

## *Beyond Nostalgia: Theological Aspects of the Anglican Loyalist Experience*

I wish to thank your Rector, the Rev'd Dr. Ranall Ingalls, for the privilege and the kindness of being with you this evening and for the opportunity, on the occasion of the 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this wonderful Maritime city, the City of Saint John, to speak about some of the theological aspects of the Anglican Loyalist experience. If you are a bit puzzled about what that means, please know that I am too!

Actually, I suspect a hidden agenda. All prejudice and bias aside, it has to be said, that there is nothing harder for Americans to understand than the Loyalists! In a way, they can't get it! It counters all of the foundational myths of the American experiment. Your Rector, however, is a learned man and he is among you and one with you and he gets it! The greater tragedy is when the descendents of the Loyalists don't get it because they have forgotten the essentials of their own story.

I am no historian. You would be far better served by a plethora of others who could regale you into the wee hours of the morning with endless stories of the Loyalist experience, no doubt in excruciating detail. There are others, far more learned than I, who can tell you about the Loyalists of Saint John. So what am I doing here? A complete fraud. Let me confess it at the outset. The person you should be hearing from is among your own diocesan clergy, the Rev'd Dr. Ross Hebb or Canon John Matheson. But here am I. And in a way, I find myself in a company similar to the Loyalists of Saint John who found themselves in straightened circumstances and did the best they could. If I can come anywhere remotely close to what they achieved, may God be praised.

In complete contrast to this anniversary celebration of success is the story of the failure of another Loyalist venture, the founding of Shelburne which at the time of the founding of Saint John was the largest 'city' in British North America. This could be '*the tale of two cities*,' (Dickens) but don't worry, it isn't. Shelburne never made it that far. Saint John did and became, in 1785, the first incorporated city in British North America. It is founded, however, upon Loyalist sensibilities and assumptions that in some sense have shaped not only the urban landscape but the deeper contours of the spiritual landscape of the Anglican experience in Maritime Canada. To remember this is everything.

These sensibilities and assumptions, I fear, have not really been fully explored from a religious or theological standpoint. I can only hope to suggest a few ideas for further investigation on that aspect, an aspect which underlies the successes and the failures of the Loyalist experience.

In 1974, George Steiner gave the Massey Lecture for that year on the topic, "*Nostalgia for the Absolute*."<sup>1</sup> Not quite one of the lost Massey Lectures, it is, perhaps, among the

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<sup>1</sup> George Steiner, *Nostalgia for the Absolute*, (CBC Massey Lecture Series, Fall 1974, Anansi Press, Toronto, ON, 1977, reprinted 2004).

neglected Massey Lectures. The burden of his lectures was that in the default of any confidence in the Christian story, other ideologies rushed in to fulfill the gap, all of them pseudo or limited forms of the Christian story which they explicitly rejected. He examines the theological aspects of Marxism, Freudianism and the social-anthropology of Claude Lévi-Strauss. His argument is that the ideologies which sought to replace the Christian story of revelation and redemption derive entirely from that very story which they dismiss. Thus these ideologies present some of the very features of the Christian story, albeit in a distorted, if not, perverted way; ideas such as a redeemed human community, original sin, and the conflicts between man and nature that shape cultures.

It is, in some sense, a moral lesson. The things of the past cannot be simply superseded; they have to be incorporated into any sort of future in ways that honour their integrity and truth. Steiner's further point and the one which speaks to our world is the utter failure of these grand meta-narratives to explain us to ourselves and to our world. We live in the fall-out of their failure and in a kind of fearful unease about our world and day. We have forgotten the grander story upon which they were predicated.

Flash forward a quarter century or so and you have the theologian, David Bentley Hart, reflecting on the essential message of the Christian gospel in the face of the trite, shallow and bombastic claims of the aggressive secular atheism of a Richard Dawkins, a Christopher Hitchens and others, aptly described by John F. Haught as "*soft-core atheism*."<sup>2</sup>

In David Bentley Hart's book, "*Atheist Delusions: The Christian Revolution and Its Fashionable Enemies*," he argues that we confront a culture of "*nihilism*."<sup>3</sup> Modern culture offers "*a model of freedom whose ultimate horizon is, quite literally, nothing*."<sup>4</sup> As he observes, "*if the will determines itself principally in and through the choices it makes, then it too, at some very deep level, must also be nothing*."<sup>5</sup> We stand "*before an abyss, over which presides the empty power of our isolated wills, whose decisions are their own moral index*."<sup>6</sup> It is a graphic illustration of our consumer world: "*the original nothingness of the will gives itself shape by*

