

# ANDREW CUNNING:

## ‘PROGRESSIVE THEOLOGIAN’?

(APPENDIX added 26<sup>th</sup> March 2022)

Back in July 2021 I wrote an article called ‘**LYNDA BRYANS**’: ‘**Spiritually Suspect**’ – it can be accessed on this link - <https://www.takeheed.info/pdf/2021/July/lynda-bryans-sprituually-suspect.pdf> My reason for referring back to this article is that I began it with these words –

Over quite a period of time now, the Belfast Telegraph Religious Affairs correspondent, ALF McCREARY, has published the results of a set of questions he has posed to well-known figures who would have usually some religious ‘attachments’. On rare occasions some have featured sound biblical Christians, but as I said, they are ‘rare’.

In this article I am once more going to examine the questions posed to and the answers given by an individual – this time a young man called **ANDREW CUNNING**. These were published in the Belfast Telegraph of Saturday 12th February 2022.

Back on 28th April 2021 I spoke in Moira Presbyterian Church on the subject of so-called ‘**Progressive Christianity**’ and I made a brief reference to **ANDREW CUNNING**. This is the link to video of that talk - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=usHhtX-STKE&t=3620s> and the relevant portion runs from around **51.48 to 53.37**. I mention in that portion that **ANDREW CUNNING** was associated then with a **pro-LGBT group** called ‘**Left Side Up**’ and that on their web site there was an article by him on the subject of ‘**hell**’ and I explain how he totally rejected the reality of it and that he was basically ‘**a universalist**’.

Later in 2021 he ended his association with that group and they in turn subsequently closed their Belfast Office at the end of January 2022 as two of the main figures in the group (**June Carton and her husband Ian, former Whitehead Presbyterian Church minister who left the Presbyterian Church because of its unwillingness to compromise Biblical truth where LGBT matters are concerned**) were feeling rather ‘stressed out’ plus it would appear that possibly maintaining the office was not financially viable

In my web site article on ‘**Progressive Christianity**’ I make reference to **the Cartons** – the article can be viewed on this link - <https://www.takeheed.info/pdf/2021/March/progressive-christianity.pdf> and the relevant pages of the article are from the foot of page 19 (**APPENDIX**) through to page 22. As the ‘**Left Side up**’ web site has also been discontinued the article on ‘**hell**’ by **ANDREW CUNNING** is unfortunately no longer accessible on the link that I gave in my article.

I propose now to list in one column the questions posed. Then in a second column I will give **ANDREW CUNNING's** answers and then in a third column I will post my observations/comments on his answers. The **preface** above these answers and questions reads **'In conversation with ANDREW CUNNING: Andrew Cunning is a theologian'**.

The Dictionary definition of a **'theologian'** is **"A person VERSED (thoroughly knowledgeable about, acquainted with skilled in) in or engaged in the study of theology"** and **'theology'**, as it pertains to Christianity, is defined as **"the SYSTEMATIC study of Christian revelation concerning God's nature and purpose"**. I think what you will now read will help you to determine whether or not **ANDREW CUNNING** warrants the title of **'theologian'** as understood in Christian terms.

Question:	Andrew's answer:	Cecil's observations:
1. Tell me about your background?	I am a 29-year-old <b>theologian</b> originally from Coleraine now living and working in Belfast. I was educated at Killowen Primary School and Coleraine Academical Institution. I studied <b>theology</b> and English at Queen's University and went on to become a teacher. In 2018 I completed a PhD in <b>theology</b> and published my first book, a study of American writer Marilynne Robinson, in 2021. I recently lectured in <b>theology</b> at Trinity College Dublin and I am teaching public <b>theology</b> courses across Northern Ireland to make <b>theology</b> more accessible and conversational.	<p>From both the <b>preface</b> and this answer, great emphasis has been laid upon <b>ANDREW CUNNING</b> being a <b>'theologian'</b> and his having studied, taken a degree in, lectured on and publicly taught <b>'theology'</b>.</p> <p>As you will read in his answer to question 3, he describes himself as a <b>'Christian theologian'</b>. A helpful definition of <b>'THEOLOGY'</b> as understood in <b>CHRISTIAN</b> terms is found in the <b>'Dictionary of Theological Terms'</b> by (the late) Alan Cairns – it reads –</p> <p><b>'Greek <i>theos</i> "God" and <i>logos</i> "word"; the systematic study of the being, attributes, purposes and works of God, and of the world, man and history in relation to Him. It is usually referred to as a science, because it should be conducted by the investigation of the objective data of divine revelation, which has its full expression in the written and incarnate word – i. e. in the Bible and its Christ-centred message. Indeed, theology used to be called the queen of sciences.</b></p> <p><u><b>This basis in an objective, divine revelation</b></u> is what marks the difference between theology and philosophy or metaphysical speculation. However, with the spread of subjectivism and the decline into more and more man-centred methods, much of what passes for theology grows increasingly like speculative philosophy.'</p> <p>I think this definition captures perfectly what in many ways is the 'speculative philosophy' rather than the 'Christian theology' of <b>ANDREW CUNNING</b> that will be found in many of his answers.</p>

<p>2. How and when did you come to faith?</p>	<p>I became a Christian through my local Youth Fellowship at First Coleraine Presbyterian Church. Although I am not sure what 'becoming a Christian' means any longer. I do remember being told to ask for the forgiveness of my sins. I was a youth group regular for the rest of my teens.</p>	<p>This answer simply serves to pose additional questions – Andrew starts by saying 'I became a Christian' but then he goes on to say 'I am not sure what "becoming a Christian" means any longer'. If that is the case, how does he understand the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian? He talks about 'being told to ask for forgiveness of my sins' – did he 'decide' to do that and is he viewing that 'decision' as what made him 'become a Christian'? Sadly, what is termed '<b>Decisional Regeneration</b>' has deceived multitudes into thinking that they have become Christians, when, unfortunately, the reality is very different - this link goes to the text of a very helpful booklet so-named - <a href="https://www.semperreformanda.com/doctrine-2/decisional-regeneration-by-james-adams/">https://www.semperreformanda.com/doctrine-2/decisional-regeneration-by-james-adams/</a> Tragically, this 'testimony' by ANDREW CUNNING is virtually devoid of any meaningful theological content such as the reason the Lord Jesus Christ suffered and died on the Cross of Calvary as a substitute for guilty sinners.</p>
<p>3. Does this faith play a real part in your life, or is it only for Sundays?</p>	<p>I find faith fascinating and have dedicated my life to its study. As a <b>Christian theologian</b> I find it impossible to separate the academic study of Jesus from how I see the contemporary world. For me, being a Christian is heavily political. I cannot live comfortably in a world so far removed from the ideals of the Beattitudes for example. And I don't understand how some people read the Bible and vote the way they do. I guess they could say the same about me</p>	<p>The 'faith' of Andrew appears to be very much 'political' and 'social' and focussed on the 'here and now' in this world. He appears to want a world where everyone adheres to what he refers to as 'the ideals of the Beattitudes'. The 'Beattitudes' are a template for how CHRISTIANS should live in this world, to distinguish them from 'the world' and in consequence they will be "salt" and "light" in a spiritually dark and corrupt world. That is to be the outworking of their 'faith' BUT their 'faith' is something else. In Hebrews 11:1 we read "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen". For me, this definition, is 'other-worldly' – it refers to what God has promised in His word, that one day He will "make all things new" (Revelation 21:5). Who possesses such 'faith'? Those who have a testimony to having been "saved" – "For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the GIFT of God" (Ephesians 2:8). For those who have experienced this supernatural conversion (the being "born again" of John 3:3; the being "born of God" of John 1:13) the "substance of things hoped for" is the knowledge that their eternal destiny is to "be with Christ" (Philippians 1:23) and "the evidence of things not seen" is the confidence that the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ "has washed them from their sins in his own blood" (Revelation 1:5). Yes, Christians are 'in the world' but at the same time they are not "of the world" (John 17:14 &amp; 16). Whilst here on earth, our gifted 'faith' makes us "ambassadors for Christ" and our 'mission' relates not to temporal matters but to eternal matters - "be ye reconciled to God" (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:20). As we are confronted by the affairs of this world Paul tells us "Set your affections (your mind) on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:2) With Andrew's wrong understanding of 'faith' comes his wrong outworking of it.</p>

<p>4. Have you ever had a crisis of faith, or a gnawing doubt about your faith?</p>	<p>In my early 20s I was ready to pack in Christianity. The faith I was handed in Youth Fellowship and through church simply didn't stand up to scrutiny. The Bible wasn't written by God, it wasn't error free and it really did contain some horrible passages. It has taken some time to find something worth holding on to it.</p>	<p><b>First-off – TRUE Christians don't and indeed can't 'pack in Christianity' – the Saviour Himself states that in John 10:27-29</b> "MY sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I GIVE unto them eternal life; THEY shall NEVER perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father which GAVE them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand". <b>'The faith that Andrew was handed in Youth Fellowship' failed to 'stand up to scrutiny' for the reason that I outlined in my closing comments to his reply to Question 3 namely that he possessed a 'wrong understanding of faith'. Concerning his statements about the Bible – 'it wasn't written by God' – that contradicts what Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3:16</b> "ALL scripture is given by inspiration of God" – literally 'breathed out by God'; Then, 'it wasn't error free' – that contradicts for example Proverbs 30:5 "EVERY word of God is pure" – literally 'has been tested and found to be without error'. Then, 'it did contain some horrible passages' – the Bible describes the history of fallen, sinful humanity and as a consequence it describes human depravity in great detail and also divine retribution in great detail. How should we react to such detailed revelation? True believers 'bow their knees' to the sovereignty of God and should look to the example of Job, who suffered greatly and intensely and yet could say "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21) and "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (Job 13:15). As a self-professed 'theologian', Andrew needs to understand that even in 'some horrible passages' the glory of God is displayed. When Pharaoh's pursuing armies were destroyed by God in the waters of the Red sea, the resultant song of Moses that rose from his lips included these words "I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed GLORIOUSLY: the horse and his rider hath been thrown into the sea ... Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea ... Thy right hand, O Lord, is become GLORIOUS in power; thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. And IN THE GREATNESS OF THINE EXCELLENY thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee: ... Who is like unto thee O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, GLORIOUS in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders (Exodus 15:1-11) For Christians, the most 'horrible passages' should refer to the mocking, scourging and crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. And yet, 'horrible' as the narrative of these passages is, from the divine standpoint, they brought GLORY to God - GLORY that Christ prayed for – "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee" (John 17:1). The final comment of ANDREW is difficult to fully fathom because of the way it is phrased but it does appear to rule out total reliance by him on the Bible alone</p>
---	--	--

