

Five defining marks of the Anglo-Catholic temperament:

1. A reluctance to define the truth too narrowly.

This is not because the truth is unimportant, but because it is too large for us to grasp. However much we know, there is always more that we do not.

2. An emphasis on worship rather than academic theology.

To put it another way, it is the understanding that worship is the soil from which doctrine springs and provides the context in which it must be interpreted.

3. Sacramental mysticism.

By this I mean the conviction that what we receive from worship and what is conveyed to us in the sacraments is not a metaphysical theory or moral lesson. Rather, it is nothing less than our mutual participation in God himself.

4. Reverence for the Church and for its unity.

The Puritans of Hooker's day, like many Protestants, saw the Church as a gathered society of believers. For Hooker, on the other hand, the Church was not an assembly of the like-minded or the right-minded, but a sacred organism, and thus it was neither ours to make nor ours to break. A few decades later, Jeremy Taylor explained this in words that have lost none of their power. "It is not the differing opinions that is the cause of our present ruptures," he wrote, "but want of charity; it is not the variety of understandings, but the disunion of wills and affections; it is not the several principles, but the several ends, that cause our miseries...we, by this time, are come to that pass, we think we love not God except we hate our brother, and we have not the virtue of religion, unless we persecute all religions but our own."⁴

5. A communitarian ethos.

From Hooker on, Catholic-minded Anglicans have been aware that just as we are embedded in the community of faith, so we are embedded in the community of the world, the community of our fellow human beings who, like us, bear the image of God.

LIBERATING ORTHODOXY: THE ADVENTURE OF ANGLO-CATHOLICISM By
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