



ENCOMPASS

News and Events from the American Anglican Council • July/August 2008

GAFCON Discerns Path Forward

BY RALINDA B. GREGOR, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

The Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) ended in rejoicing on June 29 as more than 1,000 pilgrims and 7 primates affirmed a Statement on the Global Anglican Future and the accompanying Jerusalem Declaration that chart a way forward for biblically orthodox Anglicans.

The gathering drew 291 bishops along with clergy, lay-people and spouses from 25 different countries and 19 Anglican provinces. Meeting in Jerusalem, Israel from June 22-29, the GAFCON pilgrims gathered for worship, Bible study, workshops, teaching, visits to holy sites,

The accompanying Jerusalem Declaration presents 14 tenets of Anglican orthodoxy which define and unite confessing Anglicans. The GAFCON participants acknowledge Canterbury as a historic see, but do not accept that Anglican identity is determined through recognition by Canterbury but rather by Anglican Christian belief as outlined in the Jerusalem Declaration.

The statement calls on the seven GAFCON primates to form a Primates' Council to "authenticate and recognize confessing Anglican jurisdictions, clergy and congregations" and to form and recognize a new North American province for members of the Common Cause Partnership.



GAFCON pilgrims praise the Lord on the southern steps of the temple mount in Jerusalem. (GAFCON photo by Joy Gwaltney)

and fellowship.

As individuals and through provincial meetings, they gave prayerful input and feedback on their hopes for the Communion and GAFCON, which the conference statement drafting committee coalesced into a final statement that brought the pilgrims to their feet with cheers of approval and hymns of praise.

The conference statement characterizes GAFCON as a "spiritual movement to preserve and promote the truth and power of the gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ" and a "fellowship of confessing Anglicans." It also notes that GAFCON emerged in response to the crisis in the Anglican Communion which has come about due to "the acceptance and promotion within the provinces of the Anglican Communion of a different 'gospel' which is contrary to the apostolic gospel", the declaration by Global South provinces to be out of communion with those who promote the false gospel, and the "manifest failure of the Communion Instruments to exercise discipline in the face of overt heterodoxy."

Archbishop Peter Akinola, Nigerian primate and chairman of the GAFCON leadership team, reiterated that GAFCON is not breaking away from the Anglican Communion. "We have no other place to go, nor is it our intention to start another church," he told the pilgrims in his opening address. Nor is GAFCON a church within a church.

The actions taken by GAFCON attempt to reclaim the true nature of Anglicanism rather than defining church unity through colonial structures that have proven to be ineffective. Church of England Bishop of Rochester, Dr. Michael Nazir-Ali, explained that the Anglican church is a confessing church which articulates the gospel in each culture; it is conciliar, with councils at all levels that have the authority to "make decisions that stick"; and it is consistorial which means that those councils must teach the faith so that it can be articulated clearly.

One of the first orders of business for the Primates' Council is to develop a protocol that will spell out the process to

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Keeping the Communion Holy: An Interview with Bishop Anderson

Reprint, *Jerusalem Post*, Jul. 10, 2008
BY LELA GILBERT

Next week marks the beginning of the Lambeth Conference, an international gathering of Anglican bishops held in Britain every 10 years. It is hosted by the archbishop of Canterbury, currently Rowan Williams, head of the worldwide Anglican Communion. This year, however, the Lambeth Conference was preempted by a historic and controversial gathering in Jerusalem.

The Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON), held at Jerusalem's Ramada Renaissance Hotel from June 22-29, brought together 1,148 orthodox Anglican lay and clergy participants, including 291 bishops representing millions of conservative Anglican Christians, many of them African.

In his opening remarks at GAFCON, the outspoken archbishop of Nigeria, Peter Akinola, described the necessity for such a gathering. "We have found ourselves in a world in which Anglican leaders hold onto a form of religion but consistently deny its power. We have a situation in which some members of the Anglican family think they are so superior to all others that they are above the law, they can do whatever they please with impunity.