<p>5. Have you ever been angry with God, and if so, why?</p>	<p>No. I don't think I have. I have a hard time thinking of God as a person. God to me, is ultimate reality, the thing that makes possibility possible. I often get angry at the reality of life, so maybe this is what getting angry with God means.</p>	<p>Again, this answer calls into question Andrew's whole claim to be a 'Christian theologian'. He says he has 'a hard time thinking of God as a person' and refers to him as 'the thing'. He says he gets angry 'at the reality' of life' (? the misery/brutality of life at times?) and posits that may be him getting angry with the God who 'makes possibility possible'. I can say with certainty that these thoughts and views are NOT based on God's revelation of Himself in His Word and in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. If God is not 'a person' then why would the Lord instruct us to address God as 'Our Father" (Matthew 6:9) - language reserved for 'persons'. The whole thrust of the Bible is that God can be intimately and personally known through faith alone in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ alone. In His great high-priestly prayer of John 17 the Lord is not praying to some 'ultimate reality' – listen to these words "FATHER, the hour is come ... I have glorified THEE on the earth ... And now O FATHER, glorify thou me with THINE OWN SELF with the glory which I had with THEE before the world was ... And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world and I come to THEE. HOLY FATHER keep through THINE own name those whom THOU hast given me, that they may be one AS WE ARE" (v1-11). <b>From the very dawn of creation in Eden, God demonstrated His 'person' in how He interacted with our first parents – Genesis 1:28-29 "And God BLESSED them, and God SAID unto them, Be fruitful and multiply ... And God SAID, Behold I have given you every herb bearing seed" Genesis 3: 8-9 "And they heard the VOICE of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day ... And the Lord God CALLED unto Adam". I think Andrew should ponder deeply these words of the Lord in John 17:3 "And this is life eternal, that they might KNOW THEE, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom THOU hast sent".</b></p>
<p>6. Do you ever get criticised for your faith and are you able to live with that criticism?</p>	<p>Yes. For the past number of years, I have been quite public in making the case for a more progressive inclusive theological landscape in Northern Ireland. I get criticised for this and the strongest criticism comes from socially conservative Christians. For many people, Christianity and social conservatism are synonymous, so trying to articulate a progressive Christianity seems like an act of heresy to some of them.</p>	<p><b>ANDREW</b> uses a term to describe his critics as being 'socially conservative Christians'. A more honest and accurate term would be 'BIBLICALLY conservative Christians' because these people, and I include myself in the ranks, disagree with his 'progressive Christianity' because it confronts or contradicts 'social norms' and other matters as revealed to us by God in His Word. That was very much at the heart of my talk on 'Progressive Christianity' that can be viewed on the link I also gave earlier - <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=usHhtX-STKE&amp;t=3620s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=usHhtX-STKE&amp;t=3620s</a> There is no question over Andrew's 'Progressive Christianity' SEEMING to be 'like an act of heresy' – it IS without doubt 'an act of heresy'. In his 'Dictionary of Theological Terms' the late Alan Cairns defined 'HERESY' as follows - 'A deliberate denial of revealed truth together with the acceptance of error (2 Peter 2:1) The basic meaning of the Greek word <i>hairesis</i> is "choice" giving the meaning of heresy as a self-willed opinion in opposition to Biblical truth'.</p>

<p>7. Are you ever ashamed of your own church or denomination?</p>	<p>Yes, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland has fallen so far short of the Gospel in recent years that I wouldn't dream of attending a regular church service there</p>	<p>Whilst ANDREW hasn't specifically spelt out what he means by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland having 'fallen so far short of the Gospel in recent years', I think the evidence of what he means is shown by what he has taken a particular interest in over recent years. He has publicly aligned himself and been involved with a group that 'campaigns' for LGBT people to be 'fully involved' in the life of the church. That group was called 'LEFT SIDE UP' and again I made reference to it in the video of my talk on 'Progressive Christianity' – two leading figures in that group were husband and wife Ian and June Carton. Mr Carton had been the minister of Whitehead Presbyterian Church but he felt compelled to resign over these LGBT issues and his wife had many months earlier stopped attending the church over the same issues. I mention their situation in an APPENDIX to my web site article on the subject – it is located on <a href="https://www.takeheed.info/pdf/2021/March/progressive-christianity.pdf">https://www.takeheed.info/pdf/2021/March/progressive-christianity.pdf</a> and the relevant section begins at the foot of page 19.</p> <p>'LEFT SIDE UP' did for a period of time have an office on the Donegal Road in Belfast but that has now closed. ANDREW, as well as having been connected with 'LEFT SIDE UP' for a period of time has also identified himself with the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and that being the case he would have been aware that the PCI regards The Bible as its Supreme Standard of Faith and the Westminster Confession of Faith as its Subordinate Standard of Faith. On 'MARRIAGE', the WCF states 'MARRIAGE is between one man and one woman ... MARRIAGE ought not to be within the degrees of consanguinity (blood relationship) or affinity (attraction) forbidden by the Word' – this mention of 'affinity' (attraction) reflects the many passages of scripture that show clearly God's view of so-called 'same-sex relationships' – they are in His eyes an 'abomination' and so they are utterly unacceptable lifestyles as far as He (God) is concerned.</p> <p>An informative article outlining events involving the PCI and LGBT matters over recent years can be viewed on this link - <a href="https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/deep-rifts-over-presbyterian-church-s-hard-line-on-same-sex-marriage-1.4057050">https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/deep-rifts-over-presbyterian-church-s-hard-line-on-same-sex-marriage-1.4057050</a></p> <p>Whilst ANDREW believes the PCI has 'fallen short of the Gospel' and whilst the newspaper article heading refers to 'a hard line on same-sex-marriage' the reality is that the PCI have neither 'fallen short' nor taken 'a hard line' – they have simply been BIBLICAL - faithful to the clear teaching of God's Word, the Bible, and for that they have nothing to be ashamed of before God. A photograph that I will include later in this article provides good evidence for my assessment of ANDREW's stance on these issues (see page 22).</p>
--	--	---



<p>8. Are you afraid to die, or can you look beyond death?</p>	<p>I am not afraid to die because I seem to have an inbuilt sense that what awaits us will be so good that we will look back at this life with regret that we didn't live freely and love recklessly.</p>	<p>So, ANDREW bases his opinion on what awaits 'us' (presumably a universal everyone, which was his view in an article on 'hell' that was on the 'LEFT SIDE UP' web site but which unfortunately can no longer be accessed – this was the original link to it <a href="https://www.leftsideupni.com/post/we-need-to-rethink-hell">https://www.leftsideupni.com/post/we-need-to-rethink-hell</a> but the web site is no longer there) after death on some 'inbuilt sense' that he possesses and not on what God has clearly revealed in the Bible. He obviously dismisses the biblical teaching that after death there will be a judgment and that for some it will be blessed bliss and that for others it will be unending misery (see Hebrews 9:27 and Matthew 25:31-46).</p> <p>In Revelation 2:11 reference is made to a "second death". Matthew Henry when commenting on this, wrote 'Observe, (1.) There is not only a first, but a second death, a death after the body is dead. (2.) This second death is unspeakably worse than the first death, both in the dying pangs and agonies of it (which are the agonies of the soul, without any mixture of support) and in the duration; it is eternal death, dying the death, to die and to be always dying. This is hurtful indeed, fatally hurtful, to all who fall under it'.</p> <p>John MacArthur comments briefly 'The first death is only physical; the second is spiritual and eternal' and he then cross-references that comment with Revelation 20:14 "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death" and in turn he then references this with Revelation 19:20 which also mentions "the lake of fire" and in his comments he says 'Lake of Fire – The final hell, the place of eternal punishment for all unrepentant rebels, angelic or human'.</p> <p>ANDREW clearly disagrees with the views of these gifted 'theologians' and in his own way he says to those who exit this world without a living, saving relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ – 'Ye shall not surely die' – parroting the words stated by Satan to our first parents in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:4).</p> <p>God's Word describes those who are "without" and not "in Christ" as possessing "no hope" (Ephesians 2:12-13). ANDREW is giving 'false hope' to such and encouraging them in the here and now to 'live freely' – sounds very much like the words of the sinful rebels mentioned in Psalm 2 "Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us" - and to 'love recklessly' – is this a reference to his support for those who engage in LGBT practices – practices that call down, not the approval of, but "the wrath of God" as we read in Romans 1:18-32. If ANDREW were to take seriously the truth of the Bible, then currently, he would indeed have every reason to be 'afraid to die' but sadly his 'theology' on this issue is neither biblical nor systematic.</p>
--	---	--