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<sup>2</sup> John F. Haught, *God and the New Atheists: A Critical Response to Dawkins, Harris and Hitchens*, (Louisville · London, Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> David Bentley Hart, *Atheist Delusions: The Christian Revolution and Its Fashionable Enemies*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2009), p. 21. "Modernity's highest ideal - its special understanding of personal autonomy - requires us to place our trust in an original absence underlying all of reality, a fertile void in which all things are possible, from which arises no impediment to our wills, and before which we may consequently choose to make of ourselves what we choose. We trust, that is to say, that there is no substantial criterion by which to judge our choices that stands higher than the unquestioned good of free choice itself, and that therefore all judgment, divine no less than human, is in some sense an infringement upon our freedom. This is our primal ideology. In the most unadorned terms possible, the ethos of modernity is - to be perfectly precise - nihilism."

<sup>4</sup> Hart, *Atheist Delusions*, p. 22.

<sup>5</sup> Hart, *Atheist Delusions*, p. 22.

<sup>6</sup> Hart, *Atheist Delusions*, p. 22.

*the use it makes of the nothingness of the world – and thus we are free.*"<sup>7</sup> But it is an empty freedom, a mere nothingness.

The point is all the more poignant in the face of the failure of the false gods of Marxism, Freudianism and Lévi-Straussian Social-Anthropology to provide a convincing and convicting narrative of meaning for our world and day. Do not make the mistake of assuming that free-market capitalism provides the rule and the meaning for our day. Its logic is, perhaps, already encompassed in these earlier failures for the simple reason that the reduction of our humanity to the economic logic of commodities is part of the contemporary problem that is unable to see that we and our world belong to God. That changes everything. And on that score, our Loyalist forebears have everything to teach us.

We cling to our illusions of freedom, sensing the emptiness but reluctant to face it, retreating instead into our little ghettos, hoarding what shards and fragments that remain of the social, political, ethical and religious world that we have forgotten or rejected, because as Hart observes "*few of us are so demented, demonic, or incorrigibly adolescent as to choose to live without visible boundaries.*"<sup>8</sup> In other words, the culture of nihilism is fundamentally unlivable;<sup>9</sup> it is, we may say, with apologies to T.S. Eliot, unsatisfactory.<sup>10</sup> We sense this but lack the conviction or the capacity to think again the objective and coherent world-view that is part of our history and legacy. And yet that is the demand; indeed, it is the *unum necessarium*, the one thing necessary.<sup>11</sup>

The Anglican Loyalist story is a way of recovering the grand and great narrative of the Christian story, what Hart calls "*the Christian revolution.*" Getting the Christian story right, means overcoming all the false forms of that story, the distortions and misunderstandings about the history of Christianity, particularly, in relation to the account of modernity and contemporary culture. It means getting beyond our nostalgia for some particular aspects of our history, the shards and fragments to which we cling so desperately, in order to embrace a deeper nostalgia, a longing for the absolute, for God, which underlies, shapes and informs the Anglican Loyalist story.

With the Advent of Christ, the world was quite literally put upon a new foundation, the foundation of grace, "*the grace,*" which as Thomas Aquinas puts it, "*does not destroy nature but perfects it*" (*Gratia non tollit naturam sed perficit*).<sup>12</sup> Love becomes the world-converting force and the great and defining feature of Christianity. Julian the Apostate, the last Pagan Emperor who sought desperately to re-assert the pagan cultus, had to

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<sup>7</sup> Hart, *Atheist Delusions*, p. 23.

<sup>8</sup> Hart, *Atheist Delusions*, p. 23.

<sup>9</sup> Hart, *Atheist Delusions*, p. 23. "A perfectly consistent ethics of choice would ultimately erase any meaningful distinction between good and evil, compassion and cruelty, love and hatred, reverence and transgression, and few of us could bear to inhabit the world on those terms."

<sup>10</sup> T.S. Eliot, *Journey of the Magi*, <http://www.poetryarchive.org/poetryarchive>.

<sup>11</sup> Luke 10.42

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Aquinas, ST1, q. 1, a. 8, resp. 2.

admit, as it were, that “*thou, O Galilean, has conquered*” and has conquered by love. “*It is a disgrace that these impious Galileans [meaning the followers of Jesus of Galilee]*” he complained, “*care not only for their own but for ours [meaning pagans] as well.*”<sup>13</sup> Against the tragic darkness of the pagan world, new and old, Christians minister to the poor and the outcast, to the sick and the dying in ways that were largely unthinkable in pagan antiquity. Such is love.

