Marriage and Same-Sex Relationships: How do LGBT Christians in the General Synod construct their sexual and religious identity?

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Introduction

In February 2017, the House of Bishops released a report titled 'GS2055 Marriage and Same-Sex Relationships after the Shared Conversations'. Subsequently, there was a debate in the General Synod on whether to 'take note' of GS2055, which was lost. This essay will look at the speeches of the self-declared LGBT members of the General Synod and how they linguistically construct their sexual and religious identity.

The General Synod is the legislative governing body of the Church of England. The current key piece of legislation relating to sexuality is *Issues in Human Sexuality* (1991). This expresses the ideal of celibacy for homosexual individuals, though encourages acceptance for homosexual Christians who chose to be in a committed relationship (Issues, 1991: 41). For gay clergy however, it required celibacy (Issues, 1991: 44). In 2014, gay marriage was legalized in the UK, and the Church of England was officially opposed to it (Government Consultation on same sex Marriage, 2012). Proposed by the Pilling Report (2013), the Church began a two-year process of 'Shared Conversations', which was intended to bring together members of the Church with differing attitudes about homosexuality, in order to reach a better understanding of individual's realities. Over 1300 members of the Church were involved (Statement following conclusion of Shared Conversations Process, 2016), and afterwards the House of Bishops compiled GS2055. It reaffirmed the Church's belief that marriage is between one man and one woman (GS2055, 2017: 8), but emphasised the importance of a new tone of welcome and affirmation for homosexual individuals (8). It restated that clergy should be held to a higher standard of sexuality, and so homosexual clergy should be celibate (10).

Despite the Church's efforts to be seen as welcoming towards the LGBT community, it is still viewed by the secular world as homophobic. In part this is due to the umbrella term of Christianity, which includes conservative evangelical churches who loudly condemn homosexuality. Within the Church of England, LGBT members struggle with this apparent

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conflict between their religion and their sexuality: horrifically, in some cases, leading to suicide (BBC, 2018). The attitude and stance of the Church then, should be closely analysed in order to suggest a manner in which they might successfully welcome the LGBT community. In looking at the language of confident homosexual Christians in a highly formal religious context, we can analyse their negotiation and construction of these two identities. Understanding the discourses used helps to reveal broader social implications and ideologies, within both the individuals and the Church.

Literature Review

Terminology

Identity is understood in this essay as 'the social positioning of self and other' (Butcholtz and Hall, 2005: 586). An individual has multiple identities that are socially created and influenced, and the importance certain identities have fluctuates depending on circumstance (Baker, 2008). According to Edwards (2009), 'religion was historically more often the bedrock of identity' (100), and in an increasingly secular country such as the United Kingdom, religious identity can be challenged and problematised. Religious identity refers to not only the religious group one adheres to, but also the nuances of theologies and traditions within a given religion. Within Anglicanism, there is the Anglican Communion (the denomination throughout the world), the Church of England (the Anglican Church within England), High Church (adhering to more Catholic traditions) and Low Church/Evangelical (more emphasis on Scripture) (Brittain and McKinnon, 2011). Sexual identity is a part of sexuality, and is 'how people express and view themselves as sexual beings' (Baker, 2008: 6). Sexual identity also has a range of categories that all come with their own political and social assumptions and expectations (Queen, 2004; Butcholtz and Hall, 2004).

Identity Theories and Communities

Identity in current scholarship is primarily seen as contextual (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006 – see for a summary of the history of identity theory). It is also seen as subconscious, particularly in the way different identities are performed and foregrounded; Butcholtz and Hall (2004) argue that identity 'cannot be fully intentional if it is produced by practices and ideologies that may exceed conscious awareness' (493). That said, an individual will align or disalign themselves with certain identities, whether conscious or not, and this may depend on the context and the significance certain identities have in that situation and period of life (Baker, 2008). Spencer-Oatey (2007) refers to 'centrality' to explain the importance a given identity might have to an individual, and 'valence' for how an individual feels towards a certain identity (641). Depending on how central or important an identity is, this may be fairly fixed, while others, particularly those one feels aversion to, may fluctuate (Edwards, 2009). Often aversion can be felt towards an identity because they are viewed as problematic or marginalised, and can become fixated on (Baker, 2008). One can construct identity (consciously or otherwise) as positively or negatively positioned towards different aspects of identity. Butcholtz and Hall (2004) lay out a polarity structure, listing the binaries as 'sameness versus difference, genuineness versus artifice, and institutional recognition versus structural marginalisation' (494). Often, we prefer to 'maintain a positive social identity' (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006: 25), but this can also include distancing ourselves from other identities that are less preferred (Edwards, 2009).

This then becomes about how our identities change depending on the context, and the community. Wenger (1998) postulated the concept of communities of practice, defined as a group of people who come together and work together towards a goal. Our membership to our various communities is crucial to developing, forming and understanding our identities. They are 'historical, social, cultural, institutional' and so are similarly influenced by wider contextualities (Wenger, 1998: 74). Certain communities develop

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certain ways of being and doing, and so often our membership to a community depends on how well we can adhere to these ways of being and doing (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 1992). However, like identities, communities are not static, and practices change and fluctuate depending on its members and the values held (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 1992). An individual never belongs to just one community of practice, and so has to constantly negotiate various multi-memberships (Wenger, 1998). This can cause tensions, and the negotiation and reconciliation of these identities is crucial in constructing our identity (Wenger, 1998). While communities of practice refer to smaller, specific groups, Wenger (1998) calls the larger configurations of identity 'constellations' (127); they are connected as a community in a broader scale way. Identities related to these wider constellations can also be brought into conflict within membership to communities; this can be looked at as intersectionality, where overlapping broader categories of identity interact, and the social pressures and powers of each have to be considered (Yip and Page, 2013:10).

Sexual and Religious Identity

Sexual identity has been explored through the lens of Queer Theory, which examines how non-normative sexualities are marginalised (Motschenbacher and Stegu, 2013). Sexual marginalization rather than sexual orientation is what 'queers' an individual (Butcholtz and Hall, 2004: 491). Sexual identity theories then look at the power imbalances in a situation and how this problematises a sexuality. Coming out is one aspect of this, as it forces attention towards a non-heteronormative sexuality (Chirrey, 2003). However, even within this, Queer Theory critiques the categories that are given to various sexualities, as it creates socio-political expectations that real individual experiences rarely adhere to (Motschenbacher and Stegu, 2013).

