

Anglican Primates Release Statement Condemning the Actions of the Bishop of New Westminster and the Episcopal Church of the USA

In response to the current crisis in the Anglican Church resulting from the actions of the Bishop of New Westminster and the General Convention of the Episcopal Church in the USA, the Primates of the Anglican Communion met at Lambeth in October, 2003. Here is the full text of their statement

“ The Primates of the Anglican Communion and the Moderators of the United Churches, meeting together at Lambeth Palace on the 15th and 16th October, 2003, wish to express our gratitude to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, for calling us together in response to recent events in the Diocese of New Westminster, Canada, and the Episcopal Church (USA), and welcoming us into his home so that we might take counsel together, and to seek to discern, in an atmosphere of common prayer and worship, the will and guidance of the Holy Spirit for the common life of the thirty-eight provinces which constitute our Communion.

At a time of tension, we have struggled at great cost with the issues before us, but have also been renewed and

strengthened in our Communion with one another through our worship and study of the Bible. This has led us into a deeper commitment to work together, and we affirm our pride in the Anglican inheritance of faith and order and our firm desire to remain part of a Communion, where what we hold in common is much greater than that which divides us in proclaiming Good

“These actions threaten the unity of our own Communion as well as our relationships with other parts of Christ's Church, our mission and witness, and our relations with other faiths...”

News to the world.

At this time we feel the profound pain and uncertainty shared by others about our Christian discipleship in the light of controversial decisions by the Diocese of New Westminster to authorise a Public Rite of Blessing for those in committed same sex relationships, and by the 74th General Convention of the Episcopal Church (USA) to confirm the election of a priest in a committed same sex relationship to the office and work of a Bishop.

These actions threaten the unity of our own Communion as well as our relationships with other parts of Christ's Church, our mission and witness, and our relations with other faiths, in a world already confused in areas of sexuality, morality and theology, and polarised Christian opinion.

As Primates of our Communion seeking to exercise the “enhanced responsibility” entrusted to us by successive Lambeth Conferences, we re-affirm our common understanding of the centrality and authority of Scripture in determining the



The Annunciation, Fra Filippo Lippi (1406-1469).

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Primates' Statement

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basis of our faith. Whilst we acknowledge a legitimate diversity of interpretation that arises in the Church, this diversity does not mean that some of us take the authority of Scripture more lightly than others. Nevertheless, each province needs to be aware of the possible effects of its interpretation of Scripture on the life of other provinces in the Communion. We commit ourselves afresh to mutual respect whilst seeking from the Lord a correct discernment of how God's Word speaks to us in our contemporary world.

“Therefore, as a body we deeply regret the actions of the Diocese of New Westminster and the Episcopal Church (USA)...we call on the provinces concerned to make adequate provision for episcopal oversight of dissenting minorities within their own area of pastoral care in consultation with the Archbishop of Canterbury on behalf of the Primates.”

We also re-affirm the resolutions made by the bishops of the Anglican Communion gathered at the Lambeth Conference in 1998 on issues of human sexuality as having moral force and commanding the respect of the Communion as its present position on these issues. We commend the report of that Conference in its entirety to all members of the Anglican Communion, valuing especially its emphasis on the need “to listen to the experience of homosexual persons, and...to assure them that they are loved by God and that all baptised, believing and faithful persons, regardless of sexual orientation, are full members of the Body of Christ”; and its acknowledgement of the need for ongoing study on questions of human sexuality.

Therefore, as a body we deeply regret the actions of the Diocese of New Westminster and the Episcopal Church (USA) which appear to a number of provinces to have short-circuited that process, and could be perceived to alter unilaterally the teaching of the Anglican Communion on this issue. They do not. Whilst we recognise the juridical autonomy of each province in our Communion, the mutual interdependence of the provinces means that none has authority unilaterally to substitute an alternative teaching as if it were the teaching of the entire Anglican Communion.

To this extent, therefore, we must make clear that recent actions in New Westminster and in the Episcopal Church (USA) do not express the mind of our Communion as a whole, and these decisions jeopardise our sacramental fellowship with each other. We have a particular concern for those who in all conscience feel bound to dissent from the teaching and practice of their province in such matters. Whilst we reaffirm the teaching of successive Lambeth Conferences that bishops must respect the autonomy and territorial integrity of dioceses and provinces other than their own, we call on the provinces concerned to make adequate provision for episcopal oversight of dissenting minorities within their own area of pastoral care in consultation with the Archbishop of Canterbury on behalf of the Primates.

The Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church (USA) has explained to us the constitutional framework within which the election and confirmation of a new bishop in the Episcopal Church (USA) takes place. As Primates, it is not for us to pass judgement on the constitutional processes of another province. We recognise the sensitive balance between provincial autonomy and the expression of critical opinion by others on the internal actions of a province. Nevertheless, many Primates have

pointed to the grave difficulties that this election has raised and will continue to raise. In most of our provinces the election of Canon Gene Robinson would not have been possible since his chosen lifestyle would give rise to a canonical impediment to his consecration as a bishop.

If [the] consecration [of Gene Robinson] proceeds, we recognise that we have reached a crucial and critical point in the life of the Anglican Communion and we have had to conclude that the future of the Communion itself will be put in jeopardy...This will tear the fabric of our Communion at its deepest level, and may lead to further division....Similar considerations apply to the situation pertaining in the Diocese of New Westminster.”

