

Update on Gafcon

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Preacher: The Venerable Daniel Gifford

[0 : 00] Let's pray together. Father, we thank you for the gift of your church. We thank you for the gift of your gospel that transforms us. And we pray, Father, that as we talk about Gafcon today, that you would give to us a great love of your church, that you will strengthen our faith in the gospel to transform our lives and the lives of those that we tell the gospel to.

And we ask, Father, that you will lead us through our time together so that Jesus is glorified and that you strengthen the mission of your gospel through your church. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Okay, well, it's great to be here. And Alexander was talking about what kind of day it was today. And I've got to say, I think the youth group was praying for rain today. And I'll tell you why. The senior youth are on retreat this weekend.

But apparently they always play mud football at some point. And the weather was going to be too nice for that. So they were hoping for one day of rain. So they got it today. They'll be playing football after their service, I think.

Thank you, Alexandra. I am talking about Gafcon. Gafcon, if you remember, by the way, the last time I spoke, I actually spoke about Billy Graham and the Anglican Church.

[1 : 20] And then the time before that, I talked about Gafcon. And Gafcon, as you probably know, means the Global Anglican Futures Conference.

And it is something that has been held, this is the third time it's been held every five years, since the first Gafcon in Jerusalem in 2008.

And this Gafcon was attended by four people from St. John's, which is quite amazing, because you only get a certain number of delegates per country.

And we were very fortunate to have us four. Jeremy went. And you all know Jeremy Graham. And Ron and Dave Short went as well.

And I was able to go because I was part of the ANIC Council for ANIC. Now, Gafcon 2018.

[2 : 19] I have video here that doesn't work, I found out. When this goes onto the projector, you can't actually get volume. So I was hoping to give you a little sense of it through watching video.

Now, I still may play a bit of video. It'll be silent, which will not help. But I did want to give you a little feel for what that was, to be together.

Because it was an extraordinary experience personally to be there. It was, I think, you know, in a sense I would say, a foretaste of heaven.

And the reason I say that is because there were people from all over the world. And they were all united by one belief in the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is where God is taking the world. So that all things will be united under Jesus Christ. This is what Ephesians tells us. And this was like a little, a tiny little foretaste.

[3 : 24] A little thumbnail sketch. A little picture of what heaven will be like. Where Jesus is glorified. Where there is joy in being in God's presence together.

And the purpose of the time together is to praise God. And to enjoy what he is doing. And to take our part in what he has for us.

There is a freedom. And there is a deep love. And there is a strong sense of God's presence by the power of his Holy Spirit that you experience in that time.

So I feel very fortunate to have been there. There is also an effect that GAFCON, that conference, has on the Anken Church and on the world as well.

And I want to talk a little bit about that as we go through. And I do want to give, I've talked with David and Braun and with Jeremy about their experience.

[4 : 29] And so I'll share a little bit about what they felt as well. But certainly all of us really had this sense. And it was good to hear from David and Braun because they talked about the first GAFCON,

2008, where they were present.

I was not there. They talked about the change that has taken place over the last 10 years with this movement. And this movement, by the way, is a renewal movement within the Anglican Church. And I want to tell you right at the beginning, and I think I'll say it right at the end too, that GAFCON has been accused of wanting to leave the Anglican Communion.

GAFCON represents quite a large percentage of the Anglican Communion. And they are saying no to certain things that are being done in the life of the Church. And they are saying that the instruments of unity in the Church are being compromised.

And that there has to be something that is done about it. And so there's fear about that. And maybe that is understandable fear too, because it does represent change. All of these people from the Anglican Communion being committed to the Gospel of Jesus and reforming the Church, where it's necessary.

[5 : 47] But the quote that I want to leave you with, as we actually go from this place, and as I start this talk, is that over and over again, the line came up that GAFCON is not at all interested in leaving the Anglican Communion, because they are the Anglican Communion.

They are the majority of the Anglican Communion. This is the center of what it's all about. And it's centered on the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and it's centered on a right ordering of the Church, as it was meant to do, so that it can glorify Jesus.

And so it by no means is an alternate direction. It is the direction of the Church, because it is so representative of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

And so in talking to these other delegates, what I found, and I share their experience, is that as GAFCON movement has progressed over the last 10 years, it has matured.

And it has gone from a real response, an amazingly quick response in the end, to a real crisis in the Church, to become a missionary renewal movement that is looking at how we can bring the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ more effectively, in a clearer way, to the world, in a way in which we work together to do it.

[7 : 21] And so there has been a change where instead of kind of responding and reacting to these radical directions that places like the United States and Canada have wanted to take, there is a look forward to where God is taking us, and an excitement about how God will use GAFCON, and is using GAFCON, so that people are coming to know Jesus.

