

Take Heed from the Fall of G3 Ministries

Guest: David Morrill, publisher, Protestia

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 05, 2026 at 8am CT

Host: David Wheaton 0:08

Take heed from the fall of G3 Ministries. That is the topic we'll discuss today on The Christian Worldview Radio program, where the mission is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. I'm David Wheaton, the host. The Christian Worldview is a nonprofit, listener supported radio ministry. Our website is TheChristianWorldview.org, and the rest of our contact information will be given throughout today's program. As always, thank you for your notes of encouragement, financial support, and lifting us up in prayer.

Just a very quick update that the registration deadline is this coming Tuesday, September 8th. That's the day after Labor Day for both The Christian Worldview Speaker Series event with Travis Allen at Stone House Farm in Jordan, Minnesota, which takes place Saturday, September 12th from 4 to 7 PM, and also the registration deadline for The Overcomer Foundation Cup Golf and Dinner event at White Bear Yacht Club in Dellwood, Minnesota on Monday, September 14th. A catered dinner with dessert and specialty coffee is being prepared for the Speaker Series event, so we need to know number of attendees in advance. Same for the golf event.

Our staff and volunteers are working hard to make these really special events, so we hope you can come. An event guide will be mailed to all registered attendees for both events, so be sure to look for that a couple days in advance. Again, registration deadline for both the speaker series event and the golf and dinner event is the day after Labor Day, Tuesday, September 8th.

G3 began as a theology conference in 2013 at Pray's Mill Baptist Church near Atlanta. Pastor Josh Buice of the same church was the founder of G3. Year by year the conference grew into one of the largest and most influential annual events, with thousands attending and some of the most prominent leaders speaking, such as John MacArthur, Voddie Baucham, Steve Lawson, Paul Washer, Ken Ham, Joel Beeke, H. B. Charles, Tom Askol, James White, and many more. G3 then developed beyond a national conference into a ministry organization with regional conferences, G3 Press publishing arm, G3 Plus subscription platform for written audio and video content, the G3 Church Network of nearly two hundred churches, and much more. In short, G3 was one of the most prominent theologically conservative ministries in the country. But then sin happened.

In 2025, it was discovered that founder and pastor Josh Buice was using anonymous social media accounts to criticize fellow believers, some of whom were speakers at his conference. Buice resigned and vice president and pastor Scott Aniol then took over. But just recently it was revealed that Scott Aniol and three other leaders from G3, who also serve as elders at Pray's Mill Baptist Church in Georgia, had sent anonymous dossiers or packets to the elders at First Baptist Church in Lindale, Texas, accusing their pastor Tom Buck, a

former G3 board member and contributor to the ministry of plagiarism in his sermons. Weeks later, similar anonymous dossiers were sent to ministry leaders around the country.

While there were about forty-five instances of Buck using unattributed material from commentaries in his sermons, I think it was seventeen total sermons. The elders of his church and other ministry leaders who investigated the charges concluded that it was a lesser degree of plagiarism requiring correction rather than disqualification. But then there was the question of who was sending out these packets. It soon was revealed that none other than the top leadership at G3, which stood for Gospel, Grace, and Glory, had transgressed in a most inglorious way, with anonymous accusations and even mail fraud. A confession by G3 was released, and soon the entire organization of G3 ministries was dissolved.

Joining us this weekend to discuss the fall of G3 is David Morrill of Protestia, a "polemical Christian news and discernment outlet dedicated to reporting, analysis, and theological critique". David and Protestia received one of the anonymous dossiers, did an investigation, and made public that it was the G3 leadership behind it. We will discuss several aspects of this incident, including the plagiarism. Why? Not in self righteousness or a spirit of condemnation, but rather to fearfully reflect and learn, knowing our own potential for sin. For Scripture says let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall. Let's get to the first segment of the interview with David Morrill.

David, thank you for coming on The Christian Worldview Radio program today. Before we get into our topic on what has transpired with G3 Ministries, just tell us about your background, how God brought you to saving faith, and who have been some of the key influences in your walk with Christ.

Guest: David Morrill 5:57

I'm a church kid from birth, really, you know, grew up in Plymouth Brethren Church, and then my family started attending and being members of Baptist churches since I was very little. But in terms of my coming to Christ, I can't tell you that there was a moment when I knew it flipped. Like a lot of church kids, I said the prayer many, many times to make sure that I was uh yeah, knew that I had said it. But then as I got older, that's there was a moment when I realized I have no other option but to follow Jesus. The signs in my life were like you can't run away from Him, you belong to Him, and I believe obviously my salvation is secure because of what the Bible teaches, but I grew up as a Baptist kid and got into the seeker-sensitive church stuff, was going to a seeker-sensitive church, very much into Rick Warren purpose-driven kind of movement. Then I really count online discernment ministries as helping me see the folly of that and the unseriousness of it, the lack of biblical precision and faithfulness, that was coming out of that movement. God's grace, helped me see that and pull my family, my wife, and I out of that kind of movement. Now we're at a very solid Southern Baptist church that takes doctrine seriously. That's where we are, and thank God they tolerate, I guess, or or or they understand my online polemical ways.

