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In no way do I want to under estimate the seriousness of the present situation. Indeed the shocked response from those I would call the 'real liberals' reveals just how nasty the atmosphere was in the General Synod. Though the situation is terrible and does not augur well, I do not believe that it is necessarily the end. There are few advantages in being old but one can remember the past. In 1992 the House of Bishops and the General Synod had on many occasions rejected any provision for us and although the atmosphere was not as unpleasant as that in the present Synod to all appearances everything was lost. In spite of that we ultimately ended up with the Act of Synod and 10 years of reasonable dignified life. To me that suggest that everything is not necessarily lost given that the Archbishops and many others are appalled at the Synod's decision.

It is quite apparent that we are being subjected to what I would call institutional bullying of a kind that if it were found in the commercial world would be the subject of serious litigation. The atmosphere and the approach of some of those opposed to us reveals that not only are they not very good Christians; they are also not nice human beings.

The other thing that strikes me quite hard is that most of the assets of the Church of England in terms of buildings, schools and other property either come from the pre reformation Catholic Church or as a direct result of the Tractarian and Catholic Revival. This property is very much our heritage and inheritance and to suggest that many wish to steal it from us in a very unpleasant form of legalised theft would not be an understatement. I know that many people will be looking at the legal implications lying behind both these matters.

There is a lot of pressure for rapid decisions and quick answers. I have no desire to be part of either. We need to quietly and prayerfully analyse where we are and wait for the situation to unfold. As someone whose temperament has always been to shoot first and ask questions afterwards, I recognise this will not be easy but there is an enormous amount of literature coming from members of General Synod and others which we need to digest.

There will be an emergency meeting of the Forward in Faith Council here in Canterbury on Monday. We will be grateful for your prayers as we meet to take counsel together.

Every Blessing,

The Right Reverend John Broadhurst
Bishop of Fulham
Chairman