

ADDRESSES
AT THE FIRST SYNOD
of the
TRADITIONAL ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA
A Missionary District of the Anglican Catholic Church

On the Theme:

ORGANISATIONAL STABILITY
&
PASTORAL AVAILABILITY

October 23-25 2012

Queen of Apostles Renewal Centre

Mississauga, Ontario

Preface

Greetings in Christ, to Your Graces, fellow clergy, and synod delegates and friends! We have said our prayers, and licked our wounds, we have consoled one another through a difficult period, held conference calls, and we have e-mailed. O, how we have e-mailed! We have come a long way in a short time, and here we are, together at last!

As we have just open our Synod thousand thanks are due our convenor, Father Robert Mansfield. His skill and meticulous care have been so necessary in bringing us together. We all are grateful that the Queen of Apostles Renewal Centre for their kind hospitality, given that this was the venue for an earlier gathering which had a profound effect on us all. But that past is now just a prologue to our present and hopeful venture.

Two other men deserve our deepest gratitude: Archbishop Mark Haverland and Archbishop James Provence took us under their wings. The ACCOP welcomed the remnant of the ACCC, the exception being St Mark's, of course, because we had already established a connection with the APCK. Enough of initials! Not just our newly-fledged parishes have received their pastoral care, but the Congress of Traditional Anglicans benefitted by their presence. They have given freely and graciously of their time to the foundation of what we hope will be an enduring church body. Praise God for the calibre of the leadership we have at our disposal.

Father Stanley R. Sinclair

A REMARKABLE 'FAMILY LIKENESS'

Before addressing the themes I want to tell you a story. An old, old story, and you know it as well as I do, but we need to be reminder. Our children always enjoyed stories over and over again, and yours probably did so, too. The spiritual song, "Tell me the old old story" suggests that even we older children are the same.

A small group found themselves without their leader. They were bereft, despite his reassurances that all would be well, and advice from a trusted source that they should not just stand there, but do something! It was a daunting task. Where would they begin? They were regarded with suspicion by the powerful, although they were committed to the noblest cause ever to be known in this world. But this meant they were a threat to the Establishment, because they could not be silenced. For that reason they kept to themselves at first, they met in a familiar but homely setting.

They were of course the New Testament Church, a mighty force of eleven young apostles, soon to complete their number again with a twelfth, seventy other men also chosen by Jesus Christ during a later stage of his earthly ministry, members of our Lord's family, especially his beloved mother Mary, and a circle of friends. The Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church numbered one hundred twenty souls in all the world.

There were others who shared their love for their Master, to be sure, and as events unfolded, more and more of them became actively involved, and on Pentecost, when a multitude of pilgrims descended on Jerusalem, folk from all over Palestine were among the five thousand who heard St Peter and immediately offered themselves for Baptism. There were the inevitable growing pains, as the Church spread: where to meet for worship; more than that, how to live as a community so as to bolster one another's morale in the face of so much mistrust and the beginnings of persecution?

What about membership in this new Creation: was it open to all, or must one subscribe to all the customs that were upheld by the larger society, the Jewish nation, to which most of the first Christians belonged? That was the burning question. After a lot of soul searching, especially by St Peter, the apostles reached the conclusion--perhaps reluctantly, but nevertheless they decided-- that it was enough to be a baptised Christian, without circumcision, though there were some uneasy times as non-Jews were assimilated into the young Church.

There were doubts over loyalty. When St Paul was converted, after having consented to the death of Stephen, and began his remarkable missionary enterprise, there was a spate of rivalry and "positioning." Some people followed Apollos, and others, Paul; and it

took Paul quite a while to convince people that what mattered most was not Paul nor Apollos, but only Jesus Christ; He was the head of the Church, not anyone else. So eventually that was settled, and the young church grew.

This is indeed an old, old story, but I hope you also recognise how contemporary it is: the remarkable likeness between the young Church in Jerusalem and our own. In the aftermath of momentous changes in the Anglican world, we have had to decide just what constitutes traditional Anglicanism, how best to maintain it and God willing, to reinvigorate it and restore it to its former glory as one of the chief instruments of the Holy Spirit in building the One True Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

We want to stand together, as did the earliest Christians. We are scattered, as they were. Small, as they were, but with a large number of people outside our thin ranks who really agree with us, but have not yet had the daring to join us. Suspicions abound. We have all been hurt in the process of disintegration which has afflicted the Anglican world, and that is a story we all know too painfully well, so I will say no more of it. We are ordinary people intent on doing an extraordinary thing: to rebuild and restore the Church that has been home to most of us for most of our lives; even though we consider ourselves no more qualified than those apostles did.

There is a “family likeness” then for sure, between us, despite the many ways in which our circumstances are different from those of first century Christians. We live in a society with strong Christian roots; in their time this all was new, even though the coming of Messiah had been promised for so long. Otherwise, the similarities remain: a variety of churches, because even when the New Testament was being written there were the Nicolaitans, and various other sects were in formation. A bewildering number of religions and philosophies existed in the apostolic age, as in our own.

However well known the Gospel may be, there are multitudes who have grown up without ever really hearing or understanding it; and religion has been discredited in the eyes of many disillusioned souls. Either they have allied themselves with the social and moral fashions of the times, or the widespread cynicism and suspicion of things religious, given the confusing mass of competing belief systems or because of scandals that have blasphemed the name of Christ. And then there are always those who have grown complacent, taking Christ for granted.

