

A SUBMISSION TO THE EAMES
COMMISSION
FROM THE VERY REVD COLIN SLEE
DEAN OF SOUTHWARK
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INTRODUCTION

I am addressing this to the Commission because I was at the heart of the events of the summer of 2003 when my colleague Canon Jeffrey John was put under pressure to resign his acceptance of the nomination to the Bishopric of Reading. I both witnessed and experienced the nature of that nomination and resignation and believe that close experience places me in a privileged position to make some observations which will I hope be helpful to the Commission.

I am not addressing the events of that summer in detail for the Commission, as I do not believe that is the Commission's remit. If, however, the Commission would like a paper cataloguing my perception of the events of that summer, then I will offer one.

I know the Commission has not asked for evidence from Canon John, although I am aware it has heard evidence from some who fiercely opposed his appointment. I feel it would be worthwhile if the Commission asked him to contribute as a matter of objectivity and balance, and a matter of concern if it does not. He is, after all, an acknowledged theologian and teacher.

CENTRAL ISSUES

The events of the summer of 2003 are not the central concern. Disagreement about the status of homosexual people within the Anglican Church is an extremely limited agenda. The central issues for maintaining a Communion are concerned with ecclesiology, exegesis and history.

Historical precedent

Scripture itself has ample evidence of divisions between the disciples in the New Testament. We would not have either the epistles or the Revelation to St John the Divine if it had not been for deep divisions within the early church. The disciples are recorded as competitive and bickering in the gospels. It is plain that St Peter and St Paul represented polarised positions in the early church. The New Testament only records them meeting three times and each time, they had a row. Nevertheless, they also - and significantly - recognised the veracity and authentic discipleship of each other's views; they were 'in Communion'. The Reformation, the Enlightenment, the Free Church Movements, are all periods of challenging debate and upheaval within the church. In some cases people left and probably in all, in some there was institutional schism.

The present debate has a very selective view of history within the church. Many of the people on either side of the present debate would, in different circumstances, describe the old divisions of the churches as sinful, a bad witness to the world, a source of shame; they will be people who regard ecumenical co-operation as a good thing to pursue; they will have voted for agreements at Meissen and Porvoo and yet some of them are at the same time threatening 'schism' (I would argue they are actually sectarian) from those with whom they disagree on one issue.

Nobody today would defend the religious persecutions and martyrdoms of the Reformation or later disagreements when bishops were simply unfrocked because they acted according to their conscience. Nevertheless, many people who express their horror at the conduct of our predecessors espouse a doctrinaire Anglican Church which, for example, demands public repentance (a feature of Reformation persecutions and a demand laid against Canon Jeffrey John several times last summer), or engages in condemnation and clearly discriminates against certain classes and types of people with regard to membership and status within the church. The claims of organisations like Reform, "...we are defending true Anglican orthodoxy..." have to be examined thoroughly.

I hope the Commission will find the time to address the difference between 'schism' (which was often referred to in the Press during the course of the past year) and 'sectarianism', whereby relatively small groups break away, or Provinces declare UDI according to their own definition of their faith. In particular, the Commission could assist the Communion by exploring who is the sectarian: the one who breaks or the one who stays with the parent church.

Doctrinal unity

History shows that what is held in common is greater and more firmly central to faith than what differentiates. The common lesson of most of the religious conflicts within the churches in the past has been that the most destructive and divisive events occur when what is held in common has been swamped by what differentiates believers. The beginning of the Reformation may be an exception to this rule in that it was initially a campaign against ecclesiastical corruption in various forms; it became politicised and more theological as freedom of religious expression was discovered. There is a deep

historic irony that those who exercised the freedom of religious expression sometimes became the very people who insisted on religious uniformity to their perspective and so in turn became oppressors and persecutors. We are witnessing a similar degeneration of freedom within the Anglican Communion at present.

The Anglican Communion needs to re-claim a doctrinal ecclesiology that recognises the irreducible centre of our creed as the common baptismal basis of membership and permits interpretation in matters that surround the central core of faith. Anglicans will differ in their approach to both baptism and the creeds; there are those who take the creeds literally; those who 'pick and mix', accepting some clauses and struggling (or ignoring) others; those who see them as an agenda upon which the faithful work for their entire life in the faith but, providing they are so working, they are clearly taking the creeds very seriously indeed as an article of faith.

