



### *Handle with prayer*

#### **Primates meet in Egypt**

As the Primates meet behind closed doors in Alexandria Egypt this week, expectations are low. Anglican Church of Canada Archdeacon Paul Fehleley [reports](#) from Egypt that there appears to be less media interest in this meeting than in past meetings. "In the past few Primates' Meetings, the final communiqué has spoken to issues that have been routinely ignored by some of the Primates who signed onto the document," says Archdeacon Fehleley. "One hopes that whatever the final words of this meeting are, they will be honored. It is easy, perhaps too easy, to get entangled in the politics and lose the honesty that is needed. All Anglicans in the Communion have the right to look to these leaders for integrity and commitment to the words they affix their names to."

Archdeacon Fehleley [also tell us](#) that the drafting group for the Primates meeting final report consists of: archbishops Bernard Ntahoturi of Burundi (chair), Paul Kwong of Hong Kong, Alan Harper of Ireland, Ian Ernest of the Indian Ocean, and Carlos Touche-Porter of Mexico.

George Conger [reports](#) that four of the 38 Provinces are not represented at the meeting: North India, South India, Pakistan and the Philippines. Another three provinces currently have no primate so are represented by their senior bishops: the West Indies, Central Africa and Melanesia. Seven of the Primates in attendance are new, having been elected since the last Primates meeting in Tanzania in 2007: Bangladesh, Canada, Hong Kong, Myanmar, New Zealand, Southern Africa and Sudan.

Conger [reports](#) that early in the meeting, five of the Provinces gave presentations on the issue of homosexuality in their church. Canada's Archbishop Hiltz said his the church was responding to developments in society, and Presiding Bishop Schori (of the US) said that the Episcopal Church (TEC) "...could not be bound by decisions made by bodies other than its General Convention." Archbishop Orombi (Uganda) spoke of his Province's "adherence to the 'clear words' of Scripture and the unbroken tradition of the Christian Church through the ages on human sexuality, saying the innovation proposed by the US and Canada on homosexuality was not a faithful witness to the world. The issue could not be tested against the vagaries of culture, he argued, but against the immutable words of Scripture."

While many Global South archbishops are concerned about the failure to honour past statements by the Primates meetings, Conger [reports](#) that "Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams has signaled his continued desire for conversation rather than action. In a sermon delivered Feb. 1 at St. Mark's, the archbishop said the church must be open to a diversity of views... The contrast in visions between an activist primates' meeting as envisioned by the 1988 and 1998 Lambeth Conferences and supported by a majority of primates, and an indaba-oriented meeting of discussion, where all points of view hold equal weight and no decisions are taken, may make Alexandria the last united primates' meeting." Conger reports that the ensuing discussion was frank with "none of the prevarication found at past meetings."

The Living Church [reports](#):

*Conservative primates are expected to push for the recognition of the Anglican Church in North America as an official province of the Anglican Communion. Liberals are equally adamant in opposing the innovation. Neither side expects the issue will be settled in Alexandria.*

Regarding the Covenant, Australian Archbishop Philip Aspinall told the media gathered in Alexandria that there was a "pulling back" from including sanctions. David Virtue [reports](#), "He said the provinces need to be committed to covenant, but not committed to a particular covenant."

See also:

Anglican Journal – Feb 2 09 – [Primates begin to meet](#)  
 Times Online – Feb 1 09 – [Anglican primates to discuss “two-tier” communion](#)  
 Guardian – Feb 1 09 – [Sexuality debate looms as Anglicans gather in Alexandria](#)  
 Religious Intelligence – Feb 3 09 – [Anglican Primates discuss Covenant solution to problems](#)  
 Living Church – Feb 4 09 – [Primates begin work on final Communiqué](#)  
 VirtueOnline – Feb 3 09 – [Archbishops disagree over appropriate response to Mugabe regime](#)  
[AnglicanTV](#) has posted video of the media briefings in Alexandria.

### News – ANiC and AEN

#### **Good Shepherd (Vancouver) celebrates acquisition of church building**

On January 29<sup>th</sup>, the Anglican Network Church of the Good Shepherd officially closed the purchase and took title to the church building that the congregation of the Church of the Good Shepherd has been leasing for several years. This coming Sunday, they will hold a special celebration offering thanks to God and honouring the congregation from whom they purchased the building – formerly known as Metropolitan Tabernacle. The dedication of the building will be held in October to coincide with the congregation’s 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration.

