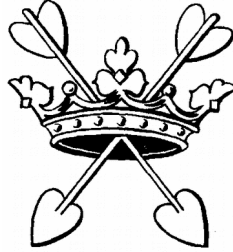


The Parish of St. Edmund, King and Martyr (Waterloo, Ontario)



The Anglican Catholic Church of Canada
(A member of the worldwide Traditional Anglican Communion)

UPDATE

January 6, 2005 - **The Epiphany of Our Lord**

February Schedule

February 2	Wednesday -	The Presentation of Christ in the Temple / The Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary /Candlemas
February 6	Sunday -	Quinquagesima
February 9	Wednesday -	Ash Wednesday
February 13	Sunday -	The First Sunday in Lent
February 20	Sunday -	The Second Sunday in Lent
February 24	Thursday -	St. Matthias the Apostle
February 27	Sunday -	The Third Sunday in Lent

Service Times and Location

(1) All Services are held in the Chapel at Luther Village on the Park - 139 Father David Bauer Drive in Waterloo.

(2) On Sundays, **Matins** is sung at **10:00 a.m.** (The **Litany** on the first

Sunday of the month), and the **Holy Eucharist** is celebrated (sung) at **10:30 a.m.**

(3) On weekdays - **Holy Days** and **Days of Obligation** - the **Holy Eucharist** is *usually* celebrated at **7:00 p.m.** when the Chapel is available.

Notes and Comments

1) Our final **The Bishop's Bit** - **Some Hymns** - this page.

On January 10, 2005, The Right Reverend Peter D. Wilkinson, OSG becomes our new Bishop Ordinary succeeding The Right Reverend Robert W. S. Mercer, CR who will be 'retiring' to England.

I am pleased to report that Bishop Mercer (with Bishop Wilkinson's approval) will continue writing monthly pieces for UPDATE, from England - he has, however, asked for a couple of months off!

2) In light of His Lordship's departure, we are repeating a biography of him written by The Very Reverend Carl Reid - **The Right Reverend Robert W. S. Mercer, CR** - see page 3.

3) Merci's / good-bye's / adieu's to our Bishop Ordinary - from several of our parishioners - **Thank-you's and au revoir's to Bishop Mercer** - see page 5.

4) Apropos for this issue - **The One Mediator of Christmas and Epiphany** - see page 5.

5) The fourth of six parts of an address given at the recent Essentials Conference - **Ecclesial Existence Today** - see page 7.

6) The 'subjectivist' and the 'objectivist' positions on Holy Scripture explained - **Two views of the Bible** - see page 9.

7) Apologies to all for the poor proof-reading of the little piece about Father Skoyles which appeared in the December 8, 2004 UPDATE - check out the corrected version on our website!

The Bishop's Bit

Some Hymns

Unto the hills around do I lift up (blue 520) is a paraphrase of *Psalm 2* by a former

Governor-General of Canada, the Marquis of Lorne, son in law of Queen Victoria, husband of Princess Louise Alberta, after whom are named Lake Louise, the province of Alberta and Princess Louise's Regiment in Halifax NS. HRH was a competent sculptress. In Toronto a suburb is named after this GG. I have met two Canadians with the baptismal name of Lorne, one in Alberta, the other in Nova Scotia.

The Rev Charles Wesley (1707 - 1788) was a brother of the Rev John Wesley (1703 - 1791), the travelling preacher. Both were Anglican priests. Charles wrote the words of 5,500* hymns, too many for any one hymnal to contain. The blue Canadian *Book of Common Praise*** has 17, the green English Hymnal*** has 20. I do not possess a copy of *Ancient & Modern* (navy) so as to check. *Ancient & Modern Revised* (maroon) has 30. Among my favourites is *O Thou Who camest from above* (green 343) which has a sneaky little tune. Charles' son Samuel (1766 - 1837) and Charles' grandson Samuel Sebastian (1810 - 1876) grew up to be famous organists and composers of church music. Among the works of S is the anthem *In Exitu Israel* (*Psalm 114*). Some prefer doing this psalm to the plainsong *tonus preregrinus*. Among the works of SS is the anthem *Blessed be the God and Father* (*I Peter 1,3*). I rather think SS also composed a piano concerto.

My favourite hymn is one of the oldest, originally intended for domestic use when the mother of a household was lighting the evening lamps. Blue has two translations of it from the 3rd century Greek, 33 by the Rev John Keble *Hail, gladdening Light*, and 34 by Robert Bridges a poet laureate, *O gladsome Light, O Grace*. Green only has the latter. The tune for blue 33 strikes me as Orthodox with its rises and falls, but those who know better say it's an Anglican chant by Sir John Stainer (1840 - 1901).

Another Greek hymn I love is to the Holy Spirit (green 454) *O King enthroned on high*. A Latin hymn to the Spirit (blue 484, green 453) *O Holy Spirit, Lord of grace* is

based on the theology of St Augustine.

I am grateful to blue for introducing me to *I can not tell* (751) to the tune of Danny Boy; to *I feel the winds of God* (426); and to *Fairest Lord Jesus* (604), which I assume to be Lutheran in origin. I am grateful to green for introducing me to *Drop, drop, slow tears* (98), words by the Puritan Phineas Fletcher (1582 - 1650), and tune by Orlando Gibbons (1583 - 1623) the Anglican.

There is detailed and doctrinal precision in hymns by many Anglican authors, eg:

About the incarnation: *The great God of heaven is come down to earth* (green 29). I assume its author to have been a country parson well versed in the Fathers, one H R Bramley (1883 - 1917). The tune sounds like a country dance. *Ye who own the faith of Jesus* (green 218) has its own tune but most of us prefer the rumbustious tune of *Daily, daily sing the praises* (green 568) which sounds like something from the Sally Army. Fr Palmer's *Sing of Mary* (blue 807) goes to at least three tunes, one of them being Beethoven's *Ode to joy*.

About the passion: *My song is love unknown* (blue 596) is by a Dean Samuel Crossman (1664), dean of where? The tune is by John Ireland (1879 - 1962).

About the ascension and pentecost: *See the Conqueror mounts in triumph* (blue 176 green 145) is by Bp Christopher Wordsworth of Lincoln (1807 - 1885), whose son Bp John Wordsworth of Salisbury wrote the *Responsio* to the Pope's statement about the invalidity of Anglican orders. Father and son were able theologians.

I am grateful to the maroon for introducing me to *O my Saviour lifted* (360); to *Jesus these eyes have never seen* (347).

Maroon has a hymn about the Virgin *Shall we not love thee mother dear, Whom Jesus loved so well?* (515). How I wish somebody would come up with a less

dreary tune! Words are by the Rev Sir Henry Baker (1821 - 1877), about whom Helen Glover has written in the *Diocesan Circular*. The Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa is not known for the liveliness of its hymns, so their use of a Sicilian folk tune for a Christmas carol is surprising, *O die vrolike*. RC's usually associate this same tune with the Virgin, *O sanctissima*, of which the great Beethoven has made an arrangement.

Another favourite of mine is by the Puritan John Mason (1645 - 1694), *How shall I sing that Majesty* (blue 402 green 404).

But I really must stop!

+Robert Mercer CR

By The Bishop Ordinary - The Anglican Catholic Church of Canada

* So says the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*

** Musical editor: the great Healey Willan of St Mary Magdalene's in Toronto

*** Musical editor: the great Ralph Vaughan Williams of England

The Right Reverend Robert W. S. Mercer, CR

When Gary sent me an email a few months ago, requesting that I prepare a short biographical overview of our Diocesan Bishop, my first reactions were: "Oh no, something else that I can't possibly fit into my schedule"; and then, "He is so well known throughout our Diocese as a humble and unfailingly courteous man, what more could anyone want to know otherwise?" And yet, to date, our still fledgling Diocese has indeed been blessed with episcopal leaders, including Robert Mercer, from whom we might well derive inspiration, so, initial reactions aside, I agreed to respond to Gary's request as soon as I was able.

As summer now draws to a close (today is

August 31), I find that I have some time, as I wait for the local plumbers to come to repair the burst hose from my well pump to the pressure tank. That which follows will be horribly incomplete; my hope is that some details will be fresh for many readers.

