

Report by Bishop Donald Harvey, Moderator, Anglican Network in Canada  
To the Anglican Mainstream gathering, Church of England General Synod  
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I bring you greetings from the Anglican Network in Canada and also from the Anglican Church in North America which is in very embryonic stages at this point. I would also like to bring you greetings from the geographic province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

For many years we, in Newfoundland, bore the motto of being England's oldest colony and Canada's newest province. We are the most easterly point of North America. We were discovered by John Cabot who sailed from Bristol in 1497. We were taken possession of as a colony by Sir Humphrey Gilbert in 1583. One minute before midnight on March 31 1949 the Dominion of Newfoundland became part of the Dominion of Canada.

Religion played a big part in the decision about how we were going to be governed. In the second referendum the decision was made to become part of the Dominion of Canada by a vote of 51.3%. It was hardly a unanimous decision. It was agreed we would become part of the Dominion of Canada on the first day of the fiscal year, which was April 1st. But April 1st was also April Fools Day and the opponents who did not want to become part of Canada would have had a real heyday with that. And so the government decided that by one fell swoop every Newfoundlander in the world would be a Canadian one minute before midnight on March 31.

Newfoundland was basically a fishing station for codfish when there were codfish to catch. Also in the years before long distance flights, we were the crossroads of the world for planes that had to refuel because they were crossing the Atlantic.

The Canadian milieu is supposed to be very different from that of the United States. In some ways it still is. But when you have two countries, one much larger than the other and much more powerful than the other, living side by side, the boundary becomes less defined. The atmosphere in Canada is often looked upon to be far more conservative than that in the USA. But when it comes to religious matters it is the other way around. After 9/11 when all the major countries had commemorative services to remember the events, on Parliament Hill in Canada when everyone was gathered, by the express command of the federal government, no prayer whatever was said. This to me seemed to be the beginning of a real downward slope. The Parliament of Canada passed a law in the next year which defined Marriage as the union between two persons instead of a union between a man and a woman. This was a very major change.

At the most easterly point of North America, we were supposed to have a service on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2000, welcoming the new era, the new millennium at the first place in North America where the sun would shine. The Government planned a big service at Cape Spear, which is the most easterly point. Word came from the Prime Minister's office that the name Jesus Christ was not to be mentioned in that service which commemorated 2000 years of what? Jesus was not even to be given an honourable mention. At that time I was diocesan bishop so when the priest who was looking after this for me came and told me about it, we agreed that since he was doing the final prayers, that it would be easier to get forgiveness than permission. So we brought in the name of Jesus a couple of times in recognition of his

birth and time amongst us

That is the atmosphere that is still in Canada at the present time: A complete divorcing of church and state.

In my own province, over the chair of the Speaker of the House, are the words in Latin: *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God*. Yet, a number of attempts were made to begin assemblies of the legislature with a prayer, and they have all been turned down.

In that atmosphere the Anglican Network in Canada came to birth. We basically stand for two things: if these two things were settled the other controversies in the church at the present time would not be as noticeable as they are. We insist on asserting the uniqueness of Jesus Christ, that he is the way, the truth and the life. We insist that there is no other name by which you can be saved, there is no way you can water down the fact that Jesus Christ is Lord. Nor should you want to. We also insist on supremacy of Holy Scripture. We are leery of those who keep telling us that scripture needs to be reinterpreted. For the most part, reinterpretation simply means rewriting or omitting large sections of it that seem to be counter to the culture that is prevalent today.

In introducing me, mention was made of the Titanic. [The Lighthouse that received its distress signals was in Bishop Harvey's diocese.] The Titanic was struck by a great iceberg. It is hard to believe, when you see these icebergs floating by – and they float by where I live all the time – that 9/10<sup>ths</sup> of these icebergs are still below water. You only see the tip of the iceberg. Similarly, the same sex blessing issue is only the top of a very large, complex iceberg. Yet that is the one that for the most part gets the attention of the media.

