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**Spirituality in the Anglican Tradition Between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>  
Centuries**

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BY  
ALEXANDER MICHAEL PECK

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## **Spirituality in the Anglican Tradition Between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries**

This paper addresses the question as to whether Anglican spirituality, specifically from the period of The Book of Common Prayer to R. S. Thomas (between the 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries), is true to the ideal of spirituality defined as “being human in the fullest sense”.<sup>1</sup>

### **Being Human in the Fullest Sense**

To become a person in the fullest sense involves *self-transcendence*. Wolski Conn articulates this understanding of spirituality from a broader philosophical meaning: “Philosophers speak of our human spirituality as our capacity for self-transcendence, a capacity demonstrated in our ability to know the truth, to relate to others lovingly, and to commit ourselves freely to persons and ideals”.<sup>2</sup> From the perspective of the actualization of the human capacity to be spiritual – to be self-transcending – this means that relational and freely committed spirituality *encompasses all of life*.<sup>3</sup>

With the concept of self-transcendence in mind, becoming a person in the fullest sense may be defined as a *life rooted in the mystery of God*.<sup>4</sup> “In other words”, writes Main, “each of us is summoned to an unlimited, infinite, development as we leave the narrowness of our own ego behind, and enter into the mystery of God.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> John Macquarrie, *Paths in Spirituality* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), 40. The quotation, “. . . fundamentally, spirituality has to do with becoming a person in the fullest sense . . .” is attributed to John Macquarrie.

<sup>2</sup> Joann Wolski Conn, *Women’s Spirituality: Resources for Christian Development* (New York: Paulist, 1986): 3-9, quoted in Bradley Hanson, “Spirituality as Spiritual Theology”, in *Modern Christian Spirituality: Methodological and Historical Essays* (Georgia: Scholars Press, 1989), 46.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Peter Ng, ed., *The Hunger and Depth for Meaning: Learning to Meditate with John Main* (Singapore: Medio Media, 2007), 26.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

Fundamentally, then, spirituality involves coming to the *fullness of being, the fullness of God himself*, as the apostle Paul expounds:

With this in mind, then, I kneel in prayer to the *Father*, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name, that out of the treasures of his glory he may grant you strength and power through his *Spirit* in your inner being, that through faith *Christ* may dwell in your hearts in love. With deep roots and firm foundations, may you be strong to grasp, with all God's people, what is the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Christ, and to know it, though it is beyond knowledge. So may you attain to *fullness of being, the fullness of God himself* [emphasis mine] (Eph 3:14-19 NEB).<sup>6</sup>

Such fullness of being, rooted in the mystery of God, can be linked to a Trinitarian spirituality as indicated in the passage quoted above.

Main elaborates further on this being human in the fullest sense. He states that Jesus has told his followers that his Spirit is to be found in their hearts.<sup>7</sup> The Spirit that they are invited to discover in their hearts is the power source that enriches every part of life.<sup>8</sup> That Spirit is the Spirit of life and the Spirit of love.<sup>9</sup> “The call of Christians is not to be half-alive, which means being half-dead, but to be *fully alive*, alive with this power and energy that St Paul speaks of that is continually flowing in our hearts [emphasis mine].”<sup>10</sup>

For a person's life to be fully human, they must encounter the Spirit of love within themselves.<sup>11</sup> By faith, the believer can know that God has sent the Spirit to dwell in their

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<sup>6</sup> *The New English Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970).

<sup>7</sup> Ng, *The Hunger and Depth for Meaning*, 26-27.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

hearts.<sup>12</sup> St. Paul has stated: “For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ” (2 Cor 4:6).<sup>13</sup> Also, Ezekiel had written: “I will put my Spirit in you and *you will live* [emphasis mine]” (Ez 37:14).<sup>14</sup> In other words, God’s being is within a person.<sup>15</sup> God is the breath of life. God is presence, and is present deep within one’s being, in one’s heart.<sup>16</sup>

Since the Spirit is the presence of power, the power of love,<sup>17</sup> then in the power of God’s Spirit each person can be regenerated, renewed, re-created, so that they become a new creation in God.<sup>18</sup> A person can then *live their life fully* if they are open to this mysterious presence of the Spirit.<sup>19</sup>

In sum, what *Jesus* has done for the believer, in the language of the New Testament, is to send his *Spirit* to dwell in their heart.<sup>20</sup> His Spirit is open in love to *God the Father*.<sup>21</sup> Main explains that when the believer is open in love to the Spirit of Jesus, they are transported into the love of the Father too, with him and through him.<sup>22</sup> In other words, their human consciousness is summoned to an infinite expansion, infinite development.<sup>23</sup> And so, the believer is called to full maturity as a human being<sup>24</sup> and can therefore *be human in the fullest sense* through such a Trinitarian spirituality. (Appendix I entitled, “Principles of Contemporary Trinitarian Spirituality”, lists fifteen principles governing such spirituality.)

