

Rob Bell's Successor: 'Being a Pastor Is Not Really Who I Am'

Kent Dobson, who took over as teaching pastor at Mars Hill after Rob Bell stepped down, will leave the church next spring, according to several reports.

Dobson told the congregation "being a pastor at a church is not really who I am."

He continued: "I have always been and I'm still drawn to the very edges of religion and faith and God," Dobson said. "I've said a few times that I don't even know if we know what we mean by God anymore. That's the edges of faith. That's the thing that pulls me. I'm not really drawn to the center. I'm not drawn to the orthodox or the mainstream or the status quo.

"And I think all churches have to have a center. It helps them define who they are, but I'm always wandering out to the edge and beyond."

Dobson took on the teaching pastor role at Mars Hill in September 2012 after Bell resigned from the Michigan church, according to the church website.

"Before coming back to Mars Hill, Kent was a Bible and Theology Teacher and Spiritual Life Adviser at Grand Rapids Christian Schools," the site reads. "His unique ability to teach across the age-span, relaying truths in broadly relatable ways, is one characteristic that makes him such a great fit for our community."

During the transition, the church lost about 1,000 members, *Charisma News* previously reported.

"There was a lot of drama with (Bell's book) *Love Wins*, and

that season feels like it's over," Dobson said in 2013. "This year has been one of sort of settling down a bit and re-identifying our priorities, making some goals for the future and getting reinvested in some new outreach opportunities and finding our feet. (It's) a chance to open up a new chapter, enter into a new season.

"I'm happy about the history of Mars Hill and Rob's role here. He left an interesting and challenging legacy, but we have to move on."

Two years after those comments, Dobson is churning up the uncertainty in the Mars Hill leadership once more.