, our church began to grow in both health and size.

On the other hand, many of the people who attended Sunday services with us in the early days left the church because they were unwilling to submit to any spiritual authority. Many do not attend church anywhere and some have even stopped claiming to be Christians. Others have matured in their faith and returned to our church, where they respect respectable authority and have been a blessing to our church because of their humility and teachable disposition.

To help our people understand how we are governed, I wrote a small booklet that we published internally to answer their questions. Over the years, many thousands of these booklets have been given away by our church for our people to read and share with friends and leaders of other churches. After visiting our church, my friends at Crossway asked if I would be willing to rewrite and expand the booklet, which was a humbling honor. I have rewritten that little booklet and the result is this small book. My hope was to boil down some of the big concepts regarding church leadership into a manageable and understandable format. The average person should be able to read this entire book in roughly one hour. You will not read a bunch of cute stories about bunny rabbits giving their lives to Jesus and such because I do not want to waste any of my words or any of your time. My hope is that through this book, Jesus would be honored, churches would be well served, and lost people would meet Jesus and grow in their love for Him and His bride the church.

Chapter 1 – Pastor Jesus

Before we can discuss church leadership, we must first define what we mean by “church.” The Church is the community of all Christians throughout history who have been loved and saved by Jesus Christ,²⁰ including the believing people of the Old Testament.²¹ In every church, there are people who are not Christians,²² including both lost people and wolves sent by Satan to lead people astray.²³ While it is possible for Christians to know who else is a Christian (e.g., those people who use frequent references to Christian brothers and sisters), ultimately only the Lord knows exactly who is and is not a Christian.²⁴ In this sense, “Church” refers to every person of any age, race, and culture whose sins are forgiven through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; this is commonly called the “universal Church.”

The various congregations of the universal Church that meet together for such things as teaching, fellowship, and worship are commonly called the “local church.”²⁵ In fact, many of the letters in the New Testament were written to help inform and direct the local churches of such cities as Philippi, Corinth, Ephesus, Colossae, and Thessalonica. Both the Old and New Testaments were written to communities of God’s people who regularly gathered together for such meetings, to help inform and direct their lives together as the family of God on mission to see their cities transformed by Jesus. The Bible is clear that every Christian is a part of the larger Church body and is expected to participate in the life of a local church with the gift(s) God has given him or her. This is so that God may be glorified and so His people may be built up through their service to one another.²⁶ It is therefore a sin for someone who claims to be a Christian to not be actively loving his or her Christian brothers and sisters²⁷ and seeking to build up the church as faithful members of a church.²⁸

The Scriptures are clear that Jesus Christ is the head of the church.²⁹ Jesus is the Apostle who plants a church.³⁰ Jesus is the Leader who builds the church.³¹ Jesus is the Senior Pastor and Chief Shepherd who rules the church.³² And it is ultimately Jesus who closes churches down when they have become faithless or fruitless.³³ Therefore, it is absolutely vital that a church loves Jesus, obeys Jesus, imitates Jesus, and follows Jesus at all times and in all ways, according to the teaching of His Word.³⁴

Human leadership in the church is little more than qualified Christians who are following Jesus and encouraging other people to follow them as they follow Jesus. Because of this, church leaders must be good sheep who follow their Chief Shepherd Jesus well before they are fit to be shepherds leading any of His sheep. This is in large part what Paul meant when he told Christians in various local churches to “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.”³⁵ While it may seem obvious to insist that any discussion of church leadership begin with the centrality and preeminence of Jesus, sadly, many churches omit Him from their organizational charts altogether. At the risk of stating the obvious, every church must place Jesus Christ in the position of highest authority and devotion in both the organizational chart and the life of their church.

²⁰ Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25

²¹ Deut. 4:10; Acts 7:38; Heb. 2:12 cf. Ps. 22:22

²² Matt. 13:24–30

²³ Acts 20:29–30

²⁴ 2 Tim. 2:19

²⁵ For example, see Hebrews 10:25.

²⁶ 1 Cor. 12:1–31

²⁷ 1 John 1:7; 3:17–18; 4:21

²⁸ 1 Cor. 12:7; 14:6, 12, 26b

²⁹ Eph. 1:9, 22–23; 4:15; 5:23

³⁰ Heb. 3:1

³¹ Matt. 16:18

³² 1 Peter 5:4

³³ Rev. 2:5

³⁴ Col. 3:16

³⁵ 1 Cor. 11:1

Serving under Jesus are elders, deacons, and church members. Philippians 1:1 illustrates this church leadership structure: "Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons." Packed in this verse we discover the three kinds of leaders who take responsibility for the health and progress of the local church. We will spend some time investigating each of their roles. First, there are elders ("overseers" in this verse), who are the senior leadership in the church. Second, there are deacons, who function as pastoral assistants by also leading the church alongside the elders. Third, there are "saints," or Christians, who love God and help lead the local church by using their resources (time, talent, and treasure) to help build up their church as church members. In the remainder of this book we will examine each of these groupings as well as the role of women in local church leadership.

Chapter 2 – Elders

Elders are the male leaders of the church who are synonymously called pastors, bishops, and overseers throughout the New Testament.³⁶ While the various words are used interchangeably, they each refer to a differing aspect of the same role in the same office. As an elder, a man has rank and authority to rule and govern a church. As a bishop, he has the responsibility before God to rule and protect a church. As a pastor, he has the high honor of caring for Christians and evangelizing non-Christians. As an overseer, he has the responsibility before God of leading and managing the church. Therefore, when the Bible uses words like elder, bishop, pastor, overseer, and such, don't get too nit-picky and try to figure out which word applies to the old man in a dress with a big hat on his head and a phat ring on his finger, but accept that sometimes one guy has a few titles, like I do as a poppa/daddy/father.

The elders are men chosen for their ministry according to clear biblical requirements after a sufficient season of testing in the church.³⁷ Elders are nearly always spoken of in plurality because God intends for more than one man to lead and rule over the church, as a safeguard for both the church and the man.

There are two primary places where the Bible defines the qualifications of an elder (1 Timothy 2:11–3:7; Titus 1:5–9), and the lists are virtually identical. Three things are noteworthy about this list. First, the list is really about men being good Christians, assuming that good Christians will make good pastors. This is curious because too many pastors are not very good Christians. Second, the qualifications for a pastor are in large part tied not to his work at the church, but rather whether or not he has been a good pastor in his home with his family and in his world with his neighbors and coworkers; too many pastors are good pastors at the expense of being good husbands, fathers, neighbors, and the like. Third, establishing whether or not a man actually meets these criteria requires relational time in community over a long season because the list is about counting character, which is more difficult than counting rocks, as one pastor has quipped. Therefore, to help you understand these qualifications, I will briefly list and explain them from their appearance in Timothy.

1 Timothy 3:1–7

The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

Seventeen Qualifications of an Elder-Pastor from 1 Timothy 3:1–7

Relation to God

- A man – a masculine leader, a dudely dude
- Above reproach – without any character defect
- Able to teach – effective Bible communicator
- Not a new convert – mature Christian

Relation to Family

- Husband of one wife – one-woman man, sexually pure (this does not require a man to be married, as Paul, Timothy, Jesus, and widowed men could qualify)
- Submissive children – successful father
- Manages family well – provides for, leads, organizes, loves

³⁶ Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; 1 Peter 5:2

³⁷ 1 Tim. 2:11–3:7; Titus 1:5–9

Relation to Self

- Sober-minded – mentally and emotionally stable
- Self-controlled – disciplined life of sound decision-making
- Not a drunkard – without addictions
- Not a lover of money – financially content and upright

Relation to Others

- Respectable – worth following and imitating
- Hospitable – welcomes strangers, especially non-Christians for evangelism
- Not violent – even-tempered
- Gentle – kind, gracious, loving
- Not quarrelsome – peaceable, not divisive or contentious
- Well thought of by outsiders – respected by non-Christians

In summary, only men of the finest character are fit for leadership in God's church. One pastor has quipped that many young men raised on the apron strings of their Mother the Church aspire to vocational ministry because it is an indoor job that does not require any heavy lifting. But Paul tells a young pastor named Timothy that to be a pastor means you can pull the load of an ox,³⁸ can fight like a warrior,³⁹ live a life of discipline to compete with the skill of an athlete,⁴⁰ and work tirelessly like a farmer who is up before the sun doing his job every day.⁴¹

According to the Bible, formal theological training is not required, though such training can indeed be very beneficial. A salary is also not required, though an elder-pastor is worth an honorable wage.⁴²

Elders are not nominated by committees or congregational votes, but rather called by God Himself. Paul tells elders that "the Holy Spirit has made you overseers."⁴³ Once called by God, a man must then examine his own life and family to see if he meets the qualifications of an elder. If he does not, then a lengthy season of repentant living and transformation are required before there is any talk of him becoming a pastor. If/when a man is qualified, he needs to then have a personal desire to accept the work and responsibility of eldership and nominate himself to the other elders as a candidate for eldership consideration. On this point, 1 Timothy 3:1 says, "If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task."

Upon nominating himself as an elder candidate, a formal process of testing his calling must be undertaken. This process should include examining his family, financial giving to the church, performance at work, relationship with people outside the church, service in the church, spiritual gifts, ministry passions, attitude toward authority, work ethic, leadership gifts, humility, and anything and everything else related to his conversion, calling, character, courage, and competency. If the man is unanimously confirmed as a called and qualified elder by the other elders, he should then be brought before the church in some way so that the people in the church have an opportunity to raise any concerns or questions they have about the man's eldership nomination. If there is no disqualifying opposition to the man, then he should be voted in by the other elders and installed as an elder by the laying of hands by the other elders as Scripture states.

The issue of which men lead the church is of the utmost seriousness, because both the reputation of the gospel in the community and the health of the church are contingent upon godly, qualified men who keep in step with Jesus and who can lead the church to do likewise. The elders function as an accountable team, much like Jesus' first disciples, and they are therefore quite unlike secular notions of a business or non-profit organizational board.

³⁸ 1 Tim. 5:17–18

³⁹ 2 Tim. 2:3–4

⁴⁰ 2 Tim. 2:5

⁴¹ 2 Tim. 2:6

⁴² 1 Tim. 5:17–18

⁴³ Acts 20:28

In addition to the qualifications of an elder, the Bible also provides the duties of elders-pastors:

- Prayer and Scripture study⁴⁴
- Ruling/leading the church⁴⁵
- Managing the church⁴⁶
- Caring for people in the church⁴⁷
- Giving account to God for the church⁴⁸
- Living exemplary lives⁴⁹
- Rightly using the authority God has given them⁵⁰
- Teaching the Bible correctly⁵¹
- Preaching⁵²
- Praying for the sick⁵³
- Teaching sound doctrine and refuting false teachings⁵⁴
- Working hard⁵⁵
- Rightly using money and power⁵⁶
- Protecting the church from false teachers⁵⁷
- Disciplining unrepentant Christians⁵⁸
- Obeying the secular laws as the legal ruling body of a corporation⁵⁹
- Developing other leaders and teachers⁶⁰

This final point is often overlooked. An elder is not someone who is a helper that does a lot of work for the church, because that is the definition of a deacon. Rather, an elder is a leader who trains other leaders to lead various aspects of the church. Therefore, no man should be an elder unless he can effectively train people to not only be mature Christians, but also train some of those mature Christians to be church leaders who train other leaders.

First Among Equals

Leading the elders under the rule of Jesus must be a senior elder who is first among equals and is responsible to help train the elders who train additional leaders. People often resist believing any hierarchy within the elder team is biblical; they see any hierarchy within the elders as demeaning of some elders because they are unequal to the other elders. Yet Alexander Strauch, who has written the most thorough book on biblical eldership, points out that

Failure to understand the concept of “first among equals” (or 1 Timothy 5:17) has caused some elderships to be tragically ineffective in their pastoral care and leadership.

⁴⁴ Acts 6:4

⁴⁵ 1 Tim. 5:17

⁴⁶ 1 Tim. 3:4–5

⁴⁷ 1 Peter 5:2–5

⁴⁸ Heb. 13:17

⁴⁹ Heb. 13:7

⁵⁰ Acts 20:28

⁵¹ Eph. 4:11, 1 Tim. 3:2

⁵² 1 Tim. 5:17

⁵³ James 5:13–15

⁵⁴ Titus 1:9

⁵⁵ 1 Thess. 5:12

⁵⁶ 1 Peter 5:1–3

⁵⁷ Acts 20:17–31

⁵⁸ Matt. 18:15–17

⁵⁹ Rom. 13:1–7

⁶⁰ Eph. 4:11–16; 2 Tim. 2:1–2

Although elders act jointly as a council and share equal authority and responsibility for the leadership of the church, all are not equal in their giftedness, biblical knowledge, leadership ability, experience, or dedication. Therefore, those among the elders who are particularly gifted leaders and/or teachers will naturally stand out among the other elders as leaders and teachers within the leadership body.⁶¹

The following lines of reasoning show that the pattern of both equality and hierarchy is common throughout Scripture:⁶²

- Within the Godhead we see Jesus doing the Father's will and speaking the Father's words in clear deference to the Father, though they are equal and united as one.
- In the government of the home after which the government of the church is patterned, we see that husbands and wives are equal as God's image-bearers and that the husband is in leadership as the head of the family.
- Within the church we see that Jesus chose Peter, James, and John as His inner circle of disciples who were present at particular times when the other disciples were not (e.g., on the Mount of Transfiguration). They were given access to Jesus, such as sitting next to Him at meals, in the place of honor and leadership among the apostles.
- Before He ascended, Jesus clearly appointed Peter as the leader of the disciples and he became the dominant figure throughout the gospels and the book of Acts until his death. John functioned as the second leader in command and ascended to first position following Peter's death. The following chart of their occurrences in the New Testament indicates this, as does the simple observation that we know virtually nothing about some apostles who were obviously godly and important but not prominent.

Apostle	Number of appearances in gospels	Number of appearances in the book of Acts	Total appearances
Peter	117	72	189
John	35	15	50
James	16	2	18
Philip	16	1	17
Andrew	12	1	13
Thomas	10	1	11
Matthew/Levi	8	1	9
James, son of Alphaeus	6	1	7
Thaddeus/Judas	3	1	4
Simon the Zealot	3	1	4
Bartholomew/Nathaniel	0	1	1
Judas Iscariot	20	2	22

- Peter, James, and John are mentioned first among the lists of the New Testament apostles since they are the leaders among the men.
- Peter also functioned as the leader of James and John in their business together prior to being appointed by Jesus as apostles.⁶³
- In the upper room after Jesus' ascension, Peter stood up among the believers and spoke because he was their leader as appointed by Jesus.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership* (Littleton, CO: Lewis and Roth, 1995), 45.

⁶² The following points are summarized from chapter twenty-six of Gene Getz's *Elders and Leaders*.

⁶³ Luke 5:7, 10

⁶⁴ Acts 1:15

- On the day of Pentecost it was Peter who stepped forward from among the apostles to preach the gospel as their leader.⁶⁵
- Peter referred to himself as a “fellow elder” though he was the leader of the elders.⁶⁶
- Initially, Barnabas led a missions team in Acts with Paul and John Mark as his assistants, but in a short time they came to be known as “Paul and his companions,”⁶⁷ because Paul had overtaken Barnabas in leadership prominence, a fact further proven by Paul’s penning of New Testament books, not Barnabas’.
- In Jerusalem, Jesus’ brother James was clearly seen as the primary leader,⁶⁸ also shown by his penning of the epistle bearing his name while none of the other elders in Jerusalem wrote New Testament books.
- Both Timothy and Titus are widely recognized as senior leaders, even being told by Paul to “appoint elders,”⁶⁹ which indicates their authority over those elders they appoint.

In summary, men like Peter, John, Paul, Timothy, and Titus are obviously prominent leaders in the New Testament who exercise authority over other elders without being overbearing or sinful in the exercise of their necessary authority.

Therefore, for an elder team to function effectively, it must have a called, qualified, gifted, devoted, humble, and competent senior human leader who leads the elder team and helps guard the gate for new elders joining the team to ensure unity and success. To do his job, that man must not have blind obedience or complete unaccountable authority. Rather, he must have the freedom, trust, authority, respect, honor, and support of the elders and other church leaders to actually lead the church. If not, there can be no leadership; leaders will no longer lead the entire church working on behalf of the best interests of the gospel, but will become representatives of various agendas, departments, factions, and programs in the church. Without a senior leader, dissension will come as people fight over resources and there will not be decisions, but compromises, which are the death of the church.

As a general rule, the best person to hold the position of first among equals is the primary preaching pastor. Indeed, 1 Timothy 5:17 says, “Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.” While all elders deserve respect and honor, the primary preaching pastor is worthy of double honor and, as the context of this verse shows, part of that honoring often includes the highest salary of all paid elders. The pulpit is the most visible place of exercised authority in the church. As such, only qualified elders should preach, which can include welcoming qualified elders from other churches from time to time as appropriate.

Principles and Methods

One of the key roles of the senior leader is to help ensure that the elders are organized in an effective manner. The New Testament is very clear on the functions of elders (e.g., leading, disciplining, teaching, shepherding, praying) and the qualifications of an elder.⁷⁰ However, the New Testament is not clear on the form of the elders. This is because the form must be adapted for the various cultures that have now had elders for two thousand years. The New Testament does not tell us how many elders a local church should have, how often they should meet, how they should conduct their vote (e.g., unanimity, consensus, majority), or how they should be structured. These issues are up to the elders and the New Testament assumes that qualified elders who aspire to best care for their church will organize themselves best according to the Holy Spirit’s leading through the first among equals.

Therefore, local church elders must determine how to best organize themselves. Furthermore, how they will organize themselves will change. For example, for many years the elder team of Mars Hill Church was only five men. As I write this book, though, it is nearing thirty-

⁶⁵ Acts 2:14

⁶⁶ 1 Peter 5:1

⁶⁷ Acts 13:13

⁶⁸ Acts 12:17; 15:7–11, 13–21; 21:18

⁶⁹ Titus 1:5

⁷⁰ For example, 1 Timothy 3.

six men. In the early years, the elders would meet in one room at my home, while our wives would meet for prayer and accountability in another room and our children all played together. At the end of our meetings we would all have dinner together as families. If we were to do that today, we would have a few hundred people in my home. We now have elder teams and not just an elder team, which means we have elder meetings and not just an elder meeting. The growth of our church and elder team has forced us to rewrite our entire church bylaws, which explain how we organize ourselves, once a year. Our bylaws are now only functional for about a year in light of our pace of growth.

For this kind of biblical faithfulness and practical flexibility to occur in a church there must be a distinction between principles and methods. The Bible is clear on such things that God is to be worshiped, preaching is to occur, and the elders are to lead the church. However, the methods by which these can be done faithfully are many and must be culturally appropriated based upon where a church is ministering. As a result, things such as music styles, number of preachers, and how the elders are organized are freedoms that God allows the elders to decide because God works through leaders empowered by His Spirit and governed by His Word under the rule of His living Son.

For people in the church, including leaders, this means that there must be a distinction between sin and style. Too many people respond to culturally appropriated style (e.g., music style, dress of the preacher, church décor) as if sins were being committed when in fact methods of biblical principles are being implemented. This also means that the elders and other appointed leaders have the right to not only enforce God's rules of the Bible, but also have the freedom to make a few house rules as needed so that people know, for example, that they need to turn their phones off during a worship service or that members need to provide a giving pledge each year so that the church can make a reasonable budget projection.

A pastor is also blessed by having sheep, including fellow shepherds, who are not wrongly stiff necked. Pastors need the people in their church to obey them and respect their God-given authority so that their work does not continually resemble a series of kicks to the groin.⁷¹ As an elder in our church, I can say that being a pastor is both a high honor and a tremendous responsibility. I have found that the degree of joy in leading people is indeed inextricably connected to the willingness of those people to follow spiritual authority in a way that is not always without dissent, but is always with humble respect.

Lastly, spiritual authority that accompanies the office of elder can in no way be an excuse for overlooking sin or error of any kind. James 3:1 is clear that "Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness." If it is believed that an elder is in sin, a formal charge should be brought according to the principles of 1 Timothy 5:19–21, which echoes Deuteronomy 19:15–19. Too often one disgruntled person who has a personal beef with the pastor and/or his wife becomes a point of gossip and rumor-mongering. However, personal matters are to be dealt with personally and not through gossip or false charges.⁷² If the church does not follow a biblical process for church discipline, sin against a pastor is tolerated in the false name of accountability and making sure he is humble. Pastors must be held accountable for sin, but they must not be quickly accused or disciplined unless there are formal charges of sin that are investigated by the elders or a team they appoint on their behalf, and a verdict is rendered based upon credible evidence that a sin has been committed. Depending upon the severity of the offense, the elder may be rebuked publicly⁷³ or even removed from church leadership.⁷⁴

The biblical differentiation between a sin that requires a rebuke and a sin that requires removal is important because all pastors are going to sin. But not all pastors are going to sin in a disqualifying way. If a pastor speaks harshly to his wife, for example, he should be held accountable, but, in most cases, this sin would not require a formal charge, unless such conduct was habitual or he was unrepentant. Instead, his wife or a close elder should approach the pastor if he has not already repented due to the Holy Spirit's conviction. Thus, there is a different

⁷¹ Heb. 13:17; 1 Thess. 5:12–13

⁷² Matt. 18:15–20

⁷³ 1 Tim. 5:19–21

⁷⁴ 1 Cor. 9:27

accountability process for a pastor's non-disqualifying sin, which is to be dealt with in essentially the same manner as any "regular" (non-pastor-elder) Christian.

Lastly, to help ensure the Bible's warning against doing anything out of favoritism or partiality with an elder, sometimes an external team comprised of members of a church's denominational leadership or other godly pastors from the area are best suited to oversee the examination and trial of an elder charged of a disqualifying sin.

QUESTIONS:

Q: I remember when we held high the statement that Jesus was the senior pastor of our church and that below Jesus were all the elders on an equal level, as in, no elder having senior authority at Mars Hill Church. Did we change this? Since one of the accusations was "lack of trust in and respect for the senior leadership of Mars Hill Church", that would have to refer to Jesus unless this aspect of our leadership structure was quietly changed and we no longer see Jesus as the senior leadership of Mars Hill Church. That is, unless "senior leadership of Mars Hill Church" refers to all of the elders as a whole. But this would be a strange thing to say since both Bent and Paul were both elders at the time they supposedly did something wrong, and since, again, it implies that Jesus is not the senior leadership of Mars Hill Church. Maybe we can get some clarification as to the definition of "senior leadership of Mars Hill Church".

Q: It kind of seems like we now have "junior" and "senior" elders....Are we as members supposed to respect them all [elders] equally as spiritual authority, or are some more authoritative than others? Are "senior" elders (AKA executive or BOD elders) the spiritual authority for the "junior" elders?

Q: Being how visual I am, I was curious if for simplicity's sake a hierarchy chart could be put together to display who falls where, so that when issues of submission are spoken of I can see why X was supposed to submit to Y.

Q: Is there any biblical support for a tiered elder hierarchy? Obviously not all decisions can be made by all the elders, but it seems very important that the trustworthiness of the body of elders stems directly from the accountability of the elders to each other, and the equality of all the elders in the body. This point has been made and reinforced countless times in Mark's preaching.

Q: How is it possible for an elder to not respect his authority if the elders were all equal before the new bylaws were passed? As a matter of precedent, can we get some guidelines as to what constitutes a lack of healthy respect for or trust in the spiritual leadership of the church so that we as members can make sure we avoid making mistakes that have required discipline up to this point, per 1 Timothy 5?

Q: I gratefully submit to pastoral leadership in the church, knowing that I am not called to be a pastor. But pastoral authority seems vastly different from "spiritual authority", which to me implies a priestly function, that no longer exists, as we are all priests, with direct access to Jesus, through the torn temple veil. What "spiritual authority" exists, other than Jesus Christ, our only great and high priest, and that given to all believers? What does such authority consist of precisely? Does such authority over-ride an individual believer's conviction? Put another way - is there anyone on the org-chart of authority between "ordinary" believers and Jesus?

Q: What are examples of an unhealthy lack of trust in and respect for the senior leadership, as well as lack of trust and respect for spiritual authority? I am not by any means looking for specifics, but rather examples, so as to more fully understand the seriousness of the charges.

Q: Please explain your use of the term "spiritual authority" and what this means biblically and within the context of Mars Hill.

A: These questions are all addressed and answered above in the excerpts from Pastor Mark's book that is to be published in June 2008. Jesus has always been the senior pastor of Mars Hill Church and always will be or God help us. The elders have always operated with the understanding of a firsts among equals structure as Pastor Mark has fulfilled this role since the beginning of the church. In the last 6 months we have established a structure that includes a team of firsts among equals with multiple elders with different gifts that share the leadership responsibility of the church. This is a significantly healthier place for us as elders and as a church as the men are more able to work in their area of gifting and each man belongs to a team of

elders with whom they get to do the ministry, rather than one large, loosely organized team or one first among equals.

All of our elders are men that are biblically qualified to hold the office of elder. In order for us to function most healthy as elders and as a church, there must be some hierarchy and authority within the eldership, however all elders should be respected as spiritual authority and no elder should be considered a "junior" elder.

Every elder has spiritual authority which includes Jesus, The Bible, all of the Elders, church governance policy and their overseeing elder. Depending on the particular issue or decision, different authorities come into play.

Q: What checks and balances exist to keep the elders from abusing the authority vested in them?

Q: Pastor Jamie indicated that the elders are submissive to spiritual authority through "accountable relationships" with godly pastors from other churches: what is an "accountable relationship"? Can we know who those pastors are, frequency of contact, what steps do they take to assess our church body, can we contact them or is it purely a personal, self-reporting process for the individual elders?

Q: How formal is the accountability of the elders? What relationships are in place to make sure that an elder is investing the into the people that he oversees, and not simply telling them to do better without giving them the tools and encouragement and counsel they need to succeed.

Q: Under the new bylaws who is holding the elders accountable?

A: With our new structure, every elder must be a part of a primary ministry team. For some that is the campus in which they serve at and for others it is their staff ministry team. Before the recent organizational changes we had several elders that floated alone as part of the large team. Accountability does not take place in a group of 20-30 men, but rather in smaller groups as men are doing ministry together, living life together and challenging each other to be an example in every area of their life. We have begun developing policies and tools that increase the formality of the accountability of the elders, which is now made possible by having clear, manageable elder teams. In addition we are spending significant time on investing in every staff member so that they have a clear development plan for their whole life. This includes their relationship with Jesus, their family, their friendships, their work, their health and everything else important to the development of a person's whole life.

Q: How do the elders resolve issues when there is a split decision? (or at least a clear dissent?)

Q: In a room full of men, it seems like a certain level of disagreement is inevitable... How will dissent be handled?

Q: Will an elder that is not in complete agreement with a decision by the majority be removed as an elder and said to have "lack of trust and respect for spiritual authority?"

Q: Quote "It was unanimously decided that Paul Petry was in violation of the biblical qualifications of eldership and further resolved that Paul should be removed as an elder of Mars Hill Church." Honestly, unanimous votes make me nervous. In the past this has always been touted as a positive indication of the unity of our church leadership. Lately though, I have begun to have doubts in regards to this issue. When you have a unanimous vote, it seems two options are available: 1.) The elders are truly unified and on the exactly same page or 2.) Those who disagree do not air their concerns out of fear of retribution. Of course it is the latter which concerns me. Is a culture of fear and elitism being perpetuated through the leadership of Mars Hill? Personally I would take far greater comfort in knowing our elders, deacons and members are

allowed to respectfully disagree and air their concerns. There is a world of difference between divisiveness and respectfully disagreeing. What is being done to foster an environment of healthy, humble correction and feedback?

Q: If an elder can be removed under such a charge, what safeguards are being put into place so that an elder can feel able to dissent without being subject to such a charge.

Q: Recently, an elder was removed for expressing “unhealthy” distrust of the elders. As such an event obviously creates a chilling effect upon elders holding each other accountable or engaging each other as “iron sharpening iron:”

Q: What precisely does an expression of “unhealthy dissent” look like, so that we as members and elders might avoid it?

A: Each elder is his own man and needs to be faithful to the guiding of the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures, his spiritual authority and his conscience. Scripture is clear and speaks often to the desire for unity amongst the church and its leaders. When at all possible we do hope for the elders to be unified regarding a decision or direction of the church. However we cannot and do not mandate one to violate a personal conviction of his conscience. The course of action with a disagreement depends on a few variables: Is it a closed handed or open handed issue? Is it a simple matter of opinion or preference? Is their disqualifying sin involved? Will the dissenting elders agree to disagree respectfully or will there be division caused as a result of the disagreement? When a final decision is made by the elders will the dissenting submit to the final decision without causing division? How do they go about their dissenting? All of these questions factor into the outcome of any conflict. Depending on the severity of the issue and the behavior of those involved, there are different outcomes that range from a healthy disagreement among elders to the removal of an elder. We do not mandate with an iron fist that every elder blindly agree with those in authority over them and encourage challenge, discussion, and debate provided it is done respectfully, according to protocol and not in a spirit of division.

Q: Why are the candidates for elder not brought before the church anymore? Shouldn't everyone have a chance to air any concerns about the potential leaders of the Mars Hill, weather they are a members or not? Aren't Sunday services the best way to communicate with the congregation?

Q: When I first started attending Mars Hill nearly 6 years ago, men applying for the eldership role were actually presented before the congregation during Sunday services. Why does this no longer happen?

Q: Is Mars Hill moving away from the vision for training up our own pastors only from those with history of service within Mars Hill?

Q: Is it true that some of the newer elders (or those in the elder process) are relatively new to MH?

Q: Would it be possible to introduce the new elders to the entire church body? (if live presence is not feasible, I hear we have the appropriate media equipment and personnel that could probably put together a video and play it at the services)

Q: Why haven't I seen any of the new Elders be presented to us from the pulpit and be prayed over and initiated as Elders as we have in the past? Did I miss that Sunday?

A: Between our six campuses we will have up to twenty services and is not practical or reasonable to expect every elder candidate to be presented in front of the body on a Sunday. We will be at a point soon where even some elders do not know each other. This issue underscores our need to build elder teams at each campus, where the elders can more effectively be introduced and commissioned in front of the body. As elder teams are built at the campuses,

those men will be introduced to the body and installed at a campus and not at Mars Hill as a whole. The most recent elder candidates were presented to the body via the members' site and the Pastors Prayer Blog on our main website for four weeks giving everyone who wanted a chance comment on or question the character or competency of the men. As we continue to refine this process we will continue to practice bringing the elder candidates before the body in some manner or another as we do believe it is important for the congregation to voice concerns if they have them.

We are committed to training up as many men as possible to be elders of Mars Hill Church, provided they are called, competent, tested and approved. All of the elders of Mars Hill have been men that have been around for years either in the church or an Acts 29 church. The process actually becomes more and more difficult every time we run a new group of candidates through it.

Q: As we grow and have a greater need for people to step into the role of deacon, how are we making sure people are ready and meet the requirements of the position? For example, I work in production - if someone comes in and works faithfully for the Lord every Sunday, how do we know how they are living the rest of the week? As a deacon myself, I know we are expected to be in authentic community, and open and accountable to the people that serve above us, and proactive in getting to know the hearts of those serving under and alongside us, but things get busy, and sometimes the right questions don't find themselves being asked. Can we add a piece to the process where we talk to community group leaders, or submit the names to the members like we do Elders so that the membership might let us know about concerns?

A: As the elders get organized and settled into their new roles and teams we undoubtedly need to make sure that our deacon process and the points that you bring up are solid and well executed. This is a project that several elders are already working on and is very important as we need hundreds of faithful deacons to serve the church.

BYLAW GOVERNANCE

responses submitted by Pastor Jamie Munson

Vision

Mars Hill Church is a legal non-profit corporation and therefore must have bylaws that guide the legal and civil leadership structure for the church. Given the current direction of the church, our desire to expand beyond our existing campuses, and our need to raise up more godly men to lead the church as pastors, it was important that we revise our bylaws to reflect the growing and changing nature of our church. Our previous form of bylaw governance, where every elder is a member of the legal Board of Directors, simply became cumbersome, slow, ineffective, and untenable with the growing needs of our church and the growing size of our eldership.

