

Why, Oh Why Anglicanism?

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“Why Anglicanism?” It is a question that I have heard with increasing frequency, and doubtlessly will continue to hear over and over throughout my Christian journey. My burgeoning association with Anglicanism has raised many a brow. Certainly, at times, said brows are not merely raised but decisively furrowed. “*Why Anglicanism?*” The tonal accent landing precisely on *that* word—*Anglicanism*—as if some sort of dirty word passed through one’s lips, or as if a curse was evoked upon my Christian faith, or even as if one’s mother was insulted.

Given the crisis within Anglicanism in North America, this disdain is not entirely without warrant. “Don’t Anglicans ‘progressively’ blur the lines on the biblical perspective on sexuality both in marriage and even in ordination?” the questioning goes, and “Don’t they deny the physical resurrection?” “Aren’t Anglicans just Catholics in disguise, who value empty ritual and tradition more than Scripture?” say the concerned. As Bobby Gross reflects about his entry into the Anglican tradition, he confesses that initially “it all seemed very ‘Catholic’ to me, which was not particularly positive given my uniformed stereotypes and inherited suspicions.”¹ In response to the caricature painted by such questions and concerns, I would confidently say ‘no,’ this is not Anglicanism. It is a distortion at best, and at worst it is heresy. It is undeniable that there are people who use the name “Anglican” to promote some of these views, but they are certainly only Anglican in name and not in their theology or values. And, if we’re honest, these heterodoxical risks are not unique to Anglicanism anymore so than they are to any other denomination.

The purpose of this paper is to help people see that “Anglicanism” need not be a dirty word, and that it is far richer than the caricature cast by those who abuse its heritage. Anglicanism, at its best, is thoroughly biblical and gospel-centered. In the course of this paper, I will first provide a brief sketch of my journey into Anglicanism and explain why I have personally embraced it. Then, secondly, I will elaborate on the advantages the Anglican tradition possesses for church planting.

Anglicanism and A.B. Sterne

Bishop Todd Hunter, the former president of the Vineyard movement, describes himself as an “accidental Anglican.”² I can’t help but appropriate this title for myself as well. My steps into Anglicanism, at first, were quite accidental. I didn’t grow up

¹ Gross, 2009, 18

² Hunter, 2010

in the church, and when I did become a Christian at the age of twenty-two, the majority of my experience was in non-denominational contexts. My journey into the Anglican heritage didn't begin until I enrolled at Asbury Theological Seminary to pursue a Master of Arts in Biblical Studies in 2008.

Dr. Buchan, who was one of my professors and assigned spiritual advisor, played a crucial role in influencing me towards Anglicanism. The first class I took with him was *Theology of John Wesley*. I knew very little about Anglicanism and even less about Wesley, but when I encountered Wesley's resolve and heart to revive the Church of England in his day, a seed was planted in my mind. I wanted to know why this particular expression of Christianity was worth fighting for with such passion?

Dr. Buchan developed within me a deep appreciation for the historic Christian faith. He introduced me to Thomas Oden's *Systematic Theology* and I began to "drink the kool-aid" of paleo-orthodoxy. I was enamored by the early Church Fathers. As I went through church history, I began to appreciate even more the Church of England's unique place within the Reformation, and its theological contributions. I admired how Thomas Cranmer grasped ahold of the patristic Fathers as well, who "as a scholar and historian had studied the life of the early Christians and was anxious to raise the worship of the Church in England as far as possible to the standards of the Primitive Church."³

I couldn't put my finger on it, but I began to find Anglicanism alluring. A strange allure, but an allure none the less. I began to do a bit more digging into the theologians and scholars who had influenced me. Unsurprisingly, my book shelf was crowded with Anglicans: N.T. Wright, Christopher Wright, J.I. Packer, John Stott, Alister McGrath, John Wesley and the like. If I included a few key Methodists (who really should be Anglicans) the list included several more who were the most influential upon me: Richard Hays, Michael Gorman, and Thomas Oden.

I began studying the 39 Articles and the Book of Common Prayer. In the Articles, I discovered the first confession of faith that I could fully agree with it. As I read the BCP cover to cover, I fell in love with the depth of its Christ-centeredness, its Scripturally-entrenched language, the depth of its theology, while also being drawn into its historic rootedness (being tied not just to the Church of England, but to patristic forms of worship as well). I began to explore liturgical worship. It moved my soul in a way that felt more congruent with how I experience God from day to day. The more I became familiar with the BCP, the more the language started to become my own—and yet not my own. I knew each phrase, and every sentence, united me in a common language of prayer and worship shared throughout the ages and the world.

