

The implication of the Report is that ECUSA should slow but not halt its commitment to elect bishops who are lesbian or gay and towards gay blessings. Bishop Kirk Smith comments that "Without backing away from decisions we have made, it is nonetheless a clear message that we will work to conform to the requests of the majority of the Anglican Communion.

Integrity comments

Integrity commended the Special Commission for reaffirming ECUSA's 30-year-old stand on gay and lesbian inclusion. "The widely predicted 'U-turn' on lesbian and gay inclusion failed to materialize," said Integrity President Susan Russell. "This a huge victory for those committed to communion and a significant defeat for those insisting on capitulation. Instead of an about-face, the report offers a way forward for those willing to stay in conversation and community with those with whom they disagree."

Dr Ephraim Radner of the conservative Anglican Communion Institute commented that the report is a significant, if quite imperfect step, in the process that ECUSA must follow if the church is to maintain its integrity as both a witness to the Gospel and an existing and thriving institution, and if she is to contribute constructively to the same future for the Anglican Communion. He noted that the recommendations would merely paper over the cracks within the Church. "Expedience in overt agreement will be grasped at over the necessity of deeper agreement in faith and morals, the lack of which is the cause of our current crisis" he cautioned.

California election

The election of a new bishop for California on May 6 also looms large as we go to press. Three of the seven candidates nominated for the post of Bishop of California are partnered gay or lesbian priests. The election of one of these three priests to the episcopate would shift the political fight away from the report, as General Convention must affirm the election before the bishop-elect is consecrated.

In the letter written shortly after the conclusion of the House of Bishops' spring retreat, the Bishop of Arizona, the Rt. Rev. Kirk Stevan Smith said given the mood of the recent meeting, consents would not be forthcoming from a majority of the bishops if a partnered gay or lesbian person was elected as Bishop of California.

Bishop Smith asked for a more charitable approach to "religious discourse" than what typically passes for civil discourse and said he was merely trying to report what he'd observed. Writing about the California election, he said, "Consents would not be as easy to get as they were for Gene Robinson. All of

us, I think, are concerned about not doing anything to jeopardize further [the Episcopal Church's] standing in the Anglican Communion. 'Extreme caution' is vague, but also an indication of where folks' mood is."

General Convention

**Tuesday 13 to Wednesday 21 June 2006
Columbus Ohio**

The first thing I learnt about this year's General Convention is that Columbus is not a popular city in which to be meeting. The second thing I learnt is that Convention 2006 is likely to be a more sober affair than 2003 when the whole convention was dominated by the election of Gene Robinson.

Changing Attitude England and Nigeria both hope to be present at this year's General Convention. Colin will be there for the first week, returning for the Windsor conference. Davis Maclyalla has been invited by Integrity, with Dennis Iraguha from Integrity Uganda. Subject to visas, both will be there.

I will be sending reports back to lesbigayanglicans as I did in 2003.

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Christina Beardsley, Jenny Clark, Irene Cowell, Susannah Izzard, Sanjay Kumar, Jean Mayland, Barry Naylor, David Page (chair), Sr Rosemary CHN, Bob Williams, Andrew Woodward (treasurer)

Patrons

Revd Canon Marilyn McCord Adams, Rt Revd Paul Barber; Rt Revd Michael Bourke, Bishop of Wolverhampton; Rt Revd Michael Doe; Rt Revd Richard Holloway; Revd Bill Kirkpatrick; Sister Una Kroll; Rt Revd Richard Lewis, Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich; Rt Revd Stephen Lowe, Bishop of Hulme; Revd Jean Mayland; Rt Revd John Oliver; Rt Revd John Packer, Bishop of Ripon and Leeds; Christina Rees, Rt Revd John Saxbee, Bishop of Lincoln; Rt Revd Dr Peter Selby, Bishop of Worcester; Rt Revd Robin Smith; Rt Revd Alan Smithson; Revd Dr Anne Townsend; Rt Revd Roy Williamson

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WORKING FOR GAY, LESBIAN,
BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER
AFFIRMATION IN THE
ANGLICAN COMMUNION

Campaign England!

Changing Attitude is changing! After three years of generous grants, we are reverting (at the moment) to being dependent on subscriptions alone. Applications to other funding bodies have not been successful. The appeal in the last newsletter raised enough money to continue paying the Director until the end of May. Sally's funding ended in March and she rounded off her work with southern groups then. Brenda will finish at the end of May and Nigel sometime in June.

Securing new funds may have become difficult because the secular agenda has moved on. The Civil Partnership act having become effective in December 2005, most of what has been fought for in terms of equality and gay rights has been achieved. There is some tidying up to do and some would like to achieve full equality in terms of marriage.

The Churches remain bastions of resistance to equality and full inclusion for LGBT people. The agenda in the Church of England is increasingly affected by the international dynamics and arguments of the Anglican Communion. More of my time is being given to international work and relationships.

