

Day 3 – Trial of ANiC Parishes v Diocese of New Westminster - May 27, 2009

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. His love endures forever. (Psalm 136:1)

Bishop Ron Ferris

Today, Bishop Ron Ferris continued his cross-examination in the morning. Mr. Macintosh began sparring once again on whether or not certain canons could have been used in a certain way to challenge Bishop Ingham's "decision" to implement the blessing of same sex unions. Mr. Justice Kelleher objected to Mr. Macintosh's approach of asking Bishop Ferris to agree with his statement or opinion, and when Bishop Ferris disagreed, then saying "Well, you're not a canon lawyer". That ended that line of questioning and Macintosh then went on to see if Bishop Ron was aware of any "strategy" of ANiC to "take other parishes out of the Anglican Church of Canada". Bishop Ron advised he is not aware of any such strategy and that ANiC has always made clear in public statements and on their website that we only assist parishes that approach us or invite us to come and speak. In answer to a question about the tension between faith and teaching vs "social relevance", Bishop Ron responded "A priest or bishop has to serve his faith and God, and if relevance results from that faithfulness, that is good". When questioning Bishop Ron about a statement in his affidavit referring to the diocese's attempts "to evict faithful Anglican congregations from their buildings, (most especially the Chinese Anglican congregations)", Mr. Macintosh tried to get Bishop Ron to say that, "clergy aside", Bishop Ingham had never actually evicted any congregation and that the congregations were welcome to stay. Bishop Ron responded that clergy are part of the congregation, and just as there is "constructive dismissal", so he saw there could be "constructive eviction", and pointed out that if the diocese had simply consented, there could be two groups functioning in the diocese. Mr. Macintosh ended his cross-examination by pointing out that none of the congregations or priests were ever asked to do same sex blessings.

Mrs Linda Seale

Linda Seale, a churchwarden from St. Matthew's was next on the stand. She has attended St. Matthew's continuously since 1979, having been baptized in the United Church but was "largely unchurched" until she met her husband and began attending an Anglican church. She was married in the Anglican church and her sons were baptized in Anglican churches as well. She has been active in the parish of St. Matthew's and was involved in researching and assisted with the writing of the church history for its centennial in 2000. In addition, she has held various leadership roles over the years.

Linda said her reaction to being "out of communion" as a result of the diocese's actions in 2002 and 2003, was "grief", saying it was troubling at a deep spiritual level and raised "concerns about our theology and what we commonly believe".

She shared information about the parish's statistics (members – approx. 571, average Sunday Attendance – 200-300 people, and some of their 70+ ministries) and their worship, explaining they offer both traditional and contemporary services on Sundays.

The original property was built and paid for by parishioners in 1900 and a new building was built on land purchased in the 1970's, and completed in 1977. Money for this new building came from parishioners and they had a \$200,000 bank loan as well as an interest

bearing loan of \$44,000 from the diocese (although at a lower rate than the bank loan). Both loans were paid off by the parishioners.

After the parish grew rapidly in the 70s and 80s, the diocese required the parish to incorporate when they wanted to get a bank loan to expand their building, to insulate the diocese from any liability. The incorporation occurred, and a mortgage was obtained and paid off by 2003, again paid off with funds from the parishioners.

Linda then recounted an incident she found distressing. Following a week-long conference in 1994 led by Bishop Ingham, she expressed her concerns to him that his teaching at the conference appeared to promote pluralism. She asked him how this related to John 14:6 where Jesus said, *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"*. In response, Bishop Ingham had replied that there are some things you had to let go of. Linda said she was "shocked" that a bishop could say such a thing.

She then described some of the events subsequent to the vote in 2002, including a period where a number of parishioners took turns sleeping at the church after Bishop Ingham, without notice to the congregation, changed the locks at St. Martin's in North Vancouver and replaced all the Trustees. She described other events leading up to the vote to accept the oversight of Bishop Don Harvey, under the jurisdiction of the Southern Cone in February 2008 and the subsequent imposition of Canon 15 on their parish in the summer of 2008, which precipitated this lawsuit.

During cross-examination, Linda was questioned about the process the Bishop undertook in the lead-up to the vote in 2002: including withholding his consent twice previously (1998 and 2001), the twinning parishes/dialogue process, appointing a legal and canonical commission, and meetings with clergy about the conscience clause. Mr. Macintosh then went on to question about the withholding of assessments after the vote in 2002 (suggesting they amounted to \$793,000, although Linda was unable to confirm that figure), and about monies that went to the Anglican Communion in New Westminster (ACiNW) coalition. He further said that the parish had not paid a portion of the residential schools claim accepted by the Diocese of New Westminster. Linda pointed out that assessments are voluntary as were the residential school claim fundraising pledges and that St. Matthew's never made such a pledge.

After mentioning that (then) Bishop Buckle had tied his 2003 offer of episcopal oversight to jurisdiction, and that he would need full power to appoint priests, Mr. Macintosh went on to point out that Bishop Ingham had appointed conservative priests for the parishes, no priest or parish had been asked to do same sex blessings, and people in the congregation had come and gone over the years. Finally, he confirmed that Canon 15 had only been imposed after St. Matthew's advised it had "left the Anglican Church of Canada", but Linda pointed out that they referred to it as "realignment".

Mrs Gail Stevenson

Gail Stevenson became a member of St. John's Shaughnessy 68 years ago when she was baptized in a "small brown wooden building" at age 5. She attended York House School, which was then associated with the parish, and attended the church without her family. Her 4 children were all married at St. John's and all of her 13 grandchildren were baptized in the Anglican church, 9 of them at St. John's. Her mother eventually became an active member of the parish after being "fascinated by the powerful place of faith" that she saw in

Gail and came to St. John's to discover it. Her parents and sister-in-law are laid to rest in the memorial garden. Gail was active in many ministries over the years and currently serves in the prayer ministry and a Bible study.

Her parents contributed to the new church building, built in memory of those who had died in WWII, and Gail was one of the first group of communicants in the new church. She and her husband have been faithful donors over the years.

She recalled Rev Harry Robinson's world renown ministry which she described as "very powerful, very transforming and very Biblical". Visitors to Vancouver – especially from Toronto and England – would come to St. John's because of his preaching. She said the ministry carried on under Rev David Short, describing it as "a seamless transition. . . very evangelical, very Biblically based".

She was "disturbed" by Bishop Ingham's preaching on Easter Sunday in 1994. She read his book, Mansions of the Spirit and found his teaching "foreign to what I had learned". She found that the scriptures and coming to a living faith brought "freedom" and was distressed by anything that took that freedom away. She said, "The prospect of remaining in a diocese that blesses same-sex unions is not workable. The tenets of faith have changed. It's like a marriage that is no longer working. You can't be together because the divisions are too great." She described the division as "heartbreaking, sad and tragic. I never thought we would come to something like this."

On cross-examination, Mr. Macintosh pointed out that the CPR gave \$50,000 to St. John's for the building fund but sat down after Gail was unable to confirm that or answer questions about assessments and residential school settlements. He also got her to confirm that she highly endorsed the clergy appointments at St. John's.

Mr Peter Y G Pang

Court ended early when Mr. Macintosh chose not to cross-examine the third witness on the stand, Mr. Peter Y.G. Pang, a parishioner from Church of the Good Shepherd, the largest Chinese Anglican church in Canada.

In his direct examination, Peter gave a powerful testimony of his life of faith. Born in 1943 in Saba, a state in the federation of Malaysia, he was taught and encouraged in his life of faith by Anglican missionaries from the U.K., after they helped him overcome his "inferiority complex", resulting from years of bullying because he was left with a physical handicap from a bout with polio as a child. [Because of their influence, Peter went on to become a teacher and a high school principal and he obtained a diploma in theology. He then went on to have a successful career in business for more than 20 years.](#)

He shared his passion for the bible and the Anglican Church, saying, "When I read the Bible, God speaks to me, whispers to me". He said the Bible is the guide and authority for his life, "inspired by God... God-breathed... that is what I have been taught in the Anglican church". He finds the liturgy "a treasure, systematic and orderly", particularly in the Book of Common Prayer and described the Anglican Church as "universal and catholic – wherever I go, I can feel at home". While living in Malaysia, he was able to travel and study in New Zealand, spent a month in England and ended up in Canada in 1988. "But, wherever I went, I felt I could fit in easily; it [the Anglican Church] is my home and I can communicate with everyone I meet." He emphasized the Anglican Communion was like a

big family. He found his church home at Good Shepherd because it was “a very Bible-based church” that concentrated “on preaching the gospel and this is what I love.” He was blessed to take two mission teams to Saba, one in 1992 and another in 2002, to share the gospel.

He discussed his interaction with the diocese, first as a lay delegate to Synod in 1992 and again in 1998 when he spoke “very passionately against the blessing of same-sex unions” because he it was “against the teaching of scripture and against the will of God” and further “that it would be a departure from Anglican theology”. If passed, he felt it would be difficult for him to witness for Christ.

After the 2002 vote, a group of parishioners from Good Shepherd visited Bishop Ingham to attempt reconciliation and to share their pain with the person they considered their chief pastor. At the same time, he said, they wanted to listen to the bishop. It was also very important for them “to tell him that, even though we don’t accept the blessing of same-sex unions, we are not against homosexuals, not against those who live together outside marriage. We are just ministers of God and we are sinners ourselves and there is no basis for us to reject anyone.” After the bishop explained how this is like the issue of slavery where the church changed its mind, and that the diocese is a very diverse family with different views, he said “I hope you can stay, but if you cannot stay and you have to leave, you have to leave the property behind.” Peter was devastated that the bishop would seem “more concerned about the property than his flock” and that he did not plead with them or show a loving attitude toward them.

Peter discussed the importance of being “in the world and not of it”, saying that when the apostles came out from the upper room, they turned the world upside down. “I am worried that we will be turned upside down by the world.”

He said that he voted to join the Southern Cone in 2008, “Firstly, because it is Anglican. I am Anglican. I want to belong to an Anglican Church and the Anglican Communion.” Finally, he praised Bishop Don, who had also been to Saba and experienced what Peter had experienced, saying “He is a person who loves the church, who loves the congregation. . . he has sacrificed a lot to be with us. I know by joining ANiC, the kind of pastoring I will receive.”

We praise God for His faithful servants who testified today and for all those who upheld them in prayer. Christ was held high.

Tomorrow, Rev David Short will be on the stand from 10:00 am. Please pray for him as we expect it to be a long day for him and he has not been well in the last two weeks.

Thanks for your partnership in the gospel,

Cheryl Chang