

# Appendix – Part One

## 'Addenda' Resources

### WEEK 1&2

1. The 39 Articles in the Anglican Church of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (G. Bellerby 2022)
2. J.I. Packer, Paul Barnett: "Ten Elements of Historical Anglicanism" [St. John's Shaughnessy, Lecture Notes].

### WEEK 3

3. "An Interview with JI Packer on the BCP" [The Anglican Studies Program, Regent College, 2010].
4. H. Matthew Lee: "Our Great Inheritance" [Prayer Book Society of Canada. Lent, 2020].
5. John Webster: "The Service of the Word" From "What Happened to Morning Prayer?" [Wycliffe College, Toronto, 1997].

### WEEK 4

6. D.B. Knox: "'Predestination". *Ibid.* p. 30-35.

### WEEK 5

7. "How to Study the Bible" - [GB Personal File]. (I was taught this by The Rev'd David Short).
8. "How to Study the Bible Pt. 2 - [GB Personal File]. (I was taught this by The Rev'd Harold Percy. follows closely the 'Inductive Bible Study Method' from Inter Varsity Fellowship).

### WEEK 6

9. J.I. Packer: "The Gospel in the BCP" [The North American Anglican, 2019].
10. "The Gospel in the Holy Communion Service" [GB Personal File].

### WEEK 7

11. L.E.H. Stephens-Hodge: "What is a Collect?" From "*The Collects*" [Hodder & Stoughton, 1961].
12. "Four Eucharistic Theologies". GB Personal File

### WEEK 8

13. Visitation: "Elements of an Effective Visit: A Biblical Model" [GB Personal Bible Study].
14. Biblical Principles for Parish Intercessions on Sunday [GB Personal Bible Study]

### WEEK 13

15. Lay Reader Licensing Liturgy [St. John's (Richmond), 2020. Adapted from Church of England]
16. Lay Reader License (Sample) [St. John's (Richmond), 2020. Adapted from ANiC Clergy License]

## The 39 Articles in the Anglican Church of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century<sup>1</sup>

- 1) It is necessary firstly, to understand the ways in which Anglicans express and embrace their theology . They are twofold: in our Church Services, and - underlying these - in the 39 Articles of Religion. This is why revision to BCP liturgy is so very important. Anglicanism depends upon, a) 'common prayer', - liturgical Services with a fixed, thoughtful, rigorous expression of theological conviction, undergirded by, b) the Articles' resolute, confessional definitions of Reformed-Catholic doctrine.
- 2) What IS an 'Article'? And, how are they organized? An Article is simply an official position statement, concisely-written, 'expressing fundamental principles of authentic Anglican belief.'<sup>2</sup> They are clustered into three broad divisions: 1) the catholic (ie. 'universal Christian'); 2) the Protestant; and 3) the Anglican. Thus, they define and describe what is to be believed 1) by all Christians, everywhere, at all times; 2) how Anglicanism is to be understood as distinctly Protestant and evangelical (ie. non-Roman); and, 3) how Anglicanism is distinct from other Protestant Churches.
- 3) The Anglican Church in the West has suffered greatly from importing theological Liberalism into her Liturgies. Instead of the Reformed-Catholicism of the BCP, newly-crafted collections of Services have shifted the focus of worship away from an engagement with the pure Word of God. Instead, they concentrate on symbol, and ritual, in contemporary (ie.'more relevant') Services which either overthrow or seriously-modify Cranmer's Prayer Book rites - most notably, the 'sin-grace-faith' structure we saw embedded in them is often discarded, since liberal theology by definition lays very little stress on sin, per se.
- 4) The 39 Articles, were intended by Cranmer et. al. to preserve and protect the Biblical integrity of Anglicanism. They are the basis of our identity, alongside the BCP and the Ordinal - without them, Anglicanism isn't Anglican, nor is it Protestant for that matter. But they have lost their rightful place as theological safeguards. Today, many Clergy and most laity have never been taught their content and significance. Recovery of understanding and submission to them is important, as the Anglican Church in North America establishes herself in our day. Their presence, intact, within the 2021 ACNA Prayer Book is not a little encouraging in this regard!
- 5) There are at least three reasons why Anglicans - especially those who aren't pastors - should read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the 39 Articles: they help to frame a clear understanding of the Biblical Gospel; enable us to better defend it; and readily grow it, in our world.

### 1) The Articles Help Frame our Understanding of the Gospel

By the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, Medieval Christianity had embraced many superstitious, even pagan beliefs and practices. The Biblical Gospel had been diluted - indeed, Reformers like Luther, Calvin, and Cranmer believed it was defaced, on the verge of destruction. With beliefs blurred, the simple Gospel of the New Testament was being obliterated. The Reformation was the attempt to 'reform and re-establish' Christian truth in the Churches of Europe.

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<sup>1</sup> Based in part upon material appearing in a Gospel Coalition (Canada) paper by Jonathan Camiré, June, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> ACNA Constitution & Canons.

In his Preface of 1549, [Canadian BCP, p. 715] Cranmer writes that his goal "Concerning the Service of the Church" was, "that the people (by daily hearing of holy Scripture read in the Church) might continually profit more and more in the knowledge of God, and be more inflamed with the love of his true religion."

The Articles he composed are declarations which expose false doctrine, and counter un-Biblical teaching. When they were written, the Bible was being both translated and published abroad, newly-putting it into the hands of all Christians. The Articles provided Anglicans with healthy definitions of Reformation thought, 'boundaries for belief', which enable correct understanding of the teachings of the Bible.

Again and again, Cranmer's short compositions point to the Scripture, and instruct Anglicans to submit to its authority. So for instance, Article VI states most clearly that, "Holy Scripture contains all things necessary for salvation": unless something can be shown proved by the Bible, it cannot be required of Anglican believers. Article VIII urges to to understand and use the 3 historic Creeds, because "... they may be proved by most certain warrants of holy Scripture." The primary authority of the Bible - "God's Word, written" (Article XX) - is crystal-clear. And in considering the Roman doctrines of purgatory, pardons, worship of images, and invocation of the saints in prayer, Article XXII limits and defines their position as *beyond* the clear teaching of Scripture: they are, "a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word."

Troublesome and difficult different doctrines, with associated practices, have always beset the Church's right understanding and application of Scripture. Cultural trends especially, are drivers of fresh approaches to theological understanding. Sometimes they can produce welcome refinements, clarifying Scripture's interpreting power and application. But often they arrive with great pressure to accept and adapt them *over against* the Bible's historic authority. The Articles set helpful boundaries which highlight when teachings stray from orthodoxy.

## **2) The Articles Provide Spiritual Defence**

Christians are told [1Pet 3.15] to "honour Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks for a reason for the hope which lies within." We need preparation to do this. As statements safeguarding the Church against mistaken teaching - medieval Roman, and radical Protestant alike - the 39 Articles provide a way of 'theological thinking', communicating the importance of sound doctrine, and truth. In short, they help us know *why* we believe.

Strident, anti-Christian paradigms govern an increasing segment of our national dialogues. Included in the challenges we face are questions about the most basic Biblical themes - sin, free will, eternal destiny, grace, the rôle of the Bible, *themes which are directly addressed by the Articles*. As Anglicans we have this treasure, assisting us to be Biblically-literate and thoughtfully-integrated Christians, to handle the Word of God with accuracy and proper reference. The Articles are solid food, and sure ground, upon which we may witness. They encourage faithfulness to Jesus, clarity in speaking, and provide us with Spiritual defence against error.

## **3) The Articles Enhance Gospel Growth**

We live in an 'audio/visual age' today, wherein the great majority of content meant for our learning is delivered to us. YouTube, Podcasts, Social Media, and of course TV, are predominant sources of information, and instruction. It's not a long way from here to St. Paul's lament to the



Ephesian Church, that they were in danger, being "tossed back and forth by every wind of doctrine." (Eph 4.14).

The NT teaches that there is a necessary progression in a Christian's understanding, leading to a spiritual maturity which, in part, comes from personal engagement with *Biblical doctrine*, not just the text of Scripture [Heb 5.12ff; 2Pet 3.16-18, and many more!]. The 39 Articles are a brilliant place for all Anglicans - especially the laity - to begin and continue this life-long work. As we become more familiar with the way the truths of Scripture inform and shape our faith, the Gospel grows, through us, in the world which, as Dr. Packer has written, "can embolden us to be ambassadors who confront the postmodern and post-truth [post-Christian] challenges that are increasing in Canada."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> J.I. Packer, *The Thirty-Nine Articles* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2007), p. 71.



## Ten Elements of 'Historic Anglicanism' \*\*

### Introduction

*"What do we mean by 'Anglicanism' as a definition?" And, why 'historic'?"*

The Anglican 'Way' of Christian faith, is the pattern and form of the Church of England, as defined by THREE HISTORIC DOCUMENTS:

- i) The Book of Common Prayer (1662)
- ii) The Ordinal (Services for Bishops, Priests, and Deacons)
- iii) The 39 Articles of Religion

Within these documents are to be found the Doctrine, Beliefs, Practices, and Ethos of Historic Anglican Christianity. Anglicans are thus 'People of the Book', in more ways than one..

### Ten Elements

1. It's final authority in matters pertaining to salvation is in the **Holy Scriptures**
  - A. *Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.*  
[Article VI]
  - B. The Church is 'the witness and keeper of holy writ', (but not the source of "Holy Writ"!)  
[Art. XX, which also recognizes that various "rites" need to be authorized and adjudication given, in matters of "controversy"; the church has "power ... and authority" in such things].
  - C. Nonetheless, churches may err, and indeed have erred, within history; they are not infallible: so, to begin, Scripture is the basis and touchstone of the faith.
  - D. Thus, the church **MUST** defer to the Bible in all matters pertaining to salvation and, indeed, ultimately in all matters pertaining to rites, ceremonies, and controversies. **THE ANGLICAN CHURCH, THEREFORE, IS BIBLICAL** as to the basis of its authority.
  - E. At their Ordination, the minister is given a Bible as the 'Instrument' of ministry. The Bishop's Charge in the Ordinal (BCP p. 648-650), Avon with the Interrogation, make it abundantly-clear that Christian ministry has the Bible as its basis, and means.
2. Historic Anglicanism is **Protestant**, anchored in the theological convictions of the **European Reformation** of the 15th and 16th Century.
  - A. Article VI states, "...whatsoever is not read therein," - that is, in the Bible - "is not required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith."
  - B. Thus, the Anglican Church upholds the right of the individual to read, and understand the Bible for his salvation, as opposed to salvation and truth mediated to him by the Church. It was (and remains) quite distinct from the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church.
  - C. This does nothing to deny the importance of the minister in teaching, explaining, and applying the Bible. Nonetheless, the hearer of the Word takes the responsibility to accept, modify, or reject the minister's teaching.

3. Anglican Christianity recognizes the 3 historic Creeds (Apostles' Nicene, Athanasian), which secure the great truths of Biblical revelation, having been composed at 3 past moments of high theological controversy. Historic Anglicanism is thus '**catholic**' (this term comes from two Greek words, *kath holike*, meaning "according to the whole"), as opposed to individual, potentially-heretical, teachings.
  
4. However, "historic" Anglicanism is, theologically, **Reformed**, articulating the great biblical insights of the great reformers Luther, Calvin, and Cranmer, and others who influenced them. It was the last country in Europe to formally embrace theology of the Reformation.
  - A. Sinners, which all persons are, as descendants of Adam, are made righteous before God solely for the merit of Christ, who is seen as THE Sacrifice for sin, and not on account of their own works, or deserving (Articles IX & X).
  - B. Only two Sacraments - effectual signs of grace, the Lord's Supper and Baptism - are recognized as Dominical, ordained by the Lord Jesus Christ, both of which take their character from the Gospel.
  - C. They have a significant place in the life of the Church. Both entail significant liturgical forms; that of the Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion, reaches great heights of theology and devotion.
  - D. Their notable place within Anglican order is secured by a simple and plain instrumentality, whereby the one called, and sent to teach the congregation - the Priest/Minister - is the one who administers these effectual signs.
  
