

The Future of Our Unruly Family

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Preacher: Canon Dr. J.I. Packer

[0 : 00] Well, thank you, Olaf, for a most enjoyable introduction. Let's pray.

Gracious Father, we lift our hearts to you. We open those hearts of ours, begging for your instruction through the Holy Spirit.

And we thank you for all that you've taught us in Learners' Exchange over the years. We thank you again for the enormous difference that the ministry of Bill and Betty made to the fruitfulness of Learners' Exchange over a quarter of a century.

And we pray for your blessing on them now, particularly on Betty, whose health is really fragile at this time.

We pray that you'll continue with us and show your kindness in presencing yourself in our midst this very morning.

[1 : 18] Help us, we pray, to discern truth and wisdom. Animate us, we pray, to advance truth and wisdom within the Church.

And enable us in all things to look upward and to praise you and to look forward and to hope for what you have in store for us.

And give us, right now, your peace in our hearts and the openness of mind to think, reflect and pass judgment and form opinions, which, really, we can only do well when we are at peace with you and with ourselves.

So, Lord, be with us now, we pray, and guide us for Christ's sake. Amen. Now, you have seen this talk announced under the title, The Future of Our Unruly Family.

That is not the way that, at least I meant to put it into the hopper and thought it had gone into the hopper.

[2 : 50] I thought of the title, and have prepared these remarks of mine in relation to the title, A Future, not the future, A Future for Our Unruly Family?

Question mark. See, I'm not a futurologist, but I do try to measure things by Scripture.

And it's out of the attempt to measure certain things by Scripture that this line of thought has come. You might ask right at the outset, why do you use the phrase, our unruly family?

It isn't just because we have our phones going off in the middle of talks and things like that. I mean, it's involuntary, I know, but there is something a little unruly about it, I think you will agree.

But no, what I'm doing actually at this point is picking up on a series of talks that I gave in Two Learners Exchange years ago, which had the phrase, unruly family, unruly family in its title.

[4 : 16] I think I just called the talks, the unruly family, or our unruly family. And what I was talking about was Anglicanism, which until the 19th century meant the Church of England, plus whatever they were beginning to do in the Episcopal Church in the States.

And what I was reviewing was the way in which the reality of zeal, zeal of one sort or another amongst Anglicans, had produced splits and divisions.

starting in 1662, when division really was forced on the evangelical ministers of the Church of England.

This was the time of the Restoration. The Restoration of Charles II followed the period during which, by law, the Church of England had been outlawed.

You could worship God any way you thought good, except by use of the prayer book. That's the legislated situation from 1645 to 1660.

[5 : 46] Well, that was the outcome of intense debate within the Church of England prior to 1645.

And when Charles II was recalled and became king, well, not surprisingly, there was a backlash.

And Parliament dreamed up an act of uniformity, controlling the clergy who would henceforth serve in the parishes of the Church of England.

The form of the control was that they must accept, without question or demur, the slightly revised version of Cranmer's prayer book, which we know as the 1662 English prayer book.

And if they hadn't been episcopally ordained, they must be episcopally ordained. Well, of course, after 1645, nobody could be episcopally ordained, because there were no bishops in action.

[6 : 59] So, what this particular provision aimed at and hit was a whole posse of younger clergy in the Church of England, who during the previous 17 years had been ordained by presbyters, because there were no bishops around, as I said.

Well, this hit at the consciences of 2,000 of these young men. They said, they thought that the Bible said to them, if you've been ordained once, that's it.

You don't get reordained any more than you get re-baptized. And so, cutting the long story short, they felt they had to withdraw from the ministry of the future Church of England, and they did.

And that's how the English Presbyterian and Congregational Churches were formed. 1662, which has gone down in the history books as the year of the Great Ejection.

It can be called, it can fairly be called an ejection, because the Parliamentary Act was intended to produce this result, to bounce Puritan clergy out of the Church of England, so that they wouldn't be heard of again.

