



*Inclusive Church
c/o St Peter's Church
Liverpool Grove
London
SE17 2HH*

Newsletter

Building a better Church...

Produced Monthly by Inclusive Church

Summer 2010

Inclusive Church needs You!

Can we Include You In to our 2010 Campaign?

Include Me in

We continue our Synod 2010 campaign



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Living Christianity

Now Available!



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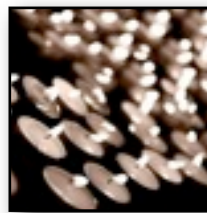
Letter to Rowan

Dear Archbishop...



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The latest from Sibyls



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Editorial... School Surprise

In the last few months I have been invited by two different local secondary schools to talk about Christianity and Sexuality. One school was a Church of England school, with a strong Christian ethos; the other a very successful Grammar school.

I suspected the Grammar school would be wondering why religion has a problem with LGBT people, and the hardest bit of my lesson would be explaining why Inclusive Church has to exist.

I thought the Church of England school, with links to many local churches, including some fiercely Evangelical ones, would be a tougher audience.

I was wrong.

Both schools contained young people of faith who thought homosexuality was a sin, and young people of faith who disagreed, and believed the church should be more inclusive. However, the overwhelming feeling in the Church school was one of generosity and acceptance. It would be wrong to say the majority of the secular school were homophobic, but the atmosphere was certainly more complicated, and I know that this was not down to the teachers (who had, in fact, invited me specifically to balance presentations they had received from local conservative evangelical groups).

Why was the church school so much more open and accepting?

It could be that this was an anomaly, and if I am invited back next year it will be a different story (I will keep you posted)? But I think there is more to it than this.

Christian faith demands that we ask questions about life and meaning, truth and love. Regardless of the vocal few and the nervous hierarchy, a religious experience makes us more likely to support inclusion...

I believe that if the Church in this country is to have a future, it will be an inclusive one.

Rowan Withdrawing

Last month I wrote to Rowan Williams for the third time, after his unfortunate Pentecost Letter (the official Inclusive Church response is reprinted in this Newsletter.) My first letter to Rowan got a detailed personal reply from a member of staff, my second letter received a standard acknowledgement, and now I have had no reply at all. It is, of course, possible that my letters are becoming too dull and predictable, but I cannot help but wonder if this is a worrying sign of the Archbishop withdrawing from conversation with Inclusive Christians? Have you written to Rowan? If so please let us know your response...

Trevor Donnelly

from our Programme Director:

Clare writes:

General Synod Elections 2010

Things are hotting up. If you are considering standing and need any persuasion or help you may want to read a new set of short papers by members of the Inclusive Church General Synod Elections Campaign Coalition:



In this issue:

Paper 1 - by Hilary Cotton, Vice Chair of WATCH, about the draft Women Bishops Legislation

Paper 2 - by Jonathan Clatworthy, General Secretary of MCU, about the Covenant

Paper 3 - by Rosemarie Mallet, a new candidate for the House of Clergy from the Southwark Diocese, who has written about BME issues

Paper 4 - by Brian Lewis and Giles Goddard, Executive members of Inclusive Church, about LGBT issues which may confront General Synod.

There is also our series of Road Maps to point you the way. It is a good idea to be forming your General Synod Election Address NOW, so that you have enough time to find others to help you edit it before the summer holidays sweep us all away, and to gain the support of your two sponsors, so that Road Maps 3, 4, and 5 may be particularly helpful. And if you don't wish to stand but know others thinking it about it then perhaps arrange a meeting or send the papers on to them.

Workshop on writing your Election Address - 1.

5pm - 8.00pm Tuesday 28th June at St Martin in the Fields, led by Mary Johnston, all welcome from London and the surrounding dioceses. The workshop is "rolling" so come when you can, to the George Richards Room of St Martin's, No 6 St Martin's Place)

Workshop on completing your Election Address - 2

2pm - 4.00pm Saturday 31st July at St John's Church Waterloo, all welcome from Southwark and the surrounding dioceses. The workshop is led by Rosalind O' Dowd, a young but already experienced lay member of general Synod from the Diocese of London and an expert in marketing! She says - bring a cheerful photograph, look friendly!

If you are an inclusive candidate from London, Southwark or any of the surrounding dioceses please feel free to come either or both of these workshops above. You will be most welcome.

Winchester and Portsmouth Dioceses' Meetings

Wednesday 21st July, 4.30pm - 9.00pm at St John the Baptist Church, St John Street, Winchester, SO23 0HF

"The Covenant - inclusive or exclusive?"

During this evening Jonathan Clatworthy, the General Secretary of Modern Churchpeople's Union will address the vital Synod issue "The Anglican Covenant: but is it Anglican?", there will be a celebration of the Eucharist using inclusive language, and, following drinks and nibbles, Giles Goddard and Clare Herbert will speak about the present work of Inclusive Church including the General Synod Campaign.

This will be a first meeting of Inclusive Church in these two dioceses and will provide a chance for people to both get together to hear of the broad spectrum of our work and to consider standing for General Synod this summer. Please contact Revd John Scott if you would like to hear more. All are very welcome to make contact or simply come on the night itself. For details scottharrell@btinternet.com 07889 977593

Meeting for the Diocese of Liverpool

Friday 30th July, 7.00pm - 9.00pm at the St Bride's Centre, Clare

Herbert, Coordinator of the Inclusive Church General Synod Campaign Coalition and Jonathan Clatworthy the General Secretary of Modern Churchpeople's Union will speak about the forthcoming General Synod Elections, the issues at stake and how to stand, and about the particular issue of "The Anglican Covenant; but is it Anglican?"

