Beyond Colonial Anglicanism

– or –

Where are we going, and why are we in this handbasket?

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I. Legacy of Colonialism in the Communion  (Douglas/Kwok)

- “Old understandings of Anglican identity based on shared Anglo-American hegemony have broken down.”
  
  Hegemony = domination
  
  - 1900: 77% of Christians lived in Europe
  - 2000: 37% “ “
  - 2025: 71% will live in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Pacific
1800-1950 Anglican Communion

- Dominated by UK, US, Canada, Australia
- Mission linked to Western imperialism
  - Majority of Anglican churches were territories of Britain or the U.S.
  - Colonialism brought cultural as well as political imperialism
    - Western ideas of power, reason, church & cultural practices imposed on other nations/peoples
      - Hierarchy
      - White male domination
      - Dualistic thinking (good/bad; us/them)
      - Stereotyping of the Other
1950 on: Colonialism disappearing

- Postmodernism/post colonialism
- Transition from old (control) to new (unknown)
- “New world order:” clash of civilizations, not ideologies
  - Jihad: religious/tribal/fundamentalism vs.
  - McWorld: global/consumerist/capitalism
Churches in the Anglican Communion

- Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia • Australia • Bangladesh • Brazil • Burundi • Canada • Central Africa • Central America • Congo • England • Hong Kong • India, North • India, South • Indian Ocean • Ireland • Japan • Jerusalem and the Middle East • Kenya • Korea • Melanesia • Mexico • Myanmar • Nigeria • Pakistan • Papua New Guinea • Philippines • Rwanda • Scotland • South East Asia • Southern Africa • Southern Cone • Sudan • Tanzania • Uganda • USA • Wales • West Africa • West Indies — extra-provincial churches

- **Churches in full communion**: Mar Thoma Syrian Church • Old Catholic Church • Philippine Independent Church
Other cultures/peoples

…can (and must) often live with multiple ways of seeing the world

– Marginalized in many countries/cultures
  ● Indigenous peoples
  ● Women
  ● Other minorities
Central Tenets of Anglicanism

“Embrace and celebration of apostolic catholicity within vernacular moments”

- **Embrace**: God among us (incarnational) in all times and places
- **Celebration**: liturgical – praying together, translated into local culture, with inclusive language
- **Apostolic**: continuity with apostolic faith
- **Catholicity**: universal community through baptism
- **Vernacular**: Gospel translates into all times and places, for all people
Anglicanism is changing

“Outgrowing its Englishness, but has not yet established its own identity as a multiracial, multilingual, multicultural family” – Charles H. Long

- Living tradition, not memorial society of 18th/19th Century English churches
- New conservatism in the air:
  - Some want “confessionalism”
  - Some want central Anglican government
    - “new curialization” more like Rome
- Neither is considered true to Anglican roots
New understandings of Anglican identity are needed...

...if we are to remain in communion with each other across cultures and nationalities

- Reclaim historic contextualization for future
  - Time/place/culture
- Recognize that the Church of England was originally a new context of Roman church for a specific time and place
  - “Cultural hybrid” termed the via media
    - England in the 16th Century
- Be open to more inclusivity, not less
God is experienced in the “inbetweenness”:

- Local and universal
  - Particular and catholic
- Not only our culture, not just our way

“It takes the whole world to know the whole gospel.”

-Max Warren
II. Challenges of the Present

- Global Urbanization
- Violence
- Environmental Issues
- Justice & Sexuality
- Debt & Poverty
- Racism
Global issues

- Violence and the need for healing
- Racism
- Environmental issues
- Debt relief
- Justice and human sexuality
- Urbanization
5 Cultures of 2nd millennium:

1. Self-determination
2. Whiteness/Eurocentrism
3. Technology
4. Materialism
5. Dominance
5 Cultures of 2nd millennium:

1. Self-determination:
   - Freedom for some, not all
   - Primacy of individual over society/community (WIIFM)

2. Whiteness/Eurocentrism
   - Exclusion of others
   - Culture sustains its own power

3. Technology:
   - Benefits: productivity, reduced labor, higher standard of living
   - Costs: high unemployment, depleted resources, pollution
     ● Leaves unskilled further behind
4. **Materialism:**
   - Creates great wealth/great poverty
   - “Theology of the bottom line”
     - Profits before people

5. **Dominance:**
   - Those in charge/those ruled
   - Related to missionary activity of earlier centuries
**Environmental Crisis**

**Utilitarian values:**
- Treating Creation as warehouse of inexhaustible resources for human consumption
- Distorts meaning and corrupts purpose of order
- Extreme: Supports domination of
  - Nature
  - Women
  - People of color
  - Indigenous peoples
Ecological Sin

- God’s love manifest in the web of life
- Human destruction of the web causes estrangement from it
- Economic globalization = extension of colonialism in a new way
- Exchanging political for economic domination
Racism

- “How easy it is to create a God in our own image”
- Prevailing culture/s contribute to its perpetuation
Debt Relief

- 40 countries worldwide spending 20-50% of export earnings on debt payment
  - Much of it services interest, not principal
  - Debt continues to grow, placing increasing burden on future
- Low human development
  - High infant mortality
  - Low school enrollment
  - Lowest life expectancy

Continued Cycle of Poverty
Color Key:

- **Black**: Countries which currently qualify for full HIPC relief.
- **Olive**: Countries which currently qualify for partial HIPC relief.
- **Beige**: Countries which are eligible for HIPC relief but have not yet met the necessary conditions.
Global Economic Interconnectedness