[8 : 31] Then, in 1795, after 60 years of the Methodist awakening in England, following John Wesley's death in 1791 at the age of 88, the Methodist societies, numbering well over 100,000 in terms of membership, they established themselves as a denomination, which Wesley, during his lifetime, had refused to let them do.

But now he was gone, and they established themselves as a denomination by arranging to hold services of their own, in their own chapels, at the time when the Church of England services were taking place every Sunday.

You can see that gesture says it all. And the Methodist Church continued a separate reality. From that day to this, it still exists south of the border.

Here, of course, in Canada, it's been swallowed up in the United Church, and that, alas, is the end of that. Then, in the 1830s, a group of folk who later came to be called Plymouth Brethren because of the very large assembly that they had in Plymouth, England, Plymouth Brethren seceded from the Church of England, which at that time included the Church in Ireland, as if we say it that way.

Have you heard of a man named John Nelson Darby? He was an Anglican clergyman, and he withdrew, and many others withdrew with him. Just let me check.

[10 : 34] How many people in this group do know about the Plymouth Brethren? How many of you actually were nurtured among the Plymouth Brethren?

Yes, the Plymouth Brethren have always hit above their weight in the English evangelical scene and have had more influence than their numbers would lead you to expect.

They're still going quite strong, I may say, all over the place. They call themselves the Christian Brethren now, and there's a number of Christian Brethren congregations in this city, Granville Chapel being perhaps the most distinguished of them.

Well, anyway, they withdrew from the Church of England in the 1830s. And so, once again, you have a split.

And then here in North America, not, I think, in Canada, but certainly south of the border, there was another split in the 1870s when a group of Anglican clergy, led by a bishop, withdrew from the Episcopal Church of the States.

[12 : 00] They called themselves the Reformed Episcopal Church. The reason for the withdrawal then, like the reason for the Brethren withdrawal in the 1830s, was simply that in the view of those withdrawing, the Anglican Church wasn't being sufficiently faithful to the Scriptures.

All right, so there you have a history which I thought warrants the use of the phrase the unruly family. The family has divided.

And the story goes on, because in the second half of the 20th century, two big issues for debate and eventually action blew up in world Anglicanism, but particularly in the Church of England and the Episcopal Church in the States.

They were both of them, in different ways, gender equality issues. There was the question of whether, in ministry, women might be treated as on a par with men.

And then, a bit later, came the question whether, in church life and ministry, both, persons in homosexual relationships could and should be treated as on a par with persons heterosexually married, according to the, shall I say, the old pattern which had existed for many thousands of years all over the world, as a matter of fact.

[13 : 50] Well, these are not unfamiliar issues for debate. not to any of you, I'm sure. So, where does that, where did that leave us?

Well, in the first decade of the 21st century, as you know very well now, further splits took place in the Anglican, the Anglican bodies, this side of the Atlantic.

we know that, down in the States, they formed AMIA, the Anglican Mission in America, and then ACNA, the Anglican Communion in North America.

And both these bodies are associations of congregations and clergy who were withdrawn from the Episcopal Church. and in fact, the Canadian counterpart to that came first.

It happened, as a matter of fact, in this diocese. And for better or for worse, yours truly was part of it. ANIC is the result, the Anglican Network in Canada, and as you know, St. John's belongs to ANIC and has withdrawn from the Anglican Church in Canada.

[15 : 16] And during the past few years, all over the Anglican Communion, which now is a worldwide body, there has been at least the beginning of a wider split.

Does the word GAPCON mean anything to you? GAPCON is the not anagram, what do I want to say?

Acronym. Thank you so much. I'll tell you, Olof, when you get to my age, every now and then you get a word wrong. And it means that if people follow you around, they have quite a bit of fun.

Yes, an acronym, thank you so much. GAPCON is an acronym for the Anglican Communion-wide gathering of folk who are on the same wavelength as Ekna and Anik and Amir.

Now, I shan't mention Amir anymore. Amir has virtually come to pieces. That's what bodies that withdraw do, tend to do. They will withdraw under the leadership of someone who, in one way or another, is unable to sustain the momentum and, one way or another, therefore, they come to grief.