Warren Hartley, the Inclusive Church Ambassador for Liverpool, will introduce the evening during which supper will also be provided. All are very welcome whether you are simply interested in inclusive issues in the Church, want to think about standing for General Synod this summer, or want to learn more about the Anglican Covenant.

For further details contact Warren on open.table@yahoo.co.uk or myself Clare on herbert.clare@googlemail.com

Inclusive Church at London Pride - Saturday 3rd July

This year many Christian groups are coming together to form Christians Together at Pride. www.christiansatpride.com. Inclusive Church is part of that coalition. Our main contribution is to form an inclusive Eucharist, in collaboration with others from the Coalition and the Soho Masses Pastoral Council, in which the theme is "Moving from the Margins to the Heart"

6.00pm - Dick Sheppard Chapel in the Crypt of St Martin in the Fields Church Trafalgar Square.

Celebrant - Rev Clare Herbert

Preacher - Canon Giles Goddard

The bells will be ringing from St Martins that day and the Rainbow Flag will be flying, do come and join us between march and partying, you will be most welcome! Oh, and BUY THE T SHIRT...

Clare Herbert

London and Southwark Changing Attitude Group 'Open Table'

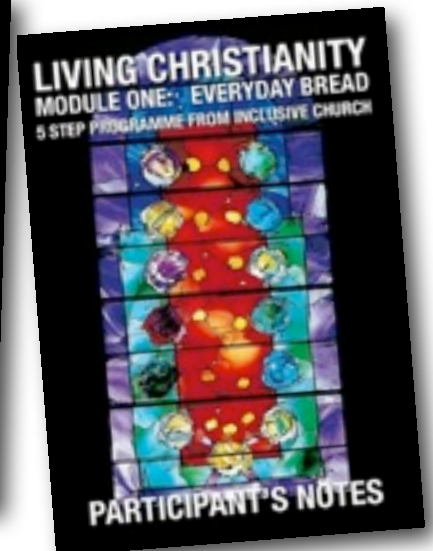
**Tuesday 3rd August 6.30pm in the Crypt
Bookshop of St Martin-in-the-Fields,
Trafalgar Square:**

**The launch of James Alison's latest book
"Broken Hearts and New Creations:
Intimations of a Great Renewal"(DLT
May 2010)**

Come and enjoy a glass of wine, and hear James and his publisher speak about his latest work and then join us in the Dick Sheppard Chapel for a discussion with James himself

7.30pm-8.30pm "James Allison
Interviewed" Come and hear this exciting
gay catholic theologian talk in more detail
about his work, with space to ask questions
yourselves.

Living Christianity Everyday Bread



LIVING CHRISTIANITY. A five part programme that takes the shape of the Eucharist to introduce Christian faith in the Inclusive tradition. "Living Christianity is a course to nurture new Christians, to refresh old ones and to catch up with people asking questions about the Christian faith. It has been written by leaders in parish ministry in the Church of England who are concerned to celebrate the breadth and diversity of traditional Anglicanism."

Available in as a book or Digital Download from <http://stores.lulu.com/inclusivechurch>

Participants notes cost £3.99 each, and the Leaders Notes are £9.99 (or £5.99 to download in .pdf format.

Include Me In Paper 1

Include Me in Paper 1 - Where are we with women bishops?

by Hilary Cotton , Vice Chair of WATCH , about the draft Women Bishops Legislation

One of the key items that is working its way through the Synodical process at the moment is the enabling of women to be consecrated as bishops in the Church of England.

In 1993 the Measure (law) that enabled women to be ordained as priests was passed. It specifically barred women from being appointed as bishops. Since 2000 the General Synod has been discussing whether this should be changed.

In 2004 the Rochester Report was produced, which covered the theological issues around women bishops.

In 2005, 2006 and 2008 General Synod passed motions that accepted the principle that it is right that women should be consecrated as bishops.

The key issue that prolongs the debate is what arrangements should be made for those, who, in conscience, cannot accept the ministry of women as bishops or, in many cases, as priests. There are two groupings that remain opposed to women's ordination: some conservative evangelicals, on the issue of 'headship' and whether a woman should be in authority over men; and some Anglo-Catholics, who believe that the Church of England cannot make such a change independently of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches, and that the tradition has always been that a priest has to be male as Jesus was male. For the latter group, they have so far insisted that only a structure that separates out the lineage or pedigree of those bishops that have never ordained or consecrated women is acceptable to them (i.e. an extension of flying bishops). However, this would create distinctions between bishops purely on the basis of sex, and this is unacceptable as a way forward for most General Synod members.

The circle that needs to be squared is how to make sure that women are bishops on the same terms as men are, and yet to enable those opposed to women's ordination or consecration to stay in the Church of England if they wish to.

Since July 2008 General Synod has been preparing and revising draft legislation aimed at solving this dilemma. This July the revised legislation will be debated at General Synod. If approved it will go to be debated in all the Diocesan Synods, and will then return to General Synod for a final debate and vote. If approved there, it goes to Parliament for approval and then to the Queen for Royal Assent. If all goes smoothly the first women could be consecrated as bishops in 2014.

