

The Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion

ANGLICAN EVANGELICALISM IN CANADA

BY RONALD WARD

IN writing on the subject of Anglican Evangelicalism in Canada, it ought to be stated at the outset that what follows is my own view. I was invited to write on the situation in Canada *as I see it*, and it could be that others view things differently. There will be some who will agree, notwithstanding. Providence has placed me in a position to see what perhaps the parish rector might miss.

It is said that professors live in ivory towers, blissfully oblivious of the world (or church) around them. That is not true in the present instance. For over a decade the opportunities have come to travel from the Atlantic to the Pacific and to preach in parish churches, lecture at diocesan conferences and other clerical meetings, and conduct evangelistic missions. In addition, it has always been possible to be "at the receiving end": to sit among the audience at meetings and to listen to speeches and conversations. From time to time one's opinion may be asked, orally or by letter. Over a period of ten years and more, impressions have been gained. It is impossible to be a long observer and end with no views of the situation!

An initial difficulty is the ambiguity of the term "evangelical". In some parts of this continent it means merely a man who uses the Prayer Book—no doubt in preference to the Missal; or it may mean "not Anglo-Catholic and therefore liberal". It is sometimes said that a man must be an evangelical before he can become a "catholic", as if he had to outgrow his evangelicalism before entering the richer life of "catholicism". Again, a high church clergyman (incense, reservation, and benediction) may be described as an evangelical because he has a genuine "concern" for people, in spite of the fact that a humanist may have a concern and the so-called evangelical would not tell his congregation that they must be converted as well as baptized. Or a low churchman may be thought evangelical because in a bustling, enterprising (and not unsuccessful) way he seeks to get people into the church. It is clear that we must define our terms.

But herein lies the second difficulty. The moment you draw up some statement which sets forth the evangelical position someone will want to add to it, subtract from it, or modify it in some way. I therefore submit a summary statement which was discussed at one of the meetings of our Evangelical Fellowship, not as a rigid theological document but as indicating broadly "the mark of the evangelical mind and heart". (Do not neglect the word "heart". The spirit of evangelicalism must not be divorced from its doctrine.) It will be observed that it follows the maxim that Christianity is Christ.

- The Supremacy of the Word of God
—Christ Supreme, written and living.
- The Sovereignty and Grace of God
—God in Christ ruling and gracious.
- The Centrality of the Cross
—Christ crucified and risen.
- The Terms of the Gospel Justification by Faith
—God in Christ pardoning freely.
- The Necessity and Validity of Christian Experience
—Christ personally known.
- The Necessity of Conversion
—Turning to Christ in commitment.
- The Fact of Assurance
—Taking Christ at His word.
- The Privileges of Laymen
—Christ available for all.
- The Means of Grace —Provision for growing in Christ.
- The Doctrine of the Church
—Christ and His people.
- The Task of Evangelism
—Obediently making Christ known.
- Christian Conduct and Holiness
—Christ growing in us.
- Expectation : the Christian Hope
—Christ eagerly awaited.

This is not exhaustive by any means. It has no explicit statement, for example, about wrath and propitiation, though they are implied. But it points to the kind of people we are. You will see that we advocate (and practise) a religion of experience, though it is not mere experience. It is experience rooted in the Word of God. Theologically we stand for Reformed, Protestant Anglicanism. Not one of these three words gives us embarrassment. We should support the thirty-two theologians rather than criticize them, and our natural home would be within the ecumenical elasticity of pre-Tractarian Anglicanism so ably advocated by Dr. Philip Hughes rather than in any form of so-called "churchianity". Convinced Anglicans as we are, our hearts warm to Dr. Graham rather than to Archbishop Laud.

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Now the present "situation" has not suddenly burst upon us, like Halifax after the violent explosion in World War 1, or an area in Florida after a hurricane, or the recent disastrous frost. It is, to my mind, the accumulated result of half a century of evangelical hesitation and retreat. To understand the position we must go a long way back into history, and here I am indebted to Professor D. C. Masters, a distinguished and evangelical layman from Lennoxville, Quebec.