[16 : 55] That very easily happens, and I'm afraid it's happened to Amir. But Ekna and Anik are solid. Indeed, they're part of the same reality now.

Ekna affirms itself to be a North America-wide province of the Anglican Communion with its own Archbishop, Archbishop Robert Duncan, and Anik is a subsection of that.

So, that's where we are. Well, the thing is, there's been a split. The point that I'm making is that the Anglican Fellowship is an association which has shown itself over the centuries vulnerable to splits.

in a way that actually you can match among the Baptists, but not among the Presbyterians, and it isn't something which in itself can be celebrated as a sign of health at all.

It's a sign that something is out of order somewhere. And that's the situation actually that we inherit. All right. now, how does the unruly family look worldwide against the background of all this upheaving over the centuries?

[18 : 22] In the Old West, as I call it, that is Britain and North America and Australasia and South Africa, in the Old West, liberalism theologically has infected the clergy and, in particular, the clerical leadership, which means that there's a great deal of tension, at least in those parts of the Old West where evangelicals have an identity.

And the future there just isn't clear. the tensions and the debates are on and one waits to see what's going to happen.

If you put together, however, the number of folk worshipping in church on Sunday in the Anglican churches of the Old West, the figure you get is an, shall I say, unimpressive five million.

For all through the Old West, the culture of the country has moved beyond its Christendom phase into a post-Christian era in which all the churches, not just the Anglican churches, though the Anglican church, very obviously, amongst the other churches.

The churches are marginalized. Christianity is thought of as a thing of the past and a hobby for people with an old-fashioned turn of mind who like to hold on to things that have been powerful and impressive in the past.

[20 : 40] Okay, so that's the actual grassroots story. Five million Anglican Christians worshipping in the Old West.

Mind, there are 30 million of them, but 25 million of them don't go to church. They're the people who put Anglican down on census forms and similar documents as indicating their religious identity, but all that that word Anglican is doing is declaring the church that they don't go to.

By contrast, in Africa and Asia, every Lord's Day, there's something between 35 and 50 million people in Anglican churches.

20 million of them are in Nigeria, and there are a number of other parts of the African and Asian world in which there are literally millions of Anglicans, seven-figure number, worshipping and witnessing.

It's a most extraordinary story. It's a story which is still only a little over half a century old. There has been a massive expansion of evangelical Christianity, quite specifically evangelical Christianity in Africa and Asia, and so these are the figures, and you can't wonder, can you, that in our unruly family, the leaders of the African and Asian branches of Anglicanism are a little restive when it's assumed that they will continue to see themselves in colonial terms as needing to be led from England.

[22 : 47] Well, may you say, ah, yes. Well, so there's tension there, and again, the future isn't clear.

I can tell you that the African and Asian Anglican churches have produced some very impressive archiepiscopal leaders in the last two or three decades, and so there's movement there, there's initiative there, and there's vision there, and one, I can tell you that one of the things that happened quite recently was that the Africans specifically, they got together, and through their archbishops, they sent a letter to England expressing their mind about the appointment of the next Archbishop of Canterbury.

They see no reason why the next Archbishop of Canterbury shouldn't actually be from Africa or Asia, but that would be a startling innovation in terms of the Anglican heritage.

All right, well, again, we don't know how that matter is going to come out, or how any of the things I mentioned are going to come out.

We don't know what shape the Anglican communion is going to have, say, 20 years from now. But what we do know is that there is unrest and there's tension, and so there may be more divisions in the unruly family before we're through.

[24 : 33] Perhaps I should spend a moment reminding you what it is that we're talking about when we generalize about Anglicanism. I suppose that because we are the evangelicals that we are, when the word Anglicanism is spoken, you all think immediately of Anglican doctrine, and chances are you won't think any further than that.

And the Anglican doctrine that you will think of is the doctrine of the 39 articles, that is Protestant anti-Roman doctrine, doctrine whose emphases and thrust were established in England in the 16th century, doctrine that hasn't changed for substance from the 16th century to the present day.