That love is the love of God in Jesus Christ which perfects and redeems all human loves. Revelation and Redemption are the grand and arresting themes signalled in the beauty of worship. The one thing necessary is about a remembering that is prayer and praise; in short, a remembering that is worship. “*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind and with all thy strength; and thy neighbour as thyself.*”<sup>14</sup> That love is realised and found in the one who comes “*with healing in his wings*”;<sup>15</sup> the one who is the Light of the World and the Saviour of all Mankind.

It is in the context of the larger Christian story that we can begin to understand the Anglican Loyalist experience here in the Maritimes. Our endeavour will be to identify certain predominant features of the Loyalists. They are: the sense of Divine Providence as undergirding the commitment to peace, order and good government; the intrinsic connection between public worship and public service; the commitment to a learned ministry and to education; and idea of the Churches as sacramental presences contributing to the sanctity and the civility of common life. Underlying these themes is the necessity and importance of the stable liturgy of *the Book of Common Prayer*, the spiritual manifesto of the Anglican Loyalist experience.

### **Maritime Loyalists: Political Commitments**

Between 1775 and 1784, more than 36, 000 Loyalists arrived in the Maritimes. A huge exodus from the New England states, it is an extraordinary part of the Canadian story of displaced people. These Loyalist, however, were a bit of a mixed bag, perhaps most charitably summed up by Rev’d Edward Manning.

They came to our shores in thousands. Among these were many men of high character and merit, many belonged to the learned professions, particularly the law, who of course became the leading men in the provinces; and who, no doubt proved a blessing to the country in many points of view. But the great mass of the emigrants were of a different description; many of them were disbanded soldiers, etc. Such an assemblage, coming directly from the seat of war, would be ill-calculated

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<sup>13</sup> Hart, *Atheist Delusions*, p. 45.

<sup>14</sup> Mark 12. 30,31

<sup>15</sup> Malachi 4.2

to benefit the morals of the rising generation. Vice of every kind, incident of the camp and navy prevailed.<sup>16</sup>

There were as well the black Loyalists, some who were slaves and others who were indentured servants. And not all of the Loyalists, of course, were Anglican. But if one were to risk a phrase which captures their common commitment, it might be “*peace, order and good government*”<sup>17</sup> versus “*life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness*.”<sup>18</sup>

One of the strong and guiding principles of the Loyalist experience was loyalty to the Crown; that is why they are called Loyalists, though at the time, especially in New England, they were often tarred with the label, Tory. Theologically, however, I think we need to appreciate that their loyalty to the Crown was about the principle of good order that reflects Divine Providence over and against the violence of human willfulness. For those who were merchants, and who suffered great losses, the stability of good order, in their thinking, is the proper basis for economic life and fortune. Benjamin Marston III, for instance, wrote in his diary in 1776 that “*All America is in the most deplorable condition. Next summer will give my deluded countrymen some idea what it is like to live in a country which is the seat of war. God send us once more peace and good government.*”<sup>19</sup>

As Stephen Kimber notes in his splendid book “*Loyalists and Layabouts: the Rapid Rise and Faster Fall of Shelburne, Nova Scotia, 1783-1792*”, Marston provides “*a window into the often conflicted mind of a Loyalist.*”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Maurice W. Armstrong, *The Great Awakening in Nova Scotia, 1776-1809* (Hartford, Conn., The American Society of Church History, 1948), p. 112.

<sup>17</sup> Section 91, Constitution Act, 1867. Some, like Stephen Eggleston, (*Myth and Mystery of POGG*, *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Winter 1996/1997), have challenged the importance of this phrase because of the uncertainty of its authorship in the crafting of the Constitution Act, and on the assumption that it expresses the elitist sentiments of the architects of Confederation, and because of its being used interchangeably with the phrase “*peace, welfare and good governance*” in England since 1689. Whatever its legislative meaning, the peace, order and good government phrase (or its twin), serves as part of the myth and mystery of the Loyalist experience. That both this phrase and the counter-phrase, “*life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness*,” can be understood as deriving from John Locke’s *First Treatise On Government* only heightens the poignancy of these contrasting perspectives and contributes to the rich history of both Canada and the United States of America. Some, like George Grant, have described the Loyalists as ‘*straight Locke with a dash of Anglicanism*’ but that hardly seems right in relation to the Maritime Anglican Loyalists, particularly Bishop Charles Inglis. Locke never mentions the Trinity. Churches and institutions dedicated to that central mystery of the Christian Faith are an inescapable feature of the Anglican Loyalist witness. The Trinity is central to the Prayer Book; indeed, Philip Dixon in his “*Hot and Nice Disputes: the Doctrine of the Trinity in the Seventeenth Century*” (2003) argues that the Liturgy of the Prayer Book preserved and maintained the Trinitarian Orthodoxy of the English Church in the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. In any event, POGG need not be taken as a conservative manifesto in any sort of party or factional sense.

