

Homosexuality and the Anglican Communion

Subjects: Ethics

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Since the 1990s, the Anglican Communion has struggled with controversy regarding homosexuality in the church. In 1998, the 13th Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops passed a resolution stating that "homosexual acts" are "incompatible with Scripture". However, this is not legally binding. "Like all Lambeth Conference resolutions, it is not legally binding on all provinces of the Communion, including the Church of England, though it commends an essential and persuasive view of the attitude of the Communion." "Anglican national churches in Brazil, South Africa, South India, New Zealand and Canada have taken steps toward approving and celebrating same-sex relationships amid strong resistance among other national churches within the 80 million-member global body. The Episcopal Church in the U.S. has allowed gay marriage since 2015." "Church of England clergy have appeared to signal support for gay marriage after they rejected a bishops' report which said that only a man and woman could marry in church." The Church of England's General Synod is set to discuss a diocesan motion "to create a set of formal services and prayers to bless those who have had a same-sex marriage or civil partnership." In 2002, the Diocese of New Westminster, in the Anglican Church of Canada, permitted the blessing of same-sex unions. In 2003, two openly gay men in England and the United States became candidates for bishop. In the Church of England, Jeffrey John eventually succumbed to pressure to withdraw his name from consideration to be the Bishop of Reading. In the Episcopal Church in the United States, Gene Robinson was elected and consecrated Bishop of New Hampshire, becoming the first openly gay bishop in the Anglican Communion and in apostolic Christianity. This was highly controversial and led several hundred bishops to boycott the 2008 Lambeth Conference. As an alternative to Lambeth, many of these bishops attended the Global Anglican Futures Conference in Jerusalem. As of 2004, other Anglican provinces, including the Anglican Church of Southern Africa and the Scottish Episcopal Church, permitted the ordination of gay clergy and others, such as the Episcopal Church in the USA, permitted blessing of same-sex unions as well. The BBC, in 2009, reported that many clergy in the Church of England "already bless same-sex couples on an unofficial basis". Many provinces, primarily from the Global South and representing about half of the 80 million active Anglicans worldwide, have responded to these theological disputes by declaring a state of impaired communion with their Western counterparts. Minority groups in Western provinces have stated their opposition to what they consider un-scriptural actions by the churches in England, Canada, Australia, and the United States. Since 2000, some conservative Global South provinces have appointed missionary bishops to the United States and Canada to provide pastoral oversight to disaffected Anglicans. This process, known as Anglican realignment, is considered by the Episcopal Church USA and the Anglican Church of Canada to be an illegitimate incursion into their territories; however, conservative Anglicans argued that the incursions were necessary because of the failure of these churches to uphold orthodox teaching with regard to human sexuality. To date, as aforementioned, "the more liberal provinces that are open to changing Church doctrine on marriage in order to allow same-sex unions include Brazil, Canada, New Zealand, Scotland, South India, South Africa, the US and Wales". In England and Wales, civil partnerships are permitted for clergy. "Neither the Church in Wales nor the Church of England are opposed to clergy being in civil partnerships. The Church of England requests that clergy in civil partnerships vow to remain sexually chaste, but the Church in Wales has no such restriction." The Church of England has allowed priests to enter into same-sex civil partnerships since 2005. The Church of Ireland recognises the pensions for clergy in same-sex civil partnerships.

Keywords: same-sex marriage ; gay marriage ; same-sex couples

1. Summary of Issues

There is a wide range of beliefs within the Anglican Communion regarding homosexuality. The majority of followers believe that heterosexuality or celibacy is required of Christians, but believe in tolerance towards others. This differs from secular society in most western democracies, which considers homosexuality to be a normal human variation, and affirms this in law. Some of the more specific issues under study within member churches and dioceses are:

- Same-sex attracted members of the church or communion
 - May they exist?
 - Must they denounce their sexual orientation and strive to become heterosexual?
 - Must they renounce same-sex relationships in order to be considered members in good standing?
 - Must they be celibate?
 - Should same-sex unions of LGBT members be blessed?
 - Should same-sex couples be allowed a religious marriage ceremony?
- Same-sex attracted clergy
 - May they exist?

- May they be openly authentic regarding their sexual orientation?
 - To what extent may they be "out" (e.g. only to their bishop, partner, spouse, or family, or to the wider public)
 - May they openly have a partner or spouse?
- Must they be celibate?
- May any of these individuals (those who are celibate and those who are non-celibate) be bishops?

Anglican churches are diverse in their views, from churches which do not accept any LGBT members, to churches which are happy to have openly same-sex, partnered or married, non-celibate bishops. The nature of the Anglican Communion is such that not all churches or dioceses must agree on all issues in order to share a common faith and baptism. Part of the controversy concerns how much and what sort of disagreement over these issues may exist while still calling it a "common faith."

- The bishops of the Anglican Communion in 1998 upheld the traditional Christian teaching that marriage is between a man and a woman and that those who are not called to marriage so defined should remain celibate. A resolution was passed stating that "homosexual acts" are "incompatible with Scripture" by a vote of 526–70;^[1] however, it also contained a statement which "calls on all our people to minister pastorally and sensitively to all irrespective of sexual orientation and to condemn irrational fear of homosexuals, violence within marriage and any trivialisation and commercialisation of sex," and noted importantly: "We commit ourselves to listen to the experience of homosexual persons and we wish to assure them that they are loved by God and that all baptised, believing and faithful persons, regardless of sexual orientation, are full members of the Body of Christ." The Lambeth Conference is "not an executive which imposes doctrine or discipline but it is a forum where the mind of the Communion can be expressed on matters of controversy."^[2] Over 100 bishops, including some who voted in favour of the resolution, immediately repudiated it and signed a letter of apology to gay and lesbian Anglicans. However over 80% of the bishops did not do so.
- In 2002, the Anglican Church of Canada, the Diocese of New Westminster voted to allow the blessing and officiation of same-sex unions and marriages by those parishes who choose to do so.
- The Church of England affirmed in 2005 that lay gay members who have entered into civil partnerships are still eligible for the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and communion.^[3]
- Also in 2005, the Church of England permitted priests to register a same-sex civil partnership provided they expect to be asked to follow the House of Bishops guidelines.^[4]
- The Church of Nigeria and the Church of Uganda criticized the Church of England for allowing same-sex civil partnerships.^[5]
- The Anglican Church of Nigeria issued a statement in 2006 affirming "our commitment to the total rejection of the evil of homosexuality which is a perversion of human dignity and encourages the National Assembly to ratify the Bill prohibiting the legality of homosexuality".^[6]
- Sexual orientation, specifically the consecration of Gene Robinson, was a major issue at the 2008 Lambeth Conference. A group of conservative bishops opposed to the ordination and marriage of same-sex attracted people, including most of the "global south", gathered in June 2008 at the Global Anglican Future Conference.
- In 2013, in the Church of England, "The House [of Bishops] has confirmed that clergy in civil partnerships, and living in accordance with the teaching of the Church on human sexuality, can be considered as candidates for the episcopate."^[7]
- In 2016, it was made public that the Church of England had consecrated Bishop Nicholas Chamberlain knowing he is gay and in a long-term same-sex relationship.^[8] Bishop Chamberlain, who is bishop of the Diocese of Grantham, is the first Anglican bishop in England to come out as gay.^[9]
- GAFCON, an association of conservative Anglican churches, called the appointment of the first openly gay bishop in England a 'major error'.^[10]
- The Church of England rebuked GAFCON and "pointed out clergy were allowed to enter civil partnerships and could offer prayers of support for same-sex couples."^[11]
- In April 2017, GAFCON announced that it is appointing a missionary bishop "for conservative Christians in Europe, bypassing Anglican Churches in England and Scotland."^[12]

2. Gene Robinson Controversy



2.1. 1973 Archbishop of York's Statement

While serving as Archbishop of York, Donald Coggan declared on BBC radio in 1973 that many Anglican clergymen were homosexuals. "We must treat them," he proclaimed, "with great sympathy and understanding."^[13]

2.2. 1998 Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops

Regarding "human sexuality", the conference said that it upholds "faithfulness in marriage between a man and a woman in lifelong union, and believes that abstinence is right for those who are not called to marriage." Furthermore, it refused to "advise the legitimising or blessing of same sex unions nor ordaining those involved in same gender unions."^[14] The vote was 526-70.^[15]

2.3. 1999 Cambridge Accord

In response to the division following the Lambeth Conference of the previous year, most Church of England bishops (although not including the then Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey), and many others elsewhere in the Anglican Communion, agreed on a document that upheld the human rights of homosexual people, while recognising and not seeking to resolve division over the morality of homosexual acts.

2.4. Gene Robinson Consecrated Bishop

In August 2003 the Episcopal Diocese of New Hampshire elected an openly gay and partnered priest, Gene Robinson, as bishop. This came shortly after a similar controversy in *England* when an openly gay priest, Canon Jeffrey John, was appointed to become the Suffragan Bishop of Reading. Eventually, however, John agreed to withdraw in order to avoid division. In 2004, in the aftermath of Robinson's election as bishop, John was installed as Dean of St Albans, the cathedral there being the site of England's first Christian martyr.

