

Archbishop of Canterbury: Christians Should 'Really, Really Repent' Over Homophobia

The Archbishop of Canterbury says Christians "have to be real" about the fact that a great deal of young people's perceptions of the church are "plain wrong and wicked" when it comes to homosexuality and same-sex marriage.

The Rev. Justin Welby, while affirming his position against **gay marriage**, said that the church has "not been good" in dealing with homophobia, the *London Daily Mail* reported.

"We have seen changes in the idea about sexuality, sexual behavior," Welby said in his address Thursday to a group of evangelical Christians. "We have to face the fact that the vast majority of people under 35 not only think that what we're saying is incomprehensible but also think that we're plain wrong and wicked and equate it to racism and other forms of gross and atrocious injustice.

"That doesn't mean **redefining marriage** is the right way forward. That discussion is continuing and the church is deeply and profoundly divided over the way forward on it."

In July, the Marriage Act was granted royal assent. Gay couples in England and Wales will be allowed to marry beginning in 2014.

The *Daily Mail* reported that the archbishop said he stood by his decision to vote against gay marriage. He said that gay marriage would "rewrite the nature of marriage."

But, he reiterated that **homophobia** is "utterly and totally

wrong.”

“God’s people, at times, have either implicitly or explicitly supported [homophobia] and we have to be really, really repentant about that,” the archbishop said.

Benjamin Cohen, a representative of Out4Marriage, told the *Daily Mail* that he applauded the archbishop’s words and said that Welby’s stance on gay marriage was not “wicked.” It is simply a matter of equality, Cohen explained.

“All the way through the debate on **same-sex marriage**, those of us in favor of the changes always maintained that churches, synagogues and mosques should be free not to opt into same-sex marriage,” Cohen told the *Daily Mail*. “That is their right—just as it is the right of the younger generations to question the relevance of these institutions if they reject a change in the law that most young people think is nothing more than equality.”