

A SUBMISSION TO THE COMMISSION ENTRUSTED WITH REVIEWING THE MARRIAGE CANON.

Dear Members of the Commission: This essay and the one following, are not focused on the theology of Christian marriage. I focus on concepts which are in the background. I guess I have, and I continue to seek, a place where I can stand and objectively look at the various opinions and beliefs in conflict around this issue. Perhaps an objective viewpoint does not exist. Doing thinking in a pluralist context can be an overwhelming challenge. Here are my efforts.

PART ONE: WHAT DOES “VIA MEDIA” MEAN?

Dear Members of the Commission: I will describe two incidents which occurred in this part of the Anglican Church, which led me into re-reading a book. This book presents a three group description of Anglicanism, which helps get at the doctrine of the Church. I believe one has to see how this issue of same-sex blessing is related to this doctrine before you can properly understand it.

AN INCIDENT FROM 2003: A DISAGREEMENT AMONG WESTERN BISHOPS.

The first incident occurred in the summer of 2003:

At this time, there were seven dissenting parishes in a struggle with the Bishop of the New Westminster Diocese. The issue concerned “Alternative Episcopal Oversight”. The Bishop of the Yukon, Terry Buckle, was offering to provide such oversight to these parishes. This was not acceptable to Bishop Ingham, who considered Buckle’s offer as interference.

In October, a five-page letter was written by Archbishop Michael Peers, Primate, and signed by the four other Archbishops of Canada. This letter was addressed to all Canadian Anglicans. It was intended as a letter to calm and reassure Anglicans. The third paragraph begins with the following two sentences:

“Though disagreement on critical issues need not threaten the gift of communion, recent events have strained our unity. On one hand, although members of our church hold a variety of views, there is little evidence that they see this as a church-dividing issue.” (Oct 9, 3002)

One Western Bishop, Bishop Victoria Matthews of Edmonton, disagreed. She wrote a pastoral letter to the parishes of her diocese. In it, she wrote:

“In a recent letter signed by our Primate and the Metropolitans of the four Canadian ecclesiastical provinces, this most painful matter of New Westminster proceeding to permit the blessing of same-gender union is judged to not be a

church dividing issue. Many disagree. I can only say that the action of Bishop Ingham and the Diocese of New Westminster, in proceeding with the blessing of same-gender unions, is church defining.” (Oct.14, 2003)

It seems to this observer, with the benefit of hindsight, that Bishop Matthews was correct. But, how is it related to the doctrine of the Church?

AN INCIDENT FROM 2004: A NEW PRIMATE VISITS THE DIOCESE OF NEW WESTMINSTER.

The second incident occurred a year later, around October. Archbishop Andrew Hutchison, now elected as Primate, came to visit the Diocese of New Westminster. He gave an evening talk at St. Mary’s Church in Kerrisdale, a local Church in the south part of Vancouver. His talk was titled “The Nature of Anglicanism”. Perhaps 120 or so persons attended.

Archbishop Hutchison took a surprising approach to his subject. He recounted early Christian history in England. He began somewhere around the 4th century, and described events and persons up to the 14th century. Two or three times during his talk, when describing a controversy, he would pause. He would look up. With a small smile, he asked “Does this sound familiar?” He ended his talk without once mentioning the current controversy.

In the question time afterwards, several persons identified themselves as former parishioners. “I was at the parish in Montreal, when you were rector....Congratulations on becoming Primate” one person enthused. There was much goodwill towards the Archbishop. Only one person asked a question about the controversy. He began by saying, “There seems to be an elephant in the room.” He went on to mention the Windsor Report, which had appeared only a week earlier. I don’t remember his exact question. The Primate answered in a calm, confident manner. Again, I do not remember clearly his answer. Soon, the evening ended. Many of us left feeling good and confident. “Everything was going to be okay”.

In the week following, I wondered about Archbishop Hutchison’s talk. What had he really been saying?

It seemed to me that Archbishop Hutchison was making an assumption, which all of us in the audience agreed with. And that assumption concerned the concept of the “via media”.