Every church has the responsibility to establish a form of organizational government that is consistent with its theological beliefs, and in our case that means the Bible and the doctrine of biblical eldership. In addition to the principles of Scripture, we must submit to earthly rulers, which in our case include the United States Government and the Washington State Government. Biblically, this command for God's people to act legally as well as biblically is stated by both Jesus (Matthew 22:20–21) and Paul (Romans 13:1–2).

Furthermore, both our federal and state governments require organizations such as ours to be registered properly and to gain tax-exempt status. These governmental requirements include articles of incorporation and bylaws to state the purposes, powers and activities of the entity. Practically speaking, Mars Hill Church must operate in compliance with the law in order to exist as a legal entity, while also remaining consistent with the teaching of the Bible regarding church leadership. As a result, we have thoughtfully and prayerfully crafted an updated version of our bylaws that allows us to maintain a biblical eldership, comply with the law, and also more accurately reflect our multi-campus strategy and future vision to continue expanding.

Strategy

The primary functional objectives of the bylaw amendments are to:

- Establish a more long range document that accurately reflects our vision and direction as a multi-campus church.
- Create a balance between organizational nimbleness and proper accountability and safeguards.
- Architect a wise and prudent structure that provides sustainability for the church.
- Establish a structure where the elders become a team of teams, rather than a single large team, so that proper authority and accountability can be adequately delegated.
- Delegate authority over campus oversight and care to local campus elder teams.

The bylaws do not attempt to answer every question, situation, scenario or policy decision that must be made rather they establish elder teams with delegated authority and jurisdiction to lead the church and make decisions as they arise. It is not feasible to foresee every future circumstance that requires elder action and rather than wasting our effort and time to plan in detail for every possible scenario we have established an elder team to serve as the Board of Directors and govern the church. Our previous bylaws were too detailed and too specific hence leaving every elder in some situation or another where they were in violation of an over detailed procedure or outdated structure. As you can imagine, updating and amending an organizations bylaws is a cumbersome and time consuming process. The elders have defined the necessary detail in the bylaws and the Board of Directors will govern the church through additional policies.

What is needed of the members

The adoption of the new bylaws and approval of the board of directors has been supported by the elders. While no document is perfect and timeless, other than the Bible, your elders have labored over these changes for several months and have arrived at an end product that we are now sharing with the members. We encourage you to read them paying close attention to the section

on members as it does say that as a member you agree to the bylaws and structure contained in them.

Prayer

As of today the Board has met only once and has a great number of projects to begin and complete. Please pray for the Board of Directors as they get established, acquainted with the global needs of the church and lead the church into a place of greater health.

QUESTIONS

Bylaws – Drafting, Process and Adoption

Q: Who drafted the new bylaws?

Q: What level of participation and counsel was the church attorney asked to provide, and what level did this attorney actually give?

Q: It seems like it was a quick process to come up with the new bylaws. Do all the elders feel that they were given enough time and input to hammer out a quality document? Was it rushed? Does everyone agree it was or wasn't rushed? What sorts of hard questions about the bylaws were asked and defined or redefined?

Q: Who was the primary author of the new Bylaws and changes? John Adams had help but was the chief architect of the US Constitution – who is our Adams?

A: The chief architects of the bylaws were Pastor Jamie Munson and Pastor Tim Beltz. Pastor Jamie has served on staff with Mars Hill for eight years and also served on the board of the Ballard Chamber of commerce for three years with his final year as the President and chairman of the board. Pastor Tim Beltz is a seasoned veteran of non-profit management, most recently serving as the COO of Crista the second largest Christian non-profit in the state of Washington. He also has ran a consulting firm that specializes in working with for profit and not for profit organizations in the areas of strategic planning and governance. Throughout the design process time was spent reviewing other similar churches and organizations bylaws to see what best practices we may learn from. As well our attorney who is a Christian and whose firm specializes in church work had significant counsel, review and input into the soundness and legalities of the structure both advising us along the way and providing content for the bylaws. The design of the bylaws and board of directors structure began in April of 2007 and finished at the end of October 2007 when the elders approved the new bylaws. A thorough review process was built and carried out that included an all elder discussion at our September 10th elders meeting. Along the way the proposed changes were discussed with all of the elders in draft format to get their review, input and suggested changes. All of the elders were given each successive draft of the bylaws that incorporated feedback and suggestions. A document of questions and corresponding answers was kept as well in order to provide full disclosure to every elder as to the questions being asked and why or why not the suggestions were included in the bylaws.

Q: Were the new bylaws approved unanimously?

Q: When Bent was reinstated as an elder under probation was he allowed to vote on the new bylaws? If so how did he vote?

Q: How can votes cast for the new bylaws be seen as "unanimous" when 2 elders that may have good input lost their chance to vote right before these were being voted on? This is coincidentally close timing. Were Bent and Paul removed in time just to get the bylaws passed in full agreement because they had genuine concerns?

Q: Is it true that two elders who made their dissent known in writing to the body of elders were removed from eldership with a week of their having submitted such dissent?

Q: Were the elders free to vote against the new bylaws, or were they informed that they were non-negotiable?

A: Paul Petry was removed as an elder of Mars Hill Church for disciplinary reasons on October 15, 2007 prior to the elders vote regarding the bylaws on October 29, 2007 and therefore was not eligible to vote on the bylaws. Paul was not removed for his dissenting opinion regarding the

structure but his behavior, accusations of other elders, and breaking of elder protocol and confidentiality were factors in his termination from staff and eldership but not the sole reason.

Pastor Bent Meyer was suspended as an elder of Mars Hill Church pending the results of his investigation which was held on October 29, 2007 after the approval of the bylaws. Bent made it known in writing to all of the elders that given the opportunity to vote he would vote no regarding the approval of the new bylaws but would submit to the eldership as a whole if they were approved. Bent was not removed for his dissenting opinion of the bylaws but his behavior and breaking of elder protocol and accusations of other elders were factors in his termination from staff. The remaining 23 elders voted that he was guilty of the charges.

The elders eligible to vote did so unanimously in support of the proposed bylaws. According to the voting procedure a 2/3 approval was needed and had Bent and Paul both voted no the bylaws would have still passed and been approved.

All elders are asked to vote their conscience in accord with what is in the best interest of the whole of Mars Hill Church and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Each man is permitted to disagree and have their own opinion provided it is not contrary to Scripture and is not divisive so that when the eldership makes a decision whether unanimous or not we move forward together as a unit in submission to that decision.

Q: Would the elders have shared the new bylaws with the members if not for this current situation?

Q: Regarding article VIII, section A and B together: Since members do not have any power to vote on the by-laws is signed agreement with the by-laws as a prerequisite for membership considered equivalent to having read the by-laws and knowing what they say? Since per the above member candidates are approved of by at least one current member might this requirement later change to two members owing to the use of interviews of prospective members and the tendency of said prospects to attend the Gospel class, per "the testimony of two or three witnesses"?

Q: Regarding Article VIII, section B of the by-laws, do existing members need to retroactively sign that they agree with the new by-laws since all of us have already signed agreement with the doctrinal statement or would this not be necessary until a general membership renewal and reassessment that may happen in the future? If so how soon can we sign?

A: Yes, the members section of the bylaws requires that members of the church agree with the bylaws. The only way to ensure that is to make them available to the membership. Prospective members will also be given access to the bylaws so they can evaluate their membership in light of this requirement. The membership process will need to be updated to reflect this requirement.

Bylaws – Elder authority

Q: Since the need for new bylaws was presented to “establish a more long range document that accurately reflects our vision and direction as a multi-campus church,” and “to delegate authority over campus oversight and care to local campus elder teams.” why do the new bylaws never reference the multiple campus vision, or campus oversight by local campus elder teams?

Q: Pastor Jamie said the new bylaws are needed to reflect the vision and direction as a multi-campus church. I see next to no mention of multiple campuses. We seem to have gone to multiple campuses ok with the old bylaws. We seemed nimble enough to buy a \$4 mil building in just the last few weeks under the old bylaws – what were the obstructing parts of the old bylaws? Please describe the changes that reflect that vision and direction and how they specifically help.

Q: Why was the decision made to create new levels of power rather than simply create a more efficient workflow within the power structure we have held high and trusted for so long?

Q: Another significant change appears to address the objective of creating "...a balance between organizational nimbleness and proper accountability and safeguards." Now this seems to be the biggest deal but has gotten little discussion: the concentration of organizational power in the Executive Elders. The Full Council of Elders has been reduced to only two functions – voting on the Elected Elders of the Board of Directors (BOD) (presently 6 but no more than 7) and voting on changes to the church doctrinal statement. The Executive Elders (now 5 but no more than 6) now have life terms, they nominate and thereby are the gatekeeper for the BOD. They set the salaries (the BOD as a whole approves) for all BOD members (including themselves), that are employed by Mars Hill and they determine whether they work for Mars Hill Church. So, they hire and fire the very elders that are responsible for holding them accountable and presently to remove an Executive Elder would take 8 of the 11. Please correct if I've got it wrong or explain how this provides/improves "proper accountability and safeguards" (especially considering the current "chilly" environment for "dissent" amongst elders).

Q: What are the "old bylaws"? Can members get a copy to compare "the old" with "the new"?

Q: The introduction to the new bylaws states 5 primary functional objectives of the "bylaw amendments" one of which is to "Establish a structure where the elders become a team of teams rather than a single large team." Another is to "Delegate authority over campus oversight and care to local campus elder teams". The new bylaws don't address these objectives but the old ones did and that part was removed. How did these sections offend and how does removing them give better direction?

Q: Did Elders at Mars Hill change the structure in such a way as to make a power play giving them more control over the church in a way that they could not be stopped and when Paul tried to stop them he was fired? This is purposely posed as a worst case scenario question, not because I believe it to be true, but because I believe that is what all the rumors are hinting at and I for one would like to know it is not true and move on.

Q: We have been repeatedly told that the new by-laws were needed in order to establish a document that reflects and facilitates the multi-campus direction of the church. I am therefore more than surprised that the new by-laws completely fail to reflect the vision and direction of multi-campus. Why are they better than the old by-laws that do address the matter of "Site" pastors? "Campus" or "Site" is only mentioned twice in the entire new by-laws, yet the old by-laws more clearly deal with the campus-site issue (19 times). Have we been misled? Instead the major difference between the old and new bylaws concerns elder authority. The regular elders are almost completely stripped of any actual authority. Under the old by-laws every elder had equal authority with any other elder – even though they delegated certain duties to the executive elders. Under the new by-laws, they only have constitutional authority to 1) vote on any doctrinal change and 2) affirm the slate of the board of director nominees each year. They cannot even nominate the elders who are elected to the board of directors – these are nominated by the unelected executive elders - 5 men. The rank and file elder can be fired at will – but it is almost impossible to remove a non-elected executive elder. The exec elders now have most of the ruling authority and their term has been lengthened from 2 years to a life term. Was the passage of the new by-laws therefore a successful attempt to give the executive elders a disproportionate amount of power, and to render the role of regular elder essentially a non-ruling position? If this is so, were we misled as to the urgency of, and the nature of the changes in the new bylaws?

Q: Under the new bylaws will some elders have more power and if so who will that consist of?

Q: Does Mark have more power under the new bylaws?

Q: The new hierarchy and voting structure defined in the bylaws concern me. It is important that our leadership be unified, and willing to work to resolve differences, and if the difference is not able to be resolved, to not move forward on that issue until it is resolved. This helps limit individual power. I also recognize that this could lead to paralysis if unity is not present.

Q: To reiterate questions already asked, what is the biblical premise for a hierarchy of elders (as detailed in the bylaws Articles IV, V, and VI) and what precautions have been put into place to safeguard against too much power in too few hands? Specifically citing Article VI Section G, is it a conflict of interest to have the executive elders as members of both the Executive Elder Team and the Board of Directors?

Q: Who are our executive Elders? Who is our board of Directors? Were any of the old Board of Directors Appointed as Executive Elders?

Q: I'm also curious why the decision was made for the BoD to serve 2 year terms, but the Exec Elders serve indefinitely? Why no term limit for the Exec Elders?

Q: Over the past 2 years, how many Executive Elders have resigned their positions as such, and when did they do so?

Q: Per Article VI. Sec. E, the slate of nominees for the BOD is to be developed by the Executive Elder team. In light of this, how are the elders and the church protected from the Exec Elder team consciously or unconsciously creating a puppet BOD?
Why were some lesser-known elders chosen to preside (on the BOD) over the more widely known, seasoned, highly-respected, trusted elders?

Q: The new Executive Elders – were they in those offices before the new Bylaws and had they gone through the examination and vote of the other elders or were the positions conferred upon them as part of the new Bylaws adoption? Since the BOD is a new construction the members must have been nominated new. Normally they would self-nominate but that couldn't have happened here so who put this slate forward?

Q: Pastor Mike Wilkerson is noted on the Elders listing on the website as being an Executive Elder but he is not in the new Bylaw listing as such. Did he resign, was he removed for some cause or due to the new Bylaws process or what happened?

Q: One Elected Elder is required to not be employed by MHC – why only one and what purpose, what protection does that provide?

Q: We are told Mars Hill is not a democracy. There appears to be a certain pride in this. Why?

Q: Why must our Executive Elders wield so much power? I understand that it is important to have a shared vision to carry the most impact, but does such a concentration of power not also leave us dangerously open to rule by oligarchy? What checks and balances do we have in place for the Executive Elders?

Q: We would like to reiterate a question already posted regarding Article VI SECTION A –“The Executive Elder Team is a team of firsts among equals within the Council of Elders and is the executive leadership and management of Mars Hill Church.” What is the biblical explanation for the term “firsts among equals”? Where did this term originate from?

A: As stated in the opening to this section the bylaws do not attempt to answer every question but set in place teams of elders to begin to answer and develop policy for the specific questions. The primary team assembled to look out for the best interest of the whole church is the Board of Directors. This is the first piece of the puzzle as we fully embrace the multi-site vision and begin to establish local elder teams to oversee the care of each campus. Right now those teams are

being built and established and each campus is not at a place of full elder teams. As we build these teams and define the jurisdiction of them there must be an oversight body that assures the teams are being architected in a way that the safety and protection for the whole church and each individual campus is being considered. We did not feel it wise to rush this process in order to incorporate these changes in this draft of the bylaws because we didn't want a half thought through system so instead built a board of directors that is best suited to architect these changes.

There are two groups of elders that are giving up "civil authority" (not biblical authority) in the adoption of the new bylaws. The first is the Full Council of Elders which consists of every elder from every campus. The second is the Executive Elders. The old bylaws of Mars Hill Church created a system with a false sense of security with every elder being a legal director of the corporation assuming that there is safety in numbers and because there are so many elders everything will work out and the best decisions will always be made. What actually happens in a system like that is that fewer and fewer people continue to get power because with so many elders you can't get anything done and as a result the red tape increases, bureaucracy ensues and shortcuts begin to be developed so that things can actually happen. If you look carefully at the old bylaws and the new bylaws the executive elders are actually giving up significant decision making authority with the new system. In specific Pastor Mark is giving up the most individual authority and power. Previous to these organizational changes he was the Lead Pastor, Preaching Pastor, Head of the Elder Board and the President of the non-profit corporation. With these changes the only current role he holds of those previously held is Preaching Pastor. The intention is to not hoard power but rather share it so that many elders and many leaders can hold positions of influence based on their individual gifts and callings.

The executive elders do not set their own salaries, that is a full board decision and more specifically an independent salary team is developed to make these decisions and recommendations to the board for approval. We have developed what is probably one of the best, most thorough compensation structures of any church in the nation to be sure that we are above reproach in this area. This would be a total conflict of interest and completely unacceptable if the executive elders were to set their own salaries. In addition the executive elders, while having no stated term length will undergo a thorough annual performance review by the board. Their job performance is directly tied to their role as an executive elder and is subject to review at any time by the board.

Every elder and deacon, including the executive elders are "at will" employees of the church. Washington State is an "at will" employment state which is set up in such a way to protect the employer and not the employees.

As the whole eldership increases in size there will be more men to choose from for the Board of Directors ensuring that a good cross-section of elders best suited to lead the church are selected. The executive elders are in the best position to see the needs of the entire church and to recommend a slate of nominees they feel are best suited to tend to the oversight and governance of the entire church. If they are choosing men to be on what has been referred to as a "puppet" board then they shouldn't be executive elders in the first place and should be removed from office. The full council of elders have the final vote on whether or not the nominees are approved and elected to the board of directors. If they felt like a man or multiple men were not suited to be on the board of directors than they have the freedom to vote no.

With any board of any organization there is the potential of corruption and misuse of authority and power. At the end of the day the elders have agreed that this structure is the best right now to lead Mars Hill Church into the future. Will it change again, probably, and at that time we'll need to go through the same process which is to prayerfully, biblically and wisely determine what is in the best interest of Mars Hill Church and the Gospel, not what is in the best interest of one or two elders.

Bylaws – Employment issues

Q: The bylaws describe elders as having a supervising elder (Article III Section C). Does every elder have a supervising elder? And how is it determined who supervises who? Do only Exec. Elders supervise other Exec. Elders?

Q: In the bylaws it states that a staff elder or deacon's employment can be terminated without reason. What is the reason for this and how can it be explained biblically? (Article V Section F and Article VII Section D)

Q: I noticed that in the bylaws, a deacon can be dismissed for any reason, with or without cause. So if one is pursuing becoming a deacon, I don't understand why this statement. It's like weird that a deaconship would end without reason at any time. Would you please why this phrasing?

A: Every elder has a supervisory elder with the exception of the lead elder who is accountable to the Executive Elders. The Lead Pastor, Jamie Munson supervises the other four Executive Elders. The Executive Elders determine whom acts in the role as supervisors as determined by the different department within the church. Washington (as well as many other states) is an at-will employment state. The verbiage is a legal representation of Washington law. It essentially means that, in the absence of employment contracts that indicate otherwise, employers generally may fire employees for any reasons, no reasons and even unfair reasons, as long as they are not illegal reasons. It is helpful to remember that the Bylaws also serve as a requirement for a non-profit organization. It does not mean that this is the standard procedure (or the goal). It merely defines the legal right of an employer. Employees that violate protocol without remorse are generally released.

Bylaws – Members

Q: If the elders felt the need to utilize counsel and outside sources to come to competent understanding of these bylaws, why are members prohibited from seeking outside insight on the documents that are to govern our relationship to Mars Hill? (Not all members of MH have engaged in legal training.)

A: The elders that were charged with the crafting the Bylaws revision had a responsibility to seek legal counsel. Members are not prohibited from seeking outside counsel for anything, but they are not allowed to have any documents prior to ratification. The reason is that the members are not liable for any violation of the corporation, financially or otherwise. The elders alone are culpable for corporate proceedings.

Q: Per article VIII, section B: "They must also agree to support in worship, giving, and service, and satisfy other conditions of fellowship defined by the Council of Elders." What constitutes "other conditions defined by the Council of Elders"? May these be amendments added at a later time? Since signing agreement with a doctrinal statement, and the by-laws, and agreeing to support the church in worship, giving and service seem pretty comprehensive I would be interested in finding out what other conditions may be defined by the Council as occasion provides. How is the determination of satisfaction of the above criteria made?

A: The only thing required is the member's covenant agreement.

Q: Regarding the waiving of the option to resign in the case of church discipline (Article VIII section C point 5), if a member decides to leave the church while being under church discipline, what procedures may apply in such cases? Certainly a member's privilege to post on this website would be revoked but at a legal and practical level what other disciplinary action could be taken, if any? Could the member be barred from any sacraments (i.e. refused marriage or communion)?

A: The member may be disallowed from fellowshiping at the church until he/she repented or a resolution was reached. This is precisely the issue with the former elder in question. He has requested removal of membership while under church discipline.

Q: Is the process of member resignation enumerated in the by-laws? I can see that member resignation is waived or forfeited but it is not explicitly spelled out that member resignation is in any way parallel or comparable to elder resignation. Can we get some clarification about that? Is it possible that barring any active church discipline a member may resign membership at any time for any reason? Since pastors and elders are at will would it be safe to guess that membership is also at will?

Q: The old by-laws (and the new) impose many restrictions on the individual member – such as not being able to resign if under church discipline and the giving up of any civil recourse against the church. They also state that by signing the member's covenant the member is agreeing with the by-laws and the church's statement of faith. (Candidates having been approved by at least one church member must affirm by signature their agreement with the Doctrinal Statement and the Bylaws of Mars Hill Church) Given these facts I ask the following:

- 1) Why have the by-laws been inaccessible to members when agreement to them is required to be a member? Would not this make these impositions on the members irrelevant and non-enforceable?
- 2) Should not every membership be held in suspension every time the by-laws are amended so that members can review the change and assert their agreement to it?
- 3) Is it just assumed that even though the vast majority of members have not seen the by-laws –that by signing the member's covenant (which does not state or imply agreement to the by-laws) they somehow intuitively are in agreement and agree to have their rights removed – such as the appeal to a civil court or the desire to leave?
- 4) Are all of the members of Mars Hill Church going to be asked to read the new by-laws and re-affirm membership – or is agreement just assumed or imposed on each member?
- 5) If a non-member who desires to become a member is asserting (by signing the covenant) that they agree to the by-laws, then it is clear that the by-laws need to be seen by non-members. This would necessitate that they be accessible to non-members. Why have members now being asked to keep the document non-accessible to non-members?
- 6) Seeing that membership requires agreement with the by-laws,
 - a) should every existing member carefully read the new by-laws and resign if they are not in full agreement with them as Pastor Paul did on Friday?
 - b) will every future amendment be presented to the members so that they can in good conscience resign if they do not agree with an amendment that occurs?

Q: How does the requirement of members signing agreement with the by-laws, in addition to the member covenant and the doctrinal statement, help the pastors fulfill their obligations to all church members as laid out in the member covenant? How does signing agreement to the new by-laws help members fulfill their obligations as laid out in the membership covenant? Do they? If we have gotten along fine without signing off on the old by-laws or even knowing what they were how does signing agreement to the new by-laws change things?

A: It is the prerogative of any member to withdraw from membership for any reason. Unless that person was under church discipline, the member would be granted their request.

A: The Bylaws will be attached to this document and will be accessible for both members and potential members to view and examine. There is no violation to read and distribute these Bylaws to others. The issue you may be referring is for confidential documents entrusted to the elders for examination prior to ratification through a formal vote.

Q: Is there any possible perception of tension between this statement that confidentiality is not assured in cases of church discipline of members given the precedent of pastoral discipline up to this point? May members perceive there to be a tension between the confidentiality afforded

pastors under current discipline and the by-laws which state that no confidentiality is assured for church members?

Q: I understand that confidentiality is assured conditionally in the case of pastoral counseling and other cases and am wondering how soon future written agreements will reflect conformity with the current by-laws.

A: Elders are held to a higher standard according to 1 Timothy 5:19. They are to be publicly rebuked that all may fear. Church members will be given confidentiality up to the level of those they have sinned against. For instance, if a member sins against his wife, the level of disclosure stays there. If he sins against the whole church by posting a blog and accusing the elders of wrongdoing, the disclosure will be more public.

Q: Is it normal to co-mingle church discipline with legal sanctions? Shouldn't these be separate issues? Surely we can deal with problems of gossip or slanderous talk etc within the church. The way it is set up now, we've created an actual legal sanction for merely contradicting the opinion of the elders

A: The Bylaws state that this action is required for elders, but not for members.

SPECIFIC ELDERS

responses submitted by Pastor Scott Thomas

BENT MEYER AND PAUL PETRY

Summary Statements:

Bent Meyer.

After Bent Meyer was terminated for disrespecting other elders and displaying an unhealthy distrust for leadership, an Investigatory Taskforce was formed, per our Bylaws. During the investigation, Bent was compliant and acted humbly and was perceived as repentant. He acknowledged that his tactics were unwise. The full council of elders interviewed Bent and voted unanimously that he was guilty of displaying an unhealthy distrust in the senior leadership of Mars Hill. They also voted unanimously to place Bent on probation under the Shoreline campus elders. The conditions for his future eldership include full confession of his sin against the elders. He is under the oversight of the Shoreline elders and will not be employed by Mars Hill until his probation ends and if a need exists for his services. Our hope and prayer at this time is that Pastor Bent will be restored fully as an elder of Mars Hill Church.

Paul Petry

Paul was terminated from employment and placed on probation for verbally attacking the lead pastor without remorse and for disregarding the accepted elder protocol for the Bylaw deliberation period. Paul contended his innocence all throughout the investigation. He failed to acknowledge any infraction, sin or indiscretion. When the full council of elders examined him in a formal interview, he defended himself, blamed others, and took a posture of obstinate defiance. The elders asked him to repent and he refused. They unanimously voted that he was not qualified to be an elder according to the biblical requirements (1 Timothy 3; Titus 1; Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-5). They also voted to remove him from office as an elder at Mars Hill. A reconciliation team was formed to care for him and his family and to walk them through the process of repentance and restoration. He refused to meet with them. He then sent a lengthy letter to all of the elders that was filled with name-calling and accusations against every single member of the eldership. He later requested that his membership be removed from Mars Hill. We are grieved for Paul and his family and continue to hope for reconciliation should he show signs of repentance.

QUESTIONS

Q: In case it's not obvious, I should probably point out what I (and probably many people) am probably feeling. Bent and Paul are two of the most trustworthy and Godly men I have ever met. Suddenly they are removed from eldership with almost no explanation, and when an explanation finally comes, it is vague almost to the point of uselessness. So on one hand I have two guys I trust entirely as spiritual leaders without a doubt (and I still do), and on the other hand I have a vague curtain of secrecy laying down a heavy hand on these two brothers and demanding absolute silence and obedience from all members. The entire board of elders is made up of humans with potential to sin, just like the rest of us. This is why our leadership structure was set up to have all elders on an even playing field in terms of power and authority so the winner was always majority vote rather than one or two people's decision. The scenario implied in the vague explanation given sounds like Paul and Bent disagreed with an elder (or elders) that held more authority than they did, and the final decision was not "who is right" but "which of these two parties has more power in this leadership structure?" That makes me suspicious, and combined with how much I know of Paul & Bent's character, you're going to have a hard time convincing me they did anything wrong. If this is not what happened, I think someone needs to clarify the matter to eliminate this kind of speculation. And you could say "I don't care if you're convinced because this is not a democracy", and I've heard that more than once on various issues in the past. But the bottom line is, my ultimate devotion and obedience is to Christ, and I wholly submit to the leadership of Mars Hill Church only to the extent that I see the leadership aligned with Christ and biblically right behavior. I think you'll agree that, as a Christian, that's my job. I need to be

constantly keeping tabs on whether or not my leadership is aligned with Jesus. You can't simply say "We are the leaders appointed by Christ and therefore you must always obey unconditionally without question" because, as you have to agree, even the elders are prone to sin and wrong behavior even to the point of needing to be dismissed.

A: In our original announcements to the members we aired on the side of giving a minimum amount of details for a couple of reasons. First we had further decisions to make regarding Bent Meyer's discipline case, the new bylaws and the new Board of Directors. We felt it important to get through those decisions and communicate in whole the direction of the church and outcome of those decisions. Knowing that our members would have many questions we wanted to be able to respond to all of them after we had all of the answers. In addition we did not want to unnecessary slander our brothers. We are under obligation to investigate the charges before making them public and needed to make sure due process had taken place.

All 23 elders voted that both Paul and Bent were guilty of the charges after the investigation and a face-to-face interview with the entire elder board. They also voted to remove Paul from our eldership based on his guilt of the charges and lack of repentance. The vote for the removal of Paul was supported by the executive elders, the elder investigation task force, every campus pastor and every elder except for two, after it was determined (by a unanimous vote) that he was not qualified as a biblical elder. They voted unanimously to place Bent on probation. This was not the decision of one or two others in higher power; it was the unanimity of the entire eldership.

I understand that you love Paul and Bent, but the entire eldership ruled in the favor of the charges that caused the termination by those in a supervisory role. It was not an enjoyable activity to participate in but necessary for the overall health of the church. Paul remains unrepentant even after 23 elders found him to be unqualified.

Bylaw Dispute Questions

Q: Did Paul and Bent oppose the new bylaws?

Q: Were Paul and Bent's lack of respect for spiritual authority in regard to the new direction of the church?

Q: Is this [change in power in bylaws] what Pastors Paul and Bent were, in fact, contending? This would explain why there were 2 elders that fell into "sin" at the same time, and why both were fired within days of filing their separate objections. I put "sin" in quotes because if this is the case, as seems evident, then I am grateful to them for attempting to stop a wrong-headed and far-reaching change in the bylaws, and rather disappointed that the other elders did not do likewise. It would also explain why the "confidential information" was never specified. Was this really kept unclear because of fear of gossip, or because, identifying it as having to do with the proposed bylaws, would have raised questions as to why this was wrong, or sinful ...needing discipline?

Q: It was said that Paul misused confidential information. Was this information about the bylaws?

Q: Is it true that Pastor Paul's "improper use of confidential information" merely involved his discussion of the proposed bylaws with a respected Mars Hill member?

A: Paul and Bent were the only elders that verbalized a disagreement with the Bylaws. The other elders recognized that the Bylaws revisions were necessary to accommodate the growth and mission of the church. The manner in which they exercised their right to speak up about their concerns contributed to their termination. Bent acknowledged that he was unwise in his tactics even though he maintained a position inconsistent with the rest of the elders. This is acceptable. The way he threatened other leaders and cast dispersion about their motivations overshadowed his concerns and thus was unsuccessful in contributing to any changes. Paul and Bent both

spoke to people outside of the eldership about the document and contributed to a volatile response that remains unsettled. Eldership is built on trust of information, people, and resources. Misusing entrusted information can be detrimental to the unity and mission of the church. They both contacted the lawyer independent of the structure established by our lead pastor. Information about people within the church and documents that are not ratified must be guarded from those who may misinterpret them and thus create undue dissension.

Vote Unanimity Questions

Q: Someone on the Ask Anything site said that 1 of the 2 votes was not unanimous. Is that true?

Q: Under the new bylaws (Article IV Section A) only the Board of Directors has a vote in matters other than doctrinal issues and elder candidates. It was said that the approval of the bylaws and the decisions regarding Paul and Bent were unanimous. Does this mean the entire elder board was agreed or only the Board of Directors?

A: The vote by the full council of elders was unanimous for the following items: 1) Approval of Bylaws, 2) Approval of new Elders, 3) That Paul Petry was not qualified biblically as an elder, 4) That Bent Meyer was guilty of the charges of displaying an unhealthy distrust in senior leadership, 5) That Bent should be placed on probation under the Shoreline campus elders, 6) Approval of the Board of Directors. Additionally, the vote to remove Paul Petry from the Mars Hill eldership was approved by a vote of 21-2. One of the dissenting voters explained that they would have voted yes if the motion had specifically included that he would be extended an opportunity to reconcile. This opportunity has been repeatedly extended to Paul to no avail.

Godly Dissent vs. Disrespect Questions

Q: Did [Paul and Bent] disagree with where Mars Hill is going and then disagree in a disrespectful manner?

Q: Barring the need to actually call out gossip [which does occur and does need to be addressed], I have witnessed a number of times in organizations [especially churches] wherein the accusation[s] of gossip or insubordination have been used in an evil way to silence what should be considered Godly dissent. An example from scripture would be Jonathan's allegiance to David when his father was seeking to kill him. I have heard the threat of reprisal thrown around for "gossip" at Mars Hill, and it feels very similar to my experiences in the not to distant past.

Q: Can someone please explain whether Paul and Bent's discipline revolved around some form of dissent or what was deemed gossip? If the answer is yes, why is it considered gossip or slander versus Godly dissent?

Q: The word trust has been used a lot. The accusations against Bent and Paul were an "unhealthy distrust" or "a lack of trust". Can you please explain how biblically this is grounds to dismiss an elder? And to go one step further, can you differentiate between distrust and a respectful dissent? After all, our Protestant tradition is based upon Martin Luther having a distrust of the spiritual authority in the Catholic church and then dissenting.

A: Both Paul and Bent disagreed in a disrespectful manner and that expedited their termination. Bent used accusatory terms of which he has since repented. Paul became obstinate and appeared unmovable. Paul accused Pastor Jamie of hiding a real copy of the Bylaws. He contacted people outside of his scope of rights to discuss the Bylaws. He defended his dissent as being responsible for the vote. Elders can and do occasionally argue their positions and views but must come to an amiable conclusion in a unified manner for the good of the entire church and not for the benefit of a few. This was not the way things were progressing with Paul.

