



TOWARD REVIVING, REFORMING, AND REORDERING THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION: Fourteen Theses for Global Anglicans

Text and Commentary by the Rev. Dr. Stephen Noll

I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the LORD!” Our feet have been standing within your gates, O Jerusalem! Jerusalem, built as a city that is bound firmly together, to which the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, as was decreed for Israel, to give thanks to the name of the LORD. (Psalm 122:1-4)

Prefatory Note

I originally addressed the “Fourteen Theses” to the Gafcon Primates as they prepared for the upcoming Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON IV) in Kigali, Rwanda on 17-21 April, 2023. As I expounded on the original theses, I amended them somewhat to include a parallel and overlapping group of Global Anglicans represented by the Global South Fellowship (formally the Global South Fellowship of Anglican Churches or [GFSA](#)). I have been involved with both these groups over the years and believe they have a joint destiny in reviving, reforming and reordering the Anglican Communion. *SN*

THE CRISIS OF CONTEMPORARY ANGLICANISM

Thesis 1: This Present Darkness

The world of the 21st century is dominated by principalities and powers opposed to God and the biblical faith. In much of the non-Western world, enmity and persecution have come from militant religions and totalitarian regimes. In the West, postmodern ideologues have sought to overturn the biblical worldview of God as the Creator and Lord of life and death and of sexuality and marriage. In this quest, they have enjoyed apparent success (but cf. Psalm 2). Many Anglican churches and their leaders in North America and the UK have succumbed to this false ideology and are promoting its godless agenda.

Thesis 2: Autonomy and Authority

While the Anglican Communion inherited much of its theological DNA from the classic Reformation formularies, its governing structure was determined by the colonial requirements of the Established Church of England, where ultimate authority is vested in the state. Hence from its inception, the Communion came to be defined as a loose association of autonomous “provinces,” with the Lambeth “Conference” of bishops having no real authority over member churches in matters of doctrine and discipline.

Thesis 3: The Failure of Communion Governance

Over the past century, the Anglican Communion has grown exponentially in numbers in the Global South while declining in the West. Although the “Instruments of Unity” appear on paper to give representation to the newer churches, in practice the Communion bureaucracy in England – the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Communion Office, and financial backers in New York and London – run the show.

Thesis 4: Lambeth 1998

The 1998 Lambeth Conference provided the first real test of the capability of Communion structures to deal with heretical teaching and practice. In [Resolution I.10 on Human Sexuality](#), an overwhelming majority of bishops stated that homosexual practices were contrary to Scripture and “could not be advised.” After twenty-five years of controversy and many Communion meetings, Western churches continue to spurn this Resolution and have now formalized ordination and marriage of self-styled LGBT persons. These churches and bishops remain prominent members in the Communion in good standing.

Thesis 5: The Failure of Church Discipline

The Communion bureaucracy has been complicit in this failure of discipline. In fact, these same practices are being condoned in the Church of England, where the Government has legalized same-sex marriage and enforced LGBT rights and promoted them across the Communion. Within a few years, the CofE will formalize these practices, and the Communion bureaucracy will insist that other Anglicans accept these practices in terms of “good disagreement,” along the lines of the “Living in Love and Faith” exercise.

THE GAFCON RESPONSE

Thesis 6: The Road to GAFCON

The convening of the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) in Jerusalem in 2008 was the most significant event in recent Anglican history. The bold leadership of Archbishop Peter Akinola and seven other Global South Primates upset the assumed dominance by the Communion establishment and set a precedent for the future of the Communion.

Thesis 7: The Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans

The 2008 [Jerusalem Statement](#) on the Global Anglican Future provides an authoritative basis for a new Communion of orthodox Anglicans. The Statement contains three elements: *a prophetic indictment* of the existing Communion, *a confession of Anglican faith* (the Jerusalem Declaration), and *a new governing structure* (a Primates Council).

Thesis 8: The Prophetic Indictment

The Jerusalem Statement from GAFCON 2008 opens with a prophetic indictment which identifies the ideology of the Western churches as “*a different ‘gospel’ (cf. Galatians 1:6-8) which is contrary to the apostolic gospel.*” Such rank heresy, it continues, has obliged orthodox churches to break communion with these churches. Finally, it faults the Communion “Instruments” for failing to take action and discipline those churches ten years after Lambeth 1998.

Thesis 9: The Declaration of Faith

The Statement includes the [Jerusalem Declaration](#), which has been widely hailed as an excellent confession of Anglican faith and has been used as the basis for subsequent Conferences. Its *first seven clauses* recall historic Anglican essentials: the Gospel and Lordship of Christ, the inspiration and authority of the Bible, and in accordance with Scripture, the Creeds, the Articles, the Prayer Book, and the Ordinal. The *second seven clauses* address contemporary issues:

sexuality and marriage; the Great Commission mandate; stewardship and social justice; and unity in diversity of the flock, while rejecting false shepherds.

Thesis 10: The Primates Council

The Jerusalem Conference established a Primates Council independent of the Lambeth “Instruments” and authorized it to recognize new confessing Anglican jurisdictions. Subsequently, the Gafcon Primates Council has recognized the Anglican Church in North America, the Anglican Church in Brazil, and a number of “Branches” inside existing unfaithful Anglican provinces.

THE NEXT STEP: FORMATION OF A NEW COMMUNION OF ANGLICAN CHURCHES

Thesis 11: Gafcon and the Global South Fellowship: Parallel Lanes Toward a New Communion

In its “[Letter to the Churches](#)“ from Jerusalem in 2018, the Gafcon Assembly urged the Archbishop of Canterbury to invite bishops from the Gafcon churches in North America and Brazil and to disinvite those bishops who had rejected and violated the teaching of Lambeth Resolution I.10, with a warning that otherwise Gafcon bishops would once again not attend the next Lambeth Conference. Meanwhile, the Global South Fellowship developed a “[covenantal structure](#)“ for an emerging communion of churches.

Thesis 12: After Lambeth 2022

Archbishop Welby dismissed Gafcon as a mere pressure group, ignored its plea, and has sought to divide and conquer its members. Three Provinces and their Primates (Nigeria, Uganda, and Rwanda), representing over 30 million Anglicans, chose not to attend the Lambeth Conference in 2020 and explained their determination not to associate with heretics. Another group of Primates and bishops, representing nearly 10 million Anglicans of the Global South Fellowship, attended Lambeth, appealed to the Conference to uphold Lambeth I.10 and refused Communion with those who violated it. As ever, Canterbury and the Conference ignored their appeal.

Thesis 13: A New Communion of Churches

Plans should be laid at the 2023 Assembly in Kigali – in conjunction with the Global South Fellowship – authorizing a working group to develop and present a final proposal for a revived, reformed, and reordered Communion to the Jerusalem 2028 Assembly. This proposed new Communion – the “Jerusalem Communion of Global Anglicans” or the “Global Anglican Communion” – will fulfil Gafcon’s original vision to be an instrument of revival of historic

Anglican faith and mission based on the confession of the Jerusalem Declaration. The final proposal will develop further covenantal structures of governance and mutual accountability appropriate to a communion of churches.

Thesis 14: What Is God Saying to Global Anglicans?

“Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?” (Isaiah 43:19). The first Global Anglican Future Conference proclaimed that it was “not just a moment in time but a movement in the Spirit.” Fifteen years later, Global Anglicans are being called to assume leadership of a revived, reformed, and reordered Anglican Communion worldwide.

THE CRISIS OF CONTEMPORARY ANGLICANISM

THESIS 1: THIS PRESENT DARKNESS

The world of the 21st century is dominated by principalities and powers opposed to God and the biblical faith. In much of the non-Western world, enmity and persecution has come from militant religions and totalitarian regimes. In the West, postmodern ideologues have sought to overturn the biblical worldview of God as the Creator and Lord of life and death and of sexuality and marriage as His blessing for mankind and the sign of His love for the Church. In this quest, they have enjoyed apparent success (but cf. Psalm 2). Many Anglican churches and their leaders in North America and the UK have succumbed to this false ideology and are promoting its agenda.

COMMENT

We live in apocalyptic times. Here is a sample of headlines over the 2022 Advent and Christmas season:

- “Over 40 Christians Killed in Nigeria on Christmas Week”
- “Why Do Politicians Shy Away from the M-Word [“Marriage”]?”
- “Abortion is the Leading Cause of Death Worldwide for the Fourth Year in a Row”
- “Christian Population of England and Wales Drops Below 50%”
- “When Thinking a Prayer Becomes a Crime”
- “Church of England’s First ‘Gender-Queer’ Priest Shares Hope of ‘Normalizing’ It for Children”
- “The Death of Christianity in Bethlehem”
- “10,000+ Canadian Euthanasia Killings in 2021”

To say that we live in such a time is not to say that the Second Coming is at hand. Jesus warned us about such pre-emptive prophecy: “For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are but the beginning of the birth pains” (Matthew 24:7-8). Yet Jesus Himself and the apostolic writers do indeed interpret the signs of their time and forecast a sudden, imminent Return of the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

The most significant geo-political tectonic shift of the last half-millennium has been the passing away of “Christendom,” that concurrence of church and state that began with the Emperor Constantine and continued in various forms through the Western and Eastern Roman Empires and their offspring in Europe and the Middle East. While the Protestant Reformation marked a

division within the Western Church, the magisterial Protestant churches retained, formally or informally, the tie between “prince and priest and thrall [subjects].” Even the multi-denominational United States was considered by most of its leaders and people a Christian nation well into the 20th century, as was also the case with other nations colonized from Europe.

Today the situation of world Christianity is far different. Although the Christian Church is still large in aggregate numbers, it is no longer dominant politically in its historic territories. Indeed Christianity is now the most persecuted religion worldwide, as opposing “empires” have arisen – some old, some new, some outside, some inside the historic bounds of Christendom. Each of these empires is inspired by a worldview hostile to the Bible and the Christian Gospel.

Islam is an ancient enemy of the Church, claiming that Allah is God who has no son and that Mohammed is his Prophet. The term “Islam” means submission to Allah and Islamic law, and while many Muslims have coexisted with Christians in mixed regimes, this is not the case in Islamic states, and in recent years radical Islam has led to increasing discrimination and acts of terrorism, as in Nigeria. Violence against Christians has also been increasing in India, due to the rise of Hindu nationalism. Totalitarian regimes in North Korea and China, with their Dear Leader cult, also forbid or suppress Christian freedom of worship and assembly and persecute any who do not cooperate.

It is in the “developed” West itself, the cradle of Christendom, that the most remarkable attack on Christianity has taken place where, within a generation, to be a Christian has become synonymous with being a hate-monger, a racist, or a “deplorable.” The ground for this cultural shift was prepared by the secularization of the universities, media, and government and corporate bureaucracies, abetted by the leadership of many churches, where questioning the veracity of the Bible was taught in prestigious divinity faculties and preached from prominent pulpits. The present division between churches in the West and South is truly “ecumenical,” with liberal Protestants and Roman Catholics lining up with secularists and their counterparts in the Global South threatening to go their separate way.

The attack in the West has been focused on overturning Christian teaching on human nature – the very nature the Son of God assumed to save – as found in these three texts that frame the biblical worldview:

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”
(Genesis 1:27-28 ESV)

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. (Genesis 2:7 KJV)

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh. (Genesis 2:24 NIV)

Based on these scriptural pillars, the Church has consistently opposed abortion and euthanasia, because the Lord gives the breath of life to the soul and the Lord takes it away. The Church recognizes and honours two and only two sexes, male and female, who together are made in God's image. The Church, following the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ, upholds lifelong monogamous marriage, along with dedicated singleness, as God's norm and blessing (Matthew 19:3-12).

Equally fundamental, the Church confesses one God the Father, Creator of heaven and earth. One of the curse words in today's Western lexicon is "patriarchy," from which all evils are said to flow. And yet it is the Word Himself who reveals the unseen Father, it is Jesus who teaches His disciples to hallow the Name of "Our Father" (John 1:18; Matthew 6:9). I am convinced that the attack on patriarchy is not merely directed against bad human fathers – who have abounded from time immemorial – but against God the Father Himself, from whom, St. Paul says, "every family in heaven and on earth is named" (Ephesians 3:14-15).

