



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on May 3, 2018

## Episcopal Church Move to Make Marriage “Gay-Friendly” Divides Church of England

“Walking with Christ is our highest calling,” wrote the Reverend Canon Peter Leonard, chair of the One Body One Faith (an Anglican LGBT advocacy group), and its chief executive, Tracey Byrne, in an open letter to William Nye, secretary-general of the Anglican Bishop’s Council in London last month.



Their idea of “walking with Christ” is to condemn Nye’s opposition to the decision of the U.S. Episcopal Church to remove references to “husband” and “wife,” and references to “marriage being for the purpose of procreation,” from its marriage liturgy. The change is intended to make the Episcopal Church’s marriage liturgy more friendly to homosexuals.

According to the U.K. *Telegraph*, “The new service removes the phrase ‘the union of husband and wife’ and replaces it with ‘the union of two people.’” In addition, the marriage liturgy which mentions that God’s intention for marriage is “for the procreation of children,” will now be changed to “for the gift of children.” Since same-sex couples cannot procreate, this will be considered more “relevant,” as same-sex couples may wish to adopt.

And all of this is supposed to be part of “walking with Christ.”

The Church of England grew out of a dispute between King Henry VIII and the Roman Catholic Church involving his wish to divorce his first wife and marry again. While considered a “Protestant” church, it retained many Catholic features. After the American Revolution, American Anglicans (members of the Church of England) organized the Episcopal Church. Today, the U.S. Episcopal Church is considered part of the world-wide “Anglican Communion” of churches that had their origin in the Church of England.

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Three-fourths of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were Anglicans, and even today Episcopalians hold high positions in government in far larger numbers relative to their percentage of the U.S. population.

In the late 1800s, the Episcopal Church largely adopted the “Social Gospel” and began taking liberal positions on most social issues. By 2015, the General Convention of the Episcopal Church even voted to “bless” same-sex marriages. This was somewhat problematic, as the Book of Common Prayer, used by all the churches in the “Anglican Communion,” clearly stipulated that marriage was between one man and one woman, and that God intended marriage for procreation.



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This move has caused division within the world-wide Anglican Communion. Many Anglican bishops in Africa are particularly incensed over the move by the U.S. Church.

But Nye's remarks that support the biblical and historic concept of marriage have precipitated opposition not only from Episcopalians in America, but also in England itself. For example, the Bishop of Buckingham, Alan Wilson, and 30 other members of the Anglican Church's ruling synod, openly support what the Americans have done. Wilson is in the minority, however, as there are 483 members of the ruling synod.

The One Body One Faith group's leaders view the American Episcopalian move as "courageous, just, and Christ-like." In fact, Leonard and Byrne told Nye, "We saw our brothers and sisters listening intently to the Spirit speaking through the Body — and having listened, acting with courage, integrity, and the determination to keep walking with Christ."

In their letter, they focused on the "shocking statistics and stories of poor mental health amongst LGBT young people." One would think that these two Church leaders would take that as an indication that the LGBT lifestyle leads to mental-health issues, and make the effort to reject a mentally unhealthy lifestyle that is clearly condemned in both the Old and New Testaments.

And, if the two really believed in "walking with Christ," one would think the two would note the words of Jesus Christ in Matthew 19:4-5, in which He said, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female.' And said, 'for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh?'"

It is instructive to note that their letter quoted neither this nor any other Scripture, however. In addition to their stated concern about the mental-health issues of LGBT individuals, they declared that "no one is attracted to a group of Christians who profess the love of Christ but seem incapable of recognizing it in the loving, committed relationship of two people." In other words, the two argued that the Church of England and the Episcopal Church, both of which have been in rapid membership decline, will lose more members if they do not abandon such historic Christian positions as the belief that God ordained marriage as between one man and one woman. In reality, statistics indicate that membership decline is far greater among churches that have abandoned historic Christian doctrines than among those who have retained them.

Perhaps Leonard and Byrne should consider that before they write any more open letters.



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