

## **Bill Gothard's Detailed Knowledge of Immorality Prior to 1980**

Question from Bill Gothard to Tony, October 16, 2013

“The statement that I had “detailed knowledge” of what was going on prior to 1980 is a very important point. What facts do you have to confirm this? I can say in all honesty before the Lord that I did not have detailed knowledge of what was going on. When I was told of broken standards, I was led to believe they were of a much lighter nature than they actually were. I dealt with them publicly and had no further knowledge of anything until 1980. “

The implications of Bill Gothard having detailed knowledge of ongoing immorality among his closest management and staff over at least a seven year period, prior to 1980 (when he was confronted by Tony G) include two of the most serious charges that can ever be brought against a minister, pastor or Christian leader. Bill Gothard's knowledge of ongoing immorality which he chose to not deal with and to cover up from further discovery and correction means two things are true...

1. Bill Gothard was and is now fully responsible for *sending* new and additional young daughters of Dad's and Mom's into this remote location in Upper Peninsula Michigan to live with and work for his brother, knowing he was sending them into harm's way, where they also were sexually assaulted with all spiritual wickedness, as had the previous young women sent previously.
2. Bill Gothard was and is now fully responsible for *keeping* young staff women, already and previously assaulted by his brother, keeping them in the same remote living quarters with his brother assigned to those remote posts by Bill Gothard to continue working daily for their tormentor and working for Bill Gothard to assist him in writing, editing and moving IBYC/IBLP publications to the market for sale, he, Bill Gothard, failing to move them out immediately, failing to provide to them spiritual, mental and emotional help to deal with their years of trauma.

Response from Tony G to Bill Gothard, December 30, 2013

Your above question regarding “detailed knowledge” is perhaps the most important question and was the turning point in 1980 for your staff and Board of Directors. Definitions are important in any discussion but are particularly so in dealing with these sorts of issues. A “detailed knowledge” does not necessarily mean that you were personally aware of every single act, action or nuance of each one's individual transgressions. There is, however, a good amount of evidence to clearly support you did have a great deal of detail about ongoing, repeated immorality. That detail included testimony I took from each of the women involved (Note 1 below), your own admissions on several occasions to department managers interviewing you in 1980, as well as testimony of your interviews with the women involved over the years. These details were reviewed with you and presented to your Board of Directors on several occasions in 1980. You were in attendance at one meeting with the Board where you were invited to disagree with or show the error of any detail being presented. This detail was also later copied to your law firm before and again during the 40 hours they deposed me. This would again have been confirmed by testimony collected and utilized in the later lawsuits against you and the ministry by others who had ongoing access to sources (which I was not involved in).

It is of interest to me, and indeed to many, that you would now attempt to claim that you did not know the “condition of your flock” (Proverbs 27:23-27) and were entirely in the dark regarding the ongoing immorality and sexual perversions being perpetrated constantly over so many years with the 15 people who you were closest to in work and in living environment. That blindness and lack of attentive care in this case would be appalling in light of your official teaching and personal claim that you were their “umbrella of protection.” The evidence and testimony will show that you actually did have “detailed knowledge” of some of the immorality (though as I have stated and do believe you did not know all or every “jot and tittle” of the goings on). The evidence demonstrates you were resistant to dealing with it, rejected every person who attempted to bring it to your attention or confront you about it and you made great efforts to cover up the fact of what was occurring. The result was your actually protecting the perpetrator.

As much as you might hate these facts, I found it incredibly easy in 1979 and 1980 to ask each of the women and your brother and the remaining of the 15 of your staff, very simple and direct questions and they were each and all most eager to tell a great deal of determinative information and ask for genuine help to stop living such a life and escape the slavery they were involved in. You had even a better advantage and position than I to make the same inquiry with even greater responsibility and sense of care over at least seven and perhaps up to fourteen years that you were aware of what was going on.

