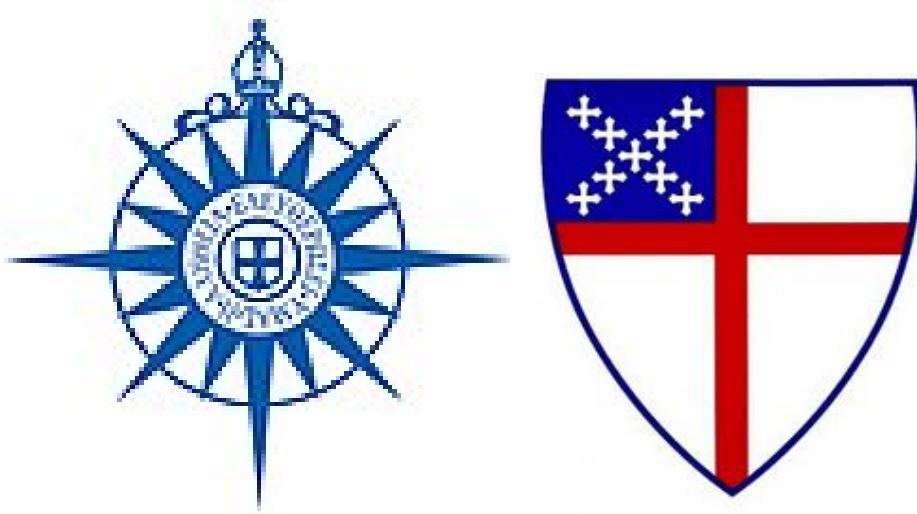


***Comparative Christianity***  
***by***  
***Fr. William G. Brown***  
***via***  
***Zoom 5:30 – 6:30 pm***



***Anglican - Episcopal***

*February 16, 2022*

The Compass Rose is a symbol identifying those who belong to the worldwide Anglican Communion. This emblem was originally designed by the late Canon Edward West of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York. The Compass Rose is set in the nave of the Cathedral Church of Christ in Canterbury, England, and it was dedicated by Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie at the final Eucharist of the Lambeth Conference in 1988. The points of a compass reflect the spread of Anglican Christianity throughout the world. The miter at the top indicates the role of Episcopacy and Anglican Order that is at the heart of the traditions of the Churches of the Communion.

# What makes us Anglican?

(Written from the Episcopal point of view)

September 16, 2020  
*The Episcopal Church*

## Hallmarks of the Episcopal Church

The Episcopal Church, having its roots in the Church of England, is also an Anglican Church. Like all Anglican churches, the Episcopal Church is distinguished by the following characteristics:

### **Protestant, Yet Catholic**

Anglicanism stands squarely in the Reformed tradition, yet considers itself just as directly descended from the

Early Church as the Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox churches. Episcopalianists celebrate the “Mass” in ways similar to the Roman Catholic tradition, yet do not recognize a single authority, such as the Pope of Rome.

### **Worship in one's first language**

Episcopalianists believe that Christians should be able to worship God and read the Bible in their first language, which for most Episcopalianists, is English, rather than Latin or Greek, the two earlier, “official” languages of Christianity. Yet the Book of Common Prayer has been translated into many languages, so that those Episcopalianists who do not speak English can still worship God in their native tongue.

## **The Book of Common Prayer**

Unique to Anglicanism, though, is the Book of Common Prayer, the collection of worship services that all worshipers in an Anglican church follow. It is called “common prayer” because we all pray it together, around the world. The first Book of Common Prayer was compiled in English by Thomas Cranmer in the 16th Century, and since then has undergone many revisions for different times and places. But its original purpose has remained the same: To provide in one place the core of the instructions and rites for Anglican Christians to worship together.

The present prayer book in the Episcopal Church was published in 1979. Many other worship resources and prayers exist to enrich our worship, but the Book of Common Prayer is the authority that governs our worship. The prayer book explains Christianity, describes the main beliefs of the Church, outlines the requirements for the sacraments, and in general serves as the main guidelines of the Episcopal life.

## **Scripture, Tradition, and Reason**

The Anglican approach to reading and interpreting the Bible was first articulated by Richard Hooker, also in the 16th Century. While Christians universally acknowledge the Bible (or the Holy Scriptures) as the Word of God and completely sufficient to our reconciliation to God, what the Bible says must always speak to us in our own time and place.

The Church, as a worshiping body of faithful people, has for two thousand years amassed experience of God and of loving Jesus, and what they have said to us through the centuries about the Bible is critical to our understanding it in our own context. The traditions of the Church in interpreting Scripture connect all generations of believers together and give us a starting point for our own understanding.

Episcopalians believe that every Christian must build an understanding and relationship with God’s Word in the Bible, and to do that, God has given us intelligence and our own experience, which we refer to as “Reason.” □ Based on the text of the Bible itself, and what Christians have taught us about it

through the ages, we then must sort out our own understanding of it as it relates to our own lives.