Robert William Stanley Mercer was born in 1935 in the southern part of Zimbabwe, formerly known as Rhodesia. Several generations earlier, his family had moved to that part of Africa from Ireland. I'm not sure how much of his early life there he has shared with other parishes across Canada; here at the Cathedral, we have the luxury of his presence most of the time, as he lives in Ottawa. At our Saturday morning breakfasts, Bishop Robert will occasionally share with us some of the more amusing anecdotes of his youth, spent in Zimbabwe. Stories of vicious girls on the field hockey pitch, to his mandatory time spent in the militia will have us choking with laughter on our granola and scones.

His initial foray into the post-secondary school world was not to test a possible vocation to the priesthood. Rather, he apprenticed for four years in the book selling business before entering St. Paul's Theological College in Grahamstown, South Africa, presumably now convinced of a possible call from God. He was subsequently ordained Deacon in 1959, and then Priest in 1960 in his home Diocese of Matabeleland, Rhodesia. After serving a three year curacy in his hometown, he traveled to England to enter the novitiate of the Community of the Resurrection, Mirfield, Yorkshire. Some of you may be aware that this is the oldest surviving monastic order for men in the Anglican Communion, having been founded near the end of the 19th century (remember, Henry VIII had dissolved all of the English monasteries in the 16th century). Just as we have an expression for men who feel that they have a call from God to serve in His ordained ministry, "testing a vocation", so too the same applies for those who feel called to a monastic life. Bishop Robert tells funny stories about how the Master of Novices at

Mirfield seemed bent on discouraging any newcomers even before they had unpacked their bags. Of course, the Master was just beginning the process of testing their call.

After professing in 1965 and spending one more year in England, Fr. Mercer was to spend three years in Wales before his order was to send him as prior and rector to Stellenbosch in South Africa. Just two years later, he and one of his brethren were deported for vigorously supporting the Church's policy against racial discrimination. I recall that, in 1987 or 1988, Bishop Crawley had arranged for me to meet Bishop Mercer on his first visit to Canada. One of our stops was Parliament Hill, where we met with the Minister of Defence (a friend of Bishop Crawley's), who took us to the House of Commons, Bishop Robert having told him of his love for the parliamentary system. After listening to Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's speech on Meech Lake for five minutes, during which it became obvious that the PM had mastered the art of speaking without really saying anything, Bishop Robert leaned forward over the rail of the visitor's gallery to look down at the Opposition side of the floor. Neither of us knew where that security guard, the size of a Mack truck, had been hiding, but he quickly "corrected" our posture (one is not permitted to lean over the railing). Afterwards, Bishop Robert told me of a visit that he had made to the South African Parliament with a friend. As they were sitting in the visitor's gallery, they suddenly realized that the topic of discussion on the floor was the deportation of one Father Robert Mercer because of his anti-apartheid stance. His friend was set to panic, but Fr. Mercer, ever the even-tempered one, was wont to hear what they were saying about him.

This grace under fire was to serve him well after his return to Zimbabwe, and his eventual consecration as fourth Bishop of Matabeleland in 1978. By then, the civil war was making his homeland an ever more dangerous place to be. Though he tells us stories as if they were nothing to be concerned about, I suspect that I would

not be quite so cool, driving along dirt roads at 120 km/hr, not even daring to stop for a flat tire in case guerrillas were waiting in the bushes (which did indeed happen far too often). Still, there were also many more relaxed and humorous events during his episcopate in Zimbabwe: native Africans' very different perspective on time and its importance or lack thereof; ladies who just had to get up and dance in the middle of his sermons; eccentric colonials who would no doubt drive one to distraction, but about whom a movie would be uproariously funny.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the good Bishop was to become just about as unpopular with the Marxist Mugabe government in Zimbabwe as he had been with the white government in South Africa. Recognizing that a black bishop would better serve Matabeleland, Bishop Robert resigned in 1987 and returned to Mirfield. Then, another call (actually a repeat of an earlier call), this time from another colony, decidedly more arctic than his homeland. Through what we in hindsight might consider to be providential circumstances, Canada was able to claim The Right Reverend Robert William Stanley Mercer as an immigrant in 1988, and as a Canadian citizen five years later. More importantly to us, he became our third Diocesan Bishop in 1989, succeeding Carmino de Catanzaro and Alfred Woolcock (the latter whom he assisted for several months after arriving in Canada).