Significantly, the Committee preparing and revising this legislation have, after comprehensive and extensive exploration of all the options, concluded that no arrangements in law can be devised that will satisfy the opponents of women bishops without compromising the role of the bishop beyond what is acceptable for the Church. Their recommendation in the current legislation is that arrangements for those opposed should be made by Diocesan bishops within their own Dioceses, in accordance with a national Code of Practice that is yet to be written. This is a compromise on both sides: we will see in July if it is the will of General Synod to proceed on this basis.

Those elected as members of the next General Synod will be tasked with the final debate and approval of the legislation after it has been debated in Dioceses. The vote at this final stage is by Houses, and there has to be 2/3 of those voting in each House in favour (a bar set deliberately high so that the decision clearly expresses the will of the majority of the Church). That's why we need lots of candidates in full support of women as bishops.

Hilary Cotton
June 2010

Include Me In Paper 2

Include Me in Paper 2 - Autonomy or Covenant?

Paper 2 - by Jonathan Clatworthy, General Secretary of MCU, about the Covenant

The Church of England's General Synod will soon be asked to give away an important part of its freedom in the proposed new Anglican Covenant. We hope you will vote against it.

Each province in the Anglican Communion is being asked to sign the Covenant. By signing it, they will undertake not to embark on any new development which is opposed by another Anglican province anywhere in the world, unless granted prior permission from a new international body of just 15 people, the 'Standing Committee of the Anglican Communion'. Who wants it?

It was first proposed in the Windsor Report of 2004, after the consecration of an openly gay bishop in the USA and the approval of a same-sex blessing service in Canada. Many wanted the provinces to be threatened with expulsion from the Anglican Communion if they did not revoke these actions and undertake never to repeat them. However, what the North Americans did was in keeping with their provincial autonomy. It would have been blatantly unjust to create new legislation forbidding these actions and then apply it retrospectively.

With expulsion impossible, the Anglican Covenant is designed to achieve a similar purpose by other means. It offers a formal structure dividing the Anglican Communion into two. Provinces which sign the Covenant would thereby make new commitments to each other. Provinces which do not sign would be treated as 'second track'. In 2006 the Archbishop of Canterbury suggested that the relationship between the two sets of provinces would be 'not unlike that between the Church of England and the Methodist Church', which seems to imply that those not signing would not be considered Anglicans at all! In May 2010 he proposed that they should neither be represented in ecumenical dialogues nor be full members of the relevant committee.

Many commentators have wondered why the Archbishop of Canterbury supports the Covenant. From the day his appointment to Canterbury was announced he was the target of intense personal hostility, focusing on his perceived support for gays and lesbians. Some have speculated that his Anglo-Catholic commitments make him more concerned for the unity of the Church than for ethical matters, some that few would have resisted the ferocity of the attacks, some that any archbishop would pay a high price to resist schism. Whatever may be the case, there is now a danger that those most aware of the Covenant's shortcomings may vote in favour of it simply in order to express solidarity with him. However, he will retire one day; but the Covenant, once signed, will remain. Is it all about gays and lesbians?

Not any more. It was the original presenting issue, most of the rhetoric about 'disciplining' the North American churches has focused on it, and most of the Covenant's supporters are primarily concerned to demote to 'second track' status all provinces which refuse to condemn gay and lesbian sexuality. However the wording of the Covenant does not mention the issue. Instead it proposes giving new powers to the Standing Committee to judge any new development in one province whenever another province disapproves.

This makes it a major, wide-ranging change to the Anglican Communion. We cannot foresee what changes will be needed in the next ten years, let alone the long term future, but we can be sure that new issues will indeed arise and will require new responses. Since we do not know what they will be, would it really be wise to hand an effective power of veto to opponents in the case of every new development?

How would it affect the Church of England?

If the Church signs the Covenant, every new development will be open to objection from other provinces. The objecting province (which in some cases

could just be a single archbishop) will appeal to the Standing Committee. Our proposed action will then be delayed until the Standing Committee gives its verdict. The Standing Committee will have considerable freedom of judgement, but the Covenant does lay down some criteria for it. Every proposal will have to be justified by appeal to the past. The criteria will be 'the Scriptures, the common standards of faith, and the canon laws of our churches', rather than the traditional Anglican balance of scripture, reason and tradition which allows due place for new developments. Local needs, like the wishes of the dioceses or the British context, will be subordinated to international Anglicanism. The Communion will become more centralised and clerical, with a great deal of power vested in the Standing Committee.

The criteria for formal objections are so vague as to encourage interference by one province in another's affairs. In effect, objectors to a proposal need only claim that they cannot in all conscience stay in the same church with it. We have already seen this claim extensively used as a negotiating tactic by opponents of the North American churches, with little sign that it does more good than harm.

Would it affect women priests and bishops?

The Covenant would not have powers to turn the clock back, and it would be difficult for objectors to block an innovation in one province which has already happened in another; so it is unlikely to hinder the introduction of women bishops. However this is only the case because some provinces already have them before the Covenant has been established. If it had been in place in 1944, the wording of the Covenant would have made it almost impossible for the Standing Committee to approve the ordination of the first woman, and the whole Anglican Communion would to this day have a male-only priesthood.

