
FRIDAY CHURCH NEWS NOTES

MARK DRISCOLL REPENTS OF JUDGMENTALISM



There is a cardinal sin among evangelicals, and that is the sin of “judgmentalism.” You can hold a wide variety of heresies and be a lover of the world or a homosexual and continue to be accepted, but being “judgmental” is a different story. Mark Driscoll, former pastor of the Mars Hill megachurch in Seattle, was guilty of this sin. He boasted about his “cultural liberalism” with its secular rock forums and New Year’s Eve dance parties complete with champagne, and that was not a problem. He mocked the Bible’s doctrine of an imminent Rapture, and that was not a problem. What was a problem was when he judged homosexuals and feminists and even went so far as to judge some of his fellow preachers and name them by names. He even publicly criticized Joel Osteen, the smiley face pastor of America’s largest church. All is well, now, though because Mark has repented in tears and publicly apologized. Like Jack Van Impe did in the 1980s, Mark has repented of judgmentalism. He did this during his interview with Brian Houston which was broadcast during the recent Hillsong Sydney Conference (attended by youth from at least one independent Baptist church). Houston told Driscoll that he has “a huge personal problem with people ... criticizing other pastors

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THE CARDINAL SIN OF JUDGMENTALISM AMONG INDEPENDENT BAPTISTS

It is not only evangelicals who believe that the public “judging” of preachers is a great sin. Many independent Baptists believe something very similar. While they believe that it is legitimate to “criticize” *some* Christian leaders, such as the Pope and Joel Osteen and perhaps Rick Warren, it is not right in their eyes to “criticize” fellow independent Baptists. Private warning is OK, but not public. A lot of people have told me that they love my Bible study materials such as the *Way of Life Encyclopedia*, the *Advanced Bible Studies*, the *One Year Discipleship Course*, *An Unshakeable Faith*, and *Bible Times and Ancient Kingdoms*, but they are offended by my “criticism” of “good men.” They think that it is unnecessary and divisive, and they have urged me to leave off the latter and devote myself to the former. The Lord knows I would like to follow this counsel, because what I love to do most is teach the Bible. There is one “little” problem, though, and that is that I am instructed by God’s Word not only to teach, but also to reprove, rebuke, exhort, and nowhere am I told to limit the ministry of reproof to a select group of preachers and churches. Forty-three years ago, before I knew anything about independent Baptists, the Lord saved me and soon thereafter he called me to preach His Word. Through Proverbs 6:23, He called me to preach “reproofs of instruction.” As a Biblicist rather than a pragmatist, I refuse to limit my ministry of reproof, since God’s Word nowhere limits it. In my experience, though, if it comes to taking a stand for God’s Word against one’s preacher heroes, in a great many cases, the Word of God gets second place, and those who commit this sin have a hundred ways to justify it. “It’s just not the way we do things, Brother Cloud.”

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even though we are different on some issues.” Driscoll replied that his position on publicly criticizing fellow pastors “has evolved” and he has made efforts to reconcile with a number of the pastors he “offended” in his former ministry, including Osteen (“Driscoll Says the Lord Convicted Him of ‘Sin against’ Joel Osteen,” *The Christian Post*, Jul. 29, 2015). Driscoll went on to say, “I appreciate this opportunity to publicly apologize to [Osteen]. When anyone dies they’re going to stand and give an account. It won’t be to Mark Driscoll.” Now that the “judgmental” issue has been dealt with, I am guessing that Driscoll will begin to get speaking invitations again and will return to some leadership position in the near future. The statements by Brian Houston and Mark Driscoll display a great misunderstanding of biblical judgment. For a preacher to warn about a heretic and compromiser is not a personal judgment; it is the judgment of God’s Word. It is not a case of a preacher taking the place of God; it is the case of a preacher obeying God by reproof and exposing error so that his flock will not be misled and devoured by wolves. Biblical judgment is the Apostle Paul warning about Phygellus, Hermogenes, Hymenaeus, Philetus, Demas and Alexander (2 Tim. 1:15; 2:16-18; 4:10, 14). This was done in an epistle to Timothy, which was an epistle that was also read in all of the churches as part of the canon of New Testament Scripture. That’s the right kind of “judgmentalism.” It is godly “judgmentalism” that cares more about obeying God than pleasing man. It is compassionate “judgmentalism” that cares more for the well-being of the flock than the feelings of the wolves. And it is a “judgmentalism” that every pastor should be engaged in and will come to deeply regret if he is not so engaged.

HILLSONG NYC CHOIR LED BY AN “ENGAGED” HOMOSEXUAL

According to the *New York Times* for October 17, 2014, a homosexual couple, Josh Canfield and Reed Kelly, sing in choirs at Hillsong New York City, and Canfield is a volunteer choir leader. Canfield and Kelly were billed as the “Broadway Boyfriends” on the reality show *Survivor: San Juan del Sur*. In a December 16, 2014, interview with *Playbill*, Canfield described how that he “came out of the closet” at Hillsong. He also speaks of his “engagement” to Kelly. He said, “I became truthful with my church. I’m a part of Hillsong NYC. I’m one of their choir directors. I also sing on their Worship team. They’ve been amazing as well. Nothing has changed there now that I’m completely out and with Reed. He sings in the choir as well.” After this was recently re-reported by a blog operated by Geoffrey Grider, Brian Houston of Hillsong Sydney issued a statement that that marriage is only for “heterosexual couples.” But in truth Hillsong is trying to face both ways on this issue, as so many others are. Last year the senior

pastor of Hillsong NYC, Canfield and Kelly’s pastor, told CNN, “We have a lot of gay men and women in our church and I pray we always do” (“Hillsong New York Pastor Carl Lentz,” *Christian Today*, June 6, 2014). In the same interview, Laura Lentz, Carl’s wife and Hillsong NYC co-pastor, said, “It’s not our place to tell anyone how they should live, it’s--that’s their journey.” There’s where Hillsong really stands on moral issues, and Laura is brave enough to say so plainly. Carl Lentz said, “I am still waiting for someone to show me the quote where Jesus addressed it on the record in front of people.” Perhaps I can help him out here. What Jesus did say in regard to homosexuality was three things. *First, Jesus exalted the law of Moses as God’s holy law.* “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least

