



HOPESIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH

POB 884, College Park, Maryland, USA, 20741
Tel: 301 576 2611, EM: contact@hopeside.org, HOPESIDE.ORG

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Pastor Nate's ([Nathaniel Caffee III](#), Pastor at [Calverton Baptist Church](#), Silver Spring, Maryland) comments to and about HopeSide (HM) and its supporters are stated below. Pastor Nate is invited to respond to the statements he has made in private and public as they greatly harmed HopeSide members and its ministry. What he has said and done are a matter of history and factually true. It should be noted that if Pastor Nate strongly believes in what he has stated, then HopeSide has every right to address what it views as extremely derogatory and disparaging statements that have been made both privately and publicly by anyone including Pr. Nate about HopeSide. For about a year, HopeSide's repeated offers through various people to resolve these matters privately have been rejected by Pastor Nate and by extension the Calverton Baptist Church because of which we are where we are today.

HopeSide believes that CBC has every right to express its views and practice its beliefs as they see fit but that the same principle of free speech and the practice of any belief is applicable to HopeSide as well. Besides, Pastor Nate is a public official in his capacity as the pastor of a church and therefore, his views can be publicly addressed. It comes with the territory.

Here are those select statements to which Pr. Nate can respond if he wishes to:

1. On Sunday, January 5, 2020, four ladies from HopeSide Church asked Pr. Nate after CBC's main service was over to please reconsider letting HopeSide continue to stay on the basis of Christian love. One of the ladies reportedly said that in heaven these differences we have now will not be there. Pastor Nate reportedly responded to the ladies that it cannot happen and that he also believes that "**we will not be in heaven together**".
2. On January 12, 2020, Pr. Caffee in the last five minutes of his sermon made the following comments in front of his audience or CBC which was later uploaded to CBC's website for all to hear. The recording clip of his comments can be heard at this link: <http://hopeside.org/cbcsermon.mp3>. They are as follows (4:43): (These remarks though they do not mention HopeSide by name, it is quite obvious about whom it is referring to because of the clear way HopeSide's supporters were referred to and the very recent events that led up to his sermon.)
 - a. "**Beloved, we are not to sit down and entertain those who blaspheme the word of God.**"
 - b. "**Or to accept them in the method of tolerance. We reject those things.**"

c. **"I was recently contacted by somebody who asked if, you know, we can kind of come together as a group under the banner of Christ, but they believe very different things than we do.** (This is a clear reference to the ladies who talked with him on Jan. 5, 2020 and also in reference to another non-Adventist supporter of HopeSide who went on Dec. 29, 2019 to talk to him about the same thing.)

d. **"And their thought process was that we are gonna not worry about doctrine at all, we are just gonna come together and say that we are all Christians, so let's come and bring ourselves together and fellowship underneath that. I can't do that. I can't do that. I can't sit there and just say I will excuse part of the word of God just so that we can all get along. I won't do that. I am gonna hold to the word of God to the very end, and let the Lord be the judge between me and them in these matters."**

e. **"Because you cannot have true peace unless we are all worshipping the same God and we have to believe that He is the same person. And you can't just take bits and pieces here and there and somebody or anybody who just says well I believe in Jesus, but He is not the same Jesus you believe in, but we can just get along and have you know, celebrating and fellowshiping one another, light has no fellowship with darkness."**

f. **"And you may look at me and say that is a very narrow minded point of view pastor. And I would tell you that it is a very Biblical minded point of view. You may disagree with me on this. But come to the word of God and bring your disagreements and we will engage each and every one of them along the way."**

g. **"It's not about just getting along. We can get along under the word of God believing the truth of God's word, and (thumping) this is God's Word from cover to cover and if that's not something you want to believe, then we are gonna have some difficulties."**

h. **"Because, when the apostles were writing the epistles, about fifty or fifty five percent of the epistles are about doctrine, about doctrine. They didn't sit back and just say well you know, believe Jesus, it's fine, it's ok. If that was the case, Paul could have stopped writing in many cases in the first few chapters and be done with it. But it was all about instruction. Because sound doctrine equals sound living...I hold to sound doctrine. I will always will, till the very end.**

i. **"Listen as I close out here. If you believe that you are saved simply by because you do good works or do good things, if you believe that you are saved that because of that, you are sadly mistaken. If you believe that good works are required to keep your salvation, you are working in vain.**

HM's response to Pr. Caffee's sermon points:

Summary: Pr. Caffee in an apparent reference to HM, unless otherwise someone else may have been referred to in his sermon, preached to CBC that HM is blaspheming God's word, that HM does not worship the same God or Jesus and that HM is in darkness and that HM does not believe in the application of all the doctrines of the Bible

and that HM is only concerned about taking bits and pieces of the Bible, ignore sound doctrine and gather under the banner of Christ and that we believe in good works to be saved or keep our salvation etc.

