



# LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH: HOW TO CONTEND?

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Our online events are designed to help lay and ordained church leaders to:

- Think Ahead (in the light of today's evidence)
- Think Afresh (in the light of eternal truth)



# Living in Love and Faith: How to contend?

## I. Understanding the context 1967-2016

### 50 Years of Reports and Debates - in the Church of England (See appendix)

1967	House of Bishops support Sexual Offences Act legalising homosexual activity
1979	Gloucester Report for House of Bishops
1987	Higton Motion (orthodox) passed with clear majority
1989	Osborne Report- not published because considered too liberal – but later leaked
1991	Issues in Human Sexuality
1998	Lambeth Conference Resolution I.10 – (orthodox) passed with clear majority
2003	Some Issues in Human Sexuality
2005	Pastoral Statement on Civil Partnerships
2012	<i>Women Bishops Measure mk1 fails</i>
2013	<i>Feb - Women Bishops facilitated conversations begin</i>
2013	Nov - Pilling Report – dissenting Report from Bishop of Birkenhead, Keith Sinclair
2014	<i>Feb - Pastoral Statement on Same-Sex Civil Marriages</i>
2015	<i>July—Women Bishops Measure mk2 passes</i>
2014-16	Facilitated Shared Conversations
2017	GS2055 - Marriage and Same Sex Relationships after the Shared Conversations
2017	Letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury and York

### 2012 - A change of tactic

On November 9th 2012, Rt Rev Justin Welby was announced as the new Archbishop of Canterbury. Less than two weeks later, the first attempt to introduce women bishops was defeated on the floor of Synod.

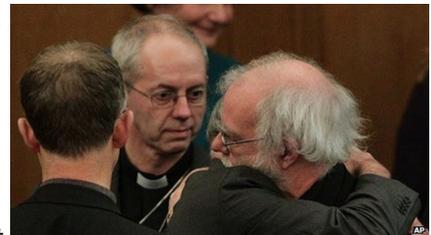
Canon David Porter, who had previously worked with ++Justin at Coventry Cathedral's Reconciliation Ministry, was brought in to assist.

As ++ Justin says, *"Reconciliation is not the ending of all difference, but the transformation of how we deal with difference."*<sup>1</sup> So, rather than seeking a place of agreement, Facilitated Conversations began in February 2013, based on the, internally contradictory, Five Principles, which continued throughout the Steering Group phase. The conversations were viewed as a great success when a new measure, with an accompanying House of Bishops' Declaration (based on the Five Principles), passed in July 2014.

It is, therefore, perhaps not surprising that ++Justin, faced with the impasse<sup>3</sup> on Human Sexuality introduced the same approach.

Again, the purpose was to move away from a binary discussion and to seek some kind of consensus. Though from the beginning, it was accepted this would not satisfy everyone - as David Porter said at the launch of the Shared Conversations at General Synod in 2015,

*"It is my job to reconcile. I hope that 80% of the Church of England can find a place of compromise. Fracture will happen."*<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> <https://difference.rln.global/> - accessed 02/02/21

<sup>2</sup> From my notes of the meeting - interesting that Colin Coward quotes similar figures from private meetings <https://anglican.ink/2015/02/03/lambeth-palace-staff-sees-split-in-the-offing-for-the-coe/>

<sup>3</sup> The authors of the 2013 Pilling Report had not been able to agree, so it included +Keith Sinclair's dissenting report, which stated the orthodox position with grace and clarity.

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# Living in Love and Faith: How to contend?

## 3. LLF - The Materials

**What is Living in Love and Faith?**

**The Course**

1. Learning Together
2. Identity
3. Relationships
4. Our Bodies and Sex
5. Life Together

**The Book**

1. Reflecting: what have we received?
2. Paying Attention: what is going on?
3. Making Connections: where are we in God's story?
4. Seeking Answers: how do we hear God?
5. Conversing: what can we learn from each other?

**Further Resources**

- Podcasts
- Story Films
- Books
- Papers

**Pastoral Principles**

1. Address ignorance
2. Acknowledge prejudice
3. Admit hypocrisy
4. Cast out fear
5. Speak into silence
6. Pay attention to power

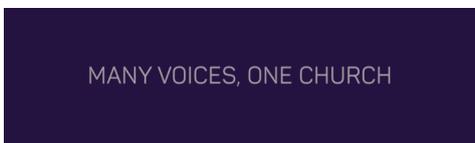
Living in Love and Faith has many parts to it - and we recommend watching the introductory video - as this gives a good indication of how those with editorial control view the project.

