



### *Handle with prayer*

#### **News – ANiC and AEN**

#### **ANiC congregation forming in Langley, BC**

Bishop Ron Ferris reports that there will be an information meeting on April 18 at 3pm for those in the Langley area interesting in being part of the new congregation. (For information and location, please contact: [Bishop Ron](#).) A Bible study has started already and the plan is to launch a parish in September with regular Sunday worship services.

#### **Joint Easter service planned for Victoria, BC**

On the evening of April 12, Victoria-area ANiC, Anglican Coalition in Canada and Reformed Episcopal (REC) churches will join together at Church of our Lord (REC) for a 7pm special Communion service, with Bishop Ron preaching.

#### **Parish updates**

Christ's Church Oceanside has [posted a video](#) of their service with Bishop Don and Executive Archdeacon Charlie Masters on March 22.

Lesley Bentley [will be speaking](#) in Sydney, Australia on May 12, sharing the ANiC story and discussing the situation in the Anglican Church in Canada. Mrs Bentley is a member and new Trustee of St John's Shaughnessy.

#### **Legal update**

**Monday, April 6** – A court hearing in London (Ontario), involving **St Aidan's (Windsor)**, will deal with the diocese's attempt to move the court proceedings from Windsor, where the church property is, to London, where the diocesan office is located. The St Aidan's lawyer is being bombarded by numerous motions, affidavits and, in our view, unreasonable demands by the diocese's lawyer – all of which appears to be designed to increase legal costs and wear down the congregation.

**Thursday, April 9** – A Hamilton court hearing – involving **St George's (Lowville), St Hilda's (Oakville) and Church of the Good Shepherd (St Catharines)** – will consider our application to move the proceedings to Halton, where two of the churches are located. Halton is also closer to the congregations who have a great interest in, and will be most affected by, the proceedings. We are still awaiting a decision from the March 13 hearing regarding the awarding of court costs from the May 2008 interim hearing.

**May 25** – Our **Vancouver-area** legal team is working hard to prepare for the upcoming trial in the Supreme Court (dealing with the property ownership question – for whom is the property held in trust?) involving four ANiC parishes in the Lower Mainland of BC. This trial will set a precedent, for all parishes in Canada that are seeking to retain their buildings for Biblically faithful worship and ministry.

A few months ago, the Diocese of Brandon convinced the bank to freeze **St Bede's (Kinosota, Manitoba)** bank accounts, without notice to St. Bede's. The action came to light when a cheque bounced that was issued to support a parishioner who recently had a stroke while in Winnipeg. It was to assist the family with their medical and living expenses during treatment. The funds in these accounts were raised entirely by the current congregation. Now, the diocese has issued a "Certificate of Dissolution" in their obvious attempt to seize St. Bede's funds.

#### **Legal Defence Fund**

We are still appealing for contributions to the Legal Defence Fund so we can seek justice and continue providing legal protection for ANiC congregations. The need for funds is urgent, with the

Vancouver-area trial coming up on May 25th and the very aggressive actions by the dioceses of Niagara and Huron, which we have strongly defended thus far.

Please share this information with friends and family in any ACoC parishes that could potentially consider realignment with ANiC in the future. This legal battle is being fought, not only for the current members of ANiC seeking to retain their buildings, but also for any others who may join down the road. Ask them to prayerfully consider how they could contribute to this important case.

### **Tracking the AEC blog**

A record 205 comments (to date) have been posted on an [active blog discussion](#) regarding the letter written by 14 concerned Toronto clergy in response to the Toronto bishops' decision to forge ahead with same-sex blessings. Another AEC blog discussion on [how bishops should be selected](#) has drawn interesting comments as well. An estimated 600 -1000 people visit the blog each day.

### **News shorts – Anglican Church in North America (ACNA)**

#### **Governance of Anglican Church in North America critiqued**

Robin Jordan continues his analysis and criticism of the governance – constitution, canons and episcopacy – of ACNA. In a [lengthy article](#) on VirtueOnline, Jordan speculates that the constitution and canons that will be presented at ACNA's inaugural assembly in June will not provide the laity with an adequate share in the governance of the church.

