

Sexuality, Secularity, and Syncretism

by Archbishop Foley Beach

February 28, 2019

Article based upon a talk given at Gafcon 2019.

Introduction

Mr. Chairman, the Most Rev. Dr. Nicholas Okoh, Mr General Secretary, the Most Rev. Dr. Ben Kwashi, and esteemed brothers and sisters in Jesus: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our glorious Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

As the Archbishop and Primate of the Anglican Church in North America, it is a joy to be here at Gafcon 19 as we are discussing “Serving Christ Faithfully in the Nations.” Thank you, Bishop Marshall for convening and hosting this conference, and thank you, Bishop Michael for coordinating this conference, and for your fine Bible teaching.

Thank you for your asking me to share this morning although I have to confess that I am embarrassed, even appalled, to be discussing this topic. So many of you are facing extreme difficulty; you are facing hostility; you are facing famine; you are facing war, and you are under much pressure in your cultural contexts, and yet, it is very important for you to know what is happening in parts of the Western church. Many of you are from the suffering church; I am from the secular church.

I am grateful to be here because I believe we are truly living in historic times. You and I have been called by God to serve him in this time in history, in the place where he has planted us, to stand for his Truth, and to faithfully proclaim His Gospel while serving those around us who are in need.

[prayer]

If you have your Bibles, I invite you to open to the Letter of Jude to which I will be referring on and off during this talk.

I realize that there are so many serious problems and challenges facing each one of you in your Churches, but you need to be aware that there is a fierce battle occurring in the Anglican Communion. Neo-Pagan Anglicanism is attempting to replace Historic Anglicanism with a revisionist theology and morality as normative in the life of the Church. In the west, we call it revisionist theology, but in reality it is not Christian – it is what Christians once considered pagan religion and pagan practices.

As *The Letter of Jude* verse 4 says: *For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.*

Pagan theologies and pagan morality are now being taught and practiced as normal Christianity in certain provinces of the Anglican Communion – mostly in the West, but it is spreading like a virus throughout the Anglican Communion and throughout various Churches in the world. I am not suggesting this is being done overtly. Pagan deities are not being explicitly commended in churches and cathedrals, or at least this is very rare. Rather, what I am suggesting is that the real danger has come in the back door. Liberal innovations in theology and sexual ethics are pushing Anglicans towards embracing an understanding of God, gender, and sexuality that has much more in common with pagan theology and ethics, than with historic Christianity.

The liberal tactic has often been to substantively change the theological content of belief while maintaining the façade of orthodoxy. The house looks right, but when you open the door and step inside you discover that the outside was very misleading. For example, when I was in the Episcopal Church, USA, we were being taught that the Bible “contained” the Word of God rather than it being the Word of God. So who decides what is the Word of God and what is not?

We were also taught that Jesus is *a* way to the Father, not *the* way to the Father. Jesus is *a* son of God, not THE Son of God. That Jesus is those things to “Christians” but that Jews or Muslims or Hindus have their own way to God. Of course, this is NOT the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the message of the Bible.

A few month’s ago, England’s most senior female bishop said the Church should stop calling God “He” because it is a turn-off to young people. Bishop Rachael Treweek is quoted in the Daily Mail as saying: “*I don’t want young girls and boys to hear us constantly refer to God as “he.”*” She went on to say that non-Christians feel an alienation from the Church if the image of God is painted as only male.¹

Last February the Episcopal Diocese of Washington D.C. in the Episcopal Church, USA, voted to limit in its liturgy the use of masculine pronouns referring to God as ‘He’ in order to be more inclusive in their approach to God.² Linda Calkins of St. Bartholomew’s Episcopal Church in Laytonville, Maryland, who supported this proposal and wants it part of the new Episcopal Prayer Book said: “*I am still waiting for the Episcopal Church to come to the place where all people feel that they can speak God’s name. Many, many women that I have spoken with over my past almost 20 years in*

¹ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6173387/Bishop-says-Church-stop-calling-God-young-people-religion.html>

² <https://www.thenewamerican.com/culture/faith-and-morals/item/28221-dc-episcopal-diocese-embraces-genderless-god-transgender-inclusiveness>.

*ordained ministry have felt that they could not be a part of any church because of the male image of God that is systemic and that is sustained throughout our liturgies. Many of us are waiting and need to hear God in our language, in our words and in our pronouns.”*³

Two years ago, a dear friend decided she could no longer attend her Episcopal Church in Clayton, Georgia when the priest changed the Lord’s Prayer from “Our Father in Heaven,” to “Our Mother in Heaven.” Another friend left his Fredericksburg, Virginia, Episcopal Church, when the priest changed the words in the Lord’s Prayer from “Our Father who art in Heaven” to reflect Mother Earth and the Creative Being of the Universe.

