

January 13, 2008

Anglican Network in Canada (ANiC) Newsletter

Network volunteer staff

The Network is thrilled to announce additions to our small staff. Garth Hunt, who most of you know as the author of the thought-provoking meditations in the monthly Anglican Essentials “1st Friday Call to Prayer”, has accepted the challenge of Network national prayer ministry director. Ron Bales brings his extensive corporate experience to the role of Network organizational development director. Joanne Lawrie, Director of Ministry Development at St John’s Shaughnessy (Vancouver), is also contributing her time and expertise as an advisor to the Network. These are all volunteer positions, which means their only reward is your’s and our gratitude and our Father’s “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

Clergy retreat

The Anglican Network in Canada is holding [a pastors’ retreat](#) designed to provide solid Biblical teaching together with spiritual refreshment and enriching fellowship. The retreat is open to all orthodox clergy and is designed to strengthen them as they minister in the midst of turmoil and uncertainty.

The focus will be on teaching the Word, not on the crisis in our church.

Speaker: The Canon Rev Terry Wong, vicar of [St James Church in Singapore](#) and chaplain to Archbishop John Chew, Primate of South East Asia. The Rev David Short describes Canon Wong as a fine Bible teacher and a humble man of God with a great sense of humour.

Dates: 26-28 February 2008 (Tuesday, 4:00pm – Thursday 9:00pm)

Location: Cedar Springs Christian Retreat Center in Sumas, Washington

Cost: \$275 for single accommodation; \$225 for shared; \$175 for spouse.

Contact: The Rev Gary Stobbs, 604 854 5380 or garystobbs@shaw.ca.

Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador summons clergy

Bishop Cyrus Pitman [sent an “ad clerum”](#) to all diocesan clergy just before Christmas demanding their attendance at the Cathedral January 21 where their licences will be revoked and reissued. He also stripped all Canons of the Cathedral chapter of their titles and ordered that no one from outside the diocese could minister in the diocese without the bishop’s explicit permission. Once the ad clerum became a media story, the [diocese issued a statement](#) softening the original language and implying this is merely an annual service of vow renewal. However, while the renewal of ordination vows may be done annually, the revoking and reissuing of all clergy licences, as well as the removal of all Canon titles is unprecedented, to our knowledge. Please pray for the clergy in the diocese of

Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador as they receive these new licences, the terms of which are unknown at this time.

See the media coverage: [Toronto Star](#), [National Post](#): [The Telegram](#) (St John's paper), [Canadian Press](#) and [CBC \(Newfoundland\)](#).

Archbishop Greg Venables' talks about attending Lambeth

In [conversation with Robert Lundy](#) of the [American Anglican Council](#), Archbishop Greg responded to the question of whether he'd attend Lambeth by saying:

"My personal conviction after a very long period of active participation in this drawn-out process is that the system is not allowing a solution. It's Catch 22. We believed initially that there was a simple, albeit painful, solution but there seemed to be an overwhelming reluctance to pay the price... It's an ecclesiastical Alice through the Looking Glass, but there's no humour and little real love... Some of us who have actually participated in all the meetings believe we have to get on with the really important ministry of the Church, which is to do with salvation and eternal life, and that this can only be done with those who share the historic biblical faith. It's a question of realism and priorities.

[Archbishop Greg participated](#) on a lengthy thread on the Stand Firm in Faith blog on the subject of GAFCON (see item below) and Lambeth attendance. (His contribution to the discussion begins at comment #114.) [Anglican-Mainstream](#) provides a summary of Archbishop Venables points. Gamely participating in the extraordinarily lengthy blog "discussion" on New Year's Day (and beyond), Archbishop Venable's comments included:

"... orthodox leaders ... having given much time and energy to the debate and seen how little things have changed ... are now getting on with the mission of the church where they are ... Lambeth is no longer a priority whereas the gospel is."

"...don't be under any illusion, the liberal agenda is after the communion franchise."

A number of those participating in the blog wrote passionately about what they saw as the strategic imperative of conservative bishops attending Lambeth. In response, Archbishop Venables requested prayer for conservative bishops considering attendance at Lambeth and also said, "Please pray as I seek to share with my colleagues in the coming days about these important considerations."

A kaffuffle over GAFCON and Lambeth attendance

The Global Anglican Future Conference (known as GAFCON) – called by orthodox primates and slated for the Middle East June 14-22 (prior to Lambeth) – has aroused some controversy among conservatives. The Primate of the Middle East, while supportive in theory is concerned about the location and the timing, and theologian Dr Michael Poon [wrote an open letter](#) questioning it. See also these articles: [Washington Times](#), [Jerusalem Post](#) and [Virtueonline](#).

[Matt Kennedy draws an analogy](#) between the TEC/ACoC and a sinking island and Common Cause Partners/Global Anglican Future Conference and a boat.

