

The Jerusalem Declaration of Gafcon, July 2008

In the name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit:

We, the participants in the Global Anglican Future Conference, have met in the land of Jesus' birth. We express our loyalty as disciples to the King of kings, the Lord Jesus. We joyfully embrace his command to proclaim the reality of his kingdom which he first announced in this land. The gospel of the kingdom is the good news of salvation, liberation and transformation for all. In light of the above, 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.

1. We rejoice in the gospel of God through which we have been saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. Because God first loved us, we love him and as believers bring forth fruits of love, ongoing repentance, lively hope and thanksgiving to God in all things.

2. We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God written and to contain all things necessary for salvation. The Bible is to be translated, read, preached, taught and obeyed in its plain and canonical sense, respectful of the church's historic and consensual reading.

3. We uphold the four Ecumenical Councils and the three historic Creeds as expressing the rule of faith of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

4. We uphold the Thirty-nine Articles as containing the true doctrine of the Church agreeing with God's Word and as authoritative for Anglicans today.

5. We gladly proclaim and submit to the unique and universal Lordship of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, humanity's only Saviour from sin, judgement and hell, who lived the life we could not live and died the death that we deserve. By his atoning death and glorious resurrection, he secured the redemption of all who come to him in repentance and faith.

6. We rejoice in our Anglican sacramental and liturgical heritage as an expression of the gospel, and

we uphold the 1662 Book of Common Prayer as a true and authoritative standard of worship and prayer, to be translated and locally adapted for each culture.

7. We recognise that God has called and gifted bishops, priests and deacons in historic succession to equip all the people of God for their ministry in the world. We uphold the classic Anglican Ordinal as an authoritative standard of clerical orders.

8. We acknowledge God's creation of humankind as male and female and the unchangeable standard of Christian marriage between one man and one woman as the proper place for sexual intimacy and the basis of the family. We repent of our failures to maintain this standard and call for a renewed commitment to lifelong fidelity in marriage and abstinence for those who are not married.

9. We gladly accept the Great Commission of the risen Lord to make disciples of all nations, to seek those who do not know Christ and to baptise, teach and bring new believers to maturity.

10. We are mindful of our responsibility to be good stewards of God's creation, to uphold and advocate justice in society, and to seek relief and empowerment of the poor and needy.

11. We are committed to the unity of all those who know and love Christ and to building authentic ecumenical relationships. We recognise the orders and jurisdiction of those

Anglicans who uphold orthodox faith and practice, and we encourage them to join us in this declaration.

12. We celebrate the God-given diversity among us which enriches our global fellowship, and we acknowledge freedom in secondary matters. We pledge to work together to seek the mind of Christ on issues that divide us.

13. 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.

14. We rejoice at the prospect of Jesus' coming again in glory, and while we await this final event of history, we praise him for the way he builds up his church through his Spirit by miraculously changing lives.



Response of The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams

The Final Statement from the GAFCON meeting in Jordan and Jerusalem contains much that is positive and encouraging about the priorities of those who met for prayer and pilgrimage in the last week. The 'tenets of orthodoxy' spelled out in the document will be acceptable to and shared by the vast majority of Anglicans in every province, even if there may be differences of emphasis and perspective on some issues. I agree that the Communion needs to be united in its commitments on these matters, and I have no doubt that the Lambeth Conference will wish to affirm all these positive aspects of GAFCON's deliberations. Despite the claims of some, the conviction of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as Lord and God and the absolute imperative of evangelism are not in dispute in the common life of the Communion

However, GAFCON's proposals for the way ahead are problematic in all sorts of ways, and I urge those who have outlined these to think very carefully about the risks entailed.

A 'Primates' Council' which consists only of a self-selected group from among the Primates of the Communion will not pass the test of legitimacy for all in the Communion. And any claim to be free to operate across provincial boundaries is fraught with difficulties, both theological and practical – theological because of our historic commitments to mutual recognition of ministries in the Communion, practical because of the obvious strain of responsibly exercising episcopal or primatial authority across enormous geographical and cultural divides.

Two questions arise at once about what has been proposed. By what authority are Primates deemed acceptable or unacceptable members of any new primatial council? And how is effective discipline to be maintained in a situation of overlapping and competing jurisdictions?

No-one should for a moment impute selfish or malicious motives to those who have offered pastoral oversight to congregations in other provinces; these actions, however we judge them, arise from pastoral and spiritual concern. But one question has repeatedly been raised which is now becoming very serious: how is a bishop or primate in another continent able to discriminate effectively between a genuine crisis of pastoral relationship and theological integrity, and a situation where there are underlying non-theological motivations at work? We have seen instances of

intervention in dioceses whose leadership is unquestionably orthodox simply because of local difficulties of a personal and administrative nature. We have also seen instances of clergy disciplined for scandalous behaviour in one jurisdiction accepted in another, apparently without due process. Some other Christian churches have unhappy experience of this problem and it needs to be addressed honestly.

It is not enough to dismiss the existing structures of the Communion. If they are not working effectively, the challenge is to renew them rather than to improvise solutions that may seem to be effective for some in the short term but will continue to create more problems than they solve. This challenge is one of the most significant focuses for the forthcoming Lambeth Conference. One of its major stated aims is to restore and deepen confidence in our Anglican identity. And this task will require all who care as deeply as the authors of the statement say they do about the future of Anglicanism to play their part.

The language of 'colonialism' has been freely used of existing patterns. No-one is likely to look back with complacency to the colonial legacy. But emerging from the legacy of colonialism must mean a new co-operation of equals, not a simple reversal of power. If those who speak for GAFCON are willing to share in a genuine renewal of all our patterns of reflection and decision-making in the Communion, they are welcome, especially in the shaping of an effective Covenant for our future together.

I believe that it is wrong to assume we are now so far apart that all those outside the GAFCON network are simply proclaiming another gospel. This is not the case; it is not the experience of millions of faithful and biblically focused Anglicans in every province. What is true is that, on all sides of our controversies, slogans, misrepresentations and caricatures abound. And they need to be challenged in the name of the respect and patience we owe to each other in Jesus Christ.

I have in the past quoted to some in the Communion who would call themselves radical the words of the Apostle in I Cor.11.33: 'wait for one another'. I would say the same to those in whose name this statement has been issued. An impatience at all costs to clear the Lord's field of the weeds that may appear among the shoots of true life (Matt.13.29) will put at risk our clarity and effectiveness in communicating just those evangelical and catholic truths which the GAFCON statement presents.

