

Newsletter

All Saints' Tide, 2011

How Cool is the Prayer Book?

*By the Rt. Revd. Dr.
Stephen Andrews,
Bishop of Algoma
(Reprinted from his on-line blog
posting of September 1, 2011)*

I confess that I didn't really know what I was getting into when I agreed to be a speaker at the Cranmer Conference in North Bay this past weekend. But I honestly couldn't resist the earnest enthusiasm of Kayla Krasnor and Will Stennett in making the request. Advertised as an event featuring "serious discussion and lots of traditional Anglican Book of Common Prayer services with glorious music, splendid food, and captivating speakers" this Cranmer Conference replicated similar conferences held in different parts of Canada since 2006. While in my case it would be hyperbole to describe the speakers as "captivating", the gathering did feature excellent discussion, delicious food and moving worship. And what made it most interesting was the fact that the conference participants were all young people – those between 19 and 29. And there were twenty-five.

The theme of the conference was "How Firm a Foundation: the Bible and the Prayer Book". I delivered three talks, the first treating what



the Reformers meant when they referred to the Bible as "God's Word written" (Article XX). This was followed by a session on "The Bible in the Prayer Book", where we saw just how permeated the Prayer Book is with Scriptural quotes and allusions. And then I spoke about "The Bible and the Prayer Book" where we examined Scripture's place in the lectionary as a curriculum in the school of discipleship. The discussion demonstrated just how important Scripture and liturgy are to the conference goers and confirmed for me why worship leaders need to take biblical preaching and liturgical presidency seriously. Jay Koyle provided an excellent example of the former when he spoke at the final banquet on the significance of words.

One of the most moving parts of the weekend was

actually using the BCP for services of Evensong, Morning Prayer, Compline, and, at the main service at St John's Church, Confirmation and Holy Communion. Our use of plainsong in reciting the Psalter was especially effective. The discipline of fitting the words to simple musical lines in ancient modes had a way of making us pay closer attention to the thoughts of the psalmist.

The conference included an extremely fine lecture on the history and use of the psalter by our guest organist, Aaron James. Aaron is a doctoral student at Eastman in Rochester, NY, and won this year's National Organ Playing Competition in Hamilton. Aaron was our organist on Sunday when it was my privilege to confirm conference organizer, Kayla Krasnor. Kayla became a

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Cranmer Conference – Continued from page 1

Christian while studying music in London, Ontario. It was announced at the service that she will be the new interim choir director at St John's.

When word got around about the conference, a group of over-29s wanted to get in on the action. So a lunch was organised at St Brice's Church on Saturday that brought out over forty people from a number of the churches in the deanery. Following a brief talk on the theology of the Prayer

Book, folks asked questions about the future of liturgy in the Church. They were pleased to hear that the Prayer Book appealed to some of today's youth and expressed the hope that there might be a resurgence of interest in the BCP.

The organizers tell me that the Cranmer Conference was a great success, with an attendance beyond what they had dared to imagine. This confirms my impression that the

BCP continues to inspire a younger generation, even as we approach the 350th anniversary of its publication. But I am not surprised. The BCP has been called the Bible arranged for daily prayer. Its language transcends the prosaic, echoing the honesty and insight of generations of saints from the earliest period of the Church's history who have struggled to follow Jesus Christ, and who have found grace in his word and sacrament.



ANGLICAN ESSAY COMPETITION FOR YOUNG CANADIANS

\$4,750 available in prizes!

In celebration of the 350th anniversary of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer and of the 50th anniversary of the 1962 Book of Common Prayer (Canada) in 2012, an essay competition is announced with the intention of raising the interest in and use of the *Book of Common Prayer* amongst Canadians aged 17-30. The competition is sponsored by the Prayer Book Society of Canada, Ottawa Branch.

Prizes of \$2,500, \$1,500 and \$750 are being offered for the best essays of approximately 3,000 words on the following topic: "Discuss the relevance of the *Book of Common Prayer* in the 21st century (in the light of two given quotations)". Competition details, and a list of suggested reference books, are available from the addresses below.

The essays, to be submitted in e-mail format, will be judged by a jury of three eminent Canadian Anglican theologians. The closing date for applications is **June 30, 2012**, and the prizes will be awarded by December 31, 2012. Essays may be written in either English or French.

