

Stand Firm Interviews: Dr. Kendall S. Harmon



Dr. Kendall S. Harmon has emerged as one of America's leading voices of orthodox Anglicanism. He was a chemistry major at Bowdoin College, from which he graduated Phi Beta Kappa and Summa Cum Laude in 1982. Thereafter he pursued seminary training at Regent College in Vancouver, B.C. from 1982-1984, and Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry outside Pittsburgh, from which he graduated in 1987.

Dr. Harmon's writings have appeared in various publications inside the Church, including *Episcopal Life*, *The Living Church*, *The Anglican Digest*, *Church Times*, and the *Church of England Newspaper*. Outside the Church his commentary has appeared in the *Charleston, S.C., Post and Courier*, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, and the *Cleveland Plain-Dealer*. An edited section of his doctoral thesis, "Nothingness and Human Destiny: Hell in the Thought of C.S. Lewis," appeared in *The Pilgrim's Guide: C.S. Lewis and the Art of Witness* (Eerdmans, 1998).

Dr. Harmon has served in many positions in the diocese of South Carolina, including as a member of the Standing Committee and an Examining Chaplain. He is currently Canon Theologian for the diocese. At the national level, he served as a

deputy to the 1997, 2000, and 2003 General Conventions, and was named to the Working Group on Science, Technology and Faith. In 2003 Dr. Harmon led the floor fight against revisionism at General Convention 2003, and read the public protest in the House of Deputies.

In January 2002 Dr. Harmon began a new ministry as communications coordinator for the diocese of South Carolina and editor of *The Anglican Digest*, the publication with the largest circulation in the Anglican communion. He is also a priest associate at Christ/St. Paul's Church, Yonge's Island, S.C. and editor of the *Jubilate Deo*, the diocesan newspaper of the diocese of South Carolina. He also runs the web site TitusOneNine.

This document contains the entire text of 4 interviews published at the Stand Firm web site during the week of July 19, 2004.

For a discussion of the broader context of the crisis facing the Anglican Communion, readers are encouraged to listen to Dr. Harmon's presentation "Anglican Essentials and Our Future Call" at www.standfirminfaith.com/mt/anglican_essentials.shtml.

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Greg Griffith: Can you give us your “executive summary” of the state of the worldwide communion?

Dr. Kendall S. Harmon: The worldwide communion I would consider very frail right now. It is clear that the whole Anglican family has never before been confronted with a rift this strong and deep. On the one hand you have a minority of people, mainly in Western Churches such as those in the United States and Canada, who believe it is a matter of gospel justice to insist that people who experience same sex attraction should be able to be involved in committed non-celibate relationships and still be ordained (I call this group the “reappraisers”). On the other hand you have the majority of world Christendom, as well as the majority of the Anglican Communion, who believe that ordaining as leaders people in these relationships is a matter of rejecting Gospel truth (I call this group the “reasserters”). Underneath the presenting issue of the clash over whether the church should repudiate or bless non-celibate same-sex relationships, you have the deeper issues of the nature of humanness; the nature of a sacrament (and in particular the consecration of a Bishop); the nature of marriage; the way authority is dispersed in the church and how the church uses that authority when it makes decisions; the issue of the authority and interpretation of Scripture (those two for me are inextricably intertwined); and even the nature of the Gospel itself.

As if all that is not enough, one needs to consider the context in which the decision is made. In the West, you have mainly white, mainly affluent, mainly shrinking Anglican Churches who, according to the perception of a significant majority of other Anglicans, are seeking to impose a non-Christian teaching on them which they believe will lead their church members away from God. This pressure is being placed upon a mainly black, mainly poor, mainly growing segment of the Anglican Communion. So one piece of this struggle is a battle between the Global North and the Global South over the shape of Christianity at the beginning of the 21st century. When you have genuine feelings by a solid group of Anglicans that this action is in part imperialism and may be tinged with racism, those are explosive dynamics beneath the surface.

Greg Griffith: Plus, you have the Africans saying, in essence, ‘We have embraced the faith you brought to us, why do you now want to discard this quite important part of it?’

Dr. Kendall S. Harmon: Another facet of this which no one wishes to mention is money. You may know the cynical version of the golden rule: *He who has the gold, rules.* The reality is that the Anglican Communion as a worldwide phenomenon is a relatively recent product of history in terms of it coming to a fuller shape. It begins in earnest with the Lambeth Conferences in the late 19th century but its more modern growth really starts in the period somewhat after the Second World War. A lot of people do not realize, for example, just how much the Anglican Communion has grown relatively recently.

Let us consider some examples. According to the World Christian Encyclopedia in 1970 the Anglican Church in Nigeria had 2.914 million people, whereas in 2000 it had 18 million; the Anglican Church in Uganda had 1.281 million people in 1970, whereas in 2000 it had 8.580 million. As a second example, I was interested to see in some research I did last year that a Roman Catholic commentator on Lambeth 1958 said: “The Lambeth Conference was composed of 310 Anglican bishops from 46 countries. It is today far wider in its reach than it used to be. It may be said to represent the second most important religious communion in English-speaking and English-ruling or ex-English-ruling parts of the world.”

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Now that was in 1958; and the author estimated the numerical strength of the Communion at that time at around 40 million. As of today, the Anglican Communion has significantly over 70 million members in over 160 countries worldwide - it has nearly doubled in a roughly a generation. The increase in size brought a greater need for family conversation and so you have the evolution, for the first time in Anglican history, of things such as the Primates’ meetings, which are now a once a year gathering of all the leaders of each of the 38 member churches within Anglicanism. The Primates’ meetings only began in the late 1970’s, and initially these leaders met every two or three years! You also have the creation of the Anglican Consultative Council, again a relatively recent phenomenon formed following a

resolution of Lambeth 1968; they came into being in 1969 and had their first meeting in Kenya in 1971. People need to know that, for good or for ill, some of the key building blocks in the modern Anglican Communion are at least in part tied to Western money, and in particular to American money. This also creates tricky dynamics.

As if all this is not enough, there are two other aspects of our context of which your readers need to be aware. One is North America. The decision of the Episcopal Church last summer in Minneapolis to embrace a new teaching on human sexuality made it the third mainline Christian denomination to do so: The first two were the United Church of Christ, and then the United Church of Canada. But those two churches, since those decisions, have been in significant numerical decline. The Episcopal Church leadership which is in favor of this radically revised new doctrine is seeking to “sell” this to the rest of the world as being an example of the Episcopal Church providing much needed leadership. But significantly since the Minneapolis decision both the Methodists and the Presbyterians did not follow the Episcopal Church’s lead. Is this a genuine gospel breakthrough based on Scriptural and Catholic teaching? If it is, then why is the question proving to be so divisive and why are so few churches - even in the West - actually moving in this direction? Is it possible that this is a case where, instead of being an embrace of the gospel, it is a case where the world is setting the agenda for the church? These questions also point to the challenging dynamics brought into play.

