



What Is Orthodox Anglicanism?

From a series of sermons delivered by +Scott E. McLaughlin (retired)

Part 1

For the past several months we have been preparing to reprint a classic Anglican work entitled *Catholic Principles*, published in 1902, and written by the Revd Fr. Frank Westcott, a priest of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Fr. Westcott wrote at a time when the Protestant Episcopal Church was thoroughly orthodox in faith and practice: his book was designed to introduce the essential tenets of Anglicanism to those outside of our tradition. Though published nearly one hundred years ago, its message is fresh and new: it contains the best and most succinct treatment I've yet seen of the Protestant theory of the Church as contrasted with the Roman Catholic theory of the Church, and both as opposed to the true **catholic**, that is, the Orthodox Anglican understanding of the Church. The book is one of those rare gems one sometimes finds hidden in the dusty corners of a used bookstore. I thank God that today we have the ability to scan the book by computer and reprint it for another generation of Christians.

We plan to use Fr. Westcott's book as a required text at St. Andrew's Theological College and Seminary. We are preparing for the first printing now, and I have been asked to write a new Preface for the book, which we plan to entitle *The Principles of Orthodox Anglicanism*.

One of the challenges in writing the Preface to the book is to briefly define "Orthodox Anglicanism." That may sound strange, considering that we constantly use those terms, but self-definition is a critical and often difficult task. It took Frank Westcott over four hundred pages to outline the **catholic** principles of the Church: I'm going to attempt to discuss these principles in three sermons!

One way of approaching such self-definition is from within our own tradition. We could discuss Orthodox Anglicanism as the great *Via Media*, the "middle way" between

Roman Catholicism and Protestantism—between corporate Christianity and individual salvation, between Sacrament and Word. Or again, we could discuss Orthodox Anglicanism from Anglican theologian Richard Hooker’s illustration of the strong three-fold chord of Scripture, Tradition, and Reason, later cast into the familiar “Three-legged stool” of the Anglican approach to theology.

But perhaps the best way to approach the subject is from another direction. What are the bare minimum dogmatic requirements for someone or some organization to join us? What are the doctrinal principles required for agreement to bring unity between us and another jurisdiction—especially one coming into us from outside of our Anglican heritage? This is the very question faced by the Episcopal Church and the Canterbury Communion in the late 1800’s—far before the days of Episcopal Church Bishops Pike, Spong, or Jane Dixon!

Anglican leaders in that day understood the unique place we hold to bring unity to Christendom. And after much discussion and debate, they propounded a document called the “Lambeth Quadrilateral,” that laid out the minimum standards for Christian Unity. Today these same four irreformable points of doctrine are the best starting point for defining Orthodox Anglicanism, and indeed, identifying Orthodox Anglicans—regardless church or jurisdictional affiliation—around the world.

The Quadrilateral as set forth by both American and British Churches and paraphrased below, stated that Unity could be found in,

1. Acceptance of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the revealed Word of God, containing all things necessary to salvation, and being the rule and ultimate standard of faith;
2. Acceptance of the Nicene Creed as the “Symbol of the Faith,” and the Apostles’ Creed as the Baptismal confession.
3. Acceptance of two Sacraments, that of Baptism and Holy Communion—being ordained by Christ Himself—ministered with unailing use of Christ’s words of institution and of the elements ordained by Him; and,
4. Acceptance of the Historic Episcopate as essential to the ministry of Christ’s Church, adapted locally to the varying needs of the people of God around the world.

Let us briefly examine each of these points as they form the foundation of Orthodox Anglicanism. In our examination, we shall find that our doctrine is far wider in scope, far more universal in its application, than normally thought. By defining what Orthodox Anglicanism is, we shall also clearly see what it is not. And, by this examination, we shall also of necessity define Heterodox Anglicanism as it presently exists in the world today.