Host: David Wheaton 7:09

Now, speaking of that, David, you are the publisher of Protestia.com, very prominent online on social media and elsewhere, and from your website it describes Protestia as a polemical Christian news and discernment

outlet dedicated to reporting, analysis, and theological critique in an age of widespread censorship and ecclesiastical decline. We document Protestia does the ongoing downgrade of the visible church while serving as a resource for Christians seeking clarity about influential figures, movements, and institutions that abuse the bride of Christ and lead believers away from sound biblical orthodoxy. Define what polemics is and why it is generally ignored or really disapproved of by mainstream evangelicalism.

Guest: David Morrill 8:03

Polemics is more or less, you can boil it down to arguing about sound doctrine, contending for sound doctrine amongst churches and Christians in the church, rather than apologetics, which would be defending our faith against other religions, atheism, agnosticism, things like this. Polemics is actually contending for sound doctrine as opposed to the numerous ways there can be false doctrine among the Christian church. Protestia is the ministry to keep Christians apprised of what's going on beyond the boundaries of their local church because the other six days of the week, people aren't necessarily at their local church under the shepherding of their pastors and and with their brethren. They're on the internet, they're living life, they're doing what Christians are supposed to do, but that does expose them to a lot of, especially with the internet, a lot of false ideas masquerading under the name of Jesus.

Host: David Wheaton 8:51

Regarding this situation that has taken place with G3 Ministries, I just want to read an online summary of the situation where the sources are coming from your organization, Protestia, Christianity Today was written about this, Ministry Watch. So this is a summary of those things. It's going to take me about three minutes to do it, but I think it's important for listeners to understand instead of just jumping in and analyzing it, let's get a quick summary of what took place with G3 Ministries. The summary statement from online was G3 ministries leaders, so their leaders anonymously mailed packets accusing Pastor Tom Buck of First Baptist Church in Lindale, Texas, of sermon plagiarism. After the G3's efforts became public, they apologized, resigned, and the ministry shut down. So this is a very major story that's taken place very recently within the Christian Church in America.

Now, just to get into some of the specifics, G3 ministries, for those who don't know, was a prominent Reformed Baptist organization. They did conferences, they had a large church network, they did publishing of resources, and they were closely tied to Pray's Mill Baptist Church in Douglasville, Georgia. I believe that's near Atlanta. Tom Buck, senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Lindale, Texas, since 2006, had been a G3 board member and a frequent contributor to G3. The episode that we're talking about today followed a 2025 scandal. That's last year, and a lot of our listeners will remember this, in which the founder of G3 named Josh Buice, he resigned after using anonymous accounts to criticize other Christian leaders.

After he resigned, Scott Aniol became the president of G3. Okay, now just to get into some of the accusations, again, quoting from an online source here. In March 2026, anonymous packets were sent to about thirty homes of First Baptist Church Lindale elders, that's Tom Buck's church, and their deacons. And they alleged in these packets, quote, habitual and systemic plagiarism by Tom Buck in his sermons, stating roughly forty-five instances of verbatim or near verbatim borrowing from commentaries across seventeen sermons over nine years that were preached without attribution to those commentaries. The elders at FBC,

First Baptist Church Lindale, investigated internally. Tom Buck recused himself, the church consulted outside pastors experienced in expository preaching, including Phil Johnson from Grace Community Church in California. The leaders of First Baptist Lindale concluded there were real attribution problems that needed correction. Tom Buck, the pastor, agreed to tighten his citation practices. But not a pattern. There wasn't a pattern of passing off others' finished sermons as his own, nor anything they viewed as ministerially disqualifying. They treated it as a local church matter already addressed.

Okay, now we're gonna fast forward to the summer now. This is where you guys at Protestia come in. In July of this year in 2026, similar packets were mailed to Tom Buck's ministry partners and friends. Now these are outside his church now. Other evangelical leaders around the country. These used listen to this at First Baptist Church Lindale return address on the envelopes and they were postmarked from Dallas and claimed the church had failed to deal with the issue of plagiarism by Tom Buck biblically while urging the recipients of these packets to investigate independently. Concealment steps reportedly included mailing these packets from Texas using latex gloves. On August 17, 2026, Protestia, your organization, David, published an investigation identifying Praise Mills elders. So that would be G3 president Scott Aniol, plus Matt Sykes, Dylan Joyner, and John Norton as responsible. The irony was widely noted. G3 and Pray's Mill had condemned Josh Buice, their former president, anonymous attacks the year before. The FBC Lindale Elders said they had tried to meet the Pray's Mill Elders privately after learning of their involvement and received no timely response.

About a week later, on August 25th, the four men from G3 and Pray's Mill Baptist Church issued a public apology to First Baptist Church Lindale's elders. They confessed that they had, quote, sinfully meddled in the disciplinary process of your autonomous local church, unquote. That they had mischaracterized how the church in Lindale handled the matter without knowing the details and should have contacted the church directly instead of sending material anonymously. They said they had no excuse, they resigned as pastors at Praise Mill and confessed to their congregation, which they said forgave them. G3 then dissolved its church network immediately and canceled dues. Within days, the organization stated it was concluding operations. They deleted social media accounts and updated its website. Some of their assets, such as G3 plus a subscription part of their ministry, were reported as transitioning to another ministry. The ministry has already been under financial strain after the 2025 conference cancellation, which came in the wake of the scandal with their former president Josh Buice.

