

LLF: FROM LEICESTER TO YORK

A Statement from Eleven Members of the LLF Working Groups, 27/06/2024

In anticipation of the General Synod meeting in York¹ and following the publication of General Synod Paper GS 2358², we wish to comment publicly on the journey LLF has taken from the Leicester conversations³ to the publication of GS 2358.⁴

As 'conservative' members of the LLF Working Groups, we sought to participate fully in the Leicester conversations with good faith. It was a privilege to be part of the weekend in Leicester, where our work involved honest sharing and deep listening, all of which was held within a context of prayer and of mutual respect for one another's sincerely held perspectives. Moreover, we were genuinely moved, both by what we heard from others, and the way in which our perspectives were listened to and valued. We remain grateful to all those who participated in the Leicester conversations and to the staff who graciously facilitated the process.

Unfortunately, and for reasons beyond our control, we feel that what is now before General Synod in GS 2358 does not represent the collaborative work undertaken – across the spectrum of our theological convictions - by the working groups during the Leicester conversations.

While we acknowledge that the fruit of our labours were always subject to further consideration by other key stakeholders, we are saddened that our collective work, recognising and respecting the depth of feelings heard, has undergone such significant revision that what is presented in GS2358 is no longer recognisable as what was agreed in Leicester. It is with deep regret that as things currently stand, we feel unable to support the motion to be debated at General Synod in York.⁵

Our experience from the Leicester conversations demonstrates the need to take time to work together in honest discussion, to form a deeper understanding of - and respect for - one another's authentically held positions, and to hold one another in prayer. We wonder whether other key stakeholders have had the opportunity to consider all the Leicester proposals, and in a similar environment to that in which they were forged?

We are deeply disappointed at the journey LLF has taken from Leicester to York. Depending upon the outcome at York, if this can be redeemed, we remain willing to work with the Bishop of Leicester, his team, and our colleagues, to seek an honest, even-handed compromise, to discerning the art of the possible, which genuinely looks to find a way forward for all of us to stay together as one church with as much unity as is possible.

Neill Burgess, Sean Doherty, John Dunnett, Adam Gaunt, Sally Gaze, Lis Goddard, Nick Land, Tom Middleton, Mark Miller, Mike Tufnell, Rosemary Wilson

¹ Friday 5th July 2024 to Tuesday 9th July 2024

² <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/gs-2358-living-in-love-and-faith.pdf>

³ Friday 10th May 2024 to Sunday 12th May 2024

⁴ Thursday 20th June 2024

⁵ GS 2358 Page 17