<https://youtu.be/g7A3wt0jqZM>



Looking at the resources in more detail it is interesting to note how two elements - real life stories and the study of the Scriptures - are framed:

Each real life video story begins with these screen shots



and ends with the participant saying:  
"I am/we are N/N and N and I/we are living in love and faith"

On Page 283, of the LLF book, it says:

*"some texts in Scripture have been identified as particularly relevant to debates on sexuality and gender issues traditionally been seen as demonstrating a straightforward, consistent biblical witness against all same-sex sexual activity."*

But the authors go on to question whether these texts should be the starting point for the discussion and say,

*"We need to be alert to the fact that narrowing our interest to a few texts is likely to give a distorted picture of how Scripture as a whole speaks to us. We also need to recognize that these texts have sometimes been used to silence the voices and questions of LGBTI+ people, or to exclude them from fellowship – which has led to these texts being experienced and described as ‘clobber texts’."*



## Living in Love and Faith: How to contend?

### 4. Initial Responses

More than 70 church leaders took part in the Anglican Futures events. They were asked for their initial thoughts about the Living in Love and Faith materials. They were asked to express any concerns they had and what opportunities they could see both in their parishes and in the wider church. This was done in small breakout groups and the feedback is recorded below.

#### Concerns

The bible's teaching is clear - should we be even having this conversation (1 Cor 5)

Will people want to engage? So many other concerns (diocese on verge of bankruptcy and clergy concerned about their future/ a conversation that needs to take place face to face - hard to talk about issues like this without the social interaction/ not the priority/ most of the church not aware of the CofEs debates/ COVID, poverty,

Nature of the materials - We were promised a teaching document - and this is ambiguous - is that the Bishops' teaching - that this matter is ambiguous? Stories are hard to engage with at a theological level - it seems like you are attacking the person. The issues are very emotive and the encounters personalise them. They water down people's ideas of what is orthodox. It's 'slippery' - hard to grasp the issues.

Fear that a same sex attracted Christian with a biblical view could find the course deeply unhelpful - feeling vulnerable being honest about their experiences, being encouraged to prioritise experience over faithfulness, diminishing the call to contentment - if we are required to engage with the course, how do we equip people for it?

Raises much bigger questions about the nature of the God we follow. If we are listening to the Holy Spirit speaking through people and he never contradicts himself - who is speaking truth if different from the Word?

The materials will inevitably cause/compound division - both in parish and wider. Challenge of inflammatory language being used already (safeguarding/ clobber texts) - not a spirit of open encounter and engagement

If both ends of the spectrum are convinced we/they are correct and not shifting ground - can only end in fury. Want to engage and welcome - but can't be all inclusive - difference between welcome and affirmation. It seems that we can't 'win' - or even be heard - if we engage our views are not considered to be within the mainstream - if we don't we are homophobic. Fear of CDMs and the conflation of conservative theology with safeguarding complaints.

Where will this end? Nothing in the material gives me any confidence that the Bishops will uphold the teaching of the Church. Feels like a done-deal with bishops saying we have to 'live together.' I have a very mobile congregation - how will they find a safe theological home in future? Feeling we are heading for visible differentiation, walking apart, split. If the CofE agrees to same sex marriage, what will happen to our relationship with the wider Anglican communion? Are we in danger of being to ethnocentric in our discussions?

Very difficult in a diocese where the leadership is more liberal. It is divisive to speak up. No future for young orthodox ordinands

Fears of evangelical disunity—as different people make different decisions over strategy

#### Opportunities

Need to keep saying : Jesus has the words of eternal life - CEEC Beautiful Story is a brilliant resource. Need to teach more about celibacy and singleness which has been neglected. Comes down to our doctrine of God - chance to enrich and correct. Need to raise question of God's goodness and our fallen humanity. One Church—One Voice not One Church - Many Voices.

LLF is helpful to understand the language and terminology of the day

Study day/ Set a positive vision for relationships. Chance to model relationships and growth.

Resources give the opportunity to show how error enters the church - We have concrete thing to show how far away from biblical truth the church has travelled. Need to teach that the premise is flawed - not just about the issue of marriage/ sexuality.

For those participating in wider conversations we will need to help them understand power dynamics etc Might be an opportunity if it starts a discussion where the gospel is clearly presented - Someone in the deanery may engage with the biblical texts for the first time and be converted. Will be good to offer a loving and mature approach.

Opportunities to work together with other orthodox folk - good to see the diversity of people engaged together.

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## Living in Love and Faith: How to contend?

### 5. How does the process work? Lessons learned

- 1) **Engagement** or active listening, requires you to be able to tell each other's story in such a way that the other recognises it - and to accept the other's interpretation of their own experience. This can be helpful in many contexts but it becomes a problem when it is considered a betrayal to repudiate or criticise that interpretation or theological understanding in the future. This is the basis of the increasing pain felt by the LGBTI+ community - as they share their stories and think people have heard them and yet see no change in doctrine or practice.