Religious identity has, in certain contexts, historical and hierarchical power, although the extent to which this identity is expressed and the importance it holds within an individual depends entirely on their faith and the context, and carries political and social connotations (Spencer-Oatey, 2007). Often discourses in academia and the media depict religion and sexuality in conflict, viewing sexuality as liberating, and religion as restrictive, especially with non-normative sexualities (Yip and Page, 2013). However, this ignores the nuanced reality for many religious individuals, who continue to mediate and reconcile their religious and sexual identity.

Research on the negotiation of identities by LGBT religious people have revealed that there is huge variation in how individuals deal with the apparent conflict. Studies are often centred around North American Evangelicals, some of whom, in order to reconcile their identities, completely reject their non-normative sexuality (see Peebles, 2014, on the narratives of ex-gays and ex-ex-gays). In the Anglican Church, the changing acceptance of gay clergy has led them to be frustrated with having to separate their private and public life, viewing it as inauthentic to themselves (Keenan, 2009). Ledbetter (2017) has noted the 'culture of deep institutional uncertainty' (112) in the legislation and varying degrees of acceptance of homosexual relationships with clergy and ordinands (someone who is being trained to be a member of clergy (Church of England, Glossary)). The requirement of celibacy for homosexual clergy results in a 'good gay/bad gay' dichotomy (Ledbetter, 2017: 117). However, it is entirely possible to come to a positive reconciliation of sexual and religious identity, where there is an acceptance of both identities (Yip, 1999). This is assisted by the affirmation of others and of institutions, which help 'gay Christians to make connections between different aspects of self' (Keenan, 2009: 24).

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Identity and Language

Amongst others, language is a way in which an individual can communicate and construct their identity, and can reveal how they want their identity to be seen in a wider social context, but also how their identity is affected by that same context. Butler (2011) postulated performativity, arguing that the way we present ourselves and our identity is, consciously and unconsciously, performed. We align or disalign ourselves with certain stances or positions, and so our identity is constructed (Queen, 2004). As mentioned, our identity is often constructed through membership to different communities, and language is one way of reinforcing our in-group status, to the extent that individuals will vary their language depending on which community of practice they are engaging in (Edwards, 2009). This is known as the 'linguistic repertoire' and is 'a set of resources for the articulation of multiple memberships and forms of participation' (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 1992:98). Changing our language is central to negotiating multi-membership and identity conflict, particularly as ideologies and socio-political influences change (McConnell-Ginet, 2014). Language allows us to gain approval in a community, but can also be used to distance ourselves from those whom we do not desire approval, and further construct our group identity (Edwards, 2009).

To understand how LGBT Christians form their identity, it is useful to note how the issue of language, sexuality and religion has been dealt with: predominantly, the research has focused on homophobic language used by religious institutions or individuals. This indicates the environment in which their identity is being constructed. Peterson (2010) has demonstrated how North American Evangelical churches legitimise their homophobic stances by using scientific rather than religious language. In secular debates over homosexuality and same-sex marriage, religious persons have defended their homophobic stance through positioning the church or themselves as the victim (Turner, Mills, van der Bom, Coffey-Glover, Paterson and Jones, 2018). Discourse used frames homosexuality in

negative terms, relating to 'sin, compliance, tradition and aberration' (van der Bom, Coffey-Glover, Jones, Mills, Paterson, 2015: 4). Baker (2004), on the debate on gay male law reform, noted the move away from identity towards the act of homosexual sex, reflecting a 'love the sinner, hate the sin' ideology espoused by more conservative Christians. That said, Catedral (2018) demonstrated that individual heterosexual religious people seemed more open to change and promoted a generally positive attitude towards homosexuality, but argued that institutional action was required to achieve significant and sustainable change.

Language and identity for LGBT Christians is therefore constructed in a generally negative context. As such, individuals can construct their identity explicitly, but also implicitly through implicatures and presuppositions, depending on the context (Butcholtz and Hall, 2005; McConnell-Ginet, 2014). Chirrey (2003), on coming out, argues for a continuum, the indirect binary involving conversational or contextual strategies (28). The directness of coming out can be difficult, as language comes with 'conceptual baggage', referring to ideologies and assumptions that a person or a group might have about a particular word or identifier (McConnell-Ginet, 2014: 318). This is crucial for understanding sexual identity construction; religious language, however, is very marked and can be a key indicator of belonging and communicating beliefs (Edwards, 2009; Scott, 2010). Religious language also allows the 'identity, agency [and] authority' to be vague due to its multivocalic nature (Keane, 1997: 47). However, religious discourse can also be used and subverted in order to create religious identities (Power, 2014). In Yip's (1999) analysis of LGBT clergy, he noted how the participants used religious discourse to critique and challenge the Church and its position. He argues that they react 'against the frame of meanings imposed by the Church' and 'constantly invent and reinvent narratives' to form their personal and social identity (Yip, 1999: 60).

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Methodology

Data

The data is from the Report of Proceedings from the February 2017 General Synod group of sessions. This is a transcript of the debate, which is in the public domain and can be found on the General Synod website, as can the audio recordings. As the data is public and the members are public figures, there was no need to anonymise the data. The GS2005 Report discussed can also be found online. The official transcript was formalised, so I edited it according to the audio to more accurately reflect the speakers' language. Given the length of the debate, I have reproduced just the speeches which I analyse in the appendix; whilst this may seem to remove them from their context, the structure of the General Synod means each speech is self-contained, rather than a response to previous speeches. In the debate, speakers are limited to three minutes, and have previously had to submit their request to speak, including a short summary of what they intend to say and if they are for or against the motion. This is so the Chair can hear a balance of gender, points of view and Houses (the Synod is divided into three Houses – Bishop, Clergy and Laity (not ordained) (Guide to the General Synod, 2015: 18). In this debate, there were over 160 applications, so not everyone was able to speak, and members were asked to sit down if their points had already been made (Report of Proceedings, 2017: 262).

