

Creflo Dollar Called to Carpet for Defending Eddie Long

☒ Days ago, Atlanta megachurch pastor Creflo Dollar was speaking out for Bishop Eddie Long. Rather than gossiping, he said, prayer and forgiveness is in order.

Now, Lerone Martin, an assistant professor of American Religious History at Eden Theological Seminar in St. Louis is speaking out against Dollar for remarks he made during his June 5 sermon.

Four men—all former members of Long’s church now in their early 20s—claim Long used gifts, trips and money to coerce them into engaging in sex acts with him, beginning when they were 17 or 18. Because the men were over the age of consent in Georgia, which is 16, no criminal charges were filed.

Although Dollar did not name names, he said “that preacher’s still anointed to do what he was called to. He just had a wreck. The blood will take care of his issue just like it will take care of yours. And I just can’t believe that people would leave their preacher because he had a wreck, instead of praying for him.”

Dollar was working to discourage people from leaving New Birth Missionary Baptist Church in Lithonia to join his church, World Changers. “If you’re from that church then you know I’m talking about, you trying to join here, I don’t want you to join here. You need to go and join where you’re supposed to be,” Dollar said.

Martin responded in an open letter to Dollar, saying that he feared the pastor’s comments confused forgiveness with accountability.

"You see, Long's case was not simply, as you suggest, a 'wreck' or a car 'accident,' but a case of DUI: Driving/Pastoring under the influence of unchecked power and accountability. This continues to be a historic problem with commercial celebrity preachers, and given your status and peer group, I'm sure you know this all too well," Martin wrote.

"Long's move from adamant public denial to private settlement left no way for onlookers and members alike to obtain an account of what exactly happened. They have been left in the dark as to whether their shepherd indeed has an ongoing problem."

As Martin sees it, people who left New Birth or who are reconsidering their commitment are not necessarily withholding forgiveness or questioning Long's call.

"You emphatically directed members of New Birth not to join your church but to return and support their pastor," Martin wrote. "Perhaps you did this in the spirit of looking out for your friend and clerical colleague."

Creflo Dollar Ministries could not immediately be reached for comment. Charisma News will follow up if Dollar or his staff responds.