

A Straw in the Wind Moderator's Comments Posted 28 January 2020

By Peter Barnes

Stuart Briscoe once noted: 'Qualifications of a pastor: the mind of a scholar, the heart of a child, and the hide of a rhinoceros.' In fact, they come close to describing what all Christians need to possess in this modern age. Jeremiah wept for the condition of Judah in the sixth century BC (Jer.9:1), and at one time became so overwhelmed with the mockery and derision he faced that he tried to restrain himself from preaching God's Word, burst out that God had deceived him, and cursed the day of his birth (Jer.20:7-18). He came through that.

Events in Brisbane over 12-13 January 2020 have a Jeremiah air about them. Carly Williams reported in her own breathless way on Sunday 12 January that about 15-20 members of the University of Queensland's Liberal National Club 'stormed' a Drag Queen Storytime event for children at the Brisbane Square Library. One author was suitably outraged: '(They) turned a beautiful event into a scary moment for our young family.' Jess Origliasso from The Veronicas, engaged to a transgender bartender, was 'absolutely furious', but managed to preach: 'Our world is in need of love & healing', adding her blessing to the two queens who brought such joy to the children and their families.

The event had been organised by Rainbow Families Queensland, which assured us all that the drag queen hosts were 'fully trained' and that 'Love makes a family. There's no room for hate in our hearts.' Yet the tax-payer funded organisers threatened 'maximum legal action against this group'. The mainstream media performed as all well-trained seals do - as did the state LNP leader, Deb Frecklington, who distanced herself from the UQ LNP club. Social media was awash with vitriol - which is hardly surprising. It is seldom awash with much else. Nobody seemed interested in asking why someone - one of the drag queens - who had won an award for his contribution to adult

pornography should be paid to perform before children in a public library. One might have thought that love might still maintain some connection to decency.

The next day came a tragic twist. The leader of the public protest, a 21 year old named Wilson Gavin, threw himself under a train. Gavin, it emerged, was an earnest young homosexual who had nevertheless campaigned for a 'No' vote in the plebiscite of 2017. He was also said to be one who deeply loved his Church, which was the Roman Catholic Church. How could he do this? How are we meant to understand this? Chesterton called suicide 'the ultimate and absolute evil', and the Roman Church has formally pitted itself against the homosexual lifestyle. From his own side of politics, there were plenty who lauded him as some kind of conservative martyr. To those who only knew of Gavin through the filters of the media, it nevertheless seemed obvious that he was an intelligent but deeply conflicted young man. At odds with himself, he projected this onto his social and political activities.

Everything was wrong. Back in the days of C. S. Lewis, he could comment humorously that to accuse a journalist of lying was like accusing a dog of being bad at arithmetic. Now, the humour has gone, a sense of a shared morality has gone, the moral outrage has become immoral, and the expressions of love nauseating. Truth has stumbled in the public squares (Isa.59:14) and we live in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation (Phil.2:15). We have looked at one more vulnerable and confused straw in a toxic wind. Christians must minister in such a world as this. No wonder the Bible tells us so often not just to be good but to be strong and discerning! Who is sufficient for these things? (2 Cor.2:16) Thankfully, we are not left simply to lament; we have comfort from Christ Himself: 'My grace is sufficient for you' (2 Cor.12:9).