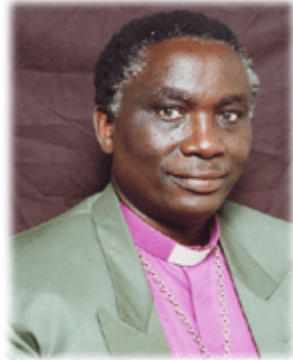


Bishop John Gladwin 'abandoned' in Kenya

A headline in the Times on 24 May announced "Bishop is abandoned in deepest Africa". The Bishop of Chelmsford and 20 curates were in the middle of a two-week visit to Kenya. The trip was going well, with the curates travelling to the heart of the country to visit parishes and explore how the Anglican church worked there.

Then the Archbishop of Kenya, the Most Reverend Benjamin Nzimbi, discovered that bishop John is a patron of Changing Attitude and withdrew his hospitality. The Diocese of Embu was reported to be wild and remote and off the beaten track in the central highlands of Kenya, hit in the past by outbreaks of typhoid and malaria. I think this was Ruth Gledhill reporting, over-dramatising reality.



Archbishop Nzimbi

Moses Njue, the Bishop of Embu, explained later in the week what had happened on Sunday He said "The press arrived and started questions. That was when we first learned that [Bishop Gladwin] was part of a gay club. It was shocking to us." It was news to John Gladwin too!

This all led to extensive media coverage in the UK by the BBC and the four serious newspapers. It was also widely reported by the Kenyan press.

The resulting publicity in Kenya brings information to Kenyan lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Anglican Church members, and to the heterosexual majority.

- It informs them about the abusive and ill-informed attitudes held by senior church members.
- The widely-published news will have alerted people to the debate taking place in the Anglican Communion and the commitment made by Archbishop Nzimbi to uphold in full Lambeth 1.10 and the Windsor Report.
- It reveals to LGBT Anglican Kenyans that there are groups like Changing Attitude working to argue for our full inclusion in the church, when they are almost certainly feeling isolated and un-cared for.

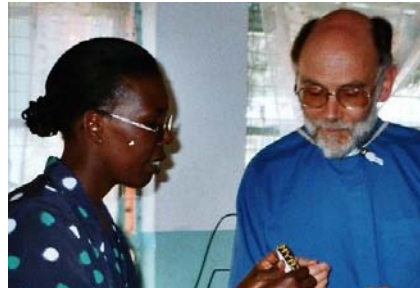
Another positive sign was an article by the Revd Tim Wambunya published by Fulcrum. Tim is vicar of Emmanuel Church, Hornsey Road, London and Chair of the Kenya Church Association UK. He wrote: "The Kenya Church Association (KCA) hopes the Chelmsford Mt Kenya link will survive the current crisis even if Bishop John Gladwin's personal views are being challenged.

Colin Coward

Help bring top-level discussion to Kenya

Kenya has a vigorous, growing Anglican Church with strong evangelical roots. Along with most other Anglican provinces in Africa, it holds that homosexuality is un-Biblical and un-African.

Henry Mayor, a retired Church of England parish priest, was in Kenya in February and March 2006, trying to set up a discussion with Anglican Church leaders on Homosexuality and Bible Interpretation. At first the idea was rejected, but after talking privately with a number of Kenyans, eventually he saw Archbishop Nzimbi, who agreed, verbally, to the following plan:



Henry Mayor, right

The Proposal

Three or four Christians from UK go to Kenya between now and April 2007 to discuss homosexuality with the bishops, to listen to their views, allowing time for reflection, not to change minds or try to win arguments, and to do the same at Kenyan theological colleges. We should go as individuals, not representing any diocese or organization, for about 3 weeks.

Who might go?

Any Christian who believes gay people should be affirmed in the church, and is willing to talk non-confrontationally about it. S/he should also have some experience of African culture. If s/he cannot pay the full cost of the trip, it should be possible to raise some sponsorship.

Henry Mayor is asking CA supporters if we can help make this idea a reality

Is anyone – in principle at least – interested in joining him there? Would anyone be part of a support group to assist in planning the project? Does anyone have any academic, pastoral or cross-cultural expertise which would be useful to the group? Could you give or help to raise funds for the trip? If you say "Yes" to any of these, please contact Henry.

Cheques should be made payable to "The Bondo Fund", an account used to send money to projects in the Diocese of Bondo and elsewhere in Kenya. Donors of £10 or more should specify that their gift is for the "theological project".

Rev. Henry Mayor, 57 Hill Street, Manchester M20 3FY
Tel. (+44)0161 434 2955. henrywmayor@hotmail.com



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

NEWSLETTER No 36

November 2006

We're still here!

Welcome to the 36th edition of the CA newsletter. It has been a long time in preparation. We've been adjusting, sometimes with practical and emotional difficulty, to our changed circumstances—less income and no paid staff. The trustees have been addressing our future, reviewing the focus of our activity in England and maintaining the ethos of Changing Attitude—we represent people who are integral to the Church, we work by building relationships and trust with the blessing of God.

