

Meeting with Archbishop the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thursday 18th April 2013

Six members of the LGB&T Anglican Coalition (representing all eight of its organisations) are meeting Archbishop Justin Welby at Lambeth Palace on Thursday 18th April. They are Tina Beardsley (Sibyls & Changing Attitude, England), Colin Coward (Changing Attitude, England), Mike Dark, (Evangelical Fellowship of Lesbian & Gay Christians, current chair of the Coalition), Clare Herbert (Inclusive Church & General Synod Human Sexuality Group), Savi Hensman (LGCM & Inclusive Church) and Jeremy Marks (Accepting Evangelicals & Two:23 Network).

The meeting is seen as the beginning of a conversation and a process that will take time. No immediate outcomes are expected, and reporting will be limited at this stage.

The issues for discussion will include some of the items from the following list.

Possible agenda items for the meeting with Archbishop Justin:

This is an opportunity to get to know the Archbishop and for him to get to know representatives of the LGB&T Coalition.

What does the Archbishop believe the Bible has to say about being LGBT as we understand it today?

Which theologians has the Archbishop read, or might he read, on the case for accepting faithful same-sex partnerships?

How does the Archbishop intend to get a better understanding and appreciation of the frustration LGBT Christians are experiencing in the Church of England and what plans does he have to address this?

To what extent does the Archbishop appreciate the mission damage this frustration is causing?

How aware is the Archbishop that some parishes are inhospitable places for LGB&T people? Will he take a lead in helping to make it a safer place for them? If so, how and when does he propose to do this?

What does the Archbishop mean by reconciliation? (His attention should be brought to the Birmingham Conference on Sexuality and human flourishing and to the LGB&TAC Website, where the proceedings of the Conference are available).

How much experience does the Archbishop have of transgender people, and what are his thoughts and plans for greater trans inclusion in the Church of England.

What are the Archbishop's views on the Church of England permitting churches to offer prayer and dedication (or prayer and thanksgiving) for couples who have had a civil partnership (or civil marriage) ceremony?

What are the Archbishop's views on liturgies of blessing for same sex couples?

What protection can clergy who are in Civil Partnerships expect from diocesan bishops who are openly hostile to such couples and are perceived as deeply homophobic?

What opportunities might there be for the care of LGB&T ordinands at theological colleges?

What of the mixed messages being given to would be ordinands about how open to be about their sexual orientation?

A plea (with *men & women in marriage* and the forthcoming Pilling report in mind) for no more statements about us without us.

Concern at the Church of England's role in obtaining faith exemptions to trans equality legislation.

The *men and women in marriage* report is causing dismay because, once again, a church report stigmatises lesbian and gay people and their relationships as second class. There is also evidence (the critique of the report by Charlotte Methuen, a member of the Faith and Order Commission that produced the report) that dissenting views are not included in the Church of England's official statements, even as a minority report.

The possibility of opening up a wider range of talks within the Church of England and for an agenda for future action to be prepared.

The Archbishop's views on the need for greater education on LGB&T issues within the Church of England.

The Archbishop's views on the House of Bishops reports on Civil Partnerships and Human Sexuality.