

FOR INFORMATION ONLY - NOT FOR CIRCULATION – YOU MAY NOT QUOTE OR
PUBLISH WITHOUT THE AUTHOR’S WRITTEN APPROVAL

Doctrine in the Episcopal Church: The Christological Center

[A paper by the Very Rev’d William H. Petersen, Provost and Professor of Ecclesiastical & Ecumenical History, Bexley Hall Seminary, Columbus, OH, delivered to the United Methodist-Episcopal Dialogue, session of 10-13 August 2003 at Minneapolis, MN.]

I. Prologue

I begin with a story. The venue of the following tale is the collegiate gothic chapel of the Divinity School in Rochester, New York, and the time, nearly a decade ago, is Wednesday morning of the third week in the Great Fifty Days of Easter at 10:45 a.m. The chords of a magnificent organ postlude have barely ceased their sending-forth encouragements to an ecumenical congregation that has just celebrated the Holy Eucharist under the presidency of a United Methodist elder—one of our professors of preaching and Black Church studies—in a rite according to the United Methodist Book of Worship. My own prayerful reverie is abruptly broken as one of my senior seminarians in the pew ahead turns and declares more than asks, “Dean Petersen, Methodists don’t believe in the real presence, do they?”

Nearly a contemporary in age, my interlocutor had proved a reluctant student of the liturgiology received under my tutelage. She had come to seminary knowing the “right rite” and the “correct ceremony.” Moreover, she knew what to think about liturgical theology and had been less than receptive to other constructions. Even so, at this juncture, I was caught off guard and, like Mary, pondered in my heart “what manner of salutation this might be.” Several thoughts, few tactful and none generous, raced through my mind. What, I said, however, was, “Well, Nancy, let’s reflect on what we’ve just experienced.”

And so I began a catalogue: “we’ve sung several excellent Wesley hymns, and, during communion yet another one that seems rather pointed in this regard.¹ But beyond that, after readings from our common lectionary and a splendid homily about Christ creating community among us, the bread and wine were brought forward, the Great Thanksgiving with its sung *sursum corda* and *Sanctus-Benedictus*, not to mention spoken words of institution, anamnesis, acclamation, epiclesis, and supplication was prayed; then the bread was broken during a fraction anthem employing Pauline words about communion as the Body of Christ, and lastly we received this with words further assuring us of a communion with Christ in this sacrament. Doesn’t all this, not to mention the vesture of the sanctuary party in cassock albs and the presider in the same with a magnificent stole of the season’s color, say ‘real presence’ to you?” And so I

¹“Glory, love, and praise, and honor for our food now bestowed render we the Donor...Who himself for all hath given...” Hymnal 1982, #300.

**FOR INFORMATION ONLY - NOT FOR CIRCULATION – YOU MAY NOT QUOTE OR
PUBLISH WITHOUT THE AUTHOR’S WRITTEN APPROVAL**

ended, thinking silently, “QED!” Her reply, nevertheless, took my breath away. “Yes, yes, I know all that. But my friend, who is a UMC seminarian here, says that Methodists don’t believe in the real presence.”

The primary point of this vignette in the present context of ecumenical dialogue is simply that, from beginning to end, we all must have reference to the accepted, constitutive documents of our traditions as authoritative in matters of faith and order, if not of life and work as well, rather than the opinions of particular members or groups within our traditions. This at once can save us from indulging, secretly or overtly, in stereotypes of one another that we may have learned from others or formed from personal experience. A secondary point of the story, however, is that its focus sets the liturgical context for my assigned task of setting forth “doctrine in the Episcopal Church.”

II. Doctrine in the Ecclesial Constitution of ECUSA

Insofar as the Episcopal Church participates in a more universal Anglican ethos, the subject of doctrine in the Church represents a notorious difficulty. For it has been often remarked that Anglican theology is “occasional” rather than “systematic.” To be sure, this is not to say that Anglicans attend to theology, and therefore, doctrine, in an off-hand or temporally casual manner. Rather, it is to recognize that traditionally Anglicans “do” theology as occasions—usually ones of crisis—arise in ecclesial life and mission. For the rest, as doctrine may involve instruction, formation of the Church’s mind, and proclamation of the Gospel, these tasks are for the most part ordered around a liturgical center. Anglicanism exhibits, then, a firm commitment to that doctrinal principle operative in the Church from the earliest times but articulated as late as the 8th Century in the west by Prosper of Aquitaine and usually formulated, *lex orandi, lex credendi*, or, “praying shapes believing.”²

In what follows, I will attempt to explicate as well as expand upon what this might mean for any consideration of doctrine in the Episcopal Church it may be seen in reference to the claim of my title, namely, that there is an indelible christological center to the enterprise.

