



Anglican Church in North America

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The Most Rev. Robert Wm. Duncan, Archbishop

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Feast of St. Mary Magdalene

Two Cities: One Choice

An Open Letter to the Anglican Communion

Dearest Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

There are times in the history of God's people when the prevailing values and behaviors of those then in control of rival cities symbolizes a choice to be made by all of God's people. For Anglicans such a moment has certainly arrived. The cities symbolizing the present choice are Bedford, Texas, and Anaheim, California. In the last month, the contrasting behaviors and values of the religious leaders who met in these two small cities made each a symbol of Anglicanism's inescapable choice.

Jerusalem and Babylon come to mind as the Scriptural cities which are enduring symbols of choices to be made by God's people, and of what can happen when God's people make a choice for something other than God's Way, God's Truth, God's Life, as set out in God's Covenant, whether Old or New.

Charles Dickens contrasts London and Paris in the last quarter of the 18th Century in his *Tale of Two Cities*. Both cities are in crisis, but one operates from received values and behaviors, while the other attempts to re-make the world to its own revolutionary tastes.

St. Augustine of Hippo in his *De Civitate Dei* contrasts the City of God and the City of the World, explaining the fate of Rome in terms of the favor that comes from conforming to the behaviors and values of the Heavenly City as over against the Earthly City.

The Anglican Church in North America, whose leaders met at Bedford, Texas, from June 20th to June 25th, embraced the values and behaviors familiar to Christians in every age: daily repenting of human sin in disobeying the one Lord, embracing the need (both personal and corporate) of a divine Savior, and recommitting to the proclamation in word and deed of the gospel of transforming love. The unity at Bedford, despite very real differences, was palpable.


The Episcopal Church, whose leaders met at Anaheim, California, from July 8th to 17th, blessed the values and behaviors of a re-defined Christianity: enabling a revisionist anthropology, budgeting litigation rather than evangelism, and confusing received understandings of Scriptural truth, not least concerning the necessity of individual salvation in Christ Jesus. At Anaheim, there were those who valiantly stood against the revolutionary majority, and their pain and grief at what was happening was heartbreaking for all who saw it, not least for their brothers and sisters in the Anglican Church in North America.

~ Reaching North America with the Transforming Love of Jesus Christ ~

The North American poet, Robert Frost, once wrote: "Two roads diverged in a wood, and I took the road less traveled by. That has made all the difference." For Anglican Christians, for the Instruments of Unity (Communion), for interdependent Provinces, for ordinary believers, there is a choice to be made. The choice is between two religions, two roads, two cities, two sets of conflicting values and behaviors. In Deuteronomy, chapter 30, Moses sets the choice as between blessing and curse, life and death. For contemporary Anglicanism the present choice is this stark.

I write this humbly and as a sinner. I also write it as one whose hope is in Christ alone, and with deepest love for all for whom He died and rose again.

Faithfully and Obediently,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Duncan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a cross at the beginning.

The Most Reverend Robert William Duncan, D.D.
Archbishop of the Anglican Church in North America
Anglican Bishop of Pittsburgh