The debate is in a highly formal religious setting, with a fairly even cross-section of the theologies and hierarchies within the Church of England. The topic of this debate is 'Marriage and Same-Sex Relationships after the Shared Conversations', and so sexuality becomes a foregrounded issue where it is relevant for members to reference their own sexuality if they so choose. The speakers I have selected are the ones who linguistically identify themselves, explicitly or implicitly, as homosexual, and I will analyse how they

construct and negotiate their religious and sexual identity in the context of this debate. This has resulted in eight speeches, seven men and one woman, and so three speakers from the House of Laity, five from the House of Clergy, and none from the House of Bishops. Many of the speakers are fairly vocal about their sexuality in the wider Church context: Ed Shaw and Sam Allberry are two of the three coordinators of the same-sex Christian website *Living Out*, and various other speakers are or have been involved in *Inclusive Church*, *LGBTI Mission* and *Rainbow Church*. Some have also written books about their sexuality, such as Shaw's *The Plausibility Problem* (2015), Allberry's *Is God Anti-Gay* (2013) and Goddard's *Space for Grace* (2008). These are individuals who are relatively comfortable in their negotiation of their sexual and religious identity: 'they are now at the stage of *being*, rather than *becoming*, gay Christians' (Yip, 1999: 49).

Discourse Analysis

Given the structure of this debate and my focus on identity, I have chosen to analyse the data based on de Fina's (2011) discourse and identity structure. She identifies positioning, footing, style and stylization as the key ways in which identity is revealed during discourse (271-274). Positioning is the way a speaker constructs their identity within a community. Footing is based on Goffman's (1981) theory of animator, author and principal, and analyses how speakers align themselves with certain stances, and take responsibility for their discourse. According to Goffman (1981), 'a change in footing implies a change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present' (128). Style is about how an individual speech relates to wider social contexts, and can be 'affiliative or disaffiliative', while stylization is repurposing the language of others (de Fina, 2011: 273-274).

Within this structure, other discourse features and how they are used in the construction of identity will be considered. Implicatures and presuppositions are used

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(McConnell-Ginet, 2014) and de Fina (2011) refers to the importance of indexicality, linguistic meanings, associations and symbols that construct an identity. Looking at the religious rhetoric and 'self-conscious uses of linguistic resource[s]' such as recontextualized terminology or biblical quotations are crucial in constructing religious identity (Keane, 1997: 48). As a part of this, conceptual metaphor theory helps reveal underlying ideologies, especially when in relation to religious language (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003; Kövescse, 2017). Catedral (2018) has noted the use of the multi-vocalic 'we' in religious speech, which blurs the lines between interlocuter and narrator. Pronouns position the speaker in different social spaces, and allow the speaker to adjust their alignment to various stances (Yates and Hiles, 2010: 537). Given my requirement that the speakers must linguistically identify themselves as homosexual, I have used Chirrey's (2003) theory and continuum on coming out to analyse the ways the speakers declare their sexuality to the General Synod. These will be considered with the broader concepts of identity categories and local occasioning (de Fina, 2011), revealing the wider social implications of the relationship between the Church and the LGBT community.

Analysis

'A gay man like myself... a same sex attracted Christian like myself': speakers' positioning of their religious and sexual identity.

Speakers can position their sexuality through the process of coming out, and how directly this is done varies the attention drawn to it (Chirrey, 2003). Two of the speakers come out explicitly and directly: 'I am a lesbian' (148) and 'I am same-sex attracted' (89). These are constructed as independent clauses, and so carry the most important information, and also use unambiguous terms for homosexuality; their sexuality therefore is foregrounded and unavoidable. Both these phrases are placed at the beginning of the

speech, thereby indexing their sexuality immediately. Three speakers position their sexual identity directly but in a dependent clause: 'as a gay man' (60), 'he is the first person I ever told I was gay' (3), 'a gay man like myself' (142). This has the dual effect of drawing and deflecting attention away; they use clear homosexual identity markers, but their act of coming out is rendered subordinate by the grammatical structure, positioned as contextual information to their main statement.

Three of the speakers come out to the General Synod implicitly. Goddard uses third person: 'the vicar is gay and he has a partner' (116). He has previously clearly identified himself as the vicar referenced, and uses explicit homosexual identity markers. However, in referring to himself in the third person, he distances himself as an individual from these labels, and puts the focus on the professional religious position he holds. Collocating 'vicar' and 'gay' foregrounds both his sexual and religious identity, forcing the audience to reconcile the congruency of these two identities. Foreshew-Cain identifies himself with the collective LGBT community, rather than as a homosexual individual: 'we, your LGBTI brothers and sisters' (47). In using the first-person plural pronoun he positions himself with the collective and so focuses the attention on the community, placing himself as a spokesperson for them. Both these speakers have still used clear homosexual identifiers; Nunn, however, completely relies on implicature. He reveals his sexuality through a narrative: 'a priest in our own diocese turned to me and said, "You know, Andrew, you cannot be saved"' (176-177). This communicates his sexual identity through the presupposition that the Christian audience will have knowledge of the language of sin and salvation used regarding homosexuality. This not only identifies himself as homosexual but also critiques the way in which homosexuality is treated and referred to by Christians. That he presupposes the audience will understand he is homosexual reveals the uncomfortable commonality of the phrase 'you cannot be saved' in regard to sexuality. Implicitly coming out linguistically protects them, as it avoids the direct unambiguity of stating their

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apparently problematic sexuality. That said, two out of the three use explicit identity markers, and so expand their experience as a homosexual Christian to the wider, more generalised experience of homosexual Christians; they speak as a representative.

Some speakers collocate their sexual identity with their religious identity. Greene unambiguously states 'I am a lesbian Christian' (148), Shaw identifies as a 'same-sex attracted Christian' (142) and Goddard explains 'the vicar is gay' (116). Combining these explicit sexual identifiers with explicit religious identifiers foregrounds their connection, and reaffirms their membership to each community, suggesting a successful reconciliation of identities (Wenger, 1998). Using religious identifiers such as 'Christian' and 'vicar' is unnecessary due to the context of the debate: they must be Christian to be in the Synod, and the professional clergy role is already declared prior to their speech in the declaration of their name and title. In collocating his sexual identity and his hierarchical religious position, he constructs his identity as reconciled, and equally challenges the audience to consider how they might react to this collocation. Similarly, Greene establishes her role within the Church as a 'churchwarden' (leading lay officer in a parish (Church of England, Glossary)) and 'a lay worship leader' (149). Whilst this is new information, it is not relevant to the debate, and so in foregrounding it, Greene affirms her own hierarchical position within the Church. Though there is no official Church of England stance, certain churches will not have a homosexual person who is in a relationship in a position of leadership within the church. Identifying herself as having official responsibilities within the hierarchy of the church challenges this stance.

