



Executive Summary

Independent Investigation of The Foursquare Church

I. Introduction

In March of 2019, The Foursquare Church¹ received a report by “Reported Victim 1” (RV-1),² a lifelong member of The Foursquare Church and a credentialed Foursquare pastor, of behavioral misconduct by Mike Larkin. In June of 2019, RV-1 resigned from her position as a regular speaker at Life Pacific College-Ignite.³ After learning that RV-1’s resignation was an aftereffect of the reported behavioral misconduct of Mr. Larkin, the Foursquare Church engaged Godly Response to Abuse in the Christian Environment (“GRACE”)⁴ to conduct this independent investigation.

II. Scope and Methodology

The Engagement Agreement between GRACE and The Foursquare Church specified the scope of the investigation:

¹ The Foursquare Church is an international body of believers that was formed in 1910 by Aimee Semple McPherson. Foursquare is registered in many nations and is governed by a stand-alone Board of Directors in each nation of registration. See foursquare.org. “The Foursquare Church” as described in this report includes Life Pacific University-Virginia (formerly LPC-Ignite), Center for Spiritual Renewal East, Center for Spiritual Renewal West, and local US church affiliates.

² GRACE is using a pseudonym of “RV-1” for the individual who brought forward information that was the impetus for the Foursquare Church’s initiation of this Independent Investigation. We use the name “RV-1” to identify her here and throughout the remainder of this Executive Summary. Except for the reported offender, all names have been changed to protect the confidentiality of those involved. In some cases, minor identifying details have been changed for the same reason.

³ Life Pacific College-Ignite (now Life Pacific University-Virginia) is a Foursquare University located in Christiansburg, Virginia.

⁴ GRACE is a third party non-profit entity that engages in independent investigations to assist faith communities with appropriate responses to abuse disclosures.

“GRACE shall investigate any and all allegations of behavioral misconduct by Mike Larkin that are directly or indirectly related to FOURSQUARE, including but not limited to, whether FOURSQUARE had any knowledge of such allegations and if so, how FOURSQUARE responded to such allegations. Behavioral misconduct shall include physical, sexual, and emotional misconduct. As part of this investigation, GRACE shall assess the current FOURSQUARE personnel policies and practices as they relate to preventing and responding to sexual misconduct. In conjunction with assessing policies and practices, GRACE shall also evaluate the environment and culture of FOURSQUARE and how such may impact matters relating to sexual misconduct within the organization.”

GRACE entered into an Engagement Agreement with the Foursquare Church on March 17, 2020. GRACE conducted twenty eight witness interviews⁵ via video call.⁶ GRACE also identified and communicated with a number of individuals who were not interviewed.⁷ Because this investigation was not a judicial proceeding, GRACE did not have the power to subpoena witnesses or documents; all information was provided to GRACE voluntarily.

In addition to witness testimony, GRACE examined evidence provided by witnesses, including email and other personal communications, policies, and written correspondence.

III. Investigative Findings⁸

A. Behavioral Misconduct by Mike Larkin

1. Background Information

Prior to being introduced to Foursquare Mr. Larkin was a police officer.⁹ In 1986, he and his wife¹⁰ began attending a Foursquare Church in Southern California.¹¹ In 1991, Mr. Larkin joined the staff of the church as an executive pastor.¹² After serving as a pastor for over five years, Mr. Larkin accepted a position coordinating global mission teams with Foursquare Missions International.¹³ In 2000, Mr. Larkin was

⁵ This investigation was conducted during the Coronavirus Pandemic of 2020/2021. To ensure safety, GRACE conducted all investigative interviews via Zoom video call. All witnesses included in this report signed a Communication Acknowledgment, authorizing GRACE to record the interview, produce a transcript, and use all information communicated during the interview.

⁶ Witnesses were invited via email to be interviewed by GRACE.

⁷ GRACE investigators decide whom to interview based on their professional judgment and a number of other factors, including whether they believe the potential witness has information relevant to the scope of the investigation and whether the potential witness is willing to participate in the investigation.

⁸ Though GRACE employs investigators with prior law enforcement and legal experience, GRACE is not a law firm and does not provide findings related to “guilt” or “innocence” as would a court of law. GRACE therefore makes no findings related to guilt or innocence, as that is what juries and judges are permitted to do. We do however provide here a summary of the relevant data points, along with a reasoned analysis, so that the reader may be properly equipped to understand the facts gathered from the perspective of experts who regularly work in the field of behavioral misconduct, and particularly disclosures that are alleged to have occurred within a faith community.

⁹ Mr. Larkin Transcript. at 5. (“ML Tr. at page number.” is shorthand that will be used throughout this report for this and other witnesses).

¹⁰ Mr. Larkin’s wife was invited to speak with GRACE, and did not want to participate in the investigation per an email sent to GRACE on January 8, 2021.

¹¹ ML Tr. at 5.

¹² *Id.*

¹³ *Id.* at 6.

promoted to the position of Director of Missions.¹⁴ Mr. Larkin held this position until 2008, when Mr. Larkin became the President of Life Pacific College-Ignite (LPC-Ignite),¹⁵ an extension campus of Life Pacific University (LPU), a Foursquare College located in California.¹⁶ In 2011, Life Pacific University relocated the LPC-Ignite campus to a satellite location in Christiansburg, Virginia.¹⁷ Mr. Larkin and his wife also relocated to Christiansburg, Virginia, where he continued his Presidency of LPC-Ignite¹⁸ until December of 2019, when he resigned.¹⁹

2. Behavioral Misconduct towards Reported Victim 1

The following is a summary of the reported victims and witnesses, and their recollection of events.

a. The Accusations of Reported Victim 1

RV-1 is a credentialed Foursquare pastor who has served as a senior co-pastor of a local Foursquare Church for fifteen years.²⁰ Before meeting RV-1 personally, Mr. Larkin was acquainted with her husband, “Witness 1” (W-1), and another family member, both staff members of the Foursquare Church.²¹ RV-1 and Mr. Larkin knew of each other through the church, but did not personally meet until they attended a Foursquare youth camp.²² After speaking to “Leader 1” (L-1) about her “concern of our Bible colleges of kids falling through the cracks with sexual addiction, with homosexuality, it never being talked about,” L-1 suggested that RV-1 speak to students at Ignite.²³ RV-1 reached out to Mr. Larkin, the President of Ignite at the time,

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ LPC-Ignite “was started as a gap year, immersion discipleship program” at Life Pacific University in San Dimas, California. In 2011, Life Pacific University was granted permission by the Virginia Commonwealth Department of Education to open a satellite location in Christiansburg, Virginia. In congruence, LPC-Ignite relocated to the Virginia campus and became a college with a three-pronged approach: discipleship, missions, and academics. Testimony of L-1, at 4, 12 (October 29, 2020). In July 2019, LPC-Ignite gained accreditation and changed its name to Life Pacific University-Virginia (LPU-VA). LPU-VA aims to offer “biblical higher education while providing discipleship, community service, ministry leadership training, and missions experience.” See <https://ignite.lifepacific.edu/about/our-lineage>. See also <https://www.lifepacific.edu/tags/lpu-virginia>.

¹⁶ ML Tr. at 7.

¹⁷ See <https://ignite.lifepacific.edu/about/our-lineage>.

¹⁸ Now LPU-VA. See <https://www.lifepacific.edu/tags/lpu-virginia>.

¹⁹ See <https://resources.foursquare.org/president-mike-larkin-transitions-out-of-lpu-virginia/>.

²⁰ RV-1 Tr. at 3.

²¹ ML Tr. at 7.

²² RV-1 Tr. at 4.

²³ *Id.* at 4-5. RV-1 said, “I actually had been talking to her [L-1] about my concern of our Bible colleges of kids falling through the cracks with sexual addiction, with homosexuality, it never being talked about. And that was a big part of my story that I had really, God really ... I mean, really healed me in extreme ways. Of course, still working through that in some ways, but ... So I was becoming more public with my story and things like that. Foursquare was using me in certain aspects of sharing my story. I was talking to [L-1] about my concern and she’s like, ‘Hey, why don’t we have you start going to the colleges and just developing relationship with the kids and talking about sexual addiction and homosexuality and those things?’ Because I had struggled both with same sex attraction and pornography. And I had experienced huge freedom from both of those things. So I was talking to her and she wanted me to go there. So I began a conversation with Mr. Larkin on Facebook of the possibility of coming there. And he knew [L-1] wanted me to come there and she also talked to him about wanting me to come there. So that’s how my relationship with him really started.” L-1 said, “She [RV-1] was not a contract or stipend or employee. She was just a credentialed pastor. And so I sponsored her to Mike, just relationally saying, ‘Hey, this is something you might want to consider.’” L-1 Tr. at 2.

via Facebook Messenger to discuss the possibility of a speaking engagement at Ignite.²⁴ An agreement was reached that RV-1 would speak to the students three or four times a year, for the purpose of building a relationship with and mentoring the students.²⁵ Before RV-1 visited Ignite to speak in the Fall of 2018, RV-1 reports that Mr. Larkin reached out to her via Facebook message, beginning an ongoing conversation.²⁶ Mr. Larkin and RV-1 continued regular correspondence from September of 2018 until March of 2019.²⁷

RV-1 said she not only saw Mr. Larkin as a leader in the denomination but as a “father figure” that she needed in her life.²⁸ She always referred to him as “Pastor Mike.”²⁹ She shared with him about her life and the struggles she was facing as well as her prior history of childhood abuse.³⁰ RV-1 said they often joked and talked about their favorite alcoholic beverages.³¹ She said Mr. Larkin instructed her to delete all of their messages as “someone could take it wrong.”³² She complied.³³ Accordingly, the majority of the original messages, including the messages that contained the reported comments below, were not provided to GRACE.³⁴

²⁴ RV-1 Tr. at 5. ML Tr. at 7-8.

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ *Id.* at 6.

²⁷ *Id.* at 9. ML Tr. at 12. The majority of their conversation occurred over Facebook Messenger, though conversations also occurred via text or telephone call.

²⁸ RV-1 Tr. at 5. “There’s always been a need for me with a father figure... So when Mike started taking interest in me and just wanted to be there for me kind of in like a mentor father figure, I was like, ‘Wow, someone even wants to be, would desire to be that kind of father figure in my life.’”

²⁹ RV-1 Tr. at 35.

³⁰ *Id.* at 9.

³¹ *Id.* at 6.

³² *Id.* RV-1 said that Mr. Larkin told her, “Make sure you delete all your Facebook messages because someone could take us joking, someone could take it wrong.” Because we would joke. He knew I liked orange juice and vodka or something and he liked Jameson whiskey, so he was like, ‘Oh, well,’ because he’s the president, ‘Someone could take it wrong, so make sure you delete everything.’ So I always deleted my messages after we talked.”

³³ See footnote 32.

³⁴ RV-1 sent GRACE a document on which she had written down several of Mr. Larkin’s comments to her soon after the Foursquare Connection 2019 conference. She provided a list of comments Mr. Larkin said to her from September 2018 to March 2019. RV-1 provided GRACE with a screenshot of one text message from Mr. Larkin, referenced in footnote 42. RV-1 also provided four screenshots of Facebook messages sent to her by Mr. Larkin in March of 2019 (Facebook message dated March 4, 2019: Mr. Larkin (ML) at 12:44 am: “Off to bed. Long drive tomorrow. Stay close!! COMG can’t do all of this alone! Hahahahaha.” RV-1 at 9:35 am: “Have a safe trip!!!! We ended up getting a foot of snow!” RV-1 also sent a photo of a snow covered table on an outside deck.; Facebook message dated March 8, 2019: ML at 9:51 pm: “12 hour drive. Just pulled into the driveway. Hope you’re sabbatting well!! *three winking face emojis*” RV-1: “Wow! Long drive! I am trying to rest. *smiling face emoji* Not easy.” ML: “Takes a couple weeks to decompress. Seriously. Rest doesn’t happen immediately.” RV-1: “Yeah I see that. *frowning face emoji* You wouldn’t know lol.” ML: “Nope.” RV-1: “lol.” ML: “A little V forces rest.”; Facebook message dated March 10, 2019: ML at 10:25 am: “How’s sabbatical on a Sunday morning?” RV-1: “It’s weird. Watching the service online.” ML: “No doubt. Would it be better to watch someone else’s service online? Hard to let go and get your mind off it if you’re watching it unfold right in front of you! *winking face emoji*” RV-1: “I know. *frowning face emoji*” ML: “[W-1] preaching?” RV-1: “Yea.” ML: “Well he is probably your favorite preacher. Hahaha.”; Facebook Message dated March 11, 2019. ML at 11:45 pm: “Hey. Where ya been? Doing ok? Staying Busy or chillaxin?”; Facebook message dated March 12, 2019. RV-1 at 9:23 am: “Hey ... been keeping busy. Started working out a lot again, cleaning my house non stop etc ...” ML at 10:03 am: “Awesome!!!! Love it. So happy for you to have the time to do it all!” RV-1: “Me too!” ML at 8:15 pm: “Checking in. How’s it going?” RV-1: “Going ok ... at [child’s] division.”)

