

# Church of England apologizes for saying sex is only for married heterosexuals



PHOTO: Justin Welby is one of the Archbishops who apologized. (Reuters: Thomas Mukoya)

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## Key points:

- The apology recognized “the division and hurt this has caused”
  - However, the statement did not retract the “pastoral guidance” issued by the Bishops
  - In an open letter to Archbishops, supporters of LGBT+ equality in the church described the pastoral guidance as “a laughingstock to a nation that believes it (the church) is obsessed with sex”
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The top archbishops and bishops of the Church of England have issued an apology for a statement released last week which declared only married heterosexuals should have sex.

Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby and Archbishop of York John Sentamu said they took responsibility for the announcement.

“We as archbishops, alongside the bishops of the Church of England, apologize and take responsibility for releasing a statement last week which we acknowledge has jeopardized trust.

“We are very sorry and recognize the division and hurt this has caused.”

However, the statement did not retract the “pastoral guidance” issued by the bishops, which came in response to the extension of civil partnerships to heterosexual couples in the UK.

The guidance said “sexual relationships outside heterosexual marriage are regarded as falling short of God’s purpose for human beings”, and that people, gay or straight, who are in civil partnerships should be abstinent.

In an open letter to the archbishops, supporters of LGBT equality in the church described the guidance as “a laughingstock to a nation that believes it (the church) is obsessed with sex.”

*“Whilst we are grateful for the archbishops’ apology and the recognition that their statement has jeopardised our trust, the fact is more than words are now needed.”*

Over 3500 people signed the open letter, including a range of senior church leaders.

“This shows the strength of concern that exists across the Church of England that its mission is being significantly damaged and that their promise of a ‘radical new Christian inclusion’ must now be delivered,” the letter said.

The letter also raised concerns over the Church’s ‘Living in Love and Faith project’, which seeks to address questions of human identity, sexuality, and marriage in relation to Church doctrine.

In their apology, the Archbishops said they were committed to the project.

“This process is intended to help us all to build bridges that will enable the difficult conversations that are necessary as, together, we discern the way forward for the Church of England,” the statement said.

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Source:

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-02-01/church-of-england-statement-on-sex-outside-of-marriage/11920864>

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