This summer has seen a constant flow of dramatic developments around the Anglican Communion. Work on this newsletter started in July, but it was difficult to chose a moment to stop editing and send copy to the printers. The moment has finally arrived!

Changing Attitude has become a complex organisation. We have 22 groups in 24 dioceses, 600 UK supporters, sister groups in 4 other countries, a commitment to work with Inclusive Church, with General Synod and the Windsor process, and all this coupled with a generosity of spirit in giving time and energy to other groups and events.

We believe it is in relationship that change occurs, and building relationships across difference is a prime commitment of CA. Reports later in the news letter show how busy and involved we have been, at conferences, general synod, in campaigns and responding to developments in the Anglican Communion.

England

CA England has two prime goals, the blessing of relationships and equality for LGBT clergy. The Diocesan Groups are critical to the achievement of our goals. How are we going to get there, when the demands of conservatives across the Communion constantly distract from our holy and healthy role in the Church?

We are focussing on 3 campaigns:

- Civil Partnerships Lay Readers**
- Welcoming and Open Congregations**

- more information on the following pages.

The campaigns will be the focus for group action and activity over the coming year. We will provide the resources and together, we can work for creative, holy, practical change in the Church of England.

Colin Coward

Communion developments

It's been a busy summer around the Communion, with the General Convention of the Episcopal Church confronting (or as some would have it, avoiding) Windsor, the bishops of Durham, Rochester and Winchester flying the Atlantic to meetings with bishops from the Episcopal Church, the Global South meeting in Kigali, a partnered gay candidate in the election of a new bishop in the diocese of Newark, and constant, sometimes hysterical, reaction to events.

Conservative Agenda

Developments seem to be driven by the conservative evangelical agenda, the Global South alliance and American reactionaries. The mood is ungenerous to LGBT Anglicans at best, categorically offensive and hostile at worst. These meetings and the statements issued drive the news agenda on the web. Those of us who believe there is a positive narrative to be told for LGBT Anglicans are left reacting to the conservative agenda.

On the defensive

We are being pushed onto the defensive. Few bishops are meeting the conservative challenge by publicly articulating a theology and vision of the Church which is positively healthy for LGBT people. We know we have friends—the CA list of patrons demonstrates that— but there is a deep and genuine fear that we will be sacrificed to the demand for unity at all costs. There is a deepening anxiety that conservatives are successfully setting the agenda and constricting the freedom of movement open to the Archbishop of Canterbury (of course, conservatives think the same in reverse).

We have a holy story to tell. We are working for change, integrating our work with Inclusive Church in the UK and Inclusive Communion internationally. We are preparing for Lambeth 2008. We are rooted in prayer and worship. We have a long way to go. We're on the way, confident in God.

Changing Attitude—the future

Since our three major grants ended at the beginning of 2006, we have struggled to find new sources of finance to replace those grants.

Please be patient with us. Changing Attitude is certainly not giving up working for equality for LGBT people in the Church of England.

The trustees have been actively developing proposals to raise funds which will enable us to maintain our generous and honest engagement with the church, resourced by a second member of staff in addition to Colin, who is continuing to work, unpaid, as Director.

The trustees met on 23rd September and reviewed the scope and priorities of Changing Attitude's activities. They were amazed to discover the diversity and complexity of work in which we are involved. Our priority is to maintain support of our diocesan groups and supporters and our engagement with the national and international Church. The trustees are meeting again in Lincoln on 17 and 18 November to further develop our strategy.

Our goals are clear. Now we need to provide you, our supporters and groups, with practical ideas and help so that together we can continue our process of education and change within each parish, deanery and diocese.

Changing Attitude's goal is to educate a reluctant Church into the discovery that LGBT people are holy people, loved and created by God just as we are. We are faithful Christians who fall in love, make mistakes and build relationships with passionate and boring normality.

We are Biblically based, evangelical in our fervour, mainstream in our theology, faithful in prayer and worship, a holy people in a diverse, inclusive Church dedicated to the Kingdom of God.

In the CA newsletter, with the focus on group news and listings and reports of national and international events, it's easy to focus on the campaign and forget that we are primarily about becoming a holier people in a holier Church. LGBT Christians are a gift to the Church.

We have a relationship with God. Keep your relationship healthy and holy—pray at all times!

You will be hearing from us in the next 3 months. Meanwhile, we hope you will continue to be patient as we build on our vision for the Church.

Welcoming and Open Congregations

The first of our campaigns—to increase the number of congregations registered as welcoming and open to LGBT people. There are many 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 become more confident in making a public commitment to LGBT welcome.

Can you put this on the agenda of your PCC?

Can you talk to your Vicar/Rector/Priest in Charge?