Note: This kind of overly broad reference to HM's beliefs is not only false but slanderous, defamatory and meant to harm and hurt HM's reputation. This kind of rhetoric amounts to Landlord-Tenant harassment as HM and its supporters are not members of CBC but mere tenants deserving of respect and dignity at all times in all places and therefore not subject to public attacks or ridicule on our character in the name of religion or any other ideology, especially by the Landlord who happened to be CBC. This kind of behavior sets a very dangerous precedent if allowed to continue without getting this issue addressed privately and publicly with all parties concerned. Pr. Caffee has basically tarnished our image privately and publicly without any factual basis whatsoever. Since he has challenged publicly to engage in a discussion of these matters of what HM supposedly believes, we have no other option but to address these allegations publicly as well. It is now very clear that he has used his false and erroneous beliefs about HM to terminate our long held lease relationship with CBC. HM's responses to each of the main allegations are as follows:

- 1. Pr. Caffee: "We are not supposed to sit down and entertain those who blaspheme the word of God...or to accept them in the method of tolerance. We reject those things."**

HM's response: Christians are definitely not called to merely "entertain or tolerate" anyone but instead to love unconditionally anyone, neighbors, enemies and especially those who are in need. Jesus was accused of associating with sinners and blaspheming as well for which he was crucified. The entire message of Christianity is to love God and love others as ourselves. Upon this one principle called the "Golden Rule" rests all other teachings and doctrines found in the Bible and none other. **Christians are called to be redemptive in their approach to those who are different and not punitive.** Loving and respecting others who are different does not mean that there is any compromise to "sound doctrine" but is the fulfillment of the first mandate of love in the same example as Jesus set forth. Christians are not called to isolate themselves into their club or clique to be able to live a good Christian life. If Pr. Caffee thinks that HM is "blaspheming God's word", we welcome the opportunity to dialogue about it in more detail, but to accuse us and our supporters of "blasphemy" publicly without any evidence cited is slanderous and defamatory and extremely offensive. It is very harmful to the health and well-being of others and HM will not entertain or tolerate being misrepresented either and neither should anyone. This phenomenon of tarnishing someone or something with false or derogatory information has become a most dangerous epidemic in modern society and social media and this should be confronted. Not doing so is a dereliction of duty all have to promote the best in all of us despite any ideological differences. **This kind of despicable and destructive behavior only promotes chaos and confusion, and the eroding of faith and community. It says that all it takes for the bad to prevail is for the good to do nothing. We are called to be salt and light and nothing else.**

2. Pr. Caffee: “I was recently contacted by somebody who asked if, you know, we can kind of come together as a group under the banner of Christ, but they believe very different things than we do.”

HM’s response: Coming together is always voluntary and never forced and it happens all the time in both religious and non-religious settings. Besides, coming together is not compromising on anything. This is a complete false reading which only results in false conclusions. No two Christians of any denomination or background always agree on everything. Matters of faith must be left up to individual conscience. Freedom of choice, freedom of religion and speech is the legacy of the Protestant Reformation and even the United States has these values enshrined in its Constitution. **“Coming together under the banner of Christ”** voluntarily is exactly what all are called to do as Christians now more than ever. The Bible says that where there are two or three gathered together in God’s name that He will be there also. It does not say that those two or three have to be in agreement first with each other or that they should first believe the same things or belong to the same faith denomination. God accepts all just as they are and then changes them as they submit themselves in words and deeds to HIM first over time. Perhaps Pr. Caffee can be clearer in this regard before assuming or presuming to know what HM believes that is so different or not acceptable if it is about Christian beliefs and the practice of such. Maybe everything should be in writing from HM before he talks about HM in public or private. This is called due process and fair play. The Bible says that we should not use false weights or bear false witness against each other. It is simply wrong to misrepresent us and then convict us on that same misinformation. **This kind of characterization amounts to false allegations of one thing or the other and it amounts to slander and defamation meant to harm HM’s reputation and image in the public.**

3. Pr. Caffee: “you cannot have true peace unless we are all worshipping the same God and we have to believe that He is the same person.”

HM’s response: In order to have true peace, the Bible says that we are to love one another just as God loves us and as we love ourselves without regard to anything else. In 1 Cor. 13 it says that without love nothing else matters. John 3:16 states that God so loved us that He gave up His only Son who died to save all so that whoever believes will have everlasting life. The essence of Christianity is to follow the example of Christ who sacrificed and gave Himself away to save the world. Surrender and supreme submission for the sake of saving anyone is the foundation upon which all other doctrines are established and taught. That is the God HM preaches, teaches and practices in all our worship and fellowship events. Unless this happens, there will be never ending fighting within and without. What’s the different God Pr. Caffee thinks that HM is worshipping? Maybe he should dialogue with HM first and get it straight from the horse’s mouth so to speak and in writing if needed rather than spread misinformation in the name of religion or ideology publicly against HM. The beatitudes can be an excellent guide to use. **This kind of characterization amounts to false allegations of one thing or the other and it amounts to slander and defamation meant to harm HM’s reputation and image in**

the public.

