

All Members Of:

1. The Diocese of Lahore – Church of Pakistan
2. All Dioceses and Members of the Church of Pakistan
3. The Archbishop of Canterbury
4. World Methodist Council
5. The United Methodist Church
6. The Methodist Church of Britain and Ireland
7. The Church of Scotland
8. FELM -
9. Kerkienectie – Netherlands
10. The Church of Finland, Norway, and Sweden
11. The World Council of Churches - through its General Secretary
12. Supporters and friends of the Church of Pakistan

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Your Excellency, The Most Reverend Archbishop of Canterbury, Respected Partners, Bishops of the Church of Pakistan, Supporters, and friends of the Church of Pakistan.

Greetings in the name of our Resurrected Lord,

With a very heavy heart, I the General Secretary, Synod, Church of Pakistan, would like to share with you all the prevailing unconstitutional realities of the Synod-COP and its leadership. This fast-growing reality has forced the autonomous Lahore Diocese one of the pioneers of the Church of Pakistan, to break their silence, take a major Diocesan decision so that certain values, traditions, unity, integrity, and witness of the Church are safeguarded.

I would like to highlight some of the major constitutional violations, (and certain corrupt actions) of our Synod leadership:

1. **SYNOD OF 2017 AND APPROVAL OF ITS MINUTES:** The 15<sup>th</sup> Triennial Synod of the Church of Pakistan took place at 17, Warris Road, Lahore in May 2017. Minutes of the said Triennial were not circulated or formally presented to the Synod Executive to review and subsequent approval by the Synod delegates of the 16<sup>th</sup> Triennial Synod, neither the Minutes of the Executive Meetings and the Audit report was approved. A copy of the 15<sup>th</sup> Triennial Synod minutes has however been provided to the Sindh High Court, for a decision in relation to the retirement age of bishops which was enhanced to 70 years. Concern for this irregularity of non-approval of the 15<sup>th</sup> Triennial minutes has been highlighted by the former Moderator of the Church of Pakistan, in one of his correspondences to the incumbent Moderator.

In the 15<sup>th</sup> Triennial Synod, a unanimous firm decision was to close enhancing of the Episcopal age for the next 10 years. Confirmed intention of calling the special Synod meeting of 21<sup>st</sup> January 2023, was to approve a one-point agenda, i.e., to enhance the retiring age of Bishops once again to 75 years. This special Synod meeting with a one-point agenda could not be held because of a court order, (We now hear that the Synod leadership unconstitutionally have given a six-month extension to the Bishop of Peshawar who was retiring on the 25<sup>th</sup> of January 2023. This illegal action by the individual lacks constitutional support, and such an act has never been done in the past. The Synod leadership we hear are taking their defense by stating the election of the Bishop of Lahore. Let it be clear once again that the election of the Bishop of Lahore took place, according to the approved rules of the Diocese of Lahore, once the incumbent Moderator constantly refused to listen to the request of the Diocese of Lahore to hold their election. or to provide them with a Coadjutor Bishop. This new decision of

extending the episcopal ministry of a retired Bishop has no support either of a Diocesan or Synod constitution)

