# ANGLICAN WAY

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## In This Issue

# Reflections FROM THE Editor's Desk

Roberta Bayer, Ph.D., *Assistant Professor, Patrick Henry College, Purcellville, Virginia*

In April of this year, at Wycliffe College in Oxford, a lecture was given in honor of the work of the Rev. Dr. Peter Toon, Anglican minister, theologian, church historian, former librarian of Latimer House in Oxford, and most importantly, former President of the Prayer Book Society of the United States. At this event Dr. Vita Toon, the widow of the Reverend Dr. Peter Toon, was presented with a photograph of a frontispiece from a book that had belonged in the library of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer. This book was restored at the expense of the Prayer Book Society. At this fine event, Board member Canon Alistair Macdonald-Radcliffe made the presentation to Dr. Vita Toon, and his comments are printed below. Bishop Nazir -Ali, former Bishop of Rochester, director of the Oxford Centre for Training, Research, Advocacy and Dialogue, and longtime friend of Peter Toon gave a lecture on the subject of Justification by Faith. An audio version of the evening is available at the following web address: http://www.churchsociety.org/issues_new/doctrine/heads/salvation/iss_doctrine_heads_salvation_ToonLecture2013.asp

In this issue, the President of the Prayer Book Society, the Rev. Gavin Dunbar explains the rationale behind the order of Sunday readings found in the historic Eucharistic lectionary. The Rev. Dunbar notes that the *Common Lectionary* (1979) redefined the previous purpose of a Sunday lectionary. The point of a lectionary is not simply to read through whole books of the Bible, as worthwhile as that is, he writes, "there is another purpose for a lectionary, and that is to proclaim the mystery of the gospel in a very focussed, doctrinally coherent way." It is this latter purpose that the historical lectionary attempts to convey by providing each Sunday with its own coherent teaching appropriate to the doctrinal emphasis of that day within the Christian year. The Rev. William Martin has contributed a sermon on the Gospel for the Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity according to the historic lectionary. Fr. Martin is on the Board of the Prayer Book Society, and a priest within the jurisdiction of the Anglican Province of America.

The Rev. Kenneth Cook has contributed a short history of the notable Anglican cleric and theologian of the 16th and 17th centuries William Perkins, an important defender of the faith. In the final, learned and lengthy article in this issue, the Rev. Edward Rix, Vice President of the Prayer Books Society and member of Forward in Faith North America takes issue with its recent decision to adopt as normative the 7th ecumenical council against the doctrine and beliefs of the historical Anglican Church.

We need your gifts in order to carry out your mandate to defend the 1928 *Book of Common Prayer.* You may send a contribution in the enclosed envelope.

Please give generously.

Please read our redesigned website: www.pbsusa.org *Contact Dr. Bayer at editor.mandate@gmail.com or from the PBS website*

The Board of the Prayer Book Society would like to offer thanks to all those individuals and churches which have sent in donations over the past year. We could not continue our work without you, nor publish this magazine. Thank you for helping us continue to teach the faith in the Anglican way.

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Cover: An open bible in a 16 century church in the Cotswolds England ©iStockphoto.com/cnstock

# Remarks at presentation to Mrs. Toon

## Presented at Wycliffe College on April 16, 2013

The Rev. Canon Alistair Macdonald-Radcliffe

Peter Toon was the eldest of four children of a Methodist coal miner and went on to graduate from King's College in London and to earn a D.Phil. from Oxford University.

Having been ordained to Holy Orders in the diocese of Liverpool in 1973, he came to Oxford as the Librarian of Latimer House, and soon became noted as an Anglican historian and theologian, teaching at Oak Hill and several other theological colleges over the course of his career, as well as serving as a parish priest and author on a very wide range of subjects from Hyper-Calvinism to the practice of meditation and the life of Frances de Sales. He was a sought-after lecturer, speaker, and preacher, and it was in the last phase of his ministry, after he moved to America, that he edited the journal of the American Prayer Book Society (then *Mandate* and now the *Anglican Way*) from 1995–2008 and served as president and CEO of the Society for the last ten years of his life, until he died on April 26, 2009.

From left to right: The Rev. Lee Gatiss, Director Church Society, the Rev. Canon Alistair Macdonald-Radcliffe, Dr. Vita Toon, the Rt. Rev. Michael Nazir-Ali

In considering Dr. Toon's remarkable life overall I am most powerfully struck by the rare combination of theological insight and historical erudition that he brought to bear with his boundless drive to achieve practical impact in the lives both of individuals and of the wider Anglican Communion. His vision of the church was always truly catholic in its breadth and reformed in its emphasis upon personal transformation. He called us back as Anglicans to our theological roots and to the great heritage and resource that is ours in the historic formularies of the Articles, the Book of Common Prayer, and the Ordinal. This combination of action grounded in faith and learning calls to mind a compliment recorded by Dr. Toon in his celebrated works on and of the writings of John Owen.

For Owen said of his good friend Thomas Westrow, whom he had known at the Queen's College at Oxford, that "his judgement to discern the differences of these times, and his valour in prosecuting what he is resolved to be just and lawful, place him among the number of those very few to whom it is given to know aright the causes of things and vigorously to execute holy and laudable designs." This recollection is particularly fitting given that Westrow, when later he became MP for Hythe, reciprocated this regard by proposing the appointment of Owen as preacher to the House of Commons for a Fast Day in April in 1646. In that sermon, Owen made a sweeping review of England's salvation history, and while I may personally warm more to his analysis of the dire effects of the invading Saxon hordes of the fifth century, than I do to the parallel he alleges with Archbishop Laud's activities in the 1630s, we can all only be moved by the grandeur of the vision he went on to set before Parliament. Thus he stated that the reformation of England "shall be more glorious than of any nation in the world, being carried on neither by might or power, but only by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts." He went on to enjoin: "O that you would labour to let all . . . taste of the sweetness of your successes, in carrying to them the Gospel of the Lord Jesus."

There can be few servants of Our Lord who can be deemed more worthy of answering that call than the Reverend Dr. Peter Toon and who have done so far beyond English shores. It is therefore with profound gratitude and humility that—on behalf of all the members and the Board of the Prayer Book Society of the United States—we present this small token of our esteem and gratitude (which is a copy of the frontispiece, from Cranmer's copy of the commentary on revelation by Primasius the 6th Century Bishop of Hadrumetum in Africa) to Dr. Vita Toon—a scholar in her own right—who was throughout the forty-seven years of their marriage a true partner in the lifetime of faith witness and achievement that was given by God's grace in Dr. Peter Toon.

Text beside the Frontispiece (copy) presented to Mrs. Toon was as follows:

THIS FRONTISPIECE, FROM CRANMER'S COPY
OF THE COMMENTARY ON REVELATION BY PRIMASIUS
*PRIMASII UTICENSIS*
IS GIVEN IN PROFOUND GRATITUDE
FOR THE LIFE, WORK AND WITNESS
OF THE REVD. DR. PETER TOON
BY THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF
THE PRAYER BOOK SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES
TO VITA TOON
UPON THE HAPPY OCCASION OF THE FIRST
ANNUAL TOON MEMORIAL LECTURE,
AT WYCLIFFE COLLEGE OXFORD
ON 16TH APRIL, 2013

*Vera theologia non theoretica, sed practica est;*
*Finis siquidem eius agere est hoc est vitam vivere deiformem*

Martin Bucer, *Enerrationes*, 1536

(True theology is not theoretical, but practical;
for the goal of it is to live a godly life.)

The Rev. Gavin G. Dunbar, President, Prayer Book Society, and Rector, St John's Episcopal Church, Savannah, Georgia



The Reverend G. G. Dunbar, Rector, St. John's Episcopal Church, Savannah, Georgia

# Reading the Bible as a Church

## The lectionaries of the historic Prayer Book

One of the defining activities of the Church, perhaps *the* defining activity, is the way it reads Scripture together as a community of faith, especially in worship. That's why lectionaries, which are plans for reading Scripture, are so important, and why they have been an element of the church's worship for many centuries. Without a lectionary, a common plan for reading the Scripture, the corporate and ecclesial aspect of reading Scripture is much diminished.

