

## Letter Published in the Church Times - 14th March 2010 after The Bishop of Liverpool argued for Mutual Acceptance

Dear Sir

Bishop James Jones is not alone amongst evangelicals in advocating a new era of acceptance of diverging views on sexuality. Formed in 2004, Accepting Evangelicals has been an informal network for evangelicals who have been advocating exactly this approach.

Members are drawn from evangelical Christians who either:

- affirm committed, faithful same-sex relationships
- or although they do not personally hold this view, are willing to accept the integrity of those who do.

There are many clergy among almost 300 open members, whose names appear on our web site. Our membership contains both homosexuals and heterosexuals. They have had the courage to risk, at a local level, the kind of rejection and condemnation which the Bishop of Liverpool has experienced following his presidential address. Yet many have had the courage to put their names to this accepting way of understanding sexuality and the Bible, and for every person who has had the courage to add their name to this list, there are many more evangelicals who privately hold this view, but who feel unable to publicly disclose their position at this time.

The irony of the outcry of opposition to Bishop James's speech is that it undermines one of the core aims of evangelicals - outreach, mission and evangelism. Our prejudice toward each other and homosexuals is quite simply closing people's hearts to the Gospel we preach. We need to put aside the 'Gospel of heterosexual orthodoxy', and re-unite behind the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is in Him that we find salvation, not in our attitude to human sexuality.

Yours in Christ

Rev Benny Hazlehurst  
Accepting Evangelicals