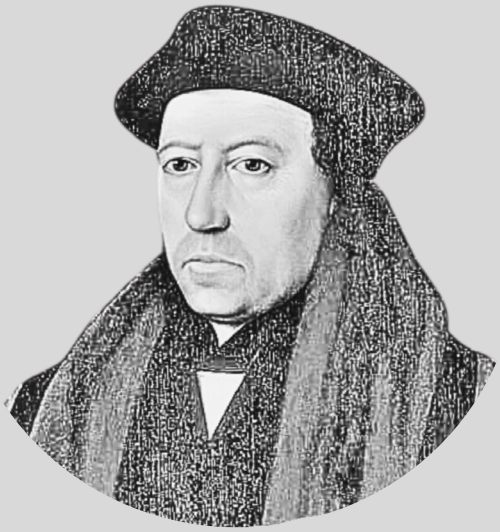
Cranmer Theological Journal



Volume 1 ◆ Number 1

January 2024

Anglican Way Institute Conference
May 29-31, 2024

APOLOGETICS AND SCIENCE

With Keynote Speaker
Dr. Alister McGrath

TRANSLATING THE LANGUAGE OF FAITH TO A CULTURE OF SCIENTISM

IN PERSON: $230
BY ZOOM: $150

Church of the Holy Communion Cathedral
17405 Muirfield Drive, Dallas, TX 75287
donna@holycommuniondallas.org
www.holycommuniondallas.org
(972) 248-6505

DR. ALISTER MCGRATH was a research scientist at Oxford University before he became a theologian. He holds doctorate degrees in the fields of molecular biophysics and theology. He is the Andreas Idreos Professor of Science and Religion at the University of Oxford. In addition to his work at Oxford, McGrath is Senior Research Fellow at Harris Manchester College, Oxford, President of the Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics, and serves as associate priest in a group of Church of England village parishes in the Cotswolds. As a former atheist, he regularly engages in debate and dialogue with leading atheists.

Cranmer Theological Journal
Volume 1 ◆ Number 1 ◆ January 2024

Contents

https://doi.org/10.62221/ctj.2024.100

Publication Information

*Cranmer Theological Journa*l (ISSN 2995-9241) is a peer-reviewed journal that publishes work related to Biblically orthodox Anglicanism in North America and elsewhere in the world. It is published once or twice annually by Cranmer Theological House, 17405 Muirfield Drive, Dallas, TX 75287.

Printed Copies

A bound copy of this issue is available for purchase. For more information, see www.CranmerJournal.org.

Copyright

Information for Authors

Guidelines for length, formatting and submission deadlines are available at the journal website.

Authors considering submission of an article are encouraged to contact the Editors. To propose a book review, contact the Book Review Editor.

Contact Information

General queries: info@CranmerJournal.org
Editors: editors@CranmerJournal.org
Book Reviews: books@CranmerJournal.org

Website: www.CranmerJournal.org

Cranmer Theological Journal
2024, Vol 1, No. 1, 1–2
https://doi.org/10.62221/ctj.2024.101

Welcome to *Cranmer Theological Journal*

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *Cranmer Theological Journal* (CTJ). Our desire is to offer a journal for both clergy and laity from a traditional, orthodox Anglican perspective. We took our inspiration from other journals with similar missions that have succeeded in the past, such as *The Churchman* in the Anglican tradition and *Concordia Theological Quarterly* in the Lutheran tradition. It is our intention to offer one or two issues per year on topics which are pertinent for all Anglicans, from a perspective that may not be available in other journals.

This first issue has been more than four years in the making. The earliest discussion began in May 2019 at Cranmer Theological House, a seminary of the Reformed Episcopal Church in Dallas, Texas. As with so much in the world, progress was delayed by various challenges during the long season of Covidtide. With the May 2021 approval of the seminary faculty and its Chancellor, The Most Rev. Ray R. Sutton, we received clear direction on the name and mission of what will be a mixed-audience, peer-reviewed journal. From the very beginning, to maximize the impact of our authors and their articles, we have been committed to publish using open access policies, which means that the journal will always be available free to all readers, with direct costs covered by donations and the sponsorship of the seminary.

In Fall 2022, we began the process of launching the journal and forming the Governing Board and the Editorial Board, as well as launching our first website. Early in 2023, we held the initial meetings of each board. Also in 2023, we both issued an open Call for Papers for Volume 1 of the journal, and approached qualified authors who could address specific topics related to our call.

Before you are the first three papers of two special issues on "Anglican Identity in the 21st Century." We chose this topic both because it is of pressing concern for Anglicans today and also because it is one where the views of North American Anglicans might not be reflected by existing American journals.

We are now receiving the remaining invited articles for Volume 1, Number 2, which (Lord willing) will be published in Summer 2024. After publication of this second issue, we will begin reviewing submissions for Volume 2, to be published early in 2025. For both issues, we will also include reviews of those books that we believe will be of interest to our readers.

While CTJ is sponsored by Cranmer Theological House, our intention is to stimulate a much broader discussion within the wider Anglican world. We sincerely hope that Anglicans from various jurisdictions in North America and elsewhere will join us in conversation. This discussion should be forthright, but also charitable. We would be well pleased if this effort leads to a better understanding among Anglicans and a greater cooperation in the cause of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

> *If you have an idea for a research article or a book review, please contact us to discuss your idea, using editors@CranmerJournal.org or books@CranmerJournal.org respectively.*

Charles Camlin and Charles Erlandson
Editors

Cranmer Theological Journal
2024, Vol 1, No. 1, 3–17
https://doi.org/10.62221/ctj.2024.102

The Issue of Anglican Identity

Charles Erlandson[1]

Institutions and communities in the twenty-first century are experiencing identity crises, a phenomenon from which religious traditions such as Anglicanism are not immune. Contemporary Anglicanism is becoming more diverse and, therefore, more contested and difficult to define. This article offers a nuanced definition of Anglicanism as a means of enabling Anglicans to understand themselves more clearly, a self-understanding which, in turn, will facilitate any future reform.

Key Words: Anglican identity, identity crisis, religious identity, definition of Anglicanism, postmodernism, unity and diversity

Introduction

Everywhere we look in Western culture, people are experiencing identity crises: individuals, families, neighborhoods, and nations. The Church and her members are not exempt from this modern crisis of identity, and one of the Church traditions most famous for having a troubled identity is Anglicanism.

In spite of our troubled identity, because of our troubled identity, it is essential that Anglicans have some clear sense of who we are. After all, if you don't know what a particular Church tradition is, how could you possibly know if it was the "best" tradition for you to be a member of?

Therefore, as we launch *Cranmer Theological Journal*, the focus of our inaugural issue is Anglican identity. My purpose in writing this article is to explore the issue of Anglican identity, which I will do in four sections. I will first discuss the notion of identity and why identities are experiencing crises, followed by a presentation of the nature of our own Anglican identity crisis. I will then present a brief model of religious identity that will serve as the basis for attempting to define Anglicanism and will help explain why religious identities are so difficult to define. Finally, I will pursue a nuanced definition of

[1] The Rev. Dr. Charles Erlandson is the Head of the Church History Department of Cranmer Theological House (Dallas, TX), where he is also the Director of External Studies. He serves as the assistant rector of Good Shepherd Reformed Episcopal Church in Tyler, TX, and is available at reverlandson@gmail.com.

Anglicanism so that we can get our bearings in understanding Anglican identity and make sense of the bewildering diversity in this unity we call Anglicanism. This foundational work of definition will provide a basis for further understanding and dialogue, both in this journal and elsewhere.

The Issue of Identity

Before I can discuss the nature of the Anglican identity crisis, I must first introduce the concept of identity and why it has become such a necessary obsession since the late twentieth century, if not before. An identity is a sense of who you are and may be either *received* or *constructed*. You may know who you are because you have received an identity that you have not chosen and which you rarely, if ever, question. Such received identities have been characteristic of humanity for most of its history, and received identities are those that people experience in traditional societies. On the other hand, your identity may not be inherited or received but conceived of as something that must be constructed from the plethora of choices offered to you. Anglicans today, among others, now have to live somewhere between received and constructed identities.

The tension between these two views is captured in Robert Schreiter's work, *The New Catholicity: Theology Between the Global and the Local*. Schreiter discusses the construction of religious identity in terms of two models of culture, what he terms "integrated concepts of culture" and "globalized concepts of culture." Schreiter's "integrated concepts of culture" parallels my "received identity," and his "globalized concepts of culture" parallels my "constructed identity."

According to Schreiter, "integrated concepts of culture depict culture as patterned systems in which the various elements are coordinated in such a fashion as to create a unified whole."[2] This patterned nature provides a sameness that gives a sense of identity to its participants and provides a feeling of security or "feeling at home." The integrated model is patterned after traditional societies that are relatively self-enclosed, self-sufficient, and governed by rule-bound tradition. It serves as a firm basis for the values a group desires to uphold and speaks of a wholeness that stands against the

[2] Robert J. Schreiter, *The New Catholicity: Theology Between the Global and the Local* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1997), 47–48.

fragmentation of society and the competitive pressures of capitalism, evokes an image of communion, and brings a sense of coherence to diverse elements.[3]

Schreiter contrasts the "integrated concept of culture" with what he calls the "globalized concept of culture," a concept in which culture is something to be constructed and is a ground of contest in relations. Identity is viewed as fragmentary or multiple, constructed, and imagined, and change is assumed to be the normal state of affairs. Global-local encounters often produce a disorienting mixture, or *tiempos mixtos*, in which the premodern, the modern, and the postmodern exist together in the same place. These *tiempos mixtos* create incompatible, coexistent logics, which may, at times, seem like an apt description of contemporary Anglicanism.[4]

Nancy Ammerman also articulates two sides to religious identity, what she variously calls "structured" and "emergent," "constructed" and "constrained," and "fluidity" and "constraint." In her view, while continuity of identity clearly prevails in religions, at the same time, a complex society continually challenges that continuity.[5]

Traditional communities, including religious communities, have *received* identities that are relatively stable over time but which are also founded on the assumption of *corporate personality*, a concept that has eroded since the time of the Reformation. Corporate personality may be summarized in terms of three basic tenets: organic unity, a representative figure, and the many-and-one oscillation. The organic unity of a corporate personality means that "the group possesses a consciousness which is distributed among its individual members,"[6] and the group considers itself organically one, as if a single body extended throughout time and space. Cultures with a corporate personality have an individual who serves as the representative figure who embodies the whole group.[7] For example, David in the Psalms represents all of Israel and not just himself, and the covenant representatives of the Scriptures (culminating in Christ) all act as representative figures: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David. The one-and-many oscillation means that the one represents the many, and the many are in the one so that there is not a sharp antithesis between the

---

3 Ibid, 47–51.

4 Schreiter, *New Catholicity,* 53–58.

5 Nancy T. Ammerman, "Religious Identities," in *Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, ed. Michele Dillon (Cambridge, U.K: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 207–24.

6 Robinson, "Corporate Personality," as quoted in Joseph C. Atkinson, *Biblical and Theological Foundations of the Family: The Domestic Church* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 2014), 164. My discussion of corporate personality closely follows that of Atkinson.

7 Atkinson, *Biblical and Theological Foundations of the Family*, 165.

individual and the community. The community is treated as an individual, and the group is all to the individual so that the individual finds his identity in the group. The individual is not himself a personality but a bearer of the community personality.[8]

In other words, in traditional communities, you are your tribe, from whom you derive your personality. You may be King David, Julius Caesar, or Plato, but most fundamentally you are an Israelite, a Roman, or an Athenian. This traditional, received corporate identity that is so salient in the Old Covenant continues in the New Covenant, where we are in Christ, and he is in us, and we have our identity as members of the one Body of Christ and not purely as individuals with their own separate relationship to God.

Since identity in traditional communities is received, relatively stable, and corporate, individuals in traditional societies have a relatively strong sense of who they are. For this reason, they don't think much about their own individual identity and question who they are.

On the other hand, identities may be not only received but also constructed, a phenomenon closely associated with the rise of the autonomous individual. If the individual does not know who he is by virtue of a relationship with the corporate community, then it is incumbent on the individual to construct his own identity in some manner. Initially in history, as the self was increasingly conceived as an autonomous person, the individual would naturally identify with received communities. However, as the ideal of individual autonomy became more dominant, and as various communities began to break down and lose their ability to communicate their identity to their members, individuals have increasingly been compelled to choose their identity or identities.

Families, churches, the nation-state, and other corporate entities no longer have the same ability to give identity to individuals. The identity-giving power of each of these, to some degree, has been dissolved by the acid of autonomous individualism.[9] This means that in postmodern culture, the individual is left to choose who he wants to be. For many, this may still mean choosing to identify oneself in terms of a particular church tradition, family, or the American nation. But the truly significant fact is that even when one makes these traditional choices, identity, to some degree, has to be chosen. This is illustrated by the phenomenon of searching for a new church to attend when you have moved to a new town. You may choose to continue to be a member of your former

---

8 Atkinson, *Biblical and Theological Foundations of the Family*, 166.

9 Carl Trueman, in his *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2020), discusses in some detail the autonomous self in its relation to dissipating communities.

denomination, but today you are also likely to decide which church to attend based on several factors related to the desires of the individual family.

Identity, therefore, is largely received in traditional cultures with strong corporate personalities but is largely chosen in cultures where communities such as the Church, the nation, and the family are weak.

One of the consequences of this culture of choice is that whatever identity is chosen takes on the characteristics of consumerism. If an individual constructs his identity from the menu of options, it's likely that the identity he creates will be a pastiche or a hodgepodge collection of choices that may have relatively little coherence or integrity. Increasingly, this is how American Christians are choosing their churches, a phenomenon I have frequently observed among Anglicans and would-be Anglicans. In the first place, the Christian identity of postmodern Christians is frequently only one identity among many categories of identity, and commonly not the most important of these categories. Secondly, people often come to Anglicanism via some collection of individual elements they find attractive, and not through an understanding of the whole of Anglicanism.

While received identities are consciously affirmed by individuals, they are not so much chosen, and when identity is thought of, it is in order to reflect on how I fit in with and abide by the terms of the community. On the other hand, those with constructed identities exhibit much more anxiety about their identities since they are the constructors of their identities, and their felt needs and desires may be changeable and uncertain. Constructed identities are relatively fickle and fluid,[10] subject to the changing ideas and whims of the individual who is offered enticing identity choices every day.

Questions of identity such as "Who am I?" are relatively rare in traditional societies whose members have received their identity, but they are an essential element of constructed identities.

The Anglican Identity Crisis

Therefore, identities, including religious identities, may be received, constructed, or hybridized. But identity is only anxiously sought in times of instability, conflict, and change, a truth that helps explain why identity is a ubiquitous pursuit in the twenty-first century.

---

[10] On the fluidity of postmodern culture, see Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Oxford: Polity, 2000).

It is not only individuals but also communities which are currently experiencing identity crises, a phenomenon to which churches are not immune. While the contemporary Anglican crisis of identity is most visibly manifest in the global struggles over an Anglicanism that faithfully maintains a biblical view of anthropology and human sexuality and one which does not, this battleground is itself only the most obvious sign of much deeper forces at work. As I have explained in my *Orthodox Anglican Identity*,[11] even those who are orthodox Anglicans in terms of biblical anthropology are experiencing an ever-increasing degree of diversity in terms of how they define Anglicanism.

Every community, if it is to survive and thrive, must have some relatively clear sense of its identity, including what distinguishes it from other similar communities and how it knows if any individual is inside or outside of the community. A one-celled organism provides a simple, useful illustration. The one-celled organism (although not sentient) has a sense of its organic unity and integrity, and in a one-celled organism there is a clear boundary line (the cell membrane) between what is inside the cell and is an integral part of it and what is outside of the cell and not part of it. Boundary markers of religious identity are not as clear-cut as those of cells, and yet the analogy holds.

In maintaining an identity, a religious community, like the cell, has to have some sense of who it is, how it knows who is part of it and who is outside of it, and some means of defending the boundaries it has defined. In terms of Anglicanism, we ask the questions: "What is an Anglican?" and "How do you know if someone is an Anglican or not?" Whatever answers we give to these questions must address the pressing issue of unity and diversity. On the one hand, Anglicanism and every religious identity must manifest a relatively large degree of unity, or else the identity in question will be meaningless. Too much diversity (and fluidity) threatens any clear identity. On the other hand, if a religious identity is too narrow in defining and defending its boundaries, it is likely to leave out desirable diversity and act more like a sect.

Therefore, the theme of unity in diversity, exemplified by the American political slogan *E. pluribus unum*, is exceedingly important in understanding identities, including religious identities. Too much unity or conformity in religion often results from coercion and is thus a characteristic of sects. Too much diversity, on the other hand, threatens clear and meaningful identities. In a religious context, this often entails moral and theological infidelity.

---

[11] Charles Erlandson, *Orthodox Anglican Identity: The Quest for Unity in a Diverse Religious Tradition* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2020). Much of what I write in this article about Anglican identity is discussed in greater detail in *Orthodox Anglican Identity*.

Anglicanism in the twenty-first century is experiencing an identity crisis, a crisis precipitated by many interacting factors. In the first place, Anglicans now live in a culture where identities are primarily constructed. This means, inevitably, that the collection of individuals and diverse churches within Anglicanism will continue making individual choices about Anglican belief and practice without understanding or perhaps even caring how these choices relate to the larger community or identity over both space and time.

Second, as we shall see when I attempt a definition, Anglicanism has an unusually complex identity that lends itself to a large degree of diversity. Anglicanism is somewhat more difficult to define than many other Christian identities because it has no pope, no magisterium, and no one confessional standard that is uniquely the primary norm.[12] This diversity has historically been kept in check, largely because of the restraining and defining power of the State to enforce religious structures, beliefs, and practices. The normative shape of Anglicanism that resulted from the Elizabethan Settlement of the sixteenth century was especially dependent on the authority of the State, and the erosion of that authority has, perhaps, enabled diversity and confusion in Anglicanism to be more exaggerated than in other Christian traditions.

Third, the trend ever since the Reformation is towards greater diversity both within the Christian tradition and among religions in the West. Anglicanism, as a religious identity, is not immune to such a trend and may, in fact, be more susceptible to this trend than other religious identities. It's not that Christianity in England before the Reformation lacked diversity. Rather, this diversity did not threaten a coherent identity because for most of English Church history it was not possible to assess the degree of diversity, nor was it possible to impose strict, universal norms to contain it. As England developed into a unified nation with its own emerging identity, and as this nation increasingly came under the unifying influence of the Roman Church after the Papal Revolution of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the diversity that existed was controlled by a combination of pope and king.

After the English Reformation and especially after the English Civil War, the initial diversification that included the majority Anglican population and the recusant Roman Catholic remnant developed into a much greater diversity that included Puritans, Presbyterians, Quakers, Baptists, and many smaller groups.

---

[12] Theological norms in Anglicanism are distributed between the Scriptures (which have a unique and fundamental authority), the Book of Common Prayer and the Thirty-nine Articles as distinctly Anglican formularies, and the Creeds, the Ecumenical Councils, and the Church Fathers as more general Christian norms.

Over time, these Dissenting groups gained more and more religious freedom and became a permanent part of the English religious landscape. The nineteenth century added agnosticism and atheism as religious options.

During these centuries of profound transformation, the State went from supporting and vigorously defending one privileged religious identity, to supporting a variety of Christian identities, to defending a complete freedom and diversity in religious options. In other words, when the Christendom model broke down, under which the State supported and promoted a particular religious identity, religious diversity exploded.

A Model of Religious Identity

To understand this increasing religious diversity and better understand Anglican identity, it is worth considering a model of religious identity I have developed. The model states that religious identities consist of four definitional factors (or identities) that interact in complex ways: ecclesial, normative, practical, and historical identities.

The *ecclesial identity* of a religious group focuses on official relationships between communities that claim a shared identity. These relationships may exist at the local, regional, national, or international level and across time. The ecclesial identity involves the key leaders, corporate structures, and institutions that bind churches together. The ecclesial identity of religions is closely related to the concept of culture as used, for example, by Philip Rieff, when he writes, "A culture survives principally . . . by the power of its institutions to bind and loose men in the conduct of their affairs with reasons which sink so deep into the self that they become commonly and implicitly understood."[13]

Ecclesial identities are accompanied by *normative identities* which are based on norms or standards deemed essential or critical to a religious identity. Such normative definitions are useful because they provide clear boundaries. They also make the acts of definition and identification more possible. Normative identities are maintained by the institutions and authorities of ecclesial identities.

While ecclesial and normative identities provide the basic structure and boundaries that make a religious identity possible, often what seems most characteristic of a church is its *practical* identity. Practical religious identities are concerned with a particular tradition of ethos, behavior, and practice.

---

[13] Phillip Rieff, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic: Uses of Faith After Freud*, 40th anniversary ed. (Wilmington: ISI Books, 2006), 2.

These first three religious identities correlate fairly well with one of the traditional expressions of Anglican identity: its "doctrine, discipline, and worship." "Doctrine" corresponds to normative identity, "discipline" to ecclesial identity, and "worship" to practical identity.

Finally, every religious group is identified as well by the development of the life of the religious group over time, that is, the *historical* identity. Every community (and even individuals) must have some sense of who they are based on their history, including their familial, tribal, or national history. In the case of churches, sometimes this history is of fairly recent origin, but, for a Catholic Christian tradition such as Anglicanism, the sense of history may be very ancient.

Even a cursory look at the model of religious identity I have so far sketched illustrates that religious identities are more complex than is usually believed. To add to the complexity, we should remember that religious identities are not static over time. For example, when we speak of the medieval Roman Catholic Church, we are not only talking about a great deal of diversity over geographic space at any given time but an even greater degree of diversity over time. For example, the pope was not always the pope in terms of his claims to universal jurisdiction asserted aggressively after the Papal Revolution of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and many beliefs and practices that have been dogmatized since the Papal Revolution were not the norm before this Revolution.

When trying to comprehend the religious diversity present today, both in general and in terms of Anglican identity, we must also understand how religious diversity is limited so that a coherent identity may be maintained. Remember: too much diversity threatens any coherent identity. In its simplest terms, religious identities are created and maintained most clearly when strong ecclesial authority and clear norms are present.

In the absence of a strong religious authority, diversity becomes the default. When the religious activity of a society is unregulated, it will tend to be very pluralistic, but when the State uses coercive force to regulate religious activity, religious monopolies are more likely. Whenever a strong authority is willing to act strongly, diversity will be limited to some degree, and religious identity will be more clearly preserved. This strong authority that employs coercive force to regulate the religious economy often comes from the State, but an ecclesiastical

authority, such as the Roman Catholic Church of the medieval period, may also act to limit religious diversity.[14]

The role of ecclesial authority in establishing and maintaining religious identities is accompanied and supported by the religious norms that interact with this authority. Often, these norms are theological in nature, although in Anglicanism the liturgical norm of the Prayer Book has a unique and critical importance. Preserving core teachings that undergo little change is critical to the long-term vitality of churches. Such core teachings generate high levels of member commitment and tight social networks, and they can preserve the religious capital accrued and valued by existing members. When these core teachings are inimitable, they help to retain members and prevent schisms. When, therefore, religious organizations revise core teachings, they threaten organizational vitality.[15]

This model of religious identity has great power to explain important distortions of Christian identities: norms without an ecclesial identity will tend to become contested, fragmented, and heretical; ecclesial authority without clear norms will tend to become arbitrary and tyrannical; behaviors and practices without an ecclesial identity and norms will tend to become moralistic and then relativistic. This is exactly what most religions are experiencing in the Western world today, including Anglicanism.

We are now in a position to understand that religious diversity is the norm in the contemporary postmodern condition, and churches will continue to experience their own varieties of identity crises. What we are experiencing is a later stage of the end of the Christendom model of Christianity and Anglicanism, in which the religious identity of Anglicanism was preserved (and to some degree created) by the power of the State. As Powicke famously stated (and perhaps overstated): "[T]he one definite thing which can be said about the Reformation in England is that it was an act of State."[16] In the Elizabethan Settlement of the sixteenth century, subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles was established and to some degree enforced by the State, as was the prescribed usage of the Book of Common Prayer.

---

[14] See Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, *Acts of Faith: Explaining the Human Side of Religion*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 193–99 and Rodney Stark and William S. Bainbridge. *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival, and Cult Formation* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), 99–125.

[15] Roger Finke, "Innovative Returns to Tradition: Using Core Teachings as the Foundation for Innovative Accommodation," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 43, no. 1 (2004), 20–23.

[16] Maurice Powicke, *The Reformation in England*, (United Kingdom: Oxford UP, 1941), 1.

It is an uncomfortable truth that throughout history, Christianity has often been spread, fostered, and enforced by the coordinate power of the Church and State, including the instantiations of Christendom experienced after the conversion of Constantine, during the time of the Frankish ascendancy and Carolingian Renaissance, and after the Papal Reformation. Now that Christendom has deteriorated, we should both expect religious diversity to increase and also seek somehow to limit this diversity, a limiting that must now take place by churches (ecclesial identity) defining and defending various norms (normative identity), as well as exercising discipline for individuals and churches that manifest undesirable diversity.

Anglican Identity

Where does this leave us as Anglicans? Now that we have some idea of why religions today are experiencing identity crises and have a model of religious identities and how they are maintained, we need a definition of Anglicanism that will enable us to evaluate Anglican identity, the all-important topic that is the focus of the first issue of the *Cranmer Theological Journal*. Such a definition will enable us to comprehend Anglican identity, perceive why that identity is now in crisis, understand why Anglicans often have no agreement on what Anglicanism is, and chart a way forward for Anglicanism in the twenty-first century.

Declining to define Anglicanism has become an Anglican pastime in recent decades,[17] and extended definitions of Anglicanism are surprisingly difficult to find, at least in part because it turns out that religious identities are inherently complex. This helps explain the reluctance of Anglicans to define just who they are. In a book titled *Anglican Identities*, former Archbishop of Canterbury and celebrated Anglican scholar Rowan Williams overtly forswears "any aim to provide a fresh rallying-point for Anglican identity in these pages."[18] Williams's

[17] When I was researching Anglican identity, I sought out many well-known Anglican authorities. One, who, in all honesty, I was hoping would decisively settle the issue for me so that I wouldn't have to, fumbled around for a coherent definition. When I attended a well-known orthodox Anglican conference and a leader asked the question "What is Anglicanism?" the participants gave a Blind Man and the Elephant series of answers, some drawing attention to the liturgy or beauty, some because of doctrine, etc. When I attended a three-day intensive seminary class on Anglicanism, at the end of the class the professor opened the class up for questions. Immediately, I raised my hand and asked the dreaded question: "What is Anglicanism?" After a few seconds of ponderous silence, the professor did what any good teacher would have done: he turned the question back on the class, saying "What do you think?"

[18] Rowan Williams, *Anglican Identities* (Cambridge, MA: Cowley, 2004), 7.

title seems to concede that defining a single Anglican identity may be an impossibility.

Many vague, confusing, and even conflicting definitions of Anglicanism have been offered, a fact that reflects the problem of Anglican identity. Some definitions are so broad and weak that, if they were generally accepted, they would strongly suggest that Anglicanism does not have a coherent enough identity to effectively discuss an Anglican future. Some say, "You are an Anglican if you think you are,"[19] while others say that because Anglicanism stresses continuity with the universal Church, it has no separate identity.

Any definition of Anglicanism should take into account the four different aspects of religious identity that my model has illuminated: the ecclesial, normative, practical, and historical.

My definition of Anglicanism, therefore, is this: "*Anglicanism is the Catholic Church that was planted in England in the first few centuries after Christ; reshaped decisively by the English Reformation that reformed the received Catholic traditions and also by the Evangelical and Catholic Revivals and other historical movements of the Spirit; and that has now been inculturated into independent, global churches.*"

This definition requires some explanation, especially in terms of the four identities I have outlined earlier.

The first of the four religious identities, the *ecclesial*, shows up in my definition of Anglicanism in two places. First, Anglicanism is essentially a part of the one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church—the part that was planted in the British Isles before the end of the second century. The ecclesial identity of Anglicanism appears in my definition as well in my acknowledgment that Anglicanism is now more than the Church of England but includes the national churches that the English Church has birthed.

To a large degree, you know if you are an Anglican if you belong to an Anglican church, which means that in some way, the ecclesial identity of a church is privileged and helps answer the question: "Who is an Anglican?"

We should extend the ecclesial identity of Anglicanism to include the truth that the bishop is the locus of unity, and so Anglicans have dioceses that consist of related parishes under the head of a bishop. Anglicans also have national churches, as well as international bodies, such as the Anglican Communion and GAFCON (Global Anglican Future Conference), but these are not bound in the same way or to the same degree as national churches.

---

[19] John Whale, *The Future of Anglicanism* (Oxford: Mowbray, 1988), 89.

The great realignment taking place in global Anglicanism is an *ecclesial* realignment. This realignment has been developing for at least a few decades and has resulted in the creation of the ACNA (Anglican Church in North America) and GAFCON and the GSFA (Global South Fellowship of Anglican Churches) internationally. More recently, the "Kigali Commitment" that resulted from the 2023 GAFCON meeting states that the GSFA and GAFCON Primates share the view that "due to the departures from orthodoxy articulated above, they can no longer recognize the Archbishop of Canterbury as an Instrument of Communion, the 'first among equals' of the Primates," and that "We welcome the GSFA's Ash Wednesday Statement of 20 February 2023, calling for a resetting and reordering of the Communion."[20]

For decades, many Anglicans have asserted that to be part of the Anglican Communion and in communion with the See of Canterbury is what makes one an Anglican, regardless of adherence to particular norms or practices, such as adhering to biblical morality or using the Book of Common Prayer. This form of Anglican ecclesial identity has been vigorously challenged by the leaders of the global Anglican churches that contain 85% of Anglicanism's members. The ecclesial structures that will replace the Anglican Communion for these orthodox Anglicans are a work in progress.

The *normative* identity of Anglicanism appears in two places in my definition of Anglicanism. First, when I define Anglicanism as the Catholic Church planted in England, I am assuming within this ecclesial identity of the Catholic Church in England certain Catholic norms that contemporary Anglicanism still adheres to: the three Creeds, the Ecumenical Councils, the ancient liturgy, and the patristic consensus. The second place that Anglican norms appear in my definition is assumed in the phrase "reshaped decisively by the English Reformation that reformed the received catholic traditions." One component of this decisive reshaping that has persisted as a part of Anglican identity for more than 450 years is the use of the specifically Anglican formularies, the Book of Common Prayer and the Thirty-nine Articles.

Part of the current Anglican realignment and identity crisis is due to the fact that two manifestly different forms of Anglicanism, orthodox and liberal, adhere to different norms. While both orthodox and liberal Anglicans claim the Scriptures as a norm, they employ the Scriptures in very different ways, especially regarding issues related to biblical anthropology. While orthodox Anglicans most commonly claim the Thirty-nine Articles as a theological norm,

[20] Global Anglican Future Conference, "GAFCON IV – The Kigali Commitment," April 23, 2023, https://gafcon23.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Kigali-Commitment-2023.pdf.

liberal Anglicans do not. While both groups claim the Book of Common Prayer as a norm and appear to have similar liturgical practices, they differ over what they believe the Prayer Book teaches and embodies. Within the orthodox Anglican camp, some prefer to rely on the English Reformers and Continental Reformers as privileged norms, while others prefer to give preference to the Church Fathers and the patristic consensus.

The *practical* identity of Anglicanism includes their understanding and practice of baptism and the Holy Communion, the five lesser sacraments, the use of the Prayer Book and liturgy, the Church year, and other practices. Some Anglicans, especially on the more liberal side, believe that practically, Anglicans are defined as well by an ethos of comprehension and toleration, notions of a dispersed authority, and the so-called "Hooker's three-legged stool" of Scripture, tradition, and reason. In such cases, the practical identity of Anglicanism is often used to undermine the firmness of doctrinal norms.

Many Anglicans today are drawn to Anglicanism especially because of some aspects of practice, such as the use of the ancient liturgy, the adherence to the Church year, or certain other practical elements such as those that convey a sense of beauty and reverence.

As with many other things, Anglicans disagree about their *historical* identity, not only about its meaning but even about when Anglicanism began. Some Anglicans begin Anglican history with the planting of the church in the British Isles in the first few centuries after Christ and stress the continuity of the church of England with the early, pre-Roman Catholic Church, in spite of centuries of the Church of England falling under the aegis of the Roman Catholic Church by degrees. More commonly, many define Anglicanism as beginning with the reconstitution of the English Church under Henry VIII because at this point the *de facto* distinctiveness of Anglicanism began.

My own belief is that the term "Anglicanism" may properly be employed to refer to the earliest origins of the planting of Christianity in the British Isles.[21] This is reflected in that portion of my definition of Anglicanism which reads that Anglicanism "is the Catholic Church that was planted in England in the first few centuries after Christ." I realize that I am, therefore, pitting myself against the majority of scholars, including the various editors and authors who contributed to the five-volume *Oxford History of Anglicanism*, who have chosen to begin

[21] I establish this point at length in my forthcoming book*, English Church History in 4 Acts: from the Beginning through Henry VIII*.

Anglicanism in 1520.[22] However, the relatively large element of continuity in the English Reformation with what came before is one of the hallmarks of Anglicanism: likewise, with preceding eras of religious transformation in the British Isles.

Conclusion

The issue of identity, then, is an inescapable part of living in a postmodern, post-Christian culture. The difficulty Anglicans have in articulating their own identity is both a part of the complex nature of all religious identities and also a reflection of the diversity in religion that manifests itself when religion is not supported by the strong authority of the State, the Church, or some combination of both.

This does not mean that Anglicans are without hope in our post-Constantinian milieu: far from it! The Church existed and even blossomed before the conversion of Constantine and the promotion of Christianity by the Empire. There can, however, be no simple return to the pre-Constantinian situation, not only because contemporary Western culture is centuries removed from Constantine but also because the strong communities that provide a secure, received identity—the Church, families, and the nation—are themselves fragmented and relatively weak.

Anglicanism has survived turbulent periods before, including the Anglo-Saxon invasions, the planting of the Roman Church in 597 and its blending with the indigenous British Church, the Viking invasions and attendant dislocations, the Norman invasion, the Papal Revolution, the English Reformation, and other subsequent traumatic events and eras. However, without a frank, reasoned, and conciliar discussion of Anglican identity, Anglicans will have no idea of what their identity is or should be.

Into this historic and exciting context, *Cranmer Theological Journal* is launching its first volume to discuss such issues of identity. In the two issues of the first volume, our authors will explore Anglican identity in terms of its history, churchmanships, and tensions. These inaugural issues will serve, the editors hope, as a strong foundation for our continuing discussions of what it means to be an Anglican in the twenty-first century as we continue to explore Anglicanism through articles related to Biblical theology, dogmatics, pastoral theology, liturgy, and Church history.

---

[22] *Oxford History of Anglicanism*, Rowan Strong, gen. ed., 5 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017–2019).

Cranmer Theological Journal
2024, Vol. 1, No. 1, 19–38
https://doi.org/10.62221/ctj.2024.103

Evangelical Identity in Anglicanism

Justyn Terry[1]

Evangelical identity has been much contested over the years, with the meaning of the term being understood differently in different times and contexts. This paper makes the case that, in the Anglican context at least, there is a consistent underlying Evangelical identity which is about an emphasis on biblical preaching that calls for conversion to Jesus Christ and encourages holiness of life, lived out in the context of Anglican polity and practice.

Key Words: Evangelical, Anglican, identity, conversion, Biblical

Evangelical identity has been hotly contested since the eighteenth century.[2] Theologian Roger Olson recently identified seven different forms of it,[3] and that was before the emergence of Evangelicalism as a voting bloc in the USA, which played a significant role in electing Donald Trump as President in 2016,

[1] The Rev. Dr. Justyn Terry is Vice Principal and Academic Dean, Wycliffe Hall, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK. Email: justyn.terry@wycliffe.ox.ac.uk. This paper develops a presentation given at The Evangelion Conference, at Trinity School for Ministry, Ambridge, PA, USA on April 28, 2016, under the title of, "A case for Evangelical Anglicanism."

[2] "In every generation, from the eighteenth century to the present, evangelical identity has been contested." Andrew Atherstone and David Ceri Jones, "Evangelicals and Evangelicalisms: Contested Identities," in *The Routledge Research Companion to the History of Evangelicalism* ed. Andrew Atherstone and David Ceri Jones (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2018), 1–21 at 3.

[3] The seven are: 1. Authentic Christianity, rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ (as used about, and by, Roman Catholic and Protestant writers); 2. Protestant, rooted in the Reformation: salvation by grace alone through faith alone (as used by Lutherans like the ELCA, and Reformed Churches); 3. An Anglican party, promoting Protestant aspects of Anglicanism (which tends to be "low church," preferring simple liturgy, stressing the priesthood of all believers, emphasizing personal conversion, and rejecting baptismal regeneration); 4. Reform and revivalist movement in Protestantism, stressing repentance and faith (known as Pietism in Germany; Moravian Brethren; and including John Wesley, George Whitefield, and Jonathan Edwards); 5. Reaction to liberalism, often seen as synonymous with fundamentalism (E.g. J. Gresham Machen of Princeton); 6. Post fundamentalist "neo-evangelicals" of the 1940s and 1950s (E.g. Billy Graham, Carl Henry, Harold Ockenga in the USA, John Stott, and J.I. Packer in the UK; and 7. Enthusiastic and mission minded people, not necessarily Chrisetian (often used by journalists for Jehovah's Witnesses and Muslims, as well as some Christians). Roger E. Olson, *Pocket History of Evangelical Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2007), 8ff. He does not distinguish between "evangelical" and "Evangelical" as other scholars do.

adding an eighth.[4] When we narrow the field to Evangelicalism within the Anglican Communion, the problem of definition is reduced but does not entirely disappear. That is in part because of the ways in which the Communion tends to have distinctive characteristics in its forty-two provinces and constituent dioceses, with their differing histories and influences.

The historian David Bebbington has proposed four characteristics of Evangelicalism that are widely used to define Evangelical identity:

1. Conversionism: the belief that lives need to be transformed through a "born-again" experience and a life-long process of following Jesus;
2. Activism: the expression and demonstration of the gospel in missionary and social reform efforts;
3. Biblicism: a high regard for and obedience to the Bible as the ultimate authority;
4. Crucicentrism: a stress on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross as making possible the redemption of humanity.[5]

Another way of describing Evangelicalism is suggested by J.I. Packer, which offers a fuller description, and is endorsed by John Stott and Alister McGrath,[6] who, like Packer, have been leading figures in the Evangelical Anglican movement, giving this approach a particular attraction for this study. Packer describes Evangelicalism under these six distinctives:

1. The supremacy of Scripture as God-given instruction, a sufficient, self-interpreting guide in all matters of faith and action;
2. The majesty of Jesus Christ our sin-bearing divine Savior and glorified King, by faith in whom we are justified;

---

[4] Atherstone and Jones note the disagreement on the number of forms of Evangelicalism: "Taxonomies are likewise multitudinous, ranging from Oliver Barclay's simple polarities of 'conservative evangelicals' versus 'liberal evangelicals', to Robert Webber's fourteen sub-categories (Fundamentalist, Dispensational, Conservative, Non-denominational, Reformed, Anabaptist, Wesleyan, Holiness, Pentecostal, Charismatic, Black, Progressive, Radical, Mainline)." Atherstone and Jones, "Evangelicals and Evangelicalisms," 4.

[5] David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1930s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 1–17.

[6] The endorsements by McGrath and Stott are in Alister E. McGrath, *Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity* (Leicester, UK: IVP, 1995), 51, and John R.W. Stott, *Evangelical Truth*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove: IVP, 2003), 24ff.

3. The lordship of the Holy Spirit, giver of spiritual life by animating, assuring, empowering and transforming the saints;
4. The necessity of conversion, not as a stereotyped experience but as a regenerate condition, a state of faith in Christ evidenced by repentance and practical godliness;
5. The priority of evangelism in the church's agenda;
6. The fellowship of believers (the faith-full) as the essence of the church's life.[7]

The two sets of criteria have many similarities, which is unsurprising if Evangelicalism is, as Packer thought, simply "apostolic Christianity."[8] The word "Evangelical" is, after all, from the Greek, *evangelion*, meaning "of the gospel." Both indicate that Evangelicalism is not to be confused with Fundamentalism, because Evangelicals are more open to engage with critical views of Scripture and theology.[9] Packer's analysis of Evangelicalism, however, makes more explicit the evangelistic drive of Evangelicalism, which is somewhat muted under Bebbington's "Activism." It gives greater prominence to the role of the Holy Spirit, which we will take to include empowering the word preached, as conservative Evangelicals stress, and the manifestation of spiritual gifts, which charismatic Evangelicals emphasize. It also gives a proper place to the church in God's mission to the world. Stott points out that the first three are convictions about God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which lead to the second three, that are responses to God, in conversion, evangelism, and corporate discipleship to cultivate holiness.[10] So, it is Packer's understanding of Evangelicalism that will be deployed here.

The argument being advanced in this paper is that Evangelical identity is found in its emphasis on biblical preaching that calls for conversion[11] to Jesus Christ, which cultivates holiness of life. We shall see that this identity, rooted

---

7 J.I. Packer and N.T. Wright, *Anglican Evangelical Identity: Yesterday and Today* (Vancouver: Regent College, 2008), 125f. The list was originally published as "The supremacy of Holy Scripture," "The majesty of Jesus Christ," "The lordship of the Holy Spirit," "The necessity of conversion," "The priority of evangelism," and "The importance of fellowship." J.I. Packer, *The Evangelical Anglican Identity Problem: An Analysis*. Latimer Studies 1 (Oxford: Latimer House, 1978), 20-23. Mark Thompson also arrives at a set of six distinctives, with different headings but covering similar territory. Mark Thompson, "Saving the heart of Evangelicalism," in *The Anglican Evangelical Crisis,* ed. Melvin Tinker (Fern, Ross-shire, UK: Christian Focus, 1995), 28–41 at 29–38.

8 J.I. Packer, *Fundamentalism and the Word of God* (London: IVP, 1958), 39.

9 Packer, *Fundamentalism and the Word of God*, 24–40, and Stott, *Evangelical Truth*, 17ff.

10 Stott. *Evangelical Truth*, 25.

11 "Conversion" as explained by Packer in his fourth distinctive of Evangelicalism above.

in convictions about the supreme authority of Scripture, the majesty of Jesus Christ, and the lordship of the Holy Spirit, has remained constant over five centuries of Evangelical Anglicanism. It becomes clearest when Evangelicals are responding to what they see as movements away from the core commitments of the Christian faith, whilst upholding Anglican polity and practice. To make the case, we shall consider Evangelical identity in its historical context, focusing on leading Evangelical figures in Anglicanism since it first emerged from the Roman Catholic Church in England in the sixteenth century, drawing out the distinctive contributions they have each made to Evangelical identity.

Evangelical Responses to Medieval Roman Catholicism: Archbishop Thomas Cranmer

The origins of the Evangelical movement in Anglicanism go back prior to the Reformation to those who, like John Wycliffe, blazed a trail for it in the fourteenth century and before. But since the history of Anglicanism is seen as beginning with the reforms that took place in England under King Henry VIII, brought about by his Archbishop, Thomas Cranmer, we shall start our exploration there.

To call Cranmer an Evangelical might be seen as an anachronism, although Olson includes him as an Evangelical under his second usage of the term, Protestant.[12] Bebbington would suggest that Cranmer was an "evangelical" understood as a Reformation Christian, but not an "Evangelical" meaning someone who stresses the emotive element of the Christian faith, which he associates with the ministry of John Wesley.[13] Bebbington's desire to reserve the term "Evangelical" for such a use has been widely contested,[14] and not without cause. Cranmer showed evidence of all six of Packer's characteristics of an Evangelical. We notice, for instance, the priority he gave to the Bible, and to personal faith in Christ. His view of biblical authority grew through contact with continental reformers even before appointment as King Henry's

[12] See footnote 2.

[13] Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain,* 1. See also Ashley Null, "Thomas Cranmer and Tudor Evangelicalism," in *The Emergence of Evangelicalism: Exploring Historical Continuities,* ed. Michael A.G. Haykin and Kenneth J. Stewart (Nottingham, UK: Apollos, 2008), 221–251 at 230.

[14] See, for instance, Michael A.G. Haykin, "Evangelicalism and the Enlightenment," in *The Emergence of Evangelicalism*, Haykin and Stewart, 37–62 at 60, and Paul Helm, "Calvin, A. M. Toplady and the Bebbington Thesis," in *The Emergence of Evangelicalism*, Haykin and Stewart, 199–220 at 220.

ambassador to Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor, in Regensburg in 1532. From his earliest days as Archbishop, when he was investigating the case for Henry's divorce from Catherine of Aragon, it was to the Bible that he primarily turned. As historian Peter Newman Brooks puts it, "[i]ncreasingly scripture was becoming central to his thought."[15] He also affirmed justification by faith, saying " . . . we know God's mercy and grace promised by his word (and that freely for Christ's death and passion sake) and believe the same, and being truly penitent, we by faith receive the same."[16] He wanted to strengthen the connection between faith and baptism, saying, "Those that come [to baptism] feignedly, and those that come unfeignedly, both be washed with the sacramental water, but both be not washed with the Holy Ghost and clothed with Christ."[17] Cranmer promoted a "lively faith"[18] that moves the heart, and affirmed the priesthood of every believer, which all suggest that he was an Evangelical.[19]

Cranmer's contribution to the Reformation was not that of a theological innovator, like Martin Luther, Philip Melanchthon, Martin Bucer or John Calvin. His gift was for using his experience as a Cambridge University fellow to affirm the insights of such theologians from Scripture and the Church Fathers, and to inculcate them into the Church of England. He wrote the preface to the second edition of the Great Bible of 1539, the first official English language Bible, made available in all the churches of England. He also simplified and reformed the prayer books of the Church of England in 1549, with further reforms in 1552, both in the English language, that became the basis of the *Book of Common Prayer* of 1662. There is a strong emphasis on Scripture, with the daily offices of Morning and Evening Prayer providing a

---

15 Peter Newman Brooks, "The Theology of Thomas Cranmer," in *The Cambridge Companion to Reformation Theology,* eds. David Bagchi and David Steinmetz, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 151.

16 Thomas Cranmer, "Notes on Justification," in *Three Sermons on St. Paul's Doctrine of Justification by Faith, Original Sin, Predestination* by Thomas Young (Whitefish, MO: Kessinger, 2010), 243.

17 Quoted in William Goode, *The doctrine of the Church of England as to the effects of baptism in the case of infants* (New York: Stanford and Swords, 1850), 216. "Feignedly" here means without faith.

18 See, for instance, Cranmer's fourth homily in his Book of Homilies, "Of the true and lively faith."

19 Ashley Null notes that "[Diarmaid] MacCulloch's magisterial study [of Cranmer] convincingly answers that Cranmer was simply a deeply committed English evangelical." Ashley Null, *Thomas Cranmer's Doctrine of Repentance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 17.

steady diet of Bible reading, going through most of the Old Testament annually, the New Testament twice a year, and all the Psalms every month.

Cranmer commissioned a Book of Homilies, published in 1547, to address his concern that preaching was widely neglected, and frequently of a poor standard. He had twelve sermons written to be preached in churches: "A Fruitful exhortation to the reading of holy Scripture," "Of the misery of all mankind," "Of the salvation of all mankind," and "Of the true and lively faith," and others addressing the practical outworking of that lively faith. Cranmer wrote at least three of these homilies, and collected and edited the others.

His view on the primacy of Scripture shaped his Forty-Two Articles of Religion, published in 1553, which became the basis of the Thirty-Nine Articles. These continue to be held in high regard by Evangelicals for their clarity about the supremacy of Scripture (Articles VI and VII), their emphasis on justification by faith (Article XI) and salvation through Christ alone (Article XVIII), and for their view of Holy Communion (Articles XXVII–XXXI).

It was Cranmer's theology of Communion that was central to his condemnation and execution under Queen Mary in 1556. His 1552 prayer book put into liturgical form a decisive break with transubstantiation, the view that the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ at consecration.[20] Cranmer, like the other reformers, rejected this. He argued that the bread and wine were the body and blood of Christ only when received by faith. As he put it in the words of distribution: "feede on him in thy hearte by faythe, with thankesgeving."[21] He believed this is what Jesus taught in John 6; that it is a spiritual feeding on Christ, not a literal one. Cranmer affirmed the real presence of Christ at the eucharist, as did fellow reformers and martyrs, Nicolas Ridley, Bishop of London, and Hugh Latimer, Bishop of Worcester. They taught that Christ was present sacramentally and spiritually by the Holy Spirit in due administration of the bread and wine, rather than in the elements themselves. For Cranmer, this was the Lord's supper, not a propitiatory sacrifice, and it took place on a table, not an altar. As Cranmer scholar, Ashley Null, explains, "The sacrament's proper focus was not the transformation of

[20] See the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraph 1376. "Because Christ our Redeemer said that it was truly his body that he was offering under the species of bread, it has always been the conviction of the Church of God, and this holy Council now declares again, that by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called transubstantiation."

[21] *The Book of Common Prayer,* 1552, http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/1552/BCP_1552.htm.

the elements, but of the human will, by means of union with Christ through Spirit-empowered faith."[22]

Cranmer may not be seen by everyone as an Evangelical in today's terms, but he did emphasize biblical preaching, calling for a response of faith that led to holiness of life. He played a key role in the work of reform of the medieval Roman Catholic Church in England, which has made the Church of England attractive for many Evangelicals. His emphasis on Christianity being about a transformation of the heart in response to the love of God made known in Christ crucified, which he crafted into liturgical form in his prayer books, has been transformative not just for the people in England, but also for the world-wide Anglican communion.

Evangelical Responses to the Elizabethan Settlement of 1558–63: The Puritans

Cranmer and his fellow reformers achieved a great deal that is welcomed by Evangelicals, but it was by no means received with thanksgiving by the whole Church of England. There were powerful voices amongst the bishops, clergy and laity raising concerns that the reforms had gone too far, especially regarding the changes to Holy Communion. This gave rise to anxiety in the royal court that the reforms were proving divisive for the nation, threatening, and at times provoking, unrest. Queen Elizabeth I responded with a religious settlement in two parts. The first was the Act of Supremacy (1559), establishing Elizabeth as supreme governor of the Church of England, and the second, the Act of Uniformity (1559), which mandated the use of the 1559 *Book of Common Prayer*, a form of the 1552 version amended to allay some concerns from traditionalists,[23] and requiring the whole nation to attend church weekly. Altars were replaced with tables, though priests were permitted to put crucifixes and candles on them, and pilgrimages were forbidden. The Thirty-Nine Articles of 1563 became law in 1571, which helped define the distinctives of Anglicanism. As historian David Starkey puts it, Queen Elizabeth's

[22] Ashley Null, "Thomas Cranmer's Reputation Reconsidered," in *Reformation Reputations: The Power of the Individual in English Reformation History,* ed. David J. Crankshaw and George W.C. Gross (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 189–221 at 208.

[23] This involved removing the last rubric in the Communion service (the "Black Rubric"), that said kneeling during Communion did not imply worship of the elements; combining the sentences used for administration of the elements during Communion from the 1549 and 1552 Prayer Books; omitting prayers against the Pope from the Litany; and adding a rubric to Morning Prayer which prescribed the use of traditional vestments.

settlement resulted in "a Church that was Protestant in doctrine, Catholic in appearance."[24]

For some, this settlement made too many concessions to those seeking to preserve more Catholic doctrines and practices. Those protesters, labelled "Puritans" by their critics for their desire to purify the church, sought to promote a more Reformed vision of the Church. Packer, who studied the Puritan Richard Baxter for his doctorate, helpfully summarizes the characteristics of the movement as:

1. The integration of daily lives;
2. Quality of spiritual experience;
3. Passion for effective action;
4. Programme for family stability;
5. Sense of human worth; and
6. Ideal of Church renewal.[25]

As such, the Puritans had a significant impact not only on the Church, but also on society, including giving women a higher status, since, as Amanda Porterfield points out, "Puritanism's emphasis on marriage and family life as the foundation of Christian society invested women's domestic roles with great social significance."[26]

Williams Perkins emerged as the father of Puritanism, so we will focus our attention on him and his contribution to Evangelical identity.

Born in 1558 in Warwickshire, England, Perkins experienced a conversion during his years as a student at Christ's College, Cambridge, the university which produced many other Puritans. He became a fellow of the college, and a lecturer at St. Andrew's the Great Church in Cambridge. In 1590, he published *Armilla Aurea*, which was translated the following year as A *Golden Chain*, becoming the first work of English Systematic Theology. He affirmed the supreme authority of Scripture, and stressed literal interpretation of the Bible, though he left room for figurative and analogical usage where context permitted. He held to justification by faith, and taught that Christ's righteousness is imputed to believers. Perkins also endorsed double predestination, meaning that both election and reprobation are predestined, and published Theodore Beza's "Order of Salvation and Damnation," that presses Calvin's ideas on election into a fully worked out schematic.

---

[24] David Starkey, *Crown and Country* (New York: HarperPress, 2011), 314.

[25] James I. Packer, *Among God's Giants* (Brighton and Hove, UK: Kingsway, 1991), 26ff.

[26] Amanda Porterfield, "Women's Attraction to Puritanism," *Church History* 60, no. 2 (1991): 196–209 at 209.

Perkins opposed the Act of Uniformity, and objected to Archbishop John Whitgift's repression of Puritanism using subscription to enforce unity in the Church of England. The Puritans questioned the use of ornaments, rituals, organs, surplices, genuflection, and the loss of the black rubric in the Book of Common Prayer,[27] saying these all lacked biblical support. Perkins preached against kneeling at Communion in 1587, since that suggested adoration of the elements, and was called to account for it by the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University.

Perkins also opposed non-conformists and other separatists, who felt they could no longer stay in the Church of England and were creating deep tensions in the nation. One of the main points of contention was around the role of bishops, which Puritans felt lacked a clear biblical mandate. Perkins was one of the Puritans who remained in the Church of England throughout his ministry, accepting that, as Calvin said, the Bible did not require the role of bishops, though he felt a biblical case could be made for them.

Political and religious tensions erupted into the English Civil Wars of 1642–1649, which resulted in the execution of King Charles I, and the installation of the Puritan Oliver Cromwell as Lord Protector in 1653, when Puritan values shaped national law. Following the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 after Cromwell's death, another Act of Uniformity (1662) passed, requiring ordained ministers to confirm their willingness to conform to the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*, with its clear role for bishops. Such affirmations were required by August 24, 1662, St Bartholomew's Day, and on that day over 2,000 ministers left the Church of England,[28] including Richard Baxter, in what has become known as the Great Ejection. That significantly strengthened the non-conformist movement, and weakened the Evangelical witness in the Church of England.

Many Puritans emigrated from England to live out their beliefs with greater freedom. Their role in the formative years of New England was enormous, not only in terms of theology but also for the character of the emerging nation.[29]

---

[27] See footnote 23 for further details about the black rubric.

[28] Andrew Roycroft, a Review of *The Great Ejection 1662* by Gary Brady (Darlington, UK: Evangelical Press, 2012), October 26, 2012, https://banneroftruth.org/uk/resources/book-review-resources/2012/the-great-ejection-1662-a-review-by-andrew-roycroft/.

[29] See, for instance, Kenneth and William Hopper, *The Puritan Gift: Reclaiming the American Dream Amidst Global Financial Chaos* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2008), which argues that the Puritan vision of hard work, desiring the kingdom of God, and putting others first underlies the success of the American economy. These values had a positive impact on the British economy for the same reasons. Porterfield, "Women's Attraction to Puritanism," 208.

One such émigré was Anne Bradstreet, who went to the Massachusetts Bay Colony at its founding in 1630. She became an influential poet, sharing her faith through her writing, declaring her trust in God even when her house burned down. In the final verse of *Upon the burning of our house* (1666), she says:

> And when I could no longer look,
> I blest His grace that gave and took,
> That laid my goods now in the dust.
> Yea, so it was, and so 'twas just.
> It was his own; it was not mine.
> Far be it that I should repine.

Perkins' scholarly and moderating voice, with his commitment to Christ-centered biblical preaching, calling for conversion and holiness of life, brought many to Evangelical faith. He was an inspiration to George Herbert and William Ames, later Professor of Theology at Franeker, and his influence was also felt overseas, including by New England pioneers like Jonathan Edwards. Puritans continue to have their impact on the Evangelical movement in Anglicanism and elsewhere, both in their scholarship and ministerial practice, and may be seen as leaving a more Calvinistic inheritance to Evangelicalism.[30]

Evangelical Responses to the 17th and 18th Century Enlightenment: John Wesley and Charles Simeon

With the publication of Isaac Newton's *Principia Mathematica* in 1687, describing how the movements of heavenly bodies follow simple mathematical laws, there was considerable philosophical activity, especially in France, some of which raised questions about the role of God in the universe. The "Enlightenment" philosophy that emerged cast doubt on divine providence, the miraculous, and the divinity of Jesus Christ, support for which rests heavily on God raising him from the dead, which David Hume, amongst others, called into question. Immanuel Kant, one of the leading figures of the movement, explained it as "man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's own understanding

[30] Richard Turnbull says Evangelical Anglicans have their roots in "moderate Calvinism." Richard Turnbull, *Anglican and Evangelical?* (London and New York: Continuum, 2007), 93.

without the guidance of another."[31] The Enlightenment was therefore not just a challenge to particular Christian doctrines, but to the whole idea of following a belief system that comes from others, and especially from previous, 'unenlightened' eras.

Christians in the Church of England responded in a number of diverse ways to these significant challenges. Some felt it necessary to reconsider the fundamental tenets of the faith by moving towards deism, the belief that God has created the universe but is not daily sustaining and guiding it but letting it run its course, an approach taken by Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, for instance. Others, like the Latitudinarians, felt there should be freedom, or 'latitude,' to loosen the interpretation of the Thirty-Nine Articles, and strengthen the role of reason, which increasingly became associated with common sense. Still others resisted the call to adapt the Christian faith to a new context, and questioned some of the rationalist assumptions of the Enlightenment, calling people to radical discipleship of Jesus Christ. Two of the main proponents of such an approach were John Wesley and Charles Simeon, both of whom have had an enduring impact on Evangelical identity.

John Wesley was born in 1703 and went to Christ Church College, Oxford, after which he was ordained and became a fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. He served his father as Curate in Wroote, Lincolnshire, and began the "Holy Club" in Oxford with his brother Charles, the hymn-writer, in an effort to cultivate serious Christian discipleship. In 1735, he went on a mission to Georgia, USA, with his brother and James Oglethorpe. They met some Moravians, whose witness on board ship, especially their calm confidence in the face of a life-threatening storm, had a significant impact on him. Then on May 24, 1738, Wesley felt his heart "strangely warmed,"[32] and had an assurance of salvation as he heard Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans read at a meeting in Aldersgate Street, London. This was a turning point for him, and he began preaching itinerantly, often outdoors, following the example of George Whitefield. Wesley scholar Ralph Waller summarizes his impact by saying, "Through his efforts, keelmen and miners, prostitutes and prisoners, sailors and smugglers, all became devout people with a purpose in life, and valued in society."[33]

---

[31] Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" 1784, trans. Ted Humphrey (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 1992), accessed December 9, 2023, https://www.nypl.org/sites/default/files/kant_whatisenlightenment.pdf. Kant's use of "man" has been retained, but should be understood as "humanity."

[32] John Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley*, May 24, 1738.

[33] Ralph Waller, *John Wesley: A Personal Portrait* (London: SPCK, 2003), 128.

Beyond his commitment to evangelistic preaching, Wesley's main contributions to Evangelical identity lie in demonstrating the value of small group ministry, and for taking the quest for holiness to new and probably unsustainable levels. Those who responded to Wesley's preaching formed into groups called "classes" of eleven members and a leader, who met weekly to read Scripture, pray, discuss religious matters, and collect funds for those in need. They were encouraged to avoid evil, do good, and use the means of grace.[34] This small group approach to discipleship may be seen in contemporary home groups, though normally without the probing questions, or collections.

How holy someone could hope to become through such a process became controversial. Wesley had met a few people who claimed to have achieved perfection without striving, at least for short periods of time. He wanted to hold that out as a goal, clarifying that it was not "sinless perfection," but experience of "loving God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. This implies that no wrong temper, none contrary to love, remains in the soul; and that all the thoughts, words, and actions are governed by pure love."[35] This raised questions about the nature of sin and the meaning of temporary perfection, but it encouraged a quest for holiness that was taken up by the Keswick movement, and elsewhere.

Another major Evangelical figure, Charles Simeon, was born in 1759, the same year as William Wilberforce, who became a lifelong friend. Wilberforce was one of the main leaders of the Evangelical Clapham Sect with Henry Thornton, Hannah More, and Simeon himself, which worked hard for the abolition of slavery. Simeon went to King's College, Cambridge, where he was required to attend Holy Communion occasionally. That got him thinking seriously about his life. As he later reflected, "Conscience told me that Satan was as fit to go there [Communion] as I; . . . so greatly was my mind oppressed with the weight of my former numberless iniquities . . . that I frequently looked on dogs with envy."[36] The Evangelical clergyman Henry Venn helped him come to a personal faith in Christ, and Simeon was ordained and became

---

[34] Kenneth Collins, "Wesley's Life and Ministry," in *The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley,* ed. Randy L. Maddox and Jason E. Vickers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 43–59 at 50.

[35] John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, Chapter 6, response to question 1, accessed December 9, 2023, https://www.worldinvisible.com/library/wesley/8317/831706.htm.

[36] Russell Levenson, "'To Humble the Sinner, to Exalt the Savior, to Promote Holiness': Reflections on the Life, Ministry and Legacy of Charles Simeon," *Sewanee Theological Review* 42, no. 1 (1998): 47–65 at 49.

Rector of Holy Trinity Church, Cambridge, in 1782. He was very young to take on such a significant role and met strong opposition, with wealthy pew holders absenting themselves and locking their pews for fourteen years. Simeon was prone to bad temper and to vanity, and was considered an academic. He was, however, a strong preacher, spending twelve hours a week in preparation. He worked hard for the poor and imprisoned, and was good at pastoral visitation, where he would often introduce himself by saying, "I am come to inquire after your welfare. Are you happy?"[37]

Simeon's contributions to Evangelical identity are mainly around preaching and parish life, and in encouraging the formation of mission societies. He developed expository Bible preaching, something he learned from a French Reformed minister, Jean Claude.[38] Simeon said, "I do not sit down to the perusal of Scripture in order to impose a sense on the inspired authors, but to receive one as they give it to me. I pretend not to teach them, I wish like a child to be taught by them."[39] He offered sermon classes using Claude's method, attracting many Cambridge students preparing for ordained ministry, who were getting little, if any, instruction in homiletics. Simeon also started Friday evening conversation parties to answer questions, and annual summer retreats, known as 'house parties' for ministers and their wives. He remained Rector of Holy Trinity Church until his death in 1836, having served there for 54 years.

Simeon also helped start some influential mission agencies. In 1799, he was involved in launching the Society for Missions in Africa and the East, now the Church Mission Society.[40] Ten years later, he was one of the founders of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews, now known as the Church's Ministry Among Jewish People. He began the Simeon Trust in 1833 to purchase livings for Evangelical preachers, initially using an inheritance of £15,000 from his brother Edward, who had been a director of the Bank of England. Having patronage of those parishes meant Evangelical clergy could find churches in which to serve.

Wesley and Simeon played significant roles in bringing revival to the Church of England and to strengthening its Evangelical witness at a time when that was much needed. They gave priority to biblical preaching, calling people

---

37 Levenson, "'To Humble the Sinner, to Exalt the Savior, to Promote Holiness,'" 54.

38 Through reading "An Essay on the Composition of a Sermon" by Jean Claude in 1792.

39 Quoted in Handley Moule, *Charles Simeon: Pastor of a Generation* (Ross-shire, UK: Christian Focus, 2001), 77.

40 It was renamed in 1812 the "Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East," and became the "Church Mission Society" in 1995.

to faith in Christ, and to discipling those who responded towards holy living. John Stott goes as far as to say Simeon was "One of the greatest and most persuasive preachers the Church of England has ever known."[41] He and Wesley were committed to mission, in England and around the world, and invested significant time in equipping others for leadership. These are significant legacies for the Evangelical movement today.

Evangelical Responses to the 19th Century Catholic Revival: Bishop J.C. Ryle

The Evangelical revival had a major impact on the Church of England. By 1848, when the Evangelical bishop John Bird Sumner became Archbishop of Canterbury, it is said that between a quarter and a third of Anglican clergy were linked to the movement. [42] There was also a substantial impact on the wider nation, especially through the work of the Clapham Sect, and through Lord Shaftesbury, "England's most prominent Evangelical."[43] They were concerned not only with the freedom of slaves, but also for the well-being of other vulnerable people.[44] They played such a significant role in the development of Victorian morality, through their campaigning, philanthropy and example, that theologian Stephen Tomkins concludes, "The ethos of Clapham became the spirit of the age."[45]

Another major influence on the Church of England traces its history to 1833, when John Keble, Professor of Poetry at the University of Oxford, preached at the University Church against the government's plan to remove ten of the twenty-two bishoprics in Ireland, with a sermon entitled "National Apostacy." Keble questioned what right the state had to decide on the organization of the Church, and asked what had become of the Church that it might be willing to accept such a proposal? Ninety tracts made the case for a

---

41 John Stott in his introduction to Charles Simeon, *Evangelical Preaching* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1986), xxvii.

42 Boyd Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, Dangerous People? England 1783–1846* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 175.

43 Turnbull, *Anglican and Evangelical?,* 146.

44 Nigel Scotland summarizes their achievements in this way: "Among the most notable were revision of the penal code, the abolition of the press gang, improvements in the care of the mentally ill, the relief of climbing boys, the regulation of factory conditions and the promotion of schools and other educational ventures." Nigel Scotland, "The Social Work of the Clapham Sect: An Assessment," *Themelios* 18 (October 1992), 17.

45 Stephen Tomkins, *The Clapham Sect: How Wilberforce's circle changed Britain* (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2010), 248.

higher view of the Church and its sacraments, and of its priests and bishops, some written by other tutors from Oriel, Keble's college, including Edward Bouverie Pusey, Professor of Hebrew, and the Chaplain, John Henry Newman. The Oxford Movement, as it became known, encouraged daily public prayers, regular fasts and feasts, and promoted the decoration of the house of God, which, as Pusey put it "acts insensibly on the mind."[46] The Anglo-Catholic movement that developed later in the century implemented many of these ideas more fully. They practiced daily Communion, and used candles, incense, and vestments that had, until then, been associated with Roman Catholic practice.

Whilst the proponents of this Catholic revival shared a common concern with Evangelicals about the rise of liberalism, Evangelicals objected to the introduction of their more Catholic theology and practices into the Church of England. Chief amongst the objectors was John Charles Ryle, whose grandfather, John Ryle, had been a convert of John Wesley. J.C. Ryle was born in Macclesfield, England in 1816 and went to Christ Church College, Oxford, where he got a congratulatory first-class degree. Whilst there, he got sick with an inflammation of the chest, and began to read the Bible and pray. He was converted through hearing Ephesians 2:8–9 read in St Aldate's Church, Oxford. After a few years studying law and then working in his father's bank, he was ordained. Ryle became established as a leading figure in the Evangelical movement, noted for his preaching and pastoral visitation. He published *The Bishop*, *The Pastor and The Preacher* in 1854, based on the lives of Hugh Latimer, Richard Baxter, and George Whitefield, showing that he saw the Reformers, Puritans, and Evangelical revivalists as holding the same core views. As Church historian Andrew Atherstone points out, for Ryle, Evangelicalism, "was no eighteenth-century innovation . . . , but a consistent position."[47] Ryle published widely, including, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels* (1856) for household devotions, *Christian Leaders of the 18th Century* (1869) on Evangelical history, *Knots Untied* (1874) arguing for the Evangelical nature of the Church of England, and *Holiness* (1877) which has become a classic of Evangelical spirituality. In 1880, he was consecrated the first Bishop of Liverpool and continued to press for Evangelicalism, though now mindful of his wider responsibilities as a diocesan bishop.

---

[46] Quoted in Owen Chadwick, *The Spirit of the Oxford Movement: Tractarian Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 42.

[47] Andrew Atherstone, "J. C. Ryle and evangelical churchmanship," in *Making Evangelical History Faith, Scholarship and the Evangelical Past,* ed. Andrew Atherstone and David Ceri Jones (London: Routledge, 2019), 81–101 at 90.

Ryle described himself as a moderate Calvinist, though he accepted that Arminians, who argued that God foreknew who would come to faith but did not predetermine it, could be Evangelicals too. He played an important role in defining Evangelicalism, setting out his understanding in the following form:

> 1. The first leading feature in evangelical religion is the *absolute supremacy it assigns to Holy Scripture* as the only rule of faith and practice, the only test of truth, the only judge of controversy. . . .
> 2. The second leading feature in evangelical religion is *the depth and prominence it assigns to the doctrine of human sinfulness and corruption*. . . .
> 3. The third leading feature of evangelical religion is *the paramount importance it attaches to the work and office of our Lord Jesus Christ*, and to the nature of the salvation which He has wrought out for men.
> 4. The fourth leading feature in evangelical religion is *the high place which it assigns to the inward work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of man.*
> 5. The fifth and last leading feature in evangelical religion is the *importance which it attaches to the outward and visible work of the Holy Ghost in the life of man.*[48]

These have significant overlaps with Packer's distinctives of Evangelicalism, though without explicit mention of evangelism, or the role of the Church, Packer's fifth and sixth points.

One of the key issues of debate with his Catholic interlocuters was whether a baptized infant should be regarded as regenerate, i.e., born again. The service for the Public Baptism of Infants in the *Book of Common Prayer* states, almost immediately after the baptism, "Seeing now that . . . this child is regenerate." Ryle argued that should not be taken out of the context of the whole service, in which commitments were made to raise the child in the Christian faith, and to bring them to confirmation, where they would express their repentance and faith.[49] Such a rejection of invariable baptismal regeneration was recognized as a legitimate understanding of Anglican doctrine in the landmark decision of the Gorham Judgement of 1850,[50] causing some conversions to Roman Catholicism, including Henry Manning, later

---

[48] J.C. Ryle, *Knots Untied* (Moscow, ID: Charles Nolan, 2000), 3–7. It was first printed in 1874. Original usages of "man" and "men" have been retained, but they should be understood as referring to men and women.

[49] Ryle, *Knots Untied*, 165.

[50] For more on the Gorham Judgement, see Turnbull, *Anglican and Evangelical?*, 99–101.

Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster. However, as Bishop Colin Buchanan observes, it "preserved evangelicalism within the Church of England."[51]

Ryle, driven by a fear that the Church of England would give up its Reformed heritage and return to the Roman Catholic Church, worked tirelessly to avoid that happening. In so doing, he left significant resources for Evangelicals in the Church of England to respond to those who would seek to move it in a more Catholic direction, and to reassure Evangelicals in the Church of England that they are properly Anglican.[52] Packer says of him, "No Anglican to my knowledge has ever expounded this [Anglican Evangelical] position more fully, fairly or masterfully than did Ryle."[53] He gave a clear example of prioritizing biblical preaching that calls for conversion and cultivates holiness of life.

Evangelical Responses to Liberalism and Revisionism of the 20th and 21st Centuries: The Rise of the Global South

The impact of Bishop J.C. Ryle on Anglican Evangelicalism remains strong, mainly through his writings, to which Evangelicals continue to turn for theological and pastoral guidance. Despite his best efforts, however, Ryle was not able to persuade all those who had been raised in Evangelical homes in his own day to maintain, or return to, Evangelicalism in adult ministry, most notably in the cases of John Henry Newman, and Robert and Henry Wilberforce, sons of William Wilberforce, who all played leading roles in the Oxford Movement. Historian David Newsome concludes that this was a result of many factors, but underlying them was their sense that the Catholic revival might provide the best way for the Church to resist the onslaught of secularism.[54]

---

[51] Colin Buchanan. *Historical Dictionary of Anglicanism,* 2nd ed. (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015), 285.

[52] McGrath says, "Too often, evangelical Anglicans have been hesitant over affirming their Anglicanism; surely the time has come to change this?" Alister McGrath, "Evangelical Anglicanism: A contradiction in terms?," in *Evangelical Anglicans: Their Role and Influence in the Church Today,* ed. R.T. France and A.E. McGrath (London: SPCK, 1993), 10–21 at 19.

[53] J.I. Packer, *Faithfulness and Holiness: The Witness of J.C. Ryle* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002), 34.

[54] David Newsome, *The Parting of Friends: the Wilberforces and Henry Manning* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1966), 16. One Tractarian commentator wrote of Evangelicals, "Personal religion declines among them, and a high standard of holiness can now only be found among Catholics—with perhaps a few exceptions, belonging to a generation fast dying out, and leaving no successors." 'The Last Thirty Years in the English Church: An Autobiography,' in *The Church and the World: Essays on Questions of the Day* ed. Orby Shipley (London, 1866), 215–218 at 216f.

The twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have seen the ongoing rise of secularism, with its combination of materialism, hedonism, liberalism, and revisionism. Evangelicals have engaged the intellectual challenge to good effect, rising to the highest levels of biblical, theological, apologetic, ethical, sociological, and missional scholarship, with N.T. Wright, Alister McGrath, John Webster, Amy Orr-Ewing, Oliver O'Donovan, Elaine Storkey, and Christopher Wright amongst those achieving international distinction. Evangelicals have also responded to these challenges with fresh approaches to gospel ministry. For instance, under the leadership of Nicky Gumbel, 28 million people worldwide have taken the Alpha Course from Holy Trinity Brompton (HTB) since launching in 1993.[55] Since 1985, HTB has helped to start over 100 church plants,[56] which in turn have inspired further church plants, bringing new life to many struggling churches. The New Wine Network has also brought charismatic renewal to many Anglican churches especially through summer conferences and church planting, and conservative Evangelicals have been growing through the Re*New* conference and its regional initiatives.[57] These are all having a significant impact on the Church of England and its outreach to the nation.

This period has seen the ongoing spread of Evangelical Anglicanism globally, due in significant part to mission agencies like the Church Mission Society and its work in Africa, Asia, Australasia, the Middle and Far East, and North America. Their ministry in Australia, Canada, Kenya, Nigeria, India, Rwanda, South Sudan, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda has proved especially significant for the shape of Anglicanism today, with Evangelicalism being the main expression of Anglicanism in several of these countries.

The story of the development of Evangelical Anglicanism could be told for each province.[58] As an example, in the USA, the work of John Wesley and George Whitefield in the 1740s had a powerful impact, and Evangelicals like Deveraux Jarrett, Alexander Griswold, and Richard Moore proved very

---

[55] Ian Paul, "What has been the influence of the Alpha Course?," *Psephizo,* September 7, 2022, https://www.psephizo.com/reviews/what-has-been-the-influence-of-the-alpha-course/. This is part of an interview with Andrew Atherstone regarding his book, *Repackaging Christianity: Alpha and the Building of a Global Brand* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2022).

[56] Church Revitalisation Trust, "Plants and Revitalisations," accessed January 6, 2024, https://revitalisetrust.org/plants-and-revitalisations.

[57] *ReNew Conference*, "Home," accessed December 9, 2023, https://www.renewconference.org.uk/.

[58] For a history of the Anglican provinces see Part III of *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to the Anglican Communion*, ed. Ian S. Markham, J. Barney Hawkins IV, Justyn Terry, and Leslie Nuñez Steffensen (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013).

effective in The Episcopal Church, especially in low church areas of the middle and southern states. The growing influence of the Oxford Movement, introduced by missionaries from the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and others,[59] made Evangelical ministry more difficult, and led eight clergy and twenty laity to start the Reformed Episcopal Church (REC) in 1873. Their departure weakened the fragile Evangelical witness in The Episcopal Church, which did not grow significantly again until the charismatic renewal a century later. The REC was to become one of the founding constituents of the Anglican Church of North America, launched in 2009 in response to the revisionism in The Episcopal Church, which has become the home of a growing Evangelical movement.

Throughout this time, Evangelical scholars have been emerging in the Global South, many supported financially for doctoral research by the Langham Trust.[60] These scholars include Femi Adeleye in Nigeria, John Chew in Singapore, Las Newman in Jamaica, David Zac Niringiye in Uganda, Michael Lolwerikoi in Kenya, and Paul Swarup in India. The emergence of such theologians helps explain why there are now Evangelical seminaries serving the Anglican Communion in Chile, Egypt, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Singapore, South Sudan, and Uganda.

Evangelical identity continues to be formed and contested in the Anglican Communion, including over proposals for same-sex blessings. Most Evangelicals resist the proposals on biblical grounds, but some are questioning that.[61] New coalitions have emerged, like the Global South Fellowship of Anglican Churches (GSFAC), which began meeting in 1994 to uphold traditional teaching on marriage. There is also the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON), which first met in 2008, bringing together Evangelicals, Anglo-Catholics and others from across the Anglican Communion to "guard the unchanging, transforming Gospel of Jesus Christ and to proclaim Him to the world."[62] Their Jerusalem Declaration, and GSFAC's Cairo Covenant of 2019, show a clear commitment to the Evangelical principle

---

59 Turnbull, *Anglican and Evangelical?*, 53ff.

60 This was set up by John Stott, and initially funded by royalty payments from his many publications, like *Basic Christianity* (1958), *The Cross of Christ* (1986), and commentaries on biblical books.

61 E.g., Mark Vasey-Saunders, *Defusing the Sexuality Debate: The Anglican Evangelical Culture War* (London: SCM, 2023).

62 GAFCON, "About GAFCON," accessed December 9, 2023, https://www.gafcon.org/about. See Mark Thompson, "The Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON)," in Markham et al., eds., *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to the Anglican Communion*, 739–749.

of the supremacy of Scripture.[63] Both GSFAC and GAFCON express the shift of the center of gravity of the Anglican Communion towards the Global South. Their task is not so much to define Evangelical identity as to seek to uphold it, by focusing on biblical preaching, calling for conversion to Jesus Christ, and cultivating holy lives.

Evangelical identity is notoriously hard to define, even within Anglicanism, but what we have seen here is, I hope, sufficient to show that it is essentially about prioritizing biblical preaching which calls for conversion to Jesus Christ that encourages holiness of life. That has meant recovering justification by faith from medieval Roman Catholicism, arguing for biblical priorities in the face of Tudor political expediency, bringing revival to a church struggling with rationalism and moral laxity, resisting calls for a more Catholic expression of Anglicanism, and uniting to contest liberalism and revisionism. Evangelicals are contenders for the gospel, and in particular for evangelism, conversion, and holiness of life. They have also often shown a strong concern for social justice.

There are, no doubt, differences to be observed between the work of the Anglican Reformers, the Puritans, the Revivalists, J.C. Ryle, and the Evangelicals of the global Anglican Communion, but we have seen evidence to support Bebbington's contention that Evangelicalism has "a common core that has remained remarkably constant down the centuries."[64] That core is biblical preaching, calling for conversion to Jesus Christ, and encouraging holiness of life, which stems from commitments to the supreme authority of the Bible, the unique saving role of Jesus Christ, and the lordship of the Holy Spirit. It is a vision for a gospel-centered ministry, which has helped bring vitality to the global Church, and blessing to the nations.

---

[63] GAFCON, "Jerusalem Declaration," accessed December 14, 2023, https://www.gafcon.org/jerusalem-2018/key-documents/jerusalem-declaration. See especially the authority of Scripture and the role of the Thirty-Nine articles in paragraphs 2 and 4.

And for the Cairo Covenant, see "A Covenantal Structure for The Global South Fellowship of Anglican Churches (GSFA), updated October 15, 2021, https://assets-global.website-files.com/64c7520a09b851adae283880/64f6cf1ea4f7e1c49c0619c3_GSFA%20Covenantal%20Structure%20(adopted%20on%2015%20Oct%202021).pdf.

[64] Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 4.

Cranmer Theological Journal
2024, Vol. 1, No. 1, 39–53
https://doi.org/10.62221/ctj.2024.104

After Kigali: The Future of Orthodox Anglicanism

Gerald McDermott[1]

The Kigali Commitment dedication to the authority of Scripture should be cheered. But if left to itself, it is easily forgotten that Scripture's birthplace and guardian are the Church and her tradition. As Paul wrote, "the Church of the living God is the pillar and foundation of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15).[2] *Without attention to that pillar and foundation, the edifice called Christian orthodoxy starts to weaken and will eventually collapse. The Church's tradition in creeds and liturgies and patristic teaching is indispensable for interpreting Scripture rightly.*

Key Words: Anglican, orthodox, progressives, gay marriage, Scripture, sola scriptura, tradition, Church, hermeneutics

After the Kigali Commitment of April 2023[3] was announced, there was justified jubilation[4] all over the orthodox Anglican world. Finally, orthodox Anglican churches, led by African Anglicans, were standing up publicly against Canterbury's subversion of marriage, the most common biblical metaphor for God's relationship to his people. Everything sexual follows from a Church's view of marriage. Canterbury's acceptance of same-sex couplings has given way to its embrace of assorted sexual perversions.[5]

---

[1] The Rev. Dr. Gerald McDermott is Distinguished Professor of Anglican Theology at Reformed Episcopal Seminary and Distinguished Professor of Theology at Jerusalem Seminary. He lives in Charlottesville, VA, and is available at mcdermott1952@gmail.com.

[2] All Scripture translations are the author's own unless otherwise noted.

[3] Global Anglican Future Conference, "GAFCON IV – The Kigali Commitment," April 23, 2023, https://gafcon23.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Kigali-Commitment-2023.pdf.

[4] David Virtue, "The Kigali Statement - 2023 - The Communion Is Broken," Virtue Online, April 21, 2023, https://virtueonline.org/kigali-statement-2023-communion-broken.

[5] See, for example, Francis Martin, "Drag queens find welcome at London church." *Church Times*, March 9, 2023, https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2023/10-march/news/uk/drag-queens-find-welcome-at-london-church.

No wonder the orthodox of every Church around the world[6] applauded the Anglican leaders at Kigali for resisting the Global North's siren calls to heresy. They were especially brave, many noted, because this would mean the loss of funds for some of the world's poorest Christians. But the Global Anglican Fellowship Conference (GAFCON) and the Global South Fellowship of Anglican Churches (GSFA) leaders refused "to bless sin." They rejected the Archbishop of Canterbury's exhortation to "walk together" in "good disagreement."[7] The mostly-African Anglican leaders rightly saw that it is impossible to accept two contradictory positions, especially on matters that affect salvation.

Scripture in the Womb of the Church

This was an important battle, and it was won by the orthodox. But something in the nature of the battle spells long-term trouble for the ongoing war within Anglicanism between its progressives and orthodox. The Kigali Commitment proclaimed that "the Bible is the rule of our lives" and declared that Scripture holds "final authority in the church." These two statements are true enough and should be cheered. But if left to themselves, it is easily forgotten that Scripture's birthplace and guardian are the Church and her tradition. As Paul wrote, "the Church of the living God is the pillar and foundation of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). Without attention to that pillar and foundation, the edifice called Christian orthodoxy starts to weaken and will eventually collapse. The Church's tradition in creeds and liturgies and patristic teaching are indispensable for interpreting Scripture rightly.

It has been the way of heretics from early on to isolate Scripture from the Truth's pillar and foundation. Athanasius appealed to the Church's liturgy against the heresy of Arianism, which argued from the Bible alone, divorced

---

[6] Joe Carter, "The FAQs: Anglican Group Calls on Church of England's Leader to Repent," The Gospel Coalition, April 27, 2023, https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/faqs-church-england-repent.

[7] GAFCON, "Kigali Commitment."

from liturgy and tradition.[8] Athanasius recognized that the Bible will be interpreted rightly only if it is read with help from Church tradition, which is the accumulated wisdom of the Jesus community going back to the apostles and their predecessors in Israel. It was this tradition that had been asserting long before Athanasius that Jesus Messiah was fully God, and that the Holy Spirit was too, as Athanasius later argued. It took Athanasius and the Cappadocian fathers to work out the precise ways in which the divine Persons were three and one at the same time. But they were all working with previous theological and liturgical tradition that had been insisting since the first century AD that the divine Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

The Arians, like the Gnostics before them, refused to pay attention to tradition. They wanted to read the Bible in their own idiosyncratic ways, with an ear to elite cultural presumptions rather than the teaching of the historic Church. Athanasius recognized that permitting private interpretations of the Bible was the road to heresy if it did not listen to the historic teaching of the Church. Inevitably, he realized, private interpretation would be formed by the surrounding culture and would read those cultural biases back into its interpretation of Scripture.

The Anglican Hermeneutic

Isolating Scripture from its origins in the Church and its tradition is not the Anglican way. It was not the Anglican way in the first millennium of Anglicanism (the catholic church in England that often rejected the Roman way[9]), and it was not the Anglican way in the long century of the Anglican reformation. Bishop John Jewel published his *Apology of the Church of England* in 1562, arguing against Roman claims but insisting that the English reformation was "confirmed

---

[8] Athanasius appealed to the fathers at Nicaea and their Council for his defense of *homoousios*, and to the baptismal liturgy for his understandings of the deity of both the Son and the Spirit. Athanasius, *De Decretis,* 31; *Letter* 56 (to Jovian); *Ad Serapionen* 1.28. See Thomas G. Weinandy, *Athanasius: A Theological Introduction* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 68, 105, 117. As he wrote to Serapion, in his first letter on the Holy Spirit, he was calling on "the tradition, teaching, and faith of the Catholic Church which the Lord gave, the apostles preached, and the Fathers kept." *The Letters of Athanasius Concerning the Holy Spirit*, trans. & ed., C.R.B. Shapland (London: Epworth, 1951), 1.28. In his "Letter to the Bishops of Africa," he wrote of "the sound Faith which Christ gave us, the Apostles preached, and the Fathers, who met at Nicæa from all this world of ours, have handed down," https://ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf204/npnf204.xxiv.ii.html.

[9] McDermott, "An Anglican Theologian: An Ancient-Future Anglicanism," in *The Future of Orthodox Anglicanism* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2020), 197–205.

by the words of Christ, by the writings of the apostles, *by the testimonies of the Catholic fathers*, and by the examples of many ages."[10]

It was not until 1571, fifteen years after the martyrdom of Thomas Cranmer, that the Thirty-Nine Articles were finalized by the Church. The bishops who approved the Articles declared in canon law that preachers were not to assert anything different from Scripture or "what the Catholic *fathers and ancient bishops* have collected from this selfsame doctrine." They declared that the Articles "in all respects agree with" the Fathers and ancient bishops.[11] Scripture was their final authority, but to be sure they were reading Scripture aright, they consulted the Fathers.

The greatest theologian of the English reformation was Richard Hooker (1554–1600). His massive *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* demonstrated the Anglican theological method—to read the Bible at the feet of the Fathers. Hooker appealed to the Fathers 774 times in his *Laws*, as often to those in the West as to those in the East. He dismissed the Puritan regulative principle—that everything in worship must have an explicit New Testament warrant—with the observation that many things in worship are not addressed explicitly. He cited Augustine (whom he quoted 99 times in the *Laws*) on the importance of tradition: "The custom of the people of God and the decrees of our forefathers are to be kept, touching those things whereof the Scripture hath neither one way or other given us any charge."[12]

Hooker contended against Roman Catholics on the right and Puritans on the left. His principal Puritan opponent Thomas Cartwright claimed to find only Puritan worship in the New Testament, but Hooker showed that Cartwright was cherry-picking the biblical text and advocating worship practices that could not be found there. In other words, Cartwright was using *Puritan* tradition, not Scripture alone, to draw Puritan conclusions about worship. Hooker's point was that there is no use of the Bible outside of *some* tradition, whether the interpreter knows it or not. Hooker appealed to patristic, medieval, and Reformation traditions, but leaned mostly on the Fathers.

Bishop Francis White (1564–1638) was another important Anglican leader at the end of the long reformation century who used the Anglican method—

---

[10] John Jewel, *Apology of the Church of England* (London: Cassell, 1888), 29, (emphasis added), eBook available at https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/17678/pg17678-images.html.

[11] "Canon 6" in *Selection from the Canons of 1571*, eds. Henry Gee and William John Hardy, in *Documents Illustrative of English Church History* (New York: Macmillan, 1896), 476–77. Available online at https://history.hanover.edu/texts/engref/er82.html.

[12] Richard Hooker, *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* IV.5.1. This and the next paragraph are adapted from McDermott, "An Anglican Theologian," 216.

reading Scripture while listening to the Fathers. White was bishop of Ely, a principal Anglican see. His statement of the Anglican method is instructive: "The Church of England in her public and authorized Doctrine and Religion" looks to Scripture as "her main and prime foundation," but after that "relieth upon the consentieth testimony and authority of the *Bishops and Patrons of the true ancient Catholic Church*; and it prefereth the sentence thereof before all other curious and profane novelties."[13]

We would not be the first to call the Anglican method *prima scriptura.* This means acknowledging the final authority of God's written word in the Church but deferring to the authority of the creeds and great councils of the Church, especially the writings of the Fathers, to determine the proper ways to use and interpret Scripture. Luther and Calvin often wrote of *sola scriptura* but meant *prima scriptura*, for they regularly deferred to the great councils and creeds, and cited the Fathers like Augustine and Chrysostom for authority. The English reformers did the same.

Anglicans have noted, with the Fathers, that there is consistent support within the New Testament itself for the use of tradition to interpret and guide ongoing revelation in the apostolic period. In Matthew 15 Jesus criticized the Pharisees for making void the Word of God by teaching "traditions of men." God had told his people to honor their parents, which included caring for them when they need it. But the Pharisees were teaching that their followers could make contributions to the Temple in a way that would exempt them from supporting their parents. Christians suspicious of tradition miss the fact that Jesus actually praised other traditions of the Pharisees when he told his disciples in Matthew 23:3 to "practice and protect whatever [the Pharisees] teach you." Our Lord denounced the Pharisees' hypocrisy but praised their traditions that helped interpret the Word of God rather than making it void.

Paul told the Corinthians he commended them for keeping to "the *traditions* which I have handed down (lit., *traditioned*) to you" (1 Cor. 11:2). He warned the Thessalonians to "stand firm and hold to the *traditions* that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter" (2 Thess. 2:15). He instructed Timothy to pass on the tradition he had taught Timothy before the NT was assembled: "What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2). He

[13] Francis White, *A Treatise of the Sabbath Day, Containing a Defense of the Orthodoxall Doctrine of the Church of England against Sabbatarian Novelty* (London: Richard Badger, 1635; Ann Arbor: Text Creation Partnership, 2011), 11–12, https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/B00873.0001.001/1:3.4?rgn=div2;view=fulltext.

delivered to the Ephesian elders a Jesus saying from the oral tradition, never recorded in the gospels, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

The Danger of "Bible Alone" Illustrated

Apparently the GAFCON and GSFA leaders at Kigali were following more of a Bible-alone hermeneutic than *prima scriptura*. For they ignored the univocal voice of Anglican and Christian tradition over the vast majority of the last two millennia (broken only in the mid- and late-twentieth century) when they promised to "affirm and encourage . . . leadership roles of GAFCON women in family, *church* and society." In this article I will focus on leadership in the church and specifically ordination to sacramental ministry.

The Kigali Commitment seems to affirm women's ordination to sacramental ministry, and there are two reasons for my saying this. First, it affirms and encourages "leadership" in "the church" without qualifying that leadership in any way. Second, GAFCON provinces represented at Kigali have already consecrated female bishops (Sudan and Kenya), several GAFCON provinces ordain women to the priesthood, and nearly all have ordained female deacons. The Anglican Church in North America (ACNA), a member of GAFCON, permits the ordination of women to the diaconate in nearly all of their dioceses and to the priesthood in a number of them. The ordination of women to the three degrees of Holy Order has been going on for several years, and GAFCON leadership has issued no rebuke of its member provinces for doing so. The inescapable conclusion is that the Kigali statement includes the sacramental ordination of women as at least *part* of what it means by "affirming and encouraging . . . leadership roles of GAFCON women in . . . the church."

While the plain sense of the Commitment suggests acceptance of women's ordination, I must acknowledge that some on the writing team for this Commitment insist the statement was not meant to affirm women's ordination. For example, the Archbishop of Nigeria signed the Commitment, and he is well-known for his opposition to women's ordination. The problem, then, lies not with the intent of all who signed but with the plain sense of the document that will be used in the future to affirm what some of the signers apparently deny.

This is why the presumption that sola scriptura is enough to safeguard orthodoxy is naïve, and has been proven wrong time and again by the history of Bible-alone evangelicals becoming liberal Protestants. For example, the social gospel movement in late nineteenth-century America denounced tradition and focused on the Bible alone, and soon morphed into the beginnings of American

liberal Protestantism. Their leaders started as evangelicals and proclaimed Scripture as their sole final authority. Walter Rauschenbusch, for example, denigrated all previous theology and dogma for perpetuating "an esoteric stream of tradition." He accused "theology" of being "the esoteric thought of the Church" disconnected from the "life and mind of Jesus" which could be found only in his ethical teachings in the synoptic gospels. The latter, he claimed, is opposed to the historic Church's "tradition and dogma."[14]

It was the rejection of tradition that enabled The Episcopal Church to ordain gays, using the same hermeneutic they used to ordain women—Scripture alone, ignoring the countervailing witness of tradition. Many Episcopal Bible scholars and theologians used Scripture to (supposedly) prove that monogamous same-sex couples could be faithful to Scripture. They convinced many, in part because they ignored or rejected tradition. There is also the witness of history: nearly every denomination that has ordained women has eventually gotten around to approving same-sex couples. Even Baptist and Pentecostal denominations that have ordained women but have not yet formally approved actively-gay pastors contain outspoken theologians and movements that are recommending their churches to do so.[15]

All of this is despite the universal testimony from the Christian tradition (and the Jewish before that) that God has limited Holy Order in three degrees (bishop, priest, deacon) to men. This polity became the universal church order as early as the second century. Ignatius wrote around AD 112, "Follow your bishop . . . as Jesus Christ followed the Father. Obey your presbyters too, as you would the apostles; give your deacons the same reverence that you would to a command from God."[16] The same threefold order can be found in Clement of Rome at the end of the first century and a century later in the writings of Tertullian.[17] It became standard over the next two thousand years in both the West and East. The Thirty-Nine Articles adopt this order as its standard for the

---

[14] Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1987), 12, 14–15, 133 (emphasis added).

[15] On the Pentecostal side, for example, there are the Fellowship of Reconciling Pentecostals International (https://rpifellowship.com/) and freedom2b (https://www.freedom2b.org), which operated from 2004–2018. The Association of Welcoming & Affirming Baptists (https://awab.org) is a national organization advocating for the full inclusion of LGBTQ people within Baptist communities of faith.

[16] Ignatius, *The Epistle to the Smyrnaeans* 8, in *Early Christian Writings,* ed. Andrew Louth (London: Penguin, 1987), 103.

[17] *The First Epistle of Clement* XLII & XLIV, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers,* vol. 1, (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2012 [orig. 1885]), 16–17; Tertullian, *The Prescription Against Heretics* XXXII, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 3, 258.

clergy (Articles XXXII, XXXVI), and Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity* follows it (V.77.8).

Just as Jews ruled out women from their orders of Levites, priests, and chief priests (corresponding to Christian deacons, priests, and bishops), so the Christian Church in both East and West reserved Holy Order to men. They observed that while Jesus was a revolutionary in the ways he treated women, he restricted the apostolate to men. The Fathers took seriously Paul's restrictions on sacramental ministry to men, and noted that Paul appealed to the created order before the Fall: "Adam was formed first, then Eve" (1 Tim. 2:13); women were to "pray or prophesy with their heads covered because man was not made from woman but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman but woman for man" (1 Cor. 11:8-9).

For the Fathers reading Paul, then, male authority in the Church derives not from a fallen order but from the creation order. Male headship is not from *sinful* patriarchy but because of God's original order for humanity. In fact, the form of the Fall reinforces male headship. Eve took the initiative rather than Adam, and did not consult with Adam. As Eve's head, Adam should have protected her from Satan and reminded her of God's commands. Instead, he retreated to the shadows as a passive husband, which is why in Romans 5 Paul blames the Fall on Adam rather than Eve: "Just as sin came into the world *through one man . . .*" (Rom. 5:12).

Yet as we have seen, for Paul order in the Church and home is rooted in nature before the Fall. This creation order also points to the order of Christ over his Church. Therefore, men are appointed heads in the home and church not because of biological or spiritual superiority but because God has ordered his creation and Church after the relation between Christ and the Church: Christ as the God-man is the head of his Church which is the feminine Bride. Woman represents "the bridal response of faith and love made by the Church."[18]

The Fathers were unanimous on this. They were well aware of priestesses in pagan religions in the first three centuries of the Church, and there was not one Father in these centuries or after who said Christians were permitted to follow that example. All condemned female priests.[19]

---

[18] Gerhard Müller, *Priesthood and Diaconate: The Recipient of the Sacrament of Holy Orders from the Perspective of Creation Theology and Christology*, trans. Michael J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2002), 103.

[19] The next paragraph is adapted from McDermott, "Anglican Hermeneutics," in *Re-formed Catholic Anglicanism,* ed. Bp Ray Sutton (Nashotah, WI: Nashotah Publishing, forthcoming).

An example of the early Fathers on this question can be seen in the *Apostolic Tradition* (c. 215), where only men were ordained to the offices of bishop, priest, and deacon, and the ordinations were conducted by the laying on of hands. All other ministries—widows, lectors, virgins, subdeacons, and those with healing gifts—were expressly forbidden to receive the laying on of hands because "ordination is for clerics destined for liturgical service."[20] All liturgical offices were limited to men. Women in other ministries were set apart for service to the Church by the bishop with prayer only and were excluded from liturgical functions.

While women were excluded from *sacramental* ministry and ordination to any of the three degrees of Holy Order, they were not excluded from ministry. Not by a long shot. For more than a millennium, churches in the East set aside women to be deaconesses for ministry to women and families. Under the authority of the rector or bishop, they exercised a variety of ministries such as pastoral care, counseling, caring for the sick and poor, teaching, spiritual formation, prayer ministry, preparing candidates for baptism and confirmation, assisting at baptisms, leading Morning and Evening Prayer, and conducting other forms of social and educational work. This was critical ministry to people of all ages. But none of this was service at an altar for sacramental ministry.[21]

This does not mean that other women (who were not deaconesses) did not have ministry during the last two thousand years before liberal churches started to put collars on their necks. Quite the contrary. From the earliest days of the New Testament women exercised a wide variety of ministries using what has been called the "Marian charism." They have prophesied, supported the apostles financially, served the sick and needy, evangelized inside and outside the Church, and instructed their husbands and children and younger women. They have demonstrated special spiritual openness exemplified by the Virgin Mary and Mary of Bethany, served as spiritual mothers, performed works of charity and mercy like those of Tabitha and Dorcas, used special gifts of faith

---

[20] No. 10, cited in Aimé Georges Martimort, *Deaconnesses: An Historical Study*, trans. K.D. Whitehead (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1986), 31; Geoffrey J. Cuming translates the expression as "Ordination is for the clergy on account of their liturgical duties," in Hippolytus: *A Text for Students, excerpted in Maxwell Johnson, ed., Sacraments and Worship: The Sources of Christian Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012), 322.

[21] Martimort, *Deaconesses*, see chaps 1–7, especially "The Liturgy for the Ordination of Deaconesses." This sums up his study: "However solemn may have been the ritual by which she was initiated into her ministry, however much it may have resembled the ritual for the ordination of a deacon, the conclusion nevertheless must be that a deaconess in the Byzantine rite was in no wise a female deacon" (156). Deaconesses had no strictly sacramental office and were not near the altar during a Eucharist when a priest was presiding.

and evangelism we see in Martha and Mary Magdelene, shown hospitality like that of Martha and Mary, and used special gifts of prayer like the women at the cross and in the upper room.

The Relation of Holy Order to Marriage

As I have written above, the Kigali leaders were courageous in their biblical refusal to go along with Canterbury's heresy on marriage. But we need to recognize—in a way that the Kigali leaders might not have yet seen—that in the Anglican future holding to Holy Order will be integral to continuing orthodoxy on marriage. For it was the rejection of Christian tradition on Holy Order that opened the way to heresy on marriage.

How so? Once Anglicans permitted themselves to depart from the plain sense of Scripture (which, we should remind ourselves, was a Reformation hermeneutical principle) on ministry, their brains were rewired to permit other violations of Scripture's plain sense. When they allowed themselves to reject the tradition on Holy Order, they had established for themselves a new hermeneutical principle—rejecting both the plain sense of the Bible and the unanimous teaching of Christian tradition in pursuit of a culturally-acceptable practice. Once this theological method had been accepted, and their brains had been rewired to follow it, it was easier for Anglicans to accept another practice that violates the plain sense of Scripture and unanimous teaching in Christian tradition.

Now, it is clear that the brave leaders at Kigali will never tolerate gay marriage. But their sons and daughters, who will follow their hermeneutic more consistently, might. For now that they have seen their fathers practicing what is condemned by Scripture and tradition, they will be open to doing the same in the future—especially when the world's condemnations grow louder and its financial coercions multiply against Christians who fail to approve what the world considers just and moral.

The Need to Recover the Patristic Vision of the Church[22]

One thing that will help Anglican sons and daughters recover proper orthodox vision is to see the Church as Scripture and the Fathers portray it. For the biblical authors and patristic thinkers, the Church is not a voluntary association

[22] This section is adapted from McDermott, "The Church," in *Re-formed Catholic Anglicanism,* ed. Bp Ray Sutton (Nashotah, WI: Nashotah Publishing, forthcoming).

of the like-minded but a divine society joined in being with the ascended Messiah. It is not an organization but an organism, an extension of the incarnation of the Son of God. It is made up of all the saints and angels in heaven (the Church Triumphant) as well as those pursuing holiness on earth (the Church Militant). So when we participate in the liturgy and sacraments of the Church, we see and touch and taste the life of the Son of God as man who has lived in his Body ever since his ascension to the right hand of the Father.

The Fathers spoke of the Church as God's plan for salvation. Clement of Alexandria wrote, "God's intention is the salvation of men and it is called the Church."[23] Irenaeus spoke of the Church as "the ladder of ascent to God."[24] Only in the Church can we find the true God by using its ladder to get up to heaven's realm. Irenaeus was telling his readers, in a day when there were plenty of Gnostic gatherings called churches of Jesus, that the true Jesus can be found only in the orthodox churches descended from the apostles. Only these churches confer salvation and true graces. One must distinguish between true and false churches and the consequence is eternal—between salvation and damnation.

Because the Church is God's plan for salvation, participation in it is not optional. It is necessary for salvation. The person who drops out of an orthodox Church is departing from Christ. It is that simple. The Church is the Body of the Messiah, so one who abstains from that Body abstains from the Messiah himself. One can speculate on the possibility of salvation outside the Church, but it is speculation nonetheless, lacking clear attestation in Scripture or tradition. The Church is the highway of grace, as Anglican Vernon Staley has called it, the sure road along which we travel to heaven and glory. For it is in the Church that the Lord Jesus carries on his work of saving men and fitting them for heaven.[25] The upshot is that the Church is no more optional for heavenly life than food and air are optional for earthly life.

The Fathers also wrote extensively of the *catholicity* of the Church. When we say every Sunday that the Church is catholic, we use the Latin word *catholicus* derived from the Greek *katholikos*, *kata* "according to" and *holos* "the whole." This is the faith of the whole world. We catholic Anglicans think particularly of the faith and worship of the whole world in the undivided church of the first

---

[23] Clement of Alexandria, *The Instructor* 1.6, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers,* vol. 1, (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2012 [orig. 1885]); this translation is from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Liguori, MO: Liguori Publications, 1994), 200.

[24] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.24, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1.

[25] Vernon Staley, *The Catholic Religion* (Harrisburg: Morehouse, 1983 [orig. 1883]), 34.

millennium, when churches both East and West used the same liturgy and creeds and believed and worshiped and lived as catholic Christians in the same ways. We confessed the same creeds, participated in the same sacraments, and were served by bishops, priests, and deacons who could be traced in a succession going back to the apostles. The English church made sure to continue this faith through the Reformation and beyond, and many have kept it to this day.

Our Prayer Book professes this catholic faith. The collect for the feast day of Sts. Simon and Jude uses traditional catholic language for the Church: "God himself has built his Church upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets." At the Reformation the Protestant communions abandoned bishops and priests, made of the sacraments something new, and rejected the apostolic succession. But our Prayer Book kept the old order of bishops and priests, and states on its title page that it administers the sacraments and rites and ceremonies of "the Church," by which it meant the universal catholic Church with its sacraments that make effectual what they promise because they are administered by bishops and priests in the apostolic succession.

The Thirty-Nine Articles also teach the catholic faith. Article XIX begins, "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men," repudiating the Protestant view that the true Church is *in*visible with its members known only to God. (More on visible and invisible below.) Article XXXIV says that "private judgment" is not sufficient to "break the traditions and ceremonies of the Church, which be not repugnant to the Word of God."

Why Rome is Not the Answer[26]

For Anglicans, "catholic" does not mean *Roman* Catholic, though we happily say the Roman Church is among the great catholic churches of the world, along with the Eastern Orthodox churches. We also say there is historical reason for *not* submitting to the primacy of Rome. Peter was the leader, not lord of the twelve apostles. He was the first among equals. The power of the keys was given to *all* the apostles in Matthew 18:17 and to all except Thomas in John 20:21–24. The Fathers stressed the equality of the apostles. Cyprian, for example, wrote that "the rest of the apostles were . . . the same as was Peter, endowed with a like partnership both of honour [sic] and power."[27] St Augustine, perhaps the

[26] This section is adapted from McDermott, "The Church," in *Re-formed Catholic Anglicanism,* ed. Bp Ray Sutton (Nashotah, WI: Nashotah Publishing, forthcoming).

[27] Cyprian, *On the Unity of the Church* 4, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 5.

greatest of the Fathers, said at the end of his life that Peter was not the rock in Matthew 16 but Christ, and that he was wrong to hold earlier in his life that it was Peter. This suggests that Augustine did not think Petrine or Roman primacy was a significant doctrine. Gregory the Great (d 604) in a letter to the patriarch of Alexandria wrote that he shared the Petrine office with him and the patriarch of Antioch since Peter was the bishop of Antioch and sent Mark to found the church in Alexandria.[28] He chided the bishop of Alexandria for calling him "universal Pope," told him to "do this no more" and insisted he did not have authority to "command" him because "in position you [and other patriarchs] are my brethren."[29] The early councils gave first place to the bishop of Rome among five patriarchs, but it was a place of honor rather than lordship. Staley compares it to the foreman of a jury, first among equals.[30]

Our own reformers made clear that they were not Roman but catholic nevertheless. As J.L.C. Dart has argued, in Elizabethan days "Protestant" meant "not papist," not anti-catholic.[31] For Jewell, Hooker, and Andrewes, it meant Catholicism without the pope.[32] Later Anglicans have found more reason to be catholic but not Roman. Pusey argued that Rome brought changes to the catholic faith by its doctrine of transubstantiation and a juridical version of purgatory.[33] Anglicans have long venerated Mary but objected to Roman innovations about her immaculate conception and assumption. The Anglican Newman was disturbed by the emerging doctrine of papal infallibility. St. Peter, he wrote, was not infallible at Antioch when St. Paul disagreed with him, nor was Liberius, the bishop of Rome, when he excommunicated Athanasius.[34]

---

[28] Gregory the Great, *Epistle XL,* in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* second series, vol. 12: 228–29.

[29] Gregory the Great, *Epistle XXX,* in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* second series, vol. 12:240–41.

[30] Staley, *The Catholic Religion*, 40.

[31] J.L.C. Dart, *The Old Religion: An Examination into the Facts of the English Reformation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, no date [originally SPCK, 1956]), 12–13.

[32] Ibid, 18.

[33] The Rev. Dr. Edward Pusey, *Anglican Doctrine: Notes and Questions on the Catholic Faith and Religion*, ed. Ben Jefferies (Nashotah: Nashotah Press, 2018), 144–49, 296–301.

[34] John Henry Newman*, Certain Difficulties felt by Anglicans in Catholic Teaching,* 2 vols., 256–58; cited in Ian Ker, *John Henry Newman: A Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 689.

The Future Church: A Persecuted and Poor Remnant Full of the Joy of the Lord

What is the future of orthodox Anglicanism? To be orthodox, it must follow the Fathers who led the Church of the first millennium in worship and practice, common to both East and West. It will remain faithful to the practice of Holy Order in apostolic succession,[35] ordaining men to sacramental ministry but opening wide the doors to an assortment of ministries for women. It will stay true to the biblical and patristic vision of marriage, which will guide all its understandings of sexuality.

It will be a persecuted church. Jesus said, "If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also . . . If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, therefore the world hates you" (John 15:20, 19). But the orthodox Anglican Church, knowing that it is in the will of God, will rejoice. It will remember Jesus' teaching on persecution and joy: "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matt. 5:11–12).

Orthodox Anglicanism will be a remnant Church. Jesus told Peter at Caesarea Philippi that he came to earth to build what Matthew translates as *ekklesia*, the Greek term for the Hebrew *qahal* or assembly of God's people. In the Septuagint and at Qumran the biblical and Essene writers often distinguished the holy remnant from the whole body of Israel.[36] This was the remnant which the Old Testament prophets spoke of, and the remnant that Paul referred to in Romans 11: "At the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace" (v. 5). Jesus referred to his followers as the "little flock" (Luke 12:32). The future of orthodox Anglicanism will be a little flock scorned by the world and sometimes misunderstood by other Christians. It will not believe it is the only way to follow Jesus, but will know it is a historic way of keeping the catholic—universal—faith of creeds, liturgy, and sacraments.

---

[35] On apostolic succession, see the section titled "Structured" in McDermott, "The Church," in *Reformed Catholic Anglicanism,* ed. Bp Ray Sutton (Nashotah, WI: Nashotah Publishing, forthcoming).

[36] On *ekklesia* based on *qahal* and therefore referring to an assembly, and sometimes that of a remnant, rather than an elect number "called out of" the world, as traditionally rendered, see Philip Susiadi Chia, "The Word *Ekklēsia* in Matthew and Its Implication for Social Justice," *Biblical Theology Bulletin: Journal of Bible and Culture* 51, no. 1 (Jan 27, 2021): 24–32, https://doi.org/10.1177/0146107920980932.

Finally, it will be a poor Church. Of course it will attract all economic classes. But just as in the early Church "not many were powerful or of noble birth" (1 Cor. 1:26), and a century later Celsus the philosopher accused the Church of containing "only worthless and contemptible people, idiots, slaves, poor women and children,"[37] the future of orthodox Anglicanism will probably remain where it is thickest now, in the global South. Here the Church is generally poor, both relatively and absolutely. Its members will recognize that by their Head's poverty, however, they have become rich (2 Cor. 8:9). Although they lack so many things of this world, God has given them "sufficiency in all things at all times, so that [they] may abound in every good work" (2 Cor. 9:8).

[37] Celsus, quoted in Origen, *Contra Celsum* 3.49, in *Origen against Celsus*, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (1885–87; repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 4:484.

Cranmer Theological Journal
2024, Vol 1, No. 1, 55–59

Book Reviews

Hans Boersma, *Pierced by Love: Divine Reading with the Christian Tradition.* Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2023. ISBN 978-1-68359-677-6, xviii+255 pp., hbk $23; also Kindle, Logos.

As a scholar of medieval monasticism, I have been hoping that others would see the treasury of divine wisdom contained in the writings of medieval theologians and make it accessible to the larger Christian Church. Hans Boersma has done exactly this with *Pierced by Love*. Often considered obscure and overly obscurantist, medieval theology is thought to be inapplicable to today's Church, so it is left to wallow among specialists in their ivory towers. This book shows that such a perspective and practice is wildly misguided.

Capitalizing on contemporary interest in *lectio divina* (divine reading), the book lays out in nine chapters how early and medieval Christian writers understood the practices of reading, meditation, prayer, and contemplation as a wholistic approach to the study of the Scriptures. Boersma attends to each of these rungs on the ladder (an image borrowed from Guigo II the Carthusian) of *lectio divina* by explaining, in clear and accessible language, what is meant by these concepts and how they work together to form a coherent theology of divine reading. Boersma is judicious in his use of primary materials and includes several very useful charts and illustrations, which, to the credit of the publishers, are reproduced in color.

Boersma is clear from the start that *Pierced by Love* is *not* a how-to manual for practicing *lectio divina*; that is, he does not offer recommendations for how one should focus his mind during meditation or how one can prepare herself for contemplation. And it is this very fact that makes the book particularly worthwhile. Many books on divine reading oversimplify the medieval approach to Scripture study, which is, in fact, a rather sophisticated way of viewing the topic. Other books on *lectio divina* are attempts to package spiritual practices in such a way that they can be picked up and employed with relatively little ease by spiritual consumers. Books on "Centering Prayer," for example, come readily to mind.

Boersma, on the other hand, is honest about the depth and challenges of medieval divine reading. This is not a practice that one simply adopts on top of a host of other spiritual practices. Boersma demonstrates that medieval theologians thought of it as a detailed set of practices, each undergirded by

robust theological rationales. A popular image for the practice, which Boersma highlights, is that Scripture must be chewed on, regurgitated repeatedly, so that such mastication brings forth the flavors and nutrients of God's holy word. Though it takes work, it is clear from Boersma that this way of doing Scriptural study is an ancient and venerable one, something that the modern Church needs to take seriously. Rightly understanding divine reading leads to its practice without providing a step-by-step how-to guide.

Though written for the non-specialist, this book will challenge many of its readers, for the medieval world and medieval thought patterns can appear quite outdated to the twenty-first century reader. Or, to say it more accurately, most contemporary Christian readers are poorly educated when it comes to Christian history; therefore, this text will contain elements that are new and, thereby, not easily understood. But they *can* be understood though it will take effort on the part of the reader. Boersma has done an incredible job of bringing medieval theology to the parish, and we should all heed his advice to read—especially the Scriptures but *Pierced by Love* too.

Greg Peters
Biola University
La Mirada, California
https://doi.org/10.62221/ctj.2024.105

Philip Hobday, *Richard Hooker: Theological Method and Anglican Identity.* London: T&T Clark, 2023. ISBN 978-0-56770803-8, xiv+220 pp., hbk $93; also EPUB, Kindle, PDF.

It is a commonplace of Christian orthodoxy that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man, not merely one or the other or some third, in-between thing. He is both-and, however much this may confound our limited human understanding. I begin with this observation because, although the book currently under review is not about christology, the duality that we find in Christ serves as a helpful point of departure for understanding Philip Hobday's argument in *Richard Hooker: Theological Method and Anglican Identity*.

Hobday begins by observing that there are, broadly speaking, three common accounts of the nature of Anglicanism:

> For some, Anglicanism is fundamentally *reformed*, emphasizing the Bible as source of theological truth and rejecting elements of Roman Catholicism's doctrine and structure. For others, Anglicanism is rather a local variation of *catholic* faith, looking less towards to [*sic*]

> the reformation than to the beliefs and practices it shares with the Roman Catholic Church. For yet others, Anglicanism occupies some middle ground ('*via media*') between reformed and catholic traditions, a kind of moderation or balance which avoids extremes. (6, italics original)

Over and against these positions, Hobday contends that Anglicanism is both fully catholic and fully reformed. He supports his position by way of a comparative study of Richard Hooker's use of Scripture, tradition, and reason, with Thomas Aquinas and John Calvin serving as representatives of the "catholic" and "reformed" approaches, respectively. In the process Hobday finds a great deal more convergence between these three figures than is typically assumed, culminating in the provocative claim that

> All three share the *sola scriptura* principle in the sense that scripture alone is the source of our saving knowledge of God, dependent for its authority on the divine authorship which the Spirit prompts the believer to apprehend, providing knowledge which unaided human reason could never attain. (199–200)

Hobday successfully moves beyond numerous entrenched assumptions in this study. In particular, he does well in differentiating the theological method of Aquinas from that which was codified at the Council of Trent and then subsequently developed further. Too often the positions of Trent, or even those of the Vatican Councils, are anachronistically read back onto Aquinas, so Hobday's careful work in drawing out Aquinas's own thought rather than that of his later interpreters, is appreciated. The same care is also taken with Calvin and Hooker, about whom many scholarly interpretations have built up over the centuries as well.

The result of this determination to let primary sources speak for themselves is a fuller account of Anglican identity than any totalizing focus on either the reformed or catholic sides of this identity can produce. Students of Hooker, and indeed Anglicanism more broadly, will find much to learn here, as will (secondarily) those of Aquinas and Calvin. The one notable drawback of the book is that in making his points Hobday is somewhat repetitive at times. This is a minor flaw, though, and one that does not prevent Hobday's discussion from being an illuminating and substantial one that I recommend.

James D.K. Clark
The North American Anglican
Omaha, Nebraska
https://doi.org/10.62221/ctj.2024.106

Dan Alger, *Word and Sacrament: Ancient Traditions for Modern Church Planting.* Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2023. ISBN 978-1645073031, xi+323 pp, pbk $25; also audiobook, EPUB, Kindle.

This book provides a long overdue examination of church planting from an Anglican perspective. The author is a veteran church planter who, since 2016, has led ACNA's Always Forward church planting program and has been the most visible face of Anglican church planting.

The title *Word and Sacrament* alludes to what Alger considers the bedrock principle for the churches being planted by Anglicans today. Like other Protestant movements, a chief motivation of the English Reformation was to make the word of God available to the laity—but unlike most, it retained the sacramental nature of the Western church.

Building on Alger's unique experience leading church planting initiatives, the heart of the book is the detailed section on how Anglican church planters must define their vision and goals. Alger begins the section with eight focused pages explaining his longtime podcast mantra: "ecclesiology shapes missiology." Or as he summarizes it: "before we jump into the nuts and bolts of how to plant a church, we first need to understand what kind of church we are planting." From this he develops key insights, such as how Anglican church planters must expect growth stages and rates to differ from (non)denominations with much larger congregations.

Similarly, Chapter 5 develops an invaluable synthesis of his many arguments for the importance and process of contextualization—how planters adapt the historic faith to a local context. While clearly more worried about under- than over-contextualization, he offers arguments against both extremes.

His discussion of "Who Should Plant?" is the most powerful and practical chapter of the "How Do We Plant?" section—if not the whole book. His cases for assessment, training, and coaching should be required reading for both planters and those who prepare them. His call for each church planter to reexamine their motives for planting is one that should be incorporated into every assessment process: of his eleven "improper motivations to plant," a few may be familiar (need a job, want to be in charge) but most are not.

Another crucial insight is that the church planter must continually balance the processes of evangelizing and forming parishioners. Alger's Reformed perspective emphasizing Christian formation by teaching doctrine matches the dominant view within the ACNA. Alternate approaches will be familiar to clergy from other backgrounds: Anglo-Catholics might begin with the experiential and ascetical discipline of the Daily Office, while REC church planting recommends

combining a Celtic response with *Koinonia* to address 21st century postmodernism, one of "belonging and becoming before believing."

At times the book seems more theoretical than practical—lots of why, and not as much how. The first two chapters are about "Why Should We Plant?"—certainly an important topic for instilling a church planting culture within a diocese, but probably more detail than the average church planter needs. At the church plants I've visited, the laity are more concerned with answering "Why is this church plant important?"—one that explains how the plant reaches and forms people not currently being served by other churches.

Similarly, the penultimate chapter—and at 54 pages, the longest one—is "Planting in Sacred Order." With the detailed theoretical framework, it has nuggets such as explaining how a diocese can both fund church plants and improve their odds of succeeding with those funds. But for the broader topic of how church governance impacts church planting, the heterogeneity between and even within the dioceses of the ACNA makes it impossible to come up with a single formula.

In his summary of familiar mistakes such as launching prematurely, Alger adds the crucial insight that the pre-launch period is one of deep spiritual formation as much as preparing to go live on a Sunday morning. However, after emphasizing the importance of appropriately gathering and evangelizing members, he limits his explanation to two paragraphs because "I do not have the space."

To be fair, the book's introduction makes clear that it's deliberately not a substitute for training, coaching, or mentoring—because no book can be. Always Forward recommends that all ACNA planters attend their four-day church planting intensive.

In this first book, Alger has succeeded in providing a complete overview of Anglican church planting. It's one that could be the primary book for those sponsoring church plants or others indirectly involved in the launching of new churches. For actual church planters, it provides a valuable introduction or supplement to other materials—such as podcasts, other church planting books, and of course, formal processes of training, coaching, and mentoring.

Joel W. West
Hildegard College
Costa Mesa, California
https://doi.org/10.62221/ctj.2024.107