In addition many supporters of women's ministry believe that over and above permitting women priests and bishops there is much else to be done to make the church less patriarchal and more balanced, some of which could well be liable to objections under the Covenant arrangements.

How should the Church respond to controversy?

The proposed Anglican Covenant is the product of an intolerant mindset, seeking power to veto actions it disapproves of even if they are only happening thousands of miles away.

It is not new. Reformation Puritans believed Christians should submit to the supreme authority of the Bible and therefore agree with each other on all matters of doctrine and ethics. As a matter of principle, they believed, there should be no scope for differences of opinion on doctrine and ethics. Their disagreements often provoked schism with each side accusing the other of not being true Christians. The current high profile campaigning represents a revival of this tradition.

Until now Anglicans have been better at staying united because, with our stronger emphasis on the role of reason, we accept differences of opinion as normal and expect to learn from each other. We do not expect our bishops and clergy to agree with our opinions; instead we worship together with people we disagree with, and debate our disagreements openly within the Church, rather than seeking to expel each other.

We think this more open, tolerant and inclusive theology of the Church has served Anglicanism well in the past, now needs defending against the strident tones of those who think everybody should agree with them.

To find out more visit:

<http://www.modchurchunion.org/anglican covenant/>
or contact

covenant@modchurchunion.org.

Alternatively you can write to

Covenant Debate, 9 Westward View, Liverpool L17 7EE.

Include Me In Paper 3

Include Me in Paper 3 - BME members of General Synod:

by Rosemarie Mallet, a new candidate for the House of Clergy from the Southwark Diocese, who has written about BME issues

The history of the General Synod states that it was set up in current form in the 1970 so that everyone - bishops, clergy and laity - could share in the governance of the Church of England. However, in 1970, the membership of General Synod, at every level of leadership, was mostly male and white. This reflected the wider society, where political and economic leadership was primarily in the hands of white, middle class men. At that time, less than 3% of the general population of England came from BME backgrounds. There are no statistics on ethnicity and church attendance from this period. Gender imbalances were the major focus of attention in inequalities in representation and leadership.

Over the past 40 years, British society has changed significantly. Women play a major role in the leadership of many areas of life including the church. With regards to ethnicity, the whole country, particularly in the major cities of England, has become a multicultural melting pot. According to the last official census in 2001, people from BME backgrounds made up 7.9 percent of the population, mostly comprised of people from visible minorities, from Asia, the Caribbean, and West Africa, who migrated to this country seeking a better way of life, or security from war, persecution, or environmental degradation. There is a rural/urban divide in terms of BME population numbers, and in many of our larger town and cities, BME people make up a growing proportion of the populations. In London, members of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups made up 32% of the total population, a figure that is projected to grow to 38.5% by 2026 (GLA 2005 Round: Interim Ethnic Group Population Projections).

This shift in the cultural mix of the country is also evidenced in the Church of England, though to a lesser extent. In 2003, a discussion in General Synod pointed out that statistics revealed that just over 3% of those on the current electoral roll of Church members were from an "ethnic background". At that time there were also very few BME clergy members and very few representatives in General Synod. The figures for wider church participation has grown exponentially over the past 10 years, and though there are still no national statistics, in many urban centres the largest growing number of church membership comes from among those with 'an ethnic background'. Indeed many of them are from West African backgrounds. As an example, in the Diocese of Southwark, in 2008 BME congregational members accounted for 22% of the Electoral roll, 19% of the PCC members and 18% of the Church Wardens, 10% of the Non Stipendiary clergy and 8% of the stipendiary clergy. Clearly Southwark is not representative of the whole Church of England, but may be representative of many of our urban parishes, in terms of the ethnic mix and the growing involvement of BME church members in involvement and leadership of churches at a local level.

However there is one area in which Southwark mirrors the situation in the wider society and the wider church - the very low representation of BME members at the higher echelons of leadership and in the minimal number of BME representatives elected to serve at General Synod. In the current General Synod there are 467 members. Of these only 11 were from a BME background. This represents less than 2.5% of the members of Synod. The low figure becomes shocking when we look at those elected to represent Southwark. Out of the 14 lay and clergy positions held by Southwark, only 1 person was from a BME background. Quite clearly, the situation at the local level is not represented in the leadership. There is no trickle up effect. The needs and views of people from BME backgrounds are not voiced, by those coming from such backgrounds themselves.

There is a trenchant view among some that anyone with a heart for mission can present the views of those they serve and that there is not necessarily a need for people from a particular background (ethnic or otherwise) to be present at the discussion table for their views to be heard. In some election addresses white candidates can and do write phrases such as "my parish is made up of mostly people from a BME background and as I have come to know my parishioners I feel very able to represent their views" How trite this would sound coming from a man purporting to represent his parish if they were made up of all women. But it remains acceptable for those representing parishes, and dioceses, where many of the parishioners and members of the churches come from BME backgrounds. There is now time to rebalance the scales of fairness and equality, and work to ensure that all those who are members of the organisation, the wider church, should be at that discussion table – the General Synod. Each diocese, and in particular those with a large proportion of BME members in their parishes, should be actively seeking to redress the representational imbalance by working hard to encourage able candidates from all backgrounds, so that all parts of the Body of Christ are equally involved in the mission of the church. This is not just a cry to find somebody, anybody, from BME backgrounds, but for those with the knowledge and power to dig deep and encourage and support competent and capable BME people to put themselves forward, to serve on Synod. This is not a cry for positive discrimination but one for affirmative action on the part of those with the power to bring about real change.

Our country and church is now multi-cultural and multi-ethnic. To once again return a Synod which does not draw on the resources and skills of all its members, and one that is not in any way representative of the ethnic and social diversity of the country and the church, will be a like an open wound on the body of a church. which purports to bring God's, love, mercy grace and healing to a broken world. Including BME people in, is not simply to pretty up the statistics but to have a governing body filled with people from a diversity of backgrounds and ethnicities, who though their skills and lived experiences can offer a worldview which will help the church better understand and offer that wideness to God's mercy.

Rosemarie Mallet

Include Me In Paper 4

Include Me in Paper 4 - LGBT issues for General Synod 2010 – 2015

by Brian Lewis and Giles Goddard, Executive members of Inclusive Church , about LGBT issues which may confront General Synod.

The major issues which, we hope, Synod will consider are the question of blessings for civil partnerships and the question of whether clergy in civil partnerships are expected to be celibate.

The General synod's position on sexuality and LGBT questions is, to say the least, unclear. In February 2007 General Synod agreed (as part of a larger resolution)

“that homosexual orientation in itself is no bar to a faithful Christian life or to full participation in lay and ordained ministry in the Church and [Synod acknowledges] acknowledge the importance of lesbian and gay members of the Church of England participating in the listening process as full members of the Church.”

Legislation now being brought forward on, for instance, clergy pensions acknowledges the existence of clergy in civil partnerships. But there is substantial anecdotal evidence that clergy in civil partnerships are being discriminated against when applying for new posts, and that in some dioceses LGBT ordinands are being automatically rejected.

Clergy who carry out thanksgiving services for civil partnership ceremonies are acting within church guidelines - the House of Bishops's Pastoral Statement on civil partnerships issued in 2005 said “Where clergy are approached by people asking for prayer in relation to entering into a civil partnership they should respond pastorally and sensitively in the light of the circumstances of each case.” But there is at present no authorised rite of blessing since that would imply a consensus about same sex unions which does not yet exist.

The same Pastoral Statement said that clergy can expect to be asked about the nature of their civil partnerships – and that they are expected to be able to confirm that these partnerships are celibate - but there is no clarity as to whether the Bishops expect to be answered or what happens if they are not.

The House of Bishops “policy” document “Issues in Human Sexuality” was received by Synod in 1997 with the decision to “commend for discussion in dioceses the House of Bishops’ report Issues in Human Sexuality and acknowledge it is not the last word on the subject”, and a resolution in 1987 that said “homosexual genital acts also fall short of this ideal , and are like wise to be met with a call to repentance and the exercise of compassion” explicitly did not describe homosexual acts as “sins” in the way that in the preceding clause fornication and adultery are described as “sins”. (At the time this was held to be a compromise amendment by some).

As far as we are aware there is no mention of homosexuality in Canon law, and no priest has been charged with conduct unbecoming under the Clergy Discipline Measure in relation to any type of Civil Partnership.

It is clear from recent debates (including the recent decision to grant full pension parity to surviving Civil Partners) that the mood of General Synod has moved dramatically since 1987. Apart from anything else we are now of course talking about partnership not sex - which is so much easier - no sex please we are the Church of England!

Clearly issues facing the Anglican Communion (international Anglicanism) include unresolved differences over LGBT questions, and often Synod addresses these questions indirectly (by, for example, talking about clergy pensions).

Brian Lewis and Giles Goddard



Resources for Inclusive Worship

Prayers, Hymns, Saints Days and Celebrations to enrich your Worship...

Please submit any resources, ideas for future newsletters at www.inclusivechurch2.net and click 'contact us'

Loving God
keep us and those who oppose us
both within your hand for cherishing.
Enliven us and enlighten us
as we struggle
together against each other.
May we work for a future
where your hopes are fulfilled
and our fears are swept away
in the joy of the coming of your Kingdom.
Amen

Hilary Cotton

Creator God
made in your image
may women stand tall and speak up,
shedding their history of holding back.

Word incarnate -
as prophets and priests
may women speak truths about their lives,
with gentleness and persistence.

Untamed Spirit -
released from being 'good',
may women discover you
in all their caring and daring.

And as a foretaste of your kingdom on earth
we pray for a church led together
by women and men,
and for all who work
towards women becoming bishops.
In your all-embracing grace and love,
Amen.

Hilary Cotton

Loving Creator, redeemer and sustainer,
we look to your Holy Spirit to inspire,
empower and move us to do your will.
May your Holy Spirit guide the members of
the General Synod
to be willing to meet each other
without partiality or discrimination.
Fill our hearts
with the hope of a united church
where men and women can live and work
together equally.
Amen.

Revd. Jenny Thomas

God our Creator
as your Spirit moved over the chaos,
you created the universe,
and in fullness of time
you gave life to the human race.
We thank you for the wonder of creation
and the joy of human relationships.
For generation after generation you have
nurtured us with a mother's care
and guided us along the path of life.