#### **Leaders discuss future of ACNA**

Four leaders of North American orthodox Anglicanism, in a panel discussion at a conference in Georgia, discussed a number of matters of interest. You can watch the session on [AnglicanTV](#) or read about it on [VirtueOnline](#).

### **News – Canada**

#### **Young seminarians write Toronto bishops re. decision to proceed with blessings**

Three students [have written](#) the Toronto bishops challenging their decision to proceed unilaterally with same-sex blessings. They say:

*“...your proposal departs from the mutual discernment of Scripture that has until recently, shaped the common life of this Church... it is certainly not a pastoral response for conservatives who will be further sidelined, their sense of having a place in the Anglican Church of Canada imperilled by this proposed action that goes against their understanding of the church's common reading of Scripture... the implications of the actions taken in this matter by the Diocese of Toronto are in fact not local; rather they impact the ability of all local Anglican Churches in all Provinces of this Communion to witness to the gospel... acting autonomously in this matter will compromise the present and future vocation of the whole Church in effectively witnessing to the gospel.”*

They ask that the bishops of Toronto:

*“...maintain the teachings and practices of 2007 General Synod and the 1998 and 2008 Lambeth Conferences as it is evident that the theological teachings to which you are opening the doors are not consistent with the biblical, historical and ecclesiological convictions of many within both this diocese and within the wider Church.”*

They also ask that they:

*“...[meet] with the ‘Pastoral Visitors’ as mentioned in the Primates’ Communiqué and with those individuals and groups within the diocese that believe we must hold to the teaching of the whole Anglican Communion prior to making any decision to implement your proposal.”*

#### **Bishop of Athabasca defends beleaguered oilsands development**

After a Roman Catholic bishop denounced the environmental impact of the oilsands project, Bishop John Clarke (Athabasca) has spoken out in support of it. In a [pastoral letter](#), he said: "It is time for all (of) us across the Diocese of Athabasca and the Canadian Church to support the good work of the people of Fort McMurray and not allow the agenda to be driven by the sensationalism of the [media]." He particularly points out the one-sidedness of media coverage, ignoring the land reclamation work to restore fish, buffalo, lakes and forests. He also points out how important the oil

sands are to the employment of Aboriginal people in the area – who comprise 13 per cent of the oilsands workforce.

Bishop Clarke [told the Calgary Herald](#), “I have seen over my time, many, many instances where people from an urban centre – sitting in their comfortable condominiums – view issues that are happening in rural, northern Canada. They don't have a clue but yet they make these great pronouncements.”

Bishop Clarke retires April 30. The Anglican Journal has an [extensive article](#) on Bishop Clarke which includes his views on unity in the church. He says, “*I get disturbed when I see division because I think unity is important. I think inclusion also is important in that unity...*,” he said. *He expressed the hope that the Anglican Church of Canada, which has been struggling with the issue of same-sex blessings, will remain one. “I hope they (churches) don't break up because, if they do, it's a denial of our history. We've lived with division... all across Canada, we've built an Anglo-Catholic parish in one corner, and an evangelical parish in another, and yet we've found the graciousness to be together as a family. I still think that's possible.”*

### **Bishop of Niagara provides timetable for blessings**

Anglican Samizdat [reveals](#) that Bishop Michael Bird (Niagara), in his charge to synod, said: “*I anticipate that [same-sex blessing] rites will be prepared by later this spring, and that I will be able to present them to the clergy of the diocese at the Annual Clergy and Licensed Layworkers Conference in May. I will be giving my permission to proceed shortly thereafter.*”

### **April Anglican Planet stories of interest**

The April edition of [the Anglican Planet](#) has arrived in mailboxes across the country and contains a number of stories of interest. These include the following and much, much more. You should consider subscribing! The recently updated Planet website is: [www.anglicanplanet.net](http://www.anglicanplanet.net).

- [An account](#) by the Rev Geoffrey Dixon (honourary assistant at Christ's Church, Oceanside) of his three months in Uganda engaged in theological education and sleeping in a tent.
- [Coverage](#) of the vote by the congregation of St Matthias (Victoria) to leave the Anglican Church of Canada and align with ANiC – calling themselves ANiC Fairfield until they choose a name.
- The [personal faith journey](#) of a young Anglican woman serving with the military in Afghanistan.

