

# COUNTERFEIT COMMUNION AND THE TRUTH THAT SETS FREE

*An urgent call to action: 'Choose this day whom you will serve' Joshua 24:15*

As the Global Anglican Future Conference assembles in Jerusalem, the Anglican Faith faces the greatest challenge to its survival and integrity since the sixteenth century Reformation. We humbly offer this paper in the conviction that the only adequate response to this crisis is the clear and decisive separation of participating Churches and leaders from the See of Canterbury and the present Anglican Communion to form a new Communion that is truly global in scope and truly Anglican in doctrine

Anything less will leave faithful Anglicans throughout the world as unwilling collaborators in a counterfeit Communion which makes a virtue out of the toleration of teaching contrary to scripture, is rife and ingrained with such false teaching and is led by an Archbishop of Canterbury who himself so teaches. Freedom from the hegemony of the Anglican Communion's pretended fellowship, with all the compromises and distractions it entails, is imperative if those Churches of the Communion which have not abandoned the sovereign authority of Scripture are to be free to develop that true communion and fellowship which has at its heart the transforming power of the gospel.

## **Two Religions in One Communion**

Such a stark choice may seem to be unnecessary or an oversimplification, but there is a simple underlying truth. Fallen human nature will always have a tendency to '*suppress the truth*' (Romans 1:18)<sup>1</sup>. Much of the Old Testament history of Israel turns on the conflict between the true and the false prophets. Jesus claimed that he was in himself 'the truth' and much of the New Testament epistles are concerned with exposing the false teaching which threatened the existence of the emerging Churches. So it should be no surprise that within the Anglican Communion today there exist two different religions – on the one hand, a revisionist Anglicanism which has adopted contemporary Western humanism and its sceptical assumptions about the Bible while retaining a veneer of religiosity; and on the other hand the Anglican reformed catholic faith, wrought in the Church of England during the Protestant Reformation and defined by the Church of England's Articles of Religion, 1662 Book of Common Prayer and the 1662 Ordinal, which has flourished remarkably in the varied cultures to which it was brought during the era of British global expansion. Suppression of the truth can of course occur in any ecclesial body, but the recognition of this human frailty should make us all the more alert to the need to make sure that our thinking about the Church is always carried out with a wholehearted submission to God's Word as uniquely revealed in Scripture.

It was this commitment to biblical authority which lay at the heart of the Protestant Reformation in England from which Anglicanism derives its identity. The Doctrine of the Church of England is defined in Canon A5 which reads as follows:

*'The doctrine of the Church of England is grounded in the Holy Scriptures, and in such teachings of the ancient Fathers and Councils of the Church as are agreeable to the said Scriptures. In particular such doctrine is to be found in the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, The Book of Common Prayer, and the Ordinal.'*

The aim of Thomas Cranmer and the English Reformers was to reform the Western Catholic tradition, not to found a new form of Christianity, but their vision was nonetheless radical in being built upon the recovery of the conviction that Scripture, as God's Word written, is true and authoritative for all matters of teaching and conduct. Article XX of the Articles of Religion states that '*it is not lawful for the Church*

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<sup>1</sup> All Scripture quotations are taken from the English Standard Version

*to ordain anything contrary to God's Word written' and the 1662 Ordinal requires all bishops and priests/presbyters 'to banish and drive away from the Church all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word.'* Hence the Church lives under the sovereign authority of Scripture and must not ordain or permit teaching contrary to God's Word. The guiding principle of the Anglican Reformers was that the Bible must be received on its own terms, as God's Word written. In a passage of clear contemporary relevance which powerfully illuminates the principle of Article XX and the Ordinal's requirement of bishops and priests/presbyters, Cranmer recognizes that once the foundations of revealed biblical truth are removed, human speculation will subvert the Church:

*'If there were any word of God beside the Scripture, we could never be certain of God's Word; and if we be uncertain of God's Word, the devil might bring in among us a new word, a new doctrine, a new faith, a new Church, a new god, yea himself to be a god. If the Church and the Christian faith did not stay itself upon the Word of God certain, as upon a sure and strong foundation, no man could know whether he had a right faith, and whether he were in the true Church of Christ, or in the synagogue of Satan'.<sup>2</sup>*

