



News Release

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Page 1 of 2

Liberalism is destroying the Church.

At a meeting of the Church of England Evangelical Council (CEEC) held yesterday a resolution was debated to withdraw the invitation given to Rowan Williams to greet and lead in prayer at the Fourth National Evangelical Anglican Congress. The motion, sent to the Council by Church Society, received 11 votes in favour with 25 against.

Some of those who spoke indicated the decision to invite Dr Williams to be a mistake but felt it would be ungracious to withdraw the invitation once it had been issued.

The meeting also discussed the decision by Richard Harries, Bishop of Oxford, to appoint a homosexual campaigner, Jeffrey John, as Bishop of Reading. This appointment required the approval of the Archbishop of Canterbury. CEEC has produced an open letter opposing the appointment of Jeffrey John and calling for him to withdraw.

Although the issues surrounding homosexual practice are important, the greater problem facing the Church of England and the worldwide Anglican Communion relates to the authority of scripture and honour of the Lord Jesus Christ. Church Society urged Rowan Williams not to accept the position of Archbishop of Canterbury precisely because he holds a view of the Bible that is incompatible with that of the Church of England.

Therefore, whilst the Society agrees wholeheartedly that Jeffrey John should not be appointed as a Bishop we reiterate that our primary concern relates to authority of the Bible and the honour of Christ within the Church and world. Sadly, it appears plain to us that the reluctance of some evangelicals to take a stand has encouraged radical liberals to be more bold.

Our troubles in the Church of England are merely the beginning. The present turmoil in the Anglican Churches in Canada and the United States show that the radical liberal agenda will only end in schism and the destruction of the Anglican Communion. Liberals have shown that they are not interested in unity. We see no evidence that liberalism can thrive in the modern world, it merely mimics the views of the world around and then attempts to give these a spiritual veneer. Liberalism is not Christianity. It lacks the power of God because it has abandoned the authentic gospel message.

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Church Society stated that we could not accept the spiritual authority of those who do not accept the authority of the Bible. Because we belong to an established Church we recognise the legal position of those who hold office within it but not their authority as pastors and teachers.

The first three National Evangelical Anglican Congresses were gatherings where position papers were tabled, debates were held and resolutions adopted. NEAC IV has a deliberately different focus. It was conceived as a teaching conference and an attempt to bring evangelicals together. There will be no resolutions. This means that whilst its aims may be laudable there is no compelling reason to attend. The invitation to Rowan Williams has caused some to pull out already and made many others feel that they cannot attend the opening. This has undermined the breadth of the gathering. Therefore, in order to continue its principled stand reluctantly Church Society will no longer be formally represented at NEAC.

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Church Society exists to uphold biblical teaching and to promote and defend the character of the Church of England as a reformed and national Church.s