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Baptismal and Missional Ecclesiology in the American Book of Common Prayer

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Abstract

I argue that the ecclesiology expressed in the American 1979 Book of Common Prayer is, in addition to being a baptismal ecclesiology, also inherently missional. After briefly attending to debates about patterns of initiation, I turn my attention to the prayer book's theology of ministry, wherein all ecclesial ministry is rooted in baptismal identity. I weigh the relative merits of considering the laity as an 'order' within the Church, and consider the diaconal nature of the Church and its mission. I finally pursue the connections between between a baptismal ecclesiology and Christian mission. This involves a consideration of the prayer book's baptismal liturgy (with particular reference to the baptismal covenant), and of the fact that baptism implicates the Church in mission because it implicates Christians in the paschal mystery.

Keywords

baptism – ecclesiology – initiation – ministry – mission – paschal mystery – sacraments

Introduction

Baptismal ecclesiology is one of twentieth-century Anglicanism's distinctive (though not necessarily exclusive) contributions to theology, and the American Episcopal Church (TEC) has been at the forefront of this movement toward a

baptismal ecclesiology.¹ TEC's 1979 *Book of Common Prayer* (BCP)² and its revisions set the agenda for revised patterns of initiation and the flowering of a fully baptismal ecclesiology.³ This article develops the BCP's baptismal ecclesiology to the end of demonstrating that it is equally a missional ecclesiology.

To sustain and construct this claim I investigate baptismal ecclesiology expressed in the American prayer book. I will first explore the Church's constitution by baptism, which will involve an investigation of patterns of initiation. Second, I will examine the relation between baptism and ministry, with particular attention to the recovery of the laity as an order of the Church, and attention to the diaconal nature of all Christian ministry and mission. Finally, I shall explore the connections between baptism, baptismal ecclesiology, and

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- 1 I would like to express my gratitude to Susan K. Wood, S.C.L., Matthew S. C. Olver, Colin Podmore, and an anonymous reviewer for their comments on an earlier version of this article. For perhaps the most fulsome treatment of the emergence and significance of baptismal ecclesiology see Ruth A. Meyers, *Continuing the Reformation: Re-Visioning Baptism in the Episcopal Church* (New York: Church Publishing, 1997). See also Paul Avis, *The Identity of Anglicanism: Essentials of Anglican Ecclesiology* (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2007), pp. 109–116; *Anglicanism and the Christian Church: Theological Resources in Historical Perspective*, Revised and Expanded Ed. (London: T&T Clark, 2002), pp. 348–354; Susanne Watson Epting, 'Common Vows and Common Mission', *Anglican Theological Review* 92, no. 1 (2010): pp. 71–87; Ruth A. Meyers, 'By Water and the Holy Spirit: Baptism and Confirmation in Anglicanism', *Anglican Theological Review* 83, no. 3 (2001): pp. 417–25; 'The Baptismal Covenant and the Proposed Anglican Covenant', *Journal of Anglican Studies* 10, no. 1 (2011): pp. 31–41; Colin Podmore, 'The Baptismal Revolution in the American Episcopal Church: Baptismal Ecclesiology and the Baptismal Covenant', *Ecclesiology* 6 (2010): pp. 8–38; Stephen Sykes, *Unashamed Anglicanism* (London: Darton, Longman, & Todd, 1995), pp. 132–139; James F. Turrell, 'Muddying the Waters of Baptism: The Theology Committee's Report on Baptism, Confirmation, and Christian Formation', *Anglican Theological Review* 88, no. 3 (2006): pp. 341–59.
 - 2 *The Book of Common Prayer* (New York: Church Hymnal Corporation, 1979). All parenthetical references will be to this book.
 - 3 See the overview in Meyers, *Continuing the Reformation*. Also noted by Paul Avis, 'Baptism and the Journey of Christian Initiation', in *Drenched in Grace: Essays in Baptismal Ecclesiology Inspired by the Work and Ministry of Louis Weil*, ed. Lizette Larson-Miller and Walter Knowles (Eugene: Pickwick, 2013), pp. 51–52; John W. B. Hill and Rowena J. Roppelt, 'Christian Initiation in the Anglican Communion', *Anglican Theological Review* 95, no. 3 (2013): pp. 419–34. For a more critical approach see Podmore, 'Baptismal Revolution', from whom I draw the phrase 'baptismal revolution'. Maxwell Johnson cites the Roman Catholic Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults and the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer* as the two agenda setting centres of gravity for twentieth-century initiatory practices, not just within but also beyond their respective communions: *The Rites of Christian Initiation: Their Evolution and Interpretation* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999), p. 296.

the Church's mission. This will involve an examination of TEC's baptismal covenant, which I will supplement with my own contribution that a recognition of the paschal character of baptism necessarily involves the Church in mission. Throughout my argument, I shall refer to the critiques of and concerns with TEC's baptismal developments raised by two representative British Anglicans, Paul Avis and Colin Podmore, who note the departures TEC has made from the classical understanding of the Church of England. While my concern is with the ecclesiology of the American prayer book, which expresses only a particular, North American expression of Anglican thought, reference to the concerns raised in other Provinces helps to set TEC's ecclesiology in a more global context.

While Eucharistic ecclesiologies have made significant and enriching inroads, a vision of the Church rooted in baptism provides an important corollary, counterpoint, and complement to them. Neither baptismal nor Eucharistic ecclesiologies should stand in isolation from the other. For the Eucharistic communion is made up of those who have been baptized into Christ's body, the Church, and the body into which we are baptized realizes itself in the Eucharist.⁴ Throughout this article, my usage of the term baptismal ecclesiology should be understood in this light: as complementary to and not competitive with Eucharistic ecclesiology.

'Mission' has the potential to be a wax nose, or a procrustean bed. Rather than leave it to my readers to supply their own definition of mission, I shall briefly state the perspective that informs this article. The Anglican Communion has identified 'Five Marks of Mission', which are 'To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom[;] To teach, baptize and nurture new believers[;] To respond to human need by loving service[;] To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation[; and] To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.'⁵ Paul Avis describes mission as '*the whole Church*

4 Meyers provides a helpful overview of how the recovery of a Eucharistic Ecclesiology paved the way and even demanded the emergence of a baptismal ecclesiology (Meyers, *Continuing the Reformation*, pp. 20–64). Avis notes the Anglican precedents for Eucharistic ecclesiologies, some of which were independent of the Orthodox and Roman Catholic renaissance in Eucharistic Ecclesiology. He also notes that baptismal and Eucharistic ecclesiologies are mutually constituting, and indicate each other (Avis, *Identity of Anglicanism*, pp. 81–104, 116. See also Sykes, *Unashamed Anglicanism*, pp. 132–133. See also Susan K. Wood, *One Baptism: Ecumenical Dimensions of the Doctrine of Baptism* (Collegetown, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2009), pp. 116–118.

