

THEOLOGY TODAY

A Newsletter from the Institute of Anglican Studies at St George's Cathedral, Perth
~ committed to building up a well-informed and thinking Anglican Community.

ISSUE 6 ~ DECEMBER 2010

THE JERUSALEM DECLARATION

This issue of *Theology Today* is designed to be a resource for those parish study groups taking up the challenge of General Synod and Diocesan Synods to reflect on The Jerusalem Declaration of the GAFCON Conference in Jerusalem prior to the Lambeth Conference of 2008.

Our previous issue discussed the Covenant it is proposed Provinces should sign up to in order to maintain the unity of the Communion. The Jerusalem Declaration sets out some of the concerns conservative Anglicans have about the controversies that threaten unity.

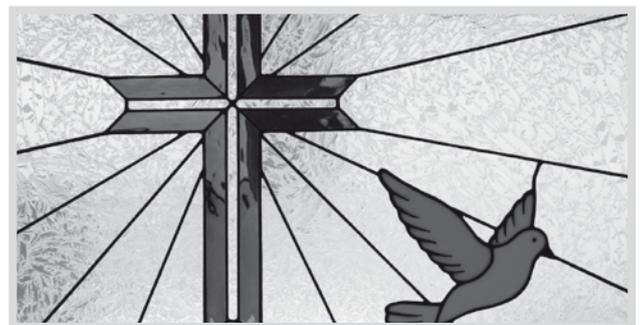
We suggest that study group members read the background notes (Section A) and then the declaration itself and theological commentary provided (Sections B and C). We trust this will help groups decide which points for discussion to tackle first (Section D). There follow notes on the so-called Instruments of Unity intended to help the Anglican Communion hold together. Anglicanism is about Unity in Diversity. We pray *Theology Today* will help us appreciate our diversity and so encourage us to celebrate our unity.

SECTION A: BACKGROUND TO THE JERUSALEM DECLARATION

In June 2008, the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) was held in Jerusalem. There were eleven hundred and forty eight lay and clergy participants including two hundred and ninety one bishops many of whom were among the nearly eight hundred bishops who attended the Lambeth conference a month later. However, nearly two hundred bishops declined the invitation to attend the conference at Lambeth.

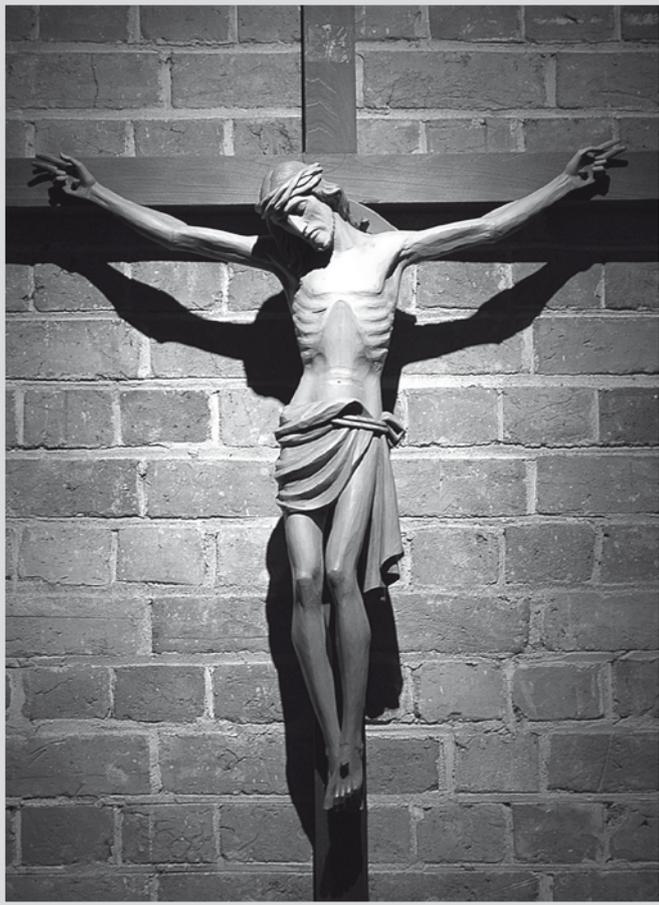
Three reasons were given in the official GAFCON Report for the holding of the Jerusalem Conference:

1. It is believed that many Anglican provinces are espousing a different Gospel to that in the New Testament. References made by many present to "the authority of God's Word written". The example was given to the blessing of same-sex unions over against the "biblical" teaching. In 2003 a bishop was consecrated in the USA who was living in a homosexual relationship.
2. Some Anglican Provinces in the "Global South" no longer believed themselves to be in communion (Eucharist fellowship) with those referred to above who went against the "biblical" teaching.
3. The third reason for GAFCON was said to be the failure of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the other Instruments of Unity (Lambeth Conference, Anglican Consultative Council and Primates' Meeting) to discipline the dissidents.



