

Sexuality

BECOMING MORE INCLUSIVE
A SERIES OF SEMINARS IN
ST JAMES THE LESS
DURING 2024

The inclusive church statement

“We believe in **inclusive church** – a church which **celebrates and affirms every person** and does not discriminate.



We will continue to challenge the church where it continues to discriminate against people on grounds of **disability, economic power, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, learning disability, mental health, neurodiversity, or sexuality.**

We believe in a Church which **welcomes and serves all people** in the name of Jesus Christ; which is scripturally faithful; which seeks to proclaim the Gospel afresh for each generation; and which, in the power of the Holy Spirit, allows all people to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Jesus Christ.”

Topics we will be covering:

Sexuality (tonight)

Disability (Tues April 16th)

Mental Health (Tues May 15th)

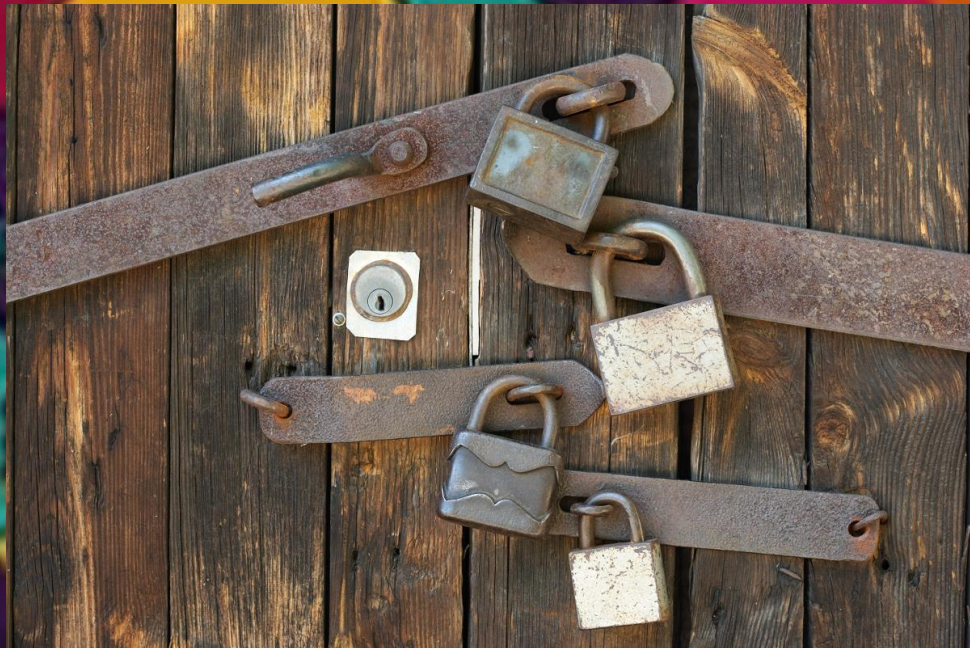
Neurodiversity (Autumn/Winter)

Gender (Autumn/Winter)

Ethnicity (Autumn/Winter)

Economic Power (Autumn/Winter)





GROUND
RULES



Tuesday 5th March, 7pm

Sexuality

Is the Church welcoming to LGBT people?

What about same sex marriage?

What does The Bible say?