4. Pr. Caffee: "Light has no fellowship with darkness':

HM's response: Christians are called to be salt and light. If Pr. Caffee believes that HM is in darkness, he is welcome to be shed more light so that HM can see well. Christians are not called to retreat and run from darkness. Light does not discriminate on what it is being a light to. The Bible clearly talks about not hiding under a "bushel". God cannot and will not bless any faith group if it isolates itself to its own building or space. The Gospel is all about going out and giving away for the sake of saving someone else. The Good Samaritan story illustrates that well. Salt acts to preserve and not destroy. Salt has no function or use if it stays all by itself in a container and not used with other ingredients. CBC is welcome to be salt and light to HM if they believe that they are so and not act to discourage or destroy our ministry and reputation and throw us into darkness after they have benefitted enormously by our contributions over the years. Despite any theological differences, HM and CBC has been very collaborative and complementary towards each other in countless ways over the years.

5. Pr. Caffee: "It's not about just getting along. We can get along under the word of God believing the truth of God's word, and (thumping) this is God's Word from cover to cover..."

HM's response: We are not sure who or what Pr. Caffee is talking about. It is better to get along first rather than not getting along and getting into needless fights about one thing or the other. Doing so can make the world a much better place. Getting along does not mean that anything or anyone's beliefs are being comprised or corrupted. Maybe getting along can get us on the track to getting along under "God's word". We never advocate forcing anyone's faith on anybody else in order to be kind and helpful to them. God's word simply says again that we are to love one another no matter differences as a first step. This cannot happen when false or misleading information is transmitted about anyone. **This kind of characterization amounts to false allegations of one thing or the other and it amounts to slander and defamation meant to harm HM's reputation and image in the public.**

6. Pr. Caffee: "...when the apostles were writing the epistles, about fifty or fifty five percent of the epistles are about doctrine, about doctrine. "

HM's response: We are not sure what doctrines Pr. Caffee thinks we are trying to ignore or compromise on but the other fifty percent is all about love and sacrifice on which everything else is built on. If there's no love and kindness, nothing else really matters as far as Apostle Paul is concerned. Despite our differences in doctrinal matters, we can still learn from each and serve one another. This is what Christianity is truly about which we believe. Sound doctrine cannot lead to sound living if there is inaccurate information being spread around and used to draw conclusions about anyone or anything. Repeating: **This kind of characterization amounts to false allegations of one thing or the other and it amounts to slander**

and defamation meant to harm HM's reputation and image in the public.

7. **Pr. Caffee:** "If you believe that you are saved simply by because you do good works or do good things, if you believe that you are saved that because of that, you are sadly mistaken. If you believe that good works are required to keep your salvation, you are working in vain."

HM's response: We believe that by faith we are saved and not by works but **SALVATION is not complete when anyone is first saved.** We believe that there are three stages of Salvation. They are Justification (saved from the penalty of sin), Sanctification (saved from the power of sin) and Glorification (saved from the presence of sin). After the first step of Justification, a believer then enters into the Sanctification stage which does involve "works" or good works which results from the faith that was embraced. Faith should lead to faithfulness to the teachings and moral commands Jesus commanded. It is erroneous to say that good works will not keep one's salvation. Bad works will most surely keep a person out of salvation. In fact, God does reward according to each one's works. By faith we are saved and by obedience to God's moral laws we live. Paul clearly talked about working out one's salvation with fear and trembling. James talks about faith and works that should go hand in hand as evidence of being saved and not to be saved. The final step of Glorification happens when all believers are taken up into heaven when Jesus returns the second time. It is not clear who is the target audience of Pr. Caffee's preaching on this topic as this keeps being talked about very frequently. Does he think Adventists are all into works and not faith or grace? It will be good to know to clear up any misconceptions. **The Good Samaritan story told by Jesus Himself illustrates how faith and works go together in terms of love to God and love to fellow man, especially those who are in need and "half dead" found on the highway of life.**

8. **Pr. Caffee:** In the HopeSide lease termination letter dated Sept. 5, 2019; he stated the reasons which are: that Adventist beliefs are not in harmony with the core tenets of Baptist and Evangelical tradition and orthodoxy. That he was praying for many years about terminating HM's lease and that he sincerely believes that the Calverton Baptist Church will grow once it is able to "**consistently present**" its Baptist beliefs. See here for a timeline and some excerpts: <http://hopeside.org/cbclearse.jpg>

HM's response: Adventists claim that they follow the Bible or "Sola Scriptura" or "Scripture Alone" when it comes to matters of faith and doctrine and they do not follow any tradition or orthodoxy as such. All things are tested by the Bible alone in matters of belief and faith. Besides, there are many kinds of Baptists and Evangelical Christians who have very different beliefs from each other. No two Christians share the same beliefs in every way. So it is not clear about who is being referred to? Pr. Caffee was invited to dialogue about his concerns but he has refused to do so and said that he made up his mind.

