

*The Journal*  
of  
**The Church of England**  
**(Continuing)**

*Jesus Christ the same  
yesterday, and to day, and  
for ever. Heb. 13:8*



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# CONSTITUTION

- 1 **Doctrine:** The doctrine of the Continuing Church shall be that of the 39 Articles of Religion understood in their original, natural and intended sense.
- 2 **Worship:** The worship of the Continuing Church 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 Continuing Church.

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

The Continuing Church publishes a prayer letter, "Intercessions." It is available free of charge to those who would like to receive news and to pray for the various needs.

Please write to

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Would contributors please note that they can send their news via email, to [edward@netvigator.co.uk](mailto:edward@netvigator.co.uk)

*Contributions toward postage costs are gratefully received.*

Dear Friends,

## **Evening Prayer**

In the evening, and morning, and at noonday will I pray. (*Psalm 55. 18, BCP*)

In Acts 3. 1 Peter and John went to the Temple at ‘the ninth hour’, because it was ‘the hour of prayer’. In Acts 10. 3, at that same hour, Cornelius was at prayer and received instructions to send for Peter, who, next day (*10. 9*), ‘went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour’. The Holy Ghost fell at Pentecost upon those that ‘were all together in one place’ at ‘the third hour of the day’ (*Acts 2. 1,15*). Thus it appears Peter and John and Cornelius and the rest continued in some relation to Temple worship. That agrees with our text, and explains Daniel 6. 10, ‘Daniel...went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime’. You will say, what connection has this with Evening Prayer?

In the course of time the division of the twelve-hour day into four parts came to be reckoned into the third, sixth, ninth and twelfth hours, from sunrise to sunset, giving rise to daytime services. This came to be observed in England before the Reformation as eight or seven hours, using at each hour the Lord’s Prayer, reciting sections of the Psalter, a short passage or passages from the Bible, and ending with prayers, all in Latin, and all rather impractical for ordinary men and women. Who could stop work for prayers in church eight times a day?

Our Prayer Book contains these hours, but reduced for obvious reasons to only two, Morning and Evening Prayer. Each is a free rendering of these Latin services, with Scripture given a more uniform and important place. The Prayer Book Preface declares the object of this to be threefold: the regular use of the daily services in church, in a way the congregation could join in with understanding, whilst giving continuity to the Psalms and Bible readings.

The methods were: first, simplicity of language by getting rid of interruptions and having few rules. Second, completeness, by reading the whole Psalter and virtually the whole Bible over a period. And third, uniformity throughout the land. All of us who are old enough to remember, can recall, say, in the forces,

being able to attend the garrison or nearest church, and expecting the service to be the one we had always been used to.

We do not ask you to attend each day, but ask you something simple and practical; please attend evening as well as morning each Sunday. We say this for excellent reasons.

When we give up attendance at evening prayer, unless old age or circumstances make it impossible, we do several things. First, we depart from the godly tradition handed down from the dawn of the Gospel of Christ. We are commanded in 2 Thessalonians 2. 15 to 'hold the traditions which ye have been taught'. In the second place, we weaken the hands of our brethren. The fact is, we have only one day in the week that ordinary church members can afford to meet, and as our Holy-Spirit-strength is in our united effort, we ruin evangelism and works of mercy. Worship is difficult with a few, and it becomes impossible to hold united open air evangelism.

We need to meet before church in the morning to pray, then to worship together, then to use the afternoon to teach children, visit the elderly, infirm and the sick, and before the evening service to be out inviting people in, and again witnessing afterwards. Alongside this are youth groups, men's and women's groups, all of which used to flourish on a Sunday in our churches. Did our fathers who worked six whole days have more time on their hands than we do?

As employment becomes so much more demanding, if we give up Evening Prayer together, we virtually give up united (how that word needs stressing) work for the Lord. Tell me, if you feel I am not making due allowance for your personal needs, what other day would you recommend weekly, in order to do these vital things?

Last Sunday evening I tried to phone a long-standing Christian friend, who had contacted us to pray for him in a special need. He replied to the letter I then wrote, saying 'I did not hear the phone because I had the TV on.'

I saw the video about Evan Roberts, the young man God used for the 1904 Revival in Wales, and was moved by the fact he alone kept coming to Sunday chapel, walking past his own friends who were swimming in the estuary, but spurred on by the words of an elder who said 'Come regularly, or the blessing may fall during the one service you are absent from.'

Lord, touch hearts!  
Your friend and bishop,



Edward Malcolm

# THE NEED TO MAINTAIN THE PROTESTANT ANGLICAN FAITH

John Shearer

WE are in a serious situation. This country is morally and spiritually sick, and if I did not love my country, and feel clearly called of God to be here and to stay here, I would be off to seek for somewhere to live which was more stable, peaceful and law-abiding. It is not my place here to enumerate the many facets of our national life which give cause for concern, but simply to say that there is obviously a very deep malaise in our national psyche. The authority of God has been replaced by the false and vacillating authority of the individual, in such a way that they believe a lie, “It’s me, not the country that matters”; so that the power of the individual becomes the power of the state and everything must fit into the liberal enlightenment where the sinfulness of the human heart is denied and therefore given no restraint. Those who dissent from this view are despised: evil becomes good and good becomes evil.

Looking back a clear agenda has been unfolding from the 1950s according to the mastermind of the Enemy of Truth. And while we clearly acknowledge the sovereign purposes of our Glorious God in all things, which will ultimately turn to His Glory, we cannot deny that the great contributing factor has been, and still is, the weakness of the Church—and of the Church of England in particular. William Cowper wrote,

When Satan leads a nation in it’s sins,  
‘Tis in the Church the leprosy begins.

It was in the post-World War Two period (I speak of my own lifetime and experience), that the Church of England, instead of re-gathering her troops and addressing a needy and essentially God-fearing nation with the saving Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ, just wasted the opportunity and spent its time revising Canon Law and debating disestablishment. Whatever we think of Billy Graham and his methods, his Crusade in 1954 attracted tens of thousands of people night after night, indicating a deep hunger to know the truth.

I intend to deal with this subject under four heads:

1. Personal Experience
2. Historical evidence
3. Present situation
4. The need to maintain the Protestant Anglican faith

## 1. Personal Experience

I hope I may be excused something of my personal history, so that you may understand a little of the perspective I have as it relates to my background. I was the only child of a good, hard-working home, which was only nominally Christian, where my father was culturally anti-Roman Catholic, and my mother would attend church from time to time with serious and devout intentions, and I only attended Sunday school the weeks before the Christmas party and the annual outing. However, what impressed me whenever I attended the Parish Church was the beauty, serenity and sense of timelessness: it seemed quite magic and spoke of another world than the one I inhabited of school, fish keeping, steam railways and exploring the countryside further and further afield on my bicycle.

Then, at the age of sixteen I was suddenly converted to the Lord Jesus Christ as the Spirit of God brought together my occasional, but inquisitive reading of the Bible and my own felt need of direction in my life arising from a serious conviction of failure. The change was so revolutionary that I did not, to begin with, associate it with the Church. For when I had earlier gone along to the Confirmation sausage-machine at the age of fourteen in the Parish Church, I saw nothing of Bible truth or life-changing exhortations.