I was a 52 year old man back then. I was an unemployed priest. I had been away from the Diocese of New Westminster some 19 years, returning in September 2002. At first, I thought I could act as a peacemaker between the two sides of the controversy. I quickly realized this was impossible. As I am a thinker, I began to read history. I thought, maybe back in historical times, there was a peaceful harmony in the Church. I also thought

connecting with history might help me gain an objective understanding of the present controversy. So, I was already wondering about the “via media” concept.

Listening to Archbishop Hutchison, he seemed to be assuming the Anglican Church was an enduring institution, living in history. And I thought, he was assuming we Anglicans have a special gift from God, the gift of “the via media”. I wondered, then, if that meant we Anglicans have a special virtue, that of Moderation, or of Reasonableness. It seemed that Hutchison’s belief was, we Anglicans have in the past stumbled through controversy. So, we will find a way to stumble through this present one. As a result, he was dismissing the seriousness of the present controversy. And he was saying, “Everything is going to be alright”.

So I re-read a lovely little book the Episcopal Church had put out in 1979.

A THREE-GROUP DESCRIPTION OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH

“The Spirit of Anglicanism” was written by three historians. The first chapter is about Richard Hooker. The second is about F.D. Maurice. The third is about William Temple. And the fourth chapter, a summarizing chapter is titled “Anglicanism and Its Spirit”.

Historian William J. Wolf wrote the fourth chapter. In it, he picks up an insight of F.D. Maurice (1805-1872). Maurice observed that in Anglicanism, there wasn’t a founding historical figure, such as a Martin Luther found in Lutheranism. But, Maurice observed, there seem to be groups within the Church who operate like political parties. Wolf picks up this insight, and suggests, because the English Reformation was guided and controlled by a monarch and a parliament, perhaps the forming of such groups is natural to Anglicans. Wolf theorizes that groups in Anglicanism form around a set of ideas, or a platform.

Wolf uses three labels to describe the groups in the Anglican Church. These labels are: an Anglo-Catholic group; a Moderate/Liberal group; and an Evangelical/Protestant group.

Let us briefly describe these:

Anglo-Catholics are Anglicans who know and love the Prayer Book. They find their theology in the Prayer Book, in the prayers and exhortations. They believe one can experience Christ through liturgy. Anglo-Catholics have been called High Churchmen and Tractarians in the past.

Moderate/Liberal Anglicans are more difficult to describe. Both these concepts, “Moderate” and “Liberal” are elusive terms. Let us loosely define Liberals as Christians who are interested in contemporary society, and believe one can enjoy the best of current culture and thought, while also being a Christian. Liberal/Moderate Anglicans can also be called Progressives. Liberal Anglicans have a strong belief in Reason. They seek to think out Christian faith using contemporary concepts.

Evangelical/Protestant Anglicans are persons who revere the Scriptures. They believe one can experience and learn about Christ through studying the Scriptures. In the 16th century, Evangelicals read the writings of Protestant Reformers on the continent. Historically, this group has been called Puritans or Calvinists.

I found Wolf's description very helpful. The phrase "via media" is using two Latin words. "Via" means a way, or a road. "Media" means a middle, or it could mean an intermediate. So, this phrase could be translated "a middle way" or "the middle way" or "an intermediate way". It isn't a precise phrase. And, with Wolf's help, it seems to me it is a summary description. It does not define a single quality about Anglicanism. It does describe, from an observer point of view, that Anglicanism is an odd religion, in which groups with different theologies and different practices are able to co-exist.

If we remember a saying of Jesus in John 17, we have a clue to how we Anglicans ought to think. Jesus says:

"I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them to me, and they have kept thy word."

Now if I identify with the Anglo-Catholics, I will believe that Christ manifests the Father's name to us through liturgy and tradition. But if I can respect Evangelicals, and I can respect that Jesus manifests the Father's name also to them, though by different means, then I am being what Wolf calls "a broad churchman". I am an Anglican grounded in one Christian tradition, and I am able to respect other Anglicans grounded in their tradition.

