

August 26, 2013

Dear Communion Partner Sisters and Brothers:

The Archbishop of Canterbury preached recently in Monterey, Mexico:

“It is a dangerous place, a narrow path we walk as Anglicans at present. On one side is the steep fall into an absence of any core beliefs, a chasm where we lose touch with God, and thus we rely only on ourselves and our own message. On the other side there is a vast fall into a ravine of intolerance and cruel exclusion. It is for those who claim all truth, and exclude any who question. When we fall into this place, we lose touch with human beings and create a small church, or rather many small churches – divided, ineffective in serving the poor, the hungry and the suffering, incapable of living with each other, and incomprehensible to those outside the church. We struggle with each other at a time when the Anglican Communion's great vocation as bridge builder is more needed than ever.”¹

It is our vocation as Communion Partners to navigate this narrow path between two dangerous extremes as we pursue the mission of the Church “to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.”² To that end, six Communion Partner bishops (Greg Brewer, Paul Lambert, Ed Little, Dan Martins, Ed Salmon and Michael Smith) made a visit to Archbishop Justin Welby at his residence in Canterbury, England last week.

There we prayed together and discussed a range of issues concerning the Anglican Communion and The Episcopal Church. Also present was the Archbishop's Director of Reconciliation, Canon David Porter. We believe the opportunity to build relationships and discuss the ministry of reconciliation we share will bear fruit in this season of our common life. We are encouraged by our experience of the Archbishop as a man of faith and prayer, committed to the re-evangelization of increasingly secularized Western cultures. Please keep Archbishop Justin in your prayers and remember us before God “who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.”³

Yours in Christ,

+*Michael G. Smith*

Bishop of North Dakota
Chair, Communion Partner Bishops' Advisory Committee

¹ <http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/5124/walk-in-the-light-with-each-other-archbishop-justins-sermon-in-mexico>.

² The 1979 Book of Common Prayer, p. 855.

³ 2 Corinthians 5:18 (NRSV)