



ENCOMPASS

News and Events from the American Anglican Council Mission and Ministry Network

Hundreds Gather for "Connecticut Six" Event in May

BY CYNTHIA P. BRUST, EXEC. EDITOR

Biblically faithful Episcopalians from across the nation met in Connecticut Thursday, May 12 through Friday, May 13 for a "Witness of the Church in Solidarity and Faith" gathering. Some 900 individuals attended the worship service Thursday evening at Bishop Seabury Church (Groton, Conn.), and approximately 300 gathered at the Capitol steps in Hartford Friday morning for a rally celebrating the Anglican Communion.

Nine domestic bishops and two African bishops, as well as representatives from the American Anglican Council (AAC) and the Anglican Communion Network (ACN), attended the event and brought words of encouragement to the faithful and challenge to those within the Episcopal Church USA (ECUSA) who have abandoned the faith of Scripture.

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Above left: The "Connecticut Six" host a worship service at Bishop Seabury Church (Groton, Conn.). From left to right: the Rev. Mark Hansen, the Rev. Gilbert Wilkes, the Rev. Ronald Gauss, the Rev. Allyn Benedict, the Rev. Christopher Leighton, and the Rev. Donald Helmandollar.



Above, right: The Rt. Rev. William Rukirande, retired Bishop of Kigezi, Province of Uganda, addresses the gathering at the Capitol steps in Hartford.



Message from the President

BY THE REV. CANON DAVID C. ANDERSON
AAC PRESIDENT AND CEO

Almost every news article I read on the current crisis in the church seems to focus on sexuality. Many Episcopalians across the country also believe the deep division we are experiencing is centered on that issue, but this is absolutely not the case. The crisis in the church is not about sexuality; it is about truth, the unique person of Jesus Christ, salvation, and the authority of Scripture.

We are in the midst of a battle for the soul of the church. In the wake of 30 years dominated by human secularism, modernism and postmodernism; a new gospel has arisen that offers Jesus as one of many ways to salvation, dismisses the transformational power of Christ through the Holy Spirit, and deems Scripture myth with no spiritual or practical authority for believers. But the moral decay in society and the church is a byproduct of this new gospel, not the cause. Our problems didn't begin with decisions at General Convention 2003 or subsequent actions of the Episcopal Church USA (ECUSA) and the Anglican Church of Canada. No, the challenges to the institution of marriage and an "anything goes" attitude to sexuality developed directly from a *crisis of belief*.

It is critical for every man, woman and child to understand what is at stake and what the central issues are: if the new gospel replaces the Gospel as revealed by God in Christ, the church will have lost its soul. If the church abandons the faith once delivered; if it no longer teaches

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The New "Via Media": Another Misnomer

BY THE REV. VERN CASWELL

(Editor's Note: So-called "Via Media" groups in numerous Episcopal dioceses and churches across the nation have formed since the crisis that erupted following General Convention 2003. Members claim concern about a break in unity within the Episcopal Church USA (ECUSA), a desire for ECUSA to remain together, and a doctrine of "diversity" and "inclusivity" within the church. Many of these groups formed under the guise of being moderate, "middle of the road" (via media) Episcopalians, but the Rev. Vern Caswell dismisses this notion below and reveals their philosophy for what it is.)

The current issues facing the Anglican Communion have many calling for unity. Numerous groups around the United States have adopted the name "Via Media" and are mis-applying the name to further their agendas. There is even a new curriculum in the Episcopal Church that has co-opted the title. [The referenced evangelism curriculum is that of Every Voice Network, an organization long associated with aggressively promoting the homosexual agenda.] The group that created this curriculum claims the material is taken from "the lessons of General Convention...that the Church needs to spread the message of an inclusive, powerful, passionate God to all people" (from www.everyvoicenet/viamedia).

Revisionism is affecting even the historical facts associated with the founding of Anglicanism. Making use of the words *via media*, a Latin phrase for "middle road", in association with ECUSA's current struggles denies the core of the original aspects of the middle way.

In its historical context, *via media* was the term applied to the Elizabethan Settlement of the 1550s, when Queen Elizabeth I issued a policy avoiding extremes in religion and adapting the "middle way". Her goal was to avert the kinds of wars based on religion prevalent on the European continent at that time. She set aside her personal preferences in hopes of gaining national unity and peace. The "middle way" was applied to elements not essential to one's salvation (these elements are known as *adiaphora*).

