

ANGLICAN WAY

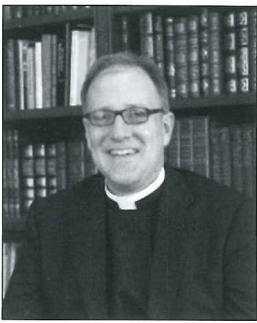
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The Rev. Gavin G. Dunbar, President, Prayer Book Society, and Rector, St. John's Episcopal Church, Savannah, Georgia

PRESIDENT'S ADVENT LETTER

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

Depend upon it, Sir, when a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully" (Samuel Johnson). I suppose the same could be said about the approach of exams, a wedding, guests, or tax day. What concentrates our minds in this holy season, however, is the coming of Christ. "Behold, thy king cometh unto thee." It is no doubt comforting to think that God is there any time we might need him—a well-trained God who does not speak unless he is spoken to, a concierge God who stands ready to answer our call. But that it is not the comfort that we have in Christ. "Our God cometh, and keepeth not silence" (Psalm 50). Christ does not remain at a polite and safe distance from us, somewhere up there in heaven, or in the past, or in Galilee. He does not hover politely in the background in case we want him, a celestial Jeeves offering a discreet cough to the earthly Bertie Wooster. He does not wait upon us to invite him in; no, *he* comes to *us*, he invades our space and time, and when he comes, he presents himself as Messiah, and with the authority of the Lord he marches into the Temple, takes charge, and starts cleaning house.

The question therefore is not *whether* or *if* he is going to come or not: he *is* coming. Nor is even the question *when* he is coming—for he is even now on his way. With every passing moment the hour of his advent draws ineluctably closer: "now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." The only question is whether we are ready to receive him, and to hail him as the multitudes did: "Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: hosanna in the highest."

Hear the seventeenth century preacher Archdeacon Mark Frank: "the days of holy Advent are to teach us to sing Hosannas to our Saviour, to bless God for his coming, to bless him for his coming, all his comings, all his ways of coming to us . . . to bless him in the highest, with heart and tongue and hand to the highest we can go, that he may also bless us in the highest."

In Advent, we prepare to bless God for the coming of Christ, and so Advent is a preparation for Christmas:

but it is also a preparation for Epiphany, for Septuagesima, for Lent and Passiontide, for Easter, Ascension, and Pentecost, for the whole of the Church's year, for every Church year, for the whole of our lives, for the whole of time. "Watch ye," says the Lord—which means, stay awake, keep watch, be vigilant, keep your eyes peeled—"for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh: at even or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping" (Mark 13:35, 36). Advent teaches us to look for Christ's coming and to be ready for it at any time, in every time, at all times, in worship but also in work, in prayer but also in play, in the things we do, and things that happen to us, in things that go right—and things that go wrong. "Come, Lord Jesus!"

Nor is this hope of his coming open-ended: this Christ whom we wait for is not some unknown Christ, some new Messiah with a newly minted gospel: he is the same Christ who has already come once in the flesh, has shown forth his glory, has suffered death and risen again, who has ascended up on high and bestowed his Spirit on the church. As in the Church's year we call to remembrance his first coming, so we learn to hope for and expect his coming again. The past is not merely past but is present and future in all its virtue and power. We go to meet him from whom we come: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and day, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8)

How shall we make ready for so great a guest—a guest who comes to claim his people as their Lord? In its essence, I think our readiness is a matter of *desire*: wanting him to come, as Christ and Lord, wanting him with everything that you have and everything you are, everything you do and everything that happens to you. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely. Even so, [quickly] come, Lord Jesus." (Revelation 22:17, 20). Let this prayer be the desire of our hearts, and the design of our lives.



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Cover: Antique stained glass window, in 19th century (St. Mary's built 1875-1899) church ©iStockphoto.com/cnstock

Anglican Way

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Reflections FROM THE Editor's Desk

Roberta Bayer, Ph.D., Assistant Professor,
Patrick Henry College, Purcellville, Virginia

It is the beginning of the Christian Year. Advent celebrates the coming of Christ at Christmas as the Advent candles, lit in a darkened Church, announce that Christ is the light of salvation, shining in the gloom of deepest winter, shedding light on the fallen world, and offering hope to sinful men. Advent and Christmas together offer an image of the hope of resurrection, the hope of redemption from sin, that will be made plain at Easter, and expounded throughout the great teaching Sundays of Trinity. The cycle of the Christian year, Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, and Trinity remind us that earthly time is not God's time. In God's time, the rebirth of the Son of God is celebrated year after year; it places the secular calendar, with its hours, days, and years, second to the divine calendar, which is beyond measure, partaking as it does of eternity. Time is God's creation, time itself will end, yet the Kingship of Christ is forever.

There are a couple of articles in this issue from new contributors. The Reverend Jonathan Mitchican, who is Rector of the Church of the Holy Comforter in Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania and who blogs at conciliaranglican.com, has contributed an article on the New Media. The Reverend David Curry, Rector of Christ Church, Windsor, Nova Scotia has written an article commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the Canadian 1962 Book of Common Prayer. This Canadian BCP was the last attempt at revision which was in keeping with the great tradition, before the effects of the liturgical movement of the twentieth century were felt. I have also reprinted an article from the Parish Paper of St John's in Savannah, by PBS President Gavin Dunbar on Predestination, always a controversial topic. A graduate of Patrick Henry College who recently has been confirmed Anglican has contributed a thoughtful article about why she loves the Anglican Church, despite its failings. Many of her friends do go to Rome. The fundamental appeal of Rome lies in the fact that it is the only Western Church, in the current culture, where the life of the mind is still regarded as an important criterion of the faith. It is not too much of an overstatement to remark that bright, well-educated young people, those who graduate with a university education which gives them some inkling of the complexity of Christian theology and philosophy, want to attend a church where the clergy are more, rather than less, theologically educated than themselves.

The Reverend William Martin, a member of our board, has contributed a short, Chestertonian article in praise of *boreds*. The Reverend Kenneth Cook has contributed an excellent introduction to Richard Hooker (1554–1600). Hooker, known by name and reputation to most Anglicans, was part of the Magisterial Reform, as it is called by historians, along with Martin Luther, John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli, and Heinrich Bullinger. Thanks to the work of contemporary scholars, among them W. J. Torrance Kirby, Hooker's incorporation of the theological and philosophical tradition of Western thought into the founding moments of Anglicanism is better understood. Also on the theology of Hooker in connection to the Book of Common Prayer, I recommend Roger Beckwith's most excellent article in *Reformed and Catholic: Essays in Honor of Peter Toon*. This eminent theologian argues persuasively that Book V of Hooker's *Laws of the Ecclesiastical Polity*, which is devoted to the topic of doctrine and worship, is entirely consistent with and a defense of the Book of Common Prayer.