2. **2021 TRIENNIAL SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF PAKISTAN:** -The summoning of 16<sup>th</sup> Triennial Synod St. Thomas Centre, Raiwind Road, Lahore (a private NGO of the incumbent Moderator) was no less than a mockery of the constitution of the Church. Proper agenda of the 16<sup>th</sup> Triennial Synod was not approved by the Synod Executive Committee, on the pretext of Church unity the Synod was convened in which there was no Church business and nor even the minutes of the 2017 Synod meetings were read or approved. The entire goal was election of the Moderator Bishop Azad Marshall, constitutionally or unconstitutionally. In the opinion of many members of the Synod this was an unconstitutional Synod and thus all its decisions unfortunately are unconstitutional. Two of the bishops have pointed out this fact.
3. **ANGLICAN LEAKS:** - The Diocese of Lahore had been an important hub of the Anglican Communion in United India and now within Pakistan. The Lahore Diocese is committed of its loyalty to the three instruments of the Anglican Communion i.e., 1) Office of the Archbishop of Canterbury. (2) Anglican Consultative Council and finally 3) The Lambeth Conference. There are vigorous efforts by the incumbent leadership of the Synod Church of Pakistan to break away from our traditional denominational relationship, to join the international breakaway group of the Anglican Church i.e., ACNA (Anglican Church of North America) and GAFCON. This can be verified through the Anglican Leak of GAFCON. (We cannot provide better proof, than the fact that the leadership of the mentioned Dioceses have still not refuted this news item, where the name of their Dioceses has been taken). The Diocesan Council of the Lahore Diocese strongly condemned this initiative and intention, disassociating itself from all such intentions and actions of the incumbent leadership of the Synod Church of Pakistan and the resolution passed in the Church of Pakistan Lahore Diocesan Council's Executive in its meeting held on January 18, 2023, is reproduced below.

The Church of Pakistan has many other Gospel realities to which no focus is being given by our leadership, e.g., poverty, injustice, religious discrimination, evangelism in its true sense etc. The Diocesan Council of the Lahore Diocese strongly condemns this initiative and intention, disassociating itself from all such intentions and actions of the incumbent leadership of the Synod Church of Pakistan. Resolution passed in the Church of Pakistan Lahore Diocesan Council's Executive in its meeting held on January 18, 2023, is reproduced below.

#### **Resolution 2**

**The facts highlighted in the Anglican leaks on social media clearly exposes the intentions of the Bishop Azad Marshall's tilt towards GAFCON and the support he has been receiving to promote GAFCON's agenda in the Church of Pakistan. The Executive Committee of the Church of Pakistan, Lahore Diocesan Council condemns the secretive linkage of Bishop Azad Marshall with GAFCON and resolves to stand firmly with The See of the Archbishop of Canterbury and not to align itself with GAFCON, a breakaway group of the Anglican Communion.**

4. **AN UNPRECEDENTED ACT IN THE APPOINTMENT OF A DIOCESAN COMMISSARY:**  
- Never had the Church of Pakistan ever experienced the appointment of retiring Diocesan Bishop being immediately appointed as the Moderator's Commissary in the same Diocese. This happened recently when the retiring Bishop of Faisalabad had been appointed Commissary. Interestingly there is no history of a major achievements of the said retiring Bishop in the Diocese of Faisalabad. We hear that at the time of handing over responsibility, there was no bank account in the name of the Diocese, and of course not a single rupee was available for the Diocese and the contract amount of

the agriculture land for the year 2023 was also taken by the outgoing Bishop of Faisalabad. We fail to understand how a Diocesan Bishop could be elected in the absence of a Diocesan Endowment Fund. There is proof available that the retiring Bishop made illegal long term property leases prior to his retirement. Money was taken but not a single rupee was handed over. I as the General Secretary, Synod, Church of Pakistan pointed these anomalies in my communications to the officers and bishops. The incumbent Moderator had a blind eye to these gross injustice with the Diocese, but on the contrary remunerated and honored the individual Bishop by appointing him as Commissary of the same Diocese. The Diocese of Lahore has concerns and has voiced that they cannot associate itself with such misconduct and corruption.

