

Driscoll, Lindell Megachurch Confrontation Sparks Controversy

I arrived at my radio studio Monday to learn that social media sites were blowing up over the latest controversy involving Pastor Mark Driscoll. He had publicly called out the performance of a sword-swallowing acrobat as demonic without talking to the pastor first. The pastor, in turn, then called out Driscoll in midstream, shutting down his comments.

Did Driscoll do the right thing? And why was this acrobat, a former male stripper, performing at a church conference?

The plot thickened when I received a phone call from one of my ministry school grads, now a trusted ministerial colleague. "Dr. Brown, I go to this church," he said. "I know this pastor. He's a fine man, and he preaches holiness and purity. I'm perturbed."

My colleague also told me that this pastor was involved in restoring Driscoll to ministry after a previous ministerial failure and that they had talked for 30 minutes before Driscoll got up to speak. Yet not a word was said about the performance in question. Why didn't Driscoll broach the subject then?

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After responding to texts and calls from other leaders through the night, I posted the following on Facebook and X:

I've been asked by lots of folks today about the debacle with the sword-swallower (who has also been a male stripper!) performing shirtless (with a pole dance!) at a church men's

conference and about Mark Driscoll's public rebuke of what happened. Some quick responses:

1) Even...

– Dr. Michael L. Brown (@DrMichaelLBrown) April 16, 2024

Very late in the evening, now past midnight, I received a text from another pastor who was at the event, telling me that the performance in question was part of the pre-service entertainment for the men, which had already featured a monster truck demonstration. (Yes, this was quite the men's conference!) The pastor explained that there were three simultaneous acrobatic performances taking place and that virtually none of the attendees saw the sword swallower's pole performance as sexual until Driscoll made his "inflammatory" comments.

He acknowledged that the church leaders who invited the sword swallower "were not familiar with this dude's past prior to inviting him, which obviously was an oversight," but that he was now a born-again Christian attending a church in Los Angeles.

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Of course, I had assumed the church did not know about his past. But my question was: if you used to be a male stripper and Jesus changed your life, why are you stripping off your shirt at a Christian men's conference, not to mention using what looks like a stripper pole for your performance? It appears that this young man could use some solid discipleship from some godly spiritual fathers.

That being said, did Driscoll go too far in his comments before being shut down by the pastor?

The pastor with whom I was texting said: "What I take issue with is Mark labeling this as an 'asherah pole strip show that invited the jezebel spirit into the conference.' That is just ludicrous.

"Unwise? Unvetted? Unnecessary distraction? That could be a fair critique, and I'm ok with fair critiques. But (in my opinion) Mark's rush to label this in the most inflammatory terms does a disservice to the actual facts of the event."

In response I left him a voice text saying that: 1) I do not know Mark Driscoll at all and cannot comment on his relationship with God, but perhaps what he said was true and that this performance was much more demonic than he realized. 2) As I said in my post, the whole focus should be on why in the world the church allowed this to take place, not on whether Driscoll followed proper protocol. 3) Most importantly, this is the kind of junk that the fire of God will soon burn up. Enough already with this nonsense!

Having walked and ministered with men like Leonard Ravenhill and David Wilkerson, having seen the fire of God's holiness touch hundreds of thousands of people during the Brownsville Revival and knowing that our God is a consuming fire, I can say this with certainty: When God comes in power, carnal stuff like this will be burned up.

The rest of the conference may have been powerful; I was not there. But to repeat: This carnal nonsense has no place in the house of God.

May the Lord restore holy reverence to His church.{eoa}

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To help start the Lord's restoration process afresh, listen to this 7-minute excerpt from Wilkerson's "Call to Anguish."