



A Pastoral Address to the People of God  
of the Convocation of American Churches in Europe

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Bishop in charge

October 16, 2008,  
being  
The Feast of Ridley, Latimer and Cranmer

Dear People of the Convocation,

I write to you as your Bishop for three basic reasons. The first is to give you the measured reflection on the recent Lambeth Conference, and events since, that I had promised you back in the early summer. The second is to give you my estimate of our life together in Europe as 2008 draws to a close. The third reason, then, is to try to tie my learnings from Lambeth to a reflection on how that bears, in my opinion, upon our common life and mission together in the future.

This Address, in the form of a Pastoral Letter, serves both as my annual address to our Convention, which opens on this day, and a letter to you. This year, your Convention will work to develop a narrative of your story, both as individual congregations and as a Convocation, with the participation of our Presiding Bishop, the Most. Reverend Katharine Jefferts-Schori. It seemed good to me to deliver my address in written form, for once, so as to give more time for this important work. So I am trying to kill two birds with one stone. As this Pastoral Address is a bit lengthy, I am not requiring the clergy to read it to you from the pulpit, but to make it available to you in written form, and to commend it to you for your consideration. Thank you for taking the time to read it.

*I. The Lambeth Conference*

It is of course the gathering of the Anglican/Episcopal bishops of the world every ten years at the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury. This Conference gathered in a time of intense disagreement and threat of schism in the worldwide Anglican Communion, to which you and I, as Episcopalians, belong. Archbishop Rowan Williams went back to an earlier form of the Conference that avoided divisive voting on propositions to be recommended to the Communion (the decisions of the Conference are only recommendatory). A number of bishops from African and other provinces did not accept his invitation. Instead, a majority of them attended a meeting in Jerusalem in June. Nevertheless, we were almost 700 bishops to attend, of the approximately 850 bishops in the world.

I have to say that it is a great honor to have represented you at such a gathering! As we in Europe know, the world is shrinking, and inter-cultural strife is increasing as a result. My experience as your Bishop was invaluable to me in working with bishops from contexts vastly different from the one we know here. I would say that as a whole, the experience of being the Convocation, with dozens of nationalities represented and several languages spoken, has some lessons to offer other Anglicans, beginning with Episcopalians in the United States, even as we ourselves have so much more to learn. More on that later.

After the Conference ended on August 4, I went on September 16 to Salt Lake City, Utah, for a special meeting of the House of Bishops. We spent one day reflecting upon our experience of the Lambeth Conference, which clearly was a transformative moment for us all, including myself. The next day was spent deliberating whether to depose the Bishop of Pittsburgh—removing his license to exercise ordained ministry in The Episcopal Church. This process was especially painful for me because it is in that diocese that I became an Episcopalian and was ordained priest to serve my first cure. The House decided by a very clear majority that Bishop Robert Duncan had indeed violated his vows as a bishop of The Episcopal Church by seeking to remove the diocese from our church, and “re-aligning” with another province of the Communion. This has now happened.

There are two things that strike me about where we are now. The first is that, since the Anglican Communion, like the Eastern Orthodox Churches, is a communion of churches without a powerful central authority, such moves are in fact less confrontational than if they occurred in the Roman Catholic Church. Nevertheless, this strategy is not meeting with the approval of the large majority of bishops around the world. That became clear at the Lambeth Conference.

At the Conference, the bishops discussed at length the idea of an Anglican Covenant—an agreement for all the provinces to sign that would function as a statement of common identity. We were divided into Bible study groups of eight bishops, and discussion groups (called Indaba Groups, after a Zulu concept of communal discussion) made up of five of these Bible study groups.<sup>1</sup> It was generally agreed that there might be some value in affirming a brief statement, over and above the traditional statements of identity found in the Book of Common Prayer.<sup>2</sup> “The devil will be in the details” seems to have been the consensus.<sup>3</sup>

Both of these strategies—splitting away, or schism, and the Covenant process—to me seem to me to be purely reactive, seeking a quick-fix solution to reducing tension. What we have learned in the Convocation’s life is that not participating in a larger common life of churches leads only to isolation and a false sense of being the only “real” Episcopalians. Alternatively, as we have wrestled with the need to harmonize the policies and procedures of our common life, we have seen the need to take time to fully understand the circumstances of each congregation, in their differing contexts, before setting forth common rules of life.