"As a communion we have been unable to exercise discipline. In the face of global suspicion of the links of Islam with terrorism, Lambeth Palace [official residence of archbishop of Canterbury] is making misleading statements about the Islamic law, Shari'a, to the point that even secular leaders are now calling us to order! We can no longer trust where some of our communion leaders are taking us."

A long simmering dispute between the worldwide Anglican Communion and conservative Anglican leaders boiled over in 2003 when the American Episcopal Church ordained openly gay, non-celibate Right Reverend V. Gene Robinson as the ninth bishop of the Diocese of New Hampshire.

Still, several of GAFCON's speakers were quick to point out that debates about homosexuality within the church are only symptoms of a greater malaise, which they identify with the rejection of Orthodox Christian beliefs regarding Holy Scripture and the divinity and redemptive work of Jesus.

Although a largely British leadership committee organized GAFCON, and although African bishops were the primary focus of media attention, a number of American bishops were also in attendance.

Many of these church leaders, along with hundreds of American churches, have left the American Episcopal Church and have instead placed themselves under the authority of conservative, biblically oriented African archbishops. One such leader is Bishop David Anderson.

In 2006, Anderson left the American Episcopal Church and had his holy orders transferred to Nigeria. In 2007 the house of bishops of Nigeria elected him, along with three others, to be suffragan bishops for the Convocation of Anglicans of North America, a missionary outreach of the Anglican Province of Nigeria to the United States.

Anderson still holds this position today. He is also president and CEO of the American Anglican Council, a non-profit advocacy group created in 1996 in response to what



Bishop David C. Anderson

he describes as "the continued drift of the Episcopal church into biblical revisionism."

In *Jerusalem* asked Anderson about the dramatic changes taking place in the worldwide Anglican Communion and his views about some of the controversies surrounding GAFCON's gathering in Jerusalem.

How many North American churches have left the Episcopal Church?

That is a difficult number to arrive at because the Episcopal Church (TEC) only counts churches that have lost their property or have lost court cases and have no recourse. If a case is pending in court, the Episcopal Church will not acknowledge that the congregation is gone. If the congregation walks away from its property but four or five people remain behind, TEC will maintain that they still have a congregation there, even though it may be four walls and a janitor. So they won't admit to the hundreds of churches that have departed.

When you add it up, between 200 and 300 churches have left, including some of the largest congregations in the Episcopal Church. Some individual churches, like Falls Church, Virginia, have a membership exceeding that of many entire Episcopal dioceses.

What is the relationship between the American Anglican Council (AAC) and GAFCON?

AAC is very interested in the outcome of GAFCON. We have a deep desire to bring together all the churches that claim Anglican heritage in order to form a new province — one that would be orthodox and part of a global family of Anglicans, but not necessarily recognizing the right of the British government to appoint archbishops of Canterbury and run the Anglican Communion. We are here to support GAFCON. We are here to encourage GAFCON to look at the needs of North America with regards to restoring orthodoxy in the larger Anglican family.

GAFCON has been viewed in numerous media reports as an anti-homosexual movement. Is that the case?

In the media there is usually a desire to boil everything down to a couple of attention-grabbing sound bites. And sex and money are the two things that grab people's attention the fastest. Certainly there is a factor of human sexuality among the issues that are before the Anglican Communion. But they are not primary. They are secondary at best. The primary issues have to do with other questions: Who is Jesus Christ? What did he really do? Was his death really necessary? Did he really rise from the dead? And what authority does he have over men and women today?

And then there is the issue of Holy Scripture. One American bishop has been widely quoted as saying, "The Church wrote the Bible and the Church can rewrite the Bible." That point of view would represent a number of TEC bishops, although most might be wise enough not to say it so clearly.

