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## THE WINDSOR REPORT (PART II)

In Part I of my brief account of the Windsor Report, I quoted the recommendations of the Lambeth Commission for the Episcopal Church. In Part II, I want to address what is said in relation to the other side, so-called, especially the Bishops and Primates who have intervened in dioceses of the Episcopal Church. Finally I want to look at two crucial necessities for the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion, as we know it, to survive.

In their attempt to be fair and to mediate between the two sides of the Episcopal Church and those who have declared themselves in impaired or broken communion with ECUSA, the commission issued a reprimand to the Bishops who considered it their duty to intervene and give pastoral care and jurisdiction to congregations and priests who have been scandalized or persecuted by the actions of ECUSA. I quote the report.

"We call upon those who believe it is their conscientious duty in provinces, dioceses and parishes other than their own:

- + to express regret for the consequences of their actions
- + to affirm their desire to remain in the Communion, and
- + to effect a moratorium on any further interventions.

"We also call upon these archbishops and bishops to seek an accommodation with the bishops of the dioceses whose parishes they have taken into their own care."

The Primate of Nigeria, Peter Akinola, has called this "equal language for unequal actions." For him, the action of the intervention of godly bishops for the sake of sheep, endangered by the wolves of heresy and schism, is nothing like the actions of the wolves themselves. I must confess I agree with the Primate of Nigeria. This section of the report was drawn up cavalierly and without a full appreciation for the necessary distinctions.

And yet, in another analysis, Oliver O'Donovan, Professor of Moral Theology at Oxford University has carefully analyzed the language to show, in his opinion, that this section of the Report, criticizing the intervention of faithful bishops, is in fact not equal in moral judgment to the reprimand of ECUSA, but seeks a measured corrective

nonetheless for the sake of the Communion. O'Donovan writes,

"They are not described in equivalent terms with respect to their subjective motives (breach of affection [ECUSA] is not the same as conscientious duty [faithful bishops]) and therefore they are not presented as equivalently regrettable (what was done is to be regretted in the one case [ECUSA], what ensued is to be regretted in the other [faithful bishops and the conflict with the dioceses they entered] - brackets all mine.

The total impact of the Windsor Report is the attempt to bring a comprehensive recommendation that will allow discipline to occur in the Anglican Communion and provide a way ahead.

But it must be recognized that the way ahead is precarious and requires courage and good will. There is no guarantee that the Anglican Communion will remain together. Now we have a chance that requires every spiritual virtue we can muster.

The result could include many possible outcomes, but I would suggest there are, at least, two crucial ones that must take place, or the Communion will make the current schism a formal one, and we will in the words of the report "begin to learn to walk apart."

Those two things are: mutual compliance with the recommendations by both sides; and a determined acceptance of the guiding principle of the "bonds of affection." These two crucial things may seem self-evident, but they are not. They both involve the risk of goodwill. And even if these are accomplished, they leave an enormous amount of reformation in the Episcopal Church with respect to its historic formularies, and theological questions concerning marriage and divorce, and the ordination of women.

Mutual compliance is the first step. On the side of the Episcopal Church, this means that bishop by bishop, their intention and action would show they comply fully with the recommendations of the Commission. Thus they would show genuine regret and renewal. In some cases where the bishops are intransigent and unwilling to comply totally with the Commission, they would provide a way for the orthodox to proceed by granting those embattled parishes delegated episcopal oversight that is truly acceptable to the orthodox view of Scripture, theological and ecclesiological tradition, and the rational apprehension of the issues at hand. We must not forget that as far as the Windsor Report is concerned, the Episcopal Church has erred not only in its unilateral action, scorning the "bonds of affection," but also in its failure both in the House of Bishops and at the General Convention to provide a coherent and persuasive theological rationale for their unilateral action. As of yet such a rationale does not exist. In my mind, and in that of the orthodox, it cannot and will not exist, because explicitly and inherently such a position would contradict the teaching of Scripture on Man, Human Sexuality, Marriage, Sin and Redemption. On the other side, as far as the intervention of orthodox primates, for the care of embattled parishes and clergy is concerned, this would be suspended, although monitored, as long as bishops of the Episcopal Church actually comply with the recommendations of the Windsor Report. But then, here is the rub. If the bishops of the Episcopal Church, through sloth and neglect of duty, or through simple intransigence, prefer to stiffen in their resolve for unilateral action in

the Anglican Communion, ignoring the recommendations of the Commission, then for the sake of the truth of the Gospel and the Church Catholic, the orthodox Primates will have no choice but to declare these willfully heretical bishops and their schismatic acts outside of the faith, and their sees vacant. Their prompt action on behalf of the faithful is their only possible response.

The bonds of affection, finally, are the only possible way for the Anglican Communion to proceed as a church. The Church as the Body of Christ participates in Him through the knowledge of his Word and the union of love that adheres to that Word. It is the truth of his person that the Church Catholic adores, through whom God the Father is made known, and from whom along with the Father, the Spirit is sent, and poured forth as the Love and Gift of God to us.

It is an ancient and irrefutable principle that one cannot love what one does not know. One cannot have affection for something that one has no inkling of whatsoever. The same is true in our relation to God. We cannot love him unless we know him. But the glorious thing is this. We do know Christ Jesus, as he is revealed first of all in Holy Scripture and then in the tradition of the church, and through the efficacy of her redeemed and sanctified reason.

And so if our Anglican Communion is to proceed, it must be within the "bonds of affection," and the commitment of good will to seek and find and obey the truth. All of this we find in Jesus, and it is therefore he, and he alone, who is the Mediator between God and Man, and man and man. As the truth incarnate, and the very possibility of true love, he shall be the mediator within the Anglican Communion.

This one last note. It will not do, as I have said now many times, to speak of a congregational family, or a diocesan family, or a national church family, or even the family of the Anglican Communion, apart from the family of the Church Catholic. Such notions may have some value but not when they are used to exclude the true and larger picture of the Church Catholic as the only true Body of Christ. The "bonds of affection" must have this understanding written on our hearts or we shall fall again into pernicious views of isolated and unilateral churchmanship, which just won't do.

My friends, it is my prayer that ECUSA and the wider Communion of Anglican Churches will enter into a mutual compliance with the recommendations of the Windsor Report, and that these will be held truly with humility in the bonds of affection, in charity. If not the Anglican Communion as we know it will cease to exist. And we shall have no other choice than to be faithful to our Lord and Savior.

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