The other context people need to consider is England. I do not think the average Episcopalian realizes how spiritually weak the Church of England really is. It is claimed that there are over 20 million Anglicans in England, the World Christian Encyclopedia puts the 2000 figure at 23.983 million, but the reality is that on a given Sunday it would be a blessing to have 1 million worshippers there nationwide. The process of secularization, at the level of the average person in England, is far, far more advanced than it is over here. With the church’s weakness have come various new societal pressures, one of which is a small breeze which is blowing toward disestablishment. The new Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, who was at Oxford when I was pursuing my doctorate there, has had some favorable disposition toward disestablishment.

Were Rowan Williams, in this struggle, to stand with the majority of the Communion he would be standing not only against American money but against the direction of the current [British] Blair government, which seemed to have had a role - we could debate how much of one - in the latest Jeffrey John [an openly practicing homosexual] appointment to be Dean

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of Saint Albans. Were the Communion to respond to the American action in a strong way it could lead that small breeze of disestablishment to turn in to a wind in England - and though few people are willing to mention it, it is a backdrop to the current struggle.

If you put all these dynamics together, you can see that the cauldron boiling under the lid is very, very potent. And now we need to add one more specific element of context - that of what has transpired since General Convention 2003.

I believe that the Anglican Primates in October 2003 gave as strong a verbal warning as the Primates as a group could muster. Coming in to that meeting there was the desire on the part of some to find a good and godly way to discipline the Episcopal Church. Had the Primates issued not only a warning, a strong verbal discipline, but then also began any structural discipline, it would have been a problem. They could have taken an already grievous situation and made it worse, finding out later that they had chosen the wrong structural response, in which case they would have set a bad precedent.

This was the reason for the set up of the Commission, headed by Archbishop Robin Eames, and now called the Lambeth Commission. Given the unprecedented level of disunity in the Anglican Communion caused directly by the actions of General Convention 2003, could they find a creative solution whereby the highest level of communion could still be maintained and the problem would be honestly and directly faced? To attempt such a task the climate of mutual interdependence, which the Primates' statement of October 2003 sought to create, had to be maintained.

Greg Griffith: What about the state of ECUSA?

Dr. Kendall S. Harmon: The Commission, we might say, needed room to work. But what we have seen since the Primates' meeting is that that room has been steadily decreasing. It began the night of the Primates meeting in which Frank Griswold shocked not only a number of press present, but also a number of Primates, by clearly implying that, having signed a unanimous statement saying that to proceed would be to "tear the fabric" of the Anglican Communion "at its deepest level," he intended to go ahead anyway.

Then the next morning in England, less than a day after the Primates' statement was released, the Diocese of New Hampshire made clear they intended to go ahead.

I happened to be in the lobby of a London hotel that morning and saw an African Primate who stood there simply shaking his head after he heard what the Diocese of New Hampshire had said. He exclaimed: "We worked so hard to say the truth in love to them and they could not even wait a day before trampling on what we said." Fast forward now and look carefully at what transpired since that time. The

consecration on November 2 last year was seen, as Robin Eames recently explained, as a betrayal of the Anglican Communion, and of trust, by so many of our brothers and sisters throughout the world. But, having done so, did the American Church express publicly any sorrow about the significant damage which they caused? There was almost none.

In addition, what we have seen is an embrace of the new theology even more fully developed by the American Church. Right before the Primates' meeting in October of 2003 you had

The image I had last week was of being outside a house, and looking inside and seeing everyone going on about their business as usual; then I was taken up in the air far above the house and could see a hurricane just off shore. As I was taken around houses in different neighborhoods, every once in a while I would see people gathering water and seeking to prepare, but they were relatively few in number. It would be alarming enough if there were a hurricane just off shore and people were boarding up their windows, but the idea that one is off shore and most people are acting like it's not even there, is bizarre.

the diocese of Nevada vote to authorize ceremonies to celebrate “relationships of mutuality and fidelity.” In March 2004 the bishop of Utah authorized same-sex blessings. Then you have the retired bishop of Utah, Otis Charles, getting “married.” You have the bishop of Los Angeles blessing a same sex relationship, the bishop of Washington, D.C. doing the same, the Diocese of Vermont moving ahead with a same-sex liturgy, and even the diocese of North Carolina following suit. All this communicates a clear attitude of “we do not care what you think,” and “tough luck for the communion,” etc. It is clear that Lambeth Palace feels these developments are taking away what little room the Commission has in which to work.

We also have to consider what took place in Canada in early June. It was a quite unusual thing for Gregory Cameron, secretary of the Lambeth Commission, to go over and address the Anglican Church of Canada’s General Synod. It seemed as if an international perspective was going to be heard. The vote to give local synods the authority to proceed with same sex blessings was postponed. Yet the next morning the whole Synod approved “the integrity and sanctity of committed adult same-sex relationships.”

Just recently, Gene Robinson said to *Religion and Ethics Weekly*, “The Eames Commission does not have any authority over any of the 38 constituent provinces of the Anglican Communion.” How do you think that comes off to the rest of the Communion where so many already feel betrayed? These kinds of comments, and the actions of these bishops and dioceses, and of the Canadian General Synod, have made an already frail situation much frailer.

Who said this:

“I think we are heading for a split...The Anglicans have a tremendous talent for fudge, and they must be hoping and praying it will come to the rescue again. But there is an inherent instability now and a fatalism on both sides that this split is now going to happen.”

An alarmist? A reasserting Episcopalian (as I like to call them)? No, one of the most respected English observers of religion, Clifford Longley, at one time religion editor of the

London *Times*. Whether Mr. Longley is right or not, and I hope he isn't, he grasps the seriousness of the present moment. Do we?

Anyone who does not realize that the Communion is heading into some of the most turbulent waters in its history in the next 6-8 months is just not in touch with reality.

To me, the situation in the Episcopal Church feels eerie at the present time. The image I had last week was of being outside a house, and looking inside and seeing everyone going on about their business as usual; then I was taken up in the air far above the house and could see a hurricane just off shore. As I was taken around houses in different neighborhoods, every once in a while I would see people gathering water and seeking to prepare, but they were relatively few in number. It would be alarming enough if there were a hurricane just off shore and people were boarding up their windows, but the idea that one is off shore and most people are acting like it's not even there, is bizarre.

At the first Plano conference [a gathering of orthodox Episcopalians who formed the Network of Anglican Communion Dioceses and Parishes] I insisted that the most important book of the Bible in the present time is Jeremiah. I believe that now even more strongly than I believed it then. One of the many important aspects of Jeremiah is that in a time in which people are particularly under God's judgment, falsehoods multiply and truth becomes ever scarcer.

