

Cranmer's Vision for Worship in Word and Sacrament in the Book of Common Prayer

Adult Catechesis

9/22/24

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Liturgy is not only the work of the people but the work of God.

“For we think it convenient that every country should use such ceremonies, as they shall think best to the setting forth of God’s honour and glory, *and to the reducing of the people to a most perfect and godly living, without error or superstition.*”

-----“On Ceremonies, why some be abolished and some remain,” 1549 Book of Common Prayer

“Gathering to worship, therefore, is akin to participating in a training session. As we participate in the liturgy and its spiritual exercises such as praise, confession, attention to scripture, intercession, and taking the sacraments, we not only hear the word of God but are trained in the virtues of Christian practice and learn the habits of life which reflect and express the grace of God.”

-----Burns, Stephen. Liturgical Spirituality: Anglican Reflections on the Church's Prayer

Word and Sacrament

- God speaks to us and transforms us through his Word
 - “That words are windows onto mystery”**
 - Second Sunday in Advent Collect: “by patience and the comfort of your holy Word we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life”
- “The Eucharist is an Icon of the Gospel” Todd Billings
- The Eucharistic path of worship encapsulates the life of worship of God

Cranmer’s Book of Common Prayer (first issued in 1549, embodied in our ACNA 2019 BCP) was:

Biblical

The Liturgy must be consistent with the truth as set forth in Scripture

90 % of the BCP is Scripture or paraphrased Scripture

Liturgical or set prayers are our worship language – and many draw on paraphrased Scripture – prayers were memorized as we today memorize Scripture

Featured Daily and Sunday lectionaries – Bible to be heard in its entirety over a year

Reformational

- Reformed Catholicism: Scriptura Prima v. Sola Scriptura
 - Medieval worship had been reduced to people watching a Priest offer a sacrifice on their behalf - saying masses mitigated eternal punishment and appeased God’s anger towards sin
 - Illustration: 1547 Act Dissolving the Chantries
 - Cranmer intended that the worship of the BCP must teach that Christ died once for all – sin has been dealt with-finality- no re-sacrifice was needed or masses for dead

- Not every “ceremony” must be prescribed in Scripture, maintained those which induced piety and right thinking – but removed worship that was contrary to what Scripture taught
- Doxology vs. Dogmatic
 - The law of prayer is the law of belief
- Desired to see the positive aspects of the monastic rule embodied in daily parish worship
- National unity in Christian belief in his day – unity across the Anglican Communion in ours

Patristic & Catholic

- He drew on the worship traditions of the early church East and West
 - Example: The prayers of *epiclesis*

The Eastern Prayer -from liturgy of St. Basil the fourth century *Apostolic Constitutions*:

May the Holy Spirit make of this bread
the Body of your Christ
and of this cup the Blood of your Christ
so that those partaking of them
may be strengthened in the faith

Cranmer’s version in 1549 (Trinitarian focus – adds “word”)

“Hear us we beseech thee: and with thy holy spirit and word vouchsafe to *bless + and sanctify + these thy gifts, and creatures of bread and wine*, that they may be to us the body and blood of the most dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ.”

Anglican Standard Text

“We ask you to bless and sanctify, with your Word and Holy Spirit, these gifts of bread and wine, that we . . . may be partakers of his most blessed Body and Blood.”

Transformational

- Our worship focuses first on our relationship with God – we are his adopted children
 - The Comfortable Words following the Absolution
- Liturgical or set prayers are our worship language
- “Teaches us to love God more than our sin”

Missional

- Our liturgy teaches us we are a people of mission : Post-communion prayer
- Our worship crosses the boundary between the people of God and the people not yet the people of God

De Magistro

The Word in you revealed his quickening powers
Removed the daily veil, and let me see,
That words are windows onto mystery.
From Eden ...he calls
In the language of Adam, creating memory,
Of unfallen speech.
His Spirit is a sacrifice of breath
Upon the letters of his revelation.
In mid-most of the word-wood is a path
That leads back to the springs of truth in speech.”
Malcolm Guite¹

¹ Malcolm Guite, *Word in the Wilderness: A poem a day for Lent and Easter*, 91.