

Statement from GAFCON/FCA Primates Council

RESPONSE TO OFFER OF AN APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTION TO ANGLICANS

We have received the Archbishop of Canterbury's letter informing us of the Pope's offer of an 'Apostolic Constitution' for those Anglicans who wish to be received into the Roman Catholic Church. We believe that this offer is a gracious one and reflects the same commitment to the historic apostolic faith, moral teaching and global mission that *we proclaimed in the Jerusalem Declaration on the Global Anglican Future* and for this we are profoundly grateful.

We are, however, grieved that the current crisis within our beloved Anglican Communion has made necessary such an unprecedented offer. It represents a grave indictment of the Instruments of Communion whose very purpose is to strengthen and protect our unity in obedience to our Lord's clear command. Their failure to fully address the abandonment of biblical faith and practice by The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada has now brought shame to the name of Christ and seriously impedes the cause of the Gospel.

The Primates Council of the Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans (GAFCON/FCA) is convinced, however, that Anglicanism has a bright future as long as we remain grounded in the Holy Scriptures and obedient to our Lord Jesus Christ's call to reach the lost and make disciples of all nations teaching them to observe the whole Gospel. We also believe that there is room within our Anglican family for all those who hold true to the 'faith once delivered to the saints'. We would like to encourage those Anglicans who are considering this invitation from the Roman Catholic Church to recognize that Anglican churches are growing throughout the world in strength and offering a vibrant testimony to the transforming work of Christ.

We are convinced that this is not the time to abandon the Anglican Communion. Our Anglican identity of reformed catholicity, that gives supreme authority to the Holy Scriptures and acknowledgement that our sole representative and advocate before God is the Lord Jesus Christ, stands as a beacon of hope for millions of people. We remain proud inheritors of the Anglican Reformation. This is a time for all Christians to persevere confident of our Lord's promise that nothing, not even the gates of hell, will prevail against His Church.

+Peter Abuja,
Chairman,
GAFCON/FCA Primates Council

November 10, 2009

Background for journalists:

The Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans was established at GAFCON 2008, a landmark meeting in Jerusalem attended by delegates from around the world and Primates representing more than 30 million Anglicans. The Primates resolved to meet regularly as a council and to urge Anglicans to confess the faith of Christ crucified, stand firm for the gospel in the global and Anglican context, and affirm a contemporary rule, the Jerusalem Declaration, to guide the movement for the future. FCA includes provinces, dioceses, churches, missionary jurisdictions and individual Anglican Christians whose goal is to reform, heal and revitalise the Anglican Communion and expand its mission to the world.

The Jerusalem Declaration

In the name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit:

We, the participants in the Global Anglican Future Conference, have met in the land of Jesus' birth. We express our loyalty as disciples to the King of kings, the Lord Jesus. We joyfully embrace his command to proclaim the reality of his kingdom which he first announced in this land. The gospel of the kingdom is the good news of salvation, liberation and transformation for all. In light of the above, we agree to chart a way forward together that promotes and protects the biblical gospel and mission to the world, solemnly declaring the following tenets of orthodoxy which underpin our Anglican identity.

- 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, lively hope and thanksgiving to God in all things.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- We gladly *proclaim* and *submit* to the unique and universal Lordship of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, humanity's only Saviour from sin, judgement 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 come to him in repentance and faith.

- 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.
- We *recognise* 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.
- 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.
- 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 baptise, teach and bring new believers to maturity.
- 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.
- We are *committed* to the unity of all those who know and love Christ and to building authentic ecumenical relationships. We recognise the orders and jurisdiction of those Anglicans who uphold orthodox faith and practice, and we encourage them to join us in this declaration.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Jerusalem Feast of St Peter and St Paul 29 June 2008