



Anglican Network in Canada

CHARGE OF THE RIGHT REVEREND DONALD F HARVEY

TO THE SECOND DIOCESAN SYNOD

Held in

ST. CATHERINE'S, ONTARIO

NOVEMBER 11 - 13, 2009

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Greetings!

It is a joy to welcome our Archbishop, the Clergy, the Lay Delegates, our guests and our visitors to this historic occasion as we gather here in this city of St. Catherine's. It is not without some significance that this city is so very close to the Canada – USA boarder, which demonstrates that while that boarder is there, for most things it can be crossed with relative ease and has little interference in the life of these two nations. Nor did we feel it would affect us adversely when from the very outset we agreed to be founding members of what now has become our new Province, the Anglican Church in North America.

This has been a long and at times arduous journey and the familiar phrase “a roller coaster ride” certainly can be applied to it. But through these ups and downs, wise leaders have persevered and when, in June we processed up the aisle of that beautiful edifice in Plano, Texas, there were not many dry eyes as we suddenly felt the impact of “what God hath wrought”.

On reflecting on this “best of times – worst of times” era, I am certain that all involved give thanks for the incredible leadership of the Moderator and now Primate, Archbishop Robert Duncan. Even when the most optimistic of us felt that it could not survive, Archbishop Bob pressed forward and deployed those remarkable gifts of leadership and reconciliation with which he so uniquely has been endowed, and God's Will was enacted. We offer profound thanks for that leadership.

Absent from our gathering this morning is another dear friend and courageous leader, Archbishop Greg Venables. At the last moment, the Venables had to cancel their trip because Sylvia came down with a severe bronchial infection, which, especially with today's concern with flu pandemics, made travel not only unwise but impossible. Still they are with us in spirit and the money that was refunded on their airfares is being ear marked for another time, when they can come and hear us express our gratitude. Archbishop's Greg's bold willingness to accept our Network into the jurisdiction of the Southern Cone on a pastoral, emergency, temporary basis, despite international opposition from very high sources, made what we are doing here today possible, and without that action, not just us,

but several other dioceses and their bishops would have been backed into an impossible corner. Like the Gideon I have heard him preach on so eloquently, we truly can say, "Gregory, thou man of valour.....".

One year ago, only a few miles from here, I confronted you with the huge challenge of how best to select new bishops in our present structure. Indeed, when after some discussion a motion to empower your then two bishops to nominate to Archbishop Greg up to three names for Suffragan Bishops for Canada, passed unanimously, I was completely overwhelmed. Months later, after Bishop Harding and I met and came up with our nominees, when we opened the "sealed ballots " you had provided before leaving Synod, we found that your choices coincided with ours in every case, and with the same majorities, both of us were overwhelmed. But why should we have been so amazed? We had sought God's Will in this matter and he had supplied it with signs following.

And so, at the conclusion of this Synod we will join in the "setting apart" as Bishops in the Church of God, Charles Masters, Trevor Walters and Stephen Leung with the full knowledge and belief that their ultimate election by the Council of Bishops of the Anglican Church in North America was a divinely inspired process.

I fear we were not as successful in one of the other commitments we made to you last Synod. This was in the area of Constitution, Canons and By-laws whereby we were supposed to have draft copies of these new documents to all parishes in time for study and revision so they could be decided upon at this gathering. We were just too ambitious and I take full responsibility for deciding that this must be left for another Synod. However, this will become a major project for the coming year and I am hoping that with the new Provincial Canons before us as a guideline, our efforts will be rewarded with the same quick passage as did theirs in June.

I always find the discipline of writing a Charge very tedious. Like the legendary Lord Ronald, I want to leap on my horse and go charging off "madly in all directions" with the result that it becomes insufferably long and without much depth. In an effort to avoid that, I now am going to concentrate on a small number of the many topics that lie open before me.

Appended to this Charge will be a statistical report, which shows significant growth in all aspects. It should be noted that none of this progress came as a result of direct intervention on our part. In every single instance a parish or a group of individuals met together for prayer and study and only then invited us to come to assist them. This we readily did; and as soon as they launched as a new Parish or Church Plant, we made provision for one of our leaders to visit them and welcome them into our Family. Indeed, I as Moderator have visited all but two of our 33 parishes to bring greetings and assure them they are not alone.

I suggest that the time is approaching for this passive strategy to change. If indeed, we feel that we are fulfilling the criteria of allowing people to be biblically faithful and at the same time part of the Anglican Communion, we need to move into places that are not directly calling out for help. The reason they are not is that in many areas the Anglican Church of Canada has been very successful in stifling any opportunity of debate or discussion on vital matters (including that of eternal salvation) and instead are putting forth the propaganda

that “all is well”. Scripture does have something to say about prophets who cry “Peace, Peace, when there is no peace” and we still need our Jeremiahs and Ezekiel’s to proclaim otherwise.

