

Southern Primates Statement

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Following a meeting of the Southern Primates (18 of them) in April the following statement has been issued under the name of Peter Akinola.

"As we meet, being acutely conscious of the current critical challenges we face as a Communion, we reaffirm our unswerving commitment to the historic and apostolic Christian Faith as revealed in the Holy Scriptures "once delivered to the saints" (Jude v.3), proclaimed and practised by the Anglican Communion over the centuries. It is our heartfelt desire to see the Anglican Communion move faithfully forward in true unity under the supreme authority of the Word of God. In this, we express our deep appreciation and prayerful support of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd Dr Rowan Williams, in his unique leadership role amongst us.

Affirming the Resolution I.10 of Lambeth 1998, and the unanimously agreed Primates' Statement of 16th October 2003 which the Presiding Bishop of the ECUSA himself consented to, and the Global South Primates' Statement of 2nd Nov 2003, we reiterate unreservedly our unequivocal opposition to the unilateral decision of ECUSA to proceed with the consecration of a divorced and practising homosexual priest as Bishop. This deliberate disobedience of the revealed will of God in the Holy Scriptures is a flagrant departure from the consensual and clearly communicated mind and will of the Anglican Communion. By this, ECUSA has wilfully torn "the fabric of the communion at its deepest level", and as a consequence openly cut themselves adrift and broken the sacramental fellowship of the Communion.

We commit ourselves to ongoing prayer for the work of the Lambeth Commission recently appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury and respectfully submit the following for their consideration:

- The Commission should include in its Report a specific call to ECUSA to repent; revoking and rescinding their decision and action regarding the election and consecration of Gene Robinson as a Bishop in the Church of God.
- Should ECUSA fail to comply within three months, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Primates should then take appropriate disciplinary action, which should include the suspension and ultimate expulsion of ECUSA from fellowship and membership of the Anglican Communion.
- Recognition and full Episcopal and pastoral oversight should be given by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Primates to those dioceses, parishes and laity within ECUSA who continue to uphold the historic faith and order of the Anglican Communion.
- Similar measures should be applied to the Bishop and Synod of the Diocese of New Westminster, Canada for their unilateral approval and implementation of rites for the blessing of same sex union.

- We also request the Commission to give urgent consideration to the renewal of mutual accountability and the harmonization of constitutions and canons of the various Provinces in the Communion.
- As Primates of the Global South, we are of one mind that these measures are essential to preserve our Communion in true union and to avoid the tragic realignment which would otherwise be inevitable.

The ACC, upon the recommendation of the Brisbane 1986 Missions Conference, organised a gathering of the non-Western parts of the Communion for mutual consultation on their distinctive contextual mission challenges. The 1st South-South Encounter was held in Limuru, Kenya in 1994. The 2nd South-South Encounter in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 1997, produced the important "Kuala Lumpur Statement on Human Sexuality" which was significantly fed into the 1998 Lambeth Conference resulting in no small way the historic and overwhelming approval of Resolution I.10. Other subsequent gatherings and initiatives took place in more recent years.

At this juncture of critical challenges faced by the Communion for its integrity, credibility and acceptability both within and before other churches, faiths and an increasingly secularised and divided world, we resolve that our fellowship and unity be further consolidated and mutually strengthened for even more concerted efforts in our common faith, witness and mission of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, notwithstanding our diverse social, cultural, religious, economic and political contexts. We challenge ourselves to spiritual renewal and transformation in stewardship and development of resources, both human and financial, through biblical discipleship and mutual care and sharing! Thus, we further intend to gather in a 3rd South-South Encounter in Egypt under the theme of the "One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church".

As we have experienced deep Christian fellowship and unity in the faith and mandate of our shared mission throughout the two days of our gathering, we are eager to share with you our wonder and joy in the amazing grace of God in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit. By the mercies of God, we urge all His faithful people in our historic and worldwide Anglican Communion, especially those in difficult situations for the sake of the Gospel, to be encouraged and to remain steadfast in "faith, hope and love".

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart". (Heb 12.1-3)."

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