

## Tracing the Theological Development of the South African Baptismal Rites: The Journey to *An Anglican Prayer Book 1989* and Beyond

ANDREW-JOHN BETHKE\*

*This essay analyzes the theological changes which are reflected in successive revisions of Southern Africa's Anglican liturgy from 1900 to 1989. The following liturgies are examined: A Book of Common Prayer—South Africa (1954); Proposals for the Revision of the Rites of Baptism and Confirmation (1967); the Church Unity Commission's ecumenical liturgies in the 1970s; Birth and Growth in Christ (1984); and An Anglican Prayer Book 1989. The article also includes valuable source material which influenced the revised liturgies, including two official reports on the theology of baptism and confirmation. The author finds that theological uncertainty surrounding the underpinning of current rites brings into question whether full church membership is actually granted during baptism.*

Over the past century-and-a-half the liturgical, ecumenical, and charismatic movements have given new dimensions of nuance to the continuing debates surrounding the sacraments of baptism and the eucharist. Almost without exception, the eucharistic rites have been the first to be revised. And yet, while baptism elicited just as much heated discussion as the eucharist, contemporary surveys of baptismal liturgies and their development are not as numerous. This essay seeks to begin filling that gap, with particular reference to the Anglican Church of Southern Africa.<sup>1</sup> It starts by setting the liturgical

---

\* Andrew-John Bethke is a post-doctoral research fellow at the University of South Africa and is Director of Music at Grahamstown Cathedral. He is a published scholar and composer.

<sup>1</sup> The Anglican Church of Southern Africa comprises South Africa, Namibia, Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Swaziland, and Lesotho. Its four million members represent at least nine different languages and at least as many cultural groupings. *An Anglican Prayer Book 1989*, the most widely used official liturgy, is available in English, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sepedi, Setswana, Sesotho, Afrikaans, and Portuguese.

scene, continues by examining some of the formative local theological statements and reports concerning baptism, and then discusses the experimental and official liturgies which emerged throughout the twentieth century, culminating in *An Anglican Prayer Book 1989*. The analyses and discussions show that an ambiguity in the theological understanding of baptism and confirmation rites exists in the current local liturgies and needs to be clarified in future revisions.

### *Southern Africa's Liturgical Inheritance*

When Anglicanism first encountered Southern African shores in 1749, it was for a fleeting visit in Cape Town. In that year, a British military chaplain (no doubt *en route* to India) conducted a 1662 *Book of Common Prayer* (BCP 1662) service in a local Dutch Reformed Church.<sup>2</sup> Nearly half a century later the British occupied the Cape in 1795 on behalf of the Dutch, who worriedly watched the French blazon through their country and feared the loss of their trade routes. Similarly, in 1806 the British returned, defending the Cape for the Dutch, but this time they did not return the colony—instead, they kept it for themselves. It was during this period that a particularly evangelical strain of Anglicanism took a foothold in the Cape. The congregational-like government (*sans* bishop) upheld a staunch *Book of Common Prayer* round of Mattins and Evensong on Sundays accompanied by metrical psalms.<sup>3</sup> Baptism of infants continued as per normal, and since Anglican missionary work had not begun, there was little need for the service of adult baptism (included for the first time in Anglican liturgies in 1662). The only problematic issue was confirmation, a rite which at that time admitted candidates to the eucharist. Confirmations could only happen sporadically when newly consecrated bishops of Calcutta passed through the Cape on their way to India. It was only in 1847 that a bishop specifically for the Cape was appointed. While the issue of confirmation was thus sorted out,

---

<sup>2</sup> Cynthia Botha, "Southern Africa," in *The Oxford Guide to the Book of Common Prayer: A Worldwide Survey*, ed. Charles Hefling and Cynthia Shattuck (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 194.

<sup>3</sup> See Andrew-John Bethke, *Contemporary Musical Expression in Anglican Churches of the Diocese of Cape Town: Developments since the Liturgical, Theological and Sociological Revolutions of the Twentieth Century*, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Cape Town (2012), 82–83.

the fiercely independent clergy did not take as kindly to the authority of a bishop.

The Anglican Church of Southern Africa, then called the Church of the Province of South Africa, was duly constituted as an independent church in 1870. In the constitution, which was drawn up in that year, special provision was made in Article X for revision of the *Book of Common Prayer*. However, all revisions were to be made in the spirit and teachings of the BCP 1662. This constitutional rider seems to have been invoked in certain circumstances, since a variety of reports concerning both baptism and eucharist mention it and are at pains to show how their reforms are within its parameters.<sup>4</sup>

The mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries witnessed a fermentation of new ideas about liturgy, especially in light of the rediscovery of major church orders, such as the *Apostolic Tradition* (found in 1848) and the *Didache* (found in 1873). Two other currents in worldwide Anglicanism spurred liturgical experimentation forward: the growth of the Tractarian movement, and the post-World War I concern that there was a lack of congregational involvement in the BCP 1662 rites. Despite the liturgical scholarship which was spurring churches toward reform, old traditions persisted unabated. In the realm of baptism, for example, congregational participation was largely absent. Until the mid-twentieth century in Southern Africa, the majority of baptisms were celebrated as private services for small congregations comprising family and friends after the main service of the day (which tended to be Mattins) or later on a Sunday afternoon.

