

PRESENTATION OF THE WINDSOR REPORT 2004

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Chairman of the Lambeth Commission

My colleagues,

I am privileged to formally present to you the *Windsor Report 2004* which has been prepared by the Lambeth Commission appointed at your request by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The text of the Report has been available now for some time and has been widely publicised. You will have read our conclusions and discussed them with your Provinces. Following this Presentation we will be reviewing the responses received to date. Therefore I will concentrate on the key features of the Report and the issues which I believe must be addressed by the Primates.

The Commission as you will recall was established following our last meeting at Lambeth Palace. It is important before turning to the details of the Report that as Chairman of the Lambeth Commission I pay tribute to the work of that Commission. We held three plenary sessions in 2004, twice in Windsor, England and once at Kanuga, North Carolina. We engaged in extensive research, examination of submissions both oral and written, dialogue with individual Provinces, individuals and groups and the Report I present has the unanimous endorsement of all the members.

The membership Archbishop Rowan appointed represented a wide diversity of theological outlook, culture and nationality. We began our work in an atmosphere of tension for the Communion and had no illusion as to the task facing us. The fact that we stayed together as a Commission and were able to present unanimous recommendations and conclusions says so much for the application, dedication and co-operation of the members. However I believe it says something more – a diverse group of Anglicans praying and thinking their way to recommendations for you and for our Communion. I believe that it represents its own symbolism of true communion. It is at that point that I begin this Presentation. I think that is an important point to make – the Lambeth Commission itself represented Communion and I suggest the Windsor Report represents what communion can produce ...

What were the characteristics of our work which supports that suggestion? First, I recognise that the full range of Anglican outlook was present in the Commission. What is usually termed liberal co-existed with conservative, radical sat beside status quo and that broad middle ground which saw the maintenance of communion as more important than division over the issue of the moment was represented. Second, no one sought to minimise division. There was respect for opposing views. No attempt was made to ignore deeply held and contrasting views. There were moments when the way forward was far from clear. Third, I saw integrity in the ways arguments were presented and listened to. That integrity produced respect for the views of others. There was cost involved in that process. No one sought to place their views as the complete or absolute solution in contradiction to all others. This attitude produced valuable listening to each other. I was conscious of that process as members met not only in plenary sessions but in many private conversations. Diversity became a recognised feature as we worked together – but integrity and listening made my task as Chair so much more possible. Finally, I witnessed the influence of daily worship and Bible Study in our work.

May I suggest that those features of our work can be described as communion in its highest and best level. As I said in presenting the Report last October the Commission had made a *'remarkable journey'* in its year's work. May I also presume to suggest that what I called *'a true symbolism of communion'* has something to say to us as fellow Primates at this meeting?

The key to understanding the Report is the context in which it was set.

This Report has to be set in the context of communion. We were not asked to pronounce on questions of sexuality. Look at the terms of reference or mandate on page 13 of the Report. The Commission believed it was vital to reflect the values of the Gospel in our work: to look for healing not division, for pastoral reconciliation and not punishment, to look to our shared witness not only in our mission but in the processes we suggest by which the Anglican Communion works out the current tensions.

The *Windsor Report* offers an analysis of all that under God our Communion can be and our analysis of how the present difficulties have arisen. The proposals we make for the future must be seen as part of a process of healing and reconciliation on the issues that divide us most sharply. I recognise the Report is asking much of the Primates and our Provinces. We recognise there is pain in division but there is also pain in healing. This *Report* offers no easy solutions. There are no easy solutions. But I believe it is a plea for mature Christian dealing with complicated questions. It is a call for maturity and understanding.

Let me now turn to the details of the *Windsor Report*.

If the context in which the Windsor Report must be placed is communion it is important to recognise that the details of our recommendations inevitably ask of us questions which lie at the very root of the Anglican experience. Those questions surfaced time and again as the Commission worked through the year.