New Year's message from Archbishop Fred Hiltz

In the [traditional New Year's message](#), Archbishop Hiltz referenced the Network's activities...

"...General Synod also concurred by resolution with the opinion of the St. Michael Report that the blessing of same-sex unions should not be a communion breaking issue. It is now, however, evident that for some it is. Some members of our Church feel compelled to leave over this issue. Their decision is regrettable given the fact that the Bishops have made adequate and appropriate provision for the pastoral care and episcopal support of all members of our Church including those who find themselves in conscientious disagreement with the view of their Bishop and Synod. These provisions are contained in a document known as Shared Episcopal Ministry approved by the House of Bishops in November 2004 and recently commended by an international Panel of Reference appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury. In light of these provisions, as well as ancient canons of the Church, statements of successive Lambeth Conferences, the Lambeth Commission on Communion known as the Windsor Report, and the 2005 and 2007 Communiqués from the Primates; we believe that recent actions by way of intervention on the part of another province in the internal life of our church are neither necessary nor appropriate. This opinion was made public in recent statements by the Council of General Synod (Nov. 16, 2007) and a joint Pastoral Statement from myself and the Canadian Metropolitans (Nov. 29, 2007). It has been made known to the Archbishop of Canterbury."

Archbishop Hiltz writes the Primates

Archbishop Hiltz wrote a [four page letter to the Primates](#) of the Communion which repeats many of the themes in his New Year's message. He restates the Anglican Church of Canada's position on the blessing of same sex unions, employing half-truths and selective recall. The letter states that the ACoC has not yet changed the doctrine of marriage, but implies that, since the Canadian government has legalized same sex marriage, the church may have to capitulate. (Who knew doctrine was so malleable?) He also repeated protests against the incursion of the Southern Cone into his territory, implying that it was completely unnecessary and unprovoked. Peter [editorializes on the AEC blog](#).

Archbishop Venables rebuts incursion protests

In an Anglican Journal article titled, [Canada calls on Canterbury to intervene](#), the Journal quotes extensively from Archbishop Greg.

"In an interview with the Anglican Journal, Archbishop Venables said Canadian Anglican leaders are practising "either denial or hypocrisy" when they criticize bishops who cross national and diocesan jurisdictions to minister to congregations that are conservative on the issue of homosexuality.

"They have broken historic agreements – the Lambeth Conference agreement and the Windsor Report – to go ahead with blessing same-sex relationships. To use that argument against us is a bit odd, to say the least," he said.

International statements and agreements in recent years concerning the Anglican controversy over homosexuality have referred to a need for moratoria on the blessing of same-sex couples and the ordination of gay priests or bishops. They have also called for an end to boundary-crossing by priests and bishops.

Archbishop Venables said he was offering Canadian parishes that feel they can't stay within the Anglican Church of Canada "a place of holding" and, "a way to remain in the Anglican Communion until this difficult situation is resolved. They don't have to abandon Anglicanism."

...The dissenting churches do not feel the Canadian provisions for protection of dissenters are adequate, said Archbishop Venables. "They don't agree with what is offered, otherwise they would have accepted it," he said.

More on diocesan decisions regarding same sex blessings

[The most recent Anglican Journal](#) comments again on the Diocese of Niagara's endorsement of same sex blessings: "The synod decision seems to contradict a "pastoral statement" reaffirmed by Canadian Anglican bishops at their October meeting that says clergy may celebrate a eucharist and intercessory prayers with a homosexual couple, but not pronounce a nuptial blessing. Bishop Spence was a co-author of the statement, but he commented that "the ground shifted underneath us when Ottawa and Montreal took the stances they did. The spirit of that pastoral letter is very much present. We strive for a generous response." In practical terms, however, he agreed that synod's decision and the pastoral statement now co-exist." Funny how easily General Synod decisions can be ignored.

Canadian news briefs

Anglican Planet (editorial), [Denouncing is easy. Facing conflicts fairly is difficult.](#)

Anglican Planet, [Primate issues letter denouncing new Church structure](#)

Anglican Planet, [Distressed Canadian Anglicans turn to Archbishop Venables](#)

Anglican Journal, [Foreign province makes bid for Canadian churches](#)

Anglican Journal, [Proposed structure for the Anglican Network in Canada](#)

Anglican Journal, [The Anglican Church of the Southern Cone of America](#)

Australia's [The Age](#) declares the Anglican Church of Canada "...probably the most liberal Anglican church, endorsing same-sex unions."

[The Ottawa Citizen](#) reports on the first service of a group outside Ottawa hoping to start a Network church plant.

Jefferts Schori accuses other churches of double standard

In an [interview with the BBC](#), Presiding Bishop Jefferts Schori claims that Bishop Gene Robinson is not the only gay bishop in the Communion, saying, "He is certainly not alone in being a gay bishop, he's certainly not alone in being a gay partnered bishop. He is alone in being the only gay partnered bishop who's open about that status." She remains hopeful that Bishop Robinson will be invited to Lambeth.

