

LGBTI Anglican Coalition

www.lgbtac.org.uk

contact@lgbtac.org.uk



21 February 2014. LGBTI Anglican Coalition Open Letter to House Of Bishops Regarding Pastoral Guidance On Same Sex Marriage, Issued 14 February 2014

Dear Bishops

As you are aware, the letter issued by the House of Bishops on St Valentine's Day has profoundly undermined the hopes expressed by the Archbishop of Canterbury and others for "good disagreement". The image of the church in wider society has been further damaged, with headline messages such as 'Church of England in snub to gay community'.

We remain committed to the need for prayer and facilitated conversations, as recommended in the Pilling Report and requested by the Church of England. However, it is hard to see how such conversations can be productive, in the light of this statement. In an attempt to re-establish some positive foundations, we request answers to the following questions:

First, we note the traditional Anglican 'insistence upon the duty of thinking and learning as essential elements in the Christian life' (Lambeth Conference 1930) and 'facing with intellectual integrity the questions raised by modern knowledge' (Lambeth 1958), which has led to change on such matters as contraception. Please could you clarify how the House of Bishops has sought to inform itself in a systematic way of the work of the numerous Anglican and other theologians from 1940 onwards who have argued that loving committed same-sex partnerships should be affirmed, and demonstrate that it has seriously considered the arguments of more than a handful of these before issuing statements such as this pastoral guidance?

Secondly, in view of repeated calls from the Lambeth Conference since 1978 for deep study of sexuality, including dialogue with homosexual people, echoed by the Church of England from 1979, please could you explain how the findings from subsequent dialogue with lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people and wider discussion have been collected by, and informed the thinking of, the House of Bishops?

Thirdly, given that the 1988 Lambeth Conference urged that such study and reflection take account of 'the socio-cultural factors that lead to the different attitudes in the provinces of our Communion', how has the House of Bishops approached the difficult task of seeking to understand the socio-cultural factors which might have influenced its members' views on sexual ethics?

Fourthly, what efforts have been made to gather and analyse the comments of those who have studied Issues in human sexuality and Men and women in marriage, and how have the findings been taken into account in this pastoral statement?

Fifthly, as you know, there are many LGBTI clergy who, in good conscience seeking to model their household according to the way of Christ, are intending to marry or to convert their civil partnership to marriage. How will you ensure that these clergy can contribute fully and equally to the proposed discussions, without fear of sanction?

Finally, we would ask how you intend to resolve the issues of the presumed bipolarity of male and female in gender and sexual orientations and in their relationships in the light of the latest scientific and theological knowledge, so that all people, intersex, transgendered, lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual, who seek to enter committed, loving and faithful relationships can find their rightful place within a renewed church which draws its teaching from the New Covenant and the unconditional love of Christ?

Yours sincerely

Mike Dark and John Blowers,
Joint-Chair, LGBTI Anglican Coalition.

END

Member Groups

The Anglican Coalition provides UK based Christian LGBTI organisations with opportunities to create resources for the Anglican community and to develop a shared voice for the full acceptance of LGBTI people in the Anglican Communion.

The Group Members are as follows:

Accepting Evangelicals is a open network of Evangelical Christians who believe the time has come to move towards the acceptance of faithful, loving same-sex partnerships at every level of church life.

<http://www.acceptingevangelicals.org>

Changing Attitude is a campaigning group drawn by God's love to work for the full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in the Anglican Communion.

<http://www.changingattitude.org.uk>

The Evangelical Fellowship for Lesbian and Gay Christians (EFLGC), formed in 1979, is a group of women and men, most of whom are lesbian, gay or bisexual and come from an evangelical Christian background..

<http://www.eflgc.org.uk>

Inclusive Church is a network of individuals and organisations working to break down the barriers to full inclusion at all levels of the Church of England.

<http://www.inclusive-church.org.uk>

The Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement is a UK-based international Charity which challenges homophobia and transphobia, especially within the Church and faith based organisations.

<http://lgcm.org.uk>

The Sibyls is a UK-based confidential Christian spirituality group for transgender people, and their supporters.

<http://www.sibyls.co.uk>

The Two:23 Network is a new network of Christians, connected by LGBT issues that aims to include and encourage all to discover the love of God for themselves, pursue the call of Christ and live in a way that cherishes others just as God cherishes us. It has developed from the LGBT-affirming ministry of Courage.

<http://two23.net/>

THE UK Intersex Association Intersex people are individuals whose anatomy or physiology differ from contemporary cultural stereotypes of what constitute typical male and female. The United Kingdom Intersex Association (UKIA) is an education, advocacy, campaigning and support organisation which works on behalf of Intersex people.

<http://www.ukia.co.uk/>