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A house divided cannot stand

"And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand," Matthew 12:25.

The above verse, containing that very well known and wise adage declared by the Lord Jesus, was referred to recently by a friend from up the country, when discussing with me the situation that prevails within the Free Presbyterian Church.

There has undoubtedly been a division within the denomination since the days when Dr Paisley went into power-sharing with Sinn Fein. That decision entailed a going back from and an abandoning of long-standing principles.

The Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster issued a statement in 1998 which condemned the very agreement which formed the foundation of the 2007 power-sharing agreement.

The Presbytery's statement reads:

"The Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster recognising the Bible as our sole rule of faith and practice — vehemently opposes the recent April Agreement (the Good Friday Agreement).

Our opposition to the Agreement stems from the fact that it is unscriptural, unethical and immoral.

Scripture makes it abundantly clear in Romans 13:1-5 that it is the duty of the Government to punish evil and reward good. The fundamental principle which lies at the heart of any stable and peaceable society has been dispensed with in this Agreement. Set against a backdrop of lies and deceitfulness it ensures that those who have supported and advocated violence will sit in government over our people. . . . Such a position is contrary to the divine law of God where He commands punishment of an evildoer (1 Peter 2:14)."

No amount of wriggling or verbal gymnastics could disguise the fact that there had been an abandoning of the 1998 Presbytery position by those who supported Dr. Paisley and his embracing of power-sharing with Sinn Fein/IRA.

Commonplace in politics

Such going back on one's word and denying one's principles are, of course, common-place within politics and while there is often much jeering by opponents, it is something that history demonstrates is an accepted practice in the political domain for even the jeering opponents!

The domain of politics is governed by the principles and policies born of man's philosophy. It is not governed by the mind and will of God as set forth in His Word.

There are times when politicians have professed allegiance to God's Word and have claimed to be directed by it in their political opinions. Sadly, that is so very often short-lived, and like the seed which falls amongst the thorns, such good intentions are soon overwhelmed "and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection," Luke 8:14. It is thus that the Democratic Unionist Party finds itself in union with the party of terrorism, Sinn Fein. Christian convictions were eroded by political ambition.

It should be noted that a recent investigation, the results of which were given in a government report just over a month ago, into the recent murders in Belfast of IRA men, concluded that the IRA 'Army Council' controls Sinn Fein and that the IRA did not decommission its weapons which was the requisite pre-condition



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demanding by the DUP, before it would enter power-sharing with Sinn Fein/IRA.

It is not surprising that such an ungodly organisation should prove to be deceitful. What is surprising is that Christians chose to believe such devil-possessed murderers and terrorists!

Embraced by Christians

The sinful philosophy that underpins politics, which may be stated in the words of the infamous Jesuit motto - "the end justifies the means", sadly has been embraced by all too many Christians in Northern Ireland, including some within the Free Presbyterian Church. Such have taken a lead from the compromises of the politicians in Stormont who profess faith in Christ.

More recently, that was evidenced by the case of the DUP's Minister for Social Development in the Northern Ireland Executive, Mr Mervyn Storey.

Mr Storey has a history of engaging in activities which would have been utterly repudiated by Free Presbyterians in a former day. Back in February 2015, he wished the ecumenical 'Corrymeela Community' well on its 50th anniversary and praised its "vision of a peaceful and sustainable society, positive relationships and respect for diversity," saying that it "is one that I, and indeed the Northern Ireland Executive shares, and which we are committed to achieving." (Stormont press statement.)

Denunciations

Dr Paisley and the Free Presbyterian Church on numerous occasions denounced the 'Corrymeela Community', back when it commenced, as part of that satanic deception that is the ecumenical movement. But here is a Free Presbyterian elder wishing the movement well! Mr Storey was pictured in the local press with the Roman Catholic sodomite who presently heads this community, underneath a cross on the occasion of his offering his best wishes! (See the article [here](#))

More recently, Mr Storey informed the Northern Ireland Assembly, in response to a question from Jim Allister, leader of the Traditional Unionist Voice party, that: "My Department has provided grant funding of £3.5k towards the cost of the 2015 festival. This grant was a contribution towards the overall costs for venue hire and artists fees for the festival. This grant was not offered for any specific event within the festival programme."

Part of the activities of that 'Festival' financially supported by Mr Storey's Department and which took place in Belfast on November 13th-21st, 2015, was an evil and blasphemous play in which the Lord Jesus was depicted as a 'transsexual'!

Absolve

Doubtless, Mr Storey seeks to release himself from all responsibility for aiding such wickedness by saying that the money was given to the 'Festival' and not to that particular play.

Does this response provide an adequate 'excuse'?

It does if Pilate's washing of his hands (Matthew 27:24) absolved him of the guilt of Christ's crucifixion. Pilate was not disposed to support the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus but his 'hand-washing' did not absolve him of guilt as Acts 4:27 declares. "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together."

