

## Silenced X-Factor Malta ex-gay contestant speaks out

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First Published by Christian Concern: November 9th, 2018

*The controversy over the testimony of Matthew Grech<sup>1</sup> continues. His testimony of becoming a Christian and leaving the gay lifestyle was initially aired on X Factor Malta, only then to be removed from all of its social media accounts. Not only has this brought to light the different views expressed by Maltese politicians and mainstream journalists, the story has also been globally covered by Christian media. This week, Carys Moseley interviewed Matthew Grech to hear his view on the whole controversy.*

**CM** - How did the whole controversy with your testimony come about?

**MG** - My pre-audition interview was broadcast together with my solo audition and the improvised group audition that one of the judges came up with on the spot. It was instantly uploaded on the X Factor Malta YouTube page. Because of the obscene, vulgar and hateful comments from the public, as well as what is considered to be governmental pressure from the Ministry of Equality (for whom Helena Dalli was the spokeswoman), the solo audition and interview were sadly removed. The government Ministry of Civil Liberties and Equality has instigated hatred towards ex-gays and Christians by accusing them of homophobia, and saying they are in danger of hurting vulnerable LGBTIQ individuals who are 'coming out'. This goes back to an event that my church, River of Love, organised called 'Gay No More...Changed by the love of Christ.' It sparked a protest from the Malta Gay Rights Movement, and also resulted in a bill that was passed in parliament - a ban of gay conversion therapy (as they call it).

**CM** - In your testimony you said that you went to live in London and became a Christian. How did that come about?

**MG** - While I was in London my dad connected me with a female colleague of his who worked there. He had no idea she was a Christian. She was very helpful and helped me with accommodation and hospitality. She preached the gospel to me and warned me about some New Age practices I was getting into. At the time I was very interested in Reiki and was training to be a Reiki Master. She helped me understand that not every spirit comes from God and told me that for all I know, I could be opening doors to demonic spirits while I

opened my spirit to Reiki energy. She invited me to go to a church and I went to a prayer meeting. I was hooked by the way these people worshipped and opened up to their God. It was real – and spiritual. It seemed to want to make me come back for more. I then joined one of the services, and Jesus revealed Himself to me in the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in this non-denominational Spirit-filled church, working through healing, prophecy and word of knowledge. I bought my first English Bible, got baptised in water and surrendered all to Jesus. A few months later the Lord convicted me through the Bible alone that homosexuality was a sin, and I decided to terminate my one-year homosexual relationship that I had entered into in London.

**CM** - You told the Maltese press that ex-gays are 'an abused and discriminated group'. Tell us what sort of attitudes there are.

**MG** - This is what we went through as a church<sup>2</sup>, promoting and encouraging ex-gays to come out and be the light! We had organised an event called 'Gay No More...Changed By The Love Of Christ', which was spotted by the Malta Gay Rights Movement (MGRM). It sparked controversy.

**CM** - Does this explain why Malta was able to pass a law against conversion therapy in 2016? How did that law come about?

**MG** - Many do believe that this ban was a follow-up to our event. They seriously thought they would stop us sharing our stories, but little did they know that we do not fall into the category of therapy they are describing. We had an official meeting to discuss the bill with the Ministry for Social Liberties and Equality and got to speak to Sylvan Agius and other team members. At the time, I feel like we simply made sure that this law wouldn't affect us as a church. However, looking back I think it would have been important for us to look deeper and fight for the right of everyone to choose any therapy they believe to be helpful to get rid of unwanted same-sex attraction.

**CM** - You have given a wonderfully positive and clear Christian testimony that has been viewed by many people by now. What effect do you think it has had?

**MG** - I think the interview has had a dual effect. Christians around the world have been emboldened to speak up and not to be silent. I think the world that has already been indoctrinated by the LGBT agenda has been shocked by the seemingly extremist Christian view. However, I believe that shock factor has been important, because people usually get desensitized following the shock factor!

**CM** - Saint Paul first brought the Christian faith to Malta. What do you think he would make of all this?

**MG** - I think Paul would have encouraged us to persevere with the message, since it exposes the unfruitful deeds of darkness, and shows the church to be the light. Paul would have mourned for the Christian who started well and then, after a while, went back to their homosexual habits.

**CM** - What do you hope that people in Malta and other countries like the UK can learn from all this?

**MG** - I hope people recognise their own failures in terms of their tolerance level and their prejudices. I think they should learn to celebrate people who are promoting traditional and cultural values that belong to the nation. Countries should either prevent a ban on therapy or work towards removing the ban.

**CM** – Thank you for speaking to us about your experience. We shall be following how things are going in Malta with great interest.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/princessleona2008/videos/2730013310557702/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AfRgwkZ99Dk&app=desktop>