

ROLLING UP OUR SLEEVES

taking the pulse of our witness as traditional orthodox Anglicans

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We look with gratitude to our inheritance from Christian Europe, and may reasonably ask whether this great civilization has a founder. If anyone could be said to have assembled, from the wreckage of the collapsed Roman Empire, the beginnings of a new Christian civilization, surely it is Benedict of Nursia in the 6th century, the Father of Western monasticism. The Benedictines build Christian Europe, and much of the Church in England.

But the foundations of Christian civilization in the British Isles are laid by the Celtic Church from the first century A.D. The British Church joins forces with the Benedictines and converts the Anglo-Saxon invaders in the 7th century. King Alfred, in the 9th century, the only English king called “the Great,” is among their progeny. He saves Anglo-Saxon-Celtic Christianity from the barbarian Danes, and sets the stage for their conversion to Christ. He strengthens the Church and lays the foundation for what is to become the British Empire, an Empire so great that its language is today spoken throughout the world.

The English language is distilled through centuries of worship with the Book of Common Prayer and the King James Bible, priceless gifts to the rest of the Body. When English spirituality, culture and freedom are threatened in our time by gnostic barbarism in Germany, God raises up Winston Churchill to save the Church and our civilization. Paris, Rome and Athens are liberated largely by Anglicans.

The fault line that first opens the Christian West to gnosticism and the hordes of hell cracks apart in August, 1914, says Solzhenitsyn in his book by that title. The fault goes back to the Enlightenment and the Renaissance, but the opening of it, and the proleptic end of our civilization, can be dated from 1914, the beginning of a ferocious 30 year civil war in Europe. Gnosticism involves the impulse to re-define human nature apart from Christ. The communist is gnostic because he says that redemption comes through eliminating the wrong class of people. Jesus is not the Head of redeemed humanity, the proletarian is. The nazi is gnostic because he says that redemption comes through eliminating the wrong race of people. The aryan superman, not Jesus, is Lord.

The Anglo-American alliance will defeat gnosticism in its first two guises. This victory leaves deep scars and social chaos. The devil will now change his tactics and up the ante and insinuate gnostic feminism into our culture, a form of the heresy far more subtle than communism or nazism. Redemption comes by getting rid of patriarchy. The Christian, however, sees the root problem as sin, not class, race or sex. The root solution is redemption from sin through the Blood of the Saviour, the Son of God. To bring down the West the devil will first attempt to bring down the United States. And to do that, what better way than to bring down the Episcopal Church? After all we are basically the founders of this country. Today we see the meltdown of family life in so many places. We see the fulfilment of Chesterton’s prophecy, that by the end of the 20th century, the most radical thing in society would be Christian fatherhood.

With the purported ordinations of women in 1974 and 1976, the Episcopal Church crumbles, cracks and breaks. We now have a form of ministry which can never be recognized by the universal Church. We can no longer sustain a claim to be part of the Catholic Church. Our relations with the Greek Orthodox and the Polish National Catholic Church, and indeed, with all Catholic bodies, are now completely bent out of shape. A book of alternate services is substituted for the beloved Book of Common Prayer. By this time the marriage canon has been turned into a divorce canon. A nod is given to abortion on demand. Hundreds of parishes leave the Episcopal Church, or rather, more accurately, declare that the Church has left them. Scores of these are taken to court. It is estimated that 50,000 communicants leave in this first wave of departures, many of whom will set up the first Anglican Church in North America, with the help of the one bishop in the House who will stand apart as a prophet, Albert Chambers, retired of Springfield.

This is a horrible, devastating time for an orthodox Episcopalian, the early and mid-seventies. So many bishops, clergy and seminary professors, embracing the faddish gnosticism, leave believers standing in shock, dismay and betrayal. The Greek Orthodox, and other Orthodox bodies, with whom an astonishingly close post WWII relationship had developed, are utterly shocked and betrayed. The deep, underlying *theological issue* is identified as the Incarnation. Is Jesus God-in-the-flesh or not? If He is, then He is Lord, and we must obey Him. We must accept His mind for the Body. If He is not Lord, we can write the rules as we go along. The *moral issues* are identified as the family, marriage, and sexual identity. What does it mean to be a man-in-Christ? What does it mean to be a woman-in-Christ? Prophetic voices can be heard at this time, warning that in one generation, the ordination of women will accelerate a crisis in fatherhood and masculine identity, the worship of the mother-goddess, ever more abortions and the acceptance of practicing homosexuality. The hermeneutic that gives us the ordination of women is the same hermeneutic that brings acceptance of practicing homosexuality. All these issues are part of the gnostic impulse to re-define human nature apart from Christ, the divine Logos and Bridegroom of the Church.

