



July 4, 2007

Anglican Network in Canada (ANiC) Newsletter

What should we make of General Synod?

Observing from a distance, an international bishop suggested privately that the Anglican Church of Canada's General Synod produced enough waffles to feed a small country. A member of the media puzzled: How can we, on the one hand, say that God sees same sex unions as right and blessed (ie compatible with Anglican core doctrine), yet then refuse to explicitly proceed with what we have now say God endorses.

Confusion and ambiguity were the words we heard again and again during General Synod. For many, however, clarity came on Thursday and Sunday when General Synod:

- overwhelmingly defeated an amendment to a motion designed to achieve what the global Primates have plainly asked of us: commit to the provisions of the Windsor report, endorse Lambeth 1:10 – the church's teaching on sexuality – and impose a moratorium on same sex blessings; and
- passed resolution A186 which stated: *That this General Synod resolves that the blessing of same-sex unions is not in conflict with the core doctrine (in the sense of being credal) of the Anglican Church of Canada.*

Bishop Donald Harvey comments

As a retired bishop of the Anglican Church of Canada, I had the privilege of being a non-participatory delegate to General Synod. It was good to see people I hadn't seen in three years and to enjoy great fellowship with many. I was encouraged by the large number who took their stand for faithfulness to Scripture, but I was greatly distressed by the division in the house. Holy Scripture tells us that "a house divided cannot stand" (Mark 3:25). General Synod clearly showed that there are two religions within our Church: one which is faithful to mainstream Anglican teaching and one which is synchronistic, rejecting the authority of the Word and questioning salvation through Christ alone.

I felt deeply the tragedy of Sunday morning, when the doctrine of the Church was changed. The defeated "local options" motion can't compensate for the core doctrine motion that was passed. The "doctrine" motion gave the green light to same sex blessings; the second defeated motion dealt only with when and how to implement it. I am certain that many faithful Anglicans will be dreadfully upset when they see the full implication of what was done at General Synod.

Although I know him to be liberal, I was pleased with the election of Archbishop Fred Hiltz as the new Primate. In the many years I have known him, he has always been a man of integrity and I believe he will be forthright and upfront in his dealings.

This was my fifth or sixth General Synod and some things never change: the agenda was far too long and there were many presentations on interesting, but less important matters. Repetitive, smaller matters were allotted considerable time, while important matters were dealt with under severe time constraints.

I was deeply impressed by the way many Network and Federation delegates courageously stood and spoke for truth. While others appealed to their experience, “our” delegates made repeated references to God’s Word as their authority. While some said the church had to reflect culture to be relevant, our delegates demonstrated that relevance comes from offering our culture the transforming truth and power of God’s Word and God’s way.

Working together under the Essentials umbrella, Network and Federation staff and volunteers did a remarkable job of assisting and supporting delegates and preparing them to face the resolutions that were deliberately complex. Finally, the Manitoba hospitality graciously offered by the Winnipeg and Brandon volunteers was superb. My thanks to all for your prayer support and hard work. Many commented on the contrast between the “darkness” of the General Synod premises, and the serene, atmosphere in the area where the Essentials team was working.

But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. They said to you, "In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires." These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit. But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. Be merciful to those who doubt; snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.

To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy— to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

Jude 1:17-25

What’s next for Anglican Network in Canada members?

Knowing how concerned Network members are, the Network servant leadership team met immediately following General Synod for a full day. To see our public statement issued following that meeting, see www.anglicannetwork.ca.

There will be announcements coming, including a major event in the late fall. Please be encouraged to know that Network is planning to ensure our members across Canada have a way of staying in Communion. Please encourage like-minded fellow parishioners to join Network so we can demonstrate to the Primates the extent of the need in Canada. Also, when people become members, we are better able to keep them informed of developments. Also, consider encouraging your parish to join. We are getting more and more people asking if there is a Network parish in their community.

