

What Hillsong Founder Brian Houston Actually Thinks About Gay Marriage Vote

In the wake of Australia formally recognizing same-sex unions, Brian Houston of Hillsong maintained he will stand firm on the Bible's definition of marriage.

"Australia has overwhelmingly voted to legalize same-sex marriage, and my hope is that once this becomes law, Australians will move forward in unity and love, viewing one another without labels," Houston says in a statement. "I believe every person is created by God with a plan and purpose, and the focus of Hillsong Church has always been—and will always be—to point people to Jesus.

Australia legalized gay marriage, with 62 percent of registered voters voting yes on the measure. Houston previously warned of what would come if the country moved forward with the legalization process.

"Whatever your view on this issue, it is undeniably one that is important to the fabric of our social structure. Changing the definition of marriage has wide-reaching ramifications and should not be taken lightly by any society," Houston wrote in a press release.

Now that the measure has been approved, Houston reiterated his church's core beliefs about the controversial issue.

"My personal belief in the Bible's teachings on marriage will not change, and the work of our church will continue as usual as it does in many parts of the world where same-sex marriage is legal. It is vital however, that legislation protects the rights of churches, pastors and others to hold contrary beliefs based on the traditional teachings of Scripture.

Freedom of religion is a fundamental part of a democratic society and must be upheld. Any attempt to force Christians to compromise their faith would be wrong.”

Houston founded Hillsong, one of the world’s largest Pentecostal organizations, with his wife Bobbie in 1983.

Rumors have swirled for years that campuses around the world allowed LGBT attendees certain roles in ministry and performances.

Yet Houston has maintained his congregation stands firm on the Scripture’s description of marriage, but is reaching out with compassion.

“As we move forward as a nation and put what has been at times a divisive debate behind us, my prayer is that we replace anger, criticism, hatred and intolerance with love, understanding, acceptance and kindness. Jesus taught us that holding firm to our convictions, and respecting and appreciating other people who hold different views, are not mutually exclusive,” he says.