And societies are being transformed, people are being transformed by this very powerful Gospel. So that's why the theme of GAFCON was proclaiming Christ faithfully to the nations.

You see how forward-looking that is, how it's mission-centered, and it's people saying, we want to renew that real commitment to proclaim Christ very faithfully.

That word faithfully is there for a reason. The pure Gospel, the pure Word of God, being brought into the world to all the nations. And that's not just sort of wishful thinking, because 50 countries were represented at GAFCON, representatives from 50 countries.

And to proclaim Christ faithfully means there is transformation happening in all of these different cultures and societies. And in many of them, Anglicans occupy significant places of responsibility in government, or in education, or in business.

[8 : 56] There are many Anglicans positioned well to bring the Gospel of Jesus into dark places and to bring great transformation.

And so there, there were 1950 representatives from 50 countries. So there's 965 laity, 316 bishops, and 669 other clergy.

It was a very big conference. In fact, this was the largest conference, the largest gathering of Anglicans since 1968.

50 years. And that was a gathering actually in Toronto that was bringing together, and didn't represent nearly as many countries, you know, less than, less than half of those countries.

So it's an amazingly significant gathering that took place in June of this year. And the thing that they, I took this photograph because here are many of the delegates because we had a group photograph that took place on one afternoon.

[10 : 09] And you can see the security guard here, and they're everywhere. Now that's the temple steps. Jesus would have walked up those steps to the temple. That's an absolute certainty. So it was an amazing experience sitting there singing Amazing Grace and waiting for the photographer.

But, you know, there were helicopters flying around. There were lots of security because this is this 2,000 person gathering of Christians in the middle of Jerusalem.

And there were sort of wondering looks of people. What are they doing? What's going on here? And it was a significant conference in Jerusalem for this year.

There was one young man that I met with children on the street. And I was walking from the hotel to this very large venue that we met in. By the way, it was a venue that holds about 2,000, over 2,000 people.

And it was the place where Eichmann was tried in Jerusalem, a very famous building in Jerusalem, a beautiful, big old building.

[11 : 14] But I was walking there from the hotel, and, you know, people could see there were lots of people going back and forth, you know, residents of Jerusalem. And he, as he passed me, he turned to me and he said, he had this little baby in a baby carriage and three little toddlers.

And he said, yeah, there's lots of big families in Jerusalem. And he said to me, I want to welcome you to Jerusalem. He said, I'm so happy that you are here.

It's good that you are gathering here in our city. A total stranger, you know, on the street. And he said, and so there was definitely an understanding in the area, certainly in Jerusalem, that something very big was happening.

And, you know, the big thing that was happening is that a group of people were gathered together to strengthen one another and to determine how can we as a church, with all of the failures and all the concerns that are happening, how can we proclaim Christ faithfully to the nations?

Well, the question that should be asked is, why did we have the conference in the first place? And there was three reasons. And the first one is failed leadership.

[12 : 33] And we all know about that from our crisis. But what we found in the crisis is that there was no way to keep the Anglican Church going towards the direction of the gospel.

In other words, if there is false teaching that happens or a compromised gospel, there was no way to correct it in the Anglican Communion because the old forms of governance, which were four instruments of unity.

By the way, if you take out this sheet here on the front page, it talks a little bit about that in the back story. See those four? There were four instruments of unity.

The Archbishop of Canterbury being the first. And that's the oldest one, going back to 597. It was the oldest diocese in England. And then much more recently, 1867, the Lambeth Conference got going.

And that was every 10 years, all the bishops from across the world would gather together. And that was partly because of the British Empire and the expansion of Anglicanism to many parts of the world.

[13 : 37] So it made sense that there was, you know, there was a number of independent provinces now. They would get together. And then jump ahead 100 years and 1968, something called the Anglican Consultative Council was created to share wisdom and encourage members in mission.

And so that would, that would help organize mission. And then finally, 1979, the Primates Meeting got going. And that was to discuss the issues facing the church.

And a lot of those issues were prefiguring what we ended up having problems with, you know, with liberal theology, false teaching, really taking the ascendancy in the United States and Canada and England as well.

But, so three out of those four instruments are pretty new. And, and what they found was that with the, the schism that was happening around false teaching and it would often take the form of sexuality, there was no ability to actually discipline or correct and to bring back those churches into the fold.

And the most recent thing that happened was in 2016, there was a meeting of the Primates where the Archbishop of Canterbury was able to get them all together and, and there was much promise to say, we can do something about some of this innovative false teaching.