If I were to describe our Church in one phrase, it would be “Biblical Catholicism.” Of all the three great historic branches of the Church Catholic—Anglican, Eastern, and Roman—ours is the only one based squarely upon the revelation of God in the Holy Scriptures. The uniqueness and importance of the Word of God is confessed in all the writings of the Anglican Fathers—both “low” and “high” church—as well as the

Articles of Religion. The Sixth Article states, “Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or thought requisite or necessary to salvation.” Thus, our reliance upon and confession of Holy Scripture as the record of God’s will for His Church, is the great dividing line between us and the Roman Communion, which has manifestly added to the biblical record. This is most easily demonstrated in the Roman requirement for salvation of belief in the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and her Assumption into heaven. These Roman dogmas are not found in Scripture, and therefore form no part—other than pious personal opinion by some—of Orthodox Anglican doctrine.

The primacy of the Word is also confessed throughout the Prayer Book. In the Prayer for the Whole State of Christ’s Church, we pray for God to “grant that all those who do confess thy holy Name may agree in *the truth of thy holy Word*, and live in unity and godly love.” Of Bishops and other ministers, we pray for grace, “that they may, both by their life and doctrine, set forth *thy true and lively Word*...” “True” and “lively” are descriptions repeatedly used of the Holy Scriptures in the Book of Common Prayer. In the Office of the Institution of Ministers, Holy Scripture is called the “*divine Word*,” and the priest prays that he might be given grace “in preaching, to give a readiness of thought and expression suitable to the *clearness and excellency of thy holy Word*.”

Orthodox Anglicanism is thus a biblically based Faith. By adhering to the Word of God we separate ourselves from the Eastern and Roman Communions, who are not so forthright about the Bible in their branches of the Church; and also the Protestants (**re: contemporary Evangelicalism, NOT Classic Reformation Protestantism**), who in the main have come to reject the Bible as being a reliable witness and record of the Acts of God for the salvation of mankind in human history. It is ironic that a movement that began with the Scriptures alone as a source of doctrine should end up by embracing skepticism and rationalism; yet, in today’s seminaries (**especially the mainline seminaries**) the higher criticism of the Scriptures has now become an exercise in political correctness: the Bible is being deconstructed in order to expose its patrimonial sins and to impose a feminist gloss upon the sacred page.

Heterodox Anglicanism, too, has not only embraced such skepticism, but is leading the way toward destruction, evidenced by Bishop Spong’s book, *Liberating the Gospels*, the essence of which teaches that the truth of Scripture should bow to the perceived guilt driven social imperatives of the liberal elite in the United States. Here is Spong’s view of the veracity of the Holy Scriptures:

“There might well have been no such person in history called Joseph, the spouse of Mary, the earthly father of Jesus . . . there was in all probability no manger . . . no literal shepherds, no angels, no guiding star, no magi, and no flight into Egypt . . . there was no Temptation during forty days in the wilderness; nor did Jesus ever preach the Sermon on the Mount . . . There was no literal raising of Lazarus from the dead . . . There was no miraculous feeding of the multitudes . . . Jesus did not himself either create or deliver such parables as the prodigal son, the Good Samaritan . . . there was no literal triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem . . . Judas may not have been a person of history at all . . . though the crucifixion of Jesus was real, most of the narrative events of Holy Week, including the Last Supper and the words from the cross, were creations of an

interpretive liturgical process there were no literal Jerusalem resurrection appearances, in an upper room or elsewhere, no Emmaus road episode, no invitation to touch the wounds in the hands or side of the risen Christ there was no cosmic ascension of Jesus no literal Pentecost experience [of the Apostles].” Spong, of course, is an easy foil for his bombastic impudence and rancorous rejection of the Faith. The sad fact is the apparent existence of at least tacit acceptance of his positions among large numbers of Episcopalians.

One the other hand, our defense of the truth of the Bible is not to say that Orthodox Anglicans abuse the Holy Scriptures as do the **Evangelical** fundamentalists . We insist that the Bible is an accurate Record of God’s Acts in history for the salvation of mankind and it contains the Reflections of God’s People upon those Mighty Acts. We further recognize that the sacred volume must be understood in terms of the cultures in which it was written, and that Christian scholarship has a valued place in the study and exposition of the Bible. Hence, we do not use the Bible like a cookbook or the Instructions to the 1040 tax form: they are not the property of any one person and are not subject to private interpretation (**without regard for the tradition of the Church**). One of the Canons of the Church of England, promulgated during Elizabeth the First’s reign, in 1571, ordered that clergy were to teach nothing “but that which is agreeable to the doctrine of the Old Testament and the New and that which the catholic fathers and ancient Bishops have gathered out of that doctrine.” The Bible is the Church’s book (**not in the Roman sense that the Church created her and has the sole infallible authority to interpret her**). They are *Holy* Scriptures—sanctified and set apart for the service of the Church. The importance of this distinction will become clearer as we proceed to consider the other points of the Quadrilateral.

