



The Prayer Book Society of Canada – Toronto Branch
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Dear members and friends of the PBSC Toronto Branch,

As most of you will know, there have been a number of important developments in the American and Canadian churches since the Lambeth Conference, which must give rise to mixed reactions among traditionally minded Anglicans.

First, the hierarchy of the Episcopal Church in the U.S. (TEC) is proving obdurate towards the requests made of it by the Anglican Communion. Litigation continues apace against parishes wishing to secede from TEC. Four entire dioceses have now departed as well, and their bishops have been deposed or disciplined (sometimes by means that are actually illegal according to the canons of TEC). All of the efforts of the Archbishop of Canterbury to foster a mediation process seem to have come to naught. Regarding the future adoption of an Anglican Covenant, despite the fact that it seems likely that a final version will be ready to present to TEC's General Convention next year, their Presiding Bishop, Katherine Jefferts Schori, has stated that she would strongly discourage any consideration of the Covenant at that time.

As a result, and as a culmination of the cross-border "interventions" made by provinces such as Rwanda, Uganda and the Southern Cone to extend pastoral oversight to separated North American congregations, in a bold and unprecedented move it has now been announced that these congregations will be joining together to form a new North American province, parallel to the existing American and Canadian churches. The constitution for the new province is expected to be in place by early December, and the new province is then planned to become an independent body, no longer under the jurisdiction of foreign provinces. This will have the positive effect of silencing the allegations that foreign provinces are "poaching" congregations from the American and Canadian churches; and if the new province is ultimately officially recognized by the Anglican Communion, it will provide a fully accredited, doctrinally orthodox alternative to the existing American and Canadian churches.

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THE PRAYER BOOK SOCIETY OF CANADA – TORONTO BRANCH

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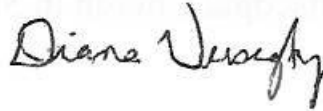
By contrast with the situation to the south, the signals sent out by the Canadian church so far have been more mixed. It was very heartening that as an outcome of the House of Bishops' meeting at the end of October, our Primate, Fred Hiltz, was able to state that the "vast majority" of Canadian bishops supported the moratorium on same-sex blessings requested by the Communion. On the down side, in addition to the bishop of New Westminster's refusal to abide by the moratorium, the bishops of Montreal, Ottawa and Niagara have now either hinted or declared that they intend to give their assent to their diocesan synods' requests for approval of same-sex blessings. The implications of this are unclear; at the very least it must damage the relations of these bishops and dioceses with the Archbishop of Canterbury (who has stated that all bishops who are willing to abide by the guidelines of the Windsor Report are in communion with him), and must place the overall unity of the Canadian church in question. Faithful Anglicans in these four dioceses will be finding it more and more difficult to justify remaining in a diocese that is a maverick in the eyes of the Anglican Communion, if a viable alternative exists in the form of the new North American province. Time will tell how all of this will evolve.

In short, the future of the Canadian church looks murky at the present time. However, the PBSC is committed to working with all faithful Anglicans within the Anglican Church of Canada, and to maintaining friendly contact with those in other jurisdictions. The study series organized jointly in October by our Niagara Branch and St. George's Reformed Episcopal Church in Hamilton is an excellent example of how such collaborations can bear rich fruit.

Alongside that, we continue our regular efforts to promote the understanding and use of the BCP. For all of these, we urgently need your prayers and assistance. In particular, we are counting on your generous financial support for the third and final volume of Sue Careless' popular series, "Discovering the Book of Common Prayer". This will come at a similar cost to the first two volumes (about \$28,000 total), and so far we have raised only a little more than half of the cost. We hope that you will consider making a special donation towards this very important effort during this holy season!

With best wishes for a blessed Advent and Christmastide,

Yours faithfully,



Diana Versegby.

We welcome your comments!