5. The Anglican Church is a **liturgical** body, employing set forms of worship, to several ends.
  - A. Liturgies secure regular acknowledgement from the Church that sinners are saved only in Christ.
  - B. They express a congregation's adherence to the Catholic faith by means of reciting the historic creeds.
  - C. They express the need of the people to hear the Bible in both Testaments, read systematically, with a particular place given to the Psalms as articulating biblical piety.
  - D. Prayers are carefully-crafted theologically, reflecting local and national/international priorities
  - E. The liturgy is not to be used for art's sake (that is, aesthetically), but for the sake of truth. The Lord should be worshipped "in the beauty of holiness" (Ps. 96.9), NOT 'in the holiness of beauty.'
  - F. Liturgy protects the laity from the whims of the clergy. The congregation is given voice, articulating the faith, in addition to hearing the minister.
  - G. Cranmer recognized that the words used in Church must be **intelligible** (1Cor 14.6-25). For this reason, Services were to be plain, and simple, and the ministers were told to speak clearly to the congregation.
  - H. Contrary to popular impression, the *actual time* taken by the liturgical content of the Services is not great! Take Morning Prayer as an example: apart from the hymns, readings, sermon, and notices, there may not be more than 10 minutes of actual liturgy! In a crisply-conducted Service it is entirely possible to have 2 readings, a psalm, the creed, reasonable intercessions, four hymns, and a twenty minute sermon, and be done in one hour. (Compare this to some free church meetings, where one does not get to the pulpit in under an hour, and neither Old Testament, New Testament, Psalm, Creed, or meaningful intercessions have been heard beforehand!).



6. The Ordinal, Catechism, and Occasional Services all commit Anglican ministers to a ministry which is clearly **evangelistic**, and **pastoral**.
  - A. The evangelism envisaged is NOT of the momentary, 'event-centred' kind, which is independent of the life of the local parish.
  - B. Some Christian traditions operate on "believe, before you belong" basis; Historic Anglicanism acknowledges the doctrine of "prevenient grace" (the grace that precedes faith), which is consistent with the approach "belong, before you believe": the liturgies, as well as the Bible, hymns, prayers, and sermons, all inculcate faith over time.
  - C. Yet there remains a need to catechize the congregation. This will often take the form of formal preparation, for Baptism, Confirmation, and Lay ministry.
  
7. The Anglican Church is **episcopal**, and **parochial**, requiring that only those recognized and authorized by the bishop may preach to the congregation, and ministry the sacraments. The task, and role, of ordaining and licensing ministers and laity who teach and lead the Services is placed in the hands of the bishop.
  - A. This hierarchical structure provides a certain stability not found in many Churches. The bishop ordains and deploys those who meet his approval, and the affirmation of the laity.
  - B. The incumbent minister is expected to be loyal to their bishop, and to exercise the ministry of Word and Sacrament with humility, godliness, and diligence.
  - C. Typically, ministers hold a license from the bishop, and cannot be unseated by their congregation, apart from exceptional circumstance of proven unfaithfulness. While this can be abused by the clergy, it serves to well-insulate, and embolden faithful ministry.
  
8. Historical Anglicanism has a **rational ethos**. It has always been prepared to engage in study, and debate.
  - A. Evangelism has depended upon apologetics, eschewing either manipulative, or unworthy methodology of bringing sinners to Christ.
  - B. People like J.C. Ryle, C.S. Lewis, Jim Packer, and John Stott come readily to mind as examples. They have given thousands in their generations, and beyond, ground for hope in the intellectual and moral acceptability of Christianity.
  
9. Historic Anglicanism **affirms both creation, and society**. It is deeply-concerned with the common good - for the 'welfare of the city' (to use Jeremiah's term); and with intercessions which are directed to that end. It seeks to be **engaged** with the life of the world which surrounds it, and which it seeks to attract.
  
10. It is, likewise, a **welcoming fellowship**, unrestrictive in terms of membership, not at all exclusive or sectarian in personality and orientation.
  - A. A steady flow of people have always come to the Anglican Church from other denominations which, in the past, have in fact separated from it!
  - B. It has a broad accessibility to the Church, of those outside its active membership. 'We belong to you' is the posture and particular grace of a local parish in its geographic locale.

\*\* This paper borrows in part from material previously published by Bp. Paul Barnett, and Dr. J.I. Packer. Any errors are the sole responsibility of the present author.



## BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER



Dr. J.I. Packer

Dr. J.I. Packer discusses with Julie Lane-Gay the significance of the Book of Common Prayer (1662) upon its 350th Anniversary. The renowned theologian calls the Prayer Book “the Bible orchestrated for worship.” This interview is published with the permission of *The Anglican Planet* where it first appeared.

*How did the Book of Common Prayer first get your attention?*

I was taken to church from an early age, and was thus reared on the 1662 English (Prayer) Book, but no one ever explained any of it to me. So Sunday worship by the BCP never meant more to me than regularly cleaning my teeth – a required routine which I was told was good for me. Most of the time I was thinking about something else. When I became a Christian, I was so cross with the Church of England for never having explained the Gospel to me properly that I spent a couple of years fellowshipping with the Brethren.

Then, slowly but surely, I became aware that Prayer Book services were celebrating the same realities that were now shaping my life and from that point on the Prayer Book has anchored itself deeper and deeper in my conscious life. It has anchored itself as an articulation of worship, celebration of the God of Grace, celebration of union with and life in Christ, and celebration of the quest for holiness, which God impressed on me from fairly early on in my pilgrimage, as a priority.

*How do you use it now?*

I have memorized most of the regular services. On Sundays I am a regular at the 7:30 am Holy Communion service at St John's [Vancouver], a service that closely follows the Book of Common Prayer. On weekdays, I aim to walk thirty minutes every day very early in the morning and I say Morning Prayer as I walk. That is quite distinct from the 30 minutes I then spend back in the house reading the Bible. I do not use the BCP in the evening because I am never at my best in the evening so I never plan to do any serious praying, or serious anything else, at that time. At night I do a 'minimal signoff' after the day's living, noting the mistakes I have

made that need to be forgiven and repented of and expressing thanks for anything particularly good that has come my way during the day.

*If I wanted to integrate the BCP into my devotional time, how would you suggest I start?*

I appreciate very much the wisdom and fruitfulness of building one's daily devotions on what is spelled out for you in the collect. The collects are brief and you get a different one every week. Pray through each one and reflect on it. Then I would say talk freely with the Lord about what is going through your mind, what you care about, things you are seeing, things you are becoming aware of – obligations, admonitions, encouragements, matters for thanksgiving. I don't think most of us do as much thanksgiving as we should – so when I am trying to help people get into the habit of prayer, I underline the fact that thanksgiving, and plenty of it, is necessary to a healthy Christian life – as the BCP shows.


*What about the places where the Prayer Book says 'minister' or 'leader'? Do we say these parts to ourselves?*

When you are saying the Office on your own, you become the leader. Then, I believe, you can properly say everything, including the absolution, to yourself and indeed need to.

*What parts of the BCP are important to say with others?*

The whole of the Daily Office – Morning and Evening Prayer both – is admirably angled for corporate use. Every bit of the service goes better when you are doing it with others. It is meant for 'group work.' Cranmer didn't know that language but certainly that is what he had in mind. He directed the priest to ring the church bell at daily service times in the hope that members of the congregation would come





and say the Office with him. I don't think that was simply because it would be of benefit to the members of the congregation but because Cranmer knew group worship honours God in a more robust way than solo worship can ever do. I believe that contemporary Protestant Christianity has become infected with the thought that set forms of liturgy are for personal use first and group work second. I don't believe that. I believe that in celebrating and glorifying God, group worship is primary. It certainly will be so in heaven and I think it is meant to be that way here on earth. I notice that the calls to thanksgiving in the New Testament letters are always plural. The whole Church is called to give thanks, and that I think is a pointer to the fact that group worship that celebrates the greatness and goodness of God is primary. Do we need the entire BCP or would abbreviated services work just as well? Using mini-versions of the set services may seem beneficial in the short run but actually becomes a real impoverishment in the long run. We ought to use the whole of the BCP as opposed to selections from it. Cranmer's architecture of services is masterly, and best not tampered with.

*What about changing some of the words now and then in the Services?*

One or two BCP words have changed their meaning over the centuries and that makes adjustment of them an advantage. But otherwise, by changing the words all that we do is put ourselves out of step with the BCP, and encourage ourselves to think, "We are a little wiser and more skillful than Cranmer was."

*Well, are we? I am not so sure.*

Some people feel the BCP is outdated and irrelevant. I don't think the BCP's Sixteenth Century ceremonial style of speech is as much a problem as is suggested. All that is needed is to sit people down and explain this language to them. If you want to know why it should be ceremonial – why ceremonial language is regularly used when you are making an address to a person of distinction such as royalty – well, we are addressing royalty when we're praying to our God. The idea that our Heavenly Father and our crucified and risen Lord are just good buddies is demeaning. It is inappropriate. The whole BCP is couched in this dignified ceremonial idiom, as are the hymns we sing, and I think this should be appreciated as making for reverence, rather than treated as some sort

of problem. I remember from my youth that in Anglo-Catholic churches sermons on Prayer Book themes and language were part of the regular fare. The purpose of them was to upgrade the quality of the congregation's worship. I think there was wisdom both in that purpose and in that practice.

*What should we understand about the time in which the BCP (1549, 1552, 1662) was written?*

When the BCP was born it had few rivals. There was no radio, no television and no regular public use of secular language of any sort dinning into people's ears. But each Sunday people attended church and heard the familiar services read. It is easier to internalize material when it is repeated stand-alone material.

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*In what ways might Anglicans be missing some essentials by not using the BCP? Where are the big gaps?*

I think the realization of our own sinfulness is the biggest of all the gaps and the deepest deficiency in the quality of our worship.

*What do you say when people say they just don't feel the Book of Common Prayer is culturally sensitive?*

I say that the BCP is culturally sensitive to all the really important facts of life: family, marriage, singleness, health – good and bad – and all the ethical Anglican Studies Program facts of family life. It is sensitive to the fact that community should be sought and practiced as a Christian duty. There should be togetherness, mutual admonition, forbearance, and unity in worship – part of the national church idea – which is part of the raw material of the Prayer Book.

*Are there contexts in which the use of the BCP concerns you?*

I don't think the Prayer Book is being well used when its contents, context and layout have not been taught. Like Christianity itself, the BCP

needs teaching. It doesn't come naturally to anyone, just as it doesn't come naturally to understand the Bible the first time you read it.

***Is the BCP being taught much today in theological colleges?***

It is hardly taught at all in theological colleges, so far as I know. What seminaries seem to do on both sides of the Atlantic is to survey and try out alternative forms of worship that the modern church has come up with and these get evaluated, rather than the BCP. If I were regularly leading worship these days, I would encourage the congregation to expect that every service – Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer and Holy Communion – is going to be an adventure. It will be a route that we've followed before, no doubt, but when you take a walk through luscious woodland you never appreciate all of it first time around. The walk is one that you enjoy taking again and again and again because there is always something new to see and yet it is the same woodland and the same path. And what, as worship leader, I emphasized last time through isn't what I am going to emphasize this time. Also, I would always plan a sentence or two to explain the lessons and the Psalms, varying as they do from service to service.

***How do you see the BCP working in tandem with the Bible?***

Think about the BCP as the Bible orchestrated for worship – when you take the Prayer Book apart, just about every phrase echoes something in Scripture. And the BCP is the Bible orchestrated for worship much more fully than any modern alternative than I have seen as yet. Think of the difference between a full orchestra and a sextet – a few instruments trying to play the same grand music which that full orchestra plays. Since it is the same grand music, the sextet sounds a bit thin and forlorn.

***Why are some Christians so suspicious of the BCP and how do we respond to that suspicion?***

Some Christians have attended churches where the routine is for the minister to improvise his prayers and there is a prejudice going around in connection with this that what is called the formalism of the BCP is what makes Anglicans go light on the Gospel. Then, when these folk are confronted with the Prayer Book presentation of the Cross and the redeeming love of Christ, and our sin and our desperate need of grace, they don't recognize it as

powerful and searching language. It just impresses them as oldfashioned. Powerful language from the Sixteenth Century – think of Shakespeare – is something that you have to grow into. Kids at school find their first introduction to Shakespeare in the classroom burdensome and difficult just because they don't appreciate his style. So they can't identify with the characters in the play. It is a fact that about the middle of the Sixteenth Century, English suddenly took off, becoming colloquial, evocative, weighty and arresting. It took off first in the phrasing of Cranmer's Prayer Book and the First Book of Homilies. Explain this so that people understand it, and suspicion will give way to excitement. It happened to me and I have seen it happen to others.