The two main sexual identifiers used are 'gay' and 'same-sex attracted'. Though both have the same dictionary definition, they have significantly different connotations. In positioning themselves as either gay or same-sex attracted, the speakers communicate other beliefs and ideologies they hold, and perform their sexuality differently (Baker, 2008). Same-sex attracted is a phrase predominantly associated with and used by Christians, often

evangelical Christians with traditional beliefs about sex and marriage. The speakers who identify themselves as 'gay' or 'lesbian' all reference a partner, while those who identify as 'same-sex attracted' adhere to the 'traditional understanding of marriage being between a man and a woman and the only godly context for sex' (97-98). Shaw specifically chooses to collocate 'gay' with 'man' and 'same-sex attracted' with 'Christian' (142), as demonstrated when he goes to say 'gay Christian' but corrects himself, emphasising same-sex attracted as the adjective that matches with Christian. This correction indicates that for Shaw, 'gay' and 'Christian' are incongruent. This suggests the connotations Shaw associates with 'gay' are in conflict with his Christian values and theology, and that one identity eliminates the possibility of the other identity. Allberry explicitly states that he is 'someone who uses the language of same-sex attraction' (100), and is consciously aware of his language choices and that they are separate from others. He also foregrounds the matter of identity, arguing that 'sexuality is not a matter of identity for me' (91). Given that he has previously identified his sexuality as 'same-sex attracted' indicates that this is an emphatic statement: that his core identity is his religious one, and so his sexuality and need for sexual relationships are not important. The statement suggests he views identity as a personal choice, as who he is, and as his theology views his sexual desires as in conflict with his faith, he chooses his faith, and so rejects his sexuality. Baker (2008) includes in his definition of sexual identity 'how people express and view themselves as sexual beings' (6); in rejecting sexuality as an identity marker, he also positions himself further away from 'gay' and the connotations that come with that descriptor.

'*We are baptized, faithful, prayerful'*: speakers' footing of their religious and sexual identity.

The first-person plural pronoun 'we', is used to reveal how speakers align their identity (Yates and Hiles, 2010). It predominantly refers to the General Synod as a group,

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reaffirming their membership to that community of practice (Wenger, 1998). In using the collective pronoun, the speaker takes a 'collaborative stance' (Power, 2014: 66); they attribute failure to the whole group, rather than direct accusation, in 'whilst we are here trying to exclude people of faith' (80) and 'we are calling our saviour subhuman' (95). This encourages group responsibility and creates a multivocalic 'we' that aligns themselves with the failure (Catedral, 2018). The practice of absolution and repentance is common in Christianity, and so, though implicit, further aligns themselves with Christian morals. There is frequent collocation between 'we' and 'need' in reference to the LGBT community: 'We need openly confident LGBT' (46), 'we need love' (55). These declaratives combined with a collective pronoun create a deontic modality, expressing the speakers' desire and vision for a more inclusive church. The strength of 'need' gives the declaratives an urgency, and encourages the audience to take action.

The collective pronoun used to refer to the LGBT community tends to collocate with descriptors: 'we are flesh and blood' (50), 'we are baptized, faithful, prayerful' (49) and 'we are not beggars' (48). This aligns the speaker with the LGBT community, and then qualifies what that means, using explicitly Christian characteristics ('baptized') and synecdoche ('flesh and blood'), the latter connoting the practice of communion, whilst also emphasising the physicality of LGBT individuals. These qualifiers reinforce the status of the LGBT community as a part of the Christian community. Giving them Christian qualities subverts the audience's presuppositions about the community. In this, the speaker has taken pre-existing religious discourse and become an active author, constructing their own stance (Power, 2014). The statement 'we are not beggars' uses the source domain of someone in need, a powerless figure, to explain how he feels the Church views the target domain of the LGBT community (Kövecse, 2017). The concept of 'the LGBT community are (not) beggars' extends to the concept that 'the LGBT community are (not) powerless', and so in his

negation of this metaphor, has both asserted how the community is viewed by the Church, whilst rejecting it and reasserting LGBT agency.

Greene shifts her footing with third person plural pronouns, acting as a spokesperson for her congregation (Yates and Hiles, 2010). She states that 'they all want [sex] to be a possibility' (155) and 'they were horrified' (156) in reference to the Church's stance of celibacy. The responsibility for these statements is attributed to the congregation, so whilst she is the author and animator, the congregation is the principal (Goffman, 1981). Greene does align herself with their beliefs ('Like me, they love our church' (169)) but this third person pronoun distances herself and constructs herself as a representative for her congregation, and focuses on the wider community. Speakers also align themselves with Christian ideals in dealing with people who disagree with them; Butler says, 'I'll always be grateful' (4) in reference to the member of Synod who disagrees with his choice to be in a homosexual relationship. Nunn constructs himself as aligning with Christian values in his response to a priest's words: 'Thank you, because it must have taken quite a lot of courage to say that to me' (178). Butler also describes other speakers as 'faithful godly' (30), using positive Christian evaluative adjectives, constructing his identity religious identity through evaluation of others (Power, 2014).

Although speakers generally construct their sexual and religious identity as personally harmonious, they are also constructed as institutionally marginalised and conflicted. There are explicit, direct accusations: 'their question to you is: is this an example of institutionalized homophobia?' (158), 'I now feel I am being bullied at Synod' (103). The rhetorical question and declarative accuse the Synod of homophobia, for both 'lesbian' and 'same-sex attracted' individuals. Both statements however are softened, in the third-person plural pronoun 'their' and the hedge 'I feel' (Brown and Levinson, 1987). This implies a reluctance to directly, impolitely accuse the Synod and, in using these politeness strategies, establish the speakers as able to challenge the Church reasonably and rationally. There are

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comparisons with heterosexuality: 'you…do not expect this of James… and his wife Sue' (157), and 'as you will know if you are married or opposite-sex attracted' (74). Both use the second person plural pronoun to directly address the audience and the House of Bishops, presupposing that the majority of the audience will be heterosexual and adhere to the Church's teachings on marriage. These statements bring the treatment of homosexuality and heterosexuality in direct contrast, in particular through the phrase 'opposite-sex attracted', subverting 'same-sex attracted' and critiquing the binary created. This highlights the dissonance between the institutional treatment of heterosexual and homosexual relationships.

'Your LGBTI brothers and sisters deserve better': speakers' use of style to construct their religious and sexual identity.

