

Statement From The Board - February 23, 2004

In recent weeks many of our readers may have heard about a problem that the Guardian of Truth Foundation experienced. Articles have been written about the problem in at least one paper circulated among brethren, a news report has aired on WBKO television station in Bowling Green, Kentucky, and letters have been distributed among brethren relating to these difficulties. It was not our original intention to disclose fully the details of this embarrassing situation. However, where little public information is available, rumor tends to abound. Because of these rumors, along with certain patently false information being circulated, it is now necessary for the Board to say more than we had at first planned. Consequently, the Board wishes to make this public statement about what happened.

In January 2003, the Board terminated the employment of Alan Birdwell as manager of the Truth Bookstore and treasurer of the Foundation because of poor job performance, after giving him several months to improve his performance. In negotiating with Alan, the Foundation at first provided him with thirty-nine weeks of severance pay to be paid weekly. At the time of his dismissal, Alan knew that the Board was having an extended review of our financial records by an outside party in an effort to bring our organization in line with standard business practices. Since 1984 Alan had served as treasurer of this Foundation and had prepared all financial records. During that entire period, his father, O.C. Birdwell, was his immediate supervisor. No outside audit of financial records had previously been done. On February 3, 2003, Alan hand delivered a letter to our accountant which said the following:

I do have some things that I want to confess to you and I want to ask for your mercy and forgiveness. I do not want to hide behind my depressed state for an excuse, but I do think I did some things that I would never do if I had been thinking clearly. However, that does not excuse anything. I have misled you and kept things from you over the last year. I have been negligent in keeping the amount of funds that I was supposed to keep in the Vanguard savings account. In order to try to make up for this lost interest, I used extremely bad judgment and invested in the stock market. I lost a lot of it very soon and with the depression, apathy, and desperation I felt, I became basically incapacitated. Margin calls came in and I paid them and fell deeper in the hole. I not only lost my savings but also the foundation's money. I convinced myself that I had the authority to invest in Vanguard or something else, but I was not thinking clearly.

I have made as much restitution as I could. I have replaced \$57,022.00, some in December and some in the first week of January. There is \$22,617 that I have not been able to replace yet. . . .

It should be noted that Alan's letter admits only to using poor judgment, resulting in the loss of funds, when in reality the Board never at any time authorized him to invest our money in the stock market. No stock market account existed in our name. The Vanguard saving account is a money-market saving account. In short, Alan had been writing checks to himself (other than his salary and reimbursements of legitimate expenses) without authorization from the Board to do so. These were acts of theft not merely poor judgment. Though Alan admitted misleading the Board in financial reports "over the last year," further investigation would reveal that he had fraudulently taken money and falsified our reports for at least six years. For six years our corporate financial records never indicated that any money was missing. Alan never produced a financial report that showed any monies were in a "stock trading account" for the benefit of the business, nor did he ever request permission in a Board meeting to establish such an account or to engage in such activity on behalf of the company.

Upon receiving this letter, we made a preliminary examination of bank records and discovered that Alan had

been writing checks to himself (other than his salary and reimbursements of legitimate expenses) without authorization from the Board to do so. Our preliminary investigation uncovered that \$103,963 had been taken of which \$57,022 had been repaid. In light of the receipt of this letter and our preliminary findings, a Board Meeting was called for February 13, 2003. We hired an attorney to come to the Board Meeting to give us legal advice, since none of us knew precisely how to handle a situation like this. We asked him if we had a legal obligation to report the crime. The lawyer advised us that we had a choice of whether or not to report this to the civil authorities, just as a store has the option of calling the law when it catches someone who is shoplifting.

At this time, there was considerable discussion about whether or not to report the crime. Some of the Board members believed that the Board had a moral responsibility to report the crime to the civil government which God set in place to address criminal behavior. Others believed that the first responsibility a Board Member had to the organization of which he was a Board Member was to protect its assets. Believing at that time that Alan owed approximately \$47,000, the Board offered Alan the option of repaying the money to avoid prosecution. Since the final figures of how much money was missing were not available to us, final resolution could not be made at this meeting. The Board also rescinded its decision to give him severance pay at this time.

