

## *A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Anglican Catechism: A Response to the Post-Christian Age*

If a new mythic consciousness is to undergird Anglican formation approaches, it seems clear that Anglicans must ask some difficult questions in the face of the witness offered by the Global South. The leadership of the Global South has called for the Communion to fundamentally reflect on some difficult questions:

- Is the vocation of forming Christians a “political activity” in the life of the church (local, national, provincial, global)?
- Does the process of Christian Formation reflect the experience of being a private matter with a small few that takes place in relative isolation?
- What is the role of the faith community in Christian formation, and is it central to the mission of the church?

The Global South Anglican witness has embraced the ideal that the role of the community in Christian formation is fundamental to the common life ( i.e., The Baptismal Covenant, p. 304-305 in the American Book of Common Prayer). In that context, each time the Sacrament of Holy Baptism is celebrated, the people of God are asked; **“Will you who witness these vows do all in your power to support these persons in their life in Christ?”** Invariably every parish both large and small offers a resounding yes to this question. Effectively, all are saying yes to a political activity that calls for promoting a vision of Christ and his kingdom whereby we pledge to form, educate and nurture these brothers and sisters. This notion of the “polis” accepting this call resonates the primitive tribal notion that “it takes a village to rear a child.” This metaphor suggests that the parish is the village, and we must be willing to live out this promise each time there is a baptism because “it takes a faithful community to make disciples.”

Two dimensions in the work of forming people in a mythic consciousness must be addressed when one approaches the work of Christian Formation from the perspective of religious anthropology, namely the cognitive and affective components. These two dimensions of the cognitive (intellectual) and the affective (nurture), when integrated in a balanced way, offer an approach to rendering an authentic religious mythic consciousness that shapes and forms the individual and the community.

◆ THE COGNITIVE DIMENSION—The process of coming to a faith posture includes a certain awareness and knowledge of how one apprehends religious meaning in a non-religious world. This process is usually consigned to the process of education (from the Latin *educare-to*

*fertilize*). The thrust of this process of coming to faith is both personal and communal, as it is an invitation from the church to people to know about and give assent to particular beliefs and traditions so as to offer meaning on the journey. Christian Education is the means to stimulate growth in the seeds of the Gospel already planted through pre-evangelization and evangelization. It allows members of the community who have a particular ministry of instruction to provide opportunities for learning the fundamental elements of the Christian faith to the fellowship. As Anglicans, the cognitive aspect of the formation experience should offer a pathway for individuals to identify and affirm components of the scriptures, liturgy, creeds and tradition as a wellspring of our religious experience. Such an approach demands a focus upon the radical nature of the story of God and His community as it has unfolded from the time of the Hebrews through the mythic story we now call Anglican Christendom. The transmission of this story provides information on the facts and characters that is complemented by incorporating the thinking, feeling and willing one wishes to offer in response. This component should enable and empower young and old alike to speak convincingly and knowingly about Christ, his Kingdom vision and how that may be lived out in the world as Anglican Christians.

Is the cognitive dimension ultimately about doctrine? If the answer is yes, some would suggest that Anglicanism cannot adequately form Christians in a cognitive way because it has never been clear about whether it even has doctrine. This would be unfair since it continues first and foremost to uphold, as a church (though some individuals may dissent), the central tenets of classical Christology as articulated in the Creeds. Moreover, the catechism (as we will see), along with the writings of the Caroline Divines and the Tractarians, do offer a systematic approach to the “substance” of what Anglicans believe. However, when the question arises as to what Anglican Christendom holds true about its mythic self in the world today, some would say there is a loss to accurately express what the belief and mission is. Bishop Stephen Sykes of the Diocese of Ely maintains that Anglicans are not at a loss, providing one understands why Anglicans even would engage in a quest for doctrinal development. “The purpose of an Anglican doctrine would be to raise the consciousness of those aspects of the Church’s life which are worthy, justifiable, Christian and true. It would provide Anglicans, with a clear, even if controversial, rationale for comparing and unifying traditions with different histories.”<sup>1</sup>

**To that end he offers three ideas:**

1. That the Church is a visible sign of God’s activity in human history.

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen Sykes., Unashamed Anglicanism (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1995) p.119

2. That we have, at all costs to, keep contact with a sophisticated account of the understanding of the church of the New Testament.
3. That the theology of baptism is foundational.<sup>2</sup>

If cognitive insight and formation through catechesis homiletics and apologetics cannot be developed to articulate these basics than it will be impossible to intelligently discuss more specific points affirmed by the entire Communion as contained in the Lambeth Quadrilateral. This document articulates the essentials of the mythic consciousness, and, even though it is often used as the springboard for ecumenical dialogue, serves the Anglican tradition well as a resource to be utilized as part of the cognitive element in catechesis and formation that will help reclaim a specific mythic consciousness or Anglican ethos.

1. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the revealed Word of God.
2. The Nicene Creed as the sufficient statement of the Christian Faith.
3. The two Sacraments—Baptism and the Supper of the Lord—ministered with unfailing use of Christ's words of institution and of the elements ordained by Him.
4. The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called by God into the unity of His Church. 3

The Quadrilateral seeks to affirm the strengths of Anglican identity, calling upon the standards of the ancient faith and recalling the customary method of establishing the cognitive dimension. This summary formula for cognitive emphasis can be seen through the use of a catechism. In this emphasis, catechesis had a connotation of personal instruction seeking a personal response from the seeker. Prior to the age of printing, this type of instruction mirrored the Socratic method of auditory question and response as evidenced in the catechetical schools of Alexandria and Jerusalem. The success of this formula to state with clarity was very attractive to the sixteenth century reformers, as this methodology became adapted by many on both sides of the Reformation split. It was an effective tool to promote both Christian fundamentals and behavior or civility.<sup>4</sup>

Ultimately, the goal of these catechisms was to facilitate a real knowledge of what it meant to live as a baptized person in a particular religious tradition, particularly as one sought the sacrament of confirmation. Since the post-enlightenment, these resources fell into disuse, or at best were given lip service. The recent success of the Universal Catechism, produced by the

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.123

<sup>3</sup> Donald S. Armentrout & Robert Boak Slocum. (ed.) ,**Documents of Witness** (New York: Church Hymnal Corporation, 1994).p.483

<sup>4</sup> John Bossy, **Christianity In The West 1400-1700** ( Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985) p.118-120

Roman tradition, should give Anglicans cause to reexamine the place such a resource can have in the efforts to reclaim an Anglican mythic religious consciousness. Most versions of The Book of Common Prayer offer an outline of the faith and which utilizes a question and answer format addressing various topics in systematic theology. In the remainder of this book, the outline augmented with a point by point commentary from an Anglican perspective on the essence of the Christian faith, for “the basic concept and approach of the catechism is still to point to the authentic Christian responses to be made in our own kind of language and contemporary situation.”<sup>5</sup>

As the Anglican tradition struggles to find its identity globally and over and against in the culture, a 21<sup>st</sup> century catechism from the Global South can incorporate the diverse richness and clarity on matters of the Christian faith that can only help Anglicanism reclaim its identity and form a new generation of disciples.

◆ THE AFFECTIVE DIMENSION—St. Paul writes in his first letter to the Corinthians that if one can speak the languages of men and have the wisdom of the world but fails to have love, it is of little account. Paul accentuates the need for the cognitive and the affective to work conjointly in the life of human persons. The affective dimension to catechesis is a vehicle for the cognitive dimension to bear fruit in the lives of people who are being formed by Christ and the Gospel. This affective dimension we call *nurture*. This process of Christian nurture should seek to foster spiritual growth through a deepening relationship with Jesus Christ. The ministry of Christian nurture is to offer people in Christian formation an opportunity to experience the grace which we say is evident in the liturgy, the scriptures and the whole of God’s creation. In the affective domain sign and symbol gives rise to thought and insight.<sup>6</sup> It is in the experience that one apprehends with the heart, as well as the mind, that one can be shaped and formed. This leads to a whole new vista in the religious realm, culminating in a careful examination of one’s lifestyle. The most significant compliment to this aspect of formation are the Rites of Christian Initiation.