The Worship Mall

Dr. Gillis Harp's article "Revisiting the Three Streams" in the last issue of *Anglican Way*, has been helpful in bringing to our attention some more recent liturgical developments in North American Anglicanism. Dr. Richmond sent a note in defense of Robert Webber, which I have reprinted below. Robert Webber had quite an impact.

By way of a general survey of the influence of postmodernism on worship, I recommend a book by Bryan D. Spinks, Bishop F. Percy Goddard Professor of Liturgical Studies and Pastoral Theology at Yale University. In his book, *The Worship Mall: Contemporary Responses to Contemporary Culture*, Professor Spinks argues that contemporary Christians approach liturgical worship as consumers. In this book he walks the reader through the worship mall to examine some of what is on offer in "postmodern global culture." Spinks observes that Robert Webber and Chuck Fromm, the CEO of Mananthe! Music, "first coined the term 'blended' worship in 1987. They had discussed the idea that if traditional and contemporary styles of worship represented thesis and antithesis, one might be able to create a synthesis or blend that would

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President's Advent Letter
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Recently these pages hosted some lively and even pointed exchanges on current questions of ecclesiology, the doctrine of the church, and in particular, of Anglican churches. The later twentieth century left Anglicans heavily invested in studied ambiguity. Formulations that meant different things to different parties were thought to be the key to unity. Such vagueness, however, only papered over differences, which now have been exposed. In the conservative camp, Anglicans find it easier to agree on what they are *against* than what they are *for*. The "three-streams" ecclesiology—catholic, evangelical, and charismatic—is a step forward in that it acknowledges the differences. Finding a unity that is not a mere abstraction, however, will require a long range commitment. Self-restraint and the identification of common ground will also contribute to a deeper unity. What would set forward this process, however,

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appeal to postmodern youth in evangelical churches, in a way that the old Billy Graham style of worship did not." (*The Worship Mall*, p. 1) Webber was convinced that young evangelicals sought a traditional and mystical approach to worship, and so by blending old and new, an older liturgical structure with contemporary praise and worship music, an appealing synthesis might be achieved. Blended worship, therefore, is an attempt to re-design older liturgies to suit contemporary aesthetic taste. It is part of the worship mall, filling a void for a certain group of people, providing

would be the rediscovery and recovery of the historic formularies, the Prayer Book and the Articles, as the common center of gravity, and the commonly acknowledged limit of diversity.

~

This Advent season everyone on our mailing list will be receiving a letter about *the Common Prayer Catechesis Project*, perhaps the most significant initiative the Society has undertaken in more than a decade. It comes at a time when there is a widespread recognition that the health and growth of the church depends upon the revival of the ancient and reformed tradition of catechesis, the teaching and training of Christians in the doctrine and worship of the Bible and the church. If it develops as we hope it will, the CPCP will position the Society as a key "go-to" resource for clergy and lay leaders inside and outside the Episcopal Church who are building congregations in the Anglican Way of historic and biblical faith. We have begun development of the CPCP, and we have a considerable way to go. Please stay tuned for updates as this develops.

them with an opportunity to experience a worship-style according to their preference.

Spinks' book is helpful in raising questions about the relation of consumerism to faith in modern society. The thesis, that people view worship-styles through the lens of 'consumers,' seems undeniable. It helps one understand why an argument, like that made by Dr. Harp, which defends the Book of Common Prayer on the basis of doctrine, and not because of the experience it offers, is very hard to hear. (Dr. Spinks has an interesting article on the work of Dom Gregory Dix's book *The Shape of the Liturgy*, in *Reformed and Catholic: Essays in Honor of Peter Toon*).

News from the Anglican Way

THE SOCIETY FOR KING Charles the Martyr is holding its Annual Mass and Luncheon at All Saints Parish, Ashmont, Boston on January 26, 2013. The 11am Mass, to be celebrated on Saturday, January 26, 2013 by The Rev'd Michael J. Godderz, SSC, Rector, will have Mozart's *Spatzenmesse* as its setting. Members and all other interested are invited. A buffet luncheon will follow for which reservations are required at \$15 per person. Checks are payable to "All Saints' Parish," memo line SKCM, and should be sent by January 15 to the parish office at 209 Ashmont Street, Dorchester Center MA 02124. The parish website is at <http://allsaints.net>.

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THE ENGLISH CHURCH SOCIETY will hold the inaugural Peter Toon Memorial Lecture at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford on Tuesday April 16th, 2013. Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali will lecture. An announcement will be placed upon our website with further details.

PLEASE ORDER YOUR 2012 Anglican Ordo Calendar based upon the 1928 Book of Common Prayer from Whithorn Press, whithornpress.com. These beautiful calendars are a publishing ministry of St. Andrew's Academy and Church, Lake Almanor, California.

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PLEASE NOTE THAT OUR address has changed: The Prayer Book Society of the United States, P. O. Box 137, Jenkintown, PA, 19046-0137

Mrs. Debbie Remenyi, who has worked tirelessly behind the scenes for the society has decided to retire from her position as secretary and general factotum. We on the Board thank her for her many years of work and dedication, and wish her the very best for the future! Mrs. Naomi Morris is our new secretary, who will answer the phone and forward our mail. We are very thankful that she has agreed to take on this work. Thank you Mrs. Remenyi and Mrs. Morris!

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.

Further Discussion of the Three Streams

November 8, 2012

Dear Dr. Harp:

With great interest, as well as a bit of consternation, I read your excellent article “Revisiting the Three Streams” in the most recent edition of *Anglican Way*. It is a timely article that seeks to address an important issue. Nevertheless, although your article is well researched and written, I believe that your emphasis requires a respectful rebuff.

First, let me tell you how much I appreciate your measured evaluation. Throughout your article you repeatedly use the words “some” and “sometimes.” This is entirely appropriate. Some people who affirm the theology of “Three Streams” have not given sufficient attention to the biblical, historical, or theological implications of these traditions. In some cases, as you point out, there are stark incompatibilities. With you, I do not believe that all our diversity is worth celebrating.

Moreover, I also appreciate your efforts at bridge-building. Given the nature of our current situation, any reasonable efforts at finding “common ground” among Anglicans must be supported. Thank you your emphasis upon common Anglican “essentials.”

Nevertheless, in spite of these commendations, I disagree with your analysis for at least three reasons. First, not all “Three Streams” thinking is “muddled.” There are those of us who believe that the history of Anglicanism *requires* Catholic, Protestant, and Charismatic considerations. Anglicanism, within certain rubrics, must celebrate a Reformed Catholicism that is dynamically available to the Holy Spirit. That is, one can adhere to “Three Streams” thinking and remain entirely biblical (more later).