For the Church has authoritatively set forth scriptural doctrine in the two great Creeds of Christendom: the Apostles’ Creed historically associated as the Baptismal Confession, and the Nicene Creed as the Eucharistic Confession—the veritable “Symbol of the Faith.” Orthodox Anglicans believe the Creeds. As the Eighth Article of Religion states, “they may be proved by the *most certain* warrants of Holy Scripture.” We thus believe in a literal Virgin Birth, a real death suffered by our Lord, a real Bodily Resurrection, the Lord’s Ascension witnessed by the Apostles, and we await His glorious return as our Judge. The authority of the Church dogmatically set forth the Creeds, and the doctrine the Creeds propounded was made binding for all Christians at all times.

On the other hand, can you see how a rejection of Holy Scripture leads, inevitably, to a rejection also of the Creeds? There are two ways in which portions of Christendom have rejected the Creeds, and thereby separated themselves from the historic faith.

The first is the common Protestant (**again re: contemporary Evangelical**) habit of replacing the Creeds by “Affirmations”—platitudes to which individuals temporarily subscribe assent. They are the latest attempt to formulate the faith in a way acceptable to liberal social activists who control so much of the governing structures of mainline Protestantism.

The second way the Creeds are rejected is by subtly shifting the wording of them to allow theological ambiguity. This is more insidious form of creedal sleight-of-hand began with the Roman Communion's attempt to promote modern language equivalents to the ancient liturgy after the days of the Second Vatican Council. Although these first efforts were no doubt sincere, the result has been to promote "fuzzy" theology ending finally in open heresy. A sample of this mid-sixties madness is found in a sermon preached by Episcopal Church Bishop James Pike in St. Louis, in 1964: "The fact is that we are in the midst of a theological revolution. Many of us feel that it is urgent that we rethink and restate the unchanging gospel in terms which are relevant to our day and to the people we would have hear it; not hesitating to abandon or reinterpret concepts, words, images, and myths developed in past centuries when men were operating under different world views and different philosophical structures."

The outcome of this is apparent in the changes made in the Nicene Creed regarding the Incarnation and the miraculous Virgin Birth of our Lord. The orthodox American Book of Common Prayer states that our Lord "came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man." The Episcopal Church's Prayer Book of 1979, following the lead of Rome, states our Lord "came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man." The former statement asserts that only one man in human history has ever been incarnate by the Holy Ghost: our Lord Jesus Christ. The latter statement differs not only in order but also in kind. It could be said that every human being is conceived by the power of God, and all children are the incarnation—the embodiment—of their parents. Thus, the change in the Creed only hints at a vague role for the divinity in the birth of Jesus, while retaining much of the cadence of the old Creed, and even use of the word "incarnate," though in a different sense than that taught by the Fathers of the Church. One can stay in the pews (or keep one's job at the church) and still confess the new "creed," while remaining in unbelief.

St. Paul described this situation in his second Epistle to St. Timothy. He wrote, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; *having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away*" (2 St. Timothy 3: 1-5).

Having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: an apt description. Especially since the Creeds, as dogmatic propositions based upon Holy Scripture, are connected with the sacramental power of the Church. The Apostles' Creed is traditionally the Baptismal confession, while the Nicene Creed is traditionally recited at celebrations of Holy Communion. Next week we will continue our examination of Orthodox Anglicanism, considering the last two points of the Lambeth Quadrilateral: the Sacraments and the historic Episcopate.

May God grant us the courage sincerely to stand for the truth in these days of theological equivocation and doctrinal denial.

