

9 Motions for General Synod 2020

Text of Motion:

In the event that a General Synod is called in 2020, Synod requests that the following 9 motions be promoted to the next session of the General Session at the request of the Synod of the Diocese of Sydney.

A. Apology

General Synod apologises to, and seeks forgiveness from, people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex (LGBTI), whom we have hurt by words or behaviour that have not displayed the love of God. We are deeply sorry for any harm we have done, and repent of such ungodly behaviour.

B. Safe Churches

General Synod—

1. Deplores and condemns any behaviour that is disrespectful, hurtful, intentionally insensitive, bullying or abusive, and recognises and rejoices in the image of God as reflected in every human being, regardless of race, social circumstances, creed or sexual identity.
2. Commits itself to fostering churches and fellowships where compassion and grace abound and where the love of God is expressed to all, so that our churches and ministries are welcoming, safe, respectful and supportive of all people, including those who identify as LGBTI.

C. Respectful Debate

General Synod—

1. Recognises that in our churches and in our midst there are same-sex attracted couples who wish to marry with the blessing of the church, and same-sex attracted Christians who as part of their commitment to Christ have chosen a celibate life.
2. Recognises that in our churches and in our midst there those who believe that to withhold the blessing and solemnization of the marriages of same-sex couples is a denial of the gospel (which entails inclusion), and there are those who believe that to change our doctrine of marriage to allow this would be a denial of the gospel (which entails repentance).
3. Conscious of the potential for division and dissension, prays for, and commits ourselves to, a spirit of humility and respect in our discussions and debate, willing to have our own views challenged by the teaching of Scripture. We will seek to respect difference and to understand the struggles that others endure as we walk together in humble, faithful discipleship in obedience to the word of God.

D. Affirming Singleness

General Synod—

1. Notes that the standard of behaviour for clergy and church workers established by *Faithfulness in Service* (our national code of conduct) is “You are to be chaste and not engage in sex outside of marriage and not engage in disgraceful conduct of a sexual nature” (FIS 7.4).
2. Affirms that singleness is, like marriage, an honourable state for God’s people, in which the fullness of God’s blessings may be enjoyed. Singleness is highly commended in Scripture (1 Cor 7:8, 32-38; Matt 19:10-12).
3. Gives thanks to God for those in our churches who experience same-sex attraction, together with other single brothers and sisters, who model to us trust in the goodness of God and the trustworthiness of God’s word, by pursuing chaste lives of joyful obedience in a culture that relentlessly promotes sexual fulfilment as essential to happiness in life.

E. The Doctrine of Marriage of our Church

General Synod—

1. Continues to affirm that the doctrine of our Church is that marriage is the voluntary union of one man and one woman arising from mutual promises of lifelong faithfulness. (cf. GS 48/17).
2. Continues to affirm that the doctrine of our church is based on the teaching of Christ that, in marriage, “a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh” (Matt 19:6).
3. Continues to affirm that any action that would allow clergy to solemnise a marriage between a same-sex couple would be contrary to the doctrine of our Church and the teaching of Christ. (cf. GS 51/17).

F. Support for Those Who Have Had to Leave their Churches

General Synod—

1. Notes that the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia (ACANZP) has amended its Canons to allow bishops to authorise clergy to bless same-sex unions in their dioceses.
2. Notes that this step is contrary to Resolution I.10 of the 1998 Lambeth Conference and is not in accordance with the teaching of Christ in Matthew 19:1-12.
3. Notes that some relationships within ACANZP and throughout the worldwide Anglican Communion, including Australia, have been impaired in the wake of this change, and prays that such relationships will be healed.
4. Expresses our support for all Anglicans in Aotearoa, NZ and Polynesia, including those who have left the ACANZP, those who feel the need to leave, and those who remain. We commit ourselves to pray for all who continue to suffer as a result of this decision.
5. Notes the Australian Bishops’ recognition in March 2018 of the complexity of these issues and affirms the need for humility and graciousness in discerning the way forward. Assures all Anglicans in Aotearoa, NZ and Polynesia of our prayers and our desire to continue dialogue.

G. Blessing Civil Same-sex Marriages

General Synod—

1. Notes that Resolution I.10 of the 1998 Lambeth Conference advised that it “cannot advise the legitimising or blessing of same sex unions”.
2. Notes that the Diocesan Synod of Wangaratta has approved a regulation pursuant to section 5(2) of the *Canon Concerning Services 1992* that purports to authorise a service that could be used to bless a civil same-sex marriage.
3. Notes that the blessing of same-sex marriages in Anglican jurisdictions overseas was a key catalyst for the “tear in the fabric of the Anglican Communion” that has widened over the past two decades, and is likely to have the same dire and potentially irreversible consequences for the Anglican Church of Australia.
4. Continues to affirm GS Resolution 62/04, that “this General Synod does not condone the liturgical blessing of same sex relationships”.

5. Declares that a blessing of a civil same-sex marriage is both inconsistent with the doctrine of Christ and the teaching of Scripture and also a departure from the principles of doctrine established by the Order for the Solemnisation of Holy Matrimony in the *BCP*.
6. Declares that the blessing or other affirmation of a same-sex marriage is contrary to Scripture's teaching about human sexuality which calls for faithfulness in marriage between a man and woman and chastity in singleness in all other circumstances.

H. Entering into a Same-sex Marriage

General Synod—

1. Notes that Resolution I.10 of the 1998 Lambeth Conference advised that it “cannot advise ... ordaining those involved in same gender unions”.
2. Recalls GS Resolution 63/04, that "this General Synod does not condone the ordination of people in open committed same sex relationships".
3. Declares that it is contrary to the doctrine of our Church (that marriage is between a man and woman) for a member of the clergy to enter into a same-sex marriage.
4. Respectfully asks all diocesan bishops to advise their clergy that entering into a same-sex marriage may render them liable before the Diocesan Tribunal to a charge of unchastity and/or sexual misconduct under section 54(2A) of the Constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia.

I. Call for Repentance

General Synod—

1. Heeds the command of our Lord to repent and believe the gospel.
2. Fervently prays

Most gracious Father,
we pray for your holy catholic Church:
fill it with all truth
and in all truth with all peace;
where it is corrupt, purge it;
where it is in error, direct it;
where anything is amiss, reform it;
where it is right, strengthen and confirm it;
where it is in want, furnish it;
where it is divided, heal it
and unite it in your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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3. Calls on those who have departed from the teaching of Christ and the doctrine of this Church to repent and bring their teaching and practice into conformity with sound doctrine.