

The Church of England is at a crossroads in her calling to bring hope and transformation to our nation. The presenting issue is that of human sexuality, in particular whether or not the Church is able to affirm sexual relationships beyond opposite sex marriage. But the tectonic issues beneath, and driving, this specific question include what it means to be faithful to our apostolic inheritance, the Church's relationship with wider culture, and the nature of the biblical call to holiness in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

As culture and attitudes continue to change, the Church faces a range of new social realities. These include the rise in cohabitation and the wide scale acceptance of divorce with its negative impact on children, the explosion of diverse types of family relationships, the emergence of gender fluidity and bisexuality, and the recognition of same-sex unions. These far-reaching social changes raise questions and – in some quarters – undermine confidence in our inherited teaching.

The Church has not always navigated these social realities well. We recognise the damage caused by judgmental attitudes. We have sometimes failed to recognise acts of great kindness and humanity. We have elevated some sins above others. We have ignored the plank in our own eye. There is much work ahead, not least in ensuring that our communities offer sacrificial hospitality and service to all, regardless of background, family structure or sexuality.

At the same time, we remain convinced of the essential goodness of the Christian moral vision. The Bible is clear that God has given the marriage of one man with one woman as the only context in which physical expression is to be given to our sexuality. We believe that we flourish, whether single or married, as our lives are brought into harmony with God's intended design.

Any change in the Church's teaching or practice - such as the introduction of provisions that celebrate or bless sexual relationships outside of a marriage between one man and one woman – would represent a significant departure from our apostolic inheritance and the authority of the Bible in matters of faith and doctrine. It would also, inevitably, be a further step on a trajectory towards the full acceptance of same-sex sexual partnerships as equivalent to male-female marriage.

There are substantive issues at stake here about the Christian understanding of what it means to be human. We do not believe that God has left us alone in the confusion and uncertainty of constructing our own identity. The gift of male and female sexual differentiation, and its unique and fundamental mutuality, is part of God's good creation and a mirror to His own nature, and the boundaries it brings are for our flourishing and preservation.

We do not believe therefore that it is within our gift to consider human sexual relationships and what constitutes and enables our flourishing as sexual beings to be of 'secondary importance'. What is at stake goes far beyond the immediate pastoral challenges of human bisexual and same-sex sexual behaviour: it is a choice between alternative and radically different visions of what it means to be human, to honour God in our bodies, and to order our lives in line with God's holy will.

At this crucial juncture, as our bishops pray and discern together regarding how the Church of England should walk forward at this time, we urge them not to depart from the apostolic inheritance with which they have been entrusted.

Any further changes to practice or doctrine in these important areas will set the Church on a path of fundamental disunity. It would cause a break not only with the majority of the Anglican Communion, but

with the consistent mind of the worldwide Church down many centuries. It will trigger a process of division and fragmentation among faithful Anglicans in England. Responses would vary, but the consequences for the life and mission of the Church will be far-reaching, both nationally and globally.

We ask our bishops to commit to a renewed vision of a welcoming Church in which all hear the good news of the Gospel, all are invited to repent and receive the grace of God, and all are called as followers of Jesus to live out the Christian moral vision– in lives of self-sacrifice and mutual care – for the common good.

.....

*Those signing below do so in a purely personal capacity. They are evangelical leaders from a variety of backgrounds, churches and organisations and indicative of the breadth and depth of support for this letter. Some could be labelled as LGBTI but are living in conformity with the historic teachings of the church.*

.....

Revd Canon Dr Peter Ackroyd, Vicar, St Marys Wootton, Chair St Albans Diocesan Evangelical Fellowship.  
Revd Sam Allberry, Trustee and co-founder of Living Out, apologist for the Zacharias Trust, editor for The Gospel Coalition.

Revd Steve Allen, Chair of CPAS Patronage Trustees.

Mrs Lorna Ashworth, member of Archbishops' Council.

Revd Dr Andrew Atherstone, Wycliffe Hall and General Synod.

Revd Simon Austen, Rector, St. Leonard's Exeter.

Revd David Banting, Vicar, St Peter's Harold Wood, Trustee of Reform, and General Synod.

Revd Mark Burkill, Chair of Reform and Chair Latimer Trust.

Revd Nathan Buttery, Associate Vicar, St Andrew the Great, Cambridge.

Revd Tim Chapman, Minister, Christ Church South Cambs, Sawston.

Revd Charlie Cleverly, Rector, St Aldates, Oxford.

Revd John Coles, Missional Community Leader, London.

Canon Andrew Cornes, Sussex Gospel Partnership and General Synod.

Revd Alyson Davie, Chair of the House of Clergy for Rochester Diocese.

Revd C J Davis, Rector, St Nicholas, Tooting.

Revd Joe Dent, Rector, Minster Church of St Andrew, Plymouth.

Revd Dr Sean Doherty, St Mellitus College, member of the Living Out team and General Synod.

Revd Will Donaldson, Director of Pastoral Care at St Aldates, Oxford and Area Dean of Oxford.

Revd James Dudley-Smith, Rector and Rural Dean of Yeovil, Member of General Synod.

Revd John Dunnett, Chair of Evangelical Group General Synod (EGGS).

Revd Jonny Elvin, Vicar, Trinity Church, Exeter and Chair of Exeter Diocesan Evangelical Fellowship.

Revd Anthony Everett Chair of Canterbury Diocese Evangelical Network, Vicar, Christ Church and St Andrew's Herne Bay.

Revd Lee Gatiss, Director, Church Society.

Dr Philip Giddings, former Chair, General Synod House of Laity and member of Archbishops' Council.

Revd Dr Andrew Goddard, Fulcrum leadership team.