The Bible condemns Pilate for the slaying of Christ despite his attempts to distance himself from the murder.

Mr Storey may not have wished to support such wickedness (and I personally believe that this would be true) as that financed by his Department, but that cannot absolve him from the terrible sin of aiding this wickedness, even when he claims that the money he gave the 'Festival' was not specifically directed toward



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the blasphemous play.

The payment will appear in the books of Stormont as a payment to a 'Festival' which included an evil depiction of the Saviour and so it will appear in the Books of Heaven!

God's word

James teaches that, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin," James 4:17. Here is a sinful culpability that springs from a failure to do that which it is known should be done. Here is positive guilt from a negative act, a failure to do right.

Mr Storey cannot deny that it was wrong to finance this blasphemy and he will find it difficult to explain why he financed an 'arts festival', events known world-wide as promoters of wantonness and immorality, which intrinsically will involve the promotion of ungodliness!

John the Apostle

John the Apostle commands us: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds," 2 John 1:10-11. Matthew Poole, a 17th century London Presbyterian said of these words: "Such as bring any contrary doctrine, (as Galatians 1:8), ought not to be harboured or countenanced by any encouraging salutation, lest we involve ourselves in the participation of their guilt, 1 Timothy 5:22."

To bid a person who is engaged in the propagation of wickedness, 'God speed' is to become guilty of that person's wickedness.

Do not these words apply to the actions of Mr Storey? I believe they most certainly do. He has been guilty of bidding Corrymeela's ecumenical endeavours 'God speed', in direct contravention of God's Word. Now he has made a decision to help finance a 'Festival' which propagates profane and ungodly notions and included the depiction of Christ, in itself contrary to God's Law which declares: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth," Exodus 20:4. But Mr Storey exacerbates his sin by being the source of funds which undoubtedly aided the promoting of the blasphemous play: "The Gospel According to Jesus Queen of Heaven."

This is not Mr Storey's first involvement with funding evil. Here is an article we published on our "Burning Bush" website back in January 2015.

Mervyn Storey, Minister for Social Development in the Northern Ireland Executive, tried to distance himself from funding of sodomites

In answer to questions regarding the squandering of £3 million "on many undeserving projects" by the Department of Social Development, tabled by Mr Jim Allister MLA, an unnamed department official sought to shield Mr Storey from all blame regarding the funding of sodomite organisations.

Here is what was disclosed in an article in the Belfast Newsletter in its report of the Department of Social Development's reply to Mr. Allister.

"The answers received revealed that amongst the spend: £1,064,546.17 was spent on GAA clubs, with £273,000 spent on one club alone in Strabane, Strabane Sigerson's Club; £1,134,100.33 was spent on Irish language groups; £138,997.78 was spent on a republican ex-prisoners group, Tar Anall; £83,176.18 was spent on the Bloody Sunday Trust; £259,087.93 was spent on Carrick Hill Residents Association; and £231,681.00 was spent on LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transexual) projects, including £170,000 to support the Strabane & Lifford LGBT group alone, and annual subventions to Belfast Pride."



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(Click [here](#) for a full report.)

We want to emphasise the fact that "£231,681.00 was spent on LGBT projects, including £170,000 to support the Strabane & Lifford LGBT group alone, and annual subventions to Belfast Pride."

While Free Presbyterians denounce and protest against the "Belfast Gay Pride" parade, Mr Storey, a Free Presbyterian elder, is engaged through his Department in funding the same wickedness!

His unnamed official did seek to shield Mr Storey. It was reported in the Belfast Newsletter: "Political considerations do not form any part of the assessment and the minister does not have, and does not wish to have, any role in funding decisions."

That is patent poppycock!

Either Mr Storey is the minister responsible for affairs within his department or he is not! There is no "autonomous sector" within the Department of Social Development over which Mr Storey has no authority.

Such blethering may serve to absolve him from his wrong-doing in the eyes of some of his Christian friends and fellow-church members but it does not stand up to scrutiny.

Mervyn Storey is the minister responsible for EVERY action of his Department. Thus he has the power to examine every decision. He may issue a 'ministerial direction' to countermand a civil servant's advice.

Of course, he is not involved in each funding decision, any more than the Chief Constable issues every speeding ticket, but he is able to set guidelines and policies.

Therefore, in the end, he is RESPONSIBLE for all of the allocations of funds by his Department.

That being so, it leaves him in a very unenviable position.

He is an officer in a church which denounces sodomy as an "abomination," Leviticus 18:22. But while having taken an oath to uphold the teachings of God's Word, he is involved through his position as Minister for Social Development in the Northern Ireland Executive in the funding of sodomite groups and activities.

That places Mr. Storey in an unenviable and surely distressing position!