Further information, and a complete statement of the Terms of Reference for this competition, are available. Interested candidates or teachers are urged to contact:

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Remembering William Tyndale

(Reprinted from the blog site "The King's English", run by Glen Scrivener, a priest in the Church of England, to mark the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible. This entry was posted on October 6th, the commemoration day of William Tyndale.)

In the 16th century, nowhere was as dangerous for a would-be Bible translator as England. In 1517 (the year of Luther's 95 theses), seven parents were burnt at the stake for teaching their children the Lord's Prayer in English.

Back in 1215 AD, the Fourth Lateran Council declared:

"The secret mysteries of the faith ought not to be explained to all men in all places ... For such is the depth of divine Scripture that, not only the simple and illiterate, but even the prudent and learned are not fully sufficient to try to understand it."

Two centuries later the English church, under Archbishop Thomas Arundel, turned this "ought not" into a heresy punishable by burning. England was the only major European country where translation was banned outright.

It was in this English context that Tyndale, aged just 22, spoke his famous words to another clergyman: "If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plow, shall know more of Scripture than thou doest." (1522, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*)

Tyndale was fluent in eight languages, a genius of translation and a true reformer. It was this passion to make the "plow-boy" know the Scriptures that cost him his freedom and then his life. He moved to the continent and in 1525 he produced the first printed New Testament in the English language.

His prologue was a combination of his own views on the gospel (he was an ardent believer in justification by faith alone) and a part translation of Luther's forward to his 1522 New Testament.

The first print run was 3000 and they were smuggled into England in bales of cloth. This New Testament was incredibly popular despite the fact that, if found with a copy, you would be burnt along with your Bible.

Tyndale has been called the architect of the English language, and in many cases he invented words to better convey the original: "atonement", "scapegoat", "Jehovah", "mercy seat", "Passover". And scores of his phrases have proved impossible to better in the last five centuries... "Let there be light"; "In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God"; "There were shepherds abiding in the field"; "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name"; "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak"; "Signs of the times"; "Skin of your teeth"; "In Him we live and move and have our being"; "Fight the good fight".

This year I have marvelled at the beauty of so many "King James phrases". Yet on closer examination the great majority turn out to be Tyndale phrases. Only around 20 of the 365 phrases I have been considering this year are original to the King James Bible. And Tyndale has provided the bulk of the rest.

Computer analysis has revealed that more than three quarters of the King James Version can be traced directly to Tyndale (83% of the NT and 76% of the OT). Many times we can wish he was followed even more closely. Consider

Tyndale's matchless translation of Genesis 3:4. The serpent tempts Eve saying, "Tush, ye shall not die"!

By 1535 he had translated all of the Old Testament from Genesis to 2 Chronicles as well as the book of Jonah. But he was betrayed by a friend and imprisoned for 18 months. He was condemned as a heretic, degraded from the priesthood, strangled and then his body burnt. But not before he cried out a famous prayer: "O Lord, open the King of England's eyes."

He was 42 years old. He had been on the run for 12 years. He had never married and was never buried. But within three years his prayer was answered. In 1539 Henry VIII ordered an English translation (the Great Bible) to be placed in every pulpit in England.

Miles Coverdale was responsible for the translation. He was not a linguist. So whose translation did he depend upon? Tyndale's.

Between Tyndale and the King James Version there were another five English translations, but none of them could get away from the monumental work of this giant of the reformation.

The King James Version is sometimes called "the greatest book written by committee". And I suppose there is something to celebrate about that. Yet, for the most part, those 47 scholars, working in peace and prosperity, could not improve on the work of a young evangelical who gave his liberty and his life for the gospel.

Thank God for William Tyndale.

Back from the Holy Mountain

By *Desmond Scotchmer*

In September I visited Mount Athos, in Greece. Mount Athos, *Hagion Oros*, or the "Holy Mountain", is a self-governing monastic state within the Greek republic, occupying a long peninsula that projects into the Aegean Sea, east of Thessaloniki (New Testament Thessalonica).

It's a timeless and ancient place. Aristotle was born at Stagira, close by the Acanthian Gulf, at the northern end of the Athonite peninsula. In 492 BC, an invasion fleet sent by Darius, King of Persia, foundered while trying to round the dangerous headland at its southern end, where Mount Athos itself rises steeply from the sea to a height of some 6,600 feet.

