

Century After Welsh Revival, Students Vote Against Word of God

Students at a Welsh university have voted to remove thousands of Bibles from halls of residence, in a move being described as “illiberal and intolerant.”

A motion passed at an Aberystwyth University Students’ Union meeting called for an end to the tradition of having Gideon Bibles in students’ bedrooms, branding it “inappropriate in a multicultural university.”

Those behind the motion are pressing for the Bibles to be removed by the end of the academic year and have proposed that students could instead request a religious text if they want one.

Illiberal

University officials will now decide whether or not to accept the motion.

Aberystwyth University alumnus and Group Chief Executive of Bible Society James Catford said when the proposal was first put forward, that he disagreed with the idea.

Responding to claims that the Bible ban is in the name of multiculturalism, he said: “The answer to a diverse and multicultural society is not to remove all traces of diversity. That seems illiberal and intolerant.”

Bible

The motion was passed by 300 votes to 175, but the Students’

Union has faced criticism as the total number of students who actually voted accounted for less than five per cent of the 10,000-strong student body.

Earlier this year the Students' Union conducted a poll which revealed that more than half of students felt that having Bibles in university accommodation as a matter of course was "uncomfortable" or "unacceptable."

Commenting on the poll results, a spokesman for The Christian Institute, said: "It is hard to imagine how a person could actually be offended by a Bible simply being in their room.

Overreaction

"The Gideons have been supplying Bibles free of charge for over a century now, providing support and encouragement for Christians and non-Christians alike.

"Banning the Bible because some people might be uncomfortable with it would be a huge overreaction.

"Students who feel uncomfortable having a Bible in their room could instead see this as an opportunity to try and engage with it.

Ethically Neutral

"Local evangelical churches and the Christian Union will be only too happy to help them."

In 2013 a company managing Huddersfield University accommodation called for Bibles to be banned arguing that it wanted its properties to be "ethically neutral."