

Report on trip of John Lewis and Keith Ainge to New Zealand and Sydney, 28th 29th November 2000.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Meeting with New Zealand Executive

John Lewis and Keith Ainge flew to New Zealand at the request of the National Executive of the Assemblies of God in Australia and met with the New Zealand Executive. The purpose of the meeting was to:

1. Ascertain details of accusations that have been made against Frank Houston
2. Share the proposed action of the Australian Executive
3. Determine ways in which the two executives can take a common position.

The New Zealand Executive was very welcoming and obviously appreciated the opportunity to work together.

Wayne Hughes and other executive members indicated that rumours have been circulating in New Zealand for at least three years, in relation to Frank having improper dealings with young boys in excess of 30 years ago. A total of six specific allegations have been investigated by the New Zealand executive relating to improper touching of genitals. The New Zealand Executive believe that the allegations are substantial and they have no reason to doubt them. At this stage, all of the complainants appear to want to avoid publicity and trouble but they do want justice to be done. The New Zealand Executive has already apologised, on it's own behalf, to a number of the complainants.

Following the report from various New Zealand Executive members, John Lewis outlined the actions of the Australian Executive, both in December 1999 and following the recent allegations. He explained that Frank's credential has been withdrawn for the last 12 months and that it is the intention of the Australian Executive that his credential never be reissued if any of the current allegations are found to be substantive. He also explained that Frank would never be allowed to minister again. The New Zealand Executive expressed that they considered this action to be appropriate.

There was discussion about the appropriateness of making a public statement in relation to the action of our executive. From discussion around the room it became obvious that at least 50 pastors in New Zealand are aware of the allegations. This includes a group of thirty who were discussing the matter on a recent boat trip. John Lewis stressed that the Australian Executive preferred not to publish a statement unless Frank failed to comply with our requirement to abstain from all ministry or unless rumours became so bad that it was considered in the best interests of all concerned. The New Zealand executive agreed with this approach.

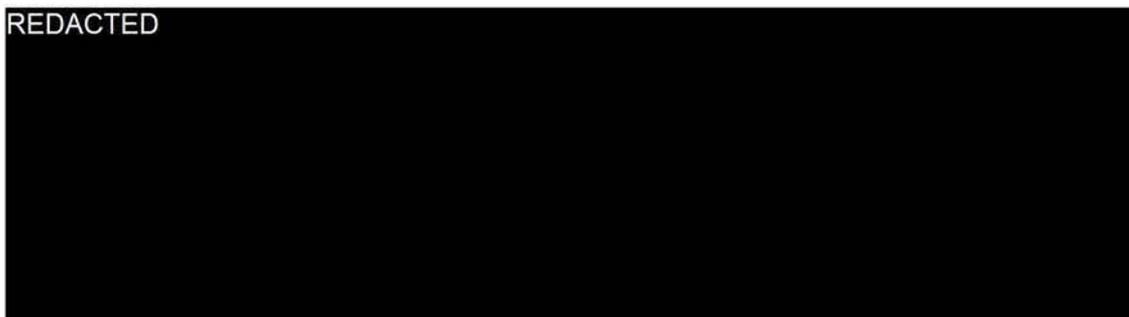
It was agreed that a statement does need to be prepared for sharing individually with people who have heard of the allegations. John Lewis and Keith Ainge outlined a draft

statement that they had prepared and after some discussion and minor changes it was agreed that a joint statement from the Australian and New Zealand Executives would be a positive move. A statement was agreed with the New Zealand executive but they understand that it requires the endorsement of the Australian Executive before it is final. It was agreed that when a statement is finalised, it will not be published, or used in any other way than to answer genuine enquiries, by either executive without first consulting with the other.

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Meeting with Frank Houston

On our return to Sydney, John Lewis and Keith Ainge met with Robert Fergusson and Jonathon Wilson, before a meeting with Frank and Hazel Houston. Hazel had requested that their family doctor (an elder of the church) attend the meeting and we requested Robert Fergusson to attend also.

Frank and Hazel were very hospitable and, given the circumstances, the meeting was very amicable. John Lewis outlined details of these accusations and the course of action that has been determined by the executive. Frank was asked to respond to four allegations including two from one family. In the case of the other two allegations, the complainants are not prepared to release their names at this time.

Frank endeavoured to recall the incidents and the people but was unable to remember the first three incidents. He did not deny them, accepting that was a continuing problem during that period of time, but he could not confess to them. When confronted with the name of the fourth person, he confessed that an improper incident had taken place. On the basis of this confession, John Lewis explained the executives conclusion that Frank's credential can never be reissued and it's determination that he should never preach again. This appeared more distressing to Hazel than to Frank and he indicated that he has now retired and will not be preaching any more.

John Lewis explained that a statement is being prepared to explain the situation to those who have heard rumours and make a genuine enquiry. He also explained that the statement will not be published unless Frank fails to keep his commitment not to preach or unless the extent of rumours makes it imperative for the executive to do so.

Following the meeting, it was agreed that Robert Fergusson would prepare a short, simple confession to be signed by Frank and that Keith Ainge will write a letter, outlining the decision of the executive, for Robert Fergusson to deliver to Frank.