Let us pray: Blessed by thy Name, O Lord God, for that it hath pleased thee to have thy habitation among the sons of men, and to dwell in the midst of the assembly of the saints upon the earth; Grant we beseech thee, that in every place set apart to thy service, thy holy Name may be worshipped in truth and purity throughout all generations; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Part 2

. . . of all the great branches of the Catholic Church—the Anglican, the Eastern, and the Roman—ours is the one based most squarely upon the revelation of God in the Holy Scriptures. Our allegiance to the Bible is taught in the Articles of Religion, as well in the Book of Common Prayer. This distinguishes us also from the Protestant (**re: contemporary Evangelicalism NOT Classic Reformation Protestantism**) sects, who have for the most part abandoned their historic reliance upon the Bible as a sure source of doctrine. But, we are also to be distinguished from the **Evangelical** fundamentalists, because we insist the Holy Scriptures are the Church’s book: they are not the property of any one person and not are subject to private interpretation.

Our allegiance to Scripture leads to an acceptance of the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds as propositional truth binding upon all Christians at all times. Those who have abandoned the Creeds in favor of theologically feeble “Affirmations” contrast our position. Still others have subtly shifted the wording of the old Creeds in order to promote theological ambiguity. We concluded that the inclusion of the two Creeds as one of the points of the Quadrilateral is important. We live in an age not known for the clearness of its theological thought: our duty is thus to safeguard and remain faithful to the deposit of the Faith granted to us from the past, rather than to rush headlong in an effort to redefine them.

For such abandonment or redefinition of the Creeds is the darling of the modern age. Today’s religious world has been described by Ravi Zacharias in his book *Jesus Among Other Gods*: “Philosophically, you can believe anything, so long as you do not claim it to be true. Morally, you can practice anything, so long as you do not claim that it is a ‘better’ way. Religiously, you can hold to anything, so long as you do not bring Jesus Christ into it.”

The modern fear of theological clarity—of picking sides in the eternal issues of life—stands in steep contrast to the points we are considering, especially the two remaining points of the Lambeth Quadrilateral: the Sacraments and the Episcopate. Both of these points aim directly at the weakness of modern religious skepticism: the idea that spirit interacts with matter and that human authority has a divine origin. The third point of the Quadrilateral requires acceptance of two Sacraments, that of Baptism and Holy Communion—being ordained by Christ Himself—and ministered with unflinching use of Christ’s words of institution and of the elements ordained by Him. Just as Orthodox Anglicans are committed to the Word of God, so we are equally committed to the work

of God in the Holy Mysteries of the Church. We are sacramental Christians. We understand that the sacraments are divinely instituted means by which we receive the touch of God, and we receive them with faith, with joy, and with thanksgiving. Furthermore, we understand the sacramental principle that underlies Reality itself. The first verses of the Bible speak of God creating the cosmos out of nothing, and then the Spirit of God hovering or brooding over the creation, to bring it into order and into life. Spirit interpenetrates matter: this is the oldest concept in religion. Yet it is also the newest challenge to modern science. Some theoretical physicists posit that the virtual photon of the Electromagnetic Field is the bridge between matter and spirit. Such particles are “real” and “not real” simultaneously; they are substantive and yet are pure energy; they are also in some sense matter and they may also, in some sense, be spirit. And these particles flood the universe: they are everywhere and fill everything; they are Light, as God is so often called Light, and as our Lord Christ called himself the Light of the world. Sacramental Reality, even if it cannot be touched, weighed, or measured, is nonetheless real: we have our Lord’s word upon it. And, we should remember that the sacraments, in biblical and early Christian terms, were called Holy Mysteries. They are still referred to as such in the Eastern Communion, and here we agree with them.

Just because the two sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion are specified in the Quadrilateral does not mean that we have rejected the traditional seven sacraments of the **catholic** faith. These two are *generally* necessary to salvation—that is, under the normal divine economy, people are grafted into the Kingdom of God by Holy Baptism and maintained in the Kingdom by Holy Communion. Marriage is also a sacrament, but not everyone is married. Ordination is a sacrament, but not everyone receives Holy Orders. Thus, **not** all of the sacraments are **necessary** for all people. Anglicans give greater veneration to Baptism and Holy Communion due to their direct institution by Christ Himself: he commanded us to “do this.”

