

Why the Battle: Different God, Different Gospel?

Wednesday, March 21, 2018

Outline for
Module Six: The Church
The Rev. Dr. Kendall Harmon

I. What about the Church?

- A. We are catholic Christians so we understand the church:
 - 1. In a historical sense
 - 2. In a geographical sense
- B. We are Anglican Christians so we understand the church to be Conciliar

II. How have we done in consulting our Anglican brothers and sisters around the world?

- A. Some historical background on the growth and development of the Worldwide Anglican Communion
- B. The Four so called Anglican Instruments of Unity
- C. What have the four instruments of unity said about this matters at hand?

1. *Lambeth Conference*

The 1998 Lambeth Conference – in Resolution 1.10:

- (a) “upholds faithfulness in marriage between a man and a woman in lifelong union, and believes that abstinence is right for those who are not called to marriage”;
- (b) “commit ourselves to listen to the experience of homosexual persons and we wish to assure them that they are loved by God and that all baptized, believing and faithful persons, regardless of sexual orientation, are full members of the Body of Christ”;
- (c) “while rejecting homosexual practice as incompatible with Scripture, calls on all our people to minister pastorally and sensitively to all irrespective of sexual orientation.”

2. *Anglican Consultative Council*

The Anglican Consultative Council on September 15-26, 2002 –called upon “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 provincial authorities to have in mind the impact of their decisions within the wider Communion.”

3. *Primates Meeting*

The primates meeting Communique from May 2003:

‘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 authorisation of such rites.’

Then a special [second in 2003] Primates Meeting at Lambeth voted to “re-affirm our common understanding of the centrality and authority of Scripture”; “re-affirm the resolutions made...at the Lambeth Conference in 1998 on issues of human sexuality as having moral force and commanding the respect of the Communion”; and speaking of the provinces state that “none has authority unilaterally to substitute an alternative teaching.”

4. *The Archbishop of Canterbury*

On October 18, 2003 John Humphrys (JH), a BBC radio broadcaster, interviewed the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams (RW), about the outcome of the Primates’ Meeting and its implications....

JH: What about your own personal position here. Do you believe that Canon Robinson should become a bishop?

RW: No I don't because I believe that on a major issue of this kind the Church has to make a decision together and one of the things that has emerged most painfully and with such difficulty in the last couple of days in our conversations is the large number - the very, very large number - of Anglican provinces who feel that, quite simply, a decision has been made which commits them or involves them in some way and yet in which they have had no part at all. And many of these are people who come from rather small and struggling churches to whom it matters quite a lot that they have a voice in a decision which, like it or not, affects them quite directly.

III. What shall our Conclusion be?

Module 6 Buzz Group Questions: The Church catholic

1. What does it mean to say that the Church is catholic (universal)?
2. What was it like when someone in your family spoke for the family without the consent or involvement of the rest of the family?
3. We speak of the Church as the Body of Christ, and the members of the Church as all having an interdependent share in one another under Christ. Discuss the implications of these truths for local churches, in terms of decisions about Christian doctrine and the practice of the Christian faith.