

# ***A Form Of Godliness***

## ***An Analysis of the changes in doctrine & discipline in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer***

### ***- Jerome E Politzer, S.T.M.***

Ever since the 1976 Minneapolis General Convention the peace of the Episcopal Church has been shattered. An exodus from the Church in their country, which began some 10 years earlier, has resulted in the loss of more than a million baptized members. Many priests have renounced their orders and have departed. Some have been deposed. A schism has resulted in the formation of several rival Episcopalian sects.

Nevertheless, the leaders of the Church stubbornly maintain that they are fulfilling the Lord's will in effecting necessary changes in the Church's faith and practice. They are committed to the position that the alteration of the essential doctrines of the Book of Common Prayer, the ordination of women to the sacred ministry, and the acceptance of hedonistic expressions of sexual behavior are all part of the necessary process of the development of Christian faith brought about by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in His Church. They are unable to recognize themselves as the ones who have destroyed the peace of the Church because of their rejection of the authoritative revelation of the Holy Scriptures as interpreted by the early Church councils and fathers. Their authority is secular humanism. They cannot see themselves as being caught up, not by the Holy Spirit, but by the self-destructive spirit of the twentieth century, which sets no standard higher than that of the mind of man.

An analysis of the doctrinal and disciplinary changes contained in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer reveals clearly this destructive process. The Book of Common Prayer is for the Episcopal Church both the law of prayer and the law of belief. There is no higher doctrinal authority. The Book of Common Prayer serves as a commentary on both Holy Scripture and Catholic tradition. It contains the doctrine and discipline of the Episcopal Church as well as the forms of worship.

The Book of Common Prayer, since its first issuance in 1549, has undergone a series of periodic revisions within the Church of England, as well as in the other provinces of the Anglican Church. Most of these revisions have consisted of a process of fine tuning this remarkable instrument. None of the revisions since 1662 have in any major way altered the doctrine and discipline of Anglicanism. They have all more clearly and more effectively continued what John Wesley called the finest document of biblical and rational piety in the English language.

This process of the tuning, however, was rejected by the leaders of the Episcopal Church in the preparation of the new Book of Common Prayer. An entirely new instrument has been produced in which the doctrinal teaching concerning the seven sacraments, through which the saving grace of Christ is mediated to the faithful, has been radically distorted. A secular, humanistic, man-centered concept of religion has been substituted for the biblical, orthodox, and God-centered teachings which heretofore have been enshrined in the Book of Common Prayer. Massive opposition exists because the leaders of the Episcopal Church have accepted a new Prayer Book, "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." (2 Timothy 3:5)

Two essential doctrines of the Christian Faith are the Incarnation and the Atonement. They affirm the coming of God the Son in the flesh in the person of Jesus Christ and His

voluntary death on the cross as a sacrifice for sin to reconcile sinful man to God the Father. They teach that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man, and that he suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, and rose again the third day from the dead. It is through the sacraments that the saving grace of our Lord's Incarnation and Atonement are conveyed to members of the Church. The seven sacraments are both symbols and instruments of the new life in Christ which is received by repentance and faith. The revisers of the Book of Common Prayer, many of whom no longer believe in the truth of the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Atonement, have deliberately altered the teaching and administration of the seven sacraments to conform them to humanistic and secular standards rather than to those of the Bible and Holy Tradition. As a result, the sacramental structure of the Episcopal Church is torn down stone by stone by means of the 1979 Prayer Book.

### **HOLY BAPTISM**

The first sacrament of the Christian Church to undergo this process of distortion is Holy Baptism. Through baptism we are born again in God's eternal kingdom by His grace. The gift of grace which God gives to us in baptism is called Regeneration. "Except a man be born again," said our Lord, "Except a man be born of water and the spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:3,5) The Regeneration of fallen mankind is the primary purpose and major result of our Lord's Incarnation and Atonement.