2.5. 2003 Lambeth Palace Meeting

As a result of the controversy over the ordination of gay bishops and the blessing of same-sex unions, on 15 October 2003, Anglican leaders from around the world met in Lambeth Palace in an attempt to avoid a schism on the issue. The day after, they released a lengthy statement:^[16]

We must make clear that recent actions in New Westminster and in the Episcopal Church (USA) do not express the mind of our Communion as a whole, and these decisions jeopardise our sacramental fellowship with each other. ...

If his [*Gene Robinson's*] consecration proceeds, we recognise that we have reached a crucial and critical point in the life of the Anglican Communion and we have had to conclude that the future of the Communion itself will be put in jeopardy. ...

In this case, the ministry of this one bishop will not be recognised by most of the Anglican world, and many provinces are likely to consider themselves to be out of Communion with the Episcopal Church (USA). This will tear the fabric of our Communion at its deepest level, and may lead to further division on this and further issues as provinces have to decide in consequence whether they can remain in communion with provinces that choose not to break communion with the Episcopal Church (USA). ...

Similar considerations apply to the situation pertaining in the Diocese of New Westminster. We commend the report of that Conference in its entirety to all members of the Anglican Communion, valuing especially its emphasis on the need to listen to the experience of homosexual persons, and [...] to assure them that they are loved by God and that all baptised, believing and faithful persons, regardless of sexual orientation, are full members of the Body of Christ"; and its acknowledgement of the need for ongoing study on questions of human sexuality. ...

As Primates, it is not for us to pass judgement on the constitutional processes of another province. We recognise the sensitive balance between provincial autonomy and the expression of critical opinion by others on the internal actions of a province.

2.6. Statements from Rowan Williams

In 2004 the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, wrote a letter to Anglican churches worldwide in which he condemned comments by bishops outside the Western world for inciting violence against gay men and women.^[17]

Any words that could make it easier for someone to attack or abuse a homosexual person are words of which we must repent. Do not think repentance is always something others are called to, but acknowledge the failings we all share, sinful and struggling disciples as we are.

In a 2007 speech to theology students in Toronto, Williams argued that conservatives have failed to consider the wider context of Romans 1:27, which states, "and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in their own persons the due penalty for error." Williams pointed out that although St Paul (the author of this epistle) and his contemporaries viewed sex between two people of the same sex "as obviously immoral as idol worship or disobedience to parents", the main point of this passage is that humans must not judge one another for being sinful: Romans 2:1 says "Therefore you have no excuse, O man, whoever you are, when you judge another: for in passing judgment upon him you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the very same things." Williams admitted that his analysis "does nothing to settle the exegetical questions fiercely debated at the moment", but called upon conservatives to avoid self-righteousness rather than "happily identifying with Paul's castigation of someone else".^[18]

2.7. Subsequent Division

Bishops from two Anglican provinces, the Province of Rwanda and the Province of South East Asia, consecrated missionary bishops for the United States in January 2000 and formally established the Anglican Mission in America (now called the Anglican Mission in the Americas) later that year. In 2010, a similar jurisdiction created by the Reformed Episcopal Church and former members and congregations of the Episcopal Church in the USA was officially launched. Four dioceses which withdrew from the Episcopal Church account for the majority of the nearly 700 congregations affiliated with this church, the Anglican Church in North America. These two bodies—AMiA and ACNA—reject the creation of rites for same-sex unions as well as the ordination of openly gay people. Neither is a member of the Anglican Communion at present (see Anglican realignment).

Bishops in Uganda cut relations with the Diocese of New Hampshire following Robinson's consecration on 2 November 2003. The Church of Nigeria declared itself in "impaired communion" with the Episcopal Church on 2 November 2003,^[19] and nine days later announced it was planning to establish a United States branch of its province to support Nigerian Anglicans living in the U.S., the Convocation of Anglicans in North America. The Province of South East Asia broke communion with the Episcopal Church on 20 November 2003, citing Robinson's consecration as the reason for its action.^[20]

2.8. Windsor Report and 2005 Primates Meeting

In 2004, the Lambeth Commission on Communion issued a report on homosexuality in the Anglican Communion, which became known as the Windsor Report. This report took a strong stand against same-sex attracted people, recommended a moratorium on further consecrations of openly gay bishops and blessings of same-sex unions and marriages,^[21] and called for all involved in Robinson's consecration "to consider in all conscience whether they should withdraw themselves from representative functions in the Anglican Communion".^[22] However, it stopped short of recommending discipline against the Episcopal Church or Anglican Church of Canada.

Apology by 184 bishops. A "Pastoral Statement to Lesbian and Gay Anglicans from Some Member Bishops of the Lambeth Conference," dated August 5, 1998, was sponsored by the Rt. Rev. Ronald H. Haines, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington. The statement apologised to Lesbian and Gay Anglicans for the Windsor Report and for the fact that their voices were not heard by the Conference. By October 30, 1998, the statement had been co-signed by 183 bishops representing every continent except Antarctica.^[23]

2005 Primates' Meeting. In February 2005, the Primates of the Anglican Communion held a regular meeting at Dromantine in Northern Ireland at which sexual orientation was heavily discussed. Of the 38 Primates, 35 attended. The Primates issued a communiqué that reiterated most of the Windsor Report's statements, but added a new twist. Both the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada were asked to voluntarily withdraw from the Anglican Consultative Council, the main formal international entity within the Anglican Communion until the next Lambeth Conference in 2008.^[24]

2.9. 2007 Primates' Meeting

The "Communiqué of the Primates' Meeting, February 2007" (Sec 17, 4) asserted its "belief that The Episcopal Church has departed from the standard of teaching on human sexuality accepted by the Communion in the 1998 Lambeth Resolution 1.10 by consenting to the episcopal election of a candidate living in a committed same-sex relationship, and by permitting Rites of Blessing for same-sex unions. The episcopal ministry of a person living in a same-sex relationship is not acceptable to the majority of the Communion."^[25]

2.10. Consecration of Mary Douglas Glasspool

In December 2009, the Diocese of Los Angeles elected Mary Douglas Glasspool, a lesbian priest with a female partner as a suffragan bishop. She was consecrated on 15 May 2010.^[26] Leaders from 20 Anglican provinces meeting in Singapore in April 2010 declared that the election and intended consecration of Glasspool "demonstrated, yet again, a total disregard

for the mind of the Communion".^[27]

2.11. 2016 Primates' Meeting

A majority of the primates voted to punish the Episcopal Church for revising its canons and marriage rites allowing same-sex marriage.^[28]

The primates' communiqué included these words:

It is our unanimous desire to walk together. However given the seriousness of these matters we formally acknowledge this distance by requiring that for a period of three years The Episcopal Church no longer represent us on ecumenical and interfaith bodies, should not be appointed or elected to an internal standing committee and that while participating in the internal bodies of the Anglican Communion, they will not take part in decision making on any issues pertaining to doctrine or polity.^[29]

The communiqué condemned "homophobic prejudice and violence and resolved to work together to offer pastoral care and loving service irrespective of sexual orientation", adding that "this conviction arises out of our discipleship of Jesus Christ."^[30]

Archbishop of Canterbury apologises

Shortly after the meeting of the Anglican primates, Archbishop Justin Welby held a press conference in which he apologised "to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people for the hurt and pain they have experienced by the Anglican Communion over the years." Welby said, "it is for me a constant source of deep sadness that people are persecuted for their sexuality ... I want to take this opportunity personally to say how sorry I am for the hurt and pain in the past and present that the church has caused."^[30]

3. Differing Stances

Within the Anglican Communion there is diverse opinion over sexual orientation.^[31]

3.1. Church of England

The Church of England has been discussing human sexuality, same-sex unions, and marriage.^[32] The current position of the Church of England is that marriage is between a man and a woman.^[33] The Church of England has also maintained the position that it supports celibate same-sex relationships including civil partnership. "We believe that Civil Partnerships still have a place, including for some Christian LGBTI couples who see them as a way of gaining legal recognition of their relationship."^[34] The House of Bishops and Archbishop's Council communicated that "The Church of England recognises that same-sex relationships often embody fidelity and mutuality. Civil partnerships enable these Christian virtues to be recognised socially and legally in a proper framework."^[35] A spokesperson for the Anglican Church has reiterated that "the church has no truck with homophobia and even supports clergy who are in civil partnerships...(But) the Church of England's doctrine on marriage is [that it is between a man and a woman]."^[36]

In December 1991, the House of Bishops issued *Issues in Human Sexuality*. In the preface, Archbishop George Carey described it as a document for "careful study and reflection". The conclusion of the document listed questions for reflection.^[37] On the tenth anniversary of the publication of *Issues in Human Sexuality*, the Bishop of Wolverhampton, Michael Bourke, wrote that "*Issues* aspired to help forward a debate on the subject", but rather than serving its stated purpose, "*Issues* has been presented as a consensus to which all bishops are expected to subscribe. Instead of enabling open and charitable discussion, it has served as an instrument of management and control."^[38]

