

Claiming our Anglican Identity:

**The Case Against
the Episcopal Church, USA**

*A Paper Commissioned For the Primates of the Anglican
Communion by The Most Rev. Drexel Gomez, The Most Rev.
Peter Akinola, and The Most Rev. Gregory Venables*



Seeking the mind of Christ for the Body of Christ

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Preface

This paper is offered to address the need for a practical statement of the Anglican Communion's self-identity and mission, as warranted by its own official documents and public declarations. In some ways, it serves as a primer for the unique character of Anglicanism as a part of God's plan for the Christian Church.

The paper is written in response to the grave threat to the Anglican Communion's continued existence and flourishing posed by the Episcopal Church, U.S.A.'s recent actions in contradiction of the Gospel. Nonetheless, our wish is that the hopefulness of Anglicanism's vocation in service of Christ's mission is here set forth.

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***Claiming Our Anglican Identity:
The Case Against the Episcopal Church, U.S.A.***

**An informational paper prepared for
the Primates of the Anglican Communion**

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Summary of the paper

- **The Episcopal Church U. S. A. has taken official actions that contradict Holy Scripture, oppose the teaching of the Church Universal, undermine the spirit and responsibilities of the Anglican Communion, and deny the law of the Church, including ECUSA's own Constitution**
- **These actions thereby touch on matters deemed not "indifferent" by the Communion's leaders**
- **These actions have thrown the Episcopal Church into turmoil among its own members**
- **These actions threaten the unity of the Anglican Communion**
- **Without the immediate and forceful disciplinary action of the Primates in response to ECUSA, the Anglican Communion will disintegrate and member churches will be severely weakened in their Christian witness and ministry**

I. What actions by ECUSA's 74th General Convention are in dispute?

1. Consent by both Houses (finalized on August 5, 2003) to the election as Bishop of New Hampshire, a self-professed homosexual man, living openly in a sexual partnership with another man for 13 years, having divorced his wife and left the family home.
2. Passage of Resolution (C051) that included in its 5th Resolve the following: "we recognize that local faith communities are operating within the bounds of our common life as they explore and experience liturgies celebrating and blessing same-sex unions." Other portions of the resolution recognized sexual partnerships outside of marriage and called on the church to exercise appropriate pastoral care in their regard.

[The basis for these actions are similar to those underlying recent decisions by the Bishop and Synod of the Diocese of New Westminster in Canada, and should be seen as part of a wider conflict of teaching within the Anglican Communion as a whole, demanding from the Primates a consistent response.]

II. What is in dispute about these actions?

Those who appeal against these actions and those who support the appeal argue:

1. General Convention's actions violate the plain meaning of Holy Scripture

Scripture teaches that the only divinely appropriate context for sexual relations is in the marriage between a man and woman; that outside of marriage sexual abstinence represents God's purpose for our lives; and that homosexual acts, along with other forms of sexual activity outside of marriage, contradict God's will for human creation.

In this first place, the substance of this teaching forms an essential part of a larger Scriptural revelation concerning the shape of human life in history and as the object of divine grace, embodied in the Incarnation and Return of Christ. This revelation concerns the creation of humankind as male and female for the purpose of life-long union, companionship, and procreation (Genesis 1 and 2); of Israel as the “spouse” of God (e.g. Isaiah 62; Hosea 1-3); of Jesus as the Bridegroom (e.g. Mark 2:19f.; John 3:29); of the Church and redeemed humanity as the purified and “virgin” bride of the Lamb at the end of time (Revelation 19:6ff); and of Christian marriage as the embodied sign of these creative and redemptive promises (Ephesians 5: 25-33). The Christian Church has, furthermore, used the shape of this revelation as an all-embracing key in its interpretation of Scripture as a whole (cf. the tradition of Christian interpretation of a book like *The Song of Songs*).

In the second place, the prohibition of homosexual relations in particular is given shape within this larger teaching, and is therefore based not just on a few isolated verses of Scripture, but on a common witness that stretches across both the Old and New Testaments.

There are well-known texts like Leviticus 18:22 (*You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination*) and 20:13, (*If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination*). There is also the extensive “Sodom” tradition, referred to from Genesis through Deuteronomy and in many of the prophets, that is taken up by Jesus himself (*Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town* [Matt.10: 15; cf. 11:23f. etc.) and other New Testament writers (e.g. Rom. 9:29; Jude 7) as part of a wide Rabbinic tradition that evaluated negatively homosexual practice and placed it within a range of other contradictions of God’s law (cf. Ezekiel 16:49-50).

Similarly, in the New Testament, the most celebrated text dealing with homosexual expression, in Romans 1:18-24, also

makes this linkage, and presses it even further: *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves.*

There are repeated and related references to sexual holiness in e.g. 1 Cor. 6:9ff; Gal. 5:19ff; 1 Tim. 1:9f; 2 Pet. 2:4ff. all of which reinforce in a broad and comprehensive way the teaching that sexual behavior is properly governed by God's creative intentions and that these intentions rule out, among other things, homosexual practice even while upholding the exclusive demands and gifts of monogamous marriage. Jesus' own positive teaching regarding the character of marriage, fidelity, and sexual purity as an essential part of human creation is clear, repeated, and striking (cf. Mark 10:5-9, *And Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.*"; cf. also Matthew 5:27-32, *"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if*

your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell. "It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery. And whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

The clear Scriptural teaching on this topic is generally accepted by most Biblical scholars, even those whose sympathies lie with the Church's affirmation of homosexual practice. Anglicanism, for its part, has voiced its universal commitment, stated in Prayer Book Prefaces, in the Articles of Religion, in Catechisms, ordination vows, and ecumenical agreed statements, to having its doctrine and discipline conform to the "Word of God". An open and admitted "contradiction" of Scripture on the matter of marriage and sexual behavior can therefore only constitute a violation of one of the most basic religious obligations of our Church, both in terms of Scripture's letter and in the purpose of its divine direction.

A fuller discussion on this whole topic can be found in [True Union in the Body? A contribution to the discussion within the Anglican Communion concerning the public blessing of same-sex unions](#) (Oxford: The Future of Anglicanism Conference, 2002), esp. c.3 and 4. This volume was commended to and by the Primates for their study and use within the Communion in May of 2003, and although the Presiding Bishop ECUSA received and affirmed this commendation, no explicit attempt was made by ECUSA's General Convention or Bishop Griswold to answer both the book's positive explications and the concerns it raised over the grave doctrinal and disciplinary dangers of accepting homosexual practice within the Church.

2. General Convention's actions violate the Church's common reading of Scripture

Although there has been a long-standing recognition that a

diversity of Scriptural interpretations exists among people (cf. 2 Pet. 3:16: *...as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures*), this diversity has also been seen as connected with real danger to the faith of the church (cf. 2 Pet. 2:1-3: *But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.*). Thus, a “diversity” of spiritual “gifts” (cf. 1 Cor. 12:4: *Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit*) stands in contrast to diversity of teaching, which is linked, semantically and theologically, to “heresy”. This is one reason why the New Testament provides a repeated call to “test the spirits” (1 Jn. 4: 1: *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.* 1 Thess. 5:21: *but test everything; hold fast what is good*).

What kind of testing? The clarity of the Scriptural witness is always underlined, but not as existing in a vacuum of individual or isolated acts of interpretation (cf. 2 Pet. 1:16ff: *For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty...And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man...).* Rather Scripture’s clear meaning is given through the accountability of interpretation to that teaching that is “delivered” apostolically (2:21: *For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy*

commandment delivered to them). This forms the basis of what the early Church came to understand as the “rule of faith” or the “rule of truth” (cf. Irenaeus), which transcends the variety of cultures and by which the truths of Scripture are grasped and through which the Church’s own communal life of self-ordering and teaching is structured.

The “rule of faith” that marks the Church’s reading of Scripture is defined, both Scripturally and within the Church’s common life, by the following communal characteristics of *truth*, virtuous *life*, and mutually accountable *love* (cf. 1 John 5:1-12). To hear Scripture’s plain meaning requires:

a common intellectual tradition of reading and teaching, that is given in the reality of the communion of saints (Ephesians 2:19ff.; 2 Th 2:15; 2 Tim 1:13ff.). **Convention’s actions, sometimes justified on the basis of highly idiosyncratic readings of Scripture, violate this tradition;**

a common commitment to holy living, according to an accepted standard of moral norms (cf. Eph. 4:17-24; 5:3-20), the pursuit of which has always represented the foundation of Scriptural insight (cf. the whole tradition of the “purified mind” in the early Church, the Middle Ages, and Reformation and Puritan exegetical discipline). **Convention’s actions, by attacking the moral norms of the Church, fundamentally assault the vocation to and possibility of a common Scriptural authority in the Church;**

a common submission to the organic life of mutual accountability and obedience, given in the participation of Christ’s own form of life (Phil. 2; Eph. 5:21) and in the institutional character of and demand for the stability of faith (cf. 1 Timothy as a whole). **Convention’s actions, by moving in willful independence of the common interconnections and responsibilities of the Communion’s structures of mutual dependence, violate the lived context in which Scripture can be heard and received faithfully.**

The existence of Communion is precisely what provides for the possibility of a genuine reading of Scripture in unified diversity. The notion of mutually contradictory readings of Scripture as requiring equal respect and coexisting integrity derives from a lack of a comprehension of and respect for Christian communion itself (see below), through which the Holy Spirit works and leads (cf. Eph. 4:1-7; 2. Tim. 1:13-14).

3. General Convention's actions violate the Historic Faith and Order of Church

The phrase “historic faith and order” (or “faith and discipline”) occurs in several key documents of Anglicanism and ECUSA. In the Chicago Quadrilateral it is linked with the “principles of unity exemplified by the undivided Catholic Church during the first ages of its existence” and with a “sacred deposit” “committed by Christ and His Apostles” to the Church forever. Within ECUSA’s Constitutional Preamble the phrase is linked both to the vocation of the Anglican Communion and the Book of Common Prayer, which Prayer Book (both according to ECUSA’s own original 1789 Preface and several Lambeth resolutions) is bound by the “essential... doctrine, discipline, or worship” of the Church of England, itself finally governed by a “non-contradictory” coherence with the “Word of God”. Within such a general, but binding, framework, it is clear that General Convention’s actions are contrary to such an “historic Faith and Order”:

The Scriptural prohibitions of homosexual conduct, and the place of these prohibitions within a larger theological framework tied to the Gospel, have been upheld consistently by the whole Church Universal since the time of the Apostles.

These prohibitions and theological framework have been consistently upheld by the witness of the Fathers and early Saints of the “primitive” and “undivided” Church (e.g. Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Cyprian, Basil, John Chrysostom, Augustine), in terms familiar to present experience and practice.

They have been upheld by the Church's Canon Law in the Church of Eastern Orthodoxy (cf. the Canons of St. Basil and Gregory of Nyssa) and the churches of the Latin West (Justinian's *Novella*).

