

British Anglicans unmoved on gay issues: Same-sex relationships tolerated among laity but not clergy

News in the [March 9, 2004](#) issue

The Church of England's governing General Synod has voiced strong support for greater acceptance of homosexuals, but the church's official stance—of tolerating gay relationships among the laity but not among the clergy—remains unchanged.

A document prepared by the House of Bishops setting out the differing views and arguments on the contentious issue was commended to the church for further study and reflection.

Sister Rosemary, a nun from Nottingham, said she is satisfied with her own celibate life but argued that forced celibacy is as abhorrent as forced marriage. "What our church no longer requires of heterosexual clergy it still insists on for those who are homosexual," she said. The synod also heard from an openly gay priest, Paul Collier of the Diocese of Southwark, who has been living with his male partner for five years. For gays and lesbians, he said, "abstinence can only be sterile and hopeless."

Nevertheless, Bishop Michael Scott-Joynt of Winchester warned against the synod's giving a signal that it would stray from biblical prohibitions against homosexual behavior, and Bishop Richard Harries of Oxford called for a sound biblical and theological foundation for any future changes. *-Religion News Service*