

THE CHURCH OF THE PROVINCE OF UGANDA

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5th January 2006

DATE:

An Open Letter to Bishop Peter James Lee, Diocese of Virginia

The Rt. Rev. Peter James Lee
Diocese of Virginia
Richmond, VA
USA

Dear Bishop Lee,

The Rt. Rev. Benezere Kisembo, Bishop of Rwenzori Diocese, has my full blessing and support in receiving the Rev. Phil Ashley from Fairfax, Virginia, as a priest of his diocese. Rev. Ashley is now canonically resident in Rwenzori Diocese and he is a priest in good standing of the Church of Uganda. We have asked him to continue the good work of church planting he has been doing in the South Riding community in Virginia.

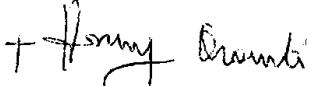
I must object, in the most strenuous terms, to your characterization of Rev. Ashley's decision to resign as a Missioner of the Diocese of Virginia as a renunciation of his holy orders. I have seen his letter to Bishop Jones. Even those of us for whom English is a second language understand his plain English to mean that he has resigned from the staff of the Diocese of Virginia, but not from his priestly orders.

This kind of re-inventing of the plain meaning of a text is the same problem we are facing today throughout the Anglican Communion with regard to bishops and leaders in ECUSA reinventing the plain meaning of Scripture. Rev. Ashley *resigned* from his position in your diocese, but in no way can his letter be construed to mean that he has renounced his holy orders. Like all of our clergy ordained in the Church of Uganda, Rev. Ashley was ordained into Christ's one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church. He requested our ecclesiastical oversight as a priest, which we gladly extended to him, and we recognize his continuing holy orders.

Your refusal to recognize Rev. Ashley's holy orders in the Church of Uganda has huge implications for your understanding of the interchangeability of holy orders and the nature of the Anglican Communion. Accordingly, we accept your written press release of 20th December 2005 as your notice that the Bishop and Diocese of Virginia have broken communion with the Church of Uganda.

We are grieved by the continued unbiblical actions of the leadership of ECUSA that has led it to walk apart from the majority of the Anglican Communion. We pray for your repentance and the repentance of all the ECUSA leadership, and for your return to the historic faith and communion of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.

Yours in Christ,


The Most Rev. Henry Luke Orombi
ARCHBISHOP OF CHURCH OF UGANDA.

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