During that meeting, the Board learned that O.C. Birdwell had transferred (without Board authorization) funds set aside by the Foundation for his retirement. He used the money to replace part of the \$57,022 which Alan said that he had replaced. In the opinion of the Board, this amounted to a cover up of the theft by the chief financial officer of the foundation. The Board reached the conclusion that O.C. Birdwell, who was the vice-president in charge of both bookstores, had not discovered the problem earlier or managed the situation in an ordinary business-like fashion when it was learned that money was missing. The Board perceived that this failure was due to nepotism.

At this same meeting, O.C. Birdwell admitted to the other members of the Board that he had attempted to cover up the fact that funds were missing. He acknowledged that if he and Alan had been able to repay the stolen money without the Board discovering it, the Board would never have been told of what happened. As a result, he was dismissed as Vice-President in charge of the bookstore operation and asked to resign from the Board. Nevertheless, in recognition of his many years of conscientious service prior to this event, the Board gave him a one-time severance check equivalent to ten week's wages. Also, at that Board Meeting, the Foundation instituted a strict no nepotism policy that prohibited one family member overseeing another family member. The Board instructed that this policy was to be prepared with legal supervision to be sure that the rights of everyone were respected, and to be put in place as soon as possible. Obviously, this resulted in a significant turnover in personnel at the Truth Bookstore and CEI Bookstore.

Meanwhile our outside accountant continued to work on organizing our financial records. Since almost all of our corporate records (both hard copy and computer files) had disappeared, our accountant was trying to reconstruct where the Foundation stood, but without having the necessary records to do so. The Board had to purchase its checking account records from the bank so that we could find out how much money was taken and by whom. We purchased records of checks greater than \$1,000 back to 1997. During this time, we found the amount taken greatly exceeded what Alan admitted. Our accountant found sixty-nine checks which Alan had written to himself without Board approval. The amount of those checks (ranging from \$1,000 to \$24,500) totaled \$370,008. Since we did not research checks under \$1,000 or prior to 1997, we are not certain exactly how much the actual total may be. The numbers were already so astronomical that we deemed it unfruitful

to dig deeper. Alan had been dishonest with us even in his “letter of confession” wherein he grossly misrepresented the amount taken.

At this point, perceiving that Alan Birdwell had not told the truth about how much money was missing, we faced another dilemma. We knew that there was a very real possibility that Alan might get a job managing someone else’s money and do to them what he had done to us. In this event, we would have contributed to his ability to do further harm by not reporting his criminal behavior. Furthermore, the Board perceived that Alan’s action had placed us in a no-win situation. In the event that we did not inform the police, some brethren would accuse the Board of covering up sin for its own members. In the event that we did report this crime to the police, some brethren would accuse us of taking a brother to court.

In an effort to resolve the issue with Alan without involving civil authorities, the following letter was sent to Alan on April 30, 2003:

The transition team of the Guardian of Truth Foundation has asked that I write to you regarding your embezzling of money from this Foundation. When we had our February meeting, we agreed to have you sign a contract to repay the balance of the funds owed to us over 20 years at an interest rate of 2.5 percent with payments beginning in March 2004. However, we were operating under false information when we met. Since you have never fully revealed what you had taken, we have had to reconstruct the information through our bank records. You destroyed many of our corporate records, making it more difficult to know exactly what had been taken. However, by purchasing past bank statements we have been able to reconstruct what you did. What you took is much greater than the amount we knew about when we agreed to a repayment plan. At that time, we thought you had taken \$103,963. As it turns out, the amount taken is over three times that total. . . .

From these records, we find the following:

Total amount embezzled:	\$370,008.00
Total amount repaid:	\$57,022.59
Balance due:	\$312,985.41

We are unwilling to have this amount put on a twenty year note and have you to repay it with monthly payments you will never be able to afford.

