



LAMBETH CALL HUMAN DIGNITY

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead... 1 Peter 1:3

1 Declaration

- 1.1 Within God's good gift of creation (Gen. 1:31), humanity is made in God's image and blessed by God's care and love (Gen. 1.26-28). This gives all human beings a dignity that cannot be taken away.ⁱ "Whenever we face another, we see a reflection of God's infinite love and glory."ⁱⁱ
- 1.2 It is in Christ's mission that we know the grace of God and God's faithful love for every human being (Jn 3:16; Col. 1:15–20; Rom. 5:18–19; 1 Cor. 15:22; 2 Cor. 5:14–17; 1 Pt. 2:9).ⁱⁱⁱ Humanity is offered new birth into a living hope through Christ's resurrection (1 Pt.1:3; 2 Pt. 1:14). As God's image-bearers, human beings are called to love God and to love each other (1 Jn. 4:11).^{iv}
- 1.3 The wonderful diversity of God's creation is echoed in the diversity of human beings. Every human being is "a unique and deep mystery of inestimable value and dignity".^v This diversity among human beings and in all creation is good and beautiful. Pentecost – and the vision of Revelation 7:9 – show how diversity is a good gift from God when, in the unifying power of the Holy Spirit, it is used in God's service and for the good of one another.^{vi}
- 1.4 Only Christ is the perfect image of God (Jn. 10:30; Col.1:15-16). All human beings turn away from God's love and mar God's image.^{vii} We acknowledge our sin and God's victory over sin at the cross (1 Pt.2.24, 3:18; Rom. 5:8). Respecting, honouring, and preserving the dignity of each human being involves acknowledgment of sin, repentance, and forgiveness. It is in Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit, that the full potential of the human person is seen.^{viii} It is in the gift of rebirth and renewed identity that the church, the body of Christ, is united. As a people redeemed by Christ, the Church is called to bear God's image, to be the body of Christ on earth (1 Pt. 3.9-10; Galatians 3.28).
- 1.5 Therefore, the church catholic declares that life is sacred and all persons are worthy of respect and worthy of conditions that make for life in all its fullness.^{ix} From such holy standards there can be no faithful dissent.

2 Affirmation

We are fellow-workers with God (1 Cor. 3:9) called to protect the gift of human life and the dignity of all human beings.^x As Jesus washed the feet of both his denier and betrayer, we are called to follow his example (Jn. 13:12–17, 34–35). We are called to love one another.

Acts and attitudes against the dignity of God's children are sin. The legacies of colonialism, the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and other abuses of power continue to impact our communities.^{xi} Some have been enriched and some impoverished. International economic systems, built upon unjust structures of exploitation, have created dehumanizing conditions. The deep inequalities in access to land, health and education, exploitation of the young, unjust labour practices, mistreatment of ethnic minorities, migrants and refugees, the inhumanity of human trafficking, religious persecution, pressures on those guided by their freedom of conscience, oppression of LGBTQ persons, gender based violence, war and sexual violence in conflict, in part, reveal such sin. Hospitality to all and faithfulness to each are key marks of a godly community (1 Pt. 4:8–10).

- 2.1 God intends life-giving inter-cultural community. Local missionary effort and contextual theology attest to a deep reception, contestation, adoption, and adaptation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ within and across cultures.^{xii} However, international Anglicanism often emerged in the context of colonialism. We acknowledge the existence and ongoing impact of an imperialist Anglicanism involved in dehumanizing practices predicated upon cultural and racial supremacy.^{xiii} Christian commitment to human dignity must celebrate the rich diversities of contextual theologies and take account of Anglicanism's complicity in brutal and extractive colonialisms.
- 2.2 Unjust economic systems unfairly disadvantage the world's poorest communities.^{xiv} Progress had been made in combating poverty.^{xv} However, a global pandemic, rising inflation, and war has seen unprecedented reversals in the reduction of poverty. The ongoing climate emergency (seen in, for example, increased global temperature, rising sea levels, and ocean acidification) creates further instability and food insecurity challenging efforts to eradicate poverty and create sustainable development now and in the future.^{xvi} In 2020, an additional 120–124 million people were driven back into extreme poverty.^{xvii} In 2022, it is estimated that between 657 million and 676 million people will live in extreme poverty.^{xviii} We lament these figures and the ways such poverty disproportionately impacts women and girls.^{xix} A commitment to human dignity means the church stands in solidarity with the poor and the marginalized and stands in witness against injustice as the poor and the marginalized.
- 2.3 Prejudice on the basis of gender or sexuality threatens human dignity. Given Anglican polity, and especially the autonomy of provinces, there is disagreement and a plurality of views on the relationship between human dignity and human sexuality. Yet, we experience the safeguarding of dignity in deepening dialogue. It is the mind of the Anglican Communion as a whole that “all baptised, believing and faithful persons, regardless of sexual orientation are full members of the Body of Christ” and to be welcomed, cared for, and treated with respect (I.10, 1998).^{xx} After careful theological reflection and a process of discernment, many provinces continue to affirm that same gender marriage is not permissible. Lambeth Resolution I.10 (1998) stated that the “legitimizing or blessing of same sex unions” is not advised.^{xxi} Other provinces have blessed and welcomed same sex union/marriage after careful theological reflection and a process of discernment. As bishops we remain committed to listening and walking together despite our deep disagreement on these issues.

