

The following letter was in writing for just over two months, and during that time was twice passed by eight significant Christian people from a variety of backgrounds, for their comments and suggestions.

The same letter - with minor changes required as a result of it being sent to different organizations - was also sent to:

To the Chairman and Members of the Board of Governors
Scripture Union, New Zealand
PO Box 760
WELLINGTON

To the Chairman and Members of the Board of Governors
TEAR Fund, New Zealand
PO Box 8315
Auckland

To the Chairman and Members of the Board of Governors
Tertiary Students Christian Fellowship
PO Box 9672
Marion Square
WELLINGTON

3rd March, 2005

To the Chairman and Members of the Board of Governors
The Bible College of New Zealand
Private Bag 93104
Henderson
AUCKLAND 1231

Dear Sir,

I am writing to express my deep concern over matters relating to public statements made by Dr Peter Lineham in which he has identified himself as a homosexual.

I am a long time acquaintance of Peter's, and he kindly wrote the foreword to my book 'Tongues Revisited: A Third Way', published in 2000.

Last year I was told by a reliable source that Peter had publicly identified himself as a 'non-practicing homosexual'.

Subsequent to this, I also heard from another reliable person that he had taken a vow of 'celibacy' - the 'celibacy' I presume referred to him abstaining from sexual relationships with men, or a sexual relationship with a man.

Then last year in Challenge Weekly, in a letter written in response to an article recording some comments about homosexuality by Bishop Vercoe, Peter identified himself by use of inclusive language, as a homosexual. He did not use any qualifying term such as 'non-practicing' in that letter. I wrote a letter to Challenge - which was published slightly abridged - expressing my concern about this. Peter emailed me and asked me to send him the unabridged version, which I did. He did not indicate that any of the comments I had made about him in the letter were incorrect, nor did he respond in the letter columns of Challenge to correct me in any way.

Then, just before Christmas, I received a circular Christmas letter from Peter (email, dated 24th December, 2004) saying among other things:

‘I am still on the Boards of Bible College and Scripture Union and TEAR Fund, and am Vice President of Tertiary Students Christian Fellowship. I am also now the chair of Auckland Community Church, a small gay fellowship meeting in St Matthew’s Church, and this has been quite exciting.’

My concern is this. Even after identifying himself as a homosexual and aligning himself with others identifying themselves in the same way, things I am sure you are aware of, the leadership of BCNZ has retained him in a position of leadership. I may also note - though this fact doesn’t add anything in principle to the seriousness of the situation - that three of these positions, one of which is BCNZ, involve him in oversight of and role modeling for, large numbers of young people.

Does it need to be stated that my concern arises because Scripture universally denounces homosexual acts as abominations, as detestable, as perversion, and thus contrary to both the biological and moral orders that God has established? In Biblical Law such acts are identified as among those few which warrant death as a penalty (Lev 20:13). This penalty was identified by the New Testament writer of Hebrews as being ‘a just punishment’ (Heb 2:2). Regardless of ones view of capital punishment, this marks homosexual acts as extremely serious.

Now of course it may be responded that yes, such acts are detestable abominations as the Bible states, but that Peter has not committed such acts and so it is quite legitimate for him to retain his leadership roles in Christian organisations. I mean, aren’t we all sinners? Who else is there available to fulfil such roles if sinful people are excluded?

Of course we are all sinners. There is no issue about that. But if we are believers, we have also become recipients of the grace and forgiveness of God, and also of the Spirit who enables us to fulfil the righteous requirements of God’s Law (Rom 8:4). We also extend grace to those who confess to being vulnerable to the temptation of particular sins and who resolve with God’s help and the support of fellow believers to overcome these.

It is one thing to be a sinner saved by grace and to acknowledge struggles against sins of thought. Such a person accepts God’s verdict regarding sinful actions and thoughts, and asks His help to live a holy life. They depend on the Lord’s help in putting to death the sinful nature which seeks at all times to entice and trap us in sinful patterns of thought and behaviour. They identify such thoughts and actions for what they are, sin which is to be confessed, repented of, and with the Lord’s help, turned from.

It is quite another matter to identify and categorise yourself with reference to sinful thoughts and actions, and thereby link yourself with others who identify themselves in a similar way and who rebelliously and brazenly commit such perverted acts in defiance of their Maker.

It is a characteristic of demonic agendas not to enter the community of the God-fearing at the fat end of the wedge, full-blown in their rebellion against God and his creation. They will enter at an almost imperceptible point through those we know and like and may be related to, and who, as a result of legitimate work they have done, may have gained status and our respect.

The homosexual agenda is known. It has been on the table publicly for several decades now. It has been followed to the letter and has been highly successful. It is an agenda that has been and is being carried through on a number of fronts simultaneously.

- There is the aim to control peoples’ thinking through the control, capture and subversion of language. They have achieved this aim to a very large degree. An essential aspect of this language hijack has been to get ‘a state of being homosexual’, separated from any acts a person

may commit, so that it can be claimed that homosexuals are homosexuals by nature/genetics/birth rather than as a result of their choice to commit particular acts. Thus the coining and promotion of the term 'sexual orientation' and the entrenchment of it in the language of our culture.

