

Thursday, January 13, 2005

An Epiphany message from the Presiding Bishop of ECUSA

ENS 011305-2

Dear brothers and sisters:

I am writing in the season of Epiphany during which we contemplate the revelation of God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ who assumed our humanity in its fullness. Every human face, therefore, bears the stamp of Jesus and is deeply valued in God's sight.

I am exceedingly mindful of this as our global community continues to deal with the aftermath of the earthquake and tsunamis of December 26 that affected 11 countries in South Asia. Individuals and nations have rallied in support, giving witness to generosity and a deep sense of interconnectedness and solidarity. Episcopal Relief and Development reports to me an outpouring of care and compassion, and as of this date has received more than two million dollars, with additional gifts continuing to come in every day.

As we reckon with this devastation, we need to keep in mind that disease, poverty, hunger and civil strife are constant realities in our world. For example, we know that 165,000 people, mostly children, die every month from malaria, 240,000 from AIDS and 140,000 from diarrhea. Practically all of these deaths are preventable. It is my hope and prayer that the tragedy of the tsunamis will open our eyes and our hearts to what occurs day by day on a less dramatic but far greater scale.

We live with delusions of safety and permanence. Then suddenly a natural disaster of overwhelming proportions, such as the tsunamis and the hurricanes that wrecked havoc on our own shores last year, brings into sharp relief the uncertain nature of our mortal life. In the face of tragedy, as fragile humans of uncertain future, we are driven to ask the question: where is God in all of this?

We ask this question in all manner of circumstances. Where is God in the death of a child? Where is God in the auto accident on a snowy night? Where is God as we experience someone we love slipping irrevocably into the haze of Alzheimer's disease? Where is God when wars tear apart nations and consume our resources and energies?

Where is God in all of this? Ours is a God who is no stranger to suffering, a God who is revealed through the mystery of the Cross, a God who shares our burdens and companions us in suffering.

At the same time, God's presence is made known through us as we are in active solidarity with those who suffer. Our care and our concern is a manifestation of God's own care and concern. In us and through us Christ continues his work of reconciling and healing. It is therefore an act of faithlessness to stand passively asking where God is in all of this without asking as well how God's presence and compassion and care are seeking to make themselves known in deeds of generosity and service.

Here I am put in mind of St. Paul's notion of the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. When our humanity is laid bare, when we have lost control and can no longer hide behind our affluence and apparent self-sufficiency, we are obliged to stand naked with others in the truth of where we find ourselves. At such moments the communion of the Holy Spirit is realized in a shared vulnerability and our hearts are opened to the deep compassion of God which roots and grounds the universe.

How essential it is for us in our church to approach one another, particularly those with whom we differ, not as enemies or adversaries but as vulnerable brothers and sisters who, in spite of seeming strength and security, have their own anxieties, fears and burdens to bear. Is not the

present strain within the Anglican Communion an opportunity given us by God to reframe and order the ways in which we relate ourselves to one another? Are we not being invited to live the mystery of communion in the Holy Spirit at a deeper level and to come together in unity to serve those who have lost so much and stand in such desperate need?

I have written to the primates of churches in the areas affected by the tsunamis to share with them our love and concern and our commitment to assist them in these times. Communion, as has often been said, is made up of many webs of relationship. One of the most fundamental aspects of communion is a willingness to reach beyond oneself for the sake of others in the power of God's reconciling love.

A special meeting of the House of Bishops called to address the Report of the Lambeth Commission on Communion, the Windsor Report, has just concluded. I commend to you the word from the bishops addressed to the church following the meeting. Your bishops recognized that the Windsor Report at its heart is an invitation to strengthen the bonds of mutual affection between the churches of the Anglican Communion in the service of mission. It is my sense that the present disaster in South Asia, along with the reminder it brings of our ongoing need to be in solidarity with brothers and sisters around the world in their suffering, is the way in which we are being called at this moment to live a costly and self-sacrificing life of communion for the sake of the world God deeply loves and cherishes.