The association of Martin Luther does not apply in that no doctrine was being disputed, only the manner in which the church would be governed. The Bible is silent in these areas, presumably so that a church can remain biblical and adapt to changes.

We want elders that have their own opinions and ideas and we want them to express them for the good of the church. We expect it to be in a respectful manner that is exemplary for the rest of the church.

Request to hear Paul and Bent Questions

Q: If well-respected leaders of Mars Hill such as Paul, Bent and Lief have concerns with the direction of the church, then shouldn't those concerns be made public for everyone to evaluate?

Q: Why are Lief, Bent and Paul not given a chance to tell their side the story and if they are in sin, given a chance to ask for forgiveness from the church? These men are not heretics that should not have a chance to speak, they are servants of Christ that deserve our love and respect.

A: The church is governed in the biblical pattern of elder rule and not congregational rule.

Bent has asked for forgiveness of the elders but it would not be advantageous to ask forgiveness where it had already been granted. He did not cause an offense against the church body, but against the elders.

Paul will not even meet with the elders that were committed to his reconciliation. He certainly would not be given the opportunity to tell his story to the church in his unrepentant state. Twenty-three elders voted unanimously that he was not qualified to be an elder.

Conflict Resolution Questions

Q: The members covenant and old by-laws call for Matthew 18:15-18 to be followed (as well, regarding elders in 1 Timothy 5:19-22) in cases of discipline. How was Matthew 18 employed with Pastors Paul and Bent if the first action was to fire them in a very public way?

Q: We would also like to reiterate the concern over the fairness of the trial of Bent and Paul. It appears that the accusers were also the judge and jury. Also, we would like to know why Matthew 18 was not exercised.

Q: According to 1 Timothy 5:19 – 20 we should not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. Who are Paul and Bent's accusers? Who are the witnesses against them?

Q: Why was an extra-biblical system implemented in the cases of such esteemed Elders as Bent Myers and Paul Petry?

A: Paul and Bent were terminated in a private manner. The Bylaws requires that any elder who is under investigation be communicated to the church. Their employment is at the discretion of their supervisors. Some actions of elders will expedite termination and the process for being investigated.

The trial was executed precisely as prescribed in the Bylaws Article III, Sec. E (old Bylaws). They both agreed to this procedure prior to implementing it. The entire elder board was unanimous in finding them guilty of the charges against both Paul and Bent.

Trial Process/fairness Questions

Q: "In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality." 1 Timothy 5:21 The charges against

Paul Petry and Bent Meyer included distrust and disrespect of “spiritual authority” and the “senior leadership” of the church. Assuming that this means they exhibited a distrust of the other elders at MH, then what measures were taken to assure that their investigations and trials were conducted without partiality, since those investigating, hearing and judging their cases were also those who were allegedly wronged in both cases? Apart from the “consecrating” that each elder in the EIT performed over himself, what other measures were in place to ensure that justice was fairly wrought?

Q: “This was not an easy decision for the elders. . .” - Pastor Jamie Munson, Lead Pastor. Specifically what hard questions were asked by the elders, and what were the answers? It’s helpful for us to understand your deliberation process. Maybe some of the elders could chime in on what specific questions they dealt with.

Q: I understand that eldership and employment are two different stations, but why weren’t Paul and Bent’s jobs simply suspended (as was their eldership) during the investigation process? Why were they terminated from staff before all of the charges were fully evaluated?

A: The Elder Investigation Taskforce is prescribed in our Bylaws and this procedure was followed to the letter of the law. Not all miniscule procedural details are specified in the Bylaws, but everything was followed as prescribed. Some of the criticisms of this specific case involve opinions of others as to how the specific details are carried out that are not specified.

We do not feel the specific questions and answers are worthy of reiteration. The elders were able to ask any question of both Bent and Paul (separately) and they were given a chance to answer them openly. At the conclusion of a lengthy conversation, both Paul and Bent were found guilty of the charges by a unanimous ruling of the elders.

The supervisors determine termination from staff. A person may be an elder that contributes to the mission of Mars Hill but may not be a contributing staff member.

The Charges Questions

Q: The original statement from the elders suggested there were other charges which were not found to be credible. What were the charges that were not found to be credible?

Q: Are charges that are not credible the same as false accusations? Since they were not credible, why were they made? Were there repercussions for the witnesses making them?

Q: The verses that have been referenced in the announcements have pointed to sin being committed. Are these charges considered sin, or are they more about breach of trust and/or not being on mission with the rest of the elders?

A: In a legal trial, a person may be guilty of an offense and not tried for it in favor of focusing on the major violation(s). Some of the charges were lesser in degree but they were not false accusations. The investigation taskforce examined the witnesses and the evidence to determine what issues needed to be addressed. The procedure allows for open conversation and does not constitute gossip or slander.

It was the ruling of the elders that the actions by Paul and Bent were sinful.

Next Steps Questions

Q: Furthermore, as stated in our previous announcement, Paul will receive full salary and benefits through the end of December 2007. Do Bent and Paul have means to provide for their families? What if they do not within 2 months when their salary and benefits from MH end?

Q: If it turns out that things have been handled rather poorly, or even sinfully, are you willing to reconsider?

Q: What is going to happen to the two positions that are now vacant? Are they to be filled or is the money that paid their salaries going to be redirected? And if so, what is the justification for this?

A: Paul remains unrepentant and will not be extended salary beyond the stipulated time. We love his family and feel sorrowful for the repercussions affecting his family. As long as he resists the elders seeking his reconciliation and remains unrepentant, we cannot support him. We are praying that the weight of this will lead him to repentance.

It would not be beneficial to second-guess every decision through this process but have documented the process and will learn from it for the future benefit of the church. Paul's response during and after the trial has proven to show that the decision was justified. The men were not terminated for financial reasons. This remains a non-pertinent issue to the case. We are examining how best to fulfill the mission Jesus has for us at this time. We are not seeking to fill voided positions with duplicate roles. Rather, we are seeking to fulfill the mission of Jesus.

Pastor Mark's Comments Questions

Q: Regarding the disciplinary actions taken regarding Bent and Paul and subsequent instructions about inquiries, I have wondered why Moira Bugler's request to read the current by-laws was given a response which treated that request as being equivalent to asking about the cases of Paul and Bent in the following thread:

<http://members.marshallchurch.org/index.php?name=PNphpBB2&file=viewtopic&t=19020>

Q: What did Pastor Mark mean when he wrote, "Once again, Pastor Jamie's request was to not do this. Without knowing it, you are pressing on the very issue that is the source of our current situation."

Q: Pastor Jamie's Oct 2 announcement regarding the termination of Paul Petry and Bent Meyer included the following: "At this time we do not want any discussion regarding this matter on the members site forums. Speculation or gossip would only be unhelpful to the church and unkind to these men. When a final decision regarding Paul and Bent's eldership status is complete the members of the church will be notified. Join us in prayer for the elders involved and for the mission and vision of Jesus to be accomplished through faithful leadership of this growing body. Any questions or comments should be directed to Pastor Scott Thomas (scott@marshallchurch.org)." Was this supposed to refer to ANY questions about ANYTHING or just about the situation regarding Paul and Bent? If the former then I worry that Pastor Scott was incredibly busy, perhaps having to field questions that could have been fielded by others. If the latter then why did Pastor Mark reply to Moira Bugler and Dustin Dekoekkoek as though any question about the current by-laws fell under Pastor Jamie's request that any questions or comments be directed to Pastor Scott Thomas if Moira and Dustin's question had nothing to do with Paul and Bent's pending cases? Is it possible that Pastor Mark's response may have unintentionally fueled rather than quelled speculation that the case of Paul and Bent had something to do with the by-laws? I do not have any evidence on which I could ascertain what Paul or Bent were fired for and am wondering why Pastor Mark implicitly linked a question about the by-laws to questions about the discipline of Paul and Bent since it seemed Pastor Mark could have simply written, "Pastor Scott can get the by-laws to you", right? If Pastor Mark hadn't written "without knowing it" would anyone have known whatever it was that Pastor Mark wrote, that by asking about the current by-laws that faithful members were asking about the thing that was the source of the current situation? Did Pastor Mark accidentally and unintentionally link the issue of the by-laws with the issue of disciplinary action taken regarding Paul Petry and Bent Meyer? Could that response be partly why members seem to think there is some connection between the disciplinary cases and the by-laws?

A: We have provided the Bylaws to everyone who requested them and have also included both the old and new bylaws in this document. The Bylaws revision was the impetus that ignited the sin resident in the hearts of two men. They both had distrust for leadership and had not dealt with it in a healthy way. When the Bylaws were presented for review, it resulted in their accusations, demands, and threats instead of a healthy discussion of the issues they felt were amiss. Disagreeing with leadership is not a sin. We all must learn to ask questions in a respectful manner rather than first question the motives of a leader and accuse them wrongly.

Miscellaneous Questions

Q: Since the communication of October 2, 2007 by Pastor Jamie stated that neither pastor faced accusations of "moral impropriety", how does one go about repenting of something that's not morally improper?

Q: It also bothers me that we're being limited in our time to deal with this issue as a church. These two men have been extremely important to the health of Mars Hill and a lot of us are very close to them. Many of us still have a lot of questions and concerns that need to be addressed. We should be able to take as long as we want and have all our questions answered, within reason. There might be other important issues to deal with, but to me this is the important issue. Right now, I don't care about the next big push or the next big thing we're doing. I care about the members of this church and their lives. That most definitely includes Paul and Bent and their families.

Q: I am also concerned that more damage has been done to the reputation of these men because of the veiled and abstract nature of the accusations. The facts have been made ambiguous, and gossip tends to thrive in ambiguity. For me personally, this seems to have drawn out the discipline process longer than necessary, which has done even more damage.

Q: I still am not quite clear how the issue of their salary and their payroll can be two separate issues? Is cutting ones salary a means of discipline? How can someone be worthy of a salary but no longer worthy of the position (except in the instance of leave pay) or visa versa?

A: The intention of the communication to the members was to fulfill a Bylaws requirement and to communicate it in a way that was not libelous or misleading. Stating that their charges were not moral impropriety meant that the men had not committed sexual sin—a common sin of fallen leaders these days. It was meant to protect their character from being implicated by those who try to read between the lines.

The short window of time to allow posting these questions was seemingly ample as over 9,000 hits were recorded in this thread. We cannot both expedite the dissemination of information and allow an endless time frame to collect it. We may allow for future discussions of this type, but members are demanding information immediately about this case.

Unfortunately, many people were not able to handle the protection of these men's reputations by using generalized terms. Again, we cannot reveal all details AND protect their reputation. The bottom line is that these men have both been found guilty by all 23 of the other elders for the way they handled themselves during this Bylaw revision.

The decision to extend their payroll for three months is an act of grace. It does not mean they were worthy of money but not their eldership. It was a generous action that sought to care for their families.

Disclosure Questions

Q: As requested before, may we have more specifics of the elders discipline issue in the recent past?

Q: Jamie in one of your letters to the members you said, and I am paraphrasing to get to the point, full disclosure was not going to happen because the leadership did not want to fuel sin gossip rumors etc. And from a follow up letter from you it was stated that Gossip and rumors is exactly what happen. According to Gods word we don't sin because of exterior matters but because of what is in our hearts. I know our leadership knows this. However maybe it was over looked in the process. I would like to encourage full disclosure it is the quickest way to dispel rumors. We can't protect people from their own desire to sin if that is what they are going to do with the information they have. However when we hear and see our leaders courageously, openly with the membership the body of Christ, (standing) and giving account to what took place and why.. then backing it with scripture, it has greater power and clarity leaving no room for speculation or the ability to cause your "brother to stumble" . Trust the Holy Spirit to guide us, direct us, and let us arrive at our own decisions prayerfully and thoughtfully. We are all members of the same body and equally important. When one suffers we all suffer. The Truth sets us free and there is nothing more orderly than Him. I pray for all the members including our leadership that we continue not only to spread the Gospel but to live it and walk in it and meet the needs of the body of Christ as we mature in Christ.

Q: In our justice system, if someone is accused of a crime, those accusations are made public weather they are true or not. We are studying Philippians, were Paul is in prison, or under house arrest, for false accusations of crimes. From the reading of Acts we are made fully aware of these accusations. Our society does not just throw people in jail without disclosing the details of the charges and the authors of the Bible did not edit out the accusations against Paul to protect his reputation or eliminate gossip. Why does Mars Hill leadership feel that they are justified in giving a vague explanation for the termination of Paul and Bent and don't need to reveal the details of the accusations?

Q: When Leif resigned and was reinstated, we were given full disclosure, so much so that I was actually surprised to read about it, since I had no idea that anything had happened before I read it. At first, I felt a little like a Peeping Tom, seeing inside the window of someone else's house when I had no intention of looking in the first place. I became encouraged, however, knowing that our church was so transparent. One of the things I have always appreciated about MH is the openness of the elders to expose their own sin, in the same manner that apostle Paul was willing to do in his letters. When I have heard Mark or Tim or Leif or any of my brothers up there on stage talking about their own struggles, I find encouragement that I am not alone. It just has seemed very odd to me how these most recent events have been handled.

Q: I love this church yet feel like I'm in the dark on a lot of what's going on. I feel uneasy knowing these godly "old stones" who have served Mars Hill for quite some time are gone. We're all one body and we feel this on a deeply intimate level. The statements made about what took place are ambiguous and I'd much appreciate some clarity. Details are unnecessary, but I love the transparency of the leadership with the body and would love to see it continue in the same direction! Thank you elders, you are held in high regard and your self-sacrifice and labor is treasured!

Q: I would like to know exactly what Paul and Bent are accused of doing. We're only left to speculate as to what actually happened. It feels like a game to me. I believe the members of this church have a right to know the plain truth. If it's complicated, then it's complicated. So be it.

Q: Mars Hill has always said that everything it does is open for review and the elders are held accountable not only by Jesus but by the church. Mark always speaks of bring leadership, or members that are in sin up before the congregation to hold them accountable. Why in this instance with regards to Paul & Bent, does this not apply?

Q: A few months ago it was very helpful to receive the letter in the mail regarding Leif and the direction of the church. It was helpful and it was great to read about Leif's transparency and was

willing to share the information. It seems that one of the grips is that people don't know what's going on, but some don't look at the members site on a regular basis. I understand that it would be very difficult to have a member's meeting with 2,000+ folks (or more), but a letter via snail mail, may be a better way to communicate since a lot of folks simply don't look at the members site. Thank you Elders, for all that you do for us. Thank you for your faithfulness, your love for the Body, your love for Jesus and your love for your friends that you've built relationships with and your trying to protect them. I appreciate it and I respect you all the more for it. Since I came to MH 7 years ago, I have been amazed at how well conflict and discipline has been handled. We've been in other churches where there has been a TON of gossip and disrespect. Thank you for trying your best to protect friends yet try to give the most information that you can at the time.

Q: What makes ponder slightly is when two Elders that have been voted in have trust issues at the same time . I can't help it it just simply makes me ask why . What were there trust issues? Are they valid? Are they invalid? Did they just simply spread like cancer one to the other. What do they know that might cause distrust?

Q: The language used to explain what happened with Paul and Bent was very slippery, and felt deceptive and secretive. We are baffled at how the pastors did not foresee what kind of effect this would have on the members. This combined with limited communication raises suspicions. Why did the elders choose to communicate only through the website? Why not send a letter to ensure that all the members would be informed?

A: We are still concerned for the demand for a listing of sins. The elders investigated the evidence, listened to accusations and then interviewed each man, allowing him to disprove, to determine the validity of those charges. The result was that the entire eldership (all 23 men) voted that Paul and Bent were guilty of the charges. This was not opinion, but rather a thorough investigatory process that confirmed the charges.

Paul was charged with multiple offenses and the elders ruled with a formal vote that he was not biblically qualified to be an elder according to 1 Timothy 3; Titus 1; Acts 20:28 and 1 Peter 5. That is a serious claim. Paul remains unrepentant and has since sent a scathing letter that in essence confirmed his disqualification status. He resigned from membership even after the elders sought to reconcile with him.

Bent was charged with having an unhealthy distrust in the senior leadership that conflicted with his eldership role. The elders voted unanimously that he was guilty. Bent humbled himself and acknowledged he was wrong.

Bent Meyer Questions

Q: It was stated that Bent had a lack of trust in Mars Hill senior leadership. Under the old bylaws I thought all elders had the same vote. Therefore wasn't Bent part of senior leadership, so was he showing a lack of trust in the other elders? To be more blunt was he in disagreement with the majority and does that equate to sin?

A: Bent lacked trust in Mark Driscoll, Jamie Munson and the entire Executive Elders. They all have the same vote, but the Executive Elders (Mark, Jamie, Scott Thomas, Bubba Jennings) led the vision, direction and reorganization. His disagreement with the majority does not equate sin. His methodology to express his disagreement did.

Q: Motion 2: Based on Bent Meyer's repentance, we recommend that he continue as an elder of Mars Hill Church on probation, with details and conditions to be overseen by the Shoreline Campus elders. What are these details and conditions? What does an elder on probation entail?

Q: Why is Bent going to be overseen by the Shoreline campus pastors to restore him? Why is he not overseen by the MH "general" pastors? Will his ministry be limited only to the Shoreline campus? Did he lose his office?

A: Bent will attend the Shoreline campus and will serve there as a non-staff elder. Our campus elders oversee their own campus and the leaders that serve within them. The Shoreline campus elders will serve Bent by determining the conditions and details. His employment will be determined by the need of Shoreline and Bent's ability to fill that needed role. Our old Bylaws allowed an upper level of leadership with Executive Elders. Our new Bylaws expand this to include the entire Board of Directors. Bent was found guilty unanimously by 23 other elders of displaying an unhealthy lack of trust in, and respect for the senior leadership of Mars Hill Church. It was unanimously decided to place him on probation.

Q: Why was Bent not put back on staff?

Q: Why wasn't Bent restored to his staff position?

Q: Will Pastor Bent be able to come back to his role of shepherding pastor at some point?

Q: If [Bent] can be reinstated as a pastor, yet not qualify to be an employee... there seems to be a disconnect. He's qualified to spiritually lead us, but not be employed by the institution he is to lead in spiritually?

Q: What will Bent do for a job?

A: When Bent and Paul were terminated, the shepherding and counseling ministries were examined for reorganization toward the renewed vision and mission of Mars Hill. These positions will be reallocated toward a new vision to strengthen community group shepherding.

The supervisors determine termination from staff. A person may be an elder that contributes to the mission of Mars Hill but may not be a contributing staff member. Additionally, Bent needs to prove himself once again during the probation period. Bent is seeking employment outside of Mars Hill Church at this time and submitting to the leadership of the Shoreline Campus for further pastoral responsibilities.

Paul Petry Questions

Q: Can you please reassure us that Paul did not reveal information shared in counseling?

A: Paul was never investigated for this. He openly shared the Bylaws before they were ratified by the elders but we have no reason to believe he shared counseling information.

Q: With regards to Paul it was stated, The EIT presented the charges they found to be credible, which included lack of trust and respect for spiritual authority and improper use of confidential information. Those charges are, as you know, extremely abstract. God tells us in 1 Timothy 5 that Elders who are in unrepentant sin should be rebuked publicly so that the rest will have a godly fear. I now have an abstract fear of "not trusting and respecting spiritual authority." but I'm not sure that is what God intended in that passage. Can we know what Paul did so that we might have a fear of committing the same sin?

Q: I've worked with Paul in particular for a long time and I know him and trust his character. I have a "known" and an "unknown". The "known" is Paul's character. The "unknown" is the details of what happened and the validity of the decision. One is a positive and holds weight, and the other is unknown and holds no weight, and so naturally I am going to lean towards the positive that holds weight. That leaves me feeling like "I'm not sure what happened here, but I wonder if I would have agreed with Paul..." I hope that makes sense.

A: Paul publicly brought an accusation against two elders and did not repent. He caused dissension by his actions surrounding the Bylaws revision. He misused information entrusted to the elders. The biggest thing Paul did through all of this was to fail to repent of any wrongdoing, even after 23 elders voted that he was not qualified biblically as an elder.

Q: Pastor Paul was loved by many at Mars Hill and will be missed. Has he been given a "positive" letter of recommendation to aid him in finding future employment in a similar field?

Q: If Paul can't generate enough revenue from his family law practice by December, will MH help out the Petry family?

Q: Is Paul still a member? Does he intend to continue fellowshiping at Mars Hill?

Q: Is there a way we can contact Paul and his family and tell them how much we love and miss them - or is that wrong altogether?

Q: Was Paul repentant? If so, why was he not reinstated as Bent has? Will he be reinstated if he does repent as Bent has?

A: Paul failed to repent even after all of the elders ruled that he was unqualified as an elder. He failed to meet with the elders to seek reconciliation. He requested that his membership be removed. He is not in fellowship with this church and will not be recommended to another church or for employment unless he repents and reconciles.

If even these efforts do not bring our brother to his senses, Jesus commands us to treat the person as an unbeliever, which means we no longer have normal, casual fellowship with him, but instead use any encounters to bring the gospel to him and lovingly urge him to repent and turn back to God.

Paul remains unrepentant and will not be extended salary beyond the stipulated time. We love his family and feel sorrowful for the repercussions affecting his family. As long as he resists the elders seeking his reconciliation and remains unrepentant, we cannot support him. We are praying that the weight of this will lead him to repentance.

A: Paul Petry publicly accused our lead pastor of lying to the elders. He claimed Pastors Jamie and Mark were deceiving the elders. When he was approached and was asked to offer an apology, he failed to repent. All throughout the investigation, Paul failed to acknowledge any wrongdoing of any kind. When the full elder board examined Paul, he further strengthened a position of innocence. The elders were astonished at his lack of repentance, even when asked for it. Paul shared confidential information with non-elders about material the elders were discussing. The elders voted unanimously by all other 23 elders that he was not Biblically qualified to be an elder. The elders sought reconciliation and Paul refused to meet after multiple attempts. He appeared to become more obstinate with each contact. Paul wrote a lengthy letter that was described as scathing as he accused every elder with multiple charges. Unfortunately, he asked that his membership be removed from Mars Hill and curtailed his reconciliation. At this time, we are instructed to treat Paul as an outsider until he repents.

By failing to repent, this person essentially ostracized himself from the community at Mars Hill for the duration of his unrepentance. It's not so much that the church has to kick out the offender as it merely recognizes the breach that is already there. This is implied in Jesus' statement about regarding the offenders as "a Gentile and a tax collector." These people weren't literally kicked out of Jewish society. Rather, they were either by birth or by choice simply not included. There were outsiders. And so is the person who will not repent of sin when given every chance to do so.

Jesus also assumes that the community of his followers, because it is a place of genuine love, will care so much about the well being of its members that it will not tolerate unrepentant sin in any of its members.

Recognize that the unrepentant sinner has effectively removed himself or herself from the community and become an outsider. Take this outsider status seriously. Don't pretend as if nothing has changed. It has. Unconfessed sin has broken fellowship with the body. But be sure to think of this outsider as one included within the mercy of God. Continue to hope and pray that this person will return to the community. Don't fail to extend welcome to the unrepentant sinner, offering the possibility of confession, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

Q: Why was the Pastor Munson's post about Paul's termination deleted? I am sure there was a post about him being fired, for us not to talk about it on the forums, and there will be an investigation. Now it is not there to reference any longer. It was the first posting that was so vague. Why was it deleted?

A: The post was not deleted but was bumped off the queue as subsequent posts were added. A copy of the post can be found in the appendix of this document.

Q: Was Paul Petry the only professional lawyer on the eldership staff? Do we have anyone else coming in who might have the same credentials to ask professionally informed questions from within the elder staff?

A: Paul was the only lawyer on staff. However Mars Hill has a regular attorney that we use who is a Christian that does not attend Mars Hill but is a partner of a local reputable law firm. This arrangement affords Mars Hill with counsel that is non-biased.

LIEF MOI

Q: Why did Lief resign and then change his mind and stay on?

Q: Pastor Lief resigned? Did I miss something mailed out to this effect? Wasn't he Mark's accountability partner?

Q: Why has Leif Moi been reduced to only a "co-founder of Mars Hill Church" as stated in his bio on the Pastor's bio page? From the Pastor's bio page, it looks like there are several other pastors currently doing the marriage ministry that Leif was doing. If he isn't doing the marriage ministry any more, what is he currently doing?

Q: Where is Leif? Is he still an Elder? If he came back why did his role change out of being the Ballard campus Pastor?

A: Pastor Lief did resign and Pastor Mark Driscoll did pursue him and work toward personal reconciliation with Lief as well as reconciliation between Lief and the other elders. Upon meeting with Lief there was reconciliation on both counts and Lief was unanimously reinstated as an elder. Pastor Lief is still an elder of Mars Hill Church and is working on staff at the Ballard Campus as a part time pastor in the area of counseling with a particular focus on pre-marital counseling. He is walking alongside the rest of the elders in support of the mission of Mars Hill. When Lief resigned several months ago, we communicated that immediately to the members of Mars Hill. A copy of that communication can be found in the appendix of this document.

ELDER INVESTIGATIONS

responses submitted by Pastor Scott Thomas

Q: How is an Elder Investigation Taskforce chosen?

A: Our Bylaws do not stipulate how an Elder Investigation Taskforce is chosen. The lead pastor chose one of our experienced pastors and asked him to select a team. The average age of the most recent Elder Investigation Taskforce was 47 years old and included men with significant pastoral experience. The answer is that a Taskforce would be selected that would best represent competency that could result in justice.

Q: It states in Article III SECTION E – Discipline and removal of elders shall be consistent with the standards set by the Bible, the specific procedures to be determined by the Board of Directors in its discretion. An elder who is also an employee is employed at will and may be terminated as an employee at any time, with or without cause, by the Executive Elder Team or its designee (e.g. campus pastor or employee’s immediate supervisor). Any such termination shall automatically result in suspension as an elder pending discipline or removal as such by the Board of Directors. Can you please explain the circumstances for terminating an employee without cause? Why are employees terminated prior to an investigation rather than suspended, investigated and then possibly terminated?

A: The verbiage is a legal representation of Washington law. It essentially means that, in the absence of employment contracts that indicate otherwise, employers generally may fire employees for any reasons, no reasons and even unfair reasons, as long as they are not illegal reasons. It is helpful to remember that the Bylaws also serve as a requirement for a non-profit organization. It does not mean that this is the standard procedure (or the goal). It merely defines the legal right of an employer. Employees that violate protocol without remorse are generally released.

Q: What does it mean for an elder to be on probation? (or how are his duties different?)

A: An elder can be placed on probation by his supervisor or by the Board of Directors. This is an exercise in loving discipline to correct behavior and/or attitudes that are deemed detrimental to the leadership. An elder on probation is allowed to function in a full capacity as an elder but with unspecified limitations as necessary to create the changes needed.

STEWARDSHIP

responses submitted by Pastor Jamie Munson

Q: I have noticed that the "giving" is greater than this time last year but yet seems to be below budget. Also, with the new campus openings expenses must be very high. Why are we not hearing more of an appeal to step up giving?

A: Our budget has always adjusted upward every Fall, this year is no exception. Our calendar year for programming, planning, expected growth, re-launching the church and new staff costs begins usually in October. This is why the budgeted increase in both our anticipated spending and also our necessary giving. Coincidentally we have just wrapped up planning for communicating more broadly our budget needs and current shortfall. We have delayed that communication by a week or two in order to focus on this document but will resume this communication shortly. We are praying to be able to finish 2007 ahead of budget so that we can retain our operational reserve and head into 2008 on level ground.

Q: What is the status and future plans for the property M.H. owns just north of the Ballard Campus?

Q: I want to throw in a 'ditto' to the question about the property north of the Ballard campus. Didn't we have a building campaign affiliated with that at one point? I forgot that we had that thing. What are the plans for that facility now?

Q: It seems there has been a shift away from involving church members on a certain level with the strategic plan or direction since the members' meeting and dedication at the second building acquired in Ballard. There is a perception of less information disseminated regarding the use of that building or building funds since that time, while members have less of a voice in any step along the way. And judging from the tone of many questions in this forum, people are hesitant to ask questions or add input (on this or other issues) for fear of reprisal. Therefore, what incentive does one have to become a Mars Hill member (other than access to the members' site)?

A: We purchased the building on 50th with the intention of performing a massive renovation, and by connecting it with our Leary building, to create a large campus in the middle of the city. Since the 50th building dedication, our renovation plans were delayed by our attempt to obtain a change of use permit. During the permitting delay we were gifted a building in West Seattle and undertook renovating and opening that building as our next campus. At the time of these changes we communicated this to the members of the church openly and honestly as we wanted to be faithful to the stewardship and generosity of the body. Also, each quarter a letter is sent to members, along with their donor statement, urging faithful stewardship and giving updates to vision and building strategies. In addition, Pastor Mark wrote a lengthy letter that was sent to members electronically, and handed out at all campuses explaining the shift to a multi-campus church before the West Seattle campus opened. Due to the restrictions and expense of building a single large building in our city our focus has shifted from one large campus to becoming a multi-site church of smaller campuses. Your elders feel this will enable a more effective and cost-efficient spread of the Gospel throughout Seattle, and beyond. It will still take capital campaigns and the purchasing of facilities but allows us to spread and grow more quickly as Jesus leads.

We are leasing part of the 50th building to generate some revenue. We are also performing a minor renovation of portions of the building to alleviate our current office and production space needs. This will eliminate the need for leasing office space for our use. In addition the property provides some much needed parking relief for our Ballard campus and also needs such as storage. An average church of our size functions with about 4 times as much square footage as we do with our Ballard campus. Storage, meeting rooms, office space and parking are greatly needed and this property serves those purposes in the mean time. Future development options are being considered as well but there are no firm plans for these. This is further complicated as the city is considering further zoning changes and restrictions in industrial areas of the city. Until

this legislation is decided it hangs property owners up as the future possibilities of the property are unclear. We are hanging on to the property and using it to the fullest extent possible in the mean time.

Q: The old bylaws provided for quarterly financial statements to be provided to all elders, the new bylaws make no provision for financial information more frequently than annually. What will be the new distribution of financial statements and how does this new plan provide more accountability and safeguards?

Q: Have the elders been receiving the quarterly financial statements of Mars Hill Church? If not, how has financial accountability been maintained?

Q: Will quarterly financial statements be produced now that these new bylaws are in place? If so, who will receive them?

A: Financial statements will continue to be prepared on a monthly basis and will be distributed to the Board of Directors and all of the Elders. It will be the Board's responsibility to manage the giving, budgets and assets of Mars Hill Church. Additionally, there is an Elder Finance Team and an Elder Audit Team which is chaired by an Elder who is not on staff. These elder teams will perform additional oversight duties and work with our auditor each year to ensure that we are above reproach.

Q: In the spirit of financial discipline and transparency, I would like to ask the elder to prayerfully consider publishing the Church's budget in addition to the campus budget. My question on this point is that in light of recent, and perhaps ongoing budget deficits, I would humbly request that a budget be made available to review and understanding. (I would perhaps clarify that I am not interested in a budget that would show in detail the specific salaries of each staff, etc. I'm more interested in a breakdown of the financial goals for the local church with our campuses, etc...)

Q: I strive to be faithful to the pledge I give to the church, and I have specific areas of ministry that I wish to be involved in the future with my wife, such as pre-marriage, single adults; and having a budget to prayerfully consider from my church leadership would better equip me to understand and perhaps adjust my budgeting priorities to match the Church's priorities.

Q: I understand that MH produces annual audited financial statements each year. Since MH holds financial transparency as a core organizational value, I presume that members have access to these statements. Where might members request and gain access to such statements. If access to such statements is not available to members, why not? Does MH file a form 990 with the IRS and Washington State?

A: We undergo regular quarterly reviews and revisions to our Operating Budget. Additionally, any budget approved is conditional upon us meeting budgeted income. Accordingly, we may undergo multiple budget revisions in a fiscal year which have created some practical issues with publishing a budget.

Members who have budget questions or wish to view our audited financial statements have been encouraged to e-mail giving@marshillchurch.org in order to set up an appointment. This is still a viable option.