We Christians should not be surprised that these attacks have come. Since Eden, humans have rebelled against their Maker, and since Babel, "the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed" (Psalm 2:2). The prophet Daniel foresaw history as a succession of brutal empires, culminating in an unspeakable Beast – the Antichrist – who seemed indomitable, defiling God's Temple. Then suddenly in Daniel's vision, God comes in judgement and the anointed Son of Man is presented before Him, "and to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away" (Daniel 7:12-14). The Beast of Empire with his minions may survive for a time, but his end is sure, in the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20).

We Christians, the Church, founded on the apostles and prophets, bear witness that this judgement in history has already occurred once for all at the Cross on Calvary, through Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Second Adam, whom God "raised from the dead and seated at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come" (Ephesians 1:20-21).

We Christians know we are in the midst of a spiritual battle. So Paul concludes his Letter to the Ephesians by encouraging and exhorting the Church:

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. (Ephesians 6:11-13)

Westerners have been accustomed to reading the daily news as just “one damned fact after another,” to quote a former U.S. Attorney General. But from the prophetic perspective of Scripture the mountains are full of angelic horses and chariots of fire (2 Kings 6:17). While the 20th century saw a number of secular prophets of our apocalyptic age such as George Orwell, Aldous Huxley, and Philip Rieff, it was the Christian apologist C.S. Lewis who best told the “tall story about devilry” which occurs when academic “research” is untethered from the tradition of Athens and Jerusalem (see the recent book by Melvin Tinker, [*That Hideous Strength: How the West Was Lost*](#)).

Lewis believed – and I believe – “this present darkness” in the West is demonic. Clearly it is unbiblical and hostile to Christianity, but beyond that it is characterized by a frantic zeal that goes against all common sense and past understanding of truth, goodness and beauty. In what kind of world do mothers boast about how many children they have aborted, young women and men offer up their genitals to the surgeon’s knife or their minds to drug kingpins, and poor, troubled, and elderly souls sink into loneliness and despair, finished off by state-sponsored suicide? So many “little ones” in our day are swimming in the polluted stream of social media.

How else can we comprehend the headlines noted above? How else can we explain the Gadarene rush of Western elites into this abyss? One thing I have noticed over these thirty years of conflict in the church is that while “conservatives” often waver and seek peace and compromise, the radicals never turn back but push on to the next frontier of god-forsakenness. This is why a revived, reformed, and reordered Communion will be called to preach the Gospel, teach the basics of whatever is true, honorable and lovely, and to heal the sick in body and soul (Matthew 10:7-8; Philippians 4:8).

We live in apocalyptic times. The late Benedict XVI wrote this: **“As one sees the power of Antichrist spreading, one can only pray that the Lord will give us mighty shepherds to defend His Church against the power of evil in this hour of need.”**

Anglicans, take note and stand firm together against the evil day.

THESIS 2: AUTONOMY AND AUTHORITY

While the Anglican Communion inherited much of its theological DNA from the classic Reformation formularies, its governing structure was determined by the colonial requirements of the Established Church of England, where ultimate authority is vested in the state. Hence from its inception, the Communion came to be defined as a loose association of autonomous “provinces,” with the Lambeth “Conference” of bishops having no real authority over member churches in matters of doctrine and discipline.

COMMENT

“How lonely sits the city that was full of people! How like a widow has she become, she who was great among the nations! She who was a princess among the provinces has become a slave.” (Lamentations 1:1)

I begin this piece as the news comes out from the bishops of the Church of England “Living in Love and Faith” report (20 January 2023). Although I and others saw this defilement of God’s holy estate of matrimony coming inevitably, still, as a Christian and an Anglican, I mourn for this great church and the communion of churches she fostered.

Almost fifteen years ago, shortly after GAFCON 2008, I hosted a meeting of the Gafcon Theological Resource Group in Uganda. In my opening remarks, I warned that the Church of England was heading down the same road as the American Episcopal Church. Here are the milestones on that road:

- In 1979, the General Convention stated: “we reaffirm the traditional teaching of the Church on marriage, marital fidelity, and sexual chastity as the standard of Christian sexual morality.” The House of Bishops reaffirmed this position in 1990, noting that “not all members of the church agree with this position.”
- In 1991, following the ordination of an openly gay man by Bishop Walter Righter, the House of Bishops initiated a study process called “Continuing the Dialogue,” which undermined the traditional teaching, even as further rogue ordinations continued. In 1996, conservative bishops sought to discipline Bishop Righter for violating his ordination vows and church canons, but the church court acquitted him. There were no further trials.
- In 2003, after most of the American bishops had denounced Lambeth Resolution I.10, the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont elected V. Gene Robinson, an openly practicing homosexual, as bishop, the General Convention approved his election, and he was consecrated by the Presiding Bishop. This act led to a series of fruitless meetings of the “Instruments” of the Anglican Communion, which in turn led to GAFCON 2008 and the formation of the Anglican Church in North America.
- In 2012, the Episcopal Church approved same-sex “blessing” rites and added “gender identity” to the non-discrimination requirement for clergy and lay leaders.

- In 2015, when the U.S. Supreme Court approved same-sex marriage, the Episcopal Church immediately approved rites for same-sex marriage. So from 2015, it became illegal for bishops or vestries to oppose legally married or LGBT candidates for any office in the Church.
- In 2020, when Bishop William Love challenged this ruling in his diocese, he was overruled and soon thereafter left the Episcopal Church.

When I concluded my remarks about such a trajectory, the representatives from the Church of England vehemently objected to my warning and said that the Church of England would never go down that road. Would they had been right!

Now that which I and others feared has happened. The Church of England is proposing to bless in God's name a practice that is consistently and explicitly condemned in the Old and New Testaments, which is contrary to nature and to the universal tradition of the church, which overturns the teaching of the Prayer Book ("avoidance of fornication") and the Ordinal ("drive away from the Church all erroneous and strange doctrines"), and which spits in the face of Lambeth Resolution I.10 and those members of the global Anglican family that hold it as true and authoritative. By adopting "Living in Love and Faith," the Church of England has broken faith with the Communion and is making its bed with the Episcopal Church, and before long it will erect the final milestones on the road to perdition.

At the global level, the current Archbishop of Canterbury protests that he has no authority to interfere in the affairs of the "autonomous" provinces of the Anglican Communion and, conversely, that these provinces have no authority to interfere in the autonomy of the Church of England. This being the case, he claims, the only option facing those who oppose the new Anglican way is to "walk together" in "good disagreement."

While it is true that the Communion was founded on an imperfect basis, with Lambeth not being a true council and Canterbury having no "legal" power of enforcement, nevertheless it got along reasonably well for more than a century until the rise of radical theologies in the 1960s and the moral practices in the West that accompanied them. At Lambeth 1998, these divergences came to a head, with the large orthodox majority laying down a moral norm regarding sexuality and marriage.

Is there any way that the Archbishops of Canterbury could have averted the division that followed on from 1998? I think they could have. Although the office of Archbishop of Canterbury has been accorded a bully pulpit as "first among equals" and "focus of unity," along with the purported authority to recognize who is "in communion" and who is not, each occupant of that office has failed to exercise this authority decisively. Had George Carey called on the dissenters from Day One to uphold Communion teaching (or else!), had he supported the two Global South Primates who proposed a disciplinary framework in 2002, the division and

realignment in North America might have looked quite different. Had Rowan Williams not reneged on his promise at the 2007 Dar es Salaam Primates Meeting to discipline the Episcopal Church, the Global Anglican Future Conference and Lambeth 2008 might have been less confrontational. Had Justin Welby deigned to notice Gafcon (at all) and act on its plea to invite ACNA bishops to Lambeth 2020, a united Global South, absent three African provinces, might not have been dismissed so peremptorily.

But they would not. Instead they avoided confrontation by means of “processes” with high-sounding titles (“Windsor,” “Covenant Working Group,” “Living in Love and Faith”) which were guaranteed to avoid hard decisions and even to push forward the progressive agenda with “smooth talk and flattery” (Romans 16:18).

Of course, the Church of England has its own peculiar problems, being yoked to a state whose current ideology is contrary to the historic Christian faith. How this will ultimately play out, I do not know. What I do know is that in choosing “autonomy,” **the Church of England and the Archbishop of Canterbury have forfeited their authority to lead the Anglican Communion.** What a tragic loss this is!

Two hundred years ago William Wilberforce, the crusader against slavery and social reformer, wrote: “We live in difficult times. We have all the marks of a declining civilization. Pray that the God who hears and answers the prayers of His people might intervene on behalf of our country and bring a spiritual renewal that might save the nation.”

I am proud of the Anglican heritage. I would choose no other way of following Christ. I love the moderate yet biblical formularies and liturgy, the poets and apologists, the cathedrals and parish churches, the English hymnody of Watts and Wesley, Neale and the Gettys, the mission history which flowed from England to the ends of the earth.

Many, many Anglicans worldwide feel likewise. One of my colleagues at Uganda Christian University, the author Timothy Wangusa, penned several affectionate yet ironical vignettes when he was a student in England:

THAT ENGLAND

When therefore I consider the towers, the underground tubes, and the slot machines that man has made, what is God, that man should regard him? Oh, it is Sunday, and time for Church.

I knelt by you. Sang with you.
And the bread that we break,
And the cup that we bless

Passed from you to me.
Then we reached for our umbrellas
And passed out into the rain
Quietly. Separately. Quickly.

But this Sunday morning it is a South Korean missionary preaching at St. George's parish church, near Leeds infirmary: "And if England will not re-awaken to its former calling and to the fear of God, then I am afraid that GB (Great Britain) will soon become SB! [Small Britain]" How outrageous! More discourteous than prophetic, you might say. What a missionary to the mother of missions!

For those of us who grieve, even from afar, over the state of the Mother Church, the question arises: when will the Lord "restore the fortunes of Zion" (Psalm 126:1)? It is encouraging no doubt that William Wilberforce's prayer for England was answered in part in the following century with the abolition of the slave trade and the promotion of moral and social reforms – and the great missionary expansion. This is what I call a "Hezekiah moment," as when King Hezekiah on his sickbed "turned his face to the wall" in repentance for Judah's faithlessness and God granted a stay of judgement (2 Kings 20:1-11). But this stay was followed by a century of even worse idolatry – including child sacrifice – under his son Manasseh; and when Hezekiah's righteous great grandson Josiah sought to reform the nation once again, he was cut off in battle because of the sins of Manasseh. This time, God said, "I will cast off this city that I have chosen, Jerusalem, and the house of which I said, 'My name shall be there'" (2 Kings 23:26-27).

Are we at such a "Josiah moment" today? God only knows. May He have mercy on the Ecclesia Anglicana. And on the Anglican Communion.

THESIS 3: THE FAILURE OF COMMUNION GOVERNANCE

Over the past century, the Anglican Communion has grown exponentially in numbers in the Global South while declining in the West. Although the "Instruments of Unity" appear on paper to give representation to the newer churches, in practice the Communion bureaucracy in England – the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Communion Office, and financial backers in New York and London – run the show.

COMMENT

It is something of a miracle that an Established national church in England became the "mother" of a communion of churches "from every tribe and language and people and nation," proclaiming an eternal Gospel to the principalities and powers of the modern world. Even as Britain rose to become an imperial power, there was no necessity that its form and substance of Christian faith, worship and order would be inherited by its dependencies.

And, truth be told, it was not the King or Parliament or the Bishops or the Archbishop of Canterbury who were primarily responsible for the fruit of Anglican mission. The primary movers of mission were voluntary societies, preeminently the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) and the Church Missionary Society (CMS), along with others, who recruited missionaries and missionary bishops and who promoted and funded evangelism, education, health and welfare throughout the emerging communion.

These societies were motivated by a sense of obedience to the Great Commission of the Risen Christ to “make disciples of all nations,” and they saw their role not as benefactors but as fellow sinners and servants, even martyrs of the living God. Most notably, CMS under Henry Venn promoted the “three self” philosophy of mission, aiming at building up “self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating” churches. The success of this strategy, however imperfectly implemented, helps explain why it was that when the sun set on the British empire, Anglicans worldwide did not pack up and go home, because *they were home*. Anglican Christianity had become indigenous, and before long national bishops, clergy and lay leaders took up the mission and the churches grew and flourished.