The failure of some churches to keep their heritage and identity has led to a loss of *esprit de corps*, and many members sadly walking away. So we have two distinct groups of people who must be included in our mission: the disenchanting former believers, and those who do not really know Jesus Christ crucified at all.

The Apostles were both exultant at the resurrection and disheartened at the ascension, but the Holy Spirit brought reassurance and a great spiritual energy, so they went out to preach, and baptise, and so can we. Because we have Christ's mandate, we can go forth to win "all nations," or in some cases win them back. Because we too have the power of the Spirit within and among us, though we are as weak as they were in the beginning, we can call upon the same strength and guidance.

Jesus chose the Twelve and the Seventy for reasons of his own. They seem at first glance rather ordinary men, given the little we know of some of them: fishermen or tradesmen – St Paul probably the only one who was both a Temple scholar and involved in international trade. – on the surface they were not all endowed with remarkable gifts. Most of them have faded into obscurity. But they got the job done! And if they could, so can we.

But our Lord knew what was "in man," and he had actually assembled a brilliant cast of characters, none more so than Saint Paul: a master communicator, an indefatigable world traveller, an eloquent speaker, highly educated, highly placed, and at home in two cultures: a remarkable human being; but he was just one man and had to work with, and depend upon, a rather untried lot, like the youthful and blundering St Mark. Aside from St Timothy and St Barnabas, few had the stature of the Apostle from Tarsus.

We know Saint Peter as a strong leader of men, in whom Our Lord had great confidence; but what we see of him in the early stages of his apostleship is not reassuring: He was a loud mouth, rash, and often misunderstood Jesus. But his simple, magnificent statement of faith, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God," was the signal of his coming greatness, so that after the Holy Spirit had come upon him, he became the towering figure in the Christian world. Too often we "judge by the outward appearance, but that the Lord looketh upon the heart."

In other words, we must not discount the prospect that our Lord can indeed use us, for all our shortcomings; and will raise up among us many new, faithful and productive Christian leaders, both clerical and lay. Many of us are old, and some of us very old! We have little in the way of funds, we are not prominent, we are despised or at least dismissed by some Anglicans. But pray God it is true, that we who trust in Him have his confidence.

This Synod can begin to energise us, as that first council of the little Church in Jerusalem opened the way to successful evangelism. And we have an advantage over the first Apostles: that is, we can profit by their story. We know that a small group, who certainly thought of themselves as ordinary men and women, were able to launch

the greatest crusade ever to enlist the hearts and minds of the people: to transcend differences in speech, culture, class, religious background, and nationality and successfully preach Christ and him crucified!

I pray that from this Synod onward, once we have taken care of some basic matters, we may turn our eyes to the world out there. The first Christians could have remained a close little lot, exclusive, withdrawn from the world, with little impact upon it. But that was not the case. And it is not to be the case with us. Much has already been accomplished: Another bishop just consecrated for the Congo, exciting things happening in Australia and New Zealand, steady growth and development in North America – so much reason for hope. Nevertheless, you and I have much to do before we sleep, to maintain our legacy of faith and devotion which must be shared.

We seek to begin the rebuilding of our part of the city of God, something we cannot nor would try to do alone. But we believe “with God, all things are possible.”

We have been through a prolonged ordeal to remain Anglican and especially traditional Anglican. From now on, let us avoid the pitfalls which have trapped so many Anglicans over the past half-century: the attempt to be something other than what we are: the people of the Prayer Book, with a rich heritage to draw upon, who say, while others wander off in all directions, that “there is no place like home.” We only wish to go to Jerusalem, the new Jerusalem, although along the way, we hope someday to find Canterbury reformed, restored, “stablished and strengthened” once again. Like the original English reformers, the Non-Jurors in the 18th, Keble and Pusey in the 19th century, we wish to be the “leaven,” that can cause Anglicanism to rise again.

Saint Paul founded a host of churches, but he died in the persecution of Nero without seeing the little house congregations grow to their full stature. Nor could he have known that the Greek Church would become one of the great patriarchates; that Rome, after she lost her prime role in the Empire, would become the centre of the Church in the West. Who would have suspected that the “sceptre’d isle” off the coast of Europe would have a Church capable of enlisting millions of many nations in the Faith of Christ?

Little could Cranmer, humiliated and burning with his fellow martyrs, have any conception of how his Prayer Book would be used and cherished around the world for centuries to come. With the exception of Christopher Wren, the architect of St Paul’s, London, few architects and master builders ever witnessed their designs fully realised in the great cathedrals of Europe. Ken and Law and other Non-Jurors did not live to see the calibre of the Church of England restored; nor were Keble and Pusey around to

observe the extent to which the Oxford Movement would greatly enhance the catholicity and spiritual life of Anglicans throughout the world. But all these persevered in faith, as Paul said in Hebrews of earlier saints, who died in faith not seeing the results of their labours.

True, what we aspire to erect, most of us here will not live to see fully realised. But our faith and perseverance will be used by the Providence of God. The Church has sometimes fallen into ruinous condition, only to be wonderfully brought to life again. There is still life in the Anglican tradition, and with the help of the Holy Spirit we can translate our zeal and loyalty into doing great things for God, with the same determination as the first followers of Jesus Christ.

