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he birth of Anglicanism can be told with many tongues and motives. Kingly lust, political independence, the love of pure doctrine, martyred saints and scholars, and the freedom of a new vernacular liturgy all play their part in the emergence of Anglicanism as a Protestant form of Catholic Christianity. Anglicanism is marked less by doctrinal innovation, over salvation at least, than by its choice and complementarity of doctrine and practice.

The task of writing on salvation in Anglicanism is not easy. For example, we might agree with Stephen Neill's classic study whose fifteenth and final chapter observed that no "special section" was devoted to Anglican theology precisely because "there is no particular Anglican theology." He rehearses the importance of the Catholic Faith, of the Holy Scriptures, of the Creeds and first four General Councils of the undivided Church as furnishing everything that is "necessary to

salvation." He also highlights a certain "Anglican attitude and an Anglican atmosphere" that "defies analysis" and must be "felt and experienced in order to be understood." While he further lists episcopacy, learning, continuity with the past, and tolerance as additional Anglican features, Neill emphasizes the great responsibility thrown "on to the individual for the working out of his own salvation." All this is set within a "liturgical life" that does not aim at "immediate emotional effects, but of gradually building up a settled resolute purpose of holiness."

Much more recently Paul Avis's small book *The Anglican Understanding of the Church* begins by saying that "when we think of Anglicanism, most of us do not immediately think of the salvation of our souls." Fortunately he quickly recovers himself to affirm that "salvation and the church are two sides of the same coin," as he goes on to dwell, as was his intention, on issues of ecclesiology to account for the church as "one of the humanly, historically conditioned institutional forms taken by the gracious saving action of God."⁵

Interestingly Stephen Sykes, experienced as a senior professor of theology, an Anglican bishop, and a college principal, recently argued that the history of Anglican "reflection upon sin and original sin . . . has yet to be written," which indicates just how extensive the reflective task of any church actually is; indeed, it may always be an ongoing task. Certainly, there are lively debates amongst some Anglican thinkers over whether, for example, there are or should be "core" doctrines and whether actual adherence to doctrine is related to salvation. As distinguished a theologian as John Macquarrie, while wondering if there is such a distinctive entity as "Anglican Christology," can even express his "hope that there is not," since he sees such doctrines as belonging more to the Christian world at large than to any particular denomination.8

Anglican Ethos

In this paper I seek to contribute by developing Neill's reference to the "attitude and atmosphere" that comprise the Church of England's "ethos of salvation," which frames its grammar of theological discourse, liturgical worship, and ethical practice. Anthropologically this could be much more fully explored in the terms of *habitus* and

gestus, as I have done elsewhere for the Latter-day Saint culture of salvation;⁹ one might even pursue it in the poetic spirit of George Herbert.¹⁰

Here, however, I pursue this ethos of salvation in the Church of England, chosen as the type case of Anglicanism both for obvious historical reasons, and also because it is the Church to which I belong and with which I am most familiar. I do so through the fundamental theological motif of divine mercy, selected as fostering and expressing this particular ethos of salvation. This theme of mercy, I want to suggest, is so implicitly central to Anglican thought that its existence largely passes without explicit theological notice.

Disclosing this Anglican secret will, inevitably, involve a discussion of the more familiar Anglican doctrinal concern with the Incarnation and sacramental theology. It will also involve making extensive use of liturgical texts. If anything, then, it is this emphasis upon the spirituality of mercy, motivating theology, worship, and pastoral practice that distinguishes this essay and goes some way to offset Stephen Neill's suggestion that the Anglican atmosphere "defies analysis."

Party Tension

Any analysis of Anglicanism must mention its internal Anglo-Catholic, Evangelical, and liberal traditions within a church, described by Sykes as "Western Reformed Catholicism." Anglo-Catholics stress the doctrinal and ritual continuity of Catholic sacramental practice and have felt a strong affinity with Roman Catholicism. For them the Eucharist is the Mass and has often been called such. The Evangelicals highlight the Bible, selected Reformation theologians, and personal conversion through spiritual rebirth. The Liberals enjoy freedom of thought and critical analysis of traditional interpretations of faith and life, seeking to interpret faith in contemporary terms.

