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IN the Old Testament there is the vision of the Prophet Ezekiel beholding the glory of God departing from the Temple in Jerusalem. It is a powerful vision, with an even more powerful message. A vision and message that is relevant to the Church today as we enter into the Season of Lent.

God's dwelling among a people or nation or church, or in the heart and mind of a person, is conditional upon that people, that nation, church or person being obedient to His commands. Sin, idolatry, false worship will cause God to withdraw His divine presence, and with it His glory. It is with this in mind that the Suffrages following the Lord's Prayer at Mattins and Evensong, pray: "And take not thy Holy Spirit from us." In that prayer we petition God not to depart from us, not to take His glory from us.

The Church, the nations, each congregation and every person, has a choice whether to be faithful to God or to reject Him. The Apostle Paul taught that the greatest mystery of all is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." (*Colossians 1:27*) Jesus Christ living in His Church and in His people is the most important thing we can experience in this life; it is the glory of God dwelling in us as temples of the Holy Spirit. Yet one of the main lessons we learn from Scripture is that God dwells only where He is wanted, worshipped and obeyed. This is true of nations; it is true also of churches, congregations, homes, and every individual.

God withdrawing His glory is never what He wants or wills. Whenever God's place of dwelling—whether a person, a church, or a

nation—is filled with false worship, continued sin, blasphemy, or hatred, there is no place for God's glory.

In so many ways our society, and even some of our churches and religious institutions, have organized themselves, their laws and worship so that God is no longer welcome or revered. Through time, the world has crowded out the divine, and there is no place for God; as a result, His glory is not to be found. Jesus illustrated this in the Parable of the Sower, when the new plants were choked by the thorns – the cares and demands of the world – and the life of faith died.

There are times when we as Christians, when we as a Church, crowd our days with the demands and concerns of the world, with little time for prayer and worship, for quiet time and meditation on God's Word — and then we find ourselves wondering why God is not present, blessing our lives. In all of this, especially now in Lent, we should ask ourselves the all-important question: Does God dwell among us? Do we manifest His glory in our lives? Are we obedient to His Word? Is there room for God in the temple of my soul?

As we enter into the Season of Lent, we are given yet another opportunity to reflect on our lives and where needed, to turn back to God; to clear away the sins and distractions which crowd out our worship and prevent God's glory from dwelling in us.

Through this Season of Lent, may each of us experience the love and longing for the Lord which calls us back to Him; leading us to the joyous celebration of Eastertide!

DEFINING ANGLICANISM by Archbishop Mark Haverland 'Anglican Catholic Liturgy and Theology'

EFFORTS to define 'Anglican' are various. A couple of years I noticed that someone on a social medium condemned as 'not Anglican' an episcopal consecration in the Anglican Church of North America (ACNA) because of its use of liturgical dance and of various other neo-Anglican or charismatic liturgical phenomena. One response to this condemnation was, 'Who are you to say something is "not Anglican"?' This responder's basic point seemed to be that anything that is affirmed or practiced by anyone who describes himself as 'Anglican' is *eo ipso* Anglican. This we may call the 'kitchen sink' definition or, alternatively, we might call it the counsel of despair. The position, whether viewed positively or negatively, was formulated most memorably by the observation of the late William F. Buckley, Jr., who said that no one from Mao Zedong to Pope Paul VI could be sure he wasn't an Anglican.

An alternative approach is to define 'Anglican' rather non-theologically by emphasizing its cultural or civilizational characteristics, products, and influences. I have myself used this approach on occasions. On this view, 'Anglicanism' is best understood in the manner of a Cole Porter (or perhaps, depending on your generation, a Barenaked Ladies) list song: Anglicanism is Anglican chant, Vaughan Williams hymns, the King's College service of Lessons and Carols, and the English musical and choral tradition; the sermons of John Donne and Lancelot Andrewes; the poems of George Herbert, John Keble, W.H. Auden, and T.S. Eliot; the Barsetshire novels and Swift's satires and Robertson Davies's Salterton trilogy and the writings of C.S. Lewis; the sons and daughters of Anglican rectories; the prose of Hooker's *Laws* and the Authorized Version of the Bible and the *Book of Common Prayer*; a deeply felt but

undemonstrative and unsentimental piety; Wren churches and English country parishes; the moral seriousness that outlawed the slave trade and stopped suttee and beat the Nazis; Evensong of a summer's afternoon; the Queen's Christmas address with its consistent, gentle emphasis on our Saviour's birth.