If his consecration proceeds, we recognise that we have reached a crucial and critical point in the life of the Anglican Communion and we have had to conclude that the future of the Communion itself will be put in jeopardy. In this case, the ministry of this one bishop will not be recognised by most of the Anglican world, and many provinces are likely to consider themselves to be out of Communion with the Episcopal Church (USA). This will tear the fabric of our Communion at its deepest level, and may lead to further division on this and further issues as provinces have to decide in consequence whether they can remain in communion with provinces that choose not to break communion with the Episcopal Church (USA).

Similar considerations apply to the situation pertaining in the Diocese of New Westminster.

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Recent Developments within the Anglican Communion Regarding the Same-Sex Issue

October 16th, 2003

The Primates of the Anglican Church throughout the world meet at Lambeth, England, and issue a statement re-affirming the 1998 Lambeth Conference on issues of human sexuality, and express “deep regret” at the actions of the Diocese of New Westminster for endorsing same-sex unions, and of the Episcopal Church in the USA for its endorsement of the election of Gene Robinson, a divorced man living openly in a same-sex union, and cites the “profound pain and uncertainty” these actions have created: “We must make it clear that recent actions in New Westminster and in the Episcopal Church [of the USA] do not express the mind of our Communion...and jeopardize our sacramental fellowship”

The statement is signed by Michael Peers, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, and by Frank Griswold, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church of the USA. The full text of the statement is reproduced on page 1.

October 17th, 2003

The Chancellor of the Diocese of New Westminster presses charges against seven clergy - representing 25% of the worshipping population of the diocese - for “disobedient and disrespectful conduct” towards the bishop – i.e., for opposing the Bishop’s endorsement of same-sex blessings – and “schism”: this in clear violation of the worldwide Primates’ explicit direction to the Canadian Church – and to the entire Anglican Communion – that Alternative Episcopal Oversight is to be provided to all dissenting minorities confronted by a bishop endorsing same-sex unions.

Earlier in the month, David Crawley, Archbishop of British Columbia said he had begun disciplinary proceedings against Terry Buckle, Bishop of the

Yukon, for offering Alternative Episcopal Oversight to the dissenting parishes in the diocese of New Westminster.

October 31, 2003

The Canadian House of Bishops wraps up their meeting with a request to Bishop to Ingham to drop charges against seven dissenting clergy, and a request to Archbishop Crawley to drop charges against Bishop Terry Buckle.

“We are appalled that the authorities within the Episcopal Church of the USA (ECUSA) have ignored the heartfelt plea of the Communion not to proceed with the scheduled consecration, which clearly demonstrates that authorities within ECUSA consider their cultural-based agenda is of far greater importance than obedience to the Word of God,...the spiritual welfare and unity of the Anglican Communion, our ecumenical fellowship and inter-faith relationships.”

November 2, 2003

Gene Robinson is consecrated Bishop of New Hampshire at a hockey rink at the University of New Hampshire in Durham. The consecration is conducted by Frank Griswold, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church. Fifty US Bishops joined Bishop Griswold, in the traditional laying-on of hands on the new bishop’s head.

The Rt. Rev’d David Bena of the Diocese of Albany reads a protest signed by 38 bishops from the US and Canada: “It is impossible to affirm a candidate for a bishop and symbol of unity whose very consecration is dividing the whole Anglican Communion....This consecration poses a dramatic contradiction to the historic faith and discipline of the Church. We join the

majority of bishops in the [Anglican] Communion and will not recognize it. We declare our grief at the actions of those who are engaging in this schismatic act. This action is a departure from Holy Scripture, from the clear historic teaching of the Church, from the moral imperative of the Lambeth Conference of Bishops, 1998, and from the fervent plea of the Primates of the Communion.”

A further objection read at the consecration declares it to be “a cowardly and conforming act of a church that has capitulated to elite culture...inclusivity without transformation is not the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

The Anglican Mainstream Statement declares “We find it hard to understand how the Presiding Bishop [Frank Griswold] could oversee this action after subscribing to the unanimous statement of all the Anglican Primates that such an action would tear the fabric of the Communion.”

Peter Akinola, Primate of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the [Anglican] Primates of the Global South expressed “profound sadness and pain”: “We are appalled that the authorities within the Episcopal Church of the USA (ECUSA) have ignored the heartfelt plea of the Communion not to proceed with the scheduled consecration, which clearly demonstrates that authorities within ECUSA consider their cultural-based agenda is of far greater importance than obedience to the Word of God, the integrity of the one mission of God in which we all share, the spiritual welfare and unity of the Anglican Communion, our ecumenical fellowship and inter-faith relationships.”

November 7, 2003

Proceedings against Bishop Buckle and seven New Westminster clergy are stayed.

Christian Unity and the coming crisis for The Anglican Church of North America:

Or, How a Prayer Book Parish in the Diocese of New Westminster came to feel the lash of a hostile bishop

Norah Johnston, Chairman of the Vancouver Branch of the PBSC

The Diocese of New Westminster is often in the news these days. The actions taken by this diocese, to sanction blessing the unions of same sex couples, have been schismatic far beyond our borders. The question must be asked: has the Bishop of New Westminster, Michael Ingham, acted in accordance with promises he made regarding the doctrine and discipline of the Anglican Church of Canada? At the time of his consecration as bishop he was charged to make these promises: (as per the BAS)

“...To guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church; to celebrate and to provide for the administration of the sacraments of the new covenant; to ordain priests and deacons, and to join in ordaining bishops; and to be in all things a faithful pastor and wholesome example for the entire flock of Christ.”