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## Our Great Inheritance

*(This eloquent and incisive essay was written by H. Matthew Lee, who was a PBSC bursary recipient in 2021. It originally appeared in "Covenant", the weblog of the Living Church Foundation, in September 2020, and is reprinted here with permission. Matthew publishes in "Covenant" under his baptismal name of Paul.)*

The Book of Common Prayer is the great masterpiece of the English Church, and although the Anglican Communion today is now present beyond the historical conquest of the British Empire, it is still impossible for us to think about and understand Anglicanism without reference to the history of the Established Church of England. This is particularly acute for me as someone who has little, if any, connection to the English and their colonial exploits by personal or familial history. Nevertheless, as an Anglican, the great treasures and sins of the English Church are as much my inheritance as they are to a thoroughbred Englishman, as we are mystically bound together by the common chalice and altar.

Through the Prayer Book, Thomas Cranmer almost single-handedly set the liturgical dialect of English Christianity which remains to this day. It is a language so grand that it was adopted by those outside of the Anglican Church, and not just by other Protestants. Long before the social emancipation of English Catholics and the

post-Vatican II ecumenical thaw, Roman Catholic translations of the liturgy into English adopted Cranmer's renderings of liturgical Latin into English as we can see in the early bi-lingual missals and, perhaps most significantly, the English translation of the Tridentine Breviary by John Crichton-Stuart. The same goes for English translations of the Orthodox liturgies which began in earnest with the Anglican hands of John Mason Neale and Isabel Hapgood.

Almost five centuries after its advent, the rhythm of the Prayer Book's English has lost little of its power. As a literary masterpiece the Prayer Book is greater than the works of Milton, more significant than even Shakespeare, for it created the language of prayer for the English-speaking world — a sacral English, a dialect set aside uniquely for the loftiest purpose of worshipping God.

Despite the prodigious efforts of Anglophone Christians to vulgarize the language of prayer over the past half-century, the hieratic English of the Prayer Book still remains in all its grandeur. Far from being a museum piece it is still used daily in prayer; far from being "outdated" it is spoken not just by our stubborn elders who are content with the sacred language of their childhood but also the many young Anglicans who have discovered the classical Prayer Book and its irresistible magnetism.

But for all its literary excellence, if the aesthetic quality of the Prayer Book's prose were all we cared about, the Anglican legacy would be poor indeed. One might sympathize with W. H. Auden's exasperation at the introduction of "contemporary English" into the liturgy in his 1968 letter to St. Mark's in the Bowery, and perhaps have even repeated his words verbatim ("Have we gone stark raving mad?") while hearing the vulgarity that is supposed to be "friendly" to the modern ear. But losing oneself to purely aesthetic effect is a fascist play, not a Christian one. Certainly, Auden himself did not only have the aesthetic in mind in his letter as he notes that "one of the great functions of the liturgy is to keep us in touch with the past and the dead".

So, setting aside the ways the Prayer Book's exalted dialect has been taken up and renewed by the Roman Catholics and the Orthodox today, what is it about the old Prayer Book that grasps our spirit with such power? The reason is much deeper and more profound than the fact that it avoids the cheap journalese that infects every corner of the Church, whether it be in its modern liturgical texts or diocesan pronouncements. No, the true reason for its power is that it still speaks those things which we have all stopped saying without apology, and it speaks them through our own mouths as we pray.

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When one recalls the most moving passages of the Prayer Book they will all, invariably, be concerned with spiritual matters, moral themes, and attestations to transcendent otherness that are now strange and offensive to our decadent age. "In all time of our tribulation, in all time of our wealth; in the hour of death, and in the day of judgement." Who today talks about the hour of death and the day of judgment? Not even at funerals do we talk about death today, distorted as they are into the strange first-world decadence of "celebrations of life" or the unmitigated narcissism of "living funerals". Do we imagine that we will outrun the deaths of our beloved and ourselves if we distract ourselves hard enough? But we hear from afar the truth perennial, perennial because Biblical: "Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down, like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow..." And before we are left desolate in the recognition of our mortality, the voice of the deep intercedes for us: "... suffer us not, at our last hour, for any pains of death, to fall from thee", and commits our mortal remains with those words that are still recognized by all: "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; in sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life... blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

When do we hear such meditation on the inevitability of our mortal end, or the cosmic agony of alienating ourselves from God in the pains of death? When have we last heard such things from the dean standing under the stars and stripes at a Republican rally; from the curate singing the national anthem in front of the altar



H. Matthew Lee

(heaven knows what the "Land of the Free" or the "True North" have at all to do with Calvary and the Empty Tomb); the vicar duped by the latest "public intellectual" swindler; or the bishop waving a rainbow flag at the Pride parade? Might our upper-middle class white clergy have started to understand even a little about the mortal gravity of "lightning and tempest; plague, pestilence and famine; battle and murder, and sudden death" from the comforts of their suburban homes, now that a pandemic and social upheaval have arrived on their front steps?

A part of the old Prayer Book's power is how it reveals our self-righteous pretension for the sickness it is, a brittle narcissism that hides itself under the activist rhetoric of the day. When we see another mealy-mouthed publication from a synod, even Lambeth, saying something like, "May God lead us to solve our social inequality", we can still hear the noble voice echo from the choir loft: "comfort all that are in danger, necessity, and tribulation... and all that are desolate and oppressed."

For generations Anglicans prayed for truth and grace, peace and humble comfort, justice and atonement. But now, it seems, we cannot help ourselves from issuing a constant stream of fatuous self-indulgence thinly disguised in the jargon of social concern — and fancy ourselves wise for it.

If only we were able to realize how facile all this is when our Anglican churches are among the most socio-culturally monochromatic institutions in North America. But if we incline our ear even in the midst of all such grim banalities, we can still hear the old organ bellow from above with moral clarity: "... there is no health in us: But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders."

But more significantly, the old Prayer Book continues to inspire such great devotion from a diversity of young people, whether leftist or

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conservative, "Evangelical" or "Catholic", because it is perhaps the last thing we have left in contemporary Anglicanism that is unashamed of being *Christian* in a robust, confident way. It is the only thing left which is connected, in both form and content, to our forebears and has resisted the contemporary obsession with novelty and "relevance".

What brings us to breathe life into the old Book with our prayers and allow it to shape our minds, tongues, and spirits, is that in its pages we find religion. In it we find a tradition that has been hallowed by the lips and fingers of the generations before us; in it are the liturgies which animate Scripture into the grammar of prayer, a language that speaks with confidence about the transcendent otherness of God and with sobriety about our sins. When we pray the Office we are in the company of the cloud of witnesses — the old granny in the country parish, the young soldier sent to his death by kings and high councils, the cloistered monks, the Israelites weeping by the rivers of Babylon.

The Prayer Book is sublime because its language is so authentically Christian, so authentically *human*. It gives glory to the majesty of God and unflinchingly lays witness to the grandest virtues and deepest failures of the human soul, and thereby shows us the path to repentance and true transcendence — our becoming one with God. Therein lies its timelessness, the reason for its relevance to our very day, and

why so many have returned to these old words; these words that were deemed obsolete by an arrogant generation and pawned off for amateurish novelties.

When one opens a contemporary revision of the Prayer Book or some other concoction from our "liturgical committees", one discovers a studious erasure of whatever is supposedly too difficult for our frail modern minds, too uncouth for the cultured ear — even to the point of censoring Scripture. There is to be no talk about rage or judgment; no mention of death or tribulation; no examination of gluttony and lust; no remembrance of sin or atonement; no courage to face suffering and martyrdom; no thoughts of even the cross or the empty tomb — no, of course not, because all these things would make us impolite company to modern society; too serious, too *religious*. And by that very fact, these new liturgical texts and lectionaries are irrelevant to both Christians and non-Christians alike, because they are inauthentic to the complexities of both God and human life.

Well-meaning as our Church might be in all this, our preaching is banal, our theology incoherent, our discipline nonexistent, because they are not grounded in the genuine prayers of the Church, shaped by the fullness of Scripture and hallowed by the witness of the saints. While stodgy English discipline still remained in her clergy and laity, the Anglican Church was able to speak with some truth about spiritual and

moral matters due to the guidance and authority of the Prayer Book, even in the midst of the Church's greatest periods of decadence. Let us today restore the ancient landmark which our fathers have set (Prov. 22:28), so that tomorrow we might speak more truthfully.

For all the manifold failures of the Anglican Church, indeed her multitude of great sins, it had the singular fortune to have had its foundations laid in an age of great strife, disease, and upheaval. It was mostly penned by the hand of an opportunistic man who, for all his sins, mustered his courage and recovered his integrity at the last moments as he thrust his right hand into the fire and burned on the pyre. The Bible and the Prayer Book, written by the Israelites and the English, carry a universal quality that transcends the ages of the authors. One, because it is the revelation of God; the other, because it is a faithful witness to the revelation of God. It is for this reason that I, who am neither Jew nor English (let alone Greek, Roman, or Slavic), have them as my spiritual ancestors. So, in the memories of my predecessors I will carry these heirlooms which I have received as an adopted son to the next generation who belong to the Lord of Hosts.

So I beseech thee, good Lord, to hear us, "That it may please thee to give us true repentance; to forgive us all our sins, negligences, and ignorances; and to endue us with the grace of thy Holy Spirit, to amend our lives according to thy holy Word."



## The Service of the Word: Theological Reflections

John Webster

### I. Introduction

Is there a *theological* argument to be made for ensuring the regular provision of a service of the word as a principal act of Sunday worship? That is to say, is there something about the Christian gospel which would lead us to give high profile to a service whose centre is the public reading of Holy Scripture? I propose that there is such an argument, and that a free-standing liturgy of the word has a unique task to perform in the worship of Anglican Christians. Provided that it is understood to be complementary to (and not in competition with) the regular celebration of the eucharist, and provided that its real centre of gravity is in the reading of Scripture, a service of the word ought to be a basic feature of an Anglican pattern of common prayer. That pattern aims at enabling Anglican Christians to gather and be confronted, challenged, consoled and exhorted by the gospel of Christ in word and sacrament. It is a pattern which, therefore, has not one but two foci. Because it has this duality, and because contemporary Anglicanism is drawn almost exclusively to only one focus (sacrament, which nearly always means eucharist), it is worth asking some theological questions about why we might justifiably urge a rather different distribution of weight in public worship.

In what follows, my concern is to articulate the theological arguments which might be advanced in favour of a liturgy of the word as the main Sunday event. There are, of course, very important practical arguments to be advanced. We may, for example, give a good deal of weight to considerations of the ministry and mission of the church, and especially to those arguments which highlight some negative effects of an exclusively eucharistic pattern to the Sunday assembly. And so we may urge that those congregations which, for whatever reason, do not enjoy week-by-week priestly ministry, need to have rich non-eucharistic liturgical provision if their staple diet is not to be a somewhat attenuated communion service shorn of the thanksgiving, culminating in the distribution of the reserved sacrament. Or, again, we might want to draw attention to the spiritual and/or cultural treasure of an older, but now sadly diminished, style of Anglicanism in which a substantial, and usually choral, mattins formed a weighty element in Anglican piety. Or we may feel that the evangelistic ministry of the church is not well served by an invariant eucharistic Sunday gathering, since the eucharist is by its very nature exclusive — in effect, the gathering of the baptized from which the unbeliever is almost by definition excluded. This last argument has particular force to it, above all because it makes the church's mission a major factor in determining its patterns of worship. A lively awareness of the church's missionary mandate, and of the fact that

the proclamation of the gospel to the world is basic to the church's existence, should certainly alert us to the dangers of eucharistic introversion. This is not, of course, to suggest that those who promote the eucharist as the Sunday norm do so without any care for evangelism; indeed, for many Anglicans the celebration of the eucharist is itself the proclamation of the gospel. Yet the danger of turning inwards (present, of course, in *any* form of Christian worship) is less easy to surmount when the eucharist — rightly the sign of the separation of church and world — is the exclusive Sunday pattern. In this light, a service of the word may be much more hospitable to the outsider, and give greater freedom to preaching which expresses the direct summons of the gospel.

Provided that their motivation is not either sheer pragmatism or unspiritual nostalgia, none of these practical arguments is without substance. Indeed, one of the most unfortunate effects of liturgical renewal in Canada (and elsewhere) has been that, in enthusiasm to promote what is thought to be the normative centrality of the eucharist on Sunday, these kinds of arguments and the sensibilities (pastoral, evangelistic, spiritual and cultural) which they represent have become casualties in the process of homogenization. Such has been the hold of the idea that to gather as Anglican Christians on a Sunday is to celebrate the eucharist that we have often found it difficult to imagine that things have been and still could be rather different.

