

book: *Is God Anti-Gay?*

This little book packs a powerful and persuasive punch, empathetically yet peacefully tackling this controversial issue. Written with intimately personal and honest experience, this book is firmly rooted in biblical principles, yet compassionately so.

Homosexuality is considered in relation to five themes: God's design, the Bible, the Christian, the church, and the world. The foundation is set with God's design and purposes for gender, sex, and marriage, followed by discussion of what the Bible has to say on homosexuality, what it means for Christians, how the church should respond, and how we could bring what we believe to the world around us.

One of my favourite features of this book was the compact, high-yield columns in which Allberry succinctly answers some of the most critical burning questions we all have, questions such as:

- 'Surely a same-sex partnership is OK if it's committed and faithful?'
- 'Aren't we just picking and choosing which Old Testament laws apply?'
- 'Isn't the Christian view of sexuality dangerous and harmful?'

The suggested approach to anyone that comes to us and the church should be to help them grasp the overwhelming God of the cross and resurrection – which has implications for their view on sexuality. Just as we do not immediately confront newcomers to church with their specific sins, we should not subject those who are same-sex attracted to such a double standard and consider their sexual orientation the defining feature of their identity.

We are also to realise that though homosexual activity is a serious sin, 'it is not alone in being so... If we are to be faithful to Scripture, we must also preach against' all the other sins which have been 'trivialised in western society'. It is important to remember that the Bible condemns homosexuality in the context of other sexual sins (i.e. all sexual activity outside of heterosexual marriage) and indeed, other sins – for example, Paul includes idolaters, adulterers, and thieves among a list in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.

Interspersed within the truths and answers were Sam's personal struggles with homosexual feelings that were an unwelcome conflict for him, which makes his brutal honesty in stating truths all the more powerful. Jesus' call to everyone is the same – to deny ourselves, take up the cross, and follow him. It involves 'saying "no" to [the] deepest sense of who [we] are, for the sake of Christ', for our lives are not ours, but created and bought by him.

### conclusion

As a medical student, I take away from this book a much clearer idea of where I stand as a Christian and a firm foundation from which to base any future decisions and readings in relation to this issue – as well as great comfort and reassurance in knowing how to better welcome, support, and counsel those who grant me the privilege of being trusted with their most personal stories. ■



### Is God Anti-Gay?

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