The issue of human sexuality erupted when Jeffrey John, an openly gay priest, was elected Bishop of Reading in May 2003. Before he could take up his post there was strong opposition from a minority of bishops and he was persuaded to not proceed with the appointment. However, many senior bishops have voiced disappointment at his decision to resign. Later in 2004 he was installed as Dean of St. Albans. Further controversy erupted when churches in the Diocese of St Albans decided that they would withhold contributions until further notice to protest this appointment. St. Peter and Paul's Church in Cranfield, near Bedford, and Holy Trinity Church in New Barnet, north of Greater London, pledged to withhold money from diocesan funds in protest. St Andrew's Church in the Hertfordshire town of Chorleywood also announced that it would withhold funds until further notice. Yet, in 2002, reporters confirmed that hundreds of same-sex blessings occur, although unofficially, every year.^[39]

In 2004, "the majority of Bishops who voted during the whole passage of the Civil Partnerships Act through [the] Lords' House were in favour of civil partnerships."^[40] Eight bishops voted in favour of civil unions and two voted against the passage of the Act.^[41]

On 25 July 2005, the House of Bishops issued a pastoral statement on the "implications of the Civil Partnerships" which came into force on 5 December 2005. The statement reaffirmed "the Church's teaching on both marriage and sexual intercourse". It also noted that "the new legislation makes no change to the law in relation to marriage".^[42] The statement

went on to say that “clergy of the Church of England should not provide services of blessing for those who register a civil partnership”. However, it said that if clergy are “approached by people asking for prayer in relation to entering into a civil partnership,” they should “respond pastorally and sensitively”. Regarding clergy themselves, “entering into a civil partnership” was not considered “intrinsically incompatible with holy orders, provided the person concerned is willing to give assurances to his or her bishop that the relationship is consistent with the standards for the clergy set out in *Issues in Human Sexuality* (House of Bishops, December 1991).”. “The House of Bishops considers it would be a matter of social injustice to exclude from ministry those who are faithful to the teaching of the Church, and who decide to register a civil partnership.”^[43] However, the statement said that “lay people who have registered civil partnerships ought not to be asked to give assurances about the nature of their relationship before being admitted to baptism, confirmation and communion.”^[42]

On 21 December 2005, in another controversial act which was contrary to the House of Bishops' pastoral statement, the Rt. Rev. David Jenkins, the former Bishop of Durham, offered a blessing for a vicar who had entered into a same-sex partnership.^[44]

In February 2007, the General Synod of the Church of England adopted a motion. In part it read that nothing should be done “that could be perceived as the Church of England qualifying its commitment to the entirety of the relevant Lambeth Conference Resolutions”.^[45] At Lambeth Conference 1998, homosexuality was that the most hotly debated issue. Its Resolution 1.10 stated in an amendment passed by a vote of 389–190 that “homosexual practice” is “incompatible with Scripture”.^[46]

In 2008, in spite of the action by the General Synod, St Bartholomew's Church in London offered a rite of blessing for two priests entering into a same-sex civil partnership.^[47] Nevertheless, other dioceses and parishes supported the inclusion of gay and lesbian priests. In 2008, the Diocese of London provided guidelines saying “clergy ... may use a form of service they consider suitable in respect of a civil partnership.”^[48] In London, some churches “[offer] dedication services to civil partners” as allowed within those guidelines.^[49] In 2011, the General Synod voted to extend pensions and employee benefits to gay and lesbian priests living with their partners in civil unions.^[50] In 2013, the House of Bishops ruled that priests in same-sex civil partnerships could be consecrated as bishops.^[51]

In January 2012, the House of Bishops of the Church of England commissioned a Working Group on Human Sexuality. The working group included Sir Joseph Pilling chairman, four bishops and three advisers.^[52] Also in 2012, Archbishop John Sentamu said he sees marriage as heterosexual, but that “[civil partnerships] are in every respect in ethical terms an honourable contract of a committed relationship.”^[53]

In 2012, the Dean of St Paul's Cathedral, London, the Very Revd David Ison, announced his support for same-sex marriage and said that he had officiated at blessings or prayer services for same-sex couples.^[54] Changing Attitude UK, an affirming group of clergy, laity, and churches within the Church of England, provides a list of prayer services allowed including a “Service of Celebration following a Civil Partnership”.^[55] A bishop of the Diocese of Oxford has given permission for at least one same-sex celebration to be officiated by a Church of England priest who presided for the high-profile ceremony for the Rev. Mpho Tutu and her partner.^{[56][57]} The Diocese of Southwark is another example of offering inclusive services as its cathedral says that “Same sex couples are welcome to approach the clergy with regard to preparation and prayers when entering a Civil Partnership and for continuing support and counsel within their relationship ... Couples approaching the clergy should receive a warm welcome and affirmation”.^[58] In 2017, the Southwark Cathedral hosted a celebration for a same-sex civil partnership.^[59] York Minster Cathedral also welcomes same-sex couples in civil partnerships for prayer.^[60]

In April 2013, the Church of England's Faith and Order Commission, in a missive to clergy, also communicated that “there was a need for committed same-sex couples to be given recognition and ‘compassionate attention’ from the Church, including special prayers.”^[61] A spokesperson for the church also stated that “The church has no truck with homophobia and even supports clergy who are in civil partnerships ...”^[62] In November 2013, the Report of the Working Group on Human Sexuality (nicknamed the Pilling Report) was published. It said that the Church should “stand firmly” against “homophobic attitudes” and should repent “for the lack of welcome and acceptance extended to homosexual people in the past, and to demonstrate the unconditional acceptance and love of God in Christ for all people”. The report's key recommendation was “that the church's internal dialogue on the subject of human sexuality might best be addressed through a process of conversations across the church and involving others in the Anglican Communion”. This recommendation was endorsed and acted on by the church as recounted later in this section.^{[63][64]} Also, in 2013, some in the Church of England planned a liturgical blessing of gay couples.^{[65][66]}

In January 2014, the College of Bishops^[67] endorsed the Pilling Report recommendation about process of conversations on the issue of homosexuality.^[68]

After the legalisation of same-sex marriages, the Church of England communicated that “the option of civil partnership should remain open for same-sex couples.”^[69]

In February 2014, the House of Bishops decreed the following:^[70]

- No special services of blessing for married same-sex couples, but allowed "more informal kinds of prayer, at the request of the couple [but this should] be accompanied by pastoral discussion of the Church's teaching and [the couple's] reasons for departing from it."
- Clergy will not be allowed to enter same-sex marriages.
- Clergy of the same sex are allowed by the Church to enter civil partnerships, but only on the understanding that they will remain celibate.

Still, "gay couples who get married will be able to ask for special prayers in the Church of England after their wedding, the bishops have agreed".^[71] As such, some congregations have offered "Prayers for a Same Sex Commitment".^[72] Moreover, "Bishops have little power to prevent gay clergy from marrying nor to sack them if they do. A panel of three senior bishops has been set up to advise other bishops on how to apply the guidance when clergy dissent. The usual format is an informal letter of rebuke and no further action, meaning more and more clergy are choosing to marry their same-sex partners."^[73]

In April 2014, the Archbishop's Council and House of Bishops asked that the government to continue to offer civil partnerships saying that "The Church of England recognises that same-sex relationships often embody fidelity and mutuality ... Civil partnerships enable these Christian virtues to be recognised socially and legally in a proper framework."^[74]

In September 2014, the College of Bishops met for three days. "Two of the days were devoted to the first of a series of shared conversations in the Church of England on Sexuality, Scripture and Mission. As part of the conversations the college shared the different responses being expressed in the life of the church and the deeply held convictions and experiences that inform them."^[75] Also in September 2014, the Bishop of Leicester confirmed that a service of thanksgiving for a same-sex civil partnership "does not contravene any Church of England rules."^{[76][77]}

The Revd Andrew Cain, of St Mary's Church, Kilburn and St James' Church West, in North London planned to defy the House of Bishops' ban and bless same-sex marriages,^[78] as did a few others.^[79] Weighing in on the issue, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, avoided taking a position on blessing same-sex marriages but did endorse civil gay marriages and prayer ceremonies to mark the important occasion for same-sex couples.^[80] Some congregations and clergy, as allowed by the permission for "informal kinds of prayer", such as St John's Church in Waterloo in South London, have begun to invite same-sex couples to receive "services of thanksgiving following a civil marriage ceremony".^[81] Same-sex attracted people who are ordained deacons, priests and bishops are forbidden to marry someone of the same sex and same-sex attracted people who are married to someone of the same sex are forbidden to be ordained.^[82] Ben Bradshaw MP wanted the position of the Church of England clarified. Specifically, he demanded to know if Church of England clergy who married a same-sex partner would be disciplined or defrocked.^[83] Gay people, including those in same-sex civil partnerships or marriages, are allowed to become clerics but are expected to remain celibate.^[84] *The Huffington Post* wrote in a 2014 article that gay clergy who enter into same-sex marriage or bless same-sex marriages risk being defrocked and losing their jobs.^[85] Seven clerics planned to marry regardless, defying their bishops.^[79] Some Church of England bishops, however, fully accept and embrace gay clergy with partners or spouses in their diocese while other bishops remove the licences of such clergy, making it extremely difficult for them to find a position in another diocese.^[86] In 2014, Canon Jeremy Pemberton married Laurence Cunnington, thus becoming the first priest in the Church of England to defy the church's ban on the marriage of gay clergy.^[87] Also in 2014, an openly lesbian and trans priest was appointed as a minor canon in Manchester Cathedral.^[88]

