

Citizens Electoral Council of Australia

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Independent Political Party

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Prime Minister Scott Morrison: Mr Caveat Emptor

Newly sworn-in Prime Minister Scott Morrison blames bank victims for bank crimes, saying they are “complicit” for being too “passive”. “Too often we, the customers, have also become complicit in allowing the deck to be stacked against us”, then-Treasurer Morrison said to the Australian British Chamber of Commerce on 3 August. “You can guarantee it—the more passive a customer is, the worse deal they are going to get.” Never mind that the Financial Services Royal Commission has exposed bank criminality, and whistle-blowers charge that the bank regulator APRA has been complicit in such crimes. Would Morrison also blame abused children for tempting paedophiles? Such a question is not to be scoffed at. Morrison’s mentor is Hillsong pastor Brian Houston, son of serial paedophile Frank Houston, who faced this charge in testimony from the 2013-17 Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Morrison’s long devotion to the strain of Pentecostalism that promotes “prosperity gospel” has clearly been an important influence in his defence of *caveat emptor* (Latin for “let the buyer beware”—if you are swindled it’s your own fault). In his maiden speech on 14 February 2008, Morrison spoke of how Brian Houston’s pastoral work had greatly assisted him. Houston, former National President of the Assemblies of God in Australia (renamed the Australian Christian Churches in April 2007), is the author of several books, including *You Need More Money: Discovering God’s Amazing Financial Plan for Your Life*.

The neoliberal economic model of Morrison and the prosperity gospel go hand in hand. Those embracing this perverse “faith” are blessed with financial success and physical well-being, but if you aren’t wealthy it must be your own fault, a lack of faith or some other shortcoming. Victim-blaming appears to be a disturbing theme at the Australian Christian Churches, as 2014 testimony from the Royal Commission into Institutional

Responses to Child Sexual Abuse reveals. Brian Houston’s father Frank was General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God in New Zealand before he moved to Sydney and founded the predecessor organisation of Hillsong, which under his son has become Australia’s biggest and richest mega-church. Frank Houston was a confessed paedophile, with victims in New Zealand and Australia. A witness identified as [AHA] testified to the royal commission on 7 October 2014 that Frank Houston abused him as a 7-year-old boy and for several years until he reached puberty. The victim reported explicit details of the sex crimes and the psychological trauma he has endured for decades. Most shockingly, he testified that Morrison’s mentor Brian Houston told him: “You know, it’s your fault all of this happened. You tempted my father.”

Morrison’s political career reflects his perverse Christianity and *caveat emptor*/victim-blaming philosophy. Jesus said, “Suffer little children to come unto me”, but as immigration minister Morrison implemented brutal policies towards desperate refugees and asylum seekers, which included locking up children behind barbed wire in detention centres indefinitely. He warned these refugees, victims of war and oppression, that they would spend a “very, very long time” in detention should they not return to the war-torn countries they had fled. In other words, their detention was their own fault. At this time asylum seekers from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia and other war-torn countries were detained on Manus and Nauru. But the Christian Morrison has never condemned the Anglo-American war party which invaded and bombed those countries, which forced people to flee in the first place.

While Jesus Christ took a whip and drove the money-changers out of the temple, Morrison defends banks and covers for the blatant crimes they have committed, and blames their victims under *caveat emptor*. Before getting into Parliament, he worked for the Property Council, a vested interest

in the speculation that has created a massive property bubble in Australia. Morrison denies there is a bubble, however, which allows the banks and property speculators to keep making money. In August 2016 he said the call for a banking Royal Commission was nothing more than a “populist whinge”, and voted 23 times against one. Meanwhile he worked with APRA and its controllers in the Bank for International Settlements to sneak through “bail-in” legislation to confiscate savings to prop up failing banks, the *Financial Sector Legislation Amendment (Crisis Resolution Powers and Other Measures) Act 2018* that became law on 5 March 2018. And it’s no surprise Morrison has done everything to oppose the Banking System Reform (Separation of Banks) Bill 2018, even to the point of making the farcical claim that “the Australian financial system already exhibits a high degree of structural separation”.

The story of how Scott Morrison first got into Parliament is one of dirty dealings and corruption. Former Labor MP Sam Dastyari describes it as the “biggest dirt campaign”. On FM radio KIIS 1065 on 28 August, Dastyari broke the story of his involvement: “I’ve seen a lot of dirty things in politics, but I’ve never had the Liberal party

come to us [Labor] and ask for dirt to fight one of their own internal opponents”, he said. “I would never underestimate Scott Morrison ... because I would never underestimate a guy who would turn to one of his political opponents to take out one of his own ... a guy who will do that will do anything.” In 2007 Morrison contested the Liberal Party pre-selection for the seat of Cook against Michael Towke, who defeated him easily 82 votes to 8. Then, to reverse the result, Morrison’s Liberal Party allies and Rupert Murdoch’s News Limited collaborated with a vicious smear campaign against Towke, who was ousted and Morrison became the candidate. “These stories sent my mother to hospital”, Towke told Paul Sheehan in the 26 October 2009 *Sydney Morning Herald*. “They demonised me. I wanted to confront them in court.” Towke did go to court and two years later cleared his name. But his assassin is now prime minister.

Mr Caveat Emptor has replaced Mr Goldman Sachs, Malcolm Turnbull, as prime minister, and appointed Mr Deutsche Bank, Josh Frydenberg, as Treasurer. It is time the Australian people cleaned out this political cesspool, and accepted nothing less than genuine morality in government that serves the welfare of all people.

Join the fight to separate the banks!

Although Scott Morrison is firmly on the side of the banks, and actively covered for the criminality being exposed by the royal commission, it is still possible to force him to introduce real financial reform to protect Australians from their predatory practices and dangerous speculation. The Australian people must demand it, so all politicians know their political survival depends on addressing this issue. The best way to do that is to join the CEC’s fight to break up the banks. The legislation is already in Parliament to do it—contact your MP today and demand they insist that the Banking System Reform (Separation of Banks) Bill 2018, which Bob Katter introduced on 25 June, be debated.

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