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Liturgical Revision in the Scottish Episcopal Church

Curated by John Reuben Davies and Nicholas Taylor

Preface on Behalf of the College of Bishops

MARK STRANGE 5

Foreword by the Convener of the Liturgy Committee

JOHN REUBEN DAVIES 6

Towards Renewal of the Scottish Liturgy: Some Principles

NICHOLAS TAYLOR 8

Revision, Resourcing and Representation: Contemporary Trends in Liturgical Provision

BRIDGET NICHOLS 18

Language and Inclusion

ALISON JASPER 36

Intercessions and the Scottish Liturgy

DAVID JASPER 49

The Lord's Prayer in the Eucharist

NICHOLAS TAYLOR 57

The 'Peace' in the Liturgies of the Scottish Episcopal Church

JOHN REUBEN DAVIES 65

The Theology of the Eucharistic Prayer:
The 1982 Liturgy of the Scottish Episcopal Church

DAVID JASPER 79

Issues in Eucharistic Theology

NICHOLAS TAYLOR 86

The Fraction and the Distribution

NICHOLAS TAYLOR 101

Worship with Care: The Pastoral Dimension of Liturgy

ARMAND LÉON VAN OMMEN 108

Season of Creation: A Time to Pray and Act

RACHEL MASH 124

The Scottish Episcopal Institute Annual Lecture 2019

Their Pattern and Their King:
The Gospel of Matthew as a Model for Christian Formation

PAUL FOSTER 131

Book Reviews

CHRISTIAN C. SAHNER. *Christian Martyrs under Islam: Religious Violence and the Making of the Muslim World*

Reviewed by NICHOLAS TAYLOR 145

ANDREW RUMSEY. *Parish: An Anglican Theology of Place*

Reviewed by JENNIFER HOLDEN 146

GEORGE CORBETT, ed. *Annunciations: Sacred Music for the Twenty-first Century*

Reviewed by ANN LOADES 149

CHRISTINE SCHENK. *Crispina and Her Sisters: Women and Authority in Early Christianity*

Reviewed by NICHOLAS TAYLOR 154

DAVID JASPER. *Heaven in Ordinary: Poetry and Religion in a Secular Age*

Reviewed by MICHAEL HULL 155

A special request regarding the late Professor Donald M. MacKinnon

Dr André Muller, who is working on an intellectual biography of Professor Donald M. MacKinnon (1913–94), would be very interested to hear from anyone who knew the Scottish philosophical theologian, or heard him lecture or preach, or corresponded with him, or has any information about him. Dr Muller may be contacted via email (mulan398@gmail.co.nz) or post (14a Arnot Ave, Clouston Park, Upper Hutt, 5018, New Zealand).

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Preface on Behalf of the College of Bishops

MARK STRANGE

Bishop of Moray, Ross & Caithness and Primus

The life of the Church, as the worshipping community of all the baptized, has the Eucharist at its heart. The people of God meet Christ, above all, in the Eucharist. Through the liturgy of the Eucharist we truly become the body of Christ, are fed by him in Word and Sacrament, and are sent out into the world to proclaim the good news of his kingdom.

The liturgy therefore leads and impels us in mission. For this reason, liturgical formation and liturgical renewal are foundations for mission and growth; a formation and renewal that draws on perhaps the most rich and flexible tradition of sacramental worship in the Anglican Communion. At the centre of this tradition is the Scottish Liturgy (in its three current forms).

The Church must constantly be attentive to the Liturgy and the manner and forms in which it is celebrated. The College of Bishops therefore commends the process of scholarship, consultation, and discussion, of which this special issue of the *Scottish Episcopal Institute Journal* forms a part, as the Liturgy Committee seeks to implement the mandate of the Faith and Order Board to present suggestions for the renewal of the Scottish Liturgy.

Foreword by the Convener of the Liturgy Committee

JOHN REUBEN DAVIES

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Convener, Liturgy Committee of the Faith and Order Board

By the celebration of the Eucharist we anticipate the life of the kingdom, and in the Eucharist, we receive Christ as the one who has ‘the words of eternal life’ (John 6. 68), and who is indeed ‘the bread of life’ (John 6. 48). Growth is a sign of life, and renewal is the means by which growth comes about. The Church can, in one sense, only be renewed through its liturgy, since it is through the liturgy – and through Baptism and Eucharist most precisely, as the sacraments of the Paschal mystery – that the Church is made and exists. And the reason the Church exists is as a herald for salvation. As the Primus reminds us in his Preface, it is for this very reason that the liturgy ‘leads and impels us in mission’.

The recognition that liturgical formation and liturgical renewal must be ‘the foundations for mission and growth’, centred on the celebration of the Eucharist, is therefore behind the commission delivered by the Faith and Order Board, to the Liturgy Committee, to begin the work of study and review of the Scottish Liturgy so that the Eucharistic worship offered throughout the Scottish Episcopal Church can allow us all the more truly to stand at the centre of the world, like Christ, and bless God. And so that we can receive the world from God and offer it to God. For the purpose of all Christians is to become the true ‘liturgists of Jesus Christ’ (cf. Romans 15. 16).

The community of love and faith, which is the Church, is also a community full of hope and new life focused on sacrificial love and thanksgiving. And this kind of sacrificial love and thanksgiving is demonstrated at the heart of our liturgical life in the Eucharist.

Only with the Eucharist, therefore, as the liturgy of word and sacrament at the heart of our lives, can we know who we are and be known for who we are. Only with the Eucharist as the heart of the life of the Church can the love of God reach beyond the act of worship and into the everyday life of the world. For the liturgy shows us how to see the world, and how to live in the world, and is therefore ‘for the life of the world’ (John 6. 51).

At the start of the process of study and review, the Liturgy Committee now offers this conversation about some of the principles of liturgical revision and renewal. Other ways of continuing and broadening the conversation are also envisaged – workshops and study days, regional

consultations and local discussions – but we begin here by setting out various ideas based on a range of scholarship and practical knowledge. This issue of the *SEI Journal* offers a collection of studies mainly by members of the Liturgy Committee. We have nevertheless also invited several contributions from specialists outside the Committee. The articles do not represent any settled opinion of the Liturgy Committee but rather the considered thoughts of the individual contributors at the outset of this journey. Neither have all the issues that need to be discussed been included here. We therefore aim to produce further collections of studies, covering themes such as communication, movement, culture, children, dementia, immobility, and inclusion; seasonal provision; and the Eucharist as the setting for other sacramental acts.

One question that we are especially aware of is the case for theological diversity in the provision for Eucharistic Prayers; and we hope that scholars from an evangelical position will be able to respond to our invitation to address the questions which have so often been raised within congregations, the Faith and Order Board, and the General Synod.

In the meantime, the following collection is presented to the Church – and the Scottish Episcopal Church in particular – as a starting point for discussion.

Towards Renewal of the Scottish Liturgy: Some Principles

NICHOLAS TAYLOR

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Member, Doctrine Committee and

Member, Liturgy Committee of the Faith and Order Board

Liturgy is an act of the Church, not of the officiating minister, nor even of the gathered congregation, but of the Church catholic, 'at all times and in all places'. Nevertheless, for reasons of historical accident as well as of cultural mutation or theological principle, Christian worship has evolved in different ways in different contexts and gives expression to the faith as understood and experienced, within a dynamic tradition, by a particular community in a particular place. Worship is therefore local as well as global, and the ordering of our worship requires that the catholic and the contextual both be expressed.

What is true of liturgy in general is pre-eminently true of the Eucharist, commemorating as it does the once-and-for-all death and resurrection of Christ. As the Body of Christ constitutes one Church, expresses one faith, and administers one Baptism, so too it celebrates the one Eucharist. This is not to deny the demonstrable historical reality that the ways in which the Eucharist is celebrated, and even what it is called, have diversified from the earliest days of the Church, and that distinctive traditions have evolved in the social, cultural, linguistic, and intellectual contexts in which Christian communities have been formed. Furthermore, the precise origin of the Eucharist in the life and ministry of Jesus and the corporate life of the early Church is disputed, as is whether a single source can be identified for the diversity of ancient liturgical traditions.¹

While eucharistic traditions have evolved in response to different impulses in different communities, it needs to be recognized that these traditions have not always mutated with the culture of the local church.

¹ P. F. Bradshaw, *Eucharistic Origins* (London: SPCK, 2004); *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship: Sources and Methods for the Study of Early Liturgy* (London: SPCK, 2002); B. D. Chilton, *A Feast of Meanings: Eucharistic Theologies from Jesus through the Johannine Circle* (Leiden: Brill, 1994); D. E. Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003); M. D. Stringer, *Rethinking the Origins of the Eucharist* (London: SCM, 2011).

Whether archaic forms and expressions can be reinterpreted, or require revision, or whether their very archaism testifies not merely to their antiquity but to their rootedness in the inherited tradition, requires careful consideration, which is unlikely to realise simple answers. Furthermore, the history of Christian missions reveals some variation in the degree of sensitivity to local language and culture with which the worshiping life of new communities has been ordered. Where political and military conflicts, conquest and occupation, have preceded or accompanied Christian mission, contextualization of the Gospel has seldom been a consideration or a priority. Where existing Christian traditions have forcibly been replaced with the vicissitudes of political and military conflict, then frequently liturgy and worship have been used as an instrument for imposing political conformity and loyalty.

These issues are all relevant to the history of Christianity in Scotland, and to the tradition of worship received and transmitted in the Scottish Episcopal Church today.² This history may be contested, and continues to be reflected in ways in which the liturgical heritage is cherished, lived, or repudiated in our present-day congregations. Neither the people nor the influences which shape the SEC today, however, can be reduced to the descendants of congregations of previous generations and centuries. There is little direct or tangible connection with the worship offered by Ninian and Columba on behalf of the communities of those they had baptised, and certainly not in the Celtic fantasies commodified by certain groups. The genetic and spiritual heritage of the first converts to Christianity in what is now Scotland has dissipated considerably over a millennium and more of population migrations and social and political instability. The conflicts of the reformation era and the ensuing dislocation in Scottish church and society which saw the SEC emerge as a distinct entity, may appear a little more relevant.³ However, the membership of the SEC today cannot be identified with the descendants of Stuart loyalists and other adherents of episcopacy who endured the penal laws, or of the membership of qualified chapels which gradually merged into the SEC during the nineteenth century.

² N. H. Taylor, 'Liturgy and Theological Method in the Scottish Episcopal Church', in *Studies in the History of Scottish Episcopacy*, ed. J. R. Davies and R. S. Spurlock, *Records of the Scottish Church History Society [RSCHS]* 47 (2018), 143–54.

³ I. Meredith, *The Scottish Reformation: An Episcopalian Perspective* (Glasgow: Diocese of Glasgow & Galloway, 2012); A. Raffe, *The Culture of Controversy: Religious Arguments in Scotland, 1660-1714* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2012); *Episcopacy and Scottish Identity from 1689* (Glasgow: Diocese of Glasgow & Galloway, 2014).

Migration has continued to change the composition of our congregations, from England and Ireland during the Industrial Revolution, from west Africa through the slave trade, from all parts of the Commonwealth as the British Empire imploded, and most recently from Europe during the seven unprecedented decades of relative peace. Just as migration from Europe ebbs with impending Brexit, refugees and asylum seekers from the middle east find temporary shelter among us, some of whom are Christian or come to Christian faith, and bring their gifts, experience, and culture into our congregations. Together with couples of mixed marriages, and refugees and converts from other denominations, immigrants continue to change the character of our communities, to broaden and even to challenge the tradition we have inherited, the experience of faith, the culture and the diversity of theological perspective which need to be reflected and expressed in our worship. The SEC of the twenty-first century is not that of any previous era, however earnestly and faithfully it seeks to transmit the heritage of faith and worship it has received, while embracing the cultural diversity of the present, and seeking to pass on its dynamic tradition to an uncertain future.

The SEC cannot hope to survive as a loose confederation of members-only social clubs for white middle-class pensioners. While much of the language of mission and welcome conceals complacency, fatalism, or the conscious erection of invisible barriers, any realistic appraisal of the future options of our Church must include recognition that survival is not inevitable; a sound grasp of how the Church, its corporate life, and its worship relate to global and local reality will be a prerequisite to any survival strategy, and even more to effective mission. The model of 'Christ and Culture' expounded by Richard Niebuhr,⁴ duly adapted,⁵ might be a helpful means of understanding, if not of resolving, the issues.

Christ against Culture defines the Church in terms of its active, worshipping community, and regulates members' way of life as integral to their Christian commitment. There is no space for ambiguity or for less than fully committed membership: the Church 'affirms the sole authority of Christ over culture and resolutely rejects culture's claims to loyalty'.⁶ The host society is perceived as hostile, idolatrous, and depraved, and a rigid boundary is maintained against it. Many of the New Testament and other early Christian writings might reflect this perspective, but it would be rare in the SEC today, especially since the defection of congregations which held such a position following the amendment to Canon 31 in 2017. Nevertheless,

⁴ H. R. Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper & Row, 1951).

⁵ N. H. Taylor, *Paul on Baptism: Theology, Mission and Ministry in Context* (London: SCM, 2016), pp. 152–62.

⁶ Niebuhr, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

it should be noted that the clear boundary between church and society can make for a church which is missionary, proclaiming the Gospel to the society surrounding its clearly defined community. Outsiders, which historically would have included catechumens, would be excluded from the Eucharist, even if welcomed to gatherings at which the Gospel is expounded.

The *Christ of Culture* approach is the opposite of 'Christ against Culture', and characteristic of established denominations, where religious, cultural, and national identity are inextricably linked. It is assumed that society is Christian, and therefore that the culture is inherently Christian, whatever may be meant by 'Christian'. Membership of the Church is inherited, and not contingent upon any personal commitment or profession. Baptism is reduced to a cultural rite of passage, and the Church jealously guards the seamlessness of its boundaries with the local sports or luncheon clubs and dining societies, political associations and masonic lodges, not allowing the Gospel to become a barrier to conviviality among the prosperous middle classes. At the same time, anyone who would not be acceptable in such circles is strenuously excluded from the Church. The Eucharist, where not replaced with a more socially acceptable liturgy such as Mattins or Christmas Carols, is as godless as any masonic ritual, its spiritual content replaced with uninformed aesthetic prejudices and entrenched resistance to liturgical change and to proclamation of the Gospel in ways which might offend friends who would never darken the door of a church except for a rite of passage.

The *Christ above Culture* approach sees the Gospel incarnated in, but always distinct from, human culture. While recognizing human limitations and sinfulness, and moral responsibility, potential is also seen for an ecclesiastical and cultural synthesis. The Gospel is interpreted and applied to life in a manner congenial to the host culture, while remaining the standard against which cultural observances and attitudes are measured. While inviting society, especially the intellectual elites, to accept the Gospel, this approach would tend nonetheless to maintain a clear boundary between Church and society, and to advocate a discipline which nurtured those born into the Christian community. While it is typically Anglican to appeal to ruling elites around the world, with varying but limited (if much exaggerated) success, this appeal is of particularly dubious value in Scotland today, and was noted by a forebear of the present writer, without a hint of ecumenical sentiment, in the Moderatorial Address to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1862:

The descendants of the Lords of the Congregation, attached to the Protestant faith and to the principle of an Established Church, had, with few exceptions, felt it hitherto their duty to

worship along with their own people; but when so great a division among them took place, a large proportion of our aristocracy (in many cases not without a great inward struggle) felt at liberty to consult their own predilections, and join the Episcopal Church. Educated, as many of them are, in the southern end of this island, they become, at an age when the heart is tender and most susceptible of strong religious impressions, attached to the Common Prayer and more imposing liturgical worship of England.⁷

The issues might be viewed somewhat differently today, but anything that suggests English supremacy is a liability to the SEC.

The *Christ and Culture in Paradox* approach engages critically with the prevailing culture; in negotiating the tensions between the Gospel and society, this approach is missional, seeking to bring people, families, and the whole society into Christian fellowship and into conformity with Christian beliefs, values, and observance, as these are understood. Where there is palpable tension between Christian and cultural values, and no avoiding integration in society, the Church will define a clear boundary between itself and the world. This approach would be typical of churches which recognize the reality of 'post-Christendom'. It will require careful consideration of how our worship is offered, how it functions as the public face of an increasingly alien and unfamiliar Gospel in an increasingly secular society. Whether the Eucharist is the appropriate vehicle for this may be questionable, and it may be felt that the prevailing frequency of celebration at 'peak times' should give way to forms of worship in which the Gospel is proclaimed and taught, and those who hear are invited to come closer to the mysteries of God through Baptism.

The final category, *Christ transforming Culture*, seeks to move beyond drawing people into the fellowship of the Church, and aspires to change the character of society. In aspiring to be the 'salt of the earth', Christians hope to influence society and culture without directly or overtly seeking to convert people to the Gospel. Those who pursue a media profile beyond their real influence in society through constant recourse to social media platforms, or the courting of television and radio journalists, may reflect such an outlook. Christian worship, however, might be a more effective means of transforming society and culture than posturing on social media; and worship's potential to transform the lives of individuals and their

⁷ J. Bisset, *Address of the Reverend Dr Bisset, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, delivered on 2nd June 1862* (Edinburgh: MacPhail, 1862).

relationships is well attested. The test for the Eucharist in this context would be whether those fed by the Sacrament and guided by the Spirit are motivated and empowered to transform the society in which they live.

If these categories were to be considered as tendencies along a continuum from *Christ against Culture*, through *Christ and Culture in Paradox*, *Christ above Culture*, and *Christ transforming Culture* to *Christ of Culture*, then they can helpfully illuminate many of the contested issues surrounding our life as a Church. There may be some diversity of views as to how the Church relates to society, not merely between catholics and evangelicals, conservatives and liberals, or between parties of whatever label, but even within a specific congregation, however clearly defined its ethos. Positions may shift or become ambivalent in response to internal or external developments, and any dissonance between the culture of the Church and that of its host society may be perceived very differently from different perspectives within the community. This complicates the task of drafting liturgies which are both faithful to the heritage of the SEC and authentic to its position in Scottish culture and society today.

As well as our relationship with our host society, or perhaps as part of it, consideration needs to be given to the ecumenical context in which we operate. While the ecumenical euphoria of the 1970s has given way to resigned co-existence, amicable in some parts of Scotland, less so in others, this does raise questions for our worship. Ecumenical acts of worship tend to take place at certain times in the church year, and usually do not include the Eucharist; notwithstanding the declared policy of the SEC that baptised Christians of any denomination are welcome to share in our Eucharist, generous hospitality towards all the baptised is not a conspicuous characteristic of all other denominations. Nevertheless, consideration might be given to liturgical developments in other Christian traditions, if only to confirm that we can sometimes do a better job ourselves. Some regard should certainly be had for ELLC, where agreed texts relevant to the SEC Eucharistic liturgy have been published.

The SEC occupies a distinctive place in the Anglican Communion, with a not untroubled liturgical relationship with the Church of England.⁸ The 'special relationship' of the SEC with The Episcopal Church (USA) may be as much the stuff of legend as are the myths and fantasies of the 'Celtic' past,

⁸ J. R. Davies, 'The Brothers Forbes and the Liturgical Books of Medieval Scotland: Historical Scholarship and Liturgical Controversy in the Nineteenth-Century Scottish Episcopal Church', *RSCHS* 47 (2018), 128–42; K. German, 'Non-Jurors, Liturgy, and Jacobite Commitment, 1718–1746', *RSCHS* 47 (2018), 74–99; Meredith, *op. cit.*; Taylor, 'Liturgy and Theological Method'.

but the affinity of some liturgical aficionados for the Prayer Book of the transatlantic provinces is undiminished thereby. The liturgies of other Anglican provinces may be more demonstrably dependent on the 1662 BCP of the Church of England.⁹ We should presumably expect that each Province, as it revises its liturgies, seeks to respond to the equivalent local and global issues as are being identified here. Its 'local' is not our 'local', and its perception of the 'global' we share may not be the same as ours. The question nevertheless arises whether we need to take seriously their perception of our global context and the ways in which it influences their tradition of worship? This is not to suggest that east or west African homophobia should be incorporated into our Marriage liturgy, but rather that the spirituality of Anglicans in other cultures might contribute words and insights to our heritage, which we could contextualize to our benefit.

Renewed attention to ancient Christian liturgies, and the rediscovery of texts from the early centuries, has had a considerable and not always sound or beneficial influence on liturgical revision during the last century. Most conspicuous among these have been the *Didache*, rediscovered in 1873,¹⁰ and the *Apostolic Tradition*, various recensions of which were discovered between 1848 and 1900.¹¹ The ascription of the latter to Hippolytus, and his dubious identification as a second-century Bishop of Rome, have elevated this document to the status of pre-eminent source of definitive ancient Christian liturgical texts.¹² This attribution is now discredited,¹³ but not before the Eucharistic rite had become the model for revised liturgies of the Roman Catholic and Anglican Communion during the latter part of the twentieth century. Its distinctive liturgical history spared the SEC much of this development, but the perils of liturgical archaeology are nonetheless to be recognized. It needs to be seriously questioned whether rites of the seventeenth century, which did not win wide acceptance when first promulgated, have exercised undue and even uncritical influence over the eucharistic liturgies of 1929, 1970, and 1982.

⁹ C. O. Buchanan, *Anglican Eucharistic Liturgies, 1985–2000* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2011); R. C. D. Jasper, *The Development of Anglican Liturgy, 1662–1980* (London: SPCK, 1989).

¹⁰ A. Milavec, *The Didache* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2003); M. Del Verme, *Didache and Judaism* (London: T & T Clark, 2004).

¹¹ P. F. Bradshaw, M. E. Johnson & L. E. Phillips, *The Apostolic Tradition* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002).

¹² Most notably, G. Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London: Dacre, 1945).

¹³ Bradshaw, *Eucharistic Origins; Search for the Origins of Christian Worship*; Bradshaw et al., *Apostolic Tradition*.

Liturgical revision is not simply a process of regurgitating or reheating texts which, for whatever reason, now appear dated. Translating into contemporary English is futile, and of transient value, if adequate account is not taken of changes in culture and the setting and life of the Church. Matters of gender in speaking of God, or of addressing God in worship, have been a sensitive topic for some decades, but the issues go beyond language of God.¹⁴ Account needs to be taken also of changes in theology. An extreme example would be the Rite of Purification or ‘churching’ of women after childbirth, included in the Scottish Book of Common Prayer. While the emphasis is on thanksgiving for safe delivery, with somewhat inadequate if not crass pastoral provision in the event of miscarriage, stillbirth, or neonatal death, and a concluding rubric providing opportunity to swell the church coffers, this liturgy would not be rendered acceptable for contemporary use simply by modernizing the English. The overtones of sinfulness in conception and contamination in pregnancy, implicit in the rubric requiring that the woman be ‘decently apparelled’ and the stipulation that she not enter the church building until the designated time after giving birth, are a relic of perverted and pejorative attitudes to sex, marriage, and the family, and of archaic notions of contamination through bodily fluids. A rite for contemporary use would need to be fundamentally reconceived, taking into account patterns of family life, shared parental responsibility, and a pastoral need to include not only the spouse but their other children (if any), while continuing to acknowledge that pregnancy and childbirth remain an uncomfortable, costly, and potentially perilous and painful process for women, both physically and emotionally. There would need to be more adequate provision in the event of tragedy, drawing on the insights of recent scholarship into the pastoral function of liturgy.¹⁵ The liturgy needs to reflect not merely changes in culture, but the often quite radical changes in theology which social changes may induce, but which become quite fundamental to Christian self-understanding and expression.

The Eucharist may appear less susceptible to theological changes of this order, but this is not the case. The theological pedantry of Thomas Aquinas, and the conflicts in eucharistic theology at the Reformation, may continue to occupy the minds of some clergy and lay people today.

¹⁴ A. Thatcher, *Gender-Inclusive Language and Worship* (London: Modern Church, 2016). See also the contribution of Alison Jasper to this volume, ‘Language and Inclusion’, 36–48.

¹⁵ E. Ramshaw, *Ritual and Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987); S. M. Smith, *Caring Liturgies: The Pastoral Power of Christian Ritual* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012); N. H. Taylor, ‘Baptism and Death: Pastoral Liturgy at the Death of an Unbaptized Person’, *Anaphora* 1 (2007), 55–80.

Nevertheless, more fundamental issues to do with the nature of the Church may be more directly relevant to contemporary liturgical provision. An example would be the growing recognition during the twentieth century of the quite fundamental place of Baptism in Christian identity, life, and ministry.¹⁶ The theological insight, born undoubtedly of the declining numbers of ordained clergy relative to the scale and scope of work demanded, may with hindsight seem so obvious that one might wonder how this has been overlooked through centuries of clericalism, without coming to conclusions about the probity of indiscriminate infant baptism. Once it is recognized that the Church is the community of the baptised, and that Christian ministry is rooted in Baptism, this has implications for the celebration of the Eucharist, for worship, and for the spiritual life of the laity. The notion of the laity as a kingdom of priests does not in itself imply that the office of presiding at the Eucharist should no longer be reserved to bishops and presbyters.¹⁷ What it does imply is that the death and resurrection of Christ, which Christians share mystically in and through Baptism, is fundamental to Christian identity and life in the world. A corollary of this insight is that, when the Church celebrates the paschal mystery at Easter, Christian preparation through Lent is shaped accordingly: self-examination begins with reflection on our observance of our baptismal promises in the Ash Wednesday liturgy, and our Baptism into Christ's death is evoked as we receive ritual washing during the Maundy Thursday Eucharist. 'We, who are baptised [...]' is as appropriate to the Eucharistic Prayer as it is a profound expression of Christian identity.

Just as the Church has had to learn afresh the identity of the laity, revive their role in worship, and expand it to meet changing needs and possibilities in the contemporary world, so too with the Diaconate. An order of ministry which had been reduced to a rite of passage between the lay and clerical states, the Diaconate has been revived as an order of ministry with its own identity, role, and vocation.¹⁸ The attention that has been given to

¹⁶ *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Faith & Order Paper No. 111 (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982); R. A. Meyers, *Baptism and Ministry* (New York: Church Publishing, 1994); S. K. Pickard, *Theological Foundations for Collaborative Ministry* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009); C. Watkins, *Living Baptism: Called Out of the ordinary* (London: DLT, 2006); *Ordering the Baptismal Priesthood*, ed. by S. K. Wood (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2003).

¹⁷ N. H. Taylor, *Lay Presidency at the Eucharist? An Anglican Approach* (London: Mowbray, 2009).

¹⁸ R. Brown, *Being a Deacon Today* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2005); J. N. Collins, *Deacons and the Church* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2002); O. Plater, *Many Servants* (Cambridge MA: Cowley, 1991).

the liturgical role of Deacons needs now to be extended and regularized in the ordering of the Eucharist. As well as the established roles of proclaiming the Gospel and leading the Intercessions, consideration will need to be given to ancient precedents for the Deacon to call upon the congregation to respond to the words of the Priest, and whether words for the Deacon might appropriately be written into the rites of the SEC.

The Eucharist is an act of the church, the priestly people of God gathered to celebrate the paschal mystery. The bishop or presbyter who presides over the celebration is not the celebrant, but rather the person set apart through Ordination to facilitate (to use a contemporary managerial expression) the worship of the congregation, and in so doing to form a mystical link between the gathered community and the universal Church. The words of the liturgy therefore express the faith of the Church, not the opinions of the president. However creative, articulate, lyrical, and even theologically literate priests may be, they are the servant of the Church, and not free to compose their own words in advance, or to extemporize those parts of the rite for which prescribed words have been ordered. This is part of following the example of Christ in obedience to God, which is integral to the priestly calling, and not merely a matter of compliance with Canon 22.

Revision, Resourcing and Representation: Contemporary Trends in Liturgical Provision

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Collects have attracted less public attention than the Eucharist and Baptism, or the liturgies of Holy Week and Easter, in the programmes of revision undertaken across the Churches over the last half century. They belong to the total shape of acts of worship, and because they change week by week, they become familiar to habitual churchgoers and remain a surprise to those who attend irregularly. Behind the scenes, where liturgical commissions and committees meet to carry out the revisions required by the Churches, the effort that has gone into adapting a form of prayer with its own admirers and defenders to meet a new set of needs has been significant. In the English-speaking world, collects have offered the Protestant Churches considerable scope for updating and new composition, and raised serious questions about methods of translation among Catholic liturgists.¹ Anglican committees have had to confront the challenges of demography, inclusivity, register and aesthetics in efforts to continue the lively contribution of the collect in contemporary worship. Their Catholic counterparts, meanwhile, have travelled the journey from capturing the sense, though not necessarily the exact shape and vocabulary, of an original by dynamic equivalence, to a much more literal fidelity to the Latin text of typical editions.²

Anglicans outside the Established Church of England have conducted their revisions and produced new prayer books without having to reckon

¹ 'Protestant' is the least unsatisfactory term to describe the churches of the Reformation and the churches of later origin (e.g. Methodist, Baptist and Presbyterian).

² See Keith F. Pecklers, *Dynamic Equivalence: The Living Language of Christian Worship* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003) and Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Liturgiam Authenticam: Vernacular Languages in the Books of the Roman Liturgy* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 2001). An excellent and balanced assessment of current developments is to be found in Alan Griffiths, 'The Collect: a Roman Catholic Perspective', in *The Collect in the Churches of the Reformation*, ed. by Bridget Nichols (London: SCM Press, 2010), pp. 197–215.

with the legally enshrined position of the Book of Common Prayer of 1662 (BCP) in the relationship of Church and State. Logically, this might have been expected to remove any inhibition about departing radically from the BCP's forms. Yet modern language prayer books have largely been faithful to their inheritance. The Episcopal Church in 1979 produced updated versions of the BCP collects that preserved their ideas and shapes, but elegantly and unostentatiously turned them into modern English. The Scottish Episcopal Church issued revised collects with its eucharistic revision in 1982. Some were new compositions in a variety of styles, some were modified familiar BCP forms. The Church of Southern Africa's 1989 revision offered a set of modern language collects with slightly modified BCP alternatives. In 1995, the Anglican Church in Australia made wide provision in its new prayer book: the number is expanded to cover the three-year lectionary; a 'prayer of the day' for Sundays and festivals is complemented by a choice of 'prayers of the week'; and styles vary from adaptations of BCP collects, to new compositions written in a similar idiom, to prayers which look and sound very different from traditional models. The Churches of England and Ireland, which adopted a different and grammatically simpler style in the 1980s, reverted to contemporary language collects with a BCP character in their books of 2000 and 2004. Different Provinces have not acted entirely autonomously. Much of the work has gone on in close co-operation with revision projects in other places, evidence of inter-provincial borrowing and adaptation can easily be found, and the results have usually been stronger for that reason.

Liturgical writing continues to be in an evolving state and there is great reticence about pronouncing on it aesthetically, or about dictating principles to direct new composition. Even the excellent guidelines on the language of worship in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America's *Principles for Worship* stop short of definite regulations.³ The firmest indications seem to address matters related to gender inclusive writing, and ways of addressing God which balance and moderate the prevailingly masculine imagery of public prayer.⁴ So far, I have not found any consideration of the techniques that writers of prayers might use to speak (*inter alia*) of issues of justice, abuse, repentance, atrocities and natural disaster. Perhaps such theorizing would destroy the power of expression which seems to have found a voice without official guidelines — admittedly,

³ Evangelical Lutheran Church of America *ELCA Principles for Worship* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2002), pp. 2–22 [Language] (accessed 30 September 2019).

⁴ See introduction to the Scottish Episcopal Church, *Permitted changes to the text of the Scottish Liturgy 1982* (accessed 15 October 2019).

more often in the prayers of writers like Janet Morley and Steven Shakespeare, whose independent collections are admired and used, but not officially authorized by any Church.⁵ Yet there would be some value in drawing attention to what language can do, analogous to the way that a musical composition might use dissonant effects and extreme variations in volume to express states of joy or anger, or deep emotional distress.

At the other extreme, strongly literary views of taste can tip over easily into rarefied compositions that please some but entirely fail to appeal to others. David Jasper, writing in this journal in response to essays inspired by his recent book, *The Language of Liturgy*, points to the example of my own comments on the Church of England's *Common Worship* Collects for the Commemorations of Lancelot Andrewes and George Herbert.⁶ He quite rightly observes that both the prayers, with their allusions to the writings and characteristic styles of the individuals they commemorate, and the kind of appreciation my piece represents, inhabit a 'very donnish world'. It is a world which is not nearly as accessible to faithful Anglican worshippers as the compilers might have imagined. Congregations might be expected to recognize quotations from Herbert's well-known hymns ('Teach me, my God and King', and 'Let all the world in every corner sing'), but not the forms of Andrewes's *Preces Privatae*.

Sampling the Genre

There is no easy way to illustrate the breadth, variety, conformity and adventurousness of the English-language collect family. The following sample attempts to indicate what has been done more recently, and to note techniques that seem to produce texts that stop the reader in his or her tracks, because they have a certain formal elegance, or because they capture an insight in an entirely novel way, or because they almost offend and yet succeed in peeling a layer off what has become conventional or platitudinous. They have not been chosen to represent the full cycle of the Christian year. Comparison of one prayer with its equivalent in the prayer book of another part of the Anglican Communion will sometimes illuminate the difference between immediate communication and unnecessary ponderous forms of expression.

⁵ Janet Morley, *All Desires Known*, 3rd edn (New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2006); Steven Shakespeare, *Prayers for an Inclusive Church* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2008).

⁶ David Jasper, *The Language of Liturgy: A Ritual Poetics* (London: SCM, 2018), p. 143. Jasper refers to my own rather optimistic entry on these collects in *A Companion to Common Worship*, vol. 1, ed. by Paul F. Bradshaw (London: Church House Publishing, 2001), pp. 179–274 (199).

I readily acknowledge two cautions, in offering these tentative approaches to discussion. The first is Stephen Sykes's reminder that the source-critical method beloved of liturgists has often failed to understand that liturgical texts are part of the structure of larger acts of worship.⁷ Collects can be admired and criticized as freestanding compositions, and are seldom critically treated in any other way, but that exercise does not hear them as they resonate against other parts of an unfolding action. The second is that the liturgical ear itself is modified by continuing exposure. What seemed unfamiliar, jarring and inelegant at a first encounter could, after an interval, emerge differently as direct and truthful.

A New Zealand Prayer Book (1989), is unlike other current prayer books in retaining very little of the BCP. Its collects — a set for each of the three years of the Revised Common Lectionary cycle — depart from conventional style and idiom to produce prayers in another liturgical voice altogether, as the Collect for the First Sunday of Advent (Year A) demonstrates:

Praise and honour to you living God;
your coming will be like a thief in the night,
like lightning flashing across the sky.
Grant that we may be ready,
and our hearts answer, Come Lord Jesus.
Hear this prayer for your love's sake.
Amen.⁸

Lines 1–2 come straight to the point of Advent vigilance for the Second Coming, contracting an array of scriptural references into two trenchant lines. A small concordance could be produced, but it would not add to the impact achieved by juxtaposing apparently contradictory metaphors. The prayer speaks of the deep fear of the night-time intruder, and the terrifying and lethal beauty of lightning. If we were looking for echoes, then it would be possible to argue that the BCP's 'give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and put upon us the armour of light' is captured in the metaphors of theft and lightning. But that seems unnecessary. As an answer to the

⁷ Stephen Sykes, 'Baptisme doth Represente unto Us Oure Profession', in *Unashamed Anglicanism* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1995), pp. 3–23 (8–9).

⁸ Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, *A New Zealand Prayer Book He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa* (1989), p. 550 (accessed 29 September 2019).

question, 'How do Christians imagine the Second Coming?' the collect finds a more intuitive way through drama to theological understanding.

Traditional narrative blends into social concern, as at Epiphany (Years A, B & C, first collect). Here, the temporariness and precariousness of the stable comes to stand for solidarity with, and hope for, the poor who 'have to live' where they can find shelter, while the discernment and homage shown by the Magi exemplifies leadership that informs itself by turning first to Christ:

Jesus, light of the world,
let your bright star stand over the place
where the poor have to live;
lead our sages to wisdom
and our rulers to reverence.
Hear this prayer for your love's sake.⁹

And even more starkly in the second option for the feast of the Holy Innocents (Years A, B & C, second collect):

Loving Jesus,
let the tears of Rachel express our desolation,
let her weep for battered babies and clinical deformity,
weep for human cruelty and ignorance and arrogance.
Loving Jesus, may we weep with her,
may we see what we are doing,
what is happening to us;
help us repair it soon.
Praise to you our God; you answer prayer.
Amen.¹⁰

Striking and direct as this prayer is, it hints at the liturgical struggle to anticipate and avoid the kind of language that will date. 'Clinical deformity' is unlikely to be well received at a time of increasing anxiety and fastidiousness in choosing terms to describe forms of disability and genetic conditions. A prayer used once a year, and then only where the feast is kept and where this option is chosen, is, however, less likely to ignite protest than a text in more regular use.

The Church of England published a set of Additional Collects 2004, in response to circumstances described in the next part of this discussion. They

⁹ Ibid., p. 565 (accessed 29 September 2019).

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 717.

came with a helpful preamble, explaining their deliberately short and punchy style, their choice of focal points, and their use of simple syntax to achieve clear communication.¹¹ Their compilers looked to Scripture, the Church's Year, key theological themes and general experience of being a Christian today in the light of the history of faith, to inspire the content of the prayers.¹²

The Epiphany Collect interprets the story of the Magi's visit as the inspiration for a lifelong journey of faith:

Creator of the heavens,
who led the Magi by a star
to worship the Christ-child:
guide and sustain us,
that we may find our journey's end
in Jesus Christ our Lord.¹³

Comparison with the New Zealand model shows how differently two ostensibly simple structures have developed. This example has many virtues as a story-based prayer of faith, that stretches the journey motif from the Magi to the Christian life. It does not deserve to be criticized for omitting the showing of Christ to the nations, or for offering a vaguer eschatology than beholding Christ's glory 'face to face'.¹⁴ How those aspects of the feast might be expressed in the whole liturgical celebration, is nevertheless a question to consider.

A few of the Additional Collects stray from the introductory principles of simplicity and directness, as on Christmas night:

Eternal God,
in the stillness of this night
your almighty Word leapt down from heaven:
pierce the world's darkness with the light of salvation
and give to the earth the peace that we long for
through our Saviour, Jesus Christ.¹⁵

¹¹ [*Common Worship Additional Collects*](#) (accessed 29 September 2019).

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Collect for the Feast of the Epiphany in Archbishops' Council *Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England* (London: Church House Publishing, 2000), p. 383.

¹⁵ *Common Worship Additional Collects*.

‘Your almighty Word leapt down from heaven’ (Wisdom 18. 11) is mysterious on any terms, and its place in the liturgical tradition of Christmas requires the full armoury of medieval exegesis. In that sense, it is impenetrable at face value. Yet the language of worship does not always work at face value, and the sheer energy in the leaping almighty Word, breaking the night-time ‘stillness’ as it ‘[pierces] the world’s darkness’, conveys the event of the incarnation breaking into history where plodding explanation would not. Sometimes, liturgical committees can profitably break their own rules.