In 2015, the Most Reverend John Sentamu, Archbishop of York, told a lay preacher, Jeremy Timm, that if he persisted with plans to marry his long-time partner, his licence to preach in Anglican churches would be revoked. As of August 2015, an agreement was reached: Timm would complete existing preaching commitments before revocation. Timm announced his plans to be married in September 2015 and to leave the Church of England^[89] and join "Contemplative Fire", a dispersed, diverse and inclusive group that is primarily Anglican.^{[90][91]}

Other bishops and dioceses have supported same-gender marriage and have advocated for the right of gay priests to marry. For example, the Rt Revd Nick Holtam, the Bishop of Salisbury, endorsed same-sex marriage following its passage.^[92] In December 2015, the bishop of Buckingham announced his support for same-gender marriage within the church.^[93] In 2016, another priest, in the Diocese of Southwark, converted his civil partnership into marriage and "has kept his position".^[94] The *Church Times* also reported that St. Agnes in North Riddish held a "service of blessing" and "ceremony of commitment" for a priest who had resigned to marry his partner.^{[95][96]} The Diocese in Europe also reported the marriage of a same-gender couple that took place in a Lutheran church in Denmark calling a "truly joyful occasion".^[97] The Diocese of Chichester featured Gay Pride in Brighton and encouraged participation.^[98] Also, the Diocese of Litchfield launched a congregation especially to reach out to LGBTI people.^[99] The bishop of the Diocese of Liverpool has called for the church to be more inclusive of same-gender relationships.^[100] In 2018, the Diocese of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich appointed the Revd Joe Hawes, who is in a civil partnership, as dean of the cathedral.^[101] Later, the Anglican Diocese of Lichfield communicated support for "radical Christian inclusion" and that churches should welcome and honour LGBTI people.^[102]

In 2016, the General Synod announced that, in response to the growing support for gay marriage, it will reconsider allowing blessing rites for same-gender couples entering into marriage.^[103] Additionally, an openly married gay priest was elected to the 2016 General Synod representing a historic moment for gay rights in the church.^[104]

From 10 to 12 July 2016, following the prorogation of the meeting of the General Synod, most "members met in an informal setting in which they listened and were heard as they reflected together on scripture and a changing culture in relation to their understanding of human sexuality".^[105]

The Church of England's official Statement after the synod's members completed their informal reflections said that "the Shared Conversations over the last two years now come to a conclusion with over 1300 members of the church directly involved. It is our hope that what has been learned through the relationships developed will inform the way the church conducts whatever further formal discussions may be necessary in the future. It is our prayer that the manner in which we express our different views and deep disagreements will bear witness to Jesus who calls us to love as he has loved us."^[106]

In September 2016, the Bishop of Grantham, the Rt Rev Nicholas Chamberlain, announced that he is gay and in a celibate relationship with his male partner becoming the first bishop to do so in the Anglican church.^[107] Following, Bishop Nicholas' 'coming out', he "received high-level support from the most senior official in the Anglican communion" as the Secretary General, Dr Josiah Idowu-Fearon, said that "the Anglican Communion has never made sexual orientation a condition of eligibility to hold office within the church and I reject the suggestion that it has".^[108]

In November, 2016, William Nye, the Secretary General of the Archbishop's Council, confirmed the following:^[109]

- clergy in the Church of England are indeed permitted to enter into civil partnerships (which are legally not the same as marriage, and therefore have no bearing on the doctrine of marriage);
- clergy in the Church of England are permitted to offer prayers of support on a pastoral basis for people in same-sex relationships;
- churches are able to indicate that they welcome LGBTI people, just as they would welcome all people;
- clergy and laity are entitled to argue for changes to teaching and practice.

On January 15, 2017, Bishop Rachel Treweek, the bishop for the Diocese of Gloucester and first diocesan woman bishop, presided over an "LGBT Eucharist" sponsored by Inclusive Church.^[110] During the General Synod of 2017, the House of Clergy voted against the motion to 'take note' of a conservative position on marriage.^[111] As a result of needing a majority in all three houses, the General Synod rejected the motion.^[112] Following the rejection of the 'take note' motion, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York called for the need of a "radical new Christian inclusion" that is "founded in Scripture, in reason, in tradition, in theology and the Christian faith as the Church of England has received it; it must be based on good, healthy, flourishing relationships, and in a proper 21st century understanding of being human and of being sexual."^[113] In October 2017, the Diocese of Hereford voted in favour of a motion supporting liturgies for same-sex couples to dedicate a civil partnership or civil marriage in church; the General Synod is set to discuss the motion.^[114]

3.2. Church of Ireland

Within the Church of Ireland there is a wide spectrum of opinion. In general, the church recognises four viewpoints ranging from opposition to acceptance of same-gender relationships.^[115] Conservatives expressed great concern about the blessing of the relationship of a lesbian couple in St. Nicolas' Collegiate Church, Galway in September 2002. The rector of the parish, the Reverend Patrick Towers, told the press, "I refuse to do weddings of same gender couples as they simply don't exist. But I am always very happy to look favourably on anyone seeking a blessing, be it for divorced couples, animals or friendships. It was a standard blessing, one I wrote myself, based on the Claddagh ring theme."^[116] There was also widespread concern within the Church of Ireland at the Bishop of Limerick's attendance at Gene Robinson's consecration.^{[117][118]} Views at parish level reflect this, with many evangelical parishes as well as those in the more populous (in terms of Church of Ireland membership) north being generally opposed to LGBT identities, while middle and high church parishes, especially in the south, have openly gay parishioners as a matter of routine. For example, at General Synod 2005, Dean Michael Burrows (now a bishop) stated that he regularly gives Holy Communion to same-sex attracted parishioners in long-standing relationships.^[119] Moreover, many of the church's congregations, including seven cathedrals, are publicly and officially affirming of same-sex couples.^[120]

The bishops have announced a process of listening and reflection within the church. A preliminary response to the Windsor Report was produced by the church's standing committee in January 2005. Most of the northern dioceses passed motions favouring the Lambeth Conference's Resolution I.10, although a similar motion failed to receive overall endorsement in the Diocese of Connor, covering most of County Antrim and the diocese with the most members in the Church of Ireland.^[121] Then, in 2010, the denomination recognised that a congregation within the church had received the 'Straight-up' Rebel award, an LGBT award, for its special services for LGBTI people.^[122]

Civil Partnerships have been allowed since 2005. "The Church of Ireland has not taken a formal stance on the issue" of civil unions.^[123] In 2008, "the Church of Ireland Pensions Board has confirmed that it will treat civil partners the same as spouses."^[124] In 2011, a senior priest in the Church of Ireland entered into a same-sex civil partnership and the relationship was celebrated by his community.^[125] Unlike the Church of England, clergy entered into a civil union "without being asked for any assurances regarding lifestyle."^[126] Since then, other priests have been taking the time and opportunity to come out about their experiences. In 2012, the church's Clergy Pension Fund recognised that "the pension entitlement of a member's registered civil partner will be the same as that of a surviving spouse."^[127]

In 2015, the Bishop of Cork, Paul Colton, announced his support of same-sex marriage, becoming the first Church of Ireland bishop to do so, saying that "The events in society are moving very rapidly and the church is not at all up to pace with the debate."^[128] Following Bishop Colton, two retired archbishops of Dublin also voiced their 'yes' vote in favour of same-sex marriages.^[129] The Bishop of Cashel and Ossory, Michael Burrows, also endorsed same-sex marriage.^[130] While opposing gay marriage, Bishop Pat Storey, Ireland's first woman bishop, did endorse and express support for same-sex civil unions.^[131] On May 23, 2015, the people of Republic of Ireland voted in favour of the legalisation of same-sex marriage, the first country to do such by popular vote.^[132] In 2016, the Church of Ireland released a pastoral letter offering guidelines on same-gender marriage. Although the Church of Ireland does not currently offer marriage or blessing rites, the guidelines allow priests to offer pastoral prayers on behalf of the newly married couples.^[133] Services of Thanksgiving for same-sex marriage have been hosted by congregations; for example, St. Audoen's Church hosted "a service of thanksgiving" for same-sex marriage.^[134] REFORM Ireland, a conservative lobby within the Church of Ireland, has rejected the contents of the letter saying it is "a dangerous departure from confessing Anglicanism."^[135]

