



Working for the full inclusion of
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and
Transgender (LGBT) persons
within our churches

Changing Attitude Ireland

www.changingattitudeireland.org

Volume 8 Issue 1 Newsletter September 2015

Significant Developments and a Time of Great Hope

The last few months have seen significant positive developments in the advancement of the rights and inclusion of LGBT people internationally. The Yes vote in the marriage equality referendum in the Republic of Ireland and judgement by the US Supreme Court have extended civil marriage rights to LGBT people. Recently both the Scottish Episcopal Church and the US Episcopal Church have made liturgical and canonical changes to allow LGBT people to marry within the church.

While the debate on same-sex marriage rages on in the Anglican churches worldwide, these developments are very positive. There is still much to do to achieve full inclusion within the Church of Ireland and Changing Attitude Ireland has an important role to play, raising the visibility of LGBT people within the church and enabling the debate on inclusion. CAI looks forward to reading the report of the church's *Select Committee on Human Sexuality in the Context of Christian Belief* and engaging in the debates that will ensue. We all look forward to the time when LGBT people are fully included in all aspects of church life.

Service of Thanksgiving

An ecumenical service of thanksgiving was held in St. Audoen's Church of Ireland, Conmarket Dublin 8 on Saturday June 27. The service was organised to coincide with Dublin's Gay Pride festival. The thanksgiving focused on the many volunteers and campaigners involved in the marriage referendum in the Republic. The service was led by Canon Mark Gardner, rector in St. Audoen's and was supported by Changing Attitude Ireland, Faith in Marriage Equality, Gay Catholic Voice Ireland and We are Church Ireland.

During the service eight members of the congregation spoke about why they were thankful. Frank McMullen spoke of the flourishing of people during the campaign and

Mrs. Dora Clarke, the mother of gay children gave thanks for the hope the referendum gave to parents. Moninne Griffith, director of Marriage Equality, gave thanks for the political will and dedication of volunteers, while the Rev. Brian O'Rourke gave thanks for diversity and for the openness of people to be supportive and inclusive.

Canon Dr. Virginia Kennerley offered thanks for the courage of gay people, particularly gay clergy and asked for prayers for the work of the Select Committee on Human Sexuality, while Dr. Richard O'Leary, gave thanks for the campaign itself and the conversations it enabled. The final input was from Fr. Martin Dolan who was thankful for the acceptance of his congregation when he told them that he was gay.

Scripture was read by the Rev. Ruth Elmes, also a poem by Tony Regan. There was an attendance of over 100. Afterwards a large group, including members of the clergy, marched in the gay pride parade behind the Changing Attitude Ireland and Faith in Marriage Equality banners.



A section of the group during the Gay Pride March in Dublin

Busy Summer for CAI

It has been a very busy summer for Changing Attitude Ireland. As well as the service of thanksgiving and the Dublin Gay Pride, members of CAI also attended the gay pride parades and other events in Belfast and Derry



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Public Talk by Bishop Burrows and CAI AGM

On Saturday October 17th 2015 at 2pm the Bishop of Cashel and Ossory, the Right Reverend Michael Burrows will celebrate a service of Holy Communion in St. Audoen's Church, Cornmarket, Dublin 8. After the service the Bishop will give a talk entitled *"Learning to disagree agreeably: Lessons from previous controversies in the Church of Ireland"*. The talk will be followed by tea and coffee. All are welcome.



On the same afternoon, also in St. Audoen's, Changing Attitude Ireland will hold its Annual General Meeting. CAI is founded as a network of people, gay and straight, lay and ordained, working for the full affirmation of Lesbian and gay Christians within the Church of Ireland and the wider Anglican Communion. This is your opportunity to shape the work of CAI. The AGM will commence at 4.15 and again everyone is welcome.

Annual Subscriptions

Changing Attitude Ireland does not receive any funding from the wider church and depends on the annual subscriptions of members. If you have not yet paid your 2015 subscription, please do so as soon as possible. Subscriptions can be paid at the AGM.

If you can't attend the AGM, the most convenient and least costly method is through the CAI website, using your debit or credit card: www.changingattitudeireland.org. Alternatively fill in the form to set up a standing order (available on the website and with this newsletter) or send a cheque to CAI Treasurer, David McConnell, 18 Villiers Road, Dublin D06 X2K4. Suggested minimum contribution Euro: €20 (concession €15) or Sterling: £15 (concession £12)

Steve Chalke in Belfast

Changing Attitude Ireland, Accepting Sexuality and the Corrymeela Community jointly present a talk by the Rev. Steve Chalke on Friday November 6th 2015 in Grosvenor House, Glengall St, Belfast at 8pm, with coffee served from 7.30. The title of Chalke's address will be *"A Matter of Integrity: The Church, Sexuality, Inclusion and an open conversation"*

Renowned evangelical writer and broadcaster Steve Chalke was moved by the experience of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people in the Oasis Academies he founded. Concerned that the churches had little to offer other than further isolation, he grappled with the Bible through prayer, conversation and study over several years—his aim to find a Christlike, rather than a cultural answer.

His conclusion: that, read through the lens of Jesus the living Word, the Bible calls us to create an environment where LGBT people are nurtured, and lifelong commitments welcomed. On this visit to Belfast, he talks about his journey to this point and makes a plea to the Churches.

Rev Steve Chalke MBE is a Baptist Minister. He is the senior leader of Oasis Church, Waterloo in London; founder of Oasis Global which operates from ten international bases across five countries; and founder of Stop The Traffik. He is United Nations GIFT Special Advisor on Community Action Against Human Trafficking

CAI Committee 2014/'15

A brief note of thanks to the 2014/'15 CAI committee, for all of their work during the year.

Chairperson: Dr. Richard O'Leary

Vice-Chair: Canon Dr. Virginia Kennerley

Secretary: Pam Tilson

Treasurer: David McConnell

Members: Hugh Denard, Canon Mark Gardner, Rev. David Godfrey, Scott Golden, Rev. Stella Jones, Emmeline Jude Kingsley-Grace, Charles Kenny, and Leo Kilroy.