

## Archbishop's Charge

**Together for Christ: 'You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his own marvellous light' (1 Peter 2:9)**

My dear brothers and sisters, I welcome you today to this Standing Committee of the Provincial Synod. As I look around this room today, I want to appreciate the love and faithfulness of all of us as representatives of this Anglican Church of Kenya which God in his mercy has raised up through the faithful preaching of the gospel. I have things to say to you today that the Lord has put on my heart for the well being of this great Church and I can address you as brothers and sisters because, as 1 Peter 2:9 reminds us, the most important truth about our identity is that we are the people of God. This comes before family, tribe, nation, gender or colour. We are all one in Christ, rebels who have been reconciled to God through the blood of Jesus Christ, to belong to him, now and throughout eternity.

This means that the church is unique amongst all human organisations because it is supernatural. It is the fellowship of those who have been born again. By supernatural, we do not mean that it is only genuine if marked by dramatic miracles, but that it shows its authenticity primarily by the miracle of transformed lives in love of God and neighbour. And the greatest way in which we show love to our neighbours is to proclaim the glory – the excellencies (1 Peter 2:9) – of God in Jesus Christ by word and by deed. So this is the calling we must keep always before us – to be a church that glorifies God by proclaiming the good news of the gospel.

If proclaiming the good news is our great purpose, then certain things follow as guiding principles as we share and deliberate together at this Standing Committee of the Provincial Synod:

- 1. We need to remember that we have been called and chosen by God** as 'a people for his own possession'. The Church is God's and not ours. We did not create it and we do not own it. The Church is not a place for seeking status, establishing our rights and achieving personal fulfillment. It is about humble service in fulfilling Jesus' mandate to make disciples of all nations.
  
- 2. We need to remember that we have been called to be holy.** Holiness means belonging to God, being distinctive. God has called us out of darkness into what Peter describes as 'his marvellous light' (1 Peter 2:9). As the people of God we cannot now compromise with the world and it is sometimes forgotten that

holiness means taking care to be faithful in what we teach as well as in how we act. In the Sermon on the Mount, we are given not only the radical ethics of the kingdom, but also warned to hold fast to the teaching of the kingdom. In Matthew 7:15 Jesus says that false teachers will come as wolves in sheep's clothing and we need to be alert to the fact that the world is not necessarily outside the church. Sometimes it can get into the church with disastrous consequences

The spiritual health of this Church is vital in the times in which we live. Although 80% of the Kenyans identify as Christians, we face serious challenges:

1. **The growth of militant Islam.** In a few weeks, the self styled Islamic State or Isis seized control of much of northern Iraq and eastern Syria and is set to consolidate those gains by shocking yet calculated violence and terror. We see how the churches in northern Nigeria are facing systematic eradication by Boko Haram and here in Kenya we also have felt the painful impact of radical Islam through Al Shabaab. While we look to the armed forces and the security services to protect all citizens, we must also be spiritually equipped to meet this challenge by a strong and courageous faith and a willingness to witness to all Muslims by acts of kindness and words of truth.
  
2.
  - (a) **The growth of global secularism.** In the West, secularization is very advanced. Christian belief has been exiled from the public realm and is seen merely as a private matter. Public values are no longer shaped by Christian beliefs, but by a belief in individual personal fulfillment, whatever that may be, and so we see the rise of family breakdown, consumerism, child abuse, abortion, euthanasia and the celebration of homosexuality. With the growth of global communications, this secular outlook is set to spread in Africa and the need for our Christians, especially the youth, to understand the times and have minds that are shaped by the Bible has never been greater. We can no longer rely just on tradition and custom when we are being bombarded with the messages of a global secular culture.
  
  - (b) Although we retain affection for the Church of England and respect the office of the Archbishop of Canterbury, we have to recognize that there has been a fundamental change in the nature of the Anglican Communion. The way in which the Anglican Communion Office in London is seeking to resolve the Communion's ongoing crisis of faith and order is deeply flawed. Two major initiatives have been adopted, Continuing Indaba and the Bible in the Life of the Church Project, but neither has been set up with the aim of discerning truth from error. Both are open-ended processes which turn Anglicans in upon themselves in endless conversation rather than equipping them for a clear and

confident witness to the world around. At the end the Letter of James (5:19,20) we read *'Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.'* The problem with Continuing Indaba and the Bible in the Life of the Church Project is that they do not seek to bring back the wanderers, but actually institutionalise 'wandering from the truth' in the Communion's official structures.

