

March 18, 1997

A CLOSING STATEMENT FROM THE PRIMATES MEETING JERUSALEM

March 1997

To our beloved in Christ in the Anglican Communion:

Greetings in the name of the blessed Trinity;

As Primates of the Anglican Communion, gathered in the Holy City, Jerusalem, the Mother City of our Christian faith, we join with the Christian leaders in the Holy Land in a call for peace, justice and equality for all people. Of particular concern for us is the status of Jerusalem, a place sacred to the three great world religions, Christianity, Judaism and Islam. As we pray for the peace of Jerusalem we have constantly been reminded by the indigenous Christian community of our Anglican tradition, the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and its bishops, that this peace can only be accomplished through dialogue, sharing and the acknowledgment of the equality of all three faiths.

We have experienced generous hospitality and the warm welcome of the Christian community as we discussed our concerns and priorities for the forthcoming Lambeth Conference of Bishops in 1998 and studied the document of the Inter Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission.

During our time here we heard the shocking news of the killing of Israeli children at the border of Jordan and we have seen first hand the dire poverty in the refugee camps in Palestine. We have expressed our concern over the Israeli government's plan to construct a new development at Har Homa between East Jerusalem and Bethlehem and see this as a violation of the Oslo Accords and a threat to the peace process. We were the guest of Palestinian President Yasser Arafat in Gaza and Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey greeted the President of Israel on our behalf. The Archbishop and the Presiding Bishop of the United States, the Most Revd Edmond Browning, met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on the last day of our meeting.

We have joined in worship with Roman Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox leaders, as well as Jewish and Muslim clergy, in a service in St George's Cathedral. We take great pride in the Anglican presence here in the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East and we pledge our support to the Primate, the Most Revd Ghais Abdel Malik of Egypt and to the bishops of the several dioceses.

We call upon Anglicans throughout the world to work and pray for peace to take deep root in this troubled land. As the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd George Carey, said in preaching at St. George's Cathedral, Jerusalem, "We are one with the people of Israel in their search for a lasting peace in the Middle East. The Jewish peoples have suffered enough in their long and terrible journey. We are one with the Palestinian people, also a proud and ancient people, whose journey, too, has been one of suffering. There can be no justice for one part of the human family without justice for another".

We rejoice with the Anglican Bishops in Jerusalem in the honours bestowed on them by presidential decoration by President Arafat. We pay tribute to the ministry and witness of the Rt Revd Samir Kafity, Bishop in Jerusalem, and thank him for all his work for justice and peace in this land.

Even though the Holy Land was ever before us during this past week, we also heard stories from around our Communion of Churches - a suffering Communion - the never ending war in the Sudan, forced and illegal repatriation, the spirit of mistrust, hatred and exclusion in Burundi, the internal struggles of the church in Rwanda, the violation of rights in India and Pakistan, the long history of sectarian violence in Northern Ireland and the constant threat of conflict in Sri Lanka.

As part of our Lenten journey together as Fathers in God of this beloved Anglican Communion, we followed the Via Dolorosa for the Stations of the Cross. The vigour of this act of devotion reminded us of the suffering that awaits the Christian in this life. This is the city for which Jesus wept and we too weep over a city that still expresses the agony of that cross. But our hope as we approach the next millennium is in the reality of the Empty Tomb that we found at the end of our walk.

Alleuia Christ in Risen.

He is risen indeed, alleluia

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