

The Episcopal/Anglican Church of Egypt with North Africa and the Horn of Africa



The Anglican/Episcopal Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East

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To the Primates and Moderators of the Anglican Communion
and the Members of the Standing Committee of Anglican Communion

Greetings in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

After much prayer and consideration, I hereby submit my resignation from the Standing Committee of the Anglican Communion (SCAC). I have come to realize that my presence in the current SCAC has no value whatsoever and my voice is like a useless cry in the wilderness. Having said that, I must say that since I joined the Committee in 2007 I have learnt quite a lot and made friends who may disagree with me but whom I appreciate very much and I will miss.

I would like to assure you that my resignation from the SCAC will not stop my commitment to the Primates Meetings, and to work for the present and future of our beloved Anglican Communion and the greater Christian witness.

I have attended every meeting of the Standing Committee as well as the ACC-14. However, I have come to the sad realization that there is no desire within the ACC and the SCAC to follow through on the recommendations that have been taken by other Instruments of Communion to sort out the problems which face the Anglican Communion and which are tearing its fabric apart. Moreover, the SCAC, formerly known as the Joint Standing Committee (JSC), has continually questioned the authority of the other Instruments of Communion, especially the Primates Meeting and the Lambeth Conference.

The current SCAC provides no effective challenge to the ongoing revisions of TEC nor does it apply the recommendations of the Windsor Report and the Primates Meetings in Dromantine and Dar es Salam.¹ I believe that this current "state of no-

¹ Windsor Report Recommendation, Section D, 157 *"There remains a very real danger that we will not choose to walk together. Should the call to halt and find ways of continuing in our present communion not be heeded, then we shall have to begin to learn to walk apart"* The Communiqué of the Primates Meeting in Dromantine in 2005: *"in order to recognize the integrity of all parties, we request that the Episcopal Church (USA) and the Anglican Church of Canada voluntarily withdraw their members from the Anglican Consultative Council"* (Section 14). This was also affirmed by ACC-13. The Communiqué of the Primates Meeting in the Dar es Salam in 2007: *"The Primates request that the answer of the House of Bishops is conveyed to the Primates by the Presiding Bishop by 30th September 2007. If the reassurances requested of the House of Bishops cannot in good conscience be given, the relationship between The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion as a whole remains damaged at best, and this has consequences for the full participation of the Church in the life of the Communion"* (Dar es Salam 2007).

action" will lead to more divisions and fragmentation simply because it widens the gap between the "promise" and the "follow-through," diminishes the trust between churches, and produces an "ecclesial deficit."²

The SCAC, in its meeting in December 2009, unfortunately was unable to respond firmly and effectively to the resolutions that were taken in the General Convention of TEC (2009)³ and to follow-through the recommendations mentioned above. In this way, the SCAC has missed an opportunity to show how serious the Anglican Communion is in upholding its standard teaching (Lambeth 1.10)—the teaching which we *say* we uphold, especially to our ecumenical and interfaith partners.

Some may say that the provinces within the Anglican Communion are autonomous, and each province is free to make its own resolutions. While I agree and accept the autonomous nature of each province, I believe that the participation in the decision making process that affects the life of the Anglican Communion should be for those who show respect in word and deed to the whole Communion—not those who turn their backs to every appeal and warning.

Many sing praises of "inclusiveness" while at the same time they exclude others. I am deeply disturbed in my conscience when I see a kind of double-standard in dealing with different issues. While emphasizing the importance of caring for the marginalized in our communities, like the LGBT community, the orthodox Anglicans are being marginalized. I understand that in a family, the concern of every member is cared for; but this is not the reality in our meetings where the orthodox voices are disregarded or suppressed.

As I resign from the SCAC, I would like to take this opportunity to express **my personal** views on certain issues facing the Anglican Communion:

1. The authority of the Instruments of Communion

In the last few years I noticed some attempts to question and diminish the authority of the Primates and the Lambeth Conference of Bishops who are the "guardians and teachers of faith."⁴ They are trying to emphasize the authority of the ACC more than the authority of the above mentioned Instruments. This clearly contradicts the Anglican way which affirms that we are "Episcopally led and synodically governed,"⁵ as Cardinal Kasper said at the Lambeth Conference 2008:

"It also seems to us [The Roman Catholic Church] that the Anglican commitment to being 'episcopally led and synodically governed' has not always functioned in such a way as to maintain the apostolicity of the faith, and that synodical government misunderstood as a kind of parliamentary process has at times blocked the sort of episcopal leadership envisaged by Cyprian and articulated in ARCIC."

In the last year I have had to remind my colleagues, twice, of the Lambeth Conference Resolutions of 1988 and 1998 in regard to the authority of the Primates Meeting,

² The Windsor Continuation Group Report to the Archbishop of Canterbury (2008)

³ Resolution C056 and Resolution D025 of the 76th General Convention of The Episcopal Church in USA

⁴ The Anglican Covenant (3.1.3)

⁵ The Signposts of the Anglican Communion

especially in times of crisis and emergency.⁶ I strongly believe that if the recommendations of the Primates Meetings, since 2005, were followed-through, the situation of the Anglican Communion would be different. There would have been no need for interventions or divisions.