Together these positions reflect something of the much rehearsed and largely overplayed formula of tradition, scripture, and reason as the threefold method of Anglican thought. In his important volume *The Integrity of Anglicanism*, Sykes describes the inherent tension of these traditions as "the long Anglican history of the experience of conflict," a conflict he considered to be "of potentially great service." This he

relates to the relatively dispersed nature of authority in Anglicanism and the feedback control inherent in congregational life and liturgical worship identified as "the power base for the Christian community as a whole." ¹³

Anglicanism not only typifies such doctrinal conflicts but also typifies the contextual nature of theology in the church's varying relationship with state and the power of civic society. Both the existence of parties within the church and the church's general social concern reflect its broad attitude of inclusivism rather than exclusivism. But inclusive tension is not without its problems; Sykes believes that one major reason why church union with other groups is so hard for Anglicans is that the Anglican internal ecology has a balance that could easily be disturbed. In recent decades, however, the rise of charismatic trends within the Church of England has gone some way to bind the groups together even when other factors, such as the ordination of women, have aggravated them.

The "Church"

As a final preliminary point, the very word *church* deserves some explanatory location since most religious groups make this simple noun carry a varied weight of implicit meaning distinctive to themselves. When members of the Church of England refer to "the church" they do not invest the word with the significance accorded, for example, by Latter-day Saints or by Roman Catholics for whom "the church" bears a high degree of religious significance—I am almost tempted to say of mystical significance. For most Anglicans "the church" refers to the building, the parish church, present in their community to which they may feel a degree of personal attachment. Or it may refer to some vague sense of a distant organization somehow related to the bishop whom they hardly ever see but more readily reflected in the local clergy. Indeed, the English phrase "going into the church" has long been synonymous with the local clergy and to ordination into that body. "Going into the church" is the pragmatic English way of referring to a sense of vocation. It is an interesting phrase because it touches on the significance of the Anglican clergy as the backbone of most local Christian organizations. While many clergy often tend to dislike

these usages, preferring not to identify "the church" with a building and certainly not with the clergy but with the community of Christians interpreted as the body of Christ, this interpretation is not at the front of most people's minds.

Salvation

A similar comment is demanded by the word *salvation*. Articles 11–18 of the thirty-nine Articles of 1571 deal with salvation in relation to Christ. Salvation relates to the eternal purposes of God, as expressed in the doctrine of predestination (though only with reference to predestination to life and not a double predestination that includes predestination to death). Salvation is obvious in terms of justification by faith showing how we participate in the righteousness of God. ¹⁴ It involves those who are delivered from "curse and damnation," called by God, experiencing the work of His Spirit, and "in due season," become adopted children of God and "by God's mercy . . . attain to everlasting felicity" (Article 17). As Article 18 emphatically states, eternal salvation is obtained only in the name of Christ. The article expressly argues that those are to be accursed "that presume to say, That every man shall be saved by the Law or Sect which he professeth," whatever his law or the light of nature may intimate.

Moving from the sixteenth to the twentieth century, the Church of England's Doctrine Commission published a report entitled *The Mystery of Salvation* in 1995. It serves more as a set of cameos of salvation than any firm pronouncement of what salvation is. Indeed, *The Mystery of Salvation* is especially alert to the changing cultural contexts of life in which salvation is experienced in a variety of ways, not least in relation to notions of gift, story, and the atonement language of legal tradition. But the contemporary self and the existential dimension is not far away; therefore, for example, "salvation is experiencing the one who is the source and goal of all things as the source and goal of our own being and living." ¹⁵

Incarnation

God is self-revealed, as the doctrine of the Incarnation, so central to Anglicanism for the reasons of history and spirituality, makes clear.