A. The ordination oath (“doctrine, discipline, and worship”)

At the ordination of every bishop, priest, and deacon in the Episcopal Church there is a moment in the public examination of the candidates where a public oath is required of each—it is both *viva voce* and publicly signed before the bishop presiding and the congregation. The major point of it is that the ordinand promises adherence to the Episcopal Church’s “doctrine, discipline, and worship.” As to worship and discipline the Book of Common Prayer 1979 and the Hymnal 1982

² Prosper of Aquitaine c. 390 - c. 463 is usually credited with the formulation *lex supplicandi statuat legem credendi* from which the shorter phrase is derived. I am indebted to Professor Lee Mitchell for the evocative translation of the maxim as it forms the title of one of his excellent contributions to liturgical theology.

(along with other authorized supplementary liturgical materials) and the Constitution and Canons of ECUSA (along with those of the particular dioceses) clearly form the outward and visible referents of the oath. It is less immediately clear what the repository of doctrine implied by the oath of conformity might be. But beyond that, it would seem important to discern how doctrine is related to discipline and worship. I take these questions up in reverse order.

B. The ECUSA expansion (Preface 1789 BCP) in Anglicanism

The phrase “doctrine, discipline, and worship” has the sonority and complexity of Cranmerian prose, yet it is in fact American, coined by the Rev’d Dr William Smith, the author of the “Preface” to the Proposed Book of Common Prayer of 1786.³ That “Preface” in a somewhat condensed form became *the* “Preface” to the first Book of Common Prayer (1789) of the Episcopal Church in the United States. The principal occasion of its appearance was the need to justify to the mother Church of England all the alterations which the new American church was making in the production of its own Book of Common Prayer. Hence,

It seems unnecessary to enumerate all the different alterations and amendments. They will appear, and it is to be hoped, the reasons of them also, upon a comparison of this with the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England. In which it will also appear that this Church is far from intending to depart from the Church of England in any essential point of *doctrine, discipline, or worship*; or further than local circumstances require.⁴

The phrase, now found in all three ordination services, is first found in public liturgy in the Ordinal to the American BCP 1792, but it was then limited only to the public oath of conformity taken by bishops-elect at their presentation.⁵ Until 1901, the oath of conformity at ordinations to

³William Smith (1727-1803), DD (Oxon) was born in Aberdeen, Scotland, from the University of which he graduated in 1747. For a time he was an agent of the Society for the Propagation of the gospel and in American became a noted educator, clergyman (1753), and founder of the Philadelphia Academy, one of the fore-runners of the University of Pennsylvania. Smith was something of a polymath and played many roles in late-colonial, early-national society. After independence he moved to Maryland and was invariably a deputy to the General Convention. He chaired the committee appointed to 1785 to revise and adapt the Book of Common Prayer to the new situation and in this position accomplished much of the task including authorship of the “Preface.” *Dictionary of American Biography*, Vol x, p. 356 and Massey H. Shepherd, *American Prayer Book Commentary*, (Oxford University Press, 1950), p. v-vi.

⁴Cited in Book of Common Prayer (1979), p. 11, emphasis added.

⁵“In the Name of God, Amen. I, N., chosen bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in N., do promise conformity and obedience to the Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. So help me God, through Jesus Christ.” BCP, 1792.

the diaconate and priesthood promised conformity to the “doctrines and worship of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States,” as well as declaring that the ordinands believed “the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God and to contain all things necessary to salvation.”⁶

⁶Hatchett, Marion J. *Commentary on the American Prayer Book*, (New York: Seabury Press, 1980), 518.

Two things may be noted here. First, and in regard to bishops-elect, the oath in ECUSA's Prayer Book replaces an oath of allegiance to the archbishop that was required in the English ordinals from 1549 onward.⁷ The formula "doctrine, discipline, and worship" from Smith's "Preface" thus replaced promises of fealty to the person holding an office and ministry no longer continued in the new and emphatically *not* "by law established" Episcopal Church. Secondly, such a public oath did not seem necessary in ordination liturgies for deacons and priests because they in fact did express fealty to the person of their bishops (or "others having authority over you") during the course of the "Examination" in the ordination rites. With the official adoption of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer, the oaths for all three orders were rendered nearly identical,⁸ all were made part of the public liturgy, and each featured the triadic phrase of conformity to the "doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Episcopal Church."