Right now there is a series of lies being told by prominent Episcopal leaders.

The first is: **It will all blow over, it is no big deal.**

The second is: **It is just like women's ordination, it will be messy but we will make it through.**

The third, which I regard as the most insidious, is: **Sexuality is not a church-dividing issue.**

If you look at the average issue of *Episcopal Life*, or the average diocesan newspaper, or the majority of stories issuing forth from headquarters (e.g., Episcopal News Service), this is the message which they are intending to send.

All of these statements are false. The first two are already demonstrably untrue based on what is occurring in the Communion and on the ground in the Episcopal Church. The last is untrue because, as I have sought to argue, the same-sex relationship controversy is merely the tip of the iceberg above the water; the issues below the water are unbelievably serious.

The reality under that very thin veneer is far different. All over the country, individual parishes and parishioners are redirecting their giving. The important part of the money issue is not the money in and of itself, but what it says about the degree to which so many ordinary people are completely alienated by what has taken place. They feel they have no ownership or involvement in the decision and are deeply worried about the future of a church that has acted as it has.

Also, all over the country individual parishioners have left the Episcopal Church. They do not make headlines, they are not noticed, but they have reached the place where they do not believe they can raise their children in this church, and be spiritually confident about where their children will end up.

To add to the picture, you have the formation of brand new parishes where people are coming together who want to be part of the Anglican Communion, but who do not wish to be affiliated with an Episcopal Church which they believe has turned its back on God.

I was recently at a gathering in Michigan. I met a priest, and, in the course of the conversation, he told me a little about himself. When I asked where he served, he told me Wisconsin - and it is in a parish seeking to be Anglican, unaffiliated entirely with the diocese in which it is geographically located. Nearly all of this has been unnoted and unremarked upon by the so-called official Episcopal church leadership.

Another piece of the puzzle is a series of groups all over the country which are forming in order to be prepared for action in response to the decisions of the Lambeth Commission and the Primates. Your group here in Mississippi, Stand Firm, is an example of that. Many

people are unaware that there is a similar group in Alabama. There is also a group in Iowa, there is a group in Rhode Island, a group in Upper South Carolina, and in many other places where people for the most part have not noticed. I talked to a friend last night in a yet another diocese where there is major organizational work going on at the parish level in preparation for the fall, but the work needs to go on still further before they make a formal announcement.

While this kind of grassroots disaffection, alienation, and organization is going on, there is a clear behind-the-scenes effort to try to undermine the Network of Anglican Communion Dioceses and Parishes.

In part, this involves the emergence of the “Via Media” groups only in those dioceses which are affiliated with, or have shown strong interest in, the Network. And you have, on the record, that the Presiding Bishop’s Chancellor, David Both Beers, had a substantial question and answer telephone conference call with the leaders of these Via Media groups.

You have bishops placing enormous pressure on people, especially clergy, not to join the Network or to allow their parish to join the network. The letter from the Bishop of Alabama, Henry Parsley, to his parish clergy, would be a case in point.

I do not think the situation in the Episcopal Church is sustainable in its present state. Something will have to give. As I said recently in an official ACN release:

“Even more shocking than this change, which is contrary to Scripture and outside the bounds of Anglicanism, is the speed with which it is now being enforced by the church’s most powerful officials... Still more alarming is the denial by so many Church leaders that a huge theological shift, and its subsequent swift enforcement, is taking place. Unless some way is found to stem the tide, all orthodox voices in ECUSA will be in danger of being drowned out.”

What I find alarming is the degree of untruth with which our leaders are seeking to live, not just by changing the church’s teaching, but the *way in which they changed it*.

They are claiming we are still in conversation about this question, when in reality they are strongly opposing people who hold to traditional Anglican teaching. I recently had a

telephone conversation with a leading clergyman who related how someone in his diocesan ordination process was specifically asked about the highly publicized 2003 General Convention decisions. The person was opposed, and was told they had better get over it because the church is changing. It appears likely he or she will now be unable to be ordained in that diocese. These kinds of incidents are part of a wider pattern, and the message seems clear: *In order for us to grow, you have got to go.* The fact that this comes from people who talk so incessantly about “inclusiveness” is very frustrating. I quote back to them the line from George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*: All of the animals are equal, but some are more

equal than others.

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I mentioned earlier that the actions of a few bishops and dioceses were causing the Lambeth Commission nearly to run out of room. Domestically, it creates a different situation, namely the clear indication that the train driven by those leading the Episcopal Church is not stopping at this station. When Resolution C051 [recognizing that liturgies “celebrating and blessing same-sex unions” are “within the bounds of our common life”] passed the House of Bishops at General Convention, it was

presented as a compromise, but I argued at the time it was not a compromise because it would encourage dioceses not allowing same sex blessings to begin doing so - it would add momentum to the current leadership direction. This is exactly what has happened, and with increasing speed.

So already you have a church spokesperson quoted in a recent story talking about General Convention 2006 and saying that same sex “marriage” will be on the agenda. Do you see how far we have moved? We have gone from a descriptive resolution in the Denver convention in 2000, to a resolution in 2003 which is being interpreted as permissive by more and more dioceses, to the discussion of same-sex “marriage” in 2006. Anyone who believes that this is not the current trajectory of the present Episcopal Church needs to wake up and smell the coffee.

And a new revised prayer book is not far behind, in which the present Rite One is gone; what is now Rite Two becomes Rite One; and there will be a series of new “inclusive language” liturgies which will be the new Rite Two whose language, at least in part, will probably be modalistic.

Again, if you watch under the surface, this is creating interesting cross-currents, especially among the so-called “moderates.” In the past two weeks a bishop whom I thought was not favorably disposed toward the possibility of Network affiliation is now indicating he is more so. Another bishop who voted to approve Gene Robinson’s election is now deeply conflicted about his vote.

The Lambeth Commission is going to need a near miracle to deal with a situation this fractious, frayed, and volatile. They need our continued prayers.

Greg Griffith: What about the state of the orthodox movement within the Episcopal Church?

Dr. Kendall S. Harmon: The ‘reasserting’ Anglicans in the Episcopal Church have had a traumatic and tumultuous year. On the one hand, there is good news. Plano One (in Dallas) was a big success, and served as a rallying cry for people around the church in a way scarcely conceivable given the tight time frame in which it had to be organized. My hat is off to Dave Roseberry for his superb leadership there.

It is amazing to me that the Network of Anglican Communion Dioceses and Parishes has come as far as it has, as soon as it has, given the degree of opposition it has run into in the official Episcopal Church. When we had the January meeting which some are calling Plano

Two, if you had asked me when I arrived if I thought the organizational charter would have had a unanimous positive vote on each section, I would not have believed it possible.

Since that time, the working of the Network steering committee on which I sit, and the geographical regional deans, has been inspiring. I believe people are catching a vision of a united Anglican missionary protest movement as I have tried to portray it.

