

SCOTTISH PROTESTANT VIEW

FREE

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NATIONAL CHURCH STANDS AT MORAL CROSSROADS



The 2006 General Assembly will be asked to receive a report from its Legal Questions Committee regarding civil partnerships. The report will argue that the reality of civil partnerships being entered into and fully recognised by law has led to a situation in the Kirk whereby ministers may be asked to perform a service of blessing for same-sex couples. As well as seeking approval for its report, the Committee will be asking the

Assembly to pass a declaration act which would grant freedom of conscience to ministers allowing them to participate or not without any censure one way or another. The Kirk has failed in the past to obey God's law rather than men's and if this report is

approved it will show that it is more interested in political correctness than God's truth. May I remind the national church that its founding fathers were men whose consciences were captive to the Word of God.

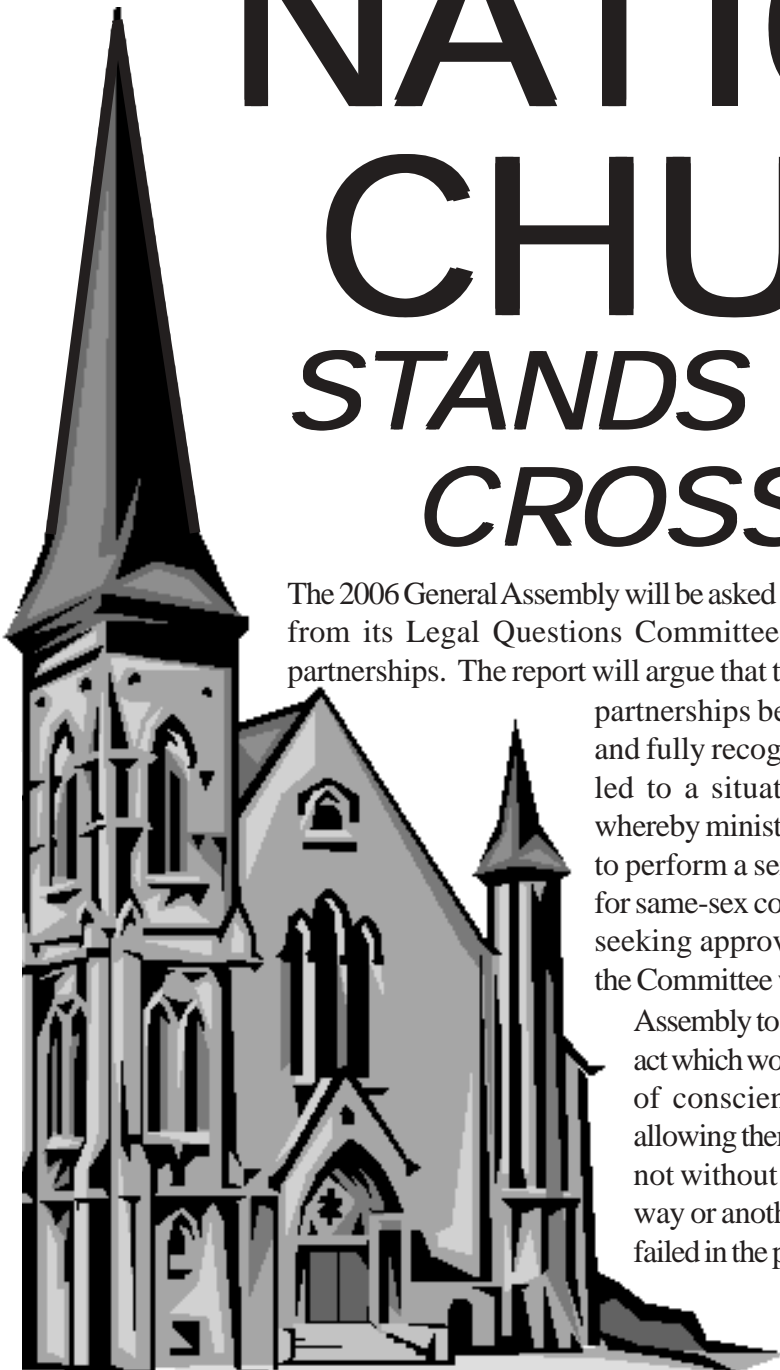
Mr Jack Bell

**Controversy as Church of Scotland
Ponder Blessing Same-Sex Unions**

See page 3

*O Church of Scotland
When will we see your like again
Who fought and died for
God's truth as Knox like men
And stood against them
Proud popery's priesthood
And send them Romeward
To think again.*

Pastor Jack Glass



Anti-Christian film 'The Beast' to be released on 06 06 06

The makers of a virulently anti-Christian film *The Beast* have deliberately chosen to release it on 6th June 2006 (06 06 06).

The film is being made in the US by VIVID films, and has a powerfully anti-Christian plot line. A publicity blurb claims that there is 'increasing historical proof that Christ never existed,' a theory which they add is 'gaining popularity'.

The plot involves a fundamentalist Christian pastor who disappears after he 'stumbles across incontrovertible factual evidence that Christ never existed'. In searching for him, the film shows his daughter Danielle 'struggling with her own need to believe that Christ existed' and also combating 'a band of fundamentalist Christians who will stop at nothing to suppress the truth'. In the film, they are portrayed as 'trying to cover up Christianity's best kept secret'.

HIDDEN

The film, it is said by its makers, is founded on 'factual material normally hidden from public view by the efforts of Bible believing Christians'. It adds, conveniently ignoring the historical testimony of

Josephus, Tacitus, Suetonius, Phlegon and many other historians and writers, that 'there is no non-Christian confirmation that Jesus Christ ever existed'.

The cast and film crew have been 'legally sworn to secrecy' about other aspects of the film, which will be released on Tuesday 6th June in the US and will then come to Britain. See *The Beast*, (website www.thebeastmovie.com).