Second, while we certainly must test all things according to Holy Scripture, it is imperative that we appreciate the need for an experiential faith. This is not “Post-Modern,” and it is entirely in keeping with biblical narrative. An examination of the Bible reveals a God who is interested in vital encounter and vibrant dialogue *before* communicating pragmatic truth. As just one or two of many examples, God communed with Adam and Eve in the Garden before providing them with a command. Genesis 1: 26–29 does precede Genesis 2:7–9, 16–17. Similarly, God met with Moses at the Burning Bush, and demonstrated who He was to all of Israel, *before* giving them the Law. That is, experience preceded expectation. We need Scripture and Spirit. “Spirit” without Scripture is dangerous, whereas Scripture without “Spirit” is dull. Both are required.

Third, while you are correct to assert that there are some things that are “incompatible,” I am not sure you demonstrate that the “Three Streams” are inherently incompatible. Take the 1549 BCP as an example. The 1549 clearly communicated a Reformed

Catholicism that encouraged the (highly personal) common faith of a common people seeking to build a common nation. As such, the first BCP was “Catholic,” Reformed, and, broadly, Charismatic. Moreover, if we use J. C. Ryle’s understanding of Evangelicalism (roughly restated), can any “Catholic” or “Charismatic” not subscribe to these tenants: We are Sinners, Christ is our only Savior, Scripture is our sure authority of faith and practice, Spirit is central to sanctification and to the imperative of effectively sharing our faith? As such, one indeed can be an Evangelical, Catholic and Charismatic. Finally, in this regard, an examination of Anglican history clearly (although at times uncomfortably) demonstrates what Archbishop Williams calls *Anglican Identities*.

Finally, corresponding with your article and in keeping with my historic orientation, I am not sure that your analysis gives sufficient attention to the history of Anglicanism. While all Anglicans must indeed embrace Cranmer and the [English] Reformation, I am not sure that those who move beyond them are to be entirely rejected. Are we to assume that Jewel and Hooker are not Anglicans? Does the reign of Elizabeth I determine the historic end of the English Reformation? Should we include our more Puritan-minded brethren in our understanding of reform, or, in fact, do these reformers go beyond the bounds of what Cranmer himself would have affirmed? Similarly, but on the opposite end of the spectrum, could we not say that first wave Tractarianism was little more than an effort to correct the liturgical negligence of our Anglo-Puritan brethren? Can we not agree that the first BCP was in some ways greatly influenced by the Benedictine Liturgy of the Hours? The questions and answers are endless—and divergent!

Although Anglicanism “emerged from the Reformation,” and it is to its foundational principles we must appeal, I am not sure that this emphasis entirely determines or defines Anglicanism. Development does have some determining influence. One can be “Three Streams” and not embrace “muddled” thinking or theology.

—The Very Rev. Dr. Donald P. Richmond
Reformed Episcopal Church,
Diocese of the West, Apple Valley, CA

November 20, 2012

I appreciated Dr. Richmond’s constructive response to my second Three Streams article. While I would agree that, historically, Anglicanism is a complex entity, I worry about a sort of blithe celebration of its “many identities” when some of these are actually incompatible. Among my concerns about the Three Streams hermeneutic is that it occasionally employs elements of Anglican historical development to

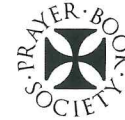
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undermine the plain meaning of the Anglican Formularies. Nor am I clear about what Dr. Richmond means when he asserts that “all Anglicans must not be strict Reformed Protestants”—Bp. Jewel would certainly have found this declaration puzzling.

Perhaps part of the problem is a reluctance (evident in Dr. Richmond’s letter) to define with precision the Catholic ethos so frequently invoked. Occasionally, it seems to be primarily aesthetic. Though I think some evangelicals benefited from exposure to his writings, I have yet to be convinced that Dr. Webber’s work helped in this respect. Much of it was neither particularly original nor very sophisticated theologically.

—Dr. Gillis Harp



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iPray app now available for iPad and Android users

App provides convenient way to pray according to the traditional Book of Common Prayer

OKLAHOMA CITY—iPray, a mobile phone and tablet application that provides users of the traditional Book of Common Prayer a convenient and intuitive way to read the daily prayers and Scripture of the church’s liturgical calendar, is now available for iPad and Android users.

Due to high demand and the success of the iPhone version that launched last April, requests were made to create iPray for the iPad and Android market. While there are no major functional differences, the new iPad app will provide users with a scrolling calendar on the top of the screen along with improved graphics.

“We are excited to bring iPray into the Android market and increase on-the-go access to the Book of Common Prayer with the iPad version,” said Rev. Patrick Bright, rector at All Souls’ Episcopal Church in Oklahoma City. “We have had overwhelmingly positive reviews of the app and hope to continue making improvements to increase the ease in which people can access the appointed lessons of Scripture, psalms and prayers for a particular day.”

The app costs \$1.99 for both iPhone and Android users, and was developed by Phase2 Interactive of Oklahoma City. The app is available through the iTunes Store and Android Market.

iPray is modeled after the Church of England’s 1662 Book of Common Prayer and based on the ancient practice of the Church as refined by the English Reformation.

iPray presents the Scripture readings and the appropriate daily prayers referenced in the Book of Common Prayer in one easy to use format according

to the traditional liturgical calendar of seasons, feast days and commemorations of the saints. In the course of praying these daily offices through the medium of this app, one enters into the honored tradition of the sanctification of time in prayer and the spiritual digestion of God’s word written.

iPray is not alone when it comes to expanding their presence for mobile apps. Over the last two years, mobile apps have exploded onto the scene with many religious organizations looking for creative ways to bring their missions into the palms of people’s hands.

“We have seen not only an increase in the demand for religious-based apps over the last two years, but an increase in app requests overall,” said Colbey Chittenden, Phase2Interactive director of robotics. “People are learning just how much we can do with an app and are constantly looking for creative ways to get into the market.”

About iPray

The iPray app was developed by users of the traditional Book of Common Prayer who desired an easy-to-use application of prayer book worship. iPray simplifies negotiating Scripture readings and the appropriate daily prayers following the liturgical calendar of the church, including feasts and fasts, into one, easy-to-understand application. The app was designed with the user in mind, placing the day’s lessons at the user’s fingertips. Four daily prayer offices are brought to you based on the liturgical calendar and the time of day: Morning Prayer, Midday Prayers, Evening Prayer and Compline. Visit www.ipraybcp.com for more information.

The BCP as Magisterium

by Dr. Roberta Bayer

The Book of Common Prayer is the Magisterium of the Anglican Communion because it contains the doctrine and faith of the Church. There is no single theologian whose works can take its place. While the *Laws of the Ecclesiastical Polity* should be required reading for every seminarian, this work does not serve as a magisterium for the Church. Nor do Anglicans consider the theological work of Thomas Cranmer to be magisterial; in fact, not all of Cranmer's writings are available in translation from the Latin in which he wrote. The Book of Common Prayer is Magisterial because it is *not* an independent creation of Thomas Cranmer, but rather Creedal and Scriptural in its entirety. The BCP is Magisterial because it is the Bible set to prayer and a distillation of the liturgical heritage of the Western church.

