

Redeemer Central Church – Belfast

Now publicly ‘full-on Progressive’

Back in January 2019 I wrote an article titled –

Redeemer Central Church – Belfast: Any cause for concern?

and in it I listed 6 matters of concern and in addition I also gave details of a number of speakers who had spoken in their ‘church’ and with whom I have ‘issues’.

That article can be accessed on this link -

<https://www.takeheed.info/pdf/2019/January/Redeemer-Central-Church.pdf>

Earlier this year I was sent what I was told was a screenshot of an announcement that had been made in **‘Redeemer Central’** on Sunday 20th March 2022. This is that screenshot –

Our collective position and posture as a church:

Among the members of our leadership, staff, and community, you’ll find a wide spectrum of beliefs about questions related to human sexuality and gender identity, and we believe that agreement on these questions should not be the basis of our unity but the confession of Jesus as Lord by the Spirit is where we centre our unity. We also believe that L.G&TQ people have a right to know what they can expect from us in terms of belonging, involvement, leadership, and marriage and the bottom line is that no one at Redeemer Central will be excluded from belonging, involvement, and leadership on the basis of their sexuality or gender identity, and we hope in time that we will have pastors or leaders available to perform weddings for same-sex couples.

By publicly declaring their aspiration to be able **‘to perform weddings for same-sex couples’** **‘Redeemer Central’** are guilty of **“turning** (their understanding of) **the grace of our God into lasciviousness”** (Jude 4).

They are proposing what I referred to in an article I wrote some years ago titled –

PHILIP YANCEY
“turning the grace of God into lasciviousness” Jude 4

Philip Yancey was a supposed best-selling ‘Christian’ author.

Here are some extracts from that article that have, I believe, legitimate application to the situation with **‘Redeemer Central’**.

They relate to a web site called **‘Whosoever’** and which is subtitled **‘An online magazine for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Christians’**

The problem of “lasciviousness” amongst professing believers is something that the Scriptures pay much attention to. We must first understand what “lasciviousness” is and Vine’s Expository Dictionary defines the word on page 353 as denoting ‘excess, licentiousness, absence of restraint, indecency, wantonness...one of the evils that proceed from the heart [Mark 7:22]; one of the evils of which some in **the church at Corinth** had been guilty of [2 Corinthians 12:21]; classed among the works of the flesh [Galatians 5:19]; among the sins of the unregenerate who are “past feeling” [Ephesians 4:19]; one of the sins against which believers are warned [Romans 13:13]’. Vine also links the “pernicious ways” of 2 Peter 2:2 to ‘lasciviousness’ and to the “filthy manner of life of the wicked” in **Sodom and Gomorrah** from which Lot was “delivered” [2 Peter 2:6-7]. Vine concludes ‘The prominent idea is shameless conduct’. In the light of this website’s *‘What We Believe’* section, I believe it is clear that those involved in and sympathetic to this ‘ministry’ are seeking to justify a lifestyle that the Bible condemns as ‘lasciviousness’.

I concluded my article with these words and I have inserted in brackets **‘Redeemer Central’** where I named Mr Yancey

Measuring Mr Yancey’s **(Redeemer Central’s)** comments against the teaching of the Word of God Mr Yancey is guilty of what Jude warned against in verse 4, namely of “turning the grace of God into lasciviousness”. Mr Yancey **(Redeemer Central)** is either not equipped or simply unwilling to articulate God’s clear views on this moral issue and as a result he **(it)** is giving false spiritual hope and comfort to those who are in danger of suffering the same judgment as their *‘sexually orientated ancestors’* as we read in Jude 7 of “Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication and going after strange flesh, **are set forth, for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire**”.

My complete article on Philip Yancey can be viewed on this link

<https://www.takeheed.info/pdf/2004/July/philip-yancey-turning-the-grace-of-god-into-lasciviousness.pdf>

In June 2022 I sent a message to **‘Redeemer Central’** via their web site asking if this screenshot was accurate as I would not wish to be quoting anything about them that was not true – I received NO reply.

A friend, who moves in Congregational circles and who is deeply concerned at the use of the church building by **'Redeemer Central'** that is managed by trustees affiliated with the Congregational Union of Ireland and who lease the building to **'Redeemer Central'**, also sent a message via Twitter to one of the officials of **'Redeemer Central'** (David Armstrong) about the screenshot but he, like myself, received NO response.

We both came to the conclusion that if the screenshot were not true and accurate then **'Redeemer Central'** would have informed us accordingly but, in the light of their total silence, we can only conclude that the screenshot is true and accurate.

Why have I described **'Redeemer Central'** as now being **'full on Progressive'**? For the most part, so-called **'Progressive Christian'** churches subscribe to an 8-point basis of faith. These are stated and examined in my article located on –

<https://www.takeheed.info/pdf/2021/March/progressive-christianity.pdf>

The relevant point of faith is number 3 and my assessment of it can be read on page 3 of my article. The reality is that the claim in the screenshot that their **'basis of unity'** is their **'confession of Jesus as Lord by the Spirit'** is **spiritually damning** in the light of what they are promoting in the screenshot, in particular **'weddings for same-sex couples'**.

The Lord said in **Matthew 7:21** **"Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven"**. The clear testimony of Scripture is that it is not the Father's will for so-called 'churches' to perform and to supposedly bless **'weddings for same-sex couples.'**

It's interesting that my Congregational friend contacted a **David Armstrong**. Back in July 2020 I was sent links to several sermons preached at **'Redeemer Central'** and the one on this link is by none other than **David Armstrong**. This is the link -

<https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/love-alone-is-credible/id626165868?i=1000483217817>

In truth, I have only now got round to listening to it in full and having done so, it certainly was an important step along the path that has led **'Redeemer Central'** to the **'Progressive'** point that they have now arrived at.

