

Statement from the Global South Primates and GAFCON Primates Council Concerning Same-sex Unions

6th October 2016

1. We acknowledge that God is the Creator of the whole cosmos and of humankind. Male and female, God created them in his own image and likeness to know him, worship him and share in his glory and love.
2. We affirm the dignity and value of every human being, as each bears the image of our gracious God. We recognise that humankind's rebellion against God has tainted that image, but not eradicated it. Yet every person is precious to God.
3. God's message of hope is therefore addressed to every man, woman and child around the globe, that they might be redeemed, restored as image bearers of God through the life, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and inherit eternal life.
4. As we proclaim the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to a broken and wounded world, we acknowledge our own failures and weaknesses in the light of God's word, the Bible. As God's love was declared to us, before we loved God, so we declare God's love to those who neither know him nor love him. Yet our love for God is both to believe and obey, and so our message is to call people to repentance and love for God, that they might be forgiven and live their lives in accordance with God's pattern for humankind as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.
5. We recognise that the brokenness of our world produces many aspects of human behaviour which are contrary to God's good design. These include slander, greed, malice, hatred, jealousy, dishonesty, selfishness, envy and murder, as well as fornication, adultery and same-sex unions. In addressing the issue of same-sex relationships, we are not minimizing the sinfulness of other forms of behaviour that are contrary to God's character and pattern for humankind. Rather, we are addressing an issue that continues to be contentious in both the Church and society and that strikes at the very heart of biblical authority.
6. We affirm that the clear teaching of Jesus, and the Bible as a whole, is that marriage is an estate for all people, not just for believers. It is a holy institution, created by God for a man and a woman to live in a covenantal relationship of exclusive and mutual love for each other until they are parted by death. God designed marriage for the well-being of society, for sexual intimacy between a husband and a wife, and for procreation and the nurturing of children (Genesis 2:18-25).
7. We contend that sexual intercourse between two persons of the same sex is contrary to God's design, is offensive to him and reflects a disordering of God's purposes for complementarity in sexual relations. Like all other morally wrong behaviour, same-sex

unions alienate us from God and are liable to incur God's judgment. We hold these convictions based on the clear teaching of Scripture. We hold them not in order to demean or victimise those who experience same-sex attractions, but in order to guard the sound doctrine of our faith, which also informs our pastoral approach for helping those who struggle with same-sex impulses, attractions and temptations.

8. In this respect, the Church cannot condone same-sex unions as a form of behaviour acceptable to God. To do so would be tampering with the foundation of our faith once for all laid down by the apostles and the prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone (Ephesians 2: 20-22; 1 Corinthians 3:10-11; Jude 3).
9. Any pastoral provision by a church for a same-sex couple (such as a liturgy or a service to bless their sexual union) that obviates the need for repentance and a commitment to pursue a change of conduct enabled by the power of the Holy Spirit, would contravene the orthodox and historic teaching of the Anglican Communion on marriage and sexuality. Such pastoral provisions, while superficially attractive in giving a more humane and socially acceptable face to the church, actually hide the contravention of doctrine involved. We must be faithful in guarding the good deposit of the gospel, in all its gracious gifts with all its covenantal obligations as well, not for the mere sake of orthodoxy but out of genuine love for God and our fellow human beings.
10. Our faithfulness to God and knowledge of his love empowers us to offer sensitive and compassionate ministry to those who are sexually broken in the area of same-sex attractions and unions. Our pastoral approach is to accept people for who they are, just as God accepted us for who we were. We oppose the vilification or demeaning of those who do not follow God's ways. We affirm that every person is loved by God, so we too must love as God loves. Our role is to restore them to God's divine patterns by inviting them to receive the transforming love of Christ that gives them the power to repent and walk in newness of life. We rely on the Holy Spirit's power to reveal to them the measureless goodness of God and the greatness of God in setting the captive free as a new creation.
11. We recognise that discipleship involves growth and while we long for all new believers to come to maturity in Christ, we know that this is a process. For those who are same-sex attracted, the path of discipleship and living in conformity with God's Word can be difficult. We commit ourselves afresh to care pastorally for them as members of Christ's body, building them up in the Word and in the Spirit, and encouraging them to walk by faith in the paths of repentance and obedience that lead to fullness of life (John 10: 9-10).

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