Anglican Evangelicalism appeared in Canada in the mid-nineteenth century. The Diocese of Quebec had a strong core of evangelicals, prominent among whom was Professor Isaac Hellmuth, then of Lennoxville and later Bishop of Huron. Trinity Church, Quebec, was (and still is) an evangelical centre. Such a rallying-point was needed, for

there were several sharp controversies with Bishop G. J. Mountain, who did not relish the strongly evangelical paper edited by C. L. F. Haensel, a former C.M.S. missionary in Sierra Leone. The Bishop regarded himself as "tolerably stiff" though he was alarmed at the Romeward leanings of Tractarian extremists and recognized the outstanding contribution of evangelical thought and piety. Another paper was published in Saint John, New Brunswick, to resist "Rationalism and Ritual", "Popery and Puseyism".

The first three Bishops of the Diocese of Huron, Cronyn (1857-72), Hellmuth (1872-83), and Baldwin (1883-1904), were strong evangelicals and impressed their character on the diocese. Cronyn brought to Canada the famous "three musketeers", who all became bishops and did not lose their evangelicalism in the process: John Philip Du Moulin became Bishop of Niagara; James Carmichael, Bishop of Montreal; and Edward Sullivan, Bishop of Algoma in Northern Ontario. We need not speak of irony, but perhaps those who know these dioceses today may be permitted a rueful smile. Cronyn and Hellmuth established Huron College as a diocesan evangelical theological college and it is now part of the University of Western Ontario at London.

In the Diocese of Toronto the evangelicals were numerous and strong and in 1873 two forces merged, the Evangelical Association and the Church Association. Positively they aimed at maintaining "the principles and doctrines of our Church as established at the Reformation", and at preserving "the simplicity of her Protestant worship and the purity of her Scriptural teachings"; negatively, they opposed "tractarianism, ritualism, rationalism, or whatever movements threaten to undo the great work of the Reformation". The leadership was strong and influential.

It was in the ferment of such controversy that Wycliffe College was founded, the result (according to Professor Dyson Hague) of earnest attempts to secure the rights of the evangelical laity and to propagate the principles of the Reformation. Amid the strife of tongues Bishop Bethune protested against the Church Association as being independent of the recognition and control of the Church and impeached some of the clerical leaders, summoning them to trial by an episcopal commission, on the ground that they were disparaging the government and discipline of the Church. But the Bishop had overplayed his hand. Two thousand laymen signed a manifesto against the Bishop and the proceedings collapsed: as well they might in the face of the display of such numbers and quality. The list of names included knights, judges, colonels, and other influential people, some of them famous in the history of Canada.

The impetus which finally brought Wycliffe College into being was a mission in the cathedral conducted by the Rev. W. S. Rainsford, son of the well-known Marcus Rainsford. It must have been a minor Pentecost. The crowds were vast (from many denominations); the fervour of both preacher and congregation was intense; hundreds stayed to the "after meeting". "Moody himself did not plead more earnestly. . . ." The results were widespread and permanent. One church had more than 700 new communicants. Work could not be

found for all who wanted to become Sunday School teachers. And a group of converted young men found themselves to be "nine men in search of a theological college". In the teeth of ecclesiastical opposition, Wycliffe College was founded in 1877. It is a salutary reminder to us today that it started in the cathedral—it is avowedly Anglican ; and it started in an evangelistic mission—its principles are protestant and evangelical.

This spearhead of Canadian Evangelical Anglicanism follows the English evangelical tradition of the eighteenth century, with the added elements of anti-tractarianism and a somewhat Irish character. Graduates have gone to the ends of the earth to preach the Gospel ; they have ministered in slums and prisons, in the vastness of the prairies, and in the snows of the North. And in the days up to the last war they were reinforced by the C.M.S. and the Colonial and Continental Church Society.