5 'The Five Marks of Mission', *Anglican Communion Website*, n.d., accessed December 22, 2014.

bringing the whole Christ to the whole world, adding, 'In this holistic concept of mission, mission is seen as the cutting edge of the total life of the Church'.⁶ It is an integral and holistic reality, encompassing all dimensions of humanity. It involves evangelization and striving for just social conditions. It encompasses the Church's internal life of worship and formation and its outward facing praxis in the world. It is to be extended to every human being: Christian and non-Christian. To focus on any one of these elements to the detriment of another, is to be imbalanced at best and sub-Christian at worst, engaging in something other than Christian mission. With this established, I turn to my argument itself.

Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist: Patterns of Initiation

Discussions of baptismal ecclesiology naturally raise the question of Christian initiation. Indeed, much of the motivation for TEC's emergent baptismal ecclesiology and of the debate surrounding it has been about initiation, so there is a fairly broad literature on the matter.⁷ Following the 1979 prayer book revisions, baptism has come to be seen as 'full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ's body, the Church' (BCP, p. 298). The revised prayer book has sought

6 Paul Avis, *A Ministry Shaped by Mission* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), p. 1. Emphasis original. Avis further notes that the phrase 'whole Christ' should be understood to refer to the *totus Christus*, head and members (p. 3), and that the Anglican Marks of Mission are deficient, as they make no mention of worship or integral practices like the Eucharist (p. 16).

7 Taken up in Avis, *Identity of Anglicanism*, pp. 112–116; Paul Avis, 'Is Baptism "Complete Sacramental Initiation"?' in *The Journey of Christian Initiation: Theological and Pastoral Perspectives*, by The Faith and Order Commission of the Church of England, ed. Paul Avis (London: Church House Publishing, 2011), pp. 6–21; 'Journey of Initiation'; Joe Goodwin Burnett, 'Reconsidering a Bold Proposal: Reflections, Questions, and Concerns Regarding a Theology of Confirmation', *Anglican Theological Review* 88, no. 1 (2006), pp. 69–83; Paul Gibson, 'Baptismal Ecclesiology—Some Questions', in *Equipping the Saints: Ordination in Anglicanism Today* (Dublin: Columbia, 2006), pp. 35–44; Hill and Roppelt, 'Initiation in Anglicanism'; Meyers, *Continuing the Reformation*, pp. 1–18, 132–146, 162–190; 'Baptism and Confirmation'; 'Fresh Thoughts on Confirmation', *Anglican Theological Review* 88, no. 3 (2006), pp. 321–40; Leonel L. Mitchell, 'The Theology of Christian Initiation and the Proposed Book of Common Prayer', *Anglican Theological Review* 60, no. 4 (1978), pp. 399–419; Susan Marie Smith, 'Confirmation as Perlocutionary Response to Infant Baptism in the Episcopal Church: A Suggestion from Liturgical Hermeneutics', *Liturgical Ministry* 9 (2000), pp. 72–83; Kathryn Tanner, 'Towards a New Theology of Confirmation', *Anglican Theological Review* 88, no. 1 (2006), pp. 85–94; Turrell, 'Muddying the Waters'.

to restore a single, unified, sacramental rite of initiation.⁸ While North American Anglicanism has adopted this revised pattern, other Anglican churches, notably the Church of England, have not. In defence of the Church of England's traditional and still official practice, Paul Avis has raised the question of whether or not the American practice is an adequate pattern for initiation, as it leaves off catechesis, public profession of faith, confirmation and reception of Holy Communion.⁹

Because my purpose in this essay is not to investigate or adjudicate questions regarding initiation, I cannot treat these matters in depth. However, as my argument is informed by a particular relationship between the elements of initiation, I shall briefly articulate it. To begin I should note that what matters, theologically and ecumenically, is that initiation be both Christological and pneumatological and culminate in the Eucharist.¹⁰ So long as we are able to recognize these aspects within each other's initiatory rites, a degree of latitude seems appropriate. That said, with certain adjustments, I prefer the American prayer book's pattern of a single unified initiatory rite—for adults as well as infants—to a temporally periodized ritual process. I prefer it for two primary reasons. First, at the level of theological coherence, baptism and Eucharist are considered generally necessary for salvation, while confirmation (as a separate rite) is not.¹¹ It seems strange indeed to have an initiatory requirement beyond what is necessary for salvation, particularly when baptism is understood to graft one to Christ and his Church (BCP, p. 873, Article XXVII).¹²

Second, the American position can be understood in a way that does not run afoul of Avis's contentions. Here I focus upon the case of infant baptisms, as nearly all of Avis's objections pertain to such cases, and would be moot for adult converts, who are the normative subjects of initiation in the 1979 BCP. Regarding public affirmation of faith, we must take seriously that one's parents

8 Marion J. Hatchett, *Commentary on the American Prayer Book* (New York: Seabury, 1980), pp. 276, 279–280; Mitchell, 'Theology of Initiation,' p. 418; Meyers, *Continuing the Reformation*, p. 235.

9 Avis, *Identity of Anglicanism*, pp. 115–116; 'Complete Initiation?', p. 15; 'Journey of Initiation,' pp. 54–59. See also Harriett Harris, 'Baptism in the Journey of Christian Initiation,' in *The Journey of Christian Initiation: Theological and Pastoral Perspectives*, pp. 60–65.

10 Wood, *One Baptism*, p. 138. This is also consonant with the seminal text from the World Council of Churches, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982), §§ 11–20.