In 2015, the Scottish Episcopal Church authorized alternative collects for experimental use.¹⁶ Among many elegant and commendable features is the sequence of Advent collects, which continue the ‘stir up’ theme of the traditional BCP collect for the Sunday next before Advent as the first two words of the collects for the four Sundays. The collects from Ash Wednesday and through Holy Week develop the theme of a journey that begins with Ash Wednesday and ends with the resurrection. The theme is revived powerfully on Passion Sunday and Palm Sunday, which invites worshippers deeper into the action of the last days of Jesus’s earthly life. The collects for the days of Holy Week move towards the waiting of Holy Saturday. This can be a strangely interminable day for anyone who has followed a disciplined and rigorous programme through Lent and Holy Week, and though the Holy-Saturday collect’s theological reflection on waiting might escape many, the simple fact of waiting for the Easter ceremonies will not.

On Trinity Sunday, the collect brings a new effort at theological clarity, and a statement of eschatological hope, by untangling the gloriously perplexing model on which it draws. Compare its progressive journey into the unfolding mystery of the Trinity to the widely current contemporary language version of the BCP original:

Almighty and Everlasting God,
you have given us grace in the profession of true faith
to recognise the glory of the eternal Trinity:
keep us steadfast in this faith
and bring us to see you in your perfect and eternal unity;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, world without end.¹⁷

¹⁶ Texts can be found online: Scottish Episcopal Church, [Collects for Experimental Use](#) (accessed 8 November 2019).

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 26.

Almighty and everlasting God,
 you have given us your servants grace,
 by the confession of a true faith,
 to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity
 and in the power of the divine majesty to worship the Unity:
 keep us steadfast in this faith,
 that we may evermore be defended from all adversities;
 for you live and reign, one God, for ever and ever.¹⁸

Collect enthusiasts might wish to question other compositional decisions, as for example, the Christmas midnight model, which replaces the BCP's 'to shine with the brightness of your one true light' with 'to grow radiant with the brilliance of the true light'. Why rarefy ordinary words like 'shine' and 'brilliance'? The powerful assertion of a world lit up by Christ, conveyed in emphatic monosyllables comes to sound mannered, and the wonderful rhythm of the BCP line, with its three final stresses — is lost.¹⁹ At Epiphany, 'by the leading of a star' becomes 'by the guidance of a star', lending a rather moral flavour to what was an unfolding and mysteriously illuminated journey.²⁰

Accessible Language, Inclusiveness, Language for God

This survey of trends in revision has not so far commented on the reception of new compositions. I turn now to some of the difficulties that have been identified in the areas of accessibility, inclusion, and the proper way to speak of, and to, the Divine.

When *Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England* appeared in 2000, there was very swiftly a motion from the Diocese of Wakefield, requesting a set of alternative collects, less complex than those in the new book, but 'in a worthy liturgical idiom'.²¹ To understand the background to the motion, it is necessary to compare the CW Collects with

¹⁸ General Synod of the Church of Ireland, *Book of Common Prayer* [2004] (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2018), p. 281.

¹⁹ SEC, *Collects*.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ The Motion GS Misc 645 was presented to the General Synod of the Church of England in 2001. The additional collects drafted by the Liturgical Commission appeared, after a revision process, as Additional Collects GS 1493A in 2003. They were published in 2004: Archbishops' Council of the Church of England, *Common Worship: Additional Collects* (London: Church House Publishing, 2004).

those of the *Alternative Service Book 1980* (ASB). A number of Book of Common Prayer Collects which had disappeared from view in the 1980 book had reappeared in very slightly modified form. The option to use them in ‘traditional language’ was available. Another returning feature was the relative clause, which had been conscientiously dropped from the syntax of the ASB collects. Certain archaic words and phrases had found their way back into what were billed as contemporary language prayers: ‘succour’ (Advent 2) and ‘keep us in the same’ (Trinity 7). The Wakefield Diocesan Synod was not arguing on the basis of economic and educational disparity — the premise of criticisms raised by *Faith in the City* in 1985²². Its interest was in shifts in the whole discourse of society, and demographic shifts in the Church’s ministry. People no longer responded to prayers in this formal, and to the promoters’ eye, prolix style. In a consultation exercise, the Liturgical Commission found that:

[t]heir language is frequently inaccessible for certain contexts; for example, where children are present in significant numbers, in ‘non-book’ contexts, and among missionary congregations where there is no background experience of the language of *The Book of Common Prayer*.²³

The result was the publication in 2004 of the Additional Collects for Sundays and Festivals, introduced above. Their style is deliberately concise, some are built around a strong image, and they carry a single petition. The traditional naming of attributes of the divine nature, or weaknesses in the human condition, is not typically part of their structure. To date, there is no reliable survey of how they are being received and used. Six years after their publication, Donald Gray remarked that ‘the jury is still out’.²⁴

Several years later, in 2011, the Diocese of Liverpool sent a motion to the General Synod requesting adjustments to the Common Worship order of Baptism.²⁵ This referred in detail to the experience of clergy working in communities where churchgoing was erratic and both general and biblical

²² Archbishop of Canterbury’s Commission on Urban Priority Areas, *Faith in the City* (London: Church House, Publishing, 1985).

²³ GS 1493 (2003) *Common Worship: Additional Collects* — Report by the Liturgical Commission, 3.

²⁴ Donald Gray, ‘The Anglican Collect’, in *The Collect in the Churches of the Reformation*, ed. by Bridget Nichols (London: SCM Press, 2010), pp. 50–66 (64).

²⁵ GS 1816A *Liverpool Diocesan Synod Motion: Common Worship Baptism Provision* (February 2011).

literacy were low. The elaborate development of the *Common Worship* Order of Baptism, its richly referenced prayers over the baptismal water, and its demanding promises were all deterrents to communicating the Christian faith to those who brought children for baptism. The Church of England Liturgical Commission produced a set of alternatives for sections of the service that most directly involve the people in 2015. Now there are new texts for the Presentation of the Candidates, the Decision, the Signing with the Cross, and the Commission. There is also a choice of two prayers over the water, each of them choosing one biblical 'picture' (the Jordan, Noah's ark) as the governing image for its further development. Lack of statistical data to indicate the use of this material makes it unwise to comment on its influence to date.

These two initiatives raise important difficulties encountered by those who had to implement the provisions authorized by the national church in local settings, ranging from economic and educational disadvantage to general unchurchedness. They assume that, to a large extent, most problems of understanding can be solved by words. Little is said about the pastoral delivery of acts of worship. A thought-provoking article by the sacramental theologian and parish priest, Louis-Marie Chauvet, whose ministry operates in circumstances where the bodies overseeing the liturgy do not provide alternatives in response to local objections, might give Anglicans a salutary reminder to take a wider view of the whole liturgical act.²⁶ The article considers the problem facing many parish clergy, which is that those who attend services find the language they encounter 'incomprehensible'. Chauvet may write from the perspective of a Parisian Catholic parish, but the phenomena he describes bear many similarities to the obstacles to worship mentioned in Anglican circles. He begins with the assumption 'that in fact the "language" of the liturgy poses a real difficulty for the "average" Christian, and that the question to ask is precisely where the difficulty of this language lies'.²⁷ Chauvet's solution looks outside of the 'simple lexical meaning of the words used'. Even though the words themselves may be perfectly easy to understand,

it is sometimes their interweaving into an expression which makes them sound inaudible or strange: 'He is seated at the right hand of the Father'; 'It is right and good'. Here, it is the failure of biblical or liturgical culture that is the issue. Misunderstandings (he 'descended to the realm of the dead') or obstacles ('women,

²⁶ Louis-Marie Chauvet, 'Are the words of the liturgy worn out? What Diagnosis? What pastoral approach?', *Worship*, 84.1 (2010), 25–37.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

be subject to your husbands') come from a cultural gap. Or else it is the style itself of an expression that makes the meaning difficult: '[...] that death be destroyed and that the resurrection be manifested'. Or yet again, the difficulty arises from the tone of voice (I would say: of the verbal 'wrapping'); from a semantic point of view, each one understands an expression like 'let us pray' / 'let us pray to the Lord': but there are tones of voice that make this very simple expression almost inaudible, the assembly not sensing at all the invitation to prayer.²⁸

Chauvet does not believe that the answer can 'simply be a technical solution', and this is because liturgy is not something that people take part in, as in a play. It is the enactment of their own lives in Christ, and its difficulty may actually lie in the seriousness of its call to conversion, and its steady measuring of the 'quality of our relationship to God'.²⁹ None of this negates the 'importance of the discrepancy between the forms of expression of the Christian liturgy and that of ordinary life'.³⁰

Critiques of existing liturgical forms have tended to focus on the 'discrepancy', as inimical to genuine participation and understanding. In answer to this, Chauvet points out that participation involves both joining in (the aspect for which simplified language is deemed necessary) *and* a process of 'interiorisation' in those parts of the service where a deliberate silence has been created. Understanding does not need to be 'intellectual'. The reinforcing of theologically complex expressions with symbolic action can create understanding at another level.³¹

It is at this point, where Chauvet appeals to 'mystery', that supporters of accessible language might feel there is sleight of hand in his argument. He is not, of course, referring to a form of knowledge obscured from anyone who is not highly literate or immersed in the theological rationale of liturgical action. What he points to, rather, is depth, the power to hold the imagination and draw it further into the mystery of salvation, and attempts to explain everything in simple language are likely to fail in achieving anything like this depth.³²

Chauvet offers three suggestions: to resist didactic explanations, and to 'do what you say', rather than 'to say what you do'. Tone of voice and gesture are as much a part of this as words. At the same time, it is possible

²⁸ Ibid., p. 27.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 28.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 29.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 29–30.

³² Ibid., p. 33.

to make ‘short introductory remarks’ that can situate the congregation and prepare them for the next phase of the action, without engaging in a wordy account of what is to be done, and why. Finally, he commends ‘decoding and recoding’, illustrating this with a baptismal example:

[F]or the renunciation, the lay person of the parish baptismal team begins by decoding a sentence like: “Sin reigns wherever the law of the strongest and everyone for oneself reigns.” The priest then moves on immediately: “You then, in order to live in the freedom of the children of God, do you reject this reign?”³³

Some words may indeed be ‘worn out’, but many are not. Before seeking severely simplified texts or engaging in the kind of running commentary that is very far from the decoding and recoding that Chauvet describes, it may be worth persevering to create a pastoral-liturgical environment in which understanding is fostered at all levels. The remedies he proposes require skills that are easy to learn, but not necessarily obvious. How they might form part of the formation of clergy, ordinands, lay ministers and designated worship leaders is a question worth pondering.

Inclusive Liturgy

A different pastoral-linguistic-liturgical situation arises where the need to make the liturgy something that genuinely embraces and engages all who participate refers to distinguishable identities or categories of persons. There was a time when ‘inclusive’ meant ‘gender-inclusive’. That was the assumption of the General Convention of the Episcopal Church when it began to commission inclusive language versions of the Daily Offices and the Eucharist of the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer* in 1985.³⁴ It was also the assumption at work in the Church of England document, *Making Women Visible*, which in turn informed *Language and the Worship of the Church* in 1993.³⁵ At the time, Professor David Frost, a very gifted composer of texts for worship, protested that the motives driving the calls for change were secular ones. In his letter of resignation from the Australian Liturgical

³³ Ibid., p. 36.

³⁴ [General Convention of the Episcopal Church 2018 Archives’ Research Report: BCP Revision: Inclusive & Expansive Language](#) (accessed 12 October 2019).

³⁵ Liturgical Commission of the Church of England, *Making Women Visible: The Use of Inclusive Language with the ASB* GS 859 (London: Church House Publishing, 1988); *Language and the Worship of the Church* GS 1115 (London: General Synod of the Church of England, 1993).

Commission, he prophesied that eliminating 'sexist' language would prove to be 'a passing fad', and that within 15 years, the Church would find itself 'with an outmoded public liturgy, bearing the mark of yesterday's craze and impoverished to a degree in its sound, rhythm and meaning'.³⁶ That was 1986. As things have turned out, the longer-term effects have entirely contradicted this forecast. Inclusive language is now part of the working brief of bodies responsible for revision, for reasons which Professor Frost did not take into account. Where he assumed that the project entailed removing language which diminished and offended women, the aspiration was rather to recognize that women were part of congregations in substantial numbers. In other words, it was a move of positive acknowledgement, and for the most part, the adjustments that have been made demonstrate that it is perfectly possible to honour the presence of all worshippers without compromising the style and dignity of the language of worship as a whole. Gender inclusivity itself is now only part of the whole subject of inclusion. Ethnicity and disability have a similar profile in the debate about what might more accurately be thought of as recognition. That principle has since extended, certainly in the Episcopal Church, to embrace LGBTQI and trans people, and 'inclusive' has given way to the new term 'expansive'.³⁷

Attempts to include or recognize can misfire. Two examples will illustrate the challenge that the Churches face in attending to significant constituencies. In the light of revelations of widespread clerical sexual abuse and abuse in Church-run institutions, the Church of England's Liturgical Commission was asked to produce prayers and resources that recognized abuse, expressed the Church's sorrow and repentance, prayed for the healing of victims and their restoration to dignity and confidence, and prayed also for repentance on the part of abusers. The materials, when published, met with anger from survivors of abuse, who described them as 'inane' and protested at the lack of meaningful consultation that had preceded publication. The Church defended itself against the accusation, citing its inclusion of survivors in preparatory discussions. But perhaps what the episode reveals, is the accentuation of two things: the expectation on the part of individuals with a variety of concerns and injuries that the prayer of the Church will speak to those things; and a simultaneous revolt against

³⁶ Quoted in *Making Women Visible*, p. 13.

³⁷ [General Convention of the Episcopal Church 2018 Archives' Research Report: BCP Revision: Inclusive & Expansive Language](#) (accessed 12 October 2019). Between 2005 and 2010, five sets of supplementary liturgical texts were published as *Enriching Our Worship* 1–5 (New York: Church Publishing, 2005–2010).

being talked about by the Church in words which inevitably generalize because that is the character of ‘common prayer’.³⁸

At about the same time, the Church of England was debating the proper way to recognize transgender people who had undergone transition to a new gender identity. A motion requesting provision for a form of re-affirmation of baptismal vows, at which the individual’s new legal name would be liturgically recognized, won sympathy but not unanimous theological support. In the end, a statement from the House of Bishops commended use of the Church’s existing order for re-affirmation of baptismal faith. While this would not allow alteration of a name given at baptism in any Church records, it was an occasion when the name by which the individual was in future to be known could be used in public worship.³⁹ Here, the Church is dealing with the desire of trans individuals to be recognized as they recognize themselves before God. Some of the theological arguments, notably that our God-given identity dates from our birth and does not change through our lives, make little sense to a person whose experience tells them that the world is not like that.

How does the Church move between the increasing liturgical awareness of individuals — especially their awareness of the power of the liturgy to include and represent them, or to ignore or diminish them — and a style of prayer that attempts inclusion and representation by less specific means? It seems pastorally right to assume that common prayer is no longer comprehensive, but as yet we know little about the limits of liturgical representation.

Language for God

The more intractable question is the language of address to God in worship, now that the vocabulary of fatherhood and power (‘Heavenly Father, almighty, everlasting God’, etc.) has been robustly challenged. Lacking the possibility available in Hebrew to use a name which effectively names the unnameable, English must find alternatives that remain faithful to a

³⁸ Church of England Liturgical Commission, *Towards a Safer Church: some liturgical resources* (May 2018)

(accessed 2 October 2019). See also Hattie Williams, ‘Survivors of clerical abuse object to C of E safeguarding liturgy guide’, *Church Times*, 8 June 2018 (accessed 2 October 2019).

³⁹ Church of England General Synod, ‘Welcoming Transgender People’, GS 2071A [a motion from the Diocese of Blackburn] June 2017; ‘Welcoming Transgender People’ GS 2071B [response from the General Secretary of the Synod] June 2017; ‘An update on welcoming transgender people’, GS Misc 1178 [statement from the House of Bishops] January 2018.

Christian doctrine of God, without presuming that God is male and overwhelming in displays of might. So far, there seem to be more compromises than genuine solutions. Using words that suggest maternal gentleness plays into a certain kind of female stereotype.

The Scottish Episcopal Church reissued its eucharistic texts in 2014, with a revised rationale for permitted changes to the 1982 liturgy. These changes affect the use of gendered language for God, and have been clarified following a hostile reception in some quarters when they were first issued in 2010. The changes proposed demonstrate that it is possible to achieve a dignified and balanced style, and to stay faithful to the text of scripture, while reducing unnecessary attribution of gender to God. The document notes that

[t]here are, in fact, few if any contexts where the imagery and scriptural allusions demand masculine or feminine forms in relation to the Holy Spirit. The use of neuter pronouns inevitably sounds harsh and crude, and conveys to modern anglophone congregations connotations of inanimacy. It may be that the English language is in flux, and that new conventions to address these issues may take shape in the future. Meanwhile creative and imaginative ways are being found to express what needs to be said without irritating repetition caused by the avoidance of pronouns.⁴⁰

Perhaps there is more potential in the repertoire of analogies from the inanimate world used in the Psalms — God is a rock, a shield, a hiding place, the wing that covers us, the glory reflected in the universe and its passing times and seasons. That does not in any way entail abandoning the Lord's Prayer, or other prayers (including many eucharistic prayers) which imagine God as 'father'. It expands rather than shrinks the compass, as long as the checks and balances that protect us from modalism, animism or an incomplete sense of the Trinity are kept in place.⁴¹

Towards a Conclusion: The Limits of Representation

In the course of preparing this survey, I have been freshly reminded of insights which should be obvious yet may be worth restating. Added to these are a few less frequently discussed matters. To call them principles would

⁴⁰ SEC, *Permitted Changes*, pp. 3–4.

⁴¹ The current work of the Church of England Liturgical Commission and the Faith and Order Advisory Group on the use of gendered language for God is ongoing and has not yet produced an agreed document.

be to exalt them to a status they do not claim. They are offered here as an aide mémoire in what remains a continuing conversation.

The ambitions of liturgical revision tend to be positive in their desire to form those who attend acts of worship ‘by the book’ (in the broadest sense) into active participants. Revisers aim for high levels of intelligibility in their use of language. They aim also at maintaining the aesthetic standards expected of good liturgy, though taste and criteria may change. Beauty is not sought at the expense of a proper address to the world in which the Church has its existence, however. In addition to the implicit redress of educational disadvantage in using ‘accessible’ forms of contemporary language, there are many more examples of prayers that explicitly incorporate themes of social justice than have been mentioned here.

Liturgical Revision is not Timeless

David Frost’s prediction that modern language liturgies that made gender inclusivity a central principle would turn into an encumbrance to the Churches before very long has not come true. That in itself is revealing. Texts composed even in the last 20 years can now look out of date, but for reasons other than their use of inclusive language. Chauvet’s sense that liturgical language becomes strange and inaccessible by its combinations of words, not by the words themselves is apposite. When, at any level of contemporary discourse, do we exhort others to ‘rebuke vice’ or ‘run the way of [God’s] commandments’? ⁴² The challenges of achieving dignity and resonance without archness and obscurity will continue to confront revisers of existing material and composers of new texts for worship.

Liturgical Revision is precariously balanced

The joy of encountering a prayer that gets things absolutely right, for reasons which sometimes exceed the findings of the most astute literary and theological analysis, can be extraordinary. Such illuminations are rendered precious because of their sheer unlikeliness when so much can go wrong. Liturgical composition is constantly threatened by destabilizations that lead to travesty or offence. All the ingredients likely to produce an elegant prayer — a strong biblical image which works even if you don’t know much about the Bible; affective power; subtly elegant use of rhetorical devices like chiasmus and alliteration — can be subverted by one misplaced word. This

⁴² Collects for the Nativity of John the Baptist (*Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England*, p. 507; Church of Ireland, *Book of Common Prayer*, p. 313) and the Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity (*Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England*, p. 419; Church of Ireland, *Book of Common Prayer*, p. 294).

was parodically illustrated by a conference delegate who asked, following a paper that made warm reference to David Frost's 'Father of all, we give you thanks and praise, that when we were still far off, you met us in your Son and brought us home', 'What if he had said "you met us in your car"?"

Liturgical Revision is not free of process

No one involved in the commissions that undertake liturgical revision on behalf of the Churches will be unaware of the constrictions of working within a synodical system or under an equivalent model of governance. The work that is produced in committee (itself a process that often leads to compromise) must be scrutinized by bodies with little insight into its genesis and often little expertise in bringing liturgy and doctrine into fruitful convergence. Revision committees have been responsible for curbing adventurous writing that might have been life-giving if allowed a clear passage. But it is the technical vocabulary that surrounds liturgical revision that says more than anything about resistance to the work of the imagination: words like 'resources', 'alternatives', 'authorized', 'commended', 'approved', and 'accessibility' say little about a creative and even inspired process.

Inclusion can become exclusion

Efforts to include categories of persons by name in the language of worship always run the risk of leaving categories out. Advance consultation with those being talked about in prayer is essential, both in discovering how they perceive themselves, and in exploring the capacity of the Churches' existing repertoire of prayer to comprehend human existence.

Liturgical Revision can become a scapegoat

Church life reflects and refracts the best and the worst of the society in which it has a share. Although the Church's response to the aberrations, cruelties and pathologies of human beings should always find a central role for prayer, the liturgy should not be made responsible for solving problems which the Church at large should be confronting. When the burden is shifted in this way, things go awry. Witness the angry reaction to the Church of England's prayers for victims of abuse committed under its aegis, and the disillusionment of trans people whose new identity may not be baptismally acknowledged. These responses are understandable, but liturgical commissions are not ultimately answerable for the doctrinal and organizational decision-making that is directed towards them for public interpretation.

The Limits of Representation – lex orandi, lex credendi

I close with a question arising out of the desire to acknowledge, make visible, and represent the uniqueness and particular conditions and circumstances of those who regularly or intermittently form part of the whole worshipping body. How much further can representation go, before any lingering commitment to common prayer becomes meaningless? We appear to have lost confidence in the ability of liturgical language to represent all who gather. Is this the inevitable, if unlooked for, by-product of increasing provision of 'resources'? Are we creating more surface, more to choose from, and in consequence less depth, less to ponder, live with, repeat, even in resistance? Do more resources simply allow us to avoid what we don't like or don't agree with, thus narrowing down our imagination of God, our difficult questions?⁴³

The tag *lex orandi lex credendi* had its origins in a much more complex debate about the matter of grace in relation to enemies or those who resisted the cross and the Christian faith. This has been superbly investigated by Paul De Clerck, who shows that Prosper of Aquitaine always had in mind the relationship between scripture and liturgy (specifically, the injunction in I Timothy 2. 1–2 to pray for all people).⁴⁴ If the argument is about the grace of God and who may receive it, the prayers of the Church must be obedient to the scriptural command. Grace is God's gift. It is not administered or restricted by the Church, and conversion comes only through God.⁴⁵ Of course, the Church should be in conversation with its own context and circumstances. Prosper's adage should not be used to reinforce a status quo, but always to discern the best way to honour the patterns and mandates of scripture and tradition in assessing the circumstances which the Church's contemporary setting expects it to negotiate.⁴⁶

⁴³ Paul F. Bradshaw, 'Liturgical Development: from Common Prayer to Uncommon Worship', in *Comfortable Words: Polity, Piety and The Book of Common Prayer*, ed. by Stephen Platten and Christopher Woods (London: SCM, 2012), pp. 121–31.

⁴⁴ Paul De Clerck, "'Lex orandi, lex credendi': the original sense and historical avatars of an equivocal adage", trans. by Thomas M. Winger, *Studia Liturgica*, 24.2 (1994), 178–200.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 189.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 200.

Language and Inclusion

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The discussion about inclusive language is not a new issue in the churches. In the Anglican provinces of the UK, work started on making liturgies more gender inclusive even before debates over the ordination of women were resolved a quarter of a century ago. Let us start then, by briefly reviewing two earlier contributions on the subject.

In 1989, the Liturgical Commission of the General Synod of the Church of England produced a report entitled *Making Women Visible: The Use of Inclusive Language with the ASB*. At the time, the Commission included just three women, only one of whom was ordained (deacon).¹ Nevertheless, the Report presents a measured, careful and thoughtful discussion of the issues emerging in response to changes in social attitudes and practice that had brought the question of inclusive language more into the forefront of people's minds. Its point of reference is the *The Alternative Service Book* (1980) which, of course, has now been superseded as authorized liturgy in the Church of England by *Common Worship* (2000).

The Report leans heavily, in its introductory section, on a relatively short list of formal sources — and no mention is made of any data or information collected about the views of practitioners and laypeople in the wider church as might be more evident in work produced today. The authors rely in particular on a Canadian report, *Bad Language in Church*² and Deborah Cameron's *Feminism and Linguistic Theory*.³ But in spite of what might be seen as these limitations, the Report has much to say that is still illuminating and useful to the present debate. Taking Cameron's question about whether language can be causal, and thus function as the mechanism

¹ Liturgical Commission of the General Synod of the Church of England, *Making Women Visible: The Use of Inclusive Language with the ASB* (London: Church House Publishing, 1989), p. v.

² Interdivisional Task Force on the Changing Roles of Women and Men in Church and Society, *Bad Language in Church* (approved by the General Council Executive of the United Church of Canada, November 1981).

³ Deborah Cameron, *Feminism and Linguistic Theory* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1985).

‘by which misogyny is constructed and transmitted’ as a starting point,⁴ the Report tends rather towards the conclusion that any kind of absolute male control over language would be impossible, given the ‘indeterminacy of meaning that makes the use of language a creative process’.⁵ But it also notes that the authorisation of ASB in 1980 ‘just predated a rise of sensitivity to such [gendered] language’,⁶ and describes the more explicit moves in the United Church of Canada, the Methodist Conference, the Roman Catholic Church and the Episcopal Church of the USA to address inclusive language in the decade following, as evidence of the continuing need to focus on this issue. There is also recognition of resistance to change, including the objections of David Frost, a contributor to the 1980 ASB, who resigned from the Australian Consultation on Liturgy on the grounds that attempts to make liturgical language more inclusive were no more than ‘a passing fad’, and the result of political rather than Christian motivations.⁷ But although the Report notes various objections, it nevertheless takes a much more positive view of the possibilities, recognizing, with Cameron, the fluidity of language and the way in which associations change and take on new meanings over time — and have always done so. The authors steer away from Frost’s conclusions, perhaps suspecting that he confuses the way in which certain words become dated with rather different concerns about the way linguistic patterns obstruct women’s visibility in the Church, a consideration of justice that can hardly now be dismissed as a mere matter of fashion.

The Report addresses the proposal to change words by examining these broader principles in its introductory section, but also by providing lists of alternatives for specific liturgical contexts in relation to the ASB and its rubrics.⁸ This constitutes the largest section of the Report. To give one specific example, in reference to a permitted choice of canticles at certain points in the ASB, it sets out four options — three scriptural examples and one from Anselm’s meditative *Prayer to St Paul* (including notes on its scriptural roots), all of which employ extended examples of female reference or imagery.⁹ Two of these examples focus on God’s maternal nature, labouring to bring us to new life or feeding and comforting us in sorrow and sickness, but two examples employ imagery associated with the figure of Wisdom whose characteristics are less emollient. In ‘A Song of Wisdom’,

⁴ *Making Women Visible*, p. 9.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., p. 11.

⁷ Ibid., p. 13.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 24–57.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 58–61.

taken from Wisdom 10, it is the spirit of Wisdom who ‘withst[ands] fearsome rulers with wonders and signs.’¹⁰

Liturgical Language: Keeping it Metaphoric, Making it Inclusive (1996)

A second very useful resource — though now more than twenty years old — for the present discussion, is Gail Ramshaw’s, *Liturgical Language: Keeping It Metaphoric, Making it Inclusive*.¹¹ This short piece differs from the previous example in that it makes few specific suggestions about liturgical revision, devoting itself fully to the philosophical and theological discussion of what might be at stake in making the liturgy more inclusive. Written from an American Episcopalian perspective, it begins from the view that although liturgical language is not the only kind of vocabulary proper to the Christian faith, it is:

the essential and primary speech, the basic language from which all other speech flows in exposition and reflection and to which, when Sunday comes around again, all Christ talk returns.¹²

Ramshaw says that, unlike Orthodox Judaism (with Hebrew), or, we could add, Islam (with Arabic), Christianity does not have a language that is considered sacred or which has to be learned before its scriptures can be properly understood or even read. In contrast, the difficult, but one might also say, fittingly incarnational task Christianity set itself by avoiding a sacred language, was to ‘bring the holy into the ordinary so that the ordinary could be seen as holy’.¹³

A key element of Ramshaw’s argument in this essay, is that metaphor is thus a key component in the practice — implied above as necessary — of translation in every new age. And this, of course, is a matter of some moment in relation to the highly gendered (metaphorical) language of Christian theology in the present age. For some in the Church’s history, metaphor has been seen as a two-edged sword precisely because it relies on the notion that ‘a factually or logically inaccurate word’ can nevertheless be true on the deepest level; the wrong word is seen to be the right word.¹⁴ In this sense, exponents of more gender inclusive language might have sympathized with

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 60.

¹¹ Gail Ramshaw, *Liturgical Language: Keeping it Metaphoric, Making it Inclusive* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1996).

¹² Ibid., p. 5.

¹³ Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁴ Ibid.

those Church Fathers like Aquinas who preferred analogy to metaphor¹⁵ and thought the latter dispensable. It could be said that cultural practice has allowed the metaphorical use of gender within liturgical language, to impress male dominance even on the unknown and mysterious nature of God. But drawing on the work of philosopher Paul Ricoeur, Ramshaw insists that metaphor is an unavoidable characteristic of the workings of the human mind.¹⁶ Following Ricoeur again, she proposes that meaning is also invariably created within communal contexts. These two insights must be connected together:

[...] liturgy is not poetry. Liturgy includes the communal recitation of the central metaphors of the faith, but liturgy is grounded in the assembly in a way that most poetry is not. The liturgy is the expression of all the people of God and all those people need to have their voices heard.¹⁷

Whilst proponents of more contemporary forms of spoken word poetry might want to push Ramshaw on the power and purpose of their art,¹⁸ her point is clear: liturgy cannot be merely a matter of private devotion pleasing only to some. In other words, she addresses the Church's on-going ambivalence about metaphorical language with a robust appeal to the inevitable fluidity and changing nature of the way in which words are connected with meaning in liturgy as in life, all being seen as part of 'the joyous matrix of human communication',¹⁹ rather than as a problem to be

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 8. Ramshaw defines analogy in relation to Aquinas's view that whereas, for example, 'God is a rock' (a metaphor) is inaccurate and, finally dispensable (though not without its uses), analogy (for example, 'God is good') proceeds from scriptural revelation rather than from human imagination.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁸ Some forms of contemporary spoken word poetry outwith church contexts, could clearly be said to share in the sense in which liturgy is grounded in the assembly. Some contemporary practice can be cited, for example, with its roots in protest songs in the civil-rights era of the 1950s and 60s and probably draws on much earlier sermonic as well as blues traditions of the slave era that may ultimately be derived from spoken word performance/storytelling practice originating in pre-slave African cultures. See Priya Parmer & Bryonn Bain 'Spoken Word and Hip Hop: The Power of Urban Art and Culture', *Counterpoints*, 306 (2007), 131–56.

¹⁹ Ramshaw, *Liturgical Language*, p. 10.

solved. As liturgy is the work of the people, they must continue to seek to express the things that the whole community believes to be significant, rather than seeking simply to suit one dominant group or another. This is the difficult task of always working towards inclusiveness 'in Christ'.²⁰ In this way, Ramshaw makes the argument that inclusive language is not simply about gender but speaks to the inclusive mission of the Church in all times.

By way of illustration Ramshaw makes the point that liturgical changes have invariably taken place against a history of linguistic development and that the process of change, accumulation and loss is a characteristic of all forms of language use. Thus, to achieve the Church's ongoing purpose of inclusiveness, translation has always been the 'fundamental technique' for equipping the people for their task.²¹ Going back to the Anglo-Saxon roots of the English language she notes its 'spellbinding' capacity to translate by creating metaphors such as *sigebeam* or 'victory tree' for the cross of Christ, or *hlāford* (eliding *hlāf* — loaf of bread — with *weard* — guardian) for the tribal authority. When, later still, this was elided into 'lord' in Middle English, she points to a loss of metaphorical richness and thus meaning.²² Sometimes perhaps sacrifices have to be made in the interests of wider translatability. On the other hand, she makes the point that whilst movement through Anglo-Saxon and Middle into modern English has seen simplifications (in terms of a loss of inflections of gender for example) this has not brought about an end to the process of making metaphors. And to make her point she draws attention to the metaphorical nature of such recent expressions as 'e-mail', 'icons', 'windows' and 'mouse'.²³ From her perspective as a speaker of American English she notes the continuing challenge to communicate with all speakers of English and yet to stick to the underlying task of achieving inclusiveness through translation.²⁴

These are more general comments about metaphor and translation at play within the larger linguistic landscape but from here, Ramshaw moves into the more specific territory of gender inclusiveness where some of the most significant issues focus on the Church's symbolic imagery.

First of all she looks at 'the Kingdom of God,' imagery reflecting an ancient Christian metaphor of royalty with its roots in Christian scripture — both New and Old Testaments. But referring back to the nature of metaphor as language that must always and only be about what God is *like*, she points

²⁰ Ibid., p. 11.

²¹ Ibid., p. 15.

²² Ibid., p. 16.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 17.

out that this idealized and mythological image fails us in some important ways as ‘the totalitarianism implied by the myth works against mature political responsibility’.²⁵ This is quite apart from its obvious gender exclusivity. She is nevertheless optimistic, that there are other or even better, non-gender-specific words that can be proposed for saying what God’s authority is *like*, such as ‘reign’, ‘dominion’ or ‘commonwealth’.²⁶

The imagery of ‘the body of Christ’ fares better. In tune with the general direction of much feminist and queer theology over the last forty years, the emphasis on body and embodiment more easily avoids androcentrism. Indeed, a key iconographic representation of the Church for centuries already, is the sometimes-majestic figure of Mary whose body and clothing in this representation by Piero della Francesca,²⁷ mimic the architectural forms of Church buildings that provides suitably queenly shelter and protection for its constituent members.

Ramshaw also grapples with the use of the word ‘Lord’ — treating it not so much as a metaphor as what is referred to as the kind of ‘circumlocution’, felt to be necessary in the case of God by many faithful Jews and Christians both in the past and the present, as a way of emphasizing a proper level of unknowability when it comes to the form of God. In this context she traces the history of the word ‘Lord’, as derived from a circumlocution for YHWH, Adonai, which is the metaphor, ‘master’ — and which, in the early Christian community became ‘Kyrios’ or ‘Christ’, and thus a circumlocution appropriate to both God and Jesus, expressing through the phrase ‘Jesus is Lord’, a key incarnational claim. But when Ramshaw moves on to consider, separately, the history of the English word ‘Lord’ implying, historically, a certain kind of socio-economic power and wealth, she acknowledges that the continued use of the term does not seem to have kept up with contemporary perceptions of its ‘loss of social significance and its androcentric connotations’.²⁸ Cautioning against a total ban on the term ‘Lord’ as a circumlocution for YHWH, she nevertheless advocates some expansion of terms or scriptural adjectives, suggesting that ‘the Living One’ might be a particularly appropriate translation/circumlocution for both YHWH — stressing its original I AM meaning in Hebrew — and ‘the risen Christ’.²⁹

²⁵ Ibid., p. 28.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 29.

²⁷ The Madonna of the Misericordia is the centrepiece of the *Polyptych of the Misericordia* now in the Museo Civico de Sansepolero, Tuscany, where the artist, Piero della Francesca was born. This is one of the artist’s earliest commissions though it took him seventeen years to complete (1445–1462).

²⁸ Ramshaw, *Liturgical Language*, p. 37.

²⁹ Ibid.

Finally, she looks at the issue of the Church's use of Trinitarian speech, noting that in the nineteenth century, the American suffrage campaigner Elizabeth Cady Stanton, author of *the Woman's Bible*,³⁰ found its Trinitarian formulations so offensively androcentric, she became a Deist. Rather than taking this extreme perspective, Ramshaw returns to the sense in which the Trinity is already a form of *catachresis* — that is a kind of forced (mis)use of words given the complexity of what is being said.³¹ The problem with the formulations of the Trinity, to put it at its bluntest, is that talking about a transcendent deity who becomes a human being in historical time but who is still at work in human communities today, stretches out of all shape, the capacity of its constituent words (Father, Son, Spirit) which are, at the same time, rooted in highly contingent, culturally specific patterns of language and meaning. Ramshaw recommends a search for metaphors that will broaden, rather than abandon, the narrow centre of the path, looking to the Bible, the Church fathers and mothers and to living theologians as sources. One idea for a more inclusive metaphor, centres again on the scriptural figure of Wisdom (Hokmah/Sophia) as a concept that is associated with wise women but also draws on the notion of wisdom as something that is not stereotypically female and is also closely associated with another familiar term applied to Jesus Christ, the Greek word, *Logos*. Yet, as she explains, with Wisdom, we are inevitably still in the territory of catachresis since 'Jesus is not that goddess of wisdom in whom we in fact no longer believe'.³² Another example — in which circumlocution and catachresis are joined — is the Aaronic blessing from Numbers 6: 'Here the Living One blesses and keeps us; the face of God shines graciously on us; and we receive from the Living God grace and peace.'³³ The work of translating this Hebrew text into liturgical English within the Trinitarian context is still likely to be taxing but, as Ramshaw repeatedly reminds the reader, that is one of the Church's continuing tasks in any age, mixing the old with the new — much as Jesus compares his work of parables and teaching to a householder whose stored treasure is the combination of material that is both new and old (Matthew 13. 51).³⁴

³⁰ Elizabeth Cady Stanton & the Revising Committee, *The Woman's Bible* [1895] (Seattle: Coalition on Women and Religion, 1974).

³¹ Ramshaw, *Liturgical Language*, p. 38.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 39.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 41–45.

Some more recent ideas

Neither of the contributions cited above, suggest that they have brought the debate about inclusive language to a final conclusion. It seems clear that their authors saw liturgical review and revision as part of the Church's on-going task — in Ramshaw's terms, one of achieving a form of ever wider inclusiveness 'in Christ'. So it is no surprise to note that in his popular study guide,³⁵ drawing on the work of Marjorie Procter-Smith,³⁶ for example, Stephen Burns revisits old questions related to gender inclusion as well as introducing new issues. Re-engaging with earlier themes Burns states that non-sexist, inclusive language is needed to express a theological point that God 'does not regard our gender, but that both women and men possess equal status before God'.³⁷ At the same time, God is also engaged in the struggle for emancipation,³⁸ so, for this reason, greater visibility for women and for the feminine is needed.³⁹ Gail Ramshaw and Gordon Lathrop's *Readings for the Assembly*⁴⁰ and also (with Gabe Huck) their *Easter: A Sourcebook*⁴¹ contain a range of metaphors for God, drawn from Scripture, chosen to evade or challenge commonplace gendered examples. These include beauty, rest, bread, milk, honey, gate, lamb, grove, love, lover, well, sovereign, banquet, crown, holy one, altar and cloud. And, on ground already worked over by Ramshaw, and in relation to the lectionary readings of the Church of England's *Revised Common Lectionary* for the Sunday cycles of years A, B and C,⁴² Burns suggests — as Ramshaw had done — that 'Lord' may be rendered 'Living One' and 'kingdom' as 'dominion'. Thus, very much in tune with the earlier work, Burns's aim is clearly to ensure that 'exclusive language is unobtrusively edged out in favour of terms that can do equal or better justice to the original'.⁴³ Nevertheless, more than twenty years after the publication of the essay by Ramshaw that has been referred to above, Burns is aware that '[a]scriptions such as "mother" have [...] rarely found

³⁵ Stephen Burns, *SCM Study-guide to Liturgy* [2006] (London: SCM Press, 2018).

