

Message from the Moderator September 17, 2007

“Like cold water to a weary soul is good news from a distant land.”

Proverbs 25:25:

For many faithful, authentic Anglicans in Canada the wait has seemed interminable. In the Diocese of New Westminster, for example, the theologically-based estrangement from established Anglican Church of Canada authorities began over five years ago. Today, several hundred young people still await confirmation by a bishop they recognize to be orthodox (biblically-faithful). A growing number of clergy candidates also need to be ordained. It saddens me that our God-given mission has been so hindered.

But I believe God is about to do a new thing.

“...Where morning dawns ... you call forth songs of joy.” Psalm 65:8

Just days ago, I returned from Africa where I had the privilege, together with Canon Charlie Masters and Dr. Terry and Cheryl Chang, of participating in the consecrations of several new North American bishops – all good and godly men and dear friends of the Anglican Network in Canada. Bishops Bill Atwood and Bill Murdoch were consecrated in Nairobi on August 30th, while Bishop John Guernsey was consecrated in Kigali on September 2nd.

What a time of celebration and thanksgiving! I wish you could have been there with me – and the thousands gathered for both services. (Estimates for the outdoor service in Uganda ranged up to 10,000.) Had you been there, your heart would have soared. The preaching was solidly Biblical and the intensity of the love and joy expressed in the worship was overwhelming. Both events were substantive. The Kenyan service lasted almost five hours, while the Ugandan service required six.

Primates and leaders, representing the majority of Anglicans worldwide, attended both consecrations, demonstrating their solid support and unity of Spirit. We were told that on any given Sunday, about 52 million Anglicans are in church worldwide; 40 million of these were represented by leaders attending these consecrations. So, while these new bishops were received into the Churches of Uganda and Kenya, the consecrations were clearly not unilateral actions, but broadly supported within the Communion. The new bishops were ordained bishops in the Church of God.



It was humbling and deeply moving to be asked to join the Primates and bishops laying hands on the newly consecrated bishops.

Strong Communion support

Our time in Uganda and Kenya provided Charlie, Cheryl, Terry and me with extraordinary and frequent opportunities to enjoy fellowship with and speak to key Primates and leaders in our Communion – including Archbishops Venables (Southern Cone) and Gomez (West Indies) from the western hemisphere, and Archbishops Nzimbi (Kenya), Orombi (Uganda), Kolini (Rwanda), Ernest (Indian Ocean), Malango (Central Africa), Akrofi (West Africa) and Okoh (representing ABp Akinola of Nigeria) from Africa.

They were uniformly supportive of the Network and determined to ensure orthodox Canadian Anglicans are provided with faithful episcopal oversight. The Primates appreciate that the Network members and parishes have been very patient and have fully cooperated with all the Communion processes as they sought various solutions over the last few years. We have done everything they have asked of us. We have not acted precipitously or in a way that unnecessarily harmed unity in the Communion. But now, there is strong consensus that things must change – very soon. That is why the Primates imposed the September 30th deadline in their Dar es Salaam communiqué.

Our first objective has always been to work and pray for the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC) to return to its biblically-based theological heritage. With the Primates' deadline looming, we must intensify our prayers for the ACC, for the Primates and for the Archbishop of Canterbury – and, yes, for the leaders, clergy, parishes and members of the Network – in the days ahead. As I've said before, I fully anticipate that, by the end of the year, God will open up a clear way forward for Network parishes, clergy and members.

In my last letter to you, I mentioned that we are planning an event for Network members. We now have a date and a location. We will meet November 22-23 at Crossroads Christian Centre in Burlington, Ontario – just west of Toronto and east of Hamilton. There will be some weighty matters for us to discuss and consider. With the September 30th deadline fast approaching, we anticipate that the Primates will offer specific options to faithful Canadian Anglican for the provision of pastoral care. In addition, we are planning training sessions that will help parishes in their ministry. Registration details will follow shortly.

The courage of a lion

This was my second visit to Africa this year. Earlier, I had the joy of working with Dr Marnie Paterson, offering evangelism training to about 100 clergy in northern Kenya. I was also able to be with Bishop Timothy Ranji in Nairobi for a week. While in Nairobi, after preaching at St Stephen's Cathedral, I was presented with a carved ebony lion. The one who prayed asked God to impart to me the courage of a lion for the days and tasks that lay ahead.

That is my prayer for each of us in the Network, that we would have the courage of a lion for the days ahead. And may God bless us with the missionary zeal and joyful spirit of our brothers and sisters in the Global South.

+Donald

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