

# ANGLICAN WAY

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# Reflections FROM THE Editor's Desk

Roberta Bayer, Ph.D., Assistant Professor,  
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*"I am the light of the world."*

**T**he fourteenth century apse mosaic of Christ Pantokrator flanked by the Blessed Virgin and John the Baptist crowns the Cathedral in Pisa, Italy. Mosaic treatments of Christ as Pantokrator depict Christ as Almighty Ruler of All, Sustainer of the World, reminding Christians that Christ is Creator of heaven and earth as well as the suffering servant who became man for our salvation. Christ is man and God: this is the teaching of the incarnation. It is worth remembering that God rules the world because the stories which we tell ourselves about our power to control human and non-human nature through science and technology, as if the fate of the earth were in our power, are thereby corrected; the predominant reality of human life is that God rules and we are commanded to worship and obey Him. We care for the earth because it is His, but we know that some day, it will be no more, but we will still be in His hands. *The Lord is a great God; and a great King above all gods; In his hand are all the corners of the earth; and the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his and he made; and his hands prepared the dry land. O Come let us worship and fall down and kneel before the Lord our Maker.*

We pray to God as Creator of the world, and we also pray for His Church. In his article on the prayer for the state of Christ's Church found in the Service of Holy Communion, Fr. Dunbar explains how to pray, and why we pray, for the entire world, churches, rulers, and all who labor here below, joining in the

whole company of saints. In the "President's Letter," Fr. Dunbar lays out the role of the Prayer Book Society during this difficult time in North American Anglicanism.

Gillis Harp has contributed an article on the underlying incoherence of the Three Streams theory of Anglicanism, returning to a topic on which he wrote in the autumn 2009 issue of *Mandate*. Apparently the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) has appropriated this theory in order to cover over, indeed, to disguise, the very real theological diversity that exists among its members. In the article Dr. Harp notes the poor historical foundation upon which this model rests, and the post-modern assumptions under which it labors. Its exponents are completely ignorant of, or they appear not to care about, the foundational documents of Anglicanism, the "peculiar genius" of the Anglican identity. In lieu of this, we have also reprinted a book review of Robert E. Webber's *Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail*, first published in the *Churchman* in 1986 by the Rev. Dr. Charles Flinn. The influence of Webber's liturgical eclecticism is strong among the defenders of the Three Streams and present in the ACNA.

It would be foolish to deny that there exists a great diversity of theological arguments about what Anglicanism is, and that this diversity has resulted in ecclesial schism. It is also clear that many people now consider themselves Anglican who have no interest in its classical theology, defended by Canterbury at the time of the Reformation, and which shaped the "peculiar genius" of Anglicanism for centuries, in its

*(continued on p. 8)*

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## Anglican Way

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Cover: Apse mosaic of Christ Pantokrator, c.1300, Pisa Cathedral, Pisa Italy

# On the Development of a New Rite

Dr. Roberta Bayer

This summer the General Convention of the Episcopal Church introduced a rite for same-sex blessings. Peter Toon remarked nearly ten years ago that such rites are contrary to the established teaching on marriage in the historic Book of Common Prayer and all established Anglican doctrine. Therefore this summer's decision was not a legitimate development of doctrine. There are legitimate and illegitimate developments, but what General Convention offers might better be termed a supersession of received doctrine.

In his book, *Same-sex Affection, Holiness, and Ordination*, Peter Toon wrote:

The development of doctrine set forth [in this new rite] is that persons of the same-sex may live together in an active sexual, committed and affectionate relationship; that in this union they may display genuine Christian holiness; and that thus they may be appropriate candidates for leadership positions, including ordination to all three orders of the Threefold Ministry. This is a remarkable and amazing claim since, to all normal appearances, it apparently contradicts the received and traditional teaching of the Church on sexual relations between human beings. That is, it is a doctrine which has no place whatsoever in the teaching of virtually all the provinces of the Anglican Communion, in the official teaching of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches, and also the teaching of most major Protestant Churches (e.g., the Southern Baptist Church of the USA).

Further, in order to have clarity of mind as to just how much the innovation differs from the traditional Christian understanding of sexual union, it will be good to note what is found in a classic Anglican source, The Book of Common Prayer (1662) in the preface to 'The Form of Solemnization of Matrimony.' Here we find the historic Christian and the reformed Catholic doctrine of marriage. Regrettably this preface was shortened in the American form of the Prayer Book in the editions of 1789, 1892 and 1928, and does not appear in the 1979 book. But here is the authentic statement from 1662:

*Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God, and in the face of this congregation, to join together this man and this woman in holy Matrimony; which is an honourable estate, instituted of God in the time of man's innocency, signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church; which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with his presence, and first miracle that he wrought, in Cana of Galilee; and is commended*

*of Saint Paul to be honourable among all men: and therefore is not by any to be enterprized, nor taken in hand, unadvisedly, lightly, or wantonly, to satisfy man's carnal lusts and appetites, like brute beasts that have no understanding; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God; duly considering the causes for which Matrimony was ordained.*

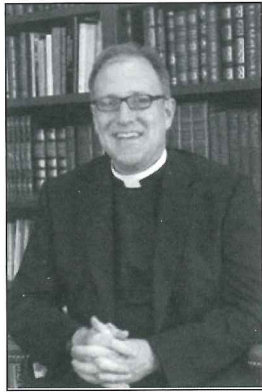
*First, it was ordained for the procreation of children, to be brought up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and to the praise of his holy name.*

*Secondly, it was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication; that such persons as have not the gift of continency might marry, and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ's body.*

*Thirdly, it was ordained for the mutual society, help, and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity, into which holy estate these two persons present come now to be joined. Therefore if any man can shew any just cause, why they may not be lawfully be joined together, let him now speak, or else hereafter for ever hold his peace.*

It is possible to see these three reasons for holy matrimony as (a) presented in order of importance, or as (b) three related reasons which may be stated in any order, as long as they are all present. In whatever order we put them, it is obvious that within the doctrine of sexual relations presented here, the idea of blessing the partnership of a same-sex couple makes no sense at all. Marriage as a holy covenant between a man and woman and blessed by the Church in God's name both points to, and also symbolizes, the mystical union between Christ, the Bridegroom, and the Church, his Bride. The union of two persons of the same sex cannot obviously signify this mystical union. In fact it stands opposed to it.

A true theological development will *develop* an already received doctrine held by the church, it will not contradict, change, or dispense with church teaching. The Nicene Creed is true development of what was said by Christ and conveyed to us through his apostles; it neither negates nor contradicts what Christ revealed about himself when he said that he was the true vine (Jn 15.1), the good shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep (Jn 10.15), and when he commanded wind and water (Lk 8.25). Same-sex marriage negates and contradicts the purpose of marriage by its unnatural and deliberate barrenness, and it abrogates God's intention, instituted in the time of man's innocency, of making men and women for each other, helpmeets and companions.



The Rev. Gavin G. Dunbar, President, Prayer Book Society, and Rector, St John's Episcopal Church, Savannah, Georgia

# FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE PRAYER BOOK SOCIETY

The Reverend G. G. Dunbar, St. John's Episcopal Church, Savannah, GA

## General Convention

This summer's General Convention of the Episcopal Church in Indianapolis needs no extended comment. The approval of trial rites for same-sex blessing, and the failure of the Anglican Covenant (already rejected by the Church of England) was no surprise. As one report to the Prayer Book Society board put it: "This means that there is not a willingness to pay the price of truly being a Church and thus of subjecting the new ideas of each Province for review and approval of the whole Communion before proceeding with them. The Episcopal Church, by contrast, seems to see its role as promulgating innovations which the rest of the Communion should then receive."

The question is, are the churches of the 'realignment' ready to offer an ecclesiological alternative? There has been much thought about the Christian faith: has there been enough thought about the Christian church? In a world of fissiparous sectarian Christianity, in which the doctrine of the church is treated as a matter of utilitarian expedience, the question cannot be left to look after itself.

## Book of Common Prayer 1662

It is not well remembered that the English Prayer Book of 1662—whose 350th anniversary falls this year—was also the American Prayer Book until 1789, and the Prayer Book of numerous founding fathers. As such the anniversary deserves rather more attention among Episcopalians and Anglicans in the U. S. A. than it has received. In 1789 it was revised for the newly organized Protestant Episcopal Church of the U. S. A. (and again in 1892 and 1928). The Prayer of Consecration was taken from the Scottish Prayer Book of 1764 (itself a revision of 1662), and some other parts were omitted or abbreviated. The omissions and abbreviations were mostly regrettable; but the substance that remains, is largely that of 1662. What Episcopalians respect and love in the 1928 Prayer Book (or Rite 1 of the 1979 Prayer book) is substantially the Prayer Book of 1662.