The definition of what constitutes genuine Anglicanism is therefore very simple and clear. We already have it laid out in the historic confessional formularies of the Church of England which were until a generation ago accepted at face value throughout the Anglican Communion. The agonizing of recent years about Anglican identity, the tortuous consultations of the Windsor Covenant process and the chronic (and seemingly calculated) ambiguity of many statements by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lambeth establishment all bear witness to the drift of the Anglican Churches of North America and the British Isles, and those of a similar Anglo-American mindset in the Southern hemisphere, away from historic confessional Anglicanism. Once theological pluralism is allowed to take root, questions of Anglican identity are inevitably complex and confusing because they involve the attempt to reconcile the ultimately irreconcilable, to accommodate revealed biblical truth to the passing fashions of human speculation.

The particular political and social trend which has so painfully laid bare the doctrinal confusion of the Anglican Communion is the movement to win approval of same gender sexual relationships. The abandonment of biblical sexual morality is not a minor ethical aberration, as recently claimed by the Archbishop of York,<sup>3</sup> but a growth now visible having been rooted in many years of doctrinal decay. To take one of the most publicized examples, Gene Robinson, the openly gay Bishop of New Hampshire, spoke recently of his relief when as a seminarian he was told by his college chaplain that he only needed to recite those parts of the creed he could agree with.<sup>4</sup> Frank Griswold, Katharine Jefferts Schori's predecessor as ECUSA/TEC's Presiding Bishop, when questioned in 1997 about the increasing approval of same gender sexual relations within the Church candidly stated:

*'Broadly speaking, the Episcopal Church is in conflict with Scripture. The only way to justify it is to say,*

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<sup>2</sup> Works of Archbishop Cranmer, Parker Society I, p 53 – Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, Martyr, 1556. Ed. John Edmund Cox, Parker Society, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1846

<sup>3</sup> 'And I haven't found that in ECUSA or in Canada, where I was recently, they have any doubts in their understanding of God which is very different from anybody. What they have quarreled about is the nature of sexual ethics.' The Archbishop of York quoted in the London Daily Telegraph 26<sup>th</sup> July 2007

<sup>4</sup> 'One day when I was ranting and raving about how much of the Nicene Creed I didn't believe, he said 'well, when you're in church, just say the parts of the creed you do agree with. Be silent for the others. We're not asking you do something against your integrity'. Transcript of an interview with Paul Collier 27<sup>th</sup> July 2007 <http://timescolumns.typepad.com/gledhill/2007/07/cofe-would-shut.html#more>. Robinson has more recently described himself as 'incredibly orthodox in my beliefs, in my holding to the historic creeds' during an interview for the BBC's Sunday program (27<sup>th</sup> April 2008) – but this apparent volte face should be treated with some reserve because the point of the statement is to allow him to then say that the gay/lesbian issue should 'not be a communion breaker'.

*well, Jesus talks about the Spirit guiding the church and guiding believers and bringing to their awareness things they cannot deal with yet. So one would have to say that the mind of Christ operative in the church over time . . . has led the church to in effect contradict the words of the Gospel'.<sup>5</sup>*

TEC's pursuit of the deliberate disobedience of Scriptural authority was clearly demonstrated during its General Convention of 2000 which violated the 1998 Lambeth Resolutions I.10, III.1, III.5 and III.6 by giving approval to the practice of same gender sexual relations among its clergy and lay members within the context of committed and loyal unions. Then in 2003 the radical rejection of God's Word was further entrenched when the General Convention not only approved the selection of Gene Robinson to be the Bishop of New Hampshire and the blessing of same sex unions, but also voted down a resolution intended to re-affirm Holy Scripture as the foundation of authority in the Church and that no member of the Church should be forced to practice anything contrary to the clear meaning of Scripture.<sup>6</sup> So no-one should have been surprised when three years later, the 2006 General Convention refused even to consider a resolution affirming salvation through Christ alone.<sup>7</sup> Accordingly, there has been no restraint on the growing practice of multi-faith worship, to the extent that the consecration service of the Bishop of Nevada, the Rt. Rev. Dan Thomas Edwards on 5th January 2008, attended by the Presiding Bishop, included blessings by a Hindu chaplain, a Muslim Imam, a Jewish Rabbi, and a Bahai leader.