- *What sort of Communion do we believe God wants us to be?*
- *How do we relate to each other in matters other than simply being nice to each other?*
- *We value and protect our Provincial autonomy but are there limits to autonomy without which true communion cannot exist?*
- *How far are we prepared to adapt, to listen and to understand each other's problems as opposed to living out our Provincial lives as though no one else mattered?*
- *What price are we prepared to pay to remain in communion with each other?*

All these questions point us to what I believe is the most crucial question of all for us today:

Do we want to remain in communion and can we do so in ways where deep differences can be addressed without fracturing what is essential in communion?

My colleagues, those questions are not simply academic musings. They are real – they are current – and they are not going to go away. They lie behind the questions our Commission is most familiar with at this time.

Second, I raise the question of expectation.

We belong to an Anglican Communion which expresses expectation in several ways. There is expectation that our structures are geared to allow God to reveal His purposes to us. There is expectation that the Anglican Communion has a role in the Body of Christ which is worth playing. But there is another expectation directly focussed in our present concerns and challenged by our present difficulties. That is the expectation that cultural, theological and doctrinal diversity can be contained within structures based on consensus or *bonds of affection* alone. Another way of expressing this is to note that *bonds of affection* seem more than adequate when we agree with each other – but not adequate when we disagree. Through the generations Anglicanism has not sought a central curia – a sort of Vatican – we have strenuously sought inter-dependence – in that scenario there must be an acknowledgement that at some point a process of living together, of being together, will need a *'bottom line'*, a *'line in the sand'*. This Report has drawn the comment from some sources that it is a move towards the very central authority we have tried to avoid. I ask you to reject that

argument. What is contained in the *Windsor Report* is in a way the minimum degree of structural expression we believe the Communion needs to provide *bonds of affection* with realistic channels of accountability, transparency and cohesion.

Third, I ask you to remember that the *Windsor Report* must be seen as part of a process. To be viewed otherwise is to be out of tune with what I believe Anglicanism grasps as a fact of its life. This Report provides no easy answers. There are references in its pages to the different processes Provinces maintain through their own constitutions: there are references to the disadvantages of provincial autonomy as well as its advantages: there are references to the role of synodical government in the expression of Provincial opinion. But I believe it brings to the surface issues which go far beyond New Hampshire, New Westminster or the needs of groups. In fact it raises questions which a meeting of Primates by itself cannot answer. Certainly there are questions demanding our answers this week. Those we cannot and must not avoid. But there are others which will exist long after we have left Dromantine. I suggest the *Windsor Report* must join other efforts over the years to understand what is the true nature of Anglicanism.

In sections A and B we have sought to describe the Communion as we experience it. We begin our Report by trying to show the benefits of *'being in communion'*. The key question for the Primates is simply this:

Do sections A and B accurately describe Communion as you see it?

Do you recognise what you read in sections A and B?

If not, **are there elements which the Primates feel able to commend?**

The Commission concluded that communion exists for the purpose of witness to the reality of our common life in Christ and then for the mission of the Church. The forty-four Churches live in a state of inter-dependence. We value our autonomy as Provinces recognising our individual cultures, diversity of theological outlooks and forms of Provincial government – but on main principles of what we believe to be God's revelation as Anglicans we act in harmony with each other. When we look back to the 1980's in the Anglican Communion and at our efforts to come to terms with divisions over the ordination of women despite all the difficulties we saw those same principles under severe scrutiny. There we saw a commitment not to act contrary to the instruments of unity. *Was this idealistic alone?* I believe the process of consultation which took place at that time strengthened the bonds of understanding across the Anglican Communion., That process did not solve all the difficulties but it did underline a basic understanding of how autonomy related to independence.

Again the Report asks if the Primates accept the description of the Communion in Sections A and B.

In sections C and D the *Windsor Report* moves into an analysis of what the Communion believes flowed from A and B. I ask you to consider C and D in the light of what you perceive A and B to be saying. It is only in that context that the Lambeth Commission believes its recommendations can be regarded as realistic.

