

## **Statement from the Guildford Diocesan Evangelical Fellowship concerning human sexuality**

January 2023

With formative decisions regarding 'Living in Love and Faith' at February's General Synod fast approaching, and with the backdrop of the Bishop of Oxford's public statement encouraging the Church of England to embrace same-sex marriage, we felt it important for clergy who hold a 'traditional' view in this area, to likewise take the same courage +Steven has and make our voices count.

Although +Steven's essay was shared with grace and understanding, we, as is likewise expressed in Rev Vaughan Roberts much longer essay, believe +Steven to be mistaken. We continue to believe that God's Word is authoritative and not ambiguous in any way:

- it clearly teaches that all are made in God's image, no matter how marred that image might be due to sin – be it sexual or non-sexual,
- it clearly teaches that God so loved the world that He sent Jesus – that's the whole world including everyone in the all-encompassing brackets mentioned above, meaning that everyone is deeply loved by God,
- it clearly teaches that God's body, His Church is in the world but not of the world, and is therefore different from the world – a light shining in the darkness, and is therefore the place anyone and everyone should be able to seek refuge in, feel understood, and experience discipleship,
- it clearly teaches that marriage is instituted by God and is a covenant between one man and one woman, despite how the world contests.

Such teaching is the Church of England's current position and doctrine and we want to herald it as part of the Good News, for the flourishing of all people (Canon B 30.1 clearly echoes Jesus' teaching in Matthew 19:4-5). In teaching it we have seen it bless individuals, communities and society as a whole. Whilst accepting the label 'traditionalist', we would welcome civil discourse that avoids calling us 'bigots' or 'prejudiced', which wounds those involved and tends towards further alienation. This is especially true for those of us who are same-sex attracted and have chosen to live celibate lives understanding this to be the sacrificial call of God. With humility, we simply seek to honour what we believe is God's good teaching for the world.

We recognise that the issues regarding human sexuality are deeply personal, and we hope that this statement is received with understanding and grace, trusting that Jesus will lead us all closer to Him. Similarly, we hope that the Church of England will continue to honour our collective voice during this period of discernment, and trust that if differentiation becomes unavoidable orthodox ministry will continue to flourish in the Church of England.

### **The GDEF Exec:**

**Revd. Greg Cushing (Chair)**

**Revd. Richard Lloyd**

**Revd. Simon Vibert**

**Stephen Hofmeyr  
Revd. Peter Chamberlin  
Ruth Allan  
Revd. Tom Darwent  
Elizabeth Klintworth  
Revd. Folo Olokose**

**Additional Clergy Signatories:**

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Revd. Mark Wallace  
Revd. Elizabeth Knifton  
Revd. Suresh Menon  
Revd. Patrick Beresford  
Revd. Thom Jee  
Revd. Chris Beecroft  
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