The 1662 Prayer Book is itself a very conservative revision of the Elizabeth Prayer Book of 1559—the very first Prayer Book used in the American colonies—which in turn is dependent upon the Edwardine Prayer books of 1552 and 1549 devised largely by Thomas Cranmer. But what sets the 1662 Prayer Book apart is its appearance after the Restoration of the monarchy and episcopacy in England after the puritan

Commonwealth, in a time of new self-awareness of the Church of England as "Anglican", and in a time when Anglican Christianity was beginning its development (notably, in the American colonies) as a global communion of churches. For all its English roots, the 1662 Prayer Book is *the* classical Prayer Book of the Anglican Communion, and is the common heritage of Anglicans (including Episcopalians both Scottish and American). And at a time when Anglicanism and the Anglican Communion are both in serious disarray, there is a noticeable tendency to return to and rediscover the numerous virtues of the 1662 Prayer Book. It offers a unity in a shared tradition of common prayer that transcends the institutional and theological fragmentation of our time. The churches of the realignment, and those still within some part of the Anglican Communion, would both be wise to seek a unity in common prayer, as matrix for unity in the faith, in charity, and in institutional governance.

## The Society's Direction

In many respects, the "political" struggle to sustain a coherent Communion of churches united in the Anglican Way is largely played out. From the 1970s until the present, in the debates over ministry, liturgy, marriage, polity, and much else, conservative or traditionalist Anglicans of various stripes have either decamped or been defeated (or both); and we have

entered therefore into an era of fragmented and competing Anglicanism. The fight, however, is far from over: but as my predecessor, Peter Toon, often said, the direction of energies has shifted, from the narrowly political (winning votes in various institutional structures) to the broadly educational. The word "educational"

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**At a time when Anglicanism and the Anglican Communion are both in serious disarray, there is a noticeable tendency to return to, and rediscover the numerous virtues of the 1662 Prayer Book.**

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is a bit limp sounding: it does not express the missionary opportunity and challenge that lies before us. The challenge for Prayer Book Anglicans and Episcopalians right now is to demonstrate, and to teach, and to share with other Anglicans and Episcopalians, how to build congregations in evangelism, catechesis, and pastoral care grounded in the Prayer book tradition. There is lots of evidence that the appeal of the 1979 Prayer Book and its ilk has dulled—it is now just another book a bit dated and dogeared, abandoned by the ever-changing currents of liturgical scholarship—and there is now a post-modern openness to the past, including the classical Prayer Books, which is our opening to the future. Learning to exploit that opportunity, should be the focus of our energies and prayers.

## Mission Statement

*The Society is dedicated to the preservation, understanding, and propagation of the Anglican Doctrine as contained in the traditional editions of The Book of Common Prayer.*

# Praying for the Church

The Rev. G. G. Dunbar, St. John's,  
Savannah, Georgia

In many recent liturgies, prayer for the Church (combined with prayer for “the needs of the world”) appears in the “prayers for the people;” and in the Eucharistic prayer itself (after the *epiclesis* of the Spirit), in prayer for the fruits of communion and the coming of Christ’s kingdom in the world. One might question whether praying for the Church is not somewhat underdeveloped, or at least, overshadowed by the concern for the transformation of the world. By contrast, one of the distinctive features of the Eucharist in the classical Prayer Books is its free-standing, lengthy, and comprehensive “Prayer for the whole state of Christ’s Church” (so 1549 and 1928, though in 1552, 1559, and 1662, its scope was more narrowly specified, as “militant here in earth”). The heavenly, Eucharistic, and eschatological aspects of the Church appear later in the service, but as the conclusion of the ante-communion, it is the Church itself that explicitly requires our attention.

As its context after the Offertory sentences indicates, prayer for the Church is a kind of good work (Matthew 5:16),

complementary to the offering of alms and oblations, and like them done in obedience to the word of God (in the teaching of “thy holy Apostle,” an allusion to 1 Timothy 2:1-2) as the fruit of a lively faith (Matthew 7:21), grounded in the gospel. As such the Church is seen as the effect of God’s saving work in Christ, engendered and sustained by the same Word to which it bears witness. Praying for the Church is therefore praying for the fruits of Christ’s saving work; it is praying for the success of the Gospel; it is asking God to fulfill his own perfect loving eternal purpose of salvation. What better way to invest our minds and wills, our time and energy?

The Restoration Dean of Durham and commentator on the Prayer Book, Thomas Comber, asked how better can we express “our love for all the world, and especially our Christian brethren,” not only in the offering of alms and oblations, but also “by recommending them all to the mercies of God, who is able to relieve them all, and whose bounty all have need: which excellent duty . . . at this holy sacrament is most proper, because we here behold the universal love of Jesus, and are declared lively members of his mystical body, and conjoined in the strictest bonds of

union with all our fellow-Christians: besides, when can we more effectually intercede with God for the whole church, than when we represent and show forth that most meritorious passion on earth, by the virtue whereof our great High Priest did once redeem doth ever plead for his whole church, even now that he is in heaven. . . .” (*A Companion to the Temple*)?

In the Prayer for the Church, the Church is loved first as a spiritual community, secondly in its institutional structures, third as a solidarity in suffering, and finally (in 1549, 1662, and 1928) as a society of hope and charity beyond death.

## For All Men

The Prayer begins by citing the Apostle’s teaching “to make prayers, and supplications, and to give thanks, for all men” (cf. 1 Timothy 2:)—what is elsewhere called “all sorts and conditions of men”—male and

female, rich and poor, old and young, near and far, clean and unclean, Jews and Greeks; all languages, cultures, races, peoples, living in all times and all places. No category of human being may be excluded from the scope of our charity.

Yet we do not pray for the world *per se*—which in Scripture refers com-

monly to those who reject God and are on course for ruin. Do worldlings not need our prayer? Most certainly—that “thy ways may be known unto them, thy saving health unto all nations”—that they may be gathered into the Ark of salvation, the Church that is “in” the world but not “of” the world, not “conformed to this world” and its wisdom but rather “transformed” by the wisdom of God. It is the Church, and not the world, in which the saving promises of Christ are to be claimed and known, and it is in the Church that all the elect people of God are gathered, being one flock under one shepherd. God’s love for the world is precisely that, by Christ and through faith in him, we might be transferred from the world under God’s judgment into the Church under God’s mercy.

## For the Church as Spiritual Community

And so we pray for God to “inspire continually the Universal Church”—to breathe into this society by his Holy Spirit the “spirit of truth, unity, and concord,” that they may both “confess thy holy Name” and also “agree in the truth of thy holy Word, and live in unity and godly love.” “Truth without unity is weak and troublesome, unity without truth is dangerous

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and mischievous, and both without charity are insignificant and cannot last long” (Dean Comber).

The Church is first of all a *spiritual* community of those who confess the Name of the Lord Jesus, united in truth and love. The truth that has been entrusted to us we cannot hold without love; nor indeed can we love without holding truth; nor is there any unity without both. That is not just a prescription for “the Universal Church,” but for every particular church, “denomination,” diocese, and parish.

### For the Church as Institution

In the second and third paragraphs we turn from the spiritual unity of the Church in truth and love to consider the institutional means of this unity—the Christian prince and magistrate (civil government), and the administration of justice; the Christian pastor and curate (ecclesiastical government), and the administration of word and sacrament; the Christian people, and their faith and service. It may seem strange that the realization of spiritual community requires institutional structures; but like soul and body, each requires the other. Oddly enough, a “purely” spiritual church and a merely institutional church become the same thing—spiritual anarchy, or tyranny, a mere power structure.

### For Christian Rulers

In societies like the U. S. A., where “separation of church and state” is taken to be a self-evident and unproblematic description of religious and civil organization, the prayer for “Christian rulers” and its priority over prayer for Christian pastors and people may seem strange. Historically it is rooted in the royal supremacy—the English monarch’s status as “supreme governor” of the Church of England—and, more broadly, in the western Christian (Catholic and Protestant) tradition of the “sacral monarchy,” which looks back to Charlemagne, to Constantine, and to the Old Testament kings, Josiah, Hezekiah, Solomon, and David. This idea recognizes that in

human society the religious and the political are overlapping aspects of one and the same community. That is not to say there are no distinctions between civil and ecclesiastical; but the distinctions are not separate compartments. God does not just rule in the “religious” sphere but in every aspect of human life, and therefore the Christian prince and magistrate, as well as bishop and priest, have a role to play in the Church’s welfare.

This idea may seem quaint in the American context, where the ties between church and state have long been loosened (in large part, at the insistence of churches seeking denominational freedom). Yet from the early days of the Republic, the separation of powers was never absolute. The American civil government forbids Mormons and Muslims the practice of polygamy (authorized by their religion); just as (in many jurisdictions) it forbids same-sex marriage to Episcopalians. It holds accountable the officers of the Roman Catholic hierarchy for failures to discipline pedophile clergy (an intrusion on canonical privilege long resisted by Rome)—and in all these and many other moral matters, Christians must acknowledge that the state operates with the authority of the Word of God (Romans 13). “You can’t legislate morality” is nonsense: the state does so all the time, and rightly so. What are the laws against murder, fraud, or defamation, if not moral laws?

It is therefore the business of the officers of the state “truly and impartially to administer justice to the punishment of wickedness and vice” and also “to the maintenance of thy true religion, and virtue”—for without true religion, that virtue does not flourish which is most necessary to a democratic Republic. This was understood once in the U. S. A., even though the involvement of the civil authorities in religious affairs was minimal. The mission of the Church is a good necessary to the welfare of society (a fact acknowledged in tax law), a good which the state cannot itself provide but has a rational interest to protect and nurture. This rebukes the lazy contemporary assumption that religion is merely a matter of private opinion and irrational emotion: it requires both the state to protect the Church as a public institution, but also the Church to bear witness to, instruct, and pray for “peace, order, and good government,” “that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty” (1 Timothy 2:2).

