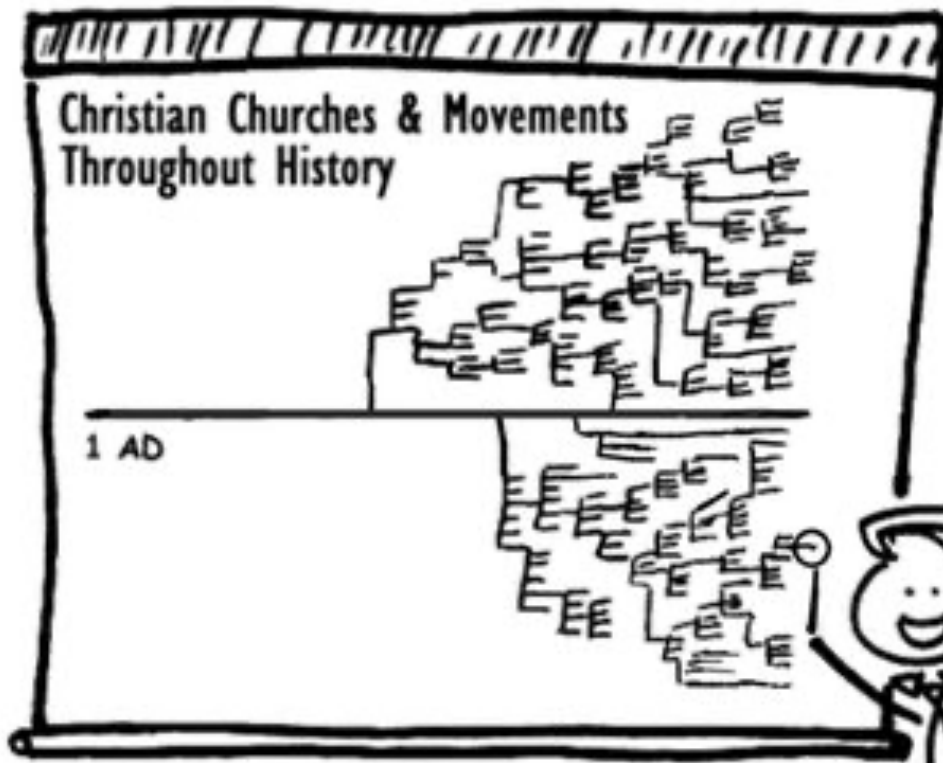


Revd. Andy Fitchet
Crawley Baptist Church.
5th November 2022

THE THEOLOGY BIT

WE ALL READ THE BIBLE
DIFFERENTLY



So this is where our movement came along and finally got the Bible right!

Jesus is so lucky to have us

MEMBERSHIP CLASS



I believe the Bible contains within it the words of God. It speaks literal truth on all that it mentions.

I believe it is historically and scientifically accurate in what it says. The 66 books we have in our Bible are given by God to us as a manual for how to live, we just need to apply it. It contains no contradictions and is fully reliable in what it says. Most of what people mean when they talk about ‘interpreting’ the Bible is one attempt or another to avoid listening to its plain teaching.

When it comes to issues of sexuality, the Bible is clear that homosexual practice is sin.



VOICE 1



VOICE 2

I agree that the Bible is given to us by our Creator, who knows all about what is good for us, and who wants to communicate that to us. I do want to stress, however, that we need to read everything that the Bible says and pay attention to each text's historical context. There is a danger of taking any part on its own.

God has given us the Bible as a whole, expecting us to learn from the interaction of all its parts. Sometimes one text qualifies another, or shows that another was giving guidance only for a specific context. We can trust such a God to have spoken to us clearly and coherently – and I think that the answers the Bible provides to our questions, including our questions about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage, are indeed clear and coherent.

I like your stress on taking care as we put the different parts of the Bible together, but I want to say more about it. I don't see that task as simply one of resolving difficulties, or finding ways to smooth out the Bible's rough edges. I think there are deep and pervasive tensions in the Bible, and that they are there for good reason.

It is an inherently complex conversation between multiple voices. I think that we need to acknowledge those tensions, explore them, go on learning from them, and dwell with them, as we think through our questions about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage. In fact, I think God invites us to this kind of dwelling with the text. I think the Bible is too complex, too mobile, and too lively to be called a blueprint or a framework.



VOICE 3



VOICE 4

I would want to push that even further. I believe the Bible is there for us for the one purpose of teaching us about God's love for the world – especially its fulfilment in Jesus. I want to say that the Bible is a collection of human words to witness to that love in Christ. Everything in it is given to us for that one purpose.