This doctrine has served two major theological possibilities. The first ties incarnation to sacrifice for sin. Anglicanism's Reformation, expressed in its thirty-nine Articles of Religion, firmly espoused the doctrine of justification by faith and the complete efficacy of the death of Christ as a "full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the forgiveness of sin," as the Eucharistic prayer expressed it. The second sets incarnation as the foundation for world affirmation rather than world rejection and developed alongside an emergent theology and practice of the Eucharist. The Eucharist, or the Lord's Supper, as it used so often to be called, deeply influenced Anglican piety and spirituality by rooting the presence of Christ in the present, available by faith in and through the act of eating and drinking sacramental elements of bread and wine.

The development of Anglican theology moved firmly in the direction of viewing life and the world as validated and given worth precisely because God's Son had, Himself, taken flesh of Mary His mother and thereby had entered into the matter of the world, or the world of matter. If God could use frail flesh as a means of His self-manifestation, He could use anything and everything. So it is that the idea of incarnation and of sacramentality come to be, practically, synonymous. This ensured that the sacramental nature of Anglicanism was not diminished when it reduced the seven sacraments of Catholicism to the two of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

The implementation of these sacraments and the organization of church life making them possible fell to the parish priest and the parish church. Europe had long been divided into parishes before the reformation, and that division of space, at once both a political and a pastoral division, has very largely been maintained to this day. Despite the industrial revolution and massive urban expansion, many clergy maintain the ideal that they exist for the cure of souls in their parish, sharing and expressing the bishop's prime episcopacy over his diocese. This reflects a high degree of inclusivism.

Sometimes reference is made to the "charitable assumption" made by Anglican clergy over the state of salvation of their parishioners in that they assume them to be Christian as far as pastoral attitudes are concerned. It is in this sense that the clergy married, baptized,

and buried parishioners, providing a kind of frame for their life, a soteriological frame. Those acts all took place within the context of worship, an acknowledgment of one's corporate response to the divine presence. "The principle of approach to God in public worship, then, is, first penitence, then praise, and then prayer," all centered around the figure of the Lamb as it had been slain.¹⁶

Ethos of Spirituality

This Christological motif brings me to my chosen topic of mercy as the prime theological frame motivating the Anglican ethos of spirituality. Beneath every religious tradition lies a spirituality, a word that has accumulated a variety of secular meanings from the later twentieth century, but which I use here to refer to the ethos, to the mood of a doctrine, to the feeling of a truth.

Richard Hooker, the formal author of Anglicanism's Reformation-Catholic dialectic, contrasts salvation by grace and by works, describing the mediation of Christ at the heart of salvation as "inexplicable mercy." Similarly, when he addresses himself to "God's supernatural way of salvation," he refers to "the tender compassion of God" as "the first thing" respecting us "drowned and swallowed up in misery." Here mercy, the tender compassion of God, enshrines a sense of God who is described in the 1662 Holy Communion as one "whose property is always to have mercy" and whose opening prayer asks that God may "have mercy upon the whole Church."

Later in the prayer for the Church militant here on earth, "we humbly beseech" God, "most mercifully to receive these our prayers." Later still, in the prayer of confession we admit that the remembrance of our sins "is grievous unto us; The burden of them is intolerable," and ask God to "have mercy upon, Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father, for thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake." Only then does the minister address the people with his absolution: "Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of his great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins to all them that with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him; have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins; confirm and strengthen you in all goodness; and bring you to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord." As the rite proceeds, in

the prayer of humble access, one of the great prayers of Anglicanism, the faithful say: "We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy table, but Thou art the same Lord whose property is always to have mercy." With this thankful acknowledgment, the priest begins the central prayer of consecration: "Almighty God our heavenly Father, who of thy tender mercy didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption. Hear us O Merciful father, we most humbly beseech thee."

