

Lambeth Conference Resolutions Archive

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NOTE: The Lambeth Conference of 1878 did not adopt any formal Resolutions as such. The mind of the Conference was recorded by incorporating the Reports of its five Committees, received by the plenary Conference with almost complete unanimity, into an Encyclical Letter which was duly published. Recommendations embodied in the Committee Reports were evidently accorded equivalent status to formal Resolutions, and they are reproduced here as they appeared in the course of the Encyclical Letter, under appropriate reference.]

Recommendation 1

Union Among the Churches of the Anglican Communion - Encyclical Letter 1.5

There are certain principles of church order which, your Committee consider, ought to be distinctly recognised and set forth, as of great importance for the maintenance of union among the Churches of our Communion.

1. First, that the duly certified action of every national or particular Church, and of each ecclesiastical province (or diocese not included in a province), in the exercise of its own discipline, should be respected by all the other Churches, and by their individual members.
2. Secondly, that when a diocese, or territorial sphere of administration, has been constituted by the authority of any Church or province of this Communion within its own limits, no bishop or other clergyman of any other Church should exercise his functions within that diocese without the consent of the bishop thereof.*
3. Thirdly, that no bishop should authorise to officiate in his diocese a clergyman coming from another Church or province, unless such clergyman present letters testimonial, countersigned by the bishop of the diocese from which he comes; such letters to be, as nearly as possible, in the form adopted by such Church or province in the case of the transfer of a clergyman from one diocese to another.

** This does not refer to questions respecting missionary bishops and foreign chaplaincies, which have been entrusted to other Committees.*

Recommendation 2

Union Among the Churches of the Anglican Communion - Encyclical Letter 1.6: Of Church Organization

Inasmuch as the sufficient and effective organisation of the several parts of the Church tends to promote the unity of the whole, your Committee would, with this view, repeat the recommendation in the sixth Report of the first Lambeth Conference, that those dioceses which still remain isolated should, as circumstances may allow, associate themselves into a province or provinces, in accordance with the ancient laws and usages of the Catholic Church.

Recommendation 3

Union Among the Churches of the Anglican Communion - Encyclical Letter 1.7: Of common work

Believing that the unity of our Churches will be especially manifested and strengthened by their unity together in common work, your Committee would call attention to the great value of such co-operation wherever the opportunity shall present itself; as, for example, in founding and maintaining, in the missionary field, schools for the training of a native ministry, such as that which is now contemplated in Shanghai, and, generally, as far as may be possible, in prosecuting missionary work, such as that which the Churches in England and Scotland are maintaining together in Kaffraria.

Recommendation 4

Union Among the Churches of the Anglican Communion - Encyclical Letter 1.8: Of commendatory letters

1. This Committee would renew the recommendation of the first Lambeth Conference, that letters commendatory should be given by their own bishops to clergymen visiting for a time other Churches than those to which they belong.
2. They would urge yet more emphatically the importance of letters commendatory being given by their own clergymen to members of their flocks going from one country to another. And they consider it desirable that the clergy should urge on such persons the duty of promptly presenting these letters, and should carefully instruct them as to the oneness of the Church in its apostolic constitution under its varying organisation and conditions.

It may not, perhaps, be considered foreign to this subject to suggest here the importance of impressing upon our people the extent and geographical distribution of our Churches, and of reminding them that there is now hardly any part of the world where members of our Communion may not find a Church one with their own in faith, order and worship.

Recommendation 5

Union Among the Churches of the Anglican Communion - Encyclical Letter 1.9: Of circulating information as to the Churches

It appears that the want has been much felt of some centre of communication among the Churches in England, Ireland, Scotland, America, India, the colonies, and elsewhere, through which ecclesiastical documents of importance might be mutually circulated, and in which copies of them might be retained for reference. Your Committee would suggest that the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge might be requested to maintain a department for this purpose, supported by special contributions; and also that provision might be made for the more general dissemination, in each Church, of information respecting the acts and current history of all the rest. They recommend that the Reports and other proceedings of this Conference, which it may think fit to publish, should be communicated through this channel. They further think it desirable that the official acts and other published documents of each representative body of this Communion should be interchanged among the respective bishops and the officers of such bodies.