As I encountered Anglicanism, I felt like I was finding a home, but I couldn't at the time explain why. It was more like an allure, an attraction. It was like a pretty girl you're a little too afraid to say 'hi' to as a teenager. But it was also so much more. In retrospect, I see it was the leading of the Holy Spirit. Since my initial exposure, Anglicanism has become much more to me than a fleeting teenage love. I have grown to love it warts and all. I am not an "accidental Anglican" now but rather an intentional Anglican.

Why Anglicanism?

³ Moorman, 1963, 187

With this brief sketch in mind, let me now move beyond its allure and return to the question at hand: *Why Anglicanism?* I have many reasons—such as a strong conviction about the Episcopate, or sharing the values of *lex orandi lex credendi* (“the law of prayer is the law of belief”) and *adiaphora* (“things indifferent”)—but I will focus on the top three that sealed the deal for me. First, Anglicanism is gospel-centered; second, Anglicanism is historically rooted; and third, Anglican liturgy is transformative.

First and foremost, I am an Anglican because it is gospel-centered. It reads Scripture salvifically, and seeks to apply the gospel to *all* areas of the human experience, understanding the gospel is how we are saved, how we are transformed, and how the entire cosmos is ultimately reconciled to God.

The entire spirituality of Anglicanism is rooted in the gospel, as Louis Weil states, “The whole structuring of the Church’s common life is an instrument for God’s saving action, as it signifies the abiding grace and power of the paschal mystery in the lives of those who believe.”⁴ There is not one aspect of the human experience that the gospel does not impact, and Anglicanism seeks to embrace this reality.

The biblical centrality of Anglicanism sees the gospel as fundamentally salvific in focus, and that the gospel is the climax of the narrative of Scripture. This is clearly stated in Article VI *The Sufficiency of Scripture for Salvation*: “Holy Scripture contains all things necessary for salvation. Consequently whatever is not read in Scripture nor can be proved from Scripture cannot be demanded from any person to believe it as an article of the faith. Nor is any such thing to be thought necessary or required for salvation.” This article captures the Anglican approach to Scripture: it is sufficient for all things necessary for *salvation*.⁵ Its center is God’s redemptive work to reconcile humanity and the created order to Himself.

I have struggled with forms of Christianity that focus solely on the mind, and treat people like information receptacles. I appreciate how Anglican spirituality attempts to shape all areas of human existence by the gospel. It seeks to form our bodies, minds and senses as we stand, kneel, speak, hear, taste, touch, smell and sing. It seeks to transform our experience of time, as the Church calendar roots us in the story of the gospel. In short, every effort is made so that people might fully *inhabit* the story of God. Leonard Vander Zee puts it this way, “the blessing of sacramental worship is the thrill and comfort of knowing that God meets us where we are, washing us, feeding us, quenching our thirst for grace. We not only believe it, we sense it, see it, taste it, feel it, smell it and swallow it. What my mind doubts, my fingers and mouth taste as the Lord’s goodness. When my faith falters, my fingers can touch truth.”⁶ There is not one area of human existence and experience that is exempt from the gospel. Anglican spirituality seeks to bring the gospel to bear in every single area engaging all our senses, our whole bodies, and our experience within time and space.

⁴ Weil, 1988, 58

⁵ This Article also expresses implicitly the *adiaphora* (“indifferent things”) principle rather than the regulative principle. This is yet another admirable trait of Anglicanism. This is an approach I became comfortable with at Summit, which consistently taught that “there are hills to die on, and there are secondary hills for discussion.” Anglicanism knows what hills to die on, and keeps them particularly limited. Yet Anglicanism also recognizes there is room for discussion, and disagreement within the Christian faith on secondary issues.

