

THE RISE AND FALL OF MARK DRISCOLL (MARS HILL CHURCH)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2007

Letter to the Elders

Today, my wife and I have submitted the following letter to the elders of Mars Hill Church. It calls Mark on sin, asks for his resignation, and we submit our own resignation from the Church.

By posting this, of course we disclose our own identities (one note, my wife was not involved in this blog, but we did write this letter together)

Here is the letter:

Saturday, December 15, 2007

To the Elders of Mars Hill,

It is with great sadness, grief, and anger that we write this letter. Your handling of Bent and Paul has revealed your self-serving heart towards this church as well as your lack of care for its members.

Your sin is that of your focus on growing a large church. Instead, you should be serving Jesus and his Church. Repent of your focus. We would ask that you spend some time thinking about what God would have you do, not on your own selfish and proud ambitions.

The shame that you have brought on Bent and Paul and their families is wretched. The fact that you would squash their opinions and then shame them publicly is mind boggling. You kept the members in the dark the entire time and then followed up with weak letters that were without specifics. You wonder why there is mistrust and gossip. It is outrageous and you are to be held responsible. You must repent from your actions, and ask forgiveness of the former elders, their families, and of every member of Mars Hill.

The remainder of this letter addresses the specific sins of Mark Driscoll. In accordance with Mars Hill's Church Discipline document:

If it is believed that an elder is in unrepentant or serious sin, a formal charge should be brought according to the principles of 1 Timothy 5:19–21, ... Depending upon the severity of the offense, the elder may be rebuked publicly (1 Tim. 5:19-20) or even removed from church leadership (1 Cor. 9:27).

Mark, you are very familiar with the qualifications of an elder. Here are the charges Karen and I bring against you (if you feel the two of us is not sufficient to bring charges, we can seek out a list of other members to collaborate this):

- Your attitude is not gentle – when I sought your advice in getting help for another members marriage, pointing out the problems they were having with Lief, your response was “I am so mad that I would blow you out of the water.”
- You are quarrelsome - pick a blog entry or many of your sermons
- You are not self-controlled – you admit in your sermons that you frequently cannot control what comes out of your mouth.
- Most abhorrent, you are an arrogant and prideful man. In your sermon on humility a few weeks back, you confessed you are unable to change this. “It is who I am”, I believe you said.
- You are a bully. You intimidate and threaten in your sermons, and in personal correspondence.

From your arrogance alone, Titus 1 makes it very clear that you are not qualified to be an elder: “He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered”

Worse, Mark, you are proud. God hates the proud. Where do you think that puts you with God?

If the sin of arrogance and pride were sexual addiction or theft, it would not require any explanation before you were asked to step down. And yet because of our western culture, your pride is treated as praiseworthy rather than abhorrent to Jesus.

Mark, you must step down from Mars Hill and figure out where Jesus wants you. You have incredible gifts, but you are using them for your own selfish ambitions. Run from this temptation!

Resignation

Mars Hill’s end does not seem to be Jesus, but rather a mega-church with fearful (of the Elders, not God) members. Your god is numbers and control. Your god is not Jesus. If this were the only problem, we would stay and fight for this church. However, the controlling elders are proud and arrogant bullies who keep their sin in the dark and are no longer trustworthy. I can no longer submit myself or my family to such ungodliness.

We will no longer be submitted to elders who wish to lead this church in their flesh, rather than in submission to the Holy Spirit. We officially tender our resignation from Mars Hill.

We pray that you will be humbled by this mess you have created, and focus on Jesus again.

Joshua and Karen Ball

POSTED BY JOE AT 1:59 PM

56 COMMENTS:

ryan said...

Since this is being tossed out on the internet I would think you should specify such claims as they are all about the numbers. Not saying you are wrong but some evidence would strengthen your point.

DECEMBER 15, 2007 8:20 PM

ryan said...

Since this is being tossed out on the internet I would think you should specify such claims as they are all about the numbers. Not saying you are wrong but some evidence would strengthen your point.

DECEMBER 15, 2007 8:20 PM

Yelstkin said...

A proud and arrogant bully. Yep, that is an accurate portrayal of our pastor. Question him and face his swift and angry response. He says he will listen to those who dissent. But only IF they are humble. Of course who decides if they are humble? The bully himself. Much like Queen Esther entering the King's court. You express any dissent and gingerly hope that the almighty bully raises his scepter and allows you to speak. Rather unlikely though. He is a bully, after all.

DECEMBER 16, 2007 9:17 AM

Yelstkin said...

He is a bully. How else does he get a unanimous vote from the remaining elders? We know that many of them have issues and conceded the current matter has been handled poorly. Yet after witnessing what happened to Bent and Paul they know what will happen to them if they express dissent. I bet every vote on the current matters were open (not sealed) so that every dissenter would have to have the courage to expose themselves and risk their eldership and job.

DECEMBER 16, 2007 9:21 AM

jennifer said...

I feel for what you are going through as we went through the same thing with a church and left after 15 years. The hurt of rejection by others there, who could not see, was very painful. It took another 7 years for it to be seen by the church, with the pastor eventually leaving. Our friends who cut us off have now sought us out. Be patient and keep praying that God would work in this situation.

DECEMBER 16, 2007 1:36 PM

Shannon said...

It's so sad to read your stuff - clearly you are blinded to your own arrogance.

DECEMBER 17, 2007 5:48 AM

Thel Astraw said...