While numbers do not mean everything, it is with some satisfaction that we can report that this time two years ago when we launched our with two bishops, two deacons, two priests and two parishes, we not can proclaim that we have six bishops, 33 parishes and plants, over 80 clergy and with an average Sunday attendance approaching 4000. To God be the glory!

With growth come other decisions to be made. It has been such a joy to operate as a single diocese from coast to coast (I still am looking forward to the day when we can add the third coast) but the magnitude of this area is bringing its own pastoral and administrative challenges. Our numbers already qualify us to multiply into at least two dioceses and it is incumbent on us to prayerfully consider what action we will take. To stay as one diocese has many blessings but as we grow even more, we fear it will become increasingly difficult to maintain unity and effective administration.

We often have spoken of the need to “think out of the box”. While we have been eager to do this, we also need to be reminded that it is not an option to destroy this box altogether. We have made the conscious decision that we want to remain part of the Anglican Communion, even though there are many other options open to us. Many of us feel that despite the ravages Anglicanism is enduring at home and abroad, it still is a valid expression of Christ’s One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church with a rich and varied heritage which allows many expressions of liturgy and some latitude in belief making a wide difference in what one may personally believe and what one may teach as necessary to eternal salvation. For all of its warts and blemishes, all of its human shortcomings, after seventy years of membership, I can say as Churchill said of democracy, “I can think of no better”.

In such a context, I was distressed by the recent pronouncement from the Vatican offering refuge to disenchanted Anglicans. Apart from being an intrusion at the very highest levels of one major church into the internal affairs of another (under the thin disguise of being ecumenical) this invitation offers very little of any real substance that is new. Indeed, I find the words in the official joint communiqué referring to “*the Catholic Church and the Anglican Tradition*” offensive in the extreme and reporters who suggested that this may be a “solution” to the Network’s needs are really not aware of what we truly profess. Over and again, while explaining why we departed from the Anglican Church of *Canada*, we have stated that we want to be remain biblically faithful and remain part of the world wide Anglican Family. To accept this “invitation” would immediately deny both of these precepts. Nor am I prepared to say that for the last 45 years I have been ministering under Holy Orders that are defective in any way, much less that they are “null and void”.

This is not the way to foster good ecumenical dialogue.

I have just a few comments on the International scene. The GAFCON experience was one of the most moving events many of us ever will experience. The Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans (FCA) that grew from this Conference is a gathering of which we in Canada are

honoured and delighted to be part. Our new Province is prospering and bit-by-bit is being accepted by other major parts of the Communion.

These are wonderful blessings, but I do have two major concerns. The first stems from the fact within the next eighteen months, a number of Primates who have been our staunch allies and dear friends will be retiring and will be replaced. I call upon you to pray fervently that their successors who will be chosen will be equal champions of the faith and share the same concern for those parts of the Communion under attack, as did their illustrious predecessors.

The second concern is that the momentum stemming from GAFCON already is receding at a pace I would not have anticipated, and although I know they are facing many and great obstacles, I urge the group known as the GAFCON Primates to stir the pot by planning another international event as soon as possible. We are only too aware that many great movements in the past started quite fervently and with great promise, only to lose momentum and ultimately move into an inertia that became deadly. The Spirit of GAFCON was far too powerful and precious for us to allow that to happen.

Nor can we permit the flame of the Anglican Network in Canada to sputter and subside. Every person here who took part in the services launching all of our parishes will never forget the sheer joy and enthusiasm on that occasion. The sense of freedom, of release, of the burden that had been slowing down your spiritual growth falling from your back and tumbling down the hill into the mouth of the open sepulture *where you saw it no more* will always be remembered with joy and thanksgiving. But it must continue to be more than a memory as we share this unique experience with other people. Remember that if ANiC or even ACNA simply becomes a safe haven for disgruntled Anglicans, not only will it fail, but it will deserve to fail. Our Primate's vision of 1000 new churches in five years must be kept alive and almost from the moment that a new church is established, they have to be planning how they are going to multiply. We are reminded here in North America that the fields already are white unto harvest and that we, called to be labourers in this harvest, must "work for the night is coming". "Others have laboured and we have entered into their labours".

Yesterday when I unveiled the Bishop's Annual Plan, I spent some time stressing the importance of Theological Education, both in the preparation for Ordained Ministry, and in meaningful Continuing Education – both clerical and lay. In the interests of time I am not going to reiterate these concerns but because of their supreme importance, I want to record this subject and record my desire that we continue to treat it with the utmost urgency.