On the other hand we have the New Testament scripture in 2 Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture is God-breathed." There's a world of difference between those two statements. A big part of the Anglican Communion has chosen to line up with the Episcopal Church, believing that Jesus is optional and that the Bible can be reformulated to suit the culture. That said, it should surprise no one that difficulties arise in determining what is a proper sexual standard.

How do you respond to those who say that unity is more important than focusing on disagreement?

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Is GAFCON tearing apart the fabric of the Anglican Church?

Unity is useful only when there is agreement to begin with — agreement about what the truth is. If a ship is sinking, do all the passengers want to stay together and sink to the bottom for the sake of unity? Or do they want to get into lifeboats? Many of us have chosen lifeboats, and, by the grace of God, Nigeria and Uganda and Kenya and the Southern Cone and others have taken us in. But the idea that unity trumps truth is foolishness. It's the kind of bizarre statement that we have become used to hearing from those who have lost their theological bearings.

Do you equate this quest for unity with multiculturalism?

I really don't. Committed Muslims don't want to have their faith put into a big blender and somehow made into a multicultural soup. Neither do Orthodox Jews. Neither do practicing Hindus. And neither do Orthodox Christians. The people who want to recognize this so-called multiculturalism — those for whom anything goes, those who say "whatever works for you" — are in fact those who have lost their faith. They are groping around in the dark trying to find some excuse for being unable to see or hear.

In recent months, Rowan Williams, the archbishop of Canterbury, has said that the adoption of some Shari'a law in the UK seems "unavoidable" and that doing so could help social cohesion. Yet some of the African bishops with whom you work have suffered tremendously under Shari'a law. What do you think about the archbishop's statements?

That the archbishop of Canterbury would make such a foolish remark about Shari'a law means that he has, in one sense, given up hope of continuing to have a traditional English nation. He has resigned himself to theological and legal chaos in his own country. That he has given up is very sad, especially because he is seen as a leader.

Who wants to follow a leader who has lost his own way? If Rowan Williams thinks that Shari'a law is inevitable, perhaps he needs to go and live under it without the safeguards of his archbishop's robes, to live as a common man under Shari'a law and then ask himself how he likes that and whether that's something he could really recommend for someone else.

Traditionally, Shari'a law forbids homosexuality. On the one hand Shari'a law "seems unavoidable" to the archbishop of Canterbury, and yet on the other hand he has not forbidden the ordination of homosexual Anglican bishops. Has there been a lot of discussion about this?

No, there has not really been a discussion about this incredible paradox. The archbishop says that Shari'a law is inevitable and yet, in a sense he has blessed homosexual issues by failing to take reasonable action that would be in accord with his office. Meanwhile, if each side moves forward, a collision between the two is inevitable. One would hope that a leader would look ahead and would have some wisdom as to how to lead his people away from that kind of situation.

Do you and the other GAFCON participants hope for further dialogue with the archbishop of Canterbury?

I think there may be continuing usefulness for the office of archbishop of Canterbury. I also think the usefulness of Rowan Williams is being marginalized more and more by his own actions and his own words, such that he becomes an embarrassment to others.

It is an odd situation in that the head of the Anglican Communion is essentially the product of Britain's prime minister... it essentially amounts to the British government running the church. And it runs not just the church but, in

a colonial sense, the entire Anglican Communion. I think those days are coming to a close.

