

# GAFCON

## Duncan's reflections

### **A Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans launched**

In June, Allan Smith and I were privileged to represent the Parish of St John's Wynberg, with four others from the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, including the Bishop of Port Elizabeth, Bethlehem Nopece, at the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) in Jerusalem. It was a gathering of some 1200 Anglicans from around the world concerned about the current state of the Anglican Communion and the divisions that are breaking it apart and hampering our witness to a lost world, in desperate need of the gospel of Christ.

We spent the week in worship and prayer and made pilgrimages to various holy sites in and around Jerusalem. There were moving moments as we prayed for our various countries on the Mount of Olives in the place where Jesus wept for the city he loved. I prayed especially for Zimbabwe. We sat on the Temple steps and prayed for a new passion for evangelism to make Jesus known as Saviour of all. In the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem I prayed that the one who was born in that place would be born in the hearts of those who do not know his love for them. I also prayed that the church would be faithful in proclaiming the message of salvation in Jesus to the next generation. There was input of the highest quality as we considered what constituted our Anglican identity. We shared in stretching fellowship in small groups with others from around the world as we prayerfully sought God's will for his church. All this helped us grapple with the deep issues that have divided the Anglican Communion and to discern prayerfully and carefully the way ahead.

The Anglican Communion has been in disarray for the past ten years as some parts of the Communion have accepted and are promoting a different gospel which is contrary to the apostolic gospel as set out in Scripture and attested to by the 39 Articles of Religion, the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordinal - the founding documents of Anglicanism.

The Communion has effectively been broken by The Episcopal Church (USA) and the Anglican Church of Canada ignoring requests by the Primates Meetings to respect the Resolutions of the last Lambeth Conference and to repent of

undermining the traditional values of Anglican faith and morals. The fact that the Archbishop of Canterbury has invited these unrepentant Bishops to the Lambeth Conference has caused great dismay amongst those who want to see the basic tenants of Anglicanism maintained and upheld. Some of the revisionist Bishops are hounding and throwing out of their churches those who want to uphold orthodoxy. It is thus not surprising that some (not all) of the Bishops at GAFCON have said they find it impossible to share in fellowship at Lambeth with those who have so wounded the church and are actively working against those seeking to uphold our received Anglican standards of faith and morals.

We are very fortunate to be under the Episcopal oversight we have in the Anglican Church in Southern Africa (ACSA) and in this Diocese. We have a local Bishop and an Archbishop who support our witness as a Parish and value the contribution we as Evangelicals make to the life of the Diocese. The Canons and Synodical Resolutions of the ACSA uphold the sanctity of marriage, affirm the authority of Scripture and declare that Jesus is the only way to the Father. That is not the case in the USA and Canada. We are deeply grateful to God for the leadership we have, and this motivates us all the more to stand in solidarity with and support those who are being persecuted and ejected from their churches by their Bishops and Ecclesiastical Authorities.

It is our hope and prayer that launching the GAFCON movement and the building a fellowship of confessing Anglicans, based on the Jerusalem Declaration, will bring us back to our roots as Anglicans. The Jerusalem Declaration is a clear statement of faith which is in line with the Montreal Declaration of Anglican Essentials, already adopted by the Parish to describe our theological position.

The GAFCON statement (printed in full below), was unanimously endorsed by the conference, and was signed by the six Anglican Primates who were there, namely:-

The Most Revd Peter Akinola (Nigeria)  
The Most Revd Justice Akrofi (Ghana)  
The Most Revd Emmanuel Kolini (Rwanda)  
The Most Revd Valentino Mokiwa (Tanzania)  
The Most Revd Benjamin Nzimbi (Kenya)  
The Most Revd Henry Orombi (Uganda)  
The Most Revd Gregory Venables (Southern Cone)

It is hoped that other provinces, dioceses, churches, missionary jurisdictions, para-church organisations and individual Anglican Christians whose goal is to reform, heal and revitalise the Anglican Communion and expand its mission to

the world will join the GAFCON fellowship of confessing Anglicans. That is certainly our hope and prayer.

An explanation of the road travelled thus far and a look at some of the issues at stake such as: The Interpretation of Scripture; Pluralism in the Church; Anglican Orthodoxy; Christ and Authority in the Church; can be found in theological resource book prepared for GAFCON entitled “***The Way, the Truth and the Life***”. You can download a PDF (486KB) version of the book from the Christ Church website [www.christ-church.org.za](http://www.christ-church.org.za) .

I have no doubt that in years to come we will look back and see that GAFCON marked a significant development in the life of the Anglican Communion. I return from Jerusalem with renewed hope and a deep sense of thanks to God. I have a new love for and appreciation of the Anglican Church.

Jesus is alive. He is head of his Church. Alleluia!

**Revd Duncan McLea**

Minister in Charge – Christ Church Kenilworth  
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