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The Grape Vine is the official newsletter of:

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A NEW REFORMATION

By Rod Ellis

Early this year, the Lord spoke to me through 2 Chronicles 2:1-10. I shared this with our Parish Council and Vestry recently with the following questions as we looked at how to further the Kingdom of God in building our Lord's Church.

What is the motivation to build?

Solomon gave orders to build a temple for the Name of the Lord (v.1)...The temple I am going to build will be great, because God is greater than all other gods (v.5).

We want to build a great church to honour the name of the Lord, our Almighty God.

How does it get built?

Send me a man skilled ...Send me also...My men will work with yours... (v.7,8). We need to ask the Lord to send us skilled workers, resources as we partner and network in Kingdom body ministry.

COOL is a good church. We considered what is good about it, and suggested that we have been faithful in proclaiming the Word of God all these years, have a Kingdom Mission focus in partnering with His people, enjoy warm and welcoming fellowship, and are open to the leading of the Holy Spirit. We also compared ourselves with the Church of Antioch in Acts 11:19-30, 13:1-3 where there was prayer, testimony, generous, mission, sending, evidence of grace among other qualities.

We then looked at how can we go from good to great, and recognised we need the same prayer as Solomon - to ask God to send us good skilled workers and resources. We are part of a Church with a great history locally, but are also part of a new reformation that is taking place worldwide. This gives us access to the rich resources of God's grace in His wider Church. I digress to give a synopsis of my personal journey and reflections.

I was ordained into the Anglican Church in South Africa in 1977, left over the "liberal" direction in 1988, then ministered in the non-denominational community church scene for about 9 years, before returning to the REC when called to COOL in 1997. So a few years ago, when there was talk of Anglicans who had left the Episcopal/Anglican church, coming together around the common cause movement, I was full of anticipation. And then I was really excited to be at the birthing of the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) in Fort Worth, Texas in 2009. So I am one who is very committed to this new Church and pray for it to succeed.

For those of you who may not remember the explanations, the ACNA is the umbrella body and is made up of a number of "Anglican" jurisdictions in the United States and Canada under the leadership of our Archbishop, Bob Duncan. At an international level, the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) meeting in Jerusalem in 2008, cemented a new relationship between many Bishops from Canada, USA, Africa, Asia and the Southern cone (South America).

The main members here in Canada are: the Reformed Episcopal Church (REC) who branched out of the Episcopal/Anglican church in the 1870's, the Anglican Network in Canada (ANiC) and the Anglican Coalition in Canada (ACiC) who started in the last ten years. There are a few more in the USA. Each have their own Bishops and Clergy but are in close relationship with one another. I have been very committed to seeing these jurisdictional wall coming down so we can be united as one strong church rather than duplicating and diluting ourselves. Over the past two years some of the pastors of these "Anglican" churches here on Vancouver Island have met for fellowship.

Back to the local scene. A few months ago the Rev. Ron Corcoran, Rector of Christ the King Church and I were having a visit. When they had to leave their property the question was asked, why they didn't link with us. They since found rented accommodation, but this has proved not to be ideal. So we began to consider the same question, "why not?" I invited him to discuss this with his leadership. To cut through a few

months, including more meetings, sharing with our bishops, discussion with our leadership, we are now seriously exploring the possibility of our two congregations entering a courtship that could lead to uniting. In Victoria this would offer a strong flagship/ mother church for this new Anglican expression. In consultation with Bishop Charles, we are also looking at the possibility of the REC, which is small, joining with the ANIC which is the largest group and represented across the nation. There are still many issues and practicalities to be faced. If this is the Lord's will, then there will be clear guidance of the Holy Spirit. To affirm the Scriptural teaching popularised in the book, *Miracle at Darien*, if Jesus is Head of His Body, and we are filled with the Holy Spirit, there will be consensus and unity as we listen to his direction. A working committee of representatives from both churches including the Rectors, will be meeting with the Bishops on Saturday September 24 to start the process. Our representatives are: our present Churchwardens Dick Faulks and Diane Liang, together with Joan Krayenhoff and David Murray.