### *South Africa's Baptismal Reforms of the Twentieth Century*

#### *A Book of Common Prayer—South Africa (1954)*

In the early twentieth century two revised experimental baptismal rites were published, the first appearing in 1926, the second in 1930. Both were deeply indebted to the British *Book of Common Prayer 1928*—itself a conservative revision of 1662. The theological underpinning of the 1662 rite, which focuses mainly on the washing away of original sin, is left intact in 1928. For example, the opening exhortation of the 1928 rite retains the idea of original sin, but

---

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, page 8 in the 1976 *Christian Initiation Report*, which places the spirit and teachings of the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer* in the Catechism, the services provided, and the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion.

tempers it slightly, saying, “all men are from their birth *prone to sin*”<sup>5</sup> rather than 1662’s “all men are conceived and born in sin.” Also, in its opening prayer the 1928 omits any reference to Noah being saved from the flood and the Israelites being saved by the parting of the Red Sea. This orients the focus of the rite specifically towards the mystical washing away of sins. In an effort to highlight the importance of washing even further, a formal blessing of the water was introduced into the 1928 rite just before the baptism itself. Both South African revisions are almost word-for-word copies of their English progenitor. Here and there the word order is slightly different. For example, the 1928 opening exhortation begins with the priest saying, “Beloved in Christ Jesus,” which the South African rites omit. Besides these minor changes, there are several notable exceptions which deserve further reflection.

The first is a question posed to the sponsors of the infant(s) to be baptized: The priest asks, “Will you take care, to the best of your ability, that this Child be brought up as a faithful member of Christ’s Church?” And the sponsors (not the parents) answer, “I will.”<sup>6</sup>

Both the 1926 and 1930 revisions included this question. Was this a special inclusion for a missionary church in which baptism was not necessarily into a wider Christian context? Perhaps, although most mission stations in Southern Africa required that their converts stay within the bounds of the station itself, creating a new community. Was it a recognition on the part of the provincial liturgical committee that the roots of Christendom had been severely shaken during the First World War and that a Christian society was not the reality into which children would be baptized? This is a more difficult question to answer, because these rites were crafted well before the Second World War, when the concept of Western Christian civilization really collapsed. Unfortunately, no records concerning the formulation of these experimental rites exists any longer, and so a definitive answer is elusive. The best possible option is to suggest that the sacrament of baptism was not being respected as highly as the revisers thought necessary. In addressing this question to the sponsors, they were placing

---

<sup>5</sup> *The Book of Common Prayer with the Additions and Deviations Proposed in 1928* (London: SPCK, 1928), 352, author’s italics.

<sup>6</sup> *An Alternative Form of the Occasional Offices of the Church: Set Forth by Authority for Use in the Church of the Province of South Africa Where Allowed by the Bishop* (Grahamstown: Grocott and Sherry, 1926), 1.

the burden of Christian nurture squarely on the sponsors and not the church. In other words, the rite of baptism was not enough to ensure salvation; rather, a Christian worldview and life was paramount.

The second is that in the 1930 revision, the Apostles' Creed is stated as a set of three questions each relating to a person of the Trinity. All begin, "Do you believe in . . . ?" To which the sponsors respond, "I do." This form could have been derived from the 1549 *Book of Common Prayer*, Cranmer's first English version of the Prayer Book, where the same format is used. Alternatively, it could be an influence of liturgical scholarship which was beginning to prove through source documents that fourth-century adult baptismal candidates were each asked to affirm their faith in the three persons of the Trinity. In the ancient practice candidates were submerged in water after each separate question and answer. The South African rite stops short of fully imitating this practice, keeping the baptism itself until after the questions have all been answered. Clearly, though, the revisers were looking to older texts to gain inspiration—a certain indication of the strong influence of the liturgical movement in the minds of South African liturgists.

Thirdly, both the 1926 and 1930 South African baptismal revisions give the option of clothing candidates in a white garment (also called a chrysom) and offering them a lit candle directly after baptism. Again, there may be two possible antecedents. Dressing an infant in a white chrysom after baptism formed part of the 1549 rite, but this custom disappeared in 1552; there was no giving of a candle in 1549, though. Alternatively, these ceremonies may be a revival of the early church custom of giving baptismal candidates new clothing after baptism (usually white as a symbol of purity) and the giving of a light (symbolizing their new life in the Light of Christ). Both are rich symbols which certainly revived a sense of historicism that appealed to many Anglo-Catholic clergy. How widely this custom was practiced is not documented, since, as stated above, most of the congregation's members were not present at baptisms to witness ceremonial. Again, the appeal to historicism points directly towards the liturgical movement and may even represent the influence of someone like Walter Frere, who had been consulted on the South African eucharistic rite.

If the 1549 Prayer Book was the inspiration for some of the revisions which were made in South Africa's baptismal rites, this may be an indication that clergy based there (many of whom were influenced

by the Tractarian Movement<sup>7</sup>) preferred the more Catholic ethos it espoused. Certainly, many aspects of the 1549 rites are simply English translations of the Latin Sarum originals.

