

Independent Investigation of Overlake Christian Church Final Report and Recommendations

September 28, 2023



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I. Introduction

Leadership at Overlake Christian Church (OCC) engaged Godly Response to Abuse in the Christian Environment (GRACE) in response to allegations made by a former youth group member in June of 2022 pertaining to incidents that occurred 2011-2013. The allegations noted patterns of sexual harassment, coercive or controlling behavior in a religious context that relied, at least in part, on the alleged perpetrator's formal or informal position of pastoral or spiritual leadership. Additionally, the incidents referenced above can be placed within a deep history of sexual misconduct within the church dating back to the 1970's.

This Final Report and Recommendations presents the scope and methodology of the GRACE process and the investigative team's findings, analysis, and proposed recommendations. These include GRACE assessments regarding OCC's response, protocols, and culture.

Overlake and its leadership should be encouraged that they initiated an independent, third-party investigation into the difficult issues covered in this report. That decision was a critical first step in understanding their own story. "Independent investigations are the primary way of legitimately addressing allegations of past abuse while also investigating and assessing the organization's knowledge of the abuse and if and how it responded to it."¹

As OCC reflects on its own journey and plans for the future, the account of Josiah in 2 Chronicles 34 can provide inspiration. This narrative illustrates a people who held a special place in God's heart, grappling with the repercussions of their ancestors' transgressions and how those actions had shaped their culture and faith. The deliberate yet persistent efforts of leaders without extensive experience, advisors with limited knowledge, and unexpected individuals who spoke God's truth during a time of crisis altered the course of an entire nation. In today's context, followers of Jesus can find solace in this example and humbly join forces with God to restore the goodness that has been compromised.

The emphasis placed by Overlake on acknowledging the challenges faced in gospel work within environments characterized by power imbalances deserves recognition. Furthermore, the dedication of the leadership to engage with the intricate nature of vulnerability in its various manifestations should be highly praised. In a Sunday service that

¹ GRACE. (n.d.). Independent investigations. Retrieved [June 20, 2023], from <https://www.netgrace.org/independent-investigations>

GRACE investigators attended in early 2023 one leader shared, “The work of peace is holding the dignity of someone else.”² In the midst of a challenging period, GRACE's prayers are with OCC, as they navigate the path towards peace by wholeheartedly embracing repentance and striving for restoration, specifically in addressing the instances where human dignity within the church has been compromised. GRACE encourages them to recognize their own vulnerability and weaknesses, finding solace in the fact that their Savior willingly sacrificed Himself, even to the point of death, as a testament to His love for those who are wounded. Let us remember that God's most profound works were accomplished when Jesus exhibited utmost vulnerability and transparency. May God's presence, comfort, and guidance be with OCC as they follow the example set by Jesus.

II. Methodology

GRACE's assessment was limited to the scope defined in the Engagement Agreement and conducted using semi-structured qualitative interviews of 21 individuals, a survey with 239 responses and qualitative content analysis of collected relevant documents. The below section provides a summary of the scope and methodology.

A. Scope

As per the Engagement Agreement with OCC, “GRACE shall investigate allegations from June 2022, specifically:

Allegations made by former youth group student at Overlake Church of behavioral misconduct by former Overlake Church youth group leader toward that youth group student. As part of the investigation, GRACE shall seek to determine if there are additional alleged victims.

Investigate whether and when Overlake Church had any knowledge of the allegation, and if so, how the organizational culture of Overlake Church impacted the way Overlake Church responded to the allegation. This includes assessing: what information Overlake Church received; when Overlake Church received such information; what Overlake Church did and should have done with said information, including its response to the allegation; and how Overlake Church response compares to best practices, Scriptural values, and SAMHSA's Six Principles of Trauma-Informed Practice. As part of this investigation and assessment, GRACE may assess the existing safety protocols related to behavioral misconduct and reporting, the administrative environment and community

² Common Hymnal. James. Service on March 5, 2023.

culture of Overlake Church, and how such may impact matters relating to behavioral misconduct within the organization.

Assess and chronicle the organizational culture of Overlake Church related to and following previous allegations of behavioral misconduct. For purposes of this Independent Investigation and Assessment, GRACE will not attempt to explore all allegations of behavioral misconduct in the history of Overlake Church, and GRACE will not attempt to establish credibility of previously made allegations. For purposes of this Independent Investigation and Assessment, allegations are assumed to be credible. As part of this assessment, GRACE will assess what information Overlake Church received; what Overlake Church did and should have done with said information, including its response to the allegations; and how Overlake Church's response compares to best practices, Scriptural values, and SAMHSA's Six Principles of Trauma-Informed Practice."

B. Witness Interviews, Documentation, and Investigation Limitations

GRACE conducted a review of relevant church policies, historical documents, and communications on-site for fifteen hours from March 4-6, 2023. Investigators also attended Sunday services on March 5, 2023. Twenty-one individuals with potentially relevant knowledge to the scope of this investigation agreed to speak with GRACE as part of the assessment. Nearly twenty hours of interviews were recorded and 508 pages were transcribed. A thirty question survey was distributed to an email list of over 4,000 addresses. Two hundred and thirty-nine individuals responded to the survey, providing an additional nine hundred pages of data that the investigators reviewed. This survey is summarized in Appendix A. Every investigation and assessment process has limitations, and OCC is no different. Overlake's founder, a notable perpetrator of sexual misconduct, is deceased, and many individuals who held authority at that time have left the church.

In this report, GRACE has named those who have been convicted of criminal activity as well as those who are public figures and are already identified in media or other publicly available materials. GRACE also named the lead pastor or pastors during OCC's history as a benchmark that may aid the reader in understanding OCC's history. GRACE did not name the youth group leader who was the subject of the investigation due to unique circumstances and risk factors that were discussed with OCC. GRACE did not name others identified in documents or witness statements as having engaged in sexual misconduct because it was not within the scope to investigate other allegations but to utilize these documents and statements in the hope of understanding the culture at OCC which has contributed to sexual misconduct. Moreover, some of these prior cases were previously investigated and prior investigators were in a better position to gauge the credibility of

witnesses and other evidence. In anticipation of OCC releasing the report publicly, GRACE also wanted to limit the possibility of harassment or other misconduct directed toward anyone referenced in this document.

However, GRACE did work with OCC in reporting or otherwise making authorities aware of past allegations and to take other precautions to protect those who may be endangered by those no longer at OCC but who are still alive and whose past transgressions could be repeated elsewhere. Specifically, GRACE investigators in partnership with Overlake staff made two reports to local law enforcement of concerns related to possible indecent liberties of an adult male on church property in 2009 and a disclosure of child abuses made to an Overlake volunteer not involving adult members or staff in 2018 or 2019. At GRACE's request, OCC also contacted law enforcement concerning a missionary OCC financially supported who was fired for alleged sexual misconduct in the 1990s. Going forward, if any party OCC is aware of who engaged in sexual misconduct were to work with youth, the leadership should be vigilant in warning other ministries of potential dangers.

III. Individual A and allegations of misconduct

Warning: this section of the report describes explicit conduct and speech and may be a trigger for those who have endured abuse, harassment, or other trauma. Readers who may have difficulties reading the content should be careful and wish to speak with a professional prior to reading the report. We also encourage parents and caregivers to read the report first before allowing youth who may be interested in the report to review it.

GRACE believes this level of detail is necessary to understand the seriousness of what transpired at OCC, to rebut any contention the conduct was simply roughhousing among boys, to assist readers in understanding the decision of OCC to report this conduct to the authorities as well as request an independent investigation, and to make sure the voice of those who courageously shared their experiences is fully heard. Detailing the behavior also aids in applying peer-reviewed research on grooming to assess the level of risk associated with the conduct.³ Finally, boys and men experience trauma differently than girls and often don't recognize conduct as abusive until much later in their lives. This delay in recognizing trauma may increase the risk for medical and mental health challenges.⁴ As this report makes clear, these dynamics are present in this case. If there are others at OCC who experienced similar conduct, GRACE hopes these details will aid them in processing their own experiences and seeking appropriate care.

³ See notes 90-95 and accompanying text.

⁴ See notes 34-44 and accompanying text.

On June 23, 2022, a former student of Overlake Christian Church (OCC), hereinafter identified as “Individual A,” the reporting victim, met with senior pastor Pat Swanson to report a series of harmful experiences that took place when he was a minor during the years 2011-2013. In particular, the former student reported a pattern of behavior he described as grooming from a former adult youth leader. The student provided a written summary of the misconduct to accompany his report.⁵

Pat Swanson shared this with Neely McQueen, the other senior pastor, as well as the board chair and human resources. He requested that the matter be addressed at the next elder’s board meeting and suggested OCC would need outside guidance from “an organization like GRACE” to determine how best to proceed.⁶

The elder board approved retaining GRACE to conduct an investigation of the reported misconduct as well as assess a history of sexual misconduct and, in some cases, criminal behavior at OCC in the hope of learning from this history and moving the church toward healing and a future where the risk of abuse is lessened. However, given a backlog of cases, the investigation and assessment could not begin until January 2023.

Prior to beginning the investigation, GRACE confirmed with OCC that the allegations had been reported to the appropriate authorities and that these professionals had chosen not to investigate. In assessing the allegations, GRACE reviewed the correspondence between Individual A and the senior leaders and board chair. GRACE also reviewed the written summary from Individual A. On March 3, 2023, GRACE interviewed Individual A via Zoom. The interview was recorded, transcribed, and sent to the student for review and any additions or corrections.

The allegations can be placed in three different categories: the touching of intimate parts of the body; sexually explicit speech; nudity and indecent activities. The age difference between Individual A and the former youth leader is approximately 4 years and 10 months. The conduct in question took place while the student was a minor in middle and high school and the leader was an adult.

Touching of intimate parts of the body

Individual A states the youth leader “would often grab/touch my butt in a way that felt violating to me. I would ask him, sometimes quite earnestly, to stop doing that, and he

⁵ The written summary is dated June 24, 2022, and the student provided additional edits on February 21, 2023.

⁶ E-mail dated June 23, 2022.

would often continue to do so. I became stressed whenever he'd be following me in hallways or staircases, because he'd often grab me quite hard and wouldn't listen when I'd beg him to stop. I remember him sometimes grabbing me so hard that his fingers would go up into my (clothed) butt cheeks."⁷

In GRACE's interview with the former student, he stated the youth leader would make a sound when grabbing the buttocks as if the conduct was "meant to provide a jolt" or a "shock."⁸ In describing the impact of the conduct, the victim stated "I would feel stress anytime he was behind me in the hallway, behind me in the stairs. I think I even remember asking him to walk in front of me at some point because I didn't trust that he would actually pay attention to what I was saying."⁹ Although the behavior eventually stopped, "even when it wouldn't happen, he [former youth leader] might make a joke about me being nervous, walking in front of me and make the similar sound or something like that without grabbing my butt."¹⁰ The victim does not recall the youth leader ever apologizing for the misconduct.¹¹

The former student also reported an incident in which "I was sitting on a chair (he was house sitting for a family in the church) and he [the former youth leader] swung his key lanyard quite hard and hit me in the groin, completely unprovoked."¹² In an interview the reporting victim described the lanyard as being "fairly long" with a number of keys and that his genitals were struck with the keys.¹³ The former student described the pain as so severe that he "doubled over" and when he went to the bathroom "I was genuinely wondering if I would see blood."¹⁴ Unlike the grabbing of the buttocks, the former student did recall the leader apologizing for this incident, saying something to the effect of "Yeah. Sorry, I hurt you."

To put this conduct in context, the former student said that in his youth group there was a practice of "sack tapping" in which students would use their hand to strike/tap the testicles of others and that this practice was "fairly common."¹⁵ The youth leader was present when "sack tapping" occurred and the student didn't recall him ever objecting or

⁷ Written statement from victim, dated June 24, 2022, final edits February 21, 2023.

⁸ Transcript, p. 10.

⁹ Id.

¹⁰ Id. at 11.

¹¹ Id. at 11.

¹² Id. at 10.

¹³ Id. at 13, 15.

¹⁴ Id. at 13.

¹⁵ Id. at 14.

correcting the youth he was in charge of.¹⁶ According to the former student, the youth leader “in many ways acted like a peer.”¹⁷

Sexually explicit speech

The former student related a number of sexually explicit statements from the youth leader. For instance, the former student remembered the youth leader “telling me that he didn’t want to get tattoos or didn’t want his wife to get tattoos (I can’t remember which) because the porn that he had used to watch featured tattooed people.”¹⁸ The youth leader also told the student that sex was “messier” than he expected and provided graphic visual and sensory details of sexual activities with his wife.¹⁹

During the summer that the student was about to enter his junior year of high school, the youth leader called him while on his honeymoon and said “I just had sex and thought about you.”²⁰ The youth leader also messaged this student and another student “in the middle of the night” of his wedding night and related how he “did the deed” and used his “chowder cannon.”²¹ As will be discussed later in this report, the student said that this sort of explicit sexual talk was “pretty common [in] Overlake’s culture” but that the youth leader “definitely crossed the line pretty clearly in what he would share.”²²

Nudity and indecent activities

The student also said that “nudity was a fairly common thing in group hangouts, student nudity or his nudity” and recalled walking around in the leader’s apartment in his underwear and the leader commented something to the effect “put those huge balls away.”²³ He recalled an incident golfing in which the leader said words to the effect “One rule I’ve played with is if you can’t hit the ball past the lady’s tee, then you have to play the rest of the hole with your penis out.”²⁴

¹⁶ Id. at 14-15.

¹⁷ Id. at 14.

¹⁸ The written summary is dated June 24, 2022, and the student provided additional edits on February 21, 2023.

¹⁹ Transcript, p. 16.

²⁰ The written summary is dated June 24, 2022, and the student provided additional edits on February 21, 2023.

²¹ Id.

²² Transcript, p. 16.

²³ Transcript, p. 18.

²⁴ Id.

Although there is no allegation of playing golf with a penis exposed, there was an incident in which the leader came out of a shower at the OCC locker room and said “Hey, it’s my wedding day, check to make sure I’m shaved well” and one of the youth present, a high schooler, did agree to check.²⁵ The former student told GRACE that pastors and others were present “but because it was normalized they didn’t say ‘Hey, that’s weird.’ It was just kind of like ‘We’re all peers and we’re all joking about these things, not thinking that there are minors in the room.”²⁶ Also on the night before the leader’s wedding, he (the group leader) slept nude in a bed with the former student sleeping on the floor.

On another occasion, Individual A and one of his peers (who was also interviewed and corroborated the incident) reported that they were on the way to the youth leader’s house to hang out. When they got there, “it took several minutes for him to answer the door. When he did, he made it obvious that we interrupted him and [his wife] having sex. This wasn’t accidental, since we had talked on the phone and told him we were on our way (about 10-15 minute drive).”²⁷

The power differential between the group leader and individual A

When asked to explain the power dynamics in his relationship with the group leader, Individual A said the group leader “worked at a church, he preached, he was older than me, four years or five. Doesn’t feel old to adults, but to high schoolers, it feels like you’re a grownup, right? Like if you’re four years or five years older, you know more, you have more power. And so in a very real way, I thought, ‘Well, if [I] don’t confess...’ Let’s say I don’t confess my sins [to the group leader], there’s this whole classic clergy dynamic going on where it’s like ‘Something’s wrong between me and God if I’m not honest about [it] with him.’”

Individual A would say to himself that the “[group leader] has his idiosyncrasies and his quirks, but he’s probably right, and I probably need to do that.’ And then a lot of it is just as a minor, in a lot of ways, you depend on the people over you to know what to do and what’s appropriate and what’s inappropriate. And so I assumed this nudity, this joking, [these] conversations must be fine because here he is in a higher role than I am, older, more along in his ministry career or something. And so, ‘I must be able to feel comfortable with this because here he is feeling comfortable with it too.’”²⁸

The impact of the group leader’s conduct on Individual A

²⁵ Transcript, p. 16, 20.

²⁶ Transcript, p. 20.

²⁷ The written summary is dated June 24, 2022, and the student provided additional edits on February 21, 2023.

²⁸ Transcript, p. 23.

In his written summary, Individual A states: "This behavior has affected me. It has hung over me...it made me feel powerless in the moment and confused in the aftermath. In the MeToo movement, I'd often think 'huh, that doesn't sound too different than what I experienced with [the group leader]...Part of initiating this conversation was to finally name what it is that I experienced instead of keeping it murky and vague. The other part was to ensure that I did my part to keep kids and students safe in the future." When asked to elaborate on this, Individual A told GRACE:

The biggest thing, and I'm grateful I'm not crying during this meeting, but the biggest thing... So you might not sense it, is that it does bring me a lot of shame when I look back at it, and especially before I fully articulated that it was problematic. It was always just kind of like a, "Ooh, that was weird," kind of, "don't think about it" kind of thing. Now, having named it as wrong, a lot of the teeth of shame are out now. But that was a big thing. And I also think I have empathy on middle school and high school me who was really struggling with things like purity and temptation and thinking how much more that kind of dose of shame, inappropriate talk, inappropriate touch, inappropriate situations were adding fuel to the fire of something that I didn't really heal until a couple years later, when I was able to actually name, "I feel shame," or, "I feel unworthy."

And that was what took the fangs out of temptation for me too, was coming to a healthy self-conception and naming the ways that I feel unvaluable or unworthy or shameful, addressing it specifically in myself and then saying, "Here are the values that I have. Here's what I bring to the table. Here are my motives." And that completely changed my mindset...But I think, 'Man, in middle school and high school, I was looking for help.' And what I got was not helpful from [the group leader]. I appreciate the community, I appreciate the connection, and yet, man, I can't think of a worse way to help someone lead a life of virtue and of beauty than of giving them this kind of shame. So that's something I walk with.

Interviews with other former students

GRACE interviewed several former students who knew Individual A and the youth leader in question. These interviews are summarized below.

Individual B

Individual B is also a former student who said he had “nothing but fond memories” of his time at OCC and his involvement with youth group.²⁹ While sexuality “wasn’t spoken about more than a couple of times a year” from the sermon stage, “it was definitely more of a topic in small groups.”³⁰ With respect to the youth leader in question he said his teachings on sexuality were “don’t have sex before marriage, porn’s bad, masturbation is bad. Those are the three things the church believes, and [the youth leader] definitely reached onto us and expected of us.”³¹ He said the boys did share their struggles with these issues with the youth leader and “that’s a pretty normal thing in the church, honestly.”³²

He said the youth leader did speak about his own sexuality in the context of his marriage and “how great sex is in marriage” but not graphic details. He said he couldn’t recall any incident of anyone being struck in the genitals with lanyards but that it “probably” happened.³³ He didn’t recall nudity other than “changing at a youth camp or something like that” but couldn’t recall if the youth leader was part of it.³⁴ He said the youth leader “genuinely loved us” but “was maybe too harsh on us at times” and while he was “kind of a goof” who “did some dumb stuff every once in a while” he “overall had a good heart and was a good guy.”³⁵

He recalled “roughhousing” among the group but not of a sexual nature or anything that “crossed any serious lines.”³⁶ When asked to rate the youth leader’s professionalism, Individual B described it as “average.”³⁷ With respect to Individual A, the student who brought to OCC’s attention allegations of misconduct, this witness said “I have no reason to doubt his [Individual A’s] integrity or credibility.”³⁸

Individual C

Individual C was also in the youth group under the leader in question. He said that sexuality was a “big topic” in the small group³⁹ but that “looking in hindsight,” the youth leader’s discussion “feels icky.”⁴⁰ Specifically, the youth group leader “would tell us how

²⁹ Transcript, p. 5.

³⁰ Id at. 8.

³¹ Transcript, p. 19.

³² Id.

³³ Transcript, p. 21.

³⁴ Transcript, p. 22.

³⁵ Transcript, p. 18.

³⁶ Id.

³⁷ Transcript, p. 27.

³⁸ Transcript, p. 20.

³⁹ Transcript, p. 5.

⁴⁰ Id.

hard his struggle was with porn and masturbation. He would tell us about when he did get married, some of the sexual acts he would perform” and these details “felt pretty graphic.”⁴¹ “In the moment,” Individual C informed GRACE, “I was excited because I was like, hey, someone I trust is sharing these intimate details with me.”⁴² In hindsight, though, “it doesn’t feel good to know what your youth leader is doing with his wife or the type of porn he likes to look at when he does struggle with that or the thoughts that run through his head or things like that. It just felt weird.”⁴³

Individual C confirmed he was with Individual A when they went to the youth group leader’s house shortly after the group leader had sex with his wife. He said that he and Individual A called the group leader and said words to the effect “Hey, we’re coming over. We’ll be there in about 10 or 15 minutes” and that the youth group leader replied “Great, cool. Awesome. Feel free to come over.”⁴⁴ When they arrived, it took some time before the youth group leader answered the door and when he did “it was very apparent they were just having sex. I mean, he was covered in a little bit of sweat. He felt not totally out of breath, but it was very much post-sex. And we just felt it was very weird. And I remember him [the youth group leader] telling us that’s what just happened.”⁴⁵

Individual C also corroborated that the youth group leader sent texts to students in his group about losing his virginity on the night of his wedding.⁴⁶ Individual C also recalled the youth group leader telling the group “he can’t wait for us to have sex because it’s going to be so awesome and he can’t wait to hear about it.”⁴⁷

Individual C also said that he and other youth went streaking and that the youth group leader participated in this activity. He recalled at least two times the youth leader went streaking nude with the boys and a “couple other times, where I think he didn’t participate, but I think he was the person who drove us there, or we all got into his car and, I think, went to that location.”⁴⁸ Individual C said there were times in the youth group where the boys would touch butts and there was “wrestling that then turned into dry humping” and that the youth group leader participated in these activities.⁴⁹ With respect to the touching of butts, Individual C said there was “a lot of times” the youth group leader “would come up and surprise us and grab us by the butt, or I think just pinch our butt when we

⁴¹ Transcript, p. 5.

⁴² Id. at 5.

⁴³ Id. at 5.

⁴⁴ Id. at 6.

⁴⁵ Id at 6.

⁴⁶ Id. at 7.

⁴⁷ Id at 7.

⁴⁸ Id at 7.

⁴⁹ Id. at 7.

weren't looking or anything like that, just to, again, scare us, just to tease us a little bit" and "then we'd probably turn around and do it to one of our friends as well."⁵⁰

With respect to the dry humping, he said "if someone was just sitting there either on their phone or they're gaming or we needed to distract them, but we'd kind of just go over and dog pile them and then all just hump them like a dog would. And it was just a funny thing between us friends...And then looking back on it, I go, yeah, [the group leader] was also a part of that...he very much participated in that."⁵¹

In explaining the difference between the touches between his friends and those involving the youth group leader, Individual C said "when I talk about play between my guy friends, I think it didn't feel malicious... It felt like they're my brothers rather than someone just, I think being gross and touching your butt...With [the group leader] in the time, I think it felt playful, but there was also the sense of me that was like, you're still a grownup. You're still very much an adult. You are over 21, you are doing these things to us. It had that tinge or that thin layer of this feels like a little bit off...And then I think it wasn't until much later that I was like, that feels more weird to me now than it did, I think back then. I think because now I have a greater sense of that age difference and the authority that he had, I think over all of us."⁵²

Individual C described his peers as a "very physical friend group" and that boundaries felt fluid among his peers but it "felt very different with [the group leader]."⁵³ He also said there was a "split era between groups" and that he knows of some "who didn't experience it as much as probably me and [Individual A]" and specifically mentioned Individual B as someone who did not experience this behavior "as aggressive or as frequent as some of the other guys."⁵⁴

Individual C described the youth group leader as someone who "really cared about us. He really wanted to make sure that life was going well for us. Just very, very kind."⁵⁵ At the same time, he said the youth leader "was really manipulative" and "he felt like someone I could never disappoint, but simultaneously someone who I always disappointed."⁵⁶ Unlike other pastors at OCC who would respond in a "grace-filled" way to a student who committed a sexual sin, the group leader had an "almost all or nothing" attitude to the point where Individual C "felt like, oh, if I looked at porn, if I did anything with a girl, even if I

⁵⁰ Id at. 9.

⁵¹ Id. at 10.

⁵² Id. at 23.

⁵³ Id at. 9.

⁵⁴ Id. at 9.

⁵⁵ Id. at 10.

⁵⁶ Id. at 11.

held hands with somebody, I was going to hell. I mean, he really dialed it up to 11 out of 10, and with him there was almost no...What's the word? There's no leeway with him."⁵⁷

Individual D

Individual D was in a youth group with the youth group leader for approximately 5 years.⁵⁸ He described the leader as "very charismatic" and said he was "definitely a mentor to me."⁵⁹ He said the subject of sexuality came up "relatively frequently" in the youth group and since the students "wanted to know where the edge was" there were questions such as "Is it a sin if it's this way? Is it not a sin if we do like..."⁶⁰ He said there was "definitely horsing around" in the group but said it "would be a stretch to say that it was in a sexual way."⁶¹ He did recall an instance of some members of the group streaking and said "chances are [the group leader] was there, but I don't remember if he was streaking with us or if he was just part of the group."⁶² Although he didn't recall any instances of genitals being struck with a lanyard he did say there was "sack tapping" which happened at several places, including church, which involved "just a backhand when somebody is not looking."⁶³ Although it was "mean-spirited a little bit," the activity "was kind of more of a game than anything."⁶⁴ When asked if the group leader would participate in that, he said "I would say so."⁶⁵ He was present the night before the youth group leader's wedding but had no memory of anyone sleeping in the room with the leader.⁶⁶

He described Individual A as an "admirable person," a "solid person," and someone he looked up to. He said the relationship between the youth group leader and individual A was "definitely close" but as not close as the relationship he had with the leader. Nonetheless, he said that he and Individual A "were both kind of teacher's pets."⁶⁷

In terms of the culture of OCC at the time, he recalled sermons from a "main worship pastor" which created a "culture of shame" regarding sexuality.⁶⁸ He recalled the worship pastor giving a sermon to the high school students in which he used a roll of duct

⁵⁷ Id. at 12.

⁵⁸ Transcript, p. 4.

⁵⁹ Id. at 5.

⁶⁰ Id. at 6.

⁶¹ Id. at 7.

⁶² Id at 7,8.

⁶³ Id. at 8.

⁶⁴ Id. at 8.

⁶⁵ Id. at 9.

⁶⁶ Id. at 10.

