

## Pastoral Letter to the Diocese of Tasmania

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As you may know I have been attending the [GAFCON IV Conference](#) in Kigali Rwanda this last week in my capacity as Chair of Gafcon Australia.

The Conference was primarily focussed on the mission of the Anglican Church throughout the world as we pursued the theme of “To Whom Shall We Go?”. It was very encouraging to be present with 1300 people from over 50 nations, representing the vast majority of the world’s Anglicans, thinking and praying about the mission of the Anglican Church throughout the world. We studied the Letter to the Colossians, were equipped for mission and heard testimony of God’s work in the world.

So many Anglicans are facing daily persecution for the name of Christ. Many are working in challenging mission contexts where militant extremists are putting pressure on believers who are risking their very lives for Jesus. Others, like us, are working to proclaim the gospel in increasingly secular contexts which have their own challenges. All of us at the conference were committed to the biblical gospel, as the only hope for our damaged and divided world. There were many stories of hope and encouragement.

GAFCON IV released a Conference Statement on its final day which you can read in full [here](#). The Statement speaks about some of the deep problems and divisions in the Anglican communion, including the recent decision by the Church of England to welcome prayers for the blessing of people in same-sex unions. This decision, along with other changes to the doctrine of the church has had a serious effect on our ability to relate in unity with each other.

I want to stress that the Anglican Church of Australia and therefore the Diocese of Tasmania remains in communion with the Church of England, as expressed in our Constitution. However, our communion with other Provinces is dependent on their communion with the Church of England. Many Provinces are now considering whether it is possible for them to remain in communion with the Church of England, and the outcome of those deliberations could potentially put us out of formal relationship with them. This is a great sadness, and we ought to lament the situation that has arisen.

Please pray for the Anglican Communion, that our unity might be in the truth and that we will continually reform our life by the Bible. Pray for the Archbishop of Canterbury as he leads the Church of England in their General Synod deliberations. And please pray for our own Diocese and the Synod as it prepares to meet in July.

I wanted to let you know that at the end of the Conference I stepped down as Chair of the Gafcon Australia Board, to allow for new leadership to arise. The Revd Peter Smith from Dalkeith in Perth is the new Chair. It has been a great privilege to serve in this role over the last 10 years or so. I will remain on the Board as a Director.

Helen and I will be on Long Service Leave until July 6<sup>th</sup>, during which time Bishop Chris will be the Vicar General.

With warm wishes in Christ,

From Kigali, Rwanda