**Summary of Bill Gothard’s (#1) “detailed knowledge”  
of immorality among his own ministry staff and employees,  
What he knew and  
When he knew it**

1. From Gary Smalley’s notes summarizing July 5, 1980 meeting with Board of Directors (notes dated July 6, 1980). Quoted excerpts from Gary’s notes:
  - a. “During the meeting it was revealed Bill did interview one of the girls in detail and did discover Steve’s [originally notated in this document as “#2”] deep level of improper sexual drives and extent of his moral problems.”
  - b. “Bill admitted to his directors that he had knowledge of total intercourse between [Steve] and at least one of the girls involved. With this knowledge and the knowledge of [Steve’s] continued involvement with one of the girls two years ago, he sent another girl on staff up North last August 1979. This girl had kept her life pure for at least 9 years and when Bill failed with his own temptations of masturbation he discovered later that it was that very night she failed with [Steve]. Bill admitted to his Board July 5, 1980 that he has struggled with the area of masturbation since he was 31 years of age.”
  - c. “Bill’s present encouragement of [Steve’s] marriage to at least one of three girls involved. Bill has recently personally encouraged the parents of two girls to marry his brother [Steve].”
  - d. “Bill’s lack of application of his own seminar message. His inability to lead his closest staff spiritually. His personal secretaries, his executive directors were all involved in a perverted sexual scheme. Bill’s brother... executive director of the work, had involved himself in sexual perversion with at least 7 girls and attempted it with two other girls. Bill has admitted allowing

[Steve] during the past 3 years to help in the development of all seminar publications including the Men's Manual of which [Steve] gave Bill the foundational format based on I Cor. 16:13, 14. ...Bill personally committed himself to [Steve's] restoration and four years later [Steve] has regressed to the state of deep moral perversion."

d. "For the past 13 years, Bill has failed in the area of masturbation."

e. "One seminar staff member witnessed Bill wipe a spilled coke off of a staff woman's breasts and personal areas [redacted]. His brother [Steve] then placed his stocking feet between her legs and requested that she rub his feet and legs. The girl placed a blanket to cover his feet. The seminar staff member kept waiting for Bill to demand his brother to remove his feet." Note: this flight included passengers Bill Gothard, his brother, [staff woman], and Gary Smalley with the ministry owned MU2 plane being used.

f. "Bill has admitted staying in his cabin alone until 11:00 p.m. on several occasions with at least one staff girl who was involved with [Steve] sexually. This was a violation of his policy of no single girl allowed in any staff man's apartment alone. "

g. "Bill has been encouraging some of the staff girls to call him whenever they were morally tempted so he could pray with them."

2. Ed Martin in meetings with Bill Gothard in **January 1975**, clearly stated to Bill "there was fornication" involved. Ed had details of sexual immorality between one girl and Bill's brother. He was made aware of this information by Gary Smalley who had learned it from his wife. She had met with the staff girl involved who admitted to the failure.

3. Excerpted from the notes taken in Ed Martin's and Mike Laramie's meeting with Bill Gothard May 18, 1980:

Question from Ed to Bill: "Did you have any knowledge of fornication by [Steve] during the past four years?" Bill: "[a First staff woman], "Yes," August 1979...[a Second staff woman], question...[a Third staff woman], "Yes," middle of April 1980.

Ed: "Bill, there were four girls involved morally before with [Steve] and I told you that one went all the way." Bill, "I did not know that." Ed: "Bill, you are lying! You know I told you four years ago. I can't believe you would lie like this." Bill: "[The Second staff woman] was the one who told me she went all the way not [the Third staff woman]." (Ed had been thinking it was [the Third staff woman] who went "all the way")

4. After meeting with Ed M, Bill Gothard met with [the Second staff woman] and asked her if she had "gone all the way" physically with his brother? She responded in the affirmative, "Didn't [Steve] tell you about it?"

5. **1969**, [a secretary's] first seminar at Trinity College, after 3 years of relationship with brother [Steve], riding home on Interstate 295 with Bill, [the secretary] told Bill "[Steve] and I are failing in the moral area of dating."

6. **Feb. 19, 1976**, SG told [the same secretary] that Bill was told about their failures (which occurred in Mr. and Mrs. Gothard's retreat bedroom). [The secretary] then went and found Bill and said to him, "I know [Steve] told you about us. I am not worthy to work on the staff. Should I resign?"

7. Feb. 1975. Bill Gothard phone call to [another secretary] just before single staff confession event up North:

\*\*Bill began conversation by saying “I know this will be difficult for you but I feel I need to ask you specific questions about your relationship with [Steve] so that I can have the facts to make the right decisions on what needs to be done.”

Questions asked by Bill Gothard:

Where did the immorality take place? \*

Were there any occasions at seminars? “Yes”

Up North? “Yes”

In his office? “Yes”

Did he kiss you on many occasions? “Only about 3 times.”

Where you ever undressed? “No”

Did he “touch” you on your “top”

”above the waist?”

