

The Pastor Writes - April 2012

March 29, 2012

Dear friends

Inevitably our thoughts turn to Easter at this time of year. I want to highlight just one element of the story for our thoughts. Jesus being raised from the dead brings we believe freedom to believers. The reason for this goes to our view of the cross and Jesus the innocent man dying for the sins of guilty men. There is no longer any need for anybody to feel guilty. The honest confession of the truths that make us guilty and the realistic intention to avoid such situations again enables the cleansing of our whole being and the release from guilt and shame.

One of the principles Baptist have always stood for is freedom of speech, the right to think and express our thoughts freely. I believe that such freedom is being taken away from the general population. The freedom to say what we believe with compassion and discretion is essential to modern democracy. We have to give others the right to disagree and even be offended by our thinking. I for one am often disturbed by the words of others and by the thinking of others. I was taught as a child and believe as an adult that while violence could hurt me the words of others cannot.

There are many organisations that have principles, beliefs and thinking that I do not agree with, indeed that I find abhorrent, but I strongly defend their right to the same freedom of speech I want for myself. I realise that many people in society have been marginalised in the past and that the Church has sometimes been responsible for that.

It is time for society to grow up and recognise in law the failures of the past and the rights of every marginalised section of our society. However in this process the right to oppose any or every value of any and every man must be recognised or we shall merely go down the same road of marginalisation again. This time with the roles reversed so that the marginalised of the past exact a revenge upon those responsible. Where does God fit into all this? Jesus said in John 3 v 17 that he had not condemned anyone but that people condemned themselves by what they believe. That gives us all something to think about.

Your friend and pastor

David