

ANSWERS TO TWO MEDIA QUESTIONS

November 30, 2018

Q. “Why did we proceed with the lawsuit now, given that the attack bloggers had not published since December 2017?”

A. As of June 2017, the attack bloggers had not published since January of 2014 due to a period of relative peace in our church. Then, as we were concluding a difficult process of separation from leading HBF and all the churches we had planted, the attack bloggers began to publish in earnest doing great damage through outright falsehoods. This, after more than four years of silence and with significant detrimental impact upon treasured relationships in our own church and among our church plants.

So after sixteen months of reflection and consultation among Christian leaders outside our church family, we decided to move past self-examination and the many changes we had made and take action to protect our church family. We agreed that the bloggers refusal to come under Matthew 18’s prescription for conflict resolution among believers, freed us to **“treat them as a non-believer”** (Matthew 18:17) and seek the legal protection afforded us in the civil authorities **“ordained by God for the punishment of wrongdoers”** (Romans 13:1-6).

Q. “Why have we involved Julie Roys, and was it to suppress a story she was working on about Harvest in matters we feared becoming public?”

A. It was not the fact of a story about Harvest that concerned us, as we have nothing to hide or anything we would be concerned if it were made public. By policy, there are a few matters the Elders keep private to protect the church or to conform to Illinois employment law; however, there is nothing secretive between or among the Senior Staff and Elders of the church.

The issue with Julie Roys is her lack of objectivity and how she came to focus on Harvest Bible Chapel, a church she has never participated in. Our awareness of her attempts to stir up gossip, sow discord, inflame old animosities, and confront sensitive matters with specific church families in order to discredit the church led us to include her in the lawsuit.

Following a recorded interview we gave to *World Magazine* to answer several old issues Julie raised, she turned her attention to financial accusations. We were contacted by the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability’s (ECFA) President Dan Busby, related to a series of questions she brought them. ECFA has informed her that Harvest is an ECFA member in good standing. We invited ECFA to do an onsite visit on December 10. We anticipate no issues once our best practice financial records are again independently verified as meeting all ECFA standards. The last time ECFA came to review our financial records they commented, “Never have we seen such a gap between what we were told about a church and what is actually true.” We anticipate the same result, but no longer believe patience will stop this time wasting and injurious assault upon the integrity of our church.

We remain committed as a church to the biblical teaching on conflict resolution and forgiveness between believers. If any or all of the defendants agreed to cease their interference and leave the governance of our church to the Elders that God has raised up, we would drop them from this suit immediately. However, we are willing to go the distance in seeking a legal remedy because we believe these actions serve notice that we will not hesitate to protect Harvest Bible Chapel from malicious efforts to discredit our church and its leaders.