

perspective, seemed more prosecutorial than simply reporting facts, information and truth from all sides. The force of the report and the discussions at Presbytery seem to indicate that the intent of the report was adjudicative although the commission said they did not believe this was their remit.

[REDACTED]

We are wondering about the seeming contradiction of upholding the virtue of impartiality (which was detailed out in the report to Presbytery as something the commission is holding against the session at IRPC) with the thrust of the report coming from only certain victim families' perspectives and primarily one family. This creates deep concern for trust, bias, and conflict of interest. The report that our Presbytery received was not an unbiased report. The commission made a conscience decision to take a 'victim-centered' approach. Again, we appreciate the desire to love and protect victims [REDACTED]. We are concerned with this two-fold. One being we were hopeful that as the Church, we would not allow worldly bents to shape or be the launching pad for the church to begin from in a pursuit after the truth and looking for solutions to our problems. No matter how virtuous the perspective is, for example trying to make sure victims are not discredited or dismissed which was alluded to when the commission was asked why they chose a victim-centered approach at our congregational meeting, Jesus' church has mechanisms and ways that world does not have. This is disturbing and cause for us to wonder at on what biblical basis was it appropriate for the commission to launch their investigation from such a clear biased position which essentially put the Session as the 'abuser.' Second, the idea of 'victim-centered' became conflated in that report and morphed into 'hurt-family' rather than 'victim-centered'. Yet it was put forward to Presbytery as 'victim-centered' yet was deeply one sided [REDACTED] and one sided in primarily reporting details that lent themselves to an agenda which seemed adjudicative. As quoted in the report, "We do not believe that our remit included adjudication" and then a few paragraphs later, "...an unexpected source of harm has come through the various mishandling of the Session. This report seeks to draw attention to this theme." Was this the remit, to draw attention to a theme from an unbalanced 'victim-centered' perspective?

- 2) In regards to influence at Presbytery. When we got on zoom to hear Saturday's session at Presbytery it took us by surprise to see [REDACTED] there at Presbytery and another family [REDACTED] attending. The commission clearly stated in their email about IRPC members attending the Presbytery proceedings in Kokomo, "This means only seated delegates and elders can be in attendance for that session. We ask the congregation not to drive to Kokomo expecting to attend and then to be turned away because of this rule. The commission is asking for an "executive session" because of this case's sensitive nature and protecting the personal information in this investigation." This brought more distrust and concern that the email was untruthful and misrepresented reality. We understand these families filed to get the commission, for which we were thankful at one point [REDACTED] to see them allowed to attend Presbytery was disheartening to us that we were not afforded the same opportunity. Then, according to the minutes as read outside executive session stated, we came to find out that a particular [REDACTED] was given an opportunity to actually verbally communicate with the entire Presbytery in person. With the commission's stated effort to advocate [REDACTED] this was difficult to synthesize when [REDACTED] were not offered an option to share [REDACTED], much less attend. This, again, creates a lack of trust bias and seemin [REDACTED] reference to onl certain ers ectives. [REDACTED]

██████████ An immense concern for us is knowing the emotional power of personal witness and the loving desire of godly men to minister to hurting people, we are deeply surprised that this was allowed on the floor and done right before Presbytery was going to vote on the recommendations in the victim-centered report. It is difficult to see how these actions by the commission and the Presbytery was not influential in how we got to where we are today. A quote from the report says, "The commission has been clear that equal access and voice to both parties in the narrative and decisions regarding this case is an excellent practice." We are wishing this would have been practiced by the commission themselves. We are deeply saddened that the platform where this was *not* practiced was in front of the entire Presbytery who were unfamiliar with the case and who had only seen a report that was, by its own admission, not centered on neutrality. This personal testimony of one family, combined with the thrust of the report, we have concern that these actions seemed to make that meeting more of a trial (with no defense) than of simply reporting information from all sides. Another disturbing aspect of the zoom call was trying to not assume motives of members of Presbytery. From the beginning of our zoom call until the computer was moved, we saw backslaps and handshakes and smiles and head nodding by different individuals. One individual who had personal involvement in the case, was sitting next to and whispering with ██████████ multiple times and displayed an amused/untroubled disposition. This was being done while a congregation of Jesus' church was receiving a deep blow in leadership. This response and spirit seemed out of place and discouraging and hurtful. We understand these actions could be responses to other things, it was just difficult to believe due to the continuous nature of the responses.

