

The Missionary Diocese of CANA East | Pastoral Address

Synod 2014 | Wayne, Pennsylvania
The Rt. Rev. Julian M. Dobbs L.Th, Th.M, D.D

In the name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, Amen.

I welcome you here to Wayne, Pennsylvania for the second Synod of the Missionary Diocese of CANA East. Thank you for responding to my invitation to gather together as a diocese to strengthen our fellowship in Christ and his mission. This Synod gathers as part of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. Quoting from the Jerusalem Declaration, ‘We express our loyalty as disciples to the King of kings, the Lord Jesus.’¹ Loyalty which was modeled for us by Athanasius of Alexandria upon whose feast we gather today. We give thanks to Almighty God for this five time exile bishop, who faithfully fought for Christian orthodoxy against the stubborn and popular heresies of his day, spending almost half of his 45 years as Bishop of Alexandria in exile. It is upon such orthodoxy which is found in the gospel once for all entrusted to the saints², that this missionary diocese was planted twelve months ago.

The Constitution of our Missionary Diocese which was unanimously passed at our inaugural Synod states, ‘The Missionary Diocese of the Convocation of Anglicans in North America (CANA) East is composed of Anglicans united by a common faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and a commitment to the trustworthiness of the Holy Scriptures. As Anglicans, we believe and confess Jesus Christ to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and that no one comes to the Father but by Him.’³

To assist us in understanding this important mandate which underpins our Anglican identity I have invited The Rt. Rev. Michael Nazir-Ali to be our guest speaker at this Synod. Bishop Nazir-Ali is originally from Asia and served as a Bishop in the Anglican Church of Pakistan before becoming the first non-white Diocesan Bishop in the Church of England. From 1999 was a member of the House of Lords in Great Britain where he was active in a number of areas of national and international concern. Bishop Nazir-Ali has both a Christian and a Muslim family background and is now President of the Oxford Centre for Training, Research, Advocacy and Dialogue and is the author of eleven books and numerous additional articles. Bishop Michael will address us twice today and will be the preacher at our ordination service tomorrow. We are honored to have you with us for this Synod to assist us in understanding our Anglican identity and how as Christians in the Anglican tradition, we can effectively engage in gospel mission.

I am very pleased to acknowledge The Rt. Rev’d David and Mrs. Mary Ellen Bena. I thank the Living God for the ministry and leadership of Bishop Bena who is a source of immense personal encouragement to me and to our diocese. It is a great privilege for me to officially welcome Bishop Bena as the assisting bishop of the Missionary Diocese of CANA East. Bishop Dave and Mary Ellen make their home in Woodbridge, Virginia and are available to make parish visitations across the diocese, to assist you develop prayer and healing ministries and to offer leadership among us.

¹ The Jerusalem Declaration

² Jude verse 3

³ Jude verse 3

³ The Constitution of the Missionary Diocese of CANA East – The Preamble

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I wish to acknowledge the presence of our invited guests and the leaders of sister denominations in this region. Your presence among us reminds us that we are part of one Church in heaven and on earth. Together we serve Christ crucified, risen and coming again. Thank you for being with us at this Synod.

I am very grateful to Almighty God for The Rev'd Adam Rick and our host team from Christ Church Anglican on the Main Line. Adam and his wife Katherine have joined us since our inaugural Synod and have been instrumental, with their team, in the preparation for this gathering.

I am sincerely thankful for the warm welcome, hospitality, and support from Wayne United Methodist Church. Pastor Joe DiPaolo and his team have been very generous hosts. Thank you for your ministry of Christian service as we gather here in this building.

I acknowledge and honor our small but very dedicated team from the CANA East office, together with our Chancellor Mr. Raymond Dague and the CANA East Standing Committee, who have labored 'above and beyond' in preparation for Synod and throughout the year.

On September 22, 1991, I was ordained as a deacon in God's Church. I was young, enthusiastic and single. At the conclusion of the ordination service, with the bishop's blessing and permission, I announced my engagement to be married to a beautiful, humble kiwi girl with whom I had fallen madly in love. From that moment to this, Brenda my bride has faithfully stood alongside me, supporting me in the ministry to which God has called us both, praying with me, encouraging me, believing in me and loving me. She often reminds me that even though the glass is half empty it is also half full. Thank you my dear Brenda, MAMA Cana, for your love for me and for your belief that the best days are yet to come for CANA East.

