

Gay Marriage

In the UK, Civil Partnerships were introduced in 2004. This allowed same-sex couples to enjoy the same legal rights and protections as married couples.

It took 10 more years, and much public debate, until legislation was passed to allow gay marriage in England, Scotland and Wales. It is not legal in Northern Ireland.

Several Christian churches spoke out against gay marriage, arguing that marriage was part of God's plan for humans, and was intended for a man and a woman. Some referred to the story in Genesis, others to the physical nature of a man and woman, and their ability to have children.

Fletcher thinks the unfair treatment of homosexuals is exactly what happens when you "use the law to hurt people instead of helping them."



Gay adoption

Up until 2002, you needed to be a married couple in the UK in order to adopt. The Adoption and Children Act 2002 changed this, allowing gay couples to adopt children.



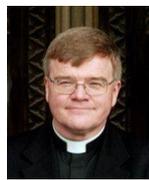
Roman Catholic adoption agencies continued to refuse to consider same-sex couples. The Labour government passed Sexual Orientation legislation as an amendment to the 2006 Equality Act that forced all adoption agencies to stop discriminating same-sex couples.

In 2013, Northern Ireland lifted the ban on gay couples adopting.

Arguments against allowing gay adoption were different from those against gay marriage, as they were claiming that it would not be in the interests of the child, rather than saying it was intrinsically wrong or unnatural.

Gay clergy – Jeffrey John

The Anglican Church in America has several gay bishops – the first was Gene Robinson in 2003. In the same year in the UK, Jeffrey John was nominated as a Bishop, and was openly in a same-sex relationship. This caused a huge controversy, with Anglican churches in Africa saying they would split from the Church of England if it went ahead. Rev John withdrew his acceptance of the nomination, despite the fact that he was celibate.



After being in a relationship for 30 years, in 2006 John entered into a civil partnership. He has spoken out in favour of same-sex marriage on several occasions.

Homophobia

Violence and discrimination against LGBT people raises ethical concerns. In some countries, homosexuality is still punishable by death. Homosexuality only began to become legal in England in 1967. Alan Turing famously took his life after being given hormones to 'cure' his homosexuality. There have been a few notable examples of discrimination in the UK:

- A gay couple was turned away from a B&B in Reading because the Christian owners weren't happy for them to sleep together in their house.
- After the Brexit vote, homophobic attacks rose by 147% across the UK



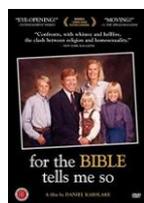
The Bible and homosexuality

The Old Testament has a number of passages that appear to condemn homosexuality outright:

"Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination." Leviticus 18:22

Many theologians disagree with the translation 'abomination', and try to look at passages like this in context. The list of prohibitions seem to be about ritual cleanliness – the surrounding passage outlaws eating shellfish, cross breeding livestock, picking up sticks on a Saturday etc.

A number of Christians think it's time to reinterpret the Bible, as these laws were written for the Hebrews thousands of years ago – they aren't moral laws for people today.



Churches and homosexuality

Some evangelical churches teach that sexuality is a choice, and that being homosexual is sinful. They have talks from 'ex-gays' and support treatments of gay people known as 'de-gayification'.



Many churches, including Roman Catholicism and the Church of England, accept that homosexuality is an orientation. They therefore welcome people who are homosexual, but believe that the act of gay sex is intrinsically disordered, so it is a sin to practise homosexuality.

A growing number of Christians from all denominations accept that there are different views on sexuality, and that it is right to bless any loving relationship, arguing for gay marriage.