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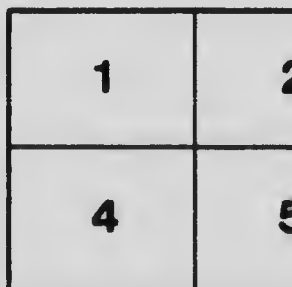
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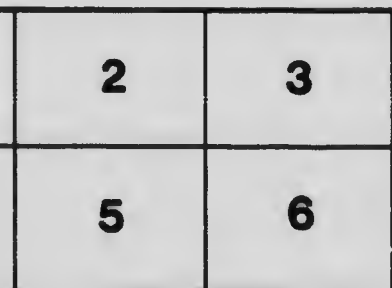
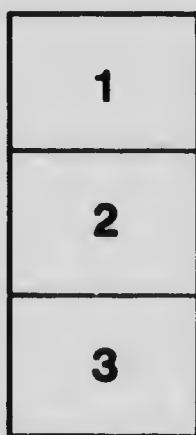
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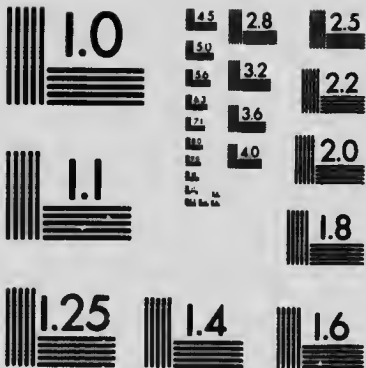
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# TRACTS FOR THE FAITH

EDITOR:  
THE REVEREND C. ENSOR SHARP, M.A.

No. 1

## THE CHURCH

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA  
GENERAL SYNOD, ARCHIVES

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ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA  
GENERAL SYNOD, ARCHIVES

# THE CHURCH

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What is the Church? This is a very important question, for there are about 560 million Christians who use the word. Of these Christians there are 270 million Roman Catholics, 120 million Greek Catholics and, for argument, we will say 10 million Anglican Catholics, though, of course, there are many more. This makes a total of 400 millions out of the 560 million Christians, or, in other words, five out of every seven Christians are agreed as to certain points about the Church, viz., that it is One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic; that it must have Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, who have direct descent from the Apostles of Our Lord; that these Priests have power in God's name to baptize for the remission of sins, to administer the Holy Communion, and in God's name and by His authority to forgive sins. The remaining Christians do not hold all these points, or else deny some of them altogether. But it is a great and important fact that five out of every seven Christians belong to bodies of Christians who do hold them.

The word "Church" has two meanings, for it can be a place or a society. We speak of the Church on such a street, whereby we mean the "place and building" used for worship by certain people; or we speak of belonging to the Church of England, whereby we mean a "society" of people holding the doctrines and practices of the Church of England. If the place or building called a Church belongs to the Church of England it is usually named after some person, such as a Saint, or Our Lord, St. Mary's, St. James' or the Church of the Redeemer; but if it belongs to the Presbyterians, the Methodist Society or some other society, it is more frequently known as High Street Presbyterian, or the Central Methodist, or the King Street Baptist Church. This is a point worth notice, for the former shews a connection with our Lord and His Saints; the latter does not.

The word "Church" is derived from a Greek word meaning "belonging to the Lord"; it came to us through the Teutonic race, and is the same as the Scotch "Kirk." Being Teutonic, it is chiefly used by the Anglo-Saxon races, and it is not used in the New Testament in the sense of either a "place of worship" or a "society" of the faithful. In the New Testament there is no word for Church meaning a "place of worship," for the

early Christians had no buildings for worship; but there is a word for Church in the sense of a "society" of the faithful, and that word is "ecclesia." Ecclesia means "called out" or "gathered together," and is still used in the French word for Church, "Eglise," or the Welsh word "Eglws," and is also used in the official title of the Church of England, "Ecclesia Anglicana." What is more important is the fact that it is the word used by Our Lord in the expression "I will found my Church," and is used in that sense through the New Testament. When, therefore, we use the word "Church" to mean a "society" of the faithful, we mean "people who have been called out"—"the elect"—and the "assembly" or "society." A society is a body of people living what is called a corporate life (from "corpus" a body), or a life in which all the members are bound together and related to each other, just as the members of the human body are. In the corporate life every part or member is subordinate to the welfare of the whole body or society in the same way that the hands, feet and eyes use their power for the benefit of the human body. This idea of the Church as a society, or corporate life, is very important, and its analogy or likeness to the human body gives us a clear picture of its nature. There is only one body. No member of a human body can live apart from the body, and any member that is not under the control of, and acting in obedience to, the head will wither and decay. This is why, in the history of the Church schism, dissent or non-conformity is so terrible. This is no reflection upon the individual members of the schismatic or separated body of people, for they may be unaware of the wrong condition in which they are; they may be people who are descendants of the original schismatics; they may, as a consequence, accept with reverence their parents' views; but it is a law of life that the members that are separated or not under the control of the head die or waste away. Neither is this statement of schism or separation any exaltation of members of the Church over members of other bodies: it only means that they are free from the sin of separation. Personal worth or individual goodness, on one side or the other, has nothing to do with the matter: it is a question of principle. But the argument will be used that calling the Church a body is only a way of speaking, and that, therefore, separating from the Church is not like separating a member from the human body. The New Testament distinctly says that the Church is the Body of Christ, of which He is the Head; also in Baptism we are made members or living parts of Christ. The Church has always held this teaching, and history supports her teaching; for when bodies of people have left the Church they have decayed and withered by the loss of their spirituality



little by little. The early bodies of separatists have disappeared altogether, although some of them lasted for over 200 years. They gradually lost their sense of worship, of Christian charity and spirituality, and to-day even their names would seem strange. Wherever we see separation we shall see, sooner or later, these consequences of the breaking of the law of life. People may say that the Church has been bad in the past, or is bad in the present, and it is true; but the Church has lasted, while the separated have not; the Church has always revived, the others have not; not because of her people, but because she is part of the Body of which Christ is the Head (the Life).

From this we advance to the "dogma" or "statement" that, if the Church is the Body of Christ there can be only one Church, or one body, a dogma which condemns utterly the possibility that the 250 sects of to-day are each and equally or in any true sense "Churches - Bodies of Christ. This dogma is also supported by Our Lord's words, "I will found my Church" —not Churches; by His prayer "that they all may be one"; by His work of the Incarnation which He accomplished in *one* body; and His extension of that work through the sacramental grace of His Body of which we become members by Baptism, and of which we partake in the Holy Communion. Christ's followers recognized, taught and held the same idea of "oneness," and blamed any who differed. For centuries, as a result, no sin was considered so great as the sin of schism, or separation from the One Body of Christ, and from its orders, sacraments, or teaching. It is true that there have always been schismatics, separatists, dissenters or non-conformists, for all these terms have the same meaning in "fact," if not in the belief and practice of those who hold them; but the separatists have always shewn signs of division, decay and atrophy, lapsing into infidelity or becoming unspiritual. Naturally, this was the result of their origin, namely, that they were man-made, that they had to minister to those who were possessed by the spirit of individualism or separation, and who would easily tend to the one more schism if they were displeas'd. Consequently, they became more and more worldly both in their outlook and in their use of secular methods and the secular power, ever cheapening the spiritual side of life until there was little left beyond a desire for good works and success.

When we speak, then, of the history of the Church, we mean the story of a society founded by Christ Himself and entrusted for order and teaching to His Apostles, and there can be no other Church but this. This society was called from the first the "Ecclesia," and has always held that there is only one Church because it is the Body of Christ; that the one Church had re-

ceived through the Apostles the mind and will of Christ as to its government, its teaching and its sacraments. *This government* was entrusted, within the first century, to three orders known as Bishops, Priests and Deacons; *this teaching* rests upon the New Testament documents, and is summed up, as regards its essentials, for convenience and defence, in the three Creeds; *these sacraments* are outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace given to man, ordained by Christ Himself. The Church, after being founded and ordered, decided upon the selection of writings which we know as the New Testament, for the Church was before the New Testament, and declares that it had power to make this selection because, being the Body of Christ, it is guided by the indwelling illumination of the Holy Ghost, and that, therefore, the New Testament contains the Revelation of God as witnessed by the Incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who took human nature, and further witnessed by the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles. Finally, this Church has existed for 1,800 years, is described as One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic, and has never varied in all the essentials of Order, Doctrine and Sacraments.

The Church, naturally, started at Jerusalem, which is the mother of all Churches, and every branch of the Church has to be able to trace itself directly to those who were at Jerusalem, otherwise it is not of the "Church." As time went on the Church in various places grew and became more important than the Church at Jerusalem in numbers, in power and in prestige. Such were the great bodies of churchmen in Antioch, Rome, Constantinople and Northern Africa at Alexandria. Eventually, Rome, being the Imperial capital, stood out beyond all others, except perhaps for a time the Church at Constantinople, which was also an Imperial capital. For a long time these Patriarchal Sees, as they were called, were all in friendship as well as in unity, but the friendship soon began to suffer from pride, jealousy and temporal greatness, so producing the seeds of "individualism" or "Protestantism," and among the worst offenders in this respect was the great see of Rome.

Missionaries from all these centres gradually spread over the world, some of whom founded the Gallican Church, or Church of France, from which country, being the nearest, it is probable that Christianity reached Britain. We must remember to say "Britain" because this happened long before the name of England existed. When it actually happened we do not know, but we find the first mention of it in Tertullian 200 A.D., and later on, in 314 A.D., three Bishops from Britain attended the Council of Arles in France. At that date, the Church in Britain was big enough to be recognized as of importance, old enough to be

an organized body and numerous enough to send three of its Bishops as its representatives to a General Council. So it would not be unfair to suppose that it was in existence for some year before Tertullian wrote about it, and that among the first missionaries to Britain there might have been men whose parents knew the Apostle St. John; which takes it back to Apostolic times. Gradually the time came when the name Britain was no longer the recognized distinctive title of the country, for on the East and Southern coasts were landing the conquering Angles and Saxons, driving the British and the British Church into the West, and giving to the country the name of Angleland or England, which original name is still visible in the French word for England, viz., "Angleterre." After this the British remained more or less cooped up in Western England and Wales, and the Anglo-Saxons, who were all heathen of a stern and cruel type, remained heathen, as the British Church does not seem to have had the will or the power to try to convert them to Christianity.

The next change that came was due to a Mission sent from Rome by Gregory the Great, and the chief missionary was Augustine. It was sent to convert the Anglo-Saxons, and it landed, therefore, on the East coast of England in 596 or 597 A.D. Augustine converted Kent, one small county, and that is about all he could do, for the Bishops he consecrated for London, Rochester and York were, after his death, all driven away.

The position after Augustine's death was as follows: There was the little body of churchmen in Kent founded by Augustine; there was the ancient British Church in Devon, Cornwall and Wales, with which Augustine had quarrelled; and that was about all, leaving four-fifths of the country in heathendom. This four-fifths was converted mostly by missionaries from Iona, an island off the S.W. coast of Scotland; another part in the centre of England by a priest named Birinus from Italy, but who had nothing to do with Augustine's mission. The Iona mission was Celtic and the chief missionary was Aidan, Bishop of Lindisfarne, to whose efforts nearly half of England owed its Christianity. These various bodies fully recognized each other as Catholics, but there was a good deal of aloofness, and also of the feeling "Our way is better than yours" in the matter of rules and regulations, until at last they were united in practice and ceremonies under Theodore of Tarsus, who became Archbishop of Canterbury in 668 A.D. He started the idea of "parishes" in England, and the Church grew rapidly, giving proof of its reality by soon sending missionaries to work on the continent of Europe, some of them being very famous men. The Church by this time had existed in England for over 500

years, and now she went on her way for about 400 years, and then another change came over her history, connected with the landing of the Normans, who conquered England under the rule of William of Normandy, whom we know in history as William the Conqueror, or William the First. The Normans spoke French, were a people with a great sense of order and obedient loyalty, and closely attached in churchmanship to the See of Rome. Naturally, the English Bishoprics were gradually filled with Normans, and so the Church of England was drawn nearer to, and placed more under, the authority of Roman ideas and Roman Bishops, or Popes as they were called.

While the people of England had a great respect for the Pope of Rome as the head of a great Patriarchal See, they strenuously objected for 600 years to the Pope's demands for money, to his claim to appoint Bishops—even Italian Bishops—to English Bishoprics or Sees, and to his so-called temporal power which he claimed made him supreme over all monarchs, able to dethrone them if they displeased him. The fight against the usurpations of Rome took 600 years for this reason. Sometimes a King of England wanted a strong person to support him in difficulties, and, knowing the power of the Pope, he would acquiesce in the Roman claims in order to get the benefit of the Pope's help; sometimes the Bishops and Clergy did the same thing in disputes with the King or the Barons. But the national feeling was always against these claims, until, in the reign of Henry VIII., the Papal claims were rejected, and in this the nation was with the King. At this time there was a sort of waking up in learning, called the Renaissance, going on all over Europe, which led to demands for changes and improvements, especially for reformation in the Church. In this reformation men of all kinds took a part: bad men because they saw in it a chance for robbery and for getting power; good men because they wished to make the Church better by restoring her primitive purity; extreme men who, in the sudden freedom of religious opinions, were determined to alter the Church until she ceased to be the Church. These last, when they found they could not get their own way in the Church, *left it*. They called themselves Independents or Congregationalists. Later on, for the same reason, others followed their example, and called themselves Presbyterians; still later, the Methodists left. We must bear in mind that the Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Methodists of to-day are not responsible for this separation. By heredity, surroundings and teaching they have come to accept it as being right, for it is hard to go against the belief of parents, of personal friends, of religious education and of continuity, while it is quite natural to assume, under these con-

ditions, that everything is perfectly reasonable. Moreover, they look around and see beautiful lives, much good work, splendid missionary effort, and again feel assured that it must be all right. But they have to face the fact that they belong to bodies of Christians that have left the Church, for they were not thrown out, or asked to leave—they separated. They cannot trace their origin back to the Apostles, for the oldest of them has not existed more than 400 years, while the Church has lived 1,900 nearly. Their example has been disastrous, for there are now several kinds of Presbyterians, Methodists and Baptists, and, instead of there being the ONE Church of God, there are over 250 sects, each claiming that their own way is right, and often showing bitterness towards everybody else. There can be no one-ness until those who left come back, and it is upon them that the responsibility of continuing the break in the unity rests. Besides this there is the responsibility resting upon those who, being born and baptized in the Church, have left it to join the Presbyterians or Methodists for one reason or another, and who by so doing are guilty of schism or separation. The man who is a Methodist or Presbyterian by birth is not guilty of *leaving* the Church; his only fault is that he is living outside of it instead of inside it, that he is perpetuating the separation and so hindering the unity of the Church of God; but the Churchman who leaves the Church to become a Methodist or a Presbyterian is guilty of making a fresh separation from the one Body of Our Lord, and that is a very serious wrong to GOD.

C. ENSOR SHARP.

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