

And In Other News...

“Conversion Therapy”: When Pastors and Churches Support a Psychological Counterfeit

Shaun Willcock

“Conversion therapy” is a form of psychotherapy which aims at re-orientating homosexuals to a heterosexual position, via psychological counselling combined with prayer, etc. Angry homosexual activists and their fellow-travellers in more than one Western country have agitated for it to be criminalised, and it has indeed now been banned in certain states of the USA, and in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and France. All this has large numbers of psychologised professing Christians up in arms, claiming it amounts to banning evangelism and is nothing less than State-sanctioned persecution of Christianity.¹

However, although we certainly acknowledge that banning “conversion therapy” could indeed result in the persecution of Christians, it is important to understand that this is *not* because “conversion therapy” is Christian – for it is not. Every single Christian should be opposed to “conversion therapy” itself, not supportive of it, because it is psychology – and psychology is neither scientific nor Christian.² “Although psychotherapeutic systems of conversion therapy differ from psychoanalytic to torturous types of behavioristic treatments, none have anything to salve the soul of those with burdened consciences. For too long pastors and so-called Christian ministries have been referring fellow believers out to a worldly system that can only alter and strengthen the old, sinful Adamic nature, which is in enmity against God (Rom. 8:7). In other words, even so-called Christian psychotherapists are using a system that panders to what the Bible refers to as the flesh or carnal nature, in contrast to the new man in Christ, of whom Paul says: ‘Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new’ (2 Cor. 5:17).”³

Unfortunately, however, psychology has so completely permeated almost every aspect of Western society that it has massively influenced much of what professes to be the “Church” of our day. Untold numbers of professing Christians have come to believe that there is such a thing as “Christian Psychology”, and that for this reason “conversion therapy” is a powerful tool to assist homosexuals to be delivered from their sinful lifestyle. In this they greatly err. This false belief reveals a lamentable lack of knowledge of biblical doctrine, and of the divine work and nature of regeneration and conversion to Christ.

In Canada “conversion therapy” was banned in January 2022, which has horrified churches and pastors there. At this stage the law only applies to psychotherapists. In an “Abstract” of a law volume entitled *The Legal Status of Conversion Therapy*, the law states: “The bans do not apply at all to private individuals or ‘members of the clergy... providing religious counseling to congregants.’”⁴ This sounds reassuring to Christians and pastors; but the fact is that whenever certain practices pertaining to issues of the *heart* and *mind* are made illegal by any government, it is indeed a slippery slope from there to eventual inclusion of churches and pastors in the prohibition, as demonstrated by what has happened in the UK. There, the alphabet soup activists (the LGBTQIRSTUVWXYZ crowd – feel free to add as many letters as you like, the list is forever growing) have been very vociferous. For example, when a UK government consultation called for public opinion and response regarding the banning of “conversion therapy”, the *Humanists UK* organisation leapt into the fray, asserting angrily that any attempt at all to change or suppress a person’s “sexual orientation”, by any means whatsoever, is inherently “morally wrong”. They claim (falsely) that a person’s so-called “sexual orientation” is

fixed and permanent, and does not need to change. Therefore, as far as they are concerned defining such behaviour as sinful is “deeply harmful”. They have actually stated: “we believe this ban should include verbal communications... such as confessions/repentances... and attendance on religious courses.” In other words, the *Humanists UK* organisation wants to make it a criminal offence for Christians even to *speak* to homosexuals about their sin and seek to lead them to repent of it. Even consensual prayer would be criminalised!

When some 2500 religious leaders in the UK wrote to the minister for women and equalities about these government plans, asking lawmakers to ensure that prayer and preaching were not outlawed, the response of Robert Mee of the LGBT-promoting organisation Out of the Bay was that this letter was as evil as the Holocaust! He said: “Have we forgotten about the Holocaust and how LGBTQI people were persecuted and killed– history is repeating itself.” He also said, “Conversion therapy is barbaric – punishing people for being who they are. Surely churches are supposed to love everyone – did God not teach this?”⁵

It’s amazing, isn’t it, how people who hate the Bible and Christianity, and fight against its commandments with all their might, presume to dictate to Christians what we are *supposed* to preach and practice and what God is *supposed* to have said? This poor man is very mistaken: God did *not* teach that churches are supposed to “love everyone” in the sense in which he means it – by overlooking their sins, welcoming them regardless of how depraved their lifestyles are, and permitting them to continue living their sinful lifestyles!