Guide with your wisdom
the members of General Synod
who will meet in July
and grant that the decisions they make
may be good for humanity and your church,
and give expression to your will
that the gifts of all people
may be fully recognised and used;
in Christ's name we pray
Amen

Revd Jean Mayland

Mighty One
Whose power does not reside
In fleshless lonely purity,
whose word is enwombed
at the heart of creation:
we praise you for Mary,
whose hospitable Yes,
made a place for love;
whose song of transformation
makes thrones and rulers tremble;
whose prayer is heard
because she is one of us;
grant courage to the General Synod
to offer the fullest opportunities
for women to serve
in the episcopate of your church,
without harmful regulation;
in Christ's name we pray.
Amen

Steven Shakespeare
Prayers for an Inclusive Church adapted.

O loving God,
Lord of all creation,
you have created us in your own image.
You have called us,
men, women,
young and old,
people of different races and nations,
to serve in your church
and to love each other.
But we have abused your creation,
divided your church through prejudice, malice
and lack of love for one another.
Look in mercy on us, your children,
forgive us, forgive the church
as it struggles against injustice
and strives for honesty and integrity.
Heal our divisions, heal us
that we may serve you faithfully.
Amen

Revd. Jenny Thomas

Dear God, we thank you for your
ever abiding presence
in our lives and in our church.
We pray especially for the General Synod at
this crucial time in the life of the church.
Shower your wisdom
on all those who meet in love
to consider the inclusion
of women in the episcopacy.
As Jesus prayed that your church may be one,
we pray that the decision of the General Synod
may be acceptable
to all those with a loving heart.
Amen

Revd Jenny Thomas

Commissioning Prayer:

Go from here.
Be the people God is calling you to be
full of life and love.
Rouse the complacent and stir up the unaware.
Revel in God's Spirit
wherever you find Her.
Holding the hands of one another, in Christ
Amen.

Hilary Cotton

SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL - VIGIL OF PRAYER FOR GENERAL SYNOD DEBATING WOMEN BISHOPS

The Lady Chapel will be set aside throughout Saturday 10 July for prayer and intercession for God's guidance for the members of the General Synod who will be debating the resolution concerning women bishops throughout the entire weekend and Monday 12 and Tuesday 13 July.

The Vigil will be undirected, so people are completely free to pray as they choose. It will begin with the Eucharist at 9.15.a.m. and conclude after Evening Prayer at 4.00.p.m. There are other services in the nave during the day but the Vigil and access will be continuous. Prayers cards, candles and prayer resources will be available.

TRANS News

CHRISTIANS TOGETHER
AT LONDON PRIDE:
SATURDAY 3RD JULY 2010

Sibyls' member Mercia has been representing the Sibyls at a series of meetings to plan a more focused LGBT Christian presence at London Pride with what is now known as Christians Together at Pride. Their website, which goes by the earlier name of <http://christiansatpride.com> is advertising the T-Shirts they are selling which proclaim "Christian and Proud" (and on the back that they are sponsored by Stonewall) to be worn by those staffing stalls and in the march, but anyone can order one. They are purple and stretchy (so 'small' will go a long way). Do join in (or at least say 'hi' to the people in Christian and Proud tees) if you are at London Pride and consider buying a T-shirt, which does not mention a specific Pride, so can be used other than at London.

There will also be a service (Service of Celebration for Christians Together at Pride: Moving from the margins to the heart) at St Martin-in-the-Fields at 6pm on Pride Day (Saturday 3rd July). It will take place in the crypt in the Dick Sheppard Chapel.

Sibyls Weekends

The Sibyls hold two weekends/retreats a year for members and supporters, one in the north, the other in the south of England. A successful northern weekend took place in May and plans are now in hand for the autumn gathering in the south in October. Smaller group meetings take place throughout the year. One such gathering, held on the south coast, usually includes an Agape Meal Liturgy, as well as lunch, and has a special emphasis on support for the partners of Trans Christian people, and there is also a central London meeting every two months which starts with Evening Prayer in a parish church followed by a meal in a restaurant. If you would like to become a member of Sibyls please email enquiries@sibyls.co.uk or visit the Sibyls website <http://www.sibyls.co.uk/>



The Sibyls workshop, 'Gender, Sexuality, & Spirituality'

For the past three years, I have worked with my Sibyls' collaborators, Michelle and Jasmine, planning and delivering this workshop, in its short (one and a half hours) and long (weekend) versions with various groups, and in a number of settings: 'Caught in the Crossfire' (the Changing Attitude, London's day conference) in January 2007; the September 2007 Sibyls weekend (short version); the European Forum of LGBT Christian Groups Conference at St Alban's in May 2008 (short version); the September 2008 Sibyls weekend (weekend version); and as the

Evangelical Fellowship of Lesbian and Gay Christians' weekend in October 2009. In the weekend version I run a movement workshop entitled 'Move like a man - walk like a woman' which was kindly road-tested by the 'YLGC - young LGBT Christians' in November 2008. Beginning from Trans/Queer perspectives we have developed a workshop that has been warmly received by LGB people as well as Trans participants, and that is suitable for any group that is ready to explore gender, sexuality and spirituality with open minds and hearts. We are now immensely proud to be offering the short version of the workshop at the forthcoming LGBT Health Summit 2010 being held this September in Hatfield <http://www.lgbthealth.co.uk/> when the leadership will not be limited to Sibyls members, and will, we hope, include LGBT people of other faiths.



Were they, or were they not, invited?

Rumour has it that there were no Trans people at the Prime Minister's Reception for LGBT people/organisations last week, as part of the run-up to Pride Fortnight. Is that true? The Sibyls is one Trans organisation that is keen to discover if the T in LGBT was actually 'fleshed out' on that occasion, as it most certainly is in the recently formed LGBT Anglican Coalition in which no less than four Sibyls members are currently involved.