<p>9. Are you afraid of "hell-fire"?</p>	<p>Absolutely not. One of the biggest sins of the church is the invention of the idea of hell. It has done untold mental damage to millions of people.</p>	<p>I think by now it should be clear that a pattern is emerging where ANDREW's 'theology' is concerned – it is not FULLY based upon the Bible and as we have already seen it regularly and flatly rejects truths revealed in the Bible. He claims that 'the idea of hell' is a sinful 'invention of the church'. In saying that he is therefore rejecting the Holy-Spirit-inspired revelation of the truth of "hell" and ascribing it to the imagination of (saved) sinners who comprise 'the church'. It would probably take a full-length book to biblically refute what ANDREW has written so I will confine myself to one reference to "hell" by the Lord Jesus Christ. In Matthew 10, the Lord is preparing His disciples for what awaits them when they are sent forth to "preach" (verses 5-7). He outlines how dangerous it will be for them (verses 16-27). And then he says in verse 28 "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell". The Lord is basically affirming that there is a 'fate worse than (physical) death'. The Lord, by use of the word translated "destroy" is not saying that God will 'annihilate' or 'obliterate' unbelieving people. Rather he is confirming that unbelievers will suffer both physically in their resurrected bodies (see John 5:29) and spiritually in their souls. In the 'Conclusions and Recommendations' of the book 'The Nature of Hell' published by Evangelical Alliance we read this on page 132 '6. Hell is more than mere annihilation at the point of death. Rather, death will lead on to resurrection and final judgment to either heaven or hell (1 Corinthians 15:1-58; John 5: 25-29; Revelation20:11-14)'. This biblical truth about "hell" gives understanding of what the Lord meant when He said of Judas Iscariot in Matthew 26:24 "woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed. It had been good for that man if he had not been born". A 'fate worse than death' awaited Judas. In Vine's Dictionary of New Testament Words, it says this about "destroy" – 'The idea is not extinction but ruin, loss, not of being, but of well-being'. Dr Eryl Davies, a gifted Christian theologian, and former principle of 'The Evangelical Theological College of Wales' wrote this on page 87 of his book 'Condemned for ever' – 'In hell however, unbelievers will be ... separated from the kindness and goodness of God ... In hell you (unbelievers) will be cut off from God's mercy and salvation'. The text of a sermon preached by John MacArthur on the subject of "hell" is located on this link <a href="https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/80-376/the-truth-about-hell">https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/80-376/the-truth-about-hell</a> and it biblically refutes any notion, as posited by ANDREW, that "hell" has been sinfully invented by 'the church'. Another helpful resource is the book 'Another Gospel' by Alisa Childers that challenges in chapter 10 the 'Progressive Christian' views on "hell" and biblically refutes them.</p>
--	--	--



<p>10. Do you believe in a resurrection, and if so, what will it be like?</p>	<p>I have no idea what the Bible means when it talks about a resurrection. I am much more compelled by its vision of what the world would look like if the wealthy and powerful were brought down and swords were beaten into ploughshares. I really don't think a resurrection of the body will make everything okay. The work of building a kingdom of justice and mercy is continuous and now</p>	<p>Once again, by this answer, ANDREW demonstrates that he 'flatly rejects truths revealed in the Bible', as I wrote at the start of my comments on question 9. He basically dismisses a future "RESURRECTION" as being of trivial importance, preferring rather to focus on conditions in the 'here and now'. What a contrast between his focus and that of the Apostle Paul when he was witnessing and preaching. "Now when Paul waited for them (Silas and Timothy) at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. Therefore, disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him. Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans and Stoics encountered him. And some said, what will this babbler say? others, he seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus and THE RESURRECTION" (Acts 17:16-18) ... "And when they heard of THE RESURRECTION of the dead, some mocked him and others said, we will hear thee again of this matter (v 32). When debating with the Sanhedrin and realising that before him were both Sadducees who deny a resurrection and Pharisees who believed in a resurrection and after-life, Paul said "Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and RESURRECTION of the dead, I am called in question" (Acts 23:8). The truth of a bodily RESURRECTION was obviously a vital ingredient in the witnessing and preaching of Paul. There are many wonderful 'spiritual blessings' that flow to us (believers) as a result of our faith alone for salvation in the death of Christ alone – we are adopted into the family of God, accepted by God because of Christ, redeemed, forgiven, heirs to a heavenly inheritance, indwelt by the Holy Spirit – see Ephesians 1:3-14. THE great blessing for believers that flows from the RESURRECTION of Christ is JUSTIFICATION (perfectly and permanently pardoned Romans 5:1 &amp; Romans 8:1) and that is affirmed in Romans 4:24-25 "Jesus our Lord ... who was delivered (to the cross) for our offences and was raised again (RESURRECTED) for our justification" Christ's RESURRECTION demonstrated that His atoning substitutionary sacrifice for our sins had been accepted by His Father and He could now be both "just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Romans 3:26). The Bible first-off shows clearly that the RESURRECTION is a vital, integral element in God's plan of salvation. Christ's own RESURRECTION shows that it will be a bodily RESURRECTION for Paul wrote in Philippians 3: 20-21 of the longing of the hearts of believers who "look for (the coming from heaven of) the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body". As for ANDREW's focus on this present world and the 'kingdom' he wishes to build. the last 7 lines of my comments on question 3 address this.</p>
---	--	--

		<p>In conclusion, the Bible gives clear understanding of and meaning on the subject of RESURRECTION. We read “all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth” (John 5:28-29). Again, as regards what will happen, we read “the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed, for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:52-53) and earlier in the same chapter, speaking of the bodies of those who die, Paul wrote “It is sown (buried) in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body” (v 42-44). Such divine truths utterly reject what ANDREW wrote – ‘I really don’t think a resurrection of the body will make everything okay’.</p>
11. What about people of other denominations and other faiths?	<p>Every faith has so much rich language and vision to share. If God is ultimate reality, then I trust that other faiths have caught a glimpse of this reality that might have otherwise passed me by. –</p>	<p>ANDREW states that ‘every faith has so much RICH language and vision to share’ and he trusts that ‘other faiths have caught a glimpse of this reality’ that he believes is ‘God’. Unfortunately, as I explained in my comments on Question 5, ANDREW’s understanding of ‘God’ is totally skewed and unscriptural but he hopes that ‘other faiths have caught a glimpse of his flawed reality’.</p> <p>All ‘non-Christian’ and ‘erroneous <i>Christian</i> faiths’ have nothing, either by way of ‘language’ or ‘vision’ to share with the glorious truths revealed in the Bible. The rich language and vision of the Bible can be summed up in what Paul wrote in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 2:2 “For I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified”.</p> <p>In his letter to the Romans Paul outlines the ‘richness’ of the wisdom of God in chapter 11 “O the depth of the RICHES both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out. For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? ... For of him and through him and to him are all things in whom be glory for ever. Amen” (v 33-36). This refers directly to God’s divine plan of salvation.</p> <p>Every non-Christian and non-biblical faith promotes a ‘salvation’ of some sorts based entirely or partly upon human input of some kind. They use ‘rich’ language and have their ‘vision’ that they offer their followers but it will lead them from this cursed and fallen world, which will remain that way until Christ returns, into the ‘hell-fire’ that ANDREW denies and describes as a sinful ‘invention’ of ‘the church’. False ‘versions’ of Christianity and non-Christian faiths teach us absolutely nothing about the biblical truths that Salvation is by Grace Alone through Faith Alone in Christ Alone according to the Scriptures Alone and all to the Glory of God Alone.</p>

<p>12. Would you be comfortable in stepping out from your own faith and trying to learn something from other people?</p>	<p>Yes, without the wisdom of people from other traditions we all run the risk of becoming inward, backward and close-minded as the Presbyterian Church is demonstrating.</p>	<p>The main 'wisdom' we learn from people of other faiths or 'traditions' is usually just how many of them reject the true God, the true Lord Jesus Christ and the true Gospel as revealed in the Bible. False 'versions' of Christianity and non-Christian faiths teach us nothing about the biblical truths that Salvation is by Grace Alone through Faith Alone in Christ Alone according to the Scriptures Alone and all to the Glory of God Alone.</p> <p>ANDREW describes those, such as the Presbyterian Church, who seek to be faithful to the teachings of the Bible in certain crucial moral areas, as being 'inward', 'backward' and 'close-minded'. In doing so he is seeking to 'shoot the messenger' (the PCI) because he doesn't like the 'Biblical message' they are proclaiming and seeking to live by.</p> <p>The Bible regularly teaches God's people not to involve themselves with or adopt the practices of other 'faiths' around them. As his life was drawing to a close Joshua instructed God's people as follows –</p> <p>“Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses (in other words – be a biblical people) ... that ye come not among these nations that remain among you; neither make mention of the name of their gods ... But cleave unto the Lord your God ... Else if ye do in any wise go back and cleave unto the remnant of these nations ... know for a certainty that ... they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides and thorns in your eyes” (Joshua 23: 6-13).</p> <p>Whilst those words of warning applied to Old Testament Israel, the principle of 'separation' applies equally to the New Testament church for Paul instructed the believers in Corinth –</p> <p>“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? ... Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord and touch not the unclean thing” (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 6:15-17).</p> <p>When it comes to being a faithful Christian, we are commanded to be biblically 'close-minded'. The Lord Himself affirmed this in Matthew 4:4 “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by EVERY word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God”. That is a command that ANDREW's opinion is clearly at odds with.</p>
--	---	--

