WYCLIFFE HALL

- OXFORD -

Inclusive Language Policy

Wycliffe Hall upholds the biblical truth that all are invited into God's grace:

'There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.' Gal 3.28
Therefore we commit ourselves as a community to reflecting this inclusivity in the way we speak, preach and read the Bible as God's word.

Languages evolve constantly. Where once the patriarchal masculine was held to include everyone ('mankind', 'man', 'every man'), a change has come in language usage. The biblical writers used these terms with the intention to mean everyone. In society now terms such as 'human', 'humanity' (or 'humankind') and 'every one' are used to convey this idea of inclusiveness which the biblical writers sought to convey. In the same way, 'he', meaning people generically, has been gradually being replaced by either 'they' or 'the one who'. The patriarchal masculine has become a form of alienation for many women and indeed many men. It reduces women to Other by normalizing the masculine.

As part of our commitment to winning all for Christ, therefore, and in recognition of the biblical writers' intent to include all of humanity in their writings, we will use inclusive language in the Hall. We will do this not because we have to but rather as a sign of our love for each other in Christ. In the same way we will commit to speaking in a way which does not alienate or convey disrespect or disparagement to others, whether in the area of gender, orientation, ethnicity or disability ('I'm being rather OCD about this', 'I'm having an autism moment' etc.) or any other aspect of a person's being. Rather we will speak with respect and graciousness to and of everyone, recognising that all are made in the image of God and that Christ died for all.

In the matter of how we speak of God, we refer to the Trinity as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, keeping in mind that God himself has compared himself also to a mother (Is 49.15).

Chapel

We use inclusive language Bibles. This applies to students and staff preaching and also to visiting preachers who will be requested to use the TNIV (our pew Bible). Preachers and service leaders will be asked to make sure they use terms like 'Brothers and sisters' when addressing the congregation and 'men and women of the gospel'.

All preachers will be asked to be sensitive in the applications and illustrations they use and ask themselves whether they are speaking about things that all sections of the community can understand. This is good preaching practice in all contexts and therefore a desirable learning outcome generally.

Older hymns are by definition written in the language of patriarchy. Since we do not wish to lose our musical heritage we will keep and honour these hymns. In the case of modern songs and hymns we will make every effort to use ones that are inclusive or those where, for example, the word 'son' can be easily changed to 'child'.

In the same way, we recognise that the Book of Common Prayer is written in patriarchal language. However, we will continue to use the BCP with respect for its own integrity in its time. This will also apply to quoting writers from earlier times who wrote in the patriarchal idiom, perhaps prefaced with a brief observation about the nature of the language used.

Lectures

Teachers will make every effort to use examples of women in biblical passages, to reference the work of women theologians and historians and to speak of the role of women in the church, wherever possible and practicable. In the same way, test cases and hypothetical situations should reflect a gender balance. Teachers will be especially sensitive to the possibility in such situations to the danger of reducing women to the merely sexual (e.g. using women as examples in cases of adultery/reproductive ethics and men in cases of workplace ethics).

As in Chapel, inclusive language Bibles will be used and guest lecturers will be asked to abide by the same guidance.

VERSION CONTROL			3 of 3		
Version Number	**Policy Gatekeeper**	**Date of Approval**	**Committee**	**Date to Take Effect**	**Date of Next Review**
V.2	**JRW**	**24.11.14**	**Education**	**24.11.14**	**Hilary 2017**

It is the responsibility of the Gatekeeper of each policy to check annually whether there have been any legislative and/or University policy changes that are relevant to Wycliffe Hall.