

## **GAFCON Primates Chair Issues Pastoral Letter**

October 29, 2012

My dear people of God:

Grace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Primates' Council has just concluded its October 2012 meeting in Dar es Salaam where we witnessed the blessing of God in a



number of key areas:

- In the increase of our numbers
- Through the achievements of our April meeting
- By the testimonies of those who are joining with us
- In the new funding provided for our communication efforts
- Through our decision to meet again in a Global assembly
- By the recognition that we are not alone in this spiritual battle

We gathered in this historic city grateful for the faithful witness of the Anglican Church of Tanzania during these challenging times. The Most Reverend Valentine Mokiwa, Bishop of the Diocese of Dar es Salaam and Primate of Tanzania, welcomed us. We were made aware of some of the current difficulties facing Tanzania and committed ourselves to prayer for protection for the Church and peace and prosperity for all of this nation's citizens.

During our meeting we were vividly reminded of the costly struggles of so many of our fellow Christians, whether facing violent persecution, natural disaster or spiritual conflict

with competing ideologies. Such struggles have shaped our intention to use the next Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON2), now to be anticipated in October 2013 (rather than May as previously indicated) to stand in solidarity with all of our oppressed sisters and brothers and to study the theme of declaring the gospel of God 'in the midst of much conflict' (1Thessalonians 2:2).

We were pleased to welcome the Most Reverend Henri Isingoma, Primate of the Anglican Church of the Congo as member of the Primates' Council. We are thankful for his faithful witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, his embrace of the tenets of the Jerusalem Declaration and his enthusiastic support for the work of the Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans.

We reflected on our meeting in London this past April when we gathered 200 leaders from 31 countries and enjoyed outstanding fellowship. We received excellent theological and biblical material that is now published on the GAFCON website. We also heard remarkable testimonies of leadership under pressure from around the Communion. But perhaps the most telling quote was from a Nigerian bishop who said, 'Now we know we are not alone.' That is at the heart of our calling as the Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans – to provide an authentic Anglican community for those who have been alienated for whatever reason.

As a result of the increased aggressiveness of the revisionists there are now those in every province and beyond who wish to stand with us and who need our help to stand for Christ: in Recife (Brazil), in South Carolina, in the Church of Scotland, in Ireland, in England, in Australia and many more. We received reports from various FCA affiliates and rejoice in their faithful witness in the face of tremendous pressure and were delighted to receive an application for the establishment of an FCA affiliate in Australia.

We were also reminded of the need for prayer for those who will gather in Auckland, New Zealand, for the meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council. In particular we prayed that they will avoid compromise and have the courage to declare boldly the Gospel of Jesus Christ that is good news for all people at all times and in all cultures.

We also rejoiced in the news that we have now received funding to expand our Communication efforts and look forward to more regular communication between our various constituencies and the ability to be able to share the remarkable stories of courageous and costly discipleship. We are also hopeful that this will also be a means by which we can be more effectively mobilized for intercession for one another and the communities that we serve.

From our very inception we have always understood that our fight is not with any particular person, political party, program or province but rather we are engaged an age-old battle for the soul of the Church.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, ... Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints. (1)

At its heart we are engaged in a spiritual and theological struggle and we were unanimous in our commitment to renew the FCA Theological Commission with Provincial representation and a revised mandate that will provide theological resources to address areas of current concern.

We concluded our meeting with a glorious service of evening worship at the Cathedral of St Albans in Dar es Salaam. As we sang the familiar words of the evening hymn "The Day Thou Gavest, Lord, Is Ended" (2) we gave thanks that "The Voice of Prayer is Never Silent. Nor dies the strain of praise way!" We are indeed not alone!

In Christ's love and service,

The Most Reverend Eliud Wabukala  
On behalf of the FCA Primates Council  
*1. Ephesians 6:12-20*  
*2. Psalm 42:8, John Ellerton, 1870*