

A Reader for Motion 29

***Documents to help prepare for St Matthew's
Special General meetings on:
23rd May 2018, 7.00pm
13th June 2018, 7.00pm***

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What's What in the Anglican Church - FAQ's

Stu Crosson

May 2018

1) What is the General Synod?

The governance body of Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia (ACANZP) made up of Bishops, Clergy and Laity elected from the various dioceses of the National church. This body meets every two years to set policy for the national church (this year they meet 4-11 May 2018)

2) What is Motion 29?

A report from a working group set up by the 2016 General Synod and tasked with considering changes to allow the blessing of "same-gender relationships" within the church, whilst allowing for differing theological convictions opposing or supporting the blessing within in the church. This report forms the basis for a motion before this year's General Synod.

Basically, motion 29 is a pragmatic proposal aimed at keeping the ACANZP church together while allowing for the blessings of same-sex relationships. If adopted at General Synod in May 2018 it will allow

- I. "diocesan bishops to authorize individual clergy to conduct services blessing same-gender relationships".
- II. Recognise Orders of Christian communities to respect and protect theological convictions Eg an AFFIRM community.
- III. Not alter the formularies (ie not change the definition of marriage)
- IV. Provide protection for dissenting voices (bishops and clergy)

Whether it achieves iii & iv is very debatable.

3) What is the Constitution of the ACANZP?

The written document governing the character, beliefs and practice of the Anglican church in New Zealand. It was drafted in 1857 and includes: Formularies, Fundamental provisions and the Code of Canons (see below). In 1928, this was formalized by an act of the New Zealand Parliament. The constitution was redrafted in 1989 to acknowledge a bicultural and multicultural church.

4) What are the Formularies?

The documents which define the belief, doctrine and the authorized services of the ACANZP including: The Bible, The Book of Common Prayer, the Ordinal, and 39 Articles of Religion.

5) What are the Fundamental Provisions?

Provisions deemed as fundamental to the nature of the ACANZP two examples include:

PART A, FUNDAMENTAL PROVISIONS, CLAUSE 1: This Branch of the United Church of England and Ireland in New Zealand doth hold and maintain the Doctrine and Sacraments of CHRIST as the LORD hath commanded in His Holy Word, and as the United Church of England and Ireland hath received and explained the same in the Book of Common Prayer, in the Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining, and Consecrating of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, and in the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion. And the General Synod hereinafter constituted for the government of this Branch of the said Church shall also hold and maintain the said Doctrine and Sacraments of CHRIST, and shall have no power to make any alteration in the authorised version of the Holy Scriptures, or in the above-named Formularies of the Church: (1857)

PART A, FUNDAMENTAL PROVISIONS, CLAUSE 6: The above Provisions shall be deemed FUNDAMENTAL, and it shall not be within the power of the General Synod, or of any Diocesan Synod, to alter, revoke, add to, or diminish any of the same. (1857)

6) What is the Code of Canons?

The laws and policy drafted by General Synod to govern the ACANZP.

7) What is AFFIRM?

A Network of evangelical parishes, voluntary societies (Eg CMS) and groups that adhere to the AFFIRM covenant. <https://affirm.net.nz/content/who-affirm>
AFFIRM stands for Anglicans for Faith, Intercession, Renewal and Mission. St Matthew's is an AFFIRM parish and Stu serves on the AFFIRM council.

8) What is GAFCON & Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans

GAFCON stands for Global Anglican Future Conference and is the grouping of orthodox national Anglican churches around the world who adhere to the Jerusalem statement 2008.

<https://www.gafcon.org/resources/the-complete-jerusalem-statement>

It was formed in 2008 and the third conference will take place in Jerusalem this year in June which Stu will be attending. Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans NZ represent the churches in New Zealand who align with GAFCON.

9) What is a Christian Community? (as per Motion 29)

Provision in motion 29 has been given to form Christian Communities of parishes or people who seek to maintain their theological identity within a diocese that may be expressing a theology or practice which is at odds to their own beliefs. A Bishop (other than their Diocesan bishop) will be able to engage with the Community on matters of dispute.

10) What is Alternative Episcopal Oversight

Alternative Episcopal Oversight is where a bishop outside of a diocese is given authority to oversee a parish, including the right to ordain and licence clergy for parishes.

NB. This has been rejected by motion 29.

11) What is the Diocesan Quota?

Diocesan quota is a negotiated financial contribution each parish gives to the Diocese to allow it to function and pay for Bishop, staff etc. Currently St Matthews gives \$21,000 on an annual basis.

The Issues Around Motion 29

Some notes for small group leaders meeting May 2018

Rev Stu Crosson

If passed by General Synod, Motion 29 will rewrite the laws (Code of Canons) of the Constitution of The Anglican church in NZ to:

Allow Bishops to authorize the use by ministers in their diocese

“a service blessing the relationship of two people, regardless of their sex or sexual orientation where the minister has satisfied him or herself that the relationship is loving, monogamous, faithful and the couple are committed to a life-long relationship.”

- *This will mean that not only will same-sex relationships able to now be ‘blessed’ but defacto (unmarried) heterosexual relationships can also be ‘blessed’. Opening the path for our church to now ‘bless’ fornication as well as homosexual expression.*

Why Motion 29 is a Problem for our Church

- 1) The unified witness of the Holy Bible is loving of all people and damning of all homosexual practice
- 2) It undermines and confuses the doctrine of marriage as being between a man and a woman(the language refers to these relationships being monogamous = one marriage)
- 3) It gives no authority to laity should they oppose the blessing of same-sex relationships in their parish
- 4) It opens clergy up to prosecution within the secular court of law if they deny a request for the public blessing of homosexuals (According to Queens Counsel legal opinion)
- 5) It places institutional unity above theology, doctrine and the gospel as revealed in scripture
- 6) It authorises a church liturgy before developing a coherent theology of homosexual practice
- 7) Young leaders of orthodox faith will not seek ordination within our church. (2 have dropped out of this diocese’ discernment process in the last few weeks)

What are the issues for the local church eg St Matthew’s:

1. Vestries and church office holders will need to sign a declaration of obedience to this rewritten Constitution and Code of Canons
2. Vicars and ministers will need to sign a faith declaration to the constitution and “authorized worship” (including homosexual service of blessing) and a declaration of obedience to their diocesan bishop.
3. Local churches will have no say in stopping a service of blessing if approval is given by the bishop and the vicar. (All that is required is for Vestry to be “consulted and its advice considered in good faith”.)

What are the options for St Matthew’s?

At our March Vestry meeting, I put forward 5 possible responses for St Matthew’s:

- 1) Ignore it

- 2) Stay within the Anglican Church of NZ but reject the reworked constitution. Align with the AFFIRM Christian community. I have recently returned from The AFFIRM Council meeting to discuss this option.
- 3) Leave the Anglican church of NZ but Align with the Orthodox stream of the Global Anglican communion (GAFCON). (In June I will attend the GAFCON conference in Jerusalem to consider this option.)
- 4) Leave and plant a new church
- 5) Embrace the changes of motion 29

All of these options have positive and negative elements to them. Personally, I only see options 2, 3, and 4 as viable options which I could endorse. Option 3 & 4 would most likely require us to leave our property at 30 Hope Street.

As we meet and talk and pray together, we need to give people space and time to process the magnitude of what is being proposed by General Synod and the bishops.