Most recently, in 2016, many clergy in the Church of Ireland signed a letter supporting the U.S Episcopal Church and its open stance toward blessing same-sex couples.^[136] In January 2016, the *Church of Ireland Gazette*, which is "editorially independent of the denomination", endorsed and supported a blessing rite for same-sex marriages in the church.^[137] A church report has also said "the moral logic underpinning the negative portrayal of same-sex eroticism in Scripture does not directly address committed, loving, consecrated same-sex relationships today."^[138] In 2017, the General Synod considered a motion to request public services of thanksgiving for same-sex relationships; the vote was 176 against the motion, 146 in favour, and 24 abstained.^[139] The General Synod also unanimously accepted a report from the church's select committee on human sexuality recommending "that the Bishops further examine the unresolved theological differences as represented in the select committee, with a view to making proposals to facilitate a way forward."^{[140][141]} The Bishop of Cork, Paul Colton, announced his support for the introduction of same-sex marriage in the Church of Ireland.^[142]

In 2018, the Irish bishops released a statement on the continuing conversations surrounding human sexuality. The Bishops stated that the church's teaching is that marriage is between a man and a woman, but acknowledged that they are divided on the subject themselves. The letter says that clergy cannot perform or bless a same-sex marriage, but that clergy can offer prayers for a couple who have married in a civil ceremony.^[143] The liberal wing wanting change noted that "the statement allows for autonomy at a diocesan and parish level, for prayer and pastoral celebration with LGBT+ couples who have married, although this is not by means of solemnization, formal blessing or specifically sanctioned liturgy."^[144]

3.3. Church in Wales

The Church in Wales currently has clergy and lay members with differing views regarding the subject of human sexuality. However, the trend has been for the church to move in a more liberal direction. The Church in Wales has taken steps toward allowing same-sex marriages and blessing rites for same-sex unions.^[145] After the Welsh bishops released a statement declaring it "unjust" to not provide formal provisions for same-sex marriages and civil partnerships, the General Synod voted in favour of requesting such formal rites for same-sex relationships.^[146]

In 2011, the Church in Wales allowed priests in civil partnerships to receive full employee benefits.^[147] In 2012, the Archbishop of Wales, Barry Morgan, endorsed civil marriage for same-sex couples and encouraged other Anglicans to support the legislation.^[148] After the archbishop offered his support for the civil policy, some bishops and dioceses developed legislation to alter the official position of the Church in Wales. The church has also endorsed an LGBT film meant to encourage support and affirmation for LGBT people.^[149]

Since 2005, the Church in Wales has permitted priests to enter into same-sex civil partnerships. "The Church in Wales has no formal view on whether people in civil partnerships who are in a sexual relationship can serve as clergy. If the issue arises, it is up to the relevant Bishop to decide."^[147]

In 2015, the governing body voted in favour of same-sex marriages, but a policy change requires further action. During the consultation and discussion, a majority of respondents voted in favour of same-gender marriage. Among the dioceses, the Diocese of St Asaph and the Diocese of Llandaff overwhelmingly supported same-sex marriage.^[150] Overall, 52% of the Governing Body voted in favour of allowing same-sex marriages in church.^[151] In April 2016, the Bench of Bishops decided to fully affirm same-sex couples and offer prayers of celebration for same-sex marriages.^[152] Of the prayers provided for same-sex couples, Form One gives God thanks "for [the two people], who have found such love and companionship in each other, that it has led them to dedicate their lives in support of one another".^[153]

3.4. Scottish Episcopal Church

The Scottish Episcopal Church (SEC) does not have a policy against ordaining non-celibate gay clergy, thus such ordinations are theoretically allowed. They announced this on 23 March 2005:

"[We] had never regarded the fact that someone was in a close relationship with a member of the same sex as in itself constituting a bar to the exercise of an ordained ministry ... We do not have a synodical decision like the Church of England has, which it made a number of years ago, and therefore if someone who was of a homosexual orientation felt a sense of call to the ordained ministry then we would begin the process of testing that vocation. We wouldn't bar him or her simply because they were homosexual."

Headlines in North America announced that the Scottish Episcopal Church had agreed to ordain gay and lesbian people in committed relationships. The Church thus released a statement pointing out that the policy was not news. Regarding the media release, the Church said: "Press interest has focused on one small part of the overall statement". It continued to say that:

"In referring to the fact that there is no current bar to ordination for someone who might be in a close relationship with a member of the same sex, the Bishops were simply stating the present position as it applies in Scotland where, unlike some other provinces, no motion discouraging such ordinations has ever been passed by our General Synod. Consequently, the statement earlier this month does not represent any change in policy on the part of the Bishops."^[154]

In 2005, clergy were able to enter into same-sex civil partnerships, and sexual abstinence is not a requirement in the Scottish Episcopal Church for such civil unions.^[155] Since 2008, St. Mary Cathedral in Glasgow has offered blessings for civil partnerships.^[156]

In 2015, the Scottish Episcopal Church voted in favour of same-sex marriage ceremonies.^[157] Following that vote, the Dundee cathedral hosted its first same-sex wedding.^[158] In 2016, the General Synod voted in favour of amending the marriage canon to include same gender couples; the change required a second reading in 2017. The motion was approved by 97 votes to 33 with 3 abstentions.^[159]

After the Synod, Bishop David Chillingworth, the Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, gave his assessment of the situation regarding the change in the marriage canon.^[160] In 2017, the General Synod approved the amendment to the marriage canon to include same-sex couples in the second reading.^[161]

3.5. Church of South India

The Church of South *India* , although divided in opinion like many Anglican provinces, has many outspoken clergy in favour of rights for same-sex couples. "The Church of South India (CSI) [is] a relatively liberal Protestant church which has, since 1984, allowed women to become pastors. 'CSI has been liberal on these issues. It has taken up issues of gender, dalits and landlessness. It has to address the issue of sexual minorities too'."^[162] In 2009, the Rev. Christopher Rajkumar, a presbyter in the Church of South India, stated that opposition to the rights of same-sex couples is a violation of human rights.^[163] Also in 2009, Bishop V. Devashayam supported legal rights for gay people saying "it is wrong to condemn people for their sexual orientation".^[164] Bishop Devashayam also argued that sexual orientation is genetic and that Scripture should be re-read from a contemporary context.^[165]

In 2015, St Mark's Cathedral in Bangalore, a congregation of the CSI, hosted a forum on preventing homophobia, and the Rev. Vincent Rajkumar advocated for the support of gay rights.^[166] CSI clergy, under the National Council of Churches in India, co-held a conference working against homophobia in Jakarta, Indonesia in 2014 featuring a rainbow flag and with speakers in favour of same-sex couples.^[167] Moreover, during the week of the Primates' meeting in Canterbury, the CSI was listed by the BBC as being among the Anglican provinces open to blessing same-sex couples.^[168]

In 2016, a seminary affiliated with the CSI has begun offering a seminary on LGBT issues. "The Tamil Nadu Theological Seminary in Madurai held a two-hour seminar on gender and sexuality..."^[169]

3.6. Church of the Province of South East Asia

(Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Nepal, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam)

The Province of South East Asia criticised the confirmation of Gene Robinson as a bishop by the Episcopal Church (USA), stating:

"The said confirmation therefore seriously raises the question of ECUSA's genuine commitment to our corporate responsibility as members of the church catholic to uphold and promote only the Apostolic Faith and Order inherited. A natural, holistic and consistent reading of the Scriptures clearly show that it is against the practise of homosexuality. In the context of orthodox and classical Christianity, the canonical authority of the Scriptures is taken to be recognized and received by the community of faith and not subject to majority, culturally relevant or even theological voting."^[170]

On 24 November 2003, the province declared that it had entered into a state of impaired communion with the Episcopal Church by releasing the following statement:

"The Synod of the Province of the Anglican Church of South East Asia unanimously rejects the purported consecration of Dr Gene Robinson on 2 November 2003 by the Episcopal Church in the United States of America, in New Hampshire, as a bishop in the Anglican Church. The Province views the purported consecration as a flagrant disregard of the fundamental teachings of the Bible and the long-established doctrines of the Church.

As the Rev. Gene Robinson is a practising homosexual who had divorced his wife and has, for the last 13 years, been living with a male partner, the Province cannot and does not recognize his consecration and ministry in the Anglican church.

In view of the ECUSA's action in proceeding with the consecration despite the warnings and pleas of a large majority of Anglican churches worldwide, the Province regrets that communion with the ECUSA as well as those who voted for the consecration and those who participated in the consecration service is now broken.

This means that the Province no longer treats those in ECUSA who carried out and supported the act of consecration as brothers and sisters in Christ unless and until they repent of their action and return to embrace Biblical truths. At the same time, the Province remains in fellowship with the faithful believers within ECUSA who rightly oppose and reject the erroneous actions of their house.