The Episcopal Church, in its historic controversies with those who tried to change the revealed faith and teaching of the Bible and Church fathers concerning the sacrament of Holy Baptism, has steadfastly insisted on the essential doctrine of baptismal Regeneration. Beginning in the first prayer book of 1549 through all the revisions until now, the explicit teaching of baptismal Regeneration, is defined as "a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness"; and the requirements for this gift of God are repentance and faith. The Pastoral Epistle to Titus in the New Testament affirms this truth. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost: which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." (Titus 3:5-6)

In the Baptismal Office in the traditional Prayer Book the term "regenerate" or "regeneration" is used four times. In the 1979 Book, approved at the 1979 Convention, the terms "regeneration" or "regenerate" are completely cut out of the Service of Baptism, as is the doctrine of Regeneration. Instead of Regeneration the new view of baptism taught in the 1979 Book is that of Initiation. Baptism is described as being a "full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ's Body, the Church." The brief reference to rebirth in the new Baptismal Office is taught in the Outline of the Faith in the 1979 Prayer Book to signify membership in the Church.

The biblical and Catholic doctrine of Original Sin is not taught in the revised service of Holy Baptism. The doctrine of actual sin is distorted. The statement from the 1928 Book of Common Prayer that because of our fallen nature we cannot enter God's Kingdom has been removed. Also taken out is the statement that none can enter God's Kingdom apart from Holy Baptism. (1928 Book of Common Prayer, pp. 273, 274).

The doctrine of Initiation, in regard to baptism, has no organic foundation in either the Bible or Catholic tradition. Initiation is entirely a man-centered, secular concept. The term Initiation carries the connotation of entrance into a gnostic mystery cult rather than that of an actual rebirth in the life of Christ. The doctrine of Initiation applies more truly to membership in the country club, the radical political activist movement, or the psycho-social encounter group than it does to incorporation into the Body of Christ. The 1979 Book

of Common Prayer radically changes the Episcopal Church's teaching on the first great sacrament of the Church from its essential Biblical, Catholic, and Anglican roots.

### **HOLY CONFIRMATION**

The second sacrament to be dislodged from its scriptural and Catholic foundation is confirmation. The chief scriptural basis for confirmation is to be found in the Book of Acts 8:17, 19:2,6 and in the Book of Hebrews 6:2. It was, of course, in the earliest times combined with baptism as a single ceremony, as it still is in the Orthodox Church. The traditional understanding of confirmation, as carried through the 1928 Book of Common Prayer, is that this sacrament is required for full participation in the Body of Christ. The rubric in the 1928 Book states that "So soon as children are come to a competent age and can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and are sufficiently instructed in the matter contained in these Offices, they shall be brought to the bishop to be confirmed by him." Further, it so states that "There shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion until such times as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed." The only exception therefrom is in such cases where confirmation is impossible to be administered because of the unavailability of a bishop.

These instructional rubrics are removed from the New Prayer Book. In their place it is stated that it is the expectation of the Church that children and adults should be confirmed when they are ready and have been duly prepared to make a mature public affirmation of their faith. When we recognize that Webster's dictionary gives as a definition of the word expect, "to entertain at least a slight belief in the happening of," we are able to see the significant change which the 1979 Prayer Book establishes concerning the doctrine of confirmation.

The Invocation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which precedes the actual laying on of hands in the 1928 Book, is removed from the 1979 Prayer Book. The substance of this prayer for the gifts of the Holy Spirit goes back to the rite described by St. Hippolytus of Rome in the third century. It is essential to the administration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. The Sacrament of Confirmation in the 1979 Prayer Book is administered improperly when there is no prayer for the gifts of the Holy Spirit included in the rite and is invalid.

The proper Form is a necessary condition for the validity of a sacrament. Confirmation and Ordination have the same Matter in common, the laying on of hands, and therefore need to be distinguished by their own recognizable Form.

The weight of theological teaching in favor of this position is overwhelming, though it is always possible to find an exception to every rule. Dr. Francis J. Hall in "Dogmatic Theology. Volume IX. The Sacraments" wrote, "The name Confirmation signifies in the Church's Order not the confirmation of baptismal vows by the candidates which for edification is now added, but the laying on of hands administered, after apostolic gifts of the Holy Spirit." (pg. 45.)

