

November 2, 2019

Dr. James MacDonald,

Since the termination of your employment on February 12, 2019, we continue to be grieved by what has happened. If you were still present in our weekend services, we're sure your heart would be hurting as much as ours are in seeing the people of this church struggle through this season. Many of the people you have personally invested in are confused, angry, hurting, and everything in between. As the ones entrusted with the care of this flock of believers, we are seeking to honor God in full submission to the authority and guidance of Scripture.

On February 16-17, 2019 our former Elder board communicated to the church that after "considering examples of old and new behavior," "the elders concluded that there is a sinful pattern of inappropriate language, anger, and domineering behavior." Since there has been a complete transition of the Elder board, we have tried to focus on ensuring to our church that Scripture is appropriately followed. The previous statements from the Elders were effective in removing you from your position as Senior Pastor, but lacked the appropriate level of specificity to address the spiritual and biblical concerns.

1 Timothy 5:19-20 says, *"Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear."*

In a desire to stay under the authority of God's Word and do what is loving, we have independently been investigating whether to validate or refute your spiritual qualifications as an Elder. In this investigation, you can be assured of these three things: (1) We have only considered accusations that included two or three witnesses. In fact, all that is covered in this letter includes many more witnesses than the biblical requisite of two or three. (2) We have only considered evidence from first-hand witnesses. (3) We have listened to these witnesses in groups of two interviewers in order to protect us from an individual opinion swaying the outcome.

The results of this investigation have led us to conclude that you had a substantial pattern of sinful behavior in the following areas:

1. Above Reproach (Titus 1:6) - To be above reproach is to have a reputation of being blameless and honorable. The accusations against you are of great quantity and continue to be brought forward. Your character should have been such that this magnitude of accusations would not have been believable. But sadly, your reputation does not defend your character. Instead, your reputation affirms many of the accusations against you as plausible.

2. Respectable (1 Tim. 3:2) - The antithesis of being respectable is to be disruptive. We found that you had a pattern of being disruptive in public and private settings at the expense of other people's well-being.
3. Upright (Titus 1:8) – We found that you failed to meet the standard of dealing with others fairly and honorably. At times, you misrepresented gifts paid for by the church as personal gifts from you.
4. Not Arrogant or Violent (Titus 1:7) - Your behavior and language indicated that you thought of yourself more highly than you should as evidenced by your pattern of insulting, belittling, and verbally bullying others.
5. Not Quick-Tempered or Quarrelsome (Titus 1:7; 1 Tim. 3:3) –We found that you had a pattern of quickly becoming angry, manifesting itself in unmerited force and frequency. Your behavior was that of a combative person who insisted on his own ways and failed to cultivate peace.
6. Not Domineering (1 Peter 5:3) –We found that you had a pattern of improperly exercising positional and spiritual authority over others to your own advantage.
7. Not Greedy for Gain or A Lover of Money (Titus 1:7; 1 Tim. 3:3) –We found that you made repeated efforts to profit yourself beyond what was honorable. There was a pattern of extravagant spending utilizing church resources, resulting in personal benefit.
8. Disciplined (Titus 1:8) - You failed to keep your emotions under control. The failure is not in the dynamic range of your personality, but in the lack of self-discipline, which an Elder should display in a bridled tongue and sound speech.
9. Self-Controlled and Sober-Minded (Titus 1:8; 1 Tim. 3:2) –We found that you had a pattern of acting on your sudden impulses with insufficient deference to wise but differing views. In some of the most crucial moments where you needed to be calm and cautiously wise, you were hasty and reckless.

Because of these findings, you were biblically disqualified from the position of Elder, meaning you did not meet the spiritual standards to which an Elder is held. With the scope of the damage caused by your behavior, you will not be able to serve again as an Elder or Pastor of Harvest Bible Chapel.

We believe you can be restored to ministry someday, but in order for that day to come, the fruits of repentance must be evident. We have not yet seen evidence of this. There is much potential for God to be glorified through you in the coming years, and our hope is to witness that someday.

Galatians 6:1 says, *“Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness.”*

What is best for you now is to find a group of godly brothers that you would trust as spiritual to biblically restore you in a spirit of gentleness. You need an extended period of time away from ministry in order to focus on your repentance and to seek relational reconciliation and restitution where it is possible. We are all in need of God's grace, and we implore you to humble yourself and fully surrender to the Lord.

In accordance with 1 Timothy 5, we will be communicating this to the church. We have no intention of sharing any of the anecdotal evidence or the names of the witnesses with the church. We have no desire to shame you, but only to be in submission to God's word.

We also want you to know that we remain open to meeting with you in person. If this would be of interest to you, please let us know. We will continue to pray for you and Kathy as you seek the Lord in this season.

Sincerely,

The Elders of Harvest Bible Chapel

*David Cryder*

*Jasen Day*

*Karl Jackson*

*Kent Jaeger*

*Brian Laird*

*Al Miranda*

*Dave Smoot*

*Tim Stoner*

*Darrin Weidman*