

**Wounded in Common Mission:
The Term of Inter-Christian Divisiveness**

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I. Banishing Fear: “Anglican” Evocations within Earshot of the Church Catholic

Soon after the publication of *The Windsor Report* in 2004—a text embraced by the Primates of the Anglican Communion, and subsequently the Anglican Consultative Council, as having described “the way in which we would like to see the life of the Anglican Communion developed”—Archbishop Rowan Williams reflected on the nature and purpose of the Church in what remains his most programmatic and interesting ecclesiological essay to date. The occasion of the essay was the centenary of former Archbishop of Canterbury Michael Ramsey’s birth, and Williams did not miss the opportunity to take up the mantle of his predecessor. In particular, Williams seized Ramsey’s suggestion—enshrined in his classic of the 1930s, revised in the 1950s, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*—that the center of Anglicanism, her primary vocation, is to witness to the perpetual passion of Christ’s body which must lead ineluctably, according to divine providence, into the heart of the gospel. In this perspective, the peculiar “light” of Anglicanism within the wider oikumene will be provisionality itself, following on a proper penitence: a readiness to go willingly, and perhaps be lifted up, to suffer whatever further sacrifices may be necessary for the visible reunion of the one Church.

This larger story is pertinent to the general upheaval in the Christian world at the moment because it places the work that we need to do in a scriptural and theological

frame that, it is devoutly to be wished, may capture our imaginations. No doubt it will be a hard sell, not least for those of us who are long since accustomed to fighting off the presumed shackles of concrete, articulated catholicism in the name of “independence” and “autonomy,” concepts that often enough barely cloak, or sit openly alongside, old-fashioned anti-papal and/or anti-curial fear-mongering. And these are old-fashioned, in real, historical terms, when considered in the light of extensive attempts by Rome in the last century to re-form and re-cast her visible structures of authority, with a view to greater accountability, collegiality, participation of laity, and with attention to the principle of subsidiarity. All of these and more were hallmarks not only of Vatican II and its intra-Catholic aftermath, but of the bilateral dialogues that flourished in this time as well; including ARCIC, for instance, which has not been shy about offering Anglican reasons for viewing the primacy of the Bishop of Rome as “a gift to be received by all the churches.”

It may be worth noting that *The Windsor Report* did not help matters when, in a much-scrutinized passage, canon 331 of the Roman Code—quoting Vatican I’s infamous “supreme, full, immediate and universal ordinary power,” attributed to the bishop of Rome—was plucked blithely out of context to draw an unhappily reductive contrast between “the Roman Catholic Church,” its “Pontiff” and “Curia,” and the “Anglican way,” the latter permitting Scripture, “as the locus and means of God’s word,” to energize the church for mission and in unity (§70). A more accurate picture of what the Catholic Church has tried to say since 1870 would have entailed some grappling with Vatican II, perhaps especially in the intersection of the Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*, and the Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*.

Admittedly, to be fair, the report of the Episcopal Church's "Special Commission" (on which I served), charged with responding to Windsor, did not improve the situation by trotting out a quotation from the 1948 Lambeth Conference, where it is noted that authority in Anglicanism is "dispersed rather than centralized," whence "we recognize in this multiplicity God's loving provision against the temptations to tyranny and the dangers of unchecked power" (§9 of the Special Commission report). The point is doubtless true enough, as a statement of the intended ordering scheme of the Church of England and thence "Anglicanism," as one reformed church amidst other Christian churches, called by God at successive points in history to discern a path of faithfulness—truth and love (cf. Eph 4.15). The agony of Christian division in the West, however, has been its bequeathal of a tortuous and deeply ambiguous legacy of multiplied discernments, scattered across the body; with the all-too-familiar result that listening for the still small voice of the Spirit in each time and place and gathering, sans any number of "external norms and boundaries," has been a matter of great perplexity, and perhaps finally impossibility. And this is not yet to have mentioned the evangelical conundrum, which is also a pastoral problem, of adjudicating between one and another claim to apostolicity, a task not lightly dismissed on pain of "testing the spirits" of truth and error (I Jn 4.1-6, NRSV).

That some on the Special Commission found it needful or wise to evoke again, therefore, the specter of "tyranny and unchecked power" usefully annotates a plain fact of our moment: that many Anglicans on the ecclesial left fear that the putatively Romanizing tilt of *The Windsor Report* will, if followed, undo the advances of progressive causes, effectively forcing the church to retrogress in the name of

accommodation and a false unity. Many presuppositions are built into this fear, and it is by no means obvious how best to go about responding to it. One may begin, however, by noting with the Archbishop of Canterbury that there appears to be an assumption “that there is indeed a self-evident emancipatory agenda, in which all issues can be decided by appeal to a particular definition of rights.” But does not this assumption “too easily allow doctrine to be shaped by apologetics of a certain kind and avoid the labour of working through why a new perspective on some questions remains part of one continuing conversation, part of a common work with the writers of the Bible or the creeds”? In other words, to make progress in what has become “the Anglican Communion’s embarrassed and ungraceful debates about sexuality and authority,” we must begin with and linger over our commonly held trust of historical memory in persistent prayer and “serious study,” as “a kind of dispossession” and “spiritual discipline.” For short of articulated, theological reason, gathering “the central themes of the tradition in a satisfactory way,” how can we tell whether a given call to action in some controverted matter is “of truth” or “of error,” in the Johannine parlance?