The two passages of scripture which I have been praying to help my discernment have been: *“Seek First His Kingdom and His righteousness”* – Matt 6:33 and *“not my will but yours Lord be done”* – Luke 22:42

Christian Ethics and the Issue of Human Sexuality

Sandy Elkin

Firstly it might be a good idea to define what I mean by ethics and Christian ethics in particular. Ethics is defined as a set of moral principles or values. Ethics are principles of conduct, i.e., what is good, what is bad, etc. Since the time of the Greek philosophers people have sought to discover what it means to live a 'good' life and what is necessary for human flourishing (*eudaemonia*). Christian ethics is a branch of Christian theology that defines concepts of right (virtuous) and wrong (sinful) behaviour from a Christian perspective. It is about the study of the principles and practices of right and wrong in the light of the Scriptures and their application to conduct. It is faith translated into actions and so involves living according to Biblical facts and principles, not just having knowledge of them.

Various sources inform Christian ethics but most Christian ethical writings use four distinguishable sources: the Bible; Christian tradition; reason and experience all under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (also known as the Wesleyan quadrilateral). Scripture is the primary norm because this is how God, and God in the person of Jesus, has chosen to reveal himself to us. Unlike general ethics Christian ethics are not based on principles alone but on a living person, i.e., Jesus Christ. It is not a question of legalistically following a principle or rule but for the Christian, it should be a matter of conviction of the heart. We choose to follow certain principles of conduct out of love for our Saviour.

The world in which we live has departed a long way from God's ideal. We are defined by the Enlightenment and by postmodern thinking which has led to a redefinition of human values, where the goal has become the pursuit of individual happiness and self-fulfilment. In modern bioethics, the key concepts are individual autonomy and rights. Sexuality is just one more dimension of the human pursuit of happiness. Sexual expression, practice and gratification become goals which, in our freedom, we must be allowed to pursue. Postmodernity has also encouraged the belief that our sexuality is the determinative thing about us which shapes everything else we do. This idea of individual freedom and choice is not Biblical. The Bible teaches us that we are no longer free to make our own choices or live by our own rules. We have been bought with a price (1 Cor 6:20) and in fact, it is no longer even I who live because Christ is living in me (Galatians 2:20). The Bible repeatedly talks of us now being 'in Christ'.

Autonomy and self-fulfilment are non-relational concepts, but in practice, we are relational beings. Christian faith upholds the idea of us as persons-in-relationship, of beings-in-community, in a way which reflects the divine example of the Trinity. As Christians, we also need to ask what God's design for human flourishing is. Clearly, from the beginning, God has shown that his desire is to be in relationship with his people and as sin enters the world and the grand story of the Bible develops we see how God continues to call his people back into relationship. Secular ethics encourages us to think that we are free moral agents who can make rational choices between many possible actions. Scripture reminds us that we are physical, embodied beings and our bodies and biological processes did not escape the effects of the fall. Consequently we have a bodily inclination to sin (Romans 6:6; 1 Cor 9:27; Phil 3:21; 1 Tim 1:10). We are as broken sexually as we are in other areas of our lives. Sin has also impacted our mental processes and altered our interpretation of ethical teachings in Scripture and our inclination to live by them. Paul reminds us that we are not free to make choices because we are 'slaves of sin' (Romans 6:17) and so are incapable of obedience.

Teaching of Scripture (eg: 1 Thessalonians 5:23) upholds the idea that we are body, soul, mind and spirit and each of these is important. It also teaches that we were created to be in intimate loving relationship with God and with our fellow believers (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16; John 15; 12, 17)

Genesis 1 is clear in saying that we bear the image of God and that being differentiated sexual beings is part of that (not ALL – there are other things that make us image bearers such as creativity, relationships, language etc). However, sexuality is very important and it remains one of the strongest metaphors in Scripture – especially in the OT. It is also the metaphor used to describe the relationship between Christ and the Church – Bridegroom and Bride – different, not the same. In Genesis 1:26-27 we see that sexual differentiation is a part of the original created order. It seems that sexual orientation, as well as practice, is part of the intrinsic order of human personhood. The creation of Eve was more than just a form of numerical multiplication – the solitariness of Adam would not have been overcome by another male for another male would not have confronted him as ‘another’ as he would only have recognised himself in it. The creation norm for marriage in Genesis 2: 24 seems to have three essential components: there needs to be a ‘leaving’ which we might equate with marriage, becoming ‘one-flesh’ in a sexual union between a man and a woman and a ‘cleaving’ suggesting a love ethic of mutual support and commitment. Throughout Scripture, there is an affirmation that God has made man and woman for each other and that sexual desires find fulfilment in heterosexual marriage (For example Mark 10:2-9; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; 1 Corinthians 7: 1-9 and Hebrews 13:4).

Considering the issue of homosexuality it is perhaps surprising to discover that there are only a few brief references to it in the whole of Scripture and Jesus himself has nothing to say on the subject! There are two main Old Testament references:

Genesis 19:1-29: The story of Sodom and Gomorrah. Although this is often mentioned in connection with homosexuality most scholars now agree that it is probably irrelevant to the discussion having more to say about social injustice and wickedness than about sexual misconduct (see Ezekiel 16:49; although there is a reference to the sexual sin of Sodom and Gomorrah in Jude v 7).

Leviticus 18:22; 20:13: This passage is clearly negative about homosexual practice but that does not really settle the matter for Christian ethics. The Church has to decide if Israel’s’ traditional ritual and moral laws apply to those under the new covenant.

There are four New Testament passages (**1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Timothy 1:10; Acts 15: 28-29 and Romans 1:18-32**) which show that the early Church did adopt the Old Testament teaching on sexual morality. Of all these passages the one in Romans is the most significant in that it puts the condemnation of homosexual behaviour in an explicitly theological context. It is, Paul argues, a rejection of the creator’s design. This passage has been dealt with by liberals by seeking to limit its reference only to those individuals, whether heterosexual or homosexual, who act against their natural instincts and (perversely) engage in erotic activity with those to whom they are not naturally attracted. In other words, homosexuals who have an inherent same-sex orientation, it is argued, are not in view in this passage, because they act in accordance with their nature. However, I would argue that, for Paul, homosexuality is evidence that human beings are in rebellion against God.

So, although there are only a few references to homosexual behaviour in Scripture they all express unqualified disapproval.

Debate in this area uses words like inclusion, equality, rights, justice, reconciliation etc. Steve Chalke (an evangelical Baptist pastor in the UK) has argued from these principles that the Church should nurture positive models for permanent and monogamous homosexual relationships. He draws parallels with our changed attitudes towards slavery and the role of women saying that we now read these texts as culturally bound and says that it is inconsistent for us not to do the same when

considering 'permanent, faithful, homosexual relationships'. (I personally think that these are not good parallels as there is inconsistent teaching in Scripture on these issues – no space to pursue this here!). He, like many others, claims that the Bible is silent on contemporary same-sex relations grounded in love and fidelity. However, I think we must admit that:

- a) There are NO positive statements in the Biblical literature regarding same-sex relations. Those who argue in support of committed same-sex partnerships must do so from silence.
- b) The argument from silence requires that we dismiss Paul's appeal to nature in Romans 1 and the pre-fall creation norm of Genesis 1 & 2. As previously argued verses 20 & 25 suggest that Paul held to a divinely created order with regard to sexuality. (See also 1 Cor 6:16; 7:1-9; Ephesians 5:31-33)
- c) The distinction between homosexual orientation and practice has no Biblical basis and is a modern construct.