Long before Gene Robinson was consecrated Bishop in New Hampshire, the Diocese of New Westminster, located on the West Coast of Canada, with its bishop Michael Ingham, went through a succession of synods. Each time there was a vote to permit same-sex blessings, with successively larger margins. After the third vote, Michael declared that it was a valid proposal and that he would give it his Episcopal assent, making his the first diocese, certainly in North America if not the world, to officially advocate this particular departure from the historic Christian platform.

That was the start. A year later, we had New Hampshire with Bishop Robinson and all the subsequent events. I do not have the time or the energy any more to go into the detail and most of you know these all too well.

A prophecy by General William Booth, who died in 1912, is very descriptive of the Church in North America at the present time. I am talking not about society but the organized church and Anglicanism in particular. He said: "I am of the opinion that the chief dangers that confront the coming century will be religion without the Holy Spirit, Christianity without Christ, forgiveness without repentance, salvation without regeneration, politics without God and heaven without hell." He was very prophetic when he said that and it has come to pass.

Because these things have come to pass, some of us have said: "Enough is enough. We cannot go that road any longer. We have to stand up." Standing up has given us the label of being schismatic, of being communion breakers. It has not been a very easy time.

To me, the turning point in Canada came at General Synod two years ago in Winnipeg when

a motion was passed that indicated that same sex blessings are not in conflict with the core creedal doctrines of the Anglican Church of Canada. When that was passed, for me it was game over – as far as being able to stay in the Anglican Church of Canada was concerned.

The Anglican Church of Canada has now made up its mind, has now decided what its theology is going to be and all they are hanging back on is timing. When will be the best time to do this with the least fallout? At the end of the synod, it was agreed that they would spend an extra three years studying this, with no diocese taking action. Despite this talk of restraint, since that time, six separate dioceses have voted to ask their bishop for permission to proceed with same sex blessings.

And two weeks ago the Diocese of Toronto, with its four bishops, decided they were going to authorize certain parishes within the diocese to perform same sex blessings without taking it to synod at all. They rationalized that, since it was only going to be allowed in a small number of parishes, there was no real harm in it. This sort of reasoning makes no sense at all.

This past year, we have gone through a series of struggles on both sides of the border. Bishop Bob Duncan of Pittsburgh has been a great champion in the United States as have a number of other diocesan bishops. And they have been a great help to us, because it is very difficult to stand alone. Together with them we are planning to see if we can form a new province in North America.

In the meantime, the persecution and prosecution has become great.

It has been our desire to remain part of the Anglican family. Many of us in North America have sought the assistance of Primates from other Provinces to provide jurisdiction and oversight so we could carry on as a part of the Anglican Communion. While there are a number of biblically faithful continuing Anglican Churches in North America that we could have joined, we wanted to remain within the Communion itself. For many of us staying in the Communion, if at all possible, is very, very important.

So, various groups went to Rwanda, to Nigeria, any number of places. We, in the Anglican Network in Canada, ultimately decided to ask Archbishop Greg Venables of the Southern Cone to take us under his wing. And that he graciously did – and subsequently he accepted a number of American dioceses as well.

History will record that Greg Venables has been a very brave champion for downtrodden Anglicans who want to stay in the family. I know he has taken a lot of abuse for it. He has also received a lot of gratitude from so many of us who realized that our path would have been much more difficult had it not been for his courageous action.

I would like to get this quite clear today. The Anglican Network in Canada did not become part of the province of the Southern Cone. The constitution of the Southern Cone would not allow that anyway because of its geographical provisions. Rather Archbishop Venables took us under his provincial jurisdiction. He used three adjectives to describe his action: temporary, emergency and pastoral.

It is his hope and ours that the time will come when we will be able to cut the umbilical cord we have with the Southern Cone and go forward as part of a new North American Province.

Our bottom line is this: that we can talk about reconciliation forever but we see in North America no indication that the Anglican Church of Canada is going to change its ways. Every bit of evidence has been the other way. Michael Ingham himself has said that same-sex blessings is not the real struggle. The real struggle will be on more complex theological issues which I mentioned just a while ago.

