



The Burning Bush - Online article archive

Election of the new moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

An insight into the moral state of that denomination



Rev. Frank Sellar, Moderator-elect of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

"O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned," Matthew 12:34-37.

At this time of the year, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, an ecumenical denomination which long has had cordial links to Rome and the other international bodies that make up modern apostate Christendom, holds its annual election to choose the next Moderator of its General Assembly.

Normally, in order to maintain tranquility within its ranks, the office alternates between one who is clearly an ecumenist/liberal and one who is not quite so clearly an evangelical with the emphasis on the 'jelly' as Dr Paisley used to say in his heyday!

This year's selection would have us believe that he quite decidedly is both liberal and conservative, ecumenical and a fundamentalist! He is called Rev Frank Sellar. I cannot help but add that it is clear he is a 'seller' of the lies of modern and false 'Christianity'.

The devil never was afraid to make outlandish claims regarding himself and his adherents. The words of Paul to the Corinthians make that clear. "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works," 2 Corinthians 11:13-15.

1. REV SELLAR CLAIMS TO BE EVANGELICAL AND CALVINISTIC.

The Moderator-elect has been given quite a lot of press coverage here in Northern Ireland. In that coverage he introduces himself to the general public.

His election is reported in the 'Belfast Telegraph' of February 4th, 2016.

"Rev Frank Sellar won a landslide victory in the vote to be the next leader of the Presbyterian Church here, with the support of 18 out of the Church's 19 presbyteries across Ireland.

The 57-year-old, who calls himself a 'gospel radical' and Calvinist," goes on: "In my role I have come across many situations that people without a calling would find quite difficult. But for me, my faith in Jesus guides me, knowing that I am doing his work because I felt the call to do it."

At this point I might just comment that a claim to be called by Christ and to be doing His work is not verified by our 'feelings' but rather by our obedience to His revealed will - the Word of God! As Moses said to Israel long ago: "Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him," Deuteronomy 10:1. Such a walking in the commands



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of God are what confirm and prove that a man is called of God.

'The Belfast Newsletter' of February 6th, gushingly declared: "The 57-year-old minister of Bloomfield Presbyterian Church in East Belfast is theologically and intellectually well equipped to lead the 250,000-strong Church over a year-long Moderatorial term that begins in June when the present Moderator the Rev Dr Ian McNie stands down.

Considered a conservative evangelical, Frank Sellar describes himself as 'a gospel radical'. He is certainly a minister with the experience and grace to reach across the religious divide in the two parts of Ireland, without compromising his Reformed Protestant beliefs."

So ignorant is the general public today as to what 'Reformed Protestant beliefs' consist of, that such a declaration by the 'Belfast Newsletter' columnist goes unchallenged.

It will be seen later in this article just how far removed from being a 'Reformed Protestant' Mr Sellars is.

2. IDENTIFIES HIMSELF AS AN ULSTER SCOT.

This claim is made in the report contained in the "Belfast Newsletter". That is significant because that newspaper is 'big' on all things 'Ulster Scots', having links to that community within its staff.

Historically, the Ulster Scot was linked to the time of the 'Plantation' when many thousands of Scottish Presbyterians moved to Ulster in the early 17th century, bringing with them their Scottish Calvinism. Shortly after the beginning of the 'Plantation' a great spiritual awakening took place amongst the planters. The valley of the Six Mile water runs from Larne, the river rising about four miles south west of Larne and passes through Ballynure, Ballyclare, Doagh, Templepatrick and Antrim into Lough Neagh. That valley became the centre of a mighty moving of the Holy Spirit in the mid 1620s. That wonderful time of blessing consolidated Presbyterianism in the area and ensured its scriptural and spiritual character. It lit a fire that we can thank God burns yet in Ulster, though with sadness we must confess its flame has very much dimmed. God has been pleased to maintain His Truth here and there, even though the once great Presbyterian Church has long ago abandoned allegiance to Biblical Christianity.

