



## THE PROVINCE OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN SOUTH EAST ASIA

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18<sup>th</sup> February 2023

### **PASTORAL LETTER**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

The General Synod of the Church of England recently passed a motion permitting their priests to conduct blessings for same-sex civil unions. Understandably, many members of our Province are troubled by this development and wish to seek clarification regarding its implications for us.

We are deeply disappointed by the Church of England's decision and unequivocally state that the blessing of same-sex unions has no biblical ground whatsoever, since Scripture teaches unambiguously that marriage is between one man and one woman. The Church of England has said that their doctrine of marriage remains unchanged. Be that as it may, in the Anglican understanding the words used in a church service, whether they are part of the liturgy or are prayers for persons, must be faithful to Scripture. The provision of a form of words for such blessings violates this key theological principle.

Although we cannot condone the decision made by the Church of England, we affirm that God loves persons of all sexual orientations, and we resolve to do likewise. We cannot approve of relationship choices that Scripture clearly forbids, but we will care for and journey with such persons, praying that the Lord will enable them to live in obedience to His Word.

Since Anglican provinces are autonomous and do not come under the authority of the Church of England, the latter's decision will not change our position and practice. As a Province, we will remain faithful to the teaching of Scripture. We also reaffirm our commitment to the Anglican Formularies—the Thirty-nine Articles, the Ordinal, the Book of Common Prayer, and the Books of Homilies—while noting that they do not grant any concession for the blessing of same-sex unions.

Despite our grave reservations regarding the Church of England's decision, we believe that the unity of the Anglican communion should not be lightly abandoned. Hence, we will remain in communion with the Church of England while praying fervently for her and speaking boldly for God's truth. May His purpose prevail!

With every blessing in Christ,

**The Most Reverend Datuk Melter Jiki Tais**

*(Primate of the Anglican Church in South East Asia, Bishop of Sabah)*

**The Right Reverend Datuk Danald Jute**

*(Bishop of Kuching)*

**The Right Reverend Dr Titus Chung Khiam Boon**

*(Bishop of Singapore)*

**The Right Reverend Dr Steven Abbarow**

*(Bishop of West Malaysia)*

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