- Transnationals bigger than many governments
  - Fed by greed, overconsumption by some, exploitation of others
- Technology driving competition up/prices down on commodities
  - Trade deficits up among poorest nations
- World Bank/IMF policies to poor nations make them choose between exports and food, education, medicine
Global Economic Interconnectedness Continued

- Greater wealth for very few
- Greater poverty and exclusion by many
- Increased uncertainty for those in the middle
  - People commodified/jobs often outsourced
- Economic development thrown into reverse by debt
  = hopelessness – nothing left to lose
  - Increased incidence of war, fundamentalism, violence
  - New forms of oppression
Culture of Violence

- Identity vs. difference: Exclusion
  - Elimination: Get rid of those unlike us
    - Germany/Jews
  - Assimilation: Make them more like us
  - Dominance: Move subjugated to margins
    - Colonialism, apartheid
  - Abandonment: Ignore plight of marginalized

- Exclusion is always a power differential
Power and Sexuality in Church and Society

- Eurocentric/male dominant culture where racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, ableism all thrive
  - Rejection/exclusion/ignoring those who don’t fit
  - Complex web of oppression within church and society
    - Difficult to recognize/harder to change
All are included in church by virtue of baptism
- Justice requires all to be included in society

Power/politics can be productive or destructive
- “Tradition” – whose?
- Need transformation, not just reform

Discuss issues of sexuality in context of racial and gender justice
Global Urbanization

- 1950: 25% lived in towns & cities
- 2000: 50%
- 2010: 75% will live in urban areas

- 1/3 of all urban dwellers in developing world live in slums with no services
- Highest birth rates/highest mortality
- Leads to new conflicts, marginalization, pollution, fear, violation of the poor
Globalization

- Carries culture of dominating values
  - Commodification of resources
    - All, including people, available for a price
  - Efficiency
    - Productivity rather than innate value
  - Knowledge
    - Information, not innate wisdom
      - Valued for what they can produce, not who they are
III. Visions of the Future Church

- Scripture and Authority
- Primacy of Baptism
- Leadership in a New World
- Postcolonial Revisioning
Scripture and Authority in Anglicanism and Beyond

- Formal position: Scripture one source among several
  - Guide to life, not lawbook
- In practice: more weight given to Scripture
- Questions:
  - What constitutes/which scriptures?
  - What ethos for our contexts?
    - Power or liberation?
  - Who determines/how do we determine authority?
  - Which interpretation takes precedence?
Scriptural Interpretation

Options:
- Needs no interpretation – speaks for itself
- Needs interpretation – 1 person/group can do it for all others
- Should be interpreted widely in context of community
  - Many voices
  - Many experiences
Anglican Theology

- Derived from multiple sources, not just one
  - “Three-Legged Stool”
    - Scripture
    - Tradition
    - Reason

- Constantly reinterpreted in light of context and Spirit
  - Incarnational: God is with us here and now
Primacy of Baptism

- Multiple identities in all Christian churches
- Tension between control and liberation in changing world

*Top down* -vs- *Bottom up*

- Authority for all Christians begins with Baptism
Authority

- Begins with God and the people God calls into Baptismal Covenant
  - Reaffirms/renews holy character of Creation
  - Shapes primary and continuing identity as Christians
    - Not to be taken for granted as 1-time initiation
    - Covenant to be lived into – lifelong
  - All Christians share identity through one Baptism
    - Christian, not Episcopalian/Lutheran/etc.
    - Overcomes all that alienates & divides us
Authority

- Recognizes and values relationships
  - Differences, otherness contribute to celebration of God’s Creation

- Provides liturgical grounding for mission
  - More than worship, but worship important community event

- Authority comes from God, not humans
  - Calls for power-sharing relationships everywhere in church and society
Leadership in a New World

- Church and government:
  - Two institutions responsible for creating and sustaining marginalization of peoples

- Postcolonialism:
  - Seeks to identify and transform unjust structures and relationships
Shared Leadership

- Models generosity, not power
- Engages with humility, not avoiding issues
- Envisions a just future
  - Remembers the best of the past
  - Understands current realities
Shared Leadership

- Builds trust between ordained and laity
  - Ordained are not:
    - Hired servants
    - In power over
    - In charge/indispensable
  - Laity not lesser, but equal

- Must move away from non-transforming ministerial structures
  - All share servant ministries of the community
Leadership Models

Monarch/Chief

- Bishop
- Priest
- Deacon
- Laity

Shared

Ministries

Whole church

After Chiwanga, *Beyond the Monarch/Chief*
What Does it Mean to be Anglican…

- …in areas that were not colonized by the English or Americans?
- …when they don’t speak English?
- …when they don’t use a form of the Book of Common Prayer?

WHERE IS THE SPIRIT LEADING?
Postcolonial Revisioning

- Decolonize imagination in Christian faith and worship
- Reconstruct world interchurch relationships
- Deconstruct monocentric power relationships
- Be aware of uncritical sharing of mindset of past
- Encourage/celebrate
  - Different logic, ways of seeing, imagining
Postcolonial Revisioning

**Reject**
- Either/or thinking
- Unity of sameness
- Primacy of eurocentric culture
- Unilateral power relationships

**Encourage**
- Both/and thinking
- Diversity/pluralism
- Local cultures and experiences
- Shared leadership
Where Do We Start?

- Reread the Gospel in a new light
  - It makes known God’s transforming power
- Understand that “mission” is God’s, not ours
  - Not geographical, but from within community
- Listen to the Spirit to understand what constrains and what liberates
- Do all we can to transform ourselves and our communities in this light
Bibliography