While the Presiding Bishop openly admitted that services of blessing for gay couples take place in the US Episcopal Church, she claimed, "Those services are happening in various places, including in the Church of England, where my understanding is that there are far more of them happening than there are in the Episcopal Church," she said.

Bishop of San Joaquin responds to attacks, receives support, and is inhibited

Since the San Joaquin became the first diocese to leave the Episcopal Church, Bishop John-David Schofield has been shamelessly slandered. In an [interview with David Virtue](#), Bishop Schofield responds to this smear campaign with characteristic grace and charity, countering misrepresentations of his handling of a shrinking mission parish and gently answering charges that he is a closet homosexual. (He's not; God called him to a life of singleness). Asked how the attacks were affecting him, Bishop Schofield said, "One's prayer life normally intensifies and therefore grows better in direct proportion to the difficulties being experienced."

Thirty-one bishops [signed a letter of support](#) for the Diocese of San Joaquin saying, "It has been said that you are isolated and alone. We want you and the world to know that in this decision for the faith once delivered to the saints, we stand with you and beside you."

On January 11, [the Episcopal Church banned Bishop Schofield](#) from practicing his religious duties for two months due to his diocese seeking alternative primatial oversight from the Southern Cone. [The Diocese of San Joaquin responded](#) to the inhibition saying in effect that this action simply proves the TEC has abandoned the faith and is walking apart from the Communion.

10 US Churches transferred from Bolivian to CANA oversight

In a [news release](#), the [Convocation of Anglicans in North America](#) (CANA) has welcomed ten Anglican congregations – located in Ohio, Michigan and Indiana – into its membership. The Rt. Rev. Francis R. Lyons, the Bishop of Bolivia, transferred these congregations and their clergy from the ecclesiastical leadership of the Church of Bolivia to the oversight of CANA Missionary Bishop Martyn Minns. In [a letter to Bishop Minns](#), Bishop Lyons said he did this "with a profound desire to promote unity in Jesus Christ which issues from his reconciling work on the Cross and an abiding trust in the power of God's Word written, and with a genuine commitment to support the emerging ecclesiastical structure of faithful Anglicans in North America." The CANA website says, "This transfer of congregations is a harbinger of the consolidation of Anglicanism for which many orthodox Anglicans in the US have been longing." Bolivia is part of the Anglican Province of the Southern Cone under Archbishop Greg Venables.

Diocese of Fort Worth one step closer to joining Southern Cone

The Bishop and Standing Committee of the Diocese of Fort Worth concluded a [review of the constitution and canons of the Province of the Southern Cone](#). They said:

“Based on our review, we have concluded that the structure and polity of the Province of the Southern Cone would afford our diocese greater self-determination than we currently have under the General Convention of The Episcopal Church. This autonomy would be evident most specifically in the areas of property ownership, liturgy, holy orders, and missionary focus.

While nothing will change in the day-to-day operations of the churches in the Diocese of Fort Worth, we expect a significant change in attitude and focus of the clergy and people of the diocese. Becoming a member Diocese of the Province of the Southern Cone would allow the Diocese of Fort Worth the opportunity and freedom to continue to practice the “Faith once delivered to all the saints” without being constantly distracted by the controversies and divisions caused by innovations hostile to traditional Christian norms. Instead, it would allow the Diocese to concentrate on the call of Jesus Christ to preach the Gospel and make new disciples, while at the same time assuring our continued place in the mainstream of Anglicanism, an assurance The Episcopal Church is unable to give.

More US and International news briefs

Virtueonline, [Changing Attitude Spins Disinformation on Homosexuality to Anglican Communion](#)

[The Most Rev. Joseph Marona](#), Archbishop of Sudan, has retired early due to failing health.

[Anglican Mainstream](#) has responded to the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Advent letter, asking him to address the communion-breaking action of the western churches.

Post-election inter-tribal strife in Kenya has deeply affected the Anglican Church there. [Please pray for wisdom for Archbishop Nzimbi](#), for protection for our Kenyan brothers and sisters, and for peace in that nation.

[Bishop of Rochester, Michael Nazir-Ali](#), warns that enclaves of extremism have flourished in Britain due to the erosion of Christianity and the adoption of a policy of multiculturalism. See also this [Telegraph article](#) and [The Independent’s report](#) of Muslim reaction.

[A motion introduced](#) in Britain’s House of Commons calling for an end to the formal link between Church and State raised eyebrows when it was ironically numbered 666 on the order paper.

As the Episcopal Church (TEC) continues to wage war in the courts on any parish that seeks refuge with an orthodox Primate, the [attorney general of Virginia](#) has filed a motion to intervene in the court battle between the TEC and 11 orthodox Virginia congregations. His motion says in part, “As a matter of federal constitutional law, the Episcopal Church is simply wrong.”