Appendix D:
Statement on Counseling and Confidentiality

Though every reasonable effort shall be made to protect confidential communications, especially those received in a pastoral counseling context, there will be times when to fulfill properly their spiritual and leadership responsibilities, Sovereign Grace Church pastors or care group leaders may, as they deem necessary or appropriate, share confidential information with one another or Church members or others they deem may be part of the church member's problem or the solution to that problem. They may do this for the purpose of counsel, or for the purpose of protecting others from the damaging effects of someone's sin, or to assist one another in providing spiritual care to the people of the church.

All Christians struggle with sin and the effect it has on our lives and our relationship (see Romans 3:23; 7:7-25). Whenever a Christian is unable to overcome sinful attitudes or behaviors through private efforts, God commands that he should seek assistance from other members, and especially from the pastors, who have the responsibility of providing pastoral counseling and oversight (see Romans 5:14; Galatians 6:1-2; Colossians 3:16; 2 Timothy 3:16-4:2; Hebrews 10:24-25; 113:17; James 5:16). Therefore, this church encourages and enjoins its members to make confession and to seek counsel from each other and especially from its pastoral counselors.

We believe that the Bible provides thorough guidance and instruction for faith and life. Therefore, our counseling shall be based on scriptural principles rather than those of secular psychology or psychiatry. Neither the pastoral nor the biblical counselors[1] of this church are trained or licensed psychotherapists or mental health professionals, nor should they be expected to follow the methods of such specialists.

Although some members of the church work in professional fields outside the church, when serving as pastoral or biblical counselors within the church, they do not provide the same kinds of professional advice and services that they do when they are hired in their professional capacities. Therefore members who have significant legal, financial, medical, or other technical questions should seek advice from independent professionals. Our pastoral and biblical counselors shall be available to cooperate with such advisors and help members to consider their advice in light of relevant scriptural principles.

_____	_____	_____
Print Name	*Signature*	*Date*
_____	_____	_____
Print Name	*Signature*	*Date*
_____	_____	
Pastor	*Date*	

[1]Throughout this statement "biblical counselors" may include members of the church's Biblical Counseling Team (typically comprised of members who are not paid staff) as well as care group leaders.