I. Mandate and Scope

The Windsor Report of the Lambeth Commission on Communion was issued under the auspices of the Most Reverend Dr. Robin Eames, Archbishop of Armagh and Commission Chair in October 2004. In response to the mandate given by the Archbishop of Canterbury, *Windsor* touches upon the “legal and theological implications flowing from the decisions of the Episcopal Church USA (ECUSA) to appoint a priest in a committed same sex relationship as one of its bishops, and of the Diocese of New Westminster [of the Anglican Church of Canada] to authorize services for use in connection with same sex unions.”¹ Of even greater importance, perhaps, *Windsor* addresses “specifically … the canonical understandings of communion, impaired and broken communion, and the ways in which provinces of the Anglican Communion² may relate to one another in situations where the ecclesiastical authorities of one province feel unable to maintain the fullness of communion with another part of the Anglican Communion.”³ *Windsor* is intended to be viewed as recommendations to the Primates

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² Information on the Anglican Communion can be obtained from the official website at http://www.anglicancommunion.org/. The member church provinces are listed at http://www.anglicancommunion.org/tour/index.cfm. Each of the 38 national or multi-national churches, called “provinces,” has wide powers of self-government. The total membership of the worldwide Anglican Communion is approximately 76 million making it the second largest Christian church in the world. 17 million members reside in Nigeria and 8 million in Uganda. The Church of England ministers to 2 million and the Episcopal Church USA also 2 million.

³ *Windsor Report* at p8.
and Anglican Consultative Council,\textsuperscript{4} and ultimately to Canterbury “to exercise an extraordinary ministry of episcopate (pastoral oversight), support and reconciliation” for the sake of maintaining communion among the provinces.\textsuperscript{5}

II. The Focus of \textit{Windsor}

\textit{Windsor} is a highly focused document that channels attention to the nature of the relationship among the provinces of the Anglican Communion, to certain procedures that have caused strain on this communion, and to recommendations for the continuation of communion. What \textit{Windsor} is not addressing is also important:

\begin{quote}
[W]e [the Lambeth Commission] have not been invited, and are not intending, to comment or make recommendations on the theological and ethical matters concerning the practice of same sex relations and the blessing or ordination or consecration of those who engage in them.\textsuperscript{6} [Emphasis original].
\end{quote}

The gaze of \textit{Windsor} is firmly laid on the unity of the church and on the preservation of communion of all members with one another. The advice of Saint Paul as given in his letters to the Corinthians is given as prime authority for the cherished themes of unity and communion as sanctified by Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{7}

The absence in \textit{Windsor} of any direct reference to Paul’s writings on same sex relations is also quite remarkable.\textsuperscript{8} For those persons who are combing for proof text and for the certainty that can be gleaned from same for the resolution of a dispute, there is still solace, because \textit{Windsor} also declares that “[w]ithin Anglicanism, scripture has

\textsuperscript{4} The Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) was established in 1968 “to give voice to lay people who were now fully participating in the governance of their provinces across the world” while disavowing any intention to develop a more formal synodal status.” \textit{Id.} at 43.
\textsuperscript{5} \textit{Id.} at 8.
\textsuperscript{6} \textit{Id.} at 24.
\textsuperscript{7} Early on, \textit{Windsor} cites chapters 1, 2, 12 and 13 of 1 Corinthians and chapter 2 of 2 Corinthians. \textit{Id.} at 12.
\textsuperscript{8} Not cited, for example, are 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 1 Timothy 1:8-11 and Romans 1:26, all of which decry homosexuality. Yet, Christ himself has not remarked on homosexuality.
always been recognized as the Church’s supreme authority, and as such ought to be seen as a focus and means of unity.”¹⁹ Even so, these are cryptic words, for are these words intended to those who feel sufficient offense on the same-sex issues so as to clamor for separation (as well as intervention to promote schism), or to those who are accused of upsetting the traditional teachings of Paul on homosexuality? It may be that the words seek to address both parties and they may very well do so. Windsor points out that

The common phrase “the authority of scripture” can be misleading; … Scripture itself, after all, regularly speaks of God as the supreme authority. When Jesus speaks of “all authority in heaven and earth” (Matthew 28:18), he declares that this authority is given, not to the books that his followers will write, but to himself. Jesus, the living Word, is the one to whom the written Word bears witness as God’s ultimate and personal self-expression.¹⁰

The fact remains that Jesus Christ himself was silent on homosexuality, an issue that presently burns red-hot within the church and that threatens to sear the “bonds of affection” into smoke and ash. Perhaps because of this over-heating of emotion, Windsor takes pain to call for balance in the theological position:

The current crisis thus constitutes a call to the whole Anglican Communion to re-evaluate the ways in which we have read, heard, studied and digested scripture. We can no longer be content to drop random texts into arguments, imagining that the point is thereby proved, or indeed to sweep away sections of the New Testament as irrelevant to today’s world, imagining that problems are thereby solved.¹¹

The adversaries are reminded that

We need mature study, wise and prayerful discussion, and a joint commitment to hearing and obeying God as he speaks in scripture, to discovering more of the Jesus Christ to whom all authority is committed, and to being open to the fresh wind of the Spirit who inspired scripture in the first place. If our present difficulties force us to read and learn together from the scripture in new ways, they will not have been without profit.¹²

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¹⁹ Id. at 27.
¹⁰ Id.
¹¹ Id., at 30.
¹² Id.
The Anglican divines of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries came to the balanced conclusion that the church is to be built on the foundation of “scripture, tradition and reason” and the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral\textsuperscript{13} affirms that scripture takes precedence.

III. The Importance of Precedent

\textit{Windsor} upholds the importance of adhering to procedural precedent within the Anglican Communion. To the church, how an action is taken is very important and this is reflected in \textit{Windsor} with its conclusion that the failure to follow precedent is at the heart of the problems currently facing Anglicans.\textsuperscript{14} The procedural precedent of recent memory within the church concerns the ordination of women clergy, to which the episcopate provides a satisfactory “example of mutual discernment and decision-making within the Anglican Communion.”\textsuperscript{15}

The chronology of the ordination of Anglican women will be summarized in this paper as it may not be readily recalled. The first woman Anglican woman to be ordained into the priesthood was Florence Li Tim-Oi and this came to pass in 1944.\textsuperscript{16} There was debate and disagreement before and after this ordination; so persistent was the controversy that the divisive question was formally put on the agenda of the 1968

\textsuperscript{13} Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral contain the four doctrines that was first adopted by the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church USA which met in synod in Chicago in 1886 and became the foundation for ecumenical reconciliation with the Church of England and the Anglican communion. The quadrilateral affirms (1) the Old and New Testaments are the revealed Word of God, (2) the Nicene Creed as the sufficient statement of the Christian Faith, (3) Baptism and Lord’s Supper as the two Sacraments ordained by Christ, and (4) the Historic Episcopate, as locally adopted to minister to the varying needs of the nationals and peoples called of God into the unity of His Church.

\textsuperscript{14} Id. at 16.
\textsuperscript{15} Id. at 14.
\textsuperscript{16} Id.
Lambeth Conference\textsuperscript{17} by the Diocese of Hong Kong & Macao. The issue was then so unsettling that Lambeth was unable to provide a conclusive response and instead deferred the question to the Anglican Consultative Council. The affected Bishop next sought the advice of Anglican Consultative Council at its first meeting in Limuru, Kenya in 1970. After protracted debate, the Council voted 24 to 22 to inform the Bishop that, if with the approval of his Synod, he were to ordain a woman priest, this proceeding would be acceptable to the Council and the Council would encourage all provinces to remain in communion with his Diocese. \textit{Windsor} ratifies this procedure with this observation:

\begin{quote}
What needs to be noted is that Hong Kong did not understand itself to be so autonomous that it might proceed without bringing the matter to the Anglican Consultative Council as requested by the Lambeth Conference 1968. Furthermore, action was only taken with the co-operation of the Instruments of Unity.\textsuperscript{18}
\end{quote}

\textit{Windsor}, thus has come full circle on the wheel of unity. In the footsteps of this one woman priest, many more have been ordained and in 1989 the ECUSA consecrated Barbara Harris, an African-American woman, as bishop.\textsuperscript{19} The importance of unity through consultation and common counsel was understood very early in the building of world-wide Anglicanism and the main device for a unified church came to be known as the Instruments of Unity, which in chronological order involve\textsuperscript{20}:

\begin{enumerate}
\item The Archbishop of Canterbury,
\item The Lambeth Conference,
\item The Anglican Consultative Council, and
\end{enumerate}

\textsuperscript{17} The first Lambeth Conference was called by Archbishop C. T. Longley of Canterbury in 1867 for Anglican bishops to gather at Lambeth Palace to take counsel with intercommunion at the center of concerns. The Conference declined legislative power and was advisory in nature. To this day, Lambeth stands for a central concept of Anglican ecclesiology, the authority of bishops through collegiality.

\textsuperscript{18} Id.

\textsuperscript{19} In that same year, the Anglican Church of New Zealand consecrated Penny Jamieson as the seventh Bishop of Dunedin. For a chronology, see \url{http://www.religioustolerance.org/femclrg3.htm}.