The faithful at this time, whether they know it or not, are overrun by an alien force, the way France was overrun in 1940. To the astonishment of the world, Charles de Gaulle stands up in June, 1940, to declare himself to be France, thereby launching the Free French underground, a reconnaissance force to prepare the way for the Allied invasion and ensure that the Third Republic would continue. In 1976, some 30,000 who want to continue as Episcopalians in effect adopt the model of the Free French, to mount a resistance, and blaze a trail for a movement that might someday have a quarter million Anglicans, somewhere around the number needed for national visibility and impact on the culture.

The Fellowship of Concerned Churchmen convenes the St. Louis Congress in September 1977, the first bright ray of hope for those who can in conscience make no political compromises with the new establishment. Those who are willing to make compromises, and live in the system, are making a terrible mistake, like the Vichy collaborators. They are underestimating their enemy, or not even identifying who the enemy is, or are not able, or willing, to deal with the enemy. The enemy is not a house of genteel Episcopalian bishops, usually willing in the past to play on a level playing field. The enemy is Satan and the hordes of hell, who unleash themselves on the Episcopal Church, to utterly crush it, by marginalizing and destroying all faithful witness. With the Episcopal Church out of the way, the demons can roll up the rest of the Anglican Communion. The Christian West will be grievously undermined, and the rest of our Lord's Body will be absent the one element that can help to reveal her essential unity, the Anglican ethos.

With hindsight one can see now that there could have been much more cooperation between those who left and those who stayed. As with a chess game, some will see sooner than others when they are about to be checkmated. Everyone's time table is different. It is important to recognize that all traditional, orthodox Episcopalians are refugees...those who join a continuing church as well as those who remain in the old system. In the early days, a continuing church body might assume that it is some sort of final solution to the crisis. That assertion is no longer credible. A continuing church body is a holding pattern in a re-alignment in which we are all refugees. In France, during WWII, the Free French underground worked at every turn with those who appeared to collaborate, who would, for example, offer a cellar for a printing press or an attic for a radio transmitter. So it is more constructive to see the continuing churches not as the solution, but as a reconnaissance operation, to map the minefields and blaze a trail for the main body of the army. Our vocation has been like that of John the Baptist, to be a voice in the wilderness, "to make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

The St. Louis Congress, and the Affirmation it promulgates, in September, 1977, rally the new reconnaissance operation. Already scores of new parishes are being organized. Bishop Albert Chambers, with others, consecrates four priests to the Episcopate on January 28, 1978, in Denver, Colorado, to end run the House of Bishops and set up the ecclesiastical equivalent of the de Gaulle Free French. The new bishops divide the Country into four quadrants, and at the first Constitutional Convention in Dallas in 1979, rename the new body the Anglican Catholic Church.

It is fashionable to belabour the divisions that arose in this body. Of course personalities were involved. But there was a real vocational issue to face. Are we going to be backward looking, with a bunker mentality, closed to those still struggling in the system, clothing ourselves with hundreds of canons to protect ourselves from any repetition of the awful pain, looking forward to a funeral with the 1928 Prayer Book? Or is our vocation to update the Church for the unseen years of the coming century, by making the reforms we always knew were necessary? Should not our vocation be to get our young people excited about God? Partly over this vocational challenge the Anglican Catholic Church began immediately to fracture, and within ten years there were a number of competing jurisdictions, not unlike the 39 resistance movements among the Free French, some politically on the left, and some on the right. Before too long, though, these movements unify under Charles de Gaulle and the Cross of Lorraine.