In the words of that great familiar hymn:

And we, shall we be faithless? Shall hearts fail, hands hang down? Shall we evade the conflict, and cast away our crown? Not so: in God's deep counsels, some better thing is stored; we will maintain unflinching, one Church, one Faith, one Lord.

PASTORAL AVAILABILITY

The second address

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff comfort me.

Our Lord Jesus wonderfully fulfilled the Good Shepherd Psalm as no one before or since. We can only rejoice that God had planned from everlasting to create his “sheepfold,” the Church. This great “gathering,” to translate the word into English, has brought us to Christ, and to each other, and our Saviour has provided us with that holy comfort – strength and inspiration – which will see us through the valley of the shadow of death. And we have been led into the green pastures, beside the still waters, where we may be restored, our lives transformed; not yet completely, but we have some inkling, some vision, of the future. How blessed we are that God so loved the world!

What a picture of “pastoral availability” we have been given. The actions of the Apostles show they were intent on continuing the ministry of Christ. Though our Lord was always on the move during the three remarkable years when He walked among men, we have seen how He carefully chose the Twelve, then the Seventy, and gave them the spiritual authority, so they were able afterward to fill up the number of the Twelve, then select those seven men for the Diaconate – just as, during this Synod, another of his chosen men will be ordained.

We have formed the Traditional Anglican Church of Canada to continue the ministry of Christ as we have received the same, maintaining the integrity of our tradition as one timeless, time-tested way of serving Him, inspired by the Spirit. We want that great tradition to remain and spread once more, after it has been diminished by those who, like Esau, have not valued the inheritance which is their spiritual birthright.

We know what a great inheritance it is, this tradition. There can be arguments and counter-arguments, but for Canadian Anglicans, it is stated so well in the Solemn Declaration of 1893, encompassing all the vital features of the Church as it has come down to us, and which most of us have known and valued all our lives. We do not pick and choose bits here and there, but take the whole of our legacy with gratitude.

The heart of this statement, produced in Canada, speaks for all traditional Anglicans: *We are determined with the help of God to hold and maintain the Doctrine, Sacraments, and Discipline of Christ as the Lord hath commanded in his Holy Word, and...to transmit the same unimpaired to our posterity.* Along the sometimes bitter and anguished course of the past half-century those of us who desire to live up to this ideal have had to depart from the

“full communion with the Church of England throughout the world,” as we find it in the Declaration. But we keep the spirit of it, because we are one with Anglican Catholics and other faithful Anglicans across the globe, and we have with us the leaders of two church bodies that have come out of the Congress of Saint Louis. The great Affirmation which came from that fateful meeting remains valid and definitive today, a bedrock statement of principles for the constitution of the Traditional Anglican Church of Canada. We embrace these principles as the leaders of the English Reformation sought not so much to reform as to **restore** the Church to her ancient, apostolic roots.

We do not claim ours is the only authentic form of Christianity; but we believe, on the basis of our faith, our knowledge of history, and graceful reason, that it is an authentically Catholic, distinctive form of the Way of Christ, a well-shaped instrument of eternal salvation. This places upon us a great obligation to carry on the apostolic mission from city to city, town to town, person to person, like the apostles, missionaries, and faithful men and women before us. And we pray, and should fervently believe, that our ministry will also produce a bountiful harvest for God.

The motto for this first Synod, “*Organisational Stability and Pastoral Availability*” – which I unwittingly reversed-- is a mouthful! Of course it is! We aspire to climb by the grace of God the great Everest which is the challenge of the Church’s ministry to the world, high above the present scene: Secularism is rampant, the Churches with few exceptions, riven with dissent; a great many people living in a meaningless world of superficiality, or in a state of self-obsession. This social and moral aimlessness has insisted on the change that has caused disorder in almost every aspect of contemporary life. This is especially so when there are, sadly, many who have edited the Bible to suit their own inclinations, and abandoned life in Christ in favour of the old pagan model with a thin Christian veneer. There is need for a colossal mission to unbelievers. They are legion; and they still do not know Christ after two thousand years of evangelism. We can do our part, however modest a part it maybe.

This mission was more daunting for the Apostles than for us. They spoke only Aramaic and a smattering of Greek; most them schooled only by the rabbi. They were fishermen, tradesmen, a tax collector, and John may have been a priest of the Temple. Perhaps the one with the greatest promise was Judas, and though Jesus knew what was “in man”, He gave Iscariot the opportunity to become the great leader he was meant to be, and instead he became a great sorrow to the Lord; whilst St Paul, who had been his enemy, fulfilled all that Christ believed he was capable of, after He appeared to Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus Road.

