

Charges and Specifications Against Mr. Francis VanD.

Charge 1: We, the undersigned, charge Mr. Francis VanD. with the offense of violating the ninth commandment by failing to protect the good name of others.

Scripture References: Exodus 20:16; Ephesians 4:15 "...speaking the truth in love...;" Ephesians 4:29 "but only such [talk] as is good for building up... that it may give grace to those who hear...;" James 4:11 "Do not speak evil against one another, brothers;" Acts 20:28 "Pay careful attention to... the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God."

Constitutional References: WLC Q 144 "preserving and promoting the good name of our neighbor..."; WLC Q 145 "detracting... reviling."

Witnesses:

William R. (for the provenance of document)

Paige P. (for the provenance of document)

Specification 1: On January 26, 2020, Session of New Hope, including Mr. Francis VanD., made an announcement to the congregation of New Hope Church, disparaging Mr. Jason R's good name and implying sinful actions and the need for restoration.

Document: Document 1 (January 26, 2020 Announcement at New Hope Church).

Witnesses: Mr. William R., Mr. Francis VanD., Mr. John W., Mr. C, Mr. Karl K, Mr. Dave M., Mr. Steven H., Mr. Joel P, Mr. Jason R.

Specification 2: On February 9, 2020, Session of New Hope, including Mr. Francis VanD., cast aspersions on Mr. Jason R's good name by making an announcement to the congregation describing alleged sins and actions that Mr. Jason R had committed and pronouncing discipline without having filed any charges against Mr. Jason R.

Document: Document 2 (February 9, 2020 Announcement at New Hope Church).

Witnesses: Mr. William R., Mr. Francis VanD., Mr. W, Mr. C., Mr. K., Mr. M., Mr. H., Mr. P., Mr. Jason R..

Specification 3: On February 11, 2020, during an open meeting the Session of New

Hope held to discuss Mr. Jason R., Mr. Francis VanD. spoke poorly and disparagingly of Mr. Jason R. Mr. Francis VanD. also gave examples of alleged sins Mr. Jason R had committed and spoke of 6 other members who had issues with Mr. Jason R. This was done despite no charges having been filed against Mr. Jason R. and many of the instances described having not been verified with the witnesses, or brought to Mr. Jason R's attention, and were personal grievances.

Witnesses: Mr. William R., Ms. Paige P., Mr. Francis VanD., Mr. M., Mr. K., Mr. C..

Specification 4: On or about April 7, 2020 Session of New Hope, including Mr. Francis VanD., without the advice or permission or knowledge of Mr. Jason R, the New Hope Elder being named, mailed a letter to the congregation and visitors casting aspersions on Mr. Jason R's and other OPC Officers good name. This Letter also shared private conversations and communications between Mr. Jason R. and session, and Mr. Jason R. and others, without the permission of Mr. Jason R. or other Officers.

Documents: Document 3 (The Backstory Byrd/Rundell)

Witnesses: Mr. William R., Mr. Francis VanD., Mr. W., Mr. C., Mr. K., Mr. M., Mr. H., Mr. P., Mr. Jason R.

Specification 5: On April 30, 2020, Session of New Hope, Including Mr. Francis VanD., sent an email to the members and regular attenders of New Hope Church defending themselves, delineating their grievances and disagreements with Mr. R., and calling Mr. R's response email an "unedifying communication."

Documents: Document 4 (Session email to congregation on 4/30/20)

Witnesses: Mr. William R., Mr. Francis VanD., Mr. W., Mr. C., Mr. K., Mr. M., Mr. H., Mr. P., Mr. Jason R.

Specification 6: On June 22, 2020, Members of New Hopes session, including Mr. Francis VanD., signed a document on Mrs. Aimee B's Website titled, "An Open Letter from Concerned Ministers and Elders in the OPC" which disparages members of a private Facebook group, "Genevan Commons," including many OPC officers. The letter disparages the name of members of the group regardless of their level of involvement or knowledge of any alleged offenses; makes allegations of wrongdoing

without charges having been filed, or verification of the truthfulness of the information; highlights the Genevan Commons Screenshots website, which contains disparaging comments, private communication, allegations of wrongdoing, and information presented in misleading and false ways; and was done without the knowledge or permission of those accused, or without any way for those to restore their good name.

Documents: Document 5 (Blog Post titled - An Open Letter from Concerned Ministers and Elders in the OPC; <https://aimeebyrd.com/2020/06/22/an-open-letter-from-concerned-ministers-and-elders-in-the-opc/>), Document 6 (Blog Post titled - Coarse Joking, Doxing, and forgiveness; <https://www.reformation21.org/blog/coarse-joking-doxing-and-forgiveness>).

Witnesses: Mr. William R., Mr. Francis VanD., Mr. W., Mr. K., Mr. M., Mr. H., Mr. Jason R.

