

Texas Pastor Blaine Bartel Resigns Over Affair

✖ Nationally known pastor and youth leader Blaine Bartel has resigned as pastor of the Dallas-area church he founded after acknowledging he'd had an affair.

Bartel, who launched 600-member Northstar Church in 2006, stepped down March 31, saying he had been unfaithful to his marriage vows, the *Dallas Morning News* reported. Bartel, 49, and his wife, Cathy, have been married for 28 years.

"I'm deeply sorry for the pain I've caused her," Bartel said, according to the newspaper. "I have three incredible boys who are hurt through this. My church [is], of course, and my family and friends."

Bartel stepped down after reporting his behavior to one of Northstar's trustees, the *Dallas Morning News* reported. Teen Mania founder Ron Luce; California pastor Richard Salazar of New Harvest Christian Fellowship; and Erik Lawson, founding pastor of Element Church in Missouri, are listed as trustees on the church Web site.

Bartel said he plans to find a job outside the church and focus on repairing his marriage, the newspaper reported. "I've disqualified myself from ministry," Bartel said. "I realize when you stand up to help people as a leader in the church, you have an incredible responsibility to live out that life as well, and I haven't done that."

Before moving to Dallas, Bartel was a well-known youth leader in Tulsa, Okla. He has written teen-oriented books such as the *Every Teenager's Little Black Book* series and led popular youth conferences. In the 1980s he hosted the youth-focused *Fire By Nite* Christian TV show.