Dr. Hall wrote of Confirmation in "Dogmatic Theology. Volume VIII. The Church and the Sacramental System," "The precise form was not fixed by apostolic authority. In Anglican use it includes, perhaps consists of, the prayer for the seven-fold gifts which immediately precedes the laying on of hands and is obviously intended to indicate the significance of that action. The accompanying prayer, "Defend O Lord this thy child, etc.'individualizes the form, and should of course be repeated for every subject." (pg. 328)

In "The American Prayer Book" by Parsons and Jones, we read, "The first English Prayer Book followed the Sarum rite of Confirmation very closely, with suffrages, the prayer for the seven-fold gifts of the Spirit, the ceremony of Consignation (marking the forehead with

a cross), a prayer for God's continued blessings, and a brief benediction... The essential "form" of the rite was originally considered to be the prayer for the ordaining power of the Spirit, which in the time of Hippolytus was accompanied by the imposition of hands."

In "The Christian Faith" by Claude B. Moss, the author wrote, "The Form of Confirmation is a prayer for the gifts of the Spirit (Acts VIII. 15)" (pg 345).

In "The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England." E.J. Bicknell stated, "It is usually held that the 'form' of Confirmation is prayer for the gift of the Spirit." (pg. 379)

A further witness to the truth is the Rt. Rev. Frank E. Wilson, late Bishop of Eau Claire. Bishop Wilson wrote in "Faith and Practice": "This is the central theme of the Confirmation office in the Book of Common Prayer, as expressed in the Prayer of Invocation, which has been in use all over Christendom for at least fifteen hundred years. In this prayer the seven-fold gift of the Holy Spirit is called down upon the candidates... The matter of Confirmation is the laying of the hands of the Bishop upon each candidate individually. The form is a prayer for the Holy Spirit." (pgs 188, 189)

What is intended to be the prayer for the seven-fold gifts of the Holy Spirit at the conclusion of the service of Holy Baptism in the New Prayer Book (pg 308) is unrecognizable in the manner in which it is written. Both the form and the substance of the Invocation have been changed. What purports to be the gifts of the Spirit, ie. "an inquiring and discerning heart, the courage to will and to persevere, a spirit to know and love you, and the gift of joy and wonder in all your works," are reduced to attributes of the human psyche. This description of an expanded consciousness is an example of the penetration of Gnostic thinking in the New Prayer Book. It is something entirely different from the Spirit-filled life taught by Jesus Christ.

An even more specific illustration of the change in teaching concerning confirmation is expressed in the choice of lessons to be used at the Confirmation Service. In the 1928 Book the lesson that is to be read from the eighth chapter of the Book of Acts specifically teaches the necessity of confirmation for all Christians. Neither this lesson nor the others which so teach are provided in the 1979 Book for the Service of Confirmation. In their place one finds eight New Testament selections dealing with the Christian life in general. None of these eight lessons have any direct reference whatsoever to the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The lesson from Acts 8:14-18 was added to the 1892 Prayer Book. The reason for the insertion of this lesson has been said to be that the Episcopal Church, "surrounded by denominations which reject confirmation, thought it worthwhile to include in its own Prayer Book this testimony that the rite is both scriptural and necessary."

Heretofore confirmation has been a necessary completion of the Sacrament of Baptism. The 1979 Prayer Book directions, which make confirmation optional, mark the first step in its disappearance from the Church altogether, at least as a sacrament. The removal in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer of the obligation "to confirm" from the list of the duties of the bishop outlined in the Catechism gives further credence to the dismantling of confirmation as a sacrament.

### **HOLY EUCHARIST**

The Holy Eucharist in the 1928 Book of Common Prayer is a simple, orthodox and biblical commemoration of our Lord's death on the cross for the sins of the world, which clearly affirms the doctrines of the Atonement and the Incarnation. Since these themes make the secular humanists uncomfortable we should not expect to find them emphasized in the

1979 Prayer Book. Instead of a clear presentation of the doctrines of the Atonement and Incarnation in the Holy Eucharist, the 1979 Prayer Book contains a doctrinal smorgasbord scattered amongst the eight rites provided for the Holy Communion Service. These rites run the gamut from a less-than-orthodox paraphrase of Eucharistic Prayer Four of the new Roman Missal to a do-it-yourself "Order for Celebrating the Holy Eucharist." The latter is an open invitation to all the secular and gnostic teaching and practice in the Church from Simon Magus to boy-evangelist Jimmy Joe Jeeter. The doctrines of the Atonement and Incarnation are diluted through the multiplicity of rites beyond the limits of Biblical and Catholic authenticity.