A CAUTION

I ought to admit Wolf presented a four group analysis in his 1979 essay. He describes two Liberal/Moderate groups. One he names "the Liberal appeal to Reason", the second he names "the Liberal appeal to Experience". Both Reason and Experience are complex, subtle concepts which need defining. So, let's admit, for high level, careful thinking, a three group model is inadequate.

However, as I am trying to get at the big picture issues, I think a three group model is adequate. It does show us a theological diversity in which we Anglicans do our thinking.

It does, for instance, show us why the place of Scripture in Anglicanism doesn't have a simple answer. Different groups use Scripture differently. So, as it was a matter of debate in the 16th century, so it has re-appeared as a matter of debate in the 21st century.

AN EXAMPLE OF THE USE OF THE THREE-GROUP PARADIGM.

This model is helpful on a parish level. It is natural for a parish to develop a distinct theological identity. So, some parishes will develop an Anglo-Catholic identity. Others an Evangelical identity. And, there could be a variety of Liberal/Moderate identities. Isn't

this a healthy situation? A variety of theological identities means a healthy Anglican Diocese. So, individual Anglicans can find a parish suited to a person's spiritual preference.

On the Diocesan level, and on the National level, this model is less useful. Can a Diocese be described as Anglo-Catholic? Can a National Church be described as Liberal/Moderate? Interesting questions.

DOES ANGLICAN CHRISTIANITY HAVE INNATE FLAWS?

What is the place of doctrinal thinking in Anglicanism?

The English Reformation occurred between 1530 and 1680 in England. It involved politics as well as religion. The institution of the king, as well as parliament, were evolving, as a state Church also emerged. This history is not easy to tell in a simple way. So, it seems to amateur Anglicans, doctrinal ideas did not drive the English Reformation. This encourages some Anglicans to think that doctrine is unimportant.

This is a wrong understanding. While the English Reformation is a complex historical matter, doctrines were important. I argue this three-group model helps us to see that. Because of the oddness of the English Reformation, because a Queen and a parliament were involved, it seems that Prayer Books were the main product and instrument of our reformation. But, to the various groups and to individuals, doctrines, ideas and beliefs were important.

Is it true, we modern Anglicans here in Canada, are very casual, even indifferent to doctrinal matters? I fear it is so. And doesn't this indifference also go along with an ignorance and a lack of interest in Reformation history?

IS THERE A CONTROLLING, SUPERVISING FUNCTION IN THE CHURCH?

Somewhere in Dietrich Bonhoeffer's book "Ethics" (printed in 1949), he says church officials have a supervising function over church doctrine. He says the Church has been entrusted with Christ's teachings and with Christ's name. We have been given a treasure to safeguard and to pass on. But, says Bonhoeffer, church officials can supervise, evaluate, and judge when clergy or teachers offer new interpretations. The Church officials can judge whether these interpretations are good, authentic teachings, in continuity with Christian faith. Or, they can judge an interpretation as distorted, even as a false interpretation of Christian faith. Bonhoeffer mentions approvingly the Catholic curia which does this function in the Catholic Church.

So, how do we Anglicans regulate and supervise the transmission and the interpretations of Christian faith?

We Anglicans don't like the concepts of Orthodoxy or Heresy. Why? Well, the Orthodoxy concept has connotations of being a goody-goody. It has a stiff, formal sense. Doesn't this come from watching Protestant theologians, who as an intellectual exercise, tried describing Christian Faith in propositional statements? A theologian might write six or eight or more such statements. As an intellectual exercise, this does have value. But, to believe Christian Faith can be completely described by a set of propositions, is reductionism.

Let us define Orthodoxy as a philosophic description of Christian faith, which attempts to describe a wholesome, balanced version of Christian Faith.

The Heresy concept also has negative connotations. We can easily remember movies or dramas of the Inquisition, of unfortunate individuals being hauled before a court, being condemned, and then executed. Yes, the Medieval times were rough, cruel and violent. But still, we have to attend to the issue of good Christian thinking.

