

# Accepting Evangelicals God and Gays?

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Letter published in the Church of England Newspaper - 27 Jan 2012

Dear Sir,

I read with interest last week's responses to Simon Tillotson's letter on sexuality (13 January).

Among the usual assertions that you can't be both evangelical and accepting of same-sex relationships, there was one letter which made much bolder claims. The Rev Martin Stevens stated that "Same-sex relationships picture a God who has no relationship with his people".

Clearly Rev Stevens must be speaking from little or no experience of listening to gay and lesbian Christians for him to form such an extreme view.

For LGB&T Christians, it is their relationship with God which keeps their faith alive in a church that is often hostile to their presence. Far from having no relationship with God, their faith and reliance on God is often much deeper and stronger than their heterosexual brothers and sisters, forged as it has been, in the fires of disapproval and condemnation. Furthermore, finding the right same-sex relationship often strengthens that faith and relationship with God, just as finding the right marriage partner is a blessing to heterosexual Christians.

I never cease to be amazed and humbled by gay Christians who hold on to their faith despite everything that has been thrown at them by the Church, and this is particularly true for evangelical gay Christians.

Simon Tillotson's letter did not open up 'a minefield of extreme liberalism' as Rev Stevens suggests. It was entirely Christ centred in its understanding of the Gospel and salvation. Sadly, the letters that were published in response last week show where the real problem is to be found – in a Church which is reluctant to engage with people as Jesus did. Jesus did not categorise people into boxes and then condemn them. He died for us all, that our sins (including our prejudices) could be forgiven.

And it is His Church that I want to be a part of – the church that preaches salvation, forgiveness, love, and life in all its fullness. That Church is the true Bride of Christ.

Yours sincerely

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