

Brian Houston and Hillsong:

“Another Jesus, Another Spirit, Another Gospel”

Part 3

1

CONNIE WRIGHT & TAMMY CHEETHAM



The following are the notes to the discussion found at this link (<https://www.facebook.com/tammy.cheetham.77/videos/382196985613349/>) for anyone who would like to study the subject more in depth.

In part one I mentioned that Hillsong considers Catholicism as just another denomination within Christianity. At this time I would like to give a few examples to illustrate their ecumenical leanings.

Ecumenism

The following statement was recorded on Assemblies of God letterhead: On April 21, 2005 National President of the Assemblies of God in Australia, Brian Houston, has congratulated the election of Pope Benedict XVI as the leader of the world’s Catholics: “Pope John Paul II left an indelible mark on the world, and we pray for Pope Benedict as he takes on the leadership mantle of the Catholic Church and navigates the challenges and opportunities facing the global Church in the 21st century,” Pastor Houston said.

WWW.LIONANDLAMBAPOLOGETICS.ORG

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

- “It is important for all of us to honour and pray for anyone in a position of leadership and authority. Pope Benedict XVI is a spiritual and experienced leader and is now head over a significant portion of the Christian community, so we will pray for wisdom in his immensely influential role,” he said.
- “We pray too that this papacy, like those before it, is marked by a commitment to seeing the Christian message continue to go forward and people changed by the power and truth of the Gospel.”
- “Obviously, as Protestants, our views are considerably different to the Pope’s on a number of issues however, we share a common desire to exalt Christ and serve our community to the best of our ability.”¹

(So, Houston again demonstrates their belief that Catholicism is part of Christianity by saying Pope Benedict “is now head over a significant portion of the Christian community.” And, then, he says Protestant views are “considerably different to the Pope’s on a number of issues,” but then straight away says “we share a common desire to exalt Christ.” Sadly, he doesn’t understand that Catholicism has another Jesus. To illustrate this point I want to read just a bit from an article at Catholic.com. The following question is asked, “Why is the Mass called the “unbloody” sacrifice of our Lord on his cross?” This is their answer: “The Mass is called an unbloody sacrifice to clarify the fact that we do not behold the Lord’s bloody body as it was seen on Calvary. Instead his body and blood are under the appearances of bread and wine. But it is the same sacrifice.”²

(However, we don’t need a recurring sacrifice or offering: Hebrews 10:17-18 says, “And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin”).

Next, I want to mention World Youth Day, an annual Catholic event, that was held in Sydney, Australia, from July 15-20 of 2008. An article from the *Sydney Morning Herald* stated: “Although they are miles apart in theology and musical tradition, the Catholic Church is borrowing Hillsong’s headline act for World Youth Day in its own attempt at mass youth evangelism. Ms. Zschech (referring to Darlene Zschech who wrote such popular songs as ‘Shout to the Lord’) and her band will perform at a concert held after the Stations of the Cross on Friday, July 18.”³

¹ https://hillsongchurchwatch.files.wordpress.com/2014/07/aog_pope-hillsong-brian-houston.pdf.

² <https://www.catholic.com/qa/why-is-the-mass-called-the-unbloody-sacrifice-of-our-lord-on-his-cross>.

³ <https://www.smh.com.au/news/worldyouthday/thousands-flock-for-god-and-rock/2008/07/07/1215282747305.html>.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

(And, I am going to include the links to some videos of this event in the Facebook note. The first one shows Hillsong performing “The Time has Come” that night.⁴

The next one shows them singing, “I Give You My Heart,” “Shout to the Lord,” and “One Way.” One of the comments after this video was, “Awesome concert! Bringing out the Blessed Sacrament was the best ever!” and another one was, “Omg, I soo remember this night...definitely one of my highlights of World Youth Day.”⁵

And, concerning the comment about the Blessed Sacrament, it is interesting to note that Pope Benedict XVI spoke at World Youth Day the day after Hillsong performed and then two months later he told those gathered for the morning Mass that “they should be filled with joy knowing that ‘each day the sacrifice of Christ’ will be offered on the new altar.....On this altar, he will continue to sacrifice himself in the sacrament of the Eucharist for our salvation and that of the whole world” (Source: Pope Benedict XVI, Catholic News Service, published 22/09/2008). (So, the person writing the comment, the Pope, 1.2 billion Catholics around the world, and apparently the members of Hillsong United performing at the concert don’t know, and/or don’t care, that Jesus’ sacrifice was a one-time event. Heb. 10:12 says, “But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.” Sadly, they seem to have decided that unity is more important than the truth. But, we know true, Biblical unity is not based on false teachings).