RV-1 reports that over the course of their correspondence, Mr. Larkin made multiple comments to her that made her feel “uncomfortable.”³⁵ Some of the comments Mr. Larkin sent to RV-1 included the following: he referred to her as a “hot drummer girl”;³⁶ told her the male coaches didn’t respect her “because you’re hot and they’re intimidated”;³⁷ while on a trip with her girlfriends he suggested he “should come and give back rubs and foot massages”;³⁸ after RV-1 sent him a picture of her and her family in which she was wearing a blue striped dress he messaged “Blue striped dress” and a heart emoji;³⁹ when RV-1 stated that he must have missed his wife while away on a trip, he replied “Nah, I prefer vodka chicks”;⁴⁰ after she posted a picture of herself with her family at the beach he told her that she had nice feet;⁴¹ he described himself as getting older but also “Seasoned. Experienced. Right Touch”;⁴² and he told her on multiple occasions, ‘I would love to see you drunk.’⁴³

RV-1 reported that she did not respond to the comments except on some occasions she would reply “Ew.”⁴⁴ Because of his role in the church she had a difficult time believing the comments were sexual in nature, and showed them to her friends and her husband.⁴⁵ She said W-1 believed the comments to be inappropriate but innocuous⁴⁶ while her one friend (“Witness 3” [W-3]) also said there was something “inappropriate” with the comments.⁴⁷ RV-1 did not confront Mr. Larkin and continued to speak with him on a regular basis until March 2019.⁴⁸

³⁵ RV-1 Tr. at 5. RV-1 described the conversations with Mr. Larkin as, “the talk that I felt really uncomfortable with.”

³⁶ *Id.* RV-1 reported that Mr. Larkin called her a “hot drummer girl,” after she sent a Facebook message stating that she played drums for a youth team at a summer camp.

³⁷ *Id.* at 6. Reportedly, Mr. Larkin made the comment “it’s because you’re hot and they’re intimidated,” when RV-1 was discussing the manner in which those on the basketball team she coached were treating her.

³⁸ *Id.* at 8. RV-1 stated that Mr. Larkin made this comment after she informed him that she was on a trip with some of her girlfriends from high school.

³⁹ *Id.*

⁴⁰ *Id.* This is a nickname Mr. Larkin used to call RV-1 on occasion. *See* footnote 54.

⁴¹ *Id.* at 9. RV-1 told GRACE Mr. Larkin made comments about her feet on multiple occasions. She remembered his comments, because she thought “It was gross... But partly because I hate feet.” *Id.*

⁴² Text from Mr. Larkin to RV-1 in February of 2019.

⁴³ Email to GRACE from RV-1 on November 20, 2020. RV-1 said in an e-mail to GRACE, “I’m just writing to share something that Mike said to me multiple times within the year and a half we had communication. He would say ‘I would love to see you drunk.’ And my reply to him was always, ‘No you wouldn’t!’ And, ‘is never going to happen!’”

⁴⁴ RV-1 Tr. at 6. (“I never responded. Except for a couple times, I was like, ‘Ew.’ And then he would say, ‘Oh, I was just kidding.’ But I never responded to his comments.”).

⁴⁵ *Id.* at 9.

⁴⁶ W-1 Tr at 9-10. “[RV-1’s] showing me Facebook threads, and I’m like, ‘That can’t be...’ What I said to [RV-1] is, ‘Those kinds of comments and things that... You and I wouldn’t do that, it’s not appropriate to do, but I’m not assuming anything.’ We did not assume that it was anything sexual or predatory, or... There was just no assumption whatsoever at that. It was the assumption actually... There was an assumption, but the assumption was that that’s the furthest thing. It just must be something stupid; him not thinking or him making... So that’s what I remember. And I don’t remember all of the things, but there were probably four or five things that were said.”

⁴⁷ W-3 Tr. at 2. “And on one of our talks she seemed to really kind of be struggling with what we now know as, or what I interpret to be inappropriate communication. And she was just kind of asking like, ‘Do you think that this is ... I feel uncomfortable with it. Am I overreacting? Am I reading too much into it?’ And some of the examples she was giving me it felt flirtatious, the communication felt flirtatious. It definitely right away I was like, this is inappropriate.” (W-3 TR. at 2.)

⁴⁸ RV-1 Tr. at 9.

RV-1 considered Mr. Larkin her friend, pastor, and mentor, but expressed some additional confusion she encountered. RV-1 stated that while she was in Mr. Larkin's presence in person at some speaking events at Ignite, he would not speak with her which was different from their friendship via the social media application.⁴⁹ Afterward he would message her late at night stating "Hey, I'm up if you want to chat."⁵⁰ On another occasion, RV-1 traveled to Ignite, and said that Mr. Larkin messaged her afterwards asking why she was ignoring him while she was speaking to the students.⁵¹ Mr. Larkin messaged her on multiple occasions "You left me"⁵² if she didn't respond to a message from him after an extended time period.

On another occasion, when he invited her over to his house for dinner with his wife he expressed friendship and familiarity with her.⁵³ At this dinner, RV-1 said that Mr. Larkin told her "you're part of the fam" and called her "V-girl" referencing the type of alcohol she liked.⁵⁴ On the other hand, it seemed to RV-1 he was trying to hide his friendship with her. She recounted a time when she messaged Mr. Larkin and he informed her that he had laughed out loud upon reading a message she sent. When his wife had asked him what he was laughing about, he told her he was laughing at something their daughter⁵⁵ had sent him.⁵⁶

b. Reported Victim 1 Discloses to Counselors⁵⁷ and Confronts Mike Larkin

In April of 2019, RV-1 spoke with one of her Foursquare-affiliated counselors ("Counselor 1" [C-1]), and told him some of the things Mr. Larkin had told her.⁵⁸ She didn't want to tell anyone, but also was concerned about Mr. Larkin's marriage.⁵⁹ She was encouraged by C-1 to speak to another counselor ("Counselor 2" [C-2]) affiliated with Foursquare and tell him. RV-1 recalled that C-1 told her, "[RV-1], you have to tell because it's going to happen to someone else, unless you tell."⁶⁰ She told C-2. Within a week, these two counselors together confronted Mr. Larkin via a video Zoom call.⁶¹ After this confrontation, Counselors 1 and 2 informed RV-1 that they wanted her to have a discussion about the matter with Mr. Larkin, W-1, and themselves.⁶² Counselors 1 and 2 asked RV-1 to write a letter to read out loud to Mr. Larkin during the call

⁴⁹ *Id.* "[Mr. Larkin] acted completely different towards me in public than alone. And that started to really hurt me, because I was like, 'This guy sees me like a daughter,' but when I'm with him, he would never hug me. He would never chat with me. It was kind of like he always kept me at a distance when I was there at Ignite." *Id.* at 9.

⁵⁰ *Id.* at 9.

⁵¹ *Id.* at 8.

⁵² *Id.* at 8.

⁵³ *Id.* at 26.

⁵⁴ *Id.* Mr. Larkin and RV-1 testified that they had discussed that RV-1 liked vodka and Larkin prefers whiskey. Frequently, Larkin would call RV-1 by the nicknames of "Vodka chick" and "V girl."

⁵⁵ Mr. Larkin's daughter was not interviewed, and the incident was not verified by her or his wife.

⁵⁶ *Id.*

⁵⁷ Professional credentialing and licensure as mental health counselors could not be verified.

⁵⁸ RV-1 Tr. at 9. C-1 stated the first time RV-1 told him about Mr. Larkin was on April 19, 2019. C-1 Tr. at 6.

⁵⁹ RV-1 Tr. at 10. "And so I just felt jaded, just by looking up at him [Mr. Larkin] so much, that he did reach out to me. He did want to have relationship with me and mentor me.... That's the only reason why I told, because I was concerned for him and his marriage. I did not want to tell. It killed me to have to tell. And knowing that they would hate me, that other people would hate me."

⁶⁰ *Id.* at 10.

⁶¹ C-2 Tr. at 7.

⁶² *Id.* at 10.

describing how she felt.⁶³ This Zoom call took place during March of 2019.⁶⁴ After this meeting, C-1 met with Mr. Larkin and his wife in a meeting where the letter RV-1 wrote was read aloud to Mr. Larkin's wife.⁶⁵ RV-1 reports that C-1 met with her after this meeting and informed RV-1 that he did not believe that Mr. Larkin had "any inappropriate intent."⁶⁶

In May 2019, RV-1 and W-1 attended the Foursquare Connection 2019 in Nashville, Tennessee.⁶⁷ Mr. Larkin also attended this event, and pulled W-1 aside and said he wanted to "work things out."⁶⁸ W-1 said he felt Mr. Larkin appeared to want to fix the problem without accepting responsibility, and told him, "Look, I think you're way more... I think you are not aware. We're not judging your motive. We're not judging all of this, but what you've done was out of line. It was across the lines. It's out of bounds. And I don't even know if you're aware to it. And [RV-1] and I just want you to be aware to it, and we want you to get help. We want you to... Whatever needs to be done, but this isn't good. This isn't good. And I don't know how it's going to be fixed, but it's not going to be fixed quick."⁶⁹

B. The Foursquare Church's Response to the Allegations of Reported Victim 1

On June 13, 2019, RV-1 reached out to L-1 and informed her that she would no longer be speaking at Ignite.⁷⁰ L-1 responded immediately asking the reason for the resignation and RV-1 said that Mr. Larkin said "sexually inappropriate" things to her.⁷¹ L-1 informed RV-1 that action would be taken and Mr. Larkin would be confronted.⁷² L-1 "immediately" contacted "Leader 2" (L-2) about taking action on the matter.⁷³

On November 10, 2019, L-2 visited the church of RV-1 and W-1, and sat down with them to discuss the allegations face to face.⁷⁴ L-2 recounted, "When I sit down with [W-1] and [RV-1], of course, [RV-1] felt like, and so did [W-1] felt like there were some violation that occurred, some boundaries that had been crossed. I certainly felt that too, but I'm hearing life from her perspective. It didn't, in my opinion, at least initially, didn't seem to border on sexual harassment as much as it bordered on flirtation and crossing boundaries of an adult person. Even though he wasn't her employer, I think because he'd invited her to be at campus to do some ministry, it created a complex relationship and situation. I agreed with [RV-1] that we needed to pursue this."⁷⁵ In November of 2019, Leaders 1 and 2 confronted Mr. Larkin in a hotel room

⁶³ C-2 Tr. at 12. When asked whose idea it was to confront Mr. Larkin in a meeting by reading a letter aloud, C-2 said, "Well I told her to do it. I said, 'You need to show him. If you need to stand up, stand up for yourself.'" RV-1 stated, "They [C-1 and C-2] wanted me to write a letter to Mike of how I felt, and some of the things he had said and done." RV-1 Tr. at 11.

⁶⁴ C-1 Tr. at 7.

⁶⁵ *Id.*

⁶⁶ RV-1 Tr. at 14.

⁶⁷ *Id.* at 17.

⁶⁸ "He [Mr. Larkin] was trying to make things right, and he wasn't denying any of the things, but he also wasn't owning any of the things. And I don't know. It's almost like everything that he could consciously admit to, he would own, but it's like he wasn't even aware. It's like he wasn't self-aware. He's not self-aware, he's not even... And so he was talking about stuff. In my opinion, he just didn't get the weight of it..." W-1 Tr. at 12.

⁶⁹ *Id.* at 13.

⁷⁰ RV-1 at 18.

⁷¹ *Id.* at 19.

⁷² *Id.*

⁷³ L-1 Tr. at 4. "I engaged [L-2] immediately." *Id.*

⁷⁴ *Id.*

⁷⁵ L-2 Tr. at 10.

about his comments to RV-1.⁷⁶ According to Leaders 1 and 2, he did not appear to be apologetic and placed blame on RV-1. L-1 stated, “His first reaction was, ‘That’s not true. She didn’t tell you my side. She didn’t give you my texts. This is one way. She didn’t tell you her part in it.’ And then he started slandering her with some pretty nasty stories about her behaviors.”⁷⁷ L-1 further stated “His whole approach was that this was consensual.”⁷⁸ During the meeting, the Leaders addressed that he was the senior leader and had the greater responsibility.⁷⁹ After pointing out his seniority, Mr. Larkin reportedly apologized.⁸⁰ Mr. Larkin was informed by the Leaders that he was being released from Ignite and that his pastoral license was under review.⁸¹ At the conclusion of the meeting, L-1 walked Mr. Larkin to the elevator where he again stated that the communication was consensual.⁸² L-1 reports that she put her finger to his chest and told him “You are the elder. Stop it.” and that he replied “You’re right.”⁸³

Both the Foursquare Board of Directors and the Board of Directors of Ignite consented to the release of Mr. Larkin from his role as President of Life Pacific University-Virginia.⁸⁴ An announcement was made on December 6, 2019 on Foursquare’s website that Mr. Larkin was stepping down as president.⁸⁵

C. Mike Larkin’s Response to the Allegations of Misconduct

Mr. Larkin confirms that he had an ongoing conversation with RV-1 for over a year.⁸⁶ Though he states that most of this conversation occurred over Facebook Messenger, Mr. Larkin was not able to provide physical evidence of the messages because they were deleted.⁸⁷ When asked how he would characterize his relationship with RV-1, Mr. Larkin told GRACE he considered her an acquaintance/friend.⁸⁸ He described his conversations with RV-1 as “an outlet to be able to just laugh and kind of tease around,” “never vulgar,” “never sexual,” or “locker room talk.”⁸⁹ Mr. Larkin claims that RV-1 would often talk about people who

⁷⁶ *Id.* at 5.