I would welcome the Commission pointing the entire Communion back to a study of the creeds, to baptismal membership, to what we hold in common and to the capacity for diversity around that core.

A GREATER HONESTY ABOUT THE ANGLICAN INHERITANCE

I spent two years working for the Anglican Church in Papua New Guinea (PNG). The Province of PNG is now numbered among those that have espoused a very traditional interpretation of Anglican teaching with regard to homosexuality.

During my time there, I worked with a number of homosexual clergy, not all of whom were wholly celibate. I watched as all the churches in PNG benefited from an agreement made between the World Wars which divided the country into zones so that denominations were no longer in competition but accepted responsibility for certain regions exclusively; the Comity of Churches. When boys from the school where I worked went to study in another region, we wrote to the pastor or priest commending them to their care, they were in communion on the basis of baptism and *vice versa*. The Province owes much to a mutual respect of central beliefs, baptism and acceptance of doctrinal difference within and between the churches. It is a Province which, no matter what its present declared 'policy' might be, was the beneficiary of the dedicated and fruitful ministry of priests whose sexual orientation was very different from that which is at present claimed as 'orthodox'. I believe that, almost by definition, because of the demands upon missionaries in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, this pattern may be applicable very widely, for example in Nigeria or in South America.

It is my hope, therefore, that the Commission will point to an honest appraisal of the historical indebtedness of the Church to diversity with integrity throughout the Church's development, particularly in those parts of the world where policies are being declared by those who are less than candid about their own foundations.

The countries of the mother church, especially England, have been guilty of a 'post-colonial, neo-patronising missiology' by adhering too strongly to a principle of independence in new Anglican Provinces. Greater provincial independence and governance has led to theological development and training being sadly neglected by the parent churches in the younger, emerging Provinces. The result, in many cases, is the perpetual re-cycling of an early 20th and sometimes 19th century, theological training. The catholic and liberal theological schools of the Anglican Communion within the churches of the 'north' have failed to address these circumstances most. Evangelical and fundamentalist elements of the Church have always had a stronger missiology and adapted more quickly to newer patterns of need. On the other hand, it might be argued (as I note Lord Carey's recent autobiography does) that they are very weak indeed on ecclesiology. The present disagreements are not only marked by radically disparate theological perceptions but also by ability and expression, as was clearly evident at the meeting of Anglican Primates at Lambeth in 2003, a theological 'time warp' has been exposed which the entire Communion must address.

It is my hope that the Commission will commend to the Anglican Communion a careful, penitent and honest appraisal of its own history within the architecture of the present disagreements.

For example: the penal colony at Sydney Cove, Australia, in the 18th and 19th centuries received many convicts from the Irish rebellion. It was very far from communication and regulation, its chaplaincy was supplied by clergy who themselves had reason to wish to be away from England. There was therefore the mixture of tyranny and oppression with political hatred labelled by religious affiliation. Understanding the roots of the present intolerant Puritanism manifesting itself in a most un-Anglican way in the Sydney diocese (as recently discussed very widely in the media), requires recognition of Sydney's particularly unfortunate foundation and the effect of strong Irish connections. The conduct of the present Archbishop and his brother the Dean, may be giving cause for

special concern within the Communion as being unrepresentative of the Anglican tradition to the point of being un-Anglican. It must be clearly recognised, nevertheless, that the present situation is the result of very many years of Anglican sectarianism there. Archbishop Michael Ramsey denounced the bigotry of the Sydney diocese from the pulpit of Sydney's Anglican cathedral forty years ago.

The divisive churchmanship and rivalry of the missionary societies in different parts of Africa and South America are directly linked to the traditions and perspectives of the churches they established.

It is my hope that the Commission will commend to the missionary societies and the Communion at large, a radical re-appraisal of the inheritance they have given to the churches of the developing world. The Communion must aim to recover the energy and commitment of the churches with financial, historic and theological training resources to assist a more coherent, less partisan, theologically grounded, biblically stringent and doctrinally thorough scholarship throughout the Communion. The Provinces without those resources must learn the capacity to accept such help, and vice versa.

Theological study and training

I am in close contact with clergy, bishops and trainers as far apart as Brazil, Ethiopia, South Africa, New Zealand, Australia and Zimbabwe. In most of those countries, the Church struggles to maintain the breadth of scholarship that is readily available in the northern hemisphere because facilities, access to teachers, scholars and records, is so much more limited.

