

# ELDER STATEMENT OF RECORD

December 18, 2018

## To Ron Duitsman, Elder Board Chairman:

**We, the Elders of Harvest Bible Chapel, express our appreciation and unconditional support for our Senior Pastor, James MacDonald.**

Pastor James has led our church in an exemplary manner. He has modeled humility, courage and generosity. Pastor James is quick to forgive and to seek forgiveness. He welcomes accountability into his life. We are grateful that he invites dissenting viewpoints into Elder decision making processes. We regularly witness how he extends grace to those who have fallen or even those who have betrayed him. Because of Pastor James, each of us are better men, husbands and fathers, and more devoted followers of Jesus.

As we stand at the forefront of the Closer campaign, which will expand the ministry of our church into the next generation, we unequivocally support our Senior Pastor. We thank him, Kathy, and their family for working tirelessly, sacrificing so much, never giving up, and always fighting for our church and for the gospel. We stand with Pastor James and count it a privilege to serve alongside of him as a fellow Elder.

Signed,

**Pedro Assumpção**

**Sam Booras**

**Joe Brightwell**

**Jim Clegg**

**Gil de las Alas**

**Tod Desmarais**

**John Dierker**

**Rick Donald**

**Ron Duitsman**

**Mike Dunwoody**

**Mark Fisk**

**Ron Frahler**

**Dan George**

**Jamie Harrison**

**Ernie Holton**

**Anthony Honore**

**Mark Hopwood**

**Steve Huston**

**Paul Inserra**

**Robert Jones**

**Jeffrey Kee**

**Dale Kuntz**

**JR Lang**

**Mike Lankford**

**Mike Lawson**

**Dave Martin**

**Marcel Olar**

**Jay Patel**

**Omar Sepulveda**

**Jeff Smith**

**Bill Sperling**

**Stephen Stewart**

**Elvin Velez**

**Bill Williams**

**Matt Woodhead**

*[Note: additional names will be added as received; employment in some regulated industries precludes any signing of public statements.]*

***Confirmations offered by the Elders of Harvest Bible Chapel – December 18, 2018***

Harvest's monthly Elder Board meetings provide an open forum for discussions on various church matters and decisions on issues which materially impact the congregation. Decisions are always weighed according to Biblical standards and are made on a consensus basis. As a member of the board, members are all encouraged to provide input. As a member of the Board, Pastor James, along with all others, are totally submissive to the consensus of the group. At all times James has been completely respectful to the collective authority of the Elder Board. – **Bill Sperling, Elder for 6 years and observing through 2018 on Executive Committee**

My observation is that our Elders govern by written policy in accordance with our Bylaws. The Executive Committee sets compensation and works closely with our Executive staff in the operations of the church and management of key staff members. Other specific committees do the deeper work, in Finances, Audit, Ministry, and Personnel. Staff make monthly reports relative to needed permissions and established written policy they are required to adhere to. Elders weigh in on areas of concern related doctrine, direction and discipline of the church. Our staff, all of our staff, submit to the guidance and direction of our Elders. We have healthy discourse and we debate our opinions, but in our consensus we do our best to honor the Lord in everything we do in a way that represents our love for the Lord, His Kingdom and each other. – **Steve Huston, Elder for 10 yrs, former Elder Chairman, current Chairman of Executive Committee**

I believe the health of our governance is strong as a group. I feel different Elders are on different committees according to their knowledge in specific areas. When these groups come to the Elders collectively we are all encouraged to give our input and ask questions about anything that may not be clear to us. I believe Pastor James has respect for our authority and the decisions that we come to as an Elder Board. Pastor James is always clear in the meeting and often pauses and makes us go back to make sure we are understanding everything about the topics we are discussing. He welcomes any questions or concerns so we can be united on our decision making. – **David Martin, Elder for 3 years**

I see a strong unity among our Elders with good collaboration in making decisions together. I am grateful to see meetings where a robust discussion takes place with differing views expressed and embraced. This has improved greatly since our Board expansion in 2009.

