

Feeding Back to Living in Love and Faith – NB deadline is 30th April 2022

The Living in Love and Faith (LLF) process has been providing an opportunity for the whole church to listen and learn together about issues relating to identity, sexuality, marriage and relationships since the end of 2020. Formal feedback to The Next Steps Group closes at the end of April. The findings of this “Listening to the Whole Church” phase will be published in September alongside “The Gift of the Church”. The bishops will then enter a period of discernment in the light of those two publications and the LLF book and will then bring proposals to the February 2023 General Synod.

Why should I feedback?

CEEC believes that it is essential that evangelicals contribute to this feedback to ensure that the reflections/voices that are heard and that will shape the bishops’ discernment are properly representative and not weighted towards other perspectives because evangelicals have not responded.

How can I feedback?

There are currently two main channels of feeding back which can be accessed FROM THE LLF HUB :

- a questionnaire (see *italicised* section below**) focussed on engagement with the course
- and creative responses which can take various forms (eg artwork, writing, music, Ros Clarke of Church Society has some ideas here).

If you have engaged with resources OTHER THAN THE COURSE there are opportunities to feedback on those in the questionnaire at Q22 or you could submit your own separate feedback to llf@churchofengland.org

If in your feedback you can demonstrate engaging with others, especially with those who hold different views to you (eg a reading group of the book, discussion of story films, home group Bible studies on sexuality, a Chapter meeting), then that will show you have taken seriously the need to listen and learn together.

The feedback questionnaire**

As well as seeking information about you and your context, the questionnaire (which is best completed online if possible but can be reviewed in full as a Word or PDF document) is predominantly asking you to evaluate the course both in general (Q4-7, 13-18) and in relation to specific sessions (Q8-12). This is mostly done by rating different aspects of it on a scale. There are also a number of free-form questions allowing you to write a fuller response. These are in relation to overall course experience (Q14), the difference it has made to you (Q15), and your hopes for the difference it will make to the local church (Q17) and the national church (Q18). There is also a question allowing you to add any other comments (Q22).

What should I feedback?

It is important to note that feedback is being asked for on *engagement with the LLF resources*. You are not simply being asked to state your views or desired outcomes on some areas relating to LLF’s broad subject matter although clearly doing so can and should also be part of the feedback process.

What follows is purposefully not detailed but focusses on some principles that may enable you to provide good feedback within the process.

Some basic principles – which would be helpful to follow whether feeding back on the course or on other materials

- **Be honest** – about what you have done, about your assessment and basis for it, about the difficulties and challenges, about your convictions, about your hopes and expectations.
- **Be theological** – provide biblical and theological rationales for your views and assessments.
- **Be focussed** – what are the key points you want to be noticed by those collating the responses?
- **Be constructively critical** – note both what has been positive and offer critique. In criticisms it may be helpful to distinguish between (a) criticism of where LLF fails in what it is trying to do and (b) criticism of what it was trying to do eg you may think (i) it fails to set out different viewpoints well and/or (ii) that it was wrong for it to set out different viewpoints without usually passing judgment on them.
- **Be winsome** – think how what you write will be read by others especially those who view things differently and those who are unsure about what they think or what should be done.
- **Be attentive to the breadth of issues** – there is a tendency to focus on a few contentious subjects (eg should we bless or marry same-sex couples) but LLF covers much more than this. The discernment process is similarly wide-ranging and the bishops are likely to be addressing these specific questions within the bigger picture of a Christian vision of identity, sexuality, marriage and relationships.
- **Be consistent with the Pastoral Principles** – check yourself as to where you may be demonstrating ignorance, prejudice, hypocrisy or fear, failing to speak into silence, or not paying attention to power.
- **Be clear about how you view our disagreements and their implications for our life together** –using the three categories of disagreement and the three ways churches might handle them that are presented in the final session of the LLF course (and in the book) may be helpful.
- **Be hopeful and practical** - share any wisdom or insights from your own context that may help the bishops and the wider church as they seek to discern the way forward and offer something to the church less than a year from now.

Questions that might inform your response :

- **Affections** – how has your heart been changed?
- **Behaviour** – how will the way in which you act be different?
- **Convictions** – how has *what* you believe and/or *how* you believe it developed?
- **Difference and Disagreement** – how has your approach to those you disagree with and/or how has your response to those who are different from you been altered?
- **Evangel** – how have you understood the gospel better and/or deepened your understanding of what it means to share the good news with people in relation to identity, sexuality, marriage and relationships, especially those who identify as LGBT+, both Christian and non-Christian?
- **Future of church** – how has your vision of the future of the church been modified?

This 'paper' is also available for download on the CEEC website (www.ceec.info) – please go to the Resources/Living in Love and Faith page.