Mars Hill does not file a 990 form, as it is not legally required to do so. Additionally, we feel that an externally prepared audit provides greater accountability than an internally prepared document.

Financial and stewardship communication to the members of the church is an area in which we desire to see improvement in. To this end we have recently hired Pastor Tim Beltz to be the

executive pastor of Mars Hill Church who has a wealth of experience in management and non-profit operations. He will be working with the finance team to improve our communication.

Q: Is there a way to value the sacrifice and hard work of staff people, many of whom have children and have left careers by finding ways to get them through our financial rough spots with the jobs/ministries we ask them to take on, or is there a way to better evaluate where we are and where we'll be so that their job security isn't so in the hands (and pockets) of the church body via their giving?

A: We are a church that is solely funded by donations. Any and all expenses, including salary and benefits, will be always be connected to the giving of the church body. We are blessed to have dedicated staff members who recognize that their greatest treasure will be to hear "Well done good and faithful servant" and work with that goal in mind.

Q: We also second the post about the "big show"/production and the money that is spent on it. We feel that the ground war, including grace groups, counseling and Children's Ministry are in much greater need of the money.

Q: With the increasing deficit I understand there have been lay-offs at at least one-campus, I do not know about others however I see the production of Mars Hill becoming more and more elaborate. I feel that instead of raising up leaders in the Church to aide our already over-burdened leaders, the focus is spent on the "Big Show". I realize I am seeing a small part of MH finances, but is the budget focusing on the air war to an extent that the ground war is suffering needless casualties?

A: Both the air war and the ground war are considered critical for the health of the church. While the funds spent for Sunday production is more visible, it doesn't occur at the expense of the ground war. Over the last year we have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars for ground war training, most notably the CCEF training which will be ongoing.

Q: What system/process/accountability is in place regarding making decisions for specific monetary purchases? In asking that I am wondering, who governs each of the budgets and decides if the money that has already been allocated, is used in a way that is most beneficial and glorifying to Jesus? Who or what keeps a group from buying something that is cool, just because they "need" it? In addition, how do we as a church evaluate our spending based on our mission? (where your treasure is, there will your heart be also). As I see it, we spend a significant amount of money on productions, much (even most) of which is well spent, but how do you balance spending on something as costly as productions, with spending on something as important counseling or community group?

A: Each campus and central support department has a budget manager and purchase agent responsible for overseeing the purchases for their campus/department. The elders soberly consider who is given that authority and appoint campus pastors who are clearly on mission. In addition, every campus pastor and department head is instructed to ensure all assets, whether money, equipment or people, are focused on our mission to spread the Gospel. By shifting budget management to campuses, we give the Campus Pastors greater autonomy which allows them to better serve the people attending that campus and take a greater ownership over the stewardship of the resources.

It is difficult to make a simple budget comparison between a department like productions, which requires great stewardship of equipment and money, and departments like counseling which require great stewardship of time and people. In general, we begin our budget process with a best-case scenario and pare it down to a level that fits our projected income for the next year. Every campus and every department is asked to make cuts in order to obtain a feasible budget.

Q: If I remember correctly, M.H. made an offer of about \$4,000,000 for the "downtown" property. Is that money available or will we be financing a loan to make the purchase?

Q: I recently read in the newspaper that our church has purchased/is purchasing a nightclub in downtown Seattle for the downtown campus. Of course, it is no secret that we want to start a downtown church. Upon reading it in the newspaper, I searched the Members site for mention of the intent to purchase the property, but I could not find any information on it. (Perhaps I missed it.) My question is, would the elders consider finding a way (either on the website or some other appropriate means) to notify the members of the church when it makes public final decisions like buying property? It seemed strange to read about our church making the purchase in the newspaper, and not being able to find any information about it on the Members Site. I think the church should consider notifying members before we read about it in the newspaper.

Q: Was any thought given to seeking the counsel of members when deciding to spend \$4 million on a new building in Belltown? If not, why not?

Q: I believe I read that the downtown building sold about 6 months ago for, if memory serves, \$3.4 mil. Forgive my memory if I'm wrong, but I recall this building being described to us as having been purchased for significantly under market value. Considering the current real estate climate, that seems like a big jump. I'm not too familiar with that area, but could you explain what makes this property a particularly wise investment?

Q: The Bible speaks of the inability of being "slaves to two masters", with Mars Hill acquiring all of this debt for the new buildings on top of our existing debt, aren't we running the risk of being a slave to the bank? In making our decisions for the church, will they be based on furthering the gospel or on how to pay the mortgage?

A: We have been looking for a space in downtown Seattle for well over six months. The process of finding, negotiating and ultimately leasing or purchasing a piece of property takes some time to do so. The church has known for sometime we were looking for a space and when we found a specific property we informed the members on the members site to this fact. In addition we announced this on Sunday from the pulpit prior to closing on the property. We were careful to not publish the information to broadly or to prematurely knowing it would garner a lot of attention because of its past. We have obtained a loan for 80% of the 3.95M purchase price and have raised the funds for the 20% down payment, primarily from the core group that will be attending the downtown campus. All of these announcements have been on the members site to view. The building we have purchased is at 2333 Western Ave in the heart of Belltown. It has appraised at over \$1M more than our purchase price. So instantly we have \$1M in equity and a good building that will take minor modifications to be used as a church. In addition the zoning of the property permits building up to 85 feet on the property so it is an attractive piece for future redevelopment if Jesus should lead us in that direction. In addition, immediately after our offer was accepted the seller of the property had 3 back up offers so there is significant interest in this property that Jesus has blessed us with. When looking to purchase property we use several qualified consultants which include our bank, developers, real estate brokers, attorneys, architects and good business men and women to speak into the decisions.

While we have increased our debt, we still fall below the debt per adult attendee metric used to determine church financial health. The debt we have is directly related to opening new campuses, and improving technology and current campuses, all of which is directly related to furthering the Gospel.

MEMBER DISCIPLINE

responses submitted by Pastor Scott Thomas

Q: Regarding Article VIII- SECTION C- Number 3- "Those who are members of the church or who regularly participate in church activities may be dismissed from the church by the agreement of at least two elders. The dismissal of a church member may be made known to all church members." How is this biblical? Matthew 18 clearly lays out how church discipline is to be conducted. Believers in sin are to be brought before the church with the intent to restore fellowship. Under this article someone may be dismissed with or without the congregation ever knowing about it. In my mind, the article above is clearly outside of the scriptural mandate. How many members have had their membership revoked without the congregation being notified or involved?

Q: Per Article VIII section C point 2 "Members of Mars Hill Church are not guaranteed confidentiality regarding issues of church discipline, and understand that in submitting themselves to the authority of the church, issues of a sensitive or personal nature may become known to others. This includes, but is not limited to, notification of the authorities if a crime has been committed or if a real threat of someone being endangered exists, as well as other violations of scripture that may not result in physical danger." Does this effectively say that church members have no assurance of confidentiality in cases of church discipline and that the matters pertaining to their discipline may be discussed not only beyond any need for compliance with the state and local authorities, but also potentially in other settings? Given that confidentially agreements are given for pastoral counseling should confidentiality agreements be vitiated in light of this by-law?

A: Church discipline (which may also be referred to as "accountability") is one of the most maligned ministries in the church. It is also one of our most desperately needed ministries and one of the greatest blessings God has given to his people.

The Bible never presents church discipline as being negative, legalistic or harsh, as modern society does. True discipline originates from God himself and is always presented as a sign of genuine love. *The Lord disciplines those he loves* (Heb. 12:6). *Blessed is the man you discipline, O LORD, the man you teach from your law* (Ps. 94:12; cf. Deut. 8:5; 1 Cor. 11:32).

Life in the community of his followers involves risky and messy involvement in the lives of others, both for their sake and for the common good. Sometimes this involvement includes discipline that is actually a reflection of Christian love.

God's discipline in the church, like the discipline in a good family, is intended to be primarily positive, instructive, and encouraging. This process, which is sometimes referred to as "formative discipline," involves preaching, teaching, prayer, personal Bible study, small-group fellowship, and countless other enjoyable activities that challenge and encourage us to love and serve God more wholeheartedly.

On rare occasions God's discipline, like the discipline in a family with young children, also may have a corrective purpose. When we forget or disobey what God has taught us, he corrects us. One of the ways he does this when we fall into sin is to call the church to seek after us and lead us back on the right track. This process, which is sometimes called "restorative discipline" is likened to a shepherd seeking after a lost sheep.

"If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off" (Matt. 18:12-13).

Thus, corrective or restorative discipline is never to be done in a harsh, vengeful or self-righteous manner. It is always to be carried out in humility and love, with the goal of restoring someone to a closer walk with Christ (Matt. 18:15; Gal. 6:1).

Jesus himself sets forth the basic process for exercising church discipline. In Matthew 18:15-20, he describes four basic steps we are to take to restore a straying brother or sister:

1. If a sin seems too serious to overlook, we are to go to our brother in private and appeal to him to repent.
2. If he will not listen to repeated personal appeals,¹ we are to take one or two other believers along, so that they too can urge the brother to turn back to God.
3. If the brother persists in his sin, we are to seek the formal involvement of the church, initially by seeking assistance from our elders, and if necessary, by informing and asking for the prayers and assistance of the entire congregation.
4. If even these efforts do not bring our brother to his senses, Jesus commands us to treat the person as an unbeliever, which means we no longer have normal, casual fellowship with him, but instead use any encounters to bring the gospel to him and lovingly urge him to repent and turn back to God.

The Bible leaves us a great deal of latitude in how we carry out these four steps, so various churches will approach this process in different ways. Most churches agree, however, that the disciplinary process has three main goals:

1. To restore the wandering brother or sister to the Lord (Matt. 18:12-15; Gal. 6:1);
2. To protect the unity of the church and guard other believers from being harmed or led into sin themselves (1 Cor. 5:6).
3. Most importantly, to show respect for the honor and glory of God (1 Pet. 2:12).

Regarding telling it to the church, it's hard to determine precisely how one should "tell it to the church" today, when many churches are much larger and more institutionalized than was assumed in Matthew 18:17. Literally, a person could stand up in a worship service and announce his or her problem to the congregation. But it's unlikely that this is a wise interpretation of Jesus' teaching in our current setting.

In many cases today, churches have structures for dealing with conflict in the body. "Telling it to the church" may be practiced by first telling it to the board of elders. The board might decide later on that the whole congregation should be informed, but this would not be the expectation.

Q: Should moderation of discussion forums on this website be a responsibility handled only by pastors and deacons for the sake of uniform capacity on the part of each moderator for enacting church discipline in cooperation with another moderator?

A: Moderation of discussion forums on the member's site must be the accountability of an elder or deacon but can include member responsibilities as overseen by them. Church discipline is not the desired outcome, but rather, a changed life through the gospel. If a problem arises with a particular member within the forum, campus pastors, elders and other moderators are asked to keep an eye out for destructive discussions.

Q: Should church leadership take disciplinary action toward members in cases where members write about the church in contexts other than this website, and would said action be consistent with article VIII, section A which says that membership is a theological and spiritual term that does not have civil effect in matters of state law? If so would this be a useful reason for requiring that members sign their agreement of the by-laws so as to be appraised of this possibility in the future?

A: That section of the Bylaws means that Mars Hill has no members in the manner of stockholders or business owners with voting rights. Additionally church members are not held culpable for civil violations or fiscal irresponsibility. Rather, church membership is a matter of spiritual covenant with one another and with the mission and vision of Mars Hill Church. Members are held responsible for living consistently with the gospel message of sin, confession, repentance and reconciliation through the person and work of Jesus.

Q: What appeal does a member that is wrongly accused by two elders of sin have? It appears that two elders can simply end a member's membership and the member - although innocent - has no way of having his or her day to argue their innocence.

A: We are currently writing the discipline guidelines that will include how a member may appeal a decision made by two elders. Scripture speaks to mediation and arbitration by others within the church membership. The final decision has not been determined at this time. The new bylaws allow policy teams to address these sorts of questions and now that the bylaws have been approved the teams are working on this and other policy guidelines.

Q: If a MH member has shown repentance for an action to a MH elder or person in leadership, and received forgiveness and/or restoration, how does such person know for certain that s/he has received such forgiveness/restoration, and may s/he rest assured that such forgiveness/restoration is sincere and permanent? (Similar to the prohibition on "double-jeopardy" in our criminal courts.)

A: The goal of any elder discipline is repentance and restoration consistent with the gospel. As long as the fruit of one's repentance is evident, no other action is necessary and the member will not be retried for past actions. However, a member that displays only worldly sorrow may be held liable for the same offense until godly sorrow that leads to true repentance is attained. A person dismissed from Mars Hill for disciplinary reasons may be reinstated to full membership if the elder that oversaw the person's discipline accepts the person's repentance as genuine.

Q: The Lead Pastor's letter of October 25, 2007 pronounced an unidentified group of members as being "utterly sinful", and participating in "slandorous gossip". As the group of offending members was unnamed, many members who have expressed their concern to the elders are left wondering if they were the utterly sinful, slanderous gossips. To set innocent hearts at rest, were each of the persons referenced above approached individually? Matthew 18:15 "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. (If this is the case, any person who has not been so approached can rest secure that they have not offended.) Both "utterly sinful" and "slandorous gossip" require malicious intent on the part of the offender. Since the Lead Pastor posts on behalf of the elders on the MH members site, can we presume that the majority of the elders support these assertions? If so, what process was used to evaluate the heart and motives of the offending individuals? Were they given an opportunity to refute such charges? If not, was the Lead Pastor speaking only on behalf of himself, and can we expect a public retraction and apology for presenting such harsh words as the voice of the elders at large?

A: Those that were identified as having words that do not build up others are under the oversight of their campus pastors to minister and care for them. They will be approached to determine if they will be encouraging or discouraging the mission of Mars Hill Church. Some of them have been confronted and have repented from their harsh words. Others are continuing to be destructive to the mission of Jesus and will be dealt with gently but in straight-forward manner. A few verses to help guide our conversations away from being slanderous are the following: Proverbs 15:1 A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. Ephesians 4:31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Proverbs 29:11 A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back. Colossians 3:8 But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Ephesians 4:29, 32 Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only

such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear...
Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.
Ephesians 4:15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is
the head, into Christ..."

TECHNOLOGY

responses submitted by Pastor Zack Hubert

Vision

This is an exciting time for Technology at Mars Hill Church. So much momentum has been built up by the faithful service of many throughout these last 11 years, that this coming year will be very significant. From the goodness of Jesus our Savior, He has brought together volunteers and staffers with the right mix of talent, passion, creativity, and humble sacrifice that we are all very excited to see what He will do with this critical mass which has come together.

Before we get into details, the question could be asked, why does Mars Hill even put this much effort into Technology when many churches have only rudimentary systems in place? How does Technology tie into the mission of Mars Hill? Stated succinctly:

The Mars Hill Technology Ministry exists to bring glory to God and magnify the name of Jesus through the development and application of innovative technologies. We solve problems and extend the reach of the ministry of Mars Hill.

Living for Jesus

Technology, like writing, singing, and many other skills can be employed in the service of different masters (Colossians 3:17,23, Matthew 6:24). Mars Hill recognizes that technology must bend its knee in the service of Jesus and that all technologists similarly must humble themselves fully in His service. As we serve a great a wonderful Lord, we desire excellence in everything we do so as to magnify His great name through this medium.

City within the city

The Lord is doing wonderful things through the many ministries of Mars Hill. We in Technology believe that we can serve the needs of these ministries through the in-house development of custom applications which will network together to create a fully integrated virtual city. Think of a social-network to end all social networks wherein this agile service-oriented infrastructure will leverage cutting edge frameworks to bring us all closer together. If you know what this means, then you need to volunteer and serve along side us! You can also subscribe to our blog at <http://www.voxpopnetwork.com/codex>, to follow along with our development.

Knowing Culture

The culture around Mars Hill represents some of the finest technologists in the world with the proximity of such giants as Microsoft, Amazon.com, Google, and many others. In addition, technology is one of the most active culture-changers that exists today as the rise of the social network, Youtube, and other media outlets attest. While there is much to reject, the redemption of Technology as a servant of the Gospel is our primary motivation.

Loving people

Extending the reach of the Gospel far from the walls of any Mars Hill campus is a great expression of our love and is only possible through the innovative use of what technology can provide (Matthew 28:19 ff). Further, by building the virtual city which connects the many facets of Mars Hill, we love each other through the fostering of a richer community (John 13, 15, Romans 12, etc.).

Transforming lives

The greatest gift technology can give is to present the Gospel and enable the community of Mars Hill to live it out more fully in every facet of our service and community with one another. As such, we see technology as a revolutionary catalyst in the lives of everyone.

Strategy

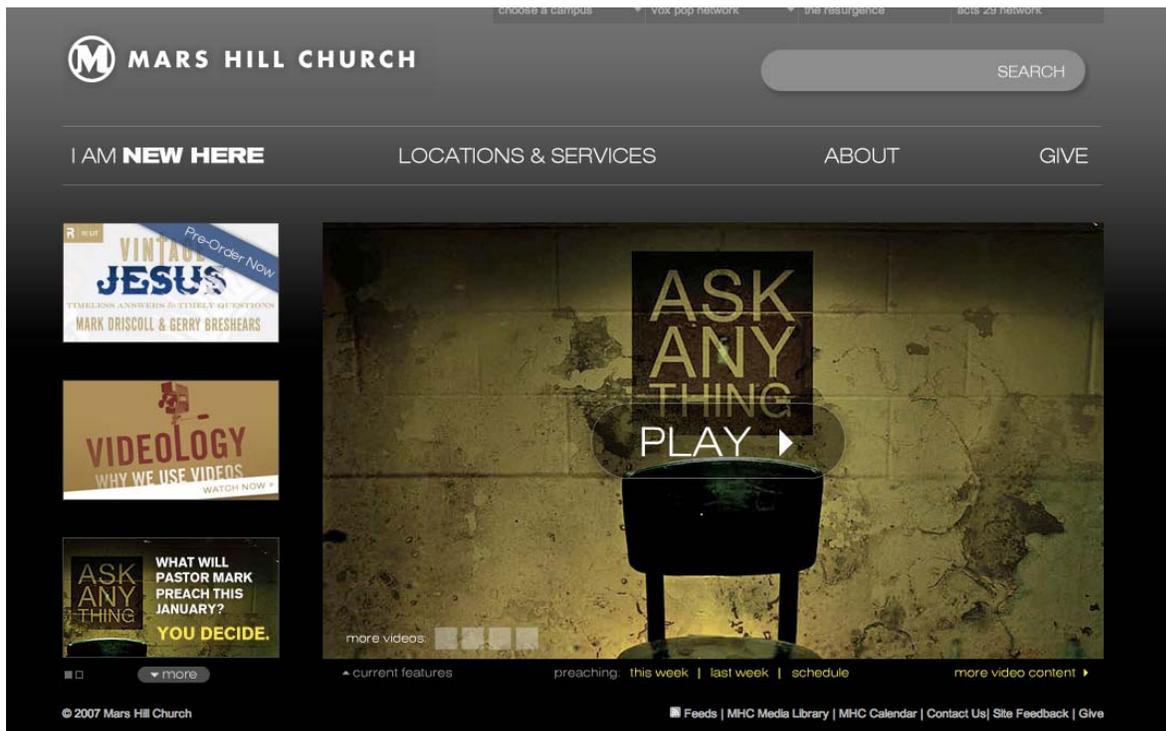
How do we plan to do this? What's our strategy for extending the reach of the gospel and cultivating a richer community within Mars Hill?

Air War

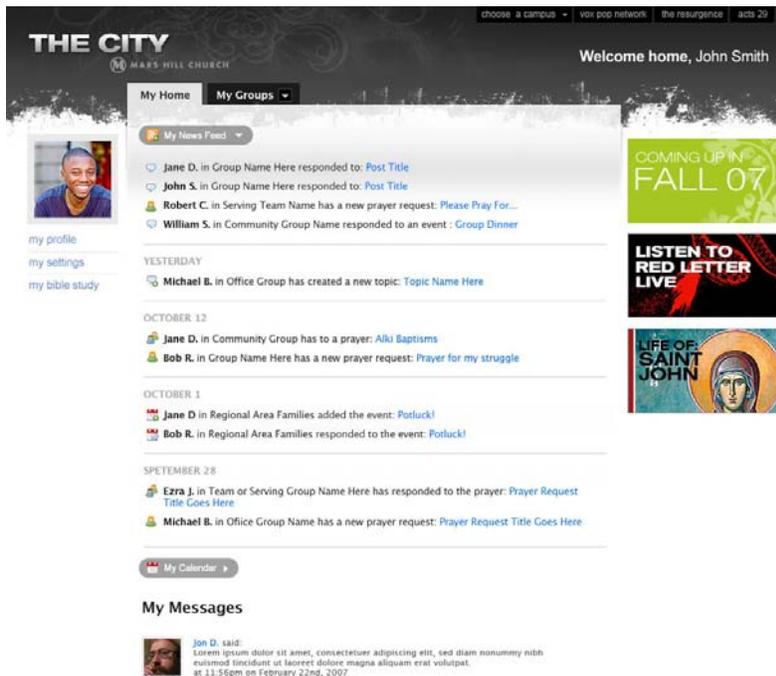
- Our current outward facing websites will all be getting a redesign to promote the extension of the Gospel through the mass distribution of preaching, teaching, and music content.
 - An example of this is the new landing page for www.marshillchurch.org, pictured above
 - Media Library Redesign - in addition, we will be rebuilding our Media Library to allow for easier sharing of important content. Wouldn't it be nice to be able to find all 5 minute segments of sermons from the last couple years that have to do with the atonement, and then mail it to a friend? Now you know what we're thinking.

Ground War

- For those who call Mars Hill home, this will be the biggest area of change you'll see in Technology over the coming year. We know that every community group, every service group, and every ministry has a different way of staying organized and connected throughout the week. Our strategy is to unify these different methods and extend them in some 'out of the box' sorts of ways. Sound vague? Our project plans aren't, but it's tough to explain without showing you. So here's a mockup:

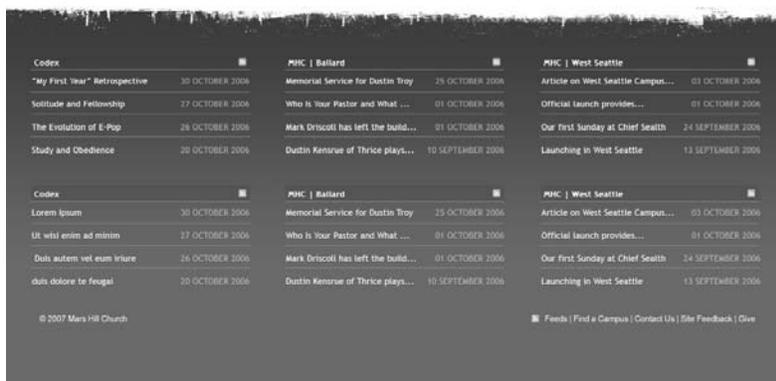


- **The City** - the picture you see below is of 'The City', the project we've been working on for a few months which will replace the Member's site and cover the range from someone who is attending Mars Hill, becomes a Member, and then is actively serving at it's core (Matthew 5:14-16). It will have features specifically for the life within a Community Group, some specifically for Service Groups, and some for Campuses, etc. This is a huge undertaking which I really can't give justice to in just a few paragraphs so let me try to hit some of the design principles so you know what to expect:
 - Attractional/Developmental - The City is for Members and Non-Members, using an attractional design to lead those on the outside into the center while strongly reinforcing Membership and developing new leaders.
 - Content Finds its Target - rather than wasting time trying to find relevant announcements etc., The City only routes relevant information to the recipient for a high signal, low noise environment.
 - Administration at the Edge - All the brains are distributed throughout the application, so centralized administration is reduced. This reinforces delegation and gives real authority to those in charge of ministries, services, and groups.
 - Real not Virtual Community - The City reinforces existing physical communities and pushes virtual participants beyond purely virtual interactions.
 - Campus Centric - everything is based in a Campus, which lives in a Church, which lives in a Network. Someday the Acts 29 churches could share content with Mars Hill



through an Associated Press-like system.

- Not Just a Social Network - this isn't Mars Space, or MarsBook, this is very different but employs some familiar concepts. What's different? You'll see :)
- Public Campus Pages - The previous version of www will be architected as the Campus pages, likely to live on their own website entities, perhaps



www.marshallchurch.org/ballard, or something like that. The content on these pages will be totally at the discretion of the Campus and will be everything a visitor or member of Mars Hill would need to know about coming Events, Classes, Locations, etc. Thus, it will look like the picture at right, but streamlined to just one campus:

Desired Result

When all is said and done, the end result of the Technology ministry will be millions of souls hearing the Gospel preached from the pulpit as it is carried to the far ends of the earth. Close to home, it will be everyone vitally tied to the life of Mars Hill, encouraging one another as disciples of Jesus, and the city around us seeing the love of Christ transforming our culture and neighborhoods.

For instance, a college student who attends a school in the East hears the Gospel through our Media Library, comes to a saving faith and understanding of Jesus, and then gets plugged into a good local church, that's the success of our Air War entity sites.

Similarly, an elderly lady across the street from a community group leader's house falls ill. John, the leader, logs into the City when he hears about her condition, and within 5 minutes mobilizes a team of 12 strapping men and women to help take care of her physical needs. Neighbors then start asking questions about where all these people came from mowing her lawn and now John gets to tell his neighborhood about Jesus.

What is Needed of the Members?

First off, if you're a technology professional and are serving in other areas, I'd challenge you to get involved in the Technology ministry. Get off the sidelines, use the gifting that Jesus has given you, and help carry the burden with us. Whether you can pull cable, troubleshoot Mac OSX, or write Ruby code, get involved!

Second, stop thinking of Mars Hill Technology like a consumer. We get emails from members complaining about the technologically equivalent of 'the color of the carpet' and I pray that you would see how off mission this sort of feedback is. Whenever I get an email from someone who clearly has a technology background telling Mars Hill to do what he thinks we should do, I'm grieved. If the Lord has given a piece of the vision to you and you want to share it, do so by getting involved in whatever capacity you can.

Finally, recognize that there is no virtual community, but only the very real Body of Christ. As such, be sure to conduct yourselves on every website that we create in a way that glorifies Jesus and demonstrates your love for one another. Whenever I have to intervene on the current member's site, it weighs heavy on my heart as one member hurts another and doesn't care enough (sometimes) to want to repair the breach. The best Technology in the world won't matter if we don't love one another.

Prayer

Prayer is needed, and with it a mindset that Technology needs your prayers urgently. As the Pastor of Technology I have often felt that we are viewed by some members as a support staff, or a bug fix team, rather than a vital part of the mission which can extend the reach of the Gospel



and encourage living community along avenues that are risky to explore. We need your prayer to be able to navigate these paths wisely, to raise up the right leaders to help lead the ministry, and to have enough workers for the harvest.

- For the reach of the Gospel via Technology, those that would hear the Word via our websites
- For the leadership of the Technology ministry, that we could identify leaders that would share our vision
- For the workers, we have a few extremely faithful volunteers right now, but we earnestly pray for more like them

Further Questions

If there are other Technology related questions that you have, now or in the future, you can always contact me at zack@marshallchurch.org. If it's particularly involved, we can schedule some time together to talk it through.

If you'd like to get involved, email me and then show up at our Thursday night function in Ballard. You'll get to meet the other technologists involved and be invited to put your hat into the ring and join with your brothers and sisters in worshipping the Lord with our gifts.

QUESTIONS

Q: Could we get a complete listing of rules, expectations and procedures for conduct on this website that is also a prerequisite to be signed alongside agreement with the doctrinal statement and the by-laws?

A: I don't think it's necessary to have a separate terms of use for the Member's site (and eventually The City) from what is already agreed to in the Membership Covenant. Everything that has violated the "rules" of the Members site have been Membership Covenant violations and my response has been to point to the original Membership agreement. The only things that could be considered as necessary to abide by on the online entities, as different than the more complete Membership Covenant, would be things like "don't copy and paste the private message from your buddy to your blog and break the trust he put into you" but even that is a corollary to the Covenant. Generally the issues on the Member's site aren't even that complex (two people that don't know each other get into an argument over a theological issue that descends into ad hominem attacks). This is covered by: "I covenant to practice the humility and sacrificial attitude of Christ by considering the needs of others (Philippians 2:1-11), by seeking spiritual friendships (Proverbs 17:17), and by not gossiping (Proverbs 16:28; Matthew 18: 15-17)."

Q: Could we be provided with a listing of current pastoral secretaries, aids, and contacts when cases requiring pastoral care and shepherding and pastoral mediation may be required, which is easily accessible at the front of this site? I use this site more than Vox Pop for finding out contacts because it saves paper and for newer members it might be a helpful resource.

A: I'm not sure I follow the premise of this question, so my answer might be a little off. I understand it to mean, "why can't I easily find the contact information for so-and-so?" where "so-and-so" might be any particular office at Mars Hill. For all Members, you can use the Member's Directory to find their contact information. Aside from that, if you're looking for a non-person specific email address, you will need to navigate to the appropriate part of the public or member's site, or just email one of our general purpose emails like "life@marshillchurch.org"

Q: As a matter of procedural clarity is it possible that the member directory can more accurately reflect membership and not just internet access to this site? While Bent has been retained as an elder pending a probationary period he is not listed in the current members' directory, and neither is Paul Petry or anyone in his family. I understand that access to this site may be restricted during disciplinary procedures but a members' absence from the members' directory makes it unclear if that absence is because a member has withdrawn membership; is undergoing church discipline; or has been expelled from the church body.

Q: So as to prevent any misunderstanding or grounds for speculation regarding a person's absence from the directory is it possible to restrict access to the member site in a way that does not also eliminate them from the member directory? This would seem like a good idea so as to prevent the possibility of speculation as to why a member's name is missing. Since Pastor Jamie has written, if I understood him correctly, that Paul and Bent are restored members I hope the member directory can reflect that as soon as practically possible.

A: Yep, it's possible and will be something we look at. It will look different in The City anyway, so we may not spend much time on trying to implement a short term solution.

Q: As our body grows i would guess that it is not safe to assume that everyone has internet access, skills to cruise the web, or may not feel comfortable participating in an online community - is the church considering additional ways of communicating with its members aside from the internet?

A: This is an interesting question, in particular, because it gives me the opportunity to highlight how different The City is from current “internet” options. You mention that not everyone has internet access, that’s certainly true, and one reason why we have allocated some portion of our budget for Kiosks in each of the campuses. My hope is that this model could grow and we could have little Internet Cafes for the purpose of access to the City and other such resources for those who don’t have the possibility otherwise. Downtown there are going to be a good number of homeless kids that call Mars Hill home, and I want them to be connected.

Regarding participating in an online community, I think it depends a lot on the community. The downside of our current member’s site is that it’s almost totally virtual. That is, you see a face and a name but the people you interact with aren’t generally in your community group or any other group you fellowship with. That impersonal connection starts a chain reaction that can end with the explosions of unkind words we see from time to time on the forums. I wouldn’t want to participate in an online community like that either.

What you’ll experience in The City will be very different. All your circles of Mars Hill will be brought together, the paradigm will flip completely. The people you interact with in The City will be the people you actually know, love, and serve alongside. Instead of 95% of the people being unknown personally to you, it will flip to only 5%. This will be an extremely different experience and one we think many more Members and Attenders will be able to embrace.

Q: As well as we roll out the satellite campuses, will the members’ site as we know it now be the most effective way of communicating with the entire body at large or will each satellite have their own forums?

A: This is another old paradigm vs. new paradigm question. In the old paradigm, you’d have forums for each campus, or different websites for each campus. That just doesn’t scale to the place we want to get to (remember, my heart is to centrally build awesome things for the glory of Jesus that we can then provide to all Acts 29 churches).

In the new paradigm, this gets solved by the design of The City. Communication gets pushed to the edge, such that each campus has the ability to determine what gets promoted, how the promotions look, what news rolls out to all their attenders and members...it’s the edge vs. central paradigm shift again (yikes, I just said paradigm shift).