The website has a popular form for public comment which has been swamped by the most vile abusive references to Christ and to Christians. However, one Christian, Austin Smith, wrote in to say: "This website and movie is nothing but a work of Satan. The release date is 6/6/06 and I know it was put like that on purpose. But it may work against you, considering that 666 is the devil's number. It's no surprise to me that Satan himself inspired this movie to lie and deceive others. Whoever made this movie is my enemy. But I love them all the same because I learned to love my enemies".

The film's Director, Brian Flemming's previous work has been called 'jaggedly imaginative' by the *New York Times*, 'a

parallel universe' by the BBC and 'immensely satisfying' by *USA Today*. His films are said to have "a unique ability to spark cult like devotion in his fans". He wrote and produced a popular musical, *Bat Boy*, featuring a creature that was half bat and half man. That has since been staged thousands of times throughout the world, in several languages. The musical has been called 'a self contained religion', and does indeed have thousands of cult adherents. He followed this up with a film about the murder of Bill Gates, the founder of the computer firm Microsoft. Gates had said through a spokesman: "I am very disappointed that a movie maker would do something like this".

The Beast was carefully timed so that it took exactly 666 days to make. One prominent Wiccan high priestess in the US recently said: "Finally, a film that proves Jesus Christ never existed. I can't wait".

"...the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" Rev. 12:12

British Church Newspaper 14.04.06

Protestant View

Reformed Churches Denying Their Creed

Speaking recently to leaders of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the Pope said, "When Christian churches and communities are willing to admit that their members may have offended or misrepresented the teachings of others, they make important contributions to Christian unity". He was referring, says the report, to pronouncements by the Presbyterian Church, USA, the Christian Reformed Church in North America, and others, that their sixteenth century creedal statements about Roman Catholicism do not reflect their current understandings. For example, the 2004 synod of the Christian Reformed Church declared as inaccurate the statement of the Heidelberg Catechism that the Mass "is basically nothing but a denial of the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ and a condemnable idolatry".

Many Reformed churches and their ministers have long ago moved away from their confessional statement that the Pope "is that Anti-christ, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalts himself, in the Church, against Christ and all that is called God". A minister of the Free Church of Scotland stated on its website in 1999 that 75% of ministers in his Church do not accept that the Pope is the Anti-christ. The fact that the President of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches spoke to the Pope about "much to be done to move beyond our past condemnations of one another

... and to come together at the table of our Lord" indicates that he and his fellow leaders are far from Reformed.

May we never lose sight of the scriptural statements of our creed that the Roman pontiff, as head of the papacy, is indeed the Antichrist, and that the mass is "most abominably injurious to Christ's one, only sacrifice, the alone propitiation for all the sins of His elect" (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, 29:2). "Hold fast the form of sound words" (2 Tim 1:13). *NMR*

*The Free Presbyterian Magazine March 2006
Faith and Freedom March 2006*

Protesters picket Jerry Springer show CHRISTIAN protesters picketed the controversial Jerry Springer the Opera musical when it opened in Edinburgh last night.

Around 40 angry churchgoers one dressed as a blood stained Christ carrying a wooden cross launched the protest at Edinburgh's Festival Theatre last night.

The musical, featuring tap-dancing KKK members and a camp Jesus, was slammed as anti-Christian by the protesters, who had travelled from as far away as St Andrews and Glasgow.

Paul James Griffiths, a 43-year-old script writer from the West End, dressed as Christ, said: "This is my artistic response to something where I feel people have pushed the boundaries too far."

Edinburgh Evening News 25.4.06

Controversy as Church of Scotland Ponder Blessing Same-Sex Unions

Evangelicals in the Church of Scotland have voiced concern following the publication of a Kirk report on the implications of the civil partnership laws which is paving the way for openly homosexual ministers to enter into such unions and continue to serve in the Church.

Forward Together, which has more than 300 members, have called for the proposals laid down in the report to be debated “calmly and sensitively” when they are put to the General Assembly by its Legal Questions Committee in May.

The controversial report asks that Kirk members refrain from seeking discipline by the Church against ministers who might conduct religious services marking a civil partnership, while also ensuring that no minister shall be compelled to conduct such a service against his or her conscience.

In a press statement, Forward Together said, “it considers that this raises wider matters for the Church than the strictly legal questions arising from the law passed last year by the Scottish Parliament.”

The new law makes clear that a civil partnership is not to be equated with marriage. “The group maintains that the Church should be equally careful not to confuse what the legislation has deliberately kept separate,” read the Forward Together statement.

Many church members have significant and genuine concerns at ministers being allowed to conduct religious ceremonies to mark a civil partnership.

Rev. Gordon Kennedy, FT Chairman, said: “There is a danger of putting the cart before the horse here. Before addressing the legal points about pension

rights for ministers’ civil partners, the Church must first reach a clear view concerning such relationships in the ordained ministry.”

He continued: “The biblical and theological questions about human sexuality have been well aired in the past, but the General Assembly has never passed a ‘deliverance’ [i.e. a motion] affirming homosexual practice as a valid option for the Christian, or for the ordained ministry.”

“Many church members have significant and genuine concerns at ministers being allowed to conduct religious ceremonies to mark a civil partnership. There is likely to be particular concern at the prospect of civil partners living in manses in the future.”

“We welcome the opportunity at the coming Assembly to debate these issues calmly and sensitively, and with due respect for the strength of views held on both sides of the debate.

“But the Church should be in no doubt that the proposals, if adopted, would open the way for a significant departure from the Bible’s teaching and from historic Christian practice. We believe that such a move would cause dismay to the great majority of church members, and also to many of our ecumenical partner churches.”

Christian Today

Editorial Comment

I can well understand the concern of ‘Forward Together’ in the regard to the possibility of further departure from the Word of God in their church but I want to remind them of Paul’s words in

Ephesians 5:8-11 “You were once darkness but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light, proving what is acceptable to the Lord and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

The exposure and the reproof has to come from the outside of the apostacy. If ‘Forward Today’ were to leave the national church they could take up a biblical position which God would bless.