These brief excerpts express something of the nature of the relationship between God, the believer, and the congregation of believers. Mercy strikes the chord of love and justice, echoes a doctrine of God related to the Incarnation and the passion of Christ, and, in practical terms, frames the pastoral nature of the Eucharist and the life of the community. But it is largely implicit; it would be hard to find anything like a doctrine of mercy in Anglicanism. Yet mercy is at its heart, as reflected in the recent Common Worship book of 2000, where the minister greets the people at the Eucharist by rehearsing the biblical verse, "Grace, mercy and peace from God our father and the Lord lesus Christ be with you." Similarly, when the commandments or their summary are read the people respond, "Amen, Lord have mercy." One of the new prayers of penitence is also telling, for it shows how mercy moves from God to the believer to become part of our ethical life: "Most merciful God, in your mercy forgive what we have been, help us to amend what we are, and direct what we shall be; that we may do justly, love mercy, and live humbly with you, our God." Once more the absolution involves God having mercy upon us as does the Agnus Dei in asking God to "have mercy upon us."

As a final example of mercy, I draw upon several lines of a favorite prayer of Anglicanism, the General Thanksgiving. "Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we thine unworthy servants do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men. . . . And we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful and that we show forth thy praise not only with out lips but in our lives,

by giving up ourselves to thy service and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days." Here Anglican spirituality of thankful worship and ethical service is unselfconsciously expressed in "that due sense of all thy mercies." Echoing this ethos of mercy, one of the largely forgotten of Anglicanism's greatest theologians, L. S. Thornton, truly reflected a fundamental aspect of the worshipful nature of Anglicanism when writing that "the inner reality of this mystery of Triune Love is something utterly beyond us. All thought and speech are helpless and impotent before it. Yet this same mystery is utterly near to us." ¹⁹

Practical Theology

While theology is always important to church leaders, it is seldom so important for the mass membership, at least in many Anglican contexts. What is important is worship and what is done in church. Here the phrase "going to church" comes into its own. "Going to church" is a root metaphor for personal religion and the significance of spirituality within one's life. Most Anglicans do not speak openly or extensively about their faith or their religion. They do, however, express hints of relation to God through such phrases as "going to Church" or, as earlier "going into the Church," or even in the bolder, usually clerical phrase of "saying your prayers."

For three hundred years two rites spearheaded Anglican spirituality: the Lord's Supper—or Eucharist, as it is now almost uniformly called—and morning and evening prayer, often called Matins and Evensong. The latter declined dramatically during the 1990s as Anglicans tended to become a one-Eucharistic-service-a-Sunday people, not a two-service people. Still Evensong remains a prime service of most Anglican cathedrals, serving as a kind of spiritual flagship of the tradition. Its form lies in the reading of the Bible (Old Testament followed by New Testament), in the singing or saying of the psalms (systematically through the Psalter), in the saying of set prayers, in the singing of anthems, and occasionally in sermons.

Parenthetically, it is worth mentioning that the Anglican funeral service, which touches the lives of all, also stresses mercy. The prayer over the grave, with its "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust,"

sets the dead into "God's great mercy." Likewise the prayer for parents in the marriage service sees that it is by the gracious gift of the merciful Lord that children come as a gift.

Whether at funerals, weddings, or, more regularly, the Eucharist or Evensong, hymns are basic to the worship of Anglicanism. When Kenneth Kirk wrote his key chapter on the Atonement (which described how salvation was dealt) within the influential volume *Essays Catholic and Critical*, published in 1926,²⁰ he began with three verses from the children's Good-Friday hymn, "There Is a Green Hill Far Away." He makes the important point that there never has been any one, single doctrine of the Atonement; however, he goes on to argue for a combined sense of the death of Christ as an example for Christian self-sacrifice and His Resurrection as a promise of evil transcended.²¹ So it is that

He died that we might be forgiven, He died to make us good, That we might go at last to heaven, Saved by His precious blood.

There was no other good enough To pay the price of sin, He only could unlock the gate Of heaven and let us in.

Oh dearly, dearly has He loved, And we must love Him too, And trust in His redeeming blood, And try His work to do.

When sung at the three-hour Good Friday Service, one of the most profound of all moments of Anglican worship with an ethos of its own, these simple sentiments focus the faith through common worship to its expectation of the private piety of those present.

