

potism of a barbaric civilization, and from his comments we at last understand that the common thread running between the imperious czars of 19th-century Russia and Lenin, Stalin, and Brezhnev of the 20th century and now Vladimir Putin is the servile Russian character, which is so totally submissive to authority that there is a frightening absence of what we like to think of as soul.

The peasants of Russia at the time were serfs. They weren't emancipated until 1861 under Czar Alexander II, "the Liberator." They were of the land as though engendered by and born of its soil. They possessed no value, distinction, character, no identification other than as workers of that soil. When Russian princelings bought and sold land, they bought and sold what Nikolai Gogol entitled his novel—*Dead Souls*.

Upon hearing that they were going to be sold, peasants commonly, according to de Custine, sent a delegation to a landlord who was reputed to be benign. He might live at a distance from their part of the country; it didn't matter. The delegation would beseech this boyar to buy their land, that is, them. He likely protested that he did not dispose of the funds. The delegation of peasants came prepared for such a response. They offered this potential master the funds, from their own pockets, required for the purchase of the land, for the purchase of themselves.

Let's run that through once more: we have the peasants selling themselves into continued serfdom with their own money. One wonders why they didn't simply buy themselves free. Were they too servile in character and horizons to think of that? Had their imaginations been rendered unable to rise beyond hoe and spade? Not exactly. The authoritarian structure of Russian society did not permit impudence from peasants.

I am struck by how similar is the case between those dehumanized peasants

of 19th-century Russia and 21st-century American citizens. When we express our discontent in Tea Parties or at town halls, we are committing a social *faux pas* because we are being rebellious against the authority of our masters in the White House and Congress. We live under the sufferance and by the edict of Washington. We offer the government our hard-earned money to purchase our souls. (We say votes.) And when there is insufficient cash in the Treasury for whatever purpose, we offer our bondage as surety, paying interest on the debt or making good out of higher taxes, that is, out of our labor. We pay for our progressive subordination to the will of our rulers; we pay for our continuing enslavement, as did Russian serfs.

A definitive revolution is taking place as I write, here, in my stone cottage in Spain, gazing into the blue Cantabrian hills, ruminating, regretting, while you on the other side of the ocean sleep. Irreversible measures are being charted, draconian statutes are being passed, perpetual bureaucracies are being established, all dikes of restraint are being burst through and a flood of debt is being loosed that, like the waters of the Gulf that drowned the Big Easy, threatens to snuff out the lights of our city on its hill. ■

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Come All Ye Faithful

Benedict's Counter-Reformation

By William S. Lind

WHEN MY MOTHER was a young woman, in the 1930s, Cousin Lily, then in her 80s, gave her some sound advice: "Wherever you go, join the Episcopal Church and you will meet all the best people in town." "Best" in this instance referred not to the Book of Life but the Social Register. The staid, proper, elevated Episcopal Church, the Republican Party at prayer, was respectability's keep.

Starting sometime in the 1960s, God's frozen people melted, generating the mother of all theological mud puddles. From the abandonment of Thomas Cranmer's Book of Common Prayer to the introduction of priestesses in the 1970s and the ongoing election of homosexual bishops, the Episcopal Church forsook traditional Christian doctrine in favor of its own invented religion. Not

surprisingly, this apostasy fractured both the Episcopal Church and the larger Anglican Communion. The upshot has been a variety of continuing churches that maintain historic ties to Anglicanism, multiple movements within the Episcopal Church to restore orthodoxy, and the breaking away of many Anglican churches in the Third World, where most Anglicans now live.

On Oct. 20, Rome parachuted into this dogfight like a division of *Fallschirmjäger*. In a move that stunned the Archbishop of Canterbury, Anglicanism's titular leader, Pope Benedict XVI, opened the Roman Catholic Church's door to Anglicans as Anglicans. He invited them to move in—individuals, parishes, whole dioceses—while retaining their Anglican identity. They could keep their Book of

Common Prayer, their liturgies, their priests—even married ones.