Rev Sellar would like the few remaining evangelicals within his denomination to believe that he is of that 'Ulster Scot' spiritual lineage but his utterances as recorded in the press indicate that he is not within 'a bagle's gowl' or even an 'ass's roar' (to employ a little Ulster Scots vocabulary which refers to the distance over which these animals may be heard when in full cry) of being within the camp of historic Ulster Presbyterianism!

He may have genealogical roots in Scotland but his theology comes from the nether regions!!

Westminster Standards denied

Mr Sellar is a modernist who preaches a modern gospel which is essentially a denial of historic Presbyterianism as set forth in the Westminster Standards. He claims to be a preacher of the Bible but then embraces and promotes that which is a clear contradiction of Bible truth!

More of that a little later.

3. MR SELLAR WAS ELECTED BY 18 OUT OF 19 PRESBYTERIES.

The significance of that is that it shows just how the views of Mr Sellar are accepted by the vast majority of Irish Presbyterians. Such a vote is virtually unknown within the history of the church. In the past, the denomination undoubtedly had a sizeable remnant who would have embraced the fundamentals of the faith. They existed though we often complained at their weakness and timidity and their failure to obey God and get out of the apostasy of Irish Presbyterianism. That apostasy was clearly signalled back in 1926-27. The festering corruption of German Rationalism and liberal theology within the theological college of the Pres-



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byterian Church in Ireland burst forth. Professor Davey was charged with teaching heresy to his students in which he denied the deity of Christ and the truth of the gospel doctrine of atonement for sin through the blood of Christ shed on Calvary.

Those who charged Davey with these heresies which are fully documented, I might say in a book entitled "Presbyterianism on Trial" by Rev James Edgar, a contemporary of Professor Davey, were ridiculed and mocked. Professor Davey was supported by 707 votes to 82 in a vote within the June 1927 General Assembly and his teachings upheld by the Irish Presbyterian Church. Furthermore, that endorsement was further ratified in 1953 when they made J E Davey their moderator.

Sermon

Dr Paisley, preaching on this subject in 1983 and reported in the June edition of "The Revivalist" gave the background of the downgrade.

"A preacher may destroy his thousands if he preaches false doctrine, but the Principal of a College can destroy tens of thousands if he preaches false doctrine, for he sends out emissaries of Hell to preach another gospel which deludes and darkens men, and eventually leads them to damnation in the outer darkness of Hell for evermore.

Professor J. E. Davey got the poison when he attended the German University. He brought it back to Ulster. He was appointed as a Professor in the General Assembly's College - Assembly's College as it was called. It is now called Union College with the amalgamation of Magee College and the old Assembly's College. Professor Davey's ground in the College was already prepared. Professor William Walker had been appointed, towards the end of the last century, as Hebrew Professor. He brought to his class all the poison of Higher Criticism; he sowed doubts in the minds of the young men concerning the authenticity, accuracy and infallibility of the Old Testament Hebrew Scriptures. The leavening was going on. Principal Matthew Leach, who was Principal of the College, decided to go out of his way to give some sound advice to the students of his day concerning the heresies of Walker, but nothing was done and the poison was laid."

If Rev Sellar has a link to past Presbyterianism, it is to that past personified in the teaching of J E Davey!

4. REV SELLAR ADMIRES AND RESPECTS SODOMITE MINISTERS.

Here is what was stated in "The Belfast Telegraph" report already noted. Indeed, the writer made it the very first detail in the report for its significance was understood even by her.

"The new Moderator of the Presbyterian Church has said some of the Christian ministers he admires and has most respect for are gay."

The report continues:

"The father-of-three, currently serving at Bloomfield Presbyterian Church in east Belfast, said homophobia must be kicked to the kerb.

Referring to two clerics - Ed Shaw and Vaughn Roberts, who both preach in England - the Moderator-Designate said those who are "same-sex attracted" and Christian can still live within the teachings of the Bible.

"It might sound surprising, but some of the people in the clergy I admire, and indeed some of the people within Christian ministry that I respect most, are same-sex attracted and it's vital that people hear that," said Rev Sellar.

"I believe there is no place in society for homophobia; in the cases of these two members, they have chosen to place their sexuality under the authority of the Lord and decided to live within the parameters the Bible sets."



