



# ENCOMPASS

News and Events from the American Anglican Council • March/April 2009

## Ordained Buddhist Elected Bishop

BY ROBERT H. LUNDY, EDITOR

The Diocese of Northern Michigan has elected a lay ordained Zen Buddhist as its next bishop. Delegates to the diocese's special convention met on Saturday, February 21, and elected the Rev. Kevin Thew Forrester to succeed the Rt. Rev. Jim Kelsey, who died in an automobile accident in 2007. Forrester, who served as the diocese's ministry development coordinator from 2001-2007 and is rector at two diocesan parishes, claims to be walking "the path of Christianity and Zen Buddhism."

The election alarmed many orthodox in The Episcopal Church (TEC) and in the Anglican Communion and drew strong criticism of the diocese's selection and methods of governance.

Forrester, in a diocesan newsletter from 2004, described how he came to engage the practice of Buddhist meditation. Forrester claimed that in 1998-99 he was exhausted from 20 years of working in the ministry and that he needed to do some "soul-work." That soul-work led him to practice Buddhist meditation and, eventually, he received Buddhist "lay ordination" along with a new name: Genpo (Japanese, for "way of universal wisdom"). According to a diocesan release, "lay ordination" has a different meaning in Buddhist practice than in the Christian tradi-



Kevin Thew Forrester, right, and Shoken Winecuff, Abbot of Ryumonji Zen monastery in Iowa. (Diocese of N. Mich. photo)

tion. The essence of this welcoming ceremony, which includes no oaths, is the resolve to use the practice of meditation as a path to awakening to the truth of the reality of human suffering."

Fredrica Thompsett, a theologian and professor emerita from Episcopal Divinity School, assisted the diocese in their selection process and defends the choice of Forrester. "The question is 'Is meditation a bad thing for bishops?'" asked Thompsett in a diocesan newsletter. "I think not. I think being spiritually grounded is essential for every leader in the church."

However, the president of the Institute for Religion and Democracy (IRD), James Tonkovich, criticized characterizing the situation as a debate over meditation. "The issue is not whether meditation is good, it is what is being meditated on," he said. "While church leaders may respect other faiths, their vow of Christian ordination has always meant an exclusive commitment to Jesus Christ and the Christian faith."

Dr. Chick Kaw Tan, a member of the Church of England General Synod who converted from Buddhism at age 17, has first-hand experience with the inconsistency of claiming to be Buddhist and Christian. "I was

*"Buddhist" cont. on page 2*

## No Discipline out of Primates' Meeting

BY RALINDA B. GREGOR, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

The Primates of the Anglican Communion met in Alexandria Egypt, February 1-5, issuing a Communiqué that repeated many of the same proposals from previous meetings but stopping short of calling for discipline of The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada. The document, "Deeper Communion; Gracious Restraint," reaffirmed Lambeth 1998 Resolution 1.10 and the moratoria on the election of non-celibate homosexual bishops, rites of blessing for same-sex unions and cross-border interventions.

Although the Communiqué gives no evidence of it, there was honest discussion about the brokenness of the Communion and the vast difference of belief between the provinces. Archbishop Gregory Venables of the Southern Cone said he was encouraged that the Primates admitted that "we believe different things," although he said it will take more time to get to the point where the Primates admit they are "not a part of the same faith." Archbishop

Peter Akinola, Primate of Nigeria, also expressed his gratefulness that the Primates were able to "discuss core theological convictions and achieve considerable clarity about our differences."

However, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams, has downplayed the possibility of any consequences of these differences. Speaking to the General Synod of the Church of England later in February, he said, "We have not yet got to the point where we can no longer recognise one another as seeking to obey the same Lord." His remarks suggested that no matter what their beliefs, no one would be turned away from the Communion. He asked, "What are we to do in a world where people don't go away? Where the Church of God overall is never going to be pure as we would want to define purity and we are always going to be embarrassed by the fact that we bear the same name as people whose views we don't own or approve to the extent that

*"Primates" cont. on page 3*



# A Message from the President

BY THE RT. REV. DAVID C. ANDERSON SR., AAC PRESIDENT & CEO

I have served this wonderful organization for eight years, and in this time we have seen so many changes in the church and the Anglican Communion. At the beginning of my tenure, the board of trustees' members were all within

The Episcopal Church (TEC) and now with the departures over the years, the board represents a variety of Anglican entities in addition to TEC. Given this more complex makeup of the board, the degree of agreement and shared vision among them is remarkable and surely a gift of God.