Importantly, Anglican parishes affiliating with Rome would not come under the authority of local Roman Catholic bishops. In the U.S. and UK, most of those bishops are liberals. They dislike traditional Anglicans as much as they dislike traditional Roman Catholics and the Latin Mass. Given the chance, they would simply close down any Anglican parish that swam the Tiber, telling the congregation to go to Roman Catholic churches. This would leave most former Anglicans unchurched, as few could stomach the snakebelly-low post-Vatican II vernacular Roman Mass. To Anglicans, no sin is more grievous than bad taste.

Not to worry: Anglicans rallying to Rome will stay under their own bishops, or priests acting as bishops, known as “ordinaries.” Pope Benedict knows his American and British bishops all too well. His whole package is neatly wrapped up just in time for Christmas in an Apostolic Constitution, the most definitive form of papal legislation. The rough American equivalent would be a constitutional amendment. It’s not just a bon-bon.

How Anglicans will react to Rome’s offer has yet to be seen. Many details remain unclear. One problem is likely to be the doctrine of papal infallibility, a 19th-century Roman innovation. The Apostolic Constitution stipulates that Anglicans would have to accept “*The Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church* as the authoritative expression of the Catholic faith professed by members of the ordinariate.” This could mean accepting papal infallibility as expressed in the catechism, and if Rome remains inflexible on that point, Pope Benedict’s initiative seems likely to fail.

But should it succeed, Rome’s offer has implications far beyond Anglicanism. Pope Benedict just might have taken the first step toward a second Counter-Reformation. The split within

Anglicanism between those who believe the Christian faith was revealed and is to be received and those who think you just make it up to accord with the temper of the times is duplicated within virtually every other denomination.

The root cause is the cultural Marxism of the Frankfurt School, commonly known as political correctness. Following Antonio Gramsci’s plan for a “long march through the institutions,” cultural Marxists have penetrated every mainline church. Their driving force is political ideology, not theology. They view the church as just one more venue for radical politics.

Their goal is Nietzsche’s “transvaluation of all values,” where the old sins become virtues and the old virtues, sins. In churches where they take power, the Holy Trinity is replaced by a trio of bogeymen: racism, sexism, and homophobia. Every denomination so afflicted is bitterly split between remaining Christians and the politically correct. (No, you can’t be both, as Marxists would agree.)

What is now happening, and what Rome may have discerned, is that the people on each side of this division find they have more in common with those in other denominations who share their basic faith, Christianity or cultural Marxism, than with the people on the other side of that divide within their own churches. A potential is emerging for a vast realignment, one transcending the divisions that came out of the Reformation. That realignment, in which the remaining Christians in every church would gather in a single, new (small “c”) catholic church, needs a leader. Who better than Rome? Indeed, who other than Rome could possibly pull it off?

Seen in that light, the Pope’s offer to the Anglicans takes on broader meaning. Some observers have seen a parallel with the arrangement a number of Eastern Catholic Churches have had with Rome since 1595. Those Churches rec-

ognize their own liturgical rites, systems of canon law, and procedures for ordination. Immediately after the announcement of the constitution—before the document was published—Father Dwight Longenecker, a former Anglican now Roman Catholic priest, wrote on the Inside Catholic website:

It has always been Benedict’s view that the way forward ecumenically is to replicate the existing structures that the Eastern Rite churches enjoy, and that this can be done with new flexibility and creativity.

He is willing to take risks to welcome those who follow the historic Christian faith, although separated from full communion with Rome. On the other hand, he sees those who prefer the modern gospel of relativism, sexual license, and a denial of the historic Christian faith that have taken over the mainstream Protestant churches. He knows there are plenty of them in the Catholic Church, and to them Benedict is quietly saying, “There’s the door.”

Yet what the Apostolic Constitution actually offers Anglicans is substantially less accommodating than Rome’s deal with the Eastern Rite churches. While Anglicans could keep their historic liturgical rite, Anglican churches affiliating with Rome would come under what are in effect non-geographical dioceses. That is a long way from the independence of the Eastern Rite Catholic Churches.

Here we come to the crux of the matter: is Rome’s offer final, or is it negotiable, an opening gambit? If it is final, it is not likely to draw many Anglicans and would have virtually no appeal to other Protestants. Papal infallibility alone might doom it, and as a vehicle for Christian unity, it would prove, well, fallible. But let us hopefully assume that the Apostolic Constitution is not Rome’s last offer, that something closer to the arrangement given to the Eastern Rite churches could

prove acceptable to Rome.