One can see, therefore, that how we speak to one another as Anglicans is always already normed by decisions we have made in the past about who we are or would wish to be; decisions, however, that in the nature of the case are evolving discernments, the beginning and end of which must, if they are faithful, be ordered and reordered by our source materials: first Scripture, then tradition, then reason. Further, these discernments are evolving because, to return to where we began, the question of “who we are” cannot be answered without reference and accountability to other Christian churches. Thus, we Anglicans are facing again—and other churches similarly—an opportunity to embrace

the “mutual benefit and reform which should arise from a shared recognition” of the ecclesial gifts that might be borne into our midst by the other, a prospect which “should be met with faith, not fear.” For instance, as the ARCIC authors wrote in 1981, while “Anglicans sometimes fear the prospect of over-centralization, Roman Catholics [fear] the prospect of doctrinal incoherence. Faith, banishing fear,” however, “might see simply the prospect of the right balance between a primacy serving the unity and a conciliarity maintaining the just diversity of the *koinonia* of all the churches.”

This is to the point, for what alternative do we have? The problem, after all, with “the vocabulary of past polemics” is that it carries with it “emotive associations” that “have often obscured the truth.” And so again today: if American Episcopalians, or indeed the Anglican Communion, opts for “autonomy,” as a kind of formal disposition ordered toward “truth” and away from one or another “tyrannical power,” we will have succumbed to the temptation to define ourselves over against a possible, putative enemy, an enemy that may or may not exist. Let us beware, then, of the real enemy in this scenario: it is Tillich’s notorious “Protestant principle,” where a supra- or post-historical option is made for an ideational identity that may be defended abstractly; with hearsay and/or false witness added as necessary when real counter-factuals present themselves, as they will. This is not the venerable *via media*: reasonable, comprehensive, and the very archetype of historically-minded, primitive, Incarnational religion. Rather, it is its opposite.

I do not believe that the Anglican Communion presently is heading off of the road of reason and comprehension; and I myself have great hope that we will receive the ecclesiology of communion, articulated in a host of concrete interdependencies, as

presented in *The Windsor Report*. Further, I am optimistic that the Episcopal Church will, at its Convention in several weeks, choose to walk along this same way of disciplined life together, borne by larger commitments and accountabilities that (in another fine phrase of Canterbury's) "challenge the localisms and self-assertive separatisms that are the most effective cultural captivity of the modern Church." But just because, therefore, the arc of "communion" bends in the direction of a host of interdependencies, a fact of the divine constitution of the Church of Christ, it is intrinsic to our present attempts at Anglican unity to recall our accountability to *all* our sisters and brothers. How, that is, we choose to speak about our faith and common mission along with, first of all, the Lutherans with whom we are in "full communion," albeit nascently; and then, with Catholics, with Baptists, with Presbyterians and Pentecostals: how we choose to move together with all of these and more is inseparable—again, as a fact of divine action—from the question of our own "Anglican Communion."

I wish here to explore this matter, not so much with reference to the varying ecclesio-political realities and structures of one church and another, but rather in terms of what I take to be most fundamental: Christian love itself, personified by Christ, articulated in the words of holy Scripture. Accordingly, I begin with a tale of ecumenical mission, in order to evoke something of the "grammar of recognisability" that provides the basis for our common faith, even across denominational lines—in this case, Anglican and Roman Catholic lines. This leads me, second, to sketch an incipient argument for the urgency of not separating Christian unity from Christian mission; that, third, should lead us to take especial note of a fruitful strand in ecumenical literature, borne of reflecting on the Church and Scripture in a single sweep with particular attention to the painful way of

the pilgrim people of God as a provision of grace, “until there be realized new heavens and a new earth in which justice dwells.” To grasp this fact of the Church’s history, that she suffers, may therefore be understood as the “term” of inter-Christian divisiveness, as well: because in Christ, who is our beginning and our end (*terminus a quo* and *ad quem*), God purifies the Church of the sin in her precincts; and again, because the hope of Christian penitence is enshrined in the terms—the prayers and the poetry, the parables and the prophecies—of Scripture.

II. Terms of Engagement

Long overdue, I ventured in May 2005, with thirty Roman Catholics (university students and their priest, plus a family), to General Cepeda, Coahuila, Mexico, on a short-term mission trip of the “Family Missions Company”—old friends of mine who have served as lay missionaries in Latin America, the Caribbean, the Pacific, and Asia since 1975, after Frank and Genie Summers experienced a dramatic conversion, sold all that they had, and gave it to the poor.

Two things struck me most about the trip. First, the depth of our missionary hosts’ immersion in and affection for the local culture and people, as a persistent presence over time, joined to a simple missionary lifestyle. In this way they have won the respect of many in the town, including the bishop in nearby Saltillo with whom they work closely, for they are friends with the poorest of the poor in their midst. Thus, the daily routine evinces an exemplary habit of charity, not only via building projects and almsgiving (medical help, food, and clothing), especially for the steady stream of needy ones who knock at the door throughout the day; but also via home visits to shut-ins, where the main

object is to sit and talk—a ministry of listening, tears, laughter, and then prayer, without a hint of strain or awkwardness. We were invariably greeted and sent on our way with smiles, hugs, and kisses.

Second, I was struck by the constancy of prayer and evangelization, morning noon and night, with gusto and thoughtfulness, bathed in Scripture, joined to a warm eucharistic piety. Each day, for instance, began with an hour of hearty morning prayer—praise and worship songs in a charismatic key, plus scriptural exhortations and intercessions. And at all hours I found members of our group in the small chapel—a quiet, “upper room” at the back of the mission house, with several windows looking out on the surrounding area—reading Scripture, journaling, kneeling or prostrating themselves before the large, hand-made, wooden crucifix and tabernacle below. Likewise remarkable was the feast of Corpus Christi at the local parish, followed by exposition and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and a procession around the neighborhood. We walked singing appropriate folk songs (e.g., “Ven a mi dulce pan de la vida”: Come to me sweet bread of life), while moving to one and another makeshift altar—in the doorway of a mercado or along the roadside—festooned with flowers and appropriate prayers or scriptural phrases. We stopped at each one, kneeling as the Lord passed by, to listen to several readings, scriptural and otherwise, followed by a prayer.