### **In the Canadian media**

Anglican Journal – April 1 09 – [Diocese of Ottawa appoints committee to consider blessings](#)

Anglican Journal – April 2 09 – [BC and Yukon provincial electoral college postpones... election](#)

Anglican Journal – April 1 09 – [Disagreement over name resolved](#) (re. Foundation name)

### **News shorts – United States**

#### **Report details declining health of the Episcopal Church**

The [Living Church reveals](#) that a report prepared for TEC's June convention (general synod) provides, in excruciating details, the woes of an aging, diminishing and divided Church. Sixty-four per cent of congregations reported tensions or serious conflict triggered largely by the ordination of homosexual clergy. The report also noted that TEC has 19,000 more deaths than births each year – equivalent “to the loss of an entire diocese annually”.

#### **Diocese of Quincy (Southern Cone) appeals to court to clarify ownership of trusts**

VirtueOnline [reports](#) that “*The Diocese of Quincy has petitioned the Circuit Court of Illinois in Quincy to issue a Declaratory Judgment clarifying the rights of the Diocese to hold and manage its endowment funds.*” This follows an attempt by the Episcopal Church (TEC) to freeze the Diocese's funds and reports in the TEC's newspapers that the Presiding Bishop intended to sue the Diocese for its funds and property. Father John Spencer, president of the Standing Committee which oversees the Diocese explained, “*We're simply trying to protect the property of our Diocese and local churches which we believe legally - and morally - belong to the people of those churches, and to our historic Diocese that has existed since 1877.*” Earlier, the Diocese had made several appeals to TEC asking to work together to come to an amicable settlement. These were ignored.

## Growing pluralism in the Episcopal Church examined

Writing in Christianity Today, highly respected journalist and TEC priest, George Conger, provides a [thorough exposé](#) of the growing pluralism – which posits that there are many ways to God – in North American Anglicanism. He cites numerous examples of TEC clergy who purport to also be Buddhists, Muslims or Druids and draws from the writings of a number, including Bishop Michael Ingham (New Westminster).

In a similar vein, StandFirm has provided a [point-by-point comparison](#) between the public statements of Kevin Genpo Thew Forrester, “Buddhist Bishop-elect” of the Diocese of Northern Michigan, and the Nicene Creed.

## New president of Episcopal Divinity School is outspoken abortion advocate

The [new president](#) of Episcopal Divinity School in Massachusetts, Rev Dr Katherine Ragsdale, is a high-profile, outspoken advocate of abortion and a self-declared lesbian. In a [recent sermon](#), she repeatedly preached: “...*abortion is a blessing and our work is not done.*” The news release announcing her appointment stated, “...*it is critical that the new president and dean be able to train and form parish priests for the growth of progressive parishes across the country.*”

**Bishop John Howe** and the diocesan council of Central Florida [were criticized](#) by a member of the TEC national executive council, John Vanderstar, for their stand in opposition to abortion. However, Bishop Howe received a [subsequent letter](#) from a layman expressing gratitude for the diocese’s position. The writer, Jonathan French, explained his special interest in abortion, saying, “*I myself was to be aborted and only by God’s grace was spared, so in a tangible way you are speaking for me and thousands, perhaps millions more who wouldn’t be here today if it weren’t for the work of those advocating life.*”

In an effort to discover the **Anglican Church of Canada’s** position on abortion, the [Anglican Samizdat](#) did extensive research but could not find any published official position – despite the ACoC’s stated commitment to justice and defending the vulnerable and powerless and the fact that there are approximately 30 abortions for every live birth in Canada.

Respected social commentator, **Dr Albert Mohler**, in his [April 2 blog](#), explores the increasingly blatant “culture of death” in the western world. Advocates are using the current recession to promote the “economics” of both abortion and euthanasia, he says. (See also his April 1 blog on assisted suicide.)