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 cost involved. Simply write to 6 Norney Bridge or email office@changingattitude.org and ask for a W&O pack.

Changing Attitude Trust

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Trustees

Christina Beardsley, Jenny Clark, Irene Cowell, Max Manin, 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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Martin Hallett and Professor Oliver O'Donovan (who chaired the Consultation) sitting to the left, Sally Rogers, Phil Groves and the bishops of Chelmsford and Liverpool to the right, Stephen Coles front right



conversations which continued until 3am. Monday's sessions took us a lot further than we could have hoped. We didn't come to any agreement, but we had clearly grown in trust and mutual understanding and respect.

July

Don't Throw Stones

Don't Throw Stones is inspired by a secular event – the International Day Against Homophobia (IDAHO on May 17th, the anniversary of the removal of homosexuality from the World Health Organisation list of mental illnesses). Colin has been attending meetings of a group including Giles Goddard, Andrew Goddard, Phil Groves, Chris Newlands, Jenny Petersen, Ian Fellows and Graham Kings, representing a spectrum of attitudes to LGBT issues but united by opposition to homophobia.

The group recognises the need for prayer and action against homophobia as distinct from campaigning for developments to change Christian theology and ethics. We are developing something which all who accepted section 6 of the Primates declaration of February 2005 could strongly support. It has the backing of the JSC of the ACC and Primates (who had indicated their support for such a day provided it reflected the above declaration and the words in Lambeth 1.10) and of the ABC. The listening process asked for cannot take place in the context of the victimisation or diminishment of homosexual people.

The group is developing a web site which should be ready to go online soon.

General Synod York

Ursula Hay and Christine Holt joined Colin at General Synod, where CA had rented a student house. Main focus of this session of Synod was the progress towards the ordination of women bishops. As a member group on Inclusive Church, we supported the activities of WATCH at Synod.

As usual, we engaged many Synod members in conversation, including those who are gay, gay supportive, gay uncertain and gay opposed. We were welcomed at the LGCM fringe meeting addressed by Phil Groves

and were happy to see the pro-gay private member's motion gain enough signatures to rise to the top of the list, guaranteeing a debate in one of the next two sessions of Synod.

Modern Churchperson's Union Conference

This year's MCU conference at High Leigh, Hoddeston, on 'Passion for Justice: a fresh look at the controversial and divisive subject of human sexuality from a global and faithful perspective' was a joint venture with the Centre for the Study of Christianity and Sexuality. Colin had been invited to chaplain the conference of over 140 participants. Prof Elaine Graham (Manchester University) chaired lectures by Canon Trevor Dennis, Martin Pendergast, Prof Adrian Thatcher and Canon Marilyn McCord Adams.

CA had a display at the market place on the final evening. CA supporters and patrons were in evidence and many people were grateful to discover us for the first time or expressed appreciation for the character of our work.

August

Affirming Catholicism Conference

Thanks to a kind benefactor, I was able to attend the Aff Cath conference for the first time, held this year at St Chad's, Durham. Highlight of the 4 days was the keynote address by James Alison. It was also good to hear and meet two new bishops, of Stephen Cotterill of Reading and Stephen Conway of Ramsbury, my own area bishop.

The conference was intense but rewarding, the liturgy rich and the music simple and creative thanks to Canon Perran Gay from Truro Cathedral. Many people who had not come across CA before were introduced to our work for the first time and new relationships formed.

September

South London Gay Group

An unusual meeting, this! I had been invited to talk to the group about developments in the Anglican Communion. I arrived to find the group gathered on the pavement outside their usual pub venue. There had been a fire and it was closed. We adjourned round the corner to the Two Brewers in Clapham High Street and I delivered my talk to the background of disco music and video screens. They want me to return!

Sibyls and EFLGC

Barely space to report that Colin was invited to talk to the transgender group the Sibyls at St Columba's, Woking and participated in an inter-group and inter-faith day at the recent EFLGC conference. Changing Attitude supporters have also been present at most of the events.

Director's diary

Changing Attitude is constantly engaged in work at the national and international level which rarely gains public attention. Here are snippets highlighting some of our work during the past 6 months as witnessed by Colin.

May

Premier Radio

Premier, the Christian radio station, invited me to record an interview about liturgies for the blessing of civil partnerships at their studio in Victoria. Premier has invited me back to record further interviews and participate in two live studio discussions, the last about the proposed Goods and Services legislation. The staff at Premier are keen to ensure that their audience hears a more complex presentation of issues and enables CA to reach a new audience with our message.

Anglican Mainstream

Representatives of Inclusive Church and Anglican Mainstream met at St Matthew's Westminster to explore our differences and search for common ground as Anglicans. The first meeting was a get-to-know-you time—we are meeting for a second time in November.

June

General Convention USA

I attended the first week of General Convention in Columbus, Ohio, sharing a room with Louie Crew, founder of Integrity. Despite Bob O'Dell's advice (Bob is London CA) that Columbus had its attractions, it isn't one of the great American cities.