Having taken this much money from the Foundation, you face serious legal problems. On top of this, were we to report to the Internal Revenue Service that you have received this much additional income to what you reported on W-2 statements, you also will face problems with the IRS.

Having this much money taken from our Foundation has created serious financial problems for the Foundation. . . .As a result, we are in need of our cash and do not have the flexibility of extending your repayment over twenty years.

We are, therefore, making the following proposals to you:

Proposal 1: Repay \$200,000 and we will not report this to the IRS or legal authorities. This is the only solution that would allow full and immediate release from us.

Proposal 2: Repay \$150,000 cash, plus sign a note for \$162,000 over 20 years (payments of approximately \$678 per month). If you fall 45 days behind in your payments, we will then turn this over to legal authorities.

Proposal 3: Repay \$100,000 cash, plus sign a note for \$212,000 over 20 years (payments of approximately \$887 month). If you fall 45 days behind in your payments, we will then turn this over to legal authorities.

The Board will give you ninety days to make up your mind which of these options you choose and to produce that portion of the money which you have taken from us.

In the event that we do not hear from you within these ninety days, we will immediately turn over this material to the legal authorities and notify the Internal Revenue Service of additional monies received for the respective years.

Alan never responded to the Board's letter offering him three repayment options, one of which allowed him to repay \$.63 on every \$1.00 of what he had stolen. There was no counter-proposal or contact made with the Board during the ninety days. He did not call us and he did not write to us. Although we gave him ninety days and offered terms of repayment, we received no response from him whatever.

In August 2003, the crime was reported to the Bowling Green police in accordance with the Board's decision. In the end the Board concluded that calling the police about this missing money was no different from the bank calling the police when someone robbed them. Rather than executing personal revenge, as is prohibited in Romans 12:18-21, the Board reported the crime to the civil government which God set in place to protect people who obey the law and to execute divine vengeance against those who disobey law (Rom. 13:1-7). No lawyer was hired by the Board and no suit was initiated. We informed the authorities of the crime which occurred and were determined to abide by their findings and their decision as to the outcome.

At this point, the civil authorities conducted their own investigation. They could have said, "There is no evidence of criminal behavior here." But that is not what they did. Rather, at the end of the process, they indicted Alan on sixty-nine counts of "theft by taking property valued over \$300" (which is the felony charge in Kentucky) based on the checks which the auditor had found.

The civil authorities decided to prosecute Alan. Shortly before the trial date, however, Alan chose to plead guilty to the charges against him instead of pleading his case in court. Alan had the opportunity to plead "Not guilty," but chose not to do so. In the end, the sixty-nine counts were broken into two groups, for each of which he was sentenced to three years of prison (a total of six years). He could be eligible for parole in fourteen months.

The Guardian of Truth Foundation certainly has legal grounds for a civil suit against Alan Birdwell to attempt to recoup its financial loss but we have chosen not to pursue a civil suit, even though our business has been greatly damaged financially by Alan's actions. We chose rather to suffer loss than to instigate a suit against a brother to recoup our losses.

As a result of this terrible incident, the Guardian of Truth Foundation implemented the following work place policies:

- From this date forward, we will hire a public auditor to do an extensive review of our financial records on a yearly basis.
- We have also bonded those who handle money for the Foundation. With such a bond, the insurance

company agrees to cover any future losses, but the company has to agree in advance to report to the police any case of theft. We have agreed to this provision.

- The immediate institution of a strict no nepotism policy. As a result of this policy being implemented, all but one of the Birdwell/Stringer family members was dismissed.