In terms of evangelization, we spent three evenings at surrounding “ranchos,” that is, small, rural villages without a parish of their own, more or less cut-off from a regular pattern of worship and adult formation. On the way there—piled into a van, driving through the desert in early evening, sun low in the sky—we prayed a rosary for the people we were about to witness to, that their hearts would be open to the gospel. Upon

arriving, we rang the bell of the chapel (if they had one), and then walked around inviting whomever we could find to join us for a prayer service. “We are Catholic missionaries,” we would begin; eighty-five percent of the inhabitants in one rancho we visited are now Jehovah’s Witnesses. In another case we simply congregated in the living room of a willing woman’s home.

Those who showed up were attentive, hungry to hear the Word of God (most cannot read). We began with several songs set to guitar and good for clapping along to. Next, a missionary capable in Spanish delivered a scriptural teaching—in one case the calling of Abram and his response to God in faith, though he did not know where the LORD was sending him (Gen 12; cf. Gal 3); in another Jesus’ apocalyptic discourse in Mark 13, culminating in the necessity for watchfulness (“Keep awake”). Then several of us visitors gave our testimony, assisted by a translator. I spoke about what it means to me to be named “Christbearer” in the context of my coming to faith as an adult, and then riffed on Ephesians 4.4-7 apropos of Trinity Sunday the day before. Finally, those who wished to—in each case nearly everyone—came up with prayer requests and we gathered round, laying on hands.

III. Unity and Mission

There is a peculiar encouragement—hope—in Christian friendship, offered without reserve in close quarters, because only in this way is the power of the gospel incarnated in our lives, as the missionary Church. The classic proof-text is Acts 2.42-47:

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all,

as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

How, and therefore whether, we live together has everything to do with the success we can expect in our preaching. The relationship is causal: life together, rightly ordered, *will* yield “awe” and “wonders and signs,” and a swelling of our common ranks, by God’s grace.

Would that Acts 2 were simply a description of the Church today! Would that we Christians did live together in love, and that “the world” accordingly “believed” (Jn 17.21). “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (Jn 13.35). Commenting on John 17.21-23, Pope John Paul II wrote: “This is a very important missionary text. It makes us understand that we are missionaries above all because of *what we are* as a Church whose innermost life is unity in love, even before we become missionaries *in word or deed*.”

Yet we balk at the sacrifice of ourselves demanded by the gospel (see Mt 9.37) in several, related ways.

1. Unity is hard to come by for Christians accustomed, often determined, to going it alone, not only in an individualized culture like the contemporary United States, but in separated “denominations,” forgetful or dismissive of one another.

2. Hence the familiar logic of John 17.21 kicks in: our divisions make a mess of our mission. John Paul II put the point strongly: “it is obvious that the lack of unity among Christians contradicts the Truth which Christians have the mission to spread and, consequently, it gravely damages their witness.” For our divisions often speak louder than words; so that, despite our claims to the contrary, we apparently do not love one

another, certainly not unto death. And what, then, of our call to live into a mature habit of love for the poor, as well, and to become poor in spirit ourselves—through service and friendship, dignifying one another’s joys and sorrows by making them our own (I Cor 12.26)? Those who disregard this divine demand will suffer just consequences.

In every case the issue is the same: have we yet learned to love God and one another, disregarding the shame of the cross (Heb 12.2)? Or do we crucify Christ again and again, “holding him up to contempt” (Heb 6.6)? Indeed, have we fought off our separation from and lovelessness toward one another “to the point of shedding [our] blood” (Heb 12:4; cf. Rev 2.10)? If not, should we expect to be able to “listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches” (Rev 2.17)?

IV. Wounds in Communion

Just here, I believe that we must find a strange comfort in a longstanding suggestion of the ecumenical movement, lately codified by the Roman Catholic Church, as well: that the unity of the one Church is *wounded*. In the statement of the Episcopal Church’s House of Bishops in 1886, for instance, preceding their affirmation of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, the bishops “solemnly declared” that

this Church does not seek to absorb other Communion, but rather, co-operating with them on the basis of a common Faith and Order, to discountenance schism, to heal the wounds of the Body of Christ, and to promote the charity which is the chief of Christian graces and the visible manifestation of Christ to the world.

Never mind that most Christians today presume that the Roman Catholic Church could never make a similar affirmation, including with reference to absorption, the opposite is the case—as Benedict conveniently demonstrated again last summer in an address to Lutherans in Cologne: if unity “subsists” in the Catholic Church, he said, this “does not

mean [i.e., require] what could be called ecumenism of the return: that is, to deny and to reject one's own faith history. Absolutely not!" But this should not surprise us, since Vatican II taught that all those who are justified by faith in Baptism may be saved, hence they are already brothers and sisters in the one body—borne by their respective church or community to salvation; and if saved, then not in need of "conversion," in the sense of changing churches. For the Catholic Church to say now, therefore, that the one Church of Christ is wounded only clarifies what was already taught, namely, that we Christians presently find ourselves in the same place: the one (and holy and catholic and apostolic) body of our Lord.