I would also argue that our ethical position needs to be internally consistent and if we are going to speak against homosexual practice then we must also discuss, and uphold, the expectations of Scripture around heterosexual sexual practice. In the OT adultery was seen as being a sin against the man – if a man slept with another man's wife he committed a sin against the man. His right to be sure of the parentage of his descendants had been violated. He could sleep with a prostitute, but not with a married woman. Adultery was a social crime that called for retribution. However, in the NT the wife comes into her own as a full partner in the covenant. Now, it is she who is sinned against when the husband violates his covenant with her. (1 Cor 7:4). God calls us to be covenant keepers in the same way that he keeps his covenant with us.

Fidelity is also a characteristic of God's relationship with his people. The whole Hosea/Gomer story is a dramatic metaphor for God's desire to win back the affections of his people and return to the monogamous commitment of their 'marriage vows' to him as their only God.

In the NT Jesus affirmed the idea of sexual expression only within marriage (Matthew 5:25; 19:5-6; Mark 10:8). However, he was also understanding and forgiving of those who violated those norms but were repentant (John 8:3-11), although his command was always to 'go and sin no more'.

The fledgling Christian Church wrote the guidelines for Christian relationships:

- a) A reaffirmation of the Genesis statement that God's intention for men and women was marriage (Ephesians 5:31)
- b) Believers are to abstain from all forms of fornication (Acts 15:20)
- c) Marriage is to be honoured and the marriage bed kept pure (Hebrews 13:4)
- d) Marriage is to be seen as a gift of God (1 Timothy 4:1-5)
- e) The advantages of celibacy should be considered (1 Corinthians 7)
- f) Husbands and wives are to love one another (Ephesians 5:25, 28; Titus 2:4)
- g) Husbands are to live with their wives with an adequate understanding of them as women (1 Peter 3:7)
- h) There is no place for adultery in the life of the Christian (Romans 2: 22; 13:9; James 2: 11; 2 Peter 2:14)

These principles were upheld by the early Church fathers - Polycarp (writing around 135AD); Felix (around 200AD); Tertullian and Cyprian (around beginning of the third century).

The liberal argument then goes on to treat same-sex attractions as natural, i.e., occurring within the natural order, they thus should be considered part of the category of creation. Both the secular versions of celebrating diversity and "gay pride" and the claim of homosexual Christians to be naturally the way they are ("God made me this way") have convinced many that a significant part of the population is simply born with a different set of sexual responses and inclinations which we

should all accept as natural, normal variations, and for Christians, part of God's creation. This view of the normality and naturalness of same-sex attraction has rapidly secured wide acceptance. However, the evidence is ambiguous and not clear enough for us to argue from nature and naturalness. There is also evidence that nurture has much to do with eventual sexual orientation.

Another avenue of exploration is to elevate the importance of 'experience' over Scripture, tradition and reason. I think it is perhaps significant that many who 'change their mind' on this issue do so because of the 'coming out' of a close friend or family member.

In conclusion, the world teaches that we find our fulfilment in pursuit of sexual freedom, whatever form that may take. Scripture teaches that we are 'in Christ' and that is where fulfilment comes from whether that is lived in the context of chaste singleness or faithful lifelong heterosexual marriage. In the end, for me this comes down to a question not so much about 'what do I think about homosexuality' but about what do I think about the authority of Scripture – how seriously am I prepared to take the claims of Jesus over who controls my life. I have met very few people who hold liberal views on homosexuality and orthodox views on other fundamentals of the faith (bodily resurrection of Jesus, virgin birth etc) and so fear that we are on the edge of a 'slippery slope'.

Sandy Elkin BA(Hons); MBHL (Dist); PGDip Theol;

Why I Walked

Sometimes loving a denomination requires you to fight

By J.I. Packer

In June 2002, the synod of the Anglican Diocese of New Westminster authorized its bishop to produce a service for blessing same-sex unions, to be used in any parish of the diocese that requests it. A number of synod members walked out to protest the decision. They declared themselves out of communion with the bishop and the synod, and they appealed to the Archbishop of Canterbury and other Anglican primates and bishops for help. J.I. Packer was one such member who walked out. He shares his story here.

Why did I walk out with the others? Because this decision, taken in its context, falsifies the gospel of Christ, abandons the authority of Scripture, jeopardizes the salvation of fellow human beings, and betrays the church in its God-appointed role as the bastion and bulwark of divine truth.

My primary authority is a Bible writer named Paul. For many decades now, I have asked myself at every turn of my theological road: Would Paul be with me in this? What would he say if he were in my shoes? I have never dared to offer a view on anything that I did not have good reason to think he would endorse.

In 1 Corinthians we find the following, addressed it seems to exponents of some kind of antinomian spirituality:

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, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God (6:9-11, ESV).

To make sure we grasp what Paul is saying here, I pose some questions.

First: What is Paul talking about in this vice list? Answer: Lifestyles, regular behavior patterns, habits of mind and action. He has in view not single lapses followed by repentance, forgiveness, and greater watchfulness (with God's help) against recurrence, but ways of life in which some of his readers were set, believing that for Christians there was no harm in them.

Second: What is Paul saying about these habits? Answer: They are ways of sin that, if not repented of and forsaken, will keep people out of God's kingdom of salvation. Clearly, self-indulgence and self-service, free from self-discipline and self-denial, is the attitude they express, and a lack of moral discernment lies at their heart.

Third: What is Paul saying about homosexuality? Answer: Those who claim to be Christ's should avoid the practice of same-sex physical connection for orgasm, on the model of heterosexual intercourse. Paul's phrase, "men who practice homosexuality," covers two Greek words for the parties involved in these acts. The first, *arsenokoitai*, means literally "male-bedders," which seems clear enough. The second, *malakoi*, is used in many connections to mean "unmanly," "womanish," and "effeminate," and here refers to males matching the woman's part in physical sex.

In this context, in which Paul has used two terms for sexual misbehavior, there is really no room for doubt regarding what he has in mind. He must have known, as Christians today know, that some

men are sexually drawn to men rather than women, but he is not speaking of inclinations, only of behavior, what has more recently been called acting out. His point is that Christians need to resist these urges, since acting them out cannot please God and will reveal lethal impenitence. Romans 1:26 shows that Paul would have spoken similarly about lesbian acting out if he had had reason to mention it here.

Fourth: What is Paul saying about the gospel? Answer: Those who, as lost sinners, cast themselves in genuine faith on Christ and so receive the Holy Spirit, as all Christians do (see Gal. 3:2), find transformation through the transaction. They gain cleansing of conscience (the washing of forgiveness), acceptance with God (justification), and strength to resist and not act out the particular temptations they experience

(sanctification). As a preacher friend declared to his congregation, "I want you to know that I am a non-practicing adulterer." Thus he testified to receiving strength from God.

With some of the Corinthian Christians, Paul was celebrating the moral empowering of the Holy Spirit in heterosexual terms; with others of the Corinthians, today's homosexuals are called to prove, live out, and celebrate the moral empowering of the Holy Spirit in homosexual terms. Another friend, well known to me for 30 years, has lived with homosexual desires all his adult life, but remains a faithful husband and father, sexually chaste, through the power of the Holy Spirit, according to the gospel. He is a model in every way. We are all sexually tempted, one way or another, yet we may all tread the path of chastity through the Spirit's enablement, and thereby please God.