Finally, South African liturgists opted to add an additional service for the admitting of catechumens. This appears to have been in response to the large number of adults who were being prepared for baptism. The service was commissioned in 1911,<sup>8</sup> but did not appear in print until almost two decades later. How widely this ceremony was used is not known. There is one confusing rubric in this short service which appears at the very end. It says, "Then let [the catechumens'] names be inscribed in the Church Roll."<sup>9</sup> This seems to imply that admission to the catechumenate was concomitant with church membership. Peter Hinchliff claims "the question 'When is the Holy Spirit received; at Baptism or Confirmation?' is rather more sharply raised by the South African than by the 1662 rites."<sup>10</sup> Yet, this rubric seems to suggest that the South African church had not as yet decided fully what church membership actually meant.

After having been passed twice at provincial synod (1934 and 1939), the 1930 revision of the baptismal rites was ratified and accepted into what would later become the *Book of Common Prayer—South Africa* of 1954.

*Proposals for the Revision of the Rites of Baptism  
and Confirmation, 1967*

It was not long after the publication of the South African Prayer Book in 1954 that a new wave of worldwide Anglican liturgical revisions began. In 1958 one of the Lambeth Conference committees studying the BCP 1662 suggested the combination of adult baptism, confirmation, and the eucharist in one service. Remember that before this baptism usually occurred either as a private ceremony for

---

<sup>7</sup> Frank England argues that the Anglican Church of Southern Africa came to be characterized as an Anglo-Catholic province. See Frank England, "Tracing Southern African Anglicanism," in *Bounty in Bondage: The Anglican Church in Southern Africa*, ed. Frank England and Torquil Paterson (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1989), 14–29.

<sup>8</sup> Peter Hinchliff, "The Theory and Practice of Prayer Book Revision in South Africa," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 11.1 (April 1960): 90.

<sup>9</sup> *A Book of Common Prayer . . . for use in the Church of the Province of South Africa* (Johannesburg: SPCK, 1954), 416.

<sup>10</sup> Hinchliff, "The Theory and Practice of Prayer Book Revision in South Africa," 90–91.

relatives and friends, or in the context of Mattins or Evensong. A move to amalgamate three sacramental actions under the umbrella of one service would have resolved all the nagging questions about when the Spirit was bestowed and when a candidate became a full member of the church—at least in the case of adults. This suggestion clearly influenced the next set of revisions in Southern Africa, which appeared in 1967.

The 1967 rite is a radical departure from the 1662 and 1928 BCPs, and the 1954 South African BCP. Clearly the ideas mooted at Lambeth 1958 formed the basis of the rites, as is made explicit in the introductory notes:

The service of baptism of adults . . . is placed first as being the archetypal form, and is followed by the other necessary forms. . . . The change is made so that the scriptural teaching about baptism may be more clearly seen. Infants are incapable of conscious faith; and, though such have been admitted into the Body of Christ from the earliest days, this practice must be seen as a privilege granted by the Church to the children of Christian families. The teaching of the New Testament is that justification is by faith, and the effective sign of man's justification is the baptismal rite. The normal recipients of baptism must therefore be those who are both willing and able to give public expression to their own faith in the salvation of Christ.<sup>11</sup>

Here we see a new theological thread emerging. While the older baptismal rites had spoken of reception into the Body of Christ, their main thrust was cleansing from original sin. Now the focus is more clearly on membership within the Body, expressed first through baptism and affirmed through the receiving of the eucharist. The introductory notes go on to suggest that liturgical scholarship was showing that baptism and confirmation were in fact one ritual action, that is, through water and the Spirit membership into the Body was achieved. Furthermore, the eucharistic gathering of the people of God is seen as the most appropriate place for the administration of baptism, since

---

<sup>11</sup> *Proposals for the Revision of the Rites of Baptism and Confirmation* (Cape Town: Liturgical Committee of the Church of the Province of South Africa, 1967), 1–2.

a celebration of the eucharist is a visible sign of the living Body of Christ on earth. These radical theological changes necessitated a completely new set of liturgical texts.

There are several important changes within the services which reflect these theological shifts. For adult baptism, the readings now revolve around water and the Spirit: Ezekiel 36:24–28 (God promising to cleanse and fill people with the Spirit); Acts 19:1–6 (Paul baptizing in the Spirit); and Mark 1:1–11 (baptism of Jesus). The readings for infant baptism are different: 1 John 3:1–2 (we are children of God) and Matthew 28:18–20 (Jesus calls his disciples to a ministry of baptism). Significantly, the Matthew reading has Jesus' words in this order: baptize and then teach, that is, the action of baptizing comes before the teaching itself.

The opening prayer of the baptism proper rehearses God's acts of salvation, primarily through the work of Jesus, and culminates with the gift of the Spirit through spiritual rebirth. The blessing of the water follows, holding in tension the images of cleansing and rebirth. Most interesting of all is the actual baptism in the adult service.<sup>12</sup> The rubrics explain: "Those who are to be baptised are brought, one by one, to the font, and the bishop asks each in turn the three questions 'Do you believe in God the Father?' 'Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his Son our Lord?' 'Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?' . . . and after each answer of faith he dips him in the water or pours water upon him."<sup>13</sup> Thus, the Apostles' Creed has disappeared.