³⁶ See for example, Marjorie Procter-Smith, *In Her Own Rite: Constructing Feminist Liturgical Tradition* (Akron, OH: Order of St Luke, 2000).

³⁷ Burns, *SCM Study-guide*, Kindle, loc 2665.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., loc 2670.

⁴⁰ Gordon Lathrop and Gail Ramshaw, *Readings for the Assembly*, cycles A, B and C (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1995).

⁴¹ Gordon Lathrop and Gail Ramshaw, *An Easter Sourcebook*, ed. by Gabe Huck, (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1992).

⁴² Ibid., Kindle, loc 2691.

⁴³ Ibid.

their way into the denominational prayer books'.⁴⁴ This is in spite of the publication of a number of feminist collections of prayers that name God in feminine terms, and he refers to Janet Morely's *All Desires Known*⁴⁵ and Nicola Slee's *Praying Like a Woman*⁴⁶ in particular. And in relation to Trinitarian language,⁴⁷ Burns claims this too has been a particularly challenging area, with few alternatives finding lasting favour, though he does make a proposal himself with 'holy eternal Majesty, holy incarnate Word, holy abiding Spirit'.⁴⁸

One aspect of the debate Burns introduces, that neither of the two earlier publications we have looked at considered to any extent, is the nature and impact of liturgy as action or performance within sacred and/or worship spaces. As Bridget Nichols's recent article for this journal, makes clear, in any discussion of the liturgy both word and action are meaningful.⁴⁹ Of course, though neither *Making Women Visible* nor *Liturgical Language* deals with the question, this is also something that has been part of earlier conversations in feminist liturgical studies. Burns refers to Rosemary Radford Ruether's classic collection of worship resources, *Woman/Church*⁵⁰ and particularly to Letty Russell's suggestions about church 'in the round'⁵¹ as a part of proposals for leadership practices that cohere better with an inclusive vision. Janet Walton⁵² analyses a number of conventional gestures we tend to take very much for granted in worship practice, such as bowing heads or kneeling. Whilst perhaps for many worshippers these gestures are not exclusive:

[...] when women kneel to receive Communion or a blessing from men, rather than promoting an experience of reverence, it can be a reminder of sexual violation or subservience. Since women are frequently victims of violence at the hands of men,

⁴⁴ Ibid., loc 2680.

⁴⁵ Janet Morely, *All Desires Known* (London: SPCK, 2005).

⁴⁶ Nicola Slee, *Praying Like a Woman* (London: SPCK, 2004).

⁴⁷ Burns, *SCM Study-guide*, Kindle, loc 2684.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Bridget Nichols, '[What Makes Liturgical Language Ritual Language?](#)', *Scottish Episcopal Institute Journal* 3.2 (2019), 5–20 (p. 7).

⁵⁰ Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Woman/Church: Theology & Practice* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985).

⁵¹ Letty Russell, *Church in the Round: Feminist Interpretation of the Church* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993).

⁵² Janet Walton, *Feminist Liturgy: A Matter of Justice* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000).

we practice standing and sitting rather than kneeling. We want to remind ourselves every time we can that sexual violence is rooted in misplaced power, that is, when anyone presumes power over another.⁵³

Walton chooses to pray without bowing her head. This, she says, is not a refusal to acknowledge God's authority so much as a recognition that there are better ways to do this than modelling non-reciprocal relationships or actions. For Walton and Procter-Smith gendered hierarchical power relations have 'not promoted women's well-being' in the past and are unhelpful to women in the present. Moreover, God does not require these gestures.⁵⁴ In a further reference to the work of Procter-Smith, Walton includes a poignant caveat about closing our eyes as 'a dangerous gesture in an unjust society'.⁵⁵ Though this might seem excessive to some readers, statistics for domestic abuse and coercive control (indicating that male abuse of women considerably exceeds female abuse of men) remains a challenging commonplace in contemporary Scottish society. A large number of women are affected.⁵⁶

Thinking about liturgy in terms of the messages it sends about power and its misuse — a direction of thought that has tended to predominate in matters of identity politics over the last several decades — Burns takes a perhaps more innovative turn in liturgical studies, looking at inclusion within a broader range of communities, such as those that are non-white. In this context, he notes western and colonial cultural tendencies to equate light and radiance with both whiteness and goodness that have found their way into the liturgy and that can, perhaps, no longer be viewed as entirely innocent. Burns suggests alternatives to this language including one example from the Anglican Church of Kenya.⁵⁷ He cites a play on the Hebrew word *kabod* (glory) — generally associated with light and radiance — placing its emphasis, instead, on the original Hebrew designation of weight or moral substance; as sins weigh heavily, 'lighten' implies both 'brighten' and 'make less heavy'.⁵⁸

We have done wrong and neglected to do right;
our sins weigh heavily on our hearts;

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 37–38.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ [Scottish Government figures on Domestic Abuse 2017–2018](#).

⁵⁷ Burns, *SCM Study-guide*, Kindle, loc 2771–75.

⁵⁸ Ibid., loc 2768–88.

Lord, have mercy, count them not against us.
 Grant us the joy of forgiveness
 and lighten our hearts with the glory of Christ,
 Who died and rose again for us.⁵⁹

Of course, one might also suggest, perhaps more radically, that rather than trying to achieve neutrality in reference to the language of darkness and light, there is also room for fuller exploration of darkness and night as contexts for deep reflection or divine mystery.

In relation to Christian communities that are, or embrace broadly 'queer' or non-conformist sexual identities, Burns notes how the tradition itself has been said to have the potential to 'queer', that is to say, unsettle and disrupt⁶⁰ exclusive patterns that oppress or stultify: 'In this perspective, liturgy mandates and energizes the subversion of established male-centred power'.⁶¹ It points, in other words, to the ways in which people may sometimes seek to secure their own sacred spaces and derive their own meanings, more or less creatively and without permission or ratification from institutional bodies such as mainstream churches. It is clear from Burns' reflection on one queer community, however, that in spite of their exclusion from mainstream church congregations, they have not simply abandoned liturgical structure but have effectively inhabited or occupied these spaces in unconventional ways — perhaps as a form of protest but perhaps simply as an alternative expression of that 'joyous matrix of human communication' to which Ramshaw makes reference. Describing the participatory performance of 'The Gospel Girls,' hosted by Morticia de Ville in a downtown bar in Atlanta,⁶² Burns notes that it is still possible to detect a liturgically very familiar shape. Though participants are drinking cocktails and sitting on bar stools, Burns compares the content and order of the service/show to 'seeker services',⁶³ which have their roots in the Frontier tradition and which he categorizes in terms of a reduced diet of Scripture, perhaps not expounded by a preacher; the absence of sacraments; a setting in a building not designed exclusively for church worship and evocation of a TV show format, with compare.⁶⁴

Burns writes from the perspective of someone who aims to guide students — ministers, congregational leaders in particular, and those who

⁵⁹ Ibid., loc 2773–81.

⁶⁰ Ibid., loc 2799.

⁶¹ Ibid., loc 2811.

⁶² Ibid., loc 2818 onwards.

⁶³ Ibid., loc 2840.

⁶⁴ Ibid., loc 2413.

seek actively to participate. Referring back to an original triangulation of his concerns as a liturgist, connecting presidential chair, pew and door, one could argue that he does an excellent job — for those entering the field for the first time perhaps — of contextualising Anglican liturgy in terms of its broad historical development, laying out a pattern of features or factors that has, in many ways, remained stable over centuries if not millennia — perhaps deviating remarkably little from the earliest patterns of Christian liturgy identified by Justin Martyr in second century Rome.⁶⁵ It is interesting that in his introduction Burns indicates a very particular interest in the location of the door, as entrance, threshold and portal because it is ‘a crucial locus of missional consciousness.’⁶⁶ Clearly the goals of mission and inclusivity are closely linked.

Some conclusions

This has been a very brief review of work in the field of feminist liturgical studies, but a number of significant themes have emerged.

The work of liturgical revision is the work of the whole people. The work of scholars — theologians or feminist theorists — needs to be taken seriously. Just as the churches need pastoral leadership and spiritual direction, they also need theological acumen alongside keen linguistic, historical and cultural awareness. However, all the people need to participate in the development of liturgical practice, not simply as a matter of expressing a personal preference but with due consideration for the needs of all.

The work already referred to in this piece and all the work of liturgical revision that will be undertaken in the coming years reflects a distinctively Christian bearing or character of openness towards those who find themselves excluded or marginalized. Inclusiveness has a theological resonance in so far as it represents the idea that we are all one, in Christ, in every new age. Liturgical review and revision is thus an on-going process of translation, rather than a matter of solving a specific problem.

As Gail Ramshaw invites us to consider, we have both old and new treasure to draw on in terms of wisdom, experience and existing liturgical material. It is neither newness nor tradition per se that we should be looking for but what serves best the needs of the whole people rather than those of the dominant majority in any context.

Liturgy needs to include both words/language and actions or performances. In the process of liturgical revision, it is important not to lose

⁶⁵ Ibid., loc 537

⁶⁶ Ibid., loc 110.

sight of the inclusive possibilities or limitations of church and/or other ritual spaces.

Intercessions and the Scottish Liturgy

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The Church as the body of Christ is concerned for the salvation of all [people], both of their bodies and their souls; and it belongs to the proper activity of the Church that it exhibits this concern by every practical means. Intercessory prayer is the liturgical expression of this concern.¹

The earliest Christian records indicate that the prayer of intercession was important in worship and the early liturgies of the Church and its later history is a complex one. In I Timothy 2. 1 it is urged that ‘prayers (προσευχάς), petitions (έντεύξεις) and thanksgivings (εύχαριστίας) be made for all people’. But the origins of such prayers are far more ancient than the Christian Church itself, being rooted in the worship of the synagogue and beyond. In the prayer of Solomon (I Kings 8. 56–61) God’s goodness in the past is recalled and after it a prayer that it be continued in the future. But the purpose of such prayer, as Paul Bradshaw has indicated, ‘is not just for the benefit of the suppliants but for the advancement of God’s praise and glory, in order that the whole world may see his works and thus be led to worship him and acknowledge his goodness’.²

Intercessory prayer is discussed in many of the earliest Christian texts, including the first epistle of Clement to the Corinthians (written c. 96, or earlier),³ the first Apology of Justin Martyr (died c. 165) and Tertullian (died c. 225). In the Eastern and Syrian liturgies, as evidenced in such early sources as the *Apostolic Constitutions* (c. 350 to 380), intercession took the form of litanies within the Eucharistic prayer. Taking the form of commemoration of both the living and the dead, these prayers were read from ‘diptychs’ or tablets on which the names of those prayed for were

¹ E. C. Whitaker, ‘The Intercessions’, in *The Eucharist Today*, ed. by R. C. D. Jasper (London: SPCK, 1974), p. 54.

² Paul F. Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer in the Early Church*, Alcuin Club (London: SPCK, 1981), p.13.

³ *Early Christian Writings*, trans. by Maxwell Staniforth (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), pp. 15–59.

inscribed.⁴ In the Western Churches the place of intercession within the Eucharist is rather more complex. The *Apostolic Tradition* (probably mid-fourth century) has no intercessions in the Eucharistic Prayer. The *Commentary* written for the *Alternative Service Book* by the Liturgical Commission of the Church of England (1980) states unequivocally that in the Western tradition, apart from the relic of intercessions outside the Eucharistic prayer itself in the *orationes solemnes* of Good Friday, 'the only intercessions at the eucharist were in the eucharistic prayer'.⁵ This, however, is a claim that is not borne out by the authority of Joseph Jungmann, who makes a distinction between the Roman Rite and the Mozarabic (Gallic) Rite, in rather flowery prose:

[...] intercessory prayer, in the Roman liturgy as well as in others, was [in] the inner sanctuary of the Eucharistic prayer. Only the Gallic liturgies withstood this development, so that to the last [...] The intercessions remained standing outside the gates of the Eucharistic prayer, in the portion of the Mass given over to the preparing of the gifts.⁶

In fact, in the Western Church, if not in the Eastern, it would seem that the place (and therefore the proper nature within the Eucharist) of the prayers of intercession was unstable, linked to the ancient institution whereby catechumens only attended the first part of the Eucharistic celebration (thus known as the Mass of the Catechumens) and were dismissed for the second part known as the Mass of the Faithful. This division is more familiar to us as we begin our celebration with the Liturgy of the Word before proceeding to the Liturgy of the Sacrament. On this division E. C. Whitaker has commented:

It is of some interest to consider the point at which intercession ought to be fitted into this twofold scheme of the liturgy, since it cannot properly be said to belong to either part: it is not part of the Word of God or its exposition, and does not necessarily

⁴ See *The Study of Liturgy*, ed. by Cheslyn Jones and others, rev. edn (London: SPCK, 1992), p. 237.

⁵ *The Alternative Service Book, 1980: A Commentary* by The Liturgical Commission (London: CIO Publishing, 1980), p. 74.

⁶ Joseph A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development*, trans. by Francis A. Brunner, abridged edn (New York NY: Benziger Brothers, 1959), p. 392.

belong to the performance of the fourfold acts of the Last Supper.⁷

Nevertheless, the place of the intercessions within the Eucharistic liturgy is by no means without importance — whether they are placed within or outside the Eucharistic Prayer itself. But as we begin the task of reviewing and renewing the Scottish Liturgy, this matter of position is a discussion that should probably be postponed until a later time. For it was in the 1552 Prayer Book (and not the first Prayer Book of 1549), that Archbishop Cranmer clearly removed the intercessions from the Eucharistic Prayer (as in the Roman Mass) and placed them in the ante-communion in the form of a monologue prefaced by the words, ‘for the whole state of Christ’s Church militant here in earth’.⁸ In this Cranmer was in tune with other continental reformers (who were following the medieval office of Prone) such as Calvin, Bucer and Hermann.⁹ Here, essentially, they have remained within our Anglican tradition.

Before we move on to the nature of intercessory prayer, and particularly within the liturgy, there remains one further item concerning the order of our liturgy that calls for some reflection. The 1982 Liturgy allows for the Confession and Absolution to be either at the beginning of the service (5) or else immediately after the intercessions (15). There is some patristic evidence for the latter position being more appropriate, or at least for the prayer of penitence as being very closely linked to (and perhaps even preceding) the prayers of petitionary intercession. For example, Origen (c. 185–c. 254) in his work *De Oratione*, following Jewish practice, suggested that, first, at the heart of intercessory prayer is the expression of thanksgiving, followed by an act of penitence and this leading to petition and intercession:

[...] after thanksgiving it seems to me that one ought to become a bitter accuser of one’s own sins before God, and to ask first for healing so as to be delivered from the state that leads to sin, and secondly for remission of what is past; and after confession [...] it seems to me we must add petition for the great and heavenly gifts for ourselves, and for people in general, and also for our

⁷ Whitaker, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

⁸ See, F. E. Brightman, *The English Rite*. VII (London: Rivingtons, 1915), pp. 663–65.

⁹ See, *Prayer and Spirituality*, Grosvenor Essay 12, Doctrine Committee of the Scottish Episcopal Church (Edinburgh: GSO, 2016), p. 45.

families and friends; and in addition to all this, our prayer ought to end in praise to God through Christ in the Holy Spirit.¹⁰

With respect to any revision of our 1982 Liturgy, two observations may be made here. Firstly, that we consider the possibility of reversing the present order of Intercessions followed by Confession and Absolution. But secondly, we should recognize the narrative flow of the current order of Nicene Creed (13), Intercessions (14), Confession and Absolution (15), and Peace (16). This follows, to a large extent, the liturgies (for example the 1980 *ASB*, Rite A) of Anglican revisionary processes in the later years of the last century. It makes perfectly good sense. Having stated our common faith in the Creed, we gather together our prayers for the world and for the Church, we confess and are absolved of our sins, we make peace with our neighbours — and then, and then only, are we a fit community — the Body of Christ — to begin the Liturgy of the Sacrament. The question as to whether the Confession and Absolution should be properly placed at the beginning of the Service of the Word (5), separated from the prayers of intercession, might be given some consideration.

Now we need to consider a little more carefully the very nature of intercessory prayer. Firstly, prayer, whether within the liturgy or in private, is an act of the whole church in its concern as the Body of Christ, for the salvation of all. In the unequivocal words of J. Neville Ward, 'If prayer is regarded simply, without qualification, as a request to God to do certain things he would not do if we did not ask him and will do simply because we ask him, we are wasting our time'.¹¹ An excellent, if now somewhat old, book which presents a tough philosophical argument for the nature of intercessory prayer is D. Z. Phillips, *The Concept of Prayer* (1965), and this should still be on the reading list of every ordinand at the very least. It reminds us that we need to think very carefully (and theologically) about what we are doing when we pray, and particularly in the matter of petitionary prayer. For example, it is often said that with God all things are possible, but generally without much thought as to what is being precisely stated here. Phillips is clear:

What is possible stands as the centre term between two extremes: the impossible and the necessary. If, in relation to prayer, one confuses the centre term with either of the extremes, it leads to untold misunderstandings.¹²

¹⁰ Origen, *De Oratione* 33:1, quoted in Bradshaw, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

¹¹ J. Neville Ward, *The Use of Praying* (London: Epworth Press, 1967), p. 85.

¹² D. Z. Phillips, *The Concept of Prayer* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), p. 129.

Firstly, to say that all things are possible with God is not the same at all as saying that God can do the impossible. That claim is just nonsense — and potentially dangerous. Secondly, and more dangerous, is the proposal that ‘with God all things are necessary’ — the idea ‘that prayer can necessitate what is prayed for’.¹³ From here it is an easy step to think that God has failed us if he does not answer our requests — requests that so-and-so be cured of a fatal illness, or that people do not die of malnutrition in some distant country. In short, there is no ‘necessary connection between what one asks for, and what one gets.’¹⁴ It is important to be clear about this. Prayer is not about attempting to manipulate God.

All prayer, and including our prayers of intercession in the liturgy, is an organic element within the life of the Church, nourishing our daily religious life as Christians and as members of the Body of Christ. It is not, and cannot be, simply an occasional reaction to difficult or extreme circumstances, resorted to when things get tough. In his *Letters and Papers from Prison* (1953), Dietrich Bonhoeffer recounted an incident during an air raid on his prison.

As we were all lying on the floor yesterday, someone muttered ‘O God, O God’ — he is normally a frivolous sort of chap — but I couldn’t bring myself to offer him any sort of Christian encouragement or comfort. All I did was glance at my watch and say: ‘It won’t last any more than ten minutes now’.¹⁵

Bonhoeffer did not respond to the man’s utterance as if to a prayer — it was not a prayer, but rather the man’s reaction to an extreme situation, and the proper response was to offer a piece of practical help. Religion had nothing to do with it.

The prayer of intercession should never be used as a kind of practical device to solve seemingly unsolvable problems — or perhaps problems we are simply unwilling to find a solution to ourselves. Job knew that real prayer begins when the utter mystery of God is acknowledged. Perhaps Simone Weil prompts us to a better sense of prayer in her remark: ‘The extreme greatness of Christianity lies in the fact that it does not seek a supernatural remedy for suffering but a supernatural use for it’.¹⁶ Another way of putting

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* (London: Fontana Books, 1968), p. 67.

¹⁶ Simone Weil, *Gravity and Grace* (London: Routledge, 1952), p. 73.

this is to recognize that Christian prayer, in J. Neville Ward's words, 'is part of the eternal prayer and sacrifice of the great High Priest. Our prayer is Christian prayer as we enter into the self-offering of Christ, as we want to be part of God's purpose and channels through which his love can act'.¹⁷ This is why prayer for the good of others (which also involves us being prepared to do something about it) lies at the heart of our celebration of the Eucharist — and perhaps why we need to give careful thought as to when in our liturgy, the prayers of intercession are placed — an argument, perhaps, for linking them more closely to the Offertory and even further, with some logic, within the Eucharistic Prayer as in the early Syrian rites.

What all this means is that the intercessions within our worship, so often placed in the hands of a lay member of the congregation, need very careful and constant scrutiny to avoid the mistakes and forms of materialism that I have briefly outlined above. It would seem that in the ancient diptychs intercession consisted simply of a list of names of the living and departed. When, in 1552, Cranmer introduced his prayer of intercession as part of the ante-communion, he had already provided for King Henry VIII (who, about to invade France, had ordered processions to be said in the province of Canterbury) his adaptation of the traditional Litany, and this remains in the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer* as 'the Litany, or General Supplication'.¹⁸ The litany form, with petitions and responses (remnants of the *kyries* remain embedded in such responses), persists in the alternative forms of intercession provided in the Appendix to the 1982 Scottish Liturgy, though in Form 3 the response is a period of silence. However, within the main text of 1982, only the briefest set of directions is provided for the Intercessions (section 14):

*Prayer is offered
for the world and its people,
for those who suffer and those in need,
for the Church and its members.*

Such brief rubrics have precedents in the Church of England revisions leading up to the *Alternative Service Book* (1980) and remain in Order One of *Common Worship* (2000). Here the rubric reads, with deliberate vagueness:

¹⁷ Ward, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

¹⁸ See Brightman, *The English Rite* I, pp. lviii–lxviii; G. J. Cuming, *A History of Anglican Liturgy*, 2nd edn (London: Macmillan, 1982), pp. 35–40.

The prayers usually include these concerns and may follow this sequence:

The Church of Christ

Creation, human society, the Sovereign and those in authority

The local community

Those who suffer

The Communion of Saints

The *Commentary* to the *ASB* offered by the Church of England Liturgical Commission comments with hesitation (not to say lack of clarity) on such rubrics and forms of intercessory prayer in the Eucharistic liturgy:

The major difficulty with this form of prayer, *which is without much precedent in liturgical history*, is that the extemporary prayers or specific biddings or the mention of particular topics may not accord too well with the given form or with each other.¹⁹

This certainly might suggest that future forms of the prayers of intercession would be more appropriately in the form of a formal litany (as already provided for in a limited way in the 1982 Liturgy) that allows for specific additions appropriate to the particularities of time and place, or perhaps more closely linked to lectionary readings. This would also be more helpful when those leading the intercessions, as is often the case, are without much guidance or training. The closer linking of the intercessions with the Liturgy of the Word and the lectionary readings for each Sunday might usefully be given further thought.

A few specific points might be made to close this brief essay.

1. The demands and responsibility laid upon those asked to lead the intercessions in the liturgy should not be under-estimated. Given that it is not always the case that clergy themselves have been given much education in the ordering of such prayer, proper provision should be provided by the Church to ensure that intercessions are properly and responsibly conducted in public worship.
2. The intercessions are the prayers of the Church, beginning and ending in worship and an expression of the Church, as the Body of Christ, for

¹⁹ *The Alternative Service Book, 1980: A Commentary*, p. 73 (emphases added).

the salvation of all. In the words of J. Neville Ward: 'It is [...] much to be regretted that petition and intercession are for so many people the principal, often the only, forms of prayer. *They are extremely difficult forms of prayer, requiring constant scrutiny, because they are so liable to degenerate into forms of panic and materialism.*'²⁰

3. Prayer that is simply request is not worth the time and effort. At the heart of intercession is self-offering within the Body of Christ. If the Church prays for the homeless, the hungry and distressed and lacks any sense of our collective responsibility in Christ to be active to alleviate such miseries, then it had better not pray at all.
4. Silence is an important element in all prayer. There are many forms of silence — it may be a listening or attentiveness, or it may be an opportunity for the individual to contribute in their own heart and mind to the universal prayer of the whole Church. Silence can be difficult, but also very powerful within the liturgy of the Church.
5. A Church which prays the prayer of intercession cannot be passive in this world while avoiding becoming a quasi-political diatribe. Together with such prayer it should be *actively* concerned to speak out against injustice, poverty and so on, whatever the cost. Intercession is never simply a passing on of our responsibilities to God, but an acknowledgement of our place within the universal majesty of divine care.

²⁰ Ward, *op. cit.*, p. 86 (emphases added).

The Lord's Prayer in the Eucharist

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In contemporary western liturgies the Lord's Prayer is generally recited at some point between the completion of the Eucharistic Prayer and the distribution of the elements. For many this may be an unquestioned and universal Christian practice, but this is in fact not the case, and it is worth considering this issue afresh in the light not only of liturgical tradition but also of the origins and content of the prayer itself.

The origins of the Lord's Prayer

It is a commonplace of Christian belief that Jesus taught his disciples the prayer now known as the Lord's Prayer or *Paternoster*, in response to their request that he teach them to pray, just as John the Baptist had so taught his disciples.¹ This setting for the prayer is, in fact, found only in Luke (11.1–4).² In Matthew this is unsolicited instruction, delivered during the course of the 'sermon on the mount' as an alternative to modes of prayer characterized by (or polemicized as) verbosity and attention-seeking (6.1–13). In Matthew, furthermore, this is envisaged as a form of private devotion, and is neither corporate nor liturgical: it is a stand-alone prayer, neither all nor part of a communal act of worship.

The Lord's Prayer derives from a tradition common to Matthew and Luke, which many scholars have conventionally termed 'Q'.³ The two

¹ Some argue that the prayer in fact originated with John, C. K. Rothschild, *Baptist Traditions and Q* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005); J. E. Taylor, *John the Baptist within Second Temple Judaism* (London: SPCK, 1997). Contra, J. B. Gibson, 'John the Baptist and the Origin of the Lord's Prayer', *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 15 (2017), 115–130.

² J. T. Carroll, *Luke* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012), p. 250; C. F. Evans, *Saint Luke* (London: SCM, 2008), pp. 475–84; J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke* (New York: Doubleday, 1983), pp. 896–908; L. T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1991), pp. 176–80.

³ Alternative theories of the relationship between the synoptic gospels might attribute this tradition to Matthew or Luke, or possibly to the *Didache*, but

transmissions are not identical in wording but are nonetheless attributed to a common tradition. As well as in these two gospels, the Prayer is found in the ancient Christian text known as the *Didache*, which some scholars argue to be as ancient as the canonical gospels, and possibly older than Matthew and Luke.

In the *Didache*, the Lord's Prayer is carefully located at a specific point in the redacted text: the initial chapters of *Didache* (1–6) concern catechesis, i.e. instruction to converts prior to their Baptism; instructions concerning the administration of Baptism are found in *Didache* 7, and the instruction to pray as stipulated, three times a day, follows (*Didache* 8); instructions concerning the Eucharist (*Didache* 9–10) precede treatment of church discipline (*Didache* 11–15).⁴ The location of the prayer and accompanying instructions within this sequence indicates very clearly that the Lord's Prayer is to be offered by the baptized, which suggests an early attestation of a later church custom of disclosing the Prayer, along with the Creed, to new Christians after their Baptism, and before they participate in the Eucharist for the first time. If the prayer was to be offered three times a day, this of course invites comparisons with contemporary Jewish customs, and indicates that each recitation of the prayer for 'daily bread' would not necessarily have preceded participation in the Eucharist. Nevertheless, it does seem likely that the later tradition of identifying 'daily bread' with the Eucharist, while clearly not intrinsic to any prayer or discipline of prayer which Jesus taught his disciples, is nonetheless ancient.⁵

It is not necessary for the present purpose to discuss in any detail the source-critical issues.⁶ It should nevertheless be recognized that we cannot assume that the Lord's Prayer represents or reflects universal ancient Christian practice, received verbatim by the disciples on a single or specific occasion during the historical ministry of Jesus. Nor should a contrast between a Jewish Christian context attributed to Matthew and a gentile Christian

the two-source hypothesis remains predominant in scholarship, cf. E. P. Sanders and M. Davies, *Studying the Synoptic Gospels* (London: SCM, 1989).

⁴ H. van der Sandt and D. Flusser, *The Didache* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), pp. 291–4; M. Del Verme, *Didache and Judaism* (London: Continuum, 2005).

⁵ J. Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1967), p. 84, argues that Marcion's version of the Lord's Prayer, cited by Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*, 4.26, 'Quis dabit mihi panem cotidianum? qui nec milium mihi condit, an qui etiam de caelo panem angelorum cotidianum populo suo praestitit?', implies identification of daily bread with the Eucharist.

⁶ *The Critical Edition of Q*, ed. by P. Hoffmann et al. (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), pp. 206–10; Jeremias, *op. cit.*, pp. 85–94.

context associated with Luke be unduly emphasized.⁷ While elaborate theories, such as that the Lord's Prayer is an extrapolation from the matthaean version of Jesus's prayer in Gethsemane,⁸ may be unnecessarily speculative, we need to recognize that Jesus's teaching on prayer may not have stipulated a fixed formulary so much as identified the principles underlying the devotional life of his disciples. The divergences in the wording reflect not so much divergent liturgical customs in the early Church,⁹ as the creativity and flexibility in the recitation of nonetheless essentially stable oral traditions, including prayers and invocations, not unique to the eastern Mediterranean but first documented in the Balkans by Milman Parry¹⁰ and A. B. Lord,¹¹ and first applied to the study of Gospel traditions by John Dominic Crossan.¹² The commonly observed similarity between the Lord's Prayer and the *Shemoneh esre*,¹³ the Benedictions which conclude the daily liturgies of Orthodox Judaism, is evidence not that synagogue liturgies were uniform and stable in Galilee,¹⁴ or anywhere else, during the first century CE, but that Jesus emerged from the same tradition of Jewish piety as was to shape later rabbinic Judaism and its descendants.¹⁵

Not only is it clear that Jesus's teaching on prayer is consistent with his Jewish heritage, but the canonical gospels in which this tradition is transmitted indicate a context apart from synagogue worship. Irrespective of whether this indicates that Jesus and his disciples could not be assured of being included in the gatherings for worship of the communities they visited,

⁷ Cf. H. D. Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), p. 372; Jeremias, *op. cit.*, pp. 88–90.

⁸ J. M. Neumann, 'Thy Will Be Done: Jesus's Passion in the Lord's Prayer', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 138 (2019), 161–82.

⁹ Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 476; Fitzmyer, *op. cit.*, p. 897.

¹⁰ *The Making of Homeric Verse* (Oxford: OUP, 1971).

¹¹ *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960); *Epic Singers and Oral Tradition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).

¹² *The Historical Jesus* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991).

¹³ Evans, *op. cit.*, pp. 478.

¹⁴ S. V. Freyne, *Galilee from Alexander the Great to Hadrian* (Wilmington: Glazier, 1980); *Galilee, Jesus and the Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988); *Galilee and Gospel* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000); R. A. Horsley, *Galilee: History, Politics, People* (Valley Forge: TPI, 1995); *Archaeology, History, and Society in Galilee* (Harrisburg: TPI, 1996).

¹⁵ D. C. Allison, *The New Moses* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993); *Constructing Jesus* (London: SPCK, 2010); P. M. Casey, *Jesus of Nazareth* (London: T & T Clark, 2010); S. V. Freyne, *Jesus, a Jewish Galilean* (London: T & T Clark, 2004); E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (London: SCM, 1985).

both Matthew and Luke present the Lord's Prayer as an extra-liturgical devotion, and Matthew in particular suggests a context of private rather than of corporate prayer.¹⁶

While a detailed discussion of the various petitions would not be necessary for the present purpose, two observations would be relevant. We have already noted that identification of the petition for adequate sustenance cannot be identified exclusively with the Eucharist, notwithstanding the long tradition of such identification, perpetuated by constant use of the formulaic prayer which evolved from Jesus's teaching and became an established part of the eucharistic liturgies of the early Church. At least as significant as this, the eschatological orientation of the Prayer, emphasized in the petition for the establishment of God's reign, highlights an aspect of the teaching of Jesus which the Church may easily be inclined to neglect. Notwithstanding the spiritual connection between the coming of Christ experienced in the Eucharist, and in the presence Catholic Christians perceive in the elements, Jesus taught his disciples to pray for the creation of a just world order in which God's sovereignty would be acknowledged, not for a transitory and escapist thrill to be experienced in the corporate worship of the Church.

The Lord's Prayer in ancient Christian liturgies

Notwithstanding that the Gospels suggest an extra-liturgical origin for the Lord's Prayer, that it became part of the customary of corporate worship in many churches at an early date, is quite clear. As noted above, the variant readings in the Gospel texts, and the divergences between Matthew and Luke may be attributed in part to evolving traditions of liturgical usage. As with other ancient liturgical formularies, amendments to the transmission may have served to clarify points of doctrine, and thereby to define the boundaries of the community. The invocation of the Holy Spirit in some texts of Luke 11. 2 has been attributed to Marcionite usage.¹⁷ That the Prayer acquired a quasi-creedal function is suggested by Tertullian:

Neque enim propria tantum orationis officia complexa est, uel uenerationem Dei, aut hominis petitionem, sed omnem paene sermonem Domini, omnem commemorationem disciplinae, ut

¹⁶ Cf. W. Rordorf, 'The Lord's Prayer in the Light of its liturgical Use in the Early Church', *Studia Liturgica* 14 (1980), 1-19, who argues that this is a liturgical prayer amenable to private use.

¹⁷ Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem*, 4.26.

reuera in oratione breuiarium totius euangelii comprehendatur.¹⁸

For it embraces not merely the particular functions of prayer, be it the worship of God or a person's petition, but as it were the whole of the Lord's discourse, the whole record of his instruction: so that without exaggeration there is comprised in the prayer an epitome of the entire Gospel.

Similar understandings are reflected in the writings of Cyprian of Carthage, who compares the Lord's Prayer with the Great Commandment in its conciseness and encapsulation of the essence of the Law.¹⁹ The coalescence of creedal and doxological aspects of the comparison may be illustrated in the affirmation of monotheism, with which the *Shema* of Jewish devotion also begins.

Later expositors of this principle include John Cassian²⁰ and Theodore of Mopsuestia.²¹ Expression of (orthodox) belief and seeking communion with God through prayer are inseparable in early Christian devotion. This does not mean that early Christian writers were unaware of the intercessory aspects of the Lord's Prayer or diminished their significance, but rather that intercessions were offered in a context in which God was worshipped and the true faith expressed.

The earliest attestation of recitation of the Lord's Prayer during the Eucharist is the final *Catechetical Lecture* attributed to Cyril of Jerusalem, which cannot confidently be dated before the last quarter of the fourth century. In lectures to the newly baptized, which according to Egeria were delivered during the week of Easter,²² Cyril's exposition appears to reflect the structure and sequence of the liturgy which his addressees have experienced for the first time: the Prayer of Consecration with its interpolated intercessions is followed by the Lord's Prayer, expounded at some length, and then the Invitation to receive, followed by instructions on the mode of reception.²³

¹⁸ *De Oratione*, 1.6.

¹⁹ *De Dominica Oratione*, 28.

²⁰ *Conlationes*, 9.25. This work records a conference of wilderness ascetics, Book 9 presenting the teaching of Abbot Isaac on prayer, and therefore reflects a wider tradition than Cassian himself.

²¹ *Liber ad Baptizandos*, 2.1.

²² *Itinerarium Egeriae*, 47.

²³ *Lect. 23. Catechesis ad Illuminandos*, 5.11–18.

Lack of extant manuscripts from the early centuries makes the development of eucharistic and other ancient Christian rites almost impossible to reconstruct with any confidence.²⁴ It is nonetheless clear that the Lord's Prayer became an established part of the Eucharist in those churches whose liturgies are known within the first three or four Christian centuries. Recitation of the Lord's Prayer all but invariably followed the Prayer of Consecration, and preceded reception of the Elements. While in some rites the Lord's Prayer preceded, and in others followed, the Fraction, and various other prayers and rituals which formed part of the liturgies of different churches,²⁵ it is nonetheless to be recognized that the Church in Scotland received an ancient and catholic tradition of reciting the Lord's Prayer at this point in the Eucharist. At the same time, it should be noted that the Prayer of Consecration in the medieval rites, such as that of Sarum, which usage predominated in both England and Scotland, included extensive intercessions for the Church, for the living, and for the departed; the only provision for intercessory prayer in the medieval order of the Eucharist.

The Lord's Prayer in the Eucharistic liturgies of the Scottish Episcopal Church Notwithstanding legends connecting ancient Scottish Christianity with the Egyptian desert, Anatolian Celts, and other oriental locations, the Church which emerged during the early medieval period was of the Western rite, its liturgies definitively shaped by those of the Roman church, with the English Sarum rite predominating at the dawn of the Reformation. In this tradition the Lord's Prayer followed the Prayer of Consecration, which included such intercessory prayers as were ordered, with the Peace and Fraction following. The first liturgies in English to be used in Scotland would have been imported from England. The second Book of Common Prayer of Edward VI, published in 1552, and enjoined by the Scottish Lords in Council in 1557, is noteworthy in two respects.²⁶

The abolition of the preparatory rituals and prayers which had accompanied the vesting of the Priest in the Sarum rite had seen the Collect for Purity and the Lord's Prayer incorporated as an introductory rite to the

²⁴ For a useful survey, and translations of many of the texts, see P. F. Bradshaw and M. E. Johnson, *The Eucharistic Liturgies* (London: SPCK, 2012).

²⁵ These are discussed in the accompanying article on the Fraction.

²⁶ G. J. Cuming, *A History of Anglican Liturgy* (London: Macmillan, 1982); R. C. D. Jasper, *The Development of Anglican Liturgy 1662-1980* (London: SPCK, 1989); B. D. Spinks, *The Rise and Fall of the Incomparable Liturgy* (London: SPCK, 2017). F. Proctor and W. H. Frere, *A New History of the Book of Common Prayer* (London: Macmillan, 1941) remains useful, if not always accurate on Scottish rites.

Eucharist itself in the first Book of Common Prayer of Edward VI of England, published in 1549. A custom which continued in the English rites of 1552, 1559, and 1662, this observance was included in the Scottish Communion Offices of 1637 and 1764. While the Collect for Purity was retained in this position, the Lord's Prayer was omitted from the introductory rites to both English and Scottish Communion Offices in the Scottish Book of Common Prayer (1929).

In the English rite of 1552, the Lord's Prayer follows the Distribution of the Elements, and forms part of the Post-Communion rite. This was continued in the English rites of 1559 and 1662, while the Scottish Office of 1637 returns the Lord's Prayer to a position following the Prayer of Consecration and preceding the Distribution. The first Scottish Book of Common Order, derived from the Genevan Book of Order produced by John Knox in 1556, and enjoined by General Assembly in 1562, does not include the Lord's Prayer in The Manner of the Lord's Supper at all.

The Scottish Communion Office of 1764, influenced by the English Non-Jurors' Office published in 1718 as well as by the scholarship of Bishop Rattray, represents a significant and distinctive restructuring of the rite. The Intercessions follow, but are separated from, the Prayer of Consecration, and conclude with the Lord's Prayer. The Confession and Absolution follow, and the Comfortable Words precede the Distribution. This pattern was followed by Bishop Seabury in 1786 and retained in the Communion Office of the American Church in 1892.

The structure adopted in 1764 is essentially retained in the Communion Office of the Scottish Book of Common Prayer, published in 1929. The Lord's Prayer is omitted from the opening rite, and the Peace follows the Lord's Prayer after the Intercessions and before the Confession and Absolution.

In the Scottish Liturgies of 1970 and 1982, the Intercessions are offered before the Offertory, and the Lord's Prayer follows the Prayer of Consecration, the Fraction following the Lord's Prayer in 1970 and preceding in 1982.