Let's define Heresy as a philosophic description of Christian faith which is one-sided, and which seriously misrepresents the Faith.

Better words might be "Pseudo-Christian" for heresy, and "Authentic Christian" for orthodoxy.

And let me mention the parable of the wheat and the tares, which is about the true and the false.

Another parable he put before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. And the servants of the householder came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then has it weeds?' He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' But he said 'No; lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. Let both grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn..'" (Matthew 13.24-30)

One commentator on this passage I read years ago, said when the weeds begin to sprout, they resemble the wheat. Both look alike as young green shoots. It is only when the plants are half grown, or are maturing, that the differences become noticeable.

Jesus here is teaching his disciples to live with a radical ambiguity. How could this apply today? In the world, then, there may be representations of Christian faith that are good and authentic. There are also bad representations of Christian faith out there. Is Jesus telling us to accept this and to live with it and to trust there is a future judgment at which everything will be rightly sorted out?

But what about within the Church? Can a good representation of Christian Faith and a false representation of Christian Faith be allowed to co-exist?

ARE WE MOVING FROM A THREE GROUP MODEL TO A ONE GROUP MODEL OF THE CHURCH?

I am suggesting the “via media” is a concept which had a clear meaning in the past, say in 17th and 18th century Anglicanism. But today it has lost its meaning. It has become what the bible calls an “idol”. That is, it is something we continue to believe in which gives us a false sense of security. It also allows us to have a narrow view of reality and to ignore painful aspects of present day reality.

This sense of false security, along with an Anglican indifference to doctrine, then, has set up the Anglican Church of Canada in a very dangerous and vulnerable place. It explains to me, why the last twenty years have been turbulent and chaotic. It explains why we are so easily blown about by all the fads and fashions of culture.

My fear is that the Anglican Church of Canada is moving from a three-group model of Anglican Faith, to a one-group model.

The issue of same-sex blessing at the 2004 and 2007 General Synods, was presented as a pastoral issue. Now, as of 2013, with Motion C0003, the framing of the issue has changed. It is now an issue of giving homosexual persons equal dignity with heterosexuals. Why this change?

It seems to this observer, changing the framing of this issue is related to a move by the leadership of the Anglican Church of Canada, from a three-group model of theology to a one-group model.

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Part Two: AN ANALYSIS OF CONTEMPORARY ANGLICAN SOCIAL ACTIVISM

In this section, I present an analysis of current Anglican Social Activism. This activism occurs within a Liberal Christian tradition. I attempt to describe Bishop Ingham's theology and his key beliefs.

GENERAL BACKGROUND

1. "Christian Liberalism" is a broad term, and a proper treatment would involve writing a large book, if not many. It is a theological movement which began with Frederick Schleiermacher (1768-1843). There are many ways to define "Liberal Christian Theology". Liberal philosophies tend to focus on the worth and value of the individual person.

2. The philosophic concept of Love is an important concept in Liberal Christianity. And texts such as Mark 12.28-31 are of fundamental importance. Here Jesus is asked, "Which commandment is the first of all?"

Jesus answers: "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'."

So "Love of God" and "love your neighbor" are foundational concepts in this theology.

3. In seminary, I read an essay which used three Greek words to explain a Christian doctrine of Love. The words were *philia*, *eros*, and *agape*. *Philia* means a brother and it usually refers to love between one Christian and another. *Eros* refers to romantic or sexual love, love between a man and a woman. *Agape* means 'a stranger', or a person different from us. So, *agape* love is the highest form of love. It is considered the most spiritual form of Christian Love, and involves sacrifice and self-giving.

4. In this essay, I generally understand Liberal Theology as an attempt to explain and present Christian faith using contemporary, modern concepts.

Here in Western Canada, we have experienced three influential Liberal bishops. There was Ted Scott, bishop in the Kootenays between 1966 and 1971. He became Primate of the Canadian Church (1971- 1986). There was David Somerville, Bishop in the Diocese of New Westminster (1971-1980). And, recently there was Bishop Michael Ingham, Bishop in the New Westminster Diocese from 1993 to 2013.

In general, these Bishops were Liberal in their thinking, and were concerned to make Christian faith relevant to modern persons. Did all three Bishops have the same theology? Were there important differences?

ARCHBISHOP TED SCOTT

Ted Scott was Bishop of the Kootenays from 1966-1971. As Bishop, he encouraged ecumenical relations with other denominations, and encouraged poor Anglican congregations to join with United Church congregations. In 1971, he was elected Primate, and served until 1986. He was a surprising choice, as he broke the usually conservative mold of previous Primate. When the issue of the Anglican Church formally uniting with the United Church came up early in his Primacy, he let the House of Bishops vote negatively. Archbishop Scott continued to support changes in the Church. He supported the ordaining of women to the priesthood. Also, he spoke out about Apartheid in South Africa. He, with others, would attend the shareholders meeting of companies with investments in South Africa, and ask questions about the morality of their investments.

Archbishop Scott was a unique, amazing Christian leader. Because he was a people person, he was willing to mix with others, even those who disagreed with him. He would listen to them, as well as debate with them. His critics came to respect his sincerity, He became a well loved figure.

It can be said Archbishop Scott legitimized Anglicans getting involved in political activism, and applying Christian faith to contemporary social issues.

BISHOP MICHAEL INGHAM

I first met Rev. Ingham in 1979. He was a priest in the Diocese of New Westminster, and he was the Diocesan representative on the P.W.R.D.F. In 1989, he went to Toronto, becoming the Principal Secretary to the Primate, Michael Peers. In 1992 he returned to Vancouver, getting the position of Dean at Christ Church Cathedral. He wasn't given much chance to be a Dean, as Bishop Hambidge soon announced his retirement. In late 1993 he was elected Bishop. He was consecrated in January, 1994.

Bishop Ingham has written two books:

- Rites for a New Age, Understanding the Book of Alternative Services, 1986.
- Mansions of the Spirit, The Gospel in a Multi-Faith World, 1997

I want to point out Bishop Ingham was born in 1949, which is the same year I was born. I think the year 1971 was an important moment in Anglicanism. This was the year Bishop Scott was elected Primate. In that year, I, as well as Ingham, was a young man about 22 years old.

It was an interesting, adventurous time, a time of questioning, seeking, and testing. There was the music of the Rolling Stones and the Beatles. There were protests against the American war in Vietnam. There was a counter-culture movement challenging all forms of conventional morality. The police were criticized, University professors were criticized, politicians were scorned, parents were questioned. This could be described as a movement involving concepts of Romantic Individualism. "If it feels good, do it!" The youthful individual was exalted and worshipped. Having intense feelings, living fully engaged, being passionate about life, all these ideals were venerated in this movement. The counter-culture criticized the conventional morals and beliefs held dear in the Victorian era. "Doing one's duty", or "Serving the public good" were seen as suspect, as inauthentic.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ISSUE OF THE BLESSING OF SAME-SEX COUPLES .

There were two phases in the development of the framing of this issue.

First phase, Ingham moves back to Vancouver, becomes Dean and then Bishop in 1993. A second important player is Peter Elliot. Elliot and Ingham both worked at National Synod Office about 1989. Elliot moves to Vancouver and becomes Dean in 1994. Together, Bishop and Dean, get established as senior clergy of this Diocese. During this time, choosing language like "same-sex couples" took hold. Also, the strategy of using a Synod motion, and deciding to proceed in a Synod setting, was formulated . In 1998 the first appearance of a motion on this subject occurs at Diocesan Synod.

The second phase started after 2002. Both Ingham and Elliot were members of the Council of General Synod. Both were active in preparing for a motion to come before General Synod in 2004. Another dimension is added to the issue: that a Bishop along with his diocese, can make a decision to perform these blessings, i.e. bypassing the authority of General Synod.

