



Lambeth Conference 2022

Pastoral Letter to the Diocese of Ely

from The Bishop of Ely and The Bishop of Huntingdon

24th July 2022

Dear Friends

We look forward to meeting with bishops from around the world at this year's Lambeth Conference: exploring together the theme of being 'God's Church for God's World', reading 1 Peter and praying together.

BACKGROUND

Rather than resolutions, there will be "Lambeth Calls", inviting dioceses and parishes in due course to consider how they might best respond to the calls and take them forward in future years.

The text of the Lambeth Calls was published last week, see here: [Lambeth Calls – The Lambeth Conference](#)

Each call consists of four parts:

- a link with the First Epistle of Peter,
- a Declaration (a section which declares what the Church Catholic wider teaches on this matter),
- an Affirmation (a section which gives a summary of what Anglican churches have taught about it and sets out what the bishops of the Anglican Communion gathered in Canterbury in 2022 want to say about this topic or issue now), and
- specific Calls or Requests.

It emerged in the course of last week that bishops will be invited to vote on these calls, the choice being

- "This Call speaks for me. I add my voice to it and commit myself to take the action I can to implement it."
- "This Call requires further discernment. I commit my voice to the ongoing process."

CONCERN

It was with some surprise and dismay that we picked up on Friday night that Resolution I.10 from the Lambeth Conference 1998 (incidentally the only resolution from previous Lambeth Conferences mentioned in the Calls) is included in the particularly wide-ranging Lambeth Call titled Human Dignity.

The relevant paragraph is here in the section seeking Affirmation:

Prejudice on the basis of gender or sexuality threatens human dignity. Given Anglican polity, and especially the autonomy of Provinces, there is disagreement and a plurality of views on the relationship between human dignity and human sexuality. Yet, we experience the safeguarding of dignity in deepening dialogue. It is the mind of the Anglican Communion as a whole that same gender marriage is not permissible. Lambeth Resolution I.10 (1998) states that the "legitimizing or blessing of same sex unions" cannot be advised. It is the mind of the Communion to uphold "faithfulness in marriage between a man and a woman in lifelong union" (I.10, 1998).xxviii It is also the mind of the Communion that "all baptized, believing and faithful persons, regardless of sexual orientation are full members of the Body of Christ" and to be welcomed, cared for, and treated with respect (I.10, 1998).

And again in the Call:

Extend the work of the Anglican Communion Office to Promote Human Dignity with Attention to Sexuality as well as Gender

We call upon the ACC (informed by relevant networks and departments of the ACO and informed by Lambeth 1998 resolution I.10), to examine whether its work on Gender Justice should be expanded to promote provincial and inter-provincial vision and practices toward human dignity with attention not only to gender but also sexuality. The ACC should explore this possibility at the ACC-18 meeting in 2023. At ACC-19 provincial and inter-provincial reports should be received and further recommendations made.

OUR COMMITMENT

Given the *Living in Love and Faith* (LLF) process of discernment in the Church of England and the teaching and practice in some provinces of the Anglican Communion of blessing same-sex unions or offering same-sex marriage, the call to re-affirm Resolution I.10 has caused considerable upset and distress.

We would like to express our concern for and solidarity with those who are personally hurt by this.

We would also like to assure you that we remain committed to the LLF conversations with an open outcome.

There is so much that is important and good to affirm among the Lambeth Calls: concerning Christian witness; trafficking, exploitation and abuse; colonialism; peace-building; discipleship; poverty, climate change; the transformation of hearts and minds; the ecumenical movement; interfaith relationships, science and faith, etc.

We wish to be of one mind on many matters but the Anglican Communion is clearly not of one mind concerning the reaffirmation of Lambeth Resolution I.10 (1998), as in fact was acknowledged by the bishops at the Lambeth Conference in 1998 (“we are unable to reach a common mind”).

The section on Human Dignity lists as sinful various inequalities and unjust practices, including “oppression against LGBTQ persons” and “gender-based violence”. We share a commitment to press for the full de-criminalisation of same-sex relationships across the whole Anglican Communion as witness to the world and wish to see the welcome and inclusion of LGBTQI+ people “as full members of the body of Christ” as called for. We are also clear that there can be no hierarchy of oppressions, with one taken less seriously than the other.

We look forward to meeting brothers and sisters in Christ from across the world, hearing about ministry and mission in very different contexts to our own (often far more difficult!), and keen to strengthen our bonds as well as our respect for these different contexts which demand varied responses.

Please pray for us as we pray for you.



Handwritten signature of Stephen Ly and Debrae Huntington.