⁶ Vander Zee, 25

The Anglican tradition also has a robust understanding of the gospel. It understands that the gospel is salvific in nature, with an emphasis on God's love motivating Christ's substitutionary sacrifice. A prayer for pardon in the BCP captures this, "Almighty Father, *who of thy great love*, did give your dearly beloved Son to *die for us*: Grant that through his Cross *our sins may be put away*, and remembered no more against us, and that, cleansed by his Blood, and mindful of his sufferings, we may take up our cross daily, *and follow him in newness of life.*" This prayer also reveals that the gospel is how we are saved, and also how we are changed. Weil writes, "The term salvation is understood in different ways in various Christian traditions. For Anglicans, it involves not only the forgiveness of sins *but also the call to a holy life.*"⁷ The gospel of grace is not just the unmerited forgiveness of God; it is also empowerment for change.

Thomas Cranmer brilliantly captures these two aspects of the gospel in Articles XI and XII. Article XII on *Good Works* says "Although good works, which are the fruits of faith and follow on after justification, can never atone for our sins or face the strict justice of God's judgment, they are nevertheless pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ and *necessarily* spring from a true and living faith." True grace, a true encounter with the gospel, leads to holiness. This sentiment is also expressed in the BCP Morning Service. After confession and absolution, and being rooted in the initial Scripture readings, the *Te Deum Laudamus* is prayed "Vouchesafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin" which is immediately followed by "O Lord, have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us. O Lord, let thy mercy lighten upon us as our trust is in thee." A day without sin will not come from our own effort alone, but through the sheer mercy of God. This same sentiment is captured in the *Collect for Grace* "grant that this day we fall into no sin." Yet by the time evening arrives, the BCP Evening Service begins with confession and absolution all over again. Anglicanism captures the tension of living between the times, in the already not yet, while taking seriously the Scriptural call to flee from sin and pursue Christ's righteousness knowing that such transformation is a work of God's mercy and grace that empowers us through His Spirit (c.f. Romans 6).

Furthermore, Anglican Theology sees that the gospel is how we are saved, how we are transformed and also how the entire cosmos is restored to God. This is why the Church calendar is a part of Anglican worship. It is recognition that the gospel sanctifies time and transforms the entire created order. It is through Jesus and the expected consummation that the earth will cease its groaning, and all things will be made new (c.f. Romans 8:18-22; Revelation 21:5). The Litany beautifully states "O God the Son, *Redeemer of the world*: have mercy upon us." And throughout the entire prayer services you can't avoid praying for the world, the redemption of governments and nations and ultimately the entire created order.

Secondly, I consider myself an Anglican because the Christian faith is Scripturally and *historically* bound. Anglicanism keeps Scriptural primacy, yet embraces what can be affirmed throughout history, rooting the Church in the Creeds and Apostolic faith.

The very Scriptures that I love have nurtured me because the Church preserved and canonized them for me.⁸ I have grown increasingly weary and

⁷ Weil, 1988, 69

⁸ Chan captures this sentiment well, he writes "The New Testament was itself the result of more than three centuries of church life, reflections, and discussions in councils. How can we accept the New Testament and reject the very process in the church that "canonizes" it? Without tradition, the present-day church cannot legitimately claim to be in line with the New Testament—sola Scripture not withstanding." Chan, 2006, 31

disconcerted with the ahistorical nature of some forms of evangelicalism. The *sola Scriptura* (“Scripture alone) chant of evangelicals is “not a principle that can be derived from Scripture alone. The formula is actually a tradition.”⁹ Simon Chan writes in *Liturgical Theology*, “For many evangelicals, tradition is only the human interpretations of Scripture at best or unbiblical accretions that distort Scripture at worst ... In short, evangelicalism accepts an ahistorical view of church supported by an ahistorical view of Scripture, cut off from tradition”¹⁰

Even Scripture itself has a much more nuanced view of tradition than popular evangelicalism. Rather than a narrow, critical view of tradition, Scripture offers a dynamic approach to it. Within the Gospels, Jesus critiques the traditions of the elders, and quite harshly (c.f. Matthew 15:1-20; Colossians 2:8). But Paul also speaks positively of apostolic tradition (παράδοσις c.f. 1 Corinthians 11:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:15, 3:6).

Anglicanism rightly embraces this, and approaches theology first from Scripture, then tradition, then reason and finally experience. Henry Chadwick explains, “Within the Anglican Communion the accepted norms of authority are located first in the faith declared in Scripture, then in the safeguard of interpretation provided by the Catholic Creeds, and finally in the liturgical tradition of Prayer Book and Ordinal, both of which are essentials rooted in ways of worship much older than their sixteenth-century origin”¹¹ While Scripture remains supreme, Chan elaborates, “Without anchoring itself within the living and continuing tradition, the modern church will have no long-term collective memory, and therefore no self-identity, that will enable it to judge the novelties and fleeting fashions of the day in light of the enduring truth of Scripture which it purports to uphold”¹² Anglicanism understands that tradition can serve as a safeguard for navigating the challenges of culture and testing modern interpretations of Scripture.