Well, I don't think the story ends there, and I have to tell you, friends, if that's all that you have in mind, when you talk and think about Anglicanism, it's an inadequate view of the Anglican reality, and does need supplementing in a number of ways.

Now, what am I talking about when I speak of Anglicanism? Well, I'm talking about a system which is provincial, and within its provinces, diocesanism, in its management.

What does that mean? It means that each province has an archbishop of its own, and under each archbishop, there are a number of dioceses, each of them with a bishop of its own, and that's a system, in fact, which has been operating in the Western Church, beyond the Western Church, but let's just keep to the West for the moment, a system that's been operating in the Western Church ever since the fourth century AD, when Constantine said, well, Christianity is now the most favoured religion in the Empire, I want Christianity to fulfil its role of spiritual leadership in the Empire, so we will have Christian churches managed the same way that our provinces, our secular provinces, are managed, secular provinces had people called pretors in charge of them, they correspond to archbishops, and they were subdivided into administrative areas, and we will subdivide at

[27 : 20] Constantine, in terms of the area divisions, most of which are already 200 years old, this pattern goes back to the second century, the word diocese means, administrative unit, each diocese shall have its own bishop, each diocese in fact did have its own bishop by the fourth century AD, and the local churches in that geographical area will each of them then have their own clergy under the bishop, who is under the archbishop, who in Constantine's setup is under the civil governor.

Well, that changed over the centuries, and the papacy was the result, the papacy expresses, or expressed in origin, a sense, right so far, that the Church of God ought not to be managed by the Roman Emperor, but ought to be standing on its own feet, looking to God to guide it in a direct way.

And so, whoever is at the head of the Christian Church should be thought of as God's man to stand on a par with the Roman Emperor.

Then the Roman Empire collapsed, leaving only the papacy. all through the Middle Ages, the papacy was there, and the papacy was the only form of rule that applied to the whole of Western Europe.

Otherwise, it was little kingdoms with their dukes, or some of them called their top people kings, and that was that. Well, in the 16th century, the Church of England broke with the papacy, and while it kept an administrative pattern that looked pretty much like England had looked before, it was made clear that the Archbishop of Canterbury, the top ecclesiastic, has no controlling jurisdiction in the way that the Pope has all through the Roman Catholic Church.

[30 : 04] That, by the way, is saying a mouthful, because while there are something like 80 million Anglicans around the world, discount 25 million of them, who are the Anglicans who never go to church, the Roman Catholic Church numbers about a quarter, sorry, numbers about a billion and a quarter.

It's a far, far larger reality than the Anglicans. But the Pope has absolute jurisdiction at every level, both in discipline and in doctrine, and the Archbishop of Canterbury doesn't.

Which means that when there's tension in the Church of England specifically, the Archbishop of Canterbury can't actually do anything.

It's rather important to realize. The Archbishop of Canterbury has no jurisdiction over the dioceses and the bishops of the dioceses that make up the Church of England.

his leadership is entirely moral leadership, as distinct from juridical leadership. So, have I time to tell you?

[31 : 25] Yes, I think I just do. My own ordination was in Birmingham diocese in England, a long time ago, 1952, as a matter of fact.

And a year or two before my ordination, the Bishop of Birmingham had published a book called *The Rise of Christianity*, which was pure left-wing liberalism and undercut Trinity, Incarnation, Atonement, Resurrection of Jesus, just about everything, actually, that evangelicals regard as the essence of Christianity, Christianity, and that indeed is almost everything that's expressed in the Christian creed.

But the Archbishop of Canterbury, for the time being, a man named Geoffrey Fisher, couldn't do anything about it. In the House of Bishops, he said, and this was the best he could do, that if he held views like those that the Bishop of Birmingham had published, he would feel obliged to resign.

to which the Bishop of Birmingham responded by deciding that he would stay, he would remain Bishop of Birmingham until his dying day.

He would never resign. Nothing could be done about that. So, when the time came for my ordination, yes, he did interview me, but he was a very doddery old man at that time, and we didn't exchange very much in our conversation.

