

Two Sorts of Christian?

(A challenge facing the Anglican Communion)

Imagine the scene: John is the last of the Apostles. Second generation Christians say to him: *"It's all very well for you, John. You saw Jesus. You touched him. You have the evidence of your senses to support your faith. We haven't. How are we to know that what you say is true?"*

So John writes down the story of how Jesus met the need of Thomas, the Patron Saint of Certainty (not of Doubt), to see and even to touch, but then Jesus also says: *"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe."*

There seem to be two sorts of Christian in the churches today. For the one faith is the need for certainty provided by the infallibility of scripture, or the assurance of grace in the eucharist; for the other faith is trust - the ability as a Roman Catholic priest put it *"to live with doubt as a constant companion."*

The challenge facing the Anglican Communion today is trying to cater for both sorts of Christian, neither meeting the needs of the one for certainty in such

a way as to deny to the other the liberty to trust, nor allowing the one to discover new truth in such a way as to undermine the certainty of the other.

The two sorts of Christian are like two subterranean tectonic plates rubbing against each other and causing tremors threatening the structure of the church.

One tectonic plate believes that to have women bishops or to accept homosexuals undermines the authority of scripture, or casts doubt on the validity of the sacraments.

The other plate hears the Spirit of Love saying women are not second-class and homosexuals no more choose to be what they are than people choose to be left-handed.

Have you ever asked yourself which kind of faith you have?

How about finding someone whose faith is the different sort from yours, and pray together and listen to each other?