<sup>18</sup> American Declaration of Independence, July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1776.

<sup>19</sup> Stephen Kimber, *Loyalists and Layabouts, The Rapid Rise and Faster Fall of Shelburne, Nova Scotia: 1783-1792* (Canada, Doubleday Canada, 2008), p. 38.

<sup>20</sup> Kimber, *Loyalists*, p. 27.

I suggested earlier that the Loyalist position is almost impossible for Americans to understand. Why? Because it represents such a rejection of the founding myths of America. Just consider.

Emma Lazarus' famous poem, "*The New Colossus*," penned in 1883 and engraven in the Statue of Liberty in 1903, identifies America as "*the Mother of Exiles*," the place where the exiles of the world could find a home and a life. "*Give me your tired, your poor,/Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free/ The wretched refuse of your teeming shore./Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,/I lift my lamp beside the golden door!*"<sup>21</sup> And the Loyalists? The Loyalists are an explicit counter to that myth and in very uncomfortable ways, challenging, as it were, the very legitimacy of American identity. Their leaving America was different from the aesthetic Americans who chose to lounge about in Europe in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, figures such as the novelist, Henry James, or the poet, T.S. Eliot, for example. It was even different from the experience of the American draft-dodgers of the late 60s and 70s.

The Loyalists represent an explicit rejection of the American democratic experiment. Left at that, it seems a negative position. It overlooks their positive commitment to constitutional government – to the ideals of peace, order and good government that consequently abhorred revolutionary fervor, sensing in it a kind of restlessness and an endless agitation; the idea of the excitable states, just one tea-party after another, different as those may be! For the Loyalists, the American colonies were more than the revolted colonies; there was something deeply revolting about the rejection of lawful order.<sup>22</sup>

Consider the story of Benjamin Marston III, what we might better call "*the Adventures of Benjamin Marston*." His father, Benjamin Marston II, was a graduate of Harvard and a small landowner in Manchester, New Hampshire. His son, Benjamin Marston III, would also go to Harvard where he graduated at the age of 19 in 1749, the year Halifax was founded. Among those whom he may have come to know through his Harvard connections was John Wentworth, who would go on to become Governor of New Hampshire before being exiled to Nova Scotia in 1775 where he became, first, Surveyor-General of the Woods and, then, Governor of Nova Scotia in 1792.

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<sup>21</sup> Emma Lazarus, *The New Colossus*, <http://www.libertystatepark.com/emma>.

<sup>22</sup> The question was raised whether the Anglican Loyalist position is akin to the situation of the Non-Jurors in England who refused to swear allegiance to William and Mary at the time of the so-called Glorious Revolution of 1688; or, for that matter the Ab-jurors, those who refused to renounce their oaths to the Stuart monarchy. There were, undoubtedly, Jacobite sympathizers (as the supporters of the Stuarts were known) among the Loyalists. Consider, for instance, the story of Flora MacDonald, who had given shelter to Bonnie Prince Charlie after the debacle of Culloden and who had subsequently emigrated to the Carolinas only to be then exiled from the States, spending the winter of 1779 in Windsor on her way back to Scotland. Yet, the issue for the Loyalists from New England was less about the spiritual integrity of vows of loyalty per se and more about the principle of stability over and against rebellion and revolt. They accepted the legitimacy of the Hanoverian succession. The issue of the Non-Jurors (and Ab-Jurors) was mostly limited to the Clergy and, in some sense, belonged to an earlier generation. Charles Inglis' great-grandfather, Archibald Inglis, for instance, was a non-juror, but neither were Charles nor his father.

