

Anglican Catechism in Outline (ACIO)

Interim Report

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (Matthew 28:19-20)

Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. (Colossians 1:28)

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of the Global South Anglican Primates Steering Committee

Ash Wednesday, 2008

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I. Preface

1. Grace, mercy, and peace in Jesus Christ our Lord to all faithful, lay readers and catechists, deacons, priests and bishops of the Anglican Communion.

The risen Lord Jesus Christ before he ascended to heaven gave the apostles the Commission to “go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything [he has] commanded [them]” (Matthew 28:19-20). He entrusted them with his authority to evangelize and communicate to the whole humanity everything he had commanded them. The church has therefore always understood that the training and instructing of the faithful are inseparable from the evangelistic task. Their neglect would lead to the spiritual impoverishment of the church. (See Martin Luther, *Preface to the Small Catechism*; John Paul II, *On Catechesis in our Time*, 1.)

Background to the Report

2. Catechetical responsibility is a key concern identified by Global South Anglican churches. In his presentation “The Church is One” in the first plenary session of the Third South to South Encounter held from 25 to 30 October 2005 at the Red Sea, Archbishop Yong Ping Chong of South East Asia proposed:

While there are those who see the recent crises in the Anglican Communion as signs of a "break-up", many others see it as a sign of an Anglican renewal of her faith and mission within the wider Christendom and the world. The present calls for faithfulness to the tradition we have received; as embodied in our worship and in doctrine. We are called to a life of holiness. We ask Anglicans who share this vision to renew their commitment to it. This entails rigorous work. Clearer catechisms need to be written; we need to take a closer look at how theological education is done. Concerned and gifted Anglicans from different walks – whether they are theologians, pastors, young people, and those in mercy ministries – need to come together to engage in deeper theological reflection. Out of this would come a new appreciation of the fides fidelium (faith of the faithful), a renewal of how life and mission is shared in the Communion beyond the confines of ecclesiastical "externals", and a recovery of the Gospel mandate to the multitudes still outside the Church.

3. This concern was taken up in the Red Sea Communiqué, Section 28 on “Theological Education”. The Global South Primates Steering Committee in a follow-up meeting in May 2006 appointed a four-member Theological Formation and Education Task Force made up of representatives from Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda and South East Asia. At the top of the list of tasks identified is to produce an Anglican catechism for today.

4. The Anglican Theological Formation and Education Task Force held its first meeting in Kigali from 19 to 22 September 2006. The Task Force saw a need to provide a common theological framework to underpin the varieties of catechisms throughout the Anglican Communion. In January 2007, the Task Force recommended to the Global South Primates the drafting of such theological framework that would “incorporate common elements for each catechism reflecting Biblical faith, historic

Anglican heritage and the mission situations in which the faithful live today”. This task would “complement with the concurrent drafting of the Anglican Covenant”.

5. The Global South Primates Steering Committee in its February 2007 Meeting in Dars es Salaam mandated the Task Force to carry out this task. They further endorsed the appointment of a team of Corresponding Members to help the Task Force in this project. Members of the drafting committee are as follows:

Members of the Theological Formation and Education Task Force:

- Rev. Dr Joseph Denge Galgalo (Kenya)
- Rev. Dr Edison Muhindo Kalengyo (Uganda) (from May 2007)
- Rt Rev. Dr David Zac Niringiye (Uganda) (to April 2007)
- Rev. Canon George Ugochukwu Njoku (Nigeria) (to July 2007)
- Rt Rev. Dr Bishop Olubayo Olugbenga Obijole (Nigeria) (from August 2007)
- Rev. Canon Dr Michael Nai-Chiu Poon (South East Asia), Convenor

Corresponding Members:

- Rt Rev. Dr Paul Barnett (Australia)
- Rev. Dr Kevin Donlon (USA)
- Professor Oliver O’Donovan (UK)
- Professor David F. Wright (UK) (from September 2007)

6. The Global South Primates Steering Committee further agreed to a work schedule recommended by the drafting committee. The drafting committee plans to submit an Interim Report in February 2008 to the Steering Committee for circulation to the Anglican Communion for comments. The Final Report will be released in June 2008.

7. The drafting committee worked together mainly through e-mail correspondence. It met from 11 to 14 December 2007 at Saint Peter’s Hall, Trinity Theological College in Singapore.¹ Bishops and clergy from the Province of South East Asia participated in the Meeting as observers.² The Diocese of Singapore hosted the event. We are very grateful for their contribution.

The Convenor kept the Global South Primates Chair, the Most Rev Peter Akinola, and General Secretary, the Most Rev John Chew, informed of its progress. The Convenor briefed the Council of Church of East Asia Full Assembly on the catechism project during its Meeting in Singapore on 5 October 2007. Ten primates read and commended an earlier draft of the Recommendations during their China visit from 21 to 30 October 2007.³

A Catechetical Framework to safeguard Common Catholicity, Apostolicity and Confession of Faith

8. Baptism is the defining moment in a person’s life. It is a gracious and powerful act of God: the summoning of the new people of God to gather around Lord Jesus Christ.

¹ Members present in the Meeting are Dr Michael Poon (Chair), Dr Edison Kalengyo, Bishop Olubayo Obijole, Bishop Paul Barnett, and Dr Kevin Donlon.

² They are Archbishop John Chew, Bishop Rennis Ponniah, Rev. Daniel Wee, Rev. Gilbert Wong, Rev. Hwa Chih, Canon Terry Wong, Canon Fred David and Archdeacon Michael Galami.

³ *Communiqué of the Global South Primates, Shanghai, October 30, 2007, 7.5; A Statement on the Global South Primates’ Visit to China, 9.*

It also demands radical discipleship and missionary responsibilities amid a hostile world (Matthew 5:1-16; Romans 12:1-2).

9. The process of becoming a Christian – the imparting of the essentials of the faith – is a chief concern of the Christian community from its earliest beginnings.⁴ Anglican Catechism in Outline (ACIO) aims to recommend a framework for *making disciples*, that they would be faithful followers of Jesus Christ in today’s world. In practical terms, catechetical instruction and formation must lead to new believers pursuing, in the power of the Holy Spirit, the call of Jesus along four dimensions: i. the call to new identity (Galatians 4:6-7) and new community (1 Peter 2:9-10) to live to the praise of God’s glory (Ephesians 1:3-14); ii. the call to faithful witness (Jude 3) and endurance (Matthew 10:22); iii. the call to holiness (1 Peter 1:13-16) and stewardship (Matthew 25:14); and iv. the call to ministry (Romans 12:4-8; Galatians 6:10) and mission (Acts 1:8; Matthew 5:13-16). If in the high days of Christendom it was possible for baptism to be treated as a routine popular cultural rite without losing its meaning altogether, that is not possible now. Preparation for baptism (and confirmation) calls for a serious and intentional effort, both from those preparing for baptism, and more so from those who are charged with catechetical responsibilities.⁵

10. ACIO does not only offer recommendations on the catechesis, that is, the instruction for those preparing for baptism. It also holds out a challenge for the Communion to refocus its structure and liturgical life to give prominent attention to its catechetical responsibilities. In the words of Saint Paul, our prayer is that “being rooted and established in love”, Anglicans worldwide “may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge — that they may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God” (Ephesians 3:17-19).

11. What ACIO offers is the *framework*, no less and no more. The catechesis embodies the faith the church has received from Christ’s apostles (1 Corinthians 15:1-2). This deposit of faith is the foundation upon which the church upholds right teaching and right worship under different circumstances in all places and in all generations. Historically Anglicans have always understood this common catholicity, apostolicity and confession as “grounded in the Holy Scriptures, and in such teachings of the ancient Fathers and Councils of the Church as are agreeable to the said Scriptures. In particular such doctrine is to be found in the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, *The Book of Common Prayer*, and the Ordinal” (Canon A5 “The doctrine of the Church of England”).⁶ This confession underpins the Preface of the Declaration

⁴ See Everett Ferguson “Catechesis and Initiation,” in *The Origins of Christendom in the West*, ed. Alan Kreider (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001), 229-268; *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 2nd ed., ed. Everett Ferguson (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), s.v. “Catechesis, Catechumenate”; *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, ed. Hans J. Hillerbrand (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996), s.v. “Catechisms”; *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed., ed. E.A. Livingstone (Oxford, Oxford UP, 1997), s.v. “catechism” and “Catechism of the Catholic Church (1992)”.

⁵ See David F. Wright, “Baptism in Mission: Catechumenate and Discipleship,” in *What has Infant Baptism done to Baptism? An Enquiry at the end of Christendom* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2005), 63-82; Alan Kreider, “Baptism and Catechesis as Spiritual Formation,” in *Remembering our Future: Explorations in Deep Church*, ed. Andrew Walker and Luke Bretherton (London: Paternoster Press, 2007), 170-206.

⁶ See further the Commentary on the Scripture, the Creeds and the Historical Formularies in Section III.

of Assent (Canon C15 of the Church of England) and Section Two of the draft Anglican Covenant:

Each member Church, and the Communion as a whole, affirms:

- (1) that it is part of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, worshipping the one true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit;*
- (2) that it professes the faith which is uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures as containing all things necessary for salvation and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith, and which is set forth in the catholic creeds, which faith the Church is called upon to proclaim afresh in each generation;*
- (3) that it holds and duly administers the two sacraments ordained by Christ himself – Baptism and the Supper of the Lord – ministered with the unfailing use of Christ’s words of institution, and of the elements ordained by him;*
- (4) that it participates in the apostolic mission of the whole people of God;*
- (5) that, led by the Holy Spirit, it has borne witness to Christian truth in its historic formularies, the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, and the Ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons;*
- (6) our loyalty to this inheritance of faith as our inspiration and guidance under God in bringing the grace and truth of Christ to this generation and making Him known to our societies and nations. (Draft Anglican Covenant, 2)*

In the words of Geoffrey Bromiley, this common basis gives “hope of promoting the unity in truth and the freedom under authority which are so necessary to the well-being of the Church”.⁷

12. At the same time, communicating Christianity well requires sensitive understanding of the particular missionary situations. Provinces are in better positions to attend to such tasks. Provinces should also make every effort to understand the social contexts of their mission. They need to teach the Christian faith in creative ways, drawing out its implications, and communicating it in languages that are accessible to the laity in general. Therefore different provinces should find suitable ways to implement the recommendations.

Why the need for ACIO today?

13. The Anglican Communion, as a worldwide body with autonomous provinces in both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres, began to take shape after the end of the Second World War. Organizational matters have understandably been a main preoccupation. The transfer of metropolitan authority to the local churches and the rapid multiplication of dioceses in the Southern Hemisphere have demanded such practical considerations.

14. As a result the renewal of Anglican catechetical instruction has not received the attention it deserves from the Communion as a whole. To introduce new Christians into the common life of the body of Christ means to share the tradition of Christian practice and understanding that marks our family of churches, so that the question “What does it mean to be an Anglican?” is addressed alongside and together with the question, “What does it mean to be a Christian?” A common Anglican approach to

⁷ G. W. Bromiley, “The Purpose and Function of the Thirty-Nine Articles,” *The Churchman* 73.2 (June, 1959): 65.

catechesis underpins the “bonds of affection” and mission activities of the Communion. Without this solid foundation, we cannot counter the centrifugal forces that can tear the Communion apart.

15. The Roman Catholic Church has wisely responded to this challenge by refocusing for the whole community of the faithful their catechetical responsibility. From the promulgation of *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* in 1972 to the publication of *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in 1992, Roman Catholics took concrete and radical steps to equip parishes to be effective in the processes of Christian initiation. Their rediscovery of a patristic model for initiation led to renewed interest and reexamination of catechetical processes in their own traditions and beyond.⁸ Looking back at our own Communion, though the Catechism contained in the *Book of Common Prayer* may still assume a formal status in the catechumenal processes, individual provinces, dioceses, and parishes often have to improvise their own teaching programmes and material.⁹ There is little common reference point for the doctrinal and moral teachings of the church. The canonical status of the historic formularies, the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*, and the Ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons – in other words, the formularies that have underpinned Anglican tradition of worship and theology – varies with different provinces. More importantly, a huge discrepancy exists between the formal and working theologies of the church. What is preached from the pulpit and what is held as important by churches in practice are often at variance with what churches formally confess. Anglicans have always recognized that there is a proper width of interpretation of Christian faith and have sought to maintain a disciplined comprehensiveness. Yet it is essential that what is transmitted to the baptized should be the teaching of Jesus Christ, not the religious opinions of individual ministers. If this cannot be ensured, new Christians will be left without the resources of Christian understanding to guide their thought and action.

16. This urgency is underlined by the common challenges facing the churches in Communion. Anglicans often remain biblically illiterate and uninformed about their particular faith traditions. At the same time, radical reinterpretation of the Christian faith and morals are taking place both in the Southern Hemisphere and in the Northern Hemisphere where Christianity has historically been a dominant presence. Today we live in a world that often regards Christian faith as damaging to social and national life, and even as a threat to human survival. In contrast, other religions experience a fresh resurgence in the Southern Hemisphere and beyond. Christians often live as tiny minorities in hostile surroundings that try to marginalize and redefine both the Christian faith and the Christian church. They are often not sufficiently confident of their faith identity to engage positively with opportunities for loving witness offered by inter-faith dialogue, into which they may be pushed by secular forces rather than by an authentic conviction of their mission.

⁸ From among the Roman Catholics, see e.g. Michel Dujarier, *A History of the Catechumenate: The First Six Centuries*, trans. Edward J. Haasl (New York: Sadlier, 1979); Edward Yarnold, *The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation: The Origins of the R.C.I.A.* 2nd ed. (Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1994); from the Reformed tradition, see e.g. John W. Riggs, “Introduction: The Liturgical Movement and Baptism as Christian Initiation,” in *Baptism in the Reformed Tradition: An Historical and Practical Theology* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 2002); from the Pentecostal tradition, see Simon Chan, *Liturgical Theology: The Church As Worshiping Community* (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2006).

⁹ See Appendix 1 for an introduction to the historical background of the 1662 Catechism.

An ACIO for the whole Communion

17. ACIO is for the whole Communion and looks towards its longer-term future. It is not an apologia for specific positions on controversial issues. For this reason it holds back from addressing the issues that immediately challenge the Communion at present, not because these do not have their own importance, but because in the longer term the faithful and reflective transmission within the Communion of the faith once delivered to the saints is the only way to ensure that it will be equipped to address not only these but such other questions as may come to seem urgent in future years.

18. ACIO is also for each and every diocese in the Communion. We need to see each diocese and her family of parishes as an organic whole. The role of the diocese should be to lead, stir, support, and connect the parishes to fulfill the mission and ministry the Lord has entrusted to his church. The parish is fundamental to our ecclesial life as the people of God. It is at the parish that evangelizing and disciple-making takes place. Therefore, the catechetical process must include the *building up and renewal of our parish life* so that the spiritual leadership, ethos, dynamic structures and community life of our parishes lends itself to the transformation of believers to fruit-bearing radiant and robust disciples of Christ.