So when a school friend invited me along to the local Baptist church where he attended, I went along with him. And there it was: the consistent and Biblical working out of the change I had experienced! What a contrast to the Parish Church where this *ought* to have been. *There* was the historic edifice at the centre of the community, the product of our Christian past, which knew nothing of Christ my Saviour, and *here* was an ugly pre-fabricated building stuck on a bit of waste ground in no-mans-land, on the edge of the village, which yet possessed the glories of the gospel. The tragedy of the situation struck me—that the truth I was entering into *should* have been in the national church in my parish, and not confined to a small group of overlooked people on the fringes. So I spoke to the Pastor of the Baptist church and said: “I feel happy and at home in your church with the Bible teaching and Christian fellowship but I am not a Baptist and have no desire or conviction to be re-baptised, but can I stay with you on that basis?” “Come right in,” he said, “you’re one of us and are welcome at the Lord’s table and nobody is going to press you to be baptised.” There I was, a refugee from the English Church!

So that was my early Christian life—a refugee from the Church of England, nourished by a Baptist chapel. I should add that while I attended every Lord’s Day at the Baptist Chapel for one service, for the other I got on my bicycle and visited every parish church in the whole of the City of Leicester to see what I could find in the way of true, vibrant, Biblical Christianity, but there was nothing and this was

the 1950s. However one particular mercy was that through our school Christian Union I met Bishop Malcolm's father who was Vicar of Mountsorrel at that time, and there, I at once recognised a man who represented the Church of England as it should really be and I greatly benefited from his ministry.

## 2. Historical Evidence

So what was being impressed upon me, almost without me knowing it, was that the Church of England was **the English Church**. Being born into this country and being English, meant therefore that this was my church, unless I could find good reason for it not to be! And the ecclesiastical history of our nation demonstrates that this is certainly the case.

It would seem to be beyond doubt that the gospel reached these islands in early post-apostolic times and that the church was established here by the end of the Second Century. Tertullian certainly speaks of the church already established in Britain in 208. By the edict of Diocletian in 284 all church buildings were razed to the ground and two years later there was our first British martyr Alban of Verulamium. Persecution ceased after 313 when Constantine became a 'Christian' and when Augustine arrived from Rome in 597 he found an already existing Christian church here and the Celtic church remaining separate in the west. At this time, what we now know as England was divided into seven separate kingdoms: Wessex, Mercia, East Anglia, Northumbria, Kent, Essex and Sussex, and so the Council of Whitby in 664 was convened in an attempt to integrate the separate churches in each kingdom. The task fell to Theodore of Tarsus who visited every kingdom, filled vacant sees, divided dioceses which were too large, suppressed irregularities, ensured that marriage and divorce laws were regularised and that there was to be no trespassing from one diocese upon another. The first truly national synod of the English Church was held at Hertford in 673 when all seven kingdoms were represented. This could be said to be the birth of the Church of England and convocations of the Church were thereafter held once a year.

One should note that the Church was not established by parliament and was in fact one hundred and fifty years older than the state. At this time there were still seven kingdoms but one church extending from the Firth of Forth to the English Channel, obeying one set of canons with the authority of one archbishop and using the same prayers and services.

This English church was organised by monks, and so monasteries played an important part. The snag here is that if we try to escape from the world, the world will only follow us and so there was a downgrade into mediaeval darkness. Corruption came in and began to abound. The monasteries were noted for their wealth and immorality to such a degree that parliament in 1405 and 1410 called

twice for their dissolution. Into this period of excessive spiritual darkness came John Wycliffe and the Lollards preaching the gospel of redemption by the blood of Christ alone, producing the Bible in English manuscript form and laying the groundwork for the reformation which was to come at a price. In 1511 the King's secretary wrote: "No wonder the price of faggots has gone up! The number of heretics form a holocaust every day and the crop is still growing." Thus there was a bold and vigorous movement throughout much of England and much blood was shed long before the time of Bloody Mary.

In 1517 news of Luther's Ninety-five theses against Indulgences gave much encouragement. In the 1520s the Greek New Testament of Erasmus affected Bilney in Cambridge and Tyndale in Oxford. From 1525 Tyndale's New Testament in English began to be available, and it was as late as 1527 that the King's matter of his desire to divorce Catherine of Aragon after a marriage of 18 years came to the surface. So never believe the Roman Catholic who tells you that the reformation was caused by Henry's divorce. Thomas Cranmer became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1533, the suppression of the monasteries began in 1536, Bibles were placed in every Parish Church from 1538 and by March 1540 all the monasteries had gone. In 1543 Cranmer was allowed to draw up an English Litany and in 1547 Henry died, bringing Edward VI to the throne. 1549 saw the First Prayer Book and 1552 the Second which is substantially the same as the one we use today. But then in 1553 Edward died and Mary began her purge of the newly emerging Protestant and Biblical church. The Archbishop was arrested and the anti-Lollard laws revived. Almost three hundred men, women, boys and girls, clergy, bishops and the archbishop were to perish before the Bible and the Prayer Book were restored. You will know the exhortation of Latimer to Ridley: "Be of good comfort, brother Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England as I trust shall never be put out." Latimer speaks of the Church of England ... The English Church. That candle is for me and every believer. This is the history of my nation and my church. I am one of the inheritors of these blessings. When Mary died, Elizabeth the daughter of the Protestant Anne Boleyn came to the throne and the Church of England was established as we have known her until recent times.

### **3. Present Situation**

The subsequent history of the Church of England, while not a time of continuous reformation and revival, did, even at its lowest ebb, still preserve its doctrine, its liturgy and the Authorised Version of the Bible. The history of the Evangelical Party is something of which we can be proud and the names of its luminaries are often on our lips: Wesley and Whitefield, William Romaine, William Grimshaw, Daniel Rowland, Augustus Toplady, John Newton, Thomas



Scott, Charles Simeon, Henry Venn, William Wilberforce, Lord Shaftesbury, Hannah Moore, J C Ryle right up to John Kensit in the twentieth century. It seemed to many that in the 1950s and 60s the evangelical tide was coming in with so many from that school being ordained. I was one of them and in 1961 when I was confessing my faith in the Calvinistic interpretation of the scriptures and the apostasy of the Church of Rome, Colin Brown, my tutor at Tyndale Hall, said to me, "Oh be careful John, because you see the tide is going out, and if you stay in that position, you will be left as a bit of flotsam on the beach". To which my reply was: "Well if I'm going to be a bit of flotsam on the beach, that's where I'll be". And that is where I am today!

During this time we have been fighting against both Romanism and Liberalism in the Church of England. A major battle was lost in 1963 when Mass vestments and stone altars were legalised, although it was said that in order to make us more comfortable, no particular doctrine was attached to these things. Then in 1967 came the Keele Congress when Evangelicals threw in the towel apart from a very small minority, including Bishop Samuel who strongly objected to what was happening. From that time evangelicals saw themselves as just one party in the Church of England having only equal rights with Romanists and Liberals, and so gave up their distinctive position. Even after that some of us continued to fight against unbiblical trends, in particular the proposed ordination of women, which with the strong Liberal resurgence was accepted by the General Synod in 1992.