After his graduation from Harvard, young Benjamin travelled about Europe in the manner of the Grand Tour before returning to New England to pursue mercantile interests. He built a large and commodious house in Marblehead which housed a library with an extensive collection of Greek and Latin texts, annotated by Benjamin himself, who as Stephen Kimber suggests, "*fancied himself something of a writer and a scholar.*"<sup>23</sup>

While in Marblehead, Benjamin served in a variety of public offices but apparently was anything but discreet about his political loyalties and, perhaps, too, about his opinions of others. Perhaps it could be said of him, as others have noted, that '*you can always tell a Harvard man; you just can't tell him much!*' Marked as a Tory, on November 24<sup>th</sup>, 1775, he had to flee a mob that was intent on doing him damage, perhaps tarring and feathering him on account of his having been one of the addressees of a letter of support to the former governor of Massachusetts. Escaping to Boston, he was then part of the evacuation of British Troops and ended up in Halifax in 1776. Pursuing his mercantile interests in the West Indies, he would be appalled at witnessing a slave auction in Santa Cruz. He would be taken captive by Yankee privateers on two occasions suffering captivity briefly in Plymouth then under house arrest in Marblehead, then in Philadelphia. Finally, he found himself in New York and was part of merchant fleet, on a ship *the Britannia*, sailing under British protection in July 1781 for Nova Scotia.

After stopping in Annapolis Royal for two months, where he tried to do business with a dishonest businessman, *the Britannia* embarked for Halifax only to be caught in a wild storm that resulted in them overshooting Halifax by 150 miles and getting locked in the ice off Cape Canso. Abandoning the vessel, they attempted to make the overland trek to Halifax. He became lame and ordered the others to press on without him. Three days later, the ship's mate returned with two Indians who were able to help him to their camp in Country Harbour. From there he trekked to Chedabucto and arranged passage on a small shallop, arriving in Halifax with nothing except his diary. He attempted to survive by doing various odd jobs, including working on the fortifications of George's Island, until in 1783, when, with the arrival of the Loyalists in Shelburne, he was given the job of deputy-surveyor, something about which he knew next to nothing.

He persevered and played an important role in the parceling out and the clearing of the land before becoming the fall-guy for a riot over land speculation and land grants to black Loyalists. Blamed by Governor Parr, he was unemployed and homeless, yet again. However, John Wentworth appointed him deputy surveyor for the new province of New Brunswick which had just been created in the spring of 1784. In December 1784, Benjamin Marston made his way, certainly poorer and maybe a little wiser, to Saint John where he found a more genteel crowd than what he had experienced in either Halifax or Shelburne. His financial means, however, were not altogether adequate to the

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<sup>23</sup> Kimber, *Loyalists*, p. 29.

social charms of Saint John and he quit his post to go to the Miramichi as “Sheriff of Northumberland County,” something else for which he was also utterly unsuited.

Miramichi turned out to be like another Shelburne. But, pursuing mercantile interests, he embarked upon a scheme to build a sawmill from which to provide the British Navy with masts. Resigning from his public office of Sheriff, he journeyed to Halifax to secure a government contract for the purchase of masts.

From Halifax he went to Boston to begin the process of seeking compensation from the Crown for his losses in the States. Like many, he would be disappointed with what Kimber describes as the “*arbitrary, niggardly ways*” of the Loyalist claims commissioners.<sup>24</sup> At the end he would receive less than a quarter of the amount he had claimed. In pursuit of recompense he journeyed to London, England, in the summer of 1786.

It would prove to be a miserable and difficult time. It would end with him being hired in 1792 by the British abolitionist, Henry Hew Dalrymple, as the surveyor for the Boolam Island Company, intended as a colony for freed slaves being returned from Nova Scotia. Bullom Island was but twenty miles from Sierra Leone and Freetown where the bulk of the Nova Scotian freed slaves would settle. Unfortunately, Benjamin Marston succumbed to malaria and died on August 1792. His last venture was for him, however, an opportunity he embraced as an escape from England like an escape “*from the worst prison I was ever in.*”<sup>25</sup>

It will not do to think of the Loyalists as driven by a nostalgic love of England and all things English. Otherwise why not simply return to England? Some did, many didn't and almost all were quite critical of the British Government in its handling of the American file. No. The Loyalists, at least some of them, were committed to other possibilities politically, namely, a British North America founded upon the principles of a constitutional monarchy, King and Parliament. Ultimately, their commitment to good order and government provided some of the groundwork for a special form of constitutional order that would emerge less than a century later, namely, Confederation with its intriguing feature of a dual sovereignty – the sovereignty of the dominion and the sovereignty of the provinces. For the Loyalists, loyalty to the King was not to an Absolute Monarch but to the duly mediated forms of constitutional order under the Monarch. It didn't really even matter that the King was mad!

Along with their experience of the turmoil and the violence of the American Revolution, the events of the French Revolution only served to confirm their anti-revolutionary sensibilities. The Loyalists and their heirs would be among the promoters, first, of responsible government, but without recourse to revolution and, secondly and ultimately, to the achievement of a new nation, but without the expense of a bloody

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<sup>24</sup> Kimber, *Loyalists*, p.209.