⁶⁷ Id. at 13.

⁶⁸ Id. at 12.

tape. The analogy was to put two pieces of duct tape together, sticky side to sticky side but then put on a different piece of duct tape. As individual D recalls, the “moral of the story is every time you have intercourse with somebody, you lose a little bit of that stickiness, and then eventually your relationships aren’t going to work or something like that.”⁶⁹ He said the message to a “bunch of hormonal kids” was “the worst thing you could do would be to masturbate or watch pornography, let alone be hooking up with another person or a student.” He described this message as “really intense.”⁷⁰

Individual E

Individual E was in an OCC youth group and also became a youth group leader by his junior year in high school. Accordingly, while he did intersect with the youth group leader in question as well as students in this leader’s group, he described them as more of his “friend group.”⁷¹ He knew the group leader for years but had a “significant falling out.”⁷² He described trauma he endured because of the ideology at OCC and while this ideology was not unique to the group leader “it did come from his voice.”⁷³ There was a significant pressure to remain pure and Individual E was “fully entrenched in this kind of thinking as well, where I’d be texting my friends my age for accountability updates, being like ‘Hey, bro, are you pure this week?’ Really kind of sick and twisted stuff and I guess I would say to sum everything up, that’s the damage.”⁷⁴ As a result of this ideology, Individual E felt tremendous shame after losing his virginity, resulting in depression and multiple attempts at suicide.⁷⁵ Individual E described his time at OCC as a “traumatic era in my life” that “resulted in many years of therapy to unwind some of that...”⁷⁶

Individual E corroborated that the group leader spoke about sexual activity with his wife which was “all positive stuff” but was also “very crude.”⁷⁷ Individual E didn’t participate in streaking “but heard about it later on.”⁷⁸ He said the striking of genitals with lanyards “was almost regular activity” and that the group leader “absolutely did it to us.”⁷⁹ If there were keys on the lanyard, that is the part which would be flicked at someone’s groin area.⁸⁰

⁶⁹ Id. at 12.

⁷⁰ Id. at 12.

⁷¹ Transcript, p. 4.

⁷² Id. at 5.

⁷³ Id. at 5.

⁷⁴ Id. at 6.

⁷⁵ Id. at 7.

⁷⁶ Id. at 3.

⁷⁷ Id. at 8.

⁷⁸ Id. at 9.

⁷⁹ Id. at 9.

⁸⁰ Id. at 18.

He said the group leader in question “was definitely physical, like boys being boys type of stuff. Not like sexual, but roughhousing type of stuff. Stuff that probably wouldn’t fly today. But he definitely roughhoused with us physically. Nothing ever that, in my experience, crossed a line, never where I was actually hurt, anything like that. And to be fair, we antagonized a lot of it. But I would probably not be physical like that if I was in his situation with people who are under 18.”⁸¹

When Individual E was 20 years old, there was a roughhousing incident in which he ended up face down on the floor, naked from the waist down with his buttocks exposed and visibly red from being slapped with a towel or other objects. He described the incident as consensual roughhousing, and said a photograph was taken by one of his friends, not the group leader. However, the group leader was present for this incident and everyone participated in the slapping, including the leader.⁸² Everyone who participated in this incident was an adult at the time and no one, other than individual E is in the photograph. At the time this photograph was taken, the youth group leader in question was an employee of OCC.

Individual E said the group leader was “super close friends” with Individual A and that he felt the group leader “looked up to [Individual A] as an adult and not as a student.”⁸³ When asked if he would have any reason to challenge Individual A’s integrity, he said “I actually feel he’s one of the most high integrity people I’ve ever encountered.”⁸⁴

Attempted interview of the group leader

GRACE contacted the group leader for an interview and had a brief Zoom conversation to discuss the investigation and assessment. Although the group leader originally agreed to interview, he subsequently wrote the following in an e-mail:

Thank you for briefly speaking with me today about the nature of your interest in interviewing me.

After thinking more about it, I am going to decline proceeding any further.

I think that conversations like this that unearth my past accompanied by my own deep pain require trust, and I do not trust the leadership that hired GRACE to conduct this investigation.

⁸¹ Id. at 11.

⁸² Transcript, p. 3.

⁸³ Transcript, p. 13.

⁸⁴ Id.

I also believe that Christ gave us specific instructions on how to handle reconciliation, and this process being conducted is not it.

Dealing With Sin in the Church

15 “If your brother or sister[a] sins,[b] go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. **16** But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’[c] **17** If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

It feels like I am being treated like a pagan or tax collector.⁸⁵

Prior to writing the report, one of the lead GRACE investigators sent the following e-mail to the group leader:

I wanted to let you know we have completed our assessment. Before we finalize our report, though, I wanted to circle back and see if you are willing to have a conversation. You indicated at one point that you were also a victim of OCC and we would be interested in learning more about what you meant by that.

I appreciate your comments about Matthew 18 and, if you like, I can explain why I don’t think that passage was violated here. Even if you disagree with me, Matthew 18 also includes verse 6. Although no one we spoke with identified a crime,⁸⁶ there were people in your small group who were deeply

⁸⁵ This e-mail was sent on Apr 14, 2023 to both of the GRACE investigators and to the senior pastors at OCC.

⁸⁶ As noted earlier, OCC made a child protection report to the authorities but it appears an investigation was not conducted. Obviously, the authorities in Washington have the final say in determining whether or not unlawful conduct took place for which they would want to take action. In the state of Washington, it is a crime to engage in sexual contact with a minor with sexual contact being defined as “any touching of the sexual or other intimate parts of a person done for the purpose of gratifying sexual desire of either party or a third party.” Washington Criminal Code Chapter 9A.44.010(13). The determination of which anatomical areas apart from genitalia and breast are intimate is a question to be resolved by the trier of fact. *In re Adams*, 24 Wn.App. 517, 601 P.2d 995 (1979). In cases in which the evidence shows equivocal touching of intimate parts of the body other than the primary erogenous areas, courts have required some other evidence of sexual gratification. See *State v. Powell*, 62 Wn. App. 914, 816 P.2d 86 (1991). In this case, the witnesses did not see the touching of buttocks or other roughhousing as done for sexual gratification and did not see the group leader having an erection or being sexually aroused by the conduct. It is interesting to

hurt. I think it would be helpful for you to understand their experiences and feelings and contemplate what a Christian response may look like.

I appreciate all of this is difficult and we are committed to being as sensitive as possible in these difficult conversations. If you still choose not to speak with us, we'll respect that but I wanted to make sure you had another opportunity if you wanted to have a conversation.⁸⁷

The former group leader responded the same day, writing: "No thank you. Please do not contact me again."⁸⁸

As GRACE noted in their e-mail, GRACE disagrees with the youth leader's flawed analysis of Matthew 18. It is dangerous to take one passage and isolate it from the rest of Scripture. In GRACE's experience, Matthew 18 is often used to silence victims and justify inaction, and should be used cautiously when responding to a possible report of child abuse or neglect.⁸⁹ In this case, OCC received a credible report which raised a reasonable suspicion of child abuse, and they appropriately contacted the authorities and also contacted outside experts to conduct an investigation. GRACE specifically advised OCC not to contact the group leader but to let GRACE contact the leader as part of this assessment. The GRACE team, acting under contract with OCC, did contact the group leader and provided him with the opportunity to respond to the allegations, but he declined.

Analysis of the credibility of the evidence

GRACE find Individual A to be an extremely credible witness. His motivation for coming forward is benevolent, including a desire to keep other children safe. The

note, though, that the state of Washington defines a sexual assault on the campus of the University of Washington as "sexual contact with another person without, or that exceeds, that person's consent." WAC 478-121-150. Sexual contact includes "Any intentional touching of the intimate parts of another person's clothed or unclothed body, including but not limited to the mouth, neck, buttocks, anus, genitalia, or breast." GRACE believes the touching of the buttocks as described by Individual A would meet this definition. Also keep in mind that even if a criminal statute was not violated, this does not mean that there could not be a civil action for sexual harassment, negligence, or other breaches of a duty to the youth entrusted to the care of this leader and to OCC. For all of these reasons, the conduct should be taken very seriously by OCC and the congregation.

⁸⁷ This e-mail was sent on July 19, 2023.

⁸⁸ Id.

⁸⁹ For a theological analysis of applying Matthew 18 in a case of actual or potential child abuse, See John D. Schuetze, *Pastoral Theology Brief: Matthew 18 also Includes Verse 6*, 112(3) WISCONSIN LUTHERAN QUARTERLY 224 (2015).

investigation did not uncover evidence of any ill will toward the group leader or any incentive to lie or exaggerate his allegations. GRACE found other witnesses who corroborated many of Individual A's statements including the use of sexually explicit language, the grabbing of buttocks, streaking or other acts of nudity, the striking of genitals with a lanyard or through "sack tapping," and a second witness to the incident of arriving at the group leader's home shortly after the leader had sex with his wife. Other witnesses also corroborated the overall OCC culture at the time, a culture that can best be described as a toxic purity culture that inhibited a healthy conversation about sexuality. The youth group leader was given ample opportunity to respond to these allegations but chose not to participate in this process. Instead, he chose to attack the process through his interpretation of Matthew 18.

Analysis of the evidence in the light of peer-reviewed literature on grooming

Grooming is a process by which an offender may "seduce their victims with attention, affection, kindness, gifts and money until they have lowered the victim's inhibitions and gained their cooperation and 'consent.'"⁹⁰ Grooming can also involve inappropriate sexual comments or touches that may start as a seemingly safe hug or kiss but gravitate toward a more purposeful touch the offender convinces the child was an accidental slip of the hand.⁹¹ Adult pornography as well as sexually exploitive images of children can also be used in grooming.⁹²

Although approximately half of the offenders who sexually abuse children employ grooming behaviors, "identifying grooming behaviors is more easily done retrospectively" because "many grooming behaviors appear to be innocent in nature and typical of adult-child interactions."⁹³ Nonetheless, some behaviors have been identified as "red flags" for "high" or "moderate" risk for sexual abuse. "High risk" behaviors include an adult exposing their naked body to a child and telling a child about their sexual experiences.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Kenneth V. Lanning, *Acquaintance Child Molesters: A Behavioral Analysis*, in SHARON W. COOPER, ET AL, MEDICAL, LEGAL, & SOCIAL SCIENCE ASPECTS OF CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION: A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF PORNOGRAPHY, PROSTITUTION, AND INTERNET CRIMES 529, 560 (2005).

⁹¹ NATIONAL CENTER FOR PROSECUTION OF CHILD ABUSE, INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION OF CHILD ABUSE THIRD EDITION 14 (2004).

⁹² Det. Sgt. Joseph S. Bova Conti, Lt. William D. Carson, *An Investigation of Victim and Offender Dynamics in Prostitutes and Incarcerated Pedophiles*, in SHARON W. COOPER, ET AL, MEDICAL, LEGAL, & SOCIAL SCIENCE ASPECTS OF CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION: A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF PORNOGRAPHY, PROSTITUTION, AND INTERNET CRIMES 715, 728 (2005).

⁹³ Georgia M. Winters and Elizabeth L. Jeglic, *Stages of Sexual Grooming: Recognizing Potentially Predatory Behaviors in Child Molesters*, 38(6) *DEVIANT BEHAVIOR* 724, 725 (2017).

⁹⁴ Elizabeth L. Jeglic, Georgia M. Winters, & Benjamin N. Johnson, *Identification of Red Flag Child Sexual Grooming Behaviors*, *CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT* 136 (2023) 105998.

“Moderate risk” behaviors include asking a child questions about their sexual experiences and relationships and using inappropriate sexual language including telling dirty jokes around the child.⁹⁵

Again, a high or moderate-risk behavior does not necessarily mean someone has sexually abused a child, but when these behaviors are identified action should be taken. Since several of these behaviors were present in Individual A’s oral and written statement to OCC, as well as allegations of the touching of intimate parts of the body, OCC acted appropriately in making a child protection report. As noted earlier, the conduct may not have met the technical definition of sexual abuse in the state of Washington, but the behaviors described by Individual A and corroborated by others are clearly concerning and should not be permitted in any youth-serving organization, especially a Christian organization.

Analysis of the evidence in the light of scripture

The conduct described by Individual A and other witnesses and revealed in documents such as the photograph described by Individual E, violates numerous passages of the Bible and clear Christian doctrines that have been in place for over 2,000 years. We discuss a handful of these passages.

First, the Apostle Paul instructed Christians in the Church at Ephesus to “not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs” (Ephesians 4:29). Five verses later, Paul writes “Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving” (Ephesians 5:4).

We believe it is “unwholesome talk” for a youth leader to share with minors details of his sexual activity or to call or text youth to inform them of sexual activity on his honeymoon. Commenting on the genitals of youth, asking minors or others to inspect pubic hair to ensure it is properly shaved, making a joke about a rule to have a penis exposed if a youth can’t hit a golf ball beyond the women’s tee, and other conduct described in the interviews also contravene these scriptural admonitions.

Although this language and behavior was unequivocally crude and undeniably sinful, it may be tempting to dismiss the coarseness as “boys will be boys.” Any such dismissal ignores the fact that one of the participants, and primary instigators of the conduct, was an adult charged with setting a good example for

⁹⁵ Id.

these youth. His failure in this regard contributed to significant mental health challenges for more than one of the minors OCC placed in his care.

In GRACE's conversation with the group leader, he indicated that he was also a victim of the OCC culture. Although GRACE doesn't know what he meant by this statement, there is no question that there was an insidious, decades-long culture at OCC that invited crudeness and often failed to address it when it occurred.

Second, the Apostle Paul told the believers in Corinthians to "flee from sexual immorality" and posed this question: "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own, you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies" (1 Corinthians 6:18-19).

This admonition from scripture may have been one of the Bible lessons that resulted in leaders at OCC speaking so frequently to children about sexuality and to shame them when they strayed. The irony, of course, is that these passages were repeatedly violated when buttocks were grabbed, genitals were struck with lanyards or hands, or half-naked men were slapped with towels or other objects. In the future, we hope OCC will make clear that the Holy Spirit resides in the bodies of all believers, including children, and that we are disrespecting God when we engage in the sort of conduct detailed in this report.

Third, the teachings of Jesus make it abundantly clear that His followers must care for children.⁹⁶ In each of the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus issues a harsh warning against anyone who harms a child (Matth. 18:6-9; Luke 17:1-2; Mark 9:42). Specifically, Jesus says "If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea" (Mark 9:42). The phrase "little ones" comes from the Greek adjective *mikros* which, in this context, means the "smallest child."⁹⁷ The reference to "stumbling block" could be a reference to any sin but especially those sins that damage someone's faith.⁹⁸ The reference to "great millstone" is a reference to a stone turned in a mill by an animal, usually a donkey,

⁹⁶ VICTOR I. VIETH, *ON THIS ROCK: A CALL TO CENTER THE CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO CHILD ABUSE ON THE LIFE AND WORDS OF JESUS* (2018).

⁹⁷ DANIEL E. PAAVOLA, *MARK 182* (2013).

⁹⁸ *Id.* at 182.

to grind seed into flour.⁹⁹ Taken together, then, Jesus is saying that anything we do to hurt a child's faith is viewed by God in the harshest possible terms.¹⁰⁰

In the investigation, GRACE heard from members of the youth group who were harmed by the way in which sexual purity was discussed as well as the disconnect between these lessons and the conduct of the group leader and the general culture at OCC. In describing the impact, one former student said "I wanted to be a pastor, and here I am eight years later and I'll never step foot in a church again" because "It's too damaging to risk."¹⁰¹ This former student also told GRACE "I've caught up with, over the past few months, friends from our small group that I haven't talked to in years...And there's very similar stories of people unwinding that same sort of ideological imprint that it had on their brain. And a lot of other people took it in a much worse way than I did. Many people went on six, seven, eight year benders and gained tons of weight, live really depressing lives right now."¹⁰²

The response of Overlake Christian Church to the report of misconduct

It is likely that there were people in authority at OCC who knew of at least some of the incidents in question. As previously noted, Individual A said pastors and others were present in the OCC locker room when the group leader asked that his pubic hair be inspected in anticipation of his wedding but that no one objected "because it was normalized...It was just kind of like 'We're all peers and we're all joking about these things', not thinking that there are minors in the room."¹⁰³

Another former member of the youth group told GRACE "I don't think leadership took it seriously. Leadership at the time was completely male dominated for the most part... I think there was a little bit of a culture at the top leadership wise of just very focused on growth, growth, growth of the church and not establishing systems and structures to ensure safety of their people. So I think it's just not where their focus was. I feel like it was normalized and it was...And I actually heard this probably on multiple accounts, it's just boys being boys as an excuse, so I don't think leadership took it seriously to be clear."¹⁰⁴

In terms of how the report of Individual A was handled, there were many positive steps. First, OCC reported the case to the authorities, and did this before GRACE was

⁹⁹ Id. at 182.

¹⁰⁰ VICTOR I. VIETH, ON THIS ROCK: A CALL TO CENTER THE CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO CHILD ABUSE ON THE LIFE AND WORDS OF JESUS 25 (2018).

¹⁰¹ Transcript #3, p. 4.

¹⁰² Id. at 3-4.

¹⁰³ Transcript, p. 20.

¹⁰⁴ Transcript #3, p. 3.

retained. Second, OCC retained an outside body to conduct this assessment and has fully cooperated with the investigation. Third, Individual A felt the leadership had responded appropriately to his report. In GRACE's interview, Individual A said "My sense is that as Neely [McQueen] and Pat [Swanson] have become co-head pastors, that they're taking really seriously the sins of the past. I, again, am still cynical, and I know the self-protection that is easy to do when you think, 'Well, if we do expose this, does this mean our jobs are in jeopardy, or church growth, or church health?'...But from what I can tell, they aren't letting their amygdalas drive it. It seems like they're allowing their prefrontal cortex to drive their decision-making of this is what's right, this is what's good, this is what's beautiful."¹⁰⁵

Individual E expressed a similar sentiment, stating "I feel like there were some really healthy personalities...that were working to change some of that culture, so it's not like I feel like it was all bad. Two people who I greatly admire, Neely McQueen, Patrick Swanson, both in leadership, obviously still at Overlake, I felt like were in part driving that change, actually, towards a healthier culture around purity and stuff like that."¹⁰⁶

GRACE identified evidence that the senior pastors have taken steps to move OCC away from unhealthy conversations around sexuality and myriad boundary crossings, and the survey finds that most congregants believe the church has turned a corner. At the same time, both senior pastors have a lengthy history at OCC and, by their own admission, participated in some of the toxicity of years ago, such as unseemly jokes or behaviors. Individual A told GRACE of an incident in which Pat Swanson drew a penis on his leg while he was asleep on an airplane in an apparent attempt at a practical joke.¹⁰⁷ Individual A also shared with GRACE an incident in which a senior leader asked him questions about potential sexual activity he may have engaged in after marriage and that Neely McQueen was present when this occurred and engaged in the banter.¹⁰⁸ At the same time, Individual A felt comfortable enough to report to Pat Swanson his concerns about the former group leader and appeared to make a distinction between the past misconduct of the current pastors with that of the group leader he reported.¹⁰⁹

In the investigation, GRACE found no evidence the current pastors touched the intimate parts of children or were nude in their company, and they both have expressed remorse for these years. Jesus said that a "good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit" and that it is by "their fruit you will recognize" a true believer in Christ (Mt. 7:18-19). At the present time, there is evidence that pastors, elders, and other

¹⁰⁵ Transcript, p. 44.

¹⁰⁶ Transcript, p. 16.

¹⁰⁷ Transcript, p. 34.

¹⁰⁸ Id. at 32.

¹⁰⁹ Id. at 37.

leaders at OCC are bearing good fruit. Having said that, there is significant work to do in learning from the church's past sins, healing long-standing wounds, and creating a healthier, more Godly future.

Jesus said "there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open: (Luke 8:17). The Bible tells us Moses was a murderer (Exodus 2:11-15), David both a murderer and sexual exploiter (2 Samuel 11-12), Abraham was willing to give his wife to another man in order to save his own skin (Genesis 12:18), Peter a perjurer (Matthew 26:72), and all the disciples fled when the going got tough (Mark 14:50).

Perhaps the lesson in recounting the egregious sins of many of the heroes of the Bible is to produce some humility in each of us and to see how far the person in our daily mirror has fallen from the edicts of God and to appreciate more deeply our need for grace. An equally important lesson is to understand it is not godly to hide our sins but to confess them and to learn from them. Using Zacchaeus as our model, we must not make excuses for our sins but demonstrate repentance through our works and actions (Luke 19:1-10).

IV. History of Misconduct at Overlake Christian Church

A. The Foundations: 1970 - 1998

Bob Moorehead grew up in Mobile, Alabama. One journalist describes his upbringing as that of a "lonely youth" with an "alcoholic father" and a boyhood "marked by family squabbles over money."¹¹⁰ At the age of 18 he was inspired by a radio sermon from the Rev. Charles Fuller's "Old-Fashioned Revival Hour" to become a pastor.¹¹¹ "I got down on my knees," Moorehead recalled, "and actually put my hands on the radio and said 'Lord, I give my life to the ministry, and I'll never look back.'"¹¹²

After serving different churches as a pastor, Moorehead arrived at Overlake Christian Church in 1970.¹¹³ At the time, OCC had fewer than 100 members.¹¹⁴ Under Moorehead's leadership, OCC grew into a "religious powerhouse" with more than 6,000

¹¹⁰ Steve Milletich, *A preacher 'on fire' also is on the grill*, SEATTLE P-I, March 2, 1998.

¹¹¹ Id.

¹¹² Id.

¹¹³ Id.

¹¹⁴ Id.

members attending worship in a \$36 million dollar facility that opened in December of 1998.¹¹⁵ At the time, OCC was the state of Washington's single largest congregation.¹¹⁶

News accounts describe Moorehead as a fundamentalist preacher with an aversion to homosexuality which he described as perverted and ungodly.¹¹⁷ Although his charisma and tenacity undoubtedly contributed to the growth of OCC, one news account describes "two Bob Mooreheads. One was the genial Southern preacher, smooth and dazzling in the pulpit, a magnetic and inspirational leader. But behind closed doors, another personality emerged—one that was controlling and sharply attuned to anything that represented the slightest threat to his power and authority."¹¹⁸ Although loved by many of his congregants, Moorehead was "rarely accessible" to them and one elder who served with Moorehead told a journalist "if you confronted Bob, you were history."¹¹⁹

The arrest for public indecency

On July 23, 1996, Bob Moorehead was arrested by police in Daytona Beach Florida and "accused of masturbating in a beachfront public restroom."¹²⁰ He was charged with lewd conduct and indecent exposure.¹²¹ Another man, Philip R. Jacowits, was also arrested in the undercover operation and "pleaded no contest to a reduced charge of lewd and lascivious behavior" and was sentenced to 12 months probation, ordered to perform 120 hours of community service, and fined \$1,000.¹²² Moorehead, with the assistance of counsel, also offered to plead no contest to a second degree misdemeanor of "exposure of sexual organs" and in exchange the court would withhold adjudication of guilt, and Moorehead would pay \$50 to the Daytona Police Department for investigation of the case and \$50 to the state attorney's office and would not receive probation, community service or jail. A copy of Moorehead's signed plea is attached as Exhibit A.

A little more than a month after Moorehead signed the plea proposal, prosecutors dropped the charges "and provided Moorehead with an exonerating letter stating he was

¹¹⁵ Id.

¹¹⁶ Steve Miletich and Heath Foster, *Moorehead Resigns as Pastor*, SEATTLE P-I, May 18, 1998.

¹¹⁷ Steve Miletich, *A preacher 'on fire' also is on the grill*, SEATTLE P-I, March 2, 1998.

¹¹⁸ Frank Kuznik, *Fallen Angel*, LAW & POLITICS (December/January 1999).

¹¹⁹ Id.

¹²⁰ *Cleric again focus of lewd conduct inquiry*, THE CHRONICLE, January 19, 1998; *Florida police say charge was no mistake*, TAMPA BAY ONLINE, January 18, 1998.

¹²¹ Steve Miletich and John Iwasaki, *Opening Moorehead arrest file doesn't close down questions*, SEATTLE P-I, February 7, 1998.

¹²² Peter Lewis, Alex Fryer and Carol M. Ostrom, *Overlake pastor's arrest is defended, Lewdness charge was no mistake, Florida policy say*, SEATTLE TIMES, January 17, 1998.

the victim of “mistaken identity.”¹²³ However, the Daytona Police Chief at the time informed the news media he conducted an internal investigation and concluded the officers did not make an error.¹²⁴ Moorehead said he had simply stopped in the public restroom on the beach to relieve himself and was arrested for lewd and lascivious behavior.¹²⁵ He also said he was being targeted by a small group of former parishioners who “hate me, hate this church and hate what we are trying to do.”¹²⁶ With respect to the plea proposal, Moorehead spoke with the press¹²⁷ and sent a letter to the “Overlake Family” explaining the plea offer was recommended by his attorney. That letter is attached as Exhibit B.

The OCC leadership and many congregants stood by their pastor with one news report stating “[b]efore church services yesterday, members of Overlake Christian Church in Redmond raised their hands and prayed for the well-being of their pastor...Surrounded by 14 senior church officials, Moorehead told the congregation that despite being cleared of any wrongdoing he and his family have suffered from continued speculation about the incident.”¹²⁸ A former OCC pastor and friend of Moorehead wrote a letter to the editor stating in part:

And why has there been an abysmal absence of investigators reporting on the character and person of Bob Moorehead? Has anyone noticed he has a spotless record? He has been married to the same woman for 40 years and has raised three children who are all married, stable, committed Christians. What about the thousands of people who have been counseled, the hungry who have been fed, the prisoners who have been visited, the poor who have been clothed, the sick who have received prayer and the marriages and families put back together, all as a result of the personal ministry and

¹²³ Steve Miletich, *Pastor admits offering to plead no contest, says he thought it would maintain his innocence*, SEATTLE P-I, February 10, 1998.

¹²⁴ Peter Lewis, Alex Fryer and Carol M. Ostrom, *Overlake pastor's arrest is defended, Lewdness charge was no mistake, Florida policy say*, SEATTLE TIMES, January 17, 1998.

¹²⁵ Alex Fryer, *Moorehead states his innocence, Minister tells church he's 'not guilty of anything*, SEATTLE TIMES, January 19, 1998.

