

AlbertMohler.com

Episcopal/Anglican Crisis Deepens — Fundamental Issues at Stake

Tuesday, June 20, 2006

The crisis in the Episcopal Church USA and the larger Anglican Communion deepened as the American church's election of a woman as the denomination's Presiding Bishop sent shock waves throughout the Anglican world.

In the US, the [Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth](#) [Texas] appealed directly to the Archbishop of Canterbury for relief. As [The Telegraph](#) [London] reports:

The break-up of the worldwide Anglican Church was hastened last night after a traditionalist American diocese began moves to split over the election of the first woman head of the American branch of Anglicanism.

Fort Worth diocese, in Texas, which opposes women bishops, appealed to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, to allow it to leave the liberal Episcopal Church and join a sympathetic province. Other dioceses are expected to follow.

In a further blow to Dr Williams, it looked increasingly likely that the Episcopal Church's General Convention, its equivalent of the General Synod, would not answer calls to toe the conservative line on homosexuality adopted by most of the worldwide Church.

From [The Times](#) [London]:

Given the "ecclesiastical anarchy" engulfing the Episcopal Church, some sort of split now seems inevitable.

With provinces, dioceses and parishes throughout the Anglican Communion now in impaired or non-existent communion with each other, the election of a woman as Presiding Bishop in the US has merely hastened a process that was going to happen anyway.

But it is significant that the person to whom the Fort Worth diocese is looking for "alternative primatial oversight" is none other than the Archbishop of Canterbury.

As someone who privately has expressed liberal views on the gay issue, but has put those opinions to one side and taken the orthodox position for the sake of unity, none could be better placed than Dr Williams to offer such oversight.

It is to be hoped strongly that he will accept, as there is little else that, at this stage, could save the Anglican Communion.

Meanwhile, The Right Reverend Gene Robinson, the openly-homosexual Bishop of New Hampshire, celebrated the [election](#) of Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori as the denomination's Presiding Bishop. From [The Guardian](#) [London]: *Bishop Robinson, one of her supporters, said he was relieved to be no longer the sole focus of church attention because of his sexuality. "I am so yesterday," he told the Guardian. "I am having badges printed saying: 'It's a girl!'"*

In London, Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams sent Bishop Schori "greetings" but no "congratulations" in his

message. Even in greeting her, he indicated that her election would pose new challenges to the church. From his statement: *Her election will undoubtedly have an impact on the collegial life of the Anglican Primates; and it also brings into focus some continuing issues in several of our ecumenical dialogues.* That is an understatement.

We discussed this controversy Monday on *The Albert Mohler Program*, where I was glad to be joined by my Salem colleague, David Aikman, an Anglican layman who served for years as senior foreign correspondent for *TIME* magazine. Listen to the program here.

Content Copyright © 2002-2010, R. Albert Mohler, Jr.