

Anglican Orthodox Leaders Meeting Communique

Embargoed until 13:00 GMT+3, 22st October 2023

Cairo, Egypt 17th - 19th October 2023

I. WE GATHERED:

1. Anglican orthodox leaders met at All Saints' Cathedral in Cairo, Egypt from 17th - 19th October 2023. The theme for the meeting was "I will make you as a light to the nations" (Isaiah 49: 6b). This resonates deeply with the essence of our faith and the mission of the Church. In his opening address, the chairman of GSFA, Archbishop Justin Badi encouraged us as followers of Jesus to be bearers of God's light by living and proclaiming His Truth in a sin-ruined and broken world.

2. We were immensely grateful for the wonderful hospitality provided for us by Archbishop Samy Shehata, Province of Alexandria and the people of the Diocese of Egypt. The warmth of their welcome and hospitality provided a context in which we were able to discuss, share, discern, pray, worship, and take counsel together. We were also grateful to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Home Affairs for facilitating this Conference.

3. 13 Primates including 2 via zoom, participated in the meeting. They were joined by 10 observers, including Anglican orthodox leaders from different networks in the Communion (see list below).

4. We were immensely grateful to God for the spirit of unity that permeated our opening celebration. We extend heartfelt thanks to the Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayeb and His Holiness Pope Twadros II for sending their respective representatives Dr. Abu Zeid Al-Amir and Bishop Aklemondos. It exemplified the power of interfaith and ecumenical harmony and mutual respect. We are also grateful to the ambassadors of different countries for their presence.

5. What brought us to the consultation in Cairo was the commitment in the GSFA Ash Wednesday statement (20 Feb, 2023), and captured also in the GAFCON IV Kigali statement (Apr, 2023) for orthodox Anglican leaders to work together on resetting the communion.

6. We gathered in Cairo in close proximity to the conflict between Israel and Hamas. We were profoundly disturbed by the destruction of lives and property of our Anglican Hospital in Gaza which happened during the days of our meeting. We pray for the Archbishop of Jerusalem and the Middle East, the Most Rev. Dr. Hosam Naoum and all those who are caught up in this tragedy. It caused us to empathise with the immense suffering of the bereaved, the homeless, the hostages, and the refugees.

II. WE WORSHIPPED:

7. We spent time during our consultation in corporate prayer and worship, with a desire to hear God's Word in our hearts. We have no doubt that we are engaged in an intense

spiritual battle both within the church and with the world that is hostile to God's reign. Prayer and fasting is fundamental to peace in the world, spiritual vitality in the church and the advance of God's Kingdom.

8. We received a fresh word through the sermon preached at the opening Eucharist at All Saints' Cathedral. The Scripture text that gripped our hearts is from Philippians 1: 27-28 "Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, ...standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel". The call to stand firm in the truth of the Gospel, with unity of mind and spirit was unmistakable. We cannot mistake tolerance for love because love delights in the truth. For the sake of love, we must be prepared to say difficult things in order to lead people into the pathway of truth and fullness of life.

III. RESETTling THE COMMUNION:

9. To press on in resetting the Communion according to its biblical & historical roots:

- a) The Anglican world has changed so dramatically in the last century. In 1900, about 80% of the Communion lived in England. Today, about 75% of Anglicans are estimated to live in Global South countries. The demographics have changed, and sadly in our day the theology of many bishops in the Church of England has also changed towards revisionism. We need new wineskins for a new reality.
- b) On the 9th of October 2023, the Church of England House of Bishops signalled their intent to commend prayers of blessing for same sex couples. Despite all that is happening, we as orthodox leaders are very encouraged to see orthodox groupings within the Church of England beginning to collectively stand against this revisionism in their Church. We applaud the 12 bishops in the Church of England who have indicated that they are unable to support the decision by their House of Bishops, and we will uphold them in our prayers. We will stand with orthodox Anglicans in England both now and going forward.
- c) We lament with tears all that has happened to the historic 'mother church' of the communion, and continue to pray for her restoration. At the same time, orthodox Anglican churches and entities will press on with the work God has given us to do as he renews the fallen creation through the finished work of Jesus Christ our Lord.
- d) In relation to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the other instruments of communion, we affirm the Ash Wednesday Statement and the Kigali Statement.