Do pray with us, and if you have any questions please ask the pastors, work committee, Parish Council or Vestry members. The most helpful would be to write out your questions and send them to the committee through the office. At the national and local levels, I still have great hope that we can see a Kingdom Church built, which is based firmly on the foundation of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Word, full of the Holy Spirit, and incorporates the best of our Anglican tradition.

To the Congregations of the Church of Our Lord, REC, and Christ the King, ANiC;

Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ:-

It is with great interest and anticipation in seeking God's will for our two Parishes, that we, the bishops of Western Canada of the Reformed Episcopal Church and the Anglican Network in Canada, have agreed in principle to study the feasibility of the unification of these two congregations, and even possibly the eventual merger of the Dioceses of Western Canada of both denominations, being to-gether, two of the founding members of Anglican Church of North America. This coming to-gether will be a process that will take time and prayer, and the need to follow an agreed upon schedule of carefully considered points

of order. Please pray for us as we continue to strive to hear God's voice among the many voices that would prefer that His Church be divided and not be one.

We have outlined below what we deem the Lord has shown us to be that route for our churches to follow

- 1- Agreement by the Vestries and Parish Councils of the two congregations to proceed with a dating arrangement;
- 2- Announce to the two congregations that there has been a dating arrangement entered into with the approval of the area bishops;
- 3- Each Parish is to establish a working Leadership Team of no greater than four people, to begin meeting to-gether, in order to explore the ramifications of such a proposed merger, and to establish, in consultations with the two area bishops, a way forward. These meetings are to also explore the Constitution and Canons of both the REC and the ANiC to ensure that all parties are aware of the consequences of such a proposed merger. Each leadership team, in consultation with their Rector, is to assemble a comprehensive summary of their manner of worship and leadership, and, to-gether with a copy of the respective Constitution and Canons, supply it to the other team for study, prior to the scheduled September 24th joint meeting with the bishops. These summaries are to be prepared and transmitted to each other prior to September 15th;
- 4- The Rectors of the two Parishes are to supply to both area bishops their joint vision of what they believe that the merged church would look like in terms of worship services (BCP/BAS, praise & prayer, coffee-house style, etc); clergy leadership roles, (Rector & Assistant Rector); and support staff needs (secretarial, worship leaders, etc.). This joint vision to be supplied to the bishops not later than September 15th;
- 5- The Leadership Teams of the two Parishes will meet jointly on Saturday, September 24th, with the bishops, to discuss and plan the way forward.
- 6- As part of the process, the two congregations will then begin to meet to-gether for joint special services to take place over an established period of time. We suggest that these special services include at least, but not necessarily be limited to, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's services. We suggest also that the congregations meet to-gether informally for such

things as Parish Dinners and/or retreat week-ends;

7- The praise and worship component leaders of the two congregations will schedule to meet several times during the next few months to try to work out an arrangement whereby they would be able to form a combined worship team representing all the proposed forms of worship. This worship team shall meet with the two Rectors to formulate the proposed worship formats for a merged congregation;

8- In January or February of 2012, the Leadership Team, Parish Vestry and Council of each church shall meet for a week-end retreat with their respective Bishop to review progress to date and discuss whether there is still an active intent to proceed with the proposed merger;

9- If there remains an intent on the part of the Parish Leadership to proceed further, after this period of dating, then a General Meeting of each congregation will be held for the purpose of voting by the whole of the Parish to either approve or deny further efforts to merge the two congregations. These Congregational Meetings will be Chaired by the respective bishop overseeing the congregation. If the Congregational Meetings vote to continue in the merger process, then their approved Resolution is to be forwarded to the Diocesan Standing Committee and Synodical Council for their approval. Should such approval be received, then a formal engagement period is then entered into by the two congregations. If either congregation votes against proceeding, then the process is halted and the Parishes continue to function within their own denomination as previously done

10- If, for any reason, the two area bishops agree that the proposed merger is not in the best interests of either church, either denomination, or for the ACNA in general, then they reserve the right to terminate any further merger processes, and the Parishes will then continue to function within their own denomination as previously done.

In the Name and service of Christ Jesus our Lord,

Rt. Rev'd. Dr. Charles Wm. Dorrington REC
Rt Rev'd. Trevor Walters, ANIC

FOR FUTHER READING ON THE TOPIC