Revd Lis Goddard, Vicar St James the Less, Pimlico and Chair of Awesome.

Revd Chris Green, Vicar, St James, Muswell Hill.

Revd Tim Grew, Acting Lead Pastor, Trinity Cheltenham.

Revd Paul Harcourt, Vicar, All Saints Woodford Wells.

Prof Glynn Harrison, formerly General Synod and Crown Nominations Commission.  
Revd Canon Clive Hawkins, Rector, St Mary's Basingstoke, formerly General Synod.  
Revd Dr David Hilborn, Principal, St John's School of Mission, Nottingham  
Mr Stephen Hofmeyr, QC, Secretary Church England Evangelical Council.  
Revd David Holloway, Vicar, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne, Chair of Anglican International Development.  
Mr Carl Hughes, General Synod and EGGs Committee.  
Revd Dr Emma Ineson, Trinity College, Bristol and General Synod  
Revd Steve James, Rector, Holy Trinity, Platt, Manchester.  
Revd Henry Kendal, Vicar, St Barnabas, Woodside Park.  
Revd Paul Langham, Vicar, Christ Church Clifton, Bristol and General Synod.  
Mrs Susie Leafe, Director, Reform.  
Mr James Lee, House of Laity, General Synod and EGGs Committee.  
Revd Canon Andy Lines, Mission Director of Crosslinks, General Secretary of AMiE, Chairman of GAFCON UK Task Force.  
Revd Chris Lowe, Mission Initiative Leader, St John's Orchard Park, Cambridge.  
Revd Angus MacLeay, Rector, St Nicholas, Sevenoaks, Reform Trustee, General Synod.  
Revd Preb Charles Marnham, Vicar, St Michael's, Chester Square, London.  
Revd Rachel Marszalek, General Secretary of Fulcrum.  
Revd John McGinley, Vicar, Holy Trinity, Leicester.  
Revd Jane Morris, Vicar St Gabriel's, Cricklewood.  
Revd Barry Morrison, Chair of Peterborough DEF.  
Revd Justin Mote, Chair of AMiE exec, and Chair of North West Gospel Partnership.  
Revd Rob Munro, Chair Fellowship of Word and Spirit, Chair of House of Clergy for Chester Diocese.  
Revd Dr Mike Ovey, Principal, Oak Hill College, London  
Revd James Paice, Vicar, St Luke's Wimbledon Park and Trustee of GAFCON and Trustee of Southwark Good Stewards Trust.  
Revd Alasdair Paine, Vicar, St Andrew the Great Church, Cambridge.  
Revd Hugh Palmer, Rector All Souls Langham Place, Chair of Church of England Evangelical Council.  
Revd Canon Ian Parkinson, Leadership Specialist, CPAS.  
Miss Jane Patterson, General Synod and Crown Nominations Commission.  
Revd Dr Ian Paul, member of Archbishops' Council.  
Revd Paul Perkin, Vicar, St Mark's Battersea Rise.  
Revd Canon Andrew Perry, Vicar, St Mary's Longfleet, Poole.  
Revd David Phillips, Vicar, St James, Chorley, Chair of Blackburn Diocesan Evangelical Fellowship.  
Revd Simon Ponsonby, Pastor of Theology, St Aldates, Oxford.  
Revd Matthew Porter, Vicar, St Michael le Belfrey, York.  
Revd Frank Price, Vicar, St Matthew's Cambridge and Chair of Ely Diocesan Evangelical Fellowship.  
Revd Esther Prior, Chair, Guildford Diocesan Evangelical Fellowship.  
Revd Jonathan Pryke, Jesmond Parish Church.  
Revd Martin Reakes-Williams, Leipzig English Church.  
Revd Vaughan Roberts, Rector of St Ebbe's, Oxford.  
Revd David Rowe, Priest in Charge, Christ Church, Winchester.  
Revd Canon Roger Salisbury, Secretary of the Peache Trustees.  
Revd John Samways, Trustee Church Patronage Trust.  
Revd Dr. Peter Sanlon, Vicar, St. Mark's, Tunbridge Wells.

Mr Ed Shaw, Trustee of Living Out, Pastor, Emmanuel City Centre, Bristol & General Synod.  
Revd Charlie Skrine, Associate Rector, St Helen's Bishopsgate, London and EGGs Committee.  
Revd Tim Stilwell, Vicar, St Dionis, Parsons Green, London.  
Canon Dr Chris Sugden, Convenor Anglican Mainstream, and former member General Synod.  
Revd Andrew Symes, Executive Secretary, Anglican Mainstream.  
Revd Canon Martyn Taylor, Rector, Rector, St George's, Stamford and General Synod.  
Revd William Taylor, Rector, St Helens, Bishopsgate and Chairman of ReNew.  
Canon Professor Anthony C. Thiselton, FBA, former member of Crown Nominations Commission and Doctrine Commission.  
Revd Rico Tice, All Souls Church & Christianity Explored Ministries.  
Revd Melvin Tinker, Vicar, St John, Newland, Hull.  
Revd Andrew Towner, Vicar Houghton & Kingmoor, Carlisle and Trustee, Diocesan Board of Finance.  
Revd Gary Tubbs, Chair of Carlisle Diocesan Evangelical Fellowship.  
Revd Jon Tuckwell, Associate Minister, Christ Church, Cambridge.  
The Revd Dr Simon Vibert, Vice Principal Wycliffe Hall & Director of the School of Preaching.  
Mr Jacob Vince, General Synod  
Revd Robin Weekes, Vicar, Emmanuel Church Wimbledon.  
Revd Paul Williams, Vicar, Christ Church Fullwood and honorary Canon Sheffield Cathedral.