Bishops discuss fallout from same-sex vote at General Synod

The ACC bishops' held a meeting on June 26 to discuss the implications of the seemingly contradictory decisions at General Synod. According of the Anglican Journal account, "Until the next General Synod in 2010, the issue is now in the hands of dioceses, where bishops have the power to set policy and discipline clergy." This clearly highlights that some bishops see a de facto local option as the current policy in the ACC, despite the defeat of the motion which would have formally approved a local option.

www.anglicanjournal.com/100/article/bishops-discuss-fallout-from-same-sex-vote-at-general-synod/

Same sex blessings continue

According to the Victoria Times Colonist, a Vancouver Island priest was planning a blessing of same-sex couples at St. Saviour's Anglican Church on July 1. Father Antonio Osorio invited lesbian and gay couples to be blessed at St. Saviour's Anglican Church, saying, "I am very pleased the national church has said blessing same-sex unions is not in conflict with the doctrine of the church ... Now is the time to start blessing same-sex couples. I have done it and I intend to keep doing it."

Archdeacon Bruce Bryant-Scott of the Diocese of British Columbia said Osorio is "pushing the envelope" but not crossing any lines. "He knows what the guidelines are. He knows what's acceptable."

www.canada.com/victoriatimescolonist/news/story.html?id=f49e1e7b-1e6c-4e16-9ad6-3d70f5b9067c

New bishop of Uganda named to oversee US churches

Following hard on the heels of Kenyan Archbishop Benjamin Nzimbi's announcement of the Rev. Dr. Bill Atwood's appointment to oversee the province's U.S.-based congregations, the Most Rev Henry Luke Orombi, Archbishop of Uganda, announced the appointment of the Rev. John Guernsey as a Bishop in the Church of Uganda. Bishop Atwood will be consecrated August 30 in Nairobi, followed by Bishop Guernsey's consecration on September 2nd in Mbarara. Also, the Rt. Rev. Andy Fairfield, retired Bishop of North Dakota, has been received by the Ugandan House of Bishops and will assist Bishop-elect John Guernsey in providing episcopal care to the 26 Churches in the U.S. under the episcopal oversight of the Church of Uganda.

Knowledgeable observers see these appointments as important steps in the long-anticipated realignment of North American Anglicanism. In making the announcement, Archbishop Nzimbi said, "It is a new day for the pastoral and episcopal care of the orthodox congregations in America. We look forward to working with our Ugandan neighbours in mutual collaboration in providing apostolic and missional support to our orthodox brothers and sisters in America."

Bishop Bob Duncan's statement said, "John Guernsey's consecration is an answer to our prayers that we would be able to provide a domestic bishop for the Ugandan churches that are part of the Network's International Conference." He added, "In my capacity as the Convener of Common Cause, we will enthusiastically welcome him to the Council of Bishops meeting in September."

www.globalsouthanglican.org/index.php/comments/church_of_uganda_to_consecrate_rev_john_am_guernsey/

In the last few days, it was also announced that Rev. Bill Murdoch has been elected as a bishop by the Anglican Province of Kenya. Rev. Murdoch has served as Dean of the New England convocation of the Anglican Communion Network in the U.S. for the past few years. He will serve as a Suffragan Bishop for All Saints Cathedral diocese in the U.S. for the parishes receiving oversight by the Province of Kenya. He will be consecrated by Archbishop Nzimbi on August 30 along with Bishop elect Atwood. Many of us in the Network know Rev. Murdoch and he has visited us on several occasions. The Kenyan parishes are very fortunate to have him as their bishop and we have no doubt that he will serve them very well.

ANiC is very supportive of the re-alignment of Anglicanism happening in the U.S. and is pleased to see all the new consecrations happening in a collaborative and cooperative manner. This is bringing together the many groups and parishes that have broken away from TEC and reuniting them under the banner of Common Cause in North America. The bishops will all participate in the upcoming Council of Bishops meeting this September.

