

Fr. Perozich comments —

The Father sent His only begotten Son Jesus to redeem the world from sin for goodness, from eternal death for eternal life, and from isolation and loneliness to full communion and joy in the Trinity through the Holy Catholic Church.

Jesus allowed himself to be sacrificed on the cross, was resurrected, and left the Eucharist and other sacraments to unite us to Him in this life toward eternal life.

Not a few high ranking clerics in our Catholic Church have allowed themselves to be seduced by their own ideas formed from worldly education, pushing out the timeless Truth of God.

This is called Modernism.

The quote below is from an article warning the Catholic Church to turn around from the errors which have decimated the church of England.

Many people ask me how the Catholic Church got into its current crisis. The list of condemned errors of over a century ago show how this is happening, since these same errors have emerged once again.

The article following the errors reflects the church of England's demise, and predicts a demise for the Catholic Church without a repentance from its adoption of the same errors seen today.

The roots of Anglicanism's current crisis lie in the very errors and trends that Pius X condemned, in words which regrettably weren't taken to heart in Anglican circles. The consequences of this failure offer both a warning and a challenge to the Catholic Church today.

Lamentabili Sane

Pope Pius X - 1907

SYLLABUS CONDEMNING THE ERRORS OF THE MODERNISTS

With truly lamentable results, our age, casting aside all restraint in its search for the ultimate causes of things, frequently pursues novelties so ardently that it rejects the legacy of the human race. Thus it falls into very serious errors, which are even more serious when they concern sacred authority, the interpretation of Sacred Scripture, and the principal mysteries of Faith. The fact that many Catholic writers also go beyond the limits determined by the Fathers and the Church herself is extremely regrettable. In the name of higher knowledge and historical research (they say), they are looking for that progress of dogmas which is, in reality, nothing but the corruption of dogmas.

These errors are being daily spread among the faithful. Lest they captivate the faithful's minds and corrupt the purity of their faith, His Holiness, Pius X, by Divine Providence, Pope, has decided that the chief errors should be noted and condemned by the Office of this Holy Roman and Universal Inquisition.

Therefore, after a very diligent investigation and consultation with the Reverend Consultors, the Most Eminent and Reverend Lord Cardinals, the General Inquisitors in matters of faith and morals have judged the following propositions to be condemned and proscribed. In fact, by this general decree, they are condemned and proscribed.

1. The ecclesiastical law which prescribes that books concerning the Divine Scriptures are subject to previous examination does not apply to critical scholars and students of scientific exegesis of the Old and New Testament.

2. The Church's interpretation of the Sacred Books is by no means to be rejected; nevertheless, it is subject to the more accurate judgment and correction of the exegetes.
3. From the ecclesiastical judgments and censures passed against free and more scientific exegesis, one can conclude that the Faith the Church proposes contradicts history and that Catholic teaching cannot really be reconciled with the true origins of the Christian religion.
4. Even by dogmatic definitions the Church's magisterium cannot determine the genuine sense of the Sacred Scriptures.
5. Since the deposit of Faith contains only revealed truths, the Church has no right to pass judgment on the assertions of the human sciences.
6. The "Church learning" and the "Church teaching" collaborate in such a way in defining truths that it only remains for the "Church teaching" to sanction the opinions of the "Church learning."
7. In proscribing errors, the Church cannot demand any internal assent from the faithful by which the judgments she issues are to be embraced.
8. They are free from all blame who treat lightly the condemnations passed by the Sacred Congregation of the Index or by the Roman Congregations.
9. They display excessive simplicity or ignorance who believe that God is really the author of the Sacred Scriptures.
10. The inspiration of the books of the Old Testament consists in this: The Israelite writers handed down religious doctrines under a peculiar aspect which was either little or not at all known to the Gentiles.
11. Divine inspiration does not extend to all of Sacred Scriptures so that it renders its parts, each and every one, free from every error.
12. If he wishes to apply himself usefully to Biblical studies, the exegete must first put aside all preconceived opinions about the supernatural origin of Sacred Scripture and interpret it the same as any other merely human document.

