

The Missionary Diocese of CANA East | Pastoral Address  
Missions Conference and Synod 2019 | Souderton, Pennsylvania  
The Rt. Rev. Julian M. Dobbs L.Th, Th.M, D.D

In the name of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

I grew up in a country and personally played one of the most violent ball games on the planet called rugby - otherwise known as *'kill the man with the ball'*. I loved rugby and still do. I played in the front row of the scrum. I took a lot of hard knocks (and gave a few myself). I learnt about the importance of being part of a team. I learnt about staying physically fit enough to run the full course of the game and I learnt that to be successful and to win, you needed to strategize. My buddies in the back line were the fast runners; we could not win without them. But they were no good without us in the forward pack. Given the type of boys we were, always pushing the rules of the game to the limit, we learnt to play with 14 players (instead of 15) as one of our number would often be penalized and sent to what is called the 'sin-bin;' a place that even your bishop found himself on occasion.

When a rugby game reaches the end of the allotted 80 minutes of game time, the referee, if he chooses to do so, may play extra time for injuries that have slowed down the game. In injury time, there is a window of opportunity to make a play and score points (the outcome of many serious international rugby games has been changed during injury time).

In Luke chapter 9, time is essentially up, the disciples are calling for judgement on a Samaritan village which rejects the lordship of Jesus, but in chapter 10 Jesus says, there is a window of opportunity for the offer of salvation to the whole world. This is not yet the time for judgment.

We might say of May 17, 2019 that we live in injury time as far as the history of the world is concerned. There is a moment of opportunity. It is not yet time for the final whistle. That *will* come, but now is the time for urgent proclamation. That is where our gospel passage begins. Luke chapter 10 verse 1.

Jesus summons 72 disciples (perhaps representative of the nations of Genesis 10) 72 disciples who are devoted to him, whatever the cost. Disciples for whom it is clear, that urgent proclamation of the message about Jesus is the need of the moment. Disciples who will walk before him in sustained endurance until the end of their lives. Notice the language Jesus uses (**verse 1**) **He sent them ahead of him**, or literally going before the face of him.

Just as John the Baptist was sent before the face of Jesus to prepare us for the coming of the Messiah, Jesus appoints first of all, a small group (Luke 9), then 72 others to go before his face and to prepare for his coming. Therefore, this is a global mission by an appointed workforce with a global vision, specifically appointed and commissioned by Jesus to go before him announcing the coming of the Lord. How global is your congregation? St. Augustine's Westerville, Ohio has helped to re-roof St. John's Barberi in the Anglican Church of Kenya and many of you have supported our persecuted brothers and sisters through our affiliated ministry called Katartismos Global.

I hope you see the significance of this for our missionary diocese; it is significant for your congregation, it is significant for bishops, clergy and lay people. You and I are being handed the baton, as it were - the baton of God's word - and told to go before the face of Jesus and to proclaim his name to the world. We are to be (as the late Dr. John Stott said) *global Christians with a global vision*.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/692344-we-must-be-global-christians-with-a-global-vision-because>

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How wonderfully this missions conference and synod illustrates the global nature of who we are and the holy and beautiful mission to which Christ continues to call his Church – the proclamation of his gospel.

From its creation in 2013, this missionary diocese had its foundation in Jesus Christ in whom there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no Igbo, Yoruba, American or New Zealander. We have among the congregations of our missionary diocese, amongst others, British, Indian, Cuban, Chinese, Korean, Malaysian, Grenadian, Kenyan, Guyanese, Pakistani, Trinidadian, Canadian, Filipino, Columbian, Barbadian, Jamaican, Nepali, and Australian Christians - and we are all one in Christ Jesus. This is a truth that definitely needs to be proclaimed and revealed in this fallen and divided world.

Luke wants us to have confidence, certainty and assurance that the message that Jesus Christ is King, is for the nations of the world and it is to be taken to those nations, by his disciples. Taken into whatever office suite you work in, whatever floor you reside on, whether you work a supermarket register or teach pre-calc; whether you are low church, high church; whether you are 1662, 1928 or the Anglican Standard Text. This is a global mission for disciples commissioned by Jesus: to take his message in (injury time), before the final whistle blows (the last trumpet sounds), to every corner of this nation and beyond!

Notice very importantly, it is the gospel, the living word of God that we must proclaim. Faith comes from where? Writes Paul to the Church of Rome, ***Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.***<sup>2</sup> Paul's ministry, he writes to the Christians at Colossae, was to make ***the word of God fully known***<sup>3</sup>.