Last paragraph. Independent reviewers generally agreed there were genuine citation shortcomings with Tom Buck in some of his sermons. But they viewed First Baptist Lindell's internal process as appropriate in the anonymous deceptive campaign, especially after G3's prior stance on anonymity with Josh Buice as the action that collapsed the organization. Now, David, I know that was a lot, but I wanted to make sure we had some clear context before we delve into the discussion. So first, could you just explain the scope and influence of G3 ministries and why this is such a significant fall?

Guest: David Morrill 15:26

Well, G3 had basically grown to be the largest, certainly within Reformed Baptist traditions, the largest conference ministry in the country. At one point they had topped one and a half million dollars in annual revenue. The conference was widely attended, sort of in conservative evangelical circles. They had major

names that people would know. John MacArthur would speak there, Voddie Bauchman would speak there. Kind of a who's who within conservative evangelicalism would be at the G3 conference, and it became very influential. Even at Protestia, we had talked about getting a booth there, and they had sent us tickets to give out to some of our subscribers and things, free tickets to the conference. So the relationship was very, I thought was very cordial between us up until this.

And then when the Josh Buice thing happened in 2025, it was obviously very embarrassing for them, and very embarrassing for the church and hurtful for the church, and they declined substantially in support and in attendance for the conference. They canceled the 2025 conference, which was a massive financial blow. Then by this year they had reconstituted themselves by their statements more of a smaller, more localized, more church-focused operational. At least that's what they were going for until all of this happened.

Host: David Wheaton 16:35

Tom Buck, as I read there, was a former board member of G3. I'm sure he probably spoke at their conference and contributed written content to them over the years. Do you know why the leaders of G3 were trying to out Tom Buck as a plagiarist in his sermons? I mean, why not just address him openly rather than anonymously and deceptively?

Guest: David Morrill 17:00

Right. And that question was really what got our investigation rolling because it just didn't add up. So Tom Buck, he was on the board of G3, and he was responsible for teaching expository preaching workshops for G3. So this was his relationship with that ministry for a long time. He stepped off the board after the Josh Buice thing happened and before Scott Aniol was brought on as president. He, Scott Aniol, was the VP of G3 at the time, and Tom stepped off the board before Scott became the president of G3. And so I could surmise that what might be going on behind the scenes in terms of organizational friction and things like that, I all of that's possible.

But the stated reason, and the reason that as far as I understand that these men are still claiming that what they did, although it was sin, to do it this way, that it was legitimate, was the accusations that Tom Buck was plagiarizing by using sermon commentaries in the way that he was using them. Ironically, the same men we found we've this is crazy, the same men we found out later by the analysis they used with Tom Buck would have been just as guilty of the same thing. Their own sermons use commentaries in the same in the same manner. So it's hard for me to look at it and say that's a legitimate motivation, which leaves us with a big question mark of what the real motivation was, and the whole thing's just kind of a shameful embarrassment within conservative evangelicalism that we still don't have a reason for.

Host: David Wheaton 18:18

Now, these packets were sent out in March of 2026 to the elders of First Baptist Church in Lindale, Texas, that's Tom Buck's church, and then they were mailed out to a wider audience when the G3 guys, the leaders apparently didn't think the church wasn't doing enough with what they had revealed to them. And this only really became a big story within the last several weeks or even a couple weeks. How was it found out that G3 was the source of these packets being sent out?

Guest: David Morrill 18:46

When they sent the first packets, and of course nobody broadly knew about this, they send these anonymous packets to First Baptist Church Lindale leaders, elders and deacons. Dozens, I don't think it was quite a hundred, but it was a lot of packets that go to that church. They handled it internally, and then the packet that everybody else, the other people that they mailed them to later, including the one that they mailed to us, said the reason they were mailing these packets to us is because First Baptist Church Lindale didn't handle it biblically. And I'm thinking to myself, okay, this seems like with these return labels that somebody had approached the leaders of that church personally. This was something that they knew who the accusers were, they they were working it out that way, and it turns out after talking to First Baptist Church Lindale, they just received an anonymous packet.

So there's no way that the gentleman that mailed these things or anybody else could have known whether the church handled it biblically because they were anonymous accusers. There was nobody to report back to. So again, these are additional red flags going off at this point in the process of trying to find a motive. We did our own analysis of the actual material in the packet and came to the conclusion that basically the same conclusion that other people had independently come to, that yes, Tom needs to tighten up his citation practice, he needs to be more careful about this, but this isn't something disqualifying where he's not doing his own work or he's buying sermons or he's taking the sermons from other men and not doing his prep. His elders basically reported to us that he does his prep during the week and we watch him and we work with him. It's kind of a collaborative process. So, like, okay, that's local church matter. If your church is satisfied, we're satisfied, but then we're still left with this lack of motive. So we're wondering, okay, who would want to do this? Who who would want to do this to Tom Buck? And information crosses, and all of a sudden there are people at Pray's Mill Baptist Church that are kind of on the outs with the leadership there, not going to the church anymore, that said, yeah, they admitted to us that they did it. So that would that was kind of the smoking gun as far as figuring out that it was them.

So then all of a sudden our investigation turns on why would these guys want to do this, how did they do it, and those kind of things, but at least we have a source at this point.