¹²⁶ Patricia Moir, *Overlake's pastor proclaims his innocence*, EASTSIDE JOURNAL, January 19, 1998.

¹²⁷ See e.g. Steve Miletich, *Pastor admits offering to plead no contest, Says he thought it would maintain his innocence*, SEATTLE P-I, February 10, 1998.

¹²⁸ Alex Fryer, *Moorehead states his innocence, Minister tells church he's 'not guilty of anything*, SEATTLE TIMES, January 19, 1998.

leadership of Bob Moorehead? Is that a reasonable profile of a liar, pedophile¹²⁹ and pervert? Does character mean anything anymore?¹³⁰

Reports of non-consensual touching of genitals

In the aftermath of the Florida arrest becoming public, a number of men began to discuss instances in which Moorehead touched their genitals without their consent. GRACE interviewed one of the men who was groped by Moorehead, and found in the OCC vault a detailed written statement from one of the men who also spoke publicly about the abuse. GRACE also reviewed news accounts that included interviews with some of the victims as well as Moorehead's response to the allegations. Most importantly, GRACE was able to locate and interview the private investigator hired by OCC to assess the allegations.

Unfortunately, the investigator's reports no longer exist in the OCC files and the investigator also could not find a copy. GRACE did, though, find billing records from the investigator and a document entitled "investigative reports" which includes the instruction "Elders: This is a list of the [Private Investigator's] Investigative Reports. You can find your list as they are in Alphabetical Order. Please initial them as you read them." Each list has 26 typed names with a date next to each name ranging from February 20, 1998 to April 9, 1998. Since the investigator told GRACE he submitted regular reports as interviews were completed, GRACE assumed the dates reflect when a particular witness was interviewed or when a report was turned over to OCC. There are five additional names that are handwritten and appear on only some of the elders' sheets. Some of the elders initialed that they had read all of the investigative reports. Other elders initialed reading some but not all of the witness statements. The sheets for some elders do not contain an initial next to any of the reports. This suggests the possibility that some of the elders didn't read any of the reports, but it's also possible the reports were read but the instructions to initial reading them were not followed.

¹²⁹ Pedophilia is often misunderstood and applied too broadly. In one study, pedophilia was diagnosed "if, over a period of at least 6 months, the respondent reported recurrent and intense sexual thoughts, fantasies, or urges involving prepubescent children as well as clinically significant distress or impairment as a result of their sexual interest in children." Hebephilia was diagnosed "if the interviewee reported that pubescent children rather than prepubescent children were the focus of sexual thoughts, fantasies, or urges, in addition to clinically significant distress or impairment as a result." M. Beier, et al, *Encouraging Self-Identified Pedophiles and Hebephiles to Seek Professional Help: First Results of the Prevention Project Dunkelfeld (PPD)*, 33 CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT 545-549 (2009). Although at least one of Moorehead's victims told the news media he was a minor at the time, most of those who spoke publicly were men at the time of abuse, albeit some were still teenagers.

¹³⁰ James P. Kress, *Character counts and Moorehead is a man of great character*, SEATTLE P-I, February 14, 1998.

Although he couldn't recall the name, the investigator said he worked with one primary contact at OCC. GRACE suspects this primary contact controlled the reports and likely retained them after the investigation was closed. GRACE does not believe there was any attempt from the current leaders or elders to keep relevant information from GRACE. Indeed, the current leaders assisted GRACE in trying to find the investigative reports and signed a release for GRACE to speak with the investigator.

The victims who discussed their experiences publicly

In reviewing voluminous print and television coverage of the allegations of Moorehead touching genitals without the other party's consent, GRACE identified six men and one teenage boy who spoke publicly about their experiences. Although most of these victims were named in the news coverage, GRACE is not naming them again here. GRACE did cross-reference these names with a list of those interviewed by the private investigator hired by OCC to assess these cases and at least 5 of the 7 were interviewed by the investigator. Two others were not identified publicly but told the media they had also spoken with the investigator.

It was not within the scope of the contract with OCC to conduct a new investigation of the Moorehead case. Moreover, since there was already a high-quality investigation and OCC eventually concluded that misconduct occurred, there was no need. Instead, the focus was on understanding the theological constructs and general culture of the time which may have contributed to misconduct in the Moorehead era and in subsequent years. To that end, GRACE spoke with the original investigator who indicated that he deemed all of the victims to be credible. GRACE also spoke with a man who was groped by Moorehead but did not speak with the original investigator or the media.

Seven victim accounts are summarized below, all but one of which is publicly available, to help new members of OCC understand the church's history. The report will then focus on the church's response to these instances of abuse and offer thoughts on factors that contributed to a slow and flawed response to the allegations.

Victim #1

Victim #1 spoke publicly about his experiences and also gave a detailed written statement, which was located in the files at OCC. With some names redacted, the statement reads:

This event happened when I was 18 years old. The year was 1975. My wife to be, ___ and I, were planning to get married at Overlake Christian Church. One of the requirements of the church was for us to become members of the

church. ____ was asked to officiate at our wedding. ____ and I met with ____ personally to complete premarital classes. In order to become a member of the church both of us agreed to be baptized. At that time Bob Moorehead, Overlake's senior Minister performed the baptisms himself. Per his instructions I was told to put on a white baptismal jump suit. While I was getting dressed Bob put his hand inside the front of my pants several times and fondled my genitals. When I asked why he was putting his hand in my pants, he told me that when I got out of the water I would show through my underwear. I asked him to stop. To the best of my memory he did this to me four (4) times until he finally stopped.

After the baptism, I dried off and went to sit with _____. I told her that I had just been fondled by the head minister of the church, Bob Moorehead. That day I was very shaken by what had happened. I called a lady in the church whose husband was an elder at Overlake Christian Church and I believe he also was serving on the board of a college affiliated with OCC. I reported my story to them as well. After that I did not see Bob Moorehead performing any more baptisms. I was married in the church but never went back as a member after my wedding.

About 20 years later I was dating a lady named ____ who told me about how many programs the church had for people experiencing a divorce. I liked everything I heard at the church. I knew I would have to tell someone in the church to clear my conscience. I made an appointment with _____. On the second meeting we met with Bob Moorehead personally. Per that conversation Bob stated that he did not have any memory of this incident. He was sorry and asked for my forgiveness. I have grown a lot over the past 20 years and felt that God knew whether or not Bob Moorehead had repented of this terrible sin. I felt I had done the right thing by talking about it.

I know in my heart that I would never make up something like this. Bob's actions have left a permanent mark on me. I had a very hard time listening to Bob preach about the evil sins of homosexuals, especially following his conduct with me. I do not want Bob removed from his position. I only hope that he will admit to his sins and seek help.

The statement ends by providing the contact information of another person who could provide corroborating evidence. The statement is dated March 14, 1997.

Victim #2 and Victim #3

Victim #2 sent a “detailed letter” to OCC about the abuse he endured. At the time, the media described him as a “54 year old senior financial analyst.”¹³¹ According to news interviews with this man, he “decided to be baptized” after a church service in 1974 “to reflect his strong born-again beliefs...”¹³² The victim said he went to a rear dressing room in the church with Moorehead. The victim took off his clothes and as Moorehead handed him a robe the pastor “reached over and touched my genitals.”¹³³ The victim said he turned away but was fondled a second time by Moorehead. “I was so shocked,” the victim told a journalist, “I didn’t know what to do.”¹³⁴

The victim didn’t tell anyone until 4 or 5 days later when his wife said she had spoken to a neighbor who had a teenage brother alleging Moorehead had fondled his genitals during a baptism ceremony.¹³⁵ As a result of receiving this information, Victim #2 chose to report Moorehead to an elder who instructed him that biblically he must confront “the person who wronged you.”¹³⁶ The victim complied and told Moorehead he had made a “homosexual advance” but Moorehead responded “You are mistaken. It didn’t happen.”¹³⁷

Victim #3, who the media described as a “teenage boy” also went with his brother and sister-in-law to an elder” with his experience of fondling.¹³⁸ However, the elder told him “nothing could have happened.”¹³⁹ Eventually, there was a meeting that included the adult victim (Victim #2), the teenage victim (Victim #3), two elders and Moorehead in which the pastor again “denied that anything happened.”¹⁴⁰ The adult victim “told Moorehead he wouldn’t pursue his charges but asked that the pastor perform no more baptisms” and he (victim #2) “quit the church.”¹⁴¹

While recounting his experience to the media, Victim #2 “became emotional several times and tears welled in his eyes.” He said the baptism was a major event in his life¹⁴² that

¹³¹ Steve Miletich, *Overlake hires a private investigator, Church wants to end rumors about pastor*, SEATTLE P-I, February 19, 1998.

¹³² Id.

¹³³ Id.

¹³⁴ Id.

¹³⁵ Id.

¹³⁶ Id.

¹³⁷ Id.

¹³⁸ Id.

¹³⁹ Id.

¹⁴⁰ Id.

¹⁴¹ Id.

¹⁴² “Baptism is the foundational sacrament of Christianity. It is the Christian’s primary encounter with God in his mercy. According to the baptismal command of the Lord Jesus, Baptism, along with

had been tainted forever.¹⁴³ "I've always considered myself a crippled Christian," Victim #2 stated.¹⁴⁴ With respect to the teenager, his brother told the media the victim sought counseling and was otherwise harmed by Moorehead's conduct.¹⁴⁵ "I think his problems today are part of that. Prior to that he was a very self-assured kid."¹⁴⁶

Victim #4

Victim #4 also publicly accused Moorehead of fondling his genitals. This occurred "just before a wedding service in 1973" and the victim said the "same thing" happened to his best man.¹⁴⁷ One year later Victim #4 "met to discuss the incident with Moorehead, who denied any wrongdoing."¹⁴⁸ In an interview with a journalist published in 1999, Victim #4 said an OCC elder called him to say there were rumors he was speaking of "inappropriate behavior by Moorehead" and "Bob would just like to see if you're willing to fly up here, at our expense, to talk to him."¹⁴⁹ Victim #4 replied "No thanks, I tried talking to Bob 25 years ago."¹⁵⁰

Victim #5

Victim #5 said he was a Bible student in the early 1970's when Moorehead molested him.¹⁵¹ He also said he was present at the OCC service when Moorehead resigned and, while pleased with the resignation, told a journalist "then [Moorehead] said he was innocent of all the charges and I know that to be a blatant lie."¹⁵² Victim #5 told the media that Moorehead owed him and the other victims an apology.¹⁵³

Victim #6

teaching, is how a person becomes His disciple (Matt. 28:19." MARTIN LUTHER ON HOLY BAPTISM: SERMONS TO THE PEOPLE 1525-39, p. vii (2018).

¹⁴³ Steve Miletich, *Overlake hires a private investigator, Church wants to end rumors about pastor*, SEATTLE P-I, February 19, 1998.

¹⁴⁴ Id.

¹⁴⁵ Steve Miletich, *A preacher 'on fire' also is on the grill*, SEATTLE P-I, March 2, 1998.

¹⁴⁶ Id., at 2.

¹⁴⁷ Alex Fryer, *Detective says no evidence yet of a conspiracy*, SEATTLE TIMES, April 5, 1998.

¹⁴⁸ Id.

¹⁴⁹ Frank Kuznik, *Fallen Angel*, LAW & POLITICS (December/January 1999).

¹⁵⁰ Id.

¹⁵¹ Steve Miletich and Heath Foster, *Moorehead Resigns as Pastor*, SEATTLE P-I, May 18, 1998.

¹⁵² Id.

¹⁵³ Id.

In the review of documents at OCC, GRACE found an email dated February 19, 1998, which reads "I am a pastor in the Puget Sound area and I recently heard directly about an accusation of groping by pastor Bob in 1972, perpetrated on a friend of mine who later became part of our Bible study in Kirkland. He had been too embarrassed at the time and intimidated to come forward. I have no reason to believe it is untrue and I have no axe to grind. I just want you to take these accusations seriously and soberly and don't merely circle the wagons of denial around your pastor. That could only lead to greater problems and disgrace for the church. I, for one, am praying for you that the Lord will strengthen your leadership and uphold his name."

There was a victim who spoke to the media but asked the journalist who interviewed him not to publish his name.¹⁵⁴ This individual also said he spoke with the private investigator hired by OCC in 1998.¹⁵⁵ It's possible this is the same victim mentioned in the pastor's letter referenced in the previous paragraph. Whether or not this is true, this individual (Victim #6) told a journalist he met Moorehead in 1971 or 1972 and that he was "captivated by Moorehead's enthusiasm" and decided to be baptized by him.¹⁵⁶ It was during the baptism the abuse occurred:

We were standing in the water at the baptismal. He had his left hand on the back of my neck, so he could lower me into the water. With his right hand, he reached down and cupped my genitals. He was my idol, as far as evangelism goes. You freeze up. It was the last thing I expected. I would have been less surprised if he pulled a knife out and stabbed me in the chest.¹⁵⁷

The man also said the incident "embarrassed the hell out of me" and he kept it to himself because he assumed he was the only one who had been touched in this way.¹⁵⁸

Victim #7: A Sexual "relationship"

A Seattle man who met Moorehead after he joined OCC told a journalist that Moorehead "manipulated him into a consensual sexual relationship that lasted for several years, into the 1980's."¹⁵⁹ The man's former wife reportedly "caught her ex-husband and Moorehead having sex on at least two occasions..."¹⁶⁰ The man was "severely affected" by

¹⁵⁴ Steve Miletich, *A Preacher 'on fire' also is on the grill*, SEATTLE P-I, March 2, 1998.

¹⁵⁵ Id.

¹⁵⁶ Id.

¹⁵⁷ Id.

¹⁵⁸ Id.

¹⁵⁹ Steve Miletich and Heath Foster, *Moorehead Resigns as Pastor*, SEATTLE P-I, May 18, 1998.

¹⁶⁰ Id.

the sexual relationship, telling a journalist “There aren’t words to describe it.”¹⁶¹ The reason GRACE labels this man as a victim is because of the statement the sexual relationship was “manipulated” and the likelihood of an imbalance of power in the relationship.

Other victims

There were other men who said their genitals were touched by Moorehead but who did not speak publicly about their experiences. Some of these men recounted their experiences to a private investigator hired by OCC but others did not. GRACE spoke with one of the men who did not speak publicly or to the investigator.

This man told GRACE he was in his 20s in the 1980s and during that time “there was certainly an unspoken understanding that the pastor might be grabbing guys between the legs. And so I would say that I would be one of those people where that happened to. I would never say I was victimized because I don’t view myself as a victim, but I know of others, at least two or three other people who in similar seasons of life, early twenties, career-minded, ministry volunteers who had the same thing happen to [them], and frankly in those days it was more of a laughable joke for three 25-year-old men...and none of us ever, I don’t think any of us fully believed that it was a thing...I don’t think any of us felt targeted. I think we just thought it was a weird coincidence maybe. But again, we’re 25, so as things did play out, obviously, there was an understanding later in our lives, oh, this was a bigger thing than we thought and it actually was a thing.”¹⁶²

This man said the leaders of the church during the Moorehead era were “goodhearted, caring people” but he believed “this circumstance was well beyond their universe in terms of how do we handle this? And I do feel that they did the best they could...”¹⁶³ This man said “I’m kind of sad that GRACE didn’t exist then because I have every confidence that their services would’ve been used to help navigate this because it was an extraordinary circumstance for people for whom this kind of thing was beyond their pay grade as volunteers trying to lead a megachurch that was growing at every possible...Growing to burst the seams.”¹⁶⁴ When asked why he believed the leaders at the time would have hired GRACE, he pointed to the fact the leaders “did ultimately hire an investigator.”¹⁶⁵

The OCC investigation of Moorehead (1998)

¹⁶¹ Id. SS

¹⁶² Transcript #2, p. 1.

¹⁶³ Id. at 2.

¹⁶⁴ Id. at 2.

¹⁶⁵ Id. at 2.

In February of 1998, OCC hired a private investigator to assess the allegations against Moorehead. The private investigator was a “former Bellevue police detective who handled a number of high profile cases” and was “often referred to by others as a ‘bulldog’” for his tenacity in collecting evidence and pursuing leads.¹⁶⁶ The OCC elders publicly stated they had given the investigator “full authority to pursue any allegations with no set time limit” and that a “summary of his [the investigator’s] findings will be provided to church members.”¹⁶⁷ GRACE was able to locate the private investigator retained by OCC in 1998 to investigate the allegations against Moorehead. After OCC signed a release, the investigator agreed to speak with GRACE. The investigator served in the Navy for four years and did two tours of Vietnam.¹⁶⁸ He then served as a patrol officer for the Bellevue Police Department for 10 ½ years before being promoted to detective where he served for 21 years. His work included investigating sexual assault cases. After he retired, he worked as a private investigator.¹⁶⁹ He said he had a reputation as a “Christian detective, a Christian cop with unusually strong track record, and that’s why Overlake Church came to me.”¹⁷⁰

The investigator told GRACE he met with some OCC board members and was assigned a primary contact person.¹⁷¹ He said he was “given a list of members that had claimed that they were molested.”¹⁷² The investigator began to interview the men and “it just began to snowball” with additional victims coming forward.¹⁷³ He described the men he interviewed as “very embarrassed. They held it inside. They were shocked.”¹⁷⁴ When asked if he found the victims credible, the detective replied “All of them. Yeah. These were solid Christian church-going people.”¹⁷⁵ When asked if he found corroborating evidence, the investigator said “Yes, I did. I found other witnesses. They [the victims] were giving the names of other people, and I followed up on those.”¹⁷⁶

The investigator said he was providing a “steady flow of reports” to OCC.¹⁷⁷ He said there “was a faction on the board that was solidly behind Bob, and they wanted him [the

¹⁶⁶ Steve Miletich, *Overlake hires a private investigator, Church wants to end rumors about pastor*, SEATTLE P-I, February 19, 1998.

¹⁶⁷ Id.

¹⁶⁸ Transcript, p. 3.

¹⁶⁹ Id. at 3-6.

¹⁷⁰ Id. at 5.

¹⁷¹ Id. at 7.

¹⁷² Id. at 7.

¹⁷³ Id. at 7.

¹⁷⁴ Id. at 7.

¹⁷⁵ Id. at 9.

¹⁷⁶ Id. at 9.

¹⁷⁷ Id. at 9.

primary contact] to get rid of me because the tide was turning. They were looking at the weekly reports I was turning in, the interview reports, the statements I took...And there began a pressure to get rid of me, and that was being fought by others...The church was getting split right down the middle. And I was getting hammered every day by the news media calls."¹⁷⁸

The investigator also interviewed Bob Moorehead who denied the allegations, but the investigator did not find his denial credible.¹⁷⁹ He said there "was a change in his demeanor about halfway in that I think he became a little uneasy with where this was going."¹⁸⁰ After the interview, he said Moorehead went back to his office and another licensed private investigator working with him was nearby collecting additional information and overheard Moorehead "cussing like a sailor" and saying "It hit me as I'm driving across the bridge back from Seattle, I'm screwed... I'm completely done. I've got to resign."¹⁸¹ He recalled that Moorehead announced his resignation to the congregation a few days later.¹⁸²

Moorehead did publicly announce his resignation on May 17, 1998, because "My credibility in the community has been seriously damaged."¹⁸³ When he made the announcement, he was surrounded by both his family and the elders.¹⁸⁴ According to one journalist, "Stunned parishioners gasped, shouted 'no' and wept."¹⁸⁵

On May 27, 1998, the elders provided an oral summary of their interpretation of the investigation which was also reduced to writing. This summary is attached as Exhibit C. In assessing the information received from the investigator, the elders said they followed a "Biblical process."¹⁸⁶ The first verse cited was Deuteronomy 19:15: "One witness is not enough to convict a man of any crime or offense he may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." They also cited the admonition in 1 Timothy 5:19 to "not entertain an accusation against an Elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses."¹⁸⁷

¹⁷⁸ Id. at 8.

¹⁷⁹ Id. at 10-12. Specifically, the investigator told GRACE "To me, he was guilty. A lot of this had been going on for a long time." Id. at 11.

¹⁸⁰ Id. at 12.

¹⁸¹ Transcript, p. 11.

¹⁸² Id. at 11.

¹⁸³ Steve Miletich and Heath Foster, *Moorehead resigns as pastor, He denies charges, but says they hurt Overlake ministry*, SEATTLE P-I, May 18, 1998.

¹⁸⁴ Id.

¹⁸⁵ Id.

¹⁸⁶ Exhibit C, p. 2.

¹⁸⁷ Exhibit C, p. 2.

They also cited Matthew 18:15 and said the “biblical process to deal with any accusation against any member of the body is first to require the offended party to confront the accused.”¹⁸⁸ In hiring a private investigator, the elders believed OCC had “put Pastor Bob’s biblical rights on hold.”¹⁸⁹

In applying this principle to the allegations against Moorehead, the elders concluded there must be two or three witnesses to the “alleged offense” and that without at least two witnesses it would be insufficient to find guilt even if the evidence met the secular standard of preponderance of the evidence used in many civil court proceedings or even the higher standard of beyond a reasonable doubt used in criminal courts of law.¹⁹⁰

The elders said there were “36 statements taken by either [the] investigator or elders” and this included “17 separate individuals” who “claimed personal inappropriate touching or attempted touching.”¹⁹¹ Of these, 14 “gave separate testimony that could not be *factually* disputed, (it was their word against Pastor Bob’s word)” (emphasis in original).¹⁹² However, there “were no instances of corroborating witnesses to a **single event or accusation**” (emphasis added).¹⁹³ The elders also claimed there was “no witnessed resistance of ‘crying’ out against the apparent offenses” as they believed is required by scripture (Deuteronomy 22:23-27). They also found it relevant that the “time period for most of the accusation dates back 20+ years.”¹⁹⁴

As a result of these and other factors, the elders “did not find a basis for church discipline against Pastor Bob Moorehead.”¹⁹⁵ However, applying the scriptural principle of a church leader being “above reproach” (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6), the elders noted Moorehead “no longer has a good reputation with those outside the church” and that this was “recognized by Pastor Bob and the elders, which facilitated the acceptance of his resignation as senior pastor, and as an elder.”¹⁹⁶ As a result of the resignation, the elders suspended the investigation and instructed the private investigator “to forward any new information to the elders to deal with directly.”¹⁹⁷

The OCC/Inquiry Committee investigation of Moorehead (1999)

¹⁸⁸ Exhibit C, p. 3.

¹⁸⁹ Exhibit C, p. 3.

¹⁹⁰ Exhibit C, p. 2.

¹⁹¹ Exhibit C, p. 4.

¹⁹² Exhibit C, p. 5.

¹⁹³ Exhibit C, p. 5.

¹⁹⁴ Exhibit C, p. 6.

¹⁹⁵ Exhibit C, p. 6.

¹⁹⁶ Exhibit C, p. 7.

¹⁹⁷ Exhibit C, p. 4.

In 1999, an “inquiry committee” consisting of six area pastors, three Overlake elders, and an Overlake association pastor “concluded that Moorehead inappropriately touched a number of men.”¹⁹⁸ Specifically, the inquiry committee found that Bob Moorehead committed “multiple acts that violate ministerial, as well as Christian morals and ethics” and that these acts “included touching the genital area of other men. These acts also included rubbing his hand against the penis of other men without their consent.”¹⁹⁹ This finding was based in part on additional witnesses to Moorehead’s sexual misconduct as well as “additional accusers.”²⁰⁰ As a result of this finding, OCC wrote a letter to their members stating:

Since Pastor Bob’s resignation, the eldership has received testimony that meets the biblical standards of multiple witnesses. Based on this testimony, the eldership reviewed the entire matter and unanimously concluded that Pastor Bob Moorehead did violate the scriptural standards of trust, self-control, purity, and Godly character required for the office of elder and pastor at Overlake Christian Church.²⁰¹

The OCC letter to the congregation is attached as Exhibit D. Unlike the inquiry committee finding, the “letter did not describe any specific misconduct on Moorehead’s part.”²⁰² The letter also did not publicly apologize to any of the victims. The wife of one of the victims called the letter the “most politically correct, watered-down, lawsuit friendly letter you can get. It’s missing the mark.”²⁰³ Another victim specifically called for a public apology, telling a journalist “I want to know that Overlake apologizes for what they put my family and hundreds of other people through. They accused us of lying when all we’ve ever done is tell the truth.”²⁰⁴

The inquiry committee chair called for a meeting of the committee to assess the OCC letter. In a meeting held June 8, 1999, the committee adopted the following resolution pertaining to the OCC letter:

¹⁹⁸ Sally Macdonald & Steve Miletich, *Elders Now Say Moorehead is “Guilty” of Misconduct*, SEATTLE TIMES, May 21, 1999.

¹⁹⁹ Correspondence from the Inquiry Committee Chair to the other members, May 26, 1999.

²⁰⁰ Sally Macdonald & Steve Miletich, *Elders Now Say Moorehead is “Guilty” of Misconduct*, SEATTLE TIMES, May 21, 1999.

²⁰¹ OCC letter to congregation dated May 18, 1999 (Exhibit D).

²⁰² Sally Macdonald & Steve Miletich, *Elders Now Say Moorehead is “Guilty” of Misconduct*, SEATTLE TIMES, May 21, 1999.

²⁰³ *Id.*

²⁰⁴ *Id.*

The Overlake membership letter was an admission of guilt. Bob Moorehead did, in fact, sin in a variety of ways. The sins identified were less explicit and less descriptive than the sins identified by the Inquiry Committee. Even so, given the public information that has circulated, it is apparent that the Elders were acknowledging the truth of the charges that have been brought against him. Therefore we find that the letter is substantially consistent with our conclusion.²⁰⁵

At the same time, the Inquiry Committee asked the elders to “examine their own hearts in this matter. Is there a willingness to be forthcoming and completely settle this matter in openness and humility before the watching community? Is there a willingness to humbly admit errors and sins? It takes great humility, and is itself humbling, for strong leaders to admit the deception that is sometimes masked by cleverly worded statements. Could it be that the same motivation that delayed the determination of guilt is behind the understated admission of guilt?”²⁰⁶

With respect to an apology to the victims, the Inquiry Committee said it “appreciates that Overlake is making an effort to contact all of the victim’s of Bob’s sins” but also stated, “We believe a public apology is also necessary.”²⁰⁷ The Inquiry Committee passed the following resolution:

In order to erase public misconceptions, and to bring closure for the sins committed, we call upon the elders of Overlake to publicly apologize (confess) the sins committed against the victims by Bob Moorehead - and to ask forgiveness of the victims.²⁰⁸

The Inquiry Committee document, including these resolutions, is attached as Exhibit E. In the search of OCC documents, GRACE finds evidence that at least some of the victims were being sought out privately with an apology from OCC. However, GRACE did not find evidence of a public apology.