Also, the vision Bob Duncan laid out at Plano One of the “re-gathering of the Anglican Diaspora” is beginning to move in a positive direction. The letter of common cause was very encouraging to many people, especially those at the grassroots level, that some type of more unified future might emerge. I live in one of the communities in the United States - Summerville, South Carolina - where there is a Reformed Episcopal Seminary. The dean is a personal friend. There are some remarkable Christians there, and to see them excited about this is encouraging.

The thinness of the theological discourse which was involved in embracing this change is simply mind-boggling given the stakes involved. At the end of May 2003 the Anglican Primates commended the document *True Union In the Body?* to the whole communion. I am not aware of any substantial Episcopal response to it. It is as if it doesn't exist. Yet here is a substantial, theological, pastoral and compassionate response to this struggle which was commended by the Primates. How can the Episcopal Church possibly defend that kind of lack of listening and lack of theological reflection?

The last thing I would mention is the invitation given to Bob Duncan to appear before the Lambeth Commission . It was a significant symbol that the Commission invited the leader of the Episcopal Church, Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold, and the leader of the Network, Bishop Robert Duncan, each to come and make presentations with teams they designated.

Having said these things, though, I would emphasize that we have a long way to go. Because of the degree to which the Network is opposed, and the context of the last three decades of debate between reasserters and reappraisers, there has been a tendency of some reasserting leaders to believe that this is a political battle which is being lost, as opposed to a gospel struggle which can be won. The fact that we get painted constantly by secular and other

media as being “against” things is part of this, sure, but we need to set out a more attractive positive vision for the future which attracts people. My talk on “Anglican Essentials and Our Future Call” was meant to try to do that.

There is no question that we have communications and structural issues on which we can improve - many people are trying to serve at least two jobs in this crisis period, and it is very difficult. There are a lot of unsung heroes and heroines in staff positions who should be receiving more thank you notes than they have up until now.

Another growing edge for us has to do with the issue of how we will deal effectively with genuine diversity within real gospel unity in the Network itself. This came to the fore at the Plano Two meeting on the women’s ordination question, and it did get very challenging for a time, but the breakthrough came when someone pointed out that this was not about theology - it was really about trust. We really do intend to take the position of the Anglican Communion as a whole here, and be in a period of reception on that issue. But the reality is, a number of Anglo-Catholics who had been so trampled by the Episcopal Church for years and years were fearful that in the Network they were going to be treated in a similar manner.

We need to learn a hermeneutics of trust instead of a hermeneutics of suspicion, if I may put it like that. The trouble is, so many reasserting Anglicans in the Episcopal Church have been so criticized for so long that they have become almost instinctively reactive. Take the recent letter of common cause as an example. As soon as it came out, I got a number of emails from people worrying about women’s ordination because the various groups involved have different stances on that issue. You see? There is an announcement, and what follows is criticism and worry. The reality is, it is intended as a letter of common cause, to signal that these groups will not criticize one another publicly, and will seek, as much as possible, to encourage one another. It was not looked at as anything like an ecumenical concordat or full intercommunion. It was not perceived as doing anything which was going to compromise anyone’s integrity.

So we have many struggles and much need to grow and improve, but God has brought us a long way.

Greg Griffith: You say, “... since the Minneapolis decision both the Methodists and the Presbyterians did not follow in the Episcopal Church’s lead.” But in a close and controversial decision, the Methodists allowed a lesbian minister to retain her position, and the Presbyterians came within a handful of votes of allowing a major concession to the gay agenda. The Presbyterians have essentially split over the issue, and the Methodists are floating the idea of an amicable separation. So if you’re saying that the Methodists and Presbyterians didn’t go as far as ECUSA, technically that’s true, but wouldn’t you agree that it seems like only a matter of time before they do?

Dr. Kendall S. Harmon: I don’t agree about the Methodists; the Presbyterian situation is more complex. The Methodist decision was quite strong and continues a trend in that denomination. A number of observers thought the Presbyterian vote would pass, and it did not. Keep in mind that in the Presbyterian Church, their polity means that certain national decisions need to be ratified by a certain percentage of the presbyteries in order to pass.

In recent years it has been the individual presbyteries which have voted against a national push away from historic Christian faith. Now you had a national vote which went narrowly in favor of historic Christian faith. Having said that, I am concerned that the reason some seemed to vote this way was because the task force appointed needs to study it more. It seems possible, given the membership of the task force, that they may recommend local option to a future General Assembly, and unfortunately “local option” is a code word for “incremental coercion” in so many instances. I also want to grant that there are those who disagree with the decisions which have been made in both the Methodist and Presbyterian churches. In the Presbyterian case, among those involved in the national assembly, this does mean a significant group.

The other point I would make is that in both of these votes the reality of the existing Episcopal Church schism played a role in the disincentive to move in the direction we have. Some people clearly felt: *“If we do this, we will go down the road of the Episcopalians, where there has been a substantial uproar and the formation of an alternative Anglican network of dioceses and parishes, which has never happened before. We do not want to go there.”*

Greg Griffith: So ECUSA has become a cautionary tale for western Christianity?

Dr. Kendall S. Harmon: ECUSA is a major cautionary tale, along with the United Church of Christ and the United Church of Canada. These are not Christian families known for powerful growth or life changing ministries, alas, so can we blame our sisters and brothers in the Global South for being skeptical?

Remember that more than 40% of bishops with jurisdiction voted in Minneapolis *against* approving the New Hampshire consecration. The fact that the change is being so strongly pushed is reason for even greater skepticism. If the change was such a good thing, people need to ask why the global communion is so against it, and why so many bishops were against it at the time.

Greg Griffith: They will say, “God’s will is not discerned by a popularity contest.”

Dr. Kendall S. Harmon: Well, people keep talking about the vote in New Hampshire but not about the vote at Lambeth 1998! Seriously, this gets us right back to the key question, doesn’t it? How do we determine what is God’s will?

A number of Episcopal leaders have what I call a “self-reinforcing prophetic theology.” If it is difficult, as it has been, they say: “Well, it was difficult for Jesus and the prophets also.” If it is embraced, they will appeal to history and say: “See, God is clearly speaking here.” I do not think this is helpful. We need a greater sense of Christian history and a greater capacity for self-criticism.



Real Christian discernment is a lot more difficult than many people realize. In the fourth century clearly a majority – some historians say a significant majority – of bishops were Arians. And there is a LOT more of a scriptural basis to fall into Arianism than there is to embrace this new sexual teaching.

The thinness of the theological discourse which was involved in embracing this change is simply mind-boggling given the stakes involved. At the end of May 2003 the Anglican Primates commended the document *True Union in the Body?* to the whole communion. I

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Greg Griffith: So Holy Matrimony for homosexuals - not blessing of same-sex unions, but full-bore Holy Matrimony - will be on the agenda for General Convention 2006. What specific confirmation can you give us about this?