You can [hear the inspiring story](#) – told to ANiC’s synod meeting last November – of how God moved his people to donate sacrificially to make this purchase possible. [Select the third presentation of Day 2 of synod: “Parish presentations and prayer for Chinese parishes”.]

#### **St Timothy’s creates interest**

The Diocese of Montreal’s publication, [the Montreal Anglican](#), has carried a number of lengthy articles – in the November, January and February issues – chronicling the progress of [ANiC’s St Timothy’s parish](#) – the first ANiC parish in Quebec. A separate story in the November issue also details the Bishop of Montreal’s refusal to ordain the Rev Dan Endresen to the priesthood. Rev Endresen was deacon-in-charge at St Augustine’s parish (Pointe Claire) at the time.

The Rev Endresen’s excellent article in response, published in the January issue, fills in some details the bishop failed to mention. The Rev Endresen, who now ministers at St Timothy’s and will be ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Don Harvey on February 22, writes:

*If someone were to ask me if I think I would have been an ordained priest today had I voted in favor of same-sex blessings and not recommended Shared Episcopal Ministry (for congregations who hold the Reformation idea of authority of scripture), the answer would be yes... It is my belief that the bishop’s decision to take away my license to minister in this diocese was made because he knew the decision he would eventually make concerning same-sex blessings – and he realized that once he authorized same-sex blessing he would no longer be able to function as my diocesan in a capacity that he would be comfortable with. This is perfectly understandable.*

In the February issue, Bishop Clark (Montreal) calls this article by the Rev Endresen offensive. The February issue also publishes the Rev Alan Cameron’s letter of resignation after nearly 60 years of ministry in the ACoC. The Rev Cameron is an ANiC priest now and ministering to St Timothy’s.

#### **In the Canadian media**

Church of England Newspaper – Jan 31 09 – [Canadian bishop resigns to join Anglican Network](#)  
 Canadian Christianity – Feb 1 09 – [New Anglican Network bishop](#)  
 Anglican Journal – Feb 1 09 – [Priests join ANiC](#)

### News – Canada

#### **Diocese of Toronto announces same-sex blessing**

The bishops of Toronto, seemingly unwilling to wait for the matter to arise at synod, [announced plans](#) to offer within a year prayers and blessings – but not rites – for same-sex couples. Calling it a pastoral response, Bishop Colin Johnson claimed the move was in line with decisions of General Synod, the House of Bishops’ 2007 letter on sexuality, and “Lambeth”. The Toronto Star [quotes](#) Bishop Johnson:

*"We've been discussing the issues of same-sex relations for 30 years," Johnson said, noting that Toronto is a very theologically diverse diocese. "As bishop, it's my responsibility to provide pastoral care for all people of the diocese, regardless of the sexual orientation or theological point of view."*

In [his response](#), Dr Ephraim Radner says:

*"I believe, in short, that it will be very difficult indeed to make the case and persuade others of the fact that the Diocese of Toronto is not moving forward with a contravention of the informal moratorium articulated at Lambeth (and before), not to mention moving in a way that simply does not defer to the general concerns of many Anglicans around the world."*

ANiC Treasurer Claus Lenk, a Torontonion, sadly notes that at their consecration Canadian bishops are asked: *"Are you ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God's Word; and both privately and openly to call upon and encourage others to do the same?"* They must respond *"I am ready, the Lord being my helper."*

See also the [Anglican Journal article](#).

### **Bishop of Caledonia likens economic crisis to crisis in the Church**

Bishop Bill Anderson's editorial in the November 2008 issue of the [Caledonia Times](#) likens the turmoil in the Anglican Communion to the crisis in the financial market, saying, *"Not surprisingly, the chaos in the financial markets is not unlike the chaos within our Anglican Communion. The activities of a few have hurt many, and created mistrust, anxiety and heartache throughout the world."*

### **Orthodox Lutherans win court challenge**

A January 23<sup>rd</sup> [decision](#) by a BC Supreme Court judge ruled that seven Lutherans expelled in 2007 from Faith Lutheran Church in Kelowna, seemingly for their opposition to same sex blessings, had been treated unjustly and in violation of the procedures laid out in the church's constitution.

### **Anglican Planet's new website**

Are you having trouble finding the Anglican Planet online? The new website is:

[www.stpeter.org/TAP/](http://www.stpeter.org/TAP/)

### **News shorts – Anglican Church in North America & Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans**

#### **Message from the GAFCon Secretariat**

There has been a lot of interest from individuals, congregations, dioceses and provinces [in the Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans]. We are now in a position to receive formal applications for membership. This can be done by accessing the website [www.fca.net](http://www.fca.net) and following the procedure for signing up to join FCA.

