

Statement from the Global South Primates Steering Committee, London, Mar 13-15, 2008

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Five Primates - Abp Peter Akinola, Abp Greg Venables, Abp Kolini, Abp Mouneer Anis and Abp John Chew - met together for some heart to heart conversations from 13th to 15th March in London. They released this statement.

1. We are most grateful to our Lord for enabling us as members of the GS Primates Steering Committee to meet in the midst of busy commitments and schedules.

2. We were greatly encouraged to receive reports of the substantial progress of the three major initiatives undertaken by the Global South at the historic "Red Sea" Encounter (Oct 2005) and further endorsed at the Global South Primates Gathering at Kigali, Rwanda (Sept 2006). They are the Global South draft for the proposed Anglican Covenant, the Anglican Catechism in Outline and the Economic Empowerment Track. We are very appreciative of all the members and voluntary support personnel involved in the various Task Forces.

3. Following the inconclusive response to the repeated calls for repentance and the specific requirements of The Episcopal Church in the Windsor Report and the various Communiqués (Dromatine Feb 2005, Dar es Salem Feb 2007), the undifferentiated invitations to the Lambeth Conference (July 2008) of the un-repenting Bishops who have clearly flouted the bonds of trust and "torn the fabric at the deepest level" of the Communion is causing a significant number of Bishops to be troubled, in deep consternation and dilemma as to their own Lambeth participation.

The controversial visit involving the Joint Standing Committee of the Primates and the ACC (Oct 2007), without prior consultation with the Primates on its composition, procedure and accountability process, and its un-critical and overly generous assessment of the response of the House of Bishops (TEC) has further weakened the remaining fragile threads of trust in the Communion and severely affected hope for any genuine resolution. These have caused various deepening negative assessments and cast further doubts on the state, will and ability, of the Communion to continue as a recognizable living and witnessing expression of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. Consequently, initiatives and challenges have emerged which could lead to further fragmentation and disintegration in the Communion, which is already in the nadir of collegial trust and confidence. It is against this backdrop that we, the Global South Primates' Steering Committee, met to pray, share frankly and converse in collegial accountability. Enabled by the Holy Spirit, we were able to focus in unity on the original spirit, vision and vocation of the Global South in the Anglican Communion which had developed and deepened since the fateful event of November 2003.

4. We see a increasing conviction and confirmation of the prophetic and priestly vocation of the Global South in the Anglican Communion. As Primates coming from different contexts, we were led into deep conversations and helpful clarifications on the challenges before us (Ps 133; Eph 4:1-6; Phil 2:1-5). We reaffirmed our total and collegial commitment to the solemn vocation of the Global South. We resolved, and urge all in the Global South and other orthodox constituencies of the wider Communion to strengthen our hearts and wills to work together for the fundamental renewal and transformation of the global Anglican Communion.

The Global South remains committed and encourage all Provinces to actively participate in the study and requested feedback on the St Andrew's Draft of the Anglican Covenant, its substance and spirit to be in line with our common classical Anglican heritage of biblical, historical and reformed formularies of faith and ecclesiology. In particular, we strongly urge the presentation of a definitive text to the Provinces by ACC 14th (May 2009) to begin the urgent and timely process of official adoption and ratification for the Communion.

5. Through our conversations together and clarifications made, we are led to understand and appreciate the principled reasons for participation in GAFCON (June 2008) and Lambeth Conference (Jul 2008). Even if there are different perspectives on these, they do not and should not be allowed to disrupt the common vision, unity and trust within the Global South. We are looking forward to offer the fruit of the labour on the Anglican Catechism in Outline to the Anglican Communion in June 2008.

6. For Lambeth Conference, we take note of the agenda centering on the significance of the Anglican Way and the Episcopal Office for the Life and Mission of the church within the framework of the Windsor-Anglican Covenant process. We also take note of the reiteration by the Archbishop of Canterbury in his Advent Letter (Dec 2007) that "*acceptance of the invitation must be taken as implying willingness to work with those aspects of the conference's agenda that relate to the implementing the recommendations of Windsor, including the development of a Covenant.*"

Nevertheless we deeply regret that the Archbishop of Canterbury did not consider it appropriate to invite those bishops consecrated by outside Provinces to address pastoral exigencies in USA. The temporal pastoral responses to needs on the ground should not be treated on the same level as the crisis-creating theological and ethical innovation of those involved in the consecration of Gene Robinson. Furthermore, these responses would not have continued if the requirements of the unanimously agreed Communique of the Primates' Meeting at Tanzania of TEC had been adequately complied with.

7. The initiative and need for GAFCON critically serves to remind us that the "torn fabric at the deepest level" of the Anglican Communion is still a living reality. We encourage the GAFCON participants to bear in mind the under-girding and wider framework of the united vocation and mission of the Global South for the life and witness of the wider Anglican Communion. We are encouraged that the primatial leadership of the GAFCON recognizes and supports the significance of the Windsor-Covenant process.

Unless the primary reason for the current crisis and division in the Communion is properly addressed, and the broken and impaired communion restored, the common life of the Communion cannot be expected to continue normally. It will be difficult to effectively fulfill our apostolic vocation, life and witness in and to a world so broken and divided, confused and lost, without the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

8. Finally, we are persuaded, that after GAFCON (June 2008) and Lambeth Conference (July 2008), the primary and urgent task is to move the global Anglican Communion substantially and effectively forward, to be living and witnessing as a worthy and exemplary expression of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. The pastoral and missional needs for focused leadership and development, the deepening of collegial foundation and framework for the transformation and renewal of covenantal Anglicanism will be the focus of the **4th Global South Encounter**, which by then should have a broadened representation.

*Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling
and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy,
to the only God, our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord,
be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority,
before all time and now and forever. Amen. (Jude vv.24-25)*