Pastor James has always demonstrated a high regard and respect for the Elders in our church. He sees it as the biblical model and a source of authority and accountability for he and the other leaders. I have seen Pastor James always submit to the consensus of the Elders, believing that God speaks through the leaders of the church even when that decision has been divergent from his.

Pastor James has taught this same principal enthusiastically to the pastors who come through our training center. Pastor James has been the one pushing our Elder Board towards more transparency through various channels to our church family (Elder Updates/ family meetings). – **Rick Donald, Elder for 29 years**

Our governance is very healthy as evidenced by our Pastor's encouragement of dissenting viewpoints, which are listened to and given appropriate consideration, as we make Elder Board decisions. – **Paul Inserra, Elder for 9 years**

In my 9 months as an Elder, I have been encouraged to ask questions and leadership has always responded with transparency and submission to God's Word. – **Matt Woodhead, Elder for 1 year**

Over the past year I have learned much as a new member of the Elder Board. I can say with full sincerity that the dichotomy between the HBC Elder Board and HBC Pastors is a relationship of mutual respect and healthy boundaries. I've witnessed this firsthand in watching the leadership of HBC's pastors yield to the collective wisdom of the Elder Board on multiple topics. In nearly all situations there is agreement between these two bodies, however in the situations in which there was disconnect; I observed a willingness to listen and more importantly the humility to act accordingly to the recommendation of the Elder Board. In short, I feel the governance of HBC is one of health and mutual respect. – **JR Lang, Elder for 1 year**

It has been my experience that the governance of the church is owned by the Elders through consensus of the Elders. As Elders we have a voice and discussions about matters continue until consensus is achieved. Our Pastor has unequivocally and consistently respected the collective authority of the Elders. – **Ernie Holton, Elder for 7 years**

Our Elders work collectively and through consensus to govern Harvest according to Scripture. There is a healthy environment for the debate and discussion in our meetings of the critical things to the life of our church. I have always observed Pastor James to not only adhere to this, but champions this same attitude. – **Jeffrey Kee, Elder for 3 years**

As far as my experience on the Elder Board, I would agree that there is a willingness to discuss dissenting views and adequately address questions brought by board members. – **Elvin Velez, Elder for 1 year**

This letter expresses my support and appreciation for Pastor James. I believe our current form of governance is designed to be quite effective. XLT manages staff, Elders govern by policy governance and provide counsel and provide doctrine, discipline and direction for the congregation. EC provides executive governance in the way of Senior Pastor accountability and counsel and the governance link with the XLT and executing for the elders on such matters as Compensation Committee, overall budgeting and transactions (bank accounts, real estate, etc.).

We can always use improvement and don't always make perfect decisions. But we can and do correct our course when needed and are able to make improvements where necessary, under God's guidance. – **Jeff Smith, Treasurer of Harvest Bible Chapel, Elder for 6 years**

As an Elder of Harvest Bible Chapel for several years, I have seen firsthand, how diligent our senior pastor and church staff work to honor God. Our church is very blessed to have such a committed team of people who welcome accountability and elevate the name of Jesus Christ. – **Mike Lawson, Elder for 4 years**

The Elder board at HBC is full of humble men who mutually submit to one another in service to the people of the church. This godly character is exemplified in James as I have seen him on multiple occasions submit to the decision and guidance of the board. – **Mike Lankford, Elder for 1 year**

As an elder of Harvest Bible Chapel, I am writing to express my appreciation and unconditional support for our Senior Pastor, James MacDonald. Pastor James has faithfully led the church, modeling humility, courage and generosity. He welcomes accountability into his life. I have seen him, despite great personal sacrifice, quickly forgive others, as well as, seek forgiveness when he has erred. It's a privilege to serve alongside Pastor James, as a fellow Elder, on an Elder Board that invites healthy debate and dissenting views in an effort to faithfully lead God's church through God's chosen governance structure of a plurality of elders. – **Tod Desmarais, Elder for 6 years**