This approach might look at first like the 'kitchen sink', as it accumulates the stuff of centuries in an apparent *gatherum omnium*. In fact, however, there is a good deal of definition and coherence to the list. There's no modernism or neo-Pentecostalism in it, for one thing. For another thing, while a Roman Catholic or an Eastern Orthodox Christian might think some important things are missing from it, there's little or nothing positively in it that he would find objectionable.

A third approach, which in fact tends to characterize the Continuing Churches, is to accept that historic Anglicanism has comprehended too much and been overly ambiguous: some of what is undoubtedly, historically present in Anglicanism has proved to be pernicious. One then might go on to say that we feel no need to affirm everything that has some presence in our history. That is, we would distinguish the history of the Anglican world, in its vastness, from the normative Anglicanism that is affirmed in, most notably, *The Affirmation of St. Louis* and that we wish to continue.

Along these lines, I often return to the following statement by Canon A.M. Allchin in a little essay printed in 1963:

The position of the seventeenth-century Anglican theologians is, and in the opinion of the present writer must remain, of real importance for all Anglican theological thinking. But this emphatically does not mean that we have to follow them in every particular, nor that we are limited by their positions and conclusions. What it does mean is that we may find in them certain

attitudes, certain approaches to theological problems, which are still valid for Anglican thinking to-day and, we would dare to say, still of value for Christian thinking as a whole. By their constant appeal to 'the Scriptures interpreted by the perpetual practice of God's Church', to use the words of Herbert Thorndike, they provide us with a method and a starting point for our own researches. But they do not give us a complete and finished system.^[1]

Anglicanism is not a distinctive and finished system, but an approach, a method, and a temper. Anglicanism is not doctrines that distinguish it from those of other Churches, because Anglicans assert that what they believe is plainly founded in the Scriptures believed by those other Churches and in the first millennium of those Churches. That same faith of the first millennium is or should be decisive in all Churches for interpreting the Scriptural deposit.

That which distinguishes Anglicans in doctrinal terms, then, is a kind of restraint concerning doctrinal commitment flowing from an unwillingness to innovate or even to receive older teachings that go far beyond Scripture and the consensus of the Churches. It is precisely this self-limitation which makes possible an openness to the great Churches of the East and the West. We assert and press nothing as essential, so far as we can see, that they do not themselves affirm, only questioning their differences from each other which seem to have no strong foundation in the Fathers or in the consensus of the first millennium.

A recent traditionalist Roman Catholic, criticizing a paper on doctrine by Bishop Chad Jones, admitted that Bishop Jones was sincere and eloquent, but asserted that Anglicanism was little better than Mormonism in its supposed theoretical claim to authority to alter doctrine. While there are no doubt self-described Anglicans who make such a sweeping claim (see my opening paragraph above), the Continuing

Church exists precisely because it rejects wholly any supposed or claimed authority in any Anglican body to alter doctrine or to add to the deposit of Scripture as discerned in the first millennium of the Church. The Roman Catholic gentlemen wrote:

Bishop Chandler Holder Jones writes. Moving: heartfelt and, when applied to THE church, true. The Mystical Body and the conservative Christian society that T.S. Eliot envisioned. But (and you knew I'd have a but): the plain meaning of the Thirty-Nine Articles. I understood when I really read Articles XIX and XXI: Anglicanism's framers believed the church is fallible. Anglicanism is Reformed Christianity, not Catholic Christianity. Articles XIX and XXI are why they have women bishops and same-sex weddings today. Not what the framers intended but logical conclusions from their premise. And Fr. Jonathan Mitchican has explained that classic Anglicans DID believe they were the true church; we "Romans" were "Catholic too" and they claimed the episcopate through us, but they thought we are in grave error.

Put another way, a Pope, even a goof like Francis, can't change the faith. A General Synod or General Convention vote claims it can. Like Mormonism, not Christianity.

But of course the writer, Mr. John Beeler, has things exactly backwards. Anglicans are not Roman Catholics, not because of Roman fidelity and refusal to innovate, but because Rome claims, and exercises, a right to innovate, and to innovate even in the face of no biblical and little patristic support. Show us the Immaculate Conception in the Bible or in the first millennium. Explain the Immaculate Conception against the arguments of the greatest of the Western Schoolmen. Show us how Anglicans have erred in their Marian piety. Where did female altar servers come from? From whence came a host of Roman innovations, if not from the claims of Vatican I, which themselves were innovations that codified

an existing, excessive, and innovative claim to authority?