Host: David Wheaton 20:41

David Morrell, the publisher of Protestia, is our guest today as we discuss the fall of G3 Ministries. We have links to Protestia at TheChristianWorldview.org. When we return from this two-minute break, we'll talk about plagiarism and why the investigation by the elders at Tom Buck's Church resulted in correction for their pastor rather than disqualification. I'm David Wheaton, and you are listening to The Christian Worldview Radio program.

You are invited to two events in September. The first is The Christian Worldview Speaker Series event on Saturday, September 12th at Stone House Farm in Jordan, Minnesota with Pastor Travis Allen of Grace Church in Greeley, Colorado, who is a longtime favorite guest on the program and former managing director of Grace to You and a U.S. Navy SEAL. We will discuss a wide range of current events and issues of the faith, along with audience questions. Dinner will be served.

Two days later, on Monday, September 14th, is the annual Overcomer Foundation Cup Golf and Dinner event at White Bear Yacht Club near St. Paul, Minnesota. Golfers from near and far experience an enjoyable day of golf, meals, and fellowship, all in support of The Overcomer Foundation, which is the nonprofit organization that directs The Christian Worldview. More details. And registration for both events is at The ChristianWorldview.org or call us at 888-646-2233.

The July-August issue of The Christian Worldview Journal commemorates 250 years of America. Ed Vitagliano of American Family Association writes how foundations of our past provide a blueprint for future political and cultural renewal. My column is about the consequences of a nation rebelling against God and the blessings for repentance as described in Psalm chapter 2. There is lots of additional content, including the insert with resources for adults and children.

The Christian Worldview Journal is a bi-monthly print and digital publication designed to sharpen your biblical worldview on current events and issues of the faith. The journal is sent to Christian Worldview Partners as a thank you for their support of this radio ministry. To become a Christian Worldview Partner or to order an individual issue of the journal, go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call 888-646-2233 or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331. Thanks for joining us on The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton. Today's program and past programs, along with transcripts and Short Takes, are available at TheChristianWorldview.org. While there, you can also sign up for our weekly email and The Christian Worldview Journal print publication, order resources, and support the ministry. Our topic today is take heed from the fall of G3 Ministries, and our guest is David Morrill, publisher of Protestia.com.

Host: David Wheaton 23:48

David, let's talk about the accusation of plagiarism. Plagiarism is a big deal because plagiarism is stealing from someone else's content. It's actually deception because you're passing off your content as being your own when it's not. Phil Johnson from Grace Community Church and Grace To You wrote a column about this. The title was very good, Haman's Gallows. Like Haman erected the gallows for Mordecai, and it was Haman who hung on them. That seems to be the thread going through the story. He said that there was no evidence that Pastor Tom Buck was preaching sermons written by others. On the contrary, the evidence proved definitively that he was doing his own thorough study on the of the biblical text in the preparation of his sermons.

But, Phil Johnson writes, there were also examples of wording taken directly from commentaries without attribution. That's a practice I do not endorse. When I've expressed opinions about it, I have candidly referred to it as plagiarism because it technically is. Nevertheless, it's small time, non-criminal, traffic ticket level plagiarism, usually motivated by haste, carelessness, negligence, perhaps even laziness, not by a desire to steal others' work. The preacher who uses words he read in a commentary without attribution is not the moral equivalent of a horse thief. I don't condone or approve the practice, but unless it is being done in a large scale by someone who is using it to avoid his own study of the biblical text, it is ordinarily not serious enough infraction to disqualify a teaching pastor or ruin his reputation and career. That's sort of what you were just saying, David.

But there are other critics out there that are saying that Phil Johnson and others who know Tom Buck, they're minimizing what he did. He was taking content from these commentaries and using it in his sermons. There was examples of it, even word for word, apparently, in some cases, even if it was relatively rare. So are there degrees of plagiarism or with some variations of it not being disqualifying? Could you maybe dig into that a little more?

Guest: David Morrill 25:53

There's two categories that we're talking about here. There's the biblical law category, if we can actually go to Scripture and identify that's where it says thou shalt not plagiarize. There's really that category, but there's also the much broader category that I think ministers, academics, students, Christians just engaged in the other parts of life can get caught up in, which is hypocrisy in the academic sense. The reason that plagiarism is such a major problem or such a grave offense in academia is because we all agree, if we're students or we're professors or we're teaching, we all agree to a specific enumerated standard for what we will do or not do, and plagiarism violates that standard.

In terms of sermon prep, it has to be really established from Scripture what the standard is for where a pastor crosses the line. I would argue that there is some leeway or some discretion that churches apply to what they expect their pastor to do. Again, there is no version of the Bible that says thou shalt not plagiarize, and so what people will tend to do is they'll say, Well, I think plagiarism is lying, and the Ninth Commandment says thou shalt not bear false witness, therefore this person doesn't sin when they plagiarize, but it really is not that simple. In the case of prior plagiarism scandals that we've reported on in the past few years, things in the SBC, these were instances where that church had every expectation that their pastor was actually studying the word every week, preparing a sermon by his own labor for that congregation, for that context, and instead we found out that they were buying sermons that they may have never even seen prior to Sunday morning and just reading them verbatim.