The global communion is a many-splendored thing, extending “o’er each continent and island,” with variegated cultures and languages and disparate economic and social conditions. In fact, the designations “global South” and “two-thirds world” are at best a generalization. What has divided “the West” from “the rest” has been a clash of worldviews, in which human sexuality in God’s image is the presenting, though hardly the only, issue.

The clash of worldviews at the Lambeth Conference in 1998 revealed a failure of governance rooted in the founding of the Anglican Communion in 1867. Most of the churches at the first Lambeth Conference were colonial churches, and the bishops were English or North American. This constituency remained predominant until the 1960s, when “autonomous” provinces began sending indigenous bishops. Even then, their representation was marginal.

According to Archbishop Joseph Adetiloye, the Primate of Nigeria:

In 1978 I waited at the microphone, and I was the first black African bishop to address the Conference. I told the assembled bishops that I was the first to speak, and it had taken until 1978 to be recognized, but in 1988, the assembly would listen to what the bishops of black Africa were saying. Further, by 1998, what African bishops had to say would chart the course of the communion.

It would be easy to attribute Adetiloye’s predicament to racism or cultural arrogance, but in fact, I think it was reflective of the emergence of a “Lambeth bureaucracy” after the Second World

War. With Europe devastated by the war, the Episcopal Church stepped forward to bolster the Communion establishment as an “executive bureaucracy,” with a kind of managerial control articulated by the social theorist Max Weber and introduced in the United States and in the Episcopal Church in the early 20th century.

In the case of the Communion, the executive hierarchy rests *ostensibly* in the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC), an assembly representing the various Anglican provinces but *actually* in the Anglican Communion Office (the Secretariat) in London. Not surprisingly, the first three Secretaries General of the Communion were Americans, from 1969-2004; they have been succeeded by two hand-picked “company men” from Africa, who do not represent their local constituencies. This bureaucracy came to be called an “Instrument” of the Communion, along with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lambeth Conference.

By the 1970s, many Anglicans became concerned that the Communion bureaucracy was superseding the “inherent authority” of bishops and in particular of the Primates of the Global South. This led to the establishment of a Primates Meeting “for mutual counsel and pastoral care and support of one another and the Archbishop of Canterbury.” The Primates Meeting came to be called a fourth “Instrument.” What was not clear was how this inherent authority was to interact with the de facto control by the Communion Office, which organizes and finances the meetings and other affairs of the Communion.

Thus we come to the puzzle of Communion governance: finance. The annual budget of the Communion Office (2019) is about \$2.3 million, largely funded by the Church of England and the Episcopal Church USA. In addition, Trinity Church Wall Street in Manhattan, which boasts “inclusiveness” as a core value, has been a benefactor to churches in the Anglican Communion, funding development grants for projects in the Global South. While it is simplistic to “follow the money trail” – many Global South leaders resisted it – neither is it irrelevant in explaining the direction taken by the Communion bureaucracy in its manipulation of and opposition to the churches of the Global Communion.

The collision of the “Instruments” was to become pivotal at the Lambeth Conference in 1998 over human sexuality and the division between the Global South and the West that followed.

THESIS 4: LAMBETH 1998

The 1998 Lambeth Conference provided the first real test of the capability of Communion structures to deal with heretical teaching and practice. In [Resolution I.10 on Human Sexuality](#), an overwhelming majority of bishops stated that homosexual practices were contrary to Scripture and “could not be advised.” After twenty-five years of controversy and many Communion meetings, Western churches continue to spurn this Resolution and

have now formalized ordination and marriage of self-styled LGBT persons. These churches and bishops remain prominent members in the Communion in good standing.

COMMENT

Lambeth 1998 was the last true Lambeth Conference. At the same time, the Conference marked the coming of age of the Global South churches within the counsels of the Anglican Communion. The ground for this moment had been prepared at Lambeth 1988, which had called for the Primates, the majority of whom were from the Global South, to exercise an “enhanced responsibility in offering guidance on doctrinal, moral and pastoral matters” (Resolution 18). This same Resolution called for quasi-independent “regional conferences” of bishops, clergy, and laity, and in 1994, the first “Anglican Encounter in the South” met in Limuru, Kenya.

At the second Encounter meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 1997, the assembly issued a remarkably clear doctrinal and pastoral [statement](#) on human sexuality. It is worth reading in its entirety, but one notes among other things the concern of Global South leaders about authority within the Communion:

5. The Scripture bears witness to God’s will regarding human sexuality which is to be expressed only within the life long union of a man and a woman in holy matrimony.
6. The Holy Scriptures are clear in teaching that all sexual promiscuity is sin. We are convinced that this includes homosexual practices, between men or women, as well as heterosexual relationships outside marriage.
7. We believe that the clear and unambiguous teaching of the Holy Scriptures about human sexuality is of great help to Christians as it provides clear boundaries.
8. We find no conflict between clear biblical teaching and sensitive pastoral care. Repentance precedes forgiveness and is part of the healing process. To heal spiritual wounds in God’s name we need his wisdom and truth. We see this in the ministry of Jesus, for example his response to the adulterous woman, “Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more.” (John 8:11)
9. We encourage the Church to care for all those who are trapped in their sexual brokenness and to become the channel of Christ’s compassion and love towards them. We wish to stand alongside and welcome them into a process of healing within our communities of faith. We would also affirm and resource those who exercise a pastoral ministry in this area.
10. We are deeply concerned that the setting aside of biblical teaching in such actions as the ordination of practicing homosexuals and the blessing of same-sex unions, calls into question the authority of the Holy Scriptures. This is totally unacceptable to us.
11. This leads us to express concern about mutual accountability and interdependence within our Anglican Communion. As provinces and dioceses we need to learn how to seek each

other's counsel and wisdom in a spirit of true unity, and to reach a common mind before embarking on radical changes to Church discipline and moral teaching.

One can, I think, draw a straight line from the language of this Statement to the Resolution which was approved overwhelmingly at the Lambeth Conference eighteen months later.

The Global South Encounters created new opportunities for conservative leaders from North America and England to meet and build bridges with their counterparts in the Global South. I note in particular the tireless work of the Rev. Canon (now Bishop) Bill Atwood of the Ekklesia Society and of Drs. Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden of the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies – work ongoing to this day! – who sponsored a ground-breaking “Anglican Life and Witness Conference” in Dallas, Texas in September 1997, with 57 bishops present, equally divided between the Global South and North.

As a veteran of the culture war in the Episcopal Church, I was asked to address the Conference on “[The Handwriting on the Wall](#).” I concluded with this warning and appeal:

After a certain vote in the [Episcopal] General Convention that went the way of the moral innovators, someone turned to Bishop William Frey and said: “Well, Bill, I guess the handwriting is on the wall!” “Yes,” Bishop Frey replied, “and it says the same thing it said the first time.” The original handwriting was addressed to a complacent ruling class which had duped its people with idolatry. It read, *Mene, Mene, Tekel Parsin*: “God has numbered your days and brought it to an end” (Daniel 5:26-28).

I subtitled this talk “Why the Sexuality Conflict in the Episcopal Church Is God’s Word to the Anglican Communion,” and I conclude with a warning that failure to deal with the crisis in the Episcopal Church will endanger the unity of the Anglican Communion. Representatives from your provinces, meeting at Kuala Lumpur, have already raised the alarm in your statement on “Anglican Reconstruction.” This is a question that cannot be delayed. What will become of Anglican unity if the American church breaks into two bodies out of communion with each other, with one body officially linked to Canterbury and the other officially committed to Kuala Lumpur? If Anglican leaders look the other way in 1998, such a situation is distinctly possible.

I believe that if the worldwide Communion would speak clearly and forcefully to the American Church, there might be a turning back in our Church to the faith once delivered to the saints.

The handwriting is on the wall. Please spell it out for us, by the grace of God that is given you and the help of the Holy Spirit. Thank you.

I was privileged to attend the Lambeth Conference in 1998 as an observer (see my “[Lambeth Diary](#)”). I observed how the Lambeth bureaucracy mobilized all their usual weapons – setting the agenda ahead of time, controlling the media, and playing politics with the various study groups. Yet when all was said and done, the Global South prevailed in passing Resolution I.10 on Human Sexuality, by a vote of 526 in favor with 70 opposed.

I am not going to expound this Resolution again (see my “[Lambeth Speaks Plainly](#)”) but simply note its fundamental premise: that the Conference “**in view of the teaching of Scripture**, upholds faithfulness in marriage between a man and a woman in lifelong union, and believes that abstinence is right for those who are not called to marriage,” hence “rejecting homosexual practice as **incompatible with Scripture**” [emphasis added].

Repeatedly, representatives of the Global South appealed to the authority of the Bible, and in doing so they were upholding the fundamental principle of the English Reformation that “the Church hath power to decree Rites or Ceremonies, and authority in Controversies of Faith: and yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God’s Word written” (Article XX).

The authority of the Bible as God’s Word written for the Church is the fulcrum on which the Anglican Communion has teetered for a quarter century, with Global Anglicans standing firm on one side. The Archbishops of Canterbury, limping between two opinions and sounding an uncertain trumpet, failed to lead at the moment of crisis, assuring thereby that subsequent Lambeth conferences in 2008 and 2022 would be mere gabfests and not true councils of the Church.

THESIS 5: THE BREAKDOWN OF COMMUNION DISCIPLINE

The Communion bureaucracy has been complicit in this failure of discipline. In fact, these same practices are being condoned in the Church of England, where the Government has legalized same-sex marriage and enforced LGBT rights and promoted them across the Communion. Within a few years, the CofE will formalize these practices, and the Communion bureaucracy will insist that other Anglicans accept these practices in terms of “good disagreement,” along lines of the “Living in Love and Faith” exercise.

COMMENT

Common sense and family and civic life confirm the truth that doctrine without discipline is a recipe for a community in chaos. This applies as well in the community in the church where doctrine, discipline and worship aim to combine in glorifying God. According to the Book of Homilies:

The true church is an universal congregation or fellowship of God's faithful and elect people, built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head corner-stone. And it hath three notes or marks, whereby it is known: Pure and sound doctrine; The Sacraments ministered according to Christ's holy institution; And the right use of ecclesiastical discipline.

Thomas Cranmer's vision was to reform the Church according to each of these marks, and he did so with the Articles of Religion and the Book of Common Prayer. He was cut short of reforming church discipline by Queen Mary; nevertheless, the existing customs and canons of the Church and the common law of a Christian commonwealth kept the Church of England on an even keel well into the twentieth century. The same may be said of the Episcopal Church USA, whose Prayer Book and Constitution and Canons remained conservative until the progressive revolution in the 1960s. From that time on, a gap widened between official doctrine and actual practice, and attempts at discipline failed, as in the case of notorious heretics like Bishops James Pike and John Spong.

So it was the spirit of the Sixties rather than the Spirit of godly council that prevailed after Lambeth 1998, as a strong majority of Episcopal bishops returned home to denounce Resolution I.10, while promising to continue promoting and institutionalizing homosexual ordinations and same-sex blessings. The Episcopal bishops reminded the rest of their fellow bishops worldwide that each Province was autonomous, that "mutual responsibility and interdependence in the Body of Christ" had its limits (namely, when it interferes with my agenda), and that none of the Communion Instruments had any power to stand in their way.

This posed a dilemma and challenge to the Archbishop of Canterbury in particular, who had been declared the "focus of unity." It also posed a challenge to the Primates Meeting, which Lambeth 1998 had reaffirmed as having an "enhanced role" in doctrinal, moral, and pastoral matters (Resolution II.6.a). **Canterbury – Archbishops Carey, Williams, and Welby – failed repeatedly to uphold the inherent authority of the office and ultimately overcame attempts of the Primates to exercise discipline of those churches that openly defied the teaching of Lambeth I.10.**

As reported in my Diary from Lambeth 1998, I was exhilarated with the passage of the Resolution on Human Sexuality, which Archbishop George Carey had personally endorsed. Two days later, I was deflated when I heard Carey fend off the sneering secular media by assuring them that the Resolution was just the first step in an ongoing consultation. Consultation is not what one offers to a rebellious teenager who has been found with pot – or a young lady – in his bedroom. Sadly, "consultation" and "listening" became watchwords of the Lambeth Establishment, even to the present day.