Concluding reflections and considerations for Scottish Liturgy 2024

The weight of catholic tradition undoubtedly supports retaining the Lord's Prayer after the Prayer of Consecration, whatever variations in the sequence of prayers and observances which have been and continue to be customary in different parts of the Church. This is a consideration which cannot be ignored in drafting the new Scottish Liturgy.

The evidence of Scripture is that Jesus's teaching may not have envisaged as formulaic a prayer as the Lord's Prayer became, and that the Prayer, or any form of prayer shaped by the dominical instruction, was not

intended as part of a larger liturgy, eucharistic or otherwise.

Notwithstanding the opening invocation in praise of God, and the creedal purpose which the Lord's Prayer seems to have served during the early centuries, the emphasis is on intercession.

In linking the Lord's Prayer with the Intercessions, the eighteenth-century Non-Jurors and Scottish Episcopalians have made a distinctive contribution to Anglican liturgical development, and in so doing restored the intercessory purpose of the Prayer. Notwithstanding the location of the Intercessions after the Prayer of Consecration, which few would defend or advocate today, the intercessory nature of the Lord's Prayer is recognized. A new Scottish Liturgy, which would presumably retain the Intercessions as a discrete part of the rite, in the position between the Synaxis and the Peace which has become customary, might appropriately locate the Lord's Prayer at this point in the Liturgy also. If the Lord's Prayer were to conclude the Intercessions, it would conclude also the Synaxis, bringing the ministry of the Word to a climax and preparing for the celebration of the Sacrament through observance of the dominical injunction to pray for the world.

Jesus taught his disciples to pray for the establishment of God's rule in the world, as the basis for the wellbeing they were to seek for themselves and for others. It is in so doing that the Church obeys Christ's teaching, and it is therefore in the context of intercessory prayer that the Lord's Prayer is most appropriately to be offered. While a prayer reserved to the faithful, it is a prayer for the world, not to be reduced or over-spiritualized through unduly close and exclusive association with partaking of the Eucharist.

The argument for restoring the Lord's Prayer to the Intercessions has been offered here; in another contribution the implications for the structure and sequence of the Eucharist, particularly the Fraction and Distribution, will be considered.

The 'Peace' in the Liturgies of the Scottish Episcopal Church

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The 'Peace' in the Eucharist has its origins in the Græco-Roman kiss, an everyday public gesture of greeting in classical antiquity. The kiss has had a continuous history as a gesture of greeting in many parts of the European continent and is gaining increasing currency as a form of greeting again in Great Britain.

The kiss of ancient Græco-Roman culture nevertheless communicated at a deeper level than a simple greeting; for it was closely tied up with a person's standing in society. The kiss was exchanged in public only among those of comparable social status. But in order to avoid any abuses there were laws and restrictions governing when kisses were to be offered. When a kiss was exchanged in public it was seen either as a formal kiss of greeting to public officials to show reverence and loyalty or as a sign of a close blood relationship. 'The closer persons were in social rank, respect, and friendship', Edward Phillips has argued, 'the closer they were allowed to approach the mingling of *pneumata* (spirit) through a kiss on the mouth'.¹ Those who were considered inferior and who did not share the same spirit as others, such as slaves, were not allowed to engage in this gesture.

The kiss was not so common among the Jewish people in the time of the Old Testament. In both Græco-Roman society and the Old Testament, familial kisses were the most common and suitable. Because the Christian community constituted a new familial structure, Paul and Peter encourage Christians to greet each other with a holy kiss. They likely did not invent the holy kiss; rather it is a reiteration of the practice that was probably used by Jesus and his disciples. Paul and Peter simply extended it to their communities. Christians, whether slave or free, were no longer strangers but shared a special bond in Christ that allowed them to offer the holy kiss to one another without being criticized. This holy kiss therefore differed from the secular kiss.

¹ L. Edward Phillips, *The Ritual Kiss in Early Christian Worship*, Joint Liturgical Studies 36 (Cambridge: Grove Books, 1996), p. 6.

The holy kiss in the first century set Christians apart from non-Christians, enhancing the bond initiated in baptism and allowing the spirit to be shared with other Christians. Thus, according to Michael Foley, the holy kiss in the first century ‘was a well-established Christian ritual, that is, a practice with distinct religious meaning for those within the church’.²

The earliest extant witness to the kiss of peace as it was used explicitly in the eucharistic liturgy is from the First Apology of Justin Martyr, writing to the Roman Emperor Antoninus between 147 and 154.³ In his description of the Eucharist as it was celebrated at Rome we find the kiss after ‘the prayers’ (αἱ εὐχαί), and before the preparation of the bread and the cup.

[65.1 ...] καί, κοινὰς εὐχὰς ποιησάμενοι ὑπὲρ τε ἑαυτῶν καὶ τοῦ φωτισθέντος καὶ ἄλλων πανταχοῦ πάντων εὐτόνως ὅπως καταξιωθῶμεν, τὰ ἀληθῆ μαθόντες, καὶ δι’ ἔργων ἀγαθοί πολιτευταὶ καὶ φύλακες τῶν ἐντεταλμένων εὐρεθῆναι, ὅπως τὴν αἰώνιον σωτηρίαν σωθῶμεν, [65.2] ἀλλήλους φιλήματι ἀσπαζόμεθα, παυσάμενοι τῶν εὐχῶν. [65.3] ἔπειτα προσφέρεται τῷ προεστῶτι τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἄρτος καὶ ποτήριον ὕδατι κεκραμένον·

[65.1 ...] and, after earnestly saying prayers for ourselves and the one who was enlightened and all others everywhere that, having learnt the truth, we might be judged worthy also to be found through our deeds people who live good lives and guardians of what has been commanded, so that we might be saved in the eternal salvation, [65.2] we cease from prayer and greet one another with a kiss. [65.3] Then there is brought to the president of the brothers bread and a cup of wine mixed with water.⁴

The earliest witness that the kiss of peace came at the end of the Lord’s Prayer is Tertullian’s treatise on (the Lord’s) Prayer (Tertullian lived in North Africa, c. 160–c. 225). When they had been fasting, Christians (in Carthage at least) had developed a custom of omitting the kiss of peace after

² Michael P. Foley, ‘The Whence and Whither of the Kiss of Peace in the Roman Rite’, *Antiphon* 14:1 (2010), 45–94 (p. 50).

³ For the date of Justin’s *Apologies*, see *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr: Apologies*, ed. and trans. by Denis Minns and Paul Parvis, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford: OUP, 2009), p. 44.

⁴ Justin, *First Apology*, 65.1–3, *ibid.*, pp. 252–53.

the Lord's Prayer. Tertullian called the kiss the *signaculum orationis*, 'the seal of the prayer', like the seal of a letter.

Alia iam consuetudo inualuit: ieiunantes habita oratione cum fratribus subtrahunt osculum pacis quod est signaculum orationis.

Still another custom has become prevalent: when they are keeping a fast, after joining in the prayer along with the brethren, they withhold the kiss of peace, which is the seal of the prayer.⁵

In the same section Tertullian asked,

Quae oratio cum diuortio sancti osculi integra? Quem domino officium facientem impedit pax? Quale sacrificium est a quo sine pace disceditur?

What prayer is unmutated when divorced from the holy kiss? Whom does the peace hinder in the performance of his duty to the Lord? What sort of sacrifice is that from which one retires without the peace?⁶

A little earlier in the treatise, in relation to the ending of the Lord's Prayer, Tertullian used the phrase *assignata oratione*, meaning, 'when the prayer has been sealed'.⁷

Commenting on the 'holy kiss' enjoined by Paul in Romans 16:16, Origen (c. 185–c. 254, like Tertullian, also writing in North Africa) commented that,

⁵ *De oratione*, §18, ed. and trans. by Ernest Evans (London: SPCK, 1953), p. 23.

⁶ Ibid. Because it ignored the dominical precept that fasting must be done secretly (Matt. 6. 16–18) Tertullian went on to warn those who were following the custom of withholding the kiss of peace, 'Quaecumque ratio sit, non erit potior praecepti obseruatione quo iubemur ieiunia nostra celare: iam enim de abstinentia osculi agnoscimur ieiunantes' ('Whatever the reason may be, it cannot be more important than the observance of the precept by which we are commanded to conceal our fasts: for it is at once evident that we are fasting, if we abstain from the kiss').

⁷ Ibid., §16, p. 21.

Ex hoc sermone, aliisque nonnullis similibus, mos ecclesiis traditus est ut post orationes osculo se inuicem suscipiant fratres

From this precept, and several similar ones, the custom has been handed down to the churches that after the prayers the brethren shall receive a kiss from one another in turn.⁸

This evidence could therefore lead us to conclude that when the Lord's Prayer was introduced into the Eucharist, it came with the ritual kiss of peace attached, its *signaculum*, or seal of approbation.

In a letter to the Bishop of Gubbio in 416, Pope Innocent I instructed that, rather than the *pax* being given to the people, or the priests giving each other the *pax* before the Mysteries are consecrated,

post omnia, quae aperire non debeo, pax sit necessario indicenda, per quam constet populum ad omnia quae in mysteriis aguntur atque in ecclesia celebrantur, praebuisse consensum, ac finite esse pacis concludentis signaculo demonstrantur.⁹

the *pax* ought to be done after all the things which I ought not to disclose, by which it may be manifest that the people have given their consent to everything which is done in the mysteries and celebrated in church, and to demonstrate that they are finished by the *signaculum* of the concluding *pax*.

⁸ Origen, *Commentaria in Epistolam B. Pauli ad Romanos* (Latin translation by Rufinus), X, 22 (*Patrologia graeca* [Patrologiae cursus completus: Series graeca], ed. by J.-P. Migne, 162 vols (Paris, 1857–1886), XIV (1862), cols 1282–83. Paul also enjoins a 'holy kiss' (φίλημα ἁγία) in I Corinthians 16. 20, II Corinthians 13. 12, I Thessalonians 5. 26. See C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2 vols (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975–79), II, p. 796. Also note I Peter 5. 14, 'Greet one another with a kiss of (charitable) love. Peace be to all of you who are in Christ' (ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν φιλήματι ἀγάπης. Εἰρήνη ὑμῖν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ).

⁹ *Sancti Leonis Magni Romani Pontificis Opera Omnia*, vol. 3, ed. by Pietro & Hieronymo Ballerini, *Patrologiae cursus completus, series Latina* 56 (Paris: J.-P Migne, 1865), col. 515.

And so, the kiss ‘was the “seal” of the eucharistic prayer for Innocent, just as it was the “seal” of prayer for Tertullian’, argued Phillips, ‘because the intercessions were, by Innocent’s time, part of the eucharistic prayer.’¹⁰

The ‘Peace’ in the Scottish Liturgy

The ‘Peace’ first became an official part of the Scottish Liturgy in 1929. Before that, precedent for its retention in reformed English liturgy was provided by the first prayer book of Edward VI (1549). At the conclusion of the Lord’s Prayer (which follows the anaphora), the Priest says,

The peace of the Lorde be alwaye with you.
The Clerkes. And with thy spirite.

The Priest. Christ our Pascall lambe is offred up for us, once for al, when he bare our sinnes on hys body upon the crosse, for he is the very lambe of God, that taketh away the sines of the worlde: wherefore let us kepe a joyfull and holy feast with the Lorde.

Here the priest shall turne hym toward those that come to the holy Communion, and shall saye.
 You that do truly and earnestly repent you of your synnes [...]

The non-jurors’ rite of 1718 reintroduced the ‘Peace’ in the same position. After the anaphora, the prayer for the Church, and the Lord’s Prayer,

Then shall the Priest turn to the People, and say,
 The peace of the Lord be always with you.
Answer. And with thy spirit.
Priest.

Christ, our Paschal Lamb, is offered up for us, once for all, when he bare our sins in his body upon the Cross; for he is the very Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world: Wherefore let us keep a joyful and holy feast unto the Lord.

Then the Priest shall say to all those that come to receive the Holy Communion,
 YE who do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins [...]

¹⁰ See Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

In Bishop Thomas Rattray's, 'Order for celebrating the Sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist' (essentially a scholarly exercise, based on the Liturgy of St James), after the Priest has washed his hands at the Offertory, the Deacon turns to the people, and says with a loud voice,¹¹

Let none of those who ought not to join in this Service stay.

Let none have ought against any one.

Let none come in Hypocrisy.

Salute one another with the holy Kiss.

*And let the Clergy salute the Bishop, or officiating Priest; and the Laity one another, the Men the Men, and the Women the Women.
Then the Priest being turned to the People shall say,*

The Peace of God be with you all.

Answ. And with thy Spirit.

Then the Deacon shall say,

Let us present our Offerings to the Lord with Reverence and godly Fear.

This is the actual Kiss of Peace. There then follow two biddings of peace after the Consecration, one immediately after the doxology and great Amen of the anaphora (*Then the Priest shall turn to the People, and say, Peace be with you all. Answ. And with thy Spirit* [p. 119].)

A significant point for what follows, and for arguments elsewhere in this issue, there then follows an intercession for the world, at the end of which is the Lord's Prayer.¹² The Lord's Prayer is followed with another

¹¹ *The Ancient Liturgy of the Church of Jerusalem* (London, 1744), pp. 113–22. This English rendering of a Greek liturgy has been characterized by Peter M. Doll as 'at once plainly Anglican yet also deeply Orthodox' ("The Reverence of God's House": The Temple of Solomon and the Architectural Setting for the "Unbloody Sacrifice", in *Anglicanism and Orthodoxy: 300 Years After the "Greek College" in Oxford*, ed. by Peter M. Doll (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2006), pp. 191–223 (200)). W. D. Kornahrens, ('Eucharistic Doctrine in Scottish Episcopacy, 1620–1875' [unpublished PhD Thesis, University of St Andrews, 2008], pp. 132–33) has argued that Bishop Rattray intended the 'Order' for actual use, probably in his private chapel at Craighall.

¹² See Taylor, 'The Lord's Prayer', 57–64; and Jasper, 'The Intercessions', 49–56, in this edition.

bidding of Peace (p. 120) in the same way, and then there is a prayer which could be paralleled to the prayer of humble access.

Scottish Liturgy 1929

The 'Scottish Liturgy' of the *Scottish Book of Common Prayer* 1929 is the first official rite of the Episcopal Church in which the 'Peace' appeared. After 'The Consecration', the prayer for 'the whole state of Christ's Church', and the Lord's Prayer, the 'Presbyter' breaks 'the consecrated Bread; and silence may be kept for a brief space'.

Then shall the Presbyter say:

The peace of the Lord be with you all;*

Answer. And with thy spirit.

Presbyter. Brethren, let us love one another, for love is of God.

* "The peace of the Lord be with you always" *may be used instead.*

"Brethren, let us love one another ..." *may be omitted; and, when it is used, "Beloved" may be substituted for "Brethren".*

The significant development in the direction of the Mass of the Roman Rite was that the Fraction was now to take place immediately after the Lord's Prayer (the rubric to break the bread at the words of institution remained, but became optional), and the 'Peace' was to follow the Fraction. The Prayer for the Church (the equivalent of the Intercessions) had been moved from the Offertory to follow immediately after the Prayer of Consecration in the Scottish Communion Office of 1735/1743.¹³

Scottish Liturgy 1970

The Liturgy 1970 (later published as *The Scottish Liturgy 1970*) was the first liturgical revision to take place after Resolutions 73–76 of the Lambeth Conference 1958 prepared the way for such work, asking for conservation

¹³ *The Communion Office for the Use of the Church of Scotland as far as concerneth the Ministration of that Holy Sacrament: Authorized by K. Charles I Anno 1636. All the Parts of this Office are ranked in the natural Order* (1743); see Philip A. Lempriere, *The Scottish Communion Offices of 1637, 1735, 1755, 1764 and 1889* (Edinburgh: Grant, 1909).

of ‘the doctrinal balance of the Anglican tradition’, while taking into account ‘present liturgical knowledge’.¹⁴

In the Scottish Liturgy of 1970, after the Prayer of Consecration and the Lord’s Prayer, the Fraction took place in the same way as in the rite of 1929.

THE FRACTION

Here the Celebrant shall break the Bread.

C. The peace of the Lord be always with you.

P. **And with thy spirit.**

C. Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God.

All We do not presume to come to this thy Holy Table, O merciful Lord ...

Before 1970, the ‘Peace’ in the official Scottish Liturgy not only followed the consecration, the Lord’s Prayer and the fraction, but was also a prelude to the general confession. In 1970 (which appears to have been influenced by the initial revision of the Roman *Ordo Missae* in 1965) the general confession was moved to the Preparation at the beginning of the rite (in a pattern that closely resembles the Roman *Ordo Missae* of 1965, including *Introibo ad altare Dei*, ‘I will go unto the altar of God’, etc.). The ‘Peace’ was also separated from the Intercession, which was moved from its place between the Prayer of Consecration and the Lord’s Prayer to its current position between the Creed and the Offertory.¹⁵ The ‘prayer of humble access’ seems to do the work given to the general confession at this point in the previous rites.

Scottish Liturgy 1982

¹⁴ ‘[The Book of Common Prayer — The Holy Communion Service](#)’ (resolution 76); also ‘The Book of Common Prayer — Prayer Book Revision’ (Resolutions 73–75); (accessed 8 November 2019).

¹⁵ The *Missale Romanum* of 1965 was not a new edition of the Missal, but a set of provisional revisions made by the Instruction *Inter Oecumenici* (1964). The Prayer of the Faithful, absent since the fifth century, was re-introduced after the Creed.

The 'Peace' in the Scottish Liturgy 1982 can be in one of two positions; either as the second action of the 'Preparation', immediately after the 'Welcome'; or immediately before 'The Liturgy of the Sacrament: The Taking of the Bread and Wine', following straight on from either the 'Intercession' or the 'Confession and Absolution', if the latter has not been used as part of the 'Preparation' at section 5. There is no rubric about ceremonial; no action is enjoined; and it is only by inference or custom that 'We meet in Christ's name' is said by the presiding celebrant and not by another minister.

When the 'Peace' comes at the beginning of the rite the liturgy runs as follows.

PREPARATION

1 Welcome

Father	Grace and peace to you from God our and the Lord Jesus Christ.
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Amen.

2 Peace

or at 16

We meet in Christ's name.
Let us share his peace.

One might infer that this pattern, and the Pauline greeting of the 'Welcome', were based on insights gained from reading the section on 'The Greeting and Kiss of Peace' in Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*.¹⁶ Dix quoted Hans Lietzmann:¹⁷

¹⁶ Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 2nd edn (London: A&C Black, 1945), pp. 105–10. For the Pauline greeting, see Romans 1. 7; I Corinthians 1. 3; II Corinthians 1. 2; Ephesians 1. 2; Philippians 1. 2; Colossians 1. 2; I Thessalonians 1. 1; II Thessalonians 1. 2; Philemon 3.

¹⁷ Dix, *op. cit.*, p. 107, note 7, where Dix was translating from Lietzmann's original German edition, *Messe und Herrenmahl: eine Studie zur Geschichte der Liturgie*, *Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte* 8 (Bonn: A. Marcus & E. Weber, 1926), pp. 229.

Now a picture becomes alive before us. We are among the assembled Christians at Corinth. A letter of the apostle is being read aloud [2 Cor. 13:10–13] – it is drawing to its conclusion – another exhortation to amendment of life, to love and peace and unity. Then the solemn words ring out: “Salute one another with the holy kiss! All the saints in the Christian Church salute you also with a kiss” – and the Corinthians kiss one another. “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all!” – “And with thy Spirit” is the response of the people. The epistle is concluded and – the Lord’s Supper begins.¹⁸

‘This overstrains the evidence a good deal’, commented Dix, ‘but it probably represents something like the truth’.¹⁹

This position, at the opening of the rite, logically suggests that all present are ‘saints’ — that is, the baptized — who will be participating in the Holy Communion. In the Apostolic Tradition it is baptism that first allows a person to ‘pray with the faithful’, to exchange the kiss of peace, to offer gifts at the Eucharist, and to receive the communion. One is now a member of the celebrating community, actively embodying the faith.²⁰

‘Nothing prevents us from placing the *Kiss of Peace* at the *beginning* of the service’, wrote Gianfranco Tellini in 1998.²¹ He went on to explain,

In this position, the *Kiss of Peace* emphasises the continuing unity, from Eucharist to Eucharist (from self-offering to self-offering), of the baptised community. It is instrumental in creating from the very beginning a feeling of togetherness. It also points symbolically to the truth that, in the Eucharist, the *Body of Christ* that was scattered as grains over the mountains is gathering to *receive* the *Body of Christ* in order to *become* once

¹⁸ The quotation here is taken from Hans Lietzmann, *Mass and Lord’s Supper: A Study in the History of the Liturgy*, trans. by Dorothea H. G. Reeve, with Introduction and Further Inquiry by Robert Douglas Richardson (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1979), p. 186.

¹⁹ Dix, *op. cit.*, p. 107, note 7.

²⁰ *The Apostolic Tradition*, 21. 25–6; see Paul F. Bradshaw et al., *The Apostolic Tradition: A Commentary*, Hermeneia series (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002).

²¹ Gianfranco Tellini, *A Single, Holy, Living Sacrifice*, Theological Institute of the Scottish Episcopal Church Occasional Paper No. 7, 2 parts in 1 (Dunblane, 1995–98), II, p. 80.

and more truly the *Body of Christ* – his living presence in the world. In our Church, there is no provision for catechumens or official penitents to be dismissed. It seemed therefore appropriate to allow for the *Kiss of Peace* to be placed in our Liturgy at the *beginning* of the service (if so wished).²²

The ‘Peace’ in the *Scottish Liturgy 1982* is always part of the pre-Eucharistic liturgy, either acting (as we have already seen) as a preparation for the Liturgy of the Word, or as a bridge between the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The headings show that it is not, unlike all the revised rites of the Church of England, part of the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

In the second position, where the ‘Peace’ comes immediately after the Intercessions (and the Confession and Absolution, if that option is chosen), it follows an Eastern pattern and understanding, supported to a certain extent by Origen, who analysed prayer as praise, thanksgiving, confession, petition, and praise again at the end.²³ John Chrysostom emphasized communal unity, effected by means of the kiss, as well as reconciliation, based on Christ’s injunction in Matthew 5. 23–24.

32 When we are about to participate in the sacred table, we are also instructed to offer a holy greeting. Why? . . . We join souls with one another on that occasion by means of the kiss, so that our gathering becomes like the gathering of the apostles when, because all believed, there was one heart and one soul. **33** Bound together in this fashion, we ought to approach the sacred mysteries. Hear what Christ says: ‘If you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has anything against you, go first to be reconciled to your brother and then offer your gift.’ [Matthew 5. 23–24] He did not say: ‘First offer’; He said: ‘First be reconciled and then offer.’ When the gift is set before us, let us, therefore, first become reconciled with one another and then proceed to the sacrifice. **34** But there can be another mystical meaning of the kiss. The Holy Spirit has made us temples of Christ. Therefore when we kiss each other’s mouths, we are kissing the entrance of the temple. Let no one,

²² Ibid., pp. 80–81.

²³ Origen, *De Oratione*, 33. 1: ‘and after thanksgiving it seems to me that one ought to be a bitter accuser of one’s own sins before God, and to ask first for healing so as to be delivered from the state that leads to sin, and secondly for remission of what is past’ (trans. by Eric George Jay, *Origen’s Treatise on Prayer* (SPCK: London, 1954), pp. 216–17).

therefore, do this with a wicked conscience, with a mind that festers beneath the surface. For the kiss is a holy thing, St Paul says: 'Greet one another with a holy kiss.'²⁴

In his mystagogical catechesis, commenting on I Peter 5. 14, Cyril of Jerusalem related the kiss of peace to forgiveness, telling his neophytes that the kiss of peace 'reconciles souls to each other', promising to them that 'injuries will be wiped from every memory'. The kiss of peace, then, both does the reconciling and also forms and signifies the reconciliation, a reconciliation that is (as in John Chrysostom's instruction) derived from Matthew 5. 23–24.²⁵

The formula

The Latin rites share a similar formula for the Peace: *Pax domini sit semper uobiscum. R. Et cum spiritu tuo* ('Let the peace of the Lord be with you always. R. And with thy spirit'). The Greek rites reflect I Peter 5. 14, *Priest*: Εἰρήνη (ὐμῶν) πᾶσιν, *People*: Καὶ τῷ πνεύματι σοῦ ('Peace be with all (of you): And with thy spirit'). In both cases, the 'Peace' comes from the Priest to the people, who then share it back (here there may be something of Luke 10. 5–6).²⁶

In the *Scottish Liturgy 1982* (supported by the evidence of the *Experimental Liturgy 1977*) the initiative may lie with the presiding presbyter, but it is the gathered people of God who offer the peace of Christ. There is a distinct and definite shift in the balance and dynamic of the liturgical assembly. The presiding priest is apparently not *in persona Christi*, and the assembly is the body of Christ.²⁷

Experimental Liturgy 1977

THE PEACE

14 All Stand

²⁴ John Chrysostom, *Catechesis ultima ad baptizandos*, 11. 32–34 (trans. by Paul W. Harkins, *St John Chrysostom: Baptismal Instructions*, Ancient Christian Writers 32 (London, 1953), pp. 171–72).

²⁵ Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechesis mystagogica* V, 3; *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series Graeca* 33 (Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1886), 1111/1112.

²⁶ 'Whatever house you enter, first say, "Peace to this house!" And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you.'

²⁷ In fact, there is very little, if anything, in the 1982 rite that suggests that the presiding priest is to be understood as acting *in persona Christi*.

Priest: We meet in Christ's name: let us share his peace.

All: Peace be with you.

The congregation greet one another according to local custom

Scottish Liturgy 1982

We meet in Christ's name.

Let us share his peace.

The position

Although the *Scottish Liturgy 1970* retains the 'Peace' in the same place as the 1549 Prayer Book, the non-juring rite of 1718, and Scottish Liturgy of the 1929 Scottish Prayer Book, I would argue that it is, nevertheless, out of step with those rites, and even with the current Roman *Ordo Missae* (especially when the Roman Canon is used), for it divorces the 'Peace' from the Intercession and the penitential rite. There are very sound theological reasons for having the 'Peace' immediately after the Lord's Prayer and the Fraction. Jeremy Driscoll, has written of the Sign of Peace in the Roman *Ordo Missae*,

Then the priest greets the assembly with the very words of our risen Lord. "The peace of the Lord be with you always" he says [...]. Then the priest [or Deacon] directs the people, "Offer each other the sign of peace". And all the members of the assembly turn to those immediately near them and offer the same greeting of the risen Lord. This is a ritual exchange, not a practical greeting. It is part of what we have called the serious play of ritual.²⁸

The idea of recognizing the risen Lord in the breaking of the bread, like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, and in the greeting of the risen Lord, 'Peace be with you', is indeed a powerful one. But, with the exception of the 1970 rite, the 'Peace' in the liturgies of the Scottish Episcopal Church has had a continuous significance both as a kind of sealing of intercessory prayer, and as a form of mutual recognition within a gathered community, linked also to reconciliation. To move the 'Peace' back to the Roman position would now disrupt a consistent meaning.

²⁸ Jeremy Driscoll, *What Happens at Mass: Unfolding the Meaning of the Church's Eucharist* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2013), p. 123.

Questions to consider

A process of liturgical renewal and revision in the Scottish Episcopal Church would therefore need to consider various questions. We might begin with the following:

Should there still be an option for the position of the 'Peace'?

If not, should the 'Peace' be at the beginning of the whole liturgical action, or at the mid-point?

If the latter, does the formula, '*We meet in Christ's name*: Let us share his peace', make sense in the middle of the rite?

Should the people be encouraged to stand during the Intercession so that the 'Peace' is more obviously connected to the prayers? (It would also discourage sitting and encourage greater brevity in the Intercession.)

Should there be words, such as, 'Let us greet one another with a sign of peace'?

Should there be rubrical guidance on how the 'Peace' is to be done?

The Theology of the Eucharistic Prayer: The 1982 Liturgy of the Scottish Episcopal Church¹

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The Eucharistic Prayer of the *Scottish Liturgy* 1982 begins with a short dialogue between the priest and the people which has its origins in *The Apostolic Tradition*.² It has been argued that the origin of this exchange is scriptural, based on Ruth 2. 4, though this seems doubtful.³ In *Common Worship* (2000) in the Church of England, two forms of introduction are provided, without preference being given to one or the other.

The Lord be with you
and also with you.

The Lord is here.
His Spirit is with us.

There is a good argument for considering the second form with some care. After the careful preparation of the people, culminating in the exchange of the Peace, there is proper reason to state clearly that the Lord is present, and that true prayer implies and indeed requires the presence of the Holy Spirit. (See Romans 8: 26: 'for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words'.)

The Eucharistic Prayer begins clearly with words of worship and praise, offered to God in all places and at all times. Prayer begins in the worship of God (as with the Lord's Prayer – 'Hallowed be thy name').

The marginal commentary provided with the *Scottish Liturgy* 1982 describes the opening in the following way.

¹ The author wishes to thank the Rt Revd Nicholas Reade, former bishop of Blackburn, for his wise advice and suggestions.

² *The Treatise on The Apostolic Tradition of St. Hippolytus of Rome*, ed. by Gregory Dix, revised by Henry Chadwick (London: SPCK, 1968), 7; see also Paul F. Bradshaw, Maxwell E. Johnson, L. Edward Phillips, *The Apostolic Tradition: A Commentary*, ed. by Harold W. Attridge (Fortress: Minneapolis, 2002).

³ R. C. D. Jasper and Paul F. Bradshaw, *A Companion to the Alternative Service Book* (London: SPCK, 1986), 34.

OPENING PRAYER: celebrating the work of God, Father Son and Spirit, in creating, restoring and bringing to completion all that is His.

The form of this pre-Sanctus part of the prayer (in other contexts known as the Preface) has varied enormously in the history of the Church and in different places. Seasonal variations are provided in the 1982 liturgy, including new forms suitable for Christmas and Epiphany that were authorised for experimental use in 2016. The Gallican rites offered a variation for every mass, while in the Eastern tradition there was much more stability and lack of variation. In the 1549 Prayer Book, Archbishop Cranmer provided five Proper Prefaces for Christmas, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost and Trinity, and these were retained in the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*. Clearly, we need to think carefully about the nature of such variations in our task of revision.

In the Eucharistic Prayer of 1982, we find a bold Trinitarian structure. After the initial expression of worship and praise (these words forming a nice Cranmerian ‘double’), the creation in power of all things in heaven and on earth is ascribed to the Father. The incarnation in the Son is expressed in the ‘wonderful exchange’ whereby our lives and the life of God in Christ are brought together. There is an echo of the ancient Athanasian formula in the *De Incarnatione* (together with John 1. 14) whereby he became like us in order that we might become like him in the two nicely balanced lines:

He made his home among us
that we might for ever dwell in you.

Finally new birth in the Holy Spirit in the restoration of all creation by God’s love completes the narrative of divine creation and redemption, and prepares us for the great song of the whole Church known as the Sanctus (in 1982, ‘an anthem to God’s glory’) followed by the Benedictus (‘The greeting to him who came in the flesh, comes in the sacrament and is still to come’).

This is a moment, sung if possible, in which all present participate, and barriers of time and space are broken down. Heaven and earth are one in the great song of praise. The Sanctus has its origins in the great vision of Isaiah in Isaiah 6. 3, linked by Clement of Rome (*fl. c. 96*) together perhaps with Daniel 7.10. Although the anaphora of the *Apostolic Tradition* does not have a Sanctus, an important, though much debated, article by the distinguished liturgical scholar E. C. Ratcliff argues that it originally ended with the Sanctus.⁴ The place of the Benedictus (which is drawn from Mark 11. 9–10)

⁴ E. C. Ratcliff, *Liturgical Studies*. Ed. A. H. Couratin and D. H. Tripp (London: SPCK, 1976), ‘The Sanctus and the Pattern of the Early Anaphora’, 18–40. See also, Matthieu Smyth and Paul Bradshaw, ‘The anaphora of the so-called

has had a somewhat unstable history in Anglican liturgy. In 1549, Archbishop Cranmer followed the pattern of the Roman rite: Sanctus – Hosanna – Benedictus – Hosanna. The Benedictus was subsequently omitted from the 1552 Prayer Book, a pattern which continued through 1662 until the revisions of the later part of the twentieth century finally resulted in the *ASB* of 1980 confirming the traditional order of 1549, and this is also found in 1982 in Scotland. (It should be noted that the Benedictus returned as an option in the *Scottish Liturgy* of 1929, becoming a fixed part of the rite in the 1970 rite.) There seems no reason to change this. In conclusion it might be noted that this great utterance of the Church is a golden ecumenical opportunity to ensure that the words we speak together are in accord with the words of our fellow Christians in other denominations. The *Scottish Liturgy* 1982 (like its almost contemporary 1980 *ASB* liturgy in the Church of England), deliberately followed the text of the ecumenical International Consultation on English Texts (ICET). The standard ecumenical texts are now produced by ELLC (English Language Liturgical Consultation).⁵ We should continue the practice of using agreed ecumenical texts.⁶

After the Sanctus and Benedictus we proceed with what 1982 entitles the ‘Christological Prayer’: ‘Thanksgiving to God for all that was accomplished in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.’ Seasonably variable, this begins again in words of praise and thanksgiving. Christ as the Word (John 1: 1) is born in human flesh yet exists beyond the boundaries of time. He is the source, the purpose and that which holds together all things. All this is dependent on the resurrection when, by the power of the Father, the Son overcomes evil and sets God’s people free. Reference here may be made to the dramatic medieval idea of the Harrowing of Hell.

After this moment that turns upon the Christological hinge of the Christian faith, the universal becomes the particular as the anaphora embarks upon what 1982 calls the ‘Narrative of Institution’: ‘an account of the Last Supper’. A number of things need to be carefully noted here. Firstly, the Institution Narrative is not necessarily essential for the validity of Eucharistic consecration. There is fairly conclusive evidence, for example, that the ancient liturgy of the Apostles Addai and Mari, originating in Edessa

Apostolic Tradition and the Roman eucharistic prayer’, *Usus Antiquior* 1:1 (2010), 5–25. More generally on the Sanctus in the Roman rite, see Joseph A. Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, transl. by Francis A. Brunner, One Volume Edition (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1959), 379–82.

⁵ See the document, ‘[Praying Together](#)’ (1988); (accessed 5 December 2019).

⁶ The English translation of the Roman Missal, however, departed from this standard in 2011.

probably in the third century,⁷ did not have an Institution Narrative, and in 2001 this anaphora was officially recognized by the Roman Catholic Church as valid.⁸ It should be made clear that consecration does not depend on the seemingly magical utterance of particular words, even those of Our Lord, but upon the priest and congregation participating in the whole Eucharist Prayer. Second, it should clearly be understood that even as the priest utters the words of Our Lord as recorded in the New Testament accounts of the Last Supper, in no sense is this to be taken literally as a kind of performative enactment of Our Lord's words. The Anglican liturgical scholar Kenneth Stevenson made a clear distinction between the 'rememorative' and the 'representational' in the liturgy.⁹ It is a delicate but important point, clarified for us by Douglas Jones in his Introduction to the Church of England's *Lent, Holy Week, Easter: Services and Prayers* (1984) in the context of Holy Week services:

... the temptation is strong to encourage an imaginative representation of the events in our Lord's life. We do not think of assisting worshippers by mental efforts to go back to the first Palm Sunday and Good Friday. We think of assisting them to make a present liturgical celebration.¹⁰

This is equally true as we rehearse the Institution Narrative in each celebration of the Eucharist.

The Narrative of the Institution concludes with our Lord's words, 'Do this in remembrance of me' (τοῦτο ποιείτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν) (Luke 22. 19; I Corinthians 11. 24). The word ποιείτε is etymologically linked, of course, to the English word 'poetry'. In Scotland the word often used for a poet is a 'makar' – one who 'makes' something. It should be noted that our

⁷ Addai and Mari were the traditional founders of the church in Edessa. The standard edition is A. Gelston, *The Eucharistic Prayer of Addai and Mari* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991).

⁸ See, R. C. D. Jasper and G. J. Cuming, *Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed*. Ed. Paul F. Bradshaw and Maxwell E. Johnson (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2019), 65.

⁹ Kenneth Stevenson, *Jerusalem Revisited: The Liturgical Meaning of Holy Week* (Washington DC: Pastoral, 1988), 9. See also, David Jasper, *The Language of Liturgy: A Ritual Poetics* (London: SCM, 2018), 56. O. B. Hardison Jr., *Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages* (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins, 1965).

¹⁰ Douglas Jones, Introduction, *Lent, Holy Week, Easter: Services and Prayers* (London: Church House Publishing, 1986), 3.

Lord says here nothing about either believing or understanding – this is something that we simply ‘do’ as an act of obedience. And finally, the word ἀνάμνησιν (*anámnesin*) denotes not simply that we remember something that might otherwise be forgotten. With its roots in Jewish liturgy, this is an act of remembrance which brings the past into the present so that the Eucharist that we celebrate is no less in the presence of Christ than was the Last Supper with his disciples before his Passion.

The act of remembering continues in the next section, entitled in 1982 ‘Anamnesis and Oblation’: ‘The work of Christ is recalled and linked to our offering’. As noted above, the celebration of the Eucharist is an act of obedience to our Lord’s command, and we now affirm this obedience. Revision might revisit the word ‘recall’ used here as we are doing more than bringing something to mind, and this word might be misleading. Indeed, through the real presence of Christ in the liturgy we are now participating in the mighty acts of salvation as we look forward to the fulfilment of all things in the coming of Christ’s Kingdom. At the very heart of this act is an offering – as Christ offers himself for our salvation, so we now, as the Body of Christ offer ourselves in the Eucharist and in his service.

We now move on to the ‘Epiclesis’ when ‘we ask for the descent of the Holy Spirit as the divine response to our obedience’. The epiclesis has a difficult and somewhat vexed history in the development of Christian liturgy.¹¹ In the *Apostolic Tradition* the invocation of the Spirit follows the Institution Narrative as it does in the 1982 *Scottish Liturgy*.

And we pray Thee that thou wouldest send Thy Holy Spirit upon the oblation of Thy Holy Church Thou wouldest grant to all Thy Saints who partake to be united [to Thee] that they may be fulfilled with the Holy Spirit for the confirmation of their faith in truth.¹²

In no sense does this seem to be a ‘consecratory epiclesis.’¹³ However, in the Eastern churches the epiclesis came increasingly to be regarded as the

¹¹ See Anne McGowan, *Eucharistic Epicleses, Ancient and Modern: Speaking of the Spirit in Eucharistic Prayer* (SPCK: London, 2014); John H. McKenna, *The Eucharistic Epiclesis: A Detailed History from the Patristic to the Modern Era*, 2nd edn (Chicago IL: Hillenbrand, 2009). There is also the old but still very useful book, E. G. Cuthbert F. Atchley, *On the Epiclesis of the Eucharistic Liturgy and in the Consecration of the Font*. Alcuin Club XXXI (Oxford University Press, 1935).

¹² *The Apostolic Tradition*, ed. by Dix, 9.