The Creeds play a vital role within Anglican tradition; they unite the one holy catholic and apostolic Church in the non-negotiable components of our faith as revealed in Scripture. I sincerely appreciate Article VIII which states that “The Nicene Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed: *for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture.*” The tradition affirmed by Anglicanism will never contradict what is revealed in Scripture, and if it does it will be corrected. A good example of this is how Anglicanism reduced the Sacraments to two—Baptism and Communion—in response to the Catholic Church's seven. Similarly, the Anglican emphasis upon Scripture led to a receptionist view of Communion, a necessary correction to transubstantiation. Yet the Anglican Church did not abandon infant baptism with the Anabaptists, and continued to affirm the historic episcopate contrary to the Presbyterians. Both of these affirmations can appeal to Scripture, but admittedly do depend on healthy appeals to tradition as well, recognizing both infant baptism and the episcopate to be of apostolic origin.

Thirdly, I consider myself Anglican because of its liturgical heritage. The English Church's place in the Reformation is unique as Cranmer attempted to root its worship in the patristic Fathers. It offers an enduring form of worship that beautifully weaves together the means of grace: the Word and Eucharist.

⁹ Chadwick, 1988, 102

¹⁰ Chan, 2006, 30

¹¹ Chadwick, 1988, 105

¹² Chan, 2006, 31

Maria Hatchett writes, “The Book of Common Prayer [possesses] a liturgy true to the Scriptures, consonant with the practice of the early Church, unifying to the Church, and edifying to the people.”¹³ Bishop Todd Hunter captures what resonates with me about liturgy: “Liturgical seekers cherish the confidence that comes from historical connectedness, from theology that is not tied to the whims of contemporary culture but to apostolic-era understandings of Christian faith and practice.”¹⁴ I believe Anglican liturgy offers an enduring form of worship that acts as a powerful counter-story to the stories fed daily to us by culture. In the BCP Communion Service, the minister says “Lift up your hearts” to which the people respond, “we lift them up unto the Lord.” Anglican liturgy lifts me up into the worship that is happening constantly in heaven around the throne of God.¹⁵ It creates a stable form of worship that connects me with Christians around the world. It roots me into forms of worship that have been celebrated for centuries, and its entire shape is gospel-centered and Biblically grounded.

Within the shape of the liturgy, Anglicanism at its best keeps the preaching of the Word, and the celebration of Eucharist together. Anglo-Catholics can learn from evangelicals and not relegate preaching beneath Eucharistic participation. It is through the read and preached Word that we hear God. Yet evangelicals can learn from Anglo-Catholics and not demote the celebration of the Eucharist beneath the read and preached Word. As Leonard Vander Zee says, “the Lord’s Supper is a physical handle faith grabs hold of, allowing us to grasp God’s promises with our bodies as well as our minds.”¹⁶ Eucharist allows us to receive what we have heard. Its place within liturgical worship is rightfully the climax of the service, but its presence would be a dull fizzle without strong Biblical preaching to prepare the people’s hearts. Affirming these two unique contributions in the Anglican tradition, and bringing them together, can create a powerful form of worship whereby the Holy Spirit moves.

Anglicanism and Church Planting

These personal aspects of what has appealed to me about Anglicanism also play a significant role in why I think Anglicanism is positioned to excel at church planting. Drawing upon some of these insights, I want to talk about three advantages of Anglicanism, at its best (unfortunately a necessary disclaimer), for church planting. Church planting is fundamentally about joining God in His mission, making disciples and building up His Church. First, Anglicanism offers a robust missiology that is inextricably connected to ecclesiology. Second, it offers a holistic understanding of discipleship, especially in light of how people actually change. And, finally, it offers an enduring form of worship which ultimately fuels both mission and discipleship.