Archbishop Carey made an even more egregious error two years later, when it had become quite clear that the Episcopal Church was in open rebellion. Two Global South Primates – Drexel Gomez and Maurice Sinclair – had presented to the Primates Meeting an eminently reasonable proposal on church discipline called *To Mend the Net*. Archbishops Gomez and Sinclair, invoking their enhanced role, offered a thoughtful and careful nine-step process of discerning and dealing with false teaching and practice in a rebellious province, calling for repentance but culminating, if no repentance was forthcoming, in a replacement jurisdiction. George Carey relegated discussion of this proposal to a “fireside chat,” and from there it was deposited in the maw of the Lambeth bureaucracy, from which it never reemerged.

A three-way tussle now was joined between the dissident churches in North America, the Global South Primates, and the Archbishop of Canterbury. This conflict became volatile in 2003 when the Episcopal Church consecrated Gene Robinson, an openly practicing homosexual, as diocesan bishop. By this time, Rowan Williams had become Archbishop of Canterbury, and he was confronted by an indignant group of Global South Primates at meetings in London (2003), Ireland (2005), and Tanzania (2007). Williams responded to the Primates’ call for discipline by establishing the “Windsor Process,” which concluded with a mild “tut, tut” for the offenders with no accountability or change required. When the Primates at Dar es Salaam finally called on Archbishop Williams to disinvite the Episcopal Church to Lambeth 2008 – a call he signed on to – he reneged and intimated that their authority had been enhanced too much. Since 2007, Primates Meetings have been orchestrated by the Communion Office.

Rowan Williams’s defiance led proximately to the Global Anglican Future Conference in 2008 (see Theses 6-10). His successor Justin Welby has followed the same script, snubbing and manipulating the Primates of the Global South and the replacement province, the Anglican Church in North America and the Anglican Church of Brazil, and welcoming the increasing radicalism of the revisionist churches in terms of “good disagreement.”

Now, sad to say, the Church of England itself has joined the North American club. Justin Welby’s two-faced professions – “joyfully” welcoming same-sex blessings but refusing to perform them himself in faux deference to his role as “focus of unity,” then sheepishly claiming in Ghana “Parliament made me do it” – would be farcical if we were not dealing with a righteous God and His Holy will.

In a strange way, the actions of the Church of England and of Canterbury confirm the maxim that doctrine, discipline and worship go hand in hand. The replacement of the biblical two-way doctrine of marriage and abstinence has led to a new discipline propounded by the English bishops and a new liturgy to accompany it. Already we begin to see a new code of conduct coming whereby open opponents of the same-sex regime will be shunned.

For those Global Anglicans who have revered the heritage of the Church of England and the See of Canterbury, this is a sad progression of events. For faithful members of the Church of England, an even more painful choice is to be faced: conform with the spirit of the age or forfeit your status and property.

Such was the choice faced by the first Anglican martyrs, as expressed by Thomas Cranmer when he gave his final testament in Oxford:

This shall be my first exhortation: That you set not overmuch by this false glosing world, but upon God and the world to come. And learn to know what this lesson meaneth, which St. John teacheth, “that the love of this world is hatred against God.”

Cranmer’s final testament embodies the true love and faith that overcomes the world (1 John 5:4).

THE GAFCON RESPONSE

Introduction to Theses 6-10

The second group of theses – “The Gafcon Response” – sketches the events that led to the calling of the Global Anglican Future Conference in 2008. It then examines the Jerusalem Statement and Declaration as a significant confession of faith, with political, theological and pastoral dimensions, addressing the current crisis in the Communion.

The focus here is on the Gafcon movement, but it does not intend to diminish the parallel and overlapping work of the Global South Fellowship. In particular, the development of an Anglican Communion Covenant, which was temporarily hijacked by the Communion establishment, has been revived by the Global South Fellowship in recent years.

THESIS 6: THE ROAD TO GAFCON

The convening of the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) in Jerusalem in 2008 was the most significant event in recent Anglican history. The bold leadership of Archbishop Peter Akinola and six other Global South Primates upset the assumed dominance by the Communion establishment and set a precedent for the future of the Communion.

COMMENT

Lambeth 1998 was the last true Lambeth Conference. Its successor was the Global Anglican Future Conference, held in Jerusalem in 2008. GAFCON, as it came to be called, was a continuation of a movement of global Anglicans which had produced and passed Resolution I.10 on Human Sexuality. This movement had brought together churches and leaders from Global South Provinces and other faithful Anglicans in the West. For a decade, Global Anglicans had sought to revive biblical authority as essential to Anglican identity and to discipline those churches that had openly defied the Communion. By 2008, it had become clear that the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Communion establishment were obstructing the Global South leaders and enabling the Episcopal Church USA to stay on course with its radical agenda.

The movement that coalesced in Jerusalem in 2008 was **political, theological, and pastoral**, including bishops, theologians and concerned laity and clergy. Bishops included Moses Tay and Yong Ping Chung from Asia, Emmanuel Kolini, Donald Mtetemela, and Henry Orombi from Africa, Peter Jensen and Glenn Davies from Australia, Robinson Cavalcanti and Greg Venables from South America, and Robert Duncan and Martyn Minns from North America, all of whom had had a role in the contested period between Lambeth 1998 and GAFCON. (Notably there were no Bishops from England in leadership, though some were sympathetic.)

The movement had also gathered a Theological Resource Team of more than twenty scholars and church leaders, convened by Vinay Samuel and chaired by Nicholas Okoh, who produced a pre-Conference book [*The Way the Truth and the Life*](#), which defined “Anglican orthodoxy in a global context” as including evangelical, catholic, and charismatic streams.

Finally, the Conference itself gathered more than 1,000 Anglicans worldwide in an Assembly in the land of Jesus and the Apostles. We worshipped God in great choruses of praise, attended various presentations on Scripture, Anglican identity, and current issues, and we finally approved by acclamation the Jerusalem Statement and Declaration.

The instigator of GAFCON was the Most Rev. Peter J. Akinola, Primate of Nigeria. In 2000, Peter Akinola had inherited the primatial mantle from Archbishop Adetiloye, who had spearheaded passage of Lambeth I.10. At first, Akinola took a restrained view of the consecrations of John Rodgers and Chuck Murphy as extra-provincial bishops. However, as the total resistance of the North American churches became clear, culminating in Gene Robinson’s elevation to the episcopate, Peter Akinola stepped forward as the leader of the Global South opposition.

Akinola did not limit his opposition to North America. When the English bishops agreed to apply the 2004 Parliamentary Civil Partnership Act to partnered gay clergy, Akinola accused them of “being double-faced” and led the Church of Nigeria to remove “communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury” from its Constitution. “No church is beyond discipline,” he said.

In the critical years leading up to GAFCON, he was Chairman of the Global South Primates and of the Council of Anglican Provinces in Africa (CAPA). This is the point at which I became directly involved with the Archbishop. When in February 2006, the CAPA Primates called for a report on “[*The Road to Lambeth*](#),” Peter Akinola commissioned two African bishops and myself (I was residing in Uganda at the time) to produce a document that would make clear to Canterbury the stakes for the upcoming Lambeth Conference in 2008.) The peroration of the document reads:

We in CAPA want to say clearly and unequivocally to the rest of the Communion: the time has come for the North American churches to repent or depart. We in the Global South have always made repentance the starting point for any reconciliation of fellowship in the Communion. We have sought to give time for those who have violated biblical and Communion norms to turn back. Now that time is up. We shall not accept cleverly worded excuses but rather a clear acknowledgement by these churches that they have erred and intend to “lead a new life” in the Communion (2 Corinthians 4:2). Along with

this open statement of repentance must come “fruits befitting repentance” (Luke 3:8). They must reverse their policies and prune their personnel.

The current situation is a twofold crisis for the Anglican Communion: a crisis of doctrine and a crisis of leadership, in which the failure of the “Instruments” of the Communion to exercise discipline, has called into question the viability of the Anglican Communion as a united Christian body under a common foundation of faith, as is supposed by the Lambeth Quadrilateral. Due to this breakdown of discipline, we are not sure that we can in good conscience continue to spend our time, our money and our prayers on behalf of a body that proclaims two Gospels, the Gospel of Christ and the Gospel of Sexuality....

We Anglicans stand at a crossroad. One road, the road of compromise of biblical truth, leads to destruction and disunity. The other road has its own obstacles because it requires changes in the way the Communion has been governed and it challenges our churches to live up to and into their full maturity in Christ. But surely the second road is God’s way forward. It is our sincere hope that this road may pass through Lambeth, our historical mother. But above all it must be the road that leads to life through our Saviour Jesus Christ.

“The Road to Lambeth” was never approved, and the way this happened is significant in itself. The document was presented to the joint Global South and CAPA Primates at a meeting in Kigali, Rwanda, in September 2006, to which I was invited as advisor. There was nearly unanimous support for it, except for Archbishop Ndungane of South Africa, who dallied, stating he would need approval by his House of Bishops (South Africa was sharply divided over homosexuality). In delaying the vote, in effect he vetoed its official enactment. Nevertheless, the document was forwarded to Canterbury, noting the fact that the vast majority of Global South bishops were prepared to avoid Lambeth unless he were to take action.

The conflict between Peter Akinola and Rowan Williams became more pointed in 2007 at the Primates Meeting in Dar es Salaam. When Williams ignored the unanimous [Resolutions](#) of that conference and excused the Episcopal Church and invited its bishops (minus Gene Robinson) to Lambeth, the die was cast, and GAFCON was underway.

There is one other outcome of the Global South meeting in Kigali that became significant in the unfolding conflict within the Communion: *Canterbury’s coopting of the Anglican Covenant*. The idea of an Anglican Covenant had been proposed by the Windsor Report, and the Global South Primates responded positively to the idea and appointed a drafting group to prepare their own Covenant. Shortly before the Kigali meeting, Rowan Williams established a Lambeth Covenant Team, to be headed up by two Global South Primates, John Chew of South East Asia and Drexel Gomez of the West Indies. This was a classic divide-and-conquer maneuver. Archbishop Chew

was known to be more deferential to Canterbury than the Africans and yet was Vice Chairman of the Global South Primates. It was suddenly announced at the Kigali meeting that the Global South team was disbanding – and from that point on, I was excluded as an advisor. Rowan Williams, of course, appointed additional “diverse” members to the new team, and the process was now administered by the Anglican Communion Office. This coup was significant because it divided the Global South movement, with the majority following Peter Akinola on the Road to Gafcon, while important Global South leaders did not attend GAFCON and went on to Lambeth in 2008.

(I note that the Lambeth bureaucracy is trying this tactic once again. At the recent Anglican Consultative Council meeting in Accra, Justin Welby intimated that he might relinquish Canterbury’s role as “Instrument of unity,” and a [study](#) was announced to “explore theological questions regarding structure and decision-making [in the Anglican Communion] to help address our differences.” The study is to be conducted by the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order” (IASCUFO), a wholly owned subsidiary of Canterbury and the Anglican Communion Office. Rest assured that any reordering of the Canterbury Communion will be firmly in the hands of Lambeth loyalists.)

Returning now to the Covenant process from 2006, after three drafts and a preemptive rewrite of the disciplinary section by Rowan Williams himself to assure its ineffectiveness, the Anglican Communion Covenant was published. When the major churches in Africa, North America, and England failed to sign on, the Canterbury Covenant became something of a beached whale.

A decade later, the idea of a Covenant has been revived by the Global South Fellowship. I shall argue that elements of this Covenant proposal overlap with the founding document of Gafcon, the Jerusalem Statement and Declaration.

It is my hope that these two roads that were diverted in 2008 may converge again in the near future.