<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/dfms/what-makes-us-anglican/>



Once again, I would recommend that you review the 39 propositions found in *The Book of Common Prayer*: Pgs. 867 - 876

#### **Articles of Religion**

*As established by the Bishops, the Clergy and the laity of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, in Convention, on the twelfth day of September, in the Year of our Lord, 1801*



## Church of England

(Written from the Anglican point of view)

[Church of England - Anglican Church - HISTORY](#)

[Anglican Communion Home Page](#)



The Church of England, or Anglican Church, is the primary state church in England, where the concepts of church and state are linked. The Church of England is considered the original church of the Anglican Communion, which represents over 85 million people in more than 165 countries.

While the Church upholds many of the customs of Roman Catholicism, it also embraces fundamental ideas adopted during the Protestant Reformation. In recent years, the Church of England has been viewed as one of the more progressive sects of Christianity and is known for its relatively liberal policies, such as allowing the ordination of women and gay priests.

#### Church of England Facts

- The British monarch is considered the supreme governor of the Church. Among other privileges, he or she has the authority to approve the appointment of archbishops and other church leaders.
- The Church of England contends that the Bible is the principal foundation of all Christian faith and thought.
- Followers embrace the sacraments of baptism and holy communion.
- The Church claims to be both Catholic and Reformed. It upholds teachings found in early Christian doctrines, such as the *Apostles Creed* and the *Nicene Creed*. The Church also reveres 16th

century Protestant Reformation ideas outlined in texts, such as the *Thirty-Nine Articles* and the *Book of Common Prayer*.

- The Church of England sustains a traditional Catholic order system that includes ordained bishops, priests, and deacons.
- The Church follows an episcopal form of government. It is divided into two provinces: Canterbury and York. Provinces are separated into dioceses, which are headed by bishops and include parishes.
- The Archbishop of Canterbury is thought to be the most senior cleric in the Church.
- The Church's bishops play a lawmaking role in Britain. Twenty-six bishops sit in the House of Lords and are referred to as the "Lords Spiritual."
- The Church embraces a way of thinking that includes scripture, tradition, and reason.
- The Church of England is sometimes referred to as the Anglican Church and is part of the Anglican Communion, which contains sects such as the Protestant Episcopal Church.
- Each year, about 9.4 million people visit a Church of England cathedral.
- In recent years, women and homosexuals were given the opportunity to participate in the church's leadership roles.

#### Church of England History

The Church of England's earliest origins date back to the Roman Catholic Church's influence in Europe during the 2nd century.

However, the church's official formation and identity are typically thought to have started during the Reformation in England of the 16th century. King Henry VIII (famous for his many wives) is considered the founder of the Church of England.

## Henry VIII

Henry VIII broke ties with the Pope in the 1530s after the Catholic church would not allow him to annul his marriage to his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, who failed to produce any male heirs.

Henry passed the Act of Succession and the Act of Supremacy, which essentially declared himself the supreme head of the Church of England.

After Henry's death, Protestant reforms made their way into the church during the reign of Edward VI. But, when Edward's half-sister, Mary, succeeded the throne in 1553, she persecuted Protestants and embraced traditional Roman Catholic ideals.

After Elizabeth I took the title of Queen in 1558, however, the Church of England was revived. The *Book of Common Prayer* and the *Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion* became important texts that outlined moral doctrine and worship principles.

## Church Movements

The Puritan movement in the 17th century led to the English Civil Wars and the Commonwealth. During this time, the Church of England and the monarchy were quelled, but both were re-established in 1660.

The 18th century brought the Evangelical movement, which promoted the Protestant customs of the Church. Conversely, the Oxford Movement in the 19th century highlighted the Roman Catholic heritage.

These two movements and their philosophies have endured in the Church and are sometimes referred to as "Low Church" and "High Church."

Church of England in America

Many of the early American colonists were Anglican Puritans. During the Colonial era, the Anglican Church set up establishments in Virginia, New York, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.

After the American Revolution, the Anglican Church became an independent organization in the United States and called itself the Protestant Episcopal Church.

The Episcopal Church, USA, is the official organization of the Anglican Communion in the United States. It has been a self-governing body since 1785 and has about 1.9 million members.

Women and Gays in the Church of England

In 1992, the Church of England voted to ordain women as priests. This decision sparked debate within the clerical community but also opened the door for further empowerment of women within the church hierarchy.

Over the next few years, several attempts to allow women to become bishops were put in place, but many of them were squashed by the opposition.

Finally, in 2014, the Church passed a bill to consecrate women as bishops. The archbishops of Canterbury and of York—the church's most elite officials—approved the bill later that year. The first female bishop of the Church of England, Rev. Libby Lane, was consecrated in January 2015.

Since 2005, the Church of England has allowed for the ordination of gay priests, under the condition that they remain celibate. Homosexuals in celibate civil unions were permitted to become bishops in 2013.