This is, without question, an influence of the liturgical movement: the world-wide, ecumenical confluence of scholarship which emerged during the nineteenth century and blossomed in the twentieth century, bringing new understandings of the early church's liturgy that had a profound effect on liturgical practice in the late twentieth century. Another important addition in the baptism of infants is a question which echoes similar sentiments as those in the 1926 and 1930 South African revisions. The priest asks the parents and sponsors: "Do you promise, as loyal members of Christ's holy Church, to seek to grow in God's grace, and to strive by your daily obedience to

---

<sup>12</sup> The service for infants is exactly the same here, except that the parents and sponsors answer on behalf of the child. Notice the subtle change in responsibility here, where both parents and sponsors are required to answer.

<sup>13</sup> *Proposals for Revision*, 10.

his will to proclaim his kingdom?"<sup>14</sup> Here we seem to have a strand of thought which was constant in the minds of the liturgical committee, that is, parents and sponsors need to affirm that their own lives are an important influence on the child who will grow up in their care. In other words, Christian morals and values are transmitted through the example of the parents and those in constant contact with the child.

Besides the obvious inspiration from Lambeth 1958, two particular influences are conspicuously absent. The eucharistic rite from the ecumenical liturgy of the Church of South India was destined to have a far reaching impact on Anglican liturgy, but in the realm of baptism, it was clearly not referenced at all. Certainly the liturgy would have been available to the committee by 1967, because it played a role in the shape of the experimental eucharistic rite which followed in 1969. Why was it not used as a prototype for baptism? Was the ecumenical nature of the South Indian rite too much for the revisers to stomach? Or was the rite too simple? The likely answer is that the South Indian baptismal rite does not reflect the liturgical movement's strong emphasis on historicism and thus was not as appealing to the Anglo-Catholic ethos of the Southern African church. The second is the curious absence of clothing in chrysom and the giving of a candle. These two ceremonial aspects of baptism had been an important revival and a direct nod towards the liturgical movement and its discoveries about early church practice. Why omit them now? Perhaps a strong backlash from Evangelicals had necessitated the omission? But why not then make them optional? While there is no conclusive evidence which points in any one direction, it is unusual that a church which represented the liturgical movement's ideals so clearly would drop these two symbolic gestures.

#### *Ecumenical Liturgies in the 1970s*

In the 1970s one of the most advanced debates on ecumenism in the world was taking place in South Africa. In the early 1990s these debates resulted in communion between four mainline churches: Anglican, Methodist, Congregational, and Presbyterian. During the 1970s, though, talks were dominated by the political implications of union. The ecumenical movement had revealed not only deep divides between denominations, but racial splits within denominations themselves. While some churches were able to claim racial unity on

---

<sup>14</sup> *Proposals for Revision*, 21.

paper, in reality parishes were basically monochrome. Black theologians, clergy, and laity felt that ecumenical unions were a farce unless denominations themselves could unify racially. Numerous black theologians were of the opinion that church denominations were an unnecessary fault of European politics, and unity within mission communities denominationally was already widely experienced much earlier in the century. Thus, at least until denominations had begun to address their racial divides, the ecumenical endeavors conducted in South Africa were largely white-led.

Despite the racial tensions within the ecumenical movement locally, discussions still continued and the Church Unity Commission was formed. It produced two liturgies in the 1970s. The first was a Communion service (1972); the second was a revised Communion service and an infant baptism liturgy (c. 1975).

The baptismal rite is specifically for children and was to be led by an ordained clergyperson. Like the 1967 rites, this one was meant to take place in the context of the normal Sunday gathering of the local congregation. Significantly, for the first time in a liturgy related to the Anglican Church in Southern Africa, the rite was designed to accommodate the full participation of the congregation, as opposed to the service simply happening before their eyes. In particular, the congregation is asked the following set of questions: "As God's people in this place, will you receive *this child* into your fellowship? Will you pray for *him* and *his* parents? Will you nurture *him* in the faith of Christ by maintaining the common life of worship and service, so that *he* and all the children of this congregation may grow in grace, in the knowledge of God, in the love and service of his Son, and in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit?"<sup>15</sup> After answering "Yes, by God's help, we will," the congregation continues by reciting the Apostles' Creed. Besides the question and creed, there are other responses for the congregation, most especially at the signing with the cross, the vesting, and the giving of the candle.

The theological focus of the rite is union into Christ's mystical Body through washing in water and the giving of the Spirit. Again and again the themes of adoption into God's chosen family and the blessings of the Spirit come to the fore. At the blessing of the water, images of water are used in conjunction with salvation: deliverance through

---

<sup>15</sup> *Sunday Worship: A Suggested Form—The Baptism of Children* (Johannesburg: Methodist Publishing House), 48.

the Red Sea, Jesus' baptism, and Jesus' resurrection from the "waters of death."

In terms of the renunciation of evil and the declaration of faith, the parents and sponsors answer for themselves, not on behalf of the child. The significance of this is that the burden of infant baptism now falls squarely on the parents and sponsors of the children. While this theme has run throughout the South African rites, it is most explicit here, because at no point is a declaration of faith made in the name of the child.