All this is to say that these “new progressive” ideas are often just re-packaged old pagan theology; it’s not Christian and it’s not Anglican. However, this has become common place and accepted in many provinces which call themselves Anglican.

Obviously, God, and God’s being, is beyond gender. And yet God has revealed to us his preferred pronouns. We haven’t been left wondering. The Bible isn’t silent on the matter. Over 160 times in the Gospels, God has been revealed to us as Father. Jesus called God *his* Father, *the* Father, *my* Father. Jesus taught his followers to pray: *Our* Father. Jesus said that He and the Father were one. (Jn.10:30) Jesus said when you had seen him, you have seen the Father. (Jn. 14:9)

C.S. Lewis said it this way:

*Suppose the reformer stops saying that a good woman may be like God and begins saying that God is like a good woman. Suppose he says that we might just as well pray to "Our Mother which art in heaven" as to "Our Father". Suppose he suggests that the Incarnation might just as well have taken a female as a male form, and the Second Person of the Trinity be as well called the Daughter as the Son. Suppose, finally, that the mystical marriage were reversed, that the Church were the Bridegroom and Christ the Bride... Now it is surely the case that if all these supposals were ever carried into effect we should be embarked on a **different religion**. Goddesses have, of course, been worshipped: many religions have had priestesses. **But they are religions quite different in character from Christianity.***⁴

³ Ibid.

⁴<http://www.episcopalnet.org/TRACTS/priestesses.html>

Lewis is right. Even with the best of motives, one cannot make a seemingly small change regarding pronouns, without necessarily affecting a much larger change – a change that ultimately results in a religion quite different in character from Christianity. In the Episcopal Church of St. John the Divine in New York City, there is a chapel which now has a female Jesus on the Cross – Christa is her name.⁵ These pagan conceptions of God are now being practiced and accepted in several parts of the Anglican Communion.



However, it is not just pagan theology which has invaded the Church; it is also a morality that those in biblical times found among the pagan societies surrounding them. The progression of describing God with interchangeable gender pronouns has been paralleled by an attempt to treat gender in sexual relationships as equally interchangeable.



Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church, Michael Curry, kissing Mr. Louie Crew, a key leader in TEC's LGBT + movement.

In the name of “marriage equality,” The Episcopal Church, USA (TEC), the Anglican Church of Canada, The Scottish Episcopal Church, The Episcopal Church of Brazil, The Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, and just a few weeks ago, the Anglican Church in Wales, have all taken steps to override the words of Jesus that marriage is between a man and a woman in favor of normalizing same-sex marriage (see Mt.19:1f). The LGBT+ lobbyists have been embraced by the leadership of these provinces and in some cases these lobbyists have been instrumental in helping these leaders ascend to power. This is not Christian. This is not Biblical.

As Jude writes in verse 7: *...Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire (that is, following their homosexual desires), serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.*

⁵ <https://www.stjohndivine.org/art/the-christa-project>

What was considered pagan morality by the early church is now accepted in these western churches as Christian practice. We have had an invasion of leaders in our blessed Anglican Communion who are not only teaching this heresy, but practicing it as well.

As Jude wrote so long ago: *For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. (Jude 4)*

To take this a step further, not only is this morality blessed among its membership, but the leadership of many of these provinces practice this morality as many lay-leaders, deacons, priests and bishops now live in homosexual and lesbian relationships.

Below is a brief timeline of a few of the relevant events:

In 2003 the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church tore the fabric of the Anglican Communion when it confirmed and consecrated Gene Robinson, a priest living in a same-sex relationship as the Bishop of New Hampshire.



In 2010 Mary Glasspool, a non-celibate lesbian woman was consecrated a bishop in the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles.



Bishop Glasspool and her partner.



Mary Glasspool with fellow bishop and LGBT+ advocate Susan Goff (right) at a meeting in Rome.

In 2013 Bishop Shannon Johnson of the Diocese of Virginia presided at the blessing of a Holy Union of two women – one of which was one of his priests – The Rev. Leslie Hague of St. Michael's Church, Arlington, Virginia.



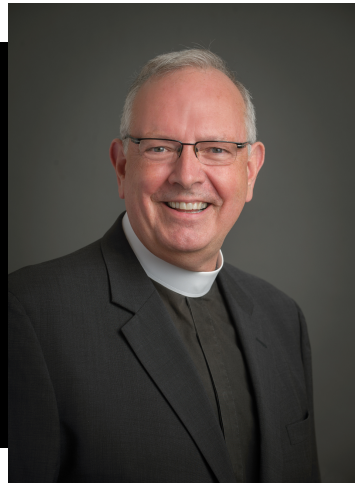


Several weeks ago the female bishop of Toronto, Canada, officiated at the wedding of her suffragan bishop and his homosexual partner. Bishop Kevin Robertson is on the left, and his partner is on the right.

