

# CN Morning Rundown: How Do We Respond to the Hillsong Scandal?

Here's a quick summary of the top stories on :

## How Do We Respond to the Hillsong Scandal?

Hillsong has been the most popular name in Christian worship for more than two decades, and the Hillsong network of churches has planted congregations in 30 countries since it was founded in 1983 in Australia. Its global membership is estimated at 150,000. But a series of scandals has rocked the movement in the last two years, prompting founder Brian Houston to resign last week amid charges of sexual impropriety and an alleged coverup.

The tarnishing of the Hillsong brand began two years ago, during the height of the pandemic, when Carl Lenz, celebrity pastor of Hillsong's church in New York City, was fired in November 2020 after it came to light that he had engaged in an extramarital affair.

Then last week, a documentary called *Hillsong: A Megachurch Exposed*, was released by Discovery Plus. The three-part film claims that the church not only mishandled accusations of sexual misconduct but exploited young ministry interns for cheap labor. In the film, former members of Hillsong share stories of feeling betrayed, manipulated or abused by church leaders, and the word "cult" is sometimes thrown around to describe the Pentecostal church.

## Revival in Texas: Randy Clark Pours Gas on a Wildfire

"It's going to be a packed house tonight," a friend whispered to me. That was evident from the moment we turned on to

Research Forest Drive, home of Celebration Church of The Woodlands, Texas.

It was hours before the Friday evening service started, and the parking lot was full. The lobby was full of laughter; in the distance you could hear the worship team putting the final touches on a rehearsal.

The line was reminiscent of other revival atmospheres, like Toronto or Brownsville, people waiting to get a “good seat.”

### **The Will Smith Smackdown: Where’s God in This?**

It was the slap heard around the world.

Actor Will Smith during the Oscars took offense to a remark comedian Chris Rock made about his wife, charged the stage and smacked him before returning to his seat to cuss him out. And the world is buzzing about it.

No doubt, you’ve seen Will Smith smack Chris Rock, who was presenting at the Oscars Sunday night. But there’s perhaps more to the story than meets the eye. {eo}

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