Where is the church of John Knox and the martyrs and their evangelical successors?

Pastor Jack Glass

FREEDOM OF WORSHIP AT HOME AND ABROAD

Christians today generally believe in freedom of worship. That was not always the case, as we know, and that freedom is a legacy of the Reformation. Its necessity and implications took some time to be realised, and the established churches were slow to accept it. It means allowing people of whose beliefs and practices you may strongly disapprove, to worship as they wish.

There are limits however. Human sacrifice and animal sacrifice are not permitted, nor (in the UK) is the use of illegal drugs in worship.

But any suggestion of government interference with freedom of worship, including the right to set up special buildings, is today regarded by Christians with hostility. Even the suggestion that the war on terror required the government to be able to close certain mosques was resisted last year. It was seen as the thin end of a wedge that could be used against Christian nonconformists at a later time.

We are daily reminded that Christians in other countries, especially Moslem ones, enjoy no such freedom. In one issue of a Christian newspaper recently, I counted four religions in whose lands Christians were being oppressed.

Undoubtedly the main problem is Islam, which is international and expansionist. Whatever persecution orthodox Jews do in Israel, Buddhists in Sri Lanka, or Hindus in India, this has limited geographical effect.

Islamic persecution radiates out from Saudi Arabia. On 3 July 2000, a fatwa was issued by the Permanent Council for Scholarly Research and Religious Legal Judgment I (a government body) forbidding the construction of non Muslim houses of worship in Muslim countries. In the Arabian peninsula itself, it forbade non Muslims to receive Saudi citizenship or buy property.

Attempts to fully implement this are ongoing, not least in the supposedly more liberal Gulf countries. The recent case of Abdul Rahman in Afghanistan has illustrated the continuing attempts to kill converts from Islam throughout the world.

UK responses to Islamic penetration are essentially passive. It is not unknown for liberal Christian groups to facilitate the gaining of former church premises by Moslems, and to celebrate it. In two

generations, UK mosques have risen to over 1000.

Many of these have links to overseas Moslems. In June 2004, for example, the East London Mosque opened a community centre which could hold 10,000 worshippers.

The European Development Fund and British public bodies contributed to the cost. A Home Office minister attended the ceremony, where Sheikh Abdur Rahman al Sudais, Iman of the Ka'ba at Mecca, spoke.

It was the usual sentiments - building communities, true image of Islam, misconceptions, cohesion. But in Arabic to audiences at home, very different views on Christians and Jews are expressed, the views of the Saudi religious establishment.

For many years, Saudi Arabia has used its oil wealth to promote its brand of Islam in the West. The current high price of oil enables Islamic missionary work to be bankrolled more than ever.

There have been hopes that Islam might be changed, by democracy for example. But the more free elections are, the more Islamic countries vote for persecution

At the time of writing, Shia death squads are killing suspected homosexuals in recently liberated Iraq, despite its constitution and its free elections. Ayatollah Sistani has recently announced on his web site in a fatwa that homosexuals are to be killed in the worst, most severe form of killing, as clear an encouragement to Islamic sadism as they could wish for.

Attempts to create "Christian free" villages, even in "British-controlled" Southern Iraq are spreading. Bahais, Jews, Ahmaddaya Moslems, barbers the enemy list is every growing. Iraqi Christians, like Palestinian Christians, are being exterminated. Kurds too, some of whom owe their lives to the no fly zones created at the behest of John Major in the early 1990s, are joining in the persecution of Christians.

To return to the UK, we believe in freedom of worship. But we have centres being established here which are agencies for those who do not believe in such freedom. Sometimes we even support this process with taxpayer money.

We should like to continue freedom of

worship, but I suggest there should be some restriction on attempts by overseas countries, which do not have freedom of religion, to establish centres here. In the Cold War we took vigorous steps to try to prevent the Soviet Union establishing front organisations here which would work on their behalf against freedom. It was a long and dangerous struggle.

The problem with what is sometimes called Islamo fascism is if anything more dangerous. One Islamic country, Pakistan, already has nuclear weapons and its precariously based military dictator is a fragile bulwark against a full release of Islamic fury.

The British government, fatally entrapped in defence contracts with Saudi Arabia, dare not fight back even if its own innocent nationals are arrested and tortured there. The UK established churches are well, you can complete that sentence in any number of disturbing ways, but parallels with the officially controlled Orthodox Church in the Soviet Union daily become more reasonable.

But I suggest Christians, should espouse a policy that countries and religions which do not support religious freedom should not be allowed to establish centres and places of worship here in the UK. The long term object of this policy would be to encourage other countries to allow religious freedom, not to deny such freedom to any religious believer here.

Despite censorship, people in Moslem countries do follow developments in the West.

A campaign to halt and reverse religious activity in the West, where it is linked with suppression of religious freedom in the originating country would be noticed - and might lead to the extension of freedom in those countries.

This would be a dangerous campaign. The murderous activities of some religious groups are one of the main reasons why their activity here needs to be curtailed.

The alternative of allowing the spread of fascist religious ideology to continue is a grim one. Acquiescence and appeasement - the government's policy - do not lead to a quiet life. They lead to destruction.

Correspondant for English Churchmen

Why the Big Yin can't wait to grow old disgracefully

By Kizzy Taylor

BILLY Connolly yesterday revealed his plans for the latter years of his life - he wants to 'grow old disgracefully' and be 'a complete nuisance'.

And the Big Yin claimed he will spend his time annoying church leaders, modern art lovers and Scottish politicians - especially nationalists.

The 63-year-old comedy legend said it was his dream to poke fun at the establishment like his hero, the late Goons star Spike Milligan.

Connolly made his comments as he prepared to embark on a month long series of one man shows in New York.

With the Glasgow born comic approaching retirement age, he revealed that he simply can't afford to give up working.