Analysis of the Moorehead case

The exact number of Moorehead’s victims is known only to God. It appears that at least 17 men spoke to the private investigator about groping or other forms of molestation and that additional men and other corroborating witnesses spoke to

²⁰⁵ Inquiry Committee Meeting of June 8, 1999 (Exhibit E).

²⁰⁶ Id.

²⁰⁷ Id.

²⁰⁸ Id.

the Inquiry Committee. GRACE also spoke with a victim who, in turn, knew of other victims who may not have been part of any formal process. Some media accounts during the time period in question state that “more than 20 men” had “come forward to say they were sexually fondled by the pastor”²⁰⁹ with one report stating the “tally was closer to 40” but also conceding the “real total of victims from the past 25 years is anybody’s guess.”²¹⁰

Whatever the actual number of victims, there is no serious doubt these offenses occurred. The sheer number of victims describing similar acts is extremely powerful evidence. The fact that both a seasoned detective and the Inquiry Committee found the victims credible and, in turn, did not find Moorehead’s denial to be credible, is also powerful evidence. GRACE also found the man who spoke with investigators about his experience of being touched by Moorehead to be extremely credible. The fact that OCC eventually acknowledged these events occurred, albeit in a weak 1999 statement, also resolves the issue in GRACE’s judgment.

With the evidence this clear, it begs the question of what went wrong at Overlake in the Moorehead era. From GRACE’s review of the documents, several factors stand out.

1. OCC did not have clear policies in responding to an allegation of sexual assault committed by a pastor or other leader.

The elders themselves acknowledged this error when, in their 1999 letter to the congregation, they pledged that, in the future, “Any serious allegation against a person on the OCC staff, including senior pastor and elders, will cause that person to be immediately suspended pending a full investigation.”²¹¹ Unfortunately, this pledge was not kept. As detailed in this report, sexual misconduct continued in the years that followed and, in at least some instances, those in authority at OCC knew or should have known of this sexual misconduct but acted slowly, if at all, in addressing the behavior.

2. OCC did not fully appreciate, much less honor the Biblical command to abide by the law.

In Paul’s letter to the Romans, he instructs the followers of Christ to be “subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently,

²⁰⁹ Joanne Plank & Doug Margeson, *Moorehead Quits*, Eastside Journal, May 18, 1998.

²¹⁰ Frank Kuznik, *Fallen Angel*, LAW & POLITICS (December/January 1999)

²¹¹ Exhibit D.

whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves...For the one in authority is God's servant for your good...Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience" (Romans 13:1-5).

In the review of OCC files, GRACE found no evidence that the church ever contacted law enforcement regarding the non-consensual touching of genitals by their pastor. Although the reports of assault that came to the attention of the elders in the late 1990s may have been barred by the statute of limitations,²¹² this would not have been true for the allegations that were brought to the attention of leaders in the 1970s.²¹³ In an article published in 1998, at least one journalist examined local police records but found "no reports filed against Moorehead over the past 28 years."²¹⁴

Even if the statute of limitations had expired, law enforcement may have had an interest in exploring whether or not this pattern of offenses was continuing and it's possible a more recent victim (if one existed) would have felt more comfortable in cooperating with a police investigation as opposed to any investigation sponsored by OCC, particularly when the alleged offender remained in a position of authority. Apart from taking steps to alert the authorities of any potential criminal activity, the non-consensual sexual touching of others, particularly by someone in authority, raises concerns about sexual harassment and other unlawful acts under civil law.²¹⁵

During this case, GRACE investigators found other instances in which sexual misconduct may have constituted a crime, but was not reported to the authorities. In a witness interview, investigators learned of a child who had disclosed an instance of familial sexual abuse to a youth group leader approximately five years ago that appears not to have been reported. In another interview, GRACE learned of a former employee who engaged in the non-consensual touching of the genitals of at least two men. Neither of these cases were reported to the authorities.

²¹² Steve Miletich, *A Preacher 'on fire' also is on the grill*, SEATTLE P-I, March 2, 1998 (noting the "allegations are too old to investigate because of the statute of limitations.")

²¹³ See the accounts of Victims 1, 2, 3, and 4.

²¹⁴ Steve Miletich, *A Preacher 'on fire' also is on the grill*, SEATTLE P-I, March 2, 1998 (noting the "allegations are too old to investigate because of the statute of limitations.")

²¹⁵ For an overview of civil law in cases of abuse within the church, see Peter B. Janci, *Helping #ChurchToo Abuse Victims Hold Religious Entities Accountable in Civil Cases*, 14(2) LIBERTY L. REV. 317 (2020).

There is evidence that OCC has turned a corner on the issue of reporting. In the two instances described in the previous paragraph, the current leaders of OCC reported the possible case of child abuse to the authorities and supported GRACE's decision to report the possible adult sexual assault case to the authorities. Moreover, OCC has chosen to make its pastors mandated reporters even though the state of Washington is among the minority of states that do not require clergy to report reasonable suspicions of abuse.²¹⁶ In the specific issue of sexual misconduct GRACE was asked to investigate, OCC did make a report to the authorities. Turning a corner, though, is not the end of a journey. OCC must learn from its past and be vigilant in walking a better path in the future.

3. OCC was too slow in bringing in an outside investigator or other expert(s) to assist in responding to reports of clergy abuse.

Although OCC did eventually bring in a seasoned investigator to assess the allegations, the leadership moved too slowly in making this decision. Once the decision was made, they erred in not deferring to the judgment of the investigator. Instead, they conducted their own analysis of the evidence using a flawed theological construct. The elders were not skilled in assessing sexual assault cases and, even if one or more had this expertise, they personally knew Moorehead and thus had biases that impaired their judgments.

As noted earlier, one survivor described the elders as “goodhearted, caring people” but he believed “this circumstance was well beyond their universe in terms of how do we handle this?”²¹⁷ He said he also wished an organization such as GRACE existed at that time and believed the elders would have used such expertise. Since expertise in responding to child abuse is very rare today in the Christian community,²¹⁸ there were certainly even fewer resources in the late 1990s. There was also a shortage of expertise among law enforcement officers, child protection workers, and other secular professionals in responding to child abuse cases.²¹⁹ Despite these challenges, the elders did find a well-credentialed investigator. The

²¹⁶ CHILDREN'S BUREAU, CLERGY AS MANDATED REPORTERS (2019).

²¹⁷ Steve Miletich, *A Preacher 'on fire' also is on the grill*, SEATTLE P-I, March 2, 1998.

²¹⁸ Victor Vieth, *ELCA Churchwide Assembly Addresses Child Abuse*, 120(1) WISCONSIN LUTHERAN QUARTERLY 75-76 (2023) (quoting the ELCA, the nation's largest Lutheran denomination, as saying it “seems clear that few rostered ministers or congregations are aware of or require best practices” in responding to child abuse.)

²¹⁹ In 1992, for example, there were only 22 accredited Children's Advocacy Centers in the United States and, of these, only 4 were in west. Nancy Chandler, *Children's Advocacy Centers: Making a Difference One Child at a Time*, 28 HAMLIN JOURNAL OF PUBLIC LAW & POLICY 315, 322 (2006).

error was in not seeking outside assistance sooner and then failing to defer to that expertise in making a final decision.

4. Cognitive dissonance likely played a role in the response to the allegations

Although most people are opposed to sexual assault or other forms of abuse, we may not be opposed to abuse when we actually encounter it. This is because when we encounter abuse, the offender is often someone we know such as a family member, a long-standing friend, or a respected member of our community such as a revered pastor. As we contemplate all the good things the accused offender may have done and we personally experienced, we resist contrary evidence. This is called “cognitive dissonance,” a phenomenon in which “people may alter their beliefs and behavior or seek to discredit and reject the conflicting evidence.”²²⁰

Those who commit sexual offenses “report exploiting this tendency by intentionally situating themselves at the center of the community, as generous, kind, learned, and pious leaders, who are truly exemplars in every way. Their sexual abuse behind closed doors thus remains hidden with the victims, and the community often refuses to accept allegations that may eventually emerge.”²²¹ A clergyperson who molested 96 children told a sex offender treatment provider:

They [church leaders and congregants] immediately rallied to my defense...They said, ‘We know this young man...He has been in our community all of his life. We know his parents, his grandparents, his aunts, his uncles. This is not something he would do. This is not something that goes along with behavior that we see in him day in and day out,’ and that was true because I was very careful that they did not see that behavior day in and day out.²²²

As a result of this cognitive dissonance, many members of the community adopt an “all or nothing” thinking which assumes a perpetrator is a monster or someone who is “all bad” and thus fail to recognize that an offender may, in fact, have done many good things while simultaneously committing sexual offenses or engaging in other misconduct.²²³ This problem may be particularly acute when an offender vigorously denies the allegations. As Dr. Judith Herman writes:

²²⁰ Shira M. Berkovits, *Institutional Abuse in the Jewish Community*, 50(2) TRADITIONS 11, 12 (2017).

²²¹ *Id.* at 12.

²²² *Id.* at 13.

²²³ *Id.* at 15.

After every atrocity one can expect to hear the same predictable apologies: it never happened; the victim lies; the victim exaggerates; the victim brought it upon herself; and in any case it is time to forget the past and move on. The more powerful the perpetrator, the greater is his prerogative to name and define reality, and the more completely his arguments prevail.²²⁴

Although cognitive dissonance has been discussed in the academic literature dating back to the 1950s,²²⁵ most faith leaders have little or no understanding of this concept. As a result, the problem of cognitive dissonance continues to harm victims, emboldens offenders, and has likely played a role in poor responses to instances of abuse in Catholic,²²⁶ Protestant,²²⁷ and other faith communities.

Given the closeness of the elders to Pastor Moorehead and his long-standing leadership of the OCC community, cognitive dissonance almost certainly is one factor that impaired the leaders and congregants from acting sooner and more effectively to the allegations against their spiritual leader.

5. The OCC leaders and community did not understand or did not fully take into account the physical, emotional, and spiritual impact of trauma, as well as the unique dynamics of trauma when the victim is a male.

In evaluating the evidence gathered by the private investigator, OCC elders considered several factors that are contrary to much of what we know about trauma. For instance, the elders noted “none of the accusers cried out” and cited Deuteronomy 22:23-27 in support of this being a relevant factor.²²⁸ Although these verses make a distinction between consensual sexual activity and assault, these Old Testament laws “do not always clearly cover the difference between consent and force.”²²⁹

GRACE does, though, know from a number of studies the myriad responses of sexual assault victims. A lack of consent may be communicated through overt resistance such as words or defensive action but there can also be involuntary freezing such as when a victim is in shock or simply shuts down and chooses to stay

²²⁴ Id. at 18.

²²⁵ Id. at 12.

²²⁶ See e.g. MICHAEL D. ANTONIO, *MORTAL SINS: SEX, CRIME, AND THE ERA OF CATHOLIC SCANDAL* (2013).

²²⁷ See e.g. Victor I. Vieth, *Lessons from the SBC Sexual Abuse Crisis*, 15(3) FAMILY & INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE QUARTERLY 61 (2023).

²²⁸ Exhibit C, p. 6.

²²⁹ THE LUTHERAN STUDY BIBLE (CONCORDIA PUBLISHING HOUSE, ST. LOUIS 2009), p. 313.

still or feign sleep.²³⁰ In some instances, a victim may “negotiate” with the offender in the hope of a lesser sexual act.²³¹ In other cases, the victims exhibit confusion and “report not understanding what was going on or not knowing how to react to what was happening.”²³² A state of confusion may occur when the assault occurs quickly. Examples of exhibited confusion include statements such as “Before I knew it, he had his finger inside me,” “He grabbed my hand and shoved it down his pants,” and “I was in shock and didn’t know what to do.”²³³

When GRACE applies this research to the public and private statements, as well as actions, of Moorehead’s victims, there are similar patterns of confusion, shock, and disbelief. Some of the victims spoke immediately to Moorehead at the time of abuse and others verbally objected shortly thereafter. The behaviors of the victims are also consistent with those who have endured trauma.

The elders also noted the “time period for most of the accusations dates back 20+ years.”²³⁴ When, though, GRACE looks at trauma research, there is nothing unusual about a lengthy delay. This is particularly so when the victim is a male. Myths such as “men cannot be raped” or “sexual assault is not as severe for a man as it is for a woman” may cause male victims to remain silent.²³⁵ As one peer-reviewed literature review noted, “Men, before their assault may never have considered that they could become victims of sexual assault.”²³⁶

Research on men who were sexually abused as boys or in their youth finds an average delay in disclosure of 21.38 years and a delay of 28.23 years before a full disclosure.²³⁷ Since sexual assault violates masculine norms of self-protection, many victims feel “weak, frightened, confused or guilty around the time of the abuse.”²³⁸ Among males there is a “generalized concern over being unable to predict

²³⁰ Sasha N. Canan, Alejandra M. Kaplan & Kristen N. Jozkowski, *A National U.S. Study of 906 Women’s Qualitative Accounts of their Reactions During Sexual Assault*, 20 *SEXUALITY RESEARCH AND SOCIAL POLICY* 977, 984-985 (2023).

²³¹ *Id.* at 984.

²³² *Id.* at 985.

²³³ *Id.* at 985.

²³⁴ Exhibit C, p. 6.

²³⁵ Michelle Davies, *Male sexual assault victims: a selective review of the literature and implications for support services*, 7 *AGGRESSION AND VIOLENT BEHAVIOR* 203, 204 (2002).

²³⁶ *Id.*

²³⁷ Scott D. Easton, *Disclosure of Child Sexual Abuse Among Adult Male Survivors*, 41 *CLINICAL SOCIAL WORK JOURNAL* 344-355 (2013).

²³⁸ Scott D. Easton, Leia Y. Saltzman, & Danny G. Willis, *Would You Tell Under Circumstances Like That? Barriers to Disclosure of Child Sexual Abuse for Men*, 15 *PSYCHOLOGY OF MEN & MASCULINITY* 460, 462 (2013).

responses from others and the outcomes of disclosure” and this “fear of unknown consequences” keeps some males from telling.²³⁹

Male survivors who “self-identify as heterosexual are often fearful that others would use their abuse experiences as evidence of homosexuality.”²⁴⁰ Conversely, boys who may have been questioning their sexual identity or who identify as gay or bisexual before the abuse may encounter attitudes that discredit or minimize their sexual identity upon disclosure of the abuse.²⁴¹

When the abuser is a member of the clergy or a religious leader, there is a significant risk a male victim will not disclose. This is because “clergy members hold extraordinary power due to their social status in the community and [because of] the association between the abuser and the survivor’s faith in God.”²⁴² In the words of one man sexually abused as a boy, “How can a man get raped, and by a priest. It’s the same as getting raped by God.”²⁴³

Lastly, some males are unable to recognize the event as abusive. In one study, a male survivor referred to childhood sexual abuse as “just part of growing up” while another survivor said, “I wasn’t sure it was actually abuse or not.”²⁴⁴ Again, it is understandable that the elders and other leaders at OCC were not likely to have been experts on trauma, much less the unique dynamics involved when boys or men are sexually assaulted. Ignorance, though, was not the error. The error was in not consulting with one or more experts as quickly as possible.

6. OCC leaders applied scripture too narrowly by failing to take into account all the Bible has to say about trauma and caring for the “least of these.”

Although the elders attempted to apply biblical principles when responding to the allegations against their pastor, the focus was too narrow and caused harm to the victims. The elders said it was their “intent to have as many of the accusers as

²³⁹ Id. at 465.

²⁴⁰ Id. at 465.

²⁴¹ Victor I. Vieth, et al, *Where the Boys Are: Investigating and Prosecuting Cases of Child Sexual Abuse When the Victim is Male*, Zero Abuse Project (2022). See generally, Amy Russell, *The People in Your Neighborhood: Working with Sexual and Gender Minority Youth as Victims of Sexual Violence*, in Robert Geffner, Jacquelyn W. White, L. Kevin Hamberger, Alan Rosenbaum, Viola Vaughan-Eden, Victor I. Vieth, Eds, *Handbook of Interpersonal Violence and Abuse Across the Lifespan* 831 (2022).

²⁴² Scott D. Easton, Leia Y. Saltzman, & Danny G. Willis, *Would You Tell Under Circumstances Like That? Barriers to Disclosure of Child Sexual Abuse for Men*, 15 *PSYCHOLOGY OF MEN & MASCULINITY* 460, 465 (2013).

²⁴³ Id. at 465.

²⁴⁴ Id. at 466.

possible discuss their allegations directly with Pastor Bob.”²⁴⁵ Citing Matthew 18:15, the elders said the “biblical process for dealing with an accusation against a member of the body is first to require the offended party to confront the accused.”²⁴⁶

It is dangerous to isolate any one verse from the entirety of scripture. Matthew 18 also includes verse 6 in which Christ says it would be better to be drowned in the sea with a large millstone around our neck than to hurt a child or other vulnerable person.²⁴⁷ Requiring a victim of sexual assault to confront the person who assaulted them is extremely dangerous. Even if the offender does not physically injure the victim again, the offender will likely emotionally abuse the victim either by denying the crime or twisting the facts in a cruel way.²⁴⁸ Accordingly, forcing a victim to sit down with the person who sexually assaulted them runs the risk of revictimizing the wronged party and may make worse their physical, emotional and spiritual wounds.²⁴⁹

As an illustration of this point, Martin Moran wrote in his memoirs of being sexually abused at a church camp and, as an adult, his decision to confront the man who abused him. During the meeting, the offender engaged in cognitive distortions that minimized his conduct. Specifically, the perpetrator told Moran:

I wanted to help you. You were such a gentle soul...Mentally, you were way ahead of the other boys. You were special...There were others, I admit. But not like you. You were so curious about things...you were shy and I wanted to teach you about the land and animals and help you gain confidence. And you did.²⁵⁰

Rather than genuine repentance, the offender not only minimized his conduct but suggested the sexual abuse was *good* for the victim. Since this is not an isolated occurrence, scholars have urged pastors and other church leaders “to help

²⁴⁵ Exhibit C.

²⁴⁶ Id.

²⁴⁷ See John D. Schuetze, *Pastoral Theology Brief: Matthew 18 also Includes Verse 6*, 112(3) WISCONSIN LUTHERAN QUARTERLY 224-228 (2015).

²⁴⁸ Theodore P. Cross, Victor I. Vieth, Amy Russell, and Cory Jewell Jensen, *Adult Sex Offenders Against Children: Etiology, Typologies, Investigation, Treatment, Monitoring, and Recidivism*, in ROBERT GEFFNER, JACQUELYN W. WHITE, L. KEVIN HAMBERGER, ALAN ROSENBAUM, VIOLA VAUGHAN-EDEN, VICTOR I. VIETH, EDS, HANDBOOK OF INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE AND ABUSE ACROSS THE LIFESPAN 857, 866 (SPRINGER 2022).

²⁴⁹ See generally, Victor I. Vieth & Pete Singer, *Wounded Souls: The Need for Child Protection Professionals and Faith Leaders to Recognize and Respond to the Spiritual Impact of Child Abuse*, 45 MITCHELL HAMLIN L. REV. 1213 (2019).

²⁵⁰ MARTIN MORAN, THE TRICKY PART, 274 (2005).

survivors understand that a confrontation is unlikely to go as they envision” and that if they choose to confront an offender they “should be fully prepared by a mental health professional to process the event before and after the confrontation.”²⁵¹ It is also wise to have one or more professionals with the victim during any conversation with an offender.²⁵²

Another danger of forcing a victim to confront the offender, is that the accused may intimidate a victim to recant or remain silent and can cause an offender to destroy evidence.²⁵³ As a result, this may impair the ability of law enforcement officers or others in authority to investigate and prosecute a crime—the very “servants of God” whose work we should respect (Romans 13:4-5).

Simply stated, any church *requiring* a victim of sexual assault to speak with an offender, particularly a clergy offender who still holds power, before taking any action is undermining the admonition of Jesus in Matthew 18:6. Moreover, the church is also undermining our Christian obligations under Romans 13:4-5.

The elders also cited Deuteronomy 19:15 in support of their belief that there must be more than one witness.²⁵⁴ The elders read this to mean there must be at least two witnesses to *each* offense—a standard that is nearly impossible in sexual assault cases where often the victim and offender are alone together. If, though, they had simply focused on the issue of whether or not their pastor had touched the genitals of men without their consent, there were at least 17 witnesses at the time the private investigator’s work was stopped (and more who came forward later).

As discussed earlier, the elders also cited Deuteronomy 22:23-27 in looking for evidence the victims had “cried out.” From GRACE’s review of the public statements, it appears each of the victims cried out consistent with the typical reactions of victims found in trauma research. Although some of this research did not exist in the late 1990s, there were nonetheless numerous experts on understanding trauma response. GRACE will never know for sure, but it is possible that consulting with experts on the trauma of having one’s genitals suddenly groped might have resulted in a different assessment.

²⁵¹ Victor I. Vieth, *What Would Walther Do? Applying Law and Gospel to Victims and Perpetrators of Child Sexual Abuse*, 40(4) JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGY & THEOLOGY 257, 269-270 (2012).

²⁵² *Id.*

²⁵³ Victor I. Vieth, *Suffer the Children* 2(1) JACOB’S HOPE 1, 4 (2011).

²⁵⁴ Exhibit C, p. 1.

Perhaps the greatest theological error was the decision of the OCC leaders to focus on passages of scripture designed to protect the rights of the accused without balancing this against the numerous passages that call on us to protect the vulnerable. As noted earlier, the presentation to the congregation did not include a discussion of Matthew 18:6. There was also no reminder that Jesus was a descendant of three exploited women (Matthew 1-1-17).²⁵⁵ As one commentator notes, compassion for victims is in the DNA of Christ, the very blood of God.²⁵⁶

There was no discussion of the warning of Jesus to cast aside those who preached in His name but failed to care for the “least of these” (Mt. 25:34-45). There was no mention that Jesus was a near victim of infanticide and that the entire church exists because of an act of protecting the vulnerable as the wise men, as well as Joseph and Mary, acted to save the baby we now worship (Mt. 2:1-18).

Most importantly, there was no discussion that Jesus himself was a victim of multiple forms of abuse including being physically struck, whipped, emotionally taunted, tortured and, since Roman execution involved killing victims without any clothes, Christ was also sexually exploited.²⁵⁷ Although Christians rightly focus on the crucifixion as the means of our reconciliation with God, the cross also had a profound impact on how we view victims. As Philip Yancey writes:

The cross upset the long-standing categories of weak victims and strong heroes, for at that moment the victim emerged as the hero. The gospel put in motion something new in history, which [Gil] Bailie calls ‘the most astonishing reversal of values in human history.’ Wherever Christianity took root, care for victims spread.²⁵⁸

In the assessment of the history of OCC, GRACE sees little evidence that pastors or congregants have fully explored the many rich texts of the Bible pertaining to sexual assault or other forms of trauma²⁵⁹ and what this may mean for

²⁵⁵ Jesus was a descendant of Tamar (Gen. 38), Rahab (Joshua 2:1; 6:22-25), and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11). For a detailed analysis of the sexual exploitation of Bathsheba, see John D. Schuteze, *Bathsheba and the Nature of David's Sin*, 116(4) WISCONSIN LUTHERAN QUARTERLY 243-247 (2019).

²⁵⁶ VICTOR I. VIETH, ON THIS ROCK: A CALL TO CENTER THE CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO CHILD ABUSE ON THE LIFE AND WORDS OF JESUS 21 (2018).

²⁵⁷ JAYME R. REAVES, DAVID TOMBS, & ROCIO FIGUEROA, WHEN DID WE SEE YOU NAKED? JESUS AS A VICTIM OF SEXUAL ABUSE (2021).

²⁵⁸ PHILIP YANCEY, VANISHING GRACE 170-171 (2014).

²⁵⁹ For instance, a sermon series or Bible study on the Biblical account of the rape of Tamar. See PAMELA COOPER-WHITE, THE CRY OF TAMAR: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE SECOND EDITION (2012).

Christians today as we contemplate building a trauma-informed church. As one victim of abuse noted, how can Christians worship a God who was abused and yet fail to care for the victims sitting beside them in the pews?²⁶⁰ It is a haunting question and has led GRACE to include in its recommendations the urgent need for OCC to engage theologically with the topic of abuse, sexual assault, and other forms of trauma.

Allegations of Child Abuse by an OCC-Supported Missionary during the Moorhead Era

While reviewing materials on-site at Overlake, investigators found a summary of an investigation in Chile in 1994, transcripts from interviews with victims, letters from Overlake Elders, and accounts of internal discussion at Overlake about allegations of child abuse by a missionary serving with Iberoamerican Ministries. Following an internal investigation, this individual was fired from the ministry. This missionary was financially supported by Overlake and possibly a member of the congregation prior to his time in South America. The victim statements indicate that the males ranged in age from 14 to 20. The alleged perpetrator's exact age at the time is unknown but likely to be in his early 30s, and he was a married man. Six victims were identified but interviews with all the victims were not available. Four accounts are summarized below.²⁶¹

Victim # 1 - 'A Relationship' Santiago, Chile (Specific age unknown)

A "youth"²⁶² who lived in the perpetrator's neighborhood described a "relationship," that the perpetrator did not deny.²⁶³ The youth claimed that they had "sexual relations" for approximately two years.²⁶⁴

Victims # 2 & 3 - Fifth Region of Chile Missions

Other allegations were made by what the documents describe as "kids"²⁶⁵ from churches and a Christian school in what is currently the second most populated region of Chile.²⁶⁶ The allegations included improper touching, massaging, sharing a bed with the perpetrator, and verbal advances by the perpetrator.²⁶⁷ Below are quotes from victim interviews transcribed in 1994.

²⁶⁰ Victor Vieth, *When God Was a Victim*, RELIGION NEWS SERVICE, April 2, 2015.

²⁶¹ Summary of the [Name Redacted] Firing. August 23, 1994.

²⁶² Id.d

²⁶³ Id.d

²⁶⁴ Id.