As your Presiding Bishop I am profoundly grateful to all of you who have so generously responded to the present situation in South Asia. At the same time I pray that we as a church will continue to reach out beyond ourselves in communion and loving service to those in many places who daily bear burdens of poverty and disease and live with little hope that their cries will be heard. The Lord hears the cry of the poor and so must we as well.

Yours in Christ,

Frank T. Griswold
Presiding Bishop and Primate

A Statement from Global South Primates meeting In Nairobi

January 27th/28th, 2005

1. We are gathered in Nairobi, Kenya to strengthen our shared ministries and in anticipation of the third South-South Encounter that will take place in Egypt October 25th/31st 2005. We are encouraged by the reports that we have heard of the transforming power of the Gospel around the Anglican Communion and yet we are conscious that there are fundamental issues of faith and order confronting us that threaten the very existence of our common life,
2. At the meeting of the Primates in October 2003, in response to these concerns, we called for the establishment of the Lambeth Commission on Communion and are very grateful for their hard work over these past months. We also commend the dedicated servant leadership offered by the Most Reverend Robin Eames and the extraordinary contributions made *by* the individual members of the Commission. We believe that the Windsor Report offers a way forward that has the potential of being marked with God's grace.
2. We welcome the clear statement of the Windsor Report in its emphasis on the Church as a "Communion of radical holiness to which all Christ's people are called, [and] are thus rooted in the Trinitarian life and purposes of the One God" [TWR 3] As the Windsor Report rightly declares our individual autonomy is always limited by our commitment to living in this community. In light of this we commit ourselves to manifesting our oneness in Christ through our willing submission one to another.
4. We agree that the Windsor Report correctly points out that the Episcopal Church USA and the Diocese of New Westminster have pushed the Anglican Communion to breaking point. The report rightly states that they did not listen to the clear voices of the Communion, rejected the Counsel of the four Instruments of Unity and ignored the plea of the Primates in their statements issued on October 16th 2003 (all Primates) and November 2nd, 2003 (Global South Primates). It is our considered opinion that their actions represent a "departure from genuine, apostolic Christian faith" [TWR 28]
5. We call on the Episcopal Church USA and the Anglican Church of Canada to take seriously the need for "repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation enjoined on us by Christ" (Windsor Report [134]) and move beyond informal expressions of regret for the effect of their actions to a genuine change of heart and mind. We are grieved that actions

within both provinces have torn "the fabric of our Communion at its deepest level" and that to date there have been no concrete steps taken towards repentance and reconciliation. This indicates that they have chosen to walk apart from the rest of the Communion. Failing any substantial change of direction within the next three months (i.e. by May 31st, 2005,) the Global South Primates and the others who share our convictions would confirm that they have chosen to "walk alone" and follow another religion.

6. We are encouraged by the recent actions of those bishops in ECUSA who at the meeting of their House of Bishops in Salt Lake City on January 13th, 2005 signed "A Statement of Acceptance and Submission" renouncing the actions that have been so injurious to our common life and affirmed that in future they will only act in ways that are "fully compatible with the interests, standards, unity and good order of the Anglican Communion." We invite other Primates to join us in declaring that full communion with these bishops is maintained.
7. We note with approval the recognition that extraordinary Episcopal care is needed for congregations alienated from their diocesan bishops because of their refusal to distance themselves from the historic faith of the church and embrace the proposed innovations. While we remain committed to the importance of coherent diocesan and provincial structures we believe, however, that there are times when these very structures can and have been inappropriately used to intimidate the faithful. We recognize the necessity for the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Primates and the aforementioned bishops to establish a more collaborative mechanism to provide for adequate Episcopal care where needed.
8. We note that the Windsor Report calls for a moratorium on the election and consecration of any candidate to the episcopate who is living in same gender union and the use of rites for the blessing of same-sex unions. We urge the Episcopal Church USA and the Anglican Church of Canada to fully comply mindful that this is only the first step towards acknowledgement of Lambeth Resolution 1.10 "We cannot advise the legitimizing or blessing of same sex unions nor ordaining those involved in same gender unions."
9. We would also point out that faithfulness to the Holy Scriptures and to the expressed mind of the Communion requires that non-celibate homosexual clergy be asked to reform or resign and instead of a moratorium on same-sex blessings there should be an immediate, total and permanent cessation of such practices.