What then? It is possible to visualize not only Anglicans but all Protestants, in a new Counter-Reformation, leaving behind the cultural Marxists in the husks of their denominational institutions and joining in full communion with the Roman Catholic Church. They could do so while remaining what they are—Lutherans and Methodists, Presbyterians and Baptists, even some evangelicals—just as Greek Catholics remain in their Eastern rite. To Rome, they would give formal allegiance, recognizing the Pope as the titular and symbolic head of the Church. What both would gain would be a reunion of Christendom in the West in a church free of cultural Marxism—no small thing.

It is obvious that we are talking about a big leap for the Protestants. While few still speak openly of the “tyranny of the Bishop of Rome and all his detestable enormities,” that attitude has shaped their histories. Interestingly, however, one of the more enthusiastic responses to the constitution came from the Methodists. A senior official told the *Methodist Recorder* that “[the constitution] may open up ways in which Methodism, whose origins were as a movement in the Church rather than a separate denomination, may find its place in future, as a Church, alongside others within the universal Church.”

Protestants’ usual Sunday services would have to alter little, if at all, except for communion services, which are infrequent. Less obvious, perhaps, is the height of the wall the Roman Catholic Church would have to vault. That barrier is built largely of beliefs that, in the Ultramontane years of the 19th century, were turned into formal doctrines. Neither Anglicans nor Protestants are likely to swear to any of them, although they ought to be willing to accept them as what they were before the 1800s, long-standing traditions that were widely believed. (Papal infallibility

is an exception; it was an invention rammed through Vatican I in 1870.)

For Rome, there is a possible way around this wall rather than over it: *status quo ante*. Anglican and Protestant congregations and jurisdictions joining in full communion with Rome would not be required to accept as doctrine anything postdating their split from Rome. The Catholic Church would lead a second Counter-Reformation by backing away from some of the first.

Before the Council of Trent (1545-63), which begat the Counter-Reformation, Rome’s hand rested lightly on national churches. For example, we think of the Roman Catholic Church as having a single rite, after Trent the Tridentine Rite and following Vatican II the sad and dispiriting *Novus Ordo*. Before Trent, Rome allowed a vast variety of rites, as she would again. England alone had three major rites and a host of minor ones in a country of 4 million people. Rome saw no problem as long as the rites for communion services followed what Dom Gregory Dix called “the shape of the liturgy.” Anglicans might again chant in the litany, “From ghoulies and ghosties and long-legged beasties and things that go bump in the night, Good Lord deliver us.”

Pre-Trent, the same decentralization reigned in other matters as well. Kings generally had a good deal of say in who became a bishop. The Church might “volunteer” to pay some form of tax to a needy monarch. (After all, Church lands might make up a third of his kingdom.) When, occasionally, a Pope would overreach, king and bishops would come together to oppose him.

If Rome’s ambitions for a reunited Western Church go beyond Anglicans, and the Vatican is willing to bend beyond what the Apostolic Constitution currently offers, it may be time for Vatican III. The goal of such a council would be twofold: to sweep away obstacles to Christian unity stemming from the

Council of Trent and Vatican I and reverse the disastrous consequences of Vatican II, including the vandalization of the liturgy and abandonment of practices (such as fish on Friday) that buttressed Roman Catholic identity among laymen. Ultramontane doctrinal innovations would all have to be on the table; they might remain for Roman Catholics but would not be required of others seeking full communion with Rome.

Is all this just wishful thinking? The division between Christians and cultural Marxists in every denomination is certainly real: it screams from the religion page of every newspaper. With that division comes the potential for realignment and Christian reunion. Understanding the mind of the Curia is more difficult than penetrating North Korea, but Rome’s offer to the Anglicans suggests that Pope Benedict XVI is looking beyond the usual games. The ice has cracked, and a new spring may be coming.

Pope Benedict is a good German. Perhaps the question he could put to himself is this: who do I want to be, Kaiser Wilhelm II or Bismarck? Kaiser Wilhelm II was a bright and well-intentioned fellow. He was almost always right in what he wanted to do (including not going to war in 1914). But over and over he deferred to his advisers, who were almost always wrong. Bismarck, in contrast, knew exactly what he wanted—the reunification of Germany—and was both opportunistic and ruthless in making it happen. He brooked no opposition. As Kaiser Wilhem I once said, “Sometimes it is a hard thing, being a Kaiser under Bismarck.”