Missing Paul's point

As one who assumes the full seriousness and sincerity of all who take part in today's debates among Christians regarding homosexuality, both in New Westminster and elsewhere, I now must ask: how can anyone miss the force of what Paul says here? There are, I think, two ways in which this happens.

One way, the easier one to deal with, is the way of special exegesis: I mean interpretations that, however possible, are artificial and not natural, but that allow one to say, "What Paul is condemning is not my sort of same-sex union." Whether a line of interpretation is artificial, so constituting misinterpretation, is, I grant, a matter of personal judgment. I do not, however, know how any reasonable person could read Robert A. J. Gagnon's 500-page book, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics* (Abingdon, 2001), and not conclude that any exegesis evading the clear meaning of Paul is evasive indeed. Nor from now on can I regard anyone as qualified to debate homosexuality who has not come to terms with Gagnon's encyclopedic examination of all the relevant passages and all the exegetical hypotheses concerning them. I have not always agreed with James Barr, but when on the dust jacket he describes Gagnon's treatise as "indispensable even for those who disagree with the author," I think he is absolutely right.

The second way, which is harder to engage, is to let experience judge the Bible. Some moderns, backed by propaganda from campaigners for homosexual equality, and with hearts possessed by the pseudo-Freudian myth that you can hardly be a healthy human without active sexual expression, feel entitled to say: "Our experience is—in other words, we feel—that gay unions are good, so the Bible's prohibitions of gay behavior must be wrong." The natural response is that the Bible is meant to judge our experience rather than the other way around, and that feelings of sexual arousal and attraction, generating a sense of huge significance and need for release in action as they do, cannot be trusted as either a path to wise living or a guide to biblical interpretation. Rhyming the point to make what in my youth was called a grook: the sweet bright fire / of sexual desire / is a dreadful liar. But more must be said than that.

Two views of the Bible

At issue here is a Grand Canyon-wide difference about the nature of the Bible and the way it conveys God's message to modern readers. Two positions challenge each other.

One is the historic Christian belief that through the prophets, the incarnate Son, the apostles, and the writers of canonical Scripture as a body, God has used human language to tell us definitively and transculturally about his ways, his works, his will, and his worship. Furthermore, this revealed truth is grasped by letting the Bible interpret itself to us from within, in the knowledge that the way into God's mind is through that of the writers. Through them, the Holy Spirit who inspired them teaches the church. Finally, one mark of sound biblical insights is that they do not run counter to anything else in the canon.

This is the position of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches, and of evangelicals and other conservative Protestants. There are differences on the place of the church in the interpretive process, but all agree that the process itself is essentially as described. I call this the *objectivist* position.

The second view applies to Christianity the Enlightenment's trust in human reason, along with the fashionable evolutionary assumption that the present is wiser than the past. It concludes that the world has the wisdom, and the church must play intellectual catch-up in each generation in order to survive. From this standpoint, everything in the Bible becomes relative to the church's evolving insights, which themselves are relative to society's continuing development (nothing stands still), and the Holy Spirit's teaching ministry is to help the faithful see where Bible doctrine shows the cultural limitations of the ancient world and needs adjustment in light of latter-day experience (encounters, interactions, perplexities, states of mind and emotion, and so on). Same-sex unions are one example. This view is scarcely 50 years old, though its antecedents go back much further. I call it the *subjectivist* position.

In the New Westminster debate, subjectivists say that what is at issue is not the authority of Scripture, but its interpretation. I do not question the sincerity of those who say this, but I have my doubts about their clear-headedness. The subjectivist way of affirming the authority of Scripture, as the source of the teaching that now needs to be adjusted, is precisely a denying of Scripture's authority from the objectivist point of view, and clarity requires us to say so. The relative authority of ancient religious expertise, now to be revamped in our post-Christian, multi-faith, evolving Western world, is one view. The absolute authority of God's unchanging utterances, set before us to be learned, believed, and obeyed as the mainstream church has always done, never mind what the world thinks, is the other.

What are represented as different "interpretations" are in fact reflections of what is definitive: in the one view, the doctrinal and moral teaching of Scripture is always final for Christian people; in the other view, it never is. What is definitive for the exponents of that view is not what the Bible says, as such, but what their own minds come up with as they seek to make Bible teaching match the wisdom of the world.

Each view of biblical authority sees the other as false and disastrous, and is sure that the long-term welfare of Christianity requires that the other view be given up and left behind as quickly as possible. The continuing conflict between them, which breaks surface in the disagreement about same-sex unions, is a fight to the death, in which both sides are sure that they have the church's best interests at heart. It is most misleading, indeed crass, to call this disagreement simply a difference about interpretation, of the kind for which Anglican comprehensiveness has always sought to make room.

Spiritual dangers

In addition, major spiritual issues are involved. To bless same-sex unions liturgically is to ask God to bless them and to enrich those who join in them, as is done in marriage ceremonies. This assumes that the relationship, of which the physical bond is an integral part, is intrinsically good and thus, if I may coin a word, *blessable*, as procreative sexual intercourse within heterosexual marriage is. About this assumption there are three things to say.

First, it entails *deviation* from the biblical gospel and the historic Christian creed. It distorts the doctrines of creation and sin, claiming that homosexual orientation is good since gay people are made that way, and rejecting the idea that homosexual inclinations are a spiritual disorder, one more sign and fruit of original sin in some people's moral system. It distorts the doctrines of regeneration and sanctification, calling same-sex union a Christian relationship and so affirming what the Bible would call salvation in sin rather than from it.

Second, it threatens *destruction* to my neighbor. The official proposal said that ministers who, like me, are unwilling to give this blessing should refer gay couples to a minister willing to give it. Would that be pastoral care? Should I not try to help gay people change their behavior, rather than to anchor them in it? Should I not try to help them to the practice of chastity, just as I try to help restless singles and divorcees to the practice of chastity? Do I not want to see them all in the kingdom of God?

Third, it involves the *delusion* of looking to God—actually asking him—to sanctify sin by blessing what he condemns. This is irresponsible, irreverent, indeed blasphemous, and utterly unacceptable as church policy. How could I do it?

Changing a historical tradition

Finally, a major change in Anglicanism is involved: Writing into a diocesan constitution something that Scripture, canonically interpreted, clearly and unambiguously rejects as sin. This has never been done before, and ought not to be done now.

All the written standards of post-Reformation Anglicanism have been intentionally biblical and catholic. They have been biblical in terms of the historic view of the nature and authority of Scripture. They have been catholic in terms of the historic consensus of the mainstream church.

Many individual eccentricities and variations may have been tolerated in practice. The relatively recent controversial permissions to remarry the divorced and make women presbyters arguably had biblical warrant, though minorities disputed this. In biblical and catholic terms, however, the New Westminster decision writes legitimation of sin into the diocese's constitutional standards.

It categorizes the tolerated abstainers as the awkward squad of eccentrics rather than the mainstream Anglicans that they were before. It is thus a decision that can only be justified in terms of biblical relativism, the novel notion of biblical authority that to my mind is a cuckoo in the Anglican nest and a heresy in its own right. It is a watershed decision for world Anglicanism, for it changes the nature of Anglicanism itself. It has to be reversed.