11 This is acknowledged by Avis, 'Complete Initiation?', pp. 13–14; 'Journey of Initiation,' p. 55.

12 This puts Avis in the strange position of stating that membership in Christ's body is bestowed baptismally, not in confirmation, and yet still regarding confirmation as requisite for initiation (*Identity of Anglicanism*, p. 114).

and godparents are indeed publicly professing the faith in one's name (BCP, pp. 302, 859). To be sure, one will need to personally appropriate this, but to view this profession as inadequate undercuts the validity of the baptism in question. Indeed, tying confirmation to public profession of faith is a relatively recent development dating to the Protestant reformation.¹³ Regarding instruction in the faith, again, surely this must happen, but it need not be initiatory. All will need continual instruction throughout the course of the Christian life. Finally, regarding admittance to the Lord's Table, the 1979 rite provides for this. Indeed, it is primarily the fact that a unified rite of initiation makes explicit the connection between baptism and Eucharist that leads me to prefer it.

Avis helpfully insists that the Christian life is a journey and process, and argues that initiation can and perhaps should reflect this.¹⁴ Yet this can be taken into account without periodizing initiation in the way he suggests. Indeed, even with a temporally extended process, the pilgrim character of the Christian life would not be fully expressed, for the logic could always be taken further. Having confirmation as a milestone could inchoately suggest that the journey is complete, when in fact Christian 'maturity is an eschatological gift never fully realized on this side of the grave.'¹⁵ If the pilgrim character of the Christian life *necessarily* gives shape to initiation, then it would seem that initiation could never be complete. I would further add that the practice of communing un-confirmed Christians (a practice of most Anglican churches, including the Church of England, and to which Avis is open),¹⁶ mitigates against such an extended, periodized process. All of this is not to say that a periodized process is inconsistent with the affirmation that the Christian life is a journey. Instead, my contention is that the pilgrim character of the disciple's

13 Its novelty, of course, does not preclude its being a positive development. For a sympathetic assessment of this matter see Martin Davie, 'Baptism and Confirmation – From the New Testament to the Reformation', in *The Journey of Christian Initiation: Theological and Pastoral Perspectives*, pp. 46–51.

14 Avis, 'Journey of Initiation,' pp. 58–59; *Identity of Anglicanism*, pp. 114–115 (the term 'cursus' is found here). Also noted by Sykes, *Unashamed Anglicanism*, pp. 14, 21. This approach is also taken by World Council of Churches, *BEM*, §§ 11–16. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (San Francisco, Ignatius, 1994) also holds that initiation is 'accomplished by a journey...[comprising] several stages', but notes that it 'can be covered rapidly or slowly', (§ 1229) and that in both the Latin and Eastern rites a 'single celebration of the three sacraments of initiation' is normative (§ 1233). A distinction is maintained between the baptism of adults and infants within the Western rite, though (§ 1231).

15 Meyers, 'Thoughts on Confirmation', p. 328.

16 Avis, *Identity of Anglicanism*, p. 115.

life cannot demand one pattern over another, for if it did, then it would prove too much.

In light of the criticism that initiation into Christ's body is abortive unless one indeed partakes in the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist, I suggest that rather than viewing the water rite of baptism itself as complete initiation into the Church, we take 'baptism' as a synecdoche for the initiatory rite, which includes first communion.¹⁷ Baptism brings us into the body of Christ, into the Eucharistic communion. This identity is realized when baptized Christians partake of the sacrament of Christ's body and blood, for it is to share in this communion that they are baptized. The initiatory pattern would then be baptism and first communion (preferably as a single rite, though there may be pastoral reasons for extending the process). Indeed, Avis suggests that he would be open to baptism as complete initiation if baptism were also understood to include laying on of hands for strengthening by the Holy Spirit and admission to communion,¹⁸ which would be tantamount to understanding it to include confirmation.¹⁹

17 That first communion is the ordinary and expected outcome of the prayer book's baptismal liturgy is affirmed by Hatchett, *Commentary*, p. 267; Leonel L. Mitchell, *Praying Shapes Believing: A Theological Commentary on the Book of Common Prayer* (Minneapolis: Winston, 1985), p. 89; Louis Weil, 'Baptismal Ecclesiology: Uncovering a Paradigm', in *Equipping the Saints: Ordination in Anglicanism Today*, ed. Ronald L. Dowling and David R. Holeton (Dublin: Columbia, 2006), p. 21. This is not far from Avis's contention that baptism is complete as baptism, but not complete as initiation ('Complete Initiation?', pp. 12–15; 'Journey of Initiation', pp. 54–55). This is also the basic approach of the Roman Catholic Aidan Kavanagh, *The Shape of Baptism: The Rite of Christian Initiation* (New York: Pueblo, 1978).

18 Avis, 'Journey of Initiation', pp. 53–54.

19 Under the 1979 BCP's new initiatory form, one of the thorniest questions has been the place of confirmation. Suggestions have ranged from abolishing confirmation as a separate rite altogether (Meyers, *Continuing the Reformation*, pp. 238–248; Turrell, 'Muddying the Waters') to confirmation as a taking mature ownership for the changed life pledged in baptism (Tanner, 'Theology of Confirmation') to confirmation as a non-sacramental reaffirmation of faith (Meyers, 'Baptism and Confirmation'; 'Thoughts on Confirmation'). None of these suggestions is particularly satisfactory. However, some more adequate account of confirmation needs to be developed, as the sacrament remains important for continued unity within the Anglican Communion (Resolution 74 of the 1958 Lambeth conference encourages prayer book revision, while stating that confirmation remains central to Anglican identity [available online at <http://www.lambethconference.org/resolutions/1958/1958-74.cfm>, accessed March 5, 2014] and ecumenically. In other words, I suggest that confirmation be retained, but be reunited with baptism as was the case historically.

So it seems that the best solution is to recognize the post-baptismal laying on of hands and chrismation as confirmation, including in the case of infants, according to the pattern of the Eastern Churches, and strive to render the rest of sacramental practice consistent therewith.²⁰ While there may be pastoral reasons for separating the elements of the rite, I do not believe that there are adequate theological reasons for so doing. Regarding the reception of TEC's pattern, the analogy with Orthodoxy may be particularly useful. The Roman Catholic Church regards the Eastern pattern of initiation as an adequate expression of the faith, even as it differs from the Western practice.²¹ Perhaps the churches of the Anglican Communion could adopt a similar perspective regarding their own differences. This understanding of baptism ordered to the Eucharist retains the important dynamism to which Avis points and roots initiation fully in salvific union with Christ. I shall return to this dynamism and Christological rooting below.

