

Open Letter to the College and House of Bishops.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Now that the process of Shared Conversations launched subsequent to the Pilling Report has been completed and the 'baton' passed to the College and House of Bishops, we are writing to assure you of our prayers as you meet this autumn to discern the way forward. As members of General Synod we wish to offer the following reflections which we hope and pray might help your deliberation and discernment.

We are grateful for the opportunity that was recently given to the General Synod to engage in a consideration of Scripture. However, we believe this was of an initial nature only, and that much more biblical study is needed before we will be able, as a Synod, to make theologically informed decisions about human anthropology and sexuality. In particular we believe it is essential to clarify what it means to 'honour God with your bodies' (1 Corinthians 6v20, NIV) so that we do not find ourselves praying for God's blessing on that which is contrary to His will.

We are committed to building a church that is genuinely welcoming to all people, irrespective of the pattern of sexual attraction that they experience. We would welcome initiatives to help local churches do this in a way that is affirming of and consistent with Scripture, and would hope to support suggestions you might wish to bring to Synod to that effect.

As you prepare to meet in the College and House of Bishops, we urge you not to consider any proposals that fly in the face of the historic understanding of the church as expressed in 'Issues in Human Sexuality' (1991) and Lambeth Resolution 1.10. To do so – however loud the apparent voice for change – could set the Church of England adrift from her apostolic inheritance. It would also undermine our ability as members of General Synod to offer support and lead to a fracture within both the Church of England and the wider Anglican Communion.

We thank God for you and, remembering the apostle James's injunction to ask God for wisdom (James 1v5), we commit ourselves to asking God to grant you His wisdom as you endeavour to offer episcopal leadership to the Church of England at this time.

Yours in Christ,

Signed by the following General Synod members (Diocese):

The Revd Canon Jonathan Alderton-Ford (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)  
The Revd Sam Allberry (Oxford)  
The Revd Dr Andrew Atherstone (Oxford)  
The Revd Andrew Attwood (Coventry)  
Mrs Emily Bagg (Portsmouth)  
The Revd Canon David Banting (Chelmsford)  
Dr William Belcher (Gloucester)  
Mrs Rachel Bell (Derby)  
Dr Andrew Bell (Oxford)  
Mrs Liz Bird (Hereford)  
Mr Peter Boyd-Lee (Salisbury)

The Revd Peter Breckwoldt (Salisbury)  
Mr James Cary (Bath & Wells)  
Mr Graham Caskie (Oxford)  
The Rev Preb Simon Cawdell (Hereford)  
The Revd John Chitham (Chichester)  
The Revd Canon Jonathan Clark (Leeds)  
The Revd Canon Charlie Cleverley (Oxford)  
Dr Simon Clift (Winchester)  
Mrs Ann Colton (Chelmsford)  
The Revd Canon Andrew Cornes (Chichester)  
Miss Prudence Dailey (Oxford)  
The Revd Barney de Berry (Canterbury)  
Mrs Gill de Berry (Salisbury)  
Brigadier Ian Dobbie (Rochester)  
The Rev Dr Sean Doherty (London)  
The Revd James Dudley-Smith (Bath & Wells)  
The Revd John Dunnett (Chelmsford)  
Mrs Mary Durlacher (Chelmsford)  
Mr Carl Fender (Lincoln)  
Miss Emma Forward (Exeter)  
Mrs Chris Fry (Winchester)  
The Revd Canon Sally Gaze (Norwich)  
Mr Chris Gill (Lichfield)  
The Revd Graham Hamilton (Exeter)  
Mr Jeremy Harris (Chester)  
The Ven Simon Heathfield (Birmingham)  
Mr Carl Hughes (Southwark)  
The Revd Canon Gary Jenkins (Southwark)  
Mrs Carolyn Johnson (Blackburn)  
The Revd Peter Kay (St Albans)  
Mrs Helen Lamb (Ely)  
Mr David Lamming (St Edmundsbury & Ipswich)  
Capt. Nicholas Lebey (Southwark)  
Mr James Lee (Guildford)  
The Revd Mark Lucas (Peterborough)  
Mrs Rosemary Lyon (Blackburn)  
The Revd Angus MacLeay (Rochester)  
Mr Sam Margrave (Coventry)  
The Revd Alistair McHaffie (Blackburn)  
The Revd Shaun Morris (Lichfield)  
The Revd Dr Rob Munro (Chester)  
Miss Margaret Parrett (Manchester)  
Miss Jane Patterson (Sheffield)  
The Revd Dr Ian Paul (Southwell & Nottingham)  
Mrs Kathy Playle (Chelmsford)  
The Revd Dr Philip Plyming (Guildford)  
Mr Andrew Presland (Peterborough)  
The Revd Dr Patrick Richmond (Norwich)  
The Revd Dr Jason Roach (London)  
The Revd Dr Ben Sargent (Winchester)  
Mr Clive Scowen (London)

Mr Ed Shaw (Bristol)  
The Revd Charlie Skrine (London)  
Mr Colin Slater (Southwell & Nottingham)  
Dr Chik Tan (Lichfield)  
The Revd Martyn Taylor (Lincoln)  
The Revd Chris Tebbutt (Salisbury)  
Mr Jacob Vince (Chichester)  
Dr Yvonne Warren (Coventry)  
The Revd Canon Giles Williams (Europe)  
Mr Brian Wilson (Southwark)