The maintenance within Anglicanism of the prohibition of homosexual sex within the larger divine intentions for human life is evident in the fact that the congruence between English Canon Law and Common Law since the Middle ages on these matters was continued and even strengthened under Elizabeth I at the same time that the Book of Common Prayer was promulgated. There can be no doubt that the "intentions" of the framers of the Church of England's liturgical and doctrinal life were that the Scriptural teaching on marriage and sexual abstinence outside of marriage remain an essential commitment of their church. Subsequent local, provincial, and national British synods and councils have upheld these teachings, as have numerous non-British and international Anglican synods, ending in Lambeth 1998, with its Resolution I.10. Indeed, in virtually all Anglican churches throughout the world, Gene Robinson would have been disciplined as a priest for the form of life he chose in divorcing his wife, leaving his children, and partnering in a same-sex relationship, and he would never have been allowed to continue his ordained ministry in this context, let alone stand for an episcopal election.

ECUSA's House of Bishops in 1977 resolved that "the Church is right to confine its nuptial blessing exclusively to heterosexual marriage. Homosexual unions witness to incompleteness". The 66th General Convention in 1979 went on to affirm "the traditional teaching of the Church on marriage, marital fidelity, and sexual chastity [as] the standard of Christian sexual morality", and that "it is therefore not appropriate for this Church to ordain a practicing homosexual, or any person who is engaged in heterosexual relations outside of marriage". ECUSA has never repealed these interpretations.

Both actions in question from the 74th Convention stand in

obvious contradiction to these witnesses of “historic faith and order” and to the explicit clarifications of ECUSA’s own discipline.

4. General Convention’s actions violate the common bonds and mutual responsibilities of the Anglican Communion

Member churches of the Anglican Communion have committed themselves to the “guiding principle of collegiality” as the means by which they shall relate to each other (Lambeth 1968, Resolution 55), a form of “mutual loyalty sustained through common counsel” (Lambeth 1930, Resolution 49). This moral responsibility of member churches to remain accountable to each other includes the concrete call to restraint from any “action regarding issues which are of concern to the whole Anglican Communion” apart from “consultation” with Lambeth and the Primates’ Committee (Lambeth 1978, Resolution 11). ECUSA’s 74th General Convention neither consulted nor listened to these groups, both of which were on record as opposing actions that might legitimate same-sex partnerships or the ordination of practicing homosexuals.

The Anglican Communion’s formation as a collegial body was itself based on the principle that member churches “maintain without alteration the standards of Faith and Doctrine” as are congruent with the Church of England (Lambeth 1867, Resolution 8), and these standards were later defined in terms of being “substantially the same doctrine” as and in “accordance with the express statements” of the Communion’s own “standards of doctrine and worship” (Lambeth 1888, Resolution 19).

[The use of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral as a “standard” of common doctrine and discipline for the Communion is misplaced and misleading, unless its use is understood in a “full sense” as being a part of and informed by a wide range of more explicit doctrinal, liturgical, and moral standards. See below the Appendix devoted to this question.]

ECUSA itself has affirmed these principles of mutual accountability in different ways. On the specific issue of teaching and discipline regarding sexuality, its own 70th General Convention, in 1991, made a commitment (Resolution B020) that “these potentially divisive issues should not be resolved by the Episcopal Church on its own”. Instead, the Convention voted that “the office of the Presiding Bishop” initiate a “broad” process of “pan-Anglican” and “ecumenical” consultation so as to avoid unilateral action. This commitment was never followed through, for the Presiding Bishop never took the steps asked of him.

By contrast, during the last decade, Lambeth as a whole (1998, Resolution 1.10) and the Primates’ Meeting in Oporto (2000) and in May 2003 explicitly reaffirmed the Communion’s collegial opposition to any change in the universal teaching of the church on the matters of sexuality. In September 2002, the Anglican Consultative Council adopted a resolution reiterating past Lambeth resolutions calling for “unity in faith and discipline” and a “common mind concerning ethical issues where contention threatens to divide”, and calling on “dioceses and individual bishops not to undertake unilateral actions or adopt policies which would strain our communion with one another” and urging “provincial authorities to have in mind the impact of their decisions within the wider Communion” (Resolution 34).

The Archbishop of Canterbury himself urged provinces to avoid unilateral actions that might “take us further from [real communion]” (Letter to Anglican Primates, July 23, 2003). Earlier, in the context of the withdrawal of Jeffrey John, an avowed homosexual priest who had been in a long-term relationship with another man, as appointed Bishop of Reading, the Archbishop wrote that “the perspective of the Anglican Communion demands careful consideration here. The estrangement of churches in developing countries from their cherished ties with Britain is in no-one’s interests. It would impoverish us as a Church in every way. It would also jeopardize links with other denominations, weaken co-operation

in our shared service and mission worldwide, and increase the vulnerability of Christian minorities in some parts of the world where they are already at risk. Any such outcome would be a very heavy price to pay” (July 6, 2003). These remarks are consistent with his earliest statements when first appointed leader of the Communion, in which he assured other Primates of his commitment to guard the unity of the Communion’s faith, articulated at Lambeth, and warned against those who would unilaterally ignore Lambeth’s decisions: “the Lambeth resolution of 1998 declares clearly what is the mind of the overwhelming majority in the Communion, and what the Communion will and will not approve or authorize. I accept that any individual diocese or even province that officially overturns or repudiates this resolution poses a substantial problem for the sacramental unity of the Communion” (Letter to Primates, July 23, 2002).

5. General Convention’s actions violate natural reason and normal pastoral responsibilities of the church in the world

The common wisdom of humankind, which has always been viewed as a weighty authority within Anglicanism (especially within the natural law tradition of e.g. Richard Hooker), is universal in its valuing of marriage between a man and a woman as the only civically acceptable context for human sexual relations. While there have been diversities of legal definitions of such marriage in different cultures, as well as social elasticity in the informal acceptance of non-marital sexual relations, the general ideals that affirm marriage and prohibit homosexual practice have represented a common human outlook, shared across time, culture, and religion. ECUSA’s actions represent a historically aberrant ethical innovation that is not surprisingly felt by most people around the world to be an affront to human sensibilities. The forceful public promotion of these innovations by ECUSA also represents a disdain for the global responsibilities the Church has in speaking sensitively to the world’s peoples. “Even the stork in the heavens knows her times; and the turtledove, swallow, and crane keep the time of their

coming; but my people know not the ordinance of the LORD” (Jeremiah 8:7).

6. General Convention’s actions violate ECUSA’s own Constitution

ECUSA’s Constitution contains in its Preamble the church’s self-definition as “a constituent member of the Anglican Communion, a Fellowship within the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church [...] in communion with the See of Canterbury, upholding and propagating the historic Faith and Order as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer”. If General Convention’s actions have violated the teachings of Scripture, including the “apostolic” writings, if they have violated the stated bonds of the Anglican Communion, both in terms of collegial commitments and common doctrine, if they have violated the framework by which its own Book of Common Prayer is bound both to Scripture and to these common commitments (see above), then General Convention has clearly violated the terms of its own Constitution. Those who speak of ECUSA’s “constitutional crisis” in the wake of the 74th General Convention are therefore accurate: does the Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. currently function under a legitimate authority? An affirmative answer to this question is in doubt, and there is no power within ECUSA to adjudicate the matter, since Convention has no constituted authority outside of itself to judge its own actions, apart from the conciliar organs of the Anglican Communion to which it is ecclesially bound.

7. General Convention’s actions violate the ordination vows of ordained leaders who voted and of those who affirm or are subject to the Convention’s decisions

The ordination of bishops in the Episcopal Church require them, among other things, to affirm the whole Scriptures to be the “Word of God”; to “guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the Church”; “with fellow bishops [to] share in the leadership of the Church throughout the world”; to hold as one’s “heritage the

faith of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs” (BCP pp. 513, 517). Priests and deacons make similar and related vows. By taking actions that violate the teaching of Scripture, dispense with the witness of “apostles and martyrs”, ignore, contradict, or work against the teachings and bonds of the larger Church “throughout the world”, and undermine the discipline, order, and unity of the church, locally and widely, the bishops and ordained deputies who supported these actions and the clergy who are asked to receive and submit to them in their dioceses are denying the promises they made before God in their ordinations. The General Convention thereby encourages deceit before God.

8. The actions of General Convention violate the shared order of church law, common prayer, and discipline

By consenting to the episcopal election of a sexually active gay man and by legitimating a variety of practices for blessing same-sex unions throughout the church, all in the face of standing prohibitions by Scripture, Church Tradition, Canons, Councils, and Synods upheld by universal practice, the General Convention has testified to the irrelevance and impotence of church law for the people it represents. As a result, it has set a formal precedent for individual congregations, priests, and bishops to set their own standards for doctrinal teaching, liturgical prayer, and the ordering of the church’s common life. In other words, General Convention has affirmed the principle, not of “collegiality” in common life, but of anarchy.

III. How do the supporters of the 74th General Convention justify these actions?

In general, supporters of the recent General Convention actions on sexuality have sought to justify a contradiction of Scriptural teaching and Church doctrine and discipline on the basis of a range of appeals:

- to an abstracted God of “grace and inclusivity” that

overrules the particular demands of Scriptural revelation concerning the divine will;

- to claims of new scientific or psychological knowledge that relativize or simply ignore Scripture’s authoritative historical witness or moral demands and the Church’s universal teaching;
- to undefined processes of historical change that make impossible the clear hearing of Scripture or the grasp of moral absolutes;
- to general theological principles as the only real “essence” of Christianity, independent of the actual life and teachings of Christ and His apostles;
- to the values of Western individualism and autonomy;
- to purportedly new divine revelations of the Spirit that go beyond Scripture.

These are each addressed below and shown to be without foundation.

1. Appeals have been made to the “spirit” of Scripture’s witness to the “inclusive God of love” as authoritative over and against “individual” and “culturally limited” verses that prohibit e.g. homosexual practice.

Most of these appeals are vague and carefully ignore the unified and integrated witness of Scripture on the matter of marriage, chastity, and sexuality. Attempts to draw parallels between the “inclusion of the Gentiles” and the “inclusion of gay” persons fail to make any distinctions between Scripture’s own moral or prophetic descriptions of the former reality and Scripture’s own witness to the latter’s moral impossibility. It is Scripture that defines what divine “love” is; and such love defines the order of human life.

2. Appeals have also been made to advances in human knowledge that are claimed to have taught us the “natural” character of homosexual affections, and thus their God-given status.

In general, however, these appeals are not based on any kind of unanimous scientific opinion and in fact always ignore the very large area of uncertainty that surrounds the scientific understanding of human sexual desire and practice as well as those studies that provide strongly counter-factual evidence to the claims made on behalf of homosexual practice. Furthermore, these appeals ignore the traditionally (and Scripturally) substantive question of human sin’s distortion of “natural” desire and sexual expression.

3. Appeals have been made, related to the above, to a purported analogy between the Church’s diverse acceptance of women’s ordination and locally diverse acceptance of gay clergy and same-sex blessings.

Here the arguments fail to note the divergence of Scriptural authority for each side of the analogy: Scripture’s teaching is mixed with respect to women exercising spiritual authority in the Church, but it is unequivocal with respect to the prohibition of homosexual practice. Thus, the appeal also fails to note the fact that the Anglican Communion, through its councils, has never forbidden the authorization of women’s ordination or declared it to be contrary to Scripture, while it has done just that with respect to the ordination of practicing homosexuals and the authorization of same-sex blessings.

4. Appeals have also been made to the “non-essential” character of the topic in question. For instance, the decision in 1996 of an ECUSA ecclesiastical court that the ordination of a practicing homosexual did not constitute a violation of the “core doctrine” of the Church – which was identified with something akin to the Apostles’ Creed – has been used as a precedent for claiming that the issue of Christian teaching on sexuality is “not church

dividing” and should be allowed a diversity of interpretations within the Communion and Church as a whole. Similarly, the use of the “Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral,” which does not mention moral teachings, including sexual practice, as a basis for “communion” within Anglicanism (cf. the 2000 Primates Communiqué from Oporto) and for communion between Anglicans and other Christian traditions, has been presented as an argument for accepting diverse teachings on sexual practice as “matters indifferent” and “not church dividing”. Finally, the “toleration” of polygamy in some parts of the African Church has been used as an argument for the “non-essential” character of diverse sexual practices within the Communion.

To this it should be responded first, that a decision by an ecclesiastical court has no bearing on the standards of church doctrine as a whole, and is authoritative only in the individual case brought to trial.

Second, the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral can be technically understood in a “restricted” and pragmatic way as a tool for ecumenical dialogue (this marks its ecumenical usefulness); or it can be understood in a “full sense”, as an explicating part of a much larger web of doctrinal, liturgical, and moral aspects of Christian “life in communion” (this marks its usefulness as a tool for understanding the internal life of the Anglican Communion). It is clear that in the “full sense” of the Quadrilateral’s meaning the episcopally-sanctioned contradiction of the Scripturally-based moral norms of the Church constitutes a serious violation of “communion”. (See below the Appendix to this paper on the Quadrilateral.)

Finally, the claim that the practice of “polygamy” in Africa, around which local flexibility within the church has been accepted, ought to find a parallel in Western ecclesial flexibility over homosexual expression – each being somehow culturally particular, relative to each locale, and thus “non-essential” to the Communion as a whole – misses the central goal of African practice. This goal is that the Scriptural rule be the supreme

guide to marriage, and that very limited pastoral flexibility over permission to retain, but not seek, multiple wives after baptism be geared to *promote* eventual adherence to the Scriptural and Christian standard of monogamy, while also maintaining the Scripturally mandated charity of care for otherwise potentially indigent women. The governing motive in this case is obedience to the Scriptural norm, not its subversion.

In general, the “essential” character of the Church’s teaching on human sexuality is proved in its consistent expression in Scripture, its intimate tie with Christological and ecclesial figures, its use in prophetic imagery, its continuous presence in the universal Church’s teaching, and finally its theological implication in the doctrines of creation, of the human purpose and destiny, and therefore of redemption. Furthermore, human sexuality has, in fact, been a church dividing issue (clerical marriage) and at Nicea was directly addressed as a crucial matter of orthodox practice (cf. the several Canons of this Council that speak to the sexual behavior of clergy).

5. Appeals have been made to the Anglican Communion’s recognition of each member church’s “legal” “autonomy” in deciding matters of “discipline”, a recognition contained in Prayer Book Prefaces (including the 1789 American BCP), Articles of Religion (e.g. 34 “On Traditions”), and Lambeth Resolutions, including that of 1978 21.3, on the acceptance of women’s ordination. The argument here is that the ordination of sexually active homosexuals, or the authorization of liturgies for same-sex blessings, are matters of “discipline” within the sphere of ECUSA’s local provincial “autonomy”, and ought not to be the concern of the wider Communion.

Several responses should be made to this claim. First, the appeal to provincial “autonomy” touches only upon those matters of “discipline” that do not pertain to “substantive” doctrine that is founded upon the Word of God (made clear by the definitions in Prayer Book Prefaces, Articles of Religion, and Anglican councils). Any decisions contrary to Scripture cannot be subject

to autonomous legislation (since they are by definition “in error”) and the decisions of General Convention here in question are clearly contrary to Scripture, have been declared as such by numerous Anglican councils, and have been accepted as such by ECUSA’s own councils until now. These considerations, explicated above, undercut any appeal to ECUSA’s “rights” to decide as she chooses on the matter of sexual behavior, for no faithful Christian church has the “right” to disobey God and to teach error.

Second, however cherished may be the local customs and practices of self-determination among Anglican churches, it is the bonds of common faith and worship that provide such space for diversity within Anglicanism in the first place. The integrity of these bonds must be sustained if the reality of “Anglicanism” and its embodiment in a “Christian communion” is to have any meaning, in a practical and political manner, and in a sense prior to the diversity of local practice. The historical basis for the existence of Anglican churches derives from the organic coherence of the Church of England’s missionary work, and its political connection to later Anglican missionary efforts. This organic coherence gave birth to the various national Anglican churches and it has always been understood as the formative basis for their eventual independence. This foundation has been provided through the ways Anglican churches have been initially organized, and through the ties of polity by which they have been sustained. The origin of the American Episcopal Church in the 18th century was itself permitted only through its bonds with the British episcopacy, which exercised clear demands upon the substance and character of the American church’s doctrine and worship.

The evolution of the Anglican Communion is consistent with these relationships and constraints within the now wider context of national pluralism. But the fact that membership within the Anglican Communion remains formally based upon doctrinal and disciplinary criteria and upon deliberated permission demonstrates that the “autonomous” character of national

churches is contained by a more basic acceptance of the bonds of common faith and practice, as shown above, and in particular of Scriptural authority in its plain sense as received and read by the larger church. The Encyclical Letter of the 1888 Lambeth Conference outlined this basic character of the Anglican Communion, one that transcends both local autonomy and individual decision with respect to membership.

6. Finally, appeals have been made to the purported “revealed” character of alterations to Church teaching on sexuality. Gene Robinson himself, the newly-elected homosexual bishop of New Hampshire, has publicly claimed and made this argument repeatedly on his own behalf: God is doing a “new thing” and the Holy Spirit has “revealed something new.” Similarly, the Presiding Bishop of ECUSA, the Most Rev. Frank Griswold, was quoted several years ago already as saying, “Broadly speaking, the Episcopal Church is in conflict with Scripture. The only way to justify it is to say, well, Jesus talks about the Spirit guiding the church and guiding believers and bringing to their awareness things they cannot deal with yet. So one would have to say that the mind of Christ operative in the church over time...has led the church to, in effect, contradict the words of the Gospels” (December 28, 1997 edition of Philadelphia Inquirer Magazine).

These kinds of appeals are in the tradition of Mormonism, and simply stand contrary to the teaching of the Anglican Churches, including ECUSA, which have always maintained that any teaching or practice in the Church cannot contradict the Word of God. ECUSA’s own Prayer Book states that “we recognize truths to be taught by the Holy Spirit when they are in accord with the Scriptures” (BCP p. 853). The claim to the Holy Spirit’s “special inspiration” in such a way as to contradict Scripture has always been judged a heretical deceit. Anglicanism’s fundamental commitment to the principle that “nothing be ordained against God’s Word” (Article 34 of the Articles of Religion) is enshrined in a range of authoritative documents and has proved a universally accepted definition of our Church’s practical Christian integrity.

In summary, the justifications offered by the supporters of the General Convention's actions are contradicted by the Scriptural, constitutional, canonical, and traditional commitments in ECUSA, including its own Book of Common Prayer.

IV. Are the Primates/Communion called to respond in a disciplinary way?

a. Three options, with discipline as the only viable alternative to pursue within the Communion

Given that ECUSA has formally violated a wide range of basic Christian and ecclesial truths and commitments, what response might the Primates and the rest of the Anglican Communion give? In broad terms, they have three options: first, leave ECUSA alone; second, separate themselves from communion with ECUSA; third, seek a way to discipline ECUSA for the sake of restoring communion.

The first option, to leave ECUSA alone, is both uncharitable and imprudent. It is uncharitable because we are called as Christians to take the welfare of our brothers and sisters in Christ as a primary responsibility, and the maintenance of the Gospel's true preaching and presentation within one part of the Body of Christ is something we are obliged to pursue out of love for the souls of God's children: "*Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness*" (Gal. 6:1; cf. 4:19; 1 Cor. 8:10). It is destructively imprudent to leave ECUSA alone because the errors of her teaching are of such broad extent and are upheld with such a breadth of political power that they threaten the health of the Anglican Church and her witness throughout the world (see below). The failure, furthermore, to act as a Communion in response to the similar errors perpetrated by the Bishop and Synod of the Diocese of New Westminster in Canada has arguably encouraged ECUSA's more sweeping contradiction of the Gospel, a dynamic whose continuance can only engulf ever

wider areas of the Communion.

The second option, separation from communion, is at best premature and thereby disruptive of a more wholesome process, and at worst negligent of a prior responsibility to engage sinful brethren for the purpose of repentance and the reformation of the Communion. The teaching of our Lord, in Matthew 18:15ff., lays out a stepped process of speaking the truth and requesting repentance of an erring brother, which although it may come to the point of separation (v. 18), is pursued for the sake of reform and forgiveness as a more basic goal (vv. 21ff.; cf. also the Parable of the Fig-tree in Lk. 13:6-9). Likewise, St. Paul's exhortation to "remove" a sinner from the community (1 Cor. c.5) is given with the ultimate goal of the sinner's salvation (5.5) and his restoration to the community (cf. 2 Cor. 2:5-11). Applied to the churches of a larger family like Anglicanism, these processes point to forms of discipline as the means of maintaining a restored communion, rather than to separation as a basic end. It needs to be stressed, furthermore, that the appeal to separation as the rationale for setting up "alternative" or "parallel" provinces is fraught with numerous evangelical contradictions and practical dangers, which may have the opposite effect of promoting false teaching and witness within the Communion rather than weakening such error. (See the Appendix below on "Parallel Provinces".)

The communion represented by the Body of Christ is founded upon and calls forth a range of practices of mutual care, deference, responsibility, and accountability (see above). In response to false teaching and moral confusion, these practices take form in the particular demands of *discipline* (cf. 2 Cor. 13: 5-10). This third option is, in fact, the only possible one the Primates of the Anglican Communion can now faithfully pursue in response to the actions of ECUSA's General Convention, in light of the commitments that underlie the Communion itself. The kinds of response required must meet the grave demands of restoring the Communion's life as founded on the common faith of the Christian Church, the actions of mutual loyalty and

deference that mark life together in Christ, and the canonical and political integrity that provide for institutional trust and conciliar authority.

b. Discipline is not an innovation within the life of the Christian Communion

In the face of ECUSA's ignoring of pleas, admonitions, and even irregular interventions by organs and offices of the Communion, the Primates have been forced by the General Convention into a position requiring their disciplinary action. Although unusual, such discipline would not be an innovation in either Scriptural terms or in the experience of the Church Catholic in its wider or Anglican aspects.

God has offered the model of prophetic and political discipline of erring and apostate religious leadership within Israel (cf. the roles of Elijah, Jehu, or Josiah in 1 Kings 18; 2 Kings 10 and 23). The New Testament apostolic leadership intervened in local and geographically segregated communities for the sake of disciplinary reform (cf. 2 Cor. 13 and 2 John 10). The Canons of Nicea represent one of the first (and relatively full) outlines of a process by which the errors of individual jurisdictions might be corrected through the graded intervention of metropolitan sees and councils. By the 14th and 15th centuries in Western Europe, extraordinary conciliar interventions were required to restore unity and order to the Latin Church's hierarchy. The very foundation of the English Reformation and Restoration can be seen in terms of disciplinary intervention for the sake of the Gospel, within a broad range of local, diocesan, and provincial contexts. More recently, the Anglican Communion itself has sought to provide a reordering of episcopal life in the midst of politically and morally disputed areas of a national church's life, e.g. in Rwanda. Within the American Episcopal Church, the process of "consent" for episcopal elections presupposes that not all elections are godly and Spirit-led and that the disciplinary discernment of the larger church is required to maintain the integrity of a given diocese's episcopal leadership. During the

history of the ECUSA at least 9 episcopal consents have been denied. Finally, the calls by Lambeth 1988 (18:2a) and 1998 (III.6), and discussed by *The Virginia Report* (4:19, 27; 5:15; 6: IV), for a Primates Meeting with “enhanced” responsibility to “intervene” in “emergency” situations within the Communion is premised on the understanding that, in some cases, a kind of provincial discipline (“intervention”) is demanded for the sake of the Church’s “unity”, “well-being”, and “consonance” with the Communion’s doctrinal commitments.

Such “discipline” is rightly viewed, in all of its diverse contexts, as an act witnessing to the mercy of God for His people: “For the Lord disciplines him whom he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.’ [...] For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?” (Hebrews 12:6, 7; cf. Deuteronomy 8:5; Proverbs 3:11ff.). In St. Paul’s terms, such discipline represents the application of apostolic authority “which the Lord has given for building up and not for tearing down” (2 Cor. 13:10). It is important to understand that the gifts of “communion” are given for the sake of nourishing “love” (cf. Eph. 4:16), yet such love requires concrete acts of “correcting” and “restoring” an erring brother or sister in Christ (cf. Gal. 6:1). A refusal to engage such a vocation of correction and restoration marks a denial of communion itself.

c. The demands of discipline for the good of the Church

Given the context of ECUSA’s unwillingness to respond, the Primates are therefore called to:

1. *Discipline for the sake of fulfilling the duties of Christian communion as we are taught them by Scripture.* The apostolic vocation in which bishops are particularly located demands that error be opposed within the Christian Church, that the truth be commended and propagated, and that care be taken by one part of the Body of Christ on behalf of another to the end that spiritual health be maintained by all. “Communion in the Gospel” (cf. Philippians 1:5) requires a commitment to building

up a common “mind” and “faith” (cf. Phil. 2:1-3; Eph. 4:1-6), that has as part of its exercise the willingness to correct and discipline (cf. Galatians 4:12-20; 2 Cor. 7:8-12). The Christian calling to hold each other accountable is not avoidable; rather it represents the voice of the “Spirit speaking to the churches” (Revelation 2:7), and is given in visible and audible acts of “rebuke” in the “presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear” (1 Tim. 5:20).

2. *Discipline for the welfare of the Church Catholic.* The health and future of the larger Christian Church’s common life is tied to the integrity of present witness within and among individual churches. It is also tied to the vocation of these churches’ restoration in a unified witness of God’s redemption in Christ before “the principalities and powers” (Col.2:15), and above “all rule and authority” (Eph. 1:21), as the one Church, the “fullness of him who fills all in all” (Eph. 1:23). The unity of calling and faith that embodies this promise (cf. Eph. 4:4f.) marks a goal which Anglican and other churches have worked hard to pursue over decades, clear that its fulfillment lies in the embrace of and subjection to shared forms of life in the Gospel.

Serious ecumenical dialogues have agreed that the connection between Scriptural faith, the self-discipline of common life in the Spirit, and shared morals together provide the framework for the “one body” of Christ into which we have been called, and which is properly termed “communion” both within Anglicanism and between it and other separated churches. The 1994 Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission statement on “Life in Christ: Morals, Communion and the Church”, building on previous agreed work, stated that “the Gospel we proclaim cannot be divorced from the life we live. Questions of doctrine and of morals are closely inter-connected and differences in the one area may reflect differences in the other” (paragraph 2).

Since ECUSA’s General Convention actions, both the Roman Catholic Church and Eastern Orthodox bishops in America have publicly acknowledged the grave ecumenical obstacles now

posed by the Episcopal Church's acceptance of moral practices that contravene Scripture and the traditional teachings of the Christian churches since apostolic times. Other denominations have responded similarly. These obstacles threaten a host of international efforts at restoring Christian unity, and represent a serious assault upon the careful work done for decades by faithful Christians around the world in the service of seeking a faithful obedience to Jesus' prayer that Christians "may all be one" (John 17:21) for the sake of the "world's" belief in the Son of God.

3. *Discipline for the good of the Communion's integrity as a functioning ecclesial organization.* Membership in the Anglican Communion is founded on shared standards of doctrine, discipline, and collegial behavior (see above). For a member church to ignore any of these is to place in jeopardy its membership; for the Communion as a whole to ignore such actions by one of its members is to place in jeopardy the meaningfulness of the claimed relationships it represents; for the Primates Meeting to ignore its responsibilities to "[intervene] in cases of exceptional emergency [...] in submission to the sovereign authority of Holy Scripture and in loyalty to our Anglican tradition and formularies" (1998 Lambeth, Resolution III.6), would place in jeopardy its calling and duty as pastors of a flock entrusted to its stewardship.

4. *Discipline for the sake of maintaining the faith and existence of ECUSA and of Anglicanism in the USA.* It is not clear that the Anglican witness to the Gospel can survive within North America (including Canada) without a strong and public correction of ECUSA's current leadership and recent Convention Actions. Not only will error be allowed to spread, but the organizational health of the institution itself is now under severe threat, as the possibility of financial ruin, disobedience, and diocesan fragmentation grows larger every day. The alternatives to discipline and to vigorous efforts by the Primates to maintain the common faith, witness, morals and preaching of the Communion within America are schism, legal

chaos, disintegration, the public scandal of Anglicanism in this part of the world, and finally the disappearance of American Anglicanism as a viable Christian church altogether.

5. *Discipline for the sake of Anglican churches' Scriptural witness and Christian mission around the world.* If the clear teaching of Scripture and of the “One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church” on central matters of sexual behavior, the authority of Christian truth, and the integrity of Christian fellowship is allowed to be contradicted with impunity by an influential and prominent member of the Anglican Communion, then the ability of any Anglican church, and many other Christians besides, to proclaim the Gospel with persuasive clarity and credible authority is undermined. By allowing erroneous and flagrant contradictions of the Christian message to stand among its own members, the Anglican Communion will sow confusion within its own churches and among unbelievers around the globe.

For some time now, and with increased volume and stridency in the past few months for example, Moslem and other opponents of Christian witness and evangelism have pointed to the inconsistencies and objectionable character of Anglican moral practice as an argument against the credibility of the Gospel preached by Anglican churches. It is the duty of the Communion's leadership as good stewards to challenge these charges by the example of loving and firm discipline among its members on behalf of sound and coherent teaching.

Such discipline is necessary in order to maintain the integrity of faith in other parts of the Communion around the world. The forces at work in pulling apart American Anglicanism will have severe repercussions elsewhere in the Communion, as the scandal of false teaching, divided witness, conflicting parties, and financial hardship spreads. No Anglican church can ignore the damage being done to their own ministry by the unbridled actions of ECUSA.

A failure on the part of the Primates to take actions and discipline the U. S. church will leave open a wide field for assault upon the Gospel elsewhere in the world, pursued by American and Anglo-European secular and religious revisionists, and imposed upon the rest of world through the same mechanisms and with the same arrogance as American economic, political, and other cultural interests are currently being inflicted upon the international community. Efforts are already underway to revise the Universal Declaration of Human Rights so as to include detailed non-discriminatory clauses related to homosexuals, to further the legalization and civil protections for multiple sexual relationships, and to achieve the abolition of marriage and its protections. Contemporary arguments over the demands and powers of a European Constitution to regulate sexual freedoms even in churches and recent decisions made by the Canadian courts in favor of gay marriages and seeking the limitation of Christian teaching in even religious schools represent a real dynamic which can only be resisted by a unified and forceful Christian witness. It is not by accident that one of the first visits made by Gene Robinson after General Convention's consent to his election was to address a UN panel on "gay rights". The Primates should not take the implications of ECUSA's actions in a limited and local manner. They must consider these actions an assault upon their own capacity to preach the Gospel and lead their churches faithfully.

APPENDIX ONE – RELEVANT STATEMENTS FROM INSTRUMENTS OF THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION

Lambeth Resolution I.10 and the letter of Primates from Brazil make clear substantive statements concerning the opinion of the Communion against same-sex blessings and ordination of those in same-sex unions. Lambeth I.10 explicitly declares homosexual practice as ‘contrary to Scripture’. No further explicit statement has been issued concerning the limits which must not be crossed, but, in the light of the statements below, the recent innovations in ECUSA and New Westminster present a strong *prima facie* case that (in contrast to actions prior to the ordination of women – see Appendix Three) there has been a serious disregard shown to the Communion and its four instruments of unity and mutual accountability.

The Archbishop of Canterbury

- ‘The Lambeth resolution of 1998 declares clearly what is the mind of the overwhelming majority in the Communion, and what the Communion will and will not approve or authorize. I accept that any individual diocese or even province that officially overturns or repudiates this resolution poses a substantial problem for the sacramental unity of the Communion’ (Letter to Primates, 23rd July 2002).
- ‘The perspective of the Anglican Communion demands careful consideration here. The estrangement of churches in developing countries from their cherished ties with Britain is in no-one’s interests. It would impoverish us as a Church in every way. It would also jeopardize links with other denominations, weaken co-operation in our shared service and mission worldwide, and increase the vulnerability of Christian minorities in some parts of the world where they are already at risk. Any such outcome would be a very heavy price to pay’ (Statement in relation to the withdrawal of Canon Jeffrey John from appointment as Bishop of Reading in the Church of England, 6th July 2003).

- ‘What does it mean to be a Communion rather than a federation? It means that provinces recognize each other as true churches of Christ, so that the apostolic ministry of one local church can be exercised freely in another local church. It means that we have ways of being accountable to each other, so that decisions in any one local church are not taken without consultation and awareness of the consequences a decision may have for other churches. It means that we regard our unity as more than a matter of human agreement, more even than a matter of doctrinal uniformity; we see it as something rooted in the Word of God who is active both through our reading and hearing of Scripture and in our performance of Baptism and Holy Communion. On these criteria, the Anglican Communion is on the way to being a Communion, but still learning. Differences of belief about the ministry of women as priests and bishops have led us to a situation of impaired communion in which the ministries of our provinces are not completely interchangeable. Our mutual accountability is still very undeveloped in regard to how we make decisions. What makes this a significant time in the Communion is that a number of the choices faced by various provinces are choices that will clearly take us either nearer real communion or further from it. The choices to which I am referring are not only issues around human sexuality, though these are the most talked-about... Certain decisions bearing directly or indirectly on sexuality are likely to have the effect of deepening the divide between provinces (and between our Communion and other confessions), not least in making any shared understanding of discipline much harder and exposing what many see as serious differences about how we read and obey Scripture... I should be very concerned to think that any decision taken by a local church ignored these considerations, and I want to encourage you and your fellow bishops to hold such questions very clearly before you in all that you do, individually and collectively. We do not have a central executive authority in our Communion; this means we are quite vulnerable in times of deep disagreement, and need

more than ever to pay attention to one another. St. Paul says in I Corinthians 11:33: 'When you gather together to eat the Lord's Supper, wait for one another.' We all need to ponder how this may apply to our situations. This is not to recommend a refusal to face circumstances or to avoid conflict at all costs. It is to acknowledge that who we are as Christians is connected to the worldwide fellowship to which we belong. Within a living Communion, we should never find ourselves in the position of saying, or seeming to say, to each other, 'I have no need of you' (I Cor. 12.21). If we believe that our Anglican tradition has, by the grace of God, been given certain precious and life-giving elements for nourishing holy life, and effective witness, we are bound by our duties and responsibilities as bishops to care for its survival and coherence. May God the Holy Spirit give us 'right judgment in all things' and bring to mind our joyful dependence on each other for our spiritual health and growth as we seek the right and faithful way forward in each of our situations.

(Letter to Primates, 23rd July 2003).

The Lambeth Conference

*1978 Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops Resolution 11
Issues Concerning the Whole Anglican Communion*

The Conference advises member Churches not to take action regarding issues which are of concern to the whole Anglican Communion without consultation with a Lambeth Conference or with the episcopate through the Primates Committee, and requests the Primates to initiate a study of the nature of authority within the Anglican Communion.

The Anglican Consultative Council

*Resolution 34 of the 12th Meeting of the AAC (15-26 Sept 2002,
Hong Kong). Province-wide and Communion-wide consultation*

This Anglican Consultative Council, being concerned about a range of matters of faith and order which have arisen since we last met, and having in mind the constant emphasis on mutual responsibility and interdependence in the resolutions

of successive Lambeth Conferences, from the call in 1867 for “unity in faith and discipline ... by due and canonical subordination of synods” (1867, IV) to the call in 1998 for a “common mind concerning ethical issues where contention threatens to divide ...” (1998, IV 5 (c)) calls upon:

1. dioceses and individual bishops not to undertake unilateral actions or adopt policies which would strain our communion with one another without reference to their provincial authorities; and
2. provincial authorities to have in mind the impact of their decisions within the wider Communion; and
3. all members of the Communion, even in our disagreements to have in mind the “need for courtesy, tolerance, mutual respect and prayer for one another” (1998, III.2 (e)).

The Primates Meeting

Porto 2000

We believe that our call to faithfulness and unity makes demands on our life of interdependence in several ways:

- We expect to see in one another a worshipping life, gratefully celebrating the sacraments given by the Lord Jesus and publicly proclaiming the Word of God in scripture.
- We expect to see a passion to share the unique Good News of Jesus Christ.
- We expect that, as we experience this worshipping life, we shall gratefully learn from each other aspects of the riches of Jesus Christ that no one local church could learn for itself in isolation.
- We also expect that, when we see in each other what we believe to be failure or unfaithfulness, there will be freedom for plain speaking and “fraternal rebuke” (Mt 18.15ff; cf. Gal 2.11; Eph 4.25). We expect honesty and challenge from each other. But we also look for humility, self-examination and a willingness to preserve those bonds of communion that reflect the unity we share.

Within our ministry to each other and our learning from one another challenge and disagreement are not only made possible but can be life-giving because of our commitment to one another in the family of the Communion. As in any family, the assurance of love allows boldness of speech. We are conscious that we all stand together at the foot of the Cross of Jesus Christ, so we know that to turn away from each other would be to turn away from the Cross. It is deeply difficult to balance the expectation of learning from each other with the expectation of honest challenge. But we recognize the freedom to call one another to account in the name of the Lord.

We believe that the disagreement over sexual ethics and differences in the reception of Lambeth Resolution I.10 that clearly exists within and among the Provinces does not necessarily amount to a complete and definitive rupture of communion. However, it has caused very great concern in many parts of the Communion that the Lambeth Resolution I.10 which was overwhelmingly adopted by bishops at Lambeth '98 has been rejected in some dioceses of our Church. Such clear and public repudiation of those sections of the Resolution related to the public blessing of same-sex unions and the ordination of declared non-celibate homosexuals, and the declared intention of some dioceses to proceed with such actions, have come to threaten the unity of the communion in a profound way. We strongly urge such dioceses to weigh the effects of their actions, and to listen to the expressions of pain, anger and perplexity from other parts of the Communion. We urge all bishops to recognize that further public actions of the kind mentioned above strain the reality of mutual accountability in a global Communion, where what may seem obvious and appropriate in one context might be harmful and unacceptable in another.

Kanuga 2001

We have been reminded of alienated groups within the Church's own life. Some of our number spoke of the difficulties of those who are estranged from others because of changes in theology and practice - especially with regard to the acceptance

of homosexual activity and the ordination of practicing homosexuals - that they believe to be unfaithful to the gospel of Christ. We have committed ourselves to seek for ways to secure sustained pastoral care for all in our Communion. We also resolved, as we did at our meeting last year in Porto, to show responsibility toward each other, and to seek to avoid actions that might damage the credibility of our mission in the world.

Brazil 2003

As Primates, we believe that the 38 provinces and united churches in the Anglican Communion are irrevocably called into a special relationship of fellowship with one another. We thank God for our common inheritance of faith, worship and discipleship - an inheritance which has sustained our journey as one Christian family, and in which we have been united in our proclamation of the Gospel.

We recognize that all churches, and not just Anglicans, face challenges in applying the Gospel to their specific situations and societies. These challenges raise questions for our traditional teaching and understanding - questions which require of the Church a careful process of thought and discussion in order to discover a way forward that is true to our inheritance of faith in Christ and to our duty as Christians to care for all people.

Recalling the Virginia Report's exhortation that we should strive for "the highest degree of communion possible with tolerance for deeply held differences of conviction and practice" (Report of the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, 1997, chapter 1), we are committed as Primates:

- to the recognition that in each province there is a sincere desire to be faithful disciples of Christ and of God's Word, in seeking to understand how the Gospel is to be applied in our generation;
- to respect the integrity of each other's provinces and dioceses, acknowledging the responsibility of Christian leaders to attend to the pastoral needs of minorities in their care;

- to work and pray that the communion between our churches is sustained and deepened; and to seek from God “a right judgment in all things” (Collect of Pentecost).

We take seriously the duty laid upon us by the Lambeth Conference 1998 to monitor ongoing discussion of this matter and encourage continued study and reflection in the context of common prayer and worship. We are grateful to the Archbishop of the West Indies, Drexel Gomez, for taking forward our discussion on matters of sexuality by introducing the booklet “True Union in the Body?”, which fruitfully illuminated our study. We are also grateful to Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold for drawing our attention to the Report of the Theology Committee of the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church (USA) on this issue. We commend the study of both documents.

The question of public rites for the blessing of same sex unions is still a cause of potentially divisive controversy. The Archbishop of Canterbury spoke for us all when he said that it is through liturgy that we express what we believe, and that there is no theological consensus about same sex unions. Therefore, we as a body cannot support the authorization of such rites.

This is distinct from the duty of pastoral care that is laid upon all Christians to respond with love and understanding to people of all sexual orientations. As recognized in the booklet “True Union”, it is necessary to maintain a breadth of private response to situations of individual pastoral care.

Other Relevant Statements

(a) The International Anglican Conversations on Human Sexuality, chaired by ECUSA Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold, issued its final report in 2002 and included the recommendation that ‘Those proposing changes to the Church’s traditional teaching on human sexuality or other significant issues should take account of both ecumenical and inter-faith implications, and the impact upon other Provinces of our Communion’

(b) ECUSA General Convention in 1991 stated that the potentially divisive issues on human sexuality 'should not be resolved by the Episcopal Church on its own' (Resolution B020 passed by both houses in 1991).

APPENDIX TWO – THE RELEVANCE OF THE CHICAGO-LAMBETH QUADRILATERAL

The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral helps explain how ECUSA has violated the “communion” of Anglicanism

Why the interest in the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral?

In the current dispute over the actions of ECUSA’s General Convention, some have suggested that only a formal repudiation of the elements of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral could call forth discipline and possibly place the American church “outside” of the Anglican Communion’s reach. This suggestion is presumably based on a sentence from the 2000 Primates’ Communiqué that “only a formal and public repudiation of [the Quadrilateral] would place a diocese or Province outside the Anglican Communion”. The implication some have drawn from this is that General Convention obviously *did not* articulate such a formal repudiation and therefore ECUSA has done nothing that could place its status within the Anglican Communion in jeopardy.

The following consideration seeks to explore this suggestion and concludes that, contrary to its claims, *ECUSA has in fact contradicted* the standards of the Quadrilateral through its recent actions at General Convention, and therefore very precisely meets the Primates’ strictures regarding churches that “place themselves outside the Anglican Communion”.

What is the Quadrilateral?

The “Quadrilateral” refers to four elements of the Christian Church, deemed “essential” as the “basis” for “reunion” among separated “communions”. These four elements are the following:

1. “The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments ‘[contain] all things necessary to salvation’ and [are] the rule and ultimate standard of faith;
2. “The Apostles’ Creed, as the Baptismal Symbol, and the Nicene Creed, [are] the sufficient statement of the Christian faith;
3. The two sacraments instituted by Christ, Baptism and “the Supper of the Lord”, according to “Christ’s words of institution and the elements ordained by Him”;
4. “The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the Unity of His Church”.

The Quadrilateral was first proposed at the 1886 General Convention of the Episcopal Church in America, held in Chicago. It was adopted by their House of Bishops (though not by the House of Deputies in a legislated way). It grew out of a growing movement of hope for reuniting Protestant denominations in the United States, and was articulated within a call by the House of Bishops to work for the restoration of Christian unity within the United States.

At the Lambeth Conference of 1888 the “Chicago Quadrilateral” was taken up and affirmed by the “Anglican Communion” in a more concise form as a resolution (no. 11), the four elements of which were defined as “articles [supplying] a basis on which approach may be by God’s blessing made towards Home Reunion”. The four elements are now commonly known as the “Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral”.

What is the scope of the Quadrilateral’s authority?

Resolution 11 of the 1888 Lambeth Conference holds the same authority as any other Lambeth resolution which has been repeatedly reaffirmed and applied in various Anglican councils, synods, and working commissions around the world – that is to say, an authority of increased moral weight and practical definition. (This is important to note: if the Quadrilateral has “authority”, it can only assume it in conjunction with

the authority of, for instance, the 1998 Lambeth Resolution I.10, given that the latter too has been affirmed, reaffirmed and repeatedly applied in a variety of synodical and conciliar contexts within the Communion.)

The Quadrilateral, however, is not a resolution of prohibitive or permissive function – it doesn't tell Anglicans what not to do or how to do something. Rather it was meant to *facilitate* a goal – “reunion” of separated churches. This distinction is important to bear in mind, since, from time to time, it has been erroneously suggested that the Quadrilateral should act as a kind of “test” for orthodoxy or Christian integrity, whether doctrinal or political, either among Christians in general or within the Anglican Communion itself. As several theologians have pointed out (e.g. J. Robert Wright), Anglicanism's only stated test of content for “saving belief” is what is found in Scripture.

The kind of misguided suggestion that would use the Quadrilateral as a “test” derives, in part, from the varying practical applications to which the Quadrilateral's four elements have been put, each of which is founded on differing implications of theological substance. Put simply, the Quadrilateral's four elements have been applied – and thus interpreted theologically – in a *restricted* and in a *full* sense depending on the practical goals being pursued, and for which the Quadrilateral's structure has been used as a clarifying tool. In general, the “*restricted sense*” has come to the fore in larger ecumenical discussions between separated churches or communions, while the “*full sense*” has come to fore in inter-Anglican discussions.

“Restricted Sense” and “Full Sense” of the Quadrilateral

The *restricted sense* of the Quadrilateral is tied to its original purpose, that is, to lay out a “basis” upon which discussions among separated Christian denominations and “communions” might be begun and initially carried out. In this sense, the Quadrilateral is not a “definition of the Church” but a template

for talking, a set of ecclesial “least common denominators” that would both provide non-Anglicans with a sense of the “non-negotiables” of Anglican churches, and also provide the common ground for a developing effort at dialogue. This *restricted sense* has proved very influential and useful, providing a shape to ecumenical discussions as far-reaching as the World Council of Church’s Lima Statement on *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry* (1982).

The original Chicago Quadrilateral, however, makes it clear that the Quadrilateral is not of itself an exhaustive definition of the Christian Church. Rather, the four elements are “inherent parts” of a “sacred deposit” of “Faith and Order committed by Christ and his Apostles to the Church”, whose full expression lies in the “Christian graces” that include “visible charity” and that uphold the Christian Church’s “organic unity” as “manifest” to the world. As distinct elements, then, the Quadrilateral’s four notes can only find their fullest use in something that lies beyond their formal shape, and that is characterized by an array of forms of common life, moral acts, and ministries tied to the visible manifestation of a certain kind of spiritual Christian existence.

While it is possible to see the Quadrilateral’s four elements as somehow implying this “fullness” of Christian life, the implications themselves need to be spelled out clearly in order for the *full sense* of the Quadrilateral’s meaning to be evident. At the 1920 Lambeth Conference, Resolution 9 (“Appeal to All Christian People”) began this process, by building onto the Quadrilateral’s four notes an explication of what they might practically demand, especially the “historic episcopate” which is now said to imply “all that is involved for the life of the Christian family in the title Father-in-God”, and that embraces forms of authority and engagement that go far beyond the bare meaning of the Quadrilateral’s own words. After all, “all that is involved” in something implies a going-beyond of a literal sense.

This process of “filling out” the Quadrilateral has continued for many years. For example, in one of the most admired

and influential ecumenical “agreed statements” of the last 25 years, the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) paper on “Church as Communion” (1991) described “communion” precisely on the basis of the Quadrilateral’s elements – “the apostolic faith revealed in the Scripture and set forth in the Creeds... founded upon one baptism... [celebrating] the Eucharist [as] its pre-eminent expression and focus... provided [with] a ministry of oversight, the fullness of which is entrusted to the episcopate” (paragraph 45). But the statement, in the same paragraph, felt it necessary to explicate these elements with a number of further aspects deliberately deemed “necessary” and “constitutive” of the Church as “communion”. These further essential aspects include: “a life of shared concern for one another in mutual forbearance, submission, gentleness and love... in solidarity with the poor and powerless”; “sharing of gifts both material and spiritual”; “acceptance of the same basic moral values”; “sharing the same vision of humanity created in the image of God and recreated in Christ”, and so on.

Thus, if the Quadrilateral is to be read in a *full sense* as detailing the very nature of the Church, it can only do so if elements of virtuous common life, material connection, visible mutual submission, deference and commitment to the poor, common moral values, and theological anthropology are explicitly drawn out from the Church’s established life and authoritative witness and allowed to inform the bare marks simply listed in the Quadrilateral’s outline.

The Two Senses Contrasted

The contrast between the *restricted sense* and the *full sense* of the Quadrilateral can be seen in the differences between the ecumenical partnership known as “full communion” between American Episcopalians and Lutherans on the one hand, and the practices of “communion” that are shared by Anglicans among themselves within the “Anglican Communion”.

While the Quadrilateral provided an important framework, implied and explicit, for basing the discussion of reconciliation

of ministries between Episcopalians and Lutherans, the agreement between the two denominations now known as “Call to Common Mission” represents a very “restricted” practice of relationship. This includes, of course, shared Eucharists and interchangeable ordained ministries (within certain limits). However, the relationship also maintains: overlapping and exclusive episcopal jurisdictions and denominational memberships; informal, irregular, and uneven conversations; a “joint coordinating committee” without practical authority; no organized sharing of material resources; no shared formularies beyond the Creeds.

By contrast, the “communion” represented within the Anglican Communion not only involves shared Eucharists and interchangeable ordained ministries, but also involves and indeed demands a much fuller array of forms of common life, ones that (at least in theory) are far closer to the kinds of things enumerated in the ARCIC statement noted above: e.g. shared ministries of supervision and sacramental practice; the strict maintenance of the integrity of geographical jurisdiction; shared counsel, often in formal synodical shape; “instruments of unity” – Archbishop of Canterbury, Lambeth, Primates, AAC and local synods – that are commonly supported and carry expected, if varied, levels of authority; shared formularies, most of which are tied by an historical family relation (e.g. Book of Common Prayer, 39 Articles).

It is not surprising, in this light, that when the Quadrilateral is formally listed as a defining document of some authority within Anglican churches, it takes a place *alongside* a number of other elucidating and authoritative documents, all of which act as a kind of mutually informing and cumulative context of ecclesial definition. Thus, the Quadrilateral is included within the American Episcopal Prayer Book in a section entitled “Historical Documents of the Church” along with critical doctrinal pieces like that Chalcedonian definition of the two natures of Christ, the Athanasian Creed, the Preface to the 1549 Prayer Book and the Articles of Religion. The Quadrilateral is not privileged in this

collection, but is clearly meant to function as one piece among many which together provide a complex lens through which to see the character of the Church, and especially of the Church within the Anglican tradition. “Fullness” of meaning for the Quadrilateral only emerges within this rich context.

The Full Sense of the “Oporto Communiqué”

Finally, when the Communiqué of the Primates who met at Oporto in March of 2000 states that “only a formal and public repudiation of [the Quadrilateral] would place a diocese or Province outside the Anglican Communion”, it can only be read, and must be read, within this context of a *full sense* of the Quadrilateral’s implications, as they find their meaning within the life of the Anglican Communion, rather than within the restricted process of ecumenical discussion. This conclusion is critical to grasp: the enumerated elements of the Quadrilateral are merely formal notes for discussion apart from the “full” substance of Christian faith and practice. As marks of “communion” within the intimate family of Anglicanism (and the final “organic unity” of the restored Church Catholic), however, they are intended to be points to which reference is made when substantive theological matters have somehow been placed in dispute. Through the facilitation of the Quadrilateral’s lens, these issues can be approached with some logical clarity and with some basis for common discourse. Apart from a *full sense* reading of the Quadrilateral within Anglicanism, however, individual Anglican churches would be left in the position one to another of “separated denominations” or even of “separated communions”, akin to the situation of the fragmented Christian Church the ecumenical vocation was meant originally to overcome. By contrast, when the Quadrilateral is read within the context of “Communion”, its meaning finds its form within the textured web of doctrine, discipline, worship, and material deference. It is within this web of meaning, parts of which have been explicated in the main paper, and not upon the basis of a bare reading of the Quadrilateral’s elements, that the actions of ECUSA’s General Convention must be evaluated.

ECUSA's violation of the Quadrilateral

In general, the fact that ECUSA's actions at the 74th General Convention in giving consent to the episcopal election of a sexually active homosexual and in recognizing a variety of same-sex blessings violate the articulated authority and meaning of Scripture held by the Anglican Communion, the moral norms shared by the Communion, the mutual deference and submission demanded by the very character of Communion, and the vocation of the Historical Episcopate aimed at maintaining Communion, and that these violations have occurred knowingly and willingly, demonstrates that ECUSA has "formally repudiated" the Quadrilateral's *full sense*, as it was clearly understood by the Primates at Oporto. We can note this now in greater detail with respect to the elements of Scripture and of the Historic Episcopate:

Violation of the Scriptural Standard

Only by ignoring the plain historical and ecumenical intention of the Quadrilateral could anyone argue that it has not been offended against, and clearly so, by the innovations of the 74th General Convention of the Episcopal Church. The language used by the Quadrilateral – Scripture as "the revealed Word of God" (original Chicago version), as "being the rule and ultimate standard of faith" (Lambeth revision), as tied to the "sacred deposit" given by Christ to the Apostles and Church "unto the end of the world, and therefore incapable of compromise" – points in the direction of the *full sense* implications of this standard as part of a coherent interpretive framework shared within and authoritative for the Church as a whole.