Baptism and Church Order

The renewal of baptismal ecclesiology has led to a re-envisioning of ecclesial ministry, one more conducive to a missional understanding of the Church. In this section I explore these implications, noting in particular the more prominent place of the laity and the reemergence of the vocational diaconate, both of which are significantly bound up with the missionary nature of the Church.

Common Priesthood Founded in Baptism

In the prayer book's baptismal liturgy, the newly baptized are greeted thus: 'We receive you into the household of God. Confess the faith of Christ crucified, proclaim his resurrection, and share with us in his eternal priesthood' (BCP, p. 308). The assumption, then, is that the Church as the People of God is a priestly people. By baptism, one is given a place in the Eucharistic assembly, the *laos* of God, and deputed to share in its worship. The prayer book places a high value upon ordained office, but this office must be understood in light of the common priestly identity shared by all the baptized. Avis notes that Christ

20 The current chrismation rite is an interesting amalgam of a post-baptismal anointing into Christ's threefold office of prophet, priest, and king and a more pneumatological anointing for confirmation. It seems therefore adequate to be considered chrismation in the same sense as it is in the Orthodox Churches. For a comparison of Western and Eastern patterns of initiation see Wood, *One Baptism*, pp. 94–110.

21 E.g., *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, §§ 1290–1292; Wood, *One Baptism*, pp. 91–118.

was marked out as prophet, priest, and king by his baptism, and that Christians, by virtue of their baptism, come to share in this threefold office.²²

Within this understanding, ordained ministry takes on the character of distinctive roles within the priestly people, rather than above them. This is highlighted in the BCP's 'Concerning the Service of the Church', which identifies four orders within the Church: 'lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacons', and instructs that 'In all services, the entire Christian assembly participate in such a way that the members of each order ... fulfill the functions proper to their respective orders, as set forth in the rubrical directions for each service' (BCP, pp. 13–14 [13]; see also pp. 284, 298, 354, as well as the catechism on p. 855).²³ This represents, then, a recovery of the laity as fully Christian members of the Church with a positive ministerial contribution, rather than merely passive recipients of the clergy's ministrations.

An Ordered Laos

At the same time, a clear differentiation between the orders is maintained. The preface to the ordination rites note 'three distinct orders of ordained ministers', and then enumerating the various prerogatives of bishops, presbyters, and deacons. Indeed, the conferral of holy orders is the exclusive prerogative of bishops, and the exercise of the activities proper to bishops, priests, and deacons is restricted to those who have been appointed to those orders by the laying on of episcopal hands (BCP, 510). The instructions for each liturgy specify that the ordinand not be vested in any 'vesture distinctive of ecclesiastical or academic rank or order' (BCP, pp. 511, 524, 536). As Marion Hatchett explains, this is 'Because each order has its own integrity'.²⁴ This indicates a distinction between clergy and laity as well as between the different clerical orders. These distinctions are further expressed in the sorts of charges given to and prayers offered for the ordinands within the liturgies (BCP, pp. 517–521, 531–534, 543–545). In all cases, though, the ordinand's future ministry is set within the context of the life of the community and not in any way separate from it, and in diaconal and presbyteral ordinations the general call of the entire people of God is explicitly mentioned. (BCP, pp. 517, 531, 543).

To explain the place of ordained ministry within this framework of common priesthood, Avis resorts to the concept of representation. All Christians, clergy and lay, represent Christ. This is a corporate representation. It is the

²² Avis, *Shaped by Mission*, pp. 65–69.

²³ Avis notes that marking out the laity as an order may be misleading (*Shaped by Mission*, p. 91), a point to which I return below.

²⁴ Hatchett, *Commentary*, p. 515.

entire *laos*, both clergy and laity, that represents Christ.²⁵ For this reason, he is hesitant to identify the laity as a distinct order, as this can tend to obscure the corporate nature of representation, which belongs to the *laos* as a whole, of which the ordained and the laity are a part. All the baptized together represent Christ. The laity are laity because they are part of the *laos* formed by baptism. To make laity an order within the *laos* risks losing sight of this,²⁶ as they become one more section of the whole, and the representative function of the *laos* is parceled out into orders rather than belonging to the entire people as such. This, in part, accounts for the continued clergy/laity distinction for ‘what is given to the whole body no private individual may arrogate to himself without the authority of the body.’²⁷ In other words, the whole people shares in Christ’s priesthood and represents him. It would be inappropriate for an individual member of the body to take upon herself a representative role within the body unless authorized to do so. This would be an illegitimate and presumptuous usurpation. Properly understood, then, the distinction among the orders is meant to safeguard the dignity of the baptized as a whole.

This leaves open the question, then, of whether or not the laity are ‘ministers’ of the church. The catechism in the 1979 prayer book identifies them as such (BCP, p. 855). Once more, the TEC revision has been rejected, or at least called into question, by the Church of England, with the Faith and Order advisory group noting that ‘ministry is entrusted to the whole Church, to the Church as such, not simply to the ordained. Every baptized believer is potentially a minister as well as a missionary,’²⁸ but then determining that all the baptized are called to discipleship, but not necessarily to ministry.²⁹ It is not necessary to my argument to adjudicate this question, the resolution of which depends largely upon what is meant by ‘ministry’.

The Church of England’s Faith and Order Commission suggests that “‘ministry” refers to God-given work, for the kingdom of God, that is acknowledged by the Church.’³⁰ The prayer book catechism explains that each order’s ministry is

25 Avis, *Shaped by Mission*, p. 88. This is also the understanding of The Faith and Order Advisory Group of the Church of England, ‘The Mission and Ministry of the Whole Church: Biblical, Theological and Contemporary Perspectives’, Church of England Website, 2007, p. 120, <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/1229854/gsmisc%20854.pdf>. Accessed January 2, 2015.

26 Avis, *Shaped by Mission*, p. 91.

27 Avis, *Shaped by Mission*, p. 95.

28 Faith and Order, *Mission and Ministry*, p. 104.

29 Faith and Order, *Mission and Ministry*, p. 116. So also Avis, *Shaped by Mission*, pp. 44–48.

30 Faith and Order, *Mission and Ministry*, p. 119.

to 'represent Christ and the Church' and specifies particular forms of that representation (BCP, p. 855). It seems undeniable that the laity have some such function, which leads me to believe that, at least as ministry is understood in the 1979 BCP, identifying lay people as ministers is acceptable. Indeed, given the BCP's official status within TEC, it would seem that the Faith and Order Commission's understanding that 'ministry' be 'acknowledged by the Church' is also met here. In this connection, though, I believe that the other criterion established by the Faith and Order Commission—that ministry is service for the kingdom—should also be insisted upon. Ministry is not anything and everything, but refers rather to functions of representing Christ and his church.³¹

At the same time, this representation is corporate, with each order serving a specific function. Therefore, it might be best to understand the laity as ministers in a corporate sense—the laity as a whole serve a representative function, at least in an intra-ecclesial sense. Beyond the church community, though, lay people, as individuals are called upon to represent Christ and the church (cf. BCP, p. 855).