Subsequent Developments

As the case neared completion in the Warren County court, Johnny Stringer, Alan Birdwell's brother-in-law, sent out a letter charging that the Foundation had mishandled this affair and thereby mistreated his family and sister Frances Birdwell. The dismissal of all but one of the family members which Johnny protests occurred because of the institution of a no nepotism policy within the company. Johnny complains that no severance pay was given to some of the family members when they were terminated. However, he does not address the fact that the financial condition of this Foundation was severely altered by the actions of Alan Birdwell. Furthermore, the family was given ample notification (from February 13 to May for Frances; from February 13 to August for Johnny) of the Board's intention to implement a no nepotism policy so that this would not create a hardship on the family.

A statement from Alan Birdwell, dated January 26, 2004, was also circulated in which he made the following statement admissions:

... After my employment ended, I confessed to the brethren on the board that I had lost company savings in the stock market and had mislead them about this. I informed them that I had made as much restitution as I possibly could. I did not invest this money for personal gain, but for the company. I, however, did not open a company account but used my personal account. I did and still do think I did wrong and sinned. I had made restitution to the point that I was broke and was willing to make further restitution. The board decided to let me repay the amount. They then changed their mind and demanded \$200,000 or threatened to turn me over to the authorities. They accused me of taking this money. They pressed the Commonwealth of KY's Attorney to bring charges against me and they did. I had little choice but to plead guilty because it was my personal account and not a company account.

Notice that Alan again publicly denies that he actually stole any money alleging, "They accused me of taking this money." Instead he defends his conduct by arguing that he was investing money for the Foundation but made the unfortunate error of investing it in his own account rather than in the Foundation's account.

O.C. Birdwell also circulated an undated letter addressed to "several individuals and churches" with an exhortation to "make copies of this letter for the members of the congregation." That letter includes the following remarks:

As many of you know, in February of 2003, I was asked to resign from the Guardian of Truth Foundation Board. This is the board that controls Truth Bookstore, CEI Bookstore, and *Truth Magazine*. I was also fired from my work with the business. Also, my wife Frances, daughter Nanette and her husband, Johnny Stringer were subsequently fired. All of this was because my son, Alan, who was Treasurer of the Foundation, and Manager of the Truth Bookstore, took funds from the company and lost them in the stock market. His intentions were not for personal gain. He admits doing wrong by using his personal account rather than opening a company account. Neither he, nor I, defend his actions. Some of the funds he was accused of taking, however, were reimbursement for company expenses.

Just as Alan's letter to the Board had done, O.C.'s letter, which was circulated to churches and individuals across the country, frames Alan's actions as merely poor judgment ("doing wrong by using his personal account rather than opening a company account"). This overlooks the reality that this was not a one-time action, but a pattern of behavior that extended over six years of writing checks to himself totaling over \$370,000 and falsifying the financial records of the Foundation to hide the sixty-nine counts of theft to which he subsequently pled guilty. In his letter, brother Birdwell accused the Foundation of sin by taking vengeance against Alan. He said, "They sought vengeance; they got their vengeance. So be it."

Furthermore, he explains that he was fired because his son took money. That is not true. He was fired because he admitted that he tried to cover up his son's actions, his mismanagement of the crime after it was committed, his mismanagement of the business (\$370,000 disappeared under his oversight and without his knowledge), and other offenses. Frances Birdwell and Johnny Stringer were dismissed in the implementation of a no nepotism policy. O.C. Birdwell's letter and his subsequent letter directing customers to other stores left us with the impression that he was making a concerted and transparent effort to destroy our business. Under ordinary business circumstances an individual would be afraid to do such a thing, knowing that he could be sued for damages. It is our perception that the only reason brother O.C. Birdwell could feel comfortable doing something like this is because he is confident that we will not sue a brother. Contact from various brethren indicates that some churches have posted his letter on their bulletin boards. O.C.'s actions involve churches in a matter that was essentially a personal business matter and necessitates that this Board publicly defend its handling of the matter. As we have said before, it was not our original intention to do this.

