

“May you live in interesting times”. So goes the somewhat obtuse Chinese saying. Well, for Anglicans, and the state of our life in communion together, this is certainly the case at present. Some weeks ago now, (the 8<sup>th</sup> June), the Episcopal Church in Scotland (with whom we are in full communion) voted at its annual Synod to change the Canon (church law) that governed the definition of marriage. The result of that was to allow same-sex couples to have their legal unions recognised and celebrated with a church wedding ceremony.

Although the Synod voted overwhelmingly in favour of this, there remain many within the church in Scotland who believe that such a change is directly against their interpretation of Scripture, and they feel that the Bishops and Primus of their church no longer speak for them, nor can they be cared for by them. As a result of this, within hours of the vote being formalised, the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA), who are a breakaway Anglican Province, not in communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury or the Anglican or Episcopal Churches, announced that they would be consecrating a new Bishop (Andy Lines), who was to be sent to Scotland to act as a “Missionary Bishop” for those Anglicans who felt they were no longer represented by the Bishops and Primus of the Scottish Church.

The Consecration of Bishop Lines was scheduled for the 30<sup>th</sup> June. Just days before the consecration, Archbishop Glenn Davies (Sydney) and Bishop Richard Condie (Tasmania) wrote to their fellow Australian Bishops to advise them that they intended to be present at, and participate in the consecration. Both expressed their objection to the Synod decision in Scotland, believing it to be contrary to Scripture, and declaring that they could not, in all good conscience, allow the “faithful Anglicans in Scotland” to be without adequate and pastoral Episcopal oversight. Both Bishops wrote that the Primate (Archbishop Freier) had advised against their attendance, and they hoped their actions would not cause any rift in the fellowship they enjoyed with other Australian Bishops.

Archbishop Freier responded, this week, with an open letter, in which he declared his “regret” at the actions of the two Bishops, saying that the Consecration “raises significant questions how the close fellowship, co-operation and collegiality of the Anglican Communion... is affected”. He said “The consecration in the ACNA is not on any view an act in communion with the Anglican Communion and its member churches”, and breaks the *koinonia* we share as bishops of the Anglican Church of Australia.”

Please pray at this time for a strengthening of ties, not a loosening of the bonds that we enjoy as Anglicans with other Anglicans around the world...

May Benedict, Sydney James Kirkby, and all the Saints walk with you this week...

*Sam*