

**THE FIFTH
CHARGE TO SYNOD
OF
THE RIGHT REVEREND DONALD F HARVEY
BISHOP AND MODERATOR**

In the Name of God. Amen

This is my fifth Charge to Synod since the Anglican Network in Canada, now a Diocese in the Anglican Church in North America, came into being. I was not elected your Bishop on that occasion since at that time I was your only Bishop and, like Topsy, “I just grewed” as God led us from one step to the next. During that first “synod” we were blessed when Bishop Malcolm Harding announced that he was coming with us, and having two persons in legitimate episcopal Orders, gave us the authenticity we craved. Then our joy became complete when during that Synod Archbishop Greg Venables, through an electronic presentation, announced that he and the Province of the Southern Cone were taking us under their Provincial care.

These indeed were exciting and spirit filled days as we started by announcing that we now had two bishops, two priests, two deacons, and just to be consistent, two parishes. Virtually everyone present at synod knew one another and intense was our zeal and enthusiasm as we got a glimpse of what God was calling us to do. Most of us then, as now, were paying a heavy price for our determination to be biblically faithful while remaining in the Anglican Communion. Our euphoria was high as were our aspirations for what God was calling us to do in His plan to rebuild His Church.

I know that we have a tendency to look back with nostalgia at the “good old days” (even if these days are only five years old) and see in them events as we would like to recall them, rather than what they actually were. I do believe that at least for a period we captured the spirit of Acts 4:32 *And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul...* and our subsequent growth was commendable as so many across the land availed of the lifeboat we were providing.

So, on this our fifth anniversary, when our numbers now read six bishops; 128 Priests; and 28 Deacons (a total of 162 clergy). When these are combined with some 69 parishes, plants and projects, there is much for which we have to give thanks for the way the Almighty has blessed our endeavours. And yet we know that in spite of these efforts and successes, we barely are scratching the surface.

From the start, we have been fully involved in the equally difficult task of developing a Province. When it became obvious that we were being steered into one entity for North America rather than a Province for each of our two countries, we were not hesitant to come forward during one of the darkest hours for the Common Cause Movement and state our determination to become part of the embryonic Province that was beginning to emerge under our Spirit filled leader, Bishop Robert Duncan of Pittsburgh, who it became so very obvious was being called by God to this mighty work. Since making that pledge, we never have looked back and rejoice that we are founding members and full and equal partners of this dynamic Province which we pray will be

instrumental in its determination to bring the Good News of Victory in Jesus to a land that has lost sight of its purposes and where so many of its inhabitants are parched for the living water that they know absolutely nothing about. We have that water but are we proclaiming where it can be found?

It is our joy to have our (and notice I am using the word “OUR”) Archbishop and his wife with us for two days of this Synod, to welcome them to our Country in its National Capital, and above all, to assure him that he constantly is in our prayers and that we consider it an honour to have him as our leader, our partner and our friend.

Nor should I go further in this Charge without again expressing gratitude to our first Archbishop before our Province emerged. Had not Archbishop Greg Venables taken the courageous steps he did, the history of not just our Diocese but our Province would be been vastly different. Not many of you may be aware of the personal pain and even at times abuse, Archbishop Greg suffered for the courageous stand he originally took, and I suggest to you that as yet we have not made the opportunity to acknowledge that sacrifice in a personal way. It is amazing, but yet a fact, just in how very few years a name passes from being on almost everyone's lips to becoming almost forgotten. How many times during the past year have you even heard his name mentioned or mentioned it yourself?

A couple of weeks ago I had the opportunity to attend Solemn High Mass (as they advertize it) at the famous All Saints', Margaret Street, in London. It is an Anglo Catholic bastion going back to the Oxford Movement and not to be confused with All Souls, Langham Place, just a few blocks away. Shall I say, there is no way that anyone possibly could confuse the two, except for the fact that for many years the unadulterated gospel of Jesus Christ was proclaimed in each. Anyway, it was an absolutely glorious service with perfect choreography and music that probably is as close to being heavenly, this side of the Celestial City itself. When I left an hour later (Anglo Catholic services usually are timed that way) I was completely transfixed as one who had just had a glimpse of heaven. Hardly observing anything along the way, I got to the Oxford Circus Underground and took the subway back to the hotel. I got off at Victoria where there is an incredibly steep escalator from the platform up to the street. As I was being transported to the top, still in my euphoria, a train must have arrived and I became aware that the down escalator was packed solidly with a great throng of persons, all on their way to the tube. There is no place in the world, I think, where faces are more expressionless than on the London Underground, and the impact of it suddenly hit me. Had I started telling any of those hundreds of what I was feeling and why, I just know that the overwhelming majority of them would have no idea whatever what I was talking about; and I found the great music of Bach and Rachmaninoff that had been echoing in my head being replaced with a single passage *And Jesus had compassion on the multitude because they were like sheep without a shepherd.* He then goes on to say “*pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send labourers into the vineyard.*” Need I elaborate more?