Rite 1 includes the 1928 Prayer Book consecration prayer in its entirety and a shorter form based on the 1928 Book. The consecration prayer in the 1928 Book does not tie the Church to any particular one of the several theories concerning the Atonement made by Christ. It does express the essential doctrine that "He is the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 2:1-2) The significant doctrinal change in Rite 1 of the Proposed Book is that the term "propitiation" is mistranslated in the Comfortable Words because the revisers want to play down the doctrine of the Atonement. In the 1979 Book of Common Prayer the revisers substitute "perfect offering" for "propitiation". The correct translation from the Greek, however, is "atoning sacrifice". In the Rite 1 service the doctrine of the Atonement is removed from the Prayer of Humble Access by the elimination of the passage "that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood." Likewise the doctrine of the Atonement is eliminated from the Prayer of Thanksgiving by the removal of the phrase "by the merits of his precious death and passion."

In the six following rites the doctrine of the Atonement is made almost non-existent. In Rite II, Prayer A, the death of Christ on the cross is mentioned fleetingly. In the five other prayers of consecration His crucifixion is not specifically stated once. The weakening of the great themes of penitence and forgiveness by the optional use of general confession and absolution further down-grades the doctrine of the Atonement in the new rites. The doctrine of the Atonement in the majority of the communion rites in the 1979 Prayer Book is relegated to the background.

In a similar fashion, the doctrine of the Incarnation as expressed in the teachings of the Real Presence and Eucharistic Sacrifice is made equivocal and ambiguous in Rite II and Form 1 and Form 2. Qualifying phrases are used to give a subjective tone to the terms "body" and "blood" of Christ in these rites. There is no way that Form 1 and Form 2 can be considered to be a liturgical sacrifice because there is no prayer of offering of the elements included in them. The Oblation or offering of the consecrated elements is a vital part of the whole consecration prayer. It brings together the thanksgivings and memorials that have gone before and offers them to God by means of the elements of bread and wine, which our Lord chose to represent His sacrifice.

The minimizing of the influence of the doctrines of the Atonement and Incarnation in the new Eucharistic Rites shifts the meaning of the Eucharist away from its Biblical and Orthodox foundation. It then becomes a humanistic and man-centered celebration expressing the bizarre and ecstatic. The spirit of the pagan god Dionysus can easily replace the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ. Communion celebrations with priests in fantastic vestments, rock music, and scantily clad dancing girls and boys are the outward and visible signs of the secularization of the Holy Eucharist taught in the 1979 Book.

### **HOLY MATRIMONY**

In the traditional Prayer Book, matrimony is a sacrament based upon Christ's teaching and that of the apostles. A man and a woman are to be joined together "according to God's

holy ordinance." Marriage in the Episcopal Church, until recently, has been considered to be an indissoluble life-long union which can be broken only by death. It is an "honorable estate, instituted by God, signifying unto us the mystical union betwixt Christ and His Church."

Because of the tremendous pressure that a sick society has placed upon the Church, the canon law dealing with the remarriage of divorced persons in the Episcopal Church has been altered. In 1973 the General Convention adopted a canon completely overthrowing the teachings of Christ and of the New Testament concerning the life-long state of marriage. Marriage, according to the Church's current teaching, is a glorified agreement which can be broken at will. What was proposed and called a "marriage canon" was in actuality a "divorce canon". As it stands now the only requirement which is really necessary in order for a priest to remarry a divorced person is his finding that the prior marriage has been annulled or dissolved by a final judgement or decree of a civil court of competent jurisdiction. Episcopal consent, in most cases, has become a formality.

