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Editorial: Liturgy and 'Readability'

In a recent article in the *Church Times* Canon Geoff Bayliss gave a summary account of research he has been doing on the accessibility of Anglican liturgy.[1] Various 'readability formulas' were applied to liturgical texts, measuring features such as 'the familiarity of the vocabulary, the number of polysyllabic words (those with more than three syllables[2]), and the length of sentences'. The resulting calculation yields a reading age or level, using the classification of the National Literacy Strategy. Canon Bayliss's headline finding is that '43 per cent of adults living in England will find 50 per cent of the Church of England liturgies difficult to read'.

The example chosen to illustrate the testing method is the Collect for the Tenth Sunday after Trinity in three versions[3]—the first from *Common Worship*, the second from the collection of alternative collects published in 2004 and the third devised by the author for a reading age of eight ('Entry Level on the National Literacy Scale').

Let your merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of your humble servants; and that they may obtain their petitions make them to ask such things as shall please you, through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Lord of heaven and earth, as Jesus taught his disciples to be persistent in prayer, give us patience and courage never to lose hope, but always to bring our prayers before you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lord of heaven and earth, Jesus taught his followers to keep praying. Teach us never to lose hope, but always to bring our prayers before you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Canon Bayliss shows without difficulty that the *Common Worship* text (very close to the Prayer Book but with a longer doxology) is the most difficult, with a reading age of 21[4], while the 2004 version 'has an improved reading age of 18', but 'remains very challenging'. His own suggested reshaping of the 2004 text achieves the required reading age of 8.

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[1] Geoff Bayliss, 'Speaking More in the Language of the People', *Church Times*, 23/30 December 2016, p.16. The full research can be found at www.plainenglishliturgy.org.uk

[2] From what is said later in the article I think this should be 'three syllables or more'.

[3] 'Versions', used in the article, is not the right word, perhaps—the 2004 collect is a quite different prayer from that of *Common Worship* and the Prayer Book.

[4] It is worth noting that the research finds little to choose, in terms of difficulty, between *Common Worship* and the BCP.

One's first thought concerns the research itself. It has evidently not involved anyone, child or adult, actually reading the words; indeed the advantage of the tests is that they can be applied quite mechanically by the use of word and syllable counts. If taken literally this would produce strange results—a purely mechanical application would be unable, for example, to distinguish between a passage *deploying* difficult terms and a passage *explaining* them.

As to the example chosen—called in the article 'a good example'—others have already pointed out that the collects are normally read by licensed ministers, and that it is not unreasonable to expect these to have a high reading age and a trained ability to convey the meaning of the words. The criteria here ought to be 'speakability' and 'listenability' rather than 'readability'. With the latter in mind, one can imagine an experiment in which people of varying ages and abilities would be asked to listen to prayers in different styles and registers, and to express their preferences without any grounds for the preference, such as intelligibility or beauty, being specified in advance. Canon Bayliss's research, for all its good intentions, seems to me to suffer from the supposed target groups being kept resolutely off stage, which makes their supposed needs and tastes easier to manage. As T.S. Eliot says somewhere words can sometimes 'communicate before they are understood', and children may respond to a sense of mysterious invitation in what they hear read without being able to give an account of its meaning. And in any case understanding is not the same as 'readability'.

The 'readability' test seems even more misconceived if it is based on what a person with, say, a reading age of eight would be able to cope with on a *single encounter*. The essence of liturgy is repetition with variation, and its words must be such as to bear and reward constant use over time.

This is among the points made in an excellent response by Doug Chaplin[5], who comments that 'good liturgical language will become richer through repetition . . . This may demand it is not so transparent on first encounter as to be disposable'. He concludes his remarks with a poignant anecdote:

> I know a family whose youngest child has some learning difficulties that seemed particularly to affect her language skills. She struggled to join in with the simplest conversation verbally . . . In worship, she appeared to like to be there (for the parts of the service other children were present) but simply couldn't cope with some of the simpler

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[5] At www.dougchaplin.uk

> action songs other children enjoyed, even if she tried to join in.
>
> After a few months had passed, she suddenly started joining in verbally. What she joined in singing was the *Gloria in Excelsis* . . . the same words to the same tune every week had become the means of participation. They are not particularly readable words, and not the first remedy one might have suggested for a child with learning difficulties.
>
> But they reveal something about the power of respecting the basics of liturgy.

This is letting liturgy be liturgy, and ought to help allay that characteristic anxiety identified by Rowan Williams in the reflection printed in this issue—the 'troubling question at the back of the mind of the person leading worship: "Is this making sense?"'

Worship is central to the Christian life, but we shouldn't expect liturgy to do everything at once or to answer every question. It is most itself—and this has been true historically—when it forms a stable, only slowly-changing centre and accompaniment to the Christian life, which is itself ever changing, throwing up new challenges and opportunities, new changes and chances. The liturgy itself is hardly meant to be the focus of attention—it should, as it were, disappear through its very familiarity. One would almost like to say of it what is said of a character in one of Henry James's novels: 'I like your mother very much, because . . . because she doesn't expect one to like her. She doesn't care whether one does or not'.[6]

John Scrivener

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[6] *The Portrait of a Lady*, Chapter V.

‘Prevent Us O Lord’: Dwelling, Walking and Serving in the Book of Common Prayer

ROWAN WILLIAMS

The Book of Common Prayer is not a book for social programmes or mission initiatives, it’s not a manifesto and it’s not a rule book. And it’s quite important, in a slightly feverish and hyperactive world of liturgical revision, to be reminded that worship is not, of its essence, a matter of programmes or manifestoes. When we look at some of the prefatory material of the Book of Common Prayer, we find in the little essay ‘Of Ceremonies’ this very simple definition of what’s going on in public worship: ‘to declare and set forth Christ’s benefits unto us’. And in what I say this morning I’m going to be taking for granted two aspects of liturgy as understood in the Book of Common Prayer—that liturgy is, first of all, *giving God his due*; and secondly, *confirming for us where we stand*. And anything we might want to say about the consequences of worship in our Christian discipleship in general will arise out of these two things.

So worship declares what has happened because of Jesus Christ *in* us. Worship therefore declares the character of the relationships in which we stand—relationships to God, and to one another. It *declares* those relationships, it makes something manifest. Worship therefore isn’t something we do in order to manipulate the Divine Will, or even to arouse and reinforce the human will. Worship sets forth what is true. And that vision of worship, of course, accords very well with what the Articles have to say about the nature of good works. In reaction to late-Medieval culture, in which the performance of ceremonial duties was a meritorious work, the Articles of Religion, and most particularly Article XII, speak in just these terms of a declaration, a showing forth. Good works don’t change the mind of God, they do not cause our justification, or turn away God’s judgement, but ‘yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith; insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit’—which I think is not simply about how an individual may show that they are in a state of grace by the life they live, but how an individual may show what a state of grace *looks like*. And in what I say about some of the language and ideas of the Book of Common Prayer, that is going to be quite near the heart of the argument.

Good works are not there to gain us merit in the sight of God and persuade God to change his mind. Good works, worship included, manifest what God has already given and what God is continuously doing. Therefore good works, liturgical and otherwise, are works which represent our realising, our actualising, of the possibilities God has created for us. And that will immediately of course recall to your minds the resonant phrase at the end of the Order for Holy Communion: 'all such good works as thou hast prepared for us to walk in'.

Our good works manifest the 'benefits of Christ' in us—they aren't things *we* devise; they are simply our walking into and activating the possibilities prepared by God; divinely-ordained possibilities that we must now realise. If we fail in good works, it's not that we are failing to keep rules, or satisfy God in some way. We are failing to show what we are.

In that sense, in a broader theological context, we can say that we're failing in mission. Our manifesting of who we are, where we stand before God, our manifesting of the benefits of Christ in us, becomes in the theology of the Book of Common Prayer, very clearly, the act of God in us, therefore the manifestation of God in God's creation. What we say to God, what we enact in God's presence, and what we do in consequence of that act of worship, is all rolled up in that definition. We are allowing God to be God in God's world, so to speak.

Now that has some quite specific and clear tangible effects. What it means to manifest the life and act of God in our lives is not any generic kind of virtue, but very specifically a faithfulness to the quality of the new relationships which exist in the Body of Christ. And you'll recall that in the first Exhortation in the Order for Holy Communion, that is set out in very unambiguous terms indeed:

> And if ye shall perceive your offences to be such as are not only against God, but also against your neighbours; then ye shall reconcile yourselves unto them; being ready to make restitution and satisfaction, according to the uttermost of your powers, for all injuries and wrongs done by you to any other; and being likewise ready to forgive others that have offended you, as you would have forgiveness of your offences at God's hand; for otherwise the receiving of the holy Communion doth nothing else but increase your damnation.

So the manifestation of where we stand, Christ's benefits in us, requires us to change our relationships with others—requires us to be reconciled, requires us to restore other men's goods 'wrongfully withholden', to use again a phrase from the earliest version of the Exhortation in the Communion Service[1]. We're not simply being exhorted to be slightly nicer.

We are to *walk* in these good works. We are to proceed, to advance, to grow in grace—not in any sense that we accumulate further resources of individualised holiness but that our manifestation of the benefits of Christ becomes clearer and clearer. And that is our 'service' to God—to allow God's sovereign will and purpose and active grace to be visible in us.

The Book of Common Prayer, for all that we speak of its poetic quality, is in many ways a deeply prosaic book, a highly practical, focussed set of meditations on what it might be to be open to God's grace. Now I say that because this language of 'dwelling' and 'walking' and 'serving' is in its way a kind of translation into sixteenth- and seventeenth-century basic English of an older tradition—or idiom—in Christianity, that of participating in the divine nature: that's to say, so leading our human lives, with all our human faculties and intelligence and energy involved, that it's the intelligence and energy of God himself that appears in what we do; that we are sharing, in some crucial sense, in the act of God (language which was to return and to be used and developed again more fully by some of the early seventeenth-century Anglican divines).

But, as I say, the Book of Common Prayer is designedly a prosaic enterprise—what does it all boil down to, this highfalutin language of participation? It boils down to the willingness, day by day, week by week, to allow the benefits of Christ to be visible in our lives. All that we do therefore needs to be tested against that touchstone: as simple and as alarmingly difficult a matter as that. That is the spirituality of the Prayer Book, a spirituality deeply hostile to any kind of excessive interiority about our discipleship, which yet requires us to dig very deep into our confused and tangled hearts, so that the will of God may clearly be seen.

As I've already hinted there, the spirituality of the Prayer Book pivots around at least three concepts, three words, which echo in a diversity of ways through the Prayer Book—'dwelling', 'walking', 'serving'. We'll reflect on those words, and some of their implications, in turn.

To begin with 'dwelling'—two places where the use of that word most readily springs to mind I suppose would be in the Prayer of Humble Access and in the Collect for Ascension Day. To begin with the first of these: 'That we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us' (as the Prayer of Humble Access concludes). We come to Holy Communion in order that Christ may be at home in us, and we in him—which is deeply Johannine, and slightly uncharacteristic in a way of the language of the

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[1] 1549 version

Prayer Book, which, for all its wonderfully resourceful and imaginative use of the farewell discourses over the Easter period, rather seldom in its directly liturgical language refers to this mutual indwelling. But there, at a crucial moment in the service of Holy Communion, comes this affirmation of the significance of mutual indwelling. Christ has elected to make his home in us and we are to be at home in him.

And, with what is again a very slightly unusual spurt of bright colour, the Collect for Ascension day asks that 'we may also in heart and mind thither ascend, and with him continually dwell'—which I take to refer not simply to our aspirations for *post*-mortem dwelling in heaven, but for the dwelling here and now, in heart and mind, where Christ is—echoing of course the words of the fourth gospel, Christ's promise that where he is his servants will be also (John 12.26).

So, we are *now*, as sharers of the common life of the Church, dwelling where Christ, on our behalf, has gone. And if we look in the Articles, Article IV this time, we're told that Christ has gone into heaven, taking our entire humanity with him—he rose from the dead with all that belongs to our humanity and took it into heaven. And this dramatic evocation of how our humanity is raised, glorified and made to dwell in the heavenly places, though seldom expressed with that kind of explicitness in the Book of Common Prayer, reflects a very deep and continuing theme in the theology of the Church of England from the mid-sixteenth century onwards, reflected not least in the characteristic Anglican interest in the heavenly priesthood of Christ, but here underlined simply as a point which is material to every baptised believer.

So, our spiritual life is, first and foremost, about dwelling, about discovering where we stand so that, as I mentioned earlier, our public worship is a confirmation of where we stand— where we stand in relation to Christ, where we stand in Christ in relation to God the Father, and of course where we stand in relation to other members of the Christian society (back to the language of the first Exhortation, once again). Those relations—with Jesus Christ, with the Father of Jesus Christ and with one another— are given, already real, they are the benefits of Christ, manifest in us. And our task is not to *create* them out of nothing but to let them be, let them come alive and be visible in us.

And so it's appropriate that, again and again, our prayer turns into a prayer for discernment, asking for the liberty and clarity to see what we are, what God has opened for us, what God has made possible for us, and what we are now to make concrete. Several collects, familiar to all of you, return to this need for discernment, asking for things to be made clear for us

> O Lord, we beseech thee mercifully to receive the prayers of thy people which call upon thee, and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same, through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Epiphany 1)

And, perhaps a little surprisingly, the Easter Collect itself:

> Almighty God, who through thine only-begotten Son Jesus Christ hast overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life: we humbly beseech thee, that as by thy special grace preventing us thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect; through Jesus Christ our Lord..

And I needn't, I think, underline the fact that the collect for Whit Sunday is also about 'right judgement' and discernment—'evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour'—because we have been given what we asked for yet again, and that is true discernment, a right judgement, a sense of where we stand, and therefore of what lies open before us.

We are, in good patristic and medieval style, assimilated to Christ in this—to do what God has prepared for us to walk in, to reveal where we dwell, is indeed one form of witness to the manifestation of Jesus Christ. We turn again to the collects, this time the collect for the Sixth Sunday after Epiphany:

> O God, whose blessed Son was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil, and make us the sons of God and heirs of eternal life: Grant us, we beseech thee, that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves, even as he is pure; that, when he shall appear again with power and great glory, we may be made like unto him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, he liveth and reigneth, ever one God, world without end.

We are to be *like* Christ, eventually, and our likeness begins now, in our indwelling Christ and Christ indwelling us. And that indwelling requires us constantly to renew the prayer for discernment—let it be clear to us who we are, where we stand and what we are to do.

And so, in our relationship with Christ we are not simply imitators of a distant exemplar, we are animated embodiments of Christ's glorious liberty. The collect for Palm Sunday, asking that 'we may both follow the example of his patience, and also be made partakers of his resurrection'—that we are to be 'partakers of his resurrection' is clearly, again, to do with dwelling and indwelling

The whole of that theology is summed up in the wonderfully rich and resourceful Collect for the Sunday after Christmas Day—'Grant that we being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit'.

All that, then, is what I understand by 'dwelling'—'that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us', that we may 'continually dwell' where Christ is, and that therefore we share Christ's relation to the Father, we live in and through Christ's relation with all the members of Christ's body. And we need from God, specifically from God the Holy Spirit, that gift of right and keen judgement which allows us to know who we are and where we are.

'Dwelling', alone, sounds static, but as soon as it's understood in something of the sense I've just outlined, we see that in fact it is a moving process, hence the connection with 'walking'. That we 'walk' in God's ways is an idiom which comes back in quite a number of contexts:

> Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways...

invites us to make our confession; and in the post-Communion prayer, as we've already noted, God has prepared 'good works for us to walk in'. The language of walking is used, once again, in the Catechism and in the Baptism liturgy, and I want us particularly to focus on the end of The Baptism of Such as Are of Riper Years:

> And as for you, who have now by Baptism put on Christ, it is your part and duty also, being made the children of God and of the light by faith in Jesus Christ, to walk answerably to your Christian calling, and as becometh the children of light;

Dwelling and walking belong together: we journey unceasingly into what God has invited us to, and use our minds to discern, to judge, to discover, where we walk. We need God's grace to love what is commanded (Trinity 14), and we need the grace and the act of God to 'prevent and follow us' in that (Trinity 17). Once again, issues around discernment come into focus, and issues around walking, in the Easter Collect which I've already referred to, and also Trinity 9:

> Grant to us, Lord, we beseech thee, the spirit to think and do always such things as are rightful; that we, who cannot do anything that is good without thee, may by thee be enabled to live according to thy will;

To ‘think’ and to ‘do’, because if the Book of Common Prayer is a prosaic book, it’s also a thoughtful book, a book which assumes that we are essentially responsible, reflective beings. It is most emphatically a book for adult Christians. It assumes a lot, which is really quite a good thing for a Christian prayer book. It doesn’t answer every question. My point is simply that ‘walking’, which recurs in so many different contexts in the Prayer Book, expresses that active and developing manifestation of where we dwell. And in so walking before God, walking in the works he has prepared for us, living out, activating, the possibilities he has made for us—in that way, and only in that way can we be said to *serve* God. Released from our sins, we do indeed become God’s servants; not that we supply anything God needs by our effort, but simply that the effect of our release from sin and selfishness becomes service.

