

PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION FROM 10.12.09

LOS ANGELES AND UGANDA

The LGBT Anglican Coalition warmly welcomes the election of two new suffragan bishops for the Episcopal diocese of Los Angeles, and notes:

- that the election has been carried out with a close regard to the norms and constitution of that church;
- that its transparency contrasts favourably with the still opaque processes by which Church of England bishops are appointed;
- that the candour of the candidates about their personal lives and the maturity of the church they serve is a glowing example to the Church of England where such openness is not possible in the present climate of denial and double standards..

It is most encouraging to see that the elections have been conducted without regard to the sexual orientation of the candidates. The election of a lesbian bishop, following on so soon after the consecration of the new Bishop of Stockholm, gives heart to the many LGBT clergy and lay ministers in churches around the world.

In the light of this, we are gravely disappointed to see the Archbishop of Canterbury rush out a statement within twelve hours of the announcement suggesting that the Episcopal Church should not confirm this election. His repeated intervention in the affairs of that province contrasts embarrassingly with his complete unwillingness to speak publicly about the Church of Uganda bishops' support for what is universally seen as oppressive and homophobic legislation in that country. That support is in direct contravention of recent resolutions by the Lambeth Conference and the Primates' Meetings.

If the Archbishop is to retain any credibility at all he needs to reconsider. This double standard of justice is frankly perverse. It appears to most people in Britain to be a disgraceful acquiescence in the demands of homophobic pressure groups both in England and in the Communion.

LGBT Anglican Coalition partners look forward to working with the Diocese of Los Angeles and all others across our Communion in the service of Christ who are committed to a church which includes and welcomes all.

The LGBT Anglican Coalition - including
Revd Benny Hazlehurst - *Accepting Evangelicals*; Revd Colin Coward - *Changing Attitude*; *The Clergy Consultation*; Jeremy Marks - *Courage*
Mike Dark - *The Evangelical Fellowship of Lesbian and Gay Christians*
Canon Giles Goddard - *Inclusive Church*
Revd Sharon Ferguson - *Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement*
Revd Dr Christina Beardsley - *Sibyls*

Notes for Editors.

The **LGBT Anglican Coalition** is a new network of groups working for the full and equal inclusion of LGBT Christians within and beyond the Church of England. Members include representatives of the following organisations:

Accepting Evangelicals is a open network of Evangelical Christians who believe the time has come to move towards the acceptance of faithful, loving same-sex partnerships at every level of church life, and the development of a positive Christian ethic for gay and lesbian people. <http://www.acceptingevangelicals.org/>

Changing Attitude is a campaigning group drawn by God's love to work for the full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in the Anglican Communion. <http://www.changingattitude.org.uk/home/home.asp>

The Clergy Consultation is a confidential support organisation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) Ministers, Religious and Ordinands, Lay Readers, and their partners. Members are drawn from Anglican churches in the United Kingdom and member churches of CTBI. The organisation is also open to LGBTI leaders of other faith communities and their partners. <http://www.clergyconsultation.org/>

Courage is a UK charity offering a safe place of friendship for gay and lesbian Christians in which to reconcile their faith and sexuality and grow towards Christian maturity. <http://www.courage.org.uk/>

The Evangelical Fellowship for Lesbian and Gay Christians (EFLGC), formed in 1979, is a group of women and men, most of whom are lesbian, gay or bisexual and come from an evangelical Christian background. The Evangelical Fellowship gives the opportunity: to meet and share experiences with other lesbian, gay and bisexual Christians; to support and be supported in times of difficulty or stress; to encourage one another in the Christian faith; to think through issues relating both to faith and sexuality. <http://www.eflgc.org.uk/default.asp>

Inclusive Church is a network of individuals and organisations whose make-up reflects the breadth and scope of the Church of England and beyond. We are working to break down the barriers to full inclusion at all levels of the Anglican Communion. <http://www.inclusivechurch2.net/>

The Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement is a UK-based international Charity which challenges homophobia and transphobia, especially within the Church and faith based organisations, as well as working to create and praying for an inclusive church. <http://lgcm.org.uk/>

The Sibyls is a UK-based confidential Christian spirituality group for transgender people, and their supporters, offering companionship along the journey, and information/advocacy to churches. <http://www.sibyls.co.uk/>

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