Timetable for this evening

7pm Drinks, recap and introduction

7.15 Is the church welcoming to LGBT people?

7.30 My story

7.35 Pause for reflection

7.40 The Church of England and Sexuality

7.50 Group exercise: The Church of England and Sexuality

8pm The Bible and sexuality

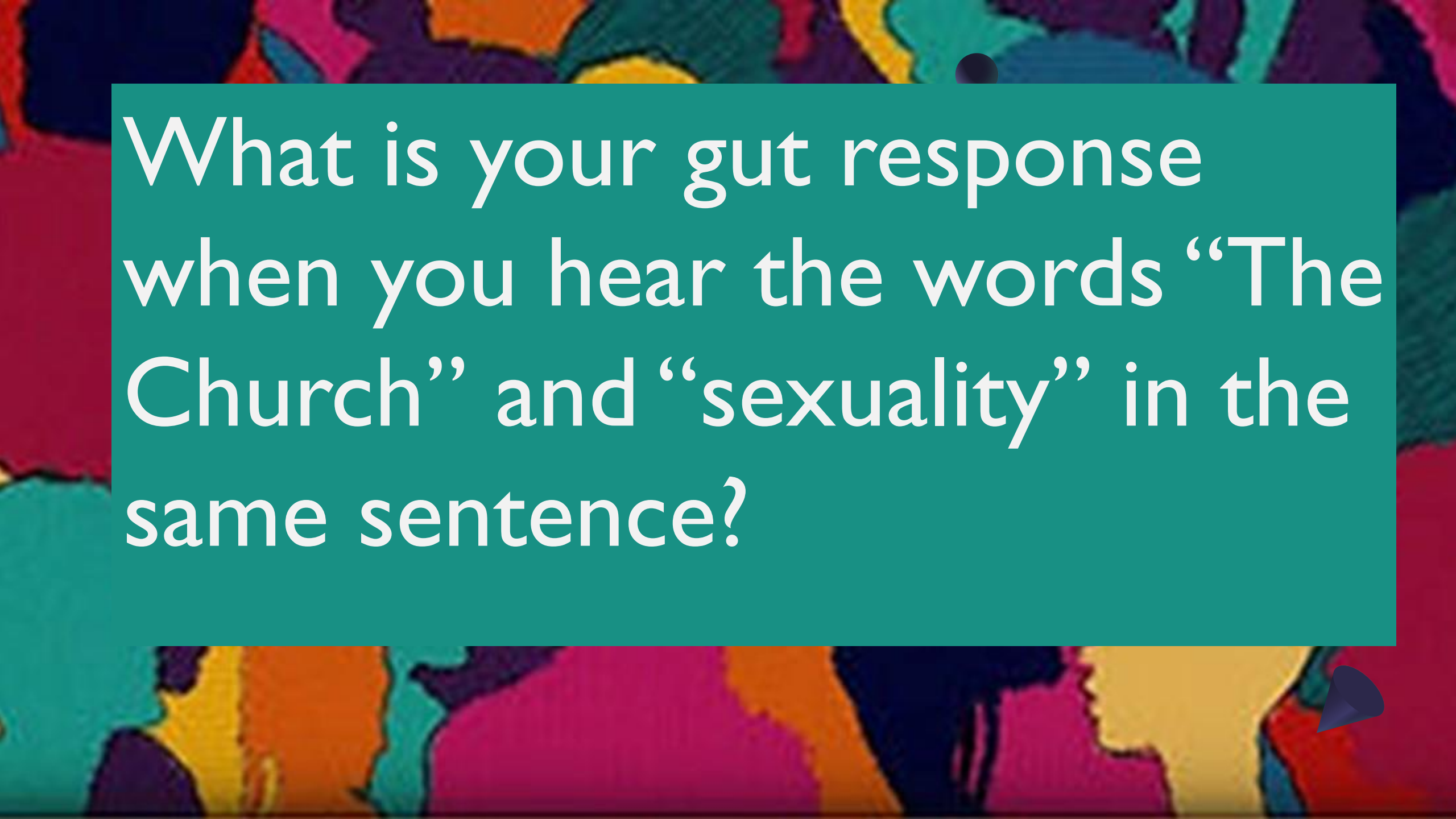
8.15pm Group Bible Study and feedback

8.30 Same-sex marriage and blessings

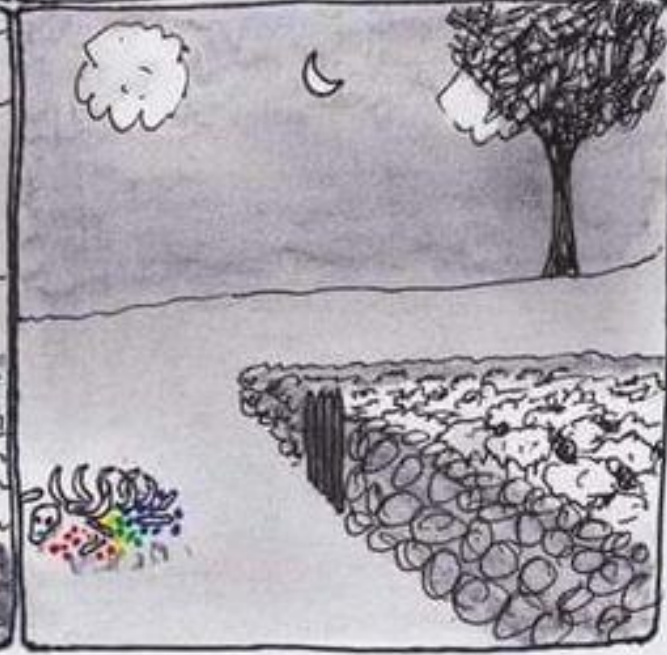
8.40 Group discussion on how we respond as a church