For the authority of the Word of God runs both ways: when the state acts contrary to the Word of God and the moral order (as for instance, denying what constitutes a human person), or when it intrudes on the freedom of church-run institutions to uphold Christian doctrine and discipline, the protests of the Church are not to be regarded as gambits in a game of civil politics (though of course they are often treated that way, by people on both sides). The authority of the Word of God runs throughout human life; and the right of the Church to bear witness to that Word, and to order its life in conformity to it, must not be infringed.



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## For the Christian Clergy

It is this right to proclaim and bear witness to the Word of God which is exercised chiefly in the ministry of word and sacrament entrusted to the “pastors and curates” of the flock. Both the content of this proclamation, and the means of doing it, are given to the Church. That is why the Constitution of the Episcopal Church commits it to “upholding and propagating the historic Faith *and Order*” of the Anglican Communion and the Church Catholic. Ministry is not a construct of self-organizing voluntary associations (whatever civil lawmakers may think); and the vexing questions which surround it (such as the three degrees of ministry, the “historic episcopate,” and women’s ordination) are not merely cranky (however cranky some of the debate about them can be). We do not create the Faith, and we do not create Order: these are gifts to be received, not remade.

We pray for the Christian pastor and curate, the shepherd (*pastor*), be he bishop or priest, with the care (*cura*) of souls in a particular place (a diocese or parish), assisted, in a subordinate role, by deacons. How much do they need this prayer! There are so many things that we should ask God to give the clergy, who are so desperately in need of much help from above. We pray that “both by their life and doctrine, they [may] set forth thy true and lively Word, and rightly and duly administer thy holy Sacraments.” “Life and doctrine”: notice the order of the words, which is absolutely correct. The Church needs true doctrine, and too often the clergy are too badly educated and perverse to provide it. But important as doctrine is, there is a greater good to ask God to bestow upon the clergy, and that is the living of it: “But Cristes loore, and his Apostles twelve, / He taught, but first he folwed it hym selve” (Chaucer, *The Parson’s Tale*). We pray also, that they may administer his sacraments, both “rightly” (in obedience to the teaching of Christ), and “duly” (in accordance with the need of the church).

“Let us therefore beg large measures of grace for our bishops and pastors, that their preaching may convert us, their lives invite us to imitation, and their dispensing of the sacraments may comfort and strengthen us in all goodness: let the clergy pray heartily one for another, for they understand the weight of this charge; and let the people supplicate affectionately for their ministers, because the grace given to them is for their sakes, and the benefit hereof finally descends upon the congregation. . . .” (Comber).

## For the Christian People

The prayer for the clergy (originally “pastors and curates,” later an insistently and fussily Episcopalian “bishops and other ministers”), centers on the clergyman’s vocation to set forth the Word of God, in life, and in doctrine, and in the administration of the sacraments.

From there we naturally turn to the vocation of the Christian people. The pastors (shepherds) must be prayed for, but also “thy people, and especially this congregation here present” (congregation means ‘flock’). Though the seed be good, it comes to nothing if the ground on which it falls is not receptive (Luke 8:4-15). We pray for grace to “hear and receive thy holy Word”: which “in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.”

This activity of hearing and receiving the Word of God is the work of faith, and indeed there is no faith that does not engage in this activity: not a self-generated certainty or feeling, but an attitude of “meek heart and due reverence”—meekness of heart, or humble teachability; due reverence to receive this Word set forth in this ministry: “not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (1 Thessalonians 2:13). The fruit which such faithful hearing and receiving brings forth is the fruit of good works: it is freedom to serve the Lord and our neighbours “in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life” (cf. Luke 1:74, 75). It is troubling that (outside of Rite I, which is the 1928 Prayer Book text), the “prayers of the people” in the 1979 Prayer Book have no petition for the gift of faith and its fruits: there is much praying for all manner of good works—a laundry list of good intentions—but the faith that hears and receives the Word of God, without which there are no good works, is either taken for granted, or thought unnecessary to pray for.

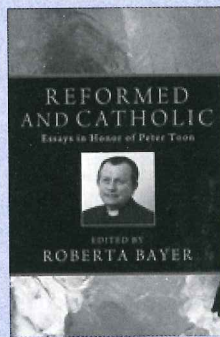
## For Those who Suffer

In prayer for Christian rulers and clergy, our charity is enlarged to pray for those institutional structures which benefit not just us but the whole Church; in prayer for the Christian people we pray for the faith and works of our neighbours; next the Prayer for the Church teaches us to pray God “of thy goodness . . . to comfort and succour all those who, in this transitory life, are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity.” The church is defined not just by its structural institutions by also its solidarity—as members of one Body—with those in suffering: “and whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it” (1 Corinthians 12:26). We have received comfort from the gospel, “that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God; for as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation aboundeth by Christ” (2 Corinthians 1:4, 5).

“And where can we so properly commemorate the afflicted as at this sacrament of mercy, wherein God is moved by the representation of his dear Son’s sufferings to pity all mankind, especially those who by suffering are made conformable to his image: . . . our gift [i.e. alms] may bring some present allay to the distressed; but if we can obtain the divine favour for them, they shall be constantly supported, or speedily delivered, if that be best for them” (Comber).

## For the Faithful Departed

The final petition—omitted in 1552 and 1559 due to concerns about the exaggerated late medieval cult of the dead—is a commemoration for the faithful departed. In the American book it is enlarged with an idiosyncratic petition for “continual growth in thy love and service,” but the core of it is a thanksgiving for those “departed this life in thy faith and fear” with a request for “grace to follow their good examples, that with them we may partakers of thy heavenly kingdom.” Living as we do in the culture of despair, it is of vital importance that our charity extend beyond the grave, that we learn to hope for God’s grace and favour even in death. The horizon of our hope is lifted from this world to the world to come. “One family we dwell in him, One Church, above, beneath, / though now divided by the stream, / the narrow stream of death.” (#397). An early eighteenth century commentator, Charles Wheatley, finds this petition consistent with the consensus of the early church, “that the interval between death and the end of the world is a state of expectation and imperfect bliss, in which the souls of the righteous wait for the completion and perfection of their happiness at the consummation of all things: and therefore, whilst they were praying for the catholic Church, they thought it not improper to add a petition in behalf of that larger and better part of it which had gone before them, that they might altogether attain a blessed and glorious resurrection, and be brought at least to a perfect fruition of happiness in heaven. By this means they testified their love and respect to the dead; declared their belief in the communion of saints; and kept up in themselves a lively sense of the soul’s immortality.”



“Toon’s contribution to the understanding of Anglicanism is hard to exaggerate. . . His courageous and scholarly work evoked much unpopularity for several decades, but it now enjoys deserved

and widely acknowledged acceptance. His writings in the last days, while he was struggling with a debilitating disease, have been an indelible encouragement to many. I count myself as one deeply grateful, not only for his scholarly contributions, but his inspiring faith.”

*C. Fitzsimmons Allison, 12th Bishop  
of the Diocese of South Carolina*

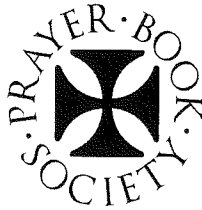
## Reflections from the Editor’s Desk (continued from p. 3)

strength Christianizing large parts of the world. This is a huge loss.

The doctrine and formularies of the Book of Common Prayer contain essential Christian teaching. Too few seminarians study classical Anglican theology, and so easily fall into thinking that there are various ‘streams’ of modern Anglican thought, without recognizing that some of them amount to heterodoxy, and none attain to the full teaching given to the Church of England in the sixteenth century. What is present in the historic Book of Common Prayer and formularies is the faith received from the Apostles. The same cannot be said of the new prayer books or in modern theology. To be immersed exclusively in the theology of the last two centuries is to assume with those thinkers, mistakenly, that classical Anglicanism is outdated. (Yet how could true doctrine be outdated?) So there is need to return to the classical Anglican Way to correct error in doctrine and learn again what it is to be immersed in Christian practice and piety. In addition, there is a pressing need for an ecclesiology based on real, rather than pretended Anglican doctrine, in order to uphold the Church in faith throughout the entire communion, historically connected to Canterbury.

A new member of the Board of the Prayer Book Society, Deacon Jonathan Kell, has contributed a sermon on how to read the psalms of imprecation. Fr. Jonathon Foos, Headmaster of St. Andrew’s Academy and Rector of St. Andrew’s and Christ the Redeemer Churches in Chester/Lake Almanor, California, has also joined the Board of the Prayer Book Society. Also ‘new’ are some books of interest to those interested in the Book of Common Prayer. *Lo, He Comes: An Advent Devotional* is a set of commentaries on the Collects by Peter Toon, edited by Jason Patterson. *Reformed and Catholic: Essays in Honor of Peter Toon* is now available from Anglican Marketplace (at a discounted price), and available on-line from Wipf and Stock publishers. *The Book of Common Prayer: Past, Present and Future: A 350th Anniversary Celebration*, edited by Prudence Dailey of the English Prayer Book Society, contains some excellent essays, one by Gavin Dunbar, and is available on Amazon. The Canadian Prayer Book Society ([prayerbook.ca](http://prayerbook.ca)) sells an award winning three-volume series *Discovering the Book of Common Prayer: A Hands-on Approach*. Also from the Prayer Book Society of Canada and available on Anglican Marketplace is a fine book in defense of Morning Prayer entitled *Whatever Happened to Morning Prayer? The Service of the Word As A Principle Sunday Liturgy* by Alan L. Hayes and John Webster. If you are seeking a more entertaining apologetic for classical Anglicanism, check out [conciliaranglican.com](http://conciliaranglican.com), where Fr. Jonathan ‘Parties like it is 1559’!





