

15th October AD 2019

Dear ■■■, ■■■ and ■■■,

I would like to apologise and ask your forgiveness for some historic abuses of power and despicable examples of spiritual leadership. I fear you will think these to be the least of my transgressions, but I hope you will nevertheless allow me to express my sorrow for:

1. Not keeping to a pre-arranged time for sabbath worship. It was arrogant to expect the entire house to simply wait for me to appear and announce the commencement of our worship. It was also a form of manipulation and conveyed the message that the sabbath activities of the rest of the household were subservient to my sermon. When ■■■ expressed his frustration at never knowing when the worship service would be, I was dismissive. His point was well made.

2. Expecting you to respond in prayer (or pray the invocation prayer) and hardly relenting even when you asked or begged to be excused. To publicly examine your understanding of a sermon in this way was to abuse a precious means of grace. To take it upon myself to choose who prayed in response was a form of exercising power over those present. Sometimes it would have encouraged individuals to endorse a sermon they didn't agree with, or to pray hypocritically, if they had not felt ministered.

3. Loading my sermons with very personal and individual insinuations and applications. I often used my position to address issues I was unhappy about. Many of my comments were very thinly veiled and I used my privilege to criticise others or hammer through my own opinions. This made the worship services at times repulsive to yourselves. Whilst the preacher's duty is to faithfully and plainly expound a Bible text, neither adding to nor diminishing from the meaning, it is best done without allusion to individuals or specific and sensitive circumstances.

4. Treating the children heavy-handedly when they misbehaved during the service. It was clearly upsetting to ■■■ in particular and very much hindered her ability to worship. There may have been other ways to quieten the children, and the disturbances may have been less frequent if I had done my sermon preparation in good time and set clear times for our worship services, truncated the service in length and given provision for the young children to sleep.

5. Typing out responses. It was controlling and manipulative to expect everybody at times to give a very personal digest of what they thought of the sermon, type these out and submit them for international publication in the church newsletter without the explicit consent of those involved. If people wish to discuss the message, they should do so voluntarily and not be under any compulsion. Also, they should be able to do so knowing that their thoughts will be treated respectfully and not passed on needlessly to others.

6. Embarking on long mission trips. I now understand that it is not at all God's way to leave wife and children for periods of weeks or months in order to participate in mission trips. There is no clear precedent or instruction to do this in the New Testament. It was particularly deplorable when ■■■ was pregnant, struggling with the children and trying to manage on a careful budget. It had been my intention originally to have travelled as a family, following the more biblical model of missionary work. A married man must care how he may please his wife. I should also have taken care to have kept in closer contact while away. Whilst on mission trips in Europe a number of pastors questioned the appropriateness of leaving ■■■ and the children. I swiftly dismissed their concerns and didn't take proper heed. I am grateful for the support that ■■■ and ■■■ provided.

7. Unduly pressuring any of you to move to Kent. I was foolhardy and naive to think that co-habiting with another family would be successful, especially given that ■■■ was opposed to the plan. I understand that this undermined ■■■ and ■■■'s confidence in me, especially when they observed ■■■'s misery at Oaktree Cottage. It also involved taking on a very large debt and locking Sarah into living arrangements which she had no means of escape from.

8. Unduly pressuring [REDACTED] to continue home schooling. Though I had reasons for doing this which I felt were in [REDACTED] and the children's interests, I was insensitive to the fact her heart was no longer in it and that Oaktree Cottage and Philadelphia were very different places. Homeschooling is a considerable burden even in favourable circumstances, so how impossible it must have been when [REDACTED] was in very low spirits.

[REDACTED]

It needs to be said that in all of the above, except for the homeschooling, I was following the example or instruction of others. That does not in any way exonerate me. I take full responsibility and have sought to repent of these things. I hope that in the future I will be given opportunity to demonstrate this repentance in deed and not only in word. I have not sent this e-mail to any third parties. It is [REDACTED] a genuine admission of guilt and request for forgiveness. Please don't conclude that our present difficulties are proof of any disingenuousness. The reasons for my present coldness are very different and will hopefully be unpacked during the upcoming mediation sessions.

Most sincerely,

Daniel.

(Addendum for [REDACTED])

Dear [REDACTED],

[REDACTED]

When I reflect, I can recall how painful it was for you to be rejected in this way when you needed me there. I was very pious, but lacking in compassion and understanding.

Also, though spending time away from you was unavoidable whilst posted in Castelderg, I did also spend a number of weeks away from home working in outlying hospitals as a medical staff grade, which was not necessary. I also left you without a car during periods of our marriage (e.g. when you were pregnant in Dundonald and at times also in James Court.

[REDACTED]

Sincerely,

Daniel.