- 3) Experience of our interview. Upon reading the report sent to Presbytery ██████████ ██████████ we were struck with how much of the report focused on establishing credibility for the allegations that were focused on the Session's dereliction of shepherding duties, particularly of the sins of superiors. We were deeply struck with the thrust of the report and the steepness of the recommendations being about shepherding issues. There was a significant disconnect for us due to what our interview was about and what the report was about. ██████████
██████████ We walked through the interview, and when we were done and wrapping it up, Kimiko ██████████ had to ask the commission if they would be interested in knowing our perspective on how we were shepherded and cared for. We had to initiate and ask them if they would like us to speak about these issues. They allowed us to briefly speak about the care we received. This honestly didn't strike us as too strange until we read the report and the recommendations and rationale and were surprised that we were not asked our perspective ██████████ but rather we had to ask them to offer the information. ██████████
██████████ It is difficult to not conclude, once again, there may have been a purpose in the 'investigation' that had an agenda (prosecutorial) and it had drifted away from the remit to gather information to report to Presbytery. We are yet again discouraged to sense an unjustness in the interview process and feels dismissive of our experience because it did not fit the narrative.
- 4) Incongruence. In the report, the commission communicates how scripture clearly states to not be partial (James 2:1, Deut 1:16-17, Lev 19:15.) These were the quoted scriptures stated in the report that the commission indicated the IRPC Session failed to keep. This is deeply incongruent for ██████████ It was understood and believed by Presbytery that this report was also seeking to obey these scriptures. We are wrestling with just how difficult it is as sinful humans to walk that line faithfully and consistently. The report was clear on the stance by the commission of finding certain sins of influence and partiality by our Session as wrong. Our hope is that they consider how- on a significantly

smaller scale and only dealing with a few families, much less a whole church and a deeply nuanced case as our Session was- just how much wisdom, carefulness, thoughtfulness it takes to navigate these waters faithfully. We can extend a tremendous amount of grace towards the commission for leaning heavily in one direction with deep sympathy, empathy and love. However, this led to a partial biased stance in favor of hurting offended people not 'victim families'.

We do not think Presbytery is aware of this. We also see a deep lack of carefulness by the entire Presbytery in allowing a victim family to speak on the floor of Presbytery. We understand a desire to give voice, however did anyone have the foresight to consider whether this was or should be offered to all victim families? Did anyone speak up in that defense? The entire Presbytery gave vote to being partial in allowing only one victim family to speak without consideration of all families. This has caused harm to our entire congregation now due to the Presbytery's vote on the recommendations. In light of the commission's highlighting impartiality and the principle of undue influence and conflict of interest this is deeply inconsistent. With the weight of 1 Tim 5:21 (which the commission stated they kept in front of them) in regards of charges against elders, "In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing *nothing* from partiality." This may be cause for us all to look at just how difficult it is to be faithful in this matters. We all need grace in it looking to our Great Shepherd. If the commission did not find malice or cover up- how did they come to that conclusion? We were surprised to not find many statements in the report of the perspective and evidence of all the ways the Session did minister well, did convey deep love, discretion, prayerfulness, ministry, pastoral care, etc. If this was a neutral report, surely these statements and evidence should have been part of the report, but are loudly silent, essentially a whisper. Why?

- 5) Harm done. We are profoundly sad that as a family and congregation it is difficult to move forward in the healing, repentance, restoration process due to actions taken by Presbytery. There has now been harm done on top harm on top of harm. Oh, the effects of living in a sin-cursed world are horrible! Due to the biased report that was presented as impartial to Presbytery, decisions have now been made that are severely affecting our church family. In an effort to seek justness being done, we felt we have no other choice than seek to right wrongs done and bring balance to an unbelievable set of events. The commission themselves voiced that there was no malice found by our Session and no cover-up. This was clearly relieving and encouraging to our congregation. Yet, this was not the spirit of the events we saw at Presbytery a month ago. Upon receiving the report that was given to Presbytery, our hearts sank at the tone of it and the essence of what our Presbytery was led to believe. The report, however, that was given to the IRPC congregation had a tangible different tenor in where it conveyed eloquently how "it is important to note that the Commission's findings are allegations," and "Please do not assume that if charges are filed that it means the defendant is guilty." This spirit seemed absent in what we witnessed through the camera and heard at Presbytery but we do understand that we are not privy to all discussions at the meetings.

The amount of pain involved in all of this, we think everyone can see, but harm is being done by the actions and decisions of the commission and of Presbytery.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Deep consequences throughout our congregation have now occurred due to the commission's failure in fulfilling the remit to give an unbiased report.

6) Other general concerns include the following:

