



Canterbury interview highlights Anglican disagreement on same-sex marriage



The Archbishop of Canterbury's views on the impact in Africa of same sex marriage not unexpectedly highlighted division and disagreement within the Anglican Communion.

Presented here is an account of the Archbishop's views expressed in the radio interview, and two contrasting points of view - from a Scottish Episcopal Dean and from a member of the leadership core of Fulcrum an evangelical group which claims to be at the moderate centre of Anglicanism.

African Christians will be killed if C of E accepts same-sex marriage

Archbishop says he has seen mass grave of Christians killed by neighbours who said they feared being 'made to become gay'

The Guardian - African Christians will be killed if the Church of England accepts gay [marriage](#), the archbishop of Canterbury has suggested. Speaking on an LBC phone in, [Justin Welby](#) said he had stood by a mass grave in Nigeria of 330 Christians who had been massacred by neighbours who had justified the atrocity by saying: "If we leave a Christian community here we will all be made to become homosexual and so we will kill all the Christians."

"I have stood by gravesides in [Africa](#) of a group of Christians who had been attacked because of something that had happened in America. We have to listen to that. We have to be aware of the fact," Welby said. If the Church of England celebrated gay marriages, he added, "the impact of that on Christians far from here, in South Sudan, Pakistan, Nigeria and other places would be absolutely catastrophic. Everything we say here goes round the world."

This reasoning has until now been kept private, although both Welby and his predecessor, Rowan Williams, anguished about it in private. More at -

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/apr/04/african-christians-church-of-england-gay-marriage-justin-welby>

A transcript of the Archbishop's phone-in is at -

<http://lordsspiritual.wordpress.com/2014/04/05/archbishops-radio-phone-in-on-lbc-radio-transcript/>

A video recording of the broadcast phone in is at -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TGdBTMx1Vgo>

You condemn it, Archbishop

**Kelvin Holdsworth, Provost of
St Mary's Cathedral, Glasgow
writes -**

It is often noted that the Scottish
Episcopal Church is very much in



favour of the Anglican Communion. What is noted in public slightly less often but which is no less important to remember, is that it is not in favour of the Anglican Communion at any cost. Our dismissal of the Anglican Covenant showed that very clearly.

The Archbishop of Canterbury's [statements yesterday in a radio phone-in](#), which seemed to imply that opening marriage to same-sex couples would lead to murder in Africa, take us into a very murky ethical place. I have to admit that my heart sank when I heard it. We have had more than enough of this kind of thing from inhabitants of Lambeth Palace. It seems very clear to me that in this case, Justin Welby is wrong.

Generally speaking, I thought it was a poor radio performance. Personally I never do radio phone-ins. It is a format that is hard to do well with. The Archbishop seemed nervous (perhaps rightly) and ill-prepared.

The particularly offensive thing which he has said is to suggest that there should be no movement on opening marriage to same-sex couples in the church because that could lead to Anglicans being murdered in Africa. He told a story of standing beside a mass grave and being told that the people had been killed by local opposition forces.

I've stood by a graveside in Africa of a group of Christians who'd been attacked because of something that had happened far far away in America, and they were attacked by other people – because of that a lot of them had been killed.

Inevitably, I've seen US friends posting a great deal online asking whether the Archbishop was trying to lay the blame for dead Africans at the doors of The [US-based] Episcopal Church. It is a repugnant suggestion and comes just before Justin Welby is due to visit that church next week. The Archbishop needs to justify his claim or withdraw it. It is a vile suggestion for a cleric to make of another part of the church.

I find the ethics of this very straightforward. It seems to me that the ethics of the Anglican Communion, of the churches in the UK, of the churches in North America, of the governments of the nations in which we live – these cannot be determined by those who bear the bullet and the bomb. The Archbishop of Canterbury seems to have been suggesting that our policies should be dictated by murderers.

