

What Type of Church Will We Be

The Rev George Sinclair

"We believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic church."¹

"The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men and women, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly administered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same."²

"And he [Jesus Christ] is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross."³

The following is a brief description of the type of Anglican Church we long to be. The comments are divided into three sectors: spiritual, organizational and ecclesial.

A. Spiritual

1. We will be missional. We will see ourselves as a missionary organization, not a chaplaincy.
2. We will evangelize. We will tell people about Jesus Christ crucified and pray that people will come to faith and obedience in Him. We will expect conversions.
3. We will be biblically faithful. We will never grow tired of asking the question, "What does the Bible say?" We will grow in the practice of penitent, humble and obedient listening and teaching of the Bible. We will seek daily to be reformed by God's word written and renewed by the Holy Spirit.
4. We will declare the whole counsel of God. Mindful of Article 19, mindful of the Church being rooted in the apostolic teaching and testimony, mindful of Jesus Christ as head of the church, we will speak clearly of the Fall, Heaven and Hell, Christ's substitutionary death for sinners, salvation through Christ alone, Jesus Christ's second coming and the other doctrines found clearly in Scripture, regardless of the world's disdain.
5. We will disciple. We will help individuals and congregations grow into holy and godly, 24/7, mature Christians.
6. We will teach godly leadership habits, practices, attitudes and disciplines.
7. We will discipline. When bishops, pastors or congregations stray from the faith, we will practice godly discipline.
8. We will be a prayerful people, encouraging a life of common and fervent prayer.
9. We will seek God's honour and glory in all things. We will seek to know and abide in His will, doing His will His way.

¹ *Nicene Creed.*

² Article 19a, *Articles of Religion.*

³ Colossians 1:18-20, ESV.

B. Organizational

1. Our corporate structures will serve parishes and not vice versa.
2. We will be lean. Parishes will pay a real 10% of their income to the larger institution. This will come from actual income and not be an artificial target set in advance by the larger Church. Dioceses (as they are formed), and the national body will live within their means. There will be few staff separate from a parish.
3. We will encourage support of gospel missionary work and compassionate outreach.
4. We will encourage initiative within the bounds of doctrinal and moral orthodoxy and biblical faithfulness. Institutionally, we will encourage clergy and parishes to show initiative in reaching the world with the Gospel.
5. We will encourage Christ-centred community among clergy, parish leaders and parishes.
6. We will plant churches.

C. Ecclesial

1. We will have an Anglican order. This involves an episcopal/synodical structure with priest/rectors and parishes.
2. We will be part of a larger Anglican Communion, living with our sister churches in true inter-dependence.
3. We will be Anglican, bound by the “original documents”:
We affirm the supremacy of the complete Canon of Holy Scripture, and we affirm the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) as our standard of doctrine and worship, including the Ordinal (with its preface), the 39 Articles of Religion, and the Solemn Declaration of 1893. We affirm the three ancient Western Creeds, ([Apostles'](#), [Nicene](#) and [Athanasian](#)) as well as the [Chalcedonian formula](#).
4. We will have a Prayer Book from the orthodox Anglican tradition. This will be, at first, the 1959 Canadian BCP but we will remain within the faithful prayer book tradition which led to this book. We will also have contemporary liturgies which are theologically and spiritually consistent with the orthodox prayer book tradition.
5. We will seek to be charitable and generous in conversation and community with the many spiritual traditions that have nurtured Anglicans in the past and will continue to do so in the future.
6. We will maintain a godly balance between the Bishop, Synod and Parish in the selection and discipline of clergy.
7. Until the Anglican Communion as a whole comes to a common mind as to what the Bible teaches on the ordination of women, we will ordain women to the diaconate and presbyterate, and also recognize and protect the consciences and “careers” of those who dissent from the ordination of women. The ordained ministry is a privilege and not a right. All called to this ministry are to live godly, holy and virtuous lives according to God’s word.

These are but some marks of a godly Anglican Church. We pray that we will be faithful stewards in Christ’s Church and in the power of the Holy Spirit bring glory, laud and honour to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, three persons, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

“They cast their crowns before the throne saying, “Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.”⁴

⁴ Revelation 4:10b, 11, ESV.