

## Adult Education Fall 2017 – Anglicanism 101

### Class 5: What do Anglicans Believe and How do they Act? [Frameworks]

#### I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Prioritize Worship over Doctrine:** Anglicanism has historically emphasized *expressions* of religion (i.e. liturgical worship, moral behavior) over *doctrinal affirmations*.
- B. Theology—Practical/Pragmatic over Systematic:** Anglicanism has appropriated, transformed, and reformed the theology of the historic church, but reached no single confessional standard or systematic theology. Theology is more practical and pragmatic than speculative or binding.
- C. Ethics:** Anglican approach is multi-faceted. Sometimes this has led to confusion from ambiguity – even at the basic level of whether to emphasize ethical behavior/action or ethical character formation. Historically, Anglicans have been tempted towards being more moralistic than virtue-centered, and even semi-Pelagian (emphasizing the importance of good works and a positive view of humanity). Considering all this...
- D. Where do Anglicans go build an ethical framework?** Scripture, early church, tradition, liturgy, philosophy, human experience, reason, culture, books/theologians?

#### II. ANGLICAN THEOLOGY—WHAT ANGLICANS BELIEVE

##### A. Sources

1. **The Bible:** all true doctrine comes from scripture.
2. **The Early Church/Tradition:** Ancient church fathers and councils, summarized by Creeds (Apostles', Nicene, Athanasian).
3. **The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion:** Summarize biblical faith and provide doctrinal norms. **History:** 10 Articles (1536), 42 Articles (1553), 39 Articles (1571)
4. **Book of Common Prayer:** Addresses the Trinity, God's Word, Hell, Resurrection, the Holy Spirit, Sufficiency of Scripture for Salvation

##### B. Frameworks of Understanding:

1. **Beginning to End:** What is the *telos*/end that we are aiming towards?
  - a. **Christian narrative: Creation-Fall-Redemption-Consummation/Restoration:** Historical view (time/space), from Eden to a City, from Israel to the church, now but not yet until the "end")
    - i. **Creeds:** See Part II in ACNA's *To Be a Christian: An Anglican Catechism*.
    - ii. **The Lord's Prayer:** See Part III in ACNA's *To Be a Christian: An Anglican Catechism*.
  - b. **Compare to Greek Philosophy (emanation and return):** one-spirit-rational-material→(return to one)
2. **Universal to Particular: Creation-Kingdom-Church-Anglicanism-self/selves**

### III. ANGLICAN ETHICS—THE PRIORITY OF PRACTICE

#### A. What is ethics? How do we define define/explain ethics?

1. Discerning what is right and good (here and now, but informed by past and future).
2. **What is wrong with the world? How is it made right?** (primarily a moral perspective)
3. **Character or action?**
4. **Architectural analogy:** Building in disrepair (historic preservation/renovation/ adaptive reuse?)

#### B. Sources, Ends, and Means

1. **Sources:** *What is good and how do we know this? What is love and how do we know this?*
  - a. **Revelation: Special** (God's Word) and **General** (natural order, reason)
  - b. **Church/Tradition:** Worship, prayer, collective reasoning
  - c. **Experience:** Spiritual formation, personal history, subjective reality, culture
2. **Ends:** *Why be good/do good? Why be loving/act in love? Why be obedient/act in obedience? Self, Other, God/God's Kingdom, What God is doing in the world/Society/Church*
3. **Means:** How do we (a) do/be good, (b) cultivate the good? (c) act rightly?
  - a. **Being/Character** (virtue, habits, reason, conscience, will, love/affections, education/intellect)
    - i. **Virtues:** disposition of the will to choose a good end/means to a good end
    - ii. **Cardinal:** justice, temperance, fortitude, prudence
    - iii. **Theological:** faith, hope, love
  - b. **Doing/Actions:** Deeds, skills, practices, duty, casuistry
  - c. *Question: What is the role of conversion? Formation (spiritual/moral)? What about examples (Jesus, apostles, saints)?*

#### C. Ethical Issues: Church and state, social ethics and justice, economics (systems, wealth, poverty, business practices), social order (hierarchy, class, privilege, power, equality, community and diversity), culture (unity and diversity, inculturation), Kingdom of God, war and peace, liberation (colonialism, post-colonialism), sexual ethics (polygamy, same sex orientation/practice, marriage, divorce), environment, etc.

#### D. Ethical Approaches:

1. **Teleological (Aristotle):** End or purpose oriented; i.e. for a Christian this might be a vision of shalom/flourishing, as in the Is. 25 or Rev. 20 vision of the Kingdom of God)
2. **Casuistic (Aquinas):** Situation, case, or act oriented
3. **Virtue (Aristotle):** Virtue or character oriented
4. **Deontological (Kant):** Act or duty oriented
5. **Consequential (Bentham/Mill):** Effect or result oriented
6. **Subjectivist/relativist ("postmodern"):** Contextually oriented

***Almighty and everlasting God, increase in us the gifts of faith, hope, and charity; and, that we may obtain what you promise, make us love what you command; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.***