

THE CERTAIN TRUMPET

Fall 2012 – Wallace Spaulding, Editor

Weak Conservative Reaction To Episcopal Church's Approval Of Same-Sex Blessing Rites

Back in May 2011, I wrote the following letter to *The Living Church* (which published the letter in its May 22, 2011, edition):

Good grief! You let the story go by of the church wide meeting to develop a liturgy for blessing same-sex unions (TLC, April 10) without an editorial comment. To endorse such sin officially not only goes against traditional Christian (Roman, Orthodox, conservative Protestant) practice, but (for you liberals) Islam and Judaism as well.

As bad as the subject matter involved is the methodology used. For a tiny group like the Episcopal Church (some two million out of two billion Christians) to feel itself competent to make such an important change unilaterally is simply preposterous.

Now it has happened: the July 2012 General Convention (GC) of The Episcopal Church (TEC), meeting in Indianapolis, approved provisional rites to bless same-sex relationships. One might have thought that there would be much screaming and jumping up and down among moral conservatives still in TEC. That there wasn't implies that the number of conservatives remaining in TEC is quite small - many of their brethren having already left - and/or that TEC conservatives are demoralized by the overwhelming majority that supported the measure; it was approved by votes of 111 to 41 in the House of Bishops and 171 to 41 in the House of Deputies.

The conservative response was as follows:

1. The morning of July 11: Under the auspices of the morally-straight Communion Partners (CP), their leader, Bishop Michael Smith (ND), issued in the House of Bishops an *Indianapolis Statement* opposing the homosexual blessing rites resolution (A049). As far as we can tell, it had been signed at that point by 13 other bishops, including ten aligned with CP: John Bauerschmidt (TN), Gregory Brewer (Cent FL), Russell Jacobus (Fond du Lac, WI), Paul Lambert (suffragan, Dallas), Edward Little (No. IN), William Love (Albany, NY), Daniel Martins (Springfield, IL), Edward Salmon (SC, retired), James Stanton (Dallas), and D. Bruce MacPherson (W. LA). The statement was also signed by three other prelates: Daniel Herzog (Albany, retired), Julio Holguin (Dominican Republic), and William Skilton (suffragan, Dominican Republic, retired).¹

Three additional CP bishops present - Gary Lillibridge (W. TX), David Reed (suffragan, W. TX), and Donald Wimberly (TX, retired)² - did not sign the *Indianapolis Statement*, despite voting against the same-sex liturgies. The same is true of ex³-CP-member Bishop Mark Lawrence (SC). Why these four didn't sign the statement is a mystery. But to a lesser degree so is the fact that 23 other bishops who voted against the resolution also did not sign the *Indianapolis Statement*, especially since other bishops had been specifically invited to sign.

Bishop Lillibridge's non-signature is to some extent understandable in light of his post-Convention recap. In that, he downplayed the whole issue, saying, first, that sexual matters did not dominate the proceedings as they had during most Conventions in recent years. (Maybe not, but the results were more serious.) Lillibridge also asserted that what was approved was not "gay marriage." (True enough, but the church's role here is *exactly* the same as in conventional marriage--the blessing of the partners

¹ <http://www.livingchurch.org/bishops-issue-dissent>

² <http://www.comunionpartners.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/CP-Bishops-Web-List.pdf>

³ Bishop Lawrence was dropped from the last CP bishops list available to us (*Ibid.*)

in their new relationship. Thirdly, the bishop said the legislation promises that no clergy person will be penalized for refusing to perform a same-sex blessing. (Similar assurances given with respect to women's ordination, however, did not hold up.) Lillibridge went on to pledge his support to the spiritual development of homosexuals, without commenting on the sinfulness of sodomy: "We are all struggling to find a way forward for the members of our diocese, which includes many faithful and dedicated gay and lesbian members," he wrote. Almost off-handedly, he noted that the West Texas delegation (himself, Bishop Reed, and the deputies) *did* vote against the same-sex blessing legislation.⁴

2) The afternoon of July 11: In what was the most spectacular protest, Bishop Mark Lawrence - earlier identified as a former CP member who voted against A049 but who apparently did not sign the *Indianapolis Statement* (see above) - led the bulk of his South Carolina delegation out of the GC the day before it concluded, to express its opposition to the approval of same-sex blessing rites (as well as the ordination of transgendered persons, also okayed in Indianapolis). Two South Carolina delegates remained at the meeting to monitor it and to symbolize that the departure of the rest of the delegation did not mean the diocese was intending to leave TEC. (The South Carolina diocese did leave in November, however, after Bishop Lawrence was inhibited for allegedly having "abandoned" the doctrine, discipline and worship of TEC. In fact, the presiding bishop and her followers seem to have seen to it that the diocese left, thus affording TEC what some might call a bit of "theological cleansing": The inhibition was handed down in the knowledge that, by previous agreement of the diocesan convention, it would trigger the South Carolina diocese's secession from TEC. There is more to this story, of course, and it is not over, but has simply entered a new phase.)

3) July 20: The Global South primates, meeting in Bangkok, condemned the GC action on same-sex blessings and expressed solidarity with the CP in opposing it. Represented at the Thailand meeting were the Archbishops of Jerusalem and the Middle East, Nigeria, Indian Ocean, Southeast Asia, Kenya, Myanmar, Congo, Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Melanesia, Papua New Guinea, South Africa, West Africa, Central Africa, and Southern Cone.⁵

4) July 29: St. John's, Moultrie, Georgia, announced its withdrawal from TEC, the only parish known at this writing to have taken that step in response to the General Convention action. Small, but well aware of what is going on in American Anglicanism, St. John's pledged to continue its support of the morally conservative American Anglican Council and the morally conservative *and* anti-women's ordination Forward in Faith-North America⁶ (see below), while changing its name to St. Mark's and affiliating with the Anglican Church in North America.

How Are They Doing Now?

During 2007-09, three Forward in Faith-North America (FiFNA)-led dioceses, and one diocese supportive of ordaining women priests, first left The Episcopal Church (TEC) and then joined the newly-formed Anglican Church in North America (ACNA). This was, however, triggered by TEC's acceptance of homosexual practice rather than of female ordination, an innovation backed by about half of ACNA constituents. The three dioceses, totaling some 130 parishes (see below), constitute about one-third of the ACNA's anti-priestess "half," as the ACNA reports a total of some 775

⁴ <http://gencon12dwtx.files.wordpress.com/2012/07/bishopsrepongc12final.pdf--through>
<http://gencon12dwtx.org/bishops-video-report>

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http://www.globalsouthanglican.org/index.php/blog/comments/communique_of_the_global_south_primates_bangkok_thailand_20_july_2012

⁶ <http://www.virtueonline.org/portal/modules/news/article.php?storyid=1638>

parishes.⁷ In each case of diocesan secession, a minority group stayed behind, forming what TEC has claimed is the “real” diocese in question. In the data below, the statistics for these supposed “real” dioceses are in parentheses after the equivalent ones for their ACNA counterparts.

Diocese	Pre-split figures (<i>Epis. Ch. Annual 2008</i>)		Post-split figures (websites & HQ statements for ACNA & <i>Epis. Ch. Annual 2012 for TEC</i>)		
	Congregations	Av Sun Attendance	Congregations		Av Sun Attendance
			Within Old Dio- Cesan Boundaries	Outside	
Fort Worth (TX)	55	7,155	54 (20)	7	5,535 (1,195)
San Joaquin (CA)	47	3,945	36 (21)	7	2,750 (943)
Quincy (IL)	21	1,105	18 (9)	8	c. 1,000 ⁸ (363)

From these statistics, we can see that the new ACNA Dioceses of Fort Worth and San Joaquin are maintaining themselves, though the overall drop in total attendance, even with the outside parishes added in – 425 in the case of Fort Worth and 252 for San Joaquin – might be worrisome for both. The small (even by Anglican standards) Diocese of Quincy may have gained on the ACNA side: four of the eight parishes coming in from outside the old diocesan boundaries have enough people for two Sunday morning Masses, something true for only five of the 18 remaining in-diocese congregations.⁹ TEC’s Diocese of Quincy, however, appears non-viable.

New Role for Forward in Faith- North America

Not only did FiFNA lead three Episcopal Church (TEC) dioceses into the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) in 2009 (see above), but it set up a new Missionary Diocese of All Saints (MDAS) that same year to facilitate the entry into the ACNA of additional anti-women’s ordination parishes and smaller federations. Now numbering about 30 parishes, the MDAS seems to be the dominant force within FiFNA, just as the latter has become a, if not *the*, link between the orthodox “half” of the ACNA and the Federation of Anglican Churches in the Americas (FACA). The latter is a loose grouping of six orthodox Anglican jurisdictions that do not wish to be part of a body like ACNA containing pro-priestess elements, but are willing to be “missionary partners” thereof (and are listed as such on the ACNA website). Thus, two of the three major orthodox American Anglican groupings are linked; the third is not willing to be connected to any group with pro-priestess elements. Just as FiFNA resources are highly concentrated in the MDAS with respect to the ACNA, they are concentrated within the Diocese of the Holy Cross (DHC), a Continuing Church jurisdiction within the FACA.

Of the 70 FiFNA-aligned parishes, 45 are in the ACNA (of which 30 are in MDAS) and 21 in the FACA (of which 16 are DHC).¹⁰ FiFNA’s president, the Rt. Rev. Keith Ackerman, led his Diocese of Quincy into the ACNA; its first vice president, the Rt. Rev. William Ilgenfritz, heads the MDAS, and FiFNA’s lay executive director, Dr. Michael Howell, is also MDAS. The Rt. Rev. Paul Hewett, head of both the FACA and DHC, is an adjunct member of the FiFNA Council, while the organization’s treasurer, Mr. Karl Sharp, is a member of one of the FACA’s constituent bodies, the Anglican Church in America (another Continuing Church body). And FiFNA Council member, the Rt. Rev.

⁷ AnglicanChurch.net/main/locator/us

⁸ Official figures are not available; this is a composite and conservative estimate of people on the spot

⁹ http://www.dioceseofquincy.org/church_list.html

¹⁰ <http://www,fifna.org/other/parishes>

Ray Sutton, is with the Reformed Episcopal Church, the one jurisdiction that is a member of both the ACNA and FACA.¹¹

Current Status of the Anglican Mission in the Americas (AMiA)

In December 2011, much of the AMiA broke with the Anglican Province of Rwanda, of which it had been a part. The group that broke away retained the AMiA name as well as the pre-break chairman, the Rt. Rev. Charles H. Murphy III. AMiA's website currently reports 59 congregations¹² (of which only 23 could be found in our *2007-08 Directory of Traditional Anglican and Episcopal Parishes*, which has 112 AMiA entries). This group also has retained the AMiA's pre-break membership in the Federation of Anglican Churches in the Americas (FACA, see above).

Those wishing to retain the Rwandan connection formed themselves into the Province of the Anglican Church of Rwanda in the USA (PEAR-USA), and elected the Rt. Rev. Steven Breedlove as bishop. PEAR-USA has joined the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA, see above) as an integral unit thereof. This is ironic, since the undivided AMiA had left the ACNA in May 2010, saying that ACNA membership was incompatible with its Rwandan relationship.¹³ So far, it has failed to list its congregations on the Internet, but the facts that "more than 60 parishes and missions" were represented at its November 2012 inaugural assembly, and that this didn't include any that might have been represented by the 30 delegates prevented from going by Hurricane Sandy¹⁴, suggests that it might well be larger than the remaining AMiA. In any case, it provides a boost to women' ordination opponents in the ACNA (see above).

A third group left the old AMiA to join the ACNA outside of the PEAR-US formation, and we assume it is smaller than either of the two groupings mentioned above. So far we have noted nine former AMiA congregations going to the ACNA's Diocese of the South, eight to its Diocese of Pittsburgh, seven to its Diocese of the Great Lakes, and 11 to seven other dioceses, for a total of 35.¹⁵

Notice For Present and Potential FCC Members

In view of the retirement of our webmaster (because of his very demanding and time-consuming new job) and the unanticipated illness of his chosen successor, we are considerably behind in making the FCC website current. Our new secretary-treasurer, Auburn Traycik, believes she has found a competent individual willing to update and maintain the website, but we will need some extra funds to get back on track with our online directory of orthodox/traditionalist Anglican/Episcopal parishes--- the FCC's primary service.

So it would be helpful if our existing members pay their 2013 dues - \$20 for singles, \$25 for married couples - in January (if they have not already paid said dues). New members, of course, are welcome at these same rates. (Visit www.anglicanchurches.net to see if you agree with the FCC's principles.)

¹¹ <http://www.fifna.org/council-member-list>

¹² <http://www.theamia.org/connect/find-a-church>. It missed one, so there are 60 ; phone calls to parishes involved: Grace Anglican, Fairhope, AL

¹³ See *The Certain Trumpet*, Summer 2010, at www.anglicanchurches.net.

¹⁴ <http://www.virtueonline.org/portal/modules/news/article.php?storyid=1680>
See *ibid.*=16497 and *ibid.*=1516510.

¹⁵ *2007/08 Directory of Traditional Anglican and Episcopal Parishes* (Nov. '07); http://adotp.org/find_a_parish.html; <http://www.pitanglican.org/?/main/finder>; <http://anglicandiocesegrllakes.org/parishes-in-adgl.html>; phone calls to and web checks for parishes outside the three dioceses cited.

It would also be greatly appreciated if parishes receiving this notice – most of which the FCC has been advertising for free for many years in its published and online directories – would send \$10 so that the FCC can continue helping newcomers or visitors to your area to find your congregation.

Please make checks or money orders payable to: **Fellowship of Concerned Churchmen** and mail them to:

**Auburn Traycik, Secretary-Treasurer
1215 Independence Ave. SE
Washington, DC 20003-1445**

It is time to think about our odd-year **regional meeting**, to be held in the Wilmington, Delaware, area. Please give us suggestions as to themes, speakers, and times. Please also let us know when your jurisdictions are meeting, so we can avoid conflicts.

Last but not least, the FCC has an opportunity to sell pre-inked stamps stating “In God We Trust” (sample below) as a fundraiser. Each stamp is estimated to cost \$30 or less, including shipping and handling. If you are interested, please let us know when returning your dues.

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TEC = The Episcopal Church
ACC = The Anglican Catholic Church
Ind = Independent Anglican
DHC = Diocese of the Holy Cross

ACA = Anglican Church in America
TACC = Traditional Anglican Church of Canada
ACNA = Anglican Church in North America
*The Diocese of Lusaka is in the Anglican Province of
Central Africa