

Notification of concerns regarding NTD Chi Alpha

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Cc: Eli@xacollegestation.com

Date: Mon, Feb 13, 2023, 1:35 PM

Hi Kermit,

**Correction: February 10th*

Hope you are well. I am writing to inform you of some concerns that were brought to me in my role as Presbyter of the South Austin Section. David McLain and I met with Eli Stewart last week, Friday, November 10 - primarily for a routine update on the status of UT Chi Alpha - and we were able to discuss the issues below. I decided that, considering the nature of the concerns (someone convicted of sexually abusing a minor) it would be best for me to make an official report to you as the head of missions for the North Texas District. I am copying Eli on this email. I consider my duties responsibly concluded with the sending of this report.

In December of 2022, I received a phone call from an alumni of Sam Houston Chi Alpha - an individual with whom I have a relationship and consider to be a person of the highest integrity. He has asked that his name not be used "unless necessary" and so I will honor that request at this stage of reporting. I asked this individual to send me some written notes, which he did. I will simply cut and paste what he sent me below (in italics) and then I will return to conclude with my notes from my meeting with Eli.

*Ron Bloomingkemper, a former XA student is reaching out to XA Alums asking if we knew/remembered being around Daniel Savala. I of course did know Savala. Ron said he has first hand knowledge of Savala grooming and making sexual advances on guys in XA. Ron said as a student, Savala once touched him and when he called him out and rejected the advance, Savala immediately retreated and said he was just trying to relax him etc. **Correction: Ron was never touched, but Savala propositioned him over the phone, and Ron rejected the offer.**

As a student it was the norm to go to Savala's house in Houston to learn about Jesus. It was normal to go to his room (he lived with his parents) and sit around and talk and learn about spiritual things. Savala would always have good things to talk about. In his talks, Savala would always sprinkle "you're my favorite guy, you're special" with guys. His room was filled with every old Custance, Boreham, old dead author you can think of. He is the guy that taught a lot of us XA guys about reading and finding those old

books. He was always soft spoken and I think a lot of us equated that to him being spiritual. As a XA student I knew it was weird for a man in his 50's to speak to guys like that, but me and countless others ignored most of those signs because of who he was, and the clout he held.

A lot of the XA guys would hang out with him in his sauna that Eli Stewart and other guys helped build for him. When Savala's house burned down lots of XA people donated and helped rebuild it. When he needed a car, XA people raised money and bought him a van.

A few years ago Savala plead guilty and served 90 days in jail for sexually abusing a youth student in Alaska years ago.

https://www.newsminer.com/former-youth-minister-gets-90-days-for-abuse/article_ab7e3efc-a738-56c2-aeec-eff264b69a8c.html

He is a registered sex offender: Texas Public Sex Offender Registry

<https://publicsite.dps.texas.gov/SexOffenderRegistry/Search/Rapsheet?Sid=50239684>

In the last few years I have heard of several instances of guys being groomed or abused by Savala. I do believe they have credibility. I think some of the XA leaders have knowledge of those accusations. I think that Eli Stewart has direct knowledge of who Savala really is, but is unfortunately deceived by him, at best. At worst, Stewart knows who Savala is, and is choosing to not do anything about a wolf in sheep's clothing.

I told this individual that I had an upcoming meeting with Eli and would talk to him about it, which I was able to do last week. Eli was quick to admit that he did know Savala and considered him a "dear friend", but denied that Savala has had any recent role in Chi Alpha functions or events. Eli did say that Savala comes to visit he and his family in College Station.

I then asked Eli if he allowed Savala to connect with any of his leaders or students. His reply was words to the effect that "we work with adults and I can't tell people who they can't meet with." I told Eli that I felt like the responsible thing for me to do, considering the sensitive nature of the issue - and the potential liability to the District - was to send a report to you, Kermit. Our conversation lasted no longer than 10 minutes.

I subsequently took the initiative of texting Savala's sex offender link to two individuals that I know who have had extensive participation in NTD Chi Alpha in recent years. My message was the same to both: "Can I ask if you have ever heard of this man or seen him around Chi Alpha events? Altitude or anything else?" I did not tell either one of them why I was asking. One had no knowledge of Savala, and the other replied "*I know who he is, but he doesn't do anything with chi alpha here or come to any events. He disciplined Eli when he was young, and sometimes spends time with their family.*" Which is pretty much exactly what Eli told David and me.

Kermit, you know my heart for protecting the congregants of the North Texas District from the devastation of Clergy Sexual Misconduct. It's a burden that the Holy Spirit has directly laid on me for the sake of the reputation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for which I have dedicated my life. So that's why I felt the need to cover all the bases when an allegation like this emerges - even when it involves a friend, which Eli certainly is. So I wanted you to be aware of everything I know.

I will say that my work and study in these issue in the past left me with two red flags - or at least two things that caused my ears to perk up. So in a spirit of full disclosure, here are the two points of my conversation with Eli that left me uncomfortable the following day. I want to be clear that I am not making any allegations against Eli. But because I take this subject matter so seriously, I wanted to include my impressions in the report. And impressions is all they are.

First, as soon as I said I had been approached by someone about the Savala connection, Eli immediately supplied the name, "Ron Bloomingkemper". I do not know Mr. Bloomingkemper, but my source seems to feel that the Chi Alpha leadership is dismissive of his concerns because of some potential disgruntledness in being called out for his own sin. As you know, disparaging an accuser - even (especially?) an imperfect one - can be a sign of toxic behavior. Again, I am not saying that is the case, but it certainly can come from the "circle the wagons" playbook.

Secondly, I came away from our meeting with the impression that perhaps Eli does not think the criminal charges and conviction against his friend, Savala, are legitimate. My one regret after the meeting was not asking him directly, "Do you think these charges were false persecution and do you use your influence with others to say as such in defense of Savala?" It is my understanding that Savala has told others that he pled guilty out of the "goodness of his heart" in an effort to put all this unpleasantness

behind us. I do not know the facts of the case, but I do know human hearts, and I have to say that I do not believe that line of reasoning for a minute. Innocent men do not agree to be placed on a sex offender registry for the rest of their lives for altruistic motives. Pleading guilty to one charge - with a 90 day jail penalty - to have 10 charges with more significant sentences dismissed...? That I understand.

So those are my two red flags. Again, only impressions. I will leave it to you and the District to decide what to do with my report. I will only add that next fall, I will be the father of not one, but two, Chi Alpha students in the North Texas District. If I were to discover that the leaders in whose care I had entrusted them were using their influence - officially or otherwise - to bring a convicted child abuser/sex offender into their realm of spiritual development, I would be livid. And again, for absolute clarity, I am not saying that is the case. But I suppose I am not fully at peace with the situation as it stands either.

Please let me know if you need any clarity from me, or anything further for that matter. If not, I leave the matter in your capable hands.

Blessings,

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