



CNI

NEWS FOCUS - Bishop of Grantham comes out as gay and in a relationship



***The Bishop of Grantham's announcement is a first
for the Church of England***

With rumours and threats of “outing,” the Bishop of Grantham, Nicholas Chamberlain has made a public statement on his sexual identity. According

to him, he remains celibate and will not marry as per the Church of England rules.

From [The Guardian](#):

Chamberlain was consecrated last November, and all those involved in his appointment – including Justin Welby, the archbishop of Canterbury – were aware of his personal situation. During the process of being appointed as suffragan bishop of Grantham, he said, “I was myself. Those making the appointment knew about my sexual identity.”

His appointment was made by the diocesan (senior) bishop of Lincoln, Christopher Lowson, and endorsed by Welby.

...

In a statement, Welby said: “I am and have been fully aware of Bishop Nick’s long-term, committed relationship. His appointment as bishop of Grantham was made on the basis of his skills and calling to serve the church in the diocese of Lincoln. He lives within the bishops’ guidelines and his sexuality is completely irrelevant to his office.”

In a letter to parishes in his diocese, Lowson said: “I am satisfied now, as I was at the time of his appointment, that Bishop Nicholas fully understands, and lives by, the House of Bishops’ guidance on issues in human sexuality. For me, and for those who assisted in his appointment, the fact that Bishop Nicholas is gay is not, and has never been, a determining factor.”

Statement from LGBTI Mission

The LGBTI Mission welcomes the openness that Bishop Nicholas Chamberlain has shown in revealing personal information about himself, while we deplore the media threat which has led to the need for this to happen. We assure him of our love and prayers, extending to his partner, his colleagues, and his wider family.

We are pleased that the forthcoming College of Bishops meeting will now have at least one openly LGBTI voice in their discussion of what next steps the Church of England should take in regard to same-sex relationships. We hope this will lead to increased openness among bishops so that burden does not long remain on the Bishop of Grantham alone.

The Guardian reports that Bishop Nicholas himself has said:

“I will speak [at the meeting], and this part of me will be known. I hope I’ll be able to be a standard-bearer for all people as a gay man. And I really hope that I’ll be able to help us move on beyond matters of sexuality,”

And, asked whether other bishops might follow his lead in openly declaring their sexuality, he said: “I really can only speak for myself. If I’m an encouragement to others, that would be great.”

We are also pleased that both the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Lincoln have expressed their unequivocal support for him, and confirmed that they made his appointment with full knowledge of his circumstances. But we regret that when announcing senior appointments the Church still adheres to a discriminatory policy of purposeful concealment. It is this policy which has lead directly to the discomfort which Bishop Nicholas is now experiencing.

The need to review the absurd and cruel double standard still applied in relation to sexual conduct

of the clergy remains an urgent task for the Church.

Married people write to College of Bishops

The following letter has been published yesterday by the *Sunday Times*
To All Members of the House of Bishops
September 2016

Dear Bishops

We are writing to you as married lesbian and gay members of the Church of England. Some of us are clergy; some of us are members of the laity. We are just a few of the many gay and lesbian people in this country who have in the past two years been able to celebrate with families, friends, and in our cases often our local Church community, the enriching and life enhancing love we have found in our wives and husbands.

We would like you to know that we will be praying for you as you meet in September as a College of Bishops.

Now that the Shared Conversations are at an end it is time for the Church of England to move forward and make clear the commitment to 'good disagreement' that was at their heart. We fully appreciate that the time may not yet be right for a change in the Church's official understanding of marriage. But many in our parishes have already made that move and it is time to respect that a diversity of theology within the Church now exists and that there is more than one understanding of what a faithful Christian may believe on these issues.

As you meet to discuss we seek from you a clear lead that offers a way forward to greater inclusion that will enable those parishes that wish to do so to celebrate the love that we have found in our wives and husbands. We hope for an outcome that will enable those who wish to do so to publicly celebrate where we see God at work in the lives of our congregations without fear and in openness.

We encourage you to be bold, and to be honest about what many of you already believe from your own experience, and to what you know to be increasingly the direction of travel, not just in our Church but in many Churches in this country.

We will always want to see the full inclusion of LGBTI people in the Church, and we will continue to work towards it. We look forward to welcoming a first step in that process and a move away from the harm and hurt that has so often been done in the name of the Church.

Yours in Christ

Clergy:

1. The Revd Andrew Foreshew-Cain and Stephen Foreshew-Cain
 2. The Revd Richard Harris and Ricardo Goncalves.
 3. The Revd Garry Lawson and Timothy H. Wane
 4. The Revd Clive Larson and John Markham
 5. The Revd Paul Collier and Mr Collier
 6. The Revd Canon Jeremy Davis and Simon McEnery
 7. The Revd Geoffrey Thompson and Tony Steeles
 8. The Revd Prof Mark Cobb and Keith Arrowsmith
- Laity
9. Jeremy Timm & Mike Brown
 10. Ruth Wilde & Ellie Wilde
 11. Jack Semple and Ross Griffiths
 12. Paul Jellings and Andrew Carter

13. Erica Baker and Susan Strong
14. Karen and Samantha Bregazzi-Jones
15. Keith Barber and Tim Mills
16. Simon Dawson and David Mooney

In addition a further seven clergy couples and Readers have indicated their support for this letter whilst wishing to remain anonymous in order to protect themselves, and often their Bishops, from attack.

Fourteen gay Anglican priests urge bishops to take lead on inclusion - Guardian

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/sep/03/conservative-anglicans-appointment-of-gay-bishop-a-major-error>

Bishop of Grantham becomes first Church of England bishop to come out publicly as gay Telegraph.co.uk

The Bishop of Grantham, Nicholas Chamberlain, has become the first ever bishop in the **Church of England** to state publicly that he is in a gay relationship. Bishops are ... May God bless & uphold them as they are suddenly thrust into the **media** spotlight!

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/09/02/bishop-of-grantham-becomes-first-church-of-england-bishop-to-com/>

Gafcon Statement on the Appointment of the Bishop of Grantham

We note with prayerful concern the revelation that Nicholas Chamberlain, Bishop of Grantham, is in a same sex relationship.

Our understanding is that the nature of his relationship conforms to the guidelines set out by the Bishops, and that he has not been campaigning publicly for a change in the church's teaching on sex and marriage. We do not doubt that he has many gifts as a leader and pastor.

However there are aspects of this appointment which are a serious cause for concern for biblically orthodox Anglicans around the world, and therefore we believe that this appointment is a major error.

In 2003, Jeffrey John's candidacy for the post of Bishop of Reading caused deep divisions within

the Diocese of Oxford and beyond, and this news about Nicholas Chamberlain will exacerbate the same divisions within the Church of England and throughout the wider Anglican Communion.

In this case the element of secrecy in the appointment to the episcopacy of a man in a same sex relationship gives the impression that it has been arranged with the aim of presenting the church with a 'fait accompli', rather than engaging with possible opposition in the spirit of the 'shared conversations'.

<http://gafcon.org/2016/09/gafcon-statement-on-the-appointment-of-the-bishop-of-grantham/>

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