

# Issues of Human Sexuality

Matthew Davies



Issues of human sexuality have had a profound impact on the Anglican Communion in recent weeks, giving a cause for celebration for some and anxiety in others. Firstly, there was the appointment of Canon Jeffrey John as the Bishop of Reading, then the Diocese of New Westminster in Canada issued a formal rite for the blessings of same sex unions and, to add insult to injury for many conservatives and fundamentalists, the Diocese of New Hampshire elected the Revd Canon Gene Robinson as its bishop.

Canon Robinson is the first openly gay man to be elected bishop in the Anglican Communion. Some bishops, however, have admitted their homosexuality later in their episcopacy. Reactions to his ordination have been both strong and varied, although the landslide victory suggests that many clergy and laity in his diocese have every faith in his ministry.

In a statement issued by the bishops of the Diocese of South Carolina, they said, "This election causes us the gravest possible concern, for if the church ratifies it, we would clearly be approving of the relationship in which Gene Robinson is involved. This is not about a person or a diocesan election process; it is about a radical change in church doctrine."

Canon Robinson, aged 56, took the difficult decision to leave his wife because he felt that God wanted him to acknowledge his sexuality. When asked, "What risks have you taken for the Gospel?" he replied, "Risking the loss of my children and the exercise of my ordained ministry in the Church was the biggest risk I've ever taken, but it left me with two unshakable things: my integrity and my God."

When clergy in six parishes within the Diocese of New Westminster had been authorised by Bishop Michael Ingham to perform a rite of blessing same sex unions, with the first blessing being conducted on Wednesday 28 May, there was an outcry throughout the Anglican Communion which has resulted in two provinces - Nigeria and South East Asia - "cutting their ties" with the diocese.

Archbishop Peter Akinola of Nigeria has said, "Regrettably, the much desired reflection that will ease the strain on our Communion has been jettisoned. Furthermore, failure to ensure strict compliance with resolutions duly passed at our meetings clearly shows that Bishop [Michael] Ingham and his diocese see no value in being accountable to anybody." He ended his statement by saying that "[Bishop Michael Ingham] has made it inevitable for the Province [of Nigeria] to sever communion with Bishop Ingham and the diocese of New Westminster."

Taking a more via media stance, the

Most Reverend Terence Finlay, Archbishop of Toronto, said last year, "I respect the right of individual dioceses to make a decision in this matter even though it would have been preferable for us to act together as a church."

He added, "I am deeply aware of how difficult this complex issue is for some people. Many faithful gay and lesbian Christians are living in committed and long-term relationships and believe that the Church has been too slow to recognise the presence of God's Spirit in these relationships. Other equally faithful Christians hold to a more traditional understanding of this issue and oppose any change."

In his own defence, Bishop Michael Ingham said in his letter to the six dioceses on 23 May 2003, "The church recognises that homosexual couples face

*"I am deeply aware of how difficult this complex issue is for some people. Many faithful gay and lesbian Christians are living in committed and long-term relationships"*

the same challenges and share the same responsibilities as other people in living out the costly demands of love. Our purpose is to encourage and strengthen fidelity and mutual supportiveness in family life on which the stability of our wider society depends."

In a statement issued today Bishop Ingham has said that "Anglicans in the Diocese of New Westminster will continue to support fellow Anglicans in northern Canada and overseas, despite the declaration by some bishops in these areas that relations are 'impaired.'"

Bishop Ingham also released a pastoral letter today, with the intention that it is read in all 80 of his diocese's parishes on Sunday 29 June. Part of that letter read, "We shall not exclude or reject our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, whatever their personal convictions, and we wish to assure them that the doors of our churches remain open to all." The full text of the pastoral letter is available at:

<http://www.anglicancommunion.org/acs/special/humansexuality/hs4.html>.

The election of Canon Jeffrey John as

Bishop of Reading took place on the 20 May but more attention has been drawn to the appointment since the news from the Dioceses of New Westminster and New Hampshire emerged.

Canon Jeffrey, who is treasurer and canon theologian at Southwark Cathedral, was appointed to the suffragan post last month by the Bishop of Oxford, the Rt Revd Richard Harries. Despite the fact that there have been many requests for him to withdraw from the position, Bishop Harries has strongly supported his case for the appointment. He pointed out that Canon Jeffrey has made it clear that he is fully committed to upholding the doctrine and practice of the Church of England as expressed in the House of Bishops' report, Issues in Human Sexuality. He also stressed that "Jeffrey is personally committed, as his references made clear, to a personal lifestyle of sexual abstinence."

Later in his statement he said, "I want a diocese that is able to show everyone, including gay and lesbian people, that they are beloved of God."

In an interview with the BBC this week, Bishop Harries further defended the election of Canon Jeffrey. "What I was looking for was a person in the catholic tradition with a good knowledge of church growth," he said. "That is where we need the impetus at the moment."

Speaking of Canon Jeffrey as being a symbol for many in the acceptance and affirmation of gay and lesbian people in the church, Bishop Harries said, "We will have a much more honest debate about the subject. My hope is that in two years he will have won the hope and trust both of the House of Bishops and people in his episcopal area."

A group of 35 Anglican leaders from around the world met in Oxford on Wednesday calling on Dr John to withdraw his acceptance. Part of the statement, which had the backing of two Primates, Archbishop Drexel Gomez of West Indies and Archbishop Gregory Venables of the Southern Cone, said, "We urge Dr Jeffrey John to withdraw his acceptance. This appointment flouts the mainstream Anglican teaching on human sexuality. We believe that if he is consecrated, the unity of the Church of England and Anglican Communion will be disrupted."

Eight bishops of the Church of England, however, wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury in support of Dr John, but urged that the debate should be carried on privately.

Despite the many dynamic comments and statements that have materialised on both sides of the argument, some of the more recent pronouncements have expounded the opinion that the issues are to be dealt with at a provincial level.

The Most Revd Clive Handford, President Bishop of Jerusalem and the Middle East, said, "I was a little surprised at the appointment because of the potential risk of controversy. However, while not knowing Dr. John personally, I believe him to be an excellent and highly regarded priest. It is significant that he has stated that he is celibate and has been for some years. I shall take no action other than to keep Dr. John and those involved in my prayers." He added that no one in this Province has requested that any action be taken.

A statement from the Archbishop of Southern Africa, the Most Revd Njongonkulu Ndungane, also supported this perspective. "The issue surrounding the appointment of Jeffrey John as a suffragan bishop affects, in the first instance, the diocese of Oxford and the Church in England, not the Church of the Province of Southern Africa," he said.

A statement issued today from the Primate of Australia, the Most Revd Peter Carnley, called on the need for honesty and humility, and a willingness to acknowledge the possibility of alternative readings of hotly disputed texts. The full statement is available at: <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/articles/34/75/acns3490.html>.

In his letter last week to all diocesan and suffragan bishops in the Church of England, the Archbishop of Canterbury voiced his own concerns on the matter:

"Confidence in the ability of a new bishop to minister to those in his pastoral care is a centrally important matter, and it is clear that serious questions remain in the diocese. To consider these with prayerfulness and maturity needs time and a measure of calm. It is not for anyone outside the diocese to override or pre-empt what is obviously a painful and complex process, and I can only ask your prayers

for the diocese as it struggles with this and tries to find a right discernment."

He concluded by saying, "In a few weeks, I shall be making a pastoral visit to West Africa. Some of our local issues are there too, of course, but so are most of the greatest wounds of our age, afflicting millions - violent conflict, epidemic disease, instability and poverty. Faithful Christian witness shines through all this, and we are deeply thankful for it. It does us no harm to think about our own priorities against such a background, and perhaps to learn in some matters to give each other a little more time and space for thought as we try to find how we can walk in step as the Body of Christ - not falling over ourselves because of anxiety and suspicion."

For further articles relating to issues of human sexuality please visit:

<http://www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/special/humansexuality/index.html>

## Archbishop of Canterbury's response to Jeffrey John's withdrawal



As most of you will know already, Canon Jeffrey John has announced his intention of withdrawing from his appointment as Bishop of Reading. The road that has led him to this point has been extremely arduous; and I must pay the warmest public tribute to the dignity and forbearance he has shown throughout, often under the most intrusive and distasteful personal scrutiny. The Bishop of Oxford and the people of the diocese have also had to endure difficult times, and there too has been much patience and graciousness in the heart of the controversy. All involved will need our prayers.

The announcement must give us all pause for thought. I hope that there will be proper opportunity to reflect on all this in depth. We have to grasp that Canon John's appointment has brought to light a good deal of unhappiness among people who could by no means be described as extremists, many of whom have willingly testified to their personal respect for Canon John. They are convinced, however, that there is a basic issue at stake relating to the consistency of our policy and our doctrine in the Church of England - and that this issue has arisen in this particular case in a way for which there are no obvious parallels. Such unhappiness means that there is an obvious problem in the consecration of a bishop whose ministry will not be readily received by a significant proportion of Christians in England and elsewhere.

For the divisions we have seen do not exist only at diocesan and

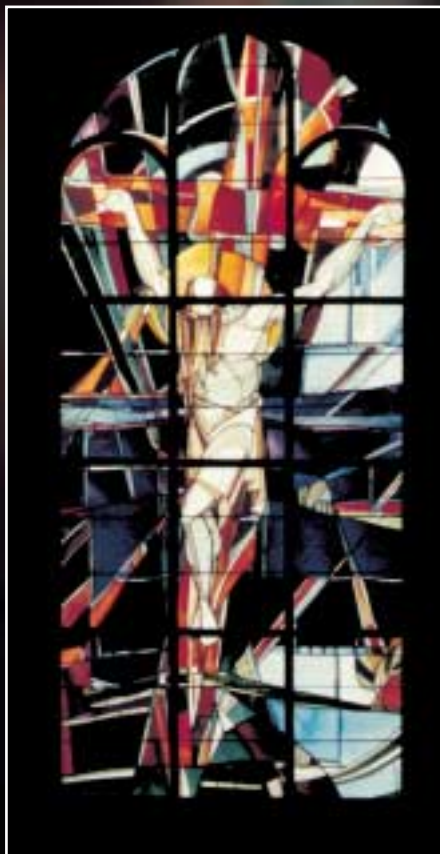
national level but internationally as well. The perspective of the Anglican Communion demands careful consideration here. The estrangement of churches in developing countries from their cherished ties with Britain is in no-one's interests. It would impoverish us as a Church in every way. It would also jeopardise links with other denominations, weaken co-operation in our shared service and mission worldwide, and increase the vulnerability of Christian minorities in some parts of the world where they are already at risk. Any such outcome would be a very heavy price to pay.

Much of the doubt expressed over the appointment was in terms of accountability to biblical teaching. Two weeks ago, I warned against interpreting the appointment as an illegitimate attempt to 'short-circuit' the Church's continuing obedient engagement with that teaching. I must be equally clear now. Canon John's withdrawal should not be taken to mean that the Church can now stop being concerned about how it discerns the will of God in this area of ethics. Later this year, a significant study guide to the debate in the Church of England on Issues in Human Sexuality will be published. I hope that this will be fully used to deepen our understanding. Whatever the difficulties, we cannot afford to ignore or foreclose the necessary work. And this will involve people at every level in the Church's life.

Let me add that some of the opposition expressed to Canon John's appointment has been very unsavoury indeed. A number of the letters I received displayed a shocking level of ignorance and hatred towards homosexual people. Our official policies and resolutions as Anglicans commit us to listening to the experience of homosexuals and recognising that they are full and welcome members of the Church, loved by God. Not everyone, it seems, takes equally seriously this element in the teaching of the Anglican Church; and some letters that came from non-believers suggest that the level of foolish and hurtful prejudice in our society is still uncomfortably high. Christians who collude with this are simply not living out their calling.

This has been a time of open and painful confrontation, in which some of our bonds of mutual trust have been severely strained. As I said earlier, we need now to give ourselves the proper opportunities honestly to think through what has happened and to find what God has been teaching us in these difficult days.

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# Heroic Church Remains Faithful



Anglicans in Uganda live their faith in difficult circumstances  
James Solheim

**“**In the midst of devastating situations of poverty, HIV/AIDS with all its attendant consequences, armed conflict and the abduction of children, this heroic church remains faithful and perseveres,” said Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold in a letter to bishops following a week-long visit to Anglicans in Uganda.

The visit came at the invitation of Archbishop Livingston Mpalanyi-Nkoyoyo, primate of the Church of the Province of Uganda, and was timed to coincide with the celebration of the Feast of the Martyrs of Uganda on June 3, a national holiday. A crowd estimated at 800,000 people flowed like a human river to the site of the martyrdom at the Roman Catholic and Anglican shrines at Numugongo east of the capital city of Kampala.

Nkoyoyo welcomed the crowd of several thousand on the hillsides near the actual site where 22 Christian pages in the court of King Mwangi of Buganda were wrapped in reed mats and roasted alive in 1886 for their refusal to renounce their faith and swear allegiance to him and submit to his sexual advances. According to witnesses, the youth went to their deaths singing and praising the Lord.

The occasion marked a major turnaround for the church, changing the perception of Christianity as a white

man’s religion to one that was truly African. Today Uganda has the largest percentage of professed Christians of any nation in Africa.

“The blood of martyrs is the seed of the church,” the archbishop reminded the crowds—even today. He introduced the widow and children of his predecessor, Archbishop Janani Luwum, who was martyred by the dictator Idi Amin in 1977. The service was planned to honor all the church’s martyrs, including those being martyred on a daily basis in the war-torn northern part of the country.

#### Grace and endurance

In his sermon at the four-hour Anglican service, Griswold said that the Ugandan martyrs were on the calendar of saints in the Episcopal Church in the USA. He talked of the heroic witness of the church to the power of the Holy Spirit, “giving grace and endurance even to this day in difficult conditions.” Listening to the stories of struggle to be faithful in Uganda was “an inspiration that has strengthened our souls, seeing how the church is reaching out in ways that shows in a very real way the compassion of Christ.”

During an overnight stop in London on his way to Uganda, he said that he took an early morning walk to Westminster Abbey where he saw the

statue of Luwum on the façade of the church, with other 20th century martyrs.

The service was an adventurous blend of elements, part Anglican, part enthusiastic African Pentecostalism with a great deal of singing and dancing. Griswold was escorted to the podium, for example, by a hundred women from the Mothers Union and Daughters of the King, singing and dancing their way across the lawn. Also, following the sermon, the archbishop introduced an evangelist who spent almost an hour deploring the corruption in the nation, with Prime Minister Apollo Nsubambi sitting a few feet away.

The prime minister had the last word, pointing out that the martyrs “paid the highest price for their principles. They had absolute faith in God.” He wondered how many Ugandans today had that kind of faith. He also expressed the hope that one day the Anglicans and Roman Catholics could hold a joint service to honor the martyrs.

#### The message of reconciliation

Griswold, his wife Phoebe, and several staff members were welcomed May 28 to Uganda in a service at St. Mark’s Church near the airport at Entebbe, on the shores of Lake Victoria. In what would be one of the few references to the sexuality controversies in the Anglican Communion, the retired

bishop of Namirembe, Wilson Mtebi, said with a smile that they would encounter a church that “does not permit any deviation from Scripture,” one that stands on the resolutions passed at the Lambeth Conference of 1998 condemning practice.

In response, Griswold said that he came as a brother. “I expect to be surprised and I’m also prepared to answer any questions about the U.S. and the church.” That opportunity came at a meeting with the Uganda Joint Christian Council where he made his first presentation. A lay theologian described a nation riven with ethnic conflict and politics, torn between north and south, between the Acholi and Bugandan tribes. Those divisions are also apparent in the church,” he said, charging that the church was indifferent and insensitive to the martyrdom of Luwum, who was “loved abroad but forgotten at home” because he was an Acholi from the north.

In his address, Griswold talked about the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and how “the effect was to teach us in the U.S. that we are vulnerable—a lesson hard to bear. In that moment we joined the world community where suffering and violent death are a daily reality.” In a subsequent letter to the primates of the Anglican Communion, he said that “this is a moment in which the U.S. might see ourselves differently and must ask about our relation with the rest of the world, examining our politics in light of world suffering. The fundamental message,” Griswold said, “is one of reconciliation. How can we as a nation seek to be an instrument of reconciliation.” A number of the church leaders present at the meeting expressed deep appreciation for the comments and gratitude that “the developing world has allies in the West.”

### Hope for the future

The party visited a rural development project supported by Episcopal Relief and Development where a widow had created a five-acre compound with cattle and a few crops, enough to support her family. In a service at the cathedral in Mityana, Griswold noted that “in many parts of Africa rural life is collapsing” so he was encouraged see concrete examples of progress. He also thanked the people of the diocese for giving the Episcopal Church Benjamin Musoke-Lubega, a Ugandan who is the church’s partnership officer for Africa—who had been ordained in the cathedral.

The province’s highly respected and very effective department of Planning, Development and Rehabilitation (PDR) has gone right down to the local level, working with the people to determine the needs and the resources available—

and providing glimmers of hope for the future. “Anglicanism is a people church so ordinary people hold the key,” said the Rev. Tom Tuma, director of PDR. “Our emphasis is on quality of life at the local level. If people are poor, the church is poor. We must play our part, make our contribution.”

Tuma is convinced that the church “should not run away from the immense obstacles. The greater the obstacles the greater the determination to overcome them. And small results provide motivation for us,” he said with an enthusiasm that has attracted international donors—including Episcopal Relief and Development—to PDR’s projects.



Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold and Phoebe greeted children following a program at an AIDS resource centre in Kampala.  
ENS photo by James Solheim

### Chilling stories from the north

One of the most sobering conversations during the trip was a session with the bishops of Northern Uganda and Kitgum who told chilling stories of what 17 years of war had done to their people. Expressing disappointment that the security situation had prevented a visit by the presiding bishop and his party to the north, Bishop Nelson Onono-Oweng of Gulu described how “traumatized” people were with hundreds of thousands reduced to waiting for the war to end in squalid camps. “I don’t know how many will survive.”

Under those conditions HIV/AIDS had become a major problem, creating thousands of orphans. He said that two-thirds of the people were living in desperate poverty, twice the level in the rest of the country. About 80 percent of those who go to the hospitals are HIV

positive. “The American government could make a big difference,” they said, “but we sometimes wonder if the U.S. even knows that we exist.”

A group of Daughters of the King, a part of the delegation from the north, described the suffering of women caught in the violence and dislocation, trying to hold their families together. Thousands of children are being abducted and trained as “killing machines” for the Lord’s Resistance Army, the main rebel faction. (According to a recent Human Rights Watch Report, a record 5,000 children have been abducted in the region in the last year.)

The bishop and his delegation said that the situation was compounded because of their isolation. They have no links with the outside church and feel forgotten. In response, Griswold said that he found their testimony “an incredible sign of God’s grace” and reported that the Episcopal Church has been involved in efforts to affect legislation to alleviate the situation—including the testimony of a bishop before a congressional committee.

(The Episcopal Church’s Office of Government Relations has joined other advocates to press for diplomatic and humanitarian assistance, proposing legislation for conflict prevention and reconciliation programs in the Acholi region and aid for the growing number of those internally displaced. Jere Skipper, the international policy analyst in the office, said that the bill recognizes the important work of peacemakers, such as the interfaith Acholi Leaders Peace Initiative, to bring the warring parties together and seek a peaceful solution. She expects action on the bill before Congress takes its summer break.)

Later the bishop would describe life in the north where “the nights are long—and dangerous.” He told the story of his life being threatened by a young rebel on a path near a village—and recognizing him as someone he had confirmed.

### ‘Life must go on’

The delegation from Kitgum said that their situation was in many ways worse because they are located on the border with the Sudan. “We are isolated by the violence, even from other Ugandans,” said Bishop Benjamin Ojwang. Luwum’s grave and a school named for him are located in his diocese. In a memorandum prepared for the discussion, the delegation pointed out that 90 percent of the people in the region are living in camps that are often raided by the rebels who seize children to serve as soldiers. “The U.S. can stop the war. You must become our voice,” they pleaded.

Representatives of the Mothers Union described a complete moral breakdown in the camps. Rebels abduct children



Frank and Phoebe Griswold greeted the 65 orphans and street children who are living in the archbishop's retirement home. ENS photo by James Solheim

between the ages of nine and 13, sometimes forcing mothers to kill their own children when they try to resist. Some of the women are forced into prostitution to save their children. Clergy are also confined to the camps and are just as vulnerable as the rest of the people, the delegation reported. "We can't wait for the war to end," said one participant. "Life must go on."

Deeply moved by their stories, Phoebe Griswold promised to take their story back to America. "Your story needs to be told, especially your struggle to survive."

US Ambassador Jimmy Klocker verified the horrific stories, praising the church for its peace efforts and its "resilience." He said that the church in the north is the only institution holding society together. But he warned that the situation was not getting any better, largely because the Lord's Resistance Army doesn't seem to have a political agenda that would open a path for negotiation, other than trying to replace the present government with a theocracy based on the Ten Commandments. He said that the people are actually being terrorized by both the rebels and the government troops. In the long-term tension between north and south the northerners don't relate well to the government in Kampala and feel that they have been neglected and persecuted—a perception that must be addressed before there can be reconciliation, he said.

The ambassador estimated that there may be as many as a million people internally displaced. "We need to be ready when the war ends to move into redeveloping the region," he said. "It's a

very religious country and many programs have been initiated by the churches and the NGOs." He noted their participation in the fight against HIV/AIDS, now being used as a model, with its emphasis on abstinence, faithfulness in relationships and the use of condoms. He gave substantial credit for the program's effectiveness to President Yoweri Museveni, who was welcomed to the White House June 10 and honored for his "extraordinary leadership." An estimated five percent of the population is now infected, compared with 15 percent a decade ago.

Uganda will also benefit from the Bush Administration's HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Act of 2003, "the largest single up-front commitment in history for an international public health initiative involving a specific disease," according to President George W. Bush.

The party visited the Archbishop Carey Regional Resource Centre for AIDS, named for the former archbishop of Canterbury, opened by him during a visit in 1998. Bishop Samuel Ssekadde of Namirembe, who had just returned from an international conference on AIDS in Germany, has been a tireless advocate for the church's role in fighting the pandemic.

The centre mobilizes efforts by the church, offers information and documentation, provides advocacy for those affected and infected, as well as training for those living with HIV/AIDS. During a ceremony, Griswold described his experience as a care-giver for someone living with AIDS when he was the bishop in Chicago—an experience that led to a commitment to join the fight

against the disease. "We will not stop our efforts—ever," he said.

### Sharing realities during a retreat

In a day-long retreat with bishops of the Ugandan church and their wives, both Griswolds shared their spiritual journeys. He talked about "how I have been shaped and formed by Christ over the years," admitting that "sometimes the seed grows slowly." Although he was baptized, "there were no signs of fruit in the early years."

At boarding school he was fascinated with the complexity of the worship rituals as he sang in the choir—and was confirmed at the age of 15. Yet he expressed shock when a roommate reported that a priest at the school thought that Griswold should be a priest. Describing it as a "laughing annunciation," it finally dawned on him that the priesthood might indeed be a vocation.

"Faith is a constant search and exploration," said Phoebe in describing her own spiritual journey. It has been a challenge, over the years, to find her own voice, as a woman, one who nurtures others. She developed a deep concern for children and the hungry, adding that "Frank allows and encourages my spirit to flourish."

Griswold said during one session that he is concerned that, in the United States, "we have too many resources and not enough spirit." The question, he said, is how we can share one another's burdens. When asked about divisions in the church, he said that "at some fundamental level all things have already been reconciled through Christ so the question becomes what are the barriers to recognizing what God has done." He added, "I have to trust that God can put the pieces together. That gives me some hope, confidence and courage. God's time is different so I try not to be dispirited by the divisions we are living with." He warned them to watch out for rumors that create mistrust because "that is the Evil One at work."

During a discussion after Griswold's meditations on the role of bishops, several bishops confessed that they were feeling completely inadequate in the face of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. They also said that it was the first time they had met as bishops without a business agenda—and how important it was to develop a new sense of collegiality and support for one another. "It was very important time with the bishops in the context of prayer and retreat where they shared the Scripture of their lives—the unfailing and absolute power of the Gospel," Griswold said later.

### Wives of bishops have clear vision

In a separate meeting with the wives



Archbishop Livingston Nkoyoyo, primate of the church in Uganda, greets a child after worship services at All Saints Cathedral in Kampala. ENS photo by James Solheim

of the bishops, Phoebe said that “despite the poverty and AIDS, they have a very clear vision of their roles,” even if they find it daunting. A bishop’s home is open all day and it is not unusual to wake in the morning to find people standing outside expecting breakfast. Widows and children sometimes show up looking for a place to stay. “They constantly share whatever they have—and they pray and pray with the people,” she said. Despite the obvious frustrations in trying to meet these needs and expectations, “they look to Scripture for strength.”

Leadership was cited as a major issue for the church in Uganda. In the past, Bishop Tucker College prepared many of the clergy and now, since it became Uganda Christian University in 1997, that role has been expanded. Griswold noted that “the vision of a thriving university has been close to the archbishop’s heart.”

The Rev. Stephen Noll, an American volunteer for mission who is serving as vice chancellor of the university, said that there are now 136 students studying theology, between 20 and 25 of them are women. The university has also developed a program for theology by extension, available to hundreds of students spread throughout eastern Africa. “People seldom think of higher education as mission,” said Noll. “But I’ve seen a growth of mission awareness.”

#### Tribalism a nagging issue

It was apparent from conversations with church leaders that they face immense challenges in the future. Neither

the church nor the nation are unified. “We speak many languages—and our ethnicity leads to more tribalism,” said the Rev. Stanley Ntigali, secretary of the province who was instrumental in arranging details of the visit.

He added that “tribalism knows no boundaries,” often interfering with the election of bishops. In one extreme case, a bishop was improperly involved in the election of his successor and, as a result, many in the diocese moved to prevent the consecration of his successor. The archbishop was forced to delay the consecration because of security threats. The matter is now in the courts as one faction sued the archbishop, trying to force the consecration to proceed. The house of bishops has postponed the consecration indefinitely, seeking reconciliation. With two dioceses vacant, the election of a new archbishop this fall is also uncertain.

Ntigali said that “poverty remains a huge problem with a majority still very poor—as high as 90 percent in many rural areas where there is no health care, no clean water, and a poor infrastructure.” Economic conditions are complicating church life. Most clergy never receive their full salary of about \$100 a month and must supplement their income. That makes recruitment very difficult. Yet women clergy “are doing very well. We have 83 ordained women and value their ministry very much.”

Understanding of HIV/AIDS is “still low in villages where there is tremendous ignorance. It is creating many orphans and family structures are crumbling. The church doesn’t have many ways of handling such enormous problems.”

Ntigali said that he has lost two brothers to AIDS and has taken in their children, adding them to his own five children. “Every family is affected and the problems seem beyond control, beyond the church’s ability to help.” Yet

he said that the church has “started to talk about the dangers, preaching about them, teaching awareness. And it has made a huge difference.”

#### Praying for peace

The Rev. Hellen Oneka, one of the first women ordained in the church and now director of Mothers Union for the province, works with women in the villages, training them in health care and child care, promoting morality during visits to schools. She also promotes agriculture in an effort to support AIDS orphans in what she describes as “a very difficult situation.” Everyone gets involved, she said, revealing that she has 20 children who depend on her for support.

Oneka had just returned from a visit to the north where she saw people hiding and sleeping in the bush out of fear of attack. “You see the situation and you just cry. There are thousands jammed together in camps with no food, under constant attack by rebels. Women are sometimes raped in front of their children. It is too much,” she said with a deep and weary sadness. “If the war would end people could return to their homes and put their lives back together.” During the trip she was held at gunpoint four times but, since she is from the area and speaks the language, it probably saved her life. “Our prayer is that the war ends.”

At the end of the trip, Griswold said that one of the most moving visits had been to the archbishop’s retirement home to meet 65 street children and orphans who were living there while the church builds a new village for them nearby. That kind of desire and determination to do something to address a desperate need “is at the very heart and soul of the church in Uganda.”

*James Solheim is director of Episcopal News Service and was a staff member on the visit to Uganda.*



Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold is escorted to the podium by a delegation from Mothers Union and Daughters of the King during Ugandan Martyrs Day Services. ENS photo by James Solheim

# A Seminarian's Canterbury Tale

Bruce Myers

Last August, I had the privilege of joining twenty other seminarians and clergy from across the Anglican Communion for a three-week course at Canterbury Cathedral's new International Study Centre. The experience has proven ministry shaping.

Reconciling Anglicanism's unity with its diversity was the overarching theme of the course, and our group was certainly representative of the

a common history and remain in communion with the Church of England, each of the Anglican Communion's provinces has evolved into an autonomous church, each with its own particular flavour and concerns. We celebrated this, but also struggled with the question of how far this diversity can be stretched before a church ceases to be authentically Anglican. Indeed, we spent much time pondering what being

though we ended many of them still in disagreement—we remained "in communion" with one another.

This was perhaps the strongest and most heartening lesson most of us drew from our three weeks in Canterbury, and one we hope to bring back to our respective parts of the Anglican Communion. Debate and disagreement and discord are not always things to be avoided or bemoaned. Indeed, they are



communion's variety. I was the lone Canadian among Anglicans from Bangladesh, Burundi, China, Hong Kong, India, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and the United States. Among our number were liberals and conservatives, anglo-catholics and evangelicals, women and men, gay and straight, high-church Anglicans and low.

With professors from Botswana, England, and the U.S., we studied and struggled with questions that have been facing Anglicanism for centuries, as well as some newer dilemmas. We spent several days discussing the question of mission and evangelism, in an attempt to understand why Christianity—and Anglicanism, in particular—is experiencing such huge growth in places like Africa. The growing pains that are a result of this rapid expansion were also a topic of discussion. Though we all have

"Anglican" really means.

Like the rest of the communion, we also wrestled with recent developments in the Diocese of New Westminster. And like the rest of the communion, our discussions surrounding sexuality proved the most difficult. People on both sides of issues like same-sex unions held firm views. In many respects, we couldn't have been further apart from each other. However, the discussions never took the adversarial, acrimonious tone that so many other debates have. Rather, there was a sincere desire on both sides of the debate to listen to the other, try and understand the other, to respect the other. We came away from that discussion in particular with a greater respect for each other's views, and a better understanding of each other's backgrounds and contexts. Throughout the discussions—even

often signs of a Christian community that is vigorous and alive and engaging with other Christians and the world. And there is a way to deal with disagreement that doesn't always need to result in division or schism.

Indeed, many of us who took part in the seminarians course at Canterbury were firmly convinced that we were able to overcome our divisions and differences—in geography, culture, language, liturgy, theology—because of the personal relationships we had established during our time together. Over three weeks, we didn't just study and debate together. We lived, ate, and played together. Every day we said morning and evening prayer (often compline, too) and celebrated the eucharist together at the cathedral. We truly lived in community for those three weeks. The personal relationships we



established in that time allowed us to engage in some difficult and wrenching discussions with one another without breaking those relationships. It's much more difficult to dismiss or condemn someone with whom you disagree when that person is also a friend, one whom you truly consider a sister or brother in Christ. As Archbishop Rowan Williams has put it, it is a matter of "learning patience with each other and learning what is involved in looking at another person as if they really are a baptized member of the body of Christ just like you, and therefore might just have something of Christ to say to you. And that sounds so simple, but actually is so difficult."

Summarizing this experience in only a handful of paragraphs is an impossible task. To be sure, it has impacted me deeply, and will be one of the most formative experiences of my training for ministry. I wish every Anglican—and every Christian—the opportunity to meet with their brothers and sisters from other parts of the world, many of whom are facing challenges that put ours in North America or Europe into a certain perspective. Among our number were seminarians and clergy from churches under persecution on the Indian subcontinent, from churches losing members daily to AIDS and to civil war in Africa, from churches still living in fear of oppression in China. More than once, those of us from the North were embarrassed at the controversies over things like prayer books and liturgies that are so often our preoccupation, and appear so petty in the light of the experiences of other Anglicans in the world.

I'll also never pray the Anglican Cycle of Prayer the same way again. Before Canterbury, it was simply an obligatory list of difficult-to-pronounce dioceses populated by people I thought I'd never

meet, faced with concerns that were literally a world away. I may still have difficulty with some pronunciations (although I did learn a little Swahili while I was there), but I now know some of the people from these far-away dioceses, and they've articulated their concerns and struggles to me in a very different way. So profound was the impact, that it prompted me to offer myself up for a summer-long internship in the Church of the Province of Southern Africa, so I can see with my own eyes and share in some of the

struggles of Anglicans elsewhere in the world, if even only briefly.

Three short weeks in Canterbury have given new and deeper meaning to what "Anglican Communion" means for me and, I believe, for all of us who were a part of the seminarians course 2002. This was perhaps best articulated in our final group assignment: collaboratively writing an open letter to the new archbishop of Canterbury, expressing our hopes, concerns, and vision for the Anglican Communion in the twenty-first century. I close these reflections with the closing lines of that letter, a letter teeming with pride, love, concern, and optimism for the communion we share:

*There is an African saying that it takes a village to raise a child. We believe it takes the whole world to raise a Christian. We praise God that we have had this opportunity to become more mature in our faith by experiencing the Body of Christ in greater fullness than we have before. We look forward to future interactions with our friends here and with others in our global communion who we have yet to meet. We hope that more Christians from a variety of backgrounds will have opportunities to come to the eucharistic table and truly give thanks for the multi-faceted images of God that stand as a great cloud of witnesses around us all.*

Bruce Myers is a postulant for ordination in the Diocese of Quebec, in the Anglican Church of Canada, and attends Montreal Diocesan Theological College.

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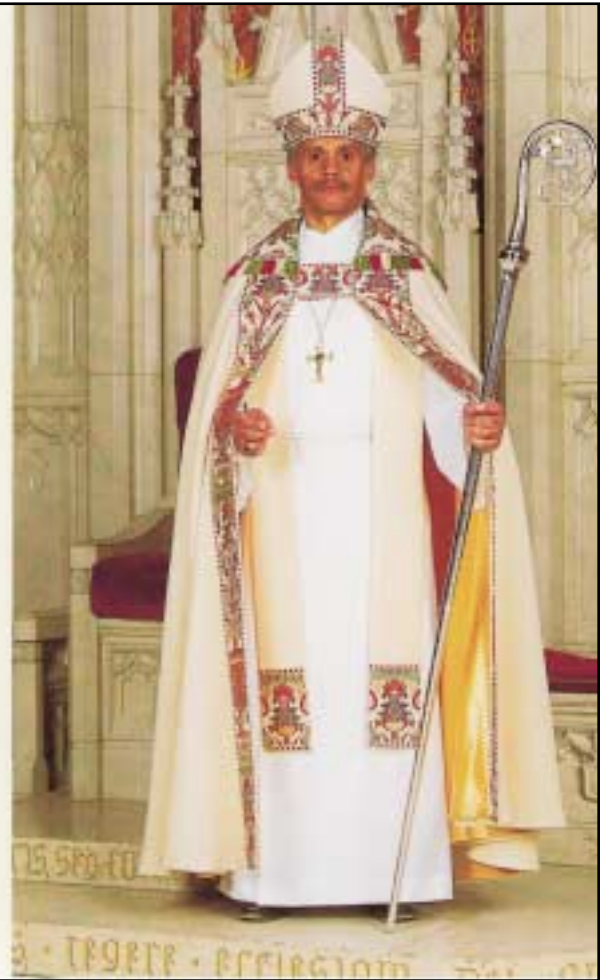
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# The Fellowship of the Breaking of Bread and Prayer

Trinity Institute for Christianity and Culture

Many Christians are acquainted with people of other faith traditions through the activities of their daily life. Even in communities where contacts with people of other religions are rare, church members are aware of the growing religious plurality in their community. It is often the case that we accept people of other faiths but fail to understand their background or culture.

A new initiative in London, UK, the Trinity Institute for Christianity and Culture [TICC] has seen the light as an ecumenical and international body. It is important to realise that the TICC is not a new interfaith dialogue centre but rather an initiative which is aiming to create an international forum which will help to raise the awareness and understanding amongst Christians to other faiths and cultures.

Ignorance breeds fear and resorts all too easily to fundamentalism with its accompanying certainties. Knowledge and information when fired by inspiration, however, lead to a living faith on a journey of continuing discipleship and exploration into God. This knowledge however refuses to be imprisoned in the box of our intellect. Rather discipleship is pursued through knowledge acquired through a relationship with God characterised by faith, hope and love. The programme of the Institute from the outset insists upon a holistic approach to learning, in which prayer, spirituality and worship are essential ingredients. "They continued steadfastly in the apostles teaching; the fellowship; the breaking of bread and the prayers." (Acts 2:42). The teaching ministry of the early Church was not restricted to lectures or lecture rooms. Rather, discipleship was pursued in the larger context of worship, prayer, fellowship and service in the wider community.

At the outset of the Third Millennium there is a welcome movement throughout all the mainstream churches, offering courses and educational programmes, which aim to inform Christians about their faith. At the same time there is verifiable and consistent evidence - at least in the Western affluent world - of a growing disenchantment with the culture of a consumerist and materialistic life style, devoid of purpose and spiritual values. Sadly, with a few notable exceptions, these two parallel movements remain unrelated and

largely unconnected.

Globalisation is here to stay. Isolationism behind barriers of religious prejudices is not an alternative option for today's world. Instead we are compelled to live as next-door neighbours with peoples with different religions, cultures and ideologies. Alongside all of this, in the opening years of this millennium a worldwide rash of religious conflicts has erupted, enflamed by ignorance and a mindless fundamentalism wedded to extreme political ideologies. Organised religion for good or ill has suddenly returned to the agenda of the nations. Today, religion has largely a bad reputation especially where it flourishes only through narrow minded and ultra-conservative expressions of faith.

The TICC has three core approaches through which it hopes to achieve its aim: re-envisioning Christian believers about their own faith, its distinctive characteristics and fundamental teachings; relating a living faith to different cultures and other faiths; and equipping the churches with resources and skills to forward the changing relationship between Christianity and the challenge of diverse global cultures.

Although the only courses that have taken place so far have been in London, the establishment of international centres, where courses and conferences will be available, is soon to become a feature of the Institute. There has been some promising interest shown from theological institutions and colleges throughout the world. Some of the courses that will soon be on offer include:

- *The Christian life-style in a multi-cultural/faith society*
- *Christian leadership and citizenship*
- *Education for Christian discipleship*
- *A Christian perspective on world religions in a multi-cultural/faith society*
- *Expressing faith through the arts*
- *Children's Christian education*
- *Learning to listen: a course for young people in multi-culture/faith schools*

In addition to courses and conferences, the Institute will offer occasional publications and a Journal keeping people abreast of their activities and progress.

Part of the vision of the TICC is to help Christian people everywhere to deepen their life of faith and discipleship:

"The Institute is committed to build



Revd Nadim Nassar

an international team of leadership which will include consultants, ministers, priests, lay readers and qualified academics, and to equip them with the necessary resources and skills to enable them to engage positively as citizens and leaders within their own local culture. Furthermore, such well-trained disciples will no longer be fearful of the diversity within their own cultures. Rather, they will be further enabled to celebrate, as well as to be enriched by all diversities and differences in religion and culture."

The Archbishop of Canterbury has generously accepted to be the patron of the TICC and will preach at Holy Trinity Church on Sunday 14 September in the evening to celebrate the TICC Sunday and prepare to start its courses on 4 October.

The TICC will offer three courses for the first term. October 4 will be the orientation and registration day, then the courses will start on Wednesday 8 October at 6:30pm and continue for seven consecutive Wednesdays. Everyone who is interested in exploring the Christian faith is welcome.

The Rt Revd Michael Marshall is giving a course on "Christ the Teacher in a Multi-faith and Multi-cultural Society."

The Revd Nadim Nassar is giving a course on "Creation Between Science, Mythology and Divine Work"

The Revd Andrew Sloane is giving a course on "The Distinctive Marks of Christian Spirituality."

The three key people involved in the initiative are the Rt Revd Michael Marshall, Director and Chairman of the Board of Trustees, the Revd Nadim Nassar, Principal and Chairman of the Educational and Theological Board and the Revd Canon Dr Bruce Duncan, Chairman of the International Consultants Board,

For further information about TICC, please visit their web site: [www.theticc.com](http://www.theticc.com)

# The Anglican Indigenous Network

## Mission Statement of The Anglican Indigenous Network

We are indigenous minority peoples living in our own lands. We are committed to the Anglican tradition while affirming our traditional spirituality. We have discovered that we have many things in common: a common spirituality, common concerns, common gifts, common hopes. We believe that God is leading the Church to a turning point in its history and that the full partnership of indigenous peoples is essential. Therefore we pledge to work together to exercise our leadership in contributing our vision and gifts to transform the life of the Christian community.

### A Brief History

An informal working group of indigenous minority Anglicans established a forum or network to share and discuss common issues and goals in 1991 at the General Convention of the Episcopal Church in Phoenix, Arizona. Since then they have tried to meet every two to three years, rotating the venue and hosting, to continue that dialogue. As the bonds of mutual trust have grown, the sharing of information, issues, some limited resources continued and the ever changing of leadership within the groups, this network came to encompass the indigenous minorities of Canada, the United States, Aotearoa (New Zealand), Australia and Hawai'i. In Hawai'i 1999 the network realized a need to formalize and sought recognition from the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) so that its voice could be heard throughout the Communion. Having received that recognition by Cairns 2001 the network proceeded to establish a secretariat for better communication and organization. That year it began to speak out on issues of concern and issued its first resolution supporting the desires of the Gwich'in Nation of Alaska, whose peoples are mostly members of the Episcopal Church, in their opposition to the exploration and drilling for natural resources in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge of Northeastern Alaska." AIN reiterated the indigenous view that, "It is inexcusable to extinguish the livelihood of a people."

In 2002 the network, now known as the Anglican Indigenous Network (AIN,) held its first programmatic meeting in Honolulu gathering indigenous minority theological educators. The very first gathering issued a broad statement of their education and religious mission, theology, goals, objectives and recommendations, especially reminding the Communion of their existence. A web site was also developed to help promote the network and to share current information. The recently concluded Rotorua 2003 continues the development of programs to complement the work of ACC by formally establishing working groups for elders, youth, women and theological educators. These groups desire to meet to further develop positions, reports and programs that are comprehensive and interrelated before the next AIN gathering in 2005. Several resolutions were approved to further the contributions and gifts of indigenous minorities to Communion.

### The Desires and Needs of the Network

Indigenous peoples of the work, some times called first peoples, are the last peoples to be able to have the funds to meet and implement their programs. The gifts we bring to the Church are many, especially in community development and leadership, liturgy and spirituality, pastoral care and healing. We are trying to accelerate the transition of leadership and the transmission of wisdom and experience between



elders, who are dying at younger ages and our youth, who show little interest in their culture and church. Other indigenous minorities of the Communion are now seeing AIN as place for them and AIN seeks their inclusion, but at an organization price since the Secretariat remains voluntary without operational funding, especially to address new translation needs. However, as modernity encompasses us, our language and way of life, AIN and the Church can be one of the places for refuge and nurturance where our Covenant with God as chosen peoples of our lands is protected. Without such a place and relationship we will no doubt still survive but we will no longer be the people of the land.