

The First Sunday after The Epiphany 2011

O Lord, we beseech thee mercifully to receive the prayers of thy people which call upon thee; and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Continuing with the global Anglican Communion but departing from the Anglican Church of Canada

A Paper by Robin Guinness

Commitment to and gratitude for our Anglican heritage

For twelve years I worked with the late Canon Tom Robinson in Barnabas Anglican Ministries (BAM), and, for the final four years of that commitment, I was President of BAM. During that time we gathered over 700 concerned Canadian Anglicans to the Essentials Conference in Montreal in June 1994, "to examine and renew the foundations of their faith in face of the cultural challenges of a postmodern and post-Christian Canada." The purpose of BAM and of the Essentials Conference was to recall the Anglican Church of Canada to its historic roots in obedience to God's Inspired Word in all matters of faith and doctrine. This call was expressed in *The Montreal Declaration of Anglican Essentials* which worked out in general terms how the teaching of Scripture applies to the issues facing our church today. The book *Anglican Essentials* edited by Dr. George Egerton provides the proceedings of the Essentials Conference and works out the call to Scriptural obedience in considerably more detail.

I have been active in ordained ministry in three dioceses within the Anglican Church of Canada since 1970, having been ordained by Bishop Cuthbert Bardsley in Coventry Cathedral, England in 1963. For more than forty years I have come to appreciate very deeply the rich and godly heritage that we have within the Anglican Church of Canada. *The Solemn Declaration*, formulated by the first synod of the Anglican Church of Canada meeting in Toronto in 1893, enshrines this commitment of our church to be orthodox in doctrine, Biblical in faith, evangelical in mission and global in identity by pledging to keep unbroken fellowship with the world-wide Anglican Communion. I look back with enormous appreciation and gratitude to such scholars, pastors and evangelists as Dr Jacob Yotch, Dr R.K. Harrison, Bishop Desmond Hunt, Canon Tom Robinson, Dr. Marney Patterson, Dr. J.I. Packer, Dr. Canon H.S.D. Robinson, and many others who remained true and faithful to the Solemn Declaration and have been among my Canadian mentors, exemplifying what it is to walk in faithfulness to that vision of being Biblically obedient Anglican leaders. I could mention many other examples of godly and faithful Christian leadership in the history of our Canadian church.

Three key moments in the abandonment of our Anglican heritage

It is with very great distress that I have witnessed the Anglican Church of Canada, very often led by her bishops, departing more and more from the Biblical faith over the course of the last three or four decades, and more intensively so in the last ten years. There have been a number of historic turning points in this tragic development, I mention but three.

The New Curriculum material for parish education (1962) The 1962 General Synod in Kingston, in response to the report by the General Board of Religious Education, gave approval to the production of *New Curriculum* materials

to replace the *Christian Truth and Life* series that had been in existence for over forty years, and the new materials began to be available at the 1965 synod in Vancouver. A new curriculum could have adhered to the Biblically faithful orientation of the previous series, but according to the research that I have conducted I have not found that to be so. *The New Curriculum* materials that I examined, reflected situational ethics, moral relativism, and a diminished emphasis on the authority of Holy Scripture. It appears that from the mid sixties onwards our church began to raise a generation of Sunday School children and Sunday School teachers who would no longer look to Scripture as the final and supreme authority in all matters of faith and doctrine. It was only a matter of time before these children would become adults and participate in votes in diocesan and general synods making crucial decisions about issues of faith, behaviour and doctrine on grounds that had more to do with prevailing cultural norms than with the abiding, unchanging Word of God.