<p>13. Do you think that the churches here are fulfilling their mission?</p>	<p>The churches generally misunderstand what mission is. For many it involves the making of Christians and the preaching of the Gospel. For me, mission is the humbling of the mighty and seeking after the wisdom found at the margins of society.</p>	<p>The mission of the Church is to 'spiritually feed' the saved and to 'evangelise' the lost. The first aspect is identified in Acts 2:42 - believers "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and prayers". The Church is to 'spiritually feed' God's people and this verse is a good pattern for that mission. The 'apostles' doctrine' would be 'SOLA SCRIPTURA'- based. Listen to PETER "We have also a more sure word of prophecy ... as unto a light that shineth in a dark place ... Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation (scripture is not of human origin). For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:19-21). Notice that Peter likens God's Word to "a light that shineth in a dark place" dovetailing perfectly with Psalm 119: 105 "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path". Listen to PAUL as he instructs Timothy what to do in days that are very like those we are living in "PREACH the word; be instant in season, out of season (in other words, whether it is popular or not to the prevailing culture) ... For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine (as evidenced by ANDREW's clear rejection of such) but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears" (teachers like ANDREW who will 'tickles their ears' and give them what they want to hear). The second aspect of the church's mission, to 'evangelise' the lost, is clearly stated in a number of scriptures – Matthew 28:19-20 "Go ye therefore and TEACH all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. TEACHING them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you"; Mark 16:15 "Go ye into all the world and PREACH the gospel to every creature". The 'evangelisation' of the lost is to be through TEACHING and PREACHING – teaching and preaching what? Clearly the Word of God. The mission is to see souls saved to the glory of God. The mission is NOT to orchestrate 'societal change' per se although that can and often has happened in the wake of souls being saved as a result of the church fulfilling its 'evangelisation' mission. Bishop J C Ryle once wrote 'She (the church) must not allow herself to be used as a pressure group for the securing of certain rights and temporal benefits for men, nor to pressure the state for reform measures even though such reforms may be needed and desirable from the Christian viewpoint. Christians as individuals are indeed to work for whatever reforms may be needed but the Church is not to do so in her corporate capacity. Such action on the part of the Church almost invariably will detract from her primary mission of the proclamation of The Gospel and ministering to the spiritual needs of men and will tend to give people a wrong conception as to what her mission really is'.</p>
--	---	---

<p>14. Why are so many people turning their backs on organised religion?</p>	<p>It has done so much damage.</p>	<p><b>'Organised religion' as found for instance in Roman Catholicism has indeed done 'much damage' both to those involved in it (think of the priest-scandals) and to those opposed to it (think of The Inquisitions). But, 'organised religion' involving genuine "born again" believers, has done 'much good' over the centuries, and, even as I type this, such groups have been outstanding in their endeavours to help those badly affected by the Russia-Ukraine conflict. True believers will generally not 'turn their backs on organised religion' if it is founded upon and seeking to be faithful to what God has set forth in His Word, the Bible. Unfortunately, experience has shown over many, many years that within the ranks of 'organised religion' there are those who have never truly been "born again" and often they either 'cause dissention within the ranks' or they 'up sticks and go' just like ANDREW and just like those referred to in 1 John 2:18-19 "even now there are many antichrists (used here in the sense of 'false teachers' and 'deceivers'); whereby we know it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us".</b></p> <p><b>Even the 'best' of churches have an assortment of problems as the Lord's letters to the seven churches that we find in Revelation chapters 2 &amp; 3 demonstrate. One telling comment from the Lord is this to the 'spiritually-dying' church in Sardis – "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die" (Revelation 3:2).</b></p> <p><b>'Organised religion' when over-run with unbelievers has done 'much damage' but biblically-faithful 'organised religion' has also been a force for much good in the world as I mentioned earlier. True believers never lose the joy of meeting with fellow believers in organised gatherings and are exhorted to do so in Hebrews 10:25 "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together".</b></p> <p><b>However, unconverted church attenders will never be comfortable in biblically-faithful gatherings and, as a consequence, many will either stop going to any church or will possibly start attending 'progressive-type' gatherings that cater for their felt-needs and their preferences, the type of gatherings that ANDREW is now to be found in. Those who 'turn their backs' on biblically-faithful gatherings are more than likely Pseudo-Christians, unregenerate 'tares' as mentioned in the parable in Matthew 13:24-30. Possibly they have been so indoctrinated by the unscientific "evolution-obsessed" tosh that is passed off as education that in their eyes the Creation-Truth of Genesis is no more than 'myth' which as you will read later is the position adopted by ANDREW.</b></p>
--	------------------------------------	--

<p>15. Has religion helped or hindered the people of Northern Ireland?</p>	<p>It must be a mixture of both. There are books published about the important role churches have had in peacemaking here but there is also the history of religiously motivated violence.</p>	<p>Unfortunately, in Northern Ireland, professing to be a Christian has at times been linked to holding to a particular political viewpoint or to having a particular sporting allegiance. <b>Those links are wrong.</b> The way for true Christians to behave towards non-Christians, or those deceived into thinking they are Christians by systems such as Roman Catholicism, is to acknowledge the 'great spiritual gulf' (Luke 16:26) that exists and to live as 'salt' and 'light' before them (Matthew 5:13-16). We must respect non-Christians and deceived 'RC Christians' as 'lost' fellow human beings (as we were: Ephesians 2:1-3) but we must not 'respect' (defined - 'to treat with esteem') any false expression of religion/Christianity (Exodus 20:1-2; John 4:23-24). If ANDREW is referring to the relatively recent 'troubles' in Northern Ireland as being a 'history of religiously motivated violence' I would disagree as the root cause of those troubles was predominantly political – a clash 'Republican-Nationalism' and 'Historic-Unionism'. True, biblical 'religion' has of course been to both the temporal and eternal benefit of countless people/souls in Northern Ireland. The 'peacemaking' role that 'churches' and Christians are to be involved in is the reconciliation of sinful people to the Holy God of heaven – “Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:20). In closing, when it comes to 'religiously motivated violence', I do fear for the future of peace and stability in Northern Ireland because of the growing presence and influence of a major religion that has a 1400-year+ 'track-record' of violence-sanctioned growth.</p>
<p>16. Some personal preferences: your favourite film, book, music and why?</p>	<p>HOME by Marilynne Robinson. This book changed my life. God is to be found in the ordinary and her novel shows this wonderfully. MUSIC: Anything by Joni Mitchell. She is a master of every genre and one of the greatest lyricists ever. I am not sure how Bob Dylan got the Nobel over her. FILM: The last great film I've seen was C'mon C'mon. A striking film about childhood and memory.</p>	<p>Books, music and films are very much 'personal preferences'. I had never heard of Marilynne Robinson until reading about her in ANDREW's responses (including his answer to Question 18) but I shall say more about her later in this article.</p> <p>Over the years I too have enjoyed some of Joni Mitchell's music recordings.</p> <p>As regards the film 'C'mon, C'mon', from what I have read about it, (and in truth that is not a lot) it appears to take a novel and interesting approach on life in America as seen through the eyes of many young people and it would appear they have expressed, amongst various things, their serious concerns for the future because of pressures being exerted upon them in many spheres.</p> <p>My impression (and I'm open to correction) was that many of them have no solid 'spiritual resources' to draw upon and sadly that is the reality in much of today's youth, and not just in America.</p>



17. The place where you feel closest to God?	On a beach or when I am in the flow of writing.	Irrespective of what is happening around us, God says to us, “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). I think God wants us to ‘know’ and to ‘feel’ His closeness 24/7. He has promised “Io, I am with you ALWAYS” (Matthew 28:20), “I will NEVER leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Hebrews 13:5) and I believe He wants us to ‘feel’ the comfort of those promises at ALL times, whether in ‘good’ or ‘bad’ circumstances/locations, and whether mentally active or bodily resting.
18. The inscription on your gravestone?	‘Grace is not so poor a thing that it cannot present itself in any number of ways.’ (Marilynne Robinson)	Yes, the ‘grace’ of God can be identified as being present in multiple ways in the lives of His people. But, supremely of course it is the divine ‘factor’ involved when someone is “born again” and “saved” – as I quoted earlier in my comments on Question 3 - “For by GRACE are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the GIFT of God” (Ephesians 2:8). I don’t know if ANDREW had that truth in mind when he answered this question, but if I’m being honest, I somehow doubt it.
19. Have you any major regrets?	Mercifully regret is not something I struggle with. I find it easy to accept what has happened. What hasn’t yet happened is my big worry.	As a Christian, there are things that I do have regret over, and to say that I don’t on occasions ‘struggle’ with that would be to be disingenuous. But, if that happens, I am comforted and encouraged by the example and words of Paul. In Philippians 3:4-7 he listed all the things that he had trusted in for a right-standing before God before he was converted on the road to Damascus. He now knew how worthless in the sight of God they had all been and he now viewed them as nothing more than “dung” (v 8). Quite possibly he had ‘major regrets’ over all those wasted years and religious fervour, but this now was his determination and goal – “forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (v 13-14). As for ‘What hasn’t happened yet is my big worry’ – well that is in direct conflict with what the Lord Himself told His followers. Having instructed them not to focus on what unbelievers focus upon (Matthew 6:31-32) He then tells them directly what their priority should be in verse 33 “Seek ye first “Take therefore NO thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof”. Matthew Henry commented ‘We must not perplex ourselves inordinately about future events, because every day brings along with it its own burden of cares and grievances’ and that, for me, is a good brief summary of what the Lord said in that verse.

In my comments on Question 16 I said that I would say more about **Marilynne Robinson**. She has authored a series of 4 fiction books, all set in a town called GILEAD. This link gives brief but helpful details of the series <https://www.goodreads.com/series/301894-gilead> and as you will see, the book selected by **ANDREW** and called '**HOME**' was the second of the quartet. Interestingly, I found a review of the first book, '**GILEAD**' written by my good friend, Pastor Gary Gilley of Springfield IL. His short review can be found on - <https://tottministries.org/gilead-by-marilynne-robinson/> and he mentions that it does touch on the 'philosophy and theology' expressed by one of the main characters in the book. The fact that Gary doesn't challenge anything expressed in those areas is comforting but I would surmise, and this is only a guess, that 'philosophy and theology' are relatively minor players in this work of fiction.