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>13</sup> Kenneth Barker, ed., *The NIV Study Bible: New International Version* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1985), 2240.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 1632.

<sup>15</sup> Ng, *The Hunger and Depth for Meaning*, 31.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

## **Spirituality in the Anglican Tradition**

This paper now examines whether spirituality, summed up in the phrase “being human in the fullest sense” – and which by nature is a Trinitarian spirituality – is reflected in the Anglican tradition between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Specifically, the paper is limited to the *The Book of Common Prayer* and the following representative individuals: John Cosin, Lancelot Andrewes, John Donne, George Herbert, Thomas Traherne, Gerard Manley Hopkins, John Henry Newman, *Oxford Movement*, Evelyn Underhill, C. S. Lewis, Dorothy Sayers, Ronald Knox, Michael Ramsey, T. S. Eliot, and R. S. Thomas.

### The Book of Common Prayer

The basis of The Book of Common Prayer is a biblical, threefold foundation consisting of the Daily Office, Eucharist, and personal devotion.<sup>25</sup> It provides an ascetical Trinitarian expression of faith – in other words, faith in God the Most Holy Trinity.<sup>26</sup> Jones elaborates further:

Acceptance of the transcendence of the *Father*, or in H. H. Farmer’s terms, of God as “ontologically and axiologically other”, is manifested in the objective offering of the Daily Office of praise. The absolute demand made, and the perfect succour offered, by *God the Son*, form the basic ascetical attitude of worship in the Holy Eucharist. The immanental and rightly subjective religious element in personal devotion is inspired by the *Holy Ghost* conceived as indwelling Spirit: the Paraclete [emphasis mine].<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Cheslyn Jones, “The Caroline Divines and the Cambridge Platonists”, in *The Study of Spirituality* (London: SPCK, 1986), 258.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 274.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 274-275.

The Book of Common Prayer, then, ensures a sound Trinitarian spirituality. When any part of the Rule of the Church is omitted, various forms of spiritual ill health can appear, such as shown in Table 1 below:<sup>28</sup>

Table 1. Consequences in Omitting any Part of  
the Rule of the Church

<i>Omitting the Daily Office</i>	<i>Neglecting the Eucharist</i>	<i>Omitting Personal Devotion</i>
Diminishes a sense of divine transcendence	Undervalues Holy Communion	Neglects personal devotion inspired by the indwelling Spirit
Results in forms of spiritual eudemonism such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subjectivism</li> <li>• Sentimentality</li> <li>• Pantheism</li> </ul>	Can lead to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A diminished Christocentricity</li> <li>• Forgetting the centrality of the Eucharist Christian living</li> <li>• Unworthy neglect</li> </ul>	Leads to errors such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legalism</li> <li>• Formalism</li> <li>• All the dangers of the Pharisees</li> </ul>

*Source:* Cheslyn Jones, “The Caroline Divines and the Cambridge Platonists”, in *The Study of Spirituality* (London: SPCK, 1986), 275-277.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 275.

In sum, The Book of Common Prayer – when the complete Rule of the Church was used in the believer’s life – expressed a dynamic and creative faith in the doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>29</sup>

It masterfully blended the subjective and objective elements of faith, the speculative and affective, discipline and freedom, as well as grace and free will.<sup>30</sup> It also brought together: body, mind, and spirit; conation, intellect, and will; as well as imagination, reason, and emotion.<sup>31</sup>

### John Cosin (1594-1672)

As with Lancelot Andrewes, Cosin’s spirituality was also much influenced by, and centred on, The Book of Common Prayer,<sup>32</sup> and would therefore have been Trinitarian. Thornton states that The Book of Common Prayer ruled Cosin’s life and that “Cosin’s influence on the development of the Anglican Prayer Book must have been tremendous, and it has been suggested that the final product of 1662 was as much the work of Cosin as of Cranmer.”<sup>33</sup>

The following words from Cosin are an example of Trinitarian spirituality:<sup>34</sup>

Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,  
and lighten with celestial fire.  
Thou the anointing Spirit art,  
who dost Thy sevenfold gifts impart.  
Thy blessed unction from above  
is comfort, life, and fire of love.  
Enable with perpetual light  
the dullness of our blinded sight.