Here I draw on two other hymns to highlight the contribution of hymns to Anglican spirituality both at the Eucharist and at Evensong. The Eucharist is problematic in Anglicanism given the spectrum extending from some Anglo-Catholics who see it as echoing the Mass and

from some Evangelicals who would interpret it in strictly memorialist terms. For the great majority, however, it probably means less than the one and more than the other. They feel close to God and to the sacrifice Christ made on their behalf. They are aware of their sin and need of forgiveness and of the power that comes to them through the sacred meal strengthening them for daily living through another week.

The following Eucharistic hymn touches the slightly more sacramental heart of Anglicanism and its Eucharistic piety grounded in the combined themes of love, the eternal sacrifice of Christ related to His real presence at the Holy Communion, the communion of saints, and the renewal for service that comes with this holy food. The knowledge of divine love fully revealed in Calvary takes the believer into Christ's priestly work as the medium through which we acknowledge our sin and the power of His passion. Amidst such grace we remember those we love, living or dead, and pray for them before finally entering into our own deliverance and life of service.

And now O Father, mindful of the love That bought us once for all, on Calvary's Tree, And having with us Him that pleads above, We here present, we here spread forth to Thee, That only Offering perfect in Thine eyes, The one true, pure, immortal Sacrifice.

Look Father, look on His anointed Face, And only look on us as found in Him; Look not on our misusings of Thy grace, Our prayer so languid, and our faith so dim: For lo! between our sins and their reward We set the Passion of Thy Son our Lord.

And then for those, our dearest and our best, By this prevailing Presence we appeal; O fold them closer to Thy mercy's breast, O do Thine utmost for their soul's true weal; From tainting mischief keep them white and clear, And crown Thy gifts with strength to persevere.

And so we come; O draw us to Thy Feet, Most patient Saviour, Who canst love us still; And by this Food, so awful and so sweet, Deliver us from every touch of ill: In Thine own service make us glad and free, And grant us never more to part with Thee.

I might, equally as well have cited the hymns "Here O My Lord I See Thee Face to Face, Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence" or "Alleluya Sing to Jesus His the Sceptre His the Throne." Each captures the mood of salvation appropriate to the Eucharistic rite. Something of a different tone is struck in Evensong. It is one reflected in many other non-sacramental services typified by a calm confidence in the providence of God and the deep sense of worship and praise as the proper response. I take the hymn "The Day Thou Gavest, Lord, is Ended" to represent this religious mood.

The day Thou gavest, Lord, is ended, The darkness falls at Thy behest; To Thee our morning hymns ascended Thy praise shall sanctify our rest.

We thank Thee that Thy Church unsleeping, While earth rolls onward into light, Through all the world her watch is keeping, And rests not now by day or night.

As o'er each continent and island The dawn leads on another day, The voice of prayer is never silent, Nor dies the strain of praise away.

The sun that bids us rest is waking Our brethren 'neath the western sky And hour by hour fresh lips are making Thy wondrous doings heard on high.

So be it Lord; Thy Throne shall never Like earth's proud empires, pass away

Thy kingdom stands, and grows for ever Till all Thy creatures own Thy sway.

Here the idea of the unsleeping church is certainly not read as being Anglican. That voice of prayer is assumed to be one of all Christians, with the ultimate focus on God's kingdom known, just now, in the unceasing praise offered from the earth whether during day or night. There is a sense of intimacy with God as a unity and not in any of the Trinitarian persons. Since the 1970s many new hymns have been introduced that reflect a broad spectrum of human concern from industry with "God of Concrete, God of Steel," to innumerably more charismatic hymns, not exclusively Anglican, dwelling on the Spirit or on personal love of Christ as in, "I Am His and He Is Mine and the Banner over Us Is Love." So it is that spirituality and theology change. From 1662 to 2000, from The Book of Common Prayer to Common Worship, shifts have occurred. As far as salvation is concerned, the move has been from an emphasis on God the Father and His redemptive work through the Incarnation to an emphasis on God the Spirit and His ongoing work through the Church as the dynamic body of Christ in the world today.

