



AUSTRALIAN INDEPENDENT BAPTIST NEWSLETTER

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Standing unashamedly for the King James Bible

Blog: www.whatyareckon.wordpress.com

This is the last AIB until August as my wife and I will be returning to the states to visit a few churches, family, friends and to speak at the Dean Burgon Society's 36th annual meeting July 23, 24. Also, this AIB is going to be a little different from other AIB Newsletters in that it will confront an issue that may be symptomatic within the Australian independent Baptist movement.

First it must be said that not everyone that reads this will agree with what is written and before some readers asks if Matthew 18 has been followed several years ago I wrote to this pastor concerning another issue that was public knowledge and received no answer. Therefore this issue would probably receive the same silence.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN INDEPENDENT BAPTIST

Being an independent Baptist once meant something. It meant that not only was the church independent of any denominational hierarchy but it clearly and dearly held certain doctrinal truths which necessitated practicing a separatist position from the world, theological liberalism and ecumenism. This separatist position is just one of the differences between an independent Baptist church and a church that is associated with the Baptist Union of Australia. For example the Baptist Union of Australia is a member of the ecumenical Baptist World Alliance (BWA).¹ Even the Southern Baptist Convention broke ties with the BWA due to the BWA's ecumenism. For instance the BWA has a Commission on Doctrine and Christian Unity which "identifies, reflects on, and clarifies issues of doctrine that are important to Baptists. It analyzes the causes of disunity among Baptists and promotes ways to overcome this disunity. It shares in theological conversations between the BWA and other Christian communities, in furtherance of Jesus' prayer for the unity of the church. It also participates in programs to improve inter-church understanding and cooperation.

¹ <https://www.bwanet.org/about-us2/statistics>

The Commission makes its findings available to the wider Baptist family.”²



Did you note the statement that the Commission on Doctrine and Christian Unity “...shares in theological conversations between the BWA and other Christian communities, in furtherance of Jesus' prayer for the unity of the church.” This is ecumenism leading to a one world church.

THE TWO LETTERS

What triggered writing this particular issue for the AIB was the reception of two letters from one of the largest independent Baptist churches here in Australia. This church, Lighthouse Baptist, is located in Rockhampton, Queensland and has a far reaching influence via its Christian Day School, Bible College, printing ministry and Global Missions Support. I have never attended this church but did hear its pastor preach some years ago at a conference in another independent Baptist church in Brisbane, Queensland. Sadly, that church in Brisbane was also one of the largest independent Baptist churches in Australia at the time with a Christian Day school and Bible College. However, a year or so after my wife and I attended the conference this church had to disband due to the pastor's married son being convicted and sent to jail for molesting boys in the youth group.

MEL GIBSON AND INDEPENDENT BAPTISTS

Now, back to the independent Baptist church in Rockhampton, Queensland. After reading the two letters from the senior pastor and the former associate pastor an internet search of this church was done. The church has a web site³ and a short stroll around the web site divulged a lot. For instance, the Christian Day School's April 8, 2014 newsletter⁴ announced that “Mel Gibson's Passion of the Christ Film will be shown to High School students whose parents approve.” Wow, that wasn't expected! Most of the AIB readers would be aware of who Mel Gibson is and he is definitely not a man to be trusted in spiritual matters! Mel Gibson is a “traditionalist”⁵ Roman Catholic through and

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<http://www.bwanet.org/programs/mission-evangelism-and-theological-reflection/doctrine-and-christian-unity>

³ <http://www.lighthousebaptist.com.au/>

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<http://www.lighthousechristianschool.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/2014-T1-End-of-term-letter.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.people.com/people/article/0,,20272857,00.html> “The actor has been very vocal about his ‘traditionalist’ views, adhering to the Roman Catholic faith as it was understood before the ‘modernization’ by the Second Vatican Council of 1962-1965. ‘I go to an all-pre-Vatican II Latin mass,’ he told USA Today in 2001.”

through . In spite of his Catholicism after the filming of the Passion of the Christ Gibson was invited to speak at various well known churches across America as though he was now an evangelical. Willow Creek in Chicago, Illinois is just one of the many churches that had him come and speak. The film, Passion of the Christ, has Roman Catholicism seeping from every scene and it is not a film that one would expect an independent Baptist church to be showing either to the adults or to its young people. Hopefully most of the parents had more discernment than the church administration did and refused for their child to attend the viewing of this blasphemous film!

