Module 5
Anglican/Episcopal Theology

Opening Reflection

Think about your childhood image of God. What aspects of your childhood contributed to that image? How has your image of God changed and why?

Objectives

After completing this module, the postulant will be able to:

✓ Explain why theology (the study of God) is important;
✓ Understand why it is important to engage one another in theological discussions and the proper etiquette for doing so;
✓ Explain the history of the Apostles and the Nicene Creed, when they are used in the BCP services, and why;
✓ Be familiar with the essentials of Anglican/Episcopal theology as expressed in the BCP and the 39 Articles;
✓ Share with other Christians the doctrines and practices of theology that are particular to the Episcopal Church;
✓ Demonstrate an understanding of the breadth of Anglican theology and be able to articulate one or two significant books for a person to consult should they find themselves in a parish where they are not on the same “theological” wave length as the clergy and/or congregation;
✓ Explain how theology and Christian living are interconnected;
✓ Recognize the expectations of the churched and the unchurched that you, wearing the mark of the office of an ordained minister of the Gospel, will encounter theologically;
✓ Explain ways theology changes through the centuries and how knowing the essential changes can help a deacon in ministering to and with people; and
✓ Discuss who your favorite theologians are and why.

Required Reading


Ramsey, one of the greatest Archbishops of Canterbury, stresses the catholicity, scriptural basis, and the use of reason and experience, as well as the openness to
various interpretation and emphases within the Anglican tradition. He also evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of various trends within Anglicanism.


This is one of the most widely used textbooks in Christian theology. The 5th edition is scheduled to be published in 2011 so look for it if you begin this module after that time. McGrath, a professor at Oxford, is constantly updating his exhaustive works.


This book is optional but recommended, since it is a companion volume to the above work. Again, a revised version is scheduled to be published in 2011 so you should buy the 4th edition if you begin this module after its publication.


This text poses the question "what is theology?" and goes on to discuss issues of methodology, the relation of theology to other disciplines and different theological perspectives. It also investigates topics in the fields of philosophical theology (human existence; revelation; the language of theology; and Christianity and other religions), symbolic theology (triune God; doctrines of creation; the problem of evil and suffering; the person of Jesus Christ; and eschatology) and applied theology (the Church; ministry and mission; word and the sacraments; worship and prayer; and ethics).


An introduction to Christian theology which presents traditional doctrine in contemporary ways, this book includes Migliore’s commitment to hear and engage new voices in an accessible style.


Mitchell gives theological commentary on the Book of Common Prayer.


This book is based on Rowan Williams' talks in Canterbury Cathedral during Holy Week 2005 and is an introduction to Christianity focusing on six major themes - trusting in God, creation, Jesus, suffering, the church and life after death. These themes are considered with reference to the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene
Creed alongside reflections on historical characters such as St Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther and modern people and events.

**Assignments**

1. Reflect upon the creeds you affirm during personal and corporate worship. In what way do they move you to stronger belief or in what way do they open up questions? In what way can you as a deacon help people who stumble over some of these statements? Summarize your wrestling with these and your ability to affirm the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene Creed. Write a short essay paper on the place such affirmations have in a Christian’s life . . . and in the life of an unchurched person who happens in on a Sunday morning!

2. Read *Anglican Spirit* by Michael Ramsey and Dale Coleman and *Tokans of Trust: an Introduction to Christian Belief*, by Rowan Williams. After reading these two works, sit with a knowledgeable laywoman (or man) in your ministry circle and share your response to this book. Explain the Episcopal ethos to them; allow them to evaluate your presentation and to offer to you ways in which your sharing could be improved, changed, reduced, expanded, etc. Write a 3-4 page reflection on the experience, three or four paragraphs of which will be your own evaluation of these books.

3. Is there a theologian or theology that influences you more than another? Discuss your perspectives with your mentor.

4. Two writers who have vastly different approaches to theology have written key theological tomes. Read *Christian Theology: An Introduction [4th edition]*, by Alister McGrath. You will know the healthy theological thought of one branch of Anglicanism. [You may also want to have handy its companion volume, *The Christian Theology Reader.*] Read also *Principles of Christian Theology [2nd edition]* by John Macquarrie and you will know a healthy theology from another branch of Anglicanism. Write a 5-6 page paper or create a table (chart) comparing and contrasting the theologies of these two authors and giving your conclusion concerning how they both reflect an aspect of theology in the Anglican Communion.