Q: I have a question about the future of the member’s site. I believe Pastor Zack mentioned that it was in the works to have campus specific member’s sites in the near future. With so many campuses opening up lately (praise God!), you have many members whose friends are or will be attending a different campus. I’ve been thankful that the current setup of the member’s site allowed my wife and I to “check up”, so to speak, on friends that we don’t see very often now, and to stay informed with how to be praying for them, what they’re going through, engagements, births, etc. Will the Member’s directory still have every Mars Hill member in it in the future? And, I think most importantly, is there any plan to have a multi-campus forum, alongside whatever sort of campus-specific forum there will be? Thus far the forums have really enabled me to follow 1 Cor. 12:26 by mourning with those who mourn and rejoicing with those who rejoice. What exactly will campus-specific sites entail? Will there be another way for us, aside from knowing we all listen to the same sermon, to feel that we’re all in the same church body, and not dismembered limbs? I suppose the broader question to the elders would be: although change and movement is a good, healthy, and biblical thing, is there recognition that much of what makes a family a family is familiarity and a sense of being “at home”? I honestly really enjoy change when it’s for the better, but there are some things that seem to be change for change’s sake.

A: There are some areas where multi-campus “forums” make a lot of sense and some areas where it doesn’t. I believe that praying for one another is definitely one of those areas but our implementation is going to be a little unexpected perhaps.

One of the concepts that we're building into The City is massive self-organization, if I was clever I'd come up with a way that it could fit a MOB acronym, because that's precisely what we're talking about. We want information to self-organize and broadcast through physical connections like phone lists did for a previous technological generation. So it might work something like this.

Sally, a member of John's community group, finds out the day after the group meets that a close friend at the dorm died from alcohol poisoning. Sally is completely wrecked. Sally logs into The City and lets her community group know what's happened in the form of a prayer request; she checks the box that says its ok to share this prayer request with others. Within minutes, all of her community group members get an email notice from The City that informs them of what's happened, those with close relationships with Sally call/visit her. In the background John, the intrepid leader, clicks the "share with other people" button in the prayer request and passes it along to the other groups/campuses that he wants to also pray for Sally. Those other group leaders get the invitation and can approve passing the request along to their groups and other groups/campuses as they see fit. The prayer request spreads like wildfire. Sally logs into The City in a couple of days and sees that 500 people are praying for her and has received dozens of personal correspondence from people that she knows closely.

Q: What vetting process do businesses promoted in the Business Directory section of the Mars Hill Members website go through? As a follow up, what recourse does a customer/client have if they believe good business ethics were not followed by a business listed?

A: First, the old paradigm...I don't believe that there is a process for inducting businesses or any sort of feedback given. If a member has a business, they can post it there for other members to see. If you've experienced a problem, contact me and we can talk further.

In the new paradigm, likely not the first release of The City, we've discussed building a referral based business directory where feedback could reside as well. So, let's say that John is also a glazier (I just like that word, so we'll use it). Peter goes to the marketplace sector of The City and asks for a referral to get his windows replaced. Returned is a list of the dozen glaziers in the body, as well as all the feedback that has ever been input on these different folks. Peter picks John, conducts his business, and then afterward inputs his feedback into the marketplace. John, wanting to keep his reputation clean, does an excellent job and is rewarded with more referrals through the marketplace. Good times.

ACTS 29 AND CHURCH PLANTING
responses submitted by Pastor Scott Thomas

Q: Why expand Mars Hill past Seattle instead of planting new churches?

A: We are doing both and were recently honored as along with another church the most prolific church planting church in America. The original vision has not changed to start new churches. We are fulfilling the mission in differing ways by expanding Mars Hill and planting new churches. In some remote areas, it is difficult to plant a new church, particularly one with the moxie of Mars Hill.

Q: I'm curious about the relationship of church discipline and Acts 29 churches--If a member under discipline leaves and goes to another Acts 29 related church would it be necessary to ensure uniformity of discipline through Acts 29 churches as a whole and advise other A29 churches to not accept the person as a member in lieu of resolution of the disciplinary issue?

A: A member under discipline would be sought after by our leadership to be reconciled. Occasionally, a member refuses to be reconciled (Romans 12:16) and attends another church without our knowledge. In this case, if an Acts 29 church received them as members, we would disclose information about our discipline case for the purpose of bringing that person into alignment with the gospel.

Q: Has there been consideration for opportunities to gather with other A29 churches in the area? When the church was smaller we used to have the gatherings with Harambee, Imago, the Gathering, etc. I'm not sure how this could be facilitated with the current set-up and is perhaps a scenario more appropriate for the satellite campuses, but just thought i would throw it out there.

A: Acts 29 pastors get together regularly for regional events, preaching training and Acts 29 and Resurgence events.

Q: I was recently looking at the acts 29 site and I realized there about 8 churches in the area the, closest being up on queen ann. Has the idea of encouraging people to seek out churches in their community been considered? I'm not saying we should tell people to shop around and I don't want to sound like I want Mars Hill all to my self. I'm just thinking about how we have sent out leaders to churches but there hasn't (at least to me) been a strong effort to send people. It is strange to me that we plant satellite campuses next to Acts 29 churches we plant and presumably pray will succeed. I realize this wouldn't likely handle the massive numbers of people but could help.

A: MH has a unique voice in this area and some people choose to go to MH even though an Acts 29 church may be closer to their home. We have and will continue to encourage MH attendees to affiliate with Acts 29 churches in the area and allow Acts 29 church planters to present their mission to the campus nearest their plant to determine if others would like to join them in this new church plant.

Q: Additionally, since Acts 29 churches tithe 10% to Acts 29, but campus tithes all go to MH, which in turn tithes 10% to A29, if we were to have campuses in other states/countries, would the church change the tithing structure/distribution of funds?

A: Acts 29 churches do not tithe to Acts 29. Each individual church determines where they invest their mission money and they are not held accountable for the amount they give toward church planting. Each MH campus gives 10% of their money to Acts 29 through the single treasury system.

Q: Is Mars Hill as a multiple campus church, in seeking independent elder boards for individual campuses, moving toward becoming a denomination, and is there any denominational

functionality in the relationship between Mars Hill and Acts 29 since Scott Thomas is an executive elder and also director of the Acts 29 network? I ask all this because it seems like at some level we already are some kind of denomination and I sometimes feel like I'm the only member who isn't a little scared by that for some reason.

A: Mars Hill campuses do not have an independent legal elder board but rather an elder team that oversees the campus. We have elders who attend different campuses and lend leadership. We have one elder board that oversees multiple campuses. Acts 29 churches are independent from MH and are affiliated only by networking for the greater good of the kingdom. Acts 29 does not require or receive any funds from affiliated churches. This is a network of churches seeking to plant other churches. It is based on influence and not on control. Denominations usually have a significant degree of authority over their member congregations. MH and Acts 29 have no authority over other Acts 29 churches.

THEOLOGY

responses submitted by Pastor Gary Shavey

Q: Generally speaking, how do you determine whether someone is gossiping or not?

A: This is a great question and one that all Christians need to be clear and discerning against. We are exhorted by Scripture to flee from gossip in order to maintain a gospel-centered life. As the apostle Paul was fighting for the upbuilding of the church to be faithful to Jesus he states, "Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves to you? It is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ, and all for your upbuilding, beloved. For I fear that perhaps when I come I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish—that perhaps there may be quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder." 2 Corinthians 12:19-20. The apostle Paul does not put gossip in good company.

Let us first define gossip. Gossip is conversation about personal or intimate rumors or facts, especially when malicious. Others might say it is talk with malicious intent. Malicious means having a desire to cause harm or pain to others. There could also be talk, although intended to be innocent could result in gossip because unforeseen circumstances or not all facts verified.

Obviously this is not good for people nor for the church. In fact Scripture tells us that the fruit of the holy spirit in ones life is, "...love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control..." (Galatians 5:22). In this grouping we do not see gossip or hurtful conversation. In other translations we may see the word whisperer, instead of gossip, where this word (whisperer) in the Greek is closely linked with the word to lie. Whisperer also can be defined as a secret slander. To be reminded, slander is the act of saying something false or maliciously damaging someone's reputation. Now gossip may or may not be lying but it may lead others to lie about one person or organization that could result in damaged character.

So the hope is to see the prohibition of gossip as it will not bring glory to Jesus nor will gossip bring unity to the body of believers. How do we as Christians discern what gossip is or if someone is gossiping? As stated earlier gossip is not one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. With the Holy Spirit present in our life, He will allow us to discern and know when we see gossip. When someone is giving a statement about a person or organization there is a healthy list of questions one might be able to ask especially if we are feeling that unease about that persons talk. Is this statement honoring Jesus? Is this statement unifying the body of believers? Is this statement a part of the upbuilding of the community? Does this person have all the facts right? If the answer is yes to these questions there might not be gossip. If the answer is no to these questions we are looking at gossip.

Here are some more questions. What is the motivation of this person giving this statement? Is it slanderous? Is it whispering with ill intent? Is this going to damage the person or organization's character? Is this person looking to bring one person down in order to lift another or oneself up? If the answers to these questions are yes then we are looking at gossip and a rebuke needs to be given. A simple, "what you are saying now is gossip and you need to apologize for your remarks and make amends with people and Jesus" (or something to this effect as this is not the script to use). The supposed Christian loophole here is making gossip into a prayer request. This also has to be rebuked. An example of this might be, "did you hear of so and so, they did such and such, I cannot believe it...we should pray for them." This kind of gossip can be cancerous to the health of the church.

As believers in Jesus, partaking in community with one another, in the desired byproduct of being a blessing to the city, we must take careful watch for gossip. The Apostle James warns us that the tongue can be a simple spark that sets ablaze an entire forest. Let us be careful that we exhibit the renewed hearts in the world that we live so that we may shine light, because it is awfully hard to shine darkness. Let us be prayerful when we come up against gossip, to rebuke it quickly and seek for restoration. Not only will this have a powerful impact of sanctification for

oneself and others but also a major impact on being on mission with Jesus. As we live for Jesus to be a city within a city, may we be reminded of the words from Colossians 4:5-6, "Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person."

A strong recommendation to dig deeper into this subject would be *War of Words* by Paul David Tripp.

Q: In his book *9 Marks of a Healthy Church*, Mark Dever makes a case for some power being vested in the congregation while still having strong elders. Specifically, he says that the final court of appeal for disputes is the congregation (Matt 18:15-18 and Acts 6:1-5); that doctrinal issues are to be determined by the congregation (Gal 1:6-9 and 2 Tim 4:2-3); and that discipline is to be administered by the congregation (1 Cor 5:4-5 and 2 Cor 2:6-7). Do the elders find Dever's arguments/ exegesis of these passages compelling? Why or why not? (A summation of Dever's arguments can be found at <http://marks.9marks.org/Mark9/LessonB/Slide2of8> and the next 3 or so 'slides' in that presentation.)

A: It should be noted that Pastor Mark Dever is highly regarded by the elders at Mars Hill Church. He has given great insight for the mission and health of the church. For his voice and thoughts on the church we are very grateful. We have directed many people to his resources and will continue to do so. I think when asked directly and in conversation with Pastor Mark Dever we may have disagreements on the role of the congregation but that this topic would not in any way cause division or take us out of fellowship. In fact it should be noted that Mark Dever is going to be speaking on the topic of ecclesiology at an Acts 29 Church Planting Boot Camp in Chicago, IL January, 2008. With this said we in no way would want to create polemical lines with other gospel centered churches over such issues.

To give an answer to this question, here are a couple of prefatory comments that need to be stated in order to understand the context of Dever's exegesis. It should be noted that Capitol Hill Baptist, in which Mark Dever is a pastor, is a Southern Baptist Church of about 500 people. Mars Hill Church is not a Southern Baptist Church nor do we turn to Southern Baptist positions for our understanding of elder/congregation relations. There could possibly be a Southern Baptist filter here. Mark Dever and Mars Hill Church are both reformed, male elder run and credo-baptist. Although there are many similarities, there are also some differences and a lot of that has to do with denominationalism as well as context and size of the church.

There may also be some confusion as to how we are to take Dever's insights pertaining to the congregation. One might see Dever's insights that all disputes, doctrines and disciplines are laid before the congregation in order to get the last check off and therefore the congregation is the one leading in this area. Where someone else might see the congregation as the last straw. For instance in church discipline if the person continues to be unrepentant then they are brought before the congregation. Or another view may be in the areas of doctrine the congregation would continue to check, much like the Bereans, to make sure that the elders are staying faithful to scripture and mission. This could be seen as gate guarding.

Mark Dever states his view of church government as an Elder Leadership vs. Elder Rule. In fact a better way to describe Dever's position is in his own words an "Elder Lead Congregationalism". Mars Hill Church would say that we hold to Elder Rule but involve the congregation as it pertains to upholding and trusting leadership. We would ask that the Church continue to check leadership in being faithful to scripture as well as make sure that the congregation has ownership in guarding the gate as well. With the size of Mars Hill Church the responsibility to guard against the wolves is paramount now more than ever. This is the point Pastor Mark Driscoll was making in his sermon series of Nehemiah.

Let me also add some insight from Pastor Dever that would be of benefit to Mars Hill. In respect to eldership he states, "Clear Recognition. Elders are to be recognized by the church as gifts from

God for the good of the church. The church should therefore delegate to them the duties of teaching and leading the church. Those duties are only to be revoked when it is clear that the elders are acting in a way which is contrary to the Scriptures (as may have been the case evidenced in some of the disobediences among churches in the NT period that the Pauline and General epistles were meant to correct). For their part, the elders must recognize the God-given authority of the congregation (e.g., Matthew 18; I Cor. 5; II Cor. 2).” I think this speaks directly to guarding the gates on all levels of the church. Keep in mind that there must at least be a couple of trustworthy witnesses with credible evidences to bring charges to an elder.

Dever goes on to state, “Heart-felt Trust. The church should trust, protect, respect and honor an elder. Thus Paul writes in I Timothy 5:17 ‘The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.’ The elders should direct the affairs of the church, and the church should submit to their leadership. So the writer to the Hebrews wrote in 13:17, ‘Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.’ So, too, Paul writes to Timothy in I Timothy 5:19 ‘Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses.’ The elder, therefore, should live in such a way as to produce no grounds for any accusation.” The elders at Mars Hill Church would whole heartedly agree with these statements and verses. The congregation along with the elders should pray for above reproach leadership, that all believers should fight the good fight and fight for the faith once delivered by the saints.

For further reading on this subject *Biblical Eldership* by Alexander Strauch has been a helpful guide to Mars Hill Church in coming to terms on eldership. Another resource is *Elders and Leaders* by Gene Getz.

Q: Sometimes people use words in discussion of faith, is there a quick reference book you can recommend for the less-informed?

A: There is no doubt that confusion can set in when talking in terms of faith or theology. This is particularly evident when one starts combining elements of philosophy and theology. There are some basic online tools like biblegateway.com and blueletterbible.org for word studies of the Bible as well as the book *New Bible Dictionary* published by IVP does a great job at covering all words related to the Bible. When looking at theological terms there is *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms, Christian Theology: An Introduction* by Alister McGrath as well as his reader companion book. A work that Mars Hill Church sells at most campuses is *Wayne Grudem’s Systematic Theology*. If you are looking for help with philosophical terms pick up *101 Key Terms in Philosophy and their Importance for Theology* by Clark, Lints & Smith. For an advanced resource in this field be encouraged to get *Dictionary of Theological Interpretation of the Bible* by general editor Kevin Vanhoozer. Using these works as a reference our hope would be to help bring depth to your future discussions by drawing one another closer to Jesus.

Q: Why do the earliest biblical manuscripts not have John 7:53-8:11 in them?

A: This section, John 7:53-8:11, dealing with the adulteress most likely was not a part of the original contents of John. It has been incorporated in various manuscripts at different places in the gospel (e.g., after vv. 36,44,52, or 21:25), while one manuscript places it after Luke 21:38. External manuscript evidence representing a great variety of textual traditions is decidedly against its inclusion, for the earliest and best manuscripts exclude it. Many manuscripts mark the passage to indicate doubt as to its inclusion. Significant early versions exclude it. No great church father comments on the passage until the twelfth century. The vocabulary and style of the section also are different from the rest of the gospel, and the section interrupts the sequence of v. 52 with 8:12ff. Many, however, do think that it has all the earmarks of historical veracity, perhaps being a piece of oral tradition that circulated in parts of the western church, so that a few comments are in order. In spite of all these considerations of the likely unreliability of this section,

it is possible to be wrong on the issue, and thus it is good to consider the meaning of this passage and leave it in the text, just as with Mark 16:9-20.

Now in Mark 16:9-20, scholars differ regarding whether these verses were originally part of this Gospel. Some important early Greek manuscripts lack these verses, other manuscripts have vv. 9-20 (known as the "Longer Ending"), and still others have a "Shorter Ending" (roughly one verse long). A few manuscripts have both the "Shorter Ending" and the "Longer Ending." Because of these differences, some scholars believe that vv. 9-20 were added later and not written by Mark. On the other hand, the verses are cited by writers from the late second century and are found in the overwhelming majority of existing Greek manuscripts of the Gospel of Mark. For other scholars, these facts establish the authenticity of the passage.

For a good overview of assuring one's belief of biblical text there is the more lengthy work by F.F. Bruce *The Canon of Scripture* and for a shorter read and more particular to the New Testament you can pick up F.F. Bruce's book *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* For a more complete discussion of the locations where the John 7:53-8:11 "floating" text has ended up, as well as a minority opinion on the authenticity of the passage, see M. A. Robinson, "Preliminary Observations regarding the Pericope Adulterae Based upon Fresh Collations of nearly All Continuous-Text Manuscripts and All Lectionary Manuscripts containing the Passage," *Filologia Neotestamentaria* 13 [2000]: 35-59, especially 41-42.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

responses submitted by Pastor Dick McKinley

Vision

The Mars Hill Children's ministry like the larger church desires to love the kids and families of the greater Seattle area, teach them about Jesus in a way that they will understand so that their lives may be transformed to live for Jesus, by loving Him and other people (Matthew 22:37-39; Matt. 28:19-20)

Strategy

Children's ministry in conjunction with the life stages / Biblical training department is working toward teaching in a systematic way that both meets people where they are at and moves them toward a greater relationship to and worship of Jesus with the totality of their lives.

What is needed of the members

One of our core values is to partner with families and be a resource for them. Parents are the kids primary teachers as the kids imitate what they do and we simply want to come along side and support, encourage and reinforce what is being taught at home. I would love to see more parents take a strategic interest in what the kids are learning and be more involved in both Sunday and Wednesday Children's ministry. This not only motivates the kids, but provides a great resource for our volunteers who are either newly married or hoping to be married and have kids of their own.

Prayer

Please pray for the Children's Ministry as we continue to figure out how to be a campus based ministry and stay on mission to reach kids and families of the greater Seattle area. The campuses have an enormous responsibility to clearly teach kids about Jesus, shepherd volunteers, love families and create a safe place where kids can be kids.

Further questions – If you have further questions I would encourage you to speak directly to your campuses Children's Ministry director.

QUESTIONS:

Q: Why does the children's ministry not have enough curriculum writing resources to support, the children learning from the same text as their parents each week, or month or the following quarter? Why do we think primarily expository preaching is good for adults and topical teaching for children in children's ministry?

A: The fact that we have moved from following the sermon series to a topical approach has little to do with the amount of resources available, it has more to do with what we saw happening in the kids and trying to teach them in the most effective way we can. In considering the changes the following things weighed heavy in making this decision:

1. **When building anything you must start with a solid foundation.** 1Corinthians 13:11 says when I was a child I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child." Kids think differently than adults do and do not have the foundation to relate one doctrine to another or shift easily as they do not have concrete experiences to compare things to. We must first help the kids to get the foundational understanding to which they can begin to compare life and scripture to.
2. **Kids learn by repetition** – When teaching kids it is important to them to teach the same thing over and over so that they can experience it in a variety of ways. This is where the life stages/biblical training topics come into play. The kids learn about the same topic as it relates to the variety of topics (image of God, worship, family/church and missions) both biblical and personal (Family, friends, stuff, and Jesus) in order that the kids see the

- topic in aspect of their whole life and giving them a relevant point of reference to pull from.
3. **Building something that can be refined and reused** – Another consideration in changing curriculum was to be able to build a curriculum that can be refined and reused as we move into the future. In addition, this curriculum being more systematic can then be passed on to other churches (A29) who can then use it knowing it is focused on Jesus, biblically sound and build in such a way as to move their kids to a closer relationship to Jesus.
 4. **It has to do with maturity** – The fact that we are going to a topical approach does not mean that it is not biblical or Christ centered nor does it mean that some kids don't appreciate an expository approach to the bible. However, Hebrews 5:12 talks about maturity and the teaching of the elementary truths of scripture. We must teach elementary kids elementary truths of scripture; we want every child to know the basics as they are not yet mature in their faith. By teaching these truths and by laying the firm foundations the kids will be much further ahead than those who are just now trying to understand them in their later years of life. We cannot assume anyone knows the basic truths we must teach them and thru the repetition of these truths coupled with experience and maturity the bible we become their playground and the truths of scripture will be learned, understood and applied as their life transforms into the likeness of Jesus.

MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS

Q: How would I be able to present these questions now and in the future?

Q: When the elders have responded to these questions, what opportunities will exist to continue dialogue about the concerns raised here?

Q: Do the elders have a process for incorporating feedback from members into planning and strategy?

Q: When members don't understand or agree with things, how can we go about getting a better understanding? Alongside that, how can we go about finding ways to help things change for the better?

Q: Someone brought up a good question regarding godly dissent. There's a sense of fear amongst people. how can we create a sense of safety for questioning what may be perceived to be poor choices made on behalf of our elders (for the record, this is a hypothetical question. i'm not saying i think poor choices are being made right now).

Q: I wondered why it was thought to be impossible to have a membership meeting on this issue? I would have liked to attend even if there was only standing room.

Q: Let's not make it a 4 day event, but maybe a regular or even a permanent forum--remember, the truth needs no defense, and for those of us not "in the know", I'd venture that our loyalties and faithfulness would even grow larger and deeper as we feel and are embraced as a full member of the body-not just a rank and filer who are fed scraps as seen fit.

Q: When members don't understand or agree with things, how can we go about getting a better understanding? Alongside that, how can we go about finding ways to help things change for the better?

A: Every member should be involved in a community group and/or regularly serving in a ministry at a campus. Through these connections and also the campus elder teams, members can ask their questions, offer suggestions and be proactively involved in improving the health and faithfulness of Mars Hill Church. If approached in a humble and respectful way, there should be no fear to ask questions and offer suggestions. The members of this church have tremendous gifts and are very helpful in the leading of the church. In the future each campus will hold membership meetings that allow for regular communication, vision casting and fellowship among the members.

Q: Will a public detailed explanation be given as to why any of these questions are not answered?

Q: I am concerned about the time restrictions given for accepting questions. This puts the members in a position of asking more probing and stretching questions than may be warranted out of fear this may be the only opportunity to be heard.

A: We have faithfully and diligently answered the questions of the members. Where there are unresolved questions you have please speak with an elder in your campus for clarity or the other resources that have been made available in this document.

Q: While you have the option, given the ground rules of this forum, to avoid hot topics, or areas that you fear would cause problems, would you agree that when efforts to manage people and information appear in the Bible, things pan out horribly? [For instance, David's behavior when working hard to conceal his affair with Bathsheba, or an even more stark example, Ananais and Sapphira.]

A: We trust as you read this document you have noticed we did not leave a single question out and have avoided no hot topics. The assumption in your question is that we are trying to cover up sin and hide things from God or the members of this church. That is simply not true.

Q: People just naturally assume that dogs would be incapable of working together on some sort of construction project. But what about just a big field full of holes?

A: Go Dawgs! Pray for Jake Locker, he is a Christian and the new hero of Seattle with which comes a lot of pressure. Pray that many will meet Jesus through his influence.

Q: In the interest of giving the Elders the opportunity to respond to the questions as completely and thoroughly as they desire, would it be helpful to have a team of us organize these questions and assist in the responses?

A: Thanks for the offer.

Q: In the future, how will the elder board handle disagreements or concerns among themselves or from members? How does the elder board plan to change the current climate of 'don't like it, then leave'?

Q: As a matter of precedent, can we get some guidelines as to what constitutes a lack of healthy respect for or trust in the spiritual leadership of the church so that we as members can make sure we avoid making mistakes that have required discipline up to this point, per 1 Timothy 5?

Q: Is there a way our elders can help us to trust them more? It's difficult to trust people you don't know.

Q: There seems to be a lot of 'bad blood' that has been generated by the recent actions taken by the elder board. What are the elders' plans to help restore unity to the body (beyond the document that will answer all these questions)?

Q: The question I have is in regards to the unhealthy lack of trust of the senior eldership part. I know there are many Christians who have seen a lot of wrong done by those in ministry, pastors, and I myself have a very hard time trusting pastors after seeing many people get hurt in churches. What should people do who find themselves in that place or feel distrustful as to how decisions like this are made?

Q: What measures does the elder board intend to take to restore trust among the growing number of members who are struggling with trusting them and/or the use of the governing by-laws?

A: Trust cannot be forced or coerced; it is earned. However, it can be gained through understanding the accountable systems in place among the elders. No elder is able to make a decision without others weighing in on the decision or preempting the decision. Pastor Mark has stepped down on his own initiative as lead pastor as an example for us all. He has less power and has more accountable systems around him. There is a growing sense of health among the elders as we wrestled with the Bylaws and the recent investigations. The new bylaws provide less chance of an individual elder or a small group of elders thwarting the mission of the church.

Q: Regardless of the final decisions of the elders, many members sense a veil of secrecy around the major decisions of the church. This is completely irrespective of whether or not the elders believe they are correct. The reality is this secrecy has the potential to cause just as much resentment and division as being more forthright with the latest events. What are we doing to address this issue?

A: We hope this document and our consistent practice of speaking honestly regarding difficult circumstances will build your trust that we have nothing to hide and there is no veil of secrecy.

Q: How do you guys distinguish between all the Pastor Tims?

A: T1, T2, T3, T4, T5 – not sure the order.

Q: Is it a possibility in your mind that Mars Hill would ever need to be shut down due to it having become an irredeemable system, where, like Frankenstein's monster, it takes on a life of its own? [Think Abraham being asked to sacrifice Isaac]. If the answer is no, why not? If yes, how would you make the decision to do so?

A: Jesus has and does close churches and no church is immune from this. It is not clear what you mean by an irredeemable system. Our “system” is to worship Jesus, preach the Word, love people, give, serve and be faithful missionaries. We plan to continue to do this by His power and grace.

Q: When Hillary is president, should we flat out refuse The Mark and face persecution or is it biblical to work in the Christian underground movement that will make fake marks so that we can still buy and sell without sinning?

A: Thank you for the levity.

Q: Who picks out the colors?

A: Pastor Bubba.

Q: What remains is this question to the elders, any elder: Who can risk with us his heart? What does it feel like all these questions of concern, anger, love, ambivalence and confusion? Not a tidy response that reads like a legal notice, but more your heart. I don't know if this is scary for you or exciting? Maybe a little hurt or pissed?

A: We are genuinely excited and encouraged about what Jesus has in store for us as a church and the recent changes we have made to improve the health of the elders and the whole church. The majority of the questions from the members have been good, respectful, clarifying questions. Some questions on the other hand have clearly revealed immaturity within the body. Our goal has been to approach this task humbly by teaching, training, correcting and rebuking where necessary. The elders love the people of Mars Hill and truly desire health in our body.

Q: I've felt uneasy, but unable to articulate it, for a while now. As Mars Hill has grown, our visibility has attracted criticism, but I don't think all the criticism has been unwarranted, and I am much more interested in defending Christ than defending Mars Hill Church. Maybe it's because I've never attended a church that faced attacks that weren't just general attacks on Christianity.

I think a lot of people are weary of the baggage that comes with telling someone you are a member of this specific church. Before we were on "top ten" lists (which always seem kinda ridiculous to me), I used to tell everyone I knew that this church changes lives, changed my life. etc. Maybe it's a positive growth in me, that I'm more excited about sharing my faith now, but I can't help taking a deep breath when someone asks which church I go to. Between the incidents of Mark's inflammatory rhetoric poking the blogger hornet nests, the massive growth, and the recent mysterious circumstances with 3 longtime elders, I've felt more and more wary of the direction the church is heading.

So, what I want to know is, beyond the doctrinal beliefs, does Mars Hill purposefully court controversy as a means of increasing our visibility? Along with that, I think just after the media circus about Mark's blog comments, Mark stated that the church would hire someone to be a

media liaison/P.R. advisor. Has this person been hired, and is this helping to prevent unnecessary incidents in the future? To end on a positive note, having recently switched to attending Wedgwood, I thank God that the multi-site method has allowed for a smaller, more intimate setting than Ballard. I really, really like the Wedgwood building (it certainly doesn't hurt that Wedgwood is using the candelabras from the old Paradox). Also, my experience with community groups, starting with the Abrams' group in 2002 or 2003, has always been phenomenal. Community groups really are the heart of the church.

A: To be completely honest, if any member is weary of the baggage that comes with telling someone you are a member of this specific church, then it may be time for you to find a church that you are not weary of supporting publicly. Mars Hill is not perfect but if you are ashamed to invite people to your church than you should find one that works better for you.

Q: "Frankly we have many critical issues that have been placed on hold". As far as I am concerned this the critical issue for the church. What is on hold? Is it future growth? When does the health of the current membership (and our concerns) get put before growth?

A: The contents of this document and previous answers should make it clear that we care about the health and well being of the members of Mars Hill and literally hundreds of hours recently have been put in by the elders to shepherd the body through these transitions.

Q: Is Mars Hill part of any independent Financial organizations such as the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA.org)? If so, how long have we been a member and of which organizations? If not, is this something that we may do in the future?

A: We are not currently but have researched it previously and will continue to do so to evaluate if it would provide benefit to the church.

Q: I'm curious to know how the elders view the scope of our mission in light of the scope of our reach. Our mission has always been articulated as being a city within the city to bring Jesus to Seattle, yet our reach through technology gives Mars Hill a global audience. Do the elders view our use of technology (satellite, vodcast, podcast) primarily as a resource for our local congregation and our mission in Seattle or for the world community at large? (To the extent it serves both, praise God.)

Q: How much does the success of Mars Hill Church depend on Pastor Mark's charismatic personality rather than on Christ? What would happen to the church if something happened to Mark? I absolutely love Mark's honesty and preaching style and the way his sermons hit home and touch on subjects other churches nervously avoid, but I've sometimes uneasily wondered whether we are all standing on the solid rock of Pastor Mark rather than on Christ? Has this been discussed among our pastors, and what conclusions have been drawn?

Q: Please explain why we would do this [add new campuses that may extend even beyond our state and/or nation], rather than plant churches. Isn't the issue Mark mentioned reason enough to avoid this (elders being incapable of meeting together). This sounds like we don't trust that God can work through pastors other than Mark, that he's the only one who has correct theology.

Q: What is the thinking among the elders around filling in Marks role should something cause him to be unable to preach? I think everyone knows that as far as face time, Mark is kind of the rock star of Mars Hill. And he preaches on Jesus in a way I have never seen. This being how does his seemingly irreplaceable talent effect his role. I am not saying God would not take care of His church by rising a man up. I am just curious as to what you Elders think about this issue.

Q: I felt unsettled recently when I went to the main church website and saw the "Ask Mark Anything" feature because it somehow seemed like Pastor Mark was being pushed into center stage as the main attraction, with Jesus and the Bible sort of fading off to the side. I'm having

trouble articulating what I mean - I'm just trying to describe a feeling. Also, I know it's probably not statistically true, but lately it seems like I've heard the phrase "one of the fastest growing churches in America" coming from the pulpit more than I've been hearing about Jesus and the gospel. I guess I'm wondering whether our vision and focus is shifting too much toward the numbers, physical church growth, and getting media attention and too far away from the simple message of the gospel. I wish Jesus were here in person and preached the sermons. I wish I could've been there when He preached the sermon on the mount and left the Pharisees tongue-tied in debate. I wish I could've seen his face when He cried over Jerusalem and held a little kid on His lap. Anyway, ramble. I suppose my question is whether the elders have considered this change of direction and what is the reasoning behind it that will draw people to Christ and glorify Him as opposed to drumming up excitement and interest in Pastor Mark and our church specifically? Please help me get more on board with our mission and church direction.