Episcopal priest also a Muslim

When a Washington state Episcopal priest announced that she is both a Christian and a Muslim, her bishop, the Rt. Rev. Vincent Warner, reportedly fully accepted her dual faiths. The Rev. Ann Holmes Redding, of Seattle remains a priest in good standing within the diocese despite her profession of faith in Islam in March 2006. The Seattle Times reports that the Episcopal Church Center's position is that a person of dual faiths can serve as Episcopal clergy at the diocesan bishop's discretion. www.christiannewswire.com/news/676323459.html & www.seattletimes.com

Rwandan bishops decline Lambeth invitations

Citing the snub of Rwanda's AMiA bishop in North America and saying the Lambeth invitations contravene Lambeth 1998 Resolution 1.10 and more recent communiqués, the bishops of Rwanda have said they will not attend Lambeth 2008.

They said, in part, “From his actions and decision to invite TEC, a province which is violating holy orders, biblical teaching and the tradition of the church, and his decision not to invite the bishops of AMiA and CANA, the Archbishop of Canterbury has shown that he has now taken sides because the Primates have asked TEC for repentance in order to be in communion with them....TEC has continually rebelled against the position and counsel of the Primates.”

www.theamia.org/index.cfm?id=E7BC7A6F-4E8B-4AB7-84AD908DA7448213 ‘

Rival Lambeth conference?

The Standing Committee of the Diocese of Sydney (Australia), on June 25 requested their Archbishop and bishops:

- “...not to accept the invitation to Lambeth without making public in protest, speech and liturgical action, both prior to and at Lambeth, our diocese’s principled objection to the continued participation of those whose actions have expressed a departure from the clear teaching of scripture, and who have consequently excluded orthodox Anglicans from their fellowship...” and
- “...to approach other orthodox bishops of the communion with the purpose of meeting in England at the time of the Lambeth Conference for Christian fellowship and the planning of joint action within the Anglican Communion to contend for the faith of the Apostles once delivered to the saints.”

http://your.sydneyanglicans.net/mediareleases/standing_committee_resolutions_for_suffragan_bishop_and_lambeth_invitations/

Church of England reported to consider a Covenant

The Telegraph reports that Church of England bishops are preparing a “covenant” for presentation to their General Synod in July. The document is intended to more clearly define fundamental doctrines and what it means to be Anglican.

www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2007/06/03/nchurch03.xml

Archbishop of Canterbury may no longer be appointed by British PM

Gordon Brown, British “prime minister in waiting”, is reported by The Sunday Telegraph to be preparing to give up the prime minister’s historic right to choose the Archbishop of Canterbury. Currently, the Crown Nominations Commission, considers candidates for vacancies for diocesan bishops, as well as the archbishops of Canterbury and York, whenever they arise. Two names are given to the prime minister who can select either or ask the commission for additional options.

www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2007/06/10/nbrown210.xml

Response to Prof. John Thorp’s “Making the Case”

Dr. Robert Gagnon, Associate Professor of New Testament Theology at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, released a paper entitled “**Case Not Made**” immediately prior to General Synod to counter a paper promoting same sex blessings sent to all delegates in the days leading up to the General Synod. See Dr. Gagnon’s response here: anglicanessentials.ca/pdf/homosex_thorpcanada_resp.pdf

Media

The media provided extensive General Synod coverage – much of it quite balanced. This is a tiny fraction of the newspaper coverage:

www.canada.com/saskatoonstarphoenix/news/story.html?id=debc9868-9fdf-4d5c-9e9d-8a71856df0f2

www.canada.com/ottawacitizen/story.html?id=0face8fc-de8f-4988-8424-6cb3d2b3f709&k=78346&p=2

www.canada.com/ottawacitizen/news/story.html?id=39601e9e-ca10-4fd4-8885-ca7d8b133441&p=2

www.thestar.com/living/article/226009

www.signonsandiego.com/news/world/20070622-1525-canada-anglicanelection.html