

A Warning to the Church of England

With all respect to the responsibilities carried by the leadership of the Church of England, and in recognition of the history of this branch of the universal body, I make this heartfelt appeal.

Just as Elijah the prophet urged the people of Israel to stop wavering between two opinions, I urge you to stop wavering between the Word of God and the spirit of this age. As Elijah said, “If Yahweh is God, serve Him. If Baal is God, serve him.” (1 Kings 18:21) It can only be one or the other.

Your current decision to “bless” same-sex unions while at the same time forbidding your churches from hosting same-sex weddings is not just a deep and fundamental departure from the biblical faith. It is also a hopeless compromise, seeking to play both ends against the middle in a way that can only frustrate, if not infuriate, the principal parties involved.

How can you bless something that you will not sanctify? How can you invoke God’s favor on something at which you cannot officiate? How can you claim to uphold the church’s historic definition of marriage if men or women involved in same-sex relationships can receive “prayers for God’s blessing”? And how can you “apologize for the ways in which the Church of England has treated LGBTQ people—both those who worship in our churches and those who do not” while barring same-sex weddings from your churches?

How can you repent to the LGBTQ community “for the times we have rejected or excluded you, and those you love” and lament for “the occasions on which you have received a hostile and homophobic response in our churches are shameful and for this we repent,” while allowing your clergy to refuse to bless

same-sex unions, at their discretion?

This is as hypocritical as it is self-contradictory. Why not simply come out and say, "Our views are changing and we are well on our way to fully embracing practicing 'gay Christians'?" Why the wavering?

In 2017 Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, said, "I am having to struggle to be faithful to the tradition, faithful to the Scripture, to understand what the call and will of God is in the 21st century and to respond appropriately with an answer for all people ... that covers both sides of the argument. And I haven't got a good answer, and I am not doing that bit of work as well as I would like."

All of us who love God and who love our LGBTQ neighbors understand this tension. We want to affirm the wisdom of Scripture while at the same time affirming our LGBTQ friends and family who want to be part of the church.

But there is no answer that "covers both sides of the argument," which is why Archbishop Welby doesn't have "a good answer."

You must either stand with God's definition of marriage and lovingly call your LGBTQ parishioners to new life in Jesus, or you must rewrite the Bible and redefine marriage. You cannot do both.

As Jacob (James) stated in another context, "From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water" (James 3:10-12).

Do you believe that homosexual practice is sinful, even in the context of a committed, loving relationship? Then you cannot invoke divine blessings on such relationships. Surely God does

not bless what He does not approve.

Do you believe homosexual practice is perfectly acceptable in the context of committed same-sex relationships? Then you should openly celebrate gay weddings, joyfully officiating at such events and hosting them in your churches. After all, you stated that, "We have not loved you as God loves you, and that is profoundly wrong. We affirm, publicly and unequivocally, that LGBTQ people are welcome and valued: we are all children of God." Then why the unequal treatment?

Your current decision simply anticipates the conclusion to which you will eventually come, namely, the full approval and sanctioning of "Christian" homosexuality. At that point, most all of the conservatives you have tried to retain will have left, your numbers will have dwindled even further and your most passionate, biblically-committed believers will have formed vibrant congregations of their own.

Barring a massive revival and awakening in the Church of England, this is where you will end up. The trajectory is clear for all to see, as further evidenced by your consideration of using gender-neutral language for God.

Why not hasten the process by putting all your cards on the table? Why not push through this intermediate, faux compromise stage with a definitive same-sex endorsement? Why play this game of theological semantics and engage in such a counsel of despair? To what purpose?

Your current strategy is not irenic, even if it intends to be. It is not bridge-building. It is not conciliatory. To the contrary, it is confused at best and cowardly at worst. It is anything but Christlike.

Jesus spoke and acted decisively, perfectly uniting grace and truth. As leaders in the church and shepherds of the flock, you must do the same.

In 1944, Rev. Peter Marshall declared, "Surely the time has come, because the hour is late, when we must decide. And the choice before us is plain—Yahweh or Baal. Christ or chaos. Conviction or compromise. Discipline or disintegration."

 That choice is just as clear today for the Church of England.

Will you uphold the plain teaching of Scripture and the historic doctrine of the Church, namely, that all same-sex relationships, no matter how loving, are sinful in God's eyes? Or will you fully embrace and endorse these relationships as holy, not only blessing them but performing same-sex wedding ceremonies in your church buildings? What will it be?

I appeal to you to choose this day whom you will serve. It is either the Lord or the spirit of the age. It cannot be both.
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