



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on September 29, 2011

## British MP: Ban Marriages in “Homophobic” Churches

A member of Britain’s Parliament has declared that Christian churches that do not perform homosexual “marriage” ceremonies should be denied the right for their pastors to contract a legally-binding marriage on behalf of the government.

[Mike Weatherly](#) (left), who represents the constituencies of Hove and Portsedale, [two areas of Brighton](#) on the English Channel, says that Anglicans, Catholics, or those of any other religion that refuses to permit homosexual marriage [are evil discriminators](#) who must not be permitted to perform any marriages.

[Weatherly](#), a public proponent of same-sex marriage, is a member of the Conservative Party.

### Weatherly Speaks

[According to](#) his website, “Mike has pushed boundaries by urging the Prime Minister to completely reconsider the laws surrounding unions for same-sex couples in Britain.”

He is taking up the parliamentary cudgels, apparently, for his constituents. His area has “the highest proportion of gay couples in the country.” Though “civil partnerships” are now permitted in Britain, churches can still refuse to bless same-sex nuptials, [Weatherly complained](#).

“Discrimination in today’s society should not be tolerated,” [he asserted](#), adding:

It’s distressing that so many countries around the world have appalling gay rights. As a supposedly civilised country, we should be pushing for a society where everyone is equal before the law. Quite simply, same-sex couples should have exactly the same marriage rights.”

So [Weatherly penned](#) a letter to Prime Minister David Cameron. Noting that he represents a city with “the most same-sex households in the UK,” Weatherly wrote that he is “increasingly concerned about the inequality which exists between the unions of same-sex couples and those of opposite-sex couples in this country.”

[Weatherly reminded](#) the PM that “civil partnerships” have been permissible on the scepter’d isle for six years, and that “the result was undoubtedly an uneasy truce between those wishing to preserve the religious significance of marriage and those fighting for equality. Lawmakers knew at the time that an





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inherent inequality would still be maintained even if greater equality was being afforded to same-sex couples.”

Looking back, I am sure that you would agree that it was nothing less than bizarre that same-sex couples were barred from holding their Civil Partnership ceremonies in religious venues. After all, many religious groups welcome same-sex couples. I am glad that this was reviewed and welcome the change to the arrangement earlier this year as a logical and progressive step.

Several campaigns are currently calling for, variously, the creation of a right to a Marriage for same-sex couples and the creation of a right to a Civil Partnership for opposite-sex couples. Such proposals may seemingly be the next logical step in the campaign for equality but, if enacted, would still leave us with a messy compromise. As long as religious groups can refuse to preside over ceremonies for same-sex couples, there will be inequality. Such behaviour is not tolerated in other areas, such as adoption, after all.

I suggest that it makes little difference if unions are called Marriages, Civil Partnerships or some other term (such as simply ‘Unions’). Until we untangle unions and religion in this country, we will struggle to find a fair arrangement.

In August, Weatherly [joined in the march down the streets](#) for “Brighton Pride.” His [website says](#) he “was delighted to walk (and even dance until he was asked by friends to stop!) along the parade route with fellow advocates of Brighton Pride. As a strong supporter of gay rights, Mike has staunchly supported the event for many years at stalls and in the parade.” “It was a great day for Brighton & Hove,” he declared, “and I was proud to walk alongside fellow supporters of gay rights.” He added,

As well as supporting the parade, I am about to write to the Prime Minister about the inequality that exists for same-sex couples when it comes to marriage. I’m glad that it was such a successful weekend and I look forward taking part again next year.

What rights churches should have to proselytize and enforce their religious creeds Weatherly did not say. Then again, the Faith in England has been under attack for five centuries, ever since [Henry VIII began his war](#) on the Church, after declaring himself head of the Church of England. (If one included the assassination of Thomas Becket by followers of Henry II in Canterbury Cathedral in 1170, then persecution of the Church by the Crown goes back nine centuries.)

A version of what Weatherly proposes for England — the subjugation of the Christian faith to legalized homosexuality — is becoming a reality in the United States.

### **Holy War at Vanderbilt**

A few weeks ago, [Carol Swain](#), a professor at [Vanderbilt University](#), [reported that](#) the institution’s [Office of Religious Life](#) had launched an attack against the [Christian Legal Society](#) — because the society requires its officers to lead Bible study at meetings. Vanderbilt religious authorities say that requirement to hold office in the CLS is not permissible because it violates the school’s policy that forbids “discrimination.”

As Fox News reporter [John Roberts explained](#), the trouble for the CLS began when a homosexual complained that a fraternity gave him the boot. “The school took a look at the constitutions of some 300 student groups,” [Roberts reported](#), “and found about a dozen, including five religious groups to be in non-compliance with Vanderbilt’s nondiscrimination policy. All were placed on provisional status.”

[Reported Swain](#), “Groups affected included the Christian Legal Society, InterVarsity and the graduate



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chapter of Campus Crusade.”

These organizations face an uncertain future because of a new policy that prohibits religious organizations from requiring that their leaders share the same beliefs and goals of the organizations they seek to lead. The policy goes one step further by hamstringing Bible studies.

In what observers note would be a humorous line of thought were it not so frightening, the religious authorities at the school said such groups “are suspect because they ‘would seem to indicate that officers are expected to hold certain beliefs,’” [Swain wrote](#). The letter from the university’s Ministry of Acceptable Religious Beliefs starkly [explains that](#) “Vanderbilt policies do not allow this expectation/qualification for officers.”

[Swain explained](#) the obvious implications of the policy: “This hastily conceived policy has the potential to destroy every religious organization on campus by secularizing religion and allowing intolerant conflict.”

Carried to its logical extension, it means that no organization can maintain integrity of beliefs. Christians can seek to lead Muslim organizations, Muslims can seek to lead Jewish ones, and Wiccans can seek to lead Catholic fellowships. The policy encourages people holding antithetical views to infiltrate organizations they seek to destroy.

And universities aren’t alone in their war against religion. Last year, the [U.S. Supreme Court ruled](#) that the University of California’s Hastings School of Law [did not have to give](#) official status to the Christian Legal Society because it excludes homosexuals.

The question is when the high court will take up British member of Parliament Weatherly’s cause in the United States: to force churches to either bless homosexual marriage or lose their authority to contract legally binding marriages for the state.



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