In this context, it is all the more incumbent upon us to return to a common reading of Scripture, since we who understand ourselves to be inheritors of the apostolic community should expect to find there a pertinent description of our life together that obtains in all times and places for all. We should note, for instance, that Paul wrote to the Corinthians as Christians who were fighting but had not consigned one another to outer darkness (see I Cor 1.13 and 12.21); Christians who, as in a famous phrase from Vatican II (pace Vatican I), were already in a "certain though imperfect communion" with one another—albeit seemingly separated, say, in terms of visible structures and governance, and in terms of what the "fullness of catholicity" may be. Likewise, as disciples who sorrow that a most bitter cup of divisiveness and derision seems inescapably ours to drink—pray not in fulfillment of Psalm 75.8: the cup that the LORD "pours out, and all the wicked of the earth shall drink and drain the dregs," but still: we are called to be poured out in imitation of our Lord Jesus' passion, so as to "complete" in our own flesh "what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the Church" (Col

1.24). And Paul commends himself as an example precisely on account of his torturous résumé, which he explains, remarkably enough, as his own experience of “the sufferings of Christ” (II Cor 1.5), hence as a divine provision: “so that we would rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead” (II Cor 1.9).

Even as a call to individual sacrifice the point is not preached as often, nor as well, as we might wish; though it must bear some familiarity to those who regularly follow the pattern of the Church’s reading and praying. Wholly unfamiliar to most of us, however, is the suggestion that the form of holiness, given to each of us as a way of discipleship, also has a corporate application—since, after all, the Christian life draws individuals together into a common life of worship, cooperation, and service. In this light, the Church’s present “wounds in communion” should be understood as provisions of grace for our sanctification, just as the figure of Christ’s passion is the form, the means, of holiness for Christians in any case. That is, Scripture’s constant presupposition of sacrifice bears, precisely through its painfulness, a promise that may help us explicate our own halting experience of life together.

Most fundamentally: just as Christ died “to gather together the children of God who were scattered,” so is it fitting to think of our own perpetual rebelliousness and self-destructiveness as a “crucifying again [of] the Son of God and holding him up to contempt,” to quote once more Hebrews 6.6. And if he dies, even over and over, out of love for us, does it not follow that the churches are called to the same spirit of prodigal self-offering and -emptying? In terms, for instance, of Paul’s familiar spirituality of Baptism, the previous pope asked: “is it possible to remain divided, if we have been ‘buried’ through Baptism in the Lord’s death [see Rom 6.3-4], in the very act by which

God, through the death of his Son, has broken down the walls of division? [see Eph 2.14].” This is the right question to ask, because the pope has “read” Baptism ecclesialogically, and here in his ecumenical encyclical, to draw out what amounts to a profound challenge. For is it any wonder that we remain divided, Ephesians 2.14 notwithstanding, just insofar as we have not yet died (to ourselves, to our pride, etc.) as we are called to, even “every day,” as Paul says (I Cor 15.31)?

In a similar vein, concerning the sacrifice the Church and the churches are called to, one might recall a phrase from the *Decree on Ecumenism*: “the Church, bearing in her own body the humility and dying of Jesus.” The Pauline pedigree of the image was duly noted by the council fathers, who cited II Corinthians 4.10 and Philippians 2.5-8. Again, then, if it is fitting now to say that the one Church of Christ is wounded by her divisions—that Christian divisions are internal to Christ’s body, which is always and only one—then the authors of a recent ecumenical text are thinking in concert with the Council and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church (inter alia)* when they conclude: “Of our churches as separated ‘bodies,’ as well as of each of us as disciples, we can only say with Paul that we are ‘struck down, but not destroyed...’ (II Cor 4.9).” For if we are already members of the same body, then however we may attempt to remain divided, we cannot so easily escape the divine ordering of our common life, and thence a certain affliction, perplexity, and persecution (II Cor 4.8-9) as the divinely-given means of restoring order, “as through fire” (I Cor 3.15).

One might think in this context, as well, of Jesus’ warning to the Pharisees: “no city or house divided against itself will stand” (Mt 12.25)—not, presumably, a denial of the promise of Matthew 16.18 that the gates of hell will not prevail against the Church,

but rather an assurance that the Church's certain victory, and even indefectibility, will also be won in accordance with the surprising stipulation that "those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it" (Mt 16:25). That is, the churches also "will" suffer a kind of passion and die before they rise again; perhaps according to I Corinthians 15.36-38: "Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen."

V. Finding Ourselves in Scripture

If the foregoing ecclesiological and ecumenical reading of Scripture is tenable, then we might look out for three, broad themes in our common study of Scripture that will be both theologically requisite and spiritually productive for our collective discernment, particularly in times when repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation—"imperatives" that have always animated the ecumenical movement—are in order.

1. History as a providentially ordered whole, in God's hands, not ours. This point is fundamental, and all of Scripture follows upon it. Yes, "believe in God, believe also in me" (Jn 14.1). But our free will must be placed, cheek by jowl, alongside the mystery of election in a relentless paradox: "if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself" (Jn 14.3)—this from the one through whom all things were made, who will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead. Apart from him we "can do nothing" (Jn 15.5). It is, therefore, especially the experience and witness of the Church that all of history is enfolded into the life of God, "convoked or convened by an act independent of itself."

2. Correlative to (1), an enjoined, rigorous obedience to God in Christ. St. Paul, for instance, exhorts us to “serve Christ” (Rom 14.18) because of our faith in him; for “faith comes from what is heard... through the word of Christ” (Rom 10.17). But this faith and word must therefore extend to our life in community, which is to be ordered by “harmony ... in accordance with Christ Jesus” (Rom 15.5), and more to the point, “in subjection to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Eph 5.21). Thus Paul, finally, situates both of these—our obedience to God in Christ and our devotion to humble service of one another—within the larger story of salvation: remarkably, the reconciliation of Jew and Gentile in the Israel of God, with the useful caveat that we not boast nor “become proud, but stand in awe,” not claiming “to be wiser” than we are: “Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God’s kindness toward you, provided you continue in his kindness” (Rom 11.20, 22).