Yet however much weight these arguments may carry, in the end what is required is an argument rooted in theology. Why? The task of theology in the church is to bring the searching light of the gospel to bear on the life, worship and witness of the people of God. Properly speaking, theology is not in the business of speculating or working out solutions to questions which no-one has ever asked. Its job is to inquire into the adequacy of what we think, speak and do as Christians in the light of the gospel. Theology sets Christian thinking and Christian practice in the light of what the gospel reveals about the ways and works of God, made known in Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit in the life of the church. Because of this, theology has a "critical" role to play with regard to the worship of the church. This does not, of course, mean that theology dictates what ought to happen in public prayer. Theology is not some sort of intellectual legislator, standing in judgment over the church and its liturgy in comfortable remoteness from the real struggles of communities of faith trying to pray together. Far from it: theology is nothing more than that activity in which the people of God who gather for prayer humbly and repentantly try to listen as attentively as they can to the gospel, so that they can order their common life, including their common prayer. Theology is thus important in thinking about worship, because the gospel is important in thinking about worship. "[A]nything we say about worship — the forms of worship, its practice and procedure — must be said in the light of the gospel of grace. We must ask ourselves whether our forms of worship convey the gospel."<sup>1</sup>



If this is what theology is about, then its importance in ordering the life of public worship can scarcely be overstated. If there is a two-fold lesson to learn from the last fifteen years or so of liturgical debate in the Anglican Church of Canada, it is — first — that very often it is in theology that the real issues lie, and — second — that unless we are deliberate and vigilant, theology will very quickly find itself squeezed out of the discussion. So: what is to be said *theologically* about the place of a service of the word as a main act of Sunday worship? We need, first, to devote a little space to considering the centrality of the Word of God for all Christian worship, and then, second, to turn to the more practical question of how this relates to regular provision of a service of the word for the Sunday assembly.

## II. The Word of God and Christian Worship

God's Word is God himself in his self-communication. God is "Word" because God is active in manifesting himself; he is neither mute nor remote but self-communicative. As such, God is one who establishes fellowship with those whom he creates. Speaking his Word, he takes the initiative to stride across the distance between himself and us, and brings about a relation between himself and us. As God speaks, he draws near, and so discloses that he is "our" God. As God speaks, we are addressed and have it disclosed to us that we are God's people. God's Word in this way is "covenantal": in addressing us in his majestic and gracious revelation of himself, God creates a people for himself. That people is bound to him by the mercy with which he has chosen them, set apart as the recipient of his grace, and called to respond in gratitude, service and worship. In this covenant which God calls into being as he makes himself known, God is always the initiator. His speaking, his disclosing of himself in his Word, always runs ahead of our speech to him, which can therefore only be response, a second, human, word which can only occur after the great free act of God's Word declared to us by God himself.

Where does God speak? "In many and various ways", the Letter to the Hebrews tells us (Heb. 1.1) — meaning, not in a random scatter of odd experiences in the history of religion, but in the cumulative life of a particular people ("our ancestors") who found themselves accosted and jolted into awareness of God by those whom God appointed to speak in his name: "the prophets". "But" — and that single word points to the massive disorientation to which the New Testament as a whole is a testimony — "in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son" (Heb. 1.2). Jesus, that is, constitutes God's final, definitive and unsurpassable "utterance" of himself. For this "Word", unlike that of the prophets, is not to be understood as some human reality of which God makes use, annexing it to serve as a medium for God's speaking. No: this "Word" is God. Jesus, his person, his history, his living and dying and rising again, *embody* God's Word. Jesus is therefore no mere herald, speaking a



message from God which is essentially other than himself. He is God's Word. The reality of Jesus Christ is God's speech to the world because, in and as this one, God communicates his true essence to us: very God of very God. Moreover, God continues to speak in and as Jesus. For Jesus, the living one, risen, ascended, enthroned at the right hand of the Father, is not simply the Word which God once spoke, but also the Word which God now speaks. Jesus Christ is God's Word by whom we are addressed now in the power of the Holy Spirit, speaking of the fulfilment of all God's promises and evoking faith, in which we trust ourselves to the word of the gospel which we hear in him.

All this may strike us as remote from the practicalities of how Anglican Christians should worship when they gather on a Sunday; in fact, however, it takes us to the heart of what Christian worship is all about. "The essence of worship is to be found in the disclosure of the Word of God."<sup>2</sup> That is to say, worship is not first and foremost a human undertaking, some initiative on our part in which we stretch out and try to put ourselves in contact with God by the best use of our liturgical powers. Worship is *response*, an activity and a speaking on our part which is brought into being and sustained by the fact that God in Jesus Christ through his Spirit speaks his Word to us. Naturally, this does not mean that worship is not also our action, something which we plan and execute. But it is an action which is preceded by God's utterly creative and gracious act of self-manifestation. "Worship is first and foremost God's service to us. It is an action by God, which is directed towards us. Our activity in worship can be nothing other than reaction and response, the consequence of God's activity."<sup>3</sup> And that activity of God is the action of his speech.

For the Anglican tradition, worship has its two-fold centre in Holy Scripture and the celebration of the gospel sacraments. Both Scripture and sacraments are properly God's actions which he undertakes in the assembly of believers. In them, the church does not hear its own voice, or engage in some celebration of values or beliefs of its own invention, or call to mind some symbol which it has found particularly enriching. Scripture and sacraments are places where God acts, and therefore places where God's people are in an important sense passive. The primary "action" which the people of God perform is the distinctly passive action of faith — hearing God's Word as it encounters us in Holy Scripture, receiving the gift of new life in baptism through the coming of the Holy Spirit, feeding on the Lord Jesus in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving at the table of the Lord. Scripture and sacraments are thus not what the church does but what God does to the church. And, hence, both Scripture and sacraments are functions of the Word of God. They are "means of grace", in the sense that they are the chosen means through which God presents to us his self-communication, graciously making use of them to give access to the reality of Jesus Christ, who is in person the Word of life and salvation. In this sense, *all* Christian worship has its centre in the Word. To say this is not (as is frequently alleged) to

subordinate sacraments to Scripture and preaching; it is simply to say that both Scripture and sacraments matter because in them the living Word of God makes himself known.

### III. Worship and the Service of the Word

We have paused a little over some very basic clarifications about the nature of Christian worship for a couple of reasons. First, whatever we go on to say about the practical business of ordering public worship — whether in our denomination as a whole or in the context of the local congregation — must be focused by the gospel. Prior to any questions about liturgical texts, or about finding a workable distribution of weight between different kinds of worship event, we have to order our thinking aright. Second, in recent years Canadian Anglicanism has found it very difficult to engage in these basic theological clarifications about the nature of worship. Partly this is to be traced to the dominance of one (often not very well digested) model of Christian worship, favoured in the liberal strand of the Liturgical Movement. Partly, again, it is because those who instinctively sense the inadequacies of that model have rarely articulated their hesitations in *theological* terms. All this makes imperative the kind of initial clarifications which we have just offered. What of the next question: providing a service of the word as a principal act of Sunday worship?

At their best, the various Anglican traditions of common prayer have retained a sense of the proper parity between word and sacrament. In practical terms, this means that Anglican worship is most effective in responding to the creative impact of the Word of God when it offers provision both for eucharistic worship and for worship in which the main centre of gravity is the public reading of Scripture. Though Anglican history has often enough failed to match up to this ideal, it remains a pattern for public worship which reflects a vision of the church governed by the gospel in such a way that the reading of Scripture and the celebration of the sacraments go unhindered.

Some strands of modern Anglicanism have not found it easy to maintain the parity in practice, despite much commitment to the principle in theory. The most obvious contributory factor in this state of affairs has been the widespread acceptance of the view that the eucharist has been and is the norm for the Sunday assembly. Two effects of this are worth noting. One is that it has meant that by far the greatest part of the energy for liturgical renewal has been devoted to the church's eucharistic life: the eucharist has established itself as the centre of the church's worship, and all else has been made subservient to this "principal act" of Christian liturgy. In the light of this, the service of the word has come to be regarded as distinctly bland, lacking in the drama and symbolic density of the new eucharistic (and baptismal) rites. A second effect has been a certain displacement of the public reading of



Scripture (and the preaching of Scripture which is its corollary). This factor is sufficiently complex to warrant some more detailed comment.

Making the eucharist normative does not in itself undermine the reading and proclamation of Scripture. Champions of the normativity of the eucharist for Sunday worship rightly point out that in an important sense the eucharist is a service of word *and* sacrament; that the provision for the public reading of the Bible is generally rich and full; and that preaching is intrinsic to the celebration. All this may be conceded. Yet three problems remain. One is that, because the climax of eucharistic worship is well after the ministry of the word, there is some pressure to regard the earlier part of the service as a stage to be passed through to arrive at the real heart of the liturgical event. This problem is not, of course, exclusive to modern eucharistic rites, though because the modern rites are weighted so heavily towards the eucharistic prayer, it afflicts them with particular acuteness. A second, related, problem is that preaching in a eucharistic context rather quickly finds itself hemmed in by that context, whether in terms of theme, or, more practically, in terms of time. But most important is a third issue: eucharistic worship cannot (and should not) hope to provide the same kind of exposure to Scripture which is furnished by the variants of the daily office, especially when used for the main worship event on Sunday. The lengthy and leisurely attention to, and meditation upon, Scripture which is the central task of a service of the word requires a certain freedom from other concerns, a freedom which is not offered in quite the same way in sacramental worship.

None of this constitutes an argument against the significance of the eucharist in the life of the people of God. To gather at the Lord's table is both to obey his command and to lay hold of his promises. But what we may, perhaps, learn from our recent history is that the eucharist is not the only thing which the people of God will do when they assemble. A full-scale service of the word can enable the people of God to do something which is less easy to accomplish in the (necessarily) circumscribed "ministry of the word" component of a eucharistic celebration: it can help them concentrate mind, heart and will on the public reading of Scripture.

In its Sunday dress, the office is composed of a variety of elements: singing (whether choral or congregational); prayer and intercession; preaching. But at its heart is substantial exposure to the Scriptural word in the psalter, the lessons, the canticles and, by a sort of liturgical osmosis, in the text of the office itself. Crucially, it is Scripture as *read* which is the heart here, not Scripture proclaimed. The service of the word is not best thought of as a kind of scaffolding for preaching. To view it in this way would, indeed, be to fall into some of the same difficulties that can attend eucharistic worship — namely, moving through the reading of the Bible in order to get to something more climactic (this time, the sermon). Over against this, the service of the word is the liturgical expression of some fundamental Anglican

convictions: that God the Word bears witness to his works through the testimony of Scripture; that Scripture is self-interpreting because in it God speaks; that it is of capital importance that the people of God are exposed to Scripture in order that they may flourish in the spiritual life. Cranmer's hope in drawing up what remain virtually unchanged patterns of morning and evening prayer was that "the people (by daily reading of holy Scripture read in Church) might continually profit more and more in the knowledge of God, and be the more inflamed with the love of his true Religion."<sup>4</sup> Anglicanism has, of course, rarely managed to make that a daily reality: daily morning and evening prayer have been almost exclusively the preserve of special communities or texts for private recitation by the ordained. But Cranmer's intention for his revised office — inflaming love of God through hearing the Bible read — remains the key to understanding the Anglican service of the word.

In what particular ways does this service enable the deepening of knowledge of, and love for, God? In the classical prayer book structure (which is itself not a Reformation invention but a drastic simplification of pre-Reformation forms of daily prayer), the worshippers are steadily walked through the history of salvation as it is recounted in the biblical witness. The aim of the service of the word is to do nothing other than set Scripture before the congregation so that the ways and works of God which are displayed in it can be made vivid to heart, mind and will. Imaginatively, intellectually and morally the worshippers are arrested by Scripture; affections, thoughts and dispositions are directed to the prophetic and apostolic testimony. In doing this, the service of the word as it were maps out for the worshippers the spiritual landscape which they inhabit. It seeks to enable them to "read" the world — history, culture, experiences, the whole set of relations which make up human life — as a place in which God is bringing to fruition his purpose of redemption in Jesus Christ. Through repentant hearing of Scripture and through responding to it in praise and intercession, the worshippers are invested in the gospel, made freshly aware of its compelling power to transform our vision of who we are in relation to the God who creates, saves and perfects us. In this way, the Anglican service of the word is a further example of what the Jesuit liturgist Robert Taft sees as the essence of liturgy: "a common celebration of what we are, or rather of what we have become and are becoming in Christ."<sup>5</sup>

A brief look at the structure of Morning Prayer in the *Book of Common Prayer* tradition will indicate something of how this works out in practice. Cranmer's simplification of the medieval offices (drawing much from earlier models of the Spanish Franciscan Quiñones and the radical Lutheran revision of the breviary by Bucer) has as its core the public reading of the psalter and lessons from the Old and New Testaments. This core is surrounded by a penitential preface and a brief concluding set of versicles and collects (which has been somewhat expanded over the course of history). The introductory act of confession and absolution (itself given explicit warrant by "the Scripture" which moves us "to



acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness") is in essence a preparation for attending to God's Word as it encounters us in Scripture:

[A]lthough we ought at all times humbly to acknowledge our sins before God; yet ought we most chiefly so to do, when we assemble and meet together to render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at his hands, to set forth his most worthy praise, to hear his most holy Word, and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul.<sup>6</sup>

In similar fashion, the concluding prayers are in an important way retrospective, looking back to the Word which has been declared and beseeching God that the mercy proclaimed in the gospel of Christ may order and sustain our lives.