The Book of Alternative Services (1985) A second turning point came in 1985 when General Synod accepted *The Book of Alternate Services*. Though this book has a number of meritorious features, and has produced some helpful forms of revised pastoral offices, yet in many aspects this book represented a departure from the Biblical theology enshrined so magnificently in the Book of Common Prayer, particularly in the Eucharistic prayers. In subtle and not so subtle ways, this book has mixed in with gospel truth, statements and concepts that are at variance with the gospel and with God's Word, and so has made it more difficult for Anglicans to understand and respond to the simplicity and purity of the true gospel. Perhaps the most pernicious achievement of *The Book of Alternative Services* (BAS) is in the Introduction to the book where a new definition of Scripture is presented to the church. The Introduction speaks of "the holy scriptures as the repository of the Church's symbols of life and faith". There is nothing in this definition of Scripture that suggests that Scripture has anything to do with God and His self-revelation of grace and truth ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The tragically misleading BAS definition of Scripture, contrasts sharply with Scripture's definition of itself such as we find in 2 Timothy 3:16 "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." This BAS definition of Scripture has helped to further marginalize the Word of God when it comes to searching for direction and instruction with respect to the priorities and purpose of the church of Jesus Christ today in a culture that is becoming increasingly hostile to Christian and Biblical truth. The way in which the BAS has further undermined the nature, significance and authority of the Word of God is in part responsible for the absence from many of our pulpits today of a confident, clear, and compelling proclamation of the gospel, and for an absence of Biblical exposition in preaching that alone builds-up the people of God. It is surely no coincidence that the collect for the second Sunday in Advent, that so magnificently affirms the supreme and divinely appointed place of Holy Scripture in our lives, individually and corporately, has been moved from its place of prominence at the beginning of Advent, and also been significantly altered. The collect for the third Sunday in Advent has been omitted altogether, depriving the church of the solemn reminder that there is coming a final judgement in which those called to be ministers and stewards of God's holy mysteries will be held accountable by our Lord Jesus Christ.

Affirmation of same-sex relationships by General Synod (2004) The two historic turning points identified above, in many respects paved the way for the third turning point in the life (and death) of our church. In June 2004 General Synod voted to "affirm the integrity and sanctity of committed adult same-sex relationships." Scripture unequivocally restricts sexual relationships to such as are between a husband and wife in marriage. No gathering of Biblically literate Christians could possibly vote in favour of the above motion. The above-mentioned motion was passed in flagrant disregard for the supreme authority in our church, namely the Word of God written, and in inexcusable ignorance of the theology of human sexuality enshrined in Scripture, confirmed in the teaching of Jesus Christ, and taught and practised by the church for two thousand years. The departure from the teaching of Scripture represented in the passing of this motion has been irrefutably demonstrated by Robert Gagnon in his

book *“The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Text and Hermeneutics.”* The passing of this motion was a horrendous tragedy. Firstly, it paved the way for the undermining of Christian marriage. Secondly, it signalled the abandonment and betrayal by our church of faithful and Biblically obedient men and women in our church struggling with same sex attraction. Thirdly, it prepared the way for sowing confusion about sexual identity in the minds and lives of the young men and women of our church, leading to destructive sexual experimentation.

The anchor of the 39 Articles discarded

On the basis of enquiries that I have made it appears that the trends precipitating and emanating from these three turning points have been increasingly confirmed by what has been taught and by what has not been taught in many of our Anglican Theological Colleges in Canada over this same time period. One such example of ties being severed with the historic Anglican faith is seen in what appears to be the widespread neglect of the 39 Articles of Religion that have shaped Anglican theology for more than 400 years and kept the Anglican Church faithful to the great truths of Scripture rediscovered at the Reformation. From my enquiries it would appear that many bishops no longer require knowledge of and allegiance to these Articles, not least because it appears that the Articles have all but disappeared from the curriculum of most Anglican theological colleges. There was a time when detailed study and application of the Articles was required of every student in training for holy orders. In 1930, one time Professor of Systematic Theology at Wycliffe College, Toronto, W.H. Griffith Thomas wrote *Principles of Theology*, a 500 page commentary on the Articles which became the definitive work on the subject for the entire Anglican Communion.