5. On three of the four following themes, create a case study and write in one or two pages the entire case from situation to “solution”: theodicy, atonement, the inclusivity/exclusivity of Christianity, or a moral issue of your choice.

6. Explore the doctrine of the Trinity. Prepare an outline for an adult class to be taught on Trinity Sunday.

7. Using Daniel Migliore’s book, *Faith Seeking Understanding: an Introduction to Christian Theology* as a source, choose one of the case studies attached as Appendix B. Respond to the questions for the case study (theodicy, atonement, or inclusivity/exclusivity of Christianity) that you have chosen.
8. Write a paper, make a DVD or create a PowerPoint presentation on the question, “How does the Book of Common Prayer inform your theology? What is meant by Anglicanism’s “three-legged stool”?

9. Define and discuss in a short essay each of the following terms and concepts:
   a. Atonement
   b. Christology (fully human/fully divine)
   c. Creed
   d. Doctrine
   e. Theodicy
   f. Theology
   g. Trinity

**Coffee Hour Question**

Discuss in a brief essay and without opening any books, how you as a deacon can be theological and pastoral at the same time.

**Synthesis**

Now that you have completed your assignments, consider how your answers to the questions in the opening reflection would be different. List three differences. Discuss in a brief paper how you, as a deacon can be theological and pastoral at the same time.

**Suggested Supplementary Reading (optional)**


Griffiss presents an overview of the beginnings of Anglicanism, the Catholic and Evangelical renewal movements, and a survey of Anglican mission, theology and worship.


Guelzo offers an excellent history of the Reformed Episcopal Church, focusing much attention on the controversies inside ECUSA which led to schism.

This collection of essays surveys a variety of topics from a broad church perspective.


Bishop Kirk's Bampton Lectures of 1928 have been recognized as among the most important and readable works of moral theology published in the twentieth century. They provide a reasoned justification for the centrality of worship in Christian life, within the context of moral theology and ecclesiastical history.


McIntosh introduces mysteries of the Christian faith such as incarnation, revelation, incarnation, salvation and eschatology and explores how these ideas are held together in the doctrine of the Trinity and reinforced in the sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist.


Prichard discusses the growing 19th century conflict over ritualism, with particular emphasis on the theology involved and its impact at General Convention.


Stone and Duke guide readers as they explore their own theological roots and then advance to a more deliberate appreciation and application of embedded faith convictions. The book addresses major theological topics such as gospel, sin, salvation, and vocation using real-life case studies.

This is a very useful series of essays on Anglican theology, polity and practice.


Deloria, executive director of the National Congress of American Indians, offers a revised edition of his 1972 study of Native American religion.


Weil explores the foundations of Anglican worship and invites the laity to claim their true baptismal role and serve alongside the ordained as ministers and celebrants of the liturgy.


This is a basic text on the topic, covering movements and events in American Anglicanism until the Revolution.

**Websites:**


Anglican Pages of Louie Crew, [http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~lcrew/rel.html](http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~lcrew/rel.html). Louie Crew is the founder of Integrity and an impassioned advocate of full inclusion for LGBT Christians. His website includes a massive database on General Convention delegates and bishops which is the standard reference point for the subject of Episcopal governance.

Episcopal Café, [http://www.episcopalcafe.com](http://www.episcopalcafe.com). This website contains Episcopal news of the day from a mainstream perspective.

Episcopal Diocese of Florida, [http://www.diocesefl.org](http://www.diocesefl.org). This is our Diocesan homepage.

N.T. Wright’s page, [http://ntwrightpage.com](http://ntwrightpage.com). This is a compendium of articles and talks by the past Bishop of Durham, one of the Church’s leading theologians.

Peek Through the Window of the Episcopal Church, [http://pttw.info](http://pttw.info). This page presents a good survey of Episcopal beliefs and attitudes.

Titus One Nine, [http://kendallharmon.net/t19](http://kendallharmon.net/t19). This is the weblog of the Rev. Canon Dr. Kendall Harmon of the Diocese of South Carolina. This blog covers quite thoroughly, from a conservative perspective, all the news of worldwide Anglicanism and other items of interest.
The Anglican Communion website, http://anglicancommunion.org. This is the official website of the worldwide Anglican Communion, comprising more than 80 million members in 44 regional and national churches in more than 160 countries around the globe.