



# ENCOMPASS

News and Events from the American Anglican Council • Fourth Quarter 2013

## Crisis Comes to the Church of England

BY ROBERT H. LUNDY, EDITOR

2013 brought the spiritual crisis of the Anglican Communion home to its mother church. No longer would unseemly arguments and debates over sexuality and the authority of holy scripture be solely associated with the North American cousins. Sadly, you might say that the Anglican Communion's chickens have come home to roost in the Church of England.

Archbishop Justin Welby was installed as the 105th Archbishop of Canterbury on March 21, 2013. Welby was a dramatic change from his predecessor, Rowan Williams, with his evangelical background, experience in the business world, plain-spoken nature and clean shaven face. The archbishop was quickly probed by reporters on where he stands regarding homosexuality and the church. The incoming Primate seemed to strategically assert his appreciation for the love evident in some homosexual relationships, sternly condemned "homophobia" and yet stopped short of an unequivocal,

unapologetic endorsement of the Church's traditional teaching on marriage.

This tactic was also on display in the UK House of Lords when the Church of England's bishops had the opportunity to speak for or against Parliament's same-sex marriage bill. Again, like most of his bishops, Welby, while opposing the bill for the "confusion" it would create, claimed:

"It is clearly essential that stable and faithful same sex relationships should, where those involved want it, be recognised and supported with as much dignity and the same legal effect as marriage."

The archbishop went on to say:

"It is also necessary to express, as has been done already, total rejection of homophobic language, which is wrong – and more than that, sickening."

In its own house of bishops, the Church of England removed a ban on bishops who were in civil partnerships if they remained celibate.

Reactions from the rest of the communion to these developments were quick to come. The majority of Anglican parishioners are in churches which reject such innovations. Nine leaders from the Global South Anglican network, a group of Anglican archbishops speaking for the majority non-Western Provinces signed a letter opposing the move.

"We, Primates of the Global South of the Anglican Communion, are deeply concerned and worried by the recent decision of the Church of England's House of Bishops which approves that clergy living in civil partnerships can be candidates to the episcopate... Sadly,

both the decision to permit clergy to enter civil partnerships and this latest decision which some call it a "local option," are wrong and were taken without prior consultation or consensus with the rest of the Anglican Communion at a time when the Communion is still facing major challenges of disunity.



Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby.

*"Crisis" continued on back page*

## It's Not Over Till It's Over



BY THE RT. REV. DAVID C. ANDERSON SR.,  
PRESIDENT, AMERICAN ANGLICAN COUNCIL

I am not one to watch nonstop sports on television, though my 100 year old mother does watch and she keeps me abreast of football, baseball and basketball games. A portion of one game this year was watched by nearly everyone, either in real time or on replay, and that was the Alabama-Auburn game. I live halfway between Georgia Tech and the Georgia Bulldogs, and passions in the South run very high during football season, so I am careful in my declarations of football loyalty.

Nevertheless, there is something to be learned from the last few moments of the Alabama-Auburn game. It was tied with only seconds left, Alabama in possession but a little far downfield for kicking a field goal. They chose to try a long distance kick, apparently thinking they had nothing to lose. The kick almost made it, but as it happened there was an Auburn player standing right where the ball fell.

He caught it, almost by reflex, and it must have startled him, but then he did the natural thing, he ran with it as fast as he could, out of his end zone area and down field. For a microsecond everyone was shocked. There was no whistle to blow the ball dead. He had caught it and it was a live ball in play. Everyone came alive, Alabama players chased him, Auburn players blocked and shielded him, and in a moment he had covered over 100 yards and scored the winning touchdown. The difference between a good day and a bad day in this case amounted to a few seconds.