The advent of the World Wide Web may in part be remedying this, providing there is adequate access to it. One feature of much that was said from the so-called 'Global South' (which usually, it should be noted, ignores South Africa, New Zealand and Australia) is that any attempt at theological argument during the past year has been notable for a very limited theological perspective.

I would welcome the Commission devoting time to consider theological training in the Anglican Communion world-wide, greater exchange programmes, greater attention to dissemination (via electronic media) of the widest spectrum of debate and enabling access to that material in the poorer parts of the Communion.

THE EVIDENCE BEING USED

In the present disagreement, the Commission will need to make some very carefully balanced judgements about the objective weight of some of the arguments that are being put to it.

The numbers debate

The Diocese of Southwark has six archdeaconries. In just one of them (Wandsworth), there are 423,571 signed-up, communicant Anglicans, not counting children or people who prefer not to join the church rolls (who number many more). The Province of the Southern Cone has 22,490 communicant Anglicans - 5% of just one Southwark archdeaconry, so an archdeacon in south London has responsibility for twenty times more souls than the Archbishop of the Southern Cone. Yet the Archbishop of the Southern Cone receives attention commensurate with his status, which bears no relation to the numbers he represents. The Bishop of Kingston, a suffragan bishop in this diocese, has two archdeaconries, i.e., over a million Anglicans in his care, counting children and those not on church rolls. It is very clear that suffragan bishops in the U.K. have more parishes, more clergy and more complexity of governance in Synod than many diocesan bishops and many primates in other parts of the world. To rank the Archbishop of the Southern Cone and the Bishop of Kingston on a numerical basis must make the Bishop of Kingston more significant by many criteria, but he is not so ranked in the Councils of the Church. Equally therefore, when dissention occurs within the Communion, it cannot be judged according to numerical predominance.

The Archbishop of Nigeria claims to represent 17.5 million Anglicans. This is not a valid comparative in terms of democratic weight. Nigeria is a tribal country; membership of certain denominations is almost obligatory according to tribe. Likewise, certain tribes are Muslim and certain tribes are Christian, dividing the country north and south. These divisions have been all-too-evident in the wars within Nigeria in past decades. To lay claim to 17.5 million Anglicans in Nigeria is therefore not something that is remotely comparable to Anglican membership in, for example, the U.K. or Canada. The Archbishop of Nigeria cannot show evidence that his method of counting has any evidential basis comparable to that of other Provinces and certainly not the Church of England's system.

I have many Nigerians in my present congregation; not only were they deeply ashamed of the Anglican Church in Nigeria during the course of last summer but they repeatedly explained that being a Christian in Nigeria is completely different from the free choice that exists to be, or not to be, a Christian in the U.K.

In the Councils of the Anglican Communion, the Archbishop of the Southern Cone and the Archbishop of Nigeria carry equal weight, the numbers argument simply does not stand up as a basis of the Communion's governance.

Those who employ the numbers argument cannot have it both ways: either numbers give them an influential position, or they take away influence if applied properly. It is my submission that the numbers arguments so frequently deployed in the present debates are entirely spurious and intentionally misleading. I would also submit that they are theologically un-sound in the light of all that Holy Scripture has to teach about the remnant, the oppressed minority, the alien and the stranger.

I hope the Commission will give due consideration to the argument that there is a statistical fraud being perpetrated whereby the Provinces of the Communion are given equal status for unequal membership on entirely variant criteria, both in debate and in the councils of the Communion. The numbers argument must be seen to apply fairly if it

is to be used as a criterion for participation at all. If it is not a criterion, then Provinces cannot be permitted to 'use' it in debate as a source of influence and authority.

The Commission could consider advising the Communion to treat any discussion based upon numerical weight as deeply flawed theologically.

The Anglican Communion very properly needs to build structures for relationship, understanding and 'democratic' synodical decision making. These need to be based upon sound foundations, rather than curious accidents of Provincial development and disproportionate influence that is unrepresentative of the entire Communion's make-up or the responsibilities within each part of it. There is a strong case for abolishing the present Lambeth Conference as too expensive and altogether un-representative of the nature of the Communion as a whole. A smaller conference, a development of the Primates' Conference, limited to diocesan bishops (without spouses), would be a more effective tool for leadership, feeding-in to regional provincial conferences ('mini-Lambeths') financed by and within each region.

