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Gafcon Primates Council Communiqué

16-19 April 2018

Many nations shall come, and say: 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Micah 4:2

We gathered on 16-19 April 2018 in Entebbe, Uganda to share in Bible study, prayer, worship and fellowship. We give thanks for the gracious hospitality of Archbishop Stanley Ntagali and the Anglican Church of Uganda.

We began our day with Bible study led by Bishop Andy Lines, Archbishop-elect Laurent Mbanda and Archbishop Onesphore Rwaje. As we met, we finalised our plans for our upcoming conference in Jerusalem, discussed matters affecting our common life, and received updates from our Gafcon provinces and branches.

Jerusalem 2018: Proclaiming Christ Faithfully to the Nations

The third Global Anglican Future Conference (Gafcon) will be held in Jerusalem 18-22 June 2018. Jerusalem has a special place in the hearts of the Gafcon movement as it was the location of our inaugural conference in 2008. The city stands as a constant reminder of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the apostles' proclamation of the gospel, and the birth of the Church. By returning to Jerusalem we are expressing our determination to remain true to the teachings of Jesus.

The theme of the conference is “Proclaiming Christ faithfully to the Nations.” Gafcon III offers authentic global fellowship in the Anglican Communion. In 2008, over 1,100 lay and clergy delegates attended, and at the second conference, in Nairobi in 2013, this number grew to over 1,500. On this, the tenth anniversary of Gafcon, we are expecting around 2,000 delegates from over 50 countries. During the conference the plenary sessions will be translated into French, Spanish, and Portuguese.

Welcoming New Primates

We welcomed the Most Rev. Justin Badi, Primate-elect of the Province of South Sudan and we welcomed the Most Rev. Laurent Mbanda, Primate-elect of the Province of Rwanda. Upon their enthronements, both will be eligible for election to the Primates Council.

Recognising a New Province in Brazil

The Anglican Diocese of Recife, Brazil has been a diocese that has related extra-provincially to Gafcon since 2008. Through its church-planting efforts, the Diocese of Recife is spreading the gospel across Brazil, and has grown into a province. We recognise them as a province in the Anglican Communion and have approved the installation of the Rt Rev. Miguel Ochoa as the first Primate of the Province. We look forward to his membership of the Primates Council.

Welcoming the New Branch in Ireland

We give thanks for the formation of Gafcon Ireland, the newest branch of the movement which was launched yesterday in Belfast. The dedicated work that has been done by faithful Anglicans in Ireland has been superb, and we commend this as a model for the formation of future branches.

Pray for the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia

We are grateful for the faithful witness of the New Zealand branch of Gafcon, and rejoice in their recent conferences which attracted around 500 faithful Anglicans. The Anglican Church in

Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia has regrettably been laying the groundwork to consider the approval of same-sex blessings. Please be in prayer for our brothers and sisters as they stand firm for the gospel. As Primates of Gafcon we are ready to support and encourage orthodox Anglicans in the province in any way we can in the days ahead.

The Panel of Assistance

Last year we established the Panel of Assistance to provide feedback and advice to the Primates Council on matters affecting our fellowship. The panel held its first round of meetings this year in the Americas, Africa, Europe and Oceania. The first task given to the panel was to consider the report of the Task Force on Women in the Episcopate. This report recommended: “The provinces of Gafcon should retain the historic practice of the consecration only of men as bishops until and unless a strong consensus to change emerges after prayer, consultation, and the continued study of Scripture among the Gafcon fellowship.”

The regional meetings of the Panel gave overwhelming support for the recommendation. We therefore affirmed our commitment to this recommendation. During our time together, the Primate-elect of South Sudan also supported this commitment.

New Structure

Gafcon is a movement, but it is more than a movement. It is also a body which authenticates those who share a common commitment to the Bible and a common Anglican heritage. In 2008, we called for the formation of the Anglican Church in North America, in 2017 we consecrated a Missionary Bishop for Europe, and now in 2018 we have affirmed the formation of the Anglican Church in Brazil.

As we have grown over the last decade, we have recognised the need to develop more structure for our fellowship so as to sustain our common life. The Panel of Assistance has been the first step in this direction. In Jerusalem, we shall propose that the Panel of Assistance be expanded to form a Council of Advisors which will enable all levels of the Church (bishops, priests, deacons and laity) to be represented. This Council, if approved by the delegates in Jerusalem, would provide the

opportunity for each province and branch to seat 3 members in the Council: one bishop, one priest/deacon, and a member of the laity.

The October 2017 Primates' Meeting in Canterbury

Some of our members who lead the largest provinces in the Anglican Communion chose on principle not to attend the 2017 Primates' Meeting. However, we received a report from those members who did choose to attend.

We are grieved that the Communiqué from that meeting did not accurately describe the relationships that have been broken by The Episcopal Church, the Anglican Church of Canada, and the Scottish Episcopal Church. These provinces have torn the fabric of the Anglican Communion. They are not walking together with us. The Communiqué also did not accurately describe the Anglican Church in North America, which we recognised as a Province in the Anglican Communion. In addition, in addressing cross-border interventions, the Communiqué failed to recognise that there is no moral equivalence between border crossing, which arises "from a deep concern for the welfare of Anglicans in the face of innovation", and the innovations themselves (Dar es Salaam Communiqué 2007).

We were disappointed both in the content of the Communiqué and the process of its production. The Communiqué was not made available until the very last day of the meeting, and there was not adequate time to consider its content. At the moment when trust between the provinces of the Anglican Communion is exceptionally fragile, this was not an event that facilitated healing and reconciliation. Instead, the Primates' Meeting in Canterbury has contributed to a deepening of the divide in our beloved Communion.

The Global South of the Anglican Communion

We give thanks for our fellowship with our brothers and sisters in the Global South, and look forward to increasing our partnership in the gospel. We recognise that our complementary callings within the Anglican Communion build up the whole body of Christ, and the strengthening of the collaboration between us brings us much joy.

Conclusion

As we set our eyes towards Jerusalem, we invite our supporters to a season of prayer. Please pray for safe travel for our delegates, and a fresh outpouring of God's grace as we gather to proclaim Christ faithfully to the nations.

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Habakkuk 2:14

Primates:

The Most Rev. Nicholas Okoh, Nigeria (Chairman)

The Most Rev. Stanley Ntagali, Uganda (Vice-Chairman)

The Most Rev. Foley Beach, North America

The Most Rev. Jacob Chimeledya, Tanzania

The Most Rev. Masimango Katanda, Congo

The Most Rev. Onesphore Rwaje, Rwanda

The Most Rev. Gregory Venables, South America

Branch Representatives:

The Most Rev. Glenn Davies, Australia

The Rt Rev. Andy Lines, United Kingdom

The Rev. Jay Behan, New Zealand

Observers:

Primate-elect, The Rt Rev. Justin Badi, South Sudan

Primate-elect The Rt Rev. Laurent Mbanda, Rwanda