⁷⁷ L-1 Tr. at 4.

⁷⁸ *Id.* at 5.

⁷⁹ “No matter what your thought is, Mike, about what [RV-1] did, you were the boss of the situation. You were the elder of the situation. And you knew that she has called you her spiritual father. And knowing she looked at you that way, knowing her background, that has been very public, for you to do anything to insinuate in any way, was absolutely inappropriate, and you know it.’ And when I said that, he sat back in his chair and he said, ‘You’re right. I should’ve known better. I was stupid.’” *Id.* at 20.

⁸⁰ *Id.*

⁸¹ *Id.* at 6. L-1 reported that Foursquare applies one of three different categories when a pastoral license is in question. The license is under review when the pastor is under investigation. The license is suspended when there is corroborating evidence of misconduct, but the pastor has repented and is undergoing a restoration process. The license is revoked when there is corroborating evidence of misconduct, but the pastor has not repented.

⁸² *Id.* at 6.

⁸³ *Id.*

⁸⁴ *Id.* at 7.

⁸⁵ See <https://resources.foursquare.org/president-mike-larkin-transitions-out-of-lpu-virginia/>.

⁸⁶ ML Tr. at 20.

⁸⁷ Mr. Larkin states “I delete all the time,” explaining that his decision to delete the messages with RV-1 was customary. *Id.* at 19.

⁸⁸ ML Tr. at 8. “I would describe [RV-1] as an acquaintance/friend.”

⁸⁹ *Id.* at 11. “It was almost like an outlet to be able to just laugh and kind of tease around. And I’m an ex-cop. And so locker room talk. It wasn’t vulgar. It was never vulgar. And I’ll tell you something else too. It was never sexual. And that was never a part of it.” *Id.*

had abandoned her and would say “you’re probably going to abandon me too.”⁹⁰ Mr. Larkin reports that the night RV-1 was at his home for dinner, she brought a bottle of Vodka and became drunk. Mr. Larkin reports that she laid on the couch and refused his offer to give her a ride home.⁹¹ Mr. Larkin also states that he did not inform the Foursquare Board of this occurrence when he was confronted.⁹² Mr. Larkin reports that the messaging from RV-1 was “incessant,” and that the majority of conversations were initiated by RV-1.⁹³

When asked by the GRACE team about the “hot drummer girl” comment, Mr. Larkin reports that he was speaking to another drummer in the presence of RV-1 when he told the drummer “Well, drummers are hot.” Mr. Larkin reports that RV-1 stated in response, “Well, I am a drummer,” and that he responded “Well, then you get to be a hot drummer too.”⁹⁴ Mr. Larkin stated that on one occasion RV-1 was complaining to him about the basketball team she coached, and that he agreed with RV-1’s conclusion that the team was intimidated by her and that he told her “you get to be the hot coach too.”⁹⁵ Mr. Larkin confirms that he messaged RV-1 “Hey, I may actually come, and give back rubs,” after RV-1 sent him a picture of the bedroom while on a trip with her girlfriends from high school.⁹⁶ Mr. Larkin also reports that he said “I missed the vodka girl” in response to RV-1’s statement that he must have missed his wife.⁹⁷ Mr. Larkin denied the allegation that he told RV-1 to delete the messages between them.⁹⁸ Mr. Larkin also denied the allegation that he lied to his wife about who he was speaking to while messaging RV-1.⁹⁹

⁹⁰ “So [RV-1] was bagging on these... men and women who abandoned her... And there were many, many, many, many, many times where she would say, you're probably going to abandon me too, kind of a thing. You're probably going to turn your back on me too, you're going to go away. I'm saying that because it did, as I look back on it because I'd always have to convince her, no, no, no, no, no.” *Id.*

⁹¹ “She [RV-1] brought a bottle of vodka. She drove. She drank half the bottle. Was clearly intoxicated. After dinner fell asleep for awhile on our couch. Woke up and insisted on driving herself back to campus. We offered to drive her back. She refused.” Email to GRACE from Mr. Larkin, January 3, 2021. When asked about this incident, RV-1 said “That is a complete lie... I drank probably two drinks, never was I drunk, never [did] I ever ask him to bring me home. Never. I drove home that night completely fine, was not drunk.” RV-1 Tr. 2 at 9. (November 19, 2020). Mr. Larkin’s wife was invited to speak with GRACE, and did not want to participate in the investigation per an email sent to GRACE on January 8, 2021. GRACE was therefore unable to ask her for her recollection of the event.

⁹² ML Tr. at 11.

⁹³ “Her messaging was incessant. It was non-stop, I would say 90% of the time it was initiated by her.” *Id.* at 12. When asked by GRACE, “Who would you say initiated the majority of the conversation?” RV-1 responded “I would say in the beginning it was me. I would say towards the end it was definitely, the last half of the year it was definitely him.” RV-1 Tr. at 3.

⁹⁴ *Id.* at 13.

⁹⁵ *Id.*

⁹⁶ “So, if you want context, the context is she [RV-1] sent me a picture of the bedroom, and the bed, and a glass of wine in her hand or something kind of, you know. And, so now here's the thing, this is how dumb I am. I mean, because I didn't take that as she was saying, ‘Hey, here's my bed, here's my wine, come...’ So, anyway, and a bunch of girls, and I said, ‘Hey, I may actually come, and give back rubs.’ Or, whatever, anyway, it's stupid.” *Id.* at 24.

⁹⁷ “I called her vodka chick, because she talked about vodka all the time. She would send memes and stuff, the funny ones. The guys with the big buckets of moonshine pouring over the top of their heads. It was hilarious, it was fun. So, again, in context was, “Hey, haven't heard from you, I thought she ditched me like everyone else ditches me, blah, blah, blah.” And, that's my comment, “I don't know, man, I missed the vodka girl.” Or, whatever, the vodka chick, or whatever. That's what it was, it was nothing more than that, stupid.” *Id.*

⁹⁸ GRACE: “You never asked her to delete the messages?” Mike Larkin: “No, not that I remember.” *Id.* at 39.

⁹⁹ *Id.* at 40.

Mr. Larkin said that during the time period he was engaging in regular conversation with RV-1, he invited W-1 to a leadership event at the college. Over breakfast, Mr. Larkin reports that he asked W-1 “You’re good, right, with [RV-1] talking to me all the time? I mean, you’re okay with that, I just want to make sure you’re good with that.”¹⁰⁰ Mr. Larkin’s recollection is that W-1 responded that he was okay with the communication because Mr. Larkin was like a father-figure to her.¹⁰¹ Mr. Larkin reported that a week after this conversation took place, RV-1 stopped communicating with him.¹⁰²

Mr. Larkin stated that during the confrontation with RV-1, W-1, and Counselors 1 and 2, he listened to RV-1 read her letter out loud and said, “I took the high road, I took the blame, I said, ‘You know what, I’m really sorry.’”¹⁰³ Mr. Larkin stated that during this conversation he also apologized to W-1.¹⁰⁴ Mr. Larkin said that a week after this confrontation, he received a hard copy of the letter. Mr. Larkin claims that the letter sent to him contained more emotional content than the letter RV-1 read aloud.¹⁰⁵

Mr. Larkin said he felt that he did everything he could to fix the relationship by apologizing multiple times: apologizing to RV-1 and W-1 with the counselors present, writing an apology letter to RV-1 and W-1 on April 1, 2019,¹⁰⁶ and initiating a conversation with W-1 at the Foursquare Connection 2019 conference¹⁰⁷ He also sent W-1 a message addressed to W-1 and RV-1 referring to the “stalled” friendship, and

¹⁰⁰ ML Tr. at 14 .

¹⁰¹ *Id.* at 15. W-1 said, “I do not recall whether [sic] Mike asked if I was ok with his regular communication with [RV-1]. However, if so, I would have replied to him like I do to others, that ‘[RV-1] and I have access to each other’s content.’” (Email from W-1 to GRACE, January 21, 2021.).

¹⁰² *Id.*

¹⁰³ *Id.*

¹⁰⁴ *Id.*

¹⁰⁵ “A week or so later [after the Zoom call confrontation], I get a copy of the letter, and it just had a bunch of stuff added to it. It was more emotional stuff. It wasn’t anything additional other than, ‘It really hurt me when you did this.’ Or, ‘It really hurt me when you said that.... Or, ‘I was wondering what would your wife think. I don’t want your wife to think...’ It was all this extra stuff was added to this letter that was sent to me.” *Id.* at 15. RV-1 said that she did not make changes to the letter between the time it was read aloud and sent to Mr. Larkin. RV-1 Tr. 2 at 5. GRACE was unable to assess if there were multiple versions of the letter.

¹⁰⁶ The Letter from Mr. Larkin to RV-1 and W-1 was sent to GRACE by RV-1 and stated, “April 1, 2019. Dear [RV-1] (and [W-1]), For the past week and a half, I have been mulling around in my mind and praying about an appropriate, heart felt response to your video meeting with me and subsequent letter that followed. I am not someone who walks away from a challenge or a wrong doing, hoping that in time everything will be ok. Doing justly, loving mercy and walking humbly when you have made a mistake is not as easy to do, but is extremely necessary. I feel horrible that this situation is on our minds and that it has placed a strain on our friendship. My prayer is that with an appropriate, humble response, the Lord will bring healing and restoration. My preference would be to handle this face to face with you, but in respect of the process and wanting for there to be no delay, after processing this with [Mr. Larkin’s wife], I am submitting this letter to you. The friendship with you has not been a long one but it has been one that I have enjoyed and had hoped would continue to grow. I have valued you both. I still do. The ongoing conversation with you [RV-1] over the past few months on Facebook was inappropriate. The words I used on a few occasions, regardless of what my intent was, were also inappropriate. I was wrong. I am asking for your forgiveness. I told you on the call that I was sorry, and I am repeating it again here. I am very sorry for the extended conversation we had over time and the inappropriate words I used in that conversation. Please forgive me. My heart and intention was never to hurt, was never to pursue or persuade, was never with an inappropriate motive in any way. I want you to believe that because it is true. I understand that regardless of my intention, things that I said triggered confusion and caused pain. I am sorry. My hope is that you will forgive me, that in time you will be able to trust me again, and our friendship and ministries to a broken generation will continue. That is my prayer. Respectfully, Mike.”

¹⁰⁷ ML Tr. at 17.

encouraged their son to attend Ignite.¹⁰⁸ Mr. Larkin said he cooperated with C-2 and sought out and attended counseling sessions with a professional in Richmond.¹⁰⁹

Mr. Larkin states “there’s not a physical attraction, and there never was” about RV-1.¹¹⁰ Mr. Larkin says that he never suggested to RV-1 that he was a father figure.¹¹¹ When discussing being confronted about the messages with RV-1, Mr. Larkin said, “So I’m on the defensive right away. And I’m looking at it and thinking, ‘Hey, wait a second man. It takes two to be in a friendship. I mean, this was two friends in an ongoing conversation... Never once was this like an affair or a quasi affair. It wasn’t anything like that to me.’”¹¹² When asked about RV-1’s credibility, Mr. Larkin said “If I’m the scapegoat in this, I’m the scapegoat in this and I accept it.”¹¹³ As [L-1] said, ‘You were the elder.’ Okay, I receive that. I accept that.”¹¹⁴

Mr. Larkin reported that the Foursquare Board informed him that an external independent agency would be hired to conduct an investigation.¹¹⁵ After being confronted by the Foursquare Board, Mr. Larkin stated that he attended counseling three or four times.¹¹⁶

D. Behavioral Misconduct¹¹⁷ at Ignite

During the investigation, GRACE learned of other reported behavioral misconduct by Mr. Larkin during his presidency at Ignite from 2008 to 2019. Witnesses interviewed were students, interns, and employees

¹⁰⁸ Mr. Larkin stated in his interview with GRACE that he did send W-1 a message: “Their son really wanted to come to our school. I wrote to them about that. I said they could have every bit of confidence that he would be loved and regarded and respected.” ML Tr. at 29. “For several weeks I have wanted to write to you but have held off. Time and space seemed the more appropriate action on my part. Over the past several months life has happened...for all of us. Time gets away, and yet the things that matter most seem to find their way into our thinking and quiet moment. I will forever regret what all caused our friendship to be stalled. But I am hopeful that the final worlds we spoke to each other on that Zoom call, the letters that followed and in Nashville [W-1] the conversation you and I had-the intentions of our heart-will eventually play out.” Undated Facebook Messenger note which appears to have been sent in August of 2019 based on context from Mr. Larkin to W-1. The photograph of the conversation was provided by RV-1.

