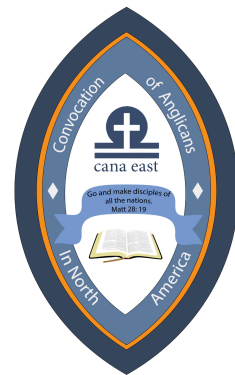


# The Bishop's Pastoral Address | Synod 2018



The Rt. Rev. Julian M. Dobbs L.Th, Th.M, D.D  
The Missionary Bishop of the Missionary Diocese of CANA East

*Presented May 4, 2018 at Synod 20184  
held in Binghamton, New York.*

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

Thank you for responding to my invitation and request to gather as a synod of this Missionary Diocese of CANA East. This is our sixth synod together. I am grateful to God that you are here and I am looking forward to all the Christ centered interaction that the next two days will provide for us.

Why is it that we gather as a synod? Is it for reasons of fellowship, strengthening and renewing relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ across the diocese? Is that why we gather? The synod planning team recognizes that fellowship and strengthening our relationships with each other is a very important part of our annual missions conference and synod. That is why last night we ate together and shared in a wonderful banquet. On two occasions today, we will eat together again and then on Saturday we will share a meal not only with each other but also with the Lord, as we break bread and share the cup of the Lord's Supper. Our fellowship and relationships are important. That is one of the reasons why I urge the clergy to use the diocesan prayer schedule each week during the Prayers of the People to pray and intercede for those who are gathered here at this Synod.

The CANA East family of 39 congregations and four additional church plants remind us that we are not alone! This is one of the great gifts of an Anglican diocese. We are in Christian relationship with each other, that is, we are brothers and sisters in Christ, and we are in canonical relationship with each other, that is, we voluntarily and willingly agree to uphold the beliefs of our constitution and the canons which govern our shared life together.

The very letters of greetings read earlier remind us that we belong to Christ and His Church. We are part of something much larger than our own patch!

We are in relationship with 10 regular worshipers at Christ the King, Pine Knot, Kentucky and 97 regular worshipers at Church of the Holy Spirit, Tulsa, Oklahoma and 47 regular worshipers with whom I gathered on Resurrection Sunday at St. George's Anglican Church Helmetta, New Jersey. We are in relationship with the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) over 22 million Anglican worshipping members. We are in relationship with the Anglican Church in North America over 110,000 worshipping members. We are a member diocese of GAFCON – the Global Anglican Future Conference, at whose most recent meeting gathered delegates from 38 nations and 27 Provinces of the Anglican Communion. We are not alone! I serve as a bishop of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) 168 bishops and I also serve as a bishop of the Anglican Church in North America – 58 bishops, Bishop Bena and I are not alone!

The presence of our ecumenical guests here today indicate that it is not just Anglicans with whom we are in relationship. The Christian community here on earth connects us with brothers and sisters of other faithful denominations who name of name of Jesus Christ.

Gathering for synod together underscores the mutual interdependence that we have as Christians within the Body of Christ! The apostle Paul wrote to the Christians in Ephesus, ***“There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that***

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***belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.***<sup>1</sup>

So, as you can see... our fellowship and relationships both in Christ and canonically are hugely important and I am very grateful that you have gathered here as your presence underscores this holy and beautiful relationship we have with one another. And yet, these relationships are not the primary reason we gather here for our 6<sup>th</sup> Synod in this Missionary Diocese.

Later this afternoon, Synod will discuss, deliberate and determine whether we should amend four canons that assist to shape our life together as an Anglican diocese. We will elect delegates to the Standing Committee and Ecclesiastical Court of the diocese, we will discuss the business and budget that impacts our shared life together and we will listen to reports of mission and ministry from around CANA East. And even these important functions of this Synod, this Council of the Church, are not the primary reason we gather here for our 6<sup>th</sup> Synod in this Missionary Diocese.

