

English Church accepts women bishops

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13 July, 2005

THE ARTICLE

English Church accepts women bishops

BNE: The Church of England took perhaps its boldest and potentially most divisive move on July 12, when it voted to accept women bishops. The landmark decision has reverberated across the Anglican world and many church leaders fear an exodus of followers. New and bitter divisions will be opened as the contentious issue is debated in churches around the globe. Ruling bishops from the Church of England unanimously supported the decision after an impassioned four-hour debate. Only six bishops voted against the motion, while 41 were in favour. It will take a further four years of wrangling to get the obstacles removed for the Church to finally swear in its first female bishop.

The decision brings the Church of England in line with 14 other churches of the wider 38-member Anglican Church. It is feared by staunch, conservative Anglicans that the floodgates will now open and the ranks of bishops will be inundated with women. Tom Sharp, a devout Anglican said: "It states as clear as day in the Bible that the conducting of God's work should be carried out by a man. This is a truly incomprehensible and reprehensible act." Tom is one of many Anglicans who may switch to the Catholic Church. Angela Evans, an Anglican churchgoer, applauded the decision as visionary, saying: "At last, after 2,000 years, women are being recognized that we too can serve God."

WARM-UPS

1. THE SAME: In pairs / groups, talk about whether men and women are the same and have equal rights. What rights are women fighting for in your country? Should women be allowed to do exactly the same jobs as men? Are there any jobs in the world that only men can do?

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Women / the church, mosque, synagogue, temple / religious leaders / sexual equality / women in religion / holy books / serving God

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

3. CHURCH: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "church". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

4. FEMALE LEADERS: In pairs / groups, discuss what you think about women being leaders in the following roles. What are the arguments some people might use to oppose women in these positions?

- Church / Mosque / Synagogue / Temple head
- National men's soccer / baseball team coach
- President / Prime Minister
- Intelligence agency boss
- Army head
- Police force head
- Construction workers chief
- Firefighting chief

5. EQUALITY: How close is your society to having zero inequality between men and women? What do you think of the following situations? What would the average person in your country think?

	You	Average person
a. A man opening doors for women.		
b. Househusbands		
c. A woman asking a man to marry him		
d. A woman buying a man flowers		
e. A female religious leader		
f. Female frontline soldiers		
g. A woman boasting she's had many sexual partners		
h. A man marrying and taking his wife's family name		

Would these situations be more accepted / acceptable if the roles were reversed?

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. The Church of England has voted to accept women becoming bishops. T / F
- b. Leaders think the decision will increase the numbers of followers. T / F
- c. The vote was extremely close. T / F
- d. The first female bishop will be ordained later this year. T / F
- e. The Church of England is a pioneer in accepting female bishops. T / F
- f. Church followers fear a flood of females leading their church. T / F
- g. Many churchgoers believe conducting God's work is a man's job. T / F
- h. It has taken around 2,000 years to reach this latest decision. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| a. reverberated | flooded |
| b. exodus | controversial |
| c. contentious | stalwart |
| d. motion | plainly |
| e. wrangling | extolled |
| f. staunch | migration |
| g. inundated | shameful |
| h. as clear as day | altercations |
| i. reprehensible | echoed |
| j. applauded | proposal |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. boldest and potentially | will be inundated with women |
| b. church leaders fear | against the motion |
| c. bitter | as day in the Bible |
| d. six bishops voted | line with 14 other churches |
| e. swear in | an exodus of followers |
| f. brings the Church of England in | most divisive move |
| g. the ranks of bishops | divisions will be opened |
| h. It states as clear | visionary |
| i. a truly incomprehensible | its first female bishop |
| j. applauded the decision as | and reprehensible act |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

WORD ORDER: Put the underlined words back into the correct order.

English Church accepts women bishops

BNE: The Church of England took perhaps its boldest and potentially most divisive move on July 12, voted when to accept it women bishops. The landmark decision has reverberated across the Anglican world and many church leaders followers exodus of fear an. New and opened divisions will be bitter as the contentious issue is debated in churches around the globe. Ruling bishops from the Church of England unanimously supported the decision after an impassioned four-hour debate. Only six bishops against the motion voted, while 41 were in favour. It will take a further four years of wrangling to get the obstacles removed for the Church to its in swear finally first female bishop.

The decision brings the Church of England in line with 14 wider of other churches the 38-member Anglican Church. It is feared by staunch, conservative Anglicans that the floodgates will now open and the ranks of bishops will be inundated with women. Tom Sharp, a devout Anglican said: "It as clear day states as in the Bible that the conducting of God's work by carried should be out a man. This is a truly incomprehensible and reprehensible act." Tom is one of many Anglicans switch to who may the Catholic Church. Angela Evans, an Anglican churchgoer, applauded the decision as visionary, saying: "At last, after 2,000 years, women are being recognized too that can we serve God."

