

Response Statement to Courier Mail's Article and Other Recent Media Attention

28 May 2011

Early this morning at 5:22am my wife and I were awoken by a phone call from Channel Seven regarding an article published a few hours earlier in the *Courier Mail* by Josh Robertson. I was surprised by the slanderous content in the article and wondered why they would attack a small ministry like ourselves that is focused on helping the community.

I'm writing this to respond to the statements made by the *Courier Mail* against our Bible School, Holy Fire Ministry Training School. The article begins by stating: "Churches make a killing raising the dead...A wave of 'supernatural' schools that claim to teach people how to heal the sick and even raise the dead are netting tens of thousands of dollars for fundamentalist Christian church coffers."

The truth of the matter is that our Bible School is not raking in the big bucks. Instead, our school is very unique in that we don't charge fees—we run by suggested donations. We often help students who want to study but have financial struggles. And our teachers either volunteer or receive a very small amount of remuneration. We operate on bare essentials and with a minimum amount of financial resources. But if you don't believe us, our Bible School financial statements are open to honest inquirers. When you see them you will wonder how it has been possible for us to run a Bible School for eight years on so little. So the article is very wrong to suggest we are trying to get rich off religion.

The reason why we train people is we are passionate about investing in ordinary people so they can in turn serve God and others. Jesus said, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). He is our role model and our goal is to walk in his footsteps.

The article and other media wrongly suggest that we guarantee we can teach people to 'heal the sick' and 'raise the dead.' Nothing could be further from the truth. However, we do believe in God's supernatural power—Jews and Christians have believed in God's supernatural power since the beginning of creation—but we can't guarantee who will be healed and when. There is no formula, no magical power. Instead, we believe that Jesus is the healer. We encourage people to put their trust in him as their healer. As believers we are also called to minister Jesus' healing to a hurting world, and we ourselves are not exempt from struggle with pain and sickness too.

There was mention of a subject that we planned to teach earlier this year entitled, "Healing the Sick and Raising the Dead." However, our schedule did not permit us to teach this module. Our plans were to do a biblical study on how God healed the sick and raised the dead in the Bible. In other words, a study on Biblical history and how it applies today. Remember, the Christian faith is built on the cornerstone that our Messiah, Jesus, was raised from the dead (1 Cor. 15:14). And the most important resurrection that God wants to do in our lives is to raise us up from our spiritual deadness—a deadness to God and his hope. This is what we preach: that someone can have a new life in Christ (1 Pet. 1:3-5). We don't force this new life on someone, we only present it.

Therefore, the article wrongly says that Marty Mitchell, the principal of our Logan School, was teaching a "healing the sick" class. That night he and Paul Jackson were actually teaching an exposition on the book of Hebrews and 1 John. One of the only things that was correctly in context was the statement: "The pastor leads the group through John's

epistles with a fine-toothed comb.” And after doing that, Marty prayed for a precious woman who had knee problems. Nothing strange here—Christians have been doing this for two thousand years.

The article also links us with Bill Johnson and their church’s school of ministry. Though we value Bill Johnson and his school, our school is not formally associated with him and the Bethel Supernatural School of Ministry. Consequently, I do not know about their financial situation or the specifics of their curriculum. I can only represent our school: we are an interdenominational Christian Bible School that values education as well as spirituality. We believe that “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Heb. 13:8).

In light of all this, Josh Robertson’s article in the *Courier Mail* is full of inaccuracies, putting a negative spin on things he does not understand and misrepresenting who we are.

Sincerely

Glen Gerhauser
Principal, Holy Fire Ministry Training School