Since our last Synod, our dear brother Bishop Malcolm Harding has entered yet into another retirement and as we heard last night when we paid tribute to him and Marylou and their ministry. that at the best, his retirement is a proverbial Busman's Holiday and that that already they are involved in evangelism across the land. Early this year we were joined by Bishop Ron Ferris and his wife Jan and they almost immediately began laying a foundation for a Church Plant in Langley, British Columbia, which now is the Church of the Ascension.

He and his lay delegate are with us today, and he is fulfilling his dream of completing his ministry in the manner in which he started by planting the seed and nurturing its growth.

Bishop elect Trevor Walters held the additional positions of Archdeacon in the west and also Examining Chaplain to the Bishop. For obvious reasons he now vacates both roles although he still will be involved in all aspects of this ministry, albeit in another capacity.

I am happy to appoint Archdeacon Paul Crossland of Brandon, Manitoba as a new Examining Chaplain, where he will join Archdeacon Desiree Stedman and the Reverend Dr. Archie Pell as part of that vital team.

It gives me pleasure to appoint the Reverend Ronald Corcoran, among many other things the author of a new book on our struggle "**Bishop or the King**", as Archdeacon of the West.

We have among us a dear friend who undisputedly has preached the Word of God to more people at home and around the world than any other Canadian Anglican, Evangelist Dr. Marney Patterson. A few years ago when Marney felt he no longer in good conscience could remain with the Anglican Church of Canada, a few of us assisted in presenting him to Archbishop VENABLES who so graciously accepted his Orders and licensed him in the same manner he received us. Today Marney, with Archbishop Greg's approval, and at his own request, is becoming a Licensed Priest of the Anglican Network in Canada and part of the Province of the Anglican Church in North America.

Most of us have a high respect for the Cursillo Movement and are so grateful for the ministry it provided over the years in bringing so many souls to Christ. Because its success was so remarkable, I was deeply saddened earlier this year to learn that ANiC members no longer could hold leadership positions in the Movement and as such, I felt were relegated to at best a second-class membership. It came as a great relief then to learn that our new Province has established its own branch of Cursillo, known **The Fourth Day**, and I encourage our members who still have great affection for this Movement to seriously consider participating in it at this new and exciting level. To that end I am appointing Deacon Gary Stobbs of St, Matthew's, Abbotsford to be the Canadian coordinator. Should numbers warrant it, we will in time appoint another co-coordinator for the east. We wish Deacon Gary well in this assignment.

Nor can I close without mentioning a couple of other absences. Our dear colleague and Theologian Emeritus, Dr. J.I. Packer, though still carrying out his day by day duties in Vancouver, has been requested by his doctor not to travel for a few months and hence his regrets at not being here. I request that at some point we send him and other absent members greetings from this Synod.

Absent in body but I am certain not far from us in God's "nearer presence" is one who, with her husband Archie, rarely missed a gathering from the earliest days of our inception. I refer to my friend Dr. Barbara Pell who entered into rest last February after a valiant battle with cancer, which she fought with courage and fortitude many years longer than doctors predicted she could. That same faith and tenacity that prolonged her life also was so evident in the battle she fought to keep the church she loved from apostasy and non-biblical standards. It was my privilege to administer the Last Rites of Holy Church to Barbara

just hours before her death, and even then I was able to carry out our tradition of trying to stump one another with the gems of English Literature. Nor can I resist the temptation to do so even now:

***Here and there does not matter
We must be still and still moving
Into another intensity
For a further union, a deeper communion
Through the dark cold and the empty desolation,
The wave cry, the wind cry, the vast waters
Of the petrel and the porpoise. In my end is my beginning***

We will remember Barbara and our other departed friends and benefactors at the Altar in this service. Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord, and may life perpetual shine upon them. May they rest in peace and rise in glory!

Dear friends, although we have much to rejoice over today, we are only too aware that the challenges awaiting us are legion, even as we strive to come to terms over issues that divide us internally. Our success is such that “the devil has come down in great fury because his time is short” and he, even today, will do his utmost to create havoc on our efforts – especially if he sees us to be wrapped in a blanket of false security. We must acknowledge our weaknesses and that without Christ we indeed can do nothing. But what greater comfort and inspiration can we ask then those words recorded in 2 Corinthians, which we have selected as the theme for our Synod

***And he said unto me, My Grace is sufficient for thee: for
my strength is made perfect in weakness...
Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in
necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake,
for when I am weak, then I am strong.***

I invoke God's Holy Spirit on this, our Second Synod. May the Holy Name of Jesus be high and lifted up in all of our deliberations. Amen.