## In the US media

Colorado Springs Gazette – Mar 26 09 – [Grace Church breakaway becomes St George’s](#)

Seattle Times – April 1 09 – [Episcopal priest Ann Holmes Redding has been defrocked](#) (due to her refusal to renounce her conversion to Islam)

Seattle Times – April 3 09 – [Breakaway congregations form new Anglican diocese](#)

## News shorts – International

### Bishop Nazir-Ali announces retirement

Although he is not yet 60, Michael Nazir-Ali, Bishop of Rochester, [has announced](#) his retirement in September so he can devote his energy to support persecuted Christians with training and education. He [told the Telegraph](#) that he will be working with Muslim converts to Christianity in Britain, as well. Bishop Nazir-Ali, an outspoken evangelical and astute political commentator, was once a leading candidate for the position of Archbishop of Canterbury. He was the first non-Caucasian to be elected as bishop in the Church of England.

While countering speculation rampant in religious media, well-connected journalist George Conger, [writing](#) in the Church of England Newspaper, pays tribute to Bishop Nazir-Ali. He writes: “...*his loss to the House of Bishops and central structures of the Church of England is immeasurable... he stood out among the Bishops with his brilliant theological acumen allied to a very broad hinterland of knowledge ranging from international politics, Islam, bioethics and ecumenism to take but a few examples... There are very few bishops with quite the same theologically-rigorous and principled orthodoxy. There is clearly now a very strongly-committed liberal tendency in the House of Bishops.*”

*And one of the main opposition voices has been lost. And in this theological opposition to the liberal tendency to capitulate to contemporary culture, he was able to represent those of us who feel a similar concern from evangelical, anglocatholic and middle-of-the-road churchmanships.”*

Writing about Bishop Nazir-Ali’s expertise of Islam, Conger says, “*he had earned the right to say such critical things about the dangers of Islamism. He had experienced persecution both in Pakistan and latterly death threats in England. There were few other people who could have had the credibility to challenge the nation about the dangers of extremism and the way in which multi-culturalism had fuelled Islamism... Sadly, there are signs that the church hierarchy are so keen to avoid causing any offence to their Muslim counterparts, that they downplay incidents of attacks on churches by Islamists in Britain and they fail to speak up on behalf of persecuted Christian minorities in other countries... It is to his credit that Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali has decided to take on this mission himself. I, for one, hope that he will continue to be robustly and loyally critical about the direction of the Anglican Communion, even while he attends to this far more important task of training and supporting minorities, and Christian converts from Islam.”*

Another British commentator, Melanie Phillips, [says](#): “*The resignation of Michael Nazir-Ali as Bishop of Rochester is a terrible blow, not just for the Church of England but for Britain... What a shocking rebuke to the church, that he has to leave his post of influence and authority as a bishop in order to carry out the church’s core duty to defend its own against attack... Dr Nazir-Ali is one of the very few inside the church to make explicit the link between Christian and British values, and to warn publicly that they are being destroyed... That strong voice of protest has never been needed more than it is now. For Christianity in Britain is under attack from all sides... [The Church of England] has all but destroyed itself. Instead of asserting its core beliefs against aggressive secularism, it has tried to accommodate its own destroyer... The resulting moral vacuum now threatens not just the church but the nation itself... Christianity infuses all this country’s institutions, traditions and values.”*

Other media coverage of Bishop Nazir-Ali’s announcement include:

Sunday Times- Mar 29 09 – [Radical bishop quits early for new mission](#)

Telegraph – Mar 28 09 – [The resignation of Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali is a victory for Islamism](#)

Telegraph – Mar 29 09 – [Bishop Nazir-Ali retires: a rebellion fizzles out](#)

Independent – Mar 29 09 – [Bishop of Rochester retires](#)

Daily Mail – Mar 30 09 – [Bishop Nazir-Ali, scourge of Church liberals, steps down](#)

Telegraph – Mar 30 09 – [Liberals too hasty in claiming victory at Bishop Nazir-Ali’s resignation](#)

Spread – Mar 30 09 – [Bishop Michael Nazir Ali – “Enough is enough”](#)

### **Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) meets May 1-13 to consider Covenant**

The ACC, one of the four “instruments of communion”, [will meet](#) in Kingston, Jamaica, May 1-13 to consider the latest draft of the Anglican Covenant and the final report of the Windsor Continuation Process. The news release states: “*Both of these documents are key to discerning a way forward for the Anglican Communion in light of recent stresses cause by differences over matters of human sexuality.*”

The Covenant Design Group met this past week in England. The Rev. Dr. Ephraim Radner, a TEC member of the Group and now a professor at Wycliffe College in Toronto, [is quoted by Episcopal Life Online](#) as saying, “*A completed revision of the proposed covenant has been finished, along with a commentary explaining our work... We have taken seriously the array of responses received from the provinces and from around the communion and larger church.*” He anticipates this final draft of the Covenant will be posted to the Anglican Communion website within a week, along with a commentary.

### **The Church of England controversy over women in the episcopate**

The BBC has posted [an article](#) on its website which provides both the “pro” and “con” arguments on the matter of female bishops. Speak in favour, Christiana Rees, says, “*We believe that men and women are made equally in the image of God, equally responsible for our actions, equally given the abilities and qualities for ministry and leadership and equally called to be Christ-like in service to the*

*world... If for no other reason, in order to reach out to all people in this nation, we should have women serving as bishops."*

In rebuttal, Bishop John Broadhurst says, *"Much will depend on how you view the Church... For me the church is a God-given society founded by Jesus Christ and formed by him during his ministry... Though Jesus was quite revolutionary in his attitude to women, and certainly did not conform to the traditions of the age, he nevertheless chose only male apostles. Male apostles and bishops has been the consistent tradition of the Church for 2,000 years... To ordain women bishops would further divide the Church of England and increase the divisions between the churches."*

### **Sri Lanka**

Anglican and Catholic bishops in Sri Lanka [have appealed](#) to the warring factions to attend to the "critical humanitarian crisis" in Vanni where fighting is intense and an estimated 100,000 – 200,000 civilians are trapped. In their appeal they say: *"The needs of food, water, health, sanitation, shelter and, above all, physical security of these our sisters and brothers and children need to be addressed without delay... the plight of these trapped civilians has become absolutely desperate... We earnestly appeal to all concerned to set aside debates on secondary issues and take immediate steps to alleviate their suffering."*

The Church of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) [is asking](#) for volunteer clergy from the Church of England to provide respite to priests in the war-torn country. Sri Lankan clergy from areas of the country not experiencing conflict will go to relieve clergy in the conflict zones, while foreign visiting clergy will fill in the less affected areas.

### **Iraqi Anglicans murdered**

The vicar of the lone Anglican Church in Iraq [writes in the Telegraph](#) that Iraqi worshippers are mostly women and children because male Christians have been killed or kidnapped. 93 church members were murdered last year and five in 2009 to date. All have suffered horribly and are in need of humanitarian aid. The help the church is able to give is small compared to the need. He says, *"It is this point that really frustrates me, that those in some of the greatest need cannot be helped because it is too dangerous to have a presence. The fact is that it is in the most dangerous places that our fellow Christians need help. It is often said that I have the most dangerous parish in the world. Maybe I do but I will not leave them."*

### **Zimbabwe parishioners still denied access to their church building**

[Reports](#) out of Zimbabwe tell of police in Harare using tear gas and guns to prevent parishioners entering an Anglican Church building – despite court orders that the parishioners be allowed to worship there. In a messy situation, a former Anglican bishop and insider in President Robert Mugabe's repressive regime, has formed a break-away church which, despite having very few parishioners, has police backing. One parishioner was shot (but recovering) and several clergy and laity arrested. While the situation in Zimbabwe has improved, the continuing chaos is evident in the complete disconnect between the police and the courts.

### **Soul food**

#### **Worth your time**

- **Dr J I Packer**, in an [amateur video](#) recently shot at the Christian Book Expo in Dallas, gives advice to new Christians – advice that applies to all of us – winsomely urging the development of Christian disciplines: daily reading of the Bible, ongoing conversation with God, regular worship with a church community, and godly fellowship.
- An [interview, posted](#) on the Catholic website ZENIT, with author **James Kalb** explores the "tyranny of liberalism". Kalb's thesis is that *"...liberalism erodes the very institutions – family, religion, local associations – necessary to restrain its excesses" and so "evolves into a form of soft totalitarianism or a "dictatorship of relativism... The end result is a comprehensive system of control over all human relations run by an expert elite responsible only to itself. That, of course, is tyranny."*

