



ENCOMPASS

News and Events from the American Anglican Council • May 2010

Global South Calls for Revised Covenant

BY ROBERT H. LUNDY,
EDITOR

The Fourth Anglican Global South to South Encounter took place April 19-23 in Singapore with representatives of the vast majority of the world's Anglicans on hand. Twenty provinces represented by 130 delegates in the Global South met at St. Andrew's Cathedral.

Representatives included archbishops, bishops, priests and laity along with some Western observers, including Anglican Church in North America (AC-NA) Archbishop Bob Duncan and the AAC's Phil Ashey, meeting for Bible study, plenary sessions, and small group discussions. The previous South to South Encounter took place in 2005 in Egypt.

Conference organizers set the theme as "The Gospel of Jesus Christ-Covenant for the People; Light for the Nations" and sought to strengthen participants' relational ties and affirm the "Anglican Covenant as the basis in intensifying the ecclesial life between churches in the Communion," according to a pre-conference publication. While the meeting's impact on the rest of the Communion remains to be seen, its importance was clearly visible. As planned, the group elected a new slate of leaders with the most notable change being the replacement of retired Nigerian Archbishop Peter Akinola as chair with the Archbishop of Singapore, John Chew.

While he could not attend the meeting due to a full schedule, the Archbishop of Canterbury addressed the conference via video. His 11 minute video address urged participants to submit to one another in mutual obedience and to be patient, in reference to the election of a partnered lesbian bishop in Los Angeles, saying that there are "no quick solutions for the wounds of the Body of Christ." Before the conference ended, reports emerged that participants did not applaud for or show noticeable appreciation for the Archbishop's message.

The meeting ended with the release of a communiqué calling for the next decade to be "a Decade of Mission and Networking" within the Global South. The communiqué also chastised The Episcopal Church (TEC) and the Anglican Church of Canada (ACoC) who have "rejected the Way of the Lord as expressed in Holy Scripture" and encouraged all Global South provinces to "reconsider their communion relationship" with TEC and the ACoC. Many provinces have already declared themselves to be out of communion or in a state of broken communion with the two provinces.

While it mourned the actions of some, the conference expressed welcome to two North American groups. The



Above: Bishops gather for prayer before Eucharist at St. Andrew's Cathedral, Singapore. Below: Bishops outside cathedral. (Photos courtesy Global South Anglican website)

Global South welcomed the Communion Partners, a group of priests and bishops who uphold Anglican orthodoxy but choose to remain within TEC, along with the AC-NA as partners in the Gospel and expressed the hope that "all provinces will be in full communion with the clergy and people of the AC-NA and the Communion Partners."

Regarding the proposed Anglican Covenant, the meeting did not affirm the document as it originally set

out to do but instead said "we are currently reviewing the proposed Covenant to find ways to strengthen it in order for it to fulfill its purpose." The communiqué specifically suggested that all who adopt the Covenant should be in compliance with Lambeth 1.10, the Communion's official teaching on human sexuality, and that the primates, rather than the Standing Committee of the Anglican Communion, should oversee the implementation of the Covenant.

The communiqué also addressed the perceived colonialism and domination of Western voices within communion structures and called for a "review [of] the entire Anglican Communion structure; especially the Instruments of Communion and the Anglican Communion Office; in order to achieve

an authentic expression of the current reality of our Anglican Communion."

As of press time, the Anglican Communion Office and Archbishop of Canterbury had not responded to the communiqué. †



Gratitude, Caution, and Hope: Personal Reflections from the GSE4



The Rev. Phil Ashley (left) and the Rt. Rev. Rennis Ponniah. (Photo courtesy Global South Anglican website)

BY THE REV. J. PHILIP ASHEY,
CHIEF OPERATING & DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Upon my return from the Fourth Anglican Global South to South Encounter (GSE4) in Singapore, I needed to plunge immediately into the organizational Synod of the newly forming Anglican Diocese of the South—a new diocese in the AC-NA that the AAC has helped to launch through our organizational work and our conference on “Sharing our Faith.” Now that the Synod and conference are completed, I have had time to reflect on the things I saw and heard at the GSE4, and my observations can be summed up in three words: Gratitude, Caution and Hope.

Gratitude: I am grateful for the privilege and honor of representing the AC-NA with Archbishop Duncan, Bishop Guernsey and Mr. Hugo Blankingship, chancellor of the AC-NA. I am grateful for the opportunities to fellowship with Communion Partner Bishops Mark Lawrence and John Howe. I am grateful for the exceptional organization and hospitality extended by Archbishop John Chew, the clergy and the people of the Diocese of Singapore. I am grateful for the anointed Bible studies by Bishop Rennis Ponniah, assisting Bishop of Singapore, from Isaiah on a new vision for God, the Church and leadership. The Bible studies and prayer times brought us daily into the presence of the Lord and the power of the Holy Spirit! I am grateful for the special meeting called by the primates to hear the concerns of the AC-NA and Communion Partners and better understand the situation we face in North America. I am grateful for the mutually supporting words offered by Archbishop Duncan and Bishop Howe in response to their questions. I am grateful that the primates recognized the flaws in the current version of the Anglican Covenant, insisted upon compliance with Lambeth Resolution 1.10 as a precondition for signing the Covenant, called for the primates to review and enforce the Covenant rather than the ersatz “Standing Committee,” and thereby reaffirmed the authority and responsibility of the primates regarding faith and order in the Anglican Communion.