Anglican 1000 has been our main project since our Primate launched it on that memorable night of our inauguration. The newly appointed Provincial Director, the Reverend Allan Hawkins is here with us at this Synod and we look forward to his advice and challenge as we move into the second half of that mandate.

Here in ANiC we still are deeply committed to this challenge.

Let me finish by putting aside all of the many things I want to share with you had I the time, and reduce them to three things that really concern me and then a couple of things that has made it all so very worthwhile.

The first is one that I have brought to every Synod I have had with you and I still am putting it first on my list. There still are far too many parishes, staffed by at least one priest, where it still is impossible for a member, or a visitor, to receive the Blessed Sacrament on a Sunday. I quite literally weep when a person who is a visitor goes through the effort of seeking out an ANiC parish, spends money on a taxi to get there, and discovers the priest is conducting Morning Prayer. Morning Prayer is fine as a *supplement* or prelude to the Eucharist but it never was meant to be a *substitute* for the Eucharist. And to say, we are giving our people what they want simply is not acceptable. Indeed, it is an attempt to give people what they want rather than what they need that has brought us into the sad mess the church is in today. From New Testament times onward, they “met together for the 'breaking of bread' and the prayers “ and I still believe the teaching I received at Confirmation of “the Lord's own service on the Lord's own day” was and should continue to be standard Anglican practice.

My second concern revolves around a proper understanding of Anglican Polity summed up in the catchy phrase “Episcopally led – Synodically governed”. It sounds great in theory, but many of our people, and indeed some of our clergy, still have to come to terms with the words “Episcopal Authority”. Bishops, clergy and people ideally should move together as a unit, all with a distinct but yet common motive in carrying out our roles in harmony. It was never meant to imply that the Bishop is the big boss (nor is the priest at the parish level, for that matter). Every priest in the oath of Canonical Obedience vows to respect the authority of the bishop *in all things lawful and honest*. And, at a Synodical Level like this, the Bishop can withhold his consent on any measure passed if he truly feels it is not for the good of the church. However, and this is very big, while he can stop something from going through, **he cannot put something through that Synod does not want**. While this is a unique and awesome formula, it easily runs into difficulty when people who have been burned badly in the past by bishops using their authority unwisely and even in an ungodly manner, will have a desire to throw out that baby with the bathwater. When we severed our connections with the church to which many of us belonged since birth, we did not chose a presbyterian or a congregationalist model, but rather the **episcopal** model as it had evolved since the Elizabethan Settlement – at which time it caused some of the consternation it does now.

Let me state quite emphatically in what is my final Charge to Synod as your Moderator, that I perceive this to be the one of the most pressing challenges facing our fledgling Diocese today, and it is absolutely critical that we come to terms with it. Otherwise, we will continue to waste time and energy (which we absolutely do not have on our side) in an effort that can become self defeating and destructive, dealing with “how” to do things rather than actually getting out and doing them. In modern jargon, we must stop spinning our wheels and come to terms with what we really are.

You, the members now assembled in Diocesan Synod, are the main governing body of ANiC. You are the parliament of the church, and on you has been placed a tremendous responsibility. But because you meet only two or three days a year, it is necessary for you to have some medium to carry out business in your absence. To do this you are called upon to elect persons out of your number here at this Synod to do this for you. They are known as the Diocesan Council (sometimes called the Board) and they are the “synod between synods”. They, in the first instance are to carry out your wishes and demands; and secondly, to deal with things on which you have not made a policy at the moment. In doing so, they realize that they are responsible and accountable to you. While Council does not have to carry out the wishes of the Bishop who may be wrong in his desires, they have no choice when it comes to carrying out the directions of the Synod.

That brings me to my last concern, which certainly is not unrelated to the one I have just mentioned and in all probability is the most sensitive thing I am going to say in this Charge.

You already have received the report of the Nominating Committee with the slate of suggested persons for the Diocesan Council for the coming year. It is quite self explanatory and bears the added weight of having been approved by this Council.

I want to make it very clear that I do not have any problem whatever with any nominee on this slate. Each one has a proven track record and every thing they will do if elected will be to the glory of God and in the best interests of our Diocese. I personally could vote for each and every one of them without any hesitation whatever. I also am led to understand that one of the challenges the Committee had was that almost every member of the present Council who was eligible to run again decided to do so. That too is commendable.

