

How Mars Hill Church's Board Failed Mark Driscoll

As the fallout continues from Mark Driscoll's dismissal from the Acts 29 church-planting network he co-founded, one former board member of Driscoll's church is speaking out about accountability in the body of Christ.

Paul Tripp, the pastor, author and international conference speaker who recently resigned from the Board of Advisers and Accountability (BoAA) of Seattle-based Mars Hill Church, which Driscoll founded, is certain long-distance accountability boards just can't work.

"I love the gospel of Jesus Christ. I love the church of Jesus Christ. I love pastors. I love working with churches to help them form a leadership culture that is shaped by the same grace that is at the center of the message that they preach," Tripp wrote in a statement.

"It's because of this love that I accepted the position on Mars Hill Church's BoAA. But it became clear to me that a distant, external accountability board can never work well because it isn't a firsthand witness to the ongoing life and ministry of the church."

As Tripp sees it, such a board at best can provide financial accountability, but will find it very difficult to provide the kind of hands-on spiritual direction and protection that every Christian pastor needs.

"Unwittingly what happens is that the external accountability board becomes an inadequate replacement for a biblically functioning internal elder board that is the way God designed His church to be led and pastors to be guided and protected," Tripp wrote.

Since he said he knew he could not be the kind of help he wanted to be through the BoAA, he resigned the position.

“I would still love to see the leadership community of Mars Hill Church become itself a culture of grace, and I am still willing to help,” Tripp said, “but not through the means of a board that will never be able to do what it was designed to do.”