The charge of Mormon-like tendencies is impolite, but if it is to be used, does it apply more to ‘a goof like Francis’ or to Bishop Jones and the Continuing Churches? Mormons claim to have a living prophet. Anglicans do not. Roman Catholics claim they do not, but can only sustain that claim for those who have made in advance a supernatural act of faith that no pope will use the extraordinary magisterium to define an error.

Calling the present pope a ‘goof’ is also impolite, but in any case is not Pope Francis merely using an authority long ceded to him by his Church? And is not the assertion that ‘a Pope...can’t change the faith’ simply a hopeful expression of trust that is actually contradicted by the facts?

[\[1\]](#) A.M. Allchin, ‘Our Lady in Seventeenth-century Anglican Devotion and Theology’ in *The Blessed Virgin Mary: Essays by Anglicans*. Ed. by E.L. Mascall & H.S. Box. London: Darton, Longmans & Todd, 1963. Pp. 53-76.

DEAR CHURCH: IT’S TIME WE STOP IDOLIZING THE MILLLENIALS

by Jonathan Aigner

‘Ponder Anew’ – February 20, 2018

A DECADE ago, my wife and I were a young newlywed couple in the process of launching our adult lives, among the first group of so-called millennials to do so. Having started out as Baptist and Methodist, we had denominationally sojourned our way through college and grad school, and picked up degrees in Theology and Religious Studies along the way. So, of course, we were church shopping through the denominational delicatessen of Houston’s greater metro.

One Sunday, drawn in by the rad mid-century mod architecture and freeway-convenient urban setting, we decided to visit

a Presbyterian congregation in the sixties-fabulous Greenway Plaza district.

Don’t misunderstand what I’m about to say. Everything about this church really was wonderful. We didn’t care that it was outdated or that it’s cavernous sanctuary wasn’t full. The liturgy was rigorous and heartfelt and the preaching intensely gospel-centric. The lush exhalations of the 30ish-rank Aeolian-Skinner soared and drew the song out of us. The people were warm and welcoming, with one caveat.

You see, like so many others, this was an aging congregation. Though I would hesitate to use the word “dying,” the all -caps block letters were clearly stenciled in the stucco. This congregation probably wasn’t going to make it. Though there were young professionals there, the driving force was the older middle-age to elderly crowd.

As soon as we walked it, there were glances and whispers from both sides of the nave. It was immediately what was happening. We were fresh meat. The locals were hungry and desperate. They could hardly contain themselves through the opening hymn. When it was time to pass the peace, they passed their piece, all right. The sales pitch began. We were immediately recruited for choir practice after Bible Study after lunch social after food pantry shift after morning worship.

We felt, as one rebellious Hawaiian-shirted and hush-puppied boomer once sang:

*You got fins to the left,
Fins to the right,
And you’re the only bait in town.*

We weren’t offended, only a little intimidated. They loved their church, and they longed to see beauty arise from its ashes. Ultimately, it was not to be, at least not as they hoped and prayed.

But they had succumbed to a great temptation, especially present within the aging edifices and shifting neighborhoods

where many greying congregations find themselves. They made us, for one hour one Sunday, a graven image in their unsettled wilderness.

We were millennials, and they were bowing at our altar.

It seems like everyone these days has an opinion on what you need to do to engage the coveted millennial generation and their families. Especially our boomer parents and Gen X older siblings. You've heard it all before, haven't you?

Create a cool website.

Serve good coffee.

Preach self-help courses masquerading as topical sermon series.

Expand your connections ministry.

Make church more convenient.

Have cool "worship" music.

Make sure the kids have fun, even though we are making precious few of those.

And thus begins yet another church marketing trend that has been tried in the past and which will inevitably culminate in increased frustrations, heightened anxiety, and no better results.

There is no silver bullet.

Church attendance is declining, and no music, no coffee, no marketing campaign, and certainly no fun, convenient Sunday experience is going to change it. The church is shrinking. The trend of young people leaving church started decades ago. It's nothing new, and there is no magical, surefire way to change it. Especially overnight.

So, as an elder statesman of this millennial generation, can I please offer you one piece of advice?

Stop.

All of it. Stop trying. Stop marketing. Stop targeting.

I know at first this seems counterintuitive, maybe even unbiblical.

I can hear the objections arising already.

Are you saying you want us to just stop evangelizing?

Our churches are dying! Do you want us to all close up for good?

This generation is going to hell in a handbasket! We've got to reach those young people before it's too late!

So basically, we just need to have cool worship, right?

No, I'm not telling you to stop evangelizing, and I'm not suggesting for a minute that you write off any group of people.