The Reformation in the Church of England was both reformed and Catholic. The peculiar catholicity of the Church of England lies in its attachment to essentials. This makes the Book of Common Prayer entirely catholic. Catholicity is defined as an attachment to basic Christian doctrine—to the Faith revealed in Holy Writ as articulated by the early Apostles and by the universal church in council in those early centuries when the Church was able to meet to determine doctrine. Catholicity means creedal Christianity. The Church of England is reformed because its advocates desired to return the Church once again in its essentials to the foundational and central doctrine of the Church; it was a reformation like all the great reform movements of Christian history, a reminder to the Church of the faith once received from the apostles.

The prose of the traditional Book of Common Prayer is beautiful, with stately rhythm and meter, because it was intended to be memorized. Once upon a time, confirmation required that confirmands memorize both the Nicene and Apostles Creeds along with the Catechism. Anglican priests and missionaries who have worked in the Caribbean or Africa, where congregations are still marginally literate, have discovered that congregations can recite aloud much of the Book of Common Prayer, its psalms, collects, prayers. The prosaic (in the sense of dull) bland prose of contemporary liturgies stays in the memory less easily and is suitable only for literate societies. (I leave it as an open question whether or not we in the developed world continue to be, in any real sense, a literate society.) But it is clear that the new liturgies engage the imagination less in prayer, and when imagination is not engaged, contemplation is impoverished.

The Catechism of the traditional Book of Common Prayer is modest if one compares it with its Roman Catholic cousin, or with the Westminster Confession.

It is based on the Nicene Creed. There were larger Catechisms produced (Nowells), to explain the fundamentals, but the BCP catechism is simple. The foundation of the faith for Anglicans, as it was for patristic and scholastic theologians, was the supremacy of Holy Writ, and attachment to the doctrines of the Trinity, and the nature of Christ, His Incarnation and Resurrection. In his *Paradiso*, Dante confesses his Faith as founded on Holy Writ and Creed, much as would any Anglican of the sixteenth century:

*Through Moses, Psalms, and Prophets, and then came
To the Evangelists, and you (St. Peter) who wrote
When you were hallowed by the tongues of flame
The three eternal persons next I quote
As tenet of my faith; so one and Trine
That are and is their nature both denote.
And on my intellect, of this divine
Profound tri-union, of which I talk,
The Gospel more than once imprints its sign.
This is the beginning, is and this the spark
Which, like a living flame, doth now dilate,
Shining within me like a star at dark.*

Dante, *Paradiso*, Canto XXIV (*Examination in Faith*)

At the 1930 Lambeth Conference, and in the constitutions of individual provinces, the Communion is described as having a common affiliation through the "Catholic and Apostolic faith and order as they are generally set forth in the Book of Common Prayer." There is a bond through mutual loyalty to the doctrine of the Faith, simply expounded in the Book of Common Prayer. Its simplicity, its strict adherence to only foundational teaching, allows for unity within diversity, reciprocity, mutual respect for different customs and practices dependent upon the culture, and the rule of Scripture, rather than the rule of a particular group of men. The coherence of the Communion requires a will and desire for mutual respect, and a united adherence to the Rule of Faith on the part of the members of the communion, this is the condition necessary to any institutional order. The disorder of the current communion is a reflection of a lack of adherence to this Rule of Faith, put simply.

This argument as to the nature of magisterial teaching in the Anglican Communion necessarily implies that there exists a set of Christian teachings as to the Faith which are fixed and not subject to development. Therefore, one comment must be added: the Reformers depended upon the historical resources available to them in the Renaissance to know which doctrines had remained unchanged from Apostolic times. They attempted, to the best of their ability, not to confuse personal and subjective interpretation of doctrine and Scripture with Apostolic teaching. If

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you check the footnotes of the books produced by Jewel and Hooker and Cranmer, the breadth of their reading and research is impressive, and to prove them wrong in particulars as to historical fact would be a rather difficult task.

Living as they were in the sixteenth century, they held no predisposition to think that there is an *inevitability* to doctrinal development, or that later theological developments are an improvement on earlier thinking. The idea that doctrine changes with culture is entirely a modern idea, it is called the idea of progress. It takes the form of an ideology today, as it did at the time of the French Revolution, when defended by an ideologue like Condorcet. In the twenty-first century, however, many within the Church seem not to have reflected upon how limited is this ideology, how time-bound and false. The Reformers did not share the belief, rather prevalent today, that cultural practices which develop in different places and times have the standing of revelation, of Apostolic and Creedal doctrine. They made distinctions between doctrines which are essential and those which are matters of cultural importance only.

The reason why moderns believe in progress, and have such confidence that what are cultural limited developments should be treated as newly-received doctrine, is a complex topic that requires knowledge of the history of ideas in the West. But it is a fact that many people in the Church are convinced that the Church progresses in its knowledge about God over time, that we are progressively correcting

Apostolic teachings. They seem unaware that this is an idea which itself has a date and a beginning. This belief in progress simply was not prevalent among the magisterial Reformers. Although as scholars they were quite aware that in the early centuries of the Church there was much diversity of practice and belief, there was no attempt to resurrect the practices of the ancient Church as a whole, or to confuse those practices with core doctrine. Looking at the situation today, they would say that new practices and beliefs, culturally embedded as they are, are like the localized and heterodox practices and beliefs of the first century, they cannot have the standing of the authoritative teaching of the universal Church in the Creeds. This is the key point. Christian practice is always warped by the culture and the time in which it exists; to offer revelatory status, equal to the Bible, to practices unique to a particular culture, whether it is ours or that of second century Antioch, leads to confusion. There are many matters which might rightly be treated as matters of *adiaphora*, such as the calendar by which to determine the date of Easter (Eastern and Western Churches disagree on this point), or ordaining women in our currently feminist West (the Eastern Church does not). They have historical standing because they are adopted at a certain time and in a certain culture, but do not need to be followed or practiced, as a matter essential to salvation. It is this distinction between culture and doctrine necessary to salvation that the Reformers maintained, and altogether it is a good distinction. It makes the historical BCP a reliable guide to Christian essentials not just for Anglicans, but for many Christians because it serves as a statement of tenets central to the universal faith.