This is a violation of what they promised their church that they would do. In the case of Tom Buck, he wasn't violating what he promised his church that he would do. He wasn't violating their expectations. It was more like because this is also public and your sermons will be public, they'll be on the internet, they'll be available, this should be tightened up. It leaned into more of an academic standard, but it's not as simple as just saying plagiarism equals lying, therefore plagiarism equals sin.

Host: David Wheaton 27:50

Good pastors, David, will constantly be using commentaries and study aids in their sermon preparation. That's how they're finding out what some of the great Christians of the past thought about the passages they're preaching on. There are settled interpretations of passages over the centuries. For someone like Tom Buck or another pastor listening, is it just a matter of they read these commentaries? Obviously, you can't take word for word. Is it a matter of better rewording or putting it into your own words or using constant attribution without a sermon? Because coupled with that is we're in the age of artificial intelligence now, and this brings a whole new dynamic into sermon prep as well. Maybe speak to that.

Guest: David Morrill 28:30

We are in an age right now where if a pastor just wanted to plainly avoid any accusation of plagiarism, he could still have a large language model AI write a whole sermon for him, and it would never be caught by any plagiarism checker. It would technically be original in terms of its you know not directly taking from other things, but it might be theological nonsense. So the goal of the preacher is not to come up with something novel or something that nobody else said, or even a way to present enduring truth in a way nobody else has presented it.

The job of the preacher is to actually get the meaning of the text, exposit that, and then actually apply it to the people he's standing in front of. And that's going to result in a lot of faithful preachers preaching things that are, in terms of content, very similar to one another. But that's not a bad thing. You know, our job as believers is to shepherd this gift of the gospel and the truth of God's Word. It's a faith once and for all delivered to the saints. It's not our job to say, now it's my turn to put my own spin on it. So that's why the issue gets a lot more complicated. Again, when we investigated the accusations that were being made against Tom Buck, it was a very tiny percentage of the actual volume of his sermonic work. But also it was the important thing to us, and this is always the case, is was he preaching what the text actually meant? Was he actually expositing the truth of God's Word? Not did he cite everything quite properly.

Host: David Wheaton 29:50

David Morel is our guest today here on The Christian World view, talking about the fall of G3 Ministries. Scott Aniol, who was the former president of G3, he has been a guest on this program several times over the years. And I didn't know him personally, but just knew him through interviews, and he always seemed like a wise, sound, upstanding person and pastor, like very level head. I'm trying to understand as I think about this how he, along with three other pastor elders, that not one of them, as this was you know hatched, put the brakes on this plan. There wasn't one among them that said, No, that's not a good idea. This isn't the right way to do it, especially considering that they really had a problem with Tom Buck thinking that he was plagiarizing over the line, following Matthew 18. If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private. If he listens to you, you have won your brother.

Step two, but if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you. So then by the mouth of two or three witnesses, every fact may be confirmed. Step three, if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church, and if he refuses to listen even to them, the church, let him be to you as a gentile and a tax collector. That's maybe the hardest part for me to understand is someone like Scott Aniol with the reputation he has and the rest of the guys, and I I know anyone's capable of sinning, I get it, but I just it would be easier to understand if there's just one person who did this, but four elders being involved in this. Can you explain that?

Guest: David Morrill 31:26

It's challenging to explain it because you can't see into people's hearts. We don't know motives per se. It was reported to me by people at the church that Dylan Joyner actually had, when they had a church meeting about this, had opposed this plan of sending the packets out. But eventually, I mean he kind of went along with it, but he kind of spoke out against it amongst the elders. And so he was given an option by the church to potentially stay on after a period of stepping aside, and he chose to resign anyway. But the methodology behind this betrays it basically excludes some of the possible motives. So, yeah, when we talk about church

discipline in Matthew 18, it can be a challenging thing to apply when we're talking about different churches or Christians interacting with each other in parachurch contexts or online, but the general equity of Matthew 18, I think, is still something we should be trying to apply.

So in this case, Tom Buck is their friend. They'd all ministered together, they were on the board of G3, they had his phone number. We look at this and say, first of all, why didn't you go to him privately? But even if you want to say, hey, this sin, "sin ", this accusation of sin, involves something he's done publicly and out in the open, we could potentially argue that they were at step two of Matthew 18. There are additional witnesses to this sin already, and they could have put it out openly. But what we don't have the option to do, and this is was really, I think, the flip for us where I realized this is a bigger problem than it may have initially looked like, is we don't have the option as Christians to accuse other Christians of sin and demand a church discipline, ecclesiastical involvement, consequences like this, and not have the responsibility of the accuser.

And these guys seem like they wanted to be able to be the accuser, the benefit of being the accuser, but not actually identify themselves and take the responsibility of being the accuser. Everybody, the basic common law biblical justice, people have a right to face their accuser. They have a right to a process. And when the person leveling the accusation says, I don't want to put my name on it, they're basically saying, I want to launder in an accusation and not be on the hook if the accusation is not correct or if I've gotten something wrong, and the Bible just simply doesn't allow for that.

