



To All Primates of the Anglican Communion

26 September 2017

Dear Brothers in Christ

We write to you following a significant year for the General Synod of the Church of England, which has seen elected representatives from across our dioceses take decisive steps towards an inclusive Church that can better serve both our Church and nation, and in particular the LGBTBI community. This has involved General Synod 'not taking note' of the House of Bishops' Report on Same-Sex Relationships, the condemnation of Conversion Therapy (notably by all but one of the House of Bishops), and the request for liturgies to welcome our Transgender brothers and sisters in Christ.

The direction of travel for the Church of England is clearer than ever, for which we give thanks.

There are inevitably those who would like to deny these measured steps towards the full inclusion of all within the Body of Christ, but their voices are becoming fewer. Even so, we are committed to walking together with them – as we hope and pray they will do with us.

Many of us were involved in signing the letter that was sent to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York ahead of your last meeting in January 2016. We were grateful for the personal apology that Archbishop Justin made regarding the way the Church has treated the LGBTBI community in the past, yet were saddened that his was a lone voice in doing so. We welcomed however the section of your communiqué, issued at the end of your meeting, that stated:

'The Primates condemned homophobic prejudice and violence and resolved to work together to offer pastoral care and loving service irrespective of sexual orientation. This conviction arises out of our discipleship of Jesus Christ. The Primates reaffirmed their rejection of criminal sanctions against same-sex attracted people.'

Persecution of the LGBTBI community continues in many of your countries, some of whom still treat being non-heterosexual as a capital offence. For instance, according to a 2016/17 report by Amnesty International relating to one African province *'Police continued to arrest LGBTI people. Men perceived to be gay were attacked by mobs and were blackmailed and targeted for extortion.'* We would therefore ask what steps you are taking to make good this commitment?

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The basic premise for the condemnation of conversion therapy by the Church of England is that being of a non-heterosexual orientation is neither a disease, nor an illness nor indeed a sin. To treat it as such is to create a society that will harbour prejudice and stigma that causes known mental health damage to the LGBTBI community. This is true the world over, and so we would ask that you prayerfully consider the impact of such practices in each of your own countries – as well as the damage that they inflict on minorities whose voices are often left unheard.

Please be assured of our prayers as you discuss your Task Group's Report, as well as the other items on your agenda some of which, such as evangelism, are directly affected by this issue.

We hope and pray that you will continue to listen to the voices of LGBTBI people as you do so, as to do otherwise will continue to prolong many misconceptions and beliefs, and undermine the Archbishop of Canterbury's assurance that there will be 'no more talking about us without us'.

Yours in Christ

The Executive Committee of the General Synod Human Sexuality Group:

The Revd Canon Giles Goddard, Southwark (Chair)
Ms Christina Baron, Bath & Wells
Ms Tracey Byrne, Southwell & Nottingham
The Revd Canon Robert Cotton, Guildford
The Revd Andrew Dotchin, St Edmundsbury & Ipswich
Ms Jay Greene, Winchester
Canon Jenny Humphreys, Bath & Wells
The Revd Chris Newlands, Blackburn
The Revd Bertrand Olivier, London
Ms Jayne Ozanne, Oxford
The Revd Neil Patterson, Hereford
The Revd Canon Priscilla White, Birmingham

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