



by JONATHAN AITKEN

He Maketh Wars to Cease

Anglican tensions relax under Justin Welby.

ANGLICAN LEADERSHIP? The phrase has had the ring of an oxymoron in recent years. From the fractious and predominantly liberal Episcopalians in America to the militantly conservative churches of Africa, the 80 million worshippers in the world's second-largest Christian denomination have long been rent asunder. They split on women bishops, same-sex marriages, ancient versus modern liturgies, songs versus hymns, pews versus chairs. Schisms divide happy-clappy charismatics and dyed-in-the-wool traditionalists, evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics, gay priests in overt relationships and seminaries in conflict. You name it, Anglicans have a row about it.

But one year after Justin Welby took over as Archbishop of Canterbury and worldwide head of his church, the landscape of Anglicanism is becoming noticeably more tranquil. Perfect peace may not yet reign, but reconciliation is definitely in the air. Some of the dottier disputes (e.g., women bishops and gay incumbents) are fading. The megaphone bishops from Lagos to Los Angeles are lowering their usually argumentative voices. In some key dioceses, most notably London, church attendance is actually rising. Whisper it cautiously around the cloisters, but Anglicanism has a new mood and a new broom. What is happening?

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A good place to glimpse some of the answers to this question was at a literary evening in Lambeth Palace earlier this year. The archbishop hosted a reception at his official fifteenth-century residence in honor of Dr. Graham Tomlin, the renowned author, scholar, and theologian who recently founded St. Mellitus College, a seminary for ordinands that began life in a cloud of unknowing that was as obscure as the medieval saint after whom it was named.

When St. Mellitus opened its doors, few observers of Anglican ordination training gave it a cat in hell's chance of surviving, let alone prospering. Britain already has twenty-five under-utilized seminaries—or theological colleges, as they are called on this side of the Atlantic. Despite being well-endowed and long-established within institutions as august as Oxford and Cambridge, these colleges are struggling to find students. The supply of their programs far exceeds the demand from suitable candidates for the priesthood. This shortage of seminarians, say the cynics, reflects the sickness of modern Anglicanism.

The cynics may be wrong. At present there are approximately 1,100 people training to become clergymen in the Church of England, thinly spread across the abovementioned twenty-five traditional seminaries. The new kid on the block is the booming college of St. Mellitus, which in the second year of Justin Welby's archiepiscopate is teaching 141 ordinands. Its numbers are rising almost as fast as the flood water of the nearby Thames. For in addition to these future ministers of the church, another 450 part-time lay students are taking

courses in theology, often as a way of exploring their vocations. Most of the teaching is done on the new \$12 million St. Mellitus campus at Collingham Road in West London, but part of the growth comes from a second campus in northwest England established by Justin Welby when he was Dean of Liverpool.

The symbiotic relationship between Archbishop Welby, St. Mellitus, and its parent church, Holy Trinity Brompton (HTB), tells us a great deal about the future of Anglicanism. HTB is far and away the most influential mega-church in Britain, and its famous "Introduction to Christianity" Alpha Course has now been completed by 24 million people across the world, many of whom are in the U.S.

The young oil company executive Justin Welby was brought into a committed relationship with the Lord by Alpha and HTB. Its leaders nurtured him through a dark period in his life after he lost a daughter in a Paris car accident. His faith deepened during this crisis and he later applied to become a candidate for ordination. The Church of England turned him down but



HTB fought against the selector's decision, which was later reversed. The rest is history, culminating in Welby making the fastest rise to the throne of Augustine since the time of the Tudors.

Now that he sits on the throne, Archbishop Welby has shown himself to be far too skillful, subtle, and scholarly an operator to allow himself to be captured by any one branch of Anglicanism. Yes, he keeps close links with his evangelical brothers at HTB, but he has a Catholic spiritual director and

Photo: Neil Hall/Reuters/Newscom

maintains friendships with the conservative bishops of West Africa, where he lived for some years. He is an energizer, a healer, and a reconciler in his churchmanship, yet his scholarship is uncompromisingly biblical. His mission is to reinvigorate Anglicanism and to follow the command of the great commission: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations" (Matthew 28:19).