Obviously some of the 39 Articles addressed issues that are no longer of great significance to the church today, but many of them are as relevant today as they were when originally written. However, the body of articles as a whole is of immense importance to the church in every age because, as a historical study, it shows how the church grappled with the issues of the day in one particular era, in the light of God’s Word and on the basis of the teaching of Scripture. Furthermore, the 39 Articles are historically connected to other similar confessions drawn up by other confessional churches in Europe at that time. Awareness of this history and theology has been one of the anchors keeping the Anglican church securely moored to its original reformation heritage. Having been cut adrift from this anchorage, the Anglican Church is now drifting dangerously, knowing neither where she has come from nor whence she is bound. Widespread ignorance of the 39 Articles and their historical context has deprived our church of the example it has looked to through the centuries as to how to grapple with contemporary issues in the light of Scripture and on the basis of God’s Word

I asked a recent graduate of one of our well known Anglican theological colleges about the place of the 39 Articles in his curriculum and he replied, (speaking in the context of academic study not of worship) “it would probably be possible to go through this college without ever opening the Bible or the prayer book.” I put the same question to another man who had spent four years studying at another Canadian Anglican theological college approximately six years ago and he answered, “The bishop who ordained me never once raised the issue of the 39 Articles.” In response to further questioning he stated that instructors from both the college and the diocese constantly belittled and undermined the importance of Holy Scripture. There are of course a few theological colleges that are the exception to this trend, just as there are some bishops who regard knowledge of and adherence to the teaching of the 39 articles as a requirement for ordination. For this faithful affirmation of, and witness to, the historic Anglican faith we do indeed thank God. However, what appears to be the widespread failure of our theological colleges to teach theological students these fundamentals of the Anglican faith, and what appears to be the increasing reluctance of our bishops to require knowledge of and adherence to the Articles as a

requirement for ordination has only further contributed to the ever growing Biblical and theological ignorance of clergy and people alike.

The faithful walk away and the articulate write books

The three historic turning points identified above, and the inadequate or false teaching and compromised worship in hundreds of parishes across Canada that flowed out of these tragic events in the history of our church has led to a massive exodus from our churches in the last three or four decades. The statistics quoted by Dr Marney Patterson speak for themselves. Dr Patterson states that, between 1965 and 1995, 954 Anglican Churches in Canada closed their doors, and, of these, 526 closed down between 1992 and 1994.

Many of those who left Anglican churches during these years went instead to churches where the gospel was proclaimed expectantly, and the Word of God was taught faithfully. I have visited many Community churches, Christian Missionary Alliance Churches and Associated Gospel Churches and frequently found in these churches former Anglicans. It is no wonder that while Anglican churches have been declining and closing, other churches have been multiplying and growing.

The developments briefly outlined above have not passed unnoticed. Books have been written calling the Anglican Church to wake up, come to its senses, and turn back to God and to the authority of the Word of God in sincere repentance and obedient faith. In 1998, George Eves wrote *"Two Religions One Church: Division and Destiny in the Anglican Church of Canada"* in which he showed with great clarity the two incompatible sets of beliefs present in the Anglican Church of Canada; the one orthodox and Biblical, the other revisionist and unbiblical. In 1999 Marney Patterson wrote *"Suicide, the decline and fall of the Anglican Church of Canada"* in which he demonstrated with prophetic clarity that if the Anglican Church of Canada proceeds on its present course of rejecting the historic, Apostolic, orthodox, Biblical Christian faith, it is signing its own death warrant. In 2009 Ron Corcoran wrote *"The Bishop or the King?"* in which he documents the progressive turning away from God's Word by the Anglican Church of Canada and its embracing erroneous beliefs, a false gospel and ungodly practices. Creating a brilliant analogy from chess Ron Corcoran depicts the Anglican Church as forsaking its King, in favour of its bishops. .

The failure of our leaders to address the issues: is it too late?

The tragedy of the events and developments outlined above has been compounded by the virtual silence of most of our bishops, and by the almost total absence from The Anglican Journal and from most of our diocesan journals of any reference to the departure from "the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3) that is taking place in the Anglican Church of Canada on a daily basis. In a report titled *"The Anglican Church of Canada: Tearing the Fabric to Shreds"* there is a detailed, ten page analysis of the actions of successive diocesan and general synods turning away from the Biblical faith and ignoring the pleas of various leadership bodies within the world-wide Anglican Communion calling the Anglican Church of Canada back to Biblical orthodoxy. (See this report at www.anglicannetwork.ca/our_genesis.htm and follow the link: *"Chronicle of events in Canada"*)

Following the approval of the blessing of same sex unions by the Bishop and Diocese of New Westminster in 2002, the above report observed, "the official response of the Province and Primate of Canada to New Westminster's actions has been silence or... support – no rebuke, no censure, not even an expression of grief. Unchallenged innovations to the faith have spread and infected many dioceses in the Anglican Church of Canada. Since 2002 six more dioceses.....have voted to authorize the blessing of same sex marriages." (and more dioceses have joined that number since that report was written.)

