

Anglicans look to gathering for calm or confrontation

By Associated Press

In an Easter season letter to leaders of the Anglican Communion, the Archbishop of Canterbury set out their priorities for a once-a-decade summit planned for 2008. The note was all about survival: How do we heal the feuds over gay clergy and other rifts and manage to hold together 77 million followers around the world?

But a deeper question — being asked with increasing urgency — is whether it's worth the effort.

Some critical judgments may emerge when the Episcopal Church — the American branch of the embattled Anglican family — begins its General Convention on Tuesday in Columbus, Ohio.

What's at stake seems profound: A nearly 500-year-old religious tradition going back to King Henry VIII's famous break from the Vatican to establish the Church of England. But the modern reality is much more messy.

Factions have engaged in theological combat since the 2003 consecration of the first openly gay Episcopal bishop, V. Gene Robinson of New Hampshire. Conservative dioceses are withholding money, congregations are looking for leadership — and the Anglican Communion has no central authority or doctrine to rally around. In short: Many bricks but not much mortar.

Some are tired of unity, if all it means is more fighting, and a formal rupture would effectively mean little in the pews. Priests and followers have generally picked their sides. But theologians worry an Anglican disintegration would set a worrying example to other mainline Protestant denominations struggling over gay clergy and same-sex unions — the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) among them.

"There's a de facto split now," said Andrew Carey, a British-based commentator on Anglican affairs. "We can't say it's broken beyond repair, but it's effectively impaired. Everyone is watching what will come next."

The delegates heading for Ohio have the opportunity to seek calm or more confrontation.

In crafting a message to other Anglican churches, they could send an olive branch to conservatives worldwide fuming over same-sex blessings and Robinson's widespread acceptance in the West. A snub, however, would reinforce perceptions that the communion is locked in a fatal battle over what it should stand for.

Liberals, including many in the Episcopal church, say issues of social justice and anti-discrimination are the priorities for the 21st century. Traditionalists, led by Africans

and the so-called "Global South," insist on strict interpretations of the Bible and point to a 1998 Anglican declaration calling homosexuality "incompatible with Scripture."

Keeping them all under the Anglican tent is the goal of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Rev. Rowan Williams. He has used his position as spiritual leader of the communion to constantly appeal for unity.

"We cannot give up," he told a global conference of Christian churches in February. In this March letter, he asked the Anglican leadership to "think and pray about the challenges that face us as a worldwide church" in preparation for the 2008 conference in London.

But there's no guarantee the communion can hobble along until then. It's already a hothouse for many of the pressures facing all Christianity — such as the growing strength and assertiveness of African churches in shaping the faith.

The Anglican tensions are even

sharper because no one is really in charge. Its bishops operate with wide autonomy and can either accept or ignore guidance from Williams and his advisers.

This has given conservatives the confidence to attack.

Combative Nigerian Archbishop Peter Akinola and other Africans have come close to full-scale mutiny. Some have refused to accept financial aid from U.S. Episcopal churches and have offered a spiritual home to parishes and seminarians in the West opposed to the liberal moves. They have numbers on their side: There are more Anglican Communion members in Africa than in Britain and North America combined.

Ironically, Africa and other impoverished points could pay the highest price if their complaints end up tearing apart the communion. Church-administered aid channels from the West could dry up. At the same time, the communion would further disintegrate into a hodge-

podge of practices.

It's already happening to some extent. The Episcopal diocese in Fort Worth, Texas, refuses to ordain women despite a General Convention order in 1997 making it mandatory.

In Connecticut, six parishes asked to be removed from oversight by the bishop because of his support for the gay priest Robinson. The

dispute remains unresolved.

"Is the communion worth saving?" asked Carey, whose father, the Rev. George Carey, served as Archbishop of Canterbury from 1991 to 2002. "These days, it comes down to who you ask. But, if it splits up, it will be seen as a total betrayal of the idea of Christian unity. You could say there's at least a theological imperative to keep it together."

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Couple finds artistic niche in later years

OSWEGO (AP) — A visitor to the home of Dorothy and Jack Jeffries might notice a small stained-glass window in the upper level of the house. That window represents Dorothy's determination as well as her ability to quickly master new artistic skills.

Several years ago, Dorothy took an arts and crafts class and told the instructor she wanted to learn how to make stained-glass windows. The instructor showed her the materials and left her to figure it out on her own.

A short time later, Dorothy was approached about teaching a class through Labette Community College, so she made the window that is now in her house to prove to the college that she could create stained glass.

Since then, Dorothy has taught herself other crafts, including ceramic and porcelain sculpture. And although they no longer teach at the college, Dorothy and her husband, Jack, still offer classes in stained glass that are well attended by older residents.

"They'll make a nice little piece and give it to their grandchildren," Jack said. "They don't care how long it takes, they just want to do it."

But the Jeffries don't just teach classes. Over the years, the couple has been commissioned to make stained-glass windows for several churches in the area, which, it turns out, is the reason Dorothy was interested in the first place.

"I just had the deep desire in me to do church windows," she said.

Dorothy is quick to point out that Jack has been with her every step of the way in her endeavors.

"I'm really fortunate," she said. "Whatever I want to do, he says, 'I'll help you.'"

Jack's explanation for his involvement is simple: "It's something we both like to do."

As proof that it's never too late to learn something new, the Jeffries did not begin their artistic endeavors until later in life. Jack was a full-time construction worker whose job frequently took him out of state, and Dorothy was busy raising six children.

It wasn't until the last of their children was almost grown that she took the arts class.

"Sometimes I wish we'd have taken it up when we were young," Jack said. "I like to leave something pretty. Someone down the line will say, 'Oh, Jack Jeffries did that years ago.'"

Added Dorothy, "I enjoy creating something that's going to be around for a while."

The Jeffries don't burn the midnight oil quite as much as they used to, but their enjoyment of the work hasn't diminished.

The couple manages to stay busy. Whether running their antique store in downtown Oswego or making a privately commissioned stained-glass window with several hundred individual pieces in it, they still have time to teach others.

"It gives them something to do when they're 60 and up," Dorothy said.

Regions have no ministry in place

REDLANDS, Calif. (AP) — New research released Tuesday by Mission Aviation Fellowship analyzes 364 isolated areas whose inhabitants are considered the hardest to reach for evangelistic work and social services.

Of the world's 20 "least-reached" ethnic groups, 15 were in Asia, including five each in Afghanistan (Hazara, Pashtun, Tajik, Turkeman, Uzbek) and China (Han, Han-Gan, Kham, Salar, Tu) and two in Nepal (Magar, Rai).

Other groups on the list were located in Djibouti, Guinea, India, Iraq, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Pakistan. A broader index of the most difficult areas for Christian

missionaries to reach showed 173 in Africa, 97 in Latin America and 94 in Asia.

In all, two-thirds of the regions had little or no Christian ministry in place.

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Registration: Children may either register at the door or preregister by contacting Dan and Lois O'Brien at 785-460-7530.

This year's Vacation Bible School should be a great time of learning about God through His word and having fun and Christian fellowship with other kids.

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Schedule of church services

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COLLEGE DRIVE ASSEMBLY OF GOD, Pastor, Jeremy Gundling, 245 W. College Dr. - 462-8234, Early Service - 8:00 a.m.; Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Morning Worship - 10:45 a.m.

BEREAN CHURCH, 1000 S. Franklin, 460-2763, www.colbyborean.com; Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Sunday Worship 10:45 a.m. Awana Clubs, Wednesday, 7 p.m., Middle & High School, Wednesday, 7 p.m. @ the Heartland Christian School Gym

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, Pastor Bradley L. Herndon, Grant & Webster Street, 462-2867, Morning Worship 10:30 a.m., Sunday School 9:15 a.m., Evening Worship 6:30 p.m., Wednesday Bible 7:30 p.m.

COLLEGE VIEW BAPTIST CHURCH (SBC), Pastor Tom Huffman, 1185 Wheatridge Rd. at College Drive, 460-7144, Sunday Bible Study 9:30 a.m., Sunday Worship services, 10:45 a.m.

MINGO BIBLE CHURCH, 420 Main Mingo, 785-462-2992: An independent community church served by Village Missions Pastor Chris Shubert. Sunday School: 9:30AM - all ages. Sunday Services: 10:45AM. Sunday Nights: 1st Sunday of the month: potluck following morning service - no evening service; 2nd Sunday: services at 6:30 PM; 3rd Sunday: informal fellowship - bring a snack to share!; 4th and 5th Sunday: services at 6:30 p.m.

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC, 462-2179, Father Dana Clark, Pastor, Saturday Eve. Mass 5:30 p.m., Sunday Masses 8:00 & 10:00 a.m., Confessions will be heard Saturday 4:30-5:05 p.m. and from 7:30-7:45 a.m. and 9:25-9:40 a.m. on Sunday.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Rev. Carol Rahn, 515 W. 4th, 462-6342, Worship, 9:00 a.m.

WESLEYAN CHURCH, 320 W. Pine - 462-8391, Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Sunday Worship 10:40 a.m., Sunday Evening Cell groups at 6:00 p.m., Wednesday Youth Ministries, Kids Clubhouse 7 p.m.

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS, 1145 S. Franklin - 460-6605, President Gary Slavens, 460-2656; Rocky Robbins, 1st counselor, 460-1101; Tim Wilson, 2nd counselor, 785-846-7796. Sacrament meeting 10 a.m., Sunday School and Primary 11:20 a.m., Priesthood, Relief Society, YM/YW, 12:10 p.m.; Family History Center open to public, 7-9 p.m. Thursdays or by appointment. Call 462-3571.

COLBY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, Rev. James Mardock, pastor, 950 S. Franklin, 462-6521, Sunday Worship Services at 8:30 and 11:00 a.m., 6:30 p.m., Fellowship coffee 9:30 a.m., Sunday School, 9:45 a.m., KXXX broadcasts 11:00 worship. http://www.gbmg-umc.org/colby-umc/

REDEEMING LOVE MINISTRIES, INC., 345 N. Franklin, Apostle W.G. and Rev. Orvella Romine, Equipping Class, Sunday, 10 a.m., Sunday worship, 11 a.m., Wednesday, R.L.M Training Center (Bible School), 7 p.m.

CHURCH OF CHRIST, 510 E. 4th, Jay Kelley, minister, Sunday Bible Study 9:30 a.m., Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m., Sunday Eve. Worship 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

COLBY EVANGELISM CENTER, Rev. Robert Cooper, 815 West 3rd - 462-2062, Sunday School 9:45; Sunday service 10:00 and 6:30 p.m.; Wednesday Bible Study 6:30 p.m.; Friday Youth Power Hour at 7:00 p.m.

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, (Disciples of Christ), Pastor Bradley L. Herndon, 385 W. 3rd - 460-2718, Sunday Morning Worship at 9:00 a.m.; Sunday School at 10:30 a.m. E-mail: fccolby@st-tel.net

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, Rev. John L. Schmidt, East 5th & Country Club, 462-3497, Services, Sat., 5:30 p.m., Sunday; Sunday School and Adult Bible Class 9:15 a.m.; Services, 10:30 a.m.

OUR SAVIORS LUTHERAN CHURCH, Brewster, Sunday worship 9:00 a.m.; 2nd Sunday of the month at 8:00 a.m.

PLEASANT HOME CHURCH, Pastor, Charlie Busch, 694-2242, 3190 Road 70, Edson, W. 9:00 a.m., Sunday School 10:00 a.m., Evening service, 6:00 p.m.

LEVANT COMMUNITY CHURCH, 205 1st St., Pastor Jerry Vincent, 586-2376, Sunday School (classes for 3 years & up and 3 adult classes) 9:30 a.m., Morning worship 10:30 a.m., Sunday Evening Worship 7:00 p.m.

WINONA METHODIST CHURCH, Rev. Michael Eurit, Sunday School, 10:30 a.m., Morning Worship 9:30 a.m. (CDT)

BREWSTER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, PO Box 250, Brewster. Pastor Dorine Chambers, 785-462-6044, Sunday School, 9:45 a.m., Morning Worship, 10:45 a.m.

THE SHEPHERD'S STAFF, REXFORD, Joan Dingwerth, Director, 687-2565

REXFORD COMMUNITY CHURCH, Rexford, Pastor Lane Purcell, 687-3305, Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Worship Service 10:30 a.m.

BREWSTER COMMUNITY CHURCH, Mike Pinkelma, Pastor, Brewster - 694-2720, Sunday School (all ages) 9:30 a.m., Worship Service 10:30 a.m., Bible Study 7:00 p.m., Wed. mornings 6:30 a.m. - Men's Bible Study, Wed. 7:00 p.m. - Children's Ministries (Royal Rangers/Missionettes), Wed. 7:15 p.m. - Intercessory & Prayer, Thurs. 4:00 p.m. - Women's Bible Study

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