While the initial formulation of the expression pointed to an external situation,⁹ from the earliest

⁷In the Name of GOD, Amen. I, *N.*, chosen Bisshoppe of the Churche and sie of *N. doe* professe and promesse, al due reuerence and obedience to the Archebisshoppe, and to the Metropolitically church of *N.* and to their successours: so helpe me God, and his holy gossell." *First & Second Prayer Books of Edward VI* (London: Dent & Sons, 1919), 310.

⁸The exceptions being two: (1) the oath required of bishops-elect retained at its start the invocation of the Trinity that it had always featured, and (2) to the bishops-elect oath was added the declaration concerning the Scriptures as the Word of God and containing "all things necessary to salvation" from the oath ECUSA had always required of its diaconal and presbyteral ordinands as based on prior English models of required subscription to the Articles of Religion, the Prayer Book and the Ordinal (*cf.* Cn 36, *The Canon Law of the Church of England*, 1603).

⁹Prior to the foundation of the Episcopal Church it had been only *worship* and *doctrine* that had appeared in the oaths explicitly. No mention was made of *discipline* (*i.e.*, the *lex agendi* or polity). The particulars of this had been implicitly assumed by the fact of the liturgical setting and the establishment by law of the Church of England as the religious expression of the English nation. The new situation in American after independence required a more explicit reference to the implied ecclesiology.

times of the Episcopal Church's history the phrase has been internally important and given application in crucial moments. And, although the phrase may in its liturgical use appear to apply only to the clergy, closer scrutiny and consideration of the locus of its utterance and signing always points to the larger context of the Church itself. It thus bears significance not only for all clergy and laity, but to this particular consideration of doctrine in the Episcopal Church.

C. The christological dynamic among *lex orandi, lex credenti, lex agendi*

Taken individually, the words *doctrine*, *discipline*, and *worship* connote basic elements of the being and activity of the Church as Anglican tradition has received and understood these aspects of ecclesial life and mission. While these meanings are significant in themselves, in the teachings of the Book of Common Prayer their inter-relationship bears even greater import. Indeed, I would claim that the phrase represents an entire ecclesiology in condensed form. This ecclesiology is grounded in the *triplex munus Christi*, the three-fold office of Christ as "prophet, priest, and king."¹⁰ It is consistent with a line that may be traced back through the Caroline Divines of the 17th Century, particularly to Lancelot Andrewes as a classic articulator of the Anglican position.¹¹ Further, the phrase contains within itself a doctrinal approach akin to (but not in one-to-one correlation with) the typical description of Anglican theological methodology as attributed to Richard Hooker and centered on the dynamic among Scripture, reason, and tradition.¹² At this juncture, however, it is important to note the indelible christological center to

¹⁰Though usually articulated in Latin, this doctrinal-ecclesial formulation is sufficiently venerable as to be clearly discernable in Scripture (after all, the crucial turning point between the public ministry and the passion narratives in the Synoptic Gospels is the Transfiguration episode, the point of which is at the conclusion of the vision the chosen disciples "saw only Jesus," meaning not that he is simply the priest-victim of the passion shortly to come, but that the offices of Elijah and Moses are now as well to be understood as held in unity by Jesus as the Christ). The formulation is well-enough attested, East & West, in the liturgical tradition as well from the earliest times to our own (cf. for instance the great Epiphany hymn which contains the following in verse two: "manifest at Jordan's stream, prophet, priest, and king supreme..." Hymnal 1982, # 135).

¹¹Bishop Andrewes (1555-1626) is a cardinal figure particularly because his active career and mature theology occurs in a time after the turbulence of 16th-century attempts at ecclesiastical settlement in England and before the cataclysmic rift in English-speaking Christianity between what was to become Anglicanism as opposed to those traditions (Presbyterian, Congregational, Baptist, &c) that were distilled out of the puritan strain within the C of E that formed part of the crisis of the English Civil War and Interregnum (1641-1660). Andrewes' classic formulation, subsequently taken as a kind of Anglican slogan, was articulated in a sermon: "Nobis *Canon unus in Scripta relatus a Deo, Duo Testamenta, Tria Symbola, Quatuor Priora Concilia, Quinque saecula, Patrumque* per ea series, tercentos ante Constantinum annos, ducentos a Constantino, regulam nobis *Religionis* figunt." [*Opuscula quaedam Posthuma*, Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology, Vol. 10, (London: Parker, 1850), p. 91], that is, "One canon, two testaments, three creeds, four general councils, five centuries...form the rule of our religion."