The Rites in the Book of Common Prayer are an invitation to Christian Initiation the community of faith to celebrate the Christian life, which is abundant in mythic symbol and power. Anglican Christians, like others branches of the liturgical tradition live in and through symbols, as they are the theophanies of God’s presence. At times a window is required to see

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<sup>5</sup> John Booty, Stephen Sykes, **The Study of Anglicanism** (London: The SPCK., 1988) *Catechisms by James Hartin* p.162

<sup>6</sup> Paul Ricoeur, **The Conflict of Interpretations** (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974) p.285-290

them more clearly, so when an individual experiences the Rites of the Church should offer a connection between what has been heard and what has been seen by the individual. It is in these sacramental acts complimented by the truths of the ages that, people come to know, in an affective way, what it means to live in God. They begin to understand with their heart that fullness in the church is not about membership but fellowship and discipleship. “The aim is to provide an opportunity for the inquirer to experience what it means to be part of a community where the love of God is expressed in the love of neighbor.”<sup>7</sup> Slowly individuals come to understand that the Church does not control these symbols but, in fact, is brought into being by them and is accountable to and for them. It becomes clear through the mythic symbols and narratives of the liturgy that the experience is not attending to self-perpetuation but salvation. While the scope of the Prayer Book, along with instruction and fellowship, are not the only places that the process of a religious mythic consciousness can evolve, they are the places where, as Bishop Stephen Sykes points out, “doctrine, ethics, myth, community, rituals and inward experience are integrally related.”<sup>8</sup>

If Anglicanism can accept the vocation of catechesis, what the entire Communion does as its particular mission will be an extension of Christian Formation, Stewardship, Outreach and Evangelism and not locally driven versions of the Gospel. In the vocation of being educators and nurturers one to each other, the Communion from its bishops to its laity would embrace the biblical concept of *koinonia*/**κοινωνία**. A Communion committed to the formation process seeks to build a community of nurture and support, a community where the love of God is taught, proclaimed and experienced and the liturgy truly is the principal locus of this proclamation and experience, for this is where the polis gathers to express its story.

### **A CHANGE IN PARADIGMS**

If the entire communion recognizes that a catechetical need and accepts the global south vocation whereby all are called to be catechists and articulate a faith story that incarnates the mythic story through Scripture, Sacraments and Ethics, the Anglican paradigm can change and a bridge between Global South and West can be constructed. As John Shea points out, “the religious mission of the church might be characterized as providing the resources and structures for the ongoing inter-relating of personal and communal stories with the larger Christian stories

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<sup>7</sup> Peter Ball, **Adult Believing: A Guide To Christian Initiation of Adults**. (New York: Paulist Press, 1988) p.12

<sup>8</sup> Stephen Sykes, **The Identity of Christianity** (London: SPCK, 1984) p.282-284

for the purposes of redemption.”<sup>9</sup> Has the Communion been faithful to this religious mission as specified by Shea? The loss of mythic consciousness would suggest not. If we are to recapture the Anglican mythic consciousness as part of the Christian story, there should be a covenant established by both council and canon that seeks to establish a formative community adapting the lost principles.

Such a commitment (as evidenced in the Communiqué from the Global South Primates) emphasizes that the responsibility for catechesis is not just upon the Primates, but upon the entire community of faith. “Only when the church has developed to some extent the kind of ministry and structural form described, will it be able to minister ... to the growing needs of the parish and society at large.”<sup>10</sup>

The Global South Primates in calling for a catechism seek to recapture the Anglican story using the gifts of Scripture, Reason and Tradition. However, one cannot just throw out that Anglican formula and expect it to provide the formation desired. Scripture must be implemented through the use of modern scholarship. Tradition must always be re-examined through the eyes of Historical Theology and Reason must be seen as more than logical input; it must be forged as a dialogue whereby the Gospel responds to the culture. When framed within a holistic approach, the use of the catechism in formation can serve the church well. In this shift, the challenge is to discover the connection between the liturgy (Tradition) that forms us and the mission of the church, which must be made explicit through teaching (Reason), preaching (Scripture), and action.

As a people of Common Prayer, Anglicans suggest to the world that, in the liturgy, there is a common purpose and language for the assembled, faith-filled people rooted in the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The deacon reminds all in the dismissal of the liturgy to go forth to love and serve the Lord (and each other). This mythic story should empower and engage the community and individuals to demonstrate discipleship and servanthood for “these efforts are not mere matters of the charity of individuals or of the parish but are the everyday expressions of the faith of every Christian.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Evelyn Eaton Whitehead,(ed.) **The Parish In Community and Ministry** (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), *The Religious Mission of the Parish* by John Shea, p.69

<sup>10</sup> Gary L. Chamberlain, **Fostering Faith: A Ministers Guide to Faith Development.** (New York: Paulist Press, 1988) p.104

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p.102

In the anthology ***Handbook of Faith***, there is a chapter that superbly details the living out of Jesus mandate as part of the formative faith process. Randolph A. Nelson, Professor of Contextual Education at Luther Northwestern Seminary suggests that service “prevents a too narrow conception of faith, as well as calling attention to its communal dimension. Because the human being is a social being, faith is never a simple relationship with God. The person of faith is a person in relationship with other persons, with a social world, and with creation, as well as with God. Involvement in social ministry reminds us of faith’s comprehensive scope and provides expression for the expansive reach of faith by bringing all reality to its purview.”<sup>12</sup>

Whether one reflects upon the Baptismal Covenant’s the five questions of commitment, ponders the nature of God as outlined in the catechism, or leads a discussion on the implications of the account of the Last Judgment (Matthew 25:31-46); the corporate demands of being formed in faith cannot be separated from the personal/individual call that is given. The life of faith is a balance of living individual and corporate disciplines.

A life of discipline and service flows from a life of prayer and worship. The Primates in calling for a 21<sup>st</sup> Century catechism seek recover a mythic consciousness for Anglicanism, the entire faith community must be aware of the need for a connection between liturgical practice, catechetical instruction and lived experience if the identity is going to be renewed and reclaimed.<sup>13</sup>

### **SIGNPOSTS ON THE JOURNEY**

Many doomsayers suggest that Anglicanism cannot rebound and reclaim its mythic consciousness because **A) it never had one B) it doesn’t even know what the questions it needs to ask itself and C) it has aligned itself for too long with the culture.** A clear reading of the evolution of this tradition, however, suggests that we have had a mythic consciousness, and that it has weighed heavily in the formation of many souls. Secondly, the Global South leadership has demonstrated that there are Anglican leaders who do know what the essential questions are and can be posed as follows:

- Are Anglicans being shaped in Formation efforts so as to be authentic men and women of God?
- Are Anglicans rooted in their heritage so as to become faithful people with an ardent desire to dwell in the presence of God?

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<sup>12</sup> James Michael Lee, ***Handbook of Faith***, (Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1990) *Facilitating Growth through Social Ministry* by Randolph Nelson p. 240

<sup>13</sup> op.cit., P.Ball., Chap 2.

- Are Anglicans given the skills to hear God’s voice and to manifest his healing, compassionate presence in the world?
- Are Anglicans equipped them with a story of the church that empowers them to be counter-cultural in a desperate and ambiguous age?

In that last point, we are reminded by the 103rd Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord George Carey that we must always be in tune with the culture if we are to address it in an adequate way that will transform people. To that point, he offers a charter for Anglicanism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century that can assist in this reclamation project of re-establishing our mythic consciousness.