He said: 'People ask me why I'm still doing it. Why don't you give it up when you get to a number?'

'But the trouble is that you spend the money. I spend an awful lot of money living this funny lifestyle because it makes me very happy and it makes my family all jolly and happy, so I'll just keep on doing it until I die.'

'I just want to keep on honing the thing that I have got and make it better and better. That's the only ambition I feel.'

'I just want to be very good at what I do - keep the standard very high and stay dangerous.'

And Connolly said he intends to keep his sense of danger intact

by annoying as many people as possible.

Writing on his own website, he claimed: I hope to grow old disgracefully. I'd like to be a complete nuisance, like Spike Milligan, a great hero of mine.

'I would like to shout at church, "Rubbish! Explain!"'

'I would like to be in a public gallery of modern art shouting, "Tosh, nonsense. Get a job."'

'I'd like to go and show up those Scottish parliament types. I like to shout at nationalist types whenever I can.'

'I have a deep loathing of nationalists. I don't like patriots or religious weirdos.'

The former shipyard welder added: 'I would like to stand behind the NHS and all these other miracles like the Welfare State. Stand beside the things I truly believe in.'

Connolly is planning to buy a ten room £1.35million mansion next to Candacraig House, the Aberdeenshire estate he has owned for eight years.

Daily Mail 13.04.06



Connolly: 'Complete nuisance'

Pastor Jack Glass confronts Billy Connolly



FLASHBACK TO 1994 BILLY PACKS THEM IN But Pastor Jack Glass stays outside to protest

BILLY Connolly was in Kilmarnock on Monday night for the first time in five years when he appeared before a capacity audience of 900 in the Grand Hall.

Also in Kilmarnock on the night was Pastor Jack Glass and around 30 of his supporters who were protesting over Connolly's skit of The Crucifixion which he has used in the past in his act.

Said the Pastor. "If it's argued that he hasn't done this particular item for a number of years then I would have to reply that it's still circulating on video."

He said that many of the protesters came from the Kilmarnock area but some had also travelled from other parts of Ayrshire and from Glasgow.

Pastor Glass also claimed that Connolly had abandoned his Socialist principles by not having concessionary tickets on sale for the show, thereby denying senior citizens, for example, a cheaper admission.

"Not that I'm advocating that pensioners should go and watch him," he added.

Certainly there was no problem in selling the 900 tickets. Within less than 24 hours of the advert appearing in the Standard, the show had sold out.

One man who attended the show said that it had been a terrific night and said that Connolly had performed superbly well during his two hours on stage.

"As soon as Connolly heard about Pastor Glass and the demonstrators outside he turned it to his advantage," he said.

Local cartoonist Malky McCormick, who has featured the Pastor in his cartoons over the years, was one of those who attended the show on Monday. He also went back-stage to meet up with his old mate Connolly when the show was over.

Said Malky: "It was an excellent performance, vintage Connolly, and it was smashing to see him again after such a long time."

Swerve

And Pastor Glass? "I gave him a quick body swerve when I arrived," said Malky "The last time I went to see Billy in Kilmarnock Pastor Glass collared me, but I managed to avoid him this time".

There was one heart stopping moment during the show when the back-drop suspended on a rail behind Billy dropped by about a foot. The noise and sudden movement startled him but it didn't put him off his stride.

A film crew recording a TV documentary about Connolly accompanied him during his visit to Kilmarnock.

The Kilmarnock Standard 4.3.94

Putting asunder

by Richard Bennett

Last month I wrote about the control that the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) seeks to exercise over marriage. One example is their claim to have the power to annul marriages ‘putting asunder’ what God has joined together. Let us look at this more closely.

Human nature being what it is, it is sadly necessary for the State to provide a legal framework for divorce. It is quite a different matter, however, for a church to legislate for and administer divorce - in direct disobedience to Christ’s teaching on marriage.

Of course, the RCC does not call it divorce but ‘annulment’. In practice, however, there is little difference (except that annulment pretends that the broken marriage never happened!).

Grounds for annulment

One of the chief grounds for annulment is a ‘diriment impediment’. This means an obstacle that is so detrimental as to nullify a marriage automatically. Examples are the lack of consent of either party or a deficiency in the actual procedure of the ceremony or ‘form of marriage’ (which Rome requires to be performed before a RC priest and two witnesses).

However, this is another case of making laws and then suspending them conditionally so as to maintain control over lives and families. Marriages declared null because of the law of ‘diriment impediments’ can be validated retrospectively by a decree of ‘radical sanation’.

RCC canon law states: ‘The radical sanation of an invalid marriage is its convalidation without the renewal of consent, which is granted by the competent authority and entails the dispensation from an impediment, if there is one, and from

canonical form, if it was not observed, and the retroactivity of canonical effects’ (Canon 1161).

Like Ali Baba’s *open sesame* - magical words that opened the treasure cave in the children’s story - the Vatican’s intricate command structure is used to retroactively validate a marriage that their own rules had declared null and void!

Such making and unmaking of marriages contravenes the law of marriage that God himself laid down for all Adam’s posterity saying, ‘therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife and they shall be one flesh’ (Matthew 19:5). God’s law cannot be manipulated and stage managed by the decrees of any system.

Making marriages

The making and the unmaking of marriage is claimed to be within the apostolic power of the RCC, which exercises such power even if both parties know nothing of what is being done.

Thus Rome proclaims, ‘A sanation can be granted validly even when one or both of the parties are unaware of it; but it is not to be granted except for serious reason’ (Canon 1164). This mysterious power to heal a marriage that never existed is purportedly held in the heart of Rome herself, ‘The Apostolic See can grant a radical sanation’ (Canon 1165).

But marriage cannot be made valid at the command of Rome. The Lord Christ Jesus said ‘*a man [shall] leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife*’. This alone is how a marriage becomes valid before God.

To decree that celibate prelates in Rome can make a marriage, even though the parties themselves do not know about it, is authoritarianism gone wild.

