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Editorial: Bricks and Mortar

The Coronavirus outbreak and ensuing lockdown and closure of churches have given rise to a number of different questions—how important are church buildings? Is this a golden opportunity to get rid of these millstones and realise anew that the Church is not bricks and mortar but the people of God? Is the ‘virtual’ space provided by a live-streamed or Zoom service more welcoming, and more in tune with the age, than the traditional space provided by churches? And if so may it not also make possible consecration by remote means of bread and wine placed in all or any of the locations occupied by the participants? These, together with more traditional theological differences as to the propriety of solitary Eucharists (whether ‘live-streamed’ or not), have in common a concern with how Christians should be present to one another as a body, and how that presence is related to actual physical settings.

Christianity is an ‘historical’ faith in the sense that it derives from, and keeps ever before it, certain events which took place in particular places at particular times, concerning one who, being God, took flesh as a particular human being. Its sacraments use material elements belonging to, or derived from, the natural order as signs and conduits of grace—and, again, not in general but on particular occasions with gatherings of particular people.

The Church, then, is not an abstraction—its reality is dependent on times and places and persons: it requires embodiment. There is a classical statement of this truth in W.H. Vanstone’s *Love’s Endeavor, Love’s Expense*:

Within the form of the Church . . . man aspires to present an offering of love—an offering fashioned by discipline out of freedom. This offering is brought into being. It is something that actually is. . . the responsive creativity of man to the love of God is nothing until it discovers itself in the emergence of the concrete actuality of the Church. The Church is not ‘the cause which the Church serves’ or ‘the spirit in which the Church lives’; the Church is the service of that cause and the actualisation of that spirit in words spoken, in bodies in a certain place or posture, in feet walking up a certain hill: in stone placed upon stone to build a church, in wood carved into the fashion of a cross: in music composed or practised, played or sung: in the doing of certain things upon a particular day and the giving up of certain things during a particular season: in the fashioning,

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out of time and care and skill, of something beautiful, and in the maintaining, out of time and care and labour, of the beauty of it . . . in the going out to others that may share the offering: in the struggle of brain and pen to find expression and interpretation for the love of God: in hands stretched out for the receiving of Bread and in lips raised for the touch of Wine. Here, at this level of concrete actuality is the response of recognition to the love of God . . . ¹

It is in respect of ‘concrete actuality’ that ‘remote’ or ‘virtual’ worship seems likely to be unsatisfactory. Our ‘embodiedness’ is a complex affair, of course. It is certainly true that we are not *confined* to our bodies, as if we were simply an anatomy lesson. There is a sense—best described phenomenologically—in which we are always in some degree projected beyond our anatomical surface. We can become conscious of this by reflecting on our use of tools: when we use a screwdriver, for example, our ‘sensation’ may be in the tip of the tool where it engages the screw-head. Or, again, when playing tennis or squash our attention goes beyond the hand to the racket, to the ball—for the seasoned player the whole machinery of arm and racket disappears. Or consider the way in which, driving a car, we incorporate, so to speak, the dimensions of the vehicle, to make an enlarged personal body space.

These are elusive matters and perhaps become even more so when we extend them to the way in which we inhabit and habit ourselves with larger spaces, but however difficult thinking about these things is we seem even at the earliest stage to come up against the limitation that ‘virtual space’ is space that we cannot occupy. Whether in Zoom or live-streaming what we see on the screen is a *representation*—albeit a simultaneous one—of a setting or series of settings which we are unable to enter, in contrast to the space we are in while watching, which, whether we are attending to it or not, is one which we can potentially and by anticipation move about in. The screen offers a space without dimensions, a representation which effectively immobilises us in our own setting, while offering no real access to the alternative sphere it depicts but from which we are excluded.

The online experience is one that we summon to us while remaining in our own space. ‘Going to church’ in contrast involves us making our way to a common shared space which is not owned by any of those who worship in it—it is ‘God’s House’. One aspect of the difference was brought out in a comment in the *Church Times*. The Revd Mark Hart had been surprised at the large number of those using online services, which

¹ WH Vanstone, *Loves Endeavour, Love’s Expense: The Response of Being to the Love of God* (1977), pp.108-9.

greatly exceeded usual attendances, but a different picture emerged when the figures were analysed:

“Reach” is a measure of the number of people who saw the videos, and it is flattering. But we are brought down to earth by the average viewing time: for services that lasted about 25 minutes, the average viewing time was one minute. When people lose interest in what is on a screen, they change the content, whereas we don’t measure how long people zone out in a church service. Even so, it’s clear that many of the 6000 are the equivalent of people who put their heads inside the church door for a quick look.²

‘Going to church’ is like an habitual mini-pilgrimage—we make our way to a dedicated sacred space, we pass a threshold and enter expecting—what? In one sense we know exactly what to expect—this is George Herbert’s ‘Heaven in ordinary’—and the more predictable the liturgy the better perhaps, but in another sense we have a less defined expectancy, a readiness for the covenanted and habitual to make possible the moment of uncovenanted illumination, ‘the hint half guessed, the gift half understood’. The words are T.S. Eliot’s of course, and for Eliot, it seems to me, the moment of illumination, ‘the intersection of the timeless moment’, requires, and can only be received, amidst the debris of contingency

 . . . when you leave the rough road
And turn behind the pigsty to the dull façade
And the tombstone.

None of this is meant to decry the efforts of incumbents to keep their flocks together by any means that lie to hand. The rather discarnate world of Zoom with its misleading sense of proximity may serve as a temporary expedient in an unprecedented situation—may even become a permanent ‘extra’, as some are thinking—but it would make a very unsatisfactory substitute. Being ‘placeless’ it lacks the ‘concrete actuality’ of which W.H. Vanstone speaks, and which is exemplified by the parish church for reasons he explains:

The understanding of the Church as offering throws fresh light on some of those duties [] which are felt rather than understood, and which are performed with diligence but not explained. It throws

2 Church Times, 7 May 2020 .

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light, for example, on that attachment to the church building itself which obstructs many proposals for reform and reorganisation of the Church. The obstructive fact is that the building is felt to be neither a necessity nor a facility but an offering. Love has been expended upon it and expressed in the care of it. In that love and care the building has been offered to God . . . Attachment to a church building is by no means to be dismissed as sentimentality: it may well contain a profound, though possibly inarticulate, understanding of what that building is.³

That insight will not stop churches closing, of course—the writing has been on the wall for a long time—and there is a natural temptation to persuade ourselves that their loss will be a great opportunity, and to minimise what would be lost with them.⁴ Vanstone remarks: ‘In the last analysis the only justification for the destruction of an offering is that it may become the basis or material of a richer, more lasting or more appropriate offering. This must be the principle which distinguishes the reorganisation of the Church from its destruction’.

John Scrivener

³ Loc.cit.

⁴ See, for example, Sir John Summerson’s cool discussion, dating from 1947: ‘Let us face some facts. Church-going is no longer considered to be a social duty by any class of the population . . . the part played by the Churches in the national life is considerable but is effective outside rather than inside the fabrics, which become more and more historical symbols and less and less essential meeting places . . . A certain amount of reorganisation within the Church of England is inevitable: there will be an attempt to get rid of the weaker units in its structure by merging them into larger and more effectively staffed units . . . Any move in this direction will result in large numbers of churches becoming superfluous and the Church will wish to disencumber itself of their upkeep and, where convenient, dispose of their sites’ (‘The Past in the Future’, printed in *Heavenly Mansions*, 1949 [Norton edition pp.232-3]). Summerson suggested that some of the bombed London churches might be allowed to become ruins, if their destruction had left sufficiently picturesque remains. This was allowed to happen in the case of St Dunstan-in-the-East.

The Book of Common Prayer as Text

SAMUEL L. BRAY

The Reformers were concerned not only with theology but also with its expression in worship. Many liturgies were produced in the churches of the magisterial Reformation in Germany, England, Switzerland, and elsewhere.¹ As the Reformers revised the mass and daily offices, they invariably pulled away from notions of Eucharistic sacrifice and purgatorial respite, pruned luxuriant ceremonies, and placed new emphasis on the reading and preaching of the Scriptures. In the English-speaking world, the most widely used of these Reformation liturgies is the Book of Common Prayer (BCP).

There have been many revisions of and variations in the BCP. But from the final edition of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer in 1552 through to the culminating edition in 1662, the revisions were modest. No structural changes, subtle but not radical shifts in theology,² generally a little taking in here and a little letting out there. Apart from state occasions, such as the commemoration of the Gunpowder Plot, only two services were added to the BCP in those 110 years: a form of Baptism for adults and forms of prayer to be used by the Royal Navy. Even these services were not creative exercises by liturgical commissions but were instead responses to the threatened depredations, respectively, of Anabaptist preachers and Spanish pirates.

After 1662, the revisions actually enacted were more modest still. For over two hundred years there would be changes in the names of the monarch and royal family, but little else.

Outside of England, the various national Anglican churches began producing their own BCPs, beginning with Scotland in 1637 and the United States in 1789, but picking up steam in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Yet there was still remarkable continuity. These books were recognizable as developments from the classic BCP. But today that is no longer true of the prayer books in use around the Anglican world.

1 A recent collection is Jonathan Gibson and Mark Earngey, *Reformation Worship: Liturgies from the Past for the Present* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2017).

2 Relative to the BCP 1552, the Communion service in the BCP 1662 comports more easily with symbolic instrumentalism because of its greater emphasis on consecration.

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One aspect of this transformation is the subject of this essay: the shift from thinking of the BCP as a text to thinking of it as a 'shape,' especially with respect to the Communion service. Central to this shift was Dom Gregory Dix, whose hugely influential work *The Shape of the Liturgy* was published in 1945.³ Dix claimed to have identified a fourfold action that he called the 'standard structure'—it was, he said, the invariable pattern in the primitive Eucharistic liturgies. He thought that it was a very early compression of an original sevenfold action, and that it consisted of: (1) taking, (2) giving thanks, (3) breaking, and (4) distributing. Critically, what Dix found to be common in these ancient liturgies was their structure, not their words. The locus of unity was shape, not text. And that unity of primitive shape was then taken, at least by others, to be the aim for liturgical revision, including revision of the Book of Common Prayer.

Dix's work has not stood up to scholarly scrutiny. His idea of an invariable shape to the primitive Eucharist and his treatment of the *Apostolic Tradition*—a document that he said expressed 'the mind and practice not of St Hippolytus only but of the whole Catholic Church of the second century'⁴—have been demolished by a number of liturgical scholars who are far more careful and less tendentious.⁵ Not only was Dix wrong about his central claims, but he seems to have had a penchant for shading or even making up evidence.⁶

But a misstatement about liturgical history, like any other misstatement, 'can travel halfway around the world while the truth is still putting on its shoes.' Before the debunking of Dix's work was accomplished, it had

3 Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London: A. & C. Black, 1945).

4 Gregory Dix, *The Treatise on The Apostolic Tradition of St Hippolytus of Rome* (London: Routledge, 1992) (reissued with corrections preface and bibliography by Henry Chadwick): p.xliv.

5 E.g., John F. Baldovin, S.J., 'Hippolytus and the *Apostolic Tradition*: Recent Research and Commentary,' *Theological Studies* vol. 64 (2003): pp.520-542; Paul F. Bradshaw, *Eucharistic Origins* (London: SPCK, 2004), especially pp.vi-ix; Maxwell E. Johnson, 'The Development of the 'Apostolic Tradition' in Early Christian Worship,' in *The Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Bryan D. Spinks, 'Mis-shapen. Gregory Dix and the Four-Action Shape of the Liturgy,' *Lutheran Quarterly* vol. 4 (1990): pp.161-177. In a recent assessment, Spinks concludes that '[t]he state of liturgical scholarship at present suggests that this is in fact a pseudo-document, representing no single tradition, certainly not all things Roman circa 215, and having no real authority other than that which anyone would like to give it.' Bryan D. Spinks, 'The Apostolic Tradition and Liturgical Revision,' in Robert W. Prichard, ed., *Prayer Book Revision: Volume 1* (New York: Church Publishing, 2018): pp.203-212, at p.210.

6 'Dix wrote movingly, sometimes with no relation to the facts, occasionally drawing from sources which, as far as other scholars could tell, did not exist.' Urban T. Holmes, 'Education for Liturgy: An Unfinished Symphony in Four Movements,' in Malcolm C. Burson, ed., *Worship Points the Way: A Celebration of the Life and Work of Massey Hamilton Shepherd, Jr.* (New York: Seabury Press, 1981): pp.116-141, at p.129. See also Kenneth W. Stevenson, *Gregory Dix—Twenty-Five Years On* (Bramcote: Grove Books, 1977): pp.9-10, 38. Dix's shadings of the evidence consistently aligned with his own theological commitments, which were quite clear: 'his chapter on the English Reformation and Cranmer's Prayer Books in *The Shape of the Liturgy* is sweepingly opposed to everything Cranmer stood for doctrinally, whilst greatly admiring of his ability to write brilliant liturgical prose in (as Dix sees it) a theologically bad cause.' Colin Buchanan, 'Gregory Dix—The Liturgical Bequest,' *Churchman* vol. 114 (2000): pp.262-276, at p.269.

already helped to reshape how millions of Christians worship all over the world. Its effect on Anglican worship was especially decisive. As one Anglican commentator has said, 'Despite the now dubious historical basis of Dix's most famous claim about the four-fold shape, most twentieth-century revisions of Eucharistic liturgies followed Dix's claim about this basic shape, including the 1979 Book of Common Prayer.'⁷

Not only did the liturgists follow Dix's claims about history, they also followed his fundamental shift in orientation, thinking of a liturgy primarily in terms of its shape.

As an illustration of this shift, consider the respected and influential International Anglican Liturgical Consultation (IALC). In 1989, it expressed doubt about 'attempts to identify Anglicanism, whether locally or world-wide, through any common liturgical texts, ethos or style.'⁸ Six years later, meeting in Dublin, the Consultation said: 'In the future, Anglican unity will find its liturgical expression not so much in uniform texts as in a common approach to Eucharistic celebration and a structure which will ensure a balance of word, prayer, and sacrament, and which bears witness to the catholic calling of the Anglican communion.'⁹ That is the Dixian position with a vengeance—the unity of Anglican worship is not in texts, as much as in approach and structure.¹⁰

This was not inevitable. Even though Dix's scholarship was simply wrong at critical points, one could have accepted his claims and then discovered that the BCP 1662 actually did, after a fashion, have all of these: a taking, a recollecting of our Lord's thanksgiving, a breaking, and a distributing. The Prayer Book could have been weighed in the Dixian balances and found not wanting.

And even if the liturgists had naively accepted Dix's claims about the fourfold action, they might still have kept the Prayer Book service of Holy Communion essentially intact.¹¹ And they could certainly have left the

7 Matthew S. C. Olver, 'No End to Sacrifice: The Legacy of Gregory Dix,' *The Living Church* (Feb. 2, 2017). See also Alan L. Hayes, 'Tradition in the Anglican Liturgical Movement 1945–1989,' *Anglican and Episcopal History* vol. 69 (2000): pp.22-43, at p.30 (describing *The Shape of the Liturgy* as having 'established the fundamental program for Anglican liturgical revision for the next forty years').

8 IALC, 'Down to Earth Worship': *Liturgical Inculturation and the Anglican Communion* (York, 1989) (emphasis added).

9 IALC, *Renewing the Anglican Eucharist* (Dublin, 1995) (emphases added).

10 A decade later the Consultation issued a statement listing the characteristics '[w]e value . . . in our rites.' The first was 'Shape'; the twelfth, 'Common prayers.' IALC, *Liturgy and Anglican Identity* (Prague: 2005).