But look around. There's a big box Wal-Church in almost every town now, at least a McCongregation, dedicated to making Jesus easy again. They pride themselves on it, actually. They have something for everyone, at least everyone who matters. Especially the ubiquitous 50-something young adult pastor with skinny jeans, a dad bod, and that unmistakable Just For Men hue in his sideburns who desperately wants us to believe he's a hipster.

These churches all claim that they're reaching us, or at least making an attempt. But studies show they simply aren't. With all the strategies, all the initiatives, all the campaigns, millennials are still leaving the church, and faster than ever before.

Let me let you in on a little secret:

Most of us can't stand churches like that anyway.

I think one thing is crystal clear, though. We've become an idol, an object, a commodity. In your minds, we're a special interest group that has left your church because we didn't get our way. So like a jilted lover, you want answers. You want to

know what will bring us back, or at least why we left and why you can do to bring in a bunch just like us.

Please, for our sake and for Jesus' sake, stop.

We don't need or want it. The truth is, beautiful church, millennials really aren't special. Yes, our collective experience of the world is unique, but we're more like you than not. We're living out the same human condition in the same cursed cosmos. And though the generational stereotype is one of narcissistic individuality, we don't need you to engage it. The glorious gospel of Jesus the Christ is all that you need.

Do your thing. Live your mission. Live into the hope of Christ that overthrows evil regimes and sets captives free. Live into the confidence that knows Christ's work is finished, and the church's mission from age-to-age, generation-to-generation, doesn't change.

But first, maybe stop for a minute. Remember who you are in the first place.

Worship together as if your lives depended on it. And invite us to join you, not as your honored guests, not as your coveted demographic, but as your brothers and sisters. Let us feast on God's Word and dine at Christ's table. Teach us the drama of your calendar, the discipline of your liturgy, and the joy of your melodies. Many of us are trying to follow Jesus on our own, and it's tough. It's just not working.

That's just it. Following Jesus is a scary prospect, a costly endeavor, a daunting task. That's where you come in. We millennials need you, just like our parents did, and like our own children and grandchildren will, also. We need a community of faith that reminds us who we are and Whose story we live out.

I can't promise the millennials will come flooding back through your rusty-hinged doors and sink into your creaky old pews.

Like I said, there's no silver bullet. But it will be the start of a necessary process.

In the end, church, it wasn't you that lost us, anyway.

It was who you were trying to be.

It's time to be uncool.

It's time to be your beautiful self.

It's time to be the church.

CHURCH OUTREACH & GROWTH

SURVEYS of Canadians over the last several years have repeatedly indicated that in matters of religion, men and women of all ages and income brackets continue to look for answers with respect to three fundamental issues: God, self, and society. Close to 90 percent of Canadians still identify themselves as men and women of faith. Yet on a national average, only 25 percent attend Church weekly -- a number which is expected to drop in half over the next 20 years. The rites of passage continue to be important to the vast majority of Canadian adults -- baptism, marriage, funerals -- and church continues to play an important role in these rites of passage but increasingly on a marginalized, consumer basis.

While the so-called 'younger generation' in our society does not in large numbers frequent weekly services, they do reflect upon matters of faith. We know from surveys that Canadians, young and old, are increasingly fascinated with supernatural ideas, yet often don't associate that interest with church. Men and women are seeking for God but are not sure where He is to be found or how to know Him. With respect to self, many Canadians are searching for personal meaning, hope, and fulfillment, but again frequently don't associate those kinds of quest with what the Church offers. And Canadians of all ages and backgrounds value nothing more highly than relationships. However, once again these

same men and women do not associate enhanced social life -- from personal relationships to global concerns -- with what the Church has to offer and say. Why?

Part of the answer lies in our culture. The sharp decline in church attendance since the 1940s is directly tied to the inclination among Canadians to adopt a belief here and a practice there; to want religion to speak to some areas of their lives but not others; to resurface for the rites of passage -- baptisms, weddings and funerals -- all the while not really coming to church and yet not really leaving either. What has been called 'cafeteria Christianity' -- where one goes along the religious smorgasbord picking and choosing what one wants depending upon one's current needs or wants, leaving the rest behind, has become an all too familiar trend. Yet this trend is not restricted to matters of religion; it is happening in every sphere of Canadian life. Selective consumption, pluralism, individualism, and relativism are being felt everywhere -- just ask retailers, educators, the media, or politicians. But this is only part of the answer, or problem if you will. The other part lies in ourselves as Church.