A person can come to faith only through hearing the gospel and the specific message that must be heard is the word – the living word of Christ, that is: the good news about Jesus Christ as the crucified and risen Savior.

The neighborhoods, towns and cities of our nation desperately need the good news of Jesus Christ. Since 1999, overall, U.S. church membership has fallen from 70% to nearly 50%, and the percentage of adults with no religious affiliation has more than doubled, from 8% to 19%.

Urgent proclamation is an absolute essential of gospel mission.

So, what lessons can we learn in this Missionary Diocese about mission, church planting and the proclamation of the gospel from Luke the apostle of Jesus?

Firstly, Gospel mission and the proclamation of the Word is an Urgent Work and we are to pray for it. Look at chapter 10, verse 2. ***And he said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.*** Literally to thrust out, or cast out laborers into His harvest field.

Jesus tells us that it is harvest time, that the harvest is plentiful. And we are together in the harvest of the Lord!

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<sup>2</sup> Romans chapter 10, verse 17

<sup>3</sup> Colossians chapter 1, verse 25

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Many of the congregations and mission of our diocese are prayerfully and strategically participating in this gospel proclamation.

Later today, we will hear from Mr. Alan Avera who is representing *Christianity Explored*: a program designed to open God's word to individuals who are seeking to know more about Jesus.

Recently, the Rev. Caleb Evans, from Holy Trinity Syracuse, facilitated *Christianity Explored* in his congregation. Here is what Caleb wrote:

Holy Trinity has been using Christianity Explored in a number of contexts and it has been useful in each of them. Our first time using the course, we promoted it to the entire congregation... I have used it in the outreach Bible study I lead for the unchurched. It has been incredibly encouraging to me to witness people coming to the realization that salvation is by grace, through faith in Christ, and is not by works. Deacon Marc has even had the experience of seeing a young man, over the course of one session, go from believing that Jesus was a good teacher, to believing that He is the Son of God.

Similarly, the Rev. Paul Young in Florida says:

Let the Gospel tell the gospel. This is one of the exciting reasons Glory of God Church is confident to use *Christianity Explored*. As a pastor it's a win- win! People hear the Gospel and people learn to share the gospel! Jamie, a member at Glory of God Church wrote this about *Christianity Explored*: I have used it with my high school girls Bible study group, with an old man of 103 years, my sister's family in their home and one-on-one with a woman with a learning difficulty. My brother-in-law who had a stroke two years ago and is now confined to a wheelchair, watched it last year. It made a profound impression on him and he has since given his life to the Lord.

Together in the harvest, through other wonderful and very creative means, congregations all across our diocese are reaching out with the good news about Jesus.

Last month, St. Leonard's in Brooklyn, New York presented, "The last Seven Words of Christ," by Theodore Dubois as part of their holy week outreach of the gospel.

On a recent visit to Christ Church, New York City, I listened to Mr. Derek Tsui introduce a community concert on a Sunday afternoon as part of the outreach of the Christ Church congregation into the urban buzz of New York City.

Together in the harvest, the recently re-planted Messiah Anglican Church in Germantown, Philadelphia, used their relocation into a new neighborhood to reach out to the local community in the weeks preceding Holy Week. The Rev. Bo Ubbens reports:

Some great results came from this event. We met one family who heard about us from a similar outreach at Christmas. They want to baptize their child, and they have now visited our church and would like to become members. A handful of neighbors said they would like to visit us in the future. We talked with many interesting people, and we hope to follow up with them at a future outreach – our "end of the summer" cookout. We took about 60 bags packed with candy, a flyer listing all of our Holy Week services, kid craft, and a letter of introduction and went around the neighborhood, knocking on doors, and handing out the bags.

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***I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest.<sup>4</sup>***

They are white for harvest with young people. (Raise you hand for a moment if you committed your life to Christ BEFORE the age of 22). 85% of adult American Christians made a commitment to follow Christ before their 22nd birthday.

Christians like Julio, from Restoration Anglican Church in Miami Florida. Archdeacon Jorge Finlay said, "Julio was a young man whose parents came from Cuba. They did not attend church, but Julio was invited to summer camp. He plugged in, came to youth group, attended our catechism class and made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ."

I had the privilege of baptizing Julio on my episcopal visitation to Jorge's congregation earlier this year.