As a glance at the original preface of the first Prayer Book of 1549 indicates, Cranmer knew the importance of lectionaries, and counted reform of the lectionary one of the most important, perhaps the most important, of the objectives of the Prayer Book. In fact, there are two lectionaries in the Cranmerian Prayer Book, one for the "daily office" of morning and evening prayer, and another for the Lord's Supper. The daily office was largely devoted to reading through entire books of Scripture in order, one chapter from the Old Testament and one from the New, at each service, four chapters each day in all; so that in the course of a year one had read through the greater part of the Old Testament at least once, and the New Testament more than twice. Though Cranmer largely devised this lectionary on his own, he knew that it was reviving a custom of extensive and sequential reading (*lectio continua*) which had been customary at the Church's daily prayer until the thirteenth century. Cranmer allowed for a seasonal aspect to this daily office lectionary, for he maintained the ancient custom of reading Isaiah in Advent and Christmas, and provided some proper lessons for holy days. Subsequent revisions (the best of which are found in the current edition of the 1662 English Prayer book and the 1962 Canadian Prayer Book) enlarged this seasonal element, while maintaining the principle of *lectio continua*.

The point of reading through entire books is of course to let the Scripture speak for itself, and to promote familiarity with it as a whole. But there is another purpose for a lectionary, and that is to proclaim the mystery of the gospel in a very focussed, doctrinally coherent way. There what matters is not extensive reading, but reading that is doctrinally complete. In ancient times, this took the form of a lectionary of short lessons from the epistles and gospels for use at the Lord's Supper. The version of this devised in the city of Rome from the fourth to the seventh centuries was brought north by the Franks in the eighth century, completed, and adopted by the churches of north western Europe, including the Church of England. Cranmer omitted its provisions for Lenten week days and Ember days, but with a few minor changes (mostly enlargements) he retained this ancient lectionary, and it is still substantially the same one found in the Book of Common Prayer of 1928.

Though scholars detect some remnants of *lectio continua* or *semi-continua* in this ancient Roman lectionary (such as the epistles for Sundays after Epiphany, all from Romans 12; or in the epistles for much of Trinity season), it is apparent that the ancient church had abandoned *lectio continua* at the Eucharist and sought a different principle for its Sunday readings, one of doctrinal and thematic complementarity. The point, that is, was not to read through a book of the Bible more or less continuously, but rather to provide each Sunday with its own coherent teaching appropriate to the doctrinal emphasis of the season or day of the Church's year. This principle of doctrinal and thematic complementarity probably first began on major feasts such as Easter or Christmas, and was extended to the seasons of preparation and celebration that preceded and followed them; but it was extended to the whole of Epiphany at an early date, and by the early Middle Ages had embraced the entire church year. This is in accord with the principle that each Sunday is its own 'little Easter', with its own coherent proclamation of the Christian mystery in lessons that are chosen to be doctrinally complementary.[1]

1. Other factors played a role in the choice of these lessons, such as allusions to local churches in the city of Rome, in which the Pope would celebrate his stational liturgy. On the fourth Sunday of Lent, for instance, the Pope celebrated mass in the Church of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem, and this probably prompted the choice of the epistle from Galatians 4, with its reference to the heavenly Jerusalem. Yet such factors do not seem to have been as widespread as one might think, and where they appear, they are integrated into the lectionary's thematic development. Thus on Lent IV, the epistle lesson fits in the general theme of 'going up to Jerusalem' for the death and resurrection of Christ, adumbrated on the Sunday before Lent, and complements the theme of pilgrimage and exodus in the gospel lesson from John 6: Lent represents to us the Christian life as spiritual exodus and pilgrimage, in which we are sustained with bread in the wilderness, whose goal is the heavenly Jerusalem.

### Mission Statement

*The Society is dedicated to the preservation, understanding, and propagation of the Anglican Doctrine as contained in the traditional editions of The Book of Common Prayer.*

Cranmer's lectionaries thus provided for both extensive and sequential reading of Scripture as a whole (*lectio continua*) at the daily office *and* doctrinally thematic reading at the Eucharist. Of course such a system assumed that Christians would by and large frequent Morning and Evening Prayer during the week and not just reduce worship to one hour on Sundays. Surprising as it may seem to the time-is-money culture of our time, there is plenty of evidence that many people did, at least until the later 18th century. But the time-is-money culture arrived with the Industrial revolution, and in 1872 the British Parliament passed the *Shortened Services Act,* which struck down the requirement that Sunday service consisted of Morning Prayer, Litany, and Ante-Communion, and allowed them to be used separately. This meant that the complementarity of Cranmer's system was undermined. When the Parish Communion movement of the 1930s moved many churches to a weekly celebration of the Eucharist at the principal Sunday service, the reading of the Old Testament almost disappeared, and the reading of the New was reduced to the provisions of the Eucharistic lectionary.[2]

## The emergence of new lectionaries—and their problems

Thus Anglicans found themselves in the same predicament as Roman Catholics, who used a (somewhat corrupted) version of the same ancient Eucharistic lectionary, and the mutilated lectionary of the thirteenth century Breviary against which Cranmer had reacted. One sensible response to this problem was the provision of an Old Testament lesson complementary to the Prayer Book gospels and epistles.[3] But the Roman Catholics went further, and decided to invent a Sunday morning lectionary which would provide both for the doctrinal themes of the Church's year and an extensive sequential reading of the Bible. With this aim in mind, in the *Ordo Lectionum Missae* (OLM) of 1969, they abandoned almost entirely the ancient Eucharistic lectionary,[4] and devised one that was entirely new. A three year cycle took the place of the one year ancient cycle, with most of the gospels for each year chosen from one of the synoptics (Year A is Matthew; Year B is Mark; Year C is Luke; with lessons from John spread through the three years.) A reading from the Old Testament, the psalms, and the other books of the New Testament precede the gospel lesson. For part of the year (Advent to Epiphany, and Lent to Trinity Sunday), these lessons aim at doctrinally thematic coherence (albeit with less success than the ancient lectionary). But for the rest of the year (Epiphany to Lent and Trinity Sunday to Advent), clumsily dubbed "ordinary time", the gospels and epistles are selected according to the principle of *lectio continua* (or *semi-continua*). As a result,

2. The other development was the revision of Cranmer's chapter by chapter reading of the Bible. The one currently found in the 1662 Prayer book, is an improved version of Cranmer's; the Revised Table of Lessons, also found in the 1662 Prayer Book, dates from 1922, and is excellent. (It is the one used in the IPray app.) A slight variation of the latter is found in the Canadian Prayer Book of 1958/62. Unfortunately, the office lectionary of the 1928 American Prayer Book was a very weak revision, and its replacement in 1942 was no better. Though not without virtues, the lessons are often far too short—narratives and arguments reduced to fragments, with large passages of the Old Testament never read at all—and the selection of lessons for special occasions is imperceptive.

3. These Old Testament lessons (and psalms) can be found on the Common Worship website incorporated under "A Lectionary and Additional Collects for Holy Communion (*Book of Common Prayer*)" at: .

4. The 1922 English and 1962 Canadian Sunday and holy day office lectionaries provide Old Testament lessons that very often have a real thematic link to the Eucharistic lessons. Note: The medieval breviaries preserve fragments of a reading system for Advent and Septuagesima-Easter which complement the Eucharistic lectionary. At St. John's, we have adopted them in this form:

Advent 1—Isaiah 1:1–20 (21–end), 2:1–5—*complements Christ's cleansing of the Temple (gospel lesson)*

Advent 2—Isaiah 11:1–10—*quoted in the epistle lesson*

Advent 3—Isaiah 35—*alluded to in gospel lesson*

Advent 4—Isaiah 40:1–11—*the imminence of God's salvation (epistle lesson) and the ministry of John the Baptist (gospel lesson)*

Christmas (at midnight)—Isaiah 9:2, 6, 7 (ancient lesson in Sarum Missal)

Christmas (at midday)—Isaiah 61:1–3; 62:11, 12 (ancient lesson preserved in Sarum Missal)

Epiphany—Isaiah 60:1–6 (ancient lesson preserved in Roman and Sarum Missal).

