

Contra ‘Love Sussex’

Love Sussex is an evangelistic-based initiative, which seeks to bring churches and communities together in order to create a platform for the Gospel.¹ Its foundational theological belief is the following:

Today we live in a fatherless generation where many people believe that God is angry and distant from His creation. Our need to be loved has caused us to look in many places for the love and acceptance that can only come from God. The world is crying out to be unconditionally loved. We all desperately need to hear the truth that God loves us and is the Father we have been looking for all our lives.

Jesus came to show us what His Father was really like. He came to tell us that God is for us, not against us and that He really does love us. Not only did He tell us that His Father loved us, but He demonstrated it by laying down His own life, that we might be born into His wonderful family.

Working in relationship with LoveSussex

Love Sussex aims simply to proclaim the truth of God’s love throughout the county through a programme of outreach projects throughout the year.²

Evangelism is a worthy objective and the desire to work in partnership with other Christians to witness for Christ is laudable. However, to do this we have to first understand the truth about God and interpret his word correctly. Second, we have to represent that truth in our witness or we dishonour God. Thirdly, if we do not witness according to God’s plan then all our work is wasted and void. The Bible teaches all that we need to know about God, about Christ and about how we work for God and witness to Jesus. The first feature of successful evangelism is obeying God’s own word.

Sadly, the statement quoted above is not a reflection of genuine, historic Christianity, but rather a manifestation of the modernised, superficial, emotional parody of Christianity which passes for the real thing today. It dishonours both God and his word and thus will have no spiritual success (though it may have superficial elements of enthusiasm).

In order to show that this statement is very unbiblical, I will try to avoid long, sustained arguments and highlight Biblical texts which reveal the contradictions to Biblical doctrine above.

‘We all desperately need to hear the truth that God loves us.’

This is completely contrary to the heart of the Gospel and dishonours the attributes of God.

Firstly, there are no texts in Scripture which state that God loves everybody.

The ‘world’ in Jn 3:16 cannot be twisted to mean ‘every person in the world’ or hell is wiped out. If ‘world’ means everyone in verse 16, then it means the same in verse 17 and this would mean that everyone is saved and there is no hell, so there is no need to evangelise. There are many other reasons which demonstrate that ‘world’ here does not mean

¹ ‘Love Sussex aims simply to proclaim the truth of God’s love throughout the county through a programme of outreach projects throughout the year. There will be projects designed to bring communities together and allow the church to serve Sussex, no strings attached. Our intention is to serve the people of Sussex regardless of their faith, background or lifestyle choices.’

² <http://love-sussex.com/love-sussex-initiative/>

Contact by email to vivienne@love-sussex.com or by telephone to 07588 425657. It appears to have the support of the Brighton Elim Church.

everyone, please consult my web pages for more information. 'World' here means the elect; a world of saved people kept for God, and the word in John's Gospel often meant a relatively few people (e.g. Jn 12:19).

There is no other verse that even slightly suggests that God's loves everyone. The word 'loving' in the NIV translation of Ps 145:13b is wrong; the Hebrew word 'love' does not appear. In fact the second part of the verse in its entirety is not in the majority of Masoretic manuscripts and, therefore, nor in the best Bible versions. If your Bible has a verse 13b or worse, has the word 'loving' in a verse 13b, then it is an untrustworthy translation and should be thrown away. Verse 13b does not appear in the following: AV, NKJV, ASV, NASB, WEB, RWB, Darby, BBE or Young's Literal.

The Bible says that God hates some people

If God hates even one person, then it is impossible to say that God loves everyone. Also if God loves everyone then he supposedly loves the devil also, an absurd notion. Scripture shows us unequivocally, that God hates very many people. He hates sinners, violent people, idolaters, adulterers and so on. He hates certain types of people, such as the Nicolaitans, and he also hates specifically named people, such as Esau. It is completely unbiblical to say that God loves everyone. It is also foolish to claim that God's hate is not a real hate, but just means to love less. In fact the word 'hate' means what it says and in the NT the word is equated with murder. In any event, God's word also uses the term 'abhor', which is an even stronger word, meaning 'to treat with disgust and hatred'. See the following:

And you shall not walk in the statutes of the nation which I am casting out before you; for they commit all these things, and therefore I abhor them. Lev 20:23

I will destroy your high places, cut down your incense altars, and cast your carcasses on the lifeless forms of your idols; and My soul shall abhor you. Lev 26:30

The boastful shall not stand in your sight; you hate all workers of iniquity. Ps 5:5

The LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man. Ps 5:6

The LORD tests the righteous, but the wicked and the one who loves violence his soul hates. Upon the wicked he will rain coals; fire and brimstone and a burning wind shall be the portion of their cup. For the LORD is righteous, he loves righteousness; his countenance beholds the upright. Ps 11:5-7

There they are in great fear *where* no fear was, for God has scattered the bones of him who encamps against you; you have put *them* to shame, because God has despised them. Ps 53:5

These six *things* the LORD hates, Yes, seven *are* an abomination to Him: A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood, A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil, A false witness *who* speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren. Prov 6:16-19

I dismissed the three shepherds in one month. My soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me. Zech 11:8

But Esau I have hated, and laid waste his mountains and his heritage For the jackals of the wilderness. Mal 1:3

As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated." Rm 9:13

Thus, in his hatred and righteous indignation (wrath), God judged many sinners in the OT. Such includes the whole population of Sodom and Gomorrah, on whom he rained fire from heaven (Gen 19:24). It includes the millions of people who populated the earth in the

period immediately before the flood (2 Pt 2:5). Of all those people only eight were saved, whom God loved. It also includes the hundreds of thousands of people God committed to genocide in Canaan to be destroyed at the hands of Israel for their sins (Deut 7:2, 20:16-18). There is no way that anyone can say God loved such people.

Such divine indignation was manifested by Jesus himself when he spoke with anger to the Pharisees calling them, 'brood of vipers' (Matt 12:34); 'serpents' (Matt 23:33) and 'whitewashed tombs' (Matt 23:27). Clearly, Jesus did not love the Pharisees for they were destined to hell, as Jesus prophesied, 'you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins' (Jn 8:24).

If there is no shortage of Bible verses showing that God hates and abhors certain people, and we could supply more, then it is dishonouring to God and contradictory to his word to suggest that God loves everyone. Furthermore, if you tell people that '*God loves you*' why should they then seek his mercy and strive to serve him. Are you not encouraging them to believe that they must be safe if God loves them?

'We all desperately need to hear the truth that God ... is the Father we have been looking for all our lives.'

To tell people that God is their father is a grave error and a blasphemy to God. It is certainly not true that God is the father of unbelievers, except in the vague, secondary sense that he is their creator. There are no family ties whatsoever.

Those who have God as their Father are those who are in Christ Jesus and those alone. Jesus is God's ONLY begotten Son, and those who become God's sons are those who have been placed into Christ by the baptism of the Spirit. Unbelievers have no part in Christ and no part in God.

For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body -- whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free -- and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. 1 Cor 12:13

Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. 2 Jn 1:9

If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 1 Jn 2:15

For all that *is* in the world -- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life -- is not of the Father but is of the world. 1 Jn 2:16

Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also. 1 Jn 2:23

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 1 Jn 3:1

Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. 1 Jn 4:15

In fact, the father of the wicked is Satan,

You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and *does not* stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it. Jn 8:44

The prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience ... by nature children of wrath. Eph 2:2-3

To claim that God is the father of the wicked, when they are of their father the devil, is a grave blasphemy.

‘God is for us, not against us and that He really does love us.’

This is a statement, addressed on the website, not to believers but to unbelievers. It is true concerning Christians, who are sons of God, but it is false concerning non-Christians.

This is really fundamental to the Gospel message and, in fact, it destroys the heart of the Gospel completely. The fundamental issue of the Gospel is that man is lost in sins, dead in sins and is completely set against God because of his lawlessness, corruption and iniquity. God’s law is that ‘the soul that sins will die’ and thus all men are under God’s curse, God’s wrath and God’s judgment. Everything about God’s attributes are set against the sinner who is obnoxious to his holiness; a stench in God’s nostrils (Eccles 10:1). God is against unbelievers.

