

Report On ACNA Conference

From 22-25 June, St. John's sent me to Dallas/Fort Worth for the inaugural convocation of the Anglican Church in North America. Also, the Northeast Network of Anglican Mission (and Bishop Thad Barnum) assigned me to be a delegate at the convocation – meaning a voting member.

I can well imagine that some of you have been watching the news from VirtueOnline, or the Gauthiers, or other blogs. Being only a single pair of eyes, I could never reproduce the intelligence contained in those various organs. This, however, is a report from my perspective and represents my opinions only.

First, a quick summary and then I'll record some general impressions.

Overview

- For St. John's, the short-term effects (next 24-36 months or so) are nil. That means that our relationships with Anglican Mission in America → Anglican Mission in the Americas → Province of Rwanda are not affected at this time.
- Anglo-Catholics, evangelicals, and charismatics of Anglican stripe have effected a kind of détente, a tentative rapprochement. The relationship perhaps can best be characterized as an agreement not to throw mud at each other in public. This is not the same, however, as a full unity or *carte blanche* agreement of cooperation.
- On a practical level, there will be scales of economy afforded us all that could be helpful; insurances, for instance, ecclesiastical leverage, and a substantial center of gravity for recruitment, church planting, missionary work, and domestic evangelism.

Impressions

3 Streams - 1 Swamp: There was a clear attempt at appeasing the “three streams” paradigm. Rick Warren spoke for the evangelicals, Todd Hunter for the charismatics, and His Beatitude Jonah, Metropolitan of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) for the catholics.

I heard neither Rick Warren (working through some canonical issues prior to the meeting), nor Todd Hunter (flying home before his late morning session on Thursday). It should be noted that Todd Hunter, who was the past president of the Alpha USA evangelism ministry and earlier in his career, National Director for the Association of Vineyard Churches, has just been elected a bishop for AMiAs.

I have a great deal of respect for Warren, though I disagree with him in some areas. But as a friend from another jurisdiction asked me: "you mean, we can't find an evangelism / church growth guru, who is an Anglican?" Obviously, one can - ever heard of Alpha? And to say that Hunter represents the charismatic stream may be a bit unfair, inasmuch as listening to several of his statements in other contexts leads me to believe that he is more an evangelical brother on an Anglican trajectory.

Most stunning was the OCA Metropolitan. No, that's not right. What was most stunning was the RESPONSE to the OCA Metropolitan. The response from the Anglo-Catholic constituency was overwhelmingly positive (remember -- we were on the turf of the diocese of Fort Worth, an Anglo-Catholic diocese). Why was that stunning? His Beatitude called for the beginning of a real move toward full unity and among the items he enumerated before unity could be accomplished and for which he received resounding applause are these:

- "the Orthodox church is the past of the Anglican church, it is the future of the Anglican church."
- Full affirmation of the faith of the fathers - 7 ecumenical councils. Local councils need to be reviewed on a scholarly level. This would include veneration of and prayers to the saints, as well as the use of icons.
- Return the creed to its original form - no double precession (*filioque* clause)
- Hope for and work toward full ecumenical relationship with the Roman church, while rejecting papal ecclesiology, papal authority and inerrancy, and the "hypertrophy of the worship of Mary, the blessed Theotokos."
- Calvinism is a condemned heresy (see the Articles!), essentially a repudiation of the reformation.
- Reaffirmation of the doctrine of the apostles, the Fathers, and the patriarchs. When he speaks of the Fathers and patriarchs, that means that anything said by them (particularly the Eastern patriarchs) would be held true.
- Anti-sacramentalism and ignorance of the sacramental life must be condemned.
- Must believe in the 7 sacraments, including ordination is a sacrament. "If you don't know and feel that ordination is a sacrament, then you've never experienced it."
- Reject iconoclasm (use of icons as a key aspect of worship must be accepted)
- Ordination of women must be rejected
- 100 years ago St Tikhon came to Anglicanism with arms open. "I occupy the same throne," he said, "our arms are wide open." "We are enthusiastic about our future together," he said. Embedded in his "code language" is this: we (the Orthodox church) have never moved and we await your return to us.

Make no mistake: the Orthodox Church sees itself as **The Orthodox Church**. All others are heterodox (heretical) or, at best, misplaced. I would suggest, dear brothers and sisters, that if we want to be Orthodox, we could solve that very simply and we don't need ACNA for the solution! The point is this: a goodly portion of the room thought that returning to

Orthodoxy (and/or Romanism) would be the most excellent solution. I fear that I am thoroughly Protestant in my catholicity. :-{

In any event, this demonstrates something of the seminal problems in ACNA.

The Rule Of Law: The proposed Constitution and Canons (C&C) were essentially accepted unchanged. I doubt that many of you have interest in a detailed analysis of aspects of the C&C, so here are some key key points:

- AMiAs has a “protocol” - a series of negotiated exceptions and qualifications - that modify the scope and power of the C&C vis-à-vis AMiAs and her congregations. See the attached document.
- The ACNA’s C&C are sufficiently vague - cleverly and brilliantly vague, even! - as to permit any of the “3 streams” to read into it whatever they want regarding doctrinal matters.
- Though some discussion took place, the meetings were sufficiently well planned to basically guarantee the ratification of the two documents unaltered.

Personal Accomplishments:

- I had a chance to “touch” a number of key relationships with leadership in AMiAs and the REC.
- I had a chance to get some intelligence on the internal workings of several of the key working committees of ACNA.
- I greatly enjoyed the opportunity to “hang” with a number of guys interested in serving in AMiA and the Northeast Network.

Conclusion

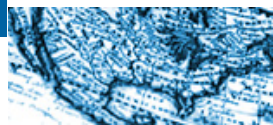
I was honored to have served AMiAs and St. John’s as a delegate at this inaugural convocation. The idealist in me says that this was perhaps the most ecumenical that we may ever see Anglicans be - for that matter, perhaps any similarly heterogeneous group of churches and groups. The cynic says its more of the same; “listening,” “discussion,” etc., with no real outcomes. But fixing worldwide Anglicanism is above my pay-grade anyway - and I don’t want the promotion!

We live in interesting times ...

Your fellow servant,

Mark

PS: copies of all related documents are available upon request for the interested (and masochistic) and also soon will be on the web site.



Special Report from the Chairman: ACNA Assembly

Last week the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) met in provincial assembly, and delegates formally ratified both the Constitution and Canons. In a service on Wednesday night, Archbishop Robert Duncan was installed as the province's first archbishop and primate. It is important for us in the Anglican Mission to understand fully what this means for us.



[Click to view my video message.](#)

The Anglican Mission has played a significant role in establishing the province, and I am including below a list of bullet points that outline the various ways we have contributed to making this new entity a reality. As a founding member of both the Common Cause Partnership and the emerging province, we will continue to fully participate in ACNA. As we have consistently explained, however, we remain a missionary outreach of the Province of the Anglican Church of Rwanda under the authority of Archbishop Emmanuel Kolini. This allows us to enjoy dual citizenship, a similar relationship to that of the Convocation of Anglicans in North America (CANA).

ACNA's Constitutions and Canons were designed to be "generous and flexible" in order to enable membership by two countries and several jurisdictions, demonstrating flexibility for the various jurisdictions. Lead bishops, the Common Cause Leadership Council and the Governance Task Force unanimously supported a "both/and" membership for the Anglican Mission, and this design is embedded in the Canons (Canon 5, Section 4).

As a member of ACNA's Executive Committee and Governance Task Force, I attended a meeting in April with GAFCON Primates including archbishops with US jurisdictions. Those leaders in attendance agreed that each member jurisdiction would develop individual protocols outlining specifics for each group worked out between the overseas jurisdictions and the ACNA leadership.

Some of the key points of the Anglican Mission's Protocol are:

1. The Canons of the Anglican Church in North America apply to the Anglican Mission in the Americas, except in those matters addressed by the Anglican Mission's "Canonical Charter of Ministry," and therefore articles such as Article 10, Section 5 of the Constitution of the Anglican Church in North America [addressing the process for electing and approving new bishops] are not applicable to the Anglican Mission.
2. The Bishops of the Anglican Mission in the Americas are elected and consecrated in the Anglican Church of Rwanda. The names of the newly consecrated bishops are brought to the College of Bishops of the Anglican Church in North America to be welcomed and seated.
3. The Bishops and Clergy of the Anglican Mission in the Americas are under the license and discipline of the Anglican Church of Rwanda.
4. The Archbishop of Rwanda, on behalf of the Province, exercises principal responsibility for the Anglican Mission in the Americas through his Primatial Vicar. [The Anglican Mission Charter states that the Anglican Mission remains as a missionary outreach of the Province of Rwanda, and in addition, the Mission is embedded in the Constitution and Canons of the Province of Rwanda.]

To read the Anglican Mission's Protocol in its entirety, [click here](#). (Download PDF)

Clearly the Anglican Mission retains its identity and distinctives while remaining fully a part of ACNA. We will continue focusing on our vision and mission of evangelism through church planting. I am convinced that our best days are before us, and I look forward with great anticipation to what the Lord

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has in store for us as we move forward on mission for His glory.

The Rt. Rev. Charles H. Murphy III, Anglican Mission Chairman

If you have any questions regarding the Anglican Mission's relationship with Rwanda and ACNA, please [email us](#).

Background and History:

The Anglican Mission and the Anglican Church of North America



1. In 2004, Bishop Murphy was one of six signatories to a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury (along with then Bishop Duncan and four others) informing him of their commitment to "making common cause" with other Anglicans in North America.
2. Bishop Murphy, along with Canon Mike Murphy, helped draft the Constitution and Canons of the Federation of Anglican Churches in the Americas in 2006. These documents were slightly revised to become the Articles of Incorporation of the Common Cause Partnership (CCP) which were adopted in September 2007 and represented the first step toward a new ecclesiastical structure in North America.
3. The Anglican Mission is a founding member of the Common Cause Partnership and has had three representatives (bishop, clergy and lay) on the Common Cause Leadership Council.
4. Bishop Murphy is a founding member of the CCP's Lead Bishops Round Table.
5. The Anglican Mission had a significant number of representatives at the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON in June 2008).
6. Bishop Murphy and the Rev. Kevin Donlon of the Anglican Mission have served on the CCP Governance Task Force that developed the Constitution and Canons of the new province.
7. The Anglican Mission has given financially to support ACNA.
8. Bishop Murphy serves on the Executive Committee of ACNA.

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Protocol Governing the Relationship between The Anglican Mission in the Americas and The Anglican Church in North America (ACNA)

Province of Rwanda House of Bishops

June 13, 2009

Entered into between the Anglican Church of Rwanda, the Anglican Mission in the Americas, and the Anglican Church in North America:

1. The Anglican Mission in the Americas is a founding member of the Anglican Church in North America and fully under its Constitution.
2. The Canons of the Anglican Church in North America apply to the Anglican Mission in the Americas, except in those matters addressed by the Anglican Mission's "Canonical Charter for Ministry", and therefore, articles such as Article 10, Section 5 of the Constitution of the Anglican Church in North America are not applicable to the Anglican Mission.
3. The Bishops and Clergy of the Anglican Mission in the Americas are under the license and discipline of the Anglican Church of Rwanda.
4. The Bishops of the Anglican Mission in the Americas are elected and consecrated in the Anglican Church of Rwanda. The names of the newly consecrated bishops are brought to the Council of Bishops of the Anglican Church in North America to be welcomed and seated.
5. The Archbishop of Rwanda, on behalf of the Province, exercises principal responsibility for the Anglican Mission in the Americas through his Primatial Vicar. The Archbishop of the Anglican Church in North America exercises authority in all things relating to the Constitution and Canons of the Anglican Church in North America, expressly limited by the canonical exceptions spelled out in numbers 2 and 3 above.
6. The Anglican Mission in the Americas agrees to a substantial financial commitment to the Anglican Church in North America.
7. The Anglican Mission in the Americas will be represented in the Provincial Assembly based on the ASA of its clusters.
8. The Anglican Mission in the Americas will be represented in the Provincial Council as if it were three dioceses (clusters or networks); the bishops, clergy and lay representatives being chosen by the leadership of the Anglican Mission in the Americas by whatever means this sub-provincial jurisdiction elects to use.
9. As with all congregations of the Anglican Church in North America, congregations of the Anglican Mission in the Americas are free to move from the Anglican Mission in the Americas to another diocese (cluster or network) with the mutual consent of the Anglican Mission bishop and the new bishop.
10. A declaration of full communion with the Anglican Church in North America has been (will be) made.
11. This protocol will be re-examined and re-negotiated in June 2010.