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The Mission & Ministry of the AAC

BY CYNTHIA P. BRUST, EXEC. EDITOR

Since its formation in 1996 as a network of individuals, parishes, specialized ministries and Episcopal Bishops; the American Anglican Council (AAC) has continually adapted in order to meet and address challenges facing the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion. The AAC leadership has never wavered in its mission—it is committed to proclaiming the Good News to every person, to affirming biblical authority, and to upholding Anglican orthodoxy—but the application of that mission has by necessity expanded and been modified.

“From 1996 to 2003, the AAC’s ministry focused on efforts to reform the Episcopal Church from within through proclamation, education, and seeking to influence the legislative process on a diocesan and national level,” said the Rev. Canon David C. Anderson, AAC President and CEO. “Our efforts were successful to some extent. We grew in individual and parish affiliation and formed chapters across the country and raised the awareness level regarding the downward spiral of the Episcopal Church.”



The Rev. Canon David C. Anderson answers questions at a media conference following release of the Windsor Report 2004.

Everything changed at General Convention 2003 of the Episcopal Church USA (ECUSA). Deputies and bishops repudiated traditional

Christian teaching by failing to pass Resolution B001, which affirmed the authority of Scripture, and by changing the Episcopal Church’s doctrine on sexuality. Both of these actions represented an abandonment of the faith and order of Anglicanism, and both set the Episcopal Church outside mainstream Christianity.

The AAC’s membership and work exploded following General Convention as Episcopalians across the country realized that the leadership of their beloved church had betrayed them. While ECUSA has embraced revisionist theology since the early 1960s, many in the pews were oblivious until 2003. It took the ensuing crisis to make the average Episcopalian aware of how far their Church had drifted from traditional Christian teaching. Thousands joined the AAC as a result, and the focus of the organization shifted in response to the changing landscape.

“In the wake of the last General Convention, the hope of reforming and renewing the Episcopal Church from within was turned on its axis as the Episcopal Church was plunged headlong into apostasy and heterodoxy,” Canon Anderson explained. “We have had to come to terms with that fact and turn our focus to the realignment of Anglicanism in North America.”

This task of realignment has been difficult and has come with a price. Revisionist leaders across the nation have accused the AAC of being schismatic and divisive while some in the orthodox camp blame the organization for not “fixing the problem.” Committed clergy and congregations have endured harassment and threats

because of their affiliation with the AAC. In the midst of these challenges, however, the ministry of the AAC has expanded. The AAC has assisted numerous churches and clergy in addressing legal issues and canonical abuses as well as worked to inform, mobilize and equip laity. In addition, the AAC has served as the secretariat for the Anglican Communion Network, providing both funding and staff support. On the international front, AAC leaders have worked closely with the primates of the Anglican Communion, both resourcing and fulfilling a diplomatic role.



The Rev. Canon Ellis E. Brust represents the AAC at the Connecticut Six rally in Hartford in May 2005.

While realignment continues to unfold, the AAC’s work will focus on preparing for that new reality and bringing as many individuals and churches on board as possible.

“We have operated in crisis mode for so long that many have adopted a victim’s mentality. I hope we can shift in our thinking and attitude,” Canon Anderson said. “We stand with the vast majority of Anglicans worldwide who uphold Biblical faith and order, and we have the support of the Communion. We are, in fact, victorious and need to look to the future with anticipation. We are on the side of history – there has never been a more exciting time to be an Anglican.” ♦

..... “Equipping the Saints: A Crisis Resource for Anglican Laity”, an AAC publication, offers recommendations on ways laity can “stand up, speak out and take action.” Laity involvement has never been so important, and the AAC hopes to partner with orthodox laity in every community to help inspire, inform, educate and mobilize others to join the cause of Anglican realignment—and time is of the essence.

Laity:
Take
Action!