Thesis 7: THE GLOBAL FELLOWSHIP OF CONFESSING ANGLICANS

The 2008 [Jerusalem Statement](#) on the Global Anglican Future provides an authoritative basis for a new Communion of orthodox Anglicans. The Statement contains three elements: *a prophetic indictment* of the existing Communion, *a confession of Anglican faith* (the Jerusalem Declaration), and *a new governing structure* (a Primates Council).

COMMENT

The convening of the Global Anglican Future Conference was remarkable: it was organized in six months; it attracted 1,148 attendees, including 291 bishops and 7 archbishops who paid their

way to get to Jerusalem (unfortunately those from Muslim nations could not get visas from their home countries and participated in a parallel meeting across the Jordan River). Attendees were treated to first-class teaching, joyous plenary worship, regional fellowships, and a side trip to the Sea of Galilee. Above all, there was a sense of God's presence and blessing, such that the Jerusalem Statement claimed that this occasion was "not a moment in time but a movement in the Spirit"; and as of April 2023, there will have been three Assemblies since then.

The question arises: what was this movement that birthed these conferences?

Soon after the first GAFCON Assembly, "Gafcon" came to be a moniker for the "**Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans**." There are four important claims staked out in this title.

First, Gafcon is a movement arising from **the global character of Anglican Christianity**. While it is an historical fact that the Gospel accompanied the extension of British imperial power across the seas, it is also true that it was conveyed, often at great price, by missionaries from England and then by national local evangelists and martyrs (Bishop Hannington and the Uganda martyrs being symbols of this reality). Gafcon represents the coming of age of that global movement, both in the sense of finding a mature identity and in the sense of "leaving home base."

Secondly, Gafcon is a **spiritual fellowship, aimed at reviving the church**. GAFCON II in Nairobi focused on the East African Revival, which was a second-generation outpouring of Holy Spirit power that spread from Rwanda and Uganda throughout East Africa and beyond, as exemplified in charismatic renewals as wide apart as North America and Singapore. As such, it was a reminder that the invisible Church is a creation of the grace and the Spirit of God, not of man's invention.

(As I write this, there are reports of a revival on Christian college campuses in the USA. As a veteran of the charismatic renewal fifty years ago, I can testify that, despite theatrics and exaggerations, revival in the Spirit is genuine and can lead to profound transformations in the life of the Church, as well as in the lives of individuals and the wider society [the most recent appointee to the U.S. Supreme Court was a participant in the renewal]. Surely there is precedent in Scripture and church history of God working to revive and reform His Church and the wider society. Let us pray for any such movement in the West and Global South, in Anglican churches and other Christian bodies.)

The true Church is a *koinonia* in the Holy Spirit, where the Word is preached and the Sacraments administered (Acts 2:42; Article XIX). The word *koinonia* can be translated "fellowship" or "communion." As such it refers not to an organization but an organism, the Body of Christ: "For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and all were

made to drink of one Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:13). Gafcon claims to be a member of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church in the service of a particular historic tradition.

Thirdly, Gafcon is a **confessing fellowship, aiming to reform the Church according to God’s Word**. The confession of the one God, who had delivered His people from Egypt, was foundational to the Jewish people (Deuteronomy 6:4; Exodus 20:2). Similarly, the apostolic church confessed “Jesus is Lord” in short acclamations and in longer creedal statements (1 Corinthians 8:5-6; 15:1-11; 1 Timothy 3:16). Confessing the faith and reforming the church go hand in hand. The patristic church expanded these statements into the catholic creeds in order to clarify the nature of the Triune God and the Person of Jesus Christ. In the 16th century, the Protestant Reformers added confessions to make clear that “we are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith” (Article XI).

In our day, the doctrine of human nature has proved the point of contention and division in church and society, and the Lambeth Conference addressed this matter in 1998 with a clear statement on human sexuality. Although the rejection of this doctrine and the failure to discipline those who denied it was the proximate cause of GAFCON 2008, the Gafcon movement took the opportunity to reaffirm Anglican essentials and address related issues of world mission, environmental stewardship, ecclesiology, and eschatology.

Fourthly, the Gafcon movement took the first step toward **reordering the Church**. While the first GAFCON was a living example of the global church gathered, it also proposed structures of continuity for the movement. These structures mirrored in some ways the so-called “Instruments” of the Anglican Communion, especially in the enhanced roles of the Primates, but the Gafcon movement did not go so far as formally to replace these Instruments. Still, it introduced a tension between them. By boycotting Lambeth 2008 and the subsequent “Canterbury” Primates meetings, some churches began to look to Gafcon and to its Primates and Assemblies as authoritative.

This differentiation became more pronounced as congregations, clergy, and laity in North America began to separate or be expelled from the official heterodox bodies in what came to be called “realignment.” As early as 2009, the Gafcon Primates recognized the Anglican Church in North America as a legitimate Anglican Province and admitted its Archbishop, Robert Duncan, as a full member of its Primates Council. Since that time, one other Province (Brazil) has been added, along with a number of confessing “branches” and independent dioceses. The Global South Fellowship likewise has recognized these entities.

What I am arguing in these Theses is that what we are seeing before our very eyes in this movement is God’s reviving, reforming, and reordering of the Anglican Communion. The

defection of the Church of England from its Christian heritage will accelerate this development greatly in the days to come.

In the next three Theses, I shall seek to demonstrate how the seeds of this development were sown in the fundamental declaration of GAFCON: the Jerusalem Statement and Declaration.

THESIS 8: THE PROPHETIC INDICTMENT

The Jerusalem Statement from GAFCON 2008 opens with a prophetic indictment which identifies the ideology of the Western churches as “*a different ‘gospel’ (cf. Galatians 1:6-8) which is contrary to the apostolic gospel.*” Such rank heresy, it continues, has obliged orthodox churches to break communion with these churches. Finally, it faults the Communion “Instruments” for failing to take action and discipline those churches ten years after Lambeth 1998.

COMMENT

PREFACE: How the Jerusalem Statement Came to Be

The Jerusalem Statement from GAFCON 2008 is the foundational text for the Gafcon movement. (Note: the “Jerusalem Declaration” is an integral part of the Jerusalem Statement.) The gestation and birth of this statement took place as a result of careful consultation. Here are the main steps of the Conference, which met from June 22-29.

- Scholars and bishops from the Theological Resource Group (who produced the pre-Conference book) exchanged ideas via email during the month prior to the Conference. Some of these ideas were incorporated into the Statement, but the final version is significantly richer and more comprehensive than any earlier strand.
- On arrival on June 22, every attendee at the Conference was asked two questions: “Do you expect GAFCON to do something?” and “Do you want GAFCON to leave the Anglican Communion?” When these replies were tallied, there was virtual unanimity: Yes to the first question and No to the second.
- The Statement Group was appointed by the participating Primates. The Chairman of the Group was Archbishop Benjamin Nzimbi of Kenya; other members included Archbishop Emmanuel Kolini of Rwanda, Bishops Michael Fape of Nigeria and Glenn Davies of Sydney, the Rev. Rod Thomas from the Church of England and myself from the USA and Uganda. Our Group worked closely with the Primates and their advisors each step of the way.
- During the Conference we received input from regional meetings, churches and individuals, and in some cases we incorporated suggestions into the Statement.

- On June 27, our draft was approved by the Primates, and I read it to the Assembly, along with a Power Point text. We invited responses to the draft and received yet more comments.
- On June 28, while most delegates toured the Sea of Galilee, the Statement Group laboured to produce a final text and took it to the Primates for their OK, literally at the eleventh hour.
- On June 29 at the closing assembly of the Conference, the Jerusalem Statement was read by Archbishop Henry Orombi of Uganda and was unanimously acclaimed by the Assembly of more than 1,000, with ululations and hallelujahs. Gafcon was launched.

I shall be considering the Jerusalem Statement in three parts over three weeks: the *prophetic indictment* (Thesis 8), *the confession of faith* (Thesis 9), and *the structure of governance* (Thesis 10).

The Prophetic Indictment

Having stated the goals of the Conference – to launch the Gafcon movement as a global fellowship of confessing Anglicans; to publish the Jerusalem Declaration as the basis of the fellowship; and to recognise a Gafcon Primates Council – the Statement turns to an indictment based on **three facts of the Global Anglican context**. Gafcon, like an able prosecutor, is laying out “facts on the ground” from the life of the Communion that had become apparent over the ten previous years of futility (see Theses 1-7).

The Old Testament prophets acted at times as God’s prosecutors in a controversy with the leaders of Israel: “Hear the word of the Lord, O children of Israel, for the Lord has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land. There is no faithfulness or steadfast love, and no knowledge of God in the land” (Hosea 4:1).

The first fact in the Gafcon indictment is *the acceptance and promotion within the provinces of the Anglican Communion of a different ‘gospel’ (cf. Galatians 1:6-8) which is contrary to the apostolic gospel*.

In citing “the Gospel” as the heart of the controversy, the Jerusalem Statement makes clear that what is at stake is nothing less than the central truth of the Christian faith, of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Writing to his new converts in Galatia, St. Paul, the apostle of the Gospel of grace, expressed amazement “that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel.” He immediately adds, “not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ” (Galatians 1:6-7).

The Statement describes this false Gospel specifically in terms of **religious pluralism** (teaching that all ways lead to God) and **pansexualism**, which goes today under the ever-expanding

LGBTQIA++ acronym. Paul and the Apostles would recognize these prototypical sins as *idolatry* and *sexual immorality* (Romans 1:21-31). Sexual immorality (*porneia*), which includes homosexual and heterosexual relations, is condemned as sinful more than thirty times in the New Testament, by Jesus (Mark 7:21), by the first Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:20,29), by Paul (1 Timothy 1:10), by Jude (verse 7), and by John the Divine (Revelation 2:20-21). Paul states the consequences for those who practice sexual immorality without repentance: “they will not inherit the Kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 5:3-5).

This is a *Gospel issue*, a *salvation issue*, according to the Jerusalem Statement. It is also a *pastoral issue*, because the souls of those who call themselves Christians are at stake, “for it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:31). This warning bears a special application for pastors who teach God’s Word. “‘Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!’ declares the Lord” (Jeremiah 23:1). Jesus also speaks of the hireling who sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees (John 10:12), and he warns against those who relax the least of His commandments and *teach* others to do the same (Matthew 5:19). In his moral teaching, Paul warns Christians: “Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 5:6).

“Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!” the Apostle warns (1 Corinthians 9:16). This warning applies to any church that calls itself apostolic. For this reason, the primary indictment in this section of the Jerusalem Statement is of the false teachers of those Anglican churches in the West who have called evil good and good evil and thus, as the prophet Micah puts it, “tear the skin from off my people and their flesh from off their bones” (Micah 3:2).

False doctrine – and doctrine includes the Moral Commandments (Article VII) – requires a clear and strong response from the guardians of the Church, the bishops of the Anglican Communion and their delegates, the “Instruments of Unity.” But that response was not forthcoming, which leads to the following two “facts” of the indictment: *the manifest failure of the Communion Instruments to exercise discipline in the face of overt heterodoxy*, which led in turn to “*the declaration by provincial bodies in the Global South that they are out of communion with bishops and churches that promote this false gospel.*”

As I see it, there has been no change in the situation since 2008, except perhaps to admit, sadly, that bishops of the Established Church and the Archbishop of Canterbury have now shown themselves to be hirelings. Representatives of the Global South Fellowship went to Lambeth in 2022, hoping against hope that the Communion leadership might repent, but it has not happened.

The Prophetic Hope

Due to the enormity of Israel’s sins, the prophetic word was often weighted toward judgement. Through his jeremiads and soul-searching, Jeremiah could still look to a hopeful future: “For I

know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope” (Jeremiah 29:11). This text became a banner for the “Hope and a Future” conference in Pittsburgh in 2005 and became part of the 2008 Conference title, “the Global Anglican Future.”

In 2018, the Gafcon “[Letter to the Churches](#)” takes up this hopeful note:

The gospel of God creates the church of God. Through the invitation of the gospel, God calls all people into fellowship with his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. As the word of the gospel goes forth in the power of the Holy Spirit, they respond through the work of the Holy Spirit to repent, believe and be baptised, and are thereby joined to Christ’s body which is his church (Acts 2:37-44; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13). As members of Christ’s body, they are sanctified in him, called to live lives of holiness and to be salt and light in the world.