8.55 Further Reading and Resources

9.00 Closing prayer



What is your gut response when you hear the words “The Church” and “sexuality” in the same sentence?



“The church has talked about sexuality for far too long and far too much.”

“Gay people are dividing the church.”

“We need to keep the African churches on board”

“Sexuality should be a private not a church matter.”

“Can’t we all agree to disagree??”

“We shouldn’t get distracted by this from the church’s mission and evangelism”

What does LGBTQIA+ mean?

Sexuality

Lesbian – A woman sexually attracted to a women

Gay – A man sexually attracted to a man

Bisexual – A man or woman sexually attracted to both genders*

Asexual – A man or woman not sexually attracted to either sex.

What does LGBTQIA+ mean?

Gender identity

Transgender – A man or woman who does not identify with the gender prescribed to them at birth.

Queer - Used to be an insult, now someone who challenges the concepts of gender and or traditional sexuality

Intersex – someone born with both male and female sex organ

What does LGBTQIA+ mean?

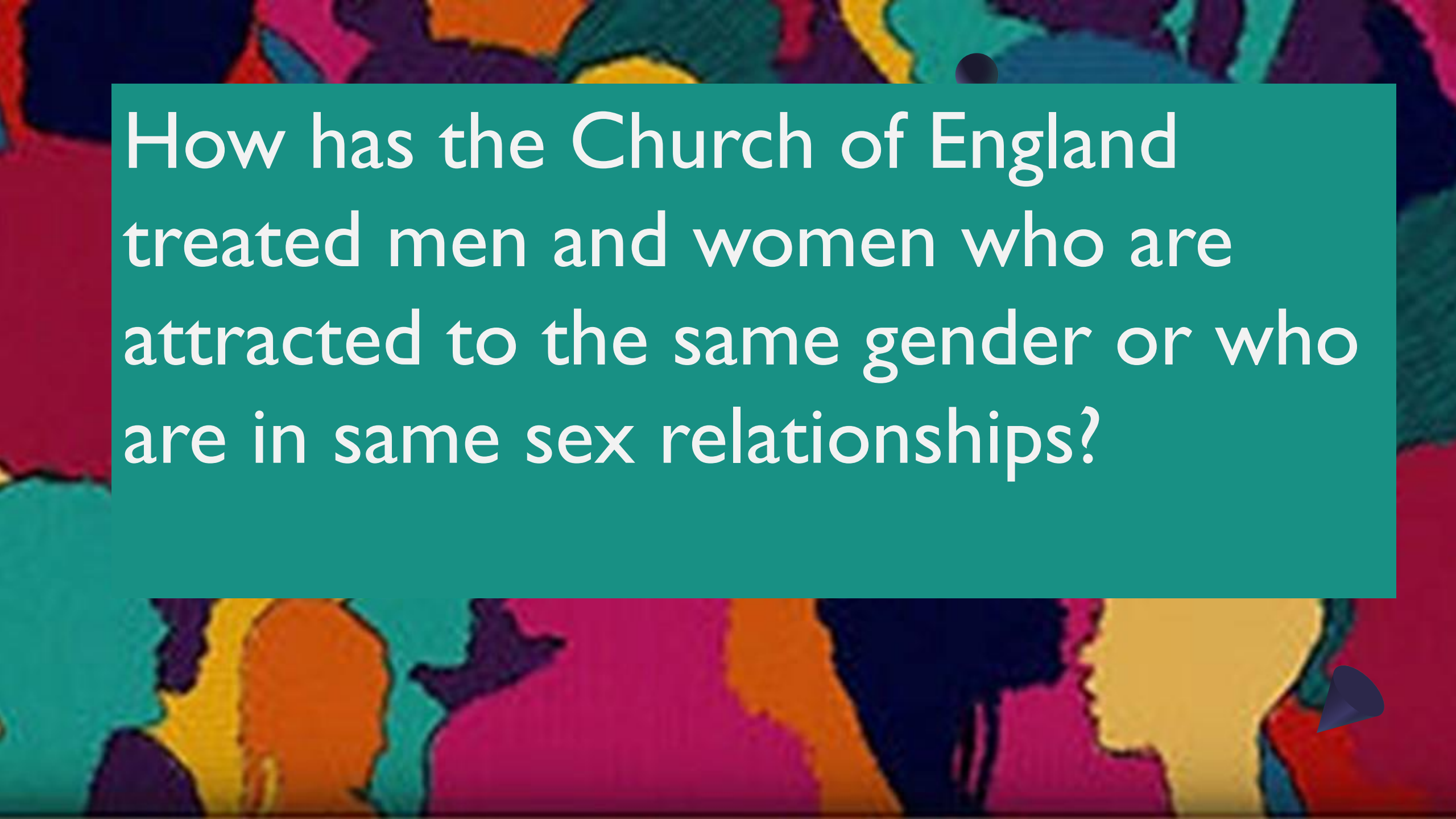
Some other definitions in the +

Pansexual *Demisexual*

Agender

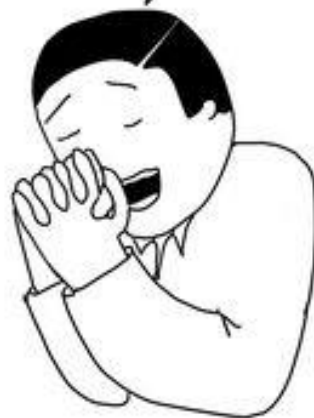
Aromantic *Non-binary*

In this seminar, we will focus only on sexuality – as a letter session will focus on gender. It is important to recongnise that sexual orientation is not directly linked to gender identity (or gender dysphoria as was originally suggested).



How has the Church of England treated men and women who are attracted to the same gender or who are in same sex relationships?

THANK YOU LORD FOR CREATING ME AS
A STRAIGHT WHITE EVANGELICAL MALE
SO THAT I REALLY DON'T HAVE TO DO
ANYTHING MORE TO GET INTO HEAVEN.



Kayla
@nakedpastor

Amy used to be a worship leader at a charismatic evangelical church, singing and playing guitar. When she said to the church leadership she had a girlfriend she was asked to step down from her public facing role.