The collapse of the acceptance of Christian marriage in its Biblical, Catholic, and Anglican sacramental structure in the Episcopal Church is recognized and authenticated in the 1979 Prayer Book. This is done by the removal in the main marriage office of the phrase "according to God's Holy Ordinance." This phrase has always been in the prayer books of the Anglican Communion a vital part of the marriage service. For the meaning of "God's Holy Ordinance" we look to Mark 10:2-12. It is, of course, in this passage from St. Mark that the life-long indissolubility of marriage is taught by our Lord. The portion of scripture from the tenth chapter of Mark's Gospel appointed for use in the marriage service in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer is deliberately edited to eliminate anything which would be contrary to the sanctified concubinage encouraged in the Episcopal Church.

More than anywhere else it is in this change in the meaning of marriage that we see the capitulation of the Episcopal Church to the spirit of the age. The refusal of modern men and women to allow any external authorities to regulate their lives has helped to produce the collapse of the family and society.

For the Christian, the regulation of relationships in the area of human sexuality must be according to God's holy laws. Pagan forms of sexual behavior will find no disapproval in the 1979 Prayer Book. St. Paul's specific teachings in the New Testament concerning the sinfulness of homosexual acts (Romans 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-11) are carefully edited out of the table of lessons for the daily offices in the New Book. Likewise, the teaching in the 1928 Prayer Book Catechism, that we are to live in "temperance, soberness, and chastity" is eliminated in the 1979 Prayer Book. The refusal to accept the revealed doctrinal truths of God always leads to the unwillingness to obey His moral laws. By such devious and subtle measures as these the leaders of the Episcopal church have taken away the means of preventing the Church from drifting further into moral degeneration.

### **HOLY UNCTION**

Holy Unction for the sick is a sacrament of healing and also a preparation for entrance into life beyond death. The scriptural foundation is taken from James 5:14-15. It is a sacramental act that signifies through the outward sign of anointing with holy oil which has been blessed by the bishop the inner grace of strengthening, renewing, and healing of the body and soul. Both in the Bible and in the Catholic and Anglican tradition, the minister of the Sacrament of Unction is a bishop or a priest. St. James specifically speaks of the priest as the minister of Unction. The 1928 Prayer Book directs that the minister of the Church shall perform the rite.

In the 1979 Prayer Book a priest is designated as the normal minister of the sacrament. A change in the biblical and traditional Anglican teaching concerning the minister of the sacrament is provided for by an additional rubric. The rubric states, "In cases of necessity, a deacon or a lay person may perform the anointing, using oil blessed by a bishop or a priest." There is no biblical or traditional authority in the Anglican Communion for this unwarranted change in the administration of the sacrament. The administration of the Sacrament of Unction by a deacon or a layman is not legitimate. It would be a superstitious act of magic, not a true Christian sacrament. We should not confuse the Sacrament of Unction with faith healing or psychological treatment. It is a sacrament of the Church meant to be administered to members of the Church by the priests of the Church. This change in the designation of the minister of the Sacrament of Unction illustrates the cavalier fashion in which the leadership of the Episcopal Church has taken upon itself to restructure the doctrine and discipline of the Church by means of revising the Book of Common Prayer.

### **PENANCE**

The Sacrament of Penance does not have a special rite in the traditional Book of Common Prayer because it is assumed in the Ordinal. It is provided for, however, in two places. One is the rubric in the Office of the Visitation of the Sick, where the penitent is encouraged to make a special confession of his sins if he feels his conscience is troubled with any matter and, in turn, the minister will pronounce absolution. The other direction is contained in the second exhortation announcing the celebration of Holy Communion.

The 1979 Prayer Book has a special section for the reconciliation of the penitent, which certainly is more full use of the Sacrament of Penance. The rubric concerning the rite states that the absolution maybe pronounced only by a bishop or a priest. It does, however, also provide for the hearing of a confession by a lay person without the benefit of sacramental absolution by including a "Declaration of Forgiveness to be used by a Deacon or lay person." Since the primary purpose of Penance is the receiving of forgiveness and absolution, it is unnecessary that a special form should be provided for confession without absolution.

In the 1979 Prayer Book service for the ordination of a priest the bishop is directed to say to the ordinand, "You are to preach, to declare God's forgiveness to penitent sinners, to pronounce God's blessings, etc." The 1979 Prayer Book removes from the consecration prayer of the new priest the words "whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted: whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained," (St. John 20:23). There is, therefore, no real distinction made in the 1979 Prayer Book between "Absolution" and a "Declaration of Forgiveness", and no distinction between the authority of a priest or layman to pronounce either one.

