

The Journal of The Church of England Continuing

“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever” Hebrews 13:8.

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From Bishop David Samuel-

The Parsonage,
1,Downshire Square,
Reading, RG1 6NJ.

Dear Friends,

I am glad that a newsletter for the Church of England (Continuing) is now being produced. It will help to make our position better known. That position is that we wish to maintain and continue as our name indicates, the great inheritance, spiritually and doctrinally, of the Church of England, which is now being so assiduously dismantled and discarded by the General Synod.

We believe in the Church of England. We believe it was fashioned and formed in the providence of God to be the vehicle of His Word and Gospel to our nation. It was specially equipped to fulfil this task, and only as it remains faithful to its real identity can it do that particular work. That identity is found in certain texts, namely the Authorized Version of the Holy Scriptures, the 39 Articles of Religion, the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordinal. All these have been incorporated individually into our constitution. We are irrevocably committed to them. We believe they are the identity card of the Church of England without which we would be mere vagrants in Christendom.

I and many other clergy have said often that what passes for the Church of England today is no longer the church into which we were ordained. The past 30 years have produced such radical and far reaching-change that the church has lost its identity. It is for this reason and this reason alone that we have been constrained to take the step we have taken. We have done it only because we love the Church of England, and do not wish to

see its great spiritual inheritance lost to our nation. We shall endeavour by God's grace to maintain a faithful witness to it. We believe we can do this better outside the constraints of the diocesan structures than within them. There are now far too many pressures upon clergy and people within the structures of the Church of England, making it necessary to conform to the changes that have been introduced.

However I do not want us to be inward looking or to form what is called a ghetto. I think we have a missionary job to do. We must explain to other people what we are about and why we take the stand we do. We must be outward looking in preaching the Gospel. I hope we shall do all these things and take every opportunity to spread the word. Why not see if there are other like-minded people in your area who would come together to form a fellowship and eventually a church which will be in communion with us in the Church of England (Continuing)? This is the way forward and I trust and pray that the Lord will richly bless you and us in His service.

Yours sincerely,

David N. Samuel, Bishop.

No Good Clinging to the Wreckage

by Bishop David N. Samuel

Since the Women's Ordination Measure received the Royal Assent I have declared my intention, in due course, to resign my ministry in the Church of England. That may appear to some to be a drastic and unnecessary step. It is one, however, which though I take it with great sadness and reluctance, I believe to be inescapable.

The Church of England has contributed much to the life of this nation spiritually and I have received much from it. I value its teaching in the 39 Articles of Religion, I treasure its liturgy in the Book of Common Prayer, and I believe its ministry as set forth in the ordinal to be agreeable to Scripture. Why then, it may be asked, if you believe in all these things do you feel it necessary to separate from such a body? The reason is that the Measure passed by the General Synod in November 1992 undermines in fact and in principle those very formularies which have given the Church of England its special character as a Reformed Church. In passing that Measure the General Synod acted against Scripture and struck at the very foundation, which is the supreme authority and sufficiency of Holy Scripture.

Teaching of Scripture

The teaching of Scripture on this matter of presbyterate or eldership in the church is very clear indeed. Paul writing to Timothy says that it must be restricted to men: "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (1 Timothy 2:12). He is referring to the office of elder or presbyter since that is the principal teaching office of the church. He is instructing Timothy as to how it is to be ordered and safeguarded. It must be restricted to men

since God has given to the man a headship both in the family and in the church. That headship and authority must not be usurped or overthrown by the intrusion into it of one who is disqualified by her sex for that is a recipe for confusion. This case is not built upon a single text but upon others, (see 1 Corinthians 14:34,35) and upon the general teaching of Scripture on the headship of man.

Now that has been the position in the church for two thousand years and no one has seriously sought to question it until relatively recent times. But suddenly, under the influence of changing customs and fashions in society, the matter has been keenly debated in the church. The authority of the church in these matters and its power to introduce changes are very clearly defined in the 39 Articles. Article 20 **Of the Authority of the Church** declares, "The church hath power to decree Rites and Ceremonies, and authority in Controversies of Faith: And yet it is not lawful for the church to ordain anything that is contrary to Gods Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and keeper of holy Writ, yet, as it ought not to decree anything against the same, so beside the same it ought not to enforce anything to be believed for necessity of salvation."