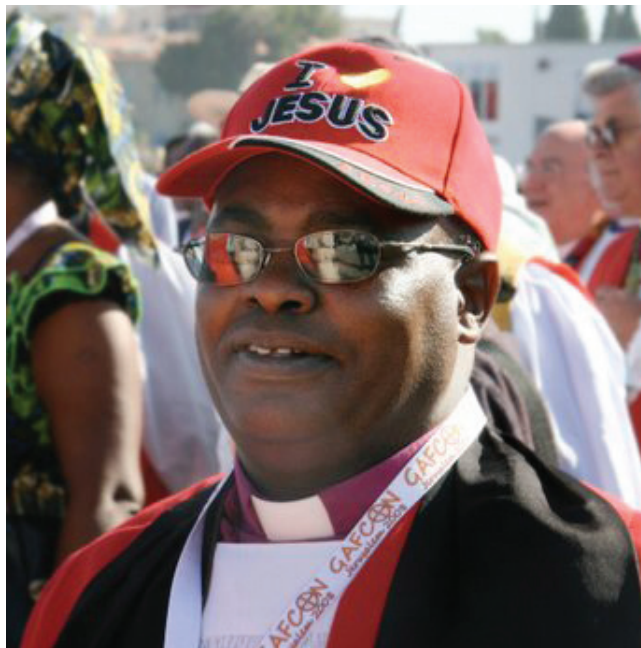
There is a need for the head of the Anglican Communion to be someone who is chosen by the Anglican Communion and answerable to them. He should not be subject to recall by any government but rather subject to recall by the people who elected him.

Why did GAFCON choose to come to Jerusalem?

At the First Christian Council of Jerusalem, recorded in the Book of Acts, the Apostles took counsel together, and from there Paul went out and began his missionary journeys. That council was a very important first step in authenticating the work that was being done. I think Jerusalem is a very apt place for Anglicanism to come back to, to take counsel together. From here we will go home, go back out into the world, having had the refreshment, the teaching and the redirection that this time in Jerusalem has afforded us.†

Below: A GAFCON pilgrim reads the conference's final statement, the "Jerusalem Declaration."

Bottom: The Bishop's hat says it all. (GAFCON photos by Joy Gwaltney.)





***Above:** The 291 GAFCON bishops pose for a picture overlooking Jerusalem atop the Mount of Olives.*

***Left:** The Rev. David Pileggi (left), pilgrimage consultant and rector of Christ Church Jerusalem, laughs with Archbishop Ben Kwashi of the Anglican Church of Nigeria and conference consultant.*

***Below left:** Members of the GAFCON leadership team and consultants address media at the final press conference. (from left to right) Archbishop of Sydney, Peter Jensen, Archbishop of Uganda, Henry Orombt, Archbishop of Nigeria, Peter Akinola, Archbishop of Rwanda, Emmanuel Kolini, Archbishop of Tanzania, Valentino Mokiwa, CANA Suffragan Bishop and AAC President & CEO, David Anderson.*

***Below right:** A GAFCON pilgrim meditates in the Garden of Gethsemane.*

(GAFCON photos by Joy Gwaltney)

To see more photos and videos, go to www.gafcon.org



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become a member, Akinola said. He expects the council to meet this summer to begin their work. After that, the Common Cause Partnership would begin the process to submit an application to the Primates’ Council to become a separate North American province, according to Bishop David Anderson, AAC president and CEO, who also serves on the Common Cause lead bishops’ council.

“We now have the opportunity and mandate to gather the dispersed orthodox Anglican family in North America into one province united by the same core Anglican beliefs and a commitment to mission, ministry and church planting, while also welcoming diversity in styles of worship and organization and making accommodation for differences on the issue of the ordination of women,” Anderson said.

While GAFCON produced a unifying statement of belief and tangible structural relief for orthodox Anglicans, many of its intangible benefits were equally profound. This was the first visit to the Holy Land for a majority of the participants, and it included pilgrimages to Mt. Zion, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Via Dolorosa, the southern steps of the temple, Bethlehem, and the Galilee region.

