

Former 'Christianity Today' Editor Mark Galli Accused of Sexual Harassment

The former editor of a prominent evangelical magazine who made national headlines for criticizing Donald Trump's failed character has been accused of sexual harassment during his tenure as editor.

A new report from *Christianity Today* magazine, published Tuesday (March 15), claims the Carol Stream, Illinois-based ministry failed to hold former editor-in-chief Mark Galli and former CT advertising director Olatokunbo Olawoye accountable for sexual harassment for more than a decade.

That harassment included "demeaning, inappropriate, and offensive behavior," according to the report from *CT's* news editor Daniel Silliman, which was edited by senior news editor Kate Shellnutt and published without review from the ministry's executive leadership.

Silliman reported finding a dozen firsthand accounts of harassment.

"Women at *CT* were touched at work in ways that made them uncomfortable," according to the *CT* news story. "They heard men with authority over their careers make comments about the sexual desirability of their bodies. And in at least two cases, they heard department heads hint at openness to an affair."

Eight women alleged that Galli touched them inappropriately, including one former employee who said Galli caressed her bare shoulder during an event in the early 2000s, while another said Galli's hand got "stuck under her bra" when he rubbed her back.

According to the report, Galli was reprimanded in 2019 after three women in three days reported to human resources that he'd inappropriately touched them—allegedly hugging a woman from behind, grabbing another woman by the shoulders and shaking her and putting a hand on another woman's bottom.

However, the article said, 2019 was not the first time Galli had been reported to HR for inappropriate behavior toward female colleagues—it was just the first time a record was kept. According to the report, more than half a dozen employees reported harassment from Galli or Olawoye between the mid-2000s and 2019. But none of those reports resulted in a formal write-up, warning or reprimand.

Reporting a case of harassment could also lead to backlash, according to the *CT* report.

Dan Darling, an evangelical author and director of the Land Center for Cultural Engagement at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, said the magazine's account showed how badly Christian institutions have handled issues of sexual harassment.

"A lot of our institutions did not have good policies," he said.

The report was sad, he said, but also a step forward for Christian groups. He hopes that other ministries will learn from *CT*'s example and adopt better policies.

"We need these protections in place," he said.

Galli told *CT*'s news editors that he likely "crossed lines" during his three decades at the magazine but said he never had "any romantic or sexual interest in anyone at *Christianity Today*."

In a phone interview with Religion News Service, Galli said he was deeply troubled by the allegations in the story, which he

denied. Several of the incidents in the story were taken out of context, he said, or were simply false.

“My initial reaction is that I am shocked at how many of the statements made in the article were simply not true,” he said.

Galli also said he was “deeply troubled” if he did anything that offended or intimidated other people and would be open to meeting with people he had offended and apologizing.

In 2019, not long before he retired, Galli called for then-President Trump to be removed from office, saying Trump’s character flaws made him unfit for his office. The editorial caused a national uproar among evangelical Christians. Galli then left *CT*—which was founded by the famed evangelist Billy Graham—in early 2020 and has since converted to Catholicism.

In an editorial, also published Tuesday, Tim Dalrymple, the current president and CEO of *CT*, said he first became aware in 2019 that a *CT* senior editorial leader—whom he did not name—had “treated his female reports unprofessionally, engaging in unwanted touch despite repeated communications that such behavior was wrong, unwelcome, and needed to stop.”

Dalrymple, who had only been at *CT* for three months at the time, said he found out from Human Resources that the editorial leader’s conduct had been addressed verbally but no written warnings were in place about past conduct.

That leader was then disciplined and warned they would be suspended or fired if any additional harassment occurred. According to Dalrymple, “no further allegations of unwanted touch or other inappropriate conduct arose” between then and the former leader’s retirement in 2020.

However, in 2021, two current employees came forward with additional details about alleged harassment by this senior editorial leader.

"They described highly inappropriate comments and unwanted touch that left them feeling disrespected, objectified, and unsafe," Dalrymple wrote. "Our immediate response was to grieve with them, thank them for their courage, and commit to a process that rigorously examines what we got wrong as a ministry and what we must do differently going forward."

As a result, *CT* hired Guidepost Solutions, which has become a go-to consultant for evangelical groups facing allegations of sexual harassment, misconduct and abuse, to assess its response to issues of harassment and misconduct.

That report, made public Tuesday, found allegations of harassment against two employees at *CT*, neither of whom were named in the report. The report also found that *CT*'s culture and work environment can feel "inhospitable to women at times."

"While many believe that this aspect of *CT*'s culture has improved under its current leadership, others believe that women are still discounted and treated as 'less than' in the *CT* workplace," according to the Guidepost report.

The Guidepost report also found that women employees at the ministry felt *CT* failed to hold employees accused of harassment accountable.

"These female employees felt that *CT* had not held Former Employee 1 accountable for his actions and that the organization's policies and procedures were insufficient to address and prevent future incidents of harassment and abuse," according to Guidepost.

Dalrymple told RNS in a statement that *CT*'s leadership supported the reporting done by Silliman.

"We invited the report because we wanted to know the truth of the matter," he said. "We cannot be truth-tellers if we refuse to tell the truth about ourselves. I appreciate Daniel's

report and stand behind it fully.

The *CT* article also detailed allegations of repeated harassment by Olawoye, who was fired from *CT* after being arrested in a 2017 sting operation. He later pleaded guilty to traveling to meet a minor for sex and was sentenced to three years in prison. {eo}

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