A third video shows Ms. Zschech and Joel Houston much closer up than the first two in case anyone might have trouble identifying them in the first two videos.⁶

And, then, at the beginning of the fourth video a Catholic priest says, “We are going to bring Jesus here; we’re going to bring the Blessed Sacrament here and we’re going to put Him here (pointing to a table) because this god wants to be with us. This god wants to be among us.” About halfway into the video a priest brings a monstrance, which is a receptacle in which the “consecrated Host” is exposed for veneration, and sets it on the table. All of the people on the stage on are their knees as if they are truly bowing down to Jesus.⁷ (True believers, of course, know they are bowing to an idol).

And, then we have the fact that Phoenix Hillsong hosted the Alpha Conference 2018 on Feb. 8-9 and this event featured popular Catholic musical artist Matt Maher and Catholic

⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SD4lYFyeUWM>.

⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sah05PGoc4o>.

⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I8qbJs24ot0>.

⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ccl0NDMIO4U>.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Bishop Eduardo Nevares. Photos from this conference show Catholic clergy in full regalia holding up the Eucharist wafer and conducting mass on the stage at Hillsong Phoenix.⁸

(Now, we have discussed Mike Bickle's IHOP Onething conference which has featured a Catholic track where attendees could visit a nearby Catholic church for mass, but this is the first time I have heard of a mass being conducted during such an event as described above).

Interestingly enough, the Alpha Course and Hillsong have a long history of collaboration. The Australian National Alpha Conference, held in November of 2003, took place in the Hillsong Conference Centre. One of the guest speakers was Nicky Gumbel, the spiritual leader of the Alpha Course since 1990. Brian Houston welcomed approximately 2000 attendees to the conference.⁹

Then, in 2011, Nicky Gumbel was one of the keynote speakers at the Hillsong conference held in Sydney, Australia. Additionally, an 'Alpha Track' was featured at this conference.¹⁰

And, speaking of Nicky Gumbel, I found this tweet¹¹ by him concerning the upcoming Alpha Leadership Conference on May 7-8 to be held in London. He says, "We are delighted to announce Grammy award winner Brooke Ligertwood, (who we discussed in part 2) speaker, worship leader & head of Hillsong Worship, will be joining our worship line-up at LC18 & leading an extended worship session on Monday evening. Book your ticket today."¹²

(So, we see there is quite a connection between Hillsong and the Alpha Course). Next, I want to mention a man named Bruce Downes, also known as the Catholic Guy, who has a weekly program airing on TBN.¹³ He also has a daily, 2-hour program on the Catholic Channel on Sirius xm. According to another website he is an international voice for Catholicism. His program impacts lives daily through its sizeable worldwide outreach.¹⁴ But, what makes him applicable to this program is a post on his Facebook

⁸ <https://emergentwatch.com/2018/02/15/hillsong-sponsoring-contemplative-alpha-allows-catholic-mass-at-conference/>.

⁹ <http://www.anglicannews.org/news/2003/11/australian-alpha-conference-explains-how-to-begin.aspx>.

¹⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9rOZNF1ams>.

¹¹ <https://twitter.com/nickygumbel/status/958033762025136133?lang=en>.

¹² <https://alpha.org/events/lc18-london>.

¹³ <https://www.tbn.org/programs/catholic-guy-bruce-downes>.

¹⁴ <http://www.spiritjuicestudios.com/bruce-downes-the-catholic-guy/>.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

page for June 30, 2014 showing him speaking at the Hillsong conference that day.¹⁵ I am also including a link that shows him announcing this on Instagram.¹⁶

Then, we see the following at the “About” section of his Facebook page: “We are evangelists. We proclaim Christ crucified and risen for people. We are committed to a certain set of values that include communicating the Truth as Catholic people and being modern and contemporary in our communication methods. We value excellence and fun while creating community among those we work and serve with while being passionate about our faith and mission.”¹⁷

So, Bruce Downes says, “We proclaim Christ crucified and risen for people.” But, again, Catholicism proclaims a different Christ. The sacrifice made by their Christ was insufficient. Catholic catechism 1129 says, “The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are necessary for salvation.”¹⁸

(But, Hebrews 7:27 says, “Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for His own sins, and then for the people’s: for this He did once, when He offered up Himself.” And, then in Eph. 2:8-9 we read, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” So, plain and simple, they have another Jesus).