Over the past twenty years, we have seen the hand of God leading us toward a reordering of the Anglican Communion. Gafcon has claimed from the beginning: “We are not leaving the Anglican Communion; we are the majority of the Anglican Communion seeking to remain faithful to our Anglican heritage.” As Archbishop Nicholas Okoh stated in the inaugural Synodical Council: “We are merely doing what the Communion leadership should have done to uphold its own resolution in 1998.”

The latest betrayal by the Communion leadership fifteen years on is cause for regret but not for loss of hope, because our hope is in the Gospel, “which was preached to every creature which is under heaven” (Colossians 1:23).

Anticipating the need for a revival, reformation, and reordering of the Communion, the Jerusalem Statement goes on to lay out a new statement of Anglican essentials, the Jerusalem Declaration. This will be the subject of my next thesis.

THESIS 9: THE DECLARATION OF FAITH

The Statement from GAFCON 2008 includes the [Jerusalem Declaration](#), which has been widely hailed as an excellent confession of Anglican faith and has been used as the basis for subsequent Conferences. Its *first seven clauses* recall historic Anglican essentials: the Gospel and Lordship of Christ, the inspiration and authority of the Bible, and in accordance with Scripture, the Creeds, the Articles, the Prayer Book, and the Ordinal. The *second seven clauses* address contemporary issues: sexuality and marriage; the Great Commission mandate; stewardship and social justice; and unity in diversity of the flock, while rejecting false shepherds.

COMMENT

The Old Testament prophets are backward-looking as well as forward-looking, or perhaps better, they look through the lens of the past to envision God's future for His people. The same Jeremiah who foresees a new Covenant calls on the people to "stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it" (Jeremiah 6:16).

Similarly, the Jerusalem Statement envisions a future grounded in the "ancient roads" of Anglicanism. In line with the vast majority of attendees in Jerusalem, it states: "Our fellowship is not breaking away from the Anglican Communion." The Statement, however, defines Anglicanism not by formal structures, the so-called "Instruments of Identity," but by the historic formularies. In particular, it cites the canon law (A5) of the Church of England:

The doctrine of the Church is grounded in the Holy Scriptures and in such teachings of the ancient Fathers and Councils of the Church as are agreeable to the said Scriptures. In particular, such doctrine is to be found in the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordinal. [italics in the original]

It continues: "We intend to remain faithful to this standard, and we call on others in the Communion to reaffirm and return to it." Implicitly, the GAFCON Assembly is accusing churches of the Anglican Communion, and the Instruments, of having wandered off the ancient path. As Jeremiah put it to the church of his day: "They said, 'We will not walk in it.'"

The Jerusalem Statement does not deny, indeed it honours, the history of the Christian faith in England, stretching back to Augustine of Canterbury and beyond and up through Thomas Cranmer to the present, but as the English Reformers themselves said, historic churches can err and have erred in matters of faith and practice insofar as they "ordain anything that is contrary to God's Word written" (Articles XIX-XXI).

For this reason, the Statement makes clear: "While acknowledging the nature of Canterbury as an historic see, we do not accept that Anglican identity is determined necessarily through recognition by the Archbishop of Canterbury." In 2008, Canterbury was judged deficient in confronting the false doctrine of the North Americans, and the Jerusalem conference felt led to offer a new confession of faith to guide its churches: the Jerusalem Declaration.

The Jerusalem Declaration

As the Statement Group formed itself in June 2008, I was appointed scribe for its drafts. I recall urging that the Statement be as concise as possible and theologically cohesive, not simply a laundry list of sundry concerns. As it turns out the Statement is less than 2,500 words and the Jerusalem Declaration just over 700 words in fourteen brief clauses. These clauses "build upon the doctrinal foundation of Anglican identity" and hence become paving stones of the new movement.

The introduction to the Jerusalem Declaration refers to two great pillars of catholicity, the Triune God and the Gospel of the Kingdom proclaimed by the Lord Jesus, which liberate and transform individual believers and constitute the Church. “In light of the above,” it continues, “we agree to chart a way forward together that promotes and protects the biblical gospel and mission to the world, solemnly declaring the following tenets of orthodoxy which underpin our Anglican identity.”

As I have expounded the fourteen clauses of the Jerusalem Declaration elsewhere in some detail, I shall summarize its main themes here.

The Jerusalem Declaration is backward-looking and forward-looking. Just as Articles I-V of the Thirty-nine Articles receive the Trinitarian orthodoxy of the first five centuries, so the Jerusalem Declaration lists simply in clauses 1-7 basic tenets held by Anglicans: the Gospel of salvation and Lordship of Christ and His atoning death (clauses 1 and 5), the authority of Scripture (clause 2), the Ecumenical Councils and Creeds (clause 3), the Thirty-nine Articles (clause 4), the Book of Common Prayer (clause 6), and the historic episcopate and Ordinal (clause 7).

The second group of seven clauses addresses current and future matters facing the Church today: sexuality and marriage (clause 8), the Great Commission to evangelize the nations (clause 9), stewardship of the earth and relief of the poor (clause 10), church unity and differentiation (clauses 11-13), and Christ’s Return (clause 14).

The Jerusalem Declaration is biblical. It affirms the inspired revelation of Holy Scripture as God’s Word written, which alone is sufficient for salvation (cf. Articles VI and XX). It also affirms the need for the Church and its members to appropriate this Word through reading, preaching, teaching, and obeying it. Contrary to claims that Scripture yields radically diverse interpretations, Clause 2 establishes a hermeneutic rule for reading the Bible in its “plain and canonical sense, respectful of the church’s historic and consensual reading.” This clause upholds the unity and clarity of Scripture which is useful for comforting the believer and building up the church (cf. 2 Timothy 3:16 and Cranmer’s Scripture Collect).

The Jerusalem Declaration is eirenic and ecumenical. It seeks to embrace Evangelical, catholic, and charismatic strains of contemporary Anglicanism. It also seeks unity among all orthodox Christians, distinguishing between essential truths and secondary matters (*adiaphora*). While recognizing that this distinction can be and often is disputed, the Gafcon movement is “eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3). On this basis, its Primates Council in 2015 commissioned a task force, with diverse members, to study the contentious issue of women in the episcopate.

The Jerusalem Declaration calls for church discipline. Clause 13 reads as follows: “We reject the authority of those churches and leaders who have denied the orthodox faith in word or deed. We pray for them and call on them to repent and return to the Lord.” Even as Global Anglicans seek unity and peace, they also recognize that heresy and schism have existed in the church since apostolic times. In their indictment, they claim as a “fact” that certain Anglican churches have been holding a false Gospel and that the Communion Instruments have failed to discipline those churches. On this basis, Gafcon churches have declared themselves out of communion with those churches and have recognized alternate jurisdictions. This break in fellowship was done only after a decade of fruitless negotiation. Nor is Gafcon being schismatic: like the Anglican Reformers, they argue that those who rejected Lambeth I.10 have in effect embraced schism. “Who moved?” it is saying.

Finally, clause 13 holds out the goal of church discipline – repentance, reconciliation, and restoration – with the hope that God may grant revisionists repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth (2 Timothy 2:25). Just as there are always two sides to a marital separation or divorce, so there are two sides to discipline. To be sure, the revisionist side owns the primary fault of breaking the Communion, but Global Anglicans recognize their own failures and accountability (see clause 8), and they beseech the Bridegroom to sanctify and cleanse His church that she might be holy and without blemish (Ephesians 5:26-27).

Before the 2018 Gafcon Assembly, Archbishop Welby warned the English bishops not to attend because to affirm clause 13 would abrogate their “good disagreement” with fellow revisionist bishops in the Church of England. What happens now that that House of Bishops as a body has openly endorsed false doctrine and practice? A painful time lies ahead for those in the Church of England. Clause 13, as I see it, gives those within and without a place to stand.

Finally, the Jerusalem Declaration is amendable. There is good precedent for this. Recall, for instance, that the original Nicene Creed in 325 AD was amended at the Council of Constantinople in 381, and Thomas Cranmer’s Forty-two Articles in 1553 became the Thirty-nine Articles in 1563. To be sure, no formulary should be lightly revised, but neither should it be sacrosanct. As I recall, the Statement Group in 2008 never considered the issues surrounding human life, such as abortion, euthanasia, genetic engineering, gender identity, and artificial intelligence, yet these matters are bound up in the larger attack on God’s creation of humankind and His lordship over life and death. I hope the Gafcon and Global South leadership will carefully weigh these issues and amend the Declaration at the right time.

The Jerusalem Declaration has been accepted as an authoritative confession of faith for those churches of the Gafcon fellowship, and attendees at the upcoming meeting in Kigali are asked to affirm it. It has been included in the “Documentary Foundations” of the Anglican Church in

North America. It has also been endorsed by the Global South Fellowship. It is my hope that it may serve as a basis for a future Communion of Global Anglicans (Thesis 13).

THESIS 10: THE PRIMATES COUNCIL

The Jerusalem Conference established a Primates Council independent of the Lambeth “Instruments” and authorized it to recognize new confessing Anglican jurisdictions. Subsequently, the Gafcon Primates Council has recognized the Anglican Church in North America, the Anglican Church in Brazil, and a number of “Branches” inside existing unfaithful Anglican provinces.

COMMENT

I recall the following anecdote from my dear friend John Rodgers. As John headed off for one of the many Anglican meetings he was involved with in the late '90s, his wife Blanche said to him: “John, don’t just come back with another statement.” Shortly after, John came back from a meeting in Singapore consecrated as an extra-provincial bishop in the Anglican Communion!

This was the spirit which most attendees brought to GAFCON 2008. So there was great rejoicing as the eight Primates present – Peter Akinola of Nigeria, Henry Orombi of Uganda, Emmanuel Kolini of Rwanda, Benjamin Nzimbi of Kenya, Valentine Mokiwa of Tanzania, Bernard Malango of Central Africa, Justice Akrofi of West Africa, and Greg Venables of the Southern Cone of South America – walked solemnly to the front of the Assembly and signed the final Statement.

The Assembly that day unanimously ratified the establishment of a new entity, as expressed in the final section:

We, the participants in the Global Anglican Future Conference, do hereby acknowledge the participating Primates of GAFCON who have called us together, and encourage them to form the initial Council of the GAFCON movement. We look forward to the enlargement of the Council and entreat the Primates to organise and expand the fellowship of confessing Anglicans.

In particular, the Assembly authorised the Primates to take emergency action within the Anglican Communion by recognizing its own Primates Council, with partially overlapping membership but independent authority of the “official” Primates Meeting. The first independent action of the new Primates Council authorised by the Jerusalem Statement was to recognize new Anglican churches:

We urge the Primates' Council to authenticate and recognise confessing Anglican jurisdictions, clergy and congregations and to encourage all Anglicans to promote the gospel and defend the faith.

A step in this direction had already been taken after 2003 when Global South churches gave recognition to those churches, clergy and laity who had felt conscience-bound to separate themselves from the Episcopal Church USA, the Anglican Church of Canada and the Anglican Province in Brazil, as noted in the Statement:

We thank God for the courageous actions of those Primates and provinces who have offered orthodox oversight to churches under false leadership, especially in North and South America.

The justification and authorization of this extraordinary action had been given in the prior sections: the indictment of certain Anglican Provinces as heretical and clause 13 of the Jerusalem Declaration, which denies their spiritual and ecclesial authority.

Now, however, those caretaker Provinces were free to allow those churches to organize their own jurisdictions, beginning in North America.

We believe this is a critical moment when the Primates' Council will need to put in place structures to lead and support the church. In particular, we believe the time is now ripe for the formation of a province in North America for the federation currently known as Common Cause Partnership to be recognised by the Primates' Council.

Since 2008, the Gafcon Primates Council has recognized two Provinces: the Anglican Church in North America (2009) and the Anglican Church in Brazil (2018) and a number of "Branches" which have not yet reached provincial status in New Zealand, Great Britain and Europe, Ireland, South Africa, Ghana, and Australia. More recently, it has recognized independent dioceses, such as the Diocese of the Southern Cross (Australia) and the Church of Confessing Anglicans Aotearoa/New Zealand.