The AAC is working with the two major areas of Anglicanism in the United States—those faithful orthodox Episcopalians who are planning on staying in TEC as a witness to the true Gospel of Jesus Christ and those outside of TEC who are looking to the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) as their future. We have reported on ACNA in the past and will report on their progress again, but this letter is especially focused on the AAC's work inside TEC and with our members and affiliates who feel called to this witness. In a recent mailing we asked AAC contributors to fill out a survey for us asking various questions, including how are we doing. One of the most frequent responses were, "Keep doing what you are doing," and "Keep telling us the truth because it is hard to get the truth without a lot of spin put on it." Whether we are working with those inside TEC or those in the larger Anglican world, gathering the facts and telling the truth is an important part of what we do. We track what Anglican leaders are saying and doing and report on bad behavior and hypocrisy where we see it. If an idea is fraught with problem areas we point that out, and from the survey, people seem to want more of this truth-telling.

Recently the AAC established a special ministry area, the Episcopal Desk, to focus on our work with those staying inside TEC, and there are several things to report. The AAC Episcopal Desk will have a presence at the Anaheim, Calif. 2009 General Convention, and we will have booth 828 in the exhibitors' hall—the same booth we had last time if I remember correctly. We will have a small media team to report back to everyone the unvarnished truth of what is and is not happening at GC09. We will have a nearby private meeting room for deputies and bishops to confer, receive prayer or take a break. Additionally we will have a large room to gather for the Daily Office and a section of a ballroom for Eucharist on Sunday.

Our staff and volunteers at the exhibit booth will greet

those who stop by and offer various AAC publications for distribution. We will also monitor several of the key committee meetings and report back to orthodox deputies and bishops what has happened in committee and what to expect as the legislation comes to the floor. As in the past, we will need self-financing volunteers to assist in the exhibit floor and committee work and some other areas as needs arise.

In the time between now and this summer's convention, the AAC is working with orthodox TEC clergy to develop plans for mission and ministry in an increasingly hostile TEC environment. Building community and developing educational offerings for TEC clergy are one of our interests. Preparing documents and educational material for orthodox deputies and bishops is another interest. In the lead up to GC09 the AAC will publish a "Deputies Handbook for General Convention: What Bishops and Deputies need to know." This will be released in two volumes, one before the GC09 official Blue Book published by the Episcopal Church, which will detail the apostate and schismatic actions of TEC leadership. The second volume of the AAC's Handbook will be released before General Convention and will include comments on the official Blue Book, together with commentary on revisionist strategy and how to respond to it.

The American Anglican Council is deeply committed to standing with those faithful orthodox Episcopalians who see their witness within TEC. But quite frankly, the expense of our work at General Convention every three years is enormous, and hence we need your help. The AAC and the AAC Episcopal Desk can't attend General Convention this year without your strong support. We need people who can help in various capacities onsite in Anaheim, and we need financial support for this project that we estimate will cost at least \$50,000. If you are still in TEC, please help underwrite this ministry of the AAC Episcopal Desk for General Convention, and if you are out of TEC, but care for those who are maintaining a faithful witness, consider reaching out to Anglican brothers and sisters in Christ with a generous donation.

What happens at TEC's General Convention this year will have a significant impact on the entire Anglican Communion. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams, will be present for a portion of the meeting. We want to be able to report accurately what is said and done, so that all the global Anglican Primates hear the truth and are able, with Dr. Williams, to weigh the future of the entire Communion. †

*"Buddhist" cont. from page 1*

once a Buddhist but I am now a Christian; I was never both. Indeed, I now understand I cannot be both. Some might insist that it is only the mechanics of meditation that is adopted and not the theology or worldview of Buddhism. To say that is to miss the entire point of Buddhist meditation," he said.

Regardless of which religion he claims, Forrester's theological views fall outside the mainstream of Christianity. He is quoted as saying "I see now a Jesus who does not raise the bar to salvation, but lowers it so far that it

disappears." Writing in the diocese's newsletter, he stated: "Sin has little, if anything, to do with being bad. It has everything to do, as far as I can tell, with being blind to our own goodness."