In 2004, activists succeeded in getting this clause passed: This Synod recognizes "the integrity and sanctity of committed, adult same-sex relationships".

In 2007, activists succeed in getting the clause " the blessing of same-sex unions is not in conflict with the doctrine (in the sense of being creedal) of the Anglican Church of Canada" passed.

Activists fail in 2007 in getting Synod to "affirm the authority and jurisdiction of any diocesan synod (a) with the concurrence of the diocesan bishop and (b) in a manner which respects the conscience of the incumbent and the will of the parish" to make decisions about this blessing. Twenty-one bishops voted "no", nineteen bishops voted "yes". Clergy and Lay delegates voted "yes" .

However, a couple of Bishops after 2007 went ahead anyway in approving a blessing of same-sex couples.

In the Spring of 2008, some 18 or so congregations hold votes at their annual congregation meetings, voting to leave the Anglican Church of Canada. They were using the same tactic the activists used. That is, holding a vote, and claiming a theology that a gathering has authority to act on its own.

It is interesting to note these changes in the Church were related to changes going on in Canadian society. The social stereotype of the homosexual has changed remarkably since the 1960's. Back then, there was a stereotype of gays being marginalized, strange persons. They might be in the theater or the arts. They were a type of outsider. But Prime Minister Trudeau changed the criminal code in 1968, removing homosexuality as a crime. Gradually social stereotypes changed.

May I point out the stereotype of the pedophile has changed?. We now have a stereotype of the pedophile as a dark stranger, someone dirty and twisted. And society has moved to define sex acts by adults on children as crimes. Suspected pedophiles are prosecuted legally.

WHAT IS BISHOP INGHAM'S THEOLOGY?

Can I give a fair analysis of Bishop Ingham's theology, the ideas and beliefs which he stood for? Can we focus on concepts, and get a picture of the conceptual war in the Anglican heavens?

When I first heard Ingham speak, it was in 1979. I was a theological student, he was a young priest. There was a controversy going on about the World Council of Churches giving grants to South African groups. Some of these groups espoused violence. As I listened to Ingham, I recognized he was using concepts from Liberation Theology.

In 1992, I again heard Ingham speak. This time he was a Dean, and he was speaking at Sorrento, an Anglican conference center near Kamloops. I remember being impressed. He spoke very well, although I don't remember his topic. I thought, "Wow, this guy is a Mystic". He seemed spiritually wise in a universalistic way. I did notice there wasn't much Christian content in his talk.

Since then, I have heard Bishop Ingham preach between six and ten times, and I have heard several of his sermons at Diocesan Synod. Let me make the following observations:

1. Bishop Ingham is an abstract thinker. He likes to use concepts like "Justice" and "Mission". I have found his books difficult to read, because as a student and then as a priest, I have done my own thinking on these same matters.

2. Bishop Ingham uses concepts like “inclusion” and “tolerance”. These concepts override the older language of “love”. So, “philia love” becomes inclusion. But, does this mean love between one Christian and another Christian? Or does it mean love we Christians ought to have for members of our society? “Agape love” clearly is involved in Bishop Ingham’s call for us to accept and acknowledge gay persons, first out in society, and second, amongst us as members of our church. By using “inclusion”, these older distinctions get blurred.

Tolerance is not a clear concept. It has two meanings. It can mean accepting in a putting up with sense. That is, acknowledging there are differences, but accepting that the differences are not crucial, are not of prime importance, so one is able to grudgingly co-exist. This is probably what tolerance meant in historic Anglicanism. The second meaning is to accept and agree with. In this second sense, differences are regarded as unimportant and unreal.

I will argue in part three of this essay, that “tolerance” “inclusion” and “diversity” are concepts which come from Human Rights Movements.

3. I think there is a strong influence of the 1970’s counter-culture in Bishop Ingham’s theology. Clearly, he and other young Anglicans picked up their ideas about sex from the counter-culture. Sex is good, it is natural, and it ought to be celebrated. And, it was in the 1970’s that homosexuality began to be accepted as normal for some people.