The question for him to resolve is which is he to be: the head of a Stormont department administering funds to sodomites or a faithful Christian submissive to God's Word?

He cannot be both.

An elder

As stated, Mr Storey is an elder. He is a member of the Session of Ballymoney Free Presbyterian Church. Just what does that Session feel about this recent matter of the fellow-elder being responsible for granting funds to a 'Festival' which included such a blaspheming of the Saviour ?

Well, silence gives consent they say and so far I don't think the Session has stated its opposition to Mr Storey's actions.

Doubtless, there are those who will defend Mr Storey's actions by the same feeble, futile, indeed stupid arguments that were wheeled out in defence of Dr Paisley entering a coalition with Sinn Fein/IRA.

Back in 2007, I submitted a paper to the Commission of Presbytery enquiring into the matter of Dr Paisley continuing as the Moderator of Presbytery while also acting as First Minister in the power-sharing Stormont executive.



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My concluding remarks are still applicable some 8 years later.

"Springing from this decision to defy the Presbytery position of 1998 will be very widespread and detrimental effects upon the stand and witness of the Free Presbyterian Church.

Those Free Presbyterians who hold office in the power-sharing executive will be required to accept moral attitudes very contrary to God's Word.

We have seen that already in the decision to enter power-sharing to start with! But it has continued with prevaricating responses to the funding of sodomite organisations which will use the funding received to promote this abominable thing which God hates. It is contrary to logic and Christian truthfulness to claim that sodomy is repulsive and yet dedicate your energies to aid in the promoting of it!

The issue of lottery funds and the promotion of the world of film-making have also fallen under the remit of Christians within the DUP ministerial team.

This involvement with that which is contrary to God's Word and the pathway of holiness can only become more widespread as the days go by.

The impact upon our people, especially the young, will be disastrous. They will see justification in overstepping the bounds of Christian propriety in the actions of the Free Presbyterian Christians involved in the Stormont government.

This issue is central not just to the present peace of our church but also the future wellbeing and effectiveness of its witness.

If we surrender our stand on separation from the wickednesses of today's political and ecclesiastical world then we will forfeit God's blessing and bring His judgment upon our heads.

"And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you," 2 Chronicles 24:20.

"Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward," Isaiah 1:4.

"Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, when he led thee by the way? And now what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt, to drink the waters of Sihor? or what hast thou to do in the way of Assyria, to drink the waters of the river? Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts," Jeremiah 2:17-19.

"O LORD, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters," Jeremiah 17:13.

"Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein," Jeremiah 6:16.

Ivan Foster, 12th June 2007."

Can any say that there is anything said back then that has not come true?

We have Mervyn Storey, an elder sanctioned by the silence of his fellow elders, openly aiding wickedness. This can bring only a sorry harvest.



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Where is the spirit of Phinehas?

"And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel. And the LORD said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the LORD against the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may be turned away from Israel. And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baalpeor. And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand; and he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel. And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel," Numbers 25:1-13.

There is needed today the same zeal and jealousy for the honour of the Lord as prompted Phinehas to act, in accordance with the Law of God, and slay the wicked.

There needs to be a wielding of the sword of discipline in order to purge the ranks of Free Presbyterianism from the spirit of departure and an embracing of the ways and philosophy of the world.

2008

In June 2008 I wrote an article entitled "**A word to the distressed amongst God's flock today**".

Here is part of what I wrote in refuting the lame excuses offered in defence of power-sharing.

"It is true that some tried to parallel the political strategy of power-sharing with Sinn Fein/IRA to that path followed by Joseph and Daniel. This was discussed and circulated amongst the supporters of power-sharing but was never really put forth in any public fashion as a defence of the initiative. The main reason being that in the company of those who knew little of God's Word such a parallel may have sounded impressive but a more public proffering of it would bring strong arguments from the Word of God showing such a view to be utterly without foundation.

There is a world of difference between entering upon a voluntary coalition with unrepentant murderers in order to obtain political power and the actions of Joseph and Daniel!

In both instances, these Old Testament saints had providentially thrust upon them the political status they attained. They never once sought after or desired the offices they entered upon.

Nor did either man shackle himself to those rulers under whom they served as the First Minister is shackled to the Deputy First Minister, a noted IRA terrorist leader and gunman in the present Stormont power-sharing arrangement."

It should also be noted that when Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were promoted to high office they remained loyal first and foremost to the Lord. They were ready to forfeit not only their office but also their lives rather than fail the Lord. The wonderful words of Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, better known as Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, or the three Hebrew Children, when facing death by burning for refus-



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ing to bow before Nebuchadnezzar's image are worth remembering. "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up," Daniel 3:16-18.

God send us such men again for they are needed today.

Ivan Foster (Retired)

26th November 2015.

PS. Perhaps I could ask Free Presbyterian Ministers and Elders who disagree with this article to put their answer in writing for all to read.