

Accepting Evangelicals - Newsletter

June 2012

Dear Friends

It has been a busy month with the church in the news again for its attitude to same-sex relationships. Here is a round up and news about our Greenbelt 2012 Appeal.

Ugandan Bishops call for revival of the Anti-homosexuality Bill

The most disturbing news this week is that an ecumenical group of Anglican, Catholic and Orthodox Bishops have called on the Ugandan Government to speed up the process of enacting the Anti-Homosexuality bill which was re-introduced to Parliament earlier this year.

The notorious bill with long prison sentences for consenting adults who have gay sex and life-imprisonment for people in gay marriages was previously dropped after international outrage. The death penalty for serious offenders is still under consideration and Ugandans living abroad could also be prosecuted.

It is hard, if not impossible, to understand how Christian church leaders can back such a law whilst at the same time saying that they want “to build a society that harmoniously co-exists and promotes, protects, respects and upholds human dignity” (Uganda Joint Christian Council).

Please pray for the people of Uganda and look out for opportunities to oppose this law yet again.

Church of England responds to same-sex Marriage proposals

In the UK, the CofE hit all the front pages when it published its response to the Government’s proposals for [Marriage Equality](#).

In a predictable statement the church has opposed all attempts to ‘redefine’ marriage to include same-sex couples arguing that it would devalue marriage for heterosexuals and threaten the historic link between church and state.

Intriguingly, however it also said that “Despite the continuing debate in the Church of England on some key ethical issues in this area, the proposition that same-sex relationships can embody crucial social virtues is not in dispute... Same-sex relationships often embody genuine mutuality and fidelity, two of the virtues which the Book of Common Prayer uses to commend marriage. The Church of England seeks to see those virtues maximised in society.” It will be interesting to see how this is put into practise in a church which still forbids the blessing of Civil Partnerships.

[The LGB&T Anglican Coalition](#) considers that the church has missed the point when it points to there being no ‘injustice’ to correct. They point out that “For many same-sex couples, equal marriage is not about legal rights, but a recognition that marriage offers something more – that marriage embraces something deeply spiritual which strengthens both the couple and society. In failing to recognise this, the Church of England has impoverished its own teaching on marriage.”

For anyone who feels that the statement does not represent their views, there is an online petition called “Not in my name” which can be signed by anyone who lives in a Church of England parish

(whether you attend the Parish Church or not). <https://www.change.org/petitions/church-of-england-not-in-our-name>

Accepting Evangelicals continues to encourage theological debate and prayerful reflection among Christians and churches on same-sex marriage – our policy can be viewed by following the link on our [Resources](#) page or by following [this link](#).

Meanwhile in Denmark...

[The Danish parliament](#) has voted by a large majority to introduce full ecclesiastical marriage for same-sex couples. Previously only registered partnerships were permitted. The new law means that same-sex couples can be married and will be able to get married in the national Evangelical-Lutheran church or the Town Hall.

No priest will be forced to conduct same-sex wedding against their conscience, but Bishops will be provide someone who is happy to conduct the service.

Greenbelt 2012 Appeal

Thank you to everyone who has responded to our Greenbelt 2012 Appeal – we are now well on our way to having the funds we need to have a stand at this year's festival, but we still need to raise about £300. The stand will be the ideal opportunity to let people know that there is an alternative evangelical approach to sexuality.

So can you help?

Cheques can be sent to: The Treasurer, Accepting Evangelicals, Flat 3, 7 Upper Tollington Park, London, N4 3EJ.

Please make cheques payable to 'Accepting Evangelicals'.

And Finally...

Readers of the Church of England Newspaper may have seen the outrageous Editorial which appeared on the 10th June issue, and our response which the newspaper printed on the letters page the following week.

We sincerely hope and pray that the CEN will draw back from political rhetoric and re-engage with the prayerful debate which is needed, and we take it as a sign of good faith that they have published our highly critical letter. You can read both by following [this link](#).

God Bless and Keep You...

[***Accepting Evangelicals***](#)