

Hello Harvest,

A few weeks ago, I wrote a letter asking you for forgiveness. In that letter I asked to stay on as an elder for a short period “to help redirect and change Harvest.” The time since I wrote my first letter — including numerous 4-5-hour meetings followed by sleepless nights — has revealed to me that I am powerless to make the necessary changes to correct the culture at Harvest Bible Chapel from within the interim elder board. It is for this reason that I resigned from my position as elder of Harvest Bible Chapel effective yesterday, March 20, 2019.

The elder board at Harvest continues to be controlled by former executive committee (EC) members who are focused on governing at a time when our church needs leadership and reform. These men should resign immediately and make room for change. Instead, they remain impeding progress. Below are some interactions which illustrate issues that are preventing change. **Ephesians 5:11-14a** is my guide here: “Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light ...”

- Even with a smaller number, the elder board continues to operate as a two-tier board. The former EC members owned the agenda and communicated among themselves much more readily than with the full board of what was nine men. Information needed to effectively govern and lead the church was still withheld. My requests for information and documents were met with, “Why do you need that?” These actions represent the old siloed, tiered, secretive culture.
- The board has not shown a willingness to really listen to the congregation. A letter submitted on behalf of 30 members with recommendations for how the church moves forward was never discussed by the board. Most elders never read any portion of a petition signed by ~200 people that was hand-delivered to the board. For Harvest to thrive, the congregation needs a voice. (There have been steps here with Q&A sessions and town halls.)
- Several weeks ago, former elders and key volunteers with valuable experience and financial know-how, including Scott Phelps, Dan Marquardt, Barry Slabaugh, and Dan Tolbert, offered their services to the board at no cost. However, the board resisted this outside help from highly experienced individuals who love our church and

want to help us. We need to humble ourselves and ask for and accept help NOW!

- The board continues to defend the decision not to make the six letters bringing charges against James MacDonald available to all the elders. Instead they still believe having only a few elders read the letters would have been the right course of action. Doing that would have meant shirking our responsibility as elders as called out clearly in **1 Timothy 5:19-21**. Per **Hebrews 13:17**, each man will give an individual account to the Lord for how he watched over the souls entrusted to us. The argument now is that other elders could not be trusted with the letters.
- When I sent those letters addressed to the elder board to all the elders via email, I got a phone call from Jeff Smith, a longtime EC member. I chose not to answer the call. Jeff left a voicemail in which he accused me of sowing discord, warned me to guard myself against stirring up anger and lawlessness, asked me to “comply” and wondered whether I had “permission to do this.” I shared this with the elder board recently. There was no response let alone rebuke of Jeff or of me, if they believe I was wrong.

If the workings and culture of the Harvest elder board does not radically change, our church will not be able to rid itself of the old sinful, secretive, siloed, controlling culture. This might sound like I am giving up. I am not. My hope is for our church to return to Christ alone and be the church (or churches) I know we can be — a church with real uncommon community where anyone can ask questions, where we say hard things to each other when needed in love, where we communicate more; a church with full transparency; a church where every member entrusted with spiritual oversight really lives out both “What does God say about this in His word?” and “What is best for the church, for the people?” But this change can happen only with a new board that has left behind the ways of the past. So, I am resigning, and I am calling on every member of the former EC to resign immediately (Steve Huston led the way here with his resignation two weeks ago), for any board member tied to the old culture to resign immediately and be replaced by men who not only are willing to reform Harvest but know how to do it—men like the former elders already named.

Harvest needs reform. It needs to start now. I am willing to help in any way I can.

Your fellow worker,

Dan