Tina (Christina) Beardsley



W.A.T.C.H. WORDS

News from Women And The Church



WATCH (WOMEN AND THE CHURCH)
PRESS STATEMENT 22ND JUNE 2010

All bishops are equal but some are more equal than others.

WATCH has studied the outline proposals of the Archbishops' intervention in the progress of legislation for women bishops. Despite the assurances that all will be well we are not convinced that the issues raised regarding jurisdiction will be resolved equitably when the practical steps of implementation are worked out. Will an "unacceptable" Diocesan bishop be required to share jurisdiction and how? Or will it be at her or his discretion? If the former, we are in effect back to automatic transfer.

The timing of the Archbishops' intervention is similarly to be questioned. The Revision Committee considered all proposals put to them in great and thoughtful detail. These new proposals could have been made in similar detail to the Revision Committee. This would have enabled their practical consequences to be thoroughly considered before they came to be debated by General Synod. It is important that the Church does not re-create the unforeseen consequences of the Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod in agreeing to proposals that have not been thoroughly explored and explained. We ask: In what way are 'nominated bishops' not actually flying bishops with extended jurisdiction? Are we not creating a two-tier episcopacy of 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' bishops with all that implies about how the Church continues to view women? Have the Archbishops sought the views of the senior women who must be counted amongst "the full diversity of voices in the Church of England"? Has their support been obtained for these proposals?

WATCH has received many messages that suggest that the Revision Committee has accurately judged the amount of compromise that people are prepared to make. While we would prefer the legislation to be simpler and more straightforward we are willing to support the Revision Committee proposals for the sake of the Church. Let us move forward on that basis

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Statement in response to the Bishop of Durham's recent comments appealing for further delay in consecrating women as bishops

The Bishop of Durham has suggested to his Diocesan Synod (21 May 2010 at http://www.ntwrightpage.com/Wright_Diocesan_Address_May_2010.htm) that the Church of England should delay moving forward with the proposed legislation to allow women to be bishops and engage in further theological debate.

WATCH welcomes the Bishop of Durham's clear support for the ordination of women, but takes issue with his call for delay. As Bishop Tom himself said in his address, the move to the ordination of women 'has been debated and decided by the whole church meeting in solemn conclave'. Bishop Tom has himself long argued that ordaining women is right according to the Bible.

'There can be no excuse for delay now. Calling for more theological debate is simply a delaying tactic, and betrays those women and men who have been working and praying for women's full inclusion in the Church for so long.' said Rev Dr Miranda Threlfall Holmes - Chaplain and Solway fellow of University College, Durham and member of General Synod

The Church of England has been discussing this issue for nigh on a century, and Florence Li-Tim Oi, the first Anglican woman priest, was ordained in Hong Kong in 1944 when there were no male priests available to serve the people behind enemy lines in China.

The General Synod of the Church of England has been formally debating this issue for over thirty years. In the 1970s General Synod voted that there was no fundamental objection to the ordination of women. Also in the 70s General Synod debated a motion calling for women's ordination as deacons, priests and bishops. It received a simple majority, but narrowly failed to achieve the two-thirds majority required in each house. The theology of women in the Episcopate has continued to be explored and debated since then. General Synod has now voted three times, in 2005, 2006 and 2008, that it is right for women to be made bishops. Let no-one say that this decision is a hasty one.

"Most people in the Church of England just don't understand what all the fuss is about. They want to see a church focusing its energies outwards rather than constantly wrangling over internal arrangements to suit the minority opposed to

women priests and bishops", said Rev Rachel Weir Chair of WATCH

The legislation that General Synod will be voting on in July makes substantial provision for those who still wish to reject the ministry of women. A parish will still be able to vote to have only a male priest. If a female bishop is appointed to a diocese, any parish in that diocese will be able to vote to reject her ministry and instead insist on having a male bishop to do things like confirmations in that parish. Anyone who wishes to avoid the ministry of women will still be able to do so.

WATCH would much prefer to have had simple legislation which just made women bishops on the same terms as men. However, we are prepared to accept this compromise position in order to see the leadership of our Church fully open to women as well as men.

WATCH looks forward, with the vast majority of the Church of England, to seeing women as bishops alongside their male colleagues as soon as possible: even if the General Synod votes to proceed in July, this will not be until 2014. Let it be no longer.

News from Scotland

Dear Friends

I have recently moved from York to Edinburgh to take up a post as leader of an ecumenical outreach project with Leith Churches Together.

With now being in the Scottish context, I have been fascinated to see how things are moving here on gender issues, both in the Anglican and Presbyterian churches. The Scottish Episcopal Church has just completed a Gender Audit which it commissioned in response to Anglican Consultative Council 14, which was responding in turn to work done by IAWN (International Anglican Women's Network). I've only browsed the beginning of the report but noteworthy is that Wales has also completed a Gender Audit and Ireland has produced a report called The Hard Gospel, on various equality issues. The C of E is not mentioned.

You may already be aware of this, but given that this is the sort of thing WATCH has been wanting to have done by the C of E, thought it was worth letting you know - might be worth putting a request to GS pointing out what is happening elsewhere in the UK?

Report is available as a pdf at the SEC website, www.scotland.anglican.org

All best wishes for the York Synod!