[33 : 15] I remember him telling me, what was the order here? Yes, the order was that I'd already written some theology for the examining chaplain, which the Bishop of Birmingham had, examining people who applied for ordination.

And I can remember him saying to me, later he put in a letter, that his examining chaplain described me as well read, but expressed a distaste for my theology, theology, which he described as intellectual bulldozing.

Well, the Bishop clearly wanted me to know that that was what his examining chaplain thought of my theology, but he didn't actually bar my ordination.

When ordination time came, he was actually on his deathbed, quite literally, in his last illness, and I was ordained by a deputy bishop brought in for the occasion.

Well, all right, that story is told you so that you will know what the Archbishop of Canterbury can't do. And then again, in 1963, a bishop published a book which seemed to deny the basics of the creed.

[34 : 54] Does the name of John Robinson mean anything to you? Honest to God was the title of the book. Have you ever heard of that book? Well, without going into the details, once again, the cry went up from the ranks.

This man should be demoted, tried for heresy, something disciplinary of that kind, and the Archbishop of Canterbury had to just remind us that he couldn't do anything about it.

He has no judiciary power, you see, except in his own diocese. Okay, so what happened? Well, John Robinson saw the writing on the wall as far as his career as a bishop was concerned, and he went back into academic work, and as far as I know, he was perfectly happy until he died of cancer.

All right, what I'm telling you is that the Anglican pattern of togetherness is essentially, and in purpose, a pattern of fellowship, a pattern of mutual trust and support, a pattern of seeking and finding togetherness, as distinct from a pattern of judicial or judicatory control, such as Anglicans see themselves confronted with in the papacy.

Okay, you've got that point, perhaps. Anglicanism is a way of being church, it is biblical, it is liturgical, theologically it is reformed, in terms of ethos it is pastoral, in terms of ecclesiastical identity it seeks to be Catholic, that is to say mainstream Christian, as mainstream Christianity has crystallized itself out over 2000 years.

[37 : 29] As a human reality, it seeks to be rational, giving a reason for everything that it does, encouraging rational debate about questions of theological, bringing theological uncertainty, community, encouraging education in all forms, founding schools, supporting universities, so on and so on, and with that, in its rational style, it seeks to be a national church in the sense, not necessarily that everybody belongs, although that was part of the original ideal, but in the sense that it treats as its own business, any matter of national concern, and looks to clergy to weigh in, and speak wisely from scripture about any debates, uncertainties, challenges, whatever, that involve the nation.

Now the nation originally of course is the English nation, all of this was crystallized out before there was a worldwide Anglican communion, now that there is a worldwide Anglican communion, however, this ethos, this style, this set of qualities, defining the Anglican style of church, as opposed to anybody else's style of church, this has spread worldwide.

So, let us be clear, friends, we in Anik, who are part of Echna, we can't regard ourselves as persons or group of enormous importance, in Anglicanism, just because at one crucial point of decision we had to say no to the diocese and withdraw from the diocese and link up with other people who also had withdrawn from the form of Anglicanism in which they were reared.

And we are very much on the touchlines, having to watch what the rest of the Anglican communion does. And that means that the future for our unruly family is quite open.

And that's why my title was A Future for Our Unruly Family? Question Mark? Can we see any clear future for where Anglicanism is going to go, how Anglicanism is going to restore order internally and re-establish its quality as a home of truth and spiritual life?

[40 : 47] Well, leaving that question open, as we have to do, I want to say now that any agenda for the Anglican future anywhere, in our congregation to start with, in Anik and Acna and the Anglican communion worldwide, there need to be, there needs to be four thrusts, four emphases, four concerns on which all minds are focused, on which desires and purposes are trained and in terms of which they're defined, four emphases which are intended to determine the way we go.

Now, when I say that, I just mean determine the way we go. None of them determines in a final way where we arrive, but they, all of them, mark out a route which we as faithful servants of Christ, faithful units in his worldwide church, need to be following.

And here they are. The agenda for Anglicans needs to be first conservationist.

if you're expecting me to say conservative, well, I disappoint you. I don't use the word conservative these days, if I can help it.

