

# The Global South Fellowship Of Anglican Churches (GSFA)

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17<sup>th</sup> Dec 2022

## CHAIRMAN'S CHRISTMAS REFLECTIONS 2022

Global South Fellowship of Anglican Churches (GSFA)

by: The Most Revd Dr Justin Badi

### Standing for Truth, Uniting the Faithful & Shining the Gospel Light

*"I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness;  
I will take you by the hand and keep you;  
I will give you as a covenant for the people;  
A light for the nations, ..." (Is 42:6).*

The above words from Isaiah give the GSFA its self-identity as a **'servant of the Lord'** in these troubled times. We thank God for our roots that go back to the first Anglican South-South Encounter in Limuru, Kenya in 1994. We marvel at how God has built up our ecclesial grouping since then through successive cohorts of Global South Primates. In 2019, the Lord led the Primates, bishops and representatives from the Global South Provinces gathered in Cairo, Egypt to adopt a new Covenantal Structure and become a **global fellowship of orthodox Anglican Provinces**, with provision for leadership to continue coming from the global south. It was decided to name this entity 'the Global South Fellowship of Anglican Churches' or 'GSFA' for short.

The year 2022 has been momentous for GSFA, to the praise of God's glory.

#### 1. Our Witness at Lambeth Conference 2022 (LC22)

Not all Global South Provinces went to The Lambeth Conference 2022 (LC22) for reasons of conscience. Those who did go were conscious of the four-fold objectives of GSFA at Lambeth: (a) to unify the orthodox in the Communion; (b) to sound a clarion call to biblical faithfulness (by re-affirming Lambeth 1.10); (c) to be a 'holy remnant' in the Communion (and not a breakaway group); and (d) to spur orthodox Provinces to collaborate and pursue holistic Gospel mission to the world.

By the grace of God, we accomplished each of the four objectives. The GSFA Steering Committee Primates at Lambeth appreciated the tremendous support coming from the GSFA Secretariat team as well as the GSFA-EFAC Resource Group on site.

The GSFA Primates played a leading role in **uniting and galvanizing the orthodox bishops** present at the Conference (including evangelical, Anglo-Catholics & charismatic bishops from non – global south constituencies).

Orthodox bishops by and large **refrained from receiving the sacrament** at the two joint services at Canterbury Cathedral. They found it necessary, from their reading of holy scripture and their commitment to uphold biblical faithfulness in practice, to not partake of Holy Communion alongside gay-partnered bishops. Instead, provision was made for the orthodox bishops, with the consent of the Archbishop of



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Canterbury, to have their own Communion service at the Conference premises. In a constructive vein, the company of orthodox bishops gave their feedback and broadly **agreed on a GSFA-initiated Communique that mapped out a robust future with a proposed re-setting of the Communion** (Link: [Communique by Orthodox Bishops at Lambeth Conference 2022](#)).

The goal of sounding a clarion call to biblical faithfulness took the form of providing an opportunity for bishops at LC22 to **re-affirm Lambeth 1.10** as the 'official teaching of the Anglican Communion on marriage and sexuality.' There was no provision at LC22 for introducing or voting on Resolutions, nor to propose amendments to the earlier-designed 'Calls'. Undeterred, GSFA was able to have a mechanism for bishops at the Conference to voluntarily 'sign up' electronically to a Resolution that re-affirms 'Lambeth 1.10' (Link: [GSFA resolution to reaffirm Lambeth 1.10](#)) and to have the results professionally validated. Given that the electronic process of voting had to be conducted externally to the Conference proper and was somewhat challenging, plus the on the ground reality that communication to the delegates was not straight forward, it nevertheless seemed an important start to the resurgence of orthodoxy in the Communion that 125 bishops at the Conference, representing 21 Provinces & about 7.9 million Anglicans world-wide, signed up to re-affirm Lambeth 1.10 (Link: [Orthodox Bishops reaffirm Lambeth 1.10 as Anglican teaching](#)). The GSFA Steering Committee will follow through this process in 2023 by inviting Primates and bishops who did not attend LC22 to also re-affirm Lambeth 1.10.

