

HARBOUR FAITH COMMUNITY: 'Progressive Perversion'.

Harbour Faith Community based in Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim, are one of the main groups in Northern Ireland promoting so-called '**Progressive Christianity**'. In an earlier article located on <https://www.takeheed.info/pdf/2021/March/progressive-christianity.pdf> they are mentioned on pages 14-16. I also referred to them in a number of talks I gave on the subject. On this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0mo9fDLJL9s&t=1494s> I mention them in the segment from 57.52 – 1.00.11

The newspaper article on the following link focused on the views of '**Pastor**' **Steve Ames** of **Harbour Faith Community** as the law on the legalisation of so-called '**Same Sex Marriage**' was approaching rapidly to being enacted –

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/pastor-critical-of-legal-threat-to-northern-ireland-same-sex-marriage-laws-38729683.html>

The newspaper article also included this photo of Mr Ames presiding over a rainbow-flag bedecked 'Lord's table' – what a blasphemy.



This article has been prompted by what **Harbour Faith Community** posted to their Facebook site on 27th October 2002 – this is the text of their post and the photo that accompanied it.

The first division in the church was over whether or not gentile believers were equal in status to Jewish Christians.

While they were still having “the discussion”, Peter went ahead and crossed this divide anyway and welcomed “those others” into the church - an act which landed him in hot water with the other Christians back in Jerusalem.

Defending himself to the council, Peter says: “If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I should hinder God?” And they praised God, saying, “Then God has given even to the gentiles the repentance that leads to life.”

This was THE game changer in the early church.

It wasn’t a bible study or theological excursion that changed their minds, they simply recognised that while they were still arguing about “those people”, God had gone ahead and given them “the same gift” he gives everyone else, and that this was a cause to rejoice!

Christians today still find “others” to cause divisions over, most notably against the LGBTQIA+ community. Maybe it’s time we rested the scholarly arguments and insular theological debates for a moment, and just look at what God is already doing right in front of our eyes.

And then may we ask “who am I that I should hinder God”?

As author Myles Markham notes: “Christians today would do well by the tradition of the apostles and our current witness in the world to recognise that, theological abstractions aside, God has already clearly embraced LGBTQAI+ people into full communion, and it is now the church’s responsibility to simply honour that reality... and rejoice.”



In this article **Steve Ames** has skilfully manipulated a **'tension'** in the early church to, as he thinks, produce the required outcome he desires. The **'tension'** arose following the visit by the Apostle Peter, **a Jew**, to, and his evangelisation of Cornelius, **a gentile**, and his household. This visitation is detailed in **Acts 10**.

The **'tension'** was not so much **'over whether or not gentile believers were equal in status to Jewish Christians'** but rather over whether or not **gentiles** could actually become and be genuine Christians.

Those of **'the circumcision'**, **the Jews**, but now Christians, and referred to in **Acts 11:1** as **"the apostles and brethren that were in Judea"** believed that the promised Messiah would be exclusively 'their man' and for them to countenance the possibility that he might also be the Messiah of **'the uncircumcision'**, **the gentiles**, was not in any way 'on their radar' as we discover in **Acts 11:2-3**.

Having heard Peter's testimony of what happened when he visited with Cornelius and his household, as recorded in **Acts 11:15-17**, those of **'the circumcision'** responded, as we read in **Acts 11:18** as follows **"they held their peace and glorified God saying, then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life"**.

The Apostle Paul also addressed this **'tension'** in his letter to the **gentile** Ephesians

"Wherefore remember, that ye being in times past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands. That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath MADE BOTH ONE and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us ... that he might reconcile BOTH unto God in ONE body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Ephesians 2:11-16).

John MacArthur commented **'As Jews and Gentiles are brought to God through Christ Jesus, they are brought together with each other ... 'the middle wall of partition' this alludes to a wall in the temple that partitioned off the Court of the Gentiles from the areas accessible only to Jews'**

This **'tension'** which **Steve Ames** refers to as a **'division in the church'** had everything to do with **'ETHNICITY'** and nothing to do with **'LIFESTYLES'**.

What exactly do I mean by **'ETHNICITY'**, well, – on this link <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/ethnicity> it is defined like this

'a large group of people with a shared culture, language, history, set of traditions, etc., or the fact of belonging to one of these groups:'

By referring to this **'division in the church'**, which is clearly over **'ETHNICITY'**, as being the grounds for **GOD** supposedly accepting the **'LIFESTYLES'** of the professing 'Christian' **'LGBTQIA+ community'** (as the quote by Myles Markham clearly states) is a blatant case of **"perverting the Gospel of Christ"** (**Galatians 1:7**).

I posted the following comment on the **Harbour Faith Community** Facebook site in response to their post – **“This is a classic example of eisegesis - reading faulty understandings into biblical texts to seek to justify a position that is completely unbiblical”**. Needless to say, my comment was REMOVED.

I then posted another comment as follows – **‘Can someone please define for me the meaning of the term ‘theological abstractions’?** This too was REMOVED.

Steve Ames and **Harbour Faith Community** stand guilty of **EISEGESIS**, because proper **hermeneutical EXEGESIS**, which does not include any so-called **‘theological abstractions’**, would never result in **‘LGBTQIA+ community LIFESTYLES’** being acceptable to the Holy God of Heaven

They certainly would not be compatible with the injunction issued to true believers by the Apostle Peter in **1st Peter 1:14-16** **“As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves (conforming yourselves) according to the FORMER lusts in your ignorance. But, as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in ALL manner of conversation (behaviour). Because it is written, be ye holy for I am holy”**.

John MacArthur commented **‘Holiness essentially defines the Christian’s NEW nature and conduct in contrast with his pre-salvation LIFE-STYLE.’**

Matthew Henry commented **‘These words may be taken as a rule of holy living, which is both positive—“You ought to live as obedient children, as those whom God hath adopted into his family, and regenerated by his grace;” and negative—“You must not fashion yourselves according to the former lusts, in your ignorance.” Or the words may be taken as an argument to press them to holiness from the consideration of what they now are, children of obedience, and what they were when they lived in lust and ignorance.**

We are living in days when the pressure is on for ‘the church’ to change its thinking on matters concerning the **‘LGBTQIA+ community’**. The following link goes to an article by **Kevin DeYoung** that summarises very well the battle that is currently raging.

<https://wng.org/opinions/from-silence-to-complexification-to-capitulation-1663675306?fbclid=IwAR0L20dtItr1JTJ-XIE7u9vKrmsa9-bczM8XNU5pzYk1H-12BgrURyqThw>

In relation to **Steve Ames** and **Harbour Faith Community**, these words as recorded by Luke in **Acts 13:9-10** seem particularly apt **“Then Saul (who is also called Paul), filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him and said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to PERVERT the right ways of the Lord?”**

And these words of the Apostle Paul, as recorded in **1st Corinthians 16:13**, seem to be a particularly apt 'rallying call' today to faithful members of Christ's true church –

“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men (act like men), be strong”

Cecil Andrews – ‘Take Heed’ Ministries – 17th November 2022