

Harvest Bible Chapel Executive Elders Announce Resignation Days After Firing James MacDonald

Harvest Bible Chapel announced its executive committee of elders will resign over the next few months as soon as a replacement committee can be set in place. This is one of several sweeping changes the church says it's making.

The announcement, which was read in services Feb. 16-17, comes just days after the church abruptly fired former Pastor James MacDonald when a recording of inappropriate comments he made surfaced. The comments became public on Mancow Muller's WLS-AM radio show, in which MacDonald allegedly discusses his plans to put child pornography on the computer of *Christianity Today's* chief executive officer and his belief that one of his critics was having an affair with CT's editor-in-chief.

In the church's statement, executive committee member Bill Sperling says the elders fired MacDonald for his "sinful pattern of inappropriate language, anger and domineering behavior." He calls the past several days "without question one of the most difficult weeks in the history of our church."

Sperling also gives several reasons for the elders' resignation, namely delaying their response to voices of concern both within and without the church.

"Harvest elders are responsible for oversight of strong biblical doctrine, direction and discipline. We must hold ourselves to this high standard," he says. "In all candor, we collectively failed in some of those areas. We acknowledge failures in direction, discipline and response time. We, as the larger elder board, have made mistakes, and we own these.

We are truly sorry and ask for your forgiveness.”

The executive committee of elders’ resignation is simply one of the changes HBC says it will make. The church announced it will change the composition and the structure of the full elder board.

“We recognize now that the large size of our elder board of over 30 men has made it difficult to make decisions during times of adversity,” he says.

HBC will also return the Naples campus to its elders and halt plans for a new campus in the Hinsdale area. Lastly, they have formed a new team called Harvest 2020. This small group of congregants, staff, outside professionals and elders will conduct a deep review of HBC.

“The Harvest 2020 Team has been set up to take the next several months to complete a deep review of our church to improve our oversight, accountability and transparency,” he says. “Please pray for these servants as they seek the Lord’s wisdom to lead us toward a healthy and fruitful future.”