19. We adopt Biblical and Prayer Book languages as much as possible in the Report, especially in the doctrinal section of the Key Recommendations (Section A). Biblical references in English are from the New International Version. For editions in other languages,¹⁰ we use the versions of the Bible churches use for their public worship.

20. The task force takes as the common reference point the classical position that our doctrine “is grounded in the Holy Scriptures, and in such teachings of the ancient Fathers and Councils of the Church as are agreeable to the said Scriptures. In particular such doctrine is to be found in the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, *The Book of Common Prayer*, and the Ordinal of the Church of England (Canon A5 of the Church of England)”. We include in this Report an appreciative account of our traditions and their histories. The Commentary (Section III below) elucidates the Scripture, the Creeds and the historic formularies. Our traditions shape our spirituality, nourish and direct us to become a biblically-based, credal, liturgical, episcopal, mission-minded and socially-engaged community. Section IV provides illustrations of churches communicating the Christian faith in vastly different sociopolitical situations. The Appendix (Section V) contains background information on the Anglican Catechism 1662, and on the Revised Common Lectionary which is commonly used by churches in the Communion.

21. This is a first-offering in theological reflection from the provinces in the Southern Hemisphere for the whole Communion. It arises from an act of discipleship to interpret mainstream Anglican traditions for today, and to order our communal and personal lives in submission to Lord Jesus Christ. “Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old (Matthew 13:52).”

¹⁰ The Final Report to be released in June 2008 will be in English, French, Spanish, Swahili, Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo and Chinese.

O Lord our God, who dwells on high and regards the humble of heart; who has sent forth as the salvation of the race of men your only-begotten Son and God, our Lord Jesus Christ: Look down upon your servants the catechumens, who have bowed their necks before thee; make them worthy in due time of the laver of regeneration, the remission of sins, and the robe of incorruption. Unite them to your holy, catholic, and apostolic church, and number them with your chosen flock. That with us they may glorify your all-honorable and majestic name: of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen. (Litany for the Catechumens, Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom)

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II. Key Recommendations

- A. What is the content of the catechesis?
- B. What infrastructures should be in place?
- C. Where and when catechetical processes take place?

A. What is the content of the catechesis?

The Holy Scripture: A lamp to my feet, and a light for my path (Psalm 119:105)

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. (Ephesians 1:13)

For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. (1 Peter 1:23)

The Holy Scripture – which, as the testimony to God’s work given by the Spirit of God is the written Word of God – is the final authority for Christian belief and teaching. Authentic traditions of doctrine and practice acknowledge its supremacy. Anglicans recognize this authority by giving the reverent, systematic, diligent and attentive reading of Holy Scripture a central place in worship and life. People are brought to faith in the first place through hearing the testimony that the Scriptures bear to Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of the Father. In catechesis the believer is put in possession of the Scriptures as a light to the path and a measure by which to appreciate and judge the treasures of Christian understanding and practice from every age.

The church needs to encourage the faithful to become biblically literate. It is God’s Word to his People that they would be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). The apostles – as the Ancient People of God did – saw catechetical instruction as a central task: “Hear, O Israel (*Shema*)”. Creedal statements are woven in the fabric of the New Testament epistles. (Refer to Matthew 28:19; Acts 8:36-37; Romans 1:3-4; 4:24, 8:34; 1 Corinthians 8:6, 15:3-6; 2 Corinthians 13:13; Ephesians 4:4-6; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:12-20; 1 Timothy 2:5-6, 3:16, 6:12-16; 2 Timothy 4:1-2; Hebrews 6:1-2; 1 Peter 3:18-22; 1 John 4:2.) These primitive creeds are coordinated with the overall catechetical formation of early Christians.

Structure of the catechesis: Faith, Hope and Love, the three that remain

From the time of the early church, faith, hope and love (“the three that remain”, 1 Corinthians 13:13) have underpinned the catechetical structure. The Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Ten Commandments became the basis for expounding these three respective doctrines.¹¹

1. Faith: New foundation

¹¹ See J. Pelikan, *Credo: Historical and Theological Guide to Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2003), 161; *Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*, Vol. I: Early, Eastern, and Medieval (New Haven: Yale UP, 2003), 20-21.

Exposition of the Nicene Creed¹²

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. (Matthew 28:19-20)

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? . . . Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. (Romans 10:14-17)

1.1 Exposition of the Creed.

God is Lord of the spirits (Number 27:16; Mark 1:27; Revelation 22:6), of knowledge, science, history, and the ambitions of man. And he is sole Lord, because the government of this universe is not contested or contestable (Daniel and Revelation, throughout). The First Article presents the vision for the Christian community to counter the present-day obsessive devotion to technological materialism and witchcraft, and to engage critically with those of other Abrahamic faiths. The God Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the Word of Life – the last Adam – who unites human beings to an intimate fellowship with the triune God, to one another, and to the material and spiritual universe (1 Corinthians 15:45; Colossians 1:15-20). From the fullness of his grace he made known to the world the glory and patient love of God (John 1:1-18).

The Second Article clarifies the central question “who Jesus is”. By his incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension Jesus revealed himself as the Christ, the Son of the living God, commanding the obedience of all humankind (Matthew 16:13-20, Romans 1:1-6; Philippians 2:6-11).

“We proclaim Christ crucified” (1 Corinthians 1:23). The death of Jesus Christ on the cross and his vindication by being raised by God from the dead is a once-for-all representative act that accomplished our redemption in God’s “tender love towards mankind” (Mark 10:45; Romans 6:9-10; Collect for Palm Sunday / the Sunday next before Easter), so that “all people everywhere” are summoned to repent and believe (cf. Acts. 17:30). Upon the cross he made “a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world” (Prayer of Consecration, *BCP 1662*; *Article XXXI*: “Of the one oblation of Christ finished on the Cross”).

The sigh *Veni, Creator Spiritus* – Come, Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life – is a mark of Christian life in anticipation of the freedom of the final redemption (Romans 8:18-27). (Note the unique inclusion of *Veni, Creator Spiritus* in the Ordinal, *BCP 1662*.) “Visit our minds, into our hearts / Thy

¹² By Nicene Creed, we refer to the text of the “Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed” used in the *Book of Common Prayer*.

heavenly grace inspire; / That truth and godliness we may / Pursue with full desire / . . . Our weakness strengthen and confirm, / (For, Lord, Thou know'st us frail;) / That neither devil, world, nor flesh, / Against us may prevail" (Ezekiel 36:25-27; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Romans 8:28-39).

Exploration of the gift of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit; discussion on the church, the sacraments, forgiveness of sins, and the resurrection of the dead.

- 1.2 Repentance of sins and renunciation of evil come together with the declaration of allegiance to Christ and the true belief. The exposition of the Creed should end with an emphasis on repentance: "turning to God from idols to serve a living and true God" (1 Thessalonians 1:9; Joshua 24:23-24).

2. Hope: New Identity and Calling

Exposition of the Lord's Prayer

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. (Romans 8:15-17a)

You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. . . . And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. (Ephesians 2:19-22)

- 2.1 Incorporation into the Body of Christ. Exposition of the Lord's Prayer begins with the cry "Our Father", the assurance the Spirit of God offers to believers that they are accepted by God.

The union with Christ through suffering, dying and rising with him is at once a gift, a call for radical discipleship, and a pledge (Romans 6:1-14; Philippians 1:21, 3:7-14; 1 Peter 4:12-13). This underpins the character of community-belonging and sharing (2 Corinthians 1:3-7; Philippians 2:1-2).

The Christian community is called to be the sign of the God's sovereign rule to come. God reveals his final purposes for the world in and through the holy people "from every tribe and language and people and nation" whom his Son has purchased through his blood (Revelation 5:9-10). Exposition of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper follows.

The Holy Spirit brings the newly baptized into a living tradition, as "fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household". Christians – even as minorities – belong to the "one, holy, catholic and apostolic church". Anglicans need to understand the history of the Christian church; and specifically their own tradition. It is a history of God's divine love towards us that finds its fulfillment in the Incarnation of his Son Jesus Christ (Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:9-10). The sixteenth-century Reformation, which has imprinted its character indelibly upon Anglican life and worship, was not the foundation or the beginning; it was a renewal which God intended for the blessing of the whole church. That is why the church not only seeks doctrinal and moral

purity and missionary energy, but also unity and fellowship in the truth of the Gospel with other Christians. The Anglican churches are therefore committed to the pursuit of the opportunities to draw nearer other Christians that began to open up in the twentieth century.

Treatment on the role of the Holy Spirit in giving gifts and ministries for the empowering and renewal of the church's mission (Acts, throughout; 1 Corinthians 12-14; Ephesians 4:1-16).

2.2 Opposition of church and the world.

Christians pray for the coming of God's Kingdom in a world that is always subject to God's sovereign rule even while it rejects it (John 1:5, 11; 15:18-19; 1 John 3:13). Led by the Spirit of God, Christians pray for the delivery of the world God has created and redeemed from bondage to sin and death. Thus they set themselves in opposition to "the world" that prevails around them, the world men and women have constructed in refusing God's rule.

Encouragement to Christians who experience persecution from an unbelieving world.

2.3 Christian belonging demands at the same time an uncompromising rejection of idolatrous attitudes and practices in the Christian community. Treatment of the place of church discipline and restoration of the lapsed in Christian life (1 Corinthians 10:21; 2 Corinthians 2:5-11, 6:14-16).

3. Love: Prepared for Good Works

Exposition of the Summary of the Law and the Ten Commandments

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2:10)

If you love me, you will obey what I command. (John 14:15)

I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. (2 John 5-6)

Exposition of the twofold love-command follows.

"Love of Christ has priority over all other obligation because it is the love of Jesus as the Christ, the acceptance of him as the one whom the Father has sent. From it there follows that we are given to love the whole reality in its due order: God, neighbour, self and the world. And from it there follows obedience to the authoritative teaching and life which interpret what is given us in reality; 'If you love me, you will keep my commandments' (John 14:15)."¹³

¹³ Oliver O'Donovan, *Resurrection and Moral Order: An Outline for an Evangelical Ethics* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1986), 243.

Christ has come “not to abolish the Law or the Prophets, but to fulfill them” (Matthew 5:17). His sovereign interpretation of the moral law overthrows every kind of legalist pedantry (e.g. Mark 7:8), and opens the way to the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 5:3). It is by building on his words alone that we shall be secure against testing and trial (Matthew 7:24-27).

3.1 The human person

- 3.1.1 Embodied Individuals: Christian attitude to his/her own bodily life (1 Corinthians 6:9-20), to the prospect of death (Romans 8:28-39; 1 Corinthians 15:51-58; 2 Corinthians 4:7-18; Philippians 1:21-26, 3:7-11), the acquisition of wealth (Luke 12:13-21; 1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19), the disciplining of sexual appetites (Matthew 5:27-30; Ephesians 5:3-5; 1 Thessalonians 4:2-8);
- 3.1.2 Interpersonal character of social existence: Christian understanding of marriage (Genesis 2; Ephesians 5:21-33; Matthew 19:3-9), family (Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:21), relation to neighbours (Luke 10:29-37; Romans 13:9) and enemies (Matthew 5:38-48, Romans 12:19-13:10). Treatment of the Fifth to Tenth Commandment.

Social existence in the fallen world is marked with hiddenness and vulnerability. Our impotence in social relations (in loving and responding to love) should spur us to look forward to the fulfillment of love in the Lord’s coming, when he will “bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men’s hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God” (1 Corinthians 5:4, 5). Treatment on the exacting of natural justice and on reconciliation.

3.2 The created order

- 3.2.1 Relation of humanity to the rest of the creation. Special attention should be given to recover the understanding that the meaning and destiny of the created order are found in Jesus Christ, the Word who became flesh. The world is created in order that it might partake in the divine life in God. The church is the ecclesial reality that Jesus Christ created, and is central to God’s redemptive purpose for the whole creation (Genesis 1-2; Psalm 8; Romans 8:18-25; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1). The human being and the earth are not merely fragments that are thrown into an infinite and hostile space-time to struggle for their survival on their own.

Man is called to be a prophet and high-priest, leading the whole creation in worshipping God.¹⁴ Under this heading, we can explore the place of human creativity, culture and personal vocation (e.g. art, music, and poetry) and the forming of personal virtues (e.g. prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance).

- 3.2.2 Treatment of issues of contemporary urgency. A general treatment of the assumptions behind a progressive technological culture is necessary to prepare

¹⁴ Note here the high vocation of man in the Orthodox tradition. This heritage is of especial interest in inter-faith dialogues. See Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or* 38.11; Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (London: James Clarke, 1957), 91-113; *The Encyclopedia of Christian Theology*, ed. Jean-Yves Lacoste (New York: Routledge, 2005), s.v. “Anthropology”.

the way for more specific issues. Without this general treatment the discussion of specific issues will be frustrated by irreconcilable judgments.

3.2.2.1 Ecological concerns; human suffering and exploitation

3.2.2.2 Technology and bioethics

3.2.2.3 Regional issues of contemporary urgency

3.3 Political order. Treatment on divine authorization of secular government. This would provide the basis on which Christians (both as individuals and as a community) are able to discern their proper tasks and calling in their particular contexts.

Government under and through law is God's will for the earthly protection of all people. Those who exercise political authority can rightly claim obedience and assistance from their citizens in upholding law, whatever the constitutional forms that support them (Romans 13:1-7). Democracy is one type of political constitution that aims to serve God's will in this respect.

Government entails heavy responsibilities to God for justice and the protection of the needy (Psalm 72:4). It is a significant aspect of every Christian's public service to form a critical and well-instructed view of how the true good of the community is to be promoted. Public expression of thought is often stifled by prejudice and partisan division. Christians may sometimes need courage in defending public discussion on the moral and spiritual basis of societies against attempts to suppress or manipulate it.

The catechesis ends with a call to a devout and holy life – to conform to the image of Christ – in view of the Lord's coming again in glory (Galatians 6:11-18; Philippians 2:12-18; Hebrews 12:14; 1 John 5:18-21). Pure and humble lives, as exemplified by the catechists, provide the best incentives for drawing others to a lasting relationship with Jesus Christ.

“Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1; cf. 4:15-16).

B. What infrastructures should be in place?

Presenting every new believer mature in Christ demands a deliberate effort from the whole Christian community (Matthew 5:48; Colossians 1:28; Ephesians 4:12). Disciples live their lives for God; disciples seek to win the world for Christ. This is why our recommendation for the catechetical framework does not end with the “Content” above, as if all would be educated if we have a syllabus. Infrastructures have to be in place to create a spiritually vibrant environment for formal instruction to have its desired effect of transforming believers into disciples.¹⁵

We recommend churches:

¹⁵ The Roman Catholic RCIA model provides a reference point for such considerations. See also Appendix 1 on the Rubrics of the Anglican Catechism 1662.