Between preface and conclusion lies the Scriptural heart of the service. Because we have so often treated the psalms and especially the lessons as a preface to preaching, we rather quickly gloss over the fact that it is the word *read* which is the real instrument of God's speech to the people of God, "the ordered *reading* of Holy Scripture, rather than the *exposition* of it, being the centre of Anglican worship. Scripture is independent of, and prior to, the church's exposition of Scripture, and the church relates to it, in the first place, simply by reading it aloud and only secondly by preaching."<sup>7</sup> What does this reading of Holy Scripture intend? The public declaration of the gospel. How is this accomplished? Through the prophetic and apostolic testimony. The reading of the psalter and the Old and New Testaments thus constitutes the high point of the service, interspersed with canticle material: the *Venite* before the recitation of the psalter; the *Te Deum* or the *Benedicite* after the Old Testament, the *Benedictus* or the *Jubilate* after the New Testament. The canticles function as a set of responses to the prophetic and apostolic witness, shaping the mind of the worshipper in apprehension of what is declared in that witness and guiding the heart of the worshipper in glad acknowledgement and affirmation. Everything else is subservient to this end: the "plain" publishing of the Scriptural testimony so that godliness can be promoted through the knowledge of the gospel.

Such, then, is the classical Anglican service of the word. Where the service of Holy Communion offers us the visible Word of God in which we are nourished by Christ's gift of himself in bread and wine, the service of the word offers a brief survey of the work of God for us and for our salvation, the history of God's saving purpose which is "recapitulated and 'personalized' in Jesus."<sup>8</sup> If there is any truth in what has been said about the service of the word, it should now be clear that there is indeed a forceful theological rationale for its regular celebration in the public worship of Anglican Christians. If it is to be a main Sunday event, such a celebration will involve a good deal more than a liturgical text. It will involve good lectionary provision — that is, the provision of a pattern of reading Scripture which will seek, not to dominate the church's reading of the Bible, but merely to offer a simple structure which will let the Word of God do its work among us. It will involve

deepened attentiveness to what is heard. It will involve a proper role for the ministry of preaching, as the attempt to serve the reading of Holy Scripture by offering a commentary which points back to the word read and displays its inherent persuasiveness and truth. It will involve the nurture of forms of congregational life in which common reading and common prayer both emerge from and sustain Christian belonging. All these elements — liturgical texts, lectionary patterns, preaching, the common life of common prayer — nevertheless constitute nothing more than the space within which God's Word can speak and go about its business among us.

#### IV. Conclusion

As it tries to emerge from some rather embittered years of liturgical debate, Canadian Anglicanism is still susceptible to the illusion that what matters most about worship is liturgical texts. Prayer books are certainly important, and Anglican order, doctrine and spirituality have been well served by the structure and discipline which they impose. But more is involved. Above all, perhaps, we need to see that the worship of God's people (even when they use the purest liturgical texts we may be able to devise) always takes place in the midst of the great struggle between God and sin — between the word which chastens and speaks forgiveness and our unwillingness to listen to either its rebuke or its encouragement. If a service of the word is to maintain a high profile alongside the celebration of the sacraments of the gospel — and it is my contention that, on theological grounds, it *ought* to have that kind of profile — it must be as a modest means through which God's own word can live and act. Anything more skirts idolatry; anything less risks spurning a wise and well-tried handmaid to the gospel.





## PREDESTINATION

Predestination is the sheet anchor of the doctrine of grace. This is illustrated by the Epistle to the Romans in which St. Paul establishes that our salvation rests on God's grace exclusively. He cites the two twins, Esau and Jacob, as the classic example, commenting 'Though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad, in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of his call, she [Rebecca] was told, "The elder will serve the younger"' (Rom. 9: 11, 12, R.S.V.).

So in the Thirty-Nine Articles the doctrine of election is fundamental to the sovereignty of grace. Article 17, the longest of the Articles, deals with the topic. (1) Its first sentence affirms that all who reach heaven do so because before the foundation of the world God chose them and unalteringly decreed to confer on them this benefit. (2) The second sentence lists the seven stages of the progress of the elect from 'curse and damnation' to 'everlasting salvation'—God's call, their response through grace, their free justification, their adoption as God's sons, the formation of a Christlike character within them, their expression of this in a life of good works, 'and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity'. We note here the two-sidedness of grace: God's sovereign initiative works through the faculties of our nature. God calls, we respond; God justifies, adopts, sanctifies, we live out a Christian life and finally attain to everlasting felicity. But our response is not to be regarded as our own contribution to our salvation but is itself God's gift, 'They through Grace obey', 'At length, by God's mercy, they attain'.

It is the same group of persons who pass through these seven stages, and in this respect the article is reminiscent of St. Paul's 'golden chain' in Romans 8: 29 f. However, in these two opening sentences the Article does not go beyond Augustine in affirming the irresistibility of grace and the effectual character of God's call. The indefectibility and perseverance of the saints is not touched on till the third sentence which comprises the second paragraph. In this third sentence

the Article sides clearly with Calvin, going beyond Augustine who taught that the gift of perseverance is not given to all the regenerate and that it is consequently possible to fall from a state of salvation and be eternally lost. The consequence of this possibility is that none would know whether he is elect, apart from a special personal revelation from God. Thus Thomas Aquinas wrote: 'No one can know whether he has sanctifying grace' (*Summa Theol.*, II. 1. 112. 5); and the Council of Trent affirmed: 'Except by special revelation, it cannot be known whom God has chosen unto Himself' (Session VI, Chapter 12). However, in its second paragraph Article 17 affirms (3) that our predestination and election in Christ may be known to us and be the subject of our meditation, yielding 'sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort'. (4) This knowledge or certification of our election results from knowledge of the promises of God, and from our perception of the working of God's Spirit within us. Consequently we may know that we are within the unbroken chain of God's purposes of blessing leading to eternal felicity. (5) This knowledge yields not only 'comfort' but increase in active godliness. For love kindles love, and a knowledge of God's steadfast love in delivering us from the curse and damnation we deserve and leading us without fail to 'eternal Salvation to be enjoyed through Christ', fervently kindles love towards God'.

A perception of the working of the Spirit of Christ in us is the assurance that God has adopted us as sons and chosen us in Christ; but an absence of this Spirit is no sign that a man is not elect (for all the elect being in this state). Nevertheless it may be so construed by the spiritually unenlightened, as experience shows. The Article, recognizing this, affirms (6) that the doctrine of predestination is a doctrine for the believer.

The Christian should always view the doctrine of predestination from the standpoint of his position in Christ. Looking backward he sees God's eternal grace choosing him in Christ, calling him, adopting him, glorifying him. As he looks forward he rejoices in the sure hope of salvation, for God is faithful, who called him and will confirm him to the end

(I Cor. 1: 8; Phil. 1: 6; I Thess. 5: 24). However, if it is separated from our experience in Christ and from our faith in God, it becomes a merely speculative doctrine (for example in the phrase 'once saved always saved' which contains no reference to God at all). It then has no religious value, and some of its apparent deductions may run counter to Christian conduct. Consequently in the Article's fourth sentence and last paragraph it is affirmed (7) that we must regulate our deductions from the doctrine of predestination by the plain teaching of Scripture; for example, (a) we must not despair of God's promises, arguing that we are non-elect, nor (b) must we presume on our election to the neglect of the clearly revealed will of God as to our duty and the way we are to live our lives.

The Article confines itself to discussing 'Predestination to Life'. It does not touch on reprobation (or preterition). This omission is not necessarily a denial of the doctrine of reprobation, as is sometimes assumed, but a recognition of the overwhelming predominance of the doctrine of predestination to life in the treatment of the subject in the Scripture, compared with the mystery of reprobation which is only touched on in half a dozen passages in Scripture. Predestination to life is a constant topic of Scripture, and consequently appropriately finds a prominent place in our own articles.

The seventeenth Article not only accompanies Calvin beyond the point where Augustine stopped short, but it effectively excludes an Arminian interpretation of predestination. Arminius, a Dutch theologian of the early seventeenth century, following many predecessors stretching back to the days before Augustine, based God's predestination not on His good pleasure (and so entirely within Himself) but on His foresight of how a man would respond to the opportunities of repentance and faith granted him. For Arminius, God's predestination (or decision about a man's future) follows the foresight of man's own decision. In this way the scriptural word 'predestination' is retained, but is evacuated of any real meaning. However, the Article clearly excludes this Arminian interpretation, for such a doctrine that our predestination is dependent on the exer-

cise of our own will could never be twisted to become 'a most dangerous downfall' were an unspiritual person to have it 'continually before his eyes', for it is the very thing which such people normally imagine to be the case. Nor could it ever lead to desperation or unclean living, for it bases 'predestination' entirely on the quality of a man's continual response to the Gospel.

These warnings of the Article confirm that its subject is the doctrine of absolute and unconditional election, for they deal with false and erroneous deductions which are sometimes made from this doctrine. The warnings are irrelevant in Arminian 'predestination'.

Article 18 concludes the group of articles (9-18) which deal specifically with individual salvation. It anathematizes the latitudinarian spirit which would open the gate of heaven to all who live a decent life. The doctrine of predestination (as expounded in Article 17) particularizes salvation and grounds it exclusively on Christ's merits and God's free gift; but the logical outcome of rejection of this doctrine is that God's salvation is generalized into the possibility of salvation, so that actual salvation comes to depend on the quality of a man's response, and not exclusively on God's grace. The quality of this response becomes the essential differentiating element in salvation. The doctrinal tendency to find a place for man's will in the ground of his salvation reaches its logical conclusion in the view 'That every man shall be saved by the Law or Sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law, and the light of Nature'. This view the Article anathematizes, 'For holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the Name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved.' If we think of our natural state as sinners as being 'without God', and 'children of wrath', and spiritually 'dead' (Eph. 2) the doctrine of Articles 17 and 18 is unavoidable.

Article 18 contains the only anathema in the Thirty-Nine Articles. Significantly enough it is directed against the full-blown form of the doctrine that salvation depends on man's own works; for it was this doctrine of works that was the basic



quarrel that the Reformers had with the papal system of religion. At the time of the Reformation their opponents would have agreed with the Reformers in the sentiments of Article 18. But in the passage of the centuries the Roman doctrine of works has expressed itself within the Roman Communion in very similar language to that anathematized by the Article. Thus Hans Küng has written: 'Yvonne (a Protestant) . . . can win eternal life if she lives according to her conscience and keeps God's commandments'.<sup>1</sup> Küng speaks similarly of how 'a pagan . . . can be saved'.<sup>2</sup> Support for this doctrine of salvation through following the light of conscience is sometimes sought in the Epistle to the Romans, chapters one and two. But in these chapters the apostle is not dealing with the salvation of the Gentiles but with the responsibility involved in possessing a conscience, and the culpability that comes from not following it. He concluded his argument: 'We before laid to the charge both of Jews and Greeks, that they are all under sin . . .' For they are all under law, either of Scripture or of nature, 'that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be brought under the judgment of God: because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight' (Rom. 3: 9, 19 f, R.S.V.). The possibility of salvation through the light of nature is no longer a private opinion amongst Roman Catholics but has been endorsed by the Second Vatican Council. In paragraph 16 of its Constitution of the Church, which was promulgated in November 1964, the Second Vatican Council declared:

The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator. In the first place among these there are the Moslems . . . Those also can attain a salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and moved by grace strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience. Nor does Divine Providence deny the helps necessary for salvation to those who,

<sup>1</sup> *That the World May Believe*, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

without blame on their part, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God and with His grace strive to live a good life.