It is perfectly clear from this that

the church has no authority to introduce the ordination of women contrary to the plain teaching of the Word of God. Its hands were clearly tied in this respect by its own formularies.

Interpretation

The right way to proceed in the interpretation of Scripture, according to all the reformers, is to begin with what is clear and then to examine what is less clear, and to interpret the hard passages in the light of those that are plain. Article 20 declares that it is unlawful for the church so to expound one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another. The church is the keeper of Holy Scripture not its judge. It must be beneath Scripture not above it. Therefore it must allow Scripture to form the mind of the church: it is not for the church to impose its mind and meaning upon Scripture.

The right way to proceed therefore is to begin with the clear statements of Paul about ministry in 1 Timothy 2: 11,12 and 1 Corinthians 14: 34,35 and to interpret the harder passages like Galatians 3: 28 (“...there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus”), often quoted by the supporters of the ordination of women, in the light of these. On this principle of interpretation it is clear there is no contradiction in what Paul is saying (for it is certain that one truth can never contradict another) but that in the one case Paul is speaking of order in the church and in the other case he is speaking of the justification of the believer before God. In the former there must be distinction on the grounds of sex, in the latter such distinctions do not obtain. Those who argue that in Galatians 3: 28 Paul is making all distinctions void in the church and society as well as before God, must contend also

that he was abolishing marriage too, which was clearly not the case.

Synod Debate

However instead of proceeding according to this principle of interpretation of Scripture, laid down in the Articles of the Church of England, the Synod chose to rely on specious arguments to justify it in acting in defiance of Scripture. First, it was argued that Scripture is not clear on this matter and that we can never really know what Scripture is saying about this subject. Many who took part in the debate and announced themselves as evangelicals took this line. “I do not think,” said one evangelical lady, “that Scripture forbids the ordination of women...neither side can be certain what ‘head’ means. We must let the circumstances decide.” So the authority of Scripture was being deliberately undermined. But in addition to this theological agnosticism, the Archbishop of Canterbury introduced the astonishing claim that the ordination of women was parallel to the admission of the Gentiles into the church. Peter, he argued, resisted their admission but was eventually persuaded of its rightness by a vision from God and his meeting with Cornelius. The ordination of women in the church was a ‘development’ in the doctrine of the church like that. This argument, if that is what it may be called, was not merely fallacious but breathtaking in its audacity. The admission of the Gentiles into the church was not effected by the development of doctrine (a modish term now employed by theologians and derived from John Henry Newman) but by **special revelation** of God. Paul the Apostle was specially called for that purpose and to him it was specially revealed (as indeed it was to Peter) Acts 26:17,18: Ephesians 3:1-12: Colossians

1: 25-27. Paul speaks of the call and admission of the Gentiles as something given by special dispensation and revelation of God to him as the apostle to the Gentiles. Can Dr. Carey in claiming that there is a parallel, be suggesting that the ordination of women to the presbyterate was given to him and the General Synod by special revelation of God? And that what they have to say on this matter is on a par with the inspired utterances of the apostles? And if not what can he possibly mean, if anything at all? In one sense there is a certain crazy logic in what he says, because in proposing to set aside the already clear word of scripture on this matter they would require a more than human authority. (But God does not contradict Himself. He is the God of order not of confusion.)

Fundamental Change

In this atmosphere and mood of irrationality and bewilderment I suppose it is not surprising that the Synod acted as it did. Something of major proportions went wrong on that day in the Church of England. I came away feeling it could never be the same again. There had been a fundamental shift in the position of the Church of England. This was a decision that would have enormous implications and would set the course and direction of the Church of England for the future, and that course would be one of ever increasing divergence from Scripture, from its formularies, from orthodoxy and from truth.