- The retiring Bishop of Carlisle, the Rt Rev Graham Dow, [offers a strong testimony](#) to faith in a recent diocesan newsletter address, titled “Get a life! – The atheists’ way or the Christian way”. He touches on the implausibility of creation without a creator, the centrality of the resurrection, and the irony of the atheists’ current bus advertising campaign. He concludes, “But the proof of the pudding is in the eating. If it didn’t work, I would have given it up long ago. Rather, the opposite is the case: 53 years of the experience of living in touch with Jesus and in prayer to the true Father in heaven has brought me untold joy.”

### Ideas for engaging your community

Looking for [ideas to help your parish](#) reach your community? [St Paul’s Anglican Church](#) in Wagga, Australia, “*is inviting all Wagga people to write in with their number one question about God and Christianity... The church is distributing more than 1000 postcards, which can be mailed back to the church or dropped [off at the church]. The church will then tackle the top five questions in a series of Sunday services, beginning April 26.*”

*“The Rector of St Paul’s... said the postcards were really an exercise in starting a conversation with the community. “We are far more interested in finding out what people think than telling them what they should think,” Rev Short said. “A number of questions have been on the subject of suffering and how can we believe there is a good God when there is so much suffering in the world,” Rev Short said. “Other questions have been along the lines of ‘what does it mean to be a Christian?’ and ‘what difference does it make in life?’ “Some people have asked questions about the Bible, such as ‘can I believe the Bible?’ or asking about particular passages in the Bible.”*

The rector said he thought all the questions so far were genuine questions. *“The tone has been ‘we want to talk about this’, rather than wanting to be argumentative’... “We are not promising we will have a water-tight answer to every question raised, but we are promising we will be willing to listen and discuss the issues on peoples’ minds.”*

### Just for laughs

A boy was watching his father, a pastor, write a sermon. "How do you know what to say?" he asked. "Why, God tells me." "Oh. Then why do you keep crossing things out?"

A little girl became restless as the preacher's sermon dragged on and on. Finally, she leaned over to her mother and whispered, "Mommy, if we give him the money now, will he let us go?"

### Please pray...

For **new ANiC congregations and fledgling church plants** – including the many groups forming across Canada with the intention of seeking membership in ANiC as church plants. May they know the Lord’s leading and experience His blessing on their congregations.

For wisdom as ANiC seeks to find more effective ways of ministering to and encouraging **“Orphaned Anglicans”** who have no orthodox Anglican church in their community.

For **congregations involved in court proceedings** and disputes. Pray for wisdom, courage and peace for the congregations – and for continued focus on ministry in the midst of this turmoil. Pray for the **judges and lawyers** involved; and for the **leadership of the dioceses** pursuing ANiC parishes in court. In particular, please pray for court hearings this coming week.

- For the **April 6** (Monday) court hearing in London involving St Aidan’s (Windsor). Pray for St Aidan’s rector, the Rev Tom Carman, the trustees and their lawyer, Stanley Mayes.
- For the April 9 hearing in Hamilton, seeking to move the court proceedings involving St George’s (Lowville), St Hilda’s (Oakville) and Church of the Good Shepherd (St Catharines) to Halton – closer to the congregations involved.
- For an equitable decision from the March 12 hearing – also involving the three parishes above – regarding in the awarding of court costs.
- For the Vancouver legal team preparing for the big, three-week trial, commencing **May 25**.

- For **St Bede's** parishioners and those working to defend them against the diocese's vindictive action in attempting to seize their funds.

For generous contributions to the **Legal Defence Fund** as we seek justice and legal protection for ANiC congregations. If designated funds are not raised, we will not be able to continue to protect ANiC congregations and retain buildings for our ministries.

For our **national, provincial and civic leaders** as well as for **our nation**. May God be pleased to grant repentance and cause a revival to sweep our land.

For **Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali**.

For Christians in **Zimbabwe, Iraq and Sri Lanka**. May the peace of God overrule prevail.

### **And now a word from our sponsor**

*Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified... Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.*

I Corinthians 9:24-27, 10:12-13