So for the first time there was an unequivocal departure from the statements of Scripture. What Scripture forbids, the Church of England now irreversibly embraced involving changes of Canon Law and the Liturgy. So fundamental was the change, that those opposed to this new church were invited to leave and take a quite generous redundancy payment. So what should we do? This was a crisis of enormous proportions and it took nearly two years for us to see a clear way forward. So we come to the necessity of a 'new' church.

#### **4. The need to maintain the Protestant Anglican faith**

In this new situation it would be impossible to retain ones Biblical integrity without the most serious protest against what was going on. John Broadhurst of Forward in Faith (which at that time included some evangelicals), who is now the Bishop of Fulham said at the time, "These are sad days as we see the church of our ministry slip away into a new creation which we shall find increasingly difficult to be part of." So a few reasons for the need, indeed necessity to maintain our historic Anglicanism.

1. There is no longer a secure Biblical foundation for preaching for the salvation of souls and the building up of believers in the faith and preparing them

for heaven. The impregnable rock of Holy Scripture has been undermined, and that not by the world but by the Church herself. I need to know when I teach and proclaim the Word of God, that Satan, either quietly in my soul, or publicly through his human agents, cannot charge me with compromise, inconsistency or hypocrisy. I must stand on God's word alone for 'all other ground is sinking sand'.

2. Because there is quite clearly no hope of reversing the ordination of women in the Church of England, the voices of those who remain and try to oppose it are marginalised, unheard, unrecognised, despised, over-looked and forgotten. They are trying (and in vain) to find a secure place, but short of a split, a church within a church, that is impossible. And even if some form of third province were to be formed, what would it be but an impossible alliance between Anglo-Catholics and Evangelicals; which is where we came in one hundred and forty years ago!

3. There remains a church in which the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, the redemption of man's soul by the blood of Christ, through faith in him, is compromised because of the fundamental shift from the revealed truth of Scripture. For all its faults in the past, the average Parish Church in England was a place where the Gospel could be heard at least in the Liturgy and the Scripture readings, if not from the pulpit. As a result, one here and one there were truly converted and born again of the Spirit of God, even though remaining as spiritual babes. From time to time in the past (less so now) I have been invited to preach for one reason or another, in a Parish Church where the tradition was not evangelical. As I expounded the Word of God I could often see one or two people clearly switched on to what was being spoken: they warmed to the Word of God. Speaking with them afterwards, it was clear, that in many cases they were the Lord's true people, born of his Spirit in that situation, but were starved of the Word of God and therefore not growing spiritually. In the new situation, the spiritual blessings which have come to many simply through the Authorised Version of the Bible and the Liturgy of the Prayer Book, are far less likely to be seen.

4. If at any time, either now or in the future, someone says, "Whatever happened to the Protestant, Biblical, Evangelical Church of England which came out of the Reformation, and which has had in the past such a healthful effect on the English people? Where is it now? Has it disappeared without trace?" We can put up our hand and say, "Here we are, a small despised remnant church, but making every attempt to preserve the Gospel and the historic English Church."

5. We can talk of the Protestant Anglican faith, because the Church of England arose by Reformation out of the Church of Rome. Non-conformists tend to be inward-looking and are rarely prepared to engage in controversy with the Church of Rome. Many think that because we worship in buildings with a

pointed end and dress up in funny clothes for the services, we are little different from the Church of Rome; not to mention how few outside Anglicanism and Presbyterianism understand our doctrine of baptism! But we can claim to be a truly reformed church because the Scripture is our sole authority for what we believe and all that we do. The Church of England was born in the crucible of controversy, with much shedding of blood to establish Biblical truth and so we feel keenly the Romish errors from which we were delivered.

6. If there were no Church of England (Continuing), what would be the situation? If we had all gone off into independency and retirement with no clear or united direction, where would we be? I know where I would be: I would be a miserable old grump, constantly bemoaning the corruption of the Church of England, and sighing for the good old days when our robust Protestant Biblical ministeries were welcome, or at least tolerated (because they had to be!) in the Church of England. But now in the Continuing Church of England I have a fellowship of the Lord's true and faithful people to belong to. I have an ecclesiastical platform on which to stand, where no compromise is involved with the Scriptures of Truth. We have decency and order, and, (this is something I do not miss) we are delivered from the constant confrontational and defensive approach that we endured for many years in the Church of England!

I simply close with a quotation from the Apostle Paul in relation to questions on which we may legitimately differ:

“Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind”. (*Romans 14.5*).

*(This article was first given as a paper at Holy Trinity, Frinton-on-Sea, Saturday 25 September 2004)*

### ***TAPE MINISTRY***



Sermons preached at St Mary's Castle Street are recorded. These are available to readers of the *Journal* who may wish to hear sermons in this way.

Contact Mr J Westmacott, 1 Salisbury Close, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG41 4AJ for details of sermon texts available, and to request copies of tapes.

*Tapes cost £1.25 each, including postage and packing  
Please make cheques payable to **St. Mary's Castle Street***

# BATHING THE BABY WITHOUT WATER

Roger du Barry

THE biblical doctrine of baptism is that it effectively and powerfully confers the benefits of salvation, namely, forgiveness of sins; regeneration; and the gift of the Holy Spirit; to those who receive it in faith. This comes as a shock to modern evangelicals, because it looks and sounds like Catholicism.

Whole denominations of disaffected Anglicans came into being during the nineteenth century wishing to have nothing to do with the ritualist over-emphasis upon the efficacy of baptism. In doing so they abandoned the doctrine of the Bible as it is expressed in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, either wittingly or unwittingly, in favour of a semi-baptistic and revivalist mindset, wherein baptism becomes merely a sign of salvation, without any actual saving power. Today most evangelicals are the heirs of this way of thinking, sincerely believing it to be the evangelical position. But they are mistaken. It is bathing the baby without water.

The Anglo-Catholic error is not that baptism confers saving benefits, but that it always and necessarily does so provided that no obstacle is placed to its reception. Put differently, they believe that baptism is inseparably linked to regeneration. The orthodox Protestant doctrine is that baptism is the usual and ordinary means ordained by God for the communication of salvation, but without tying his hands. This does not mean that a slack attitude towards baptism is permitted. On the contrary. It means that only under exceptional circumstances will people be saved without it, such as those wishing to be baptised but unable to do so, like the early martyrs. On the other hand, those who despise this ordinance and refuse to submit to it cannot be saved. The reason is that baptism is the divinely ordained way that the benefits of salvation are applied to us.

This was the position of the entire Reformation, whether Lutheran or Reformed, Presbyterian or Anglican. They were completely unanimous on this point, and fought vigorously against those who tried to downplay it or turn it in a more baptistic direction. Today, most evangelicals would insist that one enters into the kingdom of God simply by believing the gospel, or making a decision for Christ, without at any time mentioning baptism. To many of us, baptism became a non-issue. To the baptistic evangelical it is very important indeed, but for entirely different reasons from the Reformation. To him it is a sign of true faith and real commitment, and vital as a testimony to the saving love of God, but devoid of saving power. He would vigorously resist the idea that it actually

conveys salvation, rightly received. There are exceptions to this rule of course, but I believe that it accurately reflects the evangelical consensus of the last two hundred years, broadly speaking.

