



The State of the Anglican Network in Canada – August 2006

Reflections by the Right Reverend Donald F Harvey, Moderator

“If the foundations are destroyed / what can the righteous do?” (Psalm 11, v. 3)

As we begin our gathering here in Toronto, I greet you in the Name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and in so doing, I implore His Blessing on those of us who are here from all parts of this vast country and for the many thousands of people we represent.

Although we have met as a much larger group on an annual basis for a number of years now, this time it will be quite different. This is not a Rally or a Convention, designed to bring large numbers of people for the mutual encouragement we give one another, but rather, is a gathering of invited leaders who will be asked to express their own views on where we are and where we hope to go, and also to listen to others who may come from very different circumstances.. And, as we speak and listen to each other, it is my prayer, and belief, that we will hear the voice of Almighty God, speaking through the Holy Spirit we invoke to be in our midst.. We have called it a Consultation, and although it cannot be a Synod, it probably is what a Synod should be – a gathering divested of all the trappings and formalities and somewhat like those who gathered in the Upper Room for nine days prior to Pentecost to seek Divine Guidance in the way forward. May this be exactly such an occasion.

Reading to you from a script is not my favourite means of communication by any means. I much prefer to speak “off the cuff” as they say in my province, and as the Spirit gives me utterance. However, since this is a rather important summary which we hope to circulate and discuss, I feel it desirable to discipline myself and use this method.

I intend then, to proceed under three different headings:

1. Challenges in our journey
2. Joys along the way
3. Hopes and fears

Challenges in Our Journey

To quote a former US President, “We have nothing to fear but fear itself”. We have launched out into the deep in waters that many of us never have navigated before. We do have a chart, a compass, and a Pilot in whom we have ultimate trust, and yet like Peter, from time to time, we begin to sink. At such times we only can cling to Him, knowing that our voyage is a response to His Call, and that ultimately, He will bring us “to the haven where we would be”.

The Bishop I served with during most of my ministry often told the story of his first year in Newfoundland. After several hours in a small boat in a terrible storm, they rounded a cape and came into the tranquility of a beautiful little land locked harbour. As he began to breathe normally again, the fisherman who owned the boat turned to him and said, “Now My Lord, you are as safe as if you are in God’s pocket”. After battling the many storms that still lie before us, may we at the end of each day sense that we indeed, are in God’s pocket and embrace the joy and contentment that brings.

The vastness of our geography continues to be a challenge. As we try to operate as a national entity the sheer challenge of communicating with one another becomes immense. While we have become quite proficient in the way we conduct our weekly conference calls, there are times of great decision making when we have to have “face to face” contact, and that is costly both in time and resources.

That also has to be coupled with the very different traditions and backgrounds from which we originate. The three founding groups of the Essentials Movement in some ways reflect our various traditions, but even they are inadequate. Anglicanism historically always provided a very broad spectrum with extreme Anglo-Catholicism on one end and extreme Charismatic Evangelicalism on the other, with almost everything else in between, making it certain that no major decision will be reached without prolonged discussion – sometimes extending well beyond a single meeting. The marvelous fact that major decisions are made regularly with all parties feeling pleased with the result is a something quite unlike any other group with which I have been involved and can only be because the issues are met with utmost respect for all opinions and above all, because they are approached in such a prayerful atmosphere.

Although our costs of operation are formidable, as our Essentials treasurer will tell us, we ultimately always come out in the black. This is partly through our very generous contributors who believe in the battle we are waging so strongly that they give well and they give often. But, it also results from the fact that we have no fully salaried Network staff, and those who are on “part time pay” often are “full time engaged” --- and there also are a whole regiment of volunteers, and in the case of clergy, many parishes who generously give their clergy time away to use their gifts on our behalf.

While we always will depend on our volunteers, the time is rapidly approaching if we continue to grow and multiply, when we will have to avail of salaried full time personnel or the work will either remain uncompleted, or at the best, completed very slowly, to the frustration of all. That is one of the issues you will have to look at in some depth while we are in this gathering.

The other main challenge is the frustration that comes from simply waiting. We all are part of a “quick fix” generation and have come to expect rapid results. Nor does it help to be constantly reminded that Moses and his followers were in the wilderness for 40 years and even then the leader did not enter the promised land.

I deliberately am repeating the word “frustration” since that is the net result of having our hopes built up and dashed so frequently. In this connection, I empathize deeply with the original parishes in New Westminster who courageously walked from Synod all those years ago, and who have been without the benefit of formal Episcopal ministry ever since. This involves lack of the sacraments of Confirmation and Ordination, not to mention the insecurity that comes from diocesan threats and having to bear a license to minister from a bishop to whom they no longer find themselves able to offer allegiance.

