

A Pastoral Letter to the Anglican Churches in North West Australia from Bishop David Mulready

Date: February 7, 2008.

Dear friends,

Greetings from Geraldton in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Maureen and I are looking forward to serving you again this year and meeting up with you during our travels. As usual, we'll be visiting your town; spending time with your Minister(s) and their families as well as having opportunity to meet with you.

During this six week lead-up to Easter, I trust that you enjoy meeting together as God's people and continue to grow in your relationship with God through the study of the infallible Word of God, prayer, fellowship with your Church family, reading good Christian books which take the Bible seriously and belonging to a small group.

You may have heard recently, some of the debate in the media about the state of the Anglican Church and the issue of some Bishops attending the Lambeth Conference and some not attending. I wanted to write to put you in the picture about my own position.

The Lambeth Conference has been held every 10 years in England since 1888. The Archbishop of Canterbury invites the 800 Anglican Bishops from around the world to confer for three weeks while their spouses also have meetings. While no decisions made at Lambeth are binding on the Church, there are some matters which are discussed and decisions reached which can influence the future direction of the Anglican Church world-wide.

In 1998, the Lambeth conference made it clear that nearly all of the leaders of our denomination maintained the biblical view of sexual ethics; that is, that sexual relationships are reserved for marriage between a man and a woman. In 2003, the Anglican Church in the USA defiantly acted against the Lambeth decision by the consecration of an openly homosexual man, Gene Robinson. Some of the Ministers in Canada and the USA began blessing 'same-sex unions'.

While unbiblical sexual ethics is the presenting problem, it is really a symptom of a cancer eating away at true Christianity. Archbishop Peter Akinola is the Primate of Nigeria, the largest Anglican Church in the world. This is what he has to say about this: "The real issue is that there are members of our Anglican family who are not paying attention to scripture, but giving prominence to modern culture. They are bringing new principles to interpret scripture. The Word of God has precedence over any culture".

These actions have affected churches around the world. Attempts have been made to bring them back to biblical standards. While some of them regret that their actions have caused such pain, there appears to have been no real repentance.

Some of them have condemned attempts by other Bishops to provide ministry for Bible- believing orthodox Christians who wish to remain Anglicans, but cannot continue to do so in the fellowship of the American and Canadian Churches whose leaders have become militant in promoting their unbiblical sexual ethics with 'missionary zeal'.

Many Bishops around the world have questioned whether Lambeth will be able to deal adequately with the present crisis. While most Australian Bishops will be attending Lambeth, I have decided not to attend, after many months of prayerful consideration and conferring with others. While I understand the argument that it is better to be present and make my views known, I don't believe that anything worthwhile will be achieved. If I was to attend Lambeth, I feel that I would betray those Bishops who have not been invited and be seen to support those who flout their unbiblical agenda. Having said that, I do respect those Bishops who feel that they must attend.

I have written to the Archbishop of Canterbury twice expressing my concerns and reluctantly declining his invitation to Lambeth, at the same time assuring him of my prayers for him and Lambeth.

On Christmas Eve, it was announced that another conference would be held in June of this year in the Middle East for 1,000 Bishops, Clergy and Lay leaders of the world-wide Anglican Church who are committed to biblical orthodoxy. The Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) is being organized by a group of Archbishops and other leaders from Africa, South America and Asia, as well as England, Canada and Sydney's Archbishop Peter Jensen, together representing over half of the 55 million Anglicans world- wide. I have decided to attend this conference which promises to be positive and future looking. You can read about it at www.gafcon.org or ask someone to print some information from the internet for you.

Maureen and I plan on being away from the Diocese from May 17 to August 12, attending GAFCON and taking some Long Service Leave and holidays. The Dean, Jeremy Rice will act in my place as the Administrator of the Diocese while continuing with his responsibilities as The Dean. Your prayers for him and Virginia, as well as for Maureen and me would be much appreciated.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

David Mulready