Also, in 2013, the House of Commons passed legislation to legalize same-sex marriages but did not allow the Church of England to perform them.

Many consider the Church of England's elevation of women and gays in the clergy as groundbreaking and long-awaited progress. Others in the church view it as sacrilegious and blasphemous.

While the debate continues, experts agree that the Church of England has paved the way for conversations about expanding gender and sexual-orientation roles within Christianity.

Sources

History of the Church of England, [The Church of England](#).

Church of England, [BBC](#).

The Church of England in Early America, [National Humanities Center](#).

Episcopal Church Fast Facts, [CNN](#).

## **Difference Between Anglican and Episcopal (With Table)**

Protestantism, a major branch of Christianity, found its origin in the Reformation period in the 16th century. It was a movement that was started to counter Catholic Church, to point out its error and to bring a change in the society. It began in Germany in the year 1517 when Martin Luther published a book that told about the corruption and sales of indulgences going in the Catholic Church. From Protestantism, there emerged different Christian traditions. One such was Anglican Church, and the other, which in fact emerged from Anglican Church, is Episcopal Church.

### **Anglican vs Episcopal**

The main difference between Anglican Church and Episcopal Church is that the Communion of Anglican is the third largest communion of Christians in the world. While Episcopal is the sub-branch or member of the Anglican Church. Anglican Community or Church is believed to be founded in Lambeth Conference in 1867 in London. Whereas Episcopal Church was founded after the American revolution when it got separated from the Church of England.

Anglican Communion was founded in 1867 in London by Charles Longley, who was the Archbishop of Canterbury. Church of Anglican Community believes in one,

holy, catholic, and apostolic church. They refer themselves to be both catholic as well as reformed. The member of Anglicanism is referred to as Anglicans. It has 110 million members all over the world. The roots of Anglicanism can be traced back to the period of Reformation and concepts developed by the Church of England.

Episcopal Church is the American counterpart of the Anglican Church. It also traces its origins from the Church of England in the colonies of America. The first parish of Episcopal was founded in Virginia in 1607. Although in that period, no bishops of American-Anglican existed, and it was controlled by the Church of England. It was only in the 20th century that it got named Episcopal Church. Due to the American Revolution, there was a change in the power and supremacy both in church and in America, which led to its formation

## Comparison Table Between Anglican and Episcopal

Parameters of Comparison	Anglican	Episcopal
Origin	Anglican Church originated in 1867 in London.	Episcopal Church originated in 1785 under the Church of England.
Members	It has 110 million members all over the world.	It has 1,798,042 active baptized members. (2019)
Territories	It has its territory majorly in the UK. But also in African countries as well as in Australia.	It has its territory majorly in the USA. But also in Micronesia, Taiwan, Central and South America etc.
Head	Archbishop of Canterbury is the head of Anglicans.	Bishop of America is the head of the Episcopal Church.
Parishes	It has 40 independent churches and lakhs of parishes.	It has almost 6,897 parishes.

## What is Anglican?

Anglicanism is the third largest community of Christian both in the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Church. Anglican Church as such doesn't have any legal rights, but it works under the compliance of the Archbishop of Canterbury in London. It is believed that three elements hold Anglicanism together: the shared structure of ecclesiastical order,

the belief expressed in worship, and the historical documents and writings of earlier Anglicans. Anglicanism is often confused with the Church of England. It is believed to be the same. But in fact, it has taken its theology and liturgical traditions from it.

The term 'Anglican' emerges in a phrase of Magna Carta in the year 1215. Anglican is used as an adjective to describe institutions, the people, and churches and the theological concepts and liturgical traditions developed by the Church of England. Followers of the Anglican Church are called Anglicans. Anglicanism is defined as a middle path among Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, and Lutherans. It has developed a vernacular book known as 'Book of Common Prayers.'

Anglicanism has never been ruled by a theologian or a magisterium. It has always followed the Book of Common Prayers for its beliefs and practices. With the expansion of the British empire, Anglicanism also grew, and all the churches under colonial power came under its jurisdiction. Anglicanism kind of represents a non-papal Catholicism for some people, while for others, it represents a form of Protestantism. Some of the guiding figures who contributed are Knox, Calvin, Zwingli, Luther, or Wesley.

## **What is Episcopal?**

The United States of America is considered to be the origin of the Episcopal Church. It is a sub-branch of Anglicanism or Anglican Church. It can also be said as an American version of Anglicanism. Episcopal comes under the larger domain of Protestantism and has become the mainline of Christianity. It is divided into nine provinces, unlike Anglican. The bishop of America is considered as the primate of Episcopal all over the world. It has 2 to 3 lakh followers. About 1,798,042 active baptized members. (2019) followers are in America only. They constitute the 14th largest denomination in the USA.

