



## The Burning Bush—Online article archive

### Peaceful Christian protest ignored & riotous Sikh protest placated - why??



Birmingham theatre damaged in Sikh protests

**The existence and operation of the double standards under British law — one for the Bible believer and the other for the Christ-rejector — were displayed at two protests which recently took place. They were both basically about the same matter and in similar settings but that is where the similarities end!**

Reports were seen in the media in mid-December about a protest in St Andrews, Scotland. The reports said that police were investigating a controversial theatre production in the Crawford Arts Centre which depicts the Lord Jesus Christ as a Sodomite. Having “investigated”, the police said that they will be taking no further action at the moment. The American play portrays Christ as a hard-drinking, swearing gay who wears nothing but a skimpy purple robe.

He is crucified for being the ‘King of the Queers’ after being betrayed by his lover Judas. The St Andrews’ students admit some of the shocks in their production - including the boozy Virgin Mary - were added by them.

Director Zsuzsi Lindsay, 23, said: “There have been rumblings of discontent and eyebrows have been raised by local churchgoers. Clearly not everyone is going to like what’s in the play. The only real diversion from the original script is that we decided to make Mary an alcoholic. Her character is really funny and we thought having her dancing with her son holding a glass of alcohol would add to that.” Zsuzsi said the play has also caused ripples within the St Andrews’ student community. protest Christian Voice, which organised the protest, has labelled the play: Corpus Christi, a “hate-filled mockery”.

A member of the group lodged a complaint of blasphemy with Fife police after walking out of the play on its opening night.

The piece by American playwright Terence McNally is being staged by student company Zuloo and is sold out at The Crawford Arts Centre until its run ends on Saturday night. The play originally opened in the US in 1997 to strong protests and is a modern retelling of the Gospels, taking place in the Texan town of Corpus Christi. Mr McNally’s play portrays the Lord Jesus and his disciples as active sodomites. About 20 Christian Voice protesters gathered outside the centre to voice their opposition. One of the protesters outlined her reasons for joining the demonstration: “I don’t like Christ portrayed as a filthy, swearing, pervert.” Another protester added: “The Bible says that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life, that there’s no way to Heaven but through him. Jesus was sinless. He wasn’t a homosexual. Homosexuality is a sin.” “It’s a slur on Jesus Christ, and these people will have to stand before God in judgement some day.”



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### Mohammed or Buddha

Stephen Green, Director of Christian Voice, said he has not seen the play but stressed: "If there is a blasphemy like this Christians have to stand up about it. What we have here is our beliefs, our Saviour, being vilified and insulted and this wouldn't happen against any other religion. If they did this to Mohammed or Buddha all hell would break loose around them. The fact is that Jesus Christ is being portrayed here as a foul-mouthed, drunken, promiscuous, homosexual and that is an insult to my faith." "Quite apart from that, God is not mocked, and I fear for the town of St Andrews which has allowed this blasphemous, hate-filled mockery." a different story In Birmingham, the police faced a very different style of protest over a play which the Sikh community believed insulted their religious views. The play, Behzti, depicted sex abuse and murder in a Sikh temple. Three police officers were injured when clashes took place outside the theatre after 400 people gathered outside to demonstrate. Three people were arrested at the demonstration. The theatre said some protesters entered back stage and smashed equipment, windows were broken and a foyer door was destroyed. Sewa Singh Mandla, chairman of Sikh Gurdawas, said he did not condone what had happened at the theatre but protesters had been provoked.

Following the violence, the Birmingham police organised a meeting with Sikh community leaders and the Birmingham Repertory Theatre to discuss the protest about the play in which officers were injured. Later, a decision to cancel the play was taken. The decision was welcomed by Mohan Singh, from the Guru Nanak Gurdwara in south Birmingham. He said: "Free speech can go so far. Maybe 5,000 people would have seen this play over the run. Are you going to upset 600,000 Sikhs in Britain and maybe 20 million outside the UK for that?"

What needs to be remembered is the fact that the play in St Andrews blasphemed Christ whereas the Birmingham play insulted a Sikh temple! Not surprisingly, the Roman Catholic authorities came to the assistance of the Sikh protesters. The Roman Catholic Diocese of Birmingham issued the appeal, after being involved in multi-faith talks with the theatre, to try to stop the play going ahead. Birmingham's Roman Catholic Archbishop has described the play as offensive to all faiths.

In a statement, the 'Most Rev' Vincent Nichols said: "In recent weeks the Sikh community has acted in a reasonable and measured way in representing their deep concerns to the Birmingham Repertory Theatre. I regret that the Repertory Theatre, in the interests of the common good, has not been more responsive. Such a deliberate, even if fictional, violation of the sacred place of the Sikh religion demeans the sacred places of every religion." It would appear that silence was the only statement that Rome issued over the St. Andrews' blasphemy against Christ. Given that Roman Catholicism is riddled with sodomy, such a stance is no surprise! The message is clear — the police will heed violence and placate it but peaceful Christian protests will be basically ignored. We have something better than violence. We have prayer. The ultimate answer to the prayers of God's people against such wickedness will be seen in that day of which Enoch "the seventh from Adam, prophesied . . . saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him," Jude 14-15.



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On that day, all blasphemy against the Saviour, so vexing to the true believer, will come to an end.

Until that day, we must continue to raise our voices against the wickedness of this age. May the Lord bless and encourage those who have lifted a standard and may they be strengthened to continue to do so!