Septuagesima—Genesis 1:1–2:3—*the work of God and the work of man (gospel lesson)*

Sexagesima—Genesis 6:5–end (as selection of 6–9)—*the patience of Noah as type of apostolic labours (epistle lesson) and parable of seeds (gospel lesson)*

Quinquagesima—Genesis 12:1–9—*Abram's unfinished journey and offering of sacrifice completed in Christ's going up to Jerusalem (gospel lesson) and the inward growing up to maturity in faith, hope, and charity (epistle lesson)*

Lent 1—Genesis 22:1–18—the testing of Abram as type of testing of Christ (gospel lesson)

Lent 2—Genesis 25:29–34 or 27:1–28:5—*the striving of Jacob for the birthright and blessing of Esau, to which he is not entitled by right of birth (a type of the Gentiles' obtaining the graces promised Israel, in the gospel lesson)*

Lent 3—Genesis 37—*the murderous envy of Joseph's brothers towards Joseph - a type of the Pharisees who ascribe demonic motives to Christ (gospel lesson)*

Lent 4—Exodus 3:1–22 (4:1–23)—God *calls Moses to lead his people out of Egypt - a type of the new exodus sustained with bread from heaven (gospel lesson) whose goal is the heavenly Jerusalem (epistle lesson)*

Lent 5—Jeremiah 1:1–19—*the rejected prophet of judgment delivered by God - a type of Christ (gospel lesson)*

Lent 6—Jeremiah 11:1–17 (18–23)—*the covenant broken by Israel's disobedience (epistle lesson) and the rejection of God's prophet (gospel lesson) with the exception of a few major holy days, such as Christmas.*

the gospels and epistles are in principle unrelated. Though the Old Testament lessons were still chosen for their relation to the gospel lessons, the result is a loss of coherence in the Sunday lectionary. By intention it is no longer a doctrinally coherent, cohesive presentation of the Christian mystery, but an attempt to increase the amount of Scripture read. (The canary in the coal mine was the scrapping of the Sundays before Lent, an ancient feature of the Church's year in east and west, causing an abrupt transition from Epiphany to Ash Wednesday. The Church year's doctrinal articulation was mutilated for the sake of three more Sundays of *lectio semi-continua*.)

With only minor changes, the OLM was adopted for ecumenical use in the Common Lectionary (CL) and as such incorporated into the 1979 Prayer Book. Another revision, the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), adopted the principle of *lectio (semi-) continua* for the Old Testament lessons in ordinary time. All three lessons therefore are in principle unrelated for much of the Church's year. The preacher may indeed look for a unifying theme, and it is significant that almost all preachers do so; but in doing so, he is working against the explicit intentions and principles of the lectionary.

Though the Old Testament lessons were still chosen for their relation to the gospel lessons, the result is a loss of coherence in the Sunday lectionary.

Despite the reverence for the ancient liturgy professed by contemporary liturgists, the new Anglican liturgies scrap an *actual* ancient lectionary that has been in continuous use since late antiquity for an entirely modern construct, in which the doctrinal coherence of each Sunday's proclamation is much diminished, or even abandoned altogether.

One might expect the OLM/CL/RCL would do rather better at providing a continuous reading of entire books of Scripture. Certainly one can point to a greater quantity of Scripture that is being read, yet here the achievement is rather less than it may appear. Consider the treatment of the primeval history in Genesis 1-11, one of the most significant passages in the Old Testament: in the RCL (the version that increases the amount of *lectio continua* in the Old Testament). A few verses from the Creation account in Genesis 1 are read on Trinity Sunday in Year A, the Easter Vigil in all three years, and the Baptism of the Lord in Year B, but nowhere a full reading of it, and none of them in *lectio continuo,* or on days when a preacher might devote his full attention to it. Moreover, the reading of Genesis 2 and 3 (again, in snippets) only takes place on Lent 1 Year A, and Proper 22 (late summer) in Year B or Proper 5 in Year B. Passages from Genesis 6, 7, 8 (the Flood) are read on Proper 4 in Year A, at the Easter Vigil in years ABC. Genesis 9 (the covenant with Noah) is read on Lent 1 Year B, and Genesis 11 (the Tower of Babel) is an alternative reading on Pentecost in Year C. Not only is the reading of Genesis 1–11 very partial, but none of it can be considered remotely continuous. The later chapters of Genesis are not quite so fragmented, with many of them read *lectio-semi-continua* in the Sundays between Trinity Sunday and Advent in Year A; though even here some passages are read out of order in Year C or (for thematic reasons) on certain other days.

Or consider another significant book of Scripture, the Epistle to the Romans. Here again the opening chapters, which are as crucial to the argument of Romans as Genesis 1–11 is to the whole of Scripture, are read in a fragmentary way: a bit of chapter 1 on Advent 4 in Year A, another bit (with a morsel of chapter 3) on Epiphany 9 in Year A, repeated on Proper 4 in Year A. The condemnation in Chapter 2 disappears altogether. *Lectio continua* of Romans only really begins with Romans 4, but here again the reading of Romans 4–16 jumps around with some passages chosen for thematic reading in Advent, Lent, and Pentecost, and others (the leftovers?) for sequential readings in Sundays after Pentecost. Exactly how is the preacher or teacher to provide a coherent exposition of this Epistle?

Similar problems appear with Ephesians: some of which is read for thematic reasons at Christmas, All Saints, Ascension, Epiphany, Lent; the remainder of which is read sequentially in Year B. Paul's teaching on marriage (Ephesians 5:21-33), the most significant passage in the entire Bible, if also the most challenging to contemporary assumptions, is *not* read, nor is the remainder of the "household code" in Ephesians 6:1–9. Coincidentally, the parallel passages in Colossians (3:18–4:1) also disappear.

Leaving aside a certain delicacy about passages that might not go down well in contemporary culture, the RCL (and therefore also to an even greater extent the CL and OLM) suffer from warring principles. On the one hand, they want thematic readings for Advent and Christmas, Lent to Trinity Sunday. On the other hand, they want sequential readings for the rest of the year, called "Ordinary Time". Aiming to do both, they fall between two stools, and fail at both. There is neither genuine *lectio continua*—the continuous reading of entire books of Scripture—nor is there doctrinally thematic coherence for each Sunday.

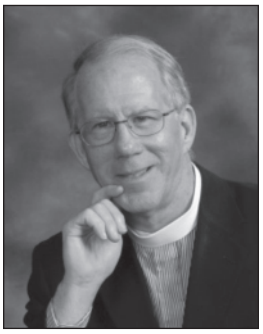
## Practical suggestions for churches today

It is hard to believe that the OLM/CL/RCL family of lectionaries can be satisfactorily amended. Their problems are fundamentally structural, and the way forward must begin by scrapping them. What's

to be done instead? Some practical suggestions for churches today:

1. Use the ancient lectionary preserved in the Book of Common Prayer, to provide a doctrinally coherent presentation of the Christian mystery every Sunday and holy day at the principal service (Morning Prayer or Holy Communion).
2. Add an Old Testament lesson at the principal service, chosen for doctrinal complementarity (see footnote 2 for specifics).
3. Recognize that not everything important that needs to be done, can be done in one hour on Sunday morning.
   a. Provide a second service (Morning Prayer if the Eucharist is the custom, or Evening Prayer on Sunday afternoon or midweek) at which there can be *lectio continua* of a selected book of the Bible with expository preaching on it.
   b. Add a Sunday or midweek teaching opportunity for the corporate reading, study, and discussion of books of the Bible. Adult Sunday School is perfect opportunity for teaching books of the Bible, and primes the pump for the principal Sunday service.
   c. Train the congregation to use the daily office as a means of reading Holy Scripture, corporately if they can or privately if they cannot, privately or publicly or in small groups. Promote the use of IPray!

# William Perkins: Theological Bellwether



The Rev. Ken Cook
Associate Rector,
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The Rev. Ken Cook

Given the religious turmoil that Christians in England experienced throughout the Reformation, the theological synthesis which William Perkins embodied by means of his ministry and literature at the close of the sixteenth century proved to be extremely influential. Born in 1558 in the village of Marston Jabbet, Warwickshire, he came to Cambridge in the late 1570s and was initially given to the easy pleasures of a student away from home. However, he was driven to a conversion to Christ after discovering that he had the common reputation among some of the local townspeople as "drunken Perkins," and began at once to preach to fellow prisoners in the town jail. His studies—B.A., 1581, and M.A., 1584—were directed by Lawrence Chaderton, the notable Puritan. He became a fellow of Christ's College in 1584 and was ordained to the priesthood c. 1585. He continuing to teach until his marriage to Timothye Cradocke on July 2, 1595. Appointed lecturer at Great St. Andrew's Church, Cambridge, he continued as the regular daily and Sunday preacher until his death in October 1602. Students, faculty and residents affected by his highly logical, yet simple sermons would remember this era as "Mr. Pirkins tyme."

> Perkins was concerned for the precise application of Scriptural revelation to the lives of the individuals and the communities that composed the Church of Christ.

Perkins' preaching was held in such high regard that his sermons were posthumously edited and published in a steady succession of biblical expositions, i.e.: *Galatians 1–5*, *Revelation 1–3*, *Jude, Hebrews 11, The Sermon on the Mount, The Temptation of Christ* and others. His academic literature, likewise, came to be embraced by a voracious reading public. Key works included *A Golden Chaine, or the Description of Theology, containing the Order of the Causes of Salvation and Damnation, according to God's Word* (1590), a succinct study of the order of salvation and condemnation, *A Treatise of the Manner and Order of Predestination, and the Largeness of God's Grace* (1599), *Treatise on Vocations, or Callings of Men* (1603), perhaps the first book-length study of divine calling within the Church, *The Whole Treatise of the Cases of Conscience* (1606), the first comprehensive English Protestant manual of self-examination in the light of Scripture and *The Art of Prophecying* (1607), a detailed study of preaching. Demand for his books was so great that 76 editions of his works occurred during his lifetime.[1]

His collected works, composed of 47 treatises (totaling over 2,500 folio pages), were published repeatedly after 1608. These publications became the standard sources shaping biblical interpretation, preaching and ministry in the New England colonies to 1700. Translated into numerous European languages, Perkins' literature was studied throughout the Continent. William Perkins' influence in the British Isles came to surpass that of Luther and Calvin, even as he became the first English theologian of the Reformation era to have international significance.

Perkins was concerned for the precise application of Scriptural revelation to the lives of the individuals and the communities that composed the Church of Christ. His focus upon the spiritual formation of his fellow disciples of Christ and the pastors called to teach them life in Christ (by the Holy Spirit to the glory of the Father) outweighed any concerns he might have for church polity; Perkins never opposed episcopacy. He drew deeply upon the Fathers, the medieval theologians and the Reformers of his time. Like other Church of England clergy and Puritans of his day, he was shaped by Lefevre d'Etaples, Calvin, Peter Martyr Vermigli, Theodore Beza, and Jerome Zanchi. His highly organized manner in both preaching and print—intent as he was on making the message of Scripture *clear*—shows the effect of Peter Ramus, Protestant professor of philosophy, logic and rhetoric in Paris, upon him. Consequently, those who flocked to Great St. Andrew's or who read his books were known to say that Perkins' teaching was "learned, but plain."

The scope and dynamic of William Perkins' international influence can be illustrated by two specific means. First, Jacobus Arminius, revisionist Reformed theologian at the University of Leyden, was provoked by Perkins' pamphlet on predestination of 1599 to a lengthy rebuttal in 1602. While Arminius polemicized against any number of Calvinists, it is likely to come as a surprise to many Anglican Christians that the father

1. R.T. Kendall, Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649, (Paternoster Press, 1979), 52–53.

of "Arminian" theology directed a major work of his corpus, not at Calvin, Beza, or Zanchius, but rather at a priest of the Church of England. Second, Perkins' stress upon both divine sovereignty and human responsibility, his high doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and his concern for preaching and the living of a holy life were to later yield fruit within the seventeenth and eighteenth century movement among Protestants known as Pietism. Eventually, pietistic Moravian Christians would play a role in the conversion, ministry and Arminian theology of John Wesley and early Methodism in England and the American colonies. The collect for the thirteenth Sunday after Trinity conveys the faith and devotion of William Perkins to this day: "Almighty and merciful God, of whose only gift it cometh that thy faithful people do unto thee true and laudable service; Grant, we beseech thee, that we may so faithfully serve thee in this life, that we fail not finally to attain thy heavenly promises; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*."

# FiFNA and the Seventh Council

The Rev. Edward Rix,
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Between 2005 and 2006 a small controversy arose over passages in a draft of a statement of agreed principles between members of the Anglican Communion Network (ACN), the forerunner of the Anglican Church in North America, and the Common Cause Partnership, which is an affiliation of Anglican groups from within and without the Episcopal Church (The American Anglican Council, the Anglican Coalition in Canada, the Anglican Mission in America, the Anglican Network in Canada, the Anglican Province of America, the Convocation of Anglicans in North America, the Reformed Episcopal Church, and Forward in Faith North America). The controversy had primarily to do with Anglican identity: many believed that certain of the passages in the statement, if averred, would move those making the statement into a confessional stance which exceeded the historical norms and requisites of the Anglican churches. Chiefly controversial among those statements was an adherence to the authority of the first seven Ecumenical Councils of the Church, a position advocated by a small party of High Church/Anglo-Catholic Anglicans for a century,[1] endorsed by the Continuing Anglican signatories of the 1977 *Affirmation of St. Louis,*[2] embraced with qualification by the Anglican Mission in America,[3] and even advocated by certain leaders of the Reformed Episcopal Church.[4] After a year of consideration the Theological Statement of the Common Cause Partnership, endorsed by the General Council of the Anglican Communion Network, gave a nuanced endorsement of the Seventh Council:

> *5) Concerning the seven Councils of the undivided Church, we affirm the teaching of the first four Councils, and the Christological clarifications of the fifth, sixth and seventh Councils in so far as they are agreeable to the Holy Scriptures.*[5]

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1 The only major argument ever presented for an Anglican acceptance of the authority of the Seventh Council was made by Claude Beaufort Moss in *The Church of England and the Seventh Council* (London: Faith Press, 1957). See especially his account of Church of England attitudes toward the Council from pages 32 to 41: He offers much documentary evidence from the Articles of Religion and the *Homilies* that the Seventh Council, if not specifically dismissed by the Reformed Formularies, is certainly inconsistent with much of their doctrinal content. By way of support from the Anglican Divines, he can only extrapolate from inferences in the writings of a few (Field, Ken, Beveridge). In most cases the writings of the authors to whom he refers could just as easily, and probably more accurately, be used contra his position.

2. The *Affirmation of St. Louis* famously claims among the "essential principles of evangelical Truth and apostolic Order" the "received Tradition of the Church and its teachings as set forth by "the ancient catholic bishops and doctors," and especially as defined by the Seven Ecumenical Councils of the undivided Church, to the exclusion of all errors, ancient and modern." Oddly enough, as a Continuing Anglican church, it makes no such claims, inter alia, for the *Book of Common Prayer,* The Ordinal or the Articles of Religion. Many of the Continuing groups tracing their lineage to the 1977 St. Louis meeting do not require subscription to the *Affirmation* amongst its members or clergy.