11 Bryan Spinks observes that with Dix's fourfold shape, 'consciously or unconsciously, he was only rediscovering what a number of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century divines had taught. The difference was that Dix believed that the Book of Common Prayer had departed from the clarity of this four-action shape, whereas his Anglican precursors found it quite clearly expressed in the Book of Common Prayer. Part of the difference is to be explained by Dix's own dislike of the Reformation and the Cranmerian liturgy.' Bryan D. Spinks, 'Gregory Dix and the Reformation Liturgy,' in Roberta Bayer, ed., *Reformed and Catholic: Essays in Honor of Peter Toon* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012): pp.90-99, at p.96.

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rest of the Prayer Book intact. But that didn't happen. Dix's fundamental claim, after all, was not really a historical one—the now thoroughly debunked claim about a universal shape of the primitive Eucharist—but a claim about the kind of thing the liturgy is: that it is centrally about a certain set of actions, not a text.¹²

Dix's idea that liturgy is about a sequence of actions is fundamentally foreign to the Prayer Book tradition. The BCP 1662 does prescribe some actions—kneeling for Communion, for example, or making the sign of the cross in Baptism. But despite the current fad of praising 'embodied' worship and the mania for finding meaning in every gesture or ritual act, that is not the general tendency of the Prayer Book. Compared to what we might expect if we're thinking in line with *The Shape of the Liturgy*, the BCP 1662 has relatively few stage directions. What it mostly gives is text.

By contrast, we could think of an ideal Dixian liturgy (not what the man Gregory Dix actually wanted, but rather a logical development of the liturgy-as-shape idea¹³). That ideal might be all stage directions, with the words themselves being left to the players' improvisation.

To be sure, there are merits, or at least attractions, to thinking of the liturgy in terms of shape. The main one is that it allows liturgical contextualization. That aim has the strongest possible support in the Anglican tradition. The Thirty-Nine Articles assert that traditions and ceremonies can be determined by 'every particular or national church' (Article XXIV). And a preface to the BCP ('Of Ceremonies'), written by Archbishop Cranmer, says: 'For we think it convenient that every country should use such ceremonies as they shall think best to the setting forth of God's honour and glory and to the reducing of the people to a most perfect and godly living, without error or superstition'

Thinking of the BCP not as a text but as a shape allows that contextualization to occur. The shape of the Communion service could remain the same, even as the words within that structure are amended and contextualized. The words could be constantly remade to be, in the cliché of the moment, 'missional.'

Yet it is worth noting who Gregory Dix really persuaded. It was not primarily the person in the pew or the parish priest. But he persuaded the professional liturgists (also clergy), who were members of liturgical

12 Gordon Jeanes, 'Liturgy and Ceremonial,' in Paul Bradshaw and Bryan Spinks, eds., *Liturgy in Dialogue: Essays in Memory of Ronald Jasper* (London: SPCK, 1993): pp.9-27, at pp.10-11.

13 Dix's Anglican Benedictine community used the 'Latin Mass and offices from the Roman Missal and Breviary.' Simon Jones, 'Introduction,' in Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2005): pp.xii-xxx, at p.xiv. For Dix, 'the legal requirement to use rites "authorized or allowed by Canon" or questions of liturgical preference, were always going to be trumped by the Roman Mass, whatever its deficiencies, as the only rite which truly expressed and embodied the full communion with the Pope and, thereby, the Universal Church, for which Dix and his community longed' loc.cit.

commissions all over the world. This is the decisive attraction of the Dixian turn to shape—its appeal to the professional liturgist.

In one of P.G. Wodehouse's novels, the Rev. Harold 'Stinker' Pinker is described by his fiancée, as she is trying to secure for him a paternal blessing: 'Up till now, Harold has been working under wraps. As a curate, he has had no scope. But slip him a vicarage, and watch him let himself out. There is literally no eminence to which that boy will not rise, once he spits on his hands and starts in.'¹⁴ For professional liturgists, sticking to the classic BCP does not afford much room for creativity. They have no scope.

This is not to say that liturgists think this way strictly out of self-interest. There is a sense of professional *raison d'être*. Arborists think you should plant new trees, not because they will benefit, but because they believe in trees. Liturgists think you should make new liturgies, not because they will benefit, but because they believe in them.

But if you believe in new liturgies, and you want to persuade people to adopt them, how do you do that? You need to say the new liturgy is new, and you need to say the new liturgy is old. How do you do both? Here is where the turn to shape is so incredibly useful for the rhetoric of prayer book adoption. It pairs a claim of innovation with a claim of continuity. Here we have this undeniably new book, but fear not, for it's the same shape as the old one.

For an example of the rhetorical impulse at work, one need only look at the preface to the Anglican Church in North America's 2019 prayer book. Its preface uses *shape* or a cognate five times, once per page. In one especially ungainly sentence we are told: 'At the beginning of the 21st century, global reassessment of the Book of Common Prayer of 1662 as "the standard for doctrine, discipline, and worship" shapes the present volume, now presented on the bedrock of its predecessors.' The idea that is struggling to break through this opaque sentence is quite simple: 'the classic prayer book shapes the new prayer book.' It is meant as a reassurance.

These, then, are some of the attractions of the Dixian turn. It allows contextualization. It keeps the liturgists in business. And it is rhetorically invaluable if you are trying to encourage a church to accept a new prayer book that is a major departure from the classic BCP.

But what have we lost by thinking of Anglican worship in terms of shape and structure? Another way to put this is to ask, what are the virtues of the BCP as text?

14 P. G. Wodehouse, *The Code of the Woosters* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005) (second Vintage Books edition): p.198.

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The first loss is paradoxical: the move to a focus on liturgical shape winds up forfeiting even the shape of the Prayer Book services. Many examples could be given. Consider two from the Communion service.

Near the start of the service in the BCP 1662, there is a progression from the Decalogue, with its specificity of social concerns, to the immediately following state collect. That connection emphasizes the first use of the law, complementing the people's responses to each commandment (which in turn emphasize the second and third uses of the law). This is a sophisticated and theologically-informed shape, yet it is lost when the state prayer and Decalogue are excised or replaced.

Another aspect of the shape of the Communion service is an ascent to and descent from the divine presence in heaven. In Archbishop Cranmer's design, we lift up our hearts to heaven (*Sursum corda*); we enter, as it were, the divine throne room (*Sanctus*); in awe of God's presence we respond as the prophet Isaiah did (Prayer of Humble Access); we partake of the bread and wine; and we descend with a song of the angels on our lips (*Gloria*). Yet this structure is invariably lost in the versions of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The heavenly focus of the *Sanctus* is confused by interpolating the cry of Palm Sunday ('Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord'), and the Prayer of Humble Access and the *Gloria* are omitted or moved to other places in the service where they no longer serve these functions.¹⁵

It is of course true that they are not the only ways to order a Communion service. There are other rationales, some theologically rich and pastorally sensitive, at work in more recent liturgies. But the point is simply that once the turn is made to thinking of liturgy in terms of shape, one of the first things lost is the shape in the BCP. The macro- and micro-structures of the BCP Communion service, like the ones just noted, tend to be razed in liturgical revision, sometimes without any appreciation for why they were there in the first place.

A second loss with a turn from text to shape is the linguistic excellence of the BCP, and not just in the Communion service. The rhythms and images of Coverdale's Psalter, the measured pace and homely vigor of Cranmer's collects—these virtues are virtues of the text as text.

In principle these could be reproduced. We could follow the shape of the BCP, change the text, and write texts with the same strength of language as the BCP. This has been tried. Many times. Some great poets have been involved in revising the Prayer Book Psalter. T.S. Eliot was on

15 For analyses of this and other structures in the BCP 1662, see Gavin Dunbar, 'Like Eagles in this Life: A Theological Reflection on "The Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion" in the Prayer Books of 1559 and 1662,' in Prudence Dailey, ed., *The Book of Common Prayer: Past, Present and Future* (London: Continuum, 2011): pp.85-105; J. I. Packer, *The Gospel in the Prayer Book* (undated).

the committee in the 1950s that developed the Church of England's Revised Psalter. W.H. Auden assisted with the Psalter in the current prayer book of The Episcopal Church (BCP 1979). Yet perhaps surprisingly, these great poets have invariably seen their role in the revision process not as creative but as conservative, resisting nearly all change. Like the Spartans at Thermopylae, they tried to bar the pass.

Now the language of the classic Prayer Book is certainly hard to equal. And this language is no mere ornament. It is critical to how the prayer book works. In what remains the leading work on the language of the prayer book, Stella Brook suggested that its secret is being formed at a time when oral and written English were closer together.¹⁶ But whatever the theory about why its language is unsurpassed, the point is simply that the widely praised language of the Prayer Book is in the text, not in the shape.

One reason language matters is that it can demarcate an activity. Baseball might be unfamiliar to you, but when you go to a baseball game, you'll quickly notice that everyone else knows what to say and what to do. They stand at the seventh-inning stretch and sing 'Take me out to the ballgame.' They say things that would be wrong everywhere else, like 'he flied out to center field.' Not *flew* out, but *flied* out. There is nothing intrinsic to baseball about this verb form. We could play the same game and say 'flew out.' It seems quite arbitrary. And it is arbitrary that this particular verb form is a marker of differentiation.

What is not arbitrary is that there are markers of differentiation. This demarcation of activities is something we as human beings do in countless ways, for any activity we consider important; it is certainly pervasive in worship (and not merely Christian worship).¹⁷

Of course, different kinds of churches have different ways of doing this, different ways of showing that 'the worshipper [is] crossing a liturgical threshold where the world of human experience meets the Kingdom.'¹⁸ Anglican worship does it in various ways (e.g., vestments). But the main way, the defining way, that Anglican worship has traditionally indicated

16 Stella Brook, *The Language of the Book of Common Prayer* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1965): pp.218-219. See also Drew Nathaniel Keane, 'An Examination of the Book of Common Prayer as Technical Writing for an Oral-Aural Culture,' *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication* vol. 50 (2020): pp.3-34. Rowan Williams has observed that 'the Reformed Church of England . . . develops in tandem with a fantastically inventive period in the use of the English language, producing both a profusion of metaphor and a quick, critical sense of the possibilities and dangers of rhetoric; it discovers both a language for Scripture and a Scripture that shapes secular language, so that its biblical fidelity is deeply bound up with a feel for the riches and traps of speech.' Rowan Williams, *Anglican Identities* (Lanham: Cowley, 2003): p.7.

17 Catherine Pickstock, 'Liturgy and Language: The Sacred Polis,' in *Liturgy in Dialogue*: pp.115-137, at p.123 ('Nearly all the world religions have been marked by a deliberate separation from the "drift" of secular language by means of the use of archaic and ritual registers or even foreign languages . . .').

18 Gordon Jeanes, Review of Bridget Nichols's *Liturgical Hermeneutics*, *Literature & Theology* vol. 11 (1997): pp.226-227, at p.226.

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the liturgical threshold—whether in a Gothic cathedral or a small rural parish—is with the words of the BCP. And this can be lost when we move from text to shape. We are at risk of losing the distinctive Anglican method of demarcating the world of worship.

A third loss is the stability of the text. A prayer or canticle repeated for decades can work deep grooves into the soul and remain in one's memory when all else is forgotten. This stability is also critical for the intergenerational community formed by the Book of Common Prayer tradition. The Scriptures are replete with commands to teach one's children the faith, so they teach their children, who teach their children, and so on (e.g., Psalm 78, Deuteronomy 6, Proverbs *passim*). That religio-cultural and catechetical transmission can happen in various ways, including with memorized Psalms and set prayers. But only if there is a substantial continuity in these Psalms and prayers from one generation to the next. All of these benefits are derived from the text. If the text is constantly changing, stability and continuity will prove elusive.

Fourth, the laity lose protection. A fixed liturgy is not at the whim of the minister, and it is therefore an immense protection against clerical experimentation. 'Feed my sheep,' not 'experiment on my guinea pigs,' as the saying goes.¹⁹

Fifth, there was once a large body of Prayer Book manuals, commentaries, and sermons built up over the centuries. These include commentaries on the Prayer Book by John Boys, Anthony Sparrow, Hamon L'Estrange, Charles Wheatly, and Richard Blakeney, as well as many sermons, not least those of Charles Simeon on 'the excellence of the liturgy.' These are deeply worthwhile, and were once widely read by ministers and also by some lay people. But they seem to have faded away. Perhaps The Episcopal Church's BCP 1979 will be the last text to receive the commentary treatment.²⁰ More recent liturgies are either massive multi-volume compilations (e.g., the Church of England's *Common Worship*), or lack the craftsmanship and coherence that would ensure long use (e.g., the Anglican Church in North America's BCP 2019). Who will go to the trouble of writing a detailed manual when the target won't stay put? No one is going to write a commentary that explores the biblical and patristic roots of this week's projector slides. Again, the benefits of this tradition of commentary are tied to the text.

Sixth, a text, but not a shape, can give Anglicanism a settled center. The text of the BCP offers a basis for unity for different kinds of

19 For development of this line of thought by Alfred Mahan, the American naval historian and Episcopalian layman, see Suzanne Geissler, 'The Admiral versus the Rector: A Naval Historian Speaks Out on Prayer Book Revision,' *Anglican and Episcopal History* vol. 82 (2013): pp.166-179, at p.173.

20 Marion J. Hatchett, *Commentary on the American Prayer Book* (New York: Seabury Press, 1981).

churchmanship, a center for reformed Catholicism. But a shape cannot do this. Knowing that a service includes taking, giving thanks, breaking, and distributing doesn't tell one anything, really, about what is happening. Unity of worship is made possible by the very rigidity of a text. Not, to be clear, an infallible text or a text that cannot change, but a relatively stable text, a text that stays put.

The Prayer Book cannot, of course, serve this centering function by itself. For Anglicans, it must work alongside the Thirty-Nine Articles and the Ordinal, with the Homilies and the Canons. But the shift to shape has made it harder for worship to tie together the fracturing and fissiparous churches of the Anglican Communion.²¹

Thus, there are gains from the move to shape: contextualization and the full employment of professional liturgists. One could add that it allows freedom for creativity in prayer and opens new possibilities in metaphor and diction and aural effects, much like the freedom a poet has in a devotional text, or a homilist has in a sermon.

And there are costs: the loss of the structures of the Prayer Book, the loss of the language of the Prayer Book, the erosion of stability, the loss of protection for the laity, the extinction of the tradition of Prayer Book commentary, and greater vulnerability to ecclesial fragmentation.

The attentive reader will notice in these costs and benefits an asymmetry. Economists like to refer to costs that other people bear as 'externalities.' For a liturgist, the *benefits* from moving to shape are huge—'But slip him a vicarage, and watch him let himself out.' But the *costs* are borne largely by the sheep. They are the people incapable of saying any form of the Apostles' Creed by heart because they have been subjected to so many different versions of it. They are the people given flat, unrhythmic prose that does not work its way into their affections. As the Irish bishop Harold Miller put it: 'The creative juices of liturgists, with their endless pursuit of new liturgies—many of which only they themselves are seeking—need to be restrained when developing what is the common private and public prayer of the people of God.'²²

That is the first asymmetry in the costs and benefits—the same people do not bear both, and in particular the people who make the decisions are often not those who bear the costs.

The second asymmetry is about time. The benefits of the move to shape, such as they are, are front-loaded. The gains can be immediate:

21 For recognition that the BCP 1662 once served this role, see Paul Avis, 'Prayer Book Use and Conformity,' in Mark Chapman, Sathianathan Clarke, and Martyn Percy, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Anglican Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015): pp.125-138, at pp.125-126.