Followers of Episcopal are called Episcopalians. The Church of Episcopal used to be a part of the Church of England, but after American Revolution, it got separated. But it was only in the 20th century that it got its name. Episcopal defines themselves as Protestant, yet Catholic also. They claim their succession of Apostles to the Apostles chosen via Holy orders. They also follow the book 'Book of Common Prayers' like Anglicans, and it plays a crucial role in their rites, prayers, liturgies, and blessings.

Episcopal has played the role of leadership in American contexts such as in science, the arts, politics, business, and education. It was also active in the 19th and the 20th century in the Social Gospel Movement. But post world war, Episcopal Church has become more liberal in its approach. This has reflected in the stands taken by Episcopal, such as opposing the death penalty, seeking equality for the LGBTQ community, allowing same-sex marriage, supporting the Civil Rights Movement, and positive actions.

# Main Differences Between Anglicans and Episcopal

1. Anglican Church originated in 1867 in London, England and was founded by Charles Longley. Episcopal Church originated in 1785 under the Church of England and later got separated.
2. Anglicanism has 110 million members all over the world and is divided into 38 provinces. Episcopal Church has 2 to 3 million members worldwide and is divided into 9 provinces.
3. Anglican Church has its territory majorly in the UK. But are also in African countries as well as in Australia. Episcopal Church has its territory majorly in the USA. But they are also in Micronesia, Taiwan, Central and South America etc. It is the sub-branch of Anglicanism.
4. Archbishop of Canterbury is the head of Anglicans
5. A Bishop of America is the head of the Episcopal Church
6. Anglican Church has 40 independent churches and lakhs of parishes. Episcopal Church has almost 6,897 parishes.

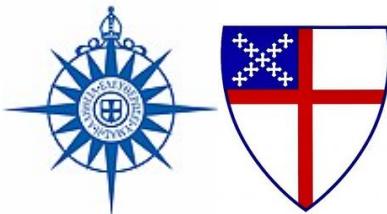
## Conclusion

Both Anglican and Episcopal are derived from the branch of Protestantism. Both are often confused with the Church of England. Although roots are connected via England. But both have different beliefs and ideologies. Both Anglican and Episcopal has more similarities than differences. Episcopal is considered as a subset of Anglican. Anglicanism is a mixture of Catholicism and Protestantism, while Episcopal beliefs to be more Protestants in nature. Both follow the same 'Book of Prayers.' Episcopal is often called Anglican Episcopal.

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1. <https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=9Fyce9FgrPgC&oi=fnd&pg=PP2&dq=Anglicans+and+Episcopal&ots=2Hth4mjijL&sig=zOZjP8jfxuEdNsZyDMHsBwoUO5E>
2. [https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=\\_iK5VqqudLkC&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=Anglicans+and+Episcopal&ots=M8U3IPHZ8X&sig=ttkZa6yrci0eZ6ac6RPfdRsu6Wo](https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=_iK5VqqudLkC&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=Anglicans+and+Episcopal&ots=M8U3IPHZ8X&sig=ttkZa6yrci0eZ6ac6RPfdRsu6Wo)

<https://askanydifference.com/difference-between-anglican-and-episcopal/#:~:text=Episcopal%20is%20considered%20as%20a,is%20often%20called%20Anglican%20Episcopal.>



## **Anglican vs Episcopal**

Anglican and Episcopal churches are closely related and as such they have more similarities than differences. Episcopal can be termed as a division of Anglican.

The Episcopal Church is part of Anglican Communion as its roots have been traced to the English Reformation and the Church of England.

The Anglican Church is mainly centered in the UK and has the Archbishop of Canterbury as its head. The Episcopal Church is based in the US. Though some of the Episcopal churches in the US have taken several names like Anglican Catholic Church and the Anglican Church in America.

The Episcopal Church was established by Samuel Seabury, who is considered its first bishop. On the other hand, the Anglican Church was formed in the 16th century. It was formed at the insistence of King Henry the 8th.

Anglicanism was always considered as a symbol of the British rule and its monarchy. The term Anglican originated from Medieval Latin ecclesia Anglican, which meant The

English Church. The Anglican Church has two factions “ High Church (Anglo Catholics) and Low Church (protestant Anglicans). The Episcopalian Church is considered to be somewhat liberal Protestant.

In both the Anglican and Episcopal churches, there is no governing body or central figure, which controls the thousands of dioceses.

When comparing the two, Episcopal are more liberal than the Anglican in the sense that they are even termed as a gay friendly church. On the other hand, the Anglican Church is known to be more conservative. But the fact is that there are believers in both Anglican and Episcopal churches who are against wide spread liberal trends.

## Summary

1. The Anglican Church is mainly centered in the U K and has the Archbishop of Canterbury as its center.
2. The Episcopal Church, based in the US, is part of Anglican Communion as its roots can be traced to the English Reformation and the Church of England.
3. The Episcopal Church was established by Samuel Seabury, who is considered its first bishop. On the other hand, the Anglican Church was formed in the 16th century. It was formed at the insistence of King Henry the 8th.
4. Anglicanism was always considered as a symbol of the British rule and its monarchy
5. When comparing the two, the Episcopalian are more liberal than the Anglicans in the sense that they are even termed a gay friendly church.