Luther's response at Worms when he was asked to recant all his writings echoes in my memory, as it has done for more than 50 years:

'Unless you prove to me by Scripture and plain reason that I am wrong, I cannot and will not recant. My conscience is captive to the Word of God. To go against conscience is neither right nor safe [it endangers the soul]. Here I stand. There is nothing else I can do. God help me. Amen.'

Conscience is that power of the mind over which we have no power, which binds us to believe what we see to be true and do what we see to be right. Captivity of to the Word of God, that is, to the absolutes of God's authoritative teaching in the Bible, is integral to authentic Christianity.

More words from Luther come to mind:

If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point that the world and the devil are at the moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ. Where the battle rages is where the loyalty of the soldier is proved, and to be steady on all the battlefield besides is merely flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point.

Was the protest in order? Was "no" the right way to vote? Did faithfulness to Christ, and faithful confession of Christ, require it? It seems so. And if so, then our task is to stand fast, watch, pray, and fight for better things: for the true authority of the Bible, for the "true truth" of the gospel, and for the salvation of gay people for whom we care.

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<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2003/january/6.46.html?start=1>

Allowing God's Word to Guide His Church

Rev Stu Crosson

April 2018

To help discern God's will for us in the light of Motion 29¹ before General Synod this year, here are some Scripture passages that have direct relevance when it comes to discussing homosexual practice. We will need to make some decision together this year but all of us first need to have wrestled what we believe God is saying to us.

The Kingdom of God	Mark 1:14-15	
Following Jesus	Mark 8:34	
	Mark 11:28	
Loving God & Others	Mark 12:28-34	
Loving obedience	John 15:9-10	
Image bearing	Genesis 1:27-28	
Marriage	Genesis 2:18	
One flesh union	Genesis 2:22-25	Matthew 19:3-6
The church	Ephesians 5:31-32	
The Fall	Genesis 3	
 <u>Homosexuality and the Bible</u>		
Sodom	Genesis 19:4-5	Jude 7
Abomination	Leviticus 18:22	
	Leviticus 20:13	
Idolatry	Romans 1:18-32	
Unrighteous	1 Corinthians 6:9-10	
Washed	1 Corinthians 6:11	
Disobedient	1 Timothy 1:8-10	
Sexual Immorality	Mark 7: 20-23	
Celibacy	Matthew 19:11-12	
Singleness	1 Corinthians 7:7, 32-35	
Final Judgement	Revelation 22:15	

¹ to authorize the blessings of same gendered relationships within the church.

Storm clouds Approaching the Anglican Church

Rev Stu Crosson
Easter 2018

At our St Matthew's Vision day (17th March), I referenced some storm clouds which were approaching the Anglican church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia (ACANZP). What I was referring to was a motion before this year's General Synod in May 2018 to authorize the blessings of same-gendered relationships within the church.

On Sunday 18 March, I preached from Exodus 32 where Aaron fashions an idol for the Israelites to worship. I said the golden calf of our age is the assertion of:

" my right to choose my truth"

I believe the current debate around Euthanasia is an expression of this idol and Same-sex marriage is an earlier expression of idolatry within New Zealand (Western) culture, that the ACANZP is about to embrace. In May this year, General Synod will be debating a motion (29) to accept the blessings of same-gendered relationships.

How did we get here?

The seeds of the current crisis facing the Anglican communion go back at least as far as the consecration of a Bishop within The Episcopal Church (TEC) in America in 2003 who was living in a same-sex relationship. Since then the Canadian Anglican church and the Scottish Episcopal Church have embraced and endorsed Same-sex marriage. This has caused the strong rebuke of Anglican church leaders (The Anglican Primates) from all around the globe especially in what is called the Global South (Africa, Asia, South America).

Locally in 2006, the then Dunedin Bishop, George Connor ordained a man in an openly gay relationship.

Within the ACNZN a number of attempts have been made to find a way to bless same-sex unions including:

Hermeneutical Huis	(x3)
Ma Whea commission	(2011)
Way forward report	(2014)
Motion 30	(2016)
Motion 29	(2018)

Some of these have tried to provide a theology for the blessings of same-sex unions, most explicitly, this was attempted in the Way Forward report but the many critiques of this were scathing in its failure to achieve anything like a coherent biblical basis for such a theology.

St Matthew's Statement on Human Sexuality May 2013

In 2013 our church leadership made the following statement:

That St Matthew's Leadership Team (Vestry, Ministry Leaders Team and Clergy) endorse the Anglican Communion's position on Human sexuality as defined in 1998 Lambeth Resolution 1.10, sections b, c, d, and e

(b) in view of the teaching of Scripture, 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;

(c) recognises that there are among us persons who experience themselves as having a homosexual orientation. Many of these are members of the Church and are seeking the pastoral care, moral direction of the Church, and God's transforming power for the living of their lives and the ordering of relationships. 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;

(d) while rejecting homosexual practice as incompatible with Scripture, 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 trivialization and commercialisation of sex;

(e) cannot advise the legitimising or blessing of same-sex unions nor ordaining those involved in same gender unions;

At the same meeting, we also adopted a pastoral stance towards homosexual relationships of 'acknowledgement' as outlined in my paper where we describe *Homosexual expression is an outworking of the fall, in the same way that greed, envy deceit and malice and idolatry is referred to in scripture (Romans 1:29). It is to be acknowledged and ministered to by the church in love. Part of the journey to relational righteousness is through celibate relationships while maintaining a vocational call of singleness.*

St Matthew's Survey 2015

In June 2015, St Matthew's Vestry commissioned a survey of our people. Approx. 100 people completed the survey. When asked:

Would you personally be willing to be part of a church within a denomination which allowed the blessing of same-sex relationships

57 % said no they would not.

16 % were unsure

27% yes they were

What is Motion 29?

Basically, motion 29 is a pragmatic proposal aimed at keeping the ACANZP church together while allowing for the blessings of same-sex relationships. If adopted at General Synod in May 2018 it will allow

1. "diocesan bishops to authorize individual clergy to conduct services blessing same-gender relationships".
2. Recognise Orders of Christian communities to respect and protect theological convictions Eg an AFFIRM community.
3. Not alter the formularies (ie not change the definition of marriage)
4. Provide protection for dissenting voices (bishops and clergy)

Whether it achieves 3 & 4 is very debatable. Legal advice from two Queens Counsel lawyers suggests it does not protect clergy from liability in a secular court of law.

Why can't we just get on with being St Matthew's?

Since being called to be the Vicar at St Matthew's in January 2006, I have worked hard at presenting an orthodox voice from within the diocese and Nationally sitting on the AFFIRM council (9 years). I have engaged actively and proactively by serving on diocesan council (7 years) and for the last 5 years as the Dunedin Archdeacon. What is being proposed in motion 29 appears to me to be a step into false teaching, contrary to the unified witness of scripture, a denial of what it means to be

faithful, human, image bearers, in our maleness and femaleness and as such an idolatrous step away from our God.

The church has never been a doctrinally pure fellowship and has always wrestled with what it means to be faithful to God and His revealed word. To bless something that God calls an abomination (Leviticus 18:22) and what the Apostle Paul describes as inviting the Wrath of God (Romans 1:18-32) seems destined to invite the judgement of God upon the church. In the words of Jay Behan; “it seems to cross a line.”