1. Be A Church Rooted In Historic Christianity
2. Be A Church Open To The World We Live In
3. Be A Worshipping Church
4. Be A Witnessing Growing Church
5. Be A Church Committed to Unity <sup>14</sup>

The reasons for re-establishing an Anglican Catechism is found in the promise that Anglicanism has something rich to offer the church in its particular expression of the catholic faith. However, the church in the west, must at the same time realize that the real dynamic behind the Anglican celebration of the Gospel Faith is not how the church appears, i.e., whether the image, inclusive or exclusive, broad or narrow. The real dynamic is in the witness and faithfulness to the truth, which the Global South leaders are pledged to when all are initiated into the Body of Christ. It is this realization the Primates of the Global South assert that the Communion’s identity should be grounded upon and that is where the greatest challenge lies. Anglicans must cherish and take possession of the deposit of faith and traditions that has been handed on, mindful of the awesomeness of what is shared in. St. John Chrysostom tried to inculcate this in his people in the fourth century, and it is well worth consideration as Anglicans ponder the tradition’s vocation and identity.

*“You are not only free but also holy. Not only holy, but also just. Not only just, but also sons and daughters. Not only sons and daughters, but also heirs. Not only heirs but brothers and sisters of Christ. Not only brothers and sisters of Christ, but also joint heirs. Not only joint heirs,*

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<sup>14</sup> George Carey, **A Charter For the Church: Sharing: A Vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century** ( Harrisburg: MorehousePublishing, 1993)

*but also members. Not only members, but also a temple. Not only a temple, but also instruments of the Spirit. Blessed Be God who alone does wonderful things”<sup>15</sup>*

A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Anglican Catechism is intended to be an instrument of the Spirit which offers a temple to the Communion from the Global South, forming others as brothers and sisters who are heirs and who live in justice and holiness.

The Primates of the Global South have suggested that the Anglican expression of the Gospel imparts of the Communion has lost its moorings, and believes that as a particularity of the Christian Church, Anglicanism shares in the common vocation of the church to be the bearer of the Good News of God in Christ Jesus and spread it throughout the world (Matthew 28:16-20). The vocation of the Christian church is to call men and women to undergo a change of heart (μετανοια) from the powers of this world to the power of a gracious, loving and saving God. This change of heart seeks that persons be shaped and empowered by grace in such a way that they serve as agents of God’s reign in the world. As stated previously, this is not something that comes innately to the human person, and it is a thematic that runs contrary to most of western culture. The church claims to live a life that reflects “The Way, The Truth and The Life,” while most people live in a culture that suggests one go one’s own way, that one may find some truth, and that one may or may not get a life. I think it is fair to say that this attitude has formed the self-absorbed, individualistic, consumer society we live in. Some think this worldview is problematic, some are unsure, and some think the key is to blend the secular and the sacred to get a “nice balance.”

The problem with this last type of approach is to find the rudiments of Christianity, or what C.S. Lewis called “mere Christianity.” While this secular/sacred dialogue captured the heart and mind of the church in the last forty years, the church did not form a clear mythic consciousness, or to “put it another way, any definition of mere Christianity was welcome except one that suggested there was a normative content to Christianity.”<sup>16</sup> While the church in the West may have learned to adapt to this style, the Global South Bishops maintain that the Anglican articulation of the Gospel has been weakened by teaching and practices, which

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<sup>15</sup> George R. Grube (ed.) **What the Church Fathers Say About . . .** (Minneapolis: Light and Life Publishing, 1996) p.127

<sup>16</sup> Ephraim Radner & George R. Sumner, (ed.) **Reclaiming Faith : Essay in Orthodoxy in the Episcopal Church.** (Grand Rapids: Wm. C. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993), *THE PLACE OF DOCTRINE IN THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH* by Robert W. Pritchard., p.43

undermine the authority of the Scriptures. “The Anglican Communion is severely wounded by the witness of errant principles of faith and practice which in many parts of our Communion have adversely affected our efforts to take the Gospel to those in need of God’s redeeming and saving love. The Global South members of the Anglican Communion are seeking to reclaim a vocation and that has not changed since the apostolic age. They seem to understand fundamental difference between the modern and the apostolic is similar to that between the Global South and the West is that many of the people in the modern/western church who are in need of μετανοια are people who already belong to the community of faith by virtue of the pedagogy of assimilation. This pedagogy of assimilation of culture cannot assist in communicating the Gospel with or to the world. In fact, the Primates of the Global South in the meetings known as the South to South Encounter have maintain with a clear voice that for the Communion to be authentic in its witness it must transformed into a communion that who can use the language of faith to describe the response to the brokenness of the world. If the world is basically Christian, then one need not worry about the church; conversion and transformation are not needed.”<sup>17</sup> The clear evidence is that they are needed, however, and the communion must undergo a transformation if it is to serve as an instrument of Grace that is to transform the world.

This is the fundamental challenge to Anglicanism: can it transform itself so as to fulfill its vocation and responsibility in a pluralistic church culture that it has already compromised itself with? It must be admitted that Anglicanism has historically been an expression of catholic pluralism and St. Augustine struggled with this in his early days upon arriving on English shores 1400 years ago. There were always, however, understood parameters and lines of authority. Anglicanism, in particular, is understood as a religious tradition that was, and is, comprehensive. At one time it was comprehensive for the sake of truly implementing formation principles; however, the fast criticism of American Anglicanism is that it is comprehensive for the sake of compromise, innovation or appeasement. The approach that includes the assimilation concept of formation is the principal challenge to providing effective catechetical formation. The pluralism advocated in this context has divested itself of the parameters and lines of authority that Anglicanism was established upon. The power of the church’s teaching does not rest in “how radical or politically correct its conclusions might be, but by the caliber of its scholarship, the judiciousness of its reasoning and its rootedness in Christian tradition.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon, ***Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony.*** (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989.) p.28-29

<sup>18</sup> A. McGrath, ***The Renewal of Anglicanism*** (Harrisburg: Morehouse Publishing, 1991) p.44

The failure to pursue such goals on a theological level have an adverse effect on the community of faith on the local level; members may not see the challenges of Christian Formation as a pathway to faith that colors all that we say, think, are and do, but they are able to recognize that in “failing to equip the saints,” there is little reason to pursue the commitment. The challenges for the Communion is to demonstrate that there is a difference in the one who claims Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior as opposed to the one who does not. There is a difference as to how one values the world, acts in the world and thinks about the world. Cozying up to the culture will not provide that, and Anglican Christendom must face this reality with expediency. It is difficult to engage in a ministry of formation within a particular tradition that has lost sight of its own vocation and identity. There is a universal call to authentic formation that the church possesses. Karl Barth summed up the vocation by stating that “it belongs to the Church to witness to the Dominion of Christ clearly, explicitly and consciously.”<sup>19</sup> This intention of vocation has become somewhat hazy in many religious traditions, and Anglicanism is no exception. It is suggested in a number of contemporary Anglican resources that the beauty of Anglicanism is not that it is clear, but that it is ambiguous; not that it is explicit, but vague. Stanley Hauerwas suggests that this is not the essence of Anglicanism at all, but rather we see that Christian theology (articulating the Christian story) “begins in ecclesiology and church practice. Theology begins in church and works its way out.”<sup>20</sup> If Anglican Christendom is to speak credibly to the world it resides in, it must do so with the conviction and comprehension of its own language and customs, and not seek to modify these elements to the standards of the world. If formation flows from ecclesiology, the ecclesial community must be moored in the ways of discipleship and the language of discipleship. These languages and methods are not innate to us or the world we live in, and the evolution comes from within the community of faith and is brought out to the world which is not part of that community. In the vocation of Christian Formation, it is unreasonable and counter-productive to translate the beliefs, doctrines, traditions and disciplines into categories and opportunities that reflect a worldview of the “*un-faithed*” or unformed. Seeking to be more relevant and acceptable by coalescing the stories and traditions of the faith community with the traditions of the unformed population is not user-friendly. Being formed in the faith is not primarily about being accessible, but about being disciplined in the story and norms of the faith which we claim to be holy, catholic and apostolic. There is no category in the secular that will make that dynamic familiar and accessible. It can only become such by being formed in the

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<sup>19</sup> Karl Barth, **The Faith of the Church** (New York: Scribner’s, 1959) p.145

<sup>20</sup> Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon, **Where Resident Aliens Live :Exercises for Christian Practice** (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996) p. 57

ecclesial community. Thus, the first challenge to the ecclesial community is to forgo the sacred-secular partnership to formation, and, secondly, to abdicate the notion that Anglicanism is vague about what it holds to be true. Instead Anglicanism needs to reclaim its identity and its vocation as part of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church.