Convention is a huge gathering involving about 10,000 people. It's a great place to network, impossible to meet particular people and seemingly impossible to avoid others (not that I wanted to). I was able to spend valuable time with Stephen Lyon (Partners in World Mission), Tim Dakin (CMS), John Sentamu (well-known Archbishop), Kenneth Kearon (ACO), and Michael Ingham (Bishop of New Westminster). Giles Goddard and Philip were there representing Inclusive Church. And of course, Gene Robinson was there and many representatives from TEC that I had met and made friends with three years ago in Minneapolis.

Gene Robinson at the launch of his biography in the exhibition hall at General Convention. Gene was his exuberant self, passionate about the Gospel and confident in his own call from God.



Martyn Minns (left) now a bishop in the Nigerian church talking with Ed Bacon, Rector of All Saints' Pasadena. Susan Russell, President of Integrity is on the staff of All Saints, which is a large, wealthy congregation passionately committed to full inclusion.



I had other encounters, with Martyn Minns, now ordained as a Nigerian bishop, and Michael Nazir Ali, breakfasting in the same restaurant as me, though he was with the Anglican Mission in America.

I worked closely with the Integrity Convention team, meeting every evening at 10pm to review the day and 'strategise' for tomorrow. We have much to learn from them about working in General Synod and planning for Lambeth 2008.

Convention holds open hearings where anyone is welcome to testify, and I contributed to a hearing about the Windsor process. Convention day began with a Eucharist in the centre, where some 5,000 gathered.

Highlight of the week was the Integrity Eucharist, held in a downtown parish church. Susan Russell presided and Gene Robinson preached. Gene was personal and emotional in his sermon, communicating with passion his own vocation as a gay man. I was invited to robe and process with the 150 LGBT clergy, taking our place amongst the 850 people gathered in the church, with another 500 crammed into the crypt and watching on a TV monitor.

I had to fly back before the final days when Convention passed resolutions under pressure to be 'Windsor compliant' but in the process, abandoned some of the church's integrity towards LGBT people. Being there was an important sign of our commitment as LGBT members of our respective churches who are committed to each other, to our Anglican Communion and to the work of Windsor and Lambeth 2008.

St George's Windsor Consultation

Sally and Colin were invited to the Consultation hosted by John Gladwin and James Jones. Other groups represented included Forward in Faith, Reform, Anglican Mainstream, Fulcrum, Inclusive Church, Clergy Consultation, General Synod human sexuality group and LGCM Anglican Matters.

Meeting under Chatham House rules allowed us to be honest and open with each other and begin to speak more truthfully about our difficulties with ideas and attitudes radically different from our own.

By the end of Sunday evening, it was difficult to believe that much progress could be made before we parted after lunch on Monday. That feeling didn't allow for the

Civil Partnerships Campaign

Many thanks those supporters who have sent details of your own Civil Partnership or of other Church of England couples who have registered their partnership. To date, we know of 46 couples, registered in 15 dioceses. They include 36 ordained gay men, 2 ordained lesbians, 31 lay gay men and 6 lay lesbians.

To show the Church ...

We would like to show the Church how many clergy have had the courage to register their CPs as well as the number of registered lay couples worshipping Sunday by Sunday in parish churches who have made a life-long commitment to one another.

We would like to present a picture to the Church on the first anniversary in December, show how the House of Bishop's guidelines are being ignored by partnered LGBT Anglicans, lay and ordained, who respect their own deeply committed, faithful loving relationships.

We STILL need your help NOW!

- We need ALL OF YOU who have registered or know of other couples, so send details
- 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 giving couple's initials, using M, F or T (male/female/trans) L or O (lay/ordained), B (followed by blessing) to: colin@changingattitude.org or write to 6 Norney Bridge, Mill Road, Marston, Devizes, SN10 5SF.

Bristol and London Letters

The bishops of Bristol and London have issued letters about Civil Partnerships.

Bristol

In May, Mike Hill, Bishop of Bristol issued a pastoral letter to his clergy about Civil Partnerships. The tone of the letter is conservative and anxious.

Bishop Mike writes that "the interpretation of civil

partnerships in some of the media as 'gay marriages' will disturb many Christians." Although many people might consider civil partnerships to be 'gay marriages', the Church does not. A civil partnership cannot be a marriage merely because it has similar legal rights.

The Civil Partnership Act should be partially welcomed by the Church because it is a remedy for some victims of Injustice. The welcome has to be limited, however, because of the aspects of the Act that have fuelled considerable anxiety. Removing the injustices should not endanger the place of marriage and family in society, and it seems that bishop Mike thinks the Act has this effect.

He says he cannot defend any unmarried cleric living a non-celibate life or any married cleric in an adulterous relationship. In accordance with traditional Anglican pastoral practice, he does not intend that in this diocese there should be unreasonable interrogatory questioning of either clergy or lay people about their personal attitudes or behaviour.