There had of course been many things before this which had occasioned deep unease and distress: the pronouncements of the Bishop of Durham, the hesitancy and fudge on moral issues, attempts to take the church in a Romeward direction. But despite all these things one felt that the formularies

of the church were secure. Evangelicals as loyal churchmen could appeal to them and claim that the official teaching of the church supported their position and these other statements were aberrations from the norm, that the official teaching was faithful to Scripture and inviolable. Now that is no longer the case. By an act of Synod the doctrine of the Church of England was deliberately changed and in a manner that contradicted the Word of God. The church had set aside Scripture and its own Articles. There seemed to be no way back from that position.

If I may put it in a picture: before, the ship was taking in water and listing badly, but there were those who were manning the pumps and hoping to correct the list. But with the passing of this measure the ship capsized and we were left clinging to the wreckage. The time comes when the survivors from cold and exhaustion, fall into the water. The best and only hope is to leave the wreck and strike out for land.

The Right Course

Some have argued that by evangelicals leaving now the situation will be made worse, that the right course is to remain within the church and fight. But the question is, Fight for what? "If the foundations be destroyed what can the righteous do?" The official doctrine of the church has been undermined and revealed to be a fiction, if it can be changed arbitrarily by a show of hands in the Synod. Church Society pursued the matter to the High Court and the court ruled that the General synod has power in all matters relating to the Church of England, including doctrine.

Parliament and the crown are no longer prepared to uphold the doctrine of the Church of England, as they were in

the eighteenth century when the clergy petitioned parliament to change the creeds in favour of Arianism and were refused. Appeal therefore to the official teachings of the Church of England, which has always been the recourse of classic evangelicals in the past no longer applies. What the church of England believes from henceforth is not what the Articles teach but what Synod decides. This is not a tenable position for evangelicals.

Others have said, if evangelicals leave the Church of England then it will become increasingly liberal and they will be guilty of hastening the process. But that is something we cannot be held responsible for. The duty of the Christian is to do what is right and to obey his conscience. He must leave the consequences to God. If the result of acting in obedience to conscience is that the wickedness of liberalism should become more apparent in the Church of England, that may be the will of God for sometimes He wants people to see clearly the nature and consequences of disobedience and rebellion and to that end he removes those conditions which have masked or ameliorated them. If that is His purpose we have no right or power to stand in His way.

The situation has now come to a head and we are placed in a position in which we have to choose. As Spurgeon once said, "Decision is the virtue of the hour." I with others cannot acquiesce in the decision of the General Synod, nor recognise, as we shall be required to do according to the new interpretation of the Canons of the Church of England, women as truly ordained presbyters of the church. The Church of England has acted in a manner that is "contrary to God's Word written" and contrary to its own teaching.

Coming Events

Bishop Samuel will speak in the Midlands Bible College, St. Johns Square, Wolverhampton, on "*The Crisis in the Church - Why the Witness of the Church of England (Continuing) is needed*" on 23rd September at 3 p.m. (D.V.). For information phone the Rev. E. Malcolm 01547-528815

Bishop Samuel will address a meeting of the Protestant Reformation Society in London at Westminster Central Hall on the subject of "*The European Union and Roman Catholic Influence in Britain*" at 2.00 p.m. on Saturday October 28th (D.V.).

Bishop Samuel will hold a **Confirmation Service** in St. Marys, Castle Street, Reading, at 11 a.m. on Sunday 29th October 1995 (D.V.)

The Revd. Allan H.L. Bowhill **Obituary**

Allan Bowhill was the youngest of ten children. They attended St. Marks, Tollington Park, North London in the time of the Rev. W. H. Selwyn Griffiths. Here Allan learnt to love the Word of God, to understand the worship of the Book of Common Prayer and to appreciate the Reformation doctrines of free salvation and justification by faith alone. At the age of nine he made a public decision for Christ at a tent mission. Five years later he met his future wife Beverley at St. Marks where they grew up together.

Allan served in the Military Police in Germany and Aden and later as a detective constable in the Metropolitan Police. This led him and his family to Papua New Guinea where Allan was responsible for 17 ports and the training of port police for the newly independent country.

