

What is Homophobia?

- ❖ Homophobia is the irrational hatred, intolerance, and fear of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people.
- ❖ These negative feelings fuel the myths, stereotypes, and discrimination that can lead to violence against LGB people.
- ❖ LGB people brought up in a homophobic society can often internalise these negative stereotypes and develop varying degrees of low self-esteem and self-hatred, often described as ‘internalised homophobia’.
- ❖ The word homophobia was constructed by the heterosexual psychologist George Weinberg in the late 1960s. He used homophobia to label heterosexuals dread of being in close quarters with homosexuals as well as homosexuals internalised oppression. The word first appeared in print in 1969.

What is Transphobia?

- ❖ Transphobia (by analogy with homophobia) refers to various kinds of aversions towards transexuality and transsexual or transgendered people.
- ❖ It often takes the form of refusal to accept a person’s new gender expression.
- ❖ Whether intentional or not, transphobia can have severe consequences for the targeted person; also, many transpeople experience homophobia as well, from people who associate gender identity disorder as a form of homosexuality.
- ❖ Like other forms of discrimination such as homophobia, the discriminatory or intolerant behaviour can be direct (e.g. harassment, assault, or even murder) or indirect (e.g. refusing to take steps to ensure that transgender people are treated in the same way as cisgender (non-transgender) people).
- ❖ Direct forms of transphobia can manifest themselves in ways that are not related to violence. One example of this is the case of Tyra Hunter. Ms Hunter was involved in an automobile accident, and when rescue workers discovered she was transgender, they backed away and stopped administering treatment. She later died in hospital.

The Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement published a research report in 2000 entitled, *Christian Homophobia*. It defines homophobia as “an irrational hatred, disapproval, or fear of homosexuality, gay and lesbian people, and their culture”, and details a number of case studies which illustrate the following key findings:

1. That the majority of homophobic abuse suffered by gay men and lesbians in the UK is supported by the words and actions of the Christian churches.
2. That such homophobia has a serious daily effect on the health and well-being of the gay and lesbian population of this country, sometimes leading to absence from work, depression, physical harm and even suicide.
3. That the Christian churches in the UK have had a disproportionate influence on legislation affecting gays and lesbians and have, at every turn, tried to frustrate the will of parliament, defy the international consensus on human rights, and to gain exemption for themselves from the fair and equal treatment of lesbians and gay men.
4. That in the methods and organisation, conservative Christian groups in this country now amount to a ‘Christian Right’ similar to that which has been active in the US for some years.
5. That some bishops and other church leaders act hypocritically in regard to the lesbian and gay members and clergy of their churches, knowing that they are licensing and ordaining gay clergy whilst publicly denying this.
6. That such hypocrisy rewards deceit and dishonesty and is deleterious to the health and well-being of those who are forced into such a lifestyle.
7. That a significant number of clergy have been dismissed, made homeless, and forced to rely on state benefits because of their sexuality.
8. That lesbian and gay church members are being expelled from congregations, lesbian and gay groups have been refused the use of church premises, church run welfare and housing organisations have specifically excluded gay men and lesbians.
9. That sermons and Christian resource material supporting gay men and lesbians have been censored or destroyed, and that young people in church youth groups and other Christian meetings are being indoctrinated into homophobia.
10. That there are significant numbers of counsellors, psychologists and other health professionals whose ‘Christian’ beliefs lead them to attempt the ‘changing’, ‘curing’, or ‘exorcising’ of gay men and lesbians against all the advice of reputable professional associations.
11. That there are occasional instances of heroic and truly Christian people within the churches taking a stand to support the lesbian and gay community. There are many gay and lesbian Christians who are prepared to work for the redemption of the churches from the sin of homophobia, often at great personal cost.

Metropolitan Community Church – Statement of Purpose

As God's liberated people, we boldly . . .

Reclaim our Holy Identity

At MCC, we believe that even in our humanness, we are holy. We are liberated from other people's definitions of who we are. We are made both body and spirit. We believe that our sexuality is a holy gift from God so we no longer distance our bodies from our experience with God. We are a people who proudly participate in the communion of body and spirit.

Advance our call to Social Justice and Action

At MCC, we believe that Jesus led the way in acts of compassion and acts of justice. Because we have been a people in the margins of society, we understand fully the grace that God has extended to us. We seek to distance ourselves from exclusion and draw ourselves closer to including all those who are marginalized in any way. We stand boldly with those who resist the structures of exclusion, as Jesus did, and work to insure freedom for all people. In the margins, we are blessed.

Tell the story of God's Transforming Grace

At MCC, we come as we are to Christ and are changed by what we find. We experience a God with open arms, inviting all to take the sacred journey of faith and transformation. We are growing in our faith and claim that our place in society has magnified our place in God's family. We are one of the many voices of God that, until now, has been lost in the margins!

Nurture the value of Community

At MCC, we believe our ultimate ministry is in the world. We know that in order to prepare ourselves for radical service that changes lives, we must equip ourselves and others in the safety of a supportive community. We strive to live out a message that rejects the idea that any are excluded from the family of God.

Build bridges that Liberate and Unite

At MCC, we have experienced the soul destruction that comes from hate filled rhetoric. In restoring our souls, we have come to find that our voices will speak the liberation that comes through peace, compassion, love, respect and grace. As followers of Jesus, we believe in everyone's holy privilege to work out their own salvation. While we are a Christian church who follows Jesus, we respect those of other faith traditions and work together with them to free all those who are oppressed by hate, disregard and violence.

Metropolitan Community Church – Core Values

Inclusion

Love is our greatest moral value and resisting exclusion is a primary focus of our ministry. We want to continue to be the conduits of a faith where everyone is included in the family of God, and where all parts of our being are welcomed at God's table.

Community

Offering a safe and open community for people to worship, learn and grow in their faith is our deep desire. We are committed to equipping ourselves and each other to do the work that God has called us to do in the world.

Spiritual Transformation

Providing a message of liberation from the oppressive religious environment of our day or to those experiencing God for the first time is what guides our ministry. We believe that when people are invited to experience God through the life and ministry of Christ, lives will be transformed.

Social Action

Working to talk less and do more, we are committed to resisting the structures that oppress people and standing with those who suffer under the weight of oppressive systems, being guided always by our commitment to Global Human Rights.

Living Springs Metropolitan Community Church, Bath

Core Values:

At Living Springs MCC, we value:

- the love and acceptance of God with the knowledge that every person is embraced in that love through Jesus Christ.
- worship that draws us closer to God.
- a warm and welcoming home with friends who share the laughter and the tears.
- being ourselves.
- the strength we gain from one another when we bring together our gifts and skills for the benefit of our church and wider communities.
- the joy of sharing our passion for Jesus and his good news.

Mission Statement:

Christ calls us to
welcome
include
liberate

At www.mccbath.org.uk you can find information, sermons and interpretation to the biblical passages that have, and sadly still are, used by many Christian churches to condemn l,g,b,t people by clicking on the link, Would Jesus Discriminate?

Don't confuse bigotry against gays and lesbians with religious truth!