I talk about conservationist Anglicanism and conservationist evangelicalism. You ask me why?

[43 : 01] Well, because what I want to do is to focus the values which have made us evangelical Anglicans what we are, in a way that separates them from mere inertia, the quality, that is, which tends to win for people the name or the description of being conservative, not simply in the church but in all walks of life.

Speak of someone as conservative and, well, what comes to mind straight away is an inert mindset.

and that's not what I'm talking about. Conservationism, as far as I'm concerned, in politics and in Christian thought, means, first, that you focus your heritage.

You ask and answer the question, what is it that I'm inheriting from the past that's being presented by those who think of themselves as conservatives and trustees for the heritage?

What am I being presented with and expected to assent to? And so, you work your, mentally, you work your mind through the various elements in the heritage and you assess them as you go.

[44 : 43] You assess them by scripture. Some of them, you decide are simply bits of the past that we will be better without in the future, so let's drop them.

What sort of things am I thinking of? Well, just about everything that is reactionary against Rome. Evangelicalism has been burdened over the decades by anti-Romanism as if everything that Rome is for we need to be against.

That is a mindset which I think should be dropped, explicitly dropped. That isn't part of the heritage to be conserved.

What then is the heritage that's to be conserved? well, biblical orthodoxy to start with, Christian holiness issuing from conscientious repentance as a way of life, that is a second factor.

Both of those emphases go right the way back actually to the foundation documents which the reformers drew up in the 16th century.

[46 : 13] Orthodoxy and repentance. Yes. More recently, the principle of every member ministry in the body of Christ has broken surface.

The most recent prominence given to it is the prominence that it had in the palmy days of the charismatic movement without wishing to commend everything that was part of the charismatic movement in those heady days.

I want to say the principle of every member ministry in the body of Christ is biblical. it ought to have broken surface long before it did.

Now that it has broken surface we must hold on to it. That means that in our discipling of each other and of new arrivals in the church we must highlight the fact that we're all of us saved to serve.

all of us are called to minister. We have different gifts that is different abilities and capacities for service. It's part of our Christian discipleship to find out what these are using such help from Christian friends and pastors as is available to us and once we find out what we can do then it's for us to seek ways and means of actually doing it.

[47 : 49] Every member ministry in the body of Christ is the phrase the catchphrase that I use for this and I say this is part of the conservationist heritage and this is one of the aspects of the conservationism we must maintain.

and something which I myself want to stress which I can't point to any constituency that has stressed it as emphatically as I want to stress it so just think of this as a Packer point and evaluate it as such.

Christ centeredness is integral to the conservation ethos as I understand it. Christ centeredness means that the risen saviour on his throne ruling the world now by the father's appointment he must be the focus of our faith of our faithfulness trust of our fellowship with God everything comes to us everything from God from God the father comes to us through Christ by the agency of the Holy Spirit whom Christ sends to as it were deliver the gift Christ himself must be the focus

I say this because the danger is that in times when the identity and character of the church is under debate discussion of the church may very easily push out the sense that Christ after all is the center for us all and this is something that I want to go strong on because I think we need this emphasis and I shall labor therefore to go strong on it as long as I'm around to do that now a second quality of the agenda that Anglicanism should Anglicans should embrace as our agenda needs to be conservationist so our agenda needs to be Catholic what does that mean well Catholic historically as I'm sure you know is a word opposed to the thought of sectarianism and sectarianism as I'm sure you know is an established

Christian label for any understanding of Christianity that is too narrow and excludes realities whether in terms of fellowship with other Christians or beliefs shared by other Christians or practices sustained by other Christians but sectarianism is the word that points to the fact that something valuable which other Christians sustained is being left out in our Christianity in other words we are impoverished so God save us from sectarianism and our agenda must be Catholicity which is the word that stands at the opposite extreme from the word sectarian and points to first of all the fullness of the historic faith it's there in the creed it's there in the articles and of course it's there supremely in the Bible and all of it must be maintained no part must be left out and