First, Anglicanism offers a robust missiology, which is a much needed corrective to a great deal of the current mission-focus dialogue of church planters that tends to emphasize the *function* of the church rather than its *nature*. For example, missiologist David J. Bosch writes “Mission is seen as a movement from God to the

¹³ Hatchett, 1988, 131

¹⁴ Hunter, 2010, 14

¹⁵ More correctly, the Holy Spirit lifts the worshiper up through the liturgy and not through Anglicanism.

¹⁶ Vander Zee, 2004, 193

world; *the church is viewed as an instrument for that mission. There is church because there is mission, not vice versa.* To participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God's love toward people, since God is a fountain of sending love."¹⁷ Bosch presents the Church solely as an instrument for God's mission. Mission flows directly from God and expresses itself in the Church.

Anglicanism, on the other hand, rightly sees missiology flowing inseparably from ecclesiology and Christology. Simon Chan writes, "The world does not know of any other Christ except the Christ that is embodied in the church. Thus to be the church is the greatest mission to the world." He continues, "Mission, then, must be defined in the largest sense, which is the fulfillment of God's ultimate reason for the church's existence: 'to the praise of his glory.' It is much larger than the narrowly defined idea of 'winning souls.'"¹⁸ This is a much-needed recalibration: the Church is not merely an instrument God uses for His redemptive purposes. When the "mission" ends—narrowly understood as evangelism and reaching the nations—at the consummation and return of Christ, the Church still remains because it has an ontological significance—it is the body and bride of Christ. The ultimate mission of the Church never ceases: giving praise to God's glory. The Church is the presence of Christ in this world for the sake of God's glory. The Church *is* Christ's body and *is* mission by its very nature. The Church enacts the story of the gospel, descending and ascending—entering into the world, and bringing the world to worship God.

Anglican worship is structured around this distinct understanding: the mission of the Church is to be what it is, the body of Christ. The entire arc of the liturgy is rooted in the people of God as gathered and commissioned people. Our sense of mission can be derived most fully through Eucharist. When we participate in the presence of Christ's broken body, we are unified in Christ, nourished by His flesh and blood, and then broken apart (just as the bread was broken into many pieces) to be sent out into the world. Chan writes, "The liturgy may be compared to a journey—a journey from this world to the heavenly kingdom and back to this world ... after being given spiritual food, the church *returns* to the world ... to love and serve the Lord."¹⁹ The Church is built up, sanctified by Christ and His gifts to the Church, so that it can be broken and sent out into the world. The actions of the Church are both to attract (gather) and incarnate (send out), but it does not exist *for* these actions but *for* God. The actions the Church performs can rightly be understood as acts of worship that give expression to what the Church *is* which is Christ's body and the story it signifies which is the gospel (the death and resurrection of Jesus). Bishop Todd Hunter writes, "Anglicanism at its best has always been marked by a twin journey: inward into the story of God as revealed in the Scriptures, and outward as we announce and embody the story in the world. These dual foci bring into play both personal piety and service to others."²⁰ The general thanksgiving in the BCP Morning Service ends with "May our hearts be unfeignedly thankful, and may we show forth your praise, not only with our lips, *but in our lives; by giving up ourselves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days.*" The whole point of worship is to allow the praise of God to give us thankful hearts that transform the way we live within the world, living for the service of God and walking before Him in all that we do. Mission flows from

¹⁷ Bosch, 1991, 389–390.

¹⁸ Chan, 2006, 40

¹⁹ Chan, 2006, 83

²⁰ Hunter, 2010, 88

worship, and no other way because it is when the gathered church is worshipping that it is most fully the church.

While the average Anglican or Anglican parish may not always be *actively* engaging the world, Anglicanism at its heart is truly missional. Ultimately when I say that Anglicanism offers a better missiology, I am actually saying that Anglicanism offers a better ecclesiology. The body of Christ, through communal worship, reenacts the life of Christ as it is gathered, blessed, broken, given and multiplied for the sake of announcing and extending God's redemptive purposes. Church planters risk getting caught up in *what the Church does*, rather than in nurturing it *to be what it is*. Anglican theology has a beautiful grasp of the ontological nature of the Church, which serves as an incredible foundation for people who are planting churches.²¹

Second, Anglicanism offers a holistic understanding of discipleship, especially in light of how people actually change. Before I examine Anglican discipleship, I first need to address how people actually change. James K. A. Smith makes a brilliant argument in his book, *Desiring the Kingdom* that people are not fundamentally “thinking-beings,” or even “believing-beings,” but “desiring-beings.” He writes, “We are more fundamentally creatures of love and desire than knowledge and beliefs, our discipleship—our formation in Christ—is more fundamentally a matter of precognitive education of the heart.”²² His insights are consistent with, and influenced by, social psychology, which suggests that we are social animals²³ and even storytelling animals.²⁴ The way we derive a sense of identity, meaning and purpose is not simply through our cognitive faculties, but also through non-cognitive processes. It is the social structures and stories that we embody that shape these non-cognitive levels, which ultimately shape the intention and aim of our hearts. Jonathan Gottschall in *The Storytelling Animal* writes “Story is the grease and glue of society: by encouraging us to behave well, story reduces social friction while uniting people around common values. Story homogenizes us; it makes us one.”²⁵ In other words, if we want our hearts to be aimed at the kingdom of God we need to inhabit routines, rituals, and rhythms that express that story.

This is precisely what liturgy does, Mark Gallis writes, “Liturgy teaches *about* the story ... but it does more, it also *embodies* the Christian story in its very structure.”²⁶ And James Smith notes, “Historic Christian worship is fundamentally formative because it educates our hearts through our bodies (which in turn renews our mind), and does so in a way that is more universally accessible than many of the overly cognitive worship habits we have acquired in modernity.”²⁷ The profound story of the gospel is woven into every aspect of Anglican worship through each service (Sunday, Morning, and Evening services) and throughout the Christian year. Anglican worship takes the gospel and invites people to live in it over and over again, moment to moment, day to day, month to month, season to season, year to year. As I said above, there is not one area of human

²¹ It is also worth noting that the Book of Common Prayer *Midday Prayers* and the *Prayers For The Extension Of The Church* are exceptionally mission-focused, and if prayed are a great way to root people back into God's story throughout the day.

²² Smith, 2009, 136

²³ Brooks, 2011

²⁴ Gottschall, 2012

²⁵ Gottschall, 2012, 138

²⁶ Galli, 2008 18

²⁷ Smith, 2009, 137

existence that the gospel does not impact. Anglicanism grasps this and has structured worship to create routines, rituals and rhythms to enter into the gospel story. These rituals and rhythms shape us both on the cognitive level and the non-cognitive level, ultimately calibrating our hearts to be pointed towards God's kingdom.

An objection I mentioned in the introduction needs to be raised: "can't liturgy just be empty, rote ritual?" This is undeniably a risk, and in some cases it is unfortunately true, but this risk exists for every form of worship. Like any form of worship, liturgy will be most helpful when "active participation" occurs.²⁸ The goal is for people to be fully engaged in what they're doing, but the reality is that people are shaped by far more than just their cognitive processes. Routines and rhythms form us even if they are done in rote monotony. Smith writes, "Worship is best understood on the order of action, not reflection; worship is something that we do. And even if we don't think about it in this reflective way—and even if some of us *can't* think about it in this way—the core claim of this book is that the practices of Christian worship *do* this work nonetheless because of the kind of creatures we are ... reflection certainly deepens the doing; but the point is that there is always *more* happening: our imagination is being formed in ways that we are not (and perhaps cannot) be aware of."²⁹ The liturgy powerfully shapes the non-cognitive dimension of the human experience by creating a consistent rhythm that roots Christians in the gospel story. The Holy Spirit uses these rhythms to shape our hearts, especially when active participation occurs, and even when it does not.

In short, the strength of liturgy is being confirmed by social psychology and the reality of how people actually change. In light of this, Anglicans can embrace both the desire of evangelicals for renewal from the inside out, and the Anglo-Catholic emphasis that renewal can also happen from the outside in. The Anglican liturgy helps the people of God enter into the story of God for the sake of the world. Liturgy can be used powerfully by the Holy Spirit to create a missional people through its patterns and routines. But beyond that, liturgy combined with catechism and the morning offices creates a powerful model of discipleship and worship.

