

Deane Church + Lostock Church
w/b Sunday 21st January 2018
Revelation 2:12-29

'Post-truth' was Oxford Dictionaries' word of the year 2016. Britain is regarded by many cultural commentators as a post-truth society.

1. Is truth important? Why / why not?

Read Revelation 2:12-29

Bible scholars largely agree that the Balaamites and the Nicolaitians had similar views including that Jesus has saved Christians from their sins and so it does not matter how you then live your life since God's grace will continue to save you from anything you do that could be sinful.

2. What are some problems with this view of the Balaamites and Nicolaitians?

The church in Ephesus was strong on **truth** (2:2) but weak on **love** (2:4).

The churches in Pergamum and Thyatira were tolerating **error** and drifting into immorality (2:14-15 & 20), even though the church in Thyatira was commended for its **love** (2:19).

WEAK ON TRUTH 1...2...3...4...5 **STRONG ON TRUTH**

WEAK ON LOVE 1...2...3...4...5 **STRONG ON LOVE**

3. Where would you place your church/fellowship group on these scales and why?

4. Why can we sometimes experience a tension between Christian truth and Christian love?

The Balaamites and Nicolaitians and the followers of the 'prophetess' Jezebel were **members** of these churches.

5. How does false teaching get access to and make inroads in a church today?

"It's about making the Christian faith more relevant to people today."

This and similar comments are often made by church leaders (and by Prime Ministers!) when General Synod (the governing body of the Church of England) takes the denomination in a step away from a traditional Biblical position. General Synod by the way consists of 483 members including 50 bishops, 197 other clergy and 236 lay people.

However, the churches in the UK that are showing **sustained growth** are not those that have moved away from what the Bible teaches but the evangelical Anglican churches where the Bible is faithfully taught and where all-member ministry is promoted with people encouraged to use their spiritual gifts.

6. Why then does General Synod repeatedly take our denomination down an unbiblical route?

There are more Anglican Christians in Nigeria, Uganda and Kenya together than there are in the Church of England. The archbishops, bishops and national synods of these African churches and of many other Anglican churches around the world are appalled by what is happening in the Church of England and in the Anglican Churches of the USA and Canada.

In response to theological drift in the historical Anglican Church in the USA and Canada, many churches in those countries (including some of the biggest congregations in North America) have broken away to form *The Anglican Church in North America*. This new 'province' now consists of 30 dioceses, over 1000 congregations and c134,000 members.

In Britain, the Anglican Mission in England (AMiE) is actively planting new congregations outside of normal Church of England structures.

7. What are the pros and cons of breaking away as opposed to prayerfully working for reform and renewal from within?