

Hillsong: Building Back Stronger

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“This is not necessarily an inspiring night,” Hillsong Interim Global Senior Pastor Phil Dooley says during the churches update meeting on Aug. 23.

After a string of scandals rocked the Hillsong community, leadership says they are working to build the church back stronger focusing on regaining the congregation’s trust in leadership.

The Sidney-based church is looking at new board members and an oversight committee. Throughout church history there has been issues in the style and model of church governance in the body of Christ. Hillsong says they are working on a new framework with greater accountability. “A board charter that says what the board is responsible for, and who they are responsible to,” says advisor Murray Baird.

Baird says they are measuring and working hard to understand the current level of trust in Hillsong, and rebuilding from there in “an open and transparent way.”

This comes after Pastor Carl Lentz was fired from Hillsong Church, in New York City over adultery, leadership issues and breaches of trust.

Former senior pastor Brian Houston’s resignation also shook the community following his legal charges for allegedly concealing his father’s child sex offenses. Then in early April 2022, Hillsong’s global board officially announced Houston’s resignation because of inappropriate behavior involving two women, one of whom was a former staff member.

So far, six board members have transitioned out. Hillsong General Manager George Aghajanian, UK leader Gary Clarke, Phillip Denton, Nabi Saleh, Darren Kitto and son of founding pastor Brian Houston, Benjamin Houston.

Instead of having one leader over multiple positions the church announced they are creating a gender diverse board with 40% women. While Houston was at the church he operated at the chairman of the board and global senior pastor. They will now make these two separate positions to establish better accountability.

“It is a significant night for our church,” Dooley says.

Hillsong recognizes their previous structure was unhealthy and they are ready to move forward. Time will tell how their new leadership and framework regains the trust of those within the congregation who were hurt by the past scandals.

First John 1:7 says, “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

As the church moves forward we should pray that they continue to walk in the light, not keeping anything hidden in secret. As light is shined on areas of sin and darkness the enemy no longer has a foothold. In this hour, believers should pray that all churches would walk in the light and repent for any past sin so the body of Christ can step into the greater things Jesus promises in the Bible. {eoa}

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