

Respect gay community, says Archbishop

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INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPERS Violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity should stop, Archbishop Thabo Makgoba said. File photo: Candice Chaplin.

Cape Town -

Violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity should stop and people should respect each other, Anglican Church of Southern Africa Archbishop Thabo Makgoba said Tuesday.

“I am called to love all God's children and if I move from that context, I cannot allow people to be discriminated (against) and I cannot allow people to meet violence just on the basis of their sexual orientation,” he said.

“Respect the gift of difference. When you violate somebody on the basis of difference you are not only violating them but demeaning yourself. It's a moral responsibility to stop the violence against people who are different.”

He said people should not fear because they were given the task of “helping humanity” realise they were called to respect and honour each other.

Makgoba was speaking on a Human Rights Watch video released on Tuesday.

He said God had not called on people to judge but to love and accept.

“Love cuts across culture. Our faith and our sacred text allow us to use our God-given courage to be fearless in saying God loves each one of us in spite of our sexual identification or orientation,” he said.

“God has not called on us to judge but God has called on us to radiate his love and grace in the world.”

He said God's people should not be pained because of who they were and how God created them.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) rights director at Human Rights Watch Graeme Reid said Makgoba's statement should call national, religious and cultural leaders across Africa to support the rights of LGBTI people.

“The archbishop’s message of respect for everyone’s rights should challenge leaders who have opposed the rights of LGBTI people to reconsider their positions,” he said in a statement. - Sapa

<http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/western-cape/respect-gay-community-says-archbishop-1.1595552#.VCFfwhacxfg>