First Order Matters

The current constitution of the ACANZP is built on Formularies which states

This Branch of the United Church of England and Ireland in New Zealand doth hold and maintain the Doctrine and Sacraments of CHRIST as the LORD hath commanded in His Holy Word,

General Synod cannot change matters of doctrine. As such it seems this motion is unconstitutional but the power brokers of General Synod seem hell-bent on pushing it through despite strong opposition across the national church.

The reformers had a saying:

In Essentials, Unity,

In Non-essentials, liberty

In all things, charity (love)

This is a helpful grid which allows us to realise there are matters about which the church can and does disagree on. The structure of church governance, the age and manner of baptism, the role of women in leadership have all caused strong debate and dispute over church history but most realise that these are matters of secondary (or to use the quote above of non-essential) importance. So we are able to agree to disagree without compromising our faithfulness to God and the Bible.

How do we decide what is an ‘Essential’ or First order matter? In my mind, matters of ‘Essentials’ include:

- our doctrine around the creeds: so the triune nature of God,
- the gospel as recorded in scripture and
- matters which affect our Salvation

are all essential. If the teaching of the church is going to lead people away from salvation and into Gods judgement then we are surely dealing with something essential?

1Cor 6:9 Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

This warning is repeated in Revelation 22:15. As a teacher of scripture, I cannot be ambivalent about matters of salvation. I will have to stand before Christ one day and give an account for my teaching and the teaching of our church.

My Pastoral commitment to all people who join St Matthew’s

Because of the aggressive and provocative implementation of the proposed Motion 29, I have at times heard the tone of my opposition to be more dogmatic than I might want to be. We are dealing with real people who have real struggles, not abstract doctrines.

Within my family, I have two sisters-in-law and one brother who identify as homosexual. I have nothing but the love and truth of Jesus Christ to offer to any person who identifies as LGBTI. Just as surely, I have nothing but the love and truth of Jesus Christ to offer to heterosexuals who remain single throughout their life.

This year I have been a part of the planning team (along with Pastors Adam Dodds and Peter Cheyne) in inviting Sam Allberry, an Anglican ordained minister who identifies as same-sex attracted and is committed to a celibate life, to come to Dunedin in September 2018. I encourage you to listen to Sam's testimony here and his description of his identity being in Christ.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mCLms7J84JY>

The gift of singleness and celibacy seems to have been somehow lost in the emotion of this debate which has been framed in terms of justice in our western media while the call to righteousness has been somehow lost. The following site called Living Out describes what I see as a pastorally sensitive and biblically faithful stance in the area of human sexuality; <http://www.livingout.org/>

My commitment to anyone that God calls me to minister to, is to extend the gospel of Jesus Christ that they may know, the redeeming, restoring, reconciling love that God holds out to everyone who in repentance and faith receive this gospel as revealed in the scriptures. God does not set different criteria of salvation for one person to another. Just as clearly, God's love does not excuse anyone of obedience to all his commands (John 15:10).

My pastoral commitment to all is to extend arms open wide to all, to know the love of Christ and to encourage them to respond in obedience to his truth.

The absence of biblical theology of Marriage or Blessing

Perhaps the starkest criticism of motion 29 is the complete absence of a theology for same-gendered people or a theology for blessing.

Jesus, in the context of teaching on divorce, gives us a concise and clear articulation of marriage in Matthew 19:4-6

"Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

In my mind, Motion 29 is simply wrong at so many levels. The warning of scripture is clear:

Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, Isaiah 5:20

It deeply saddens me what motion 29 will do to our church. I believe the Methodist church is our clearest indication in New Zealand of what this move will do to our church.

As I write this document, I note that the current Bishop of Christchurch has resigned, effective one week before General Synod. She will not be the last to leave the ACNZN but as a local church, we must prayerfully discern what God would have us do.

Helpful Resources

Books and Web sites to engage with issues of Human Sexuality

Books:

- Is God Anti Gay by Sam Allberry
- The Moral Vision of the New Testament
 - A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics by Richard Hayes
- Washed and Waiting by Wesley Hill
- The Plausibility Problem, The Church and Same-Sex Attraction by Ed Shaw
- Walking with Gay Friends, A journey of informed compassion by Alex Tylee
- What does the Bible Really teach about Homosexuality by Kevin DeYoung
- Space at the Table: Conversations between an Evangelical Theologian and his Gay Son, by Brad & Drew Harper,

Websites:

- **Living Out** <http://www.livingout.org/>
Can you be gay and Christian? Is it a sin to be gay? How do you live life without sex? How do I support my same-sex attracted Christian friend/family member?
We are a group of Christians who experience same-sex attraction bringing out into the open the questions and dilemmas that gay Christians can often face.
- **Rosaria Butterfield** <http://intersectproject.org/faith-and-culture/people-hungry-authentic-christianity-rosaria-butterfield-church-homosexuality/>
Butterfield spoke at Southeastern Seminary about gender identity and sexual orientation. In the first thirteen minutes, she talked with Mark Liederbach about her personal journey from lesbian feminist to Christ follower.
Later (starting at 13:15), she explained why homosexuality and gay marriage should matter to the church.
- **Rosaria Butterfield** <https://rosariabutterfield.com/>
Rosaria's website and resources.
- **Truth In Love** <http://truth-in-love.info/>
A Christian's Guide To Homosexuality
by Rev Peter Cheyne
- What is GAFCON by Peter Jenson <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2XCiR4cX2uo>

AFFIRM Covenant

AFFIRM (Anglican For Faith Intercession Renewal and Mission) is a partnership of voluntary societies, groups, ministry units and individuals in the New Zealand Anglican Church that have signed the following covenant:

AFFIRM seeks to recall the church to biblical faith, the life of prayer, spiritual renewal and effective mission.

What we hold in common:

We uphold the creedal beliefs of the Anglican Church, and affirm especially:

1. The love of God as the source and motive of our life and mission;
2. The Lordship of Jesus Christ over the church and the world;
3. The authority of the Bible as God's living word to individuals and communities;
4. The Holy Spirit's gifting of all Christian women and men for their varied ministries;
5. The centrality of evangelism within the whole mission of the church;
6. The need for continuing renewal of local congregations as living communities of faith and love;
7. The priority of prayer and worship as undergirding all Christian life and action.

The societies and groups that are partners in AFFIRM are:

- NZ Church Missionary Society
- Latimer Fellowship
- Church Army NZ
- SOMA
- Bishopdale Theological College Nelson

GAFCON: The Jerusalem Declaration

In the name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit:

We, the participants in the Global Anglican Future Conference, have met in the land of Jesus' birth. We express our loyalty as disciples to the King of kings, the Lord Jesus. We joyfully embrace his command to proclaim the reality of his kingdom which he first announced in this land. The gospel of the kingdom is the good news of salvation, liberation and transformation for all. In light of the above, we agree to chart a way forward together that promotes and protects the biblical gospel and mission to the world, solemnly declaring the following tenets of orthodoxy which underpin our Anglican identity.