*"I do not think anyone expected tectonic plate shifts in the Church's position on marriage but, like many, many others, I do feel that the document we have before us does not reflect the gift of sharing that was made by many who made themselves vulnerable to hopefully take the Church to a different place on the issue of sexuality; a less binary place."*

Rev Rosemarie Mallett (General Synod 2017)<sup>1</sup>

*"My inability to see how this can be a safe process was underlined a couple of days later when the Church of England Evangelical Council released a 30 minute video called 'The Beautiful Story' in which they use very thin theology and some unhealthy arguments to condemn and judge LGBT+ Christians in an inappropriate and condemnatory way. This included members of the group who have worked on the LLF material clearly indicating that they have no intention of listening or engaging at all and thus undermining the whole process. The negative and abusive impact this video has had on a large number of LGBT+ Christians has been significant."*

Ven Peter Leonard, Archdeacon of the Isle of Wight (Via Media 2020)<sup>2</sup>

- 2) **Encounter** requires you to "to serve, honour and love one another as we seek the face of Christ in each other"<sup>3</sup> and to allow them to challenge you to read the Bible differently because of their lived experience (p361-362)

*"As we have noted in earlier chapters, our reading is shaped by our beliefs about the Bible's purpose and about the kind of reading we are meant to undertake. It is shaped by our beliefs about the Bible's unity and about the kinds of tensions or contradictions that might characterize it. It is shaped by whatever habitual ways of reading we have inherited from those who taught us. .... These beliefs will have been influenced by the ways they mesh with (or rub against) all the other things we think we know. In other words: all of this will have been informed by our experience - and so all of it can be disturbed by our experience, or by our encounter with others whose experience is different."*

*Living in Love and Faith p355*

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/General%20Synod%20-%20February%202017%20w.%20index.pdf> - p273

<sup>2</sup> [LLF – Patience & Pain | ViaMedia.News](#) accessed 2/12/20

<sup>3</sup> Living in Love and Faith page 420



## Living in Love and Faith: How to contend?

### 5. How does the process work? Lessons learned (part 2)

- 3) **Complexity** – the reason that the conversation is needed is because there are no simple answers. The word ‘complex’ and ‘complexity’ appears 85 times in Living in Love and Faith. In his comments to General Synod in November 2020, the Archbishop of Canterbury said,

*“Please, let us not simplify the complicated. This work shows the complexities of the issue — there are few or no binaries... The LLF resources, taken together, demonstrate the questions we are facing are not as simple as some on all sides of the discussion like to pretend.... What we do in the next period will be seen by the Global Church, not just the Anglican Communion, as a sign of hope or a sign of failure. It will be seen in the land in its effects, as to whether all decisions are binary, as is so often the truth in our politics and common life, or whether we can love and live across profound and passionately held differences. In other words, in how we will witness, or fail to witness, to the Lord of the Church”<sup>1</sup>*

- 4) **The process creates the outcome** - the purpose is to understand one another better and to find consensus - so we can live together in love and faith. The Shared Conversations did not succeed - GS2055 was rejected - but the same questions are being asked again through the LLF process. Remember what David Porter said at the start, “I hope 80% of the Church of England will find a place of compromise.”

*“The purpose of repeating the questions is to remove bias, assuming that the first responses will contain the strongest biases.*

*When the participants are exposed to the responses of the group and the process is repeated, the biases tend to be eliminated, thus resulting in consensus of the group.”<sup>2</sup>*

- 5) **The facilitators of the conversation have power** over the feedback and the way it is presented.

For example at the Primates Meeting 2016 - the Primates of the Anglican Communion agreed a statement that can be read in full on the Anglican News Service.<sup>2</sup> A key paragraph read:

*“It is our unanimous desire to walk together. However given the seriousness of these matters we formally acknowledge this distance by requiring that for a period of three years The Episcopal Church no longer represent us on ecumenical and interfaith bodies, should not be appointed or elected to an internal standing committee and that while participating in the internal bodies of the Anglican Communion, they will not take part in decision making on any issues pertaining to doctrine or polity.”<sup>3</sup>*

At the press conference after the meeting, it took the Archbishop of Canterbury less than five minutes to completely change the narrative by ignoring the actual words of the Primates and announcing:

*“As I say – the decision that we would walk together was unanimous”<sup>4</sup>*

And in doing so:

- He ignored the fact although it was their ‘desire’ to walk together, it was not their decision.
- He ignored their ‘however’ and everything that came after it .