[15 : 10] And they made a decision. They said that the United States, the, the Episcopal Church will not be invited to any decision-making instruments of the communion for three years and that they were given time to repent of what had happened.

Well, three months later at that Anglican Consultative Council that I just mentioned, they were full participants. So you see, within three months, it was absolutely ignored and there are reasons for that.

There's, there's, there's financial and political power in these older churches in the United States and in England and in Canada and so forth.

So that's, uh, one big reason, this failed leadership. And I gotta say that the leadership that we saw in, um, Jerusalem was quite amazing and I'll talk about that in a moment.

And the second reason is that there was a real need for change in the communion from within. You know, not to have some breakaway group that goes away, but to have the whole center of the communion, uh, be changed back into gospel-centered mission.

[16:20] And, um, uh, and what, uh, what Gafcon is simply doing is giving all of the people who are part of Gafcon a very clear understanding of the gospel and teaching it and thinking of ways, uh, to make that, um, mission a reality in their part of the world.

So that's another reason. How can we change the communion from within? And then, the third motivation is true communion brings true unity. And, uh, I want to, I want to read something here. It says, and this is, um, uh, this is just a little quote that I want to read. It says, in Jerusalem, we built networks of relationships and worked on structures that will advance gospel ministry around the world.

In some places, there are terrible obstacles. Uh, and one of the things that we noticed when we met in, in Jerusalem, when we met for, uh, lunch and for different meals and just in the breaks is that people are experiencing extraordinary persecution, uh, difficulty of all kinds that you can imagine. You know, everything from real economic deprivation, uh, hunger, uh, to violent persecution by Muslim extremist groups to, uh, you know, post-modern, revisionist, pressured, not to have a faith in the living Lord Jesus Christ.

[17:47] A real range, but real strong pressure that they're, they're experiencing. And, um, but it says, the gospel will still prevail. Gafcon, 2018 in Jerusalem, has provided an opportunity to discern in concrete terms how we are to carry the gospel into the world.

It has been one of the most exciting and fulfilling gatherings ever held in contemporary Anglicanism. And that's very true. That's very true.

There's not, there's not often that a conference, an Anglican conference, you would say, is, is exciting. But this, but this truly was, um, it really was a time where people were, were, um, sharing how God was transforming them and their church and how we could work together to do that in our areas too.

And as I said, the leadership, which you see here, uh, is, uh, is remarkable. I was very impressed. A number of those guys spoke and they are part of a, like a, they're calling it now a synodical council. They're all primates. And they will gather together regularly between Gafcon, uh, to help make decisions. And there will also be, um, representatives from every one of those countries that are there that will also meet at least once a year in, in regions as well.

[19:09] But, uh, the, uh, um, the thing I found extraordinary was how, um, how deep and strong the faith of all these people were who were leading all of these provinces.

It was, uh, it was a living faith that you could see in them. And when you would sit down, I sat down with, um, you know, a number of those over different times. And, uh, you know, it was, it was talking to, uh, uh, on-fire Christian, uh, every time, uh, people who were passionate about their faith, who loved the Lord Jesus, and, uh, really believed in, in the basics, you know, reading your Bible, praying, uh, sharing your faith, uh, serving in the church.

There was a humility which I found very, very encouraging. I saw that in, uh, in Nairobi as well when I was there. Um, there's no sound.

This was going to be a video. My phone up on those pictures. No, it won't work. But, you know what, what I'll do, I'll, I'll give you a little, just a little taste of it. Um, I'll, um, I'll play it here. For some reason, it's playing. Oh, that's playing through there. Can you hear that? Yeah. That's great.

[20:32] Sounds like a bad question. Exactly. So, the bishops are out up front here, and, uh, because this is the last show of us, and this is the first time they all put on their full car.

But, there's the 200 and some bishops up front, and then, and then all of the, uh, the 2,000 delegates are running too. But, the singing was impassionate, and it was very, um, inspiring.

So, that, that's how that was in the field. There's some people saying, I know, this is really spiritual. This feels, good, very spiritual.

Yeah. Yeah, and that's when everybody said we were there. They, they sensed the work of the Holy Spirit. And you can see all different colors and ages and languages there too.

Does the, uh, does the sound go up at all? That's probably right now. That, that's good.

[21 : 47] That gives you a little bit of a, that gives you a little taste of it. Yeah. And so here you, you know, one of the days that we had, um, together, we went on different, uh, excursions, different groups.

We went to different parts of the city, or some went to the Dead Sea. And so, this is one of the groups, and you can see, uh, you know, there's a real joy in just being together in that smaller group. And you can just, and you can see all of the different, uh, cultures and races all together. Uh, uh, the, the fellowship was truly remarkable. Uh, it is amazing the instant fellowship you have with somebody who shares this faith in the Lord Jesus. And I'm sure that, uh, from people who are nodding, that you have experienced that in your life.