How do the churches of the Anglican continuum get it right? To their credit, these bodies:

- a. Make a correct assessment of the enemy. There can be no communion with bishops who have forfeited their orthodoxy. The faithful must be quarantined and protected and led out of negative energy to a positive affirmation of who we are in Christ. We are not against anything. We are *for* the apostolic ministry, *for* the historic Liturgy, *for* New Testament morality and *pro* life.
- b. Commence offensive operations. There are no defensive rear guard actions anywhere in the Book of Acts. We set up a growth model and release our apostles and evangelists. All is proclamation of the ultimate event that defines all events, the truth that defines all truth: Jesus' mighty Resurrection. "Christ is risen!" Hundreds of new parishes and missions are founded. We learn the nuts and bolts of how to form house churches and new congregations, even on a shoestring. This is something we can share with the remnant communities in the UK and Scandinavia. Our overall mission is always to stake out a claim in a geographic region and present the claims of Christ to everyone living in it, by every means available, with everyone else who is doing the same.
- c. We teach the consensus of the undivided Church of the first millennium in all matters of faith, order and morals. This is the classical Anglican and Eastern Orthodox position, and the

model proclaimed by John Paul II. “As we face the third millennium, we overcome the divisions of the second with the consensus of the first.”

d. As a badly needed reform, we move smartly to restore a sacramental episcopate (the Bishop as Father in God) as opposed to a juridical episcopate (the bishop as an administrator, or an adjudicator of canons, or worse, a policeman or tyrant). We also embrace conciliar governance (synods which hold themselves accountable to the rest of the Body in matters of faith, order, morals and mission).

e. We restore the Permanent Diaconate for men, so that it is normal for every parish to have one or two or more permanent deacons. We can share what we have learned here, and in (f) below, with the remnant communities in the UK and Scandinavia.

f. We train men as Layreaders, and equip them for leadership in worship, mission and discipling others.

g. We sometimes have good formation of men for the Priesthood.

h. We magnify women’s ministries based on Scripture and Tradition: deaconesses, catechists, nuns, Church Army officers, lay canonesses, and above all, wives and mothers. Gospel transformation of our culture requires a new emphasis on the Biblical dignity and pre-eminence of being a wife and mother. The great Mothers’ Unions of Africa show the way here.

i. We face the number two problem in our culture (number one is Solzhenitsyn’s adage, “men have forgotten God”): the erosion of theology, of God, revealed as the Father Almighty, and the consequent erosion of fatherhood in the parish, home and community. Priests are fathers, set to reveal to the fathers and men in the Church their priesthood. The Holy Scriptures are unambiguously and unashamedly patriarchal, and deal from beginning to end with the redemption of patriarchy, from fallen, self-aggrandizing patriarchy to gracious, *kenotic* patriarchy, revealed in the radical self-emptying of the Son of God. When we are orthodox, we are the most radical in our culture, able to offer the culture to the Father for transformation through Christ, in the Holy Spirit. Only thus can we re-evangelize our communities, and now, the Muslims.

Eroding our capacity for this final reform is the widespread breakdown of biblical standards of marriage throughout our movement. Annulments have been given out too freely. Even at the level of bishops the biblical standards for marriage to one woman have been rationalized away, at the very time the Africans, who keep to the biblical standards, are meeting and working with us, and are shocked to find the divorce culture in our ranks. Traditional, orthodox Anglicans should remember the devil’s attack in 1967. The marriage canon was the first to be torn apart. That is not a coincidence. As a reform, we all need to agree on a higher standard – the biblical one – and pick a date, and agree that while we can grandfather, without prejudice, everything before that date, we will apply the biblical standard after it. The biblical standard is that no man can be interviewed for any holy order who has an annulment, or whose wife has one, or, an ordained man with an annulment cannot be promoted. The whole concept of annulments needs to be reviewed and critiqued and quite possibly, eliminated. The consensus on this is growing.

Of course the fracturing of the continuing church movement was one of its other drawbacks, although it has been said that God used the divisions creatively, to prevent the Episcopal Church from taking us seriously. If we rose up, united, as a sizeable body in the early 80’s, the Episcopal Church could have not only seized property and assets, but seriously interfered with the formation of new congregations, by shutting down our ability to get IRS tax numbers, bank loans, zoning variances and building permits. Some of that happened anyway. Gnostics are always totalitarians, who cannot stand Socratic dialogue or views differing from the official ideology. Gnostic systems are based on a fatal flaw, an intellectual swindle, which debate and dialogue will expose, and undo. Opposition must be marginalized and eliminated. In the Church of England today, most of the gnostic hierarchy are trying to eliminate the witness of Forward in Faith by denying the structural solution (an independent and free province, as set

forth in the book Consecrated Women?) that will be required with the consecration of women bishops.