¹³ Jasper and Bradshaw, *A Companion to the Alternative Service Book*, 218.

moment of consecration, and ‘the epiclesis, following the institution narrative, and bearing this consecratory significance, became a feature of the Eastern liturgies’.¹⁴ The Roman Canon does not have an epiclesis, but the Anglican tradition makes for more complications. First – the *Scottish Liturgy* 1982 maintains the ‘Eastern’ position of the epiclesis *after* the institution narrative. In both *ASB* (1980) and *Common Worship* (2000) in the Church of England the epiclesis is placed *before* the institution narrative. This had also been the case with Archbishop Cranmer in his 1549 Prayer Book, in which he followed the tradition of the Roman rite. However, in the 1552 Prayer Book, following remarks made by Martin Bucer, the epiclesis was replaced by a simpler prayer that omitted any petition for the Holy Spirit: ‘Here us, O merciful Father, and grant that we, receiving these they creatures of bread and wine ... may be partakers of his most blessed body and blood.’

The important Scottish rite of 1637 returns to the epiclesis of 1549, but the 1662 English *Book of Common Prayer* steadfastly kept the form of 1552. The storm over the attempt to re-introduce the epiclesis in the ill-fated 1928 Prayer Book is well known, though it should be clearly noted that no less a Reformation text than the *Westminster Directory* (1645) supports the inclusion of the epiclesis.

However, this will need careful attention in any revision of 1982, and clearly informed liturgical debates (not ill-informed wrangles) must be engaged in in a spirit of charity and understanding. The present place of the epiclesis, which defines both the Scottish and the American traditions, is out of step with the Church of England and is evidence of old links with the Eastern Church, for which, since as early as Cyril of Jerusalem in the late fourth century, the epiclesis was a consecratory moment. Furthermore, the difficult history of the epiclesis in the Anglican tradition since 1552/1662 cannot simply be lightly dismissed.

The eucharistic prayer of the *Scottish Liturgy* 1982 draws to a conclusion with the ‘Prayer of Petition’: ‘as members of the Church we pray for her whole life and mission’. Some attention has already been given in the essay on Intercession to the place of petitionary and intercessory prayer in the Liturgy, either within the eucharistic prayer of thanksgiving, or earlier in the Liturgy of the Word. One suspects that most members of congregations are not aware that this is a return to intercession, though it is an entirely appropriate prayer at this moment that we and the whole Church, living and departed, live the life appropriate to our eucharistic calling. It might be noted that the Church of England liturgies (1980, 2000) both have a kind of further epiclesis in the calling down of the Holy Spirit within which we may be

¹⁴ Ibid., 218–19.

renewed. This does not occur in the 1982 rite, and correctly so, as long as the epiclesis remains in some form as at present.

The Eucharistic prayer concludes as it began, quite correctly, in an act of praise, the Doxology. This draws all things together in Christ (through... with... in...) and in the unity of the Holy Spirit. It does seem a pity that some form of the phrase 'with all who stand before you', known from the *Apostolic Tradition*, is not employed, linking the conclusion of the prayer back to the universality of the Sanctus.

There remain three points – simply to be raised and without proffered conclusion. It is the custom in the Scottish Episcopal Church for the whole congregation to join in those parts of the Eucharistic prayer called ANAMNESIS AND OBLATION and PRAYER OF PETITION. Although there is some justification for this, it is aesthetically awkward, breaks up the flow of the prayer, is untidy and lacks clear conviction. It also opens the larger question about rubrics, deliberately omitted in 1982 with the concomitant dangers, to be included in any liturgy. Furthermore, no reference has been made in this essay to the movements to be made by the priest. These do vary enormously, and all priests have their own peculiarities. Some thought should be given to this and proper training of ordinands ensured. One principle might be suggested. It is not the place of priests to call attention to themselves, but quite the reverse. Properly the priest should be almost 'invisible' in the Eucharistic presence of Christ.

Secondly, the Church of England now has some excellent children's Eucharistic Prayers that avoid being patronising. Although Eucharistic Prayer V of the *Scottish Liturgy* 1982 is suitable for use when there is a large number of children present, further consideration needs to be given to this as the SEC seeks to encourage the next generation of worshippers in its churches.

And finally, there is *no* justification for congregations to fall to their knees after the Benedictus has been sung. This interrupts the flow of the eucharistic prayer and implies a distinction where none should be made.¹⁵

¹⁵ Further reference might also be made to the fine work of ARCIC (Anglican–Roman Catholic International Commission) on the Eucharist, as well as the 1973 Joint Study Group Report from the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland, *The Ecclesial Nature of the Eucharist*.

Issues in Eucharistic Theology

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It is well-known that the theology of the Eucharist was one of many issues in the splintering of Western Christianity at the Reformation.¹ The doctrine of transubstantiation, defined by the fourth Lateran Council in 1215,² and articulated by Thomas Aquinas,³ John Duns Scotus,⁴ and William of

¹ Cf. W. O. Chadwick, *The Reformation* (London: Penguin, 1990); D. N. J. MacCulloch, *Reformation* (London: Penguin, 2004); L. P. Wandel, *The Eucharist in the Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

² Canon 1:

... ipse sacerdos est sacrificium Iesus Christus, cuius corpus et sanguis in sacramento altaris sub speciebus panis et vini veraciter continentur, transsubstantiatis pane in corpus et vino in sanguinem potestate divina, ut at perficiendum mysterium unitatis accipiamus ipsi de suo quod accepit ipse de nostro.

... Jesus Christ is both priest and sacrifice. His body and blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar under the forms of bread and wine, the bread and wine having been changed in substance, by God's power, into his body and blood, so that in order to achieve this mystery of unity we receive from God what he received from us.

³ *Summa Theologiae*. III. Quaest. 75. Cf. M. McC. Adams, *Some Later Medieval Theories of the Eucharist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁴ *Ordinatio* IV. R. Cross, *Duns Scotus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Ockham,⁵ was challenged by John Wycliffe,⁶ and later by Martin Luther⁷ and Huldrych Zwingli,⁸ John Calvin⁹ and Thomas Cranmer.¹⁰ The Anglican settlement realized no unambiguous definition of Eucharistic doctrine, even as the Council of Trent further defined transubstantiation as Catholic dogma, and the Lutheran and Reformed churches defined their own theology in opposition to it.¹¹

⁵ *Quodlibet IV. Quaest. 30.* G. Buescher, *The Eucharistic Teaching of William Ockham* (New York: Franciscan Institute, 1950).

⁶ *De Eucharistia.* S. E. Lahey, *John Wyclif* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁷ *Sakrament des Leibes and Blutes Christi wider die Schwarmgeister* (Wittenberg, 1526). B. Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011).

⁸ Die XXVII Artikel Zwinglis, 18. *Huldreich Zwinglis Samtliche Werke. I*, 460. W. P. Stephens, *The Theology of Huldrych Zwingli* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986).

⁹ *Institutio Christianae Religionis. IV: 17-18.* K. McDonnell, *John Calvin, the Church, and the Eucharist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967).

¹⁰ *A Defence of the true and Catholick doctrine of the Sacrament of the body and blood of our Saviour Christ : with a confutation of Sundry errors concerning the same* (London: Rivington, 1825). D. N. J. MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).

¹¹ Council of Trent, Sessio XIII. *Decretum de sanctissimo Eucharistiae Sacramento*, 4. *De Transubstantione* (1551):

Quoniam autem Christus redemptor noster corpus suum id quod sub specie panis offerebat vere esse dixit ideo persuasum semper in Ecclesia Dei fuit id que nunc denuo sancta haec synodus declarat per consecrationem panis et vini conversionem fieri totius substantiae panis in substantiam corporis Christi Domini nostri et totius substantiae vini in substantiam sanguinis eius. Quae conversio convenienter et proprie a sancta Catholica Ecclesia transsubstantiatio est appellata.

And because that Christ, our Redeemer, declared that which He offered under the species of bread to be truly His own body, therefore has it ever been a firm belief in the Church of God, and this holy Synod doth now declare it anew, that, by the consecration of the bread and of the wine, a conversion is made 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; which conversion is, by the holy

Eastern Christianity was not defined by Western theological and philosophical categories and had for several centuries been separated from the Western Church through the mutual excommunication of 1054. Transubstantiation, μετουσίωσις, entered Eastern Orthodox theological discourse in a homily of a Greek participant in the Council of Florence, the future Patriarch Gennadius II of Constantinople, in 1439,¹² in the context of attempted reconciliation between the Latin West and the Greek East. Notwithstanding the correspondence early in the seventeenth century between the See of Canterbury and the allegedly Calvinist Patriarch Cyril I of Constantinople (previously Cyril III of Alexandria),¹³ and the sojourn in Oxford of the future Patriarch Metrophanes of Alexandria, the doctrine of transubstantiation is not relevant to any Orthodox influence on emergent Anglicanism, including Scottish Episcopalianism, which derived from the study of the earlier Church Fathers.

While the influence of Zwingli, through Martin Bucer, on Cranmer is widely recognized, not least in the work of Dix,¹⁴ the Elizabethan settlement in England and corresponding developments in Scotland were very much

Catholic Church, suitably and properly called
Transubstantiation.

¹² *De Sacramentali Corpore Domini nostril Jesu Christi*, PG 160, 351–74; 358B.

Ω Μετονοσιώσεως πολὺ τὸ παράδοξον ἐχούσητ καὶ χάριεν τοῖς τῇ πίστει πεφωτισμένοι. Οὐδέν μὲν οὖν ἐστὶ χαλεπὸν οὐδ' ἀπίθανόν τι τὴν πρώτην πάντων αἵτι αν ποιεῖν τι παρὰ τὴν ἐγκαίεστεϊ αν ὑπ αὐτοῦ τοῖ πράγμασι τάξιν ἐπειδάν βουληθῇ. ὃ δέ θαυματουργίαν εἶναι φαμέν.

O Transubstantionem plane mirabilem et stupendam, et iis qui fide sunt illuminati gratissimam. Non equidem difficile est aut incredibile, quod prima rerum omnium causa efficere quidquam possit praetor constitutam a seipsa in rebus ordinem, cum voluerit quod quidem miraculum esse dicimus, quoties et naturae ipsi aliquando tale quid in se ipsa agere aut pati accidat.

¹³ G. A. Hadjiantoniou, *Protestant Patriarch* (Richmond VA: John Knox, 1961); G. P. Michaelides, 'The Greek Orthodox Position on the Confession of Cyril Lucaris', *Church History* 12.2 (1943), 118–129. The authorship of Cyril's *Confessio*, chapter 17 of which repudiates the doctrine of transubstantiation, has been disputed since his martyrdom, but the views expressed in it were condemned at a Synod of Jerusalem in 1672. The *Confessio* of Dositheus, Patriarch of Jerusalem, produced by this Synod, affirmed transubstantiation.

¹⁴ G. Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London: Black, 1945).

less narrowly defined, except in that transubstantiation was explicitly rejected. Article of Religion 28, *De Coena Domini*, Of the Lord's Supper, states:

Panis et vini transubstantiatio in Eucharistia ex sacris literis probari non potest, sed apertis Scripturae verbis adversatur, sacramenti naturam evertit, et multarum superstitionum dedit occasionem.

Corpus Christi datur, accipitur, et manducatur in Coena, tantum coelestis et spirituali ratione. Medium autem quo corpus Christi accipitur et manducatur in Coena, fides est.

Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of Bread and Wine) in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by holy Writ; but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.

The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is faith.

It might be argued that liturgies published or authorized during the period that the Articles of Religion were deemed authoritative in the SEC (1804–1977), could not validly be interpreted as reflecting a doctrine of transubstantiation.¹⁵ This would apply to the Eucharistic rites of 1929 and 1970, and also to the BCP rite included in the SBCP, which could scarcely be in doubt. In the case of the 1982 Scottish Liturgy, and any which might be authorized in the future, no external authority other than Scripture can circumscribe interpretation of the words of the rite. As two thousand years of Christian history, and five centuries of Eucharistic controversy in the Western Church, have made clear, there is no possibility that Scripture can be used to define Eucharistic doctrine in terms of anachronistic philosophical categories. Scripture, and the words and actions of the liturgy, have been interpreted in a variety of cultural contexts, in the light of the philosophical and experiential particularities of those contexts as well as of inherited traditions, and this will undoubtedly continue wherever and whenever the Gospel is proclaimed and the Eucharist celebrated in time to

¹⁵ For discussion see N. H. Taylor, 'Liturgy and Theological Method in the Scottish Episcopal Church', in *Studies in the History of Scottish Episcopacy*, ed. by J. R. Davies & R. S. Spurlock, *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* 47 (2018), 143–54.

come.¹⁶ Therefore, it is in the words of the authorized liturgy that the doctrine of the Church is to be found. This may, quite intentionally, allow some breadth of possible interpretation, not simply in the service of Anglican comprehensiveness, but in recognition that no rigidly defined exposition, no philosophical system, can adequately or exhaustively articulate the theological truths to be discerned and experienced in the Christian sacraments. Nevertheless, those who seek to interpret the words of the Eucharist will inevitably be exposed to some measure of critique of their methodology and its theological premises.

Two sections of the Prayer of Consecration are of special relevance to discerning and interpreting its Eucharistic theology: the Institution Narrative and the Epiclesis.

The Institution Narrative

The Institution Narrative derives from the Gospel account of the Last Supper, reflected also (and in the view of most scholars earlier), in I Corinthians. These texts have been studied in great detail by both New Testament scholars and liturgists.¹⁷ While in English translation (from the Greek), the words may seem entirely clear, irrespective of whether Jesus's words can be reconstructed in (presumably) Aramaic on the basis of the New Testament texts.¹⁸ How these words are to be interpreted, against the cultural and cultic context in which they were uttered, is another matter. Furthermore, the connection between the Last Supper and the Eucharist is not as unambiguous as may at first sight appear to be the case; whether the liturgical life of the early Church shaped the transmission of the Gospel

¹⁶ Cf. F. J. King, *More than a Passover: Inculturation in the Supper Narratives of the New Testament* (Fankfurt: Peter Lang, 2007); N. H. Taylor, 'The Contextualisation of Christianity in the early Church', in *Reflections on Christian Faith: An African Context*, ed. by E. R. Johnson (Mutare: Africa University Press, 2002), pp. 41–54.

¹⁷ P. F. Bradshaw, *Eucharistic Origins* (London: SPCK, 2004); *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship: Sources and Methods for the Study of Early Liturgy* (London: SPCK, 2002); B. D. Chilton, *A Feast of Meanings: Eucharistic Theologies from Jesus through the Johannine Circle* (Leiden: Brill, 1994); J. Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1966); D. E. Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003); M. D. Stringer, *Rethinking the Origins of the Eucharist* (London: SCM, 2011).

¹⁸ Cf. P. M. Casey, *Aramaic Sources of Mark's Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Jeremias, *op. cit.*

traditions of the Lord's Supper, or those traditions determined the rituals of commensality, is also debated.

Critical scholarship points not only to discrepancies between the Gospel accounts of the Last Supper, and its absence from John, but also to a longer cross-cultural tradition of ritualized communal dining which arguably shaped the liturgical life of the early Church and influenced also the transmission of the Last Supper narratives. Whether the Last Supper can be regarded as a historical event is therefore in dispute. Scholars point also to ancient accounts of the Eucharist in which elements other than bread and wine are used, and to rites which appear not to have included an Institution Narrative.¹⁹

Whatever may be argued about the transmission of the synoptic traditions, I Corinthians cannot be dated to later than AD 55.²⁰ The tradition that Jesus inaugurated a ritual meal, still practised by the Church, in which bread and wine were accorded profound symbolic meaning, the night before he was crucified, was therefore well-developed within a quarter century of the death of Jesus (I Corinthians 11. 23–26). The synoptic gospels provide a larger narrative setting (Matt 26. 20–35; Mark 14. 17–31; Luke 22. 14–34), but otherwise reflect no obvious development in the tradition from that alluded to by Paul. On the contrary, Paul presupposes a mutually recognized narrative from which brief citations or allusions could meaningfully be drawn and remain meaningful out of their original context.²¹

Irrespective of what Jesus did and did not say, and did and did not do, at the last communal meal he shared with his disciples before his arrest and crucifixion, there remains the attestation of Eucharistic prayers in the ancient Church which included no Institution Narrative. That in the *Didache* is the earliest of these, and is, moreover, located by many scholars in the first century church of Antioch on the Orontes, associated also with the apostles Peter and Paul.²² While the Eucharistic rite quoted or prescribed in *Didache*

¹⁹ Bradshaw, *op. cit.*; Chilton, *op. cit.*; A. B. McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999).

²⁰ R. F. Collins, *First Corinthians* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1998), pp. 22–24; N. H. Taylor, *Paul, Antioch and Jerusalem* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), pp. 46–47.

²¹ N. H. Taylor, 'Paul and the Historical Jesus Quest', *Neotestamentica* 37 (2003), 105–26.

²² Bradshaw, *op. cit.*; R. E. Brown & J. P. Meier, *Antioch and Rome* (New York: Paulist, 1983); K. Niederwimmer, *The Didache* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998); M. Slee, *The Church of Antioch in the First Century CE* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003); M. Zetterholm, *The Formation of Christianity in Antioch* (London: Routledge, 2003).

9–10 may or may not be complete, it is nonetheless notable that it makes no reference to any institution of the rite by Jesus, nor explicitly to his death and resurrection. No connection is drawn between the bread and the contents of the cup, by implication wine (vine of David), and the body and blood of Jesus, even if they are referred to as spiritual food and drink. Claims that an *Agape* (fellowship) meal can be distinguished from the Eucharist have proved unsatisfactory.²³ The Liturgy of Addai and Mari,²⁴ a second century Syriac text still used by the Assyrian Orthodox Church (Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East) and the Ancient [sic] Holy Apostolic Catholic Church of the East (founded 1968), includes no Institution Narrative, though this has been interpolated into the rite by the Chaldean Catholic Church and the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church. The absence of the Institution Narrative from the Eucharistic rites in no way implies that these churches have not received that tradition through Scripture, or in any way doubt the origins of the Eucharist in the dominical words.

Notwithstanding the enigmatic testimony of the *Didache*, and the evidence of some Oriental Orthodox Churches that explicit recitation of the Institution Narrative is not required in the celebration of the Eucharist, the consistent tradition of Western Christianity has been to include the words of institution in the Prayer of Consecration. This does not resolve critical questions as to what Jesus said or intended, but it does recognize that, from the first generation of Christianity, the Last Supper tradition has been received in at least some churches as defining the ritual life of the new communities. There seems no reason therefore to omit the Institution Narrative from any future Eucharistic liturgy of the SEC. There seems no reason to circumscribe how members of the Church may interpret the dominical words, or understand the Eucharistic action of the Church, beyond what is clearly stated in Scripture and in the authorized liturgies.

The Epiclesis

The Epiclesis (invocation of the Holy Spirit upon the bread and wine) has had a more varied history, its origins are less clear, and since the Reformation it has been more controversial within the Reformed tradition

²³ Bradshaw, *op. cit.*; N. H. Taylor, *Lay Presidency at the Eucharist?* (London: Mowbray, 2009), pp. 168–72.

²⁴ A. Gelston, *The Eucharistic Prayer of Addai and Mari* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992); R. C. D. Jasper & G. J. Cuming, *Prayers of the Eucharist* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2019), pp. 64–69; S. B. Wilson, ‘The Anaphora of the Apostles Addai and Mari’, in *Essays on Early Eastern Eucharistic Prayers*, ed. by P. F. Bradshaw (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1997), pp. 19–37.

of Western Christianity.²⁵ In the Roman and most Anglican, Lutheran, and Methodist rites, the Epiclesis precedes the Institution Narrative. The liturgical tradition of the SEC is on this point closer to the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox tradition, in that the Epiclesis follows the Institution Narrative, and has traditionally been understood to bring to completion the change undergone by the elements.

The association of the Epiclesis with the doctrine of transubstantiation led to its omission from the Eucharistic rites of the Church of England in the BCP editions of 1552 and 1662. In keeping with the Reformed emphasis on reception, rather than any transformation of the elements in the Eucharist, the Epiclesis is replaced with a sentence praying that the congregation might be blessed through rightly receiving the bread and the wine.

Repudiation of the doctrine of transubstantiation did not necessarily imply rejection of the Epiclesis in the Eucharist. Its inclusion in the Scottish rites of 1637²⁶ and 1764,²⁷ and in the Non-Juror rite of 1718²⁸ does not imply transubstantiation as defined by Patriarch Gennadius and his Eastern

²⁵ Anne McGowan, *Eucharistic Epicleses, Ancient and Modern* (London: SPCK, 2014); J. H. McKenna, *The Eucharistic Epiclesis* (Mundelein IN: Hillenbrand, 2009).

²⁶ Heare us, O mercifull Father, we most humbly beseech thee, and of thy almighty goodnesse vouchsafe so to blesse and sanctifie with thy word and holy Spirit these thy gifts and creatures of bread and wine, that they may bee unto us the body and bloud of thy most dearly beloved Son; so that wee receiving them according to thy Sonne our Saviour Jesus Christs holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of the same his most precious body and bloud: (immediately before the Institution Narrative).

²⁷ And we most humbly beseech thee, O merciful Father, to hear us, and of thy almighty goodness vouchsafe to bless and sanctify, with thy word and holy Spirit, these thy gifts and creatures of bread and wine, that they may become the body and blood of thy most dearly beloved Son (after the Institution Narrative).

²⁸ And do thou Accept them to the honour of thy Christ; and send down thine Holy Spirit, the witness of the passion of our Lord Jesus, upon this Sacrifice, that he may make this Bread the Body of thy Christ, and this Cup the Blood of thy Christ; that they who are partakers thereof, may be confirmed in godliness, may obtain remission of their sins, may be delivered from the Devil and his snares, may be replenished with the Holy Ghost, may be made worthy of thy Christ, and may obtain everlasting life, Thou, O Lord Almighty, being reconciled unto them through the merits and mediation of thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ (after the Institution Narrative).

Orthodox successors, still less as defined by the Council of Trent, but rather an acknowledgement of a spiritual significance in the Eucharistic act, whereby the elements may no longer be considered profane: however the sacrament may be understood, the elements become holy through being set apart and used for a sacred purpose. English Non-Jurors and the emergent SEC were movements of the Western European Reformation, and Eastern Orthodox influences on their theological and liturgical traditions were Patristic rather than more recent, reflecting an idealized view of an ancient Church, pure and united in its doctrine.

The principle of consecrating the elements while repudiating transubstantiation is reflected also in the rite drafted by Richard Baxter in 1661, for consideration at the Savoy Conference, the gathering which conferred on the ordering of the liturgies of the restored (episcopal) Church of England under the restored monarchy, which preceded publication of the BCP of 1662:

Sanctify these thy creatures of bread and wine, which, according to thy institution and command, we set apart to this holy use, that they may be sacramentally the body and blood of thy Son Jesus Christ.²⁹

While Baxter is nowhere listed as a participant in the Westminster Assembly, it would nonetheless be instructive to note that the Westminster Confession (1646) expresses similar principles from an avowedly Reformed theological perspective:

The Lord Jesus hath, in this ordinance, appointed His ministers to declare His word of institution to the people; to pray, and bless the elements of bread and wine, and thereby to set them apart from a common to an holy use (29. 3).

That doctrine which maintains a change of the substance of bread and wine, into the substance of Christ's body and blood (commonly called transubstantiation) by consecration of a priest, or by any other way, is repugnant, not to Scripture alone, but even to common sense, and reason; overthroweth the nature of the sacrament, and hath been, and is, the cause of manifold superstitions; yea, of gross idolatries (29. 6).

²⁹ Jasper & Cuming, *op. cit.*, pp. 338.

The Church of Scotland was represented at the Westminster Assembly, and adopted the Confession in 1647. It was adopted by the Scottish Parliament in 1690 and can therefore be seen to have been of continuing importance to the national church. So far as the Eucharist is concerned, it is clear that the elements are to be blessed and set apart (consecrated) by a duly authorized minister, but not only does this not imply a doctrine of transubstantiation, it expressly excludes it.

While Baxter's text and the Westminster Confession make no reference to invocation of the Holy Spirit, a Trinitarian theology would imply that any prayer seeking God's action to sanctify the elements does involve the activity of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is therefore, by implication, invoked over the elements. The consecration or sanctification of the bread and the wine does not imply any change in their chemical composition, physical texture, or nutritional qualities, but rather that their ritual use in obedience to the dominical injunction to celebrate the Eucharist brings those who receive them the promised benefits of the spiritual food and drink.

In invoking the Holy Spirit, the successive rites of the SEC have given emphasis both to the gathered congregation who are to consume the gifts to their benefit, in continuity with the Reformed heritage of the English and Scottish Reformations, and to the bread and wine whose spiritual transformation is to make those benefits possible, in continuity with the heritage of Catholic Christianity. The 1929 SBCP:

And we thine unworthy servants beseech thee, Most merciful Father, to hear us, and to send thy Holy Spirit upon us and upon these thy gifts and creatures of bread and wine, that, being blessed and hallowed by his life-giving power, they may become the Body and Blood of thy most dearly beloved Son, to the end that all who shall receive the same may be sanctified both in body and soul, and preserved unto everlasting life.

The 1970 Scottish Liturgy:

And we thine unworthy servants beseech thee, most merciful Father, to hear us, and to send thy Holy Spirit upon us and upon these thy gifts and creatures of bread and wine, that, being blessed and hallowed by his life-giving power, they may become the Body and Blood of thy most dearly beloved Son, to the end that all who shall receive the same may be sanctified both in body and soul, and preserved unto everlasting life.

The 1982 Scottish Liturgy:

Hear us, most merciful Father, and send your Holy Spirit upon us and upon this bread and this wine, that, overshadowed by his life-giving power, they may be the Body and Blood of your Son, and we may be kindled with the fire of your love and renewed for the service of your Kingdom.

In retaining the Epiclesis, and invoking the Holy Spirit on the elements of bread and wine, and on the people who are to consume them, successive liturgies of the SEC have been faithful both to the Reformation heritage and to the heritage of the, undoubtedly mythical but nonetheless significant, Catholic and united Church of Christian antiquity.

Conclusions

The liturgical tradition of the SEC, since the Reformation, has been not to accept the doctrine of transubstantiation, at least as defined by the Council of Trent, but nonetheless to emphasize unequivocally that the elements are set apart, and consecrated to their sacramental use, through invocation of the Holy Spirit upon the bread and the wine, and upon the congregation gathered to celebrate the Eucharist. The elements are holy, and to be received reverently. Their consecration in the Eucharistic prayer does not define the nature of the transformation effected through recitation of the Institution Narrative and invocation of the Holy Spirit. Here the faithful enjoy liberty of conscience, with the obligation to receive Scripture as bearing testimony to Christ, to be interpreted and applied in the context in which the Christian is called to live, worship, and bear witness to the Gospel.

That the nature of the Eucharist has been controversial from an early date, is evident from the Gospel of John, a tradition distinct from the synoptic gospels but nonetheless related to the traditions there preserved, and which can be dated no later than the end of the first Christian century.³⁰

Εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς · Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς · ὁ ἐρχόμενος πρὸς ἐμὲ οὐ μὴ πεινάσῃ, καὶ ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμὲ οὐ μὴ διψήσῃ πώποτε. ἀλλ' εἶπον ὑμῖν ὅτι καὶ ἐωράκατέ με καὶ οὐ πιστεύετε. πᾶν ὃ δίδωσίν μοι ὁ πατήρ πρὸς ἐμὲ ἥξει, καὶ τὸν ἐρχόμενον πρὸς με οὐ μὴ ἐκβάλω ἔξω, ὅτι καταβέβηκα ἀπὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ οὐχ ἵνα ποιῶ τὸ θέλημα τὸ ἐμὸν ἀλλὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός

³⁰ R. E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John* (New York: Doubleday, 1966); J. R. Michaels, *John* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1989); F. B. Moloney, *The Gospel of John* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1998).

με · τοῦτο δέ ἐστιν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός με ἵνα πᾶν ὃ δέδωκέν μοι μὴ ἀπολέσω ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἀλλὰ ἀναστήσω αὐτὸ τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ. τοῦτο γάρ ἐστιν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρὸς μου ἵνα πᾶς ὁ θεωρῶν τὸν υἱὸν καὶ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν ἔχῃ ζωὴν αἰώνιον, καὶ ἀναστήσω αὐτὸν ἐγὼ τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ. Ἐγόγγυζον οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι περὶ αὐτοῦ ὅτι εἶπεν · Ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ἄρτος ὁ καταβάς ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, καὶ ἔλεγον · Οὐχ οὗτός ἐστιν Ἰησοῦς ὁ υἱὸς Ἰωσήφ, οὗ ἡμεῖς οἶδαμεν τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὴν μητέρα; πῶς νῦν λέγει ὅτι Ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβέβηκα; ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς · Μὴ γογγύζετε μετ' ἀλλήλων. οὐδεὶς δύναται ἐλθεῖν πρὸς με ἐὰν μὴ ὁ πατὴρ ὁ πέμψας με ἐλκύσῃ αὐτόν, κἀγὼ ἀναστήσω αὐτόν ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ. ἔστιν γεγραμμένον ἐν τοῖς προφήταις · Καὶ ἔσονται πάντες διδασκοὶ θεοῦ · πᾶς ὁ ἀκούσας παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ μαθὼν ἔρχεται πρὸς ἐμέ. οὐχ ὅτι τὸν πατέρα ἐώρακέν τις ἢ εἰ μὴ ὁ ὢν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ, οὗτος ἐώρακεν τὸν πατέρα. ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ὁ πιστεύων ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον. ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς · οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν ἔφαγον ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ τὸ μάννα ἢ καὶ ἀπέθανον · οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἄρτος ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβαίνων ἵνα τις ἐξ αὐτοῦ φάγῃ καὶ μὴ ἀποθάνῃ · ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ἄρτος ὁ ζῶν ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβάς · ἐὰν τις φάγῃ ἐκ τούτου τοῦ ἄρτου ζήσῃ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, καὶ ὁ ἄρτος δὲ ὃν ἐγὼ δώσω ἡ σὰρξ μου ἐστὶν ὑπὲρ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου ζωῆς. Ἐμάχοντο οὖν πρὸς ἀλλήλους οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι λέγοντες · Πῶς δύναται οὗτος ἡμῖν δοῦναι τὴν σάρκα αὐτοῦ φαγεῖν; εἶπεν οὖν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς · Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐὰν μὴ φάγητε τὴν σάρκα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ πίνητε αὐτοῦ τὸ αἶμα, οὐκ ἔχετε ζωὴν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς. ὁ τρώγων μου τὴν σάρκα καὶ πίνων μου τὸ αἶμα ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον, κἀγὼ ἀναστήσω αὐτόν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ. ἡ γὰρ σὰρξ μου ἀληθὴς ἐστὶ βρῶσις, καὶ τὸ αἶμά μου ἀληθὴς ἐστὶ πόσις. ὁ τρώγων μου τὴν σάρκα καὶ πίνων μου τὸ αἶμα ἐν ἐμοὶ μένει κἀγὼ ἐν αὐτῷ. καθὼς ἀπέστειλén με ὁ ζῶν πατὴρ κἀγὼ ζῶ διὰ τὸν πατέρα, καὶ ὁ τρώγων με κάκεῖνος ζήσῃ δι' ἐμέ. οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἄρτος ὁ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καταβάς, οὐ καθὼς ἔφαγον οἱ πατέρες καὶ ἀπέθανον · ὁ τρώγων τοῦτον τὸν ἄρτον ζήσῃ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away; for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I

should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day.' Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, 'I am the bread that came down from heaven.' They were saying, 'Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, "I have come down from heaven"?' Jesus answered them, 'Do not complain among yourselves. No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. It is written in the prophets, "And they shall all be taught by God." Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.' The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' So Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live for ever' (John 6. 35–58).

We do not need to resolve all outstanding issues regarding exegesis of this passage to recognize that Jesus's teaching on the Eucharist, as received by the community in which John was written, gave offence — possibly not only to 'the Jews', but also to other Christians; it does not require the blood taboos of the Pentateuch³¹ to account for the repugnance with which such words might have been received. Nevertheless, in a passage which evokes the Last

³¹ Genesis 9. 4; Leviticus 3. 17; 7. 23; 17. 10–11; 19. 26; Deuteronomy 12. 16, 23; 15. 23.

Supper tradition known from the synoptic gospels, the identification of the food given by Jesus with his body is clear and is in no way mitigated by the celestial origins Jesus claims, or by his status in John as God's incarnate Word (1.1–14).

We may fruitfully conclude by citing the second century martyr, Justin, a Palestinian Greek who taught the Christian faith in Rome. His testimony, to his intended pagan readership as well as his more likely Christian readership, is unequivocal:

Καὶ ἡ τροφή αὕτη καλεῖται παρ' ἡμῖν εὐχαριστία, ἥς οὐδενὶ ἄλλῳ μετασχεῖν ἐξόν ἐστίν ἢ τῷ πιστεύοντι ἀληθῆ εἶναι τὰ δεδιδαγμένα ὑφ' ἡμῶν, καὶ λουσαμένῳ τὸ ὑπὲρ ἀφέσεως ἁμαρτιῶν καὶ εἰς ἀναγέννησιν λουτρόν, καὶ οὕτως βιοῦντι ὡς ὁ Χριστὸς παρέδωκεν. οὐ γὰρ ὡς κοινὸν ἄρτον οὐδὲ κοινὸν πόμα ταῦτα λαμβάνομεν· ἀλλ' ὃν τρόπον διὰ λόγου θεοῦ σαρκοποιηθεὶς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ὁ σωτὴρ ἡμῶν καὶ σάρκα καὶ αἷμα ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας ἡμῶν ἔσχεν, οὕτως καὶ τὴν δι' εὐχῆς λόγου τοῦ παρ' αὐτοῦ εὐχαριστηθεῖσαν τροφήν, ἐξ ἧς αἷμα καὶ σάρκες κατὰ μεταβολὴν τρέφονται ἡμῶν, ἐκείνου τοῦ σαρκοποιηθέντος Ἰησοῦ καὶ σάρκα καὶ αἷμα ἐδιδάχθημεν εἶναι. οἱ γὰρ ἀπόστολοι ἐν τοῖς γενομένοις ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἀπομνημονεύμασιν, ἃ καλεῖται εὐαγγέλια, οὕτως παρέδωκαν ἐντετάλθαι αὐτοῖς· τὸν Ἰησοῦν λαβόντα ἄρτον εὐχαριστήσαντα εἰπεῖν· Τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἀνάμνησίν μου, τοῦτ' ἐστὶ τὸ σῶμά μου· καὶ τὸ ποτήριον ὁμοίως λαβόντα καὶ εὐχαριστήσαντα εἰπεῖν· Τοῦτό ἐστὶ τὸ αἷμά μου· καὶ μόνοις αὐτοῖς μεταδοῦναι. ὅπερ καὶ ἐν τοῖς τοῦ Μίθρα μυστηρίοις παρέδωκαν γίνεσθαι μιμησάμενοι οἱ πονηροὶ δαίμονες· ὅτι γὰρ ἄρτος καὶ ποτήριον ὕδατος τίθεται ἐν ταῖς τοῦ μυσουμένου τελεταῖς μετ' ἐπιλόγων τινῶν, ἢ ἐπίστασθε ἢ μαθεῖν δύνασθε.

And this food is called among us Eucharist, of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined. For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus

who was made flesh. For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them; that Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, said, This do in remembrance of Me, this is My body; and that, after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, This is My blood; and gave it to them alone. Which the wicked devils have imitated in the mysteries of Mithras, commanding the same thing to be done. For, that bread and a cup of water are placed with certain incantations in the mystic rites of one who is being initiated, you either know or can learn.³²

It is not necessary to define the mystery of the Eucharist, but to celebrate it, and to receive the elements consecrated as Christ's body and blood, faithfully and reverently. In drafting Eucharistic prayers for use in the SEC, the Liturgy Committee will need to be faithful to a complex and contested theological heritage, acknowledging that the consecration of the bread and wine through invocation of the Holy Spirit has not been unanimously understood. But, more importantly, the rites written for our use must enable the faithful to receive Christ in the sacrament, and to go out into the world to serve God and to proclaim the Gospel in their lives.

³² Justin, *1 Apologia* 66.

The Fraction and the Distribution

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It has long been recognized that the Anaphora includes four distinct acts, or seven if the bread and wine are counted separately.¹ These acts are derived from the Gospel accounts of the Last Supper, understood by Christian tradition to be the institution of the Eucharist: Jesus took, blessed, broke, and gave the bread; as wine is a liquid, and therefore cannot be broken, Jesus took, blessed, and gave the wine to his disciples.²

Reformation-era rites tended to collapse the fourfold action, so that the Offertory is reduced to practical preparations, including the gathering of alms as well as setting bread and wine on the Altar, accompanied by readings of seasonal or other Scripture verses rather than prayers reflecting the liturgical action. The Fraction accompanies the Institution Narrative, rather than forming a separate action after the Prayer of Consecration. Modern eucharistic liturgies have sought to restore the fourfold/sevenfold shape so that each act is clearly distinguished. The Prayer of Offering, in some churches preceded by an Offertory procession, gives emphasis to the act of taking. The Fraction follows the Prayer of Consecration, and may be accompanied by words which give expression to some aspect of its significance. In some Anglican Provinces, though as yet not in Scotland, words of Invitation precede the Distribution, and express something of the significance of the act of receiving and consuming the bread and wine. It is the contention of this article that further work is needed to ensure that the distinct acts which give the Anaphora its shape are given due emphasis, and that the essential unity and continuity between them is not disrupted.

Like most Anglican rites from the Reformation to the latter part of the twentieth century, the Scottish Communion Offices of 1764 and 1929 disrupt the unity and continuity of the Anaphora. Whereas the Cranmerian family of liturgies interpolate the Intercessions and the Confession and Absolution between the Offertory and the Prayer of Consecration, the

¹ The fourfold 'shape' of the eucharistic liturgy is classically expounded by G. Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London: Dacre, 1945).

² Matthew 26.26–29; Mark 14. 22–25; Luke 22. 19–20. I Corinthians 11.23–27 reflect the same tradition.

Scottish rites interpolate these between the Prayer of Consecration and the Distribution.³ The Scottish rite of 1929 restores the Fraction as a distinct action after the Prayer of Consecration, rather than during the Institution Narrative. The rites of 1970 and 1982 go some way towards restoring the integrity of the fourfold/sevenfold action, including Offertory Prayers and a distinct Fraction as well as placing the Intercessions before the Offertory. Nevertheless, there remain issues to be addressed if the Fraction is to be given due emphasis, and the unity and continuity of the eucharistic action restored, in a new liturgy for the Scottish Episcopal Church.

The collapsing at the Reformation of the fourfold/sevenfold eucharistic action into the Prayer of Consecration and the Distribution, and the disruption of the unity and continuity of the rite, have been addressed in liturgical revisions of the latter part of the twentieth century. The outstanding issues arise in more ancient developments in the customary of different churches of both East and West: the accumulation over the centuries of some diversity of material between the Prayer of Consecration and the Distribution.⁴ These have tended to be very much more elaborate in Eastern and Oriental liturgies than in Western. Nevertheless, even the relatively sparse Roman rite included, by the eighth century, the Lord's Prayer, the Peace, the Fraction, the *Agnus Dei* and the Commixture between the conclusion of the Prayer of Consecration and the Distribution of the Elements. It is from the Roman rite that the succession of Scottish Liturgies ultimately derives, and from which these accretions entered the tradition. While suppressing many of these additions, the Reformation saw the interpolation of the Prayer of Humble Access, the Comfortable Words, and in the English rite of 1549 and the Scottish rites of 1764 and 1929, the Confession and Absolution between the Prayer of Consecration and the Distribution.