The Archbishop of Uganda, Henry Orombi, replying on May 14<sup>th</sup> 2008 to an open letter by Presiding Bishop Schori rebuking him for his visit to a former TEC congregation now under his care, showed that, unlike the Archbishop of York, he was under no illusions about Anglicanism in the United States, writing:

*'The reason this congregation separated from TEC and is now part of the Church of Uganda is that the actions of TEC's General Convention and statements of duly elected TEC leaders and representatives indicate that TEC has abandoned the historic Christian faith. Furthermore, as predicted by the Primates of the Anglican Communion in October 2003, TEC's actions have, in fact, torn the fabric of the Communion at its deepest level.'*

Within the mother Church of England herself, the erosion of orthodoxy has been less dramatic, but equally serious. A survey in 2002 found that a third of the Church's clergy doubted or disbelieved in the physical resurrection and only half were convinced of the truth of the virgin birth.<sup>8</sup> And, as the recent history of North American Anglicanism all too clearly demonstrates, once the creeds have been emptied of shared meaning, biblical morality shares a similar fate.

This process is already well under way in England. In July 2005 the English House of Bishops gave their support to the British Government's legislation creating Civil Partnerships which was explicitly designed for those in same gender sexual relationships and gave such partnerships a legal status virtually indistinguishable from marriage. Clergy of the Church of England were allowed to enter such partnerships on the rather improbable, and certainly unenforceable, condition of abstinence.

Some find reassurance in the claim that at least the Archbishop of Canterbury is orthodox in believing

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<sup>5</sup> Philadelphia Inquirer Magazine, December 28, 1997; see also Touchstone, David Mills, <http://www.touchstonemag.com/archives/article.php?id=11-05-006-e>.

<sup>6</sup> GC 2003 Resolution B001. The resolution: Re-affirms Holy Scripture as the foundation of authority in our Church, re-affirms historic positions adopted by previous General Conventions and affirms that no member of this Church shall be forced to practice anything contrary to the clear meaning of Holy Scripture. From [http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~lcrew/03\\_b001.html](http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~lcrew/03_b001.html)

<sup>7</sup> Resolution D058 'That the 75th General Convention of the Episcopal Church declares its unchanging commitment to Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the only name by which any person may be saved (Article XVIII)' etc. [http://gc2006.org/legislation/view\\_leg\\_detail.aspx?id=322&type=ORIGINAL](http://gc2006.org/legislation/view_leg_detail.aspx?id=322&type=ORIGINAL)

<sup>8</sup> 'Believe it or not' Cost of Conscience Survey 2002

such truths as the virgin birth and bodily resurrection of Jesus – in fact it is telling that this is seen to be a sign of progress by some English evangelicals – but this apparent orthodoxy is fragile and subjective because it is not anchored in the Bible.<sup>9</sup> For Rowan Williams the Bible is not to be relied upon; the Word of God has to be untangled from human misunderstanding and so inevitably the interpreter stands in a superior position to the original writers used by God. Hence, without any trace of embarrassment, Williams can describe the parable of the Unjust Steward as *‘a story which St Luke does not seem to have understood particularly well.’*<sup>10</sup> In fact, he sees all Scripture as potentially ambiguous, describing the human writers as those *‘caught up in the blazing fire of God’s gift who yet struggle with it, misapprehend it, and misread it.’*<sup>11</sup> And this approach to Scripture can only encourage those who think they can improve upon the original, even to the extent of substantially rewriting it. So when John C. Henson’s *‘Good As New: A Radical Retelling of the Scriptures’* was published in 2004 it carried an enthusiastic foreword in which Williams, as the Archbishop of Canterbury, expressed the hope that it would spread in *‘epidemic profusion’*, notwithstanding that this so-called ‘Bible’ includes the gnostic ‘Gospel of Thomas;’ omits Revelation and seven other books of the New Testament, eliminates the masculinity of God the Father and God the Son, makes the Holy Spirit feminine, removes reference to same gender sexual relationships as sin and refuses to acknowledge the existence of demons.