But I think Ingham also picked up a suspicion of institutions from the counter-culture. Bishop Ingham has a light concept of sin as regards individuals. But, as an intellectual, Bishop Ingham sees social institutions as capable of sin, that is, oppressing people. Ingham seems to see the Christian Church as a powerful force in society, capable of oppressing women and gays. He seems to think that if a social institution limits the freedom of an individual to do what he wants, or what he believes is right, that institution is being oppressive.

I do think Bishop Ingham can be described as a Romantic. His action as a Bishop in 2002, and the action of the Diocese of New Westminster, could be described as Romantic Individualism. It was a rebellious act, and Bishop Ingham and the activists were claiming to act with integrity. There was talk at the time, “I feel this is the right thing to do”, and “I feel the Holy Spirit wants us to act...”. These behaviors, and these beliefs resemble the actions of an adolescent, rebelling against a parent, and fumbling towards adulthood.

4. Was Bishop Ingham a prophet? He certainly was striving to be a reformer. There was a claim being made, that having a love for a just cause was a superior form of love. Also, activists were claiming God was with them, and giving them a knowledge superior to other Christians.

On page 8 of the St. Michael's report, two questions are presented:

“Is it theologically and doctrinally responsible for one member church of the Communion to approve a course of action which it has reason to believe may be destructive of the unity of the Communion?”

“Is it theologically and doctrinally responsible to accept unity as the value which transcends all others, and therefore for a member church of the Communion to refrain from making a decision when it believes it has an urgent gospel mandate to proceed?”
(May, 2005)

These two questions capture the conflict between being passionate for a cause or being concerned for Church unity. I see this as a conflict between two kinds of love, love for a social cause, or love for an imperfect, institutional Church.

The new element in Ingham's theology, the element which distinguishes him from Archbishop Ted Scott, was reforming the Church. In Ted Scott, activism primarily meant getting involved with issues outside of the Church. With Bishop Ingham and the activists around him, they were targeting the Church and wanting to change specific Church policies.

5. Bishop Ingham's theology operates in a liberal-fundamentalist dualism.

In 2007 I realized there was a group in North American society Bishop Ingham likely considers his theological opponents.

There was a one day workshop on the Anglican Covenant in the autumn of 2007 here in Vancouver. Archbishop Hutchison, now retired as Primate, gave some introductory comments. About sixty persons attended. Most of the time we were in discussion groups. At about 3pm, the conference ended. Afterwards, I felt frustrated. I was thinking, “Damn liberal Bishops. Why don't liberal Bishops have a doctrine of sin or evil?” I was really thinking about the issue of Orthodoxy and Heresy. I continued to ruminate, and at about 8pm, I had an “aha” moment. “Wait a second. Bishop Ingham does have a concept of heresy. For him, the American Christian Right are modern day Christian heretics!”

So, isn't it true, that all Ingham's ministry, and all his thinking, is a striving to present a compassionate, tolerant, liberal Christian faith which is distinct in comparison with American Christian Fundamentalism?

While Bishop Ingham is correct in seeing Fundamentalism as a distortion of genuine Christianity, has he correctly distinguished between Evangelicals and fundamentalists? Using Wolf's three group model, can we say Bishop Ingham understands the Evangelical group within Anglicanism?

HOW TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN AN EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN AND A FUNDAMENTALIST CHRISTIAN.

It is difficult to distinguish between these two, because they use the same language and similar beliefs. Both groups believe strongly in the Scriptures. They believe in the literal meaning of texts. Also, both groups believe it is possible to have a conversion experience, to meet Christ and experience transformation. So, both groups use a “me and Jesus” type talk.

To distinguish between the two, you have to watch how they behave. It is in their understanding of Church where the difference is. Fundamentalists believe they are called to form a pure Church on earth. They are not able to accept ambiguity. They have clear, definite ideas about who are the good Christians and who aren't. Purity is a real, controlling concern.