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New Anglican Media

by The Reverend Jonathan Mitchican

I found my way into the Episcopal Church by accident when I was twenty-one. I was a lapsed Roman Catholic with a largely secular outlook that I had no intention of changing, but then I stumbled across the website of a parish in my hometown. That website began a journey for me that led to Christ and ultimately to classical Anglicanism, wherein I discovered the fullness and richness of the historic Christian faith. I never would have discovered that church in a phone book, a newspaper advertisement, or by seeing a sign on the road.

A dozen years later, I am a priest in the Episcopal Church and I write a blog called *The Conciliar Anglican*, where I talk about classical Anglicanism and answer people's questions. I am no expert, just a guy with a computer and a voracious appetite for reading seventeenth century theology, but I have been flooded with inquiries on any number of subjects by people who are searching for Christ—those who have lost their faith and are trying to find their way back to it, those who have never had faith and want to know what this Christian thing is all about, and especially young Evangelicals who love the Lord but who have come to the end of what the mega-churches can give them and yearn for something more substantial. Their attraction to my blog has very little to do with me. It has everything to do with the light of classical Anglicanism, which gives them hope for finding Christ in the midst of an ever more secularized and dehumanizing culture.

Many people today have no concept of what it means to be a Christian, outside of their experience of Christians in politics and the pillorying of Christians in popular culture. This is true especially for younger adults, more of whom than ever have not been raised in the Church. Yet even for those young people who were brought up in Christian homes, it is often the case that they have never been exposed to historic Christianity, but rather to a paper thin substitute with praise bands that sing about Jesus as if He is our boyfriend rather than Our Lord, sermons that are closer to life coaching pep talks than explanations of the Gospel, and pizza party youth groups that inculcate young people with a false moralism, encouraging them to “get out there and change the world” rather than to realize their own sinful inadequacy and to cast their hope upon the cross alone.

Classical Anglicanism is the antidote to this madness, but people do not know that because they do not know that classical Anglicanism exists. Though on paper the doctrinal positions of most Anglican churches still commit us to the Reformational Catholic faith of our forebears, the majority of Anglicans today seem to buy into the notion that Anglicanism

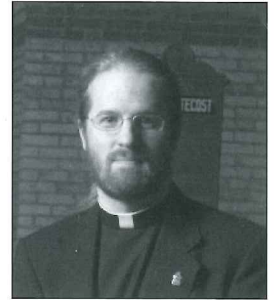
is a wax nose, an ecclesiastical common space that can be molded to the needs and desires of a variety of theologies. Only a very few, including organizations like the Prayer Book Society, are trying to counter this misconception with the bold claim that Anglicanism actually is something. It is not a wax nose. It is the historic Christian faith, fought and died for by hundreds of generations before us, and its job is to mold us, not the other way around. It is authentic in a way that most American religiosity and spiritualism is not. It is exactly what many people are searching for, but they do not know it, because we have not yet developed the tools we need to speak to these new generations.

The pace with which new media overtakes the old today is breathtaking. Forty years passed between the invention of radio and the television. Today, however, there are a whole host of new media technologies developing all the time. Smart phones, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, blogs and micro-blogs, text messages and podcasts all are interacted with every day by people all over this country. This new media landscape can be challenging to navigate, especially for people who grew up prior to its inception, but for people in their twenties, thirties, and forties today, this is the air they breathe. This is where they turn not just for entertainment but for comfort and meaning. When they begin to search for Christ and the historic faith, this is where they look first.

Some Christians have managed to capitalize on the new media phenomenon. Historic Roman Catholicism gets broadcast every day through EWTN's cable television channel and a host of internet radio stations. Many people have discovered the rich depth of Eastern Orthodoxy through podcasts from Ancient Faith Radio. Even confessional Lutherans have managed to make good use of new media with podcasts from Issues, ETC, and funny YouTube videos by Lutheran Satire. Anglicanism has almost no voice in this arena. There are lots of Anglican blogs and podcasts, but the vast majority of them are focused on the bouncing ball of internal Anglican politics, discussions about who is in communion with whom and what the latest outrage is, none of which is the least bit interesting to a person on the outside who is hungry for Christ and trying to find the way to Him. We have the pearl of great price and we are hiding it from the world.

What we need is bold and visionary leadership from those who would be willing to invest their time and financial resources in establishing an Anglican presence in the new media world. One of the things I have heard repeatedly from Evangelicals who have found their way into classical Anglicanism via my blog is how happy they were to discover that they

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The Reverend Jonathan Mitchican, Rector, The Church of the Holy Comforter, Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania

Predestined

by The Reverend G.G. Dunbar



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

The topic of predestination and election is one that some people find unsettling, and even offensive. There is no question that it is difficult. Yet we cannot ignore it either, since it plays a very definite role in the Bible, in the Prayer Book, and in the tradition of the church ancient, catholic, and reformed. "Predestination to life," says Article XVII, "is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel secret to us, to deliver from the curse and damnation, those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour." The journey that ends with the attainment of God's people to God's eternal glory begins with the eternal decision of God. If we choose to respond to God, it is because he has first chosen us.

Too often, predestination and election is approached as a zero-sum game. If God is in complete control, I am not (determinism); or I am in control and God is not (voluntarism). Both are problematic. The fatalism of the latter is obvious: who will trust a God who is powerless to save me—most especially, from my own perverse will? Moreover, Scripture testifies to God's sovereign power to shape all of history, including my history—he is not called the Lord for nothing! Yet Scripture also testifies that human beings make real and consequential choices. Both sides are affirmed in the Bible—sometimes in the same passage.

Sometimes, it is said that predestination and election make human effort in faith and prayer irrelevant; and some predestinarian Christians act as if this were true—that a Christian will be saved, no matter what

he does. It is a false inference. As the same Article explains, "they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according to God's purpose by his Spirit working in due season: they through grace obey the calling: they be justified freely: they be made sons of God by adoption; they be made like the image of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ; they walk religiously in good works, and at length by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity." God's eternal purpose encompasses not only our final destiny in glory, but also the road of grace that leads us there. To those who are on that road of grace, therefore, "the godly consideration of predestination, and our election in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh and their earthly members, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things." To them it "doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal Salvation to be enjoyed through Christ" and, also, "it doth fervently kindle their love towards God." Given the instability of all human willing, it is deeply comforting to know that our salvation does not depend upon our decision, but upon God's. If he has decided to save us, then he most certainly will—and that knowledge allows me to take heart amidst the ambiguities of Christian life. It assures me that my labours "are not in vain in the Lord."

We do not know who is among the elect, and I suspect we shall be rather surprised when we find out. And what of those who are not elect? We know this: that every human being in the end gets what he wills—to be with God, or to be separated from him. We also know this: that God is good, and in the day of the Lord the glory of his justice and his mercy will be revealed.

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did not have to abandon the Reformation in order to become historic Christians. So many of these folks turn towards Rome or the East because they think it is the only option available. If classical Anglicanism could be presented to these folks, we could see thousands of people making the journey along the Canterbury Trail into the heart of Christ.

