

The Lambeth Conference: A Declaration of Unity, Witness and Mission. *Ash Wednesday, 1988*

CERTAIN BISHOPS IN THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION

We, being bishops of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, in communion with the See of Canterbury, wish to affirm the Biblical and Catholic inheritance of the Anglican Communion and its missionary vocation.

This, we believe, is being endangered by the disagreement over certain issues facing the Anglican Communion at the coming Lambeth Conference.

We therefore state the following convictions as basic to the faith and life which, in Christ, we share with other parts of the historic Church.

1. We accept the revelation of God in the Holy Scriptures as the ground of faith and the source of all authority in the Church, and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith and morals.

2. We believe in God the Holy Trinity and in the Incarnation, Death and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ as set forth in the catholic creeds and defined by the General Councils of the undivided Church.

3. We accept the two sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist, ordained by Christ himself, as generally necessary to salvation.

4. We believe 'these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church: Bishops, Priests and Deacons' to have come down to us from apostolic times; and we do not consider that the churches of the Anglican Communion have authority to change the historic tradition of the Church that the Christian ministerial priesthood is male.

The given framework of Catholic faith and order makes it possible for theological traditions and outlooks which elsewhere have divided churches to be held together in the Anglican Communion. This unity is essential as we seek to discern the guidance of the Holy Spirit into a deeper understanding of, and obedience to, revealed truth. Both for the preservation of a commonly accepted ministry in the Anglican Communion, and for the wider unity of the Church, it is essential that

the introduction of any major innovation be in accordance with the judgment of Scripture and have a clear ecumenical consensus. Otherwise it can only lead to division and be a hindrance to the furtherance of the Gospel.

Mutual tolerance and respect among the churches of the Anglican Communion has already been greatly strained by the ordination of women to the presbyterate in certain provinces. While we recognize the many gifts which women contribute to the life of the Church, and we wish to affirm and encourage the development of ministries in which these gifts may be fully used for the building up of the Body of Christ and in Christian witness and service, the ordination of women to the presbyterate is clearly inconsistent with the tradition of the Church since New Testament times and is opposed by the greater part of the Church today. A grave situation has already been created. Full mutual recognition of presbyteral ministries no longer exists in the Anglican Communion. In certain places schism has been caused. If women are ordained to the episcopate we do not see how that can do other than call in question the continuance of the Anglican Communion.

So we call upon all God's people throughout the Anglican Communion to pray earnestly that our churches be faithful to Scripture and to the Tradition that we have received, and that the Lord Jesus Christ will heal the wounds of division within his Mystical Body. We invite all of the clergy and laity who agree with the above declaration to write to their own bishop to that effect.

Those of us who have been called to the episcopate have a special responsibility to lead if the witness of the Anglican Communion to the faith entrusted to us is to be maintained. We therefore invite other Anglican bishops throughout the world to join us in proclaiming and upholding these principles of unity, witness and mission.

Ash Wednesday, 1988.

This Declaration of Unity, Witness and Mission has the support of the bishops who are listed below.

Diocesan Bishops

Aberdeen and Orkney (Scotland)

Albany (USA)

Antsiranana (Indian Ocean)

Argyll and the Isles (Scotland)

Armidale (Australia)

Ballarat (Australia)

Bathurst (Australia)

Bermuda (Extra-provincial)

Bloemfontein (Southern Africa)

Churchman

Central Zambia (Central Africa)
Chichester (Church of England)

Eau Claire (USA)

Fond du Lac (USA)
Fort Worth (USA)

George (Southern Africa)
Gibraltar (Church of England)
Glasgow and Galloway (Scotland)
Guyana (West Indies)

Kimberley and Kuruman (Southern Africa)
Kobe (Japan)
Kyoto (Japan)

Lebombo (Southern Africa)
Leicester (Church of England)
London (Church of England)

Masasi (Tanzania)
Moray, Ross and Caithness (Scotland)

Northern Argentina (Southern Cone)

Peru (Southern Cone)
Portsmouth (Church of England)

Quincy (USA)

Riverina (Australia)

St Helena (Southern Africa)
San Joaquin (USA)
Southwest Florida (USA)
Swaziland (Southern Africa)
Sydney (Australia)

The Murray (Australia)
Trinidad and Tobago (West Indies)
Truro (Church of England)

Wakefield (Church of England)
Wangaratta (Australia)
Willochra (Australia)

Winchester (Church of England)
Windward Islands (West Indies)

Suffragan and Assistant Bishops

Edmonton (Church of England)
Sigisbert Ndwandwe, Johannesburg (Southern Africa)
L.E.W. Renfrey, Assistant Bishop of Adelaide (Australia)
John Ruston, Pretoria (Southern Africa)

Retired bishops who are members of the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church of the United States of America

Stanley Atkins (Eau Claire)
James Duncan (Southeast Florida)
Robert H. Mize, Jr. (Matabeleland and Damaraland)
William Sheridan (Northern Indiana)

Other bishops of the Anglican Communion who would like to support the above Declaration are invited to write to any of the following:

The Archbishop of Sydney,
P.O. Box Q190,
Queen Victoria Post Office,
Sydney 2000
New South Wales.

The Bishop of Fort Worth,
6300 Ridglea Place,
Suite 1100,
Fort Worth,
Texas 76116
U.S.A.

The Bishop of George,
P.O. Box 227,
George, 6530
South Africa.

The Bishop of Truro,
Lis Escop,
Truro,
Cornwall TR3 6QQ
U.K.