I would also ask the Primates to address section D before section C. Here we make specific suggestions. For the sake of time I will introduce our recommendations in the context of the implications in the opening sections of the Report.

The Report underlines that a bishop is not only to be viewed in terms of diocesan responsibility but is to be seen as a bishop of the Church universal. The communion-wide aspect of the episcopate must be taken more seriously than has been our practice in the past. Election to the episcopate must be seen as one of the most important aspects of our universality as Anglicans. We view a bishop as a focal point of unity – not a source of disunity. Our analysis of the election and confirmation of the bishop of New Hampshire has led us to conclude that it was a challenge to that principle. We have noted the argument that ECUSA acted entirely within its constitutional and due process. We have no argument with that. We accept the Provincial legitimacy of its actions. But in terms of communion we have been compelled to reach the serious and unanimous conclusion that ECUSA acted against the expressed opinions of the four instruments of unity, their understanding of Communion teaching on the issue of the episcopate – and against an understanding of the universality of Episcopal ministry. In terms of the Commission's analysis of communion in sections A and B and what we went on to say about bonds of affection in section C, we conclude that the result of the process of ECUSA in the election in New Hampshire breached the bonds of affection. While the Commission was under pressure from certain quarters to recommend expulsion from the Communion we concluded that this issue did not arise as a constitutional issue given our structures. To put this plainly: you cannot expel someone from a body which has no rules of membership. But we believe our recommendations stem from our analysis in sections A and B. We have called for an expression of regret, a moratorium and withdrawal from representative functions.

I wish to address in particular the recommendation of an expression of regret. The Report does not see this call merely as a statement of regret that other parts of the Anglican Communion were dismayed or distressed by the election and confirmation in New Hampshire on the part of ECUSA. But in terms of sections A,B and C, a statement of regret that this process went against the advice of the four Instruments of Unity. We do not believe anything less is appropriate in the circumstances. Having analysed the nature of communion we have experienced the Lambeth Commission believes the interpretation of regret by ECUSA must be clearly defined.

In our discussions we also felt that there was a moral obligation on ECUSA to produce clear arguments as to how its actions in this respect could be justified with Anglican teaching as we perceived it to be across the Anglican Communion. To put this another way, can ECUSA persuade the Communion that its actions were justified within the structures of the Anglican Communion.

The Commission was also asked to address the question of Public Rites of same sex blessings. The key word here is '*public*'. Again we concluded that as in the case of New Hampshire the actions of the diocese of New Westminster in Canada breached the bonds of affection. The same qualities of regret are therefore requested from the Anglican Church of Canada.

The Report now turns to the question of alternative pastoral oversight.

The intervention by bishops in a jurisdiction other than their own without the agreement or invitation of the relevant Episcopal and/or primatial authority is described in the *Windsor Report* as a threat to communion and a breach of the bonds of affection. It has been argued by some that the Report accorded equal judgement to these actions as in the case of ECUSA and the Church of Canada. I cannot accept this criticism. I ask the Primates to look at the language of the *Windsor Report*. It has been argued that interventions of this nature may be defended as a consequence of the developments in ECUSA and Canada but the Commission had to conclude they also represent a threat to communion and the bonds of affection. However a careful reading of the language we use in the report does not deal with the two instances in the same way.

The Report stresses the need for realistic, sensitive and transparent pastoral care of minority groups. We were left in no doubt as to the depth of feelings of such groups, particularly in the United States. We did not see a value in the creation of rival jurisdictions but we do emphasise the value to communion of an affirmation that ECUSA and Canada wish to remain in the Anglican Communion.

This brings me to the vital ingredient of reconciliation. Here in this country where we meet, reconciliation has become a priority need. Within Anglicanism the *Windsor Report* links reconciliation and healing in the process we are discussing. Therefore if true reconciliation is to be produced in our current situation a moratorium is an important part of that process. Healing of wounds takes time. A moratorium is to be viewed as much in relation to reconciliation as to reflection.