3. In 2006 the annual subscription made by clergy of the AMIA read in part "I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the Word of God and to contain all things necessary to salvation. I further affirm the Catholic Creeds, the dogmatic definitions of the General Councils of the undivided Church. . ." Its Solemn Declaration of Principles at the same time stated "With the ancient Church we affirm the three Ecumenical Creeds: the Nicene Creed, the Apostles Creed and Athanasius' Creed, and the dogmatic definitions of the first seven general councils (the last three being seen as the workings-out of the first four)." The successor of the AMIA, the Anglican Society of Mission and Apostolic Works, currently has the same statements in its clergy subscription and Solemn Declaration (http://www.theamia.org/assets/solemn-declaration-of-principles.pdf).

4. The Rt. Rev. Ray R. Sutton was then and continues now, to be an advocate for the acceptance of the Seventh Council.

5. http://anglicanchurch.net/?/main/page/about-acna. While it is self-evident that the Fifth and Sixth Councils offer comment and clarification on the decrees of earlier Councils, it would, in fact, be difficult to say this of the Seventh Council wherein the decrees of the earlier Councils vis a vis the nature of Christ are simply reiterated as precursor to its decrees regarding icons/images. See Norman P. Tanner, ed. *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1990) pp. 133–156.

Jump ahead six years and a matter which had seemingly been settled comes again to the fore with the approval this past July of Forward in Faith North America's (FiFNA) revised "Declaration of Common Faith and Purpose", which declaration is required to be signed by individual members of that organization. Several changes in the declaration have proved controversial, prompting criticism from fellow Anglicans of the Low Church/Evangelical Party.[6]

The concern of this article, however, is to address just one of the declarative statements of the new FiFNA document:

> *8. I believe all Seven Councils are ecumenical and catholic on the basis of the received tradition of the ancient Undivided Church of East and West.*

The debates have been fairly low-key, yet not without significance. FiFNA, an association previously characterized by a membership of Anglo-Catholics and Evangelicals since its founding in 1989 as the Episcopal Synod of America (itself a child of the older Evangelical and Catholic Mission founded in 1976) seems now to favor the Anglo-Catholic Party to the exclusion of a High Church-Low Church comprehensiveness. It is of that comprehensiveness, a basic 'mere' Anglicanism, that questions arise. What has been the historic Anglican attitude toward early Church Councils in general and the Seventh Council in particular? If the above mentioned changes represent a shift in attitude, what are the causes and the aims of this change? Answers to this latter question are beyond the scope of this writing and are perhaps best addressed by the leadership of FiFNA. As to the former, a body of conclusive evidence amply demonstrates that FiFNA in 2013, as did the *Affirmation of St. Louis* in 1977, now demand of its members that they aver a teaching that no Anglican jurisdiction or divine thought necessary in the hundreds of years of our history as a Reformed Catholic Church.

Let us begin with a brief overview of the Councils in General and the Seventh in Particular. The early councils of the Church were convened by various Byzantine Roman Emperors in order that disputed questions of doctrine be settled to the advancement of true religion, intending that the decrees of the councils be binding throughout the entire Empire. Thus the First Council (Nicea, 325) addressed Arianism and decreed that Father and the Son were of 'one substance' as the Creed associated with the council states; the Second Council (Constantinople, 381) addressed Arianism and Macedonianism, decreed the eternal Sonship of Christ, the full, equal divinity of the Holy Ghost with the Father and the Son, and revised the Creed of 325 to reflect this; the Third Council (Ephesus, 431) addressed Nestorianism and Pelagianism, reaffirmed the creedal statements of the first two councils, and decreed the Virgin Mary to be the Mother of God/Theotokos; the Fourth Council (Chalcedon, 451) addressed Eutychianism (monophysitism) and decreed that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man; the Fifth Council (Constantinople II, 553) addressed lingering Nestorianism on the basis of the decrees of the Third and Fourth Councils in an attempt to reconcile those churches who had not agreed to the decrees of the Fourth Council; the Sixth Council (Constantinople III, 680-681) addressed Monothelitism and Monoenergism on the basis of the decrees of the Fourth Council, and again was an attempt to reconcile the 'Non-Chalcedonian' churches; the Seventh Council (Nicea II, 787) reiterated the decrees of the earlier Councils and addressed the Iconoclastic Controversy, decreeing that that the veneration of holy images (amongst other practices) was not only theologically justifiable, but necessary.

It is true that the Latin West initially rejected the Seventh Council: it did so for political reasons, because of lack of understanding of the Greek language and the absence of a culture of iconography. Yet notwithstanding this early rejection, all in the West later came to respect its teaching on the nature of icons as sound: Though Christ in his Godhead is uncircumscribed or incomprehensible (to use the term of the *Quicumque Vult*) yet as incarnate and as a man, he was seen and handled by men,[7] and his manhood, entirely circumscribed or comprehensible, therefore could be piously represented in images. And that these images are to be venerated with an honor (*proskunesis*) entirely distinct from that worship due only to God (*latreia*) is recognized by all as a sound teaching against idolatry. The teaching is that the wanton destruction of images meant to give glory to God through His Church is prohibited, the use of

6. Specifically "I accept the two Sacraments ordained by Christ Himself—Baptism and the Supper of the Lord—ministered with unfailing use of Christ's words of Institution, and of the elements ordained by Him" was changed to "I recognize the seven Sacraments of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church—Baptism and the Supper of the Lord—ministered with unfailing use of Christ's words of institution and of the elements ordained by Him, Confirmation, Matrimony, Ordination, Reconciliation of a Penitent, and Unction of the Sick"; "I believe that, in the Sacrament and mystery of the Holy Eucharist, Jesus Christ is truly, really and substantially present in the Body and Blood in the outward and visible sign of Bread and Wine. (cf. 1 Cor. 10:16–17, 11:23–29, John 6:32–71)" was added; and "I believe all Seven Councils are ecumenical and catholic on the basis of the received Tradition of the ancient Undivided Church of East and West" was added. Among other changes, these have proven the most controversial. For the previous statement see: http://www.fifna.org/sites/default/files/Declaration_2010.pdf. For the July, 2013 statement see: http://www.fifna.org/sites/default/files/files/DECLARATION%20FINAL%20JULY%202013(1).pdf. For examples of criticism of the change see: http://anglicansablaze.blogspot.com/2013/07/forward-in-faith-north-america-rejects.html and http://livingtext.blogspot.com/2013/07/fifna-vs-anglicanism.html. For defenses of the change see: http://www.virtueonline.org/portal/modules/news/article.php?storyid=17840#.UjIC4yLD_IU, http://www.fifna.org/node/131 and http://toalltheworld.blogspot.com/2013/08/fifna-anglicanism-and-seventh.html.

7. 1 *St. John 1:1.*

such for teaching and devotional purposes is permitted, and the temptation to idolatry is to be guarded against.[8] The actual theology of the Seventh Council has never been questioned. Controversy arises however from the wording of the Council's decree: the veneration of images, as well as the Cross and the Gospel book is not simply *permitted* but *necessary*. This generally becomes the basis of argument against adherence to the decrees of the Seventh Council on the part of Reformed Christians. The Council's Terminus (definition of doctrine) specifically states:

> *. . . we decree with full precision and care that, like the figure of the honoured and life-giving cross, the revered and holy images . . .* ***are to be*** *exposed in the holy churches of God, on sacred instruments and vestments, on walls and panels, in houses and by public ways. . .*[9]

And to make the matter entirely clear, the following anathemas ("let him be set apart/declared accursed") are added:

1. *If anyone does not confess that Christ our God can be represented in his humanity, let him be anathema.*
2. *If anyone does not accept representation in art of evangelical scenes, let him be anathema.*
3. *If anyone does not salute such representations as standing for the Lord and his saints, let him be anathema.*[10]

Of course these decrees are honored without exception in the churches of the East. For an Eastern Orthodox Christian a church would simply not be a church in any proper sense without icons or an iconostasis nor would one enter the homes of the Orthodox faithful without finding the typical icons of the Theotokos and Christ Child and St. Nicholas (the patron of children and families). It would, however, be exceptional amongst Western Christians to demand that one *must* use icons to pray, that one *must, on pain of damnation*, have icons in a church. This is, in effect, what the decrees of the Seventh Council demand, apart from any 'Christological clarifications.' One might argue that many canons from many Councils are read with a subjective eye and that qualifications are made for injunctions which seem to be bound to historical circumstances which no longer apply to our age.[11] But this is really to miss the fundamental point. To accept a council as universal binds one to it. It is the primary teaching of a Council that it be accepted by all Christians, at all times, in all parts of the Church, and by a similar measure, it makes those who refuse its decrees *in toto* less than orthodox.[12] The 'house-keeping' canons of the first four Councils might equally be viewed as less-binding on the faithful, but not the primary, doctrinal statements of these Councils (or the Fifth and Sixth for that matter). The Seventh Council is acceptable to Western Christians insofar as it is a reiteration of the decrees of the previous Councils, and has a generally sound teaching on icons and against iconoclasm. But it is unacceptable in a demand that most Western Christians cannot accept: the *doctrine* that one *must* worship with icons.

Some will argue that the Church of Rome accepts the decrees of all Seven Councils as authoritative. However, the position of Rome is perhaps much more nuanced than this. For starters, the Roman Church rejected the teaching of the Seventh Council for many centuries on the basis of an erroneous reading of its decrees. With few having the ability to read Greek, imperfect Latin translations of the Council's decrees were interpreted as advocating idolatry, an interpretation foreign to the Council itself. And at the time the Roman Church was codifying a doctrine more or less in keeping with the Seventh Council at the Council of Trent[13] it was purposefully and in response to the legitimate criticisms of the Reformers, simplifying its liturgy in the Tridentine Mass,[14] with the officially sanctioned music that accompanied it[15] and with a simplified style of ecclesiastical

8. See Tanner, op. cit., pp. 133–135.

9. Tanner, p. 135–136. The stress is ours.

10. Tanner, p. 137.

11. Dr. Robert Munday does so in his defense of FiFNA's recent action cited above (*FIFNA, Anglicanism, and the Seventh Ecumenical Council*): "The Seventh Council also forbade clergy from serving more than one parish simultaneously; it forbade women from serving as housekeepers in a bishop's residence or monastery; and it forbade the establishment of "double monasteries"—monasteries of both men and women. Do we follow these injunctions today? And if we do not, does it mean that we are rejecting the Seventh Council? The fact is that a number of the Seven Councils issued canons containing details that we do not follow today, but instead, temper in light of the other sources that contribute to our theological understanding. It does not mean that we are rejecting the Councils." We would also add that its decrees forbid clergy from wearing perfume: I doubt that any Christian, Eastern or Western, is about to demand of his priest that he forgo his daily dose of Old Spice, though many would apply that old Anglican wisdom on private confession similarly: all may, none must, some do, others should!

12. Thus the estimation on the part of Eastern Churches of those who do not accept the decrees of the Seventh Council as less than orthodox or the similar estimation, historically, of Eastern and Western Christians of those who would not accept the decrees of the Fourth Council (the 'Non-Chalcedonian' churches of Oriental Orthodoxy).

13. See the decrees of Session 25 of the Council of Trent, 1563 in Tanner, op. cit. Vol. II, pp. 774ff.

14. As hard as it may be for contemporary Christians to conceive, the Tridentine Mass was, in fact, an effort toward rational harmony and simplification of liturgy in accord with the Council's admonition that the liturgy be intelligible and understood of the people so as to provoke an emotional response.

15. Again, we might have difficulty in considering the music of such as Palestrina as simple, but every effort was made to musically embellish only those elements of the Mass that used few, simple and oft-repeated words like the Kyrie, the Sanctus and the Agnus Dei. Longer sections that required a clear, rational understanding and assent, such as the Credo and Gloria, were imbued with more straight-forward melody and far less polyphony so as be more readily understood.

architecture, the "stile severo" characterized by whitewashed walls (the 'chiesa bianca') and a conspicuous lack of iconography or representational art.[16] While Trent endorsed the iconography theology of the Seventh Council, in many quarters the popular enactment of its religious dogmas actually ran counter to the Seventh Council's admonition that one *must* worship with icons. Finally it must be understood that the Roman Church endorses *twenty-one* Councils as ecumenical, far more than any other Christian body. Given this, its adherence to the first Seven, in and of itself, is hardly a convincing argument.

So what has been the position, historically, of the Reformed Catholic Church of England and its daughter churches to the Councils of the Church? The Articles of Religion (1571) state:

> *General Councils may not be gathered together without the commandment and will of Princes. And when they be gathered together, (forasmuch as they be an assembly of men, whereof all be not governed with the Spirit and Word of God,) they may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God. Wherefore things ordained by them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of Holy Scripture.*[17]

Clearly, Councils were understood by the Anglican Reformers to be fallible. The same Reformers placed themselves, the Church and its Councils, of necessity, under the judgment of the Word of God Written of which nothing may be required to be believed as an article of the Faith, or thought requisite or necessary to salvation, unless it be read therein or proved thereby.[18] The Formularies (*The Book of Common Prayer,* The Ordinal and the Thirty-Nine Articles) do not address any one Council with specificity, nor do they enumerate which canons or which decrees of which Councils are to be accepted as authoritative. Another early Anglican authority, the so-called *Second Book of Homilies* of 1563,[19] in *An Homily Against Peril of Idolatry And Superfluous Decking of Churches,*[20] argues for the complete abandonment of images and statues in churches on the basis that:

> The primitive Church, which is specially to be followed as most incorrupt and pure, had publicly in churches neither idols of the Gentiles nor any other images, as things directly forbidden by God's Word.[21]

A qualification, inserted at the command of the Queen herself, is made that "the images themselves are not simply forbidden in the New Testament without such occasion and danger" of their being abused as idols.[22]

The benefit of hindsight might allow us to judge this Reformed reaction to the overtly superstitious and probably idolatrous veneration of images of the Medieval as equally extreme and probably iconoclastic but it nevertheless shows that Anglican Reformers would not, in any wise, have regarded the decrees of the Seventh Ecumenical Council as binding upon Anglicans. Their fundamental argument was that Scripture nowhere compels the use of images in worship and explicitly warns against their abuse and that the early Church equally offers no encouragement to their use, the culture of iconography being a late patristic development, primarily of the Eastern Church.

That reference to Scripture as the final arbiter in matters doctrinal is the same principle that would move later Anglican divines, when speaking of the Councils, to extreme caution and qualification when making reference to their authority. In a now oft-quoted passage and one of the first references by an Anglican divine on the Seventh Council, Richard Field (1561–1616), Dean of Gloucester and close associate of Richard Hooker wrote:

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16. A style of Counter Reformation church building almost completely lost to history and memory owing to these early churches having been later 'buried' under layers of Baroque adornment. No original examples remain but of those later embellished the most notable are the Gesù and the Chiesa Nuova in Rome. St. Phillip Neri had explicitly intended the Chiesa Nuova to have plain, whitewashed walls. These two churches, in their initial simplicity, represented the purest ideals of the Counter Reformation in the very epicenter of Roman thought and influence. See Peter Murray, *The Architecture of the Italian Renaissance* (New York: Schocken, 1975) p. 243.

17. Article XXI, which was omitted in the 1801 American version of the Articles as being "of a local and civil nature. . . . provided for, as to the remaining parts of it, in other Articles." The 1979 Prayer Book included it in its full form in its "Historical Documents" section but as having no doctrinal authority.

18. The essential doctrine of Article VI (*Of The Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation*).

19. The *Homilies* derive their canonical authority from the Royal injunctions which ordered their regular reading in the parishes of the Church of England and a derivative theological authority from their being enumerated in Article XXXV and individually referenced in certain of the other Articles of Religion. While the point is debatable, some have given them the authority of a Formulary. See W.K. Lowther-Clarke, "The Homilies" in *Theology,* No. 26 (1933), pp. 47–51.

20. John Griffiths, *The Two Books of Homilies,* (Oxford: University Press, 1858) pp. 167–272. Bishop John Jewel is generally considered to be its author. C.B. Moss (op. cit. pp.33–34) considers the Homily to be ". . . thoroughly iconoclastic. . . . (an) astonishing example of Puritan invective . . . (which) shows clearly the ideal of the Calvinist party which was dominant in the Church of England during the reign of Elizabeth I:" an ironic characterization given Bishop Jewel's opposition to John Knox and the advanced Calvinists during his 1555 exile in Frankfurt and his fervent opposition to the Roman and Puritan parties whilst Bishop of Salisbury. See John Booty, *John Jewel as Apologist of the Church of England* (London: S.P.C.K., 1963), pp. 204–205.

21. Griffiths, p. 220.

22. Ibid, p. 213. See J.T. Tomlinson *The Prayer Book, Articles and Homilies: Some Forgotten Facts in Their History which may Decide their Interpretation* (London: Elliot Stock, 1897), p. 247–248.

> . . . therefore it is not to be marveled at if Gregory [the Great] profess that he honoureth the first four Councils as the Four Gospels; and that whosoever admitteth them not, though he seem to be a stone elect and precious, yet he lieth beside the foundation and out of the building. Of this sort there are only six; the First (Nicea I) defining the Son of God to be coessential, coeternal and coequal with the Father. The Second (Constantinople I, 391) defining that the Holy Ghost is truly God, coessential, coeternal and coequal with the Father and the Son. The Third (Ephesus 431), the unity of Christ's person. The Fourth (Chalcedon 451), the distinction and diversity of His natures, in and after the personal union. The Fifth (Constantinople II, 553), condemning some remains of Nestorianism, more fully explaining things stumbled at in the Council of Chalcedon. . . . And the Sixth (Constantinople III, 680–1), defining and clearing the distinction of operations, actions, powers and wills in Christ, according to the diversity of His natures. These were all the lawful General Councils (lawful I say both in their beginning, and proceeding, and continuance) that ever were holden in the Christian Church touching matters of faith.
>
> For the Seventh, which is Nicea II, was not called about any question of faith, but of manners; in which our adversaries confess that there may be something inconveniently prescribed, and so as to be the occasion of great and grievous evils; and surely that is our conceit of the Seventh General Council, Nicea II; for howsoever it condemn the religious adoration and worshipping of pictures and seem to allow no other use of them but that which is historical, yet in permitting men by outward signs of reverence and respect towards the pictures of saints to express their love towards them, and the desire they have of enjoying their happy society, and in condemning so bitterly such as upon dislike of abuses wished there might be no pictures in the Church at all, it may seem to have given some occasion and have opened up the way unto that grow idolatry which afterwards entered into the Church.[23]

As Peter Toon wrote in 2006 "what is clear is that . . . he had a great respect for the first Four Councils, highly regarded the next two, and was cautious about the Seventh."[24] Indeed Field held as a principle of Councils in general that:

> Neither is it necessary for us expressly to believe whatsoever the Council hath concluded, though it be true, unless by some other means it appear unto us to be true, and we be convinced of it in some other sort than by the bare determination of the Council only.[25]

Field's understanding was generally in harmony with the principle authorities of his day. No less than James I himself averred:

> I reverence and admit the Four First General Councils as Catholic and Orthodox. And the said Four General Councils are acknowledged by our Acts of Parliament, and received for orthodox by our Church.[26]

And perhaps most famous among all Anglican metrics of the locus of authority is Bishop Lancelot Andrewes' (1555–1626) statement in his sermon before the King at Greenwich on April 13, 1613, that, for the Church of England:

> One Canon related to us in writing by God, two Testaments, three Creeds, four General Councils, five centuries, and the series of Fathers three centuries before Constantine and the two after Constantine, establish the rule of our religion.[27]

The most that could be said historically and with any certainty of the attitude of the Reformed Catholic Church of England and its daughter churches toward the Seven Ecumenical Councils is that they accepted the dogma of the first four Councils as foundational, had a very high regard for the Fifth and Sixth Councils but viewed their dogmatic statements as less foundational and more derivative of those of the first

23. Richard Field, *Of the Church* as quoted in P.E. Moore and F.L. Cross ed. *Anglicanism: The Thought and Practice of the Church of England, Illustrated from the Religious Literature of the Seventeenth Century* (London, S.P.C.K., 1962) pp. 152–153.

24. Email of August 2, 2006.

25. Field, op. cit., p. 152. How one could conclude, as does the author/s of the current Wikipedia article on Richard Field, that he was "at the forefront of the argument that Anglicanism should accept the decrees of the first seven ecumenical councils as binding" defies the reason of anyone who actually reads Field. Even C.B. Moss was critical of Field's approach to the Seventh Council: see Moss, op. cit., p. 36. For the wikipedia article see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Field_(theologian).

26. James I, *A Premonition to All Most Mighty Monarchs, Kings, Free Princes, and States of Christendom,* in More and Cross, op. cit., p. 3.

27. Lancelot Andrewes, *Concio Latine Habita, Coram Regia Maiestate, XIII Aprilis, A.D. MDCXIII. in Aula Grenvici; Quo tempore, cum Lectissima Sua Conjuge, discessurus jam erat Gener Regis, Serenissimus Potentissimusque Princeps Fridericus Comes Palatinus ad Rhenum (A Latin Sermon preached before the King's Majesty, April 13, 1613, in the Hall at Greenwich, at the time when the King's Son in Law, the Most Serene and Powerful Prince Frederick, Palatine Count of the Rhine was now to depart with his most dear Consort.)* in *Opuscula Quaedam Posthuma* (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1862) p. 91.The translation is ours. The Latin text reads: "Nobis *Canon* unus in Scripta relatus a Deo, *Duo Testamenta, Tria Symbola, Quatuor Priora Concilia, Quinque saecula, Patrumque* per ea series, trecentos ante Constantinum anos, ducentos a Constantino, regulam nobis *Religionis* figunt."

four, and were very cautious of the Seventh as a Council offering little by way of foundational teaching (howsoever its teaching on icons, derived from the decrees of the earlier councils, might be sound) but requiring of the faithful that which Scripture clearly did not: the compulsory use of icons in worship and Church building. To this day neither the Church of England nor any constituent member Church of the Anglican Communion has ever required the acceptance of the first seven Ecumenical Councils as requisite of either its clerical or general membership. For that matter it has never required a specific oath of adherence to *any* of the Ecumenical Councils as it has historically understood its Reformed Formularies to enshrine the orthodox teaching of the Councils that is consonant with the clear teaching of the Word of God Written. It is not without irony that the new membership requirements of Forward in Faith North America do not require its members to assent to the teaching of the Prayer Book, Ordinal and Articles of Religion, the very things that have historically defined Anglican faith and practice. In fact the new FiFNA membership declaration would, of an age, be more readily ascribed to by a member of one of the churches in communion with the Patriarch of Constantinople, notwithstanding that, from an Eastern perspective, it offers a doctrine of the Episcopate that is a little too vague, is probably short on sacraments (in only insisting on seven), and offer a more restrictive practice on divorce and remarriage than has been historically witnessed in the Eastern Orthodox Churches.

One would hope that the leadership of FiFNA would recognize the restrictive and fundamentally 'un-Anglican' move it makes in requiring an unqualified adherence to all seven Councils in its members. A more nuanced, more qualified declaration, such as the Common Cause Partnership and the Anglican Communion Network asked of their members in 2007 would seem better, if such a declaration is even necessary. It would give a justifiably Anglican position to its membership qualifications and go some way to restoring a comprehensive High/Low, Anglo Catholic/Evangelical character to an organization that was historically peopled by Churchmen of both these parties.

