



changing  
attitude

# newsletter

No 51

Winter 2012

Welcome to the first printed Changing Attitude newsletter for nearly two years. We apologise to those of you who have missed the newsletter and for whom it is the key means of contact with us and what we are working for.

We have been busy campaigning over the last 18 months. In July 2011 we took our campaign for civil partnerships in church NOW! to the General Synod in York. We had banners at both entrances and distributed leaflets to all Synod members.

We took the banners on the road, to London, Leeds and Brighton Pride marches. They were greeted with acclaim by those watching.

At the February Synod in London, the LGB&T Anglican Coalition greeted Synod members

with banners asking the Church to talk with, not about, the over 1,500 LGB&T clergy (see picture on back page).

We've made submissions to the Government's Equal Marriage consultation and the House of Bishops' Working Parties on civil partnerships and the listening process.

Most recently we have written to every bishop asking that when the House of Bishops meets in December and next year to consider the two working party reports, they do so with honesty and courage.

Colin visited Kenya in March – a CA Kenya group is now active and has already achieved significant progress – see page 6.



# Editorial

## Colin Coward

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As the contents of this newsletter reveal, Changing Attitude has been very busy for the past 2 years. The period has been characterised by developments which have begun to transform the landscape for the Church of England's stance towards human sexuality and the place of LGB&T people in our Church. We are living into new and creative times.

The House of Bishops announced two review groups, the first chaired by the Bishop of Sodor and Man to review the guidelines on civil partnerships and the second chaired by Sir Joseph Pilling to undertake a broader review based on the listening process. Changing Attitude made submissions to both groups and we met each group for an hour to expand on our submission.

LGB&T people, our families, friends, colleagues and congregations, are living into a future in which there will be no judgement on the spectrum of sexual orientation. UK society has broadly come to terms with this, having changed dramatically in 15 years to the point where equal marriage has been proposed by the Government.

The place of LGB&T people in the Church has risen up the agenda. The landscape is being transformed and Changing Attitude is

now campaigning more directly for urgent change in Church policy and teaching about LGB&T people.

Changing Attitude's reputation as a resource for the Church, the media, academics, and individuals seeking help and advice continues to grow. My time as Director is more than fully occupied. Responding to requests for help, maintaining our networks, and formulating Changing Attitude's policy and strategy leave less time for activities such as editing the newsletter which used to be easily accommodated in my work schedule.

We are responding to events that often need instant and sometimes time-consuming attention.

This is good! Changing Attitude has become far more proactive, as this newsletter will reveal. Society and the Church are changing and our role in campaigning for change has become increasingly effective.

We are waiting for the results of the House of Bishops' Review Groups to be published next year. Changing Attitude's next steps will depend on what is proposed, whether radical or defensive. Until then, we are continuing to engage in conversation with bishops willing to meet, talk and listen.

## Changing Attitude Trust

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## Newsletter changes

The majority of those who responded to the questionnaire in the last newsletter stated a preference for print rather than an e-letter. But we have been overtaken by events.

Printing and postal costs have risen to the point where a single issue of the newsletter costs about £1,800 to print and post. We can no longer afford to post four issues a year to all supporters, bishops, DDOs, SROs. Colleges and courses.

The trustees agreed to produce a monthly e-newsletter for those online and a twice-yearly printed newsletter of more modest proportions for those without internet access.

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## Recognition for CA's work

Colin Coward, the Director of CA England, was invited to a reception at 10 Downing Street following Synod in July. An annual event, key leaders from faith communities were invited this year, part of the government's determination to encourage churches to respond positively to the equal marriage consultation.

Colin was also invited to the launch of Kaleidoscope Trust, a new group working to uphold international LGBT human rights, hosted by the Speaker of the House of Commons in his private apartment. Further Kaleidoscope meetings have provided a platform for Frank Mugisha from Uganda, Maurice Tomlinson from Jamaica and David Kuria from Kenya.



## Writing to the bishops

In late September Changing Attitude England wrote to every bishop asking them to speak honestly about the place of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGB&T) Anglicans in the Church and acknowledge truthfully how they treat LGB&T people in their dioceses. There was coverage of the story in the Guardian.