Concerning the book '**HOME**', **ANDREW** wrote '**This book changed my life. God is to be found in the ordinary and her novel shows this wonderfully.**' For a self-professed '**Christian theologian**' (see his answer in Question 3) to say '**This book changed my life**' is really quite startling. Certainly, as Christians, we can read secular books of fiction and find that they touch on our human emotions and perhaps give us new understandings of certain matters, but from my own Christian perspective, there is only one book capable of truly '**changing lives**' and that is the Bible in the power of the Holy Spirit.

David wrote in **Psalm 119:130** "**The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple**". That is a lovely summation of what happens when a 'darkened sinner' is brought savingly into the light of the glorious Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ "**But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost. In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God should shine unto them ... For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ**" **2 Corinthians 4:3-6**. "**Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new**" **2 Corinthians 5:17**. Multitudes of Christians that I know would gladly testify that it was the Bible that changed their lives – and not only at conversion but ongoingly. It continues (or at least it should) its work of changing the lives of Christians as we read in **James 1:22-25 (NASB version)** "**For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does**". Commenting on the portion '**forgotten what kind of person he was**' **John MacArthur** wrote '**Unless professing Christians act promptly after they hear the Word, they will forget the changes and improvements that their reflection showed them they need to make**'. Paul outlined clearly all that the Word of God can accomplish to change lives – "**it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof for correction, for instruction in righteousness**" and a verse earlier he affirmed that the Word is **able to make someone wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus**" **2 Timothy 3:16 & 15**. The Bible is THE book to '**change lives**'.

At the end of my comments to Question 14 I referred to the fact that **ANDREW** regards the **Genesis** account of creation as ‘**myth**’. On his Facebook timeline **ANDREW** posted the following on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2022 – (Cecil – portions highlighted in red my emphasis)

Evangelical protestants are very angry people, often. Which probably means **fear**.

I was speaking at a panel as part of the Look North festival today on Religion and Literature and the audience Q and A was very strange. It was dominated by two men who had major issues with stuff I had said. That's fine. But - and this is common - they seemed to decide that I actually didn't know what I was talking about. I find this genuinely interesting as it suggests that when people are presented with ideas they may not have heard before, their initial reaction must be **fear**. These guys had to believe I was an idiot (I am, but not when it comes to religion and literature!) because that makes their bubble all the more unpopable. **This guy couldn't believe I didn't accept Methuselah was 969, for example.**

Recently in response to a piece in the Belfast Telegraph someone said I had studied so much and learned so little. While patronising at first glance, it is probably much more likely a **fear** that their worldview might be built on sand. I know I have to be careful in future about how I communicate ideas as I have been in their shoes, listening to new things and feeling like my entire way of seeing was under threat. But still. I didn't attack the intelligence of the messenger! This is me in a more graceful moment. But in the moment I want to tell them to feck away aff.

The post prompted quite a few comments but I want to highlight what one questioner and **ANDREW** said in relation to Methuselah –

Questioner: Ok, I have to ask. Why not Methuselah dying at 969?

**ANDREW: Hahaha are you asking me why I don't take that to be true?**

Questioner: yeah, absolutely. And I mean that from a genuine position; why would you assert otherwise than old Methuselah dying at a very very old age? I don't want to assume what your response is, either, I haven't heard you on this specific thing in a long long time

**ANDREW: i cant tell if this is a wind up haha? It isn't a historical account. It is written as myth, like the other ANE narratives of the time.**

Questioner: no, not a wind up. Just seemed a weird point in the middle of your post. If discounting early Genesis as historical account, do you drop that approach from Exodus onwards, or not until later?

**ANDREW: id say the vast majority of what is often called history in the Bible is myth. I think we understood that until probably the 18th century. then Christians required their text to be factually accurate in an age when empirical truth seemed to be competing with religious faith.**

First off, I think **ANDREW** is completely wrong in ascribing the reaction of people who disagree with him as being due to ‘**fear**’. For myself and a close ministerial friend who also read the Belfast Telegraph article, it was not a reaction of ‘**fear**’ that welled up in us but rather one of ‘**righteous anger**’ as we saw the truths of God’s Word being publicly trashed by a so-called ‘**Christian theologian**’.

Then moving on to the subject of **Methuselah**, **ANDREW**’s approach and comments simply confirm the truth of **1 Corinthians 2:14** “**But the natural** (Cecil – unregenerate) **man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned**”. For **ANDREW** the story of **Methuselah** is ‘**myth**’.

An excellent book that I have is called ‘**Theistic Evolution: A Sinful Compromise**’ by **John M Otis** and I want to quote from chapter 2 titled ‘**The Meaning of Creation Days and Biblical Chronology**’ –

‘The chronology of Genesis 5 takes us up to Noah and his sons. But let us consider the oldest man to have ever lived – Methuselah, who lived to be 969 years. The pre-flood prophet Enoch (according to Jude 14) was translated (taken up), meaning, like Elijah, he never saw death. At the age of 365 God took him. Enoch was 65 years old when he begat Methuselah. Are you ready for the meaning of Methuselah’s name? If you take the Hebrew meaning of the various parts of his name, **Methuselah means ‘When he is dead it shall be sent’**. It shall be sent? What is the ‘it’? The chronology demonstrates that in the very year that Methuselah died the FLOOD came.

But even more important than the name of Methuselah is the number of years he lived. If the biblical writer of the chronology was making up numbers and made Methuselah just 5 years older, the Methuselah would have lived through the FLOOD, which is impossible according to scripture ... The total years of Methuselah’s life were 969. Genesis 5:25 says Methuselah was 187 years old when his son Lamech was born. Verse 26 says that Methuselah lived 782 years after Lamech was born. When Lamech was 182 he begat Noah ... In doing the calculations, this means Methuselah was 369 years when Noah was born. Then Genesis 7:11 says that Noah was 600 years old when God sent the FLOOD. Well, well, this is the year that Methuselah died, therefore his name really meant **‘When he is dead it shall be sent’**.

Dr Donald Crowe emphasises in his book (‘Creation without Compromise’) that **there is a distinct difference between historical narrative and mythology**. Mythology would have it say something like this- “A long, long time ago, in a far distant place there was a man known as Noah.” No, historical narrative is precise. Consider this precision and why this is not poetry. Consider Genesis 7:11-12 – “In the 600<sup>th</sup> year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventh day of the month, on the same day all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the flood gates of the sky were opened and the rain fell upon the earth for 40 days and 40 nights”. I also mentioned Jude 14 where the inspired text says there were seven generations from Enoch back to Adam. This is exactly what Genesis 5 says. So, the New Testament genealogy corresponds precisely with the Old Testament genealogy’.

One final comment on this subject – **ANDREW** claimed that up until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Christians believed that ‘**history in the bible is MYTH**’. The great bible commentator, **MATTHEW HENRY** was born in 1662 and died in 1714. In his introduction to his commentary on Genesis, he wrote this and I agree fully with him and disagree completely with **ANDREW**.

‘We have before us the first and longest of those five books, which we call Genesis, written, some think, when Moses was in Midian, for the instruction and comfort of his suffering brethren in Egypt: I rather think he wrote it in the wilderness, after he had been in the mount with God, where, probably, he received full and particular instructions for the writing of it. And, as he framed the tabernacle, so he did the more excellent and durable fabric of this book, exactly according to the pattern shown him in the mount, into **which it is better to resolve the certainty of the things herein contained than into any tradition which possibly might be handed down from Adam to Methuselah**, from him to Shem, from him to Abraham, and so to the family of Jacob. Genesis is a name borrowed from the Greek. It signifies the original, or generation: fitly is this book so called, **for it is a history of originals—the creation of the world**, the entrance of sin and death into it, the invention of arts, the rise of nations, and especially the planting of the church, and the state of it in its early days. **It is also a history of generations—the generations of Adam, Noah, Abraham, etc.**, not endless, but useful genealogies.

In his answer to Question 1, **ANDREW** wrote 'I am teaching public theology courses across Northern Ireland'. Last October he held one such course in the main 'Progressive Christian' hub in Northern Ireland – 'Harbour Faith Community' in Carrickfergus. They are mentioned in detail in my article on 'Progressive Christianity' on <https://www.takeheed.info/pdf/2021/March/progressive-christianity.pdf> This was the promotional outline for the course –

### **HARBOUR FAITH COMMUNITY COURSE ON THEOLOGY**

<https://harbourfaith.com/events-diary/2021/10/13/joining-the-conversation-week-one-kf8l9>

**By Andrew Cunning**

A four-week series of interactive workshops designed to teach you the basics of how to engage with theological thinking. Places are limited to twelve participants, so early booking is advised. The cost of this course is £40 for the four weeks. (Harbour will be happy to offer a 50% subsidy for low-income or unemployed applicants - just ask when you email)

#### **DATES:**

##### **Wednesday 13 October ~ Session 1: The Ongoing Conversation**

In this session we look at how people talk 'about' theology, and how people talk 'in' theology, and **we examine our own starting points**: where we are in the conversation and what we uniquely bring to it.