CCM AND INDEPENDENT BAPTISTS

The music at Lighthouse seems to be also moving into CCM.⁶ If you go to the internet address given in footnote 6 you will hear the song “Oceans” being sung to the Lighthouse congregation. This song is a product of the Pentecostal Hillsong United.⁷ That should be enough to warn most pastors from using the song. Another song sung at Lighthouse Baptist is Heart of Worship⁸ written by CCM ecumenist Matt Redman. Time will tell whether those independent Baptists churches such as Lighthouse Baptist that are using CCM will move further and further into ecumenism.

BACK TO THE TWO LETTERS

All of the above leads us back to the letters. They were from the senior pastor and the former associate pastor of Lighthouse Baptist, Rockhampton, Queensland. It should also be stated that the former associate pastor, Jeff O’Derry, was also the director of what is (or was) Global Missions Support. In the senior pastor’s letter and O’Derry’s the emphasis of underling and bold print is mine.

The pastor states that “Brother O’Derry recently handed in a resignation letter giving me two weeks notice of his intended departure. He and his wife’s decision to leave our church was a little bit of a shock to me, nevertheless I accepted his belief that the Lord was moving them on. I understand the place they have moved to is near the Gosford area about 1 hour north of Sydney which is closer to Kylie’s parents.

It is also my understanding that Bro O’Derry will **no longer be involved with Independent Baptist Churches and has decided to take up a ministry position as a pastor in another church, which I am led to believe is part of the Baptist Union.**”

INDEPENDENT BAPTIST MOVES TO PASTOR A BAPTIST UNION CHURCH

Jeff O’Derry according to the pastor’s letter had been involved in the ministry at Lighthouse Baptist for ten years! How did it occur that the pastor did not know that his associate was not only moving BUT perhaps moving to another church that was “a part of the Baptist Union”? After a short search

⁶ <http://vimeo.com/87540086>

⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6zlbunWsV5A>

⁸ <http://vimeo.com/77040752>

on the internet it was confirmed O'Derry was going to a church with the Baptist Union.^{9 10}

According to Jeff O'Derry's letter he had just "recently returned from Madagascar" as the director of Lighthouse Baptist's Global Missions. After telling about his trip to Madagascar O'Derry says "After spending a lot of time in prayer over the last year **I have decided** that this will be my last trip under the banner of Global Missions Support and **I will be closing this ministry down in its current form.** I will be continuing to work in Madagascar, South East Asia and the Pacific however I will be doing it in a different format and will be increasing the **humanitarian** side of my work."

O'Derry's decision to accept the pastorate of a Baptist Union church did not take place in a corner. Sometime before O'Derry handed in his resignation he had to put his name out that he was open for another ministry and it may be assumed that ministry included even pastoring a Baptist Union church. How did this occur without the senior pastor's knowledge?

Here is a young man who has served on the staff of one of the largest independent Baptist churches in Australia moving to pastor a church in association with the Baptist Union of Australia! This is not only sad but could be detrimental to the men studying for the ministry in the Bible college there at Lighthouse Baptist. Not only will O'Derry be "continuing" the missions work he had been doing before BUT "increasing the **humanitarian** side"! This social gospel mentality is what the liberals were doing in the Baptist denominations in the United States back in the 1930's. This eventually spawned the separation from and formation of various independent Baptist groups. This is not to say that O'Derry is in that line of liberalism but his words seem to indicate he may be heading that direction. There could also be some ramifications from this as O'Derry had influence in many independent churches that supported him through Global Missions.

WHAT ARE WE TO MAKE OF THIS?

The first thing is that the young men training in our independent Baptist schools **MUST** be taught from the Scriptures why independent Baptist. Secondly our people **MUST** be taught the Biblical doctrine of separation. Separation includes not being associated in any way with the Baptist Union of Australia which is a member of the ecumenical Baptist World Alliance. Unless two are agreed they cannot walk together! Thirdly what music a pastor allows is indicative of where he is. CCM is a symptom of a much larger problem and that problem is separation. The desire to reach the unsaved is sometimes an excuse for some to allow CCM and other "soul winning" tactics to be used which in time leads to a compromise of the message of God's Word. Paul told Timothy to "*Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee*" 1Timothy 4:16. That Scriptural advice is pertinent today as well.

⁹ http://www.kariongchurch.org.au/?page_id=17 Under Prayer Ministry it reads "To find out more please contact Jeff O'Derry on 0448 814 511."

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