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<sup>1</sup> You can follow my Lambeth peregrinations on my blog at <http://tinyurl.com/6kccyl>

<sup>2</sup> See the “Historical Documents” section, beginning on page 864.)

<sup>3</sup> The Conference produced a document entitled “Lambeth Indaba,” a record of our conversations, available as [lambethconference.org](http://lambethconference.org). See paragraphs 136-144.

It may be, Dear Reader, that at this point you are wondering what this really has to do with you and your congregation. As Sunday after Sunday rolls by, and things seem pretty much the same, we can be lulled into an idea that all that matters is my local reality. Both the Scriptures and globalization point out that this is an illusion. Certainly the financial crisis of today demonstrates the interconnectedness of us all. Much more powerfully, St. Paul's image that you and I together are the Body of Christ and individually members of it through baptism and common faith has been telling us for millennia that each of us is in fact connected with, and accountable to, the whole: "if one member suffers, all suffer; if one member is honored, all rejoice with it." (I Cor. 12:26) It has always been so. Our global communications and finance today have only laid bare that reality for all to see—we really are One.

There is therefore no value in schism. All the breaks of the past have only dishonored Jesus Christ, in the long run, even as they sought to honor him by trying to return to a "purer" Christianity of yesteryear. Close reading of the New Testament clearly shows that the first Christians had all kinds of conflicts, and accused each other of all sorts of ills. In this respect, we Christians have stoutly resisted the Holy Spirit's leading us into all truth (John 16:13), and that since the beginning of the Church.

Concerning the Covenant, my Indaba Group had a member from the *Nippon Sei Ko Kai*—the Japanese Anglican Church. Bishop Zerubbabel Katsuichi Hirota, of the diocese of Kita Kanto, told us that he and his fellow bishops were dead-set against the Covenant. There is no word in Japanese for "covenant"—it can only be translated "contract." "And we do not make a contract to be with Christian brothers and sisters," he said through a translator. I agree with him. As in the Convocation, any agreement has to bubble up from informal relationships and consensus, before it can be validated by the whole as a statement of identity. The bishops at Lambeth, having spent the better part of three weeks in deep Bible study and honest conversation, discovered that we all share an identical ministry as bishops, yet lived out in vastly different ways, so different that each had difficulty at times conceiving of what others were facing. Again, I was reminded of, and grateful for, my own experience among you, which allowed me some leg up on this, if only to expect to be surprised.

Over and over again, it was made clear that only through focusing on our common mission can we avoid conflicts that tear our common life and interfere with the work God has given us to do. As your Bishop, my ministry has been devoted to helping us develop our sense of a common mission. For seven years I have preached and taught and worked to help each of you realize that God has "formed" you for a unique work that only you can accomplish for the Lord, if only you will. Furthermore, I have emphasized that each congregation has a unique reason for being in God's eyes, to do for God what is needed in our time and place. And even more, we have developed Mission 2006 to be a list of things we need to make happen in order to meet the needs of the congregations that they cannot meet for themselves.

I still believe all these are true. During the Lambeth Conference, I developed a fresh new appreciation of that mission, which I am still only beginning to unpack. The heart of this insight is that in fact, the Church itself does not have a mission. Rather, the Church is the instrument of God's mission.

The 22<sup>nd</sup> paragraph of *Lambeth Indaba* expresses it thus:

Mission belongs to God and we are called to engage in this mission so that God's will of salvation for all may be fulfilled. In this sense, mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God. The Church exists as an instrument for that mission. There is church because there is mission, and not vice versa. To participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God's love toward people, since God is the fountain of sending love.

Until now, I had not thought of the whole of creation, redemption and sanctification as God's own mission, with the Church as merely the instrument of God's mission. Perhaps I have been especially stupid! Be that as it may, it seems to me to be absolutely true. If so, then we can begin to view the Holy Scriptures as the grand narrative of this mission. Just as our Convention will work toward a "grand narrative" of who we are, so the Bible itself is the record of God's going forth from the heart of the Holy Trinity. God's Spirit proceeds forth from the perfect dynamic love of the Three for one another, and creates the universe and all that is in it. Including little creatures scratching a damp mote of dirt located on the edge of a very ordinary galaxy. You and me, that is.

And when we were in desperate need to learn who we really are and whose we really are, the mission of God took the form of one of these creatures: "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." (John 1:14) And at the right time, Jesus Christ gave his life up to death, and rose again, that we might rise up from death into the eternal life of God. And he sent his disciples out into the world: "You shall be my *witnesses*...to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8).

