

The Lord's Deliverance in Answer to Prayer

By the Rev. Jim McCaslin

The Feast of Benedict of Nursia

11 July, A. D. 2007

The portion of Psalm 34 appointed for today (Vs. 1-8) is full of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord for His salvation and deliverance in times of trouble. When we seek the Lord and call on Him in prayer, He is always faithful to act on our behalf. As our loving Father, He acts with wisdom in His time and in His way. Thanks be to God that He loves us so much that He does not yield to our impatience and shortsightedness. He acts in the fullness of His time, and so the psalmist calls us to glorify and exalt the Lord's name together at all times.

In these times we American Anglicans have great cause to rejoice and to give Him the glory that He so richly deserves. God is clearly active in the midst of the work of the Global South Primates and the Common Cause Roundtable, under the chairmanship of Bishop Robert Duncan. The establishment of a new ecclesiastical structure for American Anglicanism is well on its way.

As Bishop Duncan recently remarked, "We have reached a point where, one way or another, there will be a parting of the ways." The emerging focal point for this new reformation and realignment is the Common Cause Council of Bishops, which will hold its first-ever session in Pittsburgh, September 25-28. For more information on the Common Cause membership, covenant declaration, and theological statement, see the Network website at www.acn-us.org/common-cause-partners. Orthodox Anglicans in the USA and Canada are getting their houses in order at all levels in preparation for the new American structure.

Part of that preparation is the consecration of new American bishops to provide oversight for congregations currently under the jurisdiction of overseas provinces. Both the Church of Uganda and the Anglican Church of Kenya have selected American bishops to care for their clergy and congregations and to help build for the future here. God willing, Archbishop Nzimbi of Kenya will consecrate the Rev. Bill Atwood, President of the Ekklesia Society, and the Rev. Bill Murdoch, Dean of the Network's New England Convocation, on August 30 in Nairobi. Archbishop Orombi of Uganda will then consecrate the Rev. John Guernsey, Dean of the Network's Mid-Atlantic Convocation, on September 2 in Mbarara. The support from Global South Primates and bishops and American Common Cause bishops is a huge encouragement.

Archbishops Orombi and Nzimbi have been in communication with their American congregations to share with them how God is leading them regarding new understandings for their relationships. First of all, they are both emphasizing the importance of collaborating with the Common Cause Roundtable under Bishop Duncan's leadership.

Given the complexity of our transitional situation, the relationships of the American congregations under Ugandan and Kenyan jurisdiction will have four components with regard to their new American bishops:

- **Jurisdiction.** This is the only area where the Ugandan and Kenyan provisions are essentially different. For Ugandan congregations, jurisdiction will remain with their current Ugandan diocesan bishop. For Kenyan congregations, jurisdiction will transfer from the current diocesan bishops to come directly under Archbishop Nzimbi in his diocese of All Saints Cathedral in Nairobi.
- **Oversight.** Pastoral care and oversight of ecclesiastical matters, such as ordination, clergy deployment, and discipline will transfer to Bishops Guernsey, Atwood, and Murdoch.
- **Mission Partnership.** Both provinces are encouraging the mission partnerships with the current Kenyan and Ugandan dioceses for mutual fellowship, mission, and ministry to continue and even to grow.
- **Episcopal Acts.** Visitations for confirmations, ordinations, fellowship, and mutual ministry are to be worked out by the congregations with their overseeing American bishops. They may come for these visits, as may the Ugandan and Kenyan diocesan bishops, or other Common Cause overseas or American bishops.

There is much work that remains before the Global South archbishops and our Common Cause bishops as we move forward together into the next phase of realignment. Many questions, even for this phase, have not been fully addressed. Any changes, for example, in relationships with American congregations under the jurisdiction of dioceses associated with Archbishop Greg Venables and the Southern Cone are still under prayerful consideration by the appropriate leaders. Other momentous questions remain unanswered, such as what actions American bishops, clergy, and dioceses may take; what Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams and the other Anglican Primates will do; and indeed what the future of the Anglican Communion will be in both the short and the long terms.

The realignment under way is of historic proportions. No one knows what the emerging structure will look like in its various stages as it unfolds, but to quote Bishop-Elect Bill Atwood, “we do know that it will include several hallmarks:

- an uncompromised commitment to the Word of God as the ultimate standard for matters of faith and practice,
- a passionate pursuit of the Gospel as the Mission of the Church,
- a desire to see the Kingdom of God manifest and its dominion extended,
- leaders who are committed to pursue godliness, living under and exercising spiritual authority as faithfully as possible, and
- links with as many faithful Anglicans around the world as possible.”

As we go forward together, may God grant us to walk with loving and willing hearts in the school of the Lord’s service, may His ears be open to our prayers, and may He prosper with His blessing the work of our hands; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.