

A Conflict of Beliefs:

Orthodox Anglicanism

and

The Episcopal Church

This document contains several areas of disagreement
but it is by no means exhaustive.

All Scriptures cited are from The Holy Bible, New International Version

Orthodox Anglicans Believe:

1. Jesus is the only way to God the Father.
2. Jesus is the Son of God.
3. The bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ took place.
4. The Bible is a reliable guide for all human conduct.
5. Christians should evangelize.
6. The church is the body of Christ.
7. The creeds are a summation of historic Christian doctrine taken from the Bible.

Leaders in the Episcopal Church (TEC) do not share these beliefs.

The Episcopal Church Believes:

1. Jesus is NOT the only way to God the Father.
2. Jesus as the Son of God is NOT an objectively true statement.
3. The bodily resurrection of Christ is conjectural.
4. There is no single Biblical morality.
5. Evangelism is religious discrimination by Christians.
6. All creation is the “body of God.”
7. It is more important to have unity in worship than unity in beliefs of the central tenets of the faith.

#1 – Jesus as the only way to God

Orthodox Anglicans believe:

“Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”

(John 14:6)

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

(Apostle Peter in Acts 4:12)

“They are to be condemned as false teachers who assert that persons will be saved no matter what beliefs they hold or what sect they belong to, provided they sincerely lead their lives according to those beliefs and to the light of nature; for Holy Scripture insists that it is only by the Name of Jesus Christ that we may be saved.”

(39 Articles of Religion,
Article 18,

An Anglican Prayer Book, Preservation Press of the
Prayer Book Society of the U.S.A.,
p. 218)

Episcopal Leaders say:

“In its narrow construction [the idea that Jesus is the only way to the Father], it tends to eliminate other possibilities. In its broader construction, yes, human beings come to relationship with God largely through their experience of holiness in other human beings. Through seeing God at work in other people’s lives. In that sense, yes, I will affirm that statement. But not in the narrow sense, that people can only come to relationship with God through consciously believing in Jesus.”

The Presiding Bishop
of the Episcopal Church,
Katharine Jefferts Schori
in an interview with

The Arkansas Democrat Gazette, 2007

“I don’t think God cares if we are Christian, Jewish, Muslim Buddhist and so forth. What matters is a deepening relationship with God.”

Dr. Marcus Borg, Co-director
Center for Spiritual Development,
Trinity Episcopal Cathedral,
Portland

St. Petersburg Times
February 9, 2005

#2 – Jesus is the Son of God

Orthodox Anglican believe:

“They all asked, Are you then the Son of God? Jesus replied,
“You are right in saying I am.”

(Luke 22:70)

“...what about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, ‘I am God’s Son.’ Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.”

(John 10:36-37)

Episcopal Leaders say:

“Rather, I see the grand statements about Jesus – that he is the son of God, the Light of the World and so forth – as the testimony of the early Christian movement. These are neither objectively true statements about Jesus nor, for example in this season, about his conception and birth. To speak of him as the son of God does not mean that he was conceived by God and had no biological human father. Rather, this is the post-Easter conviction of his followers.”

Dr. Marcus Borg
Washington Post
December 30, 2006

#3 – The bodily Resurrection of Christ

Orthodox Anglicans believe:

“We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will turn him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!”

(Jesus, Matthew 20:18, 19)

“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born....And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.”

(St. Paul, 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, 17)

“Christ truly rose again from the dead. His was a bodily resurrection, with flesh, bones and all things that belong to the perfection of our human nature. Further, his ascension was a bodily ascension into heaven, where he is now enthroned at the Father’s right hand until the last day, when he will return to judge all men.”

The 39 Articles, Article 4

Episcopal Leaders say:

“The story of Jesus’ bodily resurrection is, at best, conjectural; that the resurrection accounts in the four Gospels are contradictory and confusing...the significance of Easter is not that Jesus returned to actual life but that even death itself could not end the power of his presence in the lives of the faithful.”