“...through the clothes”

or directly touch you?

Answer: “through the clothes”

Did he “touch” you with his hands

below the waist?

...”through the clothes” or directly?

Answer: “through the clothes”

Would he have “gone all the way”

if you had allowed him to?

Answer: “Yes”

“How do you know [Steve] would

have gone all the way with you?”

Answer: “[Steve], on his own, unzipped my jeans. I stopped him and zipped them back. [Steve] grabbed my hand and forced me to touch his private parts.”

\* To the question of where these attempts of immorality took place, they included:

1974 summer, Crazy Bear Lodge, 2 times

Oak Brook Headquarters office, 3-4 times

15-20 additional times attempted, though resisted

Houston at a Basic Seminar, 1 time

Kissing, 3-4 times

\*\* This evidence, written documentation and personal testimony was again presented to the ministry Board of Directors meeting July 5, 1980, with Bill Gothard in attendance and invited to defend, clarify or deny. Bill Gothard did not and could not deny this evidence. The Board concluded that Bill Gothard had lied directly to them and had hidden the most serious and destructive events ongoing in the ministry they had oversight of.

8. Feb. 1975. Bill Gothard visit with [redacted] about incidents of immorality.

9. Feb. 1975. Bill Gothard visit with [a staff woman] about incidents of immorality

10. Feb. 1976. Bill’s interview of [a staff woman]

When Bill asked her about any immorality with his brother, Bill added, “It would be tragic if something like that happened again.”

11. Feb. 1976. Ed Martin and Gary Smalley's talks with Bill Gothard and Mr. Gothard Sr.

Bill Gothard confessed his very special affections for [a staff secretary] and sought Gary's forgiveness for deceiving him (Gary) about this relationship with this staff secretary.

12. Feb. 1978. [another secretary] to Bill Gothard

She warned Bill Gothard about increased signs of physical problems between his brother and [a staff woman]. "Bill did not seem shocked or overly concerned and said he would check with both..." When Bill reported back to [this secretary], he said "there was a little problem but that [Steve] said they would be careful..."

13. August, 1979. Gothard's and [a secretary's] family.

[Steve] to Gary Smalley, "Bill was distant and abrasive in August because I just told Bill about [secretary]." At least one additional woman was sent North after this date and was violated sexually.

14. May 18, 1980, Bill Gothard admitted in a meeting with Mike Laramie and Ed Martin that he did know about [Steve's] immorality.

15. 1979. [Two other staff women] met with Bill Gothard and explained their observations and concerns of ongoing problems with other secretaries going alone to Crazy Bear lodge late at night. These women also explained to Bill Gothard their problem with Bill and "his evident relationship with [yet another secretary]." These women recounted their observing that "Bill saw girls constantly going to [Steve's] bedroom."

16. May 27, 1980, in a meeting with ministry department directors, Bill acknowledged to these men he did know about [the Second staff woman in points 3 and 4 above] going "all the way" four years earlier. Notes were taken and recounted by a number of men in this meeting.

17. May 29, 1980, in meeting with Mike Laramie and Rev. Van Geldren, Bill stated with hand raised toward God, "Before the Lord, I did not know what was going on the last four years." I have not been covering up something I have known. If I had known anything the last 4 years I would have done something about it."

18. 2009, Bill Gothard telephoned Dr. Gary Smalley to request his assistance to remove an article at Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia, which detailed Bill Gothard being found late at night with [a secretary] on his lap in his private cabin. She was wearing a [sheer] nightgown. Gary Smalley's letter in response to Bill Gothard's request:

Bill,

I think I found what you were speaking of the other night. Wikipedia.... "([Veinot et al. 2003](#), pp. 52-55) alleges that Gothard tried to cover up the scandal but "despite Gothard's best efforts at containment...the story was reported in the *Los Angeles Times*." In 1982 the *Los Angeles Times* also reported allegations that "Bill Gothard was seen by staff members patting and fondling women employees. Later, he admitted in staff meetings that these actions were 'moral failures' on his part."<sup>[24]</sup>

I am wondering how the current situation got started all over again after so many years? Are their [sic] pastors, Christian leaders or some of your followers investigating these allegations? It seems like so long ago, it amazes me.

And are these recent postings in Wikipedia? Sorry for all of the "dogings" [*sic*] that keep following you. You thought [*sic*, "*taught*"] me that a leader is always being watched and held accountable for all his actions.

