

Greetings my [REDACTED],

[REDACTED] It is a sad day when one of the Lord's chosen has stumbled. It affects us all as a community of Christian and our witness to a lost and dying world. Therefore it is with a heavy heart that I bring you the news that R.C. Sproul Jr. has been deposed by the denomination that he was under. As some of you may know, I am a huge R.C. Sproul Sr. fan. He is like an idol to me, figuratively speaking, of course. I have learned so much from Sproul Sr., everything from theology, philosophy and apologetics. He has shaped my thinking in so many ways. It is for this reason that I am so sad to have to pass on this news about his son.

One wonders why so many prominent men's children do not live up to the stature of their parents. It reminds me of Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu offering strange fire before the Lord. Then there are Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas making extortion and putting themselves before the Lord. No, I am not saying Sproul Jr.'s mistakes were as egregious as these men. I am only citing them as examples of how sons do not necessarily live up to their parent's stature.

I've included the source document showing the circumstances for Sproul Jr.'s deposition. I know some of you may not use the internet and the only way you will read any of these things is, if they are printed out.

If you don't mind I would like to take a few more minutes of your time and make a personal note on this situation. As much as I love Sproul Sr., I have always had problem with Jr.'s teachings. Starting with his unbiblical teaching of his family covenant theology, and now apparently he also believes in burning incense in church service, and paedo-communion, which is one of the point of discipline that he and his elders have been defrocked for. My personal view and, I think, the majority of Christians view these practices as unbiblical, but I am not here to present a polemic against these view. (If you are interested, email me and I will send you a detail Scriptural criticism of these views) Rather, I would like to share with you from my experience of being in a cult, some of the danger signs that I see around the circumstance of Sproul Jr.'s defrocking.

To Begin, on January 26, 2006 pastor Sproul Jr and the elders Laurence Windham, Wayne Hays, and Jay Barfield were deposed by the Westminster Presbytery of the RPCGA<sup>1</sup>. There were 3 reasons for their deposition. I will briefly paraphrase and summarize the items here and comment on them. You can read the attached official document from RPCGA for the exact wording and detail.

1. Sproul Jr and the elders of St. Peter Presbyterian Church used the authority of their office to treat the Austin family in an abusive manner. Another member of the church liken the abusive treatment to a lynching and what seem to be the Auburn Avenue Theology. (If you don't know what the Auburn Avenue Theology is, don't worry about it. Just note that this has been a raging debate in the Reformed and Presbyterian churches since 2002, with the majority of the conservative theologian against this theology.)
2. Sproul Jr. knowingly and willingly used another denomination's tax ID number to set up bank and credit card processing accounts, in violation of Federal Income Tax Code.
3. St Peter Presbyterian Church violated the RPCGA's Book of Church Order by establishing a daughter church without the permission of its Presbytery.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://hushmoney.org/R.C.\\_Sproul\\_Jr.\\_disclaimer.htm#defrocked](http://hushmoney.org/R.C._Sproul_Jr._disclaimer.htm#defrocked)

4. St Peter Presbyterian Church violated Church Order by splitting their congregation into parishes and installing a student pastor without the permission of its Presbytery.
5. Rev Sproul and Rev Windham administered different vows to its members from the required vows of its Book of Church Order.
6. St Peter Presbyterian Church failed to submit ecclesiastical by-laws to its denomination.
7. St Peter Presbyterian Church performed improper administration of the sacrament of the Lord's Table, in violation of the Westminster Confession, Chapter 29: Section 7 & 8, the Larger Catechism questions 166 – 177. This is in clear opposition to the ecclesiastical adherence of PCA, OPC, ARPC, and RPCGA.

At first you might say some of these violations are just denominational squabbles and I would agree some of them are. So what danger signs am I talking about? What is indicative to me here are signs of cultic techniques. Please read what I said carefully, cultic techniques NOT cultic theology. Nevertheless, it can still be very harmful. By the way, the word cultic is not just my estimation of the elders at St Peter but that is also how the Austin family referred to the abuse that they have been subjected.

From what I can gather Sproul Jr. and the other elders of St Peter seems to be a fairly tight knit group. This should be obvious by their coordinated and unitary action to consciously violate the civil law of the land, the denominational order they vowed to uphold, and their disregard for Scripture when it conflicts with their theology. The elder of St Peter are more educated and more versed in Scripture than I; they must know the Scripture commands against these abuses.

**Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Rom 13:1**

**<sup>6</sup>This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Ro 13:6**

**<sup>2</sup>Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; <sup>3</sup>not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. 1 Pe 5:2-3**

Beyond this I think any church that starts with a small group of friends that forms the leadership without oversight is dangerous, as indicated by the elders at St Peter. Actually Sproul recognizes this danger himself. Or maybe he recognize that people looking to join a church, would spot this as a danger if St Peter did not belong to a denomination. Take a look at this quote from Sproul Jr. back in 1/2001.

