



Rev. Dave Clancey

## Editorial

The second Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) met in Nairobi in late October. This event saw over 1300 delegates from 38 countries meet for 6 days of prayer, bible study, discussion and fellowship. Archbishops, bishops, clergy and laity from around the world met and mingled, prayed and sung together in a variety of languages. It was a time of incredible joy for those present, and there can be no doubt that GAFCON was a significant event on the global Anglican stage. It generated interest from the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, who met with the primates the day before the conference and sent his video greetings to the conference. Those opposed to the conference were also interested in it, calling the Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans (GFCA) movement schismatic and un-anglican.

The interest the conference and associated movement generated is justified. The Nairobi Communique and Nairobi Commitment (see later in this edition of Focus for these documents) are broad ranging and significant documents. The GFCA has and will be strengthened by a renewed commitment to proclaiming and contending for the biblical gospel of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. It has committed itself to supporting, and where necessary authenticating, Anglicans who seek to remain faithful to this gospel and yet have been excluded from their diocese or province. This work will be undertaken as the GFCA operates on a more systematic basis and resources and structures its work around this new structure. This is not a new communion, for the Nairobi commitment clearly states that the GFCA commits itself to work within the Anglican communion for its renewal and reform. But it is a recognition that liberal dioceses and provinces have actively worked against the gospel by rejecting those who seek to declare God's word with God's authority, and have legitimized same sex activity through blessings or ordinations – calling holy what God calls sin.

We must be clear, however, that the Nairobi Communique and Nairobi Commitment do not focus exclusively on recent events in the Anglican Communion. GAFCON and the GFCA are not a single issue movement. The raising up of young leaders, calling for an end to violence against women and children, seeking to see the economic empowerment of those who are deprived and recognizing the need for good stewardship of our natural environment are just some of the subjects members of the GFCA commit themselves to. That said, the legitimization of same sex activity has been

the presenting issue in the global Anglican world in recent years, and is a significant current expression of a movement which undermines the divine authority of the Scriptures and elevates the leading of the Holy Spirit through cultural trends.

This all leads us to consider our New Zealand situation. Our general synod presently has lying on the table motions which seek to legitimize same-sex activity in various ways. It is highly likely that these motions, or others which seek to move in a similar direction, will be presented at General Synod in 2014. GAFCON will have encouraged and strengthened General Synod members to stand and speak in defence of an orthodox and traditional Scriptural view on these matters, knowing that millions of Anglicans around the world are praying for them and sharing their commitment to God's word. Should General Synod insist on abandoning the gospel and adopting a false gospel where same-sex activity is blessed or endorsed, the GFCA also provides a structure in which orthodox Anglicans – be they evangelical, Anglo-catholic, or charismatic (or any mix of the three!) – can find fellowship and oversight.

But the most significant contribution that GAFCON has made is the clarity and power with which it affirms the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ – that salvation and forgiveness is offered to all who repent and believe in Jesus. The GFCA is committed to the growing of Christian disciples and the evangelization of the world. Because GAFCON is a gospel driven movement it is necessarily a missional movement. It seeks to see men and women and children from all backgrounds, of all sexual orientations, to come to a saving knowledge of Jesus. It is because of this missional priority that the issue of human sexuality has come to the fore, because a gospel which redefines what sin is, is no gospel at all. Therefore our opposition as the Latimer Fellowship to the legitimization of same-sex activity by the church is in no way an opposition to those who experience sexual attraction to those of the same gender as themselves. It is not saying that they are more sinful than any of the rest of us, nor that they cannot be saved. Our opposition and our ongoing work to call the church to not abandon the faith we have received is because we believe that it is only *this* gospel that is the power of salvation for all who believe (Rom 1:16). We must hold to this gospel if we wish to love people and see them come to Christ in repentance and find forgiveness. The GFCA is committed to this very same task, and will be a great encouragement to us in the months and years ahead.