"And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of" his love for God and His Church; his dislike of man-made rules, rules, rules; his unflinching stand for the sanctity of ALL human life as a gift from God; his appreciation of Guinness; his aversion to "frost and cold, ice and snow"; his fondness of ginger marmalade; his distaste for long meetings; his engaging and humorous way of telling true-life stories.

By **The Very Reverend Carl Reid**, Dean of the Cathedral of the Annunciation, Ottawa, Ontario - this piece first appeared in the February 14, 2001 UPDATE.

Thank-you's and au revoir's to Bishop Mercer

+ A beloved Bishop named Mercer,
A great universal traverser,
Exchanged ice and snow
For England's rain and blow.
He went from the bad to the worser!

+ Much thanks to you, My Lord, for your assistance in helping get us [St. Edmund's] started in 1996, and for your continued support and visitations, including but not limited to: baptisms, confirmations, marriages, ordinations, and requiems. Best wishes in your 'retirement' - we look forward to your monthly contributions to UPDATE, including news of the Traditional Anglican Communion, in England and elsewhere!

+ There once was a Bishop of Canada
Who came to us from South Africa
He was gentle and kind
Quick of wit, keen of mind
Who guided us for sixteen years.

Although his job was very demanding
He was always patient and understanding
The Bishop is retiring at this year end
We will all miss a dear friend
We wish him well, amidst our tears.

+ A Prince of the Church and a prince
among men, one who despite his position,
never lost the 'common touch'. He will be
SORELY missed.

+ To Worthing-by-the Sea he's bound,
To England's rainy clime,
Leaving behind many sadden'd hearts,
In Canada's Winter-time.

We'll miss those inspiring sermons;
That personal touch we'll miss, too.
We'll be anxious to hear the next chapter
-
Bishop Mercer, we bid you "Adieu".

+ We say good-bye to a gentle, caring
shepherd who shall be missed! You are
truly a great leader, and a wonderful
person. It has been a pleasure to know
you, and we thank you for the way you

have touched our lives. All the best for a healthy and happy retirement!

The One Mediator of Christmas and Epiphany

There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5).

The message of Christmas and of the Epiphany is one of revelation, salvation, redemption and reconciliation through the Incarnation and Manifestation of the Son of the Father. But it only makes sense against the background of the biblical message of creation and human sinfulness.

There is the Creator and there are the created: there is God and there is mankind. God, the Creator and Judge, is eternal and dependent upon no other for he is self-existent and self-sufficient. In contrast, humankind is wholly dependent upon God for its existence. Human beings require God's invisible presence and power to live, to procreate and to fulfill themselves as creatures.

The eternal and infinite God is a Trinity of Persons, who exists as a threefold communion of divine love. It is from this inter-personal communion of love that the Father through the Son and by the Holy Ghost creates human beings, made in the image of God and for friendship and communion with the same Holy Trinity.

For man, a rational creature, genuinely to love God and commune with him, he must be free to do so. Thus God made human beings free. Yet, they have used their God-given freedom to think and act in ways contrary to the known will of God. Thereby they became sinners and even enemies of God for they worked against the purposes of God. The whole human race has thereby lost its relation to God of communion and friendship and has come under his judgment, as his disobedient creatures.

Thus God and man, though intimately related as Creator and created, are separated by an infinite gulf with no spiritual communion of friendship between them. So in mercy the Holy Trinity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost began his work of redemption by his choosing of Abraham and his descendants, his relation to ancient Israel and in his mighty deeds on their behalf and in his revelation to them. For this important message we read the Old Testament.

Then in the fullness of time God brought his revelation and his redemptive work to a wonderful and glorious climax. This is the story of Christmas and Epiphany of the advent of the One Mediator, who is One Person with two natures, divine and human, even Christ Jesus, the Lord.

Out of the Communion of love of the Holy Trinity, the Father sends the Son by the Holy Ghost into space and time to receive, in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a human nature. The only-begotten Son of the Father becomes the Son Incarnate, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, now possessing not only his divine nature but also a full human nature, and born as the son of Mary, and named *Jesus* by his adoptive father, Joseph.

