



# An Anglican Summer

Crosslinks' Mission Director Andy Lines reflects on a turbulent year.



Dr Jim Packer, the noted author and theologian, was for many years involved in the BCMS training college, Tyndale Hall, in Bristol. Later, Tyndale Hall merged with Dalton House (the women's training college), and Clifton College to form Trinity College Bristol. In 1979 Packer moved to the Diocese of New Westminster, Canada. Earlier this year he had his license removed for resisting false teaching in the area of sexuality, and Archbishop Greg Venables of the Anglican Province of the Southern Cone of America offered him and others licenses and temporary oversight by that Province.

On 19 September the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church (USA) voted to depose Bishop Bob Duncan, an orthodox bishop of Pittsburgh for nearly 15 years, for abandoning the Communion. The Southern Cone has likewise offered him coverage.

These two events bracket a summer full of meetings and events in the life of the Anglican Communion. Crosslinks has its "principal sphere of operations in the worldwide Anglican Communion" and as a result, I have taken part or been present

at a number of the meetings: the Church of England Evangelical Council, Anglican Mainstream's Steering Group, the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON), both the planning conference in Jordan/Jerusalem and then the main event in Jerusalem, the Evangelical Fellowship of the Anglican Communion (EFAC), the Lambeth Conference and a host of associated meetings. All this surrounded a significant gathering of the General Synod of the Church of England that chose to make no provision for those opposed on grounds of conscience to the consecration of women bishops.

The two main Communion events have been GAFCON and the Lambeth Conference, seen

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but not intended as rival 'parties'. Three groups have been involved: some attended GAFCON but not Lambeth; some attended Lambeth but not GAFCON; some, like Greg Venables, attended both. Biblically orthodox Anglicans



were present at both; those who attended GAFCON but not Lambeth did so having attempted to broker a solution to the long-standing crisis of the Anglican Communion over many years but feeling that there would be little point in continuing in the face of no progress, the exclusion of some of their colleagues from Lambeth, and the inclusion of those rejecting biblical authority. Those who attended Lambeth still felt that an effective role could be played out within the existing structures of the Communion.

What were the distinguishing features of GAFCON and Lambeth?

- Attendance. GAFCON was attended by 1,148 delegates, 291 of whom were bishops, and

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Lambeth was attended by 617 bishops, many with spouses. GAFCON was a glorious and colourful mixture of bishops, other clergy and laity, while Lambeth was for bishops and wives only. Lambeth was representative of those who had more bishops (less those who declined to attend), while GAFCON was representative of the relative numbers of church members. GAFCON, therefore, had a very African feel to it!

- Purpose and methodology. Both GAFCON and Lambeth claimed to be equipping their attendees for mission. GAFCON did this starting from a blank sheet of paper to the chagrin of the programme planners and ending with the Jerusalem Statement and Declaration; it was possible for everyone to have an input in the final statement. Lambeth was carefully crafted and sought to avoid making resolutions. Archbishop Rowan had a significant leading role in Lambeth, whilst there was a clear team of leaders presiding at GAFCON.

- Fellowship. Whilst GAFCON did not pretend to include all Bible-believing Anglicans, there was a common understanding on the central issues of the gospel. There were differences on secondary issues in GAFCON but a tremendous sense of unity in Christ. Lambeth numbered many faithful brothers and sisters as well as many who had long since rejected the supreme authority of the Scriptures. Gene Robinson, the gay Bishop of New Hampshire, was not invited but he was very evident in and around Lambeth, and those who consecrated him as well as the Bishop of New Westminster (who had withdrawn Jim Packer's license) were invited participants. The programme was designed to avoid clashes but there was a clear strain, with some Primates and others opting out of sharing in the Lord's Supper. The 'Market Place' where different groups put up stalls seemed to be dominated by

groups with questionable agendas. GAFCON sought to act on the basis of shared beliefs drawn from the Scriptures; Lambeth sought to bring people of diametrically opposed positions together in a new synthetic consensus.

- Outcomes. GAFCON has resulted in a clear statement of biblical orthodoxy and a movement committed to God's mission in God's world. Lambeth has produced documents such as the 'Lambeth Indaba - Capturing Conversations and Reflections from the Lambeth Conference 2008, Equipping Bishops for Mission and Strengthening Anglican Identity'. Despite this (and large sums of money spent) a biblically

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orthodox bishop who attended Lambeth has been deposed by fellow Lambeth attendees within seven weeks of the end of the Conference.

Where does all this leave Crosslinks, a mission agency seeking to serve churches, primarily of the worldwide Anglican Communion, in making God's salvation in Christ crucified known to the ends of the earth? Our objectives include standing with confessional Anglicans worldwide, especially the most vulnerable, and seeking to encourage biblical reformation. In other words we need to be sensitive to those who are vulnerable to the financial inducements of revisionist churches; for instance one theological trainer we have been unable to sponsor has since accepted an offer for him and his entire family to be trained in a liberal college.

We must also never give up on calling those who have departed from biblical orthodoxy to repentance and faith.

Crosslinks has signed up to GAFCON's Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans. At the same time we respect the integrity of those Bible-believing Anglicans who, for whatever reasons, decided not to attend GAFCON. There is a hard road ahead and we wish to continue serving them in God's mission. We will also continue to participate in discussions with various groups in Britain with a view to ensuring appropriate oversight for the church planters that are associated with Crosslinks, and which are currently outside current episcopal oversight arrangements. For some this would seem to be outside the remit of a mission agency; our response to this is the missionary imperative of ensuring that Britons have opportunities to respond to Christ just as much as people elsewhere, and in some cases this may require irregular action.

We believe that this multi-faceted strategy is in line with the actions of our BCMS forbears who took their stand "for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus" (Rev 1:9).

#### PAPERS:

- GAFCON Final Statement and Jerusalem Declaration 29 June 2008:  
[www.gafcon.org](http://www.gafcon.org)
- Lambeth Indaba. Capturing Conversations and Reflections from the Lambeth Conference 2008:  
[www.lambethconference.org/](http://www.lambethconference.org/)
- If you would like to express personal solidarity with the GAFCON statement go to [www.gopetition.co.uk/online/20243](http://www.gopetition.co.uk/online/20243) or for groups or churches [www.gopetition.co.uk/online/20252](http://www.gopetition.co.uk/online/20252)

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