

Southwark failure damages Church of England

Both recent meetings of the Crown Nominations Commission to choose a new bishop for the Diocese of Southwark have been the subject of serious leaks to a newspaper. This has resulted in huge personal pain and distress for one candidate, Dr Jeffrey John, Dean of St Albans, for the second time in seven years. It is particularly outrageous that some senior church officials have suggested the leaks were engineered by supporters of Dr John, rather than by those opposed to his nomination.

It has brought the Church of England into even further disrepute with the general public, who will regard it rightly or wrongly, as another example of the blatant homophobia that exists in the Church.

Once again the Church has failed to act with courage. The whole Commission must be held responsible for this, regardless of whether the source of the leak was an elected member, an ex-officio member, or one of the staff in attendance at what is supposed to be a totally confidential meeting.

It is essential that a thorough independent enquiry be held immediately to determine who was responsible. There should also be an urgent review of the process of appointing bishops, as the present arrangements are not fit for purpose, and an open and transparent procedure is clearly necessary.

Notes for Editors

1. The Anglican Coalition is here to provide UK-based Christian LGBT organisations with opportunities to create resources for the Anglican community and to develop a shared voice for the full acceptance of LGBT people in the Anglican Communion.

2. The Coalition members are:

Accepting Evangelicals www.acceptingevangelicals.org

Changing Attitude www.changingattitude.org.uk

The Clergy Consultation www.clergyconsultation.org

Courage www.courage.org.uk

The Evangelical Fellowship for Lesbian and Gay Christians www.eflgc.org.uk

Inclusive Church www.inclusivechurch2.net

The Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement lgcm.org.uk

The Sibyls www.sibyls.co.uk

3. For more information contact:

Revd Canon Giles Goddard 07762 373 674 or Simon Sarmiento 07906 445695

or the LGBT Anglican Coalition Website www.lgbtac.org.uk