

VERITAS

Official Newsletter of Fort Worth Via Media



Volume 1, Number 1 June 2005

June ACC Meeting

Excerpted from Anglican communion Website.

In June 2005, the Anglican Consultative Council will meet to hear statements from the Episcopal Church (USA)(ECUSA) and the Anglican Church of Canada as invited by **Communiqué** from The Anglican Communion Primates' Meeting of February 2005. This preceded the March 15th **Covenant Statement** of the House of Bishops (ECUSA) in which **The Windsor Report** was addressed and an apology was offered:

"We express our own deep regret for the pain that others have experienced with respect to our actions at the General Convention of 2003 and we offer our sincerest apology and repentance for having breached our bonds of affection by any failure to consult adequately with our Anglican partners before taking those actions."

The Covenant Statement was welcomed by The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams:

"I welcome this constructive response from ECUSA's House of Bishops. They have clearly sought to respond positively to the requests made of them in the Windsor Report and in the Communiqué issued after the recent Primates Meeting. It is clear that there has been a real willingness to engage with the challenges posed."

The relevant requests from the Primates' **Communiqué**:

"14. Within the ambit of the issues discussed in the Windsor Report and in order to recognise the integrity of all parties, we request that the Episcopal Church (USA) and the Anglican Church of Canada voluntarily withdraw their members from the Anglican Consultative Council for the period leading up to the next Lambeth Conference. During that same period we request that both churches respond through their relevant constitutional bodies to the questions specifically addressed to them in the Windsor Report as they consider their place within the Anglican Communion. (cf. paragraph 8)

16. Notwithstanding the request of paragraph 14 of this communiqué, we encourage the Anglican Consultative Council to organise a hearing at its meeting in Nottingham, England, in June 2005 at which representatives of the Episcopal Church (USA) and the Angli-

The purpose of Fort Worth Via Media is to support, promote, and educate interested parties concerning the religious doctrines and historical role of The Episcopal Church in the United States of America (ECUSA), to advocate openness and acceptance of all persons in the life and governance of ECUSA, and to provide balanced and accurate information concerning potentially divisive issues facing The Episcopal Church in the United States of America.

can Church of Canada, invited for that specific purpose, may have an opportunity to set out the thinking behind the recent actions of their Provinces, in accordance with paragraph 141 of the Windsor Report."

The Anglican Consultative Council was formed following a resolution of the 1968 Lambeth Conference which discerned the need for more frequent and more representative contact among the Churches than was possible through a once-a-decade conference of bishops. The role of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) is to facilitate the co-operative work of the churches of the Anglican Communion, exchange information between the Provinces and churches, and help to co-ordinate common action. It advises on the organisation and structures of the Communion, and seeks to develop common policies with respect to the world mission of the Church, including ecumenical matters. The ACC membership includes from one to three persons from each province. Where there are three members, there is a bishop, a priest and a lay person. Where fewer members are appointed, preference is given to lay membership. The ACC is one of the four Instruments of Unity that serve the world wide family of Anglican/Episcopal churches. They are:

The Archbishop of Canterbury in his international role as primus inter pares, the senior bishop in the Anglican Communion.

The Lambeth Conference (which meets every 10

years, for the bishops of the Anglican Communion. It held its first meeting in 1867).

The Primates Meetings (which are regular meetings for the senior archbishops and bishops of the 38 Provinces, who first met in 1979).

The Anglican Consultative Council (which meets every 3 years or so, and includes bishops, clergy and laity, as members appointed by the 38 provinces of the Communion. It first met in 1971).



The Prez Sez:

What in the world is Via Media and what is it for? Via Media is a group of Episcopalians who are remaining part of the Episcopal Church. It came into being after people in some dioceses became alarmed at the schismatic actions of their diocesan leadership following the National Convention of 2003. Ten dioceses, out of 100, have formally associated into a group called the Anglican Communion Network through ratification by their respective governing bodies. The ACN is the shorthand name for The Network of Anglican Communion Dioceses and Parishes. These include Albany, Central Florida, Fort Worth, Pittsburgh, Quincy, Rio Grande, San Joaquin, Springfield, South Carolina and Dallas. The actions of the ACN have been very intent on fracturing and polarizing the Church. Via Media seeks to maintain the unity of the Episcopal Church in the USA and to preserve our communion with the world-wide Anglican Communion. It's as simple as that.

The underlying concept of Via Media is to continue our unity of worship in spite of our differences of opinions and to remain in communion and listening to each other out of respect for each other with the understanding that we are all following Christ. The Fort Worth Via Media group finds that there are like-minded people in other dioceses where the Anglican Communion Network has formed. Some of these other organizations are called other names, such as Remain Episcopal. We have become affiliated into an organization called Via Media USA. Our work is to promote truth and understanding to overcome the divisiveness that is being espoused by those who wish to break-up the Church.

Since the release of the Windsor Report last fall, several important actions have been taken within the Episcopal Church to demonstrate our desire to remain in the Anglican Communion. First, the House of Bishops has met and they have extended their regret to the other Anglican Provinces. They have also estab-

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lished a covenant which abides with other recommendations of the report. Furthermore, in keeping with the request by the Primates' Communique issued in February, the Executive Council of the national church has voted to not have official representation at the forthcoming meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC). [The representatives will be at the meeting in an unofficial capacity to be available for comment or consultation, if that is requested.] The Windsor Report does, however, provide a gesture toward reconciliation. The Episcopal Church and the Canadian Church have each been invited to make a presentation to the ACC to explain the basis for the actions that the churches have taken. This may truly be the first attempt to have a genuine listening process. Each of the Lambeth Conferences of 1978, 1988 and 1998 recommended that provinces, dioceses and parishes hold discussions and respectful listening on the issue of homosexuality, but nothing of consequence in this regard has really taken place. Hopefully, there will be an open, honest discussion of this issue. Pray for the ACC meeting that all will be guided by the Holy Spirit. Our hope is that the Anglican Communion as a whole will embrace the concept of Via Media and that we will all walk together even though there are matters that we don't agree upon. This is already the case in the instance of the ordination of women.

Finally, I should mention that the Anglican Communion Network has recently issued loyalty documents called "Windsor Action Covenants" and they are seeking clergy and laity to sign these. Please think first before signing this document. Wrapped up amongst statements for increased spiritual commitment, which are admirable, are statements that are very divisive and polarizing. These are intended to lead to separation of individuals and parishes. These documents also give the connotation that the Anglican Communion Network is solidly behind all aspects of the Win-

dsor Report, whereas it is known that even the Primates are dubious about parts of the report. And finally, the Network itself is not adhering to certain recommendations of the report.

The Fort Worth Via Media organization is committed to educating the laity of the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth about what is really happening in the Church and asking them to discern the truth through intelligent discussion and thoughtful listening. If you are interested in learning more about our organization, please visit our website at <http://fwviamedia.org>. We have meetings on the third Monday of each month at Luby's Cafeteria on North University Drive. Dinner at 6:00 p.m. is optional and our meetings start at 6:45 p.m.

George Komechak, President



Windsor Report Seminar

Via Media Dallas generously mentioned Fort Worth Via Media as a co-sponsor of a seminar on the Windsor Report presented on April 30th at the Episcopal Church of the Ascension in Dallas. The Reverend Dr. Michael Battle, Vice President, Associate Dean of Academic Studies and Associate Professor of Theology at Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, Virginia conducted the seminar.

Dr. Battle presented the Windsor Report in four parts:

1. Purpose and Benefits of Communion
2. Fundamental Principles
3. Our Future Life Together
4. Maintenance of Communion

He advanced that Americans, particularly, are tempted to browse or skip through the early sections to get to the requests made by the report. He spent more than half of his presentation on the first section of the report, which he further divided as:

1. Theological Development
2. Ecclesiastical
3. Adiaphora (non-substantial procedural differences)
4. Subsidiary (decisions at local level)
5. Trust
6. Authority

Dr. Battle stated that both sides are very sure of their position on the issues, but are failing to listen to the other side. The report recommends that both sides stop and listen to what the other side is saying and try to understand from that perspective. Michael lived in residence in 1993-94 and was ordained a priest in 1994 by Archbishop Desmond Tutu in South Africa.

His ministry covers the globe and focuses on Christian non-violence, human spirituality, and African Church studies. He stated that homosexuality and even non-married adults were an aberration to African culture and, therefore, the African clergy really had no common point of reference with ECUSA or with the Anglican Church in Canada on this issue.

Dr. Battle described the recommendations in the third part of the report:

1. Enhance the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury
2. Form a Council of Advice
3. Devise an Anglican Covenant

The final part of the report is how we can "get along together for now" until the divisiveness is ironed out.

1. Moratorium on the election to the Episcopate of persons living in same sex relationships.
2. Moratorium on the blessing of same sex unions.
3. Establish alternative pastoral oversight for those parishes unable to remain under the authority of their diocesan bishop

Fort Worth Via Media appreciates the generosity of Via Media Dallas and the hospitality of the Episcopal Church of the Ascension in Dallas.



From the Website of the Diocese:

The Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth formed in 1983 after the decision was made to divide the existing Diocese of Dallas into two dioceses. The Diocese consists of 56 congregations serving 24 North Central Texas counties. Major cities in the diocese include Fort Worth, Arlington, Hurst-Euless-Bedford, Wichita Falls, Grand Prairie, Keller, Brownwood, and Stephenville. We have 128 ordained clergy with approximately 19,000 communicants. The Right Reverend Jack Leo Iker has served as the Diocesan Bishop of Fort Worth since 1995.



The Episcopal Church welcomes you.

VIA MEDIA - A METHODOLOGY

Excerpted from an article by John Sorenson, Rector, Trinity, Plattsburg, New York (Albany VM website)

The *Via Media*, "In historic terms was John Donne's phrase whose heritage dates back to Aristotle's "golden mean." The Anglican term *Via Media* is the

"label often adopted in characterizing Anglican approaches to matters of morality and ethics" To quote Henry McAdoo in McConnell's essay, *The Via Media as Theological Method*, "Perhaps the most important thing about Hooker is that he wrote no *Summa* and composed no *Institutes*, for what he did was to outline method. What is distinctly Anglican is then not a theology but a theological method."

The *Via Media* as theological method, therefore, incarnates a Godly way of treating those with whom each of us disagree. Faithful Christian people will come to differing conclusions when determining the right and the good in ethical discourse. Therefore, remaining in communion with those with whom we disagree is preferable to the stocks, or burnings at the stake, or imprisonment, or banishment, or torture, or threats, or violence or schism: all the uncharitable ways by which the church in past centuries has betrayed the savior and resolved disputes. A *Via Media* method recognizes that the truth of one generation might be understood differently in the next. In humility, Anglicans give their theological opponents the respect that comes from reading history, knowing that one ideology's devil is another movement's martyr. In so doing we create room for each other, learning from each other, in communion around God's table.

A *Via Media* approach to the interpretation of Holy Scripture will hold that faithful Christians everywhere will interpret identical passages differently, with respect to place, history, culture, experience, education and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The right to that sacred interchange was won with the blood of Anglican martyrs like Cranmer, Ridley and Lattimer in the early years of the English Reformation. They read Aristotle, applying the concept of the *Golden Mean* that, while certainty is attainable in mathematics, it is less likely in philosophy or theology. That is why Richard Hooker held that tradition, reason and experience were so critical in Biblical interpretation: the level of hermeneutical certainty is reduced by our humanity. Even enhanced by the *Imago Dei* in each of us, we still, when trying to discern the nature of God and his will for us, "See through a glass darkly" as our first theologian, St. Paul, reminded us.



Via Media USA

is an alliance of associations of laity and clergy. We are committed to promoting and protecting the faith, unity, and vitality of The Episcopal Church as the American expression of Anglican tradition. Fort Worth Via Media is a member of VIA Media USA. We are currently in the planning stages for an AN-

NUAL MEETING to be held during the latter part of September or early October. It is tentatively scheduled to be held in Dallas. We hope everyone will come together to share our knowledge and experiences with each other. Other exciting news includes a book. Yes, we are going to write a book to be published about the historical tradition of *Via Media* and our experiences in working to keep our church together in these trying times.

Our web site is www.viamediausa.org. The Press Relations Committee is looking for someone to replace Leslie Poole, who has done an exceptional job of keeping *Via Media USA* in the public's eye. Anyone with experience in this area who wants to contribute their time and energies to our cause, let it be known.

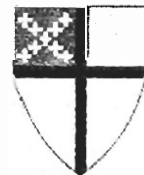
If you have any ideas or thoughts for *Via Media USA*, please contact me, elm3cats@yahoo.com. I will be happy to relay them.

Lynn Minor, Representative for FW *Via Media*.



Episcopal Habitat for Humanity House

Several Episcopal organizations along with a local insurance company are sponsoring and building a Habitat for Humanity House. Episcopal sponsoring organizations include All Saints (Church and School), Holy Apostles, St. Anne's, St. John's, Trinity, and FW *Via Media*. Volunteers are needed for up to four days in June and July for this very inspiring work. Please email Merritt Ferren at mertcf@earthlink.net or call (817) 569-9011.



Origin of Fort Worth *Via Media*

Fort Worth *Via Media*, is one of thirteen independent organizations which have come together in an alliance known as *Via Media USA*. Each of the *Via Media* organizations formed independently in areas of our country where Episcopalians perceived that the Episcopal Church's ethos and very existence had been threatened from within. I was one who assisted in the formation of Fort Worth *Via Media*.

In March of 2004, delegates from *Via Media* organizations, similar to ours, met in the city of Atlanta, where they inaugurated *Via Media USA*, an alliance of associations of laity and clergy, committed to promoting and protecting the faith, unity, and vitality of the Episcopal Church as the American expression of

Anglican tradition. Part of their concern and apprehension resulted from a secret strategy paper that was obtained and printed by the Washington Post. It was confirmed as authentic in January 2004 by its principal author, the Rev. Geoff Chapman, a high level strategist for the American Anglican Council, who spelled out in this memo that the ultimate goal is a realignment of Anglicanism on North American soil: "We believe in the end this should be a replacement jurisdiction with confessional standards."

Fort Worth Via Media is a diverse group of Episcopalians. More of our members than not, feel that it is appropriate for communicants in any Episcopal diocese of the church to elect as bishop, an individual whom *they* perceive to be of excellent character and who in *their* opinion would be a wholesome model of the Image of Christ.

Many feel that it is appropriate for the church to broaden the concept of marriage by removing the restrictions concerning gender. Not all members of Fort Worth Via Media would agree with either or both of these concepts, for, as a rector friend of mine once said: When ten Episcopalians read a passage in Scripture, there will be ten different interpretations.

The glue that holds Fort Worth Via Media together is simply that these Episcopalians want to remain in the Episcopal Church. This, simply put, is their agenda. It is an agenda shared by each and every organization in the alliance. These Episcopalians do not feel that everyone else must conform to their various interpretations of Scripture nor do they agree with every proposition passed by General Convention.

A computer link to Fort Worth Via Media, <http://fwviamedia.org> will allow you to pursue more information. Our site has links to Via Media USA as well as links to our allies and related Internet publications.

John S. Morgan
Webmaster, Fort Worth Via Media



Word Quiz: ANGLICAN

- A pelican, who died and went to heaven.
- One who determines the degrees represented in an angle.
- As a noun, it refers to members of churches descended from the Church of England, such as the Episcopal Church in the United States, the Anglican Church of Canada, and others. As an adjective, it describes traditions or teachings associated with those churches.



Growing In Truth

Source: ENS - The Episcopal News Service.

The following is excerpted from the Pentecost message from the Presiding Bishop. It is the perfect message that complements the concept of Via Media. "Via Media" and "Growing in Truth" are the two concepts that will keep the Anglican Church together. The Presiding Bishop has provided the key with his message of "Growing in Truth".

It is through the agency of the Holy Spirit that God's creative activity continues in the world and Christ continues to unfold his truth. Christ's truth is not simply about religious truth but all truth however mediated and in whatever way it is encountered. Wherever there is a taste for truth there is God, says St. Augustine of Hippo. And again "every truth by whomever uttered is by the Holy Spirit," observes St. Thomas Aquinas. The Holy Spirit whom Jesus in the Gospel of John calls the Spirit of Truth is always at work enlarging and deepening our vision and widening our embrace to encompass the many ways in which truth continues to unfold and at the same time challenge us. Each one of us structures our lives around what we perceive to be true for us. Such truth is severely limited by the various forces that have shaped us and the context in which we have found ourselves. One of the greatest gifts of being baptized into the risen body of Christ is that our several truths are brought together and reordered and refashioned under the aegis of the Holy Spirit who works within us over time the deep truth of Christ. That deep truth is entered into largely as my perceptions of truth are challenged and stretched by the truth embodied in the other limbs and members of Christ's body. Because the Holy Spirit is sovereign and free it transcends all the limitations and can

You are cordially invited to join Fort Worth Via Media by coming to our monthly meetings, participating in the Yahoo Discussion Group (email Barbi Click at goatsbeardherbfarm@cowtown.net) or just by praying with us for one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. Please email our President, George Komechak at skydancr@flash.net with questions, comments, or additions/deletions to our mailing list.

work in different ways within different cultures and different expressions of religion. Here I find it instructive that in the story of Pentecost in the Acts of the Apostles the Spirit enables those present to hear the good news each in their own language, each within the givenness of their own context and cultural reality. This ability of the Spirit to speak in different languages is a sign that difference and otherness are to be valued and affirmed. Such is God's sensitivity to different ways of perceiving and making meaning, all of which are caught up in the mystery of God's own life.

It is the function and ministry of the Holy Spirit to reconcile difference not primarily on the level of opinion but on the level of what scripture calls "the heart," namely the deep core and center of the human person which is the secret place where the love of God "poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit" most profoundly resides. Here I am struck by how much of the church's life is played out at a level of argumentation rather than seeking to discern the presence of the Spirit in one another at the level of the heart. There are those within the body of Christ with whom I may profoundly disagree, yet at the same time embrace them as brother or sister because we are able to meet the level of the heart. If this seems far fetched,

I think we can easily look at a number of families in which mutual affection overrides widely differing points of view.

The fact that truth is continuously unfolding is borne witness to by our increasing knowledge of the universe in which we live, and the mysteries of the human mind and body. Each year we learn new things, and unlearn some things that were once undisputed. Centuries pass and we learn that the earth is not flat, that our planet is not the center of the solar system and that matter can be converted into energy. And wouldn't the alchemists be amazed at our ability to do what they always wanted to do, namely turn one element into another. This learning, and unlearning I believe is all part of what Jesus meant when he said "I have many more things to say to you but you cannot bear them now. However, when the Spirit of truth comes he will guide you into all truth." Is it not possible that some of the disagreements within the life of the church are part of the Spirit's unrelenting activity in leading us to new and deeper understandings of things we have previously regarded as fully known.

And so, Fort Worth Via Media has chosen to call its newsletter "VERITAS" (Truth).

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