Arrogance! Here is arrogance. We members are now being instructed to shun Paul Petry. We are to use any encounter to encourage him to repent. Repent of what? The entire document telling us to avoid the Petry family does not tell us what sins we are to encourage Mr Petry to repent of. So my husband and I searched the 180 pages written so far. Mr Petry is to be shunned for the following sins:

1. He apparently ticked the lead pastor off – accusing him of hiding the proposed by-laws. (This is sin?)
2. He violated elder protocol – talking to a single Mars Hill member and the Mars Hill lawyer about the proposed by-laws.

That is it. For that 6000 Mars Hill members and attendees must shun him. Are you kidding me? My husband asked some of the elders what the elder protocol is or was. None could give the same answer. It is unwritten and arbitrary. So much for that “sin”. Mr Petry was an elder with equal authority as other elders under the old by-laws. How can he sin by deciding to get counsel and input from a either a Mars Hill member or the Mars Hill lawyer? Actually sounds rather wise to us. And Mr Petry denied accusing the lead pastor of hiding the by-laws. In fact – elders present at the discussion state that those words did not come from Mr Petry at all. Mr Petry has said that if that was understood then he is sorry. So what exactly is his sin?

DECEMBER 17, 2007 7:25 AM

Thel Astraw said...

I have to echo the sentiment of my husband.. He says that he understands the younger elders who are still learning the ropes. Most are men with no experience and several could not possibly get a job paying anything close to their salaries if they rocked the boat and got themselves fired. But where are the older more experienced men in this? Did the executive team rid the elder board of the only two men who would stand their ground if needed? Where is Lief Moi? Where is Bill Clem, Tim Quering, Tim Reber and Dave Kraft? How can they stand by and allow this to continue? Of course under the new by-laws there is not much they can do except try to make a case behind closed doors. They have no legitimate power any more. Is this why they are quiet? So we ask this question. Why was the decision to shun Mt Petry taken to the elders under the new by-laws? Was it is just posturing because at present the apparent unanimity seems to be working in convincing many to comply? The new by-laws do not require or even give the elders the authority to make this vote. Unbelievable.

DECEMBER 17, 2007 7:36 AM

JuliaY said...

A friend made me aware of the rather unusual development on this blog, and intense curiosity brought me back for a moment. As I suspected, I have little to add except my signature to Straw's post. I reiterate the question: What precisely was Paul's sin? To those elders who have eyes to see and yet will not speak out, beware: in the words of Martin Niemoller: ...(and) [w]hen they came for me, there was no one left to speak out.

DECEMBER 17, 2007 11:41 AM

longlivefreedom said...

The elders are blind to their decisions. It is as simple as that. They're borderline obsessed with the numerical growth of the church. Do they care about the church? Yes, but the balance has shifted clearly where they mostly care about the number projections they've placed as their goal - 10,000 people and then 20,000. Petry and Meyer are godly men. They're not perfect but godly. It's unfortunate that they've been treated in this manner and for us as the MH community to sit idle and do nothing may be even worse. MH is comprised of two significant things: Jesus and the body of Christ. We are the body of Christ. I believe that the only way that Mark and the Elder cronies will take a serious look at themselves...is if the attendance AND giving will dip dramatically. That will certainly get their attention. I am not ready to leave MH but my family and I have chosen to withhold any of our giving to the ministry until we believe integrity is restored.

DECEMBER 17, 2007 12:32 PM

ajpes said...

It seems to me that the elders of a church do have the right to remove an elder if they feel said elder is insubordinate or not behind the mission. It seems to be painted in this blog that Elder Petry was "suprised" or taken aback by a sudden firing. I would like to see some evidence to those ends. Did the elders at Mars Hill not confront him privately on the matter first? Did they give him a chance to explain himself? Do you(plural) know the answer to these questions? If not, then i suspect we should reserve judgement on Mark Driscoll and the Mars Hill elders. Aaron

DECEMBER 17, 2007 2:55 PM

ajpes said...

It seems to me that the elders of a church do have the right to remove an elder if they feel said elder is insubordinate or not behind the mission. It seems to be painted in this blog that Elder Petry was "suprised" or taken aback by a sudden firing. I would like to see some evidence to those ends. Did the elders at Mars Hill not confront him privately on the matter first? Did they give him a chance to explain himself? Do you(plural) know the answer to these questions? If not, then i suspect we should reserve judgement on Mark Driscoll and the Mars Hill elders. Aaron

DECEMBER 17, 2007 2:55 PM

Marie said...

I feel so sad for Marshill because we were there from the weekend Marshill went public until and stayed for many years. I agree that Mark is a bully. I pray for Gods will and God bless you Josh

DECEMBER 18, 2007 6:46 PM

JJH said...

Your shocking failure to use Scripture as a reference point speaks ill of Mars Hill. Surely the strong bible teaching that goes on here would compel you to a higher standard! You're both in my prayers, but for the moment I have to say Mars Hill is better off by your resignation. This doesn't mean Mars Hill or any of the elders are without sin. You could even be right in some of your accusations. But the utter recklessness of the delivery does not glorify Christ and does not reflect the gloriously changed lives we've seen color the story of Mars Hill. Please find a church you can happily submit to and stop this sowing of dissension among our Christian brothers and sisters.

DECEMBER 22, 2007 12:56 PM

FD said...

This post has been removed by the author.

DECEMBER 22, 2007 6:31 PM

Levi501 said...

Why is everyone posting anonymously?

DECEMBER 23, 2007 1:02 AM

Dan Bowen said...

Thanks for having the courage to share on this blog. I'm from the United Kingdom and am learning more quite quickly about Mark Driscoll since he was invited to a large leaders conference in Brighton UK next July 2008. (<http://www.janga.biz/terryvirgoblog/?p=71>). My heart aches that elders who are meant to care and love God's people can behave like this and sadly it's been my experience over here in UK too. When will we remember the original intentions for launching the Church? To go into all nations and see the earth covered with the glory of God?