²⁶⁵ Id.

²⁶⁶ Id.d, Appendix M1, p. 1.

²⁶⁷ Id. at 2.

Victim #2 - 16 at the time of the incident

During an in-country trip “there was a place for each of us to have our own bed and we stayed that way. He said that he was cold and instead of sleeping in separate beds let’s sleep in the same bed. And because I was so much younger, I didn’t really think anything of it. I never thought anything bad. At that time he began to be extremely loving toward me. He even gave me a kiss on the cheek. He hugged me, laying his leg over on top of me. That was when I began to notice something odd is going on. I didn’t want to comment on this to anybody, and I know that he is a man of God.”²⁶⁸

In another incident at the perpetrator’s house Victim # 2 shared, “He showed me a passage of scripture that talked about the love between Jonathan and David. He said, as you know, the scripture says that his love was sweeter than a woman’s love. What was strange to me is that he asked me what was going on in this...I was wondering why he asked me as it was a fairly complicated verse. This ended and it was time to go to sleep and I asked where is it I am going to sleep? He has in his house, lots of different rooms and I don’t really know his house well. He said that it would be much more comfortable and easier, why don’t we just sleep in the same bed? The same thing happened as before. This was Saturday and he wanted me to stay overnight for the services on Sunday. I told him that I couldn’t do that because we had our first services in the new church we were starting. And also because I just wanted to leave. From that point on I was never with him again.”²⁶⁹

Victim # 3 - 17 at the time of the incident

During a trip where the location is unclear, the victim said the alleged offender “began caressing my hand. I was laying on my back, looking up and he started to move closer to me and I just went rigid. I was really nervous. The only thing I wanted was that night to get over and to get out of there. He was laying on his back next to me and then he turned over toward me. Then he started to caress my chest. He said, “Since we’re now friends, I can show you my tenderness.” He rolled over and put his leg inside of (my) leg and began to caress me.”²⁷⁰

Victim # 4 - Maipu, Chile (17 or 18 at the time of the incident)

This witness account includes a translator. “[The Perpetrator] got a waterbed and he invited [Name redacted] for about four weeks in a row to sleep with him because it was

²⁶⁸ Id.

²⁶⁹ Id.

²⁷⁰ Id. at 5.

such a neat thing to enjoy together...After about the first 2-3 weeks he said, 'Why don't you come back and sleep in my bed and we can pray together,' and put his Bible on the bed. And then he would always take my hand and say, 'Let's pray and stay here and sleep with me.' On the third week, I was sleeping next to him and halfway through the night he kind of rolled on top of me and put his leg between and his arm all the way over [me]."²⁷¹

GRACE investigators made phone contact with the perpetrator and he agreed to speak to GRACE initially but never responded to email attempts to schedule an interview.²⁷² Overlake staff committed to sharing the information they had with appropriate law enforcement and to any ministries the individual may be part of, now or in the future. GRACE commends this decision on their part to actively engage now.

B. Crisis Response: 1998 - 2007

Rick Kingham transitioned from a national role at Promise Keepers to Senior Pastor at Overlake in the late fall of 1998 six months after Bob Moorhead resigned.²⁷³ In an early interview with the Seattle Times Kingham shared, "I do believe God has equipped me to be prepared for the particular place Overlake finds itself in now. I hope to see here an atmosphere of love, acceptance and forgiveness."²⁷⁴ It was estimated that the church had lost about 1,000 weekly attendees by the time Kingham took the helm.²⁷⁵ Interviews with witnesses reflected a church ready to carry on with its activity in the wake of the Moorhead crisis.

I think everybody at that point felt, this is a new day, a new beginning, ... but in those days, it was certainly a lot of transition as people were deciding did they want to stay with a new pastor...So it was certainly fluid and thousands did stay. When I was there, the church's attendance was, if I'm recalling properly, between 4,000 and 5,000 people on a Sunday. Again, it's been a while, but I think I recall that they used to put the numbers in the bulletin that they'd hand out.²⁷⁶

As introduced in the previous section, a letter from the Elder Board to the congregation a year and one day after Bob Moorehead resigned, outlined new policy changes including more visibility, better communication, a policy and procedure for bringing a grievance against a pastor, elder, or other leaders including automatic

²⁷¹ Id. at 7.

²⁷² Emails sent on April 15, 2023 and June 6, 2023.

²⁷³ *New Pastor Ready to Promote Healing at Overlake*, SEATTLE TIMES, November 10, 1998.

²⁷⁴ Id.

²⁷⁵ Id.

²⁷⁶ Transcript, p. 8.

suspension pending an investigation.²⁷⁷ In the same letter, the Elder Board acknowledged the spiritual gravity of Moorehead's wrongs and shared their desire to "bring closure to these matters so that we can move forward."²⁷⁸ The Elder Board concluded by sharing that they met with Moorehead to confront him and he rejected their appeal to take responsibility and move forward in a spirit of restoration.²⁷⁹

The work of the church continued but accountability for Moorehead's significant wrongdoing never came. The church made these 'key policy changes,'²⁸⁰ that still centered on protecting the reputation of the church in the moment and in the future. Making the church's reputation the point instead of the victim's needs or God's desire for repentance missed the mark and possibly set Overlake up for the patterns of misconduct to remerge.

In Danya Ruttenberg's new book, she identifies five stages in a process of repentance and repair: Naming and Owning Harm, Starting to Change, Restitution and Accepting Consequences, Apology, and Making Different Choices.²⁸¹ The Overlake Elder Board's response demonstrated elements of this process but their actions relied heavily on a perpetrator unwilling to take responsibility for his actions.²⁸² This focus and reliance on the perpetrator possibly cut short the five-stage process outlined above, thereby aborting critical actions for the victims of Moorehead's wrongdoings and the church's holistic health.

Criminal Child Abuse

Within five years after the Moorehead scandal, there was a string of child abuse crimes committed by church employees or regular volunteers. Public records indicate that JR Graves was convicted and served prison time for rape in the third degree of a child that attended Overlake in 2001.²⁸³ Graves was a longtime member and employee who frequently worked in the youth ministry. Eric Thorgerson was found guilty of two counts of child molestation of children that attended Overlake in December 2001.²⁸⁴ Finally, Patrick Autrey was found guilty of rape of a child in the third degree and sexual misconduct with a

²⁷⁷ Letter to Overlake Church, May 18, 1999.

²⁷⁸ Id.

²⁷⁹ Id.

²⁸⁰ Id.

²⁸¹ DANYA RUTTENBERG, ON REPENTANCE AND REPAIR: MAKING AMENDS IN AN UNAPOLOGETIC WORLD 26, 32,36,41, 43(2022).

²⁸² Letter to Overlake Church, May 18, 1999.

²⁸³ N. Brady, *Molestation Leads to Prison Time*, EAST SIDE JOURNAL, March 30, 2002.

²⁸⁴ Digistream, Public Records search accessed, April 4, 2023.

minor over the course of 2001 and 2002. This child also attended Overlake.²⁸⁵ Several witnesses recounted Graves being invited back to speak to Overlake youth leaders after his release from prison.²⁸⁶ He taught a seminar on “relational youth ministry.”²⁸⁷ These criminal acts occurred within the backdrop of a busy and booming church.

Sexual Situations

In addition to the criminal abuse, Overlake was impacted by other misconduct. One witness shared,

What happened while I was there though, was there continued to be issue after issue with sexual situations. I mean, it just was like thing after thing after thing, even in the early years when I'm there and I'm like, for a culture that is so... Because I think that even [Name redacted] the executive pastor had his own trauma from what happened, and then the aftermath of what happened of them being in the news and the churches getting on the local news channel saying, 'We're breaking relationship with Overlake.' All of that was so intense, and they were just trying to hold onto people and money to keep the church going. We had a very bloated staff, very inflated when I came. Almost every pastor had their own admin support person. I mean, all that shifted in the time, pretty quick. In the early years, they did some big layoffs.²⁸⁸

Without slowing down much, Overlake sidestepped the critical work outlined by Ruttenberg above. It must be noted that as a young nondenominational church, they did not have the advantages of maturity, material resources, and mutual support. In many ways, this impressively attended church was in a very isolated position.

From this position, restoration couldn't be nurtured. The leadership never acknowledged that theological concepts had been twisted to protect those in power, not the vulnerable.

The reforms made by the Elder Board became meaningless as the leadership still chose to protect the reputation of the church over internal gospel transformation. Finally, the pressures of purity culture grew without an open acknowledgment of how sexual situations had flourished without boundaries or effective accountability. One witness recounted a conversation that he had about Overlake at the time,

²⁸⁵ KidsLiveSafe.PeopleReport. (n.d.). Retrieved July 13, 2023, from https://www.kidslivesafe.com/personalinfocheck/index?gclid=Cj0KCQjwoK2mBhDzARIsADGbjerb6SibWEgedC99I7hj6yzD2RHq_MJuEyPOV1BNd-OI0bEI6IDCp1gaAgG0EALw_wcB.

²⁸⁶ Transcript, p. 8, 9.

²⁸⁷ Id.

²⁸⁸ Transcript, p. 9.

Unless Overlake gets on its knees, repents, and truly repents, and turns this issue of immorality with sexual misconduct is going to follow them and it will be the death of the church.²⁸⁹

The distance between the Moorehead scandal and the church's profile grew but the damage of his and newer sins was profound. The investigation did not reveal meaningful efforts to lead the OCC community in repentance, healing, and restoration with God and victims.

C. Second Generation: 2007 - 2020

Mike Howerton joined Overlake from Saddleback Church to help it transition youth into continued participation in the church in their early adulthood. This effort was very successful and the church's appreciation for Howerton's leadership grew into a Senior Pastor position. During Howerton's tenure there was notable progress made towards women being recognized and valued within top leadership and a sense of flattening of the formal organizational hierarchy that characterized the church in previous decades. Examples of this that emerged included ordaining women for the first time and efforts at leveling the pay scale between male and female staff.²⁹⁰ Many of the witnesses interviewed found a place within Overlake at the time as they participated in the student ministry, transitioned into leadership roles within the student ministry, and moved into more formal roles within the church or left altogether.

The interviews revealed an open and frequent presence of sexual expression and sexual content in these years. This expression and content often occurred within the technical boundaries of Overlake's policies, most notably not being alone with a student of either sex, but certainly did not represent the spirit of the Student Leaders Guide and the OCC Employment Handbook.²⁹¹ The Student Leaders Guide articulates an expectation of: "Living Above Reproach: Ministry without integrity is no ministry at all. In fact, it's destructive to the Kingdom. We are to live a life that leaves no room for speculation inside and outside the walls of the church."²⁹² The OCC Employment Handbook includes the following statement, "OCC is committed to providing a workplace that is free of verbal, physical and visual forms of harassment."²⁹³ Some examples of inappropriate talk that witnesses shared include:

²⁸⁹ Transcript, p. 5.

²⁹⁰ Transcript, p. 20, 21.

²⁹¹ Overlake Christian Church, Student Leader's Guide, 2014-2015. Page 12.

²⁹² Id.

²⁹³ Overlake Christian Church, Employment Handbook, 2021. Page 5.

He would tell us about when he did get married, some of the sexual acts that he would perform..and having those conversations and everything felt pretty graphic.²⁹⁴

I'm referring to how often the male pastors would talk about having sex with their wives on every surface in their house because they're married now, or just weird, uncomfortable comments like that, either from the stage or just in a small chatting setting. So I feel like there was a lot of inappropriate mention of that a lot. I think they were trying to be sex positive within a Christian culture by saying, sex is super awesome once you're married, but it was really too detailed and inappropriate.²⁹⁵

The misconduct shared by Individual A that is discussed in Section II (pages 3-6) occurred in this era. These experiences are examples that other witnesses describe as a "boys club,"²⁹⁶ and a "toxic culture."²⁹⁷ One witness shared, "...The participation and the coarse joking. I mean, this is the part where I'm like I know I participated. I didn't come anywhere near what they did, but it still feels like not who I'd want to be."²⁹⁸ Section II also outlines problematic applications of scriptural teaching and theology about sex. This trivialization of sexual dignity has had profound impacts on the emotional and spiritual lives of many witnesses and invited bad actors to push boundaries in a space that should be sacred.

The culture of church leadership embraced self-protection as an accepted value, which resulted in a tendency to downplay the gravity of violations.

I remember one time in a hallway it happened he grabbed [Name redacted]and said, "Man, you must be really working out." And [Name Redacted] standing right there was like, "Oh my goodness," and just kind of laughed. And I even said, "[Name Redacted], don't you find that a little, just a tinge inappropriate?" He is like, "Oh, come on, [Name redacted]." I'm like, "No, [Name Redacted], that's totally inappropriate. Completely inappropriate." That is a case closed case of sexual harassment in my mind.²⁹⁹

This culture also lacked accountability when issues were brought forward. One interviewee shared the following experience on the Overlake Student Ministries response to her abusive dating relationship with an intern:

²⁹⁴ Transcript, p. 5.

²⁹⁵ Transcript, p.7.

²⁹⁶ Transcript, p. 18.

²⁹⁷ Transcript, p. 29.

²⁹⁸ Id.

²⁹⁹ Transcript, p. 13.

So they told me that they would put him through all of these things, and I want to say six months later, he was back on as an intern and eventually got hired. And I'm not sure if he ever had to go do any of the other things that happened. And then I did not really get... Well, I didn't get... I had a mentor at the time that I think I met with once or twice about it all, but I really didn't get any of the resources that they had told me they would connect me with. And I remember feeling very hurt that this ex-boyfriend got so much patting and that they weren't really addressing anything with me. And then I definitely felt like a bit of a social outcast from then on out that I had to prove myself all over again.³⁰⁰

The impact of continuing not to act was articulated by one staff member witness/survivor,

Sin doesn't happen overnight. It was never dealt with. It was never fully addressed and say, okay, we had a problem with Pastor Moorehead that we never dealt with properly, and we never put that under the blood. We never asked God for forgiveness. We never acknowledged that the first part of healing is repentance. It isn't just, oh, well, we had an issue and let's just move on, which was the MO of the church. It was, well, we had an issue, we dealt with it, but let's just move on. No, no. We never repented. We never provided closure and restitution to the families that were [harmed]... And when I say restitution not in the form of even tangible finances. I'm talking about the ability for these families to have closure. Some of these families that were affected to this day are not around church. They have nothing to do with God. And that's the travesty of this whole situation is the person that they trusted, that was teaching and preaching the biblical truths, was the person that was, in fact, harming them. And so I think what was allowed to exist from the Bob Moorehead days carried all the way through. And that spirit of, I hate to even say it, the spirit of perversion, because that's what it was, the spirit of perversion. That spirit was left to fester. And without being checked, it was allowed in a church setting. And many people will share with you because that's exactly what it was. It was a spirit of perversion. ... I can only explain that it was allowed to exist.³⁰¹

Independent External Investigation of “discriminatory and/or retaliatory treatment”

Upon receiving a letter raising concerns about the treatment a former staff member received in the spring of 2021, Overlake, “engaged an independent external investigator to make factual determinations as to whether or not the preponderance of the evidence supports a finding

³⁰⁰ Transcript, p.11.

³⁰¹ Transcript, p. 10.

that OCC engaged in discriminatory and/or retaliatory treatment of [Name redacted] on the basis of sex and/or perceived disability.”³⁰² Overlake engaged in swift action and it should be noted they followed their policy on the engagement of independent investigators when an allegation is made against a church leader. The report articulates concerns that multiple staff had about senior staff’s actions towards two female co-workers and the outcry of one female co-worker when senior staff created an inappropriate situation at her home. It should be noted that none of the allegations or the report by the independent external investigator revealed criminal behavior.

The report contained six recommendations which the authors described as, “organizational opportunities.”³⁰³ One of the recommendations was “Transforming the perceived ‘boys’ club,’ culture.”³⁰⁴ The evidence of this boys’ club culture in the report can be summarized as a group of men making decisions about a woman on staff, dismissive patterns of women on staff’s concerns about colleagues and leaders, authoritarian responses in personnel matters, and a “long history of fact spinning and covering up scandals.”³⁰⁵ Earlier sections of this report demonstrate the boys’ club culture outside of the staff and leadership team at Overlake. It is important to restate that the Elder Board has been diversified and that Co-lead Pastors have been appointed since this time. These are strong indicators of a church seeking to reform this dynamic, but there is more work to do. Recommendations are included in the final section.

Other Allegations of Misconduct in this Era

Other concerning incidents and behaviors were unveiled through courageous testimony and comments made in response to the survey. The three categories of misconduct are emotional abuse, sexual harassment, and indecent liberties. GRACE also received survey comments about alleged past financial misconduct and, while GRACE brought this to the attention of OCC, investigating this was beyond the scope of the investigation.

Allegations of Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is a pattern whereby a person in a position of authority and/or trust uses that position to domineer and control others through behaviors such as shaming, dismissing, bullying, threatening, intimidating, humiliating, degrading, or insulting.³⁰⁶ Emotional abuse may include spiritual abuse, defined as abuse using the tools

³⁰² Holly, Wylam, Klein, . *Executive Summary of Factual Findings*. (2021). Privileged and confidential.

³⁰³ Id.

³⁰⁴ Id.

³⁰⁵ Id.

³⁰⁶ GRACE definition.

of religion to control and domineer. Like emotional abuse, spiritual abuse is typically understood as a pattern of behaviors with the goal of keeping a person under control and using them. Over the course of the investigation, witnesses described experiences with OCC staff or church practices/theology that included intimidation, shaming, and threats. The following are two examples witnesses shared as examples of shaming behavior by a leader at Overlake who at the time was twice the witnesses' age:

He asked me, well, that told me my shirt was inappropriate, and he told me to discuss it with one of my leaders or my mentors or something, because he wondered if there was a connection between that and my dad dying very young. I remember that distinctly. So it wasn't necessarily a sexual comment towards me, but it made me very uncomfortable and very ashamed.³⁰⁷

I went and told a leader, "I'm injured." No one did anything. Eventually, after advocating for myself, they took me to the ER and I had emergency surgery, but from that, there was just so many comments about my body, which I think really emphasizes the state of the culture, if that makes sense. The concern wasn't me as a student, if I was okay. It was all jokes. The first comment someone made to me was like, "Oh, well, good thing you can have sex now because my 'cherry' popped," which literally, that's not anatomically true but whatever. Things like that were the concern. Or [Staff Pastor Name Redacted] said, "How's your vagina?", which was not injured, but thank you for asking.³⁰⁸

Another witness shared an experience of threatening behavior after a report made to HR was shared with the staff member with whom they had a grievance.

He said, "Well, I'm just saying [church program] could take a drastic, drastic turn, and you might want to be aware that it has that potential." So almost like threatening, because, oh, you went and shared something. Now [church program] is on the chopping block. It was very shortly thereafter that [church program team] were informed that they were discontinuing [church program].³⁰⁹

Allegations of Sexual Harassment on Church Property

Sexual Harassment is defined by the Washington State Office of the Attorney General as behavior directed at you because of your gender, and can include unwelcome, sexually suggestive, or gender-based comments or jokes; unwelcome and repeated

³⁰⁷ Transcript, p. 9.

³⁰⁸ Transcript, p. 5.

³⁰⁹ Transcript, p. 15.

requests for dates; offensive gestures; inappropriate touching; or display of pornographic materials.”³¹⁰ Over the course of the investigation, witnesses described experiences with OCC staff that included sexually suggestive jokes and unwelcome inappropriate touching. One witness shared,

He was sitting across from me and I was eating a pickle, and he made a comment about how I was going to pound town on that pickle, and then made very direct eye contact with me to a point where I felt like I couldn't hold that eye contact. I needed to look away. And then I just was at a loss. How do I respond to that? He was making a joke, but it made me feel very, very uncomfortable.³¹¹

Other witnesses shared disturbing patterns of unwanted and inappropriate touching.

During the week, I would get a lot of intensity from him. So, almost like, as my therapist says it, more emotional abuse or emotional harassment. And then, in that room, he would trap me in this one corner, and then, would put his hands on me without consent or things of that nature. And it went on for probably like six months...I would hint at uncomfotability, but never speak up. So, I would hint to my boss at the time who was [Name redacted], and it would just get blown off. He didn't get let go until we went on a trip with [Name redacted] and [Name redacted].... They started to get the weird vibes that I had been experiencing, but in very different things. So, after that, he was let go. And then, once he was let go, I think the dam broke. So, that's when I went forward.³¹²

In this instance, the victim did receive assistance from OCC services once she requested it but the impact of this misconduct was clear.

Yeah, I think it ruined my life. To be honest, I don't know. It's hard. I think it's a little more personal because that guy then turned into a therapist who a friend of mine was seeing. So, it's a little more fresh these days. I think I still have PTSD, and I have to work through it all the time. It's really hard for me to be alone in rooms with men. I don't know. And like I'm a different person than I was before that happened. And I stayed in the ministry for two more years. And I only got out and can't step back in a church. So yeah, I am not the same person.³¹³

³¹⁰ Washington State Office of the Attorney General. (8/2/23). Retrieved from https://agportal-s3bucket.s3.amazonaws.com/uploadedfiles/Another/News/Press_Releases/DRAFT_v10_SHGuide.pdfh

³¹¹ Transcript, p. 10.

³¹² Transcript, p.6.

³¹³ Transcript, p.7.

A collective call for accountability and hope for change reverberated throughout several of the witnesses interviewed and a sense that the church had become a safe and respectful environment for all its members. A sampling of their statements follows.

I'm hopeful for the new elder team. I like how they have an email that if anyone has anything they need to talk to, they could send a note to that email. That could probably be the way that you can report abuse too. I just maybe *now* put those two together. I think we have a long way to go, but I have more hope that they wouldn't just lie about what happened and try to cover up. They would take steps to make sure each person involved would be heard.³¹⁴

This is the stuff that I think will help prevent future incidents and future trauma.³¹⁵

Seems as though they're taking it seriously now and that hopefully church culture has shifted pretty significantly in the last 10 years.³¹⁶

Allegations of Indecent Liberties of an Adult on Church Property

Washington State Code defines indecent liberties as illegal behavior, "A person is guilty of indecent liberties when he or she knowingly causes another person to have sexual contact with him or her or another: (a) By forcible compulsion."³¹⁷ It is often charged as a Class A or Class B felony.³¹⁸ In an interview with a former staff member, an incident that occurred in the men's bathroom between himself and a male colleague at Overlake was shared:

So I mean, there's no pretty way to say that, but I was standing at a urinal and [Name redacted] was in there, and he put his chin on my shoulder and whispered in my ear, "You know what, I like to make people feel really uncomfortable." And I said, "Okay." I'm like, haha, whatever. And that was already inappropriate, but he is like, "Just when you think I'm going to stop, it's going to go a little bit more." And his hand was running and I was using the bathroom, so my hands were not... So I turned with more of my body to prevent him from reaching all the way around. But he reached all the way around and just tapped my penis, underneath actually my penis, not like in front because I was peeing, but he tapped underneath it and he is like, "Just when you think it's done, I had to go one bit more." And I was speechless at that point. I

³¹⁴ Transcript, p. 10.

³¹⁵ Transcript, p. 19.

³¹⁶ Transcript, p. 46

³¹⁷ Washington State Code 9A.44.100. <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=9A.44.100> (Accessed 8/15/23)

³¹⁸ Id.

was pretty shocked that occurred. And so he walked out, washed his hand, walked out, and I remember walking by his office later, and I said, "[Name redacted]," that was so inappropriate on so many levels. And he's like, "Oh, come on," haha. Like, "Laugh it off. It's funny." And I reported that to HR.³¹⁹

The witness went on to share that the perpetrator was told that the witness had reported the actions to HR by senior leadership and confronted him later about it.³²⁰

With the permission of the witness, GRACE investigators reported this incident to Overlake, and together with Overlake staff reported it to Redmond City Police. In the course of these reports, investigators identified another former adult male OCC employee who had experienced sexual misconduct by the alleged perpetrator. GRACE reached out to the individual who confirmed the information, but the individual chose not to be interviewed. Another witness described an instance while working for Overlake, "One staff member grabbed a broom of some sort, and the other took a picture of the other staff member shoving the broom handle up my clothed butt."³²¹

D. Current Day

In November 2020, Neely McQueen and Pat Swanson transitioned into Co-Lead positions.³²² They both had extensive experience, and the announcement came with the excitement of this historical moment in the life of the church. Some feedback on this decision in a Facebook post from November 16th, 2020 includes:

Excellent choice, well done elders! I love both of them. They have a different teaching style that is very complementary to each other. Very excited to be part of the new chapter of OCC.³²³

Amazing news!!!!!! What an incredible pair.³²⁴

³¹⁹ Transcript, p. 15,16.

³²⁰ Id. at 16.

³²¹ Transcript, p. 30.

³²² Transcript, p. 4.

³²³ Facebook post Overlake Christian Church, November 16, 2020.

<https://www.facebook.com/OverlakeChurch/photos/pb.100064841856744.-2207520000./10157602627026024/?type=3>

³²⁴ Id.

Such amazing news!!! Congrats Overlake on so much talent in your head leadership roles! The best news!! Honored to be under your leadership and on your team, Pat & Neely! So excited for all that's to come - for everyone, everywhere!³²⁵

Pastor Neely and Pastor Pat moved into senior leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic that impacted faith communities across the world. They weren't just finding their feet in new roles but grappling with what church looks like when the gathering in-person model had been made unavailable. In spite of this challenge, Pastor Neely, Pastor Pat, and the staff and elders of Overlake committed to the high values of:

We **BELONG** to Jesus and to one another.

- **Bravery:** We step BRAVELY into our work as a community.
- **Equity:** We commit to EQUITABLE work & valuing others.
- **Learning:** We LEARN from each other & grow continually.
- **Ownership:** We take OWNERSHIP in God's mission through the Church.
- **Nurturing:** We NURTURE relationships by celebrating blessings & sharing burdens together.
- **Giftng:** We affirm spiritual gifts & calling in ourselves & others.³²⁶

These God-honoring values become critical anchors in the holy work of facing wrong-doing, engaging in repentance, and waiting for God to restore communities to His vision. It is important to note that no allegations of misconduct emerged from the investigation since Pastor Neely and Pastor Pat have been Co-Leads at Overlake. However, they and the board have the responsibility and opportunity to reckon with Overlake's past and lead a process that embodies the values identified above.