22 Harold Miller, 'The Making of the Church of Ireland Book of Common Prayer 2004,' *Yale Institute of Sacred Music Colloquium* vol. 3 (2006): pp.75-84, at p.79.

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the aptness for the immediate and ever-changing context, the attention-grabbing novelty. But what is lost—the communal and individual benefits of stability, the deep theological structures in the Prayer Book services, its resistance of centrifugal forces, its commentary tradition—takes time to notice. Different people will place different values on these costs and benefits. But it is hard to deny that there is a temporal asymmetry, with front-loaded benefits and back-loaded costs.

Many have noted that we are living in a fraught time for the Anglican world, a time when bonds of ecclesial unity are disintegrating, and for many Anglicans it is a time of catastrophic failure in formation and catechesis. This is not a surprise. This is exactly what one would expect from the asymmetric structure of the costs and benefits of a century of liturgical innovation.

So what do we make of all this? Brian Cummings was not wrong when he called Dix ‘the most interesting modern enemy of the Book of Common Prayer.’²³ Nor was the English bishop wrong who said that Dix was ‘a beacon which has led a whole fleet astray.’²⁴ Our task, he said, is ‘both to adjust the beacon and also to recover the fleet.’²⁵

Which brings us to the question of cure. What should those worshipping in the Anglican tradition do now? How do we adjust the beacon and recover the fleet? The answer proposed is a turn, or a return, to the BCP as a text.

What would that return look like? Already the BCP 1662 is widely used in the Evensong services of English and American cathedrals; already it is widely used throughout Africa;²⁶ already it is praised by the Global South;²⁷ already it is the focus of renewed interest among young Anglicans and Episcopalians in North America.²⁸ But to serve the purposes of formation and unity, it needs to be taken off the shelf by more individuals and parishes. It needs to be read and inwardly digested.

23 Brian Cummings, *The Book of Common Prayer: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018): p.116.

24 Colin Buchanan, ‘The End of the Offertory,’ in *An Evangelical Among the Anglican Liturgists* (London: SPCK, 2009): pp.114-147, at p.139.

25 Loc cit. For an alternative view, see Maxwell E. Johnson, ‘Imagining Early Christian Liturgy: The *Traditio apostolica*—A Case Study,’ in Teresa Berger and Bryan Spinks, eds., *Liturgy’s Imagined Pasts: Methodologies and Materials in the Writing of Liturgical History Today* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2016): pp.93-120. Johnson recognizes ‘that the *Apostolic Tradition* represents the creation of a fictional document on which many people imagined or projected a fictional past to which we gave normative status for determining our liturgical present’ (p.100), yet also finds real value in the liturgical results.

26 Esther Mombo, ‘Anglican Liturgies in Eastern Africa,’ in Charles Hefling and Cynthia Shattuck, eds., *The Oxford Guide to the Book of Common Prayer: A Worldwide Survey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006): pp.277-286, at p.282.

27 E.g., *A Proposal on the Global South Fellowship of Anglican Churches Structure* (October 11, 2019): p.4.

28 E.g., Ben Crosby, ‘A Defense of Cranmer’s Office,’ *The Hour: A Magazine of Criticism* (Nativity 2019): pp.24-30.

Any suggestion that there is still life in the Book of Common Prayer is likely to be met with certain objections, though. Consider two.

One objection is that we should go forward, not backward.²⁹ But renewal in the life of the Church is almost invariably connected with retrieval. Monasticism revives when monks turn back to the Benedictine Rule. The Reformers did not see their brief as moving ever upward and onward—they wanted to go back to what they saw as the purer water upstream. If you think you've made a wrong turn, there is nothing reactionary, nothing antiquarian, about wanting to go back to the spot where you made it.

Another objection has more merit. It is the objection that the language of the BCP 1662 is obsolete: whatever its beauties, whatever its rhythms and pacing and sturdy vigor, it is simply out of reach for a congregation today. To understand this objection, though, it needs to be broken down into two quite different objections. One is that the language is too hard to understand; the other is that the language can be understood, but it is not how we speak at Starbucks.

To a word like *propitiation*, which appears in the Comfortable Words in the Communion service, the objection is that most people do not understand its meaning. But that is not the objection to 'O Lord, make haste to help us.' No one can struggle to understand 'make haste'—the objection has to be that it is a phrase that is not contemporary. Let's distinguish, then, these two forms of the language objection: one is about comprehension, the other about currency.

The comprehension form of the objection has to be taken seriously. St. Paul says that we are to 'pray with the understanding' (1 Cor. 14:15). But there is a characteristic Christian way of dealing with this concern: it is with teaching. Otherwise this objection would knock out huge swathes not only of Christian liturgy but also of all Christian theology. We use words like *propitiation*, *atonement*, *justification*, *sanctification*, and *Trinity* because we need them. Baseball needs the term *home run*, and there's no reason to require it to be replaced with a Basic English equivalent like 'where a person hits a ball and it goes over the fence, and he or she runs around the field, putting his or her feet on each of the four white flat things in the field.'

There is surprisingly little in the Book of Common Prayer that is vulnerable to the comprehension objection, at least in comparison to in any decent translation of the Bible. True, there are a few obsolete words

29 Ron Dowling, 'Text, Shape, and Communion: What Unites Us When Nothing's the Same Anymore?', *Anglican Theological Review* vol. 95 (2013): pp.435-446, at p.446 ('There is no going back, even if this were preferable.').

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such as *prevent* (in the sense of ‘precede’). But there are only a few—it is nothing like Shakespeare.

The real objection is the currency objection, namely, that the language of the BCP is not how we talk. This objection runs much deeper, but it is less sound. It raises questions that cannot be fully answered here, but it is worth noting how novel this concern is in the great sweep of Christian history. In the first several centuries of the Church, Christians used Greek translations of the Old Testament that predated the life of Christ and were decidedly not in some kind of current marketplace speech.³⁰ For early Christians who spoke and read Hebrew, their Torah was in a classical Hebrew that was not what they spoke at home. There are different styles in the New Testament, but the beginning of Luke is not how anyone talked; the never-ending sentence in Ephesians 1 is not casual; the Book of Hebrews is full of rhetorical artifice and formality.

My argument is not that it must be so in religious speech, but that it may be so. Indeed, for most of Christian history, liturgical and biblical texts have tended to be read in a decidedly older version of the language—whether the Greek of the Septuagint, the Old Latin, the Vulgate in the centuries after Jerome, the King James Version, or the Liturgies of St. Basil and St. John Chrysostom in the churches of the East. Some liturgical and biblical texts were old-fashioned on the day they were born, such as the King James Version. Others became so through the passage of time.

The text is not static. Languages changes; adjustments are made. *Unperfect* becomes *imperfect*, and no one bats an eye.³¹ But the idea that the Scriptures and the liturgy need to be kept in contemporary diction and syntax seems to be an idea that was not widespread before the last century. The comprehension objection does have a long history in Christian thought (not least in William Tyndale and Martin Luther). But the currency objection is more newfangled, and it rests on highly contestable premises about language, effort, and worship.

Not everyone will resolve in the same way the tradeoffs involved in liturgical language. But it is easier to see these tradeoffs, and to think clearly about the currency objection, once we recover the idea of the BCP as a text. The Dixian turn to thinking of liturgy in terms of shape

30 Some of the translation units contained in the Septuagint are in a higher register and more elaborate Greek; others may have been deliberately less idiomatic and more word-for-word as in the Pentateuch (a story of textual and cultural tradition in which every word counts, not of mimicking the marketplace). All show interference from the Hebrew source text. See Marieke Dhont, ‘Towards a Comprehensive Explanation for Stylistic Diversity of the Septuagint Corpus,’ *Vetus Testamentum* vol. 69 (2019): pp.388-407. For a classic study, see James Barr, *The Typology of Literalism in Ancient Biblical Translations* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1979) (Mitteilungen des Septuaginta-Unternehmens 15).

31 Frank Streetfield, *The State Prayers and Other Variations in the Book of Common Prayer* (London: Mowbray, 1950): pp.52-53.

was a mistake. It was also momentous, for it has strongly influenced every subsequent prayer book revision, including the BCP 1979 of The Episcopal Church and more recently the BCP 2019 of the Anglican Church in North America.³²

The turn to shape was not inevitable. It need not be permanent.

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32 The BCP 2019 has two Eucharistic services. Neither resembles the BCP 1662, but one draws its Eucharistic prayer from the *Apostolic Tradition*.

Relativism and Religious Education in Church Schools

THOMAS PLANT

They took all the trees
Put 'em in a tree museum
And they charged the people
A dollar and a half just to see 'em

Don't it always seem to go
That you don't know what you've got
Till it's gone
They paved paradise
And put up a parking lot

- Joni Mitchell, 'Big Yellow Taxi.' © Siquomb Publishing Company

The price to see the trees has gone up since Joni Mitchell wrote her song back in '67. It's \$5 now. Yes, the 'tree museum' is real. She was writing about the Foster Botanical Garden in Hawai'i, an oasis of green surrounded by grey roads and high-rise. Just that little bit of paradise left between the paving.

So why not just pave it all? Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, they say. My truth is as good as yours. And for the shopkeepers and homeowners and commuters, roads and buildings are far better than trees. Beauty, truth, goodness: they're all a matter of perspective. Let's not get sentimental about them. Leave that to the children. We've outgrown such naivety, and our grown-up world is post-truth, post-beauty, and so, post-goodness.

Let's go along with this. Let's imagine for a moment that beauty really is defined by the eye of the beholder, that it is subjective, relative, no more than the arbitrary expression of human will. What this means, is that what is beautiful is simply what the majority of people *decide* is beautiful. Beauty is democratic.

But, given all the attention paid recently in the press to the ways in which democracy and the popular will can be manipulated by powerful and wealthy influencers, doesn't the democratization of beauty give us pause?

Even more so when goodness and truth are brought into the equation. If there really is no transcendent beauty, truth or goodness, nothing beyond human whim, are we not then forced to conclude, in the end, that what is beautiful, true and good is simply what the most influential, the richest, the most powerful manage to manipulate us into believing?

Because if that's the case, then the pavement is more beautiful than the paradise.

There is a lot at stake here. If the relativists are right, then beauty can be redefined at will, along with its correlate, the good. If there is nothing intrinsically beautiful or good about the natural landscape, if its beauty and goodness are purely subject to human utility and human will, then why not raze and destroy it? Why not pave paradise, pollute the oceans, make use of animals as we see fit?

What's more, if we can define the world as beautiful or ugly, good or bad purely according to the will of the majority or the most powerful, then there is nothing to stop us redefining the value of human lives, either. If there is no transcendent goodness or beauty, if these are subject purely to the human will, then we can define *people* as good and beautiful, or bad and ugly, too. Which in turn would allow us to define it as a good thing to eliminate or even exterminate those the popular will has designated ugly and evil. Men move from planning parking lots to the extermination of the Jews. Sure, there may be a minority who fail to see the good of what we are doing in the pogroms and the death camps; but if beauty and goodness are purely a matter of taste, then all we need to do is eliminate those with different tastes until only one taste remains.

As an aside, this all assumes that we are the highest intelligence in this world. That may be so for now. Yet already we can conceive of intelligent beings far more intelligent than ourselves, whether genetically and technologically enhanced humans or artificial intelligence. If beauty and goodness are indeed determined by the will of the highest extant intelligence, it might make us wonder just what use a community of digital minds or superhumans would have for the biological environment, for animals—for us. If we can define beauty and goodness by the value of things to us, and establish this definition purely by the exercise of power, then why shouldn't they do the same? And will there be any room in their ideal landscape for us? Will we become the bad, the ugly, useless, the burdensome parent, the genetically deficient relative, the unwanted child?

We think that there is something new about our so-called 'post-truth' age, where beauty and goodness are defined by the exercise of will or by their collectively assumed market value, but actually, it's been a long

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time coming. You don't need me to tell you about the deleterious effect that it is having on the people of this world, the West especially, and arguably adolescents more than most. Yet it has not arisen by anything like accident. It has been deliberately contrived:

Teaching must renounce the authority of the teacher... The teacher must aspire to be neutral.¹

Thus spake the influential educationalist Lawrence Stenhouse, back in the swinging, freedom-loving sixties. This brand of relativism has not just crept in. It is actively promoted in schools.

For some decades now, we have taught our children that there is no absolute truth apart from that which is demonstrable by science (even though at the quantum level, in my limited understanding, this is in itself a far from scientific conclusion). Anything which cannot be reduced to numbers, including morality, the question of what is *good*, is purely a matter of taste. A matter of individual choice. And on what constitutes a right or wrong choice, schools must remain 'neutral.'

Stenhouse's lofty aspiration to neutrality remains a commonplace in schools, particularly in the controversial arena of Religious Education. Relativism remains the preferred *modus operandi* of many British Religion teachers, even in confessional schools. Religions, whether Christianity, Islam or whatever, are not taught as a whole, in anything like a systematic way. Their own voices and teachings are not presented. Rather, they are presented as rival 'opinions' on otherwise 'neutral' subjects, which are all editorially selected by whatever 'neutral' person it is who devises the curriculum.

Typically, a topic—say: festivals, same-sex marriage, euthanasia, women's clothing, law, or the afterlife—is introduced from the supposedly neutral perspective of secular modernity. Examples are then given from one or two religions, along with snippets from their respective scriptures, which the pupils are expected to evaluate and employ to furnish their inevitably banal arguments.

Imagine for a moment that Literature classes were taught like this: not by reading books, but by offering snippets of literature thematically arranged. The pupils would study not Shakespeare or Milton or Harper Lee, but love, or tolerance, or diversity, and be given two- or three-sentence snippets from the great authors as proof texts to demonstrate the relative position of those texts on the topic in question. They would then be required to express their opinion on the relative merits of the texts they have glanced at.

¹ Lawrence Stenhouse, *The Discussion of Controversial Values in the Classroom*, 1969.

We would hardly deem pupils subjected to such a pedagogy literate. Yet this is the approach advocated by the prevalent Religious Studies orthodoxy in the UK.

There is some hope in the new Curriculum Education movement, which demands a return to a traditional, knowledge-based, systematic curriculum. The optimist might think this uncontroversial. Yet the hangover from the contrasting skills-based emphasis on teaching persists among the still dominant, self-styled 'progressive' educational hierarchy epitomized by the teaching unions. The progressives maintain that pupils need to learn how to process knowledge and argue about it convincingly, rather than learning the knowledge itself. The skills are what are important and enduring. After all, knowledge is so readily accessible, especially in the Internet age, that there is no point in learning anything by rote. All that is needed is the skills to sift information. And on the truth of the information itself, the educator must remain neutral. Knowledge in itself is pure data, completely value-free. This educational spirit is not new: it goes back at least as far as Rousseau, who wrote in his educational treatise *Émile* that the schoolmaster 'must not give precepts, he must let the scholar find them out for himself.'

But how can pupils know which evidence to trust? How can they make choices without knowledge? How can they make reasoned arguments on the basis of the minimal and highly selective evidence presented to them in class? And who, ultimately, defines the range of data from which they may legitimately 'choose'?

The impeccably neutral teacher. Or the neutral State. Or the neutral textbook writer. In other words, whoever 'neutrally' curates whatever particular snippets of data the children will be fed.

The Church of England Education Office, surely rightly, insists that this neutrality is a myth:

There is no such thing as a neutral education. As soon as we begin to teach something to someone else, we are inevitably making value judgements about what we are teaching, how we are teaching it and why we are teaching it. Any decision we make about what or how to teach contains within it, an implicit understanding of the human condition, of what is important in life, of the relationships we want to foster, and of what is worth learning, knowing or questioning.²

So if the popular phenomenological, topic- and skills-based approach to Religious Studies is not really neutral, what is its hidden agenda?