¹⁰⁹ Mr. Larkin told GRACE during his interview: GRACE: “Who was the counselor? Do you mind sharing who it was?” Mr. Larkin: “It’s somebody in Richmond, I don’t even remember her name...” GRACE: “How many visits did you do?” Mr. Larkin: “I don’t know, three maybe. Three, four, I don’t remember.” Mr. Larkin Tr at 20. When asked by GRACE again via email on January 6, 2021 if he would provide the name of the counselor as he told GRACE he was an “open book” he replied, “Id [sic] prefer not to. Private and confidential.” Email to GRACE from Mr. Larkin, January 6, 2021. GRACE notes that patients have the right to keep protected health information (PHI) confidential at their discretion, including names of providers.

¹¹⁰ ML Tr. at 17.

¹¹¹ *Id.* at 20.

¹¹² *Id.* at 33, 34.

¹¹³ *Id.* at 34.

¹¹⁴ *Id.* at 34.

¹¹⁵ *Id.* at 30.

¹¹⁶ *Id.* at 20.

¹¹⁷ Behavioral Misconduct is defined as any verbal, nonverbal and/or physical acts which are improper, immoral, indecent, or unlawful. Behavioral misconduct does not include unintentional errors or mistakes. For the purposes of this investigation, behavioral misconduct includes: a) emotional misconduct b) physical misconduct and c) sexual misconduct.

of Ignite.¹¹⁸ The investigation did not include an investigation of Ignite as an institution, but rather individual encounters with Mr. Larkin. Due to the large number of alleged instances and the difficulty this would create in tracking between sections, Mr. Larkin's responses are included in the corresponding footnotes. The following is a summary of reported witnesses and their recollection of events:

1. Emotional Misconduct¹¹⁹

There is often some overlap between emotional, physical, and sexual misconduct. In addition to those overlaps, the most prevalent forms of emotional misconduct were examples that could best be explained as bullying, intimidation, control, and manipulation.¹²⁰ Examples of emotional misconduct were often difficult to describe by the team member because of the subtleties and manner in which this form of abuse may be hidden or masked. The behaviors usually occurred in a manner that caused the team member to feel as if they were wrong for having questioned Mr. Larkin, and some initially doubted whether their emotions about these experiences were justified. However, over longer periods of time the team member could describe feeling "bullied," "controlled," "manipulated," and/or "intimidated." Some of these incidents occurred on a one-time basis, while others occurred over periods of time. However, when the information was viewed together, rather than in isolation, it presents a pattern of behavior that occurred over a period of time. Accordingly, the facts were usually very case specific and only some of the case examples will be enumerated here. General data includes:

- Falsely blamed another staff member for the decision to assign a student to a different missions trip than the trip the student requested.¹²¹
- Ridiculed staff for their performance and threatened to significantly reduce their compensation.¹²²

¹¹⁸ GRACE was referred to possible victims, and learned about subsequent witnesses and victims by word of mouth. Previous staff and students were not afforded an opportunity to speak with GRACE or provide their experiences with Mr. Larkin. The information is limited to the reported victims and witnesses who spoke with GRACE.

¹¹⁹ Emotional misconduct is behavior which attacks or exploits a person's self-esteem, confidence, or psychological status, usually by a person in a position of trust, power, or authority. Examples include but are not limited to controlling, manipulating, distorting, extorting, insulting, intimidating, threatening, punishing, bullying, yelling, ridiculing, harassing, and name calling.

¹²⁰

¹²¹ W-8 is a staff member who was tasked with designating students to either an international missions trip or a national missions trip. Support was commonly provided for certain students who could not afford the cost of the international missions trip. W-8 advocated for one student's request to attend the international missions trip, but Larkin reportedly assigned him to the national missions trip. Larkin was confronted about the decision by the parents of the student in the presence of W-8, and allegedly stated "Well, this is the way [W-8] divided it and she's new to the process." W-8 stated that she confronted him later about the statement and that Larkin apologized to her. Witness 8 Transcript at 9.

¹²² W-10 testified that after relocating to Virginia to work for Ignite, Larkin assigned him to a position for which he lacked the proper education. Larkin was reportedly disappointed with W-10's "lack of abilities" and said that he would reduce the staff member's salary by 40% after "letting [W-10] know every way I'd failed." W-10 later stated "I was there. I believed in the program. I believed in Mike. I had just moved my family, uprooted everything, and you know, come hell or high water, so to speak. I was going to do whatever I could to help that place make it. So it end up being really a big sense of betrayal." W-10 Tr. at 11, 16. W-15 said, "I was in [a staff member's] office asking her questions because she was working there at the time as well, and Mike came in and he saw that I was asking her questions. There was like all these students in that area and he just started screaming at me telling me like he doesn't pay me to sit in someone's office and all this stuff and anytime he could get a chance to embarrass me publicly, he would." W-15 Tr. at 9.

- Threatened staff members' job security without apparent cause.¹²³
- Stated "Oh, well, I guess you're really pro-life now." to a staff member after the staff member's wife had a miscarriage.¹²⁴
- Frequently referred to himself as a "father figure" or "family member" to students.¹²⁵
- Berated students that were considering leaving and/or had left the LPC-Ignite program.¹²⁶

¹²³ A staff member reported that he entered a room where Larkin was having a discussion with two other staff members, and asked Larkin for clarification about his job description. Larkin reportedly said, "Look, if you don't want to do your job, I'll find somebody that will, okay. If this is a problem, then just let me know." Later on, the staff member received a text from Larkin asking him to meet in a classroom. The staff member went to the class room and Larkin "proceed[ed] to just rip me to pieces for interrupting their meeting." Larkin said, "I can't believe that you're so insensitive that you didn't read the room. We were having a very tense conversation and you just bust into the middle of it like you own the place." The staff member told GRACE, "At some point I started crying again because I was so upset, and he accused me of trying to manipulate him with my emotions. I shared this story recently with an alumni, and he said Mike had pulled the same thing with him when he started crying in a meeting." *Id.* at 8-10. When a staff member asked for reimbursement, Larkin reportedly stated "I mean I can get you a reimbursement, but I mean if you're going to nickel and dime me for every single thing, then I don't know if I want you around." W-10 Tr. at 4.

¹²⁴ W-10 is a staff member at LPU-VA. Explaining that he tries to provide multiple sides of a topic to his students, the staff member asked the students to try to understand why someone might be pro-choice. Talk of this discussion made its way to Larkin, who confronted W-10. W-10 told Larkin that there was a misunderstanding and that he would "clarify with the class." Sometime later, the staff member's wife suffered a miscarriage. Noticing that W-10 was down, Larkin asked "Are you okay?" and W-10 informed Larkin of the miscarriage. Larkin responded, "Oh, well, I guess you're really pro-life now." W-10 Tr. at 18.

¹²⁵ W-11 told GRACE, "I feel like this is my personal opinion...preyed on specifically girls with who he knew had absent fathers or came from rough family backgrounds because I did. Of course, he found out everything about my history. So I had told him about how my father was in and out of my life and I came from kind of a dysfunctional family growing up. So I felt like he was trying to portray like this fatherly figure to me. So I let him get close to me and I wanted to be close to him because I felt like he was just this fountain of knowledge and wisdom." W-11 Tr. at 8. W-15 said, "If there was ever anything it would be like it became my fault or my problem or he went from being this great covering I felt like and just this safe father figure to then he started to even manipulate that and he would say things, and then cover it up with like, 'Yeah, but I'm your spiritual dad,' or things like that kind of excuses for his behavior." W-15 Tr. at 13. At the end of a conversation with Mr. Larkin, W-15 states that Mr. Larkin hugged her and said, "You belong to me and I belong to you." *Id.* W-16 stated, "He used people that had family issues and daddy issues. He used that to his advantage to get what he wanted and to be a spiritual father. I remember one time, specifically. I thought this was so strange. He pulled me aside and was like, "[W-16], I just want you to know, you are beautiful." At that point, I had had really bad cystic acne... He just pulled me aside, and he was like, "You are just so, so beautiful." He's like, "I don't know if anyone ever tells you that, but I just want you to know that. As a father, I just think you are gorgeous. God has made you perfectly you." W-16 Tr. at 20. GRACE asked Mr. Larkin if he suggested to RV-1 if he was her father figure. Mr. Larkin answered and also spoke about students at Ignite. "Never, never, I've got students that say that I've said that. I always poo poo it, whenever... I mean, I will always... If you were a student of mine, one of the things I'm getting to know you, I always ask, 'Tell me about your parents...'" Mr. Larkin Tr. at 21. Mr. Larkin also said he did tell at least one staff member she was family. Mr. Larkin Tr. at 50.

¹²⁶ W-15 said, "I remember him sitting me down and saying, like yelling at me, yelling at me in his office telling me that I couldn't leave yet because he wasn't finished making me a rock star. Like word for word that's exactly what he said. He said that I was not going to make it that people wouldn't be ready. I wouldn't be ready for anything. I was going to fail.... So after that he just told me to get out of his office because I was pretty much at that point I'm not worth much to him, and then pretty much him putting on me if the school failed and if no students came that was my fault and all this stuff and just really bad." W-15 Tr. at 11. GRACE asked Mr. Larkin if students were talked about poorly when they left Ignite. Mr. Larkin said, "It didn't happen a lot." ML Tr. at 66. He recalled a student who left the program because she was pregnant. He told GRACE, "I used it as an illustration without saying it was her, but we were talking about different things in leadership and how you handle different things in leadership. And one of the girls that was there put two and two together that it was her and called her and said, 'Mike just used you in an example in class.' So, yeah, I've been guilty of that. So, I'm not proud of it." *Id.* at 66.

- Persuaded a student to stop talking to her parents and to get rid of her phone.¹²⁷
- Reports of enlisting students to bring him information about their peers, and then using that information to pressure students and to imply or state that he received the information from the Holy Spirit.¹²⁸
- Described the sins of students, told to him in confidence, to the entire student body in the form of sermon illustrations.¹²⁹
- Cursed and yelled at students when confronted with problems with Ignite.¹³⁰
- Threatened to hurt students' future opportunities.¹³¹
- Took out loans on behalf of students without their consent¹³²

¹²⁷ W-11 said that Mr. Larkin and his wife “convinced her [another student] to stop talking to her parents. They convinced her to get rid of her phone because her parents paid for her phone.” *Id.*, at 17.

¹²⁸ W-12 told GRACE that Mr. Larkin would instruct students (usually RAs) to spy on other students and to report back to him. W-12 stated, “You could not do something without somebody finding out, or you couldn’t go somewhere without seeing somebody, and then you’d be worried if it was a certain person, because you know that they would go and tell Mike and [his wife] everything.” *Id.* at 6, 9. W-15 said, “It was like we all had to kind of do the dirty work for him I guess, but in a way that made us feel it was what was the right thing to do or maybe it was the godly thing to do.” W-15 Tr. at 7. W-16 said, “Mike specifically told the RA leadership... These are two separate RAs that told me this, to listen in on conversations of people who are asking why and who are questioning things. That’s how he knew about any rumors. That’s how he knew about any misconduct. He made it very clear to us that... He would often tell us, in his parenting, how he knew things that his kids had done. They were confused as how he knew and made it clear the Holy Spirit had told him those things. I mean, especially when he’s using it in a message and you feel like, ‘Oh my gosh. He’s calling me out,’ he is calling you out. He’s using God to do that. It’s a whole manipulative tactic.” W-16 Tr. at 19. GRACE; Did you ever get information from other students and then you would say that you heard from the Holy Spirit?” Mr. Larkin: “No. No. Absolutely, not.” ML Tr. at 71-2. Mr. Larkin said there was a seasons where RA’s would come and tell him things because they were “young and inexperienced” but “it wasn’t like, ‘You have to come tell me.’” ML Tr at 72.

¹²⁹ W-13 informed GRACE that one student struggled with pornography and confided to Mr. Larkin about his struggle. W-13 said that later that night, “Mike shared the entire story with all of the school except mentioning the guy’s name.” W-13 Tr. at 5. W-14 said about the situation, “And he publicly announced that information. He didn’t announce who the person, but there was really no point to it. It’s almost like he was using a sermon illustration in some really weird way... So it was just a really, really inappropriate way of using that information.” W-14 Tr. at 3. Mike did admit to using things told to him in confidence as illustrations: “Without naming names, but people know who it is. So, yeah, I’ve probably made that mistake more than once, but I admit to that.” ML Tr. at 65.

¹³⁰ W-13 said, “The first time we go and talk to him, he literally starts screaming and literally cussing at us. We go into his office and we say, these are the things that the students don’t like. And he’s like, seriously, starts screaming at us.” W-13 Tr. at 7. W-7 said, “I would say that Mike bullied the kids. He manipulated.” W-7 Tr. at 12. W-7 described a conversation a pastor had with Mr. Larkin. “He sat down with Mike and he was totally non-emotional, and he said, ‘Mike, you’re a bully,’ and Mike just went crazy on him, and [the pastor] never raised his voice, never, and Mike was about to just pop a blood vessel.” *Id.* at 27. GRACE asked Mr. Larkin if he ever screamed or yelled at students. Mr. Larkin replied, “First of all, I think my family would tell you too, I don’t have an anger problem. I don’t yell at my kids. I am loud. I am big.” When asked beyond being loud and big, Mr. Larkin said, “No, I would say no.” ML Tr. at 61.