And, then we have the example of Dr. Terry Crist, pastor of Hillsong Phoenix, and a greeting he sent to the John 17 movement’s “Celebration of Christian Unity” event held on Saturday, May 23, 2015. “I’m Dr. Terry Crist, the senior Pastor of ‘City of Grace’(now known as Hillsong Phoenix) and the Chair for the ‘Governor’s Council of Faith and Community partnerships’. And I want to congratulate Dr. Gary Kinnaman, Joe Tersini, Bishop Olmsted and Bishop Navaras for their extraordinary work in bringing together Catholics and Evangelicals. Something powerful happens when we rally around the person of Jesus. Our church is a member of a global family of churches, called Hillsong. Our primary church is located in Sydney, Australia, where I’m preaching this weekend, otherwise I would be with you. And it’s been beautiful to see over the last few years how the Catholics around the world have lifted the songs of our church, and have begun singing them universally, songs like, ‘Shout to the Lord’ and ‘Mighty to Save’. In fact the demand for our kind of worship has become so popular in charismatic churches that are Catholic, over the last few years, we have actually offered a tract at Hillsong Conference

¹⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/theCatholicGuyMinistry/photos/pb.88750959996.-2207520000.1414744042./10150403114834997/?type=3&theater>.

¹⁶ <https://www.instagram.com/p/p7MSUPGoT1/>.

¹⁷ https://www.facebook.com/pg/theCatholicGuyMinistry/about/?ref=page_internal.

¹⁸ http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p2s1c1a2.htm.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

for Charismatics, Catholics and Evangelicals to come together for worship. And it's a beautiful thing to see what happens when we rally around the person of Jesus. Isaiah 52, verse 8 says, 'when the Watchman sing together, then they shall see eye to eye'. So many times we tend focus on what divides us, instead of the man who unites us. Jesus is that God man, who calls us all to himself, and when we respond to that something transcendent happens, something that unites us at a place so much deeper than just mere agreement. And out of that unity comes a shared mission, out of that comes a shared transformation, and that's really at the core of my heart, my heart longs for the day when we work together and we worship together and out of that we transform our city together, to the glory of God. It's an honour to be on this journey with you, and I look forward to all that Jesus has prepared for us as we lean into Him, and we worship Him, and we explore our partnerships together, and I believe from that, for Phoenix, the best is yet to come."¹⁹

6

(So, Terry Crist mentions rallying around the person of Jesus, but Catholics have another Jesus, so we cannot have unity! And, besides the ecumenical nature of his talk here, he says the phrase, "transform our city together," so he is also a dominionist. And, after hearing these statements by Terry Crist we shouldn't be surprised at all that it was under his leadership that Hillsong Phoenix hosted the Alpha Conference during which a mass was held).

In part two of this discussion I had mentioned the album cover for "There is More" and now I want to discuss some of the specific pictures on the cover and those are the peacock, Jacob wrestling with a lion, and the Catholic sacred heart symbol. I will share the link²⁰ that has pictures of the individual items on the album cover and includes either scriptures or short explanations concerning the items. For example, the following is written under the picture of the peacock: "Ancient Greeks believe the peacock was associated with immortality. The church used this belief in common culture to point people to the redemptive, resurrecting power of Christ."

However, another site I found had this to say: Catholics adopted the symbol of the peacock to represent resurrection, renewal and immortality. This came from the ancient legend that the flesh of the peacock did not decay. Thus we find paintings and mosaics with the peacock as early as the 3rd century on the walls of the catacombs of Rome, a symbol of the exchanging of the mortal earthly body for the glorified body and eternal life of the glorified soul in Heaven...You can also find the peacock in many mosaics and images in baptisteries of ancient Catholic churches in the East and West...When the

¹⁹ <https://vimeo.com/128450270>.

²⁰ <https://hillsong.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/360000053335-There-is-More-Album-Artwork-Inspiration#jacob>.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

peacock displays its tail, it looks like hundreds of eyes are watching us. Because of this, the peacock has been associated with the all-seeing eye of God Who sees all actions and all people, meaning that nothing escapes the universal Justice. The peacock also came to symbolize the all-seeing Catholic Church, who watches over her children continually, day and night.²¹

(Well, that doesn't sound very Christian at all and when we see the phrase "all-seeing eye" we should note it is not found in the Bible describing God, but rather is found in the occult).

Then, in the picture of Jacob wrestling with God (God being depicted as a lion), a paragraph from C.S. Lewis' *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe* is mentioned beginning with the statement, "Aslan is a lion—the Lion, the great Lion." But, an article at the Catholic Herald website says Lewis went to Confession and admitted to a belief in transubstantiation even though he was part of the Church of England.²²

Additionally, he believed in purgatory; believed in praying not to the dead, but for the dead; believed in mystical experiences; did not believe in the inerrancy of the Bible; and believed that Catholicism is a Christian religion. I do not have time to elaborate on these points, but I will include the link to the article.²³

(Considering all his false beliefs, along with Hillsong's ecumenical leanings, we should not be surprised that a quote from one of Lewis' books appears with the picture of "Aslan" wrestling with Jacob).

