

Second Trumpet from 2nd Anglican Encounter in the South, Kuala Lumpur 10-15 February 1997

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[Events](#), [2nd Encounter KL 1997](#), [Statements](#), [Global South](#), [Trumpets](#), [2nd Trumpet KL 1997](#)

TRUMPET II THE ENCOUNTER STATEMENT

From 10-15 February 1997, 80 delegates, representing the Anglican Churches of the South, gathered in the beautiful city of Kuala Lumpur, to meet, know and encourage one another, in their Christian life and mission; to follow-up on the first Encounter in the South and specifically to seek God's light and wisdom as we reflect on the place of Scripture in the life and mission of the Church in the 21st century. Because the Lambeth 1998 Conference was in view, many of the delegates were Bishops or Archbishops.

We listened to a major address from the Encounter Chairman, the Most Revd Joseph A Adetiloye, Archbishop of Nigeria, on the Encounter theme, 'The Place of Scripture in the life and Mission of the Church in the 21st Century', and to one another's 'witnesses', as to how Scripture impinges on the life and mission of the Church in our different cultures and contexts. Several common issues emerged and a number of resolutions were reached as we prayed together, studied the Bible together, talked together and listened to God and one another. There was the consciousness of the presence of the Spirit of God and an awareness that people around the world were praying for us.

In every way, we sensed a spirit of commitment as we set ourselves to the task before us with a due sense of seriousness. We recognized the importance of our chosen theme for the Church at a time of difficulty and confusion in some provinces and of growth, martyrdom, dynamic missionary encouragement and quiet but powerful witness in others.

There was a significant move towards self-reliance and missionary vision as most of the delegates sponsored themselves to this Encounter. This suggests that the Churches of the South are beginning to take seriously the challenges that came to them during their first Encounter that, as a result of the current demographic shift in the world Church, the future of Christianity and the hope for the fulfillment of the Great Commission now lies with them.

The following concerns were highlighted from the keynote address, regional 'witnesses and stories, Bible studies and discussions', as we listened to God to ascertain what place Scripture should have in the life and mission of the Church as we move into the third millennium.

1. Scripture and Our Common Experience and Concerns in Society: A call to prophetic and redemptive witness

We are learning again at this Encounter, that we share in a common experience of life overshadowed by ethnic hatred, political instability and neo-colonialism, social injustice and marginalisation, crippling international debt and spiraling inflation, environmental damage and pollution, religious strife and intolerance, unbridled materialism and pervasive corruption.

We find ourselves in situation overflowing with refugees as a result of war and sometimes natural disaster; where hunger, poverty and recurrent debt combine with dehumanize our people.

In view of all this, especially the crippling effect of international debt, we call on the churches of the West to put pressure on their governments and on the World Bank and the IMF to respond to the many appeals coming from various quarters worldwide, to make the year 2000, a year of Jubilee, to remit the Two Thirds World debt.

2. Scripture and Mission

We believe that Scripture teaches that the Church exists for mission and that any Church which fails to engage in mission is a disobedient Church.

Therefore:

2.1 We call on our Communion to return to mission as the pivot of our life and ministry in the world.

2.2 We re-affirm that our understanding and practice of mission as taught by Scripture is holistic and includes an intention to make new Christians.

2.3 We reassert that mission includes engaging in dialogue with secular authorities, where possible, on the one hand, and commitment to prophetic witness as the conscience of society and the voice of God in the world, on the other, no matter what this may cost.

2.4 We further believe that our baptismal call to Christian life is a call to discipleship and mission. We therefore call for the empowerment of all the people of God for mission and for the prioritization of mission in our budgets.

2.5 We call the Church to return to faithfulness and to reliance on the Holy Spirit in the interpretation and application of Scripture.

3. Scripture and Other Faiths

3.1 We have learned in the course of this Encounter that many of us are called to live and witness to the love of God in Christ in contexts of religious pluralism. In some of these contexts, the local church is an insignificant minority. We affirm our solidarity with and prayers for those who suffer or pay the ultimate price for their faith in those situations. We thank God for those nations and governments where, because of wise leadership, people of different religions co-exist peacefully, practice and propagate their faiths without being inhibited. We praise the courage of those Christians, whose constancy in faith and witness, in some cases involving martyrdom, have resulted in exciting growth of the church in their context. This confirms to us that 'the blood of the martyrs is the seed....'

3.2 We praise the wisdom and courage of those who work to preserve the faith and maintain a faithful witness in situations where the Christian presence is threatened with extinction. We commend and encourage the witness of those who, through service of love, human compassion and other aspects of social care and advocacy, seek to draw others to experience the love of the Saviour of the world.

3.3 We have been learning in this Encounter that mission not only includes proclaiming the Gospel and converting men and women to faith in Christ, but also learning to live at peace with all persons, and being faithful to the Saviour. We encourage all Christians therefore wherever they are, to remember the words of our Lord Jesus, 'blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God.'

4. Scripture and the Youth

4.1 We have learnt again that the youth are the Church of the present and the future, and observed that in many provinces of the South, youth form an overwhelming majority of Church membership as well as of society. We therefore, call for empowerment of the youth through training and involvement, and by trusting them with responsibility.

