

The leadership of Global South Fellowship of Anglican Churches (GSFA) has clearly stated the Global South *4-fold objectives* for the upcoming Lambeth Conference: namely, unity of the orthodox, biblical faithfulness, holy remnant and world mission (see www.thegsfa.org). We therefore encourage all orthodox Bishops attending the Conference to be united for the Gospel truth, speak with one voice and to call on all Provinces to reaffirm resolution 1. 10 of the 1998 Lambeth Conference and align their faith and practice accordingly. We are thankful to our Advisor Archbishop Emeritus Mouneer for writing this article on his reflection and prayers for Lambeth 2022. We highly commend it to all orthodox Bishops to read, pray and act accordingly.

- **Archbishop Justin Badi, Chairman of GSFA**

**Prayers and Reflections for a Communion at a Crossroads
(By Archbishop Emeritus Mouneer Anis, 12 July 2022)**

A few weeks ago, the Archbishop of Canterbury called for prayer for the upcoming Lambeth Conference. I think that all who are going to attend the Conference and those who are not, need to take this important call for prayer very seriously. I personally pray for Archbishop Justin Welby and all Archbishops and Bishops attending this potentially important meeting. I pray that all participants may share their views graciously, lovingly and boldly. It is important to know that our duty is to proclaim the truth and leave the outcome to God. At the end, He is the Head of the Church.

As I started praying for the Conference, I remember Moses' words to God's people:

"...I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore, choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them." Deuteronomy 30:19-20

These words are very relevant because, at this Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Communion stands at a crossroads. One road leads to healing the current divisions and another road makes the situation worse and irreparable between the traditional and the revisionist Anglicans. There is no doubt that the Conference represents a great opportunity to resolve the Communion divisions if the Bishops are determined, have the good will, and are given the opportunity to do so.

Lambeth Conference is always a unique opportunity because it the only gathering that brings together three instruments of Communion at one meeting: the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Primates Meeting and the Bishops meeting at Lambeth Conference. If the fourth instrument, which is the ACC, is represented at least by the Anglican Communion Standing Committee, then the Conference will have all instruments present and working together. This means that decisions

taken by the Conference should carry a great moral authority. Lambeth Conference also provides a unique opportunity for a conciliatory meeting similar to the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15) during which the Apostles, guided by the Holy Spirit, found a solution for the problem that was dividing the early Church.

As a retired Bishop who attended Lambeth Conference in 2008, I remember someone describing the Conference at the time, as “Operation succeeded, patient died”. I understand why it was described in such a way. It was because the Lambeth Conference Design Committee decided that no resolution should be taken. The Committee also decided to use the South African “Indaba” way, which is used there to solve problems and disputes. However, the “Indaba” at the 2008 Conference was used as a way of mutual listening without taking decisions to sort out the problems of the Communion. In other words, the “Indaba” was emptied from its very purpose. I am sorry to say that I was a member of this Design Committee but I was one of the few who argued against these decisions.

At Lambeth Conference 2008, Cardinal Ivan Dias gave an unforgettable speech, he said:

“When we live myopically in the fleeting present, oblivious of our past heritage and apostolic traditions, we could well be suffering from spiritual Alzheimer’s. And when we behave in a disorderly manner, going whimsically our own way without any co-ordination with the head or the other members of our community, it could be ecclesial Parkinson’s.”

These words of Cardinal Dias were received with great appreciation from the vast majority of Bishops present. At that time, Dias put his finger on the painful points at the body of the Communion. We are all aware that there are Provinces who undermine the apostolic tradition we once received, and other Provinces who take unilateral decisions without any consideration of the negative impact on the rest of the Communion.

Unfortunately, some Provinces put emphasis on being autonomous and forget the necessity of being interdependent. In other words, they forget that **what affects all should be decided by all**. **This ecclesial deficit** is what the **Windsor report and the Windsor Continuation Group (WCG)** have described and made recommendations to cure this deficit, for the Communion to survive. I must mention here that the report of the WCG, submitted at Lambeth Conference 2008, is the best diagnostic and curative document for our impaired Communion. In this regard, it should be noted that the Global South Fellowship of Anglican Churches (GSFA) took the WCG recommendations seriously and developed “an enhanced ecclesial responsibility” within its new Covenantal Structure (Cairo, Oct 2019) to be a model to follow in the Anglican Communion.

I pray now so that the burning issues of the authority of Scripture, the uniqueness of Christ and human sexuality would be given the time and the priority to be discussed, and not to be left to the last days or swept under the carpet. These issues are essentials of faith and cannot be ignored. **The Church cannot deal with the brokenness of the world if she herself is broken**. Anglicans cannot say the Creed “we believe in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church” when the churches of the Communion are not of one mind in regard to the authority of Scripture or even the uniqueness of Christ as the way, the truth and the life.

I pray also for courage to resist the pressures from our societies, particularly the Western ones. These societies are pushing their moral “norms” unto the rest of the world. When the Church accepts these moral norms, she loses her distinctiveness as salt and light in our world.

I pray so that the Lord may give all those who are attending the Conference, the courage and the honesty, so that when it is said that the official teaching of the Communion, in regards to human sexuality, is Resolution 1.10, then all should respect it in its entirety and align ‘faith & practice’ with it. Otherwise, it becomes just ink on paper.

May the Lord give courage to the organisers of the Conference to admit their failure if the Conference fails to resolve the Communion problem. Other denominations have done so. It is important for Church members to know the real situation and the possible future.

Finally, I pray for unity, but not unity at the expense of the truth.

+ Mouneer

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