This bizarre power is claimed because Rome considers marriage to be a sacrament. It is therefore within her power to make or break marriages according to her own will and purposes.

Unmaking marriages

The unmaking of marriages is sometimes done by what is called ‘interior consent’ the consent that either the man or woman did or did not give from the beginning. This can be used either to make or break a marriage, but it is the latter that concerns us here.

Catholic annulments are big business. A web site states, ‘The statistics are interesting. In 1968 there were in the US a total of 338 annulments. In 1992 there were no less than 59,030, that is 175 times as many. Another interesting figure is that the total number of annulments in the Catholic Church worldwide in 1992 was 76,286, which means that no less than 75% of all annulments were from the US, that is, from a little over 5% of the world’s Catholic population.

Moreover, not only do one in two Catholic marriages in the States end up with a divorce, but one in five is officially annulled, 90% of the demands for annulment being successful’.

This casual and arrogant manner of dealing with marriage and the dissolution of marriage is not surprising. Like Indulgences, the whole annulment industry of the Roman Catholic Church, from the propounding of the laws to the ‘sale’ of the desired object is in total violation of Scripture.

The sanctity of marriage

The incarnate Son of God spoke clearly of the dignity and sanctity of marriage. When asked about it, he went back to the narrative in Genesis; ‘Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female and said, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh”?’ (Matthew 19:43).

Jesus’ endorsement of the sanctity of marriage was simply a re-statement of the original revelation given by God. Marriage is a creation ordinance. It is not like baptism and the Lord’s Supper, which are ordinances

for believers only. Marriage is from the beginning and comes under the jurisdiction of the civil state as instituted by God.

For Christians, the laws regarding marriage are clearly laid out in the Bible. A Christian pastor can counsel a couple regarding their marriage according to these biblical norms - but he is never to take jurisdiction over their marriage to make it or break it.

The Lord Jesus Christ is abundantly clear when he states that what God has joined together, no man should put asunder. The only biblical grounds for divorce are what the Lord himself allows in the case of sexual unfaithfulness and what the apostle Paul allows in the case of desertion of a believer by an unbelieving spouse.

Obscure terminology

Rome says she upholds the sanctity of marriage, but she allows marriages to be declared null and void based on a terminology of her own making. For example, 'nullity' (the decree that a marriage is null and void) when granted by Rome's ecclesial courts is not just a simple statement. It allows for different interpretations.

Thus Canon 1684 states, 'After the sentence which first declared the nullity of the marriage has been confirmed at the appellate grade either by a decree or by a second sentence, the persons whose marriage has been declared null can contract a new marriage as soon as the decree or second sentence has been communicated to them unless a prohibition attached to the sentence or decree or established by the local ordinary [the bishop] has forbidden this'.

Thus the very decree that a marriage is null and void is muddled by Catholic terminology. It requires trained Catholic lawyers to lead one through the labyrinth of canon law!

Using this smokescreen, papal Rome has granted hundreds of thousands of annulments and allowed remarriage many of which unions are, before the Lord and his Word, nothing more than officially blessed adultery.

Conclusion

The extravagant demands of Roman Catholic law impinge on God given freedoms. Marriage is the very basis of society, but for millions of Catholics it is

being controlled and manipulated by Rome. This applies not only to Catholics but also to those who become ensnared by canon law by marrying Catholics.

If Catholicism is to be addressed seriously, this violation of marriage must be dealt with scripturally, since it stands at the very heart and structure of civil society as given by God.

It is impossible to be a Bible-believing Christian - accepting both the inspiration and authority of the Bible - and accept Roman Catholicism which forthrightly rejects that authority, as their laws on marriage show.

It is no surprise that the same Church of Rome officially declares, 'the church has the innate and proper right to coerce offending members of the Christian faithful with penal sanctions' (Canon 1311).

Jesus said, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest'. Compare the oppressive laws of the Vatican with the requirements of Christ

Jesus the Lord, and see how true it is that his yoke is easy and his burden is light.

Jesus Christ will give assured rest to every weary soul that comes to him: rest from the terror of sin, rest from the legalism that increases the power of sin, and most of all, rest in the Lord God.

Footnote and reference

This topic is close to Richard Bennett's heart. As a Catholic priest, he celebrated the weddings of over 1000 couples. It was a great distress to him over 21 years of ministry to know that a large percentage of the marriages he had performed eventually failed. Since his salvation through God's grace alone, and formally leaving the Roman Catholic Church, he has founded an evangelistic ministry (visit www.bereanbeacon.org).

1. www.ssp.org/Canonical_Commission/august_1995_ltr.htm

CH SPURGEON and FREE-WILL

People talk about free-will Christians, and tell us of persons being saved and coming to God of their own free will. It is a very curious thing, but though I have heard a great many free will sermons, I have never heard any free will prayers. I have heard Arminianism in preaching and talking, but I have never heard any Arminian praying. In fact, I do not think there can be any prayer of that sort; it is a style that does not suit prayer. The theory may look very nice in argument, and sound very proper in discourse, though we somewhat differ from it; but for practical purposes it is useless. The language will not suit us in prayer, and this alone would be sufficient reason to condemn it. If a man cannot pray in the spirit of his own convictions, it shows they are a delusion from beginning to end; for if they were true, he could pray in that language as well as in any other. Blessed be God, the doctrines of grace are as good to pray with as to preach with! We do not find ourselves out of order in any act of worship when once we have the old fundamental doctrines of the blessed gospel of grace.

Persons talk about free-will Christians coming back to Jesus of themselves. I intend to believe them when they find me a free will sheep that has come back of itself; when they have discovered some sheep, after it has gone from its fold, stand bleating at its master's door, asking to be taken in again. You will not find such a sheep, and you will not find a free will Christian; for they will all confess, if you thoroughly probe the matter, that it was grace, and grace alone that restored their souls.

