Jayne Ozanne, new Director of Accepting Evangelicals, asks whether the Amazing Power of Grace can Change the Church?

For my first Christmas on the Archbishops? Council I decided to take the rather unusual step of presenting every member with a copy of a book that was then taking the Christian world by storm - ?What?s So Amazing About Grace?? (Philip Yancey). I urged my fellow Council members to find time to read the first chapter ? or at least the first page ? and so discover how many in society see the Church as being the very last place where they feel they will encounter grace. Today if I were still on Council I believe I would instead be giving out DVDs of one of the most moving and important films of last year ? Pride.

If you haven?t seen it, I strongly recommend you do so ? why not watch it together with your friends, your family, or better still your church or home group?! I?ve spent some time reflecting on why I was so deeply moved by this little known yet true story that had me in silent tears throughout. I?ve come to the conclusion that it is, like Yancey?s book, an Amazing story of the power of Grace - where the loving kindness of a group of persecuted individuals had the power to change a nation. It was their actions of selfless love, against insurmountable odds, that won the hearts and minds of some of the most homophobic people in Britain. And that was back in 1984!

This in turn reminded me of another story ? one where Moses rather bravely asks God to show him His glory (Exodus 33: 18). I?ve always found it fascinating that God chooses to do this by allowing all His goodness to pass by. Not His awesome majesty, nor His righteous power but His overwhelming goodness. It is this that we see manifest in Jesus ? His goodness, mercy and grace. It is this that we respond to. It?s this that calls us. It is this by which He is known and made known. And it is this carries the unmistakable mark of His Spirit.

As Christians I believe that we are called to discern matters ?by their fruit?. As a result, I can?t help asking - where is the goodness in a Church doctrine that causes so much hurt and pain to us gay Christians? Where is the goodness in the actions of people who ostracise friends and family because of their sexual orientation? Where is the goodness of a message that says ? some are included but others aren?t? What type of fruit is being harvested here? By contrast, God?s glory continues to be manifest in the goodness of the loving actions of faithful gay Christians who despite all the odds continue to love God and his broken Church.

This is one of most Amazing stories of Grace in our world today, which I for one believe has the power to move mountains. Indeed, it is by the undeniable testimony of the fruit borne by gay Christians around the world that we shall be known and God?s glory seen. Can it change a nation? Definitely. Can it change the Church? That remains to be seen, but I hope and pray that at least it will make us richer and more understanding of the power of God?s Amazing Grace to heal and to save.

Please note that the DVD of Pride has just been released for sale in the UK, and can be purchased from any good media retailer.

Tweet

[1]