In football, the takeaway is the ball isn't dead or out of play until the whistle blows. In life, and especially in our spiritual life, you aren't out of play until the whistle blows, either. As we age through the various seasons of life, never think that God is done with you, or that you are retired and living on God's pension. The pension years come later, in heaven, and as long as you and I have breath we are players on the field, even if we're on one of God's specialty squads. I don't know how God wants to use you personally during this next year, but I do know that he wants to use you in a capacity that is tailored to your ability and gifting, and that in letting God use you, you will be blessed and you will bless others.

Remember, and this is for you personally, keep running until you hear the whistle blow, or as the apostle Paul said in Philippians 3:13b, "...forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus." How can you and the Lord run the ball downfield in the next six months or year? Ask him! †

## American Anglican Council names Canon Phil Ashley Chief Executive

Effective January 1, 2014, the Rt. Rev. David C. Anderson, President and Chairman of the Board, together with the Board of Trustees of the American Anglican Council (AAC), has appointed the Rev. Canon J. Philip Ashley, formerly the Chief Operating Officer of the AAC, to the position of Chief Executive Officer of the AAC. In this capacity Canon Ashley will sit on the Executive Committee of the Board together with Bishop Anderson and the other officers of the corporation. He will administer both the day to day operations and the strategic planning of the AAC.

Canon Ashley has helped focus the resources of the AAC on developing faithful Anglican leaders at all levels of the Church, in North America and globally, equipping Anglican congregations in North America (ACNA) to grow in mission and outreach, and providing strategic legal and canonical counsel to both the ACNA and the Primates Council of the Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans. He will continue this focus as CEO of the American Anglican Council.



## The Pilling Report

BY THE REV. CANON PHIL ASHEY, CEO,  
AMERICAN ANGLICAN COUNCIL

The Pilling Report (PR), recently released in the Church of England (CofE), authorized by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, is no surprise. Despite assurances in advance from leading CofE spokesmen that the PR would contain no liturgies for blessing same sex civil partnerships, and that reports leaked to the contrary were sheer speculation, Recommendation 16 of the PR states clearly:

“Recommendation 16. We believe that there can be circumstances where a priest, with the agreement of the relevant PCC, should be free to mark the formation of a permanent same sex relationship in a public service but should be under no obligation to do so. Some of us do not believe that this can be extended to same sex marriage. (Paragraphs 120, 380-3) [Pilling Report Page 151]”

In response to this report, the Rev. Dr. Stephen Noll has written an excellent critique of the PR which is published on our website. I encourage you to carefully read this critique and consider its serious implications.

The PR and its recommendations are now in the hands of the bishops in the Church of England. I pray the bishops would consider Dr. Noll’s article. The bishops may also wish to consider that for the majority of Anglicans in the Global South, any recognition of same-sex partnerships is both un-biblical and contrary to Anglican Communion teaching (Lambeth Resolution 1.10 (1998)) The objections to the blessing of same-sex partnerships or unions are not simply a matter of “context,” preoccupation with sex or homophobia. As many Global Anglican leaders have pointed out time and again over the years, these blessings involve matters that are essential to the Christian faith - the authority of the Scriptures, the limits of “enculturation” in applying scripture to different contexts, God’s creation ordinances, sanctification and perseverance, to name but a few. The failure of the PR to address these serious theological objections is a matter the bishops of the Church of England may wish to address as well. I’ll leave you with the conclusions from Dr. Noll’s paper:

### Conclusion

The Pilling Report has one goal: to legitimize an ongoing dialogue about normalizing homosexual relationships in the church’s life. In my opinion, this goal is incompatible with Lambeth Resolution I.10 and the position of the Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans. Nearly eighteen years ago, the Episcopal Church USA initiated a process called “Continuing the Dialogue” on sexuality that sounds very much like the PR’s idea of “facilitated conversation.” The end result of that “dialogue” was never in doubt - approval of the gay rights agenda - nor were conservatives ever more than token participants.

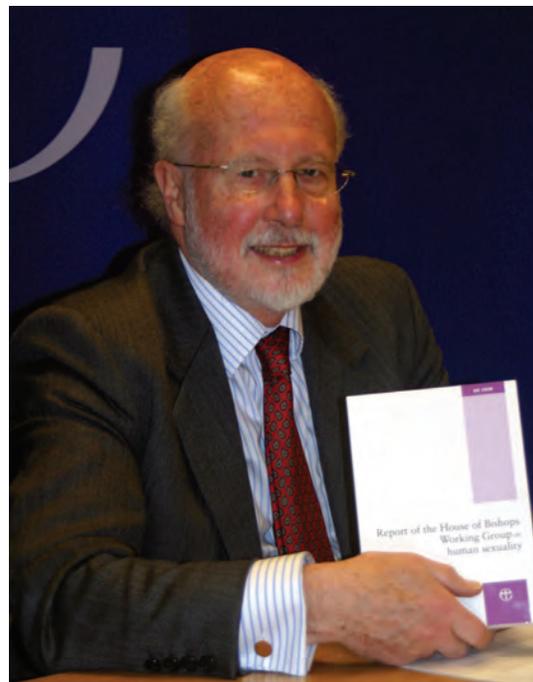
I would ask conservatives in the Church of England one simple question: can you imagine any circumstance in which the traditional teaching of the Church on the exclusive character of Holy Matrimony will be reaffirmed as a result of this dialogue? Although the PR is primarily addressing the Church of England, it also calls for Communion-wide dialogue - as if we had not already experienced the “Windsor process” from 2004 and the “Lambeth Indaba” in 2008.

For global Anglicans to return to such a fruitless endeavor would be to deter their mission and divert attention from ongoing social issues that really do affect them. Finally, many Global South churches over the past decade provided refuge to orthodox churches and clergy in North America. They may well need to do the same for English churches and clergy as well, if the recommended listening process is adopted and has the same divisive result in the Church of England that the parallel “dialogue” has had in North America.

For these reasons, I would urge Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglican churches to leave the PR alone, to pray for brothers and sisters in the Church of England who will be affected by it, and to move forward with the ambitious agenda set forth in Nairobi. For those churches and leaders that may view the PR optimistically as a way out of the divisions facing the Anglican Communion, I can only suggest they attend the wisdom of the old limerick:

There was a young lady of Niger  
Who smiled as she rode on a tiger;  
They returned from the ride With the lady inside,  
And the smile on the face of the tiger.

*The Rev. Prof. Stephen Noll is the former Vice Chancellor (retired), of the Uganda Christian University †*



*Sir Joseph Pilling. Photo courtesy Gavin Drake, Church Times*



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It is contrary to "the inter-dependence" which we try to affirm between churches within the Communion. Moreover, it does not only widen the gap between the Church of England and Anglicans in the Global South, it also widens the gap between the Anglican Communion and our ecumenical partners. Further, it jeopardizes the relationship between us Anglicans living in the Global South and followers of other faiths, and gives opportunities to exploit such departure of moral standards that this type of decision may provide."

2013 started with controversial events and ended with more controversy. The Pilling Report, compiled by a special working group on human sexuality from the House of Bishops and released in November, suggested that the church allow "pastoral accommodation" and thus an informal public service for those in civil partnerships.

From many Anglicans' points of view, the document gave much more credence to a liberal view of scripture and was not representative of the church's long-standing teaching. Sir Joseph Pilling, the report's namesake, presented the document to the House of Bishops in December. From here the Church of England and entire Anglican Communion will wait to see if the bishops endorse the report or unequivocally repudiate it. The answer could come as soon as January 27th of 2014 when the full House of Bishops meets again. †

**T**he American Anglican Council is a network of individuals, dioceses, parishes and ministries who affirm biblical authority and Christian orthodoxy within the Anglican Communion. By the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, the mission of the American Anglican Council is to build up and defend Great Commission Anglican churches in North America and worldwide through advocacy and counsel, leadership development and equipping the local church. *Encompass* is a quarterly publication of the American Anglican Council.

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