5. **EPISCOPAL ELECTIONS WITHIN THE COP, Financial Corruption: (Diocese of Karachi and Faisalabad):** - Episcopal, under the present leadership, has taken its worst turn in our history as the Church on issues of money, bribes, and false promises. Unethical political activity has gone to its extremes. Recently on the social media a telephonic conversation clip has gone viral in Pakistan and overseas, between a key advisor of the incumbent Moderator who is also the Treasurer of the Diocese of Raiwind, involved directly in asking money from a former Episcopal candidate for Karachi and after failing in Karachi promise of Faisalabad Diocese sadly he is being recommended by the incumbent Moderator to be the Co-Ordinator of the Synod Church of Pakistan. The Advisor, is directly asking for money on behalf of the bishop who gave a letter to legitimize the candidate guaranteed by the Moderator. This clip on the social media has never been refuted by the advisor and the said bishop and the incumbent Moderator. The Diocese of Lahore has clearly communicated that it cannot associate itself with such a blatantly corrupt environment, where no action is being taken. and matters are shoved under the carpet. In my letter of November 25 to the Deputy Moderator (as Moderator was out of the country) I suggested that a fact-finding committee be formed to investigate, but to date nothing has been done.
- a) **Diocese of Karachi:** - What took place speak for itself, on the first election of the bishop of Karachi the Synod Executive Committee had planned and made sure not to be in quorum. The incumbent Moderator Bishop Azad Marshall was in Karachi, but on the day of the elections left for Lahore on the pretext that he was not asked to come for the elections. In the second instance the elections were intentionally blocked by the Synod Executive Committee. As a result of the pre-planned move of the Synod the Karachi elections were delayed for more than a year.  
The Diocese of Karachi had been and continues to struggle in the midst of Synod politics. Its Episcopal elections became a big political ground, which weakened and damaged the entire infra-structure of the Diocese. Even after the elections of a Bishop the matter is still in the courts. We hear that the disgruntled group has the encouragement of Synod leadership. This can especially be seen in the recent Quetta Mission Hospital crisis, where we are told that the incumbent Moderator is involved in creating the crisis. In these circumstances the Lahore Diocese communicated that they cannot associate itself with such national leadership of the Church who have intentionally created divisions in various dioceses.
- b) **Diocese of Faisalabad:** - A meeting of the Officers and Bishops of the Church of Pakistan and three Synod Executive members was held in the hotel suite of the incumbent Moderator at Sarena Hotel, Faisalabad. The suggestion of tackling any objection against the candidates for the election of the bishop which might be tabled in the Council meeting, in the Meeting of the Synod Executive at the 3:00 pm was unconstitutional. This suggestion was strongly supported with a pre-planned agenda to accommodate the said candidate. To this I as the General

Secretary objected and categorically stated that it was illegal and wrong, and I refused to conduct the elections which was not liked by the Moderator.

- c) **Diocese of Lahore:** - Currently the Diocese of Lahore is becoming a victim of the whims and desires of the incumbent leadership of the Church. The former retiring Bishop of Lahore five months prior to his retirement requested the Moderator to elect a coadjutor Bishop of the Diocese of Lahore. This request was turned down by the Moderator unilaterally without taking a constitutional path of taking the matter to the Synod Executive. It is however interesting to mention that the Synod Executive passed a decision to elect a coadjutor Diocesan Bishop of Faisalabad just a few days prior to the retirement of the of the bishop. The election, however, never took place, but the decision reveals the double standard of the Synod leadership.

Moving forward the incumbent Moderator assured the executive and officers of the Diocese of Lahore that the Episcopal elections of Lahore will take place before the end of the year. A date was decided upon and just 24 hours before the election the Moderator took defense/protection under a letter written by the retired Bishop of Faisalabad, seconded by two Bishops that the elections of the Lahore Diocesan Bishop be postponed until a certain constitutional by-law of the Lahore Diocese was amended. It may be helpful to mention that this by-law was passed by the Lahore Diocesan Council in 1996 and in the 26 years passed and these issues were never raised. This was nothing but politics against the Lahore Diocese to divide the Diocese. The Lahore Diocese is the historical and the mother Diocese and one of the sound dioceses with good systems in place, the Lahore Diocese leadership has categorically stated that they will never allow anyone to damage the Diocese from within or outside.

It will not be out of place to mention that officers of the Lahore Diocese assured the Moderator that they would investigate the by-laws but requested that let us first have a Bishop under whose leadership we can make such decisions. This was turned down.