The 25th of the Articles of Religion asserts quite boldly that the dominical sacraments are “not only badges or tokens” (**contrary to contemporary Evangelicalism**) of a Christian’s profession of his faith, but “rather they [are] sure and certain witnesses, and effectual signs of grace, and God’s goodwill towards us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken (enliven), but also strengthen and confirm our Faith in him.” Sacraments are defined in the Catechism as “an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us; ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof.” Thus, in Holy Baptism, the water is sanctified by the Priest, for “the *mystical* washing away of sin.” The Priest prays God to “give thy Holy Spirit to this Child, that he may be born again, and be made an heir of everlasting salvation”

Likewise in the Bidding, sometimes read preceding the celebration of Holy Communion, is the description of the Eucharist as “the most comfortable Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ; to be by them received in remembrance of his meritorious Cross and Passion; whereby alone we obtain remission of our sins, and are made partakers of the Kingdom of heaven.”

If Anglican Baptismal and Eucharistic doctrine has on occasion fallen short of this standard—of the fullness of the ancient Catholic faith—we dare not repeat the theological flaws of the past. As Prof. John J. Elmendorf, of Western Theological Seminary wrote in 1890: “If the Saviour of the world preserves us in union with Himself through this holy and blessed Sacrament, it should surely be the sign and seal of unity, as it is the source of unity among all believers. And if the history of Christendom in its later ages tells us another story, *the fault is in us, not in Him or in the means which He has instituted.*”

The Orthodox Anglican approach to the Holy Mysteries must be distinguished from that of Rome, by our reluctance to define the “whys” and “hows” of Sacred Reality. Transubstantiation, the doctrinal bane of the Reformation, was developed upon the archaic “science” of Neo-platonic (**Aristotelian**) thought. Scientific conclusions may change daily, but at least we know that the cosmos doesn’t work the way St. Thomas Aquinas and the Scholastic theologians thought. Further, western theologians have displayed an unfortunate fixation of attempting to define the indefinable, and the result has been schism after schism and generations of Christians who view the sacraments not with joy but with dread. In contrast, our approach to the sacraments rests not upon superstition or unreasonable fear, as seems to be the case with many of the Roman and, it seems, of some Eastern Orthodox faithful.

And, it is sharply distinguished from the (**fundamentalist**) Protestants and their more enthusiastic cousins, the Evangelicals. For these believe their faith exists only between their ears: Christianity is a mental construct and alive (if one is a liberal Protestant) only by social or political action, or (if one is a conservative Protestant) “by witnessing for Jesus.” Both officially discount the idea that God acts, and acts today, for his people. The logical conclusion of this approach, if we could but see into the distant future, will be a rejection of the Incarnation (the ultimate example of the sacramental principle). One can glimpse the beginnings of this rejection in the common Evangelical obsession with modern Judaism as the supposed focal point of the Second Coming of Christ. If the Jews are still “the apple of Jehovah’s eye”, can the rejection of the Messiah be far behind?

Yet, there is with each one of us an innate, intuitive sense of the sacramental Reality I am speaking about. As a young proto-Baptist preacher, I can remember being taught that God the Holy Spirit uses the preaching of the Bible *as a means* of converting men’s hearts, and bringing them to the foot of the Cross. Is this not an outward, visible sign of an inward, spiritual grace? Every human being at heart is a Sacramentalist, for in Christ “we live, and move, and have our being” (Acts 17:28).

We celebrate the sacraments at our Lord’s own command, and thus there is an order and structure to their administration. Prof. Elmendorf, whom we quoted above, specified that acceptance of the dominical sacraments also implied their proper administration:

“1. There must be a lawful minister of the Sacraments.

2. There must be a Divinely appointed action, the words uttered, the material which the Lord blesses, and the outward act which employs and unites the word and the matter.

3. There must be a general intention on the part of those engaged to do what the Lord ordained.”

One can quickly see the necessity, for the due celebration of the Holy Mysteries, the need of a “lawful minister of the Sacraments.” If Christ commanded his Church to do these things, he of necessity instituted the means by which they were to be performed. This leads us to the fourth and final point of the Lambeth Quadrilateral, the necessity of the Historic Episcopate. It is at this very point where we will see the greatest contrast between the Heterodox and the Orthodox, Anglicans.

