

“LET’S TALK”

I am a regular member of the congregation of St Edward’s Church Corfe Castle. I feel as an individual that my personal views on local and national church issues do not have a place to be heard. The PCC is concerned with the church building and raising money. Those who attend the local Synod give a small verbal report at the PCC AGM. The only limited opportunity for discussion occurs in Bible Study or Prayer Group. It is not always easy to voice one’s thought processes in a group, even if you know that group well, because of the “dangers” of disagreement. You tend to become isolated and ignorant of what your fellow Christians actually think about most things.

There are problems that exist within the church community, and between the local church and the wider community, and the national church and the wider community. Communication is critical, and if the church is to be respected then it needs to be understood and needs to be broadly in tune with the wider community. The Church must demonstrate that it understands the teachings of Jesus. The temptation to marry the teachings of Jesus with our prejudices is an interference and distortion, and a transparent distortion at that. Detailed analysis of the Bible leading to some conclusion that is at odds with a basic understanding of the nature of Jesus simply does not make sense. The wider community believes that Christians judge others and stand between the people and Jesus. The Church is like a clogged artery restricting and squeezing the life blood of the people as it seeks our Lord Jesus. It is our job to clear the way to the Lord, and welcome everyone.

For example the wider community might be surprised to understand that I do not go to church because I think I am better than they are. I am pleased to welcome the gay community into the congregation. I do think that a woman should be able to be a bishop if their church community votes for them. I do think that gay people should be able to be married in church, after all we are asking for God’s blessing not telling God who to bless. I do think that we should be able to have a gay priest if the local church community votes for the individual. However I do think that sex between same sexes is a sin, and that would mean that a sexually active candidate would not receive my vote as a prospective leader of my Church. You notice that I would bring democracy into the Church appointment process.

I think we need to establish communications and debate within our local churches from the congregation up. We need to find out what our local communities think about us and to reach an understanding. Our Church leadership needs to create structures within the church that funnel ideas and communication from the bottom to the top and back again, and then out into the wider local community. I would suggest that you bring in Management Consultants to look at the way the Church “breathes”.

David Walker