He was increasingly conscious of a call to the ministry and went to Trinity College, Bristol in 1979 and then to a curacy at St. Luke's, Wolverhampton, where his and Beverley's gifts, especially for work among young people, became apparent. They fostered 27 children over the years.

He accepted an invitation to St. Mary's, Castle Street, Reading. In 1988 he developed his first brain tumour from which he made a remarkable recovery. The following years were not easy but to any enquiry after his health he would respond cheerfully, "I'm very well, thank you."

In 1994 Allan took his stand and resigned with others who believed the ordination of women to be contrary to the clear teaching of Scripture. The Church of England (Continuing) came into being and Allan's last months of ministry were

to the former congregation of St. John the Baptist with Mary-le-Port meeting at the Chapel of the Three Kings, Bristol. It was an immense joy to him to be given strength to go to Reading and take part in the consecration of Dr. Samuel as Bishop in the Church of England (Continuing).

Allan will be sadly missed by many, especially his wife Beverley, their children Elizabeth, Ruth and Simon, their sons-in-law Tim and Andrew, the grandchildren Samuel, Ruben, Abigail and Joshua, other members of the family and the many friends, colleagues and acquaintances who knew him as a faithful soldier and servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Allan Bowhill Ministry Fund

A fund has been set up to commemorate Allan Bowhill and to support ministers of the Church of England (Continuing). Cheques and other donations should be sent to the Rt. Rev. Dr. D. N. Samuel at The Parsonage, 1, Downshire Square, Reading, RG1 6NJ.

The *Wolverhampton congregation* now meet in the Bethany Chapel, Lower Prestwood Road at the junction with Blackwood Avenue, Wednesfield. Sympathetic Christian Brethren allow them to share their building but services have to be at 12.40 p.m. and 4.00 p.m.. The congregation have a sandwich lunch between services. They have the use of the building on Tuesday afternoons for a 'Sunday School' and sometimes a Bible Study and Prayer Meeting or a Church Council meeting and as a base for visiting.

Bishop Ryle on John 3 vv1-8

We should notice.....in these verses, what a mighty change the Lord declares to be needful to salvation, and what a remarkable expression he uses in describing it.

He speaks of a new birth. He says to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." He announces the same truth in other words, in order to make it more plain to the hearers mind: Except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. By this expression he meant Nicodemus to understand that no one could become his disciple, unless his inward man was as thoroughly cleansed and renewed by the Spirit, as the outward man is cleansed by water. To possess the privileges of Judaism a man only needed to be born of the seed of Abraham after the flesh. To possess the privileges of Christ's kingdom a man must be born again of the Holy Ghost.

The change which our Lord here declares needful to salvation is evidently no slight or superficial one. It is not merely reformation, or amendment or moral change, or outward alteration of life. It is a thorough change of heart, will and character. It is a resurrection. It is a new creation. It is a passing from death unto life. It is the planting in our dead heart of a new principle from above. It is the calling into existence of a new creature, with a new nature, new habits of life, new tastes, new desires, new appetites, new judgements, new opinions, new hopes and new fears. All this and nothing less than this is implied, when our Lord declares that we all need a "new birth".

This change of heart is rendered absolutely necessary to salvation by the corrupt condition in which we are all,

without exception, born. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. Our nature is thoroughly fallen. The carnal mind is enmity against God. (Romans 8:7) We come into the world without faith, or love or fear towards God. We have no natural inclination to serve Him or obey him and no natural pleasure in doing His will. Left to himself, no child of Adam would ever turn to God. The truest description of the change which we all need to make us real Christians is the expression "new birth".

This mighty change, it must never be forgotten, we cannot give to ourselves. The very name which our Lord gives to it is a convincing proof of this. He calls it a "birth". No man is the author of his own existence, and no man can quicken his own soul. We might as well expect a dead man to give himself life, as expect a natural man to make himself spiritual. A power from above must be exercised, even that same power which created the world. (2 Cor. 4:6) Man can do many things; but he cannot give life to himself or to others. To give life is the peculiar prerogative of God. Well may our Lord declare that we need to be "born again"!