ST GEORGE'S CATHEDRAL PERTH WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Phone: 08 9325 5766 ~ Fax: 08 9325 5242 ~ www.perthcathedral.org



SECTION B: THE JERUSALEM DECLARATION

1. We rejoice in the gospel of God through which we have been saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. Because God first loved us, we love him and as believers bring forth fruits of love, ongoing repentance, living hope and thanksgiving to God in all things.
2. We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God written and to contain all things necessary for salvation. The Bible is to be translated, read, preached, taught and obeyed in its plain and canonical sense, respectful of the church's historic and consensual reading.
3. We uphold the four Ecumenical Councils and the three historic Creeds as expressing the rule of faith of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
4. We uphold the Thirty-nine Articles as containing the true doctrine of the Church agreeing with God's Word and as authoritative for Anglicans today.
5. We gladly proclaim and submit to the unique and universal Lordship of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, humanity's only Saviour from sin, judgment and hell, who lived the life we could not live and died the death that we deserve. By his atoning death and glorious resurrection, he secured the redemption of all who came to him in repentance and faith.

6. We rejoice in our Anglican sacramental and liturgical heritage as an expression of the gospel, and we uphold the 1662 Book of Common Prayer as a true and authoritative standard of worship and prayer, to be translated and locally adapted for each culture.
7. We recognize that God has called and gifted bishops, priests and deacons in historic succession to equip all the people of God for their ministry in the world. We uphold the classic Anglican Ordinal as an authoritative standard of clerical orders.
8. We acknowledge God's creation of humankind as male and female and the unchangeable standard of Christian marriage between one man and one woman as the proper place for sexual intimacy and the basis of the family. We repent of our failures to maintain this standard and call for a renewed commitment to lifelong fidelity in marriage and abstinence for those who are not married.
9. We gladly accept the Great Commission of the risen Lord to make disciples of all nations, to seek those who do not know Christ and to baptize, teach and bring new believers to maturity.
10. We are mindful of our responsibility to be good stewards of God's creation, to uphold and advocate justice in society, and to seek relief and empowerment of the poor and needy.
11. We are committed to the unity of all those who know and live Christ and to building authentic ecumenical relationships. We recognize the orders and jurisdiction of those Anglicans who uphold orthodox faith and practice, and we encourage them to join us in this declaration.
12. We celebrate the God-given diversity among us which enriches our global fellowship, and we acknowledge freedom in secondary matters. We pledge to work together to seek the mind of Christ on issues that divide us.
13. We reject the authority of those churches and leaders who have denied the orthodox faith in word or deed. We pray for them and call on them to repent and return to the Lord.
14. We rejoice at the prospect of Jesus' coming again in glory, and while we await this final event of history, we praise him for the way he builds up his church through his Spirit by miraculously changing lives.

SECTION C: THEOLOGICAL COMMENTARY

Agreement on the line: there is much in the Declaration with which the great majority of Anglicans would wholeheartedly agree. Some paragraphs, however, invite comment and further discussion.

The Holy Scriptures (paragraph two). The scriptures are rightly accorded pride of place as the primary source for the faith once given to the saints. The Bible is said to be received in its plain and canonical sense i.e. according to the Anglican understanding of tradition (how scripture has been understood by all Christians at all times and in all places (as St Vincent of Lerins expressed it) and not in a sense of being another source of revelation. This distinction was made clear by Elizabethan Divine Richard Hooker. He suggested that while scripture contains all things necessary for salvation – those who claim scripture contains all things go too far. But the principal issue at stake here is this. The Bible is said to be the “Word of God written”. Yet if Jesus himself is the Word of God spoken to humankind (John 1:1) and if God’s Word is to be written on our hearts (Jeremiah 31:33) it must be concluded that the Word to whom the scriptures bear witness must become the living word by which we live. The critical issue is the use of the word biblical: could it be that what is “biblical” is what we believe, and that what is believed by others is seen as unbiblical?

The Thirty Nine Articles (paragraph four). The Articles have their origin in the troubled days of the Reformation beginning with the Ten Articles of 1536, and the Six Articles of 1539. In 1552 the number rose to forty two and finally settles at thirty nine in 1571 when the Elizabethan Church in England pulled back from more extreme Calvinistic thinking and sought to balance the insights of the Reformation with traditional Catholic doctrine. Some twenty years later, theologian John Bramhall regarded the articles as pious opinions, and in the nineteenth century John Henry Newman believed they were congruous with the Roman Catholic Council of Trent! In our own day Stephen Sykes, a former bishop of Ely, described them as an outstanding “monument” of the Anglican tradition and a useful clue to the state of theological debate in the sixteenth century.

The Atonement (paragraph five). Christians believe that Christ wrought our Atonement with God, but there have been many theories advanced as to how this works. The Declaration suggests that Christ died the death we deserve as a consequence for our sins, and that his death on the cross secured our redemption. This view resonates with the Communion Service in the Book of Common Prayer (see paragraph six). However, more recent liturgies expand the description of Christ’s redeeming work for us. Did Jesus simply die as a substitute for us, or is it true that he died in the cause for which he stood i.e. the beginning of God’s kingdom of love, peace and justice? Many theologians believe that these understandings are not incompatible, and that room must also be left for the part played by our own faith and repentance.

