

Hillsong Church Appoints New Global Leadership

There are seasons of heartbreak, betrayal and confusion in life, but in contrast to the painful times there are also seasons of joy, blessing and renewal.

It is known worldwide that Hillsong Church has struggled as a Christian community under the failings of some of its most prominent leaders.

According to their website, "Hillsong Church was founded by Brian and Bobbie Houston in 1983 in the western suburbs of Sydney, Australia. Now Hillsong has churches in city centers in 30 countries around the world. The church has an average global attendance of 150,000 weekly."

Having a reach and audience of this size brings with it enormous amounts of influence and power, but when leadership abuses those tenets of spiritual authority and it is revealed for all to see, the shock of those failings leaves the world reeling in the aftermath.

Yet there are also the seasons that come after the storm, times where growth, healing and corrections take place.

Now, Hillsong church is officially entering a new season with interim leaders Phil and Lucinda Dooley being appointed as the new global leaders at Hillsong.

The announcement was made by chair of the Hillsong Church global board Stephen Crouch during the service on Sunday, Feb. 5.

"They have served many roles, from youth pastors, to creative pastors, pastoral care, to dedicating the last 14 years establishing Hillsong Church in South Africa, a flourishing

church," Stephen said of the Dooley's.

"We believe, that is the global senior board believe, that they have got the spirit of leadership on their life. And as we have come to see them more closely, as you have come to see them more closely, you can see that they follow the Lord wholeheartedly. That they are Jesus followers," Crouch continued.

"The board recognized that they are clearly called by God. And for their part, I know that they are deeply committed to their calling," Crouch added. "I believe that they'll lead this church with grace and wisdom."

The Dooley's took over for Hillsong's embattled founder and former global leader Brian Houston. Houston is currently entangled in a legal battle regarding his knowledge of his father, Frank Houston's, sexual abuse, and had previously resigned from Hillsong leadership due to allegations of misconduct.

Just as the Lord is redeeming the pain that the Hillsong family of churches has endured over the years, so too can He redeem the relationship between the church and its founders, the Houston's, as there still appears to be strife between the two sides with social media posts Houston has made in the past.

"I want to be clear. The media and others incorrectly say I resigned because I breached the Hillsong code of conduct, but that's just not true. I didn't resign because of my mistakes. I resigned because of the announcements and statements that had been made, which Bobbie and I felt made my position untenable. And I spelled out my reasons for my resignation in my resignation letter to the Hillsong Church board," Houston said in a Facebook video.

When Houston tendered his resignation to Hillsong leadership, he appeared to be under the impression that they would not

accept it. These types of expectations, when not met, can lead to anger, bitterness and resentment in a person's heart, and are a danger to all Christians if left unchecked.

"I guess a big part of me hoped that the board, knowing the pressure I was under, would reject my offer and continue to fight for me, but that was not to be," Houston explained. "We certainly did not want to just abandon the Hillsong congregation, as some have suggested. We adore the people of Hillsong Church, and to be honest, we miss you all terribly."

The Lord is always moving forward, bringing people into new seasons of triumph, testing and healing. As Christians it is imperative to move forward with what the Lord has planned in forgiveness and reconciliation with a contrite heart, for that is what the Word of God commands of His people. {eo}

 Bring *Charisma* magazine home with a subscription today!

James Lasher is Staff Writer for *Charisma Media*.