Further, because this representation is corporate, rigidly clericalist schemas—according to which bishops are at the top of a pyramidal structure, with priests and deacons on successively lower rungs, followed by the laity at the bottom—fall by the wayside. Instead, Avis envisions a non-hierarchical³² differentiation of order within the baptized community.³³ Each has a part to play and these parts are integrally connected with the whole. There is no sense in attempting to decide which is more important, because all exist together and the result is greater than the sum of the parts. With this, Louis Weil, a pioneer of baptismal ecclesiology, concurs, noting further that such a vision does not flatten all ministry out into an undifferentiated mass, rather it recognizes that all ministry is founded upon and flows from baptism.³⁴ For this reason,

31 Cf. Faith and Order, *Mission and Ministry*, pp. 114–115. So also Avis, *Shaped by Mission*, pp. 43–49.

32 I use the term 'hierarchy' in its vulgar sense here. However, for a theological defence of hierarchy as an important ecclesiological concept, sacramentally representing the providence of Christ and just order, rather than a fetishization of power structures, see Brian Horne, 'Homo Hierarchicus and Ecclesial Order', *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 7 (2007): pp. 16–28. For my own understanding of the sacramental quality of ecclesial hierarchy, see Eugene R. Schlesinger, 'The Threefold Body in Eschatological Perspective: With and Beyond Henri de Lubac on the Church', *Ecclesiology* 10.2 (2014), pp. 186–204.

33 Avis, *Shaped by Mission*, p. 91.

34 Weil, 'Baptismal Ecclesiology', p. 22.

I judge the question of whether the laity are referred to as an 'order' to be largely semantic. So long as those who demur from this appellation remember the royal, priestly, prophetic dignity of all the baptized, and so long as those who use it remember that it is the baptized people as a whole who represent Christ, either practice seems acceptable.

Within this framework, rather than ordination being a promotion or a climbing of the ecclesiastical ladder, it is an increased scope of representative ministry as deacons take on pastoral care, including some auxiliary sacramental roles, presbyters take on sacramental functions, and bishops take on a care for the Local Church in its entirety, maintaining ministerial continuity, and connection with the wider body of Christ.³⁵ All of these ministries flow from and are rooted in the common baptismal identity. 'Thus', writes Avis, 'we have a bottom-up approach which emphasizes the breadth and freedom of the Spirit's *charismata*, complemented by a top-down approach that stresses duly constituted authority, this also flowing from the Spirit through different channels'.³⁶

Colin Podmore notes, though, that certain understandings of the relationship between baptismal grace and the grace of ordination, according to which the latter arises from the former are ecumenically problematic, and notes that Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogues have argued that the grace of sacramental ordination belongs to a different sphere of the Holy Spirit's activity. It is not simply a further expression of baptismal grace.³⁷ This understanding should be upheld. There is nothing in the prayer book that demands its denial,³⁸ and its affirmation is consonant with the prayer book's manifest concern to uphold the integrity of each order, and the distinction not just between clergy and laity, but between the different clerical orders (BCP, pp. 511, 524, 536).³⁹ Further, were the difference not qualitative, but instead quantitative, we would be left with an even more pernicious clericalism than the one we might seek to escape by erasing the distinctions. The clergy would become super Christians,

35 Avis, *Shaped by Mission*, pp. 98–99.

36 Avis, *Shaped by Mission*, p. 102.

37 Podmore, 'Baptismal Revolution', pp. 26–27.

38 The most relevant canon of the Episcopal Church demands that the baptized have opportunity to discover and exercise their own ministries, including access to the process of discernment for ministerial ordination, but makes no explicit statement about the relationship between baptismal grace and the gifts and graces of ordination (The Episcopal Church, *Constitutions and Canons Together with the Rules of Order for the Government of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, Otherwise Known as The Episcopal Church* [New York: Church Publishing, 2006], III.1.1–2).

39 See Hatchett, *Commentary*, p. 515.

receiving more of the same grace, rather than receiving a different sort of grace in order to serve the common priesthood.⁴⁰ Yet, recognizing the difference in quality between the graces of sacramental order and of baptism need not rule out seeing ordination as rooted in baptismal identity. Baptism is admission into the priestly people, while ordination is a reconfiguration within that people.

Baptism and Diakonia

A final aspect of the relation between baptism and ministry, which will help bridge the gap from this section to my consideration of mission, is the diaconate, the first of the ordained ministries. In this section I contend that the church as a whole is diaconal in character, a reality which is rooted in baptism and made visible in the distinctive ministry of deacons. Further, as deacons are concerned with the church's ministry *extra murae*, it follows that the diaconal church is necessarily a missional church.

As Susan Watson Epting notes, the recovery of a ministry grounded in baptism and a renewal of the historic diaconate coincided, and are both witnessed to in the 1979 BCP.⁴¹ Avis, through a survey of the New Testament which draws upon the work of John N. Collins, challenges the commonly accepted definition of *diakonia* as humble service. Rather:

Deacons, like priests and bishops, are ordained to the ministry of Christ, a ministry that is not one of general service, but is specific and distinct and can be exegeted by means of the scheme 'prophet, priest and king'. Diaconal ministry consists of the diaconal expression of the one mission and ministry—a ministry of word, sacrament and pastoral responsibility—that is entrusted to the Church.⁴²

The diaconal office is specifically missional in bearing. Deacons mediate between the Church and the world.⁴³ Their 'ministry embodies the fundamental commission of the Church ... it is representational of the commissioned,

40 This lies behind the Roman Catholic Church's teaching that the common and ministerial priesthoods differ 'in essence and not only in degree' (*Lumen Gentium*, §10).

