



Anglican Network in Canada

ANNUAL PLAN for 2010

Members of Synod

After half a century of attending Synods in an Anglican setting, there is not much that puzzles me about the overall process. However, this time I admit that I have met my match and I am composing a document primarily because I was requested to do so by those who were planning the “Governance” procedures for our newly launched church.

I am not complaining about the request to do this, but rather I am admitting up front that even after a number of discussions and explanations, I still am far from certain as to what I should be bringing before you this afternoon. Normally, policies and concerns are spelled out in the Bishop’s Charge to Synod, which, as I said last year, was similar to the Speech from the Throne in the parliamentary world.

One thing this accomplishes is that it has cut down by several pages the length of the Charge, which already is too long, since the issues I will raise here will not be regurgitated again tomorrow. However, even with this preamble, I do not want to trivialize or minimize the importance of any of these items I now put before you. Each one is of paramount importance and is to be kept in mind throughout this afternoon’s workshops (which follow) and indeed through the decision making process of Synod.

1. Prayer.

It goes without saying that congregations pray. Or at least it should go without saying. Most of you who have been on this pilgrimage are aware that we have reached our present plateau through concentrated prayer across the land.

Those in leadership in a parish must make provision for this gift to be exercised on a regular basis throughout the week and especially when we are called upon to uphold special situations and when it is obvious we are under attack. Deacon Garth Hunt has been invaluable in the prayer guide issued each month. Our prayer life, personally and corporately must be strengthened rather than reduced as our numbers grow and we mature.

2. Sacrament

I am especially referring to the Holy Eucharist here, but this is not meant to minimize the other major Sacrament - Holy Baptism, nor the five others that often bear that name.

I would like to feel that any member of ANiC would have the opportunity to receive Holy Communion at some time every week (and particularly on Sunday when possible) in the year. This is not to suggest that there is not a space for Morning Prayer or Prayer and Praise, or Evensong, as there most certainly is. But, as I was taught as a boy, we are to attend “the Lord’s own service on the Lord’s own day”, I would like to think that somehow a Sunday is not complete without it. I would like the Holy Eucharist offered at some time every Sunday in order that those of our people who desire it may be fed with both Word and Sacrament at least weekly.

I am aware that not having control over our property often precludes this happening on weekdays and the Major Holy Days of our Calendar.

3. Youth

I am dismayed that there are so few people in the Youth Category registered for this Synod. I apologize to those who are here that they do not have a more of their peer group to share their concerns and their hopes and aspirations. Yet, I am sure that all here will strongly agree with me when I pledge that we will listen to what you have to say intently, and we encourage you to boldly come to a microphone when you feel so moved.

4. Money

From the outset, we stated that as one of our foundational principles we would encourage and promote the biblical principle of tithing. I do not think this is an optional matter to which we pay lip service. Parishes need to have this subject regularly on their agenda and to promote the concept through good solid teaching.

So far, and we are in our infancy, sufficient parishes have adopted this concept successfully, with the result that we can plan our agenda without worrying about financing it. Still, I pick up, as I move across the country, hints about fund raising schemes to carry out our work.

It is my strong prayer and desire that we do not slip back into that old way of doing things. In my blunter moments I often say, that a parish that cannot survive and prosper on the free will offerings of its members does not deserve to.

My friends who belong to churches that include tithing as one of the conditions of membership, tell me that even in areas where the income is modest or depressed, when members tithe, having sufficient funds to operate is never a problem.

5. Theological Education.

This is my fifth and last point. It is an extremely critical one.

Although we have pledged ourselves to a fresh new start based on refreshingly new approaches, we all are aware of how easily we slip back into the old ways. They are ingrained in us. They come as second nature to us – almost as automatic as reflex actions.

I have stated before that Theological Colleges not living up to their mandate have been a major factor in plunging us into our current crisis. We need to be able to approach seminaries that prepare people for ordination and tell them our needs rather than have them dictate what is best for us – and consequently the Church at large. We need to

restore the time when glancing at the masthead of a theological diploma will be a guarantee that the person received a sound, biblically based education, that was not unduly influenced by the political correctness and desire to accommodate the “cultural trends” of a society that sadly has lost its way.

We need to keep the following factors in mind:

1. That ordination is not the only way faithful persons can use their gifts and talents in ministry.
2. That we need to spend more time examining a perceived vocation in more depth and over a longer period than heretofore.
3. Recognize that at this stage we have more trained people ordained, or ready and waiting to be ordained, than we have congregations that can sustain them. Yet they often have much to offer and their gifts are sorely needed. So, should we not be exploring other forms of ordained ministry that in the past have had titles such a “worker priest” and “tentmaker” just to name a few.
4. That an insistence be placed on Continuing Education on an annual basis and at all levels.

This list is by no means exclusive – and again I say, we must think outside the box.

So, in summary, here are the five points in the Bishop’s Annual Plan for 2010.

1. That Parishes all become storehouses of prayer.
2. That our people be given the opportunity to receive Holy Communion each week.
3. That Youth involvement in Parishes and Synod be emphasized.
4. That tithing be stressed as a part of our membership in the Body of Christ.
5. That in depth study and action be taken in the field of theological education.

Respectfully submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a plus sign followed by the name "Donald" in a cursive script.