Jesus tells us that it is harvest time; that the harvest is plentiful. It may not seem very plentiful in your particular location at the moment, but look at what Jesus says (vs.2) ***The harvest is plentiful (it is abundant) and what is needed is more workers, more laborers.*** Therefore, Our Lord tells us to pray earnestly. To pray earnestly, urgently, for the Lord to thrust out, drive out laborers into this diocese, into the harvest field of your city, into the national and global harvest field.

And in our context the majority of these laborers are going to be raised up by Christ in answer to your prayers and my prayers! It is from our 39 congregations, missions and church plants that the Lord will raise up men and women to prayerfully, willingly and sacrificially yield their lives to this missionary call to the harvest. The Bible gives numerous examples of men and women called out of everyday situations for special service to the Lord. Abraham, Moses, David, the prophets, Esther and the apostles. Men and women, young and old. Samuel would have been around 13 when God called him to ministry.

Jeremiah was around 17 years old. Think of the young virgin Mary, the mother of our Lord – all used by God, for his glory in their youth. But it is not just the young. Abraham was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.<sup>5</sup> Caleb is 85 years old when he asks Joshua for territory within the Promised Land.<sup>6</sup> He says, ***I am still as strong today as I was in the day that Moses sent me.***<sup>7</sup>

Fellow disciples of Christ in this Missionary Diocese, together, Christ has called us into his harvest. This is not only very biblical, it is very Anglican. The Church in England began by a powerful evangelistic mission that followed Jesus' commands in Luke's Gospel.

Upon arriving in Canterbury, England in the late 6<sup>th</sup> century the missionary monk, Augustine, and those with him, "Preached the Word of life to as many as they could." And what was the result? "Some people, impressed by their blameless simplicity of life and the sweetness of their heavenly doctrine, believed and were baptized."<sup>8</sup> Anglicanism is a missionary expression of the Christian faith and has sponsored global missions since the 18th century. The sending and

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<sup>4</sup> John chapter 4, verse 35

<sup>5</sup> Genesis chapter 12, verse 4

<sup>6</sup> Joshua chapter 14, verse 11

<sup>7</sup> Joshua chapter 14, verse 12

<sup>8</sup> Venerable Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*

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funding of missionaries to the far reaches of the globe to preach the gospel has been a constant feature of faithful Anglican congregations and dioceses.

Later this year, Bishop Seabury Anglican Church, Gales Ferry Connecticut, continues this biblical and Anglican missionary commitment as they send a short term mission to share the gospel in Haiti. From August 11-17 the team led by the Rev. Kevin and Natalie Ryan will stay at New Life Children's Home, ministering to the children of the orphanage.

Prior to our marriage, both Brenda and I had the privilege of serving in missionary contexts. Brenda served with Gospel Literature Outreach in the Philippines and I served under the auspices of the Anglican Board of Missions in the pacific archipelago Kingdom of Tonga.

Members of short-term missions experience other cultures and cities and often see for the first time that the glorious revelation of the Church of Jesus Christ encompasses people from every tribe and language and people and nation<sup>9</sup>. So often, participants return with a greater confidence in the faith<sup>10</sup> because they have served the Lord in new ways and have been stretched beyond that which is familiar. Many people, perhaps some of you, have sensed God's call to full-time ministry or mission in the church after serving on a short-term mission trip.

***The harvest is plentiful, but... pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.***

The Book of Revelation tells us that in the last day the kingdom of God will include a multitude, drawn from every nation, ethnicity and tribe. It will be as countless in size as the stars in the sky. A vast international company like this cannot be reached by a few. Many thousands of people will be needed, thousands who are willing to leave their comfort zones and serve the cause of Jesus Christ; thousands who, left to themselves, might otherwise sit comfortably in church on Sundays and in front to digital screens during the week, forgetting about their faith and the great harvest task of Christ's Church. We need to pray to the Lord of the harvest that He will intensify our missionary zeal and send out the laborers.

With this in mind, I am committed as your bishop to supporting, calling, educating and equipping that next echelon of lay and ordained men and women, who will continue to carry and proclaim the gospel into the next generation and beyond.

I firmly believe that we must make educating and 'unleashing' the spiritual power, enthusiasm and entrepreneurial creativity of newly recruited lay and ordained ministers to be commissioned and thrust out into the harvest field as one of our highest priorities (Luke chapter 10 in the very least, suggests that this was an urgent priority of Jesus).