# Sermon Trinity XVI

The Rev. W. J. Martin
St. Michael and All Angels Anglican Church, (APA) Arden, NC

*Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee*
*Calls back the lovely April of her prime.*
*~William Shakespeare (Sonnet 3)*

There is perhaps no Christian author whose study of the human personality is as perceptive, penetrating, and exhaustive as William Shakespeare's. The words he molds and fashions in sonnets and plays paint a picture of human nature that is at once temporally sound and spiritually perceptive. For William Shakespeare invites you and me to ponder and probe the human personality as it struggles to find its meaning and definition in the human community and in relation to God. Some scholars purposively dismiss the *God-thing* in Shakespeare, and in so doing produce impoverished interpretations of the great man's works. But Shakespeare is nothing if he does not, at least, redirect our gaze to undying truth and permanent wisdom. Shakespeare, it would seem, longs to describe the surface of life in order to ponder the spiritual ideas that complicate and frustrate or simplify and enhance man's age-old attempt to know himself in relation to his Maker.

I have opened today's sermon with Sonnet 3, which is all about motherhood. And through it Shakespeare reveals the deeper spiritual passion and love that accompanies much more than physical birth. Something mysterious and transcendent hovers over the heart of every mother whose immanent love can make a child. Shakespeare writes, *Look in thy glass, and tell the face thou viewest/Now is the time that face should form another. (Sonnet 3) Look at thyself* Shakespeare suggests that life is all about making and creating, nourishing and feeding, growing and perfecting some future thing. Motherhood should be an image and a forerunner not merely of some physical mass of unified particles, but of spiritual life that grows up and out of a desire for what is best, noblest, true, and good for the future. *Who is he so fond, will be the tomb/ Of his self-love, to stop posterity? (Sonnet 3)* What woman is so narcissistic and self-obsessed that she shuns the call and forsakes the honor of sharing and imparting her part to the golden age of what is promised? *Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee/Calls back the lovely April of her prime. (Idem)*

Shakespeare knew only too well that the connection between mothers and children is far more profound than is often admitted. For even with the onslaught of age and frailty, the mother lives vicariously in and through her children and grandchildren. Her spiritual

progeny surrounds her, and in them she finds new life, new joy, new hope, and new treasure. *So thou through windows of thine age shall see/ Despite of wrinkles, this thy golden time. (Sonnet 3)* And as the spiritual vitality between mothers and children is so mysteriously strong and alive, so is its loss and deprivation so painfully crushing and torturous. The child dies, and so too does some great thing in the heart of his mother. *Her golden time,* is cut short; if she is the mother of an only child, her loss can be horrifically traumatic and hauntingly debilitating. The flesh that was becoming spirit is now cut down, and so the mother's fleshly tie that was growing into mystical hope for the spiritual formation of her child is tragically gone.

We find Biblical witness to this horrid experience in this morning's Gospel lesson. For today we are bidden to travel to the ancient city of Nain. Nain was a place in ancient Palestine barren of any civil society or communal happiness. Archbishop Trench tells us that Dean Stanley identified it with the city of Endor, and tells us *that on a rugged and barren ridge, in an isolated place sits the ruined village of Endor [or Nain]. No convent, no tradition marks the spot.* (Richard Chenevix Trench, *Notes on the miracles of Our Lord*) The place, in his day, was lifeless, empty and seemingly void of any potential prosperity or future. Its natural state showed little sign of fertility, vitality or promise. But today we read that just to this kind of place Christ was drawn. In it, we find humans whose business seems to imitate and mirror their cold, arid, and dead surroundings. *Now when Jesus came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. (St. Luke vii. 12)* Just as this nature, outside of the city's gates, had been robbed of any sign of life, so too, had this widow been deprived of her only *pride and joy.* The widow was weeping, her tears the only expression and communication of an untellable pain. With the psalmist she cried inwardly and spiritually, *the sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. (Psalm cxvi. 3)* Her hope for new life was mirrored in her son; her son's future to be reflection of his mother's making. Now all that is gone. Into this pain and agony of soul, Christ comes today.

*And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. (St. Luke vii. 13–15)* The crowd that surrounds the woman can offer no words to console, no reason to explain what she must endure. She who is truly alone can only weep. *Make thee mourning as for an only son, most bitter lamentations (Jer. vi. 26)* the prophet cries. And so when Jesus approaches, all are wordlessly still. He so as much says, with St. Paul this morning, *I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. (Galatians vi. 11)* Christ comes into this situation to bear the burden. Christ comes with that supernatural compassion and mercy that he will convey and impart to this forlorn widowed mother. His words too are few, but his power is great. The operation of mercy has its way, and the dead man is brought back to life. The Word is spoken and the spirit of the dead obeys. The only words that emerge out of this situation come from the resuscitated youth. His words reveal to us the compassionate effect of the Lord's mercy. With the psalmist he sings, *The Lord preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me. Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee. For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living. I believed, therefore have I spoken . . . . (Psalm cxvi 6–10)* The young man speaks, and mirrors the thoughts of his mother's heart. He has new life; so too does she. The Word made Flesh has given him words—words of new life, words emerging from spiritual and physical rejuvenation, words that will commence *the spiritual awakening of the young man for a higher life, through which, indeed, alone the joy of the mother could become true and abiding (*Trench, *Miracles)* as Archbishop Trench remarks. Because the son is reborn to the hope of salvation, the mother's faith and hope too are brought back to new life.

With all this said, we might be inclined to see in the widowed mother of Nain an image of the Blessed Virgin, whose only Son will be taken from her when he dies on the Cross of Calvary. But this comparison will be hinge upon which hangs the true spiritual understanding for us of this morning's miracle. It will be essential for our salvation that the Blessed Virgin loses her only Son. The crucifixion is the culmination of her call to let him go, to have him taken from her, to be deprived of him uniquely and naturally that he might rise up and invite all men into resurrection and reconciliation with God the Father. But we, for our part, must allow the Blessed Virgin to become a symbol and image of our own spiritual lives. Mary, you see, in an image of the human soul. And the human soul is capable of giving birth to all sorts of things—good intentions, desires, thoughts, and also their opposites. The human soul is the cause and origin of both good and evil. But if the human soul, along with its body, is to be saved, it must let its entire offspring or what it makes die. What I mean is that every desire, thought, word, and deed that the soul generates and creates must die before they can be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. All that is nearest and dearest to us—be it family or friend, ambition, honor, expectations, even hopes and dreams all must die in relation to God. All, too, that is sinful and wrong—be it pride, envy, wrath, unforgiveness, sloth, lust, greed, or gluttony must die also. And all of this must be surrendered in order for our souls to place God first. What this means is that we must die in the way that the widowed mother of Nain or the Blessed Virgin died in the death of their

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sons. What we must surrender is any right to ourselves, in order to identify with Christ in his death. The holiness of Christ alone can save us, and we cannot have it unless and until we have died to ourselves and all others. Then Christ, whose Grace *does not destroy nature but perfects it,* will resurrect us into that new vision and understanding that see ourselves and all others in and for God.

Shakespeare this morning reminds us that our lives will be judged according to what we gave birth to or generated. If we give birth to evil and death, we shall reap the rewards of our conceiving. If with the widow of Nain and the Blessed Virgin Mary we endure the pain, *and remember no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world (St. John xvi. 21),* then we shall have allowed the Lord to bear the burden of our loss, in order to command in us spiritual rebirth, sanctification, and in the end, resurrection. Then, we shall not be *so fond . . .* of *the tomb of [our] self-love, to stop posterity,* but with Shakespeare, *through windows of* our *age shall see/ Despite of wrinkles, this* our *golden time. (Sonnet 3)* Amen.



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