

# Gay bishops urged to ‘come out’ in Church of England

by [Trevor Grundy](#) in the [April 30, 2014](#) issue

A leading member of the Church of England has called on gay bishops to “come out” as England celebrated its first same-sex weddings in secular venues.

Alan Wilson, bishop of Buckingham, said the time has come for gay bishops to make themselves known. He criticized the church’s stance of not recognizing same-sex marriage as “sheer cruelty” and “morally outrageous,” adding: “Most gay people would be happier out, including bishops.”

Wilson, 59, said he was not into “outing” gay people. “I don’t have a medical file on all my colleagues, but it has been claimed that there are 13 gay bishops in the Church of England,” he said.

Same-sex couples were allowed to wed legally at the stroke of midnight on March 29. But the Church of England and the Church in Wales are forbidden from performing same-sex weddings. Bishops have also attempted to ban clergy from entering into same-sex marriages.

Wilson, who is married with five children, referred to a blog written by Colin Coward, director of the gay and lesbian forum Changing Attitude. Coward wrote: “I would confidently name 13 bishops [in the Church of England] as being gay, meaning 10 percent of bishops in England are gay. How any of the 13 live with themselves, their inner world of truth, I can’t imagine.”

There are currently 100 bishops in the Church of England, a church spokesman said.

Changing Attitude was founded in 1995, and Coward is a regular contributor to Cranmer, a website which often reveals stories—and scandals—not widely known in secular or religious media.

Wilson said he has “sympathy” for gay Church of England bishops. He said these people had to hide their sexuality in order to become bishops in the first place, and

to come out could prove “very costly.” But not coming out, he added, amounts to “moral cowardice.”

“Allowing gay people to marry is good for everybody and I’m delighted,” he wrote in a recent issue of the gay weekly newspaper *PinkNews*. “It’s time to stop talking about ‘gay marriage’—the legal, personal and social reality is simply ‘marriage.’”

As gay couples “tied the knot” in civic buildings at the end of March, Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby said: “I think the church has reacted by fully accepting the right of Parliament to change the law and should react [to gay weddings on March 29] by continuing to demonstrate in word and action the love of Christ for every human being.” —RNS

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