The rite is by its ecumenical nature quite flexible, and certain sections (or words) may be omitted at the discretion of the presiding minister, for example, the signing of the cross. This would foreshadow the greater flexibility which characterizes contemporary rites both in the Anglican Communion and many other mainline denominations.

### *Birth and Growth in Christ*

The next stage in the experimental development of South Africa's existing baptismal liturgies was a set of rites called *Birth and Growth in Christ*. These rites were adopted almost unchanged into *An Anglican Prayer Book 1989*. Before examining the liturgical texts some context to revision is necessary. The recommendations of Lambeth Conference 1968 will be summarized first, followed by an analysis of two important South African reports.

At the 1968 Lambeth Conference there was renewed concern about the theological meaning of Christian initiation rites. A particular focus was baptism and confirmation as "empowering and supporting lay ministry."<sup>16</sup> The conference resolved that provinces discuss and experiment with two contrasting ideas of initiation: one in which baptism, first eucharist, and confirmation (after instruction) are separate rites; the other where baptism and confirmation are linked in one rite and first eucharist is administered later, after instruction.<sup>17</sup> The second affirms the early church concept of baptism and confirmation as an indivisible action. The South African 1967 experimental liturgy had already grappled with these questions, but two further reports were commissioned in response to Lambeth 1968.

---

<sup>16</sup> Ruth A. Meyers, "Rites of Initiation," in Hefling and Shattuck, *The Oxford Guide to the Book of Common Prayer*, 485.

<sup>17</sup> Meyers, "Rites of Initiation," 486.

In 1972 a group of clergy and theologians was commissioned to meet and discuss the theology around baptism and make recommendations for new liturgies. The result was *A Report on Christian Initiation: Church of the Province of South Africa*, also called the Hunter Report (after Bishop Hunter who chaired the consultations). The most important and controversial aspect of this report was a term which the authors used to describe the combined rites of baptism and confirmation: *baptisma*. The word is simply a transliteration of the Greek for baptism. The report argued that this term did not imply the “purely water ceremony” as the English word *baptism* did, but rather “the full initiation Rite is Baptism with water and the Holy Spirit, the outward signs of which are the laying-on-of-hands and anointing with oil.”<sup>18</sup> Like those who had designed the 1967 rites, the report was strongly in favor of initiation as a single rite comprising water, the laying on of hands, anointing with oil, and Holy Communion, where the proper minister was the bishop. Likewise, only infants of believing parents should be considered for baptism (reinforcing the implications of the 1967 rites) and non-believing parents were encouraged to have a blessing of their child, who would be brought at a later stage for baptism with preparatory classes. It was further argued that children who were baptized should be able to receive the eucharist from a young age, decided upon at the discretion of the parents and the priest.<sup>19</sup>

The report was only ten pages long, but the accompanying appendices were of equal value. A theological essay on baptism as a call from God and an anthropological investigation of initiation rites related to birth and adulthood (particularly those of vernacular cultures) were included. The anthropological essay spoke of some of the parallels between local cultural norms and what takes place during Christian baptism. For example, the ancient Christian custom of the fourth century where candidates were clothed in new garments after baptism is very much a part of amaXhosa ritual for male adult circumcision rites. Also, the author alludes to the Sotho ceremony where a baby is taken outdoors by a young child when it rains in a purifying ritual (the baby is taken outside naked and only a young child may carry the baby since he/she is still “pure”). Despite these possible parallels,

---

<sup>18</sup> *A Report on Christian Initiation: Church of the Province of South Africa* (Johannesburg: CPSA/SPCK, 1972), 2.

<sup>19</sup> *A Report on Christian Initiation*, 9.

no record is made of discussions about localization, nor are there any recommendations in the report concerning inculturating the rites.

Provincial Synod 1973 rejected the Hunter Report and another commission was created to discuss the matter further. Their findings were collected in the *Christian Initiation Report 1976*. This was dubbed the Nye Report (again after the bishop who chaired the consultations). A new dimension now was added to the debates around baptism from the charismatic movement, and several international reports were consulted, including the Ely and Durham reports from the Church of England, the Welsh report from the Church of Wales, and a 1969 report from the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States. While the Nye Report affirmed many of the theological underpinnings of the Hunter Report, it completely rejected the term *baptisma* and its implications:

[*Baptisma*] seems to indicate that water baptism (even in the name of the Trinity) is not Spirit baptism, and that Spirit baptism is conveyed through the laying on of hands. Our distinction between sacrament and rite may help here. . . . Some of us believe that if the sacrament of Christian Initiation is one indivisible sacrament, it requires an indivisible rite to administer it. So to associate part of its meaning not with water but with the laying on of hands undermines the principles that control our proposals.<sup>20</sup>

The Hunter Report was clear: baptism is one rite which conveys both admission to the Body of Christ and the gift of the Spirit. The differences of opinion expressed in the Nye Report show just how uncertain theologians and clergy were about the reality to which they were accustomed, that is, baptism and confirmation as different services with a large gap of time separating them. In essence, though, the Nye Report affirms the concept that baptism through water and the Holy Spirit (with the laying on of hands) is one indivisible action administered by the bishop. Interestingly, nothing was mentioned about the Hunter Report addenda concerning localization, even though two members of the Nye commission, Sigquibo Dwane and M. S. Ndwandwe, were esteemed black theologians. Was the localization

---

<sup>20</sup> *Christian Initiation Report 1976* (Johannesburg: Ecumenical Literature Distribution Trust, 1976), 2.

agenda not considered important enough at this stage, or was it deliberately suppressed? Alternatively, was the localization aspect of the Hunter Report a hidden reason why it was rejected? There is no documentary evidence to suggest that localization was problematic, but it does seem odd that the Nye Report makes absolutely no mention of it, and that the black theologians who were present did not highlight it. The Nye Report was carried at Provincial Synod and formed the basis of theological understanding for the rites which would become standard in Southern African Anglicanism.