In the Gospel of Matthew, our Lord Jesus Christ said, 'I will build my Church'⁴ and faithful to his word, the Lord is building his Church in The Missionary Diocese of CANA East.

At our inaugural Synod twelve months ago, we began our common life together with 23 congregations. During the past twelve months we received four existing congregations, planted two new congregations, installed three new rectors and ordained eight candidates into holy orders.⁵ Since our last Synod, Bishop Seabury Anglican Church in Gales Ferry, Connecticut and Holy Trinity Anglican Church in Plainville, Connecticut have both moved from temporary worship locations to wonderful new locations. These are important milestones in these congregations and in the life of this diocese. Since last Synod, we have sent representatives to meetings in the Church of Nigeria [Anglican Communion], Archdeacon-elect Buchanan and I were welcomed by the Patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church in Lebanon, we hosted a nation-wide visit of the Primate of all Nigeria and his entourage, we took our place at the Provincial Council of The Anglican Church in North America, 55 clergy and spouses gathered in Maryland for our initial clergy and spouse retreat,

⁴ Matthew 16:13

⁵ Two of that number will be ordained tomorrow morning

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a delegation of six from this diocese attended the second Global Anglican Future Conference in Nairobi, Kenya and thirty-three people from across the diocese participated in the Bishops' Bible Study Tour to the Holy Land.

It has been quite a year for the Missionary Diocese of CANA East [in which my wife Brenda and I were honored to become citizens of these United States of America!]

Over and above all the travel and visits, and headlines and highlights, our clergy, lay leaders and congregations have faithfully ministered the good news of Jesus Christ in word and action in their communities and through their ministries. You, the faithful people of CANA East can be very encouraged by the health of our Missionary Diocese.

The Convocation of Anglicans in North America

The Missionary Diocese of CANA East is a diocese of the Convocation of Anglicans in North America. CANA is now in the 9th year of its mission. From very humble beginnings CANA has grown to over 100 churches across 30 States and in Canada, over 435 chaplains and clergy and four missionary dioceses. In January, The Most Rev. Nicholas Okoh, Primate of all Nigeria [Anglican Communion] in consultation with the Most Rev. Robert Duncan, Primate of the Anglican Church in North America, appointed me as Missionary Bishop of CANA. In this new role I will provide leadership to our Convocation and bishops while continuing to serve as your bishop in CANA East.

Following the bishops' retreat at last month's CANA Council in Maryland, the CANA bishops agreed to request that each CANA congregation tithe a minimum of 4% of their income to their respective diocese. This will enable each diocese to make their own required contribution to the CANA Headquarters and to The Anglican Church in North America. Jesus said, "... give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you."⁶

You will see this decision, which was unanimously supported by the CANA East Standing Committee, reflected in our budget which will be presented this afternoon.

The Church of Nigeria [Anglican Communion]

The Church of Nigeria [Anglican Communion] continues to provide us with an unimpeachable connection to the global Anglican family. Towards the close of 2013, a new protocol was written, which now governs the relationship between CANA, the Church of Nigeria [Anglican Communion] and the Anglican Church in North America. Our Constitution will require an amendment as a result of this new Protocol and the Chancellor will lead us through this process in our business session this afternoon.

Across Nigeria's middle belt and northern states, intensified attacks against Christians by the Al Qaeda affiliated terrorist group, Boko Haram, have plunged the region into serious crisis.

⁶ Luke 6:36 ESV

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Scores of Christians have been slaughtered, many churches have been burned and destroyed and Christian homes and businesses have been attacked. The situation is of serious concern.

It is my intention to introduce a motion during our business session calling upon this Synod to express its support for Christians in Nigeria whose life and livelihood have been or are being devastated by the attacks of Boko Haram.

The Anglican Church in North America

CANA East was recognized as a diocese of the Anglican Church in North America at the Provincial Council meeting held at Nashotah House in June 2013. Under the very godly and capable leadership of The Most Rev. Robert Duncan, the Anglican Church in North America has joyfully and very deliberately embraced the vision to replant biblical, missionary Anglican Christianity across the United States and Canada.

In a little over one month from now, the College of Bishops of the Anglican Church in North America will meet together here in Pennsylvania to elect a new archbishop. The new archbishop will serve for an initial period of five years and will provide leadership across the Province, representing the church in the international arena. I urge you and your congregation to pray regularly that the ACNA bishops will know the mind of Christ as they prepare to elect one of their own as archbishop.

