

Does Brian Houston Allow Gay Members at Hillsong or Not?

Does Hillsong have gay worship leaders or not? Brian Houston, senior pastor at Hillsong Church, answered that question yesterday.

He's also asking another one: "Do I love gay people?"

"I love and care about people—from all walks of life; people with various beliefs, ethics, perspectives and lifestyles. I care that humanity and some within the Christian church can be so quick to alienate and ostracize others who are different than them; those who live differently, think differently, speak differently," Houston says.

"I also live by my own convictions, and hold to traditional Christian thought on gay lifestyles and gay marriage. I do believe God's Word is clear that marriage is between a man and a woman. The writings of the apostle Paul in Scripture on the subject of homosexuality are also clear, as I have mentioned in previous public statements."

Houston went on to stress that Hillsong Church welcomes all people but does not affirm all lifestyles. Put another way, Hillsong does not affirm a gay lifestyle and therefore does not knowingly place practicing homosexuals in leadership positions.

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"I recognize this one statement alone is upsetting to people on both sides of this discussion, which points to the complexity of the issue for churches all over the world," Houston says. "I love and accept people on a personal level and if I lived next to a gay couple I would treat them with

the same embrace I would any other neighbor because—surprise, surprise—not all my neighbors think like me. Everyone has the right to pursue happiness.”

Next, Houston asked a question of his own: The Western world is seemingly moving quickly toward gay marriage being universally legalized, so how does that affect us as a church, and how does it affect the various individual members of Hillsong Church?

“I believe we can quite comfortably continue to function within that environment, presuming we are not forced through legislation to compromise our own convictions,” Houston says. “Gay marriage is already legalized in many places where Hillsong Church exists, and we are functioning well and without impediment. Everyone is welcome at Hillsong church except for known predators, those who are disruptive or those who have adversarial agendas.”

Next question: If you are gay, are you welcome at Hillsong Church? Houston answers with a resounding “yes.” Gays, he explains, are welcome to attend, worship and participate as a congregation member with the assurance that they are personally included and accepted within the Hillsong community—but cannot take active leadership roles.

“This won’t make everyone happy and, to some, this stance may even be seen as hypocritical,” Houston says. “We are a gay-welcoming church, but we are not a church that affirms a gay lifestyle. ... If God had wanted to condemn the world, He would have sent a condemner. But He didn’t; He wanted to save the world, so He sent a Savior.”

I think you know where I stand on gay leadership and gay membership in churches. We should welcome gays, but not affirm the lifestyle. Practicing homosexuals should not hold leadership positions or be card-carrying members, because they embracing a lifestyle that is contrary to Scripture. What say

you?

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