10. The Windsor Report acknowledges the great pain that has been inflicted upon those faithful communities that have resisted doctrinal innovations within Episcopal Church USA and the Anglican Church of Canada. However, we reject the moral equivalence drawn between those who have initiated the crisis and those of us in the Global South who have responded to cries for help from beleaguered brothers and sisters in Christ. Because of our commitment to our common life we do regret any discomfort and disorder that has resulted from our actions taken in fulfillment of our "conscientious duty." [TWR 155]

11. We are encouraged by the suggestions offered for restructuring the various instruments of unity to strengthen our common life in Christ. We are, however, aggrieved and disappointed that the contributions and resources of the majority of the Anglican Communion are not adequately recognized and represented in these instruments. We are convinced that there must be a more regionally and provincially representative procedure in appointments to commissions and task forces established to serve the whole Communion. We support the recommendation that the Archbishop of Canterbury, together with the Primates, should establish a 'Council of Advice'. A more deliberately global approach to leadership is vital if we are to be able to respond to the challenges and complexities of worldwide mission.

12. We are committed to the future life of the Anglican Communion, one that is rooted in truth and charity and faithfulness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We applaud the proposal for an Anglican Covenant and endorse and commend the following statement as an initial step in this direction: "Each church shall act in a manner compatible both with its belonging to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, and with its membership of the Anglican Communion. In all essential matters of common concern in the Anglican Communion, no member church shall act without consideration of the common good of the Communion." [TWR, Appendix Two, Article 9]

"ON WHAT IS OUR ANGLICAN UNITY BASED?
'BONDS OF AFFECTION' OR THE ESSENTIALS OF THE FAITH?"

Executive summary

A Response to the Windsor Report Citing Biblical and Historical Precedents for the Various Interventions in Times of Crisis and for Overlapping Jurisdictions"

INTRODUCTION: The dire state of the Christian Faith within the Episcopal Church in the United States of America ("ECUSA") and Canada has precipitated a crisis within the Anglican Communion. The Lambeth Commission on Communion ("Commission") was appointed to address this crisis. We appreciate the work of this Commission and its Windsor Report ("Report") which addressed various aspects of the current crisis of faith. These efforts are to be applauded. We five archbishops of the Anglican Communion do nevertheless observe that the breadth and depth of the theological situation in ECUSA and Canada were neither adequately represented to the Commission nor fully appreciated in the recommendations of the Report. However, the Report did observe that "the overwhelming response from other Christians both inside and outside the Anglican family has been to regard these developments as departures from genuine, apostolic Christian faith."

This is an Executive Summary of a fuller Response to the Windsor Report ("Response") will primarily focus upon only one of the aspects of the lengthy Report. This Response simply addresses Paragraphs 154 and 155 concerning the responsive actions by orthodox primates and bishops in reaction to the increasingly heterodox situations in ECUSA and Canada. The precedents for such rescue missions within the Anglican Communion are replete with well over two dozen instances of such responsive undertakings and overlapping jurisdictions discussed in the full Response.

By failing to cite the underlying Biblical principles and numerous historical precedents (from the Early Church to our Anglican heritage) has resulted in the Windsor Report being flawed on this particular point. If there are so many instances of rescue efforts and overlapping jurisdictions in Anglican history for occupational, racial and ethnic, theological and trans-denominational purposes, then certainly to protect and to further the Gospel in the face of heterodoxy, false teaching and false practice warrant such responsive actions and overlapping jurisdictions. The essentials of the Christian Faith and doctrine must come first, and only then should matters of "bonds of affection" be considered. The Faith was the primary priority of the Early Christian Church ... and should be today as well.