If the fourfold/sevenfold action of the Eucharist is to be restored, then the section of the liturgy between the Prayer of Consecration and the Distribution must be governed by the Fraction. Other observances and devotions, however worthy or even necessary in themselves, must be located at more appropriate points in the liturgy.

³ Some reasons for this are discussed elsewhere in this volume, in David Jasper's article on 'The Intercessions in the Eucharist', 49–56, and in mine on 'The Lord's Prayer in the Eucharist', 57–64.

⁴ The diversity of customs in Western, Eastern, and Oriental rites is described in P. F. Bradshaw and M. E. Johnson, *The Eucharistic Liturgies* (London: SPCK, 2012).

As to the Confession and Absolution,⁵ it is unlikely that any argument would be offered for locating this rite after the Prayer of Consecration, notwithstanding the precedents in the Armenian and Coptic liturgies, and in the English Book of Common Prayer of 1549, the Non-Juror rites of 1718 and 1768, and the Scottish Communion Offices of 1764 and 1929. There seems therefore no purpose in discussing these further here.

The Prayer of Humble Access, first so named in the Scottish Prayer Book of 1637, precedes the Distribution in the Scottish eucharistic liturgies of 1764, 1929, and 1970, and is omitted from Scottish Liturgy 1982. It derives from the Gospel account of the healing of the centurion's servant,⁶ with echoes also of the account of the healing of the daughter of the Syro-Phoenician woman.⁷ However intriguing that the two healing miracles sought for a third party by gentiles should have inspired a prayer which first entered the English liturgy in the vernacular devotions to accompany the Latin rite of 1548, neither Gospel story alludes in any way to the Eucharist. The account of the centurion's servant has inspired also the *Non sum dignus* response to the presentation of the consecrated Elements, accompanied by a citation of Revelation 19. 9, in the Roman rite, adopted and amended as an alternative provision in the Alternative Service Book of the Church of England (1980) and unofficially interpolated into the Scottish Liturgy 1982 by some clergy. It is somewhat ironic that the request of a pagan official to Jesus, to provide the desired benefit while staying away from him, should inform Christian devotion at the point of receiving and ingesting the elements of Christ's Body and Blood. This applies equally to the Prayer of Humble Access as to the *Non sum dignus*, if not more especially to the latter. The Prayer of Humble Access has been omitted from the Scottish Liturgy 1982, but remains in the 1970 rite, and is at least optional in those of some Anglican Provinces. However worthy the sentiments expressed, the prayer is an act of personal piety; while the truths expressed have not ceased to be true of the gathered congregation once sins have been confessed and Absolution pronounced, nevertheless they are not appropriate at a point in the Eucharist where the whole Church, on earth and in eternity, has been invoked to share in the celebration. However, fitting a private devotion before the beginning of the Liturgy, the Prayer of Humble Access has for sound reasons not been included in the more recent eucharistic rites of the Scottish Episcopal Church, and should not be reintroduced. Nor should the *Non sum dignus* be introduced; it does violence to the Gospel passages to

⁵ For their position relative to the Intercessions, David Jasper, 'The Intercessions in the Eucharist', 49–56, in this edition.

⁶ Matthew 8. 8; Luke 7. 7.

⁷ Matthew 15. 27; Mark 7. 28.

which it alludes, and the citation of Revelation 19. 9 which precedes it at the very least suggests a doctrine of the Eucharist with which many in our Church would not identify.

The Comfortable Words, like the Prayer of Humble Access introduced in the rite prepared by Cranmer during the final year of Henry VIII of England, follow the Confession and Absolution in many subsequent Anglican and Episcopal orders of the Eucharist. In those English, Non-Juror, and Scottish rites in which the Confession and Absolution are located between the Prayer of Consecration and the Distribution, the Comfortable Words follow in this part of the liturgy. In those orders in which the Confession and Absolution precede the Prayer of Consecration, and the Comfortable Words are retained, as in the English Books of Common Prayer of 1552, 1559, and 1662, the Deposited Book of 1928, and the Scottish rite of 1637, the Comfortable Words follow the Absolution. The words of comfort, derived from Scripture for those who have confessed their sins and received absolution, are not a prelude to receiving the Elements, and were inappropriately interpolated by some clergy at this point in the 1970 Scottish rite. However suitable the four particular texts from the Gospels and Epistles may be for private devotion and contemplation, if they are recited at the Eucharist the appropriate point would be at the Confession and Absolution – whether as invitation to confession or as assurance after absolution.

In another contribution to this issue, it was argued that the Lord's Prayer would serve more closely the dominical intention if associated with the Intercessions.⁸ It is not necessary to rehearse here the discussion in any detail, but it was noted that, in the Scottish Communion Offices of 1764 and 1929, the Lord's Prayer follows immediately upon the Intercessions. It was proposed that this juxtaposition be reinstated, so that the Lord's Prayer brings to a conclusion not only the Intercessions but the entire Synaxis, and so prepares for the Peace and Anaphora which follow.

The Peace is the subject of another contribution to this issue.⁹ This is therefore not the place for any detailed discussion of the merits of the various positions in the liturgy at which the Peace has been exchanged, or the diversity of customs which have evolved, for nearly all of which ancient Christian precedents can be cited. It is worth noting, however, that the different locations invest the Peace with different emphases and significance, and that this discussion therefore requires careful consideration. For the present, some observations will be made on the custom of locating the Peace

⁸ Nicholas Taylor, 'The Lord's Prayer in the Eucharist', 57–64, in this edition.

⁹ John Reuben Davies, 'The "Peace" in the Liturgies of the Scottish Episcopal Church', 68–78, in this edition.

after the Prayer of Consecration, attested in the Roman rite by the eighth century, whence it entered the British tradition, most notably in the Sarum use. The 1549 Book of Common Prayer retained the Peace in this position, whereafter it lapsed from English usage, other than the Non-Juror rites of 1718 and 1768, until the Deposited Prayer Book of 1928. The Peace was reinstated at this point in the Scottish rites of 1929 and 1970, and moved to alternative positions in the 1982 liturgy. The Anglican and Episcopal rites in which the Peace is located after the Eucharistic Prayer do not envisage that the verbal exchange be accompanied by more than a non-tactile manual gesture by the President, or, at most, a ritualized embrace between the President and the Deacon and Subdeacon. More recent developments in western Christianity, both Catholic and Protestant, including most of the Anglican spectrum, and well established by the time of Scottish Liturgy 1982, have seen on at least some occasions the custom of the entire congregation engaging in manual and verbal exchanges, if not the labial acts envisaged in the biblical antecedents.¹⁰ This may involve clergy and laity alike leaving their positions and moving about the church to greet other worshippers. If the President and ordained and lay assistants were to leave the Sanctuary after the Prayer of Consecration, and the consecrated Elements be left unattended on the Altar, this would be unseemly. At the same time, the proclamation of Christ's peace in the presence of the consecrated bread and wine would emphasize the peace between God and humanity restored through the Passion, and provide some corrective to the modern trend of undue emphasis of peace within the community, neglecting the relationship of the community with God which makes possible that peace. Nevertheless, the Peace at this point in the liturgy would disrupt the unity and continuity of the fourfold/sevenfold action, and detract from due attention to the Fraction.

The *Agnus Dei* originated as a musical accompaniment to the Fraction, first attested in Rome during the seventh century. In the Sarum rite the Peace intervenes between Fraction and *Agnus Dei*, and in the Scottish rite of 1929 the Confession and Absolution, Comfortable Words, and Prayer of Humble Access are also inserted at that point. Scottish Liturgy 1970 retains the Peace and the Prayer of Humble Access between the Fraction and the *Agnus Dei*. In Scottish Liturgy 1982, the *Agnus Dei* is an optional devotion during or after the Distribution, which gives it a rather different purpose. The introduction of individual wafers may have limited the need for further breaking of bread after the ritual Fraction, but the separation of ritual and practical actions is nonetheless inappropriate. That the immediate juxtaposition of Fraction and

¹⁰ Romans 16. 16; I Corinthians 16. 20; II Corinthians 13. 12; I Thessalonians 5. 26; I Peter 5. 14.

Agnus Dei should be reinstated, therefore, would seem clear. However, the question remains whether the *Agnus Dei* is the only possible accompaniment, musical or otherwise, to the Fraction. The emphasis on sin, while not overtly penitential, may nonetheless make it more appropriate at some times during the liturgical year than others. It is at the very least arguable that alternative motets, emphasizing the Incarnation during Christmas and Epiphany, and the Resurrection during Easter, might be appropriate. Words used in the liturgies of the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches, which in at least some of those rites are accompanied by further censing of the Elements, might be a resource to consider, e.g. lines used at the Fraction in the Byzantine rite:

The Lamb of God is dismembered and distributed,
he that is dismembered yet not divided,
who is always eaten yet never consumed,
but sanctifies those who partake.

Seasonal versicles and responses to accompany the Fraction, and if appropriate the Commixture, might also help give this part of the rite due emphasis. These need not necessarily be as brief as the two-line provision in Scottish Liturgy 1982, and a longer prayer recited by the Priest or Deacon might also be introduced at this point. Greater use of the neglected discipline of silence might also enhance this part of the Liturgy.

The Commixture is an ancient observance, attested in both East and West, but has not been ordered in Anglican or Episcopal liturgies since the Reformation. It is nonetheless the custom of many priests to drop into the chalice or to intinct a portion of the bread, using in silence or mumbling words from Roman Catholic liturgies or Anglican imitations of Tridentine missals. Priests of that inclination are likely to persist in their acquired habits, whatever the authorized liturgy of the Scottish Episcopal Church might provide. It may nonetheless be worth considering how best the Commixture might complement the Fraction, and to provide appropriate words which those who so wish may use.

Many priests observe the customs of consignation and elevation to accompany the closing sentence of the Prayer of Consecration, after which the fourfold/sevenfold action of the Eucharist proceeds to the third part, viz. the Fraction. Silence or music might be used to indicate this transition on occasion, but all words and observances which detract from the centrality of the Fraction to this part of the rite should be moved to more appropriate sections of the liturgy, or abolished altogether if no longer considered helpful or consistent with the theology of our Church. The use of words, whether responsorial or reserved to the Priest or Deacon, and music to

accompany the Fraction, and if appropriate the Commixture, need to give due emphasis to the Fraction within the rite. There may be more varied and more extensive seasonal provision than has been customary, but the theological significance of the Fraction needs to be expressed, rather than the practical actions accompanied with verbiage.

Words of invitation to the congregation to approach the Altar to receive the elements have hitherto not been provided in the liturgies of the Scottish Episcopal Church. The English Deposited Prayer Book of 1928 transfers words from the invitation to confession in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, and adapts these to provide an invitation to communicants to 'Draw near in faith' Some clergy have interpolated these words, or renderings thereof in contemporary English and other rites, or words derived from Roman Catholic or other eucharistic liturgies. This indicates not only that ringing bells and banging gongs no longer suffice, and that words are needed not merely as a cue that the time has come for the congregation to start moving forward and approaching the Altar, but, more importantly, to signify that the final part of the fourfold/sevenfold eucharistic action has been reached. Whatever the modalities of distribution, the giving and receiving of the eucharistic Elements has its own theological significance, and appropriate words are needed to express this. These words may be complemented by those of the Communion hymns and anthems, but, however profound some of the hymns may be, words integral to the liturgy, whether pronounced by the Priest or by the Deacon, are needed.

In conclusion, a quite radical reconfiguration of that part of the Eucharistic liturgy between the Prayer of Consecration and the Distribution is proposed. To give due emphasis to the Fraction, words, actions, and prayers not directly relevant should be moved to other parts of the rite, or omitted altogether if no longer deemed appropriate. Without neglect of silence, words should be provided to give theological expression to the Fraction, and then to the giving and receiving of the consecrated Elements. Seasonal variations may appropriately be provided, so that at all times of the year and on all occasions the essential truths of the Gospel expressed in the liturgy are related to the occasion of the celebration.

Worship with Care: The Pastoral Dimension of Liturgy¹

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The relationship between God and people is central to both pastoral care and worship. Stories of joy and sorrow are connected to and find their place within the narrative of God. Worship, therefore, has a significant pastoral dimension. Nevertheless, worship is often seen as boring and unrelated to our concerns, and in academic and seminary curricula pastoral care has become a discipline apart from worship and liturgy. The aim of this article is to point out the deep relationship between the liturgy and the pastoral concerns of its participants by demonstrating the integral pastoral dimension of liturgy and worship. By demonstrating this, the article contributes to the field of pastoral studies and pastoral theology by opening out the dimension of communal worship as an important, and indeed integral, facet of pastoral caregiving. The article contributes to the field of liturgical studies by drawing out the pastoral implications of worship. The pastoral dimension of liturgy is crucial to the meeting of God and people, and therefore should be considered in any liturgical revision. By liturgical revision, in this context, I refer both to the (re)writing of official liturgies by liturgical committees and to the daily or weekly work of liturgical leaders, when they decide on the details of the liturgical celebration.

The focus of this article is on the pastoral dimension of regular, weekly worship, for which most churches gather on Sundays. The pastoral dimension of the so-called rites of passage, e.g. baptism, wedding, and funeral, is not difficult to see. Academic research has paid less attention to the pastoral significance of regular worship. Elsewhere, I have reviewed the most significant academic literature that deals with worship and pastoral care, and it is not necessary to repeat that here.² On the basis of authors like Robin Green, Elaine Ramshaw, William Willimon, Herbert Anderson and Edward Foley, Neil Pembroke, and Mark Earey, I suggest six ways in which

¹ I am grateful to my colleague Ken Jeffrey for his invaluable comments on earlier drafts of this article.

² Léon van Ommen, 'Liturgy and Pastoral Care: Pastoral Worship and Priestly Counseling', *Studia Liturgica* 46 (2016), 208–21.

liturgy and pastoral care intersect.³ These are: subject matter, narrative, relationships, community, the priestly office, and liberation. The latter point of intersection refers to certain outcomes (for lack of a better word) worship and pastoral care have in common. Liberation is one such outcome, but one can think of healing, sustaining, guiding, or reconciling as well, especially as these are common ways to think of pastoral care.⁴ The present article does not deal so much with the intersection of liturgy and pastoral care as two different disciplines or modes of ministry; this article demonstrates the pastoral significance of regular worship from a liturgical-theological point of view.

In this article the word ‘pastoral’ denotes the concerns people have in their lives, both negative and positive. In the words of Anderson and Foley:

[The] primary aim of pastoral care is to assist people in weaving the stories of their lives and God’s stories as mediated through the community into a transformative narrative that will confirm their sense of belonging, strengthen them to live responsibly as disciples in the world, and liberate them from confinement.⁵

³ Robin Green, *Only Connect: Worship and Liturgy from the Perspective of Pastoral Care* (London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1987); Elaine Ramshaw, *Ritual and Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia PA: Fortress, 1987); William H. Willimon, *Worship as Pastoral Care* (Nashville TN: Abingdon Press, 1979); William H. Willimon, *Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry* (Nashville TN: Abingdon Press, 2002); Herbert Anderson and Edward Foley, *Mighty Stories, Dan Armand Léon van Ommengerous Rituals: Weaving Together th Armand Léon van Ommene Human and Divine* (San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass, 1998); Neil Pembroke, *Pastoral Care in Worship: Liturgy and Psychology in Dialogue* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2010); Mark Earey, *Worship That Cares: An Introduction to Pastoral Liturgy* (London: SCM, 2012).

⁴ The work of William Clebsch and Charles Jaekle is illuminating in this respect. They argue that liturgy was the primary mode of pastoral care from the beginnings of the Christian tradition, a point also made by the renowned liturgical scholar Joseph Jungmann. They identify four particular emphases in the tradition: healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling. William A. Clebsch and Charles R. Jaekle, *Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective*, 1st edn (Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1964), pp. 8–66; J. A. Jungmann, *Pastoral Liturgy* (New York NY: Herder & Herder, 1962), pp. 368–87.

⁵ Anderson and Foley, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

A secondary aim of pastoral care is, according to Anderson and Foley, ‘to help people expand their own narrative in ways that recognize and accept God as an active agent in our personal narrative’.⁶ Anderson and Foley’s definition of pastoral care fits well with the narrative approach that underlies both their work and this article, as well as with their and our aim to ‘weave’ together worship and pastoral care.

‘Liturgy’ denotes the formal structure which facilitates ‘worship’.⁷ This structure relates to the weekly gathering of the faith community, but also the structuring of other prayer times, e.g. the Daily Office, and the liturgical year. I will refer mostly to the *Scottish Liturgy 1982* (hereafter SL), the liturgy of the Scottish Episcopal Church, and *Common Worship, Order One* (hereafter CW; the most commonly used liturgy in the Church of England).⁸ These are the liturgies I am most familiar with, and I have analysed *Common Worship, Order One* in detail elsewhere.⁹ However, the points I will make pertain to most traditional Western liturgies, and to a greater or lesser extent to churches with ‘free’ worship.

The first two sections of the article propose two ways of looking at liturgy, each with specific pastoral implications. In particular, the first section takes into account for any liturgical revision. The first is to see liturgy as prayer. Prayer is interpreted as a vulnerable act, which therefore requires a safe space. The second is to see liturgy as narrative, with the implication that the human stories find their place within the overarching narrative of God. This might provide a helpful way of thinking about the liturgy when revising it. The third and fourth sections look at the content of the liturgy. The third section draws out the pastoral dimension of the start of the liturgy. The fourth and final section discusses the pastoral significance of ‘wholeness’ as a main liturgical theme.

A Safe Space for Liturgical Prayer

The overall genre of liturgy is prayer, and, as we shall see, prayer requires a safe space. Bridget Nichols gives a helpful definition of prayer in the context of liturgy: “Prayer” is the name of the configurations of speech, song, silence

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ See ‘Transforming Worship: Living the New Creation’. A Report by the Liturgical Commission of the Church of England (2007), p. 1.

⁸ The Scottish Episcopal Church, *Scottish Liturgy 1982* (Edinburgh: General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church, 1982); *Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England* (Church House Publishing, 2000).

⁹ A. L. van Ommen, *Suffering in Worship: Anglican Liturgy in Relation to Stories of Suffering People* (London: Routledge, 2017).

and gesture in which human beings communicate with God'.¹⁰ This definition implies that liturgy contains different genres in terms of its texts, songs, and actions. Even throughout the liturgical year the gatherings differ significantly — a Good Friday service strikes a very different tone from the subsequent Easter celebration.¹¹ Nevertheless, the various genres have in common that they are, at a fundamental level, all prayer.¹² Liturgy is not a random collection of texts, songs, and actions, but has a focus and an addressee: God. This marks the gathering of the community with God in worship: the community prays, and through its various prayers and modes of prayer it tells their stories and hears God's story.¹³

However, for prayer to take place in all its facets from triumphant joy to naked vulnerability, the worship space should be a safe space. A colleague and friend of mine, Willem van der Horst, who is a seasoned pastoral counsellor, describes the act of prayer as follows: 'Praying is throwing yourself, casting yourself completely, boots and all, at God.'¹⁴ Such prayer goes beyond saying grace before the meal out of habit, and in a liturgical context such prayer goes beyond saying the next prayer just because it appears next in the order of service. This is not to say that these and other habitual or prescribed prayers cannot be occasions for such prayerful 'throwing'. On the contrary, these prayers may facilitate and give words for wholehearted prayer. Yet Van der Horst's description of prayer goes beyond habit and prescription insofar as these can become *mere* habit and *mere* ritual prayer. Prayer in Van der Horst's apposite description implies letting go of social security measures that the worshippers might have built around

¹⁰ Bridget Nichols, 'Prayer', in *The Study of Liturgy and Worship*, ed. by Juliette Day and Benjamin Gordon-Taylor (London: SPCK, 2013), p. 43.

¹¹ Juliette J. Day, *Reading the Liturgy: An Exploration of Texts in Christian Worship* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2014).

¹² Cf. Nichols, *op. cit.*, p. 43; Don E. Saliers, *Worship as Theology: Foretaste of Glory Divine* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), p. 85ff.

¹³ For narrative approaches to liturgy, see for example Mark J. Allman, 'Eucharist, Ritual & Narrative: Formation of Individual and Communal Moral Character', *Journal of Ritual Studies* 14:1 (1 January 2000), 60–68; Anderson and Foley, *op. cit.*; John St H. Gibaut, 'The Narrative Nature of Liturgy', *Theoforum* 32:3 (2001), 341–65; van Ommen, *Suffering in Worship*.

¹⁴ Willem van der Horst, *Handboek Voor Pastors*, Werken in de Kerk (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 2015), p. 63, translation mine, with thanks to Harvey Howlett and Elisabeth Smith. (It is hard to translate this sentence into English, because Van der Horst uses quite specific and very strong words: 'Bidden is [...] jezelf helemaal overgeven, met huid en haar, jezelf prijsgeven aan God.')

them. It implies of letting go of their masks. Prayer becomes thus a very vulnerable act and therefore requires a safe space.

My research on the place for suffering in worship showed that safety is key for people to find their suffering addressed.¹⁵ For my research on brokenness in liturgy, I conducted interviews with people who were suffering, and it was striking how this communal dimension influenced their experience of liturgy, and the role feeling safety in the community played. In the context of the present article, the implication is that the pastoral dimension of liturgy is intertwined with the communal dimension of liturgy. In other words, the pastoral dimension of the liturgy has the best chance to come to fruition when the community is a safe environment. This makes sense in relation to what we have just said about prayer as ‘throwing’ oneself. Only when the community is safe will it be possible to let go of the safety measures we have taken. Who wants to show tears if you cannot trust the person sitting next to you? Who wants to express their joy if your neighbour in the pew behind you is jealous? (The fact that some people find it easier to show sorrow and joy among strangers only proves the point — apparently their community is not safe enough.) Of course, there is a personal dimension in prayer; prayer is communication between the individual and God. Nevertheless, public worship has inevitably a communal dimension. The influence of the community on the experience of liturgy makes the worship event vulnerable. However, it also means that the liturgical community is potentially a rich resource for pastoral care. It is a place where friendships can be built and where people can find a listening ear and a helping hand. When the community is safe, it becomes a place where the joys and sorrows of life can be shared — in (liturgical) prayer and in the life of the community.

In sum, the genre of liturgy is prayer. Prayer is a vulnerable act and is a rich pastoral opportunity for the worshippers to share their lives with God in worship. Through prayer, as it takes place in song, reading, listening, and actions, the worshippers tell the story of God and themselves. The story is a specific one: it is the story of God’s salvation and the human response to God in worship. The narrative character of liturgy has several pastoral implications. The next section discusses some of the narrative elements of the liturgy and their pastoral impact.

¹⁵ Van Ommen, *Suffering in Worship*; see also A. L. van Ommen, ‘Anglican Liturgy and Community: The Influence of the Experience of Community on the Experience of Liturgy as a Challenge for Liturgical Renewal and Formation’, *Studia Liturgica* 45:2 (2015), 221–34.

Liturgy as Storytelling

A second way of looking at liturgy, with specific pastoral implications, is to see liturgy as narrative. Several classic elements of storytelling are discernible in liturgy, of which two are particularly relevant for the pastoral dimension of liturgy: the abstract and coda. This section first discusses these two narrative elements. Furthermore, a narrative view of liturgy in relation to pastoral concerns raises the question whether worship facilitates the participants to share their concerns by telling their stories. This question is implied in the discussion of the abstract and coda of the liturgy and will be made explicit in the second half of this section, which comments on authorship and narrative agency in liturgy.

Narrative analysts have suggested that stories start with an opening sentence or paragraph (the abstract) which brings the audience into the world of the story and its characters.¹⁶ The abstract often introduces the protagonist. A classic example is the opening of fairy tales: 'Once upon a time, in a country far away, there was a beautiful princess'. The coda is the ending of the story that transits the listeners back to the here and now: 'And they lived happily ever after'.

Arguably the opening words of the liturgy have the narrative function of the abstract of a story: 'In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit', transports the worshippers into a different world — the world of God the Holy Trinity. Of course, the worshippers live their whole life in God's world, and as we will see below, they do not leave their own stories behind. Yet in the liturgy, starting with this abstract, the worshippers are being transported into the story of God with all their lives, all their stories, all their joys and sorrows. In a real sense, the liturgy is interactive storytelling. The listeners are actively involved, and by telling parts of the story themselves (through responses, songs, actions) they become co-narrators of the story. Through co-narrating the stories of God and themselves, these stories become intertwined. The story of God is and becomes the worshippers' story. The worshippers' story is and becomes God's story. This latter sentence needs a qualifier though: God's story has theological priority. As we shall see, the opening in the name of the Trinity suggests the priority of God. This is pastorally comforting: the stories of the worshippers find their place in the overarching story of God, not the other way around. God remains the author of creation, and therefore the author of the relationship and the covenant with people. At the same time, it is equally comforting that the worshippers are invited to co-author the story of the

¹⁶ Alastair K. Daniel, *Storytelling across the Primary Curriculum* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), pp. 36–37; cf. Catherine Kohler Riessman, *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences* (London: SAGE, 2008), pp. 84ff.

liturgy by telling their stories. These stories find their place in the overarching story and God takes them seriously. In other words, the story of God enfolds the pain and suffering and celebrations of the worshippers. The abstract transports the worshippers into the story of God, and the story of their lives is redefined by the liturgy.

The coda of the story brings the worshippers back into the world of the here and now. The whole of the sending part of the liturgy, including the post-communion prayer, may be thought of as coda. It is not necessary here to discuss which liturgical element exactly constitutes the coda. It suffices to bring out the pastoral significance of the blessing, followed by the very last sending words. The blessings vary but usually end with 'the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always'. The last sending words are 'Go in peace to love and serve the Lord', to which the congregation responds 'In the name of Christ. Amen'.

A couple of things can be noted from this coda. First, the sending is a clear sending out into the here and now: 'Go'. The missionary and ethical edge of worship comes fully into view with the sending. At the beginning of the worship service, the worshippers are invited into the space of God, but they cannot stay in this space in the same, focused, way as the worship service enables. Worshipping God involves going out into the world 'to serve the Lord'. Secondly, the worshippers go out differently from how they came in. Worship is transformative: sins are forgiven; the glory of God is fully in view again; the worshippers may have found new hope or may have heard words of comfort or admonition; they have become one with Christ through the Eucharist. The worshippers are to go out 'in peace'; this word has been developed in rich ways in the liturgy, and the people are now in peace with each other and with God. (Of course, all of this is the liturgical-theological intention of liturgy; it may not always happen.) Thirdly, and this is pastorally significant, the worshippers do not go out alone. The blessing of the Trinity goes with them. The Trinitarian blessing and the sending 'in the name of Christ' take us back to the beginning of the liturgy: 'In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit'. The worshippers are clearly sent out by the coda and brought back into the here and now of their lives and the needs of the world. Nevertheless, the liturgy suggests a strong continuity between the liturgical place of worship and the intertwined narratives of God and people as they work out in the lives of the worshippers. Thus, all that has been pastorally and theologically significant in and through the liturgy remains with the worshippers as they now 'go in peace to love and serve the Lord'.

Before we look at the liturgical content, we need to make some further comments on the issue of narrative agency and authorship. A narrative analysis of liturgy shows that God and the people are the protagonists of the

liturgical story.¹⁷ However, they get the least narrative space to create their own story. (Here the practice of testimonials in Pentecostal churches and some other traditions deserves consideration from a narrative-liturgical point of view.) At all points that are not predetermined by a liturgical order or text, it is usually the liturgical minister who makes the choices of what is said, read, sung, or done. Despite not being the protagonist herself, she has the most power to make the story where choices need to be made or even to change parts of the story. The protagonists cannot do otherwise than just follow and say the words or sing the songs the liturgical minister has decided on. This does not need to be negative of course — hopefully the liturgical minister has been called by the Church to fulfil this function. However, the limited narrative space of the worshippers and the much greater space of the minister points to the pastoral responsibility the liturgical minister has. We saw above that the pastoral dimension of the liturgy has the best chance in a safe community. Now we add that this dimension also seems to depend to a great extent on the minister. The efficacy of God's love does not depend on either the community or the minister. Nevertheless, both clearly have an important part in bringing the pastoral aspect of the liturgy to fruition. The responsibility for the minister can be daunting, but positively it can be the beauty and satisfaction of the liturgical ministry the priest has.

The last point to be made here before we look at the liturgical content is the issue of authorship. The brief discussion about narrative agency implies that usually not all participants will tell their personal stories in the liturgy. Moreover, traditional liturgies hardly provide the space for personal storytelling in the liturgy. Nevertheless, even if the space for personal storytelling is limited, the liturgy provides various opportunities for people to recognize their own stories in the texts, songs, and actions of the worship event. As a matter of fact, my research on suffering in liturgy showed that all elements may provide the occasion for some people to feel acknowledged in their situation.¹⁸ For example, certain songs may resonate with some people, or the readings may be profoundly moving for some others. The sermon may address a special issue which causes someone to feel acknowledged, and through the prayers of intercession many worshippers may be able to cry out their own situation to God. Through co-narrating, or even co-authoring where possible, and through recognizing their stories in the liturgical texts, songs, and actions, liturgy is indeed the place where God's and the people's stories are told.

¹⁷ Van Ommen, *Suffering in Worship*.

¹⁸ Van Ommen, *Suffering in Worship*.

The Start of the Liturgy

Having reviewed two ways of looking at liturgy — liturgy as prayer and liturgy as storytelling — we now move to the content of that prayer and story. The present section shows various pastoral aspects of the start of the liturgy. From a formal perspective, the liturgy starts with the ministers processing into the sanctuary and the opening words ‘In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit’ or ‘Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ’ (CW, SL). These are significant opening words both from a liturgical-theological and a pastoral point of view. Before unpacking these words, however, we need to see that from a ritual perspective the liturgy starts much earlier, which again has theological and pastoral significance.

The worship ritual starts already by getting up earlier instead of sleeping in, by dressing up, perhaps in your Sunday best, and by trying to make it in time to church. In a sense, all of this is part of the ‘gathering’, the first act of the liturgy. The significance of this is that people come to worship carrying the whole of their life experience. The opening words of the liturgy are not a reset-button from which moment onwards the worshippers ‘now focus on the Lord’, leaving all their concerns behind. Instead, worshippers bring to the worship event all their concerns, their joys and sorrows, their grand hopes and dreams, their little frustrations of chasing their children to be in time for church. All of that has its proper place before the throne of God. Nevertheless, even though ritually the liturgical act of gathering starts well before the formal start of the worship service, the procession of ministers (or other (in)formal beginnings) and the opening words do signify a change of perspective and ‘mode’.¹⁹ At a basic, ritual level, the formal beginning perhaps brings solemnity to the gathering if not already there, and it indicates that the focus is now on the worship service, that people are usually required to stop talking if they were, and perhaps they now join in with liturgical responses or songs.

At a theological level, the key point of the two alternative opening formulas quoted above, is that the gathering takes place in the name of the Trinitarian God and that this is a benevolent God. It is important that the meeting of believers is not in their own name, but in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This name acknowledges and reveals the divine aspect to the worship gathering. Indeed, these words reveal that this is not a meeting of just people, but the Divine surrounds the meeting. Pastorally a lot happens with these opening words. By meeting in the name of God, the

¹⁹ See for a more elaborate discussion of the formal beginning and the change of ‘mode’ Michael Perham, *New Handbook of Pastoral Liturgy* (London: SPCK, 2000), pp. 111–14.

joys and sorrows are now placed within a larger context, the context of the Divine. Whatever the worshippers, individually or collectively, are struggling with, God greets with grace, mercy and peace. In some churches this greeting is preceded by a *votum*, 'Our help is in the name of the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth' (Psalm 128. 8), sometimes added by 'And who doesn't forsake the works of his hands' (after Psalm 138. 8). This *votum* further fleshes out what it means to meet in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Pastorally this might be interpreted as even if the worshipper's life falls apart, they are meeting in a space that is held by the God who even holds the heavens and the earth. It is safe here. Furthermore, the opening words suggest that the meeting does not take place at the initiative of the people nor in their authority; God is calling the gathering in God's own benevolent name, he is the host. Here we find a theological dimension of the worship event that places the need for a safe community and the responsibility of the minister in perspective. This need and responsibility are important, but theologically speaking it is God who presides over the worshipping community and therefore the pastoral dimension of the liturgy ultimately depends neither on the community nor on the minister.

At this point one might object that I suggest a very positive pastoral interpretation. Pastorally both the formal entry of the ministers and the opening words are not without possible flip sides. The procession might reinforce an unhealthy power dynamic if one is in some form or another abused or damaged by the priest or other (liturgical) ministers who proceed to the front. The sheer fact of being part of and even having a procession indicates certain authority and power relationships in the congregation. The opening words might help to shift the balance from the priest to God, but again, the sheer fact that these words are spoken by the liturgical minister gives that person some kind of power and (liturgical) authority. With regard to the opening words some may protest the male dominated portrayal of God.²⁰ Finally, the emphasis on God's benevolence might cause inner conflict for those who experience God as absent and powerless. There are no easy solutions to these flip sides of the formal opening of worship; the point here

²⁰ Feminist scholars and liturgists have criticized both the common conceptions of liturgical authority and the male-dominated portrayal of God. See, for example, Marjorie Procter-Smith, *In Her Own Rite: Constructing Feminist Liturgical Tradition* (Akron OH: Order of Saint Luke Publications, 2000).

is primarily to show the rich significance of the opening, in ritual, theological, and pastoral terms.²¹

In this section we have seen that this opening is in the name of the Trinitarian God, who is benevolent, as expressed in alternative opening sentences. The meeting is in God's name, in which the worshippers — hopefully — can find comfort and joy. The opening words add an important theological perspective on the significance of a safe community and the responsibility of the minister: God's pastoral love does not depend on them. Having seen various pastoral dimensions of the start of the liturgy, we now move from the opening words further into the worship event.

Finding Wholeness through the Story of the Liturgy

Various scholars who argue for a narrative approach to the liturgy have already been mentioned. The ritual-narrative method I used in my own work to analyse *Common Worship, Order One*, showed that the liturgy is characterized by three storylines: wholeness, glory, and living.²² Space does not allow us to discuss all three, so here we focus on the storyline in which the integral pastoral dimension of liturgy shows most clearly, i.e. the storyline 'wholeness'. The storyline of wholeness refers to the process of becoming whole as well as to being in a state of wholeness. The theme of wholeness in the liturgy is close to the concept of shalom. For our discussion of this storyline we will examine a prayer that immediately follows the opening words of the liturgy:²³

²¹ It is worthwhile though to point to the fact that some churches use a different formulation for the Trinity, for example, 'In the name of God, Creating, Redeeming, Giving life.'

²² van Ommen, *Suffering in Worship*; Léon van Ommen, 'A Narrative Understanding of Anglican Liturgy in Times of Suffering: The Narrative Approach of Ruard Ganzevoort Applied to Common Worship', *Questions Liturgiques / Studies in Liturgy* 96:1-2 (2015), 64-81. My analysis of the liturgy was based on Ruard Ganzevoort's narrative approach and the ritual-narrative reflections on worship and pastoral care by Herbert Anderson and Edward Foley. R. Ruard Ganzevoort, 'Reading by the Lines: Proposal for a Narrative Analytical Technique in Empirical Theology', *Journal of Empirical Theology* 11:2 (1998), 23-40; Anderson and Foley, *op. cit.*

²³ In practice, between the opening words and this prayer, the minister will often speak some words of welcome, or a hymn may be sung. These elements provide another occasion, from the beginning, where the liturgy might strike some pastoral chords. For a critical discussion of some other practices that may be integrated in the opening acts of the liturgy, see Perham, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-14.

Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
 that we may perfectly love you,
 and worthily magnify your holy name;
 through Christ our Lord.
 Amen. (CW, SL)

This prayer is sometimes referred to as the Prayer of Preparation but is also known as the Collect for Purity. The words in italics correspond to the storyline ‘wholeness’. This storyline includes various aspects of wholeness, each with (potential) pastoral applications. The first aspect concerns the issue of guilt and forgiveness. The words in the Collect for Purity prepare the worshippers for the rite of confession which follows on this prayer. The Confession is pastorally significant for worshippers who struggle with a sense of guilt. If that sense is justified, the liturgy provides an appropriate framework and language to confess sins and guilt before God. (Some liturgies include a confession not only before God but also for ‘our fellow members in the Body of Christ’ (SL). I suspect that this is seldom practised in reality other than uttering the words — for a confession before another person to take place, this person should be aware of it, otherwise it is hard to speak about a confession.) The rite of confession is not complete without the Absolution which follows. In terms of pastoral care, confession might be needed but it is equally important, if not more, that the confessor is assured of pardon. The confession is the expression of and owning up to the guilt the person has; the Absolution are words being received by the confessor, assuring him that the relationship is restored. The person can now move on from guilt to healing and wholeness.²⁴ For both parties the significance is

²⁴ Cf. Katheryn Rhoads Meek, Jeanne S Albright, and Mark R McMinn, ‘Religious Orientation, Guilt, Confession, and Forgiveness’, *Journal of Psychology & Theology* 23:3 (1995), 190–97; Angela G McCormick and Mark R McMinn, ‘The Intrapsychic and Interpersonal Effects of Talking about Guilt’, *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 31:4 (2012), 354–65. Pastorally the movement from guilt to healing may not be as straightforward, and it is nothing automatic. The point here is that the liturgy facilitates and supports this pastorally important movement.

that the relationship is restored and the road to healing the relationship is open.

However, key to this rite is whether the sense of guilt is justified. On a general level the words of confession always apply: nobody is perfect. Who can claim they have not 'sinned in thought, word and deed, and in what [they] have failed to do' (SL)? Moving beyond generalities, however, we might find people who have an undue sense of guilt. For example, it is well-known that people struggling with mental health issues often feel guilty. The same can be said for children of divorced parents and of those who have experienced some form of abuse or other traumatic events.²⁵ Ganzevoort points out that the rite of confession (and here we add the observation that the rite of confession is rather lengthy, certainly in comparison to the brief absolution) can harm people who have been or are being abused by reinforcing a false sense of guilt.²⁶ Simultaneously, it might upset them that their abusers seem to get away with their wrongdoing so easily. In this way the rite of confession can have a reverse effect, contradicting its intention: the abused should feel less guilty and the abusers more. The liturgy itself is not going to solve this problem, apart from the possibility of the minister including some sensitive words which might help to frame the occasion. Nonetheless, the issue is serious enough to draw attention to the context of

²⁵ E.g. R. Ruud Ganzevoort, 'God Voor Schuldigen?', in *Vergeef Me... Verzoening Tussen Mensen En God*, ed. by W. Smouter and C. Blom (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2001), pp. 84–96; Ilanit Hasson-Ohayon and others, 'Insight into Mental Illness and Self-Stigma: The Mediating Role of Shame Proneness', *Psychiatry Research* 200:2 (30 December 2012): 802–6; Rachel Miller and Susan E. Mason, 'Shame and Guilt in First-Episode Schizophrenia and Schizoaffective Disorders', *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy* 35:2 (1 July 2005), 211–21; Martin J. Dorahy and others, 'Complex Trauma and Intimate Relationships: The Impact of Shame, Guilt and Dissociation', *Journal of Affective Disorders* 147:1 (1 May 2013), 72–79; John P. Wilson, Boris Droždek, and Silvana Turkovic, 'Posttraumatic Shame and Guilt', *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* 7:2 (2006), 122–41. Note that psychological literature distinguishes between guilt and shame, even though they are often mentioned and discussed together. The literature indicates that shame is an even greater factor in mental health and PTSD. This contrasts with the liturgy's focus on guilt, in line with the theological tradition in general. One might wonder to which extent the liturgy is a resource to deal with shame.