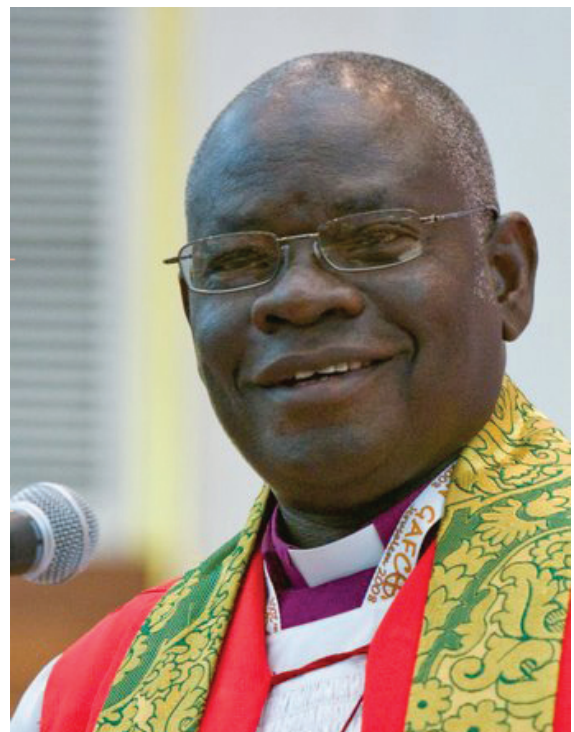
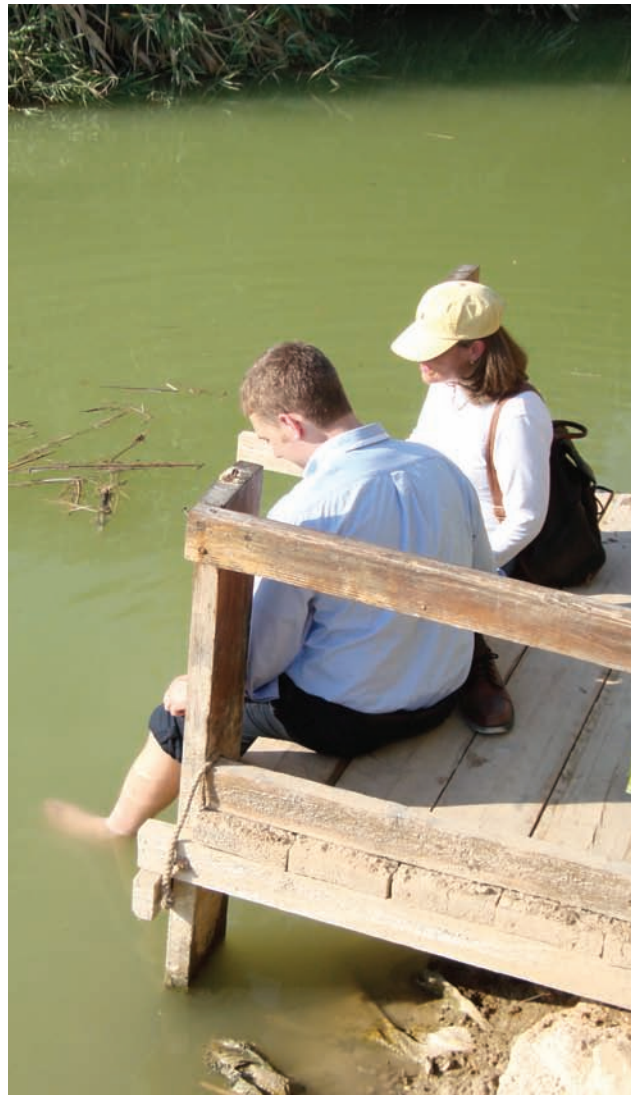
GAFCON also provided a unique Christ-centered opportunity for the global Anglican family to get to know each other better. The Rev. David Short, rector of St. John’s Shaughnessy, Vancouver, Canada, likened GAFCON to a small taste of our heavenly feast with God, complete with reunions of people who haven’t seen each other for years, where the participants sing beautiful praises to Him, and eat and drink together in fellowship with the Lord and each other.

