

Sent: June 19, 2020

Dear Cedarville University Trustees,

[Introduction excluded]

...I have been deeply grieved as I have watched, listened and read about the circumstances surrounding the hiring and firing of a particular employee. But **the issues at stake have less to do with his conduct and more to do with actions of the President, and perhaps yours as well.**

...please accept my input of both questions and counsel, for what it may be worth. Let me thank you in advance for receiving it.

QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS:

I read the letter that the President sent to you before the individual was hired. I realize, as many others have noted before me, that his letter contained both obfuscation of the truth and manipulation of the circumstances. But several questions ran through my mind which need answers from you:

1. Was there not one person among you with the courage to stand up to the President and say, "No," when he asked your opinion?
2. Did **ALL OF YOU** approve the hiring of this individual within a few months of his dismissal from pastoral leadership?
3. Did **ALL OF YOU** affirm this decision with the understanding that this man would be an assistant coach to the men's basketball team?
4. Did **ALL OF YOU** affirm this "plan of restoration" that included his appointment as a full professor in the School of Bible and Theology!?

Please,... please,... tell me that isn't true.

The President's communication indicates that **YOU ALL were 100% for this "restoration plan."** If not, please tell me otherwise. And calling it a "restoration plan" is an exercise in biblical gymnastics to say the least. Restoration, as you know, is an activity of the church, the body of Christ. It is not the prerogative of an individual (the President) nor the task of the University. For this person, his local church, the Village Church in Ft. Worth, is the rightful place of restoration.

The President then said that "**we**" didn't know everything at the time of his hiring. Please,... What didn't "we" ("he" and "you") know? You knew he was fired (not "stepped down") for "***grievous immoral actions against another adult member that disqualify him as an elder and staff member.***" The President knew that this individual had been *struggling with this for much of his life and was still feeding that lust as married father of 3 in a pastoral position!!*

The President also knew that the Elders of the Village Church had said that that he was "***unfit for ministry at this time, including speaking engagements at conferences or other churches. Our desire is for him to walk in faithfulness and repentance. We believe he is in need of deep healing and strong counseling for an extended period of time.***" I listened to Matt Chandler's contemporary statement.

Yet,... **Dr. White went ahead with your approval** (or perhaps ignorance) and hired him anyway.

The President says that there was new information that he didn't have before. What was the new information that he and you learned the week of April 25? That 5 recordings were made over 5 months rather than 2 recordings over 2 months? That is what you are calling "new"?

MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION: So please tell me so that I understand clearly. I don't want to miss the answer to this important question: **Is this the new Cedarville standard of excellence?** As long as you only make **two** videos of a young man showering without his knowledge or consent for your own personal, perverted pleasure, AND your disqualification from ministry by a local church is at least two months removed, Cedarville will hire you, move you into the Bible Department, entrust to you the training of future pastors and Christian leaders and put you in the locker room with the men's basketball team.

Do I understand you correctly? Is this your new standard? I need to know. My congregation, the church that gave birth to the University, needs to know where you stand.

Here are the facts as they presently stand from the President's own statements:

The President, with your blessing,...

- 1) removed a member and former elder who was under discipline from the community in which the discipline and accountability was taking place (and needed to continue), and then...
- 2) the President hired this recently fired pastor and elder who was a known sex offender and brought him into a community of 18-22 year olds without their knowledge and consent; students who, along with their parents and local churches, are trusting that you are providing a safe environment for them, and...
- 3) the President placed this offender in close proximity to young men in the very context that would make provision for the flesh more likely, and then...
- 4) the President facilitated this man's rapid advancement to a place of authority as a professor in the School of Bible and Theology, in direct violation of the Scriptures and the restrictions which were placed upon him by the local church where his discipline was enacted.

With all due respect, an "outside investigation" and making the administration and/or board go through "victim prevention awareness and advocacy training" is not the answer to one man's unilateral decision (unless Dr. Jason Lee, or anyone else, is also culpable—which is another issue). This falls on Dr. White. It doesn't matter how "well meaning" he was.

This is a grave leadership failure – a lack of discernment, a violation of trust, manipulation, favoritism, and abuse of authority. The President needed to own it personally and **exclusively**, without qualification, explanation or rationalization, for the sake of the school and its future. **But he didn't, or didn't appear to fully own it.**

He kept using the term "we" and expected his administration to do the same. [As illustrated by Janice Supplee's written response to Christianity Today, "*While we sought to be restorative, documenting and putting accountability measures in place, the information provided to us when the restoration plan was developed and approved was incomplete.*"]

In essence, the board and administration, and thus the entire institution, are accountable for this decision, the rationale behind it and the consequences which follow.

The reputation of the school to which our church gave birth has already taken a huge hit and Cedarville is now lumped in with other organizations and affiliations where similar scandals are taking place. One man's decision resulted in this action; unless, again, you are in agreement with his decision as Dr. White suggests and your silence indicates.

My additional unanswered question, to which I only have received limited and anecdotal input, is... "Is there more beneath the surface in Dr. White's leadership of the university over the past few years that reflect similar unwise and damaging leadership? Is manipulation & deception evident elsewhere to suggest a pattern of abusive leadership with a much more consequential wake?" I am sure that this a question that you are considering.

As you work through this issue, I am reminded of a similar board process of another organization on which I previously served as we worked through the fitness of the president to continue in office, and how the various initial responses eventually merged into a clear, united and unanimous decision. Initially, there were some who believed that the particular failure was significant enough on its own merit to warrant immediate dismissal. Others felt that the failure, if truly and properly confessed and owned, could be overcome. And others were in between. I am sure you have experienced the same. But following a thorough, prayerful and deeper examination, it became apparent to all that the failure in leadership with which we were dealing and the breach of trust with our board, the administration, the staff and the larger constituency, **required our board to carry out its stewardship trust** with courage, grace and truth, putting the glory of God and the organization's mission and health first, while upholding the high standard of leadership for our organization.

Be assured that I am praying for you as you work through a similar process and make your final deliberations.

However, I must admit, that I am presently embarrassed to be an alumnus of the school that just two months ago I was praising as our church celebrated Cedarville University's place in our own history on the anniversary of our Charter Day.

I understand that there are no perfect boards, perfect board members, or perfect shareholders, including me. And I don't profess to know all the issues or be privy to all the information that may be before you. However, I believe that I know more than enough to understand the importance of this moment and the significance of your decisions.

I am praying for the advancement of God's glory, the repair of the tarnished testimony of the school, the wise stewardship of the institution by its board, and the protection and well-being of the student body. And I look forward to any correction of my understanding as well as the answer to my questions: Did you **ALL** approve? and... Is **THIS** the new standard?

Because the tomb is empty,



Rev. Larry D. Green
Your brother and collaborator

"Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.
Let all that you do be done in love." -1 Corinthians 16:13, 14