It is difficult to see how in practice this is distinguishable from Pelagianism.

## A Way to Study the Bible

Date

Text

Main Idea

5 Facts

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

S

P

E

C

K



## How to Study the Bible Pt. 2

Date

Passage

Main Idea ('Why is this in the Bible?')

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- 1) OBSERVATION - *What is the most immediately-striking thing I see in the Passage?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) INTERPRETATION (a) - *What questions does this Passage raise for me (or my group)?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3) INTERPRETATION (b) - *What insight have I gained - what have I learned - from this Passage?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4) APPLICATION (SPECK) - *Where is a 'point of contact' between my / our personal circumstances?*

## THE GOSPEL IN THE LITURGY

*Do we value the Prayer Book enough?*

*Do we appreciate its real quality?*

*Do we make the best use of it?*

Certainly, the Prayer Book does not play in the lives of the present-day churchmen anything like the part it played in the Christian practice of their great-grandfathers. A century ago, Christians wove Prayer Book prayers into both private and family devotions as a matter of course. Their Bible reading followed the psalms and lessons set for each day. They memorized the catechism in youth, and dwelt on it constantly in later life. Their Prayer Book was prized and well-used.

But all that has changed. Many modern Anglicans do not even own a Prayer Book. Their Bible Study scheme, if they have one, owes nothing to the lectionary. They rarely hear, nor do they wish to hear, what used to be called 'Prayer Book teaching' – exposition of the Articles and services. The Prayer Book has little hold on their affections. They patronize it, treating it as a rather faded family antique, nothing like as precious as their forbears imagined. They seem to have no inkling of its real worth.

### EVANGELICALS

The attitude of some Evangelicals, in particular, contrasts strikingly with that of a former generation. A century and a half ago, Charles Simeon, vicar of Holy Trinity, Cambridge, and preacher of a famous set of University sermons on *The Excellency of the Liturgy*, never lost an opportunity of praising the Prayer Book and criticizing its critics. The deadness and formality experienced in the worship of the Church arise far more from the low state of our graces than from any defect in our Liturgy.

But many today treat the set services as a mere stodgy preliminary, tending only to take the edge off one's appetite, and the idea of the Prayer Book as an aid to spiritual worship leaves them cold.

In this situation, what is needed is a detailed account of the Prayer Book's particular virtues. The following pages, began as articles in the parish magazine inset *Neus Extra*. They seek to show in briefest outline how the English liturgy sets forth the Gospel and leads us into ways of evangelical worship.

### THE GOSPEL

The Gospel is the good news that God is love. 'In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins' (1 John 4:8-10). The background of the Gospel is God's wrath and judgment against us sinners. The heart of the Gospel is the double truth of propitiation for sin, and remission of sin – through the cross of Christ, atonement by blood, and justification by faith. 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him' (2 Cor. 5:19, 21).

### MAINSRING

The Gospel of free forgiveness through Christ crucified appears as the mainspring of worship throughout the whole Prayer Book, and it is noticeable that current discontent with the Prayer Book is strongest among those whose grasp on this Gospel is most suspect. A modern prophet, in an article entitled *Un-Christian liturgy*, has censured the Prayer Book stress on guilt and pardon as morbid and unhealthy. Our own judgment goes rather with Simeon:

I seek to be, not only humbled and thankful, but humbled in thankfulness, before my God and Savior continually. This is the religion that pervades the whole Liturgy, and particularly the Communion Service; and this makes the Liturgy inexpressibly sweet to me. The repeated cries for mercy to each Person of the ever-adorable Trinity for mercy, are not at all too frequent or too fervent for me; nor is the Confession in the Communion service too strong for me; nor the Te Deum, nor the ascriptions of glory after the Lord's Supper,



Glory be to God on high, etc. too exalted for me this shows what men of God the framers of our Liturgy were, and what I pant, and long, and strive to be. This makes the Liturgy as superior to all modern compositions, as the work of a Philosopher on any deep subject is to that of a schoolboy who understands scarcely anything about it.

## THE GOSPEL IN THE PRAYER BOOK

### EVANGELICAL WORSHIP

Dating as it stands from 1662, our Prayer Book is in all essentials the work of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer. Most churchmen know (for the Prayer Book prefaces 'Concerning the Service of the Church' and 'Of Ceremonies' tell us) that when Cranmer reshaped the traditional services, his aim was threefold.

It was to make the Anglican worship congregational (hence the title, *The Book of Common Prayer* – *common* means communal); simple (hence the dropping of pre-Reformation ceremonial); and edifying (hence the prominence of Scripture reading, psalm singing, and exhortation). Less often seen, however, is the fact that Prayer Book worship is also a monument to Cranmer's concern that Anglican worship should be evangelical; that is, a setting forth in liturgy of the Gospel.

In fact, as Cranmer grasped, only evangelical worship can be edifying. For edification (literally, building up) means the creating and deepening of Christian experience within the church's fellowship. The sole means whereby the Spirit of God produces Christian experience is the Gospel of Christ, declared audibly in word and visibly by sacraments. Christian worship, therefore, must embody the Gospel, and be so designed as to lead worshippers into a renewed experience of its power.

### SIN, GRACE, FAITH

To join in a service of worship is to be taken on a journey through a prescribed series of thoughts and actions. How did Cranmer secure evangelical worship? By routing his regular services via a sequence of three themes: first, the detecting and confessing of sin; second, the announcing of grace, in God's promise to pardon and restore the penitent through Christ; third, the exercising of faith, first in believing God's promise and trusting Him for pardon, and then in acts of praise, testimony, intercession, and obeying instruction, all based on the prior restoring of fellowship with God through forgiveness. All the main Prayer Book services have this built-in evangelical design.

### EXAMPLES

See this in Morning and Evening Prayer. First comes penitence: 'We have erred and strayed' – 'there is no health in us' – 'Restore thou them that are penitent'. Next, the good news of grace is proclaimed, calling us to faith: 'God pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel'. So now we say the Lord's Prayer, as a plea for pardon and power against sin henceforth: 'forgive us our trespasses' – 'deliver us from evil'.

The psalm singing that follows thus becomes what biblical praise always is, praise for mercy received. 'I believe' confesses Jesus Christ our Lord as our own personal Saviour. We pray to God with boldness, as His adopted children, and we learn from the lessons and sermon in a spirit of filial obedience and gratitude. This is evangelical worship.

Who will find such services dull? Only the unconverted!

## THE GOSPEL IN HOLY COMMUNION

The Prayer Book gives worship an evangelical shape by constructing services in terms of the sequence: sin acknowledged – grace announced – faith exercised in response. This sequence of themes constitutes the Gospel in liturgy.

Anglicans who worship with Free Church friends often feel that, good as non-liturgical services with free prayer can be, Prayer Book worship is more satisfying. Why? The reason seems to be that the sin-grace-faith sequence, which contains at once the essence of the Gospel, the heart of Christian experience, and the first need of every man who would approach God, is less prominent in most Free Church worship than it is in the Prayer Book.

### SACRAMENTS

The Prayer Book sees the sacraments as applicatory signs, ordained by Christ to confirm to us the truths and promises of the Gospel. Some talk as if the Gospel is about the sacraments, but the Prayer Book position is rather that the sacraments are about the Gospel. Accordingly, the chief concern of its sacramental services is to preach the Gospel; hence they, too, are built in terms of the sin-grace-faith sequence. We shall see this in the Holy Communion service.

## HOLY COMMUNION

Like most masterpieces, the Prayer Book Communion service has a basic structure that is extremely simple; just three repeats of the sin-grace-faith cycle, like three turns of a screw, each going further than the last in fixing the Gospel in our hearts and drawing out our response to it. The second adds to the first a sharpened application; the third adds to the second a sacramental confirmation. The service is built up thus.

**First cycle.** The ante-communion: (1) acknowledgement of sin by the collect for purity and the hearing of the law, with the response 'Lord, have mercy upon us'; (2) proclaiming of grace by New Testament readings; (3) responsive exercise of faith, in testimony ('I believe'), learning of God (the sermon), giving to God (the collection), and prayer for the church on earth.

**Second cycle.** (1) acknowledgment of sin in the confession; (2) proclaiming of grace, first in the prayer of absolution ('God hath promised forgiveness of sins'), and then in the comfortable words; (3) responsive exercise of faith, in thanksgiving for this grace ('Let us give thanks' – 'Glory be to thee, O Lord most High').

**Third cycle.** (1) acknowledgement of sin, in the prayer of humble access, confessing our unworthiness to come to the Table; (2) proclaiming of grace, in the prayer of consecration, which expounds the cross ('a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world'), and the delivering of the tokens of the cross to each worshipper; (3) responsive exercise of faith, in fresh thanks, self-giving, and adoration of God on high and His exalted Son.

No other Communion service in the world is so full of the Gospel. Would that modern Anglicans appreciated it more!

## THE GOSPEL AT HOLY BAPTISM

Here's a challenge how would you write a baptism service? Any ideas? It's not so easy! This was Cranmer's problem four centuries ago. Do we realize how brilliantly he tackled it?

### BAPTISM'S MEANING

In the New Testament, baptism appears as, to quote Article 27, 'not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but first and foremost a sign of Regeneration or new Birth'. It signifies cleansing from sin and a new life with God, through union with Christ in his death and resurrection. Baptism is a God-given acted parable of the Saviour receiving a sinner, washing away his guilt, and renewing his nature.

To believers, baptism is God's assurance of the reality of their forgiven and accepted status. (This is the meaning of 'be baptized... for the remission of sins', Acts 2:38). To babies, baptism is God's pledge of everlasting salvation, provided baptismal promises are kept.

As embodying the Gospel of a new start with Christ, baptism is the entry rite into the Church visible. So a congregation should always be present, to witness the reception of its new members, to welcome them into fellowship, and to show their love by praying for them.

### PRAYER BOOK SERVICE

These facts provide a set of specifications which the Prayer Book service fully meets. It prescribes baptism during Morning or Evening Prayer, when the congregation is together. It precedes the administering of the sign by elucidating the Gospel, of which it is a sign, using the sin-grace-faith sequence of which we wrote earlier. And at each transition point it leads the congregation in an appropriate act of prayer for the candidate's salvation. It falls into four stages.

**Stage 1: sin.** A child born a sinner is presented for baptism. The congregation prays that he may be born again.



**Stage 2: grace.** A Gospel story showing Christ's willingness to bless children is read and applied. This reminder of the reality of grace evokes further prayer.

**Stage 3: faith.** The godparents commit the child to a life of faith and repentance. The congregation prays that the child may be enabled to live the life to which he now stands pledged.

**Stage 4: sacrament.** The child is received into the Church by baptism. The congregation prays 'that he may lead the rest of his life according to this beginning' – actually partake in the experience of Christ's death and resurrection, and so enjoy actual salvation, both here and hereafter. (The final prayer shows that seeing now that this child is regenerate does not imply that he now has no need to repent and believe!)

Is the service muddled and obscure, as is often said? No, it is orderly and plain. Is it superstitious, as some suspect? No, it is a forthright liturgical statement of the Gospel. Nowhere in the world will you find a more evangelical baptism service than in the Book of Common Prayer.

## THE GOSPEL IN THE BURIAL SERVICE

Our Anglican burial service, unlike the Roman requiem, is not for the dead, but for the living. At funerals, we feel upset at having lost loved ones; moreover, facing death as the one certain fact of all our lives, we feel shaken inside, and start wondering what death will mean for us. The service applies the Gospel of resurrection to our state of mind.

Assuming that a Christian is being buried, it shows us his risen Saviour, and then leads us, first to give thanks for his salvation (in the committal, and the two main prayers), and second to pray our way into that same salvation for ourselves. Praise for the dead, and then prayer for the living, is the pattern.

### THREE VOICES

Three voices sound as the service opens. 'I am the resurrection and the life he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live' – this promise is the word of the Lord Jesus. 'I know that my Redeemer liveth; in my flesh shall I see God' – this is the witness of the Christian who now sleeps in Jesus. 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord' – this is the mourner's acknowledgement, through his grief, of a sovereign God's goodness.

Starting from the fact that to us, who are in God's hands for life and death, Jesus Christ offers himself as the resurrection, the service now becomes a liturgical journey from spiritual death to spiritual life. Apart from the committal of the body, which is really a parenthesis and in any case happens separately, the service falls into three sections, embodying the evangelical sequence: sin, grace, faith.