You know, one-on-one with people too. Um, so, uh, unity that was really immediate. Um, and there's the gathering in the temple steps.

I thought that gave a good, a good sense of the variety of people as well. Uh, there was some, I wrote Division and Laughter at GAFCON. Um, the, uh, the, this is the Archbishop from Chile, and that's the one from Argentina, who you know, Greg Benneville's probably, who cared, cared for us when we first had our crisis.

[23 : 02] But, uh, uh, uh, Zalalia was the, uh, he was the, um, speaker one day, and he talked about how Chilean wine was the best in the world.

Greg Benneville took great exception to that, because he's from Argentina. And he talks about, you know, Malbec being, will be in heaven, he said. And so, uh, there was great laughter because they had to, uh, uh, repent of their division.

And, uh, over a glass of wine at some point. But, uh, uh, but there was much joy in that, you know, get in that, in the time we had together amongst the leadership as well.

Now, one of the things that we had at, um, GAFCON were prayer groups too. So, that big group that you saw that I did a video of, uh, about, uh, two times a day, we would break up into groups of eight.

It was well organized, so your, your, um, name tag said where you were sitting and who you were going to be with. So, there were people around you and they deliberately had you with people from all over the world.

[24 : 05] So, in my little prayer group of eight, we had somebody from Congo who did not speak a word of English, by the way. He spoke French. And, uh, we had two couples from Nigeria and we had one, uh, a single guy from England and then a couple from, um, uh, from Malaysia.

And, we would just pray for each other, pray for each other's needs and spend 15 minutes or so doing that. And it's amazing how you got to know the group, uh, having done that.

And, uh, the guy who is from Congo, I happened to know somebody just a few seats away from him. He was living in Paris. He was from the United States and he was learning French. So, I brought him over.

He says, uh, and I asked him to translate. So, he translated for us several times in our prayers. He, he prayed beautiful French prayers. And I have a year of university French so I could understand one out of seven words he was speaking.

And they're very long prayers as well. But, what a joyful fellowship we had with all of those, you know, hugs all around when we left with those, with the group of eight.

[25 : 11] And, and all these, other groups experienced that. Prayer was at the heart of what was going on, uh, on that, uh, in that gathering, that Gathcon gathering. Um, the teaching was excellent.

And, uh, uh, we had, we had five talks from, from, uh, plenary sessions. And one of them was David Short, who spoke on God's strategy. And, uh, uh, uh, I'd love to hear you.

You know what? I'll see whether I can give you a little snippet. You can see these, by the way, on a website called gaffcon.org. And gaffcon.org will, um, we'll just play a little bit here.

Um, he, Oh, really? Okay. Okay. So let's just, let's, let's do the introduction.

Yeah, that won't work. Yeah, we won't, we won't do it. I'm going to just flip to it. Um, and so, no, you, you won't be able to hear that.

[26 : 31] Will you? Thank you. I guess I could have, if I, if I put a microphone down there, but anyway, just, um, just to say that David gave a very good talk.

In fact, what I did, cause I thought this might happen is I, I gave you his outline, which was on the screen behind him. And he talked about God's strategy from the book, of, um, uh, Titus.

That's right. It was Titus. Thank you. Somebody would, did you listen to it? I listened to it. Excellent. Yeah. And so he went through the whole book of Titus and he talked about God's strategy being a strategy of salvation.

You know, these people who are in, uh, Crete are, um, actually rebel in their sin. And the gospel transformed their lives in, uh, small churches and large.

And there was big problems in the church. Paul knew that the way, uh, to bring about transformation was to preach the gospel. And that's why it says through the gospel of Jesus and through a rightly ordered church, which is what we were working on.

[27 : 36] Um, and it's a church in which people's lives are transformed and they live new lives. Now, the thing I loved about that, um, that teaching is that when you think about God's strategy, you can often hear about techniques that one will use, you know, like, almost like business techniques of how to, how to renew a church, how to, how to grab the world for, for Jesus.

But this is actually God's very simple way. That's all through scripture of how this happens. And it was so good to have that as our baseline of where, where we are going as Gafcom, that God's strategy is all about salvation, that it's through the proclamation of Jesus, and it's through a church that's rightly ordered according to God's ways and his word.

And in it, people's lives are transformed. Um, this is life, right? This is, this is what the church is all about. It gets to the fundamentals, makes first things first. So it was great that David took such a central role in that.

