



On Saturday morning, January 20th, at the Mere Anglicanism conference in Charleston, South Carolina, we had another example of how much we need to learn to “Speak the truth in Love.” (Ephesians 4:15) While I was not present, I have spoken to several people who were present including Bp. Chip Edgar, the Bishop Ordinary of the Diocese of South Carolina. The short version is that Fr. Calvin Robinson had been invited to speak at the Mere Anglicanism Conference sponsored by St. Philip’s, Charleston. Ironically the title of this year’s conference was “Speaking the Truth in Love: The Church and the Challenge of the New Morality.”

Fr. Robinson addressed the Conference regarding the philosophical roots of the current popular liberal mindset, making a connection between Martin Luther & the Reformation, to Marx, to Feminism, to Women’s Orders. After his talk, Fr. Robinson was informed by the conference organizers that he would not be permitted to further participate as conference speaker because he failed to address the topic that was assigned to him. Fr. Robinson strongly disagreed and published a copy of the letter from the conference organizers inviting him to speak and, in his presentation, to “address why Critical Theory and the Gospel are irreconcilable metanarratives.” He contends that he did what he was asked to do, but the conference organizers and some audience members disagreed with the substance of his talk.

Apparently, some of the participants, namely the organizers, found his talk rude and self-aggrandizing. Others I’ve spoken to found him to be direct and provocative. Anyone who has ever met Fr. Robinson will find him to be warm, affable, and engaging. I know I have. Anyone who has listened to him speak will find him direct and provocative. I think of his talk at GAFCON in Kigali. While addressing current obstacles to unity in the Anglican Communion he named women’s orders as a major division. Note that he said this in Rwanda with the large delegations of Uganda and Kenya present. Clearly, Fr. Robinson does not shy away from difficult issues. Again, ironically, disinviting Fr. Robinson made a much bigger story out of the issue, and possibly hurt the future credibility of the conference.

The bigger issue for me as a Bishop of the Church and President of Forward in Faith North America is that we in the ACNA seem unable or unwilling to have the hard conversations that we need to have. Instead, we send 90-character tweets & vitriolic social media posts and or simply break fellowship with someone commonly referred to today as “Cancel Culture.” Shame on us!

In our “Victoria Statement” or technically “Statement from The College Of Bishops On The Ordination Of Women” issued at the conclusion of their September 7, 2017, conclave, the College of Bishops of the Anglican Church in North America stated that “we also acknowledge that [women’s ordination to the priesthood] is a recent innovation to Apostolic Tradition and Catholic Order. We agree that there is insufficient scriptural warrant to accept ordination to the priesthood as standard practice throughout the province.” Fr. Robinson’s plenary address echoed this statement and, albeit passionately, contrasted it with contemporary postmodern liberal political preferences that are deeply rooted in Critical Theory. It is clear to me that he was trying to engage the panel and the audience in confronting this issue which is simply a proverbial “elephant in the room” that is not going away and needs to be robustly discussed in a forum such as the Mere Anglicanism conference.

We at Forward in Faith stand ready and willing to have the hard conversation, to both speak and hear the truth spoken in love. Our prayer is that this young province will mature quickly and allow us to have what Archbishop Duncan used to call “Vigorous Fellowship”, another way of saying... “Speaking the Truth in Love.”

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "+ Eric Menees".

The Rt. Rev. Eric Vawter Menees

www.FIFNA.org

P. O. Box 210248 Bedford, TX 76095-7248 Email: office.fifna@gmail.com telephone: 1-559-494-4972