

Former senior BBC presenter criticises LGBT correspondent role

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Carys Moseley comments on the role of LGBT correspondent for the BBC news and its obvious bias.

In his soon-to-be-published memoirs, former senior BBC presenter John Humphrys criticises the appointment of Ben Hunte¹ as BBC News' first LGBT correspondent. 'A Day Like Today' is being serialised in the Daily Mail and will be published on 3 October this year. Humphrys says that "*the appointment raised eyebrows*", revealing that Hunte looked forward to being 'a mouthpiece' for marginalised groups. Humphrys criticises him for this, saying that the BBC should not be a mouthpiece for anyone, as this crosses the line from journalism to public relations and lobbying.

Ben Hunte² has been a freelance presenter for Channel 5 News and ITN News as well as having launched and presented BBC What's New in 2018, the first BBC TV programme and digital service for children in Africa. For the BBC in the UK he presented interviews as part of its 'Gay Britannia' theme in 2017. The same year he received recognition at the British LGBT Awards for 'Top 10 Outstanding Contributions to LGBT life'.

'Bringing queer issues to the masses'

Earlier this year, Brighton Pride, one of the biggest events in the UK LGBT calendar, announced that Hunte would be speaking "*on how he's bringing queer issues to the masses*"³. Did Brighton Pride ever stop to consider just how elitist and snobbish this sounds?

Talk of 'the masses' simply does not occur in today's media landscape for two reasons. First, it goes against the meritocratic ethos that was pushed from the 1970s onwards with the expansion of further and higher education. There was a greater emphasis on education and training as opposed to upbringing and genetics allowing people to succeed due to their own abilities. The second reason why talk of 'the masses' is no longer common is that the internet has allowed all kinds of people, not just the privileged few with the right connections, to produce news content and disseminate it from independent platforms. This has proven to be a major threat to traditional mainstream media, and is an

obvious reason why mainstream outlets such as the BBC are so censorious of non-established, non-progressive opinions and beliefs.

LGBT correspondent role linked to erosion of free speech

Ben Hunte is the second person to be appointed as LGBT correspondent in UK news journalism. The first was Patrick Strudwick, working in London for the US-based news website BuzzFeed. He himself proudly announced that he was 'the first LGBT specialist' in news journalism in the UK when he was given an award for his work⁴. How he became such a specialist is that he infiltrated a conference in London in 2010 where the speakers were internationally renowned therapists helping clients with unwanted same-sex attraction. He went undercover to a counsellor who attended the conference, pretending to be a client distressed with his own homosexuality, then exposed her to the press. As a result of this and of capitulation to LGBT ideology from her colleagues, she lost her professional accreditation.

I have previously shown how certain elements of the press stand guilty of eroding freedom of speech⁵, including press freedom, in either playing along with or not countering Strudwick's campaigning to ban therapy and counselling for unwanted same-sex attraction in the UK.

The very nature of the role of LGBT correspondent in the press is inextricably linked with him and as such with the push for a ban on 'conversion therapy' in the UK. As such, the role is irreversibly tainted by the attack on professional autonomy in the field of mental health, clients' rights to therapeutic choice, freedom of speech, and freedom of religion. In light of this we must conclude that for BBC News to appoint a LGBT correspondent is to send out a clear signal that it has undermined the core principle of BBC impartiality.

BBC impartiality in the balance

The BBC editorial guidelines⁶ state that the BBC aims to achieve 'due impartiality' in output. The meaning of this is set out as follows:

“The term ‘due’ means that the impartiality must be adequate and appropriate to the output, taking account of the subject and nature of the content, the likely audience expectation and any signposting that may influence that expectation.”

Regarding the application of this principle to news, the editorial guidelines go on to say:

“We must always scrutinise arguments, question consensus and hold power to account with consistency and due impartiality.”

It is very doubtful whether the BBC from now on will have any ability to report on LGBT issues objectively and comprehensively in a manner that truly serves the common welfare of society. This is because the appointment of an LGBT correspondent is all about being a mouthpiece for LGBT propaganda. What this means is that the answer to every difficult and awkward question about homosexuality, be it why many (yes – many!) of people do not want to experience same-sex attraction, why there should be professional help available for them, why children should not be brought up by same-sex couples, why homosexuality should not be normalised in schools, is ‘homophobia’. This is neither an intelligent nor a comprehensively truthful answer. Its real aim is to bully conscientious people into silence for fear of losing their jobs. The trouble with that is that no BBC journalist will really ask the difficult questions from now on.

Unnatural tendencies?

