

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ!

Some of you might have read or seen reports about a breakaway from the Anglican church over the past week. This took place in Canberra last week where the 'Gafcon' conference was taking place. Gafcon is a movement of conservative Anglican Bishops, clergy and lay people which commenced in 2008. Conferences have been held worldwide since that time and it was the Australian arm of the Gafcon movement which met in Canberra last week. In short, an independent new denomination as opposed to a new Anglican diocese, has been formed to provide pastoral care for Christians who feel they can no longer remain in the Anglican church in their diocese and under the leadership of their bishop because of their theological stance around an understanding of human sexuality, and the Anglican churches response to same sex blessings.

It is my view that this will have little impact on our church and the vast majority of Anglican churches in Australia. Divisions in the church are not new and for the most part the Anglican church has sort to work this through.

The formation of a new denomination known as the "Diocese of the Southern Cross", as an option for churches to join is as much political as it is theological. It is political in that there is an intentional move by some to have a breakaway from the current Anglican structures. It is theological in that it is seeking to provide Biblical integrity and truth around the Biblical understanding of marriage being between a man and a woman.

I am personally mixed in knowing how to fully respond. I don't agree with the political and perceived combative stance that has taken place at Gafcon, but I do hold firmly to the Biblical view of marriage being between a man and woman, which mirrors the marriage of Christ and his bride the church (Ephesians 5:25-27).

I know that there will be people at GWAC who will hold a different view. So, as a Christ-follower I want to honour the two great commandments of loving God and loving neighbour. *This means that I want to welcome and respect all people who hold a different viewpoint of the traditional understanding of marriage.* I also acknowledge that some people feel same sex attracted and GWAC welcomes people regardless of race, background, gender or sexual orientation. At GWAC the staff team is here to support you and seek to serve you as we are able.

*My commitment is, first and foremost, to be a person who is radically, honestly, and progressively more Christlike from the inside out day after day.* It is my desire at GWAC to help as many people as possible join in this journey, because I believe that if we all lived the way Jesus said we should, the world would be a truly amazing place.

GWAC is an amazing place and the past few years have been an incredible journey for us all. It is my continued prayer that more than ever GWAC will be that light on the hill in Jesus' name being a caring community making, maturing and mobilising disciples of Jesus Christ here and to the end of the earth.

That said, I look forward to some holidays over the coming month. I also look forward to gathering with the mighty people of GWAC on my return for gathered worship.