Over the past year, a number of congregations of this diocese have used the very significant 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Reformation to rediscover and recommit to that important reminder and truth that *reformed churches are always in need of continuing reformation by the word of God.*

The truth that the Reformers were most concerned to promote and what can be seen as the central theme of Scripture is the very reason why you got out of bed this morning... it is the reason why we gather Sunday by Sunday in the 39 congregations of this diocese to worship the risen Christ and learn from His Word and this very same truth is the reason why we gather here in Binghamton over these three days for this Synod of the Missionary Diocese of CANA East. What is it? *solī Deo gloria* — to God alone be the glory.

As Fanny Crosby penned in 1872

*Great things He hath done,  
And great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;  
But purer, and higher, and greater will be  
Our wonder, our rapture, when Jesus we see.*

*Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,  
Let the earth hear His voice!  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,  
Let the people rejoice!  
O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,  
And give Him the glory, great things He hath done.*<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ephesians 4:4

<sup>2</sup> Fanny Crosby, 1872

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The first question and answer of the Westminster Shorter Catechism tells us that “man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.”<sup>3</sup> God created us to glorify himself, to reflect His glory and proclaim it to all creation. To God alone be the glory is why we gather here at this Synod.

We often think of the Reformation as involving only a doctrinal dispute, but John Calvin and other reformers took seriously the teaching of Romans chapter 1 that the basic sin of humanity is its refusal to honor God as God and thank Him for all that He has given us. If God and God alone *is not* the one who saves, then He shares His glory with others. But the prophet Isaiah tells us, God will share His glory with no one.<sup>4</sup>

This is why we need the gospel! Any time we substitute something else for the God of the Bible, we attempt to have Him share His glory with others. Any time we deny any one of God’s qualities and attributes we conceive of Him as less than the sovereign Lord of all.

So, let us turn our eyes towards God and look at this gospel alone which He has given to us. [Open Bibles at Romans chapter 1:14-17]

***I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”<sup>5</sup>***

The whole concept of preaching the gospel, of personally sharing the gospel can be distressing to so many Christians. Sometimes, the attempt to win other people for Jesus Christ is regarded by many Christians today as an unwarrantable intrusion into someone’s privacy, it is considered a regrettable breach of social decorum and totally incompatible with the spirit of tolerance in 21<sup>st</sup> century America.

There are some churches and Christians today, who make no attempt to evangelize in any way. There are some church synods and church councils which never include evangelism on their agenda, and there are some of us, when the opportunity comes to witness, who are silent and tongue-tied because we do not know what to say.

Dr. Frank Gaebelien, the American evangelical educator and author who was the founding headmaster of The Stony Brook School in Long Island, New York. Author of more than twenty books, and general editor for the 12-volume *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, wrote in one of his books, "It is easy to sing in a meeting, 'O! For a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise.'" He continues, "We shall never have a thousand tongues and if we had

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.reformed.org/documents/wcf\\_with\\_proofs/](http://www.reformed.org/documents/wcf_with_proofs/)

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah 42:8

<sup>5</sup> Romans 1:14-17

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them, we wouldn't know what to do with them, not when the one tongue we have is so strangely silent respecting the Lord who loves us and gave Himself for us."

Over my 27 years of ordained ministry in the Anglican Church, it is my observation there is among many Christians a 'general mood' of reluctance to commit time, resources and energy into evangelism and intentionally and personally share the good news about Christ. The contrast between this 'mood of reluctance' and the 'evangelistic vigor' of the Apostle Paul in Romans chapter one, is startling!

I want to ask you again to look at our text and the three successive statements made by Paul. Many of us are familiar with the great "I am" statements of Jesus, ***I am the bread of life, I am the Good Shepherd, I am the light of the world.*** Here in Romans chapter 1, we have what some theologians call three ***I am*** statements of the Apostle Paul.