Let us pray. Grant, O Lord, that as we receive the blessed Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, that we may come to that holy mystery with faith, charity, and true repentance; and being filled with thy grace and heavenly benediction, may, to our great and endless comfort, obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of his passion. *Amen.* (adapted from 1928 BCP, page 565).

Part 3

. . . The last and perhaps the most contentious of the points of the Lambeth Quadrilateral is the necessity for the Historic Episcopate as the divinely appointed government of the Church. This is the requirement for recognition that, by the expressed will of our Lord, Episcopal rule—rule by Bishops—is essential to the Church’s existence on earth.

First, we need to understand that we are speaking here of the *historic* Episcopate, that is, the rule of Bishops who trace their consecration back to the Holy Apostles and thence from our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The historic Episcopate is to be distinguished from those religious bodies which claim to have “re-instituted” Apostolic Order: the Mormons—the so-called “Latter Day Saints”—come to mind in this regard, as does the “New Apostolic Church,” which is the newest manifestation of the Irvingite sect originating in the late 1800’s. The historic Episcopate is also to be distinguished from those bodies whose administrative officers are called Bishops, but who do not have, or make, claim descent from the Apostles. The Methodists and most Lutherans would fall into this category.

Thus, the divinely-ordered government of the Church is reserved to those Bishops claiming a continuous chain of consecrations two thousand years old. This is an important concept, and one that has always been a feature of the worship of God upon the earth. When we examine Rabbinic ordination, for example, we find that the Old Testament understanding of ordination is one that can be traced back to Moses. Moses ordained Joshua as his successor by the laying-on of hands (Numbers 27: 15-23, Deut. 34:9). Every Rabbi ordained after that time traced his ordination to Joshua, who received it at the hands of Moses, who received his authority, in turn, directly from Jehovah.

The Lord instituted the same chain of authority in the New Israel. Of course, the disciples understood that Jesus was far more than a Rabbi: He was the Lord’s own Anointed One, the Messiah. Jesus ordained the Apostles, not by the laying-on of hands,

but by His word (St. John 15:16) and by the receipt of his breath (St. John 20: 22, 23), which sacramentally constituted the reception of the Lord Jesus' own Spirit. Finally, we have the in-rushing power of the Holy Spirit resting on the Holy Apostles on the Day of Pentecost. It is after this time that we see the Christian Church conveying authority to rule and to teach by the ancient Old Testament practice of the laying-on of hands, and the institution of the Apostolic Succession (see, for example, 2 Timothy 1: 6, 7).

The Church was careful to preserve the record of the unending chain of Episcopal consecrations throughout her history, and although Christendom is sadly splintered even among those jurisdictions blessed with the Apostolic Succession, there can be no ultimate doubt about the intent and determination of those jurisdictions to hold the Succession as an essential constituent of the Church. This was instilled in the Church at an early date: St. Ignatius, writing at the close of the first century, wrote, "Do ye, beloved, be careful to be subject to the bishop, and the presbyters and the deacons. For he that is subject to these is obedient to Christ, who has appointed them . . ." (*Letter of Ignatius to the Ephesians*, Chap. 5). In another place he wrote, "To those who indeed talk of the bishop, but do all things without him, will He who is the true and first Bishop, and the only High Priest by nature, declare, 'Why call ye Me Lord, and do not the things which I say?' For such persons seem to me not possessed of a good conscience, but to be simply dissemblers and hypocrites" (*Letter of Ignatius to the Magnesians*, Chap. 4).

The historic Episcopacy is also important in distinguishing between the Church Catholic and the sectaries who have left the Church, or formed new bodies with a self-appointed claim to teach in the Name of Christ while remaining outside of His own Church. I remember the movie *Apostle*, watching actor Robert Duvall portraying a Pentecostal preacher who had fallen from grace, baptize himself and lay his hands on his own head, and thenceforth calling himself an Apostle.