You will see that you are asked to assent to the Jerusalem Declaration and the goals of FCA. If you are applying on behalf of a group, that application will be passed to a committee for approval.

Membership of FCA will enable us to send you information from time to time. Your details will also be passed on to the group in your area.

Please share this information with others who may be interested in joining. This is an exciting new step in the life of GAFCON, and we look forward to the Fellowship providing an important link for those who are concerned for the spread of the biblical gospel and the encouragement of faithful Anglicans around the world.

### **Timing of new province questioned**

Interviewed at the Anglican Mission in the America's (AMiA) winter conference in South Carolina, Bishop Chuck Murphy, leader of AMiA which is under the Province of Rwanda, [told David Virtue](#) that he favours a go-slow approach to developing a new Biblically faithful province in North America. *"In my judgment,"* he said, *"there is a process we have to go through and we must not fast forward the process in a way that might be short sighted... I am fully committed to a new province. It is inevitable, but the issue is timing. God is bringing about a Second Reformation, a revival of His Word and Spirit and there is no stopping it."*

Bishop Murphy pointed out some complexities to be addressed: *"I am still a Rwandan, part of the Anglican province of Rwanda. We will have two provinces in one church in the same way Canterbury and York have two archbishops with two provincial synod meetings... I am concerned that we do the right thing. I see it as a federation of jurisdictions that have gathered together to form a more perfect union and that will take a while."*

You can read more about the AMiA conference [here](#).

### **News shorts – United States**

#### **TEC may delay vote on Anglican Covenant until 2015**

The Living Church [reports](#) that the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church has endorsed [a statement](#) critical of the current, St Andrew's draft of the Covenant and recommends delaying a vote until TEC's general convention in 2015. The TEC executive council also stated that dioceses would not be allowed to sign on to the Covenant saying, it could only *"be embraced on the provincial level, that is, The Episcopal Church, and not on a diocesan level."* TEC is particularly concerned with any provision in the Covenant for holding Communion members accountable.

#### **Presiding Bishop Schori's "scorched earth" policies in dealing with dissidents**

The Anglican Communion Institute has [posted a statement](#) showing the evolution of TEC Presiding Bishop's strategy in dealing with bishops leaving TEC. In the past year, her strategy has changed radically and dangerously as she misuses canons to achieve her ends. They conclude:

*"A major concern in all this is that a canon written with a catholic understanding of both the Church and Holy Orders is being handled in such a way that, in order to get a job done, the Presiding Bishop and her Council of Advice are creating a new functional/local definition of Holy Orders... the net effect of which might well be to redefine American Anglicanism as an autonomous church with an autonomous understanding of Communion and Holy Orders... One can rightly worry that the catholic character of our Anglican life and practice is now threatened by a desire to achieve an end, even if it means the conflating of very different cases so as to deploy a single canonical statute that was arguably never meant for any of them."*

Andrew Carey, writing in the Church of England Newspaper, [concludes](#) his commentary: *"Bishop Scriven, no doubt, will be laughing about this bizarre overstep by the Presiding Bishop, but the ramifications of this move should be examined further by English canon lawyers. It seems that The Episcopal Church is claiming to have an authority that it does not. And that, after all, is the root of the problem in the Anglican Communion."*

#### **Diocese of Central Florida declares that it is in communion with ACNA**

At its convention on January 24<sup>th</sup>, the Diocese of Central Florida [passed motions](#) commending the work of the Communion Partners but also recognizing *"that those who continue with the ACN and the new Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) are our brothers and sisters in Christ, and fellow heirs of this great Anglican tradition"*. The convention also passed a motion affirming its support of the Anglican Covenant and recommending that the *"final draft include a clear provision for mutual accountability and a process for responding to crises and individual Provinces that threaten our unity in Christ and the integrity of our witness as a Communion."*

#### **Diocese of Virginia appealing court decision**

In a move guaranteeing to cost millions more in legal fees for both sides, the Diocese of Virginia has [filed an appeal](#) of a December court ruling which found decisively in favour of a group of Biblically faithful churches that left TEC and joined the Convocation of Anglicans in North America (CANA).