So in the formulae of absolution, in the second of the Good Friday collects, and in many other contexts, our released life becomes a service to God, in the sense that we are doing God’s will, and actualising God’s purpose. We are making God’s preventing work of grace, and God’s providence, clear in what we do—to serve him all the days of our life by that grace; not in the sense that we are necessary instruments of God’s purpose—quite the contrary, God’s purpose has already been formed and realised quite independently of us. But now we are instruments and signs of that purpose in the world, and that’s our service—making plain the benefits of Christ in us, where we stand before God and in relation to one another. God’s work, God’s providence, once and for all clear in the world.

‘Dwelling’, ‘walking’ and ‘serving’: three words which are pervasive, as we’ve seen, in a number of different contexts in the Book of Common Prayer and which are interwoven closely with one another in that sense of manifesting who and what we are by grace. And so the worship of the Book of Common Prayer is emphatically an act of proclamation, and the life which arises from it is, again, an act of proclamation – in that sense, of course, therefore, an act of mission. But it is mission in a very Augustinian or even Calvinist sense; and there’s no point in ignoring the theological hinterland of this. Mission, in this context, is not a human enterprise, designed to share a few interesting religious ideas. Mission is God’s action of showing grace, declaring judgement, inviting sinners to repentance. That’s what our worship does. There’s no exhortation here to go out and convert anybody. The only references to conversion come in that ever so slightly ungracious section in the 1662 Preface where we’re told that an order for adult baptism has been added to the earlier text because unfortunately there is now a great increase in the number of

Anabaptists around, and some of them may see sense and be baptised—oh, and also it may serve 'for the baptising of Natives in our plantations'. It's *slightly* ungracious—there's not very much there on which to ground a twenty-first century theology of mission, you might say. Yet what I've been arguing is that within the heart of the Book of Common Prayer there is indeed a theology which we might call appropriately 'missional', in that rather austere Reformed sense of allowing sanctified lives to speak of God, a plain obligation to inhabit the place into which we have been brought by Christ, to dwell, to *dwell*, where Christ is, partaking *now* in the resurrection, dwelling in the heavenly places, sharing Christ's intimacy with the Father, and, by so doing, articulately and explicitly declaring to the world what are the benefits of Christ.

Any theology which has its roots, in one way or another, in the idea of Christendom, is going to be a theology very different from one that might be developed for a post-Christendom environment. We, living in such a post-Christendom environment, will always be tempted to look to a text like the Book of Common Prayer for some kinds of orientation and exhortation about going out and making a difference. That's not where the Prayer Book begins. If we're going to understand how the language of worship in the Prayer Book works it is, as I've argued, by seeing with greater clarity what mission, then and now, is in its essentials, which is *God being God in the world*. Our worship is at least as significant as anything else we may do in manifesting God, making manifest what it is to live the resurrection, to be partakers of Christ's resurrection.

To reflect in this way on the language of 'preventing', the language of going where God has gone, in the Book of Common Prayer does allow us to put some significant and, I would argue, constructive questions to some of our contemporary approaches to mission and to worship And perhaps the most important of these is the perspective which never allows us simply to *instrumentalise* worship. The act of public worship, the act of liturgy, is not there in order to make a point, win an argument, or persuade an outsider. And yet, when it is performed with the integrity that the book assumes, so that it really is a manifestation of where we dwell, its effect will be to move beyond our assumed borders to speak to strangers. To functionalise worship, to say that we must constantly so adjust our worship as to allow it to make points and win arguments, is to miss something profound and necessary about our act of worship—that twofold function with which I began: giving God what is God's due, and confirming to us where we stand.

Worship first and foremost must be what it is, and must do what it does; it must honour God, and it must affirm who we are in Christ, must affirm our dwelling, our walking, our serving. And to show the world where we truly dwell, and who dwells in us, is where mission begins. The God who 'prevents' us by grace, who goes before us, is a God who assures us that the task of mission is not a human project which might succeed or fail, but the human share in the divine act, far beyond our own individual or corporate resource.

In that sense, of course, the Book of Common Prayer belongs entirely, firmly and explicitly within a Reformed Christian perspective, but at the same time is entirely in accord with what a great many medievals, West and East, said on the nature of worship. It's a rather eccentrically post-Enlightenment development that we should suddenly think that worship needs to win arguments or make points. I'd venture to guess that I'm not the only person in this room who has sat or knelt through various events of worship that seemed very much designed to win arguments or make points

The challenge then put before us is how our Christian worship may return to that centre of honouring God, and confirming who we are; how worship can express more and more effectively and powerfully our mutual indwelling, prayed for in the Prayer of Humble Access. Examples could be multiplied in texts from the Prayer Book, and I've given you this morning simply what I hope is a representative selection of the kinds of words and phrases which bring us back to those fundamental concepts of our worship.

But I believe that perhaps the most important thing which this says to us is to do with themes touched on earlier this morning. It is easy for worship in the modern Church to become hectic and worried—hectic, in the sense that it seems constantly to want to fill in gaps and silences, and to do all the work that could possibly be done in interpreting . It's the kind of worship where the worship leader may constantly want to interrupt the flow of the liturgy to explain what is happening. And that is why I say that it is not only hectic, but worried. 'Is this making sense?' becomes a troubling question at the back of the mind of the person leading worship. 'Is this making sense? Are we winning the arguments? Are we getting our points across?' And that can lead to more and more feverish elaboration of what we want to say. Like others, I admire greatly some of the forms of modern liturgy that have developed in the last ten or fifteen years. And yet, again along with others, I sense an apologetic (and I mean that in the colloquial sense), an apologetic wordiness, a worrying about whether we have yet said enough. 'Have we made it clear enough? Will all those who haven't followed please put their hands up?'

One of the things I had to do quite often in a former job of mine was to ordain bishops, and while the order for episcopal ordination in

Common Worship has many virtues, one of the virtues it does not possess is economy. I would find myself saying for the third or fourth time what bishops are supposed to be and to do. And I felt not that this was a joyful and celebratory overflow of theological understanding, but an anxiety about whether we had made it clear enough. 'Just in case, let me tell you yet again what the office and work of a bishop is'. It's one example in which, for me, this feature of contemporary liturgy came home; I dare say most of us could come up with others. I sense too in some of the baptism rites that anxiety about whether we have yet made it clear enough.

To turn from that to the Book of Common Prayer is to turn to an idiom of worship where that kind of worry does not feature very much—'If this is not clear, come back next Sunday. If this is not clear: Walk on! Walk on!'; because a manifestation of where you dwell in Christ is a lifetime's work, and therefore not something to be explained in any one event of worship, however charged, however rich. And it is in that *continual* affirmation of where we dwell, that the true educative and heart-enlarging role of liturgy finally comes in.

How we discover that— in the midst of a religious and indeed a secular culture often so preoccupied with making things plain, and being sure we've got the message across—I don't entirely know. But I'm very glad that we have as part of our liturgical repertory in the Church of England a book which treats so much of that anxiety with disdain, and which draws us back inexorably to those two fundamentals—of honouring God as God should be honoured, and articulating where indeed we are in relation to God. And which also takes us back, inexorably, gently and firmly, to the Johannine vision of a redeemed and restored humanity, indwelt by Christ and dwelling with him in the heavenly places; and because of that, doing 'all such good works as [he] has prepared for us to walk in'.

(The Most Revd and Right Hon. Lord Williams of Oystermouth is Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge and was formerly Archbishop of Canterbury. His most recent book is The Tragic Imagination, *published by Oxford University Press. This article is an edited transcript of an address to the Prayer Book Society Conference 2016.)*

The Evangelistic Strategy of the Book of Common Prayer

LEE GATISS

It may not be the case for members of the Prayer Book Society, but many people find liturgiology a little bit boring: the endless comparisons between different editions of the Prayer Book, weighed against the modern versions in the ASB and *Common Worship*, addressing the minutiae of phraseology and seemingly nit-picking objections to rubrics. Just finding one's way around the different books and knowing where we are in the liturgical calendar can be somewhat taxing, not to mention the lectionaries, the method for calculating the date of Easter, the moveable feasts, and the instructions telling you what to do with your hands, when to kneel, and so on.

I am aware that all this brings a delicious thrill to the spine for some people, but for others it can be a little dull. Liturgy is lifeless. It is a dead letter, and they want the dynamism of worship in a different and more modern style, unencumbered by the rigid moulds and forms of a bygone era. These people may appreciate some aspects of the BCP—its doctrine, its magnificent language—but it does not particularly warm their hearts or guide the ways they think about church on a Sunday.

There are many things we can all appreciate about the Book of Common Prayer, which should unite Anglicans of various different stripes and backgrounds. I want to talk here about the BCP as an evangelistic tool. That, I think, is its real heartbeat. The Book of Common Prayer is evangelism. This fantastic piece of precise liturgical genius was a key part of the Protestant Reformers' evangelistic strategy to reach the nation for Christ. Its intent was to proclaim to the people of England what the Queen's Coronation oath calls, "the true profession of the gospel... the Protestant Reformed religion", which evangelicals such as me so dearly love.[1]

So let us examine this idea that the Book of Common Prayer was at least partly a tool for mission. Though let me say up front: it wasn't *just* about evangelism. The BCP is a prayer book, a service book, a book to aid us in our worship of the one true and living God. It is, as Brian Cummings reminds us, 'a book to live, love, and die to'—for baptisms, weddings, and funerals.[2] It is a book designed to fill us with awe and reverence as we participate in its rituals and regularities, rather than an evangelistic tract to be read out to a congregation every Sunday.

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[1] See Lee Gatiss, *The True Profession of the Gospel: Augustus Toplady and Reclaiming our Reformed Foundations* (London: Latimer Trust, 2010).

[2] Brian Cummings, *The Book of Common Prayer: The Texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662* (Oxford: OUP, 2011), p. xii.

But still, the Prayer Book has a mission edge. It is carefully put together to teach the gospel, and to reach people's hearts with the message of salvation. Its much praised eloquence is all in the service of an impassioned plea to trust, obey, and please the Lord Jesus who died for his family, the Church.[3] So this is not a stuffy old book for stuffy old people. What we are considering here is classic, confessional Anglican evangelism, which Anglicans of all stripes can cherish and be inspired by.

I want to unpack this idea of the evangelistic Prayer Book by looking at what the BCP teaches us in three particular areas. What does it communicate about the Bible? What does it say about the cross and salvation? And how does it encourage us to live as believers? After thinking about its approach to the Bible, the cross, and Christian living, we will finish by considering how the Prayer Book, even after 350 years, could still be useful for *our* evangelism today.

The Prayer Book and the Bible

Let's start with what the Prayer Book communicates to its users about the Bible.

To start with, let us remember that there is actual doctrinal content in the Prayer Book. The Thirty-nine Articles were deliberately bound up together with the orders of service in the BCP, so that people could see the doctrinal basis and confessional statement of the national church. I think this is one way in which *Common Worship* has let us down. The Articles of Religion are strikingly absent from the books which make up *Common Worship*—and the excuse cannot be given that there is insufficient space!

What do the Articles and the rest of the Prayer Book say about the Bible? Two or three years ago I remember watching a televised debate on TV about some contentious issues within the church. It doesn't matter what they were. A bishop was on (it doesn't matter which one) and as part of his contribution he signalled that what Scripture says cannot be taken as the word of God. During the debate, a Lay representative on General Synod (a member of my church at the time) had quoted a passage of Scripture which directly addressed the issue being discussed. Yet the Bishop refused to countenance this, saying instead that, 'For Christians "the word of God" is the life of Jesus. The Bible is the product of those who sought to understand the life of Jesus.' It was a subtle and clever way to avoid the clear teaching of the verses that had been quoted, what the Puritans might have called an evasive tergiversation. The Bishop thus drove a wedge between Christ and his word, as many others have also done of course. It should be pointed out clearly and immediately that this is not the official teaching of the Church of England, which everywhere acknowledges that the Bible is the word of God. It is to be treated and obeyed as such, whether the human author of any particular passage is Moses, Peter, or Paul. Since that is in much doubt today, particularly on the big issues in church life, this truth perhaps requires a short demonstration.

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[3] See the first collect for Good Friday where Christ is said to have died for 'this thy family'.

Our formularies are emphatic that God is the author of Scripture and that the Bible—not just Christ—is his word. This could be illustrated from text after text after text, but a few examples from various portions of our official formularies like the Prayer Book ought to suffice to prove the point. The Canons of the Church of England, our legal code, state that 'The doctrine of the Church of England' whilst being 'grounded in the Holy Scriptures' is 'to be found in the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, the Book of Common Prayer, and the Ordinal' (Canon A5). Hence I have chosen texts from each of these documents to show what official Anglican teaching is.

The Canons themselves refer to the Bible as 'God's Word' in Canons A2, A3, A4, and A6. They speak of things being 'not repugnant to the Word of God', and in Canon A5 of things being 'agreeable to the said Scriptures.'

Article 20 of The Thirty-nine Articles refers to the Bible as 'God's Word Written.' The preface 'Concerning the Service of the Church' in the Book of Common Prayer speaks of 'the very pure Word of God, the Holy Scriptures', and ministers are encouraged to read and meditate upon 'God's word' (which clearly cannot refer here to Christ, since he cannot be 'read'!). The order for the Visitation of the Sick in the BCP contains these words—'God, who hast written thy holy Word for our learning.' The Bible is God's holy word *written*. That view is written in to BCP services. Such language is also found in several Collects (see those for Advent 2, St. Peter's Day, and St. Andrew's Day for example).

In the BCP Communion Service we pray, 'We are taught by thy holy Word, that the hearts of Kings are in thy rule' (cf. Proverbs 21:1). We affirm that it is God 'who by thy holy Apostle hast taught us to make prayers… for all men' (1 Timothy 2). Thus the Bible is seen as God's Word, through which he teaches us, even now, though the human authorship of the Scripture is also acknowledged. The Litany prays that God will 'illuminate all Bishops, priests, and deacons, with true knowledge and understanding of thy Word; and that both by their preaching and living they may set it forth.' (Note: 'set it forth' rather than 'set *him* forth' which is what one would expect if it was Christ being spoken of as the Word, rather than the Bible.)

In the Ordinal we pray, 'that we may have grace to hear and receive what they [the newly ordained presbyters] shall deliver out of *thy most holy Word*, or agreeable to the same, as the means of our salvation' while they are exhorted to 'drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to *God's Word*.' We might wish that this were indeed happening more frequently!

Finally, in the appropriately titled, 'An Information for them which take offence at certain places of the Holy Scripture' in The Homilies of the Church of England (official documents referred to in Article 35) we read that the Scriptures were 'written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost' and are 'the Word of the living God', and 'his infallible Word.'[4] There is even a case to be made for an authentically Anglican doctrine not only of infallibility but even of the inerrancy of the Bible.[5]

Thomas Cranmer, the prime architect of our Reformation, revered scripture as 'God's own words.'[6] We might also of course quote Richard Hooker, who was equally clear that the Bible itself is the word of God.[7] But even further back, St. Augustine stated that what the Bible says, God says,[8] thus indicating that this is in fact the historic, classic, orthodox Christian position to take on Scripture. It has its origins in Scripture itself of course, e.g. Hebrews 1:1 'God spoke… through the Prophets', and 2 Timothy 3:16 'All Scripture is God-breathed'. Ultimately, as Christians (disciples of Christ) we acknowledge the Bible as our authority simply because that is what Christ himself did. The definitive answer in debate for him was always 'Have you not *read* what *God said?*' (e.g. Matthew 22:31, see also 12:3, 5; 19:4).[9]

So then, when Scripture is read out in our meetings we, as committed Anglicans, need have no qualms of theological conscience as we liturgically affirm 'This is the Word of the Lord.' It is only the agenda of certain theologians and lobbyists which has caused some Anglicans to doubt or deny this. Although those supposedly 'modernising' impulses have sadly gained ground in recent years, loyal members of the Church of England who know the 1662 Prayer Book should not lose confidence in the Bible as the very word of our living God.