##### **Wednesday 20 October ~ Session 2: The Sources of Theology**

In this session we go back to basics. What are we talking about when we talk about theology? What is someone 'doing' when they 'do theology'? How might we do it too? **Through exploring the four sources of theology (Reason, Experience, Scripture and Tradition) and examining their relationship, this session sets us up to 'do theology' in our own way.**

##### **Wednesday 27 October ~ Session 3: Using Texts**

Building on Session Two, this week we turn to how we read, why we need texts and, possibly, why sometimes we don't. **In this session we look closely at how the Bible is positioned within our own theology, with an eye to exploring why the Bible has been dominant in much theology done in NI.**

##### **Wednesday 03 November ~ Session 4: Theology and the Senses**

In the final session we bring our whole person to the task of theology, heart, soul, mind and strength. **We will deliberately and intentionally bring sensory experience to the foreground this week as we explore how our bodies, memories, desires and stories can be invaluable foundations for our theological thinking.**

Much could be written to challenge many aspects of this course on **'theology'** but I will confine my response to the details relating to **'Session 2'** – part of the description reads - **Through exploring the four sources of theology (Reason, Experience, Scripture and Tradition)**. For **ANDREW**, **'Scripture Alone'** is not sufficient to be able to understand **'theology'**. On page 2 of this article, I quoted Dictionary Definitions of **'theologian'** and **'theology'**. In relation to **'theology'** this is how it is more-fully defined by the late **Dr Alan Cairns** in his **'Dictionary of Theological Terms'** and I quoted this earlier in my observations on Question 1 -

**'Greek *theos*, 'God' and *logos*, 'word'; the systematic study of the being, attributes, purposes and works of God, and of the world, man and history in relation to Him. It is usually referred to as a science, because it should be conducted by the investigation of the objective data of divine revelation which has its full expression in the written and incarnate word – i.e., in the Bible and its Christ-centred message. Indeed, **theology** used to be called the queen of the sciences. This basis in an objective, divine revelation is what marks the difference between theology and philosophy or metaphysical speculation. However, with the spread of subjectivism and the decline into more and more man-centred methods, much of what passes for **theology** grows increasingly like speculative philosophy'.**

Because **'Scripture'** is for **ANDREW** only 1 of 4 **'sources of theology'** I view his **'theology'** as fitting perfectly the description of **'speculative philosophy'** given by **Dr Alan Cairns** because his other 3 **'sources – Reason, Experience and Tradition'** are all **'man-centred'**.

In my comments on Question 13, I wrote - **The 'apostles' doctrine' would be 'SOLA SCRIPTURA'- based.** The position of **'SOLA SCRIPTURA'** is clearly 'anathema' to **ANDREW** – his view of scripture is obviously 'low' whereas I hold to a 'high' view of scripture. Back in 2019 I gave a talk in America on **SOLA SCRIPTURA** and video of the talk can be watched via this link –

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KvaRiGz-ZLY>

In my talk, I considered the subject under two headings as follows –

1. The **'positive effects'** of **'accepting' SOLA SCRIPTURA.**
2. The **'negative defects'** of **'abandoning' SOLA SCRIPTURA.**

Many of the answers given by **ANDREW** to the 19 questions posed to him, illustrate perfectly the truth of my second heading, because they are littered with **'negative defects'** caused by his abandonment of the principle of **SOLA SCRIPTURA.**



Whilst researching for this article, my wife Margaret drew to my attention a Daily Devotional that she receives and this one was for 10<sup>th</sup> March 2022 – it can be accessed on <http://www.baptistbiblehour.org/resources/devotional/the-cross-of-christ/> and it reads –

**I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified:  
(1 Corinthians 2:2)**

When we read this remarkable statement by the apostle Paul, two questions immediately come to mind.  
First- is it true? Second- is it right?

Was Paul giving an accurate description of his ministry when he said that he had spoken of nothing, while among the Corinthians, except "Jesus Christ, and him crucified"? Didn't he mention morality, didn't he teach other points of theology, didn't he bring to their minds biblical (Old Testament) history? The answer, of course, is "Yes!"

**And, yet, it is also true that he spoke of nothing but Christ and his cross. Because the basis and inspiration for morality is the cross of Christ. Every point of theology centres around a correct understanding of the cross. And all history, including the entire Old Testament, is only properly understood in relation to the cross.**

And so, we also have the answer to the second question: was it right for Paul to centre all his attention, all his teaching, on the cross of Christ? Absolutely! Grace, joy, grief, sacrifice, purpose, hope, love – all of these subjects can only be properly understood, properly prioritized, and properly practiced through a correct understanding of the substitutionary death of the perfect Jesus on an eternally planned cross.

The cross was not an accident; it was not a practice run; it was not just a good example. Jesus Christ carried our sins, in his own body, on the tree so that we, being freed from sin, would live a life that exalts his name. **The cross is the pivot-point of history.** It is the impetus and standard for morality. **And it is the centre stage of theology.**

Not only is it therefore right to focus all our attention on the cross of Christ, it is wrong not to. May the cross, today, be the focus of your vision and the fullness of your heart. May you know nothing among your friends, your co-workers, your family, save Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Sadly, unlike Paul, **ANDREW's** focus in **'theology'** is clearly **not centred** upon **"Jesus Christ and him crucified"**.

On this link on **ANDREW's** web site (<https://www.andrewcunning.com/projects-8>) details are given of the various courses **ANDREW** offers. There is also this photo on that link-page –



On 21<sup>st</sup> February 2022, as a matter of courtesy, I sent the following email to **ANDREW** –

Hello Andrew,

I was 'alerted' to your work (and web site) through the published interview in the Belfast Telegraph of 12th February. I clicked on the link to 'courses' and was intrigued by this photo -



Was this taken at a previously run course and is that you standing speaking to the folks there?

Look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

Cecil Andrews

To date I have not received a reply from **ANDREW**, but the point to note in this photo, is the use of the **LGBT 'rainbow flag'** covering the table, which serves to emphasise the acceptance of all things **LGBT by** those like **ANDREW** who push their so-called '**Progressive Christianity**'.

Also, in the run-up to preparing for this article, quotations by a number of respected pastors, theologians and commentators appeared on Facebook and I propose to conclude this article by sharing just a few of them that are, I think, particularly apt –



**Tabletalk Magazine**  
@Tabletalk

...

Ignorance of Scripture is the root of every error in religion, and the source of every heresy. —J.C. Ryle

3:00 PM · 3/4/22 · [Salesforce - Social Studio](#)

## Why Does Mankind Receive God's Wrath?

Romans 1:18–32 (ESV)

**18** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

*"Listen, when a society reaches the point where it will not define sin, where it will not hate sin, where it will tolerate sin and tolerate sinners, but will not tolerate anger toward sin, that's a society under God's wrath. And that's the society we live in."*

John MacArthur





---

## **WAKE UP CHURCH!**

We live in a generation where people "love God", but hate truth. Many people are worshipping their idea of Jesus, instead of what the bible actually says. Doesn't make any sense to me how we seek what we want over God's plan, yet expect Him to bless our nonsense. God is not the author of confusion, He will not sign off on things that lead you out of His presence and straight to Hell. We can't twist scriptures to fit our lifestyle, we have to allow the scriptures to change our lives.

**REPENT!**

---

## **BORN AGAIN**

"To be born again is, as it were, to enter upon a new existence, to have a new mind, a new heart, new views, new principles, new tastes, new affections, new likings, new dislikings, new fears, new joys, new sorrows, new love to things once hated, new hatred to things once loved, new thoughts of God, and ourselves, and the world, and the life to come, and salvation."

**JC RYLE**

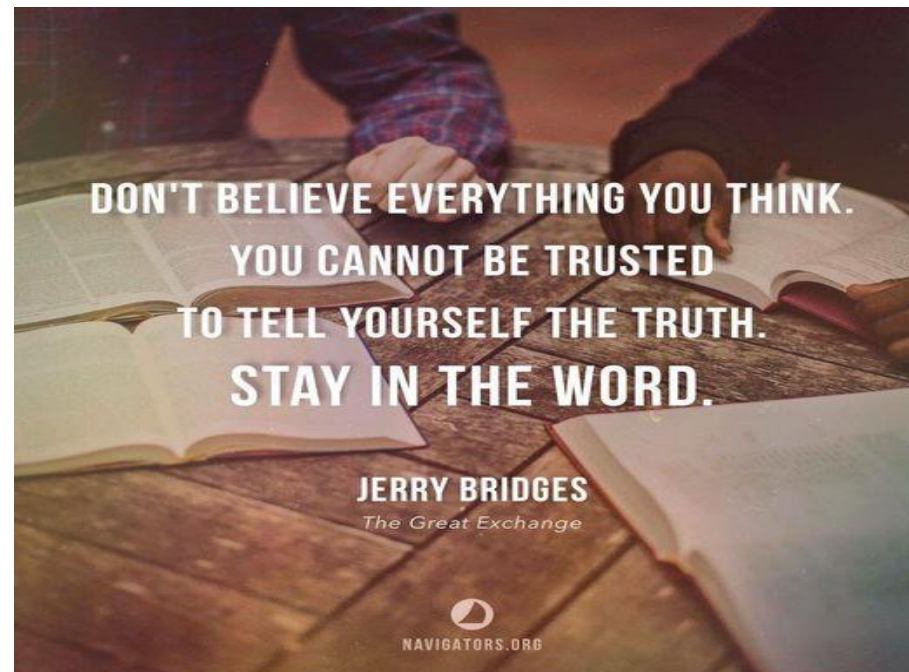
And these three are particularly pertinent for **ANDREW** to take heed of –

**Shall I live by "every word that proceeds from the mouth of God?" (Matthew. 4:4)**

**OR, shall I "lean to my own understanding?" Proverbs. 3:5**

**Any man who leans on his own understanding will be deceived.**

**D. L. Moody**





For anyone considering signing up for **ANDREW's** courses on 'theology'  
or considering attending any church promoting so-called 'Progressive Christianity'  
the Apostle Paul has sound advice in Romans 16:17

"Now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences,  
contrary to the doctrine which you have received  
and **AVOID** them".