3. Correlative to (1) and (2), evidence and/or assurance that our obedience to Christ will, in the nature of the case, be sacrificial. For we, too, are called to a passion, a reaching out to God in persistent holiness after Christ’s example. This begins with Baptism (Rom 6.3ff.) but continues thereafter, so that death itself comes to typify the witness (*martyria*) of the Christian life in a most paradoxical way: “for while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh” (II Cor 4.11). Here the Christian gratefully follows, as well, the figure of the Psalmist’s prayer, who, in the day of trouble, “sought the Lord; my hands were stretched out by night and did not tire; I refused to be comforted. I think of God, I am restless, I ponder, and my spirit faints” (Ps 77.2-3); just as, in the teeth of their inevitable betrayal of the gospel, the faithful greet the LORD’s outstretched hand as a just

and righteous chastisement (see Is 9.13-17). Thus, as Israel was “lifted up” in a sacrifice by the LORD (Jer 23.39), in the self-sacrifice of the “servant”—who “shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high” (Is 52.13)—so is the condition of the Church’s hope: that God will “draw all” people or things to himself (Jn 12.32; cf. Jn 12.27-28), always and only as an imitation of that which was previously wrought in Christ; as, that is, a certain conformity to Christ on the cross, whose wounds are at once the antidote for sin and the avenue to new and renewed life in him.

VI. A Holy and Acceptable Sacrifice

These are hard matters that will draw most of us up short. It would accordingly be easier to pretend that they do not grasp us, that our hope is at some blessed remove—thanks to any number of pastoral, psychological, political, material, or other advances—that enable us to extract the truth-as-we-now-accept-it from its extraneous husk; to disentangle, for instance, a genuine word of liberation from St. Paul’s (and our Lord’s?) otherwise abhorrent masochism.

That we have inherited the sins of our forbears, however—not only schism, but pretty packagings of the gospel, trimmed to taste: monuments to failed charity—need not doom us to endless repetition of half truths and clichés. Or, at any rate, we must do our best to fight them off. While it is true, for instance, that there is freedom in Christ (Gal 5.1), it is also the case that “those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires,” and are not “conceited, competing against one another, envying one another,” but rather “bear one another’s burdens” (Gal 5.24, 26, and 6.2). Here, then, is the hope of the Church: that we present our “bodies as a living sacrifice,

holy and acceptable to God, which is [our] spiritual worship” (Rom 12.1); and again, that we not neglect to do good and share, “for such sacrifices are pleasing to God” (Heb 13.16). Applied to the figure of Christian divisiveness, and particularly amidst difficult discernments about our life together, we should ask what particular “sacrifice of unity” God is calling us to make: in all compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience (Col 3.12f.).

In terms of Episcopal-Anglican crisis, one may note gratefully that both Galatians 6.2 and Colossians 3.12 and following were set up as markers in the Special Commission’s report (at §§56 and 79)—a preliminary gesture toward the virtuous “fruits” without which we can be sure that we never knew Christ, or vice versa (Mt 7.20, 23; cf. Jn 13). We should wish, however, that the report had also had the courage to face with candor the most difficult decision before American Episcopalians: can we commit, at the very least, to “respect,” as the primates said, Resolution I.10 of Lambeth Conference 1998 as “the standard of Christian teaching on matters of human sexuality” that holds for Anglicans, even if we ourselves do not believe it to be true? And will we accordingly, as a kind of downpayment, install the Windsor moratoria on electing and confirming episcopal candidates living in same-gender unions and on authorizing and performing public rites of blessing of same-sex unions, “until a new consensus emerges”? If not, we will be understood by the conciliar instruments of our Anglican Communion and by the vast majority of our Christian sisters and brothers to have uncoupled ecclesiology and moral theology; in a way, furthermore, that betrays an overemphasis on our present moment, without sufficient attention in particular to “the apostolic Church as witnessed in the Scriptures, the early councils and the patristic tradition.” In this case, to

borrow a page from Cardinal Kasper's précis of ARCIC, we effectively will have done justice to neither our "synchronic" nor our "diachronic" obligations—the "communion of churches" presently before and all around us on the one hand, and the historical "consensus" of the Church "through the ages" on the other. For accountability-in-communion, incorporating the whole range of Christian teaching and practice—"faith"—presumes the New Testament injunction to "be of one mind" (I Pet 3.8; cf. Rom 12.2), which is "the mind of Christ," God's own wisdom (I Cor 2.7 and 16; cf. Phil 2.5).

In this light, I cannot agree with the recent comment by my colleague and friend on the Commission, Mark Harris, that *The Windsor Report's* image of "walking together or walking apart" wrongly makes of communion "a matter of like-mindedness (or perhaps like-spiritedness), rather than a meeting with the Lord." For this must be a false dichotomy, not least because the Lord himself has a mind that Scripture exhorts us especially to be agitated about and formed by; and which the Church discerns, as well, via the *sensus fidelium*, according to certain criteria (e.g. scriptural; catholic and apostolic; "ubique, semper, omnibus"). If, however, Christian community were not especially to do with finding a common mind, then we in our report were foolish to "strong[ly] desire to be committed to the interdependent life of the Anglican Communion," a commitment not undertaken "lightly or unadvisedly" (§25), since it entails (e.g.) an obligation for each church "to foster, respect, and maintain all those marks of common identity, and all those instruments of unity and communion... with fellow churches, seeking a common mind" (§27). Likewise, in our present difficulty in the Communion, we were wrong to care about "discerning the mind of Christ," or to seek to "continue to develop ways to find a common mind while honoring dissent" (§45). And,

finally, that we were “not of one mind” in the wording of our resolution on the first Windsor moratorium on bishops (note 75 in §51, and again in the explanation of Resolution A161) doesn’t matter. In this case, furthermore, the conciliar statements of churches, including resolutions of conventions, would be of little significance and not worth arguing over, presumably because their “weight” is to be measured (only? finally, after some struggle?) by the individual conscience; though even then, for the conscience to be rightly formed some reasoned sifting of appropriate—evangelical, catholic, etc.—criteria would be in order.