While the Hillsong site put two scripture references under the picture of the Sacred Heart it is important to note that this symbol is from Catholicism as I mentioned. The following is from an article at Britannica.com: "Sacred Heart, also called Sacred Heart of Jesus, in Roman Catholicism, the mystical-physical heart of Jesus as an object of devotion...Such images are often depicted with a wounded heart, encircled by a crown of thorns and radiating light. The use of Jesus' heart to symbolize his love for humanity is not found in the Bible but in the writings of some medieval mystics. The devotion was fostered by Carthusian and Jesuit priests and promoted by St. Francis de Sales. The devotion became especially popular following the disclosure of private revelations to a French nun, St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, in the late 17th century."²⁴

²¹ http://www.traditioninaction.org/religious/f023_Peacock.htm.

²² <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2013/11/22/c-s-lewis-came-so-close-to-catholicism/>.

²³ <http://www.standstillawhile.net/2010/05/cs-lewis/>. Be a Berean!!!

²⁴ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Sacred-Heart-Roman-Catholicism>.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

(So, we see their use of Catholic symbols and recognize the subtle indoctrination occurring every time a person views the album cover).

And, then I cannot leave the section on ecumenism without bringing up Brian Houston's comments on Chrislam in one of his messages in 2013. Most of the listeners will remember these statements: "'How do you view God? In a desert there's two types of birds: there's vultures and there's hummingbirds. One lives off dead carcasses, rotting meat. The other lives off the beautiful, sweet nectar in a particular flower on a particular desert plant. In the same desert, they both find what they're looking for. Do you know – take it all the way back into the Old Testament and the Muslim and you, we actually serve the same God. Allah to a Muslim, to us Abba Father God. And of course through history, those views have changed greatly. But let's make sure that we view God through the eyes of Jesus, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the beauty of a Savior, the loving open inclusive arms of a loving God.'"²⁵

(Now, Brian Houston did a lot of dancing around and tried to say people had taken "one sentence from an entire message out of context". But, what did Brian Houston expect people to think he meant when he said, "...take it all the way back into the Old Testament and the Muslim and you, we actually serve the same God. Allah to a Muslim, to us Abba Father God?" What else does "we actually serve the same God" mean? One definition of actually is "the truth or facts of a situation; a second definition is "really").

Additionally, it is quite deceitful of him to say people were taking one sentence out of context. I read the transcript to most of this message and just four paragraphs before his questionable statements he said this, "'We all serve the same God, but not everyone in the room sees God the same way and nothing will determine the culture of your church more than your view of God". (But, that is just ridiculous because Allah doesn't exist; he is a figment of the imaginations of Muslims; he is like Baal in 1 Kings 18 when Elijah told the prophets of Baal to call on the name of their god and Elijah would call on the name of the Lord and we know how that turned out).

And, just one more item in this section: I found an Instagram message by Terry Crist, the pastor of Hillsong Phoenix as I discussed a few minutes ago, in which he said the following: "I just wrapped up a day and a half with a small group of evangelical pastors and about fifteen Muslim Imams/Sheikhs (from Egypt, Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia) talking about our beliefs, our religious differences, our common humanity and the need to protect religious and ethnic minorities around the world. Hard questions were asked and an honest dialogue began. I hope to continue that conversation with the local Imams for the sake of loving our neighbors, sharing my faith, advancing the common good of

²⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q0M2T9gYOH4>.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

our community, and protecting religious freedom here and abroad. I'm planning to share a little more about this in my message on Sunday. Hope to see you there" (4-16-2016).²⁶

(So, he uses the phrase, "sharing my faith," but it's obvious his goal is not to share the exclusivity of the gospel; that Jesus is the only Way, because he also uses the phrase, "our common humanity," and says they discussed the need to protect "religious freedom here and abroad." Sadly, this pastor fit perfectly into the Hillsong mode).

Moving on, I want to talk a little more about their dominionist beliefs. I have already mentioned their mission statement which includes their goal of "changing mindsets and empowering people to lead and impact in every sphere of life." Here are a couple more quotes from the Hillsong website that emphasize their vision for the here and now. The first one: "Our only and burning passion is to build the Church and the Kingdom of God on earth and see the people of our day-to-day being freed to fulfill their purpose and calling. We believe in people – we believe in their potential and also in their incredible ability to influence the world with good."²⁷

And, the second one: "Hillsong is a church that believes in Jesus and loves God and people. We have a heart for authentic worship, are passionate about the local church, and are on a mission to see God's kingdom established across the earth."²⁸ (The essence of Dominion Theology is that man supposedly establishes the Kingdom of God on earth, a totally unbiblical idea, rather than Jesus bringing it when He returns).