Apostolic Succession was also the barometer by which one could determine the orthodoxy of a believer: if he was under the authority of the historic Episcopate, he was orthodox in belief. But, this is sadly not always the case today. And, it is just at this point that we must distinguish between *Apostolic fellowship*—the lineal descent of the Episcopate—and the *Apostolic doctrine* found in the Scriptures and the Creeds (Acts 2:42). For the pure Apostolic Succession to exist, ***both elements must be found*** in the Church. Thus, to the extent that Episcopally-ruled jurisdictions have abandoned the Faith, to the same extent have they imperiled the true and pure Succession of the Church. Further, some jurisdictions now assert the right to ordain as a Bishop someone who is incapable of receiving the grace of Episcopal consecration. I am referring to the consecration of women "bishops" found here and there in the Canterbury Communion. The Succession is broken under such circumstances, and the sacramental grace of Christ is not to be found at her hands.

Caligula once made his horse a Roman Senator, mocking the traditional authority of the old Roman Republic. The ordination of women priests and deacons and the consecration of women bishops, ostensibly in the line of the Holy Apostles, mock the history and traditions of the Church and the commandments of Christ.

There are several dreadful consequences regarding this matter. First, there is the individual parishioner who has little or no voice in the issue of women's ordination, and is left without the means of grace to be found in the sacraments when "administered" by a woman who goes through the motions of sacramental celebration. Second, members of the Episcopal Church USA hardly realize that the policy of their jurisdiction has placed them outside of the Catholic Church in the eyes of other **catholics** around the world. At one time Eastern Orthodox prelates would advise their adherents to receive Communion in an Anglican or Episcopal Church if no priest of their own jurisdiction was at hand: I can assure you that no such advice is given today! Third, women posing as bishops in the Apostolic Succession promote the sin of schism. Many of us have watched the sad spectacle of "Bishop" Jane Dixon of the ECUSA Diocese of Washington legally and ecclesiastically tormenting a traditionalist parish under her "pastoral care." The result may be that these faithful Christians will come to distrust the Episcopacy, and— even if otherwise knowledgeable of its necessity in the Church—may have learned to shy away from proper Apostolic oversight in the future. The same can be said of many of the "independent" Anglican parishes in the United States.

The Historic Episcopate is one of the four irrefrangible points which define an Orthodox Anglican, yet it is today the most imperiled and the one which needs the most attention. We must begin to see the Bishop less as an administrator and more as a chief pastor, the one whom God holds accountable for teaching the ancient Faith to today's generation of baptized Christians. As recently quoted in *US Anglican*, the Bishop of Wellington (in New Zealand) said, "The Bishop in particular is responsible for preserving the truth. He should never be an innovator. It is his task to insure that the faith and practice of the Church today are one with that of the Church of apostolic days. Only if he is faithful can you be sure that in the Church today you will find the trust entrusted to her by our Lord."

What is Orthodox Anglicanism? ***It is belief in the Holy Scriptures, confession of the historic Creeds, practice of the Holy Sacraments, led by those in succession to the Apostles, both in their faith and their practice.*** One can easily see that this simple definition far exceeds the cultural and liturgical heritage of the Church of England. Indeed, what has been described is a church Episcopal in polity and Orthodox in faith.

Some might be surprised that we have not included the use of the Book of Common Prayer in our definition of Orthodox Anglicanism. In most religious bodies, what one believes is more important than how one worships. But such is not the case with us. One often hears that the Book of Common Prayer is the distinguishing mark of an Anglican, and this is true. *But, it is his distinguishing mark for the wrong reason.*

In English history since the Reformation, the secular authority has known that it cannot legislate the conscience or religious convictions of individuals, hence it has tolerated a wide variety of beliefs while imposing a uniformity of worship embodied in the Book of Common Prayer. Controversy over the interpretation of the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer became a substitute for real theological conflict and resolution.

Today we have thoroughgoing **catholics** happily celebrating a Communion service written by Thomas Cranmer, who many insist had a thoroughgoing **Classic Reformation** Protestant understanding of the same service! So, while “praying shapes believing,” it is not the only source of belief, and an enforced uniformity of worship has proven, in the end, to be inadequate to the task of perpetuating the Faith once delivered to the saints (St. Jude 3).

