



# BETTER CHURCH GOVERNANCE

**A Lay Initiative for the Accountability of  
the Catholic Hierarchy**

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**Create Transparency || Support Integrity**

***Better Church Governance exists to hold the hierarchy of the Catholic Church accountable for abuse and corruption, and to develop and support honesty, clarity, and fidelity in Church governance.***

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### ***The Mission***

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The College of Cardinals is made up of a large and diverse group of men. Their names, not to mention their actions, are often unknown to faithful Catholics at large and in many cases to each other. Recent developments have produced a dizzying number of reports, documents, and allegations concerning the ‘leaders of the Church.’ Our mission is to assist the public in understanding the characters, records, and priorities of the 124 cardinal electors.

The goal is not simply to record data, although this is a necessary and valuable step, but to also trace the dynamics of patronage and finance that allow abuse to continue. Our flagship project, *The Red Hat Report*, provides a survey of the cardinal electors. It is not intended to be a political project – and will not endorse or attack any cardinal. It is, fundamentally, a project of the lay faithful, conducted by professional academic researchers in order to promote greater transparency, accountability, and fidelity, and to empower members of the Church to courageously stand up for the truth.

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### ***Deliverables***

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- (1) Publish *The Red Hat Report* before the next papal conclave. This report provides a brief introduction to each cardinal, noting their handling of abuse and corruption, both sexual and fiscal, and their theological and pastoral priorities.
- (2) Provide a clear abuse/corruption-classification for each cardinal-elect, based on his degree of implication in abuse and corruption, or strong response against it. Such a score promotes a clearer understanding of their record of governance and fidelity.
- (3) Communicate this information effectively to the public through social media and the press – including but not limited to editing Wikipedia pages of cardinals – to cut through media noise and enable an accurate, user-friendly picture of their records regarding abuse and corruption.
- (4) A website with our evaluation of each cardinal for one-stop access.

*Cardinals have commented that accurately knowing the backgrounds of the other cardinal electors is the most precarious part of each conclave.*

*Our mission is to change this.*

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### *Methodology*

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In *The Red Hat Report*'s initial stages, our resources will go towards collating credible facts on the cardinals, distinguishing credible reporting from unsubstantiated claims, and synthesizing the data into an accurate and accessible account. We read the books, articles, interviews, homilies, and diocesan reports by the cardinals in order to understand their theological priorities and track-records. We have collected a list of trustworthy investigative journalists and researchers as sources, some of whom are directly collaborating with us. If any information needs to be verified, we travel to investigate locally.

One common response arising from the 2018 sexual abuse cases is, "everyone knew." Everyone knew of the abuses. We must be where "everyone knows." Thus, we assign our research-groups to a local cardinal so that it can investigate the situation on the ground.

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### *What does it mean to be a "lay project"?*

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Our work is distinct from either a governmental or ecclesial review. We are motivated by our sense of duty and love for the Church precisely as lay people and want to offer our professional skills in support of our priests and leaders.

We are not a faction or a lobbyist group. ***We, the laity, are the body of the Church, and it is as the hands and feet of the hierarchy that we must act.*** That is why prayer, sacrifice, and tangible help are our main efforts – not a disconnected review and condemnation. We must "watch the watchmen", but as helpers not enemies.

There are many holy and courageous men within the episcopacy. Our job is to empower them – and to prove to the world that they are there. We must provide reformers with the information they need to act. The Church and its structure are divinely constructed; thus, we want to encourage each member, starting with ourselves, to do its part and cooperate with the grace of God.

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## *Our Current Situation*

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- (1) Currently seeking 501(c)(3) status.
- (2) In the startup phase we are working with the non-profit *Center for Evangelical Catholicism*, which is acting as our “fiscal sponsor” while we are establishing full non-profit standing and the ability to take direct donations.
- (3) Philip Nielsen (CEO and Executive Director) and Jacob Imam (COO and Development Director) are the core staff. The former is building and managing the team of approximately forty researchers while the latter is the fundraiser and communications director. He is also leading the Oxford Team of the research group.
- (4) The researchers currently amount to about forty persons, predominately professional academics and reporters.
- (5) Organization: Each cardinal has a team of about six people investigating him. Each team is led by a team leader. Philip Nielsen manages all team leaders.
- (6) Growth: Currently we are constructing the dossiers of the American cardinals. We will soon begin forming groups in Italy to begin researching their cardinals. Jacob is traveling around the world organizing regional teams to research their home cardinals. We will be growing exponentially this year.