The 1970s in South Africa witnessed the incredible growth of the charismatic movement within mainline churches. The charismatics introduced another compelling definition for “baptism in the Spirit.” They believed that spiritual gifts, particularly glossolalia, were an indication of the indwelling of the Spirit, whether or not they manifested during a water baptism; that is to say, the two were interdependent. This perspective seems to echo the story in Acts 19:1–6, in which it is not clear if the disciples received another water baptism that was accompanied by the gift of the Spirit, or if it was simply a baptism in the Spirit without water. There were other theological problems that charismatics raised. Could people be re-baptized if they had fallen away from the church and then decided to commit themselves anew? At one point in the 1970s, charismatic Archbishop Bill Burnett required his clergy to “repent” before him if they had performed such re-baptisms.<sup>21</sup> Mercifully, a liturgical solution to this problem, which had its roots deep in antiquity, was emerging through the scholarship of the liturgical movement.

In the 1950s the Roman Catholic Church began reviving the ancient liturgies associated with the Easter Triduum. It took more than a decade before these services became widely available in South Africa, when *Ash Wednesday to Easter* was published. This set of experimental services included Ash Wednesday, all the Sundays of Lent, Palm Sunday (including a palm procession and the reading of a synoptic Passion), Maundy Thursday (an evening eucharist with washing of feet and stripping the altar), Good Friday (including the reproaches, veneration of the cross, prayers for the world, and preconsecrated communion), and the Easter Vigil (including a service of light, vigil, baptism/confirmation/renewal of baptismal vows, and eucharist). The services were received with great excitement around the province and

---

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Jane Bradshaw in Grahamstown, South Africa, in February 2016.

have become normative as Easter celebrations. The Easter Vigil revived the ancient practice of baptism during the service (rich with its symbolism of death and resurrection) *and* the renewal of baptismal vows. For those who wished to be “re-baptized,” Anglican clergy now had the perfect service to offer charismatics, with Lent being a time of intense preparation (as it had been in the early church). The Sunday readings provided for Lent seemed to reinforce this, dwelling on the symbols of baptism: water and washing, oil, cleansing, healing, and light. Like many other churches in the Anglican Communion, Southern Africa also provided a separate service of renewal of baptismal vows for any time during the year, so re-baptism was not necessary.

Into the widely diverging ideas about baptism, the liturgical committee introduced a set of experimental rites called *Birth and Growth in Christ* in 1984. They included three main rites of initiation: baptism and confirmation of adults; baptism of infants; and confirmation of adults who were baptized as children. They also provided services of conditional baptism, emergency baptism, the reception into the congregation of those baptized privately, the admission of baptized communicants of other churches, the renewal of baptismal vows, thanksgiving for a child, thanksgiving after adoption, and the admission of catechumens. In essence, this set of services was a direct response to the two reports which preceded it. A single rite of initiation (including baptism and confirmation) was provided for adults (as in 1967). Infant baptism for children of Christian parents, with required preparation, was considered normative. And an optional service of child blessing, if parents decided they could not answer the questions of faith themselves, responded to the concerns about indiscriminate baptism. Furthermore, the growing ecumenical consensus around baptism meant that baptized members of other churches could be welcomed into communion with Anglicans.

The preface at the beginning of the rites is ambiguous about the role of confirmation. It asserts, “Those who are baptized into the Body of Christ share in his anointing by the Spirit. United in him, they are to serve God in the world in a ministry of caring and compassion.”<sup>22</sup> This suggests that baptism is the entrance rite to the church and its ministry. Later it continues, “In the Holy Eucharist the life given at baptism is fed and sustained with the heavenly food of the body and

---

<sup>22</sup> *Birth and Growth in Christ: Anglican Services of Initiation* (London: Collins, 1984), 5.

blood of Christ,”<sup>23</sup> implying that the eucharist is available to everyone who is baptized. What, then, is the significance of confirmation? The preface argues that confirmation is the “response of faith and [an] act of commitment”<sup>24</sup> by the candidate. The bishop then lays hands on the candidate, praying for the gift of the Spirit, whereupon “the candidate is commissioned and empowered to fulfil his ministry within the fellowship of the Church.”<sup>25</sup> But, according to the same preface, baptism already accomplishes this. Essentially, confirmation seems to be equated with ordination—an ordination of the laity.