And thus, he completely undermined the conversations and decision of the Primates.

<sup>1</sup> General Synod November 2020 - Monday 23 November afternoon - YouTube (1:55:16 mins)

<sup>2</sup> Is Delphi unethical? - Leadership Techniques (leadershiptechniquesllc.com)

<sup>3</sup> Statement from Primates 2016 (anglicannews.org)

<sup>4</sup> AUDIO: Primates Meeting 2106 Press Conference | Anglican Communion News Service (anglicannews.org) 4min 30second



## Living in Love and Faith: How to contend?

### 6. Can we engage with LLF on its terms?

The question of whether we should engage in the Living in Love and Faith process at all was raised. Opinions differed as to whether we could really engage in good faith (on the terms allowed by the resources) if our real desire was to explain again our understanding of the Scriptures in the hope of changing the minds of those with whom we speak.

#### So how should we engage?



*"If participants approach conversations expecting to change the minds of others and fearing that the objective is to force them to change their own minds, no real conversation, in the sense of exploring beliefs and seeking understanding, is likely to take place.*

*The paradox of conversations of this kind is that they do not require that any participant changes his or her mind. On the other hand, they do require that participants approach the process in a spirit which allows the possibility that their mind may change as a result."*

Grace and Disagreement 1 – page 22

(Guide to the 2014-16 Shared Conversations)

#### So how should we engage?



*"We may find, after deep conversation and reflection, that levels of certainty, one way or another, have decreased. Exposure to the sincerity of others' views may not change our minds but may make us less sure that we alone know God's mind on this topic."*

Grace and Disagreement 1 – page 25

(Guide to the 2014-16 Shared Conversations)

As the groups looked further forward, the question changed from whether they could or should engage with these materials - ( a question of conscience) - to whether it was likely that their engagement at a deanery/ diocesan level would have any impact on the final 'outcome' - which lay with the decision of the House of Bishops in 2022 - more of that in section 9.

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## Living in Love and Faith: How to contend?

### 7. The authority of the Scriptures in the debate

Living in Love and Faith (the book) has much to say about the ‘complex’ process of reading the Bible and how our own questions and contexts will affect the way we interpret it.

One of the striking sections begins on page 294 and explores the ideas of unity and authority

*“Disagreements about the nature and form of the Bible’s authority form a second axis along which the variety of opinion in the Church of England can be arranged – distinct from the disagreements about context described earlier.”*

Seven speakers then explain how they listen to Bible. Below are extracts from these seven approaches - but we recommend reading them in their entirety on pages 295-297 of LLF.

1. “By the grace of God, the Bible is truthful, without error and clear. Everything we need .... Is right there on the page”
2. “We can trust such a God to have spoken clearly and coherently.... I do want to stress, however that we need to read everything that the Bible says about marriage and relationships... and read them in the context of the Bible’s wider message..”
3. “I want to stress the care we need to take in putting the pieces of the biblical teaching together – and the danger of taking any part on its own.”
4. I think there are deep and pervasive tensions in the Bible and they are there for good reason. It is an inherently complex conversation between multiple voices.”
5. “... we do discover that some of them, taken by themselves, are misleading. For example, some of what we read in the Bible about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage just doesn’t line up with the most central things the Bible says about love.”
6. “I believe the Bible is given to us for the one purpose of teaching us about God’s love for the world... I want to say the Bible is a collection of human words brought together by God to witness to that love and ultimately Christ... But I also think that witness is provided by fallible human voices.”
7. “I do think that it is a book produced by people who were caught up in movements of God’s Spirit in history – but their words do uneven and partial justice to what they glimpsed.”

The authors then evaluate these seven approaches and **two** are considered to be “**beyond the mainstream of the church’s conversation about the Bible’s authority and purpose.**”

*“That is, the **first speaker** seems to deny – or at least to give very little attention to – the humanity of the text. The rich and varied lives and contexts of the Bible’s human authors, and the rough texture that their voices give to the text, seem to be washed out in the glare of this speaker’s claims about God’s authorship of these words. The seventh **speaker** seems to deny that the text is given to us by God, for God’s purposes. The complex humanity of the Bible’s authors fills the screen, and there is little space left for God.” (p298)*

Thus, the view that the Bible is made up of “fallible human voices” is considered to be within the mainstream, whilst an unnuanced understanding of the perspicuity of Scripture is not, and the ‘central’ position — the one we assume is at the heart of the church’s conversation - is that the Bible is “an inherently complex conversation between multiple voices.”

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## Living in Love and Faith: How to contend?

