
FRIDAY CHURCH NEWS NOTES

BRIAN AND BOBBIE HOUSTON: PROSPERITY GOSPEL BUSTED



Brian and Bobbie Houston in prayer at Hillsong Church

For decades, Brian and Bobbie Houston were the co-pastors of the multi-million dollar Hillsong empire based in Australia. They preached a Word-Faith prosperity doctrine. In 2002, the church took in \$10 million in tithes alone, not to speak of the sale of music and materials. The Houstons had a \$4.5 million mansion in Sydney and two beach apartments valued at over \$3 million. In September 2021, Brian stepped down from his role on Hillsong boards after being charged by police with concealing child sex offenses (“Hillsong’s Brian Houston,” *Christian Headlines*, Sept. 17, 2021). The charges pertain to Brian’s alleged knowledge of his father’s abuse of a boy in the 1970s. Earlier, Brian told a court that his father, head of Australia Assemblies of God, was “a serial pedophile.” In March 2022, Brian stepped down as global senior pastor after the church sent a letter to its members exposing him for “inappropriate behavior” with two women. The Houstons have sold their beach apartments and mansion and are selling their clothes online. Perhaps Brian needs to re-read his 2003 book *You Need More Money* that teaches the way to prosperity through giving and “kingdom living.” Houston says, “If you believe in Jesus, He will reward you here as well [as

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THIRD STATE ENACTS UNIVERSAL SCHOOL CHOICE

School choice is the only program that can have a significant impact in reducing the power of the mainstream public school system, and school choice is growing. At the same time, the government remains in ultimate control of the money in these schemes, which always spells danger at some point. The best thing Bible-believing parents can do, in our estimation, is to home school or church school and don’t take a dime from the government. God has promised to take care of those who trust Him. The following is excerpted from “Iowa latest government-school domino to fall,” *Fox News*, Jan. 26, 2023: “**Arizona’s** then-Gov. Doug Ducey signed into law the biggest school choice victory in U.S. history last year. All Arizona families can now take their children’s state-funded education dollars to

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in heaven]” (“The Lord’s Profits,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, January 30, 2003). That same year, when asked by a *Sydney Morning Herald* reporter why the church is so successful, Brian Houston 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 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.”

GOD’S MERCY MEASURED IN LIGHT YEARS



“For thy mercy *is* great above the heavens” (Psalm 108:4). The heavens are immeasurable even with modern technology. Our cozy “little” Milky Way galaxy is 100,000 light years across. One light year is the distance that light travels in one year: 186,000 miles per second, 6 trillion miles a year. Traveling at 18,000 miles per hour, which was the speed of the Space Shuttle, it would take 37,000 years to travel just one light year, so to travel across our own “little” galaxy would take about 37,000,000,000 years. Our sun is one of about 100 billion stars in our galaxy. The nearest galaxy to our Milky Way is Andromeda, which is 2.2 million light years away. Modern science estimates that the currently observable universe is at least 93 billion light years across. Using the Hubble telescope and the European Space Agency’s infrared space observatory and other high-tech equipment, astronomers have estimated that there are 400 billion galaxies. Assuming there are 100 billion stars in each, that would be 40 billion trillion stars. But this is only a vague estimate, as man, even with his vaunted modern science, cannot count the stars of the universe, even the “near universe.” Abel 2029, the nearest cluster of galaxies to ours, is one billion light years away (and about 6 million light years across). To illustrate how high one billion lights years is, let’s assume that the thickness of a piece of paper equals the distance to our sun, which is 93 million miles. That would mean that the distance to Abel 2029 would equal a stack of paper 71 feet (23 meters) high, and the distance to the edge of the known universe would equal a stack of paper one million miles high! How great, indeed, is God’s mercy! The redeemed will praise God for His mercy forever.