St Paul, of course, visited Thessalonica, and wrote to the Christian community there. Monastic communities were present on the Mountain as early as the third century, and in 885, the Emperor Basil I decreed that the Mountain was to be reserved for monks, forbidding laymen, farmers, or cattle breeders to settle there. After the fall of Byzantium, during the long night of Moslem occupation, Mount Athos came to fill the vacuum left in the Orthodox world after the fall of its historic centre, becoming the bastion of Orthodox spirituality, gaining over the centuries an uncontested spiritual authority devoid of the temptation to temporal power. During the nineteenth century, the monasteries on Mount Athos reached their high point, with some 7,000 monks in 1902. The twentieth century saw a sharp decline, with the population falling to some 1,500 by the 1950s. More recently, however, there has been a remarkable influx of young, educated monks from all over Europe and far beyond, and

the overall population has increased steadily, up some 32% over the past thirty years. The number of pilgrims and visitors has increased by far more than that.

Contemporary Mount Athos is a serious place. Serious and austere: services start at 2:00, 3:00, or 4:00 in the morning, and run for five or six hours, after which you break your fast with the monks. On a fast

some monasteries (Simonos Petras, Hagios Pavlos) perched dramatically on dizzying heights high above the sparkling blue sea. Some monasteries (Stavronikita, Iveron, Megistis Lavras) are like miniature mediaeval walled cities, achingly picturesque. The churches are old and fascinating, with marvellous frescoes, filled with many treasures. The libraries are ancient, and large.



day (Wednesdays and Fridays) you can expect a large chunk of black bread, with a tomato, a couple of olives, and a tankard of very cold, fresh water. There is no lunch. On a feast day, there may be wine with a supper of grilled or stuffed eggplant, and a lentil stew. Accommodation at places like St Panteleimon's Monastery, or Andreyevsky Skete is in large dormitories with thirty men or more. At St Panteleimon, it is lights out at 8:30 throughout the entire complex, and woe to anyone without a flashlight.

The mountain is wildly beautiful, with

Timeless and historic, Mount Athos is enjoying an astonishing rebound. The American Public Affairs programme "60 Minutes" devoted a whole programme to it last year; *National Geographic* featured it in a recent article. The ferry going out from Ouranopolis on the mainland at 6:00 a.m. was packed: by far the largest number of non-Greek pilgrims were Russian, mostly young, all quiet, friendly, and serious.

I went with a group of thirty-two Russians from Toronto, New York and Chicago. Where I found the austere Athonite regime of early hours, long

services, simple food, and long treks between monasteries along unpaved roads and steep paths daunting and difficult, they found the difficulties a challenge and an incentive. The contrast was humbling, but then, much about Mount Athos has to do with the learning of humility.

The return to modern life in Canada was jarring. Everywhere, you are assaulted by an aggressive consumerism, an obsession with glamour, youth, wealth, instant gratification, and a shameless sensuality. The Anglican Church of Canada, too, presented a bleak picture. I read that more dioceses have committed themselves to same-sex blessings, putting themselves at variance with the vast majority within the Anglican Communion, the plain meaning of Scripture, and 2,000 years of inherited Christian teaching. This is merely the latest step in an agenda which has seen the imposition of modern, secular norms in the place of traditional Scriptural ones, a flight from Scriptural authenticity and historic witness, and a desperate chase after "relevance". It seemed far from the resurgence of timeless Christianity that is taking place on Mount Athos.

This dreary situation, paralleled in most so-called mainstream churches, is a direct product, I believe, of a loss of confidence in the Truth of the central narrative of the Christian religion. This is attributable in turn, in large part, to academic theology as practiced in the seminaries of the western world. In these seminaries, for far too long, the assumption has held sway that we cannot really know much about the historical Jesus, as opposed to the Jesus of Christian belief. In other words, the narrative recorded in the New Testament, that God became flesh in the person of Jesus Christ, who died for our sins, and rose again, to ascend in glory to the Father, is not reliable, but was rather manufactured

to support a faith which somehow "developed" at some time over the first two or three centuries AD, and was then manipulated by a triumphant Constantinian Church to consolidate its own hegemony and agenda.