The word "compromise" is not in our vocabulary. We have no intention of turning a blind eye to what we believe Scripture forbids. It is not in our scope to accept something about which there is not a word in Old or New Testament to indicate that it is right. But we do have the teaching of Jesus Christ, though our opponents say that Jesus never said anything about it. Jesus said that therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife and the two shall become one flesh. He was quoting the Old Testament but he set the standard and that standard has to be maintained. It is our intention to maintain it regardless of the consequences.

And my friends the consequences have been extreme. There are different kinds of retribution that we have experienced. The one I found hardest is being sent to Coventry – which means you do not exist at all. You are ignored completely. And that is what happened. Since I left the Anglican Church of Canada, I have had no contact whatever. For example, in my own former diocese, I was not sent death notices of the clergy of the diocese. It was very petty and very small – but not as bad as in some places.

Bishop Malcolm Harding is the former Bishop of Brandon who joined the Anglican Network in Canada shortly after I did – a godly man, very active in the Anglican renewal movement across Canada. In his former diocesan offices are hung pictures of the six bishops of Brandon. One day someone noticed that "The Rt Rev" had been removed from the inscription under his picture. When some people protested, his picture was removed altogether. In its place was a notice that the fifth Bishop of Brandon, having relinquished his order and his ministry, is no longer displayed here.

To my knowledge, I am not officially able to read a lesson from the Old or New Testament in any Anglican Church of Canada, although I am a Bishop of the Southern Cone. Several individual bishops have called me and said if you are ever in my diocese, I will let you preach here. But significantly not one of them has ever said that in public. Not one of them has said that at the House of Bishops. So basically when we follow this path, we become *persona non grata*.

More tragic was the person that almost everyone in this room has read about, read from, and many of you worked on his theology: Dr JI Packer. The Bishop of New Westminster accused him of abandonment of ministry and removed his licence. One of the great – and yet humbling – privileges of my life was to hand a licence to Jim Packer on a stage in Vancouver and have him graciously accepted it. I always felt that what Michael Ingham did to Jim Packer gave us more favourable publicity than anything we could have afforded to buy. Right across the world people asked, "Is this true? It's like the Baptist Federation saying that Billy Graham was no longer faithful to the gospel."

Lawsuits are another matter altogether. There are six dioceses in Canada where lawsuits are currently taking place. There are five or six parishes which came with us who have abandoned their church buildings or have been locked out. Locks were changed on the doors. Court orders have been obtained. It is a sad mess for anybody – even amongst

non-believers. For this attitude to exist between people who kneeled at the same communion rail with us and who presumably confess the same creed is nothing short of a tragedy.

These court cases can go any way. The one in New Westminster which will come on the court dockets on May 25 involves a large amount of property there is going to cost us and I presume the other side as well, pretty close to \$1 million dollars - and that is without an appeal. When you think of what one million dollars could do toward evangelism, it is a tragic situation.

The Communique that came out of the Primates' Meeting in Egypt talks again about the importance of being able to talk to one another. It sounds wonderful. This has been the main theme since I first went to the House of Bishops 15 years ago. Fifteen years later it is still the main topic being discussed and it has not moved very much at all.

When the Primates called for this restraint, and for the parties to sit down and negotiate, Archbishop Hiltz of Canada said he was willing to negotiate. I wrote to Archbishop Hiltz 14 months ago and said could we at least sit down together with the dioceses that are involved in law suits. Could we just sit around the table to see if there is some alternative dispute mechanism we could enter into which would save us all this money – which the dioceses do not have any more than we do – and set a better example for the community. The reply I got back after the House of Bishops meeting was that this is a diocesan matter. I knew it was a diocesan matter but I also knew that the primate of the church was in a position to call the sparring partners together to see what could be done. That was not done. I am hoping now that his public support for mediation will come to fruition and that, at least, we could sit down together.

I am not sure what the Primates are talking about negotiating here. Are they talking about negotiating a settlement like after a divorce? Because that is what has happened. As Greg Venables said last year at the Lambeth Conference, the divorce has taken place. Are we talking about the most amiable way to settle this now and still go on talking to one another? Or is this negotiation to try to bring us all back together again into one?

While I believe in miracles and divine intervention, it is testing my faith considerably to think that reunification would be possible after what has happened and what continues to happen. And what is happening in Canada is “small fry” compared to what is happening across the border with godly bishops being deposed for being faithful to what we believe.

I would not want you to feel in this part of the world that things are not as bad as they are. Those who are living through this day-by-day realise the gulf between us is vast. I

In an interview Archbishop Orombi and Archbishop Venables give from Egypt, Archbishop Orombi said – when we talk about the word repentance we talk about the liberal church repenting for some things it already has done. The liberal church, however, talks about repenting to the homosexual community for the way we have neglected them. If repentance means such opposite extremes, the chance of bringing them together is not that great.

What we have branched out with in Canada is, we think, blessed by God. One year ago we launched, we had two bishops, we had two priests, we had two deacons and we had two parishes. At least we did everything by twos. As of last Sunday, little over a year later, we have three bishops – Ron Ferris who has served in the Canadian House of Bishops for 29

years came to be with us in January. All three of us have come out of retirement to see ANiC through until we have bishops coming up through the ranks, as it were. We also have 68 priests and 27 parishes – with two or three in the wings. The Lord is blessing us and we thank you for your prayers. We thank Anglican Mainstream for its support, giving us encouragement and inspiration when we needed it.

We ask you to watch carefully, because those who think we can live together in our diversity do not know the enormity of that diversity. If they did they would know how almost impossible that would be – unless you want to turn a blind eye to the Word of God and the teachings of Jesus Christ. If that remains foremost, we have no choice but to be where we are.

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## **Question session**

### **Q. If anything happens to Greg Venables, what will be the situation for you?**

A. I remember the account of Geoffrey Fisher visiting a boarding school and after his talk he asked if any boy would like to ask a question. A little boy put his hand up and asked: Please your grace, why were the angels walking up and down Jacob's ladder. If they had wings they could fly, they did not need a ladder. Archbishop slowly looked around and asked: Would any bright little boy like to answer that question?

Between me representing the Anglican Network in Canada and Greg Venables we have not written one word. It is a gentleman's agreement. It has been a Christian's agreement. If anything were to happen to him unexpectedly, God will equally provide for the future. We do not worry about it. It seems to us that things are playing out the way they need to. Meanwhile we are praying fervently for his good health.

When we drew up the constitution for the New Province, we built a clause into it mainly for the people who came under Rwanda, because they come directly under the Synod of Rwanda. We built in a provision that, during the transitional period at least, there could be dual membership. You retain your connection with your overseas primate until such time as the Communion recognizes the validity of the new province. Without that provision, we could be without a Communion connection. So – time frame? I think people had far too high expectations of the Primates' Meeting. We knew the matter of the new Province was not going to be resolved. We are not always told everything that goes on behind the scenes. We want to make recognition as expediently as possible. Some of the Primates have said they do not want to prolong the temporary interventions. They will only continue as long as it is necessary. A primate said to a group of us years ago, "If you are waiting for either the Primates or the Anglican Consultative Council or any other group to come and hand you a new Province on a platter of silver and say "we have decided this is right for you; have it," you will never get it. You must take the initiative and you must start doing some of those things and ultimately – a primate here, a primate there, we will start saying we support you, we are with you and we are in communion with you. And, if you get the majority of Primates in communion with you that in many ways solves the issue we are dealing with.

**Q How does the Church of England and the Anglican establishment here see your difficulties? Is there any "ointment" being poured into your wounds? And, secondly, how do laity see your problems?**

A. To answer the second question first... in most instances across Canada this started as a lay movement. In fact, because clergy were afraid of being prosecuted – and there is a lot of fear out there – often the lay people had to take control and get things under way and call the meetings. The Anglican Network in Canada – and I am proud of this particular fact – we never once went recruiting. Every single ANiC parish originally took the initiative to invite us in. We never went around various dioceses and said can we move in? The lay component is extraordinarily strong. Of our 27 parishes we estimate 3500 as an average Sunday attendance – this is a bigger Sunday attendance than 13 dioceses in Canada. We are happy that the response is also showing itself in tithing. These are small parishes that we have. We are wondering now what the problem was before because the money is flowing in very nicely.

To your first question, if you refer to the establishment as the Church of England, I know we have very sympathetic bishops here but I am sure we have some the other way as well. In the worldwide communion, we have Primates of what we estimate to be 45 million Anglicans who have already give us written support for what we are doing. The office of the Archbishop of Canterbury is held in great esteem by most Anglicans in Canada in our movement and out of our movement. It is the prayer of people in our movement that we will, in God's time, get the support of the Archbishop of Canterbury. I am only too aware of the yellow line on which he walks. The tendency of someone on a yellow line in the middle of the road to be hit by both sides is great. So far we have had nothing negative from him at all.

**Q. Can you tell us about the significance of GAFCON and the Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans?**

A. I was one of those on the planning committee of GAFCON. It was a very difficult decision deciding in Canada who went and who did not. We followed a certain formula. GAFCON was received with extreme enthusiasm by both those who went and those to whom we reported when we came back. Many people have said that when the Jerusalem Declaration was read it was the closest thing to euphoria they have felt within the church for years. They just could not sit in their seats. They stood up in a spontaneous doxology. I have yet to hear one negative comment from the people in our movement in Canada. The only challenge we have is to see that the enthusiasm of that last morning in Jerusalem does not die out. Unless we keep that stirred up it will die out naturally. We pray that the ideals that were expressed, the feeling of unity that was so prevalent will prevail and continue. We hope that GAFCON is just the beginning of a great new movement.

You have heard before the statistic that every five hundred years there has been a Reformation in the church. We are now at the end of another 500 year cycle and the time has come for us to realign and do a good spring house clean and get rid of all the junk that has accumulated. Our movement will be a failure if we just become a replica of what we left behind. This must be a spontaneous outpouring of God's Holy Spirit and whatever that will involve. I have been accused of proclaiming that just as we have doctors without borders, and lawyers without borders, it may be necessary in some place to have bishops without borders. If that is necessary to proclaim the faith of Jesus Christ we will have bishops without borders.

In this new movement we are measuring membership by average Sunday attendance. For most of my 30 years, the measure we used to determine parish membership was the Easter Communion attendance – which was very inaccurate. When you get census numbers from

the Government referring to people who call themselves Anglicans, who even have a fringe connection with the Church, -- well the disparity is vast, in the hundreds of thousands. So I am not sure what the membership figures in ANiC would be. Apologies to any statisticians here, but I feel that statistics of that nature of church membership is like a drunk leaning against a lamppost; it's more for support than illumination.

I know that the Anglican Church of Canada has been in a sad decline for a number of years. That is not unique to Anglicans. Maybe if it is unique it is to those churches that have lost sight of the biblical message. I used to be astounded in my own diocese at what was supposed to be a big service in a church on a Sunday night, a confirmation service and all the festivities that go with it: People still used to make sure they were out in an hour and a half. Then I would drive up past this Pentecostal church which was bulging at the seams and services would go on till 10 o'clock at night. You could hardly get by on the road. I say let's listen to what they are saying because they are attracting people in a way that we have lost sight of. This can only be reversed not by gimmicks to get people in but in giving people something worth coming in for. Last week at a conference I heard a phrase: "Isn't it unfortunate that on Sundays we call God our Father and spend the rest of the week acting as if we were orphans?"

**Q. Are other Christian churches in Canada going the same route as the Anglican Church of Canada or are they standing firm on the authority of scripture as you are doing?**

A. A number of people of different denominations have been saying to me: We are praying for you and we are watching what you are doing because the problems you are now experiencing we are going to experience ourselves. Even Pentecostals and Roman Catholics are saying that to me. Because it is now the culture; all the churches will have to face it sooner or later. Many are hoping that when we come through this successfully, it may be a template for them.

**Q. These court battles revolve around church buildings. What is happening about the church buildings?**

A. In some of the more extreme cases the congregation has been forced out and nobody has gone in to replace them. In other cases a very small number have stayed for one reason or another, sometimes for nostalgic reasons. In some instances Dioceses are putting money in or bringing people in. It has been most heartening that in some cases Seventh Day Adventists have given their properties for us to use on Sundays when they do not need them.