

LGB&T Anglican Coalition

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Press Release

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LGB&T Anglican Coalition Press Statement

On the admission of Bishops in Civil Partnerships to the Episcopate

The LGB&T Anglican Coalition welcomes the House of Bishops decision, confirmed on the 4th January 2013*, to lift its moratorium of July 2011 on clergy in civil partnerships being nominated as episcopal candidates, even when living in conformity with the House of Bishops guidelines *Issues in Human Sexuality*.

The Bishops have decided that the requirements in its 2005 statement concerning the eligibility for ordination of those in civil partnerships, whose relationships are consistent with the teaching of the Church of England, will apply equally in relation to the episcopate.

We had been shocked and saddened by the imposition of the moratorium, pending the outcome of the review of civil partnerships by the House of Bishops working party chaired by the Bishop of Sodor and Man. Although the lifting of the ban is only a small step it removes a glaring injustice, and was one of many recommendations in the LGB&T Anglican Coalition's submission to the Church of England working party on civil partnerships.

However, as we noted in that submission:

It is important that any appearance of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity against those who have made considerable sacrifices (which some might regard as excessive) to comply with current church teaching be avoided... any attempt to deter or exclude such candidates by singling them out for intrusive questioning, or because their views on the theology of sexuality differ from the current Church of England position when in fact bishops have a wide range of opinions on all manner of theological issues, is not only unjust and hurtful to the individuals concerned but also damaging to mission and ministry.

We are glad that the House has addressed this particular issue, but are surprised and disappointed that this appears to be the only outcome, even though the review was expected to be complete by the end of 2012. We look forward to seeing the full report. The recent unveiling of the government's equal marriage proposals makes the House of Bishops review of civil partnerships even more relevant and we urge the House to publish its report as soon as is practically possible.

We also look forward to hearing from the wider review by the House of Bishops working party on sexuality which is chaired by Sir Joseph Pilling and which is due to report later this year.

With the outcomes of these two major working parties at its disposal, together with Archbishop-elect Justin Welby's commitment to end church-based homophobia and to listen carefully and prayerfully to LGB&T people, the Church of England is well placed in 2013 to become a more generous, humane and Christian community for the people we represent, their families and supporters. We believe that valuing and supporting committed and loving partnerships, regardless of whether the partners are celibate, is vital for the integrity and credibility of the Church's mission and ministry.

* See: <http://www.churchofengland.org/media-centre/news/2013/01/statement-regarding-clergy-in-a-civil-partnership-as-candidates-for-the-episcopate.aspx>

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Notes for Editors:

1. **The Anglican Coalition** brings together all the UK-based groups that work on behalf of the LGB&T members of the Church of England. It exists to provide UK-based Christian LGB&T organisations with opportunities to create resources for the Anglican community and to develop a shared voice for the full acceptance of LGB&T people in the Anglican Communion.

2. **For more information contact:**

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3. **The Coalition members are:**

Accepting Evangelicals www.acceptingevangelicals.org

Changing Attitude www.changingattitude.org.uk

Two23 www.two23.net

Evangelical Fellowship for Lesbian and Gay Christians www.eflqc.org.uk

Inclusive Church www.inclusive-church.org.uk

The Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement www.lgcm.org.uk

The Sibyls www.sibyls.co.uk

General Synod Human Sexuality Group

Website www.lgbtac.org.uk