### DEATH

First comes Psalm 39 or Psalm 90. Why these? Because both recognize the prospect of bodily death as revealing, not merely our dependence on God for bodily life, and the folly of self-sufficiency, but also God's wrath against us for our sins. 'We consume away in thy displeasure', and 'Thou dost chasten man for sin', and 'Deliver me from all mine offences'. 'The sting of death', the thing that makes it dreadful, 'is sin', and God's judgment upon it. We cannot face death unafraid till our sin is dealt with.

### RESURRECTION

After meditation on death comes proclamation of resurrection, as 1 Corinthians 15 is read. Jesus Christ has conquered death, and will raise the sinful sons of Adam into a new life of forgiveness and endless joy, here and hereafter. This is the message of grace.

### NEW BIRTH

So we pray that God will raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness, that, dying 'in the true faith of thy holy name', we too 'may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in thy eternal and everlasting glory'. This is a prayer that we may be led to living faith in him who is the resurrection, and so be born again.

If people at funerals thought about what they were saying and hearing, every funeral would be an evangelistic occasion! We should not think this strange; it is what the compilers of our Prayer Book intended, and surely they were right.

## THE GOSPEL IN THE MARRIAGE SERVICE

What makes cohabitation into marriage is the vow of mutual fidelity on which it rests. Here Scripture and civil law agree. The heart of the marriage service is the making of this vow by the couple concerned, guided by a Christian minister, 'in the sight of God, and in the face of this congregation'. Before this goes a statement of the meaning and seriousness of marriage; after it comes prayer for the married couple and biblical guidance on married life, by sermon or Scripture reading.

Marriage, one might say, is a civil contract: why make a religious ceremony of it? The Prayer Book answer is: because of its place in God's plan. We must acknowledge marriage as his good gift to us, and seek his help to use it as a means of grace. The service highlights this by setting the contract in the context of three facts.

### GOD'S HOLY ORDINANCE

Fact number one is law – the ideal standard God has set us. The opening declaration tells us that lifelong monogamy in what the Homily on Matrimony calls 'a perpetual friendly fellowship', with the raising and training of a family for God, is part of this ideal. Marriage, based on a promise of exclusive faithfulness, is God's holy ordinance for sanctifying and satisfying our mating instincts. The service repeatedly points to God's Word, ordinance, and laws as setting a pattern for marriage. It warns us that if we flout God's rules we shall have God against us, both here and hereafter, and urges us only to marry in the fear of God.

### MEN'S CARNAL LUSTS

Fact number two is sin – the faultiness of our nature, which makes us prone to lapse from God's laws. The opening declaration is blunt and realistic – too realistic for some – about our constant inclinations to unchastity, just as a later prayer recognizes that a life of perfect love and peace together is attainable only by divine gift. But it is a strength, not a weakness, that the service faces so frankly our inability to keep the law of marriage by our own strength.

### GIVER OF GRACE

Fact number three is grace – God's active goodness to the weak and undeserving. Twice the service reminds us that marriage itself is an emblem of this, depicting the love of Christ for his spouse the Church, who gave himself for it, loving and cherishing it. And the burden of the three main prayers for the married couple is precisely that they may benefit from Christ's love to the full. The first asks that they may be true Christians themselves ('sow the seed of eternal life in their hearts'); the second, that their family may be Christian too ('children Christianly and virtuously brought up'); the third, that, after a life of love together, both may 'inherit thy everlasting kingdom'.

Every couple on their wedding day wonder: how can we find the very best in our marriage? The service gives the answer: by turning together to a gracious God.

## THE GOSPEL IN THE LITANY

The Litany or General Supplication, a ten-minute prayer service, was the first part of the English Prayer Book to be written. Composed in 1544, in wartime, it stands as a pattern of prayer for all time. The test of a Christian's stature is how he prays, and so with churches too. The Litany shows what spiritual stature Cranmer wanted the Church of England to have.

### THE LORD'S PRAYER

Like all proper praying, the Litany expands on the themes of the Lord's Prayer. It approaches God as 'the Father in heaven', seeking 'the glory of thy name'. It asks that God's will may be done everywhere. It specifies our need of material help, and of forgiveness, and pleads in detail for deliverance from evil. It drills us in the art of conversation with God in 3 ways.

### OURSELVES



1. *It teaches us to know ourselves as sinners.* Ideas about God and man vary inversely. Great thoughts of man breed small thoughts of God; high thoughts of God bring low thoughts of ourselves. The Litany has a majestic view of God as sovereign and just, and hence takes a humbling view of man as weak and sinful. It points to 'our sins, negligences, and ignorances'; and our proneness to 'pride, vain-glory and hypocrisy'; 'envy, hatred, and malice'; 'fornication'; 'hardness of heart and contempt of thy Word'. It shows us to God, and to ourselves, as 'miserable [pitiable] sinners', needing 'true repentance' and 'an heart to love and dread thee'.

It makes us reckon, not merely with the human hostility which Christians sooner or later incur, if they are faithful, but also with the crafts and assaults of the devil of which they have to run the gauntlet. Does this humbling realism strike us as false and repellent? If so, we are self-deceived, and urgently need the Litany to lead us to self-knowledge.

### OUR GOD

2. *It teaches us to know God as our Saviour.* The Litany starts by invoking each Person of the Triune God, and thenceforth alternates petitions between the Father and the Son. It recognizes the reality of God's present anger against his people's sins, and his coming wrath against the impenitent. But it invokes him throughout as our 'good Lord' – meaning thereby not only generous in giving natural gifts, but also merciful to his own flawed creatures. Through Jesus' mediation and the coming of the Holy Ghost, God pardons, protects, and empowers for holy living. Man's need is great, but God can meet it. That is the Gospel of the Litany.

### OUR NEIGHBOR

3. *It teaches us to know others as our neighbours.* Knowing God's love to us, we love him in return, and when we love God every man becomes our neighbor, to be loved for his sake. So the Litany leads us on from personal trust in Christ to pray that God will have mercy on all men.

Do you ever dry up in prayer, feeling you have nothing to say? Live with the Litany, and that will not happen again!

The Gospel in the Prayer Book  
or  
How to make sense of Holy Communion  
in three easy to follow steps

"I seek to be, not only humbled and thankful, but humbled in thankfulness,  
before my God and Saviour continually. This is the religion which pervades the whole  
Prayer Book, and particularly the Communion service."  
(The Rev'd. Charles Simeon)

1). Thomas Cranmer's aims

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"To join in a service of worship is to be taken on a journey through a prescribed series of thoughts and actions..." (J.I. Packer, *The Gospel in the Prayerbook*)

2. The three themes of the gospel. An Evangelical shape:

- i)
- ii)
- iii)

3. The Gospel at Holy Communion

The Gospel is not about the sacraments; the sacraments are about the Gospel!

Cycle 1: The basic statement

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Cycle 2: A sharpened application

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Cycle 3: A sacramental confirmation

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## The Gospel in the Prayerbook

### 1) Thomas Cranmer's Aims

To Make Services:

- Congregational (= 'Common' Prayer)
- Simple
- Edifying
- Evangelical (According to a fixed Pattern - see below)

### 2. The three Themes of the gospel. An Evangelical Shape:

- i) SIN - Detecting, and confessing
- ii) GRACE - Announcing Pardon
- iii) FAITH - Believing; Acts of Praise; Intercession

### 3) The Gospel at Holy Communion

#### Cycle 1: The Basic Statement

S - Collect for Purity. Hearing the Law  
G - NT Readings (which proclaim grace)  
F - Creed, Sermon. Collection. Prayers

#### Cycle 2: A Sharpened Application

S - Confession  
G - Absolution  
F - Thanksgiving

#### Cycle 3 - A Sacramental Confirmation

S - Humble Access  
G - Consecration, Reception  
F - Thanksgiving Prayers

### 3. *Collect*

As compared with the other two types, the collect is at once seen to be shorter and more compact. In the words of Adrian Fortescue (*The Mass*, p. 246)<sup>1</sup> it "asks for one thing and one thing only, and that in the tersest language". It is, he says, a peculiar feature of Western liturgy and stands in marked contrast with the "long poetic rhapsodies" of the Greek Orthodox Churches.

According to another writer, people are apt to be repelled by the collects because they have "little of that flowery piety which some of us are apt mistakenly to identify with true devotion".<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless they are "full of meat" if we take the trouble to examine them more closely.

J. W. Suter has pointed out that what constitutes a collect is not so much its content or its length as its literary pattern; "a listener accustomed to the collect-form can usually tell, after he has heard the opening words, approximately how the prayer will continue; not anticipating the actual words, but *sensing the pattern*".<sup>3</sup> As an art-form it is comparable to the sonnet. Thoughts, instead of words, are made to rhyme in definite strophe-patterns, and it has underlying principles of prose-rhythm.

The structure of a collect is very simple. Usually, though not invariably, the collect has five parts: the invocation, the acknowledgment, the petition, the aspiration and the plea.

(i) *The Invocation*. The Deity is addressed, either by a simple apostrophe, or with the addition of an adjective or adjectives describing his power or mercy. Thus: "O God" occurs thirteen times and "O Lord" twenty-one times; "Almighty God" is specially characteristic of the collects before and after Easter. In the collect of Trinity VII, God is addressed as "Lord of all power and might", in the collect for Grace at Morning Prayer we cry: "O Lord our Heavenly Father."

In line with our Lord's words to his disciples in John 16:23

<sup>1</sup> Published by Longmans Green.

<sup>2</sup> E. C. Messenger, *The Sunday Collects* (Burns Oates), p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> *The Book of English Collects* (Harper and Bros.), 1940, p. 29.



("in that day ye shall ask me nothing . . . whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you") prayer is normally offered directly to the Father, but Christ himself is invoked in the collects of Advent III, Lent I and St. Stephen's Day, and all three persons of the sacred Trinity are addressed in the collect of Epiphany VI. On Trinity Sunday God is approached without any distinction of person as the "*Almighty and everlasting God*" who lives and reigns "*one God, world without end*".

(ii) *The Acknowledgment*. This is really an additional part of the introductory address and, as Dean Goulburn pointed out,<sup>1</sup> gives us the foundation of doctrine upon which our prayer is based. Instead of an adjective or noun in apposition, we have a clause introduced by a relative pronoun, "*who*", "*whose*", or "*whom*". The statement inside the relative clause will be found to have special significance in view of the petition which follows. Many examples could be given, but the reader is referred especially to the collects of Epiphany II, IV, Whitsunday, and Trinity II, VIII and XII.

Sometimes, instead of an acknowledgment of God's power and grace, and of his readiness to hear and answer prayer, there is found an acknowledgment of our own weakness and unworthiness, as in the collect of Trinity XV; "*because the frailty of man without thee cannot but fall, keep us ever by thy help . . .*"

(iii) *The Petition*. This is the actual prayer. Occasionally it is couched in the very words of scripture, as on Ash Wednesday where we pray, "*Create and make in us new and contrite hearts*"; a direct echo of Psalm 51:10. A study of these petitions will show that they cover most of the basic needs of the human heart, not only the need for cleansing but also for protection, guidance, power for service, comfort in adversity, holiness and love.

(iv) *The Aspiration*. This occurs in a few collects and is introduced by the conjunction "*that*". A good example is in the collect of Trinity XXI: "Grant . . . to thy faithful people

<sup>1</sup> *The Collects*, 1880, vol. I, ch. 3.



pardon and peace, *that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve thee with a quiet mind.*" The actual things asked for in the petition are pardon and peace. But these things are not ends in themselves. They are sought in order that we may be better fitted for God's service. God gives that we may give, give ourselves to him without fear and without distraction. Thus the petition is drawn up on to a higher level. We ask, not for our own selfish enjoyment, but for God's glory and the extension of his kingdom.

(v) *The Plea.* Our approach to God was encouraged at the collect's beginning by some aspect of his divine character, his almighty power, his providential government of the world, or by his particular acts of mercy and grace shown to saints of old. But our strongest encouragement is always to be found in Jesus Christ, whose life, death and resurrection constitute the fullest revelation of the Father's love, and who is our only Mediator and Advocate. Through him alone can we draw near to God.