DECEMBER 23, 2007 5:07 AM

fatdog said...

Lets be honest Mark has his problems and is a sinner. He has never made any qualms about that but Paul is a divisive man seeking to hurt those who hurt him. All are wrong here! Should Mark step down? NO! Would you follow Peter, Paul or King David? Is Pastor Paul a man of God? Yes! Is in being used to do harm rather than good right now? Yes! Bent did the right thing. He repented of his sin and didn't just demand everyone else repent and then he humbly left the church. You complain about Mark and Jamie dragging Paul's name through the mud before 6000 people but you drag Marks name through the mud in front of the world. My dear brother we are all sinners and I do see many of your charges but I don't

agree that they should lead to his resignation. He must demonstrate an attitude of true repentance as must we all. I myself am guilty of many of the sins of both Paul and Mark. God bless you and Merry Christmas! Jim

DECEMBER 23, 2007 4:52 PM

841yel said...

Jim... you have acknowledged that Paul was hurt (you claim he is trying to hurt those who have hurt him). I presume that you have no relationship with Pastor Paul - because if you did you would not call him divisive. He could have spoken to reporters who could have made public his side of the story. But he has not. You are right. Paul has been hurt. And your post just adds to the hurt of this family. The actions of the elders is what has been divisive. The more they try to spin themselves out of the fiasco they have created the worse it gets. What is it going to take for them to change course and end their divisiveness? Clearly it will take Mark Driscoll to end this. The elders have neither the authority nor the courage to stand up to Mark Driscoll. He can end this by taking responsibility for his rash anger that started this whole nightmare. Otherwise he can continue to damage and harm his own sheep.

DECEMBER 23, 2007 6:29 PM

FD said...

This post has been removed by the author.

DECEMBER 24, 2007 12:43 PM

Concerned said...

I have been told from some long time Mars Hill members that Paul and Bent were fired because of only one reason; their written questions and comments were perceived as a threat to the passing of the new bylaws. Those that spoke gave a much bigger and sobering picture than what has been conveyed by governing leadership the last few months helping to answer many questions. They did not speak of events in any tone of anger or try to draw any personal conclusions. They only described a chronological sequence of events. Two years ago the elders produced a set of bylaws, one of the principle writers being Paul Petry who is an attorney.

Mark and Jaime had wanted a much different set of bylaws than the ones the majority of the elders had approved of. They wanted bylaws more reflective to what the church has now. They may not have been happy with the outcome of what was passed as Jaime told one elder, "this isn't over" adding that the bylaws were going to change. The changes he referred to began to surface in the spring of 2007 with Mark asking the executive elders to resign from their positions. They all complied with the exception of Jaime as he was the only one that Mark wanted to stay. That left only Mark and Jaime as the lone executive elders for Mars Hill until those elders who resigned were replaced.

The reorganization of the leadership (which the new bylaws were to allow) had already begun months before the elder vote. During the time the bylaws were first being presented to the elders Paul and Bent were having lunch outside the

Ballard campus when one elder (he has been named) approached them and strongly encouraged them to vote for approval. Paul told this one elder that he would need to look over the bylaws before making a decision on how he would vote. Bent was also in agreement with Paul. This is not what the elder wanted to hear and further pressed Paul and Bent to go along with the bylaws regardless of its language, adding that in doing so would help bring the younger, less experienced elders along with them as they looked up to Paul and Bent and would follow their leadership. And then he added, “if you will get behind the rest of us on this there could be an opening for you on the executive elder team.”

Paul and Bent sat there stunned in disbelief at what they had just heard.

In a later elder meeting Mark had a draft of the new proposed bylaws passed out and said there would be a short window of time for the elders to read and submit any questions or comments before the vote.

But Mark spoke as if the new bylaws were already going to become part of Mars Hill. (It should be noted that the new bylaws had not been worked on by all the elders. They were written by Mark and Jaime). Though the submission of comments was going to be allowed, it was not encouraged as Mark was not going to allow the elders time to openly discuss their concerns (if there were any) before the vote. After reviewing the proposed bylaws both Paul and Bent submitted separate lists of questions and comments. They were very concerned and alarmed at the bylaw language and what it could mean for the future of the church. Their comments were only submitted as discussion comments. Mark Driscoll's response to these written comments was swift and decisive.

Three days later Paul and Bent were each contacted and told to report to the Ballard campus for what they believed was an all elder meeting. As they were waiting in the meeting room Mark was finishing his last evening message for Sunday sharing the story of Nehemiah pulling the hair out of his leaders who sinned, followed by the story of the ultimate fighter instructor that described to Mark how he would deal with students who wouldn't obey his instruction. His solution was to fight the disobedient student in front of the others with the intent that he would break the student's nose. The instructor added that he would do this in front of all to set an example, because if he didn't there would be “anarchy”. Mark finished by saying that the students would be walking around with broken noses, but at least they would have right attitudes.

Mark then made the statement about having two leaders (an attorney) that he wanted to punch in the mouth....to shut them up. After Mark finished his message he and Jaime went to the room where Paul and Bent were waiting. Jaime walked in first, looked at Bent and then at Paul and said, “your fired and your termination is effective immediately!” No explanation was given. Mark immediately followed up Jaime's statement by telling Paul and Bent that they should now resign because if they didn't the matter would go to a trial and it would be very “nasty”. In a tone of intimidation he added that he had a “file on them and that it was growing”.

In disbelief at what they had just been told they asked why they were being fired and Mark replied with, "I'm not going to tell you." Since they wouldn't resign, stating they would rather go to a trial they asked what the charges were going to be and again Mark wouldn't answer their question.