### Holy Orders in the Anglican Church

It will take both the lay and the ordained to fulfill the great mission to which the Lord still calls us. Men and women like the 23 individuals who are currently in our diocesan ordination process. Men like Ife Ojetayo. Ife wrote to me recently and said:

I discerned an internal call to pastoral ministry while I was in college through my involvement in InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. I resisted the call for many years, telling

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<sup>9</sup> Revelation chapter 5, verse 9

<sup>10</sup> 1 Timothy chapter 3, verse 13

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God I had a better plan for my life and intent on building my own kingdom rather than God's. In his mercy, God brought me to the end of myself and in the same period brought me to the Anglican Church of the Good Shepherd (Binghamton, New York)...over time I was encouraged to lead a Bible study and later I came on staff as the youth minister. God used the Church at Good Shepherd and the oversight of The Rev. Matthew Kennedy to confirm his call on my life. And I was encouraged to pursue seminary education. We are eager to be used by God in the advancement of his kingdom in whatever context He calls us.

It is no small matter to commit to our diocesan ordination process. The process is deliberately comprehensive and extensive. In our current process for ordination, potential candidates for Holy Orders are required to answer searching personal, doctrinal, psychological and practical requirements. In his epistle to the young pastor Timothy, the apostle Paul writes, Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands.<sup>11</sup> Most of the current individuals applying for ordination in this diocese have been in the process for a number of years.

I have indicated to our Canon Theologian the need to add a canonical examination to our process before candidates are brought to the bishop for his decision regarding ordination. A canonical examination will require candidates to show proficiency in The Holy Scriptures, the doctrine of the Church, history of the Reformation, The Thirty Nine Articles of Religion, The Jerusalem Declaration, Christian Theology, liturgical and ministry practice.

It is critically important the individuals who are ordained in Christ's Church are extensively formed in our doctrine and practice as Anglicans.

The Anglican Church in North America and our own missionary diocese uphold The Book of Common Prayer of 1662 and the form and manner of making, ordaining, and consecrating of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons as providing the standard for Anglican theology and practice.

In that Prayer Book the preface to the ordination service says this, "No man might presume to execute the office [of bishop, priest or deacon] except he were first called, tried and examined, and are known to have such qualities as are requisite for the same."<sup>12</sup>

The function of the priest in the 1662 ordinal was not to primarily minister the sacraments (don't panic - the sacraments are important), but the function of the priest was to primarily minister God's word. The exhortation in the 1662 ordination service (amazingly) never mentions sacraments. By instructing that a bible be given to the newly ordained priest, Archbishop Cranmer evocatively signaled a great reversal from the medieval understanding of ministry by heightening the place of the ministry of the word.

The sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are holy and highly valued in the Anglican Church. But we have all seen the damage that is done when ordained ministers have departed from the faith and abused the ministry of the word by teaching heresy and promulgating false doctrine.

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<sup>11</sup> 1 Timothy chapter 5, verse 22

<sup>12</sup> Book of Common Prayer, 1662

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I believe that our robust ordination process and the inclusion of a canonical examination upholds the weighty responsibility that is entrusted to those who are ordained (and especially those who preach) and serve as ministers and leaders of our congregations.

Remember, ordination is not the only way for disciples of Jesus to use their gifts in the service of the gospel. As Anglicans, we believe the New Testament teaches the priesthood of all believers. This was a cardinal principle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Reformation. Martin Luther criticized the traditional distinction between the laity and the clergy—arguing that all who belong to Christ through faith, baptism, and the Gospel shared in the priesthood of Jesus Christ. Luther said, “For whoever comes out of the water of baptism can boast that he is already a consecrated priest, bishop, and pope.”<sup>13</sup> (Although he went on to say that it is not seemly that just anybody shall exercise such office).

Brothers and sisters, every Christian is mandated to be a representative, an ambassador of Christ in his redemptive outreach to the world. “Laity and clergy *together* in the harvest of the Lord. *Together* bringing others into the Church. *Together* leading the wanderers back to the road. *Together* stretching forth a hand to the fallen and winning over the outsiders.”<sup>14</sup>

Firstly, Gospel mission and the proclamation of the Word is an Urgent Work and we are to pray for it.

### Lambs in the Midst of Wolves. Luke chapter 10, verse 3.

Secondly, as we willingly participate together in this holy and beautiful ministry of sharing the gospel in the harvest, the Lord warns us, Luke chapter 10, verse 3 that this gospel mission is dangerous work and therefore we are to expect opposition to it.