It is a 100% focus on **'God is love'** to the exclusion of the many other attributes of the unchanging God revealed in both the Old and New Testaments. Yes, the Bible teaches that **"God is love"** (**1 John 4:16**) but it also teaches, contrary to what Mr Armstrong suggests, that He can be **"angry"** and **"hateful"** and **"violent"** (**Psalm 2:11; Psalm 106:40; Proverbs 6:16-19; 2nd Kings 21:6; John 3:36; John 2:13-17; Luke 19:45-46**).

Providentially, an email I received today whilst writing this article contained the following comments on what the writer of the email referred to as –

A HOLY HATRED

He wrote –

“Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: depart from me therefore, ye bloody men. For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take thy name in vain. Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies. Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting,”
Psalm 139:19-24.

In a day when the essence of man’s ‘religion’ is to sanctimoniously declare that they ‘love everyone and hate none’, it is somewhat startling for such to encounter words as these from holy David the king, of whom the Lord said: “I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.” (Acts 13:22).

Hatred plays a vital part in true religion. The Lord Jesus Himself commended the believers in the Ephesian church. “But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate,” Revelation 2:6.

The Lord declared the same hatred of sin in the Old Testament age. “Howbeit I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, saying, Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate,” Jeremiah 44:4. The Lord has not changed in His attitude, His hatred of sin. We, who would be like the Lord, must share in His hatred of evil!

Mr Armstrong makes the familiar ‘**Progressive**’ mistake of elevating “**love**” to being the supreme attribute of God whereas “**holiness**” is His supreme and distinguishing attribute (see **Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8; 1st Peter 1:15-16**) and the truth is that ALL His other attributes, including “**love**” can only be properly understood and appreciated in the light of His “**holiness**”.

At around the 13-minute mark Mr Armstrong reveals what is common amongst so-called ‘**Progressive Christians**’ and that is their denial of the biblical truth of ‘**penal substitution**’ – in doing so he marks himself out as an enemy of the truth of ‘**The Cross of Christ**’ like those I make mention of in my article on this link –

<https://www.takeheed.info/pdf/2009/July/enemies-of-the-cross-of-christ.pdf>

He quotes favourably **N T Wright** – someone I have previously written and warned about as you can read on –

<https://www.takeheed.info/pdf/2021/May/nt-wright-is-nt-wrong.pdf>

Another quoted favourably is **St John Cassian** – helpful information about him and his questionable beliefs and practices can be found on this link –

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/abbot>

Also, this is the brief 'bio' for him given by Wikipedia –

'John Cassian, also known as John the Ascetic and John Cassian the Roman, was a Christian monk and theologian celebrated in both the Western and Eastern churches for his mystical writings. Cassian is noted for his role in bringing the ideas and practices of early Christian monasticism to the medieval West ... Venerated in Eastern Orthodox Church; Roman Catholic Church; Anglican Communion; Eastern Catholic Churches. '

Mr Armstrong also quoted favourably **St John Damascene**, yet another drawn to a monastic life and veneration of sacred images as you can read on this link –

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-John-of-Damascus>

Finally, Mr Armstrong referred favourably to **St Anthony the Great** and details of his monastic life can be found on this link –

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Anthony-of-Egypt>

The overall aim of Mr Armstrong is to strip away any **“fear of the Lord”** in favour of an unconditional love of everyone and everything by God. That teaching founders on the rocks of what the Lord Jesus said in **Luke 13: 3 & 5** **“Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish”** – would that not have struck **“fear”** into the hearts and minds of those listening to him?

It came as no surprise to me when Mr Armstrong referred favourably to what **Bishop Michael Curry** had said at the wedding of **Prince Harry and Meaghan Markle**. Mr Armstrong thought it was a great sermon by him – in my assessment, at best, it was an exposition of the song by The Beatles – **‘All you need is love’**.

It should be noted that **Bishop Curry** has been spearheading the drive in the **USA Episcopal Church** to legalise so-called **‘same-sex marriage’** – something that **‘Redeemer Central’** hope in due course to be able to conduct.

Mr Armstrong wants to eradicate any notion of **“the fear of the Lord”** that is mentioned many times in both the Old and New Testaments. By **“fear”**, the meaning is not restricted to **‘terror’**, but at the same time it is not excluded as this very helpful article explains –

<https://www.gotquestions.org/fear-Lord-beginning-wisdom.html>

Mr Armstrong clearly rejects his church upbringing in what he refers to as **'Fear-based Fundamentalism'** – in some circles there can perhaps be an overemphasis on fear, judgment, hell etc to the exclusion of love, mercy and grace but the antidote to that is not to exclude fear etc completely and to focus on love solely.

A former pastor of mine once said **'To proclaim a half-truth as the whole truth is to actually make it a lie'** and sadly that is what Mr Armstrong is here guilty of.

The 'all-embracing' **'God of love'** that Mr Armstrong proclaims is not the God of the Bible but is very much the God of so-called **'Progressive Christianity'** and so will give people a false assurance of being right with God whilst continuing with lifestyles that the Apostle Paul states clearly in **1st Corinthians 6:9-10** will debar people from inheriting the Kingdom of God –

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind. Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God".

**"Give unto the Lord the glory due his name:
Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."
(Psalm 29:2)**

Cecil Andrews – 'Take Heed' Ministries – 16th September 2022