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'church' and 'leader'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. WORD ORDER: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers.

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT WOMEN IN RELIGION SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about women in religion.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- move
- reverberated
- exodus
- globe
- impassioned
- swear
- line
- floodgates
- day
- reprehensible
- switch
- visionary

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What was your initial reaction to this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. Are you a church / mosque / synagogue / templegoer?
- d. Do you think there are distinct roles that men and women should stick to in religion?
- e. What roles do women play in your religion?
- f. Do you think women should sue their religions for being sexist?
- g. Would you consider converting to another religion?
- h. Do you think religion holds back sexual equality?
- i. Do you think God minds whether a man or woman is a religious leader?
- j. Is God a man or a woman?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What did you think about what you read?
- c. Are you a religious person?
- d. Would you prefer male or female religious leaders?
- e. Do you think women should be allowed to do any jobs that men do?
- f. If it says in the Bible that men should carry out God's work, shouldn't the church accept that?
- g. Why do you think it has taken 2,000 years to reach this decision?
- h. What is the biggest problem with religions?
- i. Are there any strong female role models in religious books?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

ARE YOU SEXIST?

In pairs / groups, answer the above question. Put a percentage on how sexist you think you are - 100% non-sexist to 100 % sexist.

Talk about the situations in the table. Are your feelings (i) the same, (ii) situation 'a' is more acceptable than situation 'b' or (iii) situation 'b' is more acceptable than situation 'a'? Place a check/tick in the boxes that match your feelings.

SITUATION	(i) Same	(ii) "a" more acceptable	(iii) "b" more acceptable
(a) A woman works, a man stays at home. (b) A man works, a woman stays at home.			
(a) A man flies the airplane, a woman serves the food. (b) A woman flies the airplane, a man serves the food.			
(a) Male nudity on TV. (b) Female nudity on TV.			
(a) A male religious leader (i.e. Pope). (b) A female religious leader.			
(a) A man cries at a sad movie. (b) A woman cries at a movie.			
(a) A man takes a woman's family name after marriage. (b) A woman takes a man's name after marriage.			
(a) Male nurses. (b) Female nurses.			
(a) A man carries a pink handbag and wears make-up. (b) A woman carries a pink bag and wears make-up.			

After you have finished, talk about whether your answers suggest you are a sexist. Do you have eight checks/ticks in the "same" column?

Do the situations above reveal whether or not someone is sexist?

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

English Church accepts women bishops

BNE: The Church of England took perhaps its boldest and _____ most _____ move on July 12, when it voted to accept women bishops. The landmark decision has _____ across the Anglican world and many church leaders fear an exodus of followers. New and bitter divisions will be opened as the _____ is debated in churches around the globe. Ruling bishops from the Church of England _____ supported the decision after an _____ four-hour debate. Only six bishops voted against the motion, while 41 were in favour. It will take a further four years _____ to get the obstacles removed for the Church to finally _____ its first female bishop.

The decision brings the Church of England _____ 14 other churches of the wider 38-member Anglican Church. It is feared by _____, conservative Anglicans that the floodgates will now open and _____ bishops will be inundated with women. Tom Sharp, a _____ Anglican said: "It states as clear as day in the Bible that _____ God's work should be carried out by a man. This is a truly incomprehensible and _____ act." Tom is one of many Anglicans who may switch to the Catholic Church. Angela Evans, an Anglican churchgoer, _____ the decision as _____, saying: "At last, after 2,000 years, women are being recognized that we too can serve God."

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on women in religion. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. RELIGION: Do religions promote equality? Choose any one of the world's religions and make a poster about its treatment of the sexes. What kinds of women are there in the religion's holy book? What roles do they play? Show and explain your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you find out similar things?

4. LETTER: Write a letter to the head of the Church of England to tell him what you think of the decision to allow female bishops. Read your letter to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. T b. F c. F d. F e. F f. T g. T h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

a. reverberated	echoed
b. exodus	migration
c. contentious	controversial
d. motion	proposal
e. wrangling	altercations
f. staunch	stalwart
g. inundated	flooded
h. as clear as day	plainly
i. reprehensible	shameful
j. applauded	extolled

PHRASE MATCH:

a. boldest and potentially	most divisive move
b. church leaders fear	an exodus of followers
c. bitter	divisions will be opened
d. six bishops voted	against the motion
e. swear in	its first female bishop
f. brings the Church of England in	line with 14 other churches
g. the ranks of bishops	will be inundated with women
h. It states as clear	as day in the Bible
i. a truly incomprehensible	and reprehensible act
j. applauded the decision as	visionary

WORD ORDER:

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