When I was elected a bishop in 2011, I asked a Christian brother who had recently been consecrated bishop to give me advice. He said to me, ‘There is an increased intensity and spiritual attack from Satan.’

Jesus is clear.

We are to expect vigorous opposition because verse 3 carries the most extraordinary image, look with me – verse 3. ***Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.*** Is that not an extraordinary idea? The Good Shepherd says to his lambs, Go your way, I am sending you out of the sheep fold, into the midst of wolves!

Wild-life biologists who study wolves report that it is during a hunt where cooperation between wolves within a pack is most apparent. A wolf pack may trail its prey for days before making its move. During this time, they are already hunting, assessing the flock, looking for an animal that displays any sign of weakness and this is just the beginning. Wolves factor in other conditions such as weather and terrain; the effectiveness of the hunting strategy of the pack.

***Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.***

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<sup>13</sup> Martin Luther, *Address to the Nobility of the German Nation* (1520)

<sup>14</sup> John Calvin, *Commentaries*, Heb. 10:24.

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Jesus, the Good Shepherd, has absolutely no doubt about the world's hatred of him and of his message. He expects his disciples to be greeted with real hostility as they go out in to the world.

Have you noticed that the day you trusted Christ as Savior, you did not board a cruise ship; you boarded a battleship! The New Testament is filled with military language. Jesus was very clear: If you are going to follow me, you had better count the cost, because this is war.

Even when Jesus was talking about the two different paths, he said, there is a wide path that the majority of people will take and that path is easy and then there is a narrow path that few will take and that path is hard. Brothers and sisters, it is very important to understand that, as the people of God, this is a battle.

The spiritual battle is intense! Have you noticed? Speaking about the devil and his duties in the Church, Bishop J.C. Ryle said this, "The devil, no doubt, is everywhere. That malicious spirit is unwearied in his efforts to do us harm. He is ever watching for our halting and seeking occasion to destroy our souls. But nowhere perhaps is the devil so active as in a congregation of Gospel-hearers. Nowhere does he labor so hard to stop the progress of that which is good, and to prevent men and women being saved."<sup>15</sup>

In spite of the opposition, Jesus prays for us to take the gospel He has entrusted to us and He sends his laborers out into the teeth of the opposition.

The gospel we are commissioned by Christ to proclaim is the same gospel proclaimed by 16<sup>th</sup> century Anglican bishops' Latimer, Ridley and Cranmer which led them to their deaths as martyrs of the faith. It is the same gospel proclaimed by our GAFCON brothers and sisters many of whom face the reality of persecution for the faith on a daily basis. Some of them will lose their lives and that may be today! Recent reports state that one in every nine Christians in the world today face persecution for the faith. Jesus sends us out into the teeth of the opposition.

So, do not fight each other, but fight the good fight of the faith.

Uphold the doctrine of the English reformation and our beloved 1662 Book of Common prayer, but do so recognizing that the Reformation was first and foremost about recovering the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ — bringing light to the darkness, that people might truly know and serve God. Yes, celebrate the Reformation not as romantic antiquarians, but as a passionate disciple of Jesus Christ.

And so, this is an urgent work, pray earnestly for it. It is a dangerous work, expect opposition to it.

In this missionary diocese we have been greatly assisted in the Lord's harvest by two grandfathers. Most of us who have had the privilege of knowing our grandfathers would attest to the special place that grandfathers have in our lives. My own two grandfathers, Francis Patrick Aloysius O'Brien and William Robert Dobbs were both remarkable human beings.

Francis was born May 26, 1903 in Westport, New Zealand. Excelling in athletics and boxing, represented his province at rugby and had a trial for New Zealand's national rugby team.

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<sup>15</sup> Expository Thoughts on the Gospels: Luke volume 1

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Frank (as he was known) purchased a dairy farm with the assistance of his father and joined the army in 1940, leaving his wife and daughter behind. Francis served as a runner in the 21st battalion in World War II. Captured during active duty in the desert of Libya, he was listed as missing for 4 years. Finally located by the Red Cross at Stalag 8b in Lamsdorf, Poland where 30,000 Allied PoWs were force-marched westward across Poland and Germany in appalling winter conditions, lasting about four months from January to April 1945. Called various names: "The Great March West", "The Long March", "The Lamsdorf Death March". My grandfather Frank was one of those heroes.

William Robert was born on September 4, 1907 in Hukerenui in New Zealand's North Island. Known as Bill, he was also a good rugby player and grew up in a farming family. Bill married my grandmother Dorothy in May 1933. He trained as a school teacher and was principal at numerous country schools, also serving as commissioner of the local scouting district. During the Second World War, Bill was enlisted in New Zealand's Home Guard. He was a committed follower of Christ, an Anglican lay reader, active member of St. Stephen's Anglican Church where he served on vestry. Bill was significantly influential in my own Christian formation.

Grandfathers are very special people. Some weeks ago, my daughter Grace and her husband David informed me that, The Lord willing, in December this year, I too will be a grandfather!

At this Synod, we are giving thanks for two very special grandfathers whose place in our life, past, present and future is without comparison.

### The first: The Rt. Rev'd David J. Bena

When consecrated a bishop in the Diocese of Albany in 2000, Bishop Dave Bena had served the church as a parish priest for more than 26 years. He joined CANA in March of 2007 as its first suffragan bishop, later serving as the interim rector of a Virginia congregation before serving as the assisting bishop of this diocese.

During the Vietnam War, Bishop Bena flew 252 bombing missions as a U.S. Marine bombardier-navigator. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross and 21 Strike Air Medals. After leaving the Marine Corps, he completed his seminary training at Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS) and subsequently served around the world, including the Middle East, as an Air Force Chaplain, retiring in 1992 with the rank of colonel.

Bishop Dave is the author of *Your Faith: Memorial, Memory or Miracle?* and the *In the Crucible* series, a trilogy of suspense fiction that shares of the faith, dedication, and sacrifices of our armed services and intelligence communities.

If you know the Bena's, you soon realize that the greatness of the man is in part only possible because alongside Dave, is Mary Ellen. All men have the seeds of greatness in them, but those seeds need to be watered. God gave Bishop Dave a soul mate in his wife. The tender hearted, encouraging, listening and faithful Mary Ellen has served with Bishop Dave and together they have impacted our lives, pastored our families, loved us, prayed and served us witnessing to Christ and the power of his resurrection.

*Mrs. Pam Wilkes... I just love the man. During our darkest time, Bishop Bena was our only hope. He never disappointed.*

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Archdeacon Don Helmandallor... *Dave Bena is a proclaimer and defender of the gospel message in a way that is calm and respectful, sincere and assertive.*

Archdeacon Ronald Gauss... *In times of difficulty and times of calm, Bishop Dave always came with a message of hope and encouragement. He and Mary Ellen are a symbol of strength and prayer.*

Bishop Dave and Mary Ellen, we love you. We thank you. We praise God for you. This missionary diocese is your home and will always acknowledge you as our grandfather-in-faith. Will you stand with me, give a shout out an honor our grandfather Bishop Dave and Mrs. Mary Ellen Bena!

We are also acknowledging another grandfather.

The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) is a grandfather of our missionary diocese.

In 2005, the Convocation of Anglicans in North America (CANA) was established by the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) as a missionary movement in North America under the Church of Nigeria. CANA fulfilled two main objectives: it provided a connection between the Church of Nigeria and Nigerian immigrants in North America and provided oversight to congregations who were seeking partnership with an orthodox Anglican province. In 2009, CANA became a founding jurisdiction of the Anglican Church in North America and the Church of Nigeria was the first Anglican Province to recognize ACNA as a province of the Anglican Communion, declaring that ACNA and the Church of Nigeria were (and still are) in full communion with each other.

Our diocese was established by a resolution of CANA Council and we were received as a diocese of the Anglican Church in North America in June 2013. Our relationship with the Church of Nigeria has been through the bishop and through CANA.

Earlier this year, the Church of Nigeria and the Anglican Church in North America held a joint meeting of representatives from both provinces in Houston, Texas. As a result of this meeting and with the agreement of both the Primate of All Nigeria and the Primate of the Anglican Church in North America, CANA will now become solely a ministry of the Church of Nigeria and no longer a jurisdiction of ACNA.

Over the past months, I have prayerfully considered the implications of this decision for the ministry to which God has called us in this diocese.

I have consulted with both the Church of Nigeria, the Anglican Church in North America and leaders of Gafcon. I have listened to the voices of clergy and lay leaders and I have laid this matter before our Standing Committee for their wisdom, counsel and decision.