The Mission Of the Diocese

When I presented my vision for this new missionary diocese at the 2012 Catalyst meeting held at Bishop Seabury Anglican Church in Groton Connecticut, I announced eight focus areas that I believed the Lord laid upon my heart after prayer, consultation and planning. These eight areas of mission can be found in the pamphlet entitled – “Come Let Us Arise and Build - a bishop’s vision for a missionary diocese.” I have chosen to highlight two in this pastoral address.

Church Planting

As I prayerfully contemplate the mission of CANA East as your bishop, I continue resolutely to believe that we are called to be a diocese that is radically committed to the planting of new churches.

As North American Anglicans we have made a ‘quantum leap’ into planting innovative and extraordinary new congregations in widely diverse circumstances. I continue firmly to believe in light of the spiritual gifts, dynamic energy, commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ, and immense creativity and flexibility I see amongst our clergy and laity, the Missionary Diocese of CANA East can plant healthy, growing and faithful Anglican congregations committed to biblical faith, apostolic order and global mission.

Earlier this year I asked each of our congregations to prayerfully and very seriously consider planting one new congregation within the next three years. Our Canons Missioner surveyed each congregation in CANA East and solicited responses about their intentions for church planting. The results are realistic and very encouraging. Listen to these comments about church planting from three of our clergy:

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I think church planting may be the most effective way to help my congregation think more about God and His outward mission than themselves.

I think it is a grand idea that each existing congregation, regardless of size, should be aware of opportunities to further the Gospel to the community.

Church planting is evangelism. It should be taken by Christians as God's commandment to win souls for Christ.

Brothers and sisters, we have a gospel to proclaim and the planting of new churches is an incredible opportunity that if blessed by God, will result in many redeemed lives for the Kingdom of God.

I recognize that when your average Sunday attendance is less than fifty, planting a new church may be a daunting prospect. I am aware of all the objections, I've made them myself on many occasions.

Twenty years ago this past February, six people who were members of a new church planting team, held an inaugural service of what is now known as Victory Community Anglican Church in Nelson, New Zealand. Brenda and I were two of those six people. By the grace of Almighty God the congregation was reported, at that time, to be the fastest growing Anglican Church in New Zealand, it moved to a school hall, a local pub and then to what is now a wonderful worship facility. The current priests-in-charge wrote to me earlier this year to mark the 20th anniversary of this church plant and said the following:⁷

God has promised great things and it seems He is preparing the people by challenging all of us to stretch the boundaries, move out of our comfort zones and take on new challenges. The result is that many have raised their faith levels. We're looking forward with expectation.

Dream with me about church planting for a moment. A number of our CANA East congregations are near college campuses. The Coast Guard Academy and Connecticut College are very close to Bishop Seabury. Yale and the University of New Haven are five miles from Christ Church Anglican in Branford, Connecticut. Wisconsin Lutheran College is five blocks from where Holy Cross Anglican meets each Sunday. Florida International University and Miami-Dade College are within 15 minutes drive from Christ the King, Olympia Heights, Miami. There are 92 Colleges within an eleven county radius of Philadelphia.

The Lord of the Harvest has given us an incredible opportunity right in our own backyard. You plant a new congregation near a college campus and I truly believe you will see a vibrant Anglican Church arise. Every spring, invite fifty graduating seniors from that college to come and have dinner with you.

⁷ Email from C and M Worsley, February 03, 2014

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Ask those that don't have jobs (which, according to recent figures, will be over 70% of graduating seniors⁸) to consider getting a entry level job and moving into your community to help you and a young church planter establish a new congregation. Just imagine if we had three or four congregations doing this across CANA East. The Rev. Mike Neal, the pastor of Christ the King, Pine Knot, wrote to me this week outlining his plans to plant near Cumberland College in Kentucky.

Brothers and sisters, let us in our generation consider church planting as an evangelistic gift from God. The planting of new congregations almost always results not only in growth for the new church plant, but also for the 'existing' or 'sending' congregation. This has been my personal experience. It is the experience of CANA - - we have grown since we planted new dioceses and I believe it will also be your experience when you take this faith step to plant new congregations. Please seriously pray and discuss this initiative in your congregations.

I see a diocese that is a **Conduit for New Leaders...**

To grow our newly planted missions into viable Anglican congregations and then become 'planting churches' themselves, the congregations of CANA East must recruit, train and develop new clergy. As your Bishop I firmly believe that each congregation in our Missionary Diocese must make directing, educating and 'unleashing' the spiritual power, enthusiasm and entrepreneurial creativity of newly recruited and younger clergy one of our highest priorities.