Speakers address the audience with familial language: 'Sisters and brothers in Christ' (58) and 'my brothers and sisters in the House of Bishops' (31). They utilize the 'Church is a Family' scheme, taking the source domain of family to explain how the target domain of the Church should function (Kövecse, 2017). This schema is commonly used within the Church; however, the phrase 'brothers and sisters (in Christ)' is specifically associated with High Church. Referencing the House of Bishops includes them in this family metaphor and implicitly overrides the superior hierarchical position they hold. This has the effect of reminding the Bishops, who wrote GS2055, that in the family schema, they are equal to the speakers. In addressing the audience in this clearly religious and familial way, they firmly place themselves as homosexual individuals who are unambiguously part of the Church and the Synod. They explicitly collocate the LGBT community with the Family schema, such as 'your LGBTI sisters and brothers deserve better' (36), 'we are your family in Christ' (49) and 'my brother and I in Christ' (20). They directly relate the second-person possessive with familial metaphors, and in referencing directly to Christ, foregrounds the deity and uses

High Church language, appealing to those who hold a traditional view on marriage. Phrases associated with High Church are used in reference to homosexuality: 'preserve this doctrine' (106), 'traditional doctrine of marriage' (105) and 'living dishonestly in relation to the doctrine of the Church' (10). The former two phrases are used by Allberry, who identifies as 'same-sex attracted', and the latter used by Butler to refer to someone else's belief. As High Church is associated with a more traditional theology, Allberry has constructed his religious identity as adhering to this belief, whilst Butler has stylized it in order to index the principal's ideology as more traditional. Allberry then, is affiliating himself to a certain theology and individuals within the Synod that share that theology; Butler, in contrast, is disaffiliating himself with that same group.

In-group religious jargon constructs speakers' identity as being confidently Christian: the recontextualization of Bible quotations demonstrate their ability to use their linguistic resources (Keane, 1997). Butler directly references Genesis 32:26 for his final persuasive point, telling the Synod 'I will not let you go until you bless me' (27), recontextualizing the statement from being said by Jacob to God, to being said by the LGBT community to the General Synod. Others more implicitly embed quotations into their speech, relying on audience knowledge: 'do not be afraid' (Joshua 1:9) (59) and 'perfect love casts out fear' (1 John 4:18) (56). The focus of the biblical quotations is on love, acceptance, and overcoming fear, demonstrating how speakers affirmative of same-sex relationships source the emotive aspects of the Bible and consider this to be authoritative (Power, 2014: 77). Religious metaphorical language is used through the loaded terminology of freedom and salvation, which is used to critique the Church for taking on the role of God in regard to these issues. GS2055 'fails to set all God's people free' (78), Nunn will 'pray that he can be saved' (179) and Goddard says the phrase 'maximum freedom' makes him think of 'a prisoner in his cell' (124-125). GS2055 then, is holding the LGBT community prisoner, assisted by the Church and General Synod. Styling their language to evoke ideas of salvation is particularly

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effective in this community, and constructs their sexual identity as controlled and marginalised by the Church.

Discussion

The LGBT speakers in this debate construct their religious and sexual identity as personally congruent but institutionally marginalised. Despite being in a highly religious setting, many speakers utilize specific in-group language, and continuously make unnecessary reference to their faith and their professional role within the Church. This suggests that even though they are in a context where it is required that they have a faith, there remains a desire to reaffirm their position within the community of the General Synod. This desire suggests that they feel this identity is under threat from their sexual identity, and so their need to re-establish, to the audience and themselves, their place within that community of practice emphasises their fear and feeling of being institutionally marginalized. Speakers also recontextualise religious discourse and biblical quotations in order to frame their identity, and use these to encourage the Church to adopt a more loving and welcoming attitude to the LGBT community. Certain High Church lexis suggests their belonging to a particular group within the wider community, and also indicates their individual theology without necessarily explicitly stating it. Butler implicitly stylizes this lexis to disalign himself from this theology and associate it with homophobic sentiments. Collective pronouns predominantly refer to the community of the General Synod, and the High Church familial metaphors further reinforce their in-group status.

Generally, the speakers portray their sexuality positively, whether defining themselves as 'gay' or 'same-sex attracted'. However, both depict it as marginalised by the Church. These are individuals who, by being able to come out in front of the General Synod, have a high level of confidence and security in their sexual identity, and many of them are

prominently vocal about their beliefs on sexuality outside of the Synod. As such, if these individuals feel their sexuality is marginalised by the Church, members of the wider Church of England who are still struggling with the apparent conflict between sexuality and faith are likely to feel even more marginalised. Some speakers linguistically reassert LGBT agency, implying that the Church views the LGBT community as passive. In keeping with Butcholtz and Hall's (2004) structure of polarities of identification, there is evidently a desire to obtain institutional recognition, but a feeling of structural marginalisation. This is to the extent that a question of concern prior to the debate raised the issue of potential discrimination occurring as a result of individuals coming out in the Synod, particularly for clergy. The General Synod response was 'LGBT applicants and their colleagues should be treated equally by Church employers … that said, it would be unrealistic to suggest this will be something that Church employers have always got right' (Report of Proceedings, 2017: 48). Metaphors of freedom and salvation reflect this literal structural marginalisation, and construct their sexual identity within it. The speakers' clear frustration and explicit disappointment with the Synod and GS2055 reflect Wenger's (1998) point that 'an organization whose design reflects the privileging of certain perspectives and the marginalization of others is always less than itself' (261).

Speakers' use different identifiers to construct their sexual and religious identities, and so are able to communicate not just their sexuality, but also their religious theology. The identity categories 'gay' and 'same-sex attracted' come with distinct connotations, and are marginalised, reflecting Butcholtz and Hall's (2004) stance that queering is about 'not sexual orientation but sexual marginalisation' (491). There is the queerness of homosexuality, and then the queerness of same-sex attraction: 'I was bullied at school for being gay. I now feel I am being bullied at Synod for being same-sex attracted' (Allberry, 115). The identifier 'same-sex attracted' indicates their sexual identity, but subsumes it within their religious identity. Shaw's explicit collocation of 'gay man' and 'same-sex

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attracted Christian' clearly communicates the ideology that one cannot be Christian and gay. Indeed, in Allberry's direct statement that 'sexuality is not a matter of identity for me', demonstrating that in identifying oneself as 'same-sex attracted', the individual has decentralized this aspect of their identity, and suggests a negative valence towards their sexuality and an aversion towards acting on it (Spencer-Oatey, 2007). Abstinence and celibacy are associated within Christianity with holiness and purity; indeed, choosing to be celibate is 'an agentic act in resisting dominant cultural norms' (Yip and Page, 2013: 111). In this, they foreground their faith above their sexuality, which reflects Ledbetter's (2017) 'good gay/bad gay dichotomy' (117), where a 'good gay' here not only follows the Church's teachings on homosexuality, but foregrounds and emphasises it in one word. In creating new terminology to describe homosexuality, they have created a distinction between gay Christians and same-sex attracted Christians, an unnecessary additional divide in an already divided Church. This indicates the broader social implications of this study, that despite the Church of England's efforts to be more welcoming to the LGBT community, even those members of the Church who are secure in their religious and sexual identity feel marginalised. Understanding how these speakers' construct their identity reveal ways in which the Church are marginalising the community, in viewing them as passive, as outside the Church, and needing salvation. Speakers attempt to reassert LGBT agency and establish the LGBT community as already a part of the Church, critiquing the idea that the Church needs to save them.