Because he shares that same disregard for Scriptural authority which is so grievously evident in TEC, the Archbishop of Canterbury is in no position to exercise spiritual leadership and hopelessly compromises the ability of the present Anglican Communion to resolve a crisis which continues to intensify, most obviously in North America with its growing exodus of orthodox congregations to overseas jurisdictions. In April this year the true depth of the crisis became unmistakable when it was shown that even a long established international reputation provides no guarantee of immunity as Dr J I Packer was forced to surrender his license to minister in the Anglican Church of Canada.

### **The Communion-Breaking Significance of Approving Same Gender Sexual Relationships**

Against this background, we can see that the acceptance of same gender sexual relations cannot be treated simply as a matter of sexual ethics within an encompassing theological orthodoxy, but is symptomatic of a fundamental rejection of biblical authority which strikes at the very heart of Anglican identity.

Shortly before his enthronement as Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams made it clear that he understands what is at stake. He stated in a 2002 television interview: *‘It [same gender sexual relationships] comes to be an issue about the significance of the Bible and the authority of the Bible. And it’s not for many people principally about sex; it’s about what you think of the authority of the Bible.’*<sup>12</sup> We have noted above the Archbishop’s understanding of Scripture, and it is obvious that it is impossible for him to use the Bible as giving certain truth. For Williams, the Bible asks questions more than it gives answers, and he has not been backward in providing his own answers to questions about same gender sexual relationships. It is not insignificant that in his book *‘Open to Judgment’* the address *‘Is there a Christian sexual ethic’* follows that on *‘Reading the Bible’*. Having neutered the plain sense of the Bible’s moral teaching, Williams then attempts to establish his sexual ethic within the context of relationships which are held to signify God’s self giving in Jesus Christ, claiming that *‘there are relationships other than Christian heterosexual marriage that show far more of the grace of mutual dispossession than many*

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<sup>9</sup> ‘...the main line of division is between those who regard Christian theology as revealed truth and those who think of it more as a tradition of contemplation about the deeper meaning of human life...Bishop Williams, it can be said without fear of contradiction, quite clearly belongs to the second group.’ Gerald Bray, Churchman, Spring 2000, review of Rowan Williams *‘On Christian Theology’*

<sup>10</sup> Rowan Williams; *Open to Judgment* p 158

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*, p 159

<sup>12</sup> BBC News, UK, December 22, 2002.

*duly and religiously blessed unions seem to.*'<sup>13</sup> Appearing to reject liberal as well as conservative positions he argues accordingly for a third way: 'Our main question about how we lead our sexual lives should be neither 'Am I keeping the rules' nor 'Am I being sincere and non-hurtful' but 'How much am I prepared for this to signify?''<sup>14</sup> But this 'third way' is actually another, albeit theologically sophisticated, liberal understanding which allows sexual relationships irrespective of gender because the clear voice of Scripture has been silenced.

With the publication of 'The Body's Grace', 'Reading the Bible' and 'Is there a Christian sexual ethic?', supported by his Lady Margaret Professorship of Divinity at Oxford University, Williams established himself as the leading theological advocate of the teaching that Anglican Communion churches should reject the authority of Scripture's prohibition of all same gender sexual relations and approve of such conduct in committed and loyal unions. He also took an active leadership role in the campaign to secure acceptance of this teaching, co-founding at least three organizations which promote that purpose, the Centre for the Study of Christianity and Sexuality, the journal Theology and Sexuality, and Affirming Catholicism, working closely with two gay activist organizations, the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement and Changing Attitude, and developing ties with two others, the Anglican Lesbian and Gay Clergy Consultation and Integrity (USA). He was a leading figure in the effort to win approval of this unscriptural teaching about sexuality at the 1998 Lambeth Conference, writing a foreword to a book distributed to the bishops to persuade them to give such approval, and making a plenary address in which he argued that doing so would not destroy Christian unity.

When the conference rejected his teaching by adopting the 1998 Lambeth Resolutions I.10, III.1, III.5, and III.6 by huge majorities, Williams refused to accept the resolutions and proceeded to violate them, making his intentions quite clear by being a signatory to the 'Pastoral Statement to Lesbian and Gay Anglicans from Some Member Bishops of the Lambeth Conference' issued on 5th August 1998, in opposition to the conference's Resolution 1.10, which included the pledge to '*continue to reflect, pray and work for [their] full inclusion in the life of the Church*'. Subsequently, 'The Body's Grace', 'Reading the Bible' and 'Is there a Christian sexual ethic?' were all republished. He continued his relationships with gay activist organizations. His selection to be the Archbishop of Canterbury was publicly welcomed by gay activist organizations and his work continues to lend intellectual respectability to their cause.

