

After Lentz Dismissal, Hillsong's Founding Pastor Places NYC Branch Under Investigation

Brian Houston, founding pastor of the Sydney-based megachurch Hillsong, announced Thursday it is launching an independent investigation into its New York City branch following the firing of Pastor Carl Lentz.

Lentz, 41, was dismissed by Houston after it was revealed he had engaged in a months-long sexual affair with a woman known only as Ranin.

"We are launching an independent investigation into the inner workings of Hillsong NYC/East Coast," Houston announced via Twitter. "We need a solid foundation for a fresh start and new beginning. The best is yet to come."

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— Brian Houston (@BrianCHouston) November 12, 2020

In a statement shared with Faithwire, a representative for the church said the decision to launch an outside investigation was made after leadership "heard from a number of people about their experiences and concerns."

"It is important that we establish the truth and then do everything we can to ensure our church is both a safe place and one that seeks to glorify God in all that we say and do," the statement continued. "For this reason, we have decided to

appoint a New York-based legal firm that is not associated or affiliated with Hillsong to conduct an in-depth review and investigation into all concerns and any wider cultural issues.”

The spokesperson added the church is taking the investigation “extremely seriously,” noting the results of the report will leave the organization “better positioned to take whatever actions are deemed necessary to right the wrongs and see Hillsong East Coast move forward in a way that enables many more people to find hope in Jesus.”

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