It is often complained, of the newer Prayer Books, that so many optional Rites and Liturgies are included as to overthrow the very notion of “common” prayer. With the modern State’s control of religious worship and its insistence upon uniformity virtually disappearing, the many Rites in the new Books demonstrate the contention above, since now nearly every theological persuasion tolerated in the Church must have its “own” liturgical representation in the Prayer Book.

And, while we love, and will continue to use, the old orthodox editions of the Book of Common Prayer (1662 and 1928) around the world—for we are not living in an age known for its theological acumen or for its skill at English prose—this not to say that these editions are perfect, nor that one just as orthodox cannot be produced today in contemporary language, “yet so as that the main body and essential parts of the same (as well in the chiefest materials, as in the frame and order thereof) have still been continued firm and unshaken” (from the *Preface* of the Book of Common Prayer). We err when we make the Prayer Book an idol: our Faith is greater than the tools we use to put it into practice.

Another consequence of the insistence upon uniformity of worship is the predilection of Anglicans to align themselves into fractious “low” and “high” church cliques. Far from quibbling about issues of churchmanship, we should heed the sagacious comments of C.S. Lewis in *The Screwtape Letters*, where the demon Screwtape advises the demon Wormwood to so manipulate his human charge that, “if your patient can’t be kept out of the Church, he ought at least to be violently attached to some party within it. I don’t mean on really doctrinal issues; about those, the more lukewarm he is, the better. . . . The real fun is working up hatred between those who *say* “mass” and those who *say* “holy communion” when neither party could possibly state the difference between, say Hooker’s doctrine and Thomas Aquinas’, in any form which would hold water for five minutes. And, all purely indifferent things—candles and clothes and what not—are an admirable ground for our activities. We have quite removed from men’s minds what that pestilent fellow Paul used to teach about food and other unessentials—namely, that the human without scruples should always give in to the human with scruples. You would think they could not fail to see the application. You would expect to find the “low” churchman genuflecting and crossing himself lest the weak conscience of his “high” brother should be moved to irreverence, and the “high” one refraining from these exercises lest he should betray his “low” brother into idolatry. And so it would have been but for our ceaseless labour. Without that, the variety of usage within the Church of England might have become a positive hotbed of charity and humility.”

Finally, let us close with an historical glance at the history of our Way of Faith: there has never been a time since the first days of the Church that there have not been

“Orthodox Anglicans.” From the earliest days of the indigenous Celtic Church, through the Roman hegemony of the Middle Ages, through the dark, bloody days of the Reformation, through the philosophical ages of Pietism and Rationalism, and now to the onslaughts of Feminism and Postmodernism: Orthodox Anglicanism has survived. Survival has sometimes come, as is the case today, in small groups—scorned and derided by their erstwhile brethren—holding the flame of the Faith for a better day. May God grant that, through our efforts, this Orthodox Anglican Way flourish in the years to come.

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*Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and
Ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk
Therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.*

—Jeremiah 6:16

The Orthodox Anglican Church is the US member of the global Orthodox Anglican Communion, established in the 1960's as a self-governing Anglican body. We were the first to provide a haven for disillusioned Episcopalians and all disaffected Christians who seek the OLD PATHS of the Holy Church.

OUR TRADITIONS: ANGLICAN

As Anglicans, we worship God using the traditional Book of Common Prayer and the Authorized Version of the Bible. We are led by Bishops who trace their Apostolic Succession through the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ and enjoy the same Episcopal Succession as the See of Canterbury, among others.

OUR BELIEFS: ORTHODOX

We believe and confess the three ancient Creeds of the Church: the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed. We believe Holy Scripture is God's written word. We believe in the genuine spiritual power of the sacraments. We believe in the power of God to heal the sick and broken-hearted. We believe that loyalty to our Lord is expressed by service to our fellowmen. We believe in the necessity of inward spiritual development and the outward amendment of life of every Christian. We stand for biblical faith and morality. Thus, we ordain only Godly men to Holy Orders and affirm that marriage is a sacred bond between a man and a woman.

OUR MISSION: BIBLICAL FAITH AND ANGLICAN PRACTICE

Our purpose is to present our Lord Jesus Christ in Word and Sacrament, and to perpetuate and promote, with the help of Almighty God, the biblical Faith and Anglican doctrine, discipline, and worship as directed by the Book of Common Prayer.

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