3 Specific Requests (The Calls)

The scriptures witness to the inherent dignity and equality of all human beings because all are made in the image of God. In the great ethnic and cultural diversities of the Anglican Communion all are made in the image of God. All are equal. Indeed, it is God's intent to curate the richness of the world's cultures in the final and full revelation of God's glorious redemption (Rev. 21:24). Therefore, the bishops gathered at the Lambeth conference 2022 call on the Church to protect the dignity of all creation, cultures, and human beings. We call the Communion to:

- 3.1 Support the establishment of an Archbishop's Commission for Redemptive Action (ACRA).

This work will have, at least, four foci. First, the Archbishop of Canterbury should convene the ACRA as a group of theologians in the Communion, under the chairmanship of a Majority World theologian (we have in view here a leader from a community that experienced colonialism and slavery). The ACRA will study the reports and forensic accounting being produced by the Church Commissioners for England into the church's historic links to transatlantic chattel slavery.^{xxii}

Second, the ACRA will establish and publish holistic theologies of redemptive action and reparation, grounded in the great scriptural traditions of God's redemption in Christ, and the church's call to the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:17–19).^{xxiii} We call upon the Archbishop of Canterbury (as Chair of the Church Commissioners' Board of Governors) to ensure that this theology shapes the Church Commissioners' response to the church's links to colonialism and slavery.

Third, the ACRA, in consultation with the work of the Church Commissioners, will identify criteria, communities, and programs that would serve a Communion wide witness to redemptive action.

The ACRA will provide quarterly progress reports to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Standing Committee of the Anglican Consultative Council.

3.2 Act for funded social protection measures across the Anglican Communion

Such action will mean, where possible, lobbying governments for social protection measures. It will also mean the Anglican Communion acting for social protection.

First, in consultation with relevant sources and experts, at the next Primates meeting the Primates should explore together the meaning and implications of social protection in their contexts.^{xxiv} The Primates will take the lead in witnessing to the life-changing potential of social protection schemes while equipping their bishops and dioceses to do the same in local contexts.

Second, because poverty is “a multifaceted problem that requires a multifaceted and integrated approach”, resources that are economic, political, social, environmental, institutional, and spiritual need to be mobilised.^{xxv} In a bid to deepen spiritual and imaginative approaches to the eradication of poverty, and especially youth poverty, we call the ACC to establish an Anglican Innovation Fund (AIF). This fund will disperse financial support for young people (18–30 years old) that establish projects or businesses that combat poverty through special attention to social protection. In reference to 3.1, this initiative may find ongoing funding as an outworking of the ACRA and the Church Commissioners response to the historic injustice of slavery.

3.3 Extend the work of the Anglican Communion Office to Promote Human Dignity with Attention Sexuality as well as Gender.

We call upon the ACC (informed by relevant networks and departments of the ACO and informed by Lambeth 1998 resolution I.10), to examine whether its work on Gender Justice should be expanded to promote provincial and inter-provincial vision and practices toward human dignity with attention not only to gender but also sexuality. At ACC-19 provincial and inter-provincial reports on this matter should be received and further recommendations made.