Recommendation 6

Union Among the Churches of the Anglican Communion - Encyclical Letter 1.10: Of of Day of Intercession

Remembering the blessing promised to united intercession, and believing that such intercession ever tends to deepen and strengthen that unity of his Church for which our Lord earnestly pleaded in his great intercessory prayer, your Committee trust that this Conference will give the weight of its recommendation to the observance, throughout the Churches of this Communion, of a season of prayer for the unity of Christendom. This recommendation has been, to some extent, anticipated by the practice adopted of late years of setting apart a Day of Intercession for Missions. Your Committee would by no means wish to interfere with an observance which appears to have been widely accepted, and signally blessed of God. But, as our divine Lord has so closely connected the unity of his followers with the world's belief in his own mission from the Father, it seems to us that intercessions for the enlargement of his Kingdom may well be joined with earnest prayer that all who profess faith in him may be one flock under one Shepherd. With respect to the day, your Committee have been informed that the Festival of St. Andrew, hitherto observed as the Day of Intercession for Missions, is found to be unsuitable to the circumstances of the Church in many parts of the world. They, therefore, venture to suggest that, after the present year, the time selected should be the Tuesday before Ascension Day (being a Rogation Day), or any of the seven days after that Tuesday; and they hope that all the bishops of the several Churches will commend this observance to their respective dioceses.

Recommendation 7

Union Among the Churches of the Anglican Communion - Encyclical Letter 1.11-12: Of diversities in worship

Your Committee, believing that, next to oneness in "the faith once delivered to the saints," communion in worship is the link which most firmly binds together bodies of Christian men, and remembering that the Book of Common Prayer, retained as it is, with some modifications, by all our Churches, has been one principal bond of union among them, desire to call attention to the fact that such communion in worship may be endangered by excessive diversities of ritual. They believe that the internal unity of the several Churches will help greatly to the union of these one with another. And, while they consider that such large elasticity in the forms of worship is desirable as will give wide scope to all legitimate expressions of devotional feeling, they would appeal, on the other hand, to the apostolic precept that "all things be done unto edifying," and to the Catholic principle that order and obedience, even at the sacrifice of personal preferences and tastes, lie at the foundation of Christian unity, and are even essential to the successful maintainance of the faith.

They cannot leave this subject without expressing an earnest hope that churchmen of all view, however varying, will recognise the duty of submitting themselves, for conscience' sake, in matters ritual and ceremonial, to the authoritative judgements of that particular or national Church in which, by God's providence, they may be placed; and that they will abstain from all that tends to estrangement or irritation, and will rather daily and fervently pray that the Holy Spirit may guide every member of the Church to "think and do always such things as be rightful," and that he may unite us all in that brotherly charity which is "the very bond of peace and of all virtues."

Recommendation 8

Union Among the Churches of the Anglican Communion - Encyclical Letter 2.4-6

- a. Every ecclesiastical province, which has constituted for the exercise of discipline over its clergy a tribunal for receiving appeals from its diocesan courts, should be held responsible for its own decisions in the exercise of such discipline; and your Committee are not prepared to recommend that there should be any one central tribunal of appeal from such provincial tribunals.
- b. If any province is desirous that its tribunal of appeal should have power to obtain, in matters of doctrine, or of discipline involving a question of doctrine, the opinion of some council of reference before pronouncing sentence, your Committee consider that the conditions of such reference must be determined by the province itself; but that the opinion of the council should be given on a consideration of the facts of the case, sent to it in writing by the tribunal of appeal, and not merely on an abstract question of doctrine.
- c. In dioceses which have not yet been combined into a province, or which may be geographically incapable of being so combined, your Committee recommend that appeals should lie from the diocesan courts to the Archbishop of Canterbury, to be heard by His Grace with such assistance as he may deem best. The circumstances of each diocese must determine how much consensual jurisdiction could be enforced.

Recommendation 9

Union Among the Churches of the Anglican Communion - Encyclical Letter 2.7-11

As regards the very grave question of the trial of a bishop, inasmuch as any tribunal, constituted for this purpose by a province, is necessarily a tribunal of first instance, it would, in the opinion of your Committee, be expedient that, when any such provisions can be introduced by voluntary compact into the constitutions or canons of any Church, the following conditions should be observed:

- a. When any bishop shall have been sentenced by the tribunal constituted for the trial of a bishop in any ecclesiastical province, if no bishop of the province, other than the accused, shall dissent from the judgement, there should be no appeal; provided that the case be heard by not fewer than five bishops, who shall be unanimous in their judgement.
- b. If, in consequence of the small number of bishops in a province, or from any other sufficient cause, a tribunal of five com-provincial bishops cannot be formed, your Committee would suggest that the province should provide for the enlargement of the tribunal by the addition of bishops from a neighbouring province.
- c. In the event of the provincial tribunal not fulfilling the conditions indicated in paragraph 8 of this Report*, your Committee would suggest that, whenever an external tribunal of appeal is not provided in the canons of that province, it should be in the power of the accused bishop, if condemned, to require the provincial tribunal to refer the case to at least five metropolitans or chief bishops of the Anglican Communion, to be named in the said canons, of whom the Archbishop of Canterbury should be one; and that, if any three of these shall require that the case, or any portion of it, shall be re-heard or reviewed, it should be so re-heard or reviewed.
- d. In cases in which an ecclesiastical province desires to have a tribunal of appeal from its provincial tribunal for trying a bishop, your Committee consider that such tribunal should consist of not less than five bishops of the Churches of the Anglican Communion, under the presidency of the Archbishop of Canterbury, if His Grace will consent thereto, with the assistance of laymen learned in the law.