## **The Doctrine of Covenant Baptism**

Those who are familiar with the Old Testament will know that the gospel has its origins in the promises that God made to Abraham. Indeed, the promises of blessing are the gospel of the kingdom, and it was these promises that the Lord Jesus came to fulfil. Paul said to the Galatians:

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. (*Gal. 3. 8*)

The fourth chapter of Hebrews teaches us that the wilderness generation failed to enter the land because they did not mix the gospel with faith, and so they fell through unbelief. From these texts we can see that the promises that were made to Abraham and Israel are the gospel, and that it is these promises that Jesus came to fulfil.

We Gentiles are included in the Jewish covenants of promise and the commonwealth of Israel when we believe in the God of Abraham, and the king whom he has appointed as lord over heaven and earth.

Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. (*Eph. 2. 11-13*)

There are many more passages that make the same point, but this one will suffice for now. This text makes it clear that we who once were far off from Israel and her God, have been incorporated into God's Israel through faith in Jesus the Christ. We are co-heirs with them of the promises that were made to Abraham, the gospel of the kingdom:

That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same of the body. (*Eph. 3. 6*)

The thing to grasp from this discussion is that we are incorporated into Abraham's household. We do not simply enter into an individualistic relationship with God through Jesus Christ; rather, we enter into covenant with God by being

included in the existing covenants that he has made with Abraham *and his believing household*. In other words, we enter into covenant with God by entering the existing household of faith—the house of Abraham, the Church of God.

More than this, we enter into this covenant *with our households too!* The key promise that we inherit is that God will be our God and the God of our children:

And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. (*Gen. 17. 7*)

This promise belongs as much to us now as when it was made to Abraham, because we are the heirs of the promises. When we enter into the house of Israel, which is the house of Abraham, we come in with our households. The apostle Peter said so in his Pentecost sermon:

This promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off. (*Acts 2. 39*)

For this reason we find that when Cornelius, Lydia, and the Philippian jailer enter into the kingdom through faith, they do so with their entire households—by means of baptism (*Acts 10. 24, 47-48; 16. 15; 16. 33*).

These families entered into the covenants of promise, the kingdom of God through faith expressed in baptism. When the head of the household comes to faith both he and his household is baptised. It follows that any infants in the family will be baptised as a matter of course.

## **Objections to Covenant Baptism**

The main objection to this biblical doctrine is that faith and repentance must always precede baptism, and that since infants are incapable of these they must be excluded from the sacrament. Baptist people believe that this is a self-evident truth, and it is the primary basis for refusing to recognise the validity of covenant baptism.

In all things we must go to the Bible to establish the truth of a claim. If this principle is biblical then we can expect to find it plainly stated in the sacred text. Baptists use many verses to support their case, but they are unable to produce a single one that teaches that faith must precede baptism as a matter of divine principle—in the case of covenant children. Their reading of the Bible is governed by an incorrect *a priori* principle that predetermines their interpretation.

In fact, the Bible teaches exactly the opposite principle! For God himself required the infants of the covenant to receive the sign and seal of the righteousness of faith, which was circumcision:

And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a

token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant. (*Gen. 17. 11-14*)

Circumcision is not just a sign of being an Israelite, but it is the sign and seal of justification, or, the forgiveness of sins:

[Abraham] received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised. (*Rom. 4. 11*)

Abraham's children received the sign and seal of the forgiveness of their sins when they were eight days old! We see from this that the idea that faith must precede the granting of the covenant sign *in the case of covenant children* does not carry any weight with God himself. On the contrary, he enforces it with severe penalties for disobedience. The baptistic principle is thus shown to be unbiblical. Indeed, it is wrong and even sinful to deny the covenant sign to covenant children. Even covenant slaves are not excluded!

That the children of the heathen are to be excluded from baptism is clear and necessary, because they have neither claim nor right to it. Their parents must be converted before they can be admitted to the sacrament.

Believers' baptism in the Bible applies only to those who come into the promises from outside of the church. It has a rightful place, but not at the expense of the covenant.

The application of circumcision to baptism is transparently obvious. That baptism is the sign of forgiveness now, just as circumcision was then, is beyond dispute. Baptism is for the remission of sins:

John did baptise, in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. (*Mark 1. 4*)

In the same way, when Peter exhorted the Pentecost crowd he linked baptism to the remission of sins:

...be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. (*Acts 2. 38*)

Baptism is the sign of forgiveness now, just as circumcision previously was before the appearing of the Lord Jesus.

Since God himself commanded the granting of the sign of forgiveness to infants, there can be no objection in principle to the baptism of the children of those who are in covenant with God through faith in Jesus, the king of God's kingdom.

## **The Effect of Baptism**

A sacrament has two parts: An outward sign and an inner grace. In baptism the water is the outward sign, and the inner grace is the forgiveness of sins; the gift of the Holy Spirit; and dying to sin and rising to newness of life.

This is very different from the baptistic doctrine of an empty sign, whereby baptism achieves nothing internally except maybe to increase faith, but merely serves a testimony to the church of the believer's faith and obedience, and his inclusion in the people of God.

The reasons for attributing saving power to baptism are quite simply that the Bible does so in unequivocal and transparent terms.

### **First, baptism is for the remission of sins.**

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. (*Acts 2. 37-38*)

We saw previously that John's baptism was for the remission of sin. Neither Peter nor any of the other apostles had received any baptism other than John's. They had not been re-baptised in the name of Jesus because John's baptism was sufficient, since sin cannot be remitted twice.

Paul, the great teacher of justification by faith alone, tells us in chapter twenty-two of the Acts of the Apostles how he himself was justified. *It was not apart from baptism.* He had been met on the Damascus Road by the risen Lord, been commissioned and sent on his way. Three days later he was in Damascus, still blinded by the glory of Jesus, fasting and praying. The Lord Jesus sent Ananias to him to restore his sight, and this is what he says to Paul:

And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptised, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. (*Acts 22. 16*)

Here is a consistent testimony from John to Peter to Paul that baptism is for the remission of sins.

### **Second, baptism is for the gift of the Holy Spirit:**

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptised every one of you



in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, *and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 2. 38)*

Here is an explicit link between baptism and the Holy Spirit. Peter is saying that in the light of the ascension of the risen Jesus to the throne of David at the Father's right hand, this promised gift is now in addition to the remission of sins.

### **Third, those who have been baptised are united to Christ, and to his death and resurrection:**

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. (*Rom. 6. 3-4*)

Union with Christ is through baptism, according to Paul. He links circumcision to baptism in the following text;

In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. (*Col. 2. 11-12*)

We see from this that baptism is the fulfilment of circumcision, in that it achieves the inward circumcision of the heart that is done without hands.

### **Fourth, baptism brings people into a status of legal obligation to God.**

It confers membership in the church, and this entails covenant obligations. Those who fail to meet their obligations required by their baptism bring themselves under God's displeasure, just as the unbelieving Israelites brought the curses upon themselves through their unfaithfulness to God. This is the central message of the entire Epistle to the Hebrews (*10. 26-27*).