Brian is son of a vicar, and taught Sunday school in his local church. When he came out as gay he was told he could stay a member of the church but no longer serve in any public roles due to his lifestyle choice, including Sunday school or serving on the coffee rota.

Charlie was elected to serve on the executive committee of her University Christian union. When she admitted to being gay, a campaign was launched to persuade her to stand down immediately.

Debra is a gay woman who wanted to be ordained in the church of England. She is in a civil partnership. Despite being selected for training, she decided not to go forwards as she wouldn't sign to say she agreed with the teaching document Issues of Human Sexuality, the official 1993 C of R document which states bisexual people cannot be monogamous and ponders genetic modification were a "gay gene" to be found.

Edward applied for a job as a church youth worker following university. He explained he was gay to the vicar who interviewed him. The vicar responded by recounting in depth a pastoral conversation he had had with another gay man whom he advised “in my experience, people like you either change and get married or fall away from God.

Frank worked as a ministry trainee for an evangelical church. Despite being convinced that gay Christians should be single and celibate, when he spoke to his church leader about his own same-sex attractions, his leader recommend he attend conversion therapy.

Gerard was due to be interviewed by a theological college as he was about to attend a Church of England selection panel. His vicar asked the college principal to conduct the interview as he was gay and was nervous about talking about this, despite being single. The vice principal instead conducted the interview, explained that by “being gay” Gerard would be entering a “firestorm in the Church of England”. Gerard got nervous in the interview as a result of being grilled about his sexuality and the vice principal advised Gerard’s vicar to withdraw his support of Gerard in the selection process.

Discussion 1:


In pairs or threes, discuss your gut response to hearing these stories.