Both empirical and anecdotal evidence shows clearly that the image of the isolated individual who finds God or a church on his or her own is a figment of the imagination. The dominant sources of religious commitment and involvement remain *relational* -- individuals are introduced to God and Church by others. God Himself deigned to come down from His throne in heaven to become man and to walk among us, introducing Himself, telling others about Himself, and involving Himself personally in the lives of His people. We, as Christ's disciples in this moment in time, need to model this divine initiative, and to build credible relationships with people outside the church; inviting them to join us in worship and fellowship; and to talk with them about *their* faith, *their* concerns, and

their needs and questions -- and through these relationships introduce them to a relationship with God through Jesus Christ, in the community of believers, the Church.

It is a simple fact that churches 'grow their own' through members sharing faith with their children and grandchildren, with their neighbours and co-workers, and with the person who walks in on a Sunday morning and sits nervously in the back pew. Individually and collectively we need to be a place in which the authentic Christian faith is transmitted and Christ-centred relationships are fostered.

Research tells us that most Canadians are not looking for churches -- or even religion, at least in terms of 'organized religion'. But people do express spiritual and supernatural interests, have personal desires and needs, and want to experience enhanced interpersonal lives. And therein lies our greatest challenge and our greatest opportunity.

The formula for successful Christian outreach and parish growth is simple but demanding: Know your Faith; pray with faith; be confident in that faith, and then reach out with faith.

SIN AND REPENTANCE **by Archbishop Shane B. Janzen**

FROM time to time, often in preparation for the Sacrament of Penance, I find myself discussing the nature of sin with a parishioner or with a person who has asked for spiritual counsel. During these times I frequently need help the person understand the difference between actual 'sin' and what is so often merely human error or human folly. It is not that the person feels that he or she has not sinned, but rather the person has been overly scrupulous and somehow, somewhere along the way has misunderstood the nature of sin and its commission. Because the penalty for unrepented sin is so great -- eternal death --

it is important that all Christians know and understand what it is to commit sin; and also to know and make use of the remedy for sin, the Sacrament of Penance (Confession).

So now, once again, a brief lesson in moral theology 101. In order for any one of us to be guilty of sin, we must have: (1) know that the thought, word, deed or omission is an actual sin prohibited by God; (2) actually committed the sin in question; and, (3) have done so with full intent and free will. In other words, we must have knowingly, willingly, and freely committed the sin – a sin which is an offence against God or neighbour, as set forth in Holy Scripture and the moral teachings of Christ and His Church. There is no guess work involved. We may wish we had not committed the sin, hopefully we regret that we committed the sin; but we should never be in doubt that indeed it was a sin for which we are morally culpable.

Firstly, then, it is important to know what is or is not a sin; which in turn requires of each of us knowledge of the commandments of God and the teachings of Jesus Christ; and in so knowing, a conscience formed according to the faith and teachings of the Church. As in matters of faith, so in matters of morals, it is not a question of whether you or I think something is a sin or not a sin, but rather what is the teaching of Christ revealed to His Church?

This revelation is not a matter of speculation (contrary to what popular opinion may say), but is set forth by God's in His Word. God does not lie to His people nor does He conceal the truth from us in tiny fine print or hidden teachings. God is a just Judge and loving Father, who desires only our well-being and eternal salvation.

So then it is the duty of Christ's faithful followers to know, through the study of His Word and the teachings of His Church, what is our bounden duty and responsibility with

respect to the moral life. And it is one of my primary responsibilities to see to it that none of you is in doubt or ignorance as to the nature of sin or its consequences for your life and salvation.

Each of us needs to remember that sin and temptation are not respecters of age, nor of financial or marital status, or of lifestyle. We are all guilty of sin and in need of God's mercy and forgiveness in our lives. To help us determine the nature and degree of sin in our lives, especially during the penitential season of Lent, we need to undergo an examination of conscience. Like our annual physical examination with our doctor, so too as Christians each of us needs to undergo a complete annual moral examination – one which asks us the hard soul-searching questions and probes into our lives, our thoughts, our motives, our intentions and our actions.

During the Season of Lent, Christ and His Church calls upon each of us, personally, to examine our lives in light of the Gospels; to peer into the hidden recesses of our souls; and to weigh our actions and intentions against the commandments of God. We need to undertake this examination, this spiritual 'housekeeping', with humility, faith and honesty.

So, with all of this in mind, let us with faith and humility turn once again to our Saviour Christ; lifting up our hearts and confessing our sins; and by His grace, renewing our lives. God will surely answer our prayers and defend us from "all troubles which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul". He will strengthen us in temptation and deliver us from evil; and in His love and mercy we will forever abide.

