

What's the Big Deal?

A View From the Under-30 Crowd

"It often happens at critical moments in history that ideas which have long held the field almost unchallenged are suddenly discovered, not to be wrong, but to be useless; then almost everyone can see they are absurd."

-- R W Southern, historian.



I worry that by holding on to traditions which should be left in the history books, the 18-35 group (generally a sparsely represented demographic in the Anglican church) will return in steadily fewer numbers to a church it feels is increasingly out of step with a more-tolerant society. This is not to say that I think the church should

be blown about by every trend and fad of popular culture. However, the movement to afford equality to the gay community (by which I of course mean gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, questioning, etc. people) has nearly as long a history as the modern civil rights movement and second-wave feminism. I fear that there is too great a discrepancy between current church policy and how young people perceive homosexuality, and I think the church should respect that. (I don't pretend to speak for everyone in my generation, or those after me. But being a relative youngster, I do perhaps have a better idea of how the younger generations feel.) Many young people don't understand what the problem is. *What exactly is the big deal?*

In terms of same-sex unions in particular, I would pose the question: Why is the

Church in such a snit over people in love? (And I sincerely hope, lest the debate take an absolutely ludicrous turn, that those opposed to same-sex unions will at least admit that people in a same-sex relationship are in love.) Shouldn't the Church be celebrating?

I think an institution founded on the principle that "God so loved the world he gave his only Son" should celebrate and support love in whatever form. It's dangerous for the Church to send the message that she does not care if an entire segment of her population falls into and out of intimate relationships, willy-nilly, without any recourse to the mechanisms within the Church to affirm, celebrate or support such relationships. And while that may not be the intention of the Church's unwillingness to recognise same-sex relationships, that

is the message that I get, and that's on good days. !

The Church must realise (and act upon the realisation) that love is love is love, and that all love is a gift from God and should be celebrated as such. I would also argue that change, when it advances the message of Christ's love, is a good thing. And I fully believe that celebrating and affirming the love two people have for each other can't do anything *but* advance the message of Christ's love.

As for the debate within the debate, that of marriage *versus* blessing, I say marriage. Simply put, my reason for this is that if it walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck. . . I've studied history long enough to know that separate but equal is virtually never "equal." And intimate relations are not dogs or houses which need blessing. They are powerful, and necessary to human life.

They need the Church's recognition and deserve its sanctification. Anything less institutionalises second-class citizenship for us.

by Anna Langenwalter



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