[51 : 50] Catholicity also is a word with a geographical making a geographical point Catholicity is the quality of the worldwide Christian church not just Anglican church but Christian church all right then what does that mean it means that you practice transcultural thinking in order to ensure that your own particular culture doesn't operate like blinders on a horse limiting your vision and keeping you from seeing things which Christians with a different cultural background see clearly no you must be aware we all of us must be aware that we're constantly in danger of being imprisoned by our culture and so having our vision of reality Christian reality narrowed in a way that it shouldn't be narrowed so we have to develop a conscience about that and then that word

Catholic and the noun Catholicity they point in these days this has been the story for the last half century they are the words are used to point also to the sense of worldwide mission in terms of worldwide spreading of the gospel and by the grace of God founding and fostering the church in which all of us need to be engaged one way or another one must have a world vision yeah that's part of Catholicity clocks beating me it always does so I'll be quick on the last two points third the Anglican agenda which needs to be conservationist and Catholic also needs to be catechetical that is to say committed to all age instruction of Christian people instruction in both in the truths by which we are to live and in the life the living of the life whereby we live out those truths the catechetical life is a life of lifelong learning life long discerning a life of alertness to any defect in the church's thinking or any defect in the church's behaving catechesis which is the Greek noun for the catechetical process has almost vanished from our church this last hundred years some clergy still maintain the catechizing of children in preparation for confirmation but after that I don't know any

Anglican clergy parishes in which serious adult catechesis is carried on maybe you do my only point though is that our agenda for the future needs to be catechetical and if this is something that has to be rediscovered from scratch well so be it let us labor to rediscover it you may know that I am beating the drum about this I have said in public that in my latter years and as you can see I'm in my latter years I am going to give priority to beating this particular drum and seeking to get all age catechesis back on the Christian map and I said that because I mean it and so I make this point rather strongly the Anglican agenda for the future needs to be catechetical in this broad sense and fourthly and finally it needs to be critical in the sense that we recognize the enemy of complacency you know here's to us and who's like us that attitude of mind complacency of that sort tends to creep into every congregation every diocese every human grouping where its members believe that by the grace of

God they're doing it right and part of our burden as St. John's Vancouver is to believe that we are doing it right because as a matter of fact by the grace of God we are thank God for it but now the danger of complacency threatens and we have to be on the watch against it so that's why I use the word critical any kind of agenda for the future as we seek to pursue it must be critical in the sense of fearful of complacency watchful then for shortcomings in ourselves strong on accountability required of our servant leaders I have to say that I don't think that this is sufficient of a reality in the lives of the congregation's clergy and I certainly don't believe that this is sufficiently developed in the life and ministry of our diocesan bishops who in practical terms are notoriously unaccountable they do what they want to do and who can say them nay shouldn't be like that and this is part of the critical mindset reassessing traditional beliefs habits whatever that

I maintain must be part of the Anglican agenda for the future if any of this is taken seriously what will the result be well we shall find ourselves part of the people church which knows itself to be a pilgrim people here we have no abiding city but we are heading for home it will be a penitent people we shall live in penitence seeking holiness it will certainly be a hopeful people because after all the Lord will be on our side and spiritually a healthy people because the things that bring bad spiritual health will be noted and opposed and hopefully eliminated so we shall find ourselves increasingly like the churches were meant to be in the seven ancient cities where they were established and addressed by our

[60 : 03] Lord in the second and third chapters of the book of Revelation and that would be matter for another talk which I can't start to give because I have my sixty one minutes now and you see I've got to stop final sentence my view of the true spiritually appropriate future for Anglicans the unruly family is idealist that is it's a future shaped by the way we think things ought to be but are going to try and labour to make them so there's my answer for this morning anyway to the question of a future for our unruly family if we have an idealist future a visionary future future future that makes us work towards an as yet unrealized goal in the way that

I've tried to outline then I believe God will be with us and we shall go by his grace from strength to strength love if not well I don't need to finish the sentence do I you can finish it for yourself I simply say now 64 minutes yes thank you so much for listening and may God give us all wisdom and vision as we live into his future amen