1. To ensure that accurate **translations of the Scripture** are made available to the people of God. There are still peoples in our Provinces who do not have the Bible translated in their own languages. Translations from generations ago are sometimes defective. These present unnecessary hurdles for effective communication of God's Word.
2. To affirm the **central role of bishops** as chief pastors and teachers in their dioceses. So they have a duty to *listen and discern* the Holy Scripture with (a) theological teachers in the church, (b) the faithful theologians of past generations, (c) other bishops in the worldwide church. They have particular responsibilities:
 - 3.1 In ensuring sound and adequate catechetical instruction. They are called to be leaders in mission and therefore also the key instructors of the Christian faith. They are pledged to teach and defend the public doctrines of the church, and so have a special responsibility to uphold and teach orthodoxy.
 - 3.2 To encourage clergy to devote themselves to preaching and teaching in public worship. The people of God must become biblically literate (1 Timothy 4:13).
 - 3.3 To stir up and train suitably-gifted and mature lay people for the catechetical tasks.
3. To provide an **intentional structure for the implementation of catechetical programmes**. We encourage parishes, dioceses and provinces to set out a clearer structure for the training and licensing of catechists, and for the authorization of catechetical material used in formal processes. We also encourage dioceses and provinces to provide guidelines and catechetical literature to help the laity (in their church-assigned roles and personal vocation) to fulfill their catechetical responsibilities.
4. To rethink the purposes and methodologies of **theological education**, specifically that it become more connected to the catechetical work at the congregational level.¹⁶ The clergy must be ready to think theologically for themselves, and not only say just what their congregations (or bishops!) are expecting. All of them have to be able to go on thinking and preaching, faithfully to the Gospel, for perhaps forty years after they leave college. Some

¹⁶ The drafting committee will give a fuller recommendation on theological education (in relation to catechetical responsibility) in the Final Report. Here we draw attention that some churches in the Communion exist as tiny minorities within larger Christian communities. East Asia and Latin America are cases in point. In such situations, theological formation of ordinands often takes place in union/ecumenical institutions. The issue at hand for bishops is this: How should churches best prepare *Anglican* ordinands that they are able to fulfill their vocation as deacons and priests as prescribed in the Ordinal? This issue becomes more acute given that most theological education programmes adopt a modular system. Students graduate upon successful completion of a number of credit-hours across various disciplines of study. Residential requirements have often been relaxed in response to the changing profiles of the student body – a significant number of whom are already in active service within their parishes, and have already been married with children. While this makes theological education flexible and (in some instances) portable, bishops should give more thought on whether such form of academic preparation offers adequate dogmatic formation that would equip future ministers of the church to take up their catechetical responsibilities. Such concerns should be reflected in the canonical examination of candidates, a mechanism which is sometimes sadly neglected or abandoned in today's church. Graduation from seminary or even holding a research degree in theology is sometimes equated with ministerial competence.

of them will have to take the lead in criticizing and interpreting movements of thought that have not yet even come on the horizon. And they have to be able to resource the theological needs of *tomorrow's* church.

The needs of the education of the clergy will not be met by a standard Arts-curriculum "Religious Studies" syllabus, and the appropriateness of what is on offer in places of higher education needs careful re-examination in which church authorities should expect to play a leading role.

Ministers-in-training need themselves to be instructed in the catechism in the course of their training. The elements in the catechism could suggest systematic dogmatic formation in related areas, e.g., the doctrine of God, Christology, and the atonement. As well, those catechetical elements could network into areas of contention calling for pastoral apologetics. In brief, the bedding down of the catechetical principle for the churches will potentially have far-reaching implications for the curricula of the seminary.¹⁷

5. To set up **regional/provincial centres** for the following tasks:¹⁸
 - 5.1 To provide theological formation and leadership training for catechists and lay leaders in cell/small-group ministries;
 - 5.2 To establish a large pool of qualified catechists and school chaplains, and offer them the means and resources (e.g. cell-group and religious-education study material and discipleship training manuals) so that they may be effective in assisting bishops and clergy in catechetical instructions;
 - 5.3 To reflect on the social contexts where people come to faith and to provide a forum for interpreting the Word and to understanding what it says to the immediate contexts Christians live in;
 - 5.4 To create a forum for churches and affiliated organizations to make plans for effective outreach to, and engagement with, the wider societies.
6. Arising from this Report, we recommend that a small number of parishes spread across the provinces share their catechetical material and experiences that reflect universal norms of doctrine with adaptations for local usage and:
 1. Is consistent with the framework of the ACIO Report
 2. Is approved by the Diocesan Bishop

We recommend that this **consultation** would be held before June 2008. Participants include:

1. the clergy who have produced the catechetical material
2. their Diocesan Bishops
3. the ACIO Task Force
4. a representative Primate serving as Chair

¹⁷ *In this regard, it appears that even highly trained seminarians are not equipped for frontier mission work and to explain the Christian faith clearly to new converts.*

¹⁸ We note that some large parishes are emerging to be centres for such tasks. For instance, St Paul's Theological Centre of Holy Trinity Brompton Church, London, offers a model of "restoring theology to the heart of the church". Holy Trinity's Alpha programme is widely adapted by churches from different traditions and is employed with success in contrasting situations. All Souls Church, Langham Place, London, is another significant model. John Stott's lasting contribution towards the maturing of churches in the Southern Hemisphere – through his preaching and writing ministry – can hardly be understood apart from All Souls' support.

C. Where and when catechetical processes take place?

Formal instructions take place in baptism and confirmation classes. Sunday worship, families, small groups also provide the natural settings for people to come to know Jesus and grow in their Christian life. At the same time, we need to give greater attention to the vastly changed social contexts in which churches conduct their mission. Christians, especially those who have responsibilities in communicating Christianity, should possess good understanding of both the Christian faith and of the faiths/sub-cultures of their immediate communities. Attention should be given to preparing catechetical material for new believers from other faiths. Churches also need to explore how to effectively provide integration between their mission frontiers (where people naturally meet) to the natural settings in Sunday worship, families and small groups.

1. Sunday Worship: The liturgy, calendar of the church year and the Sunday lectionary should come together so that Christians and those who come to Sunday worship would experience new birth, establish their lives with new foundations, be grafted into the new community, and discover new possibilities in relationships.

We note that in practice parishes do not follow the set of readings diligently in Sunday worship, whether they are as prescribed in the *Book of Common Prayer* or in the Common Revised Lectionary. Parish priests or worship leaders sometimes find the lectionary readings routine and repetitive, and lay them aside in favour of more contextual approaches. Sometimes, this is due to lack of understanding of the rationale of Anglican worship and the lectionary.¹⁹ Sermons topics, Bible readings and design of the worship are then planned in response to the pressing and felt needs of the moment.

We recommend the dioceses to strengthen the use of the calendar of the church year for catechetical purposes. The calendar provides a structure for a systematic and thematic exposition of the saving events within a liturgical setting. More importantly it invites God's people in every generation to understand and connect their lives to God's eternal purpose that he accomplished in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 3:1-21; see also Psalm 68, 78, 105, 106, 107, 114, 135, 136; Hebrews 11).

- 1.1 We encourage churches to recover a historical understanding of their faith. **Celebration of feast days** and the recounting of special events in the history of Christianity in the locality provide opportunities for Christians to connect their lives to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church. A historical understanding of the church also helps strengthen the authority of the historical church, which in turn, forms a bastion against many of the divergent trends and revisionist movements.
- 1.2 We encourage provinces to use the **Sundays from Pentecost to Advent** (Ordinary Time) to be occasions for sequential preaching on the central tenets of the Christian faith (which we set out in Recommendation A).

¹⁹ See Appendix 2: An Explanatory Note on the Revised Common Lectionary.

Dioceses and provinces may wish to make annual plans on how these major themes and their practical implications can be explored in Sunday worship, especially during the Ordinary Time.

- 1.3 Dioceses may wish to consider offering a **parallel calendar**. Such a calendar would not necessarily replace existing calendars, but be a parallel calendar that would focus on the major feast days and seasons where the key saving events are remembered in line with the articles of the Creeds, with the expectation that pastors will give careful and applied instruction at those feasts.
 - 1.4 The provision of a parallel Calendar would imply the **creation of an optional parallel Lectionary**. This parallel Lectionary would concentrate on readings for the feasts but would utilize the many remaining Sundays per annum for a more discretionary approach to readings that would be the basis of pastoral expositions of the Law, Writings and Prophets of the Old Testament and the Gospels, Acts, Epistles and Apocalypse in the New Testament, planned over (say) a three-year cycle, at the discretion of the Bishop and/or the clergy.²⁰
2. Families: There has been a long tradition originating with the Pentateuch and continuing into the New Testament where parents have taught their children the ways of the Lord (Deuteronomy 6:1-9; Psalm 127:3; Ephesians 6:4). Parents are expected to exercise spiritual leadership within homes. In the New Testament, we see husbands and wives praying together (1 Corinthians 7:5; 1 Peter 3:7) and hear instructions about the conduct expected within Christian homes (Ephesians 5:22-6:9; Colossians 3:18-4:1; 1 Peter 3:1-7). We recommend simple materials be produced to help parents lead families in prayer and devotion.

Both parents are responsible for the nurture of their children in the faith. Mothers have a special role in their closeness to young children, bringing little hands together as they speak words of prayer and sing sweet songs to the Lord. Soon fathers too will be involved in bed-time Bible stories and family prayers. Parents will encourage children to attend Sunday school, Bible class and church. Hymns and choruses sung at home powerfully establish the love of the Lord in strong hands. Godly grandparents have a special role in praying for grandchildren and nurturing them, particularly in times when both parents are in the work force.

Parents, Godparents, Christian school teachers, youth workers, college teachers, school chaplains and all those who are involved in the nurture of the young have a responsibility to create a successor generation of Christians.

3. Small groups: Small groups operate as small numbers of parishioners who meet during the week usually in informal settings. The activities of these groups can vary from being fairly ordered, including elements of worship, Bible-study, prayer, sharing and fellowship, as well as evangelism, to less

²⁰ This proposal would (a) provide much needed focused attention to the great feasts (and the Creeds), (b) provide guidelines for systematic teaching covering key elements of Old and New Testaments, and (c) do so with greater freedom, with enhanced pastoral freedom for bishops and pastors.

structured groups who meet to pray and to fellowship (Philippians 2:1-5; Colossians 4:12-17). The small group often affords a more intimate level of fellowship that would otherwise be unavailable in the parish setting. More attention can be given there to specialized subjects and individual needs.

Small groups fill a vital gap between the ordinary parish life and the individual life. They also provide avenues for service which traditional parish settings do not provide. It is a useful parish structure where the task of Christian instruction and pastoral care within the community can be shared more effectively.

Special attention should be given to the training of small group leaders and in supporting their ministry.

III. Commentary

1. The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture
2. The Creeds
3. The Historic Formularies

1. The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture

God's Election: in Christ, acting for Israel, speaking through the Scriptures

God elected Israel to its vocation in his plan of salvation: “out of Egypt have I called my son” (Hosea 11:1). God elected his Son Jesus to fulfill this vocation from within Israel, and effect the redemption of the whole world: “this is my Son, my chosen: hear him!” (Luke 9:35). And God elected Holy Scripture to carry his testimony to his work of salvation. When we speak of the inspiration of Holy Scripture, then, we are not speaking of some *other* work of God than the work of salvation. It is an aspect of one and the same work: Scripture is “elect”, as Israel and Jesus are elect, to serve the same plan of salvation. It is human writing set apart from every other human writing to serve a function in the saving purposes of God.

This is not to overlook the important distinctions in the way God's election operates in these three cases. Jesus' role in the saving work is God's own *self*-election; it belongs at the heart of the Holy Trinity. The election of Israel, though grounded in the self-election of God, is an act of God that reaches out to the world, an act of *adoption*. The election of the Scriptures, on the other hand, is an act of divine *speech*. The inspiration of Holy Scripture is not an extension of the Incarnation. Speaking “through the prophets” is the special work of the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. So while using the categories of God's “election” to embrace these three aspects of the one salvation God has wrought, we must observe a clear differentiation and sequence: God *in* Christ, acting *for* Israel, speaking *through* the Scriptures.

It is right to say, nevertheless, that Holy Scripture, in bearing witness to God's deed of salvation, is nothing less than God's own witness to himself. Scripture does not *come after* what God has done and said, as a kind of secondary report of it or reflection on it. In reading Holy Scripture we hear God's own voice speaking, while at the same time we hear the voice of human authors. These voices, divine and human, bear witness to God's work, and they agree. Human authors have been granted the grace to speak of God's work as God himself speaks of it. Not only do we have in the Holy Scripture the witness of God's People to God's word; we also have the divine Spirit's endorsement of the witness of God's People. The temptation in recent generations has, of course, been to ascribe the task of witness exclusively to the human voice, so opening up a gap between God's words, on the one hand, and the human account of them, on the other.¹

Perfection of the Holy Scripture

The writing of the human authors was a perfectly human task performed in response to God's calling. The uniqueness of these authors' work does not lie in *what* they

¹ The authors of the Anglican – Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) Report, *The Gift of Authority*, seem to veer towards this mistake when they write that the Scriptures are “the written witness to God's ‘Yes’”; and in them “the ‘Yes’ of God is recognized in and through the ‘Amen’ of the church, which receives the authentic revelation of God” (§19). That statement would be perfectly satisfactory if accompanied and balanced by the reverse. For it is equally true that in the Scriptures the ‘Amen’ of the church is recognized in and through the ‘Yes’ of God. Not only do we have in them the Church's witness to God's word (or Israel's) witness - it is unfortunate that ARCIC wrote of the Christian Church as the author of *all* Holy Scripture!); we also have the divine Spirit's endorsement of the Church's (or Israel's) witness.

produced, for they produced *writings*, as many others of their contemporaries did. It lies in the unique place that their writings were assigned in the redemptive purpose of God. Yet to say that the writing of Scripture was a “human” work does not imply that it was imperfectly or inadequately done. The inference “Scripture is human, therefore Scripture is flawed” is, from a purely doctrinal point of view, heretical, repeating the Manichaean failure to distinguish humanity as created from humanity as fallen. It is proper, then, to speak of a *perfection* of Holy Scripture, conferred upon it by God’s perfectly revealing himself and his works through these writings.

The perfection of the Holy Scripture is of its own kind, and may allow space for various supposed imperfections that are not relevant to the fulfillment of the purpose in hand.² The perfection of the Psalms does not consist in their being the most beautifully crafted poems, formally speaking. (Some of them are, some are not.) The perfection of the letters of Paul does not consist in their being the highest examples of epistolary elegance or clarity of phrasing. Neither does the perfection of historical records consist in their being the most perfectly researched historiography, or the most impartial first-hand sources. The best term with which to express the perfection of Scripture is, perhaps, that used by John Wyclif, when he spoke of Holy Scripture as “in corrigible”. That is to say simply that no interpreter of Scripture can venture or presume to improve on it or to set it right, whether by excision, by correction, by privileging a canon within the canon, or by assigning certain ideas to primitive ignorance and others to the Spirit of God, etc. etc.

