

Evangelist Perry Stone Placed on Sabbatical, Asks Forgiveness for 'Inappropriate Actions'

The board of directors for Voice of Evangelism (VOE) issued a recent statement "announcing that evangelist Perry Stone has stepped aside from the pulpit and his travel ministry in response to behavior that 'deviated from the biblical standards set in place for VOE leadership,'" according to the *Cleveland Daily Banner* of Cleveland, Tennessee.

Stone, 61, who founded the Cleveland-based VOE in 1979, hosts the *Manna-fest* TV program and preaches to thousands around the world. He has written dozens of books and recorded more than 100 DVDs and CDs, reports the *Chattanooga Times Free Press*.

According to the *Daily Banner*, the statement, released by VOE media relations spokesperson John Rodriguez, said that in April 2020, the board placed Stone "on sabbatical for rest and restoration," citing serious health concerns "related to spiritual and physical burnout" that included dangerously high blood pressure. Rodriguez also said "a couple" of employees at VOE had met with the board to address concerns of "inappropriate words and actions" on Stone's part.

At the board's direction, Stone has stepped aside from his preaching and travel ministry "for an extended period of time."

The board stated that the issues in question were "civil and not criminal," and included an apology from Stone in its statement: "I have asked God and my precious wife Pam to forgive me. And I humbly and sincerely ask those who are hurt or offended by my actions to also forgive me. It is my hope

that by the grace of God we will all be able to walk in healing and restoration.”

In an audio statement “played for a small, in-person group of church members” and obtained by the *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, Stone reportedly said he “acted inappropriately with female employees” and that this occurred because of the stress of his ministry work. Stone also asked forgiveness for letting down the high standards he set and that he is receiving professional counseling at an out-of-state clinic.

The *Times Free Press* reports that Stone also said in the recorded statement, “And above all, what I really want you to know, I have made [a] pledge to God, myself, my family, and I’ll make a pledge to you, that the remaining days of my life I have a lot of days, I’m going to set up very strong and unmovable boundaries to ensure that my personal and spiritual life are held completely accountable every day to men who surround me in ministry and above all accountability every day to the love of my life Pam.”

Please join the Charisma News Staff in praying for Stone and his family as well as other affected individuals during this time. {eoa}