Robertson was welcomed by Canterbury to the Bishops' Orientation program a few days ago without any concern on the impact this will have on the rest of the Communion.



The diocese of Maine in the Episcopal Church, USA, just elected the Rev. Thomas Brown (left) as their bishop. He is in a same-sex marriage with another TEC priest (Thomas Mousin, right).



The individuals above have put themselves forward for positions of public leadership, and therefore invite greater public scrutiny, but ultimately they are victims of the Provinces that have failed them. These Provinces have failed to teach and guide them to maintain biblical lifestyles. Rather than pastor them towards holiness, these provinces have attempted to redefine sin, and encouraged them to pursue leadership without amending their lives. While it would be inappropriate for bishops and spouses in same-sex marriages to attend Lambeth 2020, the greater responsibility lays upon the shoulders of those who have formed, mentored, and consecrated them. It is these false teachers who bear the greater responsibility and about whom the Bible speaks.

We are now seeing this neo-pagan theology and morality effect worship services in many Provinces. A few months ago at the Cathedral in Brisbane, Australia, they held a “Pride Evensong” celebrating the practice of homosexuality. As part of the liturgy they even had a prayer to the “erotic Christ”: *Orange is for sexuality, the fire of spirit. Erotic Christ, you are our Fire, the Word made flesh.*⁶

Churches in the UK and the US have had Muslim services in their churches, even inviting some Muslim clerics to preach and pray during Eucharistic services. There are several churches in the Episcopal Church who celebrate Hindu and Buddhist practices within the church. These examples are just a small sampling of the syncretism which has now become commonplace and is being normalized within the life of the Church.

Jude addresses these people who he says “*defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones.*”

In verses 12-13 - *These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves, waterless clouds, swept along by winds, fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wondering stars, for whom the gloom of outer darkness has been reserved forever.*

These Neo-Pagan Anglicans are not content to practice their sin in just their own context; they are exporting these theologies and morals around the globe. With its seemingly unlimited financial resources from The Episcopal Church, the Anglican Church in Canada, and their various parish, diocesan, and para-church funding societies, (ex. Trinity Church Wall Street, The Diocese of Texas, The Compass Rose Society, etc), they are using these tools to infect Historic Anglicanism with an unbiblical virus. The damage is even greater when this theology and financial resource is combined with the influence of the Anglican Communion Establishment.

⁶ <http://anglican.ink/article/brisbane-cathedral-service-offers-prayers-erotic-christ>

Unsuspecting and needy provinces and dioceses around the Communion are taken in by monetary generosity, the airplane tickets, lavish meetings, and friendship, not realizing what is in the Trojan Horse being brought into their Church.

Without realizing it, sincere believers and followers of Jesus are allowing their provinces to be infested by these ungodly viruses because of the financial wealth and shrewdness of these false teachers.

A little history....

In 2003 the Episcopal Church USA consecrates an actively same-sex attracted man to be bishop, and the Anglican Church of Canada begins allowing liturgies for those in same-sex unions. Provinces around the Anglican Communion protest, many of which break Communion or put in place a status of Impaired Communion with TEC and the ACoC.

In 2008 after the Instruments of the Anglican Communion had failed again and again to address these attacks on the Historic Faith, and after the Archbishop of Canterbury reneged on the agreement of the Primates Meeting in Dar es Salaam, archbishops and bishops met in Jerusalem to begin the Global Anglican Future Conference (Gafcon) in an attempt to defend and restore Historic Anglicanism. It should be noted that there would not be a Gafcon if the Archbishop of Canterbury had kept his word with the Primates back in 2008. But he didn't. It should also be noted that Anglicanism would not be experiencing some of the challenges it is today if the current Archbishop of Canterbury had kept his promises from the 2016 Primates Meeting. But he didn't.

With the Global Anglican Future Conference's release of The Jerusalem Statement and The Jerusalem Declaration in 2008, the Nairobi Communique in 2013, and The Letter to the Churches in 2018, Archbishops and Bishops of provinces representing the vast majority of the Anglican Communion are now humbly seeking to proclaim Jesus Christ faithfully to the nations in our generation:

- a) by restoring the Bible as the authoritative, clear, and sufficient Word of God;
- b) by reminding the Church that sexual ethics are a salvation issue (1 Corinthians 6);
- c) by understanding that walking together with false teachers is unbiblical.