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[4] John Jewel, *The Second Tome of Homilies* (London, 1571), pp. 294-315.

[5] See Lee Gatiss, 'The Unerring Word of God' in *The Gospel Magazine* (September-October 2010), pp. 152-154 and *The True Profession of the Gospel*, p. 56. Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity:Volume* 2. *Book V* (translated by Arthur Stephen McGrade; Oxford: OUP, 2013), pp. 13, (V.i.4) speaks of 'true and infallible principles delivered unto us in the word of God as the axioms of our religion.'

[6] Thomas Cranmer, *Works* (edited by J. E. Cox; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1844-1846), volume 2, p. 106 (lxxi).

[7] e.g. Hooker, *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity:Volume* 2. *Book V*, p. 56 (V.xxi.2) and p. 66 (V.xxii.10) where he says, 'Wherefore when we read or recite the scripture, we then deliver to the people *properly* the word of God.'

[8] *Confessions*, xiii.29.

[9] See Lee Gatiss, 'Biblical Authority in Recent Evangelical Books' in *Churchman* 120.4 (2006), pp. 321-335.

So that is the message which comes across propositionally in the Book of Common Prayer and elsewhere in our formularies. The Bible is the unerring word of God himself. It is the source and summit of authority in the Church of England according to 1662, a revelation from Almighty God himself that is worthy of our careful and special attention. As John Stott said, 'Scripture is the sceptre by which King Jesus reigns.'[10]

Is this relevant for mission? Well, we should acknowledge that the Prayer Book was written in different times. In those days people were perhaps more likely to be asking 'How can I know God and be saved?' than they are today. And the Prayer Book directs them to the Bible as the place to find the answer. Today, the question people on the streets are more likely asking is, 'Is there really a God, and how can I know?' But again, the Prayer Book is pointing them to the source of the answer. It claims time and time again that the Bible is a word from God. Is there a God? Yes, he is there and he has spoken. How can I know? Because we have that word, and you can see and read it for yourself. As Jim Packer put it, 'God's purpose in revelation is to *make friends* with us', and we have that revelation in his word.[11]

Now, some people tend to learn things propositionally like that. They can look through the book or hear it each week and pick out specific propositions to take away. Others, as we know, will learn things more by osmosis. So what do we pick up about the Bible by osmosis, so to speak, from the 1662 Prayer Book?

The Prayer Book prescribed a healthy and robust diet of Bible reading and preaching for every church. Again, as Packer rightly says, 'The Anglicanism of the 1662 Prayer Book, with its hundred-verses-a-day lectionary, its monthly passage through the Psalter, its Bible-crammed daily services, and its high valuation of expository preaching (witness the ordinal, the collects for Advent III and St Peter's day), is a Bible-reading, Bible-loving, Bible-believing faith.'[12] If one follows all the set readings laid down in the BCP, one gets through the Bible at a fairly rapid pace. This exceeds the expectations of every other church, whether in Rome, Wittenberg, or Geneva. So during the Reformation, the English church became the Bible-hearing church *par excellence*.

Moreover, let us not forget, this is all happening *in English*. What a revolution that was, to have the word of God in the language people understood. And of course, the BCP is also in a language people understood. It wasn't necessarily the language of the street or the farm. It was not meant to be. But it was English, and it was intended to communicate something. Many modern liturgies are actually founded on the principle of 'studied ambiguity'[13]—they deliberately obfuscate in order to gloss over doctrinal issues, piling up high sounding rhetoric without actually saying *anything* coherent or intelligible, often quite deliberately to create a sense of confusion and so-called 'mystery.'

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[10] John Stott, *Evangelical Truth: A Personal Plea for Unity* (Leicester: IVP, 1999), p. 67. The image of scripture as Christ's 'sceptre' may originate with John Calvin, e.g. *Institutes* 3.20.42; 4.2.4.

[11] J. I. Packer, *God Has Spoken* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1993), p. 50. As Packer also says (p. 52), to say that divine revelation is non-propositional is actually to de-personalize it; modern theology too often gives us 'a Lover-God who makes no declarations!'

[12] Packer, *God Has Spoken*, pp. 119-120. Sadly, he goes on 'Today, however, Anglicans devote their zeal to maintaining a state of doctrinal laxity rather than a confession of biblical truth.'

But the BCP is saying, we can know God. We English-speaking people can hear his word and grasp it. We can respond in kind, in English, and be heard. So while it retains a sense of dignity, and does not forget God's transcendent holiness, the BCP communicates to those taking part in its services that God is near to each one of us. And it urges us to call upon him, while he is near, from our hearts, in our own language.

Salvation

So that's my first point, on the Bible as God's word written. The next thing I want to look at is what the Prayer Book teaches us about salvation. Remember, I am saying that the BCP was designed to be an evangelistic tool, part of a strategy to convert England to the biblical, Reformed faith. It is not just a grand liturgical monument. So what does it say about salvation?

The Reformers Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer all died as martyrs because they refused to submit to the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Mass. So-called transubstantiation, the changing of the substance of the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper into the body and blood of Christ himself was the great dividing issue. Our Reformers refused to believe this, teach this, or to countenance the superstitious practices that had grown up around it, because they did not find such doctrine in the scriptures.[14] And in every case, it was this very thing which led to their execution. They literally went to the stake and were burned for their view of the Lord's Supper.

But they were not ritualists. They were not merely concerned with the ceremonial niceties of the Lord's Supper. What concerned them was the wrong view of Christ and salvation which was put forward by the Roman rite and by various superstitious practices. They were teaching people error, leading them astray, away from salvation. But what did they put in the place of the Mass? What was it that they taught us Anglicans to pray and to remember as we gather around the Lord's table?

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[13] For 'studied ambiguity' in liturgical use see *An Order for Holy Communion* (London: SPCK, 1966), p. viii; R. T. Beckwith & J. E. Tiller (eds), *The Service of Holy Communion and its Revision* (Abingdon: Marcham Manor Press, 1972. Latimer Monograph III), p. 28; and R. C. D. Jasper & Paul E. Bradshaw, *A Companion to the Alternative Service Book* (London: SPCK, 1986), p. 172.

[14] During the Reformation, both Henrician and Edwardian Injunctions also fulminated against 'works devised by men's fantasies, besides Scripture, [such] as wandering to pilgrimages, offering of money, candles, or tapers to relics or images, or kissing and licking of the same, praying upon beads, or such like superstition… for that they be things tending to idolatry and superstition.' See Gerald Bray, *Documents of the English Reformation* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 1994), p. 248 (cf. p. 176, 181, 255).

They taught us in the English prayer book that the Supper is a divine instrument of assurance. We confess our sins to God—our manifold sins and wickedness. We are miserable offenders, pitiable. We are unworthy sinners. Our biggest and most pressing problem is not psychological or economic. Our problem is that God is angry with our sin and we need to be forgiven for it. So as Article 2 puts it, Christ came to reconcile the Father to us. And in the Communion service we are assured by the words of scripture itself that 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners' (1 Timothy 1:15) and that 'he is the propitiation for our sins' (1 John 2:2). We come to the table, not 'trusting in our own righteousness, but in [God's] manifold and great mercies.'

So then we come with nothing in our hands to receive God's mercy. This is not the medieval idea of *Facientibus quod in se est Deus non denegat Gratiam*—'God will not deny grace to those who do what is in them.'[15] God helps those who help themselves and do a little for God. No. In our Prayer Book, salvation is all about God doing something, not us. The movement of the action in this liturgy is from God to us: God in his grace reaching down to us in our sinfulness. We simply take and eat in remembrance of what he has done.

So the whole service is a divine instrument of assurance. Its intention is to show us that although we are more wicked than we ever thought, we are also more loved by a merciful God than we ever dreamed. The result is that pastorally speaking our consciences are assured of God's love towards us even when we've been most searingly honest about our shortcomings and failures. 1662 directs us to the one place where forgiveness and peace can be found—in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. We praise God, 'that by the merits and death of thy son Jesus Christ, and through faith in his blood, we and all thy whole Church may obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of his Passion.'

There are other ways of arranging a communion service, and other ways of phrasing the prayers to give a different message altogether. We could give the impression that something magical happens at a particular moment in the service and that we can appropriate that magic somehow. We could give the impression to God that we are doing something for him, offering him something, going through a ritual for his benefit. But that would be to turn the Lord's Supper into a duty, another work we're meant to do; whereas Cranmer was concerned to make the BCP preach the gospel of grace from beginning to end.

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[15] Heiko Augustinus Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism* (Durham, NC.: Labyrinth Press, 1983), pp. 132-134 and his '*Facientibus quod in se est Deus non denegat Gratiam*: Robert Holcot, O.P. and the Beginnings of Luther's Theology' in *The Harvard Theological Review*, 55.4 (October 1962), pp. 317-342.

Cranmer makes it very clear that what is going on at the Lord's table is not a sacrifice on an altar made by a mediating priest on behalf of the people which has to be repeated again and again each week to be effective. That was the message you got from the Mass. In the Mass, something is offered to God. According to the Council of Trent (which authoritatively declared the Roman view), the Mass is 'truly propitiatory', for 'appeased by this sacrifice, the Lord grants the grace and gift of penitence and pardons the gravest crimes and sins.' Indeed, anyone who thinks a true and real propitiatory sacrifice is not offered to God in the Mass is anathematised by the Tridentine Canons.[16] Instead, what Cranmer has ministers say, as they lead the Anglican service, is that Christ's once-and-for-all sacrifice on the cross on our behalf was utterly, completely, and totally sufficient to pay for all our sins. No additional sacrifice, no other manner of offering, is necessary.[17]

So listen to the opening of the prayer of consecration, and the repeated emphasis here:

> Almighty God, our heavenly father, which of thy tender mercy didst give thine only son Jesus Christ, to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption, who made *there* [not here on the table!] (by his *one* oblation of himself *once* offered) a *full, perfect* and *sufficient sacrifice, oblation*, and *satisfaction*, for the sins of the whole world, and did institute, and in his holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual *memory* of that his precious death, until his coming again.

Cranmer does like to bang home his point doesn't he?So there is no sense in which what is happening at the *table* is a sacrifice. All the language of us making a sacrifice is kept until after we've eaten. Only then do we pray that God would accept, to use the language of Hebrews 13, a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. So after we've fed on Christ in our hearts by faith, we offer and present to God not the bread and wine but ourselves, to use the language of Romans 12, as a holy and lively (or living) sacrifice.

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[16] See *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, translated and edited by H. J. Schroeder (Rockford, Ill.: Tan Books, 1978), pp. 149, 149 (22nd Session; 17th September 1562, chapters 2 and 9). See also *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1999), pp. 304-307 (§1350, §1357, §1365).

[17] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, p. 307 (§1367) claims that 'The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are *one single sacrifice*' (emphasis original), but that 'only the manner of offering is different.' He who offered himself in a bloody manner is now supposedly offered in an unbloody manner by others.

So in our official and beloved liturgy we have assurance of sins forgiven through faith alone in the work of Christ alone, which is utterly sufficient for all. To a people brought up on medieval Catholicism, this was a powerful and very deliberate proclamation of the biblical gospel of grace alone.

Nowadays, I have to say, many of our communion liturgies try to do too much. They are so packed out with different themes and a profusion of perspectives (in order to accommodate the variety of theologies now permitted in the Church) that they don't have a simple and clear message. It's almost the case that sometimes they don't rivet our attention on the cross *at all*. Worshippers can be left at best confused and bewildered, or at worst deeply in error, about the supper and the gospel it is meant to proclaim. Outsiders have no idea what's going on and draw all kinds of strange and inappropriate conclusions, not just from the words of our liturgies but from the choreography and costumes and stage-props too.

The language of sacrifice is often moved from where Cranmer put it, *after* we have eaten and drunk, to *before*—which can give a totally different impression of what is going on.[18] And the collection is now presented immediately before the eucharistic prayer, so that as Andrew Atherstone has put it, 'Before gathering around the Lord's Table to be reminded of God's grace, we are first asked to open our wallets!'[19] The Communion service in the BCP is, however, a terrific evangelistic tool. In enables believers to focus on Christ and his work on our behalf to 'redeem our souls from the jaws of death' and reconcile the Father to us.[20]

Modern people, of course, often seem to think that God would be fortunate to have their worship and service. He should be pleased that they so graciously deign to cross the threshold of the church every few weeks. He needs the business, doesn't he? They might perhaps consider going to him for some comfort or inspiration—or to track down a Pokémon character—or if there's no sport on TV or parties for the kids. But it often seems never to cross their minds that they *need* the forgiveness for which Christ shed his blood, or that it could be theirs by faith alone.

The BCP service reminds us, even if they never hear it, that we are all sinners in need of salvation, which Christ alone can offer. We are in danger of forgetting that message, if we obscure it with medieval and

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[18] See for example Prayer A in *Common Worship* which includes the line 'Accept through him, our great high priest, this our sacrifice of thanks and praise, and as we eat and drink these holy gifts…' which takes the sacrificial offering language from where Cranmer had placed it (after the eating and drinking, as part of the thanksgiving after receiving) and strongly associates it instead with what is happening on the table at that point in the service. *Common Worship* (London: Church House Publishing, 2000), p. 187. Cf. Prayer C (p. 193) which does the same.

[19] Andrew Atherstone, 'The Lord's Supper and the Gospel of Salvation' in Lee Gatiss (ed.), *Feed My Sheep: The Anglican Ministry of Word and Sacrament* (London: Lost Coin, 2016), pp. 82-83.

[20] See the Thanksgiving for Deliverance from Plague, and Article 2, in the BCP.

Roman innovations—or if we rush through our communion services just for the sake of it once a quarter or so—without remembering what Cranmer passed on to Anglicans like us, sealed with his own blood.

The Christian Life

So we've looked at what the BCP tells us about the Bible, a revealed and written word from the speaking, living God. And we've looked at what it communicates to us about the depths of our sin and salvation *sola fide*. As one of the collects put it, 'we put not our trust in any thing that we do.'[21] Now, more briefly, let us look at what it says about the Christian life, because the *evangel* itself is also a call to discipleship.

Again, the Christian life is a life dependent on God's grace, according to the BCP. I think we see that very clearly in some of the collects, for example. So the collect for Trinity 19 says, 'O God, forasmuch as without thee we are not able to please thee; mercifully grant, that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.' Note the Augustinian, Reformed emphasis on being unable to please God without God's own help. Romans 8 teaches us that of course—verse 8 'Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.' Or Philippians 2, God works in us 'to will and to work for his good pleasure.' Or Hebrews 13, he must work in us 'that which is pleasing in his sight.' But it is also there in the Articles: 'we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God without the grace of Christ preventing us [going before us], that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will' (Article 10).

Original sin remains even in those who are regenerate according to Article 9, and according to the rest of the Prayer Book too. In one of the Advent prayers we confess that 'through our sins and wickedness, we are sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before us,' and so in turn pray that 'thy bountiful grace and mercy may speedily help and deliver us.' Help us run the race, by your grace.

We pray on Christmas Day that we 'may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit.' The Collect for Innocents' Day asks God to 'Mortify and kill all vices in us, and so strengthen us by thy grace, that by the innocency of our lives and constancy of our faith, even unto death, we may glorify thy holy name.' Kill our vices, by your grace.

I could pile up examples of how the Prayer Book, and particularly the Collects, speak of our need for grace in running the Christian life. How it is a life empowered by the Holy Spirit, by which we mortify and kill our vices.[22] This is unimpeachably Anglican stuff. All our ministers promise at ordination to proclaim *this* inheritance of faith afresh in our generation.[23] How can we do that unless we know what faith we have inherited? What is the Anglican way to live? This Prayer Book will tell us—it's about leaning on God's grace to mortify our sins and live for others to God's glory, praying for 'Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics' to be fetched home to Christ and saved.[24] We need God's special grace to go before us to put good desires into our minds, and his continual help to bring those desires to good effect.

