

**Christian
Spirituality 5.
An Introduction to
Anglican
Spirituality**

Introduction

What is Christian Spirituality?

Christianity Spirituality is the *quest* for a *fulfilled* and *authentic* life, that involves

- taking the beliefs and values of Christianity
- and weaving them into the fabric of our lives
- so that they "animate," provide the "breath" and "spirit" and "fire" for our lives

The Anglican Spirit

“The Anglican spirit was still, as it had always been, one which refused to separate

- the sacred from the secular,**
- the head from the heart,**
- the individual from the community,**
- the Protestant from the Catholic,**
- the word from the sacrament.”**

Gordon Mursell

The Anglican Spirit

Anglican Spirituality has been described as *Incarnational* because of its emphasis on:

- the goodness of material world and sensuality (God's creation)
- a sacramental view of the material world as doorway to the divine
- a tendency at times towards the Orthodox doctrine of *theosis* or *deification* (God became human so that humans might become divine), emphasizing:
 - our participation in the life of God
 - our ultimate goal of communion with God

The Anglican Spirit

**“Teach me, my God and King, in all things
thee to see”**

- George Herbert, Anglican poet

**“Earth’s crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
But only he who sees takes off his shoes,
The rest sit round and plunk blackberries.”**

- Elizabeth Barrett Browning

**“To me, the meanest flower that blows can
give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for
tears.”**

- William Wordsworth

16th Century

Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556)

One of the principal figures in the English reformation

Ordained a priest 1523

Supported Henry VIII attempt to get permission to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon

1533: named Archbishop of Canterbury; immediately annulled the marriage to Catherine and validated Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn

16th Century

Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556)

Later invalidated marriages to Anne and to Anne of Cleves

After the death of King Edward VI, Catholic Mary I took the throne (daughter of Catherine of Aragon); Cranmer was burned at the stake

Put together the first two **Book of Common Prayer**, 1549, 1552

16th Century

The Book of Common Prayer

Meant to be not just a service book but a guide for all aspects Christian living

“To the seventeenth-century layman the Prayer Book was not a shiny volume to be borrowed from the shelf on entering the church and carefully replaced on leaving. It was a beloved and battered personal possession, a lifelong companion and guide, to be carried from church to kitchen, to living room, to bedside table.”

- Martin Thornton

16th Century

Significance of Prayer Book for Spirituality

1. A religion for all:

The Curate that ministereth in every Parish-Church or Chapel, being at home, and not being otherwise reasonably hindered, shall say [Morning and Evening Prayer] in the Parish-Church or Chapel where he ministereth, and shall cause a Bell to be tolled thereunto a convenient time before he begin, that the people may come to hear God's Word, and to pray with him.

16th Century

Significance of Prayer Book for Spirituality

1. A religion for all (continued)

- The 7-fold monastic rhythms of prayer reduced to 2 (Matins and Evensong) recited by the people *in their own language*

2. A spirituality for everyday life

- prayers and thanksgivings covered everyday needs (rain, good harvest, peace)

16th Century

Significance of Prayer Book for Spirituality

3. A spirituality for the English

- made use of the rhythm and richness of the English language

“The splendid language of religious majesty and the melodious style in which these formulas were expressed made them a means of education by worship of which no Church, Catholic or Protestant, has the equivalent today.”

16th Century

Significance of Prayer Book for Spirituality

4. A sense of the church as a holy place

If we lack Jesus Christ, that is to say, the saviour of our souls and bodies, we shall not find him in the market-place, or in the guildhall, much less in the ale-house or tavern, amongst good fellows (as they call them), so soon as we shall find him in the temple, the Lord's house, amongst the teachers and preachers of his word, where indeed he is to be found.

16th Century

Other Important 16th Century Anglicans

Richard Hooker (1553-1600)

- Often considered the “true father” of Anglicanism
- wrote *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1593)
- theology rooted in the 3-legged stool of scripture, tradition, and human reason
- it is through our participation in the life of Christ that we experience forgiveness and salvation

16th Century

Other Important 16th Century Anglicans

Richard Hooker (1553-1600)

- Christ is really present not only in the Eucharist, but in those who receive the Eucharist
- church more than an invisible company of the elect, but visible institution composed of those with the living Christ in their midst meant to sanctify the world

16th Century

Other Important 16th Century Anglicans

Lancelot Andrewes (1556-1626)

- “spiritual master” of Anglicanism
- Bishop of Chichester, Ely, Winchester
- Court preacher to James I
- one of the principal translators of the King James Bible
- wrote *Preces Privatae* (Private Devotions), a collection of personal prayers and devotions compiled during his life; never intended for publication

17th Century

time of radical change that saw:

- the overthrow of the monarchy with the beheading of Charles I (1625-49),
- the Commonwealth of Oliver Cromwell,
- the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 after Cromwell's death in 1658

two forces on the young English church:

- Calvinist Reformed tradition (God's absolute control over all)
- more Catholic tradition associated with a Dutchman Arminius

17th Century

The Five “Caroline Divines”

The Five “Caroline Divines” or the
“metaphysical” or mystical poets

- 1. John Donne (1572-1631)
- 2. George Herbert (1593-1633)
- 3. Henry Vaughan (1622-1695)
- 4. Thomas Traherne (1637-1674)
- 5. Richard Crashaw (1613-1649)

17th Century

The Five “Caroline Divines”

John Donne (1572-1631)

- Most outstanding of the metaphysical poets
- Famous for his spellbinding sermons
- He secretly married Anne More in 1601, so angering her father that he was disinherited and briefly imprisoned
 - “John Donne, Anne Donne, Undone.”
- Ordained Anglican priest 1615
- Chaplain to King James I 1621 and dean of St. Paul’s Cathedral
- Left his death bed for his last sermon “Death’s Duel, ” and then posed in his funeral shroud (died one month later)

17th Century

The Five “Caroline Divines”

John Donne (1572-1631)

- Wrote *Holy Sonnets*, Mediations, including
“No man is an island”

On the intensity of his love and longing for
God:

**Batter my heart, three person'd God
For you as yet but knock, breathe, shine
and seek to mend;
That I may rise and stand, o'er throw me,
and bend
Your force to break, blow, burn, and make
me new”**

17th Century

The Five “Caroline Divines”

John Donne (1572-1631)

Meditation:

The church is Catholic, universal, so are all her actions; all that she does belongs to all. When she baptizes a child, that action concerns me; for that child is thereby connected to that head which is my head too, and ingrafted into that body whereof I am a member. And when she buries a man, that action concerns me: all mankind is of one author, and is one volume; when one man dies, one chapter is not torn out of the book, but translated into a better language: and every chapter must be so translated; God employs several translators; some pieces are translated by age, some by sickness, some by war, some by justice; but God's hand is in every translation, and his hand

shall bind up all our scattered leaves again, for that library when every book shall lie open to one another... No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

17th Century

The Five “Caroline Divines”

George Herbert (1593-1633)

- Ordained a priest in 1630
- Sent manuscript of poems (*The Temple*, 1633) on his deathbed to be published if they might do good to “any dejected poor soul.”
- Five poems set to music by Ralph Vaughn-Williams, “Five Mystical Songs”, 1911

17th Century

The Cambridge Platonists

“The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord”

(Proverbs 20:27)

“lighted *by* God and lighting us *to* God”

(Whichcote)

- sought to restore Christianity to “its old loving nurse the Platonick philosophy”
- human spirit (the “candle”) was part of divine reason, a spiritual faculty

17th Century

The Cambridge Platonists

- espoused theology *deification* or *theosis* (A fundamental Orthodox belief: God became human so that humans might become divine)
- deification in this life “in a sober sense” is “for a Christian to live wholly to God, to live the life of God, having his own life hidden with Christ in God” (John Smith)
 - used deification in an ethical sense: we should love as God loves, be merciful as God is merciful
- whole of human life should be prayer, for communion with God is our goal

17th Century

The Cambridge Platonists

- creation and Scripture the two books of the works of God

“Thus may a good man walk up and down the World as in a Garden of Spices, and suck a Divine sweetness out of every flower. There is a twofold meaning in every creature as the Jews speak of their law, a Literal and a Mistical and the one is but the ground of the other.”

- John Smith

17th Century

The Cambridge Platonists

Prominent Cambridge Platonist:

- Ralph Cudworth (1617-1688)
 - English Philosopher
 - Master of Christ College,
Cambridge 1654 until his death
- Benjamin Whichcote (1609-1683)
- Henry More (1618-1651)

17th Century

The Moralists

The Whole Duty of Man (anonymous), 1657

**“Fear God and keep his
commandments, for this is the whole
duty of man”**

(Ecclesiastes 12:13)

- began a “moralistic school” in Anglican spirituality that was to last for more than a century
- encouraged “a godly, righteous and sober life,”
- condemned drunkenness and vice
- encouraged contemplating how our daily sins daily crucify Jesus afresh on the cross

17th Century

Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667)

Educated at Cambridge and Oxford

Serves various parishes, and then became chaplain to Charles I

After Cromwell took power, became private chaplain to Early of Carbery in Wales

After the restoration, became Bishop of Down, Connor and Dromore in Ireland, and vice-chancellor Trinity College, Dublin

Mainly a moralist

Wrote two devotional works:

- *Rules and Exercises of Holy Living* (1650)
- *Rules and Exercise of Holy Dying* (1651)

17th Century

Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667)

We must turn “our natures into grace.”

Through the Principles of Holy Living:

- 1. **Care of our time.** Religious obligations must be first. At the end of each day, we must scrutinize what we have accomplished
- 2. **Purity of Intention.** We must do all for the glory of God
- 3. **Practice the Presence of God**

17th Century

Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667)

“God is wholly in every place, included in no place; not bound with cords except those of love... we may imagine God to be as the air and the sea, and we all enclosed in his circle, wrapped up in the lap of his infinite nature; or as infants in the wombs of their pregnant mothers: and we can no more be removed from the presence of God, than from our own being.”