1. We rejoice in the gospel of God through which we have been saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. Because God first loved us, we love him and as believers bring forth fruits of love, ongoing repentance, lively hope and thanksgiving to God in all things.
2. We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God written and to contain all things necessary for salvation. The Bible is to be translated, read, preached, taught and obeyed in its plain and canonical sense, respectful of the church's historic and consensual reading.
3. We uphold the four Ecumenical Councils and the three historic Creeds as expressing the rule of faith of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
4. We uphold the Thirty-nine Articles as containing the true doctrine of the Church agreeing with God's Word and as authoritative for Anglicans today.
5. We gladly proclaim and submit to the unique and universal Lordship of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, humanity's only Saviour from sin, judgement and hell, who lived the life we could not live and died the death that we deserve. By his atoning death and glorious resurrection, he secured the redemption of all who come to him in repentance and faith.
6. We rejoice in our Anglican sacramental and liturgical heritage as an expression of the gospel, and we uphold the 1662 Book of Common Prayer as a true and authoritative standard of worship and prayer, to be translated and locally adapted for each culture.
7. We recognise that God has called and gifted bishops, priests and deacons in historic succession to equip all the people of God for their ministry in the world. We uphold the classic Anglican Ordinal as an authoritative standard of clerical orders.
8. We acknowledge God's creation of humankind as male and female and the unchangeable standard of Christian marriage between one man and one woman as the proper place for sexual intimacy and the basis of the family. We repent of our failures to maintain this standard and call for a renewed commitment to lifelong fidelity in marriage and abstinence for those who are not married.
9. We gladly accept the Great Commission of the risen Lord to make disciples of all nations, to seek those who do not know Christ and to baptise, teach and bring new believers to maturity.

10. We are mindful of our responsibility to be good stewards of God's creation, to uphold and advocate justice in society, and to seek relief and empowerment of the poor and needy.
11. We are committed to the unity of all those who know and love Christ and to building authentic ecumenical relationships. We recognise the orders and jurisdiction of those Anglicans who uphold orthodox faith and practice, and we encourage them to join us in this declaration.
12. We celebrate the God-given diversity among us which enriches our global fellowship, and we acknowledge freedom in secondary matters. We pledge to work together to seek the mind of Christ on issues that divide us.
13. We reject the authority of those churches and leaders who have denied the orthodox faith in word or deed. We pray for them and call on them to repent and return to the Lord.
14. We rejoice at the prospect of Jesus' coming again in glory, and while we await this final event of history, we praise him for the way he builds up his church through his Spirit by miraculously changing lives.

Jerusalem
Feast of St Peter and St Paul
29 June 2008

Love Your Neighbor Enough to Speak Truth

A Response to Jen Hatmaker

by Rosaria Butterfield
October 31 2016

If this were 1999—the year that I was converted and walked away from the woman and lesbian community I loved—instead of 2016, Jen Hatmaker’s words about the holiness of LGBT relationships would have flooded into my world like a balm of Gilead. How amazing it would have been to have someone as radiant, knowledgeable, humble, kind, and funny as Jen saying out loud what my heart was shouting: Yes, I can have Jesus and my girlfriend. Yes, I can flourish both in my tenured academic discipline (queer theory and English literature and culture) and in my church. My emotional vertigo could find normal once again.

Maybe I wouldn’t need to lose everything to have Jesus. Maybe the gospel wouldn’t ruin me while I waited, waited, waited for the Lord to build me back up after he convicted me of my sin, and I suffered the consequences. Maybe it would go differently for me than it did for Paul, Daniel, David, and Jeremiah. Maybe Jesus could save me without afflicting me. Maybe the Lord would give to me respectable crosses (Matt. 16:24). Manageable thorns (2 Cor. 12:7).

Today, I hear Jen’s words—words meant to encourage, not discourage, to build up, not tear down, to defend the marginalized, not broker unearned power—and a thin trickle of sweat creeps down my back. If I were still in the thick of the battle over the indwelling sin of lesbian desire, Jen’s words would have put a millstone around my neck.

Died to a Life I Loved

To be clear, I was not converted out of homosexuality. I was converted out of unbelief. I didn’t swap out a lifestyle. I died to a life I loved. Conversion to Christ made me face the question squarely: did my lesbianism reflect who I am (which is what I believed in 1999), or did my lesbianism distort who I am through the fall of Adam? I learned through conversion that when something feels right and good and real and necessary—but stands against God’s Word—this reveals the particular way Adam’s sin marks my life. Our sin natures deceive us. Sin’s deception isn’t just “out there”; it’s also deep in the caverns of our hearts.

How I feel does not tell me who I am. Only God can tell me who I am, because he made me and takes care of me. He tells me that we are all born as male and female image bearers with souls that will last forever and gendered bodies that will either suffer eternally in hell or be glorified in the New Jerusalem. Genesis 1:27 tells me that there are ethical consequences and boundaries to being born male and female. When I say this previous sentence on college campuses—even ones that claim to be Christian—the student protestors come out in the dozens. I’m told that declaring the ethical responsibilities of being born male and female is now hate speech.

Calling God’s sexual ethic hate speech does Satan’s bidding. This is Orwellian nonsense or worse. I only know who I really am when the Bible becomes my lens for self-reflection, and when the blood of Christ so powerfully pumps my heart whole that I can deny myself, take up the cross, and follow him.

Calling God’s sexual ethic hate speech does Satan’s bidding. This is Orwellian nonsense or worse. There is no good will between the cross and the unconverted person. The cross is ruthless. To take up your cross means that you are going to die. As A. W. Tozer has said, to carry a cross means you

are walking away, and you are never coming back. The cross symbolizes what it means to die to self. We die so that we can be born again in and through Jesus, by repenting of our sin (even the unchosen ones) and putting our faith in Jesus, the author and finisher of our salvation. The supernatural power that comes with being born again means that where I once had a single desire—one that says if it feels good, it must be who I really am—I now have twin desires that war within me: “For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do” (Gal. 5:17). And this war doesn’t end until Glory.

Victory over sin means we have Christ’s company in the battle, not that we are lobotomized. My choice sins know my name and address. And the same is true for you.

The Cross Never Makes an Ally with Sin

A few years ago, I was speaking at a large church. An older woman waited until the end of the evening and approached me. She told me that she was 75 years old, that she had been married to a woman for 50 years, and that she and her partner had children and grandchildren. Then she said something chilling. In a hushed voice, she whispered, “I have heard the gospel, and I understand that I may lose everything. Why didn’t anyone tell me this before? Why did people I love not tell me that I would one day have to choose like this?” That’s a good question. Why did not one person tell this dear image bearer that she could not have illicit love and gospel peace at the same time? Why didn’t anyone—throughout all of these decades—tell this woman that sin and Christ cannot abide together, for the cross never makes itself an ally with the sin it must crush, because Christ took our sin upon himself and paid the ransom for its dreadful cost?

We have all failed miserably at loving fellow image bearers who identify as part of the LGBT community—fellow image bearers who are deceived by sin and deceived by a hateful world that applies the category mistake of sexual orientation identity like a noose. And we all continue to fail miserably. On the biblical side, we often have failed to offer loving relationships and open doors to our homes and hearts, openness so unhindered that we are as strong in loving relationship as we are in the words we wield. We also have failed to discern the true nature of the Christian doctrine of sin. For when we advocate for laws and policies that bless the relationships that God calls sin, we are acting as though we think ourselves more merciful than God is.

May God have mercy on us all.

*Rosaria Butterfield is a former tenured professor of English at Syracuse University and author of *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert* (Crown & Covenant, 2012) and *Openness Unhindered: Further Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert on Sexual Identity and Union with Christ* (Crown & Covenant, 2015).*

Lay Perspective on the Implications of the Report of the Motion 29 Working Group

Report to St Matthew's Vestry

*Penny Field, Synod's Rep
& Jim Faed (former People's Warden & Synod's Rep),
17/4/2018*

Why the Report on Motion 29 is Important

A report is being tabled at the General Synod of the Anglican Church on 4-11 May 2018 that is potentially divisive in the Anglican Church. The Report will be discussed under Motion 29 at the General Synod. We believe that at this time Lay members of the Church in NZ are called to have faith and show courage.

Background: The **General Synod** is the two-yearly meeting of the governing body of the Anglican Church in NZ. It is the equivalent of a national Parliament. The General Synod has the power to set rules but may not change the doctrine of the Church. The Anglican Church is established under the **Church of England (Anglican Church) Empowering Act 1928 (CEA 1928)**.

Some Definitions: **Doctrine** is the statement of what we believe. The **Constitution** is the formal statement of the beliefs, structure and functioning of the Anglican Church. The **Thirty-nine Articles** are the original statement on which the Church of England was established at the time of the Reformation in the UK; they are also part of the founding statement of the NZ branch of the Church. The **Formularies** refers to the authorised Services, the Thirty-nine Articles, the Bible and the services for consecrating, ordaining and making Bishops, Priests and Deacons.

Successive Lambeth Conferences have recognised the implications of revisions to the Services throughout the Anglican Communion, and have indicated the principles upon which Prayer Book revision should proceed. The 1989 NZ Prayer Book revision has been described as a model for revision throughout the Anglican Communion as it provides a flexible structure for Services. <http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/Maori/hc1966.htm>

Wikipedia, dispassionately summarises perspectives of Anglican Doctrine as – **Interpretation of doctrine:** The foundations and streams of doctrine are interpreted through the lenses (perspectives) of various Christian movements which have gained wide acceptance among clergy and laity. Prominent among those in the latter part of the 20th century and the early 21st century are Liberal Christianity, Anglo-Catholicism and Evangelicalism. These perspectives emphasise or supplement particular aspects of historical theological writings, canon law, formularies and prayer books. Because of this, these perspectives often conflict with each other and can conflict with the formal doctrines. Some of these differences help to define "parties" or "factions" within Anglicanism. However, with certain notable exceptions that led to schisms, Anglicans have grown a tradition of tolerating internal differences. This tradition of tolerance is sometimes known as "comprehensiveness".

The Anglican Church in NZ is a branch of the global Anglican Church and recognises the Archbishop of Canterbury as the senior Bishop in the Anglican Communion. The Church is established under its

Constitution which cannot be changed by General Synod under the CEA 1928 and the 1966 amendment. Provision exists for changes in the Formularies but subject to the Church in England, the Thirty-nine Articles and the Formularies (the services in the Book of Common Prayer – as amended and approved subsequently).

A fundamental provision of the Constitution of the (Anglican) Church in Aotearoa, NZ, and Polynesia in the CEA 1928 is: General Synod may not change the Church's doctrine but may approve changes to Services within established doctrine.

The **Motion 29 Report** is a report from a General Synod Working Group and provides a recommendation to General Synod to authorise a new non-Formulary Service of blessing for two people in a same-sex relationship, provided the Minister has satisfied him/herself that the relationship is loving, monogamous, faithful and the couple are committed to a life-long relationship.

The Report aims to be a compromise between the opposed positions of liberal and evangelical members of the Church. The differing positions prevented acceptance of a previous motion (Motion 30, GS 2016) - a proposal for how the Church might proceed to allow the blessing of same-sex couples. The Motion 29 Report, if adopted, will in effect change the doctrine of the Anglican Church in NZ. It is this issue that creates great concern for Evangelical Anglicans.

Evangelical Response

The Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans (FCANZ) is the NZ branch of a global family of evangelical Anglicans. The Fellowship feel isolated and marginalised in the current debates. They seek to promote faithfulness to the Scriptures as evangelical Anglicans have faithfully and historically understood them. A meeting was held of the southern FCANZ group in Christchurch on Sat. 8th April and was attended by Jim, Penny and Grant (for part of the meeting) and close to 400 attendees.

The chief concern of FCANZ is that the Motion 29 Report goes too far. The proposal will allow services authorised by a local Bishop that are inconsistent with the Formularies (existing Services) and will result in changes to the understanding of the Church's doctrine. It will allow for the blessing of same-sex couples and also heterosexual couples who are not married. Substantial General Synod support to pass Motion 29 is expected, though some changes might be made.

If adopted, Motion 29 will produce significant problems for the consciences of many who minister, serve, and participate in the life of our church. Those who hold official positions in the Church will be required to declare (sign) obedience to rules and regulations which contradict the teaching of Scripture and the historical practice of the Christian church.

An issue discussed at the FCA meeting is that some congregations will feel they are not able to remain in a Diocese in which the Bishop supports the blessing of same-sex relationships.

The Motion 29 Report introduced the concept of **alternative episcopal oversight** of parishes who do not wish to be associated with a Bishop who adopts licencing of ministers for the new Service(s). The issue of alternative oversight is being referred to the House of Bishops. The outcome is unlikely to be determined until after General Synod has met. For FCA members the integrity of episcopal oversight is a big issue.

Some FCANZ members are now exploring episcopal oversight within and outside NZ.

Should parishes consider they need to align themselves to an overseas Evangelical Anglican Diocese, or another church body, the threat of loss of all Parish property will be a real concern. Eviction from

Parish property occurred in the Waikato Diocese in 2016 when Rev Michael Hewatt felt he needed to leave the Anglican Communion over the Motion 30 issues. A speaker from the USA who leads in the biblically-based branch of the Anglican Church (CANA) that is not aligned with the Episcopal Church (Anglican) in North America but is under the oversight of the Primate of Nigeria, has a decade of experience of the consequences following separation. He advised NZ Anglicans to be ready to surrender the buildings, property and Parish bank balances (these are the property of the Diocese, not the local Parish), as they do not determine our faithfulness to God's word. He also encouraged Lay-people to hold Bishops theologically accountable as they do not have employment relationships with Bishops (as do Clergy).

Lay Response

It was repeatedly emphasised at the FCA meeting that the issue is seen as serious and a spiritual battle; it creates a call to mobilise intercessors that we may be found faithful. The Motion 29 Report was criticised for promoting a process where selective choosing from scripture and doctrine is seen as acceptable.

Peter Jensen, general secretary of the Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans (GAFCON) to which FCANZ is aligned, emphasised and made a strong plea for us to have faith and courage at this time and to care about our Church Community. He reminded us that Fellowship is a gift and that being faithful to Christ involves sacrifice.

We believe that this is a serious issue with potentially profound implications for Church as we know it at St Matthew's. We have engaged with the issue over the last couple of months and are still coming to grips with it and the role of Lay people in speaking their faith.

It is also a difficult issue for Clergy as it involves their Faith and also their continued employment by a Bishop. To date, the Lay Voice has not been heard in the debate, just as there has been no theological basis prepared to support discussion of the Motion 29 Report. We believe the Lay People need to engage with Bishops and Clergy over issues of faith and doctrine as a matter of accountability and to be an active part of the living Church.