¹³¹ W-16 said, “He would often tell us in the classroom, and during chapel or our Monday night service called Journey, that with a phone call, he could get us a job or keep us from a job, that he had that influence because the program is so small, and it’s very rigorous. He’s very trusted, that if someone were to call him and say, ‘I have a student that applied. Would you recommend them?’ if he said no, that carried weight because he knew us very well because it was a small school and all of that. It was made very clear to us on multiple occasions. It was a known, underlying in the back of your mind all the time in everything you did.” W-16 Tr at 4.

¹³² “My first semester there ended without me really knowing how I was going to be able to pay for the next semester. And so I went to Mike and to leadership and told them that not only could I not go pay for the missions trip...But I also couldn’t go to school the next semester, because I didn’t have the money. But he said specifically, ‘Don’t worry

- Spoke highly derisively of staff members and students when they were not present.¹³³

2. Physical Misconduct¹³⁴

- Verbal aggression and threatened physical assault.¹³⁵

about it. We'll take care of it. We'll take care of this so you can focus on your time here, and the time that you would have had to spend working, to earn this money instead...' and then I'm like, 'That sounds great. I'm totally down for that. Halfway through the second semester, I get a bill for him for a loan that I supposedly owe the school. And I talked to him and say, 'I don't remember ... What loan are you talking about?' He said, 'Oh well, all this stuff you could have paid for, here's the money you owe the school now for all this stuff.' And I said, 'You said you would take care of it.' Like to me signing me up for a loan without my knowledge is not you taking care of it. And he was like, 'Well, you owe us this money.'" W-18 Tr. at 2. GRACE asked Mr. Larkin if he issued loans. He responded, "No, but we let kids linger out and then we'd give them a year to pay it off." ML Tr. at 79.

¹³³ W-10 stated, "The things he said about [one staff member] behind his back are unreal. I mean just unreal. The things that he says about really just anybody behind their back is unreal." W-10 Tr. at 10. When asked by GRACE for examples, the staff member stated, "This person's lazy, or this person is stupid, or this person has no potential. I mean, it just depends on the person, but I mean, he will seriously go to town on somebody behind their back." *Id.* at 14. W-13 said, "You couldn't trust him because he would share whatever with anyone, he gossiped about people." W-13 Tr. at 8.

¹³⁴ Physical misconduct is behavior which intentionally, knowing, recklessly, or negligently causes or threatens to cause physical pain, illness, or an impairment of a person's physical condition. Examples include but are not limited to striking, kicking, pushing, grabbing, pinching, or threats to commit the foregoing.

¹³⁵ W-17 stated, "There was one person who put up a meme about Mike and his wife... that was so wildly inappropriate... The staff member assembled about eight students that were members of the Facebook group into a private meeting. W-17 Tr. at 42-44. W-17 further said, "Mike suddenly barges through the door and when he comes in, [a second staff member] turns to him and says, 'You need to leave, now.' And he says, 'No, I don't need to leave.' [The second staff member] says, 'Mike, you're going to say something that you don't want to say.' And he says, 'I don't give a fuck.' Immediately starts cussing. He comes in and he kicked the trashcan across the room... Got his finger in my face, and he does this to all eight of us. 'Can't believe that you would do this to me after everything I've done. I moved out from California for this. I can't get a break. This is horrible. This is the worst thing that has ever happened on our campus before' ... And then he goes through and he personally insults every one of us in some way, in a very, very personal way. I can't remember what he said to everyone. I will list some of the things that were said to me... 'I wish I could cut your balls off and feed them to you.' 'You little bitch, you couldn't do this to my face, so you created a secret group to lie about me behind my back or to stab me behind my back. You are like Satan, you go around and tempt other people to fall into sin and betray me'... he also said that he would like to take each one of us out into the parking lot and have a fist fight with us to see if we can all man up, like we think we do on that site. This was in the context, I've cut out most of the cussing in it, but there is an astronomical amount of cussing." *Id.* at 45-6. At a later time, Mr. Larkin reportedly assembled these eight students in front of a larger group of students and requested that the latter suggest a disciplinary action. *Also see* W-13 Tr. at 15. Mr. Larkin did not deny the event. GRACE: "Do you remember saying that you were going to cut their balls off and feed it to them?" Mr. Larkin replied, "No. How fun. No. I mean, it would be out of character for me, but I was so mad that if I said it... it would have been in the context of what they were saying about me, and that would be in one of those scenarios where I lowered myself to the level of peer... You want to do that? You want to take on my family? You want to make fun of my wife? You want to make fun of my kids? I'm right in front of you. Let's go." ML Tr. at 63. He also said he "went back and apologized to each and every one of those guys." ML Tr. at 81.

3. Sexual Misconduct¹³⁶

- Met alone with female students and asked about sexual history, number of sexual partners, and sexual orientation.¹³⁷
- Commented on female students' appearance, calling them "beautiful," "gorgeous," "amazing," and "hot," and also making comments such as "You can see why I hired her," while indicating a female staff's appearance.¹³⁸

In addition to the report from RV-1, agents of The Foursquare Church received various reports regarding Mr. Larkin's behavior while he was President of Ignite. One former Ignite board member reported that he went to a district supervisor and L-2 during or around 2013 with concerns about Mr. Larkin's behavior

¹³⁶ Sexual misconduct is behavior which is 1) unwelcome or unwanted and 2) sexual or intimate in nature. Examples include but are not limited to derogatory or indecent statements about a person's body; slurs, epithets, anecdotes, jokes, or innuendos of a sexual or intimate nature; verbal advances, propositions, or invitations of a sexual or intimate nature; suggestive or obscene gestures or communications; unwanted attention such as leering or staring; "groping" or any unwanted touches of a sexual or intimate nature, adult sexual assault, and sexual abuse of a minor.

¹³⁷W-11 told GRACE in her first meeting with Mr. Larkin asked her about her family and background and "specifically he asked about my sexual history." When asked whether she was alone with Mr. Larkin during this conversation, W-11 confirmed and stated, "He would ask me sometimes if I felt comfortable, 'Are you comfortable if it's just us?' I would say yes... But it was uncomfortable, actually when he would ask about things like that. But at the time, I thought that was normal... Looking back now, I think it's highly inappropriate... He specifically asked how many sexual partners I'd had." W-11 also stated that Mr. Larkin asked about her sexual orientation. W-11 Tr. at 7,8. W-11 had decided to leave Ignite and scheduled a meeting with Larkin to inform him, because she felt that she "owed an explanation to him of why [she] would be leaving." W-11 stated that during the meeting, "He completely interrupted me and was just like, 'Did you have sex with your boyfriend over spring break?' I was like, 'What? Why are you asking that right now, that has nothing to do with this conversation?' But because of covenant [a behavioral contract signed by students], I felt like I owe you this explanation... I was honest... He had tried to tell me that the Holy Spirit told him that I had done that. While it was known for a fact that I had told other classmates and something probably got back to him because it always did, nothing stays private at that school... What he said I remember made me feel so degraded and a little bit violated. He was screaming at me like at the top of his lungs and I remember the door to his office was open... I know everyone could hear what he was saying. I was just bawling my eyes out because it was scary and hurtful." W-11 Tr. at 9. Mr. Larkin later apologized to W-11 and stated "I feel bad about it, I really do. But I just feel like that was what you needed in the moment." *Id.* at 10. W-11 later stated that Mr. Larkin used this conversation as a teaching example in chapel and in class, though he would not reveal her name. *Id.* at 27. W-15 was a student and staff member at Ignite, and had a discussion with Mr. Larkin where she expressed her suspicions that a friend was homosexual. "[H]e started the conversation of like, '[W-15], that I'm like a dad to you. I love you.' Then he sat me down and started asking me questions of like, 'Am I gay? Am I a lesbian?'" W-15 Tr. at 10. W-12 told GRACE that Mr. Larkin would ask her questions such as "Have you had sex? Have you thought about it?" while they were alone. W-12 Tr. at 19. GRACE asked Mr. Larkin, "Do you recall talking to females about their asking about their sexual history?" Mike Larkin: "Yeah. And... I mean, the way you're asking, the way you're saying it is just awful." ML Tr at 54. He said the students were in a discipleship immersion program where they could be kicked out of the program for being sexually active." ML Tr. at 55. He gave an example of what he would ask a female student, "'Did you sleep with him?' You know? 'Yes.' And they'd cry, you know? And I'd say, I mean, 'Is it one time or is it been all summer?' I mean, it was all, you know, again it's to get them talking and then we could talk further and it was non-judgmental, there was never a repercussion." ML Tr. at 55.

¹³⁸W-11 said, "Throughout the years, he had often commented on my appearance. He would say, 'You're so beautiful and this picture you posted is just gorgeous. You just look so amazing.' I took it,... you're being fatherly. You're trying to build up my self-esteem, whatever. So that summer I had left campus but I had still had one more meeting with him for whatever reason because I still felt I owed it. He knew about my boyfriend, my husband now... He had met him. He knew that we were being intimate. I remember he had asked me... Not asked me but he was like, 'Yeah, I could see how you guys like would have that struggle. It makes so much sense. You're hot and he's hot.'" *Id.* at 13.

towards the students.¹³⁹ In 2018, a former student told C-1 and another Foursquare staff member about Mike's behavior towards him at Ignite.¹⁴⁰ In April of 2018, one former student wrote a letter to a Foursquare pastor that urged the pastor to report the "emotional and spiritual abuse" of students by Mr. Larkin to the Ignite board and to The Foursquare Church board, and insisted that an investigation was necessary.¹⁴¹ She also discussed Larkin's conduct with a professor at Ignite.¹⁴² A "satisfaction survey was provided to Ignite alumni, and according to one witness was "going viral on messenger."¹⁴³ One former staff member said that multiple students confided in him about their experiences with Mr. Larkin.¹⁴⁴ Multiple students also stated that they confronted Larkin directly about his behavior.¹⁴⁵ Many students expressed a fear about addressing Larkin's behavior.¹⁴⁶

¹³⁹ W-7 said, "I could say with almost certainty that [the district supervisor] communicated it to [the corporate board member]." W-7 Tr. at 22. W-7 said that the district supervisor "was appalled" and that "she could communicate things, but she had no authority." *Id.* at 23.

¹⁴⁰ W-17 Tr. at 86-7.

¹⁴¹ W-16 Tr. at 3. In her letter, W-16 wrote "I can confidently say that I experienced emotional and spiritual abuse at Ignite LPC from its leadership including Mike Larkin and those in leadership who were under the direction and supervision of Ignite LPC President Mike Larkin. Instances include..." W-16 then listed several examples that reflect the pattern of behavior outlined in this executive summary. W-16 goes on to say, "I experienced shame and a total inability to trust leadership as the blame for my own feelings or experiences was put on me. This extreme censorship did not allow for questioning even out of strict curiosity for leadership styles or to learn how leader motivations in order to learn how to lead. Mike Larkin and the leadership never directly asked me why I felt the way I did, even after some of my thoughts and words had been reported to them by student leaders... My story is not a single incident and is similar to those over the last 10 years that Ignite LPC has been an educational and biblical institution. I urge you, Ignite LPC and Foursquare board members to take action and investigate the leadership of Ignite Life Pacific College, interviewing current and past students asking for their stories." "Ignite Letter to Foursquare," at 1-2. (April 2018).

¹⁴² "I had about an hour-long conversation over the phone with him about my experiences, telling him [Ignite professor] stories. He made it very clear that I was not the first student to come from Ignite that he was aware of that had experienced similar things and that had experienced, essentially, spiritual abuse from Mike. He never used that term, but agreed with me when I did. It was a very good conversation and affirming, but nothing ever happened with it." W-16 Tr. at 4.

¹⁴³ "There's a board member for Ignite, [former board member 1] who put together a satisfaction survey for Ignite alum. It's going viral through messenger and she's about to be overwhelmed by stories about Mike's jackassery." Text message from W-10 to unknown on September 25, 2018. Document provided on October 5, 2020, at 39. GRACE did not review the survey or speak with the former board member.

¹⁴⁴ "I mean part of my job essentially became being the safe person on staff that students could talk to when they were upset. So if you've talked to any former students, there's a really great chance that they have sat in my office and cried about something Mike said to them. Yeah, so that just became part of my job. I keep tissues in my office, not because I cry a lot, but because I know I'll need them for students." W-10 Tr. 7.

¹⁴⁵ W-18 Tr. 2; *See also* W-10 Tr. 7, 9; W-16 Tr. 10; and W-13 Tr. 7. Witnesses 7, 10, 12, 15 reported personal confrontations of Mr. Larkin.

