

Denomination Lets Churches Appoint Married Gays to Leadership

Last week the Church of Scotland voted to permit clergy in same-sex partnerships to be appointed to leadership positions.

The Church of Scotland claims that it maintains a traditional view of marriage between a man and woman. Churches are now allowed, however, to 'opt out' of the official position, should they wish to appoint deacons or ministers who are in same-sex civil partnerships.

Nowhere in the Church of Scotland's statement is reference made to what the Bible teaches on marriage.

In a bold statement, the coordinator of the Principal Clerk's office of the General Assembly, Very Rev. David Arnott, has suggested that this move by the Kirk's General Assembly could provide a 'template' for the Church of England. At present, the Anglican Church requires clergy in same-sex civil partnerships to state that their relationships are celibate.

Rev. Andrew Foreshow-Cain, who defied the Church of England by "marrying" his male partner, provocatively tweeted: "I am deeply glad that the Church of Scotland has followed where the Spirit of God is leading."

Andrea Williams, chief executive of Christian Concern, comments: "Not only is Andrew Foreshow-Cain in breach of obedience to God's plan and purpose for marriage, but he's also defying the Church's teaching."

The outgoing Moderator for the General Assembly, Very Rev. John Chalmers, spoke to those on both sides of the debate in Scotland, stating: "We cannot go on suffering the pain of

internal attacks which are designed to undermine the work or the place of others. It's time to play for the team.

"And let me be very clear here—I am not speaking to one side or another of the theological spectrum. I am speaking to both ends and middle. It is time to stop calling each other names, time to shun the idea that we should define ourselves by our differences and instead define ourselves by what we hold in common—our baptism into Christ, our dependence on God's grace, our will to serve the poor and so on."

Andrea Williams responds: "The team God wants us on stands for truth. God is very clear in Scripture that marriage between one man and one woman is the pattern that He has set out for our good.

"In Titus 1, Paul teaches us that Christian leaders are held to even higher standards of holiness than those in their care. Paul includes among his list of required attributes that a good church leader be 'the husband of one wife.'

"So, while congregations in Scotland may now 'opt out' of the Church of Scotland's position on marriage, they cannot change the fact that they will be going against God's express commands in the Bible."