Q: Where is the balance, what is our take on trying to be better than other churches? What are we doing to make sure that our focus does not shift from Jesus Christ to Mark Driscoll or cool videos or awesome band or flashy lights? How do those things fit into our mission to reach as many people as possible with the Gospel? When do we have to worry about crossing the line from being missional, to trying to sell more than just Jesus?

A: As stated in the opening letter, Mars Hill Church is a miracle of Jesus not a miracle of Pastor Mark or any other leader. This focus is not shifting.

Q: How can we pray for you?

A: Thanks for asking. If you've read all the way to here then I'm sure it is pretty obvious what we need prayer for. Blessings!

APPENDIX A
(Recent communications to members)

10.02.07

Important Message from Lead Pastor

Dear Mars Hill Members,

As we excitedly approach the eleventh anniversary of Mars Hill Church and open up 3,400 new seats with seven new services we are calling all of Mars Hill to a season of celebration, pruning and faithfulness. We celebrate what Jesus is doing and the opportunities He has laid before us as a church to expand His Kingdom. We also need to allow Jesus to prune us through personal repentance where necessary and a renewed commitment to being on mission with Him. Additionally we need to respond faithfully as a church body in all areas of our life. This pruning and faithfulness includes the leaders of the church and leads to difficult decisions we must make for the good of the whole church and Jesus' mission.

It is thus with sadness that I report that two Pastors, Paul Petry and Bent Meyer, are being terminated as employees. They have also been suspended as elders pending an investigation in accordance with the church Bylaws (Article III, Section E) and Scripture (1 Timothy 5:19-20). We will report more detail following the investigation and disciplinary process, but you should know now that there are no accusations of moral or sexual impropriety. Although their employment is ending and their eldership suspended, Paul and Bent will receive full pay and benefits through the end of December.

At this time we do not want any discussion regarding this matter on the members site forums. Speculation or gossip would only be unhelpful to the church and unkind to these men. When a final decision regarding Paul and Bent's eldership status is complete the members of the church will be notified. Join us in prayer for the elders involved and for the mission and vision of Jesus to be accomplished through faithful leadership of this growing body. Any questions or comments should be directed to Pastor Scott Thomas (scott@marshillchurch.org).

With a heavy heart,

Pastor Jamie Munson, Lead Pastor
On Behalf of the Elders

10.16.07

Update Regarding Paul Petry

Dear Members of Mars Hill,

Mars Hill Church is an elder-governed church under the headship and authority of Jesus Christ our senior pastor and chief shepherd. It is our calling and desire to glorify Jesus as we lead and serve this church body that He has entrusted to us. Our leadership and service requires faithfulness to Him and the Scriptures in both times of blessing and in times of hardship. This month we've experienced both. On October 7th we celebrated our 11th anniversary with more than 6,000 people gathered across our five different campuses. For the first time in the history of our church, we have also experienced two staff pastor terminations. It has always been our policy to communicate with the members of Mars Hill in an open, honest, and forthright way, regardless of the circumstances, and we commit to continuing this practice. The purpose of this letter is to communicate the charges, investigation process, results, and resolution of the elders regarding Pastor Paul Petry. The disciplinary process has not concluded with Pastor Bent Meyer as he was not available to attend the elders meeting on October 15th. Upon conclusion of that process we will also communicate those findings and outcome.

Some members have expressed frustration regarding a lack of information in the announcement of these elders' termination and pending investigation. We understand this, however, it would

have been a grievous mistake on our part to speak publicly regarding the specifics prior to the full investigation and decision of all of the elders. There is a fine line between disclosure and gossip and we have been careful to walk in a manner that is above reproach in these circumstances. We did want to communicate the terminations forthrightly but could not speak fully because of the ongoing investigation and disciplinary process. Thank you to those of you who understood this and prayerfully supported your elders during this difficult time.

On October 2nd, we informed the church members that Paul Petry was being terminated from staff employment with Mars Hill Church. As a result, his eldership status was suspended pending a full investigation according to our bylaws and Scripture. Being a pastor on the payroll and a legal elder of the church are two distinct roles and are not mutually inclusive, thus requiring a separate process for each in regard to discipline and removal. The elders have completed the process and have made their ruling regarding Paul Petry's fitness as an elder of Mars Hill Church.

According to our bylaws, Article III, Section E, when investigating charges brought against an elder, the elders must establish an Elder Investigation Taskforce (EIT) and during the investigation the elder in question must be put on temporary leave. A taskforce was assembled made up of four elders: Scott Thomas, Gary Shavey, Dave Kraft, and Steve Tompkins. These men had the unenviable task of investigating two fellow pastors and reporting their findings to the entire Elder Council. They spent significant time in silence and solitude, reading and meditating on Scripture, repenting of personal sin, and praying for God's wisdom. This was important because our enemy will use every opportunity he can to cause division, fear, doubt, confusion, and personally attack the leaders in the church, especially at a vulnerable time like this. After consecrating themselves, the EIT began the investigation by collecting information regarding the charges from all of the elders. Based on these charges, the EIT formulated questions for a personal meeting with Paul Petry where he would be given a chance to respond to the charges. Upon completion of the investigation, the EIT was asked to review the evidence and the results of their meeting with Paul, and for each man to produce a statement that reflected their conclusion. The next step was for all of the elders to convene and make a final determination regarding Paul's eldership status, which is a binding and final decision.

The elders gathered with Paul on Monday, October 15th. The EIT presented the charges they found to be credible, which included lack of trust and respect for spiritual authority and improper use of confidential information. Each elder on the EIT read their personal statement and Paul was given a second opportunity to respond to the charges, make his own statement, and field questions from the elders. Upon completion of the questions and Paul's responses, Paul was dismissed and the elders deliberated over the matter. According to our current bylaws, the elders must determine by a 75 percent majority whether the charges have been established as credible, and if so, the appropriate discipline that should take place.

The following two motions were proposed and seconded.

Motion 1: I vote that Paul Petry is in violation of biblical qualifications of eldership (e.g., 1 Tim. 3; Titus 1; Acts 20:27-28; 1 Peter 5:1-5).

Motion 2: Paul Petry should be removed from Eldership at Mars Hill Church based on his violation of the biblical qualifications of eldership.

It was unanimously decided that Paul Petry was in violation of the biblical qualifications of eldership and further resolved that Paul should be removed as an elder of Mars Hill Church.

This was not an easy decision for the elders because we all have a personal friendship with Paul and his family. We love Paul and are committed to making Mars Hill Church a safe place for him and his family to continue to worship and serve as partners in the Gospel. A team of pastors has been assembled to care for Paul and his family through this time. We would encourage all of you with a relationship with the Petry family to reach out to them and continue to be a part of their

lives. Furthermore, as stated in our previous announcement, Paul will receive full salary and benefits through the end of December 2007.

This has been a difficult time for our church but we have embraced this challenge because it is the right thing to do. We believe that in God's sovereignty we have been forced to deal with this situation at a very crucial time in our church as we spread out to many campuses and build local elder teams at each campus that are charged with the oversight and care of their particular campus. It is a sanctifying and clarifying time for your elders as we re-commit ourselves to leading Jesus' church faithfully.

While your elders are not perfect, I pray that you see we are seeking to lead Mars Hill under Jesus' headship faithfully and that we are as committed as ever to preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ boldly. We are further committed to establishing a biblical eldership that takes sin and grace seriously and that is willing to lead by example.

This is the Elders' official statement regarding the matter and we do not intend to engage in further discussion because that would lead to gossip. We would encourage you to continue to trust and pray for your elders in a way that is faithful to the Bible's instruction on these issues. We must all act and respond in a manner that is worthy of the calling we have received and not in a manner that is harmful to Jesus and His church. Despite difficult circumstances, the elders are moving forward together and we would ask you to do the same.

Sincerely,

Pastor Jamie Munson, *Lead Pastor*
On behalf of the elders of Mars Hill Church

10.25.07 Updated Member Communication

Dear Members of Mars Hill Church,

"So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed; shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.' Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever, Amen" (1 Peter 5:1–11).

The above passage of Scripture has been powerful to me as of late. It is rich with the truth of the Gospel and particularly helpful in the challenging season we find ourselves in as a church. It would take pages and pages to unpack this section of Scripture in full, but I do want to highlight some of its truths which are very important and timely to our church.

Peter admonishes church elders to set an example for our people and faithfully oversee the people and affairs of the church. The flock of Mars Hill is now quite large, with approximately 6,400 people in attendance this last Sunday (1,500 more people than last year at this time). The growth is both exciting and challenging because we take Peter's words to heart. We care about

more than just numerical growth; we care about the maturity and growth of those that call Mars Hill their home. We are laboring to see that God's flock is well shepherded, and there is simply no way that what will soon be thirty pastors can properly care for the fast growing number of people under our care. Therefore, we are laboring diligently to architect a care structure that attends to the needs of Jesus' flock entrusted to our oversight. At Mars Hill, we have found that the most healthy and growing Christians are those that are connected to a both a campus and a Community Group, where they have regular interaction, prayer, Bible study, and fellowship with other brothers and sisters. Subsequently, our primary efforts are presently focused on pouring more energy and resources into building the leaders and systems that enable the campuses and Community Groups to operate with utmost health, and to produce as much fruit as possible.

Peter also says that the elders of a church are given the responsibility to exercise oversight in the church on behalf of Jesus. This verse should cause a godly fear in the heart of every elder as they prayerfully oversee the church. This passage speaks to the methods of our oversight and care. First, we must exercise oversight and make decisions for the whole church that are in the best interest of the Gospel. Second, serving as an elder is a personal sacrifice to one's family, and we must not be forced or obligated but willing to oversee. Third, your elders must not be greedy for personal gain, whether that be for power, finances, control, information, or preference, but rather we must be eager to serve.

Each man that is an elder of Mars Hill Church has willingly offered their life to serve as a pastor of this flock. This includes submitting to a rigorous testing and approval process in order to determine if he and his family's life is worthy to be an example to the flock. As new elders are approved, there is an ongoing expectation of all elders to continue walking in a way that is above reproach and submissive to spiritual authority (which includes God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures, the elders as a whole, and our particular overseeing elders, along with godly pastors from other churches with whom we are in accountable relationships and seek for counsel in all we do). We take Peter's exhortations quite seriously, regardless of the personal difficulties we may face at times such as the present. We are committed to continually repenting of personal sin and holding each other accountable so that we may continue to grow in Jesus and set an example of the kind of humility of which Peter speaks.

Daily, the elders continue to lean on Jesus as the Chief Shepherd of this church. He serves as the head of the church and our example and authority in everything. Because we are sinful and have no righteousness apart from Jesus, we rejoice in the fact that He leads, convicts, teaches, matures, and empowers us while also making up for our innumerable shortcomings. Without Jesus there is no hope; and with Him there is indeed great hope

It is amazing to sit back and watch God's sovereignty as the life and challenges of the church providentially align with whatever book of the Bible or sermon series we are going through at the time. As Pastor Mark approaches chapter two in the book of Philippians, we are given an unprecedented picture of Jesus' humility as our example. This example is counterintuitive to everything we are taught in culture, but it is a primary theme in Scripture, and vital to the life of a faithful Christian. Who are we without Jesus? We are nothing. We are utterly dependent on His grace for everything. In this season, Christ-like humility is an important lesson and truth of Scripture that we must all meditate on so that we might become more like Jesus and bear more fruit with Jesus. We must be sober-minded, alert, and quick to give Jesus our sin, our worries, and our fears. We can do this solely because He does care for us as only He can, sympathizing with our weaknesses as we draw near to Him. Furthermore, he gives us mercy and grace in our times of need. In that we rejoice.

Sadly, a few of our roughly two thousand church members have responded very poorly over the last few weeks to the unprecedented, difficult issues that the elders have been dealing with. Some have gone so far as to be rudely demanding, slanderous, immature, unwise, selfish, disrespectful, and utterly sinful. Some have done this through private means, such as slanderous gossip and emails to the elders, while others have chosen to post anonymously on our main

church website under the Ask Anything thread for Pastor Mark's upcoming sermon series. This grieves the hearts of your elders, as these actions are harmful to the church body and harmful to the forward progress of the Gospel.

But only a few members have responded in a negative way. For the masses who have continued in prayer for your elders and supporting us, we thank you for that. Concerns and questions are normal, and we expect you to have them, but we do ask that you handle them in a godly, mature fashion that would honor Jesus. The elders are walking the tension of caring for the flock, both, by helping those who are hurting, and by exercising oversight and discipline of those that are hurting the flock by sinning in their demands for information, their slander of the elders, and their unfounded accusations and gossip.

Our hope was that our members who had serious concerns or questions would follow our request and speak with an elder, so that we might shepherd our flock as Peter requests. Sadly, the division being caused by the few who have not honored that request has left us with a need to communicate more broadly to the entire church membership. But we want to do this in a manner that is "fitting and orderly," as Scripture commands for all church affairs. The practical difficulty is how to accomplish this task. We are too big to have a membership meeting with two thousand people, and in light of how some members have already reacted, we know that simply opening up the members' site would result in a full-scale digital flame-throwing all-church fight, which would not be wise or helpful to anyone. Therefore, we have devised a "fitting and orderly" plan through which we hope to answer the questions of our members on the very important decisions that are being made during this season of Mars Hill.

To further address the questions of our members, we will open a forum on our members' site for you to post questions for your elders. It will be called "Ask Your Elders Anything." The forum will be open for a short period of time (seventy-two hours), beginning next week after the elders conclude their October 29 meeting and the results of the meeting are communicated. We will then take your questions and craft thoughtful responses so as to do a good job of informing our members. Please be patient and give us a day or two to finish what will be a lengthy document so that we can answer as many questions as possible in one thorough manner.

We have chosen to wait until after October 29 to open this discussion because there is not much that can be reported until after this elders' meeting. This is arguably the most important elder meeting in the history of our church; we will conclude Bent Meyer's investigation, discuss and vote on our new bylaws, approve several new elders, and take the next step in establishing local elder teams at each campus, a system that replaces the singular elder team which has until this point governed all of Mars Hill. In many ways this meeting marks the replanting of Mars Hill Church—this time with a large core group distributed among many different locations, and the ability to launch many more campuses so that more people can worship Jesus as God at Mars Hill. Our recent controversies and conflicts underscore the need for us to reorganize around campuses so that future church discipline issues of leaders and members can be handled at the local level and be discussed on a campus specific members' site, thereby making communication and care more effective.

In the meantime, please pray for your elders and your church. Please also begin to consider any questions you would like answered regarding recent events and/or the future of our church. This is also a good season for every member to reevaluate his or her commitment to follow Jesus and actively serve and support Mars Hill Church.

On behalf of the elders,

Pastor Jamie Munson, Lead Pastor

10.31.07

Member Communication - Oct 29 Meeting

Dear Members of Mars Hill Church,

On Monday, October 29, the elders met for seven straight hours discussing and voting on issues that will significantly shape our future work and ministry. It was exciting, weighty, humbling, and encouraging as we dealt with the business at hand. As stated previously, in many ways the outcomes of this meeting represent the re-planting of Mars Hill Church and will position us to be able to see thousands more lives transformed by Jesus. I know many of you have been regularly praying for your elders over the last few weeks and on behalf of all of the elders, I want to say thank you. Jesus moved in our midst, and I am excited to report the recent decisions regarding our new elders, Pastor Bent Meyer's discipline case, our new bylaws, and a way for you to ask any questions you may have regarding these and other church issues.

New pastors commissioned

It is a sincere joy and privilege to see Jesus work in the hearts of men who have the desire, character, gifts, and calling to serve as fellow pastors of Mars Hill Church. On October 29, the elders approved and commissioned five new pastors of Mars Hill, with three more men awaiting approval and commissioning in the next few weeks. As of Monday, Tim Beltz, Tim Gaydos, Jon Krombein, Matt Johnson and Tyler Powell are official elders/pastors of Mars Hill Church. For more information on each man, his role at the church, and his family, please see the [Pastors Prayer Blog](#). With these new men we have twenty-nine pastors (with likely soon to be thirty-two), and honestly we need more men whom Jesus calls to help lead and care for His church in every area of ministry. Please continue to pray for these men, their families, and their service of the Gospel in our midst.

Update regarding Pastor Bent Meyer

On October 2, we informed the church members that Bent Meyer was being terminated from staff employment with Mars Hill Church. As a result, his eldership status was suspended pending a full investigation according to our (then current) bylaws and Scripture. Being a pastor on the payroll and a legal elder of the church are two distinct roles and are mutually exclusive, thus requiring a separate process for each in regard to discipline and removal. The elders have completed the process and have made their ruling regarding Bent Meyer's fitness as an elder of Mars Hill Church.

According to our then current bylaws, Article III, Section E, when investigating charges brought against an elder, the elders must establish an Elder Investigation Taskforce (EIT) and during the investigation the elder in question must be put on temporary leave. A taskforce was assembled comprised of four elders: Scott Thomas, Gary Shavey, Dave Kraft, and Steve Tompkins. These men had the unenviable task of investigating a fellow pastor and reporting their findings to the entire Elder Council. They spent significant time in silence and solitude, reading and meditating on Scripture, repenting of personal sin, and praying for God's wisdom. This was important because our Enemy will use every opportunity he can to cause division, fear, doubt, confusion, and personally attack the leaders in the church, especially at a vulnerable time like this. After consecrating themselves, the EIT began the investigation by collecting information regarding the charges from all of the elders. Based on these charges, the EIT formulated questions for a personal meeting with Bent Meyer where he was given a chance to respond to the charges. Upon completion of the investigation, the EIT was asked to review the evidence and the results of their meeting with Bent, and each man produced a statement that reflected their conclusion. The next step was for all of the elders to convene and make a final determination regarding Bent's eldership status, which is a binding and final decision.

The elders gathered with Bent on Monday, October 29. The EIT presented the charges they

found to be credible, which included inappropriate behavior due to an unhealthy lack of trust in and respect for the senior leadership of Mars Hill Church. Each elder on the EIT read their personal statement and Bent was given a second opportunity to respond to the charges, make his own statement, and field questions from the elders. Upon completion of the questions and Bent's responses, Bent left the room and the elders deliberated over the matter. According to our then current bylaws, the elders must determine by a 75 percent majority whether the charges are credible and, if so, the appropriate discipline that should take place.

The following two motions were proposed and seconded.

Motion 1: We find Bent Meyer guilty of the charge of displaying an unhealthy lack of trust in and respect for the senior leadership of Mars Hill Church.

Motion 2: Based on Bent Meyer's repentance, we recommend that he continue as an elder of Mars Hill Church on probation, with details and conditions to be overseen by the Shoreline Campus elders.

Both motions were unanimously approved and supported by the elders.

Pastor Bent and his wife Joanne are dearly loved and it is the collective desire and intention of the elders to see Bent fully restored as an elder of Mars Hill Church. The Shoreline Campus elder team will work with Bent to oversee his restoration as an elder and the particular details and conditions of his probation. We would encourage all of you with a relationship with the Meyer family to reach out to them and continue to be a part of their lives. Furthermore, as stated in our previous announcement, Bent will receive full salary and benefits through the end of December 2007.

Bylaws and Government of Mars Hill Church

Mars Hill Church is a legal non-profit corporation and therefore must have bylaws that guide the legal and civil leadership structure for the church. Given the current direction of the church, our desire to expand beyond our existing campuses, and our need to raise up more godly men to lead the church as pastors, it is important that we revise our bylaws to reflect the growing and changing nature of our church. Our previous form of bylaw governance, where every elder is a member of the legal Board of Directors, simply became cumbersome, slow, ineffective, and untenable with the growing needs of our church and the growing size of our eldership.

Every church has the responsibility to establish a form of organizational government that is consistent with its theological beliefs, and in our case that means the Bible and the doctrine of biblical eldership. Pastor Mark Driscoll has written and taught extensively on this subject, and we encourage those of you who have questions regarding this to read the "Church Leadership Book" or listen to his sermon on 1 Timothy 3:1-7. In addition to the principles of Scripture, we must submit to earthly rulers, which in our case include the United States Government and the Washington State Government. Biblically, this command for God's people to act legally as well as biblically is stated by both Jesus (Matthew 22:20-21) and Paul (Romans 13:1-2).

Furthermore, both our federal and state governments require organizations such as ours to be registered properly and to gain tax-exempt status. These governmental requirements include articles of incorporation and bylaws to state the purposes, powers and activities of the entity. Practically speaking, Mars Hill Church must operate in compliance with the law in order to exist as a legal entity, while also remaining consistent with the teaching of the Bible regarding church leadership. As a result, we have thoughtfully and prayerfully crafted an updated version of our bylaws that allows us to maintain a biblical eldership, comply with the law, and also more accurately reflect our multi-campus strategy and future vision to continue expanding.

The primary functional objectives of the bylaw amendments are to:

- Establish a more long range document that accurately reflects our vision and direction as a multi-campus church.
- Create a balance between organizational nimbleness and proper accountability and safeguards.
- Architect a wise and prudent structure that provides sustainability for the church.
- Establish a structure where the elders become a team of teams, rather than a single large team, so that proper authority and accountability can be adequately delegated.
- Delegate authority over campus oversight and care to local campus elder teams.

I am pleased to report that the adoption of the bylaws and approval of the board of directors were unanimously supported by the elders. While no document is perfect and timeless, other than the Bible, your elders have labored over these changes for several months and have arrived at an end product that we are happy with and feel will serve us well for the coming years. Throughout this process we have sought significant counsel from other churches, organizations, consultants and our church attorney. A PDF version of the bylaws and a two-page executive summary of them will be made available shortly in the "From your Elders" forum. Please respect the sensitive nature of a document like this and do not distribute it outside of the membership. There is nothing to hide, but our intent is to answer the questions of our members only, and not take the massive number of hours that would be required to also answer the questions regarding our legal governance to people for whom Mars Hill Church is not home.

Ask Your Elders Anything

Over the last few weeks and months Mars Hill Church has experienced some difficult circumstances unlike any in the history of the church. Throughout this process, your elders have been refined personally and also made significant organizational progress in clarifying many previously unknown questions and procedures. Our experience has been consistent with the pruning that Jesus speaks of in John chapter 15; while no doubt painful at times, we look forward to a more sanctified church working together for the good of the Gospel and the fruit that Jesus wants to produce through us.

However, we do acknowledge that our members will have many questions that merit thoughtful answers. We have waited to answer all of these questions until we had reached our decisions, and we are now glad to be able to finally serve you with helpful information. Therefore, to further address the questions of our church members, we will open a forum on our members' site for you to post questions for your elders. It will be called "Ask Your Elders Anything." The forum will be open for a short period beginning Thursday, November 1, at noon, and it will close Sunday, November 4, at 11:59 p.m. The reason for the short opening is that frankly we have many critical issues that have been placed on hold while we dealt with the issues listed above, as well as the discipline of former elder Paul Petry. We are trying to strike that delicate balance of keeping you informed and answering questions, while at the same time attending to the mounting ministry work awaiting us.

After the forum closes on Sunday night, we will take your questions and craft thoughtful responses so as to do a good job of informing our members. Please be patient and give us time to finish what will be a lengthy document; we will answer as many questions as possible in one thorough response. A list of ground rules will be established at the top of the forum, and we ask you to please abide by these regulations out of respect for your elders and fellow church members. Our desire is to provide disclosure and answer your questions in a "fitting and orderly" way so that Jesus might be glorified and Mars Hill might be unified

For Jesus' Fame,

Pastor Jamie Munson, Lead Pastor

APPENDIX B

(Mars Hill Re-organization Document – previously sent to members on June 23, 2007)

Regrouping for Jesus' Fame

By the Elders of Mars Hill Church

Jeremiah 29:4-7: "Thus says the Lord of hosts...Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare."

By God's grace, we have grown from a small house church in 1996 to a multi-campus church of thousands worshipping Jesus throughout the greater Seattle area, and a movement of more than 100 churches through our Acts 29 Network. With growth has come constant change which requires constant reorganization as we seek to best steward every resource and opportunity that Jesus has given us.

With great anticipation, we have spent many months trying to determine how to best organize Mars Hill Church in light of the increasing complexity of having both departments and an ever-increasing number of campuses. After much prayer, study, labor and discussion the Elders of Mars Hill Church have architected and adopted a plan to carry us through our next season with flexibility and adaptability for the future.

In this process, we sought the counsel of pastors of many churches much larger than ours that deal with similar issues. In many regards this was very helpful; however, one thing which we have witnessed is that larger churches doing multiple campuses tend not to aim for as much theological precision and pastoral care as we are. Our commitment to caring for our body and equipping our members was influential in our decision-making and strategic direction.

As a result, we believe Jesus is leading us to reorganize our church with these and other principles outlined in the following document:

- Each campus must be overseen by an elder with appropriate kingly gifts, capable of managing and leading the mission of that campus and region.
- The Mars Hill campuses need to be regarded more like church plants, instead of simply "additional services", in many ways a second form of church planting as we continue to develop both Mars Hill campuses and Acts 29 churches.
- Campus pastors need to have more freedom and authority over their local mission and leadership teams than they presently do.
- Most meetings need to happen at the campus level so that affinity is by campus, not department.
- Ballard, our largest campus, needs to become an "Equipping Center" where teams are trained and sent out to plant Mars Hill campuses and Acts 29 Churches.
- A streamlined Executive Team needs to exist to help work with Campus Pastors and the church's overall Business Operations to ensure unity in vision, direction and oversight.

Where We Were

We have been a multi-campus church for 18 months now with three campuses, and developing plans for additional campuses. Growth has stressed our structure and systems as we have adjusted and flexed to meet new requirements and demands. The current structure has worked to get us thus far but is not sustainable and becomes increasingly obsolete as we add more campuses. Many leaders

have taken additional roles and responsibilities in order to make things work, operating out of necessity though not necessarily gifting or passion. This has caused everything from frustration and discouragement to severe burnout among some of our leaders.

Fear of burnout includes even Pastor Mark. Sitting organizationally at the top of Mars Hill, it is impossible for him to effectively lead the entire church and also get time for study, preaching, writing, media interviews, Acts 29, Resurgence, conference speaking, networking etc. As a founder of Mars Hill and preacher he has served in capacities held biblically by both Ezra (spiritual leader) and Nehemiah (ministry architect). As the church moves forward he must hand off much of the work of Nehemiah (still speaking into vision and mission of the church theologically) and focusing on the work of Ezra.

The root of our problem is that our ecclesiological model was established for the governance of a single church. We have gone from a single church to a network of campuses requiring multiple levels of authority and leadership, each with defined jurisdiction. In light of this we are quickly moving to move to a greater number of leadership teams with defined scopes of responsibility and oversight. We believe that these teams built at the campus level will allow us to both care for our church and its leaders most effectively and allow us to remain a lean and nimble organization that can adapt to change quickly.

Where Jesus is leading

The desired outcomes of this reorganization are theological, spiritual, and practical as follows:

- 1. We desire to glorify Jesus as our Senior Pastor by being faithful to scripture, being on Jesus' mission of transforming lives, and being submissive to him as the ultimate head of the church.**
- 2. We desire gift-oriented leadership that recognizes the talents and passions of elders, deacons and members, leveraging strengths and positioning people so they function as depicted in Ephesians 4: *we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.***
- 3. We desire sustainability that allows us to grow and adapt as necessary in coming seasons by building our churches ministries around its various campuses.**
- 4. We desire organizational clarity, which means defining the roles, responsibilities and expectations for every elder and deacon, as well as shifting most meetings to happen at a campus level so that our primary affinity is by campus and not department.**
- 5. We desire to continually promote delegation so that our mission keeps spreading; this means distributing authority and decision-making to different teams and individuals.**
 - a. Executive Team*
 - b. Ballard Team*
 - c. Campus Teams*
 - d. Business Operations Team*
 - e. Global Church Team*
 - f. Ad hoc and task teams*

6. **We desire to renovate communication so that we can all learn to keep in step with the ever-increasing body God is creating as Mars Hill Church without having endless meetings and no time for implementation.**
7. **We desire to continually improve in shepherding the staff. It is the responsibility of an overseer to make sure each staff member is being shepherded and developed. They may not personally oversee the care, but need to ensure that it is done well and that each person/family is well cared for in addition to being productive, efficient and executing well.**
8. **We desire to see thousands more lives transformed by the Gospel in our city and plan to continue to lead the church, preach the Bible and care for people so that many more may join us in worshipping Jesus.**

Getting from Here to There

To make this transition as quickly as possible, the Elders have taken the following actions to move forward in changing structures and setting up teams that reflect our new direction:

1. The Executive Elder Team

Purpose: To lead Mars Hill Church with the best interest of the whole in mind on global issues and the overall health and growth of the church.

2. The Ballard Campus Team

Purpose: To lead the Ballard Campus expression of Mars Hill Church and ensure its overall health and growth as both a campus and an Equipping Center.

3. The Business Operations Team

Purpose: To lead Mars Hill Church in the areas of administration in order to best support the ministry of the campuses.

4. The Campus Teams

Purpose: To lead other localized campus expressions of Mars Hill Church and ensure their overall health and growth.

5. The Global Church Team

Purpose: To lead the global expression of Mars Hill Church in the areas of church planting, theological training and strategic partnerships, enhancing the ministry of Mars Hill Church around the nation and internationally.

6. Ad Hoc and Task Teams

Purpose: As needed various teams will be formed to deal with particular needs as they arise.

Changing our Executive Team

A pivotal shift was streamlining our Executive Team. On June 11 at the All-Elders' meeting, Pastors Tim, Steve, Mike, James and Lief stepped down as Executive Elders. Subsequently, Scott Thomas and Bubba Jennings nominated themselves as Executive Elders and were voted in, establishing the Executive roles corresponding to the new team structure and transitioning the other pastors to their

new roles in the revised organizational structure. Additionally, Tim Beltz, who is an elder candidate, is serving on a consulting basis to the Executive Elders and helping provide a wealth of nonprofit management experience to our decision making.

The new Executive Team will function as described below:

Jamie Munson – Lead Pastor

Jamie shifts from being the executive pastor to the lead pastor of Mars Hill Church, with a primary responsibility to work with the Executive Team as well as Business Operations of the church ensuring overall church health and mission effectiveness.

Mark Driscoll – Preaching Pastor

Mark remains an executive elder and shifts from being “lead pastor” to “preaching pastor”, allowing him to get out of the majority of church management and focus on creating content, preaching, writing, training elders in theology and teaching, and representing Mars Hill in the media and conferences.

Bubba Jennings – Ballard Campus Pastor

Bubba shifts from being campus pastor of West Seattle to campus pastor in Ballard. His primary responsibility will be to work with the Ballard Campus Team to run operations of the campus and develop the “Equipping Center” for training and supporting other campus leaders. He will work on new campus development and developing campus pastors.

Scott Thomas – Global Church Pastor

Scott will continue to oversee Acts 29 and church planting, as well as Resurgence and partnerships that have an external focus outside of Mars Hill. As a member of the executive team, he will help with the assessment and training of new campus pastors and facilities.

Those leaving the Executive Team are transitioning as described below:

Steve Tompkins

Steve shifts from the executive team and will continue as Campus Pastor of our Shoreline Campus and seek a permanent facility for that fast growing campus.

James Harleman

James shifts from the executive team and will also phase out of his Administrative Pastor role and Communications over the next sixth months, replacing himself as he works to grow a team and assume duties as the Campus Pastor of Wedgwood, hoping to start services in January 2008.

Tim Smith

Tim shifts from being an executive elder to focus on: theology, music, arts, band development, leading corporate worship in Ballard, training worship pastors for other campuses, and launching a worship music brand line for professional distribution.

Mike Wilkerson

Mike will shift from being an executive elder and continue to focus his time on leading our critical area of Biblical Living (e.g. all our groups, and biblical counseling), with an emphasis on running those ministries in Ballard while also architecting the systems and training necessary to equip other campuses.