Other than Paul probably most of the Apostles knew next to nothing about the larger world, the Roman Empire and the many realms beyond it. They had already shown the limits of both their faith and their perspective. Jesus had forewarned them of all that would happen, and they had not taken Him seriously. But in the aftermath of his ministry, the cross, the resurrection and ascension, with the power of the Spirit coming upon them, they were equipped for the ministry to come. And what a ministry it was! When we think of that little band of followers crowded into the Upper Room to break the bread of Eucharist and hear the Apostles preach, and yet how they grew to thousands of converts, and then spread within their lifetimes to some of the furthest extents of the Roman Empire and beyond – what conclusion is possible except that *when we act in faith and devotion, when we follow the way of Christ, and fulfill his ministry, the results can be far greater than our greatest expectations.*

We are well aware of the Apostles' labours, and for St Paul "the care of all the churches," and the widespread responsibilities which also fell upon St Peter, even though not with the exclusivity that some have wanted us to believe. We can certainly identify with little communities of Jews and pagans converted to Christ, and we can only marvel at how they spread the Word further and flourished, even in the face of persecution. The blood of the martyrs indeed became the seed of the Church, and so within three centuries – a very short time in the long progress of the human race – the Church had become the light of the Roman world, and spread to further kingdoms and continents. We also know that they had an internal life of their own, their own Rites and customs. They were united in communion with all who upheld, in St Jude's memorable phrase, the "Faith once delivered to the saints."

We may be few as they were, but we are a happy few! The scattered remnants of the great Anglican tradition, now largely excised from the body that for centuries drew upon this tradition and grew from its ministry among the people of one island in the silver sea to become a worldwide communion of ninety million souls. Many of us have lived long enough to watch a tragic process unfold, and I pray God again that some of us will live to see it reversed, and the Anglican Communion cleansed, restored, reformed and holy once again! We know that within the Anglican flock there are still many faithful Christians, and for them as well we must keep aflame the true character of Anglicanism. Nor can we forget those outside Christ's fold, who, through our form of Christian faith, order, and practise may be saved.

We cannot be content within our little sheepfolds, when there are so many sheep without a shepherd. By the grace of God, we can plan and create new congregations like Saint Paul and Saint Peter in many towns and cities. We must nurture the faith of

men whom God has chosen for the apostolic order of bishops, priests, and deacons, even though they may not have any idea at the moment of what God has in store for them. To achieve “pastoral availability” more young men must consider the ministry, listen for the quiet, insistent call of God. We clergy are in a position to observe those who seem most apt for this ministry. We older men in terms of the Hollywood western, are holding the fort until the “Cavalry” arrives! We ask a new generation of clergy to be “worker priests.” Until numbers grow to the extent that we can afford full time stipendiary clergy, we must nevertheless give them all the financial help possible.

We are called to preach the Gospel to men and women who may never have been Anglican, but who will find within our Church a great treasure in earthen vessels. This requires creative church programs, along with pastoral zeal.

We have this ministry, since the true Anglican tradition in its authentic character is restored Catholicism, that of the Church Fathers of the early centuries, the so-called “Undivided Church,” as rediscovered in the 16th century.

Surely his loving-kindness and mercy shall follow us. Someday we shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever, even if for now we must worship Him in makeshift circumstances, in borrowed quarters, sometimes having to pack up and move on. In that we are like the Hebrews on their pilgrimage with Moses, and like the early Christian communities in the upper room and family homes and even in the catacombs.

In time God will settle us, but right now we must build and extend the church, plant new congregations, train future clergy and lay leaders, living the Christian life with high hearted faith in the Lord, who is leading us on this great venture. Constitutions are important, too, but I hope and pray that what will begin here is the formation of working groups to establish a strategy of Christian mission, such as St Paul undoubtedly had. He did not set out without a goal, and neither should we. We want to reach every corner of Canada. We aspire just to see to the restoration of a great Church throughout the world. We have had to start small; and to build one stone upon another we must relearn the best methods of building.

We have had sufficient evidence of what happens when the original vision is lost, dissipated, and there is little outreach, or sense of mission, resulting in a static situation that has prompted escapist dreams, overlooking the real work of the Church.

We must set our sights on greater things, and determine the course for the future. We have good examples: the early bishops in North America, like Inglis in Halifax, Seabury in Connecticut, who doubled as parish priests. When the day comes for us in Canada to

elect a Bishop, undoubtedly that will be the practise, too. There is the Wesleyan method of circuit-riding as a means of carrying on and extending the ministry. Bishop Iverach in New Zealand and Australia offers still another stirring and effective method of evangelism with his small army of deacons, secularly employed, and brimming with enthusiasm. Young and old, we have much to learn, and there is so great inspiration in the Book of Acts to guide us in developing the ministries, programs and strategies we need.

A book published in the early 50s by Canon Roger Lloyd identified the character of the Church of England, that it was then best characterised by the parish ministry, and the clergy for the most part were devoted to the pastoral care of their parishioners. The Good Shepherd remains our one true, complete example of ministry.

Those of us growing up in the Church in my youth could certainly have testified of our own rector or vicar, that he was doing what the good Shepherd was meant to do: *He shall feed me in a green pasture, and led me forth beside the waters of comfort.* And though obviously our ministry cannot match that of our matchless Saviour and Lord, we have his picture of the work of the clergy, "*The good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.*" Over the centuries, especially in the little towns and villages the vicar gave his life, quietly and for the most part modestly, in the service of his people, after the manner of his Master, not the divine degree of a martyr's sacrifice, but spending himself out of love for his people. This must be the aim of every priest, for then "God giveth the increase." And as we clergy travel this road, the loyal laity travel with us.