Whilst this study has proved useful in highlighting individual homosexual Christians' construction of their identity, it is highly limited. The number of participants is small, and within the data there is only one woman. The context is highly religious, and not a comfortable context in which to come out, therefore the individuals analysed are confident in their identity. There are also individuals that speak in the debate who are part of the LGBT community, but do not indicate this in their speech, either because they do not want

to, or because it is already commonly known. For analysing the construction of identity, de Fina's (2011) structure revealed this in detail; however, analysing the data with an argumentation structure, or politeness angle might have been differently interesting.

However, this study has been one of few to look at the Church of England and Christian LGBT language. Given the breadth and variation of theology within the Church, it is particularly salient for linguistic analysis in terms of how they negotiate different beliefs and apparently conflicting identities. The Church's current desire to be more welcoming to the LGBT community means it is worth closely analysing the language used so that implicit ideologies might be uncovered, and new, more constructive uses of language might be suggested. It looked at this intersection of identities with the hope that in revealing how these identities are constructed, positive progress might be made as a result of the conclusions. Previous studies often focus on the homophobic nature of religious institutions; whilst it is extremely important to analyse and critique them for such language, it is also important to keep in mind the individuals that make up that institution and the nuances within how they negotiate their sexual and religious identities.

Conclusion

My analysis has found that the way in which LGBT members of the General Synod construct their sexual and religious identity is highly nuanced, and communicates two identities that are personally negotiated and accepted, but institutionally rejected. Their sexual identity for the most part is clear and unambiguous, though does occasionally rely on implicatures that function successfully in a Christian context. All members repeatedly reinforce their religious identity through in-group language, often to explicitly emphasise that the LGBT community is already a part of the Church. In constructing their identity as both confidently homosexual and Christian, they critique the Church for this attitude of salvation and mindset of welcoming.

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There has been little previous work done on the Anglican Church and homosexual identities. This study has provided an analysis of homosexual Christians who are comfortable and confident with their identity, however, there are many homosexual Christians who continue to wrestle with these identities. It would be highly worth linguistically investigating how these individuals construct their sexual and religious identity. Given the context, the participants of my study have been middle-aged, which is also an area overlooked by identity and sexuality studies. That said, seeing how younger homosexual Christians construct their identities would be an interesting contrast, particularly with an increased acceptance of the LGBT community among secular youth. In analysing and understanding the variations of individual experiences, it might help the Church of England as an institution to see homosexual Christians as individuals with their own spiritual and sexual journeys, rather than as a general community that needs to be 'welcomed' in.

Word count: 6877

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Appendix

The official transcript of the February 2017 General Synod can be found at:

https://www.churchofengland.org/more/policy-and-thinking/work-general-synod/record-past-meetings

The Marriage and Same-Sex Relationship debate is on pages 262-300.

The audio recording can be found at: https://soundcloud.com/the-church-of-england/wednesday-15-february-marriage-and-same-sex-relationships-after-the-shared-conversations

The speeches can be found at the following times: Butler: 44.50; Foreshew-Cain: 52.00; Hammond: 55:30; Allberry: 1.07.20; Goddard: 1.13.20; Shaw: 1.16.20; Greene: 1.39.00; Nunn: 1.42.46.

1   ***Revd Canon Simon Butler (Southwark):*** I want to talk about disagreement and to do so I want to reflect

2   on my relationship with another member of this Synod; in fact, it is the Synod member who sent me the

3   text I referred to on Monday. He was the first person I ever told I was gay 27 years ago.

4   I'll always be grateful to him and I want him to know that today. He listened without judgment and

5   promised to accompany me on my journey. He gave me a card of a shadowy road lit by sunlight which

6   remained on my study wall for many years. Our paths separated. His ministry has taken a particular

7   path. He got married and had kids. I met my partner 15 years ago.

8   Synod has brought us back together and we find ourselves serving the Church in close proximity. I've

9   told him something of my life and it's not been hard to see how difficult that is for him. He believes me

10   to be living dishonestly in relation to the doctrine of the Church. A red line has been crossed for him.

11   And of course, that is wounding for me too, working alongside someone who believes that about me. GS

12   2055, I am afraid, has taken me over a red line. And what that means for our future working remains to

13   be seen; it's too early to tell. But despite these red lines being crossed, the Church of England forces us

14   to work together. It may not be good disagreement but it is, I believe, just about workable

15   disagreement.

16   So here is my problem with GS 2055: I don't believe this Report gives us the evidence that the House of

17   Bishops has yet reached that level of disagreement. Have they reached the moment when in all

18   conscience the whole situation is intolerable and either from a conservative or progressive perspective

19   up with this they will not put? I don't believe they have—yet. They might have come close, they might

20   believe they have, but I don't think they have yet to do what my brother in Christ and I are with

21   enormous, enormous difficulty clearly struggling to live with. Only when fracture comes can new

22   possibilities emerge.

23   GS 2055 believes clergy are called to higher standards of conduct. I want to suggest to our Bishops that

24   they have yet to reach that painful higher standard before they can discover whether workable

25   disagreement is possible. For that reason I won't be taking note today.

26   I thought that would be my last word but as we worshipped last evening a text of Scripture came as a

27   bolt from the blue: Genesis 32:6: "I will not let you go until you bless me". Despite the enormous

28   difficulty it presents, I say to that person who sent me that text and who finds my presence in this place

29   so difficult, "I will not let you go until you bless me".

