

40-Year Friend: Beware of Evil Reports Regarding Mike Bickle

Years ago, I had a divine appointment with Billy Graham and asked for advice. Pointing to his Bible, he said, “Stay in the book!”

Let’s do just that as we consider a fresh look at the challenging situation Christian leader Mike Bickle currently faces.

A month ago, allegations were raised by a group alleging Bickle conducted himself in untoward ways requiring investigation and possible disciplinary measures.

I’ve known Bickle for over 40 years as a very close friend. I also state at the outset that any established wrongdoing should never be covered over but examined and dealt with according to Scripture. In 51 years of ministry, I’ve seen the “good, bad and ugly” in similar situations. “Smite the shepherd, and the sheep will scatter” (see Matt. 26:31). The “accuser of our brethren” (Rev. 12:10b, NKJV) knows this.

A classic episode of “The Twilight Zone” once depicted alien beings infiltrating a community to engage in a campaign of personal and community destruction by whispering subtle morsels of evil reports that eventually brought citizens to blows. The aliens watched gleefully from the hillside, basking in their success.

Serious Stuff

“Dante’s Inferno” listed levels in hell, and the very bottom was reserved for those involved in treachery and betrayal. The reason is probably due to the horrible repercussions that

result when people damage other's lives and reputations.

"There are six things the Lord hates ... a false witness who speaks lies, and he who sows discord among brethren" (Prov. 6:16-19, MEV). Discernment is critical.

Get your FREE CHARISMA NEWSLETTERS today! Stay up to date with current issues, Holy Spirit news, Christian teachings, Charisma videos & more!

"Do not listen to an accusation against an elder unless it is confirmed by two or three witnesses" (1 Tim. 5:19, NLT).

"The first to present his case seems right, Until his neighbor comes and examines him" (Prov. 18:17, NKJV). This is called "due process"—innocent until proven guilty—and it's the basis for our legal system (which is the opposite of that in England, where a person is guilty until proven innocent).

Months ago, I was in a room where a person referred to a Christian leader as a "sexual predator." I cautioned the person and later got back to him with accurate facts after an in-depth conversation with the leader and an attorney. The tragedy is that damage had already been done with false reports that circulated and a reputation ruined from slander.

I owe a debt of gratitude to the above leader for his decades of teachings. Ironically, even as Bickle has taught about the end-time culture of persecution and betrayal, this other teacher instructed the church about evil reports.

– What causes conflict within families, churches, ministries or organizations to flare out of control and split the entire group?

– What causes close friendships to be broken and a "root of bitterness spring up to ... defile many" (Heb. 12:15b, BSB)?

Evil Reports: Watch Out!

“An evil report involves distortion or incomplete facts or false information. It is given with wrong motivation and causes hearers to come to inaccurate conclusions and respond with unscriptural solutions.”

Billy Graham had flaws. After a private meeting at the White House, he left and ignorantly divulged everything to reporters, offending the president. He confessed he should have spent more time with his family. His son Franklin rebelled, did drugs and wouldn't get up for school. His wife, Ruth, admitted jokingly she never thought about divorce, but murder. He was photographed in a pub with a journalist sipping a soft drink that critics suggested was alcohol. A London newspaper reported he was seen at night walking with someone called “Beverly” (it was George Beverly Shea, who sang at many of his crusades), and integrating his crusades caused racial strife among some.

Imagine how today's cancel culture could have sown evil reports on the above to ruin Graham's reputation and disparage his ministry.

Bickle's Test

Pressure reveals the person.

After the IHOPKC story broke, a leader declared, “Mike Bickle is a wolf in sheep's clothing!” Others seemed to salivate that maybe they had more ammunition to discredit those “crazy charismatics!”

Caution: If you engage in disseminating evil reports, you'll reap what you sow. “Therefore, let him who thinks he stands take heed, lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12).

Sign up NOW for a FREE Charisma Magazine Online 30-day trial!

This is the time to guard our speech; be devoted to prayer for Mike, Diane and their family plus the leadership team and

their community; and emulate the example of Billy Graham when asked about Richard Nixon during Watergate: "I am still his friend. I have not forsaken him. I have met and prayed with him many times."

"A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity" (Prov. 17:17).

Go to the IHOPKC website and read the "Report on Initial Findings."

- Three of the women issued public statements refuting the allegations.
- The leadership team states abuse claims against Bickle lack evidence.
- Legal counsel and the leaders have determined the allegations "lacked any semblance of reliability or due diligence."
- A document originally prepared by the group supposed to accompany the allegations does not contain any actual evidence from the supposed victims.
- The group's allegations were accompanied by a list of "demands and threats," which included dictating the use of IHOPKC funds.
- One of the alleged victims (using only initials) accused Bickle of "prophetically manipulating" her 25 years ago. The allegations were all nonsexual, but the other woman referred to some physical contact.

Here's the deal: In four-plus decades of relationship with Mike Bickle, I stand with him as a man who puts character before charisma. He lives in a modest home with a most generous heart. He's affirming, winsome and authentic. When he was transitioning from pastor to establish the International House of Prayer, he invited me to lead the church and was ever

so gracious when I finally declined. While planting our church in a rented facility, I remember Bickle, our featured speaker, helping our takedown crew load up the van. On another occasion, after ministering for a weekend in our church, he gave his entire honorarium to our 20-year-old son in the parking lot so he could get engaged! Facing opposition from a combative local leader, Bickle humbly called me for advice. My wife (Bickle's her favorite Bible teacher) was blown away when he sent me home from Kansas City with a beautiful portrait of heaven. Every Friday, for years, I put out in our kitchen a picture of myself with Bickle and his wife, Diane, to inspire me for my weekly bridal fast.

I say all the above while praying for God's perfect will to be done. I reiterate that accountability is essential. If the careful investigation reveals wrongdoing, I'm confident it will be handled biblically and redemptively with discipline and God's plan for restoration of this man of God who is a gift to the body of Christ worldwide. He needs our intercession at this critical time. May he emerge stronger than ever to finish well. We love and appreciate you, Mike! {eoa}

Join Charisma Magazine Online to follow everything the Holy Spirit is doing around the world!