

**Address by Archbishop Eliud Wabukala, Chairman of the GAFCON  
Primates Council at the launch of FCA Australia: Pioneers and Partners**

25<sup>th</sup> March 2015

*'Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus'*

Hebrews 12:1,2.

My dear friends, it is a great joy and privilege to be sharing with you in this very special occasion. I want to thank you so much for your generous hospitality and for making it possible for Mama Rhoda and myself to join you.

Faithful, persevering and gospel-centred Anglicanism has been foundational to the identity of Australia and I believe that the initiative we are taking today, the launch of this Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans, will be seen by future generations as a strategic moment for church and society. I even pray that it will be remembered alongside the pioneering work of the Rev Richard Johnson, the Naval Chaplain who after a long and dangerous voyage from England conducted what is believed to be the first act of Christian worship on Australian soil on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1788.

For the first six years Richard Johnson ministered alone in difficult conditions with people who were often unresponsive, but he had taken the words of Hebrews chapter 12 and verse 1 to heart. He ran with endurance the race that was set before him and he looked to Jesus. And so must we. We must look not our own interests, but the interests of Jesus Christ.

And what are the interests of Jesus Christ? We do not have, as far as I am aware, any record of his sermons, but we do get an insight into how Richard Johnson understood that question in an appeal he wrote in order to reach a wider audience as the colony grew. There is a wonderful warmth and urgency in his words. He writes *'Your souls are precious. You are precious to the Lord Jesus Christ. You are precious in my esteem'*.<sup>1</sup> These words remind us that at the heart of the GAFCON movement of we which are part is a passion for the biblical gospel. Lost people are precious to the Lord Jesus Christ and cannot be seen as anything less than that by us.

It is for this reason that we acclaimed the Jerusalem Statement and Declaration at the close of our first Global Anglican Future Conference in 2008. It is a rallying point for contemporary Anglican orthodoxy and it

concluded with a visionary statement of purpose in which we declared that *'The primary reason we have come to Jerusalem and issued this declaration is to free our churches to give clear and certain witness to Jesus Christ.'* Freeing our churches involves contending for the gospel as well as promoting the gospel, even challenging ungodly leadership where necessary, and we do this not because we want to be awkward or divisive, but because lost souls are precious to Jesus and we must not be silent or inactive when they are put in danger by confusion, compromise and false teaching.

So it is my prayer that FCA Australia will be powerfully used by God as an instrument of renewal and reform in the Anglican Church here. I long to see all orthodox Anglicans united in a common commitment to pioneering a new wave of evangelism which will have a deep and lasting impact on this nation.

However, I also want to encourage you to look beyond Australia. As you come together in this Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans, commit to becoming even stronger partners with orthodox Anglicans throughout the world. Australian Anglicans have already made an immense contribution to the GAFCON movement, not least through Sydney Diocese and the outstanding ministry of Archbishop Peter Jensen who

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<http://storage.cloversites.com/stphilipsyorkstreetanglican/documents/Richard%20Johnsons%20First%20Sermon.pdf>

continues to serve as our much loved and deeply respected General Secretary, but we face great challenges.

Firstly, in the developing world, and I speak especially of my own continent of Africa, we have great need for partnership with you in discipleship training at all levels, especially as we see the secular challenges to Christian faith and life you are so familiar with now impacting Africa through a globalized media, particularly in its rapidly growing cities. We also need to stand alongside and speak out for those believers who are suffering so terribly at the hands of Islamic radicals and there is always the need for humanitarian and development initiatives by which we demonstrate the love of God to those in extreme material need.

Secondly, in the developed world, we need your partnership as we seek to stand with and strengthen Churches to maintain a faithful and winsome Christian witness in societies where their Christian heritage has become little more than an ornament. In North America, the cultural captivity of the established Anglican Churches became so bad that a fundamental realignment was necessary and we thank God for the emergence and growth of the GAFCON sponsored Anglican Church of North America.

Now we are seeing the same struggle developing in the Church of England, the Mother Church of the Communion itself, and the most recent sign of this is the crisis developing after a parish church in central London was made available for a Muslim prayer service earlier this month. The vicar not only joined in, but also covered up the cross and other Christian symbols in the church. Here we have a warning that controversies about gender and sexuality reflect a deeper problem. Now we are seeing the core Christian commitment to the uniqueness of Jesus as Lord and Saviour is being called into question.<sup>2</sup>

Despite such these problems, I take great encouragement from the growth of the GAFCON movement. It is a sign that God has not abandoned the Anglican Communion. At a time when some of its branches are visibly disintegrating, we are called to be pioneers and partners in the restoration of that part of the Church of God that has been entrusted to us as inheritors of the Anglican Reformers. So, as those who know that it is through Christ alone we are rescued from sin, death and hell, let us keep our eyes fixed upon Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith. God bless and equip you all in this great work.

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<sup>2</sup> The Vicar, Rev Giles Goddard on St John's Waterloo in Southwark Diocese issued an apology on 17<sup>th</sup> March, but this was for any offence caused, not for the action itself.