# THE PRAYER BOOK SOCIETY OF THE U. S. A.

*The Society for the Preservation of the Book of Common Prayer*

**Position:** Curriculum Development

**Overall responsibility:** The Prayer Book Society USA (PBS) has developed a vision for a Sunday School curriculum for use in classically Anglican churches that is Biblically orthodox, consistent with our Anglican patrimony and user friendly. To implement this vision it seeks a qualified individual to develop teaching materials for the first phase of this plan (for young adults 20-40's and children in K-5).

## Functions and Responsibilities

- Research and analyze a sample of existing Sunday School curricula
- Write and edit a Sunday School curriculum for K-Grade 5 and for adults with families, including scope and sequence; detailed lesson plans with age-appropriate activities
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- Work under the direction of a PBS officer
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**Compensation Package:** includes health benefits and a competitive salary

## Qualifications

- BS/BA in education and/or M.Div/M.Th
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- Age-appropriate pedagogical skills
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- Ability to self-direct and meet deadlines
- Ability to place curriculum material in an attractive and user friendly layout
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- Master's degree in educational and/or theological training
- Familiarity with historic Anglican tradition (i.e. as found in the 1662 and 1928 editions of *The Book of Common Prayer*, *The 39 Articles of Religion*, the Book of Common Prayer Catechism (1662/1928), etc.)
- Willingness to relocate to the Philadelphia or Savannah area

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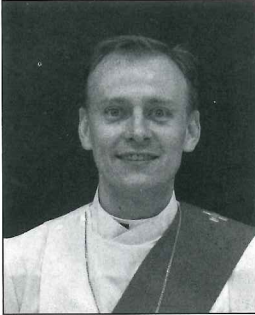
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*The Society is dedicated to the preservation, understanding, and propagation of the Anglican Doctrine as contained in the traditional editions of The Book of Common Prayer.*

# How Shall We Sing the Songs of Imprecation?



Deacon Jonathan Kell,  
Member of the Board  
of the Prayer Book  
Society

by Deacon Jonathan Kell

From the earliest days of the Christian faith, the Psalms have been at the heart of the Church's prayer life and worship. The Church Fathers, the Medieval Schoolmen, and the Reformers were all steeped in this song book and their writings are filled with the language of the Psalms. Archbishop Cranmer leads us also to drink deeply from the Psalter. If we are faithful in a discipline of Morning and Evening Prayer in our homes we will pray through the Psalter once a month. Oh, how our Church would be blessed if we all would be formed by these songs. But for those of us that do read the Psalms regularly, it is often uncomfortable to use some verses as our own prayers. How can we earnestly pray,

*The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; According to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me. For I have kept the ways of the LORD, And have not wickedly departed from my God. For all His judgments were before me, And I did not put away His statutes from me. I was also blameless before Him, And I kept myself from my iniquity. Therefore the LORD has recompensed me according to my righteousness, According to the cleanness of my hands in His sight. (Ps. 18:20-24)*

We know full well that our hands are not clean. We have departed wickedly from God, and we are not blameless before Him because we all too often follow the devices and desires of our own hearts. Certainly it is difficult to pray these prayers as our own, but there are a few Psalms which are even more challenging to us. These are the Psalms which are commonly called Psalms of Imprecation, Imprecatory Psalms or Psalms of cursing. For instance, in Psalm 58 David prays:

*Break their teeth in their mouth, O God! Break out the fangs of the young lions, O LORD! Let them flow away as waters which run continually; When he bends his bow, Let his arrows be as if cut in pieces. Let them be like a snail which melts away as it goes, Like a stillborn child of a woman, that they may not see the sun.*

Can we or should we pray such Psalms? The first American Prayer Book cut these Psalms out because many thought it was unthinkable and non-Christian to use them. Should we do the same? For the purpose of answering this question, let us consider Psalm 137 and ask the following questions: 1) Was it appropriate for the Psalmist to write these words and incorporate them into the worship life of Israel, 2) Can we pray

this Psalm, and 3) If we can pray this Psalm, how are we to understand it?

Psalm 137 was composed sometime after the return of Israel to the land of Palestine under the rule of Cyrus the Great. It is a remembrance of one who was taken out of the land by Nebuchadnezzar and spent seventy years in captivity. This Psalm is the expression of deep sorrow at the abiding memory of Israel's desolation, expressing Israel's abiding love of the land which was given in God's covenant faithfulness to the Patriarchs. We do not know who wrote this Psalm, but he speaks the heart of all Hebrews.

The Psalmist opens his verse by reflecting upon the unhappy days when they sat on the plains of Babylon by the Euphrates or by one of the many placid irrigation canals. The plains were so distant from the beautiful mountains and deep valleys of Israel. The Jews wept for their home land, and certainly wept over the idolatry which led them off into captivity. The memory of Jerusalem was not a passing thought but the very substance of their meditation. They sat daily in consideration of their distant home, and tears were their meat.

The musical instruments which had formerly given them mirth, which were employed in the worship of Jehovah, hung useless to them in the willow trees. In Israel, they had neglected to take up these instruments for the worship of God because they busied themselves idolatry. But there on the plains of Babylon, when they desired to return to the true worship of God, they could not. And to add insult to the grief of the Jews, the Babylonians asked the Jews saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!" This may have been a mockery, or it may have been an earnest request to hear the hymnody of the Temple. We cannot know.

The Hebrews could not bring themselves to sing. It was not appropriate that the songs of the Temple be sung in a distant and pagan land, for this would have been profane. So the people of God said, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?" Such was their grief, they had their harps but they could not raise them or the instrument of their voices to sing the songs of the Lord.

The Psalmist continues, "If I forget you, O Jerusalem, Let my right hand forget its skill! If I do not remember you, Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth -- If I do not exalt Jerusalem Above my chief joy." To sing the songs of Zion in the land of exile would be to forget that Jerusalem lay in desolation and that the Temple was reduced to rubble. Thus the Psalmist calls down a curse upon his own hand and

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his tongue if he should employ the songs of the Lord and neglect the remembrance of the unhappy state of Israel's exile. This leads then to the verses of our concern; verses seven through nine.

*Remember, O LORD, against the sons of Edom  
The day of Jerusalem, Who said, "Raze it, raze it,  
To its very foundation!" O daughter of Babylon,  
who are to be destroyed, Happy the one  
who repays you as you have served us! Happy  
the one who takes and dashes Your little ones  
against the rock!*

The Psalmist's prayer for God's remembrance of Edom is a call for the punishment, even destruction, of Edom. In the day of Israel's distress Edom shouted enthusiastically, "Raze it," or "make it bare," or "strip it to its very foundation," because like ghoulish fans they had cheered on the hordes from Babylon.

Note that the Psalmist speaks prophetically of the impending destruction of Babylon. Though Babylon had been taken by the Medo-Persians, it continued to stand, and was even flourishing. But the day was yet coming when it would be razed as was Jerusalem. To the one that would accomplish this, the Psalmist speaks a word of blessing, "*Happy the one who repays you as you have served us! Happy the one who takes and dashes Your little ones against the rock!*" These are hard words. What are we to say about them? Was it proper or moral for such a prayer to be uttered by the People of God? To answer this, we must consider how some others have regarded this and other imprecatory statements.

There is a school of theology called dispensationalism that sees the Old Testament as an extremely different era in God's dealings with men. This school maintains that the morality and even the means of salvation for Old Testament Israel were very different from our own. Thus, while these statements of cursing were appropriate under the Old Covenant, they are not applicable to the "Church Age." For the dispensationalist there is no problem because the Psalms are not really to be used as the song book of the Church. Rather, they were the hymns of Israel and have significance to us only in so far as it points to Christ. While this is a very tidy solution, there are fundamental theological defects in the system which preclude us from adopting such a stance. First, this position does not do adequate justice to the Old Testament's ethical provisions, where hatred of one's neighbor is forbidden in the Law of Moses and where Deuteronomy 32:35 explicitly reserves vengeance for God. A vindictive spirit was condemned in both the Old and New Testaments.