²⁶ Ganzevoort, 'God Voor Schuldigen?'; Marjorie Procter-Smith, *Praying with Our Eyes Open: Engendering Feminist Liturgical Prayer* (Nashville TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), pp. 41ff.

this paper. At the very least liturgical ministers should be aware of this dynamic. Furthermore, the issue points to the need to see the worship service as part of the larger life of the congregation. Where the concerns of this paragraph pertain to particular people, they might need to be discussed in a pastoral conversation. In other words, the rite of confession and absolution has a pastoral dimension that can be healing, and theologically speaking no one is exempted from the need for confession, but for some it can have a reverse effect.

Another pastoral aspect of the storyline 'wholeness' is the liturgical claim that God knows everything about the worshipper. This aspect is expressed by the lines 'to whom all hearts are open, all desires know, and from whom no secret is hidden'. It may be a scary thought that someone knows all our inner ruminations, all our passions (including our sinful desires), and who knows all our secret thoughts and actions. Preceded by 'Almighty God', one can start to feel unsafe. Indeed, the Almighty God may need to do some cleansing work and tidy up the dark corners of the worshippers' hearts. In pastoral terms, with these lines of the Collect God may admonish the worshippers. These words show that worship is not a neutral act — God and people invest deeply in their relationship. However, these words may be interpreted in a more comforting way. Here we need to remind ourselves of the opening words, which show a God who is in charge and who is *beneficially* so. The God who sees the dark corners of the worshippers' heart is also the God who sees the pain hidden away in these corners. The God who might need to do some cleansing is also the God who heals broken hearts. In his benevolence God hears the shouts of joy but also the cries of lament. God does not only know the sinful desires of the worshippers, but also their desire to be in right relationship with God and her neighbours. Thus, these lines in the prayer open an aspect of wholeness in the sense of healing and fullness of life (John 10. 10). The road to wholeness might include cleansing of that which diminishes the relationship with God and people, but it also includes celebrating goodness and mending what is broken.

These aspects of wholeness — guilt and forgiveness, and God's knowing the worshipper's inner depths — are reinforced throughout the liturgy. A couple of examples demonstrate this. The rite of confession and absolution establish peace between God and people — even if pastorally this may be less straightforward than the liturgical movement suggests. The readings from Scripture and the sermon may speak to these themes. The prayers of intercession are an opportunity for the community to cry out to the omniscient God the need of the world and themselves. The Eucharist is the climax of this storyline, when the Body of Christ is broken, and his blood poured out, 'that sins may be forgiven' (SL). In a sense, the opening words of

the Eucharistic rite sum up what this rite, and perhaps even the entire liturgy, is all about: 'The peace of the Lord be always with you' (CW). (Significantly, in terms of pastoral care in the community, at this point the worshippers share the peace with each other. Also, if confession before one another has not happened, see above, it will be difficult to wish each other the peace of Christ.) This very brief 'walk' through the liturgy demonstrates that the theme of wholeness, which includes the aspects of guilt and forgiveness and God knowing 'all desires', is woven throughout the liturgy. Pastorally this implies that through the liturgy people may find healing and wholeness, as their stories find their place within this storyline, i.e. within the story of God's forgiveness and healing.

Conclusion: Worship with Care

In this article I have demonstrated various pastoral implications of the worship event. This is by no means an exhaustive discussion of the pastoral dimension of liturgy, but I hope to have articulated the importance of this dimension of liturgy and a way of thinking about this dimension. Liturgy facilitates the prayerful meeting of the worshippers. Prayer is a deeply pastoral act, as it is 'throwing' oneself to the Almighty and benevolent God. Not only the worshippers 'throw' themselves though — through the prayers, in the form of songs, texts, gestures, actions, the worshippers meet the God who 'casts himself completely, boots and all, at humankind', to paraphrase Van der Horst's description of prayer. Seen like this, prayer, and therefore worship, is a risky event, for it makes one vulnerable. The safer the community is, the more possible such prayer becomes. Central to a pastoral understanding of the liturgy is the acknowledgment that the liturgy is a place of truth-telling: the full stories of people and God can be told. That includes celebration and suffering, but also the need for confession and the desire to be in right relationship with God and each other. Through it all the liturgy, or rather God, invites people to wholeness in all aspects of their lives. The opening words state clearly the theological priority of God, but as the One who is beneficial — here is 'telling the truth in love'. The opening words make clear that the human stories find their place in the overarching narrative of God, who desires to give life to the full (John 10. 10). Liturgy is a place where mourning can be shared, where broken lives are mended, where pain might be healed, where one is joined in their shouts for joy.

Prayer is risky, it makes one vulnerable. The more such prayer is possible in a safe community, the more the liturgy meets the pastoral needs of people, whether that need is to leap for joy or to cry out of the depths. Such prayer requires to worship with care. Care given by a safe community in which its members care for each other. Also, the liturgical minister has a significant responsibility to exercise pastoral care in and through worship,

to enable stories to be told and to enable people to recognize their stories in the story of the liturgy. If nothing else, the potential harm that certain elements of the liturgy may cause to broken people requires pastoral sensitivity. At the same time a liturgical-theological interpretation of the liturgy shows that ultimately the pastoral efficacy of the liturgy rests with neither the community nor the liturgical minister, but with God who initiates the worship event. Moreover, the requirement to worship with care should not be seen in the first place as a warning. Rather, to emphasize the need for worship with care is, more than anything else, to extend the liturgy's invitation, and ultimately God's invitation, to gather in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and to find a place for our stories within the story of God's love for his world.

A Season of Creation: A Time to Pray and Act

RACHEL MASH

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Hurricanes, monsoons and other types of extreme weather are a part of life on earth for many. The trouble is that climate change is loading the dice by intensifying storms and making rain patterns less predictable. Climate change is the human thumb on the scale, pushing us toward disaster. It is not a distant danger — it is already with us. As we continue to burn fossil fuels, its effects will only grow. As people of faith, we don't just state our beliefs — we live them out. One belief is that we find purpose and joy in loving our neighbours. Another is that we are charged by our creator with taking good care of his creation. The moral crisis of climate change is an opportunity to find purpose and joy, and to respond to our creator's charge. Reducing the causes of climate change is essential to the life of faith. It is a way to love our neighbour and to steward the gift of creation.

Different expressions of the Christian faith are freshly united around the need to care for our common home. The Catholic, Anglican and Orthodox Churches have come together with the World Council of Churches to celebrate a monthlong Season of Creation. During this season, people all around the globe pray and act to address climate change and to protect the earth. People of faith have a unique call to address the causes of climate change. Let us act together in ways that will safeguard our shared gift of creation — and the lives of those who will inherit it from us.¹

How can Christians respond to the crises of extreme poverty, environmental degradation and climate change? The web of life is unravelling: how is God calling us to respond? One of the dangers in the Church is a tendency to view climate change as an environmental issue rather than a human issue. 'The environment' is a matter delegated to a small group of 'green' activists; we put up a recycling bin and tick the box — 'Our church is green!'

I will argue in what follows that we need profound change, we need to re-examine our spirituality: we all know that we must love God and love our

¹ Justin Welby, '[Our Moral Opportunity on Climate Change](#)', *New York Times*, 3 November 2017.

neighbour. But the reality is that loving God and our neighbour must also involve loving God's Creation. The time has come for a liturgical and spiritual renewal which addresses the theology of Creation and the place and role of humanity in the created order.

At the core of this vision is the widely recognised insight that God's love extends to all God's creatures, that the gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ and through the Spirit is a message for the whole earth and that the life of the church is situated in God's encompassing mission.

Such an ecological reformation cannot be restricted to a recovery of a theology of creation or a call for responsible stewardship. It calls for reflection, discernment, prayer and a transformation of Christian practices that may be harmful to others, to all God's creatures. It also calls for a rereading of the canonical biblical texts, a critique of the environmental impact of specific Christian traditions and practices, a retrieval of historical insights, figures and practices, a reinvestigation of the content and significance of the Christian faith, a reconsideration of influential symbols, a renewal of Christian communities and a transformation of the ministries and missions of the church.

The ecological reformation of Christianity therefore is comprehensive in its scope and needs to extend to Bible study, catechism, teaching, liturgies, hymns, Christian art, pastoral care, ministry and mission alike.²

Over the last few years, the Anglican Church of Southern Africa (South Africa, Swaziland-Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia, St Helena, Angola and Mozambique) has come face to face with the realities of climate change. A devastating drought in Cape Town almost led us to become the first major city in the world to have our taps turned off on 'Day Zero'. Two cyclones in Mozambique brought disastrous flooding, and the city of Beira became the first city in the world to be completely devastated by climate change.³ The rising oceans had left the city below sea level, global warming supercharged the cyclone, dumping a year's supply of rain in a few days, creating an inland

² *A Manifesto for an Ecological Reformation of Christianity.*

³ 'The First City Completely Devastated by Climate Change' Tries to Rebuild after Cyclone Idai'.

sea. The raging rivers rushed through the denuded lands where high levels of deforestation had taken place.

In Southern Africa, climate change is not an issue, it is our context. How have we responded to the realities of climate change and environmental degradation? We saw that we must start first with spirituality and the actions must flow from that. If we start with actions the danger is that only a few 'keen greens' take up the challenges, and then we run out of steam. In order to transform our actions, we need our hearts to be transformed by reading the scriptures with ecological lenses. Radical change begins when our hearts change, and for that to happen our theology must change. We have been challenged by Pope Francis to 'hear *both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor*'.⁴

The Anglican Church of Southern Africa (ACSA) adopted the Season of Creation as part of our Liturgical Calendar in 2010. It has been probably the most important thing that we have done in terms of forming a basis for the environmental ministry in this province and the Green Anglicans movement which has now spread to Central Africa, Kenya, and into Democratic Republic of Congo.

What is the Season of Creation?

The Season of Creation, or Creation Time, is a growing movement across the globe. We celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas, we celebrate the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, but when do we celebrate and learn about God the Creator?

In 1989, the Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios of the Orthodox Church proclaimed 1 September as a day of prayer for creation, and this day was embraced by the other major Christian European churches in 2001.

Norman Habel (a Lutheran scholar from Australia) defined the Season of Creation as the four Sundays of September that precede the feast day of Saint Francis of Assisi, 4 October. Saint Francis is considered the patron saint of ecology in many traditions. An ecumenical commission worked with Habel to develop an extensive set of worship resources for the season that was made available to churches in Australia, and worldwide, in 2005.

Several statements from the past few years have called the faithful to observe this month-long Season of Creation, such as those of the Catholic bishops of the Philippines in 2003, and the Third European Ecumenical Assembly in Sibiu in 2007. In 2008 the World Council of Churches Central Committee adopted the 'time for creation'.⁵ Last year they changed the title

⁴ Pope Francis, '[Laudato Si'](#)'.

⁵ '[Time to pray for God's creation](#)'.

to 'Season of Creation', in order to be in line with other organizations.⁶ In 2016 Pope Francis released a joint message with the Ecumenical Patriarch for the World Day of Prayer for Creation on 1 September.⁷ This year, the pope released an official message endorsing the Season of Creation.⁸ The Anglican Communion passed a resolution at the Anglican Consultative Council in New Zealand in 2012, 'encouraging Provinces to consider the inclusion of a Season of Creation in the liturgical calendar'.

The Season of Creation: A Growing Ecumenical Movement

As the Anglican Communion Environmental Network has embraced the Season of Creation, we have drawn closer to ecumenical partners, especially the Global Catholic Climate Movement. This movement was founded as a response to Pope Francis's publication of *Laudato Sí*, the papal encyclical on 'care for our common home'.

Over the last three years, the initial collaboration between the Anglican Communion Environmental Network, World Council of Churches and Global Catholic Climate Movement has grown to include the Lutheran World Federation, the World Communion of Reformed Churches and the World Evangelical Alliance. Liturgical resources and joint advocacy actions are included at their [website](#).

A key focus has been the issue of lament — traditionally our liturgical moment of 'penitence' has focussed on individual sins and individual conversion. Lament brings in the aspect of mourning at what we have already lost, and our collective responsibility for causing such destruction. This must then inspire us to action and advocacy.

The Season of Creation in ACSA

The ACSA was one of the early adopters and passed a resolution at Provincial Synod in 2010 to include a Season of Creation in its liturgical calendar. A Eucharistic prayer for the Season of Creation was written and authorized by the Synod of Bishops.

Since then we have produced materials each year for Season of Creation, weeks 1–6. Each week has a different theme, such as, Water, Food Justice, Land, Trees, Bio-diversity, etc. For those parishes that prefer to use the lectionary readings we are producing Season of Creation readings for Years A, B, and C. The Resource booklets contain sermon materials, liturgical materials and fact sheets. The materials are created to help resource a movement, where people take the opportunity of delving into the

⁶ 'Season of Creation'.

⁷ 'Creation Day Messages of Pope Francis & Patriarch Bartholomew'.

⁸ 'Pope Francis on the Season of Creation'.

scriptures, creating liturgies, and taking action in their own context. It is a time to celebrate the gift of creation, to mourn what we have lost, and to commit to actions and advocacy.

Here are a few ideas of ways in which people have celebrated Season of Creation.

- Outdoor services to celebrate Creation: at parks, game parks, river banks, lakes, oceans.
- Outdoor services of environmental healing: tree planting, clean-ups of rivers, oceans.
- Prayers at locations of environmental injustice: by a river polluted by acid mine drainage, at the site of the possible fracking well, at a city dump site.
- Incorporating creation into a prayer service, bringing symbols of nature inside the church building.

It has also become a time of creativity, where young people and children often take the lead in creating dramas, dance, art and music to reflect the love of creation and mourn what we are losing.

One of the leaders in the Province in embracing the Season of Creation has been the Diocese of Swaziland — twinned with Brechin. Bishop Ellinah Wamukoya holds an annual Season of Creation service at an outside venue. Last year the service was held by a polluted river and after the service the congregation did a clean-up. She was joined by some representatives of the twin dioceses of Brechin and Iowa.

Saint Francis's Day

The Season of Creation runs from 1 September to 4 October, Saint Francis's Day. Saint Francis was declared the patron saint of ecologists in 1979 by Pope John Paul II. Not only did he care for the poor and sick, he preached multiple sermons on animals, and wanted all creatures on Earth, including humans, to be treated as equals under God.

Saint Francis's Day has traditionally been a day for the blessing of companion animals, but the churches are now taking up the challenge to address issues of advocacy, combating cruelty to animals and confined animal feeding operations (battery farming).

Eucharistic Prayer for the Season of Creation

Bishop Ellinah has written a thesis on the theme of Eucharist and the environment.⁹ This important study gives insights to the environmental message of the sacrament itself. The entire thesis is well worth studying but I would like to share some of her insights here.

Creation as Sacrament — The Anglican Church is a sacramental church, and so it is natural, and indeed important, that we see the whole of Creation as sacramental, remembering that the elements used for Communion are part of the created order. From a spiritual point of view, understanding that it is God who initiated the creation process, and that humankind was created in God's own image, humanity is empowered to participate in God's work of creation. The world can therefore be viewed as sacramental, the incarnate Word as the visible sign of God's presence on earth, and God's love for the whole *cosmos* — the created order — the great sacrament.

Interconnectivity between humanity, nature and the Creator — The interconnection between humanity, nature, and the Creator is drawn from the fact that the elements used in the Eucharist — the bread and the wine — are rooted in matter (as we have already noted), having been made from wheat and grapes, which both come from the soil. The Eucharist is transformative in nature, changing the bread and wine, produce of the earth and human hands, into the body and blood of Christ, the *logos* without whom 'not one thing came into being' (John 1. 2). In this way, it is the great sign of hope.

The Eucharist and environmental stewardship — The Eucharist instils a culture that treats with respect and rejects the belittlement of material things. All elements that are used in the celebration of the Eucharist are to be consumed and they are measured in such a way as to be enough for all without any waste, and whatever remains has to be reverently kept in the tabernacle for later use, or otherwise consumed — this teaches us that there should be no waste.

Through the liturgy, worshippers are made aware that the sacramental materials are products of the earth, and therefore it befits human beings who receive them to take good care of the earth by calling an end to any form of harm, and encouraging its preservation and fruitfulness.

⁹ Ellinah N. Wamukoya, '[The Environment in the Authorised Anglican Liturgies in Southern Africa from 1850](#)' (unpublished dissertation, Master of Theology in Church History, University of Pretoria, 2015).

The Eucharist is transformational — The Eucharist also signifies the transformation of the community as it repents its complicity in harming creation and examines its responsibilities toward the earth. As such, sacraments transform recipients in that they no longer become abusers but preservers of the cosmos and nature by working towards their preservation.

As we receive, so we give — In that light we are reminded that as we eat and drink we are to share ourselves with each other including nature. The Eucharist is a celebration of joy — we celebrate and give thanks for nature. You will not protect what you don't love. Christ's death and resurrection brought hope; indeed, as we eat and drink today we do so hopeful that even tomorrow there will be bread and wine as we give thanks to our Saviour and provider.

Conclusion

Just as the Season of Creation ends with Saint Francis's day, it is fitting that we conclude these thoughts with the prayer from the *Laudato Si'* of Pope Francis — a prophetic call for prayer and action, 'A Prayer for Our Earth':

All-powerful God,
 you are present in the whole universe
 and in the smallest of your creatures.
 You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
 Pour out upon us the power of your love,
 that we may protect life and beauty.
 Fill us with peace,
 that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.
 O God of the poor,
 help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
 so precious in your eyes.
 Bring healing to our lives,
 that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
 that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.
 Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain
 at the expense of the poor and the earth.
 Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
 to be filled with awe and contemplation,
 to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature
 as we journey towards your infinite light.
 We thank you for being with us each day.
 Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

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Their Pattern and Their King: The Gospel of Matthew as a Model for Christian Formation

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The Gospel of Matthew is the most influential and important Christian document ever written. I always like to begin with a non-controversial claim! However, let me try to prove my twin assertions – first that Matthew is the most influential Christian text ever written, and second that it is the most important.

In terms of influence, it is perhaps possible to quantify some of the ways that the Gospel of Matthew has been of greater influence than any other Christian writing. The four gospels that became the canonical gospels tended to circulate as a collection in a single codex or book in the early church – very occasionally with Acts attached. The arrangement of these four texts differs between the standard order we know, and the so-called Western order, with Mark and John switching positions. It appears that the latter order was intended to place the two gospels written by apostles before the two written by followers of the apostles. Yet, regardless of these different orders a constant feature is that the Gospel of Matthew always stands first in any collection of the four gospels. Later when the full collection of New Testament writings was assembled, the Gospel of Matthew always stood in first place. Other examples of the influence of the Gospel of Matthew can be seen in the frequency with which early Christian writers of the patristic and medieval periods cite various Christian authors. In assorted lists of citations, the Gospel of Matthew outstrips other Christian texts as the one most cited by later authors. However, you might feel these ancient examples are not compelling. So let me draw on a piece of incontrovertible evidence. One which I hope nobody will question. In the lectionary of the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Gospel of Matthew is the most frequently read of the gospels, with Luke a close second, then there is a significant gap to John, with Mark in a distant fourth. Well for those and for many other reasons, a compelling case can be made that the Gospel of Matthew has been, and in all likelihood

¹ Delivered at Kings' College of the University of Aberdeen on Thursday 17 October 2019.

will continue to be, the most read Christian text. However, does that make it the most important?

To answer that question, let me ask another. Does anybody agree with my very radical proposition that Jesus of Nazareth might just happen to be quite a significant figure in Christianity? If that is not too ridiculous a claim, then I think that the importance of Matthew's Gospel can also be demonstrated. Matthew is not quite the longest of the four gospels, that honour goes to Luke with 1149 verses compared to Matthew's 1068. However, the Matthean version of the story of Jesus has typically become the framework of the gospel story. Perhaps this is because many readers encounter Matthew as the first gospel they read. So consequently the portrait it offers of Jesus becomes both normative and formative. The distinctive features of the Gospel of Matthew are therefore sometimes seen as standard, and other gospel accounts are refracted through a heavily Matthean lens. It is for these reasons that it is important to gain a clear understanding both of the distinctive elements in the Matthean account, and then to reflect on the impact that Matthew's account of the life and ministry of Jesus has exerted on subsequent generations of Christian theology, piety, artistic expression, and liturgical practice.

There are many distinctive elements of the Gospel of Matthew, without which an overarching and perhaps a rounded portrait of Jesus would be impoverished. Matthew is one of two canonical gospels to have a birth account. However, only in Matthew does one find the visit of wise men from the east, the slaughter of the innocents at the hands of the malevolent Herod, and the subsequent flight into Egypt. For theologians interested in the ethics of Jesus, the primary source has long been the Sermon on the Mount. While various parts of that sermon are found dispersed in Luke's Gospel, Matthew alone presents Jesus as situated on a mountain while he teaches the crowd in this extended discourse. The figure of Peter takes on greater, although debated significance in the Gospel of Matthew. Only in Matthew's account does Peter attempt to join Jesus in walking on water, and only in the first gospel is Peter declared to be the rock on which the church is built and it is to him that the keys of the kingdom are entrusted. This enlargement of interest in the figure of Peter was generative for the evolution of an ecclesiology based on Petrine authority and succession, most clearly articulated in Roman Catholicism. Later in the narrative one finds the unique story of Judas's remorse at the betrayal of 'innocent blood' and subsequent suicide. Also in the Passion narrative, Matthew continues the interest in dreams, which was prominent in the birth story, with Pilate's wife communicating to her husband the nature of her troubling dream with the accompanying warning to 'have nothing to do with this innocent man' (Matthew 27. 19). Moreover, another uniquely Matthean element in the

gospel carries the weight of perhaps one of the darkest aspects of all Christian history. After Pilate washes his hands and declares his own innocence in regard to the coming execution of Jesus, Matthew alone relates that then ‘all the people answered and said, “his blood be upon us and upon our children.”’ (Matthew 27. 25). This narrative element of the so-called ‘blood-guilt’ has been used to legitimize early Christian anti-Jewish attitudes, the medieval pogroms and expulsions of Jews from parts of Europe, and the even more extensive anti-Semitism that led to the Holocaust. The influence of Matthew’s Gospel in shaping that horrendous ideology cannot be denied. Yet rather than explanation, perhaps only silence and repentance are the correct responses.

Matthew’s Gospel has thus had a turbulent history in the development and growth of Christianity. While the reception and application of the gospel has created a sublime picture of Jesus as a teacher of non-violent ethics with a concern for social justice and the in-breaking of the kingdom of heaven, the counterpoint to this is what may admittedly be a misapplication of Matthew’s intention, but which has led to extreme expressions of violence and injustice. Therefore, not only for understanding the text in its own right but also for its impact in later history, it is important to appreciate the meaning and nuances of the rich yet complex story of Jesus of Nazareth in what can arguably be considered the most influential and important text in Christian history.

The Davidic Messiah – A Royal Christology

More explicitly than any of the other gospels, the Gospel of Matthew links Jesus with the figure of David, and affirms him to be a royal messiah of the Davidic line. There are seventeen references to David in the Gospel of Matthew, compared with seven in Mark, twelve in Luke, and only two in John. Yet more significant than their number is their placement. Six of these references occur in the opening chapter of Matthew. In the opening verse Jesus is introduced first as the son of David. Such a claim of Davidic descent evokes both a kingly pedigree for Jesus and expectations of royal messiahship. Moreover the four references to David in the genealogy of Matthew 1. 2–17 are not simply placed on the same level as the other names. Rather, David is a key figure who structures the history of Israel with fourteen generations before him back to Abraham, and fourteen generations after him till the time of the deportation to Babylon. As many have observed, it may be the case that the number fourteen is a gematria. That is it has special significance since the Hebrew name of David, written with three letters, the fourth, sixth, and fourth of the Hebrew alphabet add to a numerical value of fourteen. So perhaps the whole genealogy is constructed as a cipher that points to David and his greater Davidic son. If that is too

speculative, there is another feature of the genealogy which is totally clear. Despite the presence of several royal figures such as Solomon, Rehoboam, Hezekiah and Josiah, Matthew chooses to name only one figure in his genealogical table as 'king', and that of course is David (Matthew 1. 6). There is only one other figure in the genealogy who is given a title, and if you need me to tell you who that is — well you might just need to go and do some homework reading.

Following on from the genealogy, the story of Jesus's birth contains Davidic references and overtones. That is not to ignore the fact that alongside these kingly references, Matthew also presents a divine link. By declaring Jesus to be Immanuel, 'God with us', Matthew undoubtedly wishes to present Jesus as more than simply a human descendant of David. Yet that Davidic element remains central and prominent. Joseph is himself addressed as 'son of David' to emphasize the immediate connection that Jesus has with the Davidic line. And while David is not explicitly mentioned in chapter two there are several references to Bethlehem. These include the prophecy from Micah about the emergence of a new shepherd leader for Israel. This is intended to evoke a strong and instantly recognizable Davidic connection. Yet, even more than this, it is stated that the magi come looking for the true king of the Jews. Matthew casts the story of the birth of Jesus in the context of a struggle over kingship between the false occupant of the throne, and the one who is a true Davidide. Matthew uses the title king of the Jews sparingly throughout the gospel, but it occurs at moments of great significance. On all occasions it is a title given to Jesus by gentiles, either by the magi or by Pilate and his soldiers. What is recognized of Jesus on the verge of his human birth is only recognized again at the time of his human death. While unborn, while dying, Jesus is recognized by gentiles as the true Davidic king of the Jews. This is a redefinition of kingship that is important for Matthew's understanding of who Jesus is.

Many of the other descriptions of Jesus as son of David occur in the context of healing miracles. For instance, a pair of blind men cry out 'have mercy on us, Son of David' (Matthew 9. 27), elsewhere upon seeing a demon-possessed blind and dumb person healed, the observing crowd in amazement ask 'is not this the son of David?' (Matthew 12. 23), or a distraught Canaanite mother seeking the healing of her daughter beseeches Jesus saying, 'have mercy on me, Lord, son of David' (Matthew 15. 22), and later a further pair of blind men twice cry out 'have mercy on us, Son of David' (Matthew 20. 30–31). Additionally, in the temple it is not the religious figures but the children who greet Jesus with the cry 'Hosanna to the son of David' (Matthew 21. 15). The significance of these affirmations of Jesus as son of David in the context of miracle stories has puzzled exegetes, primarily because of the lack of Jewish expectations in Second Temple literature that

the coming Davidic messiah would be a miracle worker. However, perhaps in the Gospel of Matthew the emphasis is on the marginal status for those who recognize Jesus as the Davidic messiah-king. What those in possession of their full senses, or who claim religious privilege fail to recognize is a fact perceived by the humble, the broken, the poor, the ostracized and the marginalized. The blind see more than the sighted, gentiles perceive the Davidic king, and innocent children grasp the identity of Jesus while Jewish religious leaders repudiate their insights. Thus the Gospel of Matthew privileges the downtrodden and the socially alienated by portraying them as the ones who truly see Jesus for what he is — David's son, the true king.

Yet perhaps more than any other passage in this gospel, it is the triumphal entry on Palm Sunday that presents Jesus most clearly as the Davidic king. Yet, even here there is a subversive and radical definition of what kingship means. At this point, Matthew subtly but intentionally rewrites his Markan source material. In the Gospel of Mark, the crowd cries out, 'Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; blessed be *the kingdom of our father David*; Hosanna in the highest' (Mark 11. 10–11). By contrast, Matthew reorders the first two affirmations, and rewords Mark's second makarism — 'blessed be *the kingdom of our father David*.' Hence Matthew has the crowd declare, 'Hosanna to the son of David; Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest' (Matthew 21. 9). Therefore, while Mark's crowd eagerly greet the restoration of the kingdom of David, Matthew's crowd recognize and welcome David's very son. Mark's crowd declare their expectation that the Davidic kingdom will be restored, but Matthew's crowd focalizes that expectation on the person of Jesus, who is recognized to be the very son of David, a new king.

However, Matthew does even more to develop the Davidic links in his description of the triumphal entry. In this passage he redefines kingly expectations. As an addition to the Markan account, Matthew cites the prophecy of Zechariah 9. 9. By doing so Matthew defies militaristic expectation for a dominant warrior-king, arriving mounted on a war horse. Yet the choice of scriptural text does more than affirm that Jesus's actions are the fulfilment of prophecy. Instead, Matthew takes a text that was understood by contemporaries as being a prediction of a messianic king and thus presents the arrival of Jesus in Jerusalem as the arrival of the new Davidic king in the very city that was David's capital. Because of the later chapter divisions imposed on the biblical text, it is easy to forget what comes immediately prior to the triumphal entry. Following on from the request from the mother of the sons of Zebedee for her sons to sit on his right and left in his kingdom, Jesus criticizes the way in which gentiles exercise lordship and authority (Matthew 20. 25). In its stead, Jesus tells his disciples that greatness will be reckoned to the servant, and that the Son of Man would

exemplify such service by offering up his life. The disciples and Jesus then set out towards Jerusalem. The only story narrated during that journey is the encounter with the two blind men who twice address Jesus as ‘son of David’ (Matthew 20. 30–31). This arrangement of material seems far from random. First, a correction of the disciples’ understanding of authority in the kingdom, then a double affirmation of Jesus as son of David, followed by Jesus arriving in David’s capital city in fulfilment of a royal messianic prophecy while being heralded as son of David. Could Matthew be any clearer? The son of David has arrived in Jerusalem as the new king. Yet this is a gentle, donkey-riding king, who comes to the city with a new mode of kingship.

According to some commentators there is an even stronger Davidic resonance here. I am not sure if I am fully persuaded yet, but if those commentators are correct then the proposed allusion would be particularly suggestive and rich. It is suggested that the coming of the gentle king mounted on a donkey to Jerusalem is based on the story of David’s return to the city after the rebellion of Absalom (II Samuel 19–20). If this were the case, then we might have an allusion to King David who weeps on the Mount of Olives as he leaves Jerusalem (II Samuel 15. 30) and who comes back to Jerusalem in a fairly conciliatory mood. However, the story is not clear that David was mounted upon a donkey, although David does come in a peaceful manner without exacting revenge (well not too much revenge) on those who sided with Absalom. In the end, the Absalom story and the return of David might not be in the mind of the evangelist. Yet, notwithstanding this, the royal messianic associations of the Zechariah passage are both transparent and widely used in Second Temple Jewish literature. This is sufficient to see that Matthew presents Jesus’s entry into Jerusalem as the arrival of the long expected Davidic king. Nonetheless, Matthew defies many of those expectations by denoting a new type of kingship that is exemplified by gentleness and servanthood.

Followers of the Davidic Messiah – The Patterning of Discipleship

Matthew instructs the followers of Jesus to emulate their master, both by following his example and living out the ethics he taught. One of the lasting gifts of the Gospel of Matthew to subsequent generations of Christian disciples and communities is the most comprehensive statement of the ethics of Jesus. This of course occurs in its most concentrated form in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7). It is worth noting that virtually none of this material is paralleled in the Gospel of Mark. However, Matthew does share some of the material with parallel traditions found also in Luke’s Gospel. This shared material is typically seen by scholars as deriving from a source of tradition that pre-dates both Matthew and Luke, which is usually given the siglum Q, from the German word *Quelle* — meaning source. The

reason for mentioning this is to emphasize that much of the Sermon is pre-Matthean material, and a good case can be made for tracing some of these traditions back to Jesus of Nazareth himself. Even the [Jesus Seminar](#), which set a very high bar for judging gospel traditions as originating with the historical Jesus, ascribed several sayings in Matthew's Sermon on the Mount as having dominical origin. In particular, members of the seminar saw several of Jesus's statements on non-violence, love of enemies, and even the intimate address of God as father in the Lord's Prayer as all originating with and being characteristic of the distinctive teaching of Jesus. While in this context we will not weigh the arguments for which of the various elements of the Sermon on the Mount may or may not originate with Jesus, it is sufficient to note that nearly all scholars feel that some of the elements in this lengthy Matthean discourse capture the authentic and radical nature of the ethical teachings of Jesus.

The pithy set of nine beatitudes set forth a charter of values for Jesus's first disciples. Those who mourn, the hungry and thirsty, the merciful, in fact those on the margins and those who are powerless are given a privileged position in the eschatological age. This set of blessings moves from the third person 'blessed are those [...]' in first eight beatitudes to the more intense second person 'blessed are you [...]' in the final beatitude (Matthew 5. 11). This shift to the second person form of address is transitional, since Matthew moves from a generalized description of the style of life that is worthy of the kingdom to a more specific address to the disciples concerning the distinctive behaviours that are required of the followers of Jesus. This direct address to disciples that commences with the final beatitude continues to Matthew 5. 16 with a staccato series of 'you' statements. 'Blessed are you when they cast insults at you and persecute you, [...] your reward in heaven is great, [...] you are the salt of the earth, [...] you are the light of the world, [...] let your light shine before people.' The gentleness that is the hallmark of the characterization of Matthew's Davidic messiah is reflected in the values that the followers of Jesus are themselves to present to those whom they encounter. The disciples' gentleness is to reflect Jesus's gentleness, their mercy is based on the mercy that the son of David is called upon to show to the blind, and their experience of persecution is to be expected since they follow their kingly messiah in the way of the cross.

In the remainder of chapter 5, Matthew speaks about the relationship his followers are to have in regard to the Jewish law. Jesus is presented, in Matthean terms, as seeing his actions as fulfilment of the law and the prophets, not as abrogation (Matthew 5. 17). However, the very fact that the Matthean Jesus has to make such a statement, suggests that others may have viewed Jesus's pattern of acting in relation to the law as at the very least being non-standard. While calling for the preservation of even the least

commandment, the way that such stipulations is to be maintained is not through rigid interpretation but through what is described as surpassing righteousness. Here it is not inaccurate to describe the ethics of Jesus moving away from a system of prescriptions to a more reflective system of righteousness that is based on an interior knowledge of behaviour that aligns with the goodness of God.

In the section that follows, known as the antitheses, Jesus presents six traditions spoken to 'the ancients', in regard to each of which the Matthean Jesus then offers comment. These traditions all derive from stipulations found in the Torah. In the first of these six statements, Jesus cites the command 'you shall not murder' (Matthew 5. 21, cf. Exodus 20. 13). He then adds that in addition to murder, any act of abusive speech directed to one's brother carries the same weight of judgment. Similarly in regard to adultery, Jesus cites the command 'you shall not commit adultery' (Matthew 5. 27, cf. Exodus 20. 14). Again, Jesus extends the understanding of adultery to include lustful thoughts. In these two cases the Matthean Jesus does not simply take the meaning of scripture in a constrained manner. Instead the original meaning is intensified, and extended to form a more radical set of ethics. The third antithesis is different. Jesus cites the concessive permission that allowed a certificate of divorce to be issued to a wife (Deuteronomy 24. 1-2). He revokes the scope of that concession by limiting it to the case of some sexual misdemeanour. In the next two antitheses, dealing with the use of oaths and the practice of retributive justice, Jesus cites the relevant passages dealing with these matters (Leviticus 19. 12; Numbers 30. 2 and Exodus 21. 24/Leviticus 24. 19-20/Deuteronomy 19. 21 respectively). He then rejects both of these practices regulated by scripture. In relation to oaths, Jesus boldly states, 'but I say to you, make no oath at all' (Matthew 5. 34). Similarly, in regard to retributive justice which the Torah states must be applied without showing mercy, Jesus offers the principle of turning the other cheek, rather than escalating vengeance. Therefore, in Matthew's Gospel there is a complicated understanding of the role and authority of scripture. It both finds its fulfilment in the person of Jesus, but Jesus is presented as radically reinterpreting it and thus is depicted as a greater source of authority even than scripture itself. This approach to ethics is perhaps complex for the followers of Jesus, but it is also more empowering and flexible since they are called to have a surpassing righteousness within themselves and a merciful standard of forgiveness towards others.

In chapter 6 of the Gospel of Matthew, several instructions are given to the followers of Jesus concerning their spiritual practices and the way they are to live their religious lives. The Matthean Jesus addresses the topics of prayer, fasting, hoarding of possessions, single-minded devotion to God, and renouncing a life characterized by anxiety. Focusing on the first of those

topics, prayer, it is possible to see the pattern that Jesus establishes for his disciples. However, the very familiarity of the words can perhaps obscure the radical intimacy that is encapsulated in the prayer. It is a prayer that has a clear eschatological outlook with its petition for the kingdom to come, and it demonstrates a radical subservience to the will of God. In this passage Matthew establishes the pattern for the prayer of his followers. However, what is often missed, because we tend to read the gospel texts in such small chunks, is that the Matthean Jesus not only teaches his disciples how to pray, he also shows them what it means to pray such a prayer. If we put the Lord's Prayer of Matthew 6. 9–13 in parallel with another of Jesus's prayers, some very startling insights emerge. The next time Jesus offers a lengthy prayer in Matthew's gospel is during his anguish in Gethsemane (Matthew 26. 36–46). The source for this passage occurs in Mark 14. 32–42. However, there are a couple of key differences that are not simply interesting, but are actually highly illuminating. In Mark, Jesus commences with the words 'Abba, Father'. By contrast, in Matthew the wording is changed to 'My Father', thus bringing the form of address into closer parallel with the first person 'Our Father' of the Lord's Prayer. Yet the similarities do not end, nor are strongest in that regard. Mark simply tells readers that Jesus prayed the same thing a second and third time. Matthew provides the content of the second prayer. After again addressing God as 'My Father' and acknowledging that it may not be possible for the cup of suffering to be removed, Jesus prays 'thy will be done' (Matthew 26. 42). These words are the words of the Lord's Prayer itself, and they are not found in the Gospel of Mark. In the Lord's Prayer in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus teaches his disciples what to pray. With his prayer in Gethsemane he shows his disciples what it actually means to pray for God's will. Offering up the petition 'thy will be done' is a demonstration of a willingness to put oneself in harm's way as Jesus did when he embraced God's will for him.

While the Sermon on the Mount is primarily a discourse on discipleship, Matthew does not limit his treatment of that topic to that passage alone. The term *μαθητής* 'disciple' occurs seventy-six times in the Gospel of Matthew. In addition, Matthew refers to the 'twelve' (often in conjunction with the word 'disciples') on eight occasions, he calls them apostles only once (Matthew 10. 2), and several individuals are explicitly named throughout the Gospel (most notably the twelve names are listed in Matthew 10. 2–4). In this foundational passage the evangelist states that Jesus appointed the twelve disciples for the following reasons.

And having summoned His twelve disciples, He gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal

every kind of disease and every kind of sickness (Matthew 10. 1).

In effect they are called to carry out the same activities that Jesus was performing during his ministry, which functioned as signs of the inbreaking kingdom. In fact, Jesus directly instructs the disciples to use the words 'the kingdom of heaven is at hand' in their preaching (Matthew 10. 7). This is the same message that Jesus proclaimed after his forty days in the wilderness (Matthew 4. 17). It is interesting that Matthew's description of the role of the disciples, while largely dependent on the parallel statement in Mark's Gospel (Mark 3. 13–15), omits Mark's first reason: 'he appointed twelve that they might be with him.' This omission might be motivated by the desire not to present Jesus as dependent on other figures for companionship. In this sense, Matthew may be presenting a more self-contained, perhaps even a more divine representation of Jesus.