That these parishes and their clergy have remained loyal and (mostly) patient for so long is a tribute to their love of Anglicanism in its best form and their desire to remain part of that world wide communion while being faithful to Holy Writ. But this cannot go on for much longer. An episcopally-led system has to have a bishop working side by side with clergy and laity, and persons, especially our youth, cannot be deprived of the sacramental Grace that comes from Confirmation. Nor can these parishes continue to remain short staffed because of a lack of ordained clergy (especially when there are many very qualified and dedicated persons awaiting ordination) when the need for evangelism is so acute.

This leads almost automatically into the expectations that have been placed on the Panel of Reference. Later in the meeting this will be discussed more fully. Suffice it to say that while we are most grateful for the sympathetic hearing we received from the two members of the Panel who met with the clergy and lay representatives involved from each of the six parishes, the fact that Network which applied on their behalf could not be part of the process – or of any proposed solution – makes the whole enterprise suddenly take on a very serious and dangerous dimension. While we still wait (albeit rather impatiently) the report of this group appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and requested by the Primates, to recommend alternative Episcopal oversight to parishes who cannot accept the authority of the bishop in their area, we now await their report with much trepidation as the very foundation of the Network, so painstakingly laid over the last several years, is threatened. These concerns have been relayed to the Archbishop of Canterbury and we await a response.

The list of parishes that have been threatened because of their orthodoxy is a long one, and in more than one instance these threats have been carried out. Now, to them we must add the threat that has come to me, the Moderator, by Bishop Michael Ingham who has charged me with intrusion into his diocese. He has asked the Primate and Metropolitans to “take appropriate” action but two months later I still have not heard from them. As we encounter the legal complications that may ensue, what happens to me should be put very low on the list. I am more concerned about the clergy and parishes to whom I currently provide pastoral oversight. I feel justified that while Holy Scripture gives many directions on the issues that concern us, as yet I have not been able to find any biblical reference to diocesan boundaries and without wanting to sound as if I am grandstanding or being unusually brave, I still believe in what we are doing to the extent that I still can answer the question, “WHOM SHALL I SERVE?” in the affirmative without any fear whatever.

I am somewhat distressed that at this stage I am the only bishop, active or retired, to officially be identified with the Network, though a small number are involved with Essentials through the Federation. I am in contact with five bishops on a somewhat regular system of

teleconferences and it is my firm belief (rather than just a hope) that should the time come when the Anglican Church of Canada makes decisions that will cause it to walk apart from the rest of the Communion, that a significant group of our bishops will make decisions they feel at the moment may be premature. There is more underlying support there than is obvious to the casual observer.

Lastly in this section, I want to reflect on one other aspect of the frustration that comes from having to wait. Our US counterpart, the Anglican Communion Network, under Bishop Bob Duncan, their Moderator, in all likelihood will soon be seen to be making some real progress. Indeed, even now that body, which has a number of dioceses in its membership, is extremely well organized and in many ways is functioning as an ecclesial entity. They have a number of full time people on staff, and the results of several years of labour are beginning to bear fruit. I predict that you will hear much from them in the near future.

We, at this stage of our development, though having made much progress, for which we give fervent thanks to God, we are not in the same category as our US counterparts. But lest we feel unnecessarily dismayed, please remember one important fact: ***the Episcopal Church has had its General Convention this summer (the equivalent of our General Synod, although much larger) and they have made decisions that now give the American Network the ammunition they have been waiting for to take international action. Our General Synod will not meet until June 2007. Just as this time last year the Anglican Communion Network had to wait until these decisions were made before taking dramatic action, so we have to wait for our Synod to act, before we can take appropriate moves. And, please remember, that we too, like our brothers and sisters in the Federation, continue to pray that the action our General Synod ultimately will take will make any further action on our part quite unnecessary. But, in the event that they follow the same path as the Episcopal Church, we must be ready – and ready we shall be.***

Joys Along the Way

Although the tone of the first section of this report may seem to deny it, this ministry, within this Movement, has provided as much joy and satisfaction as I have experienced at any time in my 43 year ministry, and I constantly offer thanksgiving for the opportunity to use whatever talents with which I have been endowed to work side by side with you. Indeed, if it were to come to an end today, it still has been as rewarding (to me) as I could ever “ask or imagine” – as the prayer states so well.

I will make this section simply a listing of the many places across Canada, and indeed the world, where I have been as part of your Network team. I am certain to leave something out here, but that can be corrected in a revised official listing later. Please remember that while on a few rare occasions these events were approved by the Diocesan Bishop, from most of them enthusiasm was lukewarm and in some cases did not exist at all. In these situations the local organizers are to be congratulated for their courage in moving forward anyway.

Let me do it from west to east:

1. Meeting with concerned Anglicans on Vancouver Island.
2. Many events in the Vancouver – Abbotsford area with ACiNW parishes.
3. A Retreat for Clergy (from across Canada) just across the boarder from Abbotsford. This was an incredibly refreshing and empowering experience – and we hope will be an annual event.
4. A meeting with a group of clergy in Edmonton – with the Bishop’s permission.
5. A major rally in Calgary – with the permission of the Administrator
6. A meeting of clergy and laity in Saskatoon – with the Bishop’s permission.
7. A day long meeting in Brandon – without the Bishop’s permission although he was present for the gathering which met in a Pentecostal Church building.
8. A luncheon with some concerned clergy in Niagara.
9. A weekend gathering, including preaching on Sunday, in Ottawa – with the Bishop’s warm permission.
10. Meetings with the Essentials Executive and others in St. John’s, NL
11. A major presentation at the Synod of the Diocese of the Arctic, in the presence of all three of its Bishops.
12. A two-day Clergy School, in the Diocese of the Arctic, with a day-long session on the Network, with two of the Bishops present.

Although I have taken but a line to enumerate each of these events, it would take many paragraphs to describe the zeal, determination, and deep concern of the participants. Having experienced these gatherings first hand I can state that any real fears I may have had for the existence of a Movement such as ours have evaporated.

Across the Border:

1. I participate in the weekly teleconferences of the US Network Bishops
2. Participation in CONAAB (Conf. Of North American Anglican Bishops)
3. Participation in CAPAC (Conf. Of Anglican Provinces in North America & Caribbean)
4. Participation in the Common Cause Roundtable (3 or 4 times a year)
5. Participation in the Windsor Bishops meeting at St. Louis
6. Participation in the International Convocation at Overland Park, MO
7. Participation and bringing greetings to the A.C.N. annual meetings
8. Representing Canada at the service of thanksgiving and support for the Connecticut 6.
9. Visit to Rhode Island to celebrate with the Parish of the Resurrection on their decision.

Nor should you think such a formidable list was a one man show. In all but two of the above eight listings I was supported by members and staff of the Network. As I stated earlier, the Network in the US is much more advanced than ours, but at all times they keep us involved, and often have stated that their launching point initially came from the courage they

experienced when they witnessed ACiNW make its initial move at that Synod which now seems so long ago.

This may be as an appropriate place as any to pay tribute to our staff , Canon Charlie Masters and Cheryl Chang for their unrelenting efforts to get things moving and even more importantly, for their constant encouragement to me and the members of the Executive and Servant Team.

While it always is dangerous (and unfair) to single out any members of the Team or Committee, I do want to pay tribute to the four Deans who wage the battle at the ground level and to our untiring Chairman, the Reverend George Sinclair, who has been at the helm since the beginning. George and Charlie have done much to enhance warm relations between the Federation and Network especially through the umbrella group Board of Anglican Essentials Canada. And, Charlie with some others presently are in the process of calling on every bishop in Canada who will receive them, while a meeting with the Primate was held earlier in the year.

International

Since taking this position I have represented the Network in:

1. London when the Windsor Report was released.
2. Northern Ireland when the Primates' report was released
3. Cairo for a meeting of the Global South Primates – by invitation
4. Singapore for the Installation of Archbishop John Chew – by personal invitation
5. Argentina as their Synod speaker
6. Recife – Brazil – for the 30th anniversary of their diocese.

In this connection I would like to express my gratitude and deep appreciation to Canon Bill Atwood of Ekklesia for his help and advice on the do's and don'ts of such gatherings and for his friendship and encouragement..

I list all of this, to demonstrate that although at times it looks as if little is happening and progress is so terribly slow, that we are making our mark on the world stage and that Primates now are aware that Canada is a separate entity with its own challenges as well as its own considerable resources. They rejoice with us that the faith still is being maintained here and they constantly uphold us in their prayers. It is our prayer, that when the time is appropriate, these same Primates will give us the support we need to be able to continue as an integral part of the Communion, if the sad day should come when our own national Church walks apart.

Hopes and Fears

And so, we find ourselves this morning here in Toronto with two full days before us. This only will be a worthwhile exercise if we allow ourselves to be completely frank and

forthcoming with one another. There well could be people registered for this event who even now would be more at ease with the Federation agenda. On the other hand, there are those who feel we have been moving far too slowly and cautiously, and who share a deep disappointment that we have not become a more established ecclesiastical body. I would imagine that many of us, in true Anglican fashion of the *via media*, find ourselves somewhere in between. It was with this in mind that your Servant Team made a deliberate decision to meet with invited leaders to explore policy and direction. And, I stress again, this is meant to be a listening and sharing experience, rather than one with emotional presentations to rally and stir up our followers. There is a place for such Conventions and in the last two summers we experienced two magnificent gatherings – one in Ottawa and the other, just a year ago here in Toronto. But there also is a very important need for our leadership on the national level to share their thoughts and especially to spend time discussing platforms and strategy with leaders at the grass roots level across the land.

Let me then, in the last section of this report, express a couple of fears and then conclude by sharing my hopes.

First, we must steel ourselves not to become victims of the condition known as *battle fatigue*. Many of you have been part of this struggle for years and you are getting tired with hearing the same old reasons as to why there is so little obvious success. I have had it said to me that we no longer are interested in hearing the same story year by year, with the proviso to wait for the results of a conference, or a commission, or a group of Primates, or the Archbishop of Canterbury. Like any battle, and never deceive ourselves into thinking it is not, because this is spiritual warfare at a high level – it is easy to stay stirred up when dramatic things are happening. Slugging it out with not much sign of movement is not nearly as exciting and it requires the discipline of patience with our leaders and with one another.

The second fear, and it is a real one, is summed up in Joseph's advice to his brothers, in the Book Of Genesis, when he sends them back to bring their aged father down to Egypt. He says "**See that you do not fall out among yourselves along the way**" and my most constant prayer these days is that we will follow that dictum. We are conscious that our calling is from God, a calling similar to the one heard centuries ago by St. Francis, to rebuild His church, and we need to be even more conscious that the devil will use every means at his disposal to thwart us. There is nothing that can do our mission more harm than dissention among those very people who have heard His call to unify and rebuild. I implore you to fervently pray for our unity even as we pray for wisdom and direction.

And finally, my hopes.

Even as I write this I am filled with euphoria that came from a meeting of the Common Cause Roundtable in Pittsburgh just last week. This will be reported in some detail but let me jump the gun by saying that in a Spirit filled gathering of people from eight different groups who for one reason or another feel a sense of dismay with the direction Anglicanism in North America has been heading (indeed to the degree that many of these groups no longer have a connection with their former national body) that our common cause is far greater than any differences we may have – and that we have agreed to form an international Federation

that will be able to speak internationally with one voice. The seven theological concepts we have adopted as being essential for membership are put in the overall context of this statement: *We believe and confess Jesus Christ to be THE Way, THE Truth, and THE Life; no one comes to the Father but by Him.*

It is sad that we find ourselves getting so excited over what is such a basic and fundamental foundation of our faith. And yet, this (in a sentence) is what lies behind the crisis we presently are facing and why we are here today. The struggle is not about **SEX but rather about SIN**. Differences on sexuality are merely the symptoms – the disease, as Canon David Anderson of the AAC said, stems from three questions:

1. Who is Jesus Christ?
2. What *unique* role did He play in my salvation?
3. What esteem and reverence do I give to the Holy Scriptures?

It basically is because the Church we love has fudged its teaching on the obvious answers to these questions that we are here today with this tremendous responsibility resting on our shoulders.

Always remember that we are not out to leave anything. We are here to prepare for a future that undoubtedly will be thrust upon us if the Anglican Church of Canada decides to “walk apart”. We are not out to form anything new. We are here to cleanse and restore – indeed to reform- the body entrusted with the “faith once delivered to the Saints”.

The way before us is still quite murky and uncertain. While the light at the end of the tunnel is somewhat clearer and stronger than it was this time last year, there still are many twists and turns that have to be navigated - and many side tracks that could lead us *from* rather than *to* our destination. It still can become quite messy (it probably will) and it may inflict pain and much self sacrifice on those of us who have accepted the call to be faithful.

Wherever we may be led, let us keep in mind that above all else we are called to be a **holy people**. That involves personal holiness as it also leads into congregational holiness. It is not enough to be on the right side of a theological or moral issue, if our life style does not reflect the radiance of a people who walk with God.

I know that our Movement has been enshrouded in Prayer from its very inception. But we must remember that as things become more difficult and the hour of decision arrives for each of us, our time of concentrated prayer, both individually and corporately, has to increase rather than weaken.

My Sisters and Brothers, may each of us feel the presence of God’s Holy Spirit among us in the next couple of days, and may that be reflected in our discussions as well as our decisions.

“...Upon this faith I will build my Church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it”

In the Name of God – Father Son and Holy Spirit -- AMEN