Host: David Wheaton 33:30

Now when this became exposed that who had sent these anonymous packets and concealed them and so forth, very much in short order went from writing a letter of confession to the First Baptist Church of Lindale, elders there, and then within one minute releasing that confession online to the general public and then shortly after completely closing down G3 ministries. I mean this was kind of a whiplash type speed that was taking place. And there's no more social media accounts online, I believe, from G3 ministries and so forth. I think they either sold off their G3 +, which was sort of you could be a subscriber to that and get their content and so forth.

So I mean it's come to an end very, very quickly. I'm trying to think, is this something that is disqualifying sin for someone like Scott Aniol and these other elders who were involved in this? In other words, they are no longer above reproach, like a pastor commits adultery, it's a disqualifying sin. You can no longer have leadership in a church. Is it disqualifying in your view, David? And and where would someone like Scott Aniol go from here? Because apparently they were going to be working in a partnership with Joel Beeke and Puritan Reformed Seminary and College. I mean, where do you go from here with this?

Guest: David Morrill 34:52

Over at Puritan Reformed Seminary, they're starting a college that's going to start classes next year, about this time next year. As far as I understand, Scott Aniol is still on staff to be the dean there starting about a year from now. I don't know, I haven't heard any updates beyond that. In terms of ministerial qualifications, Pray's Mill Baptist Church actually found all four of the men to have lacked four of the elder qualifications that we see in Scripture, and so certainly disqualified at that point when they resigned their elderships in the church.

As far as permanent disqualification, I'm not one that really would ever argue that Scripture enumerates a permanently disqualified standard, but I would argue that churches do have a responsibility for making sure that the men they select or they ordain or they they hire as elders, however you want to phrase that, are above reproach, that they're not a distraction to gospel ministry. Sometimes sins that we commit in our past, they have this lingering consequence that really renders us it very difficult for us to be above reproach for it not to be a distraction, but a church should definitely apply that in context to the man that they're about to bring on.

In the case of these guys, I would argue that any sort of restoration potentially, even reconciliation to their church and reconciliation with the elders over at First Baptist Church Lindale has to start with true repentance, but true repentance has to start with true confession of what was done, and that hasn't happened yet. So the letter that they put out to apologize, I would argue that the reason that they put it out publicly, the moment basically that they sent it to First Baptist Church Lindale, was to control the narrative. There had not been an actual meeting between these G3 elders, the elders of Pray's Mill and the elders of FBC Lindale. There had not been a meeting between them privately prior to this letter going to the public.

So you have the public looking at this and presuming, assuming that real repentance has occurred, they're really apologizing for this, they're doing what they're supposed to do, and I'm looking at it and saying, this hasn't confessed to even half of what's been done, half of what they've done. They have not confessed to how they've handled it. This is public relations spin control. I said as such on my X account, like, hey, don't start applauding and congratulating them yet. They haven't even admitted what they've done. Not really.

Host: David Wheaton 37:00

Well, John Benzinger, the pastor of Redeemer Bible Church, I think it's in uh in Arizona, has written a really good column. We're going to get to that later in the program today about what true repentance looks like. This is not just applicable to these guys involved in this, but to all of us. How to truly repent. David Morrell, the publisher of Protestia, is our guest today as we discuss the fall of G3 ministries. We have links to Protestia at TheChristianWorldview.org. After this short break, we'll discuss the importance of every believer being under the authority of a sound local church and what regular Christians should learn from the fall of G3. I'm David Wheaton, and you are listening to The Christian Worldview Radio Program.

You are invited to two events in September. The first is The Christian Worldview Speaker Series event on Saturday, September 12 at Stone House Farm in Jordan, Minnesota, with Pastor Travis Allen of Grace Church in Greeley, Colorado, who is a longtime favorite guest on the program and former managing director of Grace to You and a U.S. Navy SEAL. We will discuss a wide range of current events and issues of the faith, along with audience questions. Dinner will be served.

Two days later, on Monday, September 14th, is the annual Overcomer Foundation Cup Golf and Dinner event at White Bear Yacht Club near St. Paul, Minnesota. Golfers from near and far experience an enjoyable day of golf, meals, and fellowship, all in support of The Overcomer Foundation, which is the nonprofit organization that directs The Christian Worldview. More details and registration for both events is at [The Christian Worldview.org](http://TheChristianWorldview.org) or call us at 888-646-2233.

The July-August issue of The Christian Worldview Journal commemorates two hundred and fifty years of America. Ed Vitagliano of American Family Association writes how foundations of our past provide a blueprint for future political and cultural renewal. My column is about the consequences of a nation rebelling against God and the blessings for repentance as described in Psalm Chapter two. There is lots of additional content, including the insert with resources for adults and children. The Christian Worldview Journal is a bi-monthly print and digital publication designed to sharpen your biblical worldview on current events and issues of the faith. The Journal is sent to Christian Worldview Partners as a thank you for their support of this radio ministry. To become a Christian Worldview Partner or to order an individual issue of the journal, go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call 888-646-2233 or write to PO Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331.

Host: David Wheaton 39:54

Welcome back to The Christian Worldview. I'm David Wheaton. Be sure to visit TheChristianWorldview.org where you can sign up for our weekly email and The Christian Worldview Journal print publication. Order resources for adults and children and support the ministry. Our topic today is take heed from the fall of G3 Ministries. And our guest is David Morrill, publisher of Protestia.com.