¹²Briefly put, the method bequeathed to Anglicanism by Hooker consists in holding Scripture, reason and experience in an essentially dynamic tension with regard to the life and mission of the Church. When confronted by a question of polity [discipline], liturgy [worship], or doctrine such a method encourages us to test Scripture, our experience, and the tradition of the Church by means of *reason*. At the same time, historical *experience* must be allowed to explicate the meaning of Scripture.

the doctrinal enterprise in the life and mission of the church.

This translates itself immediately into three corresponding and proportional areas of the Church's life and mission. Within these three areas of liturgy (*worship*), doctrine, and polity (*discipline*) there is an internal rationale operative and depending for the operation of its principles on the *triplex munus Christi* flowing from Christ at the very center of the Church as a whole and, indeed, of every individual Christian. This may be formulated as the *lex orandi, lex credendi, lex agendi*. As these three are mutually interrelated in a dynamic relationship, provision is made by their critical interplay for both a check-and-balance against distortion and also for legitimate growth.

In such an ecclesiology there is a primacy given to the liturgical, the *lex orandi*, because worship has to do with primary theology and provides the locus for the celebration, appropriation, and demonstration of the Church's values as a community of the resurrection, the Body of Christ under historical conditions. As we celebrate through liturgical forms (principally, of course, Baptism and Eucharist, but also Daily Office and rites of passage) we appropriate patternings or formation into Christ (*cf.* especially Ephesians 4). And if the internal aspect of the Church's *leitourgia* is worship, then its external or missional aspect is *diakonia*, or that service that is a demonstration of those values so celebrated and appropriated.

Finally, with respect to either reason or experience as currently conceived or perceived, *Scripture* must be held as judging tradition (*e.g.*, is "x" a legitimate development or a cancerous aberration?) and revealing the limitations of reason (especially as we may be tempted to make it the sole or ultimate arbiter)," W. Petersen & R. Goesser, *Traditions Transplanted...* (Forward Movement Publications, 1981), p.28. For the centrality of Hooker to Anglican theological method, *cf.* especially John E. Booty, "Hooker and Anglicanism," in *Studies in Richard Hooker*, ed. by W. Speed Hill (Cleveland, Case Western Reserve University Press, 1972), 207-239, and particularly 228-229.

This liturgical experience then informs the *lex credendi*, that is the reflective theological task that seeks to understand the experience for the purposes of teaching and proclamation. This thinking function, having to do with “the mind of the Church” as it is focused in Christ also reflexively functions to monitor liturgical developments for authenticity and to keep them from inappropriate accretion or inauthentic pathways.¹³ The *lex credendi*, or area of doctrine, also serves to educate the Church in matters that have to do with the area of polity (*discipline*) so that characteristic behavior on any level of the Church’s life and mission is coherent and consistent. In return the area of *discipline* rooted in the governance function of the three-fold office of Christ receives its authorization (*i.e.*, the process by which theology is shaped into doctrine).¹⁴

The area of governance associated with the *lex agendi* of the Church’s life and mission, as we have seen in other areas, has only secondarily or in a derivative sense to do with legal structures, procedures, and organizational arrangements (Constitutions and Canons) as the external standards of ecclesial life and mission.¹⁵ Rather, in its basic and living sense, *discipline* has to do with, in this case, the Anglican heritage of our family patterns of living together and characteristic ways by which we relate to the general societies in which we are set as *ecclesia*. As such, we have already seen how the *lex agendi* rooted in a particular office of Christ relates to doctrine (the *lex credendi*). We come full circle, then, in noting that *discipline* as exhibiting the polity of the Church’s life and mission relates to the *lex orandi* by providing the ordering or ministerial wherewithal by which any celebration, appropriation, and demonstration of its central value—the Paschal Mystery—takes place.

¹³The Preface to the first (1549) Book of Common Prayer is instructive in this regard as it begins, “There was never any thing by the wit of man so well devised, or so sure established, which in continuance of time hath not been corrupted: as, among other things, it may plainly appear by the common prayers in the Church, commonly called Divine Service...” BCP 1979, 866.