This mighty change we must above all remember is a thing without which we cannot go to heaven, and could not enjoy heaven if we went there. Our Lords words on this point are distinct and express. "Except a man be born again he cannot *see* nor *enter* the kingdom of God." Heaven may be reached without money or rank or learning. But it is as clear as daylight, if words have any meaning, that no one can enter heaven without a new birth. (*Expository Thoughts on the Gospels*)

Church of England (Continuing)

The Right Reverend Dr. David N. Samuel, M.A., Ph.D. *Presiding Bishop*

The Right Reverend Albion W. Knight, M.A., M.S. *Bishop*

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The Rt. Rev. Dr. D. N. Samuel, M.A., Ph.D. (*Chairman*)

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Mr. D. K. Mansell (*Treasurer*)

Churches

St. Mary's, Castle Street, Reading. The Rt. Rev. Dr. D. N. Samuel. Sunday Services 11 a.m. Morning Prayer (First Sunday, Lord's Supper), 6.30 p.m. Evening Prayer (Third Sunday Lord's Supper). Enquiries 01734 595131.

Former Congregation of St. John the Baptist with Mary-le-Port, Chapel of the Three Kings, Foster's Almshouses, top of Christmas Steps, Colston Street, Bristol 1. Sunday Service 11 a.m. Morning Prayer. Enquiries 01934 712520.

Nuffield Parish Church, Nuffield, near Henley-on-Thames, The Rev. J.F. Shearer. Sunday Services 11 a.m. Morning Prayer, 6.30 p.m. Evening Prayer. Lord's Supper 8 a.m. first Sunday, 6.30 p.m. third Sunday. Bible Study Wednesday 8 p.m. Enquiries 01491 641305.

South London Congregation, St. John's Ambulance Hall, Kingston Road (Opposite Palmerston Road), Wimbledon. The Rev. B. G. Felce and Mr. Andrew R. Price. Sunday Services 11.00 a.m. Morning Prayer, 6.30 p.m. Evening Prayer. Enquiries 0181 642 7885.

Wolverhampton Congregation. Bethany Chapel, Lower Prestwood Road, at junction with Blackwood Ave., Wednesfield. The Rev. E. Malcolm. Sunday Services 12.40 p.m. Morning Prayer, 4.00 p.m. Evening Prayer. Enquiries 01547-528815.

Treasurer

Mr. D. K. Mansell, 17, Greenfels Rise, Oakham, Dudley, DY2 7TP.

Journal

Any communications or enquiries in connection with this Journal should be addressed to the Secretary, Dr. Napier Malcolm, Kingswood House, Pilcorn Street, Wedmore, Somerset, BS28 4AW. Phone (01934) - 712520.

Constitution

1. Doctrine: The doctrine of the Church of England (Continuing) shall be that of the 39 Articles of Religion understood in their original, natural and intended sense.

2. Worship: The worship of the Church of England (Continuing) shall be generally according to the Book of Common Prayer (1662).

The Authorised Version of the Bible shall be the only version used in the lectern and the pulpit and in public readings and expositions at all meetings of the Church of England (Continuing).

3. Ministry: The consecration and ordination of ministers shall be according to the Ordinal of the Book of Common Prayer (1662).

The Church of England (Continuing) believes in the ministry of women according to Scripture which does not permit them to teach or exercise authority, particularly as bishops, priests, and deacons.

4. Discipline: The church shall be episcopally governed.

A general assembly shall be held not less than once a year consisting of the bishop and the ministers of the church and representatives of the local congregations to transact the business of the denomination and for mutual encouragement and edification.

5. Membership: New churches may apply for membership of the Church of England (Continuing) on the basis of their agreement with the doctrine, worship and discipline of that body. Membership of the local church shall be on the basis of baptism and confirmation and approval by the local presbyter.

Any matters incapable of resolution shall be referred to the Ordinary.