Many of these developments have taken place since the release of **The Windsor Report** in October 2004, commissioned by the Archbishop of Canterbury the previous year. This report called on bishops not to authorize same-sex blessings; it called for Provinces to ensure bishops honour a moratorium on these blessings; it called for delegated Episcopal pastoral oversight where trust has been breached; this report contemplated a “*walking apart*” should these calls not be heeded. In rejecting the requirements of the Windsor Report and in ignoring the humble requests from the leaders of the world-wide Anglican Communion, that the Anglican Church of Canada return to Biblical orthodoxy, the Primate and Bishops of the Anglican Church of Canada are disregarding one of the foundational documents of the Anglican Church of Canada, namely the **Solemn Declaration of 1893**. This document states in part, “We declare this Church to be, and desire it to continue to be, in full communion with the Church of England throughout the world....We are determined by the help of God to hold and maintain the Doctrine, the Sacraments, and the Discipline of Christ as the Lord hath commanded in his Holy Word, and as the Church of England hath received and set forth the same in The Book of Common Prayer.” Such is the importance of this document that it is found in its entirety printed in the front page of the Book of Common Prayer.

In the failure of many of our bishops to speak out about the departure of our church from Biblical orthodoxy we see a weakening of true Episcopal leadership. In the Ordinal of the Book of Common Prayer there is laid down “The form of ordaining or consecrating of an Archbishop or Bishop.” The following question is addressed to the candidate, “Are you ready with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God’s Word; and both privately and openly to call upon and encourage others to do the same? The required answer is “I am ready, the Lord being my helper.” It is not without significance that this critically important question calling for a vitally important commitment has been omitted from the ordinal in the BAS. In its place there is the ambiguous and mischievous invitation to “proclaim and interpret the gospel.” Nowhere in Scripture are we called to interpret the gospel, but rather to proclaim and believe it.

We have seen bishops allowing erroneous and strange doctrines to flourish in their dioceses. Has there been any godly admonition within the House of Bishops calling on those entrusted to be guardians of the flock (Acts 20:28) to “take heed to yourselves and to the flock in which the Holy Spirit has made you guardians.”? In his book *Mansions of the Spirit* the Bishop of New Westminster denies the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as the only Saviour and as the exclusive Way to the Father. Has there been any recognition within the House of Bishops of the need to warn Anglican believers of the false teaching that is contained in this book? I ask these questions all too aware of my own mistakes and failures in ministry, but aware also that those who are over us in the Lord have need of encouragement, and of courage to be faithful to the Lord and to His Word, and if necessary to repent and to walk again in the way of God’s commandments. I thank God for those in Episcopal leadership who do demonstrate this faithfulness and courage.

One way in which this courage and faithfulness could be practised would be to abandon the endless “discernment” process in diocesan gatherings meeting to discuss the blessing of same sex unions. In place of this process, people need to be instructed as to what the Bible teaches about being created in God’s image, about His gift of human sexuality, about sexual brokenness, about marriage, and about God’s power to heal and transform our broken lives through Jesus Christ and by His indwelling Holy Spirit. Has our church gone too far down the road of cultural conformity and moral relativism for this dream ever to become a reality once again? With one bishop reportedly recently ordaining a woman married to her same-sex partner, and another bishop reportedly appointing to a senior diocesan position a man soon to be married to his same-sex partner, the situation does not look particularly promising. What is even more disturbing is that there will almost certainly be no discipline or rebuke from our House of Bishops for these actions in blatant disregard of the 1998 Primates Lambeth Resolution 1.10 that states

the Communion position that homosexual practise is incompatible with scripture and that they “could not advise the legitimising or blessing of same sex unions nor ordaining those involved in same gender unions.”