The bishop-elect has also been criticized for using an unauthorized liturgy for Eucharist at his parish. According to The Living Church Magazine, a eucharistic prayer that the bishop-elect wrote for Easter season 2008 says this: "In the ancient days, at the dawn of time, You leaned over creation, scooped it to your breast and breathed the moist breath of life. ... The fire of your Spirit kindled a love between

Mary and Joseph; a fire that became the roaring flame of eternal compassion—the heart of Jesus."

Critics also raised questions and concerns about the diocese's method of selection and governance. The Episcopal Diocese of Northern Michigan is choosing an alternative form of leadership that divides the traditional responsibilities of a bishop into several different positions. Along with a bishop, there will be ministry developers, regional representatives, and a diocesan operations coordinator. This

*"Buddhist" cont. on page 3*

**"Buddhist" cont. from page 2**

team, called the Episcopal Ministry Support Team, will have 12 members and will act as the diocesan leadership.

The concept of a support team in charge of the diocese as opposed to a singular bishop is not one that is unheard of in Northern Michigan. The diocese's former bishop had introduced the idea to the diocese and was taking steps towards it. After Bishop Kelsey's death, a discernment team—a

group of diocesan representatives and three advisors called "reflectors"—was put in place to nominate members to the Episcopal Ministry Support Team and thus nominate the next bishop and diocesan leadership. However, complaints from inside and outside the diocese arose when it was learned that delegates to the diocesan convention would have only one slate of nominees. Delegates had the choice to either approve the entire team or vote against the entire team. To further

shadow the process of selection, four of the members of the discernment team tasked with finding the diocese's new leadership were nominated to be on the Episcopal Ministry Support Team. Bishop-elect Forrester was also an advisor to the discernment team which eventually selected him as the next bishop of Northern Michigan.

If Forrester receives the necessary consents from TEC diocesan standing committees and bishops, he will be consecrated on October 17, 2009. †



The Primates at their meeting in Alexandria, Egypt the day before TEC Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori arrived. 22 (of 38) provinces are in "broken" or "impaired" communion with TEC.

**"Primates" cont. from page 1**

they follow the same patterns and habits of prayer and listening?"

His reluctance to impose any sort of discipline goes against a bishop's ordination vows to "refute error" (CofE) and "guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church" (TEC). Moreover, "It is not catholic practice to make peace with those who deny the catholic faith simply because they will not go away," said the Rev. Phil Ashey, American Anglican Council chief operating officer and chaplain.

The Primates Communiqué also emphasized the need for continued work towards an Anglican Covenant and called for a more "relational basis and tone" in the text of the Covenant Draft.

"The Covenant is going to be another way of discovering that we are not in Communion," Archbishop Venables said.

The Communiqué suggests that an "ecclesial deficit" exists in the structural, theological and cultural foundations which are necessary to sustain communion. To address this, the Primates affirmed the decision to establish the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission for Unity, Faith and Order which would articulate the roles of the various Instruments of Communion and offer recommendations to make them more effective.

No progress was made towards the official recognition of the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA), although Archbishop Venables said, "Everybody recognized that these people are Anglicans and we want them to remain Anglicans."

The Communiqué states that there are significant concerns about parallel jurisdictions and no consensus about how the ACNA should be regarded. To this end, the Archbishop of Canterbury will initiate a "professionally mediated conversation" to help find a "provisional holding arrangement" that will enable dialog to take place towards reconciliation. The Primates Communiqué calls on ACNA to refrain from "recruiting" or "proselytizing" to expand their membership and deems the existing Communion

Partners Fellowship and Presiding Bishop Schori's Episcopal Visitors plan sufficient for the pastoral care of disaffected orthodox Episcopalians in TEC.

The Communiqué proposes a Pastoral Forum and Pastoral Visitors to help settle Communion disputes, both of which appear to be similar to the previously established Panel of Reference which proved to be ineffective. The Pastoral Forum, which would have no legal authority, will be established to deal theologically and practically with controversies. The Pastoral Visitors will engage in reconciliation and discern the ways forward in disputes, but will not have authority to propose structural solutions unless they are given permission by the Primate or lawful authority of the affected province.