It is painful to face the reform of a church culture that your fingerprints are on, but in this sensitive place, God will be faithful. While GRACE recognizes that the past remains unchangeable, Overlake's future lies in the hands of its Elders, staff, volunteers, and congregants. Together, they will chart the course of the church moving forward. GRACE firmly believes that Overlake possesses the capability and resources to glean valuable insights from past experiences, leading to growth and progress. A pivotal aspect of this journey involves embracing the opportunity to stand with the church and community during times of suffering, striving to prevent abuse and respond with best practices whenever necessary. This endeavor will require time and dedication, extending beyond our limited existence on this earth. Nonetheless, as a part of the global Christian community, Overlake must be committed to steering the church towards a path that fosters

³²⁵ Id.

³²⁶ Overlake Christian Church Vision & Values. Retrieved from <https://www.occ.org/vision-values>

trauma-informed practices and unwavering vigilance, all in accordance with the teachings of Christ.

V. Assessment of Response, Protocols, and Culture

As described in Part II, specifically in the sections "Methodology" and "Scope of the Investigation" and the Engagement Agreement with OCC, GRACE was contracted to investigate several circumstances and dynamics. "These include determining whether OCC had any prior knowledge of the allegations, and if so, how OCC's organizational culture influenced its response to the allegations and subsequent actions taken. The investigation aims to assess the information received by OCC, their handling of that information, including their response to the allegations, and how their response aligns with best practices, Scriptural values, and SAMHSA's Six Principles of Trauma-Informed Practice. Additionally, GRACE may evaluate the existing safety protocols regarding behavioral misconduct and reporting, as well as the administrative environment and community culture within OCC, and how these factors may impact issues related to behavioral misconduct within the organization."³²⁷

The analysis conducted in this context incorporates the six principles of a trauma-informed approach developed by the National Center for Trauma-Informed Care: Safety, Trustworthiness and Transparency, Peer Support, Collaboration and Mutuality, Empowerment, Voice and Choice, and Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues. It is worth noting that these principles are also evident within biblical principles.³²⁸

Safety

In order for an organization to foster a safe environment, it is crucial that both staff and members of the congregation, regardless of age, feel physically and psychologically protected. This entails ensuring a secure physical setting and promoting interpersonal interactions that cultivate a sense of safety. Giving importance to the understanding of safety as defined by those being served is a key priority.

It is evident that Overlake Christian Church has invested thought in developing child protection policies, and their practices regarding access to young children appear to be carefully considered. For example, when investigators were on-site at the church they were oriented to a robust child check-in procedure. Everyone who had worked in the nursery, children's ministry, or student ministry could articulate appropriate protective factors and

³²⁷ GRACE, Scope of Work Overlake Christian Church, 2023.

³²⁸ ANDREA CLEMENTS, THE TRAUMA INFORMED CHURCH: THE TRAUMA INFORMED CHURCH WALKING TOWARD FLOURISHING, (2023).

some training on them. Overlake also has commendably chosen to hold their pastoral staff to a higher standard around reporting concerns about a minor's safety than the law in Washington requires at the time of this report.³²⁹

At the same time, the investigation uncovered evident gaps and potential areas for improvement. The primary gap identified in regards to safety for Overlake is the unfinished accountability and repentance for the sins perpetrated from Moorehead, to criminal child abuse and sexual harassment, and the misconduct that occurred on the church property. In the absence of righteous dealings in these places, sexual misconduct has continued to pervasively flourish even if it was in less violent ways. Proverbs 17:15 instructs, "Acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent - the Lord detests them both."³³⁰ Again, we are reminded in Genesis 4:6-7, "Why are you so angry? Why do you look so dejected? You will be accepted for what you do that is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you."³³¹ For Overlake to be a safer place it must first be a place that pursues righteousness for historical wrongs by those in authority. OCC needs to address the difficulties surrounding disclosure within an organizational context, especially when it involves misconduct by individuals in positions of influence within the church.

The church should consider the following recommendations to cultivate an environment that promotes more effective ministry by honoring God, fulfilling their responsibilities, and prioritizing the safeguarding of the vulnerable, even if it requires personal sacrifice. This involves seeking collaboration with experts and valuing the insights and recommendations of individuals who have experienced danger or threats within the OCC. To this end, GRACE's recommendations are:

- Develop an active child abuse prevention and care ministry that includes bible studies and sermons

In this assessment, GRACE did not find any evidence of sermons, Bible studies, or any sort of proactive ministry at OCC to address the sin of child maltreatment. This, of

³²⁹ Washington Code **RCW 74.34.020**

³³⁰ Proverbs 17:15 (New International Version).

³³¹ Genesis 4:6-7 (New International Version).

course, is not unique to OCC,³³² but the church needs to fully grasp the scope of child abuse and realize its impact on every aspect of ministry.³³³

The Bible is replete with accounts of physical and sexual violence and the result of trauma. The Bible makes it clear that even faithful leaders are prone to commit or look away from this sin. Although the Bible describes Lot as a “righteous” man (Pet. 2:7), he nonetheless offers his own daughter to be sexually assaulted (Gen. 19:7-8). On two occasions, Abraham protects himself by exposing his wife to the possibility of sexual abuse, and his son Isaac falls prey to the same sin (Gen. 12:10-20; 20:1-18; 26:1-11). David sexually exploited a woman and murdered her husband (2 Samuel 11). David’s son Amnon raped Tamar and then “hated her with intense hatred” (2 Samuel 13:14-15). As a result, Tamar was left “weeping aloud” and forced to live as a “desolate woman” (2 Samuel 13:19-20). All of this made King David “furious,” but he took no action and the wickedness in his family expanded (2 Samuel 13:23-38).

Each of these accounts, and so many others, offer rich texts to discuss the sins of violence and sexual assault. Even so, the potentially powerful lessons in these accounts are often distorted to make the victims responsible for the offenses committed against them. Seminary professor John Schuetze analyzed 25 Bible commentaries on the sexual exploitation of Bathsheba and found only five described Bathsheba as a victim.³³⁴ Other Bible commentaries describe Bathsheba as an “unprotesting partner,” an “equally guilty woman,” and that she submitted to the King’s exploitation “without any hesitation and offered no resistance.”³³⁵ One commentary even contends that if Bathsheba had been

³³² One study of Protestant churches found that although child protection policies increased the chance for engaging in child protection practices, only 41% of these churches addressed child abuse in worship services. Jeanette Harder & Kristina Haynie, *Child Protection Practices in Mennonite Church USA Congregations*, 38 JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH 248, 256 (2012).

³³³ In a study commissioned by the Southern Baptist Convention, the nation’s largest Protestant community, the authors of the report concluded:

Sexual abuse in the SBC is an epidemic powered by a culture of our own making. The work of the Study Group will not stop this epidemic right away. It takes years of purposeful work to change the culture of indifference and develop a cure for such a poison. CARING WELL: A REPORT FROM THE SBC SEXUAL ABUSE ADVISORY GROUP 5 (2019).

³³⁴ John D. Schuetze, *Bathsheba and the Nature of David’s Sin*, 116(4) WISCONSIN LUTHERAN QUARTERLY 243 (2019). See also, Victor I. Vieth, *A Godly Response to Abuse within a Christian Institution* in CSB LIFE COUNSEL BIBLE 379-380 (2023) (applying the lessons from the sexual exploitation of Bathsheba and the murder of her husband to modern day child abuse scandals).

³³⁵ John D. Schuetze, *Bathsheba and the Nature of David’s Sin*, 116(4) WISCONSIN LUTHERAN QUARTERLY 243 (2019).

“mindful of her matrimonial fidelity” perhaps the King would not have sexually exploited her.³³⁶ None of this is supported in the text itself. As Professor Schuetze writes:

The account places all of the blame on David and none on Bathsheba. He sees her, he lusts after her, he inquires about her, he sends people to get her, he sleeps with her. When he is done, he sends her home—used and abused. Nine months later when Nathan confronts David with his sin, he lays the blame solely on David, not on David and Bathsheba.³³⁷

As this one example demonstrates, the text accurately conveys the brutality that those in power can inflict on those without. The Bible commentaries cited by Schuetze illustrate how frequently teachers in the church re-write scripture to cast blame on the victimized. This, and so many other lessons, are waiting to be mined, and GRACE urges OCC to be proactive in doing so.³³⁸

Since not every survivor or congregant will participate in a study of the Bible, it is also critical to address the subject of abuse from the pulpit in sermons or other messaging. A trauma-informed pastor can draw out many critical lessons from sacred texts that can be of benefit to those who have been maltreated and to those who care for those who are suffering. Describing the church’s failure to preach on the many accounts of abuse in the scripture, and the impact of her own discovery of these texts, one survivor writes:

It is not as if sexual abuse is new to Christianity. Indeed, the Bible includes many texts in which rape and sexual abuse are explicit, and other texts where such behavior is implied. Yet such texts rarely find themselves included in lectionaries, or when they are, the abuse tends to be overlooked by preachers by placing the focus elsewhere. As a result, for people of faith these texts told stories with which they might resonate, but they are texts which are unfamiliar. Discovering these biblical texts for myself was in some ways a #MeToo moment, in that I saw myself not on the periphery of the faithful but as one whose experiences were shared with the women and men of faith recorded in Scripture.³³⁹

³³⁶ Id. at 244.

³³⁷ Id. at 246, 247.

³³⁸ As an example of the potential power of a sermon series on child maltreatment, see Jenna Barnett, *Let There Be Light*, July 2019, SoJOURNERS.

³³⁹ Beth A. Crisp, *Jesus: A Critical Companion in the Journey to Moving on from Sexual Abuse*, in JAYME R. REAVES, DAVID TOMBS, & ROCIO FIGUEROA, *WHEN DID WE SEE YOU NAKED? JESUS AS A VICTIM OF SEXUAL ABUSE* 249, 250 (2021). See M. Leonard, “*I did what I was directed to do but he didn’t touch me*”: *The impact of being a victim of internet offending*, 16(2), *JOURNAL OF SEXUAL AGGRESSION*, 249-256 (2010). This study focuses on how difficulty developing context increases the risk of developing PTSD

Professor Beth Crisp contends the “church needs theologians to actively engage with the theological questions of those who sit in the pews and may have no formal theological education.”³⁴⁰ To this end, she quotes former Anglican Bishop Alison Taylor who said “Ordinary non-academic Christians need to hear how they can place the tragedy of institutional child sexual abuse in churches into the story of God and his people and their ways in the world.”³⁴¹

Bishop Taylor’s comments about fitting experiences of child abuse “into the story of God” is an astute observation that has support in research. Trauma impacts the body and the brain at multiple levels. As a result of abuse, memories of trauma may not be encoded like other memories but are “frozen and wordless.”³⁴² When survivors of trauma were asked to describe their experiences while receiving an MRI, researchers found the speech areas of the brain were impacted thus impairing the ability to “put thoughts and feelings into words.”³⁴³ Since it is “difficult for survivors to make meaning of their trauma because of the non-narrative, plot-less form their memories take,”³⁴⁴ it is possible that sermons about “the story of Jesus, his death and resurrection” can provide a framework for processing experiences of abuse and to aid in healing or otherwise coping with trauma.³⁴⁵

Professor Beth Crisp writes:

One of the powerful moments in dealing with my own experiences of sexual abuse came as I listened to the passion narrative on Palm Sunday more than 20 years ago...The abuse suffered by Jesus was not the same as what I had endured, but at the that time I could see in him an ally who understood some of the consequences of sexual abuse. In particular, Jesus was someone who had experienced repeated rejection and denial of his humanity, rather than being treated with the respect which one might contend is a human right.³⁴⁶

If, though, the “stories of God” are to be helpful and not triggering to survivors, pastors will need to grow their knowledge of trauma research and incorporate these studies into how they speak of abuse. This may include providing congregants with a warning when a sermon may include graphic content, and to be

³⁴⁰ Id. at 253.

³⁴¹ Id. at 253.

³⁴² JUDITH HERMAN, *TRAUMA & RECOVERY* 37 (2015).

³⁴³ BESSEL VAN DER KOLK, *THE BODY KEEPS THE SCORE: BRAIN, MIND, AND BODY IN THE HEALING OF TRAUMA* 43 (2014).

³⁴⁴ Timothy C. Bourman, *Trauma Sensitivity as a Heuristic for the Lutheran Preacher*, 118(3) *WISCONSIN LUTHERAN QUARTERLY* 199, 208 (2021).

³⁴⁵ Id.

³⁴⁶ Beth A. Crisp, *Jesus: A Critical Companion in the Journey to Moving on from Sexual Abuse*, in JAYME R. REAVES, DAVID TOMBS, & ROCIO FIGUEROA, *WHEN DID WE SEE YOU NAKED? JESUS AS A VICTIM OF SEXUAL ABUSE* 249, 251 (2021).

ready to provide support when delivering a sermon that addresses child abuse or other difficult subjects.³⁴⁷

- Conduct annual child abuse prevention month activities.

Every year, thousands of churches or other communities of faith participate in Children’s Sabbath, a program initiated by the Children’s Defense Fund, to raise awareness of the needs of children.³⁴⁸ Some churches have a Children’s Sabbath in their own place of worship and others make it a community-wide, multi-faith event. The CDF has a number of free resources to assist in planning a Children’s Sabbath. Other churches celebrate “Blue Sunday” and set aside a Sunday each April during National Child Abuse Prevention Month to pray for maltreated children and to otherwise engage in activities to raise awareness of the suffering of children and to promote prevention. The Blue Sunday website³⁴⁹ also has resources to assist churches in planning for this event and otherwise becoming proactive in responding to child abuse and neglect. Although participation in these annual events is critical, the church should regularly include maltreated children in its communal prayers as a reminder of their suffering and the urgency to care for the “least of these.”

- Provide body safety education for parents/caregivers and children/students involved in Overlake’s Kid’sTown and Student Ministries.

With respect to implementing a body or personal safety program for both parents and youth, this might be particularly helpful in reducing the risk that future OCC youth group leaders will engage in inappropriate sexual conversations and increasing the possibility of healthy dialogue on this topic. Research shows that parents know very little about child sexual abuse, that they subscribe to a number of myths about abuse, that few parents discuss sexual abuse prevention with their children, and those who do often give inaccurate information suggesting, for example, that perpetrators are often socially isolated.³⁵⁰

In general, young children “report minimal knowledge of sexual abuse and self-protection skills.”³⁵¹ Many young children believe abuse is their fault, that they should

³⁴⁷ Timothy C. Bourman, *Trauma Sensitivity as a Heuristic for the Lutheran Preacher*, 118(3) WISCONSIN LUTHERAN QUARTERLY 199, 218 (2021).

³⁴⁸ <https://www.childrensdefense.org/childrens-sabbath-celebration/>

³⁴⁹ <https://www.bluesunday.org/blue-sunday-day-of-prayer>

³⁵⁰ Sandy K. Wuterle and Maureen C. Kenny, *Primary Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse: Child and Parent Focused Approaches*, in KEITH L. KAUFMAN, *THE PREVENTION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE: A PRACTITIONER’S SOURCEBOOK* 107, 109 (2010) citing David Finkelhor, *Prevention of Sexual Abuse Through Educational Programs Directed Toward Children*, 120 PEDIATRICS 640, 644 (2007).

³⁵¹ Sandy K. Wuterle and Maureen C. Kenny, *Primary Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse: Child and Parent Focused Approaches*, in KEITH L. KAUFMAN, *THE PREVENTION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE: A PRACTITIONER’S SOURCEBOOK* 107, 109 (2010)

not report secret touching and, if they wanted to report, didn't know how to.³⁵² However, researchers have found that "when provided with teaching materials" parents and others can empower children to recognize and report abuse.³⁵³ Although it is always the responsibility of adults to protect children, personal safety training can aid children in communicating their need for protection to a trusted grown-up. There are a number of personal safety programs and resources that can aid in this instruction.³⁵⁴

As part of personal safety education GRACE believes OCC should assign an employee to periodically check in with youth and parents to make sure they are comfortable with a particular group leader and that there are no violations of the policies. This will give youth and parents an opportunity to discuss any concerns. It may also be a means by which to grow the skills of the group leader or to detect leaders who are particularly strong.

In addition to Bible studies, sermons, personal safety education for youth and parents, and community engagement through annual events, GRACE recommends OCC:

- Develop a communications plan about the process of responding to this report and sharing it and updates with the congregation, email list, and social media following clearly and regularly.
- Staff and Elder training on the 'Basics of Grooming,' by an organization like [Darkness to Light](#), [GRACE](#) or [RAINN](#).
- Staff and Elder skill development in the specifics of grooming involving clergy.
- Staff and Elder Training on 'Trauma 101,' by an organization like [GRACE](#) or [Trauma Informed Churches](#).
- Staff and Elder Training on 'Bystander Intervention.'³⁵⁵
- Invite the voices of survivors of misconduct as youth members at OCC to help revise the Student Ministries Protection Plan and Volunteer Guidelines.
- Regular (at least annually) Mandated Reporting training through the Washington Department of Children and Families for Elders, Staff, and all other ministry leaders.

Trustworthiness & Transparency

³⁵² Sandy K. Wuterle and Maureen C. Kenny, *Primary Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse: Child and Parent Focused Approaches*, in KEITH L. KAUFMAN, *THE PREVENTION OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE: A PRACTITIONER'S SOURCEBOOK* 107, 109 (2010)

³⁵³ *Id.* at 113.

³⁵⁴ For instance, the Jacob Wetterling Resource Center has a program called "Empower Me", <https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.zeroabuseproject.org/victim-assistance/jwrc/&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1694468463608518&usg=AOvVaw12jxmFZTwUUTLlpMdQFzjSee> also JUSTIN S. HOLCOMB & LINDSEY A. HOLCOMB, *GOD MADE ALL OF ME: A BOOK TO HELP CHILDREN PROTECT THEIR BODIES* (2015).

³⁵⁵ The Church Council of Greater Seattle has held these trainings in the past and could be a good resource.

One current leader shared that creating a culture of trustworthiness and transparency involves conducting organizational operations and making decisions in a manner that fosters trust among congregants, staff members, and other individuals involved in the organization.³⁵⁶ Through interviews with past staff, current staff, and volunteer leaders at OCC, certain recurring patterns were identified. These patterns included a consistent failure to provide follow-up or feedback to relevant parties after concerns or issues were raised, and a strict control over information that could potentially challenge the reputation of charismatic leadership, often conflated with protecting the reputation of the church or its charismatic leaders.

All individuals have the opportunity to experience transformative mercy (as mentioned in Proverbs 28:13 and Psalm 32:3-5), cultivate deeper Christ-centered relationships (referencing Ephesians 4:25), and continually seek personal liberation (Psalm 139:23-24). Through interviews with specific current leaders, a sincere desire and commitment to restore and promote trustworthiness and transparency at Overlake were expressed. In addition to the previously mentioned suggestions, the following recommendations are proposed for the church's consideration.

- Apologize to victims of sexual assault, sexual abuse, misconduct, and spiritual abuse. Craft the planning of these interactions with local trauma experts.
- Consider using the liturgy and principles outlined in [A Church Called Tov](#) by Scott McKnight³⁵⁷
- Hold communal spaces to process historical patterns that compromised trustworthiness and transparency, and pursue communal repentance.

Peer Support & Mutual Support

Peer support and mutual self-help play a crucial role in fostering a sense of safety and hope, building trust, promoting collaboration, and utilizing personal narratives and lived experiences to facilitate recovery and healing. The term “peers” pertains to individuals who have personally experienced trauma or, in the case of children, may refer to family members who are essential caregivers in their healing journey. Peers are also commonly referred to as “trauma survivors.”

During the investigation, two main challenges to the implementation of peer support at Overlake were uncovered. The first challenge is the recurring pattern of downplaying misconduct and abuse. The second challenge was the overemphasis on

³⁵⁶ Transcript, p. 5

³⁵⁷ LAURA BARRINGER & SCOT MCKNIGHT, [A CHURCH CALLED TOV: FORMING A GOODNESS CULTURE THAT RESISTS ABUSES OF POWER AND PROMOTES HEALING](#), (2020).

protecting the reputation of charismatic leadership and the lack of accountability for their behavior, which undermined the concept of peer support at OCC. These patterns are identified by Dr. Jennifer Freyd as part of institutional betrayal and the DARVO principle often employed by institutions in similar situations —Deny, Attack, and Reverse the Victim and Offender. Historically, the church repeated and constructed narratives aimed at discrediting victims and treating alleged offenders as the aggrieved party. This dynamic makes the concept of peer support impossible without a philosophical shift.

Restoration is attainable in situations where dignity has been compromised in order to protect reputation, as highlighted in Philippians 2:3. When voices have been ignored for the sake of convenience, offering a platform for those voices can lead to positive transformation. Furthermore, when interests have been narrowly focused on individual concerns, it is possible to strive for a broader sense of goodness, as emphasized in Philippians 2:4.

Interviews revealed the following sentiments related to peer support.

I don't think any apology is too late. And we know it's late, but if you would like some help through this, it's like Overlake would pay for counseling, Plus. Is there anything we can do for you?³⁵⁸

I think as a congregant I want to be part of a church who would own up to what people have done and try to make it right as best as I could, or as best as they could. My guess about how the non-church community would respond is, there's another church that has done something wrong, and they're now, many, many years later, apologizing for it, potentially too little, too late, I would guess that there might be some backlash. But there also might be people who recognize, well hey, even though a lot of them are not there anymore, they're still taking ownership.³⁵⁹

Recommendations for the church include:

- Apologize publicly to the survivors of abuse by Bob Moorehead and explain why you are doing this now
- Elders and staff training on dismantling toxic cultures, typical dynamics of disclosure of sexual harassment, assault, and abuse, including the normalization of delayed disclosures.

³⁵⁸ Transcript, p. 12.

³⁵⁹ Transcript, p. 7, 8.

- Connect with peer support groups such as Empower Survivors (CSA) and Restored Voices Collective (adult clergy sexual abuse) to include survivor perspectives and lived experiences in decision-making processes.

Collaboration and Mutuality

Collaboration and mutuality signify the essence of partnership and the equalization of power dynamics between the staff and the congregation, as well as among all levels of organizational staff. This approach recognizes that healing takes place within relationships and through the meaningful exchange of power and involvement in decision-making processes. Inequitable application of policies, processes, and information sharing often emerged when in the interest of top leadership or those close to them. What entitlement and arrogance have attacked, God seeks to restore (Psalm 10). Recommendations include:

- Promote equitable accountability to policies, shared values, and decisions regardless of role or association.
- Reach out and ask trusted counsel outside of the church for help processing this report and pursuing God’s design for Overlake.
- Forge active partnerships with local and regional churches that can offer prayer support, wise counsel, and encouragement to Overlake.
- Engage in shared decision-making that reflects full participation, mutual understanding, inclusive solutions, and shared responsibility.

Empowerment, Voice and Choice

Empowerment, voice and choice are vital aspects embraced by churches that recognize the significance of power differentials and the historical marginalization of members, often leading to a lack of voice, limited choices, and even coercive treatment. Recognizing and depending on the larger family of Christ outside the ministry of Overlake can celebrate this remarkable reality and offer more profound ministry. No single faith community is meant to fulfill every need of a person at all times (1 Corinthians 12:4-11). In light of these considerations, the following recommendations are proposed for the church to consider:

- Consistently make mandated reports to the appropriate entities for concerns about children/minors and vulnerable adults.
- Consult with reporting victim regarding communication and logistics relating to this report
- Explore Matthew 4 with an emphasis on godly use of power and temptation of its misuse

- In partnership with willing survivors, create a process that provides a clear pathway for adult survivors of misconduct to report outside of the leadership structure and supports their choice of healing services.
- Prioritize inclusion of survivors on care teams, safeguarding teams, and planning teams
- Explore paths of funding for mental health services for survivors of abuse that occurred on church property or were perpetrated by staff, elders, members, or attenders of Overlake.

Cultural, Historical, & Gender Issues

The church aims to actively overcome cultural stereotypes and provide equitable access to responsive services. One relevant issue discussed previously in this report is the unique dynamics and historical prevalence of male victimization at Overlake. Another widespread issue described by witnesses is the gender imbalance of responsibility created by a theology of purity culture. Overcoming these issues involves incorporating policies, protocols, and processes that are responsive to the needs of individuals currently served by Overlake, while also recognizing and addressing the historical trauma of those within and outside of the church.

There is a powerful story in 2 Kings 22 & 23 when the Torah was rediscovered under rubble during Josiah's reign. The scroll was taken to a female prophet named Huldah who interpreted the scroll in what some biblical scholars believe to be the first recognizable act in the long process of canon formation by authenticating a document as being God's word.³⁶⁰ Chapter 23 outlines the reformation across the community based on engagement with the Torah under Josiah's reign. There was literally a cultural revolution in the nation. This level of reformation is still available to Christians today. GRACE encourages Overlake to consider what purposeful engagement with scripture, prayerful dependence and patient expectation in God's faithfulness will look like in the church's future culture.

Additionally, there is biblical precedent for someone taking responsibility for the sins of the dead. There is a limited opportunity for Overlake leadership and elders to reverse the trajectory set decades ago now. To truly align with Jesus's example and fulfill God's original intention for all creation to thrive, particularly the marginalized and vulnerable, as guided by Jeremiah 22:3-5, the church must prioritize righteousness. With this in mind, the following recommendations are proposed for the church to consider:

³⁶⁰ Jonathan Stökl, *Deborah, Huldah, and Innibana: Constructions of Female Prophecy in the Ancient Near East and the Hebrew Bible*, 6(3), JOURNAL OF ANCIENT JUDAISM 320-334 (2015).

- Explore Christ-like processes for receiving criticism and developing a culture of listening.
- Incorporate faith-based abuse prevention strategies that focus on the uniqueness of male victimization and dismantling assumptions of purity culture, including how teaching on moral codes may impact vulnerability to abuse and justify silencing survivors.
- Seek training and regular accountability in the dynamics of sexual harassment and abuse in a Christian workplace and regularly assess the entire staff in a confidential way on progress.
- Devotion to accountability at all leadership levels

GRACE also recommends that OCC have difficult conversations that may necessitate even deeper changes. To this end, GRACE recommends OCC:

- Explore pragmatic actions towards a radical culture shift around the stronghold of sexual misconduct at Overlake

As reflected in this report, there was sexual misconduct, even crimes committed by former OCC leaders, some of which occurred in the building itself. These were not isolated instances and they have impacted the physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of the victims of these offenses. For some of these victims, it is triggering to set foot on the grounds of OCC.