- 3. The need for sustainability.** Kenya and many African nations are still too dependent on wealthier nations. Aid budgets are too often used as a form of neo-colonial control to impose the values and interests of the donors. We are aware that similar pressure can be exerted by The Episcopal Church of the United States and other Provinces that have promoted false teaching. We must therefore continue to look to ways in which we can finance the work of the Church fully from our own resources and reduce the temptation to taking money that compromises our witness. This cathedral's Trinity Centre demonstrates what it possible and we are fortunate to have had the Church Commissioners of Kenya to manage and grow our finances for over fifty years.

As we seek to respond to such challenges it is good to know that we are not alone. In October last year we hosted GAFCON 2013, the second Global Anglican Future Conference. It was our great privilege to welcome to this cathedral over 1,300 delegates, including 331 bishops, from 37 countries. This conference reflected a fundamental shift in the nature of world Anglicanism. The vast majority of the Communion's active members are found in the Global South and most of those are in Africa. In particular, it established the Anglican Church of Kenya as one of the Anglican Communion's leading Provinces in a movement for reform and renewal which has much in common with the East African Revival's emphasis upon the urgency of evangelism and the authority of the scriptures as the inspired word of God. It has been rightly said that GAFCON is to the Anglican Communion what the Revival was to the Churches of East Africa.

So as we see the challenges we face and the responsibility we have to defend and proclaim the gospel as faithful members of the Anglican Communion, there are particular areas of our life together to which we must give special attention.

### **Fresh thinking about how we relate to the wider Anglican Communion.**

Recognizing its changing nature, this should include:

- a) Responsible financial giving, not supporting initiatives which are undermining

the gospel.

- b) Basing relationships with other Anglican Provinces, including mission links, on clear biblical principles of shared loyalty to the historic faith and a common commitment to the Great Commission.
- c) Being consistent with regard to those Provinces where there is broken fellowship due to fundamental departures from Anglican faith and order

Where necessary, the Provincial Constitution will need to be amended accordingly.

## **Leadership and Discipleship**

### **1. The quality of leadership in the Church is crucial for its health and growth.**

We need dedicated pastors with high standards of theological education and there are two changes I urge for consideration:

- a) As a minimum requirement, no bishop should be ordain a person into the ministry of this Church unless they hold a Diploma in Ministry from one of our approved training institutions or the equivalent from elsewhere. Both Scripture and the ordinal make it clear that sound teaching is essential to ordained ministry and we must not dilute or bypass the training necessary.
- b) All ministers of the gospel should be accountable for their ministry, but at present our bishops have assured tenure until death or retirement. It would therefore be a good and wholesome discipline for bishops to have their term of office limited to ten years, renewable after consultation with the diocese and the Provincial leadership. A bishop who stepped down or did not have his term of office renewed would continue to be recognized as a bishop, but would be redeployed in parish or sector ministry.

Again, the Provincial Constitution will need to be amended appropriately.

**2. There is a strategic need for in-service training for church leaders.** We live in a rapidly changing global and local context to which our clergy need to be sensitized and I am very happy therefore to announce the formation of the St Julian's Anglican Centre For Life-Long Learning which will be led by Wanyeki Mahiaini, a Crosslinks Mission Partner. He was previously an Associate Minister at All Souls Langham Place, London, the church where John Stott was Rector for many years. The Centre will provide ministers with skills to meet the challenges and the opportunities of complex and rapidly changing Kenyan cultures and will also further develop their skills in expository Bible teaching

**3. Review of the Catechism.** We also need to address directly the spiritual formation of the laity and one basic tool for this is the Catechism included in our

Prayer Book. We are to be disciples, not just converts and the GAFCON movement in its Jerusalem Statement and Declaration of 2008 reminded us that being an Anglican is not simply a matter of institutional recognition, but of faithfulness to our Anglican doctrinal foundations. To ensure that all Kenyan Anglicans know and understand the faith we confess in a rapidly changing culture, I believe that we need to review the catechism and learn from valuable work that has been done in other orthodox Provinces.

As I conclude, let me return to our passage from 1 Peter ch. 2. At the heart of all that I have said is the need, as Peter puts it in v2, to *‘long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation’*. To become mature, to be growing disciples of Jesus Christ, we need to be continually nourished by God’s Word. Notice that Peter talks about the *‘pure spiritual milk’*. There will always be a temptation to dilute the truth of the gospel and we need a church with a strong bible-teaching ministry so that the Christians are not given diluted or contaminated milk which makes them weak or sick. In Kenya we have many converts, but few disciples and the key to discipleship is being trained in the Scriptures so that we know what it is to be holy, to be God’s chosen people, and continually have our hearts and minds reminded of the ‘excellencies’ of the God we are called to proclaim. We are called to be together for Christ, so let us then be built together as living stones to the glory of God.

**Amen**

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