

**A Statement to Leaders and Participants in the Ecumenical Pre-Conference
from the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Allies Caucus at the Pre-Conference.**
Saturday, August 2, 2008
Mexico City, Mexico

A Christian faith is a celebration of the Gospel of love. As participants in the Ecumenical Pre-Conference we have the amazing opportunity to celebrate our diversity and find solidarity in our unity.

We acknowledge and affirm the generally positive, inclusive spirit in the conference. Leadership in this meeting has shown us a path toward greater understanding and acceptance of those most at risk for HIV infection.

We are grateful for leaders like Bishop Mark Hanson who are calling the Christian church to engage the struggle to be more inclusive; and that unlike 2006, sexual orientation and same gender loving and transgender people are being named in the discussions.

In the spirit of this conference's model of dialogue and challenge, same gender loving, transgender and allied participants who are part of this community challenge ourselves and the community to recognize that there is a significant journey ahead.

Seeking the partnership of all those gathered here and in the wider Christian church, we raise the following concerns:

- Perspectives that recognize that sexuality is a good gift from God, that our God-given bodies are good and that healthy and responsible sexual expression is good have been missing from the conversation.
- Same gender loving and transgender people of faith are spoken of as if we are not in the room, often addressed in "us" and "them" terms. There have been no openly gay or same gender loving or transgender panelists and no workshops engaging with same gender loving and transgender people of faith and faith-based gay affirming outreach programs.

We advocate the following:

- For other religious leaders and faith based programs to embrace the call of faith leaders and other speakers at this conference in their challenge to the Christian church to be more inclusive
- For each of us to be accountable for our language
- To include sex positive perspectives and create safe space for dialogue
- To include open, same gender loving and transgender persons on the planning team for future ecumenical events.

Our love of Christ unites us, the God we worship empowers us, the diversity of this community enriches us and we pray the various convictions we hold do not keep us apart.