1 Cor. 6:9-11 says:

“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

To walk together and sit at table with false teachers is a tacit admission that false teaching on salvation issues falls within the acceptable boundaries of pastoral and theological diversity. This cannot be so. It violates the Word of God.

1 Cor. 5:9-12 says:

“I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people – not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since you would need to go out of the world. But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother (*meaning a fellow Christian*) if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler –not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge. God judges the outside. Remove the evil from among you.”

This reform and renewal movement of Gafcon is appealing to Anglicans throughout the world to do as Jude says in verse 3 *to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to all the saints*. This movement is calling on Anglicans to repent of our sins, return to the Lord, return to the historic teaching of the Bible, and to resist the economic and political pressures to compromise the Biblical Faith.

Together with leaders from the Global South Anglicans, Gafcon leaders are attempting to address what has been described as the “gospel deficit” and the “ecclesial deficit” in the Anglican Communion. The lack of leadership by the Instruments of the Communion, specifically the Archbishop of Canterbury, to address the Neo-Pagan take-over of certain Provinces in the Communion is tearing the Communion apart.

The 2016 Global South Anglicans Communique speaks to this very clearly:

This deficit is evident in the inability of existing Communion instruments to discern truth and error and take binding ecclesiastical action. The instruments have been found wanting in their ability to discipline those leaders who have abandoned the biblical and historic faith. To make matters worse, the instruments have failed to check the marginalisation of Anglicans in heterodox Provinces who are faithful, and in some cases have even sanctioned or deposed them.⁷

⁷ http://www.globalsouthanglican.org/index.php/blog/comments/communique_sixthGSC

It goes on to say:

The instruments are therefore unable to sustain the common life and unity of the Anglican Churches worldwide, especially in an increasingly connected and globalising world, where different ideas and lifestyles are quickly disseminated through social media. This undermines the mission of the Church in today's world.

The colonial wineskins are no longer working. We are in a post-colonial era and the Anglican Communion Establishment has failed to change. It still seeks to control, manipulate, patronize, and order its life on a dependency paradigm. It is failing in its servant leadership to the Communion, and because of this, many people are suffering. The normalization and promotion of sin and the lack of leadership from the Communion Establishment is continuing to rip the fellowship apart.

In the words of Jude in verse 19: *In the last times there will scoffers who follow their own ungodly passions. It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit.*

Who does Jude say is causing division? Those who have departed from the Faith. And this is what we are seeing in our Communion. Because of this, the godly leaders of Gafcon and Global South have stood tall, refused to compromise the Scriptures, and refused to continue with “business as usual” with those provinces who have adopted theologies and practices more in line with ancient paganism, than historic Christianity.

Many, at great sacrifice and personal cost, have turned down lots and lots of financial resources from such Provinces, dioceses, and churches. They sacrificed their salaries, office staffs, funding for schools, child-care, church buildings, food banks, and medical clinics. Many have lost significant funding *just because* they have stood up for the Historic Faith of the Church. It has been tough, but God has honored their faithfulness with vibrancy of faith, miraculous provision, and freedom from their *economic slavery* to the west.

Many of their names will be remembered as heroes of faith. (Hebrews 11)

The situation in the Anglican Communion is even more insidious than we have known. The Anglican Communion Establishment, that is, The Archbishop of Canterbury's Office and The Anglican Consultative Council are also in economic bondage to these pagan leaders. Because of their financial dependency, I don't believe they could truly challenge these leaders if they wanted to.

It has been revealed that the upcoming Lambeth Conference is being heavily funded by TEC, and its Compass Rose Society, along with other significant grants from various related groups.

Just this past week, there has been a public argument which erupted when Archbishop Ben Kwashi called out the Lambeth planners for inviting to Lambeth 2020 homosexually active bishops and their spouses, those who have consecrated them, and those who teach that this is appropriate for the Church.

Archbishop Justin Welby's response indicated that the spouses of the homosexual bishops were not being invited, but that the partnered bishops, their consecrators, and fellow false teachers would receive invitations. The Episcopal Church, USA responded through the leader of the House of Deputies, the Rev. Gay Jennings. She challenged this decision by Archbishop Justin saying that if the spouses were not invited, then perhaps the Episcopal Church should reconsider its funding of the Anglican Consultative Council Secretariat and other initiatives.⁸

What this reveals is that not only are so many of the provinces and dioceses in the majority world dependent on this ungodly western money, but so is the whole Anglican Establishment.