1. Verse 14, ***I am under obligation*** to preach the Gospel. Ah, but many of us consider that we are under no such obligation. On the contrary, if we engage in evangelism at all, we are very pleased with ourselves and consider we have conferred a favor upon God and upon His Church. To the Apostle Paul, evangelism is a debt. He says, ***I am under obligation.***

2. Verse 15, ***I am eager to preach the Gospel.*** Ah, but with much respect, the contemporary attitude to evangelism in the Church is characterized more by reluctance than by eagerness and enthusiasm. Paul, on the other hand, writes in this passage how he prayed that he might get to Rome, verse 10; how he longed to get to Rome, verse 11; how he made his plans to get to Rome, verse 13. Little did he suspect that his prayers and his longings and his plans to get to Rome would be fulfilled three years after he was writing this letter and that he would get there in chains, as a prisoner. He was eager to get there, why? To preach... to preach the Gospel!

**I am under obligation. I am eager.**

3. Verse 16, ***I am not ashamed of the Gospel.*** Ah, once again I say with much respect, there are some of us who are ashamed of the Gospel and of Christ, and that is why we are silent, sometimes tongue-tied and less than enthusiastic about sharing the gospel of Christ, but Paul said, ***I am not ashamed.***

Who was this Paul, who wanted to visit Rome, not as a tourist, but as an evangelist who believed that he had a message that 1<sup>st</sup> century Rome needed to hear and receive? What folly and presumption he had! From one account, Paul was a person with no special or interesting qualities, small of stature, ugly of countenance; weakened and disfigured by illness; unprepossessing in appearance; awkward in manner; shy in temperament; and contemptible in speech. He belonged to a despised minority of a despised people. His message was foolish to intellectuals and it was a stumbling block to the self-satisfied. What could he hope to accomplish against the proud might of imperial Rome? Would not he be wiser to have second thoughts and stay well away in a little Messianic ecclesiastical enclave? If he must visit Rome, would not it be more prudent to keep his mouth shut, lest he be laughed out of court or hustled out of town or, worse, arrested and jailed and executed?

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Paul's conviction was resolute and it was confessional. ***I am under obligation. I am eager. I am not ashamed of the Gospel.***

Imagine for a moment. Imagine, if every delegate at this 2018 Synod of the Missionary Diocese of CANA East returned to their homes, congregations and places of work with a renewed vigor, empowered by God the Holy Spirit to be *under obligation, eager to share the good news* and *unashamed* of the gospel.

Imagine being like Paul, so eager to share the good news about Christ. Would not that be so truly liberating and would not such eagerness direct your vision towards God *solī Deo gloria* — to God alone be the glory.

What was the origin of Paul's apostolic eagerness?

Look once again with me in our passage in Romans chapter 1. Paul says, (vs. 14) I am under obligation, and so (vs. 15) I am eager to preach the Gospel (vs. 16) because the Gospel is the power of God for salvation.

Under Obligation: the Gospel is a debt to man. Because of the gospel I am indebted. The Greek word<sup>6</sup> is used for financial debtors. The same Greek word is used in our Lord's parable of the Unforgiving Servant<sup>7</sup>, a debtor who owed 10,000 talents. He was a debtor. Contemplating his response to the good news of Christ, Paul says, *I am in debt*. Here in this insight that is as true for you and me in this diocesan synod as it was when Paul wrote this letter to the Christians in Rome; Jesus Christ has given us something unique and unchanging and apostolic to pass onto the world and it is a beautiful thing! Jesus entrusted this gospel to Paul in A.D. 56 and he has entrusted the same gospel us today, in order that we might pass it on to those who do not know Christ.

Delegates of the 2018 Synod of the Missionary Diocese of CANA East, the Gospel is a treasure that has been committed to us and we hold it in trust, in stewardship, for the world, so like Paul, we too are in debt. We are in debt to the world. The Gospel comes to us in order to share it.

And our nation desperately needs this gospel. Every community and neighborhood represented by the delegates of this Synod needs the gospel today. Your neighborhood needs the gospel! My neighborhood needs the gospel. The Christian Church has been the cornerstone of American life for centuries, but much has changed in the past 30 years. Americans are attending church less and more people are experiencing and practicing their faith outside of its four walls. Millennials in particular are coming of age at a time of great skepticism and cynicism toward institutions—particularly the church. Add to this the broader secularizing trend in American culture and a growing antagonism toward faith claims.