¹⁴⁶ W-13 Tr. 18. "So many students there didn't have a voice because they were scared. They were scared that he would share whatever was going on in their personal lives. They were scared of his attitude. It was just like, it was literally a place where you're instilled with fear." W-11 said, "I don't feel safe enough to confront Mike, I don't feel safe enough to confront the leadership there because what am I going to do? It's like them against me." W-11 Tr. 25.

IV. Analysis of Findings and Cultural Assessment

A. Mr. Larkin Abused His Power¹⁴⁷ and Authority

Power is derived from God, and should always be used as the end goal of bringing glory to God.¹⁴⁸ Psychologist Diane Langberg addresses power by pointing to Matthew 28: 18-19, where Jesus said, “All authority, all power is given to me; therefore go...,” highlighting that “every drop of power” that any person holds is “shared power” given to us by Jesus who has lovingly shared it with us.¹⁴⁹ The power Jesus had came from the Father,¹⁵⁰ and he humbly followed not promoting himself, his own messages or his own kingdoms.¹⁵¹ As followers of Christ, we are to emulate his example, yet often when we “use our power to damage or use a person in a way that dishonors God, we fail in our handling of the gift he has given.”¹⁵² When power is used for personal gain and to uplift an individual rather than God, it is an abuse of power. How one uses their power not only impacts others, but tells us something about the person in power.¹⁵³

Dr. Langberg states that there are several types of power a person can use either to build and cultivate or to do harm: physical, verbal, emotional, educational, and economic. First, **physical power** is “embodied power” and can be seen in someone’s physical size (how they fill a room) or by their physical presence (charisma).¹⁵⁴

Dr. Langberg describes **verbal power** in the following way, “Words have the power to build up or tear down a person’s sense of self.”¹⁵⁵ Words easily become verbal abuse when “using words, our God-given verbal power to control, manipulate, demean, or intimidate.”¹⁵⁶

Similar to verbal power is **emotional power**. Having to “walk on eggshells” in fear of an outburst causing the “governing force” of the space to be the “emotional state of a single person.”¹⁵⁷ Another example would be “damaging and crushing responses to another’s feelings.”¹⁵⁸

Another example is **educational power**. Power can be used through the combination of knowledge, intellect, and skill.¹⁵⁹ Dr. Langberg asserts that we assume that those in positions of leadership who have

¹⁴⁷ Power is defined as “having the capacity to do something, to act or produce an effect, to influence people or events or to have authority.” Langberg, Diane. *Redeeming Power: Understanding Abuse and Power in the Church 4* (2020). Langberg further states, “It can also have harsher meanings: to master, dominate, coerce, or force.” *Id.*

¹⁴⁸ Langberg, *Redeeming Power*.

¹⁴⁹ *Id.* at 3.

¹⁵⁰ John 5:19 states, “The Son can do nothing by himself; he can only do what he sees his Father doing.” (NIV).

¹⁵¹ Langberg, *Redeeming Power*, 11.

¹⁵² *Id.* at 11.

¹⁵³ *Id.* Langberg states, “Our responses to the vulnerable expose who we are. This is an important principle to keep in mind as we consider the use--and misuse--of power.” *Id.* at 4.

¹⁵⁴ *Id.* at 62.

¹⁵⁵ *Id.* at 64.

¹⁵⁶ *Id.* at 64-5.

¹⁵⁷ *Id.* at 64.

¹⁵⁸ *Id.*

¹⁵⁹ *Id.* at 66. Dr. Langberg uses the example of taking her car to the mechanic: “[M]y lack of knowledge, intellect, and skill in this area puts me at his mercy.”

this combination of knowledge, intellect, and skill are trustworthy.¹⁶⁰ Unfortunately this combination “increases the likelihood that a leader will be granted unfiltered, sometimes automatic authority by the people they lead.”¹⁶¹

Economic power “promises and often delivers a certain measure of security.”¹⁶² Abuse occurs when “the one in control can use their economic power to enforce conformity to demands, no matter how extreme.”¹⁶³

This investigation showed how Mr. Larkin abused each type of power.

1. Assessment of Mr. Larkin Misconduct-Reported Victim 1

a. Sexual Harassment

The most familiar forms of abuse of power to many is sexual misconduct, which is “generally defined as any sexual activity-verbal, visual or physical-that’s engaged in without consent.”¹⁶⁴ In this investigation, RV-1 reported a verbal form of sexual misconduct, which Dr. Langberg says includes “sexual threats, sexual comments about one’s body, lewd remarks, harassment, and suggestive comments.”¹⁶⁵ Pamela Cooper-White states this about sexual harassment: “Harassment is more serious than it seems, because, although it is sometimes more elusive and difficult for victims to prove, and it may not cause physical pain (although prolonged harassment can often cause stress-related illness...), it has long-term and devastating consequences, both economical and psychological, for victims. It is probably more prevalent than any other form of violence against women.”¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁰ *Id.* at 67. W-11 recalled her trust of Mr. Larkin as the president of Ignite, “Especially since he [Mr. Larkin] presented himself. Now I realize that it's pretty narcissistic behavior but at the time, I just thought this person is powerful and they've experienced and learned so much. Of course, whatever they say is true and they're right, no matter what.” W-11 Tr. at 13.

¹⁶¹ *Id.* at 66.

¹⁶² *Id.* at 67-8.

¹⁶³ *Id.* at 68.

¹⁶⁴ *Id.* at 69.

¹⁶⁵ *Id.* at 70. Dr. Langberg states, “Verbal sexual abuse can also be more covert. When it is subtle, the victim may be confused and feel uncertain about the inappropriateness of a comment.” *Id.* at 70. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) states the following about sexual harassment: “It is unlawful to harass a person (an applicant or employee) because of that person’s sex. Harassment can include ‘sexual harassment’ or unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical harassment of a sexual nature. Harassment does not have to be of a sexual nature, however, and can include offensive remarks about a person’s sex. For example, it is illegal to harass a woman by making offensive comments about women in general. Both victim and the harasser can be either a woman or a man, and the victim and harasser can be the same sex. Although the law doesn’t prohibit simple teasing, offhand comments, or isolated incidents that are not very serious, harassment is illegal when it is so frequent or severe that it creates a hostile or offensive work environment or when it results in an adverse employment decision (such as the victim being fired or demoted). The harasser can be the victim’s supervisor, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or someone who is not an employee of the employer, such as a client or customer. *See* <https://www.eeoc.gov/sexual-harassment>.”

¹⁶⁶ Pamela Cooper-White, *The Cry of Tamar: Violence Against Women and the Church’s Response* 87 (2d ed. 2012).

Mr. Larkin made suggestive and inappropriate comments to RV-1. Larkin confirms that he called RV-1 a “hot drummer”¹⁶⁷, “hot coach,”¹⁶⁸ and that he told her “I missed the vodka girl,”¹⁶⁹ and said “Hey, I may actually come, and give back rubs,”¹⁷⁰ while RV-1 was on a weekend trip with her girlfriends. Additionally, GRACE reviewed a text message where Mr. Larkin described himself as getting older but also “Seasoned. Experienced. Right Touch.”¹⁷¹ The fact that these communications occurred at a time when he was president of a Foursquare college, a prominent leader in the Foursquare community, and an ordained pastor within the Foursquare church is concerning, making it a misuse of his power. While there was some awareness of his behavior when he agreed that “he is the elder,” and he should cut it out,”¹⁷² Mr. Larkin’s behavior caused RV-1 harm. Statements that indicated awareness of the responsibility he had as the “elder” were often undermined by statements that he viewed himself as a scapegoat, his repeated return to the refrain that other people initiated interactions that eventually became inappropriate, and apologies that seemed to share blame instead of accept responsibility. RV-1 said that the confrontation of Mr. Larkin caused her to have “nightmare after nightmare after nightmare,”¹⁷³ that it has caused her to “really not trust men,”¹⁷⁴ that she felt that she was “going numb,”¹⁷⁵ that she “started... not being able to feel, especially after this all was confronted.... I have depression, but especially through all of this. I went through some pretty dark [times] just trying to stay up,”¹⁷⁶ and that she “just felt violated. He knew my history and was objectifying me.”¹⁷⁷ RV-1 also said, “I blame myself...why couldn’t I stand up to him?”¹⁷⁸ Pamela Cooper-White states that “sexual harassment strikes a person’s dignity and self-esteem precisely because it is sexual.”¹⁷⁹ She further states, “Sexual harassment is therefore a spiritual assault, because it erodes and intimately attacks the dignity, identity, and worth of the victim.”¹⁸⁰ When these acts occur by someone in spiritual leadership, the impact is compounded.

b. Crossing Professional Boundaries

Marie Fortune described people who engage in sexual misconduct on a continuum between two types: 1) “the wanderer” who wanders across boundaries, and 2) the “predator,” who “seeks out victims deliberately and is lacking in conscience.”¹⁸¹ At a minimum, Mr. Larkin crossed professional boundaries as a pastor in his interactions with RV-1 and others at Ignite. RV-1 said she not only saw Mr. Larkin as a leader in the denomination but as a “father figure” that she needed in her life. She always referred to him as “Pastor Mike.” She shared with him about her life and the struggles she was facing as well as her prior history of childhood abuse.

¹⁶⁷ See footnote 94.

¹⁶⁸ See footnote 95.

¹⁶⁹ See footnote 97.

¹⁷⁰ See footnote 96.

¹⁷¹ See footnote 43.

¹⁷² See footnotes 79, 83.

¹⁷³ RV-1 Tr. at 20.

¹⁷⁴ *Id.* at 21.

¹⁷⁵ *Id.* at 24.

¹⁷⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷⁷ *Id.* at 8.

¹⁷⁸ RV-1 Tr. at 12.

¹⁷⁹ Pamela Cooper-White, *The Cry of Tamar: Violence Against Women and the Church’s Response* 103 (2d ed. 2012).

¹⁸⁰ *Id.*

¹⁸¹ *Id.* at 158 (Pamela Cooper-White is citing Marie Fortune’s research).

It is true that pastors often counsel others through difficult times. But, it is alarming that Mr. Larkin knew about RV-1's history of abuse, yet continued to engage in this behavior despite that knowledge. GRACE also received reports that students felt that he "preyed on" girls who did not have strong father figures.¹⁸² These stories corroborate RV-1's experience and raise concern that this behavior may have crossed from the category of "crossing a professional boundary" into more preparation for and acting on abuse of power.¹⁸³ In addition, given the information Mr. Larkin knew about RV-1's history, there was a misuse of his professional role of pastor in his interactions with RV-1 and others.

2. Assessment of Impact on Ignite Staff and Students

Pamela Cooper White states, "Where there is one kind of boundary violation, expect to find others. For example, sexual abuse of parishioners often goes hand in hand with unethical personnel practices (such as nepotism and gender discrimination in general), lying, and financial abuses."¹⁸⁴ This statement presented itself true in this investigation. As President of Ignite, Mr. Larkin was the paramount authority of all Ignite staff, Ignite students, and guest speakers. In this capacity, Mr. Larkin used his position of power in a way that at times, caused harm rather than good. Mr. Larkin manipulated his staff with threats of termination,¹⁸⁵ ridicule of job performance,¹⁸⁶ and passing of blame for his own actions.¹²¹ This behavior created an environment of fear and insecurity, which was best illustrated by one former staff member, who stated that he "had to massage [Mr. Larkin's] ego, just for the sake of my job."¹⁸⁷ As a result of this behavior, staff members took a submissive approach in their interactions with Mr. Larkin, and thereby increased the authoritative influence Mr. Larkin had over his staff.

Additionally, Mr. Larkin used verbal power improperly when he urged students to stay at Ignite,¹⁸⁸ persuaded them to disclose the private information of others,¹⁸⁹ yelled and cursed at students when they came to him with concerns,¹⁹⁰ threatened to use his influence to determine the students' future ministry opportunities in the Foursquare community,¹⁹¹ publicly embarrassed students,¹⁹² and took out loans in student's names without their consent.¹⁹³ A great number of students viewed Mr. Larkin as a mentor and spiritual leader. As such, Mr. Larkin's improper use of verbal power toward these individuals resulted in great emotional and spiritual damage, as well as fear. Therefore, he distorted his God-given authority for his own benefit and the detriment of others.

Diane Langberg describes it this way: "Our power is to be governed by the Word of God and the Spirit of God. Any use that is not subject to the Word of God is a wrong use. Any use of power that is based on self-

¹⁸² See footnote 125.

¹⁸³ Pamela Cooper-White, *The Cry of Tamar: Violence Against Women and the Church's Response* 103 (2d ed. 2012)

¹⁸⁴ *Id.*

¹⁸⁵ See footnote 123.

¹⁸⁶ See footnote 122.

¹⁸⁷ W-10 Tr. at 34.

¹⁸⁸ See footnote 126.

¹⁸⁹ See footnote 128.

¹⁹⁰ See footnote 130.

¹⁹¹ See footnote 131.

¹⁹² See footnote 129, 132.