I will give one further example. Policy statements have been made on behalf of the 'African' Anglican church that clearly do not reflect the position of the South African Province. The Primate of South Africa has personally told me of meetings of African bishops to which he has not been invited. I recently spent three months in South Africa, while there I had a two hour interview with the Bishop of Somerset West (a suffragan bishop of Cape Town), he is openly gay, he lives a celibate life, he was consecrated by Desmond Tutu with clear statements of his sexual orientation at the time and a clear majority in his election. He tells me he has received only one poisonous letter in the ten years he has been a suffragan bishop. That also indicates that those who say the Archbishop of Cape Town (and his predecessor) are out of step with African opinion and their pronouncements are wildly inaccurate.

The Commission will be alert, I have no doubt, to the serious mis-representations of opinion that have been - and are being - generated; and to the serious misrepresentation of opinion that is being 'engineered' by mailing campaigns and 'bulk' of letters, petitions and submissions.

The consecration of Bishop Mervyn Castle in 1994 created no furore in the Anglican Communion. It is hardly known in many parts of the Communion that he is openly homosexual and celibate. There are, of course (and always have been), other bishops who are homosexual but have not openly declared themselves to be so - I am aware of at least two who have been consecrated in Southwark Cathedral by the former Archbishop George Carey during my time as Dean.

The question must therefore be asked: 'What created the disagreements and high temperature of the summer of 2003?' With what purpose? Was it planned and co-ordinated? I believe there is evidence that it was. The Commission may wish to ask itself why, by whom, and how it was financed.

THE FINANCE DEBATE

Financial power has become a tool for coercion within the Communion. There are credible and repeated allegations of bribery of bishops to vote a certain way at the last Lambeth Conference. These have been mentioned several times in the Press; it is notable that no denials have been issued and no actions have been taken against those making the allegations.

We have seen finance used as a lever in the debate about the ordination of women to the priesthood in the U.K. and elsewhere, with people and parishes threatening to withdraw their giving. In the Diocese of Southwark, it was used when the Cathedral hosted a service for the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement, six parishes refused to pay their quota, exerting a pressure on the diocese but none at all on the Cathedral, this was widely publicised at the time. What was not publicised was their confidential payment of their quota some months later. The parishes used financial withdrawal as a leverage device whilst benefiting from diocesan structures and then submitted to those structures in order to avoid any disciplinary measures.

Conservative evangelical groups have propagated the notion that they carry serious financial power and could cripple the Church by exercising that power. This argument has been clearly utilised within England, in the U.S.A. and Canada. It is a flawed argument theologically: churches are in communion, they cannot be partly in communion on conditions. It is also fiscally doubtful that the case would stand up to true financial analysis. A snapshot of the largest donor parishes in this diocese to the diocesan share revealed, to some people's surprise, they were equally balanced between evangelical and catholic parishes.

It is a deeply flawed, sinful, use of Mammon. It is notable that, with a few recent exceptions, the churches of the 'liberal west': Canada, the U.S.A., the U.K., New Zealand and Australia, have continued to send money to the churches of the developing countries even when their disagreements have been intense. A very large contribution from a well-known catholic parish in New York was the bedrock contribution which financed the most recent Lambeth Conference, which then passed motions on homosexuality and world debt relief with which the Vestry of that church strongly disagreed; the parish did not ask for its money back.

If finance is to be accepted within the Communion as a legitimate bargaining tool, then the weight of authority clearly lies with those churches who contribute most to the Communion. This is not an argument I would advocate but the figures speak for themselves. The Anglican Consultative Council publishes accounts showing that, over four years, the Church of England has given £1,357,731, the U.S.A. £1,314,378, whereas Nigeria only £70,148, the West Indies £48,268, Australia £431,807 and Papua New Guinea £5,128. (This is in addition to Mission giving from the U.K. and U.S.A. churches.) The direction of the misuse of finance as a weapon for debate has been from conservative 'evangelical' groups within the Communion against the wider, central and liberal 'catholic' parts of the Communion. This is deeply un-scriptural, despite the frequently declared loyalty of those parts of the communion to scripture. There is an excellent paper and exegesis of this policy by the Bishop of Thetford, David Atkinson, published in the Diocese of Norwich last summer. It is a notable ecclesiological distinction that the 'threat' to use financial leverage has almost never been employed in the opposite direction within the Communion against conservative and evangelical Provinces or parishes.