I believe that the best way forward for our diocese is to continue, with as little change as possible, as a diocese of the Anglican Church in North America (which we already are) and to request (under the new arrangement) that we become a ministry partner with the Church of Nigeria. The Church of Nigeria is in our DNA; therefore, to request a continuing relationship with that province honors the place of the Church of Nigeria as a grandfather of our diocese.

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Some have believed that the recognition of the Archbishop of Canterbury is necessary for us to be authentically Anglican and therefore a relationship with the Church of Nigeria provides us with authenticity.

However, in 2017, The Archbishops of Canterbury and York recognized the orders of the Anglican Church in North America. This means that my holy orders as a bishop and the orders of the priests and deacons of this diocese are recognized by the Church of England directly through our relationship with the Anglican Church in North America.<sup>16</sup>

Let me be clear, Anglicanism is much less about the recognition of orders, or the vestments of clergy, or the grand cathedrals of England. It is about Christ and the Living word of God.

To quote Dr. Jim Packer (Anglican Scholar and presbyter of the Anglican Church in North America), Anglicanism is first biblical and protestant in its stance, and second, evangelical and reformed in its doctrine... thirdly, Anglicanism is liturgical and traditional in its worship.<sup>17</sup>

From the inception of this diocese, I have articulated my belief that we have been established by God to be a biblical missionary diocese in the Anglican tradition reaching North America and beyond with the transforming love of God. I continue to believe this, therefore as your bishop, I firmly believe we will best fulfill this mission continuing as we already are, a diocese of the Anglican Church in North America and requesting a direct relationship with the Church of Nigeria (our grandfather) as a ministry partner.

This relationship pleases me. It keeps our focus on Christ and his kingdom and secures us with fellow evangelical Anglicans here in North America, the Church of Nigeria and across our Gafcon Anglican family.

As a result of these developments, the Constitution and Canons Committee have prepared amendments to both our constitution and canons for the consideration of voting delegates of this Synod and the Standing Committee has agreed to change the name of our diocese.

At the April 2019 meeting of the Standing Committee of this diocese, Dr. Joseph Nosiri, a duly elected member of our Standing Committee, moved that: Should the Constitutional amendments presented to Synod 2019 be approved, the Standing Committee expresses their sincere gratitude to The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) for the faithful and sacrificial leadership they have provided to Anglicans across North America and request that this diocese be received as a Ministry Partner of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion). This motion was seconded by The Venerable Samuel Orimogunje and passed unanimously by the Standing Committee.

If passed, these constitutional and canonical amendments are structural changes and nothing more. The doctrine of our diocese, as referenced in our Constitution, remains unchanged. There will be no change in your bishop. No change in your congregation. No change in your liturgy. We remain part of the Anglican Church in North America and will request ministry partner relationship with the Church of Nigeria.

I believe this is a good and timely development in our life as a missionary diocese.

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.virtueonline.org/acna-orders-valid-state-archbishops-canterbury-and-york>

<sup>17</sup> The Rev. Michael Jensen

## The Bishop's Pastoral Address

Missions Conference and Synod 2019 | Souderton, Pennsylvania

The Rt. Rev. Julian M. Dobbs L.Th, Th.M, D.D

We have learnt so much from our grandfather, the Church of Nigeria. We have learnt no matter what the cost, that faithfulness to Christ must always triumph over denominational loyalty and affiliation.

In 2005, all references to 'communion with the see of Canterbury' were deleted from the Constitution of the Church of Nigeria which now states that she is in communion with all Anglican Churches, Dioceses and Provinces that hold and maintain the 'Historic Faith, Doctrine, Sacrament and Discipline of the one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church'. That's us. That's your congregation. That's this diocese.

I would assert, as your bishop, that we as a diocese are also in communion with all Anglican Churches, Dioceses and Provinces that hold and maintain the 'Historic Faith, Doctrine, Sacrament and Discipline of the one Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church'.

Our grandfather, the Church of Nigeria has also assisted us in rightfully elevating the authority of the living word of God.