### 8. A Question of Love?

Living in Love and Faith (the book) has much to say about the central message of the Bible being 'Love' - in its various forms (love, loving, loved etc) the word appears over 700 times.

As the first chapter says,

*"The gift of life that is given and received through relationship is a gift of love. God loves us into life and calls us to live life in love. To love God and be loved by God, to love others and to let others love us, to love this creation of which we are part and to receive God's love through it, is at the heart of what it means to dwell with God and to be indwelt by God." (p17)*

In a speech to General Synod, the Archbishop of Canterbury suggested to General Synod that the way that that love is worked out is by finding a way to "love and live across profound and passionately held differences."<sup>1</sup>

In the ReNew Webinar on Living in Love and Faith, Kirsten Birkett<sup>2</sup>, raises the question of what it means to love someone - to live life in love. She draws attention to one of the 'conversations' in the LLF book, where Harry states,

*"You are right that there's a strong mood to say, 'Well, there's different ways of interpreting Scripture. We live with lots of kinds of difference and that's alright.'*

*But I don't think that's ultimately sustainable. If you look at Acts 15 or 1 Thessalonians, teaching about marriage and relationships is critical to how the Church reaches out and draws the nations into the kingdom of God. Whatever you think, to try to make it marginal or secondary, I think, is just not really faithful to Christian tradition.*

*If sexual activity outside marriage is sinful then to say 'it's not, it's alright' is to do harm to people. If we come to a different view and it's not, say, sinful for people of the same sex to have sexual relationships, then to teach that it is sinful is deeply harmful. Either way, some people in the church are doing serious harm to some other people." (p406-7)*

The rest of the conversation reveals several different ways the question of what it means to love one another, is avoided by those wishing to find a way to live together in love and faith.

- "But people have dealt with disagreements in the Church throughout history"
- "...we've been living with permission for lay people to live faithfully together in sexually active same-sex relationships..."
- "there's huge room for working out the life of the gospel differently in our different cultural and historic contexts"
- "It can be a challenge that we face in Christ together, that draws us closer together, closer to the reality of the name that he has been given, and makes Christ more manifest."

Kirsten also, recognises that LLF is not equipped to answer this question - as there is no external authority on which all those involved in the LLF discussion agree - and the authors of the book are clear that they don't even agree on that themselves p368). So all we are left with is our own individual interpretation - not just of the biblical texts, the science, Anglican theology and our culture but on the very words we speak to one another.

<sup>1</sup> General Synod November 2020 - Monday 23 November afternoon - YouTube (from 1:55:16 mins)

<sup>2</sup> [Living in Love and Faith Webinar | ReNew Conference](#) (from 31 mins)



## Living in Love and Faith: How to contend?

### 9. Where are we heading?

Anglican Futures is about thinking ahead - in the light of the evidence we see today.

Of course, there might be a miracle. God may act in an extraordinary way - and we should certainly pray for such an outcome.

But, in 2022 the House of Bishops will meet again to discuss what has been learned from the Living in Love and Faith process - and it is unlikely that the answer will be another round of discussion. Some action will be needed. Looking around the Anglican Communion there are a variety of options available to them.

#### What are the options?



- **Change canons to allow same-sex marriage**
  - The Episcopal Church (USA) 2015
  - Scottish Episcopal Church 2017
  - Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil 2018
- **Don't change canons – but allow dioceses to offer same-sex marriage**
  - Anglican Church of Canada 2019
- **Keep doctrine of marriage but accept 'different views' and allow churches/ clergy to offer blessings of same-sex relationships**
  - Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia 2018
- **No change – orthodox doctrine, little discipline unorthodox practice**
- **Maintain orthodox doctrine and bring discipline of church into line with it**

At the end of the Living in Love and Faith Book , the Bishops make an appeal:

*“As we have acknowledged, we do not all agree over some matters of great importance for the well-being of Christ’s church and how they relate to another question our ordination put to us, “Will you teach the doctrine of Christ as the Church of England has received it?”. We feel the tension among ourselves between uniting the church in its differences and pressing for decisive decisions in contested areas about which each of us feels strongly. Nevertheless we are united as bishops in our commitment to promote peace and to strive for the visible unity of the church.”*

LLF p423

In the light of this statement, and the rejection of the solution set out in the body of GS2055, it would seem likely that there will be some change in favour of welcoming and affirming those in same-sex relationships. As CEEC have pointed out, this might mean that the General Synod elections which will take place in 2021 are critical.

However, the question remains as to whether the House of Bishops would want to risk another defeat of a progressive measure on the floor of General Synod. After all, the then Prime Minister, David Cameron said in 2012, it was time for the Church of England to, “Get with the programme.”

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## Living in Love and Faith: How to contend?