C. H. SPURGEON
Faith and Freedom 2006



Unholy row as Scots magicians turn Bible miracles into tricks

By Maureen Culley

TWO controversial Scots magicians have sparked outrage by replicating a series of Biblical miracles.

As Christians celebrate Easter, the pair have been condemned by religious groups for the show, entitled *Tricks From The Bible*. In it, Stuart MacLeod, 25, and Barry Jones, 23, both from Aberdeenshire, will stage a range of miracles, from the creation of the world, Lot's wife turning to a pillar of salt, getting water from a stone and turning staffs into snakes.

In a similar Channel 4 show last Christmas, called *The Magic of Jesus*, they performed eight New Testament miracles, including the recreation of the Virgin birth, the raising of the dead and walking on water.

Yesterday Bishop Michael Reid, founder of TV watchdog the Christian Congress for

Traditional Values, attacked them for mocking the Bible.

He said: 'These tricksters intend to rubbish the Bible for the sake of controversy.

'Magicians have always tried to reproduce God's miracles. Pharaoh had his court magicians attempt to outdo Moses, but in the end the power of God consumed their paltry efforts. Christians have a certainty in the miraculous power of God it is a reality to us. And the stunts performed by these two illusionists are meaningless in the lives of people with real needs.'

Gordon Macdonald, of the umbrella group Christian Action Research and Education, added: 'Magic is illusion but in scripture, we're talking about miracles - different things altogether.

'They have seen a chance to market

themselves around this time of year.'

But the two magicians claim they are not out to discredit the Bible. Jones said: 'Jesus couldn't have been a fraud. The modern technology we use in our tricks wouldn't have been around 2,000 years ago.'

Macleod, who specialised in religion as part of his philosophy degree at Aberdeen University, said: 'I know it's probably going to get us more criticism. But we're not knocking the Bible.'

The duo met five years ago and moved to London two years ago when they made their TV debut on Channel 4. Jones added: 'Our style of magic won't appeal to everyone. Magicians typically don't like us. They don't really like progress.'

Tricks From The Bible is due to be shown on E4 next month and on Channel 4 in June.

Daily Mail 14.04.06

Tolerance, Freedom, and Law

Oliver Cromwell is not everyone's hero. The mere mention of his name can rouse some people to anger even three and a half centuries after his death. Yet, like it or not, he was way ahead of his time in his understanding and exercise of toleration. We are reminded of this by the three hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the readmission of Jews to this country in 1656.

Since 1290 they had been legally excluded. Under Cromwell's rule that ban was lifted. Some might say that his motivation was economic. Others would recognise spiritual reasons. Speaking in the Council in 1655 he said, "Since there was a promise of their conversion, means must be used to that end, which was the preaching of the gospel, and that could not be done unless they were permitted to dwell where the gospel was preached".



Oliver Cromwell

Whatever our attitude may be towards the Lord Protector we can learn a lot from him and his times about our present circumstances. The mid-seventeenth century saw political and religious tensions that had been increasing for decades finally break out in civil war. Among the problems that aroused such bitter antagonism were the nature of government, and the form the Protestant Church should take. The latter question was further complicated by the emergence of different groupings, including some of an extremist nature. Issues concerning toleration, freedom, and law had to be dealt with, just

as they concern us today.

Church and State, before the Civil War, were bound together in a way that most people probably took for granted. The Stuart understanding of this was best summarised in the statement of James I, "No bishop, no king". That the Church of England could exist in any other form was unthinkable, nor could separate religious groupings be tolerated as independent entities.

With the Civil War, the execution of Charles I, and Puritan hostility to the Church of England in its then form, the nature of the religious establishment became an issue of supreme importance. The majority party in Parliament was Presbyterian in its convictions and therefore believed that this should provide the new establishment. Rome was out. Anglicanism was out. Independency in its differing forms was out as well. A new authoritarianism was in control. John Milton warned, "New Presbyter is but old Priest writ large" (*On the New Forcers of Conscience under the Long Parliament*).

Cromwell believed, though, that no one form of Christian understanding of Scripture had a right to exclusive domination in the state. He aimed at the broadest possible comprehension within the limits of the Protestant understanding of the gospel. At the same time, restrictions had to be imposed on those elements that could be politically subversive. Hence Romanism and Anglicanism were not officially included within the bounds of toleration.

The end of the Commonwealth saw the restoration of King Charles II and Anglicanism. The next three decades were hard for nonconformists, and the threat of Roman resurgence hung over the country despite the legal protections against it. Only the coming of William and Mary improved the situation, though without providing all the liberties to which we have become accustomed today.

Extract from Protestant Truth May-June 2006

PM nails his colours to Republican mast.

Blair threatens Ulster with Joint Authority

On Thursday 6th April Tony Blair and Bertie Ahern, accompanied by their various lieutenants, arrived at the Navan Centre in Armagh, the site of Navan Fort, the ancient seat of the Kings of Ulster. They came to deliver an ultimatum to the Province - do a deal on devolved government by November 24th or we will take over!

In their statement they said they were already "beginning detailed work on British Irish partnership arrangements" should their devolution plans fail. They hope their jack boot tactics will frighten Unionists, who would view joint authority as a doomsday scenario, into government with Sinn Fein/IRA mafia. The Assembly is now due to return to Stormont on 15th May.

The Governments see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil, approach to the Provos is political expediency and moral cowardice at its very worst. Even the brutal murder of spy Denis Donaldson, less than two days before the Armagh event was coldly brushed aside by Mr Blair as the probable work of dissident Republicans attempting to upset the 'peace process'. Admittedly no one knows who killed the British spy an ex Sinn Fein party official at his lonely farm house in Co. Donegal, but the finger of suspicion points as much at the Provisional IRA as anyone else. Doubtless, since Mr.

Donaldson's cover was blown. Sinn Fein have been keeping tabs on him, and this could be the most recent example of Mo Mowlam callously called paramilitary 'housekeeping'.