The theology of the texts of the rites is not as clear-cut, though. In the baptismal rites the focus is exclusively on rebirth by water *through* the Spirit. Significantly, the *giving* of the Spirit for ministry still remains firmly in the confirmation rites. Thus, while the preface offers a complete understanding of baptism as the full initiatory rite of the church, the texts themselves do not ratify this—perhaps an echo of the theological uncertainty represented by the Nye Report? In practice, the older interpretation of baptism and confirmation, where the one completes the other, still persists widely in the province. In essence, the restructuring of the rites, while widely welcomed, failed to effect much actual change.

Despite the theological difficulties, there are positive developments in the revisions. The congregational nature of the services is stronger than the 1967 rites. The biggest gift from the 1967 rite was the questions of faith, which in *Birth and Growth in Christ* followed the wording of the Church of England’s *Alternative Service Book 1980*. The questions were slightly developed with an extra clause; for example, “Do you believe in God the Father *who made the world?*” The answer is also new: “I believe and trust in him”—that is, this is not only a matter of the head, but of the heart.

With some minor adjustments made between 1986 and 1987, *Birth and Growth in Christ* was absorbed into *An Anglican Prayer Book 1989*. Between its initial forging and 1989 release, three important international developments occurred which deserve brief discussion. In 1982 the culmination of decades of ecumenical discussion through the World Council of Churches produced *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*. Soon afterwards the Southern African Anglican

---

<sup>23</sup> *Birth and Growth in Christ*, 6.

<sup>24</sup> *Birth and Growth in Christ*, 6.

<sup>25</sup> *Birth and Growth in Christ*, 6.

Theological Commission produced a brief response affirming that document's understanding of baptism as well as its reliance on Roman Catholic theological stances promulgated through Vatican II.<sup>26</sup> Curiously, mention of the gift of the Spirit in connection with either baptism or confirmation is absent. The response defends confirmation, arguing that "the personal expression of faith is necessary for the establishment of a full relationship between the believer and God."<sup>27</sup> Further, it accepts that baptism, and not confirmation, offers admission to the eucharist.<sup>28</sup> The response suggests that if *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* was accepted by the Anglican Church of Southern Africa then baptized members of other denominations should be accepted into full communion. The service of acceptance of members of other churches, already included in *Birth and Growth in Christ*, catered for this.

The year 1985 was another defining moment in Anglican baptismal thought. This was the year that the first International Anglican Liturgical Consultation met, discussing Christian initiation. The consultation made several recommendations, some of which were already incorporated within *Birth and Growth in Christ*, including congregational participation in the baptismal rites, but there were two which could have influenced the rites in *An Anglican Prayer Book 1989* yet did not. The recommendations suggested first that rites explicitly clarify that baptism is the admission to the eucharistic table; and second, that baptism should form part of any normal episcopal visit. Alas, neither formed a discernible part of either the texts or practice of baptism.

Finally, the Lambeth Conference 1988 spoke of baptism in the clearest terms: "If you are a baptized Christian, you are already a minister. Whether you are ordained or not is immaterial."<sup>29</sup> This appears to contradict the idea of confirmation as an ordination of the laity, which the Anglican Church of Southern Africa seems to have accepted. In 1988 surely it was not too late to consider incorporating

---

<sup>26</sup> Max Thurian, ed., *Churches Respond to BEM: Official Responses to the "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" Text, Volume III* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1987), 101.

<sup>27</sup> Thurian, *Churches Respond to BEM*, 101.

<sup>28</sup> Thurian, *Churches Respond to BEM*, 102.

<sup>29</sup> *The Truth Shall Make You Free: The Lambeth Conference 1988—The Reports, Resolutions and Pastoral Letters from the Bishops* (London: Church House Publishing, 1988), 58.

these foundational ideas into the liturgies which would be released the following year?

*Since 1989*

*Birth and Growth in Christ* was used as an experimental liturgy throughout the province for five years before the official release of *An Anglican Prayer Book*. During that time, provision was made for comments by clergy and laity about the rites. The liturgical committee's minutes do not refer to any major criticisms, although there were numerous comments about the offices and eucharist. Likewise, official organs of the province, like the newspaper *Seek*, do not contain any letters of complaint about the new baptismal liturgies. Thus, the new liturgies had a rather painless birth into the local church. It is likely that the detailed work which had gone into *Liturgy 1975* (the trial eucharistic and office liturgies) and *Ash Wednesday to Easter* (discussed above) secured a bond of trust between the liturgical committee, the clergy, and the laity which resulted in positive reception.

Overall, the impact of *Birth and Growth in Christ* as adopted into *An Anglican Prayer Book 1989* was significant. Firstly, private baptisms completely fell away and it has now become standard practice to celebrate baptism in the context of the local worshipping community at the main Sunday service. Secondly, more often than not, baptisms take place at a eucharistic service; yet, even when older children are baptized, first communion is seldom received by children at their baptism.

Curiously, the new rites, and their theology of reception into the Body of Christ, have largely failed to break the tradition of receiving communion only after confirmation. While this tradition is slowly beginning to die away in urban areas where clergy schools actively encourage teaching about the theology of baptism, rural dioceses and parishes have clung rigidly to the old way. Another curiosity is that the "archetypal" rite of adult baptism and confirmation is almost never celebrated. More often than not, adult candidates for confirmation who have not been baptized receive the sacrament several weeks before their confirmation. There are several exceptions to this rule, particularly at diocesan schools.