This decision was made unanimously at an extraordinary meeting of the Synod held in Kudat, Sabah, Malaysia, on 20 November 2003.^[120]

3.7. Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui (Hong Kong Anglican Church)

The fourth General Synod of the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui, at its meeting on 15 October 2007, resolved that the Anglican Church in Hong Kong and Macau supports the recommendations contained in the Windsor Report so as to safeguard the unity of the Anglican Communion. However, Archbishop Peter Kwong, a former primate, stated that he supported diversity in the Communion saying "Anglicanism is inclusive ... so why shouldn't we find a common ground on homosexuality?".^[171] In 2013, some leaders in the Hong Kong Anglican Church endorsed civil rights legislation that provided legal protection for the LGBT community from discrimination.^[172] Additionally, in 2015, the Rev. Peter Douglas Koon, the Anglican province's secretary general, objected to discrimination occurring in conservative schools and emphatically assured the LGBT community that Anglican schools would be accepting of LGBT faculty and students.^[173]

3.8. Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia

There is no officially stated policy regarding homosexuality.^[174] Members are also divided regarding agreement with the Windsor Report and Lambeth Conference. There is no single national approach toward the ordination of openly gay or lesbian clergy, although individual dioceses have supported or opposed the inclusion of LGBT clergy. However, in 2016, it has been announced that the church will go forward in provincially proposing the option of same-gender blessing rites.^[175] In 2018, the Synod voted in favour of allowing blessing rites for same-sex marriages and civil unions.^[176] Prior to official blessings, the church said that "clergy should be permitted 'to recognise in public worship' a same-gender civil union or state marriage of members of their faith community."^[177]

Some Pākehā parishes are more open to gay and lesbian issues, including ordination and blessing of unions. The Dunedin and Auckland dioceses are notable for other such examples, including the ordination of a non-celibate gay clergy and the blessings of same-sex relationships performed by priests in an official capacity.^{[178][179]} In the Dunedin Diocese, "Blessings of same-sex relationships are offered in line with Diocesan Policy and with the bishop's permission."^[180] In 2006, an openly gay and partnered deacon was ordained in the Dunedin Diocese.^[181] Subsequently, the same deacon was ordained as a priest.^[182] The Diocese of Auckland has also established policies in favour of ordaining partnered gay and lesbian priests.^[183] One priest, in a same-sex relationship, is an assistant priest in Auckland after being denied a licence in the Waikato Diocese.^[184] Congregations may offer a 'relationship blessing' for two partners in the Auckland Diocese.^[185] In 2005, a same-sex couple was joined in a civil union at St. Matthew in the City in the Auckland Diocese.^[186] In 2011, the Waiapu Diocese adopted a resolution affirming the ordination of gay and lesbian clergy and asking for an authorised liturgy for blessing same-sex relationships.^[187] The Bishop's chaplain in the Waiapu Diocese has also performed a blessing for a same-sex couple.^[188] In 2017, the Bishop of Waiapu installed an openly gay priest, who is married to his partner, as the Dean of Waiapu Cathedral.^{[189][190]}

New Zealand writer Liz Lightfoot has documented the experiences of individuals coming out in the Anglican Church as a contribution to the 'listening process' in the Anglican Church.^[191]

In 2014, General Synod passes a resolution that would create a pathway towards the blessing of same-sex relationships, while upholding the traditional doctrine of marriage.^[192] The synod in 2016 voted to receive the report on blessings but left the proposal to "[lie] on the table" and the report will be reviewed again in 2018.^{[193][194]} "However, Synod did pass a constitutional change allowing bishops the right to authorize a service for use in his or her diocese."^[195] In 2018, General Synod/Te Hinota voted in favour of the process to approve Motion 29 and the blessing of same-sex relationships.^[196]

3.9. Anglican Church of Australia

In the Seventeenth Session of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia in 2017, the Anglican Church passed a motion recognising "that the doctrine of our church, in line with traditional Christian teaching, is that marriage is an exclusive and lifelong union of a man and a woman, and further, recognises that this has been the subject of several General Synod resolutions over the past fifteen years".^[197] In 2018, the Primate of Australia and Archbishop of Melbourne, Philip Freier, released an ad clerum re-iterating the current position that clergy cannot perform a same-sex marriage, but priests can attend, participate in procession, offer prayer, and preside over the Eucharist at a same-sex wedding.^{[198][199]} At the same time, the church has "no official stance on homosexuality" itself.^[200]

At its 2004 General Synod held in Perth, the church passed four resolutions on human sexuality. The key resolutions stated that, "Recognising that this is a matter of ongoing debate and conversation in this church and that we all have an obligation to listen to each other with respect, this General Synod does not condone the liturgical blessing of same sex relationships" and "this General Synod does not condone the ordination of people in open committed same sex relationships."^[201] Nevertheless, the Diocese of Perth has "a number of people in same-sex relationships amongst the clergy."^[202] The former primate, Phillip Aspinall, has stated that the topic is not worth splitting the church over.^[200] Archbishop Aspinall has also stated that he does not take an official position on the ordination of gay clergy, preferring instead to encourage respectful conversation.^[203] Another former primate, Archbishop Peter Carnley, stated that he believed "life-long gay relationships and commitments ... could receive church blessings."^[204] Archbishop Roger Herft, as a diocesan bishop, "support[ed] blessing gay unions."^[205] Peter Jensen, the former archbishop of the strongly conservative Evangelical Diocese of Sydney, has vigorously opposed homosexuality, stating that, in spite of St. Peter's revelation that "God has shown me that I should not call anyone profane or unclean",^[206] accepting non-heterosexual people would be "calling holy what God called sin".^[207] Archbishop Peter Carnley, criticised "Sydney Anglicans" for "empty moralizing" and questioned if the Bible condemns homosexuality in a statement:

The exact meaning to be read from these texts and whether they can rightly be made to provide a neat pre-packaged answer to our contemporary questions is what is at issue. Anybody brave enough to claim to know the inner mind of God on the basis of a personal claim to be privy to the only conceivable interpretation of some biblical texts is guilty of self-delusion.^[208]

St. Andrew's Church in Subiaco, Perth, Western Australia, was the first Anglican church in Australia to publicly welcome gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people. Its Sunday evening services are affirming of LGBT people.^[209] Since then, other dioceses have taken affirming stances toward same-sex couples and LGBT clergy. In 2013, the Diocese of Perth voted in favor of recognising same-sex unions.^[210] While Archbishop Roger Herft vetoed the measure, he did say that "there are gay and lesbian clergy serving in the priesthood. They are licensed by me and are honoured and respected as priests ..."^[211] In 2011, the Diocese of Adelaide elected a new bishop, the Rt. Rev. Tim Harris, and he supported allowing LGBT clergy if they agreed to be celibate, but, at the same time, he expressed that he is open to conversation about change.^[212] Moreover, in 2012, the Diocese of Gippsland appointed an openly gay priest,^[213] and, in 2015, the Bishop of Wangaratta endorsed same-sex marriage joining an archdeacon who had already offered to perform gay marriages when allowed to do so.^{[214][215]} Additionally, the bishop of the Diocese of Grafton, the Rt. Rev. Sarah Macneil, has been affirming and supportive of LGBT clergy and relationships.^[216] So far, two cathedrals, the cathedral of the Diocese of Grafton and St. John's Cathedral in the Diocese of Brisbane have officially become supportive and affirming of LGBT people.^[217] Towards the end of 2015, Bishop Greg Thompson of the Diocese of Newcastle has called for conversation and has said that he opposes discrimination against LGBT people.^[218] Also in 2015, the Social Responsibilities Committee of the Anglican Church in Southern Queensland endorsed civil unions for same-sex couples.^[219]

In 2015, Bishop Kay Goldsworthy of the Diocese of Gippsland, appointed an openly gay and partnered priest to another post.^[220] Also, in 2016, the Bishop of Ballarat announced his support for same-sex marriage.^[221] In April 2016, St. Andrew's Church in the Diocese of Perth publicly blessed a same-sex union.^[222] In 2018, Archdeacon Peter MacLeod-Miller "conducted an unofficial hand-clasping ceremony" for a same-sex couple.^{[223][224]} In Melbourne, several Anglican priests participated in and blessed a same-sex marriage.^[225] In 2018, the Diocese of Gippsland elected Bishop Richard Treloar who has been a vocal supporter of same-sex marriage.^[226] The Diocese of Wangaratta voted to bless same-sex civil unions.^[227] The dean of St. John's Cathedral in Brisbane, the Very Revd Peter Catt wrote that he had been blessing same-sex unions.^[228]

3.10. Anglican Province of the Southern Cone of America

Archbishop Gregory Venables has also been strongly critical of homosexuality. Bishops in his province criticised the Windsor Report for failing to call liberal churches to repentance. The province has declared itself in "impaired communion" with ECUSA, but continues to maintain full communion with opponents of the Robinson consecration.^[229] Venables has authorised dioceses within his province to provide episcopal oversight to United States churches that have left ECUSA.

In December 2007, the convention of the Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin, an Episcopal Church diocese in central *California*, voted to leave the ECUSA and joined the Province of the Southern Cone as the Anglican Diocese of San Joaquin. A minority of the Episcopal Diocese remained in the ECUSA. In October 2008, a majority of the convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh voted to leave ECUSA and affiliate with the Southern Cone, resulting in one body affiliated with the Southern Cone and a second body remaining within ECUSA. The following month, the conventions of two more US dioceses—the Diocese of Quincy in Illinois and the Diocese of Fort Worth in Texas—voted to leave ECUSA and affiliate with the Southern Cone. All were subsequently absorbed into the new Anglican Church in North America.