Of course, the new media is just a tool, not an end. The real goal has to be thriving parishes where the Gospel is truly preached and the Sacraments are rightly administered, where people can receive absolution and be fed by Christ. The riches of the Book

of Common Prayer cannot be communicated from a distance. They have to be experienced, over time, through worship. Nevertheless, if we want there to be a future for classical Anglicanism and its witness to the world, we must begin to reach out to the world with the Word that we have been given. We cannot simply expect the world to come knocking on our doors. "Go and make disciples of all nations," Jesus said, "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (*Matthew 28:19-20*). If we go forth in the power of His Word, it will not come back to us empty. My generation is filled with people, for whom Jesus died, who need to hear the truth.

Richard Hooker: Scholar and Churchman

by The Reverend Kenneth Cook

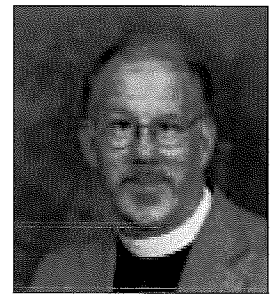
In an age characterized by conflicting ideas, beliefs and movements, Richard Hooker emerged as the preeminent spokesman for the Church of England. Hooker was a second-generation Protestant clergyman of the established church, capable of critically interacting with the Christian and classical literature of the past in a fashion that expanded upon the previous labors of Cranmer, Jewel and Whitgift. Indeed, the times in which he lived demanded the service of someone like him, because the children of fathers like Luther, Zwingli and Tyndale, having asserted *sola Scriptura*, now found themselves unable to agree on the proper objects and extent of biblical reform. English theologians and parliamentarians who were most strongly influenced by the model of Geneva found the Elizabethan *Book of Common Prayer*, and attendant matters like church furnishings, vestments and episcopal polity—and their associations with the Catholic past—to be offensive and intolerable. At stake in the heated controversy were a cluster of issues related to authority. As the debate continued, the questions being considered included the authority of the Word of God over Christ's Church and all of English society.

Richard Hooker was born c. 1554 in Exeter. After grammar school, he entered Corpus Christi College, Oxford, by means of the patronage he received from the Bishop of Salisbury, John Jewel, due to the relationship his uncle, John Hooker, had with Jewel, as fellow students of Peter Martyr Vermigli. He studied Hebrew, Greek and theology, being awarded the B.A. in 1573 and the M.A. in 1577. Thereafter he served as the lecturer in Hebrew until late 1582. Ordination to the diaconate and priesthood occurred c. 1580. In 1584 he was granted the living of Drayton-Beauchamp. 1585 saw his appointment as Master of the Temple Church, London, near the Inns of Court, home of England's common law profession. There Hooker became fully entangled in his nation's conflict over the reform of the Church. The Temple's resident assistant, Walter Travers, was a major Puritan leader and the new Master's brother-in-law. Hooker gave Travers full authority over the Sunday afternoon services, only to see them become thoroughly Genevan. Meanwhile the morning services adhered to prayer book practice. Travers was dismissed in March 1586. Hooker remained at the Temple through Summer 1591. His marriage to Joan Churchman—a matter of historiographical complexity—took place in 1588. While Travers began to edit the *Book of Discipline*, a Puritan treatise intended for presentation to Parliament as a replacement for the *Book of Common Prayer*, Hooker worked on a defense

of the state church which differed from John Jewel's earlier *Apology of the Church of England* because it sought to define the Elizabethan Settlement in relation to Puritanism as well as Roman Catholicism. The Hooker family remained in London, living with the Churchmans, while the first four Books of the *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* were written and published. Book Five appeared in 1597, during a pastoral calling in Bishopsbourne. The concluding Books Six through Eight were nearly ready for the printer at the time of death, November 2, 1600, but did not see full publication for decades.

While consistently upholding the doctrines of the creeds, the *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* successfully demonstrates that the mere citation of scriptural proof texts is inadequate for the establishment of doctrine or practice with regard to the fine points of the later sixteenth century's controversies. Utilizing fluid Ciceronian style of prose, Hooker found Plato, Aquinas, Aristotle, Athanasius, Augustine, Calvin and a multitude of other authors could be shown—positively and negatively—to serve his apologetical and polemic purposes. His Puritan co-religionists had failed to grasp that many of the details of Christian worship and polity are not specified or mandated by Scripture, either in the Old or the New Testament, showing a misunderstanding of the relation of reason to faith. Matters of churchmanship that are revealed by Scripture must be upheld and practiced. Details of church life not explicitly or implicitly revealed are “indifferent matters,” about which the national Church has authority to specify practice.

In his succinct prioritization of authorities (inaccurately referred to by others as his “three-legged stool”), Hooker did a great deal to make his case. “Be it in matter of the one kind or of the other, what Scripture doth plainly deliver, to that the first place both of credit and obedience is due; the next whereunto is whatsoever any man can necessarily conclude by force of reason; after these the voice of the Church succeedeth” (*Laws* 5,8,2). Further reflection demanded a precise definition of reason, and was quickly provided: Hooker insisted that by “reason,” he meant not his “own reason, . . . but true, sound, divine reason; reason whereby . . . conclusions [derived from Scripture might be] demonstrated, and not probably discoursed of only; reason proper to that science whereby the things of God are known; theological reason, which out of principles in Scripture that are plain, soundly deduceth more doubtful inferences . . .” (“Answer to Travers,” 25). Hooker's vision of a faithful and comprehensive Anglican Christianity still awaits full realization. Let us be about prayer and service, confident that “God is our helper.”



The Reverend
Kenneth Cook,
St. John the Evangelist
Anglican Church,
Southampton,
Pennsylvania

“Gather up the fragments that remain that nothing be lost”



The Reverend David Curry, Rector, Christ Church (Anglican), Windsor, Nova Scotia and Vice-President of the Prayer Book Society of Canada

by The Reverend David Curry

For centuries upon centuries, the Gospel story of the miraculous feeding of the multitude in the wilderness (*John 6. 5–14*) was appointed for *The Sunday Next Before Advent*. It was only in the 1962 Canadian Book of Common Prayer that there was a change to reading from the first chapter of John's Gospel instead (*John 1. 35–45*).

This year has marked the 50th anniversary of the 1962 Canadian Book of Common Prayer, an anniversary which coincides as well with the 350th anniversary of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, the mother Prayer Book of the Anglican Communion, if you will, and a book which, along with the King James Bible, has contributed much to the shaping of the English language in its many different forms and to the shaping, too, of our older institutional culture. In many ways, that is all now in utter disarray.

