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The Consecration of Bishop Robinson: A New Day of Infamy

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In the days leading up to his consecration, Bishop Robinson had rejected calls by Anglican leaders in the worldwide communion to stand down from his election. Similarly, presiding Bishop Frank Griswold deflected the calls from his fellow primates around the world to avoid schism in the church through the election of an openly homosexual man as bishop of the church.

Robinson, always ready to play the martyr, said just before his consecration: "If in my own prayer life I were to discern that God were asking me to stop, then I would do so. But I must say I've been praying about this long and hard, and where my mind and heart are at the moment is that God wants me to move forward with this."

Robinson declared that he is "extremely at peace about this decision." Not to appear callous, he also insisted that he constantly worries about "the fact that this is causing so much pain and difficulty for some people. I don't relish that at all, and yet I believe that out of that pain the church is going to be a better place."

Here we have a classic expression of an individual asserting his own autonomy over biblical authority. Gene Robinson does not really care what the Bible has to say about his homosexuality. Indeed, he has conceded that the Bible condemns homosexual activity, but also asserts that the Bible should not have the last word in the matter. To the contrary, Robinson and his allies package his election and consecration as bishop as a great moral advance as the Episcopal Church (USA) leaves the dark ages of sexual repression and enters the brave new world of celebrated homosexuality.

This brazen act by the Episcopal Church (USA) effectively removes any real communion from the Anglican Communion. Clear and eloquent calls to avoid the inevitable schism that would follow his election were presented to Robinson and the Episcopal Church by Anglican leaders from the "Global South" as well as conservative Episcopalians in the United States. In a pattern now familiar, Anglican leaders from Africa, Asia, and other southern hemisphere regions have been overwhelmingly opposed to the election of a homosexual bishop, even as bishops from the decadent and secularized North have failed to prevent his election.

The reality is even worse than first appears. The pastor of St. Alban's Church in Washington, D.C. told National Public Radio that if Anglicans in the Global South broke communion with the Episcopal Church (USA), this would not be so bad after all. As this pastor asserted, "it's not unlike never speaking to your second cousin who lives in Nevada. It's too bad you never speak, but it really doesn't matter that much."

This statement shows clearly that it is the radical revisionists on the left who are breaking faith with their orthodox brothers and sisters in the Anglican Communion. It is the orthodox Anglicans who are standing on the tradition of their church as well as the clear authority of Scripture. In the upside-down world of postmodern America, the moral revolutionaries often claim that it is the traditionalists who are radical. The actions of the American church show the

hollowness of that charge.

Looking back, we can now see that the meeting of the Anglican primates in London produced very little. Even though conservatives claimed a majority of the leaders present, the primates were unable to prevent the election of Bishop Robinson, and thus they now have a schism on their hands as testimony of the ineffectual character of their leadership. Even if conservatives decide to press for a separate jurisdiction to include conservative Episcopalians in the United States, they must face the fact that their communion is now mortally wounded by this unilateral act of the Episcopal Church (USA).

Furthermore, the homosexual advance in the Episcopal Church will not be limited to the election of Bishop Robinson. The October 29, 2003 edition of The Washington Times reveals that the Episcopal Bishop of Washington, D.C. plans to develop rites for homosexual "marriages" for his diocese. Bishop John B. Chane claims that a resolution passed during the recent Episcopal General Convention gives him permission to move in this direction.

Bishop Chane's letter stated that "in keeping with good Anglican Liturgical order, it is my intention at some point to form a task force to study those liturgical rites that have clearly been in use for sometime within the Diocese of Washington to see if there is a form that could be uniformly used by parishes, should they request it."

This concern for "good Anglican Liturgical order" disguises this Bishop's intention to undermine "good Anglican theological conviction."

One Episcopal church in the diocese has already posted a draft liturgy, which the parish approved back in 1998. Its current interim rector, the Reverend Elizabeth Carl, is identified in the newspaper as "the first openly lesbian priest in the diocese."

Back in New Hampshire, Bishop Robinson is claiming to be the victim rather than the perpetrator of this theological atrocity. In satellite-broadcast comments to a conference of gay Anglicans held in Manchester, England, Robinson even compared himself to Jesus. "It was the religious establishment that were often enraged by what Jesus said and did. It is the marginalized to rejoice. In some ways the world hasn't changed." Bishop Robinson is right at least in his last point. The world hasn't really changed. According to the Bible, moral rebellion is what we should expect in the world. A spirit of lawlessness and a rejection of God's authority is exactly what we would expect to see among those who deny Christ and the Gospel.

The supreme tragedy in the case of Bishop Gene Robinson, is that the confusion is not found in the world, but within what claims to be the Church. Robinson may now claim his office as the Episcopal Bishop of New Hampshire, but his real claim to fame will be as the theologian-in-residence of the Church of Sodom and Gomorrah.