Our Goals

There is still a mountain to climb in the Church of England to achieve Changing Attitude's goals:

- The day when the Anglican Church fully accepts, welcomes and offers equality of opportunity to LGBT people, including the ordination of partnered lesbian and gay clergy and the blessing of same-sex relationships
- The acceptance for training, ordination and preferment of partnered lesbian and gay clergy
- The blessing of same-sex relationships in church using an authorised liturgy
- The full inclusion of LGBT people in every Province of the Anglican Communion

This is our focus, working with the elected members of General Synod in the Human Sexuality Group. Synod members have to take responsibility for working through the mechanisms of General Synod and developing a strategy which they think will be realistic and effective.

We have rather more freedom! We can argue and work for a church which is not constrained by the anxieties of reactionary bishops or the bullying of conservative evangelicals. We are registering partnerships. We can (vicars permitting) celebrate our relationships in church, be prayed with and blessed, whatever the bishop's guidelines say. There are still bishops and DDOs who ease partnered gay ordinands through the system.

Working together in our diocesan groups and through our support network, we can make change happen. We plan to publish a survey of couples, lay and ordained, who have registered (see page 3). We need your help to do this. Please email or post the enclosed form, even if you think someone else will have done so already. **It's time for action!**

Colin Coward

NEWSLETTER No 35
May 2006
£1.00

The work of Changing Attitude is assisted by grants and donations from

the  *foundation*
THE NORTHERN ROCK FOUNDATION

COMIC RELIEF **OUR MEMBERS**

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- Funding
- Civil Partnership survey
- Welcoming & Open Congregations
- General Synod in York

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New books

World Council of Churches report

ILGA Conference Geneva Report

ECUSA Special Commission

General Convention Columbus Ohio

Staff changes

Sally finished her work with Changing Attitude at the end of March. She will be greatly missed by those group convenors, contacts and supporters who have valued her support, care and wisdom for the past three years. In the office we will miss the energy, insights and sensitivity with which she worked.

Brenda and Nigel's contracts run to the end of May (into June for Nigel) and they will also leave the pay roll then, but both have offered to volunteer time.

That leaves Colin, and until we can secure more funding, I will continue to work full-time but unpaid. We are now being funded by subscriptions alone and have far smaller resources than we have enjoyed for the past three years.

It's a daunting task to take on the maintenance of Changing Attitude, continuing to contact with you all, ensuring that information is up to date, and compiling a report for the newsletter, tasks that Sally has undertaken for the last 3 years, and latterly Nigel, both of them with great care and efficiency. There will be inevitable losses and tasks that we can no longer fulfil, but loss also brings opportunity for creative change and moving on.

We are going to become much more dependent on volunteers in the future, something that is already the core of our work thanks to those of you, convenors and contacts in the dioceses and supporters who contribute so much to our work.

New Patrons

We are always happy to announce new patrons for Changing Attitude. Since the last newsletter, four people have accepted our invitation to become patrons. They are:

Revd Canon Dr Trevor Dennis of Chester Cathedral
The Rt Revd John Gladwin, Bishop of Chelmsford
The Rt Revd John Packer, Bishop of Ripon and Leeds
The Rt Revd Gene Robinson, Bishop of New Hampshire
Revd Canon Angela Weaver of Guildford Cathedral

Why we hadn't asked Bishop Gene before I can't think! It's good to welcome two cathedral Canons, Angela from quietly radical Guildford and Trevor who has brought his wisdom to Changing Attitude events in the north. Need we say more about bishop John, who has engaged robustly in the Church's tortuous debate about human sexuality.

Newsletter and web site

Our printers in Devizes have bought a new colour printer. We have decided to revise the pattern of news letters as a result. This and every alternate newsletter, in monochrome, will be sent only to Changing Attitude supporters. The June and October newsletters will be printed in colour and sent to the extended list, including all bishops, DDOs etc. The saving on this mailing enables us to print two newsletters in colour. We have already produced a new supporter's leaflet and the ECUSA appeal brochure in colour.

The new web site, designed by webmaster Philip Gardner of Asgard Publications in Leeds, is now online and getting many more hits than the previous site. It is easier to update and add news and events, convenors can directly add and revise information about the diocesan groups, and searching for groups and W&O congregations has been transformed.

The old site has served us well for 5 years. Many thanks to Wai Liang who designed it, and to Phil for his work on the new site. The URL has changed to:

www.changingattitude.org.uk

Finance

A big thank you to those supporters who responded to the financial appeal in the last newsletter, some of you very generously. This enabled Colin to be paid to the end of May, but as the front page reveals, from then onwards, at present we will no longer have enough guaranteed income to pay staff costs.

Five applications to grant making trusts produced five polite refusals. Our next strategy is to send an appeal brochure to selected recipients in the USA. Max Manin from Lincoln has been giving advice to your Director on how to create an effective appeal brochure, and I think I'm learning. The brochure has just been printed and will be posted soon.

The London group has asked what we would need to raise to continue to employ staff. The budget for 2006 shows the income we expect to receive from subscriptions, with tax recovered, at £12,000, enough to pay all the present overheads—office costs, travel, attendance at conferences and events, trustees expenses, and the newsletter print and postage costs, which we budget at just over £10,000. Each full-time member of staff costs approximately £33,000 with employer's NI.