Given this reality, it is critical that OCC consider every possible avenue for transformation, including the church facility itself.³⁶¹ One radical possibility is to sell the property and start anew in perhaps a smaller facility better suited to the current number of congregants. Another possibility is to make OCC a place of healing reflected in all its leaders say and do. This can be accomplished, in part, by adhering to the SAMSHA principles for trauma-informed care. It may also be appropriate to create a memorial for everyone who was abused at OCC as a reminder that Godly institutions and leaders can stray far away from Christ's command to care for the "least of these."

After surviving the Holocaust, Corrie Ten Boom transformed a former concentration camp into a ministry of healing. This included a physical transformation, as simple as replacing barbed wire with window boxes blooming with flowers.³⁶² The Holy

³⁶¹ Architecture and design can be tools for a trauma-informed environment and approach. For more information on trauma-informed architecture and design see generally: [Empathy in Architecture: Using Trauma-Informed Design to Promote Healing](#) (2020); [5 Principles of Trauma-Informed Design](#) (2022); Ceridwen Owen and James Crane, [Trauma-Informed Design of Supported Housing: A Scoping Review through the Lens of Neuroscience](#), 19(21), INT. J. ENVIRON. RES. PUBLIC HEALTH (2022).

³⁶² LARRY LOFTIS, *THE WATCHMAKER'S DAUGHTER*, 262-263 (2023).

Spirit knows best how to transform OCC into a ministry of healing for those wounded by the church's sins—a transformation GRACE believes is already underway. If OCC humbly relies on the Lord's guidance, there is no telling what God may be able to do.

- Consider coming under the authority of a denomination or other structured oversight body

Although there are strengths to being a non-denominational church, there are also fewer checks and balances than there are when a church is part of a denomination. Of course, denominations can and have failed to protect children and other vulnerable persons. Accordingly, GRACE does not offer this suggestion as a proposal without risk, but one worthy of prayerful consideration.

Conclusion

In the Gospel of Mark we are told of Jesus taking a child in His arms and saying “Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me” (Mark 9:36-37). Jesus is referencing ancient Jewish customs involving messengers. Given the distances over which communications had to be brought, the bearers of news were to be treated with great respect—a respect equal to that accorded to the person sending the message.³⁶³ Through this analogy, Jesus is contending we should receive a child as Christ's “chosen representative.”³⁶⁴ Stated differently, our treatment of children says everything about how we regard Jesus and, since Christians regard Jesus as God, our treatment of children reflects our attitude toward our Creator.³⁶⁵

In the history of Overlake Christian Church, children have not always been treated well. As reflected in this report, some have been subjected to a toxic sexual purity that continues to negatively impact them. Some children, as well as adults, were abused or harassed. When these victims made an outcry, OCC often did not respond in a manner befitting an organization that bears the name “Christian.”

Although the past cannot be changed, God has given OCC the gift of the future and an opportunity to witness its faith to survivors of abuse and to the watching community through repentance and concrete actions that may ease the wounds of yesteryear and prevent future pain. There is evidence OCC has already begun to move in this direction. The

³⁶³ VICTOR I. VIETH, *ON THIS ROCK: A CALL TO CENTER THE CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO CHILD ABUSE ON THE LIFE AND WORDS OF JESUS 2* (2018); W.A. STRANGE, *CHILDREN IN THE EARLY CHURCH 54* (2004).

³⁶⁴ W.A. STRANGE, *CHILDREN IN THE EARLY CHURCH 54* (2004)

³⁶⁵ VICTOR I. VIETH, *ON THIS ROCK: A CALL TO CENTER THE CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO CHILD ABUSE ON THE LIFE AND WORDS OF JESUS 2* (2018).

decision of OCC's leaders to make themselves vulnerable by having an outside body conduct this assessment is a testament to their commitment to move in a better direction.

Jesus said that "[n]othing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known" (Luke 12:2). Although this report did not uncover all the sins buried in OCC's past, the sins that were revealed present a godly opportunity to confess the wrongs that have been committed and demonstrate repentance as well as faith through our actions (James 2:26).

If this opportunity is seized, OCC will not only extend a welcoming hand to survivors of abuse, but to Jesus.

Appendix A - Exhibits

The following exhibits are presented as duplicated images and transcripts to facilitate clarity.

STATE OF FLORIDA

CASE NO. 96-48868-CEAS

VS.

JOHN ROBERT MOOREHEAD

PLEA IN ABSENTIA AND MANIPULATED REQUEST
FOR INTERCING IN ABSENTIA

Defendant, JOHN ROBERT MOOREHEAD, hereby enters his plea of nolo contendere, maintaining his innocence in this cause, to exposure of sexual organs, a second degree misdemeanor, F.S. 800.03 and 774.04(1).

Defendant has been fully advised by his counsel of all of his rights with regard to this plea and voluntarily enters this plea, because he believes that it is in his best interest.

In return for this plea, it is Defendant's understanding that the State has recommended and that the Court will withhold adjudication of guilt, order Defendant to pay \$50.00 to Daytona Beach Police Department for investigation and \$50.00 to the State Attorney's Office and court costs waived. The Court will not sentence the Defendant to jail, place him on probation, order counseling or require him to serve any community service hours.

John R. Moorehead
JOHN ROBERT MOOREHEAD

Sworn to and subscribed
before me this 23 day
of October, 1996.

Dave H. Kelly
NOTARY PUBLIC



John W. Tanner
JOHN W. TANNER, P.A.
Florida Bar No: 0106174
630 North Wild Olive Avenue
Daytona Beach, Florida 32118
(904) 255-0060

Exhibit A Transcript

STATE OF FLORIDA

VS.

JOHN ROBERT MOOREHEAD

CASE NO. 96-48868-CFAXS

PLEA IN ABSENTIA AND STIPPULATED REQUEST FOR SENTENCING IN ABSENTIA

Defendant, JOHN ROBERT MOOREHEAD, hereby enters his plea of nolo contendere, maintaining his innocence in this cause, to exposure of sexual organs, a second degree misdemeanor, F.S. 800.03 and 774.04(1).

Defendant has been fully advised by his counsel of all of his rights with regard to this plea and voluntarily enters this plea, because he believes that it is in his best interest.

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Sworn to and subscribed Before me this 23 day of October, 1996.

[Notary Public's signature redacted]

NOTARY PUBLIC

JOHN ROBERT MOOREHEAD

[Defense Attorney's signature redacted].

Florida Bar Bo: [redacted]

[Law firm address redacted]

[Law firm phone number redacted]



OVERLAKE
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Dr. Bob Moorehead
Senior Pastor

February 11, 1998

Dear Overlake Family:

As you are probably aware, there has been another flurry of media reports during the past week about the allegations against me. My family and I, as well as the elders and staff of the church, continue to be dismayed about how the media chooses to represent the facts. I want to take this opportunity to share with you the truth – without media adulteration and spin. I also want to thank you for your continuing support and prayers; they have been a source of tremendous strength to us.

Here is one example of how the media has worked in this case...

Last Friday I was asked by several reporters if I had signed a “plea bargain.” I said no! To me, and I think to most people, a plea bargain is when you agree to plead guilty to a lesser charge in order to get a more serious charge dropped. I did not, and would not, plead guilty to any charge connected to this case for one simple reason: I DIDN’T DO ANYTHING WRONG.

My attorney did recommend that I change my plea because Florida has a plea option not available here in the State of Washington. You can maintain your innocence while pleading *nolo contendere*, or, no contest. Doing so essentially ends the case without the court ever determining the truth of the charges. Eventually, the entire case can be expunged from the record as if it never existed. The only cost to me would have been \$100 to cover costs of the Daytona Beach Police Department and the State Attorney’s office. That plea was **never** even entered because all the charges against me were dismissed. My attorney is a good Christian man and I know he would not give me bad advice. So, I prayed about what to do and followed my attorney’s advice.

The media wanted to try to catch me in a lie. They tried to make it appear that I said I didn’t agree to change my plea. What they asked me, though, was whether I ever agreed to a plea bargain? Even after we faxed them the documents showing what I had signed was a form changing my plea from not guilty to no contest, *but innocent of the charges*, they still tried to put a negative spin on the story. One station promoted their story by saying new documents revealed I was willing to plead to the charges. As I’m sure you agree, such a statement was incredibly misleading. The other media, for the most part, took a similar approach.

over

Our focus has not changed: As the fellowship of the unashamed, we are committed to passionately affect our world with the life-changing gospel of Jesus Christ. Concerning our response to the media, *"though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are the not the weapons of the world."* 2 Corinthians 10:3-4.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact any of the elders.

Serving You,

The Overlake Eldership

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Exhibit B Transcript

February 11, 1998

Dear Overlake Family:

As you are probably aware, there has been another flurry of media reports during the past week about the allegations against me. My family and I, as well as the elders and staff of the church, continue to be dismayed about how the media chooses to represent the facts. I want to take this opportunity to share with you the truth – without media adulteration and spin. I also want to thank you for your continuing support and prayers; they have been a source of tremendous strength to us.

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Last Friday I was asked by several reporters if I had signed a “plea bargain.” I said no! To me, and I think to most people, a plea bargain is when you agree to plead guilty to a lesser charge in order to get a more serious charge dropped. I did not, and would not, plead guilty to any charge connected to this case for one simple reason: I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG.

My attorney did recommend that I change my plea because Florida has a plea option not available here in the State of Washington. You can maintain your innocence while pleading *nolo contendere*, or, no contest. Doing so essentially ends the case without the court ever determining the truth of the charges. Eventually, the entire case can be expunged from the record as if it never existed. The only cost to me would have been \$100 to cover costs of the Daytona Beach Police Department and the State Attorney's office. That plea was **never** entered because all the charges against me were dismissed. My attorney is a good Christian man and I know he would not give me bad advice. So, I prayed about what to do and followed my attorney's advice.

The media wanted to try to catch me in a lie. They tried to make it appear that I said I didn't agree to change my plea. What they asked me, though, was whether I ever agreed to a plea bargain? Even after we faxed them the document showing what I had signed was a form changing my plea from not guilty to no contest, *but innocent of the charges*, they still tried to put a negative spin on the story. One station promoted their story by saying new documents revealed I was willing to plead to the charges. As I'm sure you agree, such a statement was incredibly misleading. The other media, for the most part, took a similar approach.

over

Our focus has not changed: As the fellowship of the unashamed, we are committed to passionately affect our world with the life-changing gospel of Jesus Christ. Concerning our response to the media, *"though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world."* 2 Corinthians 10:3-4.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact any of the elders.

Serving You,

The Overlake Eldership

Overlake Christian Church
INTRODUCTION TO INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
SCRIPTURE LESSON

May 27, 1998

The elders want you to know the circumstances that led to the hiring of the private investigator. In addition, we also want to let you know how we evaluated the allegations against Pastor Bob.

But first let me say this. None of the Elders now in office, were aware of any sexual misconduct prior to the Florida incident on the part of Pastor Moorehead. Let me repeat, WE DID NOT KNOW OF ANY SEXUAL MISCONDUCT OR ANY ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT ON THE PART OF PASTOR BOB.

The Eldership appointed [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to investigate all the allegations. The intent was to have every individual making an allegation discuss it with Pastor Bob so the facts of the allegation could be clearly examined, communicated to the other Elders and evaluated for any appropriate action.

Around April of 1997, two members were willing to come forward and speak about their allegations with Bob. They had both observed behavior by Bob that they felt was inappropriate and that made them uncomfortable. Neither of them had ever approached Bob about their feelings, even though the events happened over 20 years ago. In addition, neither person said that Bob had ever treated them inappropriately. They openly discussed the incident with Bob while [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] were present. They also said they had been able to remain under Bob's leadership over the years because they felt their observations were not sufficiently conclusive of misconduct.

During that initial investigation, there were rumors of others who had been inappropriately touched by Bob, but none were willing to come forward. Eventually, two names were given to the Elders. Both were contacted by [REDACTED], chairman of the elders at that time. The incidents were over 20 years old. Neither of the persons making the allegations would come forward to talk to Bob now. One of the individuals had discussed the incident with Bob about 4 years ago and the other person alleged that he brought this to the attention of an Elder in the early 1970s. Approximately January of 1998 the media began to release accounts of several allegations against Bob, including the two already mentioned.

The Elders felt that since these people were unwilling to come forward and since most of them were no longer OCC attendees, the only way we could get to the facts would be to have a private investigator search them out, interview them and report the results of the interviews to the Eldership. It was also our intent to have as many of the accusers as possible discuss their allegations directly with Pastor Bob.

Our responsibility, as Elders, is to follow a Biblical process in receiving and evaluating these allegations.

Deuteronomy 19:15 says *"One witness is not enough to convict a man of any crime or offence he may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or*

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1 Timothy 5:19 is more specific as it relates to an elder or overseer. It says *"Do not entertain an accusation against an Elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses"*

Who or what is a witness? According to my dictionary, a witness is *"one who has seen something and is therefore competent to give evidence concerning it."*

We believe this to mean that an accusation against an Elder is not to be entertained or acted on unless there are at least two people who witnessed the incident. Adam Clarke, a noted theologian, says *"This, the law of Moses required in respect to all; the reason for this is evident, those whose business it is to correct others will usually have many enemies; great caution, therefore, should be used in admitting accusations against such persons."* There must be at least two witnesses to each allegation you bring against an Elder or the allegation is to be dismissed. Because God demands a high standard for those He has chosen as leaders over His people and because of the seriousness of allegations, we chose to investigate them.

Since Pastor Bob is an Elder and since God requires such high standards for Eldership, let me read them for you once again:

1 Timothy 3:1-7 tells us... and again in Titus 1:5-9...

Leaders are to be respected. No one should carelessly accuse an Elder.

With an Elder, we must be sure. There must be two or three witnesses that have also witnessed the alleged offense. Not just hearsay or one person's word against another's. This is not like a secular case where conviction can be based on a preponderance of evidence or evidence that is beyond a reasonable doubt. Ours is a Biblical investigation and must be verified by two or three witnesses of the actual occurrence. Let me give you an example from the Bible: Acts 23:2-5

Paul was respectful of the High Priest's office. This is not to say that an accusation should not be brought against an Elder, but that it is a serious thing and must be clearly validated by other witnesses to the offense.

Matthew writes concerning the trial of Jesus in chapter 26, *"Now the chief priest and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death; and they did not find any, even though many false witnesses came forward. Finally two came forward and declared, 'this fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days'' Then the High Priest stood up and said to Jesus, 'are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?'" But Jesus remained silent.*

Even in this obviously biased attempt to condemn Jesus to death, there had to be more than one witness to validate the accusation. He was also given the opportunity to reply to the accusation, though He chose not to.

With that, I would like [REDACTED] to present the conclusions of the investigators report.

Overlake Christian Church

OUTLINE OF REPORT TO THE CONGREGATION

[REDACTED]
May 27, 1998

INTRODUCTION

Comments: Dillon version of the Bible (A little boy named Dillon gave me a bookmark, so I call this my Dillon version!)

I want all of you that are guests to recognize this is a family matter. I ask you to respect the fact you are guests, and respect our people and our processes. I ask that no pictures be taken and no tape recordings of our proceedings.

That which I am about to report will not be popular with some, or fairly received by some. *It is however the unanimous conclusion of your elders.*

I want you to know the elders have spent a considerable amount of time, effort, prayer, and resources coming to the conclusions I am bringing before you today. We allowed the investigator free reign for over three months to do his work. He was hired to interview the accusers and others with testimony; to investigate their statements and do background checks as appropriate; and report the facts as he found them. *He was not hired to draw conclusions, which is the sole responsibility of your elders.*

You also need to know that in the process of doing the investigation we in effect put Pastor Bob's biblical rights on hold. Remember, the biblical process to deal with any accusation against any member of the body is first to require the offended party to confront the accused. (Matthew 18:15) If you accept (listen to) an accusation against a brother before he has confronted the accused, you are in the process of taking up the offense of another and possibly gossip, both of which the bible strongly warns against. To the degree possible we had the accusers meet with Pastor Bob to discuss their accusation. Please understand, Pastor Bob yielded his rights to the end that every voice might be heard but with the expectation that he would have the opportunity to defend himself. It was further understood by both the accused and the accusers that the contents of investigation itself would remain confidential. Without this assurance many of the respondents would not have come forward.

This leads me to the subject of expectations. The media has been orchestrating an expectation that the content of the investigation report would be publicized. This would first be a violation of our commitment to the parties involved. It would further circumvent the purpose of the investigation as I noted earlier which included providing a forum for the individuals involved to privately express their concerns. Our investigator was not asked to draw conclusions, he only heard one side of the testimony, and that only of those that came to him. *Our summary report this evening we have chosen to give to you verbally.* On Sunday we will provide the congregation a summary of our conclusions and a bible study format to assist you in understanding the context of our conclusions.

I want to take this opportunity to thank those of you who came forward to provide information to our elders or the investigator. For some of you this process was both uncomfortable and emotional. In reaching our conclusions we relied on the information you chose to provide; we did not rely on the media reports, gossip or hearsay, or other

information from other unsubstantiated sources. This includes anonymous reports like you saw in last Sunday's paper, which due to the unwillingness of the parties to be forthright and identify themselves, was excluded from our consideration also.

Some will ask, why did the investigation take so long. It could have taken longer. However when Bob turned in his resignation on the 20th of April we determined that prudence required we cut the costs and we suspended the investigation of new accusations. We asked John Hansen to forward any new information to the elders to deal with directly. Our report is the summation of the findings to date.

TWO KEY ISSUES:

- A. 1 Timothy 5:19 - receiving an accusation against an elder leading to church discipline.
- B. 1 Timothy 3:2 & 7 and Titus 1:6 - dealing with the issue of an elder being above reproach.

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19 other statements broken out as follows:

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- 1 Not relevant to the investigation

4. METHODOLOGY OF EVALUATION

- A. We broke the 17 allegations down using the following criterion as a filter.
 - Credibility of the accuser (what were their backgrounds)
 - Credibility of the facts (were they baptized at Overlake or married when they said this occurred etc.)
 - Willingness to talk with the investigator
 - Willingness to talk with Pastor Bob (Matthew 18 process)
 - Willingness to talk with elders
 - Subsequent behavior of the accuser (what was their life like after the alleged incident)

- Explanation of biblical/non-biblical approach (why didn't they come forward earlier and confront Bob)
 - Willingness to identify themselves
- B. Other issues of evaluation:
 - Timeliness of complaint (when this happened vs. when they spoke out about it)
 - Speaking out when claiming violation (scripture clearly teaches us we have a responsibility to do so)
 - Corroborating witnesses to the acts claimed by the accusers
 - Bob Moorehead's reputation and the fruit of his ministry for the past 41 years

5. APPLICATION OF METHODOLOGY

- A. We disregarded those that refused to identify themselves
- B. Six of the accusers eventually met with Bob Moorehead.
- C. 14 of the accusers gave separate testimony that could not be *factually* disputed, (It was their word against Pastor Bob's word)
- D. Bob Moorehead denied(s) all allegations
- E. There were no instances of corroborating witnesses to a single event or accusation.
- F. There was no witnessed resistance or "crying out" against the apparent offenses.

6. CONCLUSIONS

1 TIMOTHY 5:19 RECEIVING AN ACCUSATION AGAINST AN ELDER LEADING TO CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

- A. Key scriptures include:
 1. 1 Timothy 5:19 There is a scriptural requirement for multiple witness to the offense.
 2. Deuteronomy 19:15, 17:6,
 3. Numbers 35:30
- B. The application of the scripture in scripture:
 1. Matthew 26:59-62 Jesus before Caiaphas
 2. John 5:31 Where Jesus himself states the same principle
 3. John 8:13 Pharisees confirm necessity of two witnesses
- C. Other factors in addition to the lack of corroborating witnesses that influenced our decision included:
 1. The 41 years of solid fruit born by the pastor.

2. The lack of accusations prior to the present investigation: Every past executive pastor going back to 1971 has been interviewed and not one, prior to [REDACTED], had heard an accusation. Of the two that claimed to have gone to Pastor Bob in the 70's: in one case the elder he claimed he told and then went with to Bob with denies he ever talked to the accuser about the incident or met with he and Pastor Bob. This elder has not been a member of OCC for over 14 years. The second one, again Pastor Bob does not remember and the only elder identified has since died.
3. NOTE: Not one of the present elders, some of who have been around since 1971, had been aware of these accusations prior to the current disclosures. (The only former elder who remembers any accusations was [REDACTED], and he refused to give us the names of any of the accusers. One of the accusers who has been on television did meet with Pastor Bob, [REDACTED], and former [REDACTED] over four years ago.)
4. None of the accusers cried out. There is a principal in scripture that if one is violated and you expect to be considered innocent you must respond against the violation see: Deuteronomy 22:23-27.
5. The time period for most of the accusation dates back 20+ years.
6. We have no history of Bob Moorehead lying.

HEREFORE:

After serious consideration of the testimony of each accuser, we do not find a basis for church discipline against Pastor Bob Moorehead. Applying scriptural standards, the evidence is insufficient for church discipline. Amos 5:10 says "they hate him who reproves them in the gate, and they abhor him who speaks with integrity" The intent of the scriptures dealing with accusations against an elder is to put a high standard of protection around one who has been set apart to rule. The standard is the same one the Old Testament places on one accused of a capital crime. Without at least two corroborating witnesses to the same crime the testimony will not be received. We had no corroborating witnesses to the testimony of any one of the individual accusers.

To help put this into perspective, lets look at the most succinct statement of this principal in Numbers 35:30.

THE SECOND ISSUE:

1 TIMOTHY 3:2 AND TITUS 1:6 WHICH DEAL WITH AND ELDER BEING ABOVE REPROACH.

- A. Regarding the matter of Bob Moorehead continuing to function as an elder and being above reproach, in accordance with scriptural teaching as we heard from [REDACTED], *Pastor Bob is not above reproach (he no longer has a good reputation with those outside the church).* This was recognized by Pastor Bob and the elders, which facilitated the acceptance of his resignation as senior pastor, and as an elder.

OTHER ISSUES

- A. You will not find our decision without controversy even within the Christian community. A liberal view of the scriptures and modern attitudes would lower the biblical standards for accepting an accusation against an elder. As you can imagine it took an enormous amount of time, study and debate at times for your elders to come to agreement. *We stand united before you in our view of the scriptures and our conclusions.*

END OF REPORT

THE NEXT EVENT!

I am going to take a speaking class.

SOME ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

There will be some who will question our decision to allow Pastor Bob to deliver his "farewell message" on the 14th of June based on our finding that he is not above reproach. *We view the 14th as a family matter.* A time to honor a man and his family for 28 ½ years of faithful and fruitful service to this body. This will be a time of celebration of consolation, of grieving, of looking to the past and most importantly looking to the future.

- God allowed us to go through this catharsis, for a purpose,
- He has other plans for Pastor Bob, perhaps even greater,
- He has other plans for us,
- When I counsel families on how to view the raising of their children I often relate back to Psalm 139 v 7 – 16,
- God knows the plans he has laid out for each of us. He has a book on each of our lives. And our books are all in the library of Overlake Christian Church. (the people whose lives have been changed)

WHAT'S THE NEXT EVENT?

- THE NEXT EVENT IS SUNDAY MORNING AS WE FOCUS ON PRAISING GOD AND WINNING THE LOST.
- THE NEXT EVENT IS PUTTING ON THE FULL ARMOR OF GOD AGAINST THE ENEMY OF DOUBT, CONFLICT, MASSIVE NEWS COVERAGES,
- THE NEXT EVENT IS GOD IS IN CONTROL

We have as an interim plan of action and first step is to win the Eastside to Christ. We have the pulpit filled for the most part through August with some exciting preachers. We will also be hearing from some of our homegrown preachers here on staff. It's now time for us to turn our attention to pursuing our vision.

We have established a search committee who is searching for the man God has anointed to fill the pulpit at Overlake Christian Church for the next 30 years.

We need now to get on our knees and pray for God's wisdom and blessing, for renewal, for a spirit of unity. I want to challenge you to fast and pray each Wednesday for the next four weeks specifically for God's man to be identified and called to Overlake Christian Church.

LET'S PRAY TOGETHER

Exhibit C Transcript

Overlake Christian Church

INTRODUCTION TO INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

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I am going to take a speaking class.

SOME ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

There will be some who will question our decision to allow Pastor Bob to deliver his "farewell message" on the 14th of June based on our finding that he is not above reproach. *We view the 14th as a family matter.* A time to honor a man and his family for the 28 ½ years of faithful and fruitful service to the body. This will be a time of celebration of consolation, of grieving, of looking to the past and most importantly looking to the future.

- God allowed us to go through this catharsis, for a purpose,
- He has other plans for Pastor Bob, perhaps even greater,
- He has other plans for us,
- When I counsel families on how to view the raising of their children I often relate back to Psalm 139 v 7-16,
- God knows the plans he has laid out for each of us. He has a book on each of our lives. And our books are all in the library of Overlake Christian Church, (the people whose lives have been changed)

WHAT'S THE NEXT EVENT?

- THE NEXT EVENT IS SUNDAY MORNING AS WE FOCUS ON PRAISING GOD AND WINNING THE LOST.
- THE NEXT EVENT IS PUTTING ON THE FULL ARMOR OF GOD AGAINST THE ENEMY OF DOUBT, CONFLICT, MASSIVE NEWS COVERAGES.
- *THE NEXT EVENT IS GOD IS IN CONTROL*

We have as an interim plan of action and first step is to win the Eastside to Christ. We have the pulpit filled for the most part through August with some exciting preachers. We will also be hearing from some of our homegrown preachers here on staff. It's now time for us to turn our attention to pursuing our vision.

We have established a search committee who is searching for the man God has anointed to fill the pulpit at Overlake Christian Church for the next 30 years.

We need now to get on our knees and pray for God's wisdom and blessing, for renewal, for a spirit of unity. I want to challenge you to fast and pray each Wednesday for the next four weeks specifically for God's man to be identified and called to Overlake Christian Church.

LET'S PRAY TOGETHER

[1] This is a GRACE transcript of an OCC document. We did not correct spelling, grammar, or emphasis but did delete names we considered irrelevant to understanding the document.