I do trust that God has provided us with witnesses whose testimony is sufficient to teach us this love. But I also think that the testimony is provided by fallible human voices. I believe the Bible calls us to work out our own answers to our questions about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage, in the light of the central message of love in Christ.

The Bible was produced by people who were caught up in movements of God's Spirit in history – but their words only do uneven and partial justice to what they glimpsed. You can certainly find some important truths in Scripture, sometimes powerfully and beautifully expressed, but they are mixed in with all kinds of other material, some of which is horrific.



COFFEE BREAK

15 minutes

The 'Clobber'
passages

THE THEOLOGY BIT

I will talk about LGBTQ+ people

Lesbian

Gay

Bi

Trans

Queer

Affirming = fully embracing and welcoming of LGBTQ+ people and their involvement in all areas of Church life

Non-affirming = not embracing of LGBTQ+ people and their involvement in all areas of church life.

DEFINING
TERMS

HOMOSEXUALITY IN BIBLICAL TIMES

- Context is important.
 - Bible written over a thousand years, two thousand years ago for cultures, by cultures, in cultures that aren't ours.
- There was no understanding of homosexuality, bisexuality, asexuality, transgender people in Biblical times.
 - They existed but not understood as an orientation.
 - First time the word 'homosexuality' appears in the Bible is in 1946.
 - We then import 20th/21st Century understandings onto the ancient text of Scripture because of language.
- Homosexual practice did take place but often/nearly always in extra-marital, pederasty, idolatrous, or abusive ways.
- Never does the Bible describe, loving, committed, consensual, adult relationships between two people of the same sex.

LEVITICUS 18 AND 20

- The Hebrew texts are very sparse on the subject. 2 verses in the whole of the Torah and Tanakh (Old Testament).
- Context in Leviticus 18:
 - ‘Speak to the people of Israel and say to them: I am the Lord your God. You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you lived, and you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you. You shall not follow their statutes.’
 - The enemy in the ancient world are always the worst who do terrible things – whether they did them or not.
- Only speaks of gay sex, not lesbian.
 - This is an important to note – the role of men and women in society. To be ‘a man’ is to be the dominator, to be a woman is to be submissive.
 - Men being submissive was deeply shameful
- Is Leviticus talking about adult consensual relationships?

ROMANS 1

- *Romans 1:26-27*
 - *Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.*
- What sort of relationship is Paul talking about?
- Is Paul talking about the same sort of relationships we are talking about?

1 COR 6 & 1 TIM 1

- *Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes (malakoi) nor homosexual offenders (arsenokoitai) nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 1 Cor 6:9-10 (NIV)*
 - *Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revellers, robbers—none of these will inherit the kingdom of God. NRSV*
- *We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for the sexually immoral, for those practicing homosexuality (arsenokoitai), for slave traders and liars and perjurers--and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine. 1 Tim 1:10 (NIV)*
 - *This means understanding that the law is laid down not for the innocent but for the lawless and disobedient, for the godless and sinful, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their father or mother, for murderers, fornicators, sodomites, slave traders, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to the sound teaching. NRSV*

1 COR 6 & 1 TIM 1

- I put these two together as they use the same word which the NIV translates, unhelpfully, as homosexual.
 - Malakoi – soft or effeminate
 - Arsenokoitai – men and bed
- Anthony Thiselton
 - “[these] two terms are the most controversial. They may well denote respective roles within a homosexual partnership. Alternately the first of the two terms [malakoi] may denote either those involved in pederastic practices, that is, male prostitution, or sleeping with younger boys. Whichever is more probable, the second [arsenokoitai] those men who practice sexual relations with men. It is possible that the terms apply to men who have relations with call boys since the general emphasis is on exploiting, or taking advantage of people for self- desire.’
- German Translations: ‘Knabenschänder’/ child molester.
- Is Paul talking about the same sort of relationships we are talking about?

A POSITIVE VISION OF SAME-SEX
RELATIONSHIPS IN SCRIPTURE

MARRIAGE AND LIFE TOGETHER

- Marriage throughout the Bible evolves
 - Abraham, Sarah and Hagar
 - Isaac with Rachel and Leah (who are sisters!)
 - Solomon with 300 wives and 600 concubines
 - Joseph and Mary. Teenage Mary.
 - Samaritan women at the well with 5 husbands who Jesus never judges
 - Paul who thinks we should all be single
 - Peter who seemingly abandons his wife?
- Acts 10
 - ‘Do not call profane that which I have called holy.’
 - One of the worst thing a devout Jew could do would be to break the food laws. God calls all things clean. Marking a change in Peter and the life of the church.
 - No longer under the law but under grace.