My Story





*Pause for reflection and
comment.*



Is the church welcoming to
ordinands and clergy who are
lesbian, gay or bisexual?

Sexuality and the Church of England (Key Dates)

- 1993 - *Issues in Human Sexuality* adopted
- 1998 – The Lambeth Conference
- 2004 – Civil partnership act
- 2011-2013 The Pilling Report
- 2013 – Same-sex marriage legal in UK
- 2014-2016 Shared Conversations Process
- 2017 Refusal to “take note” of Bishop’s Report
GS2055
- 2017-2024 Living in Love and Faith Process

Some problems with *Issues in Human Sexuality*, 1993

- It is now 31 years old and uses out of date language such as “homophile”
- It carries the force of the creeds and 39 articles in that all ordinands must assent to it
- It incorrectly suggests all bisexuals have more than one partner.
- It suggests that in future, “ethical considerations” might be used to determine criteria for genetic modification to remove a “gay gene”.

Some problems with *Issues in Human Sexuality*, 1993

- It will remain in force until the new *Pastoral Guidance* replaces it, which was promised by the House of Bishops to be forthcoming in February 2023 but is now indefinitely delayed.

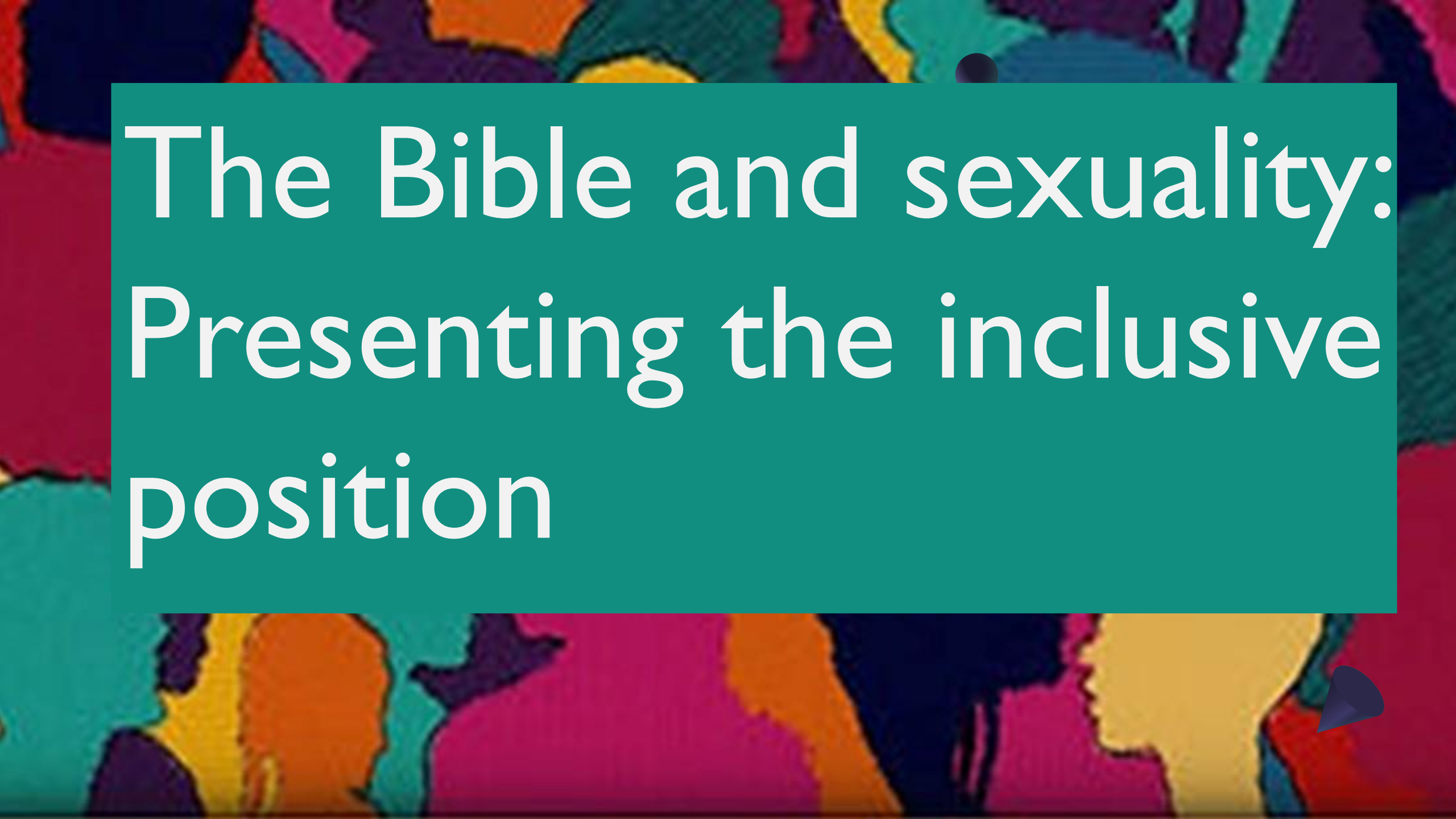
Other statements from the House of Bishops