30   I say to those faithful godly people like Susie Leafe, "I will not let you go until you bless me". And I say to

31   my brothers and sisters in the House of Bishops, even though I cannot vote for your paper today, "I will

32   not let you go until you bless me". And I look forward to the day when every one of us feels that you can

33   say the same of me. Thank you.

34   ***Revd Andrew Foreshew-Cain (London):*** I am afraid I listened to rumours and prepared something last

35   minute so forgive me if I stumble slightly as I try to say a few more words. Synod, I want to ask you not

36   to do this: please do not vote for this measure. We deserve better. Your LGBTI sisters and brothers

37   deserve better, both here in the Church and in the country. Our churches and communities deserve

38   better and the country we seek to serve with the love of Christ deserves better.

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39 The Report admits that it addresses only the concerns and divisions of the Bishops on marriage alone.
40 Nowhere do I think does it reflect the work and the struggle and the genuine listening that we have all
41 been involved in for the last three years. It fails to allow for the possibility of what we could achieve as a
42 Church working together. I think the Bishops have begun to realise that it is a document divorced from
43 the living reality of the people of God. We need something better to show that reality.

44 I suggest we need a commission or something, drawing together voices from across our Church, the
45 voices of all of us. Yes, of course the Bishops, but to help them understand where we really are—lay
46 men and women—taking seriously their call to leadership in our Church, and we need openly confident
47 LGBTI people in the room taking part. We need better because we, your LGTBI brothers and sisters, we
48 are not beggars looking for a new tone or welcome on the borders of the Church seeking entrance. We
49 are your family in Christ. We are baptized, faithful, prayerful. We read and study our Bibles. I am not a
50 case study. We are flesh and blood.

51 We need to be able to be honest about the divisions in the Church, as Jayne pointed out. Honesty
52 shouldn't be behind closed doors, fearful of episcopal unity, but genuine and honest about what divides
53 us and the great hope in Christ that unites us all. And we need to trust each other, trust in our maturity
54 in Christ to sit across the table with each other and see in each other the face of Christ, despite our
55 divisions. And we need love. (.) I need love. Oh God, do we all need love, to hear a little genuine
56 heartfelt love in this debate, because it hasn't been there much, and perfect love casts out fear; the fear
57 that I think this Report reflects too clearly.

58 Sisters and brothers in Christ, we need better; we deserve better. Synod, please, I beg you, do not give
59 in to fear; do not be afraid; take- do not take note.

60 ***Canon Robert Hammond (Chelmsford):*** This Report is really personal because it is about me. As a gay
61 man with an ordained partner I am disappointed by it. As has been said, it doesn't show that the voices
62 of the Shared Conversations have been really listened to. For example, it presents a distinction between
63 laity and clergy which isn't always there. The whole section on questions to clergy and ordinands seems
64 to imply that clergy only have same-sex relations with other clergy, as it talks about standards of
65 conduct for the clergy. Although I'm not ordained, the existing law and guidance for clergy must apply to
66 me because I'm in a relationship with a clergyman. We've supported each other for 14 years, lived
67 through the sort of stuff that most couples live through, especially those going through a period of
68 vocational discernment, and subsequent living apart for two years whilst he was at residential college,
69 where I have to say I was made so welcome and I feel it's my college as well. Now we are living in an
70 amazing, supportive and truly welcoming parish both within the church and the town where he serves
71 as curate. Yet the Report talks of continuing these different standards for laity and clergy. It isn't just a
72 laity/clergy split. The same standards as apply to clergy apply to me by definition. Yet for many gay
73 clergy it's their partners and families who provide them with the love, support, encouragement and
74 strength for their ministry, as you will know if you are married or opposite-sex attracted. And let's not
75 forget that there are now families where parents are same-sex clergy and laity. You may not like it, but,
76 as the Bishop of Norwich said this morning, the world is a very different place from 20 years ago. The

77   Report fails to show the voice of those lay and clergy, lesbian and gay couples has been listened to. It
78   fails to set all God's people free.

79   Isn't it ironic that yesterday Stonewall was running a faith role models programme for LGBTI people of
80   faith? It's ironic because whilst we are here trying to exclude people of faith from the blessings we give
81   to others, a secular organisation is working with faith leaders, including Church of England and Anglican
82   clergy, to equip them to be role models in their religious and wider community. But we have the
83   greatest role model of all in Jesus Christ and his unconditional love for us all. Let us not leave it to
84   Stonewall. We should be defining that new tone and culture willingly and graciously, not in the
85   begrudging way this Report seems to.

86   For these reasons I can't take note of the Report and I urge you not to either.

87   ***Revd Sam Allberry (Oxford):*** Thank you to the Bishops for their hard work. I'm sure it was painful for
88   them, but I think you don't become a bishop for an easy life.

89   I am same-sex attracted and have been my entire life. By that, I mean that I have sexual, romantic and
90   deep emotional attractions to people of the same sex. I choose to describe myself this way because
91   sexuality is not a matter of identity for me and that has become good news. My primary sense of worth
92   and fulfilment as a human being is not contingent on being romantically or sexually fulfilled, and this is
93   liberating. The most fully human and complete person who ever lived was Jesus Christ. He never
94   married, he was never in a romantic relationship and never had sex. If we say these things are intrinsic
95   to human fulfilment, we are calling our Saviour subhuman.

96   I've met literally hundreds of Christians in my situation and know of thousands more who are same-sex
97   attracted and who joyfully affirm the traditional understanding of marriage being between a man and a
98   woman and the only godly context for sex. If you don't hear from more of us, it is because it is very hard
99   to stand up and describe ourselves in this way.

100   As someone who uses the language of same-sex attraction, I have to say that my Church has not
101   become a safe place for me. And by "Church" I do not mean my congregation, I mean this Synod, not
102   because of what the Report says but because of what has happened since.

103   I was bullied at school for being gay. I now feel I am being bullied at Synod for being same-sex attracted
104   and faithful to the teaching of Jesus on marriage. I am grateful that the Report reaffirms the traditional
105   doctrine of marriage. I am concerned that we are already preparing to pastorally undermine it.

106   So My question to the Bishops is not, "Will you preserve this doctrine?", it's, "Do you really believe in it?

107   Is it good news for the world?" Many of us have found it to be life-giving as the message and teaching of
108   Jesus always is.

109   ***Revd Canon Giles Goddard (Southwark):*** Chair thank you for calling me. I have heard a lot during the
110   conversations running up to this debate about the need to take the middle ground with us. Well, I stand
111   before you as a member of the middle ground.

