

ANDREW

Who are you?

I'm Andrew Goddard and I teach and write in the area of ethics and am an assistant minister in Pimlico

What's your role been in the LLF process?

I was one of the consultants on the LLF Co-Ordinating Group. This meant helping shape the overall structure of the project and then being involved with those who had worked in specialist groups working on the book. I was particularly involved in finalising the text of the book and developing the course and had some input in relation to the story films and took part in a couple of podcasts.

What have you learned so far by being involved?

Although I came to this having read quite widely and been involved for many years in discussions in the CofE and wider Communion I've learned an enormous amount. Intellectually there is a wealth of material not just in the book but in the online library with over 70 LLF papers where among many I particularly appreciated those from Julian Rivers on the history of marriage law, Mark Chapman on how the CofE has engaged with issues of sexuality, and the dialogue between Walter Moberly and Chris Wright on biblical teaching related to same-sex relationships. I've also particularly learned more about the many aspects - personal, theological, scientific - of gender identity and the experience of those who identify as trans. Personally I've made new friends and deepened old friendships across the spectrum of views through working together. I've also learned the importance of seeking to listen hard in order to find common ground while being honest about our disagreements and trying to understand the underlying reasons for them and discerning their significance and implications for our life together.

What challenged you and how did you challenge others?

I've been challenged afresh by the testimonies and Christian witness of those I disagree with, whether colleagues within LLF or those whose stories appear in the films. In particular, how many of them have been hurt by evangelicals and how we need to hear that and reflect on where we need to repent and change. It was also at times a challenge to work out how to find ways of expressing the different views - especially when they are, or appear, mutually exclusive - in a fair way and a way that made clear what the church teaches but also why that teaching is now questioned by many. At times even finding the terminology we should use was difficult because the language has built into it certain perspectives which we disagreed over. Through the process and looking ahead I see a major challenge being how - as I think the materials show - our disagreements on presenting issues relate to disagreements on deeper questions concerning the nature and authority of Scripture, what we see as part of God's good creation and what we see as a sign of our fallenness and need for redemption, the implications of this for being properly inclusive etc. Although there were times of conflict and disagreement as we worked together, these were generally handled really well and most of the time it did not feel at all like a battle between opposing sides which was encouraging, even liberating. At times, however, I found myself challenging the ways some people sought

to describe the views I held, or wrote pieces which omitted things I thought important. At other times, I had to point out aspects that I was not comfortable with as fair and balanced and which I thought could alienate evangelicals from our work while also recognising the need for no part of the church to be alienated and for views and stories that challenged us as evangelicals to be expressed clearly, fairly and powerfully.

What's your top tip for those getting involved in parish, deanery and diocesan discussions?

There are so many possible things to say here but I think my top one would be to trust God is sovereign, that he speaks through Scripture and is present by his Spirit, and we all have more to learn from Him. Therefore we need not be afraid of people or the positions they hold but should get to know and learn to love those with whom we disagree as we seek to speak the truth in love, listen for the truth they are speaking to us, and pray we can somehow work out together how to discern and express God's truth and love better in our own lives and the life of the church.