This letter expresses my support and appreciation for Pastor James, the Elder Board and the pastoral staff at Harvest Bible Chapel. As with any organization, there are improvements that can be made, but by God's grace, Harvest has taken actions that will serve well to correct the course when needed and make improvements where necessary, with God's direction. – **Robert Jones, Former Elder Board Chairman, Elder for 11 years**

Although this past season has been a challenging one for our church, I count it a blessing to see first hand how God is using and leading this church. My trust in the integrity and leadership of our church has only grown since getting a "behind the scenes" view into the church's governance. In some of the most difficult circumstances, I've personally seen how our leaders – and James in particular – have responded with grace and the same love that he has taught us from the pulpit. The Board governs by consensus, has healthy debates when necessary, and most of the time is able to come to quick consensus. Occasionally the Board has pushed back on ideas brought by the pastors, and I've found our pastors very open to listening and submitting. I'm pleased to have seen the Board is not full of "yes-men." I've also seen the power of individual board members submitting their own personal preference (but never biblical conviction) for the sake of the consensus and unity of the entire Elder Board. Meetings are prayer-filled, seeking the Lord's direction in all we do. – **Sam Booras, Elder for 1 year**

I have served as an elder for the past 5 years and am a witness to the grace and patience frequently modeled by Pastor James. Without question the goal of our Pastors ( including James) and the elder board is to serve the church body of Harvest in a manner above reproach and to bring glory to God in our discussion and decisions. Pastor James leads us well in all of this. He's very patient and thorough in making sure we all have a chance to be heard. He always seeks consensus in every decision as does the elder board.

I'm very confident when James stands before the Lord he'll hear these words..."well done good and faithful servant". Matt 25:23 – **Mike Dunwoody, Elder for 5 years**

I agree whole-heartedly with the attached Elder Statement. Pastor James has led our Church well, and closely follows the admonitions of Scripture. Our Elders are free to speak up on any issue, and often do, with the result of better outcomes for Harvest Bible Chapel. – **Joe Brightwell, Elder for 2 years**

I completely concur with the statement issued regarding the health of our governance and especially the leadership by our Senior Pastor, James MacDonald. I agree with the statements regarding the exemplary character and transparency modeled for us by Pastor James.

One key contribution to the health of our governance is that Pastor James and Ron Duitsman regularly invite comments and questions to draw out any unspoken concerns that might be held by less vocal elders such as myself. This is especially helpful in our governance that decides issues by consensus. Differing opinions can be freely voiced and discussed in a very healthy and respectful dialogue. I am very grateful for this leadership and have seen the benefit of this regularly during our elder meetings. – **Dale Kuntz, Elder for 3 years**

I have been on the Elder Board for a few years now and have witnessed firsthand that our meetings do not lack for diverse opinions, we encourage everyone present to speak their mind as the Lord leads them. We have some very strong leaders on our Elder Board, and you might well imagine that we have some lively discussions. The level of strength, conviction, and dedication to the Word exhibited by the Elders, are a wonderful witness to me, these are Godly men trying to do their best to serve our Lord Jesus Christ. I feel that our governance is in a very strong place right now as a result of the decision to enlarge the Elder Board a few years ago, and the strict selection process that every Elder has to work through. We have very capable Godly men serving as Elders.

We come to our decisions through the full consensus of the Elder Board and we are guided by the Bible and by the Holy Spirit when coming to those decisions. When the Elder Board is able to come to a consensus, given the large number of very diverse individuals involved on the Elder Board, you know it is the working of the Holy Spirit, we are all submitting to His leadership. We have a tremendous amount of respect and good will toward our fellow Elders, we have joyous times and we are very serious at other times, you can be confident that your Elder Board has the best interests of His Church in mind anytime there is a decision to be made.

I can assure anyone reading this that Pastor James and all of the XLT submit willingly to the authority of the Elder Board and the EC, as well as to Biblical Authority and the Authority of our Lord Jesus Christ. One of the things that has impressed me when I began attending Harvest was the dedication of the Staff. They are in the work of saving souls, and helping people grow in their Faith.