Celebrity Ministry And Church Accountability

As you well know, David, there have been some shockingly sinful situations with well-known leaders within the theologically conservative wing of evangelical Christianity recently. Steve Lawson, the fall of Steve Lawson, after an immoral relationship. Josh Buice, we've mentioned him, the founder and president of G3, with the anonymous accusations he was making as other Christians. There are probably others you could name off the top of your head. But much has been criticized about this celebrity culture, it's called within evangelical Christianity, where you have very notable pastors and authors and conference speakers and social media influencers are very highly platformed and looked up to. Is there something about that celebrity dynamic where these Christians are just really exalted? I mean, that's been going on forever, though. I think there's always been very notable Christians over the centuries. So is there something that about that celebrity dynamic that you think leads to this?

Guest: David Morrill 41:24

It's the celebrity pastor or the ministry leader that has influence and a platform beyond a local body of believers that naturally pushes on the edges of ecclesiology and polity and how a church is actually supposed to handle things like discipline. It's not really enumerated scripturally, and yet we have a responsibility to follow what the Bible teaches when it comes to disciplining one another. It falls into that category. One of the things that I noticed as I'm digging was digging through this issue and when we were working through the Steve Lawson scandal back in 2024, and this was consistent, what we found was that there were big, I would argue, ecclesiological holes in the churches and and with the leaders that were involved.

So no real enumerated external systems of accountability for spiritual leaders. With Steve Lawson, Trinity Bible Church down in Dallas basically gave him this special pass to not be a pastor at the church. He was a preacher, their lead preacher. So he could come out from California, preach a sermon, get back on a plane, and go back to California. The church had the benefit of saying, hey, we have Steve Lawson as our preacher, and Steve Lawson had the benefit of not ever having to pastor, not having to be involved in the other

components of what the Bible describes for elder and spiritual leader ministry. With Pray's Mill Baptist Church in interviewing people there, current members, former members, people involved in that circle, there were I would argue, ecclesiological problems in terms of how authority was actually exercised. Churches sometimes, I would argue, I mean, I'm a Baptist, so I always argue for church members that have a responsibility here, but with the celebrity ministry culture, there's a lot of instances where they have presumed authority or influence and things that's not bound by the mutual submission that's supposed to go on in a constituted local church.

Host: David Wheaton 43:14

I think that's a great lesson because a lot of these situations seem to stem out of a parachurch environment. Not all the time, but G3, David, was a parachurch organization, of course. They were actually aimed, their mission was to help the local church, and they seemed to be very closely aligned with a local church, Pray's Mill Baptist down in Georgia, and yet things still went off track. Speak to the importance of not just Christian leaders and pastors being a part of a sound local church and under the authority of the leadership of that church, because that's something that you hear today, I don't need to be part of a local church, I don't really need to be a member. There's a mentality of that today. Why is that not right?

Guest: David Morrill 44:00

It's funny that you mentioned G3 being a parachurch ministry. So Josh Buice was adamant, and in fact G3's documents adamant that they were a subchurch ministry. They described it differently. G3 is a subchurch ministry. And Josh and I actually kind of went back and forth about this during the Steve Lawson scandal publicly. I mean, I wrote an article basically describing, no, it's not subchurch, it's parachurch because the members that are doing this ministerial work are still part of the universal church. And they're part of their local churches, and they fall under that accountability.

But in terms of how we should look at it as parachurch ministries, at Protestia, we don't let anybody be involved who isn't we say loving, giving, serving, faithful member of a local New Testament congregation, and yet we don't, as a parachurch ministry, necessarily fall under those local congregations. So how can this possibly work? It works in that when if somebody that we're involved with or somebody that is sinning out here and really they should be disciplined by their church, we simply report it to the church and we let the church make their own decisions. And then as a parachurch ministry, we have our standards and we exercise our discretion in terms of saying, okay, you're not going to write with us or work with us anymore because of these things. That's kind of how we have it work.

But in terms of church discipline generally speaking, I would argue that reformed evangelicalism, we've really returned to taking discipleship seriously. This is a big movement now, and I would argue a response to seeker-sensitive shallowness. We've really returned to taking discipleship seriously. We have classes, we have academies at different churches. Where we really want to train people up in a sense of having sound and deeper doctrine, but we still haven't put the discipline piece into place. Discipleship without discipline is like having a class with no exams. So we we're very good at doing the discipline part, but then when our theology or what we know is tested, we're still dropping that ball.

A lot of churches don't have really effective and substantial church discipline procedures that are transparent and open. It's a lot of subjectivity, it's a lot of the elder board is going to make a decision behind closed doors that nobody else really knows about. That can't be good. I think that that's the next step for conservative congregations is to figure out how to have real functional discipline that is transparent and open.

Host: David Wheaton 46:17

Yes, it's a necessity and a matter of obedience to God's word that churches follow the steps of discipline outlined in Matthew 18 and elsewhere for members of the church who are involved in unrepentant sin to try to restore them. Otherwise, sin has a leavening, corrupting influence within the local church. I'm just going to close with one more question for you here, David, quoting Phil Johnson from the column that he wrote, he said, No one loved and promoted G3 ministries with more enthusiasm than I did when the organization's focus was clear and singular. So it pains me to say this, but frankly, it is time for G3 to dissolve and go away. That was the conclusion of his column, and shortly after that, that's exactly what took place. G3 dissolved and has gone away. It's a major dropping a boulder in a lake with the waves hitting the shore. It's a big splash was taking place here.