Secondly, we believe that through Christ we have been grafted into the life of Israel (Rom. 11). The mystery of the Gospel of Christ is that we Gentiles, who were formerly far off, have been made into one body with Israel, grafted into the tree whose root is Abraham. Their Psalms have become our Psalms; their prayers our prayers, and not merely in that they point to Jesus. Having been united into one body, the

Psalter is to be regularly on our lips; it is to resonate in our Churches. St. Paul gives this direct command in Colossians. "*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*"

There also are those who read this Psalm and simply conclude that they are the words of a passionately vindictive individual, and as such, they are to be accounted as immoral. This was the sentiment of no less a figure than C. S. Lewis, who called the imprecatory Psalms "devilish." This is a natural conclusion if the Psalter were not an inspired book of prayers and hymns. So Lewis astutely pointed out, "The bad parts will not 'come away clean;' they may... be intertwined with the most exquisite things." The Psalm must be read as an integral whole. They must be read as prayers for the Church, and not as a private matter of passion or a call for personal revenge. Notice that the Psalmist is calling for justice; not for a personal injury, but for an offense against Israel and particularly Zion, the city to which God had attached Himself. Psalm 137 gives godly expression of a heart concerned with seeing God's honor vindicated.

Indeed our Lord, Jesus Christ, and His Apostle enjoined that his followers pray imprecatory Psalms. St. Peter used Psalm 109 to make sense of Judas Iscariot's apostasy in Acts 1. When St. John gives us the heavenly vision of the saints under the altar, their mouths are full of imprecations (Rev. 6:10). In the fashion of Psalms, St. Paul announces *anathema* upon those that have twisted the gospel (1 Cor. 16:22; Gal. 1:8-9), and the first edition of our beloved Nicene Creed ended with a curse. Imprecatory statements are not confined to the Old Testament; rather, they have become a part of the fabric of the whole Church.

This brings us to you and me. Should we use these Psalms as our own? Should they be a part of our worship? The short answer is that they were given to us to pray as hymns and we should surely be robbed of great treasures if this Psalm and others were neglected. So how then should we appropriate them? If we learn nothing else, let us remember that the justice of God is a good yet terrible thing. It is gospel when Almighty God rouses Himself against wickedness.

We must be careful though. These Psalms do not give us license to wish bodily harm on any man, neither should we eagerly seek a man's damnation, for we do not yet know God's final verdict on any that live. When we pray the Imprecatory Psalms, we teach ourselves to let God be the avenger. His justice is perfect. Ours is not. As St. Paul teaches us in Romans twelve, "*Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.*" We are to love our enemies and pray for those that persecute us. It is left to God to execute judgment, and we have the sure knowledge that He has and yet will. For in the wilderness

Jesus defeated our adversary the devil. On the cross, Jesus vanquished our enemies, sin and death. And we await the day when the nations will be set under His feet and the world will be full of His justice. These are God's works, so we look to Him when evil oppresses us. Our arms are weak against our adversaries, but His are perfectly strong. Beloved, when we pray these prayers we give proper place to God. And this is how we are to sing the songs of Imprecation:

*O Lord our Redeemer, do away our captivity into which our adversary has led us, who sinfully consented unto him, and that we who humbly sit weeping by the waters of confusion may arise through Thy delivering us from temptations, let not the flow of pleasure carry us headlong, but*

*let the lowliness of our weeping lead us to heaven. Amen. (Mozarabic Collect, see John Mason Neale, Commentary on Psalms. Vol. 5, 304-305.)*

*Deacon Jonathan Kell is a native of Harrisburg, PA. Jonathan has served as a deacon at Holy Trinity Church since 2009. He holds a Master of Divinity from the Reformed Episcopal Seminary and a B.S. in Bible from Cairn University (formerly Philadelphia Biblical University). He serves as a curriculum advisor to the Academic Dean of the Reformed Episcopal Seminary. Dcn. Jonathan hopes to sustain the presbyter's exam sometime in the coming year. He teaches New Testament and Church History at Trinity Christian School in Fairfax.*

## LO, HE COMES: AN ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

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- The Rev'd Gavin Dunbar  
*President, The Prayer Book Society*



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# Revisiting the Three Streams

by Dr. Gillis Harp

The September/October 2009 issue of *Mandate* printed an article that explored some concerns about a historical and theological paradigm that was fast becoming a popular way to explain the peculiar genius of Anglicanism. Since then, this Three Streams model has become very fashionable in some circles. Although versions of the paradigm vary considerably, most iterations contend that Anglicanism can best be understood as synthesizing the Evangelical (or Protestant), the Catholic, and the Pentecostal (or Charismatic) traditions within Western Christianity. Recently, the organ of the ACNA, *The Apostle*, published an interesting and informative piece that used three historical vignettes to define the Three Streams.<sup>1</sup> Without repeating the arguments developed in the initial *Mandate* article, the following discussion seeks to explore several further problems with this sort of interpretation.

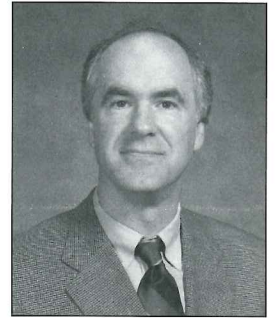
Given the deep divisions that have characterized global Anglicanism since at least the 1960s, virtually any attempt to identify and emphasize common ground among creedally orthodox Anglicans is a laudable exercise. Highlighting the important core beliefs we share as Anglicans, and more generally as Christians, can be invaluable. Still, Anglicans need to take care that we don't indulge thereby in historical fantasies or in theological wishful thinking. Back in the 1980s, an Anglican academic commented wryly that sometimes he preferred the bygone era when Anglicans identified themselves plainly as Evangelicals, or Anglo-Catholics. "These days," he quipped, "everyone claims to be *both* evangelical and catholic. It can sound glib and, frankly, makes me a little suspicious." In addition to the difficulties identified in the first *Mandate* article, the following discussion explores four additional problems with this popular conceptualization.

To begin, sometimes the Three Streams hermeneutic can treat our current theological muddle as a virtue rather than honestly recognizing its incoherence. As Peter Toon often observed (and he was rarely thanked for doing so), one should never underestimate the negative influence that the confused Protestant mainline had for decades on its members. The muddled thinking and bad habits of The Episcopal Church had a subtle but formative influence on those who chose (often for legitimate reasons) to stay. It encouraged some to make a virtue out of necessity; it discouraged drawing clear lines, and it induced otherwise faithful clergy to compromise

Biblical standards with the comforting reflection that the church on earth would always be a mixed bag. In order to avoid being labeled a fundamentalist, few pursued consistency or precision in doctrinal matters. Listening to liberal bishops and seminary faculty repeat endlessly that the Scriptures don't in fact affirm what they plainly appear to affirm undermined confidence in the perspicuity and sufficiency of Holy Writ. In short, Anglicans today may need to ask if the muddled thinking of TEC has had a deeper and more pervasive influence on us than we often recognize. Perhaps not *all* of the diversity celebrated by Three Streams champions should be prized.

Second, some Three Streams interpretations tend to focus exclusively on individual personal narratives and implicitly treat them as normative standards. Clearly, evangelical Anglicans have long stressed the importance of a personal faith commitment. Leaders of the eighteenth-century evangelical revival criticized formalism and rightly advanced what Wesley and others called an "experimental faith." Church history includes many inspiring stories of holiness and personal sacrifice, but ultimately God's Word written is our objective standard. While a pious individual may think she or he has had a "word from the Lord," we are told to "test everything" (1 Thes 5:21) by the high standard of truth rather than simply the sincerity or the fervency of a man's commitment. It would seem that something other than a simple subjective interpretation of Scripture is required to make a claim for 'truth'. Similarly, defenders of the Three Streams are guilty of philosophical pragmatism. "Our system may appear contradictory," they counter, "but the odd mixture really works in our parish." When the standard is practice rather than doctrine, it is clear American evangelicals haven't been thinking and so they should consider carefully the theological implications of certain doctrines or practices. The history of American evangelicalism in the twentieth century demonstrates how common this sort of pragmatism has been.<sup>2</sup>

Third (and clearly related to the preceding point), some proponents of the Three Streams view subscribe to what resembles a Post-Modern attitude toward truth, seeming unbothered by holding views that traditionally have been seen as incompatible. Embracing contradictory views is celebrated as preserving a creative tension and engaging in a deeper sort of thinking that transcends modernist "rationalism." Occasionally, their approach veers away from theology and toward pop-psychology or even pop-anthropology. Robert E. Webber (a popular authority



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1. Les Fairfield, "The Anglican Tradition: Three Streams, One River," *The Apostle* May 2012 (#2): 10-13

2. See Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994)

among Three Streamers) cites Jean Piaget and Erik Erikson when he describes assorted non-BCP rituals as “all prelogical forms of expression. These symbols communicate through the senses to a level of consciousness deeper than our thoughts. The point of contact that builds the bridge between this world and the next is not the mind, but the heart.”<sup>3</sup>

Similarly, advocates sometimes will sometimes speak of the Three Streams as part of a larger movement of “convergence” that understands itself as seamlessly reconciling Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. Yet the sort of convergence one actually witnesses on the ground in Three Streams parishes looks decidedly untheological. Few have attempted the sort of historical and theological investigation required to, say, understand the opposed positions staked out in the 39 Thirty Nine Articles and the Decrees of the Council of Trent. Certainly progress has been made in ecumenical discussions since World War II, but few Three Streams treatments work through the assorted ARCIC reports (given their tendentious character this may be understandable) or the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification agreed to by a committee of Lutherans and Roman Catholics in 1999. Instead, there is a lot of emoting about the importance of personal relationships and the supra-rational power of symbols. One often witnesses believers from fundamentalist backgrounds blithely adopting Roman Catholic vestments and ritual. But what if the revived medieval ceremonial teaches doctrines that the Anglican Articles explicitly repudiate? Those who press such questions are usually greeted with quizzical stares.

