

## WEEK 1: The Table Within the Landscape of Anglicanism

*BOOKS: The Anglican Way - Giving Church Another Chance - Book of Common Prayer - Anglican Catechism - Pray Daily*

The Table is a church rooted in being and becoming the Body of Christ, growing in discipleship to Jesus as a community for the sake of others.

- We aren't just learning *about* God, we encounter him and live with him.
- This changes us, and benefits others.
- As we are transformed, we're caught up into the life of the God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - on mission in the earth...

Great, so why are we ANGLICAN? We could have liturgy and candles without the hassle (and it *is* a hassle sometimes). And what does that mean?

Locating The Table... a manifestation of "the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church."

- Global Anglican Communion: 85 Million people in 165 countries (45 Provinces)
- ACNA, C4SO, Midwest Deanery, The Table.

Anglican = "English" - so "Church of England"

- Church started on pentecost... spread from there... proclaiming the gospel, baptizing, gathering believers together for communion, prayer, and mission...
- Christians arrived in England as early as 67 AD
- Christianity was different on the British Isles than the rest of Europe. Celtic Christianity.
- Always more connected to the Eastern church than the Western.
  - West = legal / East=mystical
  - West = Christ as judge / East = Christ as Great Physician
  - West = atonement "You broke the law and need to be punished!" / East = atonement = "You've drunk poison and need a cure!"
- Evolved through immigrations/invasions - led by Patrick, Columa, Aidan, others.
- St. Patrick: Patrick was a missionary, bringing the "OHCAF" to the Irish celts (barbarians), not forcing them to conform to the cultural expressions from Rome, but rather making the Faith sensible for the everyday, concrete, common experiences of those people. (Around 432)
- St. Columba (6th century Irish Abbot/missionary to Scotland)
- It was under the influence of these Irish/Celtic abbots that Christianity was shaped in Britain.
- Augustine of Canterbury, 597. Benedictine Monk (Gregorian mission to Britain late 6th century to convert the Anglo-Saxons). Already Christian presence there, distinct from Rome.
- **Key characteristics of mission:** Patrick developed a life of worship that was not a transplant of Roman faith. Gathered in monastic communities of worship, and from there engaged the people, eventually planting indigenous communities as people were baptized.

- **Key Characteristics of spirituality:** emphasis on holistic faith; all of life is sacramental; organized in abbeys and monasteries around a rule of life with simple rhythms (monastic life amidst the culture. Spiritual practices (not distinct doctrines)
- Pre-Reformation: Key Point: Long history of distinct spirituality in England from continent
- Key point - Catholicism in England had historically had a unique character, different from the rest of the continent. In a way, the reformation was an opportunity for England to realize what had already been true. ***It is not true that Anglicanism was the result of Henry VIII's crazy personal life.*** This is not WHY there was a Church of England, just one thing that happened within that development.
- **There is a long history of finding a life of prayer made sensible for ordinary life, common life.**
- Reformation in England - messy, largely a political move (e.g. no more taxes to Rome), but those moves opened room for wrestling with Protestant ideas
- **Unique response:** via media between radical reformation and Roman Catholicism (historical tension between those two that carries through today, from province to province).
- Messy history about how it all came about - and it did involve Henry VIII wanting an annulment - but at its best it allowed the catholic church in England to reach back, seeking to reclaim the faith and order of the early undivided church.
- Church of England became a more official thing after Thomas Cranmer (Archbishop of Canterbury) helped Elizabeth I establish common practices, prayer book, etc...
- Anglican Church spread as English empire spread... now most Anglicans aren't white!
- The long history of Christianity on the British Isles was one of *contextualized catholicism* - connected to the OHCAF but able to find a life of prayer for ordinary people living ordinary lives...

**The “gift” of Anglicanism:** at the heart of Anglicanism is a life of prayer (“a liturgy”), grounded in and for the person/work of Jesus Christ, revealed in Holy Scripture, and passed down through the church, made sensible for our everyday, concrete, common life.

- Not primarily about a pet-theology, theologian, defined by a certain catechism.
- The gift is the priority of the *how* over the *what*. Anglicanism is all about how we live under Jesus' lordship in our actual, real lives. It's not about how we've figured out God, but about how we're learning to yield to God's prior action, and come to an understanding of how to live in his kingdom as his citizens.
  - Notice: This is why the Book of Common *Prayer* is the central document.
- Rooted but contextual (continuity with historic church... but contextualized for today).
- No distinctive theology dogma – “mere Christianity.”
  - Created by people trying to find a “middle way” between the extremes of Roman Catholicism and European Protestantism. A return to faith and order of the early undivided church without additions of Rome, or deletions of Protestantism.
  - “Mere Christianity” - Centered set - just trying to be “catholic” under 1. Scripture, 2. Tradition (patristic church). *A contextualized catholicism.*
- Centered Set:

- One faith (Gospel of Jesus Christ, Creeds and Councils of the early church)
- One canon of scripture (as accepted by the early church)
- One sacramental life (real presence of Christ in baptism and communion)
- One apostolic ministry (bishops, priests, deacons, ordained by bishops going back to Christ and the apostles)

### **This Anglican Way is captured in “Lex orandi – lex credendi”**

- What does it mean? “The law of praying is the law of believing.” The life of prayer (worship, devotion, liturgy) gives way to what we believe. And then what we believe, we worship that way and live it out. (lex vivendi)
  - Prayer leads to belief which leads to living...
  - Liturgy leads to theology
- How do we know what we know? We worship in order to know (Anselm)
  - What do you believe? “Come pray with us.”
  - “The theologian is one who truly prays. The one who truly prays is a theologian.” – Evagrius, Treatise on Prayer
- This is how the early church lived! They met together to celebrate the gospel by hearing Scriptures and sharing communion... only defining their beliefs more substantially when forced to by heresies...
- Describes 1) how Anglicanism was formed (a liturgical experiment), 2) what we prioritize in our life together (prayer over belief), and 3) how we order our lives (around daily prayer / weekly Eucharist).
- The character of Anglicanism: we major on articulating what it means to worship in concrete life rather than on secondary, speculative theological issue.

### Why is it important?

- Because of who God is: We don’t grasp God (rational), we are grasped by God. That means both the starting point and way forward is liturgical response... we ENCOUNTER in order to embody and extend... not just “learn about.”
- Because of who we are: not brains on a stick – we are all worshipping/liturgical beings – our habits/practices reveal and shape

### How does it apply?

- Makes us liturgical – both our corporate worship (we “embody” the story of Christ in worship), but also our daily life
- Gives attention to practice, how we actually live.
- Recognizes we can’t do this on our own or make it up willy nilly. We *receive* the faith, and need to trust those wiser than ourselves to teach us to pray.
  - Not what we normally want to hear - graduation yesterday = believe in yourself!

Reflection question: if you examined your daily habits/practices, what would it *reveal*? How do those habits/practices *shape* you?