



**A Pastoral Letter**  
from  
**The Rt. Reverend D. Bruce MacPherson, D. D.**  
*Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Louisiana*

June 26, 2006

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

The past days have been borne with a heavy heart and deep concern as I pondered and prayerfully reflected upon all that has taken place within the Church these past three years. More especially, as I rethought the experience of the past two weeks and the 75th General Convention held in Columbus, Ohio.

I must also offer my apologies to you at the outset for the premature information that was found by some on the Internet. Yes, I did make the recorded presentation, and with consent; however, I was unaware that it was going to be immediately released. Please know that had I known this, I would have requested that it be held for twenty-four hours to permit me to get this letter out to the diocesan family. During my three and a half years as your Bishop, I have endeavoured to be communicative with all, and this has not changed, but being physically ill upon my return from Columbus, and faced with a full schedule the first seventy-two hours, prevented an earlier release.

Looking at GC 2006, what took place within the context of this triennial gathering does not impact us alone, but affects our brothers and sisters in Christ across the Episcopal Church, and yes, the Anglican Communion worldwide.

It was the prayer of many that we, as a Church, would respond to the Windsor Report in a manner that would be found acceptable in the eyes of the wider Communion. The Windsor Report spelled out the hopes and expectations of those who had prepared it in response to the “breach of the bonds of affection” that was experienced across the Communion by the action of General Convention 2003 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. I might add, those who prepared the Windsor Report were people of faith that had been drawn upon from across the Anglican Communion.

Amongst those things in which specific response were sought, was our expressed

regret for the action of the 74th General Convention and subsequent consequences; for the establishment of a moratorium on electing or consecrating a person that was living in a non-celibate relationship with a person of the same gender; and to also place a moratorium on same-sex blessings. Sadly, the Body of the Church gathered in convention, chose to do none of these things. Rather, on the last legislative day, both the House of Bishops and House of Deputies, passed a resolution that bears no legal authority, but rather, resolves to *“call upon Standing Committees and bishops with jurisdiction to exercise restraint by not consenting to the consecration of any candidate to the episcopate whose manner of life presents a challenge to the wider church and will lead to further strains on communion.”*

The passage of the resolution was divided as it represents “non-binding” language, and was followed quickly thereafter with a number of bishops expressing they had no intention of abiding by this action. This did not rest well with many across the House of Bishops.

It is important for you to know of my action as a result of the manner in which the Chair handled the entire process. On a point of personal privilege I advised the Chair that I was *“disappointed with the process and dismissive manner, and was disassociating myself from the actions of GC2006 that were not compliant with the Windsor Report.”* You also need to know that I remained and participated through the adjournment of the convention.

What lies ahead? The Archbishop of Canterbury has announced that a preliminary response will be forthcoming within a few days, and that he has asked some members of the Anglican Consultative Council and Joint Standing Committee to review the response made to the Windsor Report by GC 2006. As further information comes available, this will be conveyed through communication to the congregations and on our diocesan web site in order for all to be kept abreast in a timely manner.

Through the work that will be done in the coming days, we will learn more clearly whether those who refuse to be open to the expressed place of the Windsor Report will be seen as having “walked apart.” As I have shared on a number of occasions over these past many months, I will not compromise my faith and relationship with Jesus Christ, if the church is going to continue to go forward on the path it is presently on. As a bishop of the Church Catholic, and in keeping with the Apostolic tradition, our connection within the Anglican Communion is important as we share together in the living out of the Gospel handed down to us through the ages.

I am asking the Standing Committee to meet with me on Monday, July 17 in order for us to share in the conversation and planning that will lead to a series of convocational meetings with the deputation and the clergy and laity of the diocese. To this end, the deputation has agreed to join me in a series of meetings in the five convocations in order for us to be as fully communicative as possible during this

important time. Due to many of the deputation being away in the next weeks, the scheduled events will take place as outlined on the attached memo, and it is my desire for some members of the Standing Committee to also be present.

Before drawing to a close, permit me to say that I am seeking to go forward in a prayerful, yet deliberate manner; I am seeking to be mindful to draw upon the counsel of those with whom I share ministry; I am seeking to lead us, the diocese, forward in a manner which is consistent with the Gospel - and this being faithful to the One we call Lord. Let us not react in fear, but rather, keep our eyes focused on the Cross to which we are drawn, for through the death and resurrection of Jesus we are indeed people of faith, people of hope.

Thus my sisters and brothers in Christ, plans are being made and things are happening that will prayerfully enable us to work toward a better day. Or in the words of Paul to the Thessalonians, *“Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.”* [2 Thessalonians 2:16-17]

This comes this day with my care and affection, and in the words of St. Thomas More, *“Pray for me as I will for thee ...”*

Faithfully in the risen and living Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "+D Mice". The plus sign is positioned to the left of the first letter of the name.

The Rt. Rev'd D. Bruce MacPherson  
III Bishop of Western Louisiana

## SCHEDULE OF POST GENERAL CONVENTION MEETINGS

### MONROE CONVOCATION

Grace Episcopal Church, Monroe  
Thursday, July 27, 2006, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

### ACADIANA CONVOCATION

St. Barnabas Episcopal Church, Lafayette  
Tuesday, August 1, 2006, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

LAKE CHARLES CONVOCATION

The Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd, Lake Charles  
Thursday, August 3, 2006, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

SHREVEPORT CONVOCATION

St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, Shreveport  
Tuesday, August 8, 2006, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

ALEXANDRIA CONVOCATION

St. James Episcopal Church, Alexandria  
Thursday, August 10, 2006, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.