

Monday 11th December 2023

Dear House of Bishops,

To date the Alliance has been an informal partnership made up of the leaders of a number of networks within the Church of England from the traditional catholic, evangelical and charismatic wings of the church. Together, we have written several letters to you concerning the direction of travel that the Church of England has been taken on, and the bad governance that has resulted in a Church divided right down the middle.

The decision taken by Synod in November has only increased the importance of the Alliance's existence as a movement made up of **a community of partners holding a common framework with a committed purpose.**

Our community of partners

The Alliance is made up of a community of leaders from the following networks: the Catholic Group on General Synod, Forward in Faith, the Society, the Global Majority reps on General Synod, the HTB Network, New Wine, the Church of England Evangelical Council, the Evangelical Group on General Synod, ReNew, Church Society, Living Out and Myriad.

There are also a growing number of parishes and clergy that wish to come under our umbrella of partners whilst not being linked to any of the main networks that are represented by the Alliance.

Our common framework

As part of one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, we stand on the historic Christian faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds and in the historic formularies, the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordering of Bishops, Priests and Deacons. The Alliance affirms the Lambeth Resolution 1.10 in its entirety which includes a clear repudiation of all homophobia and recognises that marriage is between a man and a woman and is the God-ordained context for sexual intimacy. We are wholeheartedly committed to credal orthodoxy, supernatural faith and sacrificial discipleship.

The Alliance exists to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ afresh in each generation to the people of England. We want to play our part in achieving this vision of revitalising the Church of England. We long to see a church that is younger and more diverse; one which is growing as missionary disciples live out their calling as followers of Jesus in all of life. We are committed to the parish system, including revitalising churches and growing fresh expressions of church so that all parts of the Church of England might flourish.

This common framework means that in conscience we are compelled to resist the current direction of travel of the Church of England. It looks to alter what we stand on. It hinders our vision for the future.

The proposed Prayers of Love and Faith are a departure from the doctrine to which the Church of England has always held fast. They are opposed by the Anglican Primates of the Global South who represent over 75% of the Anglican Communion, and the unwillingness to sufficiently consult and take into account their views, seems to them to be a form of colonialism and racism. Furthermore, it is not just the wider Anglican Communion that is being ignored. The Canon Law of the Church of England has been developed in order to preserve the unity of the church. Any process which suggests an unwillingness to give appropriate recognition to the Church's constitution exposes the Church to risk of legal challenge and has the potential to cause irreparable harm to our unity. We consider that our Christian witness and the Anglican tradition require both transparent and legitimate decision making. It is in the interests of all members of the Church, and all those the Church seeks to welcome, that these principles are maintained. The means by which this is achieved is through due process and good

governance. If continued, the present path is a risk-laden one, both for clergy and for bishops, because it vitiates the oaths of canonical obedience which includes the words “in all things lawful and honest”.

Our networks increasingly find themselves in impaired relationships with the bishops who are pursuing this departure from the received doctrine and practice of the Church of England. It is impossible to estimate the consequences that will be caused through the current ‘come what may’ strategy - the implementation of the Prayers of Love and Faith by whatever means, including refusing to make public your own legal advice.

Our committed purpose

We love the Church of England. We are not looking to leave, but rather to play a positive part in the renewal of what is, sadly, fast becoming a deeply divided church – a crisis we believe will only deepen if the current proposals are pushed forward. It is widely acknowledged that other provinces of the Communion that have pushed ahead on this trajectory have subsequently shrunk at an increasingly rapid rate in terms of church attendance and those offering for vocations to ordained ministry.

We are committed to working together with others in the Church of England to enable a flourishing of the whole church for generations to come. We want to do all we can to avoid years of more infighting in our divided church. Our purpose is to be part of the solution to the crisis facing us all.

As you meet on Tuesday, we want to encourage you that it is not too late to delay the commending of the Prayers of Love and Faith until the complete package of the Prayers, the full Pastoral Guidance and the Pastoral Reassurance are all presented to Synod. These three elements are integrated realities, and they are mutually dependent. As you know, it is contrary to all the commitments previously given to Synod to deal with them in a piecemeal and separate manner as is currently taking place. Synod had been assured throughout that they would be addressed together, concurrently and in their entirety, yet we are now not getting sight of the whole package in advance of implementation.

We support the next key area of work identified by the bishops in the letter from +Helen-Ann and +Martyn of 4th December – the exploration of a formal legal structural provision. We are convinced that an outcome needs to begin to be worked out now. First, this will enable those who feel compelled to pursue changes to doctrine and practice to be able to minister freely without their actions causing growing schism in the Church of England. Second, it will allow those of us who hold on to the received Anglican heritage to have oversight, training, licensing and appointments that are aligned with current doctrine and practice. Third, it will enable LGBTQI+ people who hold to the received teaching, as well as those who hold to a progressive view, both to find the sort of welcome, teaching, and pastoral care they are looking for, from churches that are living out similar convictions to their own.

We continue to be ready to work together with all parts of the Church of England to achieve an outcome which maintains the maximum degree of unity possible of the one Church under God for all people. Our priority and purpose is to work towards such an outcome now.

With love in Christ,

Fr Adam Gaunt, Chair of **Catholic Group** in General Synod
Emma Joy Gregory, Vice-Chair of **Catholic Group** in General Synod

Tom Middleton, Director of **Forward in Faith** and Secretary of the Council of Bishops of **The Society**

Busola Sodeinde, Church Commissioner and **UK Global Majority rep**
Ade Adebajo, Lay Chair of London Diocesan Synod, Chair of Lambeth Partners and **UK Global Majority rep**
Canon Dr. Addy Lazz-Onyenobi, Member of General Synod and **UK Global Majority rep**

Revd Dr. Rich Johnson, National Leader, **New Wine**
Revd Wole Agbaje, Head of Young Adults, **New Wine**
Revd John Coles, **New Wine** Ambassador
Revd Paul Harcourt, former National Leader, **New Wine**

Revd Archie Coates, Vicar of Holy Trinity Brompton and Head of **HTB Network**
Revd Nicky Gumbel, President of Church Revitalisation Trust, **HTB Network**
Revd Sarah Jackson, CEO of Church Revitalisation Trust, and Chair of **HTB Network** on General Synod
Revd Jago Wynne, Vice-Chair of **HTB Network** on General Synod

Revd Canon John Dunnett, Chair of **Evangelical Group on General Synod** (EGGS)
Jane Patterson, Secretary of **Evangelical Group on General Synod** (EGGS)

Rt. Revd Julian Henderson, President of **Church of England Evangelical Council**

Revd Kieran Bush, Chair of the **ReNew** Planning Team
Debbie Buggs, Member of **ReNew** and Member of General Synod and of the Crown Nominations Commission

Revd Canon John McGinley, Executive Director of **Myriad**

Ed Shaw, Ministry Director of **Living Out**
Revd Canon Vaughan Roberts, Co-Founder of **Living Out**
Rt. Revd Keith Sinclair, Trustee of **Living Out**
Helen Lamb, Trustee of **Living Out**

Revd Dr. Lee Gatiss, Director of **Church Society**

All signatories are leaders of networks/organisations but are signing in their personal capacities, recognising they cannot claim to speak for everyone that they lead.

Recipients of the letter:

- The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of York
- The College of Bishops
- Members of the Archbishops' Council
- First, Second, Third Church Estates Commissioners
- Secretary to the Church Commissioners' Board of Governors
- Chair, Audit and Risk Committee, Church Commissioners
- Secretary-General of the General Synod of the Church of England