We still need your help to achieve our goals!

focused on issues such as transgender rights, religion and sexual orientation/religion and gender identity,

Imam Mushin Hendricks from the 'Inner Circle' gave a moving account of 'Islam and Sexuality and Gender' in South Africa, as well as the challenges with regards to faith, community and society faced by LGBT's. The audience's attention was further captivated by the presentations on the current issues affecting lesbians and bisexual women in southern Africa.



Davis Maclyalla addressing the Faith Day

Linda Baumann, from the 'Rainbow Project' in Namibia, highlighted lesbian health issues and in particular topics around HIV/AIDS. Rose Masuku, from 'FEW' in Johannesburg, spoke about the ignorance of service providers in dealing with lesbian issues and the widely spread homophobia in South Africa, while Bernadette Muthien, from 'Engender' in Cape Town, gave an impassioned input on gender-based violence and patriarchy.

On the second last day of the Conference, Francophone and Anglophone African representatives took the floor in the Africa plenary discussion. Among the representatives were, Keith Goddard (GALZ, Zimbabwe) who spoke on behalf of the All African Rights Initiative (ARI), Serigne Mbodji from Senegal, Davis Mac-lyalla (Changing Attitude, Nigeria), Alice Nkom and Charlse Gueboguo (ADEFHO, Cameroon) and Juliet Victor Mukasa (Sexual Minorities, Uganda).

This session provided a platform for African representatives to stress the urgency for more visibility of, and the promotion of cooperation between LGBT activists in Africa, in fighting patriarchy and advocating for the rights of LGBT on the African continent. The representatives from Cameroon and Nigeria provided shocking updates on the extent of homophobia in their countries. These examples clearly reflect the urgency for not only LGBT activists but also human rights activist to take action and campaign for LGBT rights.



Canon Phil Groves addressing the Faith Day

During the Conference an African Caucus was formed. Meeting regularly, it provided a platform for LGBT activists to discuss ways in which to increase the visibility of the LGBT community and to work towards unity and improved networking amongst African LGBT organisations in the fight for LGBT rights.

Overall, the Conference proved to be a produc-

tive, informative and educative forum and reinforced the need for more action and stronger networking among LGBT organisations globally.

As the report of the Stonewall faith group meeting on p12 shows, we seem to have arrived at a moment in the history of developing LGBT rights when secular organisations are recognising the need to address faith issues. I don't think groups on either side know where this might lead, if anywhere. Any meeting of multi-faith groups, LGBTs included, has to begin with the task of understanding the differences in our traditions of doctrine, worship, prayer, practice, ethics and language first, at the same time as trying to develop around a common agenda for future initiatives.

Colin Coward

ECUSA Special Commission "One Baptism, One Hope in God's Call"

The Report prepared by the Special Commission on the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion for General Convention in June offers 11 resolutions for consideration in response to the recommendations of the Windsor Report and the Primates' Dromantine Communiqué. The commission had been charged with "considering how to maintain the highest degree of communion within the Anglican Communion given the different perspectives held with regard to the place of homosexual persons in the life of the Church." A legislative committee appointed by the two Church leaders will review the report and prepare legislation for action by the Church's General Convention.

It recommends the Church "exercise very considerable caution" in electing bishops "whose manner of life presents a challenge to the wider church," but stops short of a moratorium on electing and consecrating more gay bishops as demanded by other Anglican church leaders.

The Report also recommends that the Church not permit public liturgies for the blessing of same-sex unions. However the current practice of private unofficial ceremonies would be permitted under its guidelines through the rubric of offering appropriate "individual pastoral care for gay and lesbian Christians".

The Church should also proffer its "sincerest apology and repentance for having breached the bonds of affection in the Anglican Communion". However, the language proposed by the Commission states the apology is not for having been in error for affirming the election of a non-celibate homosexual priest as bishop, but for a "failure to consult adequately with our Anglican partners" before it authorized the election of Gene Robinson.

European Forum workshop

My main involvement at the Assembly was as delegate of the European Forum of Lesbian and Gay Christian Groups, of which Changing Attitude is a member group. Together with colleagues from Latvia, Norway and Germany we presented a workshop on 'Diversity as a Basis for Unity'. This was very popular - many Christians from the global south were keen to discuss same sex relationships as they had little opportunity to hear from lesbian and gay Christians in their home churches. A journalist present suggested we give a workshop for WCC on 'how to deliver a workshop' as ours was the best delivered one she had attended!



Brenda Harrison addressing the Bible Study group

LGBT safe space

Over the ten days of the Assembly we were able to raise LGBT issues in many other workshops, Bible studies and personal conversations. We were pleasantly surprised by the level of support we found from unexpected quarters all over the world; it seems to be church hierarchies that are most nervous about engaging on matters of sexuality. We organised a safe space for all LGBT people and our supporters to meet every day to share news and plan strategy together. Through this we had contact with about 60 LGBT people. This collaborative working certainly increased our effectiveness. An out gay Anglican priest from Brazil may yet become Director of the first Lusophone Changing Attitude group!

Justice, exclusion and discrimination

From our experiences sharing in workshops on justice for those excluded on grounds of race or caste, gender, poverty, disability, health or religion, we were reinforced in our sense that all justice issues are tied in together. It is important that we advocate for all those experiencing exclusion, not just LGBT people as an isolated group, as we are to be found in all the other excluded groups as well. Discrimination does not operate in watertight compartments.