The legitimacy of the Gafcon Primates Council and its actions has never been accepted by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the other "Instruments of Unity." While some may have been inclined to see Archbishop Welby as simply abiding by the rules of the Communion, his recent embrace of the Western agenda, coupled with his abrupt treatment of the Global South bishops who attended Lambeth 2022, should dispel any such charitable interpretation.

The Form and Future of the Primates Council

By speaking of a "*Primates Council*," Gafcon was identifying a kind of authority known to Anglicans worldwide, as they had lived within the regional Provincial structures of the

Communion for more than a century. Provinces are “episcopally led” by diocesan bishops and a metropolitan Primate and “synodically governed” by a representative assembly of bishops, clergy and laity, all in conformity with diocesan and provincial constitution and canons.

For historical reasons having to do with the Established Church of England, Provinces were considered “autonomous,” while being recognized by (“in communion with”) the Archbishop of Canterbury, who was accorded “primacy of honour” (see Thesis 2). As the Global South Provinces emerged from the shadow of colonialism, the formation of a “Primates Meeting” as an “Instrument of Communion” and the idea of “enhanced primatial authority” had been promoted by successive Lambeth Conferences. Then when the crisis of truth arose following Lambeth 1998, the Archbishop of Canterbury unilaterally decided that the Global South Primates had overstepped their bounds.

There was, however, no formal reason preventing a group of Primates from constituting their own Council, just as there was no formal reason preventing global Anglicans from recognizing a new entity as legitimate and authoritative. According to the Statement from GAFCON II in Nairobi in 2013: “We believe we have acted as an important and effective instrument of Communion during a period in which other instruments of Communion have failed both to uphold gospel priorities in the Church, and to heal the divisions among us.” In a similar fashion, the Gafcon movement now looks to its Assemblies to exercise the kind of function held by previous Lambeth Conferences.

Many in the Gafcon movement – and even more in the Global South Fellowship – are looking ahead to a church order based on “conciliarism,” which makes church councils, guided by a Covenant, to be the locus of unity for the Communion. There is a long history of church councils, from the first Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15 to the ecumenical councils of the early church, which commend conciliar governance of the church, from the local to the national to the international level.

But conciliarism is not enough. One could argue that the structure of the official Anglican Communion *is* conciliar, with subsidiary levels of representation, dialogue and oversight built into its “Instruments,” and it functioned adequately for its first century. The crumbling of the Anglican ethos is due to the undermining of its foundation by a false and demonic ideology, which replaced the truth of the Gospel with a lie and is out to destroy the precious children of the heavenly Father.

That is why reforming and reordering the Communion must begin by speaking the truth in love to those who are promoting a false Gospel, by separating from the false structures of the Communion, and by restoring the biblical foundations and mission of Anglicanism to preach the Gospel to all nations. The Jerusalem Declaration, as I see it, gets those priorities straight. From

that start, God willing, good structures of order can be returned to the global Anglican Communion.

The next four Theses will sketch certain directions this movement may take.

THE NEXT STEP: FORMATION OF A NEW COMMUNION OF CHURCHES

Introduction to Theses 11-14

In this third section of my commentary, I intend to sketch the movement of Global South Anglicans in the decade-and-a-half after GAFCON 2008, during which *two opposing roads* were charted for the future of the Anglican Communion. One road – that taken by many churches in the West - was identified by Gafcon based on a false Gospel and leading to destruction. The other road was grounded in faithfulness to God’s Word as expressed in historic Anglican formularies and lived out in a worldwide community of churches. The divergence of these two roads has become critical as the Church of England and Archbishop of Canterbury have made their unfortunate choice. In reacting to this crisis, Gafcon and the Global South Fellowship have taken *two parallel lanes of this second road*, but it is now time for those lanes to converge.

Where do Global Anglicans go from here? That will be my proposal for GAFCON and the Global South Fellowship: *a united communion of gospel-centered Global Anglicans independent of Canterbury*.

THESIS 11: PARALLEL LANES TOWARD A NEW COMMUNION

In its “Letter to the Churches” from Jerusalem in 2018, the Gafcon Assembly urged the Archbishop of Canterbury to invite bishops from the Gafcon churches in North America and Brazil and to disinvite those bishops who had rejected and violated the teaching of Lambeth Resolution I.10, with a warning that otherwise Gafcon bishops would once again not attend the next Lambeth Conference.

COMMENT

2008. Gafcon was launched. A movement of global Anglicans had taken its stand. A clear and concise statement of identity had been published in the Jerusalem Statement and Declaration. A Council of Primates began to meet and recognize alternate jurisdictions within the Communion.

The next decade was to see two further Conferences, GAFCON II in Nairobi (2013) and GAFCON III again in Jerusalem (2018). By this time there had been significant retirements of leading Primates, Peter Akinola and Henry Orombi, and the emergence of new Primates, Nicholas Okoh from Nigeria, Eliud Wabukala from Kenya, and Robert Duncan from the Anglican Church in North America. Archbishop Peter Jensen, while not a Primate, served as General Secretary during this decade, assisted by Bishop Martyn Minns and the Rev. Charles

Raven. Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali was to serve as an important theological advisor during these years.

The Gafcon Primates met regularly, semi-annually or annually, in person or by Zoom. Six months after GAFCON I, the Primates admitted the Anglican Church in North America as a full-fledged Province and seated Archbishop Robert Duncan as a member of the Primates Council. Bob Duncan had been the architect of the Common Cause movement that brought together North American Anglicans under one banner, and he contributed his wisdom now to the global scene.

GAFCON II was held in the tense atmosphere following an Islamist bombing two weeks before in Nairobi. Despite strict security protocols, 1,358 gathered in the same spirit of fellowship and worship as in Jerusalem five years before. The “[Nairobi Communique and Commitment](#)” reaffirmed the work of GAFCON I:

Our willingness to submit to the written Word of God and our unwillingness to be in Christian fellowship with those who will not, is clearly expressed in The Jerusalem Statement and Declaration. This means that the divisions in the Anglican Communion will not be healed without a change of heart from those promoting the false gospel, and to that end we pray.

The Communique was jointly read at the final Assembly by the Rev. Canon Dr. John and Mrs. (Dr.) Ruth Senyonyi of Uganda. John and Ruth are heirs of the East African Revival (many of the early Revivalists were married couples), and they highlighted the Conference theme of repentance, both personal and institutional.

GAFCON III was held again in Jerusalem, attended by 1,950 delegates from 50 countries. In the Conference statement – “Letter to the Churches” – Gafcon grounded its ecclesial identity in the Gospel: “The Gospel of God creates the Church of God.” The Gospel, it says, leads to proclamation and reformation, which requires confronting the false Gospel which had continued unaddressed by Canterbury. For this reason, the Gafcon bishops warned Justin Welby that they would not attend the upcoming Lambeth Conference unless he invited the bishops of the Anglican Church in North America and the Anglican Church of Brazil and refused invitation to those churches that had defied Lambeth I.10.

GAFCON III also addressed the matter of perpetuating its mission. While the structure of Primatial governance had followed naturally from the existing Communion practice, in some cases when a Primate retired, the successor did not share his commitment to Gafcon and the Province was lost or divided. The Letter to the Churches proposed a Council of Advisors for each Province to give deeper rooting in the life of the churches. This proposal, while approved by the Assembly, has not been carried out as yet.

The Global South Fellowship

I described (Thesis 6) the diversion in the road between Gafcon and the Global South Fellowship when Archbishop John Chew was appointed to head the Lambeth-sponsored covenant process. Until that time, almost all Global South Anglicans favored some sort of covenant as a way forward, and in a real sense the Jerusalem Statement was a preamble of sorts to such a covenant. The “official” Anglican Communion Covenant went through three editions, each doctrinally weaker, and under intense pressure from the Left, Rowan Williams gutted it of any disciplinary authority. Recognizing its weakness, South East Asia appended a long “Preamble” to its Letter of Accession. In the meantime, many churches in Gafcon and then the Episcopal Church and Church of England rejected it. The truth was simple: there was no way to paper over the divide between orthodoxy and heresy in the Anglican Communion.

The Global South Fellowship began again in 2016 to draft a detailed “[Covenantal Structure for the Global South Fellowship of Anglican Churches](#).” This proposal has many of the same features of the Jerusalem Statement. It defines the Anglican Communion in terms of its historical origin and its Reformation formularies, and it makes no mention of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the “Instruments of Unity.” Its “Fundamental Declarations” largely overlap with the Jerusalem Declaration. In line with clause 13, the covenant declares that “our churches are out of communion” with those who allow same-sex blessings or marriage or ordination of those in same-sex unions.

The Global South Covenant outlines a governing structure far more detailed than the Jerusalem Statement, but one can see basic similarities in the role of Provinces and dioceses (“Branches”), of periodic Assemblies, and of mutual accountability.

The parallel lanes seem to be converging. The only major matter that separated them was tactical: whether or not to attend the Lambeth Conference in 2022.

THESIS 12: AFTER LAMBETH 2022

Archbishop Welby dismissed Gafcon as a mere pressure group, ignored its plea, and has sought to divide and conquer its members. Three Provinces and their Primates (Nigeria, Uganda, and Rwanda), representing over 30 million Anglicans, chose not to attend the Lambeth Conference in 2020 and explained their determination not to associate with heretics. Another group of Primates and bishops, representing nearly 10 million Anglicans of the Global South Fellowship of Anglican Churches, attended Lambeth, appealed to the Conference to uphold Lambeth I.10 and refused Communion with those who violated it. As ever, Canterbury and the Conference ignored their appeal.

COMMENT

GAFCON III addressed its appeal to Canterbury along with a warning of absenting its bishops from the 2020 Lambeth Conference. Covid-19, however, had other ideas, and Lambeth was rescheduled for July-August 2022. But no amount of time was needed by Archbishop Welby to turn a deaf ear to what he contemptuously called a “ginger group.” There would be no invitations forthcoming to the bishops of the Anglican Church in North America and the Anglican Church of Brazil.

As Lambeth 2022 drew near, three of the Gafcon Primates from among the largest Anglican Provinces – Henry Ndukuba of Nigeria, Laurent Mbanda of Rwanda, and Stephen Kaziimba of Uganda – published a [forthright statement](#) of their position:

The Anglican Communion has been in a crisis of unity, faith, and ethics since about two decades ago. Although the presenting issue is the recognition of homosexual relations and consecration of active Gay Bishops by The Episcopal Church (of America) and allied Provinces, the underlying question has been that of Biblical revisionism, arising from the adoption of secular culture within the Church.

The Anglican Church in the West is in rebellion; having rejected fundamental beliefs in the authority of the Holy Bible, sound Biblical ethics, uniqueness, and Lordship of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. This is a form of apostasy, which Jesus Christ warned against in Matthew 16:11.

The Anglican Communion is undoubtedly experiencing spiritual warfare between the Kingdom of God and that of Satan. The cry of Moses, “Who is on The Lord’s side?” (Exodus 32:36) calls for the crucial decision which all genuine Christians and church denominations must make at this period.

Consequently, the bishops of three Provinces stayed away from the Lambeth Conference *en bloc*. The Primate of Kenya and other individual bishops joined in this boycott.

In the meantime, a second approach – I would call it a strategy of engagement – was taken by the Global South Fellowship: to attend Lambeth with the [stated objectives](#) to:

- Foster the Unity of the Orthodox, whilst being a faithful witness, and defender of ‘the faith once delivered’;
- Sound a ‘Clarion Call’ to Biblical Faithfulness, including seeking the ‘re-affirmation of Lambeth 1.10’ as the ‘official teaching’ of the Anglican Church on marriage and sexuality;

- Stand by GSFA's principle of not being a 'breakaway group' from the Anglican Communion. (GSFA sees itself, and seeks to be part of, the 'holy remnant' that God has preserved in the Anglican Communion), and to
- Spur on the faithful in the Communion to get the Gospel out into the world, earnestly defending the purity of the faith in order that it might be propagated to a lost and needy world.