¹⁴This process of theology moving into doctrine is described in the next section.

¹⁵This is simply to claim for the contemporary church a continuity with the early church: the living ethos is faced with the need to develop norms and in the process creates the standards that, in turn, serve to test and try the lived ethos as time goes by.

D. Behind Creed, Articles, & Catechism: what is Doctrine?

According to the living christological principle, then, *doctrine* in its most basic sense must be the *ecclesia*, the Body of Christ-People of God, ordered in their life according to a formational teaching (*didache*) and in their mission according to a characteristic proclamation (*kerygma*). Creeds, Articles of Religion, and Catechisms, vital as they are to the doctrinal enterprise as standards, are derivative within the Church. This, it seems to me, is an indication of what was meant by the petition in the BCP's "Prayer for the Whole State of Christ's Church" that the clergy "may, both by their life and doctrine, set forth thy true and *lively* Word..."¹⁶

Another way of saying all this is that theology is ordered and articulate reflection upon the experience of salvation in Jesus Christ as the incarnation of the Triune God and that, in its turn, *doctrine* is authorized theology. While Anglicanism does not have a definable corpus of doctrine based on a theological figure (such as a Luther, a Calvin, or even a Wesley), nor a set of doctrinal confessions,¹⁷ some definite things can nevertheless be said about the nature of doctrine on the basis of the Articles of Religion and the Book of Common Prayer, Article VI states:

Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, tht it should be believed as an article of Faith, or be

¹⁶BCP 1979, 329 (my emphasis), that is "lively" in the sense of "living."

¹⁷The Articles of Religion (1571) are sometimes mistakenly thought of in this way, however. Witness Jedin *et al.* in *Atlas zur Kirchengeschichte* (Herder, 1970), 93, where they are referred to as "die Anglikanische Konfession." While ordinands of the Church of England were required until the 20th Century to subscribe the Articles *ex animo* as a doctrinal standard, in the Episcopal Church they were not even adopted by the General Convention until 1801 and then in modified form in view of its non-established status. Ordinands were never required to sign the Articles. Subsequently, the amended Articles were published in the back of the BCP and in the 1979 revision take their place and status there under the general heading "Historical Documents of the Church."

thought requisite or necessary to salvation.¹⁸

¹⁸Articles of Religion, BCP 1979, 868.

Doctrine as authorized theology or authoritative teaching must therefore be congruent with Scripture or be warranted by it. Thus the chief symbol and standard in the area of doctrine is the Bible itself. But note well that the standard is chiefly a guardian from any addition to what may be required for salvation. The Bible, moreover, is not the sole doctrinal standard. Anglicanism has been chary of construing the Church's life and mission from any single theological approach or line of interpretation, even while holding to the fundamental doctrines of Christian faith as they may be (1) discerned in Scripture, (2) summarized in the baptismal (Apostles') and ecumenical (Nicene) Creeds,¹⁹ and (3) interpreted or elaborated by prophets, apostles, teachers, and the Church itself. Doctrine is not an immutable corpus of material; it may develop over time, but its sound development is marked by the maintenance of essential continuity or coherence with its sources, of which Scripture is the primary one, along with the historical teachings of the Church as they meet the evangelical criterion of not adding to what must be believed for salvation.

It is precisely here that the *discipline* aspect of the triad begins to have relationship to *doctrine* as we have seen above, particularly in the authorization that the *lex agendi* or area of polity provides in the process of authorizing, correcting, or developing doctrine. But, having set forth an ecclesiological paradigm for understanding doctrine in the Episcopal Church, it is now necessary to turn directly to a particular and fundamental exhibition of that doctrine.

III. The Centrality of the Paschal Mystery—An Explicit Recovery & Renewal

It is a commonplace of the ecumenical movement that if you want the doctrine of the Episcopal Church you must look to the Book of Common Prayer. In the process, for instance, of the Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue III (1983-1991) it was early proposed to test the doctrinal agreement and compatibility between the two traditions that previous series (LED I & II) had claimed and somewhat explicated by a project of comparing Augsburg Confession with the Articles of Religion. In the event, the comparison was made not with the Articles but with the Book of Common Prayer 1979. I believe that tack will prove fruitful for United Methodist-Episcopal Dialogue as well.