The local congregation [your congregation] is the MOST effective place to train and equip new leaders. It is also the most effective place to recruit new leaders. Some of our more established congregations could become 'mission centers' which equip new church planters for ministry across CANA East and beyond. I am working with your Archdeacons on a strategy to assist our new clergy and church planters in their Anglican formation to build a culture of theology and worship in leadership.

Join me in praying for young clergy called by Almighty God to ministry and gifted by the Holy Spirit with the sacrificial willingness to live bi-vocationally as church planters or new mission nurturers; to establish missions or grow existing, young congregations while financially supporting themselves and their families.

Why bi-vocational? Because it will become increasingly difficult for existing congregations to financially support full time clergy church planters. Only nine of our CANA East rectors are currently paid a full time salary. Most of our clergy and your bishop are bi-vocational.

Writing to his father on August 22, 1835, Richard Hurrell Froude, Anglican priest and an early leader of the nineteenth century Oxford Movement in England wrote, 'If I was Bishop,... I will not insist on [clergy] giving up their trades; for if a priest can keep a school, I

⁸ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2013/05/20/only-27-percent-of-college-grads-have-a-job-related-to-their-major/>

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am sure he may make shoes without giving up more of his time; and if St. Paul could maintain himself by tent-making, while he discharged the duties of an Apostle, I don't see why other people should not be able to maintain themselves as well...."⁹

Full time salaries and paid clerical positions may be desirable and even helpful, but they were not then and should not today be considered the norm of a missionary church.

I commend both the planting of new churches and the formation of new leadership to your prayers, and to the decision making processes of you vestry and congregation.

Second Corinthians chapter four, verses 1-6

Before I conclude this pastoral address, please open your Bibles to our Synod Scripture, from the 2 Corinthians 4:1-6.

Second Corinthians is a manifesto about the realities of Christian ministry. If the letter has one purpose, it is to seek to provide a balanced and biblical perspective on what it means to be a Christian disciple in the real world, and in particular, to be a Christian minister or worker. It's times, I suspect were not that different to our own. Paganism, relativism, unbelief, immorality, cruelty, social disintegration. In the church, there were problems; there were divisions around sexual immorality - a diluting of the faith to suit current intellectual trends.

Paul himself faced a personal challenge to his credentials, his integrity, and yet he continued to proclaim his simple and direct message of Jesus Christ and him crucified. His ministry was under attack. The results of his ministry were criticized. People asked, was he really an authentic gospel minister or was something wrong with his message or his methods?

2nd Corinthians is Paul's answer, his defense. In chapter three he highlights the glories of the new covenant, the gospel as we call it. The gospel alone is the good news that brings human beings salvation and life transformation. Results are ultimately, argues the Apostle Paul, the work of God the Holy Spirit [remember that brothers and sisters in CANA East]. As we share the gospel, we take the gospel as far as we can, but it is God the Holy Spirit who writes the message in people's hearts.

There are a lot of closed doors and shut minds. Gospel work is never plain sailing. It wasn't then. It isn't now!

Here in chapter 4:1-6, in this manifesto of gospel realism, Paul spells out some answers to problems which have decidedly not gone away in the work of evangelism. He provides insights which we need as we struggle to be effective in a cynical environment which is increasingly hostile to the gospel. [I encourage you to read this chapter together in your vestries as you grapple with ministry in your community].

⁹ Hurrell Froude, in a letter to his father dated August 22, 1834

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Look with me, verse one, even though the results of our ministry may discourage us, even though the church budget may not look as healthy as planned, even though the average Sunday attendance may be somewhat plateaued, ‘we do not lose heart.’¹⁰

This is a chapter in which that theme of losing heart is there at the beginning in verse one, and it comes again in verse 16 at the end, discouragement, possibly, our biggest problem if we’re honest in evangelism, questioning whether it’s really worthwhile to keep going. It’s a challenge, isn’t it? A challenge, which never goes away.

On October 29, 1941, Winston Churchill delivered the commencement speech to the boys at Harrow School. Churchill said, “Never give in. Never give in. Never, never, never, –in nothing, great or small, large or petty–never give in.”¹¹

Perhaps Churchill knew the temptation to give in. I suspect Paul knew the temptation of giving up on Christian work, no longer telling people about the Lord. I suspect in a gathering this size some of you will also know something of this discouragement.

