

RELIGION · Published February 19

# Pastor and founder of Chicago megachurch fired after more than 30 years of leadership



By Kathleen Joyce | Fox News



Pastor James MacDonald, the founder Harvest Bible Chapel, a megachurch located in the surrounding Chicago area, has been fired as a leader of the church. (Stacey Wescott/Chicago Tribune/TNS via ZUMA Wire )

The founder of a [Chicago](#) megachurch has been fired as its leader.

Pastor James MacDonald, of Harvest Bible Chapel, was given the boot last week by church elders after “highly inappropriate comments made by Pastor MacDonald were given to the media and reported,” the church said in a statement.

“Given that and other conduct under consideration, in accordance with the procedures in our Bylaws, Pastor MacDonald was removed as Senior Pastor and as an Elder of the church for engaging in conduct that the Elders believe is contrary and harmful to the best interests of the church,” the statement [read](#). The church did not elaborate further.

### **SOUTHERN BAPTIST PRESIDENT SAYS DATABASE OF ABUSERS POSSIBLE**

MacDonald founded the church in 1988, and the megachurch has seven locations in the Chicago area and one in Florida, the [Daily Herald](#) reported. His two sons are on the church’s executive leadership board.

The pastor’s leadership has come under scrutiny recently, the [Chicago Tribune](#) reported.

Former church members have come forward to accuse Harvest Bible Chapel's leadership of dishonesty and "financial mismanagement," the Chicago Tribune reported.

MacDonald was fired "following several months of public revelations, indicating a pattern of abusive behavior towards subordinates and extensive financial mismanagement", [WLS](#) reported. The church was also reportedly \$42 million in debt.

MacDonald, who was known to be a charismatic preacher, was part of then-candidate Donald Trump's spiritual advisory team but stepped down after the Access Hollywood tape was made public, the Chicago Tribune reported.

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Ryan Mahoney and Scott Bryant, two of the five people who were sued for defamation by the church's leadership, have been vocal opponents of MacDonald and have posted critiques of the pastor on a blog. The lawsuit led to the exposure of undisclosed information about MacDonald, which ultimately led to his termination, the Chicago Tribune reported.

Following the news of MacDonald's termination, Mahoney and Bryant released a statement saying: "Seven years ago, we began to publicly air just a few of the stories that former elders and pastors had begun to share with us in private. While they did not allow us to share many of these stories, we published accounts and documents about finances, power and control as a means of pointing to the much deeper issues that were swirling around MacDonald and Harvest. As of the end of 2017, we felt that we had said all that we could to warn the people of Harvest about this toxic scenario."

MacDonald was at first put on an "indefinite sabbatical" last month before he was fired. After he was put on leave, text messages and recordings were released on the Erich "Mancow" Muller's radio show on WLS-AM 890 that appeared to capture MacDonald "disparage his critics." Muller, who was once friends with MacDonald, accused the pastor of "running the church as essentially a giant Ponzi scheme," the Chicago Tribune reported.

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Kathleen Joyce is a breaking/trending news producer for FoxNews.com.

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**KentSalmen** ★ Leader

20 Feb



""disparage his critics.""

I hope they have more than that, because it seems pretty flimsy, and the article is very lacking. A good church board is to oversea and make sure things are done properly. A bad board can be as bad as any other. Churches are made up of people, and people can do some bad things.



**TiredofCriminals** ★ Leader

20 Feb



Sad. But....this is what happens when "People" are given the power to control speech. God's Word is God's Word and People do not listen. The Bible tells us that these things Will happen in the Last Days. Did the "congregation" of John the Baptist fire him? Moses? Paul? Of course not. People....simply do not want to hear the Truth. And the Devil will do whatever he can to stop people from hearing the Truth. And he uses other people....to do that work. Here on Earth...Money talks...only Money is heard....not God.

When the disciple Peter cut off the ear of the servant with a sword was he fired? How about when he cursed? Was Jesus fired when he threw people out of the Temple? I could go on...but you get my drift. People need to just shut up and listen . Maybe we need Christ to return and throw out a few troublemakers in our churches today. If they want to throw the first stone.....after a their names are written in the sand.....so be it. I pray for this man of God. I pray for the church that God built using the hands of this man. I pray for the evil people who believe they can control what God says by "firing" this man. A congregation does not have the "right" to say who can preach. Most people call \*every \* preacher evil. This is nothing new. And it will continue to happen until Christ returns. The Bible says so

Reply Report 3 Likes  



**BubbaNoVote** ★ Leader

19 Feb



"... stepped down after ... video was made public..."

Isn't that precisely the sort of time that a good (and honorable) spiritual adviser DOES NOT turn his back on someone?? Hypocrite.

Reply Report  



**KentSalmen** ★ Leader

24 Feb → BubbaNoVote



You can try and help someone, but some reject and flee in shame or arrogance.

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**ThomasdAquin** ★ Leader

19 Feb



Trump's "personal" spiritual advisor is Paula White--who is every bit as much a fraud as this guy. What else would you expect from a Trump associate?

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**Exmark** ★ Leader

19 Feb → ThomasdAquin

What specifically makes McDonald a fraud?

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**TiredofCriminals** ★ Leader

20 Feb → Exmark

He is not a fraud. All congregations eventually turn on preachers. They have been doing it now for thousands of years.

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**Exmark** ★ Leader

20 Feb → TiredofCriminals

"All" is an inclusive word.

If your assertion is true, then you have a reason for the statement.

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