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commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:17-19). The law of Moses that Jesus exalted as God’s holy law says, “Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination” (Leviticus 18:22). *Second, Jesus limited marriage to one man and one woman as in the beginning of creation* (Matthew 19:3-9). This completely destroys the biblical legitimacy of “same-sex marriage.” *Third, Jesus said that His Spirit would lead the apostles into all truth* (John 16:13). We find this canon of Spirit-taught truth in the New Testament Scriptures, where we find the strongest statement against homosexuality in the entire Bible in Romans 1:24-28. To separate the authority of the Gospels from the authority of the Apostolic Epistles is rank heresy, for we are told that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Obviously Jesus left no room for homosexual Christianity and “same sex marriage,” and His teaching on this was very public, Mr. Lentz. The Hillsong churches are so “culturally relevant” that they are traitors to the truth of God’s Word, yet their music is influencing large numbers of Baptists and fundamentalists. When asked by a reporter why Hillsong is so successful, Brian Houston of Hillsong Sydney replied, “We are scratching people where they are itching” (“The Lord’s Profits,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, January 30, 2003). That is right out of 2 Timothy 4:3, which is a warning of apostasy. It describes people who itch for a new kind of Christianity, and it describes heaps of preachers who will scratch this illicit itch. “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.” That describes Hillsong to a “T”

A STIFF DOSE OF SCRIPTURE, TAKEN WITH FAITH



“My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word’ (Psalm 119:25). “There can be little doubt that the psalmist was in the grip of deep depression. He was flat on his face in the dust. He had come to the end of himself and his own resources. At this point our society would advise us to see a psychiatrist, seek professional help. ... The psalmist makes a different suggestion. He says to the Lord, ‘Quicken Thou me.’ He was going to air his problems all right, but he was going to take them to the Lord. He was going to seek a counselor--the counsel of the Word of God. There are very few problems in this life that cannot be solved by a thorough-going, honest exposure of one’s life to the Scriptures. To do that is the greatest therapy in the world. The psalmist asked God to ‘quicken him,’ that is, to put new life into him. What he needed was a stiff dose of Scripture, taken with a mixture of faith, every day. Try it. Read your Bible consistently. Say with Samuel, ‘Speak, Lord, Thy servant heareth.’ The Bible is a book of people and principles. Sooner or later, God will confront us in the pages of His Book with the basic cause of our problem and with His inspired, infallible solution to that problem. The psalmist had discovered the best way of all to handle depression. But we must be prepared. The Bible will not hedge or redefine sin. It will put its finger unerringly on the sin question, frequently at the root of other problems of life” (John Phillips).

HOMOSEXUALITY: WELCOMING OR AFFIRMING?

In the brouhaha surrounding the public statements about an engaged homosexual couple participating in the music program at Hillsong New York City, Brian Houston of Hillsong Sydney said, “We are a gay welcoming church but we are not a church that affirms a gay lifestyle.” He said that Hillsong allows homosexuals to be members of its churches but not to serve in leadership positions. What does this mean, though, and how does it work? How can a church *welcome* homosexuals without *affirming* a gay lifestyle? On one hand, “old fashioned” Bible-believing churches have been doing this for 2,000 years, but this “old” model is definitely *not* where Hillsong wants to go. According to the Bible, the *welcoming without affirming* is done by preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to all sinners, welcoming all to repent and believe, and receiving as members those who do. It is very simple. This is what we see in the church at Corinth. The members had *formerly* been fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners, but they had been washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). This is the example put forth in Scripture, but this “old” model presents a problem for emerging churches in that it

requires plainly identifying homosexuality as something that is sinful that must be repented of, whereas this is no longer culturally acceptable. Today’s homosexuals are proud of their homosexuality. They believe that God accepts them as they are, and if He doesn’t, He’s the loser. They don’t want merely to be welcomed to hear the gospel, and they will not accept merely being

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welcomed. They demand to be affirmed in their lifestyle, and in truth, Hillsong is doing *both* by allowing homosexuals to be members without repenting of the sin of homosexuality and without a new birth experience that radically changes their thinking and their lifestyle.

CONCLUSION

The Friday Church News Notes is designed for use in churches and is published by Way of Life Literature’s Fundamental Baptist Information Service. Unless otherwise stated, the Notes are written by David Cloud. Of necessity we quote from a wide variety of sources, but this obviously does not imply an endorsement. We trust that our readers will not be discouraged. It is God’s will that we know the times (1 Ch. 12:32; Mat. 16:3) and that we be as wise as serpents and harmless as doves. The News Notes remind us that the hour is very late, and we need to be ready for the Lord’s coming. Are you sure that you are born again? Are you living for Christ? “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Rom. 13:11-14). This material is sent only to those who personally subscribe to the Fundamental Baptist Information Service mailing list. To SUBSCRIBE, go to <http://www.wayoflife.org/wayoflife/subscribe.html>. TO UNSUBSCRIBE OR CHANGE ADDRESSES, go to the very bottom of any email received from us and click “Manage My Subscription.” Way of Life Literature, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org.