Turning to section C the Report addresses that often quoted aspect of the Anglican Communion – *bonds of affection*. You will find suggestions about the role and ministry of the Archbishop of Canterbury, development of the Instruments of Unity and the work of the Anglican Communion Office. There is also a formula of the Covenant concept. I would underline that the Covenant principle is not written in stone. It above all others will require careful discussion

at the Provincial level. But it does represent an idea whose time may well have come. The Commission does not argue that this is the only way to better regulate our relations in future. We offer it as one way but an important way forward. We commend it for study over a period.

For the sake of time I have presented the *Windsor Report* in general terms. But I want to say some other things on behalf of the Lambeth Commission.

While our discussion of the Report is important as we share insights I have to remind the Primates that certain decisions must be faced.

In sections A and B the Lambeth Commission gave a description of the Anglican Communion. We saw three main strands to our common life:

- governed by Holy Scripture
- living in inter-dependence
- autonomy-in-communion.

The question – ***Do the Primates recognise this description as an authentic description of our life together as a family of Churches?***

Section C contains suggestions to improve our machinery of inter-dependence

- the Instruments of Unity
- the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury
- a Council of Advice
- an Anglican Covenant.

The question – ***Do the Primates approve the main thrust of these proposals and feel they can commend them for implementation?***

Section D addresses the current situation. The Commission makes proposals about the election of bishops, public rites of blessing for same-sex unions, the Episcopal Church USA and other Provinces, situations of intervention, care of dissenting groups and the consideration of Lambeth Conference 1.10.

In the election of a bishop we submit that a bishop is for the whole Church so we propose a review of the election and confirmation processes to ensure an element of Communion-wide acceptability. We also speak of the process involved in the appointment of the Bishop of New Hampshire.

The question – ***Are the Primates willing to commend this principle to the Provinces?***

In the issue of Public Rites of Blessings for same-sex unions the Commission speaks of a moratorium, withdrawal from representative functions within the Communion and continued reflection.

The question – **Do the Primates wish to call for a moratorium?**

On the consecration of the Bishop of New Hampshire the Report speaks of regret, a moratorium and withdrawal from representative functions by consecrators until regret is forthcoming and a moratorium introduced.

The question – **Do the Primates wish to issue this call to ECUSA?**

The Report speaks of situations of intervention as a threat to Communion but not on a basis of moral equivalence to the other issues examined. It calls for reconciliation, regret for consequences, an affirmation of Communion and a moratorium.

The question – **Do the Primates wish to adopt these recommendations?**

In the case of the care of dissenting groups the *Windsor Report* talks of a recognition of the genuine Anglican expression of conservative groups, that is, that they remain loyal Anglicans even whilst in disagreement with their Provinces, a rejection of parallel jurisdictions, moves towards negotiated change and delegated jurisdiction.

The question – **Do the Primates affirm these proposals?**

Resolution 1.10 of Lambeth 1998 in addition to underlining the norm of Anglican understanding of sexual relationships spoke of a process of listening.

The question – **Will the Primates commit themselves again to this process?**

My colleagues, those are the main issues we are called upon to address. We cannot side-step them, nor ignore them.

I said earlier that experience has taught me that while there is pain in division there is also pain in healing. The Lambeth Commission experienced the pain of many during its year's work. I recognise there is pain for many in the recommendations we have made. The Report asks much. In particular it asks much of ECUSA, much of the Anglican Church of Canada, much of those who have intervened in Provinces other than their own without invitation or permission. But the Windsor Report asks something of all of us. It accepts the depth of feeling which exists in the Anglican Communion. It asks those who may have underestimated the depth of that feeling to consider the feelings of fellow Anglicans. It asks those who have felt decisions had to be made which seemed right and lawful for them to recognise what communion and bonds of affection mean. It asks all of us to reconsider how important are our links to each other in

the Anglican Communion. It is also realistic when it recognises that we may choose to *'walk along separate paths'*.

However, my colleagues, may I remind you of one of the questions posed by the Windsor Report which I believe we must answer on our knees –

'What is the will of God for the Anglican Communion'?

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