### **IS IT POSSIBLE TO BE ANGLICAN AND FAITHFUL?**

As Anglicanism has failed miserably in the mission of Formation, two propositions must be clarified so that feasible methods can be suggested for the ecclesial community to be clear, explicit and intentional. Of course, these propositions are not new terrain for Anglicans but they have been difficult to resolve. The Tractarians of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century wrestled with them to the point that John Newman felt that such notions would never be accepted. If Hauerwas is correct about our vocation rising from our ecclesiology, then we must face again the questions raised by Newman and his contemporaries, for the significance of the questions have not changed

1. *DOES ANGLICANISM HAVE AN APPRECIATION OF CATHOLIC IDENTITY BY WHICH TO FORM PEOPLE IN AS THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY DAWNS?*
2. *HOW DOES ITS VOCATION FLOW FROM THIS IDENTITY GIVEN THE PRESENT MODEL OF CULTURAL ASSIMILATION VERSUS THE EVANGELICAL RENEWAL?*

The catholic identity inherent to Anglicanism is critical to ecclesiology and formation. There can be little doubt that the sacramental character of the church depends heavily on a catholic understanding. However, this has always been a struggle in the evolution of Anglicanism from the Tudor Reformation to the present.

Canon Vincent Strudwick, in examining the catholicity of Anglicanism, recognizes that it has taken many shapes and turns given the role and posture the evangelical movement had on Anglicanism in England after the death of Henry VIII. The point of departure for catholic identity has rested in the prominence and influence of the Roman tradition. Even Richard Hooker understood that that was a premise that had to be admitted, and suggested that the Church of England was, at best, only part of the catholic church, as it shared a common heritage and mystery while, at the same time, was distinct from that tradition. “The catholicity of the Church is found by those who are attentive to the Gospel and its message and are attempting to be formed in the image of the Church of which it speaks. This formation is the ‘tradition’, which with Scripture and reason forms a “threefold cord, not quickly broken.” Catholicity is experienced in the dynamic of this threefold cord, in communion—albeit impaired—with the visible Church in other

places, and by the way in which, through its local expression in life and worship, it bears the marks of the Gospel.”<sup>21</sup>

Some critics may suggest that Anglicanism has focused on the impaired aspect of this dynamic over and above any other dimension. There can be little question that the imperfection of the catholic ethos has at times not caused a strain within Anglican self-perception. For Evangelicals of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, the catholic ethos was bereft of authentic witness to the proclamation of the Kingdom of God.<sup>22</sup> It was believed that most aspects associated with medieval practice were obstacles to coming to faith and had to be removed if the church was to reclaim its roots. Emphasis moved from the experiential in faith formation to the didactic which led to an explosion of catechisms and primers by the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century in “the hope of providing mores skillful or effective instruction through improved techniques of catechizing . . . - perhaps shorter answers or simpler words . . . or inserting short revisions tests from time to time”.<sup>23</sup>

After the Elizabethan Settlement and the development of balance of power amongst the dominant church parties (High Church, Broad and Evangelical), The Tractarians of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, felt a closer definition of catholic identity was necessary as the fervor of the evangelical revival was in decline and the spirit of the Anglican tradition lay fallow. The Oxford Movement leaders did not set out to refurbish but to reestablish the church as they understood it. “It was not enough simply to accept traditional doctrines as things always taught; rather their truth was to be felt, to be taken to the heart. . . On their lips the term catholic acquired a fresh almost revolutionary significance. The doctrine of apostolic succession reappeared as a principle to be striven for and with full recognition of its practical implications.”<sup>24</sup>

The condition of Anglicanism, in general, and the episcopate in particular, caused Newman much anxiety. The bishop for Newman was the “centre of unity” and the hander on of the faith, yet this visible ministry and hallmark of catholic identity had lost much of its luster, and this in turn affected the entire church. The Tractarians, like the Caroline Divines and some of the Reformers before them, made great appeals to the Patristic Church in reclaiming Anglican

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<sup>21</sup> Vincent Strudwick, **Is The Anglican Church Catholic?** *The Catholicity of Anglicanism* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1994) p.5

<sup>22</sup> Diarmuid. MacCulloch., **Thomas Cranmer**, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996) p.173-185

<sup>23</sup> Ian Green., **The Christian’s ABC: Catechisms and Catechizing in England c. 1530-1740.**, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p.75

<sup>24</sup> Bernard M.G. Reardon., **Religious Thought in the Victorian Age** (London: T&T Clark, 1971) p.33

identity as that which is authentically catholic. From that starting point, Anglicanism can only be called catholic “because it teaches fully and unfailingly all the doctrines which ought to be brought to men’s knowledge whether concerned with visible or invisible things, with the realities of heaven or the things of the earth.”<sup>25</sup> For Newman, and many other Oxford Reformers, the visible part expressed through the Church of England was so much in shadow that he found it difficult to believe it had company with the real thing—the mystical body.

“with the circumstance or condition of unity in those who receive them; the image of Christ and token of their acceptance being stamped upon them then, at that moment, when they are considered as one, so that henceforth the whole multitude, no longer viewed as mere individuals, become portions or members of the indivisible Body of Christ Mystical, so knit together in Him by Divine Grace, that all have what He has and each as what all have.”<sup>26</sup>

Such an observation put into motion a challenge to the Bishops of the church to reclaim the fullness of catholic identity, which had been eroding since the English Reformation. Thus the Oxford Tractarians reasserted the necessity of the apostolic paradigm for the teaching ministry and the over all work of the church to continue which when combined with the moral authority of Evangelicals such as William Wilberforce reclaimed a powerful image for Anglicanism which can best be described as “evangelical catholicism” which was and is at the heart of the Christian Church.<sup>27</sup>

This evangelical-catholic experience has always been a mark of Anglican Christendom and must be the hallmark in the future. It was the framework for the very missionary work to and from Great Britain in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries and no less should it be so for Anglican Communion today if it wishes to be a viable expression of the faith. The time has come for the Communion to recognize this as its charism, just as Rome and Constantinople have particular charisms that contribute to the character of evangelical-catholic witness in the world. In certain corners of the world, such as Africa, this charism is understood and embraced, while in the West, there is a willingness to shed the charism for a closer secular dialogue. Some might ask: are there only two categories? Well, they are the only categories that are part of the historic unfolding of the life of the church as put forward in the Great Commission in Matthew’s Gospel. They are categories that can be adapted from age to age, but whose principles and theological casings are

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<sup>25</sup> Philip Schaff., and Henry Wallace., **The Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, Volume 7** (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995) Saint Cyril of Jerusalem., *The Catechetical Instructions*, p.139-140

<sup>26</sup> Ian Kerr., **Newman: On Being A Christian.**, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press,1990) p.75

<sup>27</sup> Peter B. Nockles., **The Oxford Movement in Context.**, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,1994), Chap. .III

constant. This is an essential component to the notion of possessing a genuine identity. Without this identity there can be no vocation, and if we do not have a vocation, then we will not be about the work of forming disciples.

This struggle for identity is not new. In every age in the evolving story of Anglicanism there has been a desire to affirm a genuine identity. Augustine of Canterbury sought the development of a genuine identity, as did the Venerable Bede, Archbishop Stephen Langton, Henry VIII, Richard Hooker, John Jewel, Bishop William White, William Augustus Muhlenberg, William Reed Huntington, The Baltimore Declaration, the Common Cause Agreement and the Global South Primates Communiqué from Kigali. This identity of being evangelical and catholic is the essence of our heritage, which is why it has occupied the thinking of the church. However, because of factionalism and politics, this blended vision never quite captured the church's vision for itself. The posture of some church leaders, who call for a revisionist approach to being the church in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century so that the Anglicanism can be more relevant, misses the whole point about vocation. The Anglican expression of Christendom needs to engage with the identity that serves as its core value. If the Anglican tradition is going to be the church, it needs to be reminded constantly of how and why it came into being. The charism of being evangelical and catholic has been our identity since the dawn of Christendom. Christ is to be remembered by the breaking of the bread and the prayers. The church is sent to bring the Good News to the end of the earth and to bring all to Christ through Holy Baptism. If American Anglicanism fails to affirm these values that give flesh to the identity of being evangelical and catholic, it is doubtful that we will have much to say to the world that will be worth listening to.

Recovering Anglican identity through careful reflection on the past in light of the present is not an experience of theological nostalgia. Revisiting the myth, ethos and charism of being evangelical and catholic is what it means to be an Anglican who roots one's faith story upon a balance of Scripture, Tradition and Reason. How can a community of faith's witness be taken seriously by people when it is discovered that the community fails to allow the richness of its past to inform how it will address the spiritual challenges of its present and future? This reclaiming of the evangelical-catholic identity is not intended to create a new triumphalism or immovable dogmatism. However, it does allow Anglicanism to be truly part of the continuity and responsibility of the catholic faith. Such reclamation of our identity will only help renew Anglicanism, as it will have at its disposal a wealth of resources in addressing the issues of today. The crucial challenge in affirming an evangelical-catholic identity is "to recapture some sense of particularity as a community of memory and not merely as a custodian of generalized cultural

values. This will require, among other things, countering the secular drift that has had a disproportionate impact on its traditional constituency.”<sup>28</sup> This reclamation of identity will not sit well with Anglicans who believe that the identity and vocation of this tradition is to be the “roomiest house in all of Christendom.” Being open to all who wish to come is part of the catholic ethos but not without the caveat of embracing the story of the catholic faith. The liberal/progressive movement within Anglicanism finds making such a request of people untenable. Many in this camp in the West believe that Anglican identity needs to be revised not reclaimed. Revising the Anglican identity through enterprises such as the books of John Spong and the revising of sacramental and ecclesial theology does not offer any hope for an Anglican Mythic Consciousness being discovered in the West.”<sup>29</sup>

Such an approach makes it potentially meaningless to talk about making Christianity relevant to the modern world. This implies a theoretical universality to the modern world which is absent in reality. Every attempt to accommodate Christianity to the beliefs of one social grouping proves to make it irrelevant to another. The paradox underlying the entire liberal enterprise is that for everyone for whom the gospel is made relevant, there is someone else for whom it is made irrelevant.<sup>30</sup> The modern hermeneutic of suspicion towards that which is “*traditional*” needs to be redressed by the Communion Leaders intelligently and forcefully, for that which endures is authentic and values by the inheritors creates an ongoing sense of community. Commitment and faithfulness to one’s roots and identity does not suggest being irrelevant to the times. If one’s roots and identity are examined carefully and thoughtfully, they can provide resources for renewal.

Such a renewal can be offered in reclaiming the authentic identity of Anglicanism. The opportunity for renewal lies in the promise of being faithful to the Anglican Christian Tradition, while being ever mindful of pastoral demands in the modern world. These demands should be responded to through a creative integration of catholic order and evangelical zeal, and not in the effort to be all things to all people. This integration was readily evident in the early life of the church, as any careful reading of the Acts of the Apostles will indicate. This self-understanding grew throughout the Patristic Period. Dr. Alister McGrath encapsulates this evangelical-catholic

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<sup>28</sup> Wade Clark Roof and William McKinney., ***American Mainline Religion: Its Changing Shape and Future.*** (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987) p.241

<sup>29</sup> N.T. Wright, ***Who Was Jesus?***, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1993) p.90-93

<sup>30</sup> McGrath, ***The Renewal of Anglicanism***, p.103

identity through four characteristics that echo the notion of being a church that is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic/evangelical:

1. The church is a spiritual society
2. All Christians are made one in Christ
3. The church is the repository of true Christian teaching.
4. The church gathers the faithful throughout the world, together, in order, to enable them to grow in faith and holiness.<sup>31</sup>

The underpinnings of such a church can be titled as *evangelical catholic* in its identity and is noted as one where apologetics, evangelism and spirituality work in concert. As handers on of the faith, the faith community demonstrates and teaches that Christian discipleship is a feasible choice in the post-modern world if one is to have meaning and purpose. Evangelism offers individuals a way to come to make this choice and discover the meaning of grace in Christ Jesus, while spirituality provides individuals and communities with the resources to be nurtured and to develop fully in this life and gives a needed sense of continuity in an age of fragmentation. That is not to suggest that the church can offer a remedy to all societal ills, but in living in accord with the marks of being one, holy, catholic and apostolic (that is to say as an evangelical-catholic Christian) a new model of living can be offered. This vocation, that is alien to the culture, to possess the identity of an evangelical-catholic community, implies that those who belong will be aliens—albeit *resident aliens*. This vocation is a willingness to live a grand experiment of grace, which incarnates the gospel message of Christ as expressed within the context of an Anglican ethos that forms disciples so that the world can be reformed and renewed. Thus, once the identity is grasped, the vocation can and must be articulated.

### **VOCATION: ALL ARE CALLED, WHO WILL CHOOSE IT?**

The word vocation is a word applied to many different circumstances and contexts and in many respects has been removed from the sphere of the sacred. For many people in the culture the question of vocation raises images of that having to do with their job/employment. If one refers back to the roots of the word, there would be a discovery of a much broader meaning to the term. The English word is derived from the Latin verb, *VOCARE*, meaning “to call”. It is a verb transliterated from the Greek, *καλεο*, which means the same. In its evolution, the idea of

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<sup>31</sup> Alister McGrath, *Christian Theology*, (Oxford: Blackwells Publishers, 1994) p.406

vocation was associated with the commitments and focus of one's life. Vocation was directly related to our purpose, and not simply the purpose we designed for ourselves, but the purpose God created us to and for. When individuals were reconciled to their core identity (as Christians) this would color and affect what the vocation of their lives would be. The essence of vocation is not mystical or visionary, but rather about reflection and discernment, individually, as well as communally. "The more conscious we can become about our calling, the more we are able to consciously cooperate with God in his/her designs for us, the more we will be able to match our true vocation with our secular ones."<sup>32</sup> Are human beings left to their own imaginations and subjective wishes to come up with a vocation? This can only occur when individuals and religious communities separate vocation from identity and vocation from covenant. A vocation is derived from the depth of understanding of one's covenant which serves as the framework for the evolution of identity.