Personally, he finds within himself a level of vulnerability and pain in all of this. He says the tension between upholding Biblical teaching and the Church's tradition on the one hand, and, on the other, wanting to be compassionate and hospitable to gay people feels a lonely road to walk. Having to be public in the exercise of my responsibility to uphold the Church's teaching makes me feel vulnerable on every side.

LGBT people have walked this lonely road for most of their lives; those who accept the call of God into ministry continue to do so; because of this policy of irresolution, conditional welcome and don't ask, don't tell, many LGBT Anglicans are left wondering whether we are welcome in our congregations and safe to come out, or not.

London

The Bishop of London has written a response about Civil Partnerships to a number of churches appreciating their concern and reflecting with them on some of the issues raised.

He writes about our ultimate authority, the Word made flesh as "uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures", scriptures read in company with the church throughout the ages and the witness of the undivided church, distilled in the catholic creeds. To this he adds the authority of the Book of Common Prayer, Canon Law, the XXXIX Arti-

cles, formal resolutions of General Synod, and Lambeth resolutions which while having moral authority are strictly advisory in the polity of the Anglican Communion. Finally he arrives at the glosses on these authoritative statements including documents like "Issues in Human Sexuality" and the "Pastoral Statement".

That "Issues in Human Sexuality" sets up one moral standard for the laity and another for the clergy is clearly an incoherent position which is demeaning to the laity, he writes.

The Church recognises two forms or vocations in which life can be lived: marriage and singleness. There is no place for the Church to confer legitimacy upon alternatives to these. Pastoral care however needs a certain flexibility taking note of the circumstances which make each individual case different from every other and discerning ways in which the Gospel touches people in different situations. "It should be possible to set out the church's teaching clearly and to guide those for whom we have pastoral care without setting ourselves up as their judges."

At the same time to suggest a greater disunity among bishops than really exists is to play into the hands of those who are seeking a radical revision of orthodox teaching.

Diocese of California's policy on same-gender blessings

Meanwhile, across the Atlantic, Bishop Mark Andrus, recently elected in the Diocese of California, has issued a policy on same-gender blessings in a letter to diocesan clergy.

- Blessings are subject to the discretion of clergy in consultation with couples.
- Careful counselling and preparation should precede the rite.
- The bishop is to be informed of the blessing in advance and consulted regarding the rite, as part of the exercise of his pastoral responsibility.
- The Diocesan Commission on Marriage and Blessings will identify and/or develop rites of reference for use in the diocese. (This will relieve couples and clergy of the onerous and unfair task of having to reinvent the liturgical wheel for every rite.)
- These blessings will be a public expression of the church's common life. "The blessings of same-sex couples in our churches are cele-

brations of Christian love and vocation, and deserve the same expressions of joy and excitement that others enjoy."

In announcing the guidelines, Bishop Andrus has joined Bishop Larry Maze of the Diocese of Arkansas who also announced a policy whereby couples and their priests may pursue blessings of same-gender unions. Seven other dioceses (Delaware, Long Island, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Vermont, Washington) also have official written policies permitting same-sex blessings.

Integrity welcomes policy

The Rev. Susan Russell, President of Integrity USA, cited the Diocese of California's announcement as "a clear, concise, and pastoral response to the needs of lesbian and gay couples in our churches."

She pointed out that "this policy is a real step forward toward the full inclusion of lesbian and gay couples in the Diocese of California and one would hope -throughout the Episcopal Church" and reminded Integrity's members and supporters-and the wider community for full inclusion-of the work still to be done. She said, "This an important next step-on a journey that isn't over yet."

What a contrast between England and the USA. The drama of the Communion is starkly revealed. Some Episcopal Church dioceses respond appropriately and confidently to their LGBT brothers and sisters. England is caught between a recognition that society has moved way beyond the church, the realisation that LGBT people are integral to the church, and paralysis thanks to threats from extreme conservatives and the Global South. The Global South denying that LGBT really exist while slowly coming to terms with reality.

Nothing less than the full inclusion of LGBT people in England and every Province of the Anglican Communion will ultimately ensure that we can receive with open hearts the Gospel message of love, hope and salvation. Until that day, LGBT people live with the message that we are unwelcome, or tolerated, or welcomed conditionally.

Visit our new web site for news updates and press releases, group information, campaign resources and background material:

www.changingattitude.org.uk

Email: peterrwatkins@peterrwatkins.fsnet.co.uk

Salisbury

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Undergoing God

James Alison, gay Roman Catholic systematic theologian, has recently published his latest book, subtitled 'dispatches from the scene of a break-in'. James challenges us to leave our safe, polarized comfort zones and venture into relationship those we would prefer not to party with.

