

BeLonging: Challenge to a Tribal Church: P.Selby
SPCK 1991

Tragedy of Church is it protects its boundaries and guards vs. new.
This history limits the Good News it has to share.
Our unity is more often expressed in response to a threat from outside.

CONFLICT:

Bishops share cure with priests and so they too become 'focus for unity'.
Yet we follow Christ who was outside the camp. We therefore are trained to break down barriers and promote peace. If lay are out of communion with vicar they may leave the Church altogether!
But see this over against the needs of the outcast and conscience.
Longing in be-longing points us to prayer as the way to real unity which is beyond allowing us to face up to the differences rather than subdue and fudge them - for this will be no true unity.

The greatest blasphemy is to make God dull! For God yearns set promise like a passionate lover. God is attractive and if we forget that we ignore those who come and instead 'hold on'. But holding on is a tribal activity and not ecclesial living. Those who look for their reward in what they have already are woe begotten but Jesus teaches that the hungry are blessed: must not be content with the status quo.

It would be easier to have a monolythic god - it would give assurance to our selfish instincts for stability and security in the old.
The Church we have been given may not guarantee to protect our vulnerabilities, but this is the be-longing offered by God.