

A Letter from Dr. B

News media reports and blogs concerning me brought great anguish to me, to my family and to the many people who have known me throughout my life as a husband, father, and teacher.

My purpose in life has always been to help, serve and give. I am not a contentious person, but this matter requires a response. The allegations about me made by Ann Lindberg are as false today as they were in 2010 when she first made them. These slanderous claims were investigated by Willow Creek Community Church back then and subsequently by Wheaton College. Neither institution substantiated these accusations.

What is different today, and clearly a sign of the times, was that 10 years ago I was given a chance to respond directly to the allegations without the irresponsible public disclosure of the harmful accusations that occurred most recently. But we live in a much different world now, where one can be judged and condemned without concern for veracity.

I must make this affirmation: I did not engage in any inappropriate behavior with Ann Lindberg or with any person who has made such claims. I categorically deny such claims. Being human, I err in many ways. But I make it a principle to never intentionally abuse, violate or take advantage of anyone. Anyone who knows me and has been around me through the decades can attest that I have always treated people, particularly women, with respect and deference.

Today, my reputation has been sullied by the present leaders of the church where I served most of my adult life. Had my conduct been questionable, it is inconceivable that Willow Creek Community Church would have staged an enthusiastic celebration of me as their "Dr. B Our Living Legend" at the United Center for their 40th anniversary, just five years ago.

As for Wheaton College where I served for twenty years, I was awarded unanimously by students, faculty and administration the distinction of Senior Teacher of the Year, in 1981 and in 1992 coincidentally with the day of my retirement. These recognitions would have never been granted had my behavior been questioned during my years of service to the college.

As I became aware of Lindberg's renewed attacks on me in 2018, I firmly asked Willow Creek Community Church to conduct an investigation to which I would willingly submit. I repeated my request several times since then, but my requests remain unanswered. To its credit, Wheaton College, having become aware of the accusations, initiated a year-long thorough and vigorous investigation that concluded with a declaration on September 19, 2019: "we did not find sufficient evidence to conclude that any misconduct occurred."

I find it astounding that the allegations that were made public recently by the Elders of WCCC, then repeated in a letter by the President of Wheaton College, were publicized without providing me with an opportunity to respond. I was not contacted by these institutions to meet to hear my side of the story, or to seek any additional relevant information from me. In each case, I discovered the accusations which were formulated in letters to university staff and Willow Creek Church congregants second-hand from one of my family members or by reading my emails.

It gives me great sadness that the Willow Creek Community Church elders should be held accountable for acting as they did in a chain of events that has deeply wounded each member of my family, destroyed my ministry and the reputation I earned in my lifetime.

Throughout my life, I have believed in the rule of law, the assumption of innocence until proven guilty, and the legal right to due process. I ask those who are wrongfully judging me now to reconsider and abide by those rights, as well as by universally accepted principles.

With a clear conscience, I am compelled to and will fight to restore my reputation.

Dr. Gilbert Bilezikian