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## *Timeline*

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Each date indicates when a publishable draft will be completed. In February 2019 we will launch our website with the findings of the North American cardinals. Four months after the final date of January 2020, we plan to have the first edition of *The Red Hat Report* published.

Though we are largely working by region, we intend to have the dossiers of the most ‘papabile’ or influential cardinals around the globe completed by March 2019.

### ***February 2019***

- *North American cardinals*

### ***March 2019***

- *Top 20 Most Papabile*
- *Italian cardinals*

### ***June 2019***

- *South American cardinals*
- *Spanish cardinals*
- *Australian cardinals*

### ***August 2019***

- *African cardinals*
- *French cardinals*
- *Eastern European cardinals*
- *Central American cardinals*

### ***January 2020***

- *German cardinals*
- *Middle East cardinals*
- *Far East cardinal*

# Financial Summary

As a general policy we intend to employ part-time contracted employees rather than full time. This means that we can work with part-time staff and draw at need upon specialized researchers depending on the language of the cardinals we are investigating. This will also allow us to switch from research and editing to promotion and marketing quickly when necessary, shifting from editorial staff to social media staff.

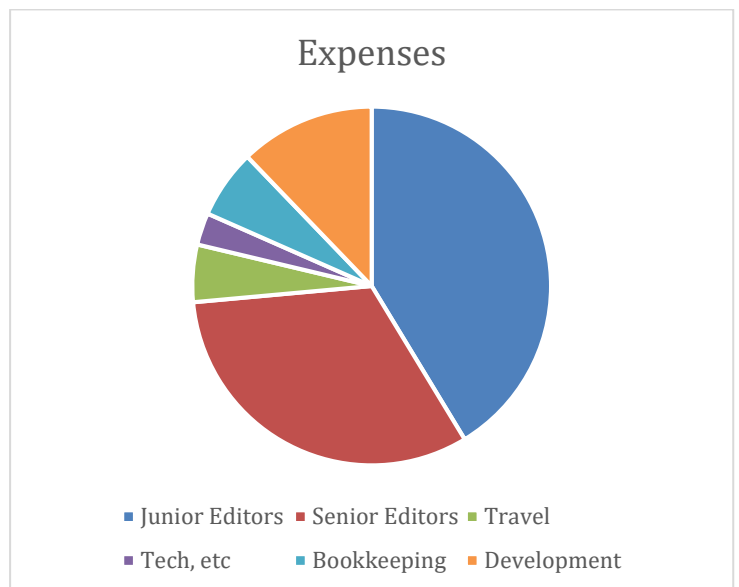
## Staff

- Senior Editorial Staff: Including Project Editor, Senior Copy Editor, Italian Editor, and Spanish Editor: 30/hr, part-time, 29 hours per week max each = 156,00 (39,000 max. each)
- Development Director = 30/hr, part-time (with the possibility of working over 30 hours in the first year if travel and fundraising functions require this) = 39,000
- Marketing/Social Media: 30/hr, part-time = 39,000
- Bookkeeping 30,000
- Travel: 25,000
- Technology and 'virtual office': 14,000

**Total First Year Expenditures:**  
**\$483,000**

## Summary

- Junior Copy Editors, various languages and employment periods = 25/hr = 200,000
- Senior Editors = 156,000
- Development/Marketing = 59,000



## *Appendix of Future Vision and Future Budgets*

The above constitutes a one-year budget only for *The Red Hat Report*. The project will need to be kept up-to-date as cardinal electors age-out, die, and are replaced. The expenditures of travel, junior copy editors, and staff can thus be lowered by approximately \$100,000.

That said, BCG hopes to expand into more projects to fulfill its mission. With the USCCB's call for a lay review of bishops (see report 29 Aug 2018) and Pope Francis's meeting with world bishops (slated for Feb 2019) we see the potential for expanding our work to include the entire episcopacy and becoming a permanent Independent Commission.

When we expand beyond *The Red Hat Report*, Philip will stay on as director of the report, but we will hire a President (CEO) to oversee the operations of the entire organization. For now, we want the supermajority of our resources to go to the production and distribution of the report itself.

## *Contact Information*

JACOB FAREED IMAM,  
COO AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR



|| [jacob.imam@betterchurchgovernance.com](mailto:jacob.imam@betterchurchgovernance.com)

Marshall Scholar || University of Oxford Prize  
Fellow and Doctoral Candidate in Theology and  
Religion

***Better Church Governance***