Thus almost every collect ends with the words "*through Jesus Christ our Lord*". He is the Redeemer through whose sacrifice we have been cleansed and reinstated in the family of God; his Spirit within our hearts prompts us to say, "Abba, Father."<sup>1</sup> So we pray "in his Name".<sup>2</sup>

In the Middle Ages this clause was always followed by an ascription of praise, e.g., "*Who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end*" (as on Ascension Day and the Sunday following, and on St. Matthew's Day). These ascriptions, which varied in accordance with the contents of the collect, were so well known that they were omitted from the English Prayer Books of 1549 and 1552; but the omission led to their ultimately being forgotten, and only a few of them were restored in 1662. All the great festival collects have them. A collect is not really complete without its ascription, in which God and his glory become once more the centre of the worshipper's thought.

<sup>1</sup> Gal. 4:6.

<sup>2</sup> John 14:13 f.



## EUCCHARISTIC THEOLOGY - COMPARISONS

- All are located within Anglicanism
- This has been seen as an advantage, for some (ie. 'Comprehensiveness')
- The Reformed position [#4] is the clearest interpretation of Cranmer's BCP Service

### Four Theological Interpretations of the Lord's Supper "This IS my body / blood" [Mk 14.22ff. & par.]

#### 1. Roman Catholic: 'This re-presents my body/blood'

- The 'Substance' (real, inner form [Platonic] ) of bread / wine are changed
  - This is called '*transubstantiation*' (*trans* = 'across')
  - = 'changed thoroughly'
- The 'Accidents' (outward, perceived form) remain unchanged
- Thus a 'Priest' duly-consecrated by Apostolic Succession presides
- He elevates the 'host' (Lat. *host* = '*sacrificial victim*')
  - An act of supreme worship
    - "and I, when I am lifted up, will draw all men to myself" [John 12.32]
    - "This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread ... If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh." [John 6.50f]
  - Elements are worshipped
    - If 'reserved' (held for future use), placed in a Monstrance (Lat. *monstrare* = 'to show')
- Consecration MUST BE by a Priest or Bishop; this MUST occur at an 'Altar' (= 'place of sacrifice')
- A continuing 're-presentation' of Jesus' Sacrifice; in a 'God-ward' direction; on behalf of the congregation; via the Priest-as-Intermediary ('go-between', a 'linking-person')
- BUT, the "*hapax*" (Gk. 'once, for all') event of Jesus' death at the Cross is undermined, since the Mass is both 'Memorial' and 'Sacrifice' (as at Calvary, repeated)

#### 2. Lutheran (Following M. Luther): 'This accompanies my body/blood'

- There is NO change of Substance in bread/wine
- Instead, a simultaneous presence, a 'Sacramental union'
  - Body and Blood are present "in and under" the elements of bread and wine
  - This is called '*consubstantiation*' (*con* = 'with')
  - The Sacrifice of the Mass is rejected!
  - Likewise, NO worship of the elements: the elements revert to their normal state when not in the presence of the Congregation
- Consecration MUST BE by a Priest; this MUST occur at an Altar

#### 3. Protestant Evangelical (Anabaptists, Baptists): 'This symbolizes my body'

- The 'Lord's Supper' helps us to 'recall' what Christ accomplished at the Cross
- A holy fellowship occurs as the faithful gathering of Believers together
  - Eating and drinking is an act of faith
    - Placing confidence in Christ as Sacrifice for sin
    - Bread and Wine are 'memorials' (aids to memory) ONLY
    - Anything more must be deemed 'idolatry'
- Intentional discontinuity with historic (ie. previous) Roman Catholic & Protestant teaching
- Consecration is by a 'Pastor' (a 'called person' set apart for leadership)

#### 4. Reformed / BCP Anglican; 'This unites my body'

- "A sacramental union between the sign and the thing signified" (Article XXV)
- There are NO ALTARS in these church buildings
  - Theologically (and practically) unnecessary, since there is no 'Eucharistic Sacrifice'
  - Instead, "a sacrifice of thanksgiving" (BCP p.83; cf. "a living sacrifice" p.85)
- There are NO PRIESTS; instead, 'Presbyters' (= Gk. "Elders": BCP p.554)
  - "Priest" is in fact a contraction of the Gk Term
- The Lord's Supper is a 'bond', or 'seal', of the faithful Believer with Christ
  - Reception of the Sacrament by Faith ('worthily') enables 'true receiving and feeding upon Christ'
  - A Spiritual uniting, and nourishing
- The Sacrament is not just a 'naked' feature
  - There is a real exhibition of Christ, to every Believer gathered around the Table
  - It is "a visible Word" of the Gospel (John Stott, following Calvin)
  - We are "**Partakers of His most blessed Body and Blood**" (BCP p. 82; Article XXVIII)
- CONTRA Catholic view (eg. BAS especially) there is NO 'invocation' of the Spirit downwards onto Bread and Wine
  - This idea is entirely alien to Scripture..
- INSTEAD: "Holy Communion", by the Spirit, in fellowship with the Lord in Heaven, and His followers on earth
  - The Instrument for this is the Supper
  - By faith we are "**lifted up in our hearts unto the Lord**" (BCP p.78)
  - United and Sealed in and by faithful receiving



## A Biblical Model of a Pastoral Visit

### LUKE 24.13-35 "The Emmaus Walk"

#### Observing the story

Who is in it?

Where is it set?

When does the action take place?

What is the *basic* problem facing these disciples?

#### Going further

Pastoral visiting can (should!) involve 3 crucial elements:

- 1) **L**
- 2) **S**
- 3) **P**

Where are they present here? And, how does Luke describe them?

L: [   ]

S: [   ]

P: [   ]

#### Practical Applications

What is the '*presenting* problem' expressed by the disciples?

What is the '*root* problem' discerned and explained by Jesus?

What is Jesus' approach characterized by - how does He meet both the presenting and root problems?

#### One Last Thing..

A simple & helpful verse or two, from Mark 16, which you could recite, BEFORE your visit begins:

"You seek Jesus of Nazareth ... *He is going before you, to Galilee.*  
*There you will see Him, just as He told you.*"

## A Biblical Model for Intercessory Prayer

### 1Kings 18 - 'Elijah, on Mount Carmel'

Elijah is, in context, very far from us:

- Deluded Prophets of Baal (with whom E. has to 'compete')
- Repellent Queen Jezebel, of malignant character, and rebellious spirit
- Troublous King Ahab, a provocateur of God, and evildoer extraordinaire

Jezebel's 'Chaplains' - the prophets of Baal - exhaust themselves seeking their god's answer to their Interceding, to no avail: [18.20-29: "... there was no voice; no one answered; no one heeded"]. This is the result of pagan prayer: no response, no answer, no sign of life whatsoever, unsurprisingly.

Elijah will now pray 3 requests, which are answered - by fire, from Heaven.

These 3 set timeless-thus-contemporary Priorities for our own Intercession.

1) [.36a]: Elijah asks: That we recognize the Greatness and Power of God in Heaven

- (the 1st Petition of the Lord's Prayer [Mt 6.8] teaches us this as well!)
- In today's religious confusion NOTHING more important than:
  - [Isa 43.11]: \_\_\_\_\_
  - [Ac 4.12]: \_\_\_\_\_
- Note as well from this verse that this God is the Biblically-Historically-revealed Lord: "O LORD, \_\_\_\_\_"

2) [.36b]: Elijah asks: That we listen and depend upon what God's Word has said.

- Who to listen to; Who to avoid. No easy choice with 450 false-prophets present, in their fine robes, fed at Jezebel's table [19].. (cf. Elijah, in his camel's-hair coat, accustomed to desert-fare, like roasted locust!
- In comparison, this is no contest - 450 to 1. Yet, the Truth is with the 1, not the many
- Which voice will win the contest? HOW CAN WE TELL, in the clamour or words, of voices? Are they ALL authentic? ALL valid? ALL equally-flawed?? What does Elijah *actually* say?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Saying: 'I am a servant'
- Doing: 'I have obeyed you.'

3) [37]: Elijah asks: That God would answer his prayers, unmistakably and with sanctifying power.

- this is not a racket; not manipulation; not pious triviality
- Cf. 2Cor 4.2: Not \_\_\_\_\_
- Instead, \_\_\_\_\_



# The Admission and Licensing of Lay Readers

## *Introduction*

*Bishop*

My brothers and sisters, God has gathered us all into the fellowship of the Gospel within the universal Church. As members of His body, Christ calls us to minister in His name and, according to our gifting, to be instruments of His love in the world. It is within this ministry that Lay Readers are to serve the Church of God, to work together with clergy and other ministers. They are to lead public worship, to preach and teach the Word of God, to assist at Holy Communion, and to share in pastoral and evangelistic ministry, called to help the whole Church in participating in God's mission to the world!

## *Admission*

### **The Presentation of the Candidates**

*The Candidates for admission stand and are presented to the bishop by the Rector.*

Bishop, I present these persons to be admitted to the office of Lay Reader: Nathan and Krista Carter, David Jones, Gail Munich, Sarah Fleming, Mary Jensen, Ed Matalas, Chris Wright, and Sheldon Yu.

*When all the candidates have been presented, the bishop asks these questions, the Rector responding*

*Bishop*

Do they affirm and declare their belief in the faith which is revealed in the Scriptures, set forth in the catholic creeds, and to which the historic formularies of the Anglican Church bear witness?

**They do.**

Are they man and women of Christian character, well-versed in the Holy Scriptures and in the doctrines of our faith?

**They are.**

Have they been sufficiently prepared for the duties of this office?

**They have.**

## The Declarations

*The bishop reads the Preface to the Declaration of Assent:*

The Anglican Church in North America is part of the. One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, worshipping the one true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It professes the faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds, which faith the Church is called upon to proclaim afresh to each generation. Led by the Holy Spirit, it has borne witness to Christian truth in its historic formularies, the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, *The Book of Common Prayer* and the ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. In the declaration you are about to make, will you affirm your loyalty to this inheritance of faith as your inspiration and guidance under God, in bringing the grace and truth of Christ to this generation, and making Him known to those in your care?

**Candidates** I, A,B, do so affirm, and accordingly declare my belief in the faith which is revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds, and to which the formularies of the ACNA witness, and in public prayer I will use only the forms of service which are authorized or allowed by Canon law.

I will give due obedience to the Bishop and his successors, and to the minister in whose cure I may serve, in all things lawful and honest.

## The Questions

*The bishop turns to the candidates and says*

In order that we may be satisfied that you are prepared for the ministry of a Lay Reader, you must answer the questions we now put to you:

**Bishop** Do you believe that God has called you to this ministry?

**Candidates** **I do so believe.**

**Bishop** Will you be faithful in leading the people in worship, and in preaching the Word to them?

**Candidates** **By the grace of God, I will.**

**Bishop** Will you be diligent in prayer, in reading the Holy Scripture, and in all studies that will deepen your faith and fit you to bear witness to the truth of the Gospel?

**Candidates** **By the grace of God, I will.**

**Bishop** Will you work closely with your colleagues in ministry and encourage the gifts of others, and will you endeavour to fashion your life according to the way of Christ?

**Candidates** **By the grace of God, I will**

*The candidates turn and face the congregation*



*Bishop* Brothers and sisters, these men and women have been chosen for the office of Lay Reader. Will you uphold and encourage them in their ministry?

*All* **We will.**

*Bishop* Will you continue to pray for them?

*All* **We will.**

*The bishop invites the clergy of the parish to stand, and asks*

*Bishop* Will you work closely with your Readers and encourage them to use their gifts and develop their ministry?

*Clergy* **We will.**

Will you commend them to the people amongst whom they will minister?

*Clergy* **We will.**

## **The Admission and Licensing**

*The candidates stand before the bishop who admits them to the office of Lay Reader by the delivery of a license, and with these words*

N, I admit you as a Lay Reader in the Church,  
in the name of the Father,  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.  
**Amen.**

*When all have been admitted, the bishop blesses them in these or other suitable words*

May the Lord give you wisdom, courage, strength, and love to do His will,  
and serve His people,  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
rest upon you, and on your work done in His Name,  
now and always.

*All* **Amen.**

*A hymn may be sung.*

# Anglican Network in Canada

NAME HERE

Lay Reader

We hereby license you to perform all the duties competent to your Order as a  
Lay Reader in Church Name Here, in Our Anglican Network in Canada  
a Diocese of the Province of the Anglican Church in North America.

This licence shall have effect until determined by Us, or Our successors.

Given under Our hand and this 14<sup>th</sup> day of November,  
in the year of our Lord Two thousand and twenty-one,  
and in the year of Our Consecration the twelfth.



---

Right Reverend Trevor Walters