An unbelieving but baptised person is in the same boat before God as was the unbelieving but circumcised Israelite.

### **Baptism and Justification by Faith**

Many people object to the idea of baptism conveying the forgiveness of sins because it appears to them to contradict justification by faith alone. If faith is the hand that takes hold of justification, then why should baptism play any part in forgiveness? The Reformers without exception did not accept this argument,

because it makes rivals of two things that are actually friends.

When Paul teaches that justification is by faith alone apart from the works of the law, he is not saying or implying that it is apart from *the means of grace*, but apart from *merit*, in particular, Jewish marks of religious superiority like circumcision. If justification is indeed apart from the means of grace, then it is apart from the proclamation of the gospel as well. We know full well that faith comes through hearing the word of Christ, because the word is a means of saving grace. No-one can be saved apart from hearing and believing the gospel.

We see then that the objection against baptism being a means and channel of saving grace must necessarily apply to the word of God itself—a conclusion that it patently absurd. Both the word and the sacraments are means of grace, not meritorious acts. They are not works of the law in the sense that Paul uses the term.

The sole cause of our salvation is the righteousness of God revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. The ordained way that God applies this salvation to us is by means of the proclamation of the gospel, which is taken hold of by faith and baptism.

Baptism is a means of grace that works hand in hand with the word. In Acts those who hear and believe are immediately baptised for the remission of their sins. Faith expressed in baptism is thus the ordinary means and channel of grace. Hence Mark says:

He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. (*Mark 16. 16*)

If baptism were irrelevant to salvation he would not have mentioned it. Incidentally, this was one of Luther's favourite texts in defence of baptism against the Anabaptist empty sign theory.

There is no conflict at all between justification by faith alone on the one hand, and baptism for the remission of sins on the other. They are the two hands of the one potter in shaping the clay.

## **Baptism is both Inward and Outward**

Baptism is described in the Catechism as an outward sign of an inward grace. The outward sign is water and the inward grace is the remission of sins; the gift of the Spirit; and union with Christ in his death and resurrection. The reception of the Spirit is rightly called a baptism too. Baptism is both outward and inward.

Baptism and salvation are by no means necessarily linked. It is obvious that many who receive the outward sign do not receive the inward grace. The grace is dependant upon right reception according to Article 27, *Of Baptism*, which is faith. These are the marks of the elect, those to whom the grace belongs.

There is no efficacy in the water itself to produce the benefits of salvation.

The water makes wet, but God is the one who changes the inner man. There is no change in the properties of the water. The change occurs in the person being baptised by the power of God using the water as a channel of grace.

Many receive the inner grace prior to baptism. Cornelius and his house received the Spirit while Peter was preaching the resurrection. When Peter saw that God has accepted them he immediately baptised the entire household. Others find grace in later years.

A complete baptism is one where the sign and the grace are both present. The greater of the two is the inward grace, but it does not follow from this fact that the water can be disregarded or despised. The water is the usual means used by God at his command for the conferring of grace to his people.

We must not make the baptistic mistake of divorcing the sign from its content, and think that the sign has no part to play in conferring the benefits of the cross. This is a false piety that separates what God has joined together. More than that, it is contrary to the plain teaching of Scripture.

Notwithstanding the fact that baptism and regeneration are not necessarily linked, and that baptism and grace may be separated by a great stretch of time, it still remains true that baptism is the normal and usual means ordained by God for the remission of sins. We should expect the grace and the baptism to coincide in the ordinary course of events, just as the Baptismal Service does in thanking God immediately after the baptism that the candidate is regenerate.

This is the historical faith of the Church. At every Communion service we say it in these words:

“I believe in one baptism for the remission of sins”.

## **Summary**

We Gentiles enter into covenant with God by being included in the existing covenant of life and blessing that was made with Abraham and his believing descendants by faith in Jesus Christ. When we enter in we come in not alone, but with our households, because God has promised to be God to us and to our children.

The baptistic principle that a conscious faith must always precede the sign and seal of justification has no support in Scripture. That requirement applies only to the heathen. This anti-covenantal principle is contradicted by God himself, who commanded that every Israelite male be circumcised on the eighth day of his life. Circumcision was at that time the sign and seal of the righteousness that comes by faith, but it has now been replaced by baptism.

The ordinary means of grace are the word and the sacraments working together. One who believes the gospel of Christ's lordship takes hold of the promises by faith expressed in baptism, with his entire household.

The sole cause of our salvation is the work of Jesus of Nazareth. The ordinary means and channels by which God mediates the benefits of salvation to us are the proclamation of the gospel, and the sacraments.

Baptism without faith is nothing, and there is no necessary link between it and salvation. Baptism is not a condition of salvation, but a channel of it. However, those who are unfaithful to their covenant obligations are under a curse.

Baptism is effective only in the case of the elect, because it belongs to them. The benefits of salvation are not necessarily realised in the moment in time that the water is administered. Some people come to a living faith many years after their baptism, and in these days of widespread baptistic thinking, many years before it. However, these instances must be seen as extraordinary exceptions to the biblical rule. Baptism is the usual and ordinary means provided by God for the conferring of the blessings of the covenant to those who believe, and to their households.

## **Conclusion**

The understanding of baptism set out in this article is that of Thomas Cranmer and the many others who were instrumental in the formulation of the Book of Common Prayer. It is the thinking and faith of the entire Reformation on the matter, and it finds its expression in the Baptismal Services of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer.

It is neither the position of Rome nor of the Anglo-Catholic party. It is not the position of modern evangelicalism, which has moved strongly in a baptistic direction by its denial of baptism's role in conferring salvation. It is orthodox Reformed Protestantism, and it is the historical faith of the Church of England.

Take up your Prayer Book and read the Baptismal Services again. As you do so you will find this doctrine clearly set out and applied in its proper pastoral setting. May you find your trust and faith in God strengthened and confirmed in bringing to mind your own baptism, wherein you “were made a member Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven”. (*BCP Catechism Answer 2*)

And the next time, dear believer, that you find yourself wondering if you have truly had your sins forgiven, and whether you are really born again of the Spirit of God, say to yourself as Luther said to the devil in his moments of doubt, “I have been baptised!”

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# THE CAUSES, NATURE AND MARKS OF A DECLINE IN GRACE\*

John Newton

OUR subject concerns the causes, nature and marks of a decline in grace. How is it that we lose that warm impression of divine things, which in some favoured moments we think it impossible to forget? How far is this change consistent with a spiritual growth in other respects? How do we form a comparative judgment of our proficiency upon the whole? By what steps may the losses we sustain from our necessary connection with a sinful nature and a sinful world be retrieved?