For Anglicans, the evolution of vocation is rooted in the covenant that is pledged to when the Sacrament of Holy Baptism is conferred. The Christian community has forged its identity as an evangelical-catholic fellowship based upon the foundational structure offered in the Baptismal Covenant. The evangelical-catholic identity is stirring because it flows from principles that are intended to transform individuals and the world. The Anglican solitary Maggie Ross writes that the Baptismal Covenant "commits us to the virginity of the single hearted, to be on fire with the love of God, encountered most potently in harrowed hell, to radiate the light of the consuming fires of love that transform even the fires of hell into the fiery dance of the life of God."<sup>33</sup> The vocation first and foremost of the baptismal covenant is to be on fire with the love of God. This vocation goes far beyond attending church; it requires an evangelical zeal for and about the scriptures and creeds, and a catholic vision whereby the sacraments play the music so that the dance of the life of God can be experienced. Such a passion is deeply rooted into the notion of a mythic consciousness, and demands far more of Anglican Christians than is presently expected as a result of being assimilated and not consumed by the embers of this rich identity and the flames of the magnificent covenant. Failure to encounter and appropriate this covenant as one's own and let the identity steer your vocation creates a context that encourages a "false compartmentalization in Christianity and denies the Eucharistic character of all life. People mistake mystique for mystery, self-image for self-respect, individualism for authenticity, dialectic

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<sup>32</sup> M. Scott Peck, **A World Waiting To Be Reborn**, (New York: Bantam Books, 1993) p.78

<sup>33</sup> Maggie Ross, **Pillars of Flame; Power, Priesthood and Spiritual Maturity** (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1988) p.xxv

for dialogue, grandiosity for grandeur, self reflection for the experience of God, gee-whiz for wonder, narrow mindedness for the narrow way, lust for sexuality, the world for creation, magic for miracle and religion for faith.”<sup>34</sup>

The challenge before the church is to rediscover its Christian vocation and thus revitalize its mission, demands that the church look honestly at the approach taken in years past. In the West, sadly the baptismal covenant has been seen as the church’s club charter, not as anything binding for a holy and communal life. Such an approach stands in the face of Tertullian’s suggestion that Christians are made not born. The American Catechism (like others in the Communion) echoes this concept on page 858 when it states that “baptism *MAKES* us members of Christ’s body.” The covenant states the vocation, the result of what we will be made into. However, this cannot occur simply by stating the right words and sprinkling the best water. It is a vocation resulting from a gift that demands a grateful response. This response is denoted with clarity in the covenant as it states what is believed through the framework of the Creed. This is followed by a firm acknowledgment that:

- ~ one’s trust is in God,
- ~ evil is rejected,
- ~ Christ is Lord,
- ~ human integrity and respect will be honored and upheld.

In short, human beings respond to God’s grace by giving their very selves in love, loyalty, devotion and obedience. Maggie Ross calls this response “*kenosis*, whereby we respond to the humility of Christ by allowing it to transform and change and dwell in us. This emptying out allows the consuming fire to burn from us the desire of status, self-aggrandizement, control and our compulsion to fix ourselves up.”<sup>35</sup> The humility of Christ and the generosity of God through the power of the Holy Spirit empowers us to live a particular way of life whereby we live as imperfect creatures who are now enabled to mirror the God of love and creation. The five baptismal promises make very specific how that reflection of God will be poured out into the world in the life of the baptized as they begin this life-long vocation. Like all vocations, it is both something that wells up from the heart of the human being and is brought to the human being <sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p.xxix

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p.117

<sup>36</sup> James W. Fowler, **Weaving The New Creation: Stages of Faith and the Public Church**, (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1991) p. 121

through the experience and insight of others. However, this vocation cannot be based solely upon the stirring of an individual heart, for these promises are those of a community. This community makes clear that identity and vocation belong not to an individual but to an entire community of faith. Thus the community must provide leadership in the participation and the practice of the Christian life, while also offering critical reflection upon this participation and practice in light of the Gospels, reason and tradition. This critical reflection will require the imparting of specific knowledge about the Christian story.

The vocation of the Anglican Christian appears to be a contradiction, as it is individual, as well as communal. Vocation involves a process of commitment, an ongoing discerning of one's gifts and giftedness in community, and of finding the means and setting in which those gifts, in all the dimensions of our living, can be placed at the disposal of the One who calls all into being." The author of the epistle to the Hebrews suggested that "*faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*" Thus, the vocation to journey in faith requires theological reflection so that the assurance and the conviction have a deeply rooted understanding in the heart and mind of the individual who is new to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic faith. This dialogue between the individual and the communal creates a dynamic tension in the life of the church and all must engage in this theological reflection. At times this tension can and does test the moorings of authority (which will be addressed in chapter six). Nonetheless, the idea of catechesis is foundational to the vocation of the Communion to be an authentic hander-on of the faith.

This vocation has a particular ancient gifts that Anglicanism must reclaim in its efforts to recover a mythic consciousness of Christian witness. The Catechism is such a gift that can offer a cognitive experience of developing an evangelical-catholic identity in the life of the person who feels called to be a Christian in this tradition. While the catechism has lost much of its appeal in the modern age, t if it is introduced with new theological casings highlighting the Anglican-Christian's articulation of the Good News, it can be a valuable tool in Anglican efforts to recover identity and vocation.

### **CATECHISMS: MORE THAN REMEMBERING**

While the church in the West has often stated through resolution that a catechetical imperative for all is a priority, the church in the West has often has failed to fully resonate what the early Christian community had as the benchmark for the nurturing of discipleship. The significance of the principles of formation must reflect the affective and the cognitive dimensions

so as to demonstrate to the unevangelized and unchurched that Anglicans are serious about faith formation in a time of spiritual uncertainty.

Some might suggest that catechisms are *passé*, something may have been useful in a previous day but not be today. Such a dismissal often stems from a lack of understanding about them. Catechism is a word which the ancient Greeks used in reference to the theatre and which means "to make resound like an echo". This word, which does not appear in the Old Testament, does have a heritage that is mindful of Hebrew roots as there is some usage of the Greek word "διδαχῆ" which is given the meaning of "transmitting the Word of God as a teaching of life". Thus, in Deuteronomy 4:10 ("Gather the people to me, that I may let them hear my words so that they may learn to fear me all the days that they live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children so" and in Deuteronomy 11:19-20: "And you shall teach them to your children, talking of them... And you shall write them upon the doorposts of your house".) we encounter some of the biblical foundations for catechesis. In the New Testament Gospels one could argue that the Gospels are the first great "Catechism" which was transmitted orally and eventually put to writing containing the essentials of all that Jesus "teaches" and "preaches" (Matthew 9:35; Mark 1:21; Luke 21:37). The Beatitudes certainly would qualify as classic catechetical teaching topic The spirit of this was certainly taken up by the nascent Church to indicate the primordial duty to make disciples (cf. Acts of the Apostles and the Pauline Letters). The proclamation of salvation was to be consolidated into the words and deeds of Christ, so as to provoke an "echo" in the mind and in the heart of the listeners, and transform their lives.

A "source book" of teaching evolved from Gospel preaching and teaching so that by the end of the first century, the "Didaché" or "Doctrine of the Apostles" was compiled.<sup>37</sup> It was a guide to instruct those who were preparing to be baptized as well as to inform about the nature of the life in the community. By the end of the first century the seed was sown for a structure to be put in place that offered the fundamental Christian truths, formulated in a clear way so that understanding, apprehension and application could be appropriated. As time went by, became the normal aid for this duty was called Catechism.

Effectively a catechism was intended to affect the Great Commission of the Church (Matthew 28:18-20). Coming to know Christ and the power of his resurrection mean one would come to know the mystery of living in his community, which found its greatest expression in the liturgical and ritual actions. This opportunity to journey with Christ and his Church gave birth today as the Rite of Christian Initiation where ritual action and cognitive Instruction was an

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<sup>37</sup> Stuart G. Hall., **Doctrine and Practice in the Early Church.**(Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmanns Publishing Co.,1991)p.29-31

integral part of the coming into the life of the church. This process became known as the Catechumenate, which was adaptation of the term used (catechumen) for the candidate seeking to be part of the body of Christ.<sup>38</sup> This is balanced process of ritual action and intense instruction for those seeking Baptism, Eucharist and Chrismation is readily evident in the Pre-Baptismal catechetical instructions offered by Saints Cyril, Augustine and John Chrysostom. Hippolytus of Rome.

Given the time and technology these the instructions may not have been printed for study by the candidates, they did offer a significant contribution to the Christian journey as they explained the core values of the catholic faith which were linked with rich liturgical experiences; as well as very specific demands and expectations to be admitted to the community. In ancient times and in the Middle Ages, to make good for the lack of manual copies, the system of "tablets" was used; on these "tablets" the truths of the faith and the prayers were inscribed and were put in a place in the house or Church where they could be easily seen, so that everybody could understand their content. In other times, they were "illustrated catechisms" which served not only the illiterate but also the whole community as didactic aids. The entirety of this journey formed a deep and abiding Christian mythic consciousness. However, once the RCIA fell into disuse this mythic consciousness was very difficult to recapture.