Jennifer Stark

An Open letter to Rowan Williams

Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury 10th June 2010

Dear Archbishop

We are writing to express our grave concern about the contents of your Pentecost letter and its consequences applied with such speed by the Anglican Communion Office.

Your letter opens with a reminder of the joy of Pentecost, when “we celebrate the gift God gives us of being able to communicate the Good News of Jesus Christ in the various languages of the whole human world”. But the result of your proposals - to summarily remove from those Communion bodies to which you directly appoint, those provinces which are in your view in breach of the moratoria - is a diminishing of the diversity of the Anglican Communion and a silencing of the different languages in which we are called to speak.

Our concerns are three-fold.

First, it is clear from the actions of the Secretary-General of the Anglican Communion that the application of the sanctions is one-sided and disproportionate. The Anglican Church of North America may now provide cover for the Bishops previously ordained by Nigeria, Uganda and Kenya but these provinces remain committed to them and the actions which made the emergence of ACNA possible, actions carried out in direct violation of the moratorium that you asked for. It would be farcical to suggest they are no longer breaking the moratoria just because they have been successful in generating a breakaway body to provide local cover for the result of their acts. The Secretary-General is “seeking clarification” regarding the Southern Cone and Canada.

However, without consultation, he has proceeded in removing members of The Episcopal Church from Communion bodies. This kind of punitive

exclusion will do nothing to promote the “path of mutual respect and thankfulness that will hold us in union and help us grow in that truth.”

Second, by proposing these actions you are not strengthening but diminishing the distinctiveness and the contribution of the Anglican voice to our ecumenical dialogue. It is clear that all the major churches are engaged in the struggle to acknowledge and include LGBT Christians. The Anglican Communion has been more open than most about its struggle, and has earned the respect of many of our partners in this. By excluding those provinces which have been able, despite deep controversy and through profound study and prayer, to include both those who welcome LGBT Christians and those who do not, you are empowering the Anglican Communion to speak with a voice which does not reflect its truth; it is, in short, inauthentic. Further, it fails to acknowledge the terrible persecution which is experienced by LGBT Christians, and those who uphold human rights as reflecting crucial Gospel values, in many of those provinces which are at the forefront of opposition to TEC and the Anglican Church of Canada. Your previous statements opposing homophobia and seeking generosity from (among others) the Church of Uganda are undermined by these actions.

Third, the actions proposed and taken appear to pre-empt the consequences of the draft Covenant. You reiterate that “the Covenant is not envisaged as an instrument of control”. And yet, by these sanctions you are prefiguring the life of the Covenant by already excluding from Anglican dialogue those who do not have majority support - creating, by default, track 2 churches. It is increasingly clear, as discussions about the Covenant continue, that whatever its original intentions it is already becoming an instrument

of control, an additional “instrument of unity” which will achieve precisely the opposite.

By excluding TEC and possibly the ACoC in this way, the voices are also silenced of the thousands of members of the Church of England for whom the life of TEC and the ACoC is a source of joy and thanksgiving - for whom the full inclusion of LGBT Christians within our parishes is already a reality, even though the structures and senior hierarchy of the Church of England are unable to acknowledge this reality.

You stress the urgency of mission. The result of these actions is further to undermine the mission of the Church of England, and to cause despair amongst those who are trying to enable all to understand the love of God. Supporters of Inclusive Church have spoken with you on a number of occasions about the vital urgency of speaking generously about the breadth of Christian experience. Unless we do, we will be unable to re-engage with the communities we seek to serve in this country and who are bemused by the Church of England’s continuing rejection of LGBT Christians.

The period of engagement for which you call will not be served by putting in place further exclusionary structures. It is only the conservative extreme of the Anglican Communion which appears to support – indeed, to encourage - further division. We are profoundly supportive of the sort of frank and open conversations for which you too hope. Therefore, a question - how do you anticipate these conversations being fruitful when decisions have already been taken which further reduce the status of LGBT Christians and those who welcome them?

Yours sincerely
Canon Giles Goddard

INCLUSIVE CHURCH STANDING ORDER/GIFT AID FORM

(if you set up a payment on line, PLEASE RETURN THE GIFT AID DECLARATION TO US SO WE CAN CLAIM GIFT AID)

To the Manager of _____ Branch Address _____
Sort code _____ A/C name _____ A/C number _____

Please pay to Inclusive Church account no 00013299, sort code 40-52-40 at CAF Bank, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ the sum of £50/ £20 / £10 / £5 per month/year - amount in words _____ starting on _____ and thereafter until I give further notice. This cancels all previous instructions for payments to Inclusive Church.

Name _____ Address _____
Postcode _____

Email _____ Phone _____

GIFT AID DECLARATION - I would like Inclusive Church to recover the Income Tax on all donations I have made in the last six years, and any tax I will pay on future donations. I confirm that I am a UK taxpayer and that I pay tax equivalent to or more than the tax Inclusive Church can reclaim (as a guide on a monthly gift of £10, you must be paying at least £33.85 in tax each year to qualify). I understand that the tax reclaimed will also be used to help fund the work of Inclusive Church and that there is no extra cost to me. Yes/No

Signed _____ Date _____

THANK YOU

Please return this form to Clare Herbert, National Coordinator, Inclusive Church, St Peter’s Church, Liverpool Grove, London SE17 2HH