The awakened soul (especially when, after a season of distress and terrors, it begins to find that the Lord is gracious) finds itself as in a new world. No change in outward life can be so real, so affecting. No wonder, then, that at such a time little else can be thought of. The transition from darkness to light, from a sense of wrath to the hope of glory, is the greatest that can be imagined, and is often as sudden as it is wonderful. Hence the general characteristics of young converts are zeal and love. Like Israel at the Red Sea they have just seen the wonderful works of the Lord, and they cannot but sing his praise. They are deeply affected by the danger they have just escaped, and by the thought that so many are careless of the same danger. A sense of the mercies they have received, and a care for the souls of others, means that they can hardly avoid preaching to everyone they meet.

This emotion is highly just and reasonable, with regard to the cause from which it comes, and it is without doubt a proof, not only of the imperfection, but also of the depravity of our nature, that we are not always so affected. But that is not a sufficient explanation, for if we examine this characteristic, which at first sight appears to condemn more mature Christians, we shall see that this zeal is not as perfect as it may first appear.

**1. Such persons are very weak in faith.** Their confidence arises more from the joy within than from a clear and distinct laying hold on the work of God in Christ. Those comforts that are meant as cordials to strengthen them against the opposition of the unbelieving world they mistake for and rest in as the proper evidences of their hope. And so it happens that, when the Lord varies his dispensations, and hides his face, they are soon troubled and at their wit's end.

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\* Published as 'Letter 1' of 'Twenty-Six Letters To a Nobleman' in *Cardiphonia, or The Utterances of the Heart*. The text has been lightly edited to shorten some very long sentences and to simplify some of the grammar. The meaning and sense has not be changed intentionally.

**2. Those who are in the condition of their first love are rarely free from a spirit of condemnation.** They have not yet felt the deceitfulness of their own hearts, and they are not yet acquainted with Satan's devices and temptations. As a result they do not know how to sympathise with or make allowances for any who do not share the same earnestness as themselves.

**3. They are also to some extent under the influence of self-righteousness and self-will.** They mean well, but not knowing enough about the spiritual meaning or use of the law, and not being settled in the faith, often a major part of their zeal is taken up with non-essential matters. They may do what is not commanded, and omit what is.

However, for all their faults I think there is something very beautiful about the earnestness and zeal of the young convert. Some judge coldly, and are ready to reject these promising signs because of temporary faults. But would a gardener discard fruit simply because it is not yet ripe? If there is not fire in youth, will there be warmth in old age?

The great and good Husbandman watches over what his own hand has planted and carries on his work by various and sometimes contradictory measures. While their mountain stands strong they think they shall never be moved, but in time they discover a change. Sometimes this change is by imperceptible degrees. That part of their affection that was purely natural will, in time, fade, when the power of novelty fades. They will begin to see their own weaknesses, and often their self-correction will lead them to the opposite extreme of coolness. The evils of their hearts, which lay dormant for a while, will begin to revive, and the enemy will look for opportunities to bring suitable temptations; and because it is our Father's plan that we should know our own weaknesses, there will be times when we shall fall. Then will guilt come hard on the conscience, the heart grows hard, the hands hang down, and the knees are weak. Then is confidence shaken, the spirit of prayer interrupted, and the armour laid aside. Things get worse and worse until the Lord is ready to intervene, for though we can fall all by ourselves, we cannot get up again unless he lifts us. Indeed, every sin, in its own nature, tends towards a final apostasy; but there is a provision in the covenant of grace, and the Lord, in his own time, returns to convince, humble, pardon, comfort, and renew the soul. He touches the rock—and the waters flow! Once we have undergone this experience a number of times (for we seldom learn wisdom quickly) we begin at last to learn that we are nothing, we have nothing, and we can do nothing except sin. And so we are prepared to begin to live out of ourselves, and gain all our sufficiency from Jesus, the fountain of all grace. We learn to tread more carefully, to trust less to our own strength, to have lower thoughts about ourselves and higher thoughts of our Lord Jesus. In these last two I understand what the Scriptures mean that a growth in grace consists of. Both are increasing in the lively Christian; every day shows him

more of his own heart, and more of the power, sufficiency, compassion and grace of his adorable Redeemer; but neither will be complete until the resurrection.

Now, suppose our views are more evangelical, our judgment more mature, our hearts more humbled by a true sense of our own depravity, and our manner more soft and tender. Suppose our prevailing desires are spiritual, and we have a right regard for the means of grace, the ordinances of God, and for his people. If these things are so, then we may reasonably conclude that the work of grace begun in us is being moved forward. If we find our first zeal has waned, yet if these things are true of us, then we should, on the whole, be encouraged.

Yet how sad that such an increase in knowledge and experience should be generally accompanied by a decline in earnestness! Had I not known this from my own experience I would not have believed it possible. The fact that it is so gives a further example of my own vileness and depravity. I am humbled by my lack of humility; my lack of fervour arouses me to be more earnest. However, there are seasons of refreshing, wonderful touches of light and power upon the heart and mind. As they proceed from clearer displays of Divine grace they are more penetrating, transforming, and enlivening than even that first joy of new faith. One such touch, compared with our usual sluggish stupidity without that touch, draws our hearts from our wretched state of sin and temptation, and causes us to long for death and the glory which is to come. In that state the conflict will be over; I shall sin and wander no more, but see Jesus as he is, and be like him for ever and ever.

So, if the question is, how can the bright moments be prolonged, renewed, or retrieved? we are directed to faith and to carefulness. We must be careful in the use of the means of grace, we must be ever on guard to watch against all occasion and appearance of evil, and we must 'pray without ceasing' in secret. We will then be brought as much as our Lord is pleased to give of such seasons of refreshing. He knows best why we are not to be trusted with them continually. Here we are to walk by faith, to be exercised and tried; in due time we shall be crowned, and the desires our heavenly Father has given us will be abundantly satisfied.

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# UNITED WE FALL, DIVIDED WE STAND?

Edward J Malcolm

LAST month (October) the Lambeth Commission finally published what has been entitled *The Windsor Report*. A team of Anglican bishops, academics and other persons were called to “examine and report...on the legal and theological implications flowing from the decisions of the Episcopal Church (USA) to appoint a priest in a committed same sex relationship as one of its bishops, and the Diocese of New Westminster to authorise services for use in connection with same sex unions.” The Mandate goes on to stress that the primary issue at stake is that of union, or communion. The Commission was to include “practical recommendations...for maintaining the highest degree of communion...possible in the circumstances...” Then they were to “make recommendations...as to the exceptional circumstances and conditions under which, and the means by which, it would be appropriate for the Archbishop of Canterbury to exercise an extraordinary ministry of episcopate” to maintain communion in any other part of the Anglican Communion. The existing statements and Resolutions on human sexuality were to be taken into account.

The facts that the unilateral actions of these two dioceses have led to the setting up of such a Commission, and that the actions have been criticised, and recommendations have been made that have potentially far-reaching implications, show how seriously the matter is viewed. But there are problems.

The Mandate has been criticised by Dr Peter Jensen, Archbishop of Sydney. Writing in the *Church Times*, 29 October 2004, he said, “...the mandate for the Commission apparently underestimated the importance of the presenting issue. The problem of the practice of homosexuality has created such turbulence because of what it represents about authority.”

