

May 22, 2024

To our Cornerstone and church family in the 1990s,

I have met with several of you, but wanted to ensure that as many people as possible could hear directly from me regarding the report that was just released on Jeff Taylor's misconduct during his years in our church. I hope you've read that report.

I grieve deeply for those of you who were victims of Jeff's physical, verbal, and spiritual abuse. I grieve deeply for our young men who endured such pain and suffering in silence and shame. I grieve deeply for our young women who ache and hurt on their behalf. I grieve deeply for our parents who have had to pick up the broken pieces, tried to repair the damage to their children, and fight to be heard. I grieve deeply for our entire church family.

As your leader, I am truly sorry for the ways that I failed you. Now, looking back, I can only say that the bottom line is I wish I had done more. I wish I had done more to learn if others had been harmed by the wolf in our midst in the 90s. It is a profound regret that I was not more suspicious and observant during that time. I wish I had been wiser and done more in 2007 to bring Jeff's abuse to light while still guarding the identity of the victim. I was not discerning enough to realize that where there is one victim there are very likely others. I wish I had taken more effective action then and in the years that followed.

You trusted me to take care of our children. I understand why some of you are angry with me. I am angry too, but more than that I am grieving for those who have had shameful and confusing memories weighing upon them all these years.

I pray that even now justice will be done, and that Jeff will face legal prosecution for his abusive conduct. I know that the Lord will judge Jeff Taylor appropriately on judgment day. I want justice for the victims and for all of us in the church community.

I can't go back in time, but I can try to help in the way forward together. My heart is broken by Jeff's evil deeds. I feel it more and more every time I meet with those who are injured as they are trying to work through grief and praying for healing. I know and cling to the promise that "the Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." (Psalm 34:18)

To those Cornerstone students who became disillusioned with the church as Christ's body on earth because of Jeff Taylor, please do not let his horrendous evil turn you away from the Creator, your Creator. I remember Paul's words in Romans 3:4 "Let God be found true, though every human being a liar."

Thank you to everyone who has communicated their pain, righteous anger, and shock to me over the past month. I have heard you. I am praying for you and for all of us. I am committed to working with you and alongside you in the days ahead.

We need God's help for true healing to come. We need open discussion, listening, acceptance, counseling, and prayer. We need to know Christ better, we need time. There's nothing easy about it, surely, but in Christ there is hope, and healing.

If you think it would be helpful, please forward this letter to other Cornerstone friends.

In Christ,
John Yates