Granting that our divisions afforded us a measure of protection, they were intrinsically a great liability. With hindsight, it is possible to apply what one of our laymen observed, a retired Marine Corps colonel. He likened our formation and deployment to an amphibious landing, the trickiest of manoeuvres in warfare. While landing on enemy beaches, there are many variables. Because of winds, tides, equipment malfunctions and enemy fire, troops can easily be landed on the wrong beaches, with the wrong officers, the wrong maps, the wrong ammunition and the wrong equipment. This can lead to a jumble and a tangle of units, and chaos, out of which the officers must lead the men, to get them off the beach, break through the enemy line, and regroup further inland.

This regrouping is now occurring, thanks be to God. For one thing, we are more likely to see ourselves today as refugees, and identify ourselves as tribes in the wilderness under Moses. As we near the 40th year of our wilderness sojourn, we are aware of a convergence point in the Promised Land. Joshua will lead us in, and we will settle down peaceably together, aware of God's gracious hand upon us, because He has important work for us to do. He has a plan for us. We have a vocation as Anglicans, a vital role to play in the rest of the Body, and in the world. The reason we have been attacked by Satan with such ferocity is because this vocation is so very important.

So for the past ten years and more, it has been possible to see powerful centripetal forces at work among us. Informal networking and cooperation have lead up to this, along with trans-jurisdictional organizations (which have many members and contacts in the old system) such as Forward in Faith/North America, the Society of the Holy Cross, the Prayer Book Society, the Fellowship of Concerned Churchmen, Anglicans United, and others.

During the 1980s the revisionist leadership of Church of England, ignoring warnings from all quarters, puts the ordination of women on the agenda and enters the anguished debate on holy orders, making the break with Catholic Order in 1992. Through the dogged determination of traditional orthodox leaders, and by a miracle, a structural provision is made for the orthodox, with "flying bishops" and shadow jurisdictions. Under Bishop John Broadhurst, Forward in Faith emerges as a movement to rally the orthodox and to set about "being the Church." Remnant communities in Sweden (the Free Synod of the Church of Sweden, and later, the Mission Province) and Norway (the Nordic Catholic Church) cooperate with it.

In the United States the group working to "change things from within," the Episcopal Synod of America," elects Father (now Bishop) David Moyer as President, renames itself "Forward in Faith/North America" (FiF/NA) and models itself on its sister in the UK, to work toward a unified orthodox province for North America. Bishop Keith Ackerman then becomes the President, and the Anglican Province in America (APA) and the Anglican Church in America (ACA) both enter into accords of intercommunion with FiF/NA.

Other structural breakthroughs are (ca 2001) the formation of the Anglican Mission in America, sponsored by the Rwandans (led by Bishop Chuck Murphy), and jurisdictions in North America sponsored by Kenyans (Bishop William Atwood), Ugandans (Bishop John Guernsey) and Nigerians (Bishop Martyn Minns). At last the massive Anglican communities in Africa are aware of the crisis and are weighing in to support the orthodox, led by Archbishop Peter Akinola, Primate of Nigeria. Involvement of the Africans and other Global South primates is having an enormous impact on the re-alignment here. Archbishop Gregory Venables of the Southern Cone lends a helping hand every step of the way.

Another structural breakthrough comes with the Reformed Episcopal Church and the Anglican Province in America deciding to set themselves on a path toward greater collaboration. Other jurisdictions sign up with this, and the Federation of Anglican Churches in the Americas (FACA) is born, in about 2006. In FACA, six jurisdictions, the Anglican Province in America (APA), the Reformed Episcopal Church (REC), the Anglican Mission in America (AMiA), the Anglican Church in America (ACA), the Episcopal Missionary Church (EMC) and the Diocese of the Holy Cross (DHC) hold themselves accountable to each other for Gospel witness, shared ministry, discipline and active cooperation.