The dean of St John the Divine in New York wrote a hymn which includes these stirring words: "*I know not where the road may lead, I follow day by day; nor where it ends, I only know I walk the King's highway. Through light and dark the road leads on, till dawns the endless day, when I shall know why in this life I walk the King's highway.*" To which one can only add these familiar lyrics: *Go, labour on; spend, and be spent,--Thy joy to do the Father's will.*

OVERCOMING INSTABILITY

Address Three

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Jesus Christ. Ephesians 4.14-15

Instability has been the curse of the Church, the “uncertain trumpet” that breeds spiritual confusion and causes doubt. Saint Paul knew this in the very beginning of the Church. There were “itching ears” then as now, and those who were always in search of the new, the exotic, as an antidote to their inner emptiness. But this instability has been especially a problem in the Twentieth Century – not just organisational instability, but instability in matters of Faith and Worship.

In Anglican history of course we trace the series of challenges to our orthodox Christian faith over the centuries. This became very evident during the Renaissance, leading into the humanist movement, and the vague Deist ideas that were never accepted in the Church but certainly infected a considerable part of the Christian community and bred a tepid spirit. In the nineteenth century came the emergence of “scientific humanism,” mainly on the fringes of the Church, that denied the authority of Holy Scripture, or rejected the evidences of divine creation. Still fresh in the minds of many of us all in the mid-twentieth century is the spectacle of men who “call themselves Christians,” and enjoy all the perquisites of high office in the Church, whilst denying the Blessed Trinity, the Divinity of Our Lord, the doctrine of Original Sin, and rejecting both the theological and moral teachings in the Bible.

But at the same time there was Organisational Instability as well, in the form of ecclesiastical and theological innovations. The radicals in religion began in the 19th century to dilute, diminish or even replace the biblical faith of the Church; although the Modernist and Liberal movements were slow to win adherence until the mid-20th century, spurred on by such men as Pike, Robinson, Jenkins and Spong.

But there was a parallel movement of a different sort, at the other end of the spectrum. Dogmas were promulgated in the 19th and 20th centuries, which had little or no biblical basis, and were virtually unknown during the first thousand years of Christendom. They do not pass the ancient test offered in the so-called Vincentian Canon, “always and everywhere believed by all” within the Christian Church. We continuing Anglicans want to be consistent, and hold fast to “the faith once delivered to the saints.”

So without being contentious we must part company with those who fail this true test of our religious teaching, the biblical canon, and the creeds, whether they come from the "Religious Right" or "Left."

One feature of Anglicanism is an anomaly that has bedevilled generations. It is the failure to remember what the Prayer Book says, that "the Gospel is not a Ceremonial Law." The externals of religion too often divided fellow churchmen, and caused much harm. Eminent Anglo-Catholics like Keble and Pusey were not concerned primarily with garb and ceremonies, although they defended ancient uses; and they won the day, when the Privy Council confirmed the legitimacy of the chasuble and candles and other outward elements of worship. The Oxford Movement was after all primarily about the Church as the very Body of Christ, not a mere adjunct of the state, and the vital character of the sacramental life. Evangelicals tended to discount the importance of vestments and vessels and things ecclesiastical, but their aim was to uphold the faith. Frequent celebration of Holy Communion was maintained by many leaders of this movement, such as The Rev Charles Simeon at Holy Trinity, Cambridge.

But somehow this continuing contest, really in many ways about externals not substance, gradually began to erode the Church's stability, and this was exacerbated by the rise of "folk religion" and group dynamics and "Liberation Theology." There have been the Anglicans who want to emulate everything Ultramontane, or if possible outdo them; the Anglicans who want to be more like the Calvinists; and more recently the Anglicans who want to be Charismatic, and turn our religion into a kind of ecstatic cult; or the Anglicans who join the Radicals, because they feel somehow intellectually embarrassed in the company of agnostics and atheists-- who are in many respects the most doctrinaire and dogmatic of all.

Pray God we want to be Anglican Anglicans, and above all Christian Anglicans, who rejoice in all the length and breadth and depth and height of Christian faith and observance, but also want to keep the purity of faith, moderation in the expression of religion, in keeping with holy wisdom and graceful reason. We who value the Via Media do not regard it as a dangerous little sandbar precariously caught in the rushing torrent of more dynamic Christian faith, but as the serene island of piety and sanity amidst the confusion and instability of stormy seas. In his Church Poems this was so well expressed by George Herbert in his poem *The British Church*:

"Dearest Mother, what they miss, the mean, thy praise and glory is, and long may be."
And he well-expressed our calling to uphold and celebrate the Church that loves the beauty of holiness, and also appreciates the holiness of beauty.

How can we obtain and retain Organisational Stability? It is an important question as we set out on this venture, and this is our initial synod.

First of all, that we should “be ourselves,” be indomitably Anglican, and cherish the best of our tradition, without idolising it.

For us organisational stability certainly means being linked with fellow continuing Anglicans, because we cannot be the Church on our own. And at the same time, stability is served by refusing to be embroiled in any squabbles with our co-religionists, provided the defining characteristics are there. Let us consider ourselves at one with all those who are Prayer Book, creedal and Biblical Christians, who uphold the apostolic ministry of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons before the ordination of women; and who believe in the importance of the Holy Sacraments. The only thing that should keep us apart should be the denial of some tenet of the Catholic faith and order.