So, why am I making an issue out of this? This Council is to be elected by this Synod (with its representatives from one coast of Canada to the other) to represent us until the next elections are held. While every part of the Diocese obviously cannot be represented, there are a number of major gaps here that we at least have to consider.

1. There are no female candidates on this slate – and there are none already on the Council.
2. There is no representation from Central Canada (Manitoba, Sask. or Alberta).
3. There is no representation from our ethnic churches which have large memberships.
4. There is no representation from our New England contingent.
5. There is no youth representative.

I am fully aware that not all of these omissions can be overcome in a single election. But I do want you to consider the effectiveness of a Council with this number of serious gaps in its overall makeup.

You already have been advised of where Nomination Forms can be found and you have until 4 pm today (Thursday) to submit these completed forms to the Nominating Committee for this Synod (which was appointed yesterday). The election will be the first Order of Business on Friday morning and you should have the results before we finish our business at lunch time.

You well may feel that the Report before you is fine as it is, and if that is the case, by all means vote accordingly. I simply feel that it is my responsibility to draw your attention to a serious situation and assure you that to vote for someone not on the Report is not being disloyal to the Committee but simply is exercising your rights and responsibilities as a member of Synod.

One of the present nominees asked me recently if I were suggesting that some of them step down. My answer is decidedly not. I will be quite satisfied if when we get our ballots tomorrow there will be more than just the required number of names on it and that you will have a choice.

I also am requesting that the new Constitution and By-Laws Committee when it is formed by the new Council, look at this section again and make an amendment so that the Office of Treasurer can be made ex officio.

Now to things that have made me rejoice:

I recall as a young teenager, (and by the way, I rejoice to see our Youth contingent here at Synod as full members) complaining about a variety of aches and pains I seemed to be experiencing. A relative said to me, "There is nothing wrong with you – you are just going through "growing pains".

It was some years later when I discovered that there existed some medical evidence to support my aunt's diagnosis. Not only does a teenager go through emotional turmoil as he or she evolves into adulthood, but the process can (and usually does) involve periods of physical pain and distress as well. It is all part of "growing up" or "coming of age".

In the five years of our existence we have gone through the euphoria of our "childhood" as we kicked off the traces of being held back and emerged into a sort of pre-adult space where on the one hand we rejoice that we have cast off that which was holding us back while on the other we get a vision of what we desire to become. The travelling from one mode to the other, like the Exodus, continues to be fraught with pitfalls and the frequent roller-coaster ride rapidly going from sheer elation and joy right down to the pits of frustration and despair.

When we were fighting a common enemy and could identify our "common cause", it was so easy to link arms and uphold one another. The freedom we experienced was exhilarating and many of you can recall vividly the joy of our first synods and some of the great "Essentials" meetings that preceded them. But such euphoria cannot last and we have to continue the process of growth and the pains that often go with it. Many of us have come from exceedingly different backgrounds, and as such, do not always have the same vision of where we are being called to grow. It involves much soul searching and allowing ourselves to listen to one another, in the belief that as we go through these processes of seeking His Way, we actually are hearing His Voice.

You may be beginning to wonder as to why I have put these comments in the "happy things" department, since they often involve conflict and differences. But my choice is quite deliberate. These are signs that we are not just "passengers in a life boat" drifting with the currents. We have been entrusted to seek a way forward not only for ourselves but for others who are putting

so much trust and confidence in what we are doing. We are being watched, not only by our followers, but also by many people still in the church we have left who are confused, bewildered and are still seeking a way forward and losing hope that “their church” will ever really reform itself from within.

I am reasonably happy with our statistical growth and in a strange way relieved that it has not been more rapid. With our limited resources, especially at the beginning, we could not adequately have cared for and welcomed those who came to us in the manner that we have.

I am happy that in the 10 Provinces of our country (from coast to coast) we have successfully established alternatives in all but two, and even there conversations are taking place. God hasten the time when we can truly say that biblically faithful churches in the Anglican family exist from coast to coast to coast. That is what we have been called to do, and we dare not allow ourselves to be replicas of what we have left or become comfortable clubs of liked minded people who have lost sight of the mission that brought us where we are.

I am happy that our parish of Christ the King in Victoria has successfully merged with the Church of Our Lord of the Reformed Episcopal and in so doing has set a standard and goal for the rest of our Province.

I am happy that we are coming to terms with our financial distress and that we soon will not be restricted from our mission by lack of funds. In the Salvation Army they used to call their weekly gift back to God as their “cartridge” which would enable them to carry out the battle in which they were engaged. When you come to think about it, that is not a bad analogy, and let us re-dedicate ourselves to the scriptural directive that anything less than a tithe or a tenth is simply not good enough.

I am happy that at this Synod we will launch a new programme of giving under the leadership of Archdeacon Ron Corcoran who has been appointed by me, but on the strong advice of others, which will move us from the hand to mouth existence we experienced for the last several years, when we learn to joyfully give back to the Lord as He has prospered us.

I am happy with the great work that has gone on in our ethnic areas under the ministry of Bishop Stephen Leung and his team, and while recognizing and responding to the distinctiveness of different cultures and languages, at the same time reaffirming that “In Christ there is no east or west / in Him no south or north / but one great fellowship of love / throughout the whole wide earth”.

I am happy that in spite of financial worries, we have been able to maintain our policy of treating all of our parishes, plants and projects as equal, extending the same pastoral care to all, even when they are not able to pay for it. But in doing this, we have to realize that we have to establish a much firmer financial foundation on which to build.

I often am asked, “how is the supply of clergy being maintained” and my constant response is that we have more clergy and trained persons awaiting ordination than we have the finances to employ. We need every one of them, but we also know that the “labourer is worthy of hire” and

the sight of seeing persons chaffing at the bits to go out and bring in the harvest is as frustrating as it is indicative that we are not facing the tasks committed to us.

My friends, when I turn over the pastoral care of this growing and dynamic diocese on July 1, 2014, it is my hope, it is my prayer, and it is my expectation, that it will be a church that is as financially stable as it is spiritually vibrant. These two must go hand in hand.

After much soul searching some months ago, I realized that the theme for my final Charge to a Synod, just had to be the one I have chosen “**The night is far spent and the day is at hand**”. It is so very easy for us to lose our sense of urgency without even realizing we are doing so.

At many times in the history of the Christian Church it has come under attack by various forces, both from within and without, and true to the promise of Our Master, He always has raised up faithful men and women to meet that attack head on. In relatively recent years we rejoice in the Evangelical Revival; the Oxford Movement; the Charismatic Revival; and so many others. Each time, the gifts that were empowered were the ones required for the task.

Now in our age, when we contend with rampant secularism, materialism in the west, a direct attack from within of the Supremacy of the Word of God and the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the impact of militant Islam, we have been called to centre stage to do our part. A tremendous responsibility has been placed upon us, and as we move forward, the devil is only too aware of the weak points within our armour and already is employing the greatest and most formidable weapons in his arsenal, the seeds of disunity, lack of resolve, and the ever present temptation “to do it my way” instead of Christ's.

I sometimes wonder what it will be like when we are called upon, like the servants in Holy Writ, to give an account of our stewardship. It is easy to imagine how it may be for others. I can conceive of many of the bishops of the Anglican Church of Canada being asked “Why did you evict so many of those who loved Me and simply wanted to be faithful to Me and My Word, from their church buildings which you did not need and to employ so much of their time and energy on survival as they made their witness?”

They will have much to answer for, but so shall we . “Why did you start off so zealously and fearlessly, and so easily become so distracted by issues that have little to do with bringing so many of the lost back to me?” “Why did you (and do you) look at my sheep dispersed and starving to be fed (often with a craving for they know not what) and then spend so much of your energy debating for decade after decade the gender of the shepherds **I have been calling** to feed them?” “ Why do you still continue to strain out a mosquito and swallow a camel?”

Never lose sight of the reality of our cause and the urgency in carrying it out. The day is at hand, possibly sooner than deep down any of us expect.

Some of the early Fathers went out into the desert to meet the devil head on (dry and desert places) . Some of them found that they had misread their calling – the devil was never far from where God's people gather together. As a cynic once said “he loves to go to church” . Was that cynical or was it prophetic?

Dear friends, these really are the Days of Elijah and we have to do more than sing with great gusto that we are major players in these days. We have to remind ourselves of Elijah's challenge "If Baal be god, then follow him; if God be God follow him – just how long will you go limping after two different opinions?" When Elijah asked that simple yet profound question, we are told "the people answered him never a word".

In the Anglican Network in Canada we answered that question five years ago when we made our decision. May each one of us leave this Synod with a fresh determination – indeed, a fresh commitment, that as we have been called to so great a work, that we dedicate ourselves completely, body, mind and spirit, in our resolve to carry it out. As we were reminded in yesterday's scripture reading, "He who endures to the end will be saved".

I invoke the guidance of God's Holy Spirit as we continue our deliberations in this our Fifth Diocesan Synod.