Dr. Kendall S. Harmon: Let us cite chapter and verse on this claim. It is from an Associated Press story on the decision of the Diocese of Vermont to develop liturgies for same-sex blessings. Here is the quote from the article:

“The next General Convention in 2006 is expected to debate whether the church should bless gay and lesbian marriages, she [Episcopal Church spokesperson Jan Nunley] added.

Greg Griffith: If by some miracle the Anglican Communion as we know it is still together by then, what are the chances that General Convention 2006 will approve Holy Matrimony for homosexuals, and what are the chances that the Anglican Communion will remain intact if that comes to pass?

Dr. Kendall S. Harmon: The Anglican Communion can hold together only if God wants it to, and only if it stays anchored in Gospel truth and who God is as Trinity, first of all. We need to pray for that. But second, we have to face reality. Either the Lambeth Commission comes up with some kind of substantial structural response to what the Episcopal Church and Canada have done, or the results will be disastrous, and Anglicanism will no longer be able - in the eyes of many - to claim to be a catholic church in any meaningful sense. We will know this long before 2006.

Greg Griffith: There have been reports that giving by dioceses to ECUSA is up 2%, which would seem to indicate that ECUSA's actions at the 74th General Convention haven't had the negative financial effect orthodox Episcopalians warned it would. But some have claimed that giving appears to be up only because some dioceses are

dipping into their endowments to pay ECUSA. What's the truth about giving to the national church?

Dr. Kendall S. Harmon: It is important to state the giving issue clearly: Are all Episcopalians giving as much this year as they did last year to the national church? The answer to that question is no.

The way some national church officials are painting the issue is: What is the giving of DIOCESES to the national church year over year? They are not the same question.

Anyone who is aware of what is occurring in individual dioceses knows that things are not well, and that this is only the beginning. Because of the creation of the Lambeth Commission and the Network of Anglican Communion Dioceses and Parishes, a lot of people are still Episcopalian who would not otherwise be. Their patience and perseverance has been remarkable. But they are in strong disagreement with what has been done, and a number have redirected their giving.

At the grassroots level there are serious funding issues in a number of dioceses. Some of this is definitely the result of what occurred at Minneapolis.

Let us just consider some examples:

One of the best is the Diocese of North Carolina.

According to the Raleigh News and Observer, churches in that diocese pledged \$1.2 million less this year than last year. Yet the diocese is giving to the national church \$763,100 dollars, according to a recent budget report... roughly the same as last year. How is this occurring? The diocese is eating the shortfall. It does not show up in the national figures at all, but if you look closely at the diocesan figures, it is there. That kind of situation is unsustainable.

The diocese of Georgia said pledges are down \$186,452 from last year, out of a \$1.8 million dollar budget. In the Diocese of East Carolina the 2004 asking budget was \$1,644,678. The actual budget was \$1,018,699, based on pledges presented. The 2003 budget was \$1,330,531. So the new actual number is a year-over-year drop of over 23%.

The Diocese of Virginia approved an actual \$3.9 million dollar budget this year, \$900,000 less than last year.

The diocese of Mississippi started the year with a \$630,000 deficit, and individual pledges were down \$284,000. Mississippi cut its giving to the national church from 21% to 16.5%. No one in Mississippi can honestly say this is “not material.”

I could go on, but the point is: At the grassroots level there are serious funding issues in a number of dioceses. Some of this is definitely the result of what occurred at Minneapolis.

Now, what would you expect from healthy leadership? They could say, “There are issues, and there will be in the short term, but we have ways we can work through this, and we are sorry some people object so strongly to what has occurred.” That would tackle it head-on, and it would acknowledge what is clearly there.

But what do we get? At the Executive Council meeting in Florida we are told the amount of the shortfall is “not material,” and now they are speaking about a slight increase at the most recent Executive Council meeting in Vermont.

This is just one of many aspects of institutional denial which we have going on right now. And the point is not that the Episcopal Church does not have the financial resources, the point is what it says about the grassroots.

Greg Griffith: So far, the Global South has acted with startling resolve over ECUSA’s actions. When ECUSA Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold invited his delegation to the consecration of Uganda’s new archbishop, announcing that a check for Uganda’s poorest missions would accompany the delegation, Archbishop Nkoyoyo refused to seat them. He also refused the money, informing Griswold that “the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not for sale, even among the poorest of us who have no money.”

African provinces, where most of the world’s Anglicans reside, receive about 70% of their funding from the wealthy American and Canadian provinces, but they recently announced they have stopped taking funds from ECUSA.

Africans have so far tended to act in “binary mode” - that is, actions of ECUSA, Canterbury, Lambeth, et al., are deemed either acceptable or unacceptable, with no gray area in between. The Africans then take clear, direct action based on that decision. If the Africans continue to act in “binary mode,” then Canterbury’s actions regarding ECUSA either will or won’t be satisfactory. If they’re not, then isn’t the future of the Anglican Communion doomed?

Dr. Kendall S. Harmon: The degree to which the Global South has been patient has been

The more the [Lambeth] Commission allows for creativity, the less the chance of there being a consensus. So for starters, getting a *real* proposal through is going to be a challenge.

amazing, but Western reappraisers have, for the most part, mistaken gracious patience for lack of resolve. As you point out, the Global South is well-focused.

As to the Communion’s future, you need to consider three pieces of the puzzle: The Lambeth Commission report, the Primates’ response to it, and Rowan Williams’ response to it.

Inside the Lambeth Commission itself, you have interesting dynamics. Robin Eames has built a reputation on being a consensus builder, and so he is motivated to come out with something on which there is consensus. But this is a deep crisis that calls for a really creative solution. The more the Commission allows for creativity, the less the chance of there being a consensus. So for starters, getting a *real* proposal through is going to be a challenge.

It may not happen. Even if they make a strong and creative proposal, the Primates need to back it. And what will Rowan Williams decide? If the proposal is inadequate, the Primates might try to strengthen it, but could it be strengthened enough for the Primates and the Archbishop of Canterbury to stay solidly behind it?

Substantive discipline doesn’t necessarily have to be “binary,” as you describe it. That would certainly not fit the ACI [Anglican Communion Institute] proposal which is the most well-thought-through one out there - especially in the first two-thirds of the document, where it

describes why the crisis is so deep. After a strong diagnosis section, the ACI basically proposes an international discipline involving sanctions on those bishops who voted for ratification of the New Hampshire election and C051 [the resolution authorizing the ‘local option’ on same-sex blessings], under certain conditions. While this international aspect of the proposal could emerge as a possible course of action, the proposal for the situation in the Episcopal Church itself is highly problematic. It involves an approach using AEO [Alternative Episcopal Oversight] in a different form than exists at present, which, alas, will be highly unworkable given the degree of deterioration in the Episcopal Church. Could it be strengthened appropriately? Will the Commission, much less the Primates as a whole, be open to this? The Commission’s mandate, remember, is to make practical recommendations in order to maintain the highest level of communion not simply between member churches within the Anglican Communion, but also *within* those churches themselves. No solution which does not deal both with the international problem as well as provide major structural relief in the domestic North American situation will be sufficient. It is a Herculean challenge.