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It is clear that by the end of the nineteenth century there was a strong leaven of evangelicalism in the Canadian Church, and it persisted for years. As late as 1917, the Bible League of Canada had the Bishop of Toronto as its Honorary President, and its Honorary Vice-Presidents were such men as Sir William Mortimer Clark, K.C., and the Hon. Mr. Justice J. J. MacLaren. But a change set in, somewhere about the time of the 1914-18 war, though it is hard to pin-point it. I judge that a new generation of clergy arose, not exactly one "which knew not Joseph" but rather one "which knew not Pharaoh". A church which is deeply divided on matters of faith is bound to have controversy, and in time (and perhaps seeing the extravagance of its elders) a clerical race rises in revolt. Tired of theological rows they seek friendship with men of the other camp—and find sympathy. The result is a weakening of evangelical thrust.

Again, following the fashion of the times, some men grew restive under the old colours and the phenomenon of liberal evangelicalism emerged. In one college (and Canada has had several professing evangelical colleges) a professor stated that "we are liberal-evangelical, not evangelical". It might be true. A blunt knife is still a knife, however, and in some cases I think that the name "evangelical" was retained with a blunted cutting edge. One friend whom I consulted told me, with some surprise, that "X College has been liberal for thirty years". Dr. Masters has stated publicly that "even at Wycliffe post-Christian liberal thought was strong" in the 1920s. He ought to know ; he lived there. Such a new orthodoxy of his generation, which identified the Christian life with the Christian ethic, left its mark on him until he came back to the rich fulness of the evangelical faith.

Whether "liberalism" is the whole story I do not know. But I am convinced that something has gone out of the vitality of evangelicalism. One college with an evangelical foundation extricated itself at some financial loss in order to be free. The experiment does not seem to have been a brilliant success. A distinguished graduate of another college has more than once said to me : "I should like a talk with you. We are doing things now which would have horrified us in my student days. How do you account for the change ? Is it justified ?"

A Bishop of Chelmsford (Dr. Henry Wilson) once horrified the church by saying (so it was alleged) that some bishops ought to be shot. What he actually said was that if the church were still under persecution—and some bishops shot—the resulting vitality would bring back the spirit of the early church, with lasting good. I suspect that the danger point was reached when, after all the opposition, Wycliffe College was “accepted”. In common with other colleges of evangelical foundation, we have our graduates in strategic positions in the church; co-operation is a virtue, a thrustful evangelicalism is frowned upon, and “Protestant” is a naughty word. In addition an emphasis on academic standards, good though it is, has its pitfalls. And our activist, practical nature shines through some of our academic disciplines. In Christian Education I once raised a strong objection to an elective course on “Curriculum Construction”. After making the lecture time-table for years I could not see the point of spending two hours a week for a whole term on constructing a curriculum! As Bishop Stephen Neill says, in some parts of the world people are placing more emphasis on Christian Education than on preaching the Gospel. The climax of this “change” was reached when a member of an evangelical stronghold stated openly: “I hate evangelicals”.

Whatever the cause, the Church has sustained a change within the last half-century. A process is going on which is called by some “the upping of parishes”, and it seems to be the result of deliberate policy. Imagine, if you will, St. Paul’s, Portman Square, with a change of vicar, who initiates eastward position because he comes from that sort of background. And further imagine (if you can!) the congregation taking it all in their stride and hardly noticing it. Imagine parishes and vicars whose spirit may be summed up by “Oak Hill” and “Cuddesdon” respectively made interchangeable. Witness the change at a traditionally evangelical centre when the vicar or chaplain resigns and authority whips in with a high churchman. Watch the wooden genuflections of dignitaries to whom it is a new practice—though I must admit that one high churchman of long standing reminds me of the lower part of Tower Bridge!

In evangelism and evangelistic missions the preacher has been criticized for ignoring the sacraments and for not giving “church teaching”—as if preaching the Gospel is a poor substitute. I have heard a distinguished and influential churchman who ought to know better tell fellow-clergy that he does not like *sola scriptura* and justification by faith. I have seen a programme of evangelism degenerate into a teaching mission to the church—as no doubt you have. Archbishop Garbett was once reported as inaugurating an *evangelistic* effort by calling all *churchmen* to the treasures of the *Church* of England. But we preach Christ crucified! Some devout and intelligent Christians in Canada believe that for the most part the church considers evangelism irrelevant. Certainly at times it arouses suspicion. One of our clergy was bursting to tell his colleagues of twenty conversions at a single service—and met with a blank wall.

