



Personal reflections on Lambeth 2008

August 11, 2008

My dear members of our ANiC family,

For the past three weeks, I have been combing the Internet for news from Lambeth. And there has been no lack of it. The blogs and (especially UK) media have been full of information. Making sense of all that information, however, has been a challenge. This is my best effort to make sense of Lambeth from this side of the Atlantic.

One of the key benefits of this Lambeth conference was the opportunity it afforded Anglican leaders from throughout the world, including our own Primate, Archbishop Greg, to meet together in groups, as well as one-on-one, to discuss important matters. There have been many reports of positive “indaba” and Bible study group meetings.

There have also been reports of frustration. Frustration that Lambeth, by design, did not produce any further clarity on the crisis – no clear direction, no decisions. However, this was indeed by design and was cited by bishops who chose not to attend as one of the factors in their decision. Two Primates – one attending Lambeth, one not – spoke passionately and eloquently of the intransigent anti-Christian actions of the North American churches, actions that precipitated the crisis. I have great respect for both Archbishop Deng Bul (Sudan) and Archbishop Orombi (Uganda) for their courage in taking their stands when silence would have been far easier.

Differences between Lambeth and GAFCon

I was struck by the marked contrast between what I was hearing from Lambeth and what I experienced at the GAFCon meeting only a few weeks earlier in Jerusalem. The ambiguity and confusion created by Lambeth is in stark contrast to the clarity and joy of GAFCon. While Lambeth focused on holding together institutional unity in the absence of spiritual unity, GAFCon manifested the genuine unity of those who share the same Lord, the same Truth and the same Spirit. Those of us privileged to be in Jerusalem in June experienced daily symphonies of praise as brothers and sisters in Christ worshipped together in “one accord”.

Sadly, Lambeth again clearly demonstrated that there are those who call themselves Anglicans who have strayed far from Christian truth and have embraced another lord and a different gospel. The Archbishop of Canterbury, I believe, is struggling to do the impossible – hold together under the Anglican banner two utterly incompatible religions. Thus, the incoherence, the confusion, and the contradictions contained in the Lambeth documents. Compare the 42 page Lambeth “Reflections” document which says everything, but in the end says nothing, to the four page GAFCon statement, which offered a clear statement of faith and outlined next steps.

Rethinking Communion

All of this is causing me to rethink my concept of “Communion” as it applies to the gathering of those 38 Provinces that for some years now have come under the banner of the **Worldwide Anglican Communion**. I now see this concept as something even deeper than the spiritual unity than is implied by the title. No matter how profound the documents and formularies produced by these Provinces may become, the real test for the strength of this “Communion” is the indwelling Spirit of God. It is only when that Spirit of the Living God is dwelling in us collectively as well as individually, that we can fully share this Communion with one another. Then other aspects such as our institutional loyalty, our nationality, our culture or even our cherished church traditions, become secondary as we experience “O Blest Communion, Fellowship Divine” as the hymn writer expressed it in a somewhat different context.

At GAFCON I experienced Communion at a level I rarely have in my lifetime. I also believe, from what I have read from fellow bishops who were at Lambeth, that there were significant pockets of Communion at this depth present several times during that Conference. But on the whole, those who attended both GAFCON and Lambeth sensed that there was something sadly lacking in the latter and it hung like a pall over almost all of the proceedings.

Archbishop Greg tells us he was not able to partake in the Lord's Table – the sacrament we often call "Communion" – during his entire time at Lambeth. Largely because of this absence of true Communion, over 25 per cent of Anglican bishops worldwide were not able to be at Lambeth.

The time has come to focus on true Communion and abandon the energy-sapping pretense of maintaining institutional unity in the absence of full and genuine Communion.

In the weeks and months ahead, we are looking to the Lord to lead us as we recommit ourselves to build His Church and His Communion within our Anglican context.

Common Cause Partnership

In mid-August the Common Cause executive committee is meeting to seek God's leading for our partnership in light of Lambeth and the GAFCon Primates invitation to advance orthodox Anglican unity in North America. You likely saw the recent [Common Cause statement](#) which declared our intention to seek recognition as the North American Province of GAFCon. The statement outlines concrete actions now underway. It said:

We accept the call to build the Common Cause Partnership into a truly unified body of Anglicans. We are committed to that call. Over the past months, we have worked together, increasing the number of partners and authorizing committees and task groups for Mission, Education, Governance, Prayer Book & Liturgy, the Episcopate, and Ecumenical Relations. The Executive Committee is meeting regularly to carry forward the particulars of this call. The CCP Council will meet December 1-3, 2008.

GAFCon

The GAFCon Primates Council meets toward the end of August at which time they will consider and respond to the outcome of the Lambeth Conference.

Anglican Network in Canada (ANiC) and Anglican Essentials Network (AEN)

With our **inaugural ANiC synod** just over three months away – November 13-15 in Burlington, Ontario – our staff and leadership team is scrambling to prepare. We are now working with ANiC churches to determine the best formula and means of selecting delegates.

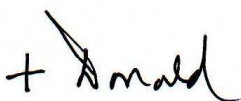
In addition, we are planning a series of **meetings** across the country – potentially in 20 or more locations – for late September and into October. These meetings will report to ANiC and AEN members and our friends on:

- GAFCon, Lambeth and the Common Cause Partnership – helping make sense of all the 'moving pieces' at the global level
- Developments in ANiC and AEN, including new churches and church plants, national ministries serving our churches, legal considerations and ANiC's upcoming synod

These meetings will also provide opportunity for you to get your questions answered and for Network staff and leaders to hear from you. A schedule of meetings should be available in early September. *Looking to Jesus* is the theme we have chosen for these meetings. In a world of confusion, disillusionment and hopelessness – Jesus is our Compass, our Guide, our Example and our Companion.

Please do try to attend the meeting in your area. We would love the opportunity to communicate with you in person.

With love and blessings,



Bishop Don Harvey