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<sup>6</sup> ὀφειλέτης *opheiletēs*

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 18

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Even though a majority of Americans still identify as Christian and say religious faith is very important in their life, these huge proportions belie the much smaller number of Americans who regularly *practice* their faith. The Barna Group reports that only 1 in 3 American adults can be considered a practicing Christian.<sup>8</sup> Of those practicing Christians, only half had actually shared the Gospel at least once in the previous 12 months.

People of God, good news is always news to share! All of us at this Synod are in debt to the world if we know the Gospel. That was Paul's first incentive. He was eager, because he was in debt. If you know Christ, you are in debt and so too am I, and yet, how eager are we to discharge this debt and declare the gospel which has been entrusted to us?

One minister in our diocese who understands Paul's eagerness to share the gospel is The Rev. Dr. Jonathan Smith, Rector of the replanted Redeemer Anglican Church, Casselberry, Florida (just north of Orlando).

Jonathan shared with me the testimony of Matthew Barker, who converted to Christianity from Asutru, a heathen religion based on the Nordic pagan myths.

At the nudging of an Aunt, Matthew began to explore Christianity at Redeemer Anglican Church. At the end of December 2017, Matthew contacted The Rev. Jonathan Smith through Redeemer's Facebook page and expressed an interest in learning more about Christianity. Jonathan invited him to Sunday services at Redeemer and Matthew began attending the spoken 1662 service. Over the course of two months, Jonathan and Matthew met often for coffee and discussed the gospel, Christianity and other faiths. Convinced of the Good News, Matthew prayed to receive Christ in March. He regularly attends Redeemer and is now being discipled. He has also begun helping out in small ways. Thanks be to God, Matthew was baptized on Easter Sunday!

Brothers and sisters, the good news of the gospel is always news to share!

Interesting, isn't it, that newly baptized Matthew Barker began his conversion journey at Redeemer Anglican by attending the spoken 1662 prayer book service. During this Synod, we will focus our attention on the pastoral and missional principles of Archbishop Cranmer. Study the liturgies of Cranmer and you discover the elevated place of the Bible in his life. Why is this important? Because faith comes from hearing and what is heard comes through the word about Christ.<sup>9</sup>

Verses from the bible, shape the liturgies of Cranmer towards evangelism and Christian conversion. Anglican author and scholar Dr. J.I. Packer has written, "The Anglicanism of the 1662 Prayer Book, with its hundred-verses-a-day lectionary, its monthly passage through the Psalter, its Bible-crammed daily services, and its high valuation of expository preaching... is a Bible-reading, Bible-loving, Bible-believing faith."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.barna.com/research/state-church-2016/>

<sup>9</sup> Romans 10

<sup>10</sup> Packer, Has God spoken Up

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If one follows all the set readings laid down in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, one gets through the Bible at a fairly rapid pace. This exceeds the expectations of every other church, whether in Rome, Wittenberg, or Geneva. So, during the Reformation, the English church became the Bible-hearing church par excellence, because Cranmer wanted all people, not just the chosen few locked away in monasteries, to be able to ruminate and meditate on Scripture and for it to change their hearts and everyday lives.<sup>11</sup>

This is the faith we have received... this is true Anglicanism... this Bible focused, Bible reading heritage is the foundation of the Anglican Church. It is the foundation of our own diocese. We continue to believe as Archbishop Cranmer believed, that Holy Scripture contains all things necessary to salvation.<sup>12</sup> This is why our Canon Theologian, the Rev. Canon Dr. Henry Jansma is proposing an amendment to our own CANA East canons ensuring that all candidates for Holy Orders declare their belief that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments be the Word of God and contain all things necessary to salvation, and that they hold themselves bound to conform their life and ministry thereto, and that each candidate solemnly agrees to conform and subscribe to the Fundamental Declarations of the Diocese, and the Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship of Christ as this Church has received them.