Creation is a "huge, risky, audacious, crazy undertaking by God to produce something fun, something that can share in God's life and God's joy, out of nothing at all. But to produce it in such a way as to allow the nothing at all, who have no right to be there, to act like customs officials or immigration officers, filters examining what is allowed in, getting all pompous at supposed breaches of our immigration rules. Taking our tasks terribly, terribly seriously and not noticing the hidden outbursts of radiance and delight from those who escape our vigilant attention and are smuggled into, and become the treasures of, the land who frontiers we patrol, though we ourselves scarcely ever step beyond the immigration posts which we maintain at such expense.

Quite a lot of us spend quite a lot of time trying to work out who should be at the party and who shouldn't, even when the evidence is that the host is pretty promiscuous in his invitations.

The capacity for party seems to be grinding to a halt because of the question of whether, after all, the promiscuous host isn't once again trying to smuggle a new bunch of people past the bouncers and get them into his party; or whether it is not the promiscuous host who is doing the smuggling at all, but some evil agent who wants to destroy the party by infiltrating evil people into it, people incapable of partying.

Isn't the real issue *not* the question of who is right or wrong, but rather how we talk to each other in the interval while we wait for the host to make it clear? Being right or wrong is not so very important. Being so grateful to be invited at all that I am quite determined to be as warm, charitable and friendly as I can learn how to be towards those who completely disagree with me is terribly, terribly important: for it is by this that I will be judged.

It is not how I defend my own, but how I imagine, portray and engage with my adversary which is the only really important issue at hand. Never, ever let go of your fundamentalists if you wish to stay at the party ...

because we are almost invariably run by the same patterns of desire ... but displaced onto something else. It's only when we can relax about God wanting them at the party that we will really be able to get over our hidden fear that he can't really want us.

Repentance is not God wanting to humiliate people because of our pride and wickedness, but God wanting people to be able to be in on the party. There is a very serious obligation on me to make it easier for those I consider to have got it wrong, not more difficult. To reach them, not to provoke them.

A considerable part of the theological effort which I think is called for is the courtesy of constructing bridges for the benefit of others, being vulnerable on their turf, exercising magnanimity towards foes.

Undergoing God: James Alison, Darton, Longman and Todd, ISBN 0232526761, £12.95

CHANGING ATTITUDE LONDON Conference

ST ANNE'S SOHO
Saturday 13 January 2007
10am-4.30pm

Keynote Speakers

Ben Summerskill, Chief Executive, Stonewall
Kathy Galloway, Leader, the Iona Community

A day conference for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Christians, friends and relatives, to explore the experience of being

CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE

between life in an increasingly affirming secular society and the troubled atmosphere of the Church of England

- Explore the ways in which we feel caught
- Identify what resources we can use to help us thrive in this atmosphere
- Celebrate our God-given identity
- Come and share your views

Other speakers include Clare Herbert, Rector, St Anne's Soho and John Ward, Lay Member of General Synod

Workshop leaders include: Christina Beardsley and Michelle O'Brien, Chris Brice, Colin Coward and Stephen Coles, Kathy Galloway and Andrew Henderson

The conference is a national CA event—all are welcome

Cost £20 (£10 concessionary rate for people on low incomes only)
Cheques made payable to Changing Attitude Trust

To book or for further information contact:
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Camberley, Surrey GU 16 5RP
or brenda.harrison@virgin.net
or tel 01276 24893

Ursula Hay, 2 Lea Bank Street, Levenshulme, Manchester, M19 3DU, Tel: 0161 225 4643

There have been two interesting and stimulating gatherings recently. Firstly in September Henry Mayer addressed us on the issue of how do you speak to a Nigerian Bishop about gay sex (see article later in the newsletter).

In October Fr Derek Palmer spoke to us and brought us up to speed regarding Civil Partnerships – where are we now?

We have met at Holy Innocents Fallowfield since our inception in 2002, but now, we are considering moving to the **Lesbian & Gay Foundation (LGF)** on Princess Street, Manchester. It has full disabled access is centrally located and will be easier for most people to get to.

It is **World Aids Day on Friday 1st December**, the last few years have seen increasing numbers attending the Aids Vigil in Sackville Park that takes place at about 8 or 8.30pm. It is a very moving tribute as we remember those who have died from HIV and the increasing numbers of those who live with the disease.

There will be a day conference at Chester Cathedral on Saturday 11 November 10am – 4pm **Does the Church limit God's love?** with speakers Kenneth Leech and Jean Mayland.

Newcastle/Durham

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Ripon & Leeds

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Over the summer, there were two joint meetings of the Ripon & Leeds Group with the Bradford & Wakefield Group, exploring LGBT issues from the Roman Catholic and Jewish perspectives.

There will be another joint meeting at 7.30 p.m. on Tuesday 7 November at Gildersome Parish Church, with Jean Mayland as the speaker.