Whether members of Episcopal churches or Anglican churches that have left ECUSA, all are called to help fill lifeboats so all can find safe harbor. Effective measures include **applying pressure on rectors and bishops and holding standing committees and diocesan conventions** to “choose this day whom you shall serve.” Our goal can best be met by “informing and persuading one Episcopalian, one church, one diocese at a time of the fact that the Gospel itself

is at risk.” We find that those who have not yet engaged the issues are greatly influenced when the facts are presented to them by someone they know and trust. Here are some specific actions we recommend:

- ❖ Pray without ceasing – consider organizing dedicated days of prayer and fasting.
- ❖ Join the AAC – individually and as a parish.
- ❖ Compile mailing lists (email and postal) to connect and remain connected.
- ❖ Work relationally in your own and other churches (see article “Reaping a Harvest” in the May 2005 *Encompass*). Invite friends to a small gathering at your house and help inform them. To assist you, the AAC has developed two tools (“Equipping the Saints” and “Walking Together or Walking Apart?”) available on the AAC website or by calling the office. ♦

Connecticut Six (continued from Page 1)

"We must ask, 'who are the dissidents and who are the faithful?'" said Bishop of Fort Worth Jack Iker in his remarks. "We, along with the Connecticut Six, are mainstream, orthodox Anglicans. The dissidents are a small group of revisionists in ECUSA seeking to undermine orthodoxy in order to update Christianity and make it palatable to society. We are not a small group of disgruntled dissidents. We stand with the vast majority of Anglicans world-wide as the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church."

Referencing the first chapter of Joshua, the Rev. Canon Ellis E. Brust, Chief Operating Officer of the AAC, called the orthodox to "be strong and very courageous" and to "choose this day whom you will serve": "Choose to obey the clear teaching of Jesus Christ and faith and order of the Church; choose to oppose the false gospel of revisionism; choose to proclaim the transforming hope of Christ," he said.

At the event, there was a direct challenge to those in the Episcopal Church who embrace revisionist doctrine and practice that are contrary to traditional Anglicanism.



Leaders offer support and encouragement at "The Witness of the Church in Solidarity and Faith" rally in Hartford, Conn., May 12-13, 2005.



The Rt. Rev. Robert Duncan addresses the rally in Hartford.

"There is a counterfeit abroad in the land that looks like the real thing, but when you try to spend it, it has no currency. It is a counterfeit," said the Rt. Rev. Robert Duncan, Bishop of Pittsburgh and ACN Moderator. "The counterfeiters are the ones distorting the faith with an easy gospel that really turns out to be no gospel, with an easy Jesus that really is not Jesus."

The Rev. Canon Martyn Minns, rector of Truro Church (Fairfax, Va.) and preacher at the Thursday evening service, clarified the work ahead: "We have a clear choice to make. We have a clear message to proclaim and a clear commandment to obey," he said.

The Rev. Christopher Leighton, one of the so-called Connecticut Six, noted, "We are here to stand for Jesus Christ and the truth of Scripture." He also called on the Episcopal Church to "repent and to choose to walk with the rest of the Communion," a call reinforced by a moving "Litany of Repentance".

Along with the Connecticut Six, other Anglican clergy present were: the Rt. Rev. James Adams, the Rt. Rev. FitzSimons Allison, the Rt. Rev. David Bena, the Rev. Canon Ellis E. Brust, the Rt. Rev. Samuel Chukuka, the Rt. Rev. Robert Duncan, the Rt. Rev. Andrew Fairfield, the Rev. John Guernsey, the Rt. Rev. Donald Harvey, the Rt. Rev. Daniel Herzog, the Rt. Rev. Jack Iker, the Rev. William Ilgenritz, the Rev. James McCaslin, and the Rt. Rev. William Rukirande. ♦

Message from the President (continued from Page 1)

Jesus as the way, the truth and the life; if it fails to teach the transforming power offered by the Holy Spirit; if it clings to idolatry of the institution of the Episcopal Church; and if apathy continues to reign in the church, then the church will have lost its soul.

Tragically, the majority of Episcopalians can't seem to grasp this reality. The average Episcopal Church has a small percentage of members (ranging from 10-20 percent) sold out to revisionism and an equal percentage of biblically orthodox sold out to Christ. That leaves the vast majority of Episcopal congregations in some form of denial, including: complete unawareness of the crisis and its issues; dedication to the institution at the expense of the Gospel; determination to ignore the problem so it will go away; and conviction that a middle ground still exists.