Changing Attitude knows from the evidence of conversations with bishops and from our supporters that over 50% of bishops support, ordain and license their LGB&T clergy, ordinands and lay ministers, including those in civil partnerships. They know that God does not discriminate against people because of their sexual orientation and their expression of love in permanent, faithful, stable sexual relationships.

The House of Bishops meets in December and is expected to conclude a review of their 2005 civil partnership statement. This meeting marks

the start of a critical period in the development of Church of England attitudes and policy towards LGB&T people. It will be followed in 2013 by the more wide-ranging report from the group chaired by Sir Joseph Pilling.

We wrote to express the hope that those who are members of the House of Bishops will find the courage and confidence to talk honestly and with integrity when they meet in December.

We told them that we think it is vital, if the Church does not want to reach a tipping point where it is too morally discredited to be respected on any issue, that its senior figures start, this year and next, to speak the truth.

The letter says that some of the bishops to whom we have written are gay; some are bisexual; some are in gay relationships; some were sexually active with men when they were younger. Some may be unaware of the identity

of the fourteen gay bishops in the Church but we know from conversations that the majority of bishops will know some of them.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Anglican clergy and lay people need bishops to offer positive, healthy role models. We long for openness and honesty in the Church. Those bishops who are gay or bisexual and others who affirm LGB&T people have a particular responsibility to be prophetic and truthful to the Church, to UK society and to God.

To be open as a gay man when you are a bishop has become almost impossible since Jeffrey John was forced to resign, not apparently because he is gay but because he was honest. A huge amount is at stake in the personal and professional life of any bishop who reveals that he is gay. He risks losing his role in the church, stipend, house, privacy, social standing and much else. Changing Attitude knows what is at stake when you come out in the Church.

The negative public stance of the Church of England towards civil partnerships in Church, the disastrous submission to the Government's equal marriage consultation, and the negative Church culture which forces so many to hide their sexuality, all do immense harm to the mission of the Church in England.

Since we sent the letter, we've had a number of supportive responses from bishops, adding to our sense that many know things can't continue as they are. The next twelve months are going to be particularly interesting and, we hope, transformative ones for our campaign.

## CA International

### Australia

CA Australia has a strong Facebook presence and is engaging the Church as equal marriage moves onto the political agenda.

### Ireland

Charles Kenny, secretary of CA Ireland, helped the group to engage with the Church of Ireland conference held in the Spring in an attempt to respond to LGB&T issues.

### New Zealand

CA NZ campaigned successfully for the full inclusion of lesbian and gay people in ministry in the Diocese of Auckland and engaged with a national debate on gay ordination.

### Nigeria

The environment in Nigeria continues to be dangerously hostile for LGB&T people, not least in the Church.

CA Nigeria is continuing to support members and oppose prejudice.

### Scotland

Changing Attitude Scotland presented a submission to the Scottish Government's Consultation on Civil Partnership and Same-Sex Marriage

They believed the response made by the Faith and Order Board of the Scottish Episcopal Church was inadequate and did not model diversity nor represent the views of many members of the church.

# Changing Attitude Kenya meets Bishop of Mombasa

In a development of great significance for LGBTI Anglicans, members of Changing Attitude Kenya's steering committee together with local LGBTI Anglicans met Bishop Julius Kalu of Mombasa on Saturday 20th October 2012. The importance of the meeting extends to LGBTI Africans, Christians and people of faith across the continent.

The meeting evolved from the foundations laid by CA Kenya and the bishop's involvement in the Listening Process and Continuing Indaba. Seven CA Kenya members met with the bishop in a hotel in Mtwapa.

Revd Michael Kimindu and Colin Coward had met Bishop Julius privately in March 2012 when he was preparing to travel to a meeting in Canada. Since then, he has clearly grown in confidence and openness, prepared to meet with and actively support LGBTI people in his own diocese and the national Church.



*Bishop Julius Kalu (2nd from right) with members of CA Kenya at the meeting*

He confessed that although he has gained knowledge about LGBTI issues, until today he had never believed that there are LGBTI persons within the Anglican Diocese of Mombasa. He had frequently reported that at the various 'listening process meetings' but he admitted that today he is beginning to know at first hand and understand about the existence of LGBTI persons within Anglican Church of Kenya. At that at the end of his listening process his main question will be: How do LGBTI people in ACK want the church to treat us?