The author of the letter to the Hebrews writes, the word of God is ***living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.***<sup>18</sup>

It is no exaggeration to say that American evangelicalism is facing a profound loss of confidence in the word of God and it is of crisis proportions. You only need to observe the flood of gimmicks that have poured into the church and, in some quarters, taken over the church, which speak to a loss of conviction about the sufficiency of scripture and a loss of confidence in the Bible. The fact is that over the last 100 years, there has been one wave after another of attacks on the Bible, the inspiration, the inerrancy, the sufficiency of scripture. The trickle-down effect has seeped even into our beloved Anglican Communion. If we believed what we ought to believe about the Bible, the living word of God, people would be flocking to bring themselves under the authority of the living word. The Bible is living. It is full of life, endued with life. It is a living word. The Bible is not a dead book. These are not dead letters upon a page. They are living - full of vibrant heart-piercing life. The word of God is living and powerful. The Bible has hands to lay ahold of you. It has feet to run after you. The Bible has power to subdue you. It is sharper than the sharpest of swords.

It has the power to search out thoughts deep within our mind. So, let us be reformed by the living word of God.

GAFCON, the Church of Nigeria, the Anglican Church in North America have all assisted us in regaining a confidence of what the Bible itself teaches and provides for us.

Earlier this year, at my request, the Standing Committee established a small group to recommend a new name for our diocese. A new name is required for two reasons. Given the changes to CANA which have been presented to you and the increasing non-geographic nature of the growth of our diocese, a new name is necessary. Clergy, spouses and some lay leaders were canvassed. Everyone had an opinion! Upon receiving the report of the small group, the standing committee unanimously voted that should the Constitutional amendments presented to

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<sup>18</sup> Hebrews chapter 4 verse 12

## The Bishop's Pastoral Address

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Synod 2019 be approved, the name of the diocese be changed to the Anglican Diocese of the Living Word.

I am very excited by this new name. The Anglican Diocese of the Living Word.

The living word of God is the supreme authority in Anglicanism. Article VI of the Thirty Nine Articles of Religion, "Of the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation," puts it this way:

Holy Scriptures containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.<sup>19</sup>

In Anglicanism, the living Word of God alone contains all things necessary for salvation.

This was the view of Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, who was martyred for his faith in 1556. He said, 'Let us night and day muse, meditate and contemplate the Scriptures. Let us ruminare, and (as it were) chew the cud, that we may have the sweet juice, spiritual effect, honey, kernel, taste, comfort, and consolation of them.'

The Anglican Diocese of the Living Word beautifully captures the essence of the fundamental beliefs of our diocese. Whether you are in Tulsa Oklahoma in the West, whether you are in Hillsdale Michigan, Waukesha Wisconsin, Manhattan New York City, Annapolis Maryland, Pine Knot Kentucky or Miami Florida, we believe Scripture alone is the Living Word of God.

The Anglican Diocese of the Living Word, a missionary diocese in the Anglican Church.

### Conclusion

Earlier, I referenced the missionary journey of Augustine to the British Isles to preach the living word of God to the English nation. Augustine and the monks with him, set off obediently but were soon seized with terror and wanted to return home instead of going to this barbarous, fierce and unbelieving nation where they did not even know the language. They agreed that it was safer to return, so Augustine – who was appointed to be bishop if they were accepted by the English – went back humbly to implore Pope Gregory to let them off this dangerous, hard and uncertain journey. The Pope responded by sending them a letter urging them on to the work of preaching God's word and to rely on God's help.

This is what he said: "From Gregory, the servant of the servants of God, to the servants of our Lord. "Since it is better not to begin a good work than to think of giving it up once you have started, you, my beloved sons, ought diligently to complete the good work, which, by the help of the Lord, you have undertaken. So do not let the toil of the journey or the tongues of men, discourage you, but with all earnestness and by God's guidance fulfill what you have started, knowing that great labor is followed by the greater glory of an eternal reward."<sup>20</sup>

Dear brothers and sisters of this Missionary Diocese. This is injury time. Between the cross and Christ's return there is one last opportunity for the people of this world, before they die or before Jesus returns, to hear the good news of rescue from judgment and the gift of God's forgiveness and love through Jesus Christ. The next whistle will end it all. The trumpet will sound! Jesus will

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<sup>19</sup> Article VI of the Thirty Nine articles of religion

<sup>20</sup> <https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/study/module/gregory-the-great-evangelizes-england>

**The Bishop's Pastoral Address**

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return and every single person in your workplace and mine, your home and mine, every person who has ever lived will stand before Christ to give account of their life.

So, let us reverently commit our cause to God. For He is faithful to complete what He has begun. If one and all we keep resolutely faithful to it, ready for whatever service or sacrifice it may demand, then with God's help, we shall prevail.<sup>21</sup>

***The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.***

In the name of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

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<sup>21</sup> His Majesty, King George VI, September 3, 1939