However, some Anglican representatives from the Diocese of Uruguay expressed their support for the inclusion of same-sex couples.^[230]

3.11. Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil

The Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil is characterised by its progressive theological views on homosexuality. After the 1998 Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Church in Brazil decided to promote two national forums on human sexuality, both held in Rio de Janeiro. Its decisions guided the policy. According to the final document, the consensus of the Brazilian Church is that human sexuality is a gift from God, and it should be experienced in peace, freedom, love and respect. The Church has approved of the ordination of openly gay priests and has offered blessing services for same-sex marriages.^[231] It is understood that the Church should respect the privacy of its members and clergy. Any kind of public exposure of someone's sexual orientation (as a pre-requisite to be a member or take part of any ministry) violates this privacy. Because of that progressive position, the Bishop of the Diocese of Recife, still strongly Evangelical, Robinson Cavalcanti, declared Recife to be independent of the Church of Brazil, an action that resulted in his being deposed as a bishop by the Ecclesiastical Tribunal.^[232] Among his main reasons, he pointed out that the Brazilian Church was sympathetic to the ordination of Gene Robinson, as well as the ordination of all LGBT people. This split the Diocese of Recife in two: one part loyal to Bishop Orlando Santos de Oliveira, primate of the Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil, and currently coordinated by Bishop Sebastião Gameleira, and the other, under Cavalcanti's leadership, tied to the Anglican Church of the Southern Cone.

In 2016, the presiding bishop convened an Extraordinary Synod to discuss adding same-sex marriage to the marriage canon; the proposal was not approved, but it was considered during General Synod in 2017.^[233] On June 1, 2018, the General Synod voted to change the marriage canon to include same-sex couples.^[234]

3.12. Anglican Church of Canada

Sexual orientation and the Anglican Church of Canada exist within a strictly Canadian context. In the secular context, Canadian law underwent a profound change in regards to homosexuality. The last same-sex attracted person to be sent to prison indefinitely as a "dangerous sex offender" was in 1967.^[235] In 1969, the Canadian parliament passed amendments of the Criminal Code, decriminalising homosexuality in *Canada*.^[235] On 20 July 1971, the last gay man criminally convicted because of his sexual orientation was released from prison.^[235] A series of judicial rulings beginning in 2003 legalised same-sex marriage in the majority of Canada's provinces, and on 20 July 2005, the Canadian government extended the new definition nationwide by statute.^[235]

Currently ten Anglican dioceses (Edmonton, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, Rupert's Land, Ottawa, Vancouver-based New Westminster, Toronto, London-based Huron, Hamilton-based Niagara, Montreal, and Victoria-based British Columbia) allow the blessing and marriage of same-sex couples. The Anglican Parishes of the Central Interior (formerly the Diocese of Cariboo) also permit such rites.^[236]

On 30 September 2012, the Bishop of Saskatoon ordained as deacon a person civilly married to a person of the same sex.^[237]

At the General Synod on July 6, 2013, the Anglican Church Of Canada made the decision to vote on the issue of same-sex marriage at the following synod in 2016. At the General Synod in 2016, a motion to change the marriage canon to include same-sex marriage received the necessary 2/3 majority and was approved; it will receive a second reading in 2019.^[238] Following the General Synod, the Dioceses of Niagara and Ottawa decided to allow legal same-sex marriages as a local option.^[239] Also in 2016, the Diocese of Toronto elected with Kevin Robertson, for the first time, an openly gay and partnered person to be a bishop.^[240]

3.13. Episcopal Church in the United States of America

In 2003, ECUSA became the first Anglican province to ordain an openly gay priest in a same-sex relationship as a bishop; however, the Episcopal Church's stance on LGBT matters had been debated for decades. In 1976, the Church's General Convention passed a resolution stating: "It is the sense of this General Convention that homosexual persons are children of God who have a full and equal claim with all other persons upon the love acceptance, and pastoral concern and care of the Church."^[241] In 1977, the first openly gay and lesbian priest was ordained by Bishop Paul Moore Jr. in New York.^[242]

Various interpretations were held within the Episcopal Church on this resolution, ranging from the majority of dioceses that now ordain non-celibate gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender clergy to the minority group who founded the Anglican Communion Network which currently opposes such ordinations. On 23 June 2005, The Episcopal Church defined its meaning in a 130-page document entitled "To Set Our Hope on Christ":

We believe that God has been opening our eyes to acts of God that we had not known how to see before ... the eligibility for ordination of those in covenanted same-sex unions ... a person living in a same-gendered union may be eligible to lead the flock of Christ ... members of the Episcopal Church have discerned holiness in same-sex relationships and have come to support the blessing of such unions and the ordination or consecration of persons in those unions ... Their holiness stands in stark contrast with many sinful patterns of sexuality in the world ... The idea that there is only one correct way to read or interpret scripture is a rather modern idea.^[243]

In July 2009, the General Convention voted to allow bishops to bless same-sex unions, and also called for bishops to "collect and develop theological and liturgical resources" for possibly creating an official rite for such ceremonies at the 2012 General Convention.^{[244][245]}

In January 2010, the Reverend Mally Lloyd and the Reverend Katherine Hancock Ragsdale, two prominent Episcopal priests, married in a ceremony at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Boston, *Massachusetts* .^[246]

In 2012, the General Convention approved an official liturgy for blessing same-sex unions, called "The Witnessing and Blessing of a Lifelong Covenant," while making it clear that it was not marriage. The action enabled priests to bestow the church's blessing on gay couples even in states where same-sex marriage is illegal, subject to the approval of the bishops.^[247]

In 2015, the General Convention approved "canonical and liturgical changes to provide marriage equality for Episcopalians." The canonical change eliminated "language defining marriage as between a man and a woman." The liturgical change provided two marriage rites for use by same-sex or opposite-sex couples with consent of the priest and permission of the bishop.^[248]

3.14. Episcopal Church of Cuba

At least one bishop of the extraprovincial diocese, Bishop Nerva Cot, stated that she supported the ordination of openly gay and lesbian priests.^[249]

3.15. Church in the Province of the West Indies

Archbishop Gomez has said Gene Robinson's ordination is incompatible with Scripture.^[200] In 2017, Archbishop John Holder stated that there is no biblical support for anti-sodomy laws and urged Jamaica to repeal its laws against gay and lesbian relationships.^[250]

3.16. Church of the Province of Central Africa

Archbishop Malango was quoted as stating Gene Robinson's election "brought darkness, disappointment, sadness and grief" to his Church.^[251]

3.17. Anglican Church of Kenya

Archbishop Nzimbi has strongly spoken against admitting non-celibate same-sex attracted people into the Church.^[200]

In 2013, Archbishop Eliud Wabukala, then the Primate of the church, "denounced a decision by the Church of England's House of Bishops to allow gay priests to become bishops."^[252] He also opposed priests being allowed to enter into same-sex civil partnerships saying the Church of England "'seems to be advancing along the same path' as the US Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada which he accused of promoting 'a false gospel'."^[253]

3.18. Anglican Church of Korea

The Anglican Church of Korea is among the more liberal provinces in the Anglican Communion.^[254] In 2015, a cleric, members, and congregations of the province participated in an LGBT Pride event and have been affirming of equal rights for gays and lesbians.^[255] The Anglican Church in Korea has openly had discussions about human sexuality.^[256]

3.19. Church of Nigeria

The Church remains sharply opposed to homosexuality, calling it "a perversion of human dignity."^[6] In 2005, Archbishop Peter Akinola spoke out against the Church of England's decision to allow priests to enter into same-sex civil partnerships.^[257]

In March 2009, the Church declared itself in full communion with the Anglican Church in North America, a denomination formed by American and Canadian Anglicans who opposed their national churches' actions with regard to homosexuality and equality.^[258]

In 2013, Archbishop Nicholas Okoh opposed the Church of England's decision to allow gay bishops, even if celibate, to enter into civil unions.^[259]

3.20. Anglican Church in Central America

The Anglican Church in Central America consists of five churches representing different Central American countries. Each member church makes many of its own decisions. In 2013, priests and ministries in the Diocese of El Salvador began to advocate for the full inclusion of LGBT members.^[260] In 2014, the Episcopal Church of Costa Rica, a diocese of the province, took steps toward welcoming the LGBTQ community.^[261] The Diocese of Guatemala elected the Rev Silvestre Enrique Romero as bishop coadjutor in 2017.^[262] Prior to being elected bishop, the Rev Romero served in The Episcopal Church (US), and offered to bless same-sex unions as priest-in-charge.^[263]

3.21. Anglican Church of Mexico

The Anglican Church of Mexico, like the other North American provinces, has expressed in some particular instances more liberal views regarding gender and sexuality. However, Presiding Bishop Francisco Moreno has opposed same-sex unions and the current canons do not provide for them.^[264] In 2007, then Presiding Bishop Carlos Touché-Porter became a patron of Inclusive Church advocating for "a liberal, open church which is inclusive of all," regardless of race, gender or sexuality".^[265] Former Presiding Bishop Carlos Touché-Porter also affirmed that Bishop Gene Robinson was not the first gay cleric, but that he was simply being honest.^[266] He also supported the ordination of openly gay clergy.^[267] Bishop Touché-Porter's diocese, the Diocese of Mexico, "permits clergy in same-sex relationships to serve in the ministry."^{[268][269]} Furthermore, in 2008, when Pope Benedict XVI approached the Anglican Church with the possibility of joining the Catholic Church over issues of sexuality, then Presiding Bishop Carlos reassured his province that he supported remaining within the Anglican Communion.^[270]