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[21] The Collect for Sexagesima.

In the Communion Service, we recite the Ten Commandments and plead for mercy—since we have broken them. And we ask God to incline our hearts to keep that Law.[25] But the collects also sum this up: 'because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without thee, grant us the help of thy grace, that in keeping of thy commandments we may please thee both in will and deed' says one; while another pleads for 'such a measure of thy grace that we, running the way of thy commandments, may obtain thy gracious promises.'[26]

So we see that the Prayer Book counters both the Pelagian tendency and the Antinomian tendency. The so-called 'Anglican way', if our 350-year-old Prayer Book is any guide, is consistent Reformed theology in prayer and practice, neither lawless, nor legalistic. This is the grace-driven Christian life for which we are saved and to which the gospel of Christ calls us.

Is this useful today?

So is this doctrinal and liturgical heritage useful for today? And am I encouraging us to use 1662 Book of Common Prayer services in our churches every Sunday, as my prescription for modern evangelism? Let me be clear: no, I am not.

Just as the church in Jeremiah's day was not safe simply because they trusted in 'the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord' (Jeremiah 7:4), neither will twenty-first century Anglicans reach the lost or 'reform and renew' their churches simply by chanting, 'The Articles of Religion, the Book of Common Prayer, the Ordinal and Homilies!' That would be romantic antiquarianism. Such formularies must be believed and obeyed (as they point us to Christ), and translated into 'a language understanded' of the people (Article 24), not just tenaciously held onto like prize exhibits in a museum.

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[22] As the Collect for the 5th Sunday after Epiphany puts it, we 'lean only upon the hope of thy heavenly grace.' We can only lean on God's grace, because, 'the frailty of man without thee cannot but fall' (Trinity 15).

[23] See Canon C15 Of the Declaration of Assent.

[24] See the Collect for Good Friday.

[25] This is the Reformed view of the Law in devotional form. See Lee Gatiss and Peter Adam, *Reformed Foundations, Reforming Future: A Vision for 21st Century Anglicans* (London: Lost Coin, 2013), p. 20.

[26] See the Collects for Trinity 1 and Trinity 11.

That said, 1662 services can be very good, and still have their place. I learned a lot by taking BCP Communion services regularly during my curacy, and not just at 8am either; sometimes at 11am as well, with full robed choir and Anglican plain chant Psalms. The Prayer Book is still useable today, even in younger congregations, with perhaps just a little updating, provided such variations are 'reverent and seemly and shall be neither contrary to, nor indicative of any departure from, the doctrine of the Church of England in any essential matter.'[27]

But we have to admit that the BCP was an evangelistic tool for a liturgical people. It was designed to teach people who were used to church and liturgy a more Reformed and Protestant way to pray and worship God. It was a strategy which made a huge amount of sense in a time and culture where most people went to church every Sunday and holy day. Its majestic language passionately pleaded with people to engage their hearts in serving a merciful God who sent his Son to save wretched sinners by faith alone. It expounded that gospel and urged congregations to respond.

Now, we too want, I assume, to passionately plead with people to engage their hearts in serving a merciful God who sent his Son to save wretched sinners by faith alone. The reading and preaching of the scriptures must be at the heart of that evangelistic effort. That's what the Prayer Book assumes: that people are converted by the Spirit of God through the word of God—and it prescribes serious doses of the word, not just a verse or two followed by a jokey 'talk' with PowerPoint slides and balloons. Are we courageous enough to follow that same course, even if we don't use the same sixteenth- and seventeenth-century language in our prayers before the sermon? As Richard Hooker says:

> With us there is never any time bestowed in divine service without the reading of a great part of the holy scripture. Which we account a thing most necessary. We dare not admit any such form of liturgy as either appoints no scripture at all or very little to be read in the Church. And therefore the thrusting of the bible out of the house of God is rather there to be feared, where men esteem it a matter so indifferent whether the same be by solemn appointment read publicly or not read, the bare text excepted which the preacher haply chooses to expound.[28]

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[27] Canon B5. If all we do is translate the Prayer Book into a modern idiom, in obedience to Article 24, then that seems to me to be perfectly legitimate. More than that, it is beneficial and edifying.

[28] Hooker, *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity: Volume 2. Book V*, p. 50 (V.xx.5).

The fashion in many churches, both high and low, seems to be to spend more time singing or listening to music than attending on God's word read and preached. If the words of our songs and anthems are scriptural, the damage may be mitigated, but not entirely avoided. This was a problem identified during the Reformation by those who put together our Prayer Book. Peter Martyr Vermigli, for example, Italian-born Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford and one of the architects of the 1549 and 1552 Prayer Books was concerned that our choral traditions would undermine the ministry of the word and lead us back in a Roman direction. 'Almost everywhere in the papal religion they think they have worshipped God sufficiently in the Church when they have sung and shouted loud and long,' he declared. 'There are many priests and monks who think they deserve well of God because they have sung many psalms.' He identified this vice as an issue to be addressed because 'there should not be so much singing in church as to leave almost no time for preaching the Word of God and holy doctrine. We can see this happening everywhere in a way, for everything is so noisy with chanting and piping [or strumming and drumming?] that there is no time left for preaching. So it happens that people depart from church full of music and harmony, yet they are fasting and starving for heavenly doctrine.' He added:

> '[Some early churches] used either very little singing or almost none at all. They saw the people's weakness to be such that they paid more attention to the harmony than to the words. So today if we see Christians running to church as to the theater, where they can be amused with rhythm and singing, in such a case we should abstain from something not necessary, rather than feed their pleasures with the destruction of their souls.'[29]

This is perhaps sage advice for churches which find themselves in a culture of entertainment. Vermigli says that if people literally are amusing themselves to spiritual death, pushing out preaching by a fixation on 'good music'; if what they are really interested in deep down is a good morning or evening out for a 'performance' or singalong at church (or chapel or cathedral)—then, rather than pandering to it and trying to imitate the world's musical idioms, we should stop singing in church altogether. We should not baptise the latest musical trends and hope to win a hearing for the gospel through good quality Christian music in our meetings; but stop it altogether, to expose the sinfulness and deception at work in such desires, and point people to a better way. We need to be feeding our souls with the word, to the destruction of the flesh, rather than feeding our pleasures with music, to the destruction of our souls.[30]

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[29] Vermigli, *De Musica et Carminibus* from *In Librum Iudicum* (Zurich: Froschauer, 1561), chapter 5, fols. 73r-74v as translated by J. C. McLelland in Donnelly, James, and McLelland (eds.), *The Peter Martyr Reader* (Kirksville, Missouri: Truman State University Press, 1999), pp. 171-172.

Liturgy itself seems to be rather out of favour at the moment.[31] As if it hindered our evangelism to pray the Lord's Prayer, or recite the great truths of the gospel in the Nicene Creed, or remind ourselves of the Ten Commandments. And yet we think singing a batch of worship songs may help to reach the un-evangelised? They may have their place, but might it not help to strengthen our congregations and save us a good deal of time and effort in catechesis, if we were more careful in constructing our Sunday services along the lines that 1662 does?

In some evangelical churches I've been in, evangelical *Anglican* churches, there is no public confession of sin. That was introduced by Cranmer in an effort to do away with compulsory auricular confession to a priest, which the Fourth Lateran Council had imposed on all and Trent endorsed with its usual dismal anathemas.[32] Without a proper public confession, we may slip back into that—except maybe we will call it Christian counselling with our pastor, which will become more and more the desired norm both in and out of the pulpit. We don't want to alienate visitors; but is it not more dangerous still to give the impression that we are no longer wretched sinners in need of forgiveness, but victims in need of affirmation and therapy?

In some evangelical churches I've been in, evangelical *Anglican* churches, there is no regular rendition of the creeds. That was intended to remind us week by week of the great central truths of our Trinitarian faith and the facts surrounding Christ's death 'for us and for our salvation.' Without it, we may need to put on special courses—even for church members—to teach them anew what every regular churchgoer in 1662 (and for a thousand years before that) would have recited habitually and known instinctively. How does it help either our discipleship or our evangelism to be so neglectful?

In some evangelical churches I've been in, evangelical *Anglican* churches, there is no use of the collects. We really really do just wanna prefer the less disciplined and less thoughtful ramblings of the untrained and unsupervised laity in public intercessions, because this is somehow more 'authentic.' But does it also lead to casual Patripassionism, Arianism, Pelagianism, Antinomianism, and all kinds of other heresies, as we push out the balanced biblical and Trinitarian diet of the Prayer Book? It is this, let it not be forgotten, which made it instinctively difficult for the Church of England to go Unitarian, as so many of the non-liturgical, non-credal 'free churches' did, in the century after 1662. As Catherine LaCugna has rightly affirmed, 'the liturgy far more than theology kept alive in Christian consciousness the trinitarian structure of Christian faith.'[33]

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[30] Notwithstanding the clear injunction in Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 for us to speak to one another and to our own hearts by means of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, of course!

[31] See the admonitory article by the Cambridge Baptist pastor, Julian Hardyman, 'The Curious Death of Evangelical Liturgical Worship?' in *Crossway* 130 (Autumn 2013), p. 3.

[32] See Canon 21 of the 1215 Lateran Council, and Canon 6 of the 14th Session of the Council of Trent. In the first exhortation before Communion in the Prayer Book (from 1552 onwards), the Minister does say that 'if there be any of you, who by this means cannot quiet his own conscience herein, but requireth further comfort or counsel, let him come to me, or to some other discreet and learned Minister of God's Word, and open his grief; that by the ministry of God's holy Word he may receive the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice, to the quieting of his conscience, and avoiding of all scruple and doubt.' But this is not mandatory for all, and nor does it speak of a sacrament of penance or (like 1549 and before) of secret, auricular confession to a priest; rather, we have a general confession, and the ministry of God's word by a learned minister.

In some evangelical churches I've been in, evangelical *Anglican* churches, there is no saying or praying through the Ten Commandments. And consequently, even many Anglican evangelical ministers couldn't tell you what all Ten Commandments are or in what order they appear in the Bible. Our theological education may give us seemingly erudite thoughts about cultural apologetics, postmodern hermeneutics, or the complexities of covenant theology. But are we clueless about the basics, such that the average churchgoer in 1662 would put us to shame? How does it help our evangelism if we sideline God's law?

In some evangelical churches I've been in, evangelical *Anglican* churches, they have never even thought about how to proclaim afresh in this generation the Reformed faith of the Thirty-nine Articles and the Book of Common Prayer. May that not be true of those who read these pages. Let us not venerate the Prayer Book or use it slavishly. But let us not neglect what Cranmer and others died to give us.

Many of the doctrinal and ethical and evangelistic mountains we face today would be substantially easier to climb if we had not abandoned this precious inheritance over the course of the last fifty years. And, as I hope I have also demonstrated, there is ripe evangelistic fruit to be reaped here as well.

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[33] Catherine LaCugna, *God For Us* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991), p. 210. See also H. J. MacLachlan, *Socinianism in Seventeenth Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 334 and Philip Dixon, *Nice and Hot Disputes: The Doctrine of the Trinity in the Seventeenth Century* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), pp. 215-216 who says that 'The sheer rhythm of the Liturgy familiarized churchgoers with belief in the Trinity.'

The Sacred Ministry

DAVID FULLER

There has been much debate and argument about the structure of the sacred ministry within the Church and the authority of the Holy Spirit in confirming those who have been chosen or elected. Diarmaid MacCulloch writes that there must have been, from post-Apostolic times, a universally recognised, single authority in the Church, able to take major decisions.[1] Apart from Orders, these rulings would have included: the application of canonical status to chosen sacred manuscripts; a uniform direction in Christian teaching and the establishment of credal statements of doctrine. It seems likely that there was also a recognised structure or set of texts associated with Christian worship. Such a 'Catholic' church saw a marked increase in authority, credibility and coherence by the early years of the second century. By the year 200 there existed a mainstream Catholic Church which took for granted the existence of a threefold ministry of bishop, priest and deacon. There would be few challenges to this pattern of church order for the next thirteen hundred years. MacCulloch suggests that the presidency of the πρεσβυτεροι (*presbyteroi*—often translated as 'elders') by James the (so-called) brother of Jesus, and the selection of διακονοι (*diaconoi*—or deacons, as defined in Acts 6: 2-5) led inevitably to the later grades of bishop, priest and deacon. However, Henry Chadwick reminds us that the apostles were not the only ones in the early Church to receive the gifts of the Spirit; prophets like Agabus and various teachers were likewise gifted.[2]

Churches in Antioch and Jerusalem established parallel, ecclesiastical hierarchies which resonated with their Judaic past, with its High Priests, Priests and Levites. Elsewhere the Church developed along more Hellenistic lines, much of it thanks to the work of Saint Paul and his associate missionaries. In his first letter to the Christian Church in Corinth Paul suggested one possible configuration; 'God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues' (1 Cor. 12: 28). Saint Paul observed that the Corinthian Church especially prized the gift of 'speaking in tongues'. He could not afford to deny that this ecstasy was a genuine manifestation of the Spirit, but persuaded the Corinthians that it was the least in a graded order of supernatural gifts.[3] Another pattern emerges from his letter to the Church in Ephesus, 'The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers' (Eph. 4: 11). However, these professions should not be considered as rigid, technical definitions but more as modes of missionary organisation that required a local church to be dynamic and always prepared to adjust and improvise in the face of changes in circumstances. MacCulloch understands that some sort of standardisation did emerge from this fractured pattern with the titles *presbyteros* (presbyter) and *episcopos* (overseer) becoming almost interchangeable in their meaning and usage.[4]

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[1] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *A History of Christianity*, (Allen Lane, 2009), p.130.

[2] Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church*, (Penguin Books, 1967), p.45. In reference to Agabus, Chadwick quotes two references from Acts: Acts 11: 28 and Acts 21: 7. The second mention is, in fact, in Acts 21: 10.

Clayton Jefford argues that ecclesiastical leadership and the subsequent Christian tradition of a three-tiered hierarchy of bishop, presbyter and deacon is largely dependent on Ignatius (d c107).[5] Most vital of these positions to Ignatius was the bishop, who embodied the presence of God among his people; 'He who honours the bishop has been honoured by God'.[6] Simon Tugwell quotes from Eusebius, who argued that Ignatius had created a strong, central government in Antioch, the greatest city in Roman Syria.[7] Ignatius believed that there could be no genuine church apart from a properly constituted structure. In his Epistle to the Trallians he wrote, 'let all men respect the deacons as Jesus Christ, even as they should respect the bishop as being a type of the Father and the presbyters as the council of God and as the college of Apostles. Apart from these there is not even the name of a church'.[8] To the Smyrnaeans he wrote,

> Follow your bishop, as Jesus Christ followed the Father, and the presbytery as the Apostles; and to the deacons pay respect, as to God's commandment. Let no man do aught of things pertaining to the Church apart from the bishop. Let that be held a valid Eucharist which is under the bishop or one to whom he shall have committed it. Wheresoever the bishop shall appear, there let the people be; even

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[3] Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church*, p 46.

[4] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *A History of Christianity*, p.131.

[5] Clayton N Jefford, 'Ignatius and the Apostolic Fathers', in D Jeffrey Bingham (ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Early Christian Thought*, (Oxford: Routledge, 2010), p.109.

[6] Ignatius, *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*, Chap IX – Honour the Bishop. Ref: http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/ignatius-smyrnaeans-longer.html.

[7] Simon Tugwell, *The Apostolic Fathers*, (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1989), p.105. Eusebius claimed that Ignatius was the second successor to Saint Peter as Bishop of Antioch, although there is little if any evidence that Peter was ever Bishop of that city.

[8] Ignatius, *Epistle to the Trallians*, 3: 1, Translation by J B Lightfoot, Ref: http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/ignatius-trallians-lightfoot.html (Accessed 07/07/10).

> as where Jesus may be, there is the universal Church. It is not lawful apart from the bishop either to baptise or to hold a love-feast; but whatsoever he shall approve, this is well-pleasing also to God; that everything which ye do may be sure and valid.[9]

Ignatius battled against both Ebionite and Docetist heresies and believed that the true faith could only be preserved through a firm and structured leadership.

The *Didache* (thought by many to date from the late first or early second century) gives clear instruction on the use of the title 'prophet' to those who had a pedagogic ministry and it offers methods for the identification of false prophets.[10] There are instructions contained within the *Didache* to appoint bishops and deacons, 'worthy of the Lord' (15: 1). The only reference to 'priests' is in the instructions that the 'first-fruits' should be given to the prophets, 'for they are your chief-priests' (13: 4). There is also some disagreement between the local ministry and peripatetic prophets but this controversy ceased at the Church became established. In his first epistle to the Church in Corinth, Clement made a number of references to both bishops and deacons; there were a few references to priests, but mostly in the context that Christ is our Great High-Priest. Clement equally saw the three-fold ministry as archetypical of the Jewish system of High Priests, Priests and Levites. Robin Ward suggests that the comparison of Christian and Jewish ministries became especially important within the Church in Rome.[11] There is little evidence for the establishment of any form of monarchical episcopacy, except that which developed in Rome. The ecclesiastical authorities there clearly determined early that their church had Saint Peter as its founder and that he was, in some way, the most prominent of the apostles.[12] There is no scriptural evidence that Peter, during his lifetime, had a prominent leadership role; on the contrary, the book of Acts makes it clear that both James and Paul played important parts in the early church.

There are several instances in the Acts of the Apostles where acceptance, approval or authority is given to others through the laying-on-of-hands. The seven deacons appointed to feed the Greek widows were, 'set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them' (Acts 6: 6); Simon the magician and others in Samaria were initiated into the Church through the laying-on-of-hands of the apostles Peter and John

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[9] Ignatius, *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*, 8: 1-2, Translation by J B Lightfoot, Ref: http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/ignatius-smyrnaeans-lightfoot.html (Accessed 07/07/10).

[10] See translation by J B Lightfoot, chapter 11, Ref: http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/didache-lightfoot.html (Accessed 02/06/10).

[11] Robin Ward, 'The Ordinal', *Faith and Worship*, Vol 65, 2010, p.55.

[12] The Roman hierarchy undoubtedly quoted Matt 16: 18 as their authority.

(Acts 8: 18); Barnabas and Saul were set apart for missionary activities through this action (Acts 13: 3). There is also an instance of the healing of the father of Publius through the laying-on-of-hands (Acts 28: 8). Yet, nowhere is there any suggestion of the employment of this praxis for the purposes of maintaining an apostolic succession. There is no suggestion in Scripture that the commissions and consequent authority given to the disciples, first through the sacrament of sufflation on the evening of the day of resurrection (John 20: 22), and later with a rushing wind and tongues of fire at the Feast of Pentecost (Acts 2: 2-3), was passed on to any other individuals. Despite this, it was clearly understood that false prophets would appear within the church; indeed Jesus predicted that this would happen (Matt 7: 15; 24: 11; 24: 24; Mark 13: 22). There is evidence that the apostles identified false prophets (Acts 13: 6; 2 Pet 2: 1). Did the early Church determine that the truth could only be revealed be the maintenance of a formal, successional procedure? Revealed wisdom shows that a structured order that comprised bishop, priest and deacon was eventually established and that this ecclesial arrangement has been maintained in the principal churches of both East and West for two millennia. It is argued by those in the Anglican Communion that the succession was not broken at the time of the Protestant Reformation. It is, of course, counter-argued by churches, denominations and sects that have, through partition and division, no direct historical links with the apostles that the whole concept of a succession is mythical and nonsensical.

G D Carleton wrote the bold statement that, 'Our Lord has established an organised ministry in his Church'.[13] Using twenty scriptural references he built an hierarchical structure, from the appointment of the apostles as Christ's representatives, to the appointment of elders (priests?) by Titus at the request of Paul (Tit 1: 5). Carleton clearly distinguished between the gifts of the Spirit (as listed in 1 Cor 12: 28) and those conveyed by apostolic laying-on-of-hands.[14] He clearly stated that, 'every bishop rightly consecrated can trace his spiritual lineage back to the apostles ... at every period of the Church we see the greatest care taken that there should be no link missing in the chain of succession'.[15] Since, as has been premised, there is no absolute biblical evidence for this practice, it must be assumed to be part of the tradition of the Church. As Richard Hooker made clear in the sixteenth century, the doctrine of the Church is based on tradition as well as scripture and reason.[16]

[13] G D Carleton, *The King's Highway*, (Norwich: The Canterbury Press – trading as Tufton Books, 2001), p.116. This work was originally published in 1924 by the Church Literature Society.

[14] Ibid, p.118.

[15] Ibid, p.121.

[16] This is often referred to as Hooker's 'three-legged stool', a doctrine that he expounded in *Of the Laws*

By contrast, MacCulloch, referring to the successional understanding of the Roman Catholic Church, writes that, 'there is no evidence that Peter had actually played the role of bishop in the Church in Rome and the names traditionally provided for his successor bishops up to the end of the first century are no more than names ... they are probably the result of later second-century back-projection to create a history for the episcopal succession in the era when episcopal succession had become significant.'[17] The church in Rome did lay claim to being the burial place of two of the apostles (although there was no historical evidence that either Peter or Paul died in that city). However, by the end of the second century the Bishop of Rome began using excommunication as a method of dogmatic and doctrinal control. Victor I (d 198) began the processes of papal supremacy by ending the long-standing practice of sending Eucharistic bread and wine that he had consecrated (the *fermentum*) to other Christian communities in the city. These communities historically included Gnostics, Montanists and Monarchians; they were, by this action, effectively divorced from the mother church. Victor assembled an early Council of Rome and through it required bishops in Eastern churches to follow the Roman lead of keeping Easter on a Sunday, not on the Jewish Passover date of 14th Nissan as had previously been the tradition. By the third century the Bishop of Rome was consolidating his position as principal within the Western Church. The title 'papa' came into use in the reign of Marcellinus (d 304) when numbers of pilgrims to the city began to expand. Marcellinus was accused of apostasy by the Donatists (he was said to have offered incense to Roman, pagan gods) and rivalry over the superior position of Rome was countered by Cyprian of Carthage on behalf of the North African Church. Despite having many martyrs, the African Church did not possess any counter-weight to Rome's two apostles. It was at this time that the Roman bishop appealed to Matt 16: 18 (Christ's pronouncement that in Peter was a rock on which he would build his church). MacCulloch suggests that, 'Rome's place in the Christian Church remained subject to many accidents of history...'[18]

By the early fourth century, before the Council of Nicaea (325), the overall structure of the Church had begun to follow civil lines. Dioceses became aligned with city territories, each governed by a bishop. The episcopacy within larger metropolitan areas, which often comprised a number of dioceses, had authority over subordinate bishops, some of whom were called suffragans. The title 'metropolitan' first appeared

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of Ecclesiastical Polity.

[17] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *A History of Christianity*, p.135.

[18] Ibid, p.137.

in the fourth canon of Nicaea. Principal among the responsibilities of metropolitans has been the presidency of provincial synods, the care of vacant sees and the consecration of bishops. There were many disputes in the Western Church between metropolitan bishops (often called archbishops) and the reigning Pope; in these the latter was generally victorious. In the early Middle Ages no archbishop could exercise his authority until granted a pallium by the Holy Father. This woollen neck-piece came to symbolise the plenitude of the pontifical office. In some parts of the Western Church, typically in North Africa, the metropolitan was the most senior bishop, by years of consecration. In other areas he was elected from among the college of bishops. Metropolitan bishops are commonly given the title of Archbishop, or Primate, or, as in the Scottish Episcopal Church, Primus.[19]

In the Eastern Church the three-fold priestly order was extended by the appointment of patriarchs, who had responsibility for each of the ancient sees of Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople and Jerusalem. This title was later used for the spiritual leaders of autocephalous Orthodox Churches, such as that in Greece and, later, in Russia. Lower in the hierarchy the office of exarch was established. An exarch had jurisdiction over a number of metropolitan sees. At no time did the Eastern Church determine the need for a supreme head, analogous with the Pope.

At the time of the Protestant Reformation much though was given to any scriptural evidence for the foundation of the Church's ministry. As has been made clear, there are no exact definitions in the Bible of the various priestly functions. Meanings of, and differences between, the words *presbyteroi* and *episcopoi* have never been clearly established and many argued that the roles associated with those priestly functions, certainly after the death of the apostles, could not be accurately determined. This dispute can, perhaps simplistically, be divided between two principal protagonists: Martin Luther, who originally dismissed the role of bishops but later incorporated them into his church; and John Calvin, who accepted as a cardinal principle of his Reformation the concept of 'the priesthood of all believers'. In Lutheranism, holy orders are not limited to bishop, priest and deacon, but can include: preachers, governmental officers and widows. The resultant position within the world-wide Lutheran churches is that some countries believe that they ordain (consecrate?) bishops in the apostolic succession (such as Norway, Sweden and Finland) while others do not emphasise this doctrine (Denmark and Latvia). Even in those Lutheran churches that subscribe to the apostolic succession, there is much confusion about what is meant by that phrase. To many the idea of apostolicity is simply a submission to the teaching of the original apostles, as recorded in Scripture. This stance is essentially embodied in the doctrine of *sola scriptura*.

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[19] From *primus inter pares*, = first among equals.

Robert Williams accepts that the authority of Christian ministers, and of bishops in particular, is derived from their connections with apostolic tradition, apostolic succession and holy scripture.[20] The historicity of successional claims is shrouded in mystery in the sub-apostolic church but when the issue reappeared in the nineteenth century researchers turned increasingly to two works by Eusebius, from the fourth century; works that gave the earliest extant records of names and dates. These were the *Chronicle* and *Ecclesiastical History*. A common feature in the establishment of the legitimacy of a social institution in the ancient world was to cite an unbroken succession of leaders from the time of the founder. This practice was applied, *inter alia*, in Greek philosophy, Roman government and the Jewish priesthood. These ideas were perpetuated in the Christian church in the form of what were called 'bishop's lists'. Early ecclesiastical writers used these lists to combat heresy and schism, in proving the titles of 'legitimate' bishops over competing claims of authority.

The Church of England has always maintained that its bishops are within the apostolic succession. However, there is much debate as to whether the services contained in the Ordinal (including the Consecration of Bishops) are regarded as sacramental. The Evangelical wing of the church maintains, along with most Protestant churches, that the sacraments comprise only those directly ordained by Christ (the Dominical Sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Holy Eucharist). Despite her claim to have apostolic order and succession, there have been claims that, since the Reformation, priestly orders in the Church of England are invalid. This accusation, particularly from the Roman Catholic Church, culminated in the Papal Bull *Apostolicae Curae* in which Pope Leo XIII, in 1896, declared all Anglican orders, 'absolutely null and utterly void'. The principal objection of the Vatican authorities to Anglican orders was based on their understanding of the 'Intention' found in the Ordinal. Furthermore, they concluded that material changes in the rite used in Anglican episcopal consecrations caused them to be invalid, and that any priesthood that devolved from them would be equally unacceptable since it differed materially from that in the Roman Catholic Church, which was deemed to be of a sacrificial nature. Anglican ordination was seen as merely a form of ecclesiastical appointment, accompanied with a blessing; it did not confer, in the Roman Catholic view, a sacramental conferral of the grace of the Holy Spirit. Pope Leo maintained that Anglican ordination rites after the middle of the sixteenth century did

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20 Robert Lee Williams, *Bishop Lists: Formation of Apostolic Succession in Ecclesiastical Crises*, (Piscataway NJ: Gorgias Press, 2005), pp.1f.

not make it sufficiently clear as to which order of bishop or priest a man was being ordained, also they did not mention any special grace or power associated with that position. The Roman Catholic Church claimed that the episcopate should be seen as a 'high priesthood' and that the presbyterate should have conferred on them, 'the power of offering and consecrating the true Body and Blood of Our Lord,' in the Eucharistic sacrifice.

While the matter of the content and structure of the liturgies contained within the Ordinal have never been resolved, a new factor has entered into all consecrations since the 1930s. Old Catholic bishops (of the Union of Utrecht), whose consecrations the Roman Catholic Church recognises as valid, have been co-consecrators of all Anglican bishops (in the so-called 'Dutch-touch').In an attempt to nullify the effects of *Apostolicae Curae* it has been the practice of Anglicans to validate their consecrations through the inclusion among the consecrators of those bishops that have Old Catholic connections. Timothy Dufort has argued that, through this procedure, all Anglican orders are now valid.[21] In more recent times the whole question of the validity of Anglican orders has become confused by the acceptance in some provinces of women and active (non-celibate) homosexuals into the episcopacy.

In 1896 the Archbishops of Canterbury and York issued a statement to counter the arguments set forth by Pope Leo XIII in *Apostolicae Curae*, entitled *Saepius Officio*. In this they argued that, if Anglican orders can be deemed to be invalid, then this condemnation must apply equally to Roman orders. It stated:

> For if the Pope shall by a new decree declare our Fathers of two hundred and fifty years ago wrongly ordained, there is nothing to hinder the inevitable sentence that by the same law all who have been similarly ordained have received no orders. And if our Fathers, who used in 1550 and 1552 forms which as he (the Pope) says are null, were altogether unable to reform them in 1662, (Roman) Fathers come under the self-same law. And if Hippolytus and Victor and Leo and Gelasius and Gregory have some of them said too little in their rites about the priesthood and the high priesthood, and nothing about the power of offering the sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ, the Church of Rome herself has an invalid priesthood...[22]

John Hunwicke reflects on changes in Roman Catholic thinking since Vatican II.[23] The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), then under the distinguished authority of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (later Pope Benedict XVI), made it clear that, 'in every valid celebration of the Eucharist the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church becomes truly present'. Much, of course, hangs on the interpretation of the word 'valid'. The CDF allowed that there were separated communities, outside the control of Rome. It accepted that these churches had valid sacraments but argued that they had a 'wounded existence'. It also saw that this separation impaired the very unity that Rome sought. It asserted that the fullness of Catholic life and the orders which are part of it are not to be found in 'non-Catholic' ecclesial groups. To those churches that are outside the ambit of Rome the objectionable phrase is, 'the orders which are part of it'. These words seem to mean that it is only in canonical union with Rome that valid orders exist; outside Rome clerical orders are contrary to the faith and to the magisterial declarations of the Catholic Church.

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[21] Timothy Dufort, *The Tablet*, 1982, May 29, pp.536-8.

[22] Ref: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/~ucbgmxd/saepius.htm (Accessed 10/06/10).

[23] John Hunwicke, *Are Anglican Orders valid?*, Ref: http://www.northernbishop.com/articlesnews/

The Council of Trent determined that the most important matter in any sacramental act was that of the 'intention' of the celebrant or officiant. By this was meant the intention to be of the mind of the Church, to do as the Church does. In the seventh session it was determined that, '*Si quis dixerit, in ministris, dum sacramenta conficiunt, et conferunt, non requiri intentionem saltem faciendi quod facit ecclesia; anathema sit* (if one shall say, that in ministers, whilst they complete and confer the sacraments, there is not required the intention, at least of doing what the church does, let him be accursed).[24] Robert Cardinal Bellarmine (1542-1621) criticised this doctrine, with the words, 'It is not possible for anyone to be sure with the certainty of faith that he has received a true sacrament, as a sacrament cannot be celebrated without the intention of the minister, and no one can see the intention of another'.[25] In his view this provided grounds for uncertainly and apprehension, especially in the matter of consecrations and ordinations. In the twentieth century, Anglo-Catholic theologian Eric Mascall argued that, 'the chief handicap with which an Anglican is faced in discussing the Roman Catholic case against Anglican Orders arises from the fact that he can never be quite sure what that case is going to be'.[26] The Roman Catholic perception fails because the Anglican sacramental action (the imposition of hands) is deemed to be faultless; attempts to show that the form (the words) is in itself inherently inadequate have never held water; and however heretical some Anglican bishops (may) have been, this, in itself, has no effect upon the validity of

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otherarticles/dutchtouch.htm (Accessed 14/06/10).

[24] Council of Trent, 7th Session, Canon xi, 3rd March, 1547.

[25] Robert Bellarmine, *Disput. de Justif.*, Lib iii. Chap 8, Sect 5, 488.

[26] Quoted by John Hunwicke, loc cit.

their sacramental actions. This argumentation seems to prove the validity of Anglican orders, but it has not persuaded the Holy See to rescind *Apostolicae Curae*.

