

BBC Trust rules against presenter who asked Christian Concern campaigner if she was a bigot

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Former BBC presenter Iain Lee has said he is "flabbergasted" after the BBC Trust [ruled](#) his interview with a Christian campaigner was a "serious breach" of editorial guidelines.

In the interview, which took place in November 2015, Lee was in discussion with Libby Powell, a lawyer for Christian Concern, discussing the case of a prison worker who faced disciplinary action for reading anti-gay verses from the Bible during a sermon. Christian Concern had taken up the man's case and Lee challenged Powell over whether the anti-gay remarks were bigoted and homophobic.

Powell said that she thought homosexuality was sinful and that all her client had done was "dare to speak the Bible".

Lee then asked her if she supported the bigotry and Powell replied that it was not bigotry but "God's word."

"Homophobia is bigotry," Lee countered, in a heated exchange. After reading out anti-gay verses from the Bible himself, Lee said that the words, read by the prison worker during a sermon he had delivered, were bigoted.

The BBC Trust ruled that "the interviewees were not treated with respect but instead faced significant personal criticism and challenge and that, overall, the tone of the interviews was inappropriate.

"The Trustees considered that the presenter should have been able to robustly and properly challenge the interviewees without recourse to personal attack and without taking a personal position on it.

"They noted that a final interviewee from the Gay and Lesbian Christian Movement was able to challenge the views of the two previous interviewees in a manner that was measured and productive."

The report also noted that "the presenter regretted that he might have appeared to be opposed to Christianity, or religion generally, when this was not the case."

Ofcom had received six complaints about the interview but took no action.

As a result of the controversy around the interview the BBC "produced a face to face training programme for presenters and their programme teams that would be rolled out across the BBC's local radio services".

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