Rowan Williams has never repented of his teaching. After the announcement of his appointment to Canterbury in 2002, the Chairman of Reform, representing some of the largest Evangelical Anglican churches in England, wrote to the Archbishop-elect seeking his affirmation of biblical teaching on sexual conduct in accordance with the Lambeth 1998 Resolution 1.10 or, failing that, his withdrawal. In his response, Williams asserted '*My personal views are on record, and I have not found reason to change them; not for lack of reflection, believe me*' and '*I can and I do state what is the majority teaching of the Church, and I will exercise the discipline of the Church as I am bound to do. But I can't go beyond this and say that I believe what I do not believe.*'<sup>15</sup>

Here was made explicit that form of discrete institutionalized hypocrisy which has long existed in the higher echelons of the Church of England; that it is acceptable for its leadership to believe one thing and teach another. The fact that this is now more open does not make it right.

Any hope that Williams might have repented of his teaching was dashed in 2005, when Global South to South Primates called upon him to repent, first privately and orally and then publicly in writing. He refused both calls.

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<sup>13</sup> Rowan Williams; Open to Judgement p166

<sup>14</sup> Ibid p167

<sup>15</sup> Letter 23rd September 2002 from Rowan Williams, then Archbishop of Wales, to the Reform Council Chairman. <http://www.church.org.uk/resources/csdetail.asp?csdate=01/10/2002>

He has continued to advance his personal views while being the Archbishop of Canterbury through media interviews and throughout the Anglican Communion in his 'listen to the experience of homosexual persons' program. His failure to exercise any effective discipline over TEC after the expiry of what the Global South Primates who attended the Dar es Salaam Primates' Meeting earlier in the year had considered to be the deadline of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2007 was therefore entirely predictable.

In his first letter to Timothy, the apostle Paul identifies maintaining a good conscience with sincerity in holding to the faith (1 Timothy 1:5,19). Losing this integrity leads to spiritual disaster. *'By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith'* (v19). Under its present leadership, it is our conviction that the Anglican Communion is heading for shipwreck and urgent action must be taken.

### **Avoiding Shipwreck**

The Scriptural response to this imminent danger is that there must be a walking apart which mirrors the underlying doctrinal incompatibility. This is not a new principle. Anglican faith must take precedence over Anglican order when the two clash. It was on this basis that Moses Tay, as Archbishop of South East Asia, refused to attend an Anglican Consultative Council meeting in 1999 chaired by the then Primus of Scotland, Richard Holloway, who in his book 'Godless Morality' had promoted, amongst other things, same gender sexual relationships. The following year Archbishop Tay, with the Archbishop of Rwanda, Emmanuel Kolini, provided the groundwork for the formation of the Anglican Mission in America (AMiA) through episcopal consecrations in Singapore. That pioneering action broke the hegemony of ECUSA/TEC and then the ACC in Canada, enabling Anglicans to see that the Anglican Faith is not co-terminus with the Anglican Communion.

All the evidence points to the fact that these painful divisions are not primarily pastoral – in which case there would be an urgent need for reconciliation, nor are they focused on secondary doctrinal issues – in which case patient dialogue of the kind urged by the Windsor Report would be appropriate. At the heart of the struggle within the Anglican Communion is the essential Reformation principle of the sovereign authority of Scripture and therefore the answer to the question of how we know what is Christian and what is not. The move to secure Church approval of same gender sexual relations is rightly a communion breaking issue because it is a decisive and deliberate rejection of the authority of Scripture. Since the Anglican Faith holds to the principle of Article XX of the Thirty-nine Articles that Scripture is God's Word written and to which the Church is subordinate, same gender sexual relationships cannot be treated as a minor matter.