Here is a little information to help us understand the authority Brian Houston holds in the church world in Australia, and of course, that influence has spread worldwide. The Assemblies of God in Australia was formed in 1937 and has experienced consistent growth. It adopted a new name of Australian Christian Churches [ACC] in 2007 and currently consists of over 1,000 churches with over 350,000 constituents, making it the largest Pentecostal movement in Australia.

In May 1997 Pastor Brian Houston was elected the new National President of the Assemblies of God [AOG] in Australia, and under his leadership, the movement continued to grow and expand its influence into the 21st century. And, as I just said, it was renamed the Australian Christian Churches in April 2007.²⁹

From another article we learn of the NAR connections: "It is important to understand that Brian Houston is not only an Apostle of the NAR in Australia at this time, the entire AOG

²⁶ <https://www.instagram.com/p/BD3PwW6s0fR/?hl=en>.

²⁷ <https://hillsong.com/>.

²⁸ <https://hillsong.com/id/faqs/>.

²⁹ <https://www.acc.org.au/about-us/>.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

by this time was of the New Apostolic Reformation, which is why Dr. C. Peter Wagner was a guest at the making of the ACC and acknowledged how the AOG “transitioned into an apostolic fellowship as the Assemblies of God in Australia.” (Just to note that C. Peter Wagner was the pioneer and chief theologian of the NAR up until his death in 2016).

This means, under Brian Houston’s Apostolic authority as AOG President, he was UNITING Australian “churches” under his Apostolic authority under Wagner’s watch). Dr. C. Peter Wagner was a guest at the launch event, and declared that this unity was unprecedented. He said that there was no other denomination in the world that had transitioned into an apostolic fellowship as the Assemblies of God in Australia had (David Cartledge, *The Apostolic Revolution: The restoration of Apostles and Prophets in the Assemblies of God Australia*, Published June 2000/August 2000, Publisher: Paraclete Institute, AUS).

(And, just to note that the NAR believes there are new Apostles are on the earth today, anointed by the laying of hands to represent and speak for God here on Earth. Since these new apostles are commissioned by God, their authority may not be questioned). Additionally, I want to mention that Alphacrucis College [AC] is the official ministry training college of the Australian Christian Churches.³⁰

Since 1948k the College has been training men and women for effective Christian ministry. This continues to be a strong emphasis of AC and is being enhanced by the college offering education and training for the broader marketplace. AC’s mission is to equip Christian leaders to influence all spheres of society, including business, education, politics, media, and arts and entertainment. (So, we see that equipping Christian leaders to influence all spheres of society is not just the goal of Hillsong College, but also of the training college for the entire group of the 1,000 churches united under the banner of Australian Christian Churches).

Now, while Hillsong often tries to hide their dominionist agenda, here are a couple of occasions in which it has slipped out. The first example is from an Instagram message by Bobbie Houston she posted after one of her husband’s sermons. She says, “In true Apostolic anointing ... he delivered what I believe was the heart of God, and a crucial “milestone” message to the soul of our church. A milestone is a marker in the journey. It reminds us of where we have come from, and more importantly, where we are headed. Every person (around the world) who believes they are in the fabric of the heart and soul

³⁰ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alphacrucis>.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

of our “Hillsong church family,” HAS to hear this message. As Revelation declares, “he who has ears, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.”³¹

Here is a second example in which a Hillsong Senior pastor, Jules A’Bell, backhandedly refers to both Brian and Bobbie Houston as (NAR) Apostles of their movement. She says, “It’s not all Apostle! It’s not all Brian Houston! It’s not all Bobbie Houston!”³²

(So, we can see how Dominion Theology and the New Apostolic Reformation ideas are really at the heart of the Hillsong empire. We may not hear them say Dominion Theology or the NAR, but when they speak of “building the Kingdom of God on earth”; “equipping Christian leaders to influence all spheres of society”; and, they use the word “apostle,” we recognize this language as part of a religious system which truly has another Jesus, another Spirit and another gospel).

I want to move on now to discuss the openly gay couple who attended Hillsong NYC and held, what might be considered as at least, lower-level ministry positions. From an article in August of 2015 we read: “The two gay men at the center of a controversy regarding their involvement with popular and influential Hillsong Church insist they have been open about their relationship from the very beginning, and “have been in conversation with Hillsong NYC’s lead pastors regarding the church’s non-LGBT affirming stance.”

