



March 2005

ENCOMPASS

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

United States and Canada Given Clear Choice by Primates

by Cynthia P. Brust

Thirty-five of the 38 Anglican Primates met in Northern Ireland February 20-25, 2005. The majority of sessions dealt with a doctrinal crisis within the Communion precipitated by innovations contrary to Scripture as well as Anglican teaching and practice by the Episcopal Church USA (ECUSA) and the Anglican Church of Canada. Primates considered specific recommendations of the Windsor Report 2004 and issued a unanimous Communiqué on February 24, 2005 that strongly upheld traditional Christian teaching on human sexuality including Lambeth 1.10. In addition, Primates asked both provinces to “voluntarily withdraw their representatives from the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC)” until at least 2008 and to account for their actions at the June meeting of the ACC.

Leaders of the American Anglican Council (AAC) and the Anglican Communion Network (ACN) noted that the meeting represents “a pivotal moment in Anglican history” and that “a clear and unequivocal choice has been presented to the Episcopal Church USA and the Anglican Church of Canada.” During this interim period, ECUSA and the Anglican Church of Canada have been given a grace period to choose their path - to walk together with or apart from the Anglican Communion. The clear warning of the Primates' Communiqué is that if ECUSA and the Anglican Church of Canada refuse to repent, thereby eschewing traditional Anglican teaching and practice, the two provinces risk permanent separation from the Communion.

Some who support theological innovations contend that the Primates of the Communion have limited power to discipline ECUSA or the Anglican Church in Canada, but Dr. James Behrens, an English barrister who is the chancellor of two dioceses and the author of four books on church law, presents a strong opposing argument. Dr. Behrens advises that the Primates have full power and authority to expel ECUSA from membership in the Anglican Communion.

“If ECUSA challenges or refuses to comply with the request by the Primates to withdraw from the ACC, ECUSA can be expelled from the Anglican Communion, or formally suspended,” Behrens explained.

Additionally, Dr. Behrens said that being a member of the Anglican Communion is a matter of fact, not a matter of law.



Photo by Darryl Mooney. Used with Permission.

The Anglican Primates gathered following Choral Evensong at Armagh Cathedral.

“It is like a group of friends, not the members of a corporation. If friendships break up, they break up,” he noted.

For more on “US and Canada Given Clear Choice...,” please turn to page 3.

A Call to Action

Bishop Robert Duncan, Moderator of the Anglican Communion Network, has reported a five-point call to action for biblically faithful believers in North America as identified by a majority of Primates:

- Explain to others that our teaching has been confirmed as the teaching of the Anglican Communion.
- Make your choice — choose your future — walk together with the Anglican Communion or walk separately.
- Engage the Panel of Reference soon to be established to address the needs of clergy and congregations in serious disagreement with their bishops and dioceses with their province.
- Reorganize and unite — “get it together” as the biblically faithful in North America.
- “Grow up” — the spiritual battle is intense. Keep the faith and run the race.



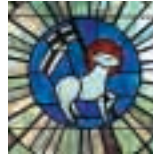
Message from the President

*By the Rev. Canon
David C. Anderson
AAC President and CEO*

We have returned from Ireland much encouraged about the future. While we deeply grieve the division in our beloved church, we are thankful that the Primates of the Anglican Communion have spoken so clearly and upheld truth without compromise. The language and spirit of the Communiqué is gracious and pastorally sensitive to all parties involved in this crisis, but be assured that the intent of an ultimatum for the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada is clear.

Certainly we face challenges as we live into the directives of the Primates' Communiqué, and I am especially concerned about those individuals, clergy and laity, as well as congregations that find themselves vulnerable in hostile dioceses. The panel of reference called for by the Primates is critical to offering protection and the ability to continue in ministry with integrity. Please pray for the work of this panel.