2 The Fruit of the Spirit, A Church of England Discussion Paper on Character Education, 2015, p.3

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Absolute relativism: for as teachers mime agnostic neutrality and present this as the norm, they inculcate not only by word but by example the firm conviction that *there is no truth*.

Students are exhorted to write about what, say, Islam or Christianity teaches, but only that ‘some Muslims believe...’ or ‘some Christians believe...’ In other words, ‘some believe x, some believe y, but ultimately, the only truth is that you can believe whatever you want.’

Because none of it really matters.

And even if it did, the basis of these convictions and the question of whether they are even credible cannot be touched upon for fear of breaching the Prime Commandment of secular modernity: ‘Thou shalt not offend.’

This is exactly what our pupils have been taught to think by the very people who are claiming not to be telling them what to think: by our ‘neutral,’ secular educators, our brave renouncers of authority, our departments of State, our university lecturers, our teachers—and with all the authority they can bring to bear.

Teachers who claim neutrality in the supposed renunciation of authority are in fact exercising authority in disguise. They are making the authoritative claim that rival truth-claims do not matter, and through the process of authoritative obfuscation implicit in the ‘learning for skills’ agenda, are restricting access to the knowledge which will enable pupils to make reasoned decisions of their own.

Beneath the velvet gloves of neutrality and choice hide the brazen fists of modernity’s most enchanting idol: the idol of relativism. Even Christian educators, enthralled by this idol, are preaching it loud and clear. Many Christian schools have fallen so much in love with it that they have forgotten even the desire to escape.

Even those Religion teachers who acknowledge the relativistic bias of their subject are often happy to defend it. Some say that first, the students are not interested in learning about religious traditions in their own right, and second, they consider such teaching to be tantamount to preaching—which is, of course, a dirty word. So, I am told, the children switch off.

Yet, we might ask: how many teenagers are really interested in Shakespeare, photosynthesis, trigonometry or the Second World War? And really, who cares what some Christians or Muslims believe if none of it is true? From what I can tell, the teenagers being made to study like this could not care less. We persist in teaching them nonetheless. In other subject areas, it would be unthinkable to define the syllabus purely according to student interest. The way in which we choose to teach any

subject and the content we choose to include in it are both subject to value judgments.

Even the belief in objectivity and neutrality is itself a truth-claim with a particular, value-laden tradition behind it:

The belief that there are objective values on which any rational being can agree, is itself rooted in a particular tradition—the tradition of European, and particularly British Liberalism. Instead of searching for an objective set of virtues beyond any one religious or moral system, we could begin from the particularity of religious and moral systems.³

The objection that teaching religious doctrine is tantamount to preaching is a delusion because relativism is itself a position which is being preached at the pupils both by word and example, especially when Religious Studies teachers feign agnosticism as a supposedly neutral position. When we teach religions in dribs and drabs, with no overarching narratives behind them, and posit them as arbitrary and relative truth-claims, we are making a surreptitious truth-claim of our own: that we inhabit a vantage point from which we can objectively view and judge those religions. That somehow, we secular westerners are extra-traditional, hovering in Cartesian virtual helicopters above and outside the genealogy of ideas.

The secular imperative of tolerance dictates that all positions must be respected regardless of their intellectual merit. That this is itself the particular position of one limited intellectual tradition, enforced not by persuasion but by the threat of social ostracism or even incarceration for daring to advocate an incompatible position, is unacknowledged. And this is the one and only intellectual tradition which cannot be challenged—because it is not even acknowledged as an intellectual tradition. It is simply to be accepted, dogmatically, as the one incontrovertible truth: a dogma which the teacher must preach or suffer the consequences.

The methodology of academic Religious Studies has been complicit in this idolatry of relativism. The sociological study of religions, as opposed to the intra-traditional study of theology, is based on the assumption of a secular orthodoxy by which religions are judged and from which they are ultimately condemned as deviations, arbitrary personal decisions not to conform: or, to use the Greek word for ‘choices,’ *heresies*. Yet in strictly historical terms, the opposite is true. From ancient Judaism sprung the sect we now call Christianity, and six centuries later, Jewish and heterodox

3 Ibid., p.12.

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Christian movements were midwives to Islam. From the perspectives of their venerable sire, both Christianity and Islam are heresies. Each of these titanic offspring ultimately outgrew and overthrew their parents, establishing their own orthodoxies within bounded geographical domains. And yet, in historical terms, each is a 'heresy'—literally, a choice to separate—from what came before.

Secularism did not come from nowhere. It most certainly did not pre-exist religions, and whilst it seems intent on patricide, or at least on shuffling its embarrassing parents off to a rest home where they can rant at one another and be forgotten by the young, it too must own up to its place in the genealogy of ideas. And the fact is that it was born not in Arabia or China or Africa, but in Europe: Christian, post-Reformation Europe, at that. In the history of ideas, secularism is a 'heresy' from Christianity.

I am not using the word 'heresy' to make a value judgment here. An orthodox Christian is, in a sense, a Jewish heretic. It has taken the horror of the Holocaust for Christians to admit culpability and seek understanding and forgiveness, yet at last there is something of a rapprochement nowadays between Jews and Christians, more of a sense of filial piety developing as Christians discover hidden depths of their own faith in that of their parent.

But put the shoe on the other foot. Where do we hear secularists aiming at the same kind of reconciliation with their own intellectual progenitor, the Christian faith? Despite the horrors of the French Revolution and of systematic state atheism imposed under Communist regimes, the tens of millions executed for dissent (many of them for daring to cling to the Christian faith), advocates of secular modernity have made little attempt even to acknowledge, let alone understand, its displaced sire, and certainly not to make amends. Secularism is still in its teenage years, able only to see its parents' faults. Perhaps when it has children of its own (such as the transhumanists of which the transgender political movement is merely a precursorial voice crying in the wilderness) it will start to see its forebears in a more favorable light.

Until then, Church schools have to recognize that the secularist assumptions on which so much Religious Studies teaching is based are not merely indifferent, and certainly not neutral, but actively hostile to Christianity and indeed to all religious orthodoxy. Schools claiming 'neutrality' are in fact collaborating in the neutralization not only of Christian truth-claims but, ironically, with those truth-claims it shares with other religions, and replacing them with the rival philosophy of relativism.

So what are we to do about it? For if we simply confront relativism as a philosophy with the Christian religion, are we still not left, in the end, with a supermarket selection of two arbitrary world-views? If so, relativism wins in the end by logical default.

One reactionary way for schools to respond to this quandary would be simply to say that since no one way is better or truer than another, we will just pick one and stick with it. It might be tempting for an historically Christian school to say that since it is a Christian foundation, it will simply adopt the viewpoint of Christianity and impose it. Pupils, parents and staff are expected to commit to living according to Christian tenets as long as they are part of the institution, whatever they may think of the faith. The faith is there: it is up to you to take it or to leave it, and either way is fine as long as you sing the hymns in assembly.

The take it or leave it approach is somewhat redolent of Barth. Yet where it differs radically is that, in order to appeal to the unbelievers who may well comprise the majority of families in a Church school, it tends to present its ethos under the guise of 'Christian values.' Whatever parents and pupils may think of the possibility of God and his self-revelation in Christ, there is a purely natural moral core which can be extracted from the supernatural claims of religion and which requires no faith to assent to it. Everyone can tag along for the journey.

Need I say, this is highly problematic.

First, the values supposedly extracted from Christianity can end up being generic to the point of having no Christian distinctiveness at all. There is nothing exclusively Christian about love or forgiveness, for example. One can readily be a non-Christian and exhibit these qualities far better than many churchgoers. The danger here is that these values become just another shopping list from which to select or discard on a whim; or worse, that they become a prop for general humanistic values and the perpetuation of the status quo. So Christianity becomes little more than a cipher for a rather stale and boring moralism: the spiritual equivalent of cold showers, mortar boards and the cane. Once again, relativism wins.

Second, the very notion of 'values' is antithetical to Christian revelation. According to Christian teaching, Jesus did not come to deliver a set of laws, but to embody the Law in himself. It is precisely because God cannot be contained in a list of values that he reveals himself in the living, breathing, giving, dying, rising person of Christ. Christianity is about relationship with God through Christ in the community of the Church. Its reality is given not so much in lists as in the self-sacrificial action of Christ on the Cross, and the mystical participation of the Church in

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that sacrifice through Word and Sacrament. The attempt to turn back the clock and reduce this mystery of the faith, this loving relationship with God as Father, to some code of conduct is really quite the opposite of what Jesus was about: it's washing the outside of the pots. Jesus was not a moralist come to broadcast the rules of some transcendent headmaster in the sky. Rather than merely obeying a set of commandments, through reception of Christ's grace we grow in virtue and become more like him, the stamp of his character ever more clearly delineated. From the perspective of both Catholic and Reformed Christianity, it is a betrayal of the Gospel to suggest that we can ourselves attain to 'Christian values' without God's grace imbuing in us first the virtuous character of Christ.

Third, the idea of values rests on a conception of God primarily in terms of his will. However one prioritise the Divine Will, it is not God's sole characteristic, and to treat it as such is theologically deficient. Nor is it evangelically effective in our present milieu. To make goodness simply what God wills, as though God's will is somehow separate from his self-revelation in the created order, makes goodness seem arbitrary: just the imposition of one greater, stronger but basically comparable will to our own. An unqualified appeal to God's sovereign will is not going to convince a religiously pluralistic society which already sees all expressions of will as arbitrary extensions of personal taste anyway.

There are, however, resources within Christian tradition by which relativism can be overcome without insisting on complete conformity of the school community to all the truth-claims of the Christian gospel. In the November 2019 edition of *First Things*, Jewish scholar David Novaks argued that the natural theology of St Thomas Aquinas can establish an 'overlapping consensus' on the existence of a transcendent Good by the use of (God-given) human reason. Aquinas used Jewish and Muslim Platonic texts while properly insisting as a Christian that this consensus is crowned and given its full value only by God's self-revelation in Christ. Shifting the focus away from rather tired arguments about God's existence, we can start by exploring the existence of goodness. This leads us to questions of what we mean by 'existence' and 'being' in the first place, so that we can start to help our children realize that their thoughts are real, rather than somehow hovering judicially above reality in an unconvincing mind-body dualism. We can ask whether beauty is really just in the eye of the beholder, and if so, what this means for our natural environment and the human use of the world: whether the utilitarian paving of paradise is really just an expression of one arbitrary rival 'good' over another. We can take the children's inherent predisposition towards fairness and demonstrate that, without any transcendent underpinning

of a real goodness behind it, that predisposition really makes no sense at all. Where does that predisposition come from, and is it real? Open the eyes to one invisible reality, and the rest can follow: but that first step needs explicitly to be made.

What is needed to make that step is a curriculum. The Church of England has not helped us in the fight against relativism by deliberately relativizing its own liturgy. It is hard to see any unity of teaching amid the open-ended plethora of resources which *Common Worship* affords. An open canon is no canon at all; and if we take seriously those words of Prosper of Aquitaine, *lex orandi, lex credendi*, then it is nigh impossible to discern the wood of what the Church of England actually believes among the proliferous trees of 'worship styles' that one might encounter throughout the land.

Of course, there is a ready curriculum of Christian belief available to Anglicans in the Book of Common Prayer, not least in the annual Eucharistic lectionary and collects and the monthly round of psalms, which afford a frequency of repetition which pedagogues such as Fr Richard Peers SMMS maintain is far more conducive to memory than the 'modern' (i.e. 1960s) arrangements, and have the added benefit of a single translation in a consistent register: exposed to three different renditions of the Lord's Prayer, children are unlikely to remember any, and the same applies for any other text of Scripture. The lectionary itself has a structure which clearly teaches the Christian faith, augmented by the collects. The Catechism is short enough to be memorized over several years in school, and with the Creeds provides a concise basis on which further learning can be built. Most importantly, though, the Prayer Book teaches something which textbooks cannot: namely, how to pray. The Church can give no better gift than that to the young in her care.

To resist relativism, we need to give pupils first the confidence that metaphysical truths are possible, and there is more to reality than the physically tangible and empirically verifiable. That initial prejudice, inherited from generations whose minds have been uncritically moulded in the tradition of utilitarian materialism, needs to be broken. The Rousseauvian liberal naivety of thinking that the individual can have any existence at a remove from society, and the concomitant deification of individual choice, need to be exposed as the analogues of libertarianism which our young can see very clearly are destroying the world. The notion of Christian values as one arbitrary set of rules among many in a supermarket of ideas needs to be taken off the shelves and put into the wheely bin, as it has long passed its sell-by date. Ultimately, we need to make Christ, not Christian values, the model for goodness in our schools,

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and to establish a knowledge-based curriculum from the promotion of Christian virtues, which we maintain are given by God's grace alone and through an ordered life of prayer. In the Prayer Book, if we dare, we will find at least the seeds for that curriculum, and by teaching it, we will offer our children the chance to grow in the likeness of Christ.

And what parent, however secularly inclined, could possibly object to their child becoming more like Christ?

(The Revd Dr Thomas Plant is Chaplain of Lichfield Cathedral School and author of The Catholic Jesus (2018))

Seven Whole Days, Not One in Seven

ERIC WOODS

I want to talk about the kind of worship which was offered in many parish churches and cathedrals in England in the early decades of the seventeenth century, prior to the English Civil War and the establishment of the 'Commonwealth' and then the 'Protectorate' which swept the parsons out of their parsonages and pulpits, the bishops to exile and the Book of Common Prayer to the flames. And I will do so with particular reference to George Herbert, whose little church of St Andrew's at Bemerton, once a rural hamlet, is now part of the wider Salisbury urban sprawl (though probably still likes to think of itself as a village!).

You all know of George Herbert, of course, if only from the singing of some of his poems which have found their way into so many hymnals: *The God of love my shepherd is, and he that doth me feed; King of glory, King of peace, I will love thee; Let all the world in every corner sing, my God and King; Teach me, my God and King, in all things thee to see*—and so on. You probably know too that in 1629 Herbert gave up a glittering career at Court to become a country parson, spending his few remaining years as Rector of Fugglestone St Peter with Bemerton. But how much do we know about the style of worship he offered his people?

Well, I am sure we are all familiar with the see-saw of religious practice during the sixteenth century. Given the sheer number of huge books on the Reformation which have appeared in recent months, my headlines will appear as just that, if not caricatures. We know, or we think we know, about Henry VIII's break with Rome. We know, or we think we know, about Thomas Cranmer's two Prayer Books of 1549 and 1552. We know, or think we know, all about Mary Tudor's attempt to put the clock back to pre-Reformation times on her accession in 1553. We all know, or think we know, how her death in November 1558 put religion into turmoil once again.