In the elder investigation period Paul was told that he would NOT be allowed to be present at his trial. He could write a statement, but someone would be reading it for him. At the last minute he WAS "invited", but still could only read a statement. The vote of elder dismissal was done as an open vote. All with the exception of a small few voted to have Paul removed as an elder. It was reported that Mark was not satisfied with the vote as he said "We have to all be in this together". Under pressure one or more gave in and changed their vote.

One who stood their ground and would not change his vote was Lief. There was a lot of pressure on the elders to vote a certain direction. As charged, Paul did speak outside the elders to a church member, but that member was a deacon who was to be installed as an elder in 2008 and who had personal experience with bylaw language. That member tried to come to Paul's defense stating that Paul did not disclose anything to him that should be perceived as breaking confidentiality. He was chewed out for trying to come to Paul's defense and has since withdrawn his membership.

In an elder meeting when Jaime was speaking about the bylaws Paul made a remark (in jest) that Jaime reacted to by saying, "are you calling me a liar?" Paul immediately apologized to Jaime in the presence of all the elders who were there. Paul later went to Jaime in private and again apologized with Jaime accepting it and telling Paul to not worry about it. Paul never said Jaime was "a deceptive liar", but he was charged with the offence anyway.

Paul did go to the church's attorney to get some clarification. This was not done in secret as he had done so on several occasions. For him it was not a covert thing to do as the attorney had encouraged all the elders to come to him at any time with any questions they might have. After Paul truthfully answered the questions that the elder investigation team asked him, he asked if he would be allowed to hear their findings when presented at his trial and he was told no. He wanted to be able to face his accusers (he still didn't know who they were) and be able to give a defense, but was denied until just before the scheduled time of his trial.

No elder went to Paul in private and explained anything that he had done wrong. He does admit writing a "scathing letter" to the elders, but this was done just before they were to vote on the new bylaws and after he was fired and dismissed as an elder. Part of his letter was voicing his anger because of the injustice of his firing, the investigation that followed and trial proceedings. Paul's statement which was sent to all the elders was one of tremendous frustration and heartache by everything that had happened to him. But his statement was also pleading with the elders to not vote away their biblical responsibility to God and to the body of Mars Hill members. In this (documented) statement he did ask forgiveness of his pride and anger and did specifically. Regarding Bent, he is saying that he never repented or took back anything he said to the elders with the

exception of being sorry for “yelling”. He will say it is on record that what he said of his concerns with the bylaws and the implications that this document could now mean stands. He said he never “repented” of that and the elders all know this to be true. He never repented of the charge leveled against him that he had an “unhealthy distrust in leadership”. His reply to how he feels about Jaime’s Dec. 5 letter on the member’s site? “I’m being used”.

Mark and Jaime were already implementing changes reflective of the new bylaws long before they were passed. They were moving away from the full counsel of elders to an authoritarian structure that would now drive the future of the church in its decision making. Members have been made to believe that the elders always worked together in counsel together and that this was how things were done right up until they voted for the new bylaws. This might not have been so.

The new bylaws reflected the structure of leadership that was already in place. The elders were basically doing what they were expected to do. All that was needed now was the vote approval of the elders which for Mark and Jaime was only a formality. There was to be no open discussion concerning the bylaws, only a vote of approval and nothing or anyone could get in the way of that happening. Paul and Bent were a threat because their questions and comments would mean discussion and any discussion might mean that others would join them in voting against the bylaws.

Other elders also had serious concerns that were voiced in private. But Paul and Bent were singled out because they were the only ones who had the courage to speak up. They are men of influence among the elders and were seen as a threat to the new reorganization that Mark and Jaime wanted.

There are questions that should be raised concerning the elder investigation itself. It is believed that the outcome of their investigation was “decided” before it began. They sought additional evidence against Paul which other witnesses within Mars Hill leadership were not willing to give. The elder who came to Paul and Bent offering them coveted seats with the executive elder team (in exchange for their cooperation) was also a member of this investigation team.

Leadership has painted a much different picture on the member site, especially through Mark and Jaime’s letters. They have diverted all responsibility away from themselves and onto Paul who is now being made a scapegoat for what they did.

No one believes that Mark’s goal is anything but good for the future of Mars Hill. No one is doubting his love and passion to see others come to Jesus Christ. What is being questioned is the heavy handedness in how Mark and Jaime have been running the church internally. There is so much control and the need to control that others have been seriously harmed in the process. That harm has now been extended into the larger body of Mars Hill Church.

DECEMBER 27, 2007 1:46 PM

Jason and Tami said...

concerned, "I have been told from some long time Mars Hill members" = **heresay**. Especially when it's being anonymously posted on a blog. In this I'm not necessarily discounting all that you said. If true, it's fairly troubling. But there is a certain manner in which church members are to address concerns about their leaders, and anonymously posting heresay on the internet isn't one of them. If, as you admit, "No one believes that Mark's goal is anything but good for the future of Mars Hill" and "No one is doubting his love and passion to see others come to Jesus Christ," then certainly he's owed more respect than you're currently giving him.

DECEMBER 27, 2007 6:11 PM

Yelstkin said...

Lets talk about respect. Like trust – this is something that is hard to give if one's actions destroy one's respectability. If it was safe to either openly challenge the actions of Mr Driscoll or to be able to challenge him face to face without him being a bully then he would be owed more respect. However – he and his men have exploited the office and power they have. They have immediately placed anyone who has challenged their harsh and unfair actions under censure. They have then slandered, belittled and in some case libeled the reputations of those that challenge them in any open way.

Mr Driscoll is a bully. We all know that, He delights in reminding everyone that he is a street fighter. He is not the street fighter that takes bullies out. He is the bully himself. He spoke openly in his sermon on Sept 29th, the night he fired Paul and Bent, about the way you get members to have a "good attitude" is to "break their noses". Did you respect your high school bully? You may have shown respect to him out of fear. But inwardly you grew to loathe him. Especially if you felt helpless to stop his cruelty. The actions of Mr Driscoll and his fellow bullies are not worthy of respect. They are cruel. The problem with a bully is his conscience. Ever seen a bully in action? He beats up the weak kid without any sense of the cruelty he has inflicted. He makes a kid cry and then laughs about it. He has no conscience. It is as if he has a disorder that renders him unable to empathize with the pain he has inflicted. If he is stopped by someone (like a policeman or teacher) he feels great empathy for himself and will quickly want people to see his pain. Yet is he is incapable of seeing the pain he himself has caused, Mr Driscoll has done this.

His opening letter in the 45 page document to church members is full of drawing the church member into feeling his pain and empathizing with all the trials he has been through. At the same time he continues to destroy the reputation and standing of Paul and Bent over trite and silly "sins". He inflicts pain. He lies. He slanders. But he asks for sympathy for the pain he is under. He is like the unforgiving servant in Matt 18, bullies want pity but they cannot show pity to others. They are mean people. But they want you not to be mean to them. I do not know how this is cured. Perhaps like the unforgiving servant the answer is to return a harsh punishment and pain for his lack of empathy.

The master forgave the wicked servant of a large debt. Yet the servant was harsh with a man that owed him a few pennies. After the master saw the lack of forgiveness and empathy he was angered and the wicked servant into fail to rot.

We members have endured with patience and kindness the bullying tactics of Mr Driscoll and his fellow executive elders. Yet they heap pain and punishment of Pastor Paul for his alleged sins of irritating the lead pastor and of violating “elder protocol”. Bullies need help. They need a fist in their face. They do not need or deserve respect. They need to see themselves for what they are and get help. We need to stop them as we empathize and care for those that they harm.

DECEMBER 28, 2007 9:41 AM

@bdul muHib said...

I don't know these people, but shouldn't you hide the names in the letter, like you did before?

DECEMBER 29, 2007 7:48 PM

@bdul muHib said...

jjh- What? Like Scripture is everything? It's not our God, you know!

DECEMBER 29, 2007 7:58 PM

Jason and Tami said...

@bdul muHib, [John 1:1,14](#). I hope you were being sarcastic.

DECEMBER 30, 2007 10:35 AM

Yelstkin said...

Why are these men Elders? As us members ask questions of our elders regarding the firing and subsequent trial of the Pastor Paul and Pastor Bent it is becoming clear that serious cracks in the solidarity of the elders are beginning to show. No names will be mentioned. I am sure each elder knows who they are. At this point at least two of the elders on the investigation team have indicated that they largely trusted the perspective of the accusers rather than pursue the truth themselves. A third has admitted that there has been wrong on both sides. One of them was so confident of what he trusted that he did not bother to even hear any defense at the trial. In fact he was not at the trial. He submitted his guilty vote by proxy. How can he honestly vote guilty when he had not heard the defendant's point of view? How could the other elders allow a juror to have a vote without even being at the trial?

Many of us have heard these men excuse their actions by passing the buck to the men that they trusted. The men they trusted were the executive elders. This is echoed by many of the other elders. Several elders, for example, claimed that they did not review all the facts because they trusted the men that presented them. So their vote was in fact a vote of trust in the accusers rather that a vote based upon the merits of the case they presented. This tells me that these men have abdicated the role that they signed up for.

Here they are, adjudicating the fate of a beloved senior pastor who has been fired and is now being tried, and they admit that they failed to spend any significant

time examining either the facts or adjudicated the question as to whether the trial was proper in the first place. After all, even the church was told that there was no sexual or moral sin involved. What kind of sin is not moral or sexual? It turns out that these men allowed a man to go on trial for contrived sins that would never hold up in environment where men were taking their eldership seriously.

Another thing we are hearing more and more from these elders is that most of them acknowledge that the firing was too rash. Well duh!! This is what has started this whole mess! Yet they stand together that despite this hasty and rather harsh decision, the subsequent actions of the executive elders get a pass while the accused actions are mercilessly condemned. Also hear with increased frequency is that there is sin on both sides. If this is the case one would wonder why the elders are not encouraging the executive elders to admit and repent of the sin on their side.

Finally these elders are aware that some of the charges leveled turned out to be deemed false or not credible. What have these elders done with the false accusers? Apparently the sins of having an unhealthy disrespect for senior leadership, upsetting the lead pastor and violating elder protocol is far more serious than bringing false charges against an elder. So I am wondering. Why are these men elders?

DECEMBER 30, 2007 1:45 PM

@bdul muHib said...

Jason and Tami, No, I'm not being sarcastic. I hope you're not confusing the English word for Word with the Greek? The beginning of John is discussing Jesus as the Logos, which is not best translated as "word", but "the organizing principle of the universe". This in no way relates to the English conception of referring to the collection of books we call the Bible as the word. To confuse the two is to fall into idolatry with the printed word.

DECEMBER 30, 2007 2:44 PM

Jason and Tami said...

@bdul muHib, Of course I'm not advocating idolatry of the written Bible. Nor has anybody claimed that "scripture is everything." But it accounts for quite a lot, and the utter lack of reliance on it by the author of this blog and most of the accusers of Mark and the elders says quite a bit about the motivation. Don't you agree that accusations such as the ones being leveled here ought to have a much stronger Scriptural basis than what's been displayed so far?

DECEMBER 30, 2007 8:42 PM

@bdul muHib said...

Well, that's good to hear. Scripture is good, and inspired. But to rely on it more than the direct inspiration of the Spirit is both idolatry and heresy. Far better to listen to the living Word. That said, I have seen scripture referenced on this blog. And there's a lot of ways Marc and Mars are violating scripture, as I've mentioned on my [own blog](#). But what is needed for the accusations leveled here is not a proof-text from scripture, but rather simply if they're true. And I have to say, not having been involved in any of this, more than anything that was written on this

blog, what has convinced me most is the comment post by Concerned.

DECEMBER 30, 2007 9:11 PM

mhmolly said...

@bdul muHib said "what is needed for the accusations leveled here is not a proof-text from scripture, but rather simply if they're true." Agreed. Presently, many are being circumspect and restrained out of respect for the wishes of those who have been harmed. Bear in mind, however that "... God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap." (Gal 6:7) We are commanded to "Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them... when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light." "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." (Eph 5:11,13) If the wrongs are not made right, rest assured you will get what you are asking for.

DECEMBER 30, 2007 10:17 PM

john said...

I've never been to Mars Hill. I don't know Marc Driscoll personally. I posted one of his YouTube videos on my blog and someone visited my blog and left this URL as a comment. It was a very old post - more than a year old. Someone is obviously searching the internet for places to publicize this site. It's sad how the Church "eats" her own. That's basically what Driscoll and the elders stand accused of. And that's CERTAINLY what you're doing, Joshua. You're repaying evil for evil - passing judgment on a fellow believer in public. I'm not sure what you think you're going to accomplish, but I can't think of anything good that can come of it.

JANUARY 1, 2008 6:40 AM

Jesse said...

Why do so many of you feel a church leader is entitled to privacy in church dealings. This is not a secret society. It's a group of people with a leader, teacher, instructor, not a dictator. Every single church matter should be an open, public event. If you are honest and sincere, that shouldn't make you uncomfortable. And if it does, so what. Deal with it. The reverse consequences are too enormous.

It is not isolated occurrences for pastors to embezel, lie, cheat or molest. Everyone I know, myself included, who was molested as a child was forced to keep it a secret to "protect" the sacred image of a church. Don't think it can happen to you or yours, you are very naive. One secret breeds another. It has made me angry my whole life that image to outsiders is more important than content. Do you know how many times I've seen pastors, leaders, elders, etc. suddenly relocate with no explanation given. This needs to stop. The only reputation that matters is God's.

My own parents refused to take a stand against my childhood church. Example showed them that those who dissent are ostracized and shunned. It was better to be quiet than have all your peers abandon you. How sad. Betray a child rather than take on a grown man who is fully capable of defending himself. Again, I ask, why do so many of you become alarmed, sad, shocked, outraged that the leaders are being questioned? As opposed to examining the content. What are

you afraid of? That you might have been mistaken about your worship of a man over God. And don't think I'm in favor of gossip or innuendo. Or that I'm implying anyone is a molester. I'm describing what can and does occur when things are shrouded in secrecy and unquestioned trust. Some legitimate concerns have been brought to the attention of Mark and the church leaders. Rather than answering, the church body is being told you are sinning to even ask. Many of you are condoning that response. That is not a road you want to travel.

JANUARY 1, 2008 2:56 PM

Tim Mathis said...

This post has been removed by the author.

JANUARY 1, 2008 7:03 PM

Tim Mathis said...

My commentary on the issues underlying this whole situation, if you're interested, is posted under "Spiritual maturity, Mars Hill, and me making people wish I'd shut up" at: <http://relativelyfaithful.blogspot.com/>

JANUARY 1, 2008 7:05 PM

Tyrone said...

This post has been removed by the author.

JANUARY 1, 2008 10:56 PM

@bdul muHib said...

Some commenters here may be interested in a Facebook Group of similar subject matter, [People of Faith Against Mars Hill Church](#).

JANUARY 2, 2008 10:16 PM

CF said...

I love the body at MH. mark is so removed from the realities resulting from his power-hungry agenda. If he does have an accountability team, he has outwitted them. They are committed to mark and the "brotherhood." Not Jesus and His people. I pray that God would lift this fog and open their eyes to what they have done. I pray that they would be so physically ill by their sin and the personal stories that it would take a miracle to peel them off the pavement and put them back together again. If someone like John Piper were close enough to hear the pains of this body of believers there is no way he would stand another minute of it. mark should be very nervous of these stories ever reaching his ears. Finally, I am ashamed of the wives of these men. You are standing by just as these boys following mark. Choosing not to be a helper suitable to your husbands. Closing your ears, eyes and hearts to the possibility that there is grievous sin here. Children are being spiritually abused along with their parents and you don't even want to know. This will take a lifetime to process. Please reconsider. The truth will set you all free.

JANUARY 4, 2008 9:23 AM

@bdul muHib said...

Perhaps part of the problem is not enough of the wives are elders, and not enough of their husbands are being suitable helpers to them.

JANUARY 4, 2008 12:05 PM

FD said...

Here's the problem. Rather than having this discussion on a public website where the Stranger and Abdul Muhib can witness it all, individuals should be pursuing this privately. Contact elder after elder until you get the answers you need. If enough people persist at voicing concerns in a right way, it will be heard. It's slower certainly, but people will leave and finances will suffer. At some point, leadership will get it. But giving Mars Hill haters additional fodder is just wrong. I think most here firmly agree with the church's doctrinal statements and positions on women in leadership.

JANUARY 4, 2008 2:07 PM

@bdul muHib said...

Hard to say, FD. As you say, a blog is a very public forum, and more people lurk on a blog than actually post comments. There could be a ton of people in Outer Mongolia reading this blog, or, more realistically, Upper Michigan. It's hard to get a take on the average theological beliefs of the readers of a particular blog post. But given the nature of this particular blog, I'd hazard a guess that the majority *do not* agree with aspects of Mars Hill theology.

JANUARY 4, 2008 3:10 PM

A.S. said...

This issue has been directly addressed with the elders by numerous members, the result has been the same: 1) a stubborn and/or fearful refusal to repent of defaming Jesus by allowing Mark to summarily and rashly fire two beloved pastors for no Biblical reason in a manner that violated scripture's admonition to try such elders with impartiality;

2) continuing to publish sinfully slanderous accusations against Pastor Paul on the members' site;

3) a refusal to repent of imposing an extra-biblical, unequal heirarchy on the church in opposition to the church being biblically governed equally by the Full Council of Elders;

4) the serial "disciplining" of members who asked questions or expressed concerns;

5) a refusal to repent of the admitted lie that the elders removed Pastor Paul by unanimous vote;

6) an arrogant denial to be open and transparent by releasing the written private accusations and trial minutes against our pastors to the members; and

7) a cowardly refusal to openly and interactively discuss these issues with the membership on the members' site, here, or elsewhere, instead fragmenting the entire church site (let's face it, over the last month, almost as many members have posted here than on the official site).

This matter will not be resolved in secrecy while the elders persist in their unrepentant state; while our church's detractors can now view the sin committed by our elders, the matter is rightly brought into the open in hopes that they may respond in humility and submit to the Holy Spirit's call to bring them to repentance while restoring justice. The elders' sin and refusal to repent has now tragically harmed many families in our church and defamed Jesus in our city; secretly covering their unrepentant sin is no answer.

This turmoil is not going away on its own. If the elders, through silence and denial, think they can make it go away, their sin and injustice will only be further exposed. The media continues to regularly contact members for additional information, most members are holding back their stories in hopes that repentance will yet be forthcoming; absent such repentance, the abuse of our dear members will be made known; mediators such as Tim J. Keller, John Piper, C.J. Mahaney, D.A. Carson, Ken Hutcherson, Gerry Breshears, Larry Osborne, Craig Groeschel and Ed Young will be sought out to speak truth to this situation. Members and those who recently have been disciplined will openly and publically call our elders to repentance outside church services.

JANUARY 4, 2008 4:31 PM

CF said...

This post has been removed by the author.

JANUARY 4, 2008 4:31 PM

Wal Kin de Lite said...

fd: most of us mars hill members would love to see this matter settled within the family of mars hill. but we have been shut down again and again. the elders are individually beginning to admit that things did not go they way they should have with comments like there is sin on both sides or there were mistakes made. but they do not have the courage to stand up as elders and be counted. this blog has allowed the matter to be brought into the light. this is something that the elders have opposed. trust us they say. no appeal they say. no discussion they say. in the mean time the have the freedom to craft endless pages of their side of the story. they started with paul not being qualified based upon negligible sins to having to re characterize him as more and more evil. now his terrible sin is that he refuses to reconcile. of course the elders refuse to reconcile unless their conditions are met. i bet the elders have the same posture toward others they view are in sin. no reconciliation except on their terms. this blog is redemptive in that it is the only place that members can vent and openly feel free to talk and speak about the matters at hand. yes many will read some with different points of view and some members will be sad that this has to be done in the public arena. I guess they would have preferred that the apostle paul rebuke peter in private and not in public. if we walk in the light we have fellowship with one another. when the elders walk in the light i bet this blog will disappear.

JANUARY 4, 2008 4:51 PM

FD said...

You don't need this blog to get attention. You can contact GB, JP, CJM, or any other respected spiritual leader for mediation without this. You need to decide your final objective. Surely those who are members at MH agree that we want Jesus to be honored and the Bible to be obeyed. If that's the case, then the elders' sin doesn't excuse more sin here. I get the impression that since the Petry's were slandered, folks here feel free to respond in kind. But you have to take the high road. The Petry's themselves have. And I imagine this discussion grieves them.

I have the vision of Peter cutting off the centurion's ear in defense of Jesus when they came to arrest Him. But that wasn't God's way for dealing with the injustice done to Christ. Take a stand. But take it in a righteous way. Not to the worldwide public in a blog. This is for Mars Hill members and those who are dedicated to its role in bringing the gospel to Seattle.

Take it to elders. Take it to Mahaney, Carson, or Piper. Then if you leave, email your circle of church members with Scripture. But there is NO BENEFIT to violating Scripture by taking a church discipline issue outside of the church to the larger public, even if you feel you are protesting an unrighteous act. We can't say, "Well righteous means didn't work, so now I'll resort to unrighteous things." Trust God. Persevere in talking to the right people at the right time. It is the goodness of God that draws men to repentance (Rom. 2:4).

JANUARY 4, 2008 5:22 PM

A.S. said...

Wal Kin de Lite makes an illustrative point. Not only did Paul rebuke Peter publicly, God saw fit to include the incident in His inspired word. A word that would be published around the earth, in every tribe and nation. Certainly more openly read than a blog. God was not so timid to believe that being forthright and honest about church difficulties should be hidden away as though we are sinless beings or worship within a secret society. Clearly, Martin Luther, in nailing his theses in a public place, followed this same pattern. Only those with unrepentant sin to hide or those afraid that walking in the light brings shame rather than redemption, want secrecy at all costs. The elders refused to permit ongoing discussion on the members' site, they have refused to repent; open discussion now is an appropriate way to call our elders to humble themselves of the sin they've committed against our body.

JANUARY 4, 2008 5:45 PM

FD said...

Several breakdowns: 1) Paul didn't rebuke Peter anonymously. Neither did Luther. 2) The original context was not published worldwide. Luther nailed his thesis to the CHURCH door. Paul wrote his rebuke in a letter to the CHURCH at Galatia. The fact that God has used both of those conflicts AFTER THE FACT in a public way doesn't excuse this forum. We are told specifically in Scripture to settle our disagreements WITHIN ourselves. It's only after a conflict is settle through grace and the gospel that it should become a public example to non-

Christians. The same Paul who rebuked Peter in his letter to Galatia instructs this to the church at Corinth. 1 Corinthians 6:6-7 But instead, one brother goes to law against another—and this in front of unbelievers! The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?

JANUARY 4, 2008 6:03 PM

A.S. said...

The issue of anonymity has been discussed here ad nauseum and in any case, lacks relevance now anyway since the blog's author and others here are no longer anonymous. As I'm sure you're aware, the Wittenburg door was a place for public notices, for that time about as equivalent to a blog as possible. As others have pointed out, the elders persist in sin and a pattern of abuse toward members after being approached repeatedly. When one is individually wronged, turning the other cheek is appropriate. When there is systematic, unrepentant abuse by church leadership against the membership, it is foolish to suppress the truth and not call the leaders to public account as Joshua has done here. To fail to do so, is assent by omission; not an act to be admired in the least. It only acts to cover sin, not promote justice or righteousness.

JANUARY 4, 2008 6:35 PM

FD said...

The apostle Paul couldn't have been any clearer than he was in 1 Cor. 6:6-7 "But instead, one brother goes to law against another—and this in front of unbelievers! The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?" His indignation is CLEAR--don't do this in front of unbelievers! The very fact that you have resorted to this means that you have already been defeated. You are better off being wronged than taking it in front of unbelievers. Not my words, but Paul's.

JANUARY 4, 2008 8:16 PM

A.S. said...

Joshua and others here have not brought a lawsuit against a believer to be decided by unbelievers. These verses are simply inapplicable to this situation. Wrenching these verses from their context and seeking a general application to church leaders who are abusing their authority would condemn not only Luther but also Jesus who certainly made public rebukes of religious leaders abusing their authority. When religious leaders misuse their authority to abuse those in their care and refuse to repent after being privately addressed, public rebuke is not only acceptable, it becomes necessary. To urge otherwise refutes the actions of Jesus and makes one an enabler of those who desire secrecy to facilitate their ongoing abusive conduct.

JANUARY 4, 2008 8:47 PM

@bdul muHib said...

If we're going to prooftext, Paul also says he wishes those false prophets and troublemakers would go castrate themselves (except the Greek uses stronger language.) Of course, this isn't a prooftext, for Paul is a fiery preacher with those

who reject the doctrines of Christ, or don't live in his practice of love. He doesn't shirk from calling them out on it, and insisting that they change. And, to preempt, this wasn't a quiet, behind the scenes calling out either. It was assumed at the time that letters would be somewhat circular, and distributed to more than one church. Some letters were more obviously to multiple churches, like the letter to the Ephesians, and others more narrowly focused, like Galatians, but in all cases, the culture of the time assumed a letter would be read and then sent on to another church. Paul didn't do this in every case. He used it in only the most glaring cases, when leaders of the church, or those who would be leaders, snuck into the Church to bring in lies of Satan. It strikes me that a blog is the modern equivalent of these letters, and I can easily see Paul setting one up if he lived at that time.

JANUARY 4, 2008 8:50 PM

FD said...

This post has been removed by the author.

JANUARY 4, 2008 9:17 PM

FD said...

Paul didn't rebuke Peter at Mars Hill. He did it "to his face" at Galatia. Go take a look at Abdul Muhib's facebook page to which he invited us all. That's where you are taking this. This is my last post. While I will continue pursuing this privately until which point I feel I must resign my membership, I will not be pursuing this in the court of public opinion. I again encourage those involved here to hear the apostle Paul's indignation over taking this kind of mess in front of unbelievers.

JANUARY 4, 2008 9:21 PM

@bdul muHib said...

Nice, FD! Simultaneously take the high road of going straight to the person in private, yet undercut me surreptitiously by implying but not actually stating something negative! Did you by chance work for the Swift Boat folks? No, that's not my Facebook page or Group- that's one that I found interesting, that I thought others here might find interesting. Someone else started it and maintains it.

JANUARY 4, 2008 9:24 PM

A.S. said...

While we don't agree on all the acceptable methods or the applicability of that passage, I do appreciate your heart for the church as you have expressed it here and hope the best for you in communicating with the elders. As for facebook pages, I guess I'm not too concerned nor interested enough to check it out.

JANUARY 4, 2008 9:28 PM

Wal Kin de Lite said...

FD: luther hid and was protected for years. he wrote and argued hidden away from those that could hurt him. posting anonymously offers protection from being the next victim. your reference to 1 cor 6 is flawed. mars hill elders have refused to have their actions adjudicated by wise men in the church. there is no appeal. read their latest discipline document. paul chides this way of thinking. he

would say that it to the shame of the elders that they cannot pick wise impartial men and sort this mess out. their actions will be the very thing that will cause and dare frustrated people to file lawsuits. it will be a shame that this will be the only way to find justice.

JANUARY 5, 2008 12:00 AM

[Post a Comment](#)

[Home](#)

Subscribe to: [Post Comments \(Atom\)](#)

BLOG ARCHIVE

- ▼ 2007 (14)
 - ▼ December (1)
 - [Letter to the Elders](#)
 - ▶ November (8)
 - ▶ October (5)

ABOUT ME

JOE

[VIEW MY COMPLETE PROFILE](#)