The fact that for the first time in history the Primates declined to participate in corporate worship during their meeting is indicative of the torn fabric of the Communion. Remarks from the Presiding Bishop of the United States and Primate of Canada as well as others in leadership hold out little hope of the repentance Archbishop Williams has said is necessary. While we should all continue to pray for ECUSA to repent, I believe we must prepare ourselves for the very real possibility of a permanent separation. In the next three years, each individual, congregation and diocese of the Episcopal Church must choose whom they shall serve. ♦



The Lamb Story

*by The Rev. Canon
David C. Anderson*

Most of us have trouble remembering what we were doing on a particular day even months ago, but now 34 years later, a particular Sunday afternoon in March 1972 still stands out in my memory. March of that year found me completing my first year as rector of St. Mary's Church in Malta, Montana. Actually I was rector of two other churches as well: St. Matthew's, Glasgow and All Saints', Scobey. That happened because the then-bishop of Montana, Jackson Gilliam, had convinced a very young priest in the Diocese of Washington, D.C., that if being rector of one church was good, being rector of three was three times better. And so I found myself starting my second year of residence on the Great Plains but still with much of the mindset of an east coast, urban dweller. Culture shock was going from the nation's capital to a lovely small ranching town of 2000 souls under the big sky of Montana.

A parish member, Harold, was always looking for ways to build a better understanding of the country and people into this new young priest. On a particular Sunday in March, he wanted to drive me to a sheep ranch south of Malta to show me what a ranch looked like during lambing season.

We drove the 30 some miles under a stormy March sky and arrived at a large ranch where a Basque family cared for sheep in the tens of thousands. Harold had called ahead, told the family that he was bringing his priest down, and asked them to show us their lambing operation. As we got out of Harold's pickup, someone in an old, warm-looking coat came over to greet and welcome us.

Spread out over several acres were four or five steel warehouse buildings; each seemed to hold several thousand sheep. Our guide explained that the sheep outside were watched closely during the lambing time, and when the ewes were about ready to birth their lambs, they were brought into the shelter of one of these large sheds.

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AAC Special Edition Magazine Available

The American Anglican Council has recently published and is currently distributing copies of a special-edition magazine entitled "Walking Together or Walking Apart? The Faith and Future of a Church in Need of Redemption." The 13-page color publication details the three-decade-long crisis within the Anglican Communion concerning theological innovations of the Episcopal Church USA. In addition to discussing the past, present and future state of the crisis, the magazine contains articles explaining the nature of the issues at stake. To order copies of this resource, use the order form on our web site or call our office at (770) 414-1515 or (800) 914-2000. Each magazine costs \$1.50 plus postage.



The Lamb Story... (Continued from page 2)

As we walked toward the door of one of the buildings, I saw something that I was not prepared to see, and for which I had no frame of reference to deal with. City raised, I had heard, and now I could see that ranch life was hard. I could tell that economy and bottom-line financial viability preceded sentiment when it came to livestock. As we came to the door, we passed by a large heap of dead lambs, at least 50, perhaps a hundred. And all were missing their fleece! The pile of small lambs was 10 or 12 feet across and four feet high, and their poor little blood-stained bodies were already hard in the chill Montana March air.

Of course lambs die; I knew that! Sheep seem to die too easily, more easily than other livestock. It would be expected that some would die in birth or from disease, all cooped up as they were in large numbers in these sheds. But was bottom-line profit so important that they needed to skin the poor little things to make an extra dollar on such a small fleece? My urban mind raced ahead, already passing judgment on such practice. I was upset, offended and feeling argumentative over this.

As we went into the relative warmth of the building I turned and asked, "What was that pile of dead lambs all about?" The guide kept talking as he walked us to a pen: "Lots of these ewes give birth to twins, and for some reason known only to God, they will reject one and keep the other. Nothing we can do will change their mind. If we were a small farm, we might bottle feed the rejected lambs, or one of the kids might take a 'bum' lamb as a 4H project and raise it. That won't work here, we've got hundreds of 'bum' lambs, and we can't afford to lose all of them, just because their mama doesn't want them."

Passing an enclosure with just such a ewe, one lamb beside her and another penned in a corner, we came next to a solitary ewe. "This one lost her lamb after it was born. It's one of those in that pile you asked about. Sometimes they just die. So we have a ewe without a lamb in one pen and a rejected lamb in the next, but a ewe will only nurse its own; it won't accept another ewe's lamb. That's why the dead lambs are missing their fleece," he said. "When one dies we take the fleece off, cut leg holes in the fleece, and put it on a rejected lamb. We take some of the blood from the dead lamb and rub it on the forehead of the abandoned lamb, and then take it to the ewe who lost her lamb."