In seeking to reclaim the roots and basis of the apostolic and biblical faith, the GAFCON pilgrims may have caught a glimpse of the heaven to come. †

Below: South American bishops including Archbishop Greg Venables (left), Bishop Abelino Apeleo of Chile, Bishop Frank Lyons of Bolivia and Bishop Tito Xavala of Chile (with guitar) lead a lively worship session. (GAFCON photo by Russell Powell)

Right top: GAFCON pilgrims take a moment for thoughtful reflection at the Jordan River baptismal site. (AAC photo by Mary Orr)

Right bottom: The Most Rev. Peter Akinola, Primate of the Church of Nigeria and chairman of the GAFCON leadership team. (GAFCON photo by Joy Gwaltney)





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Church of England Votes for Female Bishops

BY ROBERT H. LUNDY, EDITOR

The Church of England's General Synod vote of July 7, 2008 began the process which will eventually allow women into the episcopate. The Synod's opening the door for women to become bishops, while controversial, was not the most divisive action of the day. It was the door that the Synod closed that caused the most pain. At the culmination of several amendments and counter amendments, the Synod's House of Clergy, one of three voting houses, defeated a measure that would have provided pastoral care to those in the Church of England opposed to women in the episcopate. Consequently, thousands of traditional Anglo-Catholics find themselves wondering if there is any room left for them within the church.

The days and minutes leading up to the Synod's final vote were full of proposed compromises and attempts to avoid a one-sided outcome. One proposal suggested the creation of three "Super Bishops" within the church who would minister to those who did not want to come under a female bishop, mostly traditionalists and Anglo-Catholics. However, July 7 was not a day of compromise within the General Synod and every proposal that sought adequate oversight for traditionalists was voted down.

The closest traditionalists would get to adequate oversight was in a "code of practice" that the final motion called for. This code, though currently undefined, will offer guidelines to follow when clergy seek alternative pastoral oversight.

The American Anglican Council is a network of individuals (laity, deacons, priests and bishops), parishes and specialized ministries who affirm biblical authority and Christian orthodoxy within the Anglican Communion. In response to the Lord's calling and by His grace, we commit ourselves to proclaim the Good News to every person and to reform and renew the Church of Jesus Christ. We are uniting in order to fulfill our apostolic mission and ministry, working to build a faithful Anglican witness in the Americas.

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However, this code has already been rejected by many traditionalists as being too weak as it will be a suggested church practice and not a mandate.

Canon Dr. Chris Sugden, General Synod member and executive secretary of Anglican Mainstream, says for many Anglo-Catholics, the "code of practice" will not be adequate. "...It became clear that no provision was going to be made that was adequate for the needs of the Anglo-Catholics. The recent years in The Episcopal Church have shown that for vulnerable minorities, protection must be given that is adequate according to their perceptions. Anything else is patronising."

The days immediately following the vote were marked by analysis, emotion, statements, and even ultimatums. Reports that large groups of clergy were planning to leave the Church of England to join the Roman Catholic Church began circulating. It appears that some traditionalists anticipated the historic vote; according to the *UK Telegraph*, before the Synod convened, conservative bishops from the Church of England quietly met with officials from the Church of Rome to discuss their options should the Synod's vote not go their way.

For Christina Rees, General Synod member and chair of Women and the Church (WATCH), an organization that advocates for women in the episcopacy, the vote was a cause for jubilation. "It is the result we have been building up to for the last few years ... (it's) very good for the established church, good for the whole nation. A vast majority have wanted this for so long."

Synod members like Christina Rees have been waiting for women to join the ranks of bishops, but despite their victory in General Synod, their waiting could be far from over. According to Canon Sugden, the process for actually enacting the changes made by this General Synod is lengthy and it may be several years until the first woman is allowed into the Church of England's House of Bishops.

Despite the delay, according to Canon Sugden, "It is clear that, for some of the Anglo-Catholic tradition, this marks the end of the road. Even though the legislation for women bishops has to pass further stages, the refusal to even begin to consider legal provision is deeply worrying for them."†