¹⁹³ See footnote 133.

deception, when we have told ourselves that what God calls evil is instead good, is a wrong use...Using our influence or our reputation to get others to further our own ends is a wrong use of power.”¹⁹⁴

B. The Foursquare Church Responsibility and Cultural Analysis¹⁹⁵

Diane Langberg states that “Culture is like oxygen—it’s always there, but we do not see it; it’s simply what is.” Every organization has their own culture. Throughout this investigation, there were thematic cultural issues that continually presented themselves. Cultures where there is unchecked power are vulnerable to becoming a climate that is ripe for misconduct. An analysis of how The Foursquare Church’s culture left it vulnerable is presented below.

1. Impact of The Foursquare Church “Family Culture”

Throughout this investigation, Foursquare has been portrayed as a family unit and “a very loving and family-oriented denomination.”¹⁹⁶ While this is beneficial in that it builds a tight-knit community of believers, the investigation by GRACE revealed that this family dynamic has been detrimental to some witnesses, as illustrated by the vulnerable members that relied on Mr. Larkin as a “father figure.”¹⁹⁷

To those reported victims and witnesses who lacked a patriarchal presence in their childhood, Mr. Larkin appeared to be a “safe father figure,”¹⁹⁸ in whom they confided and trusted. Mr. Larkin then improperly used this emotional power and violated this trust and confidence by sharing confidential stories with others,¹⁹⁹ asking questions about their sexual history,²⁰⁰ and using abusive language.²⁰¹ Two reported witnesses who viewed Mr. Larkin as a “father figure” expressed a desire to never return to Christiansburg, Virginia, for fear of seeing Mr. Larkin.²⁰² Two other reported witnesses discussed the pain they experienced

¹⁹⁴ Langberg, *Redeeming Power*, 12.

¹⁹⁵ GRACE gleaned from interviews with witnesses of reported problems within the Foursquare culture. GRACE can only address the complaints learned, and does not claim these to be endemic to the entirety of the churches across the nation.

¹⁹⁶ RV-1 Tr. at 28. “Foursquare is a tight knit family even though it’s huge. It’s a very loving and family oriented denomination.” *Id.* at 28.

¹⁹⁷ W-20 stated, “And then after my experience with Ignite, I had set Mike up on this pedestal and like I said really viewed him as a father figure. And so being at Ignite and my experience there really kind of crushed both of those things for me. Like those were the two reasons I sought out Christianity. And then through Ignite I like had this idea of a father figure totally destroyed and also saw... And this fun ending spout of hypocrisy coming out of Ignite and hated the way that I saw them treating people...So this isn’t something that I think I want to be a part of anymore. So I didn’t follow through with my licensure. And I stepped down from my position at [a local church]...” W-20 Tr. at 16.

¹⁹⁸ W-15 Tr. at 9.

¹⁹⁹ *See* Footnote 129.

²⁰⁰ *See* Footnote 138.

²⁰¹ *See* Footnote 136.

²⁰² *See* footnote 125. W-16 stated, “Anytime I saw a blue Dodge, which is the car he [Mr. Larkin] drove, my body reacted to it. That pit in your stomach, the anxiety, and the racing heart... Then I would drive by. I see it wasn’t him, and then I could breathe again.” W-16 Tr. at 21. W-12 said, “I don’t see myself ever going back to fricking Christiansburg, Virginia... It’s a small town, and I’m probably going to run into the Larkins if I go there, so I’m just going to stay up here.” W-12 Tr. at 34.

as a consequence of accepting Mr. Larkin as a father figure.²⁰³ These emotional reactions experienced by vulnerable members who viewed Mr. Larkin as a patriarchal presence exemplify the “damaging and crushing responses to another’s feelings,”²⁰⁴ that are consequences of an abuse of emotional power.

2. The Foursquare Church Lacked Adequate Organizational Oversight of Mr. Larkin

The frequent covering of misconduct of leaders has created an open doorway for the recurrence of misconduct. When asked why reports of Larkin’s misconduct were not addressed prior to RV-1’s report, L-1 admitted to Foursquare’s tendency to “cover leaders.”²⁰⁵ L-1 said, “we’ve had this touch not mine anointed,...in the church for so long that it has covered up a lot of stuff... there’s a mentality of we don’t cover up [sin], but we do cover leaders.”²⁰⁶ While forgiveness is implicit in and commanded by Scripture, forgiveness does not equate the covering-up of bad behavior. One witness reported, “I think it just says that pastors are allowed to do whatever they want and do it in the name of God.”²⁰⁷ The covering up of the misconduct of Mr. Larkin created a precedent that the misconduct of leaders is acceptable.

Foursquare is ultimately accountable for creating and reinforcing cultural values that protect the vulnerable. Here, Foursquare lacked accountability structures as it relates to oversight of Mr. Larkin. L-2 detailed the difficulty The Foursquare Church experienced as an authority figure over Mr. Larkin. As President of Ignite, Mr. Larkin was primarily supervised by Ignite’s Board of Directors. Additionally, the Board of Directors of The Foursquare Church worked frequently with Ignite’s Board of Directors and solely supervised Ignite’s financial and academic components. L-2 informed GRACE that because Ignite operated with a separate board, the Board of Directors of The Foursquare Church “couldn’t really fire Mike.” L-2 said that the Foursquare board could remove his pastoral license or stop the funding, but that “those would have been very punitive decisions.”²⁰⁸ Though Mike was supervised by the Ignite Board of Directors, he also heavily influenced the choosing of board members through his role as president.²⁰⁹ One former Ignite board member described the board as “more of an advisory board than a working board.”²¹⁰ Some of the Ignite board members were close friends of Larkin and reportedly “rationalized some of his failures.”²¹¹

²⁰³ “No matter what, it was just like I was never good enough. And I literally felt like I was failing my father at times. That’s how he made me feel.” W-12 Tr. at 6. W-15 said, “I blocked him completely on everything, because... it was just very degrading and manipulative and confusing.” W-15 Tr. at 12.

²⁰⁴ See footnote 159.

²⁰⁵ “And the truth is, in Foursquare..., there’s a mentality of we don’t cover up, but we do cover leaders.” L-1 Tr. at 15. L-1 explained that she had heard rumors of incidents of behavioral misconduct by Mr. Larkin, but had difficulty getting those involved to speak about the incidents. L-1 stated, “It was second or third hand, and it was getting people to talk. So what I try to do is when it’s second or third hand, because of what I’ve discovered in Foursquare, I know that people have to be handled relationally. So what I try to do is, like with [two former staff members], is we happened to be with them at a convention, I try to do it around the dinner table. Relational talk. Still couldn’t get anything out. It was just kind of high level, ‘You know, humans are leaders. Leaders are humans.’ That kind of stuff. ‘It just wasn’t us. It was time to go. We always spiritualize it. It was our time to leave.’” *Id.* at 16.

²⁰⁶ L-1 Tr. at 15.

²⁰⁷ W-15 Tr. at 24. GRACE: “What do you think it says to those who are wounded that nothing has been done?” W-15: “I think it just says that pastors are allowed to do whatever they want and do it in the name of God.” *Id.* at 24.

²⁰⁸ L-2 Tr. at 7.

²⁰⁹ “I think the governing documents of Ignite that are registered in Virginia has the board, the Ignite board, choose its members. So obviously a CEO or president as Mike was would have a heavy influence over who’s on that board.” L-2 Tr. at 19.

²¹⁰ W-7 Tr. at 16.

²¹¹ “He probably had one or two or three people on the board who were extraordinarily close to him. So I think they legitimized some of the support for Mike and so it made it a little more difficult for [the Foursquare board] to

L-2 reports that at some point in time, the Board of Directors of The Foursquare Church insisted on having a couple of representatives join the Ignite board, which increased Mr. Larkin's accountability to The Foursquare Church and "clos[ed] the loop on Mike being able to just self-determine where everything was going."²¹²

Organizational accountability structures are important because they are the backbone of authenticity, transparency, and trustworthiness. These attributes of an organization are vital to creating a safe culture for survivors of abuse. Failing to provide genuine consequences for misconduct creates a number of significant problems: it exposes victims to continued risk; it silences other potential victims who observe offenders not being held accountable for wrongful behavior; it communicates to other potential offenders that The Foursquare Church is a safe place to commit abuse without being held accountable; it communicates to victims that they are not valuable or worthy of protection; and it creates the public perception that wrongdoers escape consequences.

Therefore, moving forward, Foursquare would benefit from assessing their organizational structure as it relates to leadership accountability.²¹³ When an entity or organization fails to hold offenders accountable for wrongdoing, it becomes complicit in continued misconduct. God's people are called to be a people who love truth and grieve injustice.²¹⁴ Doing otherwise creates a dangerous environment that welcomes and protects offenders, silences the vulnerable, and becomes a very unsafe place for all.

3. The Foursquare Needs More Education on Misconduct and Trauma-Informed Practices

While Foursquare leadership should be commended for commencing this investigation, RV-1 did not feel adequately cared for.²¹⁵ The suggestion by Foursquare counselors for RV-1 to write a letter to Mr. Larkin was not without consequence to RV-1, as she described the reading of the letter as "horrible for me. I had to read this letter to his face. You know, by Zoom. And as soon as I saw his face, I just start crying. I am not a crier... And even now I think about that moment, and it's just like, I hate it, I hate it. It was so horrible."²¹⁶ Additionally, RV-1 felt betrayed by [C-1]'s reported assessment that Mr. Larkin did not have "any inappropriate intent."²¹⁷ RV-1 said, "I felt completely not believed. And they pushed me to do this. [C-1] and [C-2] were like, '[RV-1], you need to do this. It's the right thing to do.' And then for [C-1] to say

navigate around that... Again, they kind of rationalized some of Mike's failures and so forth, not on this [RV-1's] situation, but in other things." L-2 Tr. at 20.

²¹² "Eventually... [the Foursquare] board insisted, to have a couple of representatives and all of those people were a part of Foursquare so it wasn't like they weren't ... but they believed in the vision. Mike is a ... Again, you've heard it. Mike's a very charismatic visionary leader, but he just doesn't follow through on ... the vision just is bigger than he's able to produce.... I think that [the Ignite] board became increasingly more accountable to Mike... So it just was complicated. But if I took you from the start to the finish, you would see how [the Foursquare board] kept closing the loop on Mike being able to just self-determine where everything was going." L-2 Tr. at 20.

²¹³ Foursquare should also assess whether there are any conflicts of interest in their leadership structures. For example, investigators, counselors, and others who may receive misconduct reports must not serve in dual roles as this often creates a conflict of interest or at a minimum, a perceived conflict of interest. For example, counselors have confidentiality responsibilities to the counselee and investigators have the duty to collect facts in the pursuit of truth. When the same person wears multiple hats, these roles will often be in conflict.

²¹⁴ Ps. 4; Eph. 4:26, Rev. 6:10, Ps. 6:3, 13:1, 35:7, Ps. 10:1.

²¹⁵ RV-1 said, "The process with this with Foursquare was in a way traumatic for me. Just the length of time. [L-1] has been amazing with me...The men...have just been stupid through some of this." RV-1 Tr. 15.

²¹⁶ RV-1 Tr. at 11.

²¹⁷ *Id.* at 14

that there's no inappropriate intent, I was really hurt and angry.”²¹⁸ RV-1 further stated, “[C-1] believes differently now,” a statement corroborated by C-1’s recognition that the communication was inappropriate during his interview with the GRACE team.²¹⁹ RV-1 also expressed concern that no action would have been taken had she not reported the messages to L-1 and said, “I wonder, in the beginning when I told, nothing would have happened if I hadn't told [L-1] myself. Them knowing [C-1] and knowing him being a counselor for Foursquare, and knowing this happened just resolving ... Nothing needs to happen, yet this guy [Mr. Larkin] is still leading young people and young women. So I would say [C-1] should have told someone higher up, that and just the time that everything took, and communicating to me one thing and then renegeing on it. And I understand, in a sense. I’m not angry but, man, it has yanked my emotions and caused so much more anxiety by this to be drawn out so long. Even the process of choosing GRACE.... It was months. Months. And so here’s me knowing that, ‘Hey, I may have to be interviewed and do all this all over again.’ And so it was just, emotionally, for me, it was torture.”²²⁰

SAMHSA²²¹ defines trauma-informed care as follows:

A program, organization, or system that is trauma-informed **realizes** the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery; **recognizes** signs and symptoms in clients, families, staff, and others involved with systems; **responds** by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; and seeks to actively **resist re-traumatization**.²²²

Foursquare leadership could benefit from becoming more trauma-informed in its care of survivors. It is imperative that leaders are able to properly identify abuse (e.g., spiritual, emotional, sexual, and physical) and offender dynamics so that they can properly name, respond and communicate about it. SAMHSA has six key principles of trauma informed practice: Physical and Psychological Safety; Trustworthiness and Transparency; Peer Support; Collaboration and Mutuality; Empowerment, Voice, and Choice; and Historical, Cultural, and Gender Considerations.²²³ Pete Singer states, “Organizations should embed [these six principles] into formal policies and procedures so they are not dependent on a single person or group. As these principles are understood and implemented, personal and organizational culture and values begin naturally leading to trauma informed practice.”²²⁴

Victims of misconduct not only suffer from the acts of the offender, but they also suffer from poor institutional responses which enable misconduct to occur. When a victim finally marshals the courage and strength needed to disclose painful events, he or she has not only reported the acts of evil, but he or she has also sounded the alarm regarding all of the cultural priorities, attitudes, and forces that exist within the

²¹⁸ *Id.*

²¹⁹ C-1 Tr. at 21.