I think you know me well enough for me to say that my motives here are to try and bring glory to God from all of the "ashes" from the past.

Instead of me sending an email or letter to you sharing that "as far as I know from the girls I interviewed, according to them, Bill did not fondle any of them" But a more important question for me to ask you is, "what do you want as an end goal with Christian leaders and the body of Christ?" Is it just my opinion that you "didn't fondle the girls?"

As I read the criticisms of you from many different Christian leaders, I wondered what your end objective is? Is it to add evidence that you didn't touch any of the girls inappropriately? Remember I was one of the staff who saw [a secretary] sitting on your lap with her sheer night ware [*sic*] on. That alone was so inappropriate that a case could be made from just that one act I saw for you to take time away from ministry in order to be healed by God's Spirit and renewed to purity. That one act would have taken Ted Haggard out of the ministry as his other actions did.

I am wondering what kind of legacy do you want to leave? What God has done through you is amazing, but you stumbled at times just like all of God's leaders throughout history.

How do you want people to remember the steps you took after "failing" in your walk with God at times?

How can I help you reach your ultimate goals for your legacy ??????. Can we visit about this question the next time we talk on the phone or visit together? I would be willing to do that if the time is right in your life.

Thanks for entrusting this to me as a friend. God is faithful and able. It is He to whom I present this serious need and ask for His provisions.

Love,  
Gary

19. [Secretary] interview. [Secretary] described her discussion with Bill Gothard's brother who told her of his discussion with Bill Gothard stating to him "I know about you and [the secretary in point 15 above]!"
20. Bill Gothard was observed rubbing inside of thighs of one of his secretaries on the Basic Seminar team, observed by a Dallas Committee member, 1979, Dallas, Texas.
21. Bill Gothard was known to commonly invite single staff women of the ministry to call him anytime they were tempted sexually. Gary Smalley notes summarizing July 5, 1980 meeting with Board of Directors, notes dated July 6, 1980.
22. By 1975 to 1980, Bill Gothard had moved a number of young single staff women to the Crazy Bear Lodge where they lived in private apartments in one of several buildings which were occupied by Bill's brother and a few other staff men and Bill occupied his private cabin in the forest.

Bill Gothard often came to the bedrooms of these young single staff women late at night after they had dressed for bed. Several reported (with witnesses) seeing Bill Gothard entering their rooms, even when not invited. One reported to interviewers he would come in while she was in her nightgown and caress her and fondle her, having them sit on his lap while visiting with them.

When Bill Gothard was confronted by Gary Smalley about these accounts, Bill defended his actions claiming he was “dating the girl” (though he had failed somehow to ask the girl’s father for permission to date his young daughter). One young girl involved with Bill Gothard described her confusion “he always told me he was treating me like my father” while I was away from home.

One young staff woman complained to her apartment neighbor (who knew Bill Gothard often came calling late at night) “I’d have to lock my door because I didn’t want him coming in my apartment at night when I was on my way to bed.”

From conference call notes, Nov. 1, 1983 involving Dr. Earl Radmacher (then President of Western Seminary, Portland, OR), Gary Smalley (long time staff and friend of Bill Gothard), Pastor Richard Hagenbaugh, interviewing three staff of Bill Gothard after their exit of the organization. Two were single women violated spiritually and sexually over a number of years.

Note 1: I (Tony G) am fairly certain Gary Smalley did not ask the same level of detail as I did in his interviews with the women or the men involved and not sure he interviewed any of the other men involved. Bill Gothard has most often responded to the question of his knowledge of immorality of many persons over the years by stating that as a single man he did not ask men or women the details of their immorality. This clear evidence and testimony of many of the women involved demonstrate he is not being truthful.

It bears repeating on these very points of evidence, because of the continued denials by Bill Gothard to this very date in the year 2014:

The implications of Bill Gothard having detailed knowledge of ongoing immorality among his closest management and staff over at least a seven year period, prior to 1980 (when he was confronted by Tony G) include two of the most serious charges that can ever be brought against a minister, pastor or Christian leader. Bill Gothard’s knowledge of ongoing immorality which he chose to not deal with and to cover up from further discovery and correction means two things are true...

1. Bill Gothard was and is now fully responsible for **sending** new and additional young daughters of Dad’s and Mom’s into this remote location in Upper Peninsula Michigan to live with and work for his brother, knowing he was sending them into harm’s way, where they also were sexually assaulted with all spiritual wickedness, as had the previous young women sent previously.

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