

Sovereign Grace Founder CJ Mahaney Speaks Out on Sexual Abuse Case

C.J. Mahaney, founder of Sovereign Grace Ministries—and current pastor of Sovereign Grace Church of Louisville, Kentucky—is finally speaking out in the wake of a sex-abuse scandal that rocked the evangelical world.

Two years ago, Covenant Life in Gaithersburg, Maryland, was hit with a civil lawsuit related to sexual abuse. Mahaney was one of the overseers of the church. During the past 24 months, Mahaney stood in silence in the face of accusations that he helped protect child predators. Now he's working to set the record straight.

For starters, earlier this week, Mahaney left the Gospel Coalition, a central hub for the Reformed evangelical movement. His move came days after a criminal trial wrapped up last week that questioned what pastors knew about the sexual abuse going on at Covenant Life.

Mahaney's statement reads:

"For nearly two years now, I have remained silent about a civil lawsuit brought against various parties including myself. During that time, many have urged me to respond publicly and address the accusations against me.

"These pleas have only intensified over the last week in light of reports of testimony in a recent trial. I look forward to the day when I can speak freely. For now, the simple and extraordinarily unsatisfying reality—for myself and others—is that in the face of an ongoing civil lawsuit, I simply cannot speak publicly to the specifics of these events.

“Even with those constraints, however, let me be clear about this: I have never conspired to protect a child predator, and I also deny all the claims made against me in the civil suit.

“I am deeply grieved for those who suffered abuse while part of Covenant Life Church, as well as those beyond the church who were abused—and I continue to pray for justice to be served on their behalf and for God’s healing grace in their lives. I’m saddened, too, by the confusion and damage that has resulted from public comments and speculation about these events. Still, my trust remains in the Lord, who comforts the brokenhearted and promises in his justice and in his time to right every wrong.”