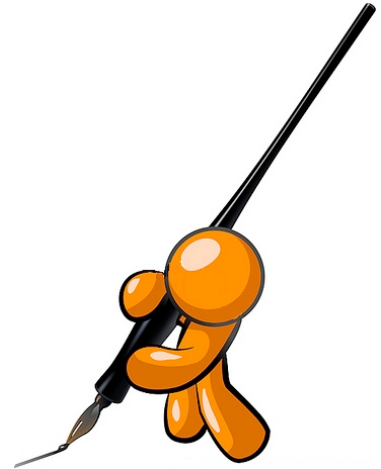


From the Desk of Rev. Ian Brown

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“TWO WICKED PARADES”

(STATEMENT RELEASED TO LOCAL PRESS, 8-1-2008)

Controversial marches are part and parcel of Northern Ireland’s recent history. However, two marches plumb depths of depravity reached by no others. One takes place today (Saturday, 2 August 2008) in Belfast’s city centre; the other staggers silently by, largely unnoticed but eerily perpetual.

HOMOSEXUALITY

This week, on the run up to the annual ‘Pride March’ in Belfast, homosexual activist Peter Tatchell went out of his way to be antagonistic, asserting that King Billy was a homosexual. It is difficult for a man more than 300 years in his grave to defend himself against the unsubstantiated slurs of those who are intent on twisting history to make their point.

This, however, is the stock in trade of many spokespersons from the homosexual community. Additional weapons in their arsenal include smokescreens, wild and unfounded speculations, thinly veiled threats, and downright lies.

Few have been surprised to note the deployment of several of these weapons against the wife of the First Minister, Mrs Iris Robinson, in recent weeks.

A plain statement of her biblically-based beliefs that homosexuality and abortion are abominations in the sight of a Holy God and detrimental to the well-being of society has seen Mrs Robinson engulfed in a firestorm of vicious criticism. The goal of this criticism, to silence her voice on these issues, has been pursued along

several lines: an internet site has been established, entitled, 'Make Iris Robinson History'; the PSNI have launched an investigation into her statements; calls for her resignation have been made; others have insisted that her role as an elected public representative means she cannot articulate the teachings of her Bible-based faith.

A couple of points beg to be made.

One, Mrs Robinson accurately reflects the opinion of the overwhelming majority in this country. Indeed, those who voted her into public office are well acquainted with her long-held convictions on these issues. They did not baulk at this knowledge when completing their voting slips, nor do I suppose are many of them offended by her statements today. Polls taken in this country consistently return a vote in excess of 70% in opposition to any expression of homosexuality.

Second, those who are so intent on silencing her are very keen to exercise their own right to speak on the same issue. Many of those who have fuelled the firestorm against Iris Robinson are politicians, or would-be politicians, themselves. Several have publicly and repeatedly supported the practice of homosexuality and ridiculed the Bible in the same breath. I wonder, in the interests of equality and fairness, what rule they are applying that allows them a free voice on this issue and yet dictates to Iris Robinson that she should remain silent?

This hypocrisy was brought into sharp focus at last year's 'Pride March' in Belfast. A male member of that parade, dressed as a woman, wore a T-shirt with the slogan 'Cooler Than Jesus' and carried a placard blasphemously proclaiming that, "Jesus is a fag." The subsequent lack of condemnation from the homosexual community of this scandalous attack on biblical Christianity indicates that they are unconcerned when rights other than their own are trampled into the ground.

From a personal point of view, I share the main points of concern articulated by Mrs Robinson.

The message of the Bible is unmistakable with regard to homosexuality: it is unnatural and depraved (**Romans 1:25-28**); an abomination to God (**Leviticus 18:22, Leviticus 20:13**); a sin that closes the door of heaven to the one who remains in it (**1 Corinthians 6:9&10**); and is certain to bring upon itself the crushing judgment of the Almighty (**Genesis 19, Romans 1:32, Jude 7**).

The only way anyone will ever be able to uncover acceptance for the sin of sodomy from either of the biblical testaments is to rewrite them.

This, of course, is an act many homosexuals and their sympathisers are ready to perform. In a recent interview, Rev. Alan Harper, the Archbishop of Armagh, showed indecent haste to consign to the shredder the statements made by the apostle Paul against homosexuality in the opening chapter of the book of Romans. Archbishop Harper insisted that if it was ever proven that a person was born homosexual, the Church would have to overturn Paul's verdict and accept that homosexuals committed "natural" rather than "unnatural" acts with each other.

His problem is that scientists have not been able to produce the proof he needs to scrap this, and other, passages of Scripture. With good reason did one of his fellow clergymen label him, "a false teacher."

ABORTION

The other wicked parade to which I refer is almost always swaddled in silence. It is the forced march of little forming feet to their destruction through the horror of abortion. This silence is broken by an occasional media article, or when abortion surfaces as a subject for debate in the chambers of our Parliamentary democracy. Over the course of the past year, sterling efforts have been made in our own local Assembly to prevent the 1967 Abortion Act being extended to Northern Ireland. For these efforts many are immensely grateful.

'Our Own Holocaust' was the headline that appeared in one of our national newspapers at the time of the 60th anniversary of the Russian army's liberation of Auschwitz. It made a telling point: we congratulate ourselves on how much better we are than the Nazis, yet in our United Kingdom we operate an extermination programme every bit as ruthless as theirs.

The Nazis started off by forcibly sterilising the mentally handicapped as 'unfit to reproduce,' then progressed to exterminating those they termed 'useless eaters,' before extending the policy to other sections of society they disliked, principally Jews. As for the disabled, 70,000 handicapped people were put to death by the summer of 1941.

In Britain today, to kill an unborn baby after 24 weeks is illegal, unless the baby is diagnosed with a handicap which, as we have recently seen, can be as trivial as a cleft palate. We compel the owners of the smallest public building to construct ramps for the disabled, while trying to eliminate disabled people before they are actually born.

At the rate of 550 unborn babies a day, we may not be killing as fast as the Nazis managed, but we have been at it for longer. Our total death toll now exceeds 6

million from abortion in the forty years since it was legalised. And we have successfully disguised the enormity of what we are doing from ourselves, just as the Nazis did.

The end product of both homosexuality and abortion is destroyed lives. And both of these sins carry the seeds of personal destruction within them – a fact demonstrated when the homosexual ends up on a psychiatrist’s couch, or with a body broken through disease, or with a life prematurely ended by suicide; or the potential mother who has aborted her baby is ravaged in heart and mind by guilt and despair.

This is a time when we need people of true biblical conviction, in both the fields of politics and religion, to give a clear lead and condemn the onward march of this wickedness.

There is a much better way to walk. That path is charted in God’s Word which gives good counsel for our lives on earth and our souls in eternity, and also points to a haven for the heartbroken and true hope in Jesus Christ for every repentant sinner.

The Bible states, “When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn” (**Proverbs 29:2**). It proceeds to confirm, “Where there is no [restraint], the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he” (**Proverbs 29:18**).

For the glory of God and the good of society, both of these wicked parades should be stopped.

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