A growing number of primates, bishops and/or provinces have responded to the pleas of American Episcopalians for orthodox episcopal oversight. The Windsor Report did not fully examine the cause of the numerous pleas for help. Thus, the Report did not adequately address the appropriateness of the rescue efforts or the vast number of precedents for such actions. Currently the several rescue efforts include those undertaken for the protection of the Gospel by Archbishop Emmanuel Kolini of Rwanda, Archbishops Moses Tay and Yong Ping Chung of SouthEast Asia, Archbishop Bernard Malango of Central Africa, Archbishop Benjamin Nzimbi of Kenya and Bishop Gideon Githiga of the Diocese of Thika in said Province, Archbishop Henry Orombi of Uganda and Bishop Evans Kisekka of the Diocese of Luwero in said Province, Archbishop Peter Akinola of Nigeria, Archbishop Gregory Venables of the Southern Cone and Bishop Frank Lyons of the Diocese of Bolivia in said Province, Bishop Robinson Cavalcanti of the Diocese of Recife in Brazil, Bishop William Anderson of Caledonia, Canada and Bishop Maternus Kapinga of the Diocese of Ruvuma in Tanzania.

It is abundantly clear that attempts to maintain the unity of our church on the foundation of "bonds of affection" without placing primary priority upon the essentials of the Faith is both unscriptural and unworkable. If the church were to choose now to allow humanly devised provincial and diocesan boundaries to serve as barriers to the proclamation of the Gospel in its authentic Anglican substance would be tragic. To ask primates and bishops to cease their ministry to believing Anglicans is to force them to place man-made polity over essential doctrine and to exalt "affection" over key and central tenets of the Christian Faith.

Historically in the life of the church catholic episcopal oversight which resulting in what is called overlapping jurisdictions has occurred in circumstances where the Faith has been compromised, pastoral need was significant, the unity and order of the church needed reinforcement or ethnic origins demanded an oversight that could insure the Faith of the church being articulated mindful of a particular culture. Now is no time to ignore these valid precedents.

TWO FUNDAMENTAL BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES: It is noted that (A) there are no territorial borders erected in the New Testament to deter the protection and proclamation Gospel and (B) that the New Testament contains clear admonitions for Christians to take when faced with instances of the proclamation of another gospel, false doctrine, false teachers and false prophets. For example among the 18 cited Biblical passages is Galatians 1:6-10: "I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for another gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you, and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached, let him be accursed [Gk: anathema] ... For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ." The New Testament sanctions no territorial borders to the proclamation of the Gospel and has stringent directives in dealing with situations of another or different gospel and false doctrine, teachers and prophets. By failing to address these cardinal biblical principles, the Windsor Report misconstrues the proper reactions to the doctrinal deviations rampant within ECUSA.

AMPLE PRECEDENT FROM THE EARLY CHURCH

At this time of a crisis of faith and mission in those provinces and dioceses where the Gospel is under attack and the Faith is being compromised, it is important to recall that there do exist persuasive and authoritative precedents from the Early Church in which faithful bishops were expected to extend their sacramental and teaching ministries across the organized church's ecclesiastical boundaries. This historical heritage includes the consecration of alternate bishops for ministry to the faithful where heterodoxy was prevalent.

Reality is - as stated by the German Lutheran scholar Werner Elert in his seminal treatise "Eucharist and Church Fellowship in the First Four Centuries" - that "[t]he early church was never in doubt that unity in doctrine is a prerequisite of altar fellowship." Pertinent to the point of this Response is the tenet that "[t]he boundary runs between orthodoxy and heterodoxy. The hierarchical unity of the episcopate and orthodoxy are both criteria of the unity of the church. However, when these two come into collision, orthodoxy has the unqualified preeminence." Dr. Elert writes as to heretical bishops, "[w]e see from this that the connection between church and bishop is only conditional. It can be sacrificed for the unity of the church according to a higher criterion of unity. Fellowship with the parish has precedence over that with its bishops."

Examples include the Synod of Antioch (268) and Bishop Dionysius against Paul of Samosata, the continual practice of Athanasius during the Arian heresies of ordaining orthodox clergy to minister outside his jurisdiction, Eusebius of Samosata did likewise, Cyprian of Carthage testifies that the bishops in his own time were so united that if anyone of the body preached heresy or persecuted the flock of Christ, all the bishops came to its rescue. Gregory of Nazianzen regarded Cyprian as a universal bishop in Carthage and Africa and he speaks similarly of Athanasius.