<sup>25</sup> Kimber, *Loyalists*, p. 290.

civil war. Not a bad accomplishment and certainly something worthy of celebration. Are we worthy of their accomplishments?

## Religious and Theological Convictions

Religion plays a huge role as well in the understanding of the Loyalist experience, perhaps in ways that are difficult for us to appreciate. In a way, the best illustration of the theology of the Anglican Loyalist experience is seen in the sermons preached on public occasions and sermons on the theme of the necessity of public worship. Anglican Loyalists made a strong and important connection between the duties to God in prayer and praise and the duties and obligations to serve in public life. For Anglican Loyalists religion could not possibly be construed as a merely private matter. It was necessarily public and contributes to the good order of the human community.

Theologically, Anglican Loyalists were committed to the ordered liturgy and polity of the Church of England expressed in *The Book of Common Prayer*. They had a strong sense of the objectivity of doctrine and were, on the whole, deeply suspicious of the emotional exuberances that were part of the Great Awakening movement. Bishop Inglis saw the specters of civil revolt in the religious enthusiasms of the NewLighters. Writing to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts in 1799, he observes:

Their (the Newlights') political principles are equally dangerous with their religious. It is believed that the conductors of these people are engaged in the general plan of a total revolution in religious and civil government. And it is a certain fact, that 'The Rights of Man,' 'The Age of Reason,' 'Volney on the Ruin of Empires,' 'A False Representation of the French Revolution,' with scandalous invectives against all crowned heads in Europe, and against the British Administration in particular, have been secretly handed about by professed Newlights.<sup>26</sup>

The connection between religion and politics was an inescapable feature of the Loyalist thinking, contributing either to peace and good order or revolution and disorder, depending on the principles of religion. Religion was not primarily or simply a personal matter; it had a strong public role, recognized by Anglican Clergy and Laity alike. Which is why doctrine and order expressed publicly in the ordered liturgy really matter. Inglis represents some of the best features of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Church of England in holding to *the Articles of Religion*, *the Ordinal* and *the Book of Common Prayer*, refusing to add or subtract from the credal orthodoxy of the Prayer Book in matters of doctrine and order.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Armstrong, *The Great Awakening*, p. 134

<sup>27</sup> Barely an hundred years after the incorporation of the City of Saint John, Trinity Church sponsored an annual lecture series under the auspices of the Church of England Institute. In 1887, Rt. Rev. Dr. Kingdon, then Coadjutor Bishop of Fredericton, gave a paper on *Misprints*, alleging in the course of the lecture that a misprint in the Douay (Latin) translation of *Genesis* 3.15 was "*the foundation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception*," which, of course, had been promulgated by the Roman Catholic Church in 1854 as an

Anglican Loyalists had a strong sense of God's Providence at work through the stability of institutions over and against the whims and fancies of individuals, not to mention the gangs of thugs and louts at whose hands many suffered more than mere verbal indignities and injuries: tarring and feathering, looting and brigandage were all part of the experience of many.

### **A Learned Ministry and The Importance of Education**

Along with the idea of religion as something public, Anglican Loyalists were adamant about the idea of a learned ministry and about the importance of education in general. Thus they contributed greatly to the establishment of schools and colleges. The outstanding figure in this regard is the First Bishop consecrated in 1787 for a Diocese Overseas, the Rt. Rev'd Charles Inglis, who in so many ways illustrates and embodies the theological features of the Anglican Loyalists. His diocese originally extended from the Atlantic shores of Nova Scotia to Detroit. His story is thoughtfully presented in Dr. Brian Cuthbertson's biography, "*The First Bishop.*"

Though not having had the advantage of attending Trinity College, Dublin, for reasons of family indigency, Inglis acquired a further education partly through the tutelage and encouragement of the American Samuel Johnson, not to be confused with Dr. Johnson of 'Dictionary Fame'. Johnson was the first president of King's College, New York, founded in 1754. Under his mentorship, Inglis acquired a knowledge of Hebrew, Syriac and Aramaic and achieved academic notice and status with a scholarly work entitled "*An Essay on Infant Baptism,*" published in 1768, for which he was awarded an Oxford MA in 1770. While Rector of Trinity, Inglis would also serve as President of King's College, New York.