Two faithful responses to this crisis

Those who have taken action in response to the brokenness, disobedience, and unfaithfulness of our church have done so in two opposite ways. Some have chosen to remain with the Anglican Church of Canada and to work for the reformation of our church from within. Others, since the formation of the Anglican Network in Canada in November 2007, have chosen to leave the Anglican Church of Canada and become part of the Anglican Network in Canada thereby becoming part of the 100,000 strong Anglican Church In North America of which the Anglican Network In Canada is a diocese. The Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) was initiated at the request of the Global Anglican Futures Conference (GAF Con) that met in Jerusalem in June 2008, where bishops, clergy and lay leaders from the five continents met representing 35 million practising Anglicans. ACNA has been formally recognized by the GAFCon Primates, representing 70% of the active Anglicans globally. In February 2010 the Church of England General Synod affirmed the Anglican Church in North America’s desire “to remain within the Anglican family”

In searching for a Biblical paradigm to understand the disobedience of our church and now the disintegration of our church, I have gone back to the division of the kingdom after the death of King Solomon recorded in 1 Kings 11 and 12. Scripture says very clearly that it was God who divided the kingdom between Jeroboam and Rehoboam as an act of judgement on the disobedience of King Solomon. Scripture says that this was “a turn of affairs brought about by the Lord” (12:15). God also promised to bless both halves of the divided kingdom if each walked in the ways of God’s commandments. As it happened, the Northern kingdom, initially ruled by King Joraboam, never came to be ruled by a godly king and was the first to go into exile. The Southern kingdom only had a few godly kings, and it too eventually went into exile in Babylon. It was God’s ultimate purpose to restore His people to Himself and to reunite the divided kingdom, as seen in the vision by the prophet Ezekiel (Ezekiel 37).

I see very significant parallels between the tragic division of the kingdom and the tragic division of the Anglican Church in Canada. In seeking to understand our situation through this and other passages of Scripture I am compelled to say that the division of the Anglican Church in Canada is a state of affairs brought about by the Lord and is in fact God’s judgement on the decisions and actions of the bishops and synods of the Anglican Church of Canada, by which it has turned away from the Word of God. It is my hope and prayer that our church will wake up to what God is doing, and return to Him in repentance and faith. It is my hope and prayer that when this happens, God will bring about the reunion of His broken and divided Anglican Church in Canada. It is my hope and prayer that God will keep the Anglican Network in Canada from any form of pride or self-righteousness. It is my hope and prayer that God will bless the ministry of those who are called by God to serve Him, whether within the Anglican Church of Canada or within the Anglican Network in Canada. I thank God for those parishes in the ACC where there are clergy and lay people faithfully teaching and obeying the Word of God in its entirety, boldly proclaiming the gospel and affirming God’s power in our Saviour Jesus Christ to remake our broken lives, without any reservations.

I have no doubt that God is calling some people out of the Anglican Church of Canada to be a part of the Anglican Network In Canada, and by the same token I believe that at the present time God is calling others to stay with the Anglican Church of Canada, and to seek to bring about change from within. Such was the intent of the Essentials Movement, that is now carried on by the Anglican Communion Alliance. In such a time of brokenness within the Body of Christ, it is of crucial importance that both churches pray publicly for each other. At a time of pain and separation when former colleagues in ministry sometimes find themselves standing on opposite sides of the

divide, it is vital we affirm and demonstrate that our true unity, in the gospel of the grace of Christ and in the written and living Word of God, transcends organisational and institutional structures. In the earliest days of the formation of the church in Corinth, the Apostle Paul found the opposition to the gospel to be so strong in the Jewish Synagogue where he had started his ministry that he was compelled to leave the synagogue and continue the work in a house next door (Acts 18) The same experience and response was repeated in Ephesus where the gospel ministry moved from the synagogue to a local hall. (Acts 19) At other places the Apostle Paul was apparently able to continue working within the local synagogue. There seems to be something of a parallel in our circumstances today.