This canonical amendment has my full support because not only must we cherish and uphold this faith which we have received, we must participate in it and with eagerness and determination share it and share it again and again!

The Bible, this Good News, is changing hearts right here in central New York through the ministry of The Rev. Caleb Evans, Rector of Holy Trinity, Syracuse, New York who is using Christianity Explored to introduce people to the word of God. Caleb writes, "Church of The Holy Trinity began running Christianity Explored in the fall of 2017. We felt that the course's biblical focus on who Jesus is, why He came, and what it means to follow Him would be beneficial to our ministry as a congregation, both to ground our members more deeply in the gospel and, especially, to use as a tool for evangelism. We are currently running Christianity Explored for the second time and our participants, thus far, have been diverse. Some have come within our congregation and some have not. Some have been mature Christians, some have been new believers and some have been unchurched. Our current iteration of Christianity Explored consists only of participants from outside of our congregation. Our soon-to-be deacon, Marc Steele, has plans underway to offer the course to his coworkers and his unchurched neighbors. We are pleased with what God is doing in our midst... a number of our participants have expressed that, through the course, they have gained a deeper understanding of the Christian gospel than they have ever had."

People of God, these testimonies underscore for us that the Gospel is not only a debt to man. It is the power of God for salvation. Look again with me in Romans 1:16 ***For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith." For***

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<sup>11</sup> Null and Yates, Reformation Anglicanism

<sup>12</sup> Article VI



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***the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness.***

The wrath of God does not mean that God has a bad temper. It does not refer to any kind of personal vindictiveness or animosity on the part of God. The wrath of God is His uncompromising hostility to evil. The wrath of God is upon guilty sinners (that is all of us). And it is because of the wrath of God, verse 17, that there is the righteousness of God in the Gospel.

Martin Luther, the 16<sup>th</sup> century reformer, lectured on the letter to the Romans for nearly a year. As he prepared his lectures, he said this, “Day and night I pondered until, at last, I grasped the truth that the righteousness of God is that righteousness by which, through grace and sheer mercy, God justifies us, that is, accepts us as righteous by faith. Thereupon, I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. The whole of Scripture took on a new meaning for me... it became to be inexpressibly sweet in greater love. This passage of Paul became to me a gateway to heaven.”<sup>13</sup>

This salvation is God's way of putting sinners right with Himself. That is what the Gospel is all about, and that is why, in verse 16, Paul talks of the power of God in the life of a believer from faith for faith. Faith is an intellectual conviction about Christ, leading to a personal commitment to Him.<sup>14</sup>

My brothers and sisters, for those who believe in Jesus, the Gospel is God's power unto salvation. It sets us free! It rescues us from his wrath and from our self-centeredness, from death and decay by bestowing upon us the righteousness of God. No wonder Paul says, I am not ashamed of good news like that. Who would be ashamed?

This is why we are in the business of proclaiming him in this diocese.

Ranked among the 40 top universities in this country, 1700 students study at Binghamton University, just 5 miles from where we gather for this Synod. Into this environment, The Rev. Matthew Kennedy, Rector of this congregation and host of this Synod has taken his ‘Engage’ apologetics ministry which started in 2017. Matt writes, “Generally students send in questions, we select about 4 or 5 per session and work through them. In the past we have dealt with evolution, the nature of evil and suffering, the Christian claims about Jesus, the reliability and inerrancy of scripture, how Christianity compares to other religions, religious pluralism, moral relativism, human sexuality, and many others. We pray that God will continue to bless this ministry and that next semester there will be more opportunities to reach both Christian and non-Christian students.”

Why do we invest the time and resources to these gospel initiatives? Why? Because we in the Missionary Diocese of CANA East know without hesitancy or reservation there is only one way to God and that one way is through Jesus Christ alone.

