

LAMBETH 2022

A PERSONAL REFLECTION – RT REV HENRY SCRIVEN

EFAC (the Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion) is the ‘parent’ organisation of CEEC and shares several officers and trustees in common. I am the General Secretary and was introduced to the work of EFAC at the 1998 Lambeth Conference when they held a pre-Lambeth day conference and organised the evangelical bishops to vote clearly on the matter of human sexuality. Hence the famous [resolution 1:10](#). It’s easy to find online and should be read as a whole.

THE COMMITMENT OF ARCHBISHOP JUSTIN AND THE ORGANISERS

Before I go on to describe some of what happened, it must be said that Archbishop Justin invested an enormous amount of energy and time in the conference. He spoke many times, at least three plenary addresses and I think most of the Bible expositions on I Peter. He was front and centre and relating to all the bishops and wives. I found a Congolese bishop wandering in the campus with his wife and a taxi driver from Heathrow, completely lost at 10.00pm one night. I was able to lead them to the Registration Centre which was still open and welcoming people, and the archbishop came down the stairs from a meeting (I presume) and engaged the bishop and his wife in French. The taxi driver was pleased because one of the hard-working staff also paid him!

Organising over 1000 people from 165 countries to travel to Canterbury, be fed and accommodated and cared for in multiple ways was an amazing feat. Just getting many hundreds of people from different flights from London airports to Canterbury, getting them from the University of Kent campus to Canterbury Cathedral and back and to London for the day was not only immensely complicated, but also costly. The staff, whenever I came across them for different reasons, were always polite, efficient and friendly despite their long working hours, so too the exhibition organiser, the university staff and security personnel.

EFAC AND THE GLOBAL SOUTH

Our task as [EFAC](#) was to resource the Global South bishops and give them a voice. This involved having a [website](#), a separate location for press conferences and meetings, a dinner early on in the conference to introduce ourselves, a meeting near the end to agree the Communique and two separate Communion services for those who did not feel that in conscience they could share in Communion with bishops in same sex partnerships.

LAMBETH 1.10 AND ‘CALLS’

Ahead of Lambeth 2022 there was a lot of anticipation about how issues of sexuality would be dealt with. The Archbishop of Canterbury announced a few weeks before the conference that they had dropped the idea of resolutions in favour of 10 or so ‘Calls’ to the Communion on a wide range of issues.

One of the main goals of the [Global South Fellowship of Anglican Churches](#) (GSFA) was to have Lambeth 1.10 reaffirmed by the Conference. There was considerable upset amongst

more liberally minded bishops when the first draft of the Call on Human Dignity stated that 1.10 was the 'mind of the Communion': *It is the mind of the Anglican Communion as a whole that same gender marriage is not permissible. Lambeth Resolution I.10 (1998) states that the "legitimizing or blessing of same sex unions" cannot be advised. It is the mind of the Communion to uphold "faithfulness in marriage between a man and a woman in lifelong union" (I.10, 1998). It is also the mind of the Communion that "all baptized, believing and faithful persons, regardless of sexual orientation are full members of the Body of Christ" and to be welcomed, cared for, and treated with respect (I.10, 1998).*

This was changed after vocal complaints from several liberal bishops, including one in a same sex relationship who was on the drafting committee for that section who had not even seen the final draft. It ended up considerably weakened:

It is the mind of the Anglican Communion as a whole that "all baptised, believing and faithful persons, regardless of sexual orientation are full members of the Body of Christ" and to be welcomed, cared for, and treated with respect (I.10, 1998). Many Provinces continue to affirm that same gender marriage is not permissible. Lambeth Resolution I.10 (1998) states that the "legitimizing or blessing of same sex unions" cannot be advised. Other Provinces have blessed and welcomed same sex union/marriage after careful theological reflection and a process of reception. As Bishops we remain committed to listening and walking together to the maximum possible degree, despite our deep disagreement on these issues.

As the Global South bishops were not permitted to [propose an alternative wording](#) and since voting 'yes or further study' was changed to 'yes, further study, or no'; and then voting was dropped altogether(!), our resource group helped draft a separate call on Anglican doctrine. This included an opportunity to vote securely and confidentially in favour of Lambeth 1.10. The process was quite complicated and involved taking a photo of the bishop's badge to show that they were at the conference and sending it to a secure email address with the numbers of church members in each diocese. For the GS bishops this was quite easy as they could speak for all their people on this issue, but it was impossible for Australian, US or English bishops to speak for their whole dioceses. Nevertheless, the secure vote was taken, and [125 votes were deemed legitimate](#). This will now be handed over to the GSFA who will expand it to the bishops who declined to attend Lambeth.

ARCHBISHOP JUSTIN – LAMBETH CALL ON HUMAN DIGNITY

The Archbishop of Canterbury made a significant speech on 2 August in which he appeared to have pleased both 'sides'. What he said and wrote in a letter to the bishops can be [found online](#) as can [Martin Davie's helpful analysis](#). It does seem that the archbishop's conclusion is that both views are valid and acceptable in the Communion. That is what [many liberals take away](#), although the Chairman of the GSFA clearly said that [they were not walking together](#).