In Joseph Bingham's "Antiquities of the Christian Church" in Book 2, Chapter V entitled 'Of the Office of Bishops in relation to the whole Catholic Church,' the scholarly author has observed: "Whenever the faith was in danger of being subverted by heresy, or destroyed by persecution, then every bishop thought it part of his duty and office to put to his helping hand, and labour as much for any other diocese as his own. Dioceses were but limits of convenience, for the preservation of order in times of peace; but the faith was a more universal thing, and when war was made upon that, then the whole world was but one diocese ... The rule in the primitive Church was that no bishop should ordain in another's diocese without his permission and for order's sake this was generally observed. There were exceptions to this rule when a situation demanded that it was necessary to do otherwise. Such situations would be when a bishop became a heretic and would only ordain heretical clergy while persecuting the orthodox. Any catholic bishop, being a bishop of the universal Church would then be authorized to ordain orthodox men in such a diocese ... The preservation of the faith is seen to be the supreme rule of all and so the lesser rule had to give way to this superior obligation."

A glaring example of the failure of the Lambeth Commission to fully consider the role of Christian doctrine and the essentials of the Faith can be seen in the references in the Windsor Report to Canon VIII of the Council of Nicea. This Canon is primarily and demonstrably concerned with orthodoxy. The Cathari and Novations must "observe and follow the dogmas of the Catholic and Apostolic Church." Though the Canon promotes one bishop in a city, it is abundantly clear that the church that produced this Canon had catholic bishops in cities where there were also Novation bishops (e.g. Aecius, Novation bishop at Constantinople).

The planting of churches through missionary bishops in locations where there were requests or need is longstanding and has had an effect within Anglicanism as well. The Great Celtic Missionary movement that began in the 5th century bore much fruit in sending forth Irish monks who became Missionary Bishops in places such as Germany.

THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES AND ANGLICAN STRUCTURES

The Thirty-nine Articles clearly state the basis of Anglican unity is doctrine and not territory. The center of unity is not the bishop, but the Christian Faith. Article XXXIV allows for diversity of worship and of expression, but only on the condition that this diversity is in accordance with Christian belief. See also, Articles XIX and XXXIX.

OVERLAPPING JURISDICTIONS IN ANGLICANISM: For over 300 years, the Anglican communion has witnessed multiple jurisdictions, overlapping jurisdiction, and bishops for people of different races, cultures, theologies and political parties. At least twenty (25) such instances are cited in the full Response. The British Parliament long ago legally authorized two Anglican Churches in one locale. Canon law, custom, history and tradition support the sending missionary bishops from one part of the Communion into another.

CURRENT EXAMPLES OF OVERLAPPING JURISDICTIONS IN ANGLICANISM: Current examples of overlapping or non-geographic bishops and jurisdictions include:

(A) General: There are four overlapping Anglican jurisdictions in Europe. In Spain and Portugal, the Church of England's Diocese in Europe coexists with the Spanish Episcopal Reformed Church and the Lusitanian Church. This Diocese and the Convocation of American Churches in Europe both have congregations in Belgium, France, Germany, Italy and Switzerland. [Since ECUSA is doing it, how can they now complain?] Alongside these parallel Anglican jurisdictions, account must also be taken of other churches in direct communion, namely the Old Catholic Churches in Austria, Croatia, the former Czech Republic, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland and Switzerland, and the "Porvoo churches" in the Nordic and Baltic regions.

(B) Theology: England/Wales: The Provincial Episcopal Visitors or the "Flying Bishop" program in the Church of England and the Church of Wales. This allows a parish to seek alternate episcopal oversight for reasons of theology.

Also, Australia: The Diocese of Sydney has planted parishes in neighboring Australian dioceses, retaining oversight and jurisdiction.

(C) Occupation: Bishops of ECUSA for the Armed Forces and Australia exercise non-geographic oversight of military and prison chaplains. [Since ECUSA is doing it, again how can they further complain?]

(D) Race: The Navajoland Area Mission within the borders of the United States overlaps with other dioceses of ECUSA. Farmington, New Mexico (a town of 37,000 residents maintains a parish of the Diocese of Rio Grande and four congregations of Navajoland.

