



The Burning Bush—Online article archive



MODERATOR:

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CLERK:

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General Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster

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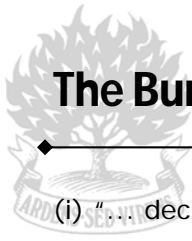
Dear Sir/Madam,

At a meeting of the General Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster on Friday, 6 December 2008, a resolution was unanimously passed in support of the public stand taken against the sin of homosexuality by Rev. David McIlveen and his church session of Sandown Road Free Presbyterian Church.

Members of Presbytery had been informed that, in one of your recent adjudications, you determined that an advertisement placed by Sandown Road FPC in the Belfast NewsLetter was offensive and indecent.

As you know, the advert in question, entitled, 'The Word of God against Sodomy,' was published to coincide with Belfast's Gay Pride parade on Saturday, 2 August 2008. It was designed to provide a biblical response to the sin of sodomy that is celebrated by this parade, and to announce a protest to be held at this event by Bible-believing Christians.

While we appreciate the fact that one portion of your ruling dismissed complaints that the calling for, "an outdoor meeting to be held in protest of the act of sodomy and to voice disapproval of the Belfast Gay Pride parade" was not, "an attempt to spread hatred and incite violence," we were nevertheless perturbed that you chose to highlight for special censure several phrases about homosexuality that were used in this advert:



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- (i) "... declaring it to be an abomination ...",
- (ii) "... God's judgement upon a sin ...",
- (iii) "... remove the guilt of their wrongdoing ...",
- (iv) "... a cause for regret that a section of the community desire to be known for a perverted form of sexuality"

Your conclusion was that these statements against sodomy, "went further than the majority of readers were likely to find acceptable," and breached standards of "decency" as defined by the advertising industry (CAP Code clause 5.1).

However, each of these statements you have found objectionable is a faithful representation of what Almighty God has declared in His Word – the timeless and unchangeable Scriptures of Truth.

- (i) Leviticus 18:22, Leviticus 20:13, Romans 1:25-28,
- (ii) Genesis 19, Romans 1:32, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Jude 7,
- (iii) Romans 1:28, 32,
- (iv) Genesis 2:18; 21-24, Romans 1:26-27.

Therefore your adjudication is not only a violation of our freedom of speech - an attempt to curtail the right of a gospel preaching church to express its sincerely held beliefs on the subject of sodomy - but is a fundamental attack on the Bible itself, since it judges that its statements are unfit for publication in advertisements.

You may realise that a judge (Mr Justice Weatherup), ruling in the Belfast High Court in August/September 2007 on the Sexual Orientation Regulations, established as a finding of fact that the orthodox Christian belief is that the practice of homosexuality is sinful, and quashed the harassment provisions that were originally intended to be part of these regulations on the basis that they threatened free speech. We fail to see any recognition of such a decision in your adjudication.

Our Presbytery considers this ruling by the ASA to be both draconian and diabolical. We are convinced that we shall not be alone in opposing it. In addition to the eighty congregations belonging to our own Presbytery (represented by the signatures attached to this letter), many Christians from the broad spectrum of evangelical denominations in this country and beyond have expressed their support of the statement made and stand taken by Sandown Road Free Presbyterian kirk session on this issue.

Yours sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Ian Brown (Clerk of Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster)