

Successor to Megachurch Pastor John Piper Resigns Amid Allegations of Leadership's 'Unethical Behavior'

Jason Meyer, successor to famed evangelical pastor and bestselling author John Piper, resigned from Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota, Sunday amid allegations of what is termed as “abusive behavior” and a toxic culture among the church leadership. Piper retired in 2011 after 30 years in the pulpit to focus on other aspects of his Desiring God ministry.

“Meyer is part of a growing exodus of leaders and members leaving Bethlehem, a church with some 4,500 members on three campus which is seen as a flagship church in Converge, formerly the Baptist General Conference,” reports Ministry Watch. Although Meyer offered no public reason for his resignation, another former Bethlehem pastor, Bryan Pickering, told ministry watchdog Julie Roys that the church culture was “domineering, bullying” and responsible for “damaging behavior.”

Pickering wrote a letter read to the congregation July 11 which read in part:

I have seen several congregants (current and former), elders (current and former), and a former administrative assistant profoundly mistreated by elders in various ways. I have also seen leadership act in ways I would describe as domineering. I have also seen patterns of deception among our elders that are deeply concerning. I have tried on several occasions

since early 2020 to speak up to others about these patterns of behavior. Increasingly in 2021, especially and intensely since March, I, too, have experienced what I would call bullying behavior. It is now clear to me that it is best for everyone for me to resign.

Turmoil appears to surround the church and its companion school, Bethlehem College and Seminary. Last week, former philosophy professor Johnathon Bowers resigned and tweeted out his concerns about the “toxic environment” of the school and church:

Back in October, I resigned from a ten-year career teaching at Bethlehem College & Seminary because of the school’s toxic environment, particularly among the leadership. My family and I withdrew our membership from the church in December for the same reason.

– Johnathon Bowers (@johnathonbowers) July 15, 2021

His sister, Janice Perez Evans, stated her concerns even more strongly in a tweet of her own, calling the church “corrupt”:

In the last four weeks Bethlehem Baptist church downtown campus has had four pastors resign. Most notably pastor Jason Meyer resigned yesterday.

His, as well as all of us who have left, is a righteous judgement against the elders and leaders of the institution. It is corrupt.

– Janice Perez Evans (@jrpevans) July 15, 2021

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