

**Living as an
Episcopalian:
The Church's
Teaching and
the Bible**

Living as an Episcopalian

1. History
2. Worship
- 3. The Church's Teaching and the Bible**
4. Spirituality
5. Ministry and Organization. The Mission of the Church

The Church's Teaching and the Bible

What is theology?

What are the sources of theology?

reason

tradition

Scripture = The Bible

**What is
Theology?**

What is Worship?

God:

personal

the Creator

holy, unknowable, infinite

the Alpha and the Omega

“I AM who I AM”

worship:

our reverent response to the personal, holy,
unknowable, infinite God

What is Theology?

comes from two Greek words:

- *theos* (God)
- *logos* (word)

literally: “God Talk”

What is Theology?

The Language of Theology (“God Talk”)

How can we talk about God when our language is based on things in the created world?

Principle of Analogy:

- the world is an expression of the being of God. Thus there is a “continuity” between God and the world
- entities of the created world can be used as “analogies” for God because the creation is an expression of God’s being

What is Theology?

The Language of Theology (“God Talk”)

Principle of Analogy. Examples:

- God is our Father = God is *like* a human father. God is *analogous* to a father

similarities:

- source of our existence
- exercise authority over us
- cares for us

dissimilarities:

- not human
- not male
- not married to our mother

What is Theology?

The Language of Theology (“God Talk”)

at times, the dissimilarities of the analogy is
strong = metaphor

Examples:

- “God is a lion”
- “God is light”

Sources of Theology

Sources of Theology

The “Three Legged Stool”

1. Scripture = the Bible
2. Tradition
3. Reason

Sources of Theology - Reason

Sources of Theology - Reason

“**reason:**” the power of the human mind to discern truth and beauty

includes:

- “critical” reasoning (elucidate revelations, correct alleged revelations)
- “intuitive” reasoning (involving imagination, esthetic sensibility)

Sources of Theology - Reason

Basis of authority of reason (Richard Hooker, 17th century):

- cosmos an “unfolding” of the mind of God in a hierarchy of orders and structures
- all of creation participates to a degree in the “mind” of God
- a “seed” of the reason of God is present in the minds of human beings

Sources of Theology - Reason

John Polkinghorne on the laws of physics:

“ there is some deep-seated relationship between the reason within (the rationality of our minds -- in this case mathematics) and the reason without (the rationale order and structure of the physical world around us). The two fit together like a glove.”

“the universe, in its rationale beauty and transparency, looks like a world shot through with signs of mind, and maybe, it’s the ‘capital M’ Mind of God we are seeing”

Sources of Theology - Reason Summary

the exercise of our reason can draw us to
knowledge of God because:

- the rationality of our minds, our esthetic sense of beauty and goodness are reflections of the mind of God

Sources of Theology - Tradition

Sources of Theology - Tradition

“tradition:” the ongoing reflection of the people of God on their experience of God, transmitted from one generation to the another

examples:

- The Creeds
- decisions of the Church Councils
- religious writings through history:
Systemic Theologies, Commentaries,
Devotional works

Sources of Theology - Tradition

Three Approaches to Tradition:

1. *Single Source* (the Anglican Approach)
 - reflections based on, rooted in the Scriptures
2. *Dual-Source* (Roman Catholic Approach Council of Trent to Vatican II)
 - a source of revelation independent of the Scriptures
3. *Total Rejection* (Anabaptist, Puritan Approach)
 - each individual should interpret Scripture independent of the past

Tradition

Articles of Religion = Thirty-Nine Articles

- adopted by General Convention 1801 and made part of the American Prayer Book
- Bible first and prior to all tradition
(Articles 6, 8, 20, 22)
- Apostles and Nicene Creed (Article 8)
- not a confession of faith like Lutheran *Book of Concord* or Reformed *Westminster Confession*; intended as a non-binding guide
- has allowed great theological freedom in Anglicanism

Sources of Theology - Tradition Liturgical Tradition

lex orandi, lex credendi = the way you pray
shapes what you believe:

theology \leftrightarrow worship and prayer

Sources of Theology - Tradition

Summary Anglican View of Tradition

we honor the reflections of past generations
rooted in the scriptures (single-source
tradition)

we have no comprehensive confession of
faith

- Creeds are bindings

- 39 Articles non-binding guides; allows
a great degree of theological freedom

we place a special emphasis on liturgical
tradition and *lex orandi, lex credendi*

Sources of Theology – The Bible

Sources of Theology - The Scriptures = The Bible

collection of texts recognized as authoritative for Christian thinking
“canonical” = adjective to describe those texts regarded as authoritative
- Greek *kanon* = “rule” or “yardstick”

The Bible

Old Testament

Reformers: Hebrew Bible = 39 books

Council of Trent 1546: Greek or Latin

Bible (Vulgate, Septuagint) = 39

books + 14 “apocryphal” or “deutero-canonical” books

New Testament

27 books (4 gospels, Acts, 21 letters, Revelation of John)

