

This is a critical time - A Statement from the Global South Primates Steering Committee, London, 2007

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[Global South Steering Committee](#)

London, July 16-18, 2007

1. We are grateful for the prayers and witness of the millions of Anglicans around the world who live out their Christian faith in complex and sometimes hostile situations. Their lives and witness offer hope to a world that is in desperate need and we have been greatly encouraged by their testimony. Their commitment to the 'faith once and for all delivered to the saints' deepens our determination to stay true to the biblical revelation and our historic tradition.
2. We reaffirm our dedication to the vision of the church that has a passion to reach all those who have not yet come to a saving knowledge of Christ and one that is truly good news for the poor and freedom for those who are oppressed. We are saddened that the actions of a small part of our Communion family have caused such division, confusion and pain and we are grieved that our witness to the oneness of Christ and his Church has been sorely compromised.
3. We in the Global South remain committed to the underlying principles and recommendations of the Windsor Report and the various Communiqués that we have issued, especially the statement that was produced during the most [recent Primates' meeting](#) in Dar es Salaam. It was the result of enormous effort and heart-felt prayer and we remain convinced that it offers the best way forward for our beloved Communion. In particular, we are hopeful that the development and endorsement of an Anglican Covenant will help us move past this debilitating season into a new focus of growth and missionary zeal.
4. We were distressed by the initial response of the House of Bishops of The Episcopal Church USA [issued on March 20th, 2007](#), reaffirmed by the Executive Council on June 14th, 2007, in which they rejected the underlying principles and requests of the [Dar es Salaam Communiqué](#). We urge them, once again, to reconsider their position because it is their rejection of the clear teaching of the Church and their continuing intransigence that have divided the Church and has brought our beloved Communion to the breaking point. Without heartfelt repentance and genuine change there can be no restoration of the communion that we all earnestly desire and which is our Lord's clear intent.
5. We have also been pained to hear of the continuing and growing resort to civil litigation by The Episcopal Church against congregations and individuals which wish to remain Anglican but are unable to do so within TEC. This is in defiance of the urgent plea agreed to by all of the Primates in the Dar es Salaam Communiqué. This approach to use power and coercion to resolve our current dispute is both enormously costly and doomed to failure and again, we urge the immediate suspension of all such activities and a return to biblical practices of prayer, reconciliation and mediation.
6. Because of the categorical rejection of the unanimously agreed Pastoral Scheme and the urgent needs of the growing number of congregations now linked to various Provinces in the Global South, we have had no choice but to provide additional episcopal oversight from the concerned Provinces. We believe that failure to do so would have resulted in many individuals and congregations lost to the Anglican Communion. The rejection of the proposed Pastoral Scheme has also had a profound impact on those dioceses that had requested alternative primatial oversight. We are aware that they are exploring various ways in which they can maintain their Anglican identity apart from The Episcopal Church. We are encouraged by this and also that they are working together within the Common Cause Partnership to avoid unnecessary fragmentation. We recognize that this is a temporary measure and look forward to the time when it is either no longer necessary or they are all part of a new ecclesiastical structure in the USA.
7. We are aware of the anticipated visit by the Joint Standing Committee of the Primates and the ACC to the September meeting of the House of Bishops of The Episcopal Church USA. Sadly we are convinced that this decision, made jointly by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Chair of the ACC, undermines the integrity of the Dar es Salaam Communiqué. We believe that the Primates Meeting, which initiated the request to the TEC House of Bishops, must make any determination as to the adequacy of their response. We strongly urge the scheduling of a Primates' Meeting for this purpose at the earliest possible moment.
8. We have also noted the decisions of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada and are dismayed by their unilateral declaration that ['same-sex blessing is not core doctrine'](#). While we were grateful for the temporary restraint shown in [not proceeding with any further authorization](#), we have observed that a number of the bishops are continuing to defy the recommendations of the Windsor process. We are exploring the possibility

of additional pastoral provisions for those who want to remain faithful to Communion teaching and have been affected by the continuing actions of their own bishops.

9. We are concerned for the future of our Communion as a truly global fellowship and our witness before the world as a respected ecclesial family within the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. In regards to the proposed Lambeth Conference in 2008, we are concerned that the publicly stated expectations for participation have changed its character and function. It is now difficult to see it either as an instrument of unity or communion. At a time when the world needs a vision of reconciliation and unity, our failure to restore the 'torn fabric' of our Communion threatens to show the world a contrary example.

10. We remain committed to the convictions expressed in the CAPA report "[The Road to Lambeth](#)" and urge immediate reconsideration of the current Lambeth plans. It is impossible for us to see how, without discipline in the Communion and without the reconciliation that we urge, we can participate in the proposed conference; to be present but unable to participate in sacramental fellowship would all the more painfully demonstrate our brokenness. The polarization surrounding the Lambeth meeting has been exacerbated because we are also unable to take part in an event from which a number of our own bishops have been arbitrarily excluded while those whose actions have precipitated our current crisis are included.

11. We have received requests from around the Communion to call a gathering of Anglican Communion leaders. We expect to call a Fourth Global South Encounter to bring together faithful Anglican leaders across the Communion to renew our focus on the apostolic faith and our common mission.

12. This is a critical time for the Anglican Communion and one that will shape our future for many years to come. We are praying for all those in leadership that the decisions made and the actions taken will bring glory to God and encouragement to all God's people. We are hopeful for the future because our confidence is not in ourselves but in Jesus the Christ who gave his life that we might have life. (see John 10:10)