For now we need to concentrate on deepening our spiritual life, and should certainly hope and pray and strive to draw closer and closer to those who are indeed our co-religionists, without making the fatal mistake of overlooking the real gulfs that can divide us. That is what killed COCU in the 70s, and has vitiated the Ecumenical Movement. I still like the old motto that once was on the masthead of a church newspaper, “Catholic for every truth of God, Protestant against every error of man.”

The worst casualty of almost every debate, discord, or schism in the Body of Christ has been love. And usually this lack of love is accompanied by a great excess of pride. Once in a bygone decade the *New Yorker* Magazine published a cartoon of two girls outside a church, talking. One says indignantly to the other, “God is too an Episcopalian.” But all naivete and all airs of superiority have been swept away in the torrent of religious strife and the sad decline in adherence to all the churches.

In humility let us love one another, and that includes all our fellow Christians, and certainly those who parted company with us over the doomed *Ordinariate*. Most of them have lived to regret their enthusiasm, or have now disappeared into the vast ranks of the Church they have chosen, with little likelihood that more than a “whiff” of Anglicanism will survive. [But painful as this whole episode has been, of course it is nothing compared to the Wars of Religion and the religious oppression and hate-filled intolerance that have happened in the past.]

No matter how passionately we believe, it should not be at the expense of love, for then we are using religion as a weapon, not as the door into the presence of God. And once all the tumult and the shouting die away in our time, we want every one of God’s

children to approach Him in the manner that brings them closest to his throne. So long as they profess the faith of Christ crucified, and they are attempting to live the Christian life, who are we to criticise them? We just want to be Anglican, and to make welcome all those who find what a long-ago convert in one parish described to me as “the full feast.”

The greatest aid to Organisational Stability is our love of Jesus Christ and our acceptance of his love. For then we are more likely to love and respect our bishops, and he to love and serve his clergy, rectors to love their flocks and be loved by their parishioners in turn, one Christian to another.

This is the supreme method by which the Church has grown, since those days in the Roman Empire when pagans looked longingly at Christians. “See how they love one another.” And that drew many a soul to Christ. Is there any less need today? People are still want to find a living faith, and an authentic faith, meaning that we are not hypocrites.

Once I received a phone call from a man who was doing business with the parish over a construction job. When I was called to another post, this had not been completed. He had a run-in with some of the parishioners, and called me to sound off. He sputtered, “If these are Christians, give me heathens.” Happily in this case he found that there were real Christians in that congregation, and two years later he was confirmed. When we put together a sound and eternal faith with a truly caring congregation, then many will be drawn to the light of Christ. And that is why we are in business, not just for our personal salvation, but for the salvation of the world.

We are not by nature people who desire change, unless it is the change of restoration, the change from darkness to light, from chaos to order, from oppression to freedom. We certainly want the change from ecclesiastical arrogance to the humility of Christ. We want the change from liturgical frivolity to sincere reverence and continuity in devotion, the ancient prayers, the beloved hymns.

We want the sound doctrine that has guided souls to their salvation from New Testament times, the Gospel of “Jesus Christ, the same today, yesterday and forever.” We do not wish to have a new faith, but a new heart. We want a Church that day in day out, age after age, stands against the battering of the winds of change, of disorder and spiritual revolution, so that any who enter her will know that they have come home, and that no one will redecorate it beyond recognition, nor do away with all the beloved and familiar things within.

We need the assurance that the Cross of Christ is the instrument of our peace and salvation, and that it will not be used as a mere talisman, or employed in the service of worldly causes. We want the stability of the divine order of things: that right is right, that the teachings of the Church will remain intact, that our great-grandchildren may receive teachings that have brought us to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

We want the stability that comes when the Church ministers to us: nourishes us in our Communion with Christ, prays for us when we specially need prayer, and will be there to bid us farewell and reassure us when we leave for the destination that has been the hope of mankind, verified in the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

When all of this is said, we want the stability necessary to withstand the lack of funds, or the lack of a church building, and the disheartening moments when we wish there were more people who cared enough to carry on.

We want to be secure in God's eternal changelessness from the mortal storm. When we visited the Grand Canyon many years ago, we were impressed by films taken by a man who spent most of his life exploring that great natural wonder. He braved the wild and dangerous rapids of the Colorado River time and time again. But when the force of the water, the continuous battering of those rapids became too intense, he pulled to the side, secured his boat, and entered a cave to lie there, rest, and regain his strength. So this was not weakness on his part, but wisdom. Once he had slept, he could go out and battle those rapids again.

The world for most of us is a river full of rapids. The Church must be the stabilised ark in which we can ride them out; and will take us to that sheltered place in which we can rest in the Lord and then face the fury of the elements once again.

May our ark be stable, well-balanced in faith, strongly built to withstand the worst the world can give us. That takes the sound and prayerful leadership, which we must help raise up to steer the ship, and that we who make up the crew are united in a common purpose, to see that the ark will take us home.