Reading the Scriptures with faith

We are therefore summoned to read the Scriptures *with faith*. The faith demanded of us is no more and no less than faith in the saving work of God attested in Scripture. Faith in Scripture is not something *additional to* saving faith or *prior to* it. It is simply a matter of reading the Scripture as it presents itself to us, in obedient willingness to hear the word of rebuke and salvation, searching for better understanding of it without presuppositions or conditions, receiving it as the message of salvation with hopeful trust in God. Recent theologians sometimes write of the “literal” or “plain sense” of Scripture as a way of describing faithful reading in this sense, though the term “literal”, suggesting a contrast with “figurative”, is potentially misleading. The “plain sense” of Scripture may sometimes be precisely a figurative sense; it depends on the text in question. For example, it does not aid our obedient understanding of Jesus’ parables to insist that the stories they contain must be treated as literally true reports of events.

Each literary element of Holy Scripture contributes to the testimony borne by the Scriptures as a totality. The manner in which the various literary units speak to us of God’s work is not uniform; for Scripture is a complex construction made up of heterogeneous elements that differ in historical background, literary type, subject matter, rhetorical manner etc. Good reading of Scripture is sensitive to the peculiarities of the different literary texts; yet the understanding of how each part functions within the Scripture also requires a sense of Scripture as a whole. We must not bring to Scripture preconceived conceptions of how different types of writing *ought to work*; we must look to see how each part *does in fact* contribute to the

² Cf. Richard Hooker, *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* 2.8.5: “The absolute perfection of Scripture is seen by relation unto that end whereto it tendeth.”

service of God’s message to humankind. Even the identification of literary *genres* in Scripture – poetry, history, wisdom, Gospel, rhetoric etc. - however much it may be helped by general reflections on styles of ancient or modern writing, must reach its conclusions by comparing Scripture with Scripture. We need to discern what the function of *this* piece of Scriptural writing is in juxtaposition, comparison and contrast with *that* piece. We do not know in advance what a “psalm”, a “prophecy” or even a “historical narrative” is, or may undertake to do. We must not impose pre-formed categories on the text, but *find* its categories in the text.

The overall shape of Scripture is that of salvation history itself: the election of Israel leading forward to the incarnation, saving death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; and this constitutes the basic pattern within which Scripture is read. It also authorises the distinction between the two literary corpuses, one in Hebrew and one in Greek, the “Old and New Testaments” as they are traditionally called. It also provides the different criteria for recognising canonicity in the authors of each – spoken of generically as “prophets” and “apostles”. The criterion for recognising a book of the Old Testament was simply that it belonged to historic Israel, and was usually written in ancient Hebrew, and that it attests Israel’s calling and preservation by God. The criterion for recognising a book of the New Testament was that it came from within the apostolic circle and contained the testimony of the contemporary generation that could speak of the Incarnation as “what we have heard, seen with our eyes, looked upon and touched with our hands” (1 John 1:1). Inevitably the canon of the Old Testament is both less homogeneous and less sharply determined than the canon of the New.

The church’s relation to Holy Scripture: determination of the canon

The church’s part in determining the scope of the canon was first of all an act of *recognition*, discerning and acknowledging the unity and authority that belonged to this literature by virtue of its election by God. The church did not “create” Holy Scripture by canonising it, as has sometimes irresponsibly been said. Yet at the same time, secondarily, it was *an exercise of its authority to teach*. It sets the literary bounds within which an appeal to the Scriptures in the service of Christian life and understanding can be seen as valid.³

The church’s continuing relation to Holy Scripture

The church’s continuing relation to Holy Scripture is firstly that of *reading* it. The centrality of the lectern in the church building and of the lectionary in the church’s calendar is one of the great Scriptural bulwarks of the Anglican tradition, a focal point of the English Reformers’ intentions.⁴ The whole life of the church and of its members is shaped by the reading of Holy Scripture, both private and public. To put the disciple in understanding possession of the Holy Scriptures is a key task of catechesis. But in particular it is the foundational act of liturgy, by which every part of common worship – petitionary prayer, praise and sacramental act – is authorized.⁵

³ Here the ARCIC Report *The Gift of Authority* expressed the point very well, saying that the determination of the canon “was at the same time an act of obedience and authority” (§22).

⁴ See Cranmer’s “Preface” to the *Book of Common Prayer*.

⁵ This point is not unique to the English theological tradition, but clearly recognized in medieval scholastic theology, e.g. in St. Thomas’s doctrine that words are the “form” of a sacrament. See *Summa Theologiae* 3.60.6-8.

Though all Holy Scripture should be read and studied by the church, not all parts of Scripture are equally well accommodated to the demands of public reading in the liturgy. So the fashioning of a faithful lectionary is a central task of ordering worship, the oversight of which must be the responsibility of the bishops. A satisfactory lectionary will succeed over a period of time in giving a good impression of the whole contents of Scripture, Old and New Testaments, and of the proper relation of its different parts. The principle that readings from the Old and New Testaments should be heard alongside one another is very important. The lectionary should include examples of different kinds of writing found in Holy Scripture, and the witness of the different ages from which the various books sprang. It will be responsive to linear and historical continuities, and it will respect the natural divisions of the text. Above all, it must avoid what seems to have become a feature of many modern lectionaries: the manipulation or evasion of the claims of the text by selective excision of unfashionable teachings, by arbitrary beginnings and endings of passages, by emphasizing safe themes at the expense of challenging ones, or by other means through which Scripture is rather put at the disposal of the church than the church at the disposal of Scripture.

The church's continuing relation to Holy Scripture is secondarily one of *interpretation*. This work begins in the pulpit, which is why careful preaching is to be highly prized and must be emphasized in theological education. But it does not end there. Scripture is interpreted by the academic work of textual commentary and theological reflection, an activity which a healthy church will know that it must maintain and encourage, recognizing that a certain freedom of debate is necessary to it. Scripture is interpreted also by the practical work of applying Scripture faithfully to the tasks and challenges of life in the world, and in this regard, at least, every member of the church needs to be engaged in it. Faithful interpretation has obedience to the word in view from beginning to end. It is not a negotiation aimed at striking a compromise between the expectations of the text and the presuppositions of our time; nor can it presume, in the name of whatever cause, to read "against the grain" of the text. It is the responsibility of the ordained ministry of the church to exercise collective oversight of the interpretation of Scripture, identifying and correcting common or deep-seated errors and upholding "sound" *i.e.* healthy and life-giving traditions of interpretation and teaching. Yet the interpretation of Scripture is a work that belongs to the whole church together, lay and ordained, praying and thinking and discussing, as the Scriptures form the lifeblood of its fellowship and mutual encouragement.

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2. The Creeds

The Catholicity of the Anglican Church

The “teachings of the ancient Fathers and Councils of the Church” as are agreeable to the Holy Scripture assume a foundational role in shaping the theology and worship of the Church of England and the Anglican Communion. The English Reformation led by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer emphatically endorsed the Apostles and Nicene Creeds.¹

Regarding the Apostles and Nicene Creeds Cranmer is quite explicit: “. . . these² ought thoroughly be received and believed, for they may be proved by the most certain warrants of Scripture” (Article VIII). Cranmer endorsed the Creeds as rooted in Scripture and prescribed their use in the main services of the Church of England. The churches of the Anglican Communion have followed the same path.

In the early centuries the word “catholic” was used for those whose faith was defined by the Ecumenical Creeds. This word derives from the Greek words *kath holikē*, “according to the whole” and was explained as “that which has been believed everywhere, always and by all”.³

Historically, those who deviated from these “catholic” beliefs were deemed “heretics” (the original word *hairesis* meant “self-chosen opinion”) and “schismatics” (the original word *schizein* meant “to split”). The words “heresy” and “schismatic” are old fashioned and rather confrontational, yet they express the reality that the “catholic” faith is a defined faith that calls for convinced commitment from church members. Accordingly, the Creeds are instruments of godly unity. Those who deviate from them do so wilfully and idiosyncratically, based on *their* private judgements and in consequence they divide the body of Christ.

Evangelism, baptism and the creeds

It is evident from the New Testament that evangelism, instruction and baptism were a continuum. Before he departed Jesus gave this instruction.

Make disciples from all the nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
teaching them to observe all I have commanded you . . . (Matthew 28:19-20)

¹ Canon A5 of the Church of England: “The doctrine of the Church of England is grounded in the Holy Scriptures, and in such teachings of the ancient Fathers and Councils of the Church as are agreeable to the said Scriptures. In particular such doctrine is to be found in the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, *The Book of Common Prayer*, and the Ordinal.” See also the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, Article VIII.

² Cranmer included the Athanasian Creed.

³ The so-called *Vincentian Canon*, formulated by Vincent of Lerins in the fifth century, in which he defined the meaning of “catholic”.

Jesus calls for three connected activities: first, “going, make disciples”; second, baptizing them in the triune name; and, third instructing them in Jesus’ teachings.⁴ Just as Jesus “made disciples” and “instructed” them, so they in turn were to do, with his promise, “Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age”.

By early second century we see the emergence of doctrinal summaries that (a) referred to the three persons within the Godhead, and (b) expanded the section about the Son with items taken from the gospels.

For example, early in the second century Ignatius affirmed the deity, humanity and Messiahship of Jesus in these words:

For our *God Jesus Christ*
was conceived by *Mary* according to *God’s* plan,
of the seed of *David* and of the *Holy Spirit* . . . (*Ephesians* 18:2)

By the mid-second century the triadic “shape” with expanded second Christological section was confirmed, e.g., by Justin Martyr.

. . . we worship the *Creator* of this universe...
and that with good reason honour him who taught us these things
and was born for this purpose, *Jesus Christ*,
who was crucified under *Pontius Pilate*,
the governor of *Judea* in the time of *Tiberius Caesar*,
having heard that he is the *Son of the true God*
and holding him in second rank,
and the *prophetic Spirit* . . . (*Apology* 1.13)

The Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds of later years had their beginnings in these early creed-like statements that were based on the embryonic trinitarianism of the New Testament and its explicit Christology (e.g., 1 Corinthians 8:6; 1 Peter 1:2; Revelation 1:4-7).⁵

Function of creeds

The earliest function of the creeds was baptismal, that is for instruction beforehand and interrogation of the candidate at the baptism itself. Between their embryonic beginnings and ultimate finalization of the creed in the forms we have them further elements were added. This was because the era between the New Testament and the finalization of the creeds in the fourth century was chaotic, with the intrusion of serious doctrinal errors threatening the survival of apostolic truth and the unity of the church. These errors came from the surrounding cultures.

From early in the second century the western church was under dire threat from various kinds of Gnosticism, which in their repudiation of the material universe

⁴ In earliest church practice it is not clear whether instruction preceded or followed baptism, only that the two were connected.

⁵ For other creedal or confessional statements from the New Testament see e.g., Matthew 28:19; Romans 1:3-4; 4:24; 8:34; 1 Corinthians 8:6; 15:3-6; 2 Corinthians 3:13; Ephesians 4:4-6; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:12-20; 1 Timothy 3:16; 6:12-16; 2 Timothy 4:1-2; Hebrews 6:1-2; 1 Peter 3:18-22; 1 John 4:2.

rejected the teaching that God was Creator and therefore the genuine humanity of his Son and his bodily resurrection. The wording of the Apostles' Creed was designed to defend the church against Gnosticism.

In the eastern church the challenge came from Arius at the beginning of the fourth century. Arius held a form of Platonism that asserted the indivisibility of God that led him to reject the intrinsic trinitarian being of God and the eternal sonship of Jesus Christ. The words that the Son of God was "of one substance with the Father" inserted into an older creed at the Council of Nicea (AD 325) buttressed the church against the effects of Arianism that threatened to swamp the church.

In other words, the apostolic doctrines, which in any case were not yet stated in systematic terms, were subject to various forms of cultural syncretism. In this respect the history of the post-apostolic church is a kind of parallel with the faith of Israel, subject as it had been to Baal worship and other ancient near eastern syncretisms. Accordingly, although the creeds were for baptismal instruction and baptismal interrogation, by the fourth century they had taken on an extra role, for the definition of true belief over against heresy.

Nonetheless, the creeds also continued their original function for the baptism of those who had been evangelised. Catechists typically instructed baptizands over many months, article by article. Since the creeds evolved as much as a means of defence against heresy as for positive doctrine it required a deepening reflection by church teachers and catechists.

Meanwhile a third aspect of credal use had developed, the gathered church's declaration of its members' faith. This is the primary function of creeds today. Unfortunately, the baptismal activities of instruction and interrogation have tended to fall away.

Doctrines of the Creeds

(i) The Apostles' Creed

The Apostles' Creed begins by asserting that God is the "almighty" sovereign over history, the Creator of the universe and "the Father" of his Son and of those who belong to him.

The second article arises from the gospel about the Christ/Messiah, asserting him to be "[God's] only (i.e., *only begotten*) Son" and "our Lord", thus identifying him with YHWH/the LORD. There follows the affirmation of his conception by the Holy Spirit and birth of the virgin Mary (teaching manhood and deity), his sufferings under Pilate, his crucifixion, death, burial, descent to Hades, from which he arose on the third day, thereafter ascending into heaven to the Father's right hand, whence he will come again as the judge of all.

The third article directs faith towards the Holy Spirit, the holy, catholic church, the fellowship of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting.

Each element is directly or indirectly scriptural. Clearly its teachings were relevant against the threat of Gnosticism. Equally, however, the elements of this Creed touch

the neo-Gnosticism of modern times, the denial of the Creator, the rejection of the deity and the bodily resurrection of Christ.

(ii) *The Nicene Creed*

The Nicene,⁶ like the Apostles' Creed, is shaped by the trinity and like the Apostles' Creed having an extended Christological section. Many items are identical in doctrine, if not in words. Its most noticeable differences are that the Son of God is "eternally begotten of the Father...begotten not made, one being with the Father (*homoousion tō patri*) . . . through whom all things were made . . . who came down from heaven . . . was incarnate of the virgin Mary . . . became man", elements that emphatically excluded the Arian heresy that had contended that God was an indivisible monad.

Thus the Nicene Creed employs philosophical terminology where the Apostles' Creed is more straightforwardly biblical in terminology. Given the subtleties of the Arian heresy it was necessary for the orthodox leaders to use correspondingly subtle terminology to refute those errors.

By AD 381 the Second Ecumenical Council was necessitated by other heresies that had arisen. One was *Apollinarianism*, which asserted that the Son of God lacked a genuinely human mind or will, but was merely passively human. The words, "he came down from heaven...by the power of the Holy Spirit he was incarnate of the virgin Mary, and became man" were strengthened by additions to refute this heresy. Another error was *Macedonianism*, which questioned the deity of the Holy Spirit. This heresy was addressed by the insertion of the words, "We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life . . . with the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified".

The doctrines of the Trinity of God and the deity of Christ are the bedrock of Christianity. It was the brilliant achievement of the Nicene Creed to secure these great truths for the worship and instruction of the churches in the years since. Nonetheless, these core teachings have been challenged in every generation since including our own by some who are *within* the churches. Thus the Creeds will never be outmoded or irrelevant.