And then what, what came out of Gafcom was a, um, was a letter to the churches. And in that same web website, gafcom.org, you can see this letter.

Uh, it's not too long because it's a letter. It's 3000 words about, but it's, it's broken up into three parts. And it talks about, first of all, it says what the gospel is, which is what we all need to know.

[29 : 01] And it talks about the pressures to not preach that gospel in this letter. Uh, it names them. And it's, and there's different things from the prosperity gospel, which is really a, uh, a challenge in Africa right now, uh, to, um, the, the extreme secularism that you will see in the West.

Um, and, uh, and it talks about how those pressures are coming at us to, to compromise that gospel. And there's a repentance in there. And then the second part is about reforming God's church.

It's saying, what do we as a church need to do in order to be faithful to him in that letter? And then finally, in the last part, it talks about, uh, reaching to, to God's world.

Now, um, I want to read that last little section because it's, it's, uh, it's a beautiful ending to it.

It says, our conference theme was proclaiming Christ faithfully to the nations. We have received the gospel through the faithful witness of previous generations. Yet there are still billions of people who are without Christ and without hope.

[30 : 14] Jesus taught his disciples, the gospel, the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony, to all nations. We repent for the times and seasons when we have only preached to ourselves and not embrace the difficult task of reaching beyond our own culture group and obedience to God's call to be a light to the nations.

In faith and obedience, we joyfully recommit ourselves to the faithful proclamation of the gospel in order to expand our ability to proclaim Christ faithfully to the nations in both word and deed.

And we launched nine strategic networks to do this. Um, and, uh, this woman actually talks about that a little bit. So, but you won't be able to hear that very well.

So those nine strategic networks that they're going to use, one is a bishop's training institute. Uh, bishops need to be trained in the gospel. This is part of the problem that we had, uh, with our own situation here.

And so there's a, um, there's new bishops that come in, they're, they're being trained. Uh, they've already had three of those meetings, um, around the world. Uh, church planting, I mean, that is the basics of the, the global strategy.

[31 : 22] And they just do it naturally in, in Africa. Uh, but there is a need for us to be encouraged in how we do that in, in different parts of the world. And especially I think in North America.

Uh, and then theological education. There were 20 theological colleges, um, that were, um, that were represented at GAFCON that met together to talk about how can we network to really strengthen theological education.

St. Charles is involved in that, by the way, in Malawi. We, we, we're working with an international group that will really strengthen the, the, um, near, one of the theological colleges in Malawi, uh, for those, um, for those Anglican clergy coming in.

And, uh, who are being trained. Now, I should tell you that in places like Africa, there is a push by liberals in North America, uh, to provide funding for education.

And of course, what will the education be? It will be liberal theology. Uh, it will be revisionist. It actually won't take the Bible seriously. And that actually is a serious threat right now in Africa.

[32 : 29] And so this is a very important movement. There are some excellent, uh, theological teachers, professors, that are, um, that are committed to this. So, um, that's one of the initiatives.

And then Mother's Union and Senior Women, Mother's Union is, is a powerhouse in Africa. Around the world. Well, that's true. Uh, but Mother's Union is, uh, uh, is something that is a feature in every African church.

And it is, as Beth said, it is around the world that this takes different forms. forms. And what they do is to, uh, really, really push the church to be active in ministry.

And in a sense there too, they also want to promote patterns of biblical marriage and family life too. I mean, it's about the center of what's in society. So they, uh, they are the lifeblood of the church.

And that, they all met together. And, um, they, uh, at, at Gafcon, they're very, very impressive. And, um, and they're about committing and promoting conditions in society too, that actually promote stable family life and protection of children.

[33 : 37] They are committed to help those whose family life has been met with adversity. So they really do care for those who are needy too. Um, and, uh, the other thing that they do is that they, they teach about what, uh, about human relationships, Christian marriage and sexuality as well.

You know, if we had mother's union strong like they did in diocese in New Westminster, we wouldn't have this problem. I worry right now. Uh, uh, youth and children's ministry. Uh, this, um, uh, Jeremy was at the gathering of this, of this initiative.

And one of the guys he talked to was from Uganda. And he was in charge of the youth and children's ministry in the, in the province. You know how many people? Seven million. So there's 10 million people in, uh, who are Anglicans going to church in Uganda every Sunday.

Seven million of them are 35 and under. So, and their youth, for whatever reason, their youth are considered, you know, people who are between 16 and 35. Goes up to 35.

Um, but there is lots of energy and there's, uh, lots of potential there for, for the work of the gospel. Um, and global mission partnerships.