It has been proposed above that liturgy is at the heart of the matter and that ecclesial life and mission at any level from the total Church to the individual believer must be authentically and in a living manner centered on Jesus Christ. One of the principal features of the BCP 1979 is that it roots the celebration, appropriation, and demonstration of salvation in the Paschal Mystery. All is ordered or reflected upon from this reality held in faith. As part of the liturgical renewal of our times, this central feature

¹⁹The Episcopal Church did not retain the *Tria symbola* of Andrewes' formulation as did the Church of England and, indeed, other traditions, for instance, the Lutheran. What that may mean is variously interpreted.

informs all other doctrinal aspects of the Church's life and mission.

The splendor of the unified four-fold liturgy of Easter Eve with its lighting and blessing of the Paschal Candle, the recounting of salvation history from creation through exodus to restoration and renewal of the People of God, the celebration of Christian initiation in Baptism, proceeding to the first Eucharist of Easter forms an inexhaustible source and ground for the exhibition of living doctrine, especially as it ushers in, to use John of Damascus' great paschal hymn's phrase, "the queen of seasons bright," the Great Fifty Days of Easter culminating in Pentecost.

The doctrine of the crucified, risen, ascended, glorified Christ revealing the Triune Mystery of divinity in its turn and sending the Holy Spirit who forms the Church and energizes its life and mission is at the heart of what the Episcopal Church claims to understand by salvation in all its dimensions and implications. That this focus on the Paschal Mystery is a relatively new emphasis is without question and it begs a related one: is this consistent with previous Anglican doctrinal understandings?

It is a commonplace that Anglicans when engaged in doctrinal discussions rely heavily (but, of course, not exclusively) on three scriptural sources: (1) the theological interpretation of the Christ event represented by the Gospel of John, especially (as compared to the synoptic Gospels) its clear setting forth of Jesus as the Christ in relationship to the other two persons of the Holy Trinity; (2) the fourth chapter of Ephesians, particularly as it relates the living Christ and growth into the character of Christ as at the heart of ecclesiology on any level—again from the individual Christian to the total *ecclesia*; and (3) the first chapter of Colossians where the cosmic Christ—in whom all things cohere—calls and forms for the mission of reconciliation.²⁰ Again, all that is claimed here is that notice be taken of the three principal *loci* or touchstones by which Anglicans typically resort for (in the order mentioned) their *theology*, *ecclesiology*, and *missiology*.

²⁰ Apart from the entire Johannine Gospel, the passages that I have particularly in mind are: (1) Ephesians 4:1-15, and especially "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift..." and "until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature humanity, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; so that we may no longer be children, tossed about by every wind of doctrine..."; and (2) Colossians, "[Jesus Christ] is the express image of the invisible God, the first-born of creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible...all things were created through him and for him... For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things...making peace by the blood of his cross... And you...he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him, provided that you continue in the faith; stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which has been preached to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became and minister."

To the extent that this characterization is accurate, well and good. But such a doctrinal tendency is adduced not to conclude ecumenical conversation, but, quite the opposite, to open it. And also, it should be added, Anglicans live under the canon of not expounding one part of Scripture to the exclusion of others. Yet to return to the point, I would claim that the renewed emphasis on the Paschal Mystery is consistent with traditional Anglicanism, especially in the light of the typical scriptural *loci* just cited.

It may be claimed, to the contrary of this assertion, that it is more typical of Anglican doctrine to focus upon the incarnation of Jesus as the Christ of the Triune God. I would answer that the whole point of the incarnation (and it is, in fact, to be considered part of the Paschal Mystery) is its result and that neither Anglicanism in general, nor the Episcopal Church in particular, has ever lost its doctrinal hold upon that reality, though, of course, it has been tested in controversy.

IV. Some Doctrinal Implications of the Paschal Mystery

In conclusion, I would like, then, to turn to what I see as several doctrinal implications of this renewed emphasis on the Paschal Mystery. Given the assigned length of this paper, now well over the limit, these will have at present to be entered almost by title but with a little explanation.