I returned from the Assembly immensely encouraged by positive attitudes of many Christians worldwide, but only too aware of how much work has yet to be done to give effect to the listening process in the Anglican Communion.

Brenda Harrison

International Lesbian and Gay Association Conference

Geneva 27 March to 3 April

ILGA held its bi-annual international conference in Geneva this year. The Revd Chris Newland was responsible for organising a pre-conference faith day on 28 March. He had invited the Rt Revd Michael Ingham, Bishop of New Westminster, Canon Phil Groves (ACO Listening Process) and Davis Macllyalla to address the faith day, and for Davis to attend the whole conference and deliver a paper about gay African experience on the Saturday.

The Revd Jide Macaulay, pastor from MCC London, Maxwell and Patrick from CAN, Dare Oladume from Alliance Rights Nigeria attended the Conference with lesbian, gay and transgender representatives from other parts of Africa, creating a new forum of more than 15 members. The African representatives made their communities highly visible and called for greater internal but also external advocacy towards the empowerment of the LGBT/gender movement on the African continent.

I arrived on Monday and met Davis for the first time in Dialogai, a gay bar where the evening meal was served. After 7 months of almost daily conversation online, during which Davis has lived through highs and lows of experience, it was an emotional moment to meet him face to face for the first time, alive and safe in Geneva.

For a gay conference, it was rather chaotically organised. Every session started late, the programme was frequently revised, and I had difficulty locating the conference centre each day. But as with all conferences, it was often what was happening outside the chamber, over coffee and in conversations that extended from one break to the next, that contacts are made, friendships formed and ideas exchanged.

ILGA dedicated a whole day to engage with members of faith communities from around the world, representing several different major faith groups. It made for some demands on the simultaneous translation team, but the common experience of living in faith communities which have great difficulty welcoming LGBT people brought us together. The day



Rt Revd Michael Ingham addressing the Faith Day

Civil Partnerships

We need your help!

Lesbian and gay couples have been able to register Civil Partnerships for nearly 5 months now. As we reported in the last newsletter, several clergy couples known to us have already registered, we know of several more who are planning to, and many lay couples have told the lesbigayanglicans group that they have also registered or will be registering.

Several of the clergy couples have received publicity, and none of them, as far as we know, has been subjected to any sanctions. Some may in the future, but it is equally clear that no action will be taken against others.

To show the bishops ...

We would like to present a picture to the bishops at the end of the first year in December, to show them how ineffective and irrelevant their Guidelines have been, ignored by many partnered clergy.

The bishops need to be shown in how many dioceses and by how many clergy their attempt to prevent clergy from registering has been ignored. We also need to show them how many lay couples have registered so they have a picture of the numbers of lesbian and gay people worshipping Sunday by Sunday in parish churches who have made a life-long commitment to one another.

- We need ALL OF YOU who have registered or know of couples who have, so send details to the national office.
- We need to ensure that we don't double count couples.
- We need to do this without breaching confidentiality.

We want to include everyone in each diocese, not just CA members, where one of the partners at least is an active church member. This is not intended to be and cannot be a full survey. Your knowledge is likely to be random and anecdotal.

Please email details to: colin@changingattitude.org or write to the office.

Oxbridge clergy consider blessing gay couples

Cambridge

The Rev Jeremy Caddick, Dean of Emmanuel College, wrote to the Bishop of Ely in February to tell him that the college does not see itself as falling under his jurisdiction and is therefore prepared to offer blessings for same sex couples.

In the letter, he says although no requests have yet been made: "We would not wish to close the door to having services for members of the college community who requested them. In a community such as this one, people know there is considerable diversity in human sexual relationships and, in general, see the importance of affirming and celebrating those that are faithful and life affirming." In an interview with Stephen Bates of the Guardian, he added that the bishops' statement that "sexual intercourse as an expression of faithful intimacy properly belongs within marriage exclusively" flies in the face of pastoral experience: "To put it bluntly, what planet is the House of Bishops on? I cannot recall the last time I presided over the marriage of a couple who were not already sleeping together ... in setting its face so publicly against gay relationships the church imperils, perhaps terminally, its standing to speak authoritatively on the subject of relationships generally."

Canon Owen Spencer-Thomas, spokesman for the diocese of Ely, said: "There is a wide range of views in any community. Dialogue between Jeremy and the bishop will continue in a spirit of friendship."

Oxford

Following the publication of Jeremy Caddick's letter, chaplains at Oxford University were approached by "The Oxford Student" to see if they would also offer blessings for same-sex unions. Two responded positively. Dr Walter Houston, chaplain of Mansfield college said: "I'd need to think about it," he said. "It depends on the circumstances, but if a couple came to me, I would take it seriously."

Canon Brian Mountford, Vicar of the University Church and Chaplain of St Hilda's said, "I am not against this in principle, but it is a pastorally sensitive matter, both in the Church and with each couple. I would therefore only make a decision on an individual basis after careful consultation with the people concerned." He added, "There are many relationships which it would be appropriate to bless: parent/child, friendship, partnership and so on. From the Christian point of view the key thing is that people in relationships should act in a self-giving way to one another, trying to model themselves on the example of Jesus Christ."