Outside of South Africa, this is to my knowledge the first meeting that has taken place in a positive context between a serving Anglican bishop in Africa and LGBTI members of his Church and diocese.

*David Kuria, Colin Coward and Michael Kimindu with retired Archbishop David Gitari*



# Winchelsea case sends a message to all bishops

The Revd David Page retired as parish priest of St Barnabas Clapham Common and chair of Changing Attitude England in 2008, moving eventually to Winchelsea. With the retirement of the Rector imminent, David made an appointment with Bishop Wallace Benn to apply for a PTO. David refused to answer Benn's question about sexual activity in the relationship and was refused a PTO.

The people of Winchelsea were angered by this decision. The Rector and PCC passed a resolution that David should continue to preach and officiate at services. When this came to the notice of the Archdeacon and Wallace Benn, procedures under the Clergy Discipline Measure were initiated against David.

## Clergy Discipline Measure interview

The facts were not in dispute when David met the Bishop of Horsham Mark Sowerby (Acting Bishop of Chichester) in September for the formal conclusion of the complaint.

The Measure required David to agree a 'penalty by consent'. The penalty that the Bishop had proposed before the meeting was 'an injunction not to officiate without permission for a period of three years.'

The meeting could only deal with the matter of officiating without permission; it could not address the more important matter of the Church of England's continuing exemption from anti-discrimination legislation and the intrusive way that the Bishop of Lewes had attempted to implement the exemption.

## PTO immediately granted

David and the bishop agreed the penalty. He was then immediately given permission to officiate. Though such an outcome had been hinted at, he had not expected an immediate outcome. The agreed penalty was effectively a formality.

## Challenge sets a precedent

The Winchelsea case has set a precedent. Most bishops already know that the current policy is untenable. Changing Attitude hopes that following the Winchelsea case, fewer bishops will ask intrusive sexual questions of their LGB&T clergy. Changing official policy will take longer.



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# The Sacred Journey of Transformation

Changing Attitude is campaigning for a change of attitude in the Church of England towards the place of LGB&T people. We are campaigning for a transformation of attitudes, way beyond grudging acceptance to a celebration of the gifts of all, LGB&T people integrated with the whole body of Christ, women and men, equal in ministry and in the love of God.

*Spirituality and the Awakening Self: The Sacred Journey of Transformation* is by David G Benner, a Canadian Anglican, a psychologist and spiritual guide. Benner has written a book that I have been wanting to read for a very long time. I have been almost craving a recognition of

my deepest, inner, core spiritual self with increasing urgency for a number of years. This desire is even more fundamental than my involvement with the campaign to change Church attitudes about human sexuality.

I have a longing for the Church to provide the context for my spiritual journeying and exploration and for the core experiences which speak to my true self in the divine presence. Changing Attitude's vision is being inspired by people (and the books they write), people who may or may not have a connection with church, but who are deeply spiritual, alive and creative.

## Sacred, transforming work

Changing Attitude's work is about the sacred journey of transformation. We are working in a complex dynamic of networks and relationships to change the Church as institution at one level and to change individuals at another level. The institution can and will only change insofar as individuals are being changed and transformed in a sacred, holistic, holy, healthy way.

The only place where this most profound movement of change can happen is in the present moment. NOW God is fully present, creation is aflame with the holy, but the majority are unaware, lost in dreams or anxieties about the future and regrets and wounds from the past. None of this is rocket science for the Church. It's all there in the Desert Fathers, it's there in many of the soul friends I have met along the way.

But it's rarely there in the routine life of the Church, in Sunday worship and Deanery,



Image by Michael Cook: [www.hallowed-art.co.uk](http://www.hallowed-art.co.uk)

Diocesan and Synodical events and processes. I have been enduring church, frustrated by the lack of depth and vision and basic competence, the inappropriate hymns, the sometimes manipulative sermons, the lack of passion for the Gospel.

What David Benner's book is about is fundamental to the Christian path and vision. It is fundamental to the evolving of a Church which recognises the universality of spirituality and the equality of all people, irrespective of race, gender and sexuality.