Yet now there is a spate of books – serious books – which begin to challenge that assumption, daring to suggest (how shocking!) that the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John might actually be the most complete and reliable sources of knowledge about Jesus, and show every sign of being history rather than works of fiction. One such book, reviewed in the *Times Literary Supplement* (TLS) on June 17 of this year, is Craig S. Keener's *The Historical Jesus of the Gospels*, published by Eerdmans in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The reviewer gingerly reaches the conclusion that the author "makes a calm case for the truth" of the Gospel narratives and the inapplicability of the frequently-offered parallels from mythology of dying and rising deities. It all turns, says the reviewer, on "dated experience with a historical person", that is, experience that claims a particular date and time, and experience that claims to be true. The review also points out that "there is no sign at all of any debate in early Christian literature about the tradition that Jesus rose bodily. That was taken for granted." He concludes "So there are robust arguments that must be answered robustly on their own terms by those who are determined to maintain the fundamental unreliability of the gospels, and the eye-witness accounts that lie behind them".

Another book recently reviewed in the TLS is Gavin Hyman's *A Short History of Atheism*, on July 15, also of this year. The reviewer, after pointing out that Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens have drawn a crowd by treating the debate about

the existence of God as an essentially simple one, proceeds to state that the book under review might more accurately have been titled *The Case against Atheism, According to Recent Academic Theology*, recent academic theology being, in this case, the new school of Radical Orthodoxy. Radical Orthodoxy arose in the 1990s in reaction to the liberalism of people like John Spong, and seeks to show that the God attacked by atheism is a modern construct, a product of Enlightenment rationalism, whereas a more traditional theism is utterly untouched by attacks on this shallow imposter-God. According to Radical Orthodoxy, modernity has invented a new, transformed concept of God, making Him into a rational human subject, an "object of thought": God therefore becomes a being who exists in the same way as things in the created order exist, rather than standing outside, and beyond His creation. This approach, says the reviewer, was invented by Descartes, modified by Kant, and finally clarified by Feuerbach who suggested God was a projection of human values. As we know, all human constructs are vulnerable to demolition.

I'm not sure the reviewer is altogether right about Descartes, and I would question some of the implications of Radical Orthodoxy, but such discussions are beyond the scope of this small article. However, it is important to realize that these books, and the perspectives they offer, reveal a profound shift in the debate about religion: to new ground which is far more respectful of the "Faith once delivered". Of course, this shift will bring with it new challenges; however, I think members of the PBSC will be heartened to know it is taking place. The religion that has been offered up in far too many Anglican Churches over the past thirty years and more has drifted far from the resounding

– Continued on page 6

claims of the Bible: that God is the great “I am that I am”; who called creation out of the void; who asks Job “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding”; the God who took flesh, and lived amongst us, and died and rose again. A God altogether too big for the human intellect to comprehend: the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy.

These books follow the appearance in 2003 of N.T. Wright’s *The Resurrection of the Son of God*. Wright was Bishop of Durham from 2003 to 2010: this scholarly, influential (and hefty) book - there are some 814 pages -

examines the Easter narratives (the empty tomb, the post-resurrection appearances), treating them as accounts of events that actually took place, rather than rationalizations of early Christian spirituality.

The connection between theology and liturgy is close. The rejection of traditional liturgies that occurred in the last century was intimately connected to the theological thinking of its day. It should come as no surprise that this new openness to traditional theology is being reflected by a renewed interest in traditional liturgies. Supporters of the Book of Common Prayer, sit up, and take note!

Of course, we seek not merely the historic Jesus but also the Eternal Jesus, who was with the Father from

the Beginning (John 1:1-3). They are, of course, one and the same, the prejudices of Enlightenment rationalism notwithstanding. We come to know the one through the other: the Eternal Jesus leads us to the historic Jesus whose life, ministry, death and resurrection are attested to in the Gospels; the Gospels point straight to

the face of God Himself in Christ, or had known those who had. Succeeding generations within the early Church trusted that witness, and their lives were transformed in turn. This is central: but the post-Enlightenment mind has trouble grasping it. We need to understand this phenomenon for what it is: a problem for a particular mindset at a particular point in Western

intellectual history, respond to it appropriately, and then move beyond it.

T.S. Eliot reminds us that in our beginning is our end. Books on theology can strengthen or weaken faith, but the real encounter with God takes place in the human heart. I experienced such an encounter

years ago, in the pages of the Book of Common Prayer. That encounter was re-affirmed in the small hours of the night, in the stillness of an ancient church on Mount Athos, during the long services before dawn, as the saints who had gone before looked back from the icons and frescoes, glimmering in the faint light of the hanging *lampadas*. It is in this sense that Mount Athos, and the Book of Common Prayer, connect us back to the historic Jesus through the Eternal Jesus, the Word, who was (and is) the great “I am” before Abraham.