We are doing the Work that He has asked us to do, and while we should not be surprised at the opposition, remember Sanballat and Tobiah, we will continue as best we can to do our Lord's work, with the Lord's help. I would simply ask for all of your continued prayers. – **Ron Duitsman, Chairman of the Elder Board, Elder for 4 years**

I have reviewed the attached letter and am in full concurrence with its content as it pertains to the health of our governance at Harvest Bible Chapel. I have a deep respect for our Senior Pastor, James MacDonald. During my tenure on the Elder Board he exhibited the highest standards of accountability to the Elders while providing outstanding leadership and vision for the church. He has exhibited humility and repentance when required always working toward caring for the growth and care of the congregation. – **Jim Clegg, Elder for 6 years**

Every elder meeting begins with a devotional and prayer. We ask the Lord to guide us as a Board. As agenda items are brought up, there is ample time allowed for healthy discussion. Input from every elder is permitted and solicited. The elder Board, by design, is comprised of a variety of skill sets. Elders who are subject matter experts are highly valued and their guidance carries much weight. The motto we hear often is: best answer wins. Pastor James is our longest serving elder, our Senior Pastor, and is revered for his willingness to submit to the consensus of the elder Board. We believe the Lord guides, and works through, the consensus of the elder Board.–  
**Stephen Stewart, Elder for 5 years**

I agree . . . I also see willingness to putting things with clarity and transparency from Pastor James even in situations that for him might be painful.– **Pedro Assumpção, Elder for 1 year**

The Harvest elder board does the hard work to get to consensus. As we do, divergent opinions are welcomed and actively drawn out. Candor is valued, especially by our Senior Pastor. Fidelity to God’s word is paramount. Doing what is best for the church is the priority.

If Harvest is your home church, you know Pastor James’ love for God’s word and his unwavering commitment to leading us in active obedience to it. I wish you could all witness how Pastor James lives out and models the priority of what is best for the church in the elder board.

The only fear cultivated in the Harvest elder board is a fear of God. – **Dan George, Elder for 9 years, former member of the Elder Leadership Team (now the Executive Committee)**

In the time that I have been on the Board of Elders I have seen James demonstrate very intentional leadership in terms of inviting and encouraging input on discussions and decisions involving church related issues, including opposing points of view. He has demonstrated graciousness to individuals on the Board and difference to the Board as a whole. His actions have shown willingness to be accountable for his words and actions, and to seek an pursue reconciliation when relationships have been strained.

Please continue to pray for us as we seek to lead our local church to the glory of our great God. – **John Dierker, Elder for 2 years**

Having concluded a 6-year Elder Board term in 2017, my comments are in support of Pastor James and our Elder Board. HBC Elder Board meetings exemplify how meetings of this type should be run. The Agenda and important documents are delivered prior to the meetings. Reports given include appropriate supporting documentation to allow for in depth discussion. Ample time is given for discussion of all Agenda items as well as “other business.” Every Elder, including Pastor James (our longest serving Elder) may provide their opinion and/or ask for further clarification and in all cases, consensus is the only method used to approve /support the Agenda item. Prior to the next Elder meeting, a complete recap of the previous meeting is provided to all Elders (whether they were in attendance or not) to ensure that nothing was miss-quoted or incorrectly represented. If so, the previous month’s recap is amended and then approved. Prayers begin and conclude each meeting as well as prayers at specific times in support of each other, our church, the Staff, the XLT, EC and for Pastor James and Kathy. Although at times we have had to “wrestle” with challenging issues, Elders maintained that highest personal regard for each other and the spiritual health of Harvest Bible Chapel. – **Ron Frahler, Elder for 7 years**

I support Pastor James, the pastoral staff and the Elder Board of Harvest Bible Chapel. No board is perfect in its execution, but we strive to quickly make changes where needed and continually learn how to better grow a large and dynamic church. I am excited to watch all that God has for us in the years ahead. – **Mike Collett, Elder for 2 years**