Caution: The Global South is not a monolithic entity. As someone in my small group remarked, it is made up of many voices and many interests. During the debate over the language of the final communiqué, some of those voices echoed the same refrains we heard 20 years ago when The Episcopal Church (TEC) and the Anglican Church of Canada (ACoC) placed sexual freedom above the authority of scripture. Even in my small group someone remarked, “And how can one define orthodoxy?” Fortunately,

those voices were not able to stop the strong language of the communiqué condemning the innovations of TEC and the ACoC, reaffirming the authority of Holy Scripture and its call to corporate and personal holiness, and encouraging every (orthodox) province to declare full communion with AC-NA and Communion Partners. But the question remains: how will the Global South choose to order itself in the years ahead? Up to now, the Global South has enjoyed congruence between geography, history and theology. When TEC and the ACoC ignore the communiqué and show up at the next meeting of the instruments of unity, who will stand with Archbishops Anis, Ernest and Orombi in boycotting those meetings? As Archbishop Duncan wisely observed in his closing remarks, building an association based on geography or history, rather than the “faith once delivered to the saints” is the same trajectory TEC and the ACoC followed in the 20th century. If the association rests on nothing more than common prayer and common mission, it will suffer the same “glorious failure” that the Archbishop of Canterbury declared in his closing address at ACC-14. If the Global South chooses to build on such foundations, what future does the Communion have?

Hope: In view of the trajectories that TEC and the ACoC have followed, it is evident that the “gathering power” in the Communion must shift from institutional mandates and history to theological agreement. In the words of Archbishop Peter Jensen, we are no longer in a time of crisis. The crisis has passed; the Archbishop of Canterbury’s video plea for restraint and further dialogue fell on deaf ears. We are living in a time of consequences. The communiqué used the strongest possible language to condemn “those who continue to claim the name Anglican but who pursue an agenda of their own desire in opposition to historic norms of faith, teaching and practice.” (para. 20) The Global South cited the GAFCON gathering and the Anglican formularies contained in the Jerusalem Declaration as a point of theological clarity and agreement. In conversations with delegates, I heard time and again that it is a gathering like that around the Jerusalem Declaration which will pave the way for an Anglican future undeterred by false gospels—a Communion committed to fulfilling the Great Commission, and profoundly missional in reaching the world with the transforming love of Jesus Christ.

The American Anglican Council will continue to work with our friends in GAFCON/FCA and the Global South to ensure such a future for the Anglican Communion. We give thanks for the recognition of faithful Episcopalians in the Communion Partner dioceses and congregations. I ask your prayers as we build upon the recognition by 80 percent of the Anglican Communion that the Anglican Church in North America is a faithful expression of Anglicanism! †



Opening service of the GSE4. (Photo courtesy Global South Anglican website)

Gracious Restraint has Ended

BY RALINDA B. GREGOR, EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefforts Schori will consecrate a partnered lesbian as one of two suffragan bishops for the Diocese of Los Angeles on May 15. Her office announced March 17 that a majority of bishops and standing committees had consented to the consecration of Canon Mary Glasspool. The Diocese of Los Angeles reported that 69 standing committees had consented, but they would not reveal how many of the 110 standing committees had responded.

Jefforts Schori wrote the primates soon after the announcement, saying, "I realize that this development will cause hurt and pain to some of you."

"...This is not the decision of one person, or a small group of people. It represents the mind of a majority of elected leaders in The Episcopal Church, lay, clergy, and bishops, who have carefully considered the opinions and feelings of other members of the Anglican Communion as well as the decades-long conversations within this Church," she explained. She said that according to TEC canons she must proceed with the consecration.

Several Global South primates reacted strongly to the announcement. In a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury and all Anglican primates and moderators, Archbishop Henry Orombi of Uganda wrote: "We have only to note the recent election and confirmation of an active Lesbian as a Suffragan Bishop in the Diocese of Los Angeles to realize that TEC has no interest in 'gracious restraint,' let alone a moratorium on the things that have brought us to this point of collapse. It is now impossible to regard their earlier words of 'regret' as a serious gesture of reconciliation with the rest of the Communion."