So the Church came into being, not to do our own work, but essentially to become witnesses of what God is doing in Christ through the Holy Spirit. The Church is therefore an instrument of God's work in the realm of our consciousness, of the mass of symbols and signs that we endlessly create and re-create to express our lives. We bear a witness, not only with our lips in symbolic communication, but in our lives, carrying forth what Jesus has instructed us to do. Thus "there is church because there is mission, and not vice versa."

Moreover, as the Swiss theologian Karl Barth observed, the Bible is the witness to the Word of God, and a witness is to be identified with that to which he or she is witnessing, as long as their testimony is faithful. At the same time, however, the witness is not the same as that which is being witnessed. Similarly, we are not Jesus Christ though we function together as his Body. As Mother Teresa said, Jesus has no other eyes, mouth, hands or feet than yours and mine. We literally "bear" witness to him. But at the same time, the work done is in the Spirit, through Christ. It isn't ours. On the contrary—we belong to it. Thomas Aquinas spoke of the sacraments done by the Church in terms of a dead stick in the hand of Jesus. We are this "stick," an instrument. Nothing more—and yet, as human beings endowed by God with intelligence, feelings, culture, and freedom—nothing less. For you and me, for us, Christ died and rose again, so that in the creation, God's children might be revealed (Rom. 8: 21). It is this work of God the Trinity, beginning at creation, of which we are

both the witnesses and the product.

Before sketching out what I think this fresh (for me, at least) understanding of mission means to you and me in the Convocation, let us take a moment to review where we are, as 2008 draws to a close.

## *II. The Convocation in 2008*

First, we can note the increasing organization of our lives. See for instance the new *Directory* and the *Handbook* of the Convocation, prepared for us by the Strategic Implementation Committee, as part of their work of Mission 2006. These will become permanent resources for each congregation. We have also done a lot of work on our canons, and have begun a systematic review of our congregations' by-laws, in order to harmonize and rationalize a lot of disparate and sometimes even illegal policies and procedures.

We continue to work to improve our ministry to and with young people. For the first time, Convocation youth and youth leaders participated in the Episcopal Youth Event, a large annual meeting of youth and leaders (some 1600 people altogether) from around The Episcopal Church. In 2010, we will be hosting this event in Geneva, Switzerland. There was a highly successful event in Rome in May, with about 65 participants—the largest ever such event. At this Convention we will consider making the Youth Across Europe committee of the Commission on Ministry of the Baptized (COMB) into a separate independent commission of its own, better to support ministry to and with young people throughout the Convocation.

COMB has worked hard to present an annual Vocational Discernment Conference called "What is God calling me to do?" This seeks to give anyone asking that question a professionally-presented retreat opportunity to begin finding an answer. So far over 80 people have participated, and the results have been palpable in our congregations' lives. There will be a Spiritual Conference in the spring for attendees wishing to follow up. COMB also has developed new mentoring and continuing education resources for clergy, as required by new Canons of the Church. The Commission is using the Discernment Conference as a resource not only for people seeking in general God's will, but also requiring it as a first step in the process of ordination that the Commission oversee for the Bishop. We have a fresh crop of participants in that process.

And this year I ordained the Rev. Laurette Glasgow to the Sacred Order of Priests, who will be assigned to All Saints, Waterloo. She will celebrate her first Eucharist during this Convention. And the Secretary of Convention, Richard Cole, will be ordained a Deacon in January, God willing, and assigned to Emmanuel Church, Geneva. He will be our second Deacon, after our groundbreaker, Deacon Joanne Dauphin.

The European Institute of Christian Studies (EICS) has developed a complete set of educational requirements for both Priests and Deacons in the Convocation. Under Lora Bernabei's leadership, EICS now has policies adapted specifically to our unusual non-geographical multicultural, multi-lingual organization, as well as a listing of theological institutions and other resources throughout the Convocation. In

September, COMB and EICS met jointly to ensure that their work be closely coordinated for the benefit of future ordinands.

EICS is putting the finishing touches on an exciting new Christian education technique they call “Transformed By Stories.” It has three parts, entitled “Telling God’s story as my story”; “Telling my story as God’s story”; “Telling our story as God’s story.” The development of this tool will conclude next February, with the Archbishop of York, the Most Rev. John Sentamu, as keynote speaker along with myself. Staff from the Episcopal Church Center, as well as very talented people among us, are working closely together to perfect this, which will become an official curriculum offering published by The Episcopal Church. It has the great benefit of working anywhere in the world, in any language, as well as across cultures.

Felicity Handford, chair of EICS, can be very proud of her commission’s products, as well as her own hard work. And there are more projects in the works...

We continue to move forward in developing new congregations. Christ Church, Clermont-Ferrand, founded in 1996, has voted to petition the Convention to seat its delegates as a parish, that is, a financially independent congregation able to provide for a full-time priest and organize its own Vestry. Christ Church will become our ninth Parish, if their petition is accepted, and the Rev. Luk de Volker our ninth Rector as a result. The Convocation, with our 4,000 members and nine parishes (soon), is actually larger than at least ten of the dioceses in the United States.

We are moving toward the same goal with St. Boniface, Augsburg, and St. James the Less, Nuremburg, congregational missions of the Church of the Ascension, Munich, Germany, as well as the Church of the Resurrection, Oriento, Italy. St. Columbian’s, Karlsruhe, continues to meet, though their vicar, the Rev. Dr. Hanns Englehardt, has officially retired. They are considering their future in consultation with me. Our little mission in Almay, Kazakhstan, has dissolved, as the five families that formed it, Episcopalians all, have moved on. Too bad—they had the highest percentage of Episcopalians in the Convocation! The Rev. Val Littman continues to celebrate the Eucharist for some thirty people in Florensac, France. I met with them in May, and they continue to mull over whether to ask for membership in the Convocation.

The Rev. Jennifer Adams-Maßmann has returned among us and will help the military chapel in Heidelberg, All Saints, think about its future. The Bishop of the Armed Forces, George Packard, has decided that the military congregations in Europe, long friends of the Convocation, need to move to join us officially, as time goes on.

The Mission Épisopale de Rennes continues to grow, even as they minister to refugees and others through a microcredit program and their unique style of hands-on ministry. We need to say “Murrakozay!” (“Thank you” in Kenyarwandan) to Théophile Rua and his leaders for their witness. The Latin American Ministry at St. Paul’s, Rome, also continues to grow and live out their witness in their own language under Pastoral Leader Mercedes Tutagsi. And we have a new group meeting in Pescara, Italy, watched over by the Rector and people of St. Paul’s, Rome, and led by a member of that parish, Signore Gianfranco Giancatarino. Check out their

extraordinary website on our Church at [www.anglicani.it](http://www.anglicani.it)

These missions are of course in French, Spanish and Italian, respectively. La Mission Saint Martin, Bordeaux, France, has closed, as their leader, the Rev. Pierre-Henry Buisson and his family have gone to Virginia Seminary for two years, in order for him to earn a Master of Theological Studies in preparation to return to France as a missionary to his people. In preparation for this project, I called a Consultation together on mission to the French in February. Held at the Cathedral in Paris, this included representatives from the French Catholic and Reformed Churches, the Diocese of Gibraltar in Europe, the Old Catholic Churches, and the head of the missionary office at Church Center, the Rev. David Copley, as well as members of the Council of Advice, the Dean and Vestry members of the Cathedral, as well as French Episcopalians. The Archbishop of Canterbury's canon for the Anglican Communion, Andrew Norman, was to have been the keynote speaker. He was prevented from attending, but very kindly allowed us to make extensive use of his thesis on Anglican mission in France. The conclusion of this Consultation was that indeed, The Episcopal Church should engage in a serious effort to spread the Gospel among the French, witnessing along with the other churches to God's mission in Christ. We will need to prepare the way, although I do not envision the Convocation taking the lead as time goes on.

What is happening is the inevitable spread of our way of witnessing to Christ in Europe, in languages and cultures other than Anglo-American. As my predecessor, Bishop Jeffrey Rowthorn says, "we will always be running after the Holy Spirit."

As we continue to work out the implications of Mission 2006, our means of communication, clumsy though they still are, are evolving. The website at [www.tec-europe.org](http://www.tec-europe.org) is increasingly useful to all, both in and out of the Convocation.

Last but not least in this *tour d'horizon*, we are meeting in Convention in Waterloo, Belgium, in All Saints' new church building. This acquisition was crucial to the parish's survival, after their former hosts abruptly changed their agreement in force since 1979. A dedicated and formidable team of parishioners, braving the extraordinarily intricate and inscrutable Belgian bureaucracies and overcoming obstacle after obstacle, has done a huge amount of work. While some work remains to be done to ensure the financial picture in perpetuity, I have been amazed at what has been accomplished. Among many stalwarts, I must mention Roderick Abbott, Maurits and Erika Dolmans, Senior Warden Janet Martin, and the Rev. Laurette Glasgow, as well as Fr. Kempton Baldridge, whose idea this was in the first place.

Many of these accomplishments would not have happened were it not for the behind-the-scenes work of our missionary, Canon Jere Skipper. Over and over, she has poured herself out in gathering people in the mission congregations, EICS, the elaboration of Mission 2006 and support of its Strategic Implementation Committee, the Waterloo purchase, providing the staff work that is indispensable to the erection and good functioning of these structures; and keeping the *Convocation Newsletter* alive. This in fact is her mission here: to help the Convocation grow in its organization. Jere is not one to stand in front of a crowd and toot her own horn—in fact, she is absolutely averse to being in the limelight. This is what makes her so effective in the background. I can only hope that we can keep her with us indefinitely.

To do so, we will have to make some changes in her agreement as missionary of The Episcopal Church to us.

As for me, I made a great number of trips since our last meeting in Munich. I have preached and celebrated in our parishes and missions 24 times, meaning (besides the Cathedral) 22 trips away from Paris. Since October 2007, I have confirmed and received 27 people.

We have said goodbye, sadly, to four priests: The Revs. Allan Sandlin, Christ-the-King, Frankfurt; Tom Pellaton, Ascension, Munich; Roger Featherston, St. James, Florence; and Susan Skillen, Resurrection, Orvieto. They all left their mark on their congregations and upon the Convocation. *Sic monumentum requiris, circumspice...*

I am not only the Bishop but also the deployment officer of the Convocation. In other words, I help congregations with search processes, as well as approving their choice of priest. Four parishes and a mission were in transition this year: Christ-the-King, Frankfurt; St. Augustine's, Wiesbaden, where we continue to have an effective Interim Rector, the Rev. Mary Ellen Dolan; St. James, Florence, where I installed as Interim Rector the Rev. Barbara Crafton last month; Ascension, Munich, actively in search, where we named the Rev. Gray Temple as Interim Rector, and Resurrection, Orvieto, where the Rev. Dr R. William Franklin has served as Interim Vicar.

I expect that Ascension, Munich, will call someone at year's end. Later next year I will help St. Augustine and St. James call new Rectors. And I plan to appoint the Rev. Russell Ruffino, a retired priest from Rhode Island, as Vicar in Orvieto, beginning Advent I.

In August we welcomed with great anticipation the Rev. Carola von Wrangel as Rector of Christ-the-King, Frankfurt. Please give this talented priest a warm reception. She comes to us lately from the Diocese of Olympia in the Pacific Northwest. Carola is the daughter of Baltic German parents, and was actually born in Austria. She is fluent in German, though perhaps not Hessian yet!

Ministry with francophones has taken up some of my time, as well as relations with our other Anglican jurisdictions in Europe. For my sins I was elected president of the Francophone Network of the Anglican Communion in July. Then there was the Lambeth Conference as well as two other meetings of our House of Bishops. It has been a busy year indeed... Not to mention the Board of Foreign Parishes meetings and the Standing Commission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations, from which I have just returned last week, my last meeting on that Commission. And then there is the work with the media, as well as occasions like greeting the Pope at Notre-Dame de Paris last month. And planning this special Convention.

Finally, I received in August 2007 a desperate plea for help from a family I met in Baghdad during my trip there in 2003. Like many Christians and some other religious minorities, they had come under terrible menace from extremists demanding they flee the country. One thing led to another, and now I head a working group of Iraqis in Paris, French people, and officials from the Immigration and Foreign Affairs Ministries vetting and bringing people out of Iraq to France and safety. So far about 200 have arrived, and we hope to be able to settle temporarily several thousand, to

await the day when stability comes to their land and they can return.

### *III. You shall be my witnesses...*

To return to the theme of witnessing to Jesus, it is significant, I think, that Jesus says to the first disciples, “You *shall* be my witnesses.” Not “You are my witnesses.” Usually it has been thought that this word of our Lord was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came to the 120 disciples gathered in the upper room. But as the Church’s witness has always been imperfect and sometimes even downright contrary to God’s mission, it seems we still need to hear that our witness is yet to be perfected in the future.

