

The Evangelical Fellowship of the Church in Wales  
A Statement following the discussion at Governing Body  
on "Formal Measures" for Same-Sex Couples

EFCW recognises that churches have often failed in their pastoral care of people with same-sex attraction. We recognise that the way we have spoken about this issue has at times been unloving and judgemental, and that this has caused personal hurt and left people feeling unable to be honest about their sexuality. We repent of these failures, and commit to doing all we can to ensure our churches are fully welcoming and inclusive of all. We welcome the Bishops' wish to offer pastoral support and care for all same-sex attracted people and commit to doing so with Christ-like love.

However, we believe that God's revelation to us regarding the nature of marriage and the proper place of sex is beyond doubt, and that this must be what guides our teaching and practice as an apostolic church.

Throughout the whole of Scripture, beginning with God's creation of humanity in Genesis 1 & 2, and continuing until the beautiful picture of the marriage of the Lamb to his bride the church at the end of Revelation, the following things are consistently affirmed:

- That marriage is between a man and a woman.
- That the appropriate place for sexual activity is within marriage.
- That sexual activity outside of marriage is outside of God's will and therefore sinful.

Jesus explicitly affirms this understanding of marriage in Matthew 19:4-6. The authority of Scripture, its consistency and utter clarity are what make this matter so important.

We therefore do not believe that it can possibly be right for the church to bless what God has clearly said he does not bless, nor to say that what God has said is sin is not sin.

We are all sinners who fall far short of the glory of God, and who stand before him only by his grace through our faith in Christ. This faith challenges all individuals and all cultures in different ways, and Christians are called to live counter-cultural lives, being in the world but not of the world. The difference between the church's teaching on sexuality and the views of modern Western society is just one example of this.

We stand with the large majority of the Anglican communion and the large majority of the world-wide church in affirming that which the church has always believed and practised regarding marriage and sex. We urge our Bishops not to encourage the Church in Wales to take steps that would lead to impaired communion with our Anglican brothers and sisters in the majority world.

We do not believe that it is “pastorally unsustainable” to teach that which our good and loving Creator says is the right way for his creatures to live: the way Christians have lived for almost 2000 years across a world-wide diversity of cultures.

We affirm Living Out, True Freedom Trust, and other organisations providing support for same-sex attracted Christians, showing the plausibility of living according to the biblical teaching on marriage and sexuality, and challenging churches to be families where all may find deep, loving, supportive and fulfilling relationships.

We commit to doing all that we can in our teaching, personal actions and church communities to ensure that the two gifts of marriage and singleness are equally affirmed and supported as good ways of life in which all people can flourish as the fully authentic selves God has created them to be.

The Executive Committee of the Evangelical Fellowship of the Church in Wales, 26<sup>th</sup> September 2018