10. As orthodox Primates, we reaffirm our adherence to Lambeth Resolution 1.10 of 1998 in full, both in moral teaching and pastoral care. We recognise this resolution as the official teaching of the Anglican Communion on marriage and sexuality and urge that renewed steps be taken to encourage all provinces to abide by this doctrine in the faith, order, and practice.

IV. WE AGREED TO THE FOLLOWING:

(Note: The actions below were agreed to by the group of leaders that met at this consultation and will need to be ratified and followed through as necessary by the respective provinces and Anglican groupings.)

11. To take the Gospel out urgently through word and deed to a pain ridden world. The Gospel we proclaim must be the faith once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3). It must be lived out in the lives of Christians and demonstrated by love and good works. We will seek to collaborate on mission and ministry among ourselves as different orthodox bodies (GSFA, GAFCON and other provinces and entities including the orthodox in USA and UK).

12. To pray fervently for, and support relief and redevelopment work in, war-torn countries as well as for persecuted and hard-pressed Christians.

- a) At the present time, we stand in solidarity with Archbishop Ezekiel Kondo and the people of Sudan, calling for an end to violence, and for a process for peace and reconciliation. We call upon the international community to give every help and support to the innocent who are displaced because of fighting. We pray for the displaced and suffering people of Ghana.
- b) We also stand in solidarity with the Most Revd Azad Marshall and persecuted Christians in Pakistan, as well as with the Most Revd Stephen Than and the hard-pressed people of the Province of Myanmar. We also remember in our prayers Christians in many parts of Nigeria who are persecuted.
- c) We are deeply concerned that if the Church of England presses ahead with the proposed changes, this will increase persecution of Christians in many parts of the Global South.
- d) In the case of the recent outbreak of war between Israel and Hamas, our sympathy lies with all who have suffered from the violent conflict. We pray for a ceasefire and serious dialogue to find a just peace.

13. We affirm the GSFA Covenantal Structure (sometimes called the Cairo Covenant) as a good way to offer ecclesiastical structure and accountability to be a locus of unity for the orthodox in the whole Communion. We thank God for the growing membership of GSFA churches and mission partners. We also affirm GAFCON's work of planting churches and supporting dislodged or discriminated against orthodox clergy in revisionist-leaning provinces. We will include orthodox provinces in combined mission and developmental projects.

14. To mobilise our economic resources, initiate projects and raise funds to help one another become self- supporting, or to meet special needs that arise and assist in developmental projects.

15. To meet annually as 'Anglican Orthodox Leaders' to continue this link to one another, to be refreshed by Spirit-filled fellowship, to take counsel together on Communion matters, and to collaborate on mission and ministry.

Participating Primates

The Most Revd Dr Justin Badi, Province of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan

The Most Revd Tito Zavala, The Anglican Church of Chile

The Most Revd Titre Ande, Province of the Anglican Church of Congo (via Zoom)

The Most Revd James Wong, The Anglican Church of the Indian Ocean

The Most Revd Stephen Than, The Church of the Province of Myanmar (via Zoom)

The Most Revd Foley Beach, The Anglican Church in North America (ACNA)

The Most Revd Stephen Kaziimba, the Church of the Province of Uganda

The Most Revd Ezekiel Kondo, Province of the Episcopal Church of Sudan

The Most Revd Miguel Uchoa Cavalcanti, Anglican Church in Brazil

The Most Revd Dr Samy Shehata, The Episcopal / Anglican Province of Alexandria

The Most Revd Albert Chama, The Church of the Province of Central Africa

The Most Revd Henry Ndukuba, The Church of Nigeria

The Most Revd Laurent Mbanda, The Anglican Church of Rwanda

The Most Rev Dr Mounseer Anis, Archbishop Emeritus, Anglican Province of Alexandria

Observers

The Most Revd Azad Marshall, Moderator of the Church of Pakistan

Revd Canon John Dunnett, Church of England Evangelical Council

Bishop Malcolm Richards, Diocese of Sydney

Bishop Fraser Lawton, Communion Partners, USA

Revd Nicky Gumbel, Alliance, UK

Revd Richard Moy, Sharing of Ministries Abroad, UK

Revd Canon Charles Raven, The Relay Trust

Mr. Stewart Wicker, SAMS, USA

Bishop Tim Davies, Anglican Mission in England

Revd Philip de-Gray Warter, Anglican Convocation in Europe