Both the ecumenical and "communion" contexts of the Quadrilateral's use within Anglicanism entail the document's scriptural standard as being an appeal to a foundation. That is, the Quadrilateral views Scripture as something held to be sufficiently clear and unifying as to act effectively as an instrument for discussions leading to "reunion" and for the

maintenance of unity, in response to “the Savior’s prayer, ‘that we all may be one’” (as it is phrased in the first paragraph of Chicago version). Indeed, the Quadrilateral’s appeal to a “sacred deposit”, including the Holy Scriptures of both Testaments, cannot be squared with a late modern concession that people read the Bible and can find no clear teaching on sexual behavior and marriage there. Quite the opposite: to the degree that claims for “diverse” readings of Scripture, or for the limited authority of Scripture on a matter like sexual behavior lead to *furthering* rifts among churches and within the Anglican Communion, the Quadrilateral’s appeal to Scripture has been overtly subverted.

This is manifestly the case with ECUSA’s General Convention actions and their justifications. The fact that Lambeth itself, in 1998, articulated the clear meaning of Scripture on the matter of sexual behavior, sexuality, and marriage (Resolution I.10. “rejecting homosexual practice as incompatible with Scripture”), provides a firm basis upon which one should judge ECUSA’s actions as a violation of the Quadrilateral’s foundational appeal to Scripture from the start.

Violation of the Standard of the Historic Episcopate

- a. The fact that the Quadrilateral, furthermore, articulates its appeal to Scripture as “the rule and ultimate standard of faith” in tandem with the essential character of the “historic episcopate” makes Lambeth’s Scriptural evaluations, which are consistent with the universal historic teaching of the Church, part of the web of authority by which the integrity of the episcopate itself is to be measured. For in respect to Scripture, the office of Bishop (among Anglicans, cf. American BCP p. 521) has as part of its purpose the guarding of the scriptural witness. And if the bishops of the Anglican Communion have themselves said, by an overwhelming voice, that homosexual relations are “incompatible with Scripture”, it is clear that ECUSA has disregarded one of the primary vocations of the historic episcopate, which

is charged to guard the fidelity of the church's witness and to see that it accords with Scripture. The burden of proof is upon ECUSA to show that it has not done so, something it simply cannot do once it has claimed an *a priori* right, as it has, to interpret Scripture apart from the judgment of the Bishops of the Communion.

b. With respect to the 74th General Convention's Resolution C051, regarding the "recognition" of various diocesan liturgies of same-sex blessing currently being performed and "explored", ECUSA's embrace of "local option" clearly undermines several basic functions of the episcopacy at once, by subtracting episcopal supervision of liturgy, by extricating such supervision from the college of bishops as a group, and by divorcing the evaluation and legitimacy of such forms of common life and supervision from the conciliar character of the episcopacy as whole within the Communion, which in every case is not only tied to episcopal vocation as guardian of Scripture's witness, but of a common "apostolic faith" and of the "unity" of the Church carried out in mutual deference and submission. By asking for the actions of General Convention to be permitted and received within the Communion when such actions are viewed as improper by most of the Communion's other bishops ECUSA is insisting that "local option" be in effect a communion-wide practice. The manner in which this would undermine the unitive function of the episcopacy, as clearly understood by the Quadrilateral, is obvious.

The Quadrilateral assaulted by ECUSA

Finally, although this paper focuses on the specific question of General Convention's violation of the Quadrilateral through its actions with respect to the permission of prohibited sexual behavior, it should be noted that ECUSA has, less formally, ignored and subverted other elements of the standard: e.g. by

failing to discipline bishops and clergy who publicly deny tenets of the Creeds, the Quadrilateral's creedal standard has been consistently eroded in ECUSA; by not only failing to discipline, but in many dioceses by outwardly encouraging the practice of opening eucharistic communion to the unbaptized, ECUSA has subverted the Quadrilateral's sacramental standard. Taken as a whole, therefore, the Quadrilateral's use as an evaluative tool for the integrity of ECUSA's membership within the Anglican Communion reveals a situation in which the American church has seriously contravened accepted basic standards of common life within the Communion. Based on the Oporto Communiqué, ECUSA stands under the judgment of the Communion.

APPENDIX THREE – THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION & THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN

As the Virginia Report states, “The move to ordain women to the priesthood and the episcopate provides a recent example of the process by which Anglicans have struggled together to form a mind on a matter which affects the ministry and therefore the unity of the Communion. It is a story which throws into sharp relief some of the emerging questions concerning both the structures of Anglican interdependence and the processes by which we come to take decisions together”.

1968 Lambeth Conference

In 1968 the Lambeth Conference did not rule out the ordination of women to the Priesthood but simply stated that ‘the theological arguments as at present presented for and against the ordination of women to the priesthood are inconclusive’ (Resolution 34). (The committee report itself went further and said, ‘We find no conclusive theological reasons for withholding ordination to the priesthood from women as such’). Lambeth therefore requested careful study of the question from every national and regional Church or province and a report by them to the ACC (Resolution 35) which was to consult with ecumenical partners and inform the Communion (Resolution 36). Recognizing that it threatened to impair communion the conference recommended ‘that, before any national or regional Church or province makes a final decision to ordain women to the priesthood, the advice of the Anglican Consultative Council (or Lambeth Consultative Body) be sought and carefully considered’ (Resolution 37). In the meantime, provinces were encouraged to make canonical provision for women to share in other public liturgical ministries (Resolution 38).

1971 ACC in Limuru

By the time of the first ACC meeting in 1971, no church had completed its study as requested under Resolution 35. However,

the Bishop of Hong Kong (in line with Resolution 37) asked for the Communion's advice as his diocesan synod had approved in principle the ordination of women to the priesthood. The ACC very narrowly (24-22 with several abstentions and Archbishop Michael Ramsey voting against) passed the following resolution (Resolution 28(b)):

In reply to the request of the Council of the Church of South East Asia, this Council advises the Bishop of Hong Kong, acting with the approval of his Synod, and any other bishop of the Anglican Communion acting with the approval of his Province, that, if he decides to ordain women to the priesthood, his action will be acceptable to this Council, and that this Council will use its good offices to encourage all Provinces of the Anglican Communion to continue in communion with these dioceses.

Later in 1971, two women deacons were ordained priest in the Diocese of Hong Kong. By ACC 1973 it was clear that this had gained wide support and a similar motion was overwhelmingly carried (50-2 with 3 abstentions) stating that '*The Council agrees to recommend once more that, where any autonomous Province of the Anglican Communion decides to ordain women to the priesthood, this should not cause any break in communion in our Anglican family*'. A number of provinces proceeded to make such decisions (including the USA in 1976) although many did not.

1978 Lambeth Conference

At the next Lambeth conference, therefore, women's ordination was an issue of concern to many and the bishops present had varied views. They wished, however, to preserve the unity of the Communion and the episcopate. Lengthy resolution 21 on Women in the Priesthood was overwhelmingly carried (316-37 with 17 abstentions) and reads:

1. The Conference notes that since the last Lambeth Conference in 1968, the Diocese of Hong Kong, the Anglican Church of Canada, the Episcopal Church in the United States of America,

and the Church of the Province of New Zealand have admitted women to the presbyterate, and that eight other member Churches of the Anglican Communion have now either agreed or approved in principle or stated that there are either no fundamental or no theological objections to the ordination of women to the historic threefold ministry of the Church. We also note that other of its member Churches have not yet made a decision on the matter. Others again have clearly stated that they do hold fundamental objections to the ordination of women to the historic threefold ministry of the Church.

2. The Conference acknowledges that both the debate about the ordination of women as well as the ordinations themselves have, in some Churches, caused distress and pain to many on both sides. To heal these and to maintain and strengthen fellowship is a primary pastoral responsibility of all, and especially of the bishops.

3. The Conference also recognizes (a) the autonomy of each of its member Churches, acknowledging the legal right of each Church to make its own decision about the appropriateness of admitting women to Holy Orders; (b) that such provincial action in this matter has consequences of the utmost significance for the Anglican Communion as a whole.

4. The Conference affirms its commitment to the preservation of unity within and between all member Churches of the Anglican Communion.

5. The Conference therefore (a) encourages all member Churches of the Anglican Communion to continue in communion with one another, notwithstanding the admission of women (whether at present or in the future) to the ordained ministry of some member Churches; (b) in circumstances in which the issue of the ordination of women has caused, or may cause, problems of conscience, urges that every action possible be taken to ensure that all baptized members of the Church continue to be in communion with their bishop and that every opportunity be given for all members to work together in the mission of the Church irrespective of their convictions regarding this issue; (c) requests the Anglican Consultative Council (i) to use its good offices to promote dialogue between those member Churches which ordain

women and those which do not, with a view to exploring ways in which the fullest use can be made of women's gifts within the total ministry of the Church in our Communion; and (ii) to maintain, and wherever possible extend, the present dialogue with Churches outside the Anglican family.

6. Consistent with the foregoing, this Conference (a) declares its acceptance of those member Churches which now ordain women, and urges that they respect the convictions of those provinces and dioceses which do not; (b) declares its acceptance of those member Churches which do not ordain women, and urges that they respect the convictions of those provinces and dioceses which do. (c) With regard to women who have been ordained in the Anglican Communion being authorized to exercise their ministry in provinces which have not ordained women, we recommend that, should synodical authority be given to enable them to exercise it, it be exercised only (i) where pastoral need warrants and (ii) where such a ministry is agreeable to the bishop, clergy, and people where the ministry is to be exercised and where it is approved by the legally responsible body of the parish, area, or institution where such a ministry is to be exercised.

7. We recognize that our accepting this variety of doctrine and practice in the Anglican Communion may disappoint the Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Old Catholic Churches, but we wish to make it clear (a) that the holding together of diversity within a unity of faith and worship is part of the Anglican heritage; (b) that those who have taken part in ordinations of women to the priesthood believe that these ordinations have been into [sic.] the historic ministry of the Church as the Anglican Communion has received it; and (c) that we hope the dialogue between these other Churches and the member Churches of our Communion will continue because we believe that we still have understanding of the truth of God and his will to learn from them as together we all move towards a fuller catholicity and a deeper fellowship in the Holy Spirit.

8. This Conference urges that further discussions about the ordination of women be held within a wider consideration of theological issues of ministry and priesthood.

Despite this agreement there was no agreement on women in the episcopate and so the procedures for moving towards such a situation were proposed in Resolution 22:

While recognizing that a member Church of the Anglican Communion may wish to consecrate a woman to the episcopate, and accepting that such member Church must act in accordance with its own constitution, the Conference recommends that no decision to consecrate be taken without consultation with the episcopate through the primates and overwhelming support in any member Church and in the diocese concerned, lest the bishop's office should become a cause of disunity instead of a focus of unity

Women Bishops

As a result of respect for the Lambeth Resolution, no province proceeded to consecrate a woman bishop until after the next Lambeth Conference. In 1985, after ECUSA's General Convention declared it would not withhold consent to the election of a bishop on grounds of gender, it sought the advice of the recently established Primates Meeting. A working party of Primates sought the advice of provinces across the Communion prior to Lambeth 1988.