The British and Irish Governments are unashamedly singing from the same hymn sheet as Sinn Fein/IRA, who have been calling on Blair and Ahern to 'take stewardship of the peace process' and impose their will upon Unionists if there is a failure to set up a governing Executive at Stormont. Mr. Blair's talk then of 'a step change in advancing North-South co operation' if the deadline is passed is music to the ears of Pan Nationalists, who will doubtless be further pleased by the decision to put through emergency legislation to enshrine the diktat in law.

We were always told that the Belfast Agreement stood or fell in its entirety. There could be no cherry picking. If Strand I which deals with the Assembly and Executive at Stormont fails, then so should the rest of the Agreement, and a new and more sensible democratic way ahead be found. However the Governments are refusing to go down that road. They are determined, in the event of the failure of the Stormont Institutions, to implement under their Plan B (joint

authority) as much as they can of the rest of the Agreement, especially, the North South arrangements, so prized by Nationalists and Republicans.

The British Government - aided and abetted by a foreign power, is playing a dangerous game with democracy within the Kingdom, and in threatening to by pass elected representatives of the people and impose its 'rigid will' (Tony's words) on Ulster to please a rebellious minority, is running the risk of serious confrontation with the loyal majority.

We would urge readers to pray for this Province and in particular for Dr Paisley and his party that they may have wisdom as they lead Unionism at this difficult time.

Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies. Psalm 27:11.

British Church Newspaper
14.04.06



Bertie Ahern and Tony Blair

Christianity will die out in 40 years

Stark warning to churches

By Maureen Culley

CHRISTIANITY will be extinct in Scotland in 40 years unless drastic action is taken, experts warn this Easter.

On the day Christians remember Christ's death, a shocking new programme will reveal that some children do not even know who Jesus was.

With only one in ten attending church regularly, church leaders discuss their fears that Christianity is in crisis in STV's Mass Exodus tonight.

The Moderator of the Church of Scotland even expresses a need for the country to have 'a theological kick up the backside'.

The Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church are suffering a decline in numbers, while minority faiths are on the up.

In the programme, leading religious figures single out materialism as the main factor drawing people's attention away from

worship.

They are advised to look for inspiration to America, where more than 60 per cent of people go to church.

Kirk Moderator, the Rt Rev David Lacey, said: 'People want to go to rugby sevens, take their children to swimming galas, want to go shopping to the new temples of consumerism on a Sunday morning rather than come to church.'

Cardinal Keith O'Brien, head of the Catholic Church in Scotland, said: 'When I was a young man, the church was the centre of our society, our community, our culture. We still need good, strong and effective Christian leaders in each and every one of our churches to proclaim the Christian message.'

The programme features Glasgow-born Pastor Alistair Begg, 53, who left Hamilton Baptist Church 23 years ago for a non denominational church in Cleveland, Ohio.

He preaches to 22,000 people a week and has millions of listeners on his daily coast to coast radio show Truth For Life - making him the envy of his Scottish counterparts.

Church of Scotland expert Harry Reid said: 'There were boom years in the 1950s and 1960s, but everyone got a bit complacent.'

'Some of the saddest people I know in Scotland are the school chaplains because they're so depressed by the lack of an elementary knowledge of Christianity in so many of the pupils.

'They have some children who don't even know who Jesus Christ was, know nothing about the basic tenets of Christianity. These things would have been given a generation ago.

'I can't see any point in being Christian if you don't have hope, but it is a crisis. I would love to have the American energy and commitment. Although some of the U.S. preachers might not be to our taste, we're in no position to sneer too much.'

m.culley@dailymail.co.uk
Daily Mail 13.04.06

Seven questions

1. What would you do if your church were closed by the authorities and you were prevented from meeting to worship?
2. How would you cope if possession of a Bible became illegal?
3. If your pastor were imprisoned for preaching the gospel would you visit him in jail?
4. If evangelism were prohibited would it make any difference to your church?
5. How would you react if your children were indoctrinated with another religion at school and questioned on what they are taught at home?
6. What would you say if the police came to your home asking questions about your fellow church members?
7. If Christian literature were banned would you miss it?

You may think these questions are at best theoretical and at worst pointless. But for many believers they reflect reality. See the article below

Today, in various lands, churches are being closed and their pastors imprisoned. The children of Christian homes are targeted, believers are interrogated and houses are searched for prohibited literature.

Today, in parts of the world, Christians will be unable to find

work because they are social outcasts. They will be physically attacked because a Danish newspaper printed some cartoons. A knock on the door, a car slowing down outside their home and strangers in the street will put them in fear.

Yet, amazingly, the fires of faith burn brightest among our persecuted brethren. Faced with a choice between peace and persecution they choose, like Moses of old, 'to suffer affliction with the people of God' rather than deny their Lord. Their zeal for Christ rebukes the careless ease of our own discipleship.

That is why we all should ponder the seven questions posed above.

A time of blessing?

Severe religious persecution may never arise for British readers, though the experience of Mr and Mrs Roberts reported on this page gives pause for thought. But it is well to remember that the freedoms we take for granted today were hard won and dearly purchased.

Evangelical Times April 2006

Stealing freedom



Joe and Helen Roberts the Christian couple interrogated by police for complaining about their local council's 'gay rights' policy (*ET* February) were featured in a Channel 4 television documentary at the end of February. The *Dispatches* programme, called 'Stealing your freedom' was presented by political commentator Peter Hitchens.

The programme alleged that police work is becoming increasingly politically motivated more concerned with people's views and opinions and less directed towards traditional law and order issues. Examples were given of how arrests for holding peaceful protests were becoming increasingly common.

Another case was cited of a letter sent by police to shopkeepers in Brighton suggesting that police need not be called to incidents of theft until the value of goods

stolen reached more than £75. The shopkeepers were also warned against detaining thieves against their will if police were delayed in getting to the scene of the reported crime.

