



ENCOMPASS

News and Events from the American Anglican Council • Fourth Quarter 2014

Anglicanism at its best

BY THE REV. CANON J. PHILIP ASHEY,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

I was elated after the recent investiture of the second Archbishop of the Anglican Church in North America, the Most Rev. Dr. Foley Thomas Beach. It is always a joy at these gatherings of our Church to see so many old friends from across North America—it really does have the joy of a family reunion. I was so blessed to see the number of archbishops, bishops, clergy, laity and friends from all across the Anglican Communion with us (at substantial cost, I might add!) simply to rejoice with us in this milestone in the growth of our Anglican Church, and to reaffirm our communion with them and the vast majority of practicing Anglicans.

Here are just some of the high points for me:

- The Communion anthem by the combined choirs on the Holy Spirit—it lifted me out of my seat and into the throne room of the Lord in worship, reminding me of our continuing need for a new Pentecost
- The presence of youth and adults, Americans, Canadians, Burmese, Nigerians (a Nigerian female deacon read the Gospel), all highlighting Archbishop Foley’s observation that we are indeed a “diverse lot”
- The greetings brought from The Rev. Preb. Charles Marnham, St Mark’s Chester Square London, on behalf of the Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans in the UK, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, the Church of England Evangelical Council, Church Society, Reform, and the Anglican Mission in England—with the heartfelt reminder that we should never forget “how many friends we have in the Church of England.”
- But especially the Primates gathering around our new Archbishop, laying hands on him and praying together out loud the blessing, and adding in this significant sentence NOT in the original worship bulletin: “Foley Beach, We receive you as an Archbishop and a Primate in the Anglican Communion.”

That they went out of their way, together, to pray this before the gathered people of God is a clear reaffirmation of the Primates’ authority to decide who is Anglican, and their confirmation of our Anglican identity on behalf of the vast majority of practicing Anglicans within the Communion.



Laying their hands on Archbishop Beach (center), 7 Anglican Primates participated in the investiture. Starting left: The Most Rev. Dr. Onesphore Rwaje (Rwanda), The Most Rev. Stanley Ntagali (Uganda), The Most Rev. Nicholas Okoh (Nigeria), The Most Rev. Dr. Eliud Wabukala (Kenya), The Most Rev. Dr. Mouneer Hanna Anis (Jerusalem & Middle East), The Most Rev. Stephen Than Myint Oo (Myanmar), The Most Rev. Hector (Tito) Zavala (South America)

I think the diversity represented, and the unity in that diversity around a common confession of the faith “once delivered” to the saints, demonstrates one of the charisms of Anglicanism. And that charism is nothing less than a reformed catholicism, anointed by the Holy Spirit, that draws people from a variety of spiritual backgrounds into a Church that addresses the yearnings of the hearts.

At the same time, this gift of Anglicanism calls us to unite with other Christians who share the same essentials of the faith, the same or similar confessions and creeds, and the same Great Commission values. We can and ought to find common ground in mission together within our communities. I was deeply blessed several weeks ago at the Diocese of Cascadia Synod where I spoke on Church Re-Vitalization and remissioning. We met in a Baptist church in Edmonds, WA (in the Seattle area) whose pastor decided that Edmonds needs an Anglican Church! Pastor Barry contacted Bishop Todd Hunter of “Churches for the Sake of Others” and Bishop Kevin Allen of Cascadia to see how they might work together to make that happen. The end result is a Baptist church planting a new Anglican Church in its building, helping to fund it, and working with Anglican bishops to make this as seamless as possible.

Anglicanism has so much to offer the body of Christ. This is especially true when Anglicanism is at its best, as we saw at the investiture of Archbishop Foley Beach. †

Pastoral Letter from Archbishop Eliud Wabukala

My dear brothers and sisters,

Greetings in the precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 'the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end'.

During this Advent Season we shall be preparing for the joyful celebration of the first coming of our Lord Jesus, but let us also rejoice that we have the promise of his second coming in glorious majesty as Lord, Saviour and Judge, and be willing to stake our lives on what we do not yet see, the fulfilment of the promises of God.

It was this confidence that kept the Apostle Paul from despair despite all the setbacks and suffering of his apostolic ministry and with deep insight he cuts right through earth bound ways of thinking when he writes 'For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal' (2 Corinthians 4:18).

This is a truly radical perspective. It brings our lives into line with what is ultimately real and gives us a hope that is not defeated by immediate challenges and loss. This is true whatever the crisis that confronts us and we must continue to pray for those whose lives have been devastated by the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, but the difference biblical hope makes is seen most clearly when persecution and violence are unleashed.

As I write these letters, I find that very often I need to emphasise the need to pray for and stand with our brothers and sisters who are experiencing heart-rending suffering as radical Islamic influence grows in Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Here in Kenya, al-Shabab gunmen have just murdered twenty-eight non-Muslim passengers from a bus they ambushed in northern Kenya. In some parts of the world Christian communities now live with the constant threat of violent death. One of the most shocking attacks in recent weeks was the burning alive of a young Pakistani Christian man Sajjeed Mashah and his pregnant wife Shama Bibi in a brick kiln near Lahore. How do Christian communities manage to carry on in such circumstances unless they look to 'the things that are unseen'? As we pray for those who suffer, let us resolve to be of the same mind and to be faithful to Christ wherever he has placed us.

The threat of atrocity is now truly global. Following the jihadist killing of a young soldier on duty at Canada's national



The Most Rev. Dr. Eliud Wabukala is Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Kenya and Chairman of the Global Anglican Future Conference Primate's Council.

war memorial in Ottawa, I was moved by the gentle yet bold response of Bishop Charlie Masters, recently appointed Moderator of the Anglican Network in Canada (ANiC). He spoke of shock and grief, but also how the founding fathers had named the country and he said "they called it the Dominion of Canada, based on Psalm 72:8 'he shall have dominion from sea to sea...' and that was speaking about the Lord Jesus, that he has dominion in this country". For Bishop Charlie, part of the response to this murder was national repentance to bring the country back to its founders' vision. The dominion of the Lord Jesus Christ is a reality unrecognized by many, but one day all creation will bow the knee and the greatest service we can do for our nations is to win them for Jesus Christ by the proclamation of the glorious gospel of the Prince of Peace.

The Anglican Network in Canada is part of the Anglican Church in North America which was formed following our first Global Anglican Future Conference in 2008. Such steps of radical faith demonstrate our trust in the Advent hope of the ultimate triumph of the gospel. For the New Testament writers, the expectation of Christ's return was an encouragement not to waver from sound doctrine or godly living, but on crucial issues such as sexual morality and the uniqueness of Jesus as Saviour and Son of God we are in a Communion where there is no longer a common mind.

Some say this does not matter. For instance, the 'Bishops in Dialogue' group after their Coventry meeting earlier this

"Wabukala" continued on back page

LGBT Advocates “Mess with Texas” (and the First Amendment)

BY THE RT. REV. DAVID C. ANDERSON,
PRESIDENT AND CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Many congregations, in making the transition to the Anglican Church in North America, have been sued by their former denomination, had their church buildings confiscated, often with the connivance of ignorant or biased judges, and yet we have worked hard to simply glance in the rear view mirror and put our focus on what is ahead.



It is one thing to lose insurance and church build- vindictive former denom- now emerging in the secu- frightening. Recently, Houston, Texas declared Christians, and especially the pastors of the Houston commu- nity. What she did, or tried to do, was beyond belief. Appar- ently she and the city council wanted to make all restrooms in Houston open to members of any gender who feel that they belong in the Men's or Women's restrooms. So ladies have to put up with some guy in their toilet because he thinks or feels that he is, in his heart of hearts, really a woman. Same scenar- io for the Men's room.

Bible-believing pastors preached about this type of sexual confusion, commented on it in Sunday School lessons, spoke about it in other public venues and wrote about it in their church communications. They also got 50,000 area residents to sign a petition calling for a referendum on the ordinance. The mayor wasn't pleased. She demanded that the court enforce an order that subpoenaed the clergy's sermons, text messages, teachings and comments as evidence in a lawsuit that was challenging her ordinance. No, seriously, this is not a joke, or a bad made-up story, we couldn't make up this stuff.

The AAC spoke with one pastor who is from just outside the Houston city limits. In discussing the events surrounding the mayor and her trampling of several First Amendment rights, and the laid-back attitude people had about electing

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a homosexual mayor in the first place, he said, "Sad to say – yes. Too many people thought that electing a gay mayor for Houston was no big deal. Just another way we underestimate the gay agenda."

Eventually, Mayor Parker withdrew her requests for sub- poena, though the lawsuit that challenges the ordinance will begin in January of 2015.

When you drive into Texas, you usually see a large sign that cautions, DON'T MESS WITH TEXAS. I don't know about you, but I take that seriously. Apparently the mayor of Hous- ton thought she could remake the culture of Houston to fit her own LGBT beliefs and bully those who wouldn't roll over easily. It would seem that she miscalculated. If there is any silver lining to this storm cloud, it is that the general public has now seen how quickly the LGBT community is ready to trample on everyone else's Constitutional rights to advance their cause. The Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgendered agenda is going to be crammed down the throats of the Christian community unless Christians are willing to put up a fierce fight with sustained vigor. If we aren't up for the fight ahead we will be swept away, but if we do fight God's fight here where we stand, we know that God fights along with us, and the power of God in us is far greater than the power which emboldens the mayor of Houston (I John 4:4).

I hope that this Houston event wakes up some of our slumbering Christians and helps them to smell the coffee. Be strong in the Lord and resist evil where ever you find it.†



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year claimed that we must maintain visible unity despite everything because ‘now we see through a glass, darkly’ (1 Corinthians 13:12). In other words, things will only become clear in heaven. This is a bad mistake. It is true that there is much about our future state that we do not yet understand, but God has given us the inspired Scriptures as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (Ps.119:105). Our future hope cannot be turned into an excuse for compromise or silence when Scripture is clear. For Anglicans the collegial mind of the Communion on sexuality and Scripture remains the orthodox position as strongly reaffirmed by the 1998 Lambeth Conference which continues to call us to obedience and pastoral responsibility. Dialogue is no substitute for doctrine.

Despite these challenges, I am confident that our efforts are not in vain. The crucial contribution of GAFCON to the future is that in an increasingly confused Communion it has a clear confessional basis in the Jerusalem Statement and Declaration which keeps the gospel at its heart. And where the gospel is, there will be life.

So may the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ establish your hearts in all that is good, make you strong and courageous in his service and bring us all with great joy to that day when the Church Militant here on earth shall become the great Church Victorious.

Archbishop Eliud Wabukala, Primate of Kenya and Chairman of the GAFCON Primates Council (pictured right)



The 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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