## Are You Anglican or Episcopalian?

Jorden Hylden

Written December 18, 2008

“Are you Anglican, or Episcopalian?” As an Episcopalian interloper studying at a Methodist seminary, I get the question a lot from my puzzled friends. Each time I’m asked, part of me wants to launch into a mini-primer on Anglican ecclesiology - to wit, that [Episcopalians are Anglicans, since the Episcopal church is just the American province of the global Anglican communion. Which means that, technically, the question shouldn’t even make sense - it’s sort of like asking, “Are you American, or Texan?”](#) But, of course, I know just what the question means - it *does* make sense, because it reflects the sad divisions that have roiled the church over the past five years. Quite simply and sensibly, my Methodist friends want to know whether I’m a member of the liberal Episcopal church, or one of the conservative Anglican groups that broke off. And as saddening as it is to admit, I’ve come to think that their common-sense perception is more accurate than my attempts at ecclesiological theory. Their question can only be asked, and answered, because of the reality on the ground in the United States: Episcopalians are one thing, and Anglicans are another.

### In the United States today,

Popular understanding is usually much wiser than theoretical wishful-thinking, and nowhere more so than here. The divisions in the church have led the American public to attach the meanings to the words *Episcopalian* and *Anglican* that they actually bear in their usage - namely, that to be an Episcopalian means to be a member of a pro-gay, autonomous American denomination, more liturgical than most churches but firmly within the theological orbit of liberal Protestantism. To be an Anglican, by contrast, means to be part of a conservative evangelical church with bishops, connected somehow with Africa and opposed to homosexuality. The definitions have by now become quite distinct and firmly fixed in the national lexicon - ask almost any church-going American what the words mean, and you will get an answer something like the above.

Some Episcopalians and Anglicans (myself included) strongly dislike these characterizations - to be genuinely Episcopalian, they believe, *means* to be in fellowship with the Anglican communion, and to be authentically Anglican is to be part of a global communion of catholic Christians united by creedal orthodoxy and a commitment to read Scripture, pray, and worship together in the historic Anglican tradition. But although this sounds wonderful in theory, it is simply not what has happened, by and large, in the American context. Because of what’s taken place over the past five years, *Episcopalian* is now understood to be a term set in opposition to *Anglican*, and *Anglican* refers not to a global catholic communion but rather to an American African evangelical phenomenon. Whether we think the words *ought* to bear

these meanings is not the point - my point is that this is what the words actually *do* mean, in newspapers and conversations and pulpits across the country.

Take, for instance, the widely publicized formation just this month of a new conservative Anglican province - the so-called Anglican Church in North America, with Robert Duncan as its new archbishop and primate. By taking the name Anglican for themselves, the clear implication is that the Anglican Church of Canada and the Episcopal Church are *not* in fact authentically Anglican since they need to be completely replaced. In this, they are only following the practice of previous breakaway groups, such as the Nigerian-based CANA (Convocation of Anglicans in North America) and the Rwandan-based AMiA (Anglican Mission in America). The commonplace notion that *Anglican* means "not Episcopalian" is no coincidence; this is precisely the conclusion that the average church-going American would reasonably draw from following the news.

Moreover, the vision of Anglicanism here in play clearly gives very little weight to catholic order and global communion. The new Anglican church was created, as it were, by fiat - Duncan's forthcoming elevation as archbishop, and the new group's status as an Anglican province, are thus far only self-declared realities. And although Duncan's group and his supporters have asked for approval from the global Anglican instruments of communion, they have also made it clear that they do not consider such approval to be necessary. Duncan and his allies enjoy the support of five evangelical Anglican primates, mostly African and all associated with the confessional GAFCON movement. This is, forthrightly, all the approval that the new church supposes itself to need; apart from this, Duncan's group considers itself authorized to go it on its own. If ordinary Americans are expected to suppose that *Anglican* means something other than a conservative evangelical movement with liturgy and bishops, it cannot be from reading the daily headlines.

Episcopalians, for their part, genuinely do see themselves first and foremost as an autonomous, liberal American denomination. Their election of Gene Robinson as the church's first openly gay bishop, of course, along with their practice (in many dioceses) of liturgically blessing same-sex unions, has led to a great deal of turmoil. But despite being asked many times by the Anglican instruments of communion to reverse course for the sake of Anglican unity, Episcopalians show little sign of doing so. By and large, Episcopalians like Bishop Robinson; as one friend of mine remarked, the thing about Robinson isn't that he's theologically unique as an Episcopalian, it's that he's so typical. Most Episcopalians are very content with their church's position on homosexuality, as well as with the church's general doctrinal haziness; such things are not about to change anytime soon. Even though holding to such positions may well mean walking apart from other Anglicans, the majority of the church views this as an unfortunate but acceptable necessity. In short, it seems clear that for most Episcopalians, the core of their identity lies elsewhere than their status as Anglicans.

