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Anglican “Missionary” Bishop Named for America — The Schism Arrives

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William Bennett once observed that America was fast becoming “the kind of nation civilized nations sent missionaries to.” In truth, that is what America has now become, with the installation of Martyn Minns as “missionary bishop” for the Convocation of Anglicans in North America (CANA).

The schism in the Anglican communion was visible for all to see when the Nigerian primate, Archbishop Peter Akinola, installed Bishop Minns in a ceremony held in northern Virginia. According to press reports, the event was held in a 3,500 seat facility next to Potomac Mills. Bishop Minns will exercise episcopal oversight over 34 congregations in the U.S. — with about one third identified as ethnically Nigerian.

As Michelle Boorstein of *The Washington Post* reported:

A powerful Nigerian Anglican archbishop defied top church leaders yesterday by coming to Northern Virginia and installing as one of his bishops a local minister who recently broke with the U.S. church after accusing it of being too liberal.

The festive ceremony thrilled those who believe the U.S. church has become too permissive but highlighted divisions that threaten to crack the Anglican Communion.

Church leaders in the United States and Great Britain had asked Archbishop Akinola not to come to America at this time and not to install Martyn Minns as bishop of his new group. Katharine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church USA, even released a [letter](#) asking Akinola to stay away. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, did the same [see [here](#)].

Nevertheless, he came. And his coming indicates one blunt truth that cannot now be denied: Archbishop Akinola no longer considers his church in communion with the Episcopal Church USA, at least as the American church is represented by its elected leadership.



This was made clear in a [letter](#) from Akinola to Jefferts Schori released May 2, 2007. Note this excerpt:

At the emergency meeting of the Primates in October 2003 it was made clear that the proposed actions of the Episcopal Church would “tear the fabric of our Communion at its deepest level, and may lead to further division on this and further issues ...” Sadly, this proved to be true as many provinces did proceed to declare broken or impaired communion with the Episcopal Church. Since that time the Primates have established task forces, held numerous meetings and issued a variety of statements and communiques, but the brokenness remains, our Provinces are divided, and so the usual protocol and permissions are no longer applicable.

And:

It is my heartfelt desire - and indeed the expressed hope of all the Primates of the Communion - that The Episcopal Church will reconsider its actions - and make such special measures no longer necessary. This is the only way forward for full restoration into fellowship with the rest of the Communion. Further, I renew the pledge that I made to your predecessor, Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold, that the Church of Nigeria will be the first to restore communion on the day that your Province abandons its current unbiblical agenda. Until then we have no other choice than to offer our assistance and oversight to our people and all those who will not compromise the "faith once for all delivered to the saints." (Jude 1:3)

The Washington Post observed that Archbishop Akinola now presides over the largest province of the Anglican Communion — and a province experiencing rapid and continuing growth. Meanwhile, the Episcopal Church USA continues to lose members.

An interesting comment came from one of those who observed the new bishop's installation. Marie Penney, described as bouncing her baby happily in the foyer, said this:

"To me, this movement combines the best of all worlds — to be banded with all these brothers and sisters from Nigeria. I can't imagine another group of Christians I'd rather be with," said Pinney, who grew up Baptist and worships at Truro. "I feel so much more in line with Archbishop Akinola. There are hardly any bishops in the Episcopal Church that I'd even want my children in Sunday school with."

That last sentence is stunning in its force and clarity. "There are hardly any bishops in the Episcopal Church that I'd even want my children in Sunday school with."

That kind of frustration with liberal theology and liberal church teachings is what produced the installation of Bishop Minns. Archbishop Akinola came to the United States as, among other things, a missionary to a land that desperately needs the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Tragically enough, his visit was necessary because far too many of our churches and denominations need to be evangelized as well.

UPDATE: Bishop Martyn Minns was my guest on Monday's edition of *The Albert Mohler Program*. Listen [here](#).