2. The Anglican Covenant

I am glad that the Anglican Covenant is now sent for adoption by the Provinces, although I believe that the current version is weaker than the previous one because Section 4.1.3 clearly states "*Nothing in this Covenant of itself shall be deemed to alter any provision of the Constitution and Canons of any Church of the Communion.*" This means that the current Covenant will not work retrospectively, i.e. it will not solve the current crisis. It only reminds us of our inter-dependence in the future.

There are many good aspects of the Covenant but I have the following points to make:

A. I hope that Provinces who would sign and adopt the Covenant would take it seriously and think many times before taking unilateral decisions that may hinder the mission of other parts of the Communion.

B. Provinces who violate the spirit of the Covenant should not be allowed to sign or adopt the Covenant in the first place. Otherwise, we will be allowing provinces to come to a covenantal relationship while carrying baggage that has already torn the fabric of the Communion. Such provinces need to be encouraged to sort out the conflict with the Communion before they adopt the Covenant.

C. Dioceses, within a province that does not want to adopt the Covenant or which is delaying the process of adoption, should be allowed to adopt the Covenant. This affirms that the diocese is the basic unit of the Communion.⁷ It also gives affirmation and recognition from the Communion to these dioceses.

D. According to Section 4.1.6, "*the Covenant becomes active for a Church when that Church adopts [it].*" The implication of this would be that when a majority of provinces have adopted the Covenant, they should then elect new representatives to the Anglican Consultative Council and the Standing Committee of the Anglican Communion. The current ACC and SCAC should resign. It is incomprehensible to think of dioceses or provinces that have not committed themselves to covenantal relationship to participate in the decision making processes that affect the life of those dioceses or provinces that have adopted and signed the Covenant. A new Anglican Consultative Council and SCAC, or at the very least an *ad hoc* Standing Committee,

⁶ *Lambeth 1998 Resolution III.6 Instruments of the Anglican Communion*

This Conference, noting the need to strengthen mutual accountability and interdependence among the Provinces of the Anglican Communion, a. reaffirms Resolution 18.2(a) of Lambeth 1988 which "urges that encouragement be given to a developing collegial role for the Primates' Meeting under the presidency of the Archbishop of Canterbury, so that the Primates' Meeting is able to exercise an enhanced responsibility in offering guidance on doctrinal, moral and pastoral matters"; b. asks that the Primates' Meeting, under the presidency of the Archbishop of Canterbury, include among its responsibilities positive encouragement to mission, intervention in cases of exceptional emergency which are incapable of internal resolution within provinces, and giving of guidelines on the limits of Anglican diversity in submission to the sovereign authority of Holy Scripture and in loyalty to our Anglican tradition and formularies.

⁷ *"the Bishop and the Diocese [is] the primary locus of ecclesial identity rather than the abstract reality of the 'national church'" (Archbishop Rowan Williams in a letter to Bishop John Howe, 14 October 2007).*

must be formed.

3. The Listening Process

The Listening Process, as mentioned in Lambeth 1998 Resolution 1.10, is to help us all to "*minister pastorally and sensitively*" to people with homosexual orientation. I am afraid to say that the Listening Process, as it is now, is taken out of the context of the whole resolution which rejects "*homosexual practice as incompatible with Scripture.*" By all means we should love, welcome and pastorally care for people with homosexual orientation. But it seems as if the aim of the Listening Process is to convince traditional Anglicans, especially in the Global South, that homosexual practice is acceptable.

In our Communion where some churches depend financially on others, there is no guarantee of a fair, two-way listening process. My heart breaks when some of my colleagues say, "*we too reject homosexual practice, but we cannot speak up because we have great financial needs.*" It is sad that money speaks louder than the Scriptures. I wish that the Anglican Communion Office would clarify with honesty what is really the ultimate aim of the Listening Process.

4. The Current Structure of the Anglican Communion

Unfortunately the current structure of the Anglican Communion is not a true reflection of the world-wide Anglican Communion which grows mainly in the Global South. The Anglican Communion Office (ACO) is mainly staffed by Westerners who do not necessarily express the voices of the rest of the Communion. The result is a lack of the sense of ownership. The major financial contributors to the ACO are from the West. I strongly feel that the rest of the Communion should support the ACO. This can only happen if provinces feel that they own the ACO, and it is not an office in the UK that tries to run the Communion in its own Western way.

Communication and consultation within the Communion is minimal and needs to be developed. There is a need to reconsider the current ways of communication which is very western and different from the South where direct communication (face-to-face meetings or phone calls) is the norm, and where IT facilities are not always available.

5. The Good News for Anglicanism

Having made all of the critiques, the good news is that the Anglican Communion is alive and fast-growing, mainly in the Global South. Many people are leaving congregational churches to join the Anglican Church for its strong Scriptural stand, its ordered structure, and its rich liturgical worship. It's a phenomenon that the churches that uphold the traditional Anglican faith are growing very fast.

Finally, I would like to say that we have a great promise from the Lord himself, "*On this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail*" (Matthew 16:18). It is *His* church, and *He* will rescue it according to *His* promise. For this reason, "*let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful*" (Hebrews 10:23).

May the Lord bless you!

Yours in Christ,

+ Mouneer Egypt

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