Such a calling brings the story back to St. Mellitus. To those who look closely there are intriguing similarities between the mission statements of Collingham Road and Canterbury. This is how Dean Graham Tomlin explains why his college has become the fastest growing seminary in the Anglican world:

We are new, vigorous and outward looking...we combine serious academic study with practical ministry aimed at church growth and church planting...we have a spirit of reverent irreverence, meaning we take our worship and theology very seriously but we don't take ourselves too seriously...We are not theological radicals...we believe in generous orthodoxy which embraces most wings of the church but is firmly grounded in the creeds and in scripture...our roots are in parishes not in ivory towers...we want to get on with the job of rebuilding the church.

Every one of these phrases could be applied to Justin Welby. Perhaps this is why the doors of Lambeth Palace were thrown open in February to launch Graham Tomlin's *Looking Through the Cross* as the "Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book." Describing it as "vigorous in its thoughtful scholarship" and "a radical challenge to the church," Justin Welby made it clear that his tenure as archbishop would be shaped by his devotion to the Cross.

This comes as no great surprise to insiders. Both the archbishop and the author have had Gethsemane moments in their lives. Both believe that today's Christians should see their own lives through the lens of the Cross. As Tomlin puts it: "The best theology begins and ends in silence...as we stop our idle chattering and listen to the quiet, strong deep voice of God speaking to us through the pages of Scripture."

Does this suggest that the squabbling disputations of twenty-first-century Anglicanism will be gradually reshaped into silent depths of Cross-centered teaching and leadership? If so, the first moves of this biblically inspired reconciliation are now being made in the new St. Mellitus and the new Lambeth Palace. 🐦

ben stein's DIARY



by BENJAMIN J. STEIN

A Nightmare Presidency

Obama and Chuck Hagel gut the military.

Monday

THIS IS A BAD MORNING. I was greeted by a headline in the *New York Times* that said Defense Secretary "Chuck Mullet" Hagel was planning to submit a budget to the Congress to cut the size of the military to a level not seen since 1940, before the U.S. entered World War II.

The article went on to say that the Pentagon realized that this would be an inadequate force for even very small wars and certainly would not allow the U.S. to police the world and keep control of contingencies like a North Korean attack on the South or a Chinese attack on Japan or an Iranian assault on Saudi Arabia or a Russian invasion of the Ukraine.

The Defense Department officials further said that because U.S. forces would be stretched so thin, the U.S. could not win wars quickly and there would be more casualties in any future war.

So, in other words, the President (of course it's not Hagel...he's just a bobble head for Obama and his ultra-leftists) is deliberately disarming America to the point where he cannot guarantee his ability to defend the nation.

Now, my wife says this is just plain treason. I don't know if she's right because the Constitution has a fairly strict definition of treason. But it is surely the grossest kind of betrayal of country. This kind of action is the kind taken by a man who hates the country of which he is president. To knowingly lay bare the life of American fighting men to our enemies is something a lot like murder.

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In a way, it stuns me. In a way, it horrifies me.

But in another way, it does not surprise me at all. Mr. Obama has never liked America. He is a part of this ultra-left cabal, especially powerful among certain socio-economic segments in Chicago who also like Minister Farrakhan, that just loathes America for its racist past. Never mind that he had benefited fantastically in his life by having an African father. Never mind that he has gotten every possible kind of preferment on racial bases. He still is part of that little knot who do not love this country. And now he's in a position to do something about it.

It's exactly like what Phil DeMuth said about him after he was elected the first time in 2008. "All that counts now," said Phil, a highly credentialed psychologist, "is Obama's unconscious feelings about America." All you have to do is read *Dreams From My Father* to know that Mr. Obama is not a fan.

So, now we have explicit unilateral disarmament. Next will come nuclear disarmament and then a world basically ruled by Iran, Russia, and China. We'll be little mice hiding underneath the bed.

Frankly, there is plenty of blame to go around. The GOP theories about cutting taxes to raise more revenue were always claptrap. They have resulted in desperately unfortunate deficits. This is not the fault of the Democrats. Bill Clinton, whatever his flaws, left us with budget surpluses. If we still had them, we would not need to cut defense the way we are doing.

Mr. Bush 43, whom I know and love, got us into a war in Iraq which was not totally his fault in that he was wildly misled by his advisors. But it was a disaster in every possible way: costly in blood, costly in money, a huge help to al Qaeda, and left a massive distaste