Gregory Dix believed that a continuum existed, whereby the Eucharistic action of a particular church at a particular time was accumulated into and connected with the depth of meaning attached to the Eucharistic action of the universal Church at every celebration since the crucifixion.[27] He wrote, 'prayer said by the bishop or his authorised deputy takes up the corporate official act of his church into the corporate act of the whole Body of Christ, head and members together, as the "Son of Man" (= "the people of the saints of the Most High") "comes" from time to the Father.' Did this imply that Dix was clearly of the opinion that Anglican orders were valid, or did it mean that the Eucharistic continuum of which he wrote only applied if the orders of the celebrant were valid? It is impossible to know. Dix had definite leanings towards Rome; he celebrated the Roman Mass in Latin, certainly within his Benedictine Community at Nashdom.[28]. Dix stressed that the Church of England, which he clearly saw as part of 'Christ's Church', had maintained the three-fold order of bishops, priests and deacons from apostolic times, and he quoted the Preface to the Ordinal in the Prayer Book to substantiate this point.[29] He suggested that this Preface had been subjected to considerable deliberation both in and outside the Church of England: inside because church members have observed a variety of ideas in its ministry, a ministry that was thought by many to have been abolished at the time of the Protestant Reformation; and outside because of the debates about union of the church with other Christian bodies. The results of these discussions have been various. In some parts of the Eastern Church, Anglican orders have been accepted, in others no decision has been made about them. They have not been formally rejected by any. Many Protestant churches and denominations have repudiated the role of a separate priesthood that maintained any sort of sacerdotal power conveyed by ordination; thus have rejected Anglican orders outright. The Roman Catholic view is that the titles of bishop, priest and deacon as employed in the Anglican Church mean something recognisably different from what they have always meant to them, 'from apostolic times'. This perceived difference led eventually to

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[27] Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, (London: Dacre Press, 1945), p.271.

[28] Dix celebrated (probably illegally!) using the English Missal while Rector of Saint Mary and All Saints, Beaconsfield, while standing in for his brother Ronald who became a Forces' Chaplain at the outbreak of World War II. See: Simon Bailey, *A Tactful God*, (Leominster: Gracewing, 1995), p.56.

[29] This Preface is entitled, 'The Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining and Consecrating of Bishops, Priests and Deacons according to the Order of the Church of England'. These services could, perhaps, better be listed in the order, 'Consecrating, Ordaining and Making'. In today's more egalitarian church no candidates for the sacred ministry are Made or Consecrated; all are Ordained.

Apostolicae Curae. Dix made it clear that, in his opinion, this was not a new decision (in 1896) and that the Roman Catholic Curia had never accepted Anglican ordinations as equivalent to their own, from the end of the sixteenth century.[30] He asked why Pope Leo's decision was of any consequence to Anglicans. He wrote, 'Some Wesleyans in the USA have Superintendents whom they style "Bishops" though neither they nor anyone else supposes that these are "Bishops" in the same sense as those of the Roman or Eastern Churches. But they go on quite happily leading their spiritual lives as Wesleyans without worrying about that. Why shouldn't we as Anglicans do the same?' The answer that he gave concerned the fundamental differences between Protestant and Catholic understandings of Christianity.[31]

Dix believed that the most important and profound difference was to be found in the single Reformation word 'Justification'. Dix defined Justification as, 'a technical term for the fundamental process in the religious life of any Christian man or woman'. Man is born in a state of alienation from God and therefore prone to sin. Despite this propensity to sin, man is brought into union with an infinitely holy God through redemption by Christ. Justification of a sinner through Christ happened through man's total surrender to one idea and to the emotion it evoked. It happened completely within a man's mind, without any involvement of the Church or her sacraments in the operation of redemption and sanctification. Justification, said Dix, concerned the very heart of the Christian religion and was the root cause of the violent differences between Catholics and Protestants in the sixteenth century. Dix explained this:

> True, Protestants could not help seeing that the New Testament represents our Lord as having instituted the Church and appointed his Apostles to act in the Church in his Name and Person. It also records that he deliberately ordered and instituted certain external actions and signs for His followers as having a vital relation to their *being* his. Neither of these facts was easily reconcilable with the doctrine of 'Justification by faith alone' which insisted not only that a man needed nothing more but actually could do nothing more than *know* the story of redemption in the first century AD and put his entire trust in that. Yet the New Testament made it impossible not to retain the Church and the Sacraments in some sense. Protestants therefore kept them both, but they were forced to empty them of much of their Scriptural meaning.[32]

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[30] Gregory Dix, *The Question of Anglican Orders*, (London: Dacre Press, 1944), p.19.

[31] Ibid, p.20.

[32] Ibid, p.23.

Protestantism retained the concept of church, despite its incompatibility with Protestant thought, but the idea of the Church as the Body of Christ, with all that that entailed, was seriously impoverished. Protestants had every reason to see the Church as a voluntary organisation with which the justified individual could dispense if it appeared not to support his purpose, or to refashion if by so doing it better proclaimed the interpretation of the gospel that the individual had perceived in the Scriptures. Such a church made no reference to Christian obedience. Dix claimed that such thinking led directly to an untrammelled religious individualism and insensitivity to schism. It led to the repudiation of authoritative standards of doctrine other than 'the Scriptures', and these as individually interpreted. Dix explained that, in the Protestant mind, the Church's sacraments were emptied of their scriptural and spiritual significance. A few, like the Salvation Army and the Society of Friends (the Quakers), abandoned the sacraments completely; others accepted only those of Dominical origin.[33] Over time they became simply optional appendages to the practice of Protestant piety.

Protestant teaching thus had a dramatic effect on the Church, its sacraments and, thereby, its orders. The Receptionist view is that the sacraments do not convey grace to those who receive them, they are merely tokens that the recipient has obtained grace, albeit in a wholly individual way. A corollary of this argument was, according to Dix, that there was no need for a priesthood of men to act in the name of Christ or to perform the corporate actions of the Church in relation to its individual members.[34] Dix saw the Protestant concept of ministry as, 'men set apart to fulfil the function of proclaiming the fact of the Redemption accomplished in the first century AD which challenges individuals to make the saving act of faith'.[35] This ministry is essentially for preaching. Dix quoted Luther who argued that, 'Ordination is a solemn ceremony for the appointment of public preachers in the Church'. Dix saw in the Protestant usage of Baptismal and Eucharistic liturgies procedures for preaching with symbolic actions. Thus it was fitting that these services should be conducted by those to whom preaching licences had been given. In conducting this public worship the preachers exercised no supernatural power or authority derived from Christ, this was merely performed by ordained ministers to maintain good order in a Christian society. Dix admitted that it was more in the Calvinist tradition for disciplinary authority to lie in the hands of the preaching ministry, and allowed that some Presbyterians, especially those in Scotland, derive their ministerial authority from ordination at the hands of other ministers, not from congregational choice and selection. By the middle of the sixteenth century Protestantism and Catholicism were essentially seen as two separate religions.

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[33] The five minor sacraments of the historical church were disregarded by the Protestant Reformers. John Knox irreverently referred to them as, 'the Pope's five bastard sacraments'.

[34] Gregory Dix, *The Question of Anglican Orders*, 28.

[35] Ibid.

The Church of England, which had abandoned papal authority in favour of a royal mandate, had to decide where it stood on the matter of Protestant teaching and its associated sacramental theology. A series of 'Articles of Religion' were formulated: ten in 1536; increased to forty-two in 1552; then reduced to thirty-nine in 1563. Article XXV states:

> Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they be certain sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace and God's good will towards us, by the which He doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm, our faith in Him. There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord. Those five commonly called Sacraments, that is to say, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel, being such as have grown partly of the corrupt following of the Apostles, partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures; but yet have not the like nature of Sacraments with Baptism and the Lord's Supper, for that they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God. The Sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon or to be carried about, but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same, have they a wholesome effect or operation: but they that receive them unworthily, purchase to themselves damnation, as Saint Paul saith.

While declaring that the five minor sacraments have been derived from a corrupt understanding of apostolic teaching, this Article makes it crystal clear that the Dominical sacraments are effectual signs of grace. In the words of Thomas Aquinas, 'they cause the grace which they signify'.[36] As a sop to the thinking of John Knox, who insisted on the inclusion of the so-called Black Rubric in the Prayer Book of 1552, which, while permitting reception of the sacrament when kneeling, forbade any adoration or worship, Article XXV states that the sacrament is not be gazed upon or carried about. Article XXVI also contains elements that counter Protestant fundamentalism. In discussing the unworthiness of ministers it makes it clear that, while they have, 'chief authority in the

[36] Quoted by Dix. Ibid, 30.

ministration of the word and sacraments'; yet 'forasmuch as they do not the same in their own name, but in Christ's, and do minister by his commission and authority, we may use their ministry both in hearing the word of God and in the receiving of the sacraments'. While these are statements that few serious Protestants could accept, they indicate the doctrine of the nascent, post-Reformation Church of England. This sacramental theology is paralleled in the Catechism. A sacrament (of which only the two Dominical ones are deemed generally necessary for salvation) is defined as, 'an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof'.[37] It seems clear from the foregoing that the post-Henrician Church of England was not as overtly Protestant as most of the continental Reformers would have wished. Even under the influence of Martin Bucer and Peter Martyr, Cranmer's first revision of the Prayer Book (1552) was far more sacramental than parallel liturgies in Switzerland and Germany. There were clear indications that Eucharistic rites thought to have been attributable to the Fathers were maintained, although some counter-Catholic revisions are evident. Dix saw Cranmer and his colleagues as,

> genuine Protestants, sincerely desirous of introducing Protestantism of the Swiss or 'extreme left-wing' variety into the Reformed Church of England ... any attempt to explain this as due to confusion of mind or feebleness under the pressure of foreign refugee scholars and the government, or even deliberate concealment of their real opinions, cannot be sustained by the evidence ... they were outspoken, conscientious and brave men who died for their beliefs.[38]

Dix made it clear that, while Cranmer *et al* were able to influence the liturgical forms in the Prayer Book very considerably, especially in subsequent editions, they did their work opposed by the vast majority of clergy and laity. While they lamented that they were unable to take their revisions as far as they thought they should, they never risked any submission of these to the Church for discussion and acceptance (or otherwise). The resulting liturgy was thrust upon the Church by the direct authority of Acts of Parliament, aided through the legislative processes by members of a Privy Council which exercised a semi-despotic authority under the regency of the boy-king Edward VI. Other revisions were forced on an unsuspecting church by Royal Proclamations, very much in the mode and manner of Henry VIII.

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[37] It is interesting to reflect on the use of the word 'generally' in the Catechism. Does its inclusion imply that there may be circumstances where other sacraments (from the five referred to as minor) may be valid and efficacious?

[38] Gregory Dix, *The Question of Anglican Orders*, p.31.

The Elizabethan Prayer Book (1559) contained six changes to the Ordinal and, again, these were never considered by or consulted on by Convocation. Cranmer and his close advisors composed services in the Ordinal (and elsewhere in the Prayer Book) which the government, albeit without Parliamentary debate or vote, compelled the clergy to use. There were no doctrinal pronouncements and no sanction was ever obtained from the Church. The only method employed by Reformers under Edward VI was *fait accompli*. The single exception to this absence of ecclesial oversight was thought to be the introduction of Cranmer's XLII Articles of Religion (1553). These were published as having been agreed upon by the Synod of London. However, at his trial Cranmer admitted that they had never been submitted to that body, or any other.[39]

The theological consequences of this absence of ecclesial sanction to new rites and service orders were profound. They could be used by the church willingly or unwillingly, but the church could not declare the 'intention' with which they were employed. As Dix commented:

> It is a commonplace of all theology, Roman or Anglican, that no public formulary of the Church be or ought to be interpreted by the private sense attached to it by the compilers. Its own contents and any official authoritative comment made upon it by the Church corporately are alone what determine its meaning.[40]

Cranmer was not seen by the Church of England as an authoritative source of doctrine, as Luther was to Lutheran Churches, and as Calvin was to Calvinism: the Church was Anglican, not Cranmerian. The Church of England could only be committed to what it corporately and commandingly agrees was officially its policy. It was never obligated to any rites forced upon it by the state.

In his XLII Articles, Cranmer had denied that the Church's sacraments have their effect *ex opere operato*, and refuted any form of Real Presence in the Eucharistic sacrament. The first opportunity given to the Church of England to express its doctrine came with the publication of the XXXIX Articles of 1563 (Cranmer died at the stake in 1556). These Articles were composed by the Church in Convocation and were prescribed by Act of Parliament in 1571. They comprised part of the Elizabethan *via media* and were loosely phrased to allow a variety of interpretations; they were not intended, in this version, to provide the clergy with a dogmatic definition of the faith. In general they repudiate Protestant teachings and practices but are also condemnatory of much of the doctrine of the Catholic Church.

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[39] Edward Pusey confirmed this in Tract 81 (*Catena Patrum*. No. IV – *Testimony of Writers in the later English Church to the doctrine of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. with an historical account of the changes in the Liturgy as to the expression of that doctrine.*). 1st November, 1837, Ref: http://anglicanhistory.org/tracts/tract81.html (Accessed 03/07/16).

[40] Gregory Dix, *The Question of Anglican Orders*, 33.

A new Article (XXXVI) defended the Edwardine Ordinal against Protestant claims of superstition. It stated that any who had received Holy Orders using Cranmer's liturgies had been, 'rightly, orderly and lawfully consecrated and ordained'. Such doctrinal affirmations make it clear that it is entirely the intention of the Church that gives validity and authority to what it does; it does not matter what the theological thinking was behind the construction of the service orders. Making comparisons between orthodox and heterodox persons and rites, Dix explained that:

> [rites] compiled by [for example] Nestorian and Monophysite heretics are in themselves quite valid and Rome therefore accepts the orders of those ordained by them in these heretical churches as valid orders. Because Cranmer never received from the Church of England any confirmation whatever of his personal opinions about ordination, his personal opinions are entirely irrelevant.[41]

It is against this background of liturgical revision and re-ordering of the Church's sacraments that the post-Reformation Ordinal was viewed by the Roman Catholic Church. *Apostolicae Curae* was a ruling by an influential authority, but was only pronounced after serious deliberation. Those in the sacred ministry of the Anglican Church have always received episcopal ordination, enabling them to celebrate the Eucharist at the Church's altars. This enabled all who came to participate in that sacrament to be, in full reality, part of the Catholic Church. Dix argued that, if Pope Leo was correct in his Bull, then the Anglican Church must disband until its senior clergy could obtain valid orders, wherever these may be available. The Eucharistic worship of the Church must cease because it is not valid unless celebrated and consecrated by a valid priesthood.[42] Dix concluded, 'We cannot just ignore *Apostolicae Curae*, if only because it puts us as Anglicans in such an awkward dilemma—if the Pope was right about the facts'.[43]

Paul Rust makes it clear in his essay that Pope Leo XIII had no argument about the validity of those in the Church of England who were consecrated and ordained in the years between 1534 and 1550; the

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41 Ibid, p.35.

42 This definition of 'validity' affects those many Christian denominations that make no claim to the Apostolic Succession nor may have three-fold orders, yet which offer their congregations The Lord's Supper, in some guise. While not 'valid' in any absolute sense, these sacraments are doubtless efficacious to their recipients. It is not for mortal man to determine what God may or may not do with his sacraments.

43 Gregory Dix, *The Question of Anglican Orders*, p.36.

years of the schism between Rome and Canterbury, and the publication of Cranmer's first Ordinal.[44] Cranmer repudiated the Catholic doctrine of a sacrificing priesthood. Every Catholic ordination rite is comprised of prayers which express the priestly power of offering and of consecrating the Body and the Blood of Our Saviour in a genuine sacrifice. These prayers nowhere suggest the Protestant doctrine, embraced by Cranmer, that the Eucharist is merely a Communion service. Thus the form of the Ordinal, apart from not accepting that the conferring of Holy Orders was a sacrament (cf Article XXV), nowhere gave any indication of the power that was conferred on the ordinand. Pope Leo therefore determined that Anglican orders were invalid because of defect of Form and defect of Intention. In arriving at his momentous declaration, Pope Leo carefully weighed earlier evidence from Popes Julius III (1487-1555), Paul IV (1476-1559) and Clement XI (1649-1721). These were all believed to have condemned as invalid all orders that resulted from the use of the Anglican Ordinal, compared with validity lawfully promoted by the Roman Pontifical.[45]

Gregory Dix commented that the principal change in the 1662 Prayer Book Ordinal was to the wording of the form; in the change of, 'Receive the Holy Ghost; whose sins you remit ...' to, 'Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands; whose sins you remit ...'[46] Dix argued that Pope Leo's contention was that, in the years between 1550 and 1662, a valid episcopate had been lost to Anglicanism, and that even if the latter rite was more in keeping with Catholic doctrine, there were no 'valid' bishops to effect ordinations or consecrations.[47] He reduced the grounds for *Apostolicae Curae* to just two: defective in Intention and defective in Form in the 1550 and 1552 Ordinals. He suggested that the Papal Bull insinuated that the Anglican Church intended to institute an entirely different ministry while retaining the titles of bishop, priest and deacon.[48] In refuting this assertion he claimed that the Preface to the Ordinal (in both 1550 and 1552) contained a statement of unambiguous clarity of the intention of the rite. Dix quoted from this:

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[44] Paul R Rust, *Leo XIII's Decision on Anglican Orders:The Extrinsic Argument*, Ref: http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?id=6237&CFID=41852338&CFTOKEN=44636664 (Accessed 24/06/10).

[45] During the reign of Queen Mary (1553-1558) Pope Julius III, in an attempt to regularise the status of Anglican clergy, through Reginald Cardinal Pole (1500-1558), the Papal Legate and successor as Archbishop of Canterbury to Thomas Cranmer, found himself with no less that ten different classes of clergy; from those who were ordained before 1534 and the breach with Rome to those who had been ordained under the 1552 rite by bishops who had themselves been consecrated under the 1552 rite. Pole applied for faculties to correct these errors and eventually received an extension to his legatory powers, 'to exercise a dispensing and reconciling power in the cases of those who had been ordained without the observance of the accustomed form of the Church'. No mention was made of re-ordination, conditionally or unconditionally. Dix asserted that by so doing Julius III had accepted as valid both the 1550 and 1552 Ordinals. See: Gregory Dix, *The Question of Anglican Orders*, pp.72f.

[46] A similar change was made to the Order for the Consecration of Bishops.

[47] Gregory Dix, *The Question of Anglican Orders*, pp.68f.

> It is evident unto all men diligently reading holy Scripture and ancient Authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church; Bishops, Priests, and Deacons: which Offices were evermore had in such reverend estimation, that no man might presume to execute any of them, except he were first called, tried, examined, and known to have such qualities as are requisite for the same; and also by public *Prayer, with Imposition of Hands*, were approved and admitted thereunto by lawful Authority. And therefore, *to the intent that these Orders may be continued*, and reverently used and esteemed in the Church of England, no man (*not being at this present Bishop, Priest, or Deacon*) shall execute any of them except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted according to the Form hereafter following (Dix's italics).[49]

Dix thought it unbelievable that *Apostolicae Curae* made no reference to the existence of this Preface. Whatever had been the Intention in the past (before the Henrician schism) was undoubtedly the Intention to be continued. The Preface makes it clear that such conditions had obtained, 'from the Apostles' time'. He was similarly scathing about the supposed grounds for condemnation under the aegis of Form. *Apostolicae Curae* argued that the rite did not state the order of priesthood being conferred and failed to mention the 'grace and power' of the Order; that of, 'consecrating and offering the true Body and Blood of Our Lord in the Eucharistic sacrifice'. Dix argued that it was not necessary to quote the title of the Order conferred, although it was named sufficiently in the two versions of the Ordinal under consideration (nine times in the case of Priesthood). Dix quoted a wide range of early ordination rites that made no overt reference to power being bestowed on the ordinand, including several Western sacramentaries and several Greek and Mozarabic liturgies.[50]

In conclusion it must be made clear that theologians, liturgists and ecclesiologists will continue to fulminate over the validity of Holy Orders; indeed they may debate interminably the meaning and significance of the word 'validity'. It seems to me that the debate does not revolve around Form and Intention, but merely on a belief in the Apostolic Succession. The priestly orders of the Anglican Church are valid because all of the bishops in that Church have, through tactile contact, through the laying-on-of-hands, had episcopal authority laid upon them in an unbroken line and process since apostolic times. All of the priests ordained by these bishops are and have been warranted to consecrate valid sacraments, and it is those sacraments that the Church, through faith, receives. Other Christian churches, denominations and sects will no doubt claim to have valid, 'priestly' orders, even though Anglican and Roman Catholic (and Orthodox) churches might dispute these. Yet, if they deem their orders and their sacraments to be valid in their own eyes, then, through their faith in them, they undoubtedly are.

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[48] Ibid, pp.81f.

[49] Book of Common Prayer, Preface to the Ordinal.

[50] Gregory Dix, *The Question of Anglican Orders*, pp.83f.

These differences of opinion are obviously a barrier to ecumenism and Church unity. Some Anglicans may happily accept the 'validity' of Roman Catholic orders, may subscribe to all of the dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church, and may be baptised and confirmed Christians, but if they prefer to be practicing members of the Anglican Church they are forbidden from receiving the sacrament from a Roman Catholic priest.[51] By contrast, the Anglican Church welcomes to its altar rails any and all who are members of Trinitarian churches, who are in 'good standing' with their churches, and wish to receive Communion.

There is, it seems, more to the debate about the structure and validity of Holy Orders than is immediately obvious.

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[51] This prohibition does not seem to apply if, for any reason, persons cannot receive the sacraments because there is no local Anglican Church, or they are on the field of battle, or they are *in extremis*, etc.

‘What of the Prayer Book? What Must We Do?: An Address to the Blackburn Branch of the Prayer Book Society

NEIL INKLEY

I am grateful for this opportunity to give this paper upon my completion of thirty years as the driver of Prayer Book activity here in Blackburn Diocese, as the Hon. Secretary and Treasurer of this branch of the Prayer Book Society. During that time I have spoken at ten other branch festivals and held several main offices in the Society at national level, and now I want to take a look back over those thirty years, and indeed rather longer, to assess what has happened to the liturgy of our beloved Church, to analyse why that occurred and to see what we can do about it.

From around 1975 until today—and for the mathematically-minded amongst you that is just 2% of all the years of our Lord and just 8% of the life of the Church of England – we have moved from almost universal use of the Book of Common Prayer to a situation where its use is a relative rarity. A small handful of churches remain completely loyal to the Prayer Book for all of their services. Some more will describe themselves as ‘traditional’, but don’t necessarily mean that in the liturgical sense, and they will use little or none of the BCP.

Then there is a larger number of churches which offer a mixture of *Common Worship* and the Book of Common Prayer—but where it is virtually always *Common Worship* which gets the ‘prime time slots’, whilst the BCP gets decidedly ‘off-peak’ treatment. And people do not attend services which are difficultly timed, not because they *will* not, but because they *can* not.

I don’t think there would be a challenge to the statement that churches offering no BCP services whatsoever now constitute a numerical majority; this has been accentuated as churches which retained BCP for Evensong have abandoned Evensong services on a massive scale. Evensong is much loved, but it seems somehow not to fit modern Sunday lifestyle timings.

Most of these churches now use *Common Worship*, but one cannot actually bank on that. DIY constructions and non-liturgical services are now quite widespread in what is supposed to be a liturgical Church.

As Andrew Davison has written: ‘The Prayer Book Society deserves praise for defending and promoting the Prayer Book, but I urge its members not to suppose that the people most in need of its persuasion are those who use *Common Worship* instead. The greater task is to defend the very idea of liturgy itself, the idea of *having* a set and authorised liturgy, of *using* forms of service in anything like the way that the phrase has previously been meant.'

The sad fact is that among most of our churches, the traditions of generations have been lost in less than half of a lifetime. Some in the Prayer Book Society think that I shouldn't say that sort of thing, in case it depresses you. But in my view, crying 'No wolf' where there *is* a wolf is every bit as inappropriate as crying 'Wolf' when there isn't one.

Of course we have much to be thankful for. The Book of Common Prayer has not disappeared completely, as it might have done under the onslaught that initially beset it. By the efforts of this Society, the Book of Common Prayer has been kept alive. And I do believe the Church hierarchy is better disposed towards it now than it was twenty-five or thirty years ago. Young priests are coming through from the training colleges now, but not I fear from the local training schemes, who are better informed about the BCP and much keener on it than those who came through the liturgical revolution. (These latter, of course, are still with us yet awhile, and in high places.) But some with this better disposition are arriving, although 'better disposed' does not guarantee re-introducing Prayer Book services. So the Prayer Book does continue to be available in some places, especially if one is flexible about timings—but not in *enough* places, nor *often* enough.

We must never belittle the efforts of the Branches of this Society which organise events, including the splendid festival services such as we are enjoying here today, which meet people's spiritual needs and proceed to charge their batteries. Yet we must be careful to know where these occasions stand within our overall objectives. We must never put the Book of Common Prayer services into what I call 'the traction engine rally syndrome'—that is, the bringing out of the admittedly obsolete once a year for a day of reverie and nostalgia. There is a degree of danger that some ambivalent people in the Church see our efforts in this way. They attend gladly, yet do not really share our aims.

The requirement for Prayer Book services is an ongoing, living and *permanent* one; for access to Prayer Book services in the normality and generality of things is what we must seek.

There are some who would tell us that in all these changes of modern times, only the modernisation of the language has occurred. They delude themselves. Language and theology move in an inextricably entwined manner. Each at times is the camouflage of the other. The new services don't just replace 'Thou' with 'You'. The inconvenience of the concept of sin for post-modern humanity, and the new social mores which do not allow individuals to be blameworthy–they have only fallen short of the ideal because of prevailing circumstances—this has all been tucked in with the new words. Take all these things together and you see man talked up to a dangerous near-equality with God, with an associated chatty manner in addressing God, and—one thing I can't abide—the constant telling God what he has done, as if he didn't know. In the BCP we remind ourselves what God has done, which is quite different.

In the BCP, 'Almighty and everlasting God, who forgives the sins of all them that are penitent...', becomes in Common Worship, 'Almighty and everlasting God, you forgive the sins of . . . ' I find myself, saying to myself, 'He knows that!'

Regarding changed attitudes, I'm reminded too that a correspondent to *The Times* newspaper considered that a new-age version of the Parable of the Good Samaritan would have the Samaritan finding the grievously wounded man and saying, 'The people who did this to you are going to need a lot of help.'

So, we are told that the liturgy should reflect the spirit of the age. Really? When the spirit of the age is in moral decline? Surely better by far that the spirit of the age should reflect the liturgy. We forget too readily the words of Dean Inge at the beginning of the twentieth century. He said, 'When the Church seeks to marry the spirit of the age, she soon becomes a widow.'

So where have we got to? To a pretty pass, I'm afraid, with the liturgy extensively re-written, changed theology written into it, not for the better, and with the uptake of all this novelty on a broad scale. Do people really like and seek this?

I spoke just now about 'a chatty manner in addressing God.' What has happened is that registers have changed. Let me explain registers. Imagine a schoolboy talking to his mates on the bus. Imagine that same schoolboy talking to his headmaster. There is a difference of style, that is a difference of register. Imagine the same boy talking to a much younger sibling. Again, another register. Get the register wrong, and it shows.

We have changed our register in speaking to God in modern liturgies, and it shows. We have become far too pretentious in our assessment of our relative standing with God. I think we have got the register wrong.

Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali has recently written, in a critique of a particularly trendy service put forward for a Godparents' Day: 'Returning lapsed churchgoers expect reverence and awe rather than touchy-feely group dynamics and the atmosphere of a class in a primary school.' Yet that is what we sometimes get.

Let me try to analyse what has contributed to our arrival in our present situation. No doubt there is a myriad of reasons, some of which

I would like to put before you. I wouldn't claim for a moment that my list is complete, nor would I claim that each reason is discrete and self-contained. Some will cross-relate with, or activate, others.

In my view, since the end of the Second World War in 1945, we have had in this country three major stepping stones in philosophical and socio-economic change. In some parts of the world they might be deemed small revolutions, but we don't do revolutions here, do we?

The first, in the second half of the 1940s, was a generally participative change. Rather like the time after the 1914-1918 War, people were on a roller-coaster of 'the old order changeth', and for the second time in half a century many things were 'never going to be the same again.' Quote, unquote. The way in which we thought changed. People now had rights rather than responsibilities. Nothing could be anyone's personal fault. The unequal became terribly equal. And, to quote the old song, 'The world owes me a living' became an epithet for the times.

I can't recognise that this affected the *Church* very much *at the time*, but I think the seeds were sown for a delayed bumper crop some years later, when the Church sought to align itself rather more closely to the changed secular environment which had by then ensued.

Perhaps, in a strangely converse way, this helped secular society to be more dismissive of religious practices than it might otherwise have been.

The second of these steps was the Thatcher denouement replacing the development of overbearing collectivism with individualism, and in the estimation of some this individualism also became overbearing. There was much vaunting of the cosmic significance of the individual and thus considerable damage to the concept of his very subordinate status to his Maker. If the liturgy were to reflect the spirit of *that* age, then *men* and *women* would be writ large. Everyone was for himself and there was nothing much for which anyone should ever apologise. That helps to put a liturgy which is big on contrition rather out of favour.

More recently has come a third and rather strange alteration of the British psyche. Perhaps initially participative to a degree, but progressively less so, without it going away. There is an outlook which is anti-establishment (I mean that in the broad sense, *not* as a matter of the establishment of the Church of England), and anti-institutional and anti-traditional. It ascribes the word 'modern' to anything which is merely different (and thus it advocates difference from what we have previously known). It apologises for all sorts of things which happened in *history*—which of course by definition could *not* have been modern! This was much rooted in the events of 1997 and the arrival of Cool Britannia, and was strangely and illogically fuelled by the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, who, although very much part of the Establishment throughout her life, became an icon of anti-establishment in her death. This was the time when we started clapping funerals and showing elaborate signs of impersonal grief.

There have been challenges in all three of these sociological changes to the traditional role of the Church of England, and most particularly in the fresh challenges of this third change. The Church has always been linked with the Establishment—which is under attack; with the Monarchy—which is under attack; it has a role in and through the House of Lords—which is under attack; and with historic Britishness (which dare I say is now becoming Englishness)—which is under attack. Confusingly, some of the liberal wing of the Church of England are themselves part of this generic attack. All these things have greatly changed the Church of England and the way in which she prays. In the Book of Common Prayer she is a national, monarchical, established Church. There are people who want to change that. Regrettably, too, some of the players in the traditional order of things have not behaved as good role models. Here lies part of the *basis* of the Church's turmoil.

Within the Church itself, there has been a top-down imposition of change. Career-conscious clergy have behaved rather like latter-day Vicars of Bray. If you know the old song, just change one word: 'And whatsoever *fad* may reign, I'll be the Vicar of Bray, Sir.' And so to an acquiescing, anything-for-a-quiet-life laity. There has been no great groundswell of change coming from them; rather an acceptance which stems from, 'Well, he's the Vicar', or, 'I don't want to argue about it, after all he is a man of the cloth.'

So changes came. Clerical promotions favoured those who conformed to the new ideas, and thus the pace of change grew.

There were other reasons too why clergy were ready to embrace change. The origins of the Church of England clergy were changing. As relatively recently as 1950, well over half of the clergy were sons of Anglican clergy—steeped in Anglican ways. Thirty years later, over 60% of the clergy were not sons of practising Anglicans.

Now look, I am absolutely *not* saying that these were unworthy men; only that the traditional ethos of Anglicanism had been weakened by the *suddenness* of this change. Many priests came from a background and outlook of non-conformity, where common liturgy is not writ large. And it happened with a remarkable simultaneity of timing with the top-down changes of which I was speaking a moment ago.

There is a sense in which we have allowed piracy, as people with different commitments as to practice have taken over the ship. Furthermore, we have increasingly entrusted the training of ordinands to joint training courses with other denominations, such that, if I can carry on the simile, even non-pirates have had a measure of piracy rubbed off upon them. I realise that I am not on very good ecumenical ground here, but that doesn't alter the facts with regard to liturgy.

Over this same period of time, Synodical government came fully into its own. No doubt elements of democracy were in mind, although the structure is not particularly democratic. My definition of Synods—not the dictionary one—is: 'groups of active, ordinarily busy, folk with axes to grind, who have somehow managed to set some time aside to change things, and are determined to use it!' Change is their bread and butter. Leaving things as they are is anathema to Synods. So they have sought change and achieved change, yet it has not always been a wonderful success. The liturgy was an obvious target for them, and even after their many changes, it remains so. Any permanence would seem to be an illusion. Change always seems trendier. Just look how it attracts media coverage, whereas the status quo does not. I wish we could have a bit of a rest from innovation. I ask myself: Why shouldn't Synods be entitled to sabbaticals?

May I turn now to what has gone on under the heading of whatI shall call 'the Young People Myth'? It goes like this:

> Young people are not coming to church.
> We must make church more young-people friendly.
> What do young people do who don't come to church?
> Let's do that.

I fear the Church has chased a myth rather chase the evidence. There are well-ordered, well-instructed churches where the young come and keep on coming. Look how it happens here in Blackburn, for example, in connection with the music outreach programme. There are clergy who, not surprisingly really, engage the interest of young people and retain contact into adulthood through their consistent orthodoxy. And there are churches made *supposedly* 'young-friendly' where the young still do not come. Then the continued non-attendance has tended to cause *not* the re-appraisal and the return to order and instruction, but the attempt to make the offering even more young-friendly still. To chase the myth which doesn't work, and, because it doesn't work, to chase it harder still. Sadly, that occasionally reaches catastrophic levels. Some will remember the terrible outcomes of the Sheffield 9 o'clock service. That was 9.00pm, perhaps I should add, and afterwards.

The Church seems to have forgotten that young people used to arrive in it by the 'come along *with*' method. With parents and grandparents. If one alienates the older generation in the course of failing attempts to attract the young, attendances are hit by what is fashionably called a 'double whammy'. They are hit from both ends.

Just now, I mentioned order and instruction. There has been quite a breakdown in instruction. People come to Confirmation with scant instruction. We used to be instructed into an appreciation of the Prayer Book and a knowledge of its use. It is true that the clergy are busy, often with multiple parishes to look after, and sometimes diocesan duties too. But perhaps some of this lack of resource stems from the fact that the dedicated, instructing, parish priest has become under-valued. Kudos comes in other directions than that of doing the fundamental job of parochial ministry.

This change away from instruction has had a co-incident timing with an apparently different, yet actually related change, elsewhere. In secular education, over *this same period*, learning by rote and appreciation of poetry all but disappeared. With *learning* supposedly subjugated to *understanding*, and without a sense of poetry and wonder, and then with a reduction in instruction within the Church, it is hardly surprising that the use of a remembered liturgy and an appreciation of its beauty have gone into decline.

I would just mention Alan Bennett's words, said in this very spot in 1990: 'A generation which found large resources of liturgy which had never consciously been *learned* but which was extensively *remembered* has been replaced by a generation which has no resources of learned or remembered liturgy whatsoever.'

With his characteristic dry humour, he went on to say that attending church today with a sound knowledge of the Prayer Book is about as useful as attending a disco with a sound ability in the Valeta.

We have also had, largely imported from America, the introduction of gender-impartial language. The secular feminist movement saw the liturgy as adverse to women because it often used generic language—for example, using 'men' (as the generic word) to mean both men and women. Into the attack they went, quite oblivious to the fact that we say 'geese' to mean both geese and ganders, or, conversely, 'ducks' to mean both drakes and ducks. But they really went to work on the liturgy, sometimes destroying its flow by the addition of extra syllables, in the unerring pursuit of gender exactitude. Such terminology is now widespread—because we have allowed it to be and not as a natural movement in language. The whole approach has made it difficult for women priests generally to espouse the Prayer Book, although there are some that do.

Yet again, though, it was not always just the particular words that were changed; the back-door opportunity to change theology as well was seized on many an occasion.

All these things have inter-played to sweep us along from our Book of Common Prayer to the remarkably Uncommon Prayer rendered today, and indeed sometimes to the lack of a liturgy altogether.

May I say, only slightly flippantly, to the Bishops, that one way of succeeding with admittedly stretched resources is to maintain a stable liturgy. We used to bring our own books to church for a service that was defined within them. We didn't have clergy spending many hours per week *every week* thinking up what sort of service to have on Sunday, before spending more hours producing multi-page booklets on the parish desk-top publishing system, the booklets having a valid life-span of approximately one hour.

So now let's move on from analysis to *action*. What can we all be doing at this particular juncture to make things just a bit more acceptable for people who think as we do?

One. Don't be shrinking violets. Ask for fair treatment with regard to Prayer Book services, even if you know that your Vicar's idea of 'fair' is not the same as yours. Ask. And learn to dig your heels in a bit. We can't be totally amenable people if that always means being swept aside. Always polite, always courteous, we must nevertheless be prepared to be profoundly awkward when it comes to standing up against our detractors and those set upon destroying our cause.

Two. Ask that some of that fair share be at reasonably accessible times. Not only in the middle of the working week. Not only at 8.00am (or earlier) on Sundays, but at times when older people and those using public transport can get there. Otherwise the situation is reached where it is said: 'We offer Prayer Book services here, but no one comes.' Well, no. Because it's at 7.30 on Wednesday mornings. I remember being told by one Theological College: 'On Saturdays, all our services are BCP.' That's good; but only later did I discover that Saturday was the one day in the week when chapel attendance for ordinands was optional.

Three. Now here's one which I think is quite important. There's a short phrase we should all learn and use. It's this: Proper Prayer Book services are *in* the Book of Common Prayer. You might be offered 'Prayer Book as used'. What a camouflaging phrase that can be! You might be offered a 'traditional service'. That can mean many things. If it is the traditional rite from *Common Worship*, the Calendar may be different—with different Collect, Epistle and Gospel, and you will probably not have the readings from the Authorised Version of the Bible. There may be a lot of other changes, too. Almost certainly all the Ghosts will have become Spirits. This can then become habitual. I once told a priest—a very good friend—that he should apply for a Spirits licence. A human *nature* might be ascribed to God rather than his *property* of having mercy. And you might get the unbeauty of gender-neutral language. 'Humankinds' a-plenty.

Some of you may be saying: ‘But do just a few differences matter?’ Well, a slip here and there can be forgotten; but constant change, I would insist, *does* matter. Because change begets more change, increasing change, and unnecessary change.

So remember: ‘Prayer Book Services are *in* the Book of Common Prayer.’ Things otherwise may not be what they seem. Which phrase prompts me to tell a little story:

An Irishman moves into a tiny hamlet in County Kerry, walks into the pub and promptly orders three beers. The bartender raises his eyebrows, but serves the man three beers, which he drinks quietly at a table, alone. An hour later, the man has finished the three beers and orders three more. This happens yet again. The next evening the man orders and drinks three beers at a time, several times. Soon the entire town is whispering about the Man Who Orders Three Beers. Finally, a week later, the bartender broaches the subject on behalf of the town. ‘I don’t mean to pry, but folks around here are wondering why you always order three beers?’ ‘’Tis odd, isn’t it’, the man replies. ‘You see, I have two brothers, and one went to America, and the other to Australia. We promised each other that we would always order an extra two beers whenever we drank, as a way of keeping up the family bond.’ The bartender, and the whole town, was pleased with this answer, and soon the Man Who Orders Three Beers became a local celebrity and source of pride to the hamlet, even to the extent that out-of-towners would come and watch him drink. Then, one day, the man comes in and orders only two beers. The bartender pours them with a heavy heart. This continues for the rest of the evening; he orders only two beers. The word flies around town. Prayers are offered for the soul of one of the brothers. The next day, the bartender says to the man: ‘Folks around here, me first of all, want to offer condolences to you for the death of your brother. You know, the two beers and all…’ The man ponders this for a moment, then replies: ‘You’ll be happy to hear that my two brothers are alive and well. It’s just that I, myself, have decided to give up drinking for Lent.’

Things may not always be what they seem.

Four. When people argue against the BCP overall and absolutely, try this: ‘I’m not clever enough to say that the BCP—to which I cleave—is right for everybody. But, equally, I know that those who insist that the BCP is wrong for everybody aren’t clever enough to be right either.’

Five. We need to have a much better idea of what is available and where, to take careful stock of what the real situation is. We do at times, even in this Society, tend to talk and write the most intricate gobbledegook, without being at all sure of the central facts of where the Prayer Book is available and where it is not.

That gives me the chance to illustrate with my favourite Sherlock Holmes story:

After much persuasion, Dr Watson had at last succeeded in getting Sherlock Holmes to go on a camping holiday with him. They pitched their tent, had a meal over a fire and settled down for the night. Later Dr Watson awoke, and, lying there in his sleeping bag, was awe-struck with the beauty of the summer night sky. He could not contain himself from waking Sherlock Holmes to show him this beauty. 'Look at this, Holmes,' he began, 'such sheer beauty, and it says so much. Look at the position of the Pole Star relative to the Moon—it says to me that we are in the Northern Hemisphere. Look at the relativity of Cirrus and the Great Bear—it says to me that we are close to the Greenwich Meridian. Look at Pleiades and Orion—it says to me that it has to be August. What does it say to you Holmes?' Holmes replied: 'What it says to me, my dear Watson, is that someone has pinched the tent.'

There are times when knowing when our tent has been pinched, and where it hasn't, is more important that the most erudite of essays and articles and philosophising.

Six. *Tell* people about the Prayer Book and what it means to you. 'Tell' means that you instigate the communication; that you do it when you have listeners; and that you dictate the subject matter and do it robustly.

Seven. If you can also get on a Parochial Church Council, do that. Be better at knowing which of our members *are* on PCCs and Synods, and also be better at knowing about those on PCCs and Synods who are *not* our members but are broadly sympathetic. We could be better organised in this regard.

Number 8, and I'll go no further than number 8. It's only a little word, and it's most important. We can *pray*. We can also pray about it. Don't underestimate the power of prayer to accomplish much. We underestimate it at our peril. In this regard we can always hover around the Collects for the 15th, 16th and 22nd Sundays after Trinity:

> Keep, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy Church with thy perpetual mercy; and, because the frailty of man without thee cannot but fall, keep us ever by thy help from all things hurtful, and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
>
> O Lord, we beseech thee, let thy continual pity cleanse and defend thy Church; and, because it cannot continue in safety without thy succour, preserve it evermore by thy help and goodness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

> Lord, we beseech thee to keep thy household the Church in continual godliness; that through thy protection it may be free from all adversities, and devoutly given to serve thee in good works, to the glory of thy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Whilst we have to accept that things are never going to be as they were forty years ago, we are not powerless to maintain a form of Prayer Book presence. We *can* do something about it. It isn't easy, I know. The pursuit of the worthwhile is rarely easy. But do remember that when you go your way into His courts with thanksgiving, you are entitled to go *your* way into those courts sometimes, not always someone else's way.

It is so easy to feel as an individual so small and so powerless to make any difference. But don't give in to that feeling. So listen to this as now I bring things to a close.

I am nothing if not a realist. Within a few weeks most of you will have forgotten almost everything I have said this afternoon. Yet I would want you to remember what you yourselves *can* do in defence of our Prayer Book, without taking to the streets or setting yourselves on fire to attract attention. Things like making your preferences known to your Vicar, like asking for a Prayer Book rite when someone in your family is being baptised or confirmed. Things like making provision for the sort of funeral service you would like at the end of your earthly life.

So to remind you of the fact that you yourselves can be considerable influences, I am going to ask you to remember, if nothing else, just the final nine words that I shall say this afternoon. Long term remembering. Are you ready? Because here they come. *Many a large door swings on very little hinges.*

(The address printed above was delivered at Blackburn Cathedral on Saturday 14th May 2016 during the Annual Festival of the Blackburn Branch of the Prayer Book Society, and on the occasion of Neil Inkley's retirement after thirty years' service as Secretary and Treasurer.)

Letters

From John Osborne, Munich

In the concluding section of his essay on the legal and constitutional position of The Book of Common Prayer (*Faith & Worship*, 78, pp. 31-32) Paul Benfield expands his theme to reflect on the possibility that the Synod could, by 'the simple device of construing the masculine as the feminine', and 'without altering the words …at all', act so as to permit same-sex marriage according to The Book of Common Prayer. In his rejoinder (*Faith & Worship*, 79, pp. 60-62) Ian Robinson challenges this conclusion at some length on the grounds that such action would be stopped by English grammar and lexis, and declares that 'the Church has no authority to change the … meaning of a sixteenth century text.'

It is perhaps a pity that Paul Benfield should have concluded on such an alarmist note; while the counter-argument might have been clearer if Ian Robinson had not found it necessary to roll out so much of the grammarians' heavy artillery.

In any case, it is surely unlikely that the matter will ever be put to the test, for that might nevertheless seem to require one of the partners in such a union to pretend, for the duration of the ceremony, to be of a sex which he or she is not—a reversal of the process of 'coming out'.

As to the substantive issue, Ian Robinson rightly points out that the noun 'man' has both an inclusive meaning (member of the human race) and an exclusive meaning (person of male sex). (See also *Faith & Worship*, 58, pp. 58-59.) However, construing masculine as feminine (or, for that matter, as *exclusively* masculine) is not an entirely arbitrary process, for the meaning is generally evident from the context, as in the marriage service, where 'men are clearly … differentiated from women' (Robinson). This is not true of the order for the consecration of Bishops, hence the perceived need for the contentious paragraph cited by Paul Benfield—perceived, at least in part, because the inclusive masculine has become 'offensive to English-speaking feminists' (Robinson).

To someone who can remember when the 'milkman' could be a woman and a 'theatre sister' could be a man, this does seem unnecessary. What a pity we did not adopt the solution suggested by an episode in Thomas Mann's novel *Budddenbrooks*. It is 1848, the year of revolutions, and a crowd of discontented workers has assembled. Consul Buddenbrook picks out one of them and asks, 'What is it you want?', getting the reply, 'We want a Republic [*mutatis mutandis*: inclusive language]', to which the Consul responds, 'But you already have one, you idiot!'

From Captain Nick Kettlewell, Dorchester

I am sure Naval colleagues will join me in thanking the Revd Dr Michael Brydon for his excellent article (*Faith & Worship* 79) drawing the attention of a wider audience to our naval prayers now lost from many a pew to Rite A and subsequently *Common Worship*.

When I joined the Navy in January 1952 attendance at Sunday Worship remained compulsory for Cadets, Midshipmen and Boy Seamen. As Midshipmen in HMS *Vanguard* when in Portsmouth we would march the Boys to St Anne's Church.

At that time weekend leave was only granted when ships were in their home port so Captain's Rounds took place on Saturdays and Divisions on Sundays. When a Chaplain was embarked, Church following Divisions was voluntary but if the Captain took Prayers they were compulsory as were prayers taken by the Chaplain at the daily muster of Both Watches of the Hands. Perhaps they still are?

My Father recounted his ship giving passage to a Chaplain from Malta to the Dardanelles in 1916. Summoned by the Captain he was handed the lesson for the Sunday service. 'I thought I would be taking it' said the Chaplain. 'No' said the Captain 'I take it. At sea in Command I rank with, but after, the Almighty"!

To this date the Chaplain of the Fleet sends out weekly notices with Collect, Readings, etc to Commanding Officers of ships without Chaplains who take their Sunday Worship and read the Banns, etc.

When I took command of HMS *Drake*, the major shore establishment in Plymouth, I inherited the Victorian St Nicholas Church seating over 1000 and smaller Church of Scotland and Roman Catholic churches. My wife and I alternated between all three in order to meet the families. I was advised that we had three Carol Services. I said to the chaplains let us have just one, introduced by the C of E, Prayers by Church of Scotland and Blessing from the high altar by RC and I will read the Gospel. They said they had been waiting for me to tell them! In St Nicholas we had Series 3 then on printed cards and the naval standard green BCP incorporating the English Hymnal. One day I was showing visitors round and noticed that my BCP had been replaced by the ASB and a new hymn book. Having taken my ASB back to my office to examine I sent for the Senior Chaplain: 'Pray tell me where I can find the Forms of Prayer for Use at Sea?' We had to type them out and stick them into the ASB. I then said 'I believe there is a Prayer Book Society, please give me their details and I will join it'.

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