Also in 2008, Bishop Sergio Carranza supported the ordination of gay clergy.^[271] Among the affirming churches, St. Mark's Anglican Church in Guadalajara, Jalisco is publicly supportive of gay, lesbian, and transgender members.^[272] Nevertheless, on the other side, Presiding Bishop Francisco Moreno, the current primate of the province, has indicated that he supports marriage as defined "between a man and a woman".^[273]

In 2015, at least one congregation "opened its doors" to bless same-gender couples.^{[274][275]} The church will be discussing same-gender unions at its General Synod.^[276]

3.22. Anglican Church of Southern Africa

The canon law of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa states that "marriage by divine institution is a lifelong and exclusive union partnership between one man and one woman" and makes no provision for same-sex weddings or for blessing same-sex civil unions.^[277] The Diocese of Saldanha Bay has approved the blessing of same-sex civil unions as a provision on the diocesan level.^[278] At the same time, the church does not have an official stance on homosexuality itself.^[279] However, it has been reported of current Archbishop Thabo Makgoba that "The Anglican Primate, [is] one among few church leaders in Africa to support same-sex marriage."^[280] Archbishop Makgoba and his working group on human sexuality have proposed a motion "... to amend Canon 34 which will enable ministry to those in Same Sex Unions and the LGBTI Community in the context in which ACSA operates in Southern Africa."^[281]

A previous archbishop, Desmond Tutu, said that: "The Jesus I worship is not likely to collaborate with those who vilify and persecute an already oppressed minority [...]. I could not myself keep quiet whilst people were being penalised for something about which they could do nothing, their sexuality. For it is so improbable that any sane, normal person would deliberately choose a lifestyle exposing him or her to so much vilification, opprobrium and physical abuse, even death. To discriminate against our sisters and brothers who are lesbian or gay on grounds of their sexual orientation for me is as totally unacceptable and unjust as Apartheid ever was."^[282]

Another former archbishop, Njongonkulu Ndungane, has criticised other African churches regarding homosexuality and said that the church's attention should be focused on other concerns such as AIDS and poverty. Nevertheless, Ndungane expressed publicly his disapproval of same-sex marriage when it was legalised in *South Africa* : "As far as we are concerned as a church, our understanding of marriage is between a man and a woman. And as a church, and the Anglican Church in particular, we have said no to same-sex unions."^[283] However, in 2016, the bishops of the Anglican

Church of Southern Africa voted to affirm members in same-gender marriages as fully equal members of the Church.^[284] Bishop Raphael Hess, in Saldanha Bay, has backed same-sex marriage and is proposing a way to allow gay priests to marry.^[285] Archbishop Tutu also gave his daughter and her partner a blessing.^[286]

Additionally, the Anglican Church of Southern Africa does not have an official policy regarding the ordination of openly gay or lesbian clergy and, thus, some may identify as LGBT depending on their diocese.^[287] In 2003, for example, the Rev. Rowan Smith, the dean of St. George's Cathedral in Cape Town, was warmly celebrated by his congregation after coming out as gay.^[288] The Rev. Douglas Torr also came out to his congregation in Johannesburg.^[289] Moreover, the Rt. Rev. Mervyn Castle, who is openly gay and celibate, was consecrated suffragan bishop in Cape Town.^[290] Still, while gay and lesbian clergy may be locally ordained, the national church has not yet developed liturgies to bless same-gender unions.

Nevertheless, the Diocese of Cape Town, in 2009, did vote in favour of recognising same-gender unions pastorally and the diocese committed itself to studying the issue further.^[291] The vote in 2009 "[had] taken a small step towards accepting gay people in 'faithful, committed relationships.'"^[292] The resolution also said that it is "Affirming a pastoral response to same-sex partnerships of faithful commitment in our parish families;"^[291] Also in 2009, Archbishop Thabo Makgoba said that "[g]ays and lesbians can be leaders within the Anglican Church of Southern Africa as long as they remain celibate, its synod of bishops has declared."^[293]

In 2013, the Provincial Synod adopted a resolution that "urged its bishops to provide guidelines for giving pastoral care to same-sex couples who have entered civil unions under South African law."^[294] The resolution also:^[295]

1. Affirms:

1. That God calls us to love and minister to all people, regardless of their sexual orientation, while at the same time upholding God's standards of holiness;
2. That this is a highly complex and emotive area which affects many people deeply and has a far reaching impact on the mission of the Church.

In 2016, Bishop Raphael Hess of Saldanha Bay gave permission for an Anglican priest to officiate at a service of celebration for the Rev. Mpho Tutu and her partner.^[56] When Tutu surrendered her licence to avoid controversy, Bishop Hess stated that he "hoped it would be short-lived" and that he is proposing to change policy to welcome her back. Her father, Desmond Tutu, gave "a father's blessing".^[57]

Currently, priests may not enter into a same-sex marriage, but the church does allow "same-sex relationships if they are celibate."^[296] Also in 2016, Archbishop Makgoba said "we also tried at the Synod of Bishops to draw up guidelines for clergy wanting to bless couples in same-sex unions, or who want to enter same-sex unions themselves ... On this issue, I had to report back to the Synod, the only agreement we reached is that we were not of one mind".^[297] Yet, the bishops did agree that LGBT people, including members in same-sex marriages, are affirmed as "full members" of the church.^[298]

The Diocese of Saldanha Bay proposed the blessing of same-gender unions and the licensing of LGBTI priests in civil marriages.^[299] During the provincial synod, the proposal did not receive enough votes and was not passed.^[300] Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, however, declared that "all is not lost". He said the issue might hopefully be taken up again at the next provincial synod in 2019. He also said the issue could be discussed at the local level in parishes and dioceses.^[300] Makgoba further noted how relatively liberal the province is saying "As it was, the degree of support for the motion was quite substantial if you compare us to other African provinces of the Anglican Church, most of which are vigorously opposed to same-sex unions in any form."^[301] He also voiced his support for same-sex marriage.^[302]

The Diocese of False Bay has also been supportive of LGBTI clergy and members having celebrated the ministry of one of its openly gay priests.^[303] The Diocese of Pretoria joined the list of dioceses that support same-sex marriage in the Anglican Church.^[304] At least one priest, who is in a same-sex relationship with his partner, has spoken to the press acknowledging that the church ordained him knowing of his relationship.^[305]

In a pastoral letter published on March 2, 2017, the Bench of Bishops said that they continue to discuss "the Pastoral Guidelines for ministry to those in same-sex relationships, which are still incomplete. We asked Archbishop Thabo to set up a small group of Bishops to work on completing them, together with others who could help the process."^[306] Archbishop Thabo is proposing a change to the canons following that process.

3.23. Episcopal Church of the Sudan

The Primate of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan, Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul, on 22 July at a public press conference during the 2008 Lambeth Conference called for Bishop Gene Robinson to resign, and for all those who had participated in his consecration to confess their sins to the conference.^[307]

3.24. Anglican Church of Tanzania

In November 2003, responding to the consecration of Bishop Gene Robinson, Archbishop Donald Mtemela stated his belief that homosexuality is against biblical teaching: "The Anglican Church of Tanzania believes that homosexuality is contrary to the teaching of the Word of God. It is a sin."^[308] Mtemela declared that the Church of Tanzania was no

longer in communion with Episcopal Church bishops who participated in the consecration of Robinson, and those who permit the blessing of same-sex unions.^[308]

3.25. Church of the Province of Uganda

The Ugandan church cut ties with its North American counterparts over homosexuality. It declared itself in full communion with the Anglican Church in North America, a denomination not recognised by the Anglican Communion that was formed by lay and clergy members who had left The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada over matters of LGBT inclusion.^[309]

In 2005, Archbishop Orombi, then the leader of the Church of Uganda, criticised the Church of England for permitting priests to enter into same-sex civil partnerships.^[31] In 2013, Archbishop Stanley Ntagali maintained opposition to clergy in civil unions opposing the Church of England's decision to allow bishops to register a civil partnership.^[310] Archbishop Ntagali stated that "to allow clergy in civil partnerships to be eligible to become Bishops is really no different from allowing gay Bishops. This decision violates our Biblical faith and agreements within the Anglican Communion."^[311] Ntagali compared England's decision to those made in other western Anglican provinces. "Sadly we must also declare that if the Church of England continues in this contrary direction we must further separate ourselves from it and we are prepared to take the same actions as those prompted by the decisions of The Episcopal Church (USA) and the Anglican Church of Canada ten years ago."^[311]

3.26. Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church

On March 22, 2017, the Synod of the Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church released a statement of support expressing its solidarity with the Spanish Evangelical Church after the latter had accepted same-sex relationships.^[312] In supporting the Spanish Evangelical Church, the Episcopal Synod joined LGBT advocacy groups by protesting its removal from the Evangelical Council of Madrid.^[313]

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