Theological education is not yet the answer. An evangelical college can produce its oddities, like Father X who flaunted his churchmanship and was the worst preacher a “central” church had ever heard; or

the young man who threatened to block the way to his old college if "Gorham" views of baptism were taught. One distinguished clergyman not infrequently asks his academic friends: "What do you *do* with them? They are converted in the parish into warm and radiant Christians; they enter the ministry cold; even their home parish notices it".

There are, no doubt, reasons for all this. Not all the men who enter evangelical colleges come from evangelical parishes and they may be more sinned against than sinning. It is said that at a certain college on the other side of the world a new student is taken into the chapel, shown how to behave, and told that if he departs from the pattern he must leave college. We have hesitated to be so drastic and I doubt if it has increased our strength. Some men of unquestionably evangelical views hold that early evangelicalism in Canada was largely low churchmanship without an inner spiritual vigour. This is only partly true; but a *mere* low churchmanship has left an area of weakness. Evangelicals do not wear vestments but some use stoles, partly to conform and partly on the ground that they have no theological significance. It would be interesting to see an enterprising rector use this as an argument for putting his choir into stoles: "They have no theological significance!" On the "practical" side, we do not know patronage as in England. We have no Simeon's Trustees. What is a young clergyman to do when told to kiss the bishop's ring in ordination, even if it is "optional"? Men of worthy character may think twice about crossing swords with their bishop.

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To sum up the "situation": Canada has had no Reformation as England had and we have no Martyrs' Memorial. After a century we still have the vigour of a new nation, a measure of impatience with old interpretations (for example, stoles as sacerdotal), and a thrustful go-ahead practicality which would throw aside Protestant scruples and "get on with the job". The absence of patronage and the power of the episcopal bench combine to make some men cautious. We have no Griffith Thomas. Disappointment is sometimes felt at the absence of burning evangelical conviction in quarters where it might reasonably have been expected. Laymen on the whole do not have the theological sensitiveness of a few generations ago. Much evangelical work and witness is done behind the scenes and there is a good deal of diffused evangelicalism, brought about partly by geographical and spiritual isolation. Co-ordination is hindered by the fact that there is no indigenous evangelicalism: we are a mixture of English and Irish and Protestant Episcopal (U.S.) with a leaven of Inter-Varsity Fellowship.

But we are in good heart! There are deep spiritual resources which are being tapped. There is a growing number of private prayer groups. Some laymen, "without tarrying for any", have launched forth into Bible studies in their own homes: one gathers as many as sixty people around him for a solid piece of evangelical lay ministry. Another is continually engaged in evangelism. Rectors faithfully preach the Word in their parishes—and in their rectories—and joyfully report conversions. There have been evangelistic missions, sometimes begin-

ning with opposition and ending with thanksgiving, and conversions and quickening occur. An impact has been made by visits to this country made by Canon Bryan Green and Mr. Tom Rees. Mr. Rees spoke at a youth rally and I shall never forget seeing nearly two hundred young people surge forward in response to his appeal. Some vigorous young men in theological colleges have stood their ground, at times amid the opposition and ridicule of an alien environment. Within the last decade a thrustful evangelistic youth movement has developed, *Koinonia*, largely run by young people themselves, with the sympathy and guidance of a group of evangelical clergy in the background. They are frowned upon at times in high places ("I am tired of hearing about being born again"), but they aim at conversions and get them. And as long as the official Year Book includes the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament I do not see how the church can logically oppose them. If toleration is to be the rule, then it is more reasonable for a Protestant Church like the Anglican to tolerate evangelicals than anyone else. One of our clergy carries on a great ministry in a parish on the doorstep of a university and young people flock to his church. He preaches for conversion, and conversions occur. Through the Inter-Varsity Fellowship his influence ranges widely among university students.

