

FACING THE GAY ISSUE

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The Anglican Communion, like many churches is finding great difficulty in dealing with the issues around gays. The most recent meeting of Anglican Primates was dominated by the subject, this in a continent with an AIDS pandemic, huge poverty and major wars going on, and in a world where global warming is becoming a more obvious reality.

In a world of such rapid moral change, bringing with it apparent chaos and disorder (to some), finding an issue to make a stand on, and where biblical authority can be appealed to, is profoundly attractive. We can create a unity of true believers, and outside this world there is only the darkness of untruth.

The biblical texts, supposedly dealing with this issue may not quite give us the authority that we think they do. But a more fundamental issue is that a Christian church cannot be centred on opposition to gays and what they do (or anything else). A Christian church is centred on Jesus Christ – on a strong centre, not a strong periphery.

We have to work through this issue, whatever our particular attitude may be. It may be that we are being told new things. There is one key reality: people who were once invisible, or in the shadows or in the closet have now become visible. They cannot be made invisible again without enormous violence. That we do know is unchristian. The discussion has to be centred on the humanity of people and what it means to be fully human – and that includes their sexuality. That may be uncomfortable for those who see themselves as 'straight'. But we have to face the discomfort and the confusion, not try to take moral shortcuts, or worse create hysteria and false unities around excluded others.

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