The reason that such important and difficult questions do not really get asked any more is that the BBC has prioritised the need to banish all negative attitudes towards homosexuality as homophobic prejudice. What this means is that it has become nearly impossible to hear or read medical and psychological evidence that homosexuality goes against human nature on the BBC. The view that people’s negative emotional reaction to homosexuality might be a sign of their conscience working well, or their bodies warning them that some behaviours might be unsuitable for them to engage in, is simply not allowed under this ideological regime. This is nothing short of an attack on people’s right to care for their own health and wellbeing.

The current situation then is that on the BBC (and indeed all other press outlets) people are no longer free to say that homosexuality is

unnatural. The early Christian theologians, many of whom lived under the capricious and at times persecutory regime of the Roman Empire, argued against homosexual behaviour both on the basis of divine prohibition and on the grounds that it was unnatural, i.e. against our created nature.

Reasoning from creation a first-order Gospel issue

Christians need to realise that speaking the truth about creation and how we handle ourselves as God’s creatures is a first-order Gospel issue. Jesus Himself warned Nicodemus that if he was not prepared to believe Him about natural, earthly realities, he would not accept that everybody needs to be born again (John 3). Jesus reiterated this line of reasoning in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus.

True freedom of speech has to allow for arguments to be made on the basis of natural knowledge, not only claims to revelation. If we were to discuss any other issue in lifestyle or healthcare, there would be no argument about this. Why then has the BBC effectively censored comprehensive reasoning about homosexuality?

Deliberate ignoring of public opinion and beliefs

Public opinion on homosexuality and LGBT issues is not as ‘progressive’ or affirmative as BBC bosses and many others in the media and Westminster bubbles would like it to be. In 2016 ILGA conducted the largest ever survey of attitudes to LGBT issues in the world⁷. It found that only one third of people in Britain believed that people are born gay. It also found that only 48% of British people thought same-sex ‘marriage’ should be legal. Neither the BBC nor any other news outlet in the UK reported on this survey. Clearly the BBC is scared of public opinion.

Huge LGBT overrepresentation among BBC bosses

Thirteen years ago BBC journalist Andrew Marr spoke plainly about LGBT overrepresentation⁸:

“The BBC is not impartial or neutral. It’s a publicly funded, urban organisation with an abnormally large number of young people, ethnic minorities, and gay people. It has a

liberal bias, not so much a party-political bias. It is better expressed as a cultural liberal bias.”

The real reason for this bias is very simple – LGBT staff are vastly overrepresented among BBC bosses. In April 2017 the Christian Institute received a response to a Freedom of Information request about the percentage of BBC staff who are LGBT⁹. It was revealed that 11.5% of BBC bosses and 10.6% of BBC staff identified as LGBT, compared to only 1.7% of the UK population. The BBC revealed that in 2016 it had launched a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and set itself a target of ensuring that 8% of its workforce would be LGBT by 2020. It justified this on the spurious basis that official estimates of the LGBT population ranged from 2% (Office of National Statistics) to 10% (Alfred Kinsey).

It was John Whittingdale, then the Culture Secretary, had set the quota in the

government’s white paper on the future of broadcasting. At the time Ross Clark, writing in *The Spectator*, asked bluntly “Why does the government want a gay quota for BBC management?¹⁰”. The problem then is one of deliberate suppression of the truth about God as the Creator in the highest echelons of government and established media institutions, by means of appointing LGBT activists.

The fact that John Humphrys, who isn’t known as a practising Christian, could only say what he said after retiring, serves as a warning. It should be obvious that BBC journalists who dissent from this ‘new normal’ do not really have the freedom to challenge it effectively. A major part of our response to all of this as Christians is the need to support and develop Christian news media which stands on the truth about God as our Creator and the love that He offers us in Jesus Christ.

¹ <https://www.pressgazette.co.uk/john-humphrys-takes-swipe-at-bbcs-institutional-liberal-bias-days-after-leaving-today/>

² <https://www.benhunte.com/>

³ <https://festivalflyer.com/news/brighton-pride-news-bbc-news-first-ever-lgbt-correspondent-ben-hunte-on-how-hes-bringing-queer-issues-to-the-masses/>

⁴ <https://www.pressgazette.co.uk/bbc-news-appoints-first-ever-lgbt-correspondent-who-says-new-role-is-dream-come-true/>

⁵ <https://archive.christianconcern.com/our-issues/freedom/press-freedom-and-journalistic-integrity-eroded-by-conversion-therapy-bans>

⁶ <https://www.bbc.com/editorialguidelines/guidelines/impartiality>

⁷ <https://ilga.org/personal-political-ilga-riwi-attitudes-survey-2016>

⁸ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-411846/We-biased-admit-stars-BBC-News.html>

⁹ <https://www.christian.org.uk/news/percentage-lgbt-staff-bbc-six-times-higher-population/>

¹⁰ <https://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2016/05/why-does-the-government-want-to-make-the-bbc-even-more-gay/>