I need to take you back to this period in order to put into context George Herbert and the practice of Anglican worship in which he grew up. He was an Elizabethan, born in 1593. The previous thirty-five years of Elizabeth's reign had seen many changes. Just a month after her sister's

death, Elizabeth made an interim proclamation to the effect that the existing rites could be continued, pending a settlement. For all sorts of reasons it could only be interim. Soon those who had fled to Europe to escape persecution under Mary came flooding back, bringing with them not only the 1552 Book of Common Prayer but other service books of a more Protestant nature, and a great many more radical ideas than they had left with. This is the time when we begin to see the rise in England of a variety of what today we would call religious ‘pressure groups’: the reformers had never been of a uniform or common mind, and now there was a greater range of Protestant opinion than ever before. The term ‘Puritan’ begins to be used, and as the great historian of the English Reformation, Patrick Collinson, has shown, that too was originally a term of abuse—just like ‘Protestant’—and is equally problematical to define. Despite sharing much common ground with other Protestants, the Puritans—or ‘the godly’ as they liked to call themselves—formed what we might call a religious subculture all of their own. They followed a rigorous regime of Bible study, prayer, fasting, hearing sermons and strict Sunday observance. Collinson calls them, in various of his works, ‘forward Protestants’, ‘super-Protestants’, ‘perfect Protestants’ and ‘the militant tendency’ of English Protestantism. In his splendid little paperback simply entitled *The Reformation*—and if you read only one account of the European Reformation (including Britain) it should be this one—he concludes:

Puritanism was much more than a quarrel with the Elizabethan settlement. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that it was the real English Reformation: an extensive programme of national renewal which aspired to reform popular culture, everything from maypoles, football, popular plays, and pubs to speech and dress-code, and above all the use of Sunday, now called the Sabbath—a set of values that applies the Old Testament to life much as some Moslem regimes apply shariah law, and, yes, it included the death penalty for adultery, although Puritan ministers lacked the power of imams and ayatollahs to activate it.¹

So here was one ardent pressure group, but there were also the more moderate reformers who wanted a return to the 1552 prayer book and the more conservative who preferred 1549, together with Catholics of different shades of opinion, from those happy to conform to the

1 P Collinson, *The Reformation*, London, 2003, p.117

Church of England in public whilst practising the 'Old Religion' in private to those who believed that there should be a *coup* to put a loyal Catholic monarch on the throne—most obviously Mary, Queen of Scots, especially after her return to Scotland in 1561 following the death of her young husband King François II of France.

So what was this 'settlement' by which Elizabeth strove to keep her divided nation together? It was an attempt to ensure that the Church of England was as broadly acceptable—not least in its liturgy—as possible. Almost by definition, it could not—it simply could not—satisfy those at the extreme ends of the religious spectrum. Elizabeth herself would probably have been content with a return to something like the 1549 Prayer Book coupled with an Act of Supremacy which made crystal clear her supreme Governorship of the Church. But it soon became apparent that the more radical Protestant factions in the House of Commons would require an Act of Uniformity as well, compelling obedience to an agreed rite. The result was the Elizabethan Book of Common Prayer of 1559. This resolutely resisted accommodation to the returning group of exiles and their radical demands, and instead sought a *via media* between the champions of the 1552 book and those who thought something rather less radical was needed. So whilst being based very much on 1552, the 1559 book took a few cautious steps back to 1549, and in one respect it went even further: the reference to 'the tyranny of the bishop of Rome and all his detestable enormities' was dropped from the Litany, never to reappear. The 'Black Rubric' on kneeling to receive the sacrament was omitted. From now on kneeling to receive the sacrament was to be the norm. The phrases at the administration of the communion in the two Edwardian books were now brought together—a classic piece of Elizabethan compromise. Thus at the administration of the bread the minister says:

The bodie of our Lord Jesu Christ which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soule into everlasting life, and take and eat this, in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feede on him in thine heart by faith with thankesgevyng.

Similarly, at the administration of the wine, we have the same conflation of the 1549 and 1552 sentences:

The bloude of our Lord Jesu Christ, which was shedd for thee, preserve thy body and soule into everlasting life. And drinke this in remembraunce that Christes bloude was shedd for thee, and be thankful.

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With both of these all users of the 1662 edition are familiar, although with a couple of minor tweaks. Their great significance was that they brought back at least a reference to the Real Presence, which had been so rigorously expunged from the 1552 book.

As for all the accoutrements of worship—the ceremonies, vestments and ornaments—there was a wonderful Elizabethan gloss which, if taken literally, restored everything that had been allowed in 1549: ‘And here it is to be noted, that the Minister at the time of communion and at all other times in his ministration, shall use such ornaments in the church as were in use by authority of parliament in the second year of the reign of King Edward the VI’. As Brian Cummings remarks in the introduction to his splendid edition of the 1549, 1559 and 1662 prayer books, ‘By fudging the issue, this clause was merely the framework for tensions which vexed the English church for the next 400 years’.² But from our point of view, the doors were wide open for what has been called ‘The Anglican Counter-Reformation’.³

You must appreciate that the religious spectrum of opinion in the first part of the seventeenth century was in many ways much the same as it is today. Elizabeth I had worked hard to establish as wide-embracing a settlement as possible, excluding as few as possible. She realised that extreme Puritans at one end wouldn’t be embraced, and nor would fervent Catholics at the other. Unlike her half-sister, Mary, she didn’t demand uniformity of belief. She demanded loyalty to the Crown. That is why there were no heresy trials in Elizabeth’s reign. She could accommodate different beliefs provided her subjects were loyal. But if they plotted against her, that was treason, and for treason she had no mercy. And of course after the 1570 Papal Bull excommunicating her, arrests for ‘religious treason’ were to increase—though subsequently to relax when the threats against her subsided.

Meanwhile loyal—or ‘loyal-ish’ Anglicans (and I ought to add that the very term ‘Anglican’ is anachronistic at this period—it came in later—so I only use it as a short hand)—also had wide divergences of opinion, but those who longed for the restoration of more elaborate ceremonies with vestments and all the other accoutrements of what today we might call ‘high Church’ devotion saw their opportunity. They could not do much to change the principal religious texts, but they could change the externals that accompanied them.

2 B Cummings, ed., *The Book of Common Prayer*, Oxford, 2011, p. xxxiv

3 I have a debt from now on to Graham Parry, and his splendid work *Glory, Laud and Honour: The Arts of the Anglican Counter-Reformation*, Woodbridge, 2006

One of the earliest of the counter-reformers was Lancelot Andrewes (1555 – 1626) who was Dean of Westminster when James came to the throne, but who became Bishop of Chichester in 1605 and Bishop of Winchester in 1619. He disliked the Puritan emphasis on preaching, and wanted the Church to build its spirituality on the Eucharist and on reverence in worship. He saw inner devotion as linked to and expressed by outward reverence, and was amongst the first to encourage more elaborate church furniture and church plate and the reintroduction of vestments. The change in communion vessels can be seen in Sherborne by comparing the small Elizabethan chalice belonging to my little village church of St James the Great in Longburton, which has a conical cup, and the much larger 1637 chalice in the Abbey which is in medieval style with a wide rim and base.

Two years after Andrewes died, William Laud (1573 – 1645) became Bishop of London, rising to be Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633, the year of George Herbert's death. He ordered altars to be moved back to the east wall of the chancel and to be surrounded by rails, so that congregations would have to kneel at them to receive the sacrament. In wealthier churches these rails were often richly carved, and the floors of the chancels paved with marble in black-and-white squares. And as we know that Herbert, who arrived at St Andrew's Bemerton in 1629, restored the church at his own expense, and that he provided the black and white stone pavement which is all that has survived the Victorian so-called restoration, it is a fair assumption that he shared these ecclesiastical preferences.

We can trace the growth of this counter-reformation from the cathedrals of bishops and deans who thought like Andrewes and Laud, to the college chapels of Oxford and Cambridge and then out into more and more parish churches. As a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, Herbert was exposed to the earliest of these influences. And it is worthy of note that his close friend Nicholas Ferrer was ordained deacon in 1628 in order to be able to officiate at divine office in the remarkable community he had founded at Little Gidding, just two miles down the road from Leighton Bromswold, of which Herbert had been appointed Prebendary in 1626 whilst still a layman. Herbert raised money (including the use of his own) to restore the neglected church building at Leighton, just as he was to do at Bemerton and also at Bemerton's mother church, Fugglestone St Peter, that little church on the Salisbury Road near to Wilton House, the stately home of the Earl and Countess of Pembroke. Incidentally, it would be interesting to know if Fugglestone's tall seventeenth-century box pews date from Herbert's time or a little afterwards. I rather hope the latter, as they were more a sign of social

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snobbery than Christian piety. Some churches even had box pews with locks on them, so that hoi-polloi could not use them when their tenants (who paid to rent them) were away. See how the Christians love one another!

I have not been able to find any contemporary documents detailing how Herbert officiated at Mattins and Evensong and celebrated the Eucharist in his two churches. But I can offer you a few snapshots from the better-documented cathedrals. Here is one from 1630, just after Herbert began to minister at Bemerton.

In August of that year, Articles of Indictment were laid before the Archbishop of York against six clerks of the cathedral church of Durham, the chief of whom was a Prebendary called John Cosin. There were thirty items of complaint about how the 'simple people' of Durham were being

Inveigled and beguiled, by your popish baits and allurements of glorious pictures and Babalonish vestures, and excessive number of wax candles burning at one tyme, and especially the horrible profanation of both the sacraments with all manner of musick, both instrumentall and vocall, so lowed that the Ministers could not be heard, what they said, as if Bacchanalia, the feasts of Bacchus, or the Aegiptian Isis, or the Phrygian Cybele ... with flutist, and bag-pipes, with tymbrells and tabers, and not the Death and Passion of our Saviour Christ were celebrated...

The charges rolled on and on. Services were now confused with those of the Church of Rome... and the ancient Hebrews, and even with the pagans of Greece and Rome. There was:

Much altar-furniture, and many massing-implements, crucifies sett on the Altar, as you call it, tapers and basons, and candlesticks etc, none of which are allowed by the Booke of Common Prayer ... and besides them you have provided abominable copes imbrodred with images, not of sayntes only, but of God himself.

Meanwhile the liturgy had become more complicated, and is 'accompanuied' by the singing of music:

You have not only banished the singing of psalms, in the vulgar tunes, by authority allowed ... but you have so changed the whole liturgie, that though it be not in Latin, yet by reason of the confusedness of voices of so many singers with a multitude of melodius instruments

(directly contrary to the Injunctions and Homilies) the greatest part of the service is no better understood, then if it were in Hebrue or Irish.

In Durham Cathedral the wooden communion table had been scrapped to make way for a glorious new stone altar. There was a majestic new font with a cover which seemed to disappear into the roof, a new organ—or, rather, a pair of organs—and so on, and so on. And so those who liked their worship plain and austere were up in arms.

Now that's a snapshot from Durham. What about Salisbury Cathedral? Well, here the Anglican 'Counter-Reformation' was also on its way. New altar silver was commissioned in the 1620's. Soon the Choir was singing the kind of music deplored in Durham, though the chief influence in this was the Chapel Royal in Whitehall, which was serving as a model for cathedrals all round the country, singing polyphony both of its own era and that of Tudor and pre-Reformation times. Herbert found the music of Salisbury Cathedral a gateway to heaven, and walked from Bemerton twice a week to listen to Evensong. On his return, according to his biographer Isaak Walton, he would say 'That his time spent in prayer, and cathedral music, elevated his soul, and was his heaven upon earth.' He celebrated it in his poem on Church Music:

Sweetest of sweets, I thank you: when displeasure
 Did through my bodie wound my minde,
You took me thence, and in your house of pleasure
 A daintie lodging me assign'd.

Now I in you without a bodie move,
 Rising and falling with your wings:
We both together sweetly live and love,
 Yet say sometimes, God help poore Kings.

Comfort, I'll die; for if you poste from me,
 Sure I shall do so, and much more:
But if I travell in your companie,
 You know the way to heavens doore

It is indeed to the poetry of George Herbert to which we have to turn to discover his sacramental theology and liturgical preferences—and also to his posthumously published book *A Priest to the Temple, or The Country*

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Parson His Character and Rule of Life.⁴

Herbert wrote the book whilst he was at Bemerton, and in his preface explained why:

Being desirous (thorow the Mercy of GOD) to please Him, for whom I am, and live, and who giveth mee my Desires and Performances; and considering with my self, That the way to please him, is to feed my Flocke diligently and faithfully, since our Saviour hath made that the argument of a Pastour's love, I have resolved to set down the Form and Character of a true Pastour, that I may have a Mark to aim at: which also I will set as high as I can, since hee shoots higher that threatens the Moon, then hee that aims at a Tree. Not that I think, if a man do not all which is here expressed, hee presently sinns, and displeases God, but that it is a good strife to go as farre as wee can in pleasing of him, who hath done so much for us.

In chapter XXXVI we learn that Herbert had no hesitation in blessing his flock:

The Countrey Parson wonders, that Blessing the people is in so little use with his brethren: whereas he thinks it not onely a grave, and reverend thing, but a beneficial also.... Now blessing differs from prayer, in assurance, because it is not performed by way of request, but of confidence, and power, effectually applying Gods favour to the blessed, by the interesting of that dignity wherewith God hath invested the Priest, and ingaging of Gods own power and institution for a blessing. The neglect of this duty in Ministers themselves, hath made the people also neglect it; so that they are so far from craving this benefit from their ghostly Father, that they oftentimes goe out of church, before he hath blessed them. In the time of Popery, the Priests *Benedicite*, and his holy water were over highly valued; and now we are fallen to the clean contrary, even from superstition to coldnes, and Atheism.

Perhaps most important of all, for our purposes, is Chapter XXII, 'The Parson in Sacraments':

The Countrey Parson being to administer the Sacraments, is at a

⁴ Published by The Reverend Barnabas Oley, Fellow of Clare College, Cambridge, and from 1633 Incumbent of Great Gransden, near Sandy in Bedfordshire. He paid for the publication of Herbert's book in 1652. A staunch Royalist, he was thrown out of his living during the Commonwealth and Protectorate, but was restored to Great Gransden in 1660.

stand with himself, how or what behaviour to assume for so holy things. Especially at Communion times he is in a great confusion, as being not only to receive God, but to break, and administer him. Neither findes he any issue in this, but to throw himself down at the throne of grace, saying, Lord, thou knowest what thou didst, when thou appointedst it to be done thus; therefore doe thou fulfill what thou didst appoint; for thou art not only the feast, but the way to it. At Baptisme, being himselfe in white, he requires the presence of all, and Baptizeth not willingly, [*ie on a date willed by the parents*] but on Sundayes, or great dayes. Hee admits no vaine or idle names, but such as are usuall and accustomed. Hee says that prayer with great devotion, where God is thanked for calling us to the knowledg of his grace, Baptisme being a blessing, that the world hath not the like. He willingly and cheerfully crosseth the child, and thinketh the Ceremony not onely innocent, but reverend. He instructeth the God-fathers, and God-mothers, that it is no complementall or light thing to sustain that place, but a great honour, and no less burden, as being done both in the presence of God, and his Saints, and by way of undertaking for a Christian soul. He adviseth all to call to minde their Baptism often; for if wise men have thought it the best way of preserving a state to reduce it to its principles by which it grew great; certainly, it is the safest course for Christians also to meditate on their Baptisme often (being the first step into their great and glorious calling) and upon what termes, and with what vowes they were Baptized. At the times of the Holy Communion, he first takes order with the Church-Wardens, that the elements be of the best, not cheape, or course, much lesse ill-tasted, or unwholsome. Secondly, hee considers and looks into the ignorance, or carelesness of his flock, and accordingly applies himselfe with Catechizings, and lively exhortations, not on the Sunday of the Communion only (for then it is too late) but the Sunday, or Sundayes before the Communion, or on the Eves of all those dayes. If there be any, who having not received yet, are to enter into this great work, he takes the more pains with them, that hee may lay the foundation of future Blessings. The time of every ones first receiving is not so much by yeers, as by understanding: particularly, the rule may be this: When any one can distinguish the Sacramentall from common bread, knowing the Institution, and the difference, hee ought to receive, of what age soever. Children and youths are usually deferred too long, under pretence of devotion to the Sacrament, but it is for want of

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Instruction; their understandings being ripe enough for ill things, and why not then for better? But Parents, and Masters should make hast in this, as to a great purchase for their children, and servants; which while they deferr, both sides suffer; the one in wanting many excittings of grace; the other, in being worse served and obeyed. The saying of the Catechism is necessary, but not enough; because to answer in form may still admit ignorance: but the Questions must be propounded loosely and wildely, and then the Answerer will discover what hee is. Thirdly, For the manner of receiving, as the Parson useth all reverence himself, so he administers to none but to the reverent. The Feast indeed requires sitting, because it is a Feast; but man's unpreparednesse asks kneeling. Hee that comes to the Sacrament, hath the confidence of a Guest, and hee that kneels, confesseth himself an unworthy one, and therefore differs from other Feasters: but hee that sits, or lies, puts up to an Apostle: Contentiousnesse in a feast of Charity is more scandall then any posture....