Sexuality (paragraph eight). The differences over the way scripture is to be understood become critical when we consider sexual orientation. Many GAFCON attendees expressed dismay that, in seeming contradiction to a resolution of the 1998 Lambeth Conference (which

conferences have no legislative authority) some provinces tolerated same-sex unions and had forms for blessing such unions. The ordination of professed homosexual persons in committed relationships was viewed by some with abhorrence. Others argue that texts sometimes produced from the Old Testament in condemnation of homosexuality had more to do with temple prostitution than with personal morality. They argued further that more is understood nowadays about sexuality than in Biblical times. Diversity of opinions seems likely to continue.

SECTION D: SOME BRIEF COMMENTS TO START DISCUSSION



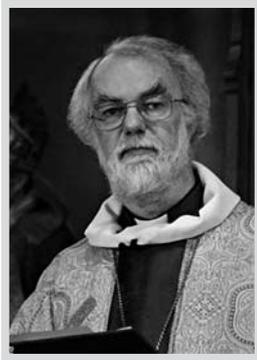
Flag of Anglican Communion

1. What about fundamentalism? What is it? What do fundamentalists do when they disagree with other fundamentalists?
2. The Archbishop of Canterbury has removed some provincial representatives from Anglican Communion Committees who have to do with Faith and Order, because their provinces disagree with his moratoria in the proposed Covenant he suggests all Provinces sign (i.e. no blessing for same-sex unions, no non-celibate homosexual clergy, no interference in provinces other than one’s own). Is the Archbishop right?
3. Canterbury suggests that celibate homosexual persons can legitimately be ordained to the sacred ministry. Is he right? How important (if at all) is the requirement for celibacy?
4. Why did Jesus die? What difference does the cross make to our lives today?
5. Should “unorthodox” clergy be disciplined? Who decides who is orthodox and who is unorthodox?
6. Do the current disputes have the potential to break up the Anglican Communion – can we prevent this happening?

SECTION E: MAINTAINING UNITY IN OUR DIVERSITY

INSTRUMENTS OF COMMUNION

The Anglican Communion is served by four “Instruments of Communion” and the work of these instruments are explained here in detail.



Rowan Douglas Williams

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

The 104th Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverent and Right Honourable Rowan Douglas Williams, was enthroned on the Feast of Blessed George Herbert, 27th February 2003. The Archbishops of Canterbury are seen by the Anglican Communion of churches as their spiritual leader. He is *primus inter pares*, first among equals of the other Primates (Chief Archbishops, Presiding Bishops) of the various provinces. He is the Primate of All England and Diocesan of the Diocese of Canterbury.

LAMBETH CONFERENCES

The Lambeth Conference of bishops meets every 10 years solely at the personal invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury. In 1867 Lambeth Palace hosted the first meeting but as the numbers grew the conference moved to Canterbury, where in 2008, the invited bishops gathered in

Christ Church Cathedral and the University. A design group assists the Archbishop in the planning of the conference. The Secretary General of the Anglican Communion serves as the secretary of the conference with a designated Conference Manager.

PRIMATES MEETINGS

The Primates of the Anglican Communion are the chief Archbishops, Presiding Bishops, Chief Pastors of the various Provinces of the global church. Their churches are autonomous yet interdependent in their relationship with each other. The Archbishop of Canterbury chairs their meetings, which are held at varying intervals at various places in the Anglican World. The primates have no authority as a “body” and their own national churches determine how their ministry is carried out in their own context. The customs and responsibilities vary from Province to Province.

ANGLICAN CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL

The Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) can rightly be seen as the most representative body of gathered Anglicans amongst the Instruments of Communion. In their ranks are laity, bishops, priests, deacons and religious orders. The meetings are held in various provinces, by invitation, every 2-3 years. The Archbishop of Canterbury is the President of ACC.

*The Right Reverend Brian Kyme,
Director, Institute of Anglican Studies*



SUBSCRIBE TO THEOLOGY TODAY

Theology Today is the quarterly newsletter of the Institute of Anglican Studies. If you would like to receive future issues of this free publication, please fill out the form below and return it to St George’s Cathedral, 38 St Georges Terrace, Perth 6000. Alternatively, send an email to josephine@perthcathedral.org or call us on (08) 9325 5766. Please also indicate whether you would prefer to receive the newsletter by post or email.

I would like to receive the quarterly newsletter, *Theology Today*.

Name: _____

Postal address: _____

_____ Postcode: _____

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

I prefer to receive the newsletter by post/email. Please delete as applicable. *Thankyou!*

PARISH DISTRIBUTION – Limited copies of *Theology Today* can be made available for parishes to distribute to lay leaders. Contact the Cathedral Office on (08) 9325 5766.