More at -

<http://thurible.net/2014/04/05/condemn-archbishop/>



The Archbishop, Gay Marriage and Violence: What are the issues?

Andrew Goddard, a member of the leadership team of Fulcrum writes -

Sadly, but perhaps inevitably, Archbishop Justin's excellent and wide-ranging LBC phone-in in which he talked about food banks, Jesus as defining who God is for us, poverty, church and politics, climate change has, in

reporting, been almost wholly reduced to one short exchange responding to one of a number of questions relating to homosexuality.

Sadly, but perhaps inevitably, even that answer has then been seriously misunderstood and distorted in the critiques and led, as usual, to more heat than light (Thinking Anglicans has its usual helpful sample of reactions and less helpful range of comments [here](#) and [here](#)). The incident Justin referred to, in which he connected possible Church of England actions on same-sex relationships to the killing of Christians in Africa, is one which has clearly, and unsurprisingly, impacted him deeply and influences his engagement with the subject. He has used it before in discussions about sexuality and Church of England policy, but never so publicly. That it should have hit the headlines when said publicly is unsurprising given the combination of its shocking nature and many people's ignorance about the reality. Both elements were captured in almost the final words of the interview:

JO: So, a Christian on the ground in Africa could end up being on the receiving end of violence and abuse because of a decision taken at Lambeth Palace about sexual equality, about gay marriage?

JW: Yes, precisely.

JO: That's not something I've heard before.

JW: I'm afraid it's only too sadly true.

Thankfully, there does not appear to be any questioning of the truth of his personal testimony as to what he witnessed. Nor have people disputed the shocking reason he was given to justify the mass murder of hundreds of Nigerian Christians ("if we leave a Christian community in this area we will all be made to become homosexual and so we're going to kill the Christians"), of which he clearly said "this is not obviously something I think". That rationale

highlights just how different our contexts are and how serious ignorance and prejudice towards gay, lesbian and bisexual people remains in many parts of the world. There has, however, been much misunderstanding and unfair criticism of what he said. There is a need to set it in context, to engage the broader questions of the nature and the rightness of his pattern of Christian moral reasoning and to consider what place his example should have in our thinking.

More at -

<http://www.fulcrum-anglican.org.uk/articles/the-archbishop-gay-marriage-and-violence-what-are-the-issues/>

MEDIA COVERAGE AND REACTION

See Thinking Anglicans at -

<http://www.thinkinganglicans.org.uk/archives/006521.html>

Thinking Anglican links to -

Lambeth Palace press release: [Archbishop answers questions on LBC radio phone-in](#)

Archbishop Justin spent an hour answering questions on LBC's radio phone-in this morning, tackling topics ranging from same-sex marriage to the nature of God.

Listen again to the full programme here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TGdBTMx1Vgo>.

LBC Radio has this: [Archbishop: Gay Marriage Could Mean Murder Of Christians](#). Embedded in that page is a six-minute clip of the part of the interview that is attracting the most media attention.

And also this: [Archbishop Confronted by Angry Ann Widdecombe](#).

Media coverage:

Guardian **Andrew Brown** [African Christians will be killed if C of E accepts gay marriage, says Justin Welby](#)

Tablet **Liz Dodd** [Christians in Africa would die if CofE accepted gay marriage, Welby warns](#)

BBC [Welby: backing gay marriage could be 'catastrophic' for Christians elsewhere](#)

Church Times **Madeleine Davies** [Welby links gay marriage with African killings](#)

Anglican Communion News Service [Abp Welby: Anglican Communion sexuality decisions can mean African Christians suffer](#)

Pink News [Archbishop of Canterbury: Africans could be killed if the Church of England backs same-sex marriage](#)

And [Archbishop of Canterbury defends Anglican position on gays from Ann Widdecombe attack](#)

Mail Online **Steve Doughty** [Gay marriage puts the world's Christians at risk of violent revenge attacks: Archbishop's warning over spread of liberal views in CofE](#)