The Board immediately realized the damage that these statements could do to the Foundation. Both Alan and O.C. Birdwell denied Alan's guilt for stealing in excess of \$370,000 from this Foundation. At the same time, Alan was pleading guilty to theft of this money in the Warren County court. Mike Willis took the two letters to the District Attorney and asked him to clarify for us whether or not Alan was pleading guilty to taking the money. The following exchange is part of the court records available to whoever wishes to purchase a copy from the Warren County court (a VCR recording was made of the sentencing and the following was transcribed by Mike Willis from that video):

DA (District Attorney): If we can address one thing, your honor. After the plea, it has come to our attention, I've discussed this with Mr. Milligan (Alan Birdwell's attorney), that Mr. Birdwell and his father have both been writing letters to various church organizations regarding the events surrounding this. I think, before the court imposes judgment, Mr. Birdwell, along with his father, seem to at least intimate in your letters they feel that, at least the father more than himself, that he did nothing wrong. And before we sentence a man to the penitentiary, I'd like the court to make inquiries of him to make him understand that he does not have to plead guilty. The Commonwealth right now will agree to vacate his guilty plea and set him for trial and let a jury of his peers decide his fate.

Judge: Well, I thought I made that clear when I took his guilty plea.

DA: Well, from the letters it appears we didn't.

Judge: Sir?

DA: From the letters that he and his father have been writing it appears that did not come across.

Judge: Well, let me go back over this. Mr. Birdwell, I asked you, you told me, and I asked you did you understand that you were waiving your right to a trial by jury and that when you pled guilty I would merely

pass judgment. I think, I assume, that you understood that, did you not, sir?

Alan Birdwell: I did understand that.

Judge: Did you also understand that you would have to waive your right not to incriminate yourself because I intended to ask you questions about what you did in order to satisfy myself that you were guilty as charged.

Alan Birdwell: Yes. I understand.

Judge: And I also asked you if you understood that you have to acknowledge that you were in fact guilty. Did you understand that?

Alan Birdwell: Yes, sir.

Judge: And you did in fact do that, did you not?

Alan Birdwell: Yes, I did.

Judge: Well, I don't know how I can be any clearer.

DA: Well, I . . .

Judge: It's all on the record.

DA: I agree. But the level, the inquiries, we have, he has pled guilty to stealing over \$370,000. . . .

In specifically addressing the content of the two documents quoted above, Alan Birdwell admitted in court that he was guilty of 69 counts of theft. The fact is that Alan said one thing in court and a different thing in his letter. He did not tell the truth one time or the other. The evidence supports the findings of the court and the plea that he voluntarily made before the Warren County judge. What he and his father want to say about his taking of this money cannot be controlled, for this is a country that allows freedom of speech. However, not all speech is true and discerning readers will have to wade through these contradictions between what O.C. and Alan Birdwell said in their respective letters and the transcript from the court records to decide for themselves whether or not they believe that Alan stole money from this Foundation.

Since the disposition of this case, subsequent attacks have been made on this Foundation by at least two brethren, James P. Needham and Maurice Barnett. The one from brother Needham was addressed to Mike Willis and e-mailed to a group of brethren. Since then, it has spread around the country. Mike Willis received the Board's first copy of brother Barnett's letter from a secondary source. Interestingly enough, the Board was not given the courtesy of being mailed a copy of it. Both of these brethren make charges about our misconduct without so much as even talking to or writing to any Board member to confirm whether or not the things being said about us correctly represented the facts.

In spite of our being wounded by brethren Barnett and Needham, we do not desire in any way to be their enemies. Brethren who read this report should not think that we are gearing up to engage in an open-ended battle with these two brethren regarding our business decisions. Our only intention is to provide a record of the facts in the hope that these facts may clarify what actually happened for the sake of these two men and all who may read their misinformed accusations.

Brother Barnett accused this Board of acting with vengeance and that without any direct contact with any member of this board to know what our motivations were. We categorically deny that we acted out of vengeance and call upon him to publicly retract his unproven and unprovable accusation. In fact, members of the Board have prayed for Alan and his family even as we struggled to find the best way to proceed in resolving this affair. Brother Barnett also charged that this Foundation lied to him and this also is categorically denied.

