

Why Christians must defeat the global attack on conversion therapy for homosexuality

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Dr Carys Moseley looks at the campaign against so-called 'conversion therapy' and the possible effects of banning help for people with unwanted same-sex attraction.

The LGBT movement worldwide¹ - as well as inside the UK government² - has made banning so-called 'conversion therapy' for homosexuality its number one goal. It is a top priority for Victor Madrigal-Borlaz, the UN LGBT czar, who told the ILGA Europe annual conference in Brussels on 27 October that he is determined to collect evidence worldwide to prove that 'conversion therapy' can be categorised as 'torture'.³

Taking therapy for unwanted same-sex attraction can include two goals, depending on what the client wants: some people want to diminish their same-sex attraction and remain celibate; others also wish to see a development in their natural potential for opposite-sex attraction. As this work is likely more common among Christians, the campaign to ban such therapy has anti-Christian and anti-social implications that reach well beyond this kind of pastoral care.

'Conversion therapy' is a dishonest term

The term 'conversion therapy' was invented by gay activists in order to disparage all types of therapy whose outcome involved diminution of same-sex attraction and behaviour. The term 'conversion therapy' is not used by anybody who works with clients with unwanted same-sex attraction, though the term 'conversion' from homosexual to heterosexual orientation was casually used by some witnesses who appeared before the Wolfenden Committee for Homosexual Offences and Prostitution in the UK in 1956-1957.

The real target is Christian conversion and discipleship

The real target is Christian teaching and pastoral care based on it, and the spiritual duty to repudiate sin after spiritual conversion. Conversion in the real spiritual sense does demand moving away from homosexual behaviour. This is clear from the Apostle Paul's words to the church in Corinth⁴:

"Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

If it becomes illegal for Christians to teach and assist the need to move away from homosexuality, by the same logic the door would have been opened to ban Christian work teaching and assisting people to move away from any kind of sexual immorality, idolatry (i.e. worshipping gods other than the God of the Bible), adultery, drunkenness and financial corruption.

This would be music to the ears of many interest groups in our society, who make a great deal of profit from these sins. Imagine if counselling for alcoholism were banned because the drinks industry got fed-up of criticism. Imagine if the gambling industry bugged Gamblers Anonymous meetings because attenders reveal the huge damage of gambling addiction and thus the advertising free-for-all that has helped fuel it. Imagine if dating websites for single people to meet married people, or for 'swingers', decided to sue churches and Christian organisations because they teach that sex is reserved for marriage between one man and one woman, and dare to discipline pastors and members who break this rule. The list could go on forever.

The effect on treatment of sex offenders

In fact this kind of attack has already happened, in the case of Pentecostal minister Rev. Barry Trayhorn, who was dismissed from his post as prison chaplain at HMP Littlehey, a prison for male sex offenders, for preaching on 1 Corinthians 6⁵. After the reading he said this to the prisoners:

"You may want to complain about this, but this is the Word of God. God loves you and wants to forgive you."

Prisoners cross-dressing as women came to disrupt the service. One prisoner complained to the prison that his human rights had been violated (on the basis of homosexual orientation). Barry Trayhorn took his case to the Employment Tribunal and lost, and also to the Employment Appeal Tribunal, again losing⁶.

There is also the matter of age. No matter how offensive it sounds, the case of Barry Trayhorn is relevant to the proposed ban on 'conversion therapy', and indeed to the Memorandum of Understanding on Conversion Therapy⁷, currently approved by the major mental health professional bodies in the UK. This is because there is no lower age limit in place for the age of the objects of sexual attraction of clients. This is the description of sexual orientation in the Memorandum:

"Sexual orientation refers to the sexual or romantic attraction someone feels to people of the same sex, opposite sex, more than one sex, or to experience no attraction."

Some people who attend pastoral groups for problems with sexuality are registered sex offenders. Such people are very vulnerable. Their decision to get help is commendable compared to the many sex offenders who have absolutely no intention of giving up their perversions. What is at stake here is whether Christians have the right to speak of God's forgiveness and whether sex offenders have the right to receive it and lead changed lives. There is also an effect on secular treatment.

Therapy bans are an attack on the mind of Christ

As has become evident in California⁸ and Malta⁹, laws aimed at banning 'conversion therapy' are really being used to attack the religious freedom of Christians, specifically the right to uphold publicly the nature of marriage, sexual ethics, and as such traditional orthodox interpretation of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. In Malta, gay rights activists¹⁰ and even government ministers¹¹ were complicit in stretching the meaning of 'conversion therapy' (as 'healing') to include Christian testimony and thus spinning tall tales on the matter. In California therapists managed to alert church leaders¹² to the fact that a ban would constitute the thin edge of the wedge as regards state control of Christian pastoral care.