Mary, who brings forth her first-born son and lays him in a manger, is later called by the Church, the *Theotokos*, the birth-giver of God [the Son]. Her son, who is the eternal Word made flesh is named *Jesus* [the Lord our salvation] and is *Emmanuel* [God with us].

The choirs of heaven greet the birth of the Mediator in Bethlehem and express glory to God. The Jewish Shepherds and the Astrologers/astronomers from the East are guided to offer worship and gifts to the new-born Mediator, Messiah of Israel and Saviour of the world. They represent the Jews and the Gentiles and they both see in the one infant the one Mediator between God and mankind, Jesus the Christ.

In this *Jesus* there is reconciliation

between Jew and Gentile and more importantly between God and man. Jesus as Man fulfils the duty that the human being was created by God to achieve, the loving of God with heart, soul, mind and strength and the loving of the neighbor as oneself. Then in his Death *Jesus* stands in the place of the human race offering to the Father a perfect obedience and a perfect sacrifice.

Since *Jesus* is the God-Man, what is achieved by his life of perfect obedience, love and faithfulness and by his perfect sacrifice in death offered to his Father is of infinite and eternal worth. For while he lived and died as man, the fact that he is the Incarnate Son (one Person with a divine and human nature) means that there is an infinite value in his active and passive obedience. Thus he is the perfect Representative of and Substitute for humankind. Through, in and with him there is a way for man back to the Father. He is the Mediator through whom comes salvation, redemption, reconciliation and communion with God the Father by the Holy Ghost.

Thus those who repent of their sins, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and are baptized in water and the Spirit are adopted as children of God and restored to communion with God.

In *The Book of Common Prayer*, Christmas Day (Dec 25) and the Feast of the Epiphany (Jan 6) are major feast days when the Incarnation is celebrated in the Nativity of Jesus and when the manifestation of the Lord Jesus to the Gentiles is proclaimed. The twelve days of Christmas between these Festivals is a special time not only of celebration of the Incarnation but also for the keeping of several other lesser but important holy days St John the Evangelist's Day (Dec 27); The Innocents' Day (Dec 28) and the Circumcision of Christ (Jan 1).

By **The Rev. Dr. Peter Toon**

Ecclesial Existence Today - 4 of

6

Unity is Impossible

To the extent that this is true, unity in the Anglican Church of Canada has become impossible. The only possible response to this sort of heresy, and to the program of moral corruption that must necessarily follow from it, is rejection root and branch. For the church that follows this path is no longer the church.

We need not marvel at those plaintive voices that profess their inability to understand why unity is impossible. "We see no reason why Anglicanism should not remain united while disagreeing about the ethics of homosexuality," they say.¹⁵ And indeed they do not see, for their understanding of church unity, like their understanding of the church itself, is not rooted in the gospel. Unity for them is not a function of the common life in Christ, but of a conservative decision-making process - a comfortable process of adaptation - which they more or less equate with the common life in Christ. Unity does not require standing with Moses or even with Jesus; it requires only a standing together. Unity, like sex, has no given content; it is strictly consensual.¹⁶

Against this notion of unity the ad hoc commission that was struck by the Archbishop of Canterbury and Cardinal Kasper has rightly warned us, in the wake of the suspension of the Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission. Against it Canon J. A. Douglas warned us many years ago in his report on the Orthodox Delegation to the Lambeth Conference of 1930:

God prepares miracles [said Douglas]. But until the antinomy is resolved between those who among us believe that an incontrovertible Revelation has been given to the Church and those who believe all Revelation to be relative and would cheerfully accept for themselves the Russian Khomiakov's ironic designation of the Lutheran Churches as a body of good men eagerly seeking after Truth, but certain that they cannot

attain to it, our Union or Intercommunion with the Orthodox will be difficult, humanly speaking, of achievement.¹⁷

It now appears, as it had to, that even our own internal union cannot hold. For this much may be granted to those who hold this defective notion of the church and its unity - a body of good men! - namely, that they have managed enough of a grip on Anglicanism in the twentieth century to see mockery made of the Solemn Declaration of 1893, wherein the first Canadian General Synod bound itself to a very different view:

"We declare this Church to be, and desire that it shall continue, in full communion with the Church of England throughout the world, as an integral portion of the One Body of Christ composed of Churches which, united under the One Divine Head and in the fellowship of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, hold the One Faith revealed in Holy Writ, and defined in the Creeds as maintained by the undivided primitive Church . . ."