If Pr. Caffee was praying for many years about terminating HopeSide's lease, then he should have let HM know when it was about to undertake at least \$30k worth of

capital improvements to CBC for equal use by both church groups without any limits. Instead, he let HM make all the various big item investments starting from about 2017 which included a proprietary projection installation, various other media related renovations, carpet deep cleaning and dyeing and much more. Not long after all the money was spent to upgrade CBC at great expense to HM, Pr. Caffee decided to terminate HM's lease on some religious incompatibility pretext. This act is an extreme betrayal of the trust that HM put in CBC and is fraudulent at best and has nothing to do with any religious matter but more like unjust enrichment at the expense of HM.

Further, it is extremely insulting and offensive to hear that somehow HM's presence or lease with CBC was the reason that it was not growing. In fact, CBC has been the primary beneficiary of HM's extraordinary generosity through the years. A Baptist person did not come and do anything to improve CBC's facilities as HM did. The way to grow a church is to lift up Jesus and He will draw all unto Him. The church cannot grow by scapegoating its problems on anyone. **The two commands of Loving God and Loving Man if they are well practiced first, the Church can grow but not by humiliating and blaming someone else. Jesus said that He has His sheep in every fold and to let the wheat and tares grow together. God lets the sun and rain to benefit the believers and unbelievers.** There are many Churches in this area and God is not only blessing one group or faith denomination. We believe that God has not called any church to build a monument to its own orthodoxy or tradition but to engage in being an example and monument of love and sacrifice to those in need most of all, and not to defraud anyone. There are also many churches in this area that rent to other faith groups that may not necessarily agree with their own beliefs. Renting to another group does not imply that each party is therefore in agreement with each other's beliefs. It is all the more peculiar to note that CBC wanted to buy HM's equipment on the cheap at the price it wanted to pay or that HM should take everything and go. The reality is that most of the improvements and renovations that were made are permanent fixtures to be used permanently by both groups and it will cost HM to remove these things as it will take professional help to uninstall what has been installed. HM never posed an existential threat to CBC. **Therefore, HM has been given a very false choice in this matter. CBC's conduct has been offensive and very fraudulent at best.**

Conclusion:

There is freedom of religion and freedom of speech in the United States. But when that freedom is used in the name of any religion or ideology to harm the reputation or spread misinformation repeatedly about someone both privately and publicly, there are consequences to deal with. False and derogatory information directed to or about anyone causes untold pain and suffering mentally, emotionally and physically. **Misinformation can distort the perception of a certain group or person publicly which in turn can give rise to hateful and bigoted behavior by an unsuspecting public and greatly harm the business and ministry of those it is directed to.** The pastor of CBC (Pastor Nate) was told by the leader of HM that he was open to dialoguing and discussing any issues so that any misunderstandings can be resolved. But very sadly, the pastor of CBC told HM's leader that he already made up his mind and so it seemed obvious from his subsequent actions that he could care less about the truth or the consequences of his

words or actions based on misinformation and misinterpretation of the faith and beliefs of HM. Because of the actions of the CBC pastor, HM's leader has suffered emotional trauma.

Some legal terms that can be applicable for this situation are as follows:

Landlord-Tenant-Contractor Harassment

The landlord's employee, a clergy, used his position to engage in repeatedly making false, slanderous and derogatory comments and thus the intentional infliction of emotional distress on a tenant and or a contractor.

Offensive Conduct

Harassment can take many forms, from derogatory comments based on religion or a person's background to name-calling and slurs. Public shaming, belittling and ridicule are offensive and very harmful to the well-being of those it is directed to.

The other type of harassment is called "hostile work environment". In these cases, the harassment doesn't directly result in discipline or lost opportunities, but does make it difficult for the victim to work because of constant ridicule and belittling comments.

Slander

Oral defamation, in which someone tells one or more persons an untruth about another, which untruth will harm the reputation of the person defamed. Slander is a civil wrong (tort) and can be the basis of a lawsuit.

Defamation

Defamation of character occurs when someone makes a false statement about another person(s) that causes some type of harm. The statement must be published (meaning some third party must have heard it), false, and it must result in harm, usually to the reputation.

This information is being made aware to those concerned in the hopes that a corrective action will be taken to address the CBC pastor's offensive behavior.

Sincerely,

HopeSide Ministries, Inc.