On this basis, several Gafcon Primates and Provinces, whose membership overlapped with the Global South Fellowship, attended Lambeth. Justin Welby saw the willingness to attend as an opportunity to split the Global South opposition. He had no intention, however, of acceding to their substantive objectives or of affirming Lambeth I.10 without insisting on "good disagreement" and "walking together" with those who openly violated it. This duplicity resulted in several stressful confrontations with Global South leaders and their refusing to take Communion at the final plenary worship.

If there is any doubt about the direction the Archbishop of Canterbury intends to take, it has been settled by his recent support of same-sex blessings in the Church of England.

So the question for the Gafcon movement and the Global South Fellowship is this: in what sense do they, in fact, constitute the Anglican Communion? As I noted (Thesis 8), since GAFCON 2008 no one intends to "leave" the Anglican Communion, but neither are they willing to compromise the fundamental doctrine, discipline and worship of classic Anglicanism. What may be emerging from the past year is the conviction that the "official" Communion and its Instruments have forfeited their birthright and legacy and have set out on another road to a far country.

Does there come a time when the Lord declares that a particular people are "not my people"? Looking through the prism of his own broken marriage, the prophet Hosea wrestled with this question with regard to the Northern Kingdom of Israel (Hosea 1). The Lord made clear to him that the current kingdom – "the house of Jehu" – would be destroyed and that its claim to represent God's covenant people was null and void. Yet at the same time, He assured Hosea that the Covenant itself remained unbroken and that He would ultimately unite His people under one Head.

Those of us in North America passed through a similar quandary. At what point, we asked, has the official church forfeited its claim to authority? At what point must a person come out and say of his beloved church, "You are not my people." For most of us in North America this was a decades-long struggle, but when we finally did depart or were expelled, the Gafcon Primates and the Global South Fellowship recognized the Anglican Church in North America not as a "breakaway group" nor as one option alongside the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church

of Canada but as the legitimate replacement for two churches that had become irrecoverably heretical and hence schismatic.

This same troubling question is now raised for the Communion as a whole and its Instruments.

THESIS 13: A NEW COMMUNION OF CHURCHES

Plans should be laid at the 2023 Gafcon Assembly in Kigali – in conjunction with the Global South Fellowship – authorizing a working group to develop and present a final proposal for a revived, reformed, and reordered Communion to a joint Assembly in Jerusalem in 2028. This proposed new Communion – the “Jerusalem Communion of Global Anglicans” or the “Global Anglican Communion” – will fulfil Gafcon’s original vision to be an instrument of revival of historic Anglican faith and mission based on the confession of the Jerusalem Declaration. The final proposal will develop further covenantal structures of governance and mutual accountability appropriate to a communion of churches.

COMMENT

The proposal of forming a Communion of Global Anglicans is both visionary and practical.

I suppose the most powerful vision of the Church triumphant is found in the penultimate chapter of the Bible:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband... It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed – on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. (Rev 21:1-2,12-27)

While the Church expectant here on earth hardly compares with the glory that is to come, there are points of continuity.

- She is a forerunner of the Kingdom of God, as promised by Jesus Himself.
- She is holy, and her members, while sinners, are justified by faith in Christ and sanctified by the Holy Spirit in what Paul calls the mystery of Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:32).

- Her sanctity is set apart by a moral and spiritual wall of separation from those who have refused God.
- She participates in the fellowship of the angels, who watch over and guard the identity and sanctity of the churches on earth.
- Her gates open in all directions of the compass, fulfilling the promise to Abraham “that in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed” (Gen 28:14).
- Her foundation is that of the apostles’ teaching, fellowship, worship, and evangelism and in particular in the apostolic scripture and the apostolic ministry (Acts 2:42-47; 1 Timothy 4:12-16).

This vision is defined succinctly in the Creeds as the “one holy catholic and apostolic Church.” No one tradition, however ancient or however widespread, has an exclusive claim to this vision, but the Anglican tradition is one of those widely recognized and respected throughout the world today.

So what makes a *communion* of churches? The Church in the New Testament is described in terms of *koinonia*, usually translated “fellowship” or “participation.” In its deepest sense, *koinonia* proceeds from the relations of love of the Persons of the Triune God. St. Paul confers *koinonia* on the Church in this blessing: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the *koinonia* of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (2 Corinthians 13:14).

Likewise, St John identifies the goal of the proclamation of the Gospel is *koinonia* with God and *koinonia* among believers:

that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have *fellowship* with us; and indeed our *fellowship* is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.... If we say we have *fellowship* with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have *fellowship* with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:3,6-7)

Just as John connects *koinonia* with the blood of Jesus, so Paul speaks of the *participation* in the body and blood of Christ which believers enjoy when they take and eat the bread and drink the wine of the Eucharist (1 Corinthians 10:16).

Koinonia is also a sign of the Church’s unity in Christ, according to Jesus’ high priestly prayer that “they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us (John 17:21). So Paul exhorts his church in Philippi to seek unity: “So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any *participation* in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind” (Philippians 2:1-2).

I have dwelt on the sacred background for “communion” in order to distinguish the church from a mere political assembly or social club. To be sure, the church at every level will be ordered in some way, often reflecting secular polities, e.g., with a constitution and rules of order. The word “covenant,” even in secular usage, carries an added weight, being enacted before God. For this reason, I think the idea of an Anglican Covenant is appropriate for an Anglican communion of churches.

So now I turn to the practicalities of a revived, reformed and reordered communion, uniting the work of Gafcon and the Global South Fellowship. What’s in a name? I’m suggesting “Jerusalem Communion of Global Anglicans” or “Global Anglican Communion” as making clear the continuity with the historic Anglican Communion. “We are not leaving the Anglican Communion, we *are* the Anglican Communion!” many have said since 2008. True perhaps, but while we cherish our bonds of affection as part of the *ecclesia Anglicana*, wrangling over titles is not Christ’s way. Let’s leave the historic name to Canterbury for safe-keeping.

The thought behind adding “Jerusalem” to the name is this: the new communion will not claim an historic see, but Jerusalem was chosen for the first Global Anglican Future Conference and for decennial Assemblies thereafter; and for Christians everywhere, Jerusalem is our “mother,” our heavenly destination (Galatians 4:26), and the place from whence the Spirit-empowered Gospel was taken to the ends of the earth.

I am suggesting – and it is merely a suggestion – that the leadership of Gafcon and Global South Fellowship aim toward producing a final covenantal structure to be inaugurated in 2028.

Why wait so long? Simply because establishing such a revived, reformed and reordered communion is a solemn, historic act. The formation of the Christian Church and of the Church of England and of the Anglican Communion itself took time, and indeed the coming to be of Gafcon and the Global South Fellowship have their own histories, travelling along what I have called “parallel lanes.” As I see it, each group has brought valuable resources – especially the Jerusalem Statement and Declaration and the proposal for an Anglican Covenant – but they should be carefully integrated. Finally, each of the Provinces and regions – from Africa, Asia, Australia, North and South America, and, yes, from Europe – have their own cultural and theological distinctives. Would it not be worthwhile to take counsel diligently and patiently so as to include all these Anglican jurisdictions in a new communion of churches?

The Constitution of the United States of America has been seen – rightly, in my opinion – as a model of political governance which has lasted for nearly a quarter of a millennium. It was not arrived at in a day. It began with a Declaration of principle, that “all men are created equal and are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights.” That Declaration united the

Founders, at the risk of their lives, to enter into a War of Independence with the King of England and even with “loyalists” at home. The new republic was established under a makeshift “Articles of Confederation” that failed to balance the roles of the central government and the semi-autonomous States. In 1787, five years after the war ended, a Convention was called among the wisest of the nation’s leaders, which proposed a new Constitution, instituted “in order to form a more perfect Union.” That Constitution was debated vigorously, to which was added ten Amendments – the Bill of Rights. And, tragically, even that Constitution failed to carry through its fundamental principle by bowing to one stubborn faction and leaving the abomination of slavery in place – a failure which our nation has paid for in bloodshed, strife, and shame even to this day.

The purpose of my analogy here is strictly limited. **I am not proposing** a constitution like that of the United States or even like that of Provincial constitutions and canons. A global communion is something more like an international treaty entity, in which national and regional churches have significantly more sovereignty. What I am saying is that we are at an historic moment in the life of the Anglican Communion, and it will repay leadership to work together and employ a “strategy of time” to come to one mind.

Thesis 13 is offered with no precise blueprint in mind, just a conviction that if the current leadership of Gafcon and the Global South Fellowship will come together and confer, the Lord may have mercy on His Church and lead this movement into the future.

Thesis 14: WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO GLOBAL ANGLICANS?

“Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?” (Isaiah 43:19). The first Global Anglican Future Conference in 2008 proclaimed that it was “not just a moment in time but a movement in the Spirit.” Fifteen years later, Global Anglicans are being called to assume leadership of a revived, reformed, and reordered Anglican Communion worldwide.

COMMENT

And Samuel said to all the house of Israel, “If you are returning to the LORD with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your heart to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.” So the people of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtaroth, and they served the LORD only.... Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, “Thus far the LORD has helped us.” (1 Samuel 7:3-4,12)

These Fourteen Theses represent an attempt to sketch a providential history of global Anglicanism over the past twenty-five years. There is biblical precedent for this attempt in the prophetic history that runs from Deuteronomy through Kings, which details God’s judgement on the persistent idolatry of Israel that led to the overthrow of David’s kingdom, the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple, and the exile of the people, to be followed by the dawn of a new age and a new covenant.

These Theses describe an “Ebenezer moment” for the Anglican Communion and propose a critical next step: a costly but necessary separation from the Church of England as the mother church and from the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury as a focus of Anglican unity. In truth, this separation has been happening since 1998, as Global Anglicans have begun charting their own way forward.

Any genuine reform of the Church involves a threefold cord: renewal of faith and mission; reform of doctrine, discipline, and worship; and reordering of church polity at the local, regional and international levels. This pattern was true in ancient Israel, in the early church, and at the Protestant Reformation in Europe and England. The challenge for contemporary Anglicanism is to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches in the context of Global Anglicanism.

This proposal is offered to Global Anglicans as they assemble in Kigali in April 2023. It reflects my own focus on the “movement in the Spirit” that took place in Jerusalem in 2008. It is offered as well to the Global South Fellowship of Anglican Churches, which will meet in 2024. The Global South Fellowship is a sister movement with Gafcon, with overlapping memberships and visions. Gafcon has contributed the movement’s best formulary in the Jerusalem Declaration; the Global South Fellowship has approved a Covenant, which can serve as a first step in constituting a new Communion.

I write today from Lent’s long shadows and the “darkling plain” of contemporary Western nihilism.

“Yet even now,” declares the LORD, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments.” Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster. Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the LORD your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion; consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather the people. Consecrate the congregation; assemble the elders... (Joel 2:12-16a)

GAFCON IV will meet in one month's time in the dawn of the Easter season, looking toward Pentecost. May the spirit of Samuel, the spirit of Joel, the spirit of Isaiah, the Spirit of the Incarnate and Risen Lord invade that gathering. For without repentance nothing is possible, but with God all things are possible.

Stephen Noll
25 March 2023


<p>The Rev. Dr. Stephen Noll is Professor Emeritus of Trinity School for Ministry and former Vice Chancellor of Uganda Christian University in Mukono, Uganda. Professor Noll was a member of the Statement Group of GAFCON I-III and has written two books on the subject of contemporary Anglicanism: <i>The Global Anglican Communion: Contending for Anglicanism 1993-2018</i> (Anglican House, 2018) and <i>The Gospel of God and the Church of God: Global Anglican Essays</i> (Anglican House, 2020). He is a priest in the Anglican Church in North America and resides in Sewickley, Pennsylvania.</p>	 A portrait photograph of Rev. Dr. Stephen Noll. He is a middle-aged man with dark hair, wearing a white clerical collar and a brown suit jacket over a dark shirt. He is smiling slightly and looking directly at the camera. The background is a solid blue color.
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Photo Credit: Bishops on Mount of Olives, GAFCON 2008