“I was questioned on the floor briefly concerning my views on the Sabbath (I tend to be more continental than Puritan, as the majority of PCA pastors are), my views on worship (that I saw nothing wrong with burning incense was the problem, though there is nothing in the Confession against it), and on paedocommunion, where my views are out of accord with the Confession, and the great bulk of Presbyterians. (Of course, I think they are, however, biblical, else I would not hold to them.) In all three I expressed my willingness to bow to the wisdom of the brethren. **I was, after all, coming to them looking for oversight.** I was also questioned at length on my views on government schools. I affirmed that I believed that sending ones children to government schools was a sin. I also stated that it would be up to the local presbytery to

determine how serious a sin such would be. That seemed to light a fire.”<sup>2</sup>

“Since that time I have been examined by and accepted into the Reformed Presbyterian Church General Assembly, a small denomination which is at the same time deeply committed to the Reformed faith, and committed to getting along nicely together. The gentlemen in the RPCGA have proven to be gentlemen indeed, and I am grateful for their oversight over the work that I do. Rest assured, if I start teaching heresy, they won't hesitate to bring to bear the grace of church discipline.”<sup>3</sup>

The first quote is R.C. Jr. describing his encounter with Westminster Presbytery and his desire for membership with them and for oversight. He had some strong views on certain doctrines and was rejected. The second quote R.C. Jr. informs the readers that St Peter has been accepted into RPCGA and again expresses his gratefulness for the oversight.

Many of us have strong view about our faith, myself included. However, we must be wise and temper those strong views with the Brethren in general. We tread on dangerous ground when we act as lone wolves, because that is how most “cults” begin. Take a look at the Mormons and JWs, they are as fervent and as dogmatic as any Christians that you will find. Both Joseph Smith and Charles Russell founders of the Mormons and JW are charismatic leader, whom their followers respected as godly men. That is why when they tell their followers that all other Christians are apostates, they are the true Christians, people believe them.

The problem with being dogmatic, especially if you are the shepherds, is that you better be sure you are not the blind leading the blind. One way is not to rely on your own intelligence and your own narcissistic piety, thinking that you are holier than the rest of your brethren.

<sup>3</sup> For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. **Ro 12:3**

Take a look at this comment from R.C Jr.

“If I was kept out for political reasons, I'm glad to be left out. If I was left out because my views were too far off, that's okay too. I am, as I have been from the beginning of this process, at peace about it. I remain grateful for the men who labored and argued hard on my behalf, and continue to pray for the peace and fidelity of the Westminster presbytery.”

I can appreciate a man with strong convictions but not to the degree if you lose balance. I am not saying that is what has happened to R.C. Jr., but I have my suspicion. The apprehension I have is R.C. Jr's insistence in shopping for a denomination that would allow him to practice his more unorthodox views. He has shown that he has no regards for his brethren's counsel, no regards for civil ethics and no regards

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<sup>2</sup> [http://highlands.gospelcom.net/ETC/Volume\\_Five/Issue\\_One/Apologia.php](http://highlands.gospelcom.net/ETC/Volume_Five/Issue_One/Apologia.php)

<sup>3</sup> ibid

for his vow to submit to an oversight. What's next? Some have speculated the Covenant Presbyterian Church Denomination<sup>4</sup> (CPC) was formed to allow for his type of theology. Do you not see the danger in this? Think about it. What this means is that we don't find any other Christians who would accept our understanding of Scripture, therefore we will start a brand new denomination for this teaching. This is a scary thing. This means that there really is no oversight and it is nothing more than cronyism, to put it crassly. All you will be left with is a group of friends who reinforces each other's errors. I hope R.C. Jr. does not go that route. I love his father too much to see him slip any further and bring dishonor to the man, not to mention the Christian Body.

A final personal note if I may. Having been in a cult, I can relate to the Austin family and how hard it must be for them to go against the elders. For those who have not been in a cult, they won't understand why people just don't walk out. It is not that simple when you have friends that you've associated with for a long time. They are your family, your friends, the people that you spend your weekends and many times weekdays with. You go on vacations together. You take care of their children and they look after yours. Finally, where else would you go if you leave? There is comradery and a sense of belonging. By leaving you enter into an outcast world of the church. When you find a new church, there isn't a sense of belonging. You don't fit into the click groups. Most people don't even care if you come or go. Many times what keeps people in a bad church is not the theology. It is the interpersonal relationships. I get it. I really do. The only question I have is, do you want to serve God or do you want to serve Man? It is especially hard for people like the Austin family because R.C.Jr. is not a flaming cult. In addition his father is R.C. Sproul the big man. I have no doubt R.C. Jr. has demonstrated his zeal and love for the faith. Again the question I have would be, what is the best way for you to serve God? Is it on the fringe of Christian theology or in the community of other Brethren? [REDACTED]

In Christ,  
[REDACTED]

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<sup>4</sup> IMHO, is an extremely small and problematic denomination.