- 1) The excessive nature of the recommendation to eliminate an entire session after voicing no malice or cover up occurred seems to not fit the alleged crimes. Also, we are unsure of how the discipline seems to be one broad stroke that feels punitive and not restorative to us. If an entire session is going to be eliminated, it is our hope that the utmost pastoral care, carefulness, vigilance of avoiding conflict of interest would be taken, but we are not believing this has happened.
- 2) Deep concern that men who investigated seem to have come to adjudicative conclusions about the elders and have now volunteered themselves as prosecutors. This lays suspicion as to the heart to care for our congregation. Why was there not a separate recommendation to see if the Presbytery thought these men should now turn from investigators to prosecutors? We are surprised that, pastorally, one could not see the harm to the congregation of not doing so. If the Presbytery had the concerns of the Church at heart, we would think it would be in the spirit of tears for what they believe the commission 'uncovered' and would desire for other eyes to ensure what they found to be accurate when looking to eliminate every single elder in a congregation. This creates a deep conflict of interest from our perspective. When asked why this happened (that some of the same men would now act as prosecutors), the answer was pragmatic in nature and not pastoral.
- 3) Concern with Presbytery's neglect of carefulness when considerin the effect of their recommendations on our con re ation. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Most of the congregation discovered that our shepherds were being asked to resign on zoom. Another disappointment is that the commission knew this was their recommendation, yet there was no immediate communication (or pastoral care) for us, nor the congregation in the wake of this. Just silence. Nothing. We got the report. The congregation had to witness it on Zoom. Then, no follow up email. No pastoral care. Nothing. We had just found out we may lose our ENTIRE elder team and no pastoral care? We wrote the commission an email on Wednesday after Presbytery saying, "[REDACTED] have been provided more info to digest all of this, but I would beg you to consider at least reaching out in some fashion to this hurting body because much distress is happening due to lack of communication from the commission at this point. People simply don't know what is going on and the sheep don't feel they are allowed to be shepherded in this deeply distressing time." We understand, 'technically' our Session was still intact, but we would hope pastorally, the heart of our Presbytery would be to come alongside these elders and a hurting congregation to aid in time of distress. Harm has been done and it is difficult to believe that love for Jesus' church is the center of all that has occurred.

- 4) A part of the commission's remit, as stated in the report, was to give recommendations to Presbytery in the area of 'Pastoral'. In the report, there seems to be a lack of instruction, pastoral love and guidance for our session as to what the fruits of repentance would look like. There were punitive recommendations, which we understand can be pastoral. We are curious as to how in the report it states, "We did not believe that our remit included adjudication," and we are trying to reconcile this with emphasis pastorally on punishments and a void of training or future-focused

instruction. Wondering, in this lack, if this is the shepherding and pastoral care Jesus desires for his Church.

- 5) The report states that there will need to be time for the Commission to complete its recommendations to the Presbytery regarding best practices concerning child safety practices. We are wondering if this forward looking effort is being attended to as much as the prosecutorial aspects are?

We are eager and ready to move forward and grow, but these deeply disturbing events that have come as a result of the report and thus the votes by our Presbytery are making it hard to do so as a congregation. Upon considering the many men in the Presbytery who were at that meeting and had that report laid out before them in writing (only a few days before), after them hearing the testimony of first hand offenses and hurts, after hearing discussions some of which were of the essence 'at some point you need to put the blinders on and administer justice,' we understand how some were inclined to vote the way they did. However, the starting point of the commission appears biased, the execution of the investigation and information in the report was unbalanced, the prosecutorial nature of the report and discussions appeared biased the allowin of onl 1 victim famil to s eak was partial. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] We do not deny wrongdoings by our Session and please know that we are keenly aware there is another 'side' to our concerns that we are bringing to Synod. We are not wanting to make anyone 'pay' or want any sort of recompense, but rather we ask that you please allow us, our congregation, our Session to walk in humility and repentance, not be forced to operate inside these legal lines of technicality but rather walk in line with the gospel and be able to pour out grace and love to one another to the glory of Christ alone. We are waiting to see how God will lead this denomination, our Presbytery, our church and our families. And while we wait, we will pray, we will love, we will serve and we desire for Christ to be magnified and that God through his church will display to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places his eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In light of the content of our letter, our formal 'complaint' is against the action of Presbytery in the appointment of special prosecutors for the elders at Immanuel RP, as stated in the minutes: Item 61, IJC Recommendations 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9. We ask the Synod to consider overturning these actions and that the prosecutors be dismissed. We believe that these actions were taken based upon a biased, unbalanced report. By overturning these actions, Synod would allow for the shepherding committee to do their work with the IRPC Session and give them time and space to walk out the necessary repentance.

If Synod does not believe overturning the actions is appropriate, we humbly ask that, (upon receiving these concerns that have been raised about the report to Presbytery) in the least, Synod would consider re-looking at the entire process in regards to all the events such as the initial case, the investigation, the investigators, the IJC report and resulting recommendations/ votes. We do not know what mechanisms would be needed to accomplish this (such as new investigators to do another investigation or a committee to examine the current investigation/ report, or placing the case/recommendations back into Presbytery for more discussion/re-vote), but we ask Synod to consider if such measures would be recommended. We also ask, if dismissal of the prosecutors is not an option, that Synod would at least appoint other men, not from the commission, to act as prosecutors. We would respectfully ask to be informed of any decisions and/or actions taken by Synod. Thank you.

Thank you for your time to read and digest all we have written. We will prayerfully await your response.

In earnest desire for His Glory-
Adam and Kimiko Soldati