Arriving in Nova Scotia in late 1787, among his first acts were the foundation of a school and a college, King's Collegiate founded in 1788 and the University of King's College, founded in 1789. In a way, the whole theological viewpoint of Anglican Loyalists is captured in the motto of the School and the College: *Deo Legi Regi Gregi*. Inglis envisioned an educational programme that was *for God, for the Law, for the King and for the People*; an education that entailed public service and commitment whether in the Church, the Law, Politics or in other forms of service to others. Other educational

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essential of the Faith. Kingdon's lecture sparked a storm of controversy that was largely covered in the local paper, *The Saint John Globe*. While at times polemical and a times pedantic, the whole debate illustrates the Anglican sense of doctrinal restraint in the matter of things necessary to be believed. The Rector of the Mission Church in Saint John, a Parish defined as Anglo-Catholic and Ritualist, Fr. John M. Davenport, undertook to defend the Bishop, largely on the basis of a classical Anglican standpoint: namely, the refusal to add or subtract from the creedal essentials of the Faith. The whole exchange is contained in R.F. Quigley's remarkable book *Ipse, Ipsa: Ipse, Ipsa, Ipsum: Which?* (New York and Cincinnati, Fr. Pustet & Co, 1890). Quigley was a barrister-at-law in Saint John, educated at Harvard and Boston Universities, and remarkably erudite, though the debate was not without its savour of a certain amount of *odium theologicum* on both sides. I owe my copy of his book to Canon John Matheson.

institutions would also emerge under Anglican auspices such as St. Thomas' University, Rothesay Collegiate, Netherwood School for Girls, and Edgehill School for Girls.

There were others, too, like Deborah How Cottnam, for instance. A remarkable woman, her life also reads like a thriller and illustrates something of the dynamic of lives lived in remote places that were involved in some of the great events on the world stage. Born in 1728 on Grassy Island off Canso, where she was raised and educated, she settled in Salem, Massachusetts with her military husband after having been a civilian prisoner of war at Louisburg in 1744. In other words, captured by the French who razed Canso and Grassy Island in 1744 and incarcerated in Louisburg, she was freed by the American expeditionary force initiated by Governor William Shirley of Massachusetts and led by William Pepperell in 1745.

Three years later, much to the disgust of the New Englanders, Louisburg was returned by the English to the French by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle as part of the negotiations belonging to the end of the war of the Austrian succession. That would, of course, be one of the precipitating factors that ultimately led to the American Revolution. It also led to the founding of Halifax in 1749 as the military response to the rebuilding of Louisburg by the French and, subsequently, to General James Wolfe's campaign of 1758 to retake Louisburg on his way to Quebec and the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in 1759, the battle at which both Montcalm and Wolfe would lose their lives.

A loyalist, Deborah How Cottnam became a refugee yet again, returning from Massachusetts to the Maritimes in 1775, the year of Paul Revere's famous ride, the year of the Battle of Lexington and Concord, "*the shot heard round the world*", and the year of the Battle of Bunker Hill. These events - Louisburg, the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, the Boston Tea Party and the subsequent forms of revolutionary foment - were all part of her life in very direct ways. And yet, she was a poet and an educator in and through the turbulence of these world historic events, displaying, I think, a deep conviction about ideas and literature and about history and education, "*the strength of reason.../ It makes us happy, and it makes us wise.*"<sup>28</sup> Returning to Nova Scotia, she established schools for girls in Halifax and Saint John during the late 1780s and 90s before retiring to Windsor where she died in 1806. She lies in the Old Parish Burying Ground where the first Christ Church stood.

### **Church Buildings as Sacramental Presence**

Another theological feature of Anglican Loyalist has to do with Church buildings. Inglis and his later successor in what subsequently became the Diocese of Fredericton, Bishop John Medley, were indefatigable church builders. They saw the actual buildings as

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<sup>28</sup> Deborah How Cottnam in *Canadian Poetry: From the Beginnings Through the First World War*, ed. Carole Gerson and Gwendolyn Davies, (McClelland & Stewart, Ltd., Toronto, 1994), '*On Being Asked What Recollection Was*', p. 32.

sacramental presences in the land and as an essential part of the creation of a civilized social order. Their ideal was a Church in every community, the Church as being in the midst of human life whether in town or country, bearing testimony to the transforming grace of God which perfects and sanctifies human endeavours and offering redemption and hope to world-weary souls. Lovely Georgian structures and lovely Carpenter Gothic churches are a part of the legacy of the Anglican Loyalists, not to mention this fine stone Gothic edifice, Trinity Church, where we meet tonight. They have shaped the rural and urban landscape of the Maritimes. At issue is for how long?

