

## GENERAL SYNOD HUSTINGS FOR LAITY QUESTION 5

### What are your hopes and prayers for the current programme of Shared Conversations around Human Sexuality?

<p>BARRON, Mr Alastair</p>	<p>This is a difficult and complex issue for many.</p> <p>In terms of the process, my hopes and prayers are that the programme is conducted in an honest and open atmosphere – where all views will be expressed and heard respectfully. I believe that such an approach is most likely to achieve mutual understanding, acceptance, tolerance and even agreement with others’ views in the short term. It is also, in my view, most likely to bring about accommodations or solutions that last into the longer term.</p> <p>In terms of actual outcomes, my hopes and prayers are that there will be greater acceptance that we are all God’s children, made by Him with all our innate differences, gifts and faults, and that we should see each other in that light, loved equally by God and equally in receipt of His grace. I struggle with the view that differences in individuals’ human sexuality should be a reason to see anyone as, in any way, of a lesser or greater value and so seen and treated differently by the church.</p> <p>I hope that the Church will continue to take this initiative forward and that those involved will continue to commit to it, energetically and prayerfully.</p>
<p>CLIFT, Dr Simon</p>	<p>I take inspiration from four of the <b>6Rs of conflict resolution</b> which Justin Welby spoke of when leading Coventry Cathedral’s international ministry of reconciliation as described in his unauthorised biography, <i>The Road to Canterbury</i>.</p> <p>In terms of <b>Researching</b>, while drawing on my own orthodox understanding of the Christian faith, I commit myself to seeking to understand others’ viewpoints, recognising that some of my pre-conceptions might be unfounded.</p> <p>When <b>Relating</b>, I will work on the basis that building trust and finding common ground can only be achieved through ongoing deepening relationships.</p> <p><b>Risking</b> means accepting the risk of being misunderstood, perhaps by those who might misinterpret my willingness to engage in dialogue as a betrayal of principle.</p> <p>And lastly <b>Reconciling</b> speaks of the importance of “<i>maintaining the Spirit of unity in the bond of peace</i>” even where there continues to be profound disagreement.</p> <p>Above all I hope that our conversations will not be seen as a local CofE issue but take place within the <b>wider context of the Worldwide Anglican Communion</b>.</p> <p>My prayer is that, as we commit to these principles, we will demonstrate to the world the <b>supernatural work of God in preserving Christian unity even when we disagree</b>.</p>

<p>COULTER, Mrs Alison</p>	<p>I am challenged by Biblical teaching on sexuality, but committed to accepting the Bible as the word of God, teaching me how God wants me to live.</p> <p>I am also challenged by Jesus' words about taking the log out of my own eye before noticing the speck in my brother's eye. Only God can judge, and I am called to love and to welcome everyone, following the example of Jesus, who was very happy to spend time with many different sorts of people. The Church is for everyone.</p> <p>My hopes and prayers for the shared conversations are that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They will be full of love and acceptance</li> <li>• Christians will seek first to listen and to understand each other with humility, while also seeking to better understand the Bible, all with the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit</li> <li>• Unity will be maintained and hurt will be diminished</li> </ul> <p>We will not be distracted from the urgent and important task of focusing together on building God's Kingdom here on earth as in Heaven.</p>
<p>DAVIES, Mr John</p>	<p>I hope and pray for God's will to be done, for insight and guidance, for unity through reconciliation and for a speedy conclusion so that we can focus on growing our church and proclaiming the Gospel in our divided society.</p> <p>In my own mind, there are two conflicting issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same sex relationships are clearly against bible teaching, but I cannot help thinking there are worse transgressions. It is not listed for example in the 'Shalt nots' of the ten commandments. But I would find it difficult to agree to blessings of same sex unions in my own church.</li> <li>• The trouble is that the scriptural argument gets in the way of proclaiming the gospel to people with same sex attraction in current secular society. Same sex attraction cannot be a bar to salvation. So often faith (and Grace) come before repentance and we should not get in the way. It is certainly not our role to judge (Matt 7.1)</li> </ul> <p>If elected, I will not decide how I will vote until I have heard the debated arguments and prayed. I have not at this stage finalised my personal opinion, but my intention is to put church unity first (John 17).</p>
<p>FRY, Mrs Christine</p>	<p>'In the church and society at large there has been a "revolution" in recent years in the attitudes and beliefs of people regarding sexuality' (Archbishop Justin, 2013). As a consequence, the orthodox teachings of the Church of England can often feel under pressure and threat.</p> <p>Over the next 18 months the Church of England is holding formal conversations to explore and address a range of issues in the area of ethics and sexuality, as raised in the 'Pilling Report'.</p> <p>I have read the Pilling Report and a several books by biblical scholars exploring the Bible and same sex relationships.</p> <p>I would hope that we would face these issues together openly, compassionately and seeking to listen to and to uphold biblical principles. I would hope that the Church of England will conclude that we can still have confidence in upholding its traditional</p>