Welcoming and Open Congregations

On the new web site:

www.changingattitude.org.uk

it is much easier to access information about the Changing Attitude Welcoming and Open churches—but at present there are only thirteen registered. This could be a great resource for many more LGBT and heterosexual people looking for a genuinely gay-friendly, safe, inclusive church to worship with.

What about your church?

What about other churches in your deanery?

There must be many more congregations who have grown in commitment to a fully-inclusive Church and have been shocked by the arguments and church policies about LGBT people into becoming more confident in taking a stand and making a public commitment.

Can you put this on the agenda of your PCC?

Can you talk to your Vicar/Rector/PIC?

Can Changing Attitude Diocesan Groups take a local initiative and encourage congregations to think about registering as Welcoming and Open?

It's easy to do and there is no fee involved. Simply write to 12 Lavender Gardens or email office@changingattitude.org and ask for a W&O pack.

Conference

Modern Churchpeople's Union

Passion for Justice

global and faithful perspectives on human sexuality

Tuesday 11—Friday 14 July 2006

High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon, Herts

Full fee £175, Reductions £100, day rate available

Booking details from:

Mrs E Darlington, 1 The Woods, Grotton, Oldham, OL4 4LP

Tel: 0161 633 3132

Email: conference@modchurchunion.org

General Synod

York Friday 7 to Tuesday 11 July

The July meeting of General Synod is always much more fun (fun?) than the Church House London meetings. The weather is warm, dress code relaxed, the city beautiful and conversation easy.

We are renting a student hostel again this year to enable Changing Attitude supporters and staff to come to General Synod and get involved with our work of supporting Synod members and groups committed to working for an LGBT Church and gently engaging with those members for whom this ranges from a difficult to an impossible idea.

Last year 8 of us spent varying times together and had a really positive and enjoyable few days. If the weather is fine, as it often is, the University campus built around a lake with a huge fountain, is a great place to be. You don't need to be inside the Great Hall where Synod meets. There are always conversations to be had on the lakeside steps outside the hall, plenty of grass (geese permitting) and fringe meetings to attend (and support other critical movements like the consecration of women bishops).

You're welcome to come for one night or all five days. Synod gathers on Friday evening and finishes lunchtime Tuesday. Parking is free around the edge of the Campus, which is about two miles from the City centre. Trains to York are fast and frequent and there are buses to the Campus.

Changing Attitude has had a significant effect at General Synod since we started "lurking around" seven years ago. People recognise us as a group committed enough to the CofE to spend time at Synod and courteous enough to build relationships across differences of opinion.

Come and join us at York in July!

Changing Attitude New Zealand

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Changing Attitude Nigeria

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Changing Attitude Scotland

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www.changingattitudescotland.org.uk

World Council of Churches

9th Assembly, Brazil

'God in Your grace, transform the world' – this was the theme of the 9th Assembly of the World Council of Churches which took place over ten days in February in Porto Alegre, Brazil. These gatherings of about 4000 Christians from 350 different member churches from all over the world take place every seven years. It is a remarkable opportunity to worship, pray, study the Bible, discuss major issues affecting our world, and have fun with Christians from widely differing Christian confessions and geographical regions.

Having participated in the 8th Assembly in Harare I was delighted to be selected again by WCC. As temperatures soared to 40 degrees outside, and plummeted indoors (highly efficient air conditioning!), you never could be sure how many layers to wear to stay comfortable through the whole working day. Most days we were occupied with Assembly activities for about 14 hours, so no chance to be bored or time to feel hungry.

The theme of transformation was the foundation for many challenging discussions and ecumenical conversations about economic justice, unity and mission, and overcoming violence. Alongside the formal sessions was the *Mutirão*, a plethora of seminars and cultural presentations which grounded the theory in real life and practice and strengthened the spiritual life of the Assembly. (*Mutirão* is a Brazilian word meaning a meeting place and opportunity to work together for a common purpose).

Morning and Evening prayer were for the most part rich experiences of being Church in all its diversity, a variety of liturgy, music and language of many countries from exuberant African praise songs to measured Orthodox chants. I never did manage to fit all the words of the Brazilian Lord's Prayer to the limited number of notes in the melody, not for want of trying.

Anglicans listening

Anglican Christians from every continent (apart from Antarctica!) were guests of the Most Revd Orlando Santos de Oliveira, Primate of Brazil, at a reception in his church in Porto Alegre. This gave me an opportunity to ask bishops from various provinces how they were implementing the listening process and whether they were in conversation yet with their national LGBT Christian groups. A common response was 'we don't discuss those things in my country'.

Archbishop Rowan Williams

Archbishop Rowan made a brief visit of less than 24 hours, in which he addressed a gathering of about 200 Anglicans about current opportunities and difficulties in the Communion. He does not want to see the Communion becoming either a Western liberal elite' or an

'anti-intellectual post mission society'. Fundamentalism is incapable of meeting deep spiritual needs, a liberal drift can end up with little more than 'well-meaning'. He mentioned the complicated relations of power that make it harder to hear one another. We need to know that all are trying to be obedient to the claims of Christ even if we cannot recognise the particular expression of obedience.