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<sup>13</sup> <http://truthandtidings.com/2016/01/martin-luther-rom-117/>

<sup>14</sup> The late Dr. John Stott

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- How exciting to see Archdeacon Richard Lafferty clad in leathers last weekend as St. George's Helmetta, New Jersey sharing the gospel with 600 bikers.
- And to learn that The Rev. Keith Paulus is sharing the gospel in downtown Manhattan at lunchtime with New York business leaders.
- And to discover that The Rev's. Juan Moreno and Sam Anyanwu are sharing the good news in prison ministry in upstate New York and Pennsylvania.
- And that in Wisconsin and Oklahoma and Kentucky and Florida and Maryland and Maine and right across CANA East the good news is being proclaimed in so many God centered ways.
- Thanks be to God for our four CANA East church plants, ministering as 'Christian paratroopers' into communities that so desperately need the gospel.

I call them paratrooper church plants because just as military paratroopers strike terror in the hearts of the enemy on a moonless night, so too, do bible believing paratrooper church planters strike terror into the enemy of souls. C. Peter Wagner, theologian, missiologist, missionary, writer, teacher, and church growth specialist who died in 2016 said, "The single most effective evangelistic methodology under heaven is planting new churches."<sup>15</sup>

Thanks be to God for Christ Church Anglican Church Plant, South Bend Indiana. Members of the planting group recently wrote to our diocesan Standing Committee and said, "The South Bend Anglican Mission, a group of Anglican laypeople in South Bend, Indiana, requests your consent that the Mission become an official church plant of the Missionary Diocese of CANA East. We heard many stories of Anglicans moving to South Bend, often to study or work at the University of Notre Dame, who could not find a church, most of whom would eventually convert to Roman Catholicism... we began meeting weekly in January 2018 for prayer and discussion. Our vision is to plant a church which emphasizes traditional Anglican worship and biblical preaching. As a group, we believe that traditional liturgy is a place where we meet the living God, in which He offers himself to us, and we to him. Liturgy, including faithful exegesis and preaching of the readings, honors God and transforms us into the image of God's Son... Our mission is to help people in South Bend to encounter the grace of God in Jesus Christ, through the ministry of word and sacrament. We have already begun a weekly Evening Prayer service on campus and have begun meeting young Anglicans there. We also request your support in prayer, and the prayerful support of the Standing Committee of CANA East. May God bless you. He is risen!"

All for his glory alone! We live for his glory, we have faith in Him for his glory, we serve for his glory, we church plant for his glory.

To assist us with our focus on mission and pastoral principles for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is a genuine honor and particular privilege to introduce the Rev. Canon Dr. Ashely Null. Dr. Null is an internationally respected scholar on the grace and gratitude theology of the English Reformation. Holding research degrees from Yale and the University of Cambridge, he has received numerous awards for his work, including Fulbright, National Endowment for the Humanities and Guggenheim fellowships as well as being elected fellow of the Royal Historical Society and the Society of Antiquaries in London. He currently holds

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<sup>15</sup> Church Planting for a Greater Harvest, 1990.

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a research post funded by the German Research Council at Humboldt University of Berlin and is a visiting fellow at the Divinity Faculty of Cambridge University and St. John's College, Durham University. His project is editing the private theological notebooks of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer.

Furthermore, having grown up in the Sunflower State. Ashley is co-chair of the National Drovers Hall of Fame Museum Development Committee and the author of "Cowboys, Cowtowns and Cattle Trails"

Dr. Ashely Null is an incredible gift not only to us, but to the Church of God in this generation.

Personally, I count Ashley as one of my closest confidants and mentors. On many occasions, he has carefully, wisely and very pastorally shepherded me (usually over the telephone from Berlin) to find courage in Christ to stand fast in the faith as a bishop in God's Church in this generation.

Dr. Null, it is a distinct honor to welcome you Sir to this Synod of the Missionary Diocese of CANA East. You honor us with your presence and we thank God that you have taken this considerable time away from Berlin to be with us over these days.