By the Fifth Century, St Augustine of Hippo at the request of a catechist writes Twenty Seven chapters in which he tries to help deepen the faith of those Christians who, though educated in profane knowledge, were "rude" in the religious one. This work is entitled **De Catechizandis Rudibus**.<sup>39</sup> He begins with the history of salvation which culminates in the charity brought by Jesus Christ, who through his Resurrection gives joy to the catechist and the one being catechized. After the church becomes aligned with the state Christendom was born and with that changes in how the people came to life in the Church. Slowly but surely the Rites of Initiation Disappear and new formats begin to emerge. In the Ninth century, Alcuin of York, the great promoter of the cultural Renaissance during the time of Charles the Great, is attributed the redaction of **Disputatio Puerorum Per Interrogationes et Responsiones** (an exposition for children in questions and answers). It includes sacred history and the doctrine on the Sacraments, the Creed and the Our Father. The title indicates already its method and is a forerunner of modern catechisms as the vernacular language was used for the catechesis.

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<sup>38</sup> William Harmless., **Augustine and the Catechumenate**, (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press/Pueblo Books,1995) p.24-25

<sup>39</sup> Joseph Christopher., (trans.) **St. Augustine The First Catechetical Instruction**, (New York :Newman Press, 1966)

The evolution of an Anglican catechism, like other medieval/reformed catechisms contained a number of different formularies. While much credit is given to the influence of the Continental Reformers on Anglican Catechisms, there is some evidence that some catechetical tools were available in parts of England. In the York there was used published what was known as a **Lay Folks Catechism**,<sup>40</sup> which included the Creed, the Sacraments, the two precepts of charity, the seven capital sins and the seven cardinal virtues. For the first time the name Catechism was explicitly used. It was published in two languages, Latin and English, for popular use. Already several other times catechetical works were written in the vernacular language for those people who did not normally use Latin.

On the eve of the Reformation, Martin Luther, in 1529, using the material of his catechetical sermons wrote his first catechism as a guide to those who would preach and teach the goals of his reform of his reforms. This was followed by one he authored for "children and simple people", which he even called **Enchiridion**.<sup>41</sup> The influence of these works were significant and probably felt no more significantly outside of Germany than by Thomas Cranmer. The works of Luther effected Cranmer so greatly that the very scope of what was being taught (i.e. Eucharistic Presence) in the new catechism of 1548 ran contrary to what the English Church had come to revere Church. This caused a less than favorable initial reception on the part of many in the church to what was thought to be an authentically English Catechism. There were also other reformers, such as John Calvin, who made use of this genre to teach people their new doctrines and whose influence would be felt catechetically. When the Reformation dust settled, most reformation traditions had some example of a catechism, as did the Roman Catholic Church in response. Irrespective of where one found one's self on the theological fault line, few could dispute the efficacy of these "books in the effective dispensation of religious information/propaganda at all levels. Lutherans, Calvinists, Presbyterians and Roman Catholics produced definitive catechisms intending to instruct members and offer a sense of identity and purpose amidst a pluralistic religious landscape. Each had distinct nuances relative to a reformed or catholic expression of faith; nonetheless the purpose was to offer clarity of understanding in the basic tenets of the Christian faith as understood in that religious tradition.

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<sup>40</sup> T.F. Simmons and H.E. Nolloth (ed) **The Lay Folks Catechism or The English and Latin Versions of Archbishop Thoresby's Instruction for the People**, (London : The Early English Texts Society, 1901) Series N. No. 118

<sup>41</sup> B.Lohse., **Martin Luther: An Introduction to His Life and Writings**, (Philadelphia: Fortress Books, 1986)

Ian Green suggests in his study on Post Reformation catechizing that there were three levels of catechesis: 1) Elementary 2) Intermediate 3) University. This mirrored many of Augustine's principles. "At its simplest level catechizing was a means of ensuring that all members of the church could say by heart a number of formulaic answers, usually including the Apostles Creed, the Lord's Prayer and Ten Commandments . . . which was the minimum knowledge for those who were going to receive the Lord's Supper, get married or act as god-parents."<sup>42</sup> The significance of the catechesis finds its basis in the efforts of St. Augustine's instructions as Augustine framed the basic format of catechism in offering an expository analysis of all aspects of the faith (i.e. the Creeds, sections of Sacred Scripture and various prayers. It was this particular style that influenced all printed catechisms and those in the Anglican tradition were no exception. The ritual actions of the catechumenate however, proved to be the missing component to effective formation.

The Anglican tradition was no exception and the use of a formal catechism officially promulgated is traced to 1549. While the Book of Common Prayer offered a framework for catechesis to occur in a liturgical context that was rarely the case. The origins the catechism was as part of the Order of Service in its appearance in the Book of Common Prayer, however it was functionally separated from the rites of initiation. Green notes that the catechism dominated the church early one was the "church catechism," which originally appeared in the 1549 *Book of Common Prayer*. This catechism featured thirteen questions and answers, and took up only seven pages in the Prayer Book. Its length was doubled in 1604, when revisers added a section on the sacraments. Because this catechism was printed in not only the *Book of Common Prayer*, but two other best-selling works, *The ABC with the catechisme*, and *The primer and catechisme*, it has claim to being one of the most pervasive works of the era. As Green suggests, "it is likely that the first text on which the majority of people who learnt to read practiced their new skills was the catechism of 1549".<sup>43</sup>

Dean Alexander Nowell of Saint Paul's London in his catechism of 1562 e writes that the catechism was intended "for the bringing up of the youth in godliness."<sup>44</sup> The catechism once extracted from the role of Christian Formation became a tool for social order and decency under the Crown and Almighty God. Catechisms expanded their scope beyond the Apostles Creed, Ten

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<sup>42</sup> Ian Green., *The Christian's ABC*., p.93-94

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p.66

<sup>44</sup> Alexander Nowell, *A Catechism* ( Cambridge: The Parker Society Series, 1840) p.143

Commandments and Lord's Prayer to include sacraments, scripture, church identity and social relations. While some of the topics contained in the catechism have been developed and expanded, the central tenet of the catechism has not. The continued focus of the catechism is to encourage members of the church to grow in a personal understanding of the faith that results in the living of a godly life through both corporate and individual's means. By the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the catechism was seen as a tool to be used with the young and the ignorant. The only relevance it had to formation was the requirement of knowing the catechism as a test to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, as stated in the Canons of the Church of England in 1604:

*“Every minister that hath cure and charge of souls, for the better accomplishing of the orders prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer concerning confirmation, shall take such especial care as that none may be presented to the bishop for him to lay his hands upon, but such as can render an account of their faith according to the Catechism.” (CANON LXI)*<sup>45</sup>

While the formulae in the catechisms that evolved after the reformation were helpful in the task of memorization, they did not form individuals. This genre of simple question and answer failed to present the Christian message in such a manner that hearts and souls were stirred up. If one reads the catechisms of the past, or even the Outline of Faith as presented in the present Book of Common Prayer, one would be hard pressed to suggest that the ordinary believer or inquirer comprehends with heart, mind and soul the catholic faith that this church says it professes. How can the identity and vocation of the church catholic be appreciated and articulated if holistic and organic opportunities in formation are not afforded to seeker and believers alike? The patterns of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Century as contained in the Books of Common Prayer have been the models we have utilized with very little success. The problem would not be style or content but context. The part of focus and meaning, the community of faith was excluded in the formation process and the ritual actions of the church were not seen as part of the process but as a reward for successfully navigating your way.

