



the alliance

Tuesday 22nd October 2024

Dear Archbishops and Bishops,

Thank you so much for the generous invitation to pre circulate a letter to the House of Bishops ahead of your meeting on Wednesday. We continue to lament the pastoral pain and division the current LLF debate and its subsequent direction of travel is causing to the fabric of the Church of England at a local, national and global level, and at deep personal cost to many on all sides of the debate. We gratefully welcome this opportunity to communicate the scale of pain and confusion felt by those we represent while seeking to bring clarity about who the Alliance represents and what we are prayerfully seeking to achieve for the sake of the future flourishing of the whole church in our nation. We humbly appeal to each of you to seek to understand us and, in your episcopal leadership as focal points of Christ's unity, to find a way to support those we represent.

The Alliance continues to grow numerically with 2360 clergy whose churches currently represent 42% of the Church of England's average Sunday attendance and 53% of all under eighteen-year-olds within the Church of England. The Alliance representatives in all 42 dioceses reflect the broad diversity of orthodox networks we are supporting, including traditional Catholics, New Wine, the HTB Network, CEEC, Living Out, Renew, the Church Society, 200 orthodox ordinands, the orthodox archdeacon group, the orthodox female clergy group and the orthodox global heritage majority group. We are working closely in partnership with a number of Alliance link bishops in the College and House who share our concerns and objectives, and have strong support from Primates from across the Anglican Communion. We represent the most diverse, youngest and fastest growing networks within the Church of England and yet are repeatedly told we are a small extreme minority grouping despite offering independent validation of our data.

The Alliance represents those who seek to hold to the received teaching of the Church of England, aligning ourselves with the majority of the Anglican Communion and other Christians across the world and through history. We affirm the [1998 Lambeth Resolution 1.10](#) in its entirety which includes a clear repudiation of all homophobia. We stand with "[A Theological Vision](#)" as set out by a number of Bishops in February 2024. We are trying to combat the schism that a de facto change of doctrine and a disregard of due process is creating within the Church. We are passionate to serve the Church of England in mission and evangelism longing to see the younger generation encounter Jesus through a confident revitalised church.

As our previous letters to the House of Bishops have sought to communicate, we believe that changing doctrine without following the lawful process places all this at risk and goes well

beyond any issue of human sexuality. Sadly, many across the Alliance are already experiencing discrimination towards those who hold orthodox views, with curacies being withheld, funding withdrawn, promotions denied and being told there is no place for you within the future Church of England. We have consistently heard stated – at General Synod, in working groups and even on podcasts with Alastair Campbell – that the House of Bishops is committed to us having a full and flourishing place in the Church of England. However, the experience on the ground feels very different. If we are to continue to play a meaningful part in this vital gospel mission, we have identified six essential criteria that will enable an ecosystem for us and future orthodox generations to flourish in. These six criteria can only be met through the powers of the ordinary of an orthodox diocesan bishop. Only orthodox diocesan episcopal oversight can fulfil these criteria, and delegated oversight on a regional basis will not work. We have communicated these six criteria repeatedly in our letters over the past two years, at every LLF working group and recently to Bishop Martyn and the Leicester groups.

To our disappointment none of our criteria for flourishing have been taken into account or integrated into the deliberations of the Leicester groups nor by the House of Bishops at General Synod. Even the concept of having “three spaces” within the Church of England which was proposed by the Leicester groups was dismissed by the House of Bishops. All this has resulted in us being forced to begin setting up a de facto parallel province within the Church of England in response to the de facto change in doctrine.

There are some who have sought to portray the Alliance as schismatic and have stated that we are looking for the widest possible separation in the Church of England. Nothing could be further from the truth. The creation of a de facto parallel province is with the purpose of enabling clergy to stay in the Church of England who might otherwise feel they are being forced to leave. Furthermore, we see it as a temporary measure that will help act as a stepping stone to a suitable permanent provision in line with our six criteria.

We are not saying that we do not want any difference in the Church of England. We value and recognise difference, and see one of the great strengths of the Church of England being maintaining a breadth of diversity in the Church we all treasure. However, there are limits to difference, and where theological innovations are being pushed forwards which amount to a de facto change in doctrine, we are stating that there needs to be adequate legal provisions made to enable all those in the Church of England to be able to flourish. Currently, flourishing is only possible for those who support these proposed changes.

As you know, we have always urged that the General Synod be allowed to follow correct legal processes requiring a two-thirds majority in all Houses for a change of liturgy. It is a matter of deep regret (and the cause of incalculable damage to the structure, integrity and mission of the national Church) that the House of Bishops, having agreed in October 2023 (and in November 2023 with the whole Synod) that the correct canonical process be followed, has reneged on its decision and that, as a result, no such process has begun. The only way for the Church of England to introduce services of blessing for same-sex couples or same-sex marriage for clergy would be to change Articles 7 and 20, Canon B30, the Book of Common Prayer, the introduction to the Common Worship marriage service, the 2005 and 2020 House of Bishops Pastoral Statements on civil partnerships and the 2014 Pastoral Guidance on same sex marriage.

The Alliance continues to implore and commend the House of Bishops to reconsider following the correct constitutional process of Canon B2, which exists to protect the unity of the church by ensuring a two thirds majority is gained as a prerequisite for any alteration or departure from current agreed doctrine. We believe the current process is unlawful and lacks integrity, honesty and transparency.

Thank you for giving us this opportunity to write a heartfelt plea, building upon [our previous letters](#). Please be assured of our prayers on Wednesday, that you may have the mind of Christ as you discern the way forward at this challenging and critical time for our church. As always, we remain ready and available to be part of discussions in discerning the way forwards.

With love in Christ,

Ade Adebajo
Revd Canon John Dunnett
Fr Adam Gaunt
Revd Canon Vaughan Roberts
Revd Canon Paul Langham
Revd Sarah Jackson
Revd Jago Wynne

Directors of the Alliance