The Church Army must not be forgotten. It has grown in numbers and stature. Although the tendency is for its officers to be used in scattered districts as "substitute clergy", they are keenly evangelistic and continue a faithful ministry, sometimes in circumstances of incredible hardship.

When the Evangelical Fellowship was formed in Canada we found to our joy that there were people, both ministerial and lay, who were knocking at the door and asking to come in. Men are hungry for fellowship. In spite of the long distances involved we have held regular meetings for prayer, study, and discussion. We have not yet recovered the status of being an organized group. We need first to explore the depths of the Gospel and in some cases to systematize our ideas—or rather the teachings of the New Testament. Discussion is animated and enjoyable. The lonely are encouraged and if we are slack we return to our tasks with renewed zeal.

I believe that throughout the length and breadth of this land there are hosts of people waiting for a lead; people in our churches who, perhaps unconsciously, are unsatisfied by projects and programmes and clubs and stewardship campaigns and long for the ringing call from God's authentic messengers. It is our hope and prayer that the evangelicalism which is diffused about the country in widely scattered—and sometimes discouraged—ministers of Christ may catch fire, to the eternal benefit of thousands.

For it is our conviction that a true evangelicalism has the answer. The colour of vestments, the beauty of music, the companionship of societies, the thrill of games—none can take the place of the Gospel of the living Christ, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. If we could flood the church with men of such mind and spirit we could look by God's grace for a religious awakening. Humanly speaking, it is a long haul. But with faithfulness to the truth of God and our commission to proclaim it, who knows how many converts might not be

made to enrich and vitalize the people of God? We are in our early days and there is much ground to be recovered. But with God's aid and grace miracles can be performed.

E.F.A.C. News Items

THE Rift Valley Evangelical Fellowship (Kenya) has been admitted to membership of E.F.A.C. Its office bearers are as follows: President: The Ven. A. Hurd (Archdeacon of Nakuru and B.C.M.S. Field Secretary); Chairman: The Rev. R. W. Hanlon (Leader of St. Francis Mission to Farms); Secretary: The Rev. G. A. R. Swannell (Minister of St. Christopher's, Nakuru). The Fellowship includes Africans and Europeans, clergy and laity. They plan to meet quarterly for fellowship, study, and prayer.

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The Rev. Frank Phillips has taken over from the Rev. A. J. Sexby as National Secretary of the Evangelical Fellowship of Anglican Churches of South Africa.

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The Evangelical Fellowship of Victoria conducted a Residential Conference in August and a Public Rally in November. The latter is said to have been the largest gathering of its kind held in Melbourne for many years. This Fellowship sponsors a monthly meeting of evangelical clergy.

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We should be glad to hear from evangelical delegates or observers who will be attending the Anglican Congress in Toronto in August.

CORRIGENDUM

The Rev. R. T. Beckwith has written as follows:

In my article on the Proposed Burial Service for Suicides in the last issue, I find that I gave an erroneous account of excommunication on pp. 233f., confusing it with exclusion from Holy Communion. Though not essential to the argument of the article, these statements ought to be corrected. To repel from the Lord's Table is not in itself excommunication, which, in English ecclesiastical law as in the New Testament, involves total exclusion from church services and from all Christian commerce, and in England used to involve civil disabilities and penalties as well. Those repelled from Holy Communion were then to be presented to the bishop (see rubric before the Communion service and Canons 26, 27, and 109 of 1603) and only if they refused to desist and do penance when required to do so by the bishop's court would they be excommunicated. There is a full account of some actual instances of excommunication in Thomas Wilson, *Works* (Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology), vol. I, pp. 367-369, 481, 488, 628. There were other grounds for excommunication also (see Canons 2-12, 59, 65, 71-73, 76, 139-141, and, for still further grounds, R. Phillimore, *Ecclesiastical Law*, 2nd edn., pp. 1094f.). Some of the old grounds of excommunication are obsolete, and excommunication itself, unlike exclusion from Holy Communion, is never inflicted today, though it could be.