#### **A GLOBAL SOUTH CATECHISM: AN ANCIENT/FUTURE POSSIBILITY.**

The time has come for a catechism that can work in concert with the, preaching, Anglican Liturgical Rites and a process of initiation can affirm a faith that is evangelical and catholic in scope and experience. The ancient model of the catechism, employed so brilliantly by St. Cyril of Jerusalem, used a three-fold structure of Creed, Ten Commandments and Lord's Prayer that

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<sup>45</sup> Edward Cardwell., **Canons of 1604** (London : Synodalia, 1842) vol. 1, p.281

served as a springboard for discourse and instruction on the catholic faith. I propose that, as Anglicans, a three-fold structure of the catechism also be employed; mirroring the depth and scope of St. Cyril, but using the categories of Scripture, Reason and Tradition as the context whereby all questions and reflections can be addressed. This “*three-fold cord not easily broken*” has not been easily identifiable. It has been suggested that if anyone wants to know what Anglicans believe, all one needs to do is turn to the Book of Common Prayer and see these three elements interplay with one another, as best evidenced in worship. In a culture that is attuned to the concepts of Scripture, Reason and Tradition as part of an ongoing story with distinctive signs and symbols that give meaning and purpose to those who believe, one will find a rich resource of who Anglican-Christians are. However, that is not the world we live in. These terms are without direct meaning to the vocation of church. When seekers open up the Book of Common Prayer today they are in need a document that inspires hearts and imaginations to participate in a living faith that has a particular identity and vocation; one that lays claim to the past so it can see its future. However, without adequate formation, that truth is lost.

When a commitment to authentic formation is undertaken the concepts of Scripture, Reason and Tradition as part of an ongoing story that has distinctive signs and symbols will give meaning and purpose to those who are seeking to believe. When that occurs people will make a significant discovery and learn what a rich resource of what Anglican Christianity is. Thus the pressing task is to create opportunities and use resources that will allow people to make this discovery and for those who already belong to make a re-discovery. Otherwise Anglicanism will be left with terms and ceremonies that are without direct meaning to the lives of people. Anglicanism is in need of a resource that inspires hearts and imaginations to participate in a living faith that has a particular identity and vocation. Certainly the success of the ALPHA Program at Holy Trinity Church in Brompton, England illustrates this.

The categories of Scripture, Reason, Tradition, Order and Vision used in this annotated catechism creates a context for exploring the deep questions, which mirror the many questions that are shared by those who desire to be marked with the sign of faith. . In studying the Catechism and participating in a weekly formation experience, Anglican Christians and those who are curious about the same can understand and experience the church as a continuous tradition that is one, holy, catholic and apostolic with a distinctive identity that is both evangelical and catholic. While Anglicanism’s claim to ambiguity and comprehensiveness has received much applause in the West the fact is that it does not adequately reflect the identity and vocation that has been handed on since the Patristic Church. A Global South Catechism seeks to

reclaim that gift for future generations in a way that is accessible to them and yet challenges them at the same time. In this reconstituting of catechism categories, a synthesis of what is essential to being an Anglican-Christian should emerge. The questions of Scripture introduce one to the story, Tradition demonstrates how that story continues and Reason offers insight as to how we live into this faith experience. If SCRIPTURE is to be a tool to rouse faith, TRADITION a way to experience that faith through Christian living and worship and REASON the examination and integration of our beliefs, then such a document is needed if the church is going to change to meet the formation needs of a Post-Christian Society. Through such an approach, Anglicanism can have the identity it needs and the fluidness it enjoys, once that identity has been apprehended.

The format is designed to provide a complete presentation of the story of faith that "hands on" fundamental theological truths and the possibility of practical spiritual living of these ageless truths within a post-modern context. An annotated catechism does not offer absolute answers to the great questions of life and faith. It does offer a way to understand those questions in the context of how the mystery can be lived, as opposed to attacking life as a series of problems to be solved. Given this scope, the catechist and the catechumen can begin with a heading or a subtopic that is of concern to them and go to other areas from there. The design of this project is create a well researched resource intended to meet the present demand for catechetical formation resources in the life of the Anglican Communion; utilizing a discussion or didactic model in concert with the Rites.

**Q: Why a catechism?**

A: The "catechism is primarily intended for use by parish priests, deacons and lay catechists to give an outline for instruction. It is a commentary on the creeds, but is not meant to be a complete statement of belief and practice; rather it is a point of departure for the teacher, and it is cast in the traditional questions and answer form for ease of reference. The second use of the catechism is to provide a clear summary of the Church's teaching for an inquiring person.

The sharing and handing on of the faith is a vocation that all baptized Christian have a special claim to by virtue of the promises made at baptism. Increasingly, are not certain what they are supposed to hand on and those who are curious about our Anglican tradition are not sure what we stand for. While such admission is painful and may contribute to questions about the clarity of Anglican identity; it is also an opportunity to transform what some believe is this catechetical crisis into a catechetical renaissance.

It seems that the advent of a crisis has many in a panic seeking to emulate educational and spiritual models that have been successful for other religious traditions. Anglicans have models that have worked and can continue to work providing those of us in leadership can present

them in new and accessible casings. One of the tools to enrich the life of the faith community has been the catechism. One cannot question that historically catechisms have been a useful tools in aiding people on the journey of faith. This is true in a number of religious traditions and no less so in the Anglican ethos.

**Q: What exactly is a "catechism?"**

A: The word catechism comes from the Greek word *κατηχεω*, which means to hear or instruct. Thus, in the early church, catechumens were individuals who would receive instruction for the Rite of Christian Initiation and the catechism was the tool of oral instruction on the foundations of the Christian faith. Eventually this term was used to describe a book of instructions that began to appear in the Middle Ages.

As the topics the catechism addresses continues to expand, the central principle of the catechism has not. The continued focus of the catechism is to encourage members of the church to grow in a personal understanding of the faith that results in the living of a Godly life through both corporate and individual's means. In short it is to be an accessible tool in the work of Christian Formation.

**Q: Why an Global South catechism**

A: The Question and Answer method as found in most Books of Common Prayer was a popular pedagogical tool stemming from the Socratic method of learning. As a formation resource this method is very helpful in absorbing information for one's own personal understanding. It also states very clearly the basic tenets as they have been traditionally held. However, given the world we live in, where questions beget more questions and set answers are received with some suspicion. An annotated approach to a catechism, can make accessible for catechist and catechumen alike, material that can facilitate deeper discussion and offer a developmental flow to the process of a faith formation in accord with the long standing teaching of the church. In countless, parishes large and small, priest and Christian education commissions struggle to find a cohesive presentation that offers the ongoing teaching of the church, with thoughtful articles and practical exercises that can illumine the mind and soul of those involved in the catechetical process.

While the catechism offers an outline for instruction, an annotated catechism from the Global South is an attempt to fill in the outline by arranging in a thoughtful way the Anglican celebration of the catholic faith. Anglicanism is not as nebulous and as vague as many perceive it to be. If those who are seekers can be exposed to an in depth examination of the history and evolution of Anglicanism since the third century; they would discover that there is a definite depth, beauty and conviction to this ongoing experience of the catholic faith.

A Global South Catechism is designed provide for a complete presentation of the story of faith that "hands on" fundamental theological truths and the possibility of practical spiritual living of these ageless truths with the post-modern context. This work does not offer absolute answer to the great questions of life and faith. It does offer a way to understand those questions in the context of how the mystery can be lived as opposed to trying to attack life as a series of problems

to be solved! The future of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century catechism should be based in the three traditional thematic of Anglican identity, that is oft termed the "three-legged stool". These are: Scripture, Reason and Tradition. As the Anglican foundations have not changed; how they may be lived out in a dynamic way does and will. The Global South catechism is an invitation to shape that dynamism of lives in such a way that can offer people direction and meaning and serves as an excellent complement to the liturgical Rites of the church and will assist in the reclamation of an Anglican Christian mythic consciousness as had occurred during the great catechetical periods in the Church.