### 8. Where are we heading - Part 2

So - is there an alternative to a decision on the floor of General Synod?

The legal advice at the end of GS2055 did offer a way that the House of Bishops could offer something concrete to those who long to welcome and affirm same-sex relationships in the church. As with the request for new liturgy to welcome and affirm transgender people, this would be a compromise. But it would be the mark of something new - and it would not require General Synod to approve the decision.

The legal opinion<sup>1</sup> stated that the House of Bishops could make no legislative change (and therefore not require General Synod to vote on the matter) and

- i. make it clear to the clergy that it is not lawful for them to use a form of service which either explicitly or implicitly treats or recognises the civil marriage of two persons of the same sex as equivalent to holy matrimony, but
- ii. explain that it would be lawful for the clergy to use a form of service which celebrated the relationship between two persons of the same sex provided that the form of service did not explicitly or implicitly treat or recognise their relationship as equivalent to holy matrimony.

Following this advice, the House of Bishops could come to the following conclusion:

#### A possible outcome – HoB



1. We recognise the diversity of views held by faithful followers of Jesus Christ within the Anglican Communion.
2. We desire to maintain the unity of the church.
3. We uphold the doctrine of holy matrimony (B30) and also recognise that other stable faithful relationships can embody the crucial social virtues of fidelity, mutuality and fruitfulness and that celebrating relationships other than holy matrimony is neither contrary to, nor indicative of any departure from, the doctrine of the Church of England in any essential matter.
4. We offer this service of celebration

2

With a form of service then being approved by the Archbishops for the use of clergy in their Provinces (under Canon B4 (2)) or, if the House of Bishops preferred, a form of service being approved by each diocesan bishop for the use of clergy in their diocese (under Canon B4 (3)).

**As we say—this is only one possible outcome - but is it an unlikely one?**

<sup>1</sup> GS2055 Appendix Legal Advice Para 8c P17.

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## Living in Love and Faith: How to contend?

### 10. So, what do we do?

**Anglican Futures is about thinking ahead - in the light of the evidence we see today.**

This briefing sets out some of the evidence. Individuals will need to weigh up for themselves the relative merits of different aspects of the evidence and act according to their conscience. There was, however, agreement amongst those who gathered for the LLF event that we all needed to:

#### 1) Pray:

- This is first and foremost a spiritual matter - not a political battle or an argument on social media.
- We need to pray - for God's protection and for his direction. We need to pray together and alone.

#### 2) Prepare ourselves and our congregations:

- Whether we engage directly with the LLF resources or not - the issues they raise will not go away.
- They raise important questions about our understanding of God, our understanding of his purpose for our lives and about the cost of discipleship and ensuring that we are all equipped to give an answer for the hope that we have, must be the first priority.

#### 3) Prepare for the consequences:

- Some faithful Anglicans will see their future in the Church of England - whatever change occurs. Others, may struggle to see a future for themselves if there were particular changes to doctrine and/or practice.
- In the light of the evidence, some faithful Anglicans will seek to become more engaged with synodical processes, others may choose to use their time differently.
- However our conscience leads us, the way we are doing ministry and the relationships we have with our local deanery and diocese, and even our parish, are unlikely to remain the same over the next few years. So be proactive - pray for the best outcome but help your congregation to prepare for the worst.
- Let's not ignore the very real challenges faced by those working in many areas of the public and private sector who face difficult decisions because of ever more intrusive 'inclusivity polices.' How will we prepare those in secular work, our youth, our local church ministries which depend on links with schools and hospitals, for the possibility of being barred from serving in these places?

#### 4) Be gracious to one another:

- Whether or not we engage directly with the LLF resources is not the most important question.
- Whether our conscience allows us to remain within the Church of England, now or in the future, is not the most important question.
- Choosing to be gracious and supportive of those who make different decisions is the more important decision, and it is likely to be the greatest challenge of our generation.

**Anglican Futures will offer day-to-day practical and pastoral support to all faithful Anglicans, and will provide a place to think together about the future**

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# Appendix: HoB Reports 1991-2020

The table below was first published by Reform in 2015.

