

Fulcrum Submission to the Lambeth Commission on the Anglican Communion¹

Key Questions 1 and 2: Implications of Recent Decisions? There are Limits to Mission Inculturation

The ‘inculturation’ of the Gospel is essential to its planting, growth and flourishing. The good news does need to be earthed deeply in local cultures, so that people feel at home and that they know that the good news comes from God, rather than from another country. However, there are key limits, and often these limits are best seen by outsiders.² In engaging with gay cultures in the USA and Canada, it is appropriate that Anglicans from other cultures, as well as those from these countries, question whether these recent decisions go beyond the limits of inculturation. We consider that they do.

Key Question 3: Autonomy and Communion? Interdependence not Independence

We agree with the analysis of Norman Doe in his recent article ‘The Meaning of Autonomy’³ that ‘provincial autonomy’, historically and canonically, does not mean that provinces may do whatever their wish irrespective of the expressed concerns of the Anglican Communion.⁴

Key Question 4: Relating without Full Communion? A Reduced Lambeth 2008

Meeting together is crucial and the cross involves sacrifice. Not all who meet together, however, should necessarily have voting rights. A series of gradations of discipline,⁵ which could include ‘observer status,’ is now needed for those who defy the expressed concerns of the Anglican Communion. We strongly recommend that the Lambeth Conference in 2008 is held. If the South African location proves to be unacceptable to many bishops from the Global South, then another location in Africa, e.g. Nairobi, should be found. The conference should be smaller than that of 1998, with the ratio of bishops invited reflecting the number of Anglicans in each province. Gene Robinson, a particular focus of disunity, should not be amongst those invited nor any other practicing gay bishops subsequently consecrated.

Key Question 5 and 6: Communion within Individual Churches? Alternative Episcopal Oversight not Parallel Provinces

A separate province for ‘conservatives’ in ECUSA, or in the Church of England, is a retrograde concept and would lead away from a united church to parallel provinces. Parallel lines do not meet. We recommend, instead, ‘Alternative Episcopal Oversight’ which goes beyond the ‘Delegated Episcopal Pastoral Oversight’ offered currently by ECUSA in that ordinations would be included.

Key Questions 7 and 8: Canterbury Intervention? Appeal Court and Gradations of Discipline

Rather than a move to ‘Curial Centrism’ on the one hand or to a loose ‘Federal Network’ on the other, we recommend that the ‘Communion’ model be developed further.⁶ In the search for an appropriate metaphor for intervention, we suggest ‘healing the wounded body’ as both biblical and organic. This would be in line with the document ‘True Union in the Body’.⁷ The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Primates should have an appeal court to consider particular cases, which could invoke gradations of discipline regarding invitations, and speaking and voting rights at meetings. Genocide in Ruanda, and human rights abuses in Zimbabwe are the sort of historical examples which could be considered as well as the recent actions of ECUSA and of the diocese of New Westminster.

Concluding Comments

We have kept the above submission deliberately short as requested. We attach an appendix of four key quotations by Adrian Hastings, Robert Runcie, Max Warren and Philip Jenkins, which have informed our thinking.

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¹ For details of Fulcrum: renewing the evangelical centre, including a short article by Graham Kings, ‘Anglican Communion: Long Term Solutions not Dissolution’, see www.fulcrum-anglican.org.uk

² It was considered by most members of the European Council of Churches that the Serbian Orthodox Church had gone beyond the limits of inculturation in giving backing to Serbian Nationalism in the campaign for ‘Greater Serbia’. This resulted in the fragmentation of the former Yugoslavia and the Bosnian and Kosovo wars. See also the quotation by Philip Jenkins in our appendix.

³ Norman Doe, a canon lawyer, is a member of the Lambeth Commission. ‘The Meaning of Autonomy’ may be seen on www.anglicancommunion.org/ecumenical/commissions/lambeth/documents/autonomy.pdf

⁴ See also the quotations on ‘autonomy’ from Adrian Hastings and on ‘interdependence’ from Robert Runcie, in our appendix.

⁵ The document, if not the non-organic metaphor, ‘To Mend the Net’ has many helpful insights, in particular its suggestion of a gradation of disciplines. Drexel W. Gomes and Maurice W. Sinclair (eds), *To Mend the Net: Anglican Faith and Order for Renewed Mission* (Carrollton: The Ekklesia Society, 2001).

⁶ See the quotation on ‘power’ from Max Warren in our appendix and the perceptive article by Philip Turner ‘Tolerable Diversity and Ecclesial Identity’, *Journal for Anglican Studies* 1.2. Dec 2003, pp.24-46.

⁷ For *True Union in the Body*, see www.anglicaninstitute.org/trueunion/true-union.pdf