SANCTUARY GIVE-AWAY INSANITY

The following is excerpted from “Camp of the Ain’ts,” *PowerLine*, Jan. 26, 2023: “In her *New York Post* column Miranda Devine reports on ‘The migrant mess ... ruining NYC’s midtown.’ She identifies previously elite midtown hotels that are now housing illegal aliens at taxpayer expense: ‘The city is putting illegals up indefinitely in Midtown’s former luxury hotels, providing three free hot meals a day, baby formula, free clothing, free legal services, free health care and free education. The cost is reportedly close to \$100,000 per room. But as it’s human nature not to appreciate what you are given for free rather than what you have worked for, some recipients of taxpayer largesse are biting the hand that feeds them. Take the Row Hotel. The new residents have been turning up their noses at the free food, with the result that almost a ton of perfectly good meals reportedly have been thrown out daily. A hotel worker earlier this month provided *The Post* with photos of trash bags full of untouched sandwiches and bagels that he said migrants refused to eat. Instead, they cook meals more to their liking on hot plates in their rooms, creating a serious fire hazard in the historic building. ... [New York Mayor Eric] Adams doesn’t appear to have any solutions apart from mildly complaining that he’s not getting enough money from the federal government. He estimates the Big Apple will need \$2 billion extra and it could bankrupt New York City. For two years, the Biden administration has been secretly flying illegals into New York and busing them all over the city and the tristate area. ... With more than 250,000 illegal migrants crossing the southern border each month, plus another estimated 70,000 ‘gotaways’ who slip past the Border Patrol, cities all over the country have been inundated, but New York bears a larger burden than most because of the sanctuary status that Adams still trumpets.’”

THIRD STATE ENACTS UNIVERSAL SCHOOL CHOICE

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the education providers of their choosing. Little did he know, Gov. Ducey ignited a school choice revolution among red states. On Monday, the Republican-controlled **Iowa** Legislature passed an expansive school choice proposal championed by the governor. Gov. Kim Reynolds--who is the leader of the Republican Governor’s Association and has fought for education freedom for years--signed the bill Tuesday. Much like Arizona’s policy, Iowa’s education savings account bill allows families to take their children’s state-funded K-12 education dollars --about \$7,600 per student--to the education providers of their choosing. ... This victory makes Iowa the third state to enact a universal school choice policy. The bill passed the GOP-led Senate by a vote of 31 to 18. The House passed the bill 55 to 45. ... **West Virginia** also has its foot on the accelerator. In 2021, Republicans passed an education savings account program initially available to all families who had children who wished to switch out of public schools. Like Iowa, West Virginia’s law allows the program to automatically expand over time--with full universality achieved in just a few years. 2021 was dubbed ‘the year of school choice,’ but 2023 may give it a run for its money. ... Red [Republican] states are now engaging in friendly competition to empower all families with school choice this session. ... Ultimately, it will lead to empowering more American families with the freedom to choose the education that works best for their children.” [**Utah, Texas, Nebraska, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Indiana, Ohio, and Florida** are moving rapidly toward universal school choice.]

CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION AT 30 YEAR HIGH

The following is excerpted from “Christian Persecution,” *Christian Headlines*, Jan. 18, 2023: “Christians around the world are facing the worst levels of persecution for their faith since persecution watchdog Open Doors began recording such acts nearly 30 years ago. Open Doors’ new 2023 World Watch List, released this week, showed that in 50 countries around the globe, Christians are facing record levels of persecution for their beliefs. North Korea returned to the top spot on the list amid a jump in arrests of Christians under the country’s ‘anti-reactionary thought’ law. This law defines a range of behaviors considered illegal, such as listening to foreign radio and distributing ‘impure’ foreign recordings or other media. The ban includes the Bible. ... Wybo Nicolai, a former Open Doors global field director who launched the World Watch List in 1993, said the high level of persecution has nearly doubled since that first list. ... The top 10 on the 2023 list are North Korea, followed by Somalia, Yemen, Eritrea, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan and Sudan.”

FAMOUS MISSIONARY PREACHES AGAINST “MODERATE DRINKING”

The following is a wise statement from *John G. Paton: Missionary to the New Hebrides*, 1891: “From observation, at an early age I became convinced that mere Temperance Societies were a failure, and that Total Abstinence, by the grace of God, was the only sure preventive as well as remedy. What was temperance in one man was drunkenness in another; and all the drunkards came, not from those who practised total abstinence, but from those who practised or tried to practise temperance. I had seen temperance men drinking wine in the presence of others who drank to excess, and never could see how they felt themselves clear of blame; and I had known Ministers and others, once strong temperance advocates, fall through this so-called moderation, and become drunkards. **Therefore it has all my life appeared to me beyond dispute, in reference to intoxicants of every kind, that the only rational temperance is Total Abstinence from them as beverages, and the use of them exclusively as drugs, and then only with extreme caution, as they are deceptive and deleterious poisons of the most debasing and demoralizing kind.**” For more about this subject, see “Christian Drinking Is a Bellwether Issue,”

https://www.wayoflife.org/reports/christian_drinking_is_a_bellwether_issue.php

INFORMATION

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.