18th Century

faced multiple challenges to faith:

- questioning of religion from scientists, philosophers
- increasing industrialization, urbanization
- heyday of the English Dissent (John Wesley, Isaac Watts)

18th Century

William Law (1686-1761)

Was a Nonjuror (an Anglican who believed the Stuarts were rightful king and who could not swear allegiance to the reigning Hanoverian king). Thus barred from university or clergy position

Wrote *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* (1729)

- Christianity life should be a life of devotion and complete dedication to God. There is no room for compromise
- work enormously popular in his day

18th – 19th Century

The Evangelicals

Characteristics:

- centrality of the word
- necessity of conversion through inward change
- moral responsibility
- daily prayer (“the daily portion”)
- world mission from British imperial base
- philanthropy and social reform
- suspicion of Roman Catholics

18th – 19th Century

The Evangelicals

Important Evangelicals:

- Charles Simeon (1759-1836)
- William Cowper (1731-1800)
- John Newton (1725-1807)

18th – 19th Century

The Evangelicals

John Newton (1725-1807)

- Was a merchant sailor, slave trader
- Converted to Anglicanism
- Ordained 1764
- 1779: became parish priest of a church in London
- strong advocate for the abolition slave trade
- wrote many hymns (including “Amazing Grace”)

18th – 19th Century

The Evangelicals

William Cowper (1731-1800)

- Began life as a lawyer but spent most of his time writing poetry
- Sickly most of his life, subject to bouts of insanity and acute depression in which he often became convinced he was damned
- His hymns and poems reflect evangelical faith that God “was in control”

**Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his Grace;
Behind a frowning Providence,
He hides a Smiling face.**
(‘Light Shining Out of Darkness’)

18th – 19th Century

The Evangelicals

Charles Simeon (1759-1836)

- Vicar of Holy Trinity, Cambridge most of his adult life
- Sermons attracted students at University
- Founded the Church Missionary Society
1799

“The Bible first, the Prayer book second and all other books in subordination to both.”

19th Century

The Oxford Movement

Sought to reassure and recover the catholic heritage of the English church

Became known as Anglo-Catholics or Tractarians (from their writings called: *Tracts for the Times*)

19th Century

The Oxford Movement

Central principles:

- Reverence for the ancient church and writings of the church fathers
- Emphasis on the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist
- High regard for the visible church (as opposed to the Evangelicals emphasis on an individual's relationship with God)
- High regard for visible part of devotion which acts insensibly on the mind
- Necessity of continued repentance of past sins

19th Century

The Oxford Movement

- Stressed union with God, increased whenever we pray to God
- Prayer is calling God into himself, for God dwells in us through our sharing the Eucharist. It is entering:
into the light of Eternal Brightness, to be kindled with the glow of everlasting Love, to enter, a bidden guest, into the unseen glory of the Divine Presence, and there, face to Face, to ask him who is more ready to give than we to ask. (Pusey)

19th Century

The Oxford Movement

- Prayer includes praise, adoration, and delighting in the presence of God:

“When we seek the company of our friends, we do not seek it simply with the view of getting something from them; it is a pleasure to be with them, to be talking to them at all, or about anything... So it is with the soul, when dealing with the Friend of friends - with God” (Pusey)

19th Century

The Oxford Movement

Lead to revival of religious communities

For men: included

- Society of St. John the Evangelist (“The Cowley Fathers”)
- Community of the Resurrection
- Society of the Sacred Mission

For women: included

- The Sisterhood of the Holy Cross, 1845

Also was a powerful stimulus to new church building

19th Century

The Oxford Movement

Important Figures:

- John Keble (1792-1866)
 - Professor of Poetry Oxford University
- John Henry Newman (1801-1890)
 - Resigned from University Church in Oxford 1843; converted to Roman Catholicism (later becoming a cardinal)
- Edward Pusey (1800-1882)

20th Century

One important part of 20th century Anglican spirituality has been an increasing interest in the English Mystics of the 14th century (Richard Rolle, anonymous author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, Walter Hilton, Julian of Norwich, Margery Kempe), seen in the writings of:

- T.S. Eliot
- Evelyn Underhill (1875-1941)
- W.R. Inge (1860-1954)

References

Christian Spirituality: Post-Reformation and Modern (World Spirituality: An Encyclopedic History of the Religious Quest, Vol. 18). Edited by Louis Dupre, Don E. Sailer, John Meyendorff (Editor). Crossroad/Herder & Herder, 1991. ISBN: 0824511441 (Chapter 9: Anglican Spirituality, by Gordon S. Wakefield)

The Story of Christian Spirituality: Two Thousand Years, from East to West. Edited by Gordon Mursell. Fortress Press, 2001. ISBN: 0800632893. (Chapter 8: The Anglican Spirit, by Gordon Mursell)

Christian Spirituality: An Introduction to the Heritage. Charles J. Healey, Alba House, 1999. ISBN: 0818908203 (Chapter 10: English Spirituality)