Importance of the Creeds

Jesus' Great Commission to his apostles was to *go* to the Nations, *evangelise, baptise* and *instruct*. From that time the "ministers of the word" began to devise simple triadic summaries as a basis for the instruction of those who had been evangelised, preparatory to their baptism. With the passage of time those summaries needed to expand to answer the challenges to apostolic teaching, in particular about the Creator and the relationship to him of the One who came, Jesus the Christ. By the fifth century there had been numerous such challenges with correspondingly detailed rebuttals from Ecumenical Councils and the Creeds they issued.

⁶ The Creed we call "Nicene" was a refinement of the Creed of the Council of Nicea (from AD 325) formulated in Constantinople (AD 381).

It is probably fair to say that the Creeds that dealt with those early challenges have at the same time anticipated the majority of the challenges that have arisen in the centuries since that era.

Notwithstanding their massive importance the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds did not anticipate every doctrinal, ethical or "order" related issue that would arise. With the passage of the generations Christians were to address the nature of the atonement, the work of the Spirit within the life of the believer (who though saved remains a fallen person wrestling with remaining sin), the nature of the sacraments, ministry and church order, civic vocation, intra-gender issues and more modern concerns like the future of our planet. Some of these items are important internationally (e.g., the environment and global warming) whilst others loom large locally (intra-gender issues). The proposed catechisms, which need to be both international but also local, will have to address these issues in a nuanced manner.

Nonetheless, the Creeds remain foundational for the Church since they establish from the Scriptures definitive statement about God and the relationship to him of the Son of God.

Evangelism, Baptism, Creeds, Catechisms and Catechists

Enough has been written to establish the historical continuum beginning with evangelism, continuing through baptism-and-instruction and perpetuated in church-based credal declarations, Sunday by Sunday. The Creeds played a critical role as bases for instruction for baptism but also to define orthodox truth in the face of destructive error. Creeds, however, imply catechisms and catechisms imply catechists.

The creation of a new catechism would likely be accompanied by the development of helpful commentaries, training programmes and educational guides to assist catechists and teachers in their instruction.

The eventual creation of new catechisms calls for the recruiting and training of catechists. But this must be seen as part of a dominically mandated continuum that Christ himself began and was continued by his disciples made disciples, instructing and baptizing them. Furthermore, in the face of modern heresy and schism we need to reclaim the notion of the "catholic" church, whose members' personal faith is circumscribed within the teaching of the faith set out in the Creeds.

The Bible, Creeds and Liturgy

The Creeds play a vital role in the liturgy, whether at the Baptismal Service, Morning and Evening Prayer or the Holy Communion. In the public reading of the Scriptures God speaks to his gathered people, who respond by declaring, "I/we believe..." By doing so we identify ourselves as "catholic" in the truest and original sense. It would be helpful for pastors to teach congregations about the origin of the Creeds and why they continue to be relevant in every age.

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3. The Historic Formularies¹

The Anglican Way

All orthodox Christians accept the Holy Scriptures as having authority for faith and morals. Further, most orthodox Christians accept the related and subsidiary authority of the Nicene Creed, and usually also of the Apostles' Creed. Yet only Anglican Christians have accepted the authority – under that of the Holy Scriptures—of what are called the Anglican Formularies, namely the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662) and *The Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining and Consecrating of Bishops, Priests and Deacons* (commonly called The Ordinal). In the Canon A5 of the Church of England this authority is stated in these terms:

The doctrine of the Church of England is grounded in the Holy Scriptures, and in such teachings of the ancient Fathers and Councils of the Church as are agreeable to the said Scriptures. In particular, such doctrine is to be found in the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, *the Book of Common Prayer*, and the Ordinal.

The three formularies are different from each other: one is similar to confessions of faith created in Protestant churches in Europe; one is doctrine as doxology, where “the law of praying is the law of believing”; and one is doctrine as services establishing and enacting polity and ministry. Thus the Church of England is not to be seen simply as a “confessional church” like the Lutheran and Reformed churches.

These three collections or set forms of doctrine, worship, discipline and polity were produced within the English National church to establish her identity in the middle of the sixteenth century, when this church, *Ecclesia Anglicana*, was ceasing to be Latin-speaking and Roman-controlled and was becoming instead the English-speaking and the national The Church of England.

The change in its language and affiliation was accompanied by other important changes in doctrine and devotion, liturgy and polity. As a result, the Church of England by 1550 was both similar to the new Protestant churches and different from the Roman Catholic Church in Europe, but unique in its character. It rejected the authority of the Papacy in Rome and set aside much of the teaching, practice and piety of the medieval church in England and Europe. In particular, the Mass as a propitiatory sacrifice, transubstantiation of the bread and wine, worship of images, invocation of saints, purgatory and indulgences were rejected as contrary to Scripture and not taught by the early church. The Formularies that were adopted contain the essence of the renewed doctrine, liturgy, discipline and polity of the reformed Church of England.

In particular, these formularies emphasize the continuance of the doctrinal heritage of the early church in terms of commitment to the basic dogma of The Holy Trinity and

¹ For a fuller treatment on the Formularies, see Peter Toon, *The Anglican Formularies and Holy Scripture: Reformed Catholicism and Biblical Doctrine* (Philadelphia: The Preservation Press of the Prayer Book Society, USA, 2006).

the Identity and Work of Jesus Christ, Son of the Father. At the same time, they set forth the doctrine of justification by faith alone, always with the important addition that such saving faith works by love and issues in good works. This great rediscovery of the Reformation deeply affected the way that salvation was understood, the sacraments were celebrated and the content and aim of the liturgy established and performed. Indeed, one cannot appreciate the structure and content of *The Book of Common Prayer*, if one is not aware of the powerful influence of justification by faith, which works by love, in its pages. Further, in the Church of England, but not in Protestant Germany and Switzerland, the ancient threefold ministry of Bishop, Priest (Presbyter) and Deacon was retained but without the high sacramental overtones and clerical celibacy of the Roman Church. And the fact that three services for the creating of this Ministry were together, as a unit, as one of the formularies, emphasizes the importance attached to the retention of this ancient Polity in its renewed form and firmly based on biblical doctrine.

Fifty years after the central events of the English Reformation occurred, Lancelot Andrewes sought to explain to ordinary members the basic foundation of the Church of England and of its three formularies. He explained the Anglican Way in terms of a simple 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5: ONE Canon of Scripture with TWO Testaments, whose doctrinal content is summarized in THREE Creeds (Apostles', Nicene and Athanasian) and in more detail in the decrees of FOUR ecumenical councils [Nicea (325), Constantinople (381), Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451)] and whose character is established by the general developments (e.g., Liturgy, threefold Ministry, Church Year, Canon Law and so on) of the first FIVE centuries. We may note that numbers one and two are not only first in order but also first in importance.

The three formularies are different from each other and together seem to make a strange trio; but yet in their strangeness is both their uniqueness and their attraction. They compose two books of Services of Worship and one short Confession of Faith, with the result that Anglican doctrine is presented through doxology, ordered worship and coherent, propositional statements. Herein lies its peculiar and universal attraction.

The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion

Up to the 1960s and even later, a standard and required course in theological seminaries and colleges of Anglican churches in much of the Anglican Communion was "The Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles". This is why there were so many solid books on the Articles published in the second half of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries.

The text of the Articles was first composed by Archbishop Cranmer in 1553 in the reign of Edward VI. It was suppressed during the reign of the Roman Catholic Mary, and was revived in 1563 during Elizabeth's reign. Archbishop Parker made modest revisions. The final version, what we call the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, was authorized in 1571 for all clergy to subscribe to. It is this version which is usually printed inside the covers of the pew edition of *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662).

A quick survey of the Articles reveals that they contain what may be called the patristic and catholic dogma of God the Holy Trinity, a Trinity of Persons in the One Godhead, and of Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, the One Person

with Two Natures, Divine and Human. Also they contain what may be called the distinctive doctrines of the Reformation – e.g., the authority of Scripture, its clarity in presenting the message of salvation, the saving and redeeming work of Christ Jesus, the nature of sin, justification by faith alone and issuing in works of love, and the priority as means of grace of the dominical Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

The Church of England and other Anglican churches are not *confessional* churches in the same sense that Lutheran and reformed churches claim to be; yet dogma and doctrine are important. Thus the Articles are best seen not merely as a sixteenth-century signpost pointing in which direction the church ought doctrinally to go, but also as the lens in the telescope (along with the lenses of the earlier catholic creeds) by which members receive or see the Christian doctrinal tradition in which they are placed. In this sense the Articles can never be revised. By using these lenses the members know how to approach Scripture, evaluate and create liturgy, face new questions, and engage in God’s mission in the world.

The Book of Common Prayer

Not too long ago, Anglicans around the world all knew what was *The Book of Common Prayer*. Travelers recognized it on all Continents. It was a specific prayer book in which were a collection of services of worship and it took one of three possible forms: (i) The English *Book of Common Prayer* dated 1662; (ii) a local edited form of this for use in a particular Province such as Canada or the United States of America or Ireland or Scotland; and (iii) a translation of all or part of the English edition of 1662 for use by non-English speaking Anglican churches. For all with eyes to see and minds to understand, there was basically one Prayer Book, available in several editions and various languages.

Most particularly in the British Empire (later the Commonwealth) and also in the U.S.A., to speak of “Common Prayer” or of “The Prayer Book” was to speak of either *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662) or one of the national editions based upon it (e.g., U.S.A., 1928 and Canada 1962).

In the twenty-first century, the situation is far less clear; in fact, it is very confused. Regrettably, since the late 1970s the title, “The Book of Common Prayer,” has been used for another type of Anglican Prayer Book developed in the West after the 1960s in the light of both Protestant and Catholic “liturgical renewal,” and the general desire for variety and choice. In 1980 the Church of England published *An Alternative Service Book 1980*, which was intended not to replace but to provide alternative forms of service to *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662). The former has been now been replaced since 2000 by *Common Worship*, but *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662) remains in place. Other churches in Australia, Southern Africa and Canada did something similar.

However, The Episcopal Church of the U.S.A. set a new trend for Anglicans by calling its own new 1979 prayer book of varied services not by the title of “An Alternative Service Book” but by the ancient title of “The Book of Common Prayer”. Some other Anglican provinces follow this unfortunate lead. Thus the title “Book of Common Prayer” no longer has a “common” meaning and there is no one “common”

Formulary or standard of doctrine any more by this title! Thousands have been confused by this development.

The Book of Common Prayer of 1662 may be called the classic edition of the Prayer Book whose distinct development began in 1549. It presents inside its covers services for all basic occasions – e.g., Daily Prayer, Sunday worship, Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage and Burial – and for all people, whatever their class or ethnicity. Its primary content is from the Bible and its doctrinal basis is the Creed together with salvation by grace through faith, issuing in good works. In terms of structure, it follows models taken from the medieval services and simplified. It also possesses two Lectionaries, the Eucharistic which is based on early church models, and the Daily which has the intention of reading through the whole Bible each year. Then the Psalter is divided into sections so that all one hundred and fifty psalms are recited or sung each month.

The Ordinal

Though usually bound with *The Book of Common Prayer*, the Ordinal is a separate book of service. The full title of the Ordinal is *The Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining and Consecrating of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons*. By including *The Ordinal* in its formularies, the Church of England recognized that the ordained ministry is essential to the existence in space and time of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. The English Church retained the traditional episcopate and ministry.

In using the expression “the Form and Manner” in the title, the Church of England was referring to what it learned from the New Testament – the setting aside, or ordaining men, by “the laying on of hands with prayer”. So central to all three services were these two elements, the laying on of hands of the bishop and prayer. The latter occurred especially through the use of *The Litany*. To emphasize the authority of the Holy Scripture over the church and especially over its ordained ministry, the newly ordained deacon was given a copy of the New Testament, while the presbyter and bishop received a copy of the whole Bible.

Deacons, priests and bishops are called to set godly and holy examples of the dedicated, consecrated and sanctified life. As Canon C26 of the Church of England “Of the manner of life of clerks in Holy Orders” puts it:

1. Every clerk in Holy Orders is under obligation, not being let by sickness or some other urgent cause, to say daily the Morning and Evening Prayer, either privately or openly; and to celebrate the Holy Communion, or be present thereat, on all Sundays and other principal Feast Days. He is also to be diligent in daily prayer and intercession, in examination of his conscience, and in the study of the Holy Scriptures and such other studies as pertain to his ministerial duties.
2. A clerk in Holy Orders shall not give himself to such occupations, habits, or recreations as do not befit his sacred calling, or may be detrimental to the performance of the duties of his office, or tend to be a just cause of offence to others; and at all times he shall be diligent to frame and fashion his life and that of his family according to the doctrine of Christ, and to make himself and

them, as much as in him lies, wholesome examples and patterns to the flock of Christ.

Conclusion

To be committed to the formularies is not to live in the past or to avoid modern knowledge, insights and issues; but it is to see them, as the creeds and doctrinal statements from the church of the Fathers, as living tradition, which though of the past, is also of the present. Perhaps the illustration of the old fashioned wheel with its hub at the centre, its spokes going out from the centre and ending at the circular rim will help. Commitment to the formularies is to be fastened securely to the hub and not to go past the rim in order to preserve unity in comprehensiveness. Too often Anglicans take their spokes as it were through the rim and out into no-man's land when they major on secondary matters, of matters which belong to other traditions. To maintain and use the three formularies, as the distinctive Anglican means and ways of being Christian, is a high privilege and solemn duty for churches of the Anglican Communion today.

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President of the Prayer Book Society of the U.S.A.

IV. Illustrations

1. Preaching in the Anglican Church of Uganda
2. Witnessing and Teaching the Christian Faith in a Multi-religious Society: A Lesson from Nigeria
3. Christian Instruction among the Fulani: the Nomad Mission of the Church of Nigeria
4. Baptism and Confirmation Preparation in South East Asia

1. Preaching in the Anglican Church of Uganda

Preaching and the birth of the Church of Uganda

As blood is to the life of an organism, so is preaching – the proclamation of the Word – to the life of the Anglican Church of Uganda. This was a central consideration of the first Church Missionary Society (CMS) missionaries when they introduced the Christian faith to Uganda in 1877. From the inception of the Native Anglican Church (as it was called then), the CMS missionaries determined that preaching was the top priority of its mission. It is not surprising that as early as 1880; efforts were made to translate portions of the Bible into *Luganda*.¹

The priority of preaching God's Word was further reinforced by the lay-inspired East African revival movement of the early 1930s.² The preaching of the Word of God became everyone's personal responsibility. The Bible is one of the prized possessions for most Christians in Uganda (as indeed is the case for other African Christians). Christians are expected to carry their Bibles wherever they go and take advantage of every opportunity to preach God's Word.³ It is part of the Christian traveler's luggage.

