

Whither the Global South movement?

The Global South communiqué of 22nd July¹, issued after a meeting in Bangkok, Thailand raised more questions than it answered. It was signed supposedly (there is some dispute about whether all the names listed did actually sign or had even seen the document) by seventeen primates or their representatives. The main thrust of the document seemed to be directed against the American Episcopal Church with a clear support for the breakaway Anglican Church of North America (ACNA).

As such, the Global South movement, with its ostensive concern for a reformation of the Anglican Communion, albeit in a conservative direction, often seems but an overseas proxy battleground for the civil war in North American Anglicanism. Consequently, it is hard to disengage from a sense that it is driven, at least in part, by breakaway factions in the Episcopal Church yearning for acceptance as an official part of the Anglican Communion, to be a replacement for the American Episcopal Church, or both.

This phenomenon, together with an unfortunate tendency towards self-righteousness and exclusivity, has relegated the movement to the status of an irritant rather than a credible force for open dialogue, serious theological engagement and unity in diversity. As such, there is a distinct sense that the Global South alignment is losing influence and suffering the growing burden of predictability.

What has not happened is any sense of a loss of universal Anglican identity. Despite anathemas and disbarments, it is actually a case of 'business as usual' in the worldwide Communion. Diocesan links continue, individuals are welcomed and received warmly and lines of communication remain open.

It is difficult to see the future of the Global South as more than that of a fellowship of like-minded conservative opinion. Communiqués will no doubt be issued with some regularity but they will continue to betray more about what is going on within the movement than anything more overtly concerned with the functioning wider Anglican Communion.

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See: http://www.globalsouthanglican.org/index.php/blog/comments/communique_of_the_global_south_primates_bangkok_thailand_20_july_2012