The authority to which he refers is dealt with in the Report. According to its authors, “The Anglican Communion has always declared that its supreme authority is scripture” (para. 42). Later, this is set out as “the authority of the triune God, *exercised through* scripture” (para. 54 - emphasis in original). This is a reasonable attempt to show how scripture is authoritative: it is so, not because men wrote it, but because its supreme author is God, and thus it is revelation. Compare this with the view of a leading Reformation historian, Professor Diarmaid MacCulloch, writing on homosexuality.

“This is an issue of biblical authority. Despite much well-intentioned



theological fancy footwork to the contrary, it is difficult to see the Bible as expressing anything other than disapproval of homosexual activity. The only alternatives are to try to cleave to patterns of life and assumptions set out in the Bible, or to say that in this, as in much else, the Bible is simply wrong.”

(D. MacCulloch, *Reformation*, quoted by Jensen).

If we examine the Resolutions of the Anglican Communion on the subject, we find that a similar approach may be allowed. The Lambeth Conference 1978: Resolution 10 ‘Human Relationships and Sexuality’ says, “While we affirm heterosexuality as the scriptural norm, we recognise the need for deep and dispassionate study of the question of homosexuality, which would take seriously both the teaching of Scripture and the results of scientific and medical research” (Appendix Three, Section 2, para. 3). If heterosexuality is the biblical norm, what further study is needed, if scripture is the supreme authority for the Anglican Communion? Again, in Lambeth Conference 1988: Resolution 64 ‘Human rights for those of homosexual orientation’, there was reaffirmation of the earlier Resolution, and an urging of “such study and reflection [that will] take account of biological, genetic and psychological research...and the socio-cultural factors that lead to different attitudes...” (Appendix Three, Section 3, para. 2). The same objection applies. Clearly, for some, scripture is not as supreme an authority as either science or practice. The Lambeth Conference 1998: Resolution 1.10 ‘Human Sexuality’ comes much closer to holding to a clearly conservative biblical line, although ECUSA saw fit in 2003 to say, “We commit ourselves...to continued prayer, study, and discernment on the pastoral care for gay and lesbian persons, to include the compilation and development of a special commission...to facilitate...a conversation of discernment...” (Appendix Three, Section 9 para. 6).

What is discernment? Unlike many technical terms used in the Report, this one is not defined. However, it is discussed in the context of Discernment in Communion and Reception (paras. 67-70). In effect, discernment is our “giving attention to the reading and pondering of scripture”. Given that different provinces of the Anglican Communion face different demands, “[w]e cannot, therefore, confine our readings of scripture to our own setting alone” (para. 67). This means that each province must work out for itself how scripture is to be read, understood and applied in the local context.

Reception deals with the church’s testing and accepting of rulings. ECUSA and the Canadian Church seemed to think that reception means everyone accepting what they (ECUSA and ACC) do.

Allied to discernment is the matter of autonomy. Some see this as giving each province the right to self-determination. In that each province of the Anglican

Communion is independent this is not unreasonable, but in that no part of the Body of Christ is not under the authority of the Head, it must be limited. Dr. Jensen writes, "...why not accept that we are a federation (or "commonwealth") of largely autonomous Churches?" This may be appealing, but since one of the marks of world-wide Anglicanism is its adherence to the Book of Common Prayer (adapted according to the system of government in each province) and the Thirty-nine Articles, surely such autonomy is restricted automatically! Add to that the question of *adiaphora* (matters not making a difference) and the whole question of autonomy becomes almost irrelevant; "It does not take an Ecumenical Council to decide what colour flowers might be displayed in church; nor does a local congregation presume to add or subtract clauses from the Nicene Creed" (para. 38). Yet, in reality, congregations do choose that very right, and half-baked arguments are advanced by unqualified individuals for the 'improving' of doctrines they do not understand. ECUSA thought their heterodox views on human sexuality were among the *adiaphora*, so proceeded with the election and consecration of Eugene Robinson. No wonder the Report's authors raise the issue of trust, which, they admit, is lacking on both sides of the theological divide.

The Lambeth Commission provide a useful case study in the Windsor Report, to show how the Anglican Communion has a process in place for handling contentious issues. This is, in fact, almost the first part of the Report, because it is intended to set the scene.

In 1944 the then Bishop of Hong Kong and Macau ordained a woman to the priesthood. In 1968, wishing to repeat the action, he approached the Lambeth Conference to know the mind of the assembled primates. He was told that "the theological arguments as at present presented for and against the ordination of women to the priesthood are inconclusive" (para. 13). If, as the Report maintains, the Anglican Communion looks to scripture for its supreme authority, some might think this odd. He was advised to approach the Anglican Consultative Council, which he did at its first meeting in 1970. He was told that, if he had local Synodical support, then the ACC would support him against any other province or diocese which threatened a weakening of communion with his own. Eight years later, three other provinces had ordained women to the priesthood, and a further eight had signified their theoretical acceptance of the practice. Seven years after that (1985) the issue of women bishops arose publicly, and by 1988 the first such consecration had taken place.

According to the Report, this shows how the North American provinces should have proceeded. They should have gained local agreement (which they did not do, hence the fury of conservatives, and the setting up of the Anglican Mission in America and the Anglican Communion in Canada), and they should

have approached a meeting of the primates for their consent (which, again, they failed to do). So they are reprimanded in the Report, and called upon to apologise for the hurt they have caused, and so on.

In fact, they did exactly what history has taught them they could get away with. The facts of this first female ordination to the priesthood are insufficiently detailed. The first woman was ordained in extraordinary circumstances, in that Hong Kong was under Japanese military occupancy, and there were, quite literally, no men available. The Bishop, mindful of his pastoral responsibilities, wished to provide for the administering of Holy Communion in outlying districts, so he ordained a woman for that purpose. The Report fails to mention these ‘extenuating’ facts. It also fails to mention that, at the Lambeth Conference of 1948, Archbishop William Temple condemned the action, saying it would have been far better to have simply licensed her for the duration.<sup>1</sup> Thus, when the bishop of Hong Kong approached the Lambeth Conference of 1968 there was already an opinion against him. His continual raising of the matter smacks of intent to act, rather than the meek submission the Report suggests.

Furthermore, though the provinces of the Anglican Communion may have remained in communion with the diocese of Hong Kong and Macau and the provinces that followed suit, nothing is said of the objections of many congregations and individuals who opposed this action on the ground that it was not a submitting to the authority of scripture! Does unity among the episcopate equate to true communion at every necessary level? I think not.