### **Awareness of divine presence**

God is not absent in life, as many people feel, nor distant, which is a common experience for many Christians. To quote David Benner: "It is we who fail to notice the divine presence. It's all a matter of awareness."

"The invitation of the present moment is always to awaken, to respond rather than simply react, and to become full participants in our lives."

"Much of the emphasis on spiritual formation and transformation that exists in Christianity [closes people down], as do the ways we relate to each other in Christian communities and churches. But I am convinced that we can experience transformational awakenings much more frequently and fully if our families, churches and communities can learn to support them rather than fear or resist them."

### **Benner on transformation**

"Given how hard change of any sort is, we need to be realistic about these grand ideals of becoming, awakening, enlightenment, and transformation.



"It is possible to experience a profound reorganisation of the very foundation of our identity, values, meaning, and consciousness. It is possible for our whole perspective on life – on our self, on others, on the world, and on God – to shift dramatically. It is possible to awaken and move from blindness to seeing, from captivity to freedom, and from separation to oneness. It is possible for us to experience the emergence of our larger, truer self that we in reality are. These sorts of quantum shifts in the organisation of our being are never something that simply results from things that happen to us. Nor are they simply the cumulative result of the small incremental steps of growth associated with our efforts at spiritual or psychological self-improvement. But when we respond to life and the continuous invitations of the Spirit to become more than we presently are, with consent and openness of heart and mind, it can be our experience."

"These sorts of changes are deeply spiritual. Genuine transformation never happens without profound spiritual implications."

# Changing Attitude's submission to the House of Bishops Review Group

Changing Attitude's full submission to the House of Bishops Review Group can be read on the web site. It was a collective effort by the trustees and director and expresses our core conviction that we, together with tens of thousands of LGB&T Christians and the hundreds of thousands who are our friends, know the truth of our identity in Christ. We know that we are deeply, intimately and infinitely loved by God as LGB&T people, because God has created us this way.

We present a challenge to the members of the review group – are you going to advocate that the Church of England recognises the reality of LGB&T people in the Church or are you going to maintain the present culture of secrecy, denial of reality, suppression of identity and the unhealthy attitudes in which many LGB&T Christians remain trapped?

The Church of England already incorporates LGB&T people at every level of church life, single, celibate, in relationship and in civil partnerships. We are members of congregations, lay ministers, readers, ordinands, deacons, priests and bishops, staff members in diocesan offices and at Church House. It is time for the Church formally to acknowledge and welcome our presence.

## Synopsis of our key arguments:

- The need for a radical change in Christian attitudes towards lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people is urgent.
- We are all born with healthy spiritual and sexual potential. We ingest messages about wrongness, and cut off or repress part of ourselves because of the shame these messages cause us, becoming less whole and less holy.
- LGB&T people are now effectively fully integrated in society – with the exception of some faith communities.
- Equality law, employment legislation, immigration rules and civil partnerships have dramatically changed the status of LGB&T people in British society.
- Hostility to the full inclusion of LGB&T people from parts of the Anglican Communion have made it impossible for the Church of England to respond in a thoughtful and appropriate way to changes in British society.
- Failure to produce a report which responds to the dramatic changes in society would be a disaster for us and for the perception of the Church of England.
- We reject the idea that anyone who is gay needs treatment. Ex-gay ministries present dangers to the spiritual and emotional health and well-being of LGB&T people.
- Services of thanksgiving and blessing should be allowed in church and an authorised liturgy developed for the blessing of civil partnerships.

- Traditional Biblical attitudes to homosexuality are deeply damaging to the emotional and spiritual health and well-being of LGB&T people.
- Same-sex relationships, whether contracted civil partnerships or a covenanted relationship, can demonstrate creativity in relationship, and further couples' health and growth towards maturity.
- Public perception of the Church of England is that it is characterised by a prejudiced obsession with homosexuality.

## Trans inclusion in the Episcopal Church

**T**ina Beardsley, CA trustee and member of the Sibyls, travelled at her own expense to the 77th General

Convention of the Episcopal Church in Indianapolis in July 2012, working alongside the TransEpiscopal delegation and members of Integrity.

Trans inclusion was the top priority for Integrity and hopes were high that 'gender identity and expression' would be added to the non-discrimination canon relating to ordained ministry.

A Voices of Witness DVD, 'Out of the Box', produced by Integrity USA, telling the stories of six trans people of faith, and explaining, straightforwardly, the meaning of 'gender identity and expression' in the resolutions, had been sent to every member of the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies.

D002 and D019, the key resolutions, were both passed. D002 added "gender identity and expression" as a protected category to the non-discrimination canon for access to the discernment process for ordination in the Episcopal Church. D019 added "gender identity and expression" as a protected

category to the canon that enables access for the laity to all levels of church participation and representation in the Episcopal Church.

Tina had to return home before the resolutions were passed, missing the scenes of jubilation. Her heart was pretty full anyway seeing the progress made at General Convention on the road to full inclusion. The Episcopal Church is an inspiration and a beacon of hope to many in the C of E and in the Anglican Communion.



*Tina, 2nd from right, in the Westin Hotel lobby with Cameron Partridge, Gari Green and Donna Cartwright*

# The Bishop of Salisbury supports gay marriage

In February 2012 *The Times* carried an interview with the Bishop of Salisbury. He said he had changed his mind and now supports gay marriage. This puts him at odds with the other 43 diocesan bishops, wrote Ruth Gledhill. That's not true. Just as there are 14 closeted gay bishops there are a number of bishops who keep their support for gay equality and gay marriage carefully in the closet.

Bishop Nicholas believes there is no distinction between heterosexual and homosexual unions, in contrast to the Archbishop of York (see p15). Bishop Nicholas said:

"All of us have friends, families, relatives, neighbours who are, or who know somebody, in same sex partnerships.

"I'm no longer convinced [that marriage can only be between heterosexual people]. I think same-sex couples that I know who have formed a partnership have in many respects a relationship which is similar to a marriage and which I now think of as a marriage."

Bishop Nicholas says that in the Church, marriage is defined by two people promising to love each other faithfully for life in the context of a sexual relationship, and that they might have children. But he believed that the Church was "moving towards" the recognition of gay relationships.

The Bishop of Salisbury said he didn't think it would help if he were to "sublimate" his own views to the views of the Church.



*The Rt Revd Nicholaas Holtam,  
Bishop of Salisbury*

"Part of responsible leadership is having the vision, the sight, to see that's where I want to go."

*The Times* reminded readers that in his 1989 essay *The Body's Grace* Dr Rowan Williams wrote in support of intimate same-sex relationships and still in private, holds to the same view.

# Equal Marriage

The Government launched a consultation in March to seek views on how the ban on same-sex couples having a civil marriage might be removed. During the 2010 listening exercise on allowing civil partnerships to take place on religious premises the Government received representations from many who sought equal access to marriage. People believe the separate provision perpetuates misconceptions and discrimination.

Changing Attitude submitted our views. We support the Government's proposals, respecting that CA supporters hold a range of views, some wanting equal marriage, others believing civil partnerships already grant equality.

The Church of England also published a submission. It was heavily criticised and achieved disastrous headlines.

The submission and statement were drawn up with no consultation with or input by any lesbian or gay members of the Church of England or the organisations representing LGB&T Anglicans.

The Church was clearly attempting to pressurise, and even manipulate, the Government into abandoning its commitment to introduce equal marriage. It attempted to put pressure on the Prime Minister and even threatened the Government with disestablishment.

The CofE press release said the legal and material inequities between heterosexual and same-sex partnerships had now been satisfactorily addressed and to change the nature of marriage for everyone would be divisive and deliver no obvious legal gains.

Church House doesn't understand there are faithful, spiritual lesbian and gay Christians, committed to their parish churches, who want more than legal equality and recognition for their relationships. We want our relationships blessed and consecrated in church.

The Church of England hierarchy seems to think that God perversely creates same-sex loving people but has imposed laws, applicable for all time, which prevent the Church from celebrating and blessing our commitment to one another in marriage.

Other voices expressed dissent from the official C of E position and you can read some of them on the following pages.