Cecil Andrews – 'Take Heed' Ministries - 16<sup>th</sup> March 2022

# APPENDIX

## Facebook responses by **ANDREW** and his friends

(Added 26<sup>th</sup> March 2022)

On 18<sup>th</sup> March, even though I had received no response from **ANDREW** to my email of 21<sup>st</sup> February, I sent this email to him –

Dear Andrew,

Further to my email of 21<sup>st</sup> February, this is a follow-up courtesy email to let you know I have published an article related to the Belfast Telegraph article of 12<sup>th</sup> February. It can be accessed on - <https://www.takeheed.info/pdf/2022/March/Andrew-Cunning-Progressive-Theologian.pdf>

Your servant for Christ  
Cecil Andrews  
'Take Heed' Ministries

He responded by email like this –

Cheers for the heads up.

What you do is insidious and does not resemble the faith you profess.

Have a lovely day,

Andrew

Just over an hour later he sent this further email to me –

I was thinking, rather than writing articles expressing our very different views, why don't we have a proper public conversation so people can hear what we believe?

Proper dialogue rather than hit pieces?

I can arrange a venue if you'd be up for it.

Andrew

As well as emailing me he also posted this to his Facebook site –

**ANDREW CUNNING: I woke up today to be alerted to a 27 page article outlining how and why I am leading you all into the mouth of hell. I had no idea I was this devious or clever. Do read the article below for full information! Thank you to Cecil Andrews for dedicating so much time to the study of my favourite subject: Andrew Cunning.**

This prompted quite a number of responses, mainly from his supportive FB 'friends' and here are a few –

**Edward Andrews:** When you get someone like this guy he has ready made (recycled) answers, which saves him thought. Any move from absolutely traditional as taught in the past belief system challenges him. He therefore has to criticise other people in his terms. The problem is that the Gospel and how it is lived is a constant struggle to discover what the Gospel is saying to each of us, and how we respond. At least you got a reaction. The trouble is that God hasn't the mind of a wee Ulster fundamentalist. Our surnames may be similar, but as I have said to this kind before, we are actually following different faiths. Fortunately God is infinitely gracious and loves us all no matter what we believe.

**My reaction:** I can assure Mr Edward Andrews, that apart from 6-7 lines that I copied from my article on Lynda Bryans and where those lines were also apt for this article on ANDREW, the remainder of the content was researched and prepared over a number of weeks. Yes, we are to all 'work out (not for) our own salvation with fear and trembling' (Philippians 2:12) but that outworking should not contradict the clear teaching and guidance of God's Word which is what those pursuing 'Progressive Christianity' are openly doing. One line I agree wholeheartedly with is when he wrote '**we are actually following different faiths.**' To suggest that God loves us no matter what we believe is a clear example of the 'Progressive Christianity' he follows as opposed to Biblical Christianity which states in John 3:36 "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life BUT the wrath of God abideth on him".

**Steven Smyrl:** Thousands of words, yet such a great void of any form of insight! He even goes as far as actually telling us what God thinks. More like, it's what he thinks God thinks! Still, you must be doing something right Andrew to merit such an assault. Take heed indeed!

**My reaction:** Any comment by Mr Smyrl must be considered in the light of the fact that he is the Presbyterian Elder at the centre of the issue that has caused the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to take disciplinary against him and the minister of the church, Katherine Meyer – I gave the link to a newspaper report about it in my observations on Question 7 but here it is again - <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/deep-rifts-over-presbyterian-church-s-hard-line-on-same-sex-marriage-1.4057050> Here are the opening lines of that newspaper report – 'The recent dismissal of a Dublin-based Presbyterian Church elder is the latest example of a particularly hard line taken by the church against same-sex marriage in recent times. Steven Smyrl of Christ Church, Sandymount, was forced from his role as a result of the findings of an internal church commission set up to investigate the 53-year-old genealogist's relationship with his husband, Roy Stanley (60). Smyrl was ordained an elder in 2007. He and Stanley, a librarian who attended the same church, have been together for 20 years and entered a civil partnership in 2011 before getting married last November'. As for me supposedly telling others what God thinks, it's called 'quoting the Scriptures'.

**Fr-Seamus Mac GhilleAindrais:** Lead on brother ❤️ You are in good company with that quoted Apostle who preached the same hatred against the early followers.....\_Run the Race: Reach for the Prize Maybe our dear brother will get knocked off his high horse ❤️🙏 You must follow your heart Andrew. There are plenty here to offer support and bind your wounds if he takes up your offer 🤔 (Cecil – this was the ‘offer’ of a ‘public conversation’ which ANDREW emailed to me and which for a time he also mentioned on Facebook but later removed possibly because various of his ‘friends’ didn’t want him to give me ‘the oxygen of publicity’)

**My reaction:** So, this Roman Catholic priest likens my expressed views to those of the Apostle Paul, who, before his conversion on the road to Damascus, was “breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord” (Acts 9:1), Frankly this is ‘rich’ coming from someone whose ‘church’ has murdered countless hundreds of thousands, if not millions of true believers and others over the centuries. Let me remind him of several of those ‘threatenings and slaughter’ carried out by Rome – ‘beginning on St Bartholomew’s Day, August 24, 1572 and continuing throughout France for five or six weeks, some 10,000 ‘Huguenots’ as the French Protestants were called, were killed in Paris alone, and estimates of the numbers killed throughout the country run from 40,000 to 60,000 ... So pleased was the pope, Gregory XIII, to be rid of the Protestants in France that he ordered *Te Deums* (hymns of praise and thanksgiving) sung in the churches of Rome, and had a medal struck with his own profile on one side and the destroying angel on the other.’ (‘Roman Catholicism’ by Loraine Boettner p 428). ‘In his biographical sketch of Pope Innocent III, Halley had this to say – Never in history has any one man exerted more power. He ordered two crusades ... Forbade the reading of the Bible in the vernacular. Ordered the extermination of Heretics ... Instituted the Inquisition. Ordered the massacre of the Albigenses. More blood was shed under his direction, and that of his immediate predecessors, than in any other period of church history, except in the Papacy’s effort to crush the Reformation of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries ... in the thirty years between 1540 and 1570 no fewer than 900,000 Protestants were put to death in the Pope’s war for the extermination of the Waldenses ... doing it in the name of Christ, by order of the vicar of Christ ... In his assessment of the Jesuit Order, Henry Halley stated that their supreme aim was the destruction of “heresy”. He also noted that they were responsible for the St Bartholomew’s Day Massacre of the Huguenots’ (‘Antichrist Exposed’ by Ronald N. Cooke pp 283-284). Somewhat sarcastically (an apparent trait with some ‘Progressive Christians’) Mr Mac GhilleAindrais refers to me as ‘our dear brother’ – in no sense, dear or otherwise, am I his or ANDREW’s ‘brother’ because, spiritually speaking, we have totally different ‘Fathers’. As for being on a ‘high horse’ – presumably he would also have to think that the Apostle Paul was on a similar ‘high horse’ when he pronounced God’s “anathema” upon the Judaisers and their false Gospel in Galatians 1:6-9? Finally, he advises ANDREW ‘You must follow your heart’ – pretty wretched advice when the Bible tells us “The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked” (Jeremiah 17:19). Matthew Henry commented ‘There is that wickedness in our hearts which we ourselves are not aware of and do not suspect to be there; ... The heart, the conscience of man, in his corrupt and fallen state, is deceitful above all things. It is subtle and false; ... It calls evil good and good evil, ... Herein the heart is desperately wicked; it is deadly’

**Michael Wardlow: Take heed ministries have always been thus in my opinion.**

**My reaction:** Not surprised in the least by this comment from Michael Wardlow – this is the man, who when he headed up the ‘Equality Commission for Northern Ireland’, squandered tens of thousands of public, tax-payers’ monies, hounding the Christian owned Asher’s Bakery through the courts, alleging that they had discriminated against a homosexual man by refusing to bake a cake for him because of his ‘sexual orientation’. Even those of us with no formal legal training could see that this allegation was utterly baseless – nothing to do with ‘orientation’ but all to do with the message the man wanted to be put on the cake.

Whilst on a short hotel break, Margaret and I encountered Michael Wardlow and his wife in the grounds of the hotel we were staying in and, as he and I knew each other from times past, we chatted briefly. As we were about to go, I simply remarked ‘Michael, in relation to “the case” – you are wrong’ whereupon his wife jumped in and said ‘you don’t know all the facts’. Well, time has proved that I did know sufficient ‘facts’ –

<https://www.christian.org.uk/resource/european-court-ruling-on-ashers-baking-company-is-a-good-outcome/>

I wrote that Michael and I ‘knew each other from times past’. MANY years ago, he contacted me to ask if I could help him prepare for a talk that he was to give at a youth gathering called ‘Summer Madness’. He was to speak on ‘cults’ and so I gave him basically my own ‘framework’ for such a talk and he was very grateful. Through time, ‘Summer Madness’ proved itself to be a less than Orthodox Christian gathering for the thousands of young people who attended each year as I illustrated in this (somewhat lengthy!!) article - <https://www.takeheed.info/the-summer-madness-of-an-invite-to-brian-mclaren/>

Brian McLaren is nowadays a ‘darling’ of the so-called ‘Progressive Christian’ movement. Shortly I will give quotes from a ‘Power-Point’ talk I gave in 2008 on the then so-called ‘Emerging Church’ – those quotes will demonstrate that it was very much ‘the bud’ that has tragically ‘blossomed’ into so-called ‘Progressive Christianity’.