## 2. Our Commitment to being a 'holy remnant'

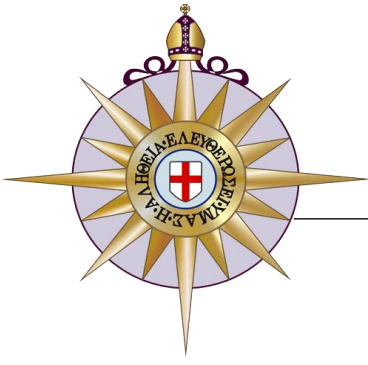
The tide of revisionism in the Communion at the present time is strong. There is immense and subtle pressure to accommodate the surrounding culture in the Communion and for our Churches to abandon the 'ancient paths' (Jer 6:16; Is 30: 9-11; 2 Tim 3:1).

GSFA is committed, in the grace of God and according to His purpose, to be 'a holy remnant' within the Communion and to work for its well-being. Often, it is thought that 'remnant' means a numerical minority. That is not how we are using the term. Rather, **GSFA's use of the term 'holy remnant' reflects our theological perspective**. With 25 Anglican Provinces belonging to or associated with our grouping, GSFA Provinces would undoubtedly be the spiritual home of the majority of Anglicans today. It is certainly not a minority numerically. But GSFA is a holy remnant because:

- (1) we are swimming against the tide and drift of where the institutional leadership of the Communion, often termed the Instruments of Communion (or Unity) , is presently moving ;
- (2) we are seeking to follow the example of God's faithful people throughout biblical history to remain true to God's covenant & to be loyal whatever the cost to the God who has spoken in holy scripture; and
- (3) we are spiritually bonded to the wider and historic Communion of which we are a part of, whether she remains faithful or not – whether she lives under God's favour or goes into 'exile.'

It is important also to correct another misconception – which is, that GSFA churches are from developing nations with a lower per capita GDP than developed nations. In fact, GSFA Churches have always come **from countries across the economic spectrum**. Moreover, it is presently in transition from being defined geographically (which is often taken to mean less prosperous economies than western economies) to being defined doctrinally and relationally.

GSFA is best seen as a world-wide ecclesial body of Provinces and dioceses, anchored by the traditional Global South Churches of the Communion, who hold to orthodox doctrine in their interpretation of



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Scripture, collaborate in mission & ministry, and who voluntarily are responsible and accountable to each other in faith and practice, as specified in the GSFA Covenantal Structure (Link: [GSFA Covenantal Structure](#)).

Correspondingly, it was fitting at Lambeth for the views of the Global South to be represented by the Global South Primates Steering Committee which is an elected body of seven Primates from across the globe, chosen by the conciliar-type assembly of Global South Provinces every two to three years.

As 'a holy remnant', GSFA will therefore seek to defend and to propagate the 'faith once delivered.' We seek to obey God in how we are to relate the wider Communion at this time of immense flux and contestation between truth and error. "What can the righteous do if the foundations are destroyed?" (Ps 11: 3). They can call upon God on his throne and they can stand firm till the end.

At the same time, GSFA will seek to advance the Gospel mission to the world that Christ has entrusted to His Church. We will do this by fostering ministry collaboration and the sharing of resources among our Provinces and dioceses. In particular, we will build up the networking among our churches along two tracks: ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT and MISSION PARTNERSHIPS. We look forward to working with other like-minded orthodox groups within the Communion in this global enterprise. GSFA is also building up the capacity for PRAYER networking across our Provinces through a digital Prayer App called INTERSEED.

### 3. Engaging the Instruments of Communion

GSFA is committed to playing its part, under God, to reform and re-vitalise the Communion. To do this, we will need God-given wisdom, discernment and robustness in relating to the Instruments of Communion, which are the Archbishop of Canterbury (ABC), the Lambeth Conference, the Primates' Meeting, and the Anglican Consultative Council. Also, in calling for REPENTANCE and RE-SETTING, we do not exempt ourselves. GSFA bishops at LC22 confessed that "In every province and diocese, there is unfaithfulness to the Lord's way. So we will return to our provinces and dioceses with humility to repent of all our sins, walk in newness of life and pursue holiness." (Link: [Orthodox Bishops map out a robust future](#)).