In the contemporary church there is a large divide between corporate worship and discipleship. People gather together for songs, and a sermon. Worship is generally done for them. Their devotional lives are expected to be rooted in prayer and the Scriptures, but at the end of the day are dictated by personal preference. It should be no surprise that many mega churches admit that they are failing at discipleship.³⁰ Alternatively, liturgical worship can become the framework for discipleship. Chan suggests, "personal devotional habits should be understood as a necessary preparation for better participation in common prayer"³¹ When through catechesis, a believer is trained in the Apostles Creed, the commandments, and the Lord's prayer, they are trained not just to understand these things, but to enter into worship. Sunday worship that includes confession, absolution, intercessory prayer, and the like, teaches believers how they can worship day to day. These are repeatable forms of worship, which makes discipleship more holistic. There is no gap between what one does on Sunday or on his own on Tuesday morning.

²⁸ Chan, 2006, 147-166

²⁹ Smith, 2009, 166

³⁰ c.f. Hawkins, 2007; Carlson, 2011

³¹ Chan, 2006, 161

Lastly, as I have mentioned in the previous two points, Anglicanism offers a form of worship that enhances discipleship and roots people in God's mission. I am convinced that the liturgical bent of Anglicanism is one of its great strengths, and that it need not be inaccessible. While some may be critical of liturgy, and desire more free-form contemporary services, such spontaneity is overrated, and generally a farce. Every single church has a liturgy regardless if they want to recognize it. Similarly, the accessibility of contemporary seeker-friendly services that emphasize songs and sermons lies not in the reduction of the service to its most "accessible components" but in something else altogether. Lets face it, singing songs not just about Jesus, but to Jesus and hearing a 30-45 minute sermon from the "archaic" Bible is hardly accessible to the average non-believer. In fact, I think these services highlight some of the most inaccessible aspects of Christian worship. So what makes them successful and so accessible? I believe the accessibility lies not in what we do, but in *how* we do it. At the heart of the liturgical Reformation lay the desire to make worship comprehensible to the average, common person. Unfortunately some Anglican parishes have forgotten that even though our worship is now in the common language, its forms and theology are no longer common language in a post-Christian context and they require additional explanation. I truly believe that the enduring, trans-generational nature of the liturgy offers a profound worship experience, and it can be *very* accessible if it simply is explained. J.I. Packer is right to beat the catechism drum. But in addition to the revival of catechism—so that people can actively participate in worship—I think the entire presentation of liturgy needs to be considered and that its accessibility will depend on how well people are led into it.

At the end of the day, the Church is fundamentally a worshipping community. Through Anglican worship, the church is rooted in the gospel, participates in the life of Christ through the proclaimed Word and Eucharist, and is shaped by the liturgy to become mature disciples that participate in God's continuing mission. Anglicanism sees the Church's ontological value rather than diminishing the Church solely to its instrumental use. Furthermore, in light of how people change, liturgical worship deeply affects us on the cognitive and non-cognitive level, which points our hearts towards God's kingdom. Liturgy also offers holistic discipleship, which transcends Sunday worship alone. This is a vision for the Church, and it is a powerful vision. As a church planter, this is the vision I aspire to see come to fruition as I believe it can thrive in a post-Christian context.

Conclusion

Couldn't one just take all these insights and apply them to any denomination's church planting efforts? Sure. So again I have to answer, *why Anglicanism?* These insights are deeply indebted to, and entrenched in Anglicanism. I would have not come to many of these realizations if it had not been my engagement with Anglican writings and its tradition. I believe they are Biblical insights, and can be claimed by other denominations, but I have had to seriously ask myself "Why throw the baby out with the bathwater?" If Anglicanism can prove to be this fruitful, why not be Anglican? Why not whole-heartedly embrace such a rich expression of the Christian faith?

My theological positions and my understanding of worship has led me this far. Additionally, my convictions about the episcopate severely limits my denominational options. Anything in the free-church tradition and its Congregationalist approach will

not do. While Anglicanism is in disarray, I believe the heart of Anglicanism—its history, theology, and worship—is worth defending and fighting for because it is nothing less than the best of the historic Apostolic faith, and nothing more than the biblical gospel.

One of Anglicanism's strengths is that it knows how to endure through history, even when heresy plagues its own body. I am convinced that time and endurance is all that is needed for Anglicanism to get through its current struggles. In the meantime, it needs young leaders who are willing to commit to the service of the Church, and to the mission of God through the Church.

Finally, I agree once again with Bishop Todd Hunter's summary of "why Anglicanism?" He writes: "The convergence of the evangelical, Spirit-filled and liturgical elements of Christianity are leading to the spiritual formation and mission that I dreamed of, worked toward and hoped for."³²

³² Hunter, 2010, 122

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