We begin to wonder if we will ever see positive results. And yet, Paul says, Yes we will because, verse one, this work to which we are called is God’s work. Almighty God has established this new covenant ministry in Christ. It is a glorious ministry because it transforms lives. It is transforming mine.

And yet, there will be knocks and setbacks and discouragements. A discouraged minister once wrote to the great 19th century Presbyterian preacher, Alexander White for advice about his future, ‘never think of giving up preaching, the angels around the throne envy your great work.’ And yet, there is a time to plant and a time to luck up what is planted - we all know this¹². Earlier this year, I supported the closure of St. Paul’s Elmira, New York. The Rev. Jeff Hoffman and his team had faithfully labored in this new church plant, but the time had come to discontinue the effort [Jeff, may God bless you and your wife Margi for your faithful ministry at St. Paul’s].

Brothers and sisters in CANA East, communication is our part, getting the gospel to ears or eyes or minds. But change is God’s part. Yes, we have this gospel ministry, but God works through our work. Paul refuses to be discouraged, because he is utterly convinced theologically and experientially that the gospel message about Jesus Christ is true.

Is this same gospel our confidence in the face of discouragement?

We have a gospel to proclaim! We believe that the canon of Scripture closed with the final stroke of St. John’s pen on the island of Patmos and from then down to the present day, every claim to truth is measured by the standard of that faith contained therein, once and for

¹⁰ 2 Corinthians 4 verse 1

¹¹ Winston Churchill, address to Harrow School, October 29, 1941

¹² Ecclesiastes chapter 3

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all entrusted to the Saints. It has fallen to us--to you and to me--in our time to preserve and to proclaim this historic gospel, which is the word of God.

The gospel is God's word to the world. We didn't make it up and we have no liberty to change it. Theological liberals, in an attempt they believe to give the gospel intellectual respectability, question the very fact of revelation. They sanitize atonement. They debunk the miraculous. They subject the resurrection to erroneous speculation and we end up in Richard Niebuhr's phrase, 'With a gospel of a God without wrath, who brings men without sin into a kingdom without judgment, through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross.'¹³ And even we evangelicals are not exempt from watering down the gospel either. We sometimes ignore repentance. We play down suffering. We skate over the raw challenges of Jesus to the wealthy and His warnings about the eternal peril of letting possessions take control of our lives.

Delegates of the Missionary Diocese of CANA East, if God has given us a gospel-- then this gospel is something which is extraordinarily precious, isn't it? Therefore we have no liberty to go behind the gospel or to try to get beyond it; to add to it, or to take from it; to think we have the right to 'correct it' instead of 'submitting' to it.

Our Diocesan Constitution unreservedly endorses the Jerusalem Declaration that includes the affirmation: 'We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God written and to contain all things necessary for salvation.'¹⁴

Brothers and sisters, never replace faithful preaching with the power of personality and presentation skills to win people for Christ. Never give the impression that to be effective in Christian service, it helps to be smooth.

Never says Paul. Look with me, verse 5, 'For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus 'sake.'¹⁵ This is a warning very especially for the clergy. In the pulpit, we're not performing. We're not entertaining. We are not, heaven forbid, trying to proclaim our own ideas. We're not trying to start some sort of personality cult. No. We are here unobtrusively to let people see Jesus.

Delegates of the 2014 Synod of The Missionary Diocese of CANA East, be passionate promoters of Jesus Christ. Proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord. And believe that what God has begun, He is faithful to complete.

On Friday, Sept. 25, 1835 the first Missionary Bishop of The Episcopal was consecrated at St. Peter's Church, here in Philadelphia. In the sermon, The Rt. Rev. George Washington Doane said this, "... Go out, in the Saviour's name, go in the spirit, preach the gospel of salvation to a ruined world, bear "the ministry of reconciliation", preach to them "Christ crucified, beseech them in Christ's stead, "be ye reconciled to God." ...Welcome, in Jesus'

¹³ The Kingdom of God in America (1937)

¹⁴ The Constitution of The Missionary Diocese of CANA East

¹⁵ 2 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 5

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name, the tears, the toil, the blood! Welcome, for Jesus' sake, the shame, the agony, the death! If we suffer, we shall also reign—if we die, it is to live with him!—Go, bear, before a ruined world, the Saviour's bleeding Cross. Go, feed, with bread from heaven, the Saviour's hungry Church. Go, thrice beloved, go, and God the Lord go with you!"

In the Name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Delivered Friday May 2, 2014

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