Nor must we overlook Chapter XIII, on 'The Parson's Church':

The Countrey Parson hath a speciall care of his Church, that all things there be decent, and befitting his Name by which it is called. Therefore first he takes order, that all things be in good repair; as walls plaistered, windows glazed, floore paved, seats whole, firm, and uniform, especially that the Pulpit, and Desk, and Communion Table, and Font be as they ought, for those great duties that are performed in them. Secondly, that the Church be swept, and kept cleane without dust, or Cobwebs, and at great festivalls strawed, and stuck with boughs, and perfumed with incense.⁵ Thirdly, That there be fit, and proper texts of Scripture every where painted, and that all the painting be grave, and reverend, not with light colours, or foolish anticks. Fourthly, That all the books appointed by Authority be there, and those not torne, or fouled, but whole and clean, and well bound; and that there be a fitting, and sightly Communion Cloth of *fine linnen*, with an handsome, and seemly Carpet of good and costly Stuffe, or Cloth, and all kept sweet and clean, in a strong and decent chest, with a Chalice, and Cover, and a Stoop, or Flagon; and a Bason for Almes and offerings; besides which, he hath a Poor-mans Box conveniently seated, to receive the charity of well minded people, and to lay up treasure for the sick and needy. And all this he doth, not as out of necessity, or as putting a holiness in the things, but as desiring to keep the middle

5 My emphasis

way between superstition, and slovenliness, and as following the Apostles two great and admirable Rules in things of this nature: The first whereof is, *Let all things be done decently, and in order:* [I Cor. 14:40] The second, *Let all things be done to edification,* I Cor. 14 [:26]. For these two rules comprize and include the double object of our duty, God, and our neighbour; the first being for the honour of God; the second for the benefit of our neighbor. So that they excellently score out the way, and fully, and exactly contain, even in externall and indifferent things, what course is to be taken; and put them to great shame, who deny the Scripture to be perfect.

There you have Herbert's attitude to liturgy and worship in a single phrase, 'as desiring to keep the middle way between superstition [*ie of popery*] and slovenliness' [*which reveals what he thought of Puritan services!*].

This for Herbert (and for me!) is the essence of Anglicanism: 'the middle way'. It is celebrated in many of his poems, as in the one entitled 'The British Church'. He delights in serving a church where 'Beautie in thee takes up her place', but insists that it is a modest beauty:

A fine aspect in fit array
Neither too mean, not yet too gay
Shows who is best

Graham Parry puts it better than I can, so I will quote him here—and urge you to buy his splendid book, which deserves so much more attention than I think it has attracted:

In Herbert's handsomely-appointed church, all parts of the building play their part in raising the spirit of devotion. 'The Church-floore' with its black and white marble slabs speaks of humility, patience and confidence; sin may stain it, but the marble weeps, and all is cleansed, just as the indurated heart may repent and sweep its sins away. The dust on the floors is a reminder of death, but the dust of death is swept away by thoughts of the resurrection. The floor has a 'gentle rising' as it approaches the chancel, characteristic of the ritualistic tendency to regard that space as more sacred than the rest of the church, and the desire to 'honour' the altar by steps rising up to it. 'Church monuments' provokes a meditation on the certain disintegration of all material bodies, leading to a concentration on

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the state of one's soul, so that thou 'may fit thy self against thy fall.' Herbert expresses his approval of painted glass in the complex poem 'The Windows' (where in the phrase 'thou dost anneal in glasse thy storie' he shows an awareness of the technique of modern glass painting), Windows, like the priest, 'preach thy eternal word' and have a 'glorious and transcendent place' in the church; yet man, 'like glass, is 'brittle' and 'crazie' – frail and depraved by sin—but can be glorified by God's light, grace. As windows glow with the light of the sun, so preachers are illuminated with the divine spirit and make the holy stories more compelling, bringing the gospel home to the congregation.⁶

I found myself using exactly the same argument in a Consistory Court in Sherborne Abbey in 1997, wanting to take out an inferior Victorian window to replace it with a much superior new design. I wish I had had at my fingertips Herbert's verse about the way painted windows complement preaching, the one lending strength to the other:

Doctrine and life, colours and light, in one
When they combine and mingle, bring
A strong regard and aw: but speech alone
Doth vanish like a flaring thing,
And in the eare, not conscience ring.

But we won, anyway.

As you all know, George Herbert died as a comparatively young man, after three years at Bemerton, when consumption—from which he was already suffering when he arrived—carried him off. We can only speculate if he would have stayed constant to his 'middle way'. I suspect that he would, and would not have supported the next generation of Anglican 'High Churchmen', such as Richard Crashaw, who notched up the attack on the Puritans even higher. Who knows? Had Herbert lived, he might have been able to make common cause with those others of eirenic mind who sought to avoid the horrors of the English Civil Wars.

As it was, as he contemplated his end, he wrote a poem of six lines which sum-up his ultimate priorities. It is entitled *To my Successor*, and is said to have been 'ingraven in the mantle of the chimney in his hall'.

6 Parry, *op.cit.*, p.137

With it I end:

If thou chance for to find
A new House to thy mind,
And built without thy Cost:
Be good to the Poor,
As God gives thee store,
And then, my Labour's not lost.⁷

(The Reverend Canon Eric Woods DL was instituted as Vicar of Sherborne in 1993. He was due to retire from the Abbey on Easter Day 2020, but 'lockdown' put paid to that. He is a former Trustee of the Society, and remains an enthusiastic member of the Salisbury Branch. He explains the origin of the present article: 'Back in September 2018 I gave a talk to the Salisbury Branch of the Prayer Book Society on the kind of worship which would have been offered in many of the parish churches and cathedrals of England early in the seventeenth century. This, in turn, was based upon an earlier talk I had given to members of the George Herbert Society, at a meeting in Herbert's own little church of Bemerton, just outside Salisbury. The editor of Faith & Worship, John Scrivener, expressed an interest in publishing it. So here it is, not quite as polished as I would like it, but still, I hope, of interest'.)

7 For a critique, less of George Herbert than of the 'mythology' that has grown around him over the centuries, see Justin Lewis-Anthony, *If You Meet George Herbert on the Road, Kill Him*. London, 2009. My only advice is, if you manage to get to Rome, where Lewis-Anthony is Deputy Director of the Anglican Centre, and see him on the road—kill him!

Elizabethan Enigma: Music and Reformation in Sixteenth-Century England

JEREMY HASELOCK

In the north aisle of the nave of Norwich Cathedral is a memorial tablet, complete with miniature columns and pediment, to one Osbert Parsley who died in 1585. The rather fulsome inscription records a life, ‘Renowned by Blast of Golden Fame: Whose Harmony survives his vital Breath’ but more significantly that he was a singing man in the cathedral ‘full fifty years.’ Born in 1511, he is first discovered by history in 1534 as a singing man on the pay roll of the Benedictine community that staffed Norwich Cathedral from its foundation. Parsley was singing at the time of the Dissolution of the Priory in 1538 but continued as a member of the cathedral choir throughout the years of the Reformation, on through the return to Roman Catholicism under Queen Mary, and well into the reign of Elizabeth I.¹ In liturgical terms he could be said to have sung his way through the last years of the Benedictine variant of the Latin rite—derived in Norwich from the use of Fécamp², through the introduction of the 1549 and 1552 editions of Archbishop Cranmer’s vernacular Book of Common Prayer, through the Latin rite of Sarum—introduced at Norwich by the now secular Dean and Chapter in response to the Marian Injunctions of 1554, and finally through the restored Book of Common Prayer annexed to Elizabeth I’s Act of Uniformity of 1559. In this paper I would like to look briefly at the period of profound liturgical change in the English Church covered by Parsley’s professional life to see if by reviewing some well-known material we can lay bare some of the origins of what we now think of as English cathedral worship—the genre of liturgical style and tradition within which I have had the privilege of working for the greater part of my ordained life—and an outcome of the English Reformation very different from that envisaged by its authors. In passing, a few observations

1 P. Aston and T. Roast, ‘Music in the Cathedral’ in Atherton, Fernie, Harper-Bill and Smith (eds) *Norwich Cathedral: Church, City and Diocese, 1096-1996*, The Hambledon Press, 1996, p.690.

2 See J B L Tolhurst, ed. *The Customary of the Cathedral Priory Church of Norwich: ms. 465 in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge*, Publications of the Henry Bradshaw Society, Vol 82, 1948.

on the development of vernacular liturgical texts in England and how they were set to music in a golden age might find a place.

As well as singing, Osbert Parsley was a moderately accomplished composer: the madrigalist Thomas Morley (of *Now is the month of Maying* fame), also Norwich-born and Master of the Choristers at the Cathedral from 1583, would have known him well and, in publishing some of his music, described it as 'praiseworthy.' From Parsley's pen music survives for both the Latin and English rites and his Latin works with their smoothly flowing lines are the earliest examples of polyphonic music written for Norwich Cathedral. The great editor of Tudor Church Music, Edmund Fellowes, considered him less assured in his handling of the new vernacular texts³ but an English *Te Deum* from one of his two surviving Morning Services was chosen to be sung to celebrate the visit of Queen Elizabeth I to Norwich in 1578.

As a personification of musical continuity in one place or institution Parsley was in many ways very lucky. The musical foundation he served was reformed and refashioned but not suppressed. Many hundreds of singing men, however, were deprived of their position at the dissolution of the religious houses and left to find a livelihood as best they could with only a small gratuity to start them off in a world turned upside down. In his good fortune, though, he was not unique. His better-known contemporary, Thomas Tallis, for example, was organist and master of the choristers of the Augustinian community at Waltham Abbey when it was dissolved—last of all the major foundations—in 1540, and his team of five choristers, twelve singing men and an organist were all sent packing. But Tallis almost immediately secured employment at Canterbury Cathedral where, with a large budget, the newly-founded Dean and Chapter were busy recruiting an enlarged musical establishment. That same year, 1540, Tallis is named first in the list of Canterbury's singing men⁴. It is said that Henry VIII may have encountered Tallis and his music on his many visits to Waltham⁵ and liked what he heard. Whether or not this is true, Tallis's name disappears from the Canterbury lists in 1543 and appears in a subsidy list for the Royal Household in 1544 by which time the King had appointed him to the Chapel Royal. Tallis's undoubted talent ensured that he had continuity of employment under the next three monarchs for whom he composed liturgical music for both Reformed and Latin rites as the religious situation oscillated back and forth.

3 E.H.Fellowes, *English Cathedral Music from Edward VI to Edward VII*, Methuen, 3rd edn, 1946, p.61.

4 Canterbury, Dean and Chapter Library, MS D.E.164.

5 Fellowes, op.cit, p.7.

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Osbert Parsley left no indication of his religious sympathies as he sailed through the troubled waters of the Reformation. As I have already observed, his Latin music is undoubtedly better than that which he wrote for English texts and his fine Latin setting of the *Lamentations*, which is still sung in Norwich, probably dates from the five years of Marian restoration. In so far as 'his art found its most congenial expression in his Latin church music,'⁶ it might be hazarded that his heart remained in the old rite and traditional ways but, as we have little or nothing else to go on, it is his pragmatism we must admire.

One can only speculate as to the personal feelings of individual church musicians during this time of rapid change. Composers, who had been active earlier, like Parsley and Tallis, would have been accustomed to the unchanging Latin texts of the Proper and a liturgical climate in which sophisticated musical artistry was highly valued. Quite apart from whether they were personally in sympathy with the ideals of the Reformation, composers faced the practical difficulty of not knowing whether liturgical changes were temporary or permanent. While there appeared to be an immediate need for musical settings for the new vernacular services there was no guarantee that any of their work would remain current for any length of time. The Marian restoration of the *status quo ante* proved just how precarious and uncertain things could be both politically and liturgically.

Equally uncertain, initially at any rate, was the question of texts. Here the musicians' predicament can easily be imagined. The pressing need for musical settings was there but, until the first editions of the Book of Common Prayer appeared in March 1549, there were no definitive versions of service texts. Numerous reports of vernacular services in London churches early in the reign of the boy king Edward indicate the speed with which attitudes to liturgical reform moved forward. Where precisely the texts and translations used by the *avant garde* came from can only be guessed. Vernacular texts had been circulating since the late 1530s: pre-Prayer Book, pre-Cranmer versions of the main canticles and the ordinary of the Mass can be found in Marshall's *Primer* of 1535, and Hilsey's *Primer* of 1539⁷. An English Litany from Cranmer's pen had appeared in 1543 and the authorised King's *Primer* with Latin and vernacular texts in 1545. The importance of the Chapel Royal in this regard should not be underestimated. As I shall suggest later in this paper, after the death of Henry VIII, Cranmer and his team of liturgical draftsmen would have found there a useful liturgical laboratory, staffed

6 J. Morehen, Parsley, Osbert. In *Grove 2nd Edn*, OUP, 2001, Vol 19, p.160.

7 Edward Burton, ed. *Three Primers put forth in the Reign of Henry VIII*, Oxford, OUP, 1834.

with highly competent musicians and compliant chaplains. An English language form of *Compline* was sung in the Chapel Royal as early as Easter Monday 1547. More publically, King Edward's first Parliamentary session was opened in November 1547 with a votive Mass of the Holy Spirit in Westminster Abbey where Nicholas Ridley preached and according to *Wriothesley's Chronicle*, 'the Gloria in excelsis, Creede, Sanctus, Benedictus, and the Agnus were all songen in Englishe.'⁸

The musical style considered appropriate for the setting of texts in the new vernacular services was first spelled out in a letter from Archbishop Cranmer to Henry VIII in 1543 concerning the manner in which his new Litany should be set: 'In mine opinion, the song that shall be made thereunto would not be full of notes, but, as near as may be, for every syllable a note; so that it may be sung distinctly and devoutly, as be in Matins and Evensong . . . and in the Mass.'⁹ The Archbishop's hand can be discerned in the 1548 Royal Injunctions for Lincoln Cathedral a year before the publication of the Prayer Book. These state that the choir: 'from henceforth shall sing or say no anthems of our Lady or other Saints, but only of our Lord, and then not in Latin; but choosing out the best and most sounding to Christian religion they shall turn the same into English, setting thereunto a plain and distinct note for every syllable one: they shall sing them and none other.'¹⁰

Perhaps the classic example of this new style of liturgical word setting and certainly the best known today is John Merbecke's *Book of Common Prayer Noted* which appeared in 1550, the first published setting of services in the 1549 Prayer Book.¹¹ Merbecke was an almost life-long member of the Chapel Royal establishment. His name appears in the account books of St George's Chapel, Windsor as a lay-clerk and organist from 1531 until his death in 1584. In a dedicatory letter to Edward VI written in 1550, he states that he was 'altogether brought up in your highnes College at Wyndsore, in the study of musicke and playing on Organs' and so joins Parsley and Tallis in continuity of employment through four reigns. At the end of 1548, the committee that finalised the first Book of Common Prayer met at Windsor under Thomas Cranmer's chairmanship. It would seem likely that Merbecke's famous work had its origin in

8 Charles Wriothesley, *A Chronicle of England during the reigns of the Tudors from AD 1485 to 1559*, ed. W D Hamilton, 2 Vols, Camden Society, London 1875-77.