In seeking to update it in 2020, we note that the 'Appeal from the House of Bishops' in LLF, avoids any comment on the doctrine of the Church and merely says,

"... as bishops. We do not agree on a number of matters relating to identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage. Some of those differences of view relate to the ethics and lifestyle of opposite sex relationships and some relate to questions around gender and pastoral provisions for transgender people. Most pressing among our differences are questions around same-sex relationships, and we recognize that here decisions in several interconnected areas need to be made with some urgency." (LLF p 422)

1991 Issues in Human Sexuality: A House of Bishop Statement	Approach Good disagreement	Principle The Bible teaches that any sexual activity outside of marriage is sinful	Application to laity Laity who conscientiously disagree and live in practising homosexual relationships should not be rejected	Application to clergy Clergy should model their lives according to the doctrine of the church... but...	Liturgy/Public Worship Not considered
<p>Issues in Human Sexuality: A House of Bishop Statement</p>	<p>"We cannot expect all to agree with our conclusions and indeed in our own discussions we encountered a wide variety of opinions and we benefited by vigorous debate, set as it was in the context of mutual affection and tolerance"<sup>1</sup></p>	<p>There is, therefore in Scripture an evolving convergence on the ideal of lifelong, monogamous, heterosexual union... sexual activity of any kind outside of marriage comes to be seen as sinful, and homosexual practice as especially dishonourable... this ultimate biblical consensus presents us with certain problems which need to be faced.<sup>2</sup></p> <p>"Homosexuality and homosexuality are not equally congruous with the observed order of creation or with the insights of revelation... The convergence of Scripture, Tradition and reasoned reflection on experience, even including the new sympathetic and perceptive thinking of our own day, make it impossible for the Church to come with integrity to any other conclusion."<sup>3</sup></p>	<p>Some are conscientiously convinced of the benefits of a loving and faithful homosexual partnership... (which) includes the physical expression of their attachment... While unable, therefore, to commend the way of life just described as its own as faithful a reflection of God's purposes in creation as the heterosexual, we do not reject those who sincerely believe it is God's call to them.</p>	<p>"We have therefore to say that in our considered judgement the clergy cannot claim the liberty to enter into sexually active homosexual relationships."</p> <p>However clergy who are 'themselves in active homosexual partnerships... who come out as a matter of personal integrity' are respected but 'called to live lives that respect the Church's teaching'.<sup>4</sup></p> <p>The Bishops say they 'do not think that it is right to interrogate individuals on their sexual lives... it should be left to candidate's own consciences to act responsibly in this matter'.<sup>5</sup></p>	<p>No liturgy or 'blessings' – but requests for prayer should be dealt with pastorally</p>
<p>2005 Civil Partnerships: A Pastoral Statement from the House of Bishops</p>	<p>Civil Partnerships and marriage differ because the law does not require sexual union or faithfulness in a Civil Partnership</p> <p>In particular, it is not predicated on the intention to engage in a sexual relationship. Thus there is no equivalent of the marriage law provision either for amendment on grounds of non-sterility or for its dissolution as a result of sexual infidelity.<sup>6</sup></p> <p>This has proved to be a false assumption as there is no provision for either of these in the Same-Sex Marriage Act.</p>	<p>Marriage is between a man and a woman Sex outside marriage falls short of God's purposes</p> <p>"It has always been the position of the Church of England that marriage is a creation ordinance, a gift of God in creation and a means of his grace. Marriage, defined as a faithful, committed, permanent and legally sanctioned relationship between a man and a woman"<sup>7</sup></p> <p>"Sexual relationships outside marriage, whether heterosexual or between people of the same sex, are regarded as falling short of God's purposes for human beings."<sup>8</sup></p>	<p>Laity in civil partnerships should not be expected to be celibate and should not be excluded from sacraments</p> <p>"...lay people who have registered civil partnerships ought not to be asked to give assurances about the nature of their relationship before being admitted to baptism, confirmation and communion."<sup>9</sup></p> <p>In relation to infant baptism, Canon B 22.4 makes it clear that, while baptism can be delayed for the purpose of instruction (including on marriage and the family), it cannot be refused.<sup>10</sup></p>	<p>Clergy can enter civil partnerships but should expect to give assurance that it is a celibate relationship.</p> <p>Clergy can enter into civil partnerships – if they are willing to assure their bishop that 'the relationship is consistent with the standards for the clergy set out in Issues in Human Sexuality'<sup>11</sup>; and should expect to be asked for assurances.<sup>12</sup></p>	<p>No liturgy or 'blessings' – but requests for prayer should be dealt with pastorally</p> <p>"It would not be right to produce an authorized public liturgy in connection with registering civil partnerships"<sup>13</sup> and the House of Bishop affirmed that 'clergy of the Church of England should not provide services of blessing for those who register a civil partnership'<sup>14</sup></p> <p>However, the guidance continues "Where clergy are approached by people asking for prayer in relation to entering into a civil partnership they should respond pastorally and sensitively in the light of the circumstances of each case."<sup>15</sup></p>
<p>2014 Statement of Pastoral Guidance on Same Sex Marriage from the House of Bishops</p>	<p>We can only agree that the doctrine has not changed (yet)</p> <p>"(W)e are not all in agreement about every aspect of the Church's response. However we are all in agreement that the Christian understanding and doctrine of marriage as a lifelong union between one man and one woman remains unchanged."<sup>16</sup></p> <p>"We have already committed ourselves to a process of facilitated conversations across the whole Church of England in the light of the Pilling Report."<sup>17</sup></p>	<p>Doctrine of marriage is affirmed but homosexual practice is not described as sinful or falling short of God's purposes</p> <p>Lambeth 1:10 and Dromantine Communique are quoted selectively.</p> <p>Seen most clearly by only quoting the end of 1.10 d – it does NOT include the section in bold: "while rejecting homosexual practice as incompatible with Scripture, calls on all our people to minister pastorally and sensitively to all irrespective of sexual orientation and to condemn irrational fear of homosexuals, violence within marriage, and any trivialisation and commercialisation of sex."<sup>18</sup></p>	<p>Laity should be free to marry and should not be expected to be celibate and should not be excluded from sacraments</p> <p>Those same sex couples who choose to marry should be welcomed into the life of the worshipping community and not be subjected to questioning about their lifestyle. Neither they nor any children they care for should be denied access to the sacraments.<sup>19</sup></p> <p>We also noted that the clergy could not lawfully refuse to baptize children on account of the family structure or lifestyle of those caring for them, so long as they and the godparents were willing to make the requisite baptismal promises following a period of instruction.<sup>20</sup></p>	<p>Clergy should not enter into same-sex marriage and those in such partnerships will not be ordained. But can argue for change</p> <p>"The House is not, therefore, willing for those who are in a same sex marriage to be ordained to any of the three orders of ministry. In addition it considers that it would not be appropriate conduct for someone in holy orders to enter into a same sex marriage, given the need for clergy to model the Church's teaching in their lives."<sup>21</sup></p> <p>"The Church of England will continue to place a high value on theological exploration and debate that is conducted with integrity. That is why the Church of England clergy are able to argue for a change in its teaching on marriage and human sexuality."<sup>22</sup></p>	<p>No liturgy or 'blessings' – but requests for prayer should be dealt with pastorally</p> <p>The same approach as commended in the 2005 statement should therefore apply to couples who enter same-sex marriage, on the assumption that any prayer will be accompanied by pastoral discussion of the church's teaching and their reasons for departing from it. Services of blessing should not be provided. Clergy should respond pastorally and sensitively in other ways.<sup>23</sup></p>