The provision for the hearing of a confession by a deacon or layman is one more step in the direction away from the biblical and traditionally Catholic teaching and Anglican practice concerning the Sacrament of Penance. The only proper minister of the Sacrament of Penance is a bishop or a priest, and the 1979 Prayer Book is unclear as to whether they have been given this authority or not.

### **HOLY ORDERS**

At long last, we come to the treatment of the Sacrament of Holy Orders in the Church. It is the change in the subject of this sacrament, of course, which has received all the notoriety since the 1976 Minneapolis Convention. The alteration in this sacrament is only the final step in what has been the secularizing of the sacramental system in the Episcopal Church by the means of Prayer Book revision and canonical change.

The subject of the Sacrament of Ordination has always been a baptized male person. Both the Bible and the witness of the Catholic tradition and the Anglican Church testify to this fact. Our Lord appointed only men to be apostles. This was in spite of the fact that in New Testament times women had achieved the high role of prophetess and priestess in the religious realm and served as queens in the secular realm.

The 1976 Convention of the Episcopal Church circumvented both its constitution and Prayer Book directions by approving a canon providing for the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopacy. The ordinal in the new Prayer Book was distorted by the simple means of changing a few pronouns. Through the 1979 Prayer Book the Episcopal church has taken upon itself to create a new priesthood. This action was taken in spite of warnings from the Roman Catholic, Old Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox communions that they would look upon such an action with disfavor and that the ordination of women would jeopardize the ecumenical discussions taking place. This action has caused those churches to doubt even further the validity of Anglican orders. Another result is that the Polish National Catholic Church in America, which is the Old Catholic Church of Utrecht in the United States and Canada, has taken steps through the action of its General Synod to terminate the intercommunion agreement which has existed since 1946 between their church and the Episcopal Church.

The Bible makes it very clear that the priest and bishop are sacramental symbols of the person of Jesus, both as they represent Him to the Church, and also as they represent the Church before God. Patriarch Demetrios the First, spiritual leader of Eastern Orthodoxy, has reaffirmed Orthodoxy's traditional opposition to admitting women to the priesthood, saying a priest is a bodily representative of Christ and must be a man as Jesus was. The highest authorities of the Roman Catholic Church have stated that the priest images Christ, and therefore, must be an adult male. The Archbishop of Utrecht of the Old Catholic Church has warned the Archbishop of Canterbury that new schisms could divide the Church over the question of the ordination of women. The leaders of the vast majority of Christendom are saying that the sacred ministry is a sacramental order and not a secular profession. To treat the ordained ministry primarily as a profession is to secularize it beyond the limits of Biblical and Catholic recognition.

The sacred ministry participates in the mystery of Christ's Incarnation and Atonement. The bishop and priests are a nonverbal testimony that Christ has come in the flesh, has suffered and died upon the cross to atone for our sins, has risen from the dead and ascended into heaven, and now makes heavenly intercession for us at the throne of God. In the New Testament we have the unchangeable teaching concerning the apostolic ministry. In Matthew 10:40, when Jesus called the apostles, He said, "He that receiveth you, receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth Him that sent me." In John 13:20. He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." These words of Jesus are made clear by His actions in choosing adult males only to be His priestly representatives. It was to the apostles alone that Jesus said, "This do in remembrance of me." (Luke 22:19).

The fact that these men chosen by Jesus were all Jews is of no sacramental consequence. Racial identity and religious particularity are not part of essential being, and are, therefore, not included in the transmission of sacramental symbolism. Human sexuality is an ontological quality given in creation as witnessed in the Book of Genesis. Human sexuality, therefore, is an essential part of the Sacrament of Holy Orders and must be clearly symbolized therein.

The meaning of the Eucharist as an earthly counterpart to the heavenly offering of the sacrifice of Christ to God the Father also requires that the priest be an adult male in order



to perform adequately his role as a sacramental symbol of Christ. This understanding is based upon the teaching of . Therein we read, "But this Man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." The priest at the altar offering the sacrifice of the Eucharist is a sacramental symbol of our Lord Presenting His eternal sacrifice in heaven.

