

What Do You Do When Authority Fails You...

by Larry D. Green, CU Graduate '82

An open letter addressing the recent Action of the Trustees of Cedarville University.

When you have appealed to the only earthly authority in a given situation and they fail to respond in a God-honoring way, what recourse do you have?

This is the question many faculty, staff, alumni, parents, students, donors and friends of Cedarville University are asking today. And it is a painful question with limited options.

You cannot appeal to the President of the school, for it is his actions that are in question.

The trustees alone stand in the position of appeal. Yet, it would appear that they have closed their eyes on the obvious facts open to all of us, and have closed their ears to any voice other than their own.

The report of an outside law firm, even with the limited and narrowly defined inquiry established by the board itself (which is another issue), confirmed what was already known. The President of Cedarville University intentionally deceived the board (and everyone else at the institution and in the community) in hiring Anthony Moore and withheld vital information from the very body entrusted with the governance of the institution.

Read that last sentence again. Let it sink in.

The President of Cedarville University intentionally deceived the board (and everyone else at the institution and in the community) in hiring Anthony Moore and withheld vital information from the very body entrusted with the governance of the institution.

Now consider this... the Board of Trustees, knowing this, chose to retain this man as its President. Now let that sink in.

Even in the obfuscating legalese of the law firm's statement it is clear **that** the President failed in his stewardship responsibility. In the limited statements we were granted to hear from them, they write,

"It is reasonable to infer from the evidence available that President White took steps that he knew, or should have known, clouded the specific nature of Dr. Moore's misconduct,... and subsequently failed to notify the Board of the specific nature of Dr. Moore's misconduct."

When Paul withstood Peter to the face over the vital issues of the gospel, integrity and hypocrisy, I am pretty sure that he didn't say to Peter, "It is reasonable to infer..." Paul said, "I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned" (Galatians 2:11-14).

The only charge that the Trustees are requiring of the president is that he take some classes and "lead Cedarville University to emphasize victim prevention, awareness, advocacy, and other related areas." They are asking him to lead in the one area that he has clearly demonstrated that he is unqualified. Seriously? There may be a time when an alcoholic will be ready to lead a 12-step program, but let's wait until he can at least pass a breathalyzer test himself.

I think **it is reasonable to infer** that the board of Trustees is now complicit with their President in his abusive leadership of the institution. For by their action they have clearly established a new and very different standard of excellence for the Presidency of Cedarville University, and consequently for all trustees, faculty, staff and students going forward.

Is this what the Trustees want as the face of the University? Is this the new standard of integrity for presidential leadership at Cedarville? We are not talking about a differing of opinions on secondary matters. We are not talking about differing priorities in a strategic plan. We are talking about deception, manipulation and abuse of authority by the lone executive officer responsible for the moral and spiritual direction of the institution. So tell us please, what is a fireable offense?

Is the cabinet, faculty and staff expected to respect, trust and follow his leadership simply because of the board's resolution? Are alumni expected to continue to support and promote the school in spite of our shame and embarrassment? It would appear to those of us with a vested interest in the school, both its history and its future hopes, that the Trustees are only concerned about two numerical indicators — enrollment and dollars — and as long as they are headed in the preferred direction, all is well and we need not worry or rock the boat. But the hand and blessing of God can depart without one knowing it, even while all of the temporal and earthly measures look comparatively good to those only concerned about the bottom line.

The Hope: Honor

I have taught my sons—all graduates of Cedarville University—that “the Lord honors those who honor Him” (1 Samuel 2:30). Even if a decision is to your own hurt, you honor the Lord above all.

Our hope in this particular situation, as the news of the President's actions first came to light for many of us on April 25th, was that he would do the honorable thing. That he would truly recognize and personally own his breach of ethics, his harm to the testimony of Jesus Christ before a watching world, his damage to the churches and individuals involved, his failed stewardship as the chief executive officer of the institution, and his prideful and blatant deception to carry out his personal agenda. And, consequently, that he would fully own his failure without qualification or justification, and step aside for the sake of the institution, and for the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus Christ.

But... he didn't.

Whether he considered it or not, I do not know. Whether anyone close to him ever encouraged him to do so, I do not know. But his failure to do so only affirmed that he continued to be blind to the severity of his “missteps” and the disqualifying nature of his judgement.

But there was still hope... When the President lacked the courage and integrity to do the honorable thing, we rightly looked to the Board of Trustees to do the the honorable thing on behalf of all of us who have been tossed and overturned in the wake of this one man's prideful and unilateral decisions. And at first, it looked as if they might take it seriously.

But... they didn't.

Even our declining culture takes such abusive leadership and the mishandling of sexual offenses more seriously than the Trustees of Cedarville University. I never would have thought we would see such a day in my lifetime. Wonderful. We are now left with an institution whose standards are lower than the culture around it. So much for being “above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom we appear as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:15).

And let's be perfectly candid and honest. When there is a known failure of judgment and a breach of ethics this significant, you can be sure that there are other signs of abusive, deceptive and manipulative leadership under the hood at Cedarville University. Unfortunately, instead of taking a closer look, the Board of Trustees just chose to close the hood and keep driving.

So... what DO YOU DO when authority fails you...?

You appeal again,... and again, and again, and again. For even an uncaring and corrupt judge “who does not fear God or respect men” will eventually get it right even if for the wrong reason (Luke 18:1-8).

And so, if there is still a Trustee or two of the caliber of the two men who had the integrity to step down over this decision, who fear God and respect men, I strongly appeal to you. Please prayerfully reconsider and have the courage and humility to reconvene and do the right thing, the honorable thing. It is not too late.

Unfortunately, so many have already been deeply wounded and suffered life-altering consequences in the wake of one's man's actions. But what is most troubling for many of us is the fact that the one man who caused it all is the only one not held accountable! There was not even a censure of his actions or a rebuke of his deception!

As an alumnus, as the son of the first campus pastor and Vice President for Christian Ministries ('70-'95), and as the pastor of the church that gave birth to Cedarville as a Baptist School in 1953, regrettably, I can no longer endorse the school. If it were possible, I would ask for the return of the motto that our church gave to the school, "For the Word of God and the Testimony of Jesus Christ."

The president frequently concludes his letters, videos and social media statements with the line, "God is faithful. You can trust Him." That is so true. And in that we all can rest. Unfortunately, the same can no longer be said about the governing body and the executive officer of Cedarville University.

Heartbroken, but Still Hopeful,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Larry D. Green", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Larry D. Green, '82