A Changing Attitude Northern Province Carol Service is scheduled for 2.30 p.m. on Saturday 16 December at Holy Trinity Church, Boar Lane, Leeds (followed by refreshments in the cafe). 10 minutes walking distance from the Station

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Southwell

Rev David Swain TSSF, 77
Trent Boulevard, West Bridg-

Launch meeting of the Ed-
mundsbury and Ipswich CA
group, with from left, Revd
Mary Sokanovic, Bishop Rich-
ard Lewis, Julie Clifford, Revd
Andrew Dotchin and Sally
Rogers



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Rev Ashley Wilson, St Oswald's House, West Rounton, Northalerton, DL6 2LW
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Sat 25th November

The State Of The Anglican Communion—Colin Coward
1.00pm Lunch followed by talk 2.00pm at Church House, Ogleforth, York. This is near the Minster, there is no parking outside, but there is a pay and display car park not far away on Lord Mayors Walk. Meeting will be in the Large Conference Room

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Lay reader Campaign

Does the Church discriminate against LGBT people in Lay Ministry?

We had always assumed that the church will not ordain openly partnered LGBT people, but that we would be admitted to all lay ministries. The 1991 report *Issues in Human Sexuality* distinguished between ordained and lay people. Clergy 'cannot claim the liberty to enter into sexually active homophile relationships' because of 'the distinctive nature of their calling, status and consecration'. who make a The conscientious decision of those who are not clergy to enter into such a relationship must be respected and the Church must not 'reject those who sincerely believe it is God's call to them'.

During a discussion on the Changing Attitude yahoogroup (lesbigayanglicans@yahoo.com) we discovered that a number of lay members of the group had been refused Readership training and other official positions because they admitted to being partnered.

Changing Attitude believes it is now important to get a better picture of how the church treats its

General Synod question

openly partnered LGBT lay members. Prompted by our discussion a member of General Synod asked the question at the last General Synod meeting in July 2006:

Has the House considered how *Issues in Human Sexuality*, a discussion document - but which has been quoted as indicating the Church of England's view on matters of human sexuality and which suggests that different types of lifestyle may be acceptable amongst the laity from that expected of clergy - is being applied in the selection of persons for training or licensing as Readers, which is a lay ministry?

She received the following answer:
No: Matters relating to the selection of Readers are principally for diocesan bishops who, in determining their selection criteria, would no doubt take account of the Synod's 1987 motion and Lambeth 1998 Resolution 1.10 as well as *Issues in Human Sexuality*.

Informally, she discovered that:
The Bishop of Carlisle as Chair of the Central

Readers' Council is looking at the criteria which should apply to all who hold a Bishop's licence or commission.

Changing Attitude research

We are now trying to establish a fuller picture and have started to invite comments and stories from those who subscribe to the CA Yahoogroup. Some of us have experienced a truly appalling level of personal discrimination at all levels of church life, while others have been accepted by their congregations and have been welcomed into authorised lay ministry.

To be able to engage the church with the inconsistency of policy between dioceses and in contrast to the policy set out in *Issues in Human Sexuality* we are seeking to develop as full a picture as possible of current practice and experience in the Church of England. We are preparing a dossier summarising personal stories and experience.

- We invite LGBT lay readers and others to contribute their experience.
- Everything you tell us will be treated in confidence.
- We would like to invite you to contact us with your stories.

It would be helpful if you could be as detailed as possible so we can identify dioceses where the policy seems to be open/tolerant/encouraging and those where people have experienced problems, prejudice or refusal.

Changing Attitude's research is being carried out by Erika Baker and Susan Strong. They can be contacted by email:

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Changing Attitude Scotland

You can contact Kelvin, who maintains the website and network, by e-mail:
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General Synod

John Ward, member of Changing Attitude and LGCM and elected as a member of General Synod for the Diocese of London, introduces himself and the dynamics of Synod.

I was elected to the House of Laity in General Synod last year as an openly gay, life long Anglican, enjoying life with my (now civil) partner, Kevin. I don't think that there have been many other people elected to General Synod who have declared themselves as openly gay prior to election. This alone gives me some cause for excitement. In my 'manifesto', I gave three reasons why I wanted to serve on General Synod. First, I believe in an inclusive Church. Secondly, I think that it is crucial that the Church is held to account for how it spends, what is, God's money. Thirdly, as I lawyer, I believe that I have some relevant skills.

It is a privilege for me to be able to speak up and represent lesbian and gay Christians in our Church in this very public way. There are two other members who talk openly on the floor of Synod about their sexuality and there are, of course, many others who are very supportive, including other gay people. Looking at the results of the votes on women bishops, I think that those who are opposed to an inclusive church are probably now in a minority.

So what has been happening?

