



**IGREJA EPISCOPAL ANGLICANA DO BRASIL – IEAB
DIOCESE ANGLICANA DO RECIFE – DAR**

Bispo Diocesano:

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PATIENCE HAS LIMITS. MINE HAS BEEN REACHED!

I must confess that I got tired of remaining silent. I have reached the end of my patience. I can no longer remain in the same position, observing everything as a passive spectator, who has nothing to say.

To be frank, for the past six years I have read, in silence, letters, documents and various printed materials on what supposedly happened in the Anglican Diocese of Recife.

The limits of my patience were reached last week, when I received in my e-mail box an article entitled "*Recife Bishop Survives Attempt to Take Over his Diocese and Resists Liberalism*". Which bishop? Linked to what Province? I asked myself.

In the article one easily perceives that marketing is being used in presenting Mr. Robinson Cavalcanti as the good guy, a defender of morality, the Bible and holiness. As a victim and a hero. Prophet and paladin.

Those who, like myself, worked closely with Mr. Cavalcanti, know that his personal and ministerial lives give him no authority to pose as a model hero resisting sexual "liberalism".

Those who, like me, have read books written by Mr. Cavalcanti, know that where he stands with regard to sex before marriage and polygamy is anything but orthodox. He treats polygamy simply as a cultural standard, though the Scriptures, which he so "esteems" are quite clear in this respect, especially the New Testament.

Those who, like me, worked closely with Mr. Cavalcanti, know of his criticism of Fundamentalism ("They take texts literally. They deny the cultural context of the Scriptures"), Evangelicalism ("isolated, rigid, defensive and exotic subculture, that sacralises fashions and models without the critical sense of non-conformity and innovation") and, to be fair, Liberalism ("To minimise the content and the possibilities of revelation").¹

Those who, like me, worked closely with Mr. Cavalcanti, know of the cases of clergy extra-conjugal relationships covered up by him in the name of pastoral care, and even defended by him, publicly, as victims of cultural prejudice.

Those who, like me, worked closely with Mr. Cavalcanti, know that he stimulated and promoted the strange marriage blessing rite for divorced people, creating all over the Diocese enormous embarrassment and granting a former Dean the excuse that he was waiting for breaking with the Church in 2002.

¹ Cf. Robinson Cavalcanti, *Libertação e sexualidade: Instinto, cultura e revelação* (Campinas/São Paulo: CEBEP e Temática Publicações, 2004).



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Those who, like me, worked closely with Mr. Cavalcanti know what value he himself gives to his word, even when it is confirmed by a signature from his own hand. Was it not him who signed in the presence of the clergy, the commitment, in the case of being elected as bishop, to carry out his ministry for a period of five years only?

Those who, like me, worked closely with Mr. Cavalcanti, know that because of pastoral inability, lack of flexibility and diplomacy – skills that are proper to a bishop's functions – the Diocese, under his administration lost around 5,500 members, among clergy and laity. Those who, like me, worked closely with Mr. Cavalcanti, know how he was consecrated bishop by those whom he now labels as liberals. If the Brazilian Episcopal Anglican Church were liberal, which continues to be at least a twisting of the truth as far as the great majority of its members and clergy is concerned, this has not happened over the past year.

Those who, like me, worked closely with Mr. Cavalcanti, know that he is not naïve and is quite clearly aware of the Anglican principles of inclusion and respect for diversity, defended not only by the Brazilian Province, but also by the Anglican Communion.

Those who, like me, worked closely with Mr. Cavalcanti, know of his fruitless record as an Evangelical pastor and missionary. How many can affirm they got to know Christ through his preaching? What growth was experienced by parishes or missions that have been under his leadership?

Those who, like me, worked closely with Mr. Cavalcanti know who initiated the process of intolerance and non-dialogue between the Anglican Diocese of Recife and the Province; who it was that wrote compulsively against the Province and assumed a belligerent stance, disrespecting his commitment to uphold the truth in love. Are these attitudes expected from a "father in God"?