Lief Moi

Initially, Pastor Lief Moi was uncomfortable with the transition plans and uncertain that his conscience would allow him to continue as an Elder of Mars Hill Church. This precipitated several tense and difficult meetings for us as an Elder team, striving for unity but also the most effective way to organize and lead our church. After a few weeks off with his family to think and pray, Lief Moi resigned from his position on staff as well as his office as Elder of Mars Hill Church. Loving our brother and unwilling to let this matter go without every possible effort for reconciliation Pastor Mark, and Pastor Bill Clem spent hours laboring over Lief's concerns and frustrations. Following the extremely fruitful meeting with Pastors Mark and Bill, Lief sought reconciliation with several pastors who felt they had been wronged in the matter by him, and submitted himself humbly for restoration as an Elder of the church. The Elders assembled, discussed the matter soberly, and after much prayer and discussion voted to restore Lief as an Elder of Mars Hill Church and a member of the Ballard Campus team. Lief will continue to employ his unique gifts, which many of our members have been blessed by for years, to strengthen faith, fortify marriages, and equip the saints for acts of service as we love our city with Jesus. This process put many of our men's faith, endurance, constitution, and their trust in Jesus to the test. It drove many men deep into God's Word for wisdom, seeking His discernment and leading through prayer. Despite sleepless nights and frayed nerves, we are truly a stronger Elder body because of this incredible labor God has shepherded us through. In His wisdom, He has made us bear this weighty issue as we move to a structure that distributes and delegates authority and mandates more trust and confidence in one another. Praying together as 24 men united by our love of Jesus and His great commission, it is evident He has uniquely tempered us for the coming season as a lovingly unified yet honest and effective team.

Next Steps...

The first step in reshaping Mars Hill is to get refocused on Ballard to bolster all the roles and systems there, not only as a Campus but as the Equipping Center for our other campuses, existing and future. Pastor Bubba will work with the re-worked Ballard team to put these plans in motion.

What about West Seattle?

West Seattle obviously becomes a prime concern in light of this transition, as Pastor Bubba and his team were instrumental in its launch. Thankfully, **Pastor Adam Sinnett** has felt God's call and will be moving to West Seattle to assume the duties of Campus.

What about Office Space?

As always, staffing needs and office space become the next vital step of planning in light of our refocused direction. A new staff plan will need to be worked up for each area of ministry in light of the organizational changes, as well as planning who will office where. A transition plan is being developed to renovate half of the building in Ballard at 50th to house the needed office space so that there is no longer a "hub" at Wedgwood but rather a hub out of Ballard.

When will we open new campuses?

Opportunities for new campuses will be prioritized and determined for summer and fall, with hopeful launches in January 2008. The Wedgwood facility is an obvious next step, with a Campus Pastor now determined (Pastor James Harleman). A prospective location and campus pastor are being considered for downtown, as well as Eastside options still being explored. These three options are the most likely possibilities for January 2008 (at the earliest).

How will Campuses be developed in the future?

Potential new campuses will first be evaluated by the executive elder team. Once a campus seems likely, the architecting of that campus will be done by the Ballard campus team along with the identified campus pastor who will lead the new campus. Leaders will be trained at Ballard and sent out in teams to carry with them our values and DNA that can then be contextualized for their region.

How does all of this affect Mars Hill Pulpit and Preaching?

Pastor Mark should be out of the pulpit roughly 12 times a year for vacations and writing breaks along with some travel that includes international travel with his family once a year for extended speaking tours. In this, we will be opening many more opportunities for many of our elders to preach and also develop preaching gifts. There will be a monthly preaching cadre to train those gifted in preaching at Mars Hill, along with regional A29 pastors wanting to increase their pulpit skills led by Pastor Mark. This will allow many of our elders to exercise this gift and also grow our farm team of preachers in the future. In some campuses, much of this will be covered by the campus pastor. In others, this may be covered by various other elders as determined. Our prayer is to have a team of gifted preaches that enables Pastor Mark to get the vacation and writing breaks he needs and also safeguard our church should he ever be unable to preach for some reason such as health problems, an injury etc.

How does this affect my role at Mars Hill Church?

Some elders, deacons and members are already working aligned with gifting and campus and may experience nothing more than a culture shift with better oversight and new faces on their local team. Others face some dramatic changes in identity and role. Each elder will work with deacons and ministry leaders, who in turn will work with our thousands of faithful servants helping across multiple campuses, to help determine these changes over time as we continually adjust to most effectively live for Jesus as a city within the city: knowing culture, loving people, and seeing lives transformed to live for Jesus. We trust in Him as he leads us through this change, knowing that our stability comes not from our work routine or even our organizational chart, but the gospel of grace in which we strive for his fame with joy in our hearts and the Holy Spirit guiding our steps.

Why should this make me happy?

Admittedly, the adjustments that are being implemented bring another season of change and reorganization to the church. In light of that, it is important that we all thank God for this season of change for four reasons. One, Jesus has yet again grown our church in the past year to the degree that we need to work hard to keep up with His provision as America's 15th fastest growing church in the nations' least church city. Two, we are ending the budget year over budget which means that the hearts of our people are with us and we are financially able to continue to press forward. Three, the opportunity to see the number of places in which Jesus is worshipped at Mars Hill double in the coming year is now before us as there are even more parts of our region that Jesus is preparing for us to love through His gospel. Four, God is not done with us and by His grace we will again see ourselves needing to reorganize yet again in the near future as well as many times thereafter. There are only 100 churches in America of 6000 or more people, and only 40 churches of 10,000 or more people and to continue forward in our mission to the next level will require humility, flexibility, and unity among us all. Our God is Christ, and not Convenience, and so we praise Christ that His lavish blessing has inconvenienced us.

Sincerely,

The Elders of Mars Hill Church

APPENDIX C

(Church size document by Pastor Tim Keller of Redeemer Presbyterian in New York)

This is a helpful training piece put together by Pastor Tim Keller available here:

http://www.redeemer2.com/themovement/issues/2006/fall/church_size_dynamics.html

APPENDIX D
(Current Bylaws)

Bylaws of Mars Hill Fellowship

A Nonprofit Corporation With Members

Article I

The Civil and Ecclesiastical Government

SECTION A – The government of Mars Hill Fellowship, also known as Mars Hill Church, is established and headed by Jesus Christ, who is the Senior Pastor of Mars Hill Church. The church is first and foremost an ecclesiastical body of believers, the supreme governing document of which is the Bible. Mars Hill Church is secondarily a civil corporation, the governance of which is established by its Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. The articles and bylaws, however, are subordinate to the Bible and must be interpreted in light of the scriptures.

The church government set forth in these bylaws is a three-level ecclesiastical body, the powers and duties of which are derived from the authority of Jesus Christ and the Bible. The acts and functions of each level of government shall be presumed to be ecclesiastical unless explicitly required for civil purposes (e.g. authorizing the purchase of real estate). The three levels shall consist of the following:

- Full Council of Elders – all male elders/pastors of Mars Hill Church
- Board of Directors – selected from amongst the elders
- Executive Elders – a team appointed by the Board of Directors, all in accordance with these bylaws

SECTION B – The elders shall be the civil members of the corporation for purposes of the Washington Nonprofit Corporation Act, Chapter 24.03 RCW (the “Act”). Except as otherwise explicitly stated in these bylaws, the term “member” is a spiritual and theological term for a member of the body of Christ that has completed the membership process at Mars Hill Church and remains in good standing, and shall not mean an elder or a member for purposes of the Act.

Article II

The Eldership Process—Qualification and Selection of Elders

SECTION A – The Full Council of Elders (also known as the Eldership) is composed of elders/pastors (paid or unpaid) who follow the leading of Jesus who is the Senior Pastor of Mars Hill Church.

To be considered as an elder, a man must have been called by God into leadership at Mars Hill Church and be a man of the highest Christian character according to the qualifications of Scripture.

SECTION B – The process of becoming an elder/pastor shall be established by resolution of the Board of Directors.

SECTION C – The final step of the elder selection process shall include ordination in a manner to be determined by the Board of Directors. Upon such ordination, the elder shall have the authority to preach, administer the ordinances of the church, marry, and enjoy all the rights and privileges accorded to licensed or ordained ministers under secular law.

Article III
The Eldership Service—Duration, Resignation, Removal

SECTION A – Once a man becomes an elder at Mars Hill Church, it is expected that the man would continue to serve as an elder indefinitely.

SECTION B – If the Board of Directors determines that an elder needs an extended Sabbath for a season because of a legitimate need (e.g., illness, tragedy), then that elder can transition to an inactive and non-voting elder for a set period of time as determined by the lead elder.

SECTION C – To resign from the Council of Elders, an elder must notify his supervising elder and lead elder by letter, which the lead elder will then distribute to the other elders.

SECTION D – An elder who senses God's call to leave Mars Hill Church to help plant a Mars Hill Church-sponsored church plant should make his desire known to his supervising elder and the lead elder. If the Board of Directors confirms his calling, the elder will be sent out with blessing to help lead another church.

SECTION E – Discipline and removal of elders shall be consistent with the standards set by the Bible, the specific procedures to be determined by the Board of Directors in its discretion. An elder who is also an employee is employed at will and may be terminated as an employee at any time, with or without cause, by the Executive Elder Team or its designee (e.g. campus pastor or employee's immediate supervisor). Any such termination shall automatically result in suspension as an elder pending discipline or removal as such by the Board of Directors.

Article IV
Powers and Meetings of the Full Council of Elders

SECTION A – The following issues are reserved for a vote of the full Council of Elders, with any voting requirements other than simple majority specified for such issue:

- Election of the Elected Elder/Directors of the Board of Directors: Approval requires a two-thirds vote.
- Any change to Mars Hill Church's doctrinal statement: Approval requires three-fourths vote.

Any issue not reserved for the full Council of Elders pursuant to this section may be decided by the Board of Directors.

SECTION B – Annual Meeting. The annual meeting of the elders in their capacity as civil members of the corporation for purposes of the Act shall be held during the month of January on the day, at the time and in the place determined by the Board of Directors, for the purpose of electing directors and transacting such other business as may properly come before the meeting. If the annual meeting is not held during the month of January, the Board shall cause the meeting to be held as soon thereafter as may be feasible.

SECTION C – Special Meetings. The president, the Board of Directors, or not less than fifty percent (50%) of the elders entitled to vote at such meeting, may call a special meeting of the elders for any purpose.

SECTION D – Place of Meetings. All meetings of the elders shall be held at the principal office of the corporation, unless another place for such meeting, either within or without the State of Washington, is determined by the president, Board of Directors, or elders entitled to call a meeting of elders.

SECTION E – Notice of Meetings. The president or the secretary shall cause notice, in the form of a record, to be delivered to each elder entitled to notice of or to vote at the meeting, not less than ten nor more than fifty days before the meeting. Such notice shall state the date, time, and place of the meeting and, in the case of a special meeting, the purpose or purposes for which the meeting is called.

SECTION F – Waiver of Notice. Whenever any notice is required to be given to any elder under the provisions of these Bylaws, the Articles of Incorporation or applicable law, a waiver thereof in the form of a record, delivered by the person or persons entitled to such notice, whether before or after the time stated therein, shall be deemed equivalent to the giving of such notice.

SECTION G – Quorum. Fifty percent (50%) of the number of elders entitled to vote shall constitute a quorum at a meeting of the elders. If less than a quorum of the elders entitled to vote is present at a meeting, a majority of the elders present may adjourn the meeting from time to time without further notice.

SECTION H – Manner of Acting. A majority of the votes entitled to be cast by the elders present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be necessary for the adoption of any matter voted upon by the elders, unless a greater vote is required by these Bylaws, the Articles of Incorporation, or applicable law.

SECTION I – Voting. An elder may vote in person, by mail, by electronic transmission, or by proxy in the form of a record delivered by the elder. Cumulative voting shall not be permitted. Votes may be taken by mail or electronic transmission only if the name of each candidate and the text of proposals to be voted upon are set forth in the notice of the meeting or in an accompanying record that is either a tangible medium or an electronic transmission. When an election is to be conducted by electronic transmission, the corporation shall designate an address, location or system in which the ballot may be electronically transmitted. Elders voting by mail or electronic transmission are present for all purposes of quorum, count of votes, and percentages of total voting power present.

SECTION J – Participation by Telephone. Unless otherwise specified in the notice of the meeting, elders may participate in a meeting of the elders by a conference telephone or similar communications equipment by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time. Participation by such means shall constitute presence in person at a meeting.

SECTION K – Action by Written Consent. Any action required or permitted to be taken at a meeting of the elders may be taken without a meeting if a consent, in the form of a record, setting forth the action to be taken is executed by all of the elders. Any such consent shall be inserted in the minute book as if it were the minutes of an elder meeting.

Article V The Board of Directors

SECTION A – Purpose and powers. The primary governing body for Mars Hill Church shall be its Board of Directors. Except for those powers reserved for the Full Council of Elders pursuant to Article IV, Section A, the Board of Directors shall have the power to determine all issues regarding Mars Hill Church, including, but not limited to:

- Changes to and adoption of Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws
- Approve the selection of elders. Approval requires no objections (abstention permitted).
- Selection or removal of lead elder, preaching elder, or other members of the Executive Elder Team

- Appoint the officers of the corporation as set forth in Article VI, Section H below
- Discipline or removal of elders
- Establish policies and procedures necessary to govern the affairs of the organization in consonance with the laws and regulations described in Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code
- Approval of the annual operating and capital budgets
- Approval of the annual salary and benefits of all paid Elders
- Authorize the purchase, management and sale of all land, buildings or other major assets for use by Mars Hill Church, and the construction of new buildings and major renovations of existing buildings
- Overturn a decision made by the Executive Elders
- Borrow money and make and issue bonds, notes, contracts and other evidence of indebtedness therefore and, by the proper resolution duly adopted by a majority vote of the Board of Directors
- Apply for and aid in the processing of all applications for patents and copyrights; receive or purchase patents and copyrights, inventions, processes and discoveries; hold, manage, use and develop the same; sell, license or otherwise dispose of the same; and collect royalties thereon.
- Any other power not explicitly reserved for the Full Council of Elders

SECTION B – Size. The size of the Board of Directors shall be no less than seven men and no more than thirteen men, the specific number to be established from time to time by resolution of the Board. In the event of a vacancy on the Board of Directors, the remaining directors, even if less than a quorum, may by majority vote elect a successor for each vacancy to fill the unexpired term.

SECTION C – Composition. The Board of Directors shall consist of:

- “Elected Director/Elders”--four to seven members elected by the Full Council of Elders.
- “Executive Director/Elders”--three to six members elected by the Board (including Elected Elders and Executive Elders) pursuant to Article VI, Section C

The above composition shall be subject to the following additional requirements:

- At least one of the Elected Director/Elders shall be financially independent from Mars Hill Church (that is, neither he nor any member of his immediate family shall be an employee or independent contractor with respect to Mars Hill Church).
- The number of Elected Director/Elders shall always be at least one more than the number of Executive Director/Elders.

SECTION D – Terms of Office. The Elected Director/Elders will serve for a term of two years and may succeed themselves in office. To facilitate the orderly rotation of members of the Board of Directors, the terms of office shall be arranged as evenly as possible so that approximately one-half of the terms of office will expire each year on January 31. The term of office for each Elected Director/Elder shall begin on February 1. Each member shall hold office until his successor is elected and qualified.

SECTION E – Resignation. Any director may resign at any time by delivering notice to the president or the secretary, or by giving oral or written notice at any meeting of the Board of Directors. Any member of any committee may resign at any time by delivering notice thereof to the president, the secretary, or the chairperson of such committee, or by giving oral or written notice at any meeting of such committee. Any such resignation shall take effect at the time specified therein, or if the time is not specified, upon delivery thereof and, unless otherwise specified therein, the acceptance of such resignation shall not be necessary to make it effective.

SECTION F – Removal. At a meeting of the Full Council of Elders called expressly for that purpose and at which a quorum is present, one or more Elected Director/Elders may be removed from office, with or without cause, by the two-thirds vote of the Full Council of Elders. One or more of the Executive Elder/Directors may be removed by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Directors (including Executive Elder/Directors). Removal as a Director shall not automatically remove a person as an Elder, but removal as an Elder shall automatically remove the person as a Director. A director shall be entitled to vote on the issue of his own removal.

SECTION G – Quorum. One-half of the members of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum.

SECTION H – Annual Meeting. The annual meeting of the Board of Directors shall be held during of the month of February. If in the judgment of the Board of Directors the meeting cannot be then held, it shall be held as soon as feasible thereafter. The Board of Directors may specify by resolution the time and place, either within or without the State of Washington, for holding any other regular meetings, which may be held without notice other than such resolution.

SECTION I – Special Meetings. Special meetings of the directors shall be held upon the call of the president or one-third of the Board of Directors. The notice of the meeting shall be in the form of a record and shall be sent at least 24 hours prior to the meeting time. Notice of any meeting of the Board of Directors may be waived in a record by any director at any time or by a director's presence at the meeting, except where the director attends the meeting with the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business because the meeting is not lawfully called or convened. Neither the business to be transacted at, nor the purpose of any regular or special meeting of the Board of Directors or any committee designated by the Board of Directors need be specified in the notice or waiver of notices of such meeting unless required by these bylaws.

SECTION J – Voting. Each director shall be entitled to cast one vote at any election or on any subject before any meeting of the Board. For an issue to meet the approval of the Board of Directors, it must receive a simple majority vote unless otherwise prescribed in these bylaws.

SECTION K – Participation by Telephone. Directors of the corporation may participate in a meeting of the Board by means of a conference telephone or similar communications equipment by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time. Participation by such means shall constitute presence in person at a meeting.

SECTION L – Action Without a Meeting. Any action required or permitted to be taken at a meeting of the Board of Directors may be taken without a meeting if a consent, in the form of a record, setting forth the action to be taken is executed by all of the directors. Any such consent shall be inserted in the minute book as if it were the minutes of a Board meeting.

SECTION M – Loans to Directors Prohibited. No loan shall be made from the church to any director. Any director who assents to the making of such a loan shall be jointly and severally liable for its repayment.

SECTION N – Committees. The Board of Directors may designate and appoint by resolution adopted by majority of the directors one or more standing or temporary committees, each of which shall consist of two or more directors. Such committee or committees, to the extent provided in such resolution, shall have and exercise the authority of the Board of Directors in the management of the corporation, subject to the limits of RCW 24.03.115 or similar statute. A majority of the number of directors composing any committee shall constitute a quorum, and the act of a majority of the committee members present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the committee. Any committee member may be removed from committee by a majority vote of the Board. The Executive Elder Team shall be a permanent committee of the Board of Directors.

Article VI
The Executive Elder Team

SECTION A – The Executive Elder Team is a team of firsts among equals within the Council of Elders and is the executive leadership and management of Mars Hill Church.

SECTION B – The size of the Executive Elder Team shall be no less than three men and no more than six men.

SECTION C – The Executive Elder Team shall consist of men who meet the following criteria in addition to the qualifications and duties of an elder:

- The elder must be selected by the Board of Directors to be a member of the Executive Elder Team
- The elder must receive a two-thirds vote of approval by the Board of Directors

SECTION D – The Executive Elder Team will serve indefinitely until resignation, death or replacement. Vacancies on the Executive Elder Team shall be filled as soon as practical by the Board of Directors.

SECTION E – Subject to those powers and duties reserved for the Full Council of Elders under Article IV, Section A or the Board of Directors pursuant to RCW 24.03.115, the following issues are delegated to the Executive Elder Team by the Board of Directors:

- Establishing the overall vision for the entire church
- Directing and managing the operations of Mars Hill Church
- Developing an annual slate of nominees for the Board of Directors
- Issues delegated to the Executive Elder Team by resolution of the Board of Directors

SECTION F – For an issue to meet the approval of the Executive Elder Team it must receive a 2/3 majority vote.

SECTION G – The Executive Elder Team shall include the preaching elder and the lead elder, who shall be determined by the Board of Directors. The preaching elder functions as the principal teacher and preacher for the church. The lead elder functions as the organizational head and leads the Executive Elder Team, the Board of Directors, the Full Council of Elders and the rest of the church in effectively obeying God's leading as revealed in Scripture.

SECTION H – Immediately following the election of the members of the Board of Directors, the Board of Directors shall appoint members of the Executive Elder Team to serve as President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer to serve as officers for purposes of the Washington Nonprofit Corporation Act. The lead elder described in Section G shall be the President. He shall chair the meetings of the Executive Elder Team, the Board of Directors, and the Full Council of Elders. The preaching elder shall be the Vice-President and serve the role of president during the absence of the president. The treasurer shall maintain proper books of account for the church. The secretary (who shall not also be the president) will ensure official minutes of each meeting of the Executive Elder Team, Board of Directors, or Full Council of Elders are kept and will keep on file and authenticate all pertinent minutes and other appropriate documentation used in making decisions and/or taking action. An officer may be removed as such by the Board of Directors without regard to such person's status on the Executive Elder Team. A vacancy in any officer position shall be filled as soon as practical by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE VII Deacons

SECTION A – There shall be a spiritual position of deacon that is subordinate to the position of elder. Deacons may be male or female.

SECTION B – To be considered as a deacon, a person must meet the qualifications set forth in the Bible and as established by the Board of Directors from time to time.

SECTION C – To be selected as a deacon, the person must complete the process determined by the Board of Directors.

SECTION D – The term of a deacon depends upon the commission given by the departmental elder or campus pastor at the time the person is selected as a deacon. Some deacons may serve for a specific task; others indefinitely. A deacon may resign by delivering notice to an elder, or, if due to a legitimate need, seek an extended Sabbath as determined by the lead elder. A deacon may be removed by the Executive Elder Team for any reason, with or without cause.

SECTION E – The general responsibility of deacons shall be to assist the elders in serving the church. Specific responsibilities or tasks may be given to deacons by the elders.

SECTION F – Certain male deacons who meet such additional requirements as determined by the Board of Directors may additionally be licensed by the board, the specifics of such licensure to be determined on a case by case basis. Such licensure may confer the authority to administer all ordinances of the church and qualify the deacon to be a minister of the gospel for purposes of secular law.

ARTICLE VIII Members of Mars Hill Church

SECTION A – The reference to “member” in these bylaws is a spiritual and theological term for a member of the body of Christ that does not have any civil effect for purposes of state law. Consistent with the biblical concept of member and this Section A, members shall not have voting rights.

SECTION B – All persons desiring to unite with this Church shall sign an application to become a part of the fellowship, complete the required member process, sign the member covenant, and shall appear before at least one church member making a confession or reaffirmation of their faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Candidates coming in by transfer of letter from another church will follow the same procedure. Candidates having been approved by at least one church member must affirm by signature their agreement with the Doctrinal Statement and the Bylaws of Mars Hill Church. They must also agree to support in worship, giving, and service, and satisfy other conditions of fellowship defined by the Council of Elders.

SECTION C – Church Discipline. The threefold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church, to edify believers by deterring sin, and to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct.

1. Members of Mars Hill Church and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with this church who err in doctrine, or who engage in conduct that violates Scripture as determined by any two or more elders, shall be subject to church discipline. Each potential case of discipline will be weighed on its own merits and dealt with according to Scripture.

2. Members of Mars Hill Church are not guaranteed confidentiality regarding issues of church discipline, and understand that in submitting themselves to the authority of the church, issues of a sensitive or personal nature may become known to others. This includes, but is not limited to, notification of the authorities if a crime has been committed or if a real threat of someone being endangered exists, as well as other violations of scripture that may not result in physical danger.
3. Those who are members of the church or who regularly participate in church activities may be dismissed from the church by the agreement of at least two elders. The dismissal of a church member may be made known to all church members.
4. A person dismissed from Mars Hill Church for disciplinary reasons may be reinstated to full membership if the person's repentance is accepted as genuine by the elders that oversaw the person's discipline.
5. Each member of this church, and every other professing Christian who regularly attends or fellowships with this church, agrees that there shall be no appeal to any court because of a discipline process or dismissal. A member who is under discipline by the church, as defined in the previous paragraphs, forfeits and waives the right to resign from Mars Hill Church. Resignation is possible only by a member who is in good standing and who is not under any disciplinary action.
6. Separate and apart from the process of church discipline, but subject to the discretion and approval of any two or more elders, a member, non-member regular participant in church activities, or other individual, may be notified that he or she is not to be present upon church premises or at church activities for such a period of time as is deemed necessary for the safety and well-being of others. Such required absence may, but need not, be concurrent with church discipline of that person.
7. Separate and apart from the process of church discipline, but subject to the discretion and approval of any two or more elders, members who have not met all of the criteria of church membership for a period of six months or longer may be removed as a member of Mars Hill Church and may be asked to no longer attend Mars Hill Church.

ARTICLE IX Indemnification

SECTION A – The Corporation shall have the following powers:

1. Power to Indemnify. The corporation may indemnify and hold harmless to the full extent permitted by applicable law each person who was or is made a party to or is threatened to be made a party to or is involved (including, without limitation, as a witness) in any actual or threatened action, suit or other proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative, and whether formal or informal (hereinafter a "proceeding"), by reason of the fact that he or she is or was a director, officer, employee or agent of the corporation or, being or having been such a director, officer, employee or agent, he or she is or was serving at the request of the corporation as a director, officer, employee, agent, trustee, or in any other capacity of another corporation or of a partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise, including service with respect to employee benefit plans, whether the basis of such proceeding is alleged action or omission in an official

capacity or in any other capacity while serving as a director, officer, employee, agent, trustee or in any other capacity, against all expense, liability and loss (including, without limitation, attorneys' fees, judgments, fines, ERISA excise taxes or penalties and amounts to be paid in settlement) actually or reasonably incurred or suffered by such person in connection therewith. Such indemnification may continue as to a person who has ceased to be a director, officer, employee or agent of the corporation and shall inure to the benefit of his or her heirs and personal representatives.

2. Power to Pay Expenses in Advance of Final Disposition. The corporation may pay expenses incurred in defending any proceeding in advance of its final disposition (hereinafter "advancement of expenses"); provided, however, that any advancement of expenses shall be made to or on behalf of a director, officer, employee or agent only upon delivery to the corporation of (a) a written affirmation of the director's, officer's, employee's or agent's good faith belief that he or she has met the standard of conduct described in RCW 23B.08.510, and (b) a written undertaking, by or on behalf of such director, officer, employee or agent, to repay all amounts so advanced if it shall ultimately be determined by final judicial decision from which there is no further right to appeal that such director, officer, employee or agent is not entitled to be indemnified under this Article or otherwise, which undertaking may be unsecured and may be accepted without reference to financial ability to make repayment.
3. Power to Enter into Contracts. The corporation may enter into contracts with any person who is or was a director, officer, employee or agent of the corporation in furtherance of the provisions of this Article and may create a trust fund, grant a security interest in property of the corporation, or use other means (including, without limitation, a letter of credit) to ensure the payment of such amounts as may be necessary to effect indemnification as provided in this Article.
4. Expansion of Powers. If the Washington Business Corporation Act or the Washington Nonprofit Corporation Act is amended in the future to expand or increase the power of the corporation to indemnify, to pay expenses in advance of final disposition, to enter into contracts, or to expand or increase any similar or related power, then, without any further requirement of action by the directors of this corporation, the powers described in this Article shall be expanded and increased to the fullest extent permitted by the Washington Business Corporation Act and the Washington Nonprofit Corporation Act, as so amended.
5. Limitation of Powers. No indemnification shall be provided under this Article to any such person if the corporation is prohibited by the Washington Business Corporation Act or other applicable law as then in effect from paying such indemnification. For example, no indemnification shall be provided to any person in respect of any proceeding, whether or not involving action in his or her official capacity, in which he or she shall have been finally adjudged to be liable on the basis of intentional misconduct or knowing violation of law by the person, or from conduct of a director in violation of RCW 23B.08.310, or that the person personally received a benefit in money, property or services to which the person was not legally entitled.

SECTION B – Indemnification of Directors, Officers, Employees and Agents.

1. Directors. The corporation shall indemnify and hold harmless any person who is or was a director of this corporation, and pay expenses in advance of final disposition of a proceeding, to the full extent to which the corporation is empowered.

2. Officers, Employees, and Agents. The corporation, by action of its Board of Directors, may indemnify and hold harmless any person who is or was an officer, employee or agent of the corporation, and provide advancement of expenses to the full extent to which the corporation is empowered, or to any lesser extent which the Board of Directors may determine.
3. Character of Rights. To the extent the rights of indemnification and advancement of expenses have been conferred by or pursuant to this Article, such rights shall be contract rights.
4. Enforcement. A director ("Claimant") shall be presumed to be entitled to indemnification and/or advancement of expenses under this Article upon submission of a written claim (and, in an action brought to enforce a claim for an advancement of expenses, where the undertaking in Section 1.2 above has been delivered to the corporation) and thereafter the corporation shall have the burden of proof to overcome the presumption that the Claimant is so entitled.

If a claim under this Article is not paid in full by the corporation within sixty days after a written claim has been received by the corporation, except in the case of a claim for advancement of expenses, in which case the applicable period shall be twenty days, the Claimant may at any time hereafter bring suit against the corporation to recover the unpaid amount of the claim. If successful in whole or in part, the Claimant shall also be entitled to be paid the expense of prosecuting such claim. Neither the failure of the corporation (including its Board of Directors or independent legal counsel) to have made a determination prior to the commencement of such action that indemnification of or advancement of expenses to the Claimant is proper in the circumstances nor an actual determination by the corporation (including its Board of Directors or independent legal counsel) that the Claimant is not entitled to indemnification or advancement of expenses shall be a defense to the action or create a presumption that the Claimant is not so entitled.

5. Rights Not Exclusive. The right to indemnification and advancement of expenses conferred in this Article shall not be exclusive of any other right which any person may have or hereafter acquire under any statute, provision of the Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws of the corporation, agreement, vote of disinterested directors, or otherwise.

SECTION C – Insurance. The corporation may purchase and maintain insurance, at its expense, to protect itself and any director, officer, employee or agent of the corporation or any person who, while a director, officer, employee or agent of the corporation, is or was a director, officer, partner, trustee, employee or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, employee benefit plan or other enterprise against any expense, liability or loss, whether or not the corporation would have the power to indemnify such person against such expense, liability or loss under the Washington Business Corporation Act.

SECTION D – Survival of Benefits. Any repeal or modification of this Article shall not adversely affect any right of any person existing at the time of such repeal or modification.

SECTION E – Severability. If any provision of this Article or any application thereof shall be invalid, unenforceable or contrary to applicable law, the remainder of this Article, or the application of such provision to persons or circumstances other than those as to which it is held invalid, unenforceable or contrary to applicable law, shall not be affected thereby and shall continue in full force and effect.

SECTION F – Applicable Law. For purposes of this Article, “applicable law” shall at all times be construed as the applicable law in effect at the date indemnification may be sought, or the law in effect at the date of the action, omission or other event giving rise to the situation for which indemnification may be sought, whichever is selected by the person seeking indemnification.

ARTICLE X Amendments to Articles and Bylaws

Proposed amendments to the Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws shall generally be approved by the Executive Elder Team prior to submission to the Board of Directors to be adopted by simple majority.

ARTICLE XI Administrative Provisions

SECTION A – Definitions.

“Deliver” means: (a) mailing; (b) transmission by facsimile equipment, for purposes of delivering a demand, consent, notice, or waiver to the corporation or one of its directors or officers; (c) electronic transmission, in accordance with the director’s or officer’s consent, for purposes of delivering a demand, consent, notice, or waiver to the corporation or one of its directors or officers under Section B.

“Electronic transmission” means an electronic communication (a) not directly involving the physical transfer of a record in a tangible medium and (b) that may be retained, retrieved, and reviewed by the sender and the recipient thereof, and that may be directly reproduced in a tangible medium by a sender and recipient.

“Execute,” “executes,” or “executed” means (a) signed, with respect to a written record or (b) electronically transmitted along with sufficient information to determine the sender’s identity, with respect to an electronic transmission.

“Record” means information inscribed on a tangible medium or contained in an electronic transmission.

“Tangible medium” means a writing, copy of a writing, facsimile, or a physical reproduction, each on paper or on other tangible material.

Any term not defined in these bylaws shall have the definition in Chapter 24.03 RCW, as presently enacted or hereafter amended.

SECTION B – Electronic Notice.