Specification 7: On January 16, 2021 and February 6, 2021 during the opening and closing remarks of the trial of Jason R., Session of New Hope, including Mr. Francis VanD., cast aspersions on Mr. Jason R's good name by delineating issues, grievances and arguments that were not part of the charges against Mr. Jason R, including making several unfounded and unrelated accusations against Mr. Jason R's good name.

Documents: Document 7 (Jason R. Trial Transcript Pages 16 to 18 and pages 155 to 158)

Witnesses: Mr. William R., Ms. P., Mr. Francis VanD., Mr. W., Mr. C., Mr. K., Mr. Myers, Mr. H., Mr. P., Mr. Jason R.

Charge 2: We, the undersigned, charge Mr. Francis Francis VanD. with the offense of violating the command to keep the peace, purity and unity of the church (Ephesians 4:3), a sin aggravated by being a violation of his ordination vow to "seek the peace, the purity, and the unity of the church."

Scripture References: Exodus 20:16; Ephesians 4:3.

Constitutional References: WLC Q 144 "...keeping of lawful promises...;" WLC Q 145 "...breach of lawful promises...;" FG 25:6.b(4).

Witnesses:
William R. (for the provenance of document)
Paige P. (for the provenance of document)

Specification 1: On January 26, 2020, Session of New Hope, including Mr. Francis VanD., made an announcement to members of New Hope Church, disparaging Mr. R's good name and implying sinful actions and need for restoration. This action made concerns that were unverified and had not been charged, public, thus, creating an unnecessary rift within the church and disturbing the peace, purity and unity of the church.

Document: Document 1 (January 26, 2020 Announcement at New Hope Church).

Witnesses: Mr. William R., Mr. Francis VanD., Mr. W., Mr. C., Mr. K., Mr. M., Mr. H., Mr. P., Mr. Jason R.

Specification 2: On February 9, 2020, Session of New Hope, including Mr. Francis VanD., cast aspersions on Mr. Jason R's good name by making an announcement to the congregation describing alleged sins and actions that Mr. Jason R. had committed and pronouncing discipline without having filed any charges against Mr. Jason R. This action made concerns that were unverified and had not been charged, public, thus, creating an unnecessary rift within the church and disturbing the peace, purity and unity of the church.

Document: Document 2 (February 9, 2020 Announcement at New Hope Church).

Witnesses: Mr. William R., Mr. Francis VanD., Mr. W., Mr. C., Mr. K., Mr. M., Mr. H., Mr. P., Mr. Jason R.

Specification 3: On February 11, 2020 and February 13, 2020, during an open meeting the Session of New Hope held to discuss Mr. Rundell, Mr. Francis VanD. spoke poorly and disparagingly of Mr. Jason R. Mr. Francis VanD. gave examples of sins Mr. Jason R. was alleged to have committed and spoke of 6 other members who had issues with Mr. Jason R. This was done despite no charges having been filed against Mr. Jason R and many of the instances describe had not been verified with the witnesses, or had been brought to Mr. Jason R's attention, and were personal grievances. This action made concerns that were unverified and had not been charged, public, creating unnecessary tension between New Hope Members and the Elders of New hope, and disturbing the peace, purity and unity of the church.

Witnesses: Mr. William R., Ms. Paige P., Mr. Francis VanD., Mr. M., Mr. K., Mr. Jason R.

Specification 4: On or about April 7, 2020, Session of New Hope, including Mr. Francis VanD., without the advice, knowledge or permission of Mr. Jason R, sent a document (The Aimee B/Jason R Backstory) to members and visitors of New Hope Church delineating conflict within the church and making this a public affair. This document included personal communications of Mr. Jason R. without his knowledge or permission. This document and the information contained in it had been discussed by session in meetings with Mrs. Aimee B., and was read and edited by Mrs. Aimee B., yet session had not met with Mr. Jason R. on this, and had not shared this document with him, leading to a one-sided presentation of the information. In addition, the document explained concerns session had with Mr. Jason R's complaint prior to Presbytery even processing his appeal. Making this information public, and presenting only one side of it disturbed the peace, purity and unity of the church.

Documents: Document 3 (The Backstory Aimee B/Jason R)

Witnesses: Mr. William R., Mr. Francis VanD., Mr. W., Mr. C., Mr. K., Mr. M., Mr. H., Mr. P., Mr. Jason R.

Specification 5: On or about June 22, 2020, Members of New Hopes Session, including Mr. Francis VanD., signed a document on Mrs. Aimee B's Website titled, "An Open Letter from Concerned Ministers and Elders in the OPC." which made public concerns about content on a private of a Facebook group, "Genevan Commons," a group that included many OPC members and officers. The letter disparages the name of members of the group regardless of their level of involvement or knowledge of any alleged offenses; makes allegations of wrongdoing without charges having been filed, or verification of the truthfulness of the information; highlights the Genevan Commons Screenshots website, which contains disparaging comments, private communication, allegations of wrongdoing, and information presented in misleading and false ways; and was done without the knowledge or permission of those accused, or without anyway for those to restore their good name. This action greatly disturbed the peace, purity and unity of the OPC.