One friend who was present on 2 August wrote to me that: *'I think one of the remarkable things about the ABC's intervention was that it was, in the words of 'Porridge' a 'statement of the bleedin' obvious' – although remarkably well delivered!'*

A document that was agreed by the GSFA bishops at Lambeth was the final [Communique](#). Some people complained that it had been prepared beforehand and did not come from the bishops during the conference. Those that were there know how impossible that would have been unless there had been a group who did not sleep at all for the whole 10 days. So, it was drafted before, but it was amended, read out in its entirety and agreed by all those (well over 100) bishops at a meeting on 8 August. It is long, but it is a clear statement of where we are and well worth reading.

THE LEGACY OF THIS CONFERENCE FOR THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Where does that leave the Communion and the Church of England? It is clear that accepting both sides is not possible for those who accept the authority of Scripture. GSFA has work to do in following up the bishops who affirm Lambeth 1.10. There are still some who were present who have not yet signed up and, of course, many from Nigeria, Uganda and Rwanda, along with several others from a variety of provinces who will be given the opportunity to reaffirm.

GSFA were given a new prominence and profile and part of the way forward for them, and to a lesser extent EFAC, is to work with GAFCON to define their respective positions. There need not be rivalry, but we must pray for clarity. There is overlap in their constituencies, but the main difference is that GSFA has pledged not to leave the Communion but to work for its reformation whereas GAFCON clearly embraces those who (as far as Canterbury/Lambeth is concerned) have left the Communion. The other issue that needs to be addressed is how GSFA can include orthodox bishops, clergy and lay people who are in the global North. That's us as CEEC and other groupings in other provinces like the Communion Partner bishops in TEC and those in Australia, Canada etc. Bishops in these places cannot speak for their whole dioceses on matters of sexuality and LLF is still pending here. Hopefully though the GSFA and their allies have given us hope for the future.

On reflection, perhaps the most important thing that EFAC and GSFA were able to do at Lambeth 22 was help the GS leaders find a voice and get it heard. We needed professional PR help (which was far cheaper than the Lambeth PR company) and were able to hold press briefings apart from the main conference off campus. No western voices were heard except for one time when I chaired the meeting. But the Archbishops of South Sudan, Indian Ocean and Chile did the speaking and answered the questions. Archbishop Justin Badi (South Sudan) used engaging illustrations about the Communion. He said: *'I live in Africa, and we live in mud huts. If there is a snake in the house, we don't run away out of the house, we kill the snake'*. Their vision is of a renewed Church with no snakes!

The other significant contribution was our stand where we had a never-ending supply of free books (on the Bible, discipleship, human sexuality and bishops) kindly donated for the bishops to take in their free EFAC tote bags. The stand in the Exhibition Centre provided great opportunities for conversations with all who came by.

As a bishop with two Lambeth Conferences behind me, what might I say to the English evangelical bishops (and EGGs leaders and DEFs) as we face the next stage in the LLF process :

- Firstly, I recognise and have sympathy for your position as bishops to all the people in your dioceses; and if any of our actions made your ministry more difficult, I am truly sorry. You must honour the LLF process and take back home what you believe God was doing in Canterbury. But I would ask you to consider whether it is possible truly to be in communion with those who are consistently and openly disobeying scripture in the area of human sexuality. Can this matter be 'adiaphora' as the archbishop clearly thinks?
- Secondly, the CEEC is giving bold leadership in a gracious and sometimes costly way and deserve our full support, even to the point of sticking heads above the parapet. Hopefully we can minister to all without necessarily pleasing all. I chaired an informal discussion in one of our local churches last Sunday and was not surprised that the majority of the voices were in favour of same sex relationships and 'marriage', based entirely on sincerely held feelings about love and with little or no concern for scripture or church teaching over 2000 years. We are in a cultural battle and have lost any idea of heresy. [Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote:](#)

If critical Christology is concerned with the fixing of limits, that means it is concerned with the concept of heresy. The concept of heresy is lost today because there is no longer a teaching authority. This is a terrible decline. The present day ecumenical councils are everything but Councils, because the word 'heresy' is struck out from their vocabulary. There can be no creedal confession without the saying, 'In the light of Christ, that is true and this is false!' The concept of heresy belongs necessarily and irrevocably with the concept of a creedal confession. The teaching of a Confession Church must stand in opposition to a false teaching. The Augsburg Confession says quite clearly, "The Church condemns".

*It must be here noted that the concept of heresy emerges from the fellowship of the Church and not from an absence of love. Only when man does not withhold the truth from his brother, does he deal with him in a brotherly way. If I do not tell him the truth, I treat him like a heathen. When I speak the truth to one who is of a different opinion from mine, then I offer him the love I owe him. [From Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Christ the Center* (Harpers, 1978), pp. 75-76.]*

Finally, we certainly did not do everything right. There are things I would not advise for future conferences, but we are content that the prayers of many were answered, and God was at work. For the results, we will adopt a Gamaliel stance and see what was truly of God.

Henry Scriven (23.08.2022)