

Bethel Statement on Shawn Bolz to Alumni

Feb 3, 2025

STATEMENT

Dear Alumni,

We know this feels very late for some of you. Sorry this has taken so long. We are aware that a conversation is happening regarding Shawn Bolz, and our confrontations with him that took place more than five years ago. We have delayed in an effort to reflect our recollection accurately, as the issues are important and complex.

Shawn Bolz had ministered with us many times for many years, and had a great impact on our house. We deeply valued and trusted him and appreciated his prophetic gift. Many of us have received important, accurate prophecies, and words of knowledge from him (prior to social media being so pervasive) that we had great confidence in.

In 2019, some significant concerns came to us from respected international leaders regarding irregularities in Shawn's word of knowledge gift that caused them to wonder if he may have been using social media to generate them. We believe that these concerns and the evidence to support them were gathered and shared in good faith and out of concern for the global Church.

Their presentation of over a dozen words amongst the hundreds he's given was a small sample size, but regardless, was validly concerning and needed to be addressed. For some of our team, the evidence felt conclusive but for others it was not. We did not have a consensus, but we were very concerned and sought clarity from him.

Two of our leaders met with Shawn on two separate occasions about this. Kris flew down for his meeting with Shawn at Bill Johnson's request. Our leaders also met with Shawn's board and shared the evidence and our concerns. Each time, Shawn

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absolutely denied using any social media in his words of knowledge or prophecies. Shawn still maintains he never used social media in any words. And truthfully, unless something changes, only he and the Lord really know what took place.

We ended up in a stalemate, without a satisfactory resolution of our concerns. Without definitive proof, repentance, and/or team consensus, we made no public statement because we weren't sure. The leaders who previously investigated and gathered the evidence were, of course, free to do what they thought best going forward.

Around the same time, one of Shawn's employees made allegations concerning inappropriate behavior and an unacceptable work environment. Though Shawn was not, and is not under our authority, one of our leaders found another impacted former team member, went to Shawn and confronted him on those issues over several difficult conversations and admonished him that this behavior was completely unacceptable and that he should take responsibility. He indicated to us that the behaviors that had taken place had stopped. Though we are not experts, these behaviors seemed to fit the descriptions of sexual harassment and a hostile work environment as commonly taught in HR training, and had potential legal ramifications. We recommended they take action in seeking a remedy through the justice system (such as the labor board, arbiters, or courts) as there was no real movement from Shawn to address the past situations, and we had done what we could given the limited level of knowledge we had at the time. We spoke to his board regarding this area of concern.

Romans 13 teaches us that God has placed civil leaders in place as ministers of God for the kinds of issues his former team member brought to us. Furthermore, their experience was absolutely important and personal, and as such was their story to tell, not ours, and to take action if they desired. This is the general context to which Kris was speaking in the text messages that were posted on social media.

Shawn was a trusted guest minister who spoke often on our platform. If Shawn

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worked for us, or was truly or officially under our covering, the situation would have been handled much differently. We would have not just appealed to Shawn, we would have required a comprehensive and righteous response. Whether related or not, shortly after we addressed our concerns, it appeared that Shawn took steps to adjust how he operated in words of knowledge. He just recently spoke to some of the changes he has made, which can be found on his website [here](#).

In the absence of clarity about both what really happened with some of the words of knowledge, and having addressed the issues with his former team members and found his response lacking, we made the decision to step back from our ministry connection. This meant: 1. We did not have him ministering to our people or movement, or have his materials in our stores (though we missed some things until recently). 2. We communicated our concern, confusion, and his denials to the leaders who initially raised concerns about the words of knowledge with us, as well as to leaders closely connected to Shawn and made the evidence available to them for them to make their own decision. 3. We firmly admonished and warned him, and he responded by making some changes in both of these areas. 4. We made it clear that global leaders were concerned and watching closely.

These were all clear boundaries that produced some of the necessary changes.

I Timothy 5:20 says to publicly rebuke elders “who continue in sin” (NASB20). We weren’t entirely clear what was happening in the words of knowledge and unaware of the scope of his issues with his former team members, but believed he changed his behavior and the work environment going forward after our confrontations, so we did not make a public statement. In the past, we have only brought public admonishment to those outside of our organization in cases where no acknowledgment and change has taken place after correction.

We empathize with those who are confused and disappointed over this situation; we feel the same—this is a tender, confusing, and complex situation. As it stands, our trust in Shawn is still unrepaired. Having privately admonished him, this letter is

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only intended to clarify the journey we were on, and the steps we have taken given that it is now a wider conversation.

We receive and value the feedback that our actions may have been too subtle and difficult to decipher, and that it would have been more helpful to at least openly acknowledge that we were creating distance with Shawn due to our concerns. We acknowledge we have more to learn in handling situations outside of our staff environment with greater clarity and have been working for the last several months on standardized procedures for hearing and responding to concerns in order to create an even healthier church culture.

Words of knowledge are a significant and important element of conveying the heart of God, demanding high levels of integrity, accountability and responsibility, and our work environments and team relationships must be full of holiness, respect, appropriate behavior, and safety, such that they reflect the joy and glory of God.

We pray that the Holy Spirit brings wisdom, humility, comfort and instruction to each of us.

Bethel Leadership