In the letter, Orombi criticized the enhanced authority that the "Standing Committee of the Anglican Communion" has granted to itself in the latest draft of the Covenant. He called upon the Archbishop of Canterbury to call a Pri-



Archbishop Ian Ernest. (Photo courtesy Global South Anglican website)

mates' Meeting—the only instrument that has authority to act—to deal with the communion crisis. He insisted that the primates themselves set the agenda, rather than any Lambeth staff, and he called for the primates of TEC and the Anglican Church of Canada to be excluded from this meeting since they are "proceeding with unbiblical practices that contradict the faith of Anglicanism." The GAFCON primates, meeting in Bermuda April 5-9, also responded to

TEC's approval of Glasspool's election in a communiqué, noting, "This action also makes clear that any pretence that there has been a season of gracious restraint in the Communion has come to an end." The primates noted that the Communion structures have "lost integrity and relevance" and concluded that "the Anglican Communion will only be able to fulfill its gospel mandate if it understands itself to be a community gathered around a confession of faith rather than an organisation that has its primary focus on institutional loyalty."

A primate outside the GAFCON group, Archbishop Ian Ernest of the Province of the Indian Ocean, also responded to TEC's approval of Glasspool in an April 13th letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury. He characterized TEC's actions as proof they are "hell bent on a course that is in radical disobedience to the counsels of God in Holy Scripture." He echoed the call for a Primates' Meeting—minus TEC and the Anglican Church of Canada (ACoC)—to be convened soon and questioned why Communion structures are not representative of the 80 percent of Anglicans who live in the Global South.

"Gracious Restraint" cont. on back page

Lawsuit Updates

The Episcopal Church (TEC) has initiated more than 50 lawsuits against Anglican parishes and individuals across North America. The lawsuits usually begin after an orthodox congregation votes to leave TEC and affiliate with another Anglican province. The national church or the local diocese then usually sues the congregation, and sometimes individual members, for control of church property and assets.

The following is an update on some of the more high-profile cases that are being tried.

Virginia: A ruling from the Virginia Supreme Court is expected soon for the case involving nine Anglican District of Virginia parishes, The Episcopal Diocese of Virginia and the national Episcopal Church. On April 13, the court heard oral arguments from each side's attorneys. Four justices (two recused themselves because of prior relationships with both churches) peppered the attorneys with questions in front of a crowded courtroom. The case came as an appeal to Fairfax County Circuit Court Judge Randy Bellows' ruling that the realigning parishes owned their property. The court will announce its decision on June 10 or 11.

San Joaquin, California: The TEC-affiliated Diocese of San Joaquin brought suit against a fifth congregation in April. St. James, Sonora, also known as the "Red Church" because of its red exterior, is part of the Anglican Diocese of San Joaquin, which left TEC in December, 2007. The dio-

cese filed similar suits in February and March. Sources say a sixth lawsuit is expected to be filed soon against St. John's in Stockton. All of the existing lawsuits are at the Superior Court level in the parishes' respective counties.

South Carolina: An Episcopal church in South Carolina has effectively withdrawn its appeal to the U.S. Supreme

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The Rt. Rev. David Bena addresses the congregation at The Falls Church, Va., which was established in 1732. (Photo courtesy CRC Public Relations)



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

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Court to hear the case it lost when the Supreme Court of South Carolina ruled in favor of the group that voted to leave TEC and join the Anglican Mission in the Americas (AMiA). All Saints Church, Pawley's Island voted to leave TEC in 2003. The Diocese of South Carolina, along with a group of church members who did not want to leave TEC, sued the parish but eventually lost in the state's Supreme Court. While the diocese did not appeal the ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court, the group of former members along with the national church did; however, the two parishes reached a settlement before the court decided whether or not to hear the case. In a March 25 letter to the Episcopal congregation, Father Ed Kelaher told parishioners that "our Vestry has worked long and hard with the Vestry of the AMiA congregation to find a way to end the case forever while providing a way for both churches to go forward into the future in faith and service to our Lord." Among other arrangements, the settlement included the AMiA congregation offering a gift of \$375,000 to the Episcopal congregation, the opportunity for the Episcopal congregation to use the church buildings for funerals, weddings and other pastoral occasions and the understanding that the Episcopal congregation would cease using the name "All Saints." In a letter to the AMiA congregation, Bishop Terrell Glenn said, "It is the hope of both Vestries that this agreement allows our two church families a graceful way to go forward in ministry, seek reconciliation of relationships and forge healthy ways of partnering in the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ." This settlement effectively ends TEC's chance to appeal the state court's decision. †

"Gracious Restraint" cont. from page 3

Additionally, Ernest announced that he was suspending all verbal and sacramental communication with TEC and the ACoC, except for the Communion Partners and others who "have distanced themselves from the direction of the TEC."

Glasspool will be the second non-celibate homosexual to become a bishop in The Episcopal Church. Since her election, another diocese has added a homosexual priest to its slate of bishop nominees. The Rev. Canon Michael Barlowe, who married his partner in California when it was legal, is one of the four finalists who could be elected on May 22 as the next bishop of the Diocese of Utah. †

Nigeria's New Primate

The Most. Rev. Nicholas Okoh, during his consecration service in Abuja, Nigeria. Over 2,000 people were on hand for the March 25 service including the primates of West Africa, Kenya and the Anglican Church in North America along with the AAC's President and CEO, Bishop David Anderson. Nigerian President Dr. Goodluck Jonathan was a featured speaker. (Photo courtesy Chris Sugden)



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 bi-monthly publication of the American Anglican Council.

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