

## EDITORIAL

In the aftermath of the row in the Church of Scotland over inducting a homosexual minister, I had a look at some of the material produced by Christians who see homosexuality as an equally valid form of sexual expression to heterosexual marriage.



**Jonathan Hodgins**

What follows is not meant to be a critique of their position on homosexuality but rather an analysis of their methodology- how do they get to the position they are defending?

I found (at least) three troubling positions.

First, there is the low view of the Bible. If you've ever argued with a person about homosexuality by saying 'the Bible says it's wrong' you know that what will come back is a list of Levitical laws about seafood and fabrics, finishing with the devastating riposte, "I hope you don't eat prawns!" Leviticus and the Old Testament is the great battering ram for the pro-homosexual group. Ignoring the fact that there is plenty of material explaining very clearly why these different verses must be handled in different ways, what troubles me here is the glee with

which the Bible is held up for ridicule. These are meant to be professing Christians who presumably found the basis for their faith in the Bible, yet they handle the Bible in the most immature way and seem to think that by arguing that it is contradictory and old fashioned that this somehow makes an increasingly Biblical illiterate nation more inclined to take hold of the book and give their lives to upholding its message. Whether or not they mean to, they give the impression that the Bible is not relevant to the discussion. An impression summed up by Revd Lindsay Biddle, Chaplain of Affirmation Scotland who declared recently "If you don't like homosexuals, then get on with it — but don't use the Bible to justify opinions."

By extension the second worrying thing for me is that these folk have a low view of the Church. Their analysis of the historical church gives the impression that vagabonds and scoundrels led it. After a few minutes of reading I wonder if I would have less flak admitting I was a member of the BNP. Racist, sexist exploitative and thick, the church from its earliest days is condemned. Now there can be no doubt that there were times when Christians of the past acted foolishly, dishonestly and sometimes cruelly. More often people claiming to be Christian (without having any saving faith) behaved very badly, and sponsored some awful attitudes and actions. But let's not forget that the Church is

a group of sinners, and in its 2000 year history it would be surprising if groups within the worldwide Church had never made mistakes. Much more importantly, let's remember that the Church is the Bride of Christ. For all its faults, Jesus loves it and we should love it too. Criticising where necessary is fine- we've all done it, but dragging the name and reputation of Jesus' Church through the mud? Rather than me.

Finally there is the low view of Love. The most persuasive argument in the pro-homosexual arsenal seems to be that they are loving. They recognise the need of a person to follow his heart, and love whoever he is attracted to regardless of gender. By contrast those who promote heterosexual marriage as the only God honouring expression of sexuality are seen as repressive.

Put like this, the orthodox position looks horrible. But let me present things differently.

At this point I might mention my one year old son. He loves the toaster. His desire is to spend all his time with the toaster. When I sit him up on the worktop with me to butter him a sandwich he never turns to his left to play with the radio. It does not interest him. He only wants to turn to his right and put his hands in the toaster. What should I do? According to the logic of the pro- homosexual group I should let him carry on after all he is following his heart. In fact tolerance isn't enough. I should encourage him to see this is a valid choice- that

is the loving way. Of course when he burns his hands I will quite rightly find Social Services intervening and punishing me for my stupidity, because I was not loving but negligent. I knew that what he was doing was wrong and dangerous. The loving act was to point out clearly to my son the inevitable consequences and prevent him doing what he wanted to do. Pro-homosexual Christians will not do that and that is troubling. Of course the pro-homosexual lobby is not down on everything. Read the Statements of Faith, the Vision Statements and the Press Releases and you see a group with a high view of Society. Society has deemed this right and acceptable, and we must do so too. They have a high view of advancement, arguing that the Bible authors did not know what we do today.

But even here I am concerned, and maybe you should be too. The Christian pro-homosexual groups argue that they are serving a persecuted and silent minority. As Christians we instinctively feel drawn to such groups. But as you listen to arguments formed to support the fashionable opinions of the day while at the same time attacking the Church and the Bible, ask yourself who are they really serving?

The author referred to articles on [www.affirmationscotland.org.uk](http://www.affirmationscotland.org.uk) and [www.onekirk.org](http://www.onekirk.org) and subsequent links.

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# News from the Churches

## MID WALES & BORDER PRESBYTERY

Bethlehem Church, Talgarth is joining with the URC and Baptist churches in Talgarth.

They hope to meet for worship in the local Library and all three churches will close.

A Service took place at Bethlehem Church, Talgarth on 18th June when a Declaration of Intent was signed.

## SOUTH WEST WALES PRESBYTERY

**Please Note:** New Email for Revd Geoffrey Barrington:

[geoffrey.barrington@virginmedia.com](mailto:geoffrey.barrington@virginmedia.com)

## SOUTH EAST WALES PRESBYTERY

### Retreat Day at Llanover

Members of the SE Wales Presbytery recently gathered at Llanover Christian Centre for a day of Retreat, with a focus on strengthening our links with the community.

The Revd Linda Price, Chaplain of the Centre, led worship and Mrs

Angela Evans of Pentwynmawr led the Meditation. This emanated from her beautiful, thought-provoking photographs from around the world, set to music.

The speaker in the morning, Mr David Garrett of Mount Pleasant, Ebbw Vale, shared the questionnaire his church had distributed to 650 homes around the church, to assess

the needs of the community. In the afternoon, the Rev. Diane Notley shared the experiences of her three churches in developing links and community-based activities. Both speakers challenged and encouraged those present. They also gave pointers along the way.

Glynis Owen, Clerk of the Presbytery comments that it was

heart-warming to see the completion of the refurbishment of Llanover Christian Centre and Retreat, a project brought about by the inspiration, dedication and generosity of many in the former Gwent Presbytery. The tranquility of its rural position enhances a day of Retreat and fellowship.

Anyone wishing to make use of its beautiful facilities for worship, discussion and refreshment should contact the Rev. Linda Price, 10 Haulfryn, Y Fenni NP7 0LZ. The ►



South East Wales Presbytery Retreat Day