- 2005 – pastoral guidance permits clergy to enter same-sex civil partnerships if they are celibate. Clergy living with a partner in a same-sex relationship required to enter a civil partnership.
- February 2014 – pastoral guidance issued which prohibits people in same-sex civil marriages from being ordained, and clergy from entering same-sex marriages.

Discussion 2:

In your groups, discuss a few of the case studies from the article “What church awaits us, ordinands ask”.

- What are the principle challenges that face ordinands and clergy from the LGBT+ community?*
- In what ways do you think the Living in Love and Faith process betters or worsens these challenges?*
- What would be your suggestions for practical ways forwards?*



The Bible and sexuality: Presenting the inclusive position

The “traditional” position:

1. Asserts that all forms of sex outside of marriage between a man and a woman are sinful
2. Argues from 5 bible passages which speak about same-sex relations negatively (known as the “clobber” passages.)
3. Argues from a complementarian viewpoint that male and female have different complementary roles, as ordained in creation
4. Argues that the core of sexual relationships is procreation

The “clobber passages” - Old Testament

1. Genesis 19.1-38
2. Leviticus 18:22: “You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.” (c.f Lev 20:13; Deut.23.18)

The “clobber passages”- New Testament

3. Romans 1:26-27 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. ²⁷ In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.

The “clobber passages”- New Testament

4. **I Corinthians 6.9-10:** Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, ¹⁰ thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers—none of these will inherit the kingdom of God.

The “clobber passages”- New Testament

5. **1 Timothy 9-10** ⁹This means understanding that the law is laid down not for the innocent but for the lawless and disobedient, for the godless and sinful, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their father or mother, for murderers, ¹⁰fornicators, sodomites, slave-traders, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to the sound teaching.
6. **Jude 7** (*on Sodom and Gomorrah*)

Weaknesses of using the “clobber passages”

I. Inconsistency of application of OT law

- Ban on prawns (Lev 11.12)
- Ban on polycotton shirts (Lev 19.19)
- Ban on tattoos. (Lev 19.28)

Weaknesses of using the “clobber passages”

2. Failure to appreciate context

- Same-sex practices is OT linked to shrine prostitution and idol worship
- NT prohibitions linked to idol worship, and “vice lists” of what was generally regarded as immoral behaviour.

Three problems with the “traditional” position

I. A pre-modern view of “homosexuality”

First recorded use of the word “homosexual” according to OED is in 1891, translating an 1886 psychological treatise. References in letters of 1868 and 1869.

New Testament Greek	46AD	malakoi, arsenekoites
Latin Vulgate	406	molles, masculorum concubitores
Wyclif	1508	lecchouris, synne of Sodom
Tyndale	1525	weaklings, abusers of themselves with mankind
Geneva Bible	1560	wantons, bouggerers
Reims-Douai	1609	effeminate, liers with mankind
King James Authorised Bible	1611	effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind
Darby	1890	those who make women of themselves, abuse themselves with men
Wesley's New Testament	1938	guilty of unnatural crime
Godspeed	1951	sensual, given to unnatural vice

Jerusalem Bible (French)	1955	effeminate, people with infamous habits
Amplified Version	1958	those who participate in homosexuality
New English	1961	homosexual perversion
Today's English Version	1966	homosexual perverts
Jerusalem Bible (German)	1968	sissies, child molesters
New International	1973	male prostitutes, homosexual offenders
New Jerusalem Bible	1985	self indulgent, sodomites
New American Catholic	1987	boy prostitutes, self indulgent sodomites
New Revised Standard Version	1989	male prostitutes, sodomites

Three problems with the “traditional” position

2. A pre-modern view of complementarianism

- Men and women are created with different roles
- The wife is to submit to the “headship” of her husband
- Historically and in many cultures wives regarded as property of their husband

Three problems with the “traditional” position

3. A pre-modern view of procreation

- “ “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it” – Genesis 1.28 as a command.
- Church of England marriages no longer view procreation as essential to a marital union and permits contraception.