"She smells the fleece and recognizes the fleece as her own," he continued. "She sees the blood on the lamb's head and

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The Primates also addressed the issue of alternative oversight, underscoring concern they expressed in their October 2003 statement "for those who in all conscience feel bound to dissent from the teaching and practice of their province in such matters." Their 2005 Communiqué calls for the Archbishop of Canterbury to appoint "as a matter of urgency a panel of reference to supervise the adequacy of pastoral provision" for those who are in "serious theological dispute with their diocesan bishop, or dioceses in dispute with their Provinces". Given the deficiencies of ECUSA's Delegated Episcopal Pastoral Oversight (DEPO) plan as well as numerous acts of hostility and oppression experienced by biblically faithful individuals and congregations in a number of dioceses, the work of this panel is critical for both protection and oversight.



Photo by Darryl Mooney. Used with Permission.

Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, preaching at Choral Evensong worship in Armagh.

licks it off, and she can taste the scent of her own body in the blood of her lamb. She cleans the new lamb and claims it as her own and lets it suckle. In a day or two, her milk passes through the body of the new lamb, giving it the scent and taste of the mother, and the adoption is complete."

I left the ranch overwhelmed by the experience of death and life and the sheer number of sheep being cared for. And even with the good of the adoptions, I felt sorrow for the abandoned lambs and all the death. It made my calling as shepherd of three small Montana congregations look so much more manageable, so much more enjoyable. It was some years later, during the Easter Season, that I saw our story in the lambs. It was an image of Christ as the knowledgeable shepherd, and Christ as the dying lamb, offering his fleece. And God the Father, as a mother sheep who looks at you and me, wrapped in the fleece of Jesus Christ, and with the blood of the lamb covering the stain of our estrangement from God. When God the Father looks upon you and me, it is the wrapping of Jesus that He sees, (as St. Paul said, "put ye on Christ Jesus"), and the blood, the salty taste of the blood, is the same blood shed on Calvary. And God sees his own, and claims his own, and we become his own, by adoption and grace. ♦

Responses to the Primates' decisions have been predictable. Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold issued a brief statement that failed to acknowledge the gravity of the sanctions imposed, implying ECUSA would continue with business as usual. In one news report, he is quoted as saying "I cannot imagine a conversation saying, 'We got it wrong...I can see a conversation in which we agree that we should have been more aware of the effects of our decisions.'" Others who embrace the revisionist theology and agenda have dismissed, decried or spun the Primates Communiqué. Following the meeting, however, the majority of Primates have made clear they remain resolute in their expectations. ♦



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Quotable Quotes: Responses to the Primates

"The forces that sought to distract and mislead the Church have been put on notice to stop...The strong voice of the Primates underscores and validates what we have known for years to be true-that there is a crisis of faith and leadership in the North American church. The Primates have now responded to the same anguished cries that prompted us to form the Anglican Mission in America nearly five years ago."

Archbishops Emmanuel Kolini & Yong Ping Chung in a joint statement, March 1, 2005

"The Anglican Communion, with one voice, has affirmed the unchanging doctrine of the historic Christian faith once received from the apostles and which continues to be the teaching of orthodox Christianity around the world...The call for this choice comes from a unified Communion, led by the Archbishop of Canterbury, not just from a few 'angry arch-conservatives.'"

Archbishop Greg Venables' speech to Anglican Essentials Canada, February 2005

"This is a pivotal moment in Anglican Church history, for it is now obvious that there are limits to the ways in which we deal with tenets of the Faith, as it relates to conciliar votes. That is, the democratic principles of majority rule do not always apply to matters of Revealed Truth and Faith."

Bishop Keith L. Ackerman, Diocese of Quincy, March 2005

"I value the Anglican Communion immensely. Apart from the Communion my episcopacy means nothing. And should the Episcopal Church decide to 'walk separately' from the rest of the Communion we will become just another American protestant sect. I have no desire to move in that direction."

Bishop John Howe, Diocese of Central Florida in a letter to the diocese, March 2005

The American Anglican Council is a network of individuals, parishes, specialized ministries and Episcopal Bishops who affirm Biblical authority and Anglican orthodoxy within the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion. In the Lord's grace, we commit ourselves to proclaiming the Good News to every person and to working to reform and renew our church.

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