

3rd July, 2017

Mr William Nye
Secretary General,
Church of England,
Church House,
Great Smith Street,
London, SW1P 3NZ.

An Open Letter to Mr William Nye and Members of Church of England General Synod

Dear Mr Nye,

You have indicated formally your view that the onus is on therapists to prove that their work is ethical. Within reasonable limits, it should be the other way around. Nothing would hamper vital research more than a ban on new approaches until they had been 'proven'.

And how shall we protect freedom of *speech* if freedom to *talk* (in Talking Therapies) is not allowed? And how would these things be policed?

Everyone knows that an ideological battle is being fought here. Dr Nicholas Cummings, the former president of the American Psychological Association who led that organisation to de-list homosexuality as a disorder, subsequently describes the APA as 'stampeding into a motion to declare the treatment of homosexuality unethical ... even when the homosexual patient willingly and even eagerly seeks treatment... Vigorously pushed by the gay lobby, it was eventually seen by a sufficient number of Council members as runaway political correctness and was defeated by the narrowest of margins. In a series of courageous letters to the various components of APA, former president Robert Perloff referred to the willingness of many psychologists to trample patients' rights to treatment in the interest of political correctness."¹

A third former APA president, Dr Jack Wiggins commends the book saying, "The authors provide cogent examples of how in mental health circles today misguided idealism and social sophistry guarantee that good science and practice will not go unpunished."

Before making such a momentous decision as to support a therapy ban, the Church must surely accept that the onus is on the 'banners' to prove their case. Suicide attempts cut both ways. Some testimonies are shortly to be released which demonstrate how helpful therapy can be. Has the Church considered how devastating it would be for a person to be denied therapy and told to leave spouse and children, and to go and live with a same-sex partner?

I pray that the Synod will go well. (What you do in England of course greatly affects us in the Church of Ireland too, but nobody has asked our view).

Yours sincerely



Dermot O'Callaghan
Director, Core Issues Trust
Former member, General Synod of the Church of Ireland

cc. The Most Revd. and Rt. Hon Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury.
The Most Revd. and Rt. Hon John Sentamu, Archbishop of York.

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¹ *Destructive Trends in Mental Health: The Well-Intentioned Path to Harm*, Routledge 2005