One of the first things that the Loyalist of Saint John did was to build a church, Old Trinity Church, named not only in honour of the Blessed Trinity, but after Trinity Church, New York, where Rev'd Charles Inglis, had been Rector. Bishop Medley would have a hand in the design and erection of this marvelous structure dedicated to the glory of God and for the good of his Church and people in this great city of Saint John.

It is, however, a most melancholy object to contemplate the dismantling, piece by piece, of one of the few remaining churches designed by Bishop Inglis, All Saints', Granville Centre, Nova Scotia, so that it could be sent to a gated community in Louisiana, USA.

### **Make-over or Renewal?**

The question is whether you recognize anything of yourselves in any of this recital of Anglican Loyalist sensibilities. Ours is, after all, the make-over culture. And certainly the pressures are very great with respect to the disremembering of the past and the presumption to re-image God, the Church and ourselves. Perhaps you know the story of Johnson.

Johnson was seventy years old. He decided, like many of the good people of New Brunswick, to alter his lifestyle completely in order to live longer. He went on a strict diet, a pre-Christmas Advent diet, we might say, if one were to be so religiously motivated as to seek a physical benefit under the guise of a spiritual discipline. He ran and walked; he worked out with true devotion. In just three months, and without the benefit of a bowflex exercise machine, he had lost thirty pounds, shrunk his waist by six inches, and expanded his chest by five. Pleased with the results of his make-over, he decided to complete his transformation with a haircut and a pedicure. Stepping out of the barbershop in downtown Saint John, he was hit by a bus.

As he lay dying, he cried out, "God, how could you do this to me?" And a voice from heaven replied, "To tell you the truth, Johnson, I didn't recognize you."

You see, there's the rub. We lose ourselves in losing sight of who we are in the sight of God. The need is not for a make-over but for a remembering of the things that matter,

namely, the holy principles signaled in Word and Sacrament and in the ordered life of the Church to which we can give our hearts and minds.

Where to begin? Where to end? We begin and end with recollection, with the necessity of remembering.

*What Recollection is – Oh! wouldst thou know?  
'Tis the soul's highest privilege below:  
A kind indulgence, by our Maker given –  
The mind's perfection, and the stamp of Heaven;  
In this, alone, the strength of reason lies –  
It makes us happy, and it makes us wise.*<sup>29</sup>

So begins Deborah How Cottnam's poem *On Being Asked What Recollection Was*. Written some time in the 1780s, the poem signals something of a moral and an intellectual outlook that undergirds an educational programme and enterprise. It captures something of the spiritual sensibilities of the Anglican Loyalist experience of which she was a part. The classical allusions in the poem to the Platonic, Stoic and Augustinian themes of the interplay between reason and memory, of hope and virtue, of the passionate and the rational parts of the soul, suggest something of the qualities of her own education and intellectual interests.

Recollection is "*this faculty divine*" without which "*mortals could no more/ Review the past, explore the future hour*". "*'Tis this alone*", she says, "*bids virtuous hopes arise, / And makes the awakening penitent grow wise*"; "*'Tis this bids the tyrannizing passion cool - / Calms and resigns the mind to reason's rule*"; "*This guards the heart 'gainst treachery and surprise, / And teaches to bestow on worth the prize.*"<sup>30</sup>

In many ways, her poem captures the theological sensibilities of *the Book of Common Prayer*, itself the theological manifesto of the Anglican Loyalist experience. There is the strong sense of Divine Providence ruling in and through "*the unruly wills and affections of sinful men.*"<sup>31</sup> There is the remembrance of the Divine Grace that gives us hope, and makes "*the awakening penitent wise*" – wisdom through repentance, now there's a thought! There is the sweet confidence in "*reason's rule*" and the confidence that virtue must have its own reward. Not entitlement, not the nostalgia for a lost world of prominence and status, only the strong confidence in the Absolute, a confidence in the mercy of God. A nostalgia for the Absolute.

Thank you.

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<sup>29</sup> Deborah How Cottnam, *Canadian Poetry*, 'Recollection', p. 32

<sup>30</sup> Deborah How Cottnam, *Canadian Poetry*, 'Recollection', p. 32. See also, David Curry, *Some Literary Figures From Windsor's Past*, An Address to the West Hants Historical Society, January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2006, <http://www.westhantshistoricalsociety.ca/addresses>.

<sup>31</sup> *The Book of Common Prayer*, Collect for the Fourth Sunday after Easter, (Canada, 1962), p. 194.

*(Rev'd) David Curry*  
*Advent Sunday, November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010*  
*Trinity Church, Saint John, NB*