The claim that a change in the priesthood, which involves the inclusion of women as well as men, is only a matter of discipline and not of doctrine is a spurious one. Both in Old Testament as well as New Testament times the priesthood was essentially a doctrinal matter and only secondarily a disciplinary one. Concerning the Hebrew priesthood, the Abingdon Bible Commentary says, "The Levitical Priesthood was the heart and core of the Jewish law, 'under it hath the people received the law,' ie: The Jewish code as a whole had grown up around the central fact of the priesthood. The need, therefore, of a new order of priesthood involved a revolutionary change in the whole legal system." The new priesthood of Christ, around which the Christian Church was developed, is referred to in Hebrews 7:12, "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." The Christian faith is inextricably intertwined with the nature and person of Jesus Christ and His Incarnation and Atonement. To change the sacramental representation of Christ in the sacrament of Holy Orders is to necessitate a revolutionary change of the faith away from the essential Biblical and traditionally Christian doctrines of salvation and redemption.

Amongst the many changes of a secularizing nature which are made in the 1979 Prayer Book Ordinal, two especially stand out. The beautiful exhortation read by the bishop to the priests who are to be ordained, which has been included in every prayer book since 1549 through 1928, has been removed. The authorship of the exhortation belongs to Cranmer. The exhortation is an expression of the "highest ideals for the personal and pastoral side of the priest office such as has never been equaled". The 1979 Prayer Book drops this outstanding commentary on the pastoral aspect of priesthood based upon the biblical model of Jesus Christ, the good shepherd of the sheep.

A second significant omission in the 1979 Prayer Book is the removal from the sacred vows taken by the priest of the promise that he will be "ready with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away from the Church all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's word." All the clergy of the Episcopal Church, both priests and bishops, who have been ordained with the 1928 rite, have accepted this vow. The fact that no bishop and only a handful of clerical deputies voted to reject the 1979 Book of Common Prayer confirms the fact that the concern for the purity of doctrines is no longer of any great importance in the Episcopal Church. The removal of this promise in the 1979 Prayer Book is one more indication that the essential doctrines of the Church will be progressively set aside in the future in favor of the latest ideas of the academy and the market place. One might well ask if bishops and priests are unwilling to safeguard the precious doctrines of the Church, who is left to do so? Chaucer raised the same question in the Canterbury Tales with the comment, "If gold rust, what shall iron do?"

+ + +

One cannot rightfully claim that the alterations in doctrine and discipline concerning the seven sacraments as expressed in the 1979 Prayer Book represent a true development of the Church's doctrine. Development, in order to be legitimate, has to be in accordance with the organic laws of the organism being developed. A calf born with two heads is not a true development of the breed; it is deformed. A democracy which lapses into a dictatorship cannot be said to have developed normally. Instead, it has degenerated and destroyed itself. In the same fashion, the doctrinal and disciplinary revisions of the seven sacraments in the 1979 Prayer Book are all manifestations of various ancient heresies which have been

tried and rejected by the Church in the past. They do not represent a true development of Christ's Church. they signify a deformation and degeneration of this portion of the Body of Christ.

The 1979 Book contains a number of good and helpful elements. These include, among others, the revised office for the ministration to the sick, the more flexible and enlarged lectionary, and the services for Holy Week. The tremendous effort in time and money spent on the 1979 Book has been beneficial in some ways.

The doctrinal and disciplinary changes are of such a secular nature that they cancel out the positive values of the 1979 Book. The true religious substance of the majority of the sacraments is drained out of them, leaving them empty and distorted. The alterations reflect the "God is dead" movement of the 1960s and the collapse of moral values which surfaced during that period.

The 1979 Prayer Book does not teach the Biblical and Catholic faith. It has a "form of godliness", while "denying the power thereof." (2 Timothy 3:5) As the sole standard of doctrine, discipline, and worship in the Episcopal Church it is unacceptable. The peace of the Episcopal Church will not be restored unless the General Convention continues to authorize the 1928 Book of Common Prayer and makes adequate structural provisions in the Church's canons for the clergy and congregations who, as a matter of conscience and theological conviction, cannot accept the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopate.