

Bill Gothard - Covering Up Sin



“I fear that when I come again my God may humble me before you, and I may have to mourn over many of those who sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality that they have practiced. This is the third time I am coming to you. Every charge must be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. I warned those who sinned before and all the others, and I warn them now while absent, as I did when present on my second visit, that if I come again I will not spare them.” II Cor. 12:21-13:1-2

This correspondence is in response to inquiries from a father of a son currently employed at IBLP headquarters in Oak Brook, IL. We will refer to this father as “Trenton” who has actively participated in the www.RecoveringGrace.org blog and website. Trenton loves Bill Gothard very much and has benefited greatly from his ministry, as so many of us have. He is concerned to confirm or prove/disprove the continuation of decades of charges raised against Bill Gothard especially regarding charges of Bill Gothard’s knowledge of immorality before 1980 during which time period Bill Gothard continued to send more young daughters of Dad’s and Mom’s up North where they were spiritually abused and sexually assaulted. The additional charges of Bill Gothard’s own direct involvement in sexual violation of the same single staff women sent up to the Northwoods Retreat Center (Watersmeet, Michigan) was also his concern and is addressed here with Trenton. Trenton is reliant on Dr. Gary Smalley’s continued friendship and continued involvement in the ministry of Bill Gothard and related conferences, concluding that Dr. Gary Smalley knows of no disqualifications of Bill Gothard from the ministry.

Trenton, your reference to Gary Smalley as “the primary one with first-hand information” is simply not a true statement. Gary Smalley was not a direct source for knowledge of all of the immorality going on with the top 15 staff members living closest to and working closest with Bill Gothard over the last 10 years Gary was an employee there. Gary Smalley knew of only a few and only in very general terms, e.g. “inappropriate behavior“, “indiscretions” etc. When I personally asked Gary Smalley to assist me with confronting the immorality and those involved, and for his involvement in discussions with Bill Gothard in 1979-80, Gary Smalley did interview generally several of the women involved, but later admitted they were very general discussions and in his view did not reveal condemning detail in regards to Bill Gothard. These women were not forthcoming to Gary Smalley in those interviews at that time indicating to him that Bill Gothard “never touched them inappropriately.” You have to understand those answers were in the context of the gross, continual, and many years of immorality they were experiencing with the other brother, with Bill Gothard’s detailed knowledge and ongoing provision and protection. Gary Smalley did not interview all of the 15 staff involved in immorality and was only very general in his discussions with the very few he met with.

I carefully interviewed in great detail each of the 15 staff persons involved and that is the detail which was examined by the IBYC (now IBLP) Board of Directors, Bill Gothard’s chain of command, and the basis of their termination of Bill Gothard as President and Teacher at the ministry on June 5-6, 1980.

Gary Smalley is a direct witness to Bill Gothard “seeing and touching” a staff woman’s private parts, if you would define private parts as body parts that can be viewed and touched through “a skimpy nightgown” of a staff secretary, sitting directly on top of his lap, at 11 p.m. at night in the middle of the forest in Bill Gothard’s private cabin. Do you think Bill Gothard walked this young lady back to her room through the forest in the middle of the night? When you interview Bill Gothard next, you might ask him to answer that question, which is a detail we do not know at this

time. We are only left to guess about what happened next. Or do you think this girl had to find her own way home? This is public domain information which until recently could be viewed at www.Wikipedia.com. As you may know, Bill Gothard is in direct control of the dress code for all of his girls and boys that work for him.

And this was clearly Bill Gothard approved clothing for this occasion he was found in. And it seems to have happened more than once. Think about Bill Gothard's approval, acceptance, and welcome of this dress code by a staff employee. Bill Gothard was notified of this report and details at the worldwide read web site and immediately (2009) telephoned his good friend Gary Smalley to request a letter from him stating that he/Gary Smalley had interviewed all the woman involved (in 1980) and did not have any knowledge of any such violations by Bill Gothard and had never seen such intimacy between Bill Gothard and his staff girls.

Well, Gary Smalley was stuck in that phone call and with that request. Gary Smalley had to remind Bill Gothard that it was he, Gary Smalley, who was the one who walked through the forest and came into Bill Gothard's cabin so late at night and found Bill Gothard holding this secretary on his lap in this condition. Needless to say, Gary Smalley was not able to offer any assistance to Bill Gothard in denying this "false charge" published on the Wikipedia website under "Bill Gothard." Trenton, I know you have some trust in the validity of Gary Smalley in his statements and evident spiritual authority, but this should give you some pause. Why has Gary Smalley not provided you with this first-hand account? Could it be that Gary Smalley accepts this level of violations of Biblical standards for pastors, elders, deacons? Have you interviewed Gary Smalley on this specific question of Biblical standards he would require of any minister? Do you know why Gary Smalley resigned from the ministry, with two other primary men in the ministry, in protest to the deception and lying of his good friend Bill Gothard regarding the immorality going on and Bill Gothard's lying about it to his chain of command, the Board of Directors?

You may doubt this could possibly be true, but that can easily be resolved with your interview of Gary Smalley first and Bill Gothard second. Trenton, I realize you are relying heavily on the credentials and godliness of Gary Smalley. You have stated to me, "I doubt that Gary Smalley would allow his name and ministry to be associated with Mr. Gothard if he knew that the reality was along the lines of the LA Times article."

Trenton, you have direct access to two witnesses of that event, which you can interview by phone or in person at any time you would like, e.g. Gary Smalley and Bill Gothard. Their testimony should collaborate with each other perfectly. Bill Gothard was somehow successful in removal of the article, without Gary Smalley's help, but removal of the account from the public domain does not return him to innocence. Would you agree? Additionally, I gave to you this account on April 4, 2012, and to my knowledge and as indicated by your recent public blog statement, you have completed no follow up in further investigation of this matter. Why not? In reality, you treat such reports as rumors, wild imaginations, and dismiss them as so many Christian leaders have done over the years.

This is in my view only a small glimpse into publically available information, of the much more detailed and important issues that illustrate his complete disqualification as a representative of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as required in the Scriptures. You have overlooked these very specific requirements of God's Word and you have resisted learning the details of his violations.

You have basically failed to catch what is going on here with a man that has great skill in controlling people's thinking and public perceptions, but who is a failed man, miserable in his guilt, only able to blame others, finding it impossible to repent in a godly way (II Cor. 7:8-13), choosing rather regrets that lead only to DEATH, pitiful in his rebellion against the truth and resulting confusion, living with fears of the coming Day of Judgment and the likely loss and shame of confessing all while he is still alive, failing to trust God for the good results that would come from that obedience.

To help you visualize the location of this particular event, here are a few photos of Bill Gothard's private cabin in the forest where this happened, at least the one time we are referencing with the account of Gary Smalley finding this compromising situation. You can hardly imagine this was the only time if he accepted this dress code and behavior by his staff girls.

This will not surprise you once you learn of the additional and ample detail of what Bill Gothard knew was going on and his continued provision for it. Trenton, right here I would want to say one more, very clearly. This kind of

immoral behavior is only a symptom, a fruit, an outcome of very flawed understandings of the Scripture, personal and ongoing rebellion of an individual toward God, with pride and defiance, unable or unwilling to seek or find repentance. Just like Esau found trouble doing so, thinking he was above the law of God, could sin and confess and find forgiveness and a return to his inheritance now squandered for a bowl of porridge. That is the real trouble Bill Gothard faces, between him and a holy God.

Note: Below is a copy of Dr. Gary Smalley's 2009 correspondence to Dr. Bill Gothard confirming that it was he, Gary Smalley, who had found Bill Gothard in this compromising relationship late at night with his very young executive secretary, the daughter of a trusting Dad and loving Mother.

Bill,

I think I found what you were speaking of the other night. Wikipedia.... "([Veinot et al. 2003](#), pp. 52-55) alleges that Gothard tried to cover up the scandal but "despite Gothard's best efforts at containment...the story was reported in the *Los Angeles Times*." In 1982 the *Los Angeles Times* also reported allegations that "Bill Gothard was seen by staff members patting and fondling women employees. Later, he admitted in staff meetings that these actions were 'moral failures' on his part."²⁴

I am wondering how the current situation got started all over again after so many years? Are their [*sic*] pastors, Christian leaders or some of your followers investigating these allegations? It seems like so long ago, it amazes me.

And are these recent postings in Wikipedia? Sorry for all of the "dogings" [*sic*] that keep following you. You thought [*sic*, "taught"] me that a leader is always being watched and held accountable for all his actions.

I think you know me well enough for me to say that my motives here are to try and bring glory to God from all of the "ashes" from the past.

Instead of me sending an email or letter to you sharing that "as far as I know from the girls I interviewed, according to them, Bill did not fondle any of them" But a more important question for me to ask you is, "what do you want as an end goal with Christian leaders and the body of Christ?" Is it just my opinion that you "didn't fondle the girls?" As I read the criticisms of you from many different Christian leaders, I wondered what your end objective is? Is it to add evidence that you didn't touch any of the girls inappropriately? Remember I was one of the staff who saw #6 sitting on your lap with her sheer night ware [*sic*] on. That alone was so inappropriate that a case could be made from just that one act I saw for you to take time away from ministry in order to be healed by God's Spirit and renewed to purity. That one act would have taken Ted Haggard out of the ministry as his other actions did.

I am wondering what kind of legacy do you want to leave? What God has done through you is amazing, but you stumbled at times just like all of God's leaders throughout history.

How do you want people to remember the steps you took after "failing" in your walk with God at times?

How can I help you reach your ultimate goals for your legacy ??????. Can we visit about this question the next time we talk on the phone or visit together? I would be willing to do that if the time is right in your life.

Thanks for entrusting this to me as a friend. God is faithful and able. It is He to whom I present this serious need and ask for His provisions.

Love,

Gary

For additional information and a tour of the Northwoods Conference Center where many of these events took place, see <http://northwoods.iblp.org/facilities/> as well as <http://northwoods.iblp.org/gallery/>

For a walk through of Bill Gothard's cabin, see <http://northwoods.iblp.org/facilities/cabins/billscabin/>