

INTRODUCTION

This is what the Lord Almighty says:

*“Do not listen to what the prophets are prophesying to you;
they fill you with false hopes.
They speak visions from their own minds,
not from the mouth of the Lord.*

Jeremiah 23:16

In the first edition of this book, now over twenty years old, I asked those readers who disagreed with what I said to enter into dialogue, to put forward counter-arguments, or present a more accurate picture of what was taking place in our Church. To my knowledge this was never done and in the meantime the Church has continued to drift apart, two more Canadian solitudes. I have begun to think we even have two different languages in the Church as well!

I had many readers let me know that they strongly agreed with me and found the book very helpful. Although this was gratifying on one level, on another it was discouraging. For the fact that I heard about others who had the opposite reaction only confirmed my basic thesis that the Anglican Church of Canada is so deeply divided that the division could be characterized as that between two different religions. Two reactions: One book, (as my friend Reed Fleming might put it, yet again)!

In that book I also claimed that I was not a prophet or the son of a prophet. I was thinking at the time of the inspired ability of a prophet to predict the future and some have suggested that, once again, I was wrong. At least about me not being a prophet. I suppose my one big prediction was that the ACC would come to grief over the issue of homosexuality and that is unfortunately

proving to be the case. Focus is now firmly fixed on General Synod this coming July in Vancouver and its second vote on an amendment to the Marriage Canon permitting same-sex marriage.

However, a prophet's role is not limited to, or even mostly about, prediction. His or her main role is to obey the call of God and, speaking uncomfortable truth, confront a situation that, if not rectified, will lead to disaster for God's wayward people.

In this book I speak terrible and hard truths, as directly and as clearly as I can. I have tried to speak the truth in love and not in anger, fear, or bitterness but I realize that speaking as directly as I have can make it seem otherwise. I hope that none will take offence, but if you do, I also hope you will try to put that offence aside for the sake of our common future and consider carefully and prayerfully what I have to say. If you find my reasoning incomprehensible and wildly off base, please consider the possibility that your reaction is, at least in part, evidence of the depth of the problem we face. Part of my purpose in speaking in this way is indeed to shock us out of our dangerous complacencies. Consider it a crude attempt at an "intervention" along the lines of St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (2:4).

I did not want to write this book, just like I did not want to write the first edition. When certain members of my family "encouraged" me to do so, I resisted mightily because I felt there was really nothing I could say or do that would truly make any difference. It seemed to me that after General Synod 2016 passed the first vote on the amendment the die was cast and there was little or no hope that our Church would survive intact. But, as usual, I gave in.

As I began to write, a strange thing began to happen: I started to see a glimmer of hope, like Elijah's small cloud on the horizon. I began to see a possible (though not probable, and certainly not easy!) way to keep the Church together with the two religions more or less peacefully intact and I felt duty bound to try to express this hope as best I could.

HERE IS MY THESIS:

The Anglican Church of Canada was organized in the late nineteenth century with the overt intention of remaining in doctrinal continuity with the historical Christian faith and in communion with the Church of England from which it sprang. Over the last century many in the Church (especially in its leadership) adopted theological "liberalism" in whole or in part. At the end of the day, liberalism leads its adherents to profess a different religion than that of classical catholic Christianity. As a result, the Church became a rather uneasy mixture of the two religions. Until recently, the resulting division has remained a largely behind-the-scenes development but it has been becoming more and more obvious. General Synod 2019 will make a decision on a proposed change to the Marriage Canon that would allow for the marriage of persons of the same sex. Conservative Anglicans in their opposition to this doctrinal innovation, and liberal Anglicans in their support of it, have their fundamental theological convictions on the line in this debate. Whichever way the vote goes there will be more open conflict and division. People do not arrive at or change their basic theological convictions as a result of a majority vote at General Synods. Eventually this conflict and division will lead to a diminished Church that is radically different than it is today but shaped by forces already at work. These forces will either work their destructive way unhindered or, just possibly, motivate structural changes that will enable both religions to co-exist on their own terms in the same institution and perhaps even pave the way to some kind of long-term and fruitful relationship.

Am I a prophet who fills people with false visions and vain hopes as Jeremiah puts it in the quotation above?

That is not for me to decide. I simply cannot remain silent in the light of what I see now and what I see coming. I sincerely hope that I convince no one of anything but the truth. Let your heart and mind prayerfully consider whether or not this is what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

May God have mercy on us all.

George R. Eves

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P.S. If you have read the first edition of this book or are already convinced that two religions underlie the divisions in the ACC, then you have my permission to go directly to Chapter Seven for its discussion of General Synod 2019 and its likely outcomes. Chapters One to Six present an updated and revised explanation of how we got to this point. Chapter Seven begins with a summary of the previous chapters to refresh your memory and confirm your prejudices.