



# ENCOMPASS

News and Events from the American Anglican Council • Third Quarter 2015

## What Brings Us Together



BY THE REV. CANON PHIL ASHEY,  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, recently announced that he was inviting the leaders of the Anglican Communion to gather, reflect and pray over the Communion's future. We later learned through his "aides" that he was open to the Communion moving to a looser federation-like structure. Ruth Gledhill, a long-time reporter on Anglican events, gave a hearty endorsement of this possibility:

*Thus from this Archbishop, whose years in the world of secular finance and industry have taught him the futility of fighting reality, has emerged a vision of what might happen if the Anglican Communion can "let go and let God". Allowing the bonds to loosen will release the considerable tension of these past fractious centuries. It will allow the lost sheep of the Anglican family to return to the fold, the prodigal sons and daughters to be welcomed home with feasting and rejoicing. For the first*

*time in centuries, the prospect of real unity is in sight. Let us pray that Anglicans have not lost faith in what they cannot yet see.*

While I like Ruth Gledhill's writing, I don't share her enthusiasm for the Archbishop's "vision." Why can't I get on board with it and just "let go and let God?" Because that would mean I "let go" of the truth. The truth is that The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada have rejected the Biblical, historic Christian faith. There are faithful individuals that remain in those churches, but as a whole, these provinces (and now the Scottish Episcopal Church) are outside the bounds of Biblical Christianity.

You see, in Luke 15, the prodigal son returned home when he came to his senses and confessed his sin. But in the "let go and let God" communion the Archbishop of Canterbury proposes, there is no sin to confess. It might be accurate to say that there is no Biblical

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## "Be the Change" in Your Church



BY THE REV'D CANON  
STEVEN SAUL, DIRECTOR OF  
CHURCH REVITALIZATION

Long-term success in any organization is planned and not accidental. It is not uncommon to talk about possible actions your team may take and then sit back and miss opportunities to set goals (take action) for ministry success. Have you ever been a part of a ministry team that met for a specific purpose and, when the meeting ended, team members left without clear direction, stated objectives and measureable goals? As leaders, we need to **"be the change"** – change that makes a difference for the Lord.

There is really no greater threat to organizational success than a team that has *"missed the mark"* of goal setting.

Some leaders may consider the process of *planning to succeed* as an *unnecessary step*. I, however, think Benjamin Franklin was right when he said, *"If you fail to plan, then you plan to fail."* The same is true for shorter and longer-term goals. Stating the preferred outcomes is important for every team. Identifying the required steps (step-by-step) that take the team to the desired goal is just as important.

While it takes a little more time to create a strategic plan for reaching the goal, the team that plans will have greater clarity and ownership for the success if intermediate goals are set along the way.

At a smaller church where clergy and ministry leaders wear multiple hats and serve in a number of ministry areas, it's common to think that everyone is on the "same page" and low attendance diminishes the need for goal setting. This is not the case. Planning for a desired outcome and determining

*"Change" continued on back page*

## The wages of spin: death of truth?

BY ANDREW SYMES, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY,  
ANGLICAN MAINSTREAM (UK)

Revisionist leaders talk a lot about their desire for unity in the Church. But more often than not, the only unity they are interested in is with the world, joining with the briefings of the secular culture against orthodox Christianity.

Here is what happened on Thursday, on the BBC Radio 4 'Today' programme, where the Bishop of Manchester, David Walker, and myself were in separate studios to discuss Justin Welby's recent invitation to the Primates of the Anglican Communion to attend a meeting in January. Bishop Walker began with a downplaying of the sexuality question, saying that there were many other issues of shared interest which would continue a sense of unity:

*"...they will be discussing religiously motivated violence, the environment, protection of children... [on my recent visit to Pakistan] Christians were far less interested in my views on same sex relationships than that I was prepared to be with them and...pray with them."*

He then spoke of how the Communion can hold together with "strong autonomy for each national church, but a sense of mutual affection and...shared history".

My response to the Archbishop of Canterbury's invitation was to show appreciation for his initiative in getting people round the table who have been estranged, but I questioned the diagnosis of the problem, in particular the suggestion in the Statement from Lambeth that the differences are cultural when in fact they are theological; serious differences about what the Christian faith is.

The interviewer, following the line of questioning provided by the Radio 4 researchers, then asked how the Communion can hold together when the American branch supports gay marriage, while Ugandan Bishops support the death penalty for homosexuality. I said immediately that this was completely false. The Ugandan church holds to the historic biblical teaching on sex and marriage, but does not support the death penalty – and in fact has worked hard for protection of homosexuals and other minorities in Africa from injustice.

At this point the Bishop of Manchester, only a couple of minutes before telling us all how sexuality was a minor issue in the overall unity of the Anglican Communion, jumped in to say "oh but the Ugandans do support criminalization of homosexuality". Er, no. We need to get our facts right.

The interviewer then said that there were obviously major differences. How could the splits be healed? Bishop Walker assured listeners that the "bonds of affection" would continue.

Now apart from tips as to how I can improve my own media performance, is there anything we can extrapolate from this encounter?

Firstly, a clearer understanding of the methods of spin that are being used. The "Ugandan Bishops support the death penalty for gay people" line was used in an article by Andrew Brown in the Guardian the day before; it was picked up and repeated by Caroline Wyatt the BBC religion correspondent in her TV report, and then used by the interviewer Mishal Husain in the morning. Wyatt and Brown have apologized and amended their reports, but the damage has been done. A big lie has been asserted as truth by authoritative sources, and has reached millions of people. Repeat the lie; it will stick in people's minds. George Orwell could not have thought up a better example.