Greg Griffith: At the Stand Firm meeting in May, you described the Network of Anglican Communion Dioceses and Parishes, sometimes called the

“conservative network,” as a “United Anglican Missionary Protest Movement.”

Readers who haven’t done so are encouraged to listen to your question-and-answer session, but could you expand on the Network’s mission and goals, and especially its importance in the emerging Anglican realignment?

Dr. Kendall S. Harmon: Well, with regard to “united,” I continue to hearken back to Bishop Bob Duncan’s image from Plano One of the “re-gathering of the Anglican Diaspora.” The letter of common cause is a very early preliminary step in that direction. We believe that real unity comes from the truth of the gospel and from God himself.

One of the clearest signs of a genuinely unified community is that they do not talk about unity, they simply live it out as a response to the gift that God gives them. If you are in a community which talks incessantly about unity, you can tell it is genuinely not united.

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In terms of “Anglican,” we believe that Anglicanism is a precious gift which has been handed down to us by those on whose shoulders we now stand. It means a balance between word and sacrament, a balance between the best of Roman Catholicism and the best of Protestantism, it means a community where the lovely saying of Meldenius, a Lutheran

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theologian, holds true: In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; and in all things, charity, is lived out well. We believe this crisis represents a decisive break with Anglican teaching and with the Anglican Communion and we wish to continue as faithful Anglicans.

In terms of “missionary,” it is vital that we repent of the degree to which we have allowed maintenance to become not simply our priority but our whole way of life. That has to dramatically change. The Great

Commission really does have to be our highest priority. It means that the greatest need the movement will have in the near future are for three things: apologists, church planters, and evangelists. How many Episcopal dioceses do you know that have any of those on their staff? How many seminaries are training people for that kind of ministry? There is a reason why, in the providence of God, we are being aligned with the Global South: These people bleed with a mission-based heart, it is the very pulse of their life. We have a lot to learn from them.

We are also called to “protest” any turning away from the historic Christian faith. People need to be aware that Luther not only taught justification by faith, but he also refuted justification by works. In the New Testament, the writer of Titus, speaking of a church leader, says that he or she “must hold firm to the sure word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to confute those who contradict it” (Titus 1:9).

For us this means we will continue to hold up the historic Christian standard on human sexuality and will continue to stand against departures from that standard, all the while avoiding attacks on persons and seeking to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15).

The last word is also crucial. It is a “movement”, sailing into the uncharted waters of the future that God has for us. One of the key images of the church in her rich history is of the Army of God, not simply the called out ones, but the called up ones, called up to be men and women who serve and share Christ. There needs to be preparation, there needs to be strategic thinking, there needs to be anticipation, and, above all, there needs to be prayer.

I love the Old Testament image of God as a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud by day. God is already at work in and for this future, and we need to come alive to the ways in which that future is forming. Part of that future is all these communities, previously referred to, which are emerging in many, many dioceses in different ways but around the same basic theme. Groups of Episcopalians are gathering and saying firmly: We wish to be Gospel-based Anglican people, we need to stand together in our time, we need to take common cause.

Groups of Episcopalians are gathering and saying firmly: *We wish to be Gospel-based Anglican people, we need to stand together in our time, we need to take common cause.*

At Plano Two we had a missionary moment interspersed through our gathering in which each region shared something of what God was doing in their midst. I hope that will be a habit of this movement. We need to lift up people who are taking risks, planting churches, and sharing faith. I recently spoke to a friend who moved from Colorado to the East Coast to plant a church. Probably almost everyone in the movement does not know who he is. In the future, he is one of many whose story needs to be told.

Greg Griffith: I am regularly contacted by people in other denominations who are paying close attention to this debate. One of them suggested that the revisionists - the “reappraisers,” as you describe them – are like the man at the wedding banquet

in Matthew 22:1-14 who refused the wedding clothes the king provided. Is this too harsh a characterization?

Dr. Kendall S. Harmon: I do not think it is possible to describe all reappraisers that way, no. That is painting with too broad of a brush. There is a wide spectrum among both reasserters and reappraisers. Among the latter, there really are some who have adopted an epistemology, a way of believing how we know what we know, where the experiencing self is the key arbiter of that decision. That really is a hugely different perspective from a Christian worldview which says we were created in the image of God, but now are fallen, and can know only very little through “natural” knowledge and need to know what we know about God through what God reveals to us. I would say that only characterizes some reappraisers, but it is a vocal, influential “some.”

In the Episcopal Church, a lot of it was far more innocent than that. Good people had leadership which lost its theological vision, and so they adopted the ways of knowing and deciding by default from the world around them. If you take someone like that and place them in the “I feel, therefore I am” type of atmosphere – such as General Convention 2003 in Minneapolis – they will be swayed by clever-sounding but specious epithets like “God is doing a new thing,” or “this is the way I am,” without raising all the necessary questions which go along with assertions like that.

It remains astounding how weak the theological foundation is on which we built this dramatic shift in our teaching about human sexuality, but with a number of folks it happened like that. I meet people all the time who tell me the Bible has nothing at all to say to this question – who actually believe that because they were told it, and they have such an inadequate familiarity with the Scripture that they believed it. A person like that hardly falls into the category of the refuser of the wedding garment.

Greg Griffith: The Episcopal Divinity School, which has hosted such auspicious events as “The Queer Christ,” recently sent a letter to its alumnae. In it, Dean Steven Charleston announced that because the Episcopal Church does not offer the blessing of Holy Matrimony to same-sex couples, it has stopped allowing heterosexual couples to be married in its chapel. They are, however, encouraging other

denominations whose policies do not inhibit gay marriage to use the EDS chapel for such ceremonies. In other words, they are discriminating against heterosexuals to protest what they say is discrimination against homosexuals. I don't have a question here, I was just hoping you'd tell me this was Charleston's idea of a joke.

Dr. Kendall S. Harmon: My take on this is actually different. I think they are seeking to be consistent with their presuppositions.

Greg Griffith: So why not allow ALL marriages to take place? Why exclude heterosexuals?

Dr. Kendall S. Harmon: Consider it from their perspective. They believe that a certain percentage of people have been ordered by God to have attraction to people of the same sex. These people have had terrible treatment over the years from some Christians and some Churches. As a matter of gospel justice, they believe this crisis means that what was extended to African-Americans, and was extended to women, needs also to be extended to them. This includes being able to be in non-celibate committed relationships and to have leaders ordained who are in these relationships. But that is not happening. The lack of justice, as they perceive it, becomes unbearable. So just as some white people, at a certain point, could not ride buses that had separate seating for blacks, they will now refuse to allow relationships for some of God's people which are explicitly denied to others.

Rowan Williams is suffering at present from the impossibility of meeting unrealistic expectations. I remember a number of years ago when Yale University was looking for a president, they produced a list of desired qualifications, and someone read the list and said, "Well, I'm glad God isn't applying... He wouldn't make it."

Keep in mind that I disagree with this perspective, but that is how they see it in some cases.

For a thoughtful piece on why this will not work, I encourage your readers to see "Why We Can't Talk: The Homosexual Rights Movement in the Church" by Jonathan Sorum.

Greg Griffith: *Stand Firm's* President The Rev. George Woodliff has said that Archbishop Williams' endorsement of the "As Good As New" Bible translation, in which the Book of Revelation is omitted, the Gnostic gospel of Thomas is inserted, and the Bible's teachings on sexual morality reversed, may ultimately prove to be a bigger issue - in strictly theological terms - than the conflict over homosexuality. His point is that the debate over homosexuality is about *interpretation* of Scripture, but the "Good as New" debate is about *what Scripture is*. Is this a fair distinction?

Dr. Kendall S. Harmon: This contains a number of pieces. First, as someone who studied in some seminars with Rowan Williams I have a respect for the man that makes me wish to

...even Dr. Wink of Auburn Theological Seminary, who favors changing the church's teaching, says: "Efforts to twist the text to mean what it clearly does not say are deplorable. Simply put, the Bible is negative toward same-sex behavior, and there is no getting around it."

be careful about how what he does is judged. He wrote a foreword to this work, and he wrote it a while back. I do not wish it to be portrayed as his having specifically gone through and endorsed this translation. There are questions which can be raised, but there is perspective that needs to be kept. For the record I tried to defend Archbishop Williams in part on my blog on this matter and was significantly criticized for so doing.

Having said that, I believe that "what Scripture is" and "scriptural interpretation" are inextricably intertwined. When in this debate people go to the Bible, they bring certain ideas as to what they are doing. I do believe that some unhelpful ways of thinking about Scripture, and how it is to be interpreted, have been taught by the seminaries to many in the Episcopal Church in the last 30 to 40

years or so, and as a result it has moved into a number of parishes.

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“Well, I’m glad God isn’t applying... He wouldn’t make it.” To that sense of impossibly high hopes for him by others you need to add that Dr. Williams has had an incredibly difficult first year as Archbishop of Canterbury, with the Iraq war and the huge Anglican crisis, among many other things.

Greg Griffith: In his Stand Firm interview, Mark Galli expressed his dismay that Episcopal revisionists have been “shockingly lacking in biblical and theological argument,” saying he was “frankly stunned at the theological illiteracy of most bishops.” In the same letter in which EDS announced its bizarre new rules for marriage ceremonies in its chapel, it confirmed its commitment to “changing the canons and rubrics that stand in the way of holy matrimony for gay and lesbian persons.”

Biblical scholars and theologians - virtually all from the orthodox side of the debate, and more than a few from the revisionist side - agree that homosexual behavior simply can’t be reconciled with Scripture. Indeed, after years of debate, no serious argument has been advanced that it can. So if the revisionists in the Episcopal Church are successful in changing church canons and the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer such that they are placed in direct contradiction to Scripture, will it be accurate to say that the Episcopal Church has ceased to be a Christian institution?

Dr. Kendall S. Harmon: Well, on the first matter I do plead for more theology among our bishops. The other day I was reading a newsletter from the late Stephen Neill who spoke of “the apparently settled policy of the Episcopal Church not to elevate scholars to the Episcopate.” He went on to say: “But what else are bishops for?” There is behind this crisis a very significant crisis in the office of the bishop of the Episcopal Church, but that is another story for another time.

At a minimum, it raises the question of whether we are any longer part of the Anglican family whose boundaries we have so deliberately transgressed.

I would not agree that “no serious argument has been advanced” for this change in the church’s teaching. We would not be here if there were no arguments at all, and on this score I would challenge the reasserters to be aware of these arguments. I wonder how many of them are.

There are serious cases, such as those from for example Jeffrey John and Michael Vasey in England, and Walter Wink and Eugene Rogers in the U.S. with which people should be familiar. The difficulty has been that the initial arguments, which were that what the Scriptural passages seemed to be saying they were not saying, have over time been seen by many as being special pleading. So even Dr. Wink of Auburn Theological Seminary, who favors changing the church’s teaching, says: “Efforts to twist the text to mean what it clearly does not say are deplorable. Simply put, the Bible is negative toward same-sex behavior, and there is no getting around it.”

That led to a new tack, which is to say, “Yes, this is what the Bible *says*, but the Bible is limited in its context; we now not only know more, but we also know better, and the teaching of the Bible needs to be laid aside.” This is the approach of Walter Wink, and was notably that of Presiding Bishop Griswold in an interview with the Associated Press. He said the Bible says certain things, but they had no knowledge of committed non-celibate relationships between people of the same sex, and therefore the Bible must be set aside, and we need to decide other ways.

This certainly places the Episcopal Church at odds with the teaching of Scripture as it has been ecumenically received, east and west, which is, simply: *God calls all to chastity, in marriage it takes the form of faithfulness, in singleness, abstinence.* This is also the teaching of the Anglican Communion, at the Lambeth Conference in 1998 and reiterated at subsequent Primates’ meetings. At a minimum, it raises the question of whether we are any longer part of the Anglican family whose boundaries we have so deliberately transgressed. In addition, the overwhelmingly negative ecumenical response makes dubious any claim that the Episcopal Church would play a key role in ecumenical relations between Christian Churches .

It would be fair to say that arguments which seek to take seriously the plain meaning of Scripture on its own terms have not been produced to support this change. Something can

claim to be Scripture-based, but then not wrestle very much with the text as it has come to us and as the church has understood and received it.

Greg Griffith: In a recent conversation, you said that “those churches that haven’t already joined the Network, or aren’t moving towards joining it, are increasingly part of the problem, not the solution.” Can you explain what you meant?

Dr. Kendall S. Harmon: We are in a culture and a church under judgment. God’s judgment has many ways of working itself out, but sometimes the judgment is particularly direct in the midst of a people. That was the case in Jeremiah’s day, and it is also the case in ours. One of the greatest challenges of being in a time of judgment is this: *Not to decide is to decide*. The boat is going out from the shore. You can try to keep one foot on the land and another on the boat, but it is unsustainable. If I ask a person like that and they say, “I have not decided,” the reality is they will fall off the boat and quickly be on the shore.