Brother Barnett wrote, “The indication we get of the wealth of the Foundation. It took them a long time to realize that the money was missing. And, \$200,000? That is apparently a drop in the bucket compared to the wealth they actually possess.” His statements about the disappearance of this amount of money without knowledge of its disappearance raises some of the same questions we Board members raised. The Board is composed of nine men scattered around the country who have virtually no contact with the day-to-day operations of the business. That is why we have hired managers to operate the bookstores and to oversee the operations. At the time, the Truth Bookstore was under the oversight of Alan Birdwell and the CEI Bookstore was under the oversight of Johnny Stringer, son-in-law to O.C. Birdwell. Both managers were under the oversight of O.C. Birdwell. When we analyzed the problem, we learned that for at least six years money had been stolen from the Foundation and our financial reports prepared by Alan Birdwell were falsified. The Board had been making decisions based upon false financial reports. We also asked, “How could that much money disappear if the people in place were doing a good job of overseeing their respective works?” None of our bookstore managers, neither the former managers nor the present managers (Andy Alexander at Truth Bookstore and Vernita Goodall at the CEI Bookstore) have told us that we have so much money that large sums could disappear without our knowing it. Rather, both managers are struggling to enable the respective stores recover from this significant loss. The large sum of money which was stolen primarily came from inventory. The goods were sold and not restocked. In recent months the company has had to expend considerable sums of monies, some of which had to be borrowed from the bank, in order to reprint and restock our inventories. The Board concluded that nepotism was the reason this problem was not discovered earlier or handled in a business like manner when it was discovered. For this reason, the Board responded to this problem with the nepotism policy mentioned above and changes in management.

Brother James P. Needham wrote a letter that he circulated to a group of brethren at the same time in which he sent me a copy charging this Foundation with “ungodly action” against the “Birdwells” (note the plural). He charged that “extremely poor judgment” had been used and “sin has been committed on both sides.” He charged the Foundation with being “unbrotherly and unethical” and that our reporting Alan’s crime to the police was “another case of shooting our wounded.” He said that “a great injustice had been perpetrated upon the Birdwell family” and that the Foundation had violated 1 Corinthians 6 by taking a brother to court (rather than going into detail here, see a separate article on the Christian and civil government in the pages of *Truth Magazine* which will address the principle of the proper use of civil government). Brother Needham knows all of this because he talked to O.C. Birdwell! He manifestly violated the Scriptures that teach that one should hear both sides before forming a judgment. “He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him” (Prov. 18:13). Nevertheless, he has charged us with sin based on the biased testimony of a father angry because his son is going to prison.

Upon receipt of brother Needham’s letter, Mike Willis called brother Needham and explained to him the details of what transpired, believing that if he were given the facts he would recognize wherein he erred. He explained to Mike that he was not interested in hearing these details (although he had charged us with sin in regard to how we handled the situation). He alleged that we had sinned by violating 1 Corinthians 6 which

prohibits a brother taking a brother to court before unbelievers. Mike Willis replied that the Board had never hired a lawyer to sue anyone to recover any money. All that we had done was to report the crime to the police. Nevertheless, brother Needham still charged that sin occurs when one Christian calls the police to report that another Christian has committed a crime. In the course of this conversation, Mike Willis asked him, "If a brother broke into your home and proceeded to rape your wife, could you call the police?" He replied, "Yes, but that is a crime." To this Mike Willis responded, "So is stealing!"

Since that time, we were reminded that brother Needham participated in the legal controversy involving the Taylor Boulevard church in Louisville, Kentucky in which those brethren went to court to obtain part of the value of the property at Taylor Boulevard. Even though the other party filed the suit, the matter was contested by brother Needham and others, and the dispute was settled before it went to court. Brother Needham wrote a tract of almost forty pages length defending their conduct in the action. Yet, brother Needham now is accusing us of violating 1 Corinthians 6 when we have not taken anyone to court or even gone to court with anyone! The District Attorney of the state of Kentucky decided to take Alan to court for his crimes against us. Is this consistent?