OVERLAKE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Rick Kingham
Senior Pastor

May 18, 1999

Dear Church Family,

We are writing to you to share insights we gained and changes that need to be made for the future in regards to the issues we have faced these past few years. Our heart is to inform you of things that we, your elders have learned.

We are ordinary and fallible men earnestly seeking God's will and endeavoring to do what is right. Where we have failed to correctly perceive God's will, we are sorry and seek your forgiveness. The Godly leadership to which elders are called requires that they seek wisdom, righteousness and unanimity in every decision. A great deal of prayer accompanies our decision-making processes. Our greatest desire is to serve you, our church family, in a God honoring way.

We have learned that being in the leadership of this church is a growing and maturing process. Part of the maturing process is learning from the past. We have identified policies and procedures needing change. We have made the following three, key policy changes:

1. We pledge to seek better ways to communicate more effectively with this church body. Your eldership is committed to being more visible, transparent, and approachable.
2. We have added a written policy and procedure to follow when a serious allegation is made against an elder, pastor or staff person. Generally, no one is comfortable bringing an accusation against another, but we are committed to making that process, as user friendly as is reasonably possible.
3. Any serious allegation brought against a person on the OCC staff, including senior pastor and elders, will cause that person to be immediately suspended pending a full investigation.

We also want to address unresolved issues surrounding the resignation of our former senior pastor, Bob Moorehead. We realize some of you joined Overlake after the resignation of Pastor Bob Moorehead and that much of this information may be unclear. The spiritual significance of these issues makes it imperative that we comment at this time. The long-term health of this body is dependent on bringing closure to these matters so that we may move forward.

Pastor Bob Moorehead was accused of inappropriate conduct. Pastor Bob resigned last year because his reputation and witness in this community was damaged beyond repair. For those reasons, had Pastor Bob not resigned, the Elders were prepared to ask for his resignation.

Since Pastor Bob's resignation, the eldership has received testimony that meets the biblical standard of multiple witnesses. Based on this testimony, the eldership reviewed the entire matter and unanimously concluded that Pastor Bob Moorehead did violate the scriptural standards of trust, self-control, purity, and Godly character required for the office of elder and pastor at Overlake Christian Church.

The eldership followed the Biblical mandate by recently meeting with Pastor Bob and appealing for his acknowledgement. Pastor Bob has chosen to reject our appeal at this time. The eldership will continue to encourage Pastor Bob to seek spiritual restoration. We covet your prayers in this matter. Despite the challenges that these past events have brought to the life and ministry of this church, you, the congregation have remained faithful to God, focused on Christ and committed to the mission of this church.

The vision and leadership of our new senior pastor and pastoral staff gives us all hope and sustains our belief that God's plan for this church is to reach the unsaved and train disciples to fulfill the Great Commission. It is our prayer and desire that having addressed past difficulties we now focus on the future work God would have us do. We wholeheartedly look forward with great anticipation to serving in unity with the entire body of Christ on the Eastside and the greater Puget Sound area. Thank you all for your faithful and continued commitment to this church.

The Elders
Overlake Christian Church

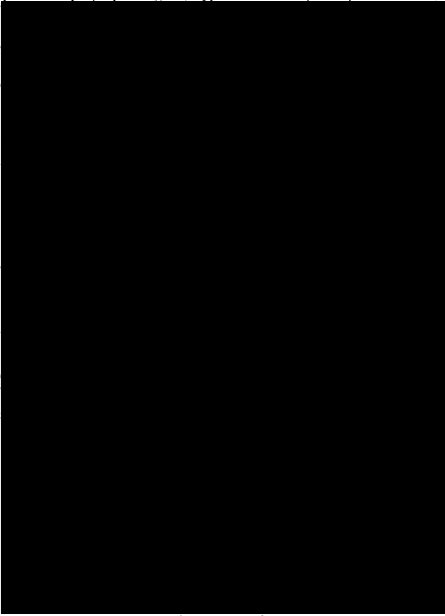


Exhibit D Transcript

Overlake Christian Church

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Inquiry Committee Meeting of June 8, 1999

1. Adequacy of the Overlake members letter.

The Elders of Overlake sent a letter to their membership on May 21st that acknowledged that Bob was guilty of violating “the scriptural standards of trust, self-control, purity, and Godly character.” Is their statement substantially consistent with our conclusion? Bob did

“... commit multiple acts that violate ministerial, as well as Christian morals and ethics.

These acts included touching the genital area of other men. These acts also included rubbing his hand against the penis of other men without their consent.”

Resolution 1A: The Overlake membership letter was an admission of guilt. Bob Moorehead did, in fact, sin in a variety of ways. The sins identified were less explicit and less descriptive than the sins identified by the Inquiry Committee. Even so, given the public information that has circulated, it is apparent that the Elders were acknowledging the truth of the charges that have been brought against him. Therefore we find that the letter is substantially consistent with our conclusions.

The fact that the letter was less descriptive of the sinful acts could be explained in at least two alternative ways.

First, it might be an effort by the elders to avoid mentioning the sinful acts based upon their understanding of the Scripture which says in Ephesians 5:12 “it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret.” If that was the motivation, we can find virtue in the graciousness of the understatement.

Second, it might represent a remaining unwillingness to fully expose the sins which the elders had known about, but were unwilling to properly deal with. The fuller context of the above verse can give a different light to the meaning: “Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible...” (Ephesians 5:11-13)

The elders placed an extremely high value on 1 Timothy 5:19 and used it as the basis of the long delay in arriving at an acknowledgement of guilt by Bob. The next verse says, “Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that the others may take warning.” If the elders wanted to admit as little as possible then the motivation did not come from a true heart of obedience to the 1 Timothy 5:20 passage and the thing is not pleasing to God.

We want to be careful not to make a wrong judgement even though there might be a part of our nature inclined to want to judge these motives. John urged us to “Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment” (John 7:24). Paul encouraged us that when the Lord comes “He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.” (1 Corinthians 4:5) These are all things we are reminding ourselves about. The concern we feel is sufficient to warrant asking the elders to examine their own hearts in this matter. Is there a willingness to be forthcoming and completely settle this matter in openness and humility before the watching community? Is there a willingness to humbly admit the errors and sins? It takes great humility, and is itself humbling, for strong leaders to admit to the deception that is sometimes masked by cleverly worded statements. Could it be that the same motivation that delayed the determination of guilt is behind the understated admission of guilt? We do not offer these questions as accusations. Rather, we are calling for self-examination toward the end of spiritual growth and refinement. Your letter to the congregation indicated that you desire to seek righteousness in each decision. We offer these ~~these~~ ^{issues} as possible venues of prayer and personal evaluation for the elders as individuals and for the elders as a collection of leaders.

Resolution 1B: That the above statement be adopted and communicated to the elders of Overlake in the form of a letter.

2. Adequacy of the public apology

The Inquiry Committee appreciates that Overlake is making an effort to contact all of the victims of Bob's sins. We believe this is an important step in making things right with them. We believe a public apology is also necessary. Whether right or wrong, there is a strong public perception that no apology is going to be offered. If your heart is otherwise, then a direct public apology to the victims is necessary. This will remove any impression held by the public that the elders have been able to admit Bob's violations without having taken any responsibility for the mishandling of victims by the Overlake leadership.

We know that Bob Moorehead, as the one guilty of moral misdeeds against Overlake members, should apologize. Confession is really the same as apology. Long ago, God said in Numbers 5:6-7 "Say to the Israelites: 'When a man or woman wrongs another in any way and so is unfaithful to the LORD, that person is guilty and must confess the sin he has committed.'" If the Pastor of Overlake has wronged these people as has been admitted, and he did so during official acts of the church in baptism and in weddings, it seems that an apology by the Church is in order.

In times of difficulty such as Overlake has been experiencing, there is a need for apology and confession. There is a classic illustration in Nehemiah 9:1-2. There the people repented on behalf of their leaders.

On the twenty-fourth day of the same month, the Israelites gathered together, fasting and wearing sackcloth and having dust on their heads. Those of Israelite descent had separated themselves from all foreigners. They stood in their places and confessed their sins and the wickedness of their fathers.

Indeed, the situation of Overlake bears striking similarities to the ancient record. At the very time that Overlake was enjoying the goodness of God and His blessing, while souls were being saved and baptized, the Pastor was grasping the genitals of converts, even while speaking to the congregation from the baptistry. In Nehemiah's day the people who followed the time of sin repented of the sins of those who went before:

In all that has happened to us, you have been just; you have acted faithfully, while we did wrong. Our kings, our leaders, our priests and our fathers did not follow your law; they did not pay attention to your commands or the warnings you gave them. Even while they were in their kingdom, enjoying your great goodness to them in the spacious and fertile land you gave them, they did not serve you or turn from their evil ways.
(Nehemiah 9:33-35)

We also know there is a long tradition of confession of the sins of others.

Resolution 2: In order to erase public misconceptions, and to bring closure for the sins committed, we call upon the elders of Overlake to publicly apologize (confess) the sins committed against the victims by Bob Moorhead and to ask forgiveness of the victims.

3. A Service of Reconciliation

The Eastside Pastors offered to Overlake the opportunity of a joint service of restoration of unity and relationship with Overlake. We have discussed the date of August 8, 1999. This has been the intended outcome of the Inquiry Committee from the beginning.

Resolution 3: The Eastside Pastors affirm their desire for the rapid completion of this process and to have a reconciliation service as soon thereafter as possible. We would welcome a request for such a meeting on August 8th or another date of mutual agreement.

Exhibit E Transcript

Inquiry Committee

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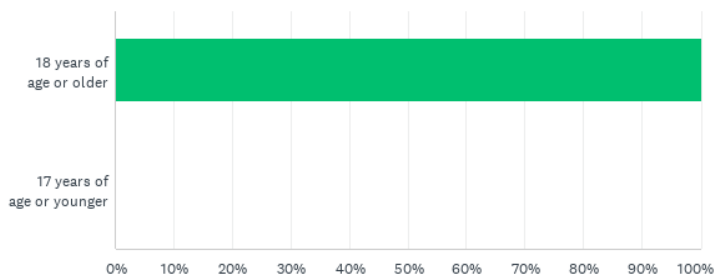
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Appendix B - Survey Summary

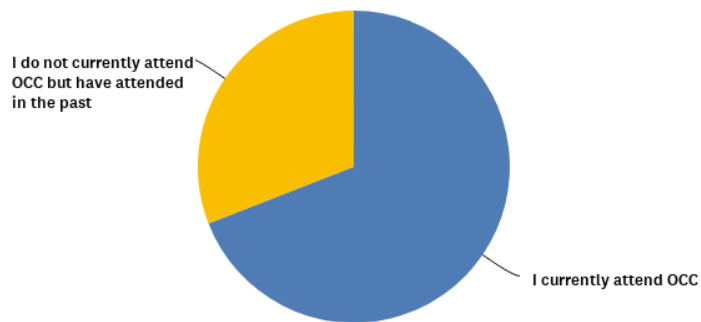
Overlake Christian Church Survey Summary

A survey drafted by GRACE investigators was distributed to an email list through OCC of over 4,000 addresses. The survey was open for a month. There were 239 respondents and it had a 67% completion rate. GRACE Investigators have incorporated many comments and ideas from the survey results into the final report recommendations. Therefore, not every question summary is reflected below.

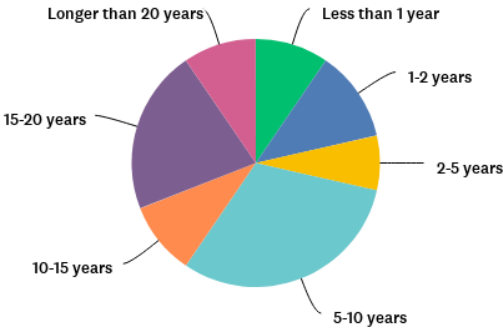
Q2 I am currently:



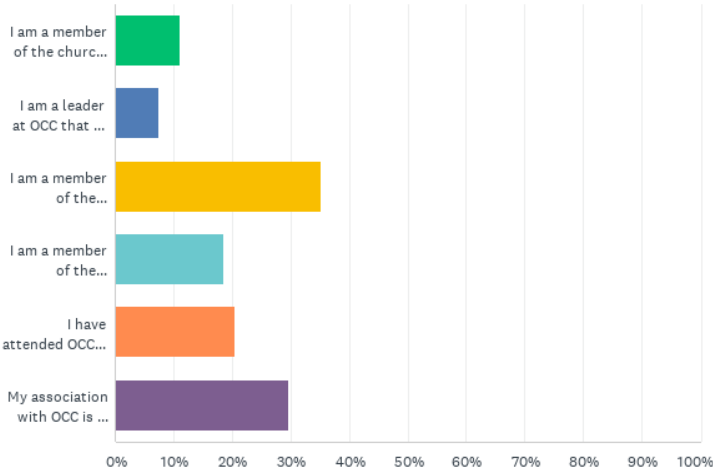
Q3 Please select the description below that best describes your attendance at OCC:



Q4 If you currently attend OCC, how long have you been part of the congregation:



Q5 How would you describe your association with OCC? (You may check more than one.)



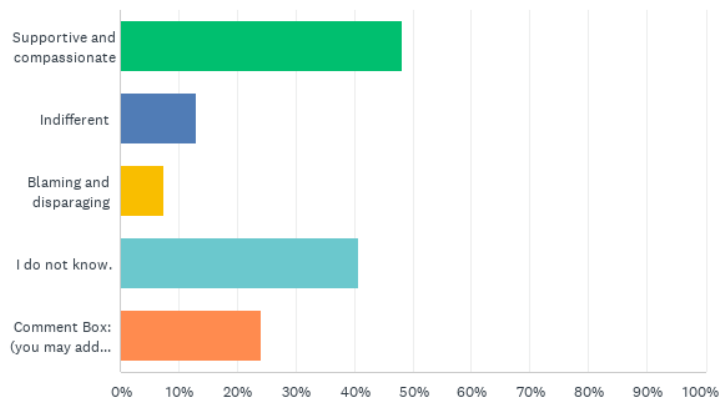
- I am a member of the church staff, or an elder.
- I am a leader at OCC that is not on staff.
- I am a member of the congregation who volunteers with children or youth ministries, teaching ministries, or serves as a volunteer in some other ministry of the church.
- I am a member of the congregation but do not volunteer in a ministry within the church.
- I have attended OCC but am not a member.

- My association is as follows: (Fill in)

Question 6. Of the respondents who indicated they were familiar with the Overlake's history with sexual misconduct, sexual abuse, adult sexual assault and behavioral misconduct:

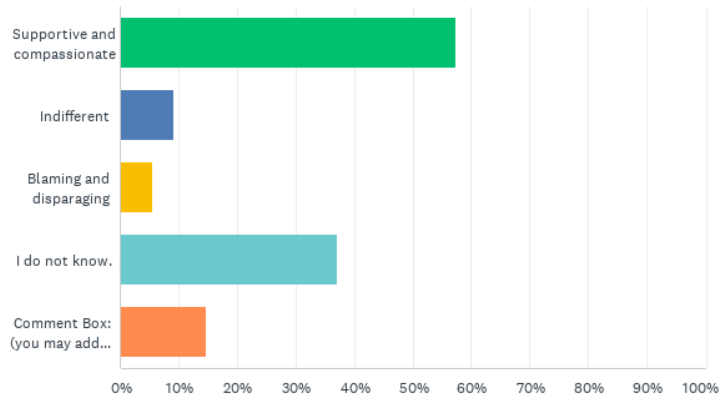
- Very familiar – 23.5%
- Somewhat familiar – 43.5%
- I don't know anything – 33%

Q9 How would you generally describe the way the current leadership at OCC responds to known survivors of sexual misconduct, sexual assault, sexual abuse, or behavioral misconduct? (Check all that apply)

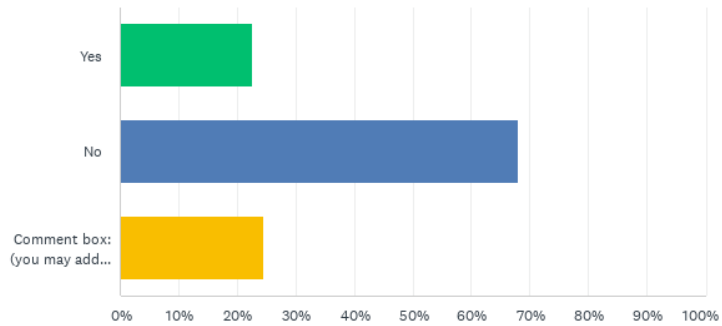


- Supportive and compassionate
- Indifferent
- Blaming and disparaging
- I do not know.
- Comment box:

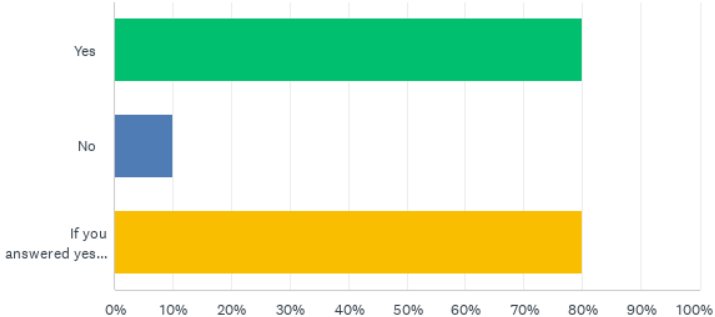
Q10 How would you generally describe the overall current culture within OCC toward survivors of sexual misconduct, sexual assault, sexual abuse or behavioral misconduct?
(check all that apply)



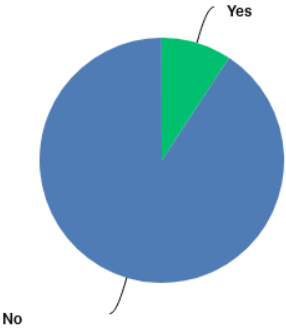
Q11 Have you been given clear instructions regarding how to report any concerns regarding sexual misconduct, sexual assault, sexual abuse, or behavioral misconduct to OCC?



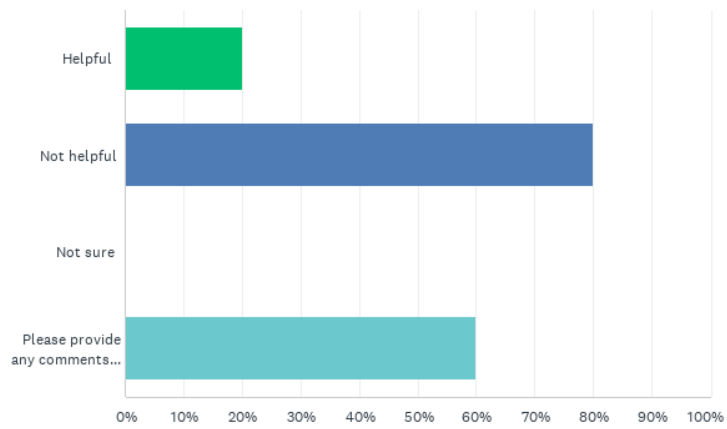
Q15 Was the sexual misconduct, sexual assault, sexual abuse, or behavioral misconduct reported to any OCC employee or staff?



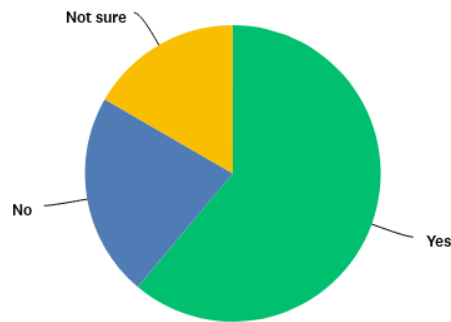
Q16 Have you ever sought pastoral or spiritual care at OCC as a result of experiencing sexual or behavioral misconduct?



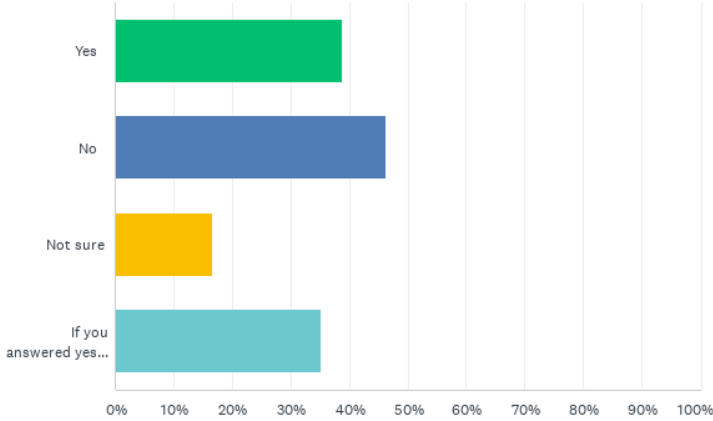
Q17 You answered "yes" to seeking spiritual care, was the spiritual care:



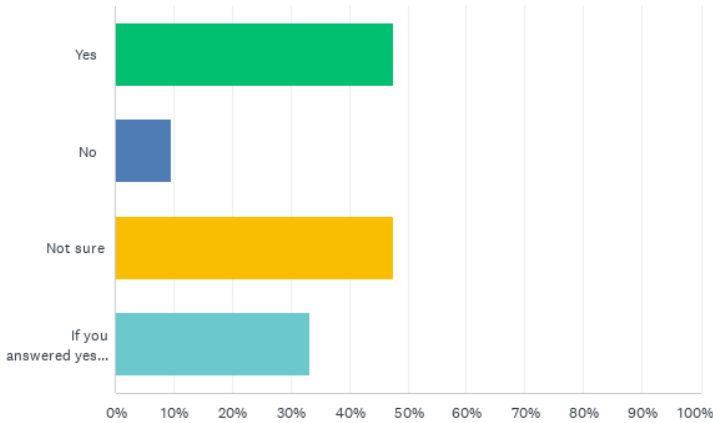
Q18 If you were to experience sexual or behavioral misconduct in the future, would you feel comfortable seeking spiritual care from an OCC pastor?



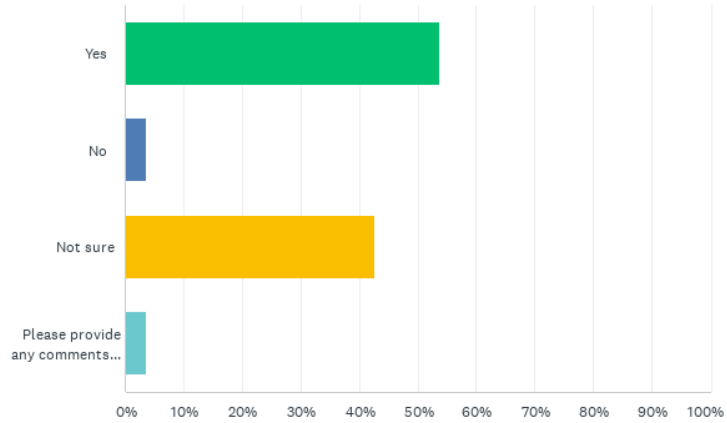
Q19 During your time at OCC, has anyone you know (or have known) experienced at any time any form of sexual misconduct, sexual assault, sexual abuse, or behavioral misconduct?



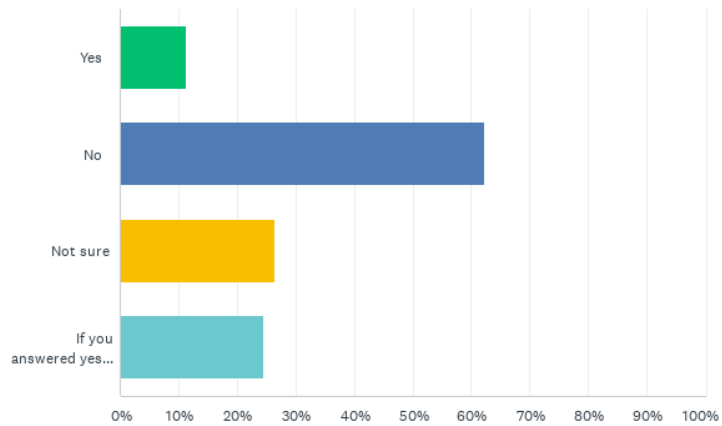
Q20 Was the sexual misconduct, sexual assault, sexual abuse, or behavioral misconduct reported to any OCC employee or staff?



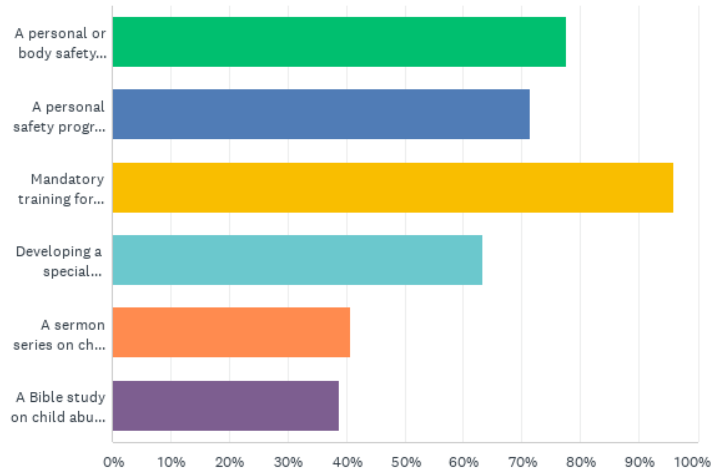
Q21 In your experience, or to the best of your knowledge is OCC currently supportive of coordinating spiritual care with mental health and medical care:



Q24 Has OCC provided you at any time with any training on recognizing and responding to sexual or behavioral misconduct?



Q26 Below is a list of potential OCC initiatives. Which, if any, of these possible initiatives would you be supportive of? (check all that apply)



- A personal or body safety program for youth to better equip them with options should they be abused in any way.
- A personal safety program for parents to better equip them to speak with their children about abuse.
- Mandatory training for OCC staff on recognizing and responding to child abuse.
- Developing a special ministry for child and adult survivors of abuse prevention initiatives.
- A sermon series on child abuse and other forms of trauma.
- A Bible study on child abuse and other forms of trauma.

Q27 The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) defines a trauma-informed organization as one that “realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery; recognizes signs and symptoms in clients, families, staff, and others involved with systems; responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; and seeks to actively resist re-traumatization.” Do you believe OCC should work to make sure it is an organization that meets the SAMSHA standards for being trauma-informed?