Within the church in the U.K., wealthy evangelical congregations are nearly always suburban. Withdrawal of financial support is at the expense of the maintenance of the

ministry of inner urban or rural, deprived parishes. This raises significant questions about the teaching of ecclesiology and exegesis in the prosperous parishes.

The Press in the U.K. and elsewhere believe they have identified the donor of large sums of money which finance relatively extreme conservative evangelical organisations; organisations whose constitutions are not representative of the Baptismal, Episcopal and Synodical tradition of the Anglican Communion and Anglican doctrine of the church. If the Press are accurate in their identification, then the donor's known personal views are evidenced as at wide variance to the Anglican tradition; this raises further questions about subverting the tradition intentionally.

It is my hope that in its recommendations for the future conduct of the Communion, the Commission will address the misuse of finance as a weapon for coercion, examine the theological implications of this development, the sources from which finance is accepted by lobby groups, the obligations of recipients both towards donors (who clearly may have an agenda) and towards the Church and Communion as a whole.

ECCLESIOLOGICAL QUESTIONS

There are major ecclesiological questions and differences to be addressed, most particularly: hierarchy, governance and democracy.

It is my personal opinion that there are Provinces and organisations within the Anglican Church dedicated to accepting anything they choose to like while rejecting and subverting anything they dislike; there is a breakdown of discipline and an erosion of 'Communion'. There is clear evidence of this from the debate concerning the ordination of women to the priesthood. In the U.K., the strategy for a divided church was actually institutionalised by the Act of Synod. Those who chose to reject the validity of women's orders were given the privileged position of remaining within the church (and in many cases continuing to subvert it), whilst rejecting its carefully debated path. These people and parishes are from *both* catholic and evangelical traditions.

In New Zealand, the church established the first 'flying bishops' with the establishment of the separate Maori constituency and episcopacy. This action not only acted as a precedent for the Act of Synod in England (which, it may be argued, institutionalised dissent) but may also be open to question as a racist action when its motives were no doubt the exact opposite.

There were many Anglicans, both in the U.K. and throughout the Communion, who do not represent the evangelical perspective he epitomised, who found Archbishop George Carey's appointment difficult to accept for several reasons but they were loyal, there were no stratagems to undermine him or campaigns against his appointment, or organisations financed and dedicated to subvert his teaching.

It is a matter of ecclesiology and obedience to the process and governance that the Communion as a whole accepts the integrity and mutual inter-dependence of each individual part.

The very proper independent governance of separate Provinces is conducted with relatively little reference to the effect of decisions in respective Provinces upon the whole Communion.

It is my hope that the Commission will give serious attention to the sociological and governance changes that have occurred within the Communion which have made occasions of disagreement so powerfully divisive, when previously the Communion could accommodate disagreement with greater charity.

I hope the Commission will examine the (sometimes deeply flawed) distinctive ecclesiologies throughout the Communion. Holy Scripture is very clear about the way different parts of the body are not free to reject one another.

The Commission will also need to address the difficulty of a Bishop acting 'in Synod' in countries covering vast geographical areas, with poor communications and little finance where synods meet rarely and bishops, almost inevitably, adopt quasi dictatorial roles.

MIS-INFORMATION AND ORGANISED DISSENT

It became abundantly clear to me during the course of the highly sophisticated campaign against Canon Jeffrey John during the summer of 2003 that there are organised networks dedicated to subverting the due processes of the Communion.

One example is the network that now emanates from the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, based at Wycliffe College Oxford; another is Anglican Mainstream. The mobilisation of e-mail campaigns, letter writing and telephoning were, in organisational terms, impressive. The objective was the reversal of a decision properly taken within the open and public structures of a given Province, with the Archbishop's consent and the approval of the Crown; more openly and consultatively than in the appointment of any other suffragan bishop (of which I am aware) in the U.K. An individual was pilloried by mass communication generated from a relatively small but highly organised group; the Archbishop was effectively subverted, the statistics, when assessed dispassionately, bear this out because the numbers of communicant Anglicans who were not threatening actions to force Canon John's resignation enormously outweighed the numbers that were. It is a known statistical phenomenon that people write objections much more than they write approvals, the case for submitting to the campaigns from objectors is therefore always extremely doubtful on moral grounds. Overseas archbishops and bishops were recruited (by what mechanism?) to interfere in the proper processes of an independent Province, thereby creating the crisis the Commission must now address.