	<p>approach to issues of human sexuality. I pray that we would be God centred in our conversations and we would be come to an outcome that pleases God.</p> <p>If re-elected to Synod, I would take part in these conversations with courtesy, a keen listening ear and seeking to contribute an orthodox view of our historic faith and doctrine.</p>
<p>GREENE, Ms Jay</p>	<p>I pray that we will come to understand each other better, respect each other's views, and find a way to agree to differ which will allow the church to move on and use all this energy for pressing issues such as the refugee crisis, the challenges of climate change, the widening gap between rich and poor, the loss of any sense of God in many people here in the UK, and many other national and global issues.</p> <p>As a member of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community I feel welcomed in my own church and Deanery so I would hope that that welcome could spread right across the Church as a result of the conversations. While we are perceived nationally as a homophobic and unjust organisation we have no hope of attracting those under 35 for whom whether a friend, family member, neighbour, or colleague is gay or straight is a non-issue.</p>
<p>HUNT, Mr Alan</p>	<p>I believe that our Lord Jesus Christ's teaching on marriage in Matthew 19: 4-6 sums up God's pattern for the holy life which he calls us to follow in relation to his gift of human sexuality. I hope and pray that the Church of England's doctrine will continue to follow this pattern, and that it will be reflected in pastoral practice which is loving, compassionate and respectful to all.</p>
<p>KIDD, Mr Christopher</p>	<p>The issues of human sexuality are deeply divisive. For some it is an issue of identity, discrimination and justice. For others it is an issue of biblical authority. For all, it is profoundly important, as how we approach these issues says something about who we are as Christians and as a Church.</p> <p>It seems impossible to imagine a way forward that all can agree on. We need to explore further what does it mean for us to hold deeply held views, with very different understandings of scripture and mission and yet to belong to the same Church.</p> <p>When we talk about 'issues' of sexuality, it can be all too easy to forget that we are talking about real people, leading real lives, which will be really impacted by any decisions made.</p> <p>We should remember that what we have in common is far greater than that which threatens to divide us. We all belong to Jesus Christ, there is no condemnation for those in him, and nothing can separate us from his love. My hope and prayer is that we can find a way to keep loving each other, as well as loving Christ.</p>
<p>LALLY, Mr Daniel</p>	<p>I think that no matter what, we are all going to agree to disagree on this matter. We need to come to a conclusion one day on this matter but we need to be accommodating of all peoples opinions and love and support one another throughout the process. I hope and pray that there will not be a divide, but throughout this process we support one another with our differences.</p>

<p>MAIN, Mr Paul</p>	<p>I would like to see a consensus grow that is sympathetic, welcoming and non-judgemental to those who are same-sex attracted, and repentant of any failures to show Christian love towards them in the past, while also affirming what the Bible says about physical same-sex relationships.</p> <p>I hope and pray that agreement can be reached on a way forward which allows us all to remain within the Church without being put under pressure to reject the Church's traditional stance on this issue.</p>
<p>MOORE, Mrs Lucy</p>	<p>I hope that those with quieter voices, including Christians of different persuasions, will genuinely be heard. I hope that the very fact that these conversations are taking place will be noticed and valued. I hope they won't just be nominal but a symptom of an ongoing humility that develops in our Church and shows that we are confident enough in our core beliefs to make space to understand different opinions in all areas of debate, not just human sexuality.</p> <p>Listening to the attitudes of my own children and their friends (in their early 20's and thus in the 'missing generation'), I am aware that many of their generation have very different outlooks on matters of sexuality from those I have inherited and that I need to tread lightly and listen myself.</p> <p>As this is not <i>the</i> most important challenge facing the Church, important though it is, I pray we can walk together with our differing beliefs until God's wisdom shines from and upon every side.</p> <p>I pray that we will treasure the insights of those in the LGBTQ community, because if we don't, their God-given spirituality will find a home outside the Church of England.</p>
<p>NASH, Mrs Abigail</p>	<p>We are God's image-bearers and precious to Him, and so I hope and pray that the glory of God and the unity of God's people is the desire of all involved. There has been much hurt caused to those who experience same-sex attraction. Listening actively to all views is important; understanding differences is key to resolving disagreements.</p> <p>I do not think that 'good disagreement' would be a satisfactory outcome, although it will be part of the conversations as understanding grows. Our sexuality is part of who we are, but it is not the most important thing to define us. If we are Christians, we are first and foremost Christ's.</p> <p>It is vital that as a result of these conversations there is faithful pastoral care and sensitivity provided for all whether single, experiencing same-sex attraction or heterosexually married, so that they are both faithful to God and flourish in their Christian walk, at the same time.</p>
<p>WILSON, Mrs Cynthia</p>	<p>This debate will have serious implications for the future of the Anglican Church. I know it sounds tough, but 'Hate the sin and love the sinner' is a maxim for all attempts and strategies to try and understand the huge range of human dilemmas. Ultimately we all need to remember who we are trying to honour, man or God?</p>