It would therefore be inconsistent and clearly wrong for any follower of the Anglican Faith to be part of any program of dialogue which holds open the possibility that approval might be given to doctrinal or moral teaching contrary to Scripture. Those who accept the principle of Article XX and those who do not are working from two fundamentally different presuppositions. The Archbishop of Nigeria, Peter Akinola, set out this principle very clearly in a letter of August 2005:

*'The issue is such a defining one because two cannot go together except if they agree. To overlook this fundamental departure from scripture is not safe for faith or conscience; it means "walking in the counsel of the ungodly". The consequence is to risk the displeasure of God.'*<sup>16</sup>

There are those who have pressed for the African and South American sponsored jurisdictions in North America to be recognized by the Archbishop of Canterbury as members of the Anglican Communion, but as should already be clear, that would be to take these networks back towards the captivity from which they have so recently been liberated. As members of the Communion, they would not only be under the

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<sup>16</sup> [http://www.anglican-nig.org/Pri\\_obj\\_Homo.htm](http://www.anglican-nig.org/Pri_obj_Homo.htm). See p28 of SPREAD's 'Petition To The Third Global Anglican South To South Leadership Team And Primates Advisory Group' of October 2005 ([www.anglicanspread.org](http://www.anglicanspread.org))

aegis of the Archbishop of Canterbury, but would also be acknowledging fellowship with the very same bishops whose oversight they have in conscience rejected, including those who voted for the consecration of Gene Robinson.

Similarly some leaders, while opposing same gender sexual relationships, have nonetheless argued on grounds of pragmatism and fellowship that orthodox bishops have a duty to attend the Lambeth Conference, despite the presence of many TEC bishops who approved the consecration of Gene Robinson, not to mention the scores of other bishops (including the Archbishop of Canterbury) who actively promote the teaching that the Communion's churches should accept same gender sexual relations. In a careful analysis of biblical teaching, Philip Jensen, the Dean of St Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney,<sup>17</sup> shows that the opposite is true; the duty of orthodox bishops is to be absent. Scripture enjoins us to avoid false teachers<sup>18</sup> which must include those who promote a way of life which, without repentance, excludes people from the kingdom of God,<sup>19</sup> and we are not to share in their '*wicked works*'<sup>20</sup> by lending them the legitimacy of table fellowship. Applying this teaching to the Lambeth Conference, he explains why the bishops of Sydney Diocese will be absenting themselves:

*'The reason why our bishops are not attending is because of the impossibility of Christian fellowship with the consecrating bishops. They are the false teachers who have acted in a way that makes fellowship with them impossible.'*

And in the strongest terms, Philip Jensen urges other evangelical bishops, tempted to be present, not to attend:

*'Actions have divisive effects. You are now put under incredible pressure to act on an issue that is not your own choosing. But you cannot avoid the consequences of your action. Attending is to fellowship with false teachers in their wicked work. It cannot help but diminish faithful Christians' confidence in you as a leader. To believe otherwise is a further illustration of the naivety, which leads you to attend.'*

He then underscores the argument with an appeal to consistency:

*'You cannot accuse others of disobeying the scriptures on homosexuality while you yourselves are disobeying equally clear commands of scripture to avoid such false teachers.'*

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<sup>17</sup> The Limits of Fellowship: Address given by the Dean of Sydney, Philip Jensen, at the Sydney Lambeth Decision Briefing, St. Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney, Friday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2008.

<sup>18</sup> *'I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive. For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil.'* (Romans 16:17-19) See also 2 Timothy 3:5

<sup>19</sup> *'Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.'* (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

<sup>20</sup> *'For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward. Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works.'* (2 John 7-11)

But we must ask – is there any reason why this admirable biblical logic should not be applied to the Anglican Communion as a whole?

If attendance at Lambeth is in contravention of the clear commands of Scripture to avoid false teachers, then on what grounds is it still possible to describe oneself as being in communion with them, especially when the Archbishop of Canterbury, who has the power to declare who is in communion and who is not, is himself a false teacher? <sup>21</sup> Since being in communion with such teachers clearly violates Scripture, all those Churches which seek to be in submission to the authority of Scripture should break from the Anglican Communion forthwith.