On the other hand, Mark may mean, as he suggests further on, that we only need to try to be of one mind with those in our own canonical/provincial community—the “all,” as it were, that is ready-to-hand, notwithstanding the apparent, universal ambition of *Windsor Report* §51. This provincial principle, however, simply announced, seems difficult to square with the suggestion that we Christians are to be about the business of the Lord of the one Church; for what then of the proliferation of *churches* with their overlapping provinces and jurisdictions, to say nothing of competing missions, contradictory teachings, etc.? Is the Episcopal bishop of Washington, D.C. to turn to the other bishops of that city, the Catholic and Lutheran and Orthodox bishops ..., and summarily announce that he has no need of them (pace I Cor 12.21) on account of his neatly demarcated “canonical community”? Only, I suppose, if one church, in fact, belongs to Paul, another to Apollos, another to Cephas... (I Cor 1.12). But then *communion*—i.e. “koinonia,” as Mark invokes it repeatedly—would certainly be beside the point according to Paul: for the cup of blessing and the bread are a “sharing”

(*koinonia*) in the blood and body of Christ for “all” (I Cor 10.16-17) just insofar as Christ has *not* “been divided” (I Cor 1.13).

In either case, the problem at bottom is to do with “communion”: where it is, under what conditions it obtains, and what consequent responsibilities go along with it. If, as in my view, communion always already obtains for us Christians—in contrast with Mark’s suggestion that it is an “idea,” “something we have never done”—then our present life together must enunciate, at once, a great faith and hope as well as a grave challenge in need of urgent attention. For, on the one hand, our present concatenation of churches and communities bears with it certain bonds, *vinculi*, of accountability that find their origin in the sacramental gift of unity; whence I cannot, as Mark does, distinguish between “organized churches (ecclesial entities)” and “organic fellowships (*koinonia*)” as I find these wholly interpenetrated, *in Christ*. Likewise, on the other hand, where Mark is inclined to argue from provincial and canonical autonomy, in seeming disregard of our divisions (though they are far more settled than the ones Paul identified as would-be contradictions of the Church’s unity [I Cor 1.13]), I am reminded of the Apostle’s advice that “we judge ourselves” in order to avoid the Lord’s judgment and discipline, and so “not be condemned along with the world” (I Cor 11.31-32).

Of course, the way has already been painful, and even “unspeakably difficult and disquieting.” And it is doubtless on account of our sheer exhaustion, with many failed attempts at love in our wake, and countless self-justifications secreted away in our souls or proudly proclaimed from our latest battlement, that we dare to disdain our brother or sister, to cause offense, and then to allow resentments to fester, clouding our conscience. In this way, carelessness and forgetfulness of one another remain our common currency,

and the integrity of our witness often little more than a cacophony of lovelessness—so many noisy gongs and clanging cymbals, perhaps sounded with a “prophetic” intent, and even with real “understanding,” “knowledge,” and “faith,” but “gaining”—amounting to, signifying—“nothing” (1 Cor 13.1-2).

“Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?” (Rom 7.24)—from these “long-engrained habits of unfaithfulness in our practice”? Of course, “thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (Rom 7.25). It is on this account, however—with our Lord’s example before us, beckoning—that when we pray for the grace to glorify Christ in our own day, we should also ask for, and then expect to receive, the courage to go and “die with him” (Jn 11.16), even all together. For how else to be perfected or purified but in giving ourselves away (see Mt 10.37-39)?

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“The Lutheran Catholic,” first given as the Ramsey Lecture in Durham Cathedral, 23 November 2004; available on the Archbishop of Canterbury’s website

(http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/sermons_speeches/2004/041123.html) and published in *Glory Descending: Michael Ramsey and His Writings*, eds. Dales, Habgood, Rowell, and Williams (Norwich: Canterbury Press; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005). I will cite from the published edition. For the sake of clarity, I capitalize *Church* when I am referring to the one Church of Christ, and use *church* or *churches* when I am referring non-specifically to a denomination or group of denominations.

Quoting 1999’s *Gift of Authority: An Agreed Statement by the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission* (ARCIC) at §47. Cf. esp. the discussion in this text at §§45-48 and §§53-63; and ARCIC’s earlier statements, *Authority in the Church I* (from 1976), esp. at §§12-25, along with the important “Elucidation” (of 1981), followed by *Authority in the Church II* (also from 1981), *passim*.

See esp. the movement of §§18-29 in *Lumen Gentium*; and cf. John Paul II’s 1998 Apostolic Letter “On the Theological and Juridical Nature of Episcopal Conferences,” *Apostolos suos*.

Rowan Williams, *Anglican Identities* (Cambridge: Cowley, 2003), p. 1.

All from *ibid.*, p. 86.

Ibid., p. 85

Rowan Williams, *Why Study the Past? The Quest for the Historical Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), pp. 112 and 110.

Williams, *Anglican Identities*, p. 1.

ARCIC, *Authority in the Church I*, from the Co-Chairmen’s Preface; quoted in turn at “Elucidation,” n. 8.

ARCIC, “Elucidation,” n. 8.

ARCIC, *Authority in the Church I*, n. 25.

See ch. 11 in *The Protestant Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948).