The Roberts' case was used to show how an elderly couple were intimidated by police and council officers and made to feel uncomfortable in their own home simply because they expressed their Christian beliefs.

Last year, the Roberts complained to their local council over its 'gay rights' policies. They were shocked to receive a visit from the police, who questioned them for over an hour and told them they were close to committing a 'hate crime'.

However, there is no crime against expressing the view that homosexual practice is morally wrong and should not be promoted by local authorities.

In the absence of an apology, the Roberts are suing the council and police for breaching their human rights.

Evangelical Times April 2006

But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. (Job 23:10)

ALL ARTICLES IN THIS MAGAZINE REPRODUCED AS EVIDENCE

The Finished Work of Christ

While walking home late at night recently, I passed a shopkeeper who was shutting up his store for the night. His body language suggested that he was relieved that his day's work was over. Daily work is both a blessing and a bane.

We are grateful for it, as it enables us to pay the bills. Yet work, when it involves people, machines or computers, always has its pressures and stresses. This being said though, there is a great satisfaction gained from seeing a job through to the end. We can all relate to the pride we feel concerning 'a job well done.' Think of how a novelist must feel when he/she writes the final full stop after thousands and thousands of words. What of an artist when he/she does the final stroke on a painting, and puts down the brush? Then there are thousands of others of us who know the minor joy of logging out and docking off at the end of the day, having played our minor 'bit part' for our country's economy and welfare. There is a great satisfaction in 'a job well done.'

At the very heart of the Christian Faith there lies 'a job well done.' We are referring here to the Finished Work of Christ at Calvary. In John 17:4, the Lord Jesus said to His Father in heaven: *"I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do."* And then John goes

on to record that, when Christ died at Calvary, *'We said, It is finished: and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost'* (John 19:30).

'It is finished.' These three words are just one word in the original Greek, the word, 'Tetelestai.' And this one word 'Tetelestai' actually encapsulates the whole Faith of the Bible. We could translate the word as 'It is completed', 'It has been done' or 'It stands for ever accomplished.' The tense which the Holy Spirit has employed is the perfect tense. It is a fitting tense to describe a perfect, faultless Work. In Greek, the perfect tense refers to an action in the past which has continuing and abiding consequences in the present. Christ's cry of *'It is finished'* therefore was not a cry of defeat but a shout of triumph. We could paraphrase what He meant as:

'It is finished! I have fully atoned for My peoples' sins.'

'It is finished! I have paid in full the debt of sin which My people owe.'

'It is finished! I have wrought the forgiveness of My people, so that they will remain eternally forgiven.'

'It is finished! I have procured the eternal salvation of My people.'

'It is finished! My sacrifice, on My peoples' behalf, has now made all sacrifice eternally redundant.'

So then, at the heart of the Christian Gospel there lies the Finished Work of Christ at Calvary. *"... now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself"* (Hebrews 9:26). *"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down at the right hand of God"* (Hebrews 10:12).

What then is the answer to the crucial question of 'What must I do to be saved?' (Acts 16:30). The answer is actually 'Nothing!'. We do not have to do anything because Christ has already done everything for us. According to the Bible, salvation is by divine grace, not by human works; it is by divine mercy, not human merit; it is a result of what Christ has done, and not what we do; it is due to Christ's perfect, finished Work, and not our imperfect, on going, unfinished works. Salvation is gained solely by availing ourselves of what Christ did for us at Calvary - we receive Him as our own, personal Saviour, and rest upon His Finished Work, and entrust the eternal well being of our souls to His care. 'Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace whereby we receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation, as He is offered to us in the Gospel' (Shorter Catechism).

*Extracts from English Churchman
March 2006*

CHILDREN'S CORNER

Hello Boys and Girls

Here are some tricky questions for you
love Mrs Glass

1. What is the longest name in the Bible?
2. Which creature from the Book of Job could run faster than a horse?
3. Which is the longest river in Israel?
4. What language did Jesus speak?
5. What is the Pentateuch?
6. Which wild animal did Isaiah say would "eat straw like the ox"?
7. What did Jesus refuse to turn into bread?
8. Who wrote letters to Timothy and Titus?
9. Whose way back to Paradise was barred by an angel?
10. What did Josiah order to be burned?



1. Maher-Shal-Nash-Baz 2. Ostrich 3. River Jordan 4. Aramaic 5. First five books of the Bible 6. Lion 7. Stones 8. Paul 9. Adam & Eve 10. All the pagan idols

WOMEN'S VIEW

Hello Everyone,

I am writing this column three and a half weeks after having had a hip replacement operation. Funny how life can change so quickly. I had an assessment to check my health and then very quickly I was in hospital for the operation. The operation itself went smoothly and I was allowed home after six days, but shortly after, it was discovered I had a blood clot in my lungs and landed back in hospital, a different one in which I had my operation, this time for five days. When something like this happens, we can go in the huff with God, we can question why this has happened to us, or we can have the firm assurance that our life is in God's hands and that He knows and is in control of our situation. Only this morning did I read about Joseph. Was he angry with God or his brothers over the many years he was a slave and badly treated? No, and he says in Genesis 50 God meant it unto good so from every situation can come good. It's up to us to look for it. I certainly did learn lessons from listening to the other patients and realising afresh how good the Lord has been to me. So

many people have so many problems in their life and no one to turn to, I have a loving Heavenly Father that I can speak to when things go wrong. I am also grateful for a loving family who are anxious about my progress, and an extended family in my church who have upheld me in prayerful love. I am blessed indeed.

With love in His Name. M.Glass

PS Before going into hospital a dear sister in my church gave me a card telling me that when I was first put onto my feet after the operation I was to remember that as well as having the nurses holding me up, the everlasting arms of the Lord would also be there. When that time came, I felt so sick and faint that after a few minutes I was led back to bed, and it was only when I started to feel a little better that I realized that without thinking about it, I had walked with my operated hip. Truly the everlasting arms had been there.



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