We will diligently follow-up on major issues raised in the course of LC22. The first concerns the matter of the 'ecclesial deficit' in the Communion. This 'deficit' was highlighted by the Windsor Continuation Group Report of 2008 (Section D, paragraphs 50-51). It refers to the lack of a structured way in the Communion for (a) holding Provinces accountable to each other in matters of 'Faith & Order' and (b) ensuring that decisions made by an official organ/instrument in the Communion 'has force in the life of the Churches of the Communion.' This 'ecclesial deficit' continues to threaten and hamper the common life of the Communion.

In terms of the different positions and practices in the Communion with regard to same sex unions, the Archbishop of Canterbury (ABC) has indicated that he does not see the 'office' of the ABC as including the role of exercising discipline among the Provinces. But if it is agreed that mutual accountability and inter-dependence of Provinces, together with a mechanism for Church discipline, are needed for Anglicans to remain as one Communion of Churches, then should not this role of guarding and ensuring consistency in essential matters of 'Faith & Order' be assigned to the Primates' Meeting or a suitably-formed new organ of the Communion? The other issue that GSFA will vigilantly watch over is that there is no seepage of the insidious idea that the Communion should allow for a 'plurality of views' on what the holy scriptures teach as foundational doctrine. Such an approach opens the gates to a flood of false teaching which will corrupt 'the faith once delivered.'



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In terms of participating in initiatives by the various Instruments of Communion, GSFA will carefully assess the goals and methods of these initiatives or established projects before joining in. This is in order that we do not compromise our convictions about biblical truth and practice. Where a situation warrants 'visible differentiation', we will not shrink from it. We will do so not out of hubris but out of deep love for God and His life-giving truth, including our love for our fellow-man who needs the whole Gospel for salvation and transformation.

## 4. Our Plans for the Immediate Future

- (a) In the grace of God, the work of GSFA has grown significantly since LC22. We are needing a **global office with full-time staff** to keep in step with this growth and to ensure the effectiveness of our witness for the Lord. Please pray for the siting of this office.
- (b) **Applications to become Ordinary Members or Associate Members of GSFA**, by giving written assent to the GSFA Covenantal Structure, are gaining momentum. This process understandably requires time as it involves the Provincial Synod or Standing Committee, and also ensuring harmony of the Covenantal Structure with existing provincial or diocesan Constitutions and Canon Laws. Primates and Diocesan Bishops can obtain the updated Application Forms from the GSFA Secretariat ( [secretariat@the\\_gsf.org](mailto:secretariat@the_gsf.org))

We are happy to announce the **1<sup>st</sup> batch of nine Provinces that have been accepted as Ordinary Member of GSFA** with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> Nov 2022. In alphabetical order, they are: Alexandria, Anglican Church in Brazil (ACiB), Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) , Bangladesh , Congo, Myanmar , South East Asia , South Sudan, and Sudan. Several Provinces, including those of Chile, Indian Ocean and others , are already in the pipeline to submit their applications.

- (c) The **first GSFA Assembly**, under the new Covenantal Structure, is scheduled for 2024. It will be an important time to get the formal structure and mechanisms in place, elect godly leaders with the necessary gifts and graces of the Spirit, and to step up in gear in contending for the truth, discipling our people and advancing the glorious kingdom of our Lord and Saviour.

As we celebrate Christmas this year, our focus should be on the importance and power of a family (a man and a woman) as a gift of God's creation. The continuity of human kind relies on families. **For God blessed them and said: Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and govern it.. (Genesis 1:28)** When an Angel appeared to Marry, she ran to the family of Zechariah for help. Ironically, when Caesar sought to demonstrate his power and dominate his world, he had to reunite families in their home territory. Joseph and Mary had to travel to their home town.

*“And while they were there, the time came for Mary to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.” (Luke 2:6-7)*



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This phrase that there was no place for them to stay in the Inn illustrates the prophetic word which says: ***“He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him” (John 1:11)***

It is my prayer that God blesses your families and you will all have a guest room for the new born child Jesus Christ in your families, in your Churches, in your offices and businesses. May His joy fill your hearts and families, His peace and blessings be with you all throughout the festive season into the New Year 2023.

Together for the Lord’s glory,

The Most Revd Dr Justin Badi  
Chairman of GSFA & Primate of South Sudan