To further complicate matters that I representative of the Lahore Diocese, was elected by the Synod as General Secretary was unconstitutionally and illegally suspended on totally false accusations by a decision of the Bishop Council held in Dubai, to be followed by an emergent Synod executive committee held on December 15, 2022. An interim Synod Secretary was appointed, which is unconstitutional. These are signs of victimizing the Diocese of Lahore. Let me state that I as the General Secretary of the Synod did not agree with the wrong policies and decisions of the Moderator. I had no choice but to get relief from the civil court and was reinstated as General Secretary by the order of the learned Judge passed on January 17, 2023.

It was communicated to me that Lahore Diocese leadership, being aware of the intentions of the Synod and to protect the diocese from fragmentation will be deciding their course of action to preserve their unity, discipline, systems, and traditions. They strongly stressed that they will in no way weaken the unity of the Church of Pakistan but would encourage all to stand for the truth, to work harmoniously and uphold the values, traditions, and constitution.

## **6. CONTROVERSIAL REALITY OF THE PRESENT LEADERSHIP**

The present leadership of the Synod is in a very controversial situation in the following two areas:

1. Elections of the Co-adjutor Bishop of Raiwind, held in January 2016 are very controversial. The matter is sub-judice therefore I will abstain from commenting.
2. Election of the incumbent Moderator is also controversial since the 2021 Synod meeting was against all norms of the Church of Pakistan constitutional requirements.

Let me draw your attention to the spirit of mistrust in the Synod expressed 24 years ago and captured in the Minute No. 12 of the Special Meeting of the Synod Executive Committee, held on February 14, 1998, at Rawalpindi in which members of the Synod Executive Committee recorded their concerns regarding the Bishop of Karachi' Election held in 1997 in Quetta and the then Moderator standing on the alter was declaring the loosing candidate as winner, this matter was then settled by the intervention of Archbishop of Canterbury. The above-cited Minute speaks a lot about the negative role of the Synod in the elections of bishops of different dioceses and is quoted as below:

*“Discussing the prevalent impasse in Karachi Diocese, some members of the house opined that the causes of the present situation was rooted in history and its seeds were sown in the conduct of the first election held in Quetta and the election procedure that followed. Most of the members now sitting in the House, specially some of the Church leaders had contributed in one way or the other to bring the situation to its present state, and so it was their duty to find some workable solution. In this regard, the role of the Synod was deplorable as the Synod was only interested in politicking for election of Bishops and so has been indulging in very un-ethical and un-Christian like manners to influence the election of Bishop to suit the interest of certain members. Some members expressed their feelings that various rules and regulations framed by the Synod itself have been violated at will, and in some cases even the basic qualifications of the candidate of the election of the Bishop have been deliberately ignored and a mockery of the whole procedure and actual conduct of the election had been made in many cases. The current situation in Karachi was a result of the lack of faith, by the people in Synod to conduct fair and free elections. Some of the members felt that the Executive Committee had also not done its job properly as many of its recommendations, including conduct of election procedure of the Bishops were not heeded to and action on many of its vital decisions was not taken. Therefore, it was worth considering whether there was any use to remain a part of such a Synod or its Executive Committee. If things did not improve, some Dioceses may find it expedient not to have anything to do with the Synod in its present form”.*

The Lahore Diocese waited for more than two months requesting the Synod to hold the elections but to no avail. Under the circumstances after long discussions and deliberations amongst the officers and consultants and considering the negative role of the Synod, Church of Pakistan, Lahore Diocese decided to move forward and in their Executive Meeting held on January 18, 2023, unanimously passed the following resolution, which was later the same day unanimously endorsed by the Lahore Diocesan Council in which 140 out of 168 delegates were present.

#### **Resolution 1**

**Due to the deplorable, unacceptable, and unethical role of the Synod in the election of the Bishops, the Executive Committee of the Church of Pakistan, Lahore Diocesan Council unanimously resolved that the Church of Pakistan Lahore Diocese is left with no option but to hold the election of the bishop of Lahore on its own and as per its registered Constitution.**

I hope this communication is helpful,

Regards,



Anthony Lamuel  
General Secretary, Church of Pakistan.