Ill-informed attacks were purposely generated; the Archbishop of Nigeria could not possibly have been concerned with Canon John's nomination had he not been recruited (as with other primates in, for example, the West Indies and Southern Cone of America). The Archbishop of Nigeria's outbursts in the newspapers always assumed Canon John either to be in an active relationship or a liar, either the Archbishop chose to adopt this slander or he was partially advised in order that he did so. His statements are also evidence for the argument used above that there are widely varying standards of theological debate within the Communion. The Archbishop of Canterbury was intentionally undermined to the point at which he asked Canon John to withdraw from an appointment that he had personally told me he welcomed, in order to maintain the unity of the Communion. Principle was sacrificed to expedience.

The nature of some of the campaigning groups is highly congregational and even anti-episcopal. Rule by majority among the laity is a tradition of the Protestant free churches; it is not an Anglican theology of churchmanship.

Inevitably, the more liberal and catholic parts of the Church are setting about the same exercise with the creation of movements such as Inclusive Church but it will not reach the levels of sophisticated lobbying because it is by definition, contrary to their liberality and obedient tradition of ecclesiology.

The Commission will need to ask: 'What is the intention of these pressure groups (the true intention as distinct from the stated intention), and whether that intention is fully in accord with the teaching and governance of the Anglican Communion?'

The Commission will have a difficult task discerning whether the inclusive tolerance of the Anglican tradition has unknowingly harboured a significant minority who have no belief in the Apostolic succession, episcopacy, Orders and synodical processes and may genuinely be said to be outside even the wide boundaries of a tolerant Anglicanism.

The Commission will wish to address a world-wide doctrine of priesthood and episcopacy in the Anglican Communion, this is implicit in a 'Communion' but manifestly not systematic, as can be seen in the conduct of many.

BISHOPS

This view that bishops are above all else, a focus for unity gained increased significance during the primacy of George Carey who saw it as a *sine qua non* of membership of the bench of bishops. It has a scriptural basis, not least in St Paul's letters to Timothy and should be addressed with reverence.

The Church has, nevertheless, at times of deep division and schism made huge strides in its structures, governance, doctrine and approach to scripture. For example, it is perhaps worth observing that some of the bishops of the Church of England opposed the abolition of slavery in England!

Church polity cannot be driven by a 'unity at all costs', which ultimately compromises truth in scripture, reason and tradition.

I express the earnest hope that in its deliberations, the Commission will address the customary view of bishops as a focus for unity.

It is my hope that the Commission will give attention to the need for bishops to face up to disunity as a part of their leadership of the flock and the searching after truth.

SCRIPTURE, REASON AND TRADITION

It is my hope that the Commission will draw the attention of Anglicans throughout the world to the Anglican heritage of Scripture, Reason and Tradition. Much of the present difficulty lies in imbalances between these elements of the inheritance.

In debates concerning women's ordination, lay presidency, divorce and homosexuality, there has been evidence that some parts of the Communion place emphasis on Scripture at the expense of Reason and Tradition while others appeal to Reason and could be said to give inadequate attention to Scripture. Reason is not only an intellectual tool in discerning meaning and doctrine but also in responding to the climate and social demands of the present era. These will differ from country to country. It is perfectly possible to hold the Communion together if the Communion can discern these three elements of its inheritance as in a constant dynamic dialogue by which each enriches the other and in different proportion in different parts of the world and at different times.

Scriptural exegesis lies at the heart of many of the most divisive debates. One of the most distressing features has been the way that people who claim to teach the scriptures seriously are hugely selective in the manner they use scripture.

For example: Our Lord had direct and firm things to say in the gospels about divorce but nothing about homosexuality. It is normally accepted that the gospels have a certain scriptural pre-eminence as a source. Yet the present Bishop of Winchester argued in the General Synod of the Church of England for a more compassionate approach in the Church's discipline towards divorce, using scripture and the spirit of reconciliation and forgiveness within scripture as a whole, whilst at the same time he was participating in the campaign against homosexuals in the church, objecting to Canon John's nomination to Reading, in a campaign that made highly selective use of passages in the epistles and was planned in secret, contrary to Holy Scripture.

