

## Press Release - 28<sup>th</sup> November 2013

for immediate use

### **Pilling recognises Evangelical diversity**

Published today, the Pilling Report has recognised the diversity in theology and understanding which now exists in the Church of England and more particularly, in the Evangelical wing of the Church.

While evangelicals are often assumed to be in opposition to same-sex relationships, The Pilling Report highlights the increasing spectrum of evangelical opinion.

As an expression of this, the Report has included a substantial article from Rev David Runcorn alongside the dissenting statement from the Bishop of Birkenhead,

*“We include in the Appendices two essays on the Scriptures and homosexuality which were prepared for us. One, by Keith Sinclair, Bishop of Birkenhead, epitomizes a conservative understanding of the biblical texts. The second, by the Revd David Runcorn, argues a scriptural case for a more inclusive ethic. Both would identify themselves as evangelicals within the Church of England and both believe they are taking a high view of the authority of Scripture.”*

(page 67: para 223)

Accepting Evangelicals’ submission to the Pilling Group included four aspirations, the first of which called for the Church of England to “begin to formally recognise and express the diversity of opinions and theological understandings that exist in the Church”.

Rev Benny Hazlehurst from Accepting Evangelicals said, “We welcome this clear recognition of diversity in Biblical understanding and commend the Report to the whole church, and especially to those who still see opposition to same-sex relationships as an open and shut case.”

Other aspirations have been less successful, particularly our call to “develop an experimental liturgy of ‘Thanksgiving and Dedication after Civil Partnership’ to be available to churches as a formal response to requests for Blessing of Civil Partnerships”

While recognising that the Pilling Report recommends public services to ‘mark’ Civil Partnerships where clergy and PCC agree, Benny Hazlehurst said, “We also welcome these small steps towards church services for same-sex couples, but we recognise that many LGB&T people will feel deeply disappointed that no liturgy of thanksgiving or blessing is proposed.”

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**Note for Editors:**

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Accepting Evangelicals is an 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 lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. [www.acceptingevangelicals.org](http://www.acceptingevangelicals.org)

**Accepting Evangelicals submission to the Pilling Working Group** can be found here:  
<http://www.acceptingevangelicals.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Submission-to-HoB-Sexuality-Review-2012-Accepting-Evangelicals.pdf>

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