41 Epting, 'Common Vows', p. 72.

42 Avis, *Shaped by Mission*, pp. 103–112 [112].

43 A forthcoming Faith and Order Report for the Church of England notes that though Collins argues for this mediating understanding of *diakonia*, 'the evidence he assembles demonstrates that the word never leaves the sense of a household attendant': 'Senior Church Leadership: A Resource for Reflection', *Thinking Anglicans Website*, 2014, p. 26, <http://www.thinkinganglicans.org.uk/uploads/SeniorChurchLeadership%20.pdf>.

apostolic character of the whole body of the baptized.⁴⁴ So then if ordained ministries represent something of the church's nature and if the diaconate is foundational to ordained office, it follows that the church is fundamentally diaconal.

For this reason, it makes sense to continue the historic practice of sequential ordination. One is made a deacon before a priest, and a priest before a bishop. This is because all ecclesial ministry is diaconal in some sense. One does not cease to be a deacon upon entering the presbyterate or the episcopate.⁴⁵ This might be a helpful way of thinking about sacramental character. Because each order has its own integrity, deacons are not defective priests or bishops, nor are priests only partial bishops. Diaconal character is indelible, as is presbyteral character. The fullness of sacramental order is found in episcopal consecration, and this fullness includes all that makes diaconal and presbyteral order distinctive. Epting draws this out further, rooting diaconal identity in the baptismal identity of the entire people of God, writing, 'I believe that even though ordained, our primary identity remains baptismal', and noting that the entire Church is called to the sort of service exemplified by diaconal ministry.⁴⁶ The sacrament of diaconal ordination brings this to visibility not just for an individual, but for the entire community.

Returning to the question of the laity as an 'order', we might note that baptism's character is likewise indelible. If laity refers to being a member of the *laos*, then the logic could be carried further: one retains one's lay identity within ordained ministry, just as a bishop retains diaconal and presbyteral character. However, canon law and common parlance typically define laity differently, such that one ceases to be a lay person upon ordination: a limitation of contrastive, binary definitions.⁴⁷ There is, then, a terminological conundrum. However, it is worth noting that bishops, presbyters, and deacons never lose their baptismal status and their identity as members of the *laos*.

Moreover, diaconal service carries the Church beyond itself, for, in addition to 'assist[ing] bishops and priests in the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments', a deacon is called upon to 'represent Christ and his Church, particularly as a servant of those in need' (BCP, p. 856). She is

Accessed January 2, 2015. Hence, the compartment of service remains central to the diaconal office.

44 Avis, *Shaped by Mission*, pp. 112–113 [113].

45 Avis, *Shaped by Mission*, pp. 113–114.

46 Epting, 'Common Vows', p. 71.

47 For an analysis of this conundrum within the Roman Catholic Church see Jean Beyer, 'Le laïcat et les laïcs dans l'Église', *Gregorianum* 68 (1987), pp. 157–85.

to 'serve all people, particularly the poor, the weak, the sick, and the lonely' (BCP, p. 543). This, then, demands attention to the concrete world in which real women and men with real needs—financial, medical, relational, and spiritual—live. In order to serve those in such need, deacons must be attentive to the living conditions of the men and women in the community, which necessarily places a focus of ministry beyond the gathered church. Moreover, the charge given in her ordination makes no distinction between those who are members of the church and those who are not in specifying objects of diaconal care (BCP, p. 543). Therefore, the lives and ministries of deacons should be rooted not just within the church, but in the world beyond as well. Christians are 'all called to Christ-like service at baptism', while deacons serve as 'living reminders that the church itself is called, not only to provide nurture, sacramental sustenance, and fellowship to its members, but to be the church outside its walls in mission, witness, and service'.⁴⁸ The diaconate is the foundational order of ordained ministry, but is itself an order within the *laos*, which is iconic of the common call to missional service shared by the entire people of God by virtue of their baptism. To this mission I now turn.

Baptism and Mission

The burden of my argument is to establish that the 1979 Book of Common Prayer's baptismal ecclesiology is also a missional ecclesiology. In this section I explore the missional dimensions of baptism and of an ecclesiology grounded in baptism. At the outset, we must note that the foregoing discussion of ministerial order within the Church is not incidental to a consideration of mission. For, as the BCP's catechism states, 'The mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ ... The Church pursues its mission as it prays and worships, proclaims the Gospel, and promotes justice, peace, and love...[and] The church carries out its mission through the ministry of all its members' (BCP, p. 855). Therefore, as bishops, priests, deacons, and lay people exercise their ministry, the mission of Christ is carried forward. This includes ministries that are more *ad intra* in addition to those that are more *ad extra*. A view of mission that dispenses with either of these aspects will be impoverished.

In this understanding, then, even the very act of baptism is an engagement in mission. This is the case for three reasons. First, as we have seen, mission is carried forward through prayer and worship, which includes enacting the rite

48 Epting, 'Common Vows', p. 76.

of baptism. Second, by baptism, Christ and his gospel are extended further, entering into the lives of the baptized. They are brought into the Church and reconciled to God, which is the Church's definition of its mission.⁴⁹ This accords with the Matthean Great Commission in which Christ instructs the apostles to go and make disciples of all nations by baptizing them into the triune name and teaching them to observe all he has commanded (Matthew 28:19–20). Baptism, then, is itself constitutive of the Church's mission. Third, as people are baptized into the order of laity, they become ministers of the Church, integral to carrying out its mission. Baptism, then, also makes missionaries.

The Baptismal Covenant

That baptism makes missionaries is perhaps seen most clearly in the baptismal liturgy's baptismal covenant, which itself is a unique contribution, new to the 1979 prayer book.⁵⁰ It has had a marked communion-wide effect on baptismal liturgies, such that it now forms one of two 'major patterns' of baptismal rite.⁵¹ After the candidates for baptism are examined, making their threefold renunciation and threefold affirmation (BCP, pp. 301–303), the entire congregation joins them in articulating the covenant. It begins with a profession of faith using an interrogative form of the Apostles' Creed (BCP, p. 304). Following the Creed five questions are asked:

Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers? ... Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord? ... Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ? ... Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself? ... Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

BCP, pp. 304–305

Brian Spinks has raised the suggestion that by placing these vows before the baptism, rather than after it, a more contractual than covenantal relationship is in place, and indeed, that the covenant 'is certainly asking for things beyond

49 Avis, *Shaped by Mission*, p. 32.

50 Bryan D. Spinks, *Reformation and Modern Rituals and Theologies of Baptism: From Luther to Contemporary Practices* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 175.