13. The Evangelists themselves, as well as the Christians of the second and third generation, artificially arranged the evangelical parables. In such a way they explained the scanty fruit of the preaching of Christ among the Jews.

14. In many narrations the Evangelists recorded, not so much things that are true, as things which, even though false, they judged to be more profitable for their readers.

15. Until the time the canon was defined and constituted, the Gospels were increased by additions and corrections. Therefore there remained in them only a faint and uncertain trace of the doctrine of Christ.

16. The narrations of John are not properly history, but a mystical contemplation of the Gospel. The discourses contained in his Gospel are theological meditations, lacking historical truth concerning the mystery of salvation.

17. The fourth Gospel exaggerated miracles not only in order that the extraordinary might stand out but also in order that it might become more suitable for showing forth the work and glory of the Word Incarnate.

18. John claims for himself the quality of witness concerning Christ. In reality, however, he is only a distinguished witness of the Christian life, or of the life of Christ in the Church at the close of the first century.

19. Heterodox exegetes have expressed the true sense of the Scriptures more faithfully than Catholic exegetes.

20. Revelation could be nothing else than the consciousness man acquired of his revelation to God.

21. Revelation, constituting the object of the Catholic faith, was not completed with the Apostles.

22. The dogmas the Church holds out as revealed are not truths which have fallen from heaven. They are an interpretation of religious facts which the human mind has acquired by laborious effort.

23. Opposition may, and actually does, exist between the facts narrated in Sacred Scripture and the Church's dogmas which rest on them. Thus the critic may reject as false facts the Church holds as most certain.

24. The exegete who constructs premises from which it follows that dogmas are historically false or doubtful is not to be reproved as long as he does not directly deny the dogmas themselves .

25. The assent of faith ultimately rests on a mass of probabilities .

26. The dogmas of the Faith are to be held only according to their practical sense; that is to say, as preceptive norms of conduct and not as norms of believing.

27. The divinity of Jesus Christ is not proved from the Gospels. It is a dogma which the Christian conscience has derived from the notion of the Messias.

28. While He was exercising His ministry, Jesus did not speak with the object of teaching He was the Messias, nor did His miracles tend to prove it.

29. It is permissible to grant that the Christ of history is far inferior to the Christ Who is the object of faith.

30 In all the evangelical texts the name "Son of God" is equivalent only to that of "Messias." It does not in the least way signify that Christ is the true and natural Son of God.

31. The doctrine concerning Christ taught by Paul, John, and the Councils of Nicea, Ephesus and Chalcedon is not that which Jesus taught but that which the Christian conscience conceived concerning Jesus.

32. It is impossible to reconcile the natural sense of the Gospel texts with the sense taught by our theologians concerning the conscience and the infallible knowledge of Jesus Christ.

33 Everyone who is not led by preconceived opinions can readily see that either Jesus professed an error concerning the immediate Messianic coming or the greater part of His doctrine as contained in the Gospels is destitute of authenticity.

34. The critics can ascribe to Christ a knowledge without limits only on a hypothesis which cannot be historically conceived and which is repugnant to the moral sense. That hypothesis is that Christ as man possessed the knowledge of God and yet was unwilling to communicate the knowledge of a great many things to His disciples and posterity.

35. Christ did not always possess the consciousness of His Messianic dignity.

36. The Resurrection of the Savior is not properly a fact of the historical order. It is a fact of merely the supernatural order (neither demonstrated nor demonstrable) which the Christian conscience gradually derived from other facts.

37. In the beginning, faith in the Resurrection of Christ was not so much in the fact itself of the Resurrection as in the immortal life of Christ with God.

38. The doctrine of the expiatory death of Christ is Pauline and not evangelical.

39. The opinions concerning the origin of the Sacraments which the Fathers of Trent held and which certainly influenced their dogmatic canons are very different from those which now rightly exist among historians who examine Christianity .

40. The Sacraments have their origin in the fact that the Apostles and their successors, swayed and moved by circumstances and events, interpreted some idea and intention of Christ.

41. The Sacraments are intended merely to recall to man's mind the ever-beneficent presence of the Creator.

42. The Christian community imposed the necessity of Baptism, adopted it as a necessary rite, and added to it the obligation of the Christian profession.

43. The practice of administering Baptism to infants was a disciplinary evolution, which became one of the causes why the Sacrament was divided into two, namely, Baptism and Penance.

44. There is nothing to prove that the rite of the Sacrament of Confirmation was employed by the Apostles. The formal distinction of the two Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation does not pertain to the history of primitive Christianity.

45. Not everything which Paul narrates concerning the institution of the Eucharist (I Cor. 11:23-25) is to be taken historically.

46. In the primitive Church the concept of the Christian sinner reconciled by the authority of the Church did not exist. Only very slowly did the Church accustom herself to this concept. As a matter of fact, even after Penance was recognized as an institution of the Church, it was not called a Sacrament since it would be held as a disgraceful Sacrament.

47. The words of the Lord, "Receive the Holy Spirit; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained" (John 20:22-23), in no way refer to the Sacrament of Penance, in spite of what it pleased the Fathers of Trent to say.

48. In his Epistle (Ch. 5:14-15) James did not intend to promulgate a Sacrament of Christ but only commend a pious custom. If in this custom he happens to distinguish a means of grace, it is not in that rigorous manner in which it was taken by the theologians who laid down the notion and number of the Sacraments.

49. When the Christian supper gradually assumed the nature of a liturgical action those who customarily presided over the supper acquired the sacerdotal character.

50. The elders who fulfilled the office of watching over the gatherings of the faithful were instituted by the Apostles as priests or bishops to provide for the necessary ordering of the increasing communities and not properly for the perpetuation of the Apostolic mission and power.

51. It is impossible that Matrimony could have become a Sacrament of the new law until later in the Church since it was necessary that a full theological explication of the doctrine of grace and the Sacraments should first take place before Matrimony should be held as a Sacrament.

52. It was far from the mind of Christ to found a Church as a society which would continue on earth for a long course

of centuries. On the contrary, in the mind of Christ the kingdom of heaven together with the end of the world was about to come immediately.

53. The organic constitution of the Church is not immutable. Like human society, Christian society is subject to a perpetual evolution.

54. Dogmas, Sacraments and hierarchy, both their notion and reality, are only interpretations and evolutions of the Christian intelligence which have increased and perfected by an external series of additions the little germ latent in the Gospel.

55. Simon Peter never even suspected that Christ entrusted the primacy in the Church to him.

56. The Roman Church became the head of all the churches, not through the ordinance of Divine Providence, but merely through political conditions.

57. The Church has shown that she is hostile to the progress of the natural and theological sciences.

58. Truth is no more immutable than man himself, since it evolved with him, in him, and through him.

59. Christ did not teach a determined body of doctrine applicable to all times and all men, but rather inaugurated a religious movement adapted or to be adapted to different times and places.

60. Christian Doctrine was originally Judaic. Through successive evolutions it became first Pauline, then Joannine, finally Hellenic and universal.

61. It may be said without paradox that there is no chapter of Scripture, from the first of Genesis to the last of the Apocalypse, which contains a doctrine absolutely identical with that which the Church teaches on the same matter. For the same reason, therefore, no chapter of Scripture has the same sense for the critic and the theologian.

62. The chief articles of the Apostles' Creed did not have the same sense for the Christians of the first ages as they have for the Christians of our time.

63. The Church shows that she is incapable of effectively maintaining evangelical ethics since she obstinately clings to immutable doctrines which cannot be reconciled with modern progress.

64. Scientific progress demands that the concepts of Christian doctrine concerning God, creation, revelation, the Person of the Incarnate Word, and Redemption be re-adjusted.

65. Modern Catholicism can be reconciled with true science only if it is transformed into a non-dogmatic Christianity; that is to say, into a broad and liberal Protestantism.

The following Thursday, the fourth day of the same month and year, all these matters were accurately reported to our Most Holy Lord, Pope Pius X. His Holiness approved and confirmed the decree of the Most Eminent Fathers and ordered that each and every one of the above-listed propositions be held by all as condemned and proscribed.

PETER PALOMBELLI, Notary of the Holy Roman and Universal Inquisition

If Only the Anglicans Had Listened

PIKE OR PIUS?

By Andrew M. Seddon | June 2010

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If only the Anglicans had listened. But, of course, Pope St. Pius X wasn't addressing them when, one hundred years ago, he issued two stern warnings about grave dangers he perceived confronting the Church. Were Pius X to return, he would surely experience a sense of déjà vu when encountering the complaints of today's Catholic dissidents about the Church's "repressive" position on moral issues, her "archaic, intolerant" theology, and her "antiquated" hierarchical structure. He would also find familiar their proposed solutions: freeing the laity from "patriarchal" clerical oppression; agitating for a more "democratic" Church with lay participation in the selection of bishops, including women and active homosexuals; and replacing the teaching authority of the Magisterium (the bishops in union with the Pope) with that of dissenting theologians and professors.

What would such a church look like? The answer is plain to see: It would look like much of today's Anglican Communion, particularly the Church of England, the Episcopal Church (its American offshoot), and the Anglican Church of Canada. Contrary to the Catholic dissenters' rosy imaginings, the picture isn't pretty.

The disintegration of the Anglican Communion has reached such a point that Pope Benedict XVI recently issued an apostolic constitution, *Anglicanorum Coetibus*, that enables Anglicans fleeing the rubble of their denomination to enter into full communion with Rome while retaining elements of their cultural and liturgical heritage. The roots of Anglicanism's current crisis lie in the very errors and trends that Pius X condemned, in words which regrettably weren't taken to heart in Anglican circles. The

consequences of this failure offer both a warning and a challenge to the Catholic Church today.

“Modernism” refers to various subjectivist trends that developed in the Catholic Church in the late nineteenth century. Basing itself on post-Enlightenment thought, Modernism critically re-evaluated Scripture, the person and work of Jesus Christ, and Church dogma. It is particularly associated with Abbé Alfred Loisy, Fr. George Tyrrell, and Baron Friedrich von Hugel, who desired to bring Catholic doctrine into line with current trends. To do so, revelation, faith, Scripture, and the authority of the Church would all need to be reinterpreted.

In 1907, in *Lamentabili Sane* (LS), Pius condemned sixty-five modernist propositions; he expanded on his denunciations in *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* (PDG). The following five tenets are typical of the movement:

1. The “historical” Jesus is to be distinguished from the Christ of faith. Corollaries to this notion include the ideas that the Catholic faith contradicts history, and Catholic teaching cannot be reconciled with the true origins of Christianity (LS, #3). The evangelists invented and embellished stories which they judged to be profitable (LS, #14). The Gospels, which underwent development over centuries, contain only a faint and uncertain trace of the doctrine of Christ (LS, #15). Christ’s divinity is not proved from the Gospels, but was derived later (LS, #27). Jesus’ resurrection was spiritual, not historical (LS, #6). The doctrine of the expiatory death of Christ is Pauline, not evangelical (LS, #38).
2. Faith, rather than being a gift of God, is a matter of feeling, which, of course, comes from experience. Pius wrote: “Given this doctrine of experience united with that of symbolism, every religion, even that of paganism, must be held to be true.... Modernists do not deny, but actually maintain, some confusedly, others frankly, that all religions are true” (PDG, #14).
3. People need to be freed from Church authority, which must be transformed from an apostolic basis to the consensus of the masses. This is because, it is said, Christ did not intend to found the Church as an enduring society (LS, #52). “We observe,” Pius wrote, “the introduction of that most pernicious doctrine which would make the laity the factor of progress in the church” (PDG, #27).

4. Revelation is to be based on experience and personal inward enlightenment. As such, revelation was not completed with the Apostles (LS, #21). Modernists derive a law, Pius explained, “according to which religious consciousness [i.e., experience] is to be put on an equal footing with revelation, and that to it all must submit, even the supreme authority of the Church, whether in the capacity of teacher, or that of legislator...” (PDG, #8).

5. Christ did not teach a determined body of doctrine applicable to all times and all men, but rather inaugurated a religious movement to be adapted to different times and places (LS, #59). Church dogmas are therefore not timeless, absolute truths which the Magisterium safeguards, but are relative to their era. Dogma must evolve and the Church must adapt her teaching to the present time. “To the laws of evolution [i.e., change] everything is subject under penalty of death — dogma, Church, worship, the books we revere as sacred, even faith itself” (PDG, #26).

Modernists claim that the Church cannot effectively maintain evangelical ethics because she obstinately clings to immutable doctrines that cannot be reconciled with modern progress (LS, #63). Furthermore, modern Catholicism can be reconciled with true science only if it is transformed into a non-dogmatic Christianity — that is to say, into a broad and liberal Protestantism (LS, #65).

It is no wonder that, in Pascendi, Pius called Modernism “the synthesis of all heresies.” Faced with what he perceived as a pressing danger, Pius X acted strongly, censoring publications, encouraging bishops to root out Modernism in their dioceses, requiring an “anti-modernist oath” from clergy and professors, and in some cases resorting to excommunication.

Pope Pius X’s methods resulted in Modernism in the Catholic Church becoming moribund for a good half-century. Today, though, Pius’s actions are viewed differently, particularly by those of liberal persuasion. The New Dictionary of Theology calls them “draconian.” Notre Dame professor Richard McBrien wrote of Pius’s “sometimes cruel and internecine campaign against Catholic theologians, biblical scholars, and historians (lumping them all under the umbrella of Modernism), from which the Church did not begin to recover until the Second Vatican Council.” Eamon Duffy has described Pius as “deeply hostile to intellectualism of every kind,” accusing him of viewing “every attempt at the liberalization of Catholic theology and social thought [as] nothing but heresy and betrayal.” Of

Pascendi, Duffy wrote, “there was more than a hint of fantasy and conspiracy theory behind all this,” and “the encyclical was simply the opening shot in what rapidly became nothing less than a reign of terror.”

Upon the death of Pope Pius X, however, Msgr. Robert Hugh Benson, a convert from Anglicanism, wrote that, rather than fearing to face the light and retreating into bondage, “Pius stood firm where [other] religious leaders faltered or temporized;... Rome, under his leadership, placed herself on the side of plain Gospel truth, of the authority of Holy Scripture and of the divinity of Christ.”

It was providential that the Church had a Pope who was courageous enough to oppose Modernism. The Anglican Communion, however, had no such champion, and modernist thought found fertile ground.

Of course, some Anglicans saw where the trends were heading. In 1920, on the eve of his conversion to the Catholic Church, then Episcopal Bishop of Delaware Frederick Kinsman published his book *Salve Mater*, in which he discussed some of the problems with the Anglican approach. He regarded the Anglican via media, which considers Anglicanism a middle ground between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, as an unstable basis for definite belief, and saw in Anglicanism an increasing tendency toward lay-domination and disbelief in the supernatural. Modern Anglicanism was becoming characterized by tolerance of heresy, doctrinal laxity, and the lack of discipline. “Inclusiveness,” Kinsman wrote, “is not a glory but a give-away.”

His insights were prescient: Gradually, decade by decade, the Church of England and the Episcopal Church began to drift from their Catholic roots, until they reached the present sad state of affairs. As evidence, consider the following comments from Episcopal theologians and bishops, which should not be taken as aberrancies, but as reflective of the underlying mindset of large swaths of the Episcopal leadership:

– “We who practice the Christian tradition understand [Jesus] as our vehicle to the divine. But for us to assume that God could not act in other ways, is to put God in an awfully small box.... Jesus is a venue, an event, an experience, and an instance in which life is renewed.”

– “The Incarnation God is one for us. But is Christ God’s final act? We can’t say that because we cannot see the future. We don’t know what God will do next to redeem us.”

– “I see the pre-Easter Jesus as a Jewish mystic who knew God, and who, as a result, became a healer, wisdom teacher, and prophet of the kingdom of God.... But I do not think he proclaimed or taught any extraordinary status for himself.... I see the grand statements about Jesus — that he is the Son of God, the Light of the World and so forth — as the testimony of the early Christian movement. These are not objectively true statements about Jesus.... I don’t think God cares if we are Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist and so forth.”

– “[The Hebrews] came to see that humanity and this energy they called God mingled and existed through Christ and thus, exists in all of humanity.”

– “The story of Jesus’ bodily resurrection is, at best, conjectural.... The significance of Easter is not that Jesus returned to actual life but that even death itself could not end the power of his presence in the lives of the faithful.”

– “We wrote the Bible, we can rewrite the Bible. The Scriptures are internally contradictory on the surface. Their interpretation varies according to the needs of the hearer.”

One bishop even issued an apology to Hindus for “centuries old acts of religious discrimination by Christians, including attempts to convert them.”

The lamentable state of the Anglican Communion in the West today shows us the sort of fruits Modernism produces. The Western branches are hemorrhaging members, many of whom are leaving for more orthodox Anglican splinter groups, Eastern Orthodox churches, or for Rome. What is causing them to leave?

1. Sexual morality. When V. Gene Robinson, a man who divorced his wife and left his children to “marry” his male lover, was ordained as bishop of New Hampshire in 2003, the door was thrust open for the Episcopal Church to officially and practically embrace homosexual activity and the so-called gay lifestyle under the guise of “tolerance” and “inclusiveness.”

2. Life issues. The Episcopal Church, by belonging to the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, officially endorses abortion.

3. The nature of the Gospel. By reinterpreting Scripture in light of current mores and individual experience — that is, by embracing relativism — Western Anglican theology has radically altered the Gospel. Instead of

instructing people to acknowledge their sins and seek salvation through the person and work of Jesus Christ, this “new gospel” encourages people to accept themselves as they are because Jesus includes and affirms all. Sin doesn’t have to be repented of if we feel it is a part of who we are. There’s no need to change. There’s no call to become Christ-like. The church becomes nothing more than yet another human organization for promoting social goals.

4. Authority. Traditionally, Anglicanism was based on the “three-legged stool” of Scripture, tradition, and reason. To that has now been added a fourth leg of “experience,” which trumps the others. Wedded to this is a lack of ecclesiastical authority. There is no one to set boundaries, to proclaim that certain beliefs are outside the faith, to discipline erring priests and bishops. Modern Western Anglicanism represents the ultimate in individual interpretation of Scripture. In the words of Judges 21:25, “every man did what was right in his own eyes” because “there was no king in Israel.”

Contrast this with what the Catholic Church stated at Vatican I in the dogmatic constitution *Dei Filius*: “The doctrine of the faith which God has revealed has not been proposed to human intelligences to be perfected by them as if it were a philosophical system, but as a divine deposit entrusted to the spouse of Christ to be faithfully guarded and infallibly interpreted” (#4).

Rather than individual reason and experience, the Catholic Church relies on the triad of Scripture, Tradition (capital T), and Magisterium. When Modernism raised its head in the Catholic Church, there was a strong pope to say “No.” The Anglican Communion, with lay-elected bishops, can give no such coherent response. The result is the appalling decline of the Anglican Communion in the West.

An instructive parallel exists between the life of one of the Episcopal Church’s influential bishops in the early twentieth century and Western Anglicanism. Born in 1913 and raised Roman Catholic, James Albert Pike considered the priesthood until college, when he became an agnostic. He received a doctorate in law from Yale, practiced in Washington D.C., and taught at George Washington University. After serving with naval intelligence in the Second World War, he entered the Episcopal Church, was ordained, and eventually became Bishop of California.

He advocated a variety of liberal positions, some of which, such as civil rights for blacks, opposition to apartheid and anti-Semitism, and

concern for farm-worker exploitation, were commendable. Other positions brought him into conflict with both Catholics and members of his own denomination. He attacked Catholic bishops for their opposition to Planned Parenthood, and opposed John F. Kennedy's presidential campaign — in part from simple anti-Catholicism, and in part because of concerns regarding the pre-Vatican II Church's stance on religious liberty. He urged increasing acceptance of practicing homosexuals, and ordained a woman as a "transitional deacon," the first step toward ordination. Theologically, he questioned such doctrines as the virgin birth, the Trinity, the Incarnation, Hell, original sin, and the infallibility of Scripture. After the suicide of his son, Pike immersed himself in clairvoyance in an attempt to contact his dead son, and his views became increasingly gnostic. Although there were several calls for a heresy trial, the Episcopal Church declined to prosecute him. (He did, eventually, resign after being censured.) Nevertheless, Pike is still regarded in some Episcopal circles, especially in California, as a theological pioneer.

Pike's personal life was marred by alcoholism. His first two marriages ended in divorce, and he had an affair with his secretary who later became wife number three. He died in the Holy Land, wandering alone in the desert between Bethlehem and Masada in search of help after the car in which he and his wife were traveling became stranded.

Bishop Pike, in short, allowed himself to be led astray by modernist thinking; he denied basic tenets of Christianity and embraced what Pope John Paul II called the "Culture of Death."

Parts of the Anglican Communion have done the same — although, to be fair, many Anglican provinces in the Global South are appalled at the direction the Western branches have taken. As a result, the life of these denominations is fast waning. Lost in the theological vapidness of a "gospel" of their own making and wandering aimlessly in the desert, these Western branches are, like Bishop Pike, nearing a tragic end. Paradoxically, the liberal response to this crisis is to become more liberal — faced with dwindling membership, the "solution" is to further alter doctrines, to conform even more to societal trends and popular opinion, and thereby hasten the end.

The "broad and liberal Protestantism" that Pope St. Pius X refused to allow the Catholic Church to mimic has taken over the Anglican churches of Britain, Canada, and the U.S., and shows itself to be "the broad way that

leads to destruction.” Perhaps, if it hadn’t been for Pope Pius X, the Catholic Church would be in the same dire straits.

But the struggle for the heart and soul of the Church isn’t over. One has only to think of various dissident Catholic organizations, politicians, clerics, thinkers, and theologians to realize that modernist ideas and trends are alive and well. In some instances, even the hierarchy has been affected. Not so long ago, Basil Cardinal Hume of Westminster and Archbishop Derek Worlock of Liverpool attempted to convince Pope John Paul II to change his mind on a point of doctrine to suit the opinions of the English laity. But the Pope wouldn’t budge. Traditional Catholic British writer Michael Davies described the episode thus: “Contrary to Modernist belief, the Church is not a democracy in which the Pope derives his mandate from the people, or has the duty to proclaim as Catholic teaching whatever a majority among them cares to believe.”

The trends of Modernism are not dead. Witness the attacks, both overt and subtle, against Pope Benedict XVI, who is lambasted in the dissident Catholic media for his opposition to women’s ordination, same-sex marriage, and abortion. He is derided as old-fashioned and unacceptably conservative because he maintains Church teaching and refuses to compromise with the spirit of the age. The underlying, unspoken assumption is that the Church should conform herself to society, rather than conform society to herself.

The stories of Bishop Pike and the Anglican Communion offer a sober object lesson to the Catholic Church. It behooves all of us, both clergy and laity, to recognize Modernism’s subtle — and sometimes not so subtle — influence and counter it with prayer and adherence to sound doctrine lest, like Bishop Pike, we too fall into error and come to a tragic end while wandering the desert.