The stench of sin has to be replaced by the aroma of righteousness, which is one aspect of the OT sacrifices, typifying the cross.

Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the LORD smelled a soothing aroma. Gen 8:20-21

And you shall burn the whole ram on the altar. It *is* a burnt offering to the LORD; it *is* a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD. Ex 29:18

And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. Eph 5:2

Far from God loving the wicked, he hates them (as we have proved). Far from God being the father of the wicked, he is their judge (as we have proved). Far from God being for the wicked, the wicked are the enemy of God.

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God. Rm 8 7

Friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Jm 4:4

The basis of the Gospel is that God is not for us at all but his wrath abides on us and his judgment is about to fall upon us and we need a Saviour to ransom us from God’s wrath.

He who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him. Jn 3:36

For *there is* one God and one Mediator between God and men, *the* Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. 1 Tim 2:5-6

To tell sinners that God is for them means that they do not need a Saviour to rescue them from his judgment. It is the very opposite of the Gospel. Is it any wonder that this sort of false Gospel has not worked in bringing many to Christ in recent decades, despite the glorious promises of revival amongst Charismatics for many years?

What is the Gospel then?

It is the good news that Christ will save all those who come to him for life and salvation. If the Gospel is good news, then it means that natural man is surrounded by bad news and needs a Saviour. If your Gospel tells people that their situation is lovely, that God loves

them, that God favours their works, that God is their father, that God has a wonderful plan for their lives, then they need no Saviour. This is the very opposite of the Biblical Gospel.

The Biblical assessment of man in sin is far from lovely; it is terminal. Man is dead in his sins and controlled by the devil (Eph 2:1-2). He can do no good works of any kind (and this includes believing the Gospel, which is a good work: Rm 3:10-19). He is cursed by God (Gal 3:10). He is under judgment and wrath now (Jn 3:36) and his future is an eternal hell (Matt 10:28; Lk 12:5).

The true Gospel is the following: *'You are a sinner before God and have come under God's curse. Your future is only death and God's awful judgment whereby you will be sentenced for all your sins and condemned to an eternal punishment in hell for evermore. The only way to escape this condemnation is to flee for mercy to Christ, God's only Son and the only Saviour sent by God to redeem men. Read the Bible to see who Christ is; seek his mercy; call upon God; repent of your sins and believe in Christ as your Lord and Saviour. Without this there is only the prospect of eternal hell fire. If you believe in Christ completely for salvation, and confess his Lordship openly, you will receive eternal life and be accepted by God as a son. Your sins will be forgiven and God will fill you with his Spirit as a guarantee of eternal life and heaven.'*

Conclusion

The sort of false Gospel published in this website as become more and more popular in the last 120 years. However, before this period this type of theology was relatively rare amongst UK evangelicals. From the Reformation onwards the truths that God does not love everyone but only the elect, and the need of sinful men to abandon their sin and flee to Christ alone for mercy from God's impending wrath, was the basis of all sound Gospel preachers.

I urge the folk behind this initiative to rethink their theology, repent of their wrong teaching and seek to understand the truth of God's word in this matter. Only then will they be effective in preaching the Gospel.

Information for interested parties: the theology behind the false Gospel perpetrated in this website is technically called Arminianism. It arose as an unorthodox theology following the death of James Arminius in Holland and was condemned by an international synod at Dordt in 1618-19, attended and supported by delegates from all the major national Reformed churches (including Britain). However, the origin of this thinking was the Semi-Pelagian ideas about conversion that had been around since the 5th century, which also form the basis of Roman Catholic salvation by works. The error of Arminianism was deliberately fed into England by Jesuit monks, supported by Archbishop Laud (1573-1645), in order to pervert the Calvinistic Anglican Church. Thus it took root in Britain as a rogue theology but was only adopted by a few until the time of John Wesley. With Wesley it became the basis of his theology which was riddled with other theological errors, including sinless perfectionism and a hatred of God's sovereignty in predestination. From Wesley it spread to the Holiness Movement and then Classical Pentecostal churches. Elim is a UK variant of these.

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