It was unfortunate that the usual simultaneous translation had not been made available for Archbishop Rowan. At least a third of the audience were non English speaking and were not pleased to be so excluded – the impression was given that English speakers were of greater importance, not helpful as he had just said that the English voice often carries the 'noise' of colonialism.

Kenneth Kearon on Windsor

At this meeting Kenneth Kearon, Secretary General to the Anglican Consultative Council, set out the background to the Windsor Report, from the first decision to set up a listening process in 1978 (that never happened) to the current commitment made by every primate.

I asked what strategy was in place to help provinces give effect to the listening process, as some seemed reluctant to engage with it. I was also able to highlight the plight of Davis Maclayalla, Director Changing Attitude Nigeria, who was being persecuted by the hierarchy of the Church of Nigeria for trying to conduct an open and honest dialogue. Although the official response was not encouraging, there was considerable support and interest shown by other delegates, and Davis' situation is now known by a few in provinces across the world.

At a later Anglican meeting Kenneth Kearon said that the listening process had been broadened to include 'mutual listening', not just LGBT people had to be listened to, but also those opposed, and that this had to take place within the Anglican way of reason, scripture and tradition. I said that this was essentially imbalanced because LGBT voices in many provinces were extremely weak and vulnerable, and that they heard the voices of those opposed to them every day. The point of listening is to empower the vulnerable to tell their stories, not to give yet another platform to the powerful.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Archbishop Desmond Tutu was a welcome and inspirational guest speaker at the presentation on Unity. He commended the contribution of the WCC towards defeating apartheid, and said that unity is indispensable for the salvation of God's world. 'All, not some, are insiders in God's family, Bush, bin Laden, gay, lesbian, so-called straight – all belong and are loved and are precious'.

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Tel: 0170 9309 136

Southwark

Contact:
The group is no longer meeting, and is looking for a new contact person.

Coming In

Discovering how God within empowers us in our relating with the world and with each other

July 16-21 2006

Iona in the MacLeod Centre

A week for lesbians, gay men & their friends, integrating spirituality and sexual identity through a range of creative media in a safe space with Urs Mattmann, author of the book 'Coming In' & Cass Howes, National Coordinator of OUTCOME

All are welcome, book through Iona

'Did we really think we were alone?'

Evangelical Fellowship for Lesbian and Gay Christians
Autumn Conference

Sharing with other gay groups of faith how they see their role in society and their religion

20-22 October 2006 Holland House near Worcester

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For further details contact John Blowers 01245 252214

Email johna.blow@virgin.net

Books

Coming In:

Gays and Lesbians Reclaiming the Spiritual Journey

Urs Mattmann (With a foreword by Richard Rohr)

The issue of homosexuality has become one of the most contentious within the Christian church today. Urs Mattmann shows that the spiritual and indeed practical aims of gay and lesbian people are no different from those of others on the path of true spirituality throughout the ages; in fact, their particular lifestyles and experiences put them in a better position to work for good in the world. The author explores a mystic spirituality and describes numerous practical steps that gay men and women can take in order to connect with their innate spiritual nature and express it in their daily lives and relationships. He provides prayers, meditations, rituals, exercises and other suggestions to foster spiritual discovery.

For more details or to order, go to: <http://www.ionabooks.com/bookshop/moreinfo.asp?ID=11785>

Other Voices, Other Worlds:

The Global Church Speaks Out on Homosexuality

Edited by Terry Brown

Anglicans in the growing churches of Africa and the developing world are said to be unanimously and consistently agreed that all same-sex relationships are immoral and sinful, while Anglicans in the shrinking churches of the UK and north America (except for some 'orthodox traditionalists') are calling for a change in the church's teaching on homosexuality. The differences between the two sides are said to be fundamental and irreconcilable. This book exposes this analysis as a myth.

Bishop Terry Brown of Malaita in the South Pacific, and bishops and theologians from Africa, Asia, Latin America and elsewhere insist that the conversation between Anglicans about homosexuality must continue. They reveal the rich historical and cross-cultural complexity to same-sex relationships.

Bishop Terry Brown is one of several contributors who write frankly about their own sexuality. The bishop writes, 'Scripture, reason and the voice of the church have not been allowed their full freedom to range across history, cultures and the broad range of human experience and have instead been narrowed into one proposition - all homosexual practice is evil - which is then imposed upon the church as doctrine. Other Voices, Other Worlds challenges this ultimately oppressive model.'

352pp; ISBN: 0 232525692; published by Darton, Long-

Stressing the 'T' in LGBT

As its vision has evolved, Changing Attitude has always been remarkably sensitive and open. If it has been a little slow to recognise the collaboration of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people this is now being remedied and I have joined the Trustees to advise specifically on transgender matters. Obviously, lesbian and gay people have different issues to transgender (and bisexual) people and there is a wide range under each of the letters of LGBT: understandably as they are only convenient categories for a rich spectrum of humanity.