The Evangelical Christian is able to accept ambiguity. An Evangelical can understand that in the Church, there are good persons and imperfect persons. And Evangelicals understand Jesus' parable about the wheat and the tares (Matthew 13.24-30, 36-40)

So, Evangelical Anglicans may sound like Fundamentalists, but they are not. Bishop Ingham and many Anglican activists aren't able to discern this matter clearly.

IS THE THEOLOGY OF CHRIST'S PASSION A DIVISIVE MATTER?

Liberals and Evangelicals think differently about Christ's death and resurrection. In traditional systematic theology, there was a category “the Person of Christ” and a category “the Work of Christ”.

The three-group model is helpful here, because it gives us permission to develop different doctrines. As a Liberal Christian, I find Evangelical doctrines mechanical, too much like a scientific formula. But, if I dismiss their doctrine as too simplistic, how do I preach and teach about Christ's passion? How do I interpret such passages as I Corinthians 15.3-5, where Paul expresses the Christian kerygma in a formula like language?

“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the twelve.” (I Corinthians 15.3-5)

I do think preaching about the Cross, preaching about Christ's death and resurrection is a challenge for Liberal thinkers. These matters are mysteries, they are paradoxes, and to use Reason alone to explain them is impossible.

But, Anglicans who believe strongly in a social cause, do they believe they are imitating Christ's Love for God? Isn't there a Christological error somewhere here? In assuming

that passion for social causes, passion for Justice is an imitation of Christ's passion, doesn't this lessen the uniqueness of Christ?

I have to say, that in listening to Bishop Ingham's sermons, I had the sense that Christ is an idea. He is an idea of passionate Love. In what I heard and in what I read, Bishop Ingham didn't struggle with issues in the categories of Christ's person and work.

My criticism of Anglican activists and persons who engage in social justice issues, is the tendency towards superiority. And, in the 2004 and 2007 General Synods, activists were claiming to be reformers. They claimed they possessed a Christ-like love. And it seemed they viewed the rest of us as apathetic, less good and less real Christians.

WHAT ARE PRIESTS AND BISHOPS?

What are priests and bishops? How do we understand their roles theologically?

Somewhere in Jaroslav Pelikan's book, "Reformation of Church and Dogma, 1984, he gives a Protestant understanding. The Word of God creates Christian community. Out of Christian community emerges offices of priest and bishop. So, we are a type of leader and we occupy an office in the Church. The Word of God is transcendent of the office. That means, the Word of God may use priests and bishops as intermediaries. But members of a congregation may have their own access to the Word of God.

Notice, that in Catholic doctrine, priests and bishops are intermediaries of God's Word and God's Grace. So, which understanding do Anglican bishops and priests follow?

Bishop David Somerville, Bishop between 1971 and 1980 here in Vancouver, used to tell the clergy: "We are not called to be successful. We are called to be faithful". While this is somewhat general, it is encouraging. There is a wide path for clergy. There is struggle. But, one need not accept simplistic answers. And, one need not accept prevailing precepts. God does not give every priest or bishop the grace to love the Church as it is. Surely, if the Anglican Church is to survive, He will support clergy in the three theological groups Wolf describes.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

My conclusion about Bishop Ingham is he was an unusual Bishop. He forced us to acknowledge that gay people are humans like us, and he forced us to acknowledge they are members of the Church. There are Christian gay persons present. In this, he was a courageous and pastoral Bishop.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS CONTINUED

But his social justice theology doesn't give us a theology that leads to better understandings. He was using the gay issue in symbolic ways also. For him it was a badge issue, a way to distinguish between good tolerant Christians and bad fundamentalist Christians. He was not a Bishop able to understand theological diversity within the Church.

I do think the phrase Romantic Individualism describes Bishop Ingham and his theology well. A mixture of rebel, being concerned for the wellbeing of individuals, both Christian and outsiders, seeking and believing in a lonely, distant Christ figure, the revolutionary founder of the Church's faith, Ingham was a sincere, out of step, Anglican Bishop.