See a recent issue of the American *Anglican Theological Review*, vol. 86, no. 4 (2004), fruit of the Episcopal Church Foundation's "Fellows Forum" (presently on hiatus, hopefully not defunct) for an excellent introduction to the present debate in academic-Episcopal circles about the relative importance of historical identities for constructing possible futures, depending upon one's point of view: in eight papers on the theme "Reconstructing Anglican Comprehensiveness."

Williams, "The Lutheran Catholic," p. 221. Williams here depends upon American Episcopalian theologian Ephraim Radner, who wisely commented recently that "'Oneness' of thought and life... cannot be trumped by democratic 'diversity,' but it must find a place within it that does not, at the same time, turn us into democracy's enemies" (in his lecture of January 15, 2006, "The Two Providences: Democracy and the Church's Witness": <http://www.anglicancommunioninstitute.org/articles/TwoProvidences.html>). Cf. the forthcoming volume from Radner and Philip Turner, *The Fate of Communion: The Agony of Anglicanism and the Future of a Global Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), which contains Radner's essay, "Children of Cain: The Oxymoron of American Catholicism."

The report of the Special Commission, *One Baptism, One Hope in God's Call*, secured this point decisively. Note, for instance, the scriptural adduction of the Church at §§3-6 and 8 (which provide a basis for §26, much of §27, §§31-32, and §§78-79) without reference to Episcopalians or Anglicans—because, of course, St. Paul and St. Luke were speaking about the one body of Christ, not the anomaly of a host of more or less autonomous "churches" in less-than-full "communion" with each another but nonetheless "sharing," to varying degrees, the same faith.

Williams, *Why Study the Past?* p. 107.

Lumen Gentium, n. 48, citing Romans 8.19-22. Cf. ch. 2 of *Lumen Gentium*, nn. 9-17, on "The People of God."

See their website: <http://www.fmcmissions.com/>, and Genie Summers, *Go! You Are Sent* (Baton Rouge: Charleston Press, 1995).

Redemptoris Missio, n. 23, italics in original. See also nn. 49-50 of this encyclical for striking comments on the connection between ecumenism and mission.

Ut Unum Sint, n. 98.

See Rom 5.7 and I Jn 3.16; cf. Col 1.24, Rom 8.13, Phil 3.10.

See Jer 7.5-15, Rom 11.22, Heb 10.26-31.

See, e.g., in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: Christian divisions are "ruptures that wound the unity of Christ's Body" (§817). In another document published in 1992, then-Cardinal Ratzinger made clear that this means the Catholic Church itself is also wounded; see Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion*, n. 17. In turn, the 2004 statement of the U.S. Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogue, self-consciously building on this new Roman Catholic parlance, argues that the *ministries* of the separated denominations are wounded, "insofar as unity and communion are lacking with other churches and their ministries" (*The Church as Koinonia of Salvation: Its Structures and Ministries. Common Statement of the Tenth Round of the U.S. Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue*, n. 101; see further nn. 111 and 121-125 of this statement). For an earlier instance of a conservative Roman Catholic theologian speaking of the Church as wounded, see Hans Urs von Balthasar, *In the Fullness of Faith: On the Centrality of the Distinctively Catholic* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1988 [1975]), pp. 125-26: "True, the Catholica is bleeding from all her wounds, but in doing so she is following her Lord. She is more and more naked, increasingly without 'form or comeliness,' and her own sons begin to be ashamed of her."

Here from the American *Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 876-77.

Address of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI, Cologne, 19 August, 2005

(http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2005/august/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20050819_ecumenical-meeting_en.html).

See, e.g., *Unitatis redintegratio*, nn. 3-4, a text cited by Benedict in Cologne; and John Paul II's *Ut Unum Sint*, which recapitulates most of the conciliar decree, while also bringing new points to bear.

This conclusion is commonly drawn by ecumenical theologians; e.g., Michael Hurley flatly states that "The basic methodological insight of ecumenism is a 'no' to individual conversions" ("The Ecumenical Methodology of Forgiveness," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 68 [2003]: 357-377; here at p. 358). Hurley defends this point with reference to the "cautionary rules," such as "those elaborated by the World Council of Churches, accepted at its New Delhi Assembly in 1961 and approved by Cardinal Bea," for pastoral care of individuals who "for reasons of conscience wish to change their Church of allegiance;" and again, with

reference to the Balamand Statement, adopted in 1993 by the Roman Catholic-Eastern Orthodox dialogue. Granted, Hurley's claim—that ecumenism discourages individual conversion—arguably undoes the balance of *Unitatis redintegratio*, n. 4, which allowed that “preparing and reconciling those individuals who wish for full Catholic communion” and “ecumenical action” are, at once, “distinct” and not “opposed... since both proceed from the marvelous ways of God.” This text, however, secures the point that, since Vatican II, Catholic ecumenical activity has not been predicated on hoped-for *individual* “reconciliation.” Rather, as the quotation of Benedict suggests (see note 26, above), the goal is inter-communal reconciliation. Hence, one may note, e.g., that John Paul II spoke of *conversion* in *Ut Unum Sint* only as incumbent on us all, and even particularly as “a deep challenge to the Catholic faithful” (n. 82; cf. esp. nn. 2, 4, 15-17, 34-35, 83-85, 91-93). Here, again, the pope expanded upon the Council's use of “interior conversion” (*Unitatis redintegratio*, n. 7; cf. nn. 1 and 8).