The Bible

Anglicans and the Apocrypha

“Anglicanism holds an ambiguous or even contradictory attitude towards the Apocrypha”

-- Owen Thomas, Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, MA in *Introduction to Theology*

- several lectionary readings in *Book of Common Prayer* from Apocrypha
- Article 7: church does “not apply them to establish any doctrine”
- Article 6: we reads Apocrypha “for example of life and instruction of manners”

The Bible

Common terms:

Pentateuch = Five books of the Law =

Torah = Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus,
Numbers, Deuteronomy

Major Prophets = first 4 prophetic writings
in Old Testament = Isaiah, Jeremiah,
Ezekial, Daniel

Minor Prophets = remaining 12 prophetic
writings = Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah,
Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk,
Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

The Bible

Common Terms:

Synoptic Gospels = Matthew, Mark, Luke

Pastoral Epistles or Letters: concerned
with church order, pastoral matters: 1 and
2 Timothy, Titus

Catholic Epistles or Letters: not addressed
to individuals: James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2,
3 John, Jude

The Bible

Testament = strongly Christian theological term

- “testament” = “covenant”
- coming of Christ inaugurated something new, a New Covenant, which supercedes the Old Covenant
- religious *principles and ideas* continue from the Old Covenant; *religious practices* do not (dietary laws. . .)

what Christians call the “Old Testament” is “the law, prophets and writings” to Jews

The Bible

Basis for the authority of scripture:

1. early *church*, guided by the Spirit, which chose the canon
 2. *intrinsic* authority of the scriptures:
written under the guidance of the Spirit
 3. guidance given by the Holy Spirit to any *reader* of the scriptures who is earnestly seeking the truth
- 1 & 2: “The canon of Scripture may be regarded as emerging organically from a community of faith already committed to using and respecting it.” (McGrath, p 195)

The Bible

Intrinsic Authority from Divine Inspiration

- 2 Timothy 3:16: “All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (NRSV)
- “inspired by God” = Greek *theopneustos* = “God-breathed”
 - biblical authors “flutes, lyres or pens in the hand of God”
 - more modern view: authors used their innate faculties and powers; the Spirit’s inspiration did not change their free will or fallibility

The Bible

Intrinsic Authority from Divine Inspiration

divine inspiration NOT same as

- absolute historical reliability
- factual inerrancy

there are different ways of “interpreting” the divinely inspired text

fundamentalist view of “literal and historical inerrancy” of the Bible only began in 18th and 19th centuries

The Bible

Interpreting the Bible

Middle Ages: *Quadrigena* = “fourfold” sense of the Scriptures

1. *literal* sense. Face value
2. *allegorical* sense. Statements of doctrine in form of an allegory
3. *tropological* or *moral* sense. Ethical guidance
4. *anagogical* sense. Grounds for Christian hope, pointing to the future

The Bible

Interpreting the Bible

Martin Luther: “eightfold” sense

- saw both a “historical” and a “prophetical” sense to each of the four *Quadrigena* categories

The Bible

Interpreting the Bible

John Calvin:

- **Theory of Accommodation.** God accommodates to the capacities of the human mind and heart
- Origen: “God condescends and comes down to us, accommodating to our weakness, like a schoolmaster talking a ‘little language’ to his children, or like a father caring for his own children and adopting their ways”
- Scripture is divine “baby talk.” We are the babes

The Bible

Interpreting the Bible

Modern Methods of Biblical Interpretation

Textual Criticism (or Lower Criticism) -
try to determine the original text

Literary Source Criticism - tries to find
literary sources which are basis of text

Form Criticism (or Traditional Criticism) -
tries to piece together the oral traditions
that went into the text

Redaction Criticism - tries to discover
ways the author(s) shaped, modified his
sources or created new material for the
text

The Bible

Interpreting the Bible

Modern Methods of Biblical Interpretation

Historical Criticism - tries to discover authorship and date, what actually happened historically

Comparative Religions Criticism - looks for patterns believed to be common in the development of all religions

Structural Criticism - looks at how the author used available literary forms

Reader - Response Criticism - focuses on the meaning of the text created by the reader

Interpreting the Bible

Modern Methods of Biblical Interpretation

understand the words and language

- what were the original words?
- what did they mean to the people of the time?
- what if anything was added on later?

Why?

understand the author

- where was author coming from?
- what was author's purposes, goals?
- how did he shape his message to accommodate his culture, society?

Interpreting the Bible

Modern Methods of Biblical Interpretation

understand ourselves

- where are we coming from?
- how does our culture, society shape how we perceive the message?
- how does our own life shape how we perceive the message?

The Bible Summary

- foremost source of our knowledge of God
 - authoritative because:
 - the early church chose the canon under the Spirit's guidance
 - authors were divinely inspired
 - the Spirit inspires us when we study the Bible
- our study and understanding of the meaning (= interpretation) of the Bible is a lifelong, "living" process using
- reason (our own and that of other Christians)
 - tradition