# Deans and Bishops talk about equal marriage

## David Ison Dean of St Paul's

The new dean of St Paul's Cathedral, the Very Rev Dr David Ison, called on the Church of England to embrace gay marriage soon after his appointment. He said the church should welcome gay people wanting to take on the virtues of marriage, such as faithfulness.

"We need to take seriously people's desire for partnership and make sure that the virtues that you see in married relationships are available to people who are gay," he said.

Ison told the Times that there was a problem of "word definition" about gay marriage because of the history and the tradition of the church. He added that it was more helpful to talk of "Christian marriage" than homosexual or heterosexual unions.

"You can regard two Christian gay people as wanting to have the virtues of Christian marriage," he said. "For Christian gay people to model that kind of faithfulness, in a culture which, historically, has often been about promiscuity, is a very good thing to do."

Asked whether the government was right to change the law on gay marriage, Ison said a commitment to being together was "the best pattern for how to flourish if you're going to be in a relationship ... whether you're gay or straight. Marriage doesn't belong to the Church."

In his previous position as dean of Bradford Cathedral, Ison conducted ceremonies to affirm and pray for gay couples civil partnerships. He said he would be happy to do the same at St Paul's.

## Tim Ellis Bishop of Grantham

The Rt Rev Tim Ellis, the Bishop of Grantham, in a blog entitled 'Not in my name', said the official position did not reflect the true "mind" of the Church. "In truth, the bishops in the media have not spoken for me or the way in

which I understand this thorny matter," he wrote on his blog, "and I suspect they do not speak for a sizeable minority or even majority within the life of the Church."

## Tim Stevens Bishop of Leicester

In a letter to the Church Times the Bishop of Leicester, the Rt Revd Tim Stevens, defended the Church of England's response to the Government's consultation document against a critical leader the previous week.

He defended the House of Bishops' submission on the grounds that the timescale allowed by the Government was too short. As a result the Church's response inevitably reflected the present teaching of the Prayer Book and Canon Law.

He seemed to leave open the possibility of the Church of England redefining marriage, however, writing: "It is hardly likely that a national Church, let alone the rest of society (with its high rate of marital breakdown), can arrive at a new and universally accepted definition of marriage overnight."

In his final paragraph he wrote: "[Many] of us would agree with your assertion that if the Church had been more welcoming of civil partnerships, the arguments addressed in the submission would carry more weight. A review of the Church's approach to this is urgently needed, and is now under way."

Bishop Tim indicates that many bishops think the Church has failed to welcome civil partnerships and by implication, that the review group needs to strongly recommend movement in this direction. Is he saying that a more radical review of civil partnerships is underway?

Many bishops already welcome clergy and laity in civil partnerships. There is no reason why services of thanksgiving following a civil partnership should not be welcomed now as a first step. They are not illegal.

## Alan Wilson Bishop of Buckingham

The Rt Revd Alan Wilson the Bishop of Buckingham, in a blog entitled 'But mummy, he hasn't got anything on', said: "The statement is narrow and legalistic ... Jesus didn't say anything about being gay, but he said a certain amount about loving your neighbour as yourself."

## Archbishop of York

In stark contrast, the Archbishop of York said marriage is a relationship between a man and a woman. He said David Cameron would be acting like a "dictator" to change the law.



## LGB&T Anglican Coalition

The most visible activity for the Coalition in the last 18 months was the Act of Witness at the February 2012 Synod meeting at Church House, pictured above. Over 30 people from Coalition groups assembled around banners reminding Synod members of the over 1,500 LGB&T clergy and the need to talk with them rather than about them.

Progress has been made in working together more closely. The CA display at Synod has become a Coalition display and members of Coalition groups have joined CA's supporters in lobbying Synod members, who noted our increased presence in February.

A priority is the development of a theology of same-sex marriage. As a contribution to this, Savi Hensman from LGCM has written a number of papers which are available on the Ekklesia web site.

The General Synod Human Sexuality Group is monitoring Diocesan Synod motions maintaining a watch on questions asked at Synod, ensuring that members are alerted to respond.

Dr Susannah Cornwall attended the May meeting and gave a detailed presentation on intersex issues and the pros and cons of including Intersex alongside LGB&T.