**That is, sub-paragraph (a) above.*

Recommendation 10

Missionary Bishops and Missionaries of Various Branches

Your Committee have had before them the question of providing Books of Common Prayer for converts from heathenism, suitable to the special wants of various countries, and they recommend as follows:

- They think it very important that such books should not be introduced or multiplied without proper authority; and, since grave inconvenience might follow the use of different Prayer Books in the same district, in English and American missions, they recommend that, whenever it is possible, one Prayer Book only should be in use.
- It is expedient that Books of Common Prayer, suitable to the needs of native congregations in heathen countries, should be framed; that the principles embodied in such books should be identical with the principles embodied in the Book of Common Prayer; and that the deviations from the Book of Common Prayer in point of form should only be such as are required by the circumstances of particular Churches.
- In the case of heathen countries not under English or American rule, any such book should be approved by a board consisting of the bishop or bishops under whose authority the book is intended to be used, and of certain clergymen, no less than three where possible, from the diocese or dioceses, or district, and should then be communicated by such bishop or bishops, or by the metropolitan of the province to which any such bishop belongs, to a board in England, consisting of the Archbishops of England and Ireland, the

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Bishop of London, the Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, together with two bishops and four clergymen selected by them, and also to a board appointed by the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America.

- No such book should be held to have been authorised for use in public worship, unless it have [sic] received the sanction of these two boards.
- In any diocese of a country under English rule, all such new books, being modifications or versions of the Book of Common Prayer, should be submitted, after approval by local authority, to the board in England only.

Recommendation 11

Missionary Bishops and Missionaries of Various Branches

Your Committee have considered the case of missions in countries not under English or American rule, and they recommend as follows:

- In cases where two bishops of the Anglican Communion are ministering in the same country, as in China, Japan, and Western Africa at the present time, your Committee are of opinion that under existing circumstances each bishop should have control of his own clergy, and their converts and congregations.
- The various bishops in the same country should endeavour, as members of the same Communion, to keep up brotherly intercourse with each other on the subject of their missionary work.
- In countries not under English or American rule, the English or American Church would not ordinarily undertake to establish dioceses with strictly defined territorial limits; although either Church might indicate the district in which it was intended that the missionary bishop should labour. Bishops in the same country should take care not to interfere in any manner with the congregations or converts of each other.
- It is more undesirable that either Church should for the future send a bishop or missionaries to a town or district already occupied by a bishop of another branch of the Anglican Communion.
- When it is intended to send forth any new missionary bishop, notification of such an intention should be sent beforehand to the Archbishop of Canterbury, to the Presiding Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, and to the metropolitan of any province near which the missionary bishop is to minister.

Recommendation 12

Anglican Chaplains and Chaplaincies - Encyclical Letter 4.1-5

Your Committee have to report that they have agreed the following recommendations:

1. That it is highly desirable that Anglican congregations, on the continent of Europe and elsewhere, should be distinctly urged not to admit the stated ministrations of any clergyman without the written licence or permission of the bishop of the Anglican Communion who is duly authorised to grant it; and that the occasional assistance of strangers should not be invited or permitted without some satisfactory evidence of their ordination and character as clergymen.
2. That it is desirable, as a general rule, that two chapels shall not be established where one is sufficient for the members of both Churches, American and English; also that where there is only one church or chapel the members of both Churches should be represented on the committee, if any.
3. That it be suggested to the societies which partly support continental chaplaincies that, in places where English and American churchmen reside or visit, and especially where Americans out-number the English, it may be desirable to appoint a properly accredited clergyman of the American Church.
4. That your Committee, having carefully considered a Memorial addressed to the archbishops and bishops of the Church of England by four priests and certain other members of "the Spanish and Portuguese Reformed Episcopal Church," praying for the consecration of a bishop, cannot but express their hearty sympathy with the memorialists in the difficulties of their position; and, having heard a statement on the subject of the proposed extension of the episcopate to Mexico by the American Church, they venture to suggest that, when a bishop shall have been consecrated by the American Church for Mexico, he might be induced to visit Spain and Portugal, and render such assistance, at this stage of the movement, as may seem to him practicable and advisable.