1. Consent to Electronic Notice. In order to consent to notice via electronic transmission, a director or officer must, in a record, designate in the consent the appropriate electronic format and the address or system to which notices may be electronically transmitted, for example, specify an email address to which such electronic transmission may be sent.
2. Revocation of Consent to Electronic Notice. A director or officer who has consented to receipt of electronically transmitted notices may revoke the consent by delivering a revocation to the corporation, in the form of a record (sent to the attention of the secretary). Additionally, the consent of any director or officer is revoked if the corporation is unable to electronically transmit two consecutive

notices given by the corporation in accordance with the consent, and this inability becomes known to the secretary of the corporation or other person responsible for giving the notice. The inadvertent failure by the corporation to treat this inability as a revocation does not invalidate any meeting or other action.

SECTION C – Effective Date of Delivery. If notice is mailed, it shall be deemed delivered when deposited in the mail properly addressed to the director or officer at his or her address as it appears on the records of the corporation with postage thereon prepaid. If the notice is by electronic transmission, it shall be deemed delivered when it is transmitted electronically in accordance with the consent of the director or officer. All other notice in tangible medium shall be deemed delivered upon receipt.

APPENDIX E
(Membership Covenant)

With the help of the Holy Spirit, the church leadership covenants the following:

We commit ourselves to lovingly caring for you and seeking your growth in Christ (Heb. 13:17; 1 Thes. 5:12).

We covenant to provide teaching and counsel from the Scriptures (Gal. 6:6; 1 Tim. 5:17–18).

We commit that this teaching will span the whole counsel of God's Word (Acts 20:27–28).

We commit to helping you in times of need (Acts 2:42–47, 4:32–35; James 2:14–17).

We covenant that your elders and deacons will meet the criteria assigned to them in the Scriptures (1 Tim. 3:1–13; 5:17–22; Titus 1:5–9; 1 Pt. 5:1–4).

We covenant to pray for you regularly, particularly when you are sick (James 5:14).

We covenant to be on guard against false teachers (Acts 20:28–31).

We covenant to exercise church discipline when necessary (Matt. 18:15–20; 1 Cor. 5; Gal. 6:1).

We covenant to help you become equipped to serve Christ (Eph. 4:11–13).

We covenant to seek God's will for our church community to the best of our ability as we study the Scriptures and follow the Spirit (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1–5).

We covenant to set an example and join you in fulfilling the duties of church members (1 Cor. 11:1; Philip. 3:17; 1 Tim. 4:12).

With the guiding help of the Holy Spirit, I, the undersigned, publicly proclaim as follows:

I believe Jesus Christ is exactly who He claimed to be (Isaiah 5:6; Matthew 26:64; Mark 14:62; Luke 22:70; John 4:25–26; 6:29; 8:58; 11:25–27; 14:6–7; 15:5). I have renounced my old way of life, repented of my sins, asked God to forgive my sins, to cleanse me and make me a new creation (1 John 1:9; 2 Corinthians 5:17). I confess Jesus Christ is the Lord and Master of my life (Romans 10:9).

I recognize that my sin nature has separated me from God and put me at enmity with Him, the object of his wrath. Because of my sins I deserve eternal torment and separation from God, i.e.: Hell (Romans 3:10, 23).

I recognize that there is only one way to God, salvation, the kingdom of heaven and eternal life: Jesus Christ. There is no other way. My redemption and the forgiveness of sins is an unmerited gift of grace from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, accomplished by His death and shed blood on the cross at Calvary (John 14:6; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8–9).

I am a Christian who has been saved from my sins by the grace of Jesus Christ. I have accepted His gift of salvation bought by His death on the cross, the penalty for my sins, and His resurrection, by which I am assured of eternal life (John 3:16–18; Romans 3:23–26).

In obedience to Scripture, I have been baptized after I became a believer in Jesus Christ as evidence and testimony of my commitment to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, my Savior (Colossians 2:12; 1 Peter 3:21).

I have read and understood the Mars Hill doctrinal statement and agree to not be divisive to its teaching. I also understand the importance of submission to church leadership and will be diligent to preserve unity and peace (Ephesians 4:1–3; Hebrews 13:7, 17).

I will endeavor to maintain a close relationship with the Lord Jesus through regular personal Bible reading, prayer, fellowship and practice of the other spiritual disciplines. My commitment to follow Jesus Christ will be evident through my regular participation in the Sunday assembly and worship services, my willingness to serve where needed, and my involvement in fellowship with other members of the church body through a small group or class (Psalms 119:97; 105:1–2; Acts 2:42–47; Hebrews 10:23–25).

I will strive to properly manage the resources God has given me, including my time, body, spiritual gifts and talents, attitudes, finances and possessions (Proverbs 3:9–10; Romans 12:1–2; Ephesians 4:1–16; 5:15–18; Gal 5:22–26). This includes regular giving and service to the local church (Mars Hill) that is sacrificial, cheerful, active, and voluntary (Romans 12:1–8; 2 Corinthians 8–9; 12:7–31; 1 Peter 4:10–11).

I commit myself to the Mars Hill church family and agree to aid in fulfilling its missional purpose to both be and bring the gospel to Seattle by being a doer of the Word and not a hearer only, serving Jesus as my Master and Lord in every area of my life.

I covenant to practice the humility and sacrificial attitude of Christ by considering the needs of others (Philippians 2:1–11), by seeking spiritual friendships (Proverbs 17:17), and by not gossiping (Proverbs 16:28; Matthew 18:15–17).

I covenant to have friendly Christian relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ from other churches, but I will not function in leadership or as a member in another church family (Hebrews 13:17).

I covenant to be self-disciplined, to follow the biblical procedures of church discipline regarding my brothers and sisters in Christ, and submit myself to church discipline if the need should ever arise (Matthew 18:15–17; 1 Corinthians 5:1–5; 2 Corinthians 2:5–8; Galatians 6:1–5, 8; 1 Timothy 5:20; 2 Timothy 2:25; Titus 1:9; 3:10–11; Revelation 2:5–7, 14–25).

I covenant to submit to the authority of Scripture as the final arbiter on all issues (Psalm 119, 2 Timothy 3:16–17).

God enabling me, I will strive to consider my commitment to this Membership Covenant on a yearly basis. I understand that it is an evaluative tool, as well as an affirmation of my continuing conviction and purpose. My responsibility will be to notify the Mars Hill leadership if at any time I can no longer commit to this covenant, or if I have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding Mars Hill Church.

APPENDIX F
(Old Bylaws)

By-Laws of Mars Hill Fellowship
A Nonprofit Corporation Without Members

Article I
The Government

SECTION A – The senior leadership of Mars Hill Fellowship, also known as Mars Hill Church, shall be vested in a governing board of male elders/pastors, hereinafter referred to as the Council of Elders or the Eldership, which is composed of both paid and unpaid elders/pastors who follow the leading of Jesus who is the Senior Pastor of Mars Hill (1 Peter 5:1–4). To be considered as an elder, a man must have been called by God into leadership at Mars Hill (Acts 20:28) and be a man of the highest Christian character according to the qualifications of Scripture (1 Timothy 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9). The Council of Elders shall be the Board of Directors for purposes of the Washington Nonprofit Corporation Act.

- Relation to God
 - A man – masculine leader
 - Above reproach – without any character defect
 - Able to teach – effective Bible communicator
 - Not a new convert – mature Christian
- Relation to Family
 - Husband of one wife – one-woman man, sexually pure
 - Has obedient children – successful father
 - Manages family well – provides for, leads, organizes, loves
- Relation to Self
 - Temperate – mentally and emotionally stable
 - Self-controlled – disciplined life of sound decision-making
 - Not given to drunkenness – without addictions
 - Not a lover of money – upright, not greedy
- Relation to Others
 - Respectable – worth following and imitating
 - Hospitable – welcomes strangers, especially non-Christians for evangelism
 - Not violent – even-tempered
 - Gentle – kind, gracious, loving
 - Not contentious – peaceable, not quarrelsome/divisive
 - Good reputation with outsiders – respected by non-Christians
 - Mutually submissive to the other elders

Additionally, he must competently and consistently accomplish the biblical duties of an elder/pastor which include:

- Prayer and Scripture study (Acts 6:4)
- Ruling/leading the church (1 Timothy 5:17)
- Managing the church (1 Timothy 3:4–5)
- Caring for people in the church (1 Peter 5:2–5)
- Giving account to God for the church (Hebrews 13:17)
- Living exemplary lives (Hebrews 13:7)
- Rightly using the authority God has given them (Acts 20:28)
- Teaching the Bible correctly (Ephesians 4:11; 1 Timothy 3:2)
- Preaching (1 Timothy 5:17)

- Praying for the sick (James 5:13–15)
- Teaching sound doctrine and refuting false teachings (Titus 1:9)
- Working hard (1 Thessalonians 5:12)
- Rightly using money and power (1 Peter 5:1–3)
- Protecting the church from false teachers (Acts 20:17–31)
- Disciplining unrepentant Christians (Matthew 18:15–17)

SECTION B – The Council of Elders determines the lead elder, who functions as the first among equals and is the lead pastor for the church. It is the duty of the lead elder to help lead the Council of Elders and the rest of the church in effectively obeying God’s leading as revealed in Scripture.

SECTION C – Selection as an elder pursuant to Article II below confers the authority to preach, administer the ordinances prescribed in Article IX below, marry, and enjoy all the rights and privileges accorded to licensed or ordained ministers under secular law.

SECTION D – No loan shall be made from the church to any director. Any director who assents to the making of such a loan shall be jointly and severally liable for its repayment.

Article II The Eldership Process—Selection of Elders

SECTION A – The process of becoming an elder/pastor involves at least the following steps:

- The man must be a member in good standing at Mars Hill who has demonstrated the calling, character, and competency of an elder.
- The man must make his desire to become an elder known to one of the elders and be interviewed by the lead elder for approval.
- His nomination must be approved by the Executive Elders without objection from anyone on the Council of Elders.
- If accepted as an elder nominee, the man will then undergo a period of training and testing.
- Training, prior to becoming an elder, will include whatever is deemed necessary to enhance the nominee’s understanding of an elder’s responsibilities as outlined in Scripture.
- Upon completing his training and testing process, the man must be approved by all elders without objection to be introduced to the church members as an official elder candidate.
- If approved as an elder candidate, members of Mars Hill will be notified that he has met the criteria of an elder. Anyone in or out of the church having a concern regarding the man’s qualifications to lead as an elder will have four weeks to notify the elders, who can investigate the matter to determine if there is any reason to disqualify the man.
- If the elders do not find any reason to reject the man as an official elder, an official final vote of the elders shall be taken and if there are no objections to his installation from any elder, the man will be installed by the laying on of hands, after which he shall be considered an ordained and licensed minister of the gospel.
- Selection as an elder does not result in contract rights as an employee. All employees are “at will” and the employment relationship may be terminated without regard to such person continuing to serve as an elder.

Article III The Eldership Service—Duration, Resignation, Removal

SECTION A – Once a man becomes an elder at Mars Hill it is expected that the man would continue to serve as an elder indefinitely.

SECTION B – If the elders determine that an elder needs an extended Sabbath for a season because of a legitimate need (e.g., illness, tragedy), then that elder can transition to an inactive and non-voting elder for a set period of time as determined by the lead elder.

SECTION C – To resign from the Council of Elders, an elder must notify the lead elder by letter, which the lead elder will then distribute to the other elders.

SECTION D – An elder who senses God's call to leave Mars Hill to help plant a Mars Hill–sponsored church plant should make his desire known to the lead elder. If the elders confirm his calling, the elder will be sent out with blessing to help lead another church.

SECTION E – Any credible charge of moral impropriety, doctrinal error, or anything else that could displease the Lord or harm Mars Hill, against an elder shall be investigated by a taskforce established by the elders. During the investigation, the elder in question shall not be allowed to vote on any church matters and shall be placed on temporary leave. If the elder taskforce finds credible evidence of wrongdoing, the elder in question shall be tried by the elders according to the criteria of Scripture (e.g., James 3:1; 1 Timothy 5:19–21). A three-fourth's vote of the remaining elders is necessary in order to find an elder guilty of the charges. If such a verdict is rendered by the remaining elders, the consequences for such a finding shall be determined by the remaining elders, with any action (up to and including removal) requiring another three-fourths vote of the remaining elders. In such instance, the members of Mars Hill shall be notified in writing of the process and results.

Article IV The Eldership Structure and Procedure

SECTION A – Regarding the number of elders, there should always be a minimum of three elders without a maximum cap on eldership.

SECTION B – Elders shall be structured into multiple working teams with lead elders for those teams.

- Council of Elders – all Elders of Mars Hill Church
- Executive Elder Team – a small team of Elders, elected by the vote of the Council of Elders, who have organizational influence over the entire church and who can and will lead the organizational vision and mission of the church
- Departmental Elder Teams – each department builds a team of specialists to lead, pastor, and manage the department
- Site Elder Teams – each site will have a team of elders to pastor and manage the details of the site
- Ad Hoc Elder Teams – these are teams assembled on an as-needed basis to handle a particular project or process; these teams will be assembled for a particular season to deal with particular issues

SECTION C – The duties and powers of Departmental, Site, and Ad Hoc Elder Teams; the Executive Elder Team; and the full Council of Elders are set forth in Articles V, VI, and VII respectively.

SECTION D – The full Council of Elders shall meet monthly or as determined by the executive elder team. The executive elder team shall meet monthly or more frequently on an as-needed basis as determined by the members of the executive elder team. Departmental, Site, and Ad Hoc Elder Teams may meet weekly or on an as-needed basis to adequately discharge their duties of overseeing their areas of responsibility.

Except as otherwise specified in these bylaws, meetings of the Council of Elders or an elder team may be called by the lead elder for the particular team upon 24 hours notice (or, in an emergency, upon less than 24 hours notice) via electronic notice (e-mail), telephone, or personal notice.

SECTION E – Quorum for purposes of a meeting of the full Council of Elders or an elder team shall be a simple majority of the voting members.

SECTION F – Except as otherwise specified in these bylaws for a particular action, the decision of the Council of Elders or an elder team shall be determined by a majority vote of those present at the meeting.

Article V Departmental, Site, and Ad Hoc Elder Teams

SECTION A – Departmental, Site, and Ad Hoc Elder Teams may be established from time to time by resolution adopted by majority of the directors. The Departmental and Site Elder Teams shall be of indefinite duration; resolutions creating an Ad Hoc Elder Team shall specify the purpose and powers of such team and its duration. Subject to the limits specified in Section C, below, and RCW 24.03.115 or similar statute, a Departmental, Site, or Ad Hoc Elder Team shall have the powers and duties set forth in the resolution establishing such team.

SECTION B – The elders serving on a Departmental, Site, or Ad Hoc Elder Team shall be designated by the Council of Elders from time to time, and a particular elder may only be removed from an elder team by a decision of the Council of Elders.

SECTION C – No Departmental, Site, or Ad Hoc Elder Team shall have the powers or duties reserved for the Executive Elder Team or the full Council of Elders. The Departmental, Site, or Ad Hoc Elder Team shall notify the lead elder of any decision that might reasonably have church-wide significance in order to determine whether it should be submitted to the Executive Elder Team or full Council of Elders.

Article VI The Executive Elder Team

SECTION A – The executive elder team is a team of firsts among equals within the Council of Elders. The executive elder team needs to collectively have comprehensive oversight over every aspect of the church. Executive elders primarily need to spend time leading leaders, seeing the big picture, and must be able to think globally regarding church-wide issues that will impact all of Mars Hill. Executive elders need to be good team-builders that work for unanimity among the individual elder teams they lead. Executive elders must work as a team for the protection and health of the church, representing the best interests of the entire church and not simply interests of a particular part of the church. This team needs to be filled with men who can make wise and efficient decisions as leaders trusted by the other elders and church members.

SECTION B – The size of the executive elder team shall be no less than four men and no more than seven men.

SECTION C – The executive elder team shall consist of men who meet the following criteria in addition to the qualifications and duties of an elder outlined in Article I:

- The elder must be a full-time employee of Mars Hill Church
- The elder must have served as an elder for at least one year
- The elder must nominate himself for consideration to be a member of the executive elder team.
- The elder must receive a two-thirds vote of approval by all elders

- If more than seven men meet these criteria, then those seven men receiving the highest number of votes will be accepted
- If there is a tie among two or more men for the seventh seat on the lead elder team, a new vote will be taken by all elders (on only the seventh position) with the man receiving the highest vote total being appointed to the lead elder team

SECTION D – The executive elder team will serve for a term of two years. Executive elder team terms shall commence on July 1. Every two years the process of electing the executive elder team shall be repeated. The election, by secret ballot, shall occur at the first all-elders' meeting of June preceding the end of the executive team's two-year term. Vacancies on the executive elder team shall be filled as soon as practical by the full Council of Elders.

SECTION E – Except for those powers and duties reserved for the full Council of Elders under Article VII, Section A and RCW 24.03.115 or similar statute, the following issues are reserved for determination by the executive elder team and may not be decided by a Departmental, Site, or Ad Hoc Elder Team:

- Establishing the overall vision for the entire church
- Purchase, sale, or rental of real estate
- Approving new services and venues
- Comprehensive operational budget line items
- Capital expenditures budget
- Hiring and firing of elders who are also employees (the employment status of an employee who is also an elder may be determined by the executive elder team, but such person's status as an elder is reserved to the full Council of Elders)
- Issues delegated or reserved to the executive elder team by resolution of the full Council of Elders

SECTION F – For an issue to meet the approval of the executive elder team it must receive a unanimous vote (abstention permitted).

SECTION G –Immediately following the election of the executive elder team pursuant to Section D, the full Council of Elders shall appoint members of the new executive elder team to serve as President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer to serve as officers for purposes of the Washington Nonprofit Corporation Act. The president shall be the chief executive officer of the corporation and the lead elder/pastor of the church described in Article I, Section B. He shall chair the meetings of the Council of Elders and the executive elder team. The Vice President shall serve the role of president during the absence of the president. The treasurer shall maintain proper books of account for the church. The secretary (who shall not also be the president) will ensure official minutes of each executive team meeting are kept, as well as meetings of the entire Elder Council, and will keep on file and authenticate all pertinent minutes and other appropriate documentation used in making decisions and/or taking action. An officer may be removed as such by the full Council of Elders without regard to such person's status on the executive elder team. A vacancy in any officer position shall be filled as soon as practical by the full Council of Elders.

Article VII The Full Council of Elders

SECTION A – The following issues are reserved for the full Council of Elders, with any voting requirements other than simple majority specified for such issue.

- Election of an elder. Approval requires no objections (abstention permitted).
- Discipline or removal of elders. Voting requirements and procedure are set forth in Article III, Section E.

- Changes to and adoption of articles of incorporation or by-laws: three-fourths approval of all elders
- Any significant change to essential doctrine: three-fourths approval
- Election or Removal of Executive Elder Team or Officers: as set forth in Article VI, Section C
- All powers reserved for the full Council of Elders as described in RCW 24.03.115 or similar statute.

Furthermore, any decision by any elder team, including the executive elder team, may be overridden by a simple majority vote of all elders. An objection to a decision by the executive elder team may be brought by any elder, and the matter scheduled for a review and vote, provided the objection was brought within a month of the decision being made.

SECTION B – To ensure that there is full disclosure to all elders, proper notice of all proposals requiring a vote of the full council of elders or the executive elders shall be provided to all the elders at least 30 days in advance, unless a credible emergency exists. Detailed minutes and voting record of each executive elder team meeting, as well as all other elder team meetings where a vote is taken (e.g., departmental, site, ad hoc) shall be published and disseminated to the elders, with records kept on file. The following information shall also be provided to every elder:

- Annual financial statements from CPA review
- Annual salaries and benefits list
- In-house prepared quarterly financial statements
- Quarterly church-wide tithing/giving report

ARTICLE VIII Indemnification

SECTION A – The corporation shall have the following powers:

1. Power to Indemnify. The corporation may indemnify and hold harmless to the full extent permitted by applicable law each person who was or is made a party to or is threatened to be made a party to or is involved (including, without limitation, as a witness) in any actual or threatened action, suit or other proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative, and whether formal or informal (hereinafter a “proceeding”), by reason of the fact that he or she is or was a director, officer, employee or agent of the corporation or, being or having been such a director, officer, employee or agent, he or she is or was serving at the request of the corporation as a director, officer, employee, agent, trustee, or in any other capacity of another corporation or of a partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise, including service with respect to employee benefit plans, whether the basis of such proceeding is alleged action or omission in an official capacity or in any other capacity while serving as a director, officer, employee, agent, trustee or in any other capacity, against all expense, liability and loss (including, without limitation, attorneys’ fees, judgments, fines, ERISA excise taxes or penalties and amounts to be paid in settlement) actually or reasonably incurred or suffered by such person in connection therewith. Such indemnification may continue as to a person who has ceased to be a director, officer, employee or agent of the corporation and shall inure to the benefit of his or her heirs and personal representatives.

2. Power to Pay Expenses in Advance of Final Disposition. The corporation may pay expenses incurred in defending any proceeding in advance of its final disposition (hereinafter “advancement of expenses”); provided, however, that any advancement of expenses shall be made to or on behalf of a director, officer, employee or agent only upon delivery to the corporation of (a) a written affirmation of the director’s, officer’s, employee’s or agent’s good faith belief that he or she has met the standard of conduct described in RCW 23B.08.510, and (b) a

written undertaking, by or on behalf of such director, officer, employee or agent, to repay all amounts so advanced if it shall ultimately be determined by final judicial decision from which there is no further right to appeal that such director, officer, employee or agent is not entitled to be indemnified under this Article or otherwise, which undertaking may be unsecured and may be accepted without reference to financial ability to make repayment.

3. Power to Enter Into Contracts. The corporation may enter into contracts with any person who is or was a director, officer, employee or agent of the corporation in furtherance of the provisions of this Article and may create a trust fund, grant a security interest in property of the corporation, or use other means (including, without limitation, a letter of credit) to ensure the payment of such amounts as may be necessary to effect indemnification as provided in this Article.

4. Expansion of Powers. If the Washington Business Corporation Act or the Washington Nonprofit Corporation Act is amended in the future to expand or increase the power of the corporation to indemnify, to pay expenses in advance of final disposition, to enter into contracts, or to expand or increase any similar or related power, then, without any further requirement of action by the directors of this corporation, the powers described in this Article shall be expanded and increased to the fullest extent permitted by the Washington Business Corporation Act and the Washington Nonprofit Corporation Act, as so amended.

5. Limitation of Powers. No indemnification shall be provided under this Article to any such person if the corporation is prohibited by the Washington Business Corporation Act or other applicable law as then in effect from paying such indemnification. For example, no indemnification shall be provided to any person in respect of any proceeding, whether or not involving action in his or her official capacity, in which he or she shall have been finally adjudged to be liable on the basis of intentional misconduct or knowing violation of law by the person, or from conduct of a director in violation of RCW 23B.08.310, or that the person personally received a benefit in money, property or services to which the person was not legally entitled.

SECTION B – Indemnification of Directors, Officers, Employees and Agents.

1. Directors. The corporation shall indemnify and hold harmless any person who is or was a director of this corporation, and pay expenses in advance of final disposition of a proceeding, to the full extent to which the corporation is empowered.

2. Officers, Employees, and Agents. The corporation, by action of its Board of Directors, may indemnify and hold harmless any person who is or was an officer, employee or agent of the corporation, and provide advancement of expenses to the full extent to which the corporation is empowered, or to any lesser extent which the Board of Directors may determine.

3. Character of Rights. To the extent the rights of indemnification and advancement of expenses have been conferred by or pursuant to this Article, such rights shall be contract rights.

4. Enforcement. A director (“Claimant”) shall be presumed to be entitled to indemnification and/or advancement of expenses under this Article upon submission of a written claim (and, in an action brought to enforce a claim for an advancement of expenses, where the undertaking in Section 1.2 above has been delivered to the corporation) and thereafter the corporation shall have the burden of proof to overcome the presumption that the Claimant is so entitled.

If a claim under this Article is not paid in full by the corporation within sixty days after a written claim has been received by the corporation, except in the case of a claim for advancement of expenses, in which case the applicable period shall be twenty days, the Claimant may at any time hereafter bring suit against the corporation to recover the unpaid amount of the claim. If

successful in whole or in part, the Claimant shall also be entitled to be paid the expense of prosecuting such claim. Neither the failure of the corporation (including its Board of Directors or independent legal counsel) to have made a determination prior to the commencement of such action that indemnification of or advancement of expenses to the Claimant is proper in the circumstances nor an actual determination by the corporation (including its Board of Directors or independent legal counsel) that the Claimant is not entitled to indemnification or advancement of expenses shall be a defense to the action or create a presumption that the Claimant is not so entitled.

5. Rights Not Exclusive. The right to indemnification and advancement of expenses conferred in this Article shall not be exclusive of any other right which any person may have or hereafter acquire under any statute, provision of the Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws of the corporation, agreement, vote of disinterested directors, or otherwise.

SECTION C – Insurance. The corporation may purchase and maintain insurance, at its expense, to protect itself and any director, officer, employee or agent of the corporation or any person who, while a director, officer, employee or agent of the corporation, is or was a director, officer, partner, trustee, employee or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, employee benefit plan or other enterprise against any expense, liability or loss, whether or not the corporation would have the power to indemnify such person against such expense, liability or loss under the Washington Business Corporation Act.

SECTION D – Survival of Benefits. Any repeal or modification of this Article shall not adversely affect any right of any person existing at the time of such repeal or modification.

SECTION E – Severability. If any provision of this Article or any application thereof shall be invalid, unenforceable or contrary to applicable law, the remainder of this Article, or the application of such provision to persons or circumstances other than those as to which it is held invalid, unenforceable or contrary to applicable law, shall not be affected thereby and shall continue in full force and effect.

SECTION F – Applicable Law. For purposes of this Article, “applicable law” shall at all times be construed as the applicable law in effect at the date indemnification may be sought, or the law in effect at the date of the action, omission or other event giving rise to the situation for which indemnification may be sought, whichever is selected by the person seeking indemnification.

ARTICLE IX Amendments to Articles, Bylaws, and Doctrinal Statement

Proposed amendments to the articles of incorporation or bylaws shall generally be approved by the executive elder team prior to submission to the full Council of Elders. Voting requirements for amendment are set forth in Article VII, Section A.

ARTICLE X Members of Mars Hill Church

SECTION A – Mars Hill Church shall not have members for purposes of the Washington Nonprofit Corporation Act. The reference to “member” in these bylaws is a spiritual and theological term that does not have any civil effect for purposes of state law (Romans 12:45-5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27). Consistent with the biblical concept of member and this Section A, members shall not have voting rights.

SECTION B – All persons desiring to unite with this Church shall sign an application to become a part of the fellowship, complete the required member process, sign the member covenant, and shall appear before at least one church member making a confession or reaffirmation of their faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Candidates coming in by transfer of letter from another church will follow the same procedure. Candidates having been approved by at least one church member must affirm by signature their agreement with the Doctrinal Statement and the Bylaws of Mars Hill. They must also agree to support in worship, giving, and service, and satisfy other conditions of fellowship defined by the Council of Elders.

SECTION C – Church Discipline. The threefold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church (1 Corinthians 5:6), to edify believers by deterring sin (1 Corinthians 5), and to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Galatians 6:1).

1. Members of Mars Hill Church and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with this church who err in doctrine, or who engage in conduct that violates Scripture as determined by an elder team (e.g., site, departmental, ad hoc, executive, all-elder council), shall be subject to church discipline. Each potential case of discipline will be weighed on its own merits and dealt with according to the following Scriptural examples:

- When a Christian sins against another Christian (Matthew 18:15–22)
- When someone is a gossip (Proverbs 16:28; Proverbs 20:19; Corinthians 12:20–21)
- When someone who professes faith lives in sin without repentance (1 Corinthians 5:1-13)
- When someone continually blasphemes God (1 Timothy 1:18–20)
- When a Christian sins and is repentant (Galatians 6:1–5)
- When someone encourages false doctrine (Acts 20:25–31; 1 Timothy 1:4–7; 1 Timothy 4:1–8)
- When someone is a habitual doctrinal debater (2 Timothy 2:14–26)
- When someone will only listen to false teachers (2 Timothy 4:1–5)
- When someone is sincere but deceived (2 Corinthians 11:3–4, 13–15)
- When a teacher is in moral sin or doctrinal error (James 3:1)
- When an elder is in moral sin or doctrinal error (1 Timothy 5:19–21)

2. Members of Mars Hill Church are not guaranteed confidentiality regarding issues of church discipline, and understand that in submitting themselves to the authority of the church, issues of a sensitive or personal nature may become known to others. This includes, but is not limited to, notification of the authorities if a crime has been committed or if a real threat of someone being endangered exists (Romans 13:1–7), as well as other violations of scripture that may not result in physical danger.

3. Those who are members of the church or who regularly participate in church activities may be dismissed from the church by the agreement of at least two elders. The dismissal of a church member may be made known to all church members. If the offense is a publicly known matter the executive elder team has the discretion to determine if the member's discipline should be made known to the entire church (1 Corinthians 5:1–5).

4. A person dismissed from Mars Hill for disciplinary reasons may be reinstated to full membership if the person's repentance is accepted as genuine by the elder team that oversaw the person's discipline.

5. Each member of this church, and every other professing Christian who regularly attends or fellowships with this church, agrees that there shall be no appeal to any court because of a discipline process or dismissal. A member who is under discipline by the church, as defined in the previous paragraphs, forfeits and waives the right to resign from Mars Hill Church. Resignation is possible only by a member who is in good standing and who is not under any disciplinary action.

6. Separate and apart from the process of church discipline, but subject to the discretion and approval of an elder team (e.g., site, departmental, ad hoc, executive, all-elder council), a member, non-member regular participant in church activities, or other individual, may be notified that he or she is not to be present upon church premises for such a period of time as is deemed necessary for the safety and well-being of others on church premises. Such required absence may, but need not, be concurrent with church discipline of that person.

8. Separate and apart from the process of church discipline, but subject to the discretion and approval of an elder team (e.g., site, departmental, ad hoc, executive, all-elder council), members who have not met all of the criteria of church membership for a period of six months or longer may be removed as a member of Mars Hill Church and may be asked to no longer attend Mars Hill.

ARTICLE XI Administrative Provisions

SECTION A – Definitions.

“Deliver” means: (a) mailing; (b) transmission by facsimile equipment, for purposes of delivering a demand, consent, notice, or waiver to the corporation or one of its directors or officers; (c) electronic transmission, in accordance with the director’s or officer’s consent, for purposes of delivering a demand, consent, notice, or waiver to the corporation or one of its directors or officers under Section B.

“Electronic transmission” means an electronic communication (a) not directly involving the physical transfer of a record in a tangible medium and (b) that may be retained, retrieved, and reviewed by the sender and the recipient thereof, and that may be directly reproduced in a tangible medium by a sender and recipient.

“Execute,” “executes,” or “executed” means (a) signed, with respect to a written record or (b) electronically transmitted along with sufficient information to determine the sender’s identity, with respect to an electronic transmission.

“Record” means information inscribed on a tangible medium or contained in an electronic transmission.

“Tangible medium” means a writing, copy of a writing, facsimile, or a physical reproduction, each on paper or on other tangible material.

Any term not defined in these Bylaws shall have the definition in Chapter 24.03 RCW, as presently enacted or hereafter amended.

SECTION B – Electronic Notice.

1. Consent to Electronic Notice. In order to consent to notice via electronic transmission, a director or officer must, in a record, designate in the consent the appropriate electronic format and the address or system to which notices may be electronically transmitted, for example, specify an email address to which such electronic transmission may be sent.

2. Revocation of Consent to Electronic Notice. A director or officer who has consented to receipt of electronically transmitted notices may revoke the consent by delivering a revocation to the corporation, in the form of a record (sent to the attention of the secretary). Additionally, the consent of any director or officer is revoked if the corporation is unable to

electronically transmit two consecutive notices given by the corporation in accordance with the consent, and this inability becomes known to the secretary of the corporation or other person responsible for giving the notice. The inadvertent failure by the corporation to treat this inability as a revocation does not invalidate any meeting or other action.

SECTION C – Effective Date of Delivery. If notice is mailed, it shall be deemed delivered when deposited in the mail properly addressed to the director or officer at his or her address as it appears on the records of the corporation with postage thereon prepaid. If the notice is by electronic transmission, it shall be deemed delivered when it is transmitted electronically in accordance with the consent of the director or officer. All other notice in tangible medium shall be deemed delivered upon receipt.