\textsuperscript{20} Id. at 41.
Interestingly, *Windsor* goes on to note with approval the revival of interest in the Canon Law of the Anglican churches, the 2001 Primates’ Meeting at Kanuga specifically considered recognition of the existence of unwritten *ius commune* of the world-wide Anglican Communion. Kanuga initiated a process that led up to the Anglican Communion Legal Advisers’ Consultation in Canterbury in March 2002, at which time the primates recognized the unwritten law common to the churches of the communion and urged that such shared principles of canon law be understood to constitute a fifth Instrument of Unity for the purpose of providing a basic framework for minimum conditions that allow the Anglican Communion to live together in harmony and unity. This development suggests a *corpus* of principles which, once accepted, arises to covenant having force and effect and is legally binding on all who chooses to be bound.

IV. The Arguments of Adiaphora and Subsidiarity

The tension presented by *adiaphora* and *subsidiarity* against a uniform, catholic church is another noteworthy question to be addressed in *Windsor*. *Adiaphora* literally means “things that do not make a difference” and *subsidiarity* calls for issues to be decided as close to the local level as possible. *Windsor* recalls the early Anglican reform position on Eucharistic theology, specifically on the question of transubstantiation as an example of adiaphora but also admonishes that “even when the notion of ‘adiaphora’

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21 The first Primates Meeting was called by the 1978 Lambeth Conference for the primates of the Anglican Communion to coordinate international activities in order that God be best served within the context of one holy catholic and apostolic church.

22 Id. at 46-47.

23 Id. at 21. Cf. that legal maxim, *de minimus non curat lex* (the law takes no interest in small things). *Windsor* cites Paul’s advice on food and drink (Romans 14.1 – 15.13; 1 Corinthians 8-10) as classic examples of *adiaphora*. 

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applies, it does not mean that Christians are left free to pursue their own personal choices without restriction.”24 *Windsor* acknowledges that “subsidiarity and adiaphora belong together - the more something is regarded as ‘indifferent’, the more locally the decision can be made,25 and yet the clearer it is that something is ‘indifferent’ in terms of the Church’s central doctrine and ethics, the closer to the local level it can be decided; whereas, the clearer that something is central, the wider the circle of consultation.26

V. The Theological Reflection of *Windsor*: Continuation of Communion – Unity Through Christ.

*Windsor*’s found these four actions to have strained the bonds of wider Communion: (1) consecration of a openly gay bishop by ECUSA, (2) declaration by the 74th General Convention of ECUSA for liturgies celebrating and blessing same-sex unions, (3) approval of use of public Rites for blessing same-sex unions by the Diocese of New Westminster, and (4) statement by the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada affirming the integrity and sanctity of committed same-sex relationships, (5) the intervention of a number of primates and other bishops in the affairs of other provinces of the Communion27. All parties who were identified as having caused deep offense were invited to express regret for the consequences of their actions, affirm their desire to remain in the Communion, and to observe a moratorium on such actions.28 *Windsor* concludes with a call to “all parties to the current dispute to seek ways of reconciliation, and to heal our divisions,” while at the same time recognizing that “there remains a very real danger that we will not choose to walk together” because “should the call to halt and

24 Id. at 39.
25 Id. at 21.
26 Id. at 40.
27 Id. at 50.
28 Id. at 59.
finds ways of continuing in our present communion not be heeded, then we shall have to begin to learn to walk apart.”

The tension between the centralization versus decentralization of canon authority has been answered in favor of oversight by bishops and primates through proper procedure of consultation, reference of church law, and the judicious exercise of episcopal authority.

In the finally analysis, Windsor’s one great hope is for unity. I suspect that we surely recall that Jesus Christ before offering himself up as a spotless lamb upon the altar of sacrifice, prayed to his Father for all to believe in Him: “that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” [Emphasis added] This our Savior prayed not for his own sake, but for the sake of his church, and indeed for all peoples.

After being lifted up on the cross in death and glorified in his resurrection, Jesus poured forth the Holy Spirit, our great comforter as was promised, and under this Spirit are gathered all peoples of the New Covenant in a unity of faith, hope and charity. Hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. The Lord’s admonishment to his church is “to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,” for “there is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God

29 Id. at 59-60.
30 John 17:21-23.
31 Romans 5:5.
and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. This is the most cherished hope of Windsor, albeit expressed in a less impassioned Anglican tone.

VI. The Impact of Windsor on My Own Sense of Christian Vocation

The issue grappled by Windsor reaches beyond the Anglican Communion – it affects all Christianity and indeed all societies. Some Christian denominations have elected to take a firm position against homosexuality and this is usually achieved by reading the relevant verses in the Old and New Testaments literally. The Anglican approach is to reflect on a difficult controversy through a combination of Scripture, tradition, and reason. In the light of tradition and reason, is homosexuality adiaphora? If it is adiaphora, this thorny question should be resolved at the local level under the doctrine of subsidiarity. Windsor teaches unequivocally that it is not, at least at the present time.