Secondly, the episode is an example of revisionist episcopal hypocrisy. David Walker (whose views are well known) claimed on one hand that the "gay" issue was not going to split the church, and that unity in the Anglican Communion was his priority. But then he joined in an attack on the Church of Uganda using false information. If his aim is unity, this will surely have the opposite effect – unless of course he thinks he can bully African churches into following his revisionist views, and creating 'unity' that way? Rather than discuss the theological issues behind the fracture in the Communion, the Bishop of Manchester chose to use the radio interview to solicit support from the secular liberal audience for his own brand of Christianity, by demonizing African Anglicans and so further hardening the divisions in the Communion. To what extent does this reflect his own view, or part of a more organized policy?

We are seeing a combination of spin, intimidation and hypocrisy as revisionist church leaders join with the secular media in creating distance between (in their narrative) 'good religion' of liberal Western Anglicanism, and the 'bad religion' of the orthodox version in the developing world. In North America the faithful confessing Anglicans have faced this, taking a public, costly stand, articulating the Bible's clear teaching about sex, marriage and what it means to be human as part of a fully-orbed presentation of the counter cultural Gospel of Jesus Christ. They have not been ashamed of association with African Christian leaders, warmly welcoming close fellowship and even oversight from them. The Archbishop of Canterbury needs to show at the January meeting that he rejects the revisionist tactics of the BBC/Guardian/Bishop of Manchester. Otherwise, faithful Anglicans in the UK will need to be moving ahead organizationally along the same lines as the Anglican Church in North America. †

*Read more from Canon Symes at [AnglicanMainstream.org](http://AnglicanMainstream.org)*



Alexandria, Egypt 2009 Primates' gathering: the last time a majority of the world's Anglicans were represented at a Primatial meeting.

## **"Anglican Unity"** *continued on page 3*

plumb line to define what sin is. Those churches that have legitimized same sex behavior have done so over and against the plain meaning of Holy Scripture.

That's why the Archbishop of Canterbury is reduced to speaking about the importance of "culture and context." Sin, if it can be said to exist at all, is simply a moving target. It is not the heart, soul and conscience-ruining wreck that stems from our fundamental rebellion against God and his high hopes for us. It is simply what we define, shaped by our culture, our desires, what is politically correct and in every case apart from God and His word. We don't need to "come home"—we are already at home with who we are, and quite content to remain that way.

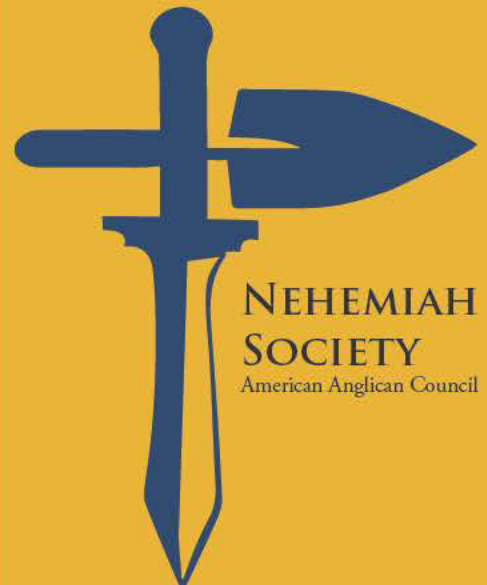
"So what," you may say. "Why does it matter, as long as you get on helping the poor, feeding the hungry, serving widows and orphans and others? If you can keep your theology to yourself and get on with 'mission' together, isn't that the most important thing?" No. A church that serves the poor but fails to faithfully preach the Gospel and disciple believers is missing the mark. Jesus said it all in the Great Commandment: "You shall the love the LORD your God with all your heart...and love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:36-40) Jesus challenged his people, his Church, to have love for God and love for neighbor. Jesus said "If you love me, obey my commands." (John 14:15, 23) We find those commands in the Bible. We also find love of neighbor defined by God's word (see the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10). In fact, we find immutable principles of justice throughout the Bible, Old and New Testaments. What a terrible bargain this new Communion vision asks us to enter—to exchange immutable truths and standards of right and wrong for what is "culturally and contextually" correct. How many secular relief organizations and NGO's have made that same bargain? It does not make us a family, much less a church, and even less a Communion of churches.

What brings us together as Anglicans isn't shared mission or endless indaba. What brings us together as Anglicans is a common confession of Jesus Christ as Lord as revealed in the Scriptures. Out of that flows the greatest missionary imperative of all—Christ's Great Commission to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:16-20), teaching them to obey all that Christ has commanded—including food for the hungry, and justice for the oppressed. †



Please join me in becoming part of the Nehemiah Society of the American Anglican Council. The Nehemiah Society is an association of patrons that support AAC with annual gifts of \$1,000 or more. Members will be recognized and appreciated for their sacrifice and invited to an annual, private gala in their honor.

*-Archbishop Foley Beach  
Anglican Church in North America*



*"Let us rise up and build"  
Nehemiah 2:18*



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what short-term goals will be reached on the way is the best step for ministry at every size.

**AAC Church ReVitalization encourages ministry teams to set 30, 60 and 90-day goals.** Why is this important? Because goals that are achieved are a reason to celebrate and they also determine if the team is on schedule for meeting longer-term goals. Short-term (intermediate) goals are the greatest attributes for long-term success. Consider naming a 30-Day goal with your ministry team and celebrate the first steps of greater victories ahead. Be the change, because success won't happen accidentally! †

*Discover our Church ReVitalization resources at [www.AmericanAnglican.org/ChurchRevitalization](http://www.AmericanAnglican.org/ChurchRevitalization)*



**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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