All in all, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the commonplace definitions of *Anglican* and *Episcopalian* in the American public lexicon have their roots not simply in confusion or misunderstanding, but in what has actually happened on the ground. Many may view these realities as unfortunate, but that does not change the fact that they have indeed become realities. If these words are to change in their popular meaning, they will have to change also in fact. And to do so will mean fighting an uphill battle against the forces that have given them their current definitions.

So far, so gloomy. I'm home from seminary at the moment, visiting family and friends in North Dakota. When I get asked - as I undoubtedly will whether I'm Anglican or Episcopalian, what will I say in reply? As of right now, believe it or not, I still think that my answer can and should be, "Both."

The answer depends not on the probability of being understood; given what I have just laid out, I have little reason to think that. My reason has much more to do with necessity and hope. As I made clear to my diocesan standing committee last summer, I understand myself to be an Episcopalian precisely *because* I am an Anglican; if I did not believe in the vision of a genuinely catholic and reformed global fellowship of Christians that the Anglican communion, at its best, holds out, I would have little interest in joining up with a denomination that, frankly, is more committed to their openness toward diverse beliefs and practices than to orthodox Christian doctrine. If I cannot say that I believe myself to be an Anglican first and Episcopalian second, then my place in the church makes little sense.

And that, in turn, is dependent upon being able to hope that Anglicanism actually means something beyond the local and the ad hoc; that there actually is, in fact and not only in theory, but a global fellowship of Anglican Christians also committed to the creedal faith and to common prayer, worship, and reading of Scripture. In short, despite the general futility of my hand-waving attempts at explaining Anglican ecclesiology, I *have* to stick to my guns - even though I think that the terms *Anglican* and *Episcopalian* have almost entirely left the barn, I can't accede to what the words have come to mean in their near-universal American usage.

Is there still reason to hope that the words will somehow change their meanings? As for *Episcopalian* , I don't see how it could. Next summer's General Convention will be important to watch; many expect that it will further underscore the church's autonomy and commitment to theological liberalism. Even so, the valiant Communion Partners, the group within the Episcopal church committed to both catholic order and doctrinal orthodoxy, remains forward-looking and vocal. If the status quo remains unchanged, their long-term future in the Episcopal church is dubious, but they intend nevertheless to remain committed to both Anglicanism and the Episcopal church so long as it is possible.

What about the definition of *Anglican* ? In the October issue of FIRST THINGS , I expressed the hope that last summer's Lambeth Conference, and particularly the

leadership of Archbishop Rowan Williams, gave strong evidence that the center of the Anglican communion intended to hold together; that the Episcopal left and the GAFCON right would not, in fact, carry the day and so lead the communion ever-further down the road to fragmentation and incoherence. Since that time, most of the action has been on the GAFCON and Bishop Duncan side; and the more influence they have, the less chance there is of an eventual coming-together of things.

But the ball is now in center court, as it were - this February's meeting of the Anglican primates will be crucial, as will the meeting of the Covenant Design Group in April and the Anglican Consultative Council's meeting in May. If Anglicanism is truly to mean something beyond the local, these meetings will carry forward the Lambeth vision of a genuinely covenanted "global" and "catholic church," with its ministry, faith, and sacraments "united and interdependent throughout the world," as Rowan Williams has put it.

There are, of course, no guarantees. The forces of dissolution and division right now are strong, and it is always much easier to pull apart than it is to hold together. The question "Anglican or Episcopalian?" may always be with us; but at the least, we may still be able to hope that the question "What kind of Anglican are you?" will not become just as common.

*Jordan Hylden, a former junior fellow at FIRST THINGS , is a graduate student at Duke Divinity School.*

## **References:**

[Communion Partners](#)

["What Lambeth Wrought"](#) by Jordan Hylden (October 2008)

[Meeting of the Anglican Primates](#)

[Meeting of the Covenant Design Group](#)

[Meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council](#)

## **For further reading:**

["An Emerging North American Province,"](#) by Bishop Robert Duncan

["A New Province in North America: Neither the Right nor the Only Answer for the Communion,"](#) by Dr. Ephraim Radner

<https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2008/12/anglican-or-episcopalian>

# ***Episcopal Split as Conservatives Form New Group***



A group of conservative bishops met on Wednesday at the Resurrection Anglican Church in West Chicago, Ill. Credit...Sally Ryan for The New York Times

By Laurie Goodstein  
Dec. 3, 2008

WHEATON, Ill. □ Conservatives alienated from the Episcopal Church announced on Wednesday that they were founding their own rival denomination, the biggest challenge yet to the authority of the Episcopal Church since it ordained an openly gay bishop five years ago.

The move threatens the fragile unity of the Anglican Communion, the world's third-largest Christian body, made up of 38 provinces around the world that trace their roots to the Church of England and its spiritual leader, the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The conservatives intend to seek the approval of leaders in the global Anglican Communion for the province they plan to form. If they should receive broad approval, their effort could lead to new defections from the Episcopal Church, the American branch of Anglicanism.