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 276.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Austin Cooper, *SP540 The Anglican Years: Study Guide* (Pennant Hills, NSW: Broken Bay Institute, 2009), 28.

<sup>33</sup> Martin Thornton, “John Cosin: Foundation or Embarrassment?”, *The Month* (January 1975): 14.

<sup>34</sup> Cooper, *The Anglican Years*, 42.

Anoint and cheer our soiled face  
with the abundance of Thy grace.  
Keep far our foes, give peace at home:  
when Thou art guide, no ill can come.  
Teach us to know the Father, Son,  
and Thee, of both, to be but One;  
that, through the ages all along,  
this may be our endless song:  
Praise to Thy eternal merit,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
Amen.

Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626)<sup>35</sup>

Andrewes' spirituality was greatly influenced by the The Book of Common Prayer<sup>36</sup> and as a result would have been Trinitarian in nature. Moorman supports the premise that Andrewes retained a Trinitarian perspective when he writes that "Andrewes preached on the great themes of the Christian religion – the incarnation, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the power of the Holy Spirit – from which flow our faith and our life. He preaches from the Bible . . ." <sup>37</sup> Moreover, Andrewes viewed the incarnation as the final truth which governed the life and destiny of man, and believed in the ultimate harmony of all things. <sup>38</sup> The basis of his preaching was the reconciliation of God and man, the spiritual with the material. <sup>39</sup> Finally, Andrewes used an age long approach to prayer known as "Lectio Divina" (literally divine or sacred reading), stemming from the Benedictine tradition. <sup>40</sup> In this practice, one creates a space of silence and peace in which to be attuned to the Spirit. <sup>41</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 33. Andrewes was one of the principal translators of the Authorised Version.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>37</sup> John R. Moorman, *The Anglican Spiritual Tradition* (London: DLT, 1983), 85.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Cooper, *The Anglican Years*, 33.

### John Donne (1572-1631)

In 1615, Donne became a priest of the Anglican Church.<sup>42</sup> He gained eminence as a preacher.<sup>43</sup> In his sermons he opens his soul and wrestled with the problems of faith and the spiritual life.<sup>44</sup> In reading the heartfelt writings of Donne, one may conclude that he was moved by a Trinitarian perspective, which included a deep awareness of the Christian paschal mystery of dying and rising with Christ.<sup>45</sup> An example is his poem, “A Hymne to Christ”, which is a great religious lyric.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, in his Holy Sonnets, the three Persons of the Trinity are mentioned. His poem, “Holy Sonnet XIV: Batter My Heart”, opens with the lines: “Batter my heart, three person’d God . . .”<sup>47</sup> Finally, Moorman writes:

The penetrating force of the sermons of men such as . . . Donne came from the depth of their own spiritual life. They were men of God, men of prayer, whose colloquies with God occupied a considerable part of each day.<sup>48</sup>

### George Herbert (1593-1633)

Best known for his poetry, many of Herbert’s poems reveal his personal spiritual struggles.<sup>49</sup> One of his best-known poems is entitled “Prayer” which summarizes many elements of his spirituality.<sup>50</sup> His spirituality befits the Anglican tradition par excellence<sup>51</sup> and would therefore have been Trinitarian in orientation. Indeed upon reading Herbert’s poems, one finds the Persons of the Trinity mentioned and referred to. He recognizes the

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Moorman, *The Anglican Spiritual Tradition*, 87-88. Many of his sermons were preserved in ten volumes.

<sup>45</sup> P. O’Connell, “Worth Pondering on . . . John Donne”, *Living Prayer* 29 (March/April 1996): 10.

O’Connell mentions that “this same paschal theme recurs again and again in Donne’s one hundred-sixty extant sermons” (p. 13).

<sup>46</sup> Jeffrey Johnson, “Gold in the Washes: Donne’s Last Going into Germany”, *Renascence* 46 (Spring 1994): 199.

<sup>47</sup> Lawrence Beaston, “Talking to a Silent God: Donne’s Holy Sonnets and the Via Negativa”, *Renascence* 51 (Winter, 