End notes

- i. The Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith & Order (IASCUFO), Created in the Image of God: The Divine Gift and Call to Humanity: An Anglican Theological Anthropology: Unity, Faith & Order Paper No. 3 (London: ACC, 2021), 9, 12, 14–25, 42 https://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/460188/UFO_IASCUFO_Papers-3-and-4-God-So-Loved-the-World_v2_en.pdf See also Brian Brock and John Swinton eds. *Disability in the Christian Tradition: A Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012); World Council of Churches, *The Gift of Being: Called to Be a Church of All and for All* (2016) <https://tinyurl.com/7kyvdnr>



- ii. IASCUFO, *Created in the Image of God*, 24
- iii. International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue (ICAOTD), *In the Image and Likeness of God: A Hope-Filled Anthropology* ("The Buffalo Statement", 2015), 5–12. Lambeth 1998, I.10c; IASCUFO, *Created in the Image of God*, 75–77.
- iv. IASCUFO, *Created in the Image of God*, 34–40.
- v. IASCUFO, *Created in the Image of God*, 24.
- vi. IASCUFO, *Created in the Image of God*, 10–11.
- vii. IASCUFO, *Created in the Image of God*, 12, 50–57.
- viii. IASCUFO, *Created in the Image of God*, 9–11, 30–35.
- ix. ICAOTD, *In the Image and Likeness of God*; Lambeth 2008, Section C (Human and Social Justice); Lambeth 1998, I.1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 14, 15; III.21, 22.
- x. IASCUFO, *Created in the Image of God*, 26–30.
- xi. IASCUFO, *Created in the Image of God*, 53–54. See Jeremy M. Bergen, *Ecclesial Repentance: The Churches Confront their Sinful Pasts* (London: T&T Clark, 2011); International Labour Organisation (ILO), *Walk Free*, and International Organisation for Migration (IOM), *Global Estimates of Modern Slavery Forced Labour and Forced Marriage* (Geneva: ILO Publications, 2022)
- xii. See Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* revd. ed. (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2009); Jehu H. Hanciles, *Migration and the Making of Global Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021); William L. Sachs and Robert S. Heaney, *The Promise of Anglicanism* (London: SCM, 2019).
- xiii. See Rowan Strong, *Anglicanism and the British Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Ian T. Douglas & Pui-lan Kwok eds., *Beyond Colonial Anglicanism: The Anglican Communion in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Church Publishing, 2000).
- xiv. See IASCUFO, *Created in the Image of God*, 52–54.
- xv. Andrea Peer and Sevil Omer, "Global poverty: Facts, FAQs, and how to help" <https://www.worldvision.org/sponsorship-news-stories/global-poverty-facts>, August 23, 2021 (accessed June 10, 2022).
- xvi. UN, General Assembly, 73rd Session (18 October, 2018), Second Committee, Agenda item 24 (a), "Eradication of poverty and other development issues: implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018–2027)", 4. IASCUFO, *Created in the Image of God*, 12–13, 58–67.
- xvii. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal1> accessed June 10, 2022.
- xviii. "Extreme poverty" is measured as people living on less than \$1.90 a day. See Daniel Gerszon Mahler, Nishant Yonzan, Ruth Hill, Christoph Lakner, Haoyu Wu and Nobuo Yoshida, "Pandemic, prices, and poverty" <https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/pandemic-prices-and-poverty>, April 13, 2022 (accessed August 10, 2022). See <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/ending-poverty> accessed June 11, 2022. For information on climate change and migration patterns see Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Working Group III contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, "Climate Change 2022: Migration of Climate Change" (April 2022), 2-54 – 2-55; 3-96 – 3-109. https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg3/IPCC_AR6_WGIII_FinalDraft_FullReport.pdf accessed June 27, 2022.



- xix. UN, General Assembly, 73rd Session (18 October, 2018), Second Committee, Agenda item 24 (a), "Eradication of poverty and other development issues: implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018–2027)", 3.
- xx. Lambeth 1998, 1.10 c, d
- xxi. Lambeth 1998 1.10 e
- xxii. <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/Church%20Commissioners%20research%20report%20final.pdf> accessed June 28, 2022
- xxiii. IASCUFO, *Created in the Image of God*, 75–77. See IASCUFO, *God's Sovereignty and Our Salvation: An Anglican Theological Statement: Unity, Faith & Order Paper No. 4* (London: ACC, 2021), 82–84.
- xxiv. Social protection is any scheme or system set in place to protect workers from dramatic or traumatic change in working conditions. Social protection means employers share risk with their employees. Such protection can be in the form of, for example, pension benefits, access to low rate loans, and subsidized or free health care access. For more on the concept of "risk sharing" see Truman Packard, Ugo Gentilini, Margaret Grosh, Philip O'Keefe, Robert Palacios, David Robalino, and Indhira Santos, *Protecting All: Risk Sharing for a Diverse and Diversifying World of Work* (Washington D.C.: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, 2019) <https://bitly.ws/zBmR> June 21, 2022.
- xxv. UN, General Assembly, 73rd Session (18 October, 2018), Second Committee, Agenda item 24 (a), "Eradication of poverty and other development issues: implementation of the Third United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2018–2027)", 3.