In the last few years, Episcopalians who wanted to leave the church but remain in the Anglican Communion put themselves under the authority of bishops in Africa and Latin America. A new American province would give them a homegrown alternative.

It would also result in two competing provinces on the same soil, each claiming the mantle of historical Anglican Christianity. The conservatives have named theirs the Anglican Church in North America. And for the first time, a province would be defined not by geography, but by theological orientation.

"We're going through Reformation times, and in Reformation times things aren't neat and clean," Bishop Robert Duncan of Pittsburgh, a conservative who led his diocese out of the Episcopal Church in October, said in an interview. "In Reformation times, new structures are emerging."

Bishop Duncan will be named the archbishop and primate of the North American church, which says it would have 100,000 members, compared with 2.3 million in the Episcopal Church.

The conservatives contend that the American and Canadian churches have broken with traditional Christianity in many ways, but their resolve to form a unified breakaway church was precipitated by the decision to ordain an openly gay bishop and to bless gay unions.

The Rev. Charles Robertson, canon for the Episcopal Church's presiding bishop, Katharine Jefferts Schori, said Wednesday, "There is room within the Episcopal Church for people of different views, and we regret that some have felt the need to depart from the diversity of our common life in Christ."

He added that the Episcopal Church, the Anglican Church of Canada, and La Iglesias Anglicana de Mexico will continue to be "the official, recognized presence of the Anglican Communion in North America."

In a news conference on Wednesday evening, the conservative group unveiled its new constitution and canons at a large evangelical church here in Wheaton, near Chicago.

The proposed new province would unite nine groups that have left the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada over the years. This includes four Episcopal dioceses and umbrella groups for dozens of individual parishes in the United States and Canada.

Besides Pittsburgh, those dioceses are Fort Worth; Quincy, Ill.; and San Joaquin, in the Central Valley of California representing 4 of 110 dioceses in the Episcopal Church. But not all the parishes and Episcopalians in those four dioceses agreed to leave the Episcopal Church.

The new province would also absorb a handful of other groups that had left the Episcopal Church decades earlier over issues like the ordination of women or revisions to the Book of Common Prayer. One of the groups, the Reformed Episcopal Church, broke away from the forerunner of the Episcopal Church in 1873.

Conservative leaders in North America say they expect to win approval for their new province from at least seven like-minded primates, who lead provinces primarily in Africa, Australia, Latin America, and Asia.

These are the same primates who met in Jerusalem over the summer at the Global Anglican Future Conference and signed a declaration heralding a new era for the Anglican Communion. Most of these primates a few weeks later boycotted the Lambeth Conference, the international gathering of Anglican bishops in England held once every 10 years.

Bishop Duncan and other conservative leaders in North America say they may not seek approval for their new province from the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev. Rowan Williams, or from the Anglican Consultative Council, the leadership group of bishops, clergy, and laity that until now was largely responsible for blessing new jurisdictions.

Bishop Martyn Minns, a leading figure in the formation of the new province, said of the Archbishop of Canterbury: "It's desirable that he get behind this. It is something that would bring a little more coherence to the life of the Communion. But if he does not, so be it."

Bishop Minns, a priest who led his large, historic church in Fairfax, Va., out of the Episcopal Church two years ago and was subsequently ordained a bishop by the Anglican Archbishop of Nigeria, said in an interview: "One of the questions a number of the primates are asking is why do we still need to be operating under the rules of an English charity, which is what the Anglican Consultative Council does. Why is England still considered the center of the universe?"

Jim Naughton, canon for communications and advancement in the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, and a liberal who frequently blogs on Anglican affairs, said he doubted that a rival Anglican province could grow much larger.

"I think this organization does not have much of a future because there are already a lot of churches in the United States for people who don't want to worship with gays and lesbians," he said. "That's not a market niche that is underserved."

Since the Episcopal Church ordained Bishop Gene Robinson, an openly gay man who lives with his partner, in the Diocese of New Hampshire in 2003, the parallel rifts in the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion have widened.

In the first years after Bishop Robinson was ordained, bishops representing about 14 dioceses in the Episcopal Church joined meetings to explore the formation of a new Anglican entity in North America.

Asked why only four dioceses broke away, Bishop Minns said: "It's one thing to feel distressed. It's another thing to do something about it."

He added: "There's some people standing back to wait and see if we pull this off, which I think we'll do. Then others will join us □ parishes, and maybe dioceses."

If the conservatives try to take their church properties with them, they are likely to face lawsuits from the Episcopal Church. The church is already suing breakaway parishes and dioceses in several states to retain church property.

Bishop Duncan said members of the proposed province would spend the next six months discussing the constitution and would meet to ratify the document next summer at a "provincial assembly." He said it would probably be held at the Episcopal Cathedral in Fort Worth.

