

Social Changes in the Anglican Communion, Part II
CCA Adult Education
Week 9

- I. Introduction and Recap
 - a. Human sexuality in the Anglican Communion: Consecration of Gene Robinson to the Episcopacy in 2004, which was neither legal nor canonical.
- II. Broader Context in Anglicanism
 - a. All of Christian history is plagued by a tension between culture and the purity of the church.
 - b. Anglicanism has always wrestled with its own relationship to culture: examples are the Clapham Sect (Wilberforce), the Oxford Movement, and their opponents. Again, Anglicanism's greatest problem is its close relationship with culture (this is a condemnation of both left and right, reflected in the fact that sometimes the ACNA and TEC seem mainly interested in fighting culture wars).
 - c. Anglicanism has always struggled with partisanship (three-streams is just putting a nice veneer on this fact).
 - d. Difficult conversations about sexuality had been taking place long before the late 1900's, because of the prevalence of polygamy among African converts to the faith who were polygamists. The 1988 Lambeth Conference stated that Polygamist Christians could be members of the church but could not hold leadership positions in the church.
 - e. Anglicans had been splintering for a long time in the United States, first with the Reformed Episcopal Church in the 1870's (now a part of the ACNA), and then with various "Continuing Anglican" Movements in response to liturgical revisions and Women's Ordination.
 - f. Brought into context, the divisions within Anglicanism regarding human sexuality were predictable, and not handled particularly well.
 - g. *A Plague on Both Their Houses* by Anglican priest, Christopher Craig Brittain. A sociological/theological analysis of the Diocese of Pittsburgh during the years it left TEC.
 - i. Brittain argues that what took place in response to changing values in the Anglican Communion is more properly understood as a divorce, rather than a schism.
 - ii. Brittain also identifies the heart of the issues in the Anglican Communion in the United States as an inability to marry together the notion of the church as a community of grace, and the notion of the church as a community of holiness (Ephraim Radner v. John Webster). Argues that, for the Anglican Communion to move forward, they must emphasize both.
- III. Conclusions
 - a. How are Anglicans united? What brings them together? This is an open question, one which we will explore next week.

Resources:

A Plague on Both Their Houses, <https://amzn.to/3nlggVQ>