The message

To some, this may be obvious: Most congregations judge the value of a sermon largely by the emphasis it puts on Jesus' saving power to all who believe in him. As Paul puts it, "But we proclaim Christ crucified" (1 Corinthians 1:23). Elsewhere Paul writes, "For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake" (2 Corinthians 4:5). The proclamation of Christ as Lord is often accompanied by testimonies of what he has done in the lives of the believers.

¹ See Tom Tuma. "Church Expansion in Buganda" in, *A Century of Christianity in Uganda*, eds. Tom Tuma and Phares Mutibwa (Nairobi, Uzima Press, 1978), 19. *Luganda* is the language spoken by the majority of people in central Uganda. Early in the translation process of the portions of the Bible, the translated portions were constantly referred to as *ekigambo kyatonda* ("the Word of God"). To Ugandan Christians, the Bible is the written Word of God. It is inconceivable for them to think or speak of the Bible in other terms.

² See *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*, ed. John Bowker (Oxford; Oxford UP, 2000), s.v., "East African Revival": "East African Revival or Balokole (Luganda, 'saved ones'). A widespread Christian renewal movement with several independent origins. In the 1930s it spread among Ugandan Anglicans and then into Kenya and Tanzania, working alongside the churches and avoiding schism, although meeting at first with a mixed reception from church leaders. It is essentially a lay movement, African in style and control, that has transcended tribal, racial, and church divisions, and has produced its own theology, organization, and hymns; one revival chorus, 'Tukutendereza' ('We praise thee, Jesus'), is now widely known." See also J. E. Church, *Awake! An African Calling: the Story of Blasio Kigozi and His Vision of Revival* (London: Church Missionary Society, 1937); Jocelyn Murray, "A Bibliography of the East African Revival Movement," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 8.2 (1976): 144-147.

³ It will be noted that in this essay, 'preaching' is used very widely to also cover the proclamation of God's Word that goes on outside the confines of pulpit Sunday ministry. This should not however be confused with the one-to-one witnessing that happens all the time.

Where preaching takes place

Preaching is mainly carried out on Sundays in the context of worship.⁴ In Uganda it is unthinkable for a service or Christian gathering to take place without a sermon or sharing from the Bible. Preaching also takes place in the various weekly fellowships at the local churches and at other informal services. Pastors take Paul's exhortation to Timothy to heart: "Proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favourable or unfavourable" (2 Timothy 4:5). Every opportunity is used to preach the Word of God. At the same time, they are expected to share God's Word during their pastoral visits.

While most formal preaching is carried out by ordained ministers and trained lay readers, every believer also assume responsibility for the preaching of the Good News. They share Paul's outlook: "If I proclaim the gospel, this gives me no ground for boasting, for an obligation is laid on me, and woe unto me if I do not proclaim the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:16). And so it is common in Uganda for one to get into a bus or commuter taxi and start proclaiming the message of the risen Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Various levels of the church – parishes, archdeaconries and dioceses – organize outreach missions.

Baptismal and confirmation provide another occasion for preaching and Christian instruction. This however has not been done very effectively. A parish in Uganda (under one ordained minister) will normally have five and even up to ten daughter churches under the headship of lay readers. These lay readers are in fact the pastors of these congregations.⁵ But these lay readers are not sufficiently trained to handle issues raised by the candidates during baptism and confirmation classes.⁶ I believe ordained ministers (who have received theological training) should themselves handle baptism and confirmation classes, because they are key occasions for Christian instruction.

In most churches, new converts are assigned to a fellowship or to "senior brothers and sisters" for continuing Christian nurture. There are no specific discipleship programmes or cell groups for new converts. However, this is slowly changing with urban churches. Some are beginning to have "new believers' fellowships". Materials from para-church organizations like the Navigators, Campus Crusade and Life Ministry are often used in nurturing new believers.

⁴ Even the early CMS missionaries acknowledged that the Sunday services provided "the main opportunity for proclaiming the Gospel". See John V. Taylor, *The Growth of the Church in Buganda* (London, SCM, 1958), 37.

⁵ In the majority of churches/congregations, these lay readers are the ones who preside and preach in Sunday services, prepare confirmation and baptismal candidates, prepare intending couples for marriage, do home visitation, bury the dead in their congregations, etc. It may take four to six months for the pastor to visit such daughter church in his parish. When he visits, he will conduct baptisms and celebrate the Eucharist.

⁶ These lay readers (catechists) are trained at Diocesan Bible centres. The period of training lasts for six to twelve months and varies with each diocese. There is a provincial syllabus that is often translated into the various languages since most of the training is done in the local languages. I would suggest that this training is too important to be left to the individual dioceses. Also the level of those trained should be raised to those able to read and write in English since most of the materials of instruction are written in the English language.

The purposes in preaching

The Anglican Church of Uganda sees evangelism to be the primary purpose in preaching. Preaching should lead men and women to come to personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. The aim is to bring those outside the church into the church, and help those who are considered as “nominal Christians” into a personal relationship and commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. Matthew 28:19-20, John 3:16 and Romans 10:13-15 provide the chief inspiration for ordained ministers and lay preachers. Most evangelistic preaching concludes with an invitation and challenge for the people to believe the gospel, and make personal commitments to Jesus Christ with the assurance of forgiveness of sins and a new life. The results have been most amazing. In most congregations, people come to faith in Jesus Christ almost on weekly basis. This has been and continues to be one of the key strengths of the Anglican Church of Uganda.

But preaching serves wider purposes than evangelism. Preaching should help congregations in building up their faith. Through this type of preaching, Christians are encouraged to change and have their lives transformed by the power of God’s Word and become Christ-like. As Paul candidly puts it, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2). At the individual level, the believers grow in their faith as they get rooted in Christ while at the cooperate level, the church as the body of Christ gets build up through the edifying word of God preached. As Paul counsels, “Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual edification” (Romans 14:19).⁷ While we place emphasis on individual spiritual growth, we must equally take seriously the growth of the church, Body of Christ.

The Anglican Church of Uganda on the whole has not put enough emphasis on this. Efforts in Christian instruction are less effective as in evangelistic preaching. There is no systematically organized programmes that cater for the edification of both the individual Christians and the church as a whole. Even when people have been converted to the Christian faith through our evangelistic preaching campaigns, most of them end up in the Pentecostal churches. In the past, the Provincial Education Office designed a “Go Forward Course”. But this course did not take root in the local congregation. The material required translation in various local languages, but this was not done effectively. Individual churches are beginning to adopt the Alpha course materials but it is too early to evaluate these programmes.

In this connection, I am very passionate about implementing Recommendations B and C in the *Anglican Catechism in Outline* (ACIO). The Anglican Church of Uganda will have to pay greater attention to programmes for teaching the believers and grounding them in the faith if it is to record any meaningful growth levels both in the individual lives of Christians and the church. In view of the rising number of cults in Uganda, sermons should also give more attention towards combating such false teaching and false teachers. Again there is no systematic programme for this.

⁷ For further reference to both personal and corporate edification read 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Corinthians 14:4, 5, 17, 26.

The need for resources

The Bible is the key resource that most preachers have in Uganda. The Anglican Province of the Church of Uganda annually publishes a lectionary called “Churchman’s Pocket Book and Diary”. It contains selected readings for each day of the year (including Sunday services and feast days). There are no set themes in this lectionary. Ideally, Sunday preachers are supposed to use these readings for their sermons and draw themes from these readings. But in the majority of the churches, this is not the case.

Lectionary preaching is not something our preachers are used to even when they have been trained to do so. Most preachers decide the sermon topics and readings. In some cases they choose the lectionary readings assigned for that particular Sunday. But for churches, the preacher will still preach from his own passage in total disregard of the passages that were set for that day, even if those passages are read out. In this kind of environment, one can hardly expect significant individual Christian and church growth. In most urban churches, topical preaching is given priority over lectionary preaching.

It is my passionate prayer that the recommendations put forth in ACIO will be taken seriously both by theological and training institutions and member churches in the Southern Hemisphere. As Paul puts it, let “everyone who belongs to God be proficient, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:17).

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2. Witnessing and Teaching the Christian Faith in a Multi-religious Society: A Lesson from Nigeria

Introduction: Nigeria's multi-religious situation

Living in a multi-religious society is now a prevalent experience worldwide. Whether Christians live as a minority or majority in a society, or whether in hostile or peaceful surroundings, they need to respond courageously, thoughtfully, tactfully, faithfully and prayerfully to the challenges of living alongside those of other faiths. How do Christians in such conditions evangelize and teach the Christian faith to new converts, particularly in hostile situations? Anglicans in Nigeria have been wrestling with these questions, in particular through our mission in northern Nigeria.¹

In Nigeria, religious pluralism is not new. It has existed for centuries; first between Islam and African traditional religions in the time before Christianity arrived in



Nigeria almost two centuries ago. Christians cannot afford to be indifferent to this pluralism as their survival is at stake. In the northern Nigeria, Muslims are hostile to Christians. For flimsy reasons, they resort to killing Christians, burning church buildings and personal properties of Christians; while the state governments distance themselves in tacit support of such hostility for the authorities are pro-Islamic and are afraid of Christian expansion to the unreached areas of the Islamic north.² Federal and state governments are doing little to defend the rights of Christians. Muslim conversions to Christianity and the alleged trivializing of Islamic doctrines or

the Qur'an by Christians have often been adduced as reasons for such Muslim hostilities which are rampant in the extreme northern states (where Muslims are of the majority). In the northern and the middle belt states (where Christian are the

¹ For further reading on Nigeria's multi-religious situation, see David Barrett, Thomas Kurian, and Todd M. Johnson, *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World*, vol.1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 549-555; *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, ed. John Esposito (New York; Oxford UP, 1995), s.v. "Nigeria"; A. Oyewole and John Lucas, *Historical Dictionary of Nigeria* (Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, 2000). The map shows the thirty-six federal states of Nigeria (from Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, The University of Texas at Austin, http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/africa/nigeria_pol93.jpg).

² The Nigerian Federal Government did not release the ethnic and religious demographical indices in the pro forma of the last 2006 census despite protests from the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and some ethnic groups. It wanted to avoid public controversies on such sensitive issues.

majority), Christians do not enjoy the same privileges of employment and land ownership rights as Muslims for example enjoy in the northern regions. In the southern part of the country where Christians are the over-whelming majority (with over 70 per cent of the population), members of the same family freely belong to any religion of their choice (whether it be Islam, an African traditional religion or Christianity) without any rancour. Evangelism and Christian conversions can go on peaceably in the south. Here also all citizens and all religions enjoy the same rights without any discrimination except for isolated cases.

Christians in Nigeria respond to such hostility in different ways, mainly depending on where they live. In northern Nigeria, Christians adopt a militant “exclusive” position. In the past, they have been passive, but are no longer so. They are becoming more vocal in defending their rights. Christian catechetical instructions to new converts are done with much risk, courage and fearlessness in a hostile environment. In the south, Christians tend to take different stances towards other faiths; varying from “exclusive”, “inclusive” or “pluralist”, in response to the immediate situation.

Dialogue as a means of witness

What stance does the Anglican Church take? Anglicans in Nigeria in obedience to the Great Commission have accepted the challenge of witnessing in a religiously plural society. It is committed to penetrate even the remotest rural regions. The dioceses have increased from 26 (1988) to 122 dioceses (2007), covering all areas where there was no Anglican presence. This has resulted in soul-winning explosions, rapid church planting, and catechizing of new converts all over the country, even in the face of Islamic hostilities.

Nigerian Anglicans believe that they are called to bear witness to the Gospel through proclamation (Acts 1:8), liturgy and worship (1 Corinthians 11:26), and social service (Matthew 25:31-46) in their multi-religious nation. They are also aware that adherents of other faiths are also committed to witness for their faiths. Nigerian Christians often see themselves as bearers of the message. But witnessing in Nigeria is not a one-way traffic. The triune faith calls Christians to enter into a personal relationship with their neighbours through dialogue. This allows Christians to bear witness with a deep-seated conviction of their own faith to their neighbours, and at the same time listen with respect to them who also hold similar deep-seated convictions. Conviction of one’s belief and an openness to others are held in balance in dialogue.

Christians approach dialogue as a means of witness. They do so with a sense of:

- i. *repentance* from self righteous pride and misconstruing God’s revelation and grace;
- ii. *humility* as recipients of God’s undeserving grace, avoiding passing judgments to others from a position of superiority;
- iii. *joy* that we preach Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, though He is only recognized as a prophet, teacher, and a holy man by other religions;
- iv. *integrity and openness* in the face of attacks, as Christ did on the cross;
- v. *co-operation* with those of other faiths in responding with compassion to the suffering of our fellows; and finally
- vi. *adventurous caution* against syncretism in interpreting other faiths.

Dialogue: An ecumenical undertaking for the sake of witness

The Anglican Church in Nigeria and churches of other denominations together engage the Muslims in dialogue. The *Project for Christian Muslim Relations in Africa* is a Christian ecumenical organization led by Anglicans in Nigeria. It has engaged in dialogue with over 250 ethnic groups in Nigeria in the spirit of Christ's reconciliation who wants all men to be under God's redemptive rule. The Anglican Church continues to seek intra-unity with other Christian denominations through bodies like *Christian Council of Nigeria* (CCN) and *Christian Association of Nigeria* (CAN).³ The Primate Archbishop Peter Akinola was the immediate past President of CAN. Such forms of ecumenical partnership make the Christian Gospel credible (John 17:17). The Nigerian Federal Government has also set up *The National Inter-Religious Relations Council* (NAIRREC) – a forum where all the major religions meet regularly for dialogue. It serves as an advisory body to the government, and takes concerted actions in responding to social, religious and political problems, especially in times of crisis. The Anglican Church continues to be at the forefront in seeking good relations and common grounds with those of other faiths on concrete social issues both on the national and international fronts.

In other words, Anglicans undertake dialogue at various levels, and see this as part of witnessing to the truth of the Gospel.

Catechetical instruction for Muslim converts in the Akoko Diocese

The Nigerian experience points to an acute need for the church to equip Christians on how to live alongside those of other faiths; in particular, with Muslim neighbours. What follows is an illustration from my own Diocese.

The Akoko Diocese is in the northern part of the south-west Nigeria, very near to the middle-belt states. Muslims make up of one-third of Akoko's population. Unlike the Muslims of the north, they are not hostile to Christians. Since 1999 many Muslims have been converted to the Christian faith through the Anglican Church.

Providing Christian instruction to Muslim converts is a challenging task. It involves not only teaching them basic Christian doctrines,⁴ but also comparative studies of Christian and Islamic concepts of the Scriptures (between the Bible and the Qur'an), sin, morality, God (as Trinity and Allah), Jesus Christ and life after death. As the diocesan bishop I formed a committee to provide guidance to our clergy on catechetical instructions for Muslim converts.

Catechists and clergy should have an understanding of and exposure to the Muslim world. Sharing of experience and mutual encouragement between Christians living alongside Muslims in hostile and friendly situations can also be helpful during catechetical instruction.