I am pleased to welcome Mrs. Rebecca Jumper Matheson. Rebecca is no stranger to this diocese being a member of our CANA East congregation Christ Church, New York City. I had the privilege of listening to Rebecca encourage a group of women in Christian disciple and focus on the Bible. Rebecca will be speaking to the women of the synod later today.

Being part of God's Church gives us the opportunity to recognize the extraordinary service of the men, women and young people who are The Missionary Diocese of CANA East. I recognize each one of you and thank you for your service for Christ and the kingdom. Our chancellor, our secretary, our canon theologian, our regional archdeacons, our Executive Canon, my personal assistant, Moriya French, the incredible diocesan and local synod planning team, would those people I have mentioned, please stand so that we can honor you for your part in making this synod the incredible event that it is.

There are three people whose gifts and service make my episcopal ministry fruitful for the kingdom of God. Bishop Dave and Mary Ellen, you are the best! You pray, you support, you encourage, you visit, your preach, you guide all on your own dime. This diocese loves you both and we thank God for Dave and Mary Ellen Bena.

In 1991, I fell in love with a beautiful, serene and graceful lady who would in that same year become my wife. Her companionship, counsel, love and most of all her commitment to Christ and his Church help me be the man of God that I am today. Brenda, I love you and on behalf of CANA East, I thank you for your gift of service to everyone associated with this diocese and beyond. May God be praised for you!

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Earlier this year, on Wednesday February 21<sup>st</sup>, Dr. Billy Graham passed from this world into the nearer presence of God.

Billy Graham was perhaps the most significant religious figure of the 20th century and the organizations and the movement he helped spawn continue to shape the 21st. During his life, Billy Graham preached in person to more than 100 million people and to millions more via television, satellite, and film. Nearly 3 million have responded to his invitation to "accept Jesus into your heart" at the end of his sermons. He proclaimed the gospel to more persons than any other preacher in history.

In his sermon for the millennium (which deeply impacted me then, as it continues to impact me today) Dr. Graham said this, "Never has the Christian church faced so many challenges on so many fronts—political, social, demographic, economic, philosophical. In response to these challenges, the church today often seems paralyzed and confused, torn by division and uncertainty. In the eyes of many, religion has lost its relevance and is little more than a quaint relic from another time. In spite of the difficulties, the twenty-first century could mark the greatest evangelistic advance in the history of the Christian Church. In order for this to happen, however, the Church (in all of its diversity) must embrace the challenges it faces and must mobilize every possible spiritual and physical resource to declare the gospel that has been committed to us.<sup>16</sup>

So then, my dear brothers and sisters, here we are! Standing on the precipice of a changing world desperately in need of Christ. The same truths that changed the course of history 500 years ago as Archbishop Cranmer courageously initiated the English Reformation are still changing lives today as people turn to Christ in repentance and faith. We are thankful to God for the clarity of their testimony to the truth, often sealed with their blood, and pray that the message of Christ alone and *to God alone* be the glory would again be heard — loud and clear — in and through the Missionary Diocese of CANA East from Maine to Miami and from Tulsa to Virginia Beach.

May this be our vision. May He be our vision - *soli Deo gloria* — to God alone be the glory.

The Rt. Rev. Julian M. Dobbs  
May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2018 | CANA East Synod | Binghamton, New York

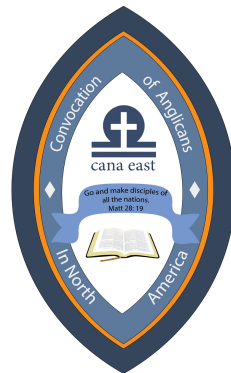
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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/1997/december8/7te027.html>

**The Missionary Diocese of CANA East | Pastoral Address**

Synod 2018 | Binghamton, New York

The Rt. Rev. Julian M. Dobbs L.Th, Th.M, D.D



The Rt. Rev. Julian M. Dobbs L.TH, Th.M, D.D  
The Missionary Bishop of CANA East.