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Rev Roberts, who is based at St Ebbes Church in Oxford, is 'same-sex attracted' and celibate, though does not define himself as gay."

It is also reported of Rev Sellar that "Though confirming his belief that marriage should be between a man and a woman, he said: 'It is a very important issue, not just for Christians but an appeal that is important to everybody.'"

True face

Here is the real face of Mr Sellar. Despite his claims about his Calvinism, his 'faith in Jesus', and the press statement that he is 'theologically and intellectually well equipped to lead the 250,000-strong Church,' an examination in the light of God's Word of his views on sodomy would repudiate such a claim.

Sodomy is a wicked, vile sin, declared by God to be an abomination. "If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them," Leviticus 20:13. Mr Sellar may claim that it is 'homophobic' to preach such a doctrine but in so doing he clearly indicates that he thinks nothing of denying God's holy and inspired word and fears not to denounce God's truth and stoutly declare that it 'must be kicked to the kerb.'

Have we not here the same dismissive attitude toward the Scriptures that can be detected in the writings of J E Davey?

I think so.

Two horses

Mr Sellar would attempt the impossible - riding two diametrically opposed 'horses' at the one time! You cannot be 'for God' and also 'repudiate God's Law' at one and the same time. That is Mr Sellar's position.

God's view of sodomy is very clearly stated in the verse we have quoted from Leviticus. To God, sodomy is a gross and abominable sin. It is very evidently not so with Mr Sellar. He and God are on opposite sides on this issue.

We seek to stand with God on this matter. What His word says about it is final.

As with all sin, there is an answer to sodomy in the mercy and grace of God. We do not, as does Mr Sellar, suggest that sodomy, by God's mercy is an acceptable practice. No, far from it. What we say is that there is deliverance from this abomination through the blood of Christ.

Listen to these words. "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. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

Paul lists here those for whom there is no entrance to or inheritance in heaven. He terms them 'unrighteous.' He goes on to elaborate and explain just what it is comprises 'unrighteousness'. He lists 10 classes of sinners which make up the 'unrighteous.' Amongst them, indeed, in the very heart of the list are those he terms 'effeminate' and 'abusers of themselves with mankind.'

The great Protestant commentator, Matthew Henry, explains these words as referring to 'sodomites'. With this we readily agree. There is no place in God's kingdom for unrepentant, practising sodomites. With this, of course, Mr Sellar disagrees and would term such a statement as being 'homophobic', which is detested by him and indeed, is illegal under the law of the land as it stands.

But irrespective of Mr Sellar or the law of the land, we stand with the apostles on this issue. "And they called



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them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard," Acts 4:18-20.

Modern 'Christianity' and Mr Sellar is an apostle of such, has reclassified that which God calls sin. However, that does not alter the eternal consequences of such behaviour. It may make it acceptable to men today but it stands as an abomination in God's books and will ever remain so.

However, we would stress that there is an answer to such a sin, as with all sin, revealed in the gospel. Note Paul's word again. "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." There is a washing, there is a sanctifying, there is a justifying of those guilty of such a sin through the Lord Jesus Christ. Those in Corinth who once were caught up in this abomination had been delivered from it, forsook it, were cleansed from the guilt of it by the washing of the blood of Christ.

That is the message of God to this evil world. It is a saving message. It is very different from Mr Sellar's message of endorsement, of excusing of this sin which will bring damnation.

This is the depths to which the Presbyterian Church in Ireland has sunk!

Protest

What a need there is for the Free Presbyterian Church, the only church to have really challenged the apostasy of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, to man afresh the battlements in opposition to its latest wickedness, especially when the rampant apostasy of that church has been so boldly presented by its latest leader-elect.

No better opportunity presents itself to the Free Presbyterian Church to once more declare itself against this apostasy than a resurrecting of the protest, first initiated by Dr Paisley many years ago, by our Church at the annual meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in June of this year. It would be especially significant that a protest take place this year since it is the 50th anniversary of that protest which brought such happy and blessed consequences in Ulster and further afield back in 1966.

Rev Ivan Foster (Retired)

12th February, 2016.