³ CCN is a World Council of Churches ecumenical body for Protestants in Nigeria. CAN is an umbrella body for all Nigerian Christians that includes Catholics, Protestants, Pentecostals and the Aladura movements.

⁴ These include teachings on the triune God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit, salvation, baptismal pledges, church, creeds, the Decalogue, sacraments, eschatology, Christian ethics (Christian marriage and family life, Christian social and political responsibilities), discipleship and Christian suffering, spiritual fellowship and Christian growth.

Christian converts need also to know the difference between Christianity and Islam. The degree that the two religions can come together is partial; each faith has its distinctive irreconcilable aspects. Some basic concerns are as follows:⁵

- i. Firstly, Christianity is more open-minded because of its longer exposure to modernity than Islam. Christians are more aware of the need to respond to pluralism than Muslims. So Christians need to be patient with Muslims who may feel that their culture is being swamped in the process of dialogue. In particular, they may have a deep-seated resentment of western powers because of its encroaching influence on their ancient Islamic cultural life. Islamic countries resent what they see as Western cultural imperialism;
- ii. Secondly, Muslims' statements in dialogue tend to be rigid, often refusing to take in the views of Christians. But Christians and Muslims can join hands to solve common problems facing the world today;
- iii. Thirdly, Christianity is open to criticism while Islam is not. Islam is a fundamental religion which accepts the Qu'ran as verbal and literal scriptural revelation to the Prophet Mohammed. It is therefore not open to criticism. But Christians accept that the Bible is open to critical studies;
- iv. Fourthly, Muslims see Islam as the final revelation. They rank Jesus Christ in a long succession of prophets whereas Christians see Christ as God's final revelation to mankind;
- v. Fifthly, the finality of Islamic revelation since the 7th century makes it closed to modernity. Islamic countries often do not protect the civil and personal rights of minority religious communities. The Qu'ran is ambiguous about equality of the sexes. In contrast, countries with a Christian heritage respect fundamental human rights and freedom of religion. They allow Muslims not only to practice their faith; but also to build or convert church buildings to mosques, and become full citizens.

Conclusion

The task of catechetical instruction to new Christians, especially Muslim converts, is an urgent task in the Church in Nigeria.

Christians should learn to live peacefully alongside people of other faiths whether in religious or secular states. More dialogue among people of living faiths will dissolve mutual suspicion and prejudices. Christians should evangelize through dialogue with patience, humility, perseverance, love, honesty and in awareness of the freedom and respect for people of other faiths.

Olubayo Olugbenga Obijole

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⁵ For further reading, refer to the writings of Kenneth Cragg. See "A Bibliography of Kenneth Cragg," *The Muslim World* 83 (1993): 177-191 and the interview "Cross Meets Crescent: An Interview with Kenneth Cragg," *Christian Century* 116 (1999): 180-183. See also Patrick Sookhdeo, *Islam: The Challenge to the Church* (Pewsey, Wiltshire, UK: Isaac Publishing, 2006); World Council of Churches, *My Neighbour's Faith -- and Mine: Theological Discoveries Through Interfaith Dialogue. A Study Guide* (Geneva: WCC, 1986).

3. Christian Instruction among the Fulani: the Nomad Mission of the Church of Nigeria

Introduction

My present purpose is to explain how the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) carries out Christian instruction among nomadic peoples.

Huge population movements are pervasive in today's society. Wars, diseases, political hostilities, racial and cultural discrimination, ecological disasters, religious disturbances and suchlike often result in such population displacements.

Peoples are displaced all over the world – particularly in the Southern Hemisphere. The church needs to stand alongside them, and attend to their particular circumstances and experiences. This is in keeping with the prophetic spirit of prophet Ezekiel – to “sit where [the people of God in captivity] sit” (Ezekiel 3:15), and with the evangelistic spirit of Saint Paul – who was “made all things to all men, that [he] might by all means save some” (1 Corinthians 9:22). The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (John 1:14). The call for “the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole world” (Lausanne II, *Manila Manifesto*, 1989) should embrace the world of displaced peoples.

The secular world holds out a vision of settled life for the achievers – a life that is protected by pension plans, medical coverage, personal wealth, and social stability. This however is not within reach for most people in the world, nor is it the Biblical vision for human life. The Bible speaks of a history of displacements. This began with Adam and Eve who were expelled from of the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:23-24), followed by the scattering of the peoples at Babel to the wider world (Genesis 11:1-9). Displacement is not necessarily a result of sin. The history of the people of God began with a pilgrimage (Genesis 12:1-8; Hebrews 11:9-16). Following God is accompanied with rejection and hatred by the world. The infant Jesus was a refugee in Egypt because of King Herod. Throughout his earthly ministry, the Son of Man had no where to lay his head (Matthew 8:20). The persecution of Christians after Stephen's martyrdom led to the scattering of Christians outside Jerusalem to the wider region. So the spread of the Gospel to the ends of the world providentially came about from such people displacements.

Mission to the nomadic peoples by the Church of Nigeria

In northern Nigeria, and indeed throughout West Africa, many live a nomadic life. In particular, the nomadic Fulani are a cattle-rearing people. They roam around ranches looking for places to graze their animals. The search for pasture has led them to spread to other countries of West Africa; such as the northern parts of Cameroon, Togo, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Upper Volta, Senegal, the Gambia and Mauritania. There are over ten million nomadic Fulani in northern Nigeria, spread over the middle belt and the northern states. The Fulani is one of the major groups of

the ethnically complex nation of Nigeria.¹ The Nigerian Government sees the education for these nomadic people as a priority, and has devoted monetary and material resources for such programmes.



Map 1: Nigeria and neighbouring countries (from www3.nationalgeographic.com)

Archbishop Peter Akinola, the Primate of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) also saw the need for the Church to set up a special arm of her Christian ministry to the nomadic Fulani. In 2006, the Church decided to create a non-geographical nomadic diocese (Nomad Mission) for the Fulani. Bishop Simon Peter Mutum volunteered himself for this responsibility, and was translated from the Diocese of Jalingo in Taraba State – where he had been diocesan bishop for five years – to become the diocesan bishop of the newly created nomadic diocese. He has since started working with pastors, teachers, and evangelists specially trained to minister to these nomadic people of northern Nigeria.

The Bishop and his catechists

Support from the Church of Nigeria is central to the work of the non-geographical Nomadic Missionary Diocese from the inception. Bishop Simon Peter Mutum was originally to be stationed in Abuja (the Nigerian federal capital). He was moved to Jos,² a central location in the middle belt area, central enough to enable him supervise the non-geographical Diocese which covers the middle belt and the entire northern Nigeria. Benjamin A Kwashi, Bishop of Jos and also the Archbishop of Jos, kindly made provision for Bishop S P Mutum and his family to settle in quickly in the new surroundings.³ The Church of Nigeria also provides a vehicle for the new Bishop's travel.

¹ For further readings on the Fulani, see Richard V. Weekes, "Fulani." *Muslim Peoples: A World Ethnographic Survey* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1978), 133-139; David Levinson, *Ethnic Groups Worldwide A Ready Reference Handbook* (Phoenix, Ariz: Oryx Press, 1998), 156-159.

² Jos is the capital of Plateau State and seat of the Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Jos.

³ The Province of Jos consists of nine dioceses; the Dioceses of Bauchi, Bukuru, Damaturu, Gombe, Jalingo, Jos, Maiduguri, Pankshin, and Yola.



Map 2: Key Cities of Nigeria (from <http://geography.about.com>)

Staff for the new Nomadic Mission is recruited from two fronts. The first comes from catechists and evangelists who were already serving in the dioceses of northern Nigeria. They were released by their bishops to join the staff of the Nomadic Mission. These workers came with vast experience and skills from their former dioceses. A special orientation seminar was held for them to prepare them for the challenges of a nomadic mission. They were then sent back to begin work in the areas that were already familiar to them – based in their former dioceses, no longer as staff of those dioceses but as staff of the new Nomad Mission. The reason

for this arrangement was for each person to begin in a familiar terrain. While their former bishops provided accommodation for them and their families, the national Church provided them with bicycles and motorcycles, and the cost of maintenances and fuelling the motorcycles.

The second category of staff was those who were specially recruited by advertisements in parish churches. Basic requirements for these would-be evangelists are basic secondary school education, good Christian conviction, fluency in Hausa language and a local Fulani dialect and flair in person-to-person evangelism. Those who responded to the advertisements were interviewed and sent to the Saint Francis of Assisi Theological College, Bukuru via Jos, to be trained as evangelists and catechists for a minimum of two years. They are presently still undergoing training; after which they will be commissioned and sent to the nomadic mission field.

The Church undertakes to make adequate provision for the catechists. It offers them a reasonable stipend, provides good accommodation at their bases of mission and good means of transport around the nomadic mission field. It also gives them and their families generous medical care. The Church also makes provision to take care of the social and special needs of the Fulani Christian converts. These provisions have given great encouragement to the workers on the field.

Christian instruction among the Fulani: the developing of an oral catechism

The Fulani are predominantly Muslim; many of whom have never heard the Gospel. Bishop Mutum and his evangelists face religious hostility of the nomadic Fulani. These nomadic cattle-rearers are also not uneasily accessible due to their high mobility. The evangelists often have to search for them on rough and rural roads and footpaths, with the means of transport such as bicycles or motor cycles. Sometimes they need to trek long distances through the hinterland of savannah and sub-savannah vegetation.

How could the church be effective in teaching the faith to nomadic peoples? The catechism and catechetical methods churches use often presuppose a settled social condition. The ministry to the nomadic Fulani offers us an opportunity to re-examine our suppositions. Bishop Mutum and his catechists soon discovered that the new converts need a solid foundation in Christian understanding.

The church prepared specially designed oral catechism for the Fulani converts who are generally illiterate by present-day educational standards. The oral catechism contains the basic Christian teaching on the doctrine of God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, salvation, the Church and the sacraments, the Christian family, Christian social responsibilities to the community, life after death, and the second coming of Christ. Converts also learn the Creeds, the Ten Commandments, and Christian duty to God and to neighbours.

Christian instruction and social care

Catechists need to help the new converts face issues particular to their ways of life. The Fulani often have to cope with an uncertain future, pressure that arises from continuous relocation, depression, hostilities, discriminations, violation of human rights, marginalization, work and resident permit matters, citizenship rights, anxiety about means of livelihood and in meeting basic human needs.

Evangelistic outreach comes hand in hand with a deliberate effort to improve the Fulani's social conditions. Literacy programmes, social care (food, clothing and medical), and skills development (in agricultural and animal husbandry) are part of the ministry of the church to the Fulani. These practical services make the nomadic mission meaningful and relevant to these nomadic people. In all these "God was in Christ reconciling the world – of the nomadic – unto himself . . . and hath committed unto [the Church] the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:18).

Olubayo Olugbenga Obijole
Diocesan Bishop of Akoko, the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)

4. Baptism and Confirmation Preparation in South East Asia

A. Catechetical Materials in the Diocese of Kuching

Introduction: Background

The Diocese of Kuching encompasses the state of Sarawak, one of the thirteen states of Malaysia, and Negara Brunei Darussalam. From the time of the arrival of the first Anglican missionary on St. Peter's Day, June 29, in 1848, leading to the creation of the first diocese in South East Asia, Kuching has played a prominent part as the headquarters for the expansion of Anglican missionary activities amongst the people of the region and especially in Sarawak and North Borneo, now known as Sabah. The early missionaries from the United Kingdom were influenced by the Oxford Movement. This shaped the churchmanship of the Diocese of Kuching to this day. Before the formation of the Anglican Province of South East Asia in 1996, the Diocese of Kuching was an extra-provincial diocese under the metro-political jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Canterbury. This historic connection continues to be the source of strength in maintaining the bond of fellowship with the Province of Canterbury.

The Origin of the Catechetical Materials

A Clergy Conference was held on August 13, 1962, during which "a constitution was adopted, and the Diocesan Council formed".¹ This resulted in the inauguration of the Diocese of Kuching, with Bishop Cornwall as its bishop. While the Dioceses of Kuching and Sabah were in the process of being formed, a theological school was started in Kuching in 1952. The school was meant to train local men for priesthood. The school opened on September 8, 1952 under the direction of Peter Henry Herbert Howes, who eventually became an Assistant Bishop of the Diocese of Kuching. The school eventually led to the construction of a permanent building – the House of Epiphany – to house the ordinands. From 1953, the House of Epiphany has served to prepare local men for priesthood and other ministries within the Diocese.

The opening and establishment of the theological school led to the development of catechetical materials. They were compiled from notes given to students by Bishop Peter H. H. Howes in the House of the Epiphany from 1953 to 1955. These instruction materials were subsequently translated into Iban, a local language, by Archdeacon Alfred Chabu. Where they have not been translated into the local dialect, the instructors would personally translate the materials into the language of the candidates preparing for baptism and confirmation. The catechists, who were in most cases in the mission frontiers in Kuching, have been using the materials for instructing candidates for baptism since the 1950s. In 1991 the Diocese revised and updated the materials.

¹ Brian Taylor, *The Anglican Church in Borneo 1848-1962* (Bognor Regis, Sussex: New Horizon, 1983), 314.

Contents of the Catechetical Materials

The 108-page Iban version of the catechetical materials is entitled *Pengarap Aku* (My Belief). Such a title gives a very strong emphasis on one's faith in the doctrines of the Church.

Pengarap Aku contains 34 lessons. It is certainly possible to increase the number of lessons to be taught given the immense amount of source materials that were used for the production of catechetical materials. This, obviously, was left to the discretion of the catechists or the clergy concerned.

In a nut shell, *Pengarap Aku* is an exposition of the Catechism. It elucidates the Christian faith as taught in the Catechism of *The Book of Common Prayer*. The main source materials for *Pengarap Aku* are the Bible, the Apostles' Creed,² the Ten Commandments, and the Sacraments.

Acknowledging the importance of the Bible as the final authority in the formulation of the doctrines, one immediately notices the repeated references to the Bible in *Pengarap Aku*. To underline this, the catechists and readers are reminded to equip himself with a copy of the Bible in the Preface.

The Apostles' Creed is schematically itemised article by article. Each article of the creed is exposed by giving due consideration to the need to elucidate its meaning by using local illustrations. Hence references to the local traditional religious beliefs are often made for the purpose of making comparisons with the hope of making the pedagogical process more meaningful and comprehensible.

Like the Apostles' Creed, the Ten Commandments are also itemised commandment by commandment. The exposition of each commandment is considered vitally important in helping the candidates for baptism and, subsequently, confirmation making moral judgments for themselves.

Though the sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Communion are the two sacraments considered 'necessary for salvation', the other five sacraments of the Church are also taught. The catechetical materials include the teaching on the other five sacraments incorporating relevant examples from local context, such as the need to have some knowledge of the government legislation pertaining to marriage, when it comes to the teaching on the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony.