Concerning preparation for baptism, customs vary so widely that it is impossible to categorize any specific trends. For the most part,

clergy tend to have at least one session with parents and godparents. This session can form part of a rehearsal for the service itself. Others insist on a longer course of several weeks, led either by a priest or designated lay people. The province has produced an authorized baptismal course which is widely available and can be adapted easily for local conditions. It is rare for no preparation to take place, although it is not unheard of in rural settings, where a priest may only visit an outstation periodically. While the intention of preparation was to ensure that parents commit to bringing their children up within the Christian faith and attending church faithfully as a family, in practice this seldom happens in urban areas. There are exceptions, of course, particularly in poorer areas where church attendance is strong and culturally normative. In more affluent areas of urban centers the frequency of baptism has slowed and the cultural pressure to baptize a child has waned, most particularly in areas strongly influenced by Western culture.

Ceremonially the celebration of baptism can vary widely, depending on the congregation and priest. Some clergy insist that candidates are dressed in white, while others are not concerned about clothing. Those who come from the Anglo-Catholic and broad church traditions tend to anoint candidates with oil and present a lighted candle, while evangelical parishes usually avoid these actions. The author has witnessed any number of variations concerning the use of water, including dipping, pouring water with a shell, and full immersion (in an inflatable swimming pool).

While there has been no revision to baptismal rites since 1989, there is a province-wide program of liturgical renewal which should culminate in revision in the next ten to fifteen years. Hopefully a clearer theological stance will emerge then. More importantly, a new set of rites which considers the growing African ethos of the local church needs to arise, without which, it is certain, numerous Anglicans will defect to African Initiated Churches.

### *Conclusion*

This essay has shown how international and local trends in baptismal theology have influenced official Southern African Anglican liturgies and practice. In the early part of the twentieth century, liturgical revisions were conservative, clarifying rather than dismissing the foci of the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*. Yet, in South Africa, there were

already signs of influence from the liturgical movement through the inclusion of the chrysom and a lighted candle. By the 1960s newer currents in theology related both to ecumenical discussion and liturgical scholarship were to prove foundational. The idea that baptism was mainly a ritual washing away of original sin was largely abandoned and replaced with an understanding that the sacrament was more an incorporation into the life and ministry of the church. This in turn brought the meaning of confirmation into question. In 1967 the experimental baptismal rite released by the Anglican Church of Southern Africa's liturgical committee tried to address these changes, affirming that a rite which included baptism, confirmation, and eucharist was the ideal. They went as far as including such a service for adults. Yet, for infants, the normal round of baptism and confirmation still remained, but with an ambiguous theology surrounding confirmation.

The ecumenical rite of the 1970s affirmed the theological stances which were developing in the 1960s, echoing much of what had already been pioneered in the Anglican 1967 experimental rite. Here, though, the role of the Spirit in empowering candidates through baptism was much stronger than ever before. *Birth and Growth in Christ* was the culmination of these experiments, and although an experimental rite itself, it was accepted into the official *Anglican Prayer Book 1989* without major revision. The preface to these rites affirms the central role of baptism in terms of admission into the Body of Christ, intimating that the rite confers both membership and empowering in the church. Yet it fails to make these understandings explicit in the rites, reserving confirmation exclusively for the giving of the Spirit and thus reflecting the theological uncertainty that was represented in the Nye Report, a foundation for the rites. The ideals of *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* had already been anticipated by *Birth and Growth in Christ* and so did not have an impact on the rites directly. Several of the recommendations from the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation 1985 could have been incorporated into these experimental rites before they were formally accepted into *An Anglican Prayer Book*, but alas, were not. In essence, then, the *Anglican Prayer Book 1989* rites still reflect an unsatisfactory theological stance towards infant baptism in relation to confirmation. Hopefully future revisions will rectify these inconsistencies.

Anglican Church of South Africa prior to the establishment of Fedsem, an. under-researched subject despite several studies of good quality on the early. history of Anglicanism in South Africa.Â formal beginning of the Anglican Church in South Africa. It took decades and a long succession of trials and errors for a coherent. system of formal theological education to be established in the Anglican. Church of South Africa. After a short period of relative colour blindness Buy paper book Convert (EPUB, MOBI) Sent to Email Sent to Kindle Report. âœœ In the end only three things matter: how much you loved, how gently you lived, and how gracefully you let go of things not meant for you. â€• Anonymous. Similar Free eBooks. Filter by page count 1-24 Pages 25-50 Pages 51-100 Pages 100+ Pages. Shepherding a Child's Heart by Tedd Trip. 243 PagesÂ·2017Â·1.16 MBÂ·72,410 Downloads. Shepherding\_a\_Childs\_Heart\_-\_Tripp,\_Tedd.pdf Shepherding a Child's Heart ...Â SEMPOZYUMU TAM METÂ°N KÂ°TABI of the desk with his fingerprints. 359.pdf. Hong, Yoo Soo (2005 Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire. 689 PagesÂ·2008Â·14.66 MBÂ·789 DownloadsÂ·Turkish. Mundi and TÂ¼rkiye AraÅŸmalarÄ± Literat¼r Der- gisi. Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire