

[send this](#)[bookmark](#)[print](#)[close](#)

# The Parish Paper

OF  
ST. JOHN'S CHURCH  
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

Vol.34 No.42

The Exhaltation of the Holy Cross (Trinity XIII) 09/14/03

## A Look Ahead to Dallas

The American Anglican Council has called a meeting for October 7th—9th in Dallas, Texas, to discuss what orthodox Episcopalians will do in light of the actions of the recent General Convention. Fr. Dunbar, Mrs. Neil Victor, Leonard Trosten, Esq., Ty Butler, Esq., and I will represent St. John's.

Many of our old friends will be there: Fr. Bright, Fr. Buechner, and Fr. Jeffrey Steenson. Other parishes from the Diocese of Georgia that are sending representatives are: Christ Church, Savannah; All Saints, Thomasville; St. Thomas' Thomasville; St. Margaret's, Moultrie; Christ Church, St. Simon's Island, and Christ Church, St. Mary's.

What is the objective? The objective is to craft a petition asking the Primates of the Anglican Communion to establish another Province of the Anglican Communion in North America. Such a Province would mean that orthodox Dioceses and Parishes could continue within the Anglican Communion but apart from the church of the General Convention. I will not call the General Convention the Episcopal Church. Having officially voted to proceed with acts that are contrary to Holy Scripture and Moral Tradition, and that undermine our own Constitution, I am not sure what to call them. They are not the Episcopal Church in substance and intention.

One hopes that representatives will attend from the so-called "Continuum," those different Anglican bodies that exist in North America and are separate from the "institution" of the Anglican Communion, but are thoroughly Anglican in doctrine and discipline.

Important organizations will also be in attendance, principally, Forward in Faith, North America, and the Prayer Book Society. I am sure there will be others present as well. Many of us belong to more than one of these.

This is an important meeting, but not a decisive one. If we are to do something in the near future for orthodox Episcopalians, this may be our best shot; however, the realignment that is taking place will be a gradual one that will take years to complete.

By realignment, I mean a settling out of orthodox Anglicans into one church throughout the world. For an orthodox Anglicanism to settle may take years because the sickness that afflicts the Episcopal Church is also present in the churches of England, Scotland, Canada, New

Zealand, and other places.

But, in time, the realignment will happen. It has already begun. Who could have predicted, a decade ago, that the call to orthodoxy would come primarily from the Bishops of Africa, Southeast Asia and South America? And yet those are the churches experiencing tremendous growth, while the Episcopal Church has declined over the past few decades. Realignment is coming. How exactly it will form, only God knows.

Some have pointed out that if the Primates of the Anglican Communion move to establish another Province for the orthodox in North America, and do anything less than excommunicate the Episcopal Church USA, that both Provinces, the old and the new, while parallel, and having nothing to do with one another, would both be in communion with Canterbury. Which makes a mockery of Communion in any real sense of doctrine and discipline.

There is, however, already a significant degree of impaired communion in the Anglican Church. In actual effect, the ordination of women to the Priesthood and to the Episcopate has broken the communion both within churches such as the Episcopal Church and the Church of England as well as within the larger communion. Those who support the new apparatus of the General Convention may think that the issue of the ordination of women is over and done. But they are sadly mistaken.

While the initial action of the Primates might not be all that we should hope for, it could be a real beginning along the road toward realignment. But what is of the utmost importance is not so much what the Primates do, although they will make a huge impact, but what the orthodox of the Episcopal Church do.

The action of the General Convention has exposed not only the ecclesiastical sins of the present, but also of the past. The 1928 Prayer Book has come again into view as the definitive orthodox liturgy, most precise and comprehensive in doctrinal form, and most suitable for the worship of Almighty God. The faithful are beginning to talk again about the necessity for the Catholic Order of a male Priesthood and Episcopacy. Many have called for an honest confrontation with the "divorce culture" present in the Episcopal Church. Many desire to be reunited with our brethren who, because of our ecclesiastical sins, have left the Episcopal Church over the past several decades. With the recognition of the duplicity of the General Convention, we have begun to take a look at the many forms of duplicity with which we have lived over the years. This is all very good, and all necessary.

One hopes that the leaders of the American Anglican Council can have the courage, strength, and above all, the imagination to begin to look at all these matters. As they think of their petition to the Primates they should also begin to address the following:

1. The standardization of the Liturgy in the 1928 Book of Common Prayer, permitting the 1979 Book as Alternative Services, and reaffirming the clear authority of the classic formularies of the Thirty-nine Articles and the Ordinal.
2. A real analysis of the doctrine of reception proposed in the Anglican

Communion, which means that the experiment of the ordination of women be given a true theological evaluation. At the least, those who hold to the historic Catholic Order should be granted a synod in which such order could be maintained.

3. A return to a discipline of marriage and divorce that is truly biblical and pastoral.

4. The incorporation of the "Continuum" into the new Province, so that the faithful who left years ago could return, and as our Lord prayed, we all might be one. Those Bishops of the "Continuum" validly consecrated could be retained in a Council of Bishops, while the crafting of the canons for the consecration of new Bishops would return to the biblical mandate and definition.

These four points would provide a way forward for a truly new Province. If the leaders of the meeting at Dallas would begin to consider all of these, they would usher in a bright new day for Anglicans in North America. It would take courage and charity, but it can, by the grace of God, be done.

It will be wonderful to see our faithful friends in Dallas. But in some respects the conference will not be pleasant. No doubt egos will loom large to obstruct precious time and great need. Misunderstandings will have to be overcome. But truth must be spoken, and charity must reign. What I absolutely dread is the guitars and the praise music, which our Presbyterian friend down the street, Mr. Johnson, would call "strange fire on God's altar." But if I must endure it this time, I will, for the sake of God's Church.

**The Rev. Dr. Michael L. Carreker**



[Report Errors](#) | [Comments](#)

Copyright 2003 - 2004 St. John's Episcopal Church in Savannah, GA. All rights reserved.