- LGCM** holds interesting meetings every time Synod meets and everyone is invited to attend. So far, we have had discussions on civil partnerships, Christian-Muslim relations and on the Anglican Communion listening process. The meetings are well attended by bishops, clergy and laity from all perspectives.
- Back in February, I was elected Convenor of the **General Synod Human Sexuality Group**. We held our first meeting in July. We only invited members of Synod and imposed 'Chatham House' rules so that people could more freely speak about their experiences. An open evangelical member of Synod led our discussion and around 50 members attended. I am pleased to say the people from all perspectives spoke and I found it a powerful way to listen to one another. I think that we are all called to do this and, as a member of Synod, I believe that I shall

find Christ by spending time with members with whom I disagree. The Human Sexuality Group intends to carry on holding these sorts of meetings every time Synod gathers.

- At each meeting of General Synod, **questions** can be put to the Archbishops and leaders of the various boards and committees which report to Synod. There are always some supportive questions asked and, not surprisingly, there are always some unsupportive ones. In addition to the first scripted question, we are allowed to ask up to two further unscripted oral questions on the floor of Synod. I have made it my business to challenge unsupportive questions with a secondary which tries to explain where we are coming from. For example, following a question about hate crimes put to the Bishop of Southwark, I asked whether he could empathise with a gay man like me for whom 'love the sinner, hate the sin' just feels like hate. I took my lead from the Bishop Gene Robinson's address during the CA service last December. It's clear that some conservatives just don't get it; they really don't understand that they come over as homophobic.
- There are two **private member's motions** down for debate on human sexuality. One criticises the House of Bishops' pastoral statement of civil partnerships and this debate, when it comes up, will probably be unpleasant and messy. The second affirms lesbian and gay Christians and seeks to further the listening process. Here's the motion:
'That this Synod acknowledge the diversity of opinion about homosexuality within the Church of England, and that these divergent opinions come from honest and legitimate attempts to read the scriptures with integrity, understand the nature of homosexual orientation, and respect the patterns of holy living to which lesbian and gay Christians aspire; and, bearing in mind this diversity,
(a) agree that a homosexual orientation in itself is no bar to a faithful Christian life; and
(b) invite parish and cathedral congregations to welcome and affirm lesbian and gay Christians, lay and ordained, valuing their contribution at every level of the Church; and
(c) urge every parish to ensure a climate of sufficient acceptance and safety to enable the experience of lesbian and gay people to be heard, as successive Lambeth Conferences in 1978 (resolution 10), 1988 (resolution 64), and 1998 (resolution 1.10) have requested'

We are not sure when these motions will be debated but currently they are next on the list. I am pleased to say that the motion seeking to further the listening process has the most support and would therefore get priority on the agenda. You can be sure that I shall be aiming to do some of the talking during any debate.

At the moment, I think that all we can do on General Synod is to seek to influence the doctrine of the House of Bishops and the Church in relation to human sexuality. That's very important, and there is no silver bullet solution. We must all keep on gently talking and listening. General Synod is part of that process, but only a part. Sometimes people ask me why I don't just walk away from the Church of England. My answer is that I have tried. But I believe that someone just won't let me.

Whether you live in London or elsewhere, please don't hesitate to contact me if you would like to talk more about General Synod or what I can do for you.

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Changing Attitude Diocesan Groups

Birmingham

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Wed 22nd November 2006

AGM, review of the year and discussion of ideas for the future direction for Birmingham Changing Attitude.

Wed 6th December 2006

Doing December Differently: issues for LGBTs and others around the celebration of Christmas.

January 2007

A meeting in a local Parish. Details to be confirmed. Is your Parish interested in hosting a Birmingham Changing Attitude meeting? If so, please get in touch.
Thursday 8th February 2007

What does the New Testament have to say about same sex relations? Paula Gooder, lecturer in Biblical Studies at the Queen's Foundation and well-known author

Bradford See Wakefield

Bristol

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Canterbury

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Our next gathering will be at Caffe Uno, 49A St Peter's Street, Canterbury at 8 p.m. on Friday Dec 8th. Bro Colin of the Franciscans has kindly invited us for drinks at 7 p.m. at 6A Stour Street. Information from Tony Crowe, details above.

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A Day with Jim Cotter for Advent

Saturday 9th December 2006

Affirming Catholicism and Changing Attitude in Lincoln Diocese invite you to a **Day with Jim Cotter for Advent** on Saturday 9 December from 11am - 4pm at Edward King House, Lincoln.

Affirming Catholicism and Changing Attitude are waiting and working for change in the Anglican Communion, and are committed to dialogue as a means of shaping the future. During the morning Jim will help us explore the question, 'What gifts can we share positively in conversation with those with whom we disagree?'. In the afternoon we will take this question deeper, in a time of reflection and silence for Advent.

At the end of the day you are invited to share in an **Ecumenical Communion: Here Comes Everybody** drawing on material used by Jim on a great variety of occasions, with different groups, over the last 20 years.

The day will cost £10 (£5 concessions) and advance booking is essential. Coffee, tea and mince pies will be provided; please bring your own lunch. To book or for further details contact Tracey Byrne (01522 532034) or Robin Whitehead (01205 362864).

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