A Small Personal History

I was a priest in the Episcopal Church trying to be faithful to the Lord, proclaiming his Gospel, leading people into relationship with Jesus, feeding the poor and helping the needy, growing our congregation. And then the Diocese of New Hampshire elected a homosexual man who had divorced his wife and entered into a same-sex partnership. Our congregation was in shock.

After the Primates held an emergency meeting to offer the North Americans temporary, pastoral oversight to those priests and congregations who could not go along with this consecration, I transferred to the Diocese of Bolivia in the Province of the Southern Cone. Other provinces offered oversight such as Nigeria, Uganda, Rwanda, Kenya, Brazil, Ghana, etc.

For the next four years, leaders in the Communion sought to resolve the situation with no results, and at the 2008 Jerusalem Global Anglican Future Conference, the Primates called for a new Province in North America who would bring the faithful back into the fold and begin to reevangelize North America. The next year, 2009, the Anglican Church in North America, was formed and various provinces began releasing their clergy and congregations to the new Province establishing full Communion with us.

Our people paid a huge cost. Over 700 clergy and bishops were deposed by TEC and the ACoC. Our pensions were cut. Many lost their homes. We had to walk away from our building. But those who stayed in their buildings were sued by The Episcopal Church and Anglican Church of Canada losing their buildings (which they paid for and built) and millions of dollars worth of assets (land, buildings, bank accounts).

⁸ <https://houseofdeputies.org/2019/02/21/executive-council-opening-remarks-february-2019/>

God, however, has not been silent. In these 10 years our membership has grown to over 134,000 people, over 1000 congregations, 2100 clergy, 30 dioceses, and a special jurisdiction for chaplains. We are planting a church once every 9 days, and have a significant ministry to the poor and needy in our communities. The Anglican Church in North America is in Communion with more than 50 million of the 70 million Anglicans around the world.

However, now this revisionist virus has left North America and spread around the Anglican Communion. We now have the Archbishop of Canterbury, who is appointed by a secular government which promotes this pagan morality, inviting those who embrace these pagan practices to the official church gatherings - Primates meetings, other Anglican Communion meetings, and now the historic Lambeth Conference, while those who are resisting these unbiblical practices are labeled schismatics and excluded from being invited to these events.

And this leaves the questions for us - What are we to do? What are we not to do?

This is not a question of love. That question is settled. We are all called to love all people regardless of their beliefs or behaviors. One of the most loving things you can do for someone is to point out their sin.

Questions for you to consider:

Is the new teaching about God and “same-sex marriage” false teaching? Are those who teach these kinds of things false teachers? If they are, what does the Bible say about the Church’s relationship with false teachers?

This is our dilemma. We love our Anglican Communion.

Lastly, let me say this -

We in the West need you to stand strong. We need to speak out loudly with your words and with your deeds. As Jude says, we need you to “contend for the faith once delivered to the saints.” They are not listening to us in the west. You now have the voices to speak.

If we are to serve Christ faithfully in our nations, we must speak the truth. We must be people of integrity - who practice what we preach, by our deeds, by our service, by our lifestyle, by our trust in the faithfulness of God.

After pointing to departures from the Faith by these early so-called Christian leaders, the Holy Spirit inspired Jude to advise his listeners (v. 20-23):

But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garments stained by the flesh.

We live in a world in need of the Gospel of Jesus. Heresy is a decadence that cannot be tolerated within the Church because it steals our time, our resources, and our energy.

Millions are going to their grave without hearing about Jesus and his saving Work. Millions need to be snatched from the fire. Millions need to be shown mercy and loved out of their sin. Millions are going to bed hungry and with severe needs. Millions are being persecuted because of their faith in Jesus.

As Anglican Christians, we are called to be in the world, taking the Gospel, calling people to repent of their sins, feeding the hungry, healing the sick, clothing the naked, and helping all in need. We must love people enough to tell them the truth – the truth about their sin – about our sin, and call them to join us in repentance. Yet, this de facto Neo-Pagan Anglicanism threatens to bring it all down – diluting the Gospel and dividing the Church.

It is amazing that Anglicanism began with so many martyrdoms – men and women who were burnt alive fighting to correct *wrong theology* in the church of their time. Ridley. Latimer. Cranmer - to name a few.

Are we modern Anglicans going to ignore their sacrifice and example to us?

It is also amazing that Anglicans in Uganda in the late 1880's were martyred for their Faith and for refusing to practice the *pagan morality* being forced upon them by the king. About 40 young men were burnt alive for their commitment to Christian morality and for not succumbing to the homosexual advances of the king and his friends.

Are we moderns going to ignore their sacrifice and example for us?

Jude concludes his letter with these words in v. 24. 25 and in closing I commend them to you:

Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our savior through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. AMEN.