Bishop John Chane
The Episcopal Diocese
of Washington, DC
Easter sermon, 2002

“I think Easter is most profoundly about meaning, not mechanism.”

Katharine Jefferts-Schori
Episcopal Life online
(Official newspaper of TEC)
April 8, 2008

#4 – The Bible as a reliable guide for conduct

Orthodox Anglicans believe:

All scripture is God-breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

(Paul, 2 Timothy 3:16-17)

“Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

(Peter, 2 Peter 1:20-21)

Episcopal Leaders say:

“The Scriptures are internally contradictory on the surface. Their interpretation varies according to the needs of the hearer.”

Bishop Charles Bennison,
The Episcopal Diocese
of Pennsylvania,
St. Luke’s Church,
Newtown, PA, July 8, 2004

“There is no single biblical morality. Few biblical scholars would claim that a mono-chromatic approach to ethics and human behavior exists in the Holy Scriptures...The Holy Scriptures, written in antiquity, could not and did not foresee many of the ethical questions we face in our age.”

A Statement from
The Episcopal Diocese of Utah, General Convention,
March 13, 2007

#5 – Christians should evangelize

Orthodox Anglicans believe:

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

(Jesus, Matthew 28:19-20)

“He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that He is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.

(Apostle Peter, Acts 10:42-43)

Episcopal Leaders say:

“The Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles has issued an apology to Hindus worldwide for what he called ‘centuries-old acts of religious discrimination by Christians,’ including attempts to convert them. The apology was given in a statement read to over 100 Hindu spiritual leaders at a mass from the Right Reverend J. Jon Bruno. The ceremony started with a Hindu priestess blowing a conch shell three times and included sacred chants...Rev. Karen MacQueen, who was deeply influenced by Hindu Vedanta philosophy and opposes cultivating conversions (added), ‘there are enough Christians in the world.’”

India Abroad
posted February 10, 2008

#6 – The Church is the Body of Christ

Orthodox Anglicans believe:

“Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceit-ful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”

(Paul, Ephesians 4:14-16)

Episcopal Leaders say:

“Christians talk about the body of Christ. A theologian named Sally McFague talks about the body of God as being all of creation. When one part of the body suffers, the whole body suffers. That’s an essen-tial piece of Paul’s theology. If we’re not caring adequately for the other parts of the body, we are not only destroying ourselves, but we’re destroying our neighbors here and across the world. The fact that, you know, how I use carbon might have some impact on a poor person in China.”

Katharine Jefferts-Schori, PBS,
The Bill Moyers Journal, June 2007

#7 – Belief in the Creeds

The Creeds may be found in the *Book of Common Prayer*
Apostles' Creed, p. 120; Nicene Creed, p. 358; Athanasian Creed, p. 864

Orthodox Anglicans believe:

“If the creeds are not important, we should stop reciting them on Sundays. The worship service on Sunday, if we accept the number of premises pre-sented...by the leaders of the Episcopal Church, would have no Scripture reading, hopefully no sermon expounding on the Scripture, no recital of creeds and no Eucharist. We would just have a great time reading poetry, feeding and being fed.”

Dr. Moheb Ghali,
Vice Provost for Research and
Dean of the Graduate School,
Western Washington University,
an active Episcopalian for 40 years
before becoming a member of
St. Brendan's Anglican Church
Bellingham, Washington.

Episcopal Leaders say:

“You don't all have to profess exactly the same understandings of the central tenets of the faith,” she added.
“What's important is to worship together.”

Katharine Jefferts-Schori,
San Diego, CA,
Union Tribune, April 5, 2008

“To be expected to repeat these sentiments (The Nicene Creed), (V.Gene) Robinson decided, was an offense against conscience. He took his protest to one of the school's chaplains, who listened to him and told him that he saw no problem at all. If joining in the Creed distressed him, why not just speak only those portions of it that didn't offend?”

New Yorker Magazine,
April 17, 2006



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