Service

At its birth the Anglican Church was the Church of England, appointed by law, with the monarch as its temporal head. Political factors and matters of state were, doubtless, at its heart. Its infancy was a period of open competition between Catholic and Protestant forms of religion and understanding of Christendom. The parochial system whereby the whole of Britain is divided into geographical parishes has, historically, made the vicar, who as his Latin title indicates is the substitute for the bishop, responsible for all the people there. His ministry is to be inclusive. This has numerous consequences and in the twentieth century led to a form of contextual theology stressing the poor and their social condition, reflected in the *Faith in the City* report²² and in the notion of God's bias to the poor.

Here the church exercised a prophetic voice to the nation, part of its duty as a state church, even when it means that some politicians

prefer it to avoid political issues such as the Falklands War. In the service held at the war's end the archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie, said in his sermon that "war springs from the love and loyalty which should be offered to God being applied to some God substitute, one of the most dangerous being nationalism." The archbishop received 244 letters criticizing and 1,763 praising the service, including one from the Queen. Similarly, in the days immediately following the catastrophic terrorist activity in New York and Washington DC, numerous public services were held by the Church of England. One broadcast on the BBC's Radio 4 channel on Sunday, September 15, 2001, came from London's St. Martin-in-the-Fields. Not only did it include readings and blessings given in English, Hebrew, and Arabic by Christian, Jewish, and Islamic religious leaders, but the entire set of prayers were framed by the liturgical response, "Lord, have mercy."

Conclusion

These are good examples of mercy-driven spirituality knowing itself weak before God rather than seeking to display puny strength. Times change, and so may the ethos of a church. Elements of the "gospel of success," of apparent failure to demand utter loyalty and of magical religiosity may all be found within contemporary Anglicanism and be deemed by some as strengths and by others as weaknesses. Theologically, there is much to be said for a strength made perfect in weakness, for an ethics of mercy on the part of those who have received mercy, all grounded in the worship of the one whose "property is always to have mercy."

Notes

- 1. Stephen Neill, Anglicanism (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1958), 417.
 - 2. Neill, Anglicanism, 418.
 - 3. Neill, Anglicanism, 424.
 - 4. Neill, Anglicanism, 418.
- 5. Paul Avis, The Anglican Understanding of the Church (London: SPCK, 2000), 9.

- 6. Stephen Sykes, "Sin and original sin in Anglican perspective," Académie internationale des Sciences religieuse, October 2001, 1.
- 7. Charles Hefling, "On 'Core' Doctrine: Some Possible Relevant Soundings," Anglican Theological Review 2 (1998): 239.
- 8. John Macquarrie, "Current Trends in Anglican Christology," Anglican Theological Review 4 (1997): 563.
- 9. Douglas J. Davies, *The Mormon Culture of Salvation*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000) 108.
- See George Herbert, A Selection of His Finest Poems, ed. Louis L. Martz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).
- 11. Stephen Sykes, The Integrity of Anglicanism (London: Mowbrays, 1978), 98.
 - 12. Sykes, Integrity of Anglicanism, 89.
 - 13. Sykes, Integrity of Anglicanism, 96.
- 14. Oliver O'Donovan, On the Thirty-nine Articles: A Conversation with Tudor Christianity (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1986), 77.
- 15. The Mystery of Salvation, the Story of God's Gift, A Report of the Doctrine Commission of the General Synod of the Church of England (London: Church House Publishing, 1995), 57.
- 16. F. W. Worsley, The Theology of the Church of England (London: Chapman and Hall, 1913), 110.
- 17. John Keble, The Works of Mr. Richard Hooker, 5th ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1865), 3:601.
 - 18. Keble, The Works of Mr. Richard Hooker, 1:261.
- 19. Lionel Spencer Thornton, *The Incarnate Lord* (London: Longmans, 1928), 143.
- 20. Kenneth E. Kirk, "The Atonement," in Essays Catholic and Critical, ed. E. G. Selwyn (London: SPCK, 1926).
- 21. Lionel Spencer Thornton, "The Christian Conception of God," in Essays Catholic and Critical, 274.
 - 22. See Faith in the City (London: Church House Publishing, 1985).
- 24. Humphrey Carpenter, Robert Runcie, The Reluctant Archbishop (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1996), 257.