Having just reviewed some highlights of the year, it should be obvious that this work of witness is being lived out. Yet we need to redouble our efforts.

Dr. Rebecca Anderson Powell, director of religious education at the US Army base in Baden-Wurttemberg and an experienced cleric in Europe, has some wise words for us:

...ministry in international congregations is “preaching to a parade.” The constant change causes pastors to need (and hopefully develop) skills beyond those taught in seminary, such as transition management and Third Culture Kids populations.

International congregations have extra crises not normally expected in “monocultural” congregations. However they have an opportunity for ministry and discipleship that is also beyond that which is normally seen in “monocultural” congregations.

This is a time to renew our confidence in our abilities as international congregations. We have a functioning Convocation and a solid corps of clergy and lay leaders.

First, the economic crisis will have at least some impact upon our congregations’ members. We will all need to gird our loins to help people confront terminations, crashing retirement funds, fewer business opportunities, and whatever else will be the long-term fallout of the credit crunch. The Virgin Mary’s words of the *Magnificat* are crucial: “[God] has pulled down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted the humble and meek. He has filled the hungry with good things, but the rich he has sent empty away.” While the market-kingdoms of this world fall down, God’s favor continues, especially upon those who are marginalized.

Refugee and homeless ministries, already an important part of several congregations’ lives, will become ever more important in the present climate, as Europe attracts more and more people.

Second, we must continue to develop parish ministries in adult as well as children’s education, with young people, college students, and singles, as well as

families both transient and permanent. While some progress in stewardship has been made, it remains the perennial Achilles' heel of our common life. Actively seeking out the resources we now have from our membership in The Episcopal Network for Stewardship (TENS) should be a big help for all, as it has already been for some.

It needs to be remembered that the Convocation has two great helps: the General Convention pays for the Bishop; and the Nice Fund under the management of the Board of Foreign Parishes continues to give us a significant income stream. As such, the assessment of our congregations is the lowest in the entire church. This means that parishes in Europe consecrate a smaller percentage of income to the ministry of their parent body than any other of the 7,200 congregations in the 11 other countries where The Episcopal Church is present.

In other words, let's make hay while the sun shines.

Third, we must continue to plan and plant new congregations. There are a large number of opportunities all across Europe. I think our recent experiences have made us smarter, starting with me. But there can be no backing down from this goal of Mission 2006. Furthermore, we must leap ahead of the developments that continue to come to us, as in Pescara, where Italians want to become Episcopalians, having discovered our bilingual Prayer Book.

Fourthly, along the same lines, it is time for individual congregations, as well as the Convocation as a whole, to develop companion relations with other congregations and dioceses around the world. Anglicans are present in 164 countries—we are one of only two truly global churches. As the Convocation in Europe, with all our international and multicultural experience, I believe we should focus on those parishes and dioceses that have no other relationships at present. The Millennium Development Goals, to which the Convocation has been committed financially since 2003, will continue to be good guides in this work.

To quote Lambeth again, “mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God. The Church exists as an instrument for that mission.” The word “mission” comes from the Latin *mittere*, to send forth (“transmission” for example comes from this root). God's mission proceeds from the intention of the Holy Trinity arising from God's heart to love something else, something that is not God—the creation. The essence of love—and “God is love” (I John 4:8)—is to care about Another. The Church as instrument of that mission therefore exists primarily to benefit those people who are *not* its members, as Archbishop William Temple pointed out.

Look back at your own congregation's history. When did you grow and develop? Was it during those times when the ministry of the church trod water? Was it when your focus was on dealing with internal conflicts and challenges? Or was it when the congregation had its eyes turned outward to people around you in the community, and people far away whose needs you found yourselves strangely well-equipped to meet?

We need a bigger vision. There is a whole hurting world outside our doors, waiting for a word of caring, a sign of hope, a reason to believe. Nothing will benefit us more than to go forth—*sent* forth. Let us rely more on God to meet our needs as we allow

ourselves to be used as the instrument of the mission of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Thus we will surely become ever more faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ, who is the only lasting hope for you and me and all of humanity.

Thank you again for taking time to read this lengthy Letter.

This comes with every good wish and all good blessings.

Your Bishop in charge,

Pierre Whalon