The bishop's actions also need to be set against the solemn oaths made as a priest at the time of ordination. Even in the BAS, which in many places seeks to dilute the tenets of classical Anglicanism, the priest swears a solemn oath before the congregation and before God to “be loyal to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of Christ as this Church has received them”, then states “I solemnly declare that I do believe the holy scripture of the Old and New Testament to be the word of God, and to contain all things necessary to salvation, and I do solemnly swear to conform to the doctrine, discipline and worship of the Anglican Church of Canada (BAS, p 647) .

Yet the Bishop has broken the Guidelines of the Canadian House of Bishops, flouted the resolutions of the world-wide Anglican Bishops meeting at Lambeth in 1998, disregarded the plain word of Scripture, and departed from the doctrine, discipline and worship of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Two separate churches have been wrapped in the same cloak for decades – and suddenly the cloak is drawn aside. There they stand: one seeking to be loyal to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of

Christ as the Anglican Church of Canada has received it, the other keen to innovate, to revise the ‘faith once offered’, interpreting revelation as progressive, sceptical of the traditional ethos of those believing in the ‘One, True, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church’; perfecting the language of ambiguity. The storm has been looming a long time.

The situation in New Westminster should warn us that the “process”, which, having been on its receiving end, we can only describe as being coercive, will be attempted in many dioceses across the country and has already begun in some. The bishop of the Diocese of New Westminster would have the Canadian Church use the process of “*Dialogue*” – a modern substitute for rigorous debate. This modern dialogue process allows no testing of contentious ideas; instead a well orchestrated process of coercion, with *designed discussions*, lead by carefully taught “*facilitators*” is the order of the day. Employed in New Westminster, this process will likely be proposed as a template in your own diocese. We have all witnessed how successful the process has been in New Westminster.

St. Martin's, North Vancouver, is a traditional Anglican parish which uses the Book of Common Prayer primarily for its worship. It has been directly faced with the consequences of this conflict, and borne this responsibility with courage, graciousness and perseverance.

New Westminster Diocesan Synods:

The diocese had endured a prolonged process of enforced ‘dialogue’ on same sex unions. The process was seen as unsatisfactory by many. The meetings of the Diocesan Synod of 1998 and 2001 narrowly passed motions authorizing the blessing of same-sex unions. Bishop Ingham withheld his consent, but continued to manage the process. He then made an attempt to win the approval of the parishes and clergy who had declared their opposition at the synods. Approaching the June synod of 2002 the bishop made a proposal to this group of

clergy: to designate an “Episcopal Visitor”, a visiting bishop to provide pastoral care but one who would have no jurisdiction; and to provide a “conscience clause” for priests who would not perform the same sex rite. That conscience clause would not be binding on the bishop's successor. This proposal was rejected as unworkable by most of the orthodox clergy. The proposal, now called **Motion 7**, was then presented to the Synod of June 2002, even though it had been rejected by most of the orthodox of the diocese. Many delegates at synod, uninformed of the motion's history, hailed it as a great gesture of compromise. The proposal was passed by a 62.5% majority. At this point, representatives of eight parishes, including St Martin's, walked out of Synod in protest. The eight protesting parishes subsequently met and formed a coalition called the Anglican Communion in New Westminster (ACiNW). It is important to realize that these parishes represent about 25% of the active, worshipping population of the diocese of New Westminster.

Vestry Follow-up at St. Martin's Church

On Sunday, September 29th, 2002, St Martin's Vestry convened and, after a report from the Rector, Rev'd Dr. Timothy Cooke, and subsequent discussion, voted on three questions:

- Are you in favour of St. Martin's actively seeking Alternative Episcopal Oversight (AEO)? (Carried by 75.96%)
- Are you in favour of St. Martin's withholding its financial assessment from the Diocese of New Westminster pending resolution of our request for AEO? (Carried by 78.94%)
- Are you in favour of St. Martin's, together with other parishes, contributing resources (financial and otherwise) to the coalition known as the “Anglican Communion in New Westminster” (ACiNW), which is seeking AEO? (Carried by 82.97%)

Resignation of St. Martin's Rector

However, the subsequent pressures of the situation became too great for the

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Christian Unity ...

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Rector, the Rev'd Dr Timothy Cooke, and he resigned, effective January 31, 2003. An interim Rector, the Rev'd Canon Don Willis, was appointed by the bishop.

St. Martin's Annual Vestry Meeting, Feb. 2003

The wardens proposed a motion, which was amended to:

"Be it resolved that the wardens be instructed to organize one or more informational meetings for the purpose of outlining the options available to the parish, together with the legal and other implications of each option, and thereafter to call a special vestry meeting, prior to Diocesan Synod, all for the purpose of determining the relationship of this parish with the Diocese of New Westminster." (Motion carried)

Reaction in the worldwide church

Many in the Anglican Church of Canada and the Anglican Communion worldwide watched with concern the events unfolding in the Diocese of New Westminster. Several Bishops and Primate of Africa and southeast Asia visited Vancouver and met with representatives of the Diocese and the ACiNW. They believed that reconciliation was now impossible, and stated that they were prepared to provide assistance to the parishes of the ACiNW. Later, they all agreed that a Canadian solution for alternative Episcopal oversight (AEO) would be the ideal way forward.

In February, 2003, shortly after St. Martin's annual vestry, Bishop Terry Buckle of the Diocese of the Yukon (in the same Anglican Province as New Westminster) submitted an offer to Bishop Ingham to provide AEO with jurisdiction (that is, episcopal oversight with full authority) over the parishes of the ACiNW.

Several Anglican Primate and Canadian Bishops endorsed this offer. Michael Ingham "strongly rejected this offer and threatened legal action if Bishop Buckle exercised his Episcopal ministry in the Diocese without permission." Bishop Ingham also wrote to all diocesan clergy and parishes stating that he would take "disciplinary measures under the Canons" if any accepted such an offer. With the exception of St. Martin's, the other 7 ACiNW parishes accepted Bishop Buckle's

offer of AEO. St. Martin's was not in a position to make such a decision without a Rector.

Information Meetings at St Martin's leading up to the Special Vestry, May 25, 2003

On March 14, the wardens distributed a 16 page document summarizing the issue. Three informational meetings duly held. At the first meeting, representatives from the ACiNW attended, and answered questions. Bishop Ingham along with an archdeacon and the regional dean attended the second meeting, and made a presentation. The diocesan authorities raised the prospect of litigation regarding church property, should the parish opt to accept Bishop Buckle's offer. The third meeting was held for the purposes of congregational discussion. In the meantime, Bishop Ingham announced that he had approved Bishop Hockin of Fredericton to act as an episcopal visitor to the diocese for a period of one year. All authority was to be left in the hands of Bishop Ingham.

A Special Vestry was scheduled for May 25 to vote on the issue. Without its Rector, the parish felt its way towards clarity in a highly difficult situation. St. Martin's felt vulnerable, particularly over the issue of possible litigation regarding church property. Advance voting for people unable to attend the Special Vestry meeting was held. As the wording on this ballot was deemed by many to be "scare-mongering", a further meeting was held on May 13, at which the question on the ballot was re-worded. The original wording ran as follows: "I give my own support to the ACiNW to seek Episcopal Oversight by Bishop Terence Buckle. I recognise that the Chancellor and Chief Legal Officer of the Diocese of New Westminster has stated that in order to actually obtain such Episcopal Oversight ministry from Bishop Buckle, I may have to leave the parish of St. Martin."

A special Vestry was held on May 25th, 2003, with the wording on the ballot as follows: "Be it resolved that this vestry accepts Bishop Terry Buckle's offer of alternative Episcopal oversight with full jurisdiction, as set out in his letter of March 17, 2003." A motion was made that no vote less than 60% would be binding.

The result of the vote (including the

advance ballots with the words deemed objectionable by some) was 116 for and 78 against, that is 59.79% in favour.

Following the vote, the wardens announced that the vote would be interpreted by the diocese as a rejection of Bishop Buckle's offer of alternative Episcopal oversight. At a Church Committee Meeting on May 28, the wardens called for a "process of discerning the way ahead".

Church Committee Meeting, June 10th, 2003

The meeting was well attended, with many parishioners as observers. The Wardens, Trustees and Treasurer provided the Parish with a Report on the Church Committee Meeting, June 10th, 2003, dated and distributed June 15th.

Excerpts from that Report follow:

The Trustees, Jim Burns and Chris Vondette, expressed the following concerns:

- a) A very friendly private meeting with Bishop Hockin confirmed that, with him as Episcopal Visitor, Bishop Ingham would control the selection of our next priest. St. Martin's would be required to bring its contributions to the Diocese up to date.
- b) The financial state of our parish had deteriorated to a critical point as members on both sides of the question have withheld their contributions, awaiting some clear direction.
- c) The vote taken on May 25 showed that the parish is split almost 60% in favor of accepting Bishop Buckle's offer, and 40% against.

Therefore at the Church Committee the Trustees presented this motion:

"The Wardens, with the full support of the Trustees, accept the recommendation that the vote of May 25th be accepted as being in favour of accepting Bishop Buckle's offer of Episcopal Oversight, and that Bishop Buckle be so informed.

Accepting Bishop Buckle's offer, since it is the majority's wish, would logically result in the loss of fewer parishioners and would be the best solution to providing closure to the uncertainty, providing a point from which St. Martin's can move forward and begin the process of healing within the parish."

After discussion, the Church Committee passed the motion by a

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The 2004 Canadian Church Calendar is now available. The calendar includes the Sundays, Holy Days, Saints' Days and seasons of the Church Year, in accordance with the calendar from the *Book of Common Prayer* (1962) of the Anglican Church of Canada.

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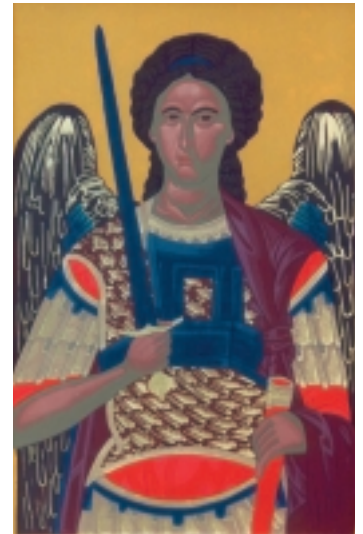
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Many, many thanks to readers of the PBSC National Newsletter who contributed so very generously to our programme during past Christmases!

Icon of St Michael Painted at St Michael's Youth Conference

This year's St Michael's Conference at Durham, Ontario featured something new: the painting (or "writing") of an icon of St Michael the Archangel. As the icon was

being "written" (correctly speaking, icons are "written", not painted), it was being used as a teaching tool. This is highly appropriate, as icons are considered to be a pictorial



representation of a doctrinal statement about God or His saints. Icon "writer" Chris Vandonkelaar, from Hamilton, Ontario, taught Conference attendees about icons, their significance, and the art of painting them, as he worked on the icon during one of the classes offered at the Conference this year.

Once completed, the icon will be placed in the new Chapel of St Michael and St Nicholas of the Seafarers' Mission, at the foot of Wellington Street in Hamilton, which serves hundreds of sailors from around the world. Icons play an important part in the religious life of the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches, and are used by many Anglicans, and, these days, by many Protestants as well. Those who use icons as part of their worship understand the significance of these "windows into heaven".

Of the Great and Glorious Accidents Happening about the Birth of JESUS

by Jeremy Taylor, D.D.

From the *Life and Death of the Ever Blessed JESUS CHRIST the Saviour of the World*, by Jeremy Taylor, D.D., Chaplain to His Majesty King Charles I, printed at the Sign of the Angel in Ivy Lane, London, 1653.

“ Although the birth of Christ was destitute of the usual excrescencies* and less necessary Poms which used to signify and illustrate the birth of Princes; yet his first humility was made glorious with presages, miracles, and significations from heaven, which did not only, like the furniture of a Princely Bedchamber, speak the riches of the Parent, or greatness of the Son within its own walls, but did declare to all the world that their Prince was born, publishing it with figures and representments almost as great as its Empire.

But because the heavens, as well as the earth, are his Creatures, and do serve him, at his Birth he received a sign *in heaven above*, as well as *in the earth beneath*, as an homage paid to their common Lord. For as certain Shepherds were keeping watch over their flocks by night, near that part where Jacob did use to feed his cattle when he was in the Land of Canaan, the Angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them. Needs must the shepherds be afraid, when an Angel came arrayed in glory and clothed in a robe of light, great enough to confound their senses and scatter their understandings. *But the Angel said unto them, fear not, for I bring tidings of great joy which shall be to all people, For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord.* The Shepherds needed not to be invited to see this glorious sight; but lest their fancy should rise up to an expectation of a Prince as externally glorious as might be hoped for in consequence of so glorious an apparition, the Angel, to prevent the mistake, told them of a sign, because it was so remote

* excrescencies - excesses



“Angeli Laudantes”, (*Angels Offering Praise*), Tapestry designed by Edward Burne Jones, woven in wools and silk by Morris and Company, Merton Abbey, England, 1894.

from the common probability and expectation of such a birth, that by being a miracle, so great a Prince should be born so poorly, it became an instrument to signify itself and all the other parts of mysterious consequence. *For the Angel said, this shall be a sign unto you, ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger.*

But as light, when it first begins to guild the east, scatters indeed the darkness from the earth, but ceases not to increase its flame, till it hath made perfect day, so it happened now in this apparition of the Angel of light, he appeared and told his message and did shine, but the light arose higher and

higher till midnight was as bright midday; for suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly host: and after the Angel had told his message in plain song, the whole chorus joined in descant, and sang a hymn to the tune and sense of heaven, where *glory* is paid to *God* in eternal and never-ceasing offices, and whence good will descended upon men in perpetual and never-ending torrents: their song *was Glory be to God on high, on earth, good will towards men.*

As soon as these blessed Choristers had sung their Christmas carol, and taught the Church a hymn to put into her offices for ever in the anniversary of

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Glorious Accidents...

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this festivity, the Angels returned into heaven, and the Shepherds went to Bethlehem, to see this thing which the Lord had made known unto them, *And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.* Just as the Angel had prepared their Expectation, they found the narrative verified, and saw the glory of the mystery of the presentment which was made by the heavenly Ministers, seeing GOD through the veil of a child's flesh, the Heir of heaven wrapt in swaddling clothes and a person to whom the Angels did minister laid in a manger. And they beheld, and wondered, and worshipped.

But as a precious liquor warmed and heightened by a flame, first crowns the vessel, then dances over its brim into the fire, increasing the cause of its motion and extravagancy, so it happened to the shepherds whose hearts being filled with the oil of gladness up unto the brim, the joy ran over, as being too big to be confined in their own breasts, and did communicate its self, growing greater by such dissemination: *for when they had seen it they made it known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.* And (as well they might) *all that heard it wondered.* But Mary, having first changed her joy to wonder, turned her wonder into entertainments of the mystery, and mystery into a fruition and cohabitation with it. *For Mary kept all these sayings and pondered them in her heart.*

...But the Angel brought the message to Shepherds, to persons simple and mean, and humble, persons likely to be more apprehensive of the mystery and less of the scandal, of the poverty of the Messiah: for they whose custom or affections dwell in secular pomps, who are not used by charity or humility to stoop to evenness and consideration of their brethren, of equal natures though unequal fortunes, are persons of all the world most indisposed and removed from the understanding of spiritual excellencies, especially when they do not come clothed with advantages of the

world, and of such beauties which they admire. GOD himself in poverty comes in a prejudice to them that love richness, and simplicity is folly to crafty persons, a mean birth is ignoble stain, beggary is a scandal, and the Cross an unanswerable objection. But the Angel's moral in the circumstances of his address, and inviting the poor shepherds to Bethlehem is: That none are fit to come to CHRIST but those who are poor in spirit, despisers of the world; and therefore neither did the Angel tell the story to Herod nor to the Scribes and Pharisees, whose ambition had ends contradictory to the simplicity and poverty of the birth of JESUS. ”

Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667) was Chaplain to King Charles I, and one of the most celebrated preachers of his day. His fame today rests largely on his devotional writings, which are characteristic expressions of Anglican spirituality in their balanced sobriety and their insistence on a well-ordered piety and reverence. They have become classics due to their lucid and vigorous prose and powerful imagery. Jeremy Taylor became Bishop of Down and Connor in 1660.

Prayer from Meditation upon the “Great and Glorious Accidents Happening about the Birth of JESUS”, from Jeremy Taylor's ‘Life of Christ’, 1653.

“O Blessed and eternal JESU, at whose birth the Quires of Angels sang praises to GOD, and proclaimed peace to Men, sanctify my will and inferior affections; make me to be within the conditions of peace, that I be Holy and mortified, a Despiser of the world and exterior vanities, humble and charitable: that by thy eminent example I may be so fixed in the degrees and prosecution of the ends of GOD, and blissful Eternity, that I be unmoved with the terrors of the World, unaltered with its allurements and seductions, not ambitious of its honour, not desirous of its fullness and plenty, but make me diligent in the employment thou givest me, faithful in discharges of my trust, modest in my desires, content in the issues of thy Providence, that in such dispositions I may receive and entertain visitations from Heaven, and revelations of the mysteries and blisses Evangelical, that by such direction I may be brought into thy presence, there to see the beauties and admire thy graces, and imitate all thy imitable excellences and rest in Thee forever, in this world by the perseverance of a holy and conformable life, and in the world to come in the participation of Thy essential glories and felicities, O blessed and eternal JESUS.”

Primates' Statement

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We have noted that the Lambeth Conference 1998 requested the Archbishop of Canterbury to establish a commission to consider his own role in maintaining communion within and between provinces when grave difficulties arise. We ask him now to establish such a commission, but that its remit be extended to include urgent and deep theological and legal reflection on the way in which the dangers we have identified at this meeting will have to be addressed. We request that such a commission complete its work, at least in relation to the issues raised at this meeting, within twelve months.

We urge our provinces not to act precipitately on these wider questions, but take time to share in this process of reflection and to consider their own constitutional requirements as individual provinces face up to potential realignments.

Questions of the parity of our canon law, and the nature of the relationship between the laws of our provinces with one another have also been raised. We encourage the Network of Legal Advisers established by the Anglican Consultative Council, meeting in Hong Kong in 2002, to bring to completion the work which they have already begun on this question.

It is clear that recent controversies have opened debates within the life of our Communion which will not be resolved until there has been a lengthy process of prayer, reflection and substantial work in and alongside the Commission which we have recommended. We pray that God will equip our Communion to be equal to the task and challenges which lie before it.

“Now I appeal to the elders of your community, as a fellow elder and a witness to Christ's sufferings, and as one who has shared in the glory to be revealed: look after the flock of God whose shepherd you are.” (1 Peter 5.1,2a) ”

We wish all our members and friends a truly blessed Christmas.

Christian Unity ...

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significant majority. The vote was 12 to 8, or 60% to 40%, mirroring the earlier Parish vote. In spite of some talk of the vote being “illegal” a letter was duly sent to Bishop Terry Buckle of the Yukon.

The Report concluded with an earnest plea “that we all join in the task of reuniting the St. Martin’s family....and ensure that we are up to date with our financial contributions....”

First Meeting with Bishop Ingham

On June 23rd Bishop Michael Ingham sent a letter to the Wardens and Trustees inviting them to a meeting to discuss the “turmoil” in St. Martin’s. He proposed two options:

1. proceed with the process of getting a parish priest, using the services of Bishop Hockin as Episcopal Visitor, if deemed useful; or
2. he would invoke **Diocesan Canon 15**, which empowers him by cause of a “pastoral emergency” to establish a new or alternative form of organization and thereby move to the appointment of a new priest

This meeting was held at the Diocesan Offices with Chancellor George Cadman (the Bishop’s legal counsel), the Venerable Archdeacon Lou Rivers, Regional Dean the Rev’d Sarah Tweedale, and Priest-in-charge the Rev’d Canon Don Willis. The Church Wardens and Trustees represented St. Martin’s Parish. Warden Paul Clarke presented the Parish’s position that time was needed to discuss the Bishop’s options especially as summer holidays made meetings difficult to put together. Bishop Ingham did not accept this view but suggested another meeting shortly.

Second Meeting with Bishop Ingham:

On July 3rd there was another meeting with Bishop Ingham and his two advisors, Chancellor Cadman and Archdeacon Rivers. The mood was much more controversial and acrimonious. St. Martin’s wanted more time to bring the church together and deal with its difficulties. In spite of considerable pressure, the Wardens and Trustees would not revoke the Vestry’s decisions on alternative Episcopal oversight without putting the question before another Vestry meeting, possibly in

September. When the meeting broke up St. Martin’s representatives fully expected the Bishop to invoke Canon 15 within a few days. However, on July 10th the Bishop agreed to postpone any further meetings or action until after the August holidays.

Aborted Church Committee Meeting of August 12, 2003:

On July 21 2003 the Rev’d Don Willis, Priest-in-Charge, sent two letter to all Parishioners. The first called for an Extraordinary Meeting of the Church Committee set for Tuesday, August 12, 2003. The second letter noted the financial difficulties of the Parish. There was a flurry of activity and opinion for several weeks following the announcement of this meeting. However, on August 11th the Extraordinary Church Committee meeting for August 12th was cancelled, with no clear reason given.

The Bishop Acts:

On Saturday afternoon, September 6th, two Diocesan officials, together with a locksmith, arrived at St. Martin’s to change the locks. Women in the kitchen and a youth group meeting with the Youth Pastor quickly notified the Trustees and others, who came to the scene and prevailed upon the Diocesan people to cease this activity. The locks were returned but a vigil was maintained all night.

Diocesan Archdeacon Ron Harrison was present for both Church services Sunday September 7th. At the end of each, he stood and read a letter, already in the mail to all parishioners, from the Bishop. Due to the troubles in St. Martin’s, and the apparent “unwillingness of some members of the parish to search for a permanent Incumbent through the normal diocesan process”, the Bishop had invoked Diocesan Canon 15, and consequently, had removed all officers and members of the Church Committee, and replaced them with three “Bishop’s Wardens”, confirmed the priest-in-charge until further notice, and appointed a Diocesan official as treasurer. The next day the Youth Director, whose salary was paid by a special fund, was “let go”. He and his family are now in the process of reorganising their lives. These actions received wide publicity in the local, national and international media, much of it critical of the Bishop’s “attempt to lock out his parishioners”.

Continuing Work of Parish Groups:

In the letter to parishioners from the Bishop’s Wardens dated September 18th the Bishop’s Wardens state that parish groups were not discharged under canon 15, and that “St. Martin’s needs these groups to continue doing their duties.” In good faith, the Newsletter Committee continued the production of the newsletter as usual....

“...On Friday afternoon [Sept. 26th], we were informed by our Interim Rector that after consulting with Diocesan officials he could not allow the newsletter to be produced. We find this position to be difficult to understand. We as editors never censored the content of the newsletter. Michael Ingham has publicly stated that his actions were not intended to stifle debate. Since we feel the newsletter reflects correctly the current situation at St. Martin’s, and that those who submitted articles have a right to be published, we have continued”. Ironically, it is from that very newsletter has come the timeline of events compressed for this article

You can read elsewhere in this edition of the PBSC Newsletter the worldwide events taking place at the meeting at Lambeth of the Anglican Primates, and the subsequent meeting of the Canadian House of Bishops. How these events will affect us here at St Martin’s remains to be seen.

Some Conclusions

The crisis we are presently suffering in our Church seems to centre on questions having to do with ‘jurisdiction’ and ‘authority’. Anglicanism really has no authoritative hierarchical structure. Instead Anglican structure is that of a communion of bishops, a group held together by collegial respect as servants of Christ. One of the responsibilities made formal by vows at the consecration of an Anglican bishop is to safeguard unity of the Church. The essence of true Christian unity, and a bishop’s promise to guard that unity, is well expressed by Fr. Robert Crouse, here speaking at the consecration of Anthony Burton as Bishop of Saskatchewan, in October, 1993:

“...No doubt, the functions of a bishop are manifold; but, above all, he is to be the shepherd of Christ’s flock in this place, the overseer or steward of God’s household here; and to him especially is

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Voices From the Pew

Parishes Need to be Alert when Changing their Priest

By Billie Farmer

Every parish that uses the Book of Common Prayer – and wishes to preserve its way of worship – needs to be vigilant when there is a change of priest. Our parish priest was moved in October, 2002. That was the beginning of a lot of trouble for us.

When the Archdeacon came to visit us he advised there were only two clergy available for Interim duties. We chose the one whose income request we could afford. The first service he conducted was according to the Book of Common Prayer. However, on the second Sunday we were advised that the Anglican Church had “moved forward” to a more personal form of prayer than that in the BCP, and that new inserts for the service were included in the bulletin. After the service I said that we were not interested in having a BAS service. He informed me that the inserts were from a Lutheran Service Book. As things progressed, it became clear that his idea was to have us using the BAS and the new hymnal before the new rector was appointed.

I complained to the Archdeacon, who said that no instructions to change the service traditional in our parish had come from his office, or from the bishop's office. Just when I was about to accept this as an honest statement, the Archdeacon advised me that perhaps I was going to need to grow accustomed to this type of service. It was then that I realized that the Interim had not been advised that our parish has always been a BCP parish, and wished to remain that way. Accordingly, I wrote to the bishop, and received a reply that this should be resolved between the wardens and the interim priest. Things only got worse.

We made our concerns known to the Suffragan Bishop when he came to visit and give us the names of clergy who

were interested in being interviewed for our new full-time priest. In reply, he said that every parish experiences a bit of a set-back when there is an interim priest. We advised him that we had experienced a very serious set-back indeed! He wondered aloud why our problems with worship had not been resolved between the wardens and the interim clergyman. Our people's warden informed him that, as our interim had his own agenda and would not listen to anything we said, there was no way for us to resolve the issue.

I had obtained the financial statements for the parish the years 2001 and 2002, and provided them to the Parish Selection Committee. In the months of November and December - the period immediately after the Interim had come to us - the envelope offerings and open collection had dropped by so much that the shortfall for two months was greater than the shortfall for the rest of whole year. After the meeting I knew that the only way to open the bishop's eyes was to supply him with these figures. He was also to learn that, because of the shortfall and our need to have money on hand to pay for the incoming rector's moving expenses, and to renovate the rectory, we would not be able to pay any of our apportionment in 2003.

I wrote a second letter to the bishop, and included the following additional concerns:

1. At Clericus, our Interim had boasted that he would “straighten out this bunch” – (that's us!) - for the new Rector.
2. His methods would soon have us financially bankrupt, as our parish wanted services from the BCP.

3. The Interim bastardized the BCP services to suit his own liturgical agenda.
4. When our previous rector wished to have someone assist at Holy Communion he had this approved by the Board of Management. The interim just invited someone to come – without any discussion with the Board.
5. The new Interim used hymns from the new book – which has some pretty questionable hymns in it!! He had our parish volunteer photocopy these on our machine, telling her to buy coloured paper to have them printed. Our warden vetoed the coloured paper, and the Incumbent didn't offer to pay for it. (All our Service Books and Hymnals are memorial gifts).
6. He also instructed the choir to use a different chant because he didn't like the one our parish uses – and likes.

The main issue, it seemed, was that the interim had been given the authority to brow-beat our wardens and congregation. We wanted to know why, because his actions were destroying our parish.

The interim also wanted to move the altar forward, so he could stand behind it, and conduct the service facing the congregation, the way it's done in the BAS. We didn't want this, and anyway, the physical structure of the church would not permit it. The people's warden told him this, and that was the end of that!

Our only hope was to be a get on the Selection Committee for the new rector,

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Voices From the Pew...

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and to make clear what we as a parish wanted in the way of worship. A member whom I have always considered a peacemaker was absolutely adamant that we have clear in our minds exactly what services we wanted, and make that perfectly clear to the bishop and any prospective incoming priest. We were also to make it clear that if we were to regain our numbers at each service the incoming priest must respect – and cater to – the needs of our parish, and not try to change us.

So that's exactly what we did. When we were interviewing we were adamant that the Book of Common Prayer is our service book, and we did not want inserts for every service. After each interview the priest was given a tour of the church itself. One priest checked the altar to see if it could be moved. That person's name was dropped by the selection committee immediately. In the end we got what we needed, and our happy with our choice.

Here are my recommendations for any parish in our position: The selection committee must be of one mind about what things are of prime importance, and make sure all these things are discussed thoroughly with any prospective new priest. Each diocese probably has a different procedure. Ours has forms to be filled by all members of the congregation. The selection committee then condenses these into a "parish profile", which states the real requirements of the parish, and which is made available to all clergy who wish to apply. In turn, the selection committee is given a profile of those wishing to be interviewed. The selection committee can accept or refuse these people for interviews. For this reason it is very important that you choose the selection committee carefully. In our diocese, a selection committee consists of the four wardens, the two lay delegates to Synod, and two other people from the parish roll.

One of the important points is that the wrong interim can lower the parish income very drastically in a short time. So, be careful about whom you accept as interim—the lowest amount requested for a salary is not really the best way to choose.

Nevertheless, it is foolish to make a quick decision about the person who is to become the next incumbent—there is always a great deal of time needed for the new person to adapt to the parish and for the parish to accept the person.

One further thing I do need to stress. Because I am a Lay Delegate to Synod, my fellow parishioners seemed to think that I had the power to change things. Of course, I didn't. Because I couldn't do anything, I gave the bishop's address to anyone who was interested and cared about our parish, and told them to write to him directly. I stressed to them that only the bishop has the power to make a priest change his ways, so the only person to whom you should complain is the bishop himself. (At the meeting with the Suffragan Bishop, I told him that I had done this, and his reply: "The bishop is quite aware that you did this", indicated to me that many people had written.)

I also explained that every parishioner has the right to tell the bishop that they are unhappy for this reason, or happy for that reason. (The only time a complaint is going to cost a priest the license to preach is if a committee which includes the wardens of the parish visit the bishop with a parish complaint, so parishioners worried about getting their priest "into trouble" don't need to worry about that: even then, it may only mean that the priest will be reprimanded).

The thing to remember is this: If your parish is unhappy with a priest – especially an Interim - making changes: Write to the Bishop! If enough unhappy parishioners write letters, the bishop will take note. Because the Bishop always wants a parish to be able to pay its apportionment.

Christian Unity ...

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directed the challenge, 'If you love me, feed my sheep'. And that must be an intimidating challenge in these days of a troubled Church in a troubled world. The bishop must somehow be a focus of unity in a Church threatened by the Scylla and Charybdis of radical schism on the one hand, and a vacuous bureaucratic uniformity on the other. He will be under constant pressure to conform to the faddish standards and inclinations of the present age in the Church and in the world...

... There will be only one real answer, and that one won't always be easy. St. Paul says it, in First Corinthians: "It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful". And as St. Irenaeus, the great exponent of Apostolic Succession in the midst of the Gnostic crisis of the Second century, clearly saw and said, the bishop can serve as a focus of unity only inasmuch as he himself is faithful to the tradition of the truth divinely given; only thus can he hold the freedom and integrity of mind which can resist the pressures to conform to the spirit of the present age."

In telling this story I mean to encourage you to be vigilant, to watch for the coming battle in your own parish. It is my hope that the courage of this Parish of St. Martin's, North Vancouver will inspire others to persevere. It is with that kind of courage that we will have to rebuild the Church.

"...for those classical Christians who stay in their own mainline church — this recovery is predicated on elbow-grease, tears, determination, prayer, speaking out, and suffering. Here we have no abiding city; here we find no ease or comfort; it has taken years to steal and seize and demolish, it may take a long time indeed to rebuild the foundations and walls and towers and good places of our ecclesiastical institutions. However, as classical Christians we speak for all past generations of faithful folk; we claim the purloined treasures and hijacked institutions; ours by right and title are the good things of the church." (Quoted from the PBSC news service CaNN (Classical Anglican Net News))

For more information, see St. Martin's website at: <http://www.st-martins.cc/>

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