In the stillness of eternity the claims of the doubters and sceptics are distant, shrill and false. And it is in the heart that we hear the message first, and understand it; only then is it conveyed to the mind: “Be still and know that I am the LORD”.



the Eternal Jesus revealed on Mount Tabor, and record the response of the Man who answered his Jewish critics with the astounding claim: “Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58).

The nagging fear that the narrative of our Lord’s life, death and resurrection as set out in the Gospels might not be reliable has sapped the strength and witness of the Christian Church in the West for half a century and more. My hope is that these books will open the way for a more robust response to twenty-first century scepticism than was offered in the last century. As the first reviewer mentioned above notes, there is no dispute in early Christian literature about the tradition that Jesus rose bodily. Surely this was because the first Christians experienced the closeness of Eternity: they had seen

“Gracious Restraint” Bishops

Six conservative bishops have banded together in the hope of influencing the overwhelmingly liberal House of Bishops in the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC). The six have pledged to observe with “gracious restraint” the three moratoria of the Windsor Report. These are:

1. consecration of clergy to the office of bishop who are living in a same gender relationship,
2. authorization of public rites of blessing for same gender unions;
3. interventions by bishops into ecclesiastical provinces other than their own.

The text of their declaration to the April 2011 meeting of the House of Bishops is reprinted below.

Although the six have been dubbed “gracious restraint bishops”, there is no official name for their association. The group includes three relatively new bishops – the Rt. Revs. Stephen Andrews (Algoma), Michael Hawkins (Saskatchewan) and Fraser Lawton (Athabasca) – and three longtime bishops: William Anderson

(Caledonia), Andrew Atagotaaluk (Arctic) and Larry Robertson (Yukon). The new group represents one-fifth of the House of Bishops.

In an interview, Bishop Andrews of Algoma explained that “the purpose of the group ... is to promote conditions that would help the church deepen its understanding of the nature of communion ... In forming this association we are primarily wanting to make a constructive contribution to our common life.” He continued: “The primary focus of our action is the House of Bishops. But we do hope that our efforts will be an encouragement to others outside the House who value the Anglican Communion and view with concern actions which threaten the integrity of our Anglican fellowship.” Bishop Andrews quoted British theologian John Stott who says that orthodox Anglicans “have three options before us: to get out; to give in; or to stay in and refuse to give in.”

Commenting on this very issue, Bishop Robertson of the Yukon said:

“As a bishop I have tried to be honest in standing against what I believe to be erroneous teaching in the church. I have, along with others, made a stand in my diocese, and at provincial and national synods. However, as a bishop I have also a responsibility to those God has given me to serve. I am responsible in part for their spiritual care and growth. I cannot do this by abandoning them. Although many have chosen to ignore it, the canons of the national church in this area have not changed.”

Bishop Lawton of Athabasca commented: “Athanasius made clear his own position with regard to the Arians, but did not depart the Church. For some time his appeared to be the minority position, yet, in the end, it was the one that prevailed. It is God’s Church and he is certainly able to use his people.”

(Extracted from “The Anglican Planet”, October 2011 issue. Article by Sue Careless.)

The text of the bishops’ statement: We are pleased to announce the establishment of an association of bishops in the Anglican Church of Canada who are committed to a policy of “gracious restraint”, embodied in observing the three-fold moratoria as enjoined by the Windsor Report. Between ourselves we agree to observe the discipline of the Windsor moratoria until such time as there is clarity in the Communion about the final status of the Anglican Covenant and our mutual obligations.

The purposes of the association will be:

1. To provide fellowship, support and accountability for those who are committed to remaining within the Anglican Church of Canada and the Anglican Communion;
2. To encourage some of our episcopal colleagues who are themselves in dioceses deeply conflicted on matters dividing the Church;
3. To preserve and promote the conditions for constructive discussion of the nature of Communion and the place of the Covenant, particularly in light of General Synod’s express will that we study the Anglican Covenant;
4. To respond to a call issuing from across the Church for greater episcopal leadership regarding matters threatening our fellowship; and
5. To issue a message to the wider Communion that there is an association of Canadian bishops who greatly value the efforts being made to strengthen our common life through the Covenant.



The association is open to any others who share in these commitments and purposes.

The Prayer Book Society of Canada

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