One day we may be able to do without the labels and simply relate to each other as people. In the meantime, they serve a useful purpose, not least because they identify minorities who, despite a growing culture of equality in the West, still experience prejudice and discrimination. Many organisations in the UK, like trade unions and the Police, are highly proactive in addressing the needs of their LGBT members and clients. Similarly, the working party of Bishops that produced *Some issues in human sexuality* recognised the LGBT spectrum in its reflections.

Transgender range

The term 'transgender' represents a broad range of people, from those who cross-dress occasionally through to those who have undergone gender re-assignment. In medical terms they are said to be experiencing a greater or lesser degree of gender dysphoria, that is, their sense of gender identity does not match their biological sex. The expression 'trapped in the wrong body,' once a common-place of transsexual narratives, is now considered simplistic and misleading. In the majority of cases, modern medical treatments, such as hormone therapy and gender re-assignment surgery, can successfully modify the person's body to match their sense of gender identity.

Transgender people have received much support from the lesbian and gay community. Some may have believed that they were lesbian or gay, for a time at least; others will have always been aware of their transgender status but a 'same sex' culture offered a safe place in which to begin to express their sexuality (historically, this has been especially true of female-to-male transsexuals). Like lesbians and gays, transgender people have experienced hostility and exclusion from churches, and a 'Christian' organisation exists – similar to the gay exodus movement - to rescue them from their allegedly sinful lifestyle, so there is obvious common ground.

On the other hand, some transgender, particularly transsexual people, do not wish to be associated with lesbians and gays, arguing that their issue is one of gender not sexuality. However, this distinction,

while it contains some truth, is not really sustainable, since gender and sexuality, in the widest sense, are issues for everyone in Western society, especially since the rise of feminism. (Indeed, one of the worrying aspects of the current church 'debate' about sexuality is its narrow focus on those who differ from the heterosexual majority.) In any case, once the transsexual person has addressed the dilemma posed by their sense of gender identity issues of sexuality will remain.

Four sexual possibilities

The psychiatric textbooks identify four sexual possibilities for transsexual people

- 1) attraction to people of the opposite gender
- 2) attraction to people of the same gender
- 3) attraction to people of either gender
- 4) asexual

In other words, their sexuality is as diverse as the rest of the human race; but there is an added complication: the transsexual's sexual preference may change as a result of the transition process, and no one can predict the outcome. For example, a genetically born male who is convinced that he is female, and is currently attracted to females, could, after transition, find that she is now attracted to males. However, human relationships are built on more than just sexuality, and some married couples wish to remain together after one of the partners has transitioned. The complications involved are addressed by two pieces of UK legislation passed in 2005, the Gender Recognition Act and the Civil Partnership Act, in which the interface between T and LG is particularly obvious.

Anomalies of transition

Until last year, one of the anomalies of transition was that people were able to change their name legally, and amend all their important documents (passport, driving licence etc.) accordingly, but not their birth certificate. This meant that transsexual people could acquire a social gender, but legally they remained locked in their birth gender, and were therefore unable to marry someone of the opposite gender to their acquired gender. Prior to the mid 1960s this had been allowed and transsexual people did marry in their acquired gender, but the ruling in the April Ashley case overturned that and it has taken forty years for the law to be changed.

Those who wish their birth certificate to be amended must first obtain a Gender Recognition Certificate by supplying evidence of their medical diagnosis and treatment, also that they have lived in their acquired gender for a minimum of two years

and intend to do so until they die. If they are single or divorced the rest is straight-forward, but, if a married couple wishes to remain together a full gender recognition certificate will not be issued as the State does not wish to endorse the concept of same-sex marriage. In this instance the couple are expected to divorce and then enter into a civil partnership as a same-sex couple. One of the first people to do this was Bernadette Rogers, a loyal Anglican, who is now in her eighties and wished to remain with her wife of many years.

Church of England perspective

The faith communities have obtained several exemptions from the Gender Recognition Act but, from the Church of England's perspective, these are mainly to do with appropriate disclosure of information to those with oversight and authority. Unless there is some other legal impediment, holders of a Gender Recognition Certificate in England may marry in the parish church where they or their future spouse reside, and are not obliged to inform the minister of their gender history. If the minister suspects it, and has conscientious objections, he or she must provide another minister.

So far in England six clergy have undergone or are undergoing gender re-assignment and the pastoral response from their bishops has been very different in each case. The most awkward stage for any transsexual is when they actually transition from one gender to the other, and this is magnified when the person is in a public role. However, it is far more common now in many professions and a rich resource of experience is available. The recent positive response to the Revd Sarah Jones, a newly ordained woman who transitioned ten years ago, suggests that transsexual people are easier to accept when they are well-established in their acquired gender and perhaps, that the Church of England is becoming more at ease with the idea of transgender people among its ranks.

Christina Beardsley
(Co-founder of the Clare Project, for people dealing with issues of gender)

Web sites: Sibyls: www.sibyls.co.uk
Press for Change: www.pfc.org.uk

Changing Attitude Diocesan Groups

Birmingham

Convenors:
Catherine Bennett email: c.a.bham@blueyonder.co.uk
Dr Nicola Slee tel. 0121 441 1130
email: nicola_slee@hotmail.com

Next meetings:
Tuesdays, 23 May, 27 June, 18 July all at
7.45pm in St Philip's Cathedral, Colmore Row, Birmingham.

