

Same-Sex Relationships "Comparable to Marriage": Anglican Head



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US and Canadian reports say Anglican leadership "tearing the fabric of the Communion to shreds"

By Hilary White

LONDON, February 16, 2009 (LifeSiteNews.com, with files from VirtueOnline) - As long as a homosexual partnership is "faithful and lifelong," it presents only the same ethical questions as a natural marriage, wrote the head of the Church of England in a series of letters, dating from 2000 and 2001, that have only just been made public.

The London Times revealed this weekend that Dr. Rowan Williams, the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, made the statements in a series of letters to Deborah Pitt, a psychiatrist and evangelical Christian living in his former archdiocese in South Wales, while Williams was still the archbishop of Wales.

"I concluded that an active sexual relationship between two people of the same sex might therefore reflect the love of God in a way comparable to marriage, if and only if it had about it the same character of absolute covenanted faithfulness," Dr. Williams wrote in one of the letters.

Dr. Williams said he had reached this "definitive conclusion" after 20 years of study and prayer. Although he had once opposed homosexual activity, he said, he had changed his mind while a university professor.

In his letters, Williams said that he "drew a distinction" between his personal views as a theologian and his position as the titular head of the Established Church of England.

Williams' comments came to light at the same time as ongoing discussions among senior Anglican bishops came to a standstill at a five-day meeting of senior bishops held in Alexandria, Egypt. The meeting was intended to tackle the divisions in the Anglican Communion over the acceptance of homosexuality by the liberal factions in the church.

At that meeting Dr. Williams said that "the willingness to find reconciliation has been very much in evidence," while admitting that there are "deep divisions" in the Communion.

David Virtue, a conservative Anglican journalist, reported from Alexandria that the response of the orthodox Anglican primates was more forthright. He quotes Archbishop Peter Akinola, the head of the Anglican church in Nigeria, saying that those pushing for acceptance of homosexuality are "trivializing" their religion.

"It now seems increasingly clear that without a radical change of behavior on the part of The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada the only possible outcome of such a process is acknowledgement of a bitter truth that the differences ... are irreconcilable," Akinola said.

Akinola recently commissioned a report by the American Anglican Council and a group of orthodox Canadian Anglicans, to clarify the situation of the church in those countries. The US report provides a minutely detailed record of the efforts of the "leadership of the Episcopal Church," which it says "has been systematically destroying the foundations of Anglican Christianity within the United States."

The report said that the ECUSA leadership has "denied Jesus as the only way to the Father, denied the divinity and uniqueness of Jesus Christ, denied the Resurrection, denied heaven and hell, denied salvation through the cross of Jesus Christ, denied the authority of Scripture, denied the Creeds and denied biblical standards for human sexuality."

The report also said that the "fruits" of this "new theology" include "the promotion of abortion, weakening traditional marriage, promoting same sex blessings and other sexual aberrations, communion for the unbaptized, and accelerating litigation by TEC [the Episcopal Church] against the orthodox."

A similar report, dated January 26, 2009, by orthodox Anglicans in Canada, expressed their gratitude to the doctrinally orthodox primates who have been "willing to cross jurisdictional boundaries" to provide oversight for Anglicans unwilling to go along with the pro-homosexual agenda of the leadership of the Anglican Church of Canada [AcoC].

"Their support, in spite of the hostile reactions of the ACoC and TEC, has been a blessing and witness that has given many faithful Anglicans hope and a reason to remain within Anglicanism. Without their support, many more faithful Anglicans would have been lost as they departed for other denominations or ceased going to church altogether," the Canadian report said.

Meanwhile, the branches of the Anglican Communion that have retained and vigorously defended Christian teaching are reportedly increasing rapidly. David Virtue reports that new dioceses are being formed in Rwanda, Nigeria and Uganda every few months. It is already widely acknowledged, on the other hand, that the membership of the Anglican churches in most western countries is in freefall, with congregations aging and churches closing and being sold in Canada, the US, Britain and Australia.

URL: <http://www.lifesitenews.com/ldn/2009/feb/09021603.html>