When we consider that Jesus Christ upheld the teaching of Genesis 1-2 we must reckon

with the fact that this is an attack on the mind of Christ about the Old Testament and its fulfilment in the times of the New Testament. The Gospels of Matthew and Mark record Christ's teaching on marriage which is explicitly based on the book of Genesis. Thus an attack on Christians' freedom to teach about this and to organise churches and groups based on this is among other things an attack on the interpretation of Holy Scripture.

Those who spy on other Christians' liberty will come after you too

The Apostle Paul refers to 'false believers' who were brought in secretly into the church in Galatia and says this of them:

"[They] slipped in to spy out our freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might bring us into slavery." (Galatians 2: 4)

Three times now gay activist journalists have gone undercover to Christian events, pretending to be Christians, ostensibly to expose pastoral care helping people move away from homosexuality. Three times these journalists have shown no evidence of acknowledging that there are other men with homosexual attraction who, unlike them, find it undesirable and want to be rid of it, let alone that they have the right to determine their own sexual orientation. By the third time, it should be obvious what the real aim is – to make the case that Christian men with same-sex attraction should get in (or back into) the gay lifestyle. Never mind if they have wives and children.

The third undercover journalist worked for ITN, and secretly bugged a room where a self-help meeting of Christian men with sex addiction was taking place¹³. The sole obsession of this journalist was to find out whether any men said their addiction was homosexual. However the fact is that Journey UK, to which the group was linked, also has a group for the wives of these men¹⁴. In other words, they too need pastoral care, to save their marriages. To attack such work is to be complicit in the desecration of marriage.

Putting Christian groups and churches under surveillance is something that has happened in Communist regimes for a long time. It happened in eastern Europe during the Cold War and it is happening today in China. The fact that it is starting to be done in the United Kingdom – once the home of religious freedom and free speech – shows just how far this

country has sunk during the last fifty years. For make no mistake of it, this government is passively supporting this totalitarian tendency.

Don't let the true church go underground in the United Kingdom

It is impossible to have a Christian church and outreach without Christian sexual ethics rooted in the doctrines of creation and fall. Defending people's right to treatment is not just an individual matter, it now involves the need to defend people's right to have small groups and to keep matters confidential within those groups. It should be obvious that this extends to entire churches and therefore comes under freedom of assembly as well as the right to privacy (freedom from surveillance) and the right to respect for private and family life.

If you are watching from the sidelines and thinking 'my church does not offer counselling for people to move from homosexual attraction and behaviour to heterosexual attraction and behaviour, therefore I/we won't be affected by a therapy ban', think again. As this is all really a worldwide attack on the Bible and Christian ethics in relation to human sexuality and embodiment, it is an all-out attack on Christianity. It is time Christians in the UK stood up to be counted otherwise much vital Christian pastoral work will be forced underground here and internationally.

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- ¹ <https://www.reuters.com/article/un-rights-lgbt/interview-u-n-envoy-wants-global-ban-on-barbaric-conversion-therapies-idUSL8N1TG4NA>
- ² <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-government-action-plan-pledges-to-improve-the-lives-of-lgbt-people--2>
- ³ <https://www.washingtonblade.com/2018/11/05/exclusive-new-un-lgbti-watchdog-talks-global-progress-backlash/>
- ⁴ <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+6%3A9-11&version=ESV>
- ⁵ <https://archive.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/freedom-of-speech/a-judicial-warning-shot-that-should-put-the-fear-of-god-into-us-andre>
- ⁶ <https://christianconcern.com/ccpressreleases/christian-prison-worker-loses-appeal-over-quoting-bible-in-chapel-service/>
- ⁷ https://www.psychotherapy.org.uk/media/cptnc5qm/mou2-reva_0421_web.pdf
- ⁸ <https://thefederalist.com/2018/05/04/californias-lgbt-therapy-ban-would-ban-christianity-itself/>
- ⁹ <https://christianconcern.com/comment/x-factor-malta-silences-ex-gay-singers-christian-testimony/>
- ¹⁰ <https://lovinmalta.com/opinion/reactions/x-factor-contestants-audition-pulled-from-facebook-and-youtube-after-gay-conversion-backlash/>
- ¹¹ <https://lovinmalta.com/news/equality-minister-hits-out-at-tvm-for-allowing-gay-conversion-comments-on-x-factor-malta/>
- ¹² <https://lc.org/newsroom/details/083118-ca-counseling-ban-is-dead>
- ¹³ <https://www.itv.com/news/2018-11-13/itv-news-undercover-the-christian-charity-that-claims-you-can-change-your-sexuality>
- ¹⁴ <https://www.journey-uk.org/tag-wives/>