Bradford See Wakefield

Bristol

Convenor: James Wilson
St Gregory's Vicarage, Filton Road, Horfield, Bristol, BS7 0PD
Tel: 0117 969 2839 email: revjameswilson@aol.com

Canterbury

Acting Co-ordinator: Tony Crowe
9 Park Avenue, WHITSTABLE, Kent, CT5 2DD
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Chelmsford

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Chester

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Durham See Newcastle

Guildford

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Leicester

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tel. 0116 299 9828 or 0116 262 0788
Email: barry99@btinternet.com
Sally Beazley, tel: 0116 286 6395

Lichfield

Convenor: Jenni Latham 2 Fireclay Drive, St Georges, TEL-
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tel: 01952 614136; mob 07879 233488
(Honorary Chair): Sally Chapman, 2 Foley Church Close,
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Lincoln

Convenors: Tracey Byme, 157 Carholme Road, Lincoln LN1 1RU
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Jonathan Thacker, St George's Vicarage, 87 Ferry Road, Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire, DN15 8LY
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Liverpool

Convenor: Rev Irene Cowell, The Rectory, Water Street, Thornton, Liverpool, L23 1TB tel: 0151 931 4676
email: irene@rectory.fsnet.co.uk

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Convenors: Andrew Henderson, 4 Western Terrace, Brighton BN1 2LD Tel. 01273 327829
email: andrew.henderson4@virgin.net
Ann Clarridge, 80 Greenford Gardens, Greenford, Middx, UB6 9NA tel: 020 8578 7025 email: clarria@lsbu.ac.uk

Next meetings:
Conference W/P - Tues 16th May at 6.00 pm
Thurs 20th July at 7.30 pm
Thurs 26th October at 7.30 pm all at St Anne's Rectory.

Manchester

Convenors:
Charles Clapham, Tel: 0161 794 2464
33 Moorside Road, Swinton, Manchester, M27 0EZ
email: charlesclapham@lineone.net
Ursula Hay, 2 Lea Bank Street, Levenshulme, Manchester, M19 3DU, Tel: 0161 225 4643

Next meeting
Saturday, 3 June (Pentecost weekend)- Jim Cotter has been booked to speak at 2 seminars at St Agnes Church, North Reddish, Stockport. Recognising that people's Saturdays are precious, Jim suggests a Saturday with 2 distinct parts so people can come to one or the other or both. Jim will also preach at St Agnes for Pentecost at 10.15am.

Newcastle/Durham

Convenors:
Stephen Griffith, The Vicarage, Dunblane Crescent, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE5 2BE
tel. 0191 267 2058
email: denton.vicar@btopenworld.com
Jenny Lancaster, 2 Heathdale Gardens, High Heaton, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE7 7QR
tel. 0191 240 1612
email: jenny.lancaster@gmail.com

Ripon & Leeds

Convenors: Maureen Browell, 4 Upper Folderings, Dodworth, Bamsley, S75 3EE
tel: 01226 208391 (mob 07930 194421)
email: maureenbrowell@surefish.co.uk
Nigel Greenwood, 47 Broomfield, Adel, Leeds, LS16 7AD
Tel: 07940 587618
email: greenwoodnd@aol.com

Tuesday, 16 May, 7.30pm at Dewsbury Minster, when the Revd Dr Kevin Ward from the Department of Theology & Religious Studies at Leeds University will speak on "African Theology & Tradition"..

Rochester

Convenors: Chris Bunce, 07815 041852

email: christopherbunce@hotmail.com
Sue Brewer, 01322 292335
email: suec@brewer86.freeseve.co.uk

St Albans

Interim contact: Rev. Richard Watson,
The Rectory, 136 Church Hill Road, East Barnet, Herts.
Tel: 020 8368 3840
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St Edmundsbury & Ipswich

Convenors: Julie Clifford, 28 Coplestone Road, Ipswich, IP4 5HB
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Rev Andrew Dotchin
The Rectory, 176 Fircroft Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 6PS
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Southwell

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Sr Rosemary CHN tel: 0115 978 5101
email: rosemarychn@yahoo.co.uk

Wakefield/Bradford

Convenor: The Revd Chris Bullimore,
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tel: 01924 849161
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Tuesday, 16 May, 7.30pm at Dewsbury Minster, when the Revd Dr Kevin Ward from the Department of Theology & Religious Studies at Leeds University will speak on "African Theology & Tradition".

It is also hoped to arrange a further joint meeting in the summer to consider issues in human sexuality from the Roman Catholic perspective.

Worcester

Convenor: Rev. David Rogers, St. Leonard's Vicarage, Beoley, Redditch, B98 9AR Tel: 01527 63976
email: davidrogers@santiago.plus.com

York

Convenors:
Rev Jean Mayland, Minster Cottage, 51 Sands Lane, Barmston, E Yorks, YO25 8PO
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Rev Ashley Wilson, St Oswald's House, West Rounton, Northalerton, DL6 2LW tel: 01609 882401 email: ashley@dunelm.org.uk

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Chichester

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