Lambeth 1988

Here it was again overwhelmingly agreed to accept diversity within the Communion on this issue (Resolution 1, 423-28 with 19 abstentions):

This Conference resolves:

- 1 That each province respect the decision and attitudes of other provinces in the ordination or consecration of women to the episcopate, without such respect necessarily indicating acceptance of the principles involved, maintaining the highest possible degree of communion with the provinces which differ.*
- 2 That bishops exercise courtesy and maintain communications with bishops who may differ, and with any woman bishop, ensuring an open dialogue in the Church to whatever extent*

communion is impaired.

3 That the Archbishop of Canterbury, in consultation with the primates, appoints a commission: a) to provide for an examination of the relationships between provinces of the Anglican Communion and ensure that the process of reception includes continuing consultation with other Churches as well; b) to monitor and encourage the process of consultation within the Communion and to offer further pastoral guidelines.

4 That in any province where reconciliation on these issues is necessary, any diocesan bishop facing this problem be encouraged to seek continuing dialogue with, and make pastoral provision for, those clergy and congregations whose opinions differ from those of the bishop, in order to maintain the unity of the diocese.

5 Recognizes the serious hurt which would result from the questioning by some of the validity of the episcopal acts of a woman bishop, and likewise the hurt experienced by those whose conscience would be offended by the ordination of a woman to the episcopate. The Church needs to exercise sensitivity, patience and pastoral care towards all concerned.

Comments

The contrasts with recent innovations in relation to sexual ethics are stark:

(1) No Lambeth Conference explicitly stated its opposition to the ordination of women or judged it to be contrary to Scripture.

(2) Despite the possible implication that this was therefore a non-essential matter, those considering innovation were asked to consult widely before acting. At each stage, dioceses and provinces showed restraint, not asserting their autonomy but rather seeking the guidance of the instruments of the communion and only proceeding when advised to do so by the Communion.

(3) The Communion explicitly stated that the innovation was acceptable and within the bounds of Christian orthodoxy before action was taken. Women's ordination was therefore recognized as a legitimate matter for diversity within the Communion prior to its official occurrence and the Communion committed itself to work in order to prevent it leading to a fundamental break in

communion.

(4) Although the Communion sought to support those in innovative provinces who did not agree with the decisions (and worked for respect for their views), its prior decisions on the principle meant it did not need to discipline provinces or consider creating or recognizing alternative Anglican structures.

APPENDIX FOUR – ASSESSING THE PROPOSAL FOR A SECOND OR PARALLEL PROVINCE

A Formula for the End of The Anglican Communion as Such

I

One proposal for addressing the divisions and crisis caused by ECUSA's General Convention actions (and actions within the Canadian Anglican Church) regarding sexuality is the creation of a 'second province' for those dioceses and parishes that find these actions unacceptable. It is unclear if the proposal envisions two alternative provinces (one in Canada and one in the U.S.) or a single second province (one that includes both Canada and the U.S., or perhaps just the U.S.). These details are of enormous importance, but they do not bear immediately on the assessment that follows of the general idea of a separate province, an assessment that is decidedly negative in its conclusions.

II

The proposal seems to have its origin in a perceived similarity between the divisions brought about by the ordination of women and those that have resulted from the more recent actions of New Westminster (Canada) and ECUSA. For some time now, some opponents of women's ordination, dissatisfied with present arrangements for alternative pastoral oversight, have argued for the creation of a non-geographical province that would not admit the practice of ordaining women. The idea of a second province for those who do not approve of 'gay blessings' or the ordination of homosexual people who are not sexually abstinent is often seen as a possible solution for circumstances perceived to be analogous.

The first thing to be said about the second province proposal for those who do not agree with this change in teaching and practice in respect to homosexual relations is that *the analogy with women's ordination does not hold*. [See the material in Appendix 3.] In respect to the ordination of women, the Lambeth

Conference of Bishops has never said that this practice is contrary to scripture. Rather, they have argued that a process of reception be allowed and not closed prematurely. Thus, a second (non-geographical) province in which women are neither ordained nor preside at the Holy Eucharist may be seen as a means of seeing that the process of reception is allowed to continue without premature closure.

Things are quite different, however, when it comes to a second province for those who cannot accept a changed teaching and practice in respect to homosexual activity. The Lambeth Conference of Bishops, in this case, did not say that a process of reception should be allowed. Rather, the Bishops, by an overwhelming majority, said that homosexual practice is contrary to Holy Scripture. This is as strong a theological statement as Anglicans can make. From the beginning Anglicans have insisted that doctrine be “proved” or “tested” by Holy Scripture, and that no doctrine is to be held or taught that is contrary to Holy Scripture (Articles 6, 20, 21, 34 of the 39 Articles; cf. the 1789 Preface to the American BCP). They have also insisted that it is a primary responsibility of the Episcopate to insure that doctrine accord with Holy Scripture. While it is true that some contest the interpretation of Scripture given by the Bishops, it is nonetheless the case that, in the exercise of their responsibility to ensure that doctrine and practice accord with Holy Scripture, the Bishops assembled at Lambeth in 1998 spoke forcefully and clearly stating that a change in teaching and practice would indeed be contrary to Holy Scripture. The statement of the Bishops assembled at Lambeth was, furthermore, supported by a later meeting of the Primates of the Communion who spoke strongly against any change in teaching and practice.

III

The difference noted above between a second province for those who do not accept the ordination of women and a second province for those who do not accept a change in sexual ethics suggests several things about the latter proposal that argue strongly against it.

1. By creating a second province recognized on the same basis as the original one, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Primates of the Communion would be saying that Anglicans may, at one and the same time, have a province whose practice accords with Scripture and a province whose practice does not. This precedent would undermine the principle that Anglicans are not to hold doctrines that are contrary to Holy Scripture. [On the plain meaning of Scripture, and the common teaching of Scripture in the Church, the material in the main paper above.]
2. The creation and recognition of a second province whose teaching and practice runs directly contrary to the stated view of the Lambeth Conference about the import of Holy Scripture would undermine the moral authority of that body and render its future proceedings of little consequence.
3. The creation of a second province whose teaching and practice is considered contrary to Holy Scripture would also weaken the moral authority of the Primates who have been given an “enhanced responsibility” for addressing crises such as the one brought about by the actions of New Westminster and ECUSA. Having on more than one occasion reaffirmed Lambeth’s teaching, by being seen as giving approval both to a province whose teaching they hold accords with Holy Scripture and to one whose teaching does not, they would undermine the credibility of their moral decisions and leadership.
4. The creation of a second province whose teaching and practice is considered by the Bishops of the Communion to be contrary to Holy Scripture would also make the practice of ECUSA to honor “local option” (i.e. each diocese determining its own policy on these matters) the de facto practice of the Anglican Communion, something that, on a matter of Scriptural teaching, contradicts the character of Christian “communion” itself.
5. Should the Communion as a whole adopt the policy of

“local option” in matters that most consider contrary to Holy Scripture, the Anglican Communion would cease, in any meaningful sense of the word, to be a Communion. At best it would become a federation of churches linked by (fading) historical relations and purely pragmatic considerations. At worst, it would fragment into groupings no longer in communion one with another.

6. By creating co-existing, and in some cases geographically overlapping, provinces, which are equal members of the Communion yet whose Scriptural and moral teachings contradict each other, the Anglican Communion would be sowing great confusion in the missionary witness of its churches. This would be the case both in America (where contradictory teachings would be promoted equally under the aegis of “Anglicanism”) and elsewhere in the world (where contradictory moral teachings would cause scandal to non-Christians and Christians alike).

IV

The factors listed above comprise substantive issues that would flow from giving official license to teaching and practice that the Anglican Communion as a whole considers to be contrary to Holy Scripture. There are also more practical considerations that tell against the creation of a second province.

1. If a second province were to be created, which province would be considered by the Anglican Communion to be ECUSA? If the one associated positively with the past General Convention is said to be ECUSA then the province whose teaching and practice accord with that of the Anglican Communion would have no access to the considerable assets of that province. It seems odd – as a matter of justice at the minimum -- to adopt a policy that favors legally the very province that has acted without regard to the moral authority of either the Lambeth Conference of Bishops or the Meeting of the Primates.

If, on the other hand, both provinces were held to be ECUSA then both would presumably have access to the assets now held by the single province known as ECUSA. Both options portend a legal quagmire, and the shameful sight of Christians contending one with another in courts of law.

2. The creation of a second province when the point of division involves teaching and practice considered contrary to Holy Scripture also does nothing to force a divided church to come to a common mind and find its way back to peace and unity. Each may claim victory and in so doing continue to regard the other as an enemy they may either ignore or with whom they continue to contend for members. This contradicts the Scriptural view of the Church (cf. Philippians 2; Ephesians 4), and reduces the relationship between the purported churches of Christ to the struggle between vying claimants to the Gospel (cf. 1 John 2:19f; 4:5f.).
3. The creation of a second province for those who find the recent action of General Convention unacceptable would also place those who have honored the moral authority of Lambeth and the Primates at a distinct disadvantage. They would not have an adequate system for educating future clergy. They would also be viewed by many members of ECUSA, even those unhappy with the recent actions of General Convention, as disgruntled “conservatives” who have left the Church. Episcopalians have a deep-seated dislike of people who leave, and this no matter what the reason. A second province would for these two reasons alone, weaken the position of those who in fact support the view of the Communion as a whole, something that injures the claims to justice and prudence within the Communion.
4. The creation of a second province would also put enormous strains on those Bishops within ECUSA who have opposed the recent action of General Convention. Each would have a terrible battle to face in their diocese in respect to going into a second province. Many who

oppose the action of General Convention could not gain assent for a second province in their own diocese.

5. The creation of a second province would demand of parishes a decision of some kind regarding their allegiance and membership. How would such a decision be made? By congregational majority vote? Would the minority in such a vote be forced to leave their parish? The pastoral and political chaos of such a process would be hard to untangle and would most certainly devastate the common life in Christ to which individual Christians and congregations are called.

V

There are, in short, both substantive and practical reasons that tell against the creation of a second province. In brief, this solution is no solution at all. On the one hand, it will undermine Anglicanism as a Communion of Churches, and on the other it will render those who are in agreement with the larger Communion extremely vulnerable. Most important of all, it will do little to help the members of ECUSA find unity and peace in the Gospel. It will simply fuel their divisions. When the issue is not a process of reception (as in the ordination of women), but a practice that runs contrary to that of the Anglican Communion (as with the blessing of homosexual relations) appropriate pastoral practice must differ. In the first case, pastoral practice should serve to ensure that the process is allowed to proceed without hindrance or undue haste. In the case of unacceptable practice or teaching, pastoral practice should be designed to bring the practice of an erring province or diocese back into line with that of the rest of the Communion. When the issue is a process of reception, a second province may provide a temporary strategy that allows the process to go forward in a constructive manner. When the issue is unacceptable teaching or practice, a second province serves only to give tacit approval to the teaching or practice in question and to reduce the prospects for reconciliation.