²²⁰ RV-1 Tr. at 29. RV-1 explains, “I told in June. I was told basically month to month to month the confrontation was going to happen with Mike. It didn’t happen until November.” *Id.* at 19.

²²¹ This is an acronym for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

²²² Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. SAMHSA’s Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a

Trauma-Informed Approach. HHS publication number (SMA). Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014. Emphasis in the original. (This information was gleaned from Pete Singer’s article.

See Pete Singer, *Trauma-Informed Legal Practice with Clients* 3-4.

²²³ *Id.*

²²⁴ Pete Singer, *Trauma-Informed Legal Practice with Clients* 4.

system that enabled the abuse to occur. Foursquare must heed these alarms with more urgency in the future to ensure safe environments for the vulnerable.

Outlining an overall development plan with timetables for regularly scheduled training creates and reinforces a proactive, healthy, and vigilant organizational culture. Clear commitments to understanding abuse will also help its people become less vulnerable to exploitation as well as communicate to offenders that Foursquare will not be a safe place to operate undetected. This is important because ongoing education about offenders and the dynamics of abuse and power are an investment in Foursquare's people. Just as the church maintains its grounds or repairs a broken window, learning about offenders and engaging in safeguarding education must be an ongoing commitment for the health of any organization committed to preventing abuse and supporting survivors. Educating all demographics of the church body and providing everyone with a high level of understanding about the dynamics of abuse, the dangers of how offenders can operate, and requiring all to be vigilant in enforcing safeguarding policies must be a top and ongoing priority.

Understanding the impact of abuse, as well as how it relates to spiritual issues (e.g., restoration, lament, forgiveness, sin, and suffering), is crucial for all within the church body, and particularly leaders, so that they can care well for all who are impacted. This is critical not only for the benefit of reported victims in this specific investigation, but the many congregants who also have their own histories of abuse and can be secondarily re-traumatized. Additionally, even for those who are not survivors of abuse, the impact of the dealings of an institutional crisis can be a traumatic experience, impacting members in varying ways. Some research posits that “at least 50-60% of people in the United States have experienced an event that could be traumatic, with some areas of the country having a prevalence of trauma as high as 90%.”²²⁵ Therefore, an understanding of trauma is important so that leadership can care for primary and secondary victims, as well as all others in their midst who have been wounded.²²⁶

4. The Foursquare is Lacking Adequate Misconduct Policies and Procedures

The “Inappropriate Sexual Behavior Manual,” a Foursquare policy dealing with sexual misconduct that was written over 20 years ago and last revised in July of 2018, was the only policy of the kind in place during the time period of the forgoing events.²²⁷ GRACE was not provided a complete or current policy.

At the time of this investigation commencing, Foursquare did not have policies adopted to respond to sexual misconduct. To date, it is unclear whether Foursquare has such policies in place. Additionally, any policies implemented should define and address all forms of abuse (including emotional, spiritual, and physical abuse). Throughout the course of this assessment, GRACE received many reports of information that fell within the confines of all types of abuse, but specifically focusing on emotional abuse. Christian institutions in particular should convey God's heart for issues related to maltreatment: safety of the vulnerable, justice and accountability for offenders, respect for all (regardless of position, stature, power, or influence) and

²²⁵ Pete Singer, *Trauma-Informed Legal Practice with Clients* (citing several studies which are referenced in footnotes 9 and 10 in this article).

²²⁶ Pete Singer also posits that in legal practice, a “universal precaution approach” should be used. *Id.* This approach states that “since any person, group, or system with which one interacts may have experienced trauma, one should respond to everyone in a trauma-informed way.” *Id.* at n. 19. In this article, Pete further explains, “While it is true that some people have never experienced a potentially traumatic event, principles grounded in trauma-informed practice are often still helpful and do not cause harm, so applying them universally is generally good practice.” *Id.* at 3. The same principles could be applied in other areas, such as non-profit and ministry work and churches.

²²⁷ Policy Writer 1 Tr. at 4.

care for the wounded. Foursquare's failure to do so raises a question about their sense of urgency for the issues surrounding caring for the vulnerable.

GRACE received information that employees have no knowledge of the policies and procedures as well. Moving forward it is imperative that Foursquare articulate clear and cohesive value statements describing its unwavering commitment to an organization-wide culture of abuse prevention, vigilance, accountability, and support. The failure to properly identify these core concepts, define wrongful behavior, illustrate with examples, and condemn forms of abuse in clear terms fuels silence, passivity, denial, and ultimately empowers abusive behaviors to continue.

C. Spiritual Impact

The spiritual impact upon a person who is abused by an offender who is a professing Christian is profound. In explaining this tragic dynamic, Dr. Diane Langberg writes, "God is viewed through the lens of abuse. Who he is and what he thinks about the survivor is understood based upon who Daddy was, or Mommy, or a grandfather, or a youth pastor, or whoever. They have learned about love, trust, hope, faith through the experience of sexual abuse. They have also learned about the unseen through the visible. The ins and outs of ordinary life have taught them many lessons about who they think God is."²²⁸ Failure to identify misconduct and to respond to it well has resulted in a number of reported cases of significant and long-lasting spiritual trauma.

- "If you come to Ignite, you're young, you want to be in ministry. You love Jesus. Then you experience the crazy horrible stuff that happens there and you're like, 'This is ministry? This is what people who love Jesus are like?' Mike's an important guy. He used to be a big, important big-wig at Ignite, or in Foursquare. This is how he treats people? Well, then I don't want to be a part of it at all. So people, if I had a nickel for every person who left Ignite and then a year or two later left the church and left, who don't call themselves Christians anymore because of people who were supposed to be protecting them... One of the most heartbreaking things for me is seeing these kids with amazing potential for the kingdom of God falling away from Jesus in droves. In droves. Just because of how they were treated."²²⁹
- "I was watching my friends who had graduated who loved Jesus with every fiber of their being, walking away from their faith, fired because they just couldn't handle things, having mental breakdowns, suffering with depression and anxiety."²³⁰
- "It absolutely ruined my faith. Once I left there, I stopped going to church... It was too triggering to go back to something like that. So I was like all right, I guess this is just my life now. No spirituality, I'm just going to be a good person and live my life and try to rebuild."²³¹
- "It's hard for you to think like, 'Then who can I trust?' If this guy was appointed power and in charge of all these students yet he can't even hold a simple secret or hold his emotions together, then gosh, I can only imagine the people that get churches."²³²
- "[After attending a non-Christian college] Oh. Hey, there's people out there that exist in the world that actually do amazing things for other people not through the lens of religion. And they seem to be a lot less hypocritical than the people I've experienced so far. And they seem to actually care about me and actually care about the people they're helping. And so I pretty much walked away

²²⁸ Langberg, *Redeeming Power*

²²⁹ W-17 Tr. at 16.

²³⁰ W-16 Tr. at 21.

²³¹ W-11 Tr. at 24.

²³² W-13 Tr. at 30.

from everything the church touched at that point in my life and I've never really gone back. I've avoided it pretty heavily."²³³

- “[M]y relationship with God just went numb... And I don't know why it affected my relationship with God so much, but I've been struggling just to get back. And that's the part that makes me angry the most at Mike, is that he caused ... I think, the hardest part for me is because I want that back...I know who God is and know what he's rescued me from, but my ability to feel him and sense him is pretty much gone.”²³⁴

These were not individuals with hurt feelings. It was expressed as though they were lost in the world- at one point so sure of what was true, and now unsure of who God is and what Christendom should be. This was not a series of mistakes on Mr. Larkin's behalf, but a pattern of misconduct that went unchecked and unheeded for at least a decade. One witness said the reason nothing was done to quell Mr. Larkin's behaviors while he was at Ignite was because there were plenty of students who were having a great experience versus those who were not.²³⁵ This shouldn't dismiss the many who are forever marked. The wake of damage includes previous students, staff, and contracted speakers such as RV-1. Added to their pain is the silence and lack of action from Foursquare leaders at the local, district, and national level. The spiritual loss is significant.

V. Conclusion

Mary DeMuth provides the following encouragement:

The flock of God needs shepherds who will inconvenience themselves for the sake of the outcast, the broken, and the victimized. We need leaders who will feed us, not profit from our silence. We need a church that is proactive rather than reactive. We need leaders imbued with kindness, compassion, and empathy. We need actions to back up words. We need honesty about what has happened, not cover-up. We need leaders who will ask the question, “Why have so many left the church?” and then actively pursue them. We need shepherds who chase the wounded instead of chastising them.²³⁶

Foursquare has courageously initiated this investigation, and thus begun the hard work of becoming a safer place for survivors of abuse. However, there is still much work to be done. If Foursquare resolves to continue the difficult work ahead, they can become a safer environment and serve as a city on a hill, a refuge for the broken-hearted. Prayerfully, Foursquare will continue the work to become a light of hope to all survivors both locally and globally.

Respectfully Submitted,

GRACE

²³³ W-20 Tr. at 16. W-20 continued about why she didn't want to be involved with the church any longer: “And after my experience with Ignite and Foursquare... this isn't something I want to be a part of.” W-20 Tr. at 15.

²³⁴ RV-1 Tr. at 32, 33.

²³⁵ “It was...also affirmed, ‘Well, it's just kind of Mike's leadership style.’ The main reaction was there are students that didn't have a negative experience, a negative experience to the extent that I did. That was mainly what it was often chalked up to be because some students spoke very highly of Mike. Others that didn't have a positive experience at all... There was a lot of fear instilled in us throughout the culture of Ignite and then Mike's leadership, that he was very influential. He had a lot of connections.” W-16 Tr. at 5.

²³⁶ Mary Demuth, *We Too: How the Church Can Respond Redemptively to the Sexual Abuse Crisis* 139 (2019).

Recommendations

Based upon the findings of this investigation, GRACE proposes several recommendations for the leadership of the Foursquare Church:

- GRACE recommends that Foursquare respond to this report transparently and in a way that honors victims.
- GRACE recommends that Foursquare make a decision about Mr. Larkin's pastoral license
- GRACE recommends that Foursquare provide funding to assist all known reported victims of Mike Larkin associated with Foursquare.
- GRACE recommends Foursquare leadership develop a plan that demonstrates authentic repentance by addressing the past and acknowledging the pain and harm suffered by the victims.
- GRACE recommends Foursquare leadership listen to the experiences of each victim and to acknowledge its responsibility for and repents of its inadequate responses.
- GRACE recommends Foursquare conduct further assessment into events that took place at Ignite.
- GRACE recommends that Foursquare provide a method for Foursquare staff, members, students to make complaints of abuse and misconduct.
- GRACE recommends Foursquare hire a third party to conduct an organization-wide survey to better understand the prevalence of behavioral misconduct, and whether leaders, staff, congregants, and students know what to do when faced with abuse within the organization.
- GRACE recommends that Foursquare provide pastors, staff, congregants, and students access to a virtual library or resource page regarding all forms of abuse.
- GRACE recommends that Foursquare use mental health professionals with board-approved credentials and licensure and who have extensive training and specialty in treating trauma when offering counseling to survivors of trauma or abuse.²³⁷
- GRACE recommends that Foursquare complete policies and procedures regarding abuse and misconduct, and make them available to all pastors, leadership, congregants, and students. All policies should be readily accessible to those who are governed by it either publicly on the Foursquare website or via a login provided by Foursquare.
- GRACE recommends that Foursquare develops a Safeguarding team²³⁸ that will:
 - a) Facilitate a support ministry for survivors of sexual abuse.
 - b) Work with sexual misconduct experts in developing safeguarding policies and response protocols for the organization that satisfy best practice standards.
 - c) Conduct annual audits of safeguarding policies and response protocols and revise as needed.
 - d) Facilitate ongoing training on trauma-informed practice and issues of abuse in faith communities for pastors, staff, congregants, and students affiliated with The Foursquare Church.
 - e) Play a central role in responding to reported safeguarding policy violations.²³⁹

²³⁷ Pete Singer (2018). Coordinating Pastoral Care of Survivors with Mental Health Providers. *Currents in Theology and Mission*.

²³⁸ The creation of this Safeguarding team should be outlined in the The Foursquare Church safeguarding policies and procedures. Furthermore, this Safeguarding team must be diverse and include at least one survivor of sexual abuse and one person in law enforcement or social services as well as both male and female representatives. The Foursquare Church should carefully consider possible conflicts of interest as this team is developed..

²³⁹ This role should be clearly outlined in the safeguarding policy.

- f) Develop relationships with community partners who work in the field of addressing issues related to adult and child maltreatment.
- g) Facilitate ways The Foursquare community can become more trauma-informed through training, assessment, and other methods.