And let us close with this prayer of John Newton:

*May the grace of Christ our Saviour, and the Father's boundless love,
With the Holy Spirit's favour, rest upon us from above*

Organisational Stability

Address Four

Whoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon the rock. St Matt.7.24
And as St Paul tells us, *That rock was Christ.* I Cor. 10.4b

St Paul described how God protected Moses and the Children of Israel and provided them with spiritual sustenance. The context of our Lord's statement is different, but the meaning is the same; because He speaks of the proper foundation, just as St Paul, earlier in First Corinthians: "*Other foundation no man can lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus.*"

The interpretation of the early Church Fathers was quite clear, when Jesus spoke of St Peter as "the rock," he was referring to the Apostle's faith. The Church is indeed built upon faith like St Peter's, but the Lord clearly means "upon faith like yours I will build my Church." Because the Lord Himself is the rock, the foundation, the cornerstone. And that is why Jesus instructed us to be "founded upon the rock." The words of Jesus clearly identified St Peter as the leader of the Apostles, nothing more nor less. We have lost many of our co-religionists who have accepted the interpretation of our Lord's words to say what they do not mean.

So once again, let us consider the old, old story.

To find organisational stability, let us look at what Jesus did in the first days of the Church. In the Gospels, we can see very clearly how Jesus "grew" the Church. Beginning with his Baptism, Jesus was in touch with men like Andrew. The way the Gospels read, Jesus clearly moved around on a very deliberate mission to call the men He chose to be his closest associates and colleagues. He began with Twelve, as Moses had done when he appointed the judges, one over each of the tribes of Israel. The Apostles were to lead the new Israel that would replace the old. First they were learners, disciples, we might even say, deacons, working with Him who said He had come "not to be served, but to serve" and to give his life "a ransom for many."

We observe in the Gospels how He trained them carefully and finally sent them out two by two to preach, baptise, anoint the sick, and heal the wounded bodies and souls. He gave them explicit instructions. First of all, they were sent to the "lost sheep of the

house of Israel." He had them begin among their own people, before they would be able to minister further afield. Hear his old familiar counsel:

Go, preach, saying, "The Kingdom of heaven is at hand." Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold nor silver nor brass in your purses, nor script for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat. And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy, and there abide till ye go thence. And when ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it... And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet....

The essence of his remarks is absolutely appropriate to our church and its work. We must still prepare men and women for the Kingdom of God, and offer to them whatever ministry they need for good health of mind, body and soul. We see here the beginnings of Holy Baptism, Holy Unction, and even exorcism. There are specific references to accepting gifts, staying in one house, traveling light. Jesus makes plain that those who serve in his Church should be compensated. If they are not well-received, they should move on.

But our Lord gave far more than practical advice: His grace was with them.

But at the beginning our Lord launched these men on their missionary adventure. They returned exultant, in fact so pleased with themselves that Jesus, with an obvious twinkle in his eye, told the Apostles, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." Gentle humour that did not diminish their accomplishments. We know from the Gospels that our Lord is not just a Teacher, but a great Encourager.

He also warned them of the possible dangers they would face. But "be wise as serpents and harmless as doves." So long as they maintained their integrity, they could withstand repeated opposition and misrepresentation of their work. And they would be given the words to utter in their own defence.

Then the Seventy were sent out, including so many of the men who would later play a prominent role in the Church, such as Barnabas and Luke himself. The first centres in which the Apostles ministered became the Patriarchates, in which the parish and diocesan systems would evolve.

We see how our Lord designed the Church, when we read the Book of Acts, and how, once Jesus has ascended, the Apostles took definite and concerted action to put this design into effect. They had not been left comfortless. With their new degree of spiritual power and authority they appointed and ordained Deacons for a very practical ministry; Bishops took the place of the Apostles as they died off, or could not cover the immense territories, as the Church spread rapidly through the Empire and beyond. And they completed or "sealed" the baptised by the laying on of hands in Confirmation.

No wonder the Church expanded so quickly despite slow travel and communication and ever present danger. The men were well trained, and the Holy Spirit sanctified human ability, which was now combined with the outpourings of divine grace.

From Pentecost on, as St Luke records in the Book of Acts, there was a clear pattern to worship, consisting of the Apostles' doctrine, which would include reading the pastoral epistles and Gospels, followed by an explanatory sermon; the Apostles' fellowship, which was expressed in the unity of the ministry; the Breaking of Bread, the pure sacrifice kept every Lord's Day; and the intercessory prayers of the Church. From their previous observance of the Passover *Seder* the Apostles already knew the order they must follow, as Jesus had indicated on Maundy Thursday, even though that rite was now superseded by the Eucharistic feast.

As we watch the development of the Church over the following century, we observe that every local Church had a character of its own, and was regarded as an entity in itself: the Church of Antioch, Corinth, Alexandria, Rome, and so on. This is evident in the Book of Revelation, when the Seven Churches of Asia are critically portrayed. And early in the Second Century with the letters of men like St Ignatius we learn of Rites and customs that were developing in each place within a common order. But despite the distinctive features of every Church, good or bad, there was unity on a much deeper level, as expressed by Saint Paul so famously, "*There is one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all.*" The Gospel message bound them all together.

From our standpoint it may seem curious that so many details about church life are missing. But the reason is not hard to reckon: the readers of the Book of Acts were for the most part well aware of how things were done from their experience. Detailing them would have been superfluous. St Luke assumes that everyone knows exactly what he is writing about, in the same way that in a letter to a family member, one would not have to give details about family customs and other homely matters, but just refer to them. When St Paul said that everything should be done "decently and in

order," his readers knew what is the decent or proper way of doing things in worship, and exactly what that order is. When in the 3d century St Jerome, the brilliant translator of the Bible into Latin, stated that the Apostles wrote most of the Collects, we must give some credence to his words, knowing his remarkable scholarship.