“The drama that is unfolding at the moment all revolves around the fact that we have been heavily involved in our church, Hillsong NYC,” reads a public statement written by Josh Canfield and Reed Kelly. “Josh has been with Hillsong for eight years in a variety of ways: choir director, vocal director, and worship team. I’ve been there since the beginning of our relationship, over three years ago, and eventually began singing in the choir and opening my apartment as the gathering place for a connect group for Hillsong members in the Broadway and theatrical communities,” the statement continues.³³

But, also from August 2015 we read the following statement by Brian Houston concerning the issue: “I wish to correct reports that Hillsong church has “an openly gay couple directing a choir” at our New York City campus. Hillsong’s position on homosexuality and gay marriage has not changed and is consistent with Scripture. As I have stated previously, I believe the writings of Paul are clear on this subject. Several months ago when one of our choir directors made an unexpected public statement regarding his

³¹ <https://www.instagram.com/p/BfapQr8FGW6/>.

³² <https://videopress.com/v/CexuAiBn>.

³³ <https://www.christianpost.com/news/gay-couple-at-center-of-hillsong-controversy-say-theyve-been-open-and-forthright-about-relationship-from-the-get-go-142563/>.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

engagement to a man who sometimes sang in the choir, it was a complete surprise to us as well. It is my understanding that they have not been involved in an active leadership or ministry role since. That said, we still love them and acknowledge that they – like all of us – are on a journey, and our role as a church is to assist them on this journey with grace and compassion.”³⁴

(So, their “position on homosexuality and gay marriage may be consistent with Scripture,” but their actions are different than their position, essentially. While the public statement regarding their engagement might have been unexpected, the relationship had been ongoing for three years and the couple said they were open about this relationship from the start).

Additionally, in an interview published online by ABC News in November 2014 Brian Houston stated, “Apparently, someone told me that there’s two gay guys singing in the choir at New York. But we’d never be the kind of church who, when people join the choir, we ask them, ‘Are you heterosexual? Are you homosexual?’ We would never be that kind of church.”³⁵

(An interesting note is right before this statement (4:09) the reporter asks Brian Houston, “If a gay couple came to your church, would you want them to change?” Brian Houston answers, “The short answer is I think all of us need to be changing. So, that’s what serving Jesus does.” (But, I just read that Josh Canfield attended Hillsong for eight years. How long does Brian Houston expect this change will take? And, in the meantime, they are actually promoting their sinful lifestyle by allowing them to serve in ministry positions).

I believe the problem resides in the fact that Hillsong’s top leaders don’t seem to want to call sin, sin. In an interview with CNN from June of 2014, Laura Lentz, wife of Carl Lentz, had this to say about those following a gay lifestyle: “It’s not our place to tell anyone how they should live. That’s their journey.”³⁶

(But, this thinking doesn’t line up with the Apostle Paul’s instructions in 2 Tim. 4:2 to reprove and rebuke. He, clearly and correctly, felt it was his place to tell Christians how to live, as evidenced by his direction to the Corinthian church concerning the man who had taken his father’s wife in 1 Cor. 5).

And, moving along to another subject, I did want to bring up some issues with Carl Lentz because he seems to be the most well-known preacher from Hillsong besides Brian Houston, of course. And, sadly, he often makes headlines for statements and activities

³⁴ <https://hillsong.com/no/media-releases/hillsong-church-statement-by-senior-pastor-brian-houston/>.

³⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HjxzBEITyQU> 4:20.

³⁶ <https://www.cnn.com/videos/living/2014/06/02/ac-harlow-pastor-carl-lentz-long.cnn>.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

that are unbiblical. Hillsong's website states: "Carl pastors Hillsong NYC, a church in the heart of Manhattan that has a passion to serve the city and make an impact worldwide." He, and his wife, Laura, both graduated from Hillsong College. In an article from July 31, 2017 we read, "Since earlier this year, photos of Carl Lentz and Justin Bieber slamming shots together at a bar have been circulating online. Bieber had formerly been arrested and pleaded guilty to DWI."³⁷

13

(This is a horrible example for Lentz to set, not only for Justin Bieber, but for the entire world. Is this how a true shepherd leading his flock should behave? Of course not). Then, on October 30, 2017, while on the program, "The View," Lentz was asked if he believed abortion was a sin; he did not answer the question directly, instead saying that "The cultural, religious norm right now is that if you and I disagree, we're done. I don't believe that's the case." Eight days later, Lentz released a statement via Twitter saying "I do believe abortion is sinful."³⁸

(But, one has to ask why didn't he just say that on "The View" if he really believes so?) In another article from Dec. of 2013 we read: "Hillsong NYC Pastor Carl Lentz has made it clear that he will not take a public stance on social issues like homosexuality. He said, "When it comes to people's sexuality, I don't want to use a public forum to talk about private things. Because how in the world could you have a dialogue? How in the world can I hear your story? How in the world can someone have a question? ... No matter where you're from, no matter what you carry, no matter what orientation you feel is your lane of life to run in, I want to have a conversation about it. We have a stance on love, and we have a conversation on everything else...If I sat down with a homosexual couple and they ask me what I thought about their relationship, I would tell them, and it would be at their table and it would be our business. But their situation is different than the next situation."³⁹

(Now, the date of this interview places it during the time period the gay couple we already discussed were serving at Lentz' church. So, if he had a conversation with them, it wasn't to tell them the Biblical truth about homosexuality. And, it shows he really didn't want to address it, publicly or privately).

³⁷ <https://christiannews.net/2017/07/31/concerns-raised-as-photos-resurface-of-hillsongs-hipster-pastor-carl-lentz-slamming-shots-with-justin-bieber/>.

³⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl_Lentz.

³⁹ <https://www.christianpost.com/news/pastor-carl-lentz-will-not-preach-on-sexuality-from-pulpit-refuses-to-ostracize-people-111211/>.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics

I also wanted to mention that Oprah interviewed Carl Lentz on her Super Soul Sunday program in October of 2016.⁴⁰ Here is some of the exchange:

Oprah—“Do you believe that only Christians can be in relationship with God?”

Lentz—“No, I believe that when Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” the way I read that, Jesus said that He is the road marker, He is the map, so I think that God loves people so much, that whether they accept or reject Him, He’s still gracious, and He’s still moving, and He’s still giving you massive red blinking lights, for chances to take a right turn when maybe you’d take a left, but I believe God loves people, and that’s what this whole gospel is based on, it’s love....”

(Well, he didn’t even come close to answering the question of whether only Christians can be in a relationship with God. Such an opportunity here to give the truth of the gospel and he dances around with a universal, false gospel of love which is another gospel).

Oprah—In speaking of the Holy Spirit said, “It’s a power; it’s a force...I call it Divine Energy. I also call it the Holy Spirit.”

Lentz—“I don’t disagree with your term. I think that people have used, they’ve hijacked terms like energy, faith, trust and given it their own definition. I think when you put it like you just did, Divine Energy, that’s exactly what it is.”

(So, here Lentz agrees with Oprah who has presented another Spirit). In reaction to this interview Bobbie Houston posted the following on Instagram: “Wow. Wow. Wow. So good. Well done, Carl, & THANK YOU Miss Oprah for allowing such an honest, genuine, enquiring, God honoring, Spirit breathed and Jesus ‘front and center’ interview.”⁴¹

(Well, first of all, a true believer would not appear on Oprah’s program unless they planned on giving a clear presentation of the gospel and not backing down in any way. How is it possible that Bobbie Houston thinks that this was a God honoring, Spirit breathed and Jesus ‘front and center’ interview? God was not honored because Oprah is a new age universalist and has made it clear she believes there cannot possibly be only one path to God. It was not Spirit breathed because the Holy Spirit would not direct people to discuss him as only a power or a force. In this same interview Oprah said, “Jesus came to show the way, [halfway singing the line from the song] this is how you do it.” But, Jesus’ purpose for coming to this earth was not to set us a moral example. We could

⁴⁰ https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=8&v=OnaK4X5pwA0.

⁴¹ https://www.instagram.com/p/BLpWG5pg_IT/.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

follow His good, moral example for a hundred years and still not be saved. Sadly, the majority of people do not want to acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God who came to die for our sins. They would rather put Him on the same level as Gandi or the Dalai Lama. So, this interview absolutely presented another Spirit, and at best a confusing view of Jesus and the gospel. We didn't have time to discuss all of it, and in other places he does use the words sin and repentance, but he doesn't give a straightforward presentation of the gospel).

15

Now, I want to spend just a few minutes talking about something we brought up at the very beginning of the first discussion which was the fact that Gabriel Swaggart had posted a selfie with Brian Houston and also said it was a privilege to meet him.⁴² And, that we had found out a specific meeting had been set up between the two of them and that the picture wasn't taken during a chance meeting.⁴³

We said many have been led to believe this is no big deal, but we would say otherwise. With all the information we have presented we hope that no one would believe there is any reason to meet with this man or promote him in any way. And, we are not just picking on Gabriel Swaggart because leaders in the modern church do this all the time. But, I found some information in a book I have been re-reading entitled *A Different Gospel* by D.R. McLaren that speaks to this matter. According to this book (p. 80) in Dec. of 1980, Jimmy Swaggart published the first of a series of articles under the title of "The Balanced Faith Life." In his first article of the series, Swaggart admitted that "I too have been guilty of preaching some of the "errors" of the Faith movement. But he claimed that God had given him a new direction away from what he perceived as the "utopian" claims made for the power of positive confession. A careful reading of *The Balanced Faith Life* showed Swaggart to be a man in theological transition. He had not yet broken entirely with the Faith message, but was having serious misgivings about its content and practice. The transition did not take long to complete. In early 1982, Swaggart published a booklet entitled *Hyper-Faith: A New Gnosticism?*

The following is a paragraph from the booklet that was shared by the ministry in several parts in *The Evangelist* magazine. This paragraph is from part 3 and appeared in the Oct. 2014 edition: "Following hard on the heels of "knowledge" is "confession." Confession constitutes a major element in hyper-faith ministry. Scriptural formulas confessing result into existence — thereby releasing benevolent forces on our behalf — constitute a major

⁴²<https://www.facebook.com/gabeswaggart/photos/a.382817918433335.80993.120638904651239/1686091624772618/?type=3&theater>

⁴³ https://scontent-ort2-1.xx.fbcdn.net/v/t1.15752-9/30652261_2142924102645770_6626017893475680256_n.png?_nc_cat=0&oh=8a12669254feda678633f9dc89b0b1b6&oe=5B8F0A2D.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

force in this gospel. Their “law of confession” is a routine quoting of certain Scriptures. The Word of God is seen as a self-energizing entity — a deity within itself. Specific Scriptures are utilized, out of context, completely ignoring all related Scriptures addressing the same principles. By using these isolated Scriptures, God is supposedly obligated to perform certain actions. The verbalized confession becomes the total force.”⁴⁴

(So, this paragraph flies in the face of the statements we heard in part one of this discussion made by Brian Houston concerning speaking things into existence. If Jimmy Swaggart recognized the error in the WOF practice of confession, why would Gabriel Swaggart think it was permissible to promote a major figure in the WOF movement? And, why would Jimmy Swaggart not have stepped in and told Gabriel he shouldn't promote anyone like Brian Houston in any way?)

Unfortunately, however, Gabriel has been preaching a form of the positive message for some time now. He regularly makes the statement, “Your blessing's coming through!” in his sermons. Then for a couple of examples from his Facebook page: From his post on April 9 we read: “Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up. In life, there will be storms that will come upon us, there will be critics and naysayers who will try and dissuade us, and there will be times where we feel like giving up. Many of life's failures are people who did not realize just how close they were to success and victory when they gave up. I encourage you today, don't give up hope, keep swimming, keep moving forward, for your blessing is right ahead.”⁴⁵

Then, on April 10 we see: “Always believe something wonderful is going to happen. God wants to do great things for you. Believe that He is, and He will reward those who seek Him out on a daily basis. Believe that something good is going to happen to you.”⁴⁶

(And, we are not saying that God never blesses us, but the greatest blessing ever happened 2,000 years ago when Jesus paid the price for our sins. Where is the preaching of scriptures like John 16:33 which says, “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world?” We need to hear about trials, persecution and tribulation, and that holding onto to Jesus is the only way we will survive such, instead of fluffy, cuddly messages which feed the flesh).

⁴⁴ <https://www.jsm.org/Evangelist/October2014.pdf>.

⁴⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/gabeswaggart/photos/a.382817918433335.80993.120638904651239/1688653904516390/?type=3&theater>

⁴⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/gabeswaggart/photos/a.382817918433335.80993.120638904651239/1689759727739141/?type=3&theater>.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

And, sister Tammy, I know you wanted to make some general remarks about avoiding false teachers.

Rom. 16:17 “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.” “Avoid them.” It really is not enough to just identify false teachers of doctrinal error or divisive practices. They must be avoided or shunned. Evidently the Apostle Paul did not view it as a sign of spiritual maturity or love to get along with teachers of error. Neither did he “agree to disagree.”

Those who promote doctrines or practices contrary to what is revealed in Scripture must be avoided. There are no new truths for the times we live in today! What the Bible teaches has not become outdated or irrelevant. Believers must adhere to its truths today and take the biblical steps to avoid those who would teach otherwise. The Word of God is our sole authority.

© The Narrow Path. Retrieved November 14, 2023.

<http://www.thenarrowpath.co.uk/8203brian-houston-and-hillsong-another-jesus-another-spirit-another-gospel-part-3.html>.

NOTE: This post is in compliance with the Fair Use clause of the US Copyright Act of 1976 (17 U.S. Code § 107). The US Supreme Court has issued several major decisions clarifying and reaffirming the fair use doctrine since the 1980s, most recently in the 2021 decision *Google LLC v. Oracle America, Inc.*