Use of the Catechetical Materials

When the materials were first published, they were done so with the view to help lay readers who conducted the spiritual communion, in the absence of the priests, in the outstations particularly of the parishes in the rural areas. As more people came forward to offer themselves for baptism, parish priests often found that they needed to share their teaching ministry and responsibilities with some mature lay members due

² Bishops in the Diocese, particularly Bishop Peter H. H. Howes, insisted that each candidate must be able to recite the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments. As the Catechetical materials were also used by most clergy in Baptism and Confirmation preparation, *Pengarap Aku* did not only give an exposition of the Apostles' Creed, but also the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed and the Thirty-Nine Articles, with a view that the candidates would be aware of the existence of the foundational documents relating to our creedal faith.

to other urgent commitments which required their immediate attention. This was not to belittle the immense teaching responsibility of a priest but to complement it. Thus the usage of the materials was not restricted to the lay readers in rural context alone but were also for those in urban situations where priests required assistance in preparing the candidates for baptism and confirmation.

Complementary Catechetical Materials

Subsequent to the publication of the Iban version of the catechetical material, complementary catechetical materials were produced by the Anglican Communications Centre in Kuching,³ These materials, among others, include teachings on the Christian Calendar, liturgical colours and the need for a quiet time before the ministration of the Sacrament of Baptism.

Conclusion

Considering the need to have a common syllabus for instructing and teaching candidates for baptism and confirmation, the Diocese of Kuching was blessed to have a catechism which forms the basis for instructing candidates for baptism and confirmation throughout the Diocese. It has helped to maintain a churchmanship which is generally the same throughout, especially in liturgical worship. The existence of minor variations in the actual application or teaching using the catechetical materials in order to accommodate the needs of the local church within the ambit of an autonomous diocese is an indication of the on-going process in order to meet an ever-changing cultural context. Apart from the existence of a negligible number of worshipping congregations where materials imported from other sources have been used, the *Pengarap Aku* or the English version of the same and the complementary catechetical materials, still form the basis of the catechesis in the Diocese.

Michael Buma Galami
Archdeacon of the Diocese of Kuching

³ The Anglican Communications Centre was originally established in order to cater for the needs of the school children. It serves as a Centre where the School Chaplain could conduct the various components of his chaplaincy work, such as holiday school activities, when he was not ministering to the students in the schools themselves.

B. Baptism and Confirmation Preparation in Singapore

My present purposes are to describe in concrete terms how Church of the Ascension (COA), Diocese of Singapore, has been conducting its Baptism and Confirmation Course.

The Diocese of Singapore

Firstly, it is important to know our context and the challenges facing the Diocese of Singapore (DOS). DOS consists of 26 parishes within the Archdeanery of Singapore and six deaneries outside the territory. These six deaneries – spread across a region with considerable racial, social and political diversities – are Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Nepal, and Thailand. DOS is committed “to mobilise resources to plant and grow bilingual churches in every country of the Diocese” with the view of “the eventual formation of a Diocese in each country”.¹ Vicars based in Singapore often act as regional deans to these countries; material and personnel resources from the parishes are often mobilised towards fulfilling this mission goal. In short, churches in Singapore are often the home bases for this mission thrust into the rest of South East Asia. This mission context informs our catechetical tasks; we need to equip our congregation to take up this mission task.

Church of the Ascension²

COA was founded over half a century ago to provide pastoral care to boarding students studying in St Andrew’s School. Over the years, COA became a parish for those who have been saved through its chaplaincy work. It now has an expanded role in chaplaincy oversight over the Boarding House Centre, St Andrew’s Junior School and Ascension Kindergarten, with an aggregate total of close to 4,000 students and teachers.

Congregational strength of the church is close to 350, based on its average Sunday attendance. It has two English-speaking congregations and one Chinese-speaking congregation and a group of Myanmar Christians, though not Anglicans, using COA for its weekly services.

Process of Baptism and Confirmation

The Baptism and Confirmation Course is the standard means to initiate Christians into the parish. What follows is a descriptive account of how one is initiated into the Anglican family.

There are three groups by which Christians are being prepared for baptism and confirmation, namely Children, Teens and Youths, and Adults.

The vicar appoints a full-time Membership Coordinator who is the key person in training of these groups. This person is expected to have a degree in theology, and preferably, an Anglican.

¹ “Mission and Vision Statements of the Diocese of Singapore,” The Diocese of Singapore, <http://www.anglican.org.sg/info.html>.

² Due to the diversity of languages and cultures, a separate treatment is needed for Chinese-speaking congregation, chaplaincies, and deaneries.

a. Children (Ages from 7 -12)

When a young child wants to make a commitment to Jesus, the child's parents would inform and register with the church. The Membership Coordinator will share with and interview the parents to ascertain the child's desire and spiritual state. Then an arrangement to meet the child is made for confirmation on what had been discussed privately with the child's parents. Finally, a recommendation is made to the vicar for a round of interviews and instructions for parents and godparents in their spiritual responsibility in the nurturing of the young.

Once completed, the child's Sunday school teachers and class will be informed that the child would be attending the Baptism Course. The child would be baptised in the context of a gathering of Christians of the same parish to witness the baptism and a small celebration ensues.

The baptized children would then continue their Confirmation preparation once they reach 13-14 years of age in the Senior Sunday School.

Children participate occasionally in the main congregations for "family worship".³ This is important as the communal aspect of the Christian life is emphasized. A suitable liturgical service is specially written to accommodate the children so that they too could be familiar with the liturgical life of the church.

b. Teens and Youths (Ages from 13 to 16)

Teens of 14 years of age⁴ who have accepted Jesus as Lord will follow the same Baptism and Confirmation Course as the adults.

Those teens who were baptised as infants or as young children will attend the Senior Sunday school (13 to 16 years of age). The first two years of Senior Sunday School is the Confirmation track. At the end of the second year, they will be confirmed if they fulfill the following conditions:

- i. Completion of all the Confirmation lessons
- ii. Successful interview with the Membership Coordinator, who together with the Vicar will determine the suitability for entry into Confirmation Retreat.
- iii. Attendance in the Confirmation Retreat.
- iv. An undertaking that after the Confirmation, they will remain for the next two years of Senior Sunday School, where they will study lessons on the spiritual gifts, undertake a survey to discover their giftings, and later become involved in the ministries of the church.

Like the younger children, these teens and youths will attend the first half of a liturgical service every Sunday which includes an introit hymn, confession,

³ COA normally holds "family service" three to five times a year.

⁴ This is the age that they could apply for Confirmation Course.

absolution, an extended time of sung worship after which they are dismissed to their own classes.

c. Adults

Information on Baptism and Confirmation Courses are announced during Sunday service. Adults are encouraged to attend a nine-month Course. They are required to attend Sunday services regularly and to be part of a cell group. Upon completion of the Course, they will write a reflection paper and undergo an interview with the Membership Coordinator. They are required to attend the Baptism and Confirmation Retreats and be involved in the ministries of the church.

These adult Christians participate fully in the liturgical service. By this age, it seems that they have fewer problems accepting and embracing the communal life of the church.

Areas of Improvements in Response to Parish Life Review (PLR)

The above describes the Baptism and Confirmation processes in COA. Thus far, the Diocese has not adopted a common policy. This is however currently under review.

From 2006, the DOS implemented a diocesan-wide Parish Life Review, a programme designed for all parishes to review their church life. This arose out of three concerns: “the need for faithfulness in changing times; the need for spiritual health and growth; and the need to minister effectively to a contemporary world.”⁵ Parishes across the Diocese of Singapore are encouraged to review their church life in these five main areas: i. Worship and Prayer; ii. Fellowship and Care; iii. Witness, Evangelism and Community Impact; iv. Discipleship, Equipping, and Ministry; and v. Global Missions.

After the review process, COA identified discipleship, community impact and leadership development as the three central concerns for 2008 to 2010. In this light, it plans to organise teachings and activities for our candidates in their preparation for parish involvement as part of the Baptism and Confirmation Course.

Here is an illustration to show how the parish implements its discipleship programme. We decided that post-Baptism and Confirmation education should continue, and we encouraged our candidates to be part of a cell group. This inculcates a structure of accountability and responsibility within which they can learn and grow.

Once channelled to cell groups, the Cell Group Coordinator would follow up with these new members so as to monitor their progress. Like the Membership Coordinator, the Cell Group Coordinator is required to possess a theological degree.

This Cell Group Coordinator ensures that leadership training will be conducted for the cell leaders. Selected members within the cell group will be mentored and trained for leadership (2 Timothy 2:2). In this way, it is hoped that our members will be well

⁵ See the Diocese of Singapore May 2006 Synod Resolution on Parish Life Review. See also “Introduction to Parish Life Review,” Parish Life Review, http://www.parishdevelopment.org/index.php/site/comments/an_introduction_to_the_parish_development_process/.

grounded in the Word as well as able to contribute to the life of the parish of which they are members.

One concern is that each cell group is different from the others. In order not to stifle the uniqueness of each cell group, space is given for each cell group to decide their own programmes while in the main following church's materials.

In summary, the Baptism and Confirmation programmes in COA and other parishes are evolving. In the end, we hope our experiences would lead to the emergence of a more appropriate model and a common policy across the Diocese in instructing new Christians so that they would be more effective in fulfilling the Great Commission.

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V. Appendices

1. The Anglican Catechism, *The Book of Common Prayer*, 1662: Rubrics and Historical Background
2. An Explanatory Note on the Revised Common Lectionary

1. The Anglican Catechism, *The Book of Common Prayer 1662*: Rubrics and Historical Background

Rubric

The Curate of every Parish shall diligently upon Sundays and Holy-days, after the second Lesson at Evening Prayer, openly in the Church instruct and examine so many Children of his Parish sent unto him, as he shall think convenient, in some Part of this Catechism.

And all Fathers, Mothers, Masters, and Dames, shall cause their Children, Servants, and Prentices (which have not learned their Catechism,) to come to the Church at the time appointed, and obediently to hear, and be ordered by the Curate, until such time as they have learned all that is here appointed for them to learn.

So soon as children are come to a competent age, and can say, in their Mother Tongue, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments; and also can answer to the other questions of this short Catechism; they shall be brought to the Bishop. And every one shall have a Godfather, or a Godmother, as a witness of their Confirmation.

And whensoever the Bishop shall give knowledge for Children to be brought unto him for their Confirmation, the Curate of every Parish shall either bring, or send in writing, with his hand subscribed thereunto, the names of all such persons within his Parish, as he shall think fit to be presented to the Bishop to be confirmed. And, if the Bishop approve of them, he shall confirm them in manner following.

Historical Background of the Anglican Catechism¹

First included in the prayer book of Edward VI in 1549 as part of the order of confirmation, *The Anglican Catechism* underwent various revisions during the reign of Elizabeth I and was finally codified in its present form in the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*. Archbishop Thomas Cranmer is generally given credit for the composition of the prayer book of Edward VI, which became the official doctrine of the Church of England with the Uniformity Act of 1549. A 1552 revision introduced a more Calvinist theology, until it was revised again under Elizabeth in 1559. It was further revised after the Restoration and issued in the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*. This 1662 version remains the authorized text.

Among the antecedents for the catechism are *The Institution of a Christian Man* (1537) and its 1543 revision by Cranmer and Henry VIII, *A Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for Any Christian Man* (also called *The King's Book*). Later contributors to the composition of the catechism as it evolved probably include Alexander Nowell (c. 1507-1602), dean of St. Paul's, John Overall (1560-1619), bishop of Norwich, and John Ponet (1516?-1556), bishop of Rochester. The brief work guides the catechumen through five topics: (i) the nature and duties of a Christian; (a) *The Apostles' Creed*;

¹ An extract from Jaroslav Pelikan and Valerie Hotchkiss, eds. *Creeds & Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*, Vol. 2. *Creeds and Confessions of the Reformation Era* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2003), 364-365.

(3) the ten commandments; (4) the Lord's Prayer; and (5) the sacraments (baptism and the eucharist).

The Church of England sponsored a revision of the catechism in 1958, which modernized the language and added material on the Bible, Christian duty, and the church. This *Revised Catechism* was not intended to supersede the original catechism, but has been recommended for use in the Church of England since 1973.

2. An Explanatory Note on the Revised Common Lectionary¹

The orderly reading of scripture is at the heart of Christian worship. A lectionary clothes the cycle of the Christian year with the stories that tell the story of divine activity and human response to it and makes it possible for Christians to celebrate the mystery of faith the more effectively. When they use a common lectionary, and read the scriptures ‘in step’, they are also enabled to celebrate their essential unity in Christ.

The Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) is an international and ecumenical lectionary without rivals. . . .

The Church of England has adopted this lectionary and made it its own as the main constituent of its Principal Service Lectionary for Sundays, Principal Feasts and Festivals. That lectionary is almost identical with the RCL, from which it is derived, but there are a number of deviations and much of the festival material is additional to the RCL. Its provision for the large majority of Sundays is absolutely identical with RCL.

Among the churches that have adopted the RCL are the Episcopal Church of Scotland, the (Anglican) Church in Wales and the (Anglican) Church of Ireland. Their provisions also draw to a greater or lesser extent on the Church of England’s deviations from and additions to the RCL. Their precise local variations are not listed within the lectionary, but users of this lectionary within those churches should, by reference to their tables of readings, be able to deduce whether, on a particular day, they follow the RCL provision or the English variations from it. A supplement provides the texts of the few lections for Ireland, Scotland and Wales that are not included in the main text. These are a series of Old Testament Readings in Eastertide and the readings for specifically Irish, Scottish and Welsh saints.

The variations between the RCL and the Church of England provision include some differences in the ways Sundays are described. This applies particularly on the Sundays after Epiphany and before Lent, and in the time between Trinity Sunday and the First Sunday of Advent. . . .

One particular feature of the RCL, reproduced in the Church of England lectionary, is the provision of alternative Old Testament readings for the period of Ordinary Time (the Sundays after Trinity). In Track 1 the approach to the Old Testament is ‘semi-continuous’. In other words, one biblical book is followed through in a series of readings over a number of weeks, without any pre-determined relationship with the other readings that day. The Psalm following it reflects that reading. In Track 2, the Old Testament readings are chosen to relate to the Gospel reading and therefore move around the Old Testament without any sequence from one week to another. A different Psalm is provided to reflect that different Old Testament reading. Users are free to

¹ From “Introduction: How to use the lectionary” in *Revised Common Lectionary in NRSV: Sundays and Festivals. Principal Service Lectionary of the Church of England* (London: Mowbray, 1997), ix-x. See also “About the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL),” Consultation on Common Texts, <http://www.commontexts.org/rcl/faq.html>.

choose which track to follow in any particular year (though the Church of England abandons Track 1 during the four weeks before Advent), but, during any given year, there should be no movement from one track into another.

....

The publishers offer this Lectionary to the churches in the hope that it may help the Church in the public liturgical proclamation of the scriptures, in the discovery of the strengths of the new lectionaries that will bring freshness to that proclamation, and in the recovery of unity among those who find in reading the Hebrew and Christian scriptures the word of God for every generation.