So taking this from what we've discussed from you know what took place, plagiarism, how this happens, the parachurch, celebrity culture, bringing it down to someone listening today who's just a quote unquote regular Christian, what do you think are the top two or three takeaways that a listener today should be learning from this fall of G3?

Guest: David Morrill 47:42

I think in terms of Christian living, we have to understand that what we do out in the open publicly, and this is by the way, that this challenge has been brought on really by half of our lives being lived on the internet nowadays. People have this digital life and then they have the real life, at least in their minds, but in terms of our obedience to God, He sees everything. He's everywhere.

So acting one way behind closed doors, one way online, one way in real life, saying certain things to certain people and other things to other people, none of that is biblically allowable. I think even mature Christians can get really pragmatic with what they do and not understand that everything that we do in every fast of our lives is to be offered to God as worship. We don't have the option of saying, I'm gonna be publicly chaste, I'm gonna be publicly righteous and holy and obedient, but behind closed doors I can kind of skirt the rules a little bit and be manipulating and pragmatic. I think that that gets a lot of Christian leaders in trouble, and it's a risk for all of us that do any sort of public ministry to be one person out in front and another person behind closed doors.

We've all grown up being told that in our churches, but it's like the internet came along and we decided, well, maybe maybe we can still pull it off somehow. It's like God doesn't mess around with His children. If He loves us and He does, He will not let us continue in that kind of sin. He'll bring us low, and we're seeing that happening. The reports that we have from Steve Lawson and the people close to him and Josh Buice and the people who are close to him are that they're repentant and that they've been forgiven and restored, and that's exactly what we expect to see from people that are truly Christians. We expect to see that. But there's still

consequences. Their public ministries will never be what they once were. It's something that all of us who do public ministry need to be constantly aware of.

Host: David Wheaton 49:24

I'm so encouraged to hear what you just said about Steve Lawson and Josh Buice, and God is a God of forgiveness when there's true repentance, and that's the sign of a true believer, really. The true believer can fall, but the overcomer repents and God restores that person. But you're right, there are consequences to sin, and we need to live in the fear of the Lord, knowing that He's always watching and weighing what we're doing. We never get away with sin. David, thank you for coming on the program today. Thank you for your diligent reporting on not only this, but so many other things going on within the church today. We just wish all of God's best and grace to you. Thanks again.

Guest: David Morrill 50:02

Thank you.

Host: David Wheaton 50:03

Again, our guest has been David Morrell, publisher at Protestia, a polemics ministry. Protestia .com is their website. We have links to them at TheChristianWorldview.org. There are lessons in the fall of G3 for all of us, and one of the main lessons is this. Fear God, for your sin will find you out. Proverbs 16:6 says, By the fear of the Lord one keeps away from evil. So the fear of the Lord means a deep reverence for God, knowing that God knows and sees our every thought, word, and action. Nothing can be done in secret without Him knowing. The fear of the Lord is never doing anything to displease Him, knowing we are accountable to Him, and that there is a consequence for sinning against Him and forfeiture of the blessing He wants to give us for obedience. So am I implying that the G3 leaders had no fear of the Lord? No. I'm assuming these are godly men. But it shows how easily even godly men can be drawn away into a sinful situation. Was it personal animosity toward Tom Buck that festered in their hearts and grew to the point of sinful decision making? Perhaps. Was it a righteous desire to expose sin, what they saw, plagiarism? If so, they should have followed the pattern of Matthew 18 and contacted Tom privately. If that didn't go anywhere, they should have contacted his elders openly, not anonymously.

It should never have been spread outside Tom Buck's church unless the elders of his church egregiously failed to address a clear sin issue. First Corinthians 10:12 says, Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall. So we shouldn't look at the G3 leaders and conclude, I would never do that. No, we need to fear the Lord. Abide with Him every day. Pray that He can help us see and overcome temptation. We are weak. He is strong. So pray for the G3 leaders for repentance and restoration. We'll try to publish the article by Pastor John Benzinger on genuine repentance in the September-October issue of The Christian Worldview Journal.

Thank you for joining us today on The Christian Worldview and for your support of this nonprofit radio ministry. Just a reminder that Tuesday, September 8th, the day after Labor Day, is the registration deadline for both The Christian Worldview Speaker Series event on Saturday, September 12th, and The Overcomer

Foundation Cup Golf and Dinner event on Monday, September 14th. We encourage you to come to one or both, but please register soon.

So until next time, think biblically, live accordingly, and stand firm. The mission of The Christian Worldview is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. We hope today's broadcast encouraged you toward that end. To hear a replay of today's program, order a transcript, or find out what must I do to be saved, go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call toll-free 888-646-2233. The Christian Worldview is a listener-supported, non-profit radio ministry furnished by The Overcomer Foundation. To make a donation, order resources, become a Christian Worldview Partner, sign up for our weekly email, or The Christian Worldview Journal print publication, or to contact us, go to [The Christian Worldview.org](http://TheChristianWorldview.org), call 888-646 -2233, or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331. Thanks for listening to The Christian Worldview.