It is not by accident that the move to overturn Christian teaching on homosexuality has been made, in our circles, by those who have rebelled against the Solemn Declaration both in principle and in particulars, who indeed scoff at the very notion of credal orthodoxy.¹⁸ Nor is it an accident that they must now attack especially its notion of Christian unity. But we have every reason to insist that one cannot sanely acknowledge one and the same church, as represented by General Synod 1893 and General Synod 2004 respectively. We have therefore to choose, and the choice is clear: We will choose - if we are not conservative but evangelical - 1893. We will therefore stand in our time and yet out of it, in our place and yet out of it, looking upwards to the holy mountain and forwards to the promised city of God, not downwards and backwards to that city of man from which, by the blood of Jesus Christ, we were redeemed.

Unity has now become impossible: let our "Broad Church" friends hear this clearly

and let them understand that we hold them partly responsible. Was it not the Broad Church movement that taught us to find the truth about God within ourselves, to transform the analogy of faith into an ever-more-slippery analogy of experience, to be inspired by the Bible but to be governed in our reading of it by the culture rather than by the creeds? Its remaining representatives may think that they are well positioned to broker a deal, if a deal can be brokered. But the Broad Church coalition is itself broken and will not be remade. Advocates of what today is called the Inclusive Church, running on ahead, have exposed its weakness. Broad Church leaders lead as Aaron led when Moses was away on the mountain. They may be more or less well-meaning, but they cannot prevent the people (even those with collars) from doing what comes naturally, from following their own gods, from constructing their golden bull.¹⁹ At the end of the day, all they can do is build an altar in front of it, and declare that "tomorrow there will be a festival to the Lord."²⁰ But that is a festival to which the faithful will not come.

By **Douglas Farrow** - Associate Professor of Christian Thought at McGill University, Montreal

¹⁵ From a submission of the Modern Churchpeople's Union to the Eames Commission.

¹⁶ "We believe that this granting of time and freedom, within which a consensus can slowly arise or change, is justified by the Anglican understanding of authority. Central to the traditional balance of Scripture, reason and tradition is the recognition that no single authority is infallible and we therefore need them all to balance each other. This makes Anglican theology open, in the sense that every age has the potential to discover new insights. The methodology is inductive rather than deductive; absolute certainty is not given to us, so theological reflection should be done with humility and creativity. Within the church divergent voices need to be heard, or our ears will be blocked; churches at their best are inclusive." (ibid.)

¹⁷ *The Christian East* (Summer 1930)11:2, pp. 49-64 (source: Project Canterbury).

¹⁸ They are joined, to be sure, by some (in England Jeffrey John comes to mind, in America Eugene Rogers) who think that same-sex blessings are compatible with church dogma, but the best attempts to demonstrate that only lead further into a hopeless quagmire of theological confusion and heretical

notions, as I have tried to show elsewhere. See "Beyond Nature, Shy of Grace" in the *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 5.3 (2003) 261-86; cf. Rowan Williams' remarkably uncritical review of the same book in *Scottish Journal of Theology* 56 (2003) 82ff.

¹⁹ On 1 Nov. 2003, looking ahead to the morrow's consecration of Canon Robinson, *The Guardian* (online) reported that "worshippers in the state have donated gold wedding rings and family heirlooms to be melted down into the new bishop's ceremonial pectoral cross, which he will wear over his heart on official occasions."

²⁰ Exodus 32:3. Immediately after the Robinson consecration Bishop Howe wrote as follows to Bishop Griswold:

"You have helped us learn to be civil with each other, and for that I am grateful, but you have led us deeply into a world of 'pluriformity' in which there is, ultimately, no truth on which we can rely. And hence many are hailing yesterday's consecration as a "new thing God is doing" in spite of its contradiction of what God has actually said!"

From here and there

a) Egotism is the anesthetic that dulls the pain of stupidity. **Frank William Leahy**

b) If a Dodge "Stealth" hits a Mitsubishi "Mirage", did the accident happen?

c) If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point that the world and the devil are at the moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ. Where the battle rages is where the loyalty of the soldier is proved, and to be steady on all the battlefield besides is merely flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point. **Martin Luther**

d) How can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same, while a wise man and a wise guy are opposites?

e) Many folks want to serve God, but only as advisors.

f) Thou shalt not weigh more than thy refrigerator.

g) God loves every one of us, as though

there were but one of us to love. **St. Augustine**

h) Don't wait for six strong men to take you to church.

i) Spurious acronyms:

news - north, east, west, south

golf - gentlemen only, ladies forbidden

tip - to insure promptness

j) Those who insist on the dignity of their office show they have not deserved it. **Baltasar Gracian**

k) Never be afraid to try something new. Remember that a lone amateur built the Ark. It was a group of professionals who built the Titanic.

l) Puritanism: The haunting fear that someone, somewhere, may be happy. **H.L. Mencken**

Two views of the Bible

At issue here is a Grand Canyon-wide difference about the nature of the Bible and the way it conveys God's message to modern readers. Two positions challenge each other.

One is the historic Christian belief that through the prophets, the incarnate Son, the apostles, and the writers of canonical Scripture as a body, God has used human language to tell us definitively and transculturally about his ways, his works, his will, and his worship. Furthermore, this revealed truth is grasped by letting the Bible interpret itself to us from within, in the knowledge that the way into God's mind is through that of the writers. Through them, the Holy Spirit who inspired them teaches the church. Finally, one mark of sound biblical insights is that they do not run counter to anything else in the canon.

This is the position of the Roman Catholic

and Orthodox churches, and of evangelicals and other conservative Protestants. There are differences on the place of the church in the interpretive process, but all agree that the process itself is essentially as described. I call this the objectivist position.

The second view applies to Christianity the Enlightenment's trust in human reason, along with the fashionable evolutionary assumption that the present is wiser than the past. It concludes that the world has the wisdom, and the church must play intellectual catch-up in each generation in order to survive. From this standpoint, everything in the Bible becomes relative to the church's evolving insights which themselves are relative to society's continuing development (nothing stands still), and the Holy Spirit's teaching ministry is to help the faithful see where Bible doctrine shows the cultural limitations of the ancient world and needs adjustment in light of latter-day experience (encounters, interactions, perplexities, states of mind and emotion, and so on). Same-sex unions are one example. This view is scarcely 50 years old, though its antecedents go back much further. I call it the subjectivist position.

In the New Westminster debate, subjectivists say that what is at issue is not the authority of Scripture, but its interpretation. I do not question the sincerity of those who say this, but I have my doubts about their clear-headedness. The subjectivist way of affirming the authority of Scripture, as the source of the teaching that now needs to be adjusted, is precisely a denying of Scripture's authority from the objectivist's point of view, and clarity requires us to say so. The relative authority of ancient religious expertise, now to be revamped in our post-Christian, multifaith, evolving Western world, is one view. The absolute authority of God's unchanging utterances, set before us to be learned, believed, and obeyed as the mainstream church has always done, never mind what the world thinks, is the other.

What are represented as different

"interpretations" are in fact reflections of what is definitive: in the one view, the doctrinal and moral teaching of Scripture is always final for Christian people; in the other view, it never is. What is definitive for the exponents of that view is not what the Bible says, as such, but what their own minds come up with as they seek to make Bible teaching match the wisdom of the world.

Each view of biblical authority sees the other as false and disastrous, and is sure that the long-term welfare of Christianity requires that the other view be given up and left behind as quickly as possible. The continuing conflict between them, which breaks surface in the disagreement about same-sex unions, is a fight to the death, in which both sides are sure that they have the church's best interests at heart. It is most misleading, indeed crass, to call this disagreement simply a difference about interpretation, of the kind for which Anglican comprehensiveness has always sought to make room.

Sorry, **the author** is unknown to me! GF

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