The Pastoral Visitors have already been appointed by Archbishop Williams and met with representatives of TEC, Communion Partners, and the Anglican Church of Canada at Virginia Theological Seminary, February 25-28. They did not meet with representatives of ACNA, and it is telling that every church body tasked with finding a Communion solution has failed to consult with the injured parties—the Common Cause Partners and now ACNA—to come up with a plan that meets their needs for adequate episcopal oversight. "Since the orthodox Anglicans who left TEC have been talked about at length by the Lambeth powers but not talked to officially or 'on the record,' it would be nice to sit down and tell it like it is," said Bishop David Anderson, AAC president and CEO.

Regardless of what solutions are proposed, it remains to be seen whether TEC leadership will exercise "gracious restraint."

Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori has said this is a matter for General Convention to consider. In February she hired a litigator as her personal legal counsel, TEC joined the lawsuit against the Diocese of Pittsburgh and appealed the ruling in favor of the Virginia churches, and when questioned, Jefferts Schori did not rule out the possibility of litigation against the Diocese of Ft. Worth. †



THE AMERICAN ANGLICAN COUNCIL  
2296 Henderson Mill Road, NE  
Suite 406  
Atlanta, GA 30345-2739

(800) 914-2000  
(770) 414-1515  
info@americananglican.org  
www.americananglican.org

Non Profit Org  
US Postage  
PAID  
Suburban, MD  
Permit No.  
4889

### In this issue...

- Buddhist Bishop Elected in Northern Michigan
- No Discipline out of Primates' Meeting
- A Message from the President

### AAC Releases Report to Primates

At the request of the Archbishop of Nigeria, the American Anglican Council prepared a 42-page report, "The Episcopal Church: Tearing the Fabric of Communion to Shreds", which is available on the AAC website. The report was presented to various Primates of the Anglican Communion at their recent meeting in Alexandria, Egypt. An additional report prepared by the Anglican Network in Canada on the Anglican Church of Canada is also available at the AAC website.

The AAC will continue to update this document. Please send any news or updates (with documentation) to [communications@americananglican.org](mailto:communications@americananglican.org) or by mail to our office.

### In-depth Commentary on the Primates Communique

Don't miss the Rev. Phil Ashey's "An Honest Look at the Primates Communique" and "The Real Lessons From Alexandria" available on the AAC website. Both articles were originally distributed through the AAC Weekly Update, which contains the latest news and commentary from the AAC emailed every Friday.

### Receive Encompass by e-mail

In an effort to save money and the environment, the AAC is urging Encompass subscribers to sign up to receive the publication by email instead of posted mail. If you would like to receive the electronic version of Encompass instead of your current hard copy, please email [communications@americananglican.org](mailto:communications@americananglican.org). Include your name and current mailing address in the email body. Please put the phrase "Email Version of Encompass" in the subject line.

If you do not currently subscribe to Encompass but would like to receive it by email, go to [www.americananglican.org](http://www.americananglican.org) and click on the top of the screen where it says "email sign-up."

### No Jan/Feb 2009 Encompass

Due to the demands of preparing the Primates' Report and updating "Equipping the Saints", the AAC did not publish a January/February issue of Encompass.

### Updated Educational Resource Available from the AAC

The AAC has recently updated "Equipping the Saints," an educational resource now available on its website under "Current Resources."

"Equipping the Saints third edition" is an informative booklet that focuses on the crisis in the Anglican Communion as it relates to The Episcopal Church. A preliminary third version was posted in December, 2008. That version has now been updated and finalized and includes new information on the Anglican Church in North America as well as practical information for orthodox laity remaining in TEC. Complete with cited quotes, timelines, and statistical information, "Equipping the Saints" is a great reference tool for individuals wanting to know more about the current situation and how we got here.

The document can be downloaded and copied free of charge. To order multiple hard copies of the publication, please call us at 1-800-914-2000 or fill out an order form online.

**The American Anglican Council is a network of individuals (laity, deacons, priests and bishops), parishes and specialized ministries who affirm biblical authority and Christian orthodoxy within the Anglican Communion. In response to the Lord's calling and by His grace, we commit ourselves to proclaim the Good News to every person and to reform and renew the Church of Jesus Christ. We are uniting in order to fulfill our apostolic mission and ministry, working to build a faithful Anglican witness in the Americas.**

*Encompass* is a monthly publication of the American Anglican Council.

**Publisher: The Rt. Rev. David C. Anderson  
Executive Editor: Ralinda B. Gregor  
Editor: Robert H. Lundy**