

**Statement from the Gafcon Primates
16 November 2023**

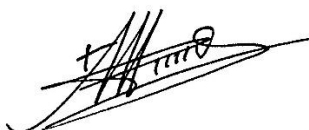
This week marks a tragic moment in the history of the Church of England. On Wednesday, November 15, its General Synod approved a proposal to encourage its bishops to continue their work in creating and implementing liturgical prayers of blessing for same-sex unions. The Synod additionally voted to approve an amendment that will allow clergy to go ahead and conduct standalone services of blessing on a trial basis. This means that, beginning next month, Anglican clergy in Church of England churches will be able to do what the prophet Balaam could not and would not do by going against the Word of God and blessing that which God has condemned (Num 24:12-14).

Holy Scripture is clear and unequivocal in its affirmation that the only proper context for sexual intimacy is the relationship of a man and woman who have been joined together in marriage. All forms of sexual intimacy outside of this context are condemned as immorality and are behaviors from which the people of God are regularly called to repent. In I Corinthians 6:9-10, the apostle Paul tells us “not to be deceived” on the seriousness of such immorality and warns us that those who fail to repent of it will not inherit the kingdom of God. And one of the behaviors he specifically names is that of homosexual activity. Elsewhere the New Testament specifically warns against false teachers who promote sexual immorality within the church (2 Peter 2:1-3, Jude 3-4, Rev. 2:19-24) and instructs us not to listen to or heed their words.

This week, the Church of England has made it clear that they disagree with Holy Scripture. They have decided that they can bless that from which the Bible calls us to repent. What is more, although these motions were passed by very narrow votes among the clergy and laity, the bishops gave their support and approval by a very clear majority. This is a tragedy for Anglicans, for not only has the Church of England done what its own Thirty-Nine Articles forbid by approving ceremonies that are “contrary to God’s Word written” (Articles XX, XXXIV), but a majority of its bishops have broken the vows which they swore at their consecration, to “banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God’s Word” (BCP Ordinal).

We lament the actions of the Church of England’s synod this week and we commit ourselves to pray and support those within its fold who continue to uphold the authority of God’s Word and to defend the faith “once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). Nearly fifty percent of the clergy and lay delegates at the Synod voted against these motions and we have no doubt that they, along with many other Anglicans throughout England, are currently experiencing grief and pain over these developments. We grieve with them, and we recommit ourselves to supporting the ministry of biblically faithful Anglicans throughout England, especially through the faithful ministry and mission of the Anglican Network in Europe.

Jesus Christ has promised us that the gates of hell shall not prevail against his church (Matt 16:18). Today we remember that promise and, even as we grieve, we rejoice that Christ is both the head of the church and the Lord of history and that his Word and his Kingdom will prevail.



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