Mr Mee should learn the true facts of history: that many of the top leaders of the Nazi party were homosexuals. But be that as it may, no Bible-believing Christian has *ever* threatened to kill, or called for the killing of, homosexuals. How then is “history repeating itself”? LGBT activists cannot point to a single example of any Bible-believing Christian doing this – but Christians are able to point to numerous examples of homosexual activists threatening to kill Christians, to destroy church buildings, to rape Christians, etc., etc.! The threats of violence all come from the homosexual side.

As for “punishing people for being who they are”: how is praying for or speaking to someone punishing them for who they are? Christians do not go out with weapons and force homosexuals into their church buildings, strap them to chairs and punish them! They only preach the Gospel; and if a homosexual, just like any other sinner, voluntarily asks to know more, how is this punishment? These statements are deliberately designed to mislead.

Another LGBT activist, Jayne Ozanne, stated: “I would strongly refute that ‘gentle non-coercive prayer’ should be allowed. All prayer that seeks to change or suppress someone’s innate sexuality or gender identity is deeply damaging and causes immeasurable harm.”⁶ What utter nonsense! How can it be deeply damaging, how can it cause immeasurable harm, if someone seeks it *voluntarily*? No one is strapped to a chair in a dimly-lit interrogation room and tortured into accepting it! She admits such prayer is “non-coercive”, which of course means (self-evidently) that *no coercion is used*. By any sane standard of measurement, how can this be harmful or damaging?

Such statements are so typical of the alphabet soup activists, seeking to overturn all biblically-based morality. They know they are lying through their teeth, but they don’t care. For them the end justifies the means. They never let the facts get in their way.

In its desire to please the shrill and shrieking PC-brigade, the UK government consultation document claims that some of those practicing “conversion therapy” have used rape, assault, the forcible administration of drugs, and electric shock therapy to try to change homosexuals! This was also stated by LGBT activist Alicia Kearns, who said that even Christian prayer should be banned, and added: “Conversion therapy can range from ‘therapy’ and prayer sessions, to aversive treatments like electroshocks or even ‘corrective’ rape.”⁷

This is arrant nonsense. These things were done in the past (although not by Christians), but they are now criminalised – and rightly so. No Christian would ever advocate, much less practice, such barbaric methods. In claiming that they do so, both the government document and the powerful

LGBTQ+ lobby intend to paint Christians in the worst possible colours by declaring them guilty of hideous crimes.

But even though “conversion therapy” is non-physical and thus harmless to the bodies of those seeking it out, it is still a completely antichristian “therapy” that should be rejected by all true Christian pastors and churches! It is a satanic alternative to biblical conversion. This is what is so troubling, indeed extremely disturbing, about the opposition by so many churches and pastors to governments banning it: the vast majority of these churches and pastors are *in favour* of psychoheresy, and thus of this version of it as well! They have been so psychologised, they are so committed to the ungodly and anti-biblical tenets of psychology, and they are so supportive of the heresy known as “Christian psychology”, that they are up in arms because Western governments are clamping down on a *psychological* (not biblical) therapy which no true Christian should be supporting anyway! It is a non-biblical psychological method of “therapy” which has nothing whatsoever to do with the Gospel of Christ. If there was nothing more to it than that certain countries want to ban it, this should not, in and of itself, be of any concern whatsoever to Christians. The only aspect of this entire business which Christians should be concerned about is that the ban could potentially be expanded to include the banning of Christians seeking to lead homosexuals to repent of their sinful lifestyles. As we have seen above with what is occurring in the UK, this is *already* a grave danger to Christians there, and could soon become so in other countries as well.

The tragedy is that a vast number of churches and pastors in the West have so completely fallen for the lie of psychology that they actually refer the members of their churches to psychotherapists for “help” with the problems of life! They have in effect rejected the biblical doctrine of the all-sufficiency of Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16), as well as the biblical doctrine that the Lord’s divine power has given to His people all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3,4). The real reason so many pastors and churches are up in arms over the banning of “conversion therapy” is because they believe psychology can be alligned with Scripture, and that believers should go to psychotherapists for answers to the various issues of living with which they are confronted.