Finally, the Three Streams approach tends to either denigrate or neglect both the Anglican Reformers and the Anglican Formularies. Because Cranmer’s role within Anglicanism was different from that of Luther within Lutheranism, some argue that Anglicans need not defer to Cranmer’s theological views. Following the dated and partisan work of Benedictine Dom Gregory Dix, they characterize the chief author of the Book of Common Prayer and the Articles as a gifted liturgist but not a deep or sophisticated theologian. His gift to Anglicanism was a sort of studied ambiguity that his successors were then free to develop in their distinctive directions. Yet recent historical scholarship on Cranmer by academics (and not Anglican partisans) clearly contradicts this portrait. Cranmer’s knowledge of the Patristic literature was surpassed by no one during his lifetime and his mature doctrinal positions came only after years of intense and wide-ranging study.<sup>4</sup>

3. Robert E. Webber, “What is Ancient Future Evangelicalism?” *Theology, News and Notes*, see: [http://documents.fuller.edu/news/pubs/tnn/2004\\_fall/a2.htm](http://documents.fuller.edu/news/pubs/tnn/2004_fall/a2.htm)

4. Among many sources, see: Diarmid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996); MacCulloch, “The Myth of the English Reformation,” *Journal of British Studies*, 30 (1991): 1–19. Ashley Null, *Thomas Cranmer’s Doctrine of Repentance: Renewing the Power*

Surely a better way to understand Anglican identity and its peculiar genius would be to study its foundational documents—the Book of Common Prayer (especially in its definitive 1662 edition), the Articles of Religion, the 1662 Ordinal, and the First and Second Books of Homilies. The writings of later Anglican thinkers (including—but not limited to—those of Jewel, Hooker, and the Caroline Divines) can certainly help interpret that bedrock foundation, but where later thinkers wander from the Formularies, they are less able to claim to be authentically Anglican in any historic sense.

The original title of the Articles included a significant description of their larger purpose: “for the avoiding of diversities of opinions and for the establishing of consent touching true religion.” Prior to the destabilizing changes that came during the mid-nineteenth century, most Anglicans of either the Evangelical or High Church party (and even many Broad Churchmen) neither ignored the Formularies nor sought to impose upon them far-fetched interpretations that flatly contradicted the views of their authors. By the turn of the century, a difference of emphasis among the traditional parties had led to an unwieldy heterogeneity; by the 1960s, there was diversity bordering on incoherence. Some treatments of the Three Streams resemble an attempt to baptize this incoherence. The approach to Anglican history here is problematic at best. It is not necessary to affirm *all* historical movements within Anglicanism as equally helpful and positive in order to avoid a narrow fundamentalism.

John Henry Newman later came to understand his earlier theological efforts as reflecting a similar error. After entering the Roman Catholic Church, he remarked that his fanciful attempt to remake Anglicanism into something at odds with its actual history was “an impossible idea” and ultimately “untenable” because it was “indeterminate in its provisions, and without a substantive existence in any age or country.”<sup>5</sup> The Church of England emerged from the Reformation with distinctives (such as an episcopal polity and traditional liturgical forms, to mention only two) that had not been preserved by Protestant Reformers elsewhere. High Church Anglicans can legitimately celebrate these features. But all Anglicans would do well not to read back into the formative sixteenth and seventeenth centuries an easy synthesis that is, in some respects, at odds with the historical reality.

to Love (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). Dewey D. Wallace, *Puritans and Predestination: Grace in English Protestant Theology, 1525–1695*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982.

5. John Henry Newman, *Apologia pro vita sua* (New York: E.P. Dutton, date?), see Part VI: History of my Religious Opinions, 1841–1845; John Henry Newman, *Via Media*, Preface to the Third Edition (1877), p. i. Newman commented in the *Apologia*: “The *Via Media* was an impossible idea; it was what I had called ‘standing on one leg;’ and it was necessary, if my old issue of the controversy was to be retained, to go further either one way or the other.”

# Evangelicals and Eclecticism

*The reprinting of this review of Robert E. Webber's *Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail* is important because of Webber's continuing influence on the Three Streams movement in American Anglicanism. Only when I read this book in 1986 did I recognize the influence of American Revivalism and liturgical eclecticism on the new interest of evangelicals in liturgy. At the time I read it I mistakenly thought it was a phenomenon to be welcomed by those whose faith and practice had been shaped by the Thirty-nine Articles and the historic Book of Common Prayer because it would lead to a renewal of interest in our own liturgical heritage. That was perhaps overly optimistic.*

*One caution that should have been noted pertains to my comment in the review about use of the Fathers for liturgical study and revision, as I do not mean to imply that I am accepting their conclusions about the historical evidence. Moreover I have since learned I was mistaken in implying that Webber's views had any solidarity with Augustine.*

*A good example of the current and continuing liturgical eclecticism was found on the website of an evangelical congregation that identifies itself with such liturgical developments:*

## EVENSONG COMMUNION

*On the 3rd Sunday of each month (excluding summer months) we celebrate the Lord's Supper in a quiet, reflective service called Evensong.*

The Rev. Dr. Charles Flinn

## Book Review:

**Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail. Why Evangelicals are Attracted to the Liturgical Church. Robert E. Webber and Others.**

(Reprinted from *The Churchman*, Vol. 100, No. 4, 1986, pp. 367-371)

Review by Charles Flinn

**E**vangicalism on the Canterbury Trail is written as if the combination of Evangelical with Anglican produces, if not an oxymoron, at least a recognizable anomaly. Of course, many Anglicans, certainly many American Episcopalians, have willingly given up the evangelical label, leaving those in the more radical and more recently formed Protestant denominations free to take over this designation for themselves. So too something like the same group has been able to claim that they are the only born-again Christians—without quite explaining whether there could be Christians who are not.

However, some of these evangelical Protestants have rejected their evangelical religion for something

more 'Catholic'. One such group, called the Evangelical Orthodox Church, looks to the East and Constantinople for its identity. Another group finds its niche in Anglo-Catholic parishes in the U.S. Perhaps not surprisingly, one of the chief centers for this movement is Wheaton College, Billy Graham's alma mater, where Robert Webber, the editor and principal contributor to this book, is professor of theology.

When I first met people like this in an Anglo-Catholic parish in Washington, D.C., I was surprised at their still wanting to be identified as evangelicals. As far as I could tell, this identity did not show in their acceptance of sacerdotalism, or their Catholic view of the sacraments, or even Anglo-Catholic soteriology. Certainly, their high view and knowledge of Scripture set them apart from others in the parish, but their almost complete acceptance of Catholic ceremonies and ornamentation meant they were not easily distinguishable from the crowd. It also meant that the only challenge to Anglo-Catholicism in this particular parish came from Liberals, and that the teachings of the Reformation, though poorly understood, were nevertheless generally reckoned contemptible.

As an evangelical Anglican, as one who values Reformed teaching and the liturgical tradition associated with the Reformed side of Anglicanism, it is difficult not to be curious about this phenomenon. After all, Professor Webber has subtitled his book: *Why Evangelicals are Attracted to the Liturgical Churches*. For him, and for the other contributors, liturgy means Anglo-Catholic liturgy. But it need not be so. Though a scanty minority in the U.S. church—less so in the worldwide church—many Anglicans continue to adhere to both their Reformed and their liturgical heritage.

Ironically, one of the reasons for the dissatisfaction of these evangelicals is their failure to find in the tradition in which they started any objective basis for the individual Christian's reconciliation to God. In the best of the contributions to this book, John Skillen, who teaches English Literature at Gordon College (the other academic center for evangelicals on the Canterbury trail), describes "his discomfort with evangelical spirituality which sets the self center-stage, and hence triggers the very self-consciousness that abstracts one from involvement and inhibits action." Who does not cringe with Skillen as he describes the evangelical cliches which so effectively make this point? He reminds us, for example, of the groups which invite each person around the room to tell how he "met the Lord" or to "share" what the Lord has been doing in his life that week. Such groups often end with the 'just' prayer: "Lord, we *just* want to come before you, Lord, and *just* being with us, and we *just* pray that . . ." The way



out of his dilemma came, Skillen concludes, through liturgical worship:

Liturgical worship allowed me to forget myself in a corporate action not contingent on my own feelings at the moment for its effect. The efficacy of the liturgy does depend on *faith* but efficacy resides within the corporate *act* performed in faith, rather than in the faith as evidenced in the subjective *feelings* of the individuals present.

This then is the irony.

Contemporary evangelicals have been led by their tradition to look for actual righteousness in themselves as evidence of their own salvation and have only found the external righteousness in which they can have confidence in liturgical and sacramental acts. Just as the evangelical teachers who drove these pilgrims to the Canterbury trail did not realize how close they were getting to the essence of Roman

Catholic teaching, with its insistence on works righteousness, so also our pilgrims do not realize the similarities between their own stories and the stories of the sixteenth century reformers who realized that they must look for their justification in a righteousness external to themselves.