Documents: Document 5 (Blog Post titled - An Open Letter from Concerned Ministers and Elders in the OPC; <https://aimeebyrd.com/2020/06/22/an-open-letter-from-concerned-ministers-and-elders-in-the-opc/>), Document 6 (Blog Post titled - Coarse Joking, Doxing, and forgiveness; <https://www.reformation21.org/blog/coarse-joking-doxing-and-forgiveness>).

Witnesses: Mr. William R., Mr. Francis VanD., Mr. W., Mr. K., Mr. M., Mr. H., Mr. Jason R.

Charge 3: We, the undersigned, charge Mr. Francis Francis VanD. with the offense of violating the ninth commandment by speaking with doubtful and equivocal expressions, in other words, being disingenuous.

Scripture References: Exodus 20:16; James 5:12.

ConstitutionalReferences: WLC Q **144**, "...sincerely, freely, clearly, and fully speaking the truth..."; and WLC Q 145, "...speaking the truth... in doubtful and equivocal expressions. "

Witnesses:

William R. (for the provenance of document)

Paige P. (for the provenance of document)

Specification 1: On April 21, 2020 session of New Hope, including Mr. Francis VanD. sent out an email responding to the complaint filed against them that stated while there were some areas they did not do as they should have, "we do not believe we sinned or erred".

Document: Document 8 (April 21, 2020 Email to Congregation)

Witnesses: Mr. William R., Mr. Francis VanD., Mr. W., Mr. C., Mr. K., Mr. M., Mr. H., Mr. P., Mr. Jason R.

Specification 2: On September 19, 2020 Session of New Hope, including Mr. Francis VanD., during a meeting of the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic stated, in response to discussion related to a complaint filed against the Session of New Hope, "we messed up, we see that," and went on to say, we got it, we understand what Presbytery is telling us, we messed up. However, after the Presbytery meeting session approved a motion at their next meeting to appeal the decision of Presbytery and made an announcement to the church stating that they would appeal the Presbytery decision. Also, session sought to again censure Mr. Jason R. without trial by telling him he should not take communion on October 4th, 2020, and giving the fact that he took communion as one of the reasons for suspending him from the duties of office on October 10, 2020. In addition, Session did the same action that the complaint was about, by telling congregants to come to the trial against Mr. Jason R. to hear session's concerns and then making the same accusations against Mr. Jason R. (accusations that were not part of the charges) both during session's opening statement and their closing statements. Further, session members, both in private

and at the trial, would not say that what they did was censure, instead stating that the actions being wrong are "what Presbytery ruled". Additionally, they did no work to restore or repair the situation after the complaint was sustained, still placing the blame on Mr. Jason R. despite what Presbytery had ruled and their comments at the Presbytery meeting.

Documents: Document 9 (Minutes NHOPC September 25, 2020), Document 10 (Announcement September 27, 2020), Document 11 (Email October 9, 2020)

Witnesses: Mr. William R., Mr. Francis VanD., Mr. W., Mr. C., Mr. K., Mr. M., Mr. H., Mr. P., Mr. Jason R.

Specification 3: On February 6, 2021 during the Trial of Jason R., Mr. Francis VanD. was asked, "Do you have concerns about Ms. Aimee B's writings?" Mr. Francis VanD. responded that he did not have concerns, despite having stated concerns about Ms. Aimee B's writings to others.

Documents: Document 12 (Jason R. Trial Transcript Pages 104 and 105)

Witnesses: Mr. William R., Mr. Francis VanD., Mr. Jason R.

Specification 4: On February 6, 2021 when asked during the trial of Mr. Jason Rundell if it was wrong to send out the backstory letter to the congregation, Mr. Francis VanD. failed to give an answer as to whether he believed it was wrong, stating "I think Presbytery weighed in on that and session apologized for it." Also, during the trial it was asked if "session acted wrongly against Mr. Jason R. by making public announcements?" Mr. Francis VanD. failed to give an answer as to whether he believed it was wrong, stating, "Yes, Presbytery ruled on that." When asked was the backstory an error in policy or procedures, Mr. Francis VanD. failed to give an answer as to what he believed and said, "Presbytery ruled on that in the affirmative."

Documents: Document 13 (Jason R. Trial Transcript Pages 46 and 50)

Witnesses: Mr. William R., Mr. Francis VanD., Mr. Jason R.

Signed,
William R., Paige P., Jesse B., Trevor W.