New Zealand/Aotearoa: In 1928, the Church in New Zealand created the Te Pihopatanga o Aotearoa for Maori Anglicans with dioceses for the indigenous people of this area which overlap the seven (7) dioceses of New Zealand created for the descendants of European settlers. In 1992, the General Synod adopted a revised constitution providing a tri-partite system of governance for the three racial groups found in the New Zealand Church. Further, the Church in New Zealand has recently announced in 2005 (since the publication of the Windsor Report) the formation of a third parallel jurisdiction occupying the same geographic territory as the Diocese of Auckland of the Province of New Zealand and the Hui Amorangi ki te Tai Tokerau diocese of the Province of Aotearoa.

South Africa: The Order of Ethiopia maintains parishes independent of its system in the Province of South Africa.

United States: The Church of South India (CSI) has 20 overlapping parishes within the United States and the borders of ECUSA and Canada with oversight held by the Moderator of the CSI. No compact regarding these overlapping jurisdictions has been formulated.

Also, Arabian Gulf: The Church of Pakistan - without seeking the permission of the Provinces of Jerusalem and the Middle East - sent a missionary bishop to the Arabian Gulf to work with expatriate Pakistanis in the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf. In Kuwait, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, the CSI also maintains overlapping parishes in the Gulf under the oversight of the Bishop in Kerala.

(E) Trans-denominationally: Overlapping jurisdictions exist throughout the world relative to the various Orthodox Churches of the East, the various Eastern Rite Churches, the Roman Catholic Church as well as the numerous Protestant denominations. And what about the ECUSA Concordat with the Lutherans in the United States? Temporally, the world no longer has one Christian denomination or is one organizational church.

(F) Other: In addition to the above current examples supportive of the existence of the Anglican Mission, the recent book "Consecrated Women?" by Forward in Faith UK further paints an accurate picture:

HISTORICAL EXAMPLES OF OVERLAPPING JURISDICTIONS IN ANGLICANISM:

(A) The Scotland Precedent: In 1745, Parliament recognized two Anglican churches in Scotland. English and Irish bishops provided episcopal oversight, on theological grounds, for these chapels until 1923.

(B) The Church Mission Society Precedent: Historically, the Anglican Church has tolerated and established over-lapping and dual jurisdictions for reasons of theology, politics and national identity. In 1844, the American Church sent a Bishop to Shanghai to exercise jurisdiction in the Amoy area of the Chinese Empire. In 1849, the Church of England with the support of the Church Mission Society (CMS) sent a bishop to Hong Kong to exercise jurisdiction throughout the Chinese Empire.

(C) The Cape Town Precedent: In 1863, the Metropolitan of Cape Town, Robert Gray, deposed the Bishop of Natal, John Colenso, for heresy. Colenso appealed to the Privy Counsel in London, which in 1865, overturned the sentence and restored Colenso to his bishopric.

CONCLUSION:

Any insistence that territorial boundaries are superior to the doctrinal unity of the Faith is misplaced. The New Testament clearly does not sanction such and always stresses one Faith and the importance of the Great Commission. The Church Fathers and Reformers certainly understood this. Faith and doctrine are pre-eminent. In ruling out the legitimacy of intervention and overlapping jurisdictions, the Windsor Report erred in offering an opinion which did not adequately consider or discuss the foundational Scriptural mandates and which is likewise not supported by church history or doctrine. On the sole point of this Response, the Windsor Commission sought no guidance or briefs from the wider Anglican Communion. All Christians in a place are to be united in the Faith. The Windsor Report regrettably ignores the pervasiveness of the tragic theological reality in vast portions of the United States and Canada. The precedents for the rescue missions are replete. Well over two dozen instances of rescue effort to protect and further the proclamation of the Gospel and the numerous historical and current instances of overlapping jurisdictions are detailed in the full Response of which this an Executive Summary. Failing to rely upon the underlying Biblical principles and numerous historical precedents (from the Early Church to our Anglican heritage) has resulted in the Windsor Report being flawed in its recommendations on overlapping jurisdictions.

Faithfully Submitted,

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