In composing the Book of Common Prayer of course Thomas Cranmer preserved the order of service that had been in use from the beginning of the Church, enriched by the beautiful prayers added to it during the first three hundred years. We all know that in our Book of Common Prayer, the inspired work of St Gregory, St John Chrysostom, and of other great divines down through the ages, including, later on, Cardinal Quinones, are also preserved. This Book was not intended to be a *new liturgy* but a noble rendering in English of the prayers of the Church and the praises of God. "Newfangledness" was definitely eschewed, as the article on ceremonies from the 1549 book made plain. If the Rites became somewhat simpler than before, this was not to diminish reverence, as it said, "Without some ceremonies it is not possible to keep any Order or quiet Discipline in the Church," and at the same time it emphasised that "Christ's Gospel was not a Ceremonial Law."

This review has one purpose in mind: to show us Organisational Stability at work. And to make us remember that Organisational Stability is far more than a structural plan or any human device. It is nothing less than the timeless and time-tested way in which the Church can live in peace and get on with her work.

Jesus gave a shape both to the Church and the Liturgy; the Apostles developed it, and future ages added to it. Some additions were more like accretions, and that is why they were later removed from the Use of the Church of England. But we are after Organisational Stability; and if we want it, we must see how justifiable it is in the history of the Anglican tradition, because we claim we are, and wish to be, a part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

On a humble parochial plane, many an old church in England had vicars and rectors. Who survived in office through the upheavals from the reign of Henry VIII and Edward and Mary, into the time of Elizabeth I. We find the evidence on plaques listing the incumbents of these churches. They were not necessarily in the mould of the Vicar of Bray in the old satirical poem! Most were simply faithful parish priests, who kept their heads down, and continued to do their duty. If this is not a form of Organisational Stability, what is?

The record of those troublous times argues strongly in favour of our Anglican position that despite the changes which were made, the English reformers were committed

soundly to the Faith and Order of the Church, nor did they wish to change the basic pattern of Worship and Discipline, as they had been known from Apostolic and Post-Apostolic times. The abuses that crept into the Church, especially in the Middle Ages, were the main issue. The Anglican tradition was by intent and character a continuation of what had come down from the beginning, to restore the Church to a purity in style and practise that had been almost lost.

So Organisational Stability persisted in the Church of England when she regained the autonomy which the old British Church had enjoyed. The Order of the Church, Bishops, Priests and Deacons in Apostolic Succession remained, only the controversial supreme power, unknown to the first ages of the Church, had been removed. Devotional customs, ceremonies, vestments, the church calendar of major feasts and fasts and holy days: all these remained, simplified and clarified.

The Prayer Book we use is not identical with that of 1549, as we all know; and yet it is basically the same book which in a legal fiction remains the official liturgy of the Anglican Church of Canada. With some notable exceptions, it is still the liturgy that our forefathers used in Britain, later in the Colonies, and spread to other lands; what has been called for generations "our incomparable liturgy," an opinion that was long shared by those outside our ranks, who borrowed the marriage and burial rites.

We still insist on links with bishops in the Apostolic Succession, and that we are part of the authentic Church Universal, the Church Catholic.

We have good reason to have confidence in the validity of our Holy Orders; that they have the proper intention, form and matter, consistent with the practises of the Church during the period of the Undivided Church. We are indeed in that long line that takes us back to the Upper Room, and the Apostles gathered in fear, until their risen Lord burst in upon them, and said to all, not just one: "*Receive the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you remit, they are remitted unto them. Whose sins you retain, they are retained.*" From those chosen men, the ancestry of the Church's ministry is still derived. We can trace this with remarkable accuracy, knowing that if there are any missing names, this is an anomaly, and not an argument against the authenticity of the Apostolic Succession.

We still sing the song of the angels, "*Glory be to God on high.*" We still recite or sing the Creed inspired by the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, to express the faith of the Undivided Church. In every element of our religious life we have the basis for organisational stability, which we can build upon for the future. The tragedy of

Anglican instability, after all, led us in good conscience, but sadly, out of communion with Canterbury and the national churches.

We have stability in our beliefs, in our liturgy, and in Holy Orders; but that is not all we need: With these qualities, still alive in our reconstituted church, we must of course have the personal stability in faith and love, without which, our witness will be dissipated.

And we must have the New Testament morality.

We still believe that human life is a divine gift and that “you are not your own; you were bought with a price,” and we must regard it as the precious gift of God. We still believe that “He made them male and female,” and that marriage is a sacrament for Christians, which can only sanction the union of man and woman. So our ethics and morals are derived indeed from Holy Scripture, especially the teachings of Jesus Christ, and to a lesser degree, Saint Paul. At the same time we are reminded by these sacred sources to temper morality with Christian charity.

Stability may seem a rather colourless term. But for us it represents the reliable, secure, lasting and inviolate nature of truth and devotion to which we should hold on, because our heavenly Father desires for all his children that there can be a core to their existence in which they can be at peace, content in our faith through “the knowledge of the Son of God.”

O God, our help in ages past; our hope for years to come, our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home!