4.2 We encourage Anglican youth to be in fellowship with one another across the Communion for mutual encouragement and envisioning. We urge the youth of the South at this Encounter to link up with those who organized the 1995 Anglican Youth Encounter as well as with the Inter-Anglican Youth Network, with a view to exploring the possibility of another Anglican Youth Encounter in the South and participation in the Inter-Anglican Youth Network events.

4.3 We urge the South-to-South Co-ordinating Group to ensure that the next Encounter in the South includes a significant input from the youth. In an age when many young people live in search of models and direction, we challenge the leadership of the Church to exemplify the ideals they proclaim. We equally challenge the youth to take their cue from the theme of this Encounter to make Scripture their rule of faith and conduct and to submit themselves to God for missionary service through the Church at home and abroad.

5. Scripture and the Church in Context

We have learned from experience in rich diversity of situations and cultures that:

5.1 The life and witness of the Church can be enriched through the unique contribution of each member.

5.2 In order to be fully and effectively 'Church' in any given context our local congregations need to be freed from the trappings of the colonial past.

5.3 While theology, worship and liturgy need to be rooted in Scripture, the Churches of the South are challenged to contextualize and make them relevant.

5.4 The life of the Communion is impoverished by the lack of direct input from the South. We therefore urge the Communion to explore ways of intentionally encouraging direct South input for the enrichment of the life and mission of the whole Church.

6. Scripture, the Family and Human Sexuality

Reflection on our Encounter theme has helped further deepen our resolve to uphold the authority of Scripture in every aspect of life, including the family and human sexuality.

Therefore:

6.1 We call on the Anglican Communion as a Church claiming to be rooted in the Apostolic and Reformed Tradition to remain true to Scripture as the final authority in all matters of faith and conduct;

6.2 We affirm that Scripture upholds marriage as a sacred relationship between a man and a woman, instituted in the creation ordinance;

6.3 We reaffirm that the only sexual expression, as taught by Scripture, which honours God and upholds human dignity is that between a man and a woman within the sacred ordinance of marriage;

6.4 We further believe that Scripture maintains that any other form of sexual expression is at once sinful, selfish, dishonouring to God and an abuse of human dignity;

6.5 We are aware of the scourge of sexual promiscuity, including homosexuality, rape and child abuse in our time. These are pastoral problems, and we call on the Churches to seek to find a pastoral and scriptural way to bring healing and restoration to those who are affected by any of these harrowing tragedies.

7. Scripture and Church Unity

7.1 Aware of the scriptural teaching on the significance of unity among Christians, we challenge our churches to examine their relationship with Christians of other denominations in their contexts.

7.2 We further challenge our Anglican Churches to recognize the missionary and pastoral implications for as well as guard the internal unity of, our Communion. Even though some of us may feel marginalized, pushed out and not recognized, yet we must also recognize our integral inter-relatedness and that we need each other. Among other things this calls for greater sensitivity to the effects of our local policies and pronouncements on those of our members who are called to witness in situations of martyrdom and religious pluralism.

7.3 We therefore call on the Primates, the Anglican Consultative Council and the Lambeth Conference to take the necessary steps to establish such new structures (or reinforce old ones) that will strengthen the bonds of affection between our provinces, and especially, make for effective mutual accountability in all matters of doctrine and polity throughout the Communion.

8. Practical Decisions

These include, among other things:

8.1 Unanimous commendation of the work of the South-to-South Co-ordinating Committee and their re-election as follows:

The Most Revd Joseph A Adetiloye; Chairman

The Most Revd Ghais Abdel Malik; Treasurer

The Revd Canon Dr James Wong; Co-ordinating Secretary

The Revd Canon Dr Sebastian Bakare; News Letter/Theo Editor

Mr Rolando Dalmas; Communications Secretary

The Revd Canon Dr Cyril Okorochoa; Director for Mission ACC

8.2 Future of South-to-South and the next Encounter

There was a strong consensus to continue and to further strengthen the South-to-South Movement and to hold the next Encounter in the Year 2000, possibly in Jerusalem. Meanwhile the South Bishops were encouraged to meet at Lambeth and to hold regional Encounters to take the Encounter vision and message of return to Scripture to the grass roots level. The Co-ordinating Committee was charged with planning and executing the next Encounter. At that Encounter a new Co-ordinating Committee will be elected.

8.3 Encounter Report

- This Encounter agreed to retain the title '**Trumpets from the South**' for the publication of the papers emerging from the two Encounters. **The Second Trumpet from the South (or Trumpet II)** is the title of the major release and resolutions from the Second Encounter only.

- Dr Cyril Okorochoa, Director for Mission and Evangelism for the Anglican Communion, is charged with the responsibility of editing and presenting the 'Second Trumpet from the South' with the Chairman's Opening Address, to the ACC and Primates' Joint Standing Committees and to the Primates' Meeting, and to St. Augustine's Seminar in preparation for Lambeth 98.

- Dr Okorochoa will also edit a fuller Report of this Encounter together with extracts from the papers of the first Encounter (Trumpets from the South) to be published in due course and circulated throughout the Communion. Anglican Encounter in the South

Kuala Lumpur 10-15 February 1997