The Episcopal Church is also holding its General Convention next summer.

The founding members of this new province have major theological differences among themselves on liturgical practices, and whether to ordain women.

Bishop Duncan, whose theological orientation is more evangelical, has ordained women in the diocese of Pittsburgh. Bishops of other breakaway dioceses, like Jack Iker in Fort Worth and John-David Schofield in San Joaquin, are more "Anglo-Catholic" in orientation, modeling some elements of the Roman Catholic Church, and are opposed to ordaining women as priests or bishops.

Under their new constitution, each of the nine constituent dioceses or groups that would make up the new province could follow its own teachings on women's ordination. Each congregation would also keep its own property.

Told of this new Anglican entity, David C. Steinmetz, Amos Ragan Kearns professor of the history of Christianity at the Divinity School at Duke University, said in a phone interview, "It's really an unprecedented and momentous event," that all of these dissident groups had agreed to bury their differences.

"It's certainly going to be deplored by one part of the Communion and hailed by another," Professor Steinmetz said. "Are we going to end up with two families of Anglicans, and if so, are they in communion with each other in any way? There are so many possibilities and geopolitical differences, it's really hard to predict where this will go."

<https://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/04/us/04episcopal.html#:~:text=WHEATON%2C%20II.,gay%20bishop%20five%20years%20ago.>

# The Historical Hypocrisy of the Anglican-Episcopal Split

By

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On January 14, 2016, the Anglican Communion suspended its American branch, the Episcopal Church, from voting and decision making in the global Anglican Church for the next three years. This was a direct reaction to the Episcopal Church officiating marriages of same-sex couples in church. As quoted from [Primates2016.com](http://Primates2016.com), this act violated church doctrine:

*The traditional doctrine of the church in view of the teaching of Scripture, upholds marriage as between a man and a woman in faithful, lifelong union. The majority of those gathered reaffirm this teaching.*

Such a statement would not have raised an eye if it had been made by the Catholic Church, whose stance on marriage has been clear since it assimilated Peter Lombard's list of seven sacraments in 1439. The sacrament of marriage espouses one man, one woman, one flesh, *for life*.

Yet, the very foundation of the Church of England lies in pragmatism over doctrine. In 1532, Catholic King Henry VIII was unhappy with his marriage to his brother's widow, Catherine of Aragon, and not just because Leviticus forbids such unions. Catherine had not produced a male heir to his throne, so Henry appealed to Pope Clement VII for a divorce.

The Pope denied Henry's request, less out of defense of sacrament than for fear of political backlash from Catherine's nephew, Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. In response, Henry appointed his sympathizer, Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury: a married man in celibate clothing. Masking his deception, Cranmer traveled to Rome in 1533, where the unsuspecting Pope approved his appointment as archbishop. With new spiritual leadership loyal to the king, the Church of England broke away from Rome and became self-reliant.

The new Church's doctrine on marriage and divorce technically did not change, but with Thomas Cranmer comfortably seated in his new position of spiritual authority, he could now "annul" Henry's marriage with Catherine, rather than "divorce" them. Four months later, Cranmer officiated Henry's marriage to the already pregnant Anne Boleyn, then "annulled" that and Henry's next four marriages.

Today, the Anglican Church retains the same doctrine of marriage and divorce as its Catholic forebears but approaches the traditional aspects of marriage differently. In a nod to wedded Thomas Cranmer, for example, the Anglican Church permits marriage among clergy members, and as of 2002, divorce as well.

The spiritual distinction is simple. Since the Council of Nicea (325 CE), Catholic tradition has taught celibacy among clergy with the idea that marriage detracts from a priest's perfect relationship with God. The Anglican Church pragmatically took the opposite stance, that a person can still seek God while married to another person.

Along that line of reasoning, the Episcopal Church's decision to officiate marriages of practicing same-sex couples may diverge from doctrine but is consistent with the Anglican Church's history of pragmatic changes to tradition. If a church can wink at parts of doctrine like "lifelong," it stands to reason that "man" or "woman" can be similarly altered if the net result is still a "faithful" union.

The modern Anglican Church proclaims pride in its openness. It offers communion freely to Anglicans and Catholics alike and permits a degree of flexibility among each of its national churches to adapt to the culture of its own country.

Our country's culture is shifting, and in this proclaimed spirit of openness, the Episcopal Church has updated traditions accordingly. It is a double standard for the Anglican Communion to penalize its American branch for this adaptation, now choosing to cite doctrine despite its own history of taking pragmatic liberties with it.

Expanding the tradition of marriage, if not the doctrine, serves a net positive to the Church, leading more spiritual couples to feel welcome to pursue and develop a relationship with God, together. For this reason, the Episcopal Church deserves praise, rather than censure, for furthering the Anglican practice of rethinking tradition in order to provide access to a fuller faith.

[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/anglican-punishment-of-ep\\_3\\_b\\_900144](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/anglican-punishment-of-ep_3_b_900144)