There are so many examples of the selective use of scripture in debate that they cannot be easily enumerated. I remind the Commission that scripture was at one time used (the 'mark of Cain') by the Dutch Reformed Church to justify Apartheid. Scripture is a very powerful weapon and its abuse by selectivity and partiality is a matter of the gravest concern.

It is my hope that the Commission will be able to point Provinces of the Communion towards a more respectful, serious and comprehensive use of scriptural exegesis than is displayed in many parts of the Communion at present.

The concept of Tradition is as difficult as an agreed and common approach to Scripture unless that concept is maintained within the lessons from history and experience.

The 39 Articles are a clear example. Famous ecclesiastical cases in law, such as against Michael Ramsey when Bishop of Durham with regard to the wearing of vestments, show that the tradition of the Church of England is much broader and more flexible than any narrow application of literalism to the 39 Articles. They remain a body of order within the Church of England to which clergy 'assent' upon ordination. Clergy assent that they exist, that they were formative in the Anglican Church, that they represent a statement of the conduct of the church at the time. Clergy are not asked to say they 'believe' them.

It is commonly believed that the Anglican Church has no tradition of sacramental confession to a priest and yet, at the heart of *The Book of Common Prayer* Visitation of

the Sick it can be found; it is perfectly legitimate to argue that individual sacramental confession has never disappeared from the Anglican tradition.

Likewise, the place of bishops within the Church is central to its unique role as both catholic and reformed. It is an episcopal church with synodical processes. The governance is by the Bishop in Synod. When, therefore, issues are debated and resolved within that process, loyalty to the Anglican Communion requires that Anglican communicants adhere to the disciplines thereby declared, whether they fully agree with them or not.

I hope the Commission will recall the Communion to the historic building blocks of its inheritance and the application of Scripture, Reason and Tradition within its councils and debates and to obedience to the Councils of the Church.

VOCABULARY

In recent years, we have witnessed words being 'kidnapped' for purposes which are not reflective of their true meaning. So we have movements and organisations which claim they are 'traditional', 'orthodox', 'mainstream', 'Reform', 'Forward in Faith' and so on.

It is a matter of mis-representation. For example, the ecclesiological and doctrinal inheritance of the Anglican Church is both catholic and reformed. It is its unique gift to Christian history that its polity has been balanced in this way and has permitted of inclusiveness for all people of goodwill with great generosity. Therefore to seek to label any organisation narrowly 'mainstream' when it does not represent these traditions, or narrowly 'catholic' (which is an oxymoron) or reform is to seek to hijack the inheritance for a limiting purpose of exclusion. Similar arguments can very easily be adduced for the other examples I give above.

The Commission might consider the growing manipulation of vocabulary. It is my hope the Commission will warn the church to avoid this tendency as it carries within it the seeds of sectarianism.

I assure the Commission that they are in my prayers and the daily prayers of the congregation at Southwark Cathedral.

The Commission has been delegated with a role within the Communion which may be said to be quasi Episcopal. The ordinal for bishops in *Common Worship* says,

'A bishop is called to lead in serving and caring for the people of God and to work with them in the oversight of the Church. As a chief pastor, he shares with his fellow bishops a special responsibility to maintain and further the unity of the Church, to uphold its discipline, and to guard its faith. He is to promote its mission throughout the world. It is his duty to watch over and pray for all those committed to his charge, and to teach and govern them after the example of the Apostles, speaking in the name of God and interpreting the gospel of Christ. He is to know his people and be known by them. ... He is to be merciful, but with firmness, and to minister discipline, but with mercy. He is to have a special care for the outcast and needy...'

It is my firm conviction that the present discord within the Communion can be redeemed and turned to good purpose under God. I pray, nevertheless, that this is not done by postponing disagreement to another day and disguising it as diversity. With respectful attention to the Ordinal, we seek from the Commission: leadership, service, care; furthering unity, guarding faith; mission, teaching and governance; merciful firmness and discipline; with a special care for the outcast and needy.

I look for clear guidance from the Commission for the Communion about its honesty, use of power and finance and for charity towards one another under God.

Colin Slee