[34 : 52] This is, uh, you know, they, they're going to have a worldwide gathering of next generation leaders and a global evangelism initiative. And there's going to be six regional teams that will collaborate on mission in Africa, South America, North America, and Europe, and, uh, beyond.

Let's see, Oceania, Asia and unreached people. Uh, sustainable development. Uh, the, the purpose for this is to establish global partnerships, uh, to bring sustainable transformative development amongst the poor and needy.

And, you know, many churches, they are, they are the fabric of the society and the village or the town. And they're seeing what's happening. It's not, they're, they're not separate in any way from the life of these villages and these cities.

And, uh, they, they see that need. And because of the gospel, they're looking at how to, how to really influence that and work together to make it happen. Often there, there is not the resources that they need.

Well, Gathcon provides, um, an opportunity there for that to happen. Uh, and then the lawyers task force. Uh, now this, this is amazing because, um, I don't often think of lawyers and, uh, and the mission of the gospel in the same sentence, but, um, this, this is talking about, um, the challenge of, of living under Sharia law, which many Anglicans do.

[36 : 16] How, you know, how do you do that? Um, um, they are helping to define what our identity is as Anglicans. Uh, they, they talk about how we can strengthen our life together under the Jerusalem Declaration and the historic formularies.

And they want to give exit strategies for those biblically faithful Anglicans who can't compromise and adjust to the false teaching within their own dioceses.

Um, they're very, they're very, they're very, very important in helping with this. They're very important resource. Uh, and then very quickly, intercessors fellowship. Uh, as I said, prayer was just constant at this, at this gathering.

And there is this, uh, this multilingual, they want to have multilingual communication platforms to coordinate prayer and fasting, uh, recognizing reality of spiritual warfare.

People meeting together through the internet to pray. So, okay. So, I want to just say a couple of things. Um, why is New Zealand up there?

[37 : 15] Uh, there are several churches. I want to go back and forth here because there are churches in Ireland, Brazil, Scotland, Wales, and some dioceses in England that are facing exactly what we faced 10 years ago or more.

And, uh, with New Zealand, we met with all of the clergy from New Zealand because they knew that we at St. John's and Anna had gone through what they are starting to go through now.

So they, their, uh, provinces just decided that they will have same sex marriage. So they are considering what they're going to do. And they know a number of them that they will lose their churches.

Now, a number of them I talked to said, it really doesn't matter. And I said, why? They said, because we don't have a church, the earthquake took it away. So they said, you know, that's no longer an issue for us.

Um, we're, we're free from the building. And, uh, so they're thinking, but they're having to think through how it is that they will go about this. And what do they do about churches that they might have where, uh, it's, they're not unanimous about what to do.

[38 : 20] Uh, so we met one evening to quite late and talking through, um, our own experience, trying to give some wisdom and help to them too. Um, what happened by the way, as a result is that Bronwyn, um, ended up leading a large, uh, national women's gathering, uh, speaking at it, uh, in, in the summer.

Uh, she was, she was going to be in, in New Zealand anyway, and she, or in Australia and, um, ended up speaking to them. But there, and David had spoken to them in New Zealand a year ago as well.

So we are helping these people from, you know, halfway across the world through Gathcom, uh, in what they're going to be facing. And the same thing in, in, uh, Ireland, Scotland, uh, Brazil, Wales, they were fearful about what was going to happen.

They were meeting together. It was just exactly the way that we met together, um, starting 20 years ago actually. So, uh, we had a special place in our heart of course for what they're going through and are praying for them.

And I hope you can pray for them as well. It was very encouraging to see how they're dealing with it and the life that they had too. Um, now how long do I have worth, where's Alexandra?

[39 : 34] Um, usually we go through just before 10 and then 10 quickly ask for questions. Okay. Okay. So I, so I, so I can keep going then. Okay.

Um, I just want to show a short video here and I'm not, you're not going to be able to hear it. So I'm just going to show you and just tell you a little bit about them. So, this is, uh, this is, uh, while you're watching the Gapcon live stream and it's great to have you with us.

Uh, I've got, uh, these two guys here, uh, this is, uh, this is, uh, this is Archbishop Ben Quashi and that's his wife, Gloria Quashi.

And, uh, and, uh, and the thing that, the reason I put this here is because Ben is, is now the new general secretary of Gapcon.

He will start in, in January. Uh, after two weeks after, uh, Gapcon in his, his home city of Joss, a number of churches were burned by Islamic extremists and, uh, parishioners were killed as well.

[40 : 35] Like this was two weeks later. He himself and his wife have experienced their home invasions four times and they've both been beaten up and tortured as well. And, uh, their, their lives threatened.

And they were talking here. He asked a question about, well, I understand that you have a ministry in addition to running this big part of Nigeria with a number of bishops under his charge.

Uh, they have 50 children living in their home. Five zero. And they run an orphanage near the cathedral for 400 kids.

And there's some of them who are in real desperate situations. Uh, and they decided to, that they really need parents. So they brought these, they brought these kids over the last, um, 10 years into their home.

And, um, I don't know how they do it, but anyway, they, they both say, you know, we're, we are, we are their father and their mother. And at the same time, they're running this massive, uh, group of Anglicans as well.

[41 : 36] And as they were talking, he said, there's 51. She said, why? She said, I, I didn't tell you, but two days ago, there was a mother who was killed in the field and she had an eight month baby.

And they have taken this baby in. But the reason I wanted to show that clip is because, um, he's going to be one of the leaders and his commitment to service and his humility and their living out the gospel and serving was so apparent in this, um, in this video.

And I thought this gave a really good sense of the quality of the leadership of, of Gathcon and where it's heading. Uh, and I, I have met him a number of times and he's good friends with Felix, by the way, too.

Felix or G. Um, but it's, it's quite a wonderful thing to see the transition to the next, um, generation of leadership there. And then the other one that I, I would have played here too is.

We will proclaim Christ faithfully to that nation. There you go. So that, that was our, that was our theme. Keep your body to the Lord. Walk into the dance.

[42 : 43] Yeah, this is our typical, uh, Anglican worship, right? With real faith and joy. And that's Vaughan Roberts. The center of the gospel message is Jesus Christ.

It's most exciting. So he was reading his letter there. With brethren all over the world. When Jesus came home, get out of hell. The Nigerian fire was quite amazing.

It was a mix of music. Hymns and, yet faithful proclamation of the gospel is under attack. So unless we had a conference statement today, which said that we're going to hold to scripture, then in evangelism, the Holy Spirit departs.

Okay. So now this guy named Rico Tice, who's come here to visit, and he was evangelist for the church of England. He left because they were compromising the gospel. He says, I can't tell somebody, uh, the, the gospel, if they, if I can't say that they are, um, that they are in danger of salvation, that they are in danger of their life, that hell is a real thing.

And that if you go down this path, whatever path of sin it is, sexual sin, whatever it is, that you are, you are apart from God, and you need the transforming gospel. He said, I, I couldn't be an evangelist and have that.

[43 : 58] And so, uh, he, he, um, was deeply thankful for, for that reason. Tragically, there has been a failure of the church in our churches.

We felt very alone. My dad and his church decided to leave the physical church. Our communion has been under threat from leaders who denied the Lordship of Christ.

There was trouble. I love the fact that we were the temple steps, which was so historical. And then I just thought about all nations gathering together in unison, singing the Lord's praises.

I respect to very urge the Archbishop of Cantabury to invite as full member to Lambeth 2020, bishops of the province of the Anglican Church of North America and the province of the Anglican Church.

Okay. So that, what he was saying there is very important. He was saying that, um, that in that letter, that there's going to be something called Lambeth in 2020. And they're saying, unless, uh, the, the, the ACNA, which we're part of, is invited, and the church in Brazil, which is a new province as well, is invited, that, that a number of them will not go, including Nigeria and, um, and Uganda, which together make up almost 50%, over 50% of the Anglican community.

[45 : 19] And so, um, uh, there's also to say, if, if these places do not repent like the United States, they will not go too. And so that, this has an effect on the Lambeth gathering.

That will not be a representative gathering now, unless there is change that takes place. There's a very strong stand. And both those countries have now made statements that it will not happen.

They will not be going in two years. So, um, uh, this is, this is, this is part of standing up, which is a difficult part of the letter.

Yes. We're waiting for a claim. Very to pass. There was trouble. Tragically, there has been a failure of leadership in our churches.

We felt very alone. My dad and his church decided to leave the musical church. Our communion has been under threat from leaders who denied the leadership of Christ.

[46 : 18] There was trouble. I love the fact that we were the temple staves, which was so historical. And then I just thought about all nations gathering together in unison, singing the Lord's praises.

Respectively urge the Archbishop of Cantabury to invite as full member to Lambeth 2020, bishops of the province of the Anglican Church of North America, and the province of the Anglican Church in Brazil.

And not to invite bishops of those provinces which have endorsed by word or deed, sexual practices, which are contradiction to the teaching of scripture.

There's a challenge to the Archbishop of Cantabury. We want him to step up to the leadership of his office. We must assist. Let me just read you something that was said.

I thought this was wonderful. We're not leaving the Anglican communion. We are the majority of the Anglican communion seeking to remain faithful to our Anglican heritage. Which is great, isn't it? It is, and it leaves a question for the church in England.

[47 : 24] The question is, what gospel will we proclaim? Will we proclaim the gospel which is the traditional gospel of the Anglican church, faithful to scripture, which is that Jesus is Lord, we must repent of all sin, and here in Jerusalem, go to his cross for forgiveness.

71% of the world's Anglicans are represented here. Will we stay with them? It's been an extraordinary experience. It has been, I'm elated, and I feel I've come home. We do. That's how it feels to me.

It's just wonderful. Yeah, it's been an absolute joy, and I'm so grateful. To be led by these men of God who are standing up with clarity to Jesus. Yeah, we're going to be going onto the front line. I'll be preaching on Oxford Street on Sunday afternoon, and as I go out to preach on the street, I'll go just thrilled that I'm representing this church. We must praise him.

We invite all faithful Anglicans to join us in this great enterprise of proclaiming Christ's faithfulness to the nations. It's very exciting.

[48 : 30] We're going forth from this place to proclaim the gospel, and that's what it's all about, to claim Christ faithfully to the nations. And we're really going to do... Okay, so that... You probably know that that's fully beached there.

And that was Ben Quash, the guy I was telling you about, who brought those orphans into his home. He'll be... He's the general secretary of it, and he's the chair-elect, as it says there, of the Primates Council.

And they're taking over from the Archbishop of Nigeria, Nicholas Oko, and Philip Jensen, who's from... Or Peter Jensen from Sydney.

And so they're going to be starting in the new year, in January. So... So... We're really going to do that. We're going to proclaim Christ's faithfulness.

Oh, there she is. That's good. And you heard that a lot when you were there. And so I want to close, just to say... Just to give a little... Just a brief summary on what I think this means for St. John's, and for probably us individually, too.

[49 : 43] Gafcon is a great resource, I think. It's a great resource for our own context, because I think God is calling us... In fact, I know God is calling us at St. John's to reach into the city of Vancouver with the gospel.

And we have gone through a lot of difficulty. We have gone through a lot of persecution. We've gone through a crisis. And that is behind us. I think in some ways we mirror Gafcon.

And God is calling us ahead. He's calling us ahead to how we can share the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. How we can be strengthened to do it in a place that's not easy to share the gospel in. And the thing that Gafcon does, I think, is it says, look, in an Anglican setting, you can be very effective. You can have confidence in the gospel, in the power of the gospel through your church, affecting your city, and bringing people into a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

When you look at the website, when you see what is happening in the teaching and so forth, you cannot help but be encouraged. But more than that, there's a clarity of the gospel that I think that it brings us back to, Gafcon does.

[50 : 59] It's almost like an accountability that we have. If we are a Gafcon church, and if you sign up for Gafcon, it's as though you're saying, I'm taking on this mission that the majority of Anglicans are about, as Anglicans.

And I'll commit myself in my particular context to do this. So I just find it a very helpful accountability and motivator in our very central work of gospel sharing in our own context.

Very, very good that way. The other thing is that we can be a great encouragement to the world around us too. I gave you some examples of talking with the church in New Zealand and praying for these different churches in Brazil and Scotland and Wales, Ireland, these places where the gospel is being really put under attack.

And we've experienced this ourselves. We've been through that struggle. We've come out the other side. And we know how to pray. We know how to support and encourage these people.

And I think that's part of our role at St. John's and individually too, how we can be praying. Now the way, and I think it's important for you to be able to look at that website and say, well, how can I sign on as a Gafcon supporter?

[52 : 17] And there's some of these brochures, which probably a lot of you have, which are really helpful because it has the first Jerusalem declaration from 10 years ago, which is a great theological statement.

But then it also gives a little sense about what Gafcon is all about. And it's not a financial thing, although that's very helpful to them. It is, as I said, a spiritual commitment in signing on to Gafcon, which is very, very helpful.

And then finally, I would just say that the last thing I would say about Gafcon is that what that represents, what you saw there, is the direction that God is taking the church in the end.

This is what the Bible, when you look at the whole sweep of the Bible, it's moving all, all of humanity towards this day when everybody will kneel and call Jesus Lord.

That God will be with his people forever. The people will be with their God and they will call him Father and they will worship him in spirit and in truth. This is the most important thing that we can be about.

[53 : 31] This is what all of our life is about. All of our vocations, the things that we are all about, are all caught up in that movement that God has towards the day when all things are put in authority, brought into unity under Jesus Christ.

And Gafcon mirrors that. So that's why I have such great encouragement and confidence in that movement. Okay, so it's 10 o'clock and we should ask some questions.

Thank you.