The same story can be heard elsewhere and from such distinguished sources as the present Bishop of London. In an address given in America in the Spring of 1986, Dr. Graham Leonard spoke of his own background in a conservative evangelical setting. He admitted his frustration at being expected to produce a particular subjective state, which he was never sure he did produce. He then said that the answer for him came only in the Catholic teaching about the sacraments. He went on to cite—not, as one might expect the principle of *ex opere operato* or the notion of Eucharistic sacrifice, but the Prayer of Humble Access: “We do not presume to come to this thy table, O Merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness. . .” This shows us that when these evangelicals turned to liturgy, sacraments, and priests, they were in some sense looking for a righteousness outside themselves. They wanted confidence about their relationship to God, and their search could be likened to the Reformers’ discovery of justification by faith through imputation of righteousness.

Because it lacks clarity, the position of these pilgrims on the Canterbury trail is subject to some criticism. Certainly Professor Webber sees the situation differently. For one thing, he understands the change

he made in terms of his own model of justification and sanctification. His contention, as set out in his concluding essay, is that evangelicals are strong on the justification side of Reformed teaching, and the liturgical church is strong on the sanctification side. But the rest of the book does not bear him out. The kind of evangelicals he is talking about may emphasize conversion, but it is rarely conversion based on *reconciliation to God through imputed righteousness*.

It is more often conversion based on practicing a particular style of piety or religious observance.

On the other hand, the evangelicals who become Anglo-Catholics are not claiming (or demonstrating) a greater sanctity, but adopting a different style of religious observance or manners. The evangelicals come from a tradition in which religious observance is more blunt and parochial, and the manners more provincial. The Anglo-Catholics, on the other hand, are, by

comparison, more subtle and catholic in observance, and more urbane in manners.

The difference in style is not discussed, as such, by any of the contributors, though several do mention the importance of recovering a sense of the historic church. All the contributors, for example, seem to have experienced the isolation which characterizes most American evangelical congregations. Apparently, they find in the contemporary U. S. Episcopal Church a stronger solidarity with the Apostolic Fathers, Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine. It is difficult to evaluate such a conclusion.

Most, too, see the Episcopal Church as a community with a common approach to worship but a fair amount of diversity in religious beliefs. Yet, the great teachers of Christian history have been primarily concerned about correct doctrine. It is only since the Enlightenment and the Romantic Movement that Christian Doctrine has been displaced from its formerly central position.

What we see today is an accommodation of Liberal Christianity, although it is seldom recognized as such. The interest these evangelicals say that they have in the Fathers is perhaps best understood by reflecting on the practical use made of the Fathers in the last forty years, namely as a source book for liturgical study and liturgical revision. The writings of the Fathers have not had a substantial practical effect on determining doctrine (other than sacramental) or on defining ethical standards. This may explain why those who are mainly interested in public worship

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and liturgy exaggerate the Fathers' importance for Anglicans.

Admittedly, the above criticism can be made of many others with a liturgical interest. And while the claim to unity with the Fathers is eclectic and raises questions about this group's so-called catholic identity, other claims raise similar, more serious, questions about its evangelical identity.

For example, in one piece, a former Seventh Day Adventist minister talks about taking a Seventh Day Adventist to the Anglo-Catholic parish he was attending at the time. This visitor (who happened to be the author's father-in-law) pointed out that the ornaments and ceremonies were all signs of belief in the Real Presence. The author's response was to "remind him that the mainstream Protestant Reformers continued to believe in the Real Presence, that Jesus' presence in the sacrament is *not* one of the issues of the Reformation."

Sad to say, the Canterbury trail has many of the same defects of the old evangelical path. The problems that Professor Skillen identified in evangelical piety are not entirely absent from the piety Professor Webber describes. Unhappily, Professor Webber likes to dramatize important points in his spiritual odyssey by telling us he "gulped" or he "swallowed hard"—till we finally imagine his having to put himself under the special care of St. Blaise. He also describes the time when, alone in his office, he abandoning Calvinism:

Then in a moment of conviction, I stood to my feet, grabbed the answer part of my sermon in both hands, and vigorously crumpled the papers. Raising my right hand and arm high above my head, I tossed those answers with all my power into the wastebasket. I dropped back into my chair and sobbed for several hours. I had thrown away my answers. I had rid myself of a system in which God was comfortably contained. I had lost my security and turned my back on years of defending God's existence, his incarnation, his resurrection, and his coming again.

Continuing the description of the events that day, he writes:

'I wept and I wept . . . my student assistant came into my office. I told him what had happened and he wept. I went to my class and told them and they wept.'

The road we are on here is the Sawdust Trail of American revivalism, with its attendant emotionalism and anti-intellectualism.

Later, when he was in a "crisis situation" about his 'church affiliation', Webber meets a 'charismatic

Episcopal deaconess' friend crossing the Wheaton College Campus: "She took one look at me and said, 'Bob, what's the matter with you? You look deeply troubled. I see strain in your face and in your eyes.'" After he "spelled out his concern over church affiliation," she took him to his office to pray, locked the door, and turned out the lights:

I watched with curiosity as she drew a small silver vial from her pocketbook. She made the sign of the cross over the vial and uttered a brief prayer to set the oil apart as the agent of the Holy Spirit. Then she dipped her thumb into the precious oil and placed the oil on my head in the sign of the cross and in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

She then performed the 'healing of memories' for Webber:

She clasped her hands around the sides of my head and encouraged me to pray through every stage of my spiritual journey. Starting in my preschool years through high school, college, and seminary, we prayed through my spiritual journey asking God for a sense of direction. I began to feel a sense of release from the past. To this day the effects of that prayer are still with me. For the confusion about my spiritual identity was laid to rest, and my feelings about being drawn into the Episcopal Church were confirmed.

Scripture teaches that people are forgiven and freed from the past, based on the one oblation of Christ

once offered. Nevertheless, there is a need to examine ourselves in light of what the contributors to *Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail* are saying. Why have Anglicans within the historic evangelical position not been able to minister to people like this when the Anglo-Catholics have?

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### The road we are on here is the Sawdust Trail of American revivalism, with its attendant emotionalism and anti-intellectualism.

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Have evangelical Anglicans been abandoning the historic liturgy that so beautifully expresses their theology and adopting in its place an emotional, subjective piety and observance, which in practice deny the Reformed doctrines of justification and sanctification? Perhaps evangelical Anglicans have accepted uncritically the informal, emotional, and subjective style of many free church evangelicals and, in the process, lost the ability to minister to those who, like Professor Webber, are dissatisfied with their revivalist roots.

Anglican teaching and worship should clearly teach salvation by a righteousness which is *perfect* but not *inherent*. This is the foundation of New Testament faith, and should not be obscured by either what we teach or how we worship.

# News from the Anglican Way

*Anglican Way* welcomes news of meetings and conferences from all branches of Anglicanism.

## Episcopal Missionary Church Synod News

The Episcopal Missionary Church (EMC), headquartered in Monteagle, Tennessee, held its tenth biennial Synod this July 18–21, in Hillsdale, Michigan. The Synod, co-sponsored by the Holy Trinity Anglican Church, and Hillsdale College, both in Hillsdale, Michigan, marks the 20th anniversary of the EMC's separation from ECUSA and founding in 1992. Since its inception, the EMC's authorized prayer book has been the 1928 BCP.

Highlights of the 2012 Synod included keynote and banquet speeches by Hillsdale College President Larry P. Arnn, major presentations by Fr. Peter Kago Nganga, Esq., Canon Duane Beauchamp, and Fr. Vince McLaughlin, and a theological discussion led by Fr. Carter McCain. The Synod was conducted by the Rt. Rev. Council Nedd, II, Bishop of the Chesapeake and the Northeast, and the EMC's third and current Presiding Bishop.

The EMC has seen substantial domestic and international growth in recent years, with nearly 50 parishes and missions throughout the United States, and newly affiliated dioceses in areas of southern Africa,

India, and the Middle East. At the Synod, a special presentation was made by the new rector and a lay leader of the EMC's latest mission parish, Living Water Chapel on the campus of Oasis Hospital, at Al Ain, in the United Arab Emirates.

The Synod elected a new Standing Committee, which includes Fr. John Stults, Secretary General; Canon Michael Cochran, Esq. Chancellor; Fr. Charles Moncrief, Chaplain Canon; Deacon Fred Erb, Bursar; Canon Len Giacalone; Canon Pete Minton; Fr. Timothy Davies; Canon Duane Beauchamp; Douglas Campbell; Dr. Wendy Hernandez.

The Synod included special workshops for EMC military chaplains. The EMC sponsors a popular Chaplain Candidacy Program for priests-in-training with the U.S. Army Reserve, Army National Guard, Navy Reserve, and Air Force Reserve. The Rt. Rev. William Millsaps, Bishop of the South and Presiding Bishop Emeritus, is EMC Chaplain Endorser. The Rt. Rev. Wilbert Bailey, Suffragan Bishop for the Armed Forces Chaplains, is Assistant Bishop of the Diocese of the Chesapeake and the Northeast, and EMC Assistant Chaplain Endorser.

