

Larry Tomczak: 5 Ways We Should Respond to Mike Bickle's Statement

My long-standing friend and fellow leader Mike Bickle has issued a statement regarding his current situation in which he has faced allegations about sinful misconduct. Multitudes across America and abroad have been praying for truth to be revealed, and we believe that has happened, continuing in prayer as the careful investigation continues. I affirm the current IHOPKC senior leadership and have confidence in their ongoing oversight.

In my weekly written and video commentaries, I've joined other leaders in expressing support for Bickle while underscoring absolute adherence to biblical guidelines and accountability: "I reiterate that accountability is essential, and if the careful investigation reveals wrongdoing, I am confident it will be handled biblically and redemptively with discipline and God's plan for restoration."

I, like others, emulated the example of Billy Graham when asked about Richard Nixon during Watergate: "I am still his friend. I have not forsaken him. I have met and prayed with him many times."

In his personal statement, Bickle shared that he was "deeply grieved" about "my past sins" of "20+ years ago ..." "I asked for forgiveness ..." [from his wife, family and now church community and the body of Christ].

He sincerely believed these things "were dealt with and under the blood of Jesus" but "since this has now become public, I want to repent publicly."

With today's open season on social media, Bickle mentioned

that some accusations “are out of context, greatly exaggerated or blatantly false” but “please do not criticize those who are voicing their disdain for me. Please only speak blessing to them and about them” (Matt. 5:44).

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He said he would not be engaging in “public preaching ministry” and sees this as “God’s delayed loving discipline on my life” (, 11) and will “look to other leaders to determine how long this season will last– it may be long and it may even be permanent. I will only reengage in my public preaching ministry if God confirms it through others.”

5 Ways We Should Respond

1. According to Scripture: Besides praying for God’s continued guidance for leaders entrusted with oversight in this matter, the Bible calls us to carefully guard our speech and speculation while we embrace His directive in this situation: “Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted” (Gal.6:1, ESV).

2. Recognize leaders are called to a higher standard: Biblical criteria for leadership in the church start with integrity and leaders being “above reproach” (1 Tim. 3:2). “Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness” (James 3:1).

3. Realize an offender’s response needs to be confession, repentance and demonstration: Individuals need to confess specifically and directly to the people who were affected by the sin; repent (which is not merely admitting sin, sorry one is caught or feeling bad over consequences) but “godly sorrow brings repentance” (2 Cor. 7:10, NKJV)) characterized by

heartfelt brokenness proven in a changed life over a period of time. “Whoever confesses and renounces [his sin] finds mercy” (Prov. 28:13b, NIV). “Bear fruit in keeping with repentance” (Matt. 3:8, ESV).

4. Know that God is merciful to those genuinely submitting to His plan for restoration: Grace is giving people what they don’t deserve; mercy is not giving people what they do deserve. The Bible teaches us that “mercy triumphs over judgment” (James 2:13b).

While we never compromise with sin or God’s holy standards, we must guard against harsh, legalistic standards for people to be restored. Our example is the humble prodigal who repented and returned to his father’s loving embrace.

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Moses committed murder, yet was forgiven and restored. David committed adultery and arranged a murder and was restored. The disciples fled in Christ’s hour of need, and Peter denied he knew Him three times (even after he had been warned) and was restored.

There are consequences for sin, but “His [the Lord’s] mercy endures forever” (Ps. 107:1) remains the most quoted verse in all the Bible. “Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy” (Matt. 5:7, NKJV).

5. Remember that the glorious church for which Christ is returning requires that we all do our part to uphold righteousness: Jesus Christ pledged to build His church, and He intends it to be one of purity and power. In times of testing such as this, pressure reveals the person, so let’s not squander our opportunity, but be faithful to see righteousness established in our own hearts as well as Bickle’s.

“I will restore your judges as at the first, And your

counselors as at the beginning. Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city" (Isa. 1:26).

Arthur Wallis, one of my favorite icons of the faith, now in heaven, said, "If we allow the righteousness of the kingdom to be diluted by unrighteousness, the kingdom loses its primary and distinctive feature. Its authority is undermined, its cutting edge is gone."

Here's the deal: With everything that has surfaced with our brother Mike Bickle and the inspiring International House of Prayer, may God use this experience to allow the organization's cutting-edge prophetic ministry to emerge even sharper than ever before.

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