To remain in communion is to legitimize, or at least to hold as something indifferent, that which imperils eternal salvation by treating same gender sexual relationships as consecrated – ordaining as priests/presbyters and consecrating as bishops those engaged in such conduct and blessing same sex unions. Many church leaders seem to have lost their capacity to recognize this shocking reversal for what it really is; the exchange of natural sexual relationships for unnatural, is nothing less than the mark of a culture which is under divine judgment because it has radically rejected the Creator God (Romans 1:26). And this is the practice false teachers seek to sanctify.

The essential meaning of communion is relationship, a shared fellowship which is often referred to as maintained by the ‘bonds of affection’. True communion is a gift of God’s grace which is animated by the Holy Spirit, but it is never independent of the truth of Scripture. A communion which maintains relationship with those who persist in the radical and unrepented rejection of biblical authority has become a counterfeit communion. It becomes an exercise in idolatry as its own continued existence is elevated above faithfulness to the Word of God which brought it into being.

### **Breaking the Bewitchment**

So why are some conservatively minded Anglicans so reluctant to break their ties with the Anglican Communion? We suspect that for many the answer lies in the unexamined assumption that the Anglican Faith is inseparable from the See of Canterbury and identical with the Anglican Communion. Since the Communion is a particularly English legacy of Britain’s global influence and Empire the link seems quite natural, but this association is now demonstrably false and fatally toxic. As the Rev Prof Stephen Knoll observes, commenting on the Anglican Communion’s failure to exercise effective discipline of heretical members:

*‘We must start by admitting that that Global Anglican Polity has leaned far too heavily on the benevolent patriarchy of the Established Church and the British Empire. The idea that a rapidly expanding body of Global South churches must be governed from an historic See dominated by a secular government and a compromised mother church is, to be blunt, a dangerous exercise in nostalgia’<sup>22</sup>*

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<sup>21</sup> Some have claimed that to withdraw from Communion with false teachers is to be overly rigorous and fall into the Donatist heresy, but the parallel is spurious. The Donatist movement began in North Africa with the refusal to recognize a bishop tainted by compromise under Diocletian’s persecution during the early years of the fourth century and subsequently spread to become a schismatic movement. The issue was one of character and conduct, not doctrinal orthodoxy per se, and Donatism was finally condemned by Augustine in the early fifth century. His teaching is reflected in Article XXVI ‘Of the Unworthiness of the Ministers’ which assures us that we may use the ministry of ‘evil ministers’ in Word and Sacrament, while not ignoring necessary discipline which may result in their deposition. The Article does not support the continued tolerance of false teachers and needs to be understood in the context of the ordinal which lays on both bishops and priest/presbyters the duty ‘with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God’s Word’.

<sup>22</sup> Global Anglican Orthodoxy: A Blueprint; The Rev. Prof Stephen Noll, Vice Chancellor, Uganda Christian University.

The danger is very evident in the Windsor Report which reflects and reinforces this bewitchment by co-opting biblical concepts to validate an Anglican mythology. By applying to the Anglican Communion the language which the Apostle Paul uses to describe the local church, the report gives a ramshackle post-imperial ecclesiastical institution an organic quality and erroneously identifies it with the Body of Christ<sup>23</sup>. Thus anyone who advocates institutional separation is immediately classified as schismatic and there is no way of recognizing that duty of separation which Philip Jensen describes. Biblically speaking the schismatic is one who breaks fellowship over personal or secondary issues, not on fundamental truths such as whether or not Scripture is the Word of God and must be obeyed. However, the degree of bewitchment is such that even some evangelicals may be blind to the possibility that there can be division which is not schismatic. For instance in an essay for the Anglican Communion Institute, commended by Dr Ephraim Radner, Craig Uffman criticizes

*‘those who embrace global schism as the price all of us must pay so that they may distance themselves from TEC’s apostasy. For all schism is violence.’<sup>24</sup>*

Based on this dubious ecclesiology, Anglican Communion Churches are now expected to be ‘Windsor compliant’, but compliance does not entail any commitment to addressing false teaching as such. As Melvin Tinker perceptively states:

*‘By excluding from their brief at the outset the theological and ethical considerations of those practices which de facto have given rise to the present crisis, namely same sex genital relations, the Commission (or at least those who set it up) are guilty of a serious dereliction of duty. It is like a doctor who from the outset refuses to consider cancer to be the main cause of the symptoms ... who instead chooses to focus on the symptoms alone.’<sup>25</sup>*

