

Cameron Strang takes leave of absence from *Relevant*

by [Jack Jenkins](#) in the [October 23, 2019](#) issue

The founder and CEO of *Relevant* magazine is “stepping away” from the evangelical Christian publication after several former staffers raised concerns about his past behavior, which they described as racially insensitive and toxic.

*Relevant* founder Cameron Strang announced his leave of absence in a post published on the magazine’s website on September 23. He did not dispute the accounts of former staffers and apologized for his past actions, which he repeatedly described as toxic.

“Over the last week, I’ve heard from former members of the *Relevant* team pointing out long-term insensitivity and poor leadership on my part,” he wrote. “I’ve heard about patterns of toxic communication that have caused pain for members of my staff. I’ve learned how my insensitivity has hurt people, and when it came to women and people of color on our staff, I was blind as to how some of my statements were especially insensitive and hurtful.”

Strang did not formally resign but explained that he intended to take a “sabbatical, or leave of absence” for “an extended period of time to engage a process of healing, growth and learning.”

In a separate post published on the *Relevant* website, the magazine’s editors explained that the publication will be assembling an “accountability board” to assist with the transition during Strang’s absence.

The news came just days after several former *Relevant* staffers went public with accounts of Strang’s leadership, with at least one characterizing it as “spiritual abuse.”

Andre Henry, an African American writer who served as *Relevant*’s managing editor from October 2017 through July 2018, was the first to publish his account. In a blog post, he alleged that Strang rejected a plan to publish stories throughout Black History Month, warning Henry not to “waste editorial energy” and suggesting the site would have to post seven or eight articles each day online to “offset” each

article about race.

Henry's account was echoed by a separate blog post published two days later by Rebecca Marie Jo, who preceded him as managing editor at the magazine. Among her allegations was an account of Strang suggesting staff publish an image of a black Christian rapper with a noose around his neck as a "shocking image to symbolize his lynching by white evangelical America" after the artist was criticized for supporting the Black Lives Matter movement.

Another former editor, Ryan Hamm, told Religion News Service that Strang once attempted to explain poor sales of an issue of the magazine that featured an image of the band The Roots on the cover by saying, "Well maybe our audience doesn't want to see scary black men on the cover of *Relevant*." —Religion News Service