In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus's initial calling of followers is directed to the fishermen Simon called Peter and Andrew his brother, and the siblings James and John (Matthew 4. 18–22). At this stage the term 'disciples' is not used to describe them. Instead they are simply called to follow, and to be 'fishers of men'. However, at the opening of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus sits down to teach and his disciples come to him at that point: the term 'disciples' is unexplained, as is their role. Nonetheless it is possible to see that these people are still following Jesus and receive his teaching.

It appears that the term 'disciple' is not just reserved for the 'twelve' in Matthew's Gospel. A figure described as 'another of the disciples' comes to Jesus and requests time to go and bury his father (Matthew 8. 21). Jesus responds with the apparently pastorally harsh words 'follow me; and allow the dead to bury their own dead' (Matthew 8. 22). While there have been various attempts to soften the force of this saying, here Jesus prioritizes discipleship over other commitments, and in particular this entails constancy in following Jesus. In one of the central statements concerning discipleship, Jesus utilizes harvest imagery and tells his disciples to beseech the Lord to send workers into the harvest (Matthew 9. 37–38). The implication is that the disciples are to engage in this work. Then after calling the twelve disciples (Matthew 10. 1), Jesus places an initial limit on the scope of their preaching. They are to 'go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (Matthew 10. 6). That limitation is explicitly countermanded by the risen Jesus at the end of the gospel when he instructs the then eleven disciples to 'go therefore and make disciples of all nations' (Matthew 28. 19). Here the scope of the mission is universal, and the term 'disciple' can be applied to anybody willing to become a follower of Jesus.

In Jesus's teaching a disciple remains in a subservient role: 'a disciple is not above his teacher' (Matthew 10. 24). Discipleship is also presented as a life-negating commitment, since following Jesus requires taking up the cross and following the path of crucifixion (Matthew 16. 24). Thus, at first glance, there appears little to recommend the way of discipleship. It prevents one from carrying out family duties of burial, it places the disciple in a servile relationship to the teacher, and emulation of the master leads to crucifixion. However, in the Gospel of Matthew there is the promise of eschatological reversal and reward. When the disciples express their amazement at another of Jesus's harsh sayings about the difficulty of the rich entering the kingdom, Peter speaking on behalf of the disciples states 'we have left everything and followed you, what then will there be for us?' (Matthew 19. 27). Jesus points to the eschatological future which will bring glory for him and reward and status for the 'twelve'. He promises Peter and the disciples that they 'shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel' (Matthew 19. 28).

Disciples form a key group in the Gospel of Matthew. They are called to follow Jesus. That primarily means receiving his teaching and emulating his mission of preaching, exorcism and healing, which are activities that point to the coming kingdom. Discipleship is presented as a difficult path, which can require cross-bearing as a way of following Jesus. Yet despite appearances, in Matthew's Gospel, the disciples are promised a future reward and status that transcends earthly loss. Yet more than this, by embracing the ethics of Jesus, by praying the prayer he gave, by emulating his actions of healing, gentleness and mercy, the disciples are transformed into the likeness of their master.

Concluding Thoughts and Observations

Many stories are said to go viral these days. One such story that received much attention recently, not just in Christian circles, related to the appointment of a new pastor to a mega-church in the USA. I might just say that the appointment of a pastor is not usually a viral story. However, you might be wondering what connection there might be between mega-churches and congregations in the Scottish Episcopal Church, which no matter what their many virtues might be, typically the adjective 'mega' does not characterize them. The connection is that like the Scottish Episcopal Church the new pastor of that mega-church had read the most important Christian text. The story on the internet went something like this:

There was a large church in the USA which was recently appointing a new pastor. On the same day that the new pastor was to be introduced to the congregation a homeless man

arrived. For thirty minutes before the service he was begging for change to buy food. At this mega-church with a congregation of around 7000 only three people spoke to this man, and nobody gave him any money for food. Despite this he decided to attend the service and sat down in the front row. No doubt since such churches have televised services, this homeless man was told by ushers to sit at the back where he could not be seen. As the service progressed the time arrived to introduce the new pastor. One of the elders invited the new pastor to come forward and to address the congregation. Amid the clapping, the slowly walking figure of the homeless man made his way down the aisle. The clapping faded away as he progressed to the front. The elder, who was the only other person who knew that the new pastor had come in disguise handed him the microphone. His first words were from Matthew's Gospel: "Come to me you who are blessed of my Father [...] For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me. [...] Then the righteous will answer him, Lord when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you [...]? Then the king will reply, Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

After reciting this passage, the pastor then told the congregation what he had experienced that morning. Heads were bowed, there was the absolute silence of shame. He then said, Today I see a gathering of people, not the church of Jesus Christ. The world has enough people, but not enough disciples. When will you decide to become disciples? He then dismissed the congregation.

Becoming a disciple, being a follower of the gentle Davidic messiah-king, is not presented by Matthew as being a life of ease. It is not a life of prosperity, prominence and social standing. As it was for Jesus, so it is for his disciples: it is the way of the cross. Matthew promises followers of Jesus that they will be persecuted and rejected, that they will be delivered up to torment, and that they will follow in the way of the cross. For those in the early church, and for many of those in the contemporary church, 'the cross' is not a mere metaphor. Instead, it is an accurate description of the reality of the life of discipleship. Thus, the choice to follow the pattern of Jesus can be a death sentence. Yet for such disciples the Gospel of Matthew often

continues to be the most important and influential text they have ever read. That is because it shows that the meek kingly messiah has trodden that same path before them. In that story they find the true portrait of the one who is their pattern and king.

I wonder if you picked up the citation in my title in the phrase ‘their pattern and their king.’ I am sure you did. It is from the second verse of a well-known hymn (‘Blest are the pure in heart’ by John Keble) that speaks of:

The Lord who left the heavens,
Our life and peace to bring
To dwell in lowliness with men
Their pattern and their king.

That verse speaks of the humility of kingly messiah, hailed at his birth by the magi as king even while born in lowly circumstances. It looks forward to the one hailed as Son of David on his entry into Jerusalem, yet only a few days later mocked by soldiers as a mere supposed-king. Yet Matthew shows throughout his gospel that only the outcasts, only the foreigners and only the blind can see Jesus as the true son of David and the kingly Messiah. However, amid that recognition, comes the realization that following Jesus means embracing the cross, which is the way of rejection in this life. Yet the Matthean Jesus promises he will be with his disciples even unto the end of the age.

The hymn from which the phrase ‘their pattern and their king’ is drawn is the hymn ‘Bless’d are the pure in heart’. It is a phrase that occurs in only one of the gospels — the Gospel of Matthew, as one of its beatitudes. For those with hearts purified by following Jesus, who recognize him as the Son of David, that sixth beatitude promises that ‘they shall see God.’ Instead of only seeing the immediate, they are promised that they may gaze on the ultimate. According to the Gospel of Matthew, making Jesus one’s pattern and seeing him as king means embracing the way of the cross; such a pathway is the only way in which one may be ultimately blessed of the father and finally see God. With that deep insight into the life of discipleship and the rich understanding of Jesus as the gentle and humble Davidic king, is there really any doubt that the Gospel of Matthew still remains and will always continue to be the most important and influential text for those who are willing take up the cross by allowing the true Son of David to be for ever their pattern and their king.

Book Reviews

CHRISTIAN C. SAHNER. *Christian Martyrs under Islam: Religious Violence and the Making of the Muslim World* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2018). Xxiv, 335pp. ISBN 9780691179100. £23.

This book addresses a sensitive subject, and does so not only sensitively but even-handedly, and with an academic rigour combined with an easily readable writing style, maps, and a glossary. The reader unfamiliar with this neglected area of scholarship is therefore assisted in navigating complex issues, contested histories, and their enduring legacy.

When the Muslim Arabs conquered vast swathes of the Middle East, North Africa, and the Iberian peninsula during the seventh and eighth centuries, they brought under their rule predominantly Christian and Zoroastrian societies with substantial Jewish minorities; the superimposition of Arab language and culture, and Muslim religious observance, effected significant transformation in the conquered societies over a period of centuries. Arabisation and Islamisation were diverse but inextricably linked phenomena, and the responses of Jewish, Zoroastrian, and Christian populations varied accordingly. In addressing the Umayyad and Abbasid periods, with particular emphasis on the Levant, Mesopotamia, and Iberia, with rather less attention to Egypt, Persia, and the Caucasus, and very little to the Arabian Peninsula and Latin North Africa, Sahner is essentially following the evidence. Contemporary and near contemporary sources are limited, their origins are not always clear even if their polemical intent is. Sahner takes care where possible to corroborate information from Christian sources with extant Muslim writings of the period, and he notes that most of the surviving martyrological literature emanates from Melkite sources, whose authors and subjects were susceptible to suspicions of loyalty to the receding Byzantine Empire.

The issue of martyrdom is inextricably bound up with that of religious conversion. While it is clear that, over a period of centuries, majority Christian (and Zoroastrian) populations became predominantly Muslim, it is also clear that the social, economic, cultural, political, and military forces which influenced this process were not uniform, but varied according to local circumstances as well as any imperial policy. Coercion and violence quite clearly were factors, but social and economic benefits were also important, and the prohibition of conversion from Islam ensured that most traffic would be in one direction. Where there were outbreaks of intense brutality against Christians, and also against Jews and Zoroastrians, with slaughter or enslavement of people accompanied by confiscation,

desecration, or destruction of sacred buildings, and looting and destruction of private property, the factors were complex. Continuing strife between the caliphate and the Byzantine Empire was clearly a factor, as were power struggles between the former and predominantly Christian polities on the periphery of their empire. So also were internal, dynastic and other, power struggles within the caliphate, and friction between different Christian groups. Neither the myth of a tolerant and accommodating caliphate, nor that of systemic persecution, is tenable: the truth is more complex, and careful examination of the sources, locating each in its geographical and historical context so far as possible, allows the reader to reach some appreciation of the issues.

Sahner notes that the martyrological literature features prominently Christians who converted to Islam, and subsequently apostatized from Islam in returning to Christianity. In many cases, also, martyrdom is depicted as having actively been sought, often through public displays of blasphemy in places and in the presence of officials chosen for the purpose. Sahner suggests that this reflects a conflict within the Christian communities, between the majority who sought to assimilate to Islamic society while continuing their fidelity to Gospel and Church with no more compromise than necessary, and a minority found predominantly in the Melkite monasteries who reacted against compromises which saw erosion of Christian communities, with continuing haemorrhaging of members to the mosque through marriage or conversion to avoid the social and economic restrictions of *dhimmi* status. Those who glorified martyrdom sought thereby to define more rigid boundaries between the Church and Islamic society, and to encourage Christians to remain faithful irrespective of the costs, and to receive converts from Islam despite the threat of violent retribution.

This book sheds light on aspects of Christian history with which most Western Christians are woefully unfamiliar. In an age in which Christian-Muslim relations are fraught in many parts of the world, it is more than useful to have available as carefully balanced a study of an early and formative period in the often hostile relationship between adherents of the two faiths, and between empires which have exploited those faiths for political and military ends. In eschewing the grand narratives of Huntingdon and Said, this book offers an insight into a more complex world, for which Sahner is highly to be commended.

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ANDREW RUMSEY. *Parish: An Anglican Theology of Place* (London: SCM Press, 2017). 203 pp. ISBN: 9780334054849. £19.99 (paperback).

Parish: An Anglican Theology of Place is a study of the history and place of the parish in England combined with a theological reflection on Jacob's Ladder, Christology and modern developments in human geography related to space. It combines practical experience, theological engagement with spatial geography, illustrative vignettes and quotes from literature, both prose and poetry. Parish is an important term in Church of England identity, governance, ministry and pastoral care.

Rumsey's argument is that the neglected (in his view) idea of parish can be important in how people see their community and local space, including ideas of belonging. The book specifically neglects pastoral issues and ideas of liturgy, focussing on what parish and therefore place looks like from the standing point of a parish door. Doctrine and theology are used to frame the arguments of the book drawing from the Old Testament and Christology, and engaging with non-Christian texts; namely those from the fields of human geography, built environment and philosophy. Rumsey argues that these sources shed important light on the idea of the parish and give new insights particularly as space is socially constructed, following the work of Doreen Massey. The second part of the book looks at the parish in the context of challenging times, studying the little-examined link between the Church of England's status as the national/state church and the deployment of pastoral care in that place. This follows the case studies presented in the cited *Praying for England* (edited by Sam Wells and Sarah Coakley). The first major conclusion of the work is that for effective ministry in the parish the Church should engage with contemporary scholarly work in social and spatial theory and consider where place is involved in Christian doctrine. The second is that the theory of the first major conclusion can and should be strengthened by engagement with the *praxis* and case study examples from those working in the parish place-space context.

Place and space are important issues in the world around us; we all engage with it by living on earth. The book is based on Rumsey's PhD at King's College London: *What kind of place is the Anglican parish? A theological description*, with the research conducted whilst Rumsey was Team Rector of Oxted in the Diocese of Southwark (the author is now a suffragan bishop in the Diocese of Salisbury. The origins of the book mean that whilst aimed at an interested reader, the tone is as an academic book, accessible to the intelligent lay person but with the assumption that they will have access to texts, particularly those on place and theory. The case study vignettes at the start of each chapter are accessible, but really come alive if the reader has experienced suburban life in South East England. The

recommendations, from the conclusions, that the Church should engage in social and spatial theory and vice versa have wide-ranging applications for all shapes of parish and for church members. However, the intellectual endeavour to engage in contemporary scholarly ideas involves access to materials such as peer-reviewed journals and (often expensive) academic tomes.

Rumsey explicitly acknowledges his upbringing in parish contexts and his work in ministry. The reader learns of Rumsey's early life and engagement and experiences of parish in terms of social and spatial themes and also his experiences as an ordained minister. However, Rumsey does not describe or explore his early encounters with human geography, social and spatial studies. The reader knows of the author's first encounter with the parish but not with the scholarly material he recommends the whole church to engage with. The introduction cites existing studies integrating theology and modern spatial studies (e.g. John Inge's work) but does not describe how Rumsey encountered this work. This appears strange in a context where the main conclusion is that parish praxis and the theory of place and space should engage productively with each other, as the parish experience of the author is privileged by explicit description of first and continuing encounters, whilst the newer material to the author is not accredited the same word space.

The author is successful (to this reader at least, but with caveats discussed below) in achieving their aims in extolling the benefits of productively engaging theology and spatial and social studies. The case study vignettes are of interest to a wide audience and give valuable context, as do the literature quotes. These two elements usefully break up what can at times be dense, academic text tackling intellectually challenging ideas, particularly for readers who have not encountered the texts and concepts cited. These are introduced briefly and assume background knowledge of wider paradigm shifts in the parent disciplines of geography and philosophy.

The book, despite its practical illustrative vignettes, is very theoretical. The recommendations and conclusions to engage theology and spatial scholarly work and vice versa are recommendations without practical guidance of how to do this. The illustrative *vignettes* could have benefitted from images, particularly for those who are not familiar with the context of Oxted such as what an English Remembrance Sunday looks like. In a book stressing the importance of space and place, it seems an omission not to help the reader to engage with the specific locations mentioned with visual aids.

The author does not engage with material from missiology, particularly new forms of church which stresses the importance of knowing context well. This is where theory from social and spatial studies can be usefully deployed, effectively illustrating some of the productive

engagement of theology and other scholarly endeavours. However, the author very deliberately delineates the space they are working in the introduction. The conclusion fleetingly talks of the value of the work in dealing with changing times of communities and church, going deeper into contemporary examples than just referencing *Mission-Shaped Church*. However, whilst being non-specific about how to deploy the conclusions in practice, this allows the reader to be creative and think about what the interaction between theology, place and space theory might look like in their context, including outside the English parish system.

The arguments made in the book, although initially beginning in scripture move to drawing more on non-Christian texts, illustrating the benefits of engaging with academic traditions away from theology. The evidence presented, as the book moves through its argument, draws on textual evidence and some case studies, as well as broad Christian doctrine and ideals such as 'love thy neighbour'. The conclusions could have been strengthened by reflecting back to specific scriptural references, perhaps mirroring the book's overall conclusions.

The book asserts that the greatest learning that theology, in particular the parish, can take from human geography is spatial and social studies reflecting geography's innate linking of people and their environment. However, this neglects (explicitly) the value of the temporal dimension of geography with this being explored in the book through history in its concise history of the parish in England. Drawing from the geographical tradition neglects the valuable regional school where the specificity of space and place was taken into account before modern developments in spatial and social studies took place. This reader has a background in geography, including spatial work, and therefore came to the two sets of scholarly endeavour (theology and geography) in the opposite way to the author. This meant that the geographical themes and texts were familiar, and perhaps the book more enjoyable as it was engaging with two known areas of work. However, this reviewer is unsure that the book would be as relevant and engaging without prior knowledge of the geographical themes discussed.

The book is written from a Church of England parish perspective and mentions the Church of Scotland as having a parish model, there is a cursory mention of the Anglican Communion. However, does the book have applications in a different context in the Anglican Communion? The book is very much rooted in its space and place and that of the author: a Church of England cleric. However, the wider work on looking at the Bible and place and what God has to say about place applies no matter the geographical or denominational location. The Scottish Episcopal Church is perhaps further ahead in navigating the challenges to the church-located space and the surrounding space due to having had longer since a formal break between

the two. The Scottish Episcopal Church does not have to deal with the challenges nor the benefits of being a local expression of a national idea (including associated perceptions). However, despite the lack of concrete practical suggestions this reader saw value in the book in bringing together theology and spatial studies in an imaginative way, drawing connections that are between people who have experience of both domains. The resounding idea relatable to any context from this book is the importance of knowing the specific place well, practically and theoretically.

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GEORGE CORBETT, ed. *Annunciations: Sacred Music for the Twenty-first Century* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2019). Xvi, 376 pp. ISBN 9781783747269. £28.95 (paperback).

This book is a pioneering venture in a number of ways, beginning with the fact that it is available ‘for free’ on the publisher’s website. It is also available in print and digital editions, and with web/video/University of St Andrews material to view, a CD by the University’s St Salvator’s Chapel Choir online and to purchase (central to full appreciation of the TheoArtistry project — see p.376 for details). Publication of yet more original poetry is forthcoming. Text and images one expects, but this volume also includes the scores of the three minute anthems which like the poetry were generated by remarkable collaboration between those who survived the advertised competition for writers and musicians, together with members of St Andrews School of Divinity, the University Music Centre,¹ and the University’s major Choir.²

¹ The Music Director, Michael Downes, contributes ‘Music at the Borders of the Sacred: Handel, Elgar and Poulenc’ pp. 311–24; and together with the School of Divinity’s Institute for Theology, Imagination and the Arts (ITIA) will be responsible for the MLitt. in Sacred Music beginning in 2020, in the new Laidlaw Music Centre.

² See Tom Wilkinson, University Organist/Lecturer in Music, ‘Composing for a Non-Professional Chapel Choir: Challenges and Opportunities’, pp. 69–93. See p. 4 note 11 for details of the CD, which includes six new compositions by contributors to the project, five compositions by James MacMillan, and music by composers important to him. Cf. James MacMillan, *A Scots Song. A Life of Music* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2019).

The Editor, Dr George Corbett³ had joined ITIA in 2015 at a critical juncture in its development. Readily and generously acknowledging the pioneering initiatives of Jeremy Begbie's 'Theology through the Arts 'programme' ⁴ the recruitment of outstanding Faculty and doctoral/postdoctoral participants to ITIA opened up the question of the possible relationship between theology and the 'arts', with exploration of 'imagination' but without 'faith commitments' to a readily identifiable ecclesial group. What was required, however, was the willingness to make a constructive contribution to 'theology' in all its complexities. In the same year James MacMillan received a knighthood, and joined ITIA as a professor.⁵ It was discussion of both music and 'spirituality' with MacMillan which brought into focus Corbett's TheoArtistry scheme, which is concerned to find how 'research at the interface between theology and the arts might inform directly the making, practice, performance, curatorship and reception of Christian art, and transform, the role of the arts in theology, Church practice, and society at large.'⁶

³ George Corbett is a musician, an expert on Dante, with theological interests extending from Aquinas to Roman Catholic theology post Vatican II. The book is dedicated to the choir of St Albans Abbey where he began serious musical study. Cf. Matthew Owens, 'Commissioning and Performing Sacred Music in the Anglican Church: A Perspective from Wells Cathedral', pp. 297–310 on Wells' Cathedral Commissions and *newmusicwells* festival; Michael Ferguson, 'Sacred Art Music in the Catholic Liturgy. Perspectives from the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland', pp. 279–95.

⁴ TTA (pp. 37–40) relocated from Cambridge to St Andrews 2000–2008, thence to Duke Divinity School in 2009. Between 2000–2013 the Revd Professor Trevor Hart was Director of ITIA, followed by Gavin Hopps, cf. the latter's 'Music and Theology: Some Reflections on "The Listener's Share"', pp. 337–52; his co-authored book [not edited as stated in the bibliography] with David Brown, *The Extravagance of Music* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018); the essay by Jonathan Arnold, 'Sacred Music in Secular Spaces', pp. 325–35.

⁵ Dr Natasha O'Hear was appointed, in the same year, to be concerned with 'Theology and Visual Arts', though was not involved in the TheoArtistry project.

⁶ Note 7, p. 2. See also Roderic Dunnett, 'Touching the sky in the summertime', *The Church Times* 2 August 2019, pp. 23 & 26; Joanna Moorhead, 'Into the Unknown', *The Tablet* 31 August 2019 on the first performance of MacMillan's Choral Symphony No. 5, its alternative title being '*Le Grand Inconnu* — the mystery of the Holy Spirit'. Apart from conducting his work at the 2019 Edinburgh International Festival, he was also fully engaged with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra's Masterworks

With a splendid combination of ambition, invention and discernment, six composers (from almost a hundred who applied) were chosen to work with ITIA colleagues (including some from other academic institutions, but roped into ITIA for the project) in pairs producing six new choral settings of ‘annunciations’ in the Hebrew Bible, i.e. divine communication (‘Here I am’) as in Genesis 3. 32, Exodus 3, I Samuel 3, I Kings 19, and the Song of Songs 3. 6–11. These are included in the central section of the book, following on from Part 1, a set of reflective essays on ‘Compositional and Theological Perspectives’. MacMillan himself finds Mary at her ‘annunciation’ constituting ‘an invitation to both composer and listener’,⁷ followed by Madhavi Nevader’s superb reconsideration of the incident as ‘theophany’,⁸ and William Hyland’s reading three Gospel Canticles through Bonaventure.⁹ One profoundly moving essay in this section is concerned with the self-reflections of Paul Mealor and his understanding of his own calling to compose music as that of a ‘surrogate priesthood’ thus illuminating the ‘spirituality’ of composition.¹⁰ Like Corbett, he is also a former member of an Anglican choir, in his case at St Asaph’s Cathedral, and like MacMillan has found setting the ‘Stabat Mater’ inescapable.¹¹

Each of the collaborations is noteworthy, with the ‘theologians’ appreciating the insights of the composers, and the latter the resources of the theologians — one acting as catalyst for the other, mutually transforming

programme, focussed on his *Tryst* (poem by William Soutar) written for the SCO in 1989. See Masterworks 2019. Meet the Composer on the web.

⁷ G. Corbett, ‘Mary as a Model for Creative People: Establishing Theologian-Composer Partnerships with James MacMillan’ pp. 31–43, p. 35–36.

⁸ Madhavi Nevader, ‘When Gods Talk to Men: Reading Mary with the Annunciations of the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East’, pp. 45–55).

⁹ William Hyland, ‘Old Testament Typology: the Gospel Canticles in the Liturgy and Life of the Church’ pp. 58–67. Apart from the Franciscan tradition transmitted in this essay, other authors draw on Benedictine, Ignatian and Carmelite insights and practice.

¹⁰ Margaret McKerron with Paul Mealor, ‘The Surrogate Priest: Reflecting on vocation with Welsh Composer Paul Mealor’, pp. 17–29. McKerron clearly played a key role in the project, both acting as ‘visual editor’ for the whole book, exemplified in her own work with Anselm McDonnell which links Genesis 3, ‘Where are You?': The Temptation of Adam and Eve’ and divine presence at the Cross, in ‘Hinneni’, pp. 97–125. Cf. her article ‘TheoArtistry: practical perspectives on “theologically informed art”’, *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, 18.4 (2018), 354–68, which includes a wealth of references, plus ‘related materials’ including ‘Media’.

¹¹ See above, pp. 25–28; and MacMillan, *A Scots Song*, pp. 80–93.

perception. A grandmother's music, stories and whistling, embodied knowledge and 'fire-spinning', 'the sounds and rhythms of fire', a child's nightmare, bewilderment and terror, the representation of silence, the vastness of natural landscape, wind, breath and whispers, and the approach of a mysterious bridegroom on his wedding day — each of these sheds unexpected light on what we may otherwise suppose we understand, though have only begun to glimpse a fragment of what may be there to be discerned.¹² Each of the 'pairs' reflects on the experience of collaboration and the generation of insight, the confidence born of creativity, and the development of 'text' for the composer in each case. One startled the other some of the time, and as it happens, provoked hitherto unsuspected meaning. Reading the 'set text', then the new texts and each composer's 'setting', turned the reader back to the 'set text' juxtaposed with the new one. Whatever else might be learned from these collaborations, the trust generated between novel 'conversation partners' was crucial. For they read biblical texts together, both beginning with 'commentaries' pulled from the shelf, but then searching for other resources in art-work broadly construed — music, digital media and film — whatever may be found. Given present-day preoccupations, one of the most astonishing essays is the last one, which picks up the 'gendered tension' both in God's wrestling with Jacob, juxtaposed with a reading of the 'masculine identity' and vulnerability of the first essay, concluding with the possibility of hearing the voice of Solomon as that of Adam in praise of Eve's beauty, finding reconciliation with women and with God (p. 259). The 'complex issues' of voice and gender are negotiated here by the composition of what the composer refers to as 'feminine' music, and having the whole (agender) choir sing the 'male' voice (p. 268).

Beyond what is so far available from the TheoArtistry project, we note also the 'Poets' Scheme', similar to the 'Composers' Scheme' in that six 'theologians' were teamed with six poets (from over fifty applications), first reading their new work in public at StAnza 2018, the international poetry festival at St Andrews. Not MacMillan, but one of his collaborators, Michael

¹² In addition to the first of the published collaborations as in note 10 above, see Marian Kelsey and Dominic de Grande on 'Jacob Wrestling'/'Whilst falling asleep, Savta told me of Jacob', pp. 127–60; Rebekah Dyer and Kerensa Briggs, 'Setting Fire to Music'/'Exodus 111', pp. 173–88 (Rebekah Dyer also designer and manager of the TheoArtistry website); Caleb Froelich and Seán Doherty, 'A Dark Dream'/'God Calls Samuel', pp. 189–216; Mary Stevens and Lisa Robertson, 'Elijah's Silent Annunciation'/'The Silent Word Sounds', pp. 217–52; Kimberley Jane Anderson and Stuart Beach, 'Musical Arguments and Gender Performance'/'The Annunciation of Solomon', pp. 253–75.

Symmons Roberts, was the mentor for the poets.¹³ One particularly interesting development was the focus of Maria Appichella and Joel Maynard on the text (I Kings 19) which became 'Elijah's Silent Annunciation' in the 'Composers' Scheme'.¹⁴ In this different reading, they noted Elijah's 'spiritual burnout and burden', 'panic' and paranoia', his 'fear and insecurity' (p. 103). The poem which resulted was 'Belle's curse', reimagining the conflict Elijah endured as a conflict between female singers in a pub song competition, with the winning entry being Liza's Christian worship song. She endures acute distress in the Welsh countryside, but given succour at last by an eccentric elderly woman, she finds 'The Lord is here holding my gaze'. Thus Maynard concludes that Appichella's poetic world is 'a God-haunted reality' (p. 104).

We can at this stage only anticipate the publication of the 'Poets' Scheme' work, which will undoubtedly exemplify afresh the possibilities of collaborative work. In particular, 'theologians' learn to present their 'research' with 'an open-handed posture of grace', resulting in 'mutual expansion of knowledge and understanding', with yet more to explore in a whole range of mediums (p. 105). It is now recognized that 'reception exegesis', following on from 'reception history' has in effect long been part of Christian tradition in e.g. at least the forms of liturgy, preaching, prayers. It would seem to be the case that the contributors to *Annunciations* have both attended to the kinds of exegesis current in textual and historical analysis, but have also engaged with one another in trust, appreciation, courage, and affirmation, between them exemplifying the attentive empathy which makes it possible to listen and attend with great care to insights from whatever quarter — a manner of interaction with implications for theology well beyond the present project of TheoArtistry.

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¹³ For the development of the relationship, see MacMillan, *A Scots Song*, p. 72–74, especially in respect of their work together on the 1999 'Quickening', performed in a new version by the RSNO and Choirs on 10 August 2019 in the Usher Hall as part of the Edinburgh International Festival.

¹⁴ Joel Maynard, 'TheoArtistry: collaborations with Sir James MacMillan and Michael Symmons Roberts', *Theology* 122.2 (2019), 100–07. See also Ewan Bowlby, Transpositions (online, ITIA) 27 September 2019, 'TheoArtistry 'beyond clarity'; Theology, Spirituality and the Art of Irresolution', on the Theoartistry Student Led Partnership Project designed and overseen by Rebekah Dyer and Caleb Froelich.

CHRISTINE SCHENK. *Crispina and Her Sisters: Women and Authority in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017). xx, 459 pp. ISBN 9781506411880. £25.

The thesis of this book is that there is evidence that women exercised leadership more widely in the early Church than is commonly acknowledged, and that the opposition to this attested in the literary sources, which ultimately prevailed, should in its turn be overcome in the Roman Catholic Church in particular. Much of the evidence is derived from analysis of funerary objects, in particular sarcophagi with human figures depicted on the sides and lids.

However sympathetic the reader, and the reviewer, may be to the cause of reform in the Church ecumenical, and however willing to acknowledge the contributions the author has made to this cause over many decades, this book is not without its weaknesses. Women who exercised patronage and influence in the early Church have been known about, and celebrated, for a long time. What is needed is to understand more fully the nature of the leadership exercised, how it related to the evolving Church structures of the early centuries, and how representative were the wealthy and privileged women (and men) of whom written and artefactual evidence survives.

The author writes about material with which her familiarity is non-specialist. This is particularly evident where primary texts are cited through secondary sources, with little evidence that quotations have been studied in their original languages or in their wider contexts. Her grasp of the technical work of archaeologists is not always evident, and statistical tables are used as a somewhat blunt instrument with which to generate evidence. Intriguing, and even compelling, as some of the evidence discussed may be, many of the judgements made are subjective, and there is little consciousness apparent of the distinction between probability and speculations which are no more than plausible.

The fundamental problem with this book is that the author is content to deal with a small number of highly privileged and wealthy women, admittedly the group of whom most records remain. There is no appreciation of just how stratified society was, or of the appalling disparities in wealth – a great deal more extreme than are ever-widening gaps between rich and poor in Britain and North America today. Those who could afford to be buried in sarcophagi, in particular those with elaborate carvings on which this study depends, were no more than 1%, or at most 2%, of the population of the empire, and social and economic mobility were a great deal more restricted than the author assumes to have been the case. A more substantial

study of death and funeral rites in ancient societies, on which there is substantial scholarship available, would have revealed this weakness, and have provided further insights which could have strengthened the thesis of this book.

What this book does achieve, and for which readers will be rightly appreciative, is that it presents an enormous amount of data, much of it not easily accessible to the non-specialist, which require further investigation – even if the inevitable, if wholesome, outcome will be to reveal more clearly how much we simply do not know, and are unlikely ever to be able to reconstruct with any confidence. Ultimately, however, the case for reform and renewal in the Church must depend, not on historical reconstruction but on theological principle.

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DAVID JASPER. *Heaven in Ordinary: Poetry and Religion in a Secular Age*. Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2018. 151 pp. ISBN 9780718895419. £20 (paperback).

David Jasper's *Heaven in Ordinary* is a charming foray into the borderlands of theology and literature with an autobiographical twist. On the surface, *Heaven in Ordinary* has its roots in the [St Aidan's Lectures](#) 2018, but as one reads early-on in the Introduction, the roots go deeper: to Jasper's own love affair with poetry and, of course, with religion. That love affair, like any other, is particular and peculiar. Jasper's *raison d'être* for *Heaven in Ordinary* is neither to justify such affairs nor to explain them; rather, it is to introduce us to Thomas Hardy, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Thomas Traherne, Philip Sidney and Geoffrey Hill on Jasper's own terms and in that order. The list is achronological, to be sure, and perhaps atypical to others' affairs with poetry and religion, but that is not the point. Instead, they are selected and discussed such wise because they 'reflect a variety of attitudes towards Anglicanism, both for and against, that sum up, to a degree, [Jasper's] own complex relationship with that tradition within the Christian church' (2–3).

It is, indeed, that 'complex relationship', that affair, which serves as the contextual mooring for Jasper's survey. To many a reader of *Heaven in Ordinary*, these five poets are already acquaintances, if not old friends. Yet, even if a reader has encountered each of these five poets before, notwithstanding different contexts, that only serves to pique the reader's curiosity as to the why and wherefores of Jasper's 'entirely personal' choices (9). The redolence of Anglicanism is palpable in *Heaven in Ordinary*, where the reader seems, at times, to be in the library and, at other times, in the pew;

but on finishing the book to find him or herself ensconced in the cosiness of an Anglican priest's study, where theology and literature are themselves happily at home.

So, what of Thomas Hardy, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Thomas Traherne, Philip Sidney and Geoffrey Hill? Jasper indulges in their poetry and in religion as he likes, and it is a delight to accompany him in his indulgence. Thomas Hardy is Jasper's 'first love' (2). Hardy is perhaps better known as a novelist than a poet, having published most of his poetry later in life and after much success in prose, but Jasper begins with a poem, '[The Darkling Thrush](#)'. He compares Hardy's thrush to John Keats's nightingale ('[Ode to a Nightingale](#)') to the effect that Hardy's own religious doubt and pessimism never entirely squash his hope. 'True poets – and Hardy was a true poet at heart – *make* things so that there *is* hope, in spite of it all', writes Jasper. 'Hardy was no theologian. He was not even consistent (though perhaps few of us are). But there is always for him a light in the darkest place, though the cost of finding it may be extreme' (19, *italics original*).

Samuel Taylor Coleridge was Jasper's 'second love' (39). His predilection for Coleridge lies both in Coleridge's regard for words 'as nothing less than living things' as well as the fact that 'Coleridge took the imagination absolutely seriously' (40). Coleridge is, surely, a fascinating figure: poet, philosopher and critic. He was a Christian and a onetime Unitarian. He suffered with anxiety, depression and opium addiction. Almost every English-language educated person has known him a wee bit due to [The Rime of the Ancient Mariner](#) and [Kubla Khan](#), but as Jasper notes Coleridge was, 'in a sense and in the eyes of much of the world, a total seeming failure. [...] But still he was rather wonderful' (41–42). Jasper leads the reader through much of Coleridge's poetry, especially 'The Rime' and 'Kubla Khan', to show that, for Coleridge, 'Poetry is not just about life; it is living, and alive with something very close to what in Christian theology, after the opening of St John's Gospel, is known as the "logos" or vital divine Word' (49). Along with Jasper, the reader is a tad stupefied by all that Coleridge offers as in the final words of 'Kubla': 'For he on honey-dew hath fed, / And drunk the milk of Paradise.'

The poet whom Jasper considers after Hardy and Coleridge is Thomas Traherne, taking us farther back in time and to a different sort of person, as Traherne was a parish priest who is commemorated in some liturgical calendars of the Anglican Communion and best known for his [Centuries of Meditations](#). Jasper is fascinated with Traherne's poetry. For example, '[The Salutation](#)', where Jasper sees *theosis*. He sees Traherne as 'on the latitudinarian edges of Protestant orthodoxy [...] deeply aware of the glory that is in the soul of each one of us, finally overwhelming sin [...]' (64). Jasper notes (60), along with many other commentators, that the heart of

Traherne's prose and poetry is the idea of 'felicite', a childlike acceptance of God's love evoking joy. Jasper completes his chapter of Traherne with 'Affection' from the *Commentaries of Heaven*, where he writes: 'And that is God, who doth my love regard / And that is God, who doth my Lov [*sic*] reward'. Traherne, like his brother priest and (metaphysical) poet George Herbert, died young and with a sense of innocence and trust in the goodness of God.

After Traherne, Jasper brings us back yet another century to Philip Sidney, who also died in his 30's, though from gangrene (after having been wounded in battle). A courtier and diplomat, in addition to scholar and soldier, Sidney along with his sister, Mary (Countess of Pembroke), translated the Psalter. Jasper pays tribute to Sidney as a renaissance man and author of such works — not the easiest of reads for us today — of *Astrophel and Stella*, *The Defence of Poesy* and *Arcadia*. Jasper's focus, though, is on the so-called *Sidney Psalter*. Sidney's translations are 'very different from the much earlier tones of what is for most of us the far more familiar music of the Coverdale psalms [...]. They are complex and meditative poems to be read [...]. More than just translations,' for Jasper, 'they are original poems in their own right' (87). Jasper gives samples, and comments upon them, of Sidney's translations of Psalms 1, 4, 14 and 139, among others, which bring the reader to a deeper understanding of both poet and psalmist. And, importantly, Jasper guides us to an understanding of Mary's role in Sidney's oeuvre.

Ah, then Jasper brings us forward to the twenty-first century with Geoffrey Hill and Jasper's convoluted relationship to a contemporary and kindred spirit he — sadly — never met in person. Familiar names appear in Jasper's recounting, for example Donald MacKinnon and T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound and W. H. Auden. Jasper declares Hill as difficult to read but well worth the effort (98 *et passim*), even if a reader may be 'left exhausted, mentally and spiritually' at times (103). Jasper worked himself through all of Hill's published poetry and brings the reader a tantalizing survey of why Hill's gems are worth our while. A '*Canticle for Good Friday*' is Jasper's favourite and one which he quotes in full as he guides the reader through it. So too, he introduces the reader to other significant Hill poems only to conclude that Hill is 'never comfortable', 'troubling', but 'he is always worth the time spent with him' (114). Jasper ensures that as he guides us.

The final chapter in *Heaven in Ordinary* focusses on the pastoral tradition in English poetry rather than on a particular poet. It nicely rounds out the book. For this section, Jasper looks to the tradition, going back centuries, to the poetry growing out of the Anglican and English parish communities, largely based on the *Book of Common Prayer* and extending to our own day in persons such as David Scott and Rowan Williams, to name

but two. This chapter brings us samples and other names too little read these days, like George Herbert, Isaac Watts, William Cowper, Robert Walker, John Keble, Christina Rossetti, and Gerard Manley Hopkins. Throughout this final chapter — as with the conclusion — Jasper's admiration for the learned and devoted pastor emerges clearly. Taking a lead from Chaucer's 'povre persoun of a toun', Jasper idealizes a pastor who is holy, charitable *and* learned 'such learning being necessary for the true preaching of the gospel' (132).

Heaven in Ordinary is well worth the reader's time. Jasper waxes eloquently about poetry and religion in a secular age, and we do well to listen to him. Trained voices like Jasper's are hard to come by and rarely heard in our day. More's the pity. For we desperately need them to sing not only in the luxury of our priests' studies, but in the whole of the pastoral tradition of Anglican Christianity from which they are born.

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