We live in the ruins of a revolution, namely, the deliberate and intentional attempt to re-image and change the Christian Faith. For Anglicans the form the revolution took was largely through liturgical revision and the creation of a centralized bureaucracy on the part of the episcopate and the synods. It hasn't worked. The result has been a loss of spiritual identity and the destruction of parishes. Things don't look much better on the diocesan and national levels either, especially in North America. The confusions and conflicts about polity and morality reflect, however, a deeper spiritual malaise. That provides, perhaps, the occasion for a renewal and a discovery of the very principles of the Christian Faith, the very thing signaled in the Collect. “*Stir up, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people.*”

The 1962 Canadian Book of Common Prayer is unique. It is the only modern Prayer Book (i.e. post-World War II), which stands self-consciously and intentionally within the classical Anglican tradition of Common Prayer. It does so by virtue of a kind of accident of history. The Canadian revision of the 1918 Book of Common Prayer was more or less complete in the late 1950s when in 1958 the Lambeth Council made a momentous decision to remove the classical Prayer Book as the basis for liturgical revision in order to embrace an ideological theory based on the liturgies of the early Church, particularly that of Hippolytus. The American Church, also far along in their revision of the 1928 Book of Common Prayer, immediately jettisoned their revision and entered into decades of liturgical experimentation that ultimately resulted in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer,

so-called. I say ‘so-called’ because it is really a collection of alternative liturgies and bears only a passing resemblance to the classical tradition of Common Prayer, but then again, it wasn't supposed to! Why, then, the title, one might ask?

But the Canadian Church was simply too far along and far too poor to embark upon the brave new world of liturgical innovation and experimentation. The Canadian Book was completed and in use by 1959 and authorized by General Synod in 1962.

Behind these changes throughout the Communion and beyond was a revolutionary impulse. It comes down to the desire to accommodate the Christian Faith to the contemporary world, a world largely seen through the optic of sociological and political agendas of a liberal bent. It seems to me that it hasn't worked and it cannot, because it is essentially negative and reactionary about the heritage of the past, particularly our Anglican liturgical heritage. It has continued on because of two things: the revolutionary zeal for change, come hell or high water; and the lamentable ignorance theologically of clergy and laity alike about the foundational principles of the Christian Faith and in the form which Anglicans have received them. Yet, this now becomes the context of the Church's mission.

It is not about tradition for the sake of tradition. It is about a contemplative approach to our life with God through which we engage the contemporary world. That contemplative approach for Anglicans is and can only be centered on the liturgy. One of the positive features of the revolution has been the discovery of the essentials of the Faith and, in particular, our Anglican expressions of the Faith in such things as the classical books of Common Prayer, the Thirty-nine Articles, and the Ordinal.

Central to the liturgy for Anglicans is the approach to the reading of the Scriptures. Theologically and historically, that is a creedal approach. It means reading the Scriptures through the Creeds which are themselves nothing more and nothing less than a distillation of the Scriptures and arise at the same time as the formation of the Canon of Scripture.

This minimal and yet essential approach can be the basis of our speaking to the contemporary world. I see no future in the corporate management model of Church life—itsself the mechanism of the revolution as well as its product. It has left us with the shards and fragments of a broken church and communion. We have been living in its ruins for several decades.

Whatever opinions one might have about the issues of polity and morality that currently divide and

distress Anglicans, and, of course, the whole point is that there can be different opinions about these questions, there is surely a problem in thinking that the Church must conform to the assumptions of the secular culture in the way the Prime Minister of England along with the outgoing and incoming Archbishops of Canterbury seem to demand. That invariably means picking and choosing which aspects of the contemporary culture interest you and which do not, and then demanding that your point of view override any other points of view, however legitimate historically and theologically they may be. Thus the outgoing Archbishop of Canterbury can offer a wonderful critique of the culture of the market-state, on the one hand, but then dogmatically demand the embrace

of the so-called liberal social agendas with respect to polity (women bishops) and morality (same-sex marriages), on the other hand.

We have yet to arrive at a deeper and more profound contemplative understanding of the fullness of the Christian Faith as distinct from a selective approach that privileges certain perspectives to the detriment of others that have at least an equal claim to be heard and respected.

The Gospel story of the miraculous feeding of the multitude read on the *Sunday Next Before Advent* signals the gathering up of the fragments of our lives into the banquet of heavenly love. We live from the fragments but in the divine intention “*that nothing be lost.*” It is really about love in the ruins.

The Bored and the Boring

by The Reverend William J. S. Martin,
All Saints Church, Mills River, NC

Have you ever wondered why the Bible does not excite and inspire you? I have to admit that there was a time when it did not do much for me. And I think I have discovered the reason for it. G. K. Chesterton in his book *Heretics*, says that there are two kinds of people in the world, *bored* and *the bored*. In his own day, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Chesterton had concluded that the majority of men were *bored*, while a minority could be given the honorable title of *bored*. *Bored*, to him, were actually the admirable lot; their opposite type was hopelessly lost. And by *bored*, he meant those men and women who were actually inspired, moved, and defined not only by creation, but by every last little aspect of human existence. *Bored*, you see, are poets. *The bored* are, by contrast, those who see and perceive only physical facts, surfaces, shapes, colors, sizes, and statistics. *The bored is stronger and more joyous than [the bored]; he is a demi-god—nay, he is a god. For it is the gods who do not tire of the iteration of things; to them the nightfall is always new, and the last rose is as red as the first. . . the bored would go onward, bold and gay, and find the blades of grass as splendid as the swords of an army.* (*Heretics*, iii) The *bored* is a poet because he responds to the world around him through wonder with imagination and creativity. The only reason he is considered a *bored*, is that the common lot of men is *bored* and uninspired.

This is a long way of saying that there was a time when I was *bored*. Thankfully, however, something transpired, which softened my heart and opened my mind to the songs of the *poets*. That something was the birth of *faith*. *Faith*, you see, *is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

(*Hebrews xi.1*). *Faith* is something more than knowledge of the facts, or even belief in certain dogmas. *Faith* is the living conviction that reality, as we know it, is a sign and symbol of the Divine plan, its order and governance a reflection of God’s passion and desire. *Faith* is that disposition that never ceases to seek and plumb the expanse of the universe and the depths of the human heart for God’s knowledge and love, his purpose and his intention. *Faith* is that desire that yields to a creation that was fashioned and molded to lead and guide man’s heart and soul back to God. *Faith* never ceases to search and to seek, and when it has found its treasure, it shares it with the world.

So the *bored* is a poet, whose faith leads to song. The song that is sung is by no means the last. In fact it might even be sung that others may sing, as *bored* men and women begin to find faith. Such is, at any rate, the intention and desire of the poetical *bored*. You see, the *bored* cannot help himself. He cannot help but sing, and pray in his heart that his song will be heard.