This bewitchment is insidious because it dulls sensitivity to the Scriptural imperative to separate from false teachers. Instead it encourages the tolerance of such leaders in direct contradiction of the Risen Christ’s warning to the Church in Thyatira which is rebuked because ‘you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and is teaching and seducing my servants to practice immorality’ (Revelation 2:20). The result is a false orthodoxy based on process and the maintenance of institutional unity rather than a unity based on revealed biblical truth. Being ‘Windsor compliant’ is not a long term guard against the remorseless advance of the revisionist Churches’ destructive agenda and will undermine the capacity of participants to preserve the Anglican Faith. The advocates of anti-Scriptural teaching have time on their side and they know that the longer they can engage in dialogue the greater the chance they have of establishing their position.

The communiqué of the February 2007 Dar es Salaam Primates’ Meeting<sup>26</sup> provided a warning of things to come. While calling on TEC to refrain from authorizing the blessing of same sex unions or consenting to the ordination of bishops in same sex relationships, it followed the Windsor Report in holding out the possibility that a new consensus on these matters might emerge across the Communion<sup>27</sup> and approved the circulation of material designed to bring about this consensus.<sup>28</sup> In this way, the Primates’ Meeting strengthened the hand of those seeking to establish that the authority of Scripture can be supplanted by

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<sup>23</sup> The Windsor Report p25

<sup>24</sup> Models of Communion: Performing our Anglican Identity; Craig Uffman p7

<sup>25</sup> Anglican Communion in Crisis: The Windsor Report – Solution Or Part Of The Problem?; Melvin Tinker, Churchman, Spring 2005 p29

<sup>26</sup> See [http://www.anglicancommunion.org/communion/primates/resources/downloads/communique2007\\_english.pdf](http://www.anglicancommunion.org/communion/primates/resources/downloads/communique2007_english.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> The Windsor Report par 134

<sup>28</sup> See SPREAD Paper ‘The Danger To The Anglican Faith Posed By The 2007 Dar Es Salaam Primates’ Meeting Communiqué’ at [www.anglicanspread.org](http://www.anglicanspread.org)

Communion consensus. No doubt many present did not intend this, but the fact remains that shortly afterwards, in April 2007, the Archbishop of Canterbury released a statement commending a dialogue program based on wrenching the ‘*listen to the experience of homosexual persons*’ provision of the 1998 Lambeth Resolution I.10 out of context to open up a debate about the very behavior the resolution had described as ‘*incompatible with Scripture*’. His call for the Anglican Communion to be made a ‘safe place’ for gay and lesbian people assumed that this could only be done by keeping the debate open – which of course makes the Communion an unsafe place for the gospel.<sup>29</sup>

Scripture warns us that ‘false teaching spreads like gangrene.’<sup>30</sup> Collusion leads to contagion. The middle way is an illusion. False teaching has its own malign spiritual dynamic and we urge that it is now so embedded in the structures of the Anglican Communion that amputation is the only remedy left.

### **The New Wineskin**

The historic Anglican faith has demonstrated its transformative power in the Global South and this is where its center now lies. We should be under no illusion; it is only through severing links with Canterbury and the present Anglican Communion to form a new global Communion that the Anglican Faith will be preserved and free to flourish in loyalty to God’s Word written as envisaged by the English Reformers.

Let us welcome the new wineskin of a new Communion, a truly global and truly Anglican Church.

*‘But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord’* Joshua 24:15

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<sup>29</sup> See SPREAD Paper: ‘To: The Primates and bishops of the Anglican Communion “An Unsafe Place”: How The Archbishop Of Canterbury Rowan Williams Has Made The Anglican Communion Unsafe For The Anglican Faith’

<sup>30</sup> 2 Timothy 2:17

**The Society for the Propagation of Reformed Evangelical Anglican Doctrine**

**June 2008**

The Society is dedicated to the preservation and propagation of the Anglican Faith, as defined by “the Anglican Formularies” comprised of the Church of England’s Articles of Religion, 1662 Book of Common Prayer and Ordinal.

The Society may be reached at: <http://www.anglicanspread.org/>