9 J E Cox, ed. *Cranmer's Letters*, Parker Society Publications, 1846, Letter CCLXXVI, p.412.

10 W H Frere and W M Kennedy, eds., *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the period of the Reformation*, 3 Vols, Alcuin Club Collections, London, 1910. Vol 2 p.168, item 25.

11 See J Eric Hunt, ed., *Cranmer's First Litany, 1544, and Merbecke's Book of Common Prayer noted*. SPCK, London, 1939 and E H Fellowes, ed., *The Office of the Holy Communion as set by John Merbecke*, OUP, Oxford, 1949.

the deliberations there of the Archbishop's liturgical draughtsmen. Significantly the book was published by Richard Grafton, one of the royal publishers charged with issuing the 1549 Prayer Book, suggesting that Merbecke's approach had at least quasi-official approval. Merbecke 'noted' the sung parts (the Ordinary) of the Communion Office, the Order of Mattins and Evensong, the Office for the Burial of the Dead and 'the Communion when there is a burial'—all this in unaccompanied monody on the strict principle of 'for every syllable a note.' Initial approval notwithstanding, Merbecke's work was issued only in a single edition and was effectively disused by the second Prayer Book of 1552, and was never reprinted for use with the new order. What did survive, below ground level as it were, was Merbecke's unison setting of the preces, versicles and responses for Mattins and Evensong, used as a *cantus firmus* in many subsequent Tudor sets of harmonised responses.

To understand the wider musical implications of the early liturgical reforms leading to the imposition of the 1549 Book of Common Prayer and its successors we need to examine the surviving repertory with some care. Liturgical and musical scholars have one significant piece of evidence to evaluate in trying to come to some conclusions, a collection of English-rite liturgical music from the reign of Edward VI (1547–53). The Wanley Partbooks¹², in the Bodleian Library, preserve a repertory of four-voice anthems, communion services, canticles, psalms, and responses which reveals how Thomas Tallis, John Sheppard, and a number of other London-based composers responded to the exigencies of the 1549 and 1552 Prayer Books. The ninety works in the Wanley manuscripts comprise the largest vernacular ritual collection to survive from mid sixteenth-century England and we discover in these pieces a liturgical comprehensiveness not found in any other compilation. The works establish a proper peer-group context for all of Sheppard's English liturgical music, for example, as well as most of Tallis's. What is also clear from the Wanley Partbooks is the high degree of participation and even collaboration by London composers in what was a decidedly partisan Reform project. Clearly, professional musicians could sense the winds of change. The collection encompasses composers as diverse as the Protestant crown-employed musicians Christopher Tye and Robert Okeland; the Catholic sub-dean of Saint Paul's Cathedral, William Whitbroke; and even the late, venerable musician John Taverner through *contrafacta* (replacing the original underlay with English texts) of several of his popular Latin works. In this collection, perhaps for the only time in Tudor music, we can delineate a common set of what we might

12 Oxford, Bodleian Library, MSS Mus.Sch.e.420-22.

term 'Reformation-aware' compositional practices shared among the principal Church musicians of the nation's capital.

The Wanley books show how very quickly metropolitan composers created a new matrix of structural and stylistic norms in adapting to an almost total change in the ritual and textual contexts of their work. There is a large number of Prayer Book texts set in the collection, the choice of which suggests that the part books were written for a foundation whose choir frequently sang a wide range of liturgies. Noticeable also is the music's circumscribed texture and scale, but this is not 'easy' music written with the limited resources of a small institution in mind, rather the new style reflects the Edwardine Church's ideological preference for 'sober, discreet and devout singing'. In spite of this overall subjugation to the one-note-per-syllable style of Cranmer's strictures, the collection displays a great diversity of compositional procedures, and resourcefulness. This range of contents enables the scholar to compare the new-style Tallis of, for example, 'If Ye Love Me, Keep My Commandments' with dozens of other anthems by several of his Chapel Royal colleagues, also composing for the new liturgy. We can also compare Chapel Royal works for the Edwardian Prayer Book with the little-known, but apparently influential work of their London contemporary, the overtly Catholic William Whitbroke.

The Wanley Partbooks may or may not have been compiled for the Chapel Royal but they certainly provide more than a glimpse into what was being sung around the anvil upon which Cranmer's liturgical work was being forged. Because of the reforming zeal of the 'young Josiah' Edward VI and his uncles and Lord Protectors, the Chapel Royal became for a short time a centre for Reformed liturgical innovation, avant garde church music and ceremonial minimalism. While the standards set by the Chapel Royal were to become hugely influential in creating what we now think of as the decent and fitting order and seamliness of classical Anglican worship, it was not Edward VI's short-lived ecclesiastical household which was to set the long term agenda. The Protestant position reflected in the Wanley compilation was to be dramatically reversed, not unsurprisingly, at the accession of the devoutly Catholic Queen Mary in 1553 and then, less dramatically but with more long-term and far-reaching effect upon the accession of Elizabeth in 1558.

Queen Mary and Edmund Bonner, Bishop of London—effectively standing in as her Archbishop of Canterbury during the trial of Thomas Cranmer—vigorously restored the Roman rite in 1553. It was restored in its familiar incarnation in England, the Use of Sarum, now given an effective hegemony by the technological advances of printing. This was

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a conservative rite: had Queen Mary and her Archbishop, Cardinal Pole, both lived into old age doubtless the liturgical texts of the Roman Church as revised by the Council of Trent and finally published in 1570 would have displaced it. Indeed, Thomas Goldwell, a Theatine priest and close friend and associate of Pole's, was a keen liturgical scholar and reformer. He was appointed bishop of St Asaph in Wales in 1554, but when forced to leave Britain after the accession of Elizabeth, he went to Rome where he was closely involved in the revisions and editorial processes which led to the Missal of Pius V.¹³ As far as Church Music is concerned, it is clear there was a return to the polyphonic settings of the Latin texts and the Chapel Royal composers who had conformed to the Prayer Book regime exhibited their pragmatic professionalism, continuing to produce new work and returning with little effort to the neglected texts. Thomas Tallis flourished—Queen Mary held him in the same esteem as had her father and granted him a twenty-one year lease of the manor of Minster in Thanet in Kent in 1557, which brought him a comfortable income over and above his other emoluments. Osbert Parsley no doubt continued to sing and compose at Norwich for a now secular Dean and Chapter as if nothing had happened.

Queen Elizabeth the First, the Virgin Queen, has been mythologised in the English historical subconscious almost as much as her much-married father, Henry VIII. As a private person, she remains deeply enigmatic, not least in the matter of her religious faith. Her own religious opinions are difficult to discern behind the smoke screen of the political and diplomatic positions she felt it necessary to take up. Tales from late Victorian children's history books linger in the English mind such as the story from the opening of her first Parliament when Elizabeth was greeted at Westminster Abbey by a procession of monks bearing lighted candles. 'Away with those torches,' she called out, 'we see very well.' A Spanish bishop-diplomat recorded that on her instructions the elevation of the Host was ceased and, as he wrote, 'the Holy Sacrament was taken away yesterday from the Royal Chapel, and Mass was said in English.' Yet leading Puritans, John Field and Thomas Wilcox, described the Book of Common Prayer annexed to her 1559 Act of Uniformity as 'an unperfect book, culled and picked out of that Popish dunghill, the Portuise and Mass book full of all abominations'.¹⁴ Insofar as it softened some of the more extreme positions taken up by the 1552 Book, they may have had a point. The Queen ordered what was regarded by many churchmen as an

13 Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England from Cranmer to Baxter and Fox, 1534-1690*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1996, Vol 1 p.138.

14 *Admonition to Parliament*, June 1572, to which was annexed a pamphlet entitled *AView of Popish Abuses yet remaining in the English Church*.

immoderate degree of ritual in her chapel yet called herself a Protestant. She kept a crucifix upon the altar between lighted candles which the more radical Puritans denounced as idolatry and she had a strong dislike for married priests yet she also lost her temper with the Dean of St Paul's when he sent her a Prayer Book which had been illuminated like a Missal.

Most germane to our topic is her well-attested liking for elaborate choral music. The choir of the Chapel Royal was by far the largest such musical establishment in the country and so highly did the Queen esteem it that conditions of service were remarkably generous with salaries more than three times the national average—the pay roll comprised over sixty singers and instrumentalists. Her lavish patronage drew in the very best practitioners and composers which included at some stage almost every important English church musician of the period. This was widely commented upon at a time when the 1562 Convocation of the clergy were seriously discussing banning 'all curious singing and playing of organs'¹⁵. English accounts of the splendour of worship in Elizabeth's Chapel Royal are often tinged with this sort of Puritan disapproval but more objective are descriptions by visiting foreign nobility and members of their entourages. Typical of these is the account of a service in St George's Chapel, Windsor, in 1592 when the Queen was in residence, given by the secretary to Frederick, Duke of Württemberg—a Lutheran prince, who attended worship with the Sovereign: 'In this church his highness listened for more than an hour to the beautiful music, the usual ceremonies and the English sermon. The music, and especially the organ, was exquisite. At times could be heard cornets, then flutes, then recorders, and other instruments. And there was a little boy who sang so sweetly . . . that it was really wonderful to listen to him. Their ceremonies indeed are very similar to those of the papists, with singing and so on.'¹⁶

The Duke will have been impressed by the experience no doubt, but the interest in this account, apart from its praise for the high musical standards set by the Chapel Royal, lies in its comment on the traditional ceremonial the writer witnessed. The Duchy of Württemberg had been Evangelical Lutheran since 1534 and Duke Frederick saw Elizabeth as an important Protestant ally within the axis of countries where the Reformed faith had taken hold. The traditional ceremonies of her court religion—'very similar to those of the papists'—will have been the cause of some surprise. Elizabeth's ecclesiastical policy may have seemed complicated and unsatisfactory to contemporaries—the Catholics

15 P le Huray, *Music and the Reformation in England, 1549-1660*, Cambridge, CUP, 1978, p.34.

16 W B Rye, ed. *England as seen by Foreigners in the days of Elizabeth and James I*, 1865. New York, B Bloom 1967.

lamented the reversal of Mary's policies, while the reformers were inclined to believe that the English Church was still papistical—but it was designed to be comprehensive, a vessel capable of holding as many people as possible. 'The difference between Catholics and Lutherans', the Queen told the Spanish ambassador, 'is of not much importance in substance.' Refusing to 'open windows into men's souls', she looked only for a Church settlement that would bring order and maintain unity. Caution on the international front also motivated her policy: whilst not wishing to lose the support of the Lutheran princes like Frederick of Württemberg, neither did she wish to antagonise the Catholic kings of southern Europe. The reformed Church of England was not just a Church for her people but had a significant foreign context.

The extent of her religious tolerance when it came to matters musical is best illustrated by the case of the greatest of all English sixteenth-century composers, William Byrd. As Organist and Master of the Choristers at Lincoln Cathedral from 1563, Byrd wrote vernacular liturgical music of high quality for the daily services, consciously demonstrating his mastery of the new forms by producing a couple of examples in each of its genres but then apparently losing interest. An increasingly Puritan chapter at Lincoln found little use for his approach to his duties and, indeed, suspended his salary for a time after accusing him of playing protracted organ pieces during services in a manner they found too 'popish.' Distaste for the vernacular liturgy and papistical improvisations were early indications of the stubborn Catholicism which was to be the defining feature of Byrd's subsequent life and work. Yet, in 1572 he was sworn in as a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal where he was described as joint organist with Tallis. Thus began two lengthy and close relationships for Byrd: one with the Queen and her Chapel Royal which saw and heard the composition and performance of his greatest, mid-period, works, and one with Tallis which became a deep friendship and a business partnership which lasted until Tallis's death in 1585.

As he stood godfather to one of Byrd's sons, Tallis's continuing allegiance to the Catholic faith seems likely even though he seems to have kept his head well below the parapet. Byrd's stubborn recusancy was well-known—his chief friends at court were all Catholics, Lord Paget, the Earls of Worcester, Oxford and Northumberland, some of them dangerous to know—yet in 1575 Elizabeth granted Byrd and Tallis a lucrative, twenty-one year patent for the printing and marketing of polyphonic works and manuscript paper. Yet, apart from his greatest essay in Anglican liturgical composition, the *Great Service*, which may date from the 1590s, Byrd expressed an almost polemical commitment to

the Catholic cause in his finest church work, the series of 50 motets composed between 1575 and 1591. While the texts of the Chapel Royal motets included by Byrd and Tallis in their 1575 collaboration, *Cantiones*, which they dedicated to the Queen, have a neutral doctrinal tone, recent scholarship sees a significant change of direction in the texts set by Byrd alone in the motets of the 1580s¹⁷. In these it seems that Byrd was deliberately interpreting biblical and liturgical texts in a contemporary context and almost using a code to communicate his support for the beleaguered Catholic community. All this apparent Catholic activism seems not to have dented his favour with the Queen who provided him with some sort of document of immunity from the financial penalties of recusancy and somewhat ironically commissioned him to set words of her own composition celebrating the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. The Latin church music of Tallis and Byrd fell sweetly on the ears of the Queen and its regular performance further set apart the worship of her Chapel from what was happening in the cathedrals and collegiate foundations of her realm where vernacular anthems were *de rigueur*.

The importance of the Chapel Royal in shaping one consistent element in the liturgical aesthetic of what we now call Anglicanism is a major discovery of recent scholarship¹⁸. Its preservation of much traditional ceremonial, music, furnishing and decoration after 1558 was, as we have heard, much remarked upon—with disapprobation—by Evangelical Protestants, those we call Puritans, but it was also noted with approval by the proponents of continuity for whom its worship was a source of inspiration. These men were to be of great significance. In the 1590s the identity of the Church of England came under new intellectual scrutiny from scholars like Richard Hooker and Lancelot Andrewes and some influential layfolk who had been at university with them or with those in their circle. This group, labelled *avant-garde conformists* by Peter Lake,¹⁹ saw the Church of England not primarily as a Protestant—in the sense of Evangelical—Church, but as offering a more authentic strain of Catholicism than the Church of Rome, a reformed, *via-media*, Catholicism based on their reading of the Fathers of the undivided Church. The Reformation, for them, was something that had happened in Continental Europe not in England and the more disturbing elements in English church life since the 1540s were the results of tiresome interference from busybody, foreign theologians.

17 J Kerman, *The Masses and Motets of William Byrd*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1981.

18 K Fincham and N Tyacke, *Altars Restored. The Changing Face of English Religious Worship, 1547 –c.1700*. OUP, Oxford, 2007.

19 P Lake, 'Lancelot Andrewes, John Buckeridge and *avant garde* conformity at the court of James I', in L L Peck (ed) *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, CUP, Cambridge, 1991.

Looking for continuity with rather than rupture from the Church they found through their Patristic reading, they deplored the professionalised vandalism of the Edward VI's reign and yearned to worship once more in the beauty of holiness.