First of all, with the re-appropriation of the Paschal Mystery has come a renewal of Baptism. Once this rite was normally observed almost in private, frequently on a Sunday afternoon with only parents and sponsors in attendance. Now for at least a quarter-of-a-century Episcopalians (with others of course) have been celebrating Baptism publicly in the context of the main and eucharistic liturgy of the Lord's Day. As this is done the congregation is put in mind of its own incorporation into Christ, renewing its baptismal promises, and looking for growth into Christ by what one of our best theologians has called "the sacrament of perpetual union."²¹ Baptism, then, is not private, but an ecclesial affair. Among the many implications of such a baptismal ecclesiology is a renewed appreciation for the priesthood of all believers that militates against clericalism by including the ordained or ministerial priesthood as within rather than above the laity.²² Also to be noted here is a small revolution in our doctrine of the Holy Spirit! Between the water rite and the consignation with chrism (making each Christian truly that, a "little Christ"), is a prayer invoking the seven gifts of the Spirit—previously postponed to Confirmation. The implications of this renewed pneumatology have largely

²¹F. D. Maurice, *The Kingdom of Christ*, (London, 1842), 96ff.

²²"Holy Baptism," BCP 1979, xxx. Especially significant in this regard is the following said or by the entire congregation, "We receive you into the household of God, confess the faith of Christ crucified, proclaim his resurrection, and share with us in his eternal priesthood."

yet to be explicated, but they are nonetheless important to mention here.²³

Secondly, the recovery of the Paschal Mystery underlies the norm of the Eucharist as the principal liturgy of the Lord's Day throughout the year. Having received their identity and mission in Baptism, the faithful gather to hear their story, the story of the People of God in God's Word and its timely explication; to pray for forgiveness, reconciliation, and the life of the world for which Christ died and rose again; and to celebrate the Sacrament of their growth and nourishment in Christ, finally being sent forth "to love and serve the Lord" in persons and peoples created in the divine image and, indeed, in the stewardship of creation, neither of which may be regarded any longer from a "human" (in the Pauline sense) or "worldly" (in the Johannine sense) point of view.

²³The seven enumerated gifts (Isaiah 11:1-3) are given more of a verbal formulation than has previously been the case whether in KJV or BCP. Thus: "Heavenly Father, we thank you that by water and the Holy Spirit you have bestowed upon these your servant the forgiveness of sins, and have raised them to the new life of grace. Sustain them, O Lord, in your Holy Spirit. Give them an [1] inquiring [wisdom] and [2] discerning [understanding] heart, the courage [3] to will [counsel] and [4] to persevere [strength], a spirit [5] to know [knowledge] and [6] to love [love] you, and the gift of [7] joy and wonder [holy fear] in all your works. Amen."

In the context of the Eucharist, it will also be well to mention the doctrinal appropriation of an eschatology that is at once more primitive and contemporary than that which had obtained from the late medieval period until well into the 19th Century. The Eucharist is held to be the meeting point of time and eternity (eternity being distinguished as qualitatively different from time and not just time extended indefinitely).²⁴ In this encounter, graceful energies are released for the necessary christological formation in the faithful. The chief liturgical locus of a direct statement in regard to this eschatology may be seen in contrasting the old form of absolution after the General Confession with the new. Previously, this absolution pronounced over the people ended, “and bring you to everlasting life”; it now reads “and keep you in eternal life.” There are many implications of this primitive-contemporary eschatology that impinge on everything from our understandings of the sacraments in the life of the Church to the issues of social justice in her mission.

Thirdly and lastly, there is a doctrinal implication for Episcopalians in all this, namely, that the ecumenical enterprise is not one that is to be entered into after all else is said and done or when we have, at some hypothetical point in the future (presumably a nano-second before the Parousia!) gotten our own ecclesial house in order. Ecumenism must be part of our breathing in and breathing out, part of the Spirit’s inspiration and respiration in and through us as we engage the life and mission of the Church together. Whatever we say we believe will be, literally, *incredible* without the ecumenical.

There is, of course, much more to be said in the matter of doctrine in the Episcopal Church. The major point has been to claim a radical christological center for doctrine. Here, then, we may cite John Keble’s wonderful morning hymn concluding with the aspiration that “we may live more nearly as we pray.” We might all justly agree that I have, not as well as might be done, but to some degree at least “put the best face” on the subject of doctrine in my Church! Therefore, I want to end by altering the prayer to include that “we may live more nearly as we believe.” And thus there will be a better and more christly harmony among the *orandi*, the *agendi*, and, indeed, the *credendi* in our life together.

²⁴For English-speaking theology (and Anglicanism specifically) it was F. D. Maurice (1805-1872) who reappropriated and advanced this eschatology in the last of his *Theological Essays* (London, 1854).