The reaction to those who have left the Anglican Church of Canada

There have of course been previous times in the history of God's people when the church has split. The Reformation is the prime example of this. At such a time, all too often the tragedy of separation is then compounded by the tragedy of blanket condemnation on the one hand or the tragedy of persecution on the other. In our own day, it is with deep distress that we have witnessed bishops of the Anglican Church of Canada and those acting on their behalf, taking hostile action toward dissenting priests and congregations. The report *Tearing the Fabric to Shreds* quoted above summarizes the situation. "Many have suffered eviction from their churches, inhibition, and accusations of abandonment of the ministry. Hostile bishops and diocese have taken orthodox clergy, lay leaders and parishes to court. Even internationally renowned theologians and biblical teachers such as the Revd. Dr. J.I. Packer and the Revd. David Short have not been spared. " Exorbitant amounts of money have been spent on legal fees in attempts to drive faithful believers and their leaders from their buildings and curtail their ministry. The report cites twenty-six instances of punitive and debilitating action and persecution taken against individuals and parishes by seven bishops who were named. In these and other instances, the interests of the institution were put ahead of the cause of the gospel: this has been described as institutional idolatry. Such action indicates that there is something terribly wrong. The apostle Paul writes to the church at Corinth, "To have lawsuits at all with one another is defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded? But you yourselves wrong and defraud, and that even your own brethren." (1 Corinthians 6:7-8)

What a godly example is Bishop Mark Lawrence of the Episcopal diocese of South Carolina who has given permission to any parish in his diocese to put itself under the jurisdiction of another bishop if that is the step that they believe would enable them to exercise a more Biblical and orthodox ministry. Here is an example of freedom of conscience being honoured above institutional conformity.

The decision that I have made.

At the beginning of this paper I indicated briefly how I had been involved in the earlier decades of my ministry in Barnabas Anglican Ministries, a movement within the Anglican Church of Canada that sought to bear witness to those great truths of Scripture on which the Anglican Church is founded. I find myself in these latter years of my ministry called by God to bear witness to those same truths, but this time within the Anglican Network in Canada. To leave the Anglican Church of Canada is a step that I take with the utmost reluctance and with great sorrow of heart. I only take it after serious thought and prayer and after much valued consultation with trusted colleagues. Such a step does not signal my abandonment of those within the ACC who are courageously defending the orthodox Anglican faith.

The reasons for my taking this step are two-fold. Firstly, I cannot follow where bishops and synods are leading our church and at the same time remain true to my ordination vows. I could stay and ignore the direction and example our leaders are giving, but how long can a soldier be part of an army and ignore the example and instructions of his

commanding officer? Furthermore I see no signs of a future change of direction in the path that our leaders have chosen to take. The character of a church that allows itself to be led in this direction seems to be aptly described by the Apostle Paul writing to Timothy, "Holding the form of religion, but denying the power of it" (2 Timothy 3:6). I believe that the words of the Apostle Paul in writing to the Galatians are equally pertinent for us. "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you in the grace of Christ and turning to a different gospel - not that there is another gospel, but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ." (Galatians 1:6, 7) The second reason for my decision is that God has raised up a new Anglican Church in Canada that wants to be true to the gospel and teaching that was originally embraced and affirmed by those who first planted the Anglican Church in Canada. Mine is as much a call into as it is a call out of. To work now with this Christian community is merely to maintain a long obedience in the same direction. Notwithstanding that decision I will continue to support the faithful witness to Jesus Christ of my local Anglican church.

I have relinquished my license to serve as a priest in the diocese of Toronto and in the Anglican Church of Canada. I am not in any way surrendering my calling to Holy Orders within the Anglican Communion, nor my privilege and responsibility to exercise the ministry entrusted to me some forty-seven years ago at my ordination on 22nd September 1963 by Cuthbert Bardsley, Bishop of Coventry, England.

I have been assured by Bishop Don Harvey that he will license me as a presbyter / priest in the diocese of the Anglican Network in Canada, province of the Anglican Church in North America. I wish to thank Bishop Patrick Yu for the privilege of serving most recently under his Episcopal leadership. I want to assure him of my continued prayers, and by the same token covet his prayers for me, and his prayers for the bishop under whose leadership I will now be serving, as well as for the Anglican Church in North America.

Robin Guinness

Note: A number of changes were made to the original document, on September 7th 2016, in the interest of greater accuracy.