*Fr. Charles Moncrief*

## Report on the 2012 Fellowship of Concerned Churchmen Conference and Forward in Faith/North America Assembly

The Fellowship of Concerned Churchmen had its annual Conference at the Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville, Illinois, from July 10–11. The FCC is the group that organized the historic St. Louis Congress in September, 1977, which produced the Affirmation of St. Louis. Since then the FCC, under the leadership of Dr. Wallace Spaulding, has labored to bring the jurisdictions of the Anglican Continuum into closer relationships. The theme of the talks this year was "Eucharistic Validity." Bp. Richard Lipka (Suffragan Bishop of the Missionary Diocese of All Saints) spoke on "Valid Ministry." Fr. Edward Rix (All Saints, Wynnewood, PA, and PBS Vice-President) lectured on "Valid Formula and Matter." Fr. Ralph McMichael (Director of the Eucharistic Center) spoke on "Valid Intent." There was also a symposium on "Intercommunion among all orthodox Anglicans."

The Forward in Faith/North America (FiF/NA) Council Meeting followed the FCC Conference. The Council, under the leadership of the President, Bishop Keith Ackerman, is steering FiF/NA away from being an organization to being an organism, "the mission of being the Church to all people by teaching the

fullness of the Catholic Faith and being the source of information and education for the ACNA (Anglican Church in North America) and beyond." Attending this year from the UK were Canon Geoffrey Neal, representing Forward in Faith/United Kingdom, and Frs. Francis Gardom and Arthur Middleton, representing the Anglican Association (AA). The AA is a think tank whose members are all in FiF/UK, with the goal of *Restoring the Anglican Mind*, the title of Fr. Arthur Middleton's latest book. The AA also encourages and fosters closer relationships between Evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics.

The theme of this year's Assembly was Acts 2:42, "they devoted themselves to the breaking of bread." Bishop Ackerman's opening homily was "The Bread of Life, Food for the Journey." Fr. Lawrence Bausch's teaching was "The Sacraments: Christ's Gift to the Church." Bp. Ray Sutton's presentation was "Christ in the Eucharist, the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament," and Bp. Donald Parson's was "The Eucharist as the Source and Center of Christian Life." Bp. Frederick Fick finished up with "The Holy Eucharist, the Foundation of Christian Mission." All this teaching was magnificent; we are all so hungry for sound biblical and patristic teaching on "Christ in us, the hope of glory."

*The Rt. Rev. Paul C. Hewett, SSC,  
Diocese of the Holy Cross*



# Language and Faith

by The Rev. Dr. William H. Ralston,  
(St John's Savannah, Parish Paper,  
December 7, 1997)

**B**ishop Reeves once observed, most truly, that the great misfortune of the Episcopal Church in revising its Prayer Book was undertaking the revision in a time when both theological understanding and literary competence were eroded. All of us have felt the banality and shallowness of the “new” services as literary artifacts, and even the Standing Liturgical Committee admits in print that the theological emendations and alterations were deliberate, not accidental or due to impoverished language.

There is no inherent reason why “modern” English cannot be used to convey the truth of the Gospel or furnish acceptable language for the liturgy. Some people are still able to write well, even in a period of linguistic flux and comparative incoherence. The same experimental and unsettled state of the language existed in the sixteenth century. We were fortunate that the people like Cranmer, Hooker, Shakespeare, and the translators of the King James Bible were able to inform it and wield it with power. Our run of good fortune has ceased.

Our liturgical committee was reduced to the absurdity of requesting Mr. W. H. Auden to cast his hand over the prose of the new liturgies and, as it were “poetize” them. Mr. Auden of course rejected this as a fraud and an indignity. It would be like spreading marmalade on stale bread. Poetry does not work that way. You don't take prose and dress it up.

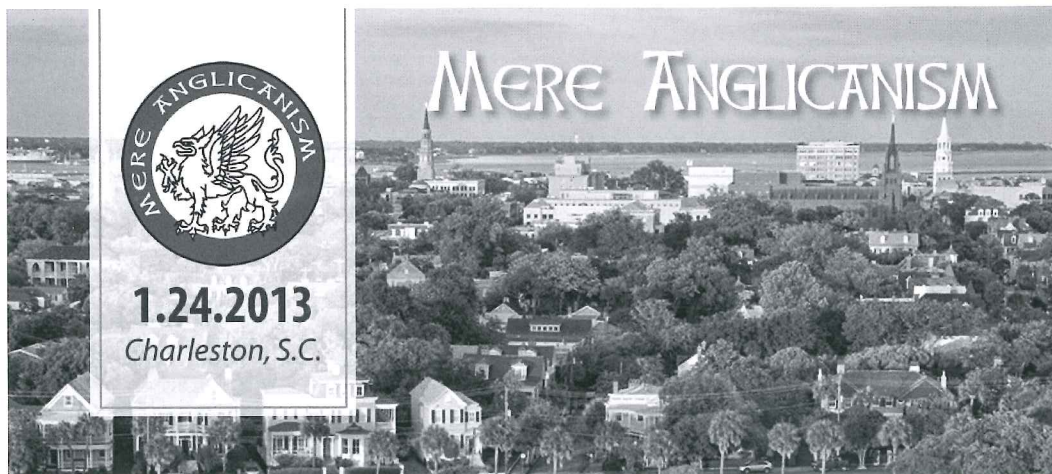
You simply write poetry—as Coverdale and Cranmer did in the Psalter and in the Prayer book. If you can't write it, then you can't. The compilers of the 1979 Prayer Book could not, and foisted on the Church their literary and theological inferiority.

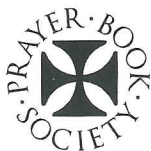
The Prayer Book Society, in campaigning for the continuance in use of the traditional Prayer Book, never imagined attempting to convert the unchurched or speak to the “modern world” in the cadences of Elizabethan prose. The liturgy is designed to address God on our behalf. I dare say He comprehends not only Elizabethan English, but Urdu, Latin, and (undoubtedly!) Hebrew. The point is to offer Him the best we can. “This fragile earth, our island home”, a phrase appearing in the new Prayer Book, is a classic example of the “purple patch”, a little “beauty spot” thrown at (or pasted on) an otherwise plain, flat linguistic face. It's like the “corroborative details”, brought in to “add verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative”.

The problem with the revisers of the Prayer Book is that they lost their nerve. Their liturgical solutions were not radical enough. They were just sufficiently iconoclastic to land us in the present confusion, where nothing much is memorable and the services of the Church are thrown into the (indiscretionary) hands of the clergy. You never know what you will have or what may happen when you go to Church.

The older order of a single, worldwide “use” for the Church is gone forever. The “use of the traditional Book is either dismissed as irrelevant or derided as nostalgic historicism. But the liturgical officers

Mere Anglicanism, a Conference held in Charleston, South Carolina and hosted by the diocese, will take place on January 24–26, 2013. See [mereanglicanism.com](http://mereanglicanism.com) for details about speakers, events and accommodation.





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(Bishops and members of the Commission) must fear it, because they try so hard to stifle it and forbid its use, probably because it diminishes so clearly their own stillborn and feeble efforts.

I don't know whether God cares if He is "Thee" or "You", but I myself certainly care, and will never be converted to the insipidity of our present liturgical habits. I attend Church and I love the Church because it is "other" than I am. It puts me in touch with something more than the parameters of my own circumscribed habits of existence. It gives me words to say and sing which carry my thoughts and aspirations, and pains and afflictions, to God, in a form which convinces me is addressed to Him. It is not about me as I customarily am. It does not try to adjust God to me and my finite understanding. It preserves His mystery and His holiness, which I need infinitely more than I need a strict construction of what I am saying.

And, as a paradox, a strict construction of the old services, if I make the (not very large) effort to comprehend what they are saying, also informs me about myself, even though their direction is massively toward God. We have heard about evangelism for ten years. It was a complete flop in terms of concrete results on a large corporate level. Christianity is more "caught" than "taught", as someone (von Hügel, I think) once said. Every Christian is by definition an evangelist, in the sense that every Christian by Baptism is gifted to embody and represent the Lord and his virtues. We all fail, in one way or another. But by the grace of God that is what Baptism makes us to be.

And we will never know the measure of our success or our failure. We are told not to judge until the Lord himself comes on the last

great day. Therefore the interior life of each Christian and the true life of the body of Christ's faithful people is hidden. This part of me is a secret even from myself, just as the value of the life of the Church is a secret. Not for nothing do we begin Holy Communion with God, "unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid"; and then pray that He may "cleanse the thoughts of our hearts" (a glorious mixed metaphor!). Even the makers of the new Prayer Book had enough sense to leave *that* alone.

The issue is not Elizabethan or contemporary English. If well used, each may bring the soul to God. If poorly used, no number of "Thees" or "Yous" will do anything at all. There is a larger issue anyhow. I can imagine the advocates of a universal *esperanto* laughing in their graves as *all* the world's languages are devoured by numbers and virtual images. I remember seeing a picture called *Fahrenheit 15*. Each person in the small, threatened, escapist colony *was* a book. Each member had memorized a book, to keep it alive after all printing was forbidden and all books burnt.

I think something like this may actually be happening. Communicating with the modern world has been an illusion, the pursuit of a phantom. The modern world is slipping away, dissolving before our very eyes. What radical solutions for a radical (not necessarily "brave") new world may be required to carry the revelation of God in Christ through the next millenium is beyond me. But while I live, I want the best nourishment and the best company in faith I can find. None better, I think, than right here on my knees with my old Prayer Book in my hand, and all of you for companions.

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