

much bigger; it is, we are told, a mystery, designed to reveal the glory of the relationship between Christ and the Church - (Eph 5: 22-22, Rev 21:1-4). If we alter this teaching we alter the very heart of the gospel.

There are, of course, many examples of flawed relationships in the Scriptures, (polygamy, adultery, divorce and homosexuality, to name just a few) but such behaviour is condemned, (alongside gossip and disobeying our parents) rather than commended (Romans 1:18-22, 1 Cor 6:9-11). We make a mistake if we take God's patient forbearance and use it as a reason to sin (Romans 6:1-3).

It calls on churches to love people enough to get alongside them, love them, listen to them and point them to the truth

Lambeth I.10 challenges those who would wish, for whatever reason, to ignore, reject or vilify those who would identify as LGBTI/SSA⁴. Instead, it makes clear that God loves and welcomes all people, regardless of their sexual orientation, calling all to a life of repentance and faith (1 Cor 6:11). It requires pastoral and sensitive ministry to all so all can hear what Jesus has done for us. The truth is, *"All have sinned and fall short of the Glory of God"* (Romans 3:23) and we all need the rescue that God offers.

It has been a consistent benchmark for the bounds of unity in the Anglican Communion

Lambeth I.10 makes two clear recommendations to the Churches of the Anglican Communion.

Do not bless or legitimise same-sex unions. After all, to bless or affirm that which goes against God's purposes is to speak falsely of God.

Do not ordain those involved in same gender unions. Those who lead God's people are called to live lives of integrity. They must be able to credibly teach the whole counsel of God. This does not mean they will be perfect, just that they will seek to order their lives according to God's Word, dependent, in repentance, on His grace.

Those Churches that chose to go against Lambeth I.10 were described by the Windsor Report⁵ as having 'torn the fabric of the Communion' - but there has been a continued struggle to hold them accountable for the damage they have caused.

You can read more in Reform's Anglican Communion leaflets.

- *A Brief Guide to the Anglican Communion*
- *The Road to Canterbury - 2004-2015*
- *"We desire to walk together, however..."*

Lambeth I:10 and the Church of England

In 2007, the General Synod of the Church of England passed a motion commending efforts to *"prevent the diversity of opinion about human sexuality creating further division and impaired fellowship within the Church of England and the Anglican Communion"*. It recognised that, if this was to be achieved, the Church of England should avoid doing anything that could be *"perceived as"* *"qualifying its commitment"* to Lambeth I.10 and other similar Lambeth resolutions.

However, on the very same day, the same Synod rejected a call for the House of Bishops to rethink their pastoral guidance requiring clergy to admit lay people in civil partnerships to baptism, confirmation and communion without commenting on the nature of their relationship. Guidance which Bishop Nazir-Ali wrote at the time, *"compromised pastoral discipline at the local level and pre-empted the relevant canons"*.

Since then the situation has become more compromised and any commitment to Lambeth I.10 more qualified

- The House of Bishops have extended their guidance on civil partnerships to include lay people in same-sex marriages.
- The House of Bishops have said that clergy should not bless same-sex relationships but they are happy that churches offer more informal prayers for same-sex couples. Many churches, including York Minster, encourage couples to come with their friends and family to 'hear the Scriptures, pray' and 'take communion'; others publicly offer 'blessings' on their websites.
- The House of Bishops' guidance that clergy civil partnerships should be celibate has been widely ignored and several clergy have entered into same-sex marriages and have remained in post.
- Several bishops actively promote divisive teaching; the Bishop of Buckingham published a book, *"A More Perfect Union"*, advocating same-sex marriage and has spoken publicly of 'the queering project of Jesus'. The Bishop of Liverpool appointed a bishop and an archdeacon from TEC.

In February 2017, the House of Bishops are due to suggest 'a way forward' on issues of sexuality, for discussion at General Synod. If their suggestion fails to uphold Lambeth I.10, they will knowingly cause further division. Please pray for them.

Lambeth I.10

**What is it?
&
Why does it matter?**



Conference takes conservative stance on human sexuality

A Guide for Congregations



www.reform.org.uk

What is Lambeth I:10?

