



ENCOMPASS

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Christian Persecution: “It has been just devastating”



Gunshots and grenade blasts sent people running for cover as terrorists attacked the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi, Kenya.

BY ROBERT H. LUNDY, EDITOR

Concern over Christian persecution is rising. Islamic militants stormed an upscale shopping mall in Nairobi, Kenya on September 21, reportedly targeting Westerners and Christians. The Al Qaeda-linked terrorists tortured and killed at least 67 during a four day siege between Kenyan defense forces and a handful of terrorists. The day after the Nairobi attacks began, suicide bombers killed 81 and injured 140 at All Saint’s Anglican Church in Peshawar City, Pakistan.

“It has been just devastating,” Bishop Humphrey Peters of the Diocese of Peshawar, Pakistan told reporters. “Quite a few children are paralyzed, and others are orphaned. This is a terrible time for the Christian community.” Bishop Peters has faulted the Pakistani government, citing its total failure to protect minorities.

In Nairobi, Archbishop Eliud Wabukala addressed the recent attacks along with the upcoming Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON), saying “We have seen a manifestation of evil in this city, but my prayer for our conference is that it will be a manifestation of the presence of God in the power of the Holy Spirit. We are gathering to be inspired afresh from the Scriptures by the love of God which has triumphed over evil by the power of the cross and compels us to reach all nations. Nairobi will become the focus not of bad news, but of the good news of the gospel of God.”

Sadly, the extent of anti-Christian violence appears to be increasing. According to Open Doors USA, an organization that tracks Christian persecution, 75% of the world’s population lives in countries with severe restrictions on religious freedom. Reports of recent Christian persecution in Syria, Iran, Egypt, Iraq, Nigeria, China, North Korea and elsewhere continue to surface and the attacks are taking their toll.

In Baghdad, Iraq the number of Christians has dramatically decreased due to persecution. Canon Andrew White, Vicar of St. George’s Anglican Church in Baghdad says the constant persecution puts his church in a state of fear. “The Christians here are frightened even to walk to church because they might come under attack. All the churches are targets. We used to have 1.5 million Christians, now we have probably only got 200,000 left in Iraq. There are more Iraqi Christians in Chicago than here.”

As instances of violence against Christians and other religious minorities gain attention, some politicians have taken notice. Days prior to the recent attacks in Kenya and Pakistan, the U.S. House of Representatives passed legislation to appoint a special envoy for religious freedom. Should the bill clear the Senate and gain presidential approval, the State Department post would seek to advance freedom for religious minorities in the Middle East and South-Central Asia.

If you would like to learn more about the extent of Christian persecution worldwide, visit Open Doors USA at OpenDoorsUSA.org. †

Waterfall: Where are we headed?

BY THE RT. REV. DAVID C. ANDERSON SR.,
PRESIDENT & CEO, AMERICAN ANGLICAN COUNCIL

In many ways our culture, society and church today are like a small boat traveling toward a dangerous waterfall. At first, the indications of danger are apparent to only a few, but the opportunity for safely changing course is still excellent. The faint sound of the falls and a mist on the horizon indicate trouble ahead, but only a few are concerned. As the boat draws closer to the falls, the current's speed increases, the sound is louder and the mist is closer, and now safely changing course is very difficult. Then quickly the falls are at hand and all are swept over into the chaos below. So our society, culture and church have approached the falls of sexual chaos in the last ten years, and today no sexual absurdity is beyond someone's desire to normalize, e.g., a court in California has now ruled that children in school who feel that they are male or female contrary to physical indications, should nevertheless be able to use the bathrooms and showers reserved for their chosen gender.

With the successes that "progressive" activists have seen of late, both in civil courts and in churches, many conservatives must feel that things can't get worse and are

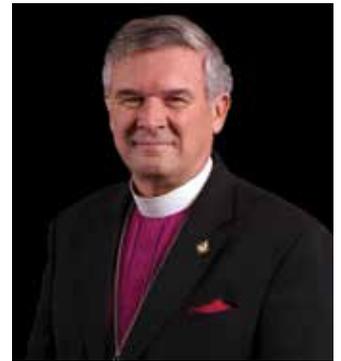
pulled toward depression, but I urge you to stay alert and engaged in the battle. I believe the fight for orthodox sexuality and marriage is still winnable, though it will be long and difficult. But I also believe that if we give up, things can get much worse.

Consider the abortion issue. When we lost in the courts over abortion, the faithful went to the grassroots and worked hard to change America's mind, and that is bearing fruit today as the number of abortions has dropped and the public's attitude toward abortion has shifted. My point is that bad things can be reversed with hard, coordinated work over long periods of time, so then the question is, "How serious are we about stemming Satan's tide?"

The pressure to redefine marriage so that individuals can custom design their relationships will in short order see a movement to legalize polygamy so that individuals in those relationships can feel good. The arguments that I have seen for gay marriage seem to be easily morphable into arguments for multiple partners, and since everyone is supposed to be open and inclusive and tolerant of just about everything, I suppose why not. Except that some of us are citizens/subjects of God's Kingdom and God has given us his parameters on what to bless and not to bless, and what to accept and what to reject.

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People who care about the right to practice their religion faithfully without harassment from either the government, the courts, or their neighbors need to be vigilant. Watch the developing legal scene. Pay attention to what the legislators are voting for. Support those who support Christian values, uphold traditional marriage, and be willing to be vocal about your shared faith. †



We Need Repentance...Not Dialogue

BY THE REV. CANON PHIL ASHEY, COO
AMERICAN ANGLICAN COUNCIL

Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury and symbolic head of the Anglican Communion, has issued his most serious and straightforward diagnosis of the crisis within the Anglican Communion. He did so recently in Mexico, on the feast day of Jeremy Taylor. He cited Jeremy Taylor as an example of one who proclaimed tolerance of differing opinions in an age of religious civil war and persecution. In contrast to Jeremy Taylor, he said the Anglican Communion is moving in the opposite direction – into disintegration and chaos in bitter disputes between traditionalists and progressives. Quoting Jeremy Taylor, he gave this analysis:

“It is unnatural and unreasonable to persecute disagreeing opinions: ... Force in matters of opinion can do no good, but is very apt to do hurt’ ... Taylor wrote those words at a time of civil war and rebellion, when even to suggest toleration was to risk prison – and he went there. The very existence of the state was felt to be threatened if there was variety of religious belief. I sometimes worry that as Anglicans we are drifting back in that direction. Not consciously, of course, but in an unconscious way that is more dangerous. Like a drunk man walking near the edge of a cliff, we trip and totter and slip and wander, ever nearer to the edge of the precipice.”

There you have it. The problem within the Anglican Communion is a lack of tolerance. Even the suggestion of “force” (read “discipline”) in disputes over faith and order (read “opinions”) is no good.

Contrast ++Justin Welby’s analysis with the statement of the leaders of the Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans in April 2012 from London (200 Archbishops, bishops, priests, deacons and lay leaders from 30 countries and 25 Anglican provinces) who described the problem this way:

“The conflict in the Anglican Communion since 1998 [is] a crisis of Gospel truth, not only regarding matters of human sexuality, but the authority of Holy Scripture as God’s inspired Word and the unique Person and Work of Jesus Christ for salvation ... The chairman of the FCA, the Most Rev. Eliud Wabukala, Primate of Kenya, opened the Conference with a keynote

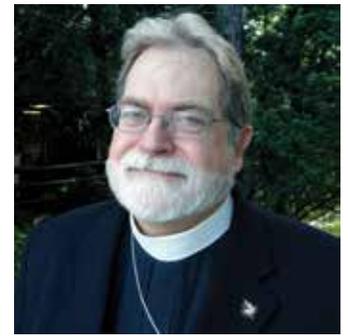
address on the identity of confessing Anglicans in the light of the current crisis, highlighting the fact that the heart of the crisis we face is not only institutional, but spiritual. We were also reminded that we are not wrestling against flesh and blood but against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places (Eph 6:12).”

Judge for yourself: which of these two analyses of the problem is more faithful to the facts and underlying causes of the crisis in the Anglican Communion unfolding and accelerating over the last 10 years? Which of these two analyses – the Archbishop of Canterbury’s, or the 200 leaders representing the majority of Anglicans worldwide – is more faithful to both Gospel truth and the fulfillment of Gospel mission in Christ’s Great Commission (see Matthew 28:16-20).

The Archbishop of Canterbury went on to describe one “extreme” this way:

“It is a dangerous place, a narrow path we walk as Anglicans at present. On one side is the steep fall into an absence of any core beliefs, a chasm where we lose touch with God, and thus we rely only on ourselves and our own message.”

If only that extreme were true, it would be easy to repudiate. But it is not in fact a description of those who describe themselves as liberal or theologically “progressive.” From the statement of the bishops dissenting from the Lambeth Conference Resolution 1.10 (1998) on human sexuality and holy orders to the Chicago Consultation of bishops and theologians within the Episcopal Church USA (TEC) today, the issue has never, ever been an absence of core beliefs. Rather, they have been about changing the core beliefs of Anglicanism – indeed of Christianity itself – on the essentials of the catholic and apostolic faith. From the supremacy of Christ alone as “the way, the truth and the life” (Jn 14:6) to Christ the great teacher as a way, a truth and a life; from the creeds and councils of the Apostolic church and the 39 Articles to the Millennium Development Goals; from baptism as



Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby

“Repentance” cont. on page 4

“Repentance” cont. from page 3

initiation into new life through the blood of Jesus Christ to baptism as a bill of rights for access to any office within the church ... And the list goes on.

By defining the one extreme this way, the Archbishop has ignored the challenge that there is to faith and order within the Anglican Communion.

The Archbishop of Canterbury goes on to describe the other extreme this way:

“On the other side there is a vast fall into a ravine of intolerance and cruel exclusion. It is for those who claim all truth, and exclude any who question. When we fall into this place, we lose touch with human beings and create a small church, or rather many small churches – divided, ineffective in serving the poor, the hungry and the suffering, incapable of living with each other, and incomprehensible to those outside the church.”

I won't dwell on the disproportionate contrast in sheer numbers of words between his descriptions of liberals and traditionalists. Nor will I dwell on the contrast between a “steep” fall and a “vast” fall, or the contrast between falling into a place of “losing touch with God” and “falling into a ravine of intolerance and cruel exclusion.” The point is simply that the Archbishop has set up another straw man as an extreme.

For those who describe themselves as traditional, biblical, evangelical, catholic and confessing Anglicans, Archbishop Welby's caricature is not only far from reality but hurtful. We do not know of any place or practice among ourselves which excludes any who question. If it were not so, we would not intentionally create such opportunities for people to ask the questions worth asking about life in places and practices like ALPHA, Christianity Rediscovered and a host of other process-evangelistic opportunities. If he were to walk about the vibrant, growing Anglican churches in places like Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Argentina, Peru and the Anglican Church in North America, I am sure that the Archbishop would discover people who are neither divided nor ineffective in serving the poor, the suffering and the hungry. In fact, he would find them meeting the whole needs of the whole person - spiritual as well as material. He would find them not only living with each other but partnering at ever deeper levels with other likeminded, biblically grounded Christians from other denominations. He would find them seeking to contextualize the gospel without sacrificing the content of the Bible in the face of increasing secularization, religious pluralism and even outright persecution.

How sad that the Archbishop has chosen to caricature such faithful Anglicans in this way. He came to office with the expectation that his deep experience in reconciliation would bring people together. One of the essential skills of reconciliation is the acknowledgement and telling of truth; the ability to fairly represent the position of all sides. Such skills require a careful listening to all sides so that one can indeed faithfully

represent each side's position. The Archbishop's failure to fairly represent either side of the “precipice” makes one wonder the extent to which he has carefully listened to all sides.

In the end, ++Justin Welby concluded his sermon this way:

“Light is the answer to the troubles of the Communion, to enable us to find our true way and to serve our world. There must not be politics in dark corners, but love expressed in the light, even love expressing difference. In that light we will be secure enough to be churches that reach out, serve the poor, and draw others to light, as a lighted house draws the weary traveler.”

And to whom is he speaking about “politics in dark corners”? The liberal extreme? The traditional extreme? Both? By failing to distinguish, he makes a comment that is potentially, if not in fact, deeply offensive to confessing Anglicans everywhere – and especially to those children of the East African revival who have in fact been walking in the light (I John 1:7) from the inception of that revival over 100 years ago, through the duplicities of fellow Archbishops from the developed west who promised in Primates meetings not to “tear the fabric of the Anglican Communion at its deepest levels,” – and then went ahead and did so by ordaining practicing homosexuals and lesbians as bishops, sanctioning same-sex blessings and seeking to change the core beliefs of the Christian faith up to this present moment.

Has the Archbishop of Canterbury listened to those confessing Anglican leaders through their tears over the attempts

“If we say we have no sin we lie, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” - 1 John 1:8-9

they have made in the last 10 years to call the leadership of TEC, the Anglican Church of Canada and other “progressives” into repentance?

The Archbishop's answer is not the light of dialogue, indaba or Hegelian processes of bringing new revelation out of a synthesis of opposing positions. The light he rightly cites from I John 1:7 includes the next two verses, I John 1:8-9, in which the Apostle says “If we say we have no sin we lie, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” What the Communion needs on all sides is forgiveness and cleansing that go to the root of our sins. And this will require public confession and public repentance.

So far, the Archbishop of Canterbury has reserved the call to confession and repentance for pernicious payday lenders and homophobics. Based on his analysis of the problems within the Anglican Communion, how far will confession and repentance go in the Archbishop of Canterbury's agenda? †

The Legal Pendulum Has Begun to Swing

BY ALLAN S. HALEY, GUEST WRITER

Recently the pendulum in the state and federal courts has begun to swing against the Episcopal Church (USA). In the last six months, it has suffered a series of setbacks which sorely test its litigation strategy: to claim that its “hierarchical structure” requires the courts to defer to its “ecclesiastical determinations.”

On March 14, 2013, the California Third District Court of Appeal ruled that ECUSA had improperly sued the vestry and rector of St. John’s Anglican Church in Stockton, and affirmed their dismissal from the case. St. John’s has now filed a motion for summary judgment as to the remainder of the case, which will be heard in November.

On April 25, 2013, the Fresno County Superior Court denied ECUSA’s motion for summary judgment in its case against Bishop John-David Schofield, and in June the Court of Appeal summarily denied ECUSA’s request to review.

In South Carolina, on June 10, the federal district court ordered the case brought by Bishop Lawrence and the parishes of his diocese be returned to the state court where it had been filed, before ECUSA tried to remove it to federal court.

Four days later, on June 14, 2013, the Tulare County Superior Court likewise denied ECUSA’s motion for summary judgment against St. Paul’s in Visalia, and noted that it, along with the entire Diocese of San Joaquin, had withdrawn from the Church with the consent of Bishop Schofield, who was the ecclesiastical authority of that diocese at the time.

On August 23, Senior Federal District Judge Houck in South Carolina dismissed a trademark infringement lawsuit which ECUSA’s Bishop vonRosenberg had filed against Bishop Mark Lawrence. (ECUSA recently filed a motion asking Judge Houck to reconsider that decision.)

On August 30, the Texas Supreme Court handed down two decisions against ECUSA: it reversed the trial court’s grant of summary judgment against Bishop Jack L. Iker and others, and sent it back with directions that the court apply neutral principles to decide the dispute over the property of the withdrawn diocese, rather than defer to ECUSA’s claims. Simultaneously it reversed the judgment against the Church of the Good Shepherd in San Angelo, and ruled that under neutral principles the Dennis Canon had no effect on its

property. Based on those rulings, the federal district court in Fort Worth just last week closed two trademark actions (similar to those in South Carolina) which had been pending against Bishop Iker.

On September 10, the Adams County Circuit Court in Quincy gave its written decision awarding to the Anglican Diocese the money and property it had owned when it voted to withdraw, and holding that ECUSA had no claim to those assets.

And most recently, on September 25, another department of the Fresno County Superior Court indicated that it would rule in favor of St. Columba’s parish, Fresno, to deny ECUSA’s motion for summary judgment. It also ordered the parties to show cause why the case should not be stayed pending the outcome of the case involving Bishop Schofield and his diocese.

Taken together, these decisions indicate that courts are becoming aware that in cases where an entire diocese leaves the Church, ECUSA lacks the authority to lay any claim to its property, or to the property of its parishes and missions. †

Allan Haley is an attorney and lives in Northern California.



When Mike Lumpkin became the Rector of St. Paul’s Church in Summerville, SC in November of 1995 the only worship space was the historic church which seated 225. With that building bursting at the seams, parishioners, under Lumpkin’s leadership, built Doar Hall, a multi-purpose worship space which seats over 550. Currently the church holds four Sunday worship services, two in the historic building and two in Doar Hall. Facilities like these and the ministries they support are at stake in the Episcopal v. Anglican litigation. Photo courtesy Joy Hunter, Diocese of South Carolina



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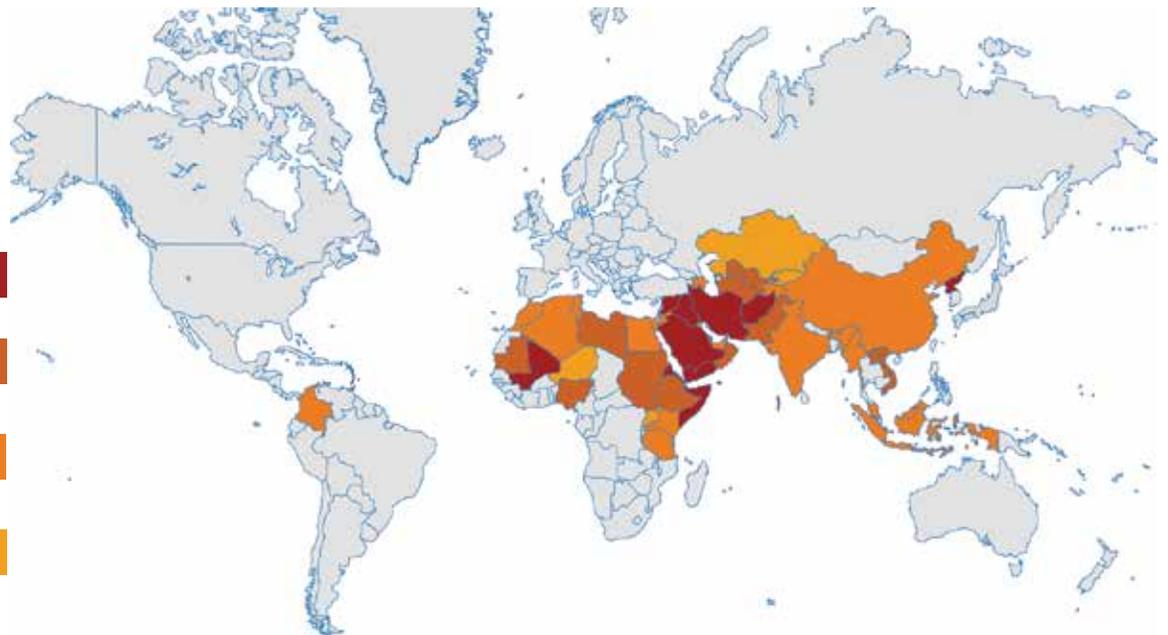
Christian Persecution Worldwide

Extreme Persecution

Severe Persecution

Moderate Persecution

Sparse Persecution



Source: *Open Doors USA*

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 quarterly publication of the American Anglican Council.

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