

## SECURING EVANGELICAL WITNESS

In December 2023, the House of Bishops commended a suite of 'readings and prayers of thanksgiving, dedication and asking for God's blessing for same-sex couples' for use in Church of England services.

This paper explores the 'provisions' that will be needed to secure evangelical presence and witness in the C of E if the current trajectory continues. It is intended to :

- help local church leaders (ordained and lay) think through their own position and need for provision
- be drawn on by Diocesan Evangelical Fellowship (DEF) committees when discussing these matters with their bishops
- contribute to a national discussion as to what might be needed in any 'settlement' (a phrase used by the Archbishop of York in his February General Synod speech).

CEEC has given substantial thought over the last few years as to what kind of provision might be needed in the situation in which we now find ourselves – including to the various 'forms' or 'models' by which long term provision might be made. In short, CEEC believes that the nature and scale of provision needed will necessitate significant structural rearrangement (the detail of these considerations can be found in papers available on the CEEC website : [www.ceec.info](http://www.ceec.info)) and welcomes a discussion to enable the C of E to avert the otherwise inevitable loss of large numbers of evangelicals from the C of E.

### INTRODUCTION

From the outset it is worth emphasising that – even in the event of some form of differentiation or 'settlement' between orthodoxy and liberalism(1) - a number of functions can continue to be shared across the C of E as a whole as part of the overarching infrastructure shared by all parishes and clergy. These might include: clergy pensions, DAC's, Church Commissioners investment and others.

Some of the needs identified below will be short term stepping-stones to a longer-term structural settlement.

It is important to be clear that any so called 'settlement' is to be without theological compromise.

Any settlement (intended to meet the need for provision) will have to be of a different order to the concept of extended episcopal oversight and the five guiding principles, because the current proposals involve a primary salvation issue: they are not adiaphora.

### LICENSED MINISTERS (CLERGY INC. CHAPLAINS AND LAY MINISTERS) will need ...

- To have episcopal oversight from an orthodox diocesan bishop
- To be licensed by an orthodox diocesan bishop
- To receive explicit episcopal support when declining an invitation to offer Prayers/Celebrations of relationships outside of marriage between one man and one woman (a short term measure until full structural provision is in place).
- To be free from threat of CDM's and/or other steps consequent upon teaching their theological position or living in the light of it.
- To be legally supported by bishops in the event of discriminatory charges being brought for declining to take a blessing
- To be able to express the view that others in the C of E are preaching a different gospel and are false teachers
- To have episcopal support for teaching in C of E schools that marriage is (biblically) between 1 man and 1 woman
- To be able to serve as Governors of schools etc without having to retreat from their theological position
- To attend diocesan training days that are framed in orthodoxy

- MDR's conducted by people who by sharing our doctrinal convictions prove we can trust them with MDR responsibility.

#### **CHURCHWARDENS will need ...**

- To have episcopal oversight from an orthodox diocesan bishop
- To be admitted by an orthodox diocesan bishop

#### **PARISHES will need ...**

- To have episcopal oversight from an orthodox diocesan bishop
- To receive explicit episcopal support when declining an invitation to offer Prayers/Celebrations of relationships outside of marriage between one man and one woman (this is a short term requirement – until full provision is made)
- To be part of deaneries and dioceses that uphold an orthodox position even if these are not structured geographically
- Freedom to give financial support to specific churches with whom they choose to partner
- To be able to refuse to partner with liberal churches on projects which require a shared understanding of the gospel
- To be able to refuse to enter into multi-parish benefices with parishes which do not share their convictions.
- To be eligible for SDF/SMMIB funding as part of ongoing Commissioners investment in a vision for growth.
- To be eligible for church planting opportunities
- To be part of a diocese which will accept responsibility for explaining why we are unable to bless/marry those outside the marriage of one man and one woman.
- To be supported by diocesan Communications teams who work in support of orthodoxy not despite/against it
- To be able to refuse use of buildings/facilities for activities which undermine their theological position
- To receive safeguarding support, training and oversight that does not undermine its orthodox position

#### **ORDINANDS will need ...**

A really clear selection, training and ordination pathway and funding including the following:

- Selection pathways overseen by those who share an orthodox theological position
- guaranteed freedom to be trained in colleges and courses that teach in accord with a 'framework' of orthodoxy
- to be ordained (and in due course, where appropriate, priested) by orthodox bishops
- the right to insist on an orthodox training incumbent
- Diocesan training including POT/ IME 2 which is orthodox

#### **THOSE WHO ARE SINGLE, INCLUDING SAME SEX ATTRACTED CHRISTIANS (CLERGY AND LAY) WHO HOLD TO TRADITIONAL/ ORTHODOX TEACHING will need ...**

- To enjoy the public support and pastoral care of their bishop, clergy, and church leaders to live in keeping with traditional biblical teaching.
- To be protected from being part of a church whose teaching, liturgy or pastoral care undermines their consciences.
- To be clear what their local Church of England church teaches and seeks to live out when it comes to sexuality, identity and relationships.

#### **APPOINTMENT PROCESSES will need ...**

Clergy

- All patrons (ie inc non-evangelical patrons) to be supportive of parishes wishing to appoint a person with orthodox views
- Dioceses/ bishops allowing parishes to request/appoint orthodox clergy

Parish officers (eg wardens)

- Parishes allowed to specify that their officers (Wardens and PCC) must be orthodox

Church staff/volunteers, including youth workers and volunteers on summer camps run by C of E organisations

- Parishes to be able to specify under GOR, as appropriate under the Equalities Act, that any employees hold to an orthodox position
- Parishes to be able to specify under GOR, as appropriate under the Equalities Act, that volunteers for specific positions (eg small group leaders, organist etc) hold to an orthodox position

#### Senior leaders

- For the appointment of senior leaders who publicly uphold the biblical doctrine of marriage/sexuality

#### Patrons (of parishes)

- Ability to restrict appointments to those whose theological conviction's align with those of the Trust they discharge.
- Where there are non-evangelical patrons they must not be able to 'force' on a parish a non-orthodox candidate

#### **CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOLS / HEADTEACHERS will need ...**

- Employment security for staff who hold to and teach a biblical position on sex and marriage

#### **CHURCH PLANTERS AND BMO'S will need ...**

- Oversight from orthodox bishops
- Freedom to be able to specify under GOR, as appropriate under the Equalities Act, that any employees hold to an orthodox position

#### **ORTHODOX BISHOPS will need ...**

- To be able to rely on their licenced clergy to support them in the event of criticism of their publicly orthodox ministry

#### **THEOLOGICAL COLLEGES AND COURSES will need ...**

- To be able to maintain/advertise/recruit students who hold an orthodox position and also staff, specifying under GOR, as appropriate under the Equalities Act, that any employees hold to an orthodox position
- Funding guarantees
- That TElS connected with universities are viewed as Church of England even if they dissent from the House of Bishops' proposals or a part of a structural settlement.

#### **PATRONS WILL NEED...**

The freedom to restrict the right of presentation to candidates whose theological convictions align with those of the Trust they discharge.

#### **ANGLICAN MISSION AGENCIES WILL NEED...**

The ability to order their affairs and ministries in keeping with an orthodox position, with the support of the Church of England and without any fear of reprimand or reprisal.

*Version 10 March 2023*

(1) <sup>1</sup>We recognise that many people claim terminology for their own use. For clarity throughout this document whenever the terms 'orthodox' and 'liberal' are used, they refer to those who wish to *conserve* the churches historic and apostolic teaching in the former instance and to change advocates who wish to *change* that teaching in the latter instance.