So where does this leave us? The Anglican Communion has given ECUSA a clear choice—walk together or walk apart. While the ultimate decision will be made at General Convention 2006, early indications point to ECUSA's intention to continue on its self-destructive path. Few expect true and hearty repentance and amendment of life. If the Episcopal Church chooses once and for all to embrace the new gospel of revisionism, those Episcopalians not already committed to either side will be faced with making their choice. Each of us who is dedicated to orthodoxy must help others understand the choice and provide the information and tools necessary to uphold the faith once delivered. The rally call of the AAC is, "Choose this day whom you shall serve." Join us in taking this call to each church; the souls of individuals, the soul of the church, and the face of civilization as we know it are at stake. ♦



A Tribute to Diane Knippers (1952-2005)

The life and ministry of Diane Knippers was marked by uncompromising devotion to Christ and His Church, and she was recognized for her tireless commitment to preserving orthodox Anglicanism. Without a doubt, Diane lived for the "praise of His glory", displaying truth, grace, firm determination, and gentleness.

President of the Institute on Religion and Democracy since 1993, Diane was named one of America's 25 most influential evangelicals by *Time* magazine earlier this year. Many Anglicans best remember her for her powerful message addressing the role of laity in the church delivered at the AAC's "A Place to Stand: Declaring, Preparing" conference two years ago.

Diane was a beloved member of the AAC family, having served as Interim President and as a member of the Board of Trustees. And while we and all of her family and friends miss her deeply, we rejoice that she is now enjoying eternity with our Lord, and we are thankful for the far-reaching impact she had during her life. May Diane serve as a model, witness and inspiration for all of us who continue the fight to uphold orthodoxy which she carried out so valiantly and effectively until cancer took her from us this past April. ♦

Above: Diane Knippers speaking in October 2003 at the AAC conference in Dallas, Texas.



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Learn more at www.americananglican.org

Via Media (continued from Page 1)

The brilliance of the Elizabethan Settlement was in the way it incorporated various Catholic and Protestant ideas of worship into a single entity. The middle road accepted divergent opinions on items of less importance, such as ceremonial and political issues, like liturgical vestments. These divergent opinions concerned the expression, not the content, of the faith. This is the “diversity in unity” that is spoken of as a major component of Anglicanism. At the time of the settlement, the reform element wanted to return the Church to the way it was in the first five centuries of existence. Bringing these divergent groups together without a war was a tough task. However, there was never any discussion about the essentials of the faith; Scriptural authority was not challenged and Jesus’ divinity was accepted. Jesus’ statement “I am the way, and the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6) was considered true.

When this atmosphere is compared to the current climate in the Episcopal Church, and by extension to the Anglican Communion, it is not difficult to see the deficiencies in the new *via media*. Queen Elizabeth I did not have

a large table with room for everyone and every view. Her settlement did not include room for Druid worship or Islamic Imams on a cathedral staff. The historic middle way was not a compromise between competing theories about God. It was, as Professor Les Fairfield of Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry notes, “not a bridge but a causeway.” It did not join together two differing religions but was a way through the middle ground of the one true religion. The historic *via media* did not open new doors to a new church but allowed entry through several doors to the same Church. In fact, the Articles of Religion were foundational during the Elizabethan period. Today, the 39 Articles are mere suggestions from a begotten era and can be found in the “Historical Documents” section of the *Book of Common Prayer*. One must wonder if the current *via media* groups will assent to the Articles of Religion as required by their name. Besides the 39 Articles, the historic *via media* also believed in the Divine Right Monarchy. Would today’s group follow the dictates of Queen Elizabeth I?

The historic *via media* is very different from the progressive nature of the modern *via media*. The inconsistencies abound. Anyone attempting to use the term *via media* today must either accept the historical reality the phrase represents or dismiss the pertinent points in favor of aspects that coincide with their feelings. The latter choice is rampant in the Episcopal Church today, unfortunately at the expense of the former.

History teaches us valuable lessons which the revisionists of the new *via media* ignore. Let them do so at their own peril. When the true facts of *via media* are known, those who have hijacked the term for political expediency will fall short in their efforts. ♦

--The Rev. Vern Caswell is rector of St. James Anglican Church in Oklahoma City, Okla., which belongs to the Diocese of Argentina.

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.

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