

CN Morning Rundown: Tennessee Megachurch Pastor Apologizes, Denies Affair as Church Implodes

Here;s a quick summary of the top stories on :

Tennessee Megachurch Pastor Apologizes, Denies Affair as Church Implodes

Between 2013, when Tavner Smith responded to God;s call to plant a church in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and 2015, when his church ranked No. 7 on *Outreach magazine*;s list of fastest-growing U.S. churches, Venue Church experienced explosive growth with almost 2,000 members. But in a story repeated too often, that growth has now dwindled and the church, which once offered six weekly services in two locations, appears in danger of closing after revelations including Smith;s divorce, an alleged affair with a former staff member and the subsequent resignations of multiple staff members.

In a December meeting with more than 100 church volunteers, Smith, 41, apologized but still denied the affair, the *Chattanooga Times Free Press* reports from recent audio obtained of the meeting. In a separate article, the *Free Press* reports that the church “now struggles to attract a few dozen people to a service on a given Sunday.”

Smith met his former wife, Danielle, at North Greenville University in South Carolina and later attended Redemption World Outreach Center (now Redemption Church), also in Greenville, South Carolina, after a time of what Smith said was his “disobedience” to the Lord. He volunteered with the Redemption youth group and ultimately became executive youth pastor under the leadership of Pastor Ron Carpenter, whom

Smith's website describes as his "mentor." Danielle Smith also served on the Redemption staff. Both left their Redemption positions under the call of God and moved to Chattanooga in 2013 to begin Venue Church, which launched with an astounding attendance of 450 on Oct. 13, 2013.

Student Sues Michigan School for Persecution for Sharing His Christian Beliefs

A Michigan high school student has filed a federal lawsuit against his school after he was suspended for three days for sharing his Christian beliefs with another student in a hallway at the school and in a private text conversation off school property.

The Great Lakes Justice Center, a nonprofit religious rights law firm, representing Plainwell High School junior David Stout, filed the lawsuit naming the Plainwell Community Schools district, Plainwell High School's principal and assistant principal, as well as the school's two band directors, as defendants.

According to court documents, Stout shared "his Christian beliefs about heterosexual/homosexual conduct in a series of private text messages with another child. The communication did not occur on the school grounds or campus, with school property, at a school-sponsored event or field trip, nor was it connected to any functions of the school in any way."

Time to Cancel Dwayne Johnson (;The Rock;)?

The plot thickens as our contemporary cancel culture gets into a feeding frenzy. Who will the next victim be?

First, there was an attempt to cancel Joe Rogan's massive podcast because he was allegedly spreading misinformation about COVID and vaccines.

Next, acting superstar and former professional wrestler Dwayne

Johnson (aka “The Rock”), stood up for Rogan, saying, “Great stuff here, brother. Perfectly articulated.” Yes, Johnson was looking forward to “coming on one day and breaking out the tequila with you.” {eoa}

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.