Now there’s a vision to gladden the heart: a German Pope proclaiming the reunion of the Western Church in the hall of mirrors at Versailles. Be a Bismarck, Benedict, be a Bismarck. ■

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Keep the Change

The zeal for improvement threatens old liberties.

By James A. Reed

THE PRESENT-DAY reformer supplants the ancient and foolish doctrine, “Everything that is, is right,” with the still more foolish doctrine, “Everything that is, is wrong.” In a world which an intelligent and patriotic ancestry lovingly handed over to us in a reasonably well-ordered condition, he runs amok. Our inherited liberties, guaranteed by a Constitution and code of laws, together forming a homogeneous system, are recklessly attacked until the whole structure is seriously imperiled.

The modern reformer insists upon substituting statutory commands for ethical precepts and official surveillance for the restraints of morality. He undertakes to force the acceptance of his peculiar doctrines by penalty of fine and imprisonment. The old and true concept of freedom embraced the right of the citizen to choose his own religion, think his own thoughts, indulge his own habits, and live his life without interference by the state, save that he should not trespass upon the rights of others. For this condition of personal freedom and responsibility, the reformer proposes to substitute legal regulations, which, like a web of steel, shall encompass the citizen from birth to death. Man will live and die the slave of the majority which enacts the laws.

Natural rights may be as effectively destroyed by the laws of a republic as by the decrees of a despot. The doctrine that the world can be made virtuous and happy by substituting for the natural right of choice, with responsibility, the prohibitions and regulations of law is as old as human tyranny. It has been resorted to in every age and has uniformly failed. It

established the Inquisition and equipped it with instruments of torture. It forbade freedom of thought, of speech, and of the press. It compelled men to embrace certain creeds upon pain of death, ordered people to attend particular churches or suffer barbaric penalties. It regulated the habits of the people in the minutest detail. And occasionally, as every school-boy knows, it burned a witch.

The modern intolerant differs from his ancient prototype only in degree. Alike they have resorted to the logic of brute force. In the past, the penalty was pillory and scaffold; today it is fine and imprisonment. Legal restrictions are to take the place of ethical instruction, parental precepts, and enlightened reasoning. The statutory reformer nominates himself as doctor-general of public morals and insists that all mankind shall swallow his physic.

Let it be admitted that this statutory moralist is generally honest and in earnest. Unfortunately, honesty of opinion and earnestness of purpose are only too frequently accompanied by gross ignorance. Zeal, honesty, and ignorance in combination always produce intolerance, and intolerance increases to fanaticism, eager to destroy all the natural liberties of men if thereby the zealot's ends may be gained. Regardless of the university degrees he has attained, the fanatic is invariably ignorant. Tolerance is the offspring of intelligence. The intelligent man knows he may be mistaken. The ignorant man is certain he is right. Give me the radius of a man's intelligence, and I will describe the circumference of his tolerance.

Regardless of divergent creeds and cults, modern reformers all agree:

1. That our plan of government has not worked with perfection and that therefore the plan ought to be destroyed;
2. That all who oppose them are “in league with hell and have made a covenant with death”;
3. That they possess an infallible specific which every human being should be by law compelled to swallow, and that, thereupon, evil will disappear, sorrow will cease, men and women will be transformed into statutory angels, and “everything will be lovely and the goose hang high”—particularly if the reformer succeeds somehow or other in grabbing a lucrative job.

Accordingly, the agitation begins, proselyting proceeds, the morons are mustered. All the while numerous hired males and females, masquerading as disinterested representatives of morals, pull the strings and gather in the shekels. The political candidate, observing the gathering storm, promptly trims his little sail to catch the wind and scuds before it for the port of office. Commonly, he pledges himself in advance. Wherefore, he arrives in Washington hog-tied beyond squealing.

Of course, no plan of government ever has been or ever will be absolutely perfect; even if perfect, its administration would necessarily be faulty. Defective administration is inseparable from the frailty, dishonesty, and ignorance of human agents. What is needed is better execution of the law, not the destruction of the governmental plan. Clearly, the