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112 I'm vicar of a middle-of-the-road parish, St John's Waterloo. Our electoral roll has increased under my
113 tenure from 80 to 127. We have five people thinking about ordination, of whom two are under 20.
114 We've trebled our congregational giving and have doubled our parish share. It feels as though we must
115 be doing something right and, yet, St John's is seen as a dangerous parish, one to be treated with kid
116 gloves. Why? Because the vicar is gay and has a partner, so our story, which should be one of success
117 and delight, is one of mistrust and fear.

118 I urge you not to take note of this Report because I don't believe it would help St John's to be seen as an
119 integral part of the Church of England.

120 There are two specific points which I want to raise. Firstly, I think the Report misrepresents the Shared
121 Conversations. In York, I heard very clearly that many of us do not think the time is right at the moment
122 for opening up Church marriage, but to say there is little appetite for change is a mishearing of what the
123 Shared Conversations produced.

124 And secondly, I have a real problem with this notion of maximum freedom. I'm afraid what it makes me
125 think of is saying to a prisoner in his cell, "You have maximum freedom to walk around the cell but of
126 course we can't open the door for you". It will not serve as a good basis for an additional teaching
127 document and I think until we can get the possibility of openness right there is no point in trying to
128 produce a further teaching document.

129 I'm very anxious that if we do take note of this Report it will gain a status which will not be helpful for
130 the Church. That's what happened with Issues in 1991. It was not presented as policy but it magically
131 became policy. This Report has already gone to the ACC as a declaration of the Church of England's
132 position.

133 We are not ready to make that declaration yet. It's previous, it's premature, and if we do it won't help
134 us. My friends, I know that there is a huge amount of fear around, but the howls of anger and pain
135 which greeted this Report but must be enough for us to say we can do better.

136 Please, let's try again. Let's use our wisdom, our knowledge and our faith and let's take time to produce
137 something which confidently speaks to the Gospel for the whole of England. Please vote not to take
138 note.

139 *Mr Ed Shaw (Bristol):* Since our group work this afternoon, I've been pondering a question. Group work
140 does get you thinking. My question is this: how did the Lord Jesus manage to be both a liberal and a
141 conservative? How on Earth did He pull it off? How did He manage to be inclusive of all, including a gay
142 man like myself, and yet speak challenging words to all, including a gay- a same-sex attracted Christian
143 like myself?

144 I welcome this Report as a chance to ponder together how we can do both. Jesus managed it. With His
145 help, with His Spirit's power, we can surely speak the truth in love too. I think this Report is a good, if not
146 perfect, first step. Can we please, please take note of it, as we seek to become more and more like Him,
147 the great liberal conservative?

148   ***Ms Jay Greene (Winchester):*** I am a lesbian Christian. I am from a rural benefice where I am
149   churchwarden and a lay worship leader. I'm in a civil partnership with a member of the clergy team, but
150   we are not treated as a problem. We are welcomed. Last year, when Marion, my partner, was ill, we
151   were shown much love and given much help by the people of the benefice, and for which I am truly
152   grateful.

153   Last Sunday, in our congregations we discussed the Bishops' Report and what it means for them and for
154   us. Many of the congregation, like me and Marion, are over 60. Sex may be a rare treat for them, or it
155   may be—yes, you get this one— or it may be a distant memory, but, actually, they all want it to be a
156   possibility in a committed loving long- term relationship. And they were horrified to be reminded that
157   you expect us to be celibate but you do not expect this of James over there, our vicar, and his wife, Sue.

158   And their question to you is: is this an example of institutionalised homophobia? However, their main
159   disappointment was not about us. It was for themselves and their adult LGBT children, their nieces and
160   nephews, their gay and bi friends, lesbian neighbours and trans work colleagues. They want them to be
161   able to come to church and have their partnerships celebrated. They are deeply disappointed with this
162   Report, its tone full of fear, and they urged you and me to vote against it.

163   Now, today, I have heard the passion of Bishop Paul and the compassion and honesty of Bishop Rachel
164   and, of course, it's very tempting to then think: "We'll be all right, they can take us forward" but,
165   paradoxically, I'm going to still ask you to vote against because I want to give them that encouragement
166   that the congregation, the people in the shires, want this Church to go further faster forward.

167   They do not understand why this issue is the rock on which the Anglican Communion will founder. They
168   want you to find an accommodation, as you did over the remarriage of divorcees and over women
169   priests. Like me, they love our Church and they want it to be strong, successful, inclusive. Please help us
170   by voting against this Report and ask our Bishops to think again. Thank you.

171   ***Very Revd Andrew Nunn (Deans):*** I'm wearing a badge which says "I won't be taking note" because I
172   won't be taking note, and I encourage you not to take note. It is nice that the Bishops are now taking
173   note of what is being said in this chamber. It's a shame that they did not really take note of what was
174   said in those Shared Conversations or, at least, it doesn't feel like that to me.

175   I have been on three of them: the regional one, we had a diocesan one and then the one we had at
176   General Synod. And They were a very, very good experience, even when a priest in our own diocese
177   turned to me and said, "You know, Andrew, you cannot be saved." And I said to him, because I did not
178   really know what to say to that, "Thank you, because it must have taken quite a lot of courage to say
179   that to me. All I can do is rest upon the mercy of God as I always do and pray that I can be saved".

180   You talk of a new tone. Well, if this Report is the first sign of that tone, I don't like the tone. You can do a
181   lot better, Bishops. And If the tone is about being nice to LGBTI people, you've already been very nice,
182   but the Christian gospel is not about niceness; it is not about niceness at all. God is not nice. God is love
183   and justice and integrity. God is peace and wholeness and life. That is the divine tone, but it's not the
184   tone of the Church in this Report.

Marriage and Same-Sex Relationships: How do LGBT Christians in the General Synod construct their sexual and religious identity?

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185 I have been wandering around the Anglican Communion a bit whilst I was on sabbatical. I went to
186 Canada and in Toronto, outside Holy Trinity Toronto there's a banner, a rainbow banner outside that
187 church, as there is a rainbow banner, it seems, in every church, and on that banner it said, "Every day is
188 Gay Pride Day at Holy Trinity". Can we not have a bit of pride in our LGBT members? We may not be
189 Canada but this nation, Bishops, demands more love, more joy, more recognition of the blessing that
190 gay people bring to every part of the life of our Church.

191 Synod members, please ask our Bishops to do better by not taking note. Thank you.