See *Unitatis redintegratio*, n. 3 for the phrase “certain though imperfect communion,” said of those who commonly believe in Christ and have been baptized (“Hi enim qui in Christum credunt et baptismum rite receperunt, in quadam cum Ecclesia catholica communione, etsi non perfecta, constituuntur”), and nn. 3-4 on “fullness”—first in terms of “the means of salvation,” and second in terms of “catholicity” (where a crucial admission is also made that the Catholic Church herself “finds it more difficult to express in actual life her full catholicity in all its aspects” on account of inter-Christian divisions). John Paul II thus summarizes at *Ut Unum Sint*, n. 11: “By God's grace... neither what belongs to the structure of the Church of Christ nor that communion which still exists with the other Churches and Ecclesial Communities has been destroyed.” Vatican I, by contrast, conjures a very different picture—if, for instance, (i) the one Church simply *is* the “Roman” church, (ii) where “true catholic faith” is taught, “outside of which none can be saved;” (iii) against therefore “those heresies, condemned by the fathers of Trent, which... have gradually collapsed into a multiplicity of sects;” (iv) and, finally, if “anyone [who] says that the Roman pontiff has... not the full and supreme power of jurisdiction over the whole church...; or that this power of his is not ordinary and immediate both over all and each of the churches and over all and each of the pastors and faithful [is] anathema” (quoting from the “Profession of faith” of Session 2, the introductory section of Session 3 on the “Dogmatic Constitution on the catholic faith,” and the end of ch. 3 in Session 4).

See I Cor 4.16, 11.1; Phil 3.17, 4.9; I Thess 1.6, 2.14; II Thess 3.7, 3.9.

E.g., II Cor 11.23ff., II Tim 3.10-12.

John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint*, n. 26.

Ibid., n. 6; cf. n. 84.

Unitatis redintegratio, n. 4.

In One Body through the Cross: The Princeton Proposal for Christian Unity, eds. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), §6. This text is the product of an ad-hoc colloquium of American theologians from across the denominational spectrum, convened by the Center for Catholic and Evangelical Theology (publishers of the journal *Pro Ecclesia*). It may serve as an excellent introduction to ecumenical spirituality (see note 36, below), particularly ordered around the themes of penitence, sacrifice, and wound. The authors recall, for instance, that the classic description of “the unity we seek,” by the 1961 World Council of Churches assembly at New Delhi, had the courage to recognize that “the achievement of unity will involve nothing less than a death and rebirth of many forms of church life as we have known them. [We believe that] nothing less costly can finally suffice” (§15). Unfortunately, the Princeton text is not available on the internet, thereby hindering its widest possible diffusion.

Repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation are called in *The Windsor Report* “imperatives of communion” (§134). Cf. analogously Vatican II's exhortation to “spiritual ecumenism” (greatly expanded upon in *Ut Unum Sint*), borrowed in part from Abbé Paul Couturier, a founder of the Groupe des Dombes—for which see especially *For the Conversion of the Churches*, trans. James Greig (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1993); and Catherine E. Clifford, “Dialogue and Method: Learning from the Groupe des Dombes,” *One in Christ* 38 (2003): 43-57. Likewise, John Paul II often spoke of the need for “healing of memories,” e.g., at *Ut Unum Sint*, nn. 2, 52, 88; which should be read alongside the International Theological Commission's 1999 study, *Memory and Reconciliation: The Church and the Faults of the Past*. See also Dom Eoin De Bhaldraithe's profound essay, “Ecumenical Forgiveness” in *The Downside Review*, 425/121 (2003): 235-250.

See further John 15.16, John 17, Acts 2, I Thessalonians 4.4.

Williams, *Why Study the Past?* p. 111.

John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint*, n. 102.

Here rejoining a key sentence from the primates' "Communiqué" of February 2005, only partially quoted in the Special Commission report (*One Baptism, One Hope in God's Call*, at §16); for "many primates have been deeply alarmed" that Lambeth 1998 I.10, "which should command respect as the position overwhelmingly adopted by the bishops of the Anglican Communion, has been seriously undermined by the recent developments in North America" (§6 of the "Communiqué"). In turn, the primates note that "there remains a very real question about whether the North American churches are willing to accept the same teaching on matters of sexual morality as is generally accepted elsewhere in the Communion" (§12); and at §17, Lambeth I.10 is again referred to "as the present position of the Anglican Communion." For this latter claim, see further §§25, 126-27, and 137 of *The Windsor Report*; and again, the Anglican Consultative Council's June 2005 endorsement and affirmation of the primates' "decisions" concerning Lambeth I.10 in February 2005 (noted at *One Baptism, One Hope in God's Call*, §18, esp. note 20). *The Windsor Report*, §§134, 144; *One Baptism, One Hope in God's Call*, §§51 and 54. "Letter of His Eminence Cardinal Walter Kasper to His Grace Dr Rowan Williams Archbishop of Canterbury," 17 December 2004

(http://www.anglicancommunion.org/commission/reception/responses/pdf/ecum_pontificalcouncilforchristianunity.pdf).

Ibid. For a more hopeful indication, however, of how the foundations of the Special Commission's report could lead the General Convention to opt decisively for "communion," and its attendant, concrete responsibilities, see my short piece, "Heartbroken: The Sacrificial Vocation of Anglicanism," forthcoming in *Centro*, the newsletter of the Anglican Centre in Rome.

Here from the first of Mark's five-part "Windsor Nosh":

http://anglicanfuture.blogspot.com/2006_05_08_anglicanfuture_archive.html.

Quoting from "Windsor Nosh #5."

John Paul II, *Testament of the Holy Father* (published posthumously), 24 February-1 March 1980.

Cf. *One Baptism, One Hope in God's Call*, §36, quoting Archbishop Williams's "Advent Pastoral Letter," 29 November, 2004: "if it is true that an action by one part of the Communion genuinely causes offence, causes others to stumble, there is need to ask, 'How has what we have done got in the way of God making himself heard and seen among us?...Have we been eager to dismiss others before we have listened?' We owe it to one another to let such questions sink in slowly and prayerfully."

Williams, "The Lutheran Catholic," p. 220.