Those who, like me, worked closely with Mr. Cavalcanti, know who really abandoned longstanding friends; who really left companions in the lurch, brothers and sisters from the time of the Intersarsity Fellowship of Evangelical Students movement and of the Latin American Theological Fraternity, ignoring all the appeals they made, personally and through repeated messages, in search for common sense and Christian charity; who was really intolerant towards the clergy and childhood friends on the eve of a un-pastoral and un-ethical Council led by him.

Those like me, who know the disciplinary process started against Mr. Cavalcanti in the Chamber of Bishops, know the true reasons for his dismissal as a bishop of the Brazilian Episcopal Anglican Church (IEAB). Why does he not say that he rejected the Church authority to discipline him, refusing to provide evidence to the canonical process even in his own defence? Why does he not say that he appealed to the civil authorities to make him justice in a process that had guaranteed him full defence rights? Why does he not say that the local Court of Justice recognised the legitimacy of the decision taken by the Brazilian Episcopal Anglican Church in dismissing Mr. Cavalcanti from the Diocese and



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from ordained ministry, denying provision to the lawsuit moved by the ex-bishop, registered under the numbers 001200500047826001 and 00120051207550 in the Pernambuco Court of Justice?

Those who, like me, worked closely with Mr. Cavalcanti, know what he has done since he was deposed from the episcopacy from IEAB in not handing over the properties and the documents that pertain to the Brazilian Episcopal Anglican Church.

Those who, like me, worked closely with Mr. Cavalcanti, know that from the time he was consecrated bishop up to his dismissal he never refused to receive financial resources from the Province and fellow foreign dioceses that he accused of being “liberal”.

Those who, like me, have inside knowledge of the facts, know that the supposed “pseudo-council” referred to by Mr. Cavalcanti was held under the authority of IEAB and confirmed as being in accordance with the Church’s canons. After all, whence comes the Council’s authority to make decisions, from IEAB or Mr. Cavalcanti?

Those who, like me, have inside knowledge of the facts, know that the parish mentioned by Mr. Cavalcanti as resisting his demands was actually the Cathedral itself, that remained faithful to the principles of IEAB and the Anglican Communion, with him losing the “chair” as Obispo in a process of clear, open and transparent deposition

Those who, like me, have inside knowledge of the facts, know that when the first schism (2000) happened, among other reasons, as a result of Mr. Cavalcanti’s poor management of the situation, the Cathedral remained with only 13 members, and now, in 2008, it has a membership of over 300 and a new temple, built with local resources through their members own efforts.

Why did Mr. Cavalcanti not say then that the “parish” mentioned by him and which has remained faithful to the Province was the Cathedral itself? Could it be that he was reluctant to admit having “lost” the Cathedral twice? What does this tell us of his style of leadership, pastoral care and ability to mediate and solve conflicts?

Those who, like me, have inside knowledge of the facts, know that in spite of insinuations by Mr. Cavalcanti the Anglican Diocese of Recife, initially under the episcopal authority of the Most Revd. Filadelfo Oliveira Neto, and since 2006 under the pastoral guidance and administration of the Most Revd. Sebastião Armando Gameleira Soares, lawfully and canonically elected bishop, has grown and increased its work, not only in the States of Paraíba, Pernambuco and Bahia, but also in Rio Grande do Norte, Ceará and Maranhão.

The Anglican Diocese of Recife is, therefore, neither dead nor dying, as Mr. Cavalcanti would like us to believe.

Who knows the churches, the clergy and the laity that have remained in the Diocese? Why have they done so? What are their commitments? Were they, really, co-opted by the spirit of “liberalism”? Clergy and laity of different Anglican theological persuasions have



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remained in the Diocese. It is not true that the rupture happened so that the Evangelicals could stay with Mr. Cavalcanti. The fact is that the Evangelicals are in the majority in the Diocese.

May God, whom we love and serve, help us to continue faithful to Him, to the Brazilian Episcopal Anglican Church, to the Anglican Communion and to continue proclaiming His truths with love, understanding and compassion.

The Right Revd. Sérgio Andrade

Dean of the Anglican Cathedral of the Most Holy Trinity - Anglican Diocese of Recife