Did this group appear out of nowhere? What was their inspiration? Significant must surely be a feature of the Elizabethan settlement unique among the Protestant Churches of Europe: the retention of the great medieval cathedrals, along with the five former monastic churches raised to cathedral status by Henry VIII and a small number of old collegiate foundations, as independent self-governing corporations without substantial alteration to their pre-Reformation life. Nowhere else could be found anything like the English cathedral with its daily round of liturgical worship, large numbers of clergy and elaborate music performed by an elite band of paid professionals, all set in a close or defined precinct, funded still by extensive landholdings and prebendal revenues, nothing of which appeared at the time to have anything to do with a Reformed Church. Here, alongside rich bishoprics and wealthy archdeaconries, was a pool of well-endowed benefices to be handed out at no cost by royal favour to the deserving or the thirsty for preferment. Here, parallel to the Chapel Royal and, I suggest, inspired by it, were independently funded foundations which, for some reason as yet to be adequately researched, considered it appropriate to maintain musical establishments of high quality to offer divine worship and sustain their devotional life. Those who worked in these environments could not regard a past that had left them such monuments with the same degree of distaste as many Puritan reformers. Performing daily the superlative liturgical music that flooded out from the composers of the Chapel Royal and was published by the Royal warrant holders, they could not regard beauty as an impediment to godly worship. Alongside the provincial cathedrals, Elizabeth's 'royal peculiar' of Westminster Abbey also acted as a metropolitan bastion of traditional music and ceremonial. It was surely this nursery—the Chapel Royal, cathedral and Westminster Abbey tradition—that produced the phenomenon of avant-garde conformism, the doctrinal position of a group which a generation later briefly dominated the Church of England, a group which we know as the 'Caroline Divines'.²⁰

Recent research has shown that the example of the Chapel Royal was regularly quoted by those who in the avant-garde conformist tradition were apologists for the 'High Church' campaigns of Archbishop William

20 See D MacCulloch, *Reformation, Europe's House Divided 1490 – 1700*, London, Penguin, 2003, pp. 502-512.

Laud in the 1630s.²¹ Crucially, the Chapel's traditional pattern of worship was preserved throughout the Civil War and then in exile with the Royal Family in the 1640s and 50s, so that at the Restoration in 1660 the Chapel could regain its exemplary status for the wider Church of England and its practices quoted to justify change and undergird liturgical revision. This exemplary role was extended once more to cathedrals under Charles I and again after the Restoration in 1660. Royal patronage of and interest in the cathedrals under both Charles I and Charles II helped answer Reformation questions about the role of such foundations in a Protestant polity. Bishops like Norwich-born John Cosin, who had been royal chaplains before and during the king's exile, building on the foundations laid in the reign of Elizabeth, were determined to make their cathedrals into 'mother churches' for their dioceses, performing ceremonial and choral worship according to The Book of Common Prayer within richly adorned settings.

So, inspired, I suggest, by the Chapel Royal of Elizabeth I, the survival of the cathedral tradition had profound significance for the future of Anglicanism by reinterpreting Cranmer's Book of Common Prayer for subsequent generations with a new emphasis on its potential for liturgical splendour and sacramental richness—something of which Cranmer himself would have heartily disapproved.

(The Reverend Canon Jeremy Haselock is a Chaplain to The Queen, and was formerly Precentor and Vice-Dean of Norwich Cathedral.

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21 Fincham and Tyacke, 2007, op cit.

Learning Again to Sing in a Foreign Land: The Book of Common Prayer and Domestic Piety

PHILIP TURNER AND EPHRAIM RADNER

‘How could we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land?’ (Ps. 137:4)
In the midst of the ongoing COVID-19 lockdowns, many Christians feel exiled from their own churches, as indeed they are physically. This is hardly a brutal banishment as in past times of persecution, earthquake, and war. The effects of the present Time of the Virus are destructive enough in other ways, to be sure. But church buildings stand, priests, ministers, and bishops are in place and they still send their messages abroad. Yet it is all as if from afar, with most Christians watching, from across their quieted streets or on the screens, the distanced silhouettes of their churches, now barred, wondering what to do. How shall sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land?

On the night of September 2, 1666, a fire engulfed and burned much of London to the ground. The next day, John Evelyn did what he always did: he joined his family in prayer together in their home. Only then, in wonderment and sorrow, did they go and watch from a distance as the city went up in a blaze, amazed and stricken as they saw barges of desperate people float down the Thames with what little they could salvage piled on their swaying vessels. In his now famous *Diary*, Evelyn weeps over what are the ‘ruins’ of a once great city:

The noise and cracking and thunder of the impetuous flames, the shrieking of women and children, the hurry of people, the fall of towers, houses, and churches, was like a hideous storm [...] It forcibly called to my mind that passage—‘*non enim hic habemus stabilem civitatem*’ [‘for here we have no continuing city...’ Heb 13:14]; the ruins resembling the picture of Troy. London was, but is no more!

There is much to ponder in events like these. Here, we would point only to the opening note of the day: Evelyn’s watching took place in the frame of his family’s gathering in prayer. Such family prayer was a common setting in those days. We find it in Pepys’ recounting of the great

London Plague of the year before, and in Daniel Defoe's own far more vital narrative of the same epidemic: in the midst of all these terrors, just as in the daily round of normal life, families prayed, day by day. They called it 'public prayer', in the sense that they used the Prayer Book or some other ordered form: parents, children, servants gathered in one room, often in the evening, but sometimes in the morning too, to read the office or some portion of it, recite the Psalms, hear the Scriptures, offer intercession, lift up before God the realm.

'Domestic prayer', we call it today, in a term wrongly tinged with our own contemporary sense of the home as someplace 'private' and silent to the world. In the seventeenth century, however, as in many eras other than our own, the home was, as the English liked to say, a 'little commonwealth,' and the family (in Chrysostom's phrase) a 'little church,' strong enough in spirit to carry nations on its shoulders, if not in this world, then in and into the next.

The onslaught of COVID-19 has shaken the peoples of the earth and their institutions. Just how strongly, we shall see; but the tremors are real enough. Everyone with an ounce of common sense is asking an age-old question. 'What then shall we do?' The initial answer of the churches has been to offer their members, through various forms of digital communication, comfort, practical advice, and the sharing of information and experience. These electronic forms of communication include phone-trees, live-streamed forms of worship (without the presence of congregations), podcasts and blogs of spiritual messaging, drive-through blessings and, in some cases, even drive-by pickup of consecrated hosts.

These responses are of differing value and appropriateness; and all are, without doubt, well-meant. Well-meant or not, however, the question they seek to answer is not the first to be asked. In the midst of plague the first question to which God directs our attention is not 'what shall we do' but what is *God* doing to and for us in the midst of this deadly pandemic?

We do not mean to suggest that God has sent COVID-19 to punish us (though the question is hardly out of bounds). We suggest only that God, in speaking to us in the midst of life's fragility, reminds us that none of our efforts to avoid the abyss—the dust of nothingness—from which we come and to which we return will in the end succeed. In the end, nations rise and fall and death will claim us all. 'Here, we have no continuing city.' What, then? 'We seek one to come.' And in this foreign land, in our seeking and our watching, we sing the songs that God has taught us.

What we 'do' emerges only from recognizing where God has placed us. In traditional language, in the midst of plagues God questions our lives

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and calls us to repent. That is, he calls us to turn away from foundations that can be shaken to one that cannot be moved. To rephrase this yet again, we can say that in the midst of plagues God calls us to worship him and renounce the worship of our false Gods—the ones that slumber and sleep and cannot help in time of need. In short, worship is at the center of this time, not as a means of comfort (though surely it is that), nor as an instrument of passage to a better time and economy (though it helps there too). We are here to sing the Lord's song, and nothing else.

That said, we take it as given that God's call to worship him in Spirit and Truth has been made particularly difficult by the virus that now ravages the nations of the world. This virus has rendered public worship an international threat to public health. We cannot gather to share bread and wine and in so doing 'show forth the Lord's death until he comes.' Arguments abound among us on this score. What is more, the virus that has visited us has brought to the full light of day the fact that the society that forms both our children and us no longer particularly cares about the silencing of our congregational voices. A 'foreign land' it surely is. But the Lord's song is already written in our books, awaiting our enunciation.

The Book of Common Prayer, our primary means of Christian formation as Anglicans, lies ready as a gift. Not all of its pages contain forms for corporate worship, but all of it is 'public' in the sense that Evelyn understood. Many of its pages, after all, provide forms of devotion well-suited for use in the home. The Book of Common Prayer is as much about what we can call Domestic Liturgy as it is about congregational worship. That is, it suggests a form of life shaped in the domestic space by daily reading of Scripture; prayers at morning, noon, and night; observance of the seasons of the Christian year; self-examination and prayer for others and ourselves.

Indeed, we contend that the Book of Common Prayer assumes that the formative power of public worship is inextricably linked to the sanctification of life as lived daily within domestic space. This truth has been steadily eroded in our era of digitalized passivity.

Protestant worship long thrived on household worship, and people like Evelyn were but ordinary practitioners of its virtue. In emphasizing household prayer, English Protestants in particular built on the Catholic domestic worship that was already in place in the sixteenth century. And by the seventeenth century especially, domestic prayer life was, arguably, central to almost all streams of especially British Christian life, and later early American Christian devotion, as the diaries of early British settlers on the Atlantic coast attest.

Protestants and Catholics, and often antagonistic Protestants among themselves, borrowed from each other's books and manuals, revising, collating, especially using forms of prayer that built upon a scriptural and personal devotion that was now shared among all members of the home. That was the point.

As recent work by historians like Fiona Counsell has shown, English theological luminaries like William Perkins, William Gouge, John Cosin, Vincent Taylor and John Tillotson were all involved in the dissemination of these practices, convinced as they were that the family was 'the seminarie of all other societies' (Perkins). By the late seventeenth century, female devotional writers had become leaders in encouraging household worship, and their quiet but often extensive influence fueled a long-standing movement in Christian literacy and prayer among all ages and where it most mattered, in the home.

These domestic liturgies, at least among members of the Church of England, were not forms of life independent of the Book of Common Prayer's corporate worship. They flowed from it and in turn supported the 'common' prayer of the gathered people. They were, in fact, an ongoing, visible, and sustaining aspect of what made common prayer 'common.' Already at the time of Thomas Cranmer's early reforming work, 'primers' were being published that contained forms of the offices in English for families to use.

But quickly the Book of Common Prayer as a whole inserted itself into the domestic sphere, along with supporting volumes of family prayer and ordered services. The oral culture that still permeated popular Christianity well into the nineteenth century both demanded and permitted 'common prayer' to be sowed and then flourish within the home.

In all this, if in a weakened manner, the Prayer Book framed a form of Christian life that mirrored aspects of devotion that provided Judaism its lifeblood, that is the coordination together of domestic and corporate worship. After the Jerusalem Temple's destruction in 70 A.D., as is well known, the 'sacrifice' of the Jewish people was formally shifted and embodied in the form of prayer and service centered in family and synagogue. This was not merely an adjustment to circumstance; it was viewed by sage and scribe alike as a faithful response to God's judgment and gracious mercy granted to Israel in her present vocation, a recognition of the 'times,' a spiritual sensitivity from which we might well learn today.

When the Psalmist asked 'How shall we sing the Lord's song in an alien land?' Diaspora Jews answered with the Domestic Liturgy, which

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maintained its vigor and integrity even when social threat closed off their access to the synagogue. Much as we are asked to do on the Lord's Day, they kept—and keep!—the Sabbath weekly in the home, joining children and adults together in the most profound celebration of God's gift of himself. As we are asked to do, they daily said the prayers and kept the feasts that mark God's faithfulness and kindness. As we are asked to do, they followed a way of life faithful to the covenant. They did these things each day and week within the walls of their homes and in all the lands of their dispersal.

By means of Domestic Liturgy they not only survived and kept hope alive, they also witnessed to the truth of God's unshakeable fidelity. It is instructive to hear the Jewish-Christian David Neuhaus¹ point us to this reality today, in the face of our often frantic and sometimes angry attempts to assert our Christian worship in the Time of the Virus, as if we were without the gifts needed for faithfulness in the face of travail.

It is a matter of encouragement that some congregations seem to have recognized these gifts. There are churches which are using our present moment to teach their people anew the practice of household prayer and the use of the Book of Common Prayer to order it. It is, to be sure, a mark of our churches' formational neglect that so many Christians require elementary teaching in this respect. But perhaps the demand for such renewal is part of the blessing of this time.

Yet if it is a gift, it is not an idle one. The Time of the Virus is a particular kind of plague, and its effects have exposed tremendous weaknesses at the root of our common life and witness. Our Jewish brethren—not least because of the Christian Church's astounding and unrelenting viciousness towards them—spent centuries drawing from the wells of domestic faith and worship, and thereby being transformed into a people of enduring hope within the world, marked by a spirit of *philanthropia* whose medical fruits, among many, have been on clear display in the present crisis. It is a story of both tragic and wondrous transfiguration. Our own churches, by contrast, seem only to be groping at the front end of such a process, whose corridors are likely to be long.

Still, we *are* in a foreign land, and to have our eyes opened to this reality is a blessing, not a curse. The category of 'diaspora' has, of late, been mostly applied to ethnic and immigrant groups, or, in Christian terms, to political sensibilities of resistance to the *status quo*. The Time of the Virus is making it clear that the demise of Christendom is now complete, and that 'diaspora' now applies to all of us. After all, 'our commonwealth is in heaven' (Phil. 3:20). This meant, for St. Paul, 'pressing ahead' toward the

1 David Neuhaus, 'Learning from Our Jewish Neighbours', *The Tablet*, 15 April 2020.

‘prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus’ (Phil. 3:14), a vocation for the ‘mature’ who had indeed learned to sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land. This is a time to learn to pray again, not for today only, but for the long journey ahead.

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Letter

From The Revd Dr Thomas Plant

I greatly enjoyed Simon McKie's article in the Trinity 2019 edition on the Doctrine of Holy Communion and was impressed by its thoroughness, erudition and decisive conclusions. There are two points which, I would submit, may benefit from further exposition.

First, the Black Rubric and the notion of 'physical presence.' Mr McKie rightly submits that we should draw doctrinal conclusions only from the 1662 edition of the Prayer Book and not from its predecessors; nonetheless, where one term from a previous edition has been deliberately replaced with another form of words, this surely affects our reading. In this case, the 1552 admonition against adoration of any 'real and essential' presence of Christ's natural flesh and blood is replaced in 1662 with the word 'corporal.' This implies that a doctrine of 'real and essential' presence is indeed permissible. It is in any case not necessarily adequate to conflate the term 'corporal' with 'physical.' That Christ's presence is real, if incorporeal, is indicated by the part of the same rubric exhorting the Priest immediately and reverently to consume consecrated elements in church (though I realise this could equally be read as a prophylactic against reservation and procession).

This leads me to my second query, about Article XXVII, where transubstantiation is rejected as overthrowing the nature of a Sacrament insofar as it indicates reception of the Body of Christ in anything other than 'an heavenly and spiritual manner.' However, this reading of transubstantiation, while common among both Protestant and Catholic thinkers of the time, has been proven misleading: the Aristotelian and properly Thomistic category of 'substance' is not a physical one, but metaphysical, and so in theological terms precisely 'spiritual' or 'heavenly.' If the supposed contradiction in the doctrine of transubstantiation is in fact a theological error, it would be perverse to insist on it as a point of doctrine.

Taking these points together, it seems well within the bounds of our formularies to admit not only of the reception but also the proper adoration of Christ's objectively real and essential, spiritual, heavenly and thus metaphysically substantial presence in the elements of Holy Communion. I trust that this interpretation is not at such great odds with Mr McKie's careful and learned legal reading.

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