- There is the aim to desensitise the whole community in regards to sexual matters in general so that homosexual acts don't seem so deviant. Homosexual promotion of the decriminalising of prostitution is no coincidence. With both the positions of Chief and Deputy Chief Censor's now held by homosexuals, and the Film and Literature Board of Review being totally committed to the cause, most popular media is now open to their campaign to desensitise, and to corrupt public morals. One only has to look at recent decisions by the Chief Censor's Office and the Film and Literature Board of Review to see how far this aspect of the agenda has been implemented.
- There is the aim to get homosexuals into positions of power and influence in the culture so that they can further 'the cause' from the top. The Labour government, which is not only sympathetic to the homosexual agenda but has outspoken and influential homosexuals in significant positions, has been hell-bent on pushing the agenda as fast and as far as they can. Explicit statements made have indicated their intention has been to get things such as civil unions passed and entrenched to such a degree, that they will be extremely difficult if not impossible to reverse. The State Education system has adopted the cause as well and so now the majority of the New Zealand children – including those of by far the majority of Christian parents, who with little or no thought give their children into the hands of an atheistic education system – are being subject to homosexual socialisation and taught to view homosexual behaviour as acceptable and legitimate.
- There is the aim to change laws step by step, incrementally, and by stealth, until the full legal recognition and legitimisation of homosexual acts is achieved. This process is far advanced in New Zealand as a result of homosexuals and their supporters capturing the New Zealand Parliament over the past several decades.
- And in the wings is government promoted legislation to bring in "hate speech" laws to curtail freedom of speech against homosexuals and their behaviour.

Peter's claim to be a 'non-practicing homosexual' conforms to aspects of this agenda. It is a 'thin edge of the wedge', opening up to the homosexual agenda a community of people who in principle are opposed to it.

What does it mean for a person to be defined as a 'non-**practicing** homosexual' as Peter has identified himself?

There are two things that tend to be confused here: Behaviour and thoughts.

At one level a person is a homosexual because they commit homosexual acts. At this level if you don't do such things then you are not a homosexual. In the same way, because I have not committed adultery, I am not an adulterer. It would be ludicrous for any person, let alone one committed to the Holy God, to publicly identify themselves as a 'non-practicing adulterer', or a 'non-practicing thief', or a 'non-practicing paedophile', etc. A genuine believer, who before conversion may have indulged in such acts, will have repented of them and is commanded by Scripture to have no further association with such sinful practices. Thus they are no longer an adulterer, thief, or paedophile. Regarding this Paul writes to the Corinthians:

'Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither the sexually immoral...nor homosexual offenders...will inherit the kingdom of God. **And that is what some of you were.** But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.' [1 Corinthians 6:9-11]

They are now new creations in Christ – **the old has gone**, the new has come.

At this level, if Peter has not committed homosexual acts then he is not a homosexual.

But can it still be valid for a person to identify himself as a homosexual without committing homosexual acts? The only possible way that this could be derived would be from his knowledge of his thought life - that he has desired homosexual acts. In this regard, Christ pointedly and bluntly said that we commit adultery in our hearts if we look at a woman lustfully. (Matthew 5:27-28). In the sight of God, the lustful thought and the act lusted after, are both accounted as sin. Peter has thus identified a secret sin of which he is guilty: homosexual lust in the heart, that is, the indulging in homosexual fantasies of some sort. He may have wrongly presumed that because he has lusted in this way he is actually a homosexual by nature. But rather than identifying his sinful thoughts as sin - as the Lord Jesus does in the passage referred to above - and repenting of them and forsaking them, it appears he has taken these sinful thoughts to indicate that he is homosexual by nature and so has identified himself as such.

Homosexual desires and fantasies are just one form of lust. Lust is sinful thinking that may or may not lead to sinful actions, and needs to be confessed to God (and to man where it is appropriate), repented of, and turned away from with the Lord's help. Homosexual lust is in principle no different to sexual lust directed towards a neighbour's wife or husband, or towards an animal. Lust is sin and sin is not to be coddled and justified as though somehow it is viewed as a small matter by a Holy God. By identifying himself as a 'non-practicing homosexual' who is 'celibate' Peter has exposed his sin of thought. It is utterly unacceptable, that one can identify oneself within a class of persons who are committed to sinful thoughts and practices, thus effectively endorsing and promoting their abominations, while at the same time holding significant positions of leadership in the evangelical Christian community.

The evangelical community in New Zealand to date has resisted the homosexual agenda to a large degree. Its resistance has been a resistance in principle and mostly in the abstract, not primarily carried out in close, direct contact with those advocating the validity of homosexual thought and practice. The insulation/isolation of the evangelical Christian ghetto from the more forthright expressions of the homosexual agenda has meant that to date it has not really had to face squarely, publicly, and in practice, this agenda within its midst.

This has been changing and the 'principled' resistance has been weakening remarkably quickly. Since Peter has apparently not confessed this sin, repented of it, and forsaken it, rather identified himself by it, and since, and the Board of BCNZ, and the Boards of these other leading Christian organisations have retained him in spite of this, the wedge is now firmly and deeply in the heart of the evangelical community in New Zealand. The walls have been breached, the Trojan Horse is well and truly inside the gates.

Peter is not an insignificant person and for him to identify himself in the way he has is not insignificant. Thus his retention by Boards of evangelical organisations after his disclosure, is not insignificant either.

1 Timothy 1:8-11 says: 'We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. We also know that the law is not made 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 adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers - and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.'

Those who commit homosexual acts fall under the above Biblical term of 'perverts' and their acts - which presuppose lustful desires preceding them - are clearly said to be contrary to the Gospel. For Peter to identify himself positively without shame in terms of a perversion which is universally condemned in Scripture and which is explicitly said in this passage to be contrary to the Gospel, and at the same time hold positions of responsibility within the Christian community, is totally

untenable. For leading evangelical organisations to have in their leadership a person who defines himself in this way is equally untenable.

I accordingly request the Board to explain why it has retained Peter subsequent to his having publicly identified himself with a detestable, abominable perversion, which is contrary to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ that the Board is charged with upholding, and contrary to both God's moral and biological order.

I also request that this letter be formally tabled at the next meeting of the Board.

I await your response.

Yours in Christ

Renton Maclachlan
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Porirua