This is the case with the Network, and where one stands in relationship to it. The Network is saying, “This is a decisive moment. The gospel really is at stake. If we do not stand now we will never stand. Will you stand with us?”

There are now only two broad possibilities of what is to occur: Either the international leadership will propose a very serious and meaningful solution, or there will be some kind of a tragic bifurcation. In either case, the presence of the community of the Network will be pivotal.

Greg Griffith: In your presentation “Anglican Essentials and Our Future Call,” you give a very compelling explanation – based on the work of some theologians gathered in Oxford – as to why Gene Robinson’s consecration was invalid, along with other examples of how ECUSA has flouted the will of the Communion’s instruments of unity. In this series of interviews, you’ve mentioned that Robinson has flatly stated how, in his opinion, Lambeth has no authority in America. If that’s true, then presumably Lambeth has no authority *anywhere*. It’s become clear that Canterbury can’t expect to hold together a Communion over which it has no “real” authority, no way of making a structural response to a province it decides has strayed

too far. Do you think such a structure will emerge from the Lambeth Commission, and if so, do you think they will have waited too long to implement it?

Dr. Kendall S. Harmon: Well let us look at what Gene Robinson actually said: “The Eames Commission does not have any authority over any of the 38 constituent provinces of the Anglican Communion.” Technically he is talking about the Commission, which is working on behalf of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Primates, and it will be reporting to them. The authority they have is derivative, but it is still there.

The main point is that your question speaks to the authority of Lambeth, and it represents the attitude of many Episcopalians: They say of the Episcopal Church “We are autonomous”... “We are our own province”... and similar such things.

It is simply untrue. The Archbishop of Canterbury has had to intervene in the provinces of Rwanda and the Sudan. We could debate in how direct a way he did so, but he did do it. That is real authority. If you read the documents submitted to the Lambeth Commission you may see that many argue that Dr. Rowan Williams has real authority. The right way to think of it is the New Testament image of a family: The father does not have *juridical* authority, but he has real *personal* and *persuasive* authority. Anyone who knows how healthy families work knows that.

The Primates also have authority, and as they have begun relatively recently to meet more frequently together, they have spoken of their desire to exercise “enhanced responsibility.” It is highly significant that this very phrase — “enhanced responsibility” was something that they saw themselves exercising when they met and issued a statement in the middle of October 2003 in response to this crisis.

The key to this authority is some words from the Anglican Congress held in Toronto in the early 1960’s: “Mutual responsibility and interdependence.” That is how families work. When leaders lead, there is a submission to direction. You do not have to look any further for an example of this than a recent action of The Anglican Church of the Province of Southern Africa. Back in the spring their House of Bishops issued a letter prohibiting the blessing of same-sex unions and encouraging further discussion. According to The Living Church, the

letter, which was read from pulpits on June 13 in many dioceses, affirmed the CPSA’s commitment to the Church’s teaching on human sexuality as articulated in Resolution 1.10 of the 1998 Lambeth Conference. The bishops stated they would heed the primates’ Oct. 16, 2003 request “not to solemnize same-sex marriages but to continue in dialogue on this and related issues.” Note carefully the language: They are heeding what the primates called for. That is real authority, and that is what mutual responsibility and interdependence looks like.

Note also the reference in the South African Anglican decision to Lambeth. At General Convention we heard one deputy utter the appalling words: “Lambeth is irrelevant.” According to the widely respected Cambridge University Professor Owen Chadwick, in the Anglican Communion, Lambeth resolutions have an influence “so close to authority as hardly to be distinguishable from it.” Professor Chadwick is correct, and the General

The key point is: *This is it – there is no more time. Something has to give. This is not about “reconciliation.” It is a clash over the truth.*

Convention deputy is sadly mistaken. It is highly significant in this regard that the Primates, at their highly unusual specially called second meeting in 2003, “reaffirmed” the resolutions of Lambeth 1998.

So as for authority, it is clearly there if those who have been given it choose to exercise it.

Now to the question of what the Lambeth (Eames) Commission will do. One prays and wonders and rejoices that we do not know—we depend on God. But let us be clear about this much:

“Further dialogue” is something that some members of the Anglican Communion want to do, but they must know they can’t. No “Anglican fudge” is possible. I think there will also be a temptation to offer something between a verbal rebuke and substantive discipline, and that will be insufficient. There is a possibility that the commission will come up with a set of choices which is then passed on to the Primates, with positives and negatives for each possibility. This is a way to play for more time, but all it will do is hand the problem to the primates; then the primates will need to solve it. Remember, too, the crucial situation of

traditional Episcopalians in the U.S. and Canada. The Primates statement in October 2003 was concerned about them. The American and Canadian House of Bishops clearly failed them, and any solution will need to reflect that by offering some type of serious structural relief.

The key point is: This is it – there is no more time. If they try something “in between,” the Primates of the Global South – and remember, their patience is being mistaken for lack of resolve – will **not** play that game. Something has to give. This is not about “reconciliation.” It is a clash over the truth.

Greg Griffith: There are many Episcopalians who don't support the pansexual agenda in the church, but are so filled with grief at the prospect of a split that they seem willing to tolerate the encroaching agenda for the sake of unity. What advice do you have for them?

I think they have to ask themselves very hard questions about what the Scriptures teach about responding to false teaching, about how the early church dealt with false teaching.

The Primates have made clear that this teaching is beyond the bounds of Anglicanism. It is more dangerous than bad medicine – it is potentially spiritually fatal. That is why, in the early church, communion was seen not simply as a matter of sacramental efficacy but also of Eucharistic fellowship, and they would not be in fellowship with false teachers.

They need to take seriously the fact that so many member churches of the Anglican Communion consider themselves in impaired or broken communion with the Episcopal Church. What would it mean for them to follow this lead for themselves? What would it mean for their children, whose spiritual welfare is part of their stewardship?

That is the theological side, yet there is also a more practical side to your question. They need to remember that the train is not stopping at this station, that Holy Matrimony for homosexual couples will be on the agenda for the 2006 General Convention. They may not be under constraint themselves to adopt this agenda but they need to understand that because a revision of sexual teaching has occurred, the pressure will come to them also. In 1997 Richard John Neuhaus wrote an article called “The Unhappy Fate of Optional

Orthodoxy.” In it he said: “Where orthodoxy is optional, orthodoxy will sooner or later be proscribed.” It is already happening to clergy and some parishes, and it is the direction of the future. What then is God’s call to them as that future unfolds?

These questions I know are difficult, but we are called to wrestle with them as Jacob wrestled with God at the Jabbok.

Realignment is now inevitable. We are to prepare fully. And yet also to remember the words of the psalmist who ends Psalm 131: ***Oh Israel, hope in the Lord, from this time forth and forevermore.***