The biggest culprits in promoting the lie of “Christian psychology”, and for causing so many pastors and churches worldwide to fall for this lie, are the pseudo-Christian organisations Focus on the Family (and its founder, James Dobson⁸), the American Family Association, and the Family Research Council. These organisations have “spent large amounts of money and received national coverage promoting a Freudian-based conversion therapy – the very kind of therapy that should be avoided by all believers. [Their] support for and promotion of Freudian-based psychotherapy has wreaked havoc in the lives of those who came for help.”⁹

Why then – since we reject psychology and “conversion therapy” outright – do we oppose any attempt to criminalise it? We do so *only* because such bans could lead to the persecution of Christians for praying for homosexuals, preaching or witnessing to them, and urging them to repent of their sins and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The criminalisation of “conversion therapy” will greatly erode freedom of speech and freedom of religion. This is of course denied by LGBT activists. For example, the pro-LGBT Ozanne Foundation stated, “This is not a matter of freedom of speech... this harmful practice is unfortunately promoted and practiced primarily by religious leaders”.¹⁰ Oh, but it most definitely *is* a matter of freedom of speech. Although as Bible-believing Christians we are utterly opposed to “conversion therapy”, as long as it does not physically harm anyone it should not be banned. Once a nation starts sliding down that slippery slope, it is only a matter of time before persecution follows. To slightly re-word the old saying: “I may disagree with what you say or teach, but I will defend your right to say or teach it – because if I don’t, *my* speech and teachings may be next on the hit list.” Freedom of speech must mean just that: freedom to say what one likes. When speech is coerced or outlawed, then we have become slaves to the State. The State has the God-given authority to protect the *physical* lives of its citizens – but not to tell them what they may believe, say or think.

The criminalisation of “conversion therapy” will be just the beginning. If such things as consensual

prayer, speaking to someone, etc., can be criminalised in this case, it will not end there. Slowly but surely it will be expanded until other aspects of the faith are criminalised as well. It could very well result in the banning of the teaching of other doctrines, in time. Seeking to allay such fears, a UK government spokesman for “equality” (how laughable!) stated: “The Government’s proposals to ban conversion therapy will not impact everyday religious practice.”¹¹ How many times throughout history have governments given such assurances? And how many times have they meant nothing more than the paper they were written on? Considering the outright hostility being demonstrated towards Christianity and Christians throughout the West today, any Christian who trusts such a government assurance would be naive indeed.

In summary: in and of itself, a government ban on “conversion therapy” would have no effect whatsoever on Bible-believing Christians, because we completely reject psychology as antibiblical nonsense. But because of the potential danger to Christians in the long run, as governments lump Bible-believing Christians in with all kinds of other groups, we should indeed be *very* concerned about these bans. The situation is analogous to a government banning the teachings and practices of a false religion like Hinduism. We care nothing for Hinduism, for we know it is a false religion; but a ban on Hinduism could ultimately lead to a ban on Christianity. If we desire freedom of religion and freedom of expression for ourselves, then we must also desire it for others. We seek to propagate the true Gospel of Christ not by banning the false ones, but by preaching the true one fully and freely.

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Shaun Willcock is a minister, author and researcher. He runs Bible Based Ministries. For other articles (which may be downloaded and printed), as well as details about his books, audio messages, pamphlets, etc., please visit the Bible Based Ministries website; or write to the address below. If you would like to be on Bible Based Ministries’ email list, to receive all future articles, please send your details.

Bible Based Ministries

info@biblebasedministries.co.uk
www.biblebasedministries.co.uk

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Psychology: False Science, False Religion (MP3 set), by Shaun Willcock. Available as a free download on the Bible Based Ministries website. Go to:

<https://www.biblebasedministries.co.uk/tapes/various-messages/>

ENDNOTES:

1. *Creation.com*, 22 February 2022. “Humanists UK seek to ‘ban repentance’!” www.creation.com.
2. *Psychology: False Science, False Religion*, by Shaun Willcock. Free MP3 set available for downloading on our website: <https://www.biblebasedministries.co.uk/tapes/various-messages/>
3. *PsychoHeresy Awareness Ministries*, July 6, 2022. “Conversion Therapy Bans: Aargh!” <https://pamweb.org>.
4. *PsychoHeresy Awareness Ministries*, February 16, 2022. “Conversion Therapy Ban Reactions.” <https://pamweb.org>.
5. *WND*, March 5, 2022. “LGBT campaigner likens Christianity to the Holocaust.” www.wnd.com.
6. *WND*, March 5, 2022.
7. *WND*, March 5, 2022.
8. For a detailed and biblical critique of the “ministry” of James C. Dobson, see *Prophets of PsychoHeresy II: Critiquing Dr. James C. Dobson*, by Martin and Deidre Bobgan. EastGate Publishers, Santa Barbara, California, 1990.
9. *PsychoHeresy Awareness Ministries*, July 6, 2022.
10. *WND*, March 5, 2022.
11. *The Telegraph*, 12 February 2022. “Christian teachings to be protected from conversion therapy ban, says Government.”