We also think those who judge us to be the sinners in this matter have a distorted view of justice or have not sought all of the relevant facts. We are victims of a crime. We reported the matter to the police. The district attorney conducted his own criminal investigation and prosecuted the case. The one whom he charged with criminal behavior pleaded guilty to those charges and was sentenced to jail. Alan Birdwell still owes this Foundation money he stole. Where have we done wrong? Others who wish to make Alan Birdwell a martyr – an innocent victim suffering as a result of righteousness or of mistakes in judgment– have a perverted sense of righteousness and justice. The Lord willed that criminals suffer for their criminal behavior saying, "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters" (1 Pet. 4:15). The portrayal of Alan as a martyr reveals more about the one who so portrays him than it does about this Foundation.

Alan Birdwell betrayed our trust. We expected Alan Birdwell to behave as a Christian. We did not wish to think evil of our brother. But the facts forced us to confront reality. When he did wrong, we expected him honestly to confess his wrongs (James 5:16). He did that before the court. But he has yet to do that before his brethren. And, sad to say, brother O.C. Birdwell has supported his public denials of the true nature of his wrongdoing.

We regret that the Birdwell family has responded by charging the Foundation with misconduct by reporting to the police Alan's criminal behavior. O.C. Birdwell's and Johnny Stringer's letters demonstrate to those who read them the very same nepotism which was apparent to this Board. This nepotism is the reason why the problem of embezzlement was not discovered earlier or managed correctly after brother Birdwell discovered it. Their letters also demonstrate why we reached the conclusion that we could no longer continue to work with one another. We grieve over the consequences which Alan's conduct has brought to his family. We grieve over the attacks against this Board by the various members of the family (which attacks appear to us as "revenge"). We also are saddened over the mind-set of those brethren who are willing to reproduce and spread those charges without any investigation of whether or not they are true. Regarding "talebearers," the Scriptures say:

Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I am the Lord (Lev. 19:16).

The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly (Prov. 18:8).

Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth (Prov. 26:20).

Brethren who have no desire to harm us but who are perplexed by various rumors need to hear the other side of this issue. To these, this information is submitted. This statement is signed by every member of our Board so that “at the mouth of two or three witnesses” every word might be established – or in this case, at the mouth of *ten* witnesses! Some will not believe the testimony of ten impeccable witnesses, choosing rather to believe the words of a convicted felon and an angry father.

We deeply regret the crime that occurred and the damage and pain it inflicted on everyone involved or touched by its effects. In every step we have taken, we prayed for wisdom, justice, and mercy in our decisions.

We thank you for taking the time to read this account. It was not our intention to “air our dirty laundry” before the whole world. Circumstances now necessitate us telling our side of the story. We regret any misunderstandings that may have arisen about this matter and are hopeful that this may clear up any questions that may arise. Also, we genuinely solicit your prayers on our behalf during this difficult time and hope that we may continue to deserve your good will.

We would ask that brethren not victimize this Foundation a second time by withdrawing their business from our bookstores, especially at a time when we are recovering from the economic losses created by Alan Birdwell’s behavior. We appreciate the opportunity to serve your bookstore needs and ask for your continued patronage.

At the present, the Foundation is doing its best to regain the solid financial footing on which we have tried to operate this organization through the years. We continue to do our best to conduct ourselves in accordance with the principles of New Testament Christianity, while at the same time doing business in a genuinely business-like manner.

Signed by:

Connie W. Adams
Andy Alexander
Dickie Cooper
Ron Halbrook
Daniel H. King

Fred Pollock
Donnie V. Rader
Weldon E. Warnock
Mike Willis
Steve Wolfgang