The great re-alignment is given a boost in 2003 with TEC's consecration of a practicing homosexual bishop in New Hampshire. Now there is a groundswell of new witness. Bishop Robert Duncan of Pittsburgh leads the Anglican Communion Network, Bishop David Anderson, the American Anglican Council, and Bishop Donald Harvey, the Anglican Network in Canada. FiF/NA bishops (Keith Ackerman of Quincy, Jack Iker of Fort Worth and John-David Schofield of San Joaquin) now prepare their dioceses to move out of TEC. All the groups in the post-2003 witness are converging toward a single province for North America. The AMiA and the REC sign up with this, along with FiF/NA, with the provision that those who are traditional and orthodox on the ordination of women will have the same safeguards that FiF/UK plans for a new free province in the C of E: the integrity of holy orders, and our own synods, seminaries and ecumenical relations. This concept is like the "10th Province" idea proposed in 1977, of a non-geographic and free tenth province in the Episcopal Church. The emerging new province is at this point called the Common Cause Partnership (CCP), and is being encouraged by the Global South primates, meeting in Jerusalem in June of 2008, as the Global Futures Anglican Conference (GAFCON). Late in 2008 CCP becomes the new Province of the Anglican Church in North America, led by Archbishop Robert Duncan and recognized by the Anglican primates who represent the bulk of the Anglican Communion.

The Diocese of the Holy Cross (DHC) in 2003 has its parishes recognized as overseas affiliates of FiF/UK. In 2006, DHC (a) enters into an accord of intercommunion with FiF/NA and (b) joins FACA. In 2009, DHC's parishes all become affiliates of FiF/NA, to help form a cluster in FiF/NA that is part of ACNA. Since DHC is actively in FACA, there is an important link between FACA and the ACNA.

Other significant links are to be found between the Anglican Catholic Church, the Province of Christ the King and the United Episcopal Church, sister jurisdictions that emerged from the 1978 Denver Consecrations. They recognize each other and enjoy an informal federation, which is connected to FACA by many ties of friendship and cooperation.

All these centripetal forces are the hand of God, the work of the Holy Spirit, in our midst. Internationally there is GAFCON and the new primates council. In the UK there is FiF. In North America there is ACNA and FACA and the ACC/PCK/UEC alliance. We are all part of "the converging church," the re-alignment of Anglicanism, which is not so much a split as a great reform, to return to the consensus of the undivided Church of the first millennium, to unite the catholic, the evangelical and the charismatic strands and to engage in Kingdom thinking for the unhindered proclamation of the Gospel. The Lord is freeing us to be Anglicans, whose roots go through Churchill to Alfred the Great to Benedict to the Celtic Church in Britain and to the apostles of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

The Celtic itinerant missionaries of old have left an indelible impression on us. Benedict's emphasis on the family, rooted in one place, is with us always. Alfred's zeal for Holy Tradition and for freedom burns forever. The Reformer's focus on the fathers, with the incarnation as a

starting point in theology, is the cutting edge for our witness in a diseased and distressed culture. Our Book of Common Prayer is a way of life and a masterpiece of liturgy for all time. We are an outbreak of Orthodoxy in the West. Alone among Christians we have a foot in the Roman, Orthodox and Protestant worlds.

We are great synthesizers. From Whitby on we agreed on a blend of the seemingly impossible elements of the Celtic itinerant and the Benedictine settler. They worked together to convert the Anglo-Saxon invaders. From repeated invasions, Christians in Britain had to learn to hold on to “core values” but have enough elasticity to absorb the good in what their invaders brought. The English language is itself an expression of this. English remains a Germanic language, amazingly enriched by Scandinavian and French. In our time the devil takes advantage of this wonderful gift, and seduces us into an elasticity that absorbs heresy and error, and has us succumb to spiritual exhaustion after the 1914-1945 European civil war. But God is reforming and invigorating us so He can use us to help reveal the essential unity of His Church...to “mend the rends” in our Lady’s Protecting Veil. We are in a position to help the two lungs of the Church, East and West, breathe together again.

How marvellous that now, most Christians in this amazing Anglican ethos live in the global south, and are making their own unique contributions. The great Churches of Rome and Constantinople, and many others, are eager to see us come into our own, so that they can receive the precious gift that we are and have, to the glory of our heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit.