

AN INTRODUCTION TO ANGLICANISM
AND THE
ANGLICAN CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA
(ANGLICAN COMMUNION)

HISTORIC CHRISTIANITY

FOR TODAY

by the Rev. V. E. Novak
To my wife Cheri and daughter Hannah,
who have been my partners in ministry
throughout these many years.

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C. 2009 by the Reverend Victor E. Novak

WHAT IS ANGLICANISM?

The Anglican Church is an historic branch of the Church established by Jesus Christ Himself. The word *Anglican* comes from the Latin and means *English*, and refers to its Anglo-Saxon and Celtic spiritual heritage and roots in the ancient Church of the British Isles. As such, the Anglican, or English, Church has had a continuous and unbroken existence since the founding of the Church by Christ nearly 2,000 years ago.

The Anglican Church was brought to America by the early English explorers, missionaries and colonists, with the first parish in what would become the United States established in Jamestown, Virginia more than four centuries ago in 1607. In a like manner the Anglican Church spread throughout the world. Anglican churches are now found on every continent, and its members make up the third largest body of Christians in the world after Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy.

The Anglican Church was the established State Church in six of the original thirteen American colonies and was active in all of the others. George Washington and most of the founding fathers of the United States were Anglicans, as were some two-thirds of the signers of both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States.

After the American Revolution, Anglicans in America established an autonomous national branch of the Anglican Church, making only such modifications in its liturgy and practice as seemed necessary to ecclesiastical life in the new nation. Because England and things English were not very popular in America after the Revolution, Anglicans in the United States began to call their Church by the name *Episcopal*, because theirs was a church led by bishops. The word *episcopal* comes from the Greek and means *bishop*.

EARLY HISTORY

The gospel of Jesus Christ was brought to Britain by St. Joseph of Arimathea, the disciple who buried Christ after the crucifixion. Gildas the Wise (AD 425-512), an early British historian wrote, "Christ, the True Sun, afforded His light, the knowledge of His precepts to our Island in the last year, as we know, of Tiberius Caesar." The last year of Tiberius Caesar was AD 37, just a few years after the Resurrection of Christ! William of Malmesbury (AD 1080-1143), the best British historian of his day, says that after the crucifixion of Christ, St. Joseph of Arimathea came to Britain with eleven missionaries, and that the King gave them twelve hides of land at Glastonbury (*De Antiquitate Galstoniae Cap. 1*).

Tertullian (AD 155-222) wrote, "The extremities of Spain, the various parts of Gaul, the regions of Britain which have never been penetrated by Roman arms have received the religion of Christ." We know from the presence of British bishops at the Council of Arles

in 314, that the Church took root in the British Isles, and has had a continuous existence since its establishment there.

The English Church was acknowledged by five Western Church Councils (Pisa 1409; Constance 1417; Sens 1418; Sienna 1424; and Basil 1434) as the oldest Church outside of the Holy Land; with the Council of Basil declaring in 1434, "The Churches of France and Spain must yield in points of antiquity and precedence to that of Britain, as the latter Church was founded by St. Joseph of Arimathea immediately after the passion of Christ."

At the time of the Great Schism (division) between Eastern and Western Christendom in the year 1054, the Anglican Church sided with the Eastern Churches in rejecting the novel claims of the Bishop of Rome to a primacy of jurisdiction over the entire Universal Church. In response, the Pope blessed the Duke of Normandy, William the Conqueror, to invade England and force the Church there into submission to Rome. This was accomplished in 1066, with the Norman invasion. William conquered England, seized the throne, replaced all but one of the native British bishops with Normans, and forced the Anglican Church to submit to papal authority. For the next four and a half centuries the English Church maintained an uneasy, sometimes beneficial and sometimes stormy, relationship with the papacy.

The first great theologian after the Norman conquest was St. Anselm (1034-1109), Archbishop of Canterbury. A generation and a half later another Archbishop of Canterbury, St. Thomas Becket (d.1170), was murdered at the foot of the altar in his cathedral for refusing to submit the Church of England to the State.

Unfortunately, the medieval English Church, like the rest of the Church under papal domination, grew increasingly corrupt in faith and morals, and in need of reform. John Wyclif (1324-1384), a parish priest and Oxford don, wrote and preached against the corruptions in the Church more than a century before Luther, and is known as the "Morning Star of the Reformation." He translated the Bible into English so that all literate Englishmen could read the Scriptures for themselves; and sent out preachers, like the early friars, to proclaim the gospel throughout the land. "These 'Poor Preachers' were mostly priests, some were scholars, many were simple and humble men. As they went out they took copies of the Scriptures in English with them and laid much stress on the Bible as the sole standard of faith and action...Wyclif succeeded in lighting a candle which burnt steadily through many years of trial and which is by no means extinguished at the present day" (*History of the Church of England*, J.R.H. Moorman; Morehouse Publishing; Third Edition, 1980; pp. 121-122).

"In the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth centuries the urgent need for a Reformation of the Church was recognized by all thoughtful men everywhere throughout western Europe, and was loudly expressed by almost everyone outside the circle of the influence of the Roman curia. Statesmen and men of letters, nobles and burghers, great

Churchmen as well as monks and parish priests – all bewailed the condition of the organized Christian life, and most of them recognized that the unreformed Papacy was the running sore of Europe” (*A History of the Reformation*, Vol.1; Thomas M. Lindsay, D.D., LL.D.; Charles Scribner’s and Sons; 1914; pp. 484-485).

THE REFORMATION

“Jesus began his public ministry with the expulsion of the profane traffickers from the court of the temple. The Reformation began with a protest against the traffic in indulgences which profaned and degraded the Christian religion” (*History of the Christian Church*, Philip Schaff; vol. 7; 1888; p. 146). The Ninety-five Theses that Martin Luther nailed to the Cathedral door in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517, in opposition to the sale of indulgences, sounded the trumpet call of the Reformation.

In Germany, Martin Luther and Philip Melancthon, both brilliant theologians, led the Reformation; and in Switzerland and France the Reformation was led by John Calvin, a trained theologian whom Richard Hooker called “the wisest man that ever the French church did enjoy”; but in England the Reformation was led by the bishops themselves, under the guiding hand of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer of Canterbury.

“Cranmer was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury on March 30, 1533. His opinions were known. He had been one of the Cambridge ‘Germans’; he had freely consorted with Lutheran divines in Germany; he had begun to pray for the abolition of the Pope’s power in England as early as 1525; and it is not without reason that Chapuys calls him a ‘Lutheran’” (ibid, Lindsay, Vol. 2; p. 330).

In 1534, the Anglican Church was finally able to renounce papal supremacy and end centuries of papal control that had been uncanonically established by force of arms. In that year, Convocation, the governing body of the Church of England, declared that “the Bishop of Rome hath not, by Scripture, any greater authority in England than any other foreign bishop.”

The statement sometimes made that the Anglican Church was founded by King Henry VIII, has no basis in fact. The question of the King’s annulment, not divorce, was the occasion, not the reason, for the renunciation of papal supremacy by the English Church; and only one bishop and a handful of clergy declined to accept the action taken by Convocation. The Church before and after the renunciation of papal supremacy was the same Church, with the same liturgy, under the same bishops and parish priests. It is true that Henry VIII was a dissolute king, in fact Anglicans call his reign the royal tyranny; but it is also true that Pope Paul III, who’s unscriptural and uncanonical authority Convocation repudiated, was a dissolute Pope with illegitimate children.

After the repudiation of papal supremacy, the Church of England was able to begin the process of reformation. The reform began in 1534, with Convocation calling for the Holy Scriptures to be translated into English; and in 1535, Miles Coverdale agreed to undertake the translation. In 1536, Injunctions were issued to the clergy which ordered a copy of the English Bible to be placed in all churches before August 1537.

Henry VIII died in 1547, and was succeeded on the throne by his nine year old son, Edward VI. Under the new King the Church was able to speed the process of reformation. In 1549, the Book of Common Prayer was published, and the reform of the Church continued. "The great innovation in this Liturgy was that all its parts were in the English language, and every portion of the Services could be followed and understood by all the worshippers" (ibid, Lindsay; Vol. 2; p. 357).

Edward VI died in 1553, leaving the crown, by hereditary right, to his half sister, Mary Tudor. Under Queen Mary (reigned 1553-1558), the Roman Catholic daughter of King Henry VIII, the English Church reverted briefly to papal authority and the gains made by the Reformation were suppressed. All dissent was cruelly crushed, with nearly 300 men, women and children, clerical and lay, burned at the stake during her brief five year reign, with many more imprisoned, earning her the name "Bloody Mary."

With the death of Queen Mary in 1558, her half sister, Elizabeth Tudor (reigned 1558-1603), became Queen. Under Elizabeth I, religious persecution ceased and the Church of England secured its freedom from all novel and unscriptural papal claims, renewed the process of reformation, and eliminated the abuses and errors that had crept into the doctrine and discipline of the Western Church since the Middle Ages. Indulgences and forced clerical celibacy were abolished; the Latin Services were replaced once again by Services in English, and published as the Book of Common Prayer; a new emphasis was placed on preaching the Word of God and the frequent reception of Holy Communion; and the English Bible was made available to all

It was Rome, not England, that divided the Church when the Pope excommunicated Queen Elizabeth I in 1570, for supporting the Reformation, and forbade papal loyalists from continuing to worship in Anglican churches. There was never any desire on the part of the English Church to sever ecclesiastical communion with the rest of Western Christendom, as was reaffirmed in the canons of 1604.

Reformation and restoration is never easy, and it was especially difficult during the religious turmoil of the sixteenth century. The Anglican Church had to contend with a flood of refugees that had fled England during the Marian persecution, some of whom were returning as radical Calvinists. On the other hand, there were the papal loyalists that opposed any reform whatsoever, and wanted to maintain the religious policy of the late

Queen Mary. In addition, there was always the threat of invasion by the armies of Roman Catholic nations, which finally became a reality with the sailing of the Spanish armada.

The English Reformation was carried out gradually and with great care by the bishops of the Church. In his book *Anglicanism*, published in 1958, Bishop Stephen Neill summarizes what the English Church had accomplished during the Reformation. He wrote, “It had *maintained* the Catholic faith, as that is set forth in the Scriptures, Creeds, and the decisions of the first four General Councils. It had *restored* the Catholic doctrine of the supremacy of Holy Scripture in all matters of doctrine and conduct. It had *restored* Catholic practice in the provision of worship in a language understood of the people. It had *restored* Catholic practice in the encouragement of Bible-reading by the laity. In the Holy Communion, it had *restored* Catholic order by giving the Communion to the laity in both kinds, both the Bread and the Wine, instead of in one kind only, as was the practice of the medieval Church. In Confirmation and Ordination, it had *restored* Catholic order by making the laying on of hands by the Bishop the essential in the rite. It *aimed at restoring* the Catholic practice of regular Communion by all the faithful. It had *retained* the three-fold Order of ministry: bishops, priests and deacons. It had most carefully *retained* the succession of the bishops from the days of the Apostles. It *retained* the liturgical order of the Christian year, though in a considerably modified and simplified form. It had *repudiated* the supremacy of the Pope, as that had developed since the days of Gregory VII. It *denied* that the Pope had authority to interfere in the civil affairs of States and to depose princes. It *claimed* liberty for national Churches, within the fellowship of Christ’s Holy Catholic Church, ‘to decree Rites or Ceremonies’ (Article XX). It *rejected* the scholastic philosophy, and the late medieval definitions, especially of transubstantiation, which had been based on it. It *rejected* late medieval ideas of purgatory, indulgences, and the merits of the saints... It *maintained* continuity of administration, most of the Episcopal registers showing the work of the Church was carried on through all the troubles without the intermission of a single day. It *claimed* to be a living part of the world-wide Church of Christ” (pp. 131-132).

The word *Reformation* means a return to an earlier normal condition, and that is just what the Anglican Church sought to do. In 1562, Anglican Bishop John Jewel wrote, “We have returned to the Apostles and the old Catholic Fathers. We have planted no new religion, but only preserved the old that was undoubtedly founded and used by the Apostles of Christ and other holy Fathers of the Primitive Church” (*Apologia Ecclesiae Anglicanae*).

Likewise, in 1563, Queen Elizabeth I, said, “We and our people – thanks be to God – follow no novel and strange religions, but that very religion which is ordained by Christ, sanctioned by the primitive and Catholic Church and approved by the consentient mind and voice of the most early Fathers.”

Archbishop John Bramhall (1594-1663) of Armagh in Ireland, wrote, “I make not the least doubt in the world, but that the Church of England before the Reformation and the

Church of England after the Reformation are as much the same Church, as a garden before it is weeded and after it is weeded, is the same garden; or a vine before it is pruned and after it is pruned and freed from luxuriant branches is one and the same vine.”

CATHOLIC AND REFORMED

The Anglican Church is a Reformed Catholic Church; and Reformation Anglicanism is a return to the Faith and practice of the primitive Church. Bishop John Pearson (1613-1686) taught, “Search how it was in the beginning; go to the fountainhead; look to antiquity;” and Bishop Thomas Ken (1637-1711) said, “I die in the Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Faith, professed by the whole Church before the disunion of East and West. More particularly I die in the *Communion of the Church of England* as it stands distinguished from all Papal and Puritan innovations, and as it adheres to the doctrine of the Cross.”

The Anglican Church is thoroughly Evangelical. It is Evangelical because it is a gospel preaching Church, and takes seriously the Scriptural, Patristic and Reformation principles, enshrined in its *Thirty-nine Articles of Religion*, which state, “We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith, and not for our own works or deservings” (*Article XI*); and that “Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation” (*Article VI*).

However, the Anglican Church does not subscribe to the unscriptural notion of private interpretation of Scripture whereby, like Israel of old, every man does what is right in his own eyes. Dr. E. B. Pusey, the great 19th century Anglican theologian, wrote, “What is [a] matter of faith must be capable of being proved out of Holy Scripture; yet that, not according to the private sense of individuals, but according to the uniform teaching of the Church” (*The Rule of Faith*, p. 36).

The Anglican Church is also fully Catholic. The word *Catholic* comes from the Greek and means *Universal*. The Church is called Catholic “because it is universal, holding earnestly the Faith for all time, in all countries, and for all people; and is sent to preach the Gospel to the whole world” (*Book of Common Prayer*).

Anglicanism is firmly grounded in the Holy Scriptures; and Anglican worship couples ancient liturgy and sacraments with Biblical preaching and teaching. The Rev. Dr. Carroll Simcox, a former editor of *The Living Church* magazine, while speaking at the St. Louis Church Congress in 1977, said, “Anglicanism when true to itself is Biblical Catholicism. Whatever is received, believed, taught, and enjoined...as essential doctrine or as Christian morality must be rooted and grounded in Holy Scripture.”

THE GOSPEL OR GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST

The Holy Scriptures describe the Church as the Body of Christ; and the Church has been commissioned by Christ to continue His ministry on earth. During His earthly ministry Jesus Christ could only be in one place at one time, but through His Church He can extend His ministry to the entire world, proclaiming the gospel to all nations, races and peoples.

John 3:16 and 17 have been called “the gospel in summary” - “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” The Apostle Paul also wrote, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (I Tim. 1:15). The gospel is “good news” because it teaches us about our Saviour Jesus Christ, and God’s gift of salvation and eternal life by faith in Him.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Church is bestowed by God through the sacrament of baptism. People of any age may undergo this rite of Christian initiation, including infants. The first converts to Christ were, of course, adults; but, as the Apostle Peter said when speaking of the importance of baptism, “the promise is unto you *and your children*, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:39). St. Paul teaches that baptism takes the place of the Old Covenant initiation rite of circumcision (Col. 2:11-13), which was performed on infants (Gen. 17:10-14); and the Holy Scriptures record that entire families were baptized (Acts 16:15,33). Infant baptism was the practice of all Christians everywhere for some fifteen hundred years of church history, until the beginnings of the Anabaptist movement in the sixteenth century.

What is the spiritual grace received in the Sacrament of Baptism? The *Catechism* says, “A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness: for being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace” (*Book of Common Prayer*).

Membership in Christ’s Church is vital for all who profess to follow Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Neither the Holy Scriptures nor historic Christianity know of any such thing as an independent Christian or an invisible Church. The Bible says, “And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47); and Martin Luther said, “The Church must be visible, for how can one find Christ if he cannot find his Church?” *The Book of Common Prayer* teaches, “The Church is the Body of which Jesus Christ is the Head, and all baptized people are the members.”

CONFIRMATION

The word *Confirmation* is derived from the word *confirm* and means to make strong. “The Church provides the Laying on of Hands, or Confirmation, wherein, after renewing the promises and vows of my Baptism, and declaring my loyalty and devotion to Christ as my Master, I receive the strengthening gifts of the Holy Spirit” (*Second Office of Instruction, Book of Common Prayer*). In The Order for Confirmation, the bishop, as representative of the wider church, asks, “Do ye promise to follow Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour?”, giving each individual about to be Confirmed the opportunity to make a public confession of faith in Christ.

The Bible records, “Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost” (Acts 8:14-17; see also Acts 19:5-6 and Heb. 6:1-2).

THE SACRAMENTS

The Anglican Church is a sacramental Church. *The Book of Common Prayer* defines a sacrament as “an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us; ordained by Christ himself.” The sacraments are means of grace, and aids to our sanctification. They are visible signs of God’s grace by which He works in the lives of believers, and by which our faith in Him is strengthened.

The Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion were ordained by Christ Himself, and are “generally necessary to salvation” (*Book of Common Prayer*). Through the Sacrament of Baptism we are regenerated and grafted into the Body of Christ, the Church; and in the Sacrament of Holy Communion “The Body of Christ is given, taken and eaten, . . . after an heavenly and spiritual manner” (*Article XXVIII; Thirty-nine Articles of Religion*). The outward part or sign of this Sacrament is, “Bread and Wine, which the Lord hath commanded to be received” (*Catechism, Book of Common Prayer*); and the inward part, or thing signified is, “The Body and Blood of Christ, which are spiritually taken and received by the faithful in the Lord’s Supper” (*ibid*).

There are also five other ancient Christian rites that are commonly called sacraments: Confirmation, Confession, Holy Orders (Ordination), Holy Matrimony, and Holy Unction (Anointing of the Sick). In Confirmation, the Christian renews his baptismal promises and receives the strengthening gifts of the Holy Ghost. In Confession the repentant are given spiritual counsel, and the assurance of God’s forgiveness by the absolution of a priest (John 20:19-23). Holy Orders is the sacrament by which men are ordained to the

ministry of deacon, presbyter (priest) or bishop. In Holy Matrimony one man and one woman are joined together in marriage according to the laws of God and of His Church. Holy Unction is the anointing of the sick with oil, with prayer for healing.

THE HOLY COMMUNION

The Lord's Supper or Holy Communion was instituted by Christ Himself, and is the chief Sunday Service of the Anglican Church. The Holy Communion is sometimes called the Holy Eucharist, the Divine Liturgy or the Mass. It was instituted by Christ at the Last Supper when He said, "Do this in remembrance of me" (I Cor. 11:24; Matt. 26:20-28; Mk. 14:17-25; and Lk. 22:14-20). Christ "did institute, and in his holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of that his precious death and sacrifice, until his coming again" (*Book of Common Prayer*). In the Sacrament of Holy Communion, Christians receive the very Body and Blood of Jesus Christ after an heavenly and spiritual manner (John 6:41-59). Bishop John Jewel the great 16th century Anglican theologian wrote, "Christe's Body and Bloude in deede and verily is given unto us... We are Boones of his Boones and Fleash of his Fleash" (*Replie, 1566*); and Dr. James DeKoven, a saintly 19th century American priest and theologian, summed up the Anglican position in these words: "Believing in the presence of the body and blood of the Lord in the consecrated elements [the Sacrament of Holy Communion], I believe that presence to be in no sense material or corporal, but spiritual, though none the less real and true." The Holy Eucharist is the center and summit of Anglican spiritual life.

THE HOLY BIBLE

The Anglican Church is a Bible-believing Church, recognizing the Bible to be the very Word of God containing all the doctrine necessary for salvation. The deposit of faith is enshrined in its completeness in the Holy Scriptures. This is not merely an Anglican or Reformation era teaching, but is the historic belief of the Church. Centuries before the Reformation St. Thomas Aquinas wrote, "canonical Scripture alone is a measure of faith" (*Commentary of the Gospel of John*).

The Church, as "a witness and keeper of Holy Writ" (*Article XX*), utilizes its received Tradition as set forth by the consensus of the Fathers of the Church, and especially as defined by the ancient Ecumenical Councils, to properly interpret the Scriptures and explain the Faith.

Not only is the Anglican Church a Bible-believing Church, but it is also a Bible reading Church. Perhaps the greatest single achievement of the Anglican Church has been the translation of the King James Version of the Bible in 1611. A jewel of the English language, the King James Version has become *the* Bible of the English speaking world; and even such popular modern translations of the Scriptures as the Revised Standard Version, the New King James Version, and the English Standard Version are merely

revisions of the King James Bible utilizing more contemporary uses of the English language.

THE CREEDS

The Anglican Church is a Creedal Church, confessing her Faith in the words of the three ancient Christian Creeds: the Apostles Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed. These *Creeds*, from the Latin *Credo* meaning *I believe*, come down to us from the primitive Church and have always been the universally accepted summaries of the fundamentals of Christian doctrine as found in the Holy Scriptures.

THE ANGLICAN FORMULARIES

The Anglican Church is a Confessional Church. What Anglicans believe, teach and confess are found in her historic formularies: the classical Book of Common Prayer and Ordinal, the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion and the two Books of Homilies.

The Thirty-nine Articles of Religion were issued by Convocation in their final form in 1571, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. The Articles begin with the fundamentals of Christian belief, and acknowledge the Holy Scriptures as the rule of Faith containing all things necessary for salvation. They then tackle the controversies arising from the Reformation of the 16th century, explaining the *classical* Protestant or Reformed Catholic teaching on Original Sin, Justification by Faith, Good Works, the Sacraments, the Church, the Ministry, The Traditions of the Church, and more. *Article XXXV*, speaks of another Anglican formulary, the two Books of Homilies, and says they, “doth contain a godly and wholesome Doctrine, and necessary for these times...”

The Anglican Church was not unique in producing a Confessional statement in light of the Reformation era controversies. The Roman Church did the same thing at the Council of Trent, as did the Protestant Churches on the Continent of Europe. Bishop John Moorman writes, “The Thirty-nine Articles were written in a spirit of charity which compared favorably with the anathemas of Trent and the denunciations of the Calvinist Confessions...The Articles have played an important part in the history of Anglicanism and have even been regarded as the Anglican platform of orthodoxy and the test of faith” (*The Anglican Spiritual Tradition, Moorman, 1983, p. 57*). The *Thirty-nine Articles of Religion* are bound up together with the Book of Common Prayer and can be found in the back of that volume.

THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

The *Book of Common Prayer* is often described as the Bible arranged for worship. More than two-thirds of the Prayer Book consists of psalms, canticles and other verses taken from the Holy Scriptures, with the remainder made up primarily of ancient Christian

prayers. In addition, there are generally two lengthy Scripture readings in each Service. The heart of the New Testament is contained in the Epistle and Gospel readings for each Sunday and Holy Day of the year; and the daily readings appointed in the lectionary of the Book of Common Prayer provide for a systematic reading of the Old Testament once and the New Testament twice in the course of a year.

The Book of Common Prayer was first published in 1549, when the Church of England inaugurated Services in English rather than Latin. It is a product of fifteen centuries of Christian worship, but its roots go back to the Services used in the temple and synagogues at the time of the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A liturgy, or set of written prayers, has always been used in the Church, just as they were earlier in the temple and synagogues under the Old Covenant. Without liturgy there could be no “common prayer,” just as there could be no congregational singing without hymnals. Every time Jesus attended a worship Service in a synagogue or in the temple, he participated in liturgy and took part in common prayer. The Lord’s Prayer (Our Father) is a good example of a written or liturgical prayer.

The Book of Common Prayer was never intended to supplant the private devotions and extemporaneous prayers of the individual Christian, or to be repressive of extemporaneous prayer by ministers during worship, but to encourage common prayer and the intelligent participation of the congregation in the Services of the Church.

The Book of Common Prayer contains the daily Offices (Services) of Morning Prayer (Matins) and Evening Prayer (Vespers); the Holy Communion (Lord’s Supper or Eucharist); such occasional Services as Baptism, Confirmation, and the Marriage Service, among others, as well as two Offices of Instruction and a Catechism, plus the Psalter or Psalms of David.

One of the great principles of Anglicanism is that the worship of the Church is a corporate affair, an action of the entire congregation. Therefore a real emphasis is placed on congregational participation in the Services of the Church. As a rule, Anglicans kneel to pray, stand to sing or praise God, and sit to listen and learn.

Like the King James Version of the Bible, the Book of Common Prayer is a jewel of the English language and of Christian devotion. Anglicans have long described it as “our incomparable liturgy.”

THE MINISTRY

From the time of the Apostles there have been three orders of ordained clergy in the Church: deacons, presbyters or priests, and bishops in Apostolic Succession, and the Anglican Church has carefully preserved that ancient ministry. Apostolic Succession

should not be viewed as merely an outward and mechanical succession of bishops. An outward succession without a succession of orthodox doctrine is meaningless. The lawful succession of ordained ministers from the Apostles *and* the faithful succession of Apostolic doctrine are *both* vital for the well being of the Church.

A deacon is ordained by a bishop into the first order of ministry. The word deacon comes from the Greek and means “servant.” A deacon usually ministers under a presbyter (priest) in a local parish. He assists the priest in the celebration of the Holy Communion, and in the administration of the Sacrament at communion time; reads the Holy Scriptures in the church; instructs the youth; baptizes in the absence of a presbyter; preaches when called upon to do so; and cares for the poor. When vested he wears a stole over his left shoulder as a symbol of his office and ministry. Deacons are addressed as “Deacon” or as “Mister.”

The presbyter or priest, from the Greek “presbyter,” is ordained by a bishop to the second order of ministry. He celebrates the Holy Communion; administers the sacraments; preaches; teaches; absolves, blesses; and generally is the pastor or assistant pastor of a local congregation. When vested he wears a stole over both shoulders as a symbol of his office and ministry. A presbyter who serves as the pastor of a parish is called the rector, while an assistant is usually called a curate. A presbyter that pastors a mission congregation is called a vicar. Presbyters or priests are generally addressed as “Father.”

The bishop, from the Greek meaning “overseer,” is ordained to the third and highest order of the ministry by other bishops of the Church. He confirms and ordains, and if he is a diocesan bishop administers a diocese and serves as pastor of his presbyters and chief pastor of all the clergy and laity of the diocese. An assistant bishop serves under, and assists, the diocesan bishop. A diocesan bishop is sometimes called the “Ordinary” because he is the person that ordains men to the ministry in the diocese. The Anglican Church is an “Episcopal” Church because it is led by bishops. When vested a bishop wears a stole over both shoulders. A bishop is addressed simply as “Bishop.”

In addition to the ordained ministry there are acolytes and licensed lay readers in the Anglican Church; and every baptized member of the Church shares in the priesthood of all believers. Qualified men may serve in the office of lay reader, and men and boys may serve as acolytes. Lay readers are selected and trained by the parish pastor, and licensed by the bishop. They assist at the Holy Communion by reading the epistle; may conduct Services such as Morning and Evening Prayer; and may even preach if qualified and properly trained, and so licensed by the bishop. Acolytes serve in the sanctuary during Divine Service doing such things as lighting and extinguishing the candles, carrying the processional cross, and bringing the bread and wine to the celebrant during the offertory in the celebration of the Holy Communion.

Finally, every baptized member of the Church shares in the priesthood of the faithful, and has been given spiritual gifts and talents by God to be used in building up the Body of Christ, the Church, and advancing the work of the Great Commission. Every faithful Anglican should be involved in the life and work of their parish, and there are many opportunities for lay involvement in the local church.

CHURCH GOVERNMENT

The Anglican Church is both hierarchical and constitutional in its government. Each local church has an elected governing body, presided over by the pastor, called the Vestry. The Vestry has authority over the temporal affairs of the parish, while the parish pastor has authority over the spiritual affairs of the congregation. The Vestry is to assist the pastor, helping to lift the burden regarding the temporal affairs of the congregation and seeing to the needs of the pastor and his family. The pastor is answerable to the diocesan bishop who alone can sever the pastoral relationship between pastor and people.

With the approval of the bishop, the Vestry calls a presbyter (priest) to serve as rector (pastor) of the congregation. A presbyter serving a mission congregation is known as a vicar and is appointed by the bishop.

A diocese is a geographical area containing a number of local congregations, and is under the jurisdiction of a bishop. The diocese is governed by its bishop and a diocesan synod composed of the presbyters of the diocese and laymen elected by diocesan congregations as their representatives. The diocesan synod also elects a standing committee to assist the diocesan bishop between meetings of the diocesan synod.

A diocese elects its own bishop, subject to the consent of the bishops and standing committees of the wider Church. Under certain circumstances a diocesan bishop can call for the election of one or more assistant bishops. An assistant bishop who has the right of succession as diocesan bishop is known as a bishop coadjutor, while an assistant bishop without right of succession is generally known as suffragan bishop. When several dioceses are grouped together geographically they form an archdiocese, province or national Church. The bishop who leads an archdiocese, province or national Church is called an Archbishop or Presiding Bishop.

The rule of law prevails within the Anglican Church, assuring that all things are done decently and in order. A church law is known as a “canon,” and the body of church laws are known as “the canons” or as “canon law.” A diocese will have its own canons, while a province or national Church will have additional canons that apply to its member dioceses as well.

SYMBOLS, GESTURES, VESTMENTS AND THE KALENDAR

The Anglican Church believes that God is the Creator and that He reveals Himself through His creation. The Church expresses this truth by using many of God's created gifts to enrich worship and improve our learning experience. This includes beautiful church buildings and Christian art, inspiring music, vestments and ceremonial.

The central feature of an Anglican Church is the Lord's table, commonly called the altar. As important as the sermon is, and it is very important, Anglicans do not come to church merely to hear the preacher. They come to worship God, and the altar is a visible symbol of the spiritual presence of the living God.

Candles are found on or near Anglican altars. They are symbolic of the truth that Jesus Christ is the light of the world. The flowers that often beautify the altar are symbolic of the church's joy in the resurrection of Christ.

The lectern, from which the Holy Scriptures are read, and the pulpit, from which the sermon is preached, stand on each side of the altar, and are symbolic of the read and proclaimed Word of God.

In addition to candles, a cross or crucifix will generally be found on or above the altar. A crucifix reminds us of the substitutionary atonement made by Christ for our sins, while the empty cross reminds us of Christ's triumphant victory over sin, death and the grave.

Anglicans do not separate body and mind in worship, but use gestures when praying and worshipping. Anglicans kneel to pray, stand to sing or praise God, and sit to listen and learn. They bow to the altar when entering or leaving the church; make the sign of the cross; bow the head at the name of Jesus; and kneel to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Anglicans try to arrive a little early for Services so they can have time for private prayer, and they do not leave until the candles are extinguished at the end of Services.

Anglican clergy generally wear clerical clothing and collars on the street, and often wear a cassock (black robe) while on the church grounds. Vestments are worn by the clergy, lay readers, acolytes and often by choir members during worship Services. Vestments symbolize and emphasize the sacred nature and function of the office and ministry, rather than the personality, budget and clothing preferences of the minister; and make it clear that the clergy and those assisting them are acting as representatives of the Church, and of the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ. It is said that when even the youngest and most inexperienced clergyman puts on his stole he is 2,000 years old because he represents the historic Church.

The colours displayed in the sanctuary and worn by the clergy symbolize the various emphases found in the Holy Scriptures and in the life of the Church. They are known as liturgical colours and change with the seasons and sometimes with the day.

Green symbolizes life, growth, hope and peace, and is used during Epiphany season (the manifestation of Christ to the gentiles) and throughout Trinity season when basic Christian doctrine is presented each Sunday.

Red symbolizes blood and fire, and is used on days when martyrs are commemorated, and on Whitsunday or Pentecost where the red symbolizes the tongues of fire.

Violet or purple symbolize penitence, and is used in Advent and Lent, and on Rogation and Ember Days.

White symbolizes victory, purity and joy, and is used on Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, the Transfiguration of Christ, on many saints days, as well as on joyous occasions such as a baptism or a wedding.

Black symbolizes death and mourning, and is used on such occasions as Good Friday.

The Church not only uses sacred symbols, gestures and vestments, but has its own calendar as well. The Church calendar is generally spelled Kalendar and means “to reckon.” The Church year begins with the first Sunday in Advent and is made up of various seasons such as Advent and Lent, and special days such as Christmas and Easter. The lectionary found in the Book of Common Prayer provides Scripture readings for each day of the liturgical year.

CHALLENGES TO CHRISTIANITY

Beginning in the early 19th century certain schools of Biblical Criticism appeared in Germany, adopting a new liberal approach to the Bible and to Christian doctrine. Soon this German Rationalism began to spread across Europe, into Great Britain, and then across the Atlantic to North America, leading to controversies and divisions in many denominations.

As a result of the rise of liberal-modernism, some Anglicans began to argue that the Bible-based Reformation of the 16th century was a mistake, and that the Anglican Church should combat theological liberalism by moving in the direction of the Roman Catholic Council of Trent. With the publication of *Tract XC* in 1841, the eight year old Oxford Movement was becoming divided into two groups: the old conservatives under the leadership of John Keble and Dr. E. B. Pusey, whose goal was to renew the worship and theological learning of classical Anglicanism, and promote personal holiness; and a

newer group, often called “Ritualists,” who were becoming increasingly doubtful of Reformation Anglicanism and were looking more and more toward Rome.

At the same time there was a concern on the part of other Anglicans to uphold the achievements of the Anglican Reformation. Their view was that liberal-modernism should be combated by clearly proclaiming the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ, by defending the integrity of the Holy Scriptures, and by holding firmly to the classical Anglican formularies.

Finally, in 1873, when it seemed clear to some that the bishops of the Episcopal Church were not going to resist the rising liberal-modernist movement or the excesses of the Ritualists, Anglicanism in America became divided into two jurisdictions: the Episcopal Church and the smaller but more theologically conservative Reformed Episcopal Church. The Rt. Rev. George David Cummins, Assistant Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Kentucky, became the first Presiding Bishop of the Reformed Episcopal Church.

Both the Episcopal Church and the Reformed Episcopal Church are daughters of the Church of England; but, unlike the Episcopal Church, the Reformed Episcopal Church has remained theologically orthodox and upholds Biblical morality. In its more than 135 year history, the Reformed Episcopal Church has never strayed from Biblical orthodoxy or experienced a schism (split).

Bishop Charles Cheney, the first bishop consecrated in the Reformed Episcopal Church, said, “If I build my house, I will consult an architect. The architect will present me the latest style, the most modern ideas. But our Church has done exactly the opposite and presented the earliest ideas. Why? Because the water very near the fountain head is the purest...I do not believe a thing is better simply because it is old. But in Christianity, the nearer I get to Christ’s own day, the more assured I can be.”

Half a century later, in 1924, at the height of the liberal-modernist controversy that was shaking most Christian denominations in America in the 1920’s, REC Presiding Bishop Robert Livingston Rudolph could say, “Since this Synod was organized, no man has ever crept into the ministry with a doubt in his mind as to the Deity of Christ, the utter helplessness of man, the full efficacy of the shed blood when the sinner believes, or the irrevocable loss of those who finally neglect this Gospel of grace. We are free from modernism, thank God.”

The concerns of those who established the Reformed Episcopal Church as a separate Anglican jurisdiction in 1873, proved to be prophetic. The liberal-modernist assault on orthodox Christianity so increased in vigor that by the end of the turbulent 1960’s, it had seriously impacted most Christian denominations in the Western world, and by the end of the 1970’s, had overwhelmed many – including the Episcopal Church. Fortunately, the

Reformed Episcopal Church remained true to the teachings of Holy Scripture and was not impacted by the liberal-modernist movement.

Joseph Dawson Wilson, an early leader in the Reformed Episcopal Church, told the seventh General Council of the REC in 1879, “The most powerful among the instruments arrayed upon the side of Christ to-day is, in my opinion, the Anglican Communion,” adding, “God has brought the Reformed Episcopal Church into being for the purpose of revivifying the Anglican Communion.”

PRESENT AND FUTURE

Today the Anglican Communion is the third largest Christian body in the world, totaling some 77 million members, with the fastest-growing provinces of the Communion in a region of the world known as the Global South, situated mainly in Africa, South America and Southeast Asia. In fact, the vast majority of orthodox adherents to Anglicanism today are not in first-world English speaking countries where churches such as the Episcopal Church USA have been impacted and then overwhelmed by the rising tide of liberal-modernism, but in the two-thirds world.

After years of calling Christians in the first-world back to Biblical orthodoxy, Oxford educated Archbishop Peter Akinola, primate of the Anglican Church of Nigeria – the worlds largest Anglican province – along with other primates of the Global South, called for a Church-wide Conference to meet in the holy city of Jerusalem. From June 22-29, 2008, nearly 1,200 orthodox Anglican leaders, including 291 bishops from 27 nations, on six continents, representing 70 to 75% of practicing Anglicans world-wide, gathered in Jerusalem in an invitation-only meeting to launch a new Reformation in Anglicanism and a realignment in the Anglican Communion. This conference, known as GAFCON (the Global Anglican Future Conference) was chaired by Archbishop Peter Akinola of Nigeria, and included the bishops of the Reformed Episcopal Church in North America.

The Christian Challenge magazine reported that the Conference “plans for a vigorous expansion of missionary activities around the globe. As well, it rejects the authority of the U. S. Episcopal Church (TEC), accusing it of proclaiming a ‘false gospel,’ and calls for the creation of a faithful new Anglican Province in North America.”

The Conference acknowledged Canterbury as “an historic see,” but added, “We do not accept that Anglican identity is determined necessarily through recognition by the Archbishop of Canterbury.” Instead, the Conference established a Primate’s Council to lead the Anglican Communion in a conciliar manner.

Since the tide of liberal-modernism overwhelmed the Episcopal Church in the 1970’s, hundreds of congregations have either left that Church or been formed by churchmen who have. The exodus began in earnest in 1977, with the St. Louis Church Congress that

was held in the wake of the decision made by the Episcopal Church in 1976 to ordain women and to replace the historic Book of Common Prayer with a new Prayer Book of dubious orthodoxy, giving birth to what has become known as the “continuing Anglican movement.”

Beginning in the year 2000, foreign Anglican jurisdictions have stepped in to provide temporary oversight for some of these departing churches, forming organizations such as the Anglican Mission in the Americas (AMIA) under Rwanda; and the Convocation of Anglicans in North America (CANA) under Nigeria; with other congregations joining the Anglican Province of the Southern Cone headquartered in Argentina, or coming under the Anglican provinces of Uganda or Kenya. Other continuing Anglican churches functioned under their own bishops and in their own ecclesiastical jurisdictions. In addition, in 2007, an entire diocese, the Diocese of San Joaquin, California voted to separate from the Episcopal Church; and in October of 2008, the Diocese of Pittsburgh did the same. Two other dioceses – Quincy and Fort Worth – left the Episcopal Church in November of 2008. These organizations and dioceses joined together with the Reformed Episcopal Church to form a federation called the Common Cause Partners.

After the Jerusalem Conference in 2008, The Most Rev. Leonard W. Riches, Presiding Bishop of the Reformed Episcopal Church said, “The establishment of a Primates’ Council marks a major step toward restoring the church to the ancient, conciliar form of order and government by which substantive matters of belief and practice can be collectively considered, effectively determined, and strongly upheld, so that both orthodoxy and orthopraxis are maintained and promoted in the life of the church.”

There will be battles ahead, but the new Reformation in Anglicanism and the realignment within the Anglican Communion cannot be stopped as the orthodox who make up the overwhelming majority of practicing Anglicans in the Anglican Communion exercise leadership through the Primates’ Council.

THE REFORMED EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Reformed Episcopal Church, the largest of the Common Cause Partners, has grown from a single struggling synod in 1873, to a confident and growing Church of seven dioceses today: five in the United States and two in Canada. The Church carries on missionary work throughout the world, including Africa, South America, and Europe. The Reformed Episcopal Church of Germany has grown to the point that it now has its own native German bishop and a seminary; and the work in Cuba that was begun just as the Iron Curtain there began to crack, is rapidly growing.

The Reformed Episcopal Church utilizes its own edition of the Book of Common Prayer based upon the Church of England’s 1662 Prayer Book, along with the Order for Holy Communion from the 1928 American Book of Common Prayer. The doctrinal

formularies of the Church are the historic Book of Common Prayer with its Ordinal, the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, and the two Books of Homilies. The Reformed Episcopal Church believes in both baptismal regeneration and the real presence of Christ in the Sacrament of Holy Communion – that “The Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten...after an heavenly and spiritual manner” (*Article XXVIII*).

The Reformed Episcopal Church operates seminaries in Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas and Arizona, parochial schools throughout the country, and retreat centers. The Church does not ordain women as bishops, presbyters (priests), or as deacons, but it does set apart qualified women to serve in the ancient Christian order of deaconess. The canons of the Reformed Episcopal Church also allow for the formation of Religious Communities.

The Reformed Episcopal Church is in covenant union with the Anglican Church of Nigeria and is recognized by the Primates’ Council as a faithful part of the world-wide Anglican Communion. It is a founding member of the Common Cause Partners and the Federation of Anglican Churches in the America’s (FACA). The Reformed Episcopal Church is neither high church nor low church today, but can best be described as “classical Anglican” The website of the Reformed Episcopal Church can be visited at: www.rechurch.org .

A UNITED ORTHODOX ANGLICAN PROVINCE: THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA

On Monday, June 22, 2009, the Common Cause Partners, under the direction and guidance of the Primate’s Council of the Anglican Communion, met in an inaugural assembly (synod) at St. Vincent’s Anglican Cathedral in Ft. Worth, Texas to bring into being a united, orthodox Anglican Church in North America.

Announcing to the world that he was now Archbishop of the newly formed Anglican Church in North America, The Most Rev. Robert Duncan of Pittsburgh told a press conference that the Church he now leads will “reunite a significant portion of our Anglican Church family here in North America. We are uniting 700 congregations and 28 dioceses...We are oriented toward a hopeful future again.” Archbishop Duncan drew a wide net saying that God isn’t just bringing Anglican Christians together, “across the church people are re-embracing Scripture’s authority. Christians are rediscovering the grace of our 2,000 year-old tradition.”

Primates or leading bishops from nine provinces of the Anglican Communion were in attendance, and messages of support were received from others. The Anglican Church in North America received immediate recognition as the North American Province of the Anglican Communion by the Primates Council.

There were important Ecumenical representatives at the synod as well. The Vatican sent a bishop to represent Pope Benedict XVI, and the Eastern Orthodox Church was represented by Metropolitan Jonah, primate of the Orthodox Church in America. Metropolitan Jonah addressed the synod for 45 minutes and called for “full intercommunion” with the Anglican Church in North America. “What will it take,” he asked, “for true ecumenical reconciliation? That is what I am seeking by being with you today.” Metropolitan Jonah said, “I come to you as the successor of [St.] Tikhon...with the same openness, the same invitation, the same love and desire to unify Anglicanism and Orthodoxy.”

The Service installing Bishop Duncan as the first Archbishop and primate of the Anglican Church in North America was held at the end of the inaugural synod at the nearby 2000 member Anglican parish of Christ Church in Plano, Texas. The huge church was filled to capacity, as 60 bishops and more than 300 priests processed in for Service.

With some 100,000 faithful in 700 congregations, in 28 dioceses, with six seminaries, numerous parochial schools, and other ministries, the Anglican Church in North America is already larger than a number of provinces of the Anglican Communion, including such important provinces as Scotland and Wales. The Anglican Church in North America will begin as a federation of the Common Cause Partners that brought it into being, with members of each Partner holding dual membership.

While there are issues to resolve, and there will no doubt be growing pains to deal with, there is now a united, orthodox Province of the Anglican Communion in North America - and it is focused on the Great Commission. Bishop Jack Iker of Ft. Worth said, “Our desire is to bring the whole gospel to the whole world... We are evangelical and catholic... We are a Biblical missionary movement.” The website of the Anglican Church in North America can be visited at www.united-anglicans.org

THE ANGLICAN AND HIS CHURCH

Anglicans find great joy in their Church, and quiet confidence in their faith. Theirs is a Church with an unbroken history dating back to the dawn of Christianity; and theirs is a Church reformed and renewed in the Reformation of the 16th century, confidently believing, teaching and confessing Evangelical Truth and Apostolic Order, and actively advancing the work of the Great Commission.

Many famous Christians have been Anglicans, including William Shakespeare, Francis Bacon, Charles Dickens, John Donne, George Frederick Handel, John and Charles Wesley, George Washington, John Newton, Dorothy Sayers, T. S. Eliot, and C. S. Lewis, along with such contemporary Christian luminaries as J. I. Packer and John Stott. The

Anglican Church has produced a whole host of great saints, missionaries, martyrs, evangelists, monastics, theologians, poets and hymn writers, men and women of all races, and from every continent in the world.

We welcome all who seek a firm foundation for their Christian faith in this confused and troubled world, and invite *you* to join with us on our pilgrim journey. St. Augustine of Hippo wrote that our souls are restless until they rest in God. Why not worship with us this Sunday and discover the peace of God that passes all understanding? We are a friendly *and* faithful Church, - and we have a place for you!

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