



January 23, 2014

The Most Rev. Dr. Justin Welby
Lambeth Palace
London, SE1 7JU
England

Dear Dr. Welby:

I am writing to you on behalf of Progressive Episcopalians of Pittsburgh, an organization of laypeople and clergy of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh who remained steadfast advocates for The Episcopal Church in the face of the schismatic depredations of our former bishop, Robert W. Duncan, and his followers.

The occasion of this letter is the recent announcement that the Rev. Dr. Tory Baucum has been appointed as one of the Six Preachers of Canterbury Cathedral. We believe that this appointment is ill-advised and represents an affront to our own Episcopal Church and a sop to the Church of Nigeria.

We appreciate your belief that the Baucum appointment will have the effect of "promoting reconciliation and unity among us." Perhaps his preaching will address those very issues. If Dr. Baucum were truly committed to reconciliation and unity, however, why is he no longer a priest in The Episcopal Church? Whereas it is no doubt true that his dialogue with Bishop of Virginia Shannon Johnston resulted in a more graceful return of property to the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia than might have been expected, the terms were negotiated in the context of a court decision that held that his Truro congregation had no valid claim on the property it had appropriated.

Our primary concern is not Dr. Baucum's personal talents or accomplishments but his associations. He is in the rather odd position of claiming to be a priest of two churches, the schismatic Anglican Church of North America and the transgressive Church of Nigeria [Anglican Communion]. The former has established itself largely by poaching souls and real estate from The Episcopal Church and continues to be involved in property litigation with The Episcopal Church, a matter of apparent indifference to Canterbury. The Church of Nigeria, on the other hand, has proven equally predatory regarding our own church and has flouted longstanding Anglican tradition regarding boundary crossings. Moreover, this honor bestowed on a putative Nigerian priest comes at a time when Anglican leaders in Nigeria are applauding the advent of a new law persecuting homosexuals and advocates for human rights.

Dr. Baucum's appointment has been welcomed by Archbishop Robert Duncan, who has called it "an historically significant appointment," no doubt because it advances the fiction that the Anglican Church in North America is or should be part of the Anglican Communion. We are aware of those in the Church of England who would have their church declare it to be in full communion with the Anglican Church in North America, and we consider such sentiment a threat both to The Episcopal Church and to the Anglican Communion. We are dismayed that you have added to our concern through Dr. Baucum's appointment.

We urge you to rescind the appointment of Dr. Baucum as one of the Six Preachers of Canterbury Cathedral or, barring that, to clarify that the appointment is of a personal nature unrelated to the church [or churches] in which the honoree is a priest.

Finally, we ask you to condemn in the strongest terms the new anti-gay law in Nigeria, whether or not you choose to chastise Nigeria Anglican clergy who have advocated it. The law is inconsistent with international notions of human rights, with the gospel imperative to love one another, and even with the notorious 1998 Lambeth resolution I.10.

Under your predecessor, our beloved Episcopal Church was afforded little respect, whereas Communion churches disdainful of our polity and gospel understanding were treated with deference. We sincerely hope that you will not continue that lamentable tradition.

We understand that your ministry is a difficult one with many competing demands, and we continue to hold you in our prayers.

Yours in Christ,

Elizabeth N. Stifel, Vice President
Progressive Episcopalians of Pittsburgh

cc: The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori
The Rt. Rev. Dorsey McConnell