

Anglicanism 101

What it means to be
Anglican/Episcopalian

St. John in the Wilderness Episcopal Church

Fall, 2007

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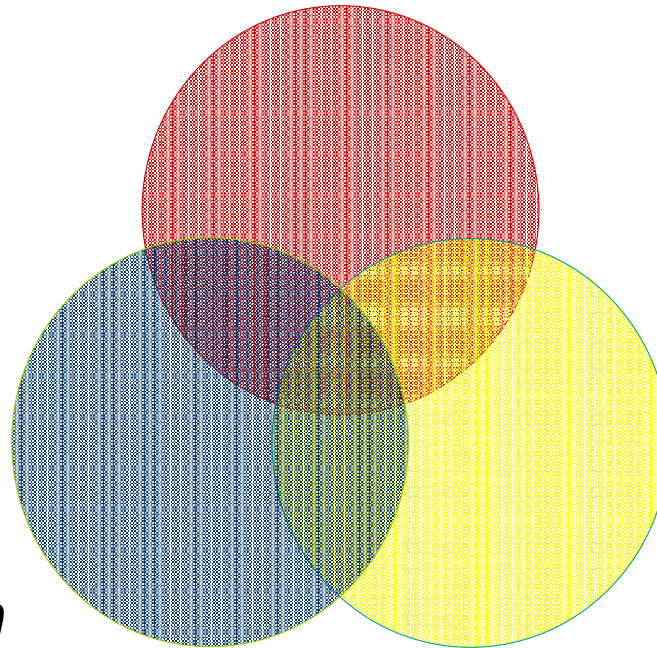
- Identity
- Authority
- English Reformation
- Book of Common Prayer
- A New American Church
- Emphases:
 - Community
 - Pastoral/Spiritual Care
 - Mission/Work of the Church

Week 2

Authority in the Anglican Communion

Anglican Authority: “Three-Legged Stool”

1. Scripture



2. Tradition

3. Reason

Some add *Experience*
All interacting

Scripture

- Record of God's revelation to humanity
- Measure of all else: source, norm
- Nothing taught contrary to Scripture
 - Anglican: tempered by reason
 - Differs from biblical fundamentalism
 - Belief that Bible's words are exact, written by God
- Anglican position:
 - Formal : Scripture one source among several
 - Guide to life, not lawbook
 - In practice: more weight given to Scripture

Scriptural Focus

- ❑ Outlined in the BCP
- ❑ Scripture designed to be read as a whole – no “pick and choose”
- ❑ Sunday Lectionary
 - Three year cycle – all Gospels
 - ❑ Many additional OT and NT readings
- ❑ Daily Office Lectionary
 - Two-year cycle – all readings

Scriptural Interpretation: Options

1. Needs no interpretation – speaks for itself
2. Needs interpretation – 1 person or group can do it for all others
3. Should be interpreted widely in context of community

Anglican position – middle way

- Many voices
- Many experiences
- Many paths to God

Tradition

- ❑ Collective experience, not necessarily individual
- ❑ Additions to Scripture
- ❑ Judeo-Christian roots
- ❑ Universal: catholic (small "c")
- ❑ Early church traditions recovered
- ❑ Pastoral/relational emphasis
- ❑ Belief that Spirit is active in full church councils
- ❑ Tension between freedom and tyranny
 - Often described as vagueness, ambiguity

Incarnation

- God among us, transforming ourselves and the world
- Sacraments, liturgy follow from Incarnation
- Sacraments are central to Christian life
 - Make present the passion of Christ
 - Baptism: “buried with Christ in his death”
 - **Full** initiation into community of Christ
 - All are ministers, not just the ordained
 - Eucharist: makes present the sacrifice of Christ on behalf of all people
 - Participants share in effect of Christ’s sacrifice

Liturgy

Greek: “work of the people”

- The way we celebrate the sacraments
 - Weekly remembrance of Christ’s sacrifice
- Has “power to bring us...to where we can hear God at the depth of our being” (Holmes)
- Anglican emphases:
 - Ritual
 - Symbolism
 - Beauty
 - Dignity
 - Participation of the people

Reason

“Not simply human but reflecting the mind of God” – Urban Holmes

- Natural theology – learning about God through observation of the natural world
 - God still present and active in Creation
 - We collaborate with God and each other to further Creation
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