<sup>1</sup> Issues in Human Sexuality, Preface p vii | <sup>2</sup> Issues in Human Sexuality, para 2.29 | <sup>3</sup> Issues in Human Sexuality, para 5.2 | <sup>4</sup> Issues in Human Sexuality, para 5.20 | <sup>5</sup> Issues in Human Sexuality, para 5.21 | <sup>6</sup> Issues in Human Sexuality, para 5.22 | <sup>7</sup> Civil Partnerships – A Pastoral Statement from the House of Bishops, para 1 | <sup>8</sup> Civil Partnerships – A Pastoral Statement from the House of Bishops, para 2 | <sup>9</sup> Civil Partnerships – A Pastoral Statement from the House of Bishops, para 3 | <sup>10</sup> Civil Partnerships – A Pastoral Statement from the House of Bishops, para 4 | <sup>11</sup> Civil Partnerships – A Pastoral Statement from the House of Bishops, para 5 | <sup>12</sup> Civil Partnerships – A Pastoral Statement from the House of Bishops, para 6 | <sup>13</sup> Civil Partnerships – A Pastoral Statement from the House of Bishops, para 7 | <sup>14</sup> Civil Partnerships – A Pastoral Statement from the House of Bishops, para 8 | <sup>15</sup> Civil Partnerships – A Pastoral Statement from the House of Bishops, para 9 | <sup>16</sup> Same-Sex Marriage: Pastoral Guidance on Same-Sex Marriage, para 19 | <sup>17</sup> Civil Partnerships – A Pastoral Statement from the House of Bishops, para 25 | <sup>18</sup> Civil Partnerships – A Pastoral Statement from the House of Bishops, para 17 | <sup>19</sup> Civil Partnerships – A Pastoral Statement from the House of Bishops, para 17 | <sup>20</sup> Civil Partnerships – A Pastoral Statement from the House of Bishops, para 18 | <sup>21</sup> Civil Partnerships – A Pastoral Statement from the House of Bishops, para 18 | <sup>22</sup> Civil Partnerships – A Pastoral Statement from the House of Bishops, para 18 | <sup>23</sup> Civil Partnerships – A Pastoral Statement from the House of Bishops, para 19