Brian McLaren’s aberrant views on ‘Same-Sex-Marriage’ came to full fruition when in 2012 he officiated at the ‘marriage’ of his son, Trevor to a man called Owen Ryan, as you can read on –

<https://www.christianpost.com/news/brian-mclarens-son-marries-same-sex-partner.html>

These are the quotes I referred to earlier -

## Quotes by BRIAN McLAREN on 'hell': Interview with Leif Hansen

McLaren: 'anybody who would sit for five minutes and ponder the reality of hell as it's commonly understood would ... lose their minds... a lot of people who have this - *'the fundamentalists are right in their understanding of hell'* - as a result they hate God, or they become an atheist. They just say it's better to not believe in God than to have to believe in that kind of God. Or they become a raving fundamentalist who'd be grabbing people on the street and shaking them and saying you better repent...

Hansen: They [fundamentalists] want to know that there's going to be some kind of, so to speak, hell to pay. Some sort of judgment...the problem that you and I both react to is that an infinite amount of punishment for a finite being and a finite amount of sin...*that seems to question God's just and loving nature.*

McLaren: Yeah...that creates a rational problem... Does it make sense for a *good* being to create creatures who will experience infinite torture...It really raises some questions about the *goodness* of God... *John said in 1st John 1:5, God is light and in God there is no darkness at all...* very few of us actually believe that. We all have the suspicion that there is a dark side to God. And that God isn't truly, truly *good*... this is, in large part, why, what is so wonderful and magnetic about Jesus, is that Jesus, I think, reveals to us a God who is all light and there is no darkness at all there. [13]



## Quotes by BRIAN McLAREN on 'homosexuality' and 'original sin'


1. The couple approached me immediately after the service... they had one question... where our church stood on homosexuality... I hesitate in answering "the homosexual question"... *I am a pastor, and pastors have learned from Jesus that there is more to answering a question than being right or even honest. We must also be ... pastoral* [14:1]... Most of the emerging leaders I know share my agony over this question. ... Frankly, many of us don't know what we should think about homosexuality. We've heard all sides, but no position has yet won our confidence... *Perhaps we need a five-year moratorium on making pronouncements.* ... Maybe this moratorium would help us resist the "winds of doctrine" blowing furiously from the left and right, so we can patiently wait for the wind of the Spirit to set our course. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/bobacz/newsletter/2006/ch06122.html>
2. "The church latched on to that old doctrine of **original sin** like a dog to a stick, and before you knew it, the whole gospel got twisted around it. Instead of being God's big message of saving love for the whole world, the gospel became a little bit of secret information on how to solve **the pesky legal problem of original sin.**" [14:2] -Brian McLaren, *The Last Word and the Word After That*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), p.134.



## Quote by BRIAN McLAREN on 'penal substitution'

<http://adrianwamock.com/2007/07/brian-mclaren-supports-steve-chalke.html> -

'Brian McLaren addresses the cross in his book, *The Story We Find Ourselves In*. His fictional character **Kerry**, who happens to be a seeker, asks how Jesus fits in to God's story. **Carol**, a Christian, answers with a summary of substitutionary atonement... **Kerry** responds: *"For starters, if God wants to forgive us, why doesn't he just do it? How does punishing an innocent person make things better? That just sounds like one more injustice in the cosmic equation. It sounds like divine child abuse."*...As the narrative continues, the legitimacy of the analogy is never refuted, let alone examined or questioned...Taken alone, this is worrisome. Coupled with McLaren's endorsement of Steve Chalke's book, *The Lost Message of Jesus*, this is cause for concern. [*The Jesus introduced by Steve sounds like someone who can truly save us from our trouble*]



Finally, in relation to **MICHAEL WARDLOW** this is what I posted to Facebook in June 2017 –

[Cecil Andrews](#)

Shared with Your friends



Is it any wonder ASHER'S BAKERY were taken to court by the so-called 'Equality Commission'?  
The following is the text of a post on the "SPECTRUM: LGBT + Christian Fellowship Belfast"  
Facebook site for 2nd May 2017 –

'The next Spectrum meeting is on **\*\*Tuesday 16th May\*\***, 7.30pm in the Agape Centre, Lisburn Road.  
This meeting is a special event to mark LGBT Awareness Week.  
In keeping with the week's theme, "Stand by Us", a special welcome is extended  
to allies and friends/families of LGBT+ people.

We are delighted to have **Dr Michael Wardlow** as a speaker at the event.  
Michael's day job is the Chief Commissioner at the Equality Commission NI,  
and we look forward to the message he will be bringing on 16th May.  
At Spectrum we value the power of story, and we will also be hearing of  
someone's personal experience of faith and sexuality.  
Everyone is welcome, and tea/coffee/refreshments will be provided along with lots of time to chat!  
Hope to see you there!  
The following Spectrum meeting will be on Tuesday 20th June'.

Does anyone with a 'legal brain' think this might perhaps represent a 'conflict of interest'  
(where Michael Wardlow and the commission's prosecution of Asher's Bakery case was concerned)  
and should be brought to the attention of the Legal authorities?

**Steve Stockman:** You are only doubling their numbers... and I will add here another related post –

**Lynda Gould** to **Steve Stockman:** four corners also generated an article I see! Criticism from Cecil was consistent when I worked at ECONI.

**My reaction:** Just recently I posted an article about the 'ultra-ecumenical' 'Four Corners Festival' that Steve Stockman helped very much to organise in Belfast. In the article I mentioned the role that a former leading ECONI (Evangelical Contribution on Northern Ireland) official called David Porter played in organising the participation of Justin Welby in the festival – my guess would be that **Lynda Gould** would have worked along with David Porter, hence her reference to myself and ECONI. That 'Four Corners' article can be accessed on - <https://www.takeheed.info/pdf/2022/January/four-corners-festival-belfast.pdf> and as you will see this is not the first time I have written about **Steve Stockman** and his 'Four Corners Festival'.

This next post relates to exchanges between a Facebook friend of mine (SIMON) and his interaction with ANDREW

**SIMON:** Before criticising the paper, do read it carefully, prayerfully and assess both Andrew's and Cecil's views in accordance with Scripture.

**Andrew Cuning:** Simon this notion of looking at your views 'in accordance with scripture' is maddeningly incoherent. 'scripture' isn't some IKEA manual that operates at one level, or says one thing. It's a library full of nuance, wisdom and contradiction. You do realise your approach to the Bible is out and out idolatry don't you?

**SIMON:** I believe that Scripture is inspired by God. How is that idolatry?

**Andrew Cuning:** You make the assumption that you are encountering the Bible as it is, not as it has been constructed for you by your religious tradition. If you are an evangelical you have a very different Bible to the one the poet reads or the historian or the Catholic mystic. You have to realise that your notion of the Bible is specific and subjective, not the Bible as it is. This is only a problem when you insist other people's views are wrong based on your view on what the Bible actually is. It is like an ant on a picnic blanket thinking the whole world is chequered and telling ants from other places that they are wrong about the world because it mistakes it's little patch for all that is.

**SIMON:** So you're a modern-day guru with all the answers?

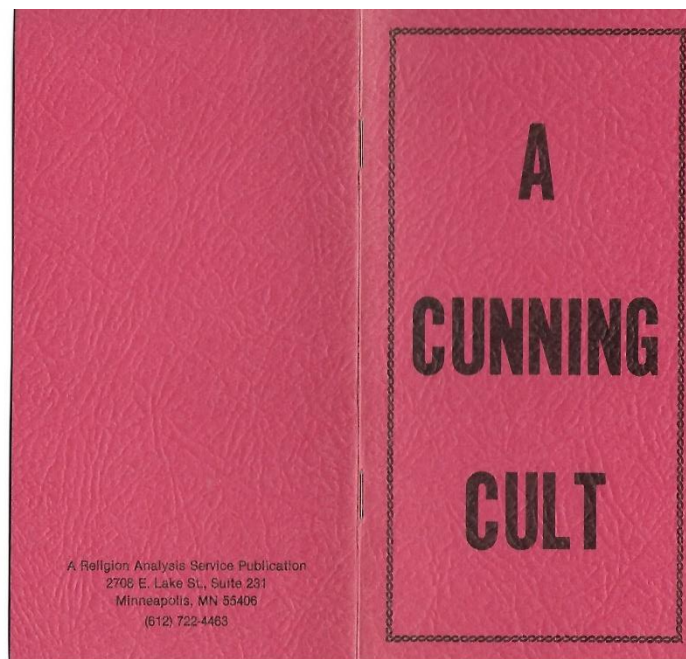
**Andrew Cuning:** No not at all. But you seem to miss the point that that is exactly what you are claiming for yourself. 'my reading of this text is infallible'.

**SIMON:** I'm claiming that the Word of God is infallible, not me! I'm nothing more than a wretched sinner saved by grace You're leading yourself and your cult following to hell just like the JW's and Mormons. I'm not sure whether you're mistaken or deliberately rebelling against God. Either way, I pray for your salvation and that of your disciples.

**Andrew Cuning:** Oh for feck sake would you catch a grip you absolute melon.

**SIMON:** You claim to be a Christian Theologian" and yet you're quite happy to use insulting language towards those who disagree with you? You are neither a Christian nor a Theologian. Your own comments prove that.

By way of bringing this **APPENDIX** to a close, I did note that **SIMON** referred to **ANDREW's 'cult following'** and that expression 'rang a bell' with me because I have books on many false versions of Christianity in my office, and one which relates to '**The Cooneyites**' has this for an outside cover – it does seem rather amusingly apt in the circumstances –





**Version of 'AND CAN IT BE' on**

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQelGbKqiw8>**