What do the Scriptures teach about homosexuality? The Old Testament is clear about God’s disapproval of homosexual acts. The Mosaic laws required that homosexuals be put to death – e.g. Leviticus 20:13 directs: “If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.” Even so, homosexuality continues to exist

32 Ephesian 4:4-6. Cf. the Tower of Babel at Genesis 11:1-9. Babel came to be because man had deluded himself into thinking that he could do the infinite and that nothing was to be denied to him (just as Adam chose to eat the fruit of tree of knowledge of good and evil, the one thing in the Garden of Eden denied man by God). In the matter of Babel, God simply reminded man of his limitations and finiteness through the small example of making him unable to understand the language of his neighbor. So is man limited at this moment, a creature divided and in discord. Through Jesus Christ, the imperative for division and schism as seen since the days of Babel is overcome.
in human society regardless of culture or race. Three salient passages, all written by the Apostle Paul decry homosexual conduct and these are:

Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. 33

Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 34

But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous man, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, or the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers and mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted. 35

But nowhere does the New Testament say that homosexuals are to be put to death. 36

Jesus Christ said nothing about homosexuality, but silence about homosexuality does not mean that Jesus did not deal with the subject of sexual transgression. When Jesus was teaching at the temple courts, a woman was caught in flagrante delicto of adultery. Just like sodomy, the Old Testament penalty for adultery was death. Leviticus 20:10 requires that "If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor both the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death." So the Pharisees brought the woman (but not the man) before Jesus, for they wanted to test Jesus on how he would judge this case, with the hope that he would make a mistake about the law of Moses.

33 Romans 1:26
34 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.
35 1 Timothy 1:8-11.
36 In the United States, the Supreme Court in 2002 has held in Lawrence v. Texas (539 U.S. 558) that consenting homosexual conduct is no longer subject to criminal penalties.
What was Jesus’ answer? But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin." Jesus did reaffirm the death penalty for adultery, except he could not find a qualified executioner! So Jesus imposed the sentence of grace: “Although I am without sin, I will not stone you – instead, I forgive you, provided you sin no more.’

Another example of Mosaic law dealing with sexual difference is the ostracizing of eunuchs. Deuteronomy 23:1 directs that “No one who has been emasculated by crushing or cutting may enter the assembly of the Lord.” An Ethiopian eunuch (a high official of Queen Candace) upon meeting the Apostle Philip on the road was baptized by Phillip. Let us take to heart the reminder of John: “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.” There is strength from this promise: “No temptation has seized you except what is common to

37 John 8:1-11. 38 Acts 8:27-39. Another example of the abandoning of law of the Old Testament is that of Levirate marriage which mandated that the brother of a deceased man marry his widow. (Genesis 38, see also Deut. 25:5-10) Indeed the opposite was in effect - no man may marry his brother's widow and this was the issue faced by King Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn. 39 1 John 1:6-10.
man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it." 40

Such is the love of the Lord God as revealed through Jesus Christ. Those with sexual differences such as homosexuals are like the woman caught in the act of adultery. Jesus not only did not condemn the adulteress – he also gave her the means to be saved from death, both physical and spiritual. Philip gladly baptized the sexually different eunuch who was made whole with Holy Spirit - he found new joy and eternal contentment.

Although the Pharisees singled out the adulteress for death by stoning, Jesus used her to show God’s grace. God understands the various sins that torment men and tempt women. Accordingly, God has sent us a Savior for the redemption of all sins. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him 41. The wonderful salvation that Jesus offered the adulteress is just as available to those of us who are afflicted with any manner of sin. And who among us is without sin? Quite meaningfully, the Apostle Paul reassured us thus:

Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law. You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. 42

40 1 Corinthians 10:13
41 John 3:16.
42 Galatians 3:28.
In the last and ultimate analysis, “there is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”\footnote{Romans 3:22-24.} When our Savior died on the cross, he died for all of us. Such is the nature of God’s grace.

VII. Conclusion

The theme of Windsor is the balancing of non-adiaphora and subsidiarity. Restated, Windsor grapples with the tension between Scripture and reason. Faithful to the Anglican tradition of settlement and compromise, established since the days of Elizabeth I, Windsor seeks a reconciliatory position and asks both contending parties to embrace for the sake of unity of the Church and Communion. However, Windsor fully recognized the severity of the differences and the forces of schism – to this end, it asks for an amicable, respectful parting of ways if such an outcome cannot be avoided, and for the possibility of future reconciliation, both in the near term and over the long. It is virtually impossible to predict the ultimate effectiveness of Windsor as the issues are deep and the emotions are high. I pray for the infinite wisdom and grace of God on this matter over His own good time.

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