

## Communion or Covenant?

‘See how these Christians love one another!’ is a two-edged comment. Is it a sign of love when fellow believers set limits to what God may reveal of his truth to their sisters and brothers?

How much freedom of belief should Anglicans allow one another if they are still to retain Table Fellowship with each other, and with Christ who is our common Host?

In the Upper Room Jesus said “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth.” John 16:12,13

The story of the Church has been the Spirit’s endless uncovering of deeper truth about the God of Love - from the day Peter unilaterally baptised an ‘unclean’ Gentile.

In New Testament times slaves were seen as sub-human even by church people, but in 1833 in the British Empire they were recognised as having equal value in the sight of God with their so-called ‘owners’.

Professor F.D.Maurice was sacked from his King’s College London chair in the 1850s for questioning the dogma of everlasting torment; now in Common Worship he is listed as a ‘Teacher of the Faith’.

In 1944 the Bishop of Hong Kong was branded by the Church Times as ‘Bishop in Insurrection’ for ordaining Florence Li Tim-Oi a Priest in the Church of God; now more than 5000 women have



been ordained priests in the Church of England and 29 as bishops in the Anglican Communion.

In 1854, eight years after becoming a Roman Catholic, Father Frederick Faber wrote: *For the love of God is broader Than the measure of our mind; And the heart of the Eternal Is most wonderfully kind... But we make His love too narrow By false limits of our own; And we magnify His strictness With a zeal He will not own.*

The complex Anglican Covenant proposal is claimed to be the only way to keep the Anglican Communion together, and yet many of those who have stayed away from the Anglican Primates’ meetings, or refused to receive Communion with their sister Primate from the United States, say it is not restrictive enough to satisfy them.

Meanwhile several dioceses have already voted that it is too restrictive, and do not want it to exclude their sisters and brothers, or to be themselves excluded.

Is Anglican ‘apartheid’ the will of God for this branch of his Church?

Those who build walls fence themselves in just as they fence others out.

Is our Communion in future to be a convoy, progressing only at the speed of its slowest vessels, or will it continue to allow some to be driven ahead by the unpredictable wind of the Spirit?

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