Three problems with the “traditional” position

3. A pre-modern view of procreation

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The “inclusive” case for same-sex relationships

The inclusive case for same-sex relationships sees the quality of a loving relationship as not dependent on the gender of the participants.

Three principles behind this case are:

1. Same-sex relationships can be inherently good and loving
2. Loving same-sex relationships do not fit with the broader biblical definition of sin and evil
3. Loving same-sex relationships result in good “fruit”

The “inclusive” case for same-sex relationships

If it looks like a duck...



The “inclusive” case for same-sex relationships

I. Same-sex relationships can be inherently good and loving

e.g. Non-sexual friendships in the Bible: David and Jonathan, Ruth and Naomi

The “inclusive” case for same-sex relationships

I. Same-sex relationships can be inherently good and loving

¹⁵ If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. ¹⁶ And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. (1 John 4.15-16)

The “inclusive” case for same-sex relationships

2. Loving same-sex relationships do not fit with the broader biblical definition of sin and evil

²⁰ He went on: “What comes out of a person is what defiles them. ²¹ For it is from within, out of a person’s heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, ²² adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. ²³ All these evils come from inside and defile a person.” *(Mark 7.20-23)*

The “inclusive” case for same-sex relationships

2. Loving same-sex relationships do not fit with the broader biblical definition of sin and evil

¹⁹ The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like.

(Galatians 5.19-20)

The “inclusive” case for same-sex relationships

2. Loving same-sex relationships do not fit with the broader biblical definition of sin and evil

¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. (*John 10.10*)



What about same-sex
blessings / same-sex marriage?

Two traditional positions on same-sex marriage

I. Position I: No blessings on any same-sex relationships

- All extramarital sex is sinful.
- Marriage can only be between a man and a woman.
- All same-sex sexual acts are therefore sinful, and should not be blessed.
- Validation of same-sex civil partnerships should be resisted at all costs, and clergy in same-sex relationships should not be ordained.

Two traditional positions on same-sex marriage

- I. Position 2: Marriage is between a man and a woman, but that doesn't mean same-sex relationships can't be blessed.
 - Marriage is a creation ordinance between a man and a woman, and the context of procreative sex.
 - Marriage cannot take place between two men or two women.
 - Same-sex partnerships (even sexual ones) are not however intrinsically sinful, so can be affirmed and blessed

The “inclusive” case for same-sex relationships

3. Loving same-sex relationships result in good “fruit”

⁴³ “No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. ⁴⁴ Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars. ⁴⁵ A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.

(Luke 6.43-35)

The Case for Equal Marriage

1. Marriage and procreation are no longer intrinsically linked in our modern world (or the Church of England service).
2. We no longer hold to a complementarian view of male and female.
3. It is better to support committed monogamous unions than encourage promiscuity.
4. Opposition to equal marriage damages the potential for mission amongst the next generation who see it as discrimination.

Discussion 3: Bible study

In your groups, read the Bible Passages from Matthew 6.15-20

- *What does this passage tell us about how to determine what is true and false teaching?*
- *What are the possible fruits that might arise from a same-sex relationship? Which of these are good and bad?*
- *How convinced (or not) are you by Mark's argument that same-sex non-celibate relationships can be a good thing if the "fruit" of the relationship is a good thing?*

Our church and sexuality



Conclusions:

What can I do / we do as a church to make the church more inclusive to lesbian, gay and bisexual people?