Faith looks forward to find God. Its greatest discovery is its origin and source, the well-spring of life and the *dayspring from on high*. It finds God in his Son, and in the heart of his mercy. For thousands of years *faith* reached forward in time, waiting in expectation, longing to be caught up in the song that God alone could sing. Then one day the *bored*, the *poet*, the man of faith heard God singing in the person of Christ. The song was sung in life, through death, and then into resurrection. The poetical *bored* knows that every poem and song begins and ends in the music of heaven. God sings his song that men might hear and learn to sing the song of faith. Perhaps, it is time to hear the song of the poetical *bored*. Who knows, we might learn to sing, and in so doing, find faith that lives because it is no longer *bored*?

The Center Holds

by Sydney Nichole Thomas



Sydney Nichole Thomas

*"Turning and turning in the widening gyre,
The falcon cannot hear the falconer; Things fall
apart, the centre cannot hold . . ."* —Yeats

I came to love the Anglican way through the kind of education that led me to see properly the relationship of faith to reason. I visited a small brick parish in the Virginia countryside, the Church of Our Saviour at Oatlands. The simple order and beauty of the liturgy, the well-wrought homily that brought together education in the liberal arts and the knowledge necessary to hold the faith in spirit and in truth—these were a rest, of sorts, for one who was harried by modernity.

The liberal arts education had led me to Church of Our Saviour in a roundabout way, through *The Iliad*, through *The Republic*, through Descartes, Locke, Nietzsche, and back again, to follow Dante and Virgil up the slopes of Mount Purgatory, that winding ascent which straightens souls the world has made crooked. Education in the classics had been just this to me, a rectifying of the soul; but that is its own story, and one shared by many others. Suffice it to say that it was partly because of classical education that I visited Church of Our Saviour, and that I first discovered the dignity, reverence, and theological strength contained within the historic Book of Common Prayer.

I have practiced as an Anglican for nearly two years, despite the prevailing attitude among Anglicans to put aside discussions which might broadly be called philosophical, avoiding theology related to sexuality, human nature, and personhood, as if these cannot or should not be articulated within the Anglican Communion. These topics are poorly discussed because of competing claims as to what constitutes the Anglican tradition, claims which came about largely in the last two centuries as party politics obscured the classical Anglican teachings. Many other young people, who also discovered the historical Christian faith through a classical education, have swum the Tiber because of this confusion. They see Anglicanism as a church which doubts its own inheritance and which praises the 'broad tent' instead of the narrow way of the Gospel. They think that Anglicans do not know who they are; and of course, who wants to join a church filled with lost sheep, where are "*Such fables from the pulpits dinned . . . that the silly sheep, all unaware, Come home from pasture fed on emptiness; No harm they see, no less of guilt they bear*"?¹

Perhaps all along the sheep have yearned to be fed, on something more than the empty and changing winds of doctrine. I was fed on the Book of Common Prayer, and it was there that I discovered an

inheritance worth guarding; the common life, doctrines, and sacraments of the early Church, put into praying words refined over the centuries, preserved unchanged in their very essentials.

When introduced to the Book of Common Prayer, I could see how the reformed and catholic Church in sixteenth century England had a truly common worship by which to live the faith. It aimed to "cleave to antiquity; that is to say, to follow the primitive Church and ancient Fathers," becoming learned in the history and doctrines of Christianity; for, as John Jewel notes in his *Apology*, consulting sacred Scriptures and the primitive Church is how the truth of the Church's teachings may be discerned.² Such a body was equipped to transmit the essential truths of Christianity to future generations.

These truths have been obscured today, because of the pluralistic conditions shaping our society, and because of the noticeable absence of reason in the public square. Theological discourse has become unlearned and unintelligible, as Duke theologian Reinhard Hütter notes in his work *Suffering Divine Things*. Hütter suggests that modern theology often has begun to understand itself as an autonomous 'construction' of the religious subject, rather than continuing to orient itself around an older conception of rationality that is rooted within a historical framework.³ Those who claim that Anglicanism has no central doctrine, no center because all truth claims are equally valid, implicitly hold that the individual 'discovers theology for himself.' They have accepted the autonomous construction of the self, and have denied the place of reason.

Yet I would question, is such a practice good for the soul, much less a means by which to preserve the Church, if it is detached from a community of saints both living and dead, if it presumes that it is a matter of indifference whether or not we are alienated in our theology and in our worship from the multitude of the saints, from the teachings of classical Anglicanism which sustained those saints and built up the Church in the first place?

Our doctrines and sacraments shared with the apostolic Church ought to provide wonderful resources, and a unity in faith that spans both space

2. Bishop John Jewel, *The Apology for the Church of England and a Treatise of the Holy Scriptures*, trans. William R. Whittingham, (New York: Onderdonk & Co.), 120. Bishop Lancelot Andrewes similarly outlines, "One canon reduced to writing by God himself, two testaments, three creeds, four general councils, five centuries, and the series of Fathers in that period—the centuries that is, before Constantine, and two after, determine the boundary of our faith."

3. Reinhard Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things: Theology as Church Practice*, trans. Doug Stott, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000) 6–14.

1. Dante, *Paradiso*, XXIX, 103, 106–8.

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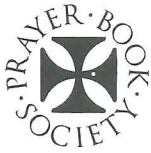
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The Center Holds (continued from p. 14)

and time. However, when the Church loses unified prayer and belief, what Hütter describes as its “public character,” it moves toward a private religious association in which there is little left that is ‘common.’⁴ We have seen this within the Anglican Communion, as liturgical practices have been imported from other traditions, and as revisions of the Book of Common Prayer have emptied the prayers of their meaning, leaving the content of faith open to the subjective and untutored judgment of the worshipper. The loss of the public character of the Church, the loss of a center to Anglicanism, is but one effect of the nihilism that undergirds this idea of the ‘big tent.’

Without a central teaching united in worship, a Church is incoherent; and however can an incoherent Church hope to carry out its mission in this divided, post-metaphysical world? These challenges to common worship are faced by all churches, not least the Roman Catholic, as it too needs to negotiate intelligently various theological debates which are produced by the culture. But they are particularly troubling for Anglicans, who lack the institutional and legal authority of a Roman magisterium, and who rely upon formularies, and upon an educated clergy and laity, to hand down sacred truths. In such straits, it seems of utmost importance that Anglicans rediscover the theological tradition of classical Anglicanism contained within the historic Book of Common Prayer.

⁴ Hütter, *Suffering Divine Things*, 28.

It would be a great pity, indeed, if the Anglican Church were to squander its jewels for a mess of potage, or so it seems to a young person who went looking for those jewels. An education in historical philosophy and theology led me to a Church where there yet remained an echo of the greatness of the Anglican past. Such Churches must not be allowed to pass away, their Center must not be overgrown and hidden, because then the capacity of the Anglican Church to be a missionary unto the young would be sadly compromised.

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