



STATEMENT TO THE MEDIA: 12 January 2012

The Core Issues Trust conference to be held in Belfast on Friday 20 and Saturday 21 January 2012 will explore the role of evangelical and orthodox churches in supporting men and women with unwanted same sex attractions. The event focuses primarily on issues around practical theology rather than psychotherapy.

Dr Jim Reynolds will call fellow ministers and believers to live out the redemptive role of local churches in affirming those men and women, both within and outside the church, who seek to live according to orthodox teachings of the bible. His message will underscore the institutional and hypocritical failure of evangelical Christianity to recognise heterosexual sin whilst ostracising those inclined to homosexuality. He calls all to repentance.

Core Issues Trust does not offer so-called “Reparative” or ‘Conversion’ therapy but does offer support to individuals conflicted in religious and sexual identity, within a specific ethical frameworkⁱ. It recognises the fundamental human rights of the LGBT community to live in partnerships that are happy, fulfilled and respected. It acknowledges that Christians have different understandings of the teachings on the bible around human sexuality. It reserves the right to offer alternative orthodox views to those who choose to prioritise a religious identity over a sexual identity, or when these identities collideⁱⁱ.

The conference organisers recognise that the event’s title “The Lepers Among Us” has caused some misunderstanding, being taken as a call for the church to treat LGBT people in the way that lepers were treated by society in biblical times – shunned and regarded as untouchable. In fact the intention is the opposite. This conference criticises the church for behaving in this very way - treating LGBT people as ‘outcasts’ – and calls upon it to help end prejudice wherever it is found, especially within the church.

Towards this end, the organisers request the Royal College of Psychiatrists, BACP, UKCP and other like-minded professional bodies to pay careful attention to the dangers of prematurely foreclosing on an LGB-affirmative stance when working with individuals conflicted in their religious and sexual identities. It requests more thorough discussion about how to deal with competing religious and cultural values, and for these groups to



recognise the poor quality of currently available scientific data and the lack of adequate evidence around both proving or disproving sexual orientation change efforts.

The organisers welcome any individuals wishing to participate in or to observe its event, and requests that attendees are not harassed or intimidated in their right to free association.

Mike Davidson, PhD., FHEA
Core Issues Trust

Ends

Dr Jim Reynolds will be available for interview from **Thursday 19th to Wednesday 25th** of January in Belfast, and from **Thursday 26th to Sunday 29th** in London.
Please contact:

Mike Davidson
Core Issues Trust
Mobile 07833098998
info@core-issues.org
www.core-issues.org

ⁱ (2010) Supporting individuals conflicted in religious and sexual identities: exploring the possibilities for congruence with religiously motivated clients:

<http://www.core-issues.org/uploads/Supporting%20individuals%20conflicted%20in%20religious%20and%20sexual%20identities-CORE.pdf>

ⁱⁱ (2010) When identities collide: providing therapeutic support for individuals with sexual and religious incongruence, ethically
<http://www.core-issues.org/uploads/When%20identities%20collide.pdf>