You may have heard of “Lambeth I.10” - it sometimes pops up in newspaper articles and church documents - your vicar may have mentioned it or you may have come across some diocesan document that refers to it - but if you are anything like most of us, you are left wondering what it means, and why is it relevant to you and your church.

The short answer to that question is that Lambeth I.10 is a resolution of the 1998 Lambeth Conference¹, which sets out a set of propositions about the Anglican Communion and issues of human sexuality. As such it has been at the centre of many of the controversies in the Anglican Communion over the past twenty years.

The Background:

In August 1998, 749 bishops from all corners of the Anglican Communion met in London for the thirteenth Lambeth Conference. This gathering represents one of the so-called Instruments of Communion that are intended to maintain unity amongst the 44 autonomous churches that make up the Anglican Communion. (The others being the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Primates’ Meeting² and the Anglican Consultative Council³.)

In 1998 the expression of human sexuality was already a controversial issue in the Anglican Communion. The Episcopal Church in the USA (ECUSA or TEC) and the Anglican Church of Canada (ACoC) had both taken steps towards affirming same-sex relationships - through ordination of those in such relationships- and many were advocating for their churches to bless same-sex relationships.

The Conference involved several weeks of complex, and sometimes heated, debate but eventually the final wording of Resolution I.10 was agreed and passed by a majority of 526-70.

¹**Lambeth Conference** = a meeting of all the bishops of the Anglican Communion - called by the Archbishop of Canterbury- it usually takes place every 10 years.

²**Primates’ Meeting** = a meeting of the ‘top’ Archbishop from each of the churches in the Communion - called by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

³**Anglican Consultative Council** = a meeting of lay, clergy and episcopal representatives from each church in the Communion.

⁴**LGBTI**= Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex **SSA** = Same-sex attracted **Windsor Report**=the findings of a Lambeth Commission to study the state of the Anglican Communion following TEC’s consecration of an openly gay bishop in 2003.

Resolution I.10 Human Sexuality

This Conference:

- a) commends to the Church the subsection of the report on human sexuality;
- 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 trivialisation and commercialisation of sex;
- e) cannot advise the legitimising or blessing of same sex unions nor ordaining those involved in same gender unions;
- f) requests the Primates and the ACC to establish a means of monitoring the work done on the subject of human sexuality in the Communion and to share statements and resources among us;
- g) notes the significance of the Kuala Lumpur Statement on Human Sexuality and the concerns expressed in resolutions IV.26, V.1, V.10, V.23 and V.35 on the authority of Scripture in matters of marriage and sexuality and asks the Primates and the ACC to include them in their monitoring process.

Why is Lambeth I.10 important?

It represents the mind of the Communion.

Although, the decisions of any Instrument of Communion are not legally binding on individual churches, they are said to have a certain moral authority in that, for the sake of unity, they express the mind of the Communion.

In 2003 the Primates’ Meeting specifically reaffirmed Lambeth 1.10, saying: *“We also re-affirm the resolutions made by the bishops of the Anglican Communion gathered at the Lambeth Conference in 1998 on issues of human sexuality as having moral force and commanding the respect of the Communion as its present position on these issues.”*

The moral authority of Lambeth I.10 is perhaps greater because it has been repeatedly affirmed by other Anglican bodies.

- The Primates’ affirmed it in 2001, 2003, 2005 and 2007.
- The leaders of the majority of the Anglican Communion affirmed it through Global South and GAFCON meetings in 2003, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2013, 2015 and 2016.
- The General Synod of the Church of England affirmed it in 2007.
- English evangelical leaders affirmed it in 2008 and 2016.

It is based on biblical principles.

Lambeth I.10 appeals to Scripture, not tradition or custom, as the reason for upholding faithfulness in marriage between a man and a woman in a lifelong union and abstinence for those not called to marriage. This is the pattern that Jesus himself points to when he said,

“Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” (Matthew 19:4-6)

In thinking about these things we are, perhaps not helped by viewing marriage only in terms of companionship, caring for children or our own personal fulfilment. God’s view is so