This brings us to the Report’s greatest failing. Dr. Jensen highlighted the complete lack of provision in the Report’s recommendations for those parishes that cannot, in all conscience, accept the decisions of New Westminster and New Hampshire. The following is taken from a Canadian web site, [www.acicanada.ca](http://www.acicanada.ca):

The Anglican parish congregations of Christ the Redeemer Anglican Church, Pender Harbour (formerly St. Andrew’s) and St. Simon’s, Deep Cove received notices threatening eviction from the Rt. Rev. Michael Ingham, Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of New Westminster. Bishop Ingham told the leadership of these churches that, unless they “reconsider the actions” taken, they are “to seek alternate worship space for those whom you lead.” A third congregation, Richmond Emmanuel Church, (formerly Emmanuel Church, Richmond) received a “Notice of Closure” threat.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Jensen writes, “What are you to teach your children when your

- 
1. I am grateful to the Rev. Dr. Roger Beckwith for this additional information
  2. I am grateful to the Rev. Lewis H. How for pointing me to this source of information

denominational structure is endorsing as good what you believe to be fatally bad?” The Report offers no hope, but, as one of its authors, Bishop N.T. Wright, has said, “...all that the ‘orthodox’ will have to do is to hang on and wait and see whether those charged will draw the logical conclusions of their actions ...”, which is cold comfort to those Canadian clergymen who are facing eviction from their churches with loss of pension and home thrown in for good measure. Just as ECUSA has used her financial weight to try to bully the African provinces, so New Westminster is following with the same tactic at home. So much for the unity of the Body of Christ, for love and ‘radical holiness’.

Among the conclusions of the Report are calls for expressions of regret from ECUSA and New Westminster, as well as from the interfering African bishops, and for a moratorium on homosexual elections and consecration, and on the adoption of rites for same sex unions. Bishop Wright believes the position is clear.

They have been asked to express regret for doing so, and to promise not to do so again. I leave it to semantic pedants whether this means ‘repentance’ or not, but I have to say that when I tell God and my neighbour that I regret breaking the high call of love and promise not to do so again that looks and feels pretty much like repentance to me. And that, of course, is precisely what the expressions of regret currently coming from Griswold and Robinson are not doing...

(N.T. Wright, ‘Thoughts on Concerns and Questions about the Windsor Report’, [www.fulcrum-anglican.org.uk](http://www.fulcrum-anglican.org.uk))

However, this is only one part of the Report. Another is the recommendation that the Archbishop of Canterbury’s role should be strengthened. In particular, it calls for his office to be “the central focus of both unity and mission within the Communion. This office has a very significant teaching role” (para. 109). And yet, when we examine what the Archbishop of Canterbury is actually teaching, conservatives, evangelicals and those of a Reformed theology will want to run a mile from his position. The authors point to the lack of discretion the Archbishop has in extending invitations to various Conferences and Meetings, and suggests he should have the right to invite “whomsoever he believes is appropriate” (para. 110). Which means a liberal will only invite conservatives out of a sense of duty, and a conservative will only invite liberals similarly. This is hardly the recipe for the increased communion envisaged.

Where does this leave the worldwide Anglican Communion? The Report began by setting out the biblical imperative for unity, and did so well. Yet unity is, by its very definition, only to be had between those who are agreed. The failure of the Report to deal with the ground of disagreement—the biblical

teaching on homosexual matters—means that it has sidestepped the nub of the issue. It leaves faithful, biblical Anglicans with the feeling that unity will destroy, and yet division is bad. It offers no encouragement to the faithful conservative parishes, dioceses and provinces (if any of the latter really exist), and it falls short, N.T. Wright's protestations notwithstanding, of sufficiently condemning error.

Whatever the way forward for the Anglican Communion, it will not be found in the Windsor Report, in spite of some commendable aspects. Giving the Archbishop of Canterbury increased powers, and condemning those who try to make provision for the disenfranchised in other dioceses and provinces will solve nothing, but will merely add to future troubles. Only faithful adherence to the revealed will of God will do, with a genuine and deepening understanding of unity in the Body of Christ. How often is that found, in Anglicanism or elsewhere?

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# THE CONTINUING CHURCH

(The Association of the Continuing Church Trust: Charity No. 1055010)

[www.continuingcofe.org](http://www.continuingcofe.org)

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The Right Reverend David N Samuel, MA, PhD

The Right Reverend Albion W Knight Jr. MA, MS, (*Bishop, United States of America*)

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Rev. EJ Malcolm (*See over*) Email: [edward@netvigator.co.uk](mailto:edward@netvigator.co.uk)

**MATERIAL FOR APRIL ISSUE OF *THE JOURNAL*  
AND *INTERCESSIONS* BY MARCH 18 2005, PLEASE**

*We thank all those who sent the names and addresses of others requiring the Journal, or whose names needed deleting. We are very grateful to all who sent donations. **Please note that all address details supplied to the Editor for mailing purposes are treated as confidential. We do not pass on addresses to anyone.***

**Have you considered making a gift to the Central Fund, to assist with the ongoing costs of the Continuing Church? Please contact the Treasurer.**

## CHURCHES IN UK

**Nuffield Congregation** meeting with Nuffield Parish Church, near Henley-on-Thames, the Rev John F Shearer. Sunday Services: 11.00 am Morning Prayer, 6.30 pm Evening Prayer. Lord's Supper 8.00 am first Sunday, 6.30 pm third Sunday. Bible Study Wednesday 8.00 pm. *Enquiries* 01491 641305.

**St. John's Church, South London.** Meeting at the Shaftesbury Home, Trellis House, Mill Road (off Merton High Street), Colliers Wood, SW19, for 11.00 am Morning Prayer and 6.30 pm Evening Prayer. Midweek as intimated. *Enquiries* Rev Peter Ratcliff, 020 8417 0875.

**St. Mary's Castle Street, Reading.** Sunday Services: 11.00 am Morning Prayer (first Sunday Lord's Supper), 6.30 pm Evening Prayer (third Sunday Lord's Supper). Tuesday 8.00 pm Bible Study. *Enquiries* Rev EJ Malcolm 0118 959 5131.

**St. Silas, Wolverhampton,** meeting in St. John's Cloisters Chapel, St. John's Square (A-Z p29 H2). 11.00 am Morning Prayer (1st Sunday Holy Communion); 6.00 pm BST Evening Prayer (4.00 pm GMT) (3rd Sunday Holy Communion). Tuesdays in term time 7.00 pm Bible Study; 7.45 pm Prayer Meeting. On-street parking. *Enquiries* Rt Rev E Malcolm 01547 528815. Hon Curate Rev IR Budgen, 01902 656514.

**Holy Trinity Church, Frinton-on-Sea.** Sunday 11 a.m. Morning Prayer—Room 5, The Frinton Community Centre, Soken House, The Triangle, Frinton-on-Sea, Essex. Sunday 6.30 p.m. Evening Prayer, Tuesday 8.00 p.m. Bible Study and Prayer Meeting—1, Chaplins, Frinton-on-Sea, Essex. For more information please contact Mr Philip Lievesley Tel: (01255) 679572. <http://beehive.thisissessex.co.uk/holytrinitycofecfrinton>

### Clergy in UK & USA

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The Rev JF Shearer, BSc, The Rectory, Nuffield, Henley-on-Thames, Oxon, RG9 5SN. 01491 641305

The Rev EJ Malcolm, The Parsonage, 1 Downshire Square, Reading RG1 6NJ. 0118 959 5131

The Rev IR Budgen, BSc, Dip Th (ITA), 159 Castlecroft Road, Wolverhampton, W Mids, WV3 8LU. 01902 656514

The Rev EA Powell, BSc, MDiv 7615 Lankershim Blvd, North Hollywood, CA 91605 USA. 818-765-0716

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### Associate Clergy

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### Licensed Preachers

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Mr P Karageorgi. Contact on 0208 742 0151