



Submission on the appointment of the next Archbishop of Canterbury

To: The Chair, Canterbury CNC

Monday 7 April 2025

cc. The Prime Minister's Appointments Secretary
The Archbishop's Appointments Secretary

Dear Lord Evans,

We are grateful to you and to all those with whom you will be dedicating time, prayer and effort to secure the appointment of the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury; and assure you of our support and prayer as you seek God's chosen person to lead the Church of England.

We recognise and rejoice at the creative, faithful ministry and mission that is evident in many parishes across England. Yet we also acknowledge that the next Archbishop will take office at a time of unprecedented challenge for the Church of England. Our membership continues to decline and age; almost without exception, our dioceses are facing financial crisis; we have suffered a steep reduction in vocations; high numbers of clergy report low morale & confidence; and we have lost significant trust from wider society not least due to our failings over safeguarding and racial justice. And our Church is split down the middle over Living in Love and Faith, itself a proxy for deeper, underlying divisions around our interpretation of scripture, our understanding of authority, and our vision for the church.

At such a time of stark disunity and existential threat, we believe that the Church of England needs an archbishop who

- has an unshakeable confidence in Jesus Christ and his unchanging gospel;
- does not believe that church decline is inevitable, but sees a future of vibrant, flourishing ministry and witness both within and beyond the C of E;
- has a vision and strategy for the renewal of the national church through revitalised and vibrant local congregations confidently proclaiming in word and deed the good news of God's love for all people made known in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; which enables the C of E to play its part alongside others in bringing eternal hope to an anxious nation;
- has a proven track record of leading both a parish and a diocese into growth through effective strategy for mission and planting;
- values the significance of unity with the majority of the Anglican Communion around the world and with the many ecumenical partners who, remaining faithful to scripture and historic doctrine, are experiencing unprecedented growth;
- does not accept that changing doctrine is either necessary or missionally beneficial, but is committed to the protection of our inherited faith, as expressed in scripture and in the historic formularies, articles and creeds of the Church – which faith all bishops and clergy have solemnly undertaken to uphold;

- recognises – and does not underestimate – the real challenges posed by the direction of travel set by a majority of the House of Bishops in response to the Living in Love and Faith process, in proposing teaching and practice contrary to the received doctrine of the Church of England, in particular in relation to marriage;
- has the humility and spiritual maturity to rebuild trust, confidence and hope within the Church of England and the Anglican Communion;
- is willing to restore the rightful relationships between the Church, the State, and modern Society; and in particular, grasps the significant role of the Church in challenging the excesses of Western culture, and calling Society to mirror the Church rather than the other way round.

The primary focus of the next Archbishop of Canterbury must be missional. The never-ending focus on LLF must be resolved. It is not proving possible to find a non-existent consensus position in the middle; and this failure is exacerbated by attempting to bypass Canon B2 to get there. We believe that the next Archbishop of Canterbury must be someone who is ready to move forwards with one of two strategies.

The first strategy is to commit unwaveringly to the principle that there can be no further alterations in services, doctrine and practice without employing Canon B2, which was designed to maintain the unity of the church.

The second strategy is immediately to prioritise finding an ecclesiological solution to the current problem. Whilst respecting the strongly held different convictions that are present across the church, the next Archbishop of Canterbury must be prepared to move forward with a radical structural solution so that the Church of England can continue to hold together for the sake of our common witness to the nation. This solution will need to be implemented, despite many in the House of Bishops being reluctant to embrace such a move.

One of these two strategies must be swiftly employed regarding LLF so that the primary focus of the Church of England can return to the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel of Jesus Christ to our nation.

We do not believe it possible to make the political appointment of one person who is miraculously able to balance the various parts of the church. What is needed is a person who will be courageous in enabling us to focus wholeheartedly again on our core mission. The evidence is clear that those church networks within the Church of England that have remained faithful to historic doctrine and practices have seen growth rather than decline or stagnation. The new Archbishop must therefore have, at the very least, the confidence of that part of the Church of England represented by the Alliance.

With our grateful thanks, and our prayers

Revd Sarah Jackson (Chair of Alliance)
 Ade Adebajo
 Revd Canon John Dunnett
 Fr Adam Gaunt
 Revd Canon Vaughan Roberts
 Revd Canon Paul Langham
 Revd Jago Wynne

Directors of the Alliance