Further reading on Sexuality:

Inclusive theologies:

Matthew Vines (2014), God and the Gay Christian

Savitri Hensman (2015), Sexuality Struggle and Saintliness

Justin Lee (2012), Torn: Rescuing the Gospel from the Gays-Vs-Christian Debate

Marcus Green (2018), The Possibility of Difference

Bishop Steven Croft (2023), Together in Love and Faith

Further reading on Sexuality:

In depth theologies:

*James Brownson (2013), Bible, Gender, Sexuality,
(Inclusive)*

*Robert Gagnon (2001), The Bible and Homosexual
Practice, (Traditional)*

Further reading on Sexuality:

Biographies:

Vicky Beeching (2018), Undivided (The story of a Christian singer whose career was changed when she came out as gay)

Wesley Hill (2010), Washed and Waiting (The story of a same-sex attracted Christian man who believes God calls him and all same-sex attracted people to singleness and celibacy)

Further reading on Sexuality:

The church and sexuality:

*Mark Vasey-Saunders (2023), Defusing the Sexuality Debate:
The Anglican Evangelical Culture War*

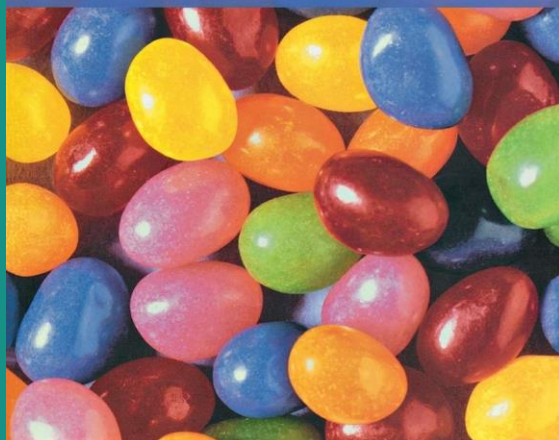
*Wendy Vander Wal-Gritter (2014), Generous Spaciousness:
Responding to Gay Christians in the Church*

Resources

the INcLUSiVe GOD

RECLAIMING THEOLOGY FOR AN INCLUSIVE CHURCH
STEVEN SHAKESPEARE & HUGH RAYMENT-PICKARD

'This book is intended to make one thing absolutely clear. Inclusivity ... has nothing to do with being liberal, it's not a churchy version of political correctness. It's a gospel imperative, fundamental to the nature of God and at the very heart of the mission and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ.' GILES FRASER



HOW TO BUILD THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE



20 YEARS OF
INCLUSIVE CHURCH



Ethnicity

The Inclusive Church Resource

*Personal experiences, theological and practical resources.
The ideal handbook for churches seeking to be welcoming and open to all.*



Includes a Theology of Ethnicity by
Michael Jagessar



Sexuality

The Inclusive Church Resource

*Personal experiences, theological and practical resources.
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Includes a Theology of Sexuality by
Susannah Cornwall



Disability

The Inclusive Church Resource

*Personal experiences, theological and practical resources.
The ideal handbook for churches seeking to be welcoming and open to all.*



Includes a Theology of Disability by
John M. Hull



Gender

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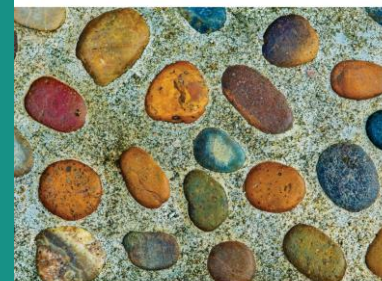
Includes a Theology of Gender by
Rosemary Lain-Priestley
Includes 'The rise and fall of Default Man' by
Grayson Perry



Poverty

The Inclusive Church Resource

*Personal experiences, theological and practical resources.
The ideal handbook for churches seeking to be welcoming and open to all.*



Includes a Theology of Poverty by
Susan Durbur



Mental Health

The Inclusive Church Resource

*Personal experiences, theological and practical resources.
The ideal handbook for churches seeking to be welcoming and open to all.*



Includes a Theology of Mental Health by
Jean Vanier & John Swinton





BECOMING MORE INCLUSIVE
A SERIES OF SEMINARS IN
ST JAMES THE LESS
DURING 2024

Tuesday 16th April, 7pm
Disability

How easily can people with disabilities access worship?
What are our prejudices and preconceptions?
What assumptions do we make about healing?

www.pangbournechurches.org/becoming-more-inclusive