#### **In the US media**

Philadelphia Inquirer – Feb 2 09 – [Episcopalians still a house divided](#)

Church of England Newspaper – Jan 31 09 – [Virginia go-ahead on same-sex rites](#)

### News shorts – International

#### Archbishop of Canterbury critiques anti-children society

In a report published by the [Children's Society](#) following two years of study, the Archbishop of Canterbury – together with other experts and academics – pleads for more child-friendly social and educational policies and stronger, stable families. The Telegraph [reports](#) that *A Good Childhood: Searching for Values in a Competitive Age* attacks the organization of society around the desires and convenience of adults, harming children. It targets family break-up, advertising aimed at children, pressures in the educational system and mothers working long hours outside the home. See Dr Rowan Williams' [commentary](#) published in the Times.

#### The Primates meeting in Egypt issue statement on Zimbabwe

Outlining the horrors of the situation in Zimbabwe, [the Primates say](#), “*We therefore call upon President Robert Mugabe to respect the outcome of the elections of 2008 and to step down. We call for the implementation of the rule of law and the restoration of democratic processes.*” They called for a special envoy from the Communion to go to Zimbabwe to “show solidarity with the Zimbabwean people”, and asked for high level meetings with African political leaders to advocate for Zimbabweans. Also, they have called for all church property in Zimbabwe to be returned to the Church of the Province of Central Africa. Finally, they called upon parishes throughout the Communion to send material aid to Zimbabwe and to **observe February 25<sup>th</sup>, Ash Wednesday, as a day of prayer for Zimbabwe.**

You can listen to accounts of the situation in Zimbabwe [here](#).

#### In international news

The Times – Jan 28 09 – [Plans for new province3 in US opposed by senior Anglican](#)

Church of England Newspaper – Jan 30 09 – [Differences, divisions or diversity](#)

Stephen's Witness – Jan 25 09 – [Future of the Anglican Communion Covenant in light of GAFCon](#)

Crosswalk.com – Feb 4 09 – [Anglican Primates to consider rival North American Church](#)

### Soul food

#### Worth reading

Charles Colson, on his [daily commentary](#), BreakPoint, tells of the work of a Rwandan Bishop, John Rucyahana, in promoting reconciliation and forgiveness in Rwanda following the genocide.

#### Just for fun

Enjoy a humorous take on music in the church [posted to the AEC blog](#). Or here it is [as a mp3 file](#).

#### Resources

An amazing wealth of spiritual resources is available online. One great website is “[Desiring God](#)”. You will find presentations and sermons from this week's North American pastors' conference already available on the website. The conference theme was *Commending Christ: The Pastor, the Church and the Perishing*. Speakers were Mark Dever, Matt Chandler, Michael Oh and John Piper. Video and audio from the conference are now on the [Desiring God blog](#).

#### Please pray...

For **Primates meeting** now concluding in Alexandria, Egypt. Pray particularly for our Primate, Archbishop Greg Venables. Pray for God's purposes to be accomplished.

For the people of **Zimbabwe and the Congo**. Pray that peace, order and good government would be restored quickly.

For Dr **Barbara Pell**, wife of ANiC rector the Rev Dr Archie Pell as she battles cancer. And for others of our members and leaders who are experiencing health problems.

For **new ANiC congregations and fledgling church plants**; that the Lord's wisdom be sought, and that they may find success and growth in His Name.

For those **congregations still involved in court proceedings** and disputes; may they be blessed with the wisdom, courage, peace and necessary funds. Prayer also for the **judges and lawyers** involved.

For the **biblically faithful clergy and laity in the ACoC**, particularly in dioceses that are departing from historic Christian teaching.

For our **nation and government** in these days of deepening economic woes and spiritual malaise. Pray that our leaders will have the wisdom to seek God and His righteousness and that there Canadians will seek God.

**And now a word from our sponsor**

*Shout for joy in the Lord, O you righteous! Praise befits the upright.*

*Give thanks to the Lord with the lyre; make melody to him with the harp of ten strings!*

*Sing to him a new song; play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts.*

*For the word of the Lord is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness.*

*He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord.*

*By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host.*

*He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap; he puts the deeps in storehouses.*

*Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him!*

*For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.*

*The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; he frustrates the plans of the peoples.*

*The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations.*

*Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!*

*The Lord looks down from heaven; he sees all the children of man; from where he sits enthroned he looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth, he who fashions the hearts of them all and observes all their deeds.*

*The king is not saved by his great army; a warrior is not delivered by his great strength.*

*The war horse is a false hope for salvation, and by its great might it cannot rescue.*

*Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love, that he may deliver their soul from death and keep them alive in famine.*

*Our soul waits for the Lord; he is our help and our shield. For our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name.*

*Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in you.*

Psalm 33 (ESV)