51 Spinks, *Theologies of Baptism*, p. 183.

the Creed, and could be regarded as semi-Pelagian.⁵² However, as Marion Hatchett notes, these questions are simply an expansion of a question from the 1662 baptismal rite pertaining to keeping God's will and obeying his commands.⁵³ They prevent misunderstanding what is involved in the Christian life. Meyers perceptively notes that Spinks raises no such questions about the 1662 rite.⁵⁴ Indeed, the Apostles' Creed is the first half of the baptismal covenant. There is a link between Trinitarian faith, and the salvation narrative and the human response.⁵⁵ Indeed, the response to each question is, 'I will, with God's help' (BCP, pp. 304–305). Even the human response is conditioned by divine grace.⁵⁶

The baptismal covenant reminds us that belonging to Christ means communal life, sharing in the sacraments, repentance for sin, and witness and service beyond the walls of the Church.⁵⁷ This is borne out further in the prayers for the candidates, which also form part of the baptismal covenant. These prayers include intercessions for the candidates to remain in ecclesial communion and that they be sent 'into the world' as witnesses (BCP, p. 306). Clearly the formation of a missionary community is in view in the rite, and this mission is understood to include evangelization and social action; witness and striving for justice. A holistic mission is in view. 'The creedal questions of the Baptismal Covenant link to the questions of commitment. God who sent the Son and sends the Spirit into the world also sends the Church. God who yearns to draw the whole world into the divine life calls us to participate in God's self-giving love for the sake of the world.'⁵⁸

Balanced and Imbalanced Appeals to the Covenant

Colin Podmore notes that a definite social agenda has been tied to the baptismal covenant, and specifically that it has been used in support of ordaining women and LGBT persons, typically with the last two questions—about justice and the dignity of every human being—in view.⁵⁹ For this reason, he sees the baptismal revolution as standing behind many of the crises—in which women's ordination and particularly the status of LGBT persons in the Church

52 Spinks, *Theologies of Baptism*, p. 175.

53 Hatchett, *Commentary*, p. 274.

54 Meyers, 'Baptismal Covenant', p. 33.

55 Meyers, *Continuing the Reformation*, p. 228.

56 Meyers, 'Baptismal Covenant', p. 34.

57 Hatchett, *Commentary*, p. 274.

58 Meyers, 'Baptismal Covenant', p. 34.

59 Podmore, 'Baptismal Revolution', pp. 30–33.

have figured prominently—facing Anglicans today.⁶⁰ And yet, this is due more to the use which is made of the baptismal covenant than to the covenant itself. While some have appealed to the baptismal covenant as the basis for expanding the conception of who constitutes a suitable candidate for ordination, this betrays a faulty understanding of ordination, which is not a right that can be demanded, but rather a divine calling and gift,⁶¹ not a problem inherent to the covenant. The vows taken in the baptismal covenant are integral components of Christian discipleship. One would be hard pressed to argue for a vision of discipleship that dispensed with any of them.

Though the actual wording of the covenant should itself be unobjectionable, appeals to the baptismal covenant have tended to be imbalanced. Meyers notes that the last three questions—proclamation in word and deed, serving the neighbor and striving for justice, and preserving the dignity of all—are cited far more often than the first two about Eucharistic fellowship and repentance for sin. This has the unfortunate effect of sundering the relationship between worship and mission. And yet, as we saw in the catechism, ‘In worship, Christians are not only nourished and empowered for ministry in the world, they are actively engaged in Christian mission.’⁶²

That baptism specifically brings us into the priestly people of God connotes a further missional implication. The mission of the Church is carried out by its ministers: lay people, bishops, priests, and deacons. And the laity’s manner of carrying out the Church’s mission is ‘to bear witness to him [Christ] wherever they may be; and ... to carry on Christ’s work of reconciliation in the world’ (BCP, p. 855). In other words, their particular sphere of mission is the world beyond the Church. The clergy also have extra-ecclesial responsibility for mission (and the laity have intra-ecclesial roles), but a distinctive feature of the baptized faithful is their missionary comportment to the world.

Baptism and the Paschal Shape of Christian Life

I have established that baptism is inherently missional. Up to this point, though, it has not necessarily been clear why baptism is inherently missional.

60 Podmore, ‘Baptismal Revolution’, pp. 36–37.

61 Avis, *Identity of Anglicanism*, pp. 78, 131. I do not mean by this that there is no baptismal basis for women’s ordination, which, I believe gives witness to the common salvation of women and men in Christ as well as the priestly character of the entire people of God within whom the presbyterate serves a representative function. I simply suggest that the baptismal covenant and the questions of rights or justice is the wrong place to turn for this basis.

62 Meyers, *Continuing the Reformation*, p. 228.

We should first note that the sacrament's biblical institution in Matthew is explicitly tied to the Church's missionary commissioning (Matthew 28:19–20), which means that the mandates to baptize and to engage in mission are of a piece. Why are they so intertwined, though? I would like to suggest that the reason baptism implicates the faithful in mission is because it implicates the faithful in the paschal mystery. A recognition of the paschal dimensions of baptism, associated with a recovery of the Easter Vigil, lay behind much of the impetus for its recovery as central to the life of the Church.⁶³ The 1979 BCP specifies the Easter Vigil, Pentecost, the Feast of the Lord's Baptism, and All Saints' Day as particularly appropriate occasions for baptism (BCP, p. 312). This connects baptism to the life of Jesus, and particularly to the paschal mystery (All Saints' being an exception). Marion Hatchett notes that the BCP's provision for diaconal administration of baptism owes to the relative importance of these calendrical connections.⁶⁴ In other words, the paschal dimension of baptism was considered so important that provision for non-episcopal-or-presbyteral administrations of the sacrament was made to uphold this continuity.

Thomas Cranmer's reform of the baptismal rite was meant to move the sacrament from a private exercise into the public life of the Church, though it remained largely a private matter for some time thereafter.⁶⁵ A recovery of the public, corporate, and ecclesial character of baptism lay behind the American Episcopal revolution in developing a baptismal ecclesiology.⁶⁶ Stephen Sykes notes that Cranmer's specific reason for this move from the private to the public was so that adults present at baptism should be able to recall their own baptisms. "The Christian "profession,"" he writes, 'entails a journey "in Christ", which begins with a dying to sin', but throughout the entirety of the Christian life, this basic structure remains.⁶⁷ The entirety of the Christian life, then, is paschal in shape. This, in turn, means that the entirety of the Christian life is missionary in shape.

The rite of baptism itself is clear: candidates 'are baptized into the death of Jesus Christ' so that they 'may live in the power of his resurrection' (BCP, p. 306). This follows from the biblical witness, which baptism links to the dying and rising of Christ (Romans 6:3–11; Colossians 2:11–15). The Thanksgiving over the Water, an addition to the 1979 BCP, recovers ancient patristic imagery

63 Meyers, *Continuing the Reformation*, pp. 59–63.

64 Hatchett, *Commentary*, pp. 268, 285.

65 Meyers, *Continuing the Reformation*, pp. 6–7; Sykes, *Unashamed Anglicanism*, p. 14.

66 Meyers, *Continuing the Reformation*, pp. 48–52.

67 Sykes, *Unashamed Anglicanism*, p. 14.

associated with baptism, notably the Exodus and Christ's own baptism where he was anointed with the Holy Spirit to lead the people of God in a new Exodus by his death and resurrection (BCP, p. 306).⁶⁸ Further, 'In it [the water of Baptism] we are buried with Christ in his death. By it we share in his resurrection' (BCP, p. 306). The paschal dimensions of the sacrament are quite pronounced. The imagery of passing over: from Egypt to the Promised Land, from bondage in sin to freedom in Christ, from death to life is not static. Rather, a dynamism pervades the process. This dynamism is carried forward in the Church's mission.

Christ's own baptism, 'consecrate[ed him] to the work of human salvation,' leading him to the cross and his resurrection.⁶⁹ Baptism is ordered toward the cross, toward the fulfillment of Christ's mission of salvation. It is into this salvific and missionary dynamism that Christians are initiated by their baptism. Above, I noted that a proper initiatory pattern will include reception of Holy Communion. As Stephen Sykes writes:

Precisely because it is a repeated sacrament, the Eucharist actualises again and again the completed reality of the reconciliation of God and humankind in the cross. The eucharistic sacrifice is, as such, theologically inseparable from the baptismal sacrifice. It belongs intrinsically to the institutional reality of the Church to order baptism and Eucharist in such a way that this connection is constantly made clear.⁷⁰

Baptism is dynamically ordered toward the Eucharist, where Christ draws us 'into the movement of his self-offering to the Father'.⁷¹ This is expressed variously in the prayer book's liturgies. From an explicit self-oblation of body and soul (BCP, Eucharistic Prayers I and II, pp. 336, 342); a request to be united with Christ in his sacrifice (BCP, Eucharistic Prayer B, p. 369); or that communicants be made, by virtue of the epiclesis, 'one body and one spirit, a living sacrifice in Christ' (BCP, Eucharistic Prayer D, p. 375). This movement necessarily carries us beyond ourselves, beyond the Church and into the world. For Christ's paschal act of self-sacrifice is an offering of himself for the life of the world. In the Eucharistic action Christ offers himself simultaneously to the Father and to the many for whom he sheds his blood. Indeed, in the Eucharist, the faithful are themselves constituted as this body which is so given away. Just as Christ

68 Hatchett, *Commentary*, pp. 274–275.

69 Avis, *Shaped by Mission*, p. 31.

70 Sykes, *Unashamed Anglicanism*, p. 137.

71 Avis, *Shaped by Mission*, p. 33.

passed through the world on his journey into the far country and back to his Father, bringing humanity along in his wake, the Church is sent to journey through the world, treading the same path as Christ, drawing more and more into the redeemed new creation which Christ's resurrection has inaugurated so that all may be presented to the Father. But the Church does this in the manner of Christ, not in triumphalistic self-assurance, but in humble, kenotic self-dispossession. The Church empties itself into the world, just as its Saviour did and still does.

That baptism is simultaneously initiation into the Christian Church and into the Christian mission ought to impact our ecclesiology. In fact, if the Church is indeed rooted in baptism, then we must go further and see that it is not just the individual Christian life that is missionary in its shape, but that mission constitutes the Church's identity and nature as well. Dynamically ordered by baptism toward the Eucharist, the Church's inmost identity is the paschal mystery. By baptism we become members of Christ's body, and in the paschal mystery we see that Christ's body is a body that is given away for the life of the world.

Conclusion

The 1979 Book of Common Prayer's ecclesiology is a baptismal ecclesiology. Baptism is the root of all Christian identity, clerical and lay. Baptismal identity lies at the basis of all Christian ministry, intra-ecclesial and extra-ecclesial. And baptismal identity, because it is fundamentally Christological and pneumatological is also fundamentally missionary. The people of God constituted in baptism is a missionary people, who 'Confess the faith of Christ crucified, proclaim his resurrection, and share ... in his eternal priesthood' (BCP, p. 308). In a properly understood baptismal ecclesiology, baptism does not stand alone as the Church's sacramental basis, but is oriented toward the Eucharist (hence, initiation is not 'complete' apart from Eucharistic communion). And this dynamic orientation gives shape to the entirety of the Christian life. This shape is the paschal mystery—Christ's movement of redemption into the world and back to his Father so that the world through which he passes in his act of self-oblation may share in his eternal filial relation to the Father.

We find ourselves and our identity most fully when we share in this movement. For our baptismal identity flows from and shares in it. The priorities of Christ—the redemption of the world—become our own. And we are sent forth into the world as servants and witnesses. Indeed, as we are thus sent into the world, we share not only in Christ's priorities, but in his activity, for, joined

to him in baptism and nourished by him in the Eucharist, we become living members of his body, the body that he has given, still gives, and, in the eschatological consumption will give to his Father as the world's salvation. This is the calling of every baptized Christian. And because the Church finds its grounding and most basic character in baptism, it is the corporate shape of the Church. This then, demands that the Church always be attentive to its mission, for if it forgets its mission, it forgets who it is. The missionary comportment of the Christian life must be clear in catechesis, proclamation, and prayer. For the Church realizes itself in its liturgies, and the self that is so realized is missionary. As the 1979 prayer book's revisions are discussed within and beyond the Anglican Communion, this missionary dimension and its implications for ecclesiology must be taken into account, so that we do not forget that this is not merely a shift in initiatory patterns, or in sacramental practice, or understandings of ministry, but rather one with profound implications for the life of the world.