

Archbishop Peter Jensen reflects as he retires as General Secretary of GAFCON

(Photo: Archbishop Peter Jensen, with his successor, Archbishop Ben Kwashi of Jos, Nigeria.)



On January 1st Archbishop Ben Kwashi became General Secretary of Gafcon in succession to me.

I cannot say how pleased I am to welcome him into this role. I admire him very much as a wise man of God, and think that his passion for prayer and the sharing of God's word will be an immense encouragement to the Gafcon movement as we seek to, 'proclaim Christ faithfully to the nations.' God has also endowed our brother with spiritual perceptiveness and courage – gifts he will certainly need.

When I think of the message of Jerusalem 2018, 'Proclaim Christ Faithfully to the Nations', I am always so glad that the word 'faithfully' appears. All our churches have many failings and even scandals. We are very far from perfect. But the aim of proclaiming Christ faithfully gives us a purpose, a goal, and a character.

Why?

Well, even in the New Testament times, we hear that there were those who came proclaiming 'another Jesus than the one we proclaimed to you' and hence a different Spirit and a different Gospel (2 Corinthians 11:4). Merely

using the name 'Jesus' does not mean that you are talking about the real Jesus and the Gospel in all its truth and glory. We all need to have our Gospel shaped by the Biblical witness itself.

Of course we are helped to do this by the wisdom of those who study the text and the wisdom of those who have gone before us. But the only infallible guide to the truth about Jesus is the Scripture, the word of the living God.

Much is at stake. It is the testimony of Scripture that 'all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23) and that 'the wages of sin is death' (Romans 6:23). Every single human being is so important in the eyes of God, that we will be held accountable for our sins of thought, word and deed on the Day of Judgement and the proper punishment for our sins is the place of destruction, hell itself.

The Gospel is not some children's game, or some therapy to make us feel better. It is deadly serious. And it needs to be preached faithfully, in its full-orbed truth. It is about the salvation of sinners from hell.

'The wages of sin is death', but the rest of this wonderful sentence runs, 'the

free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord'. These words capture the grace of God (the free gift) given to us when we did not deserve it and were incapable of being good enough to receive it. It reminds us of the glory that is ours in eternal life, as opposed to destruction. And it tells us where eternal life may be found, namely in the Jesus who is the Christ, the fulfilment of all the promises of God, and the one who saves us by being our Lord.

In our times, the tendency is to omit two absolutely vital parts of this:

First, the fact that we are faced with the choice between life and death. **We fail to preach judgement**, because we do not want to offend. Instead we preach a Christ who will fulfil all our desires – for money, for success, for happiness, because we cannot believe in eternal life and eternal death.

Second, we **omit the summons to repentance** which is integral to the true Gospel. For there is no salvation unless we turn away from ourselves and entrust ourselves to Christ as Lord. Our aim as Christians is to please him in all things, because we have received forgiveness through his death on the cross for us and we are now in his kingdom.

Once again, the tendency of our times is to preach Christ without repentance, and that is no gospel at all.

Gafcon started over a dispute about the true Christ. If you accept the idea that sexual sin is not really sinful and that we need to encourage people not to live in accordance with the Bible, we

are not proclaiming Christ faithfully, but commending 'another Christ, another Lord'. **If you will not preach Christ faithfully, you will not be saving sinners from hell, no matter how big your church or vigorous its programs.**

How wonderful it is to be part of a movement amongst Anglicans to proclaim Christ faithfully to the nations. For the peoples of the world need to hear this message above all. And Gafcon is becoming under God a great instrument of authentic gospel preaching to the nations.

It has been such an honour to be part of it!

Let me end on a note of personal testimony.

I have been following the Lord personally for 60 years, since I gave my life to Jesus in 1959 as a 15 year old. Many are the testimonies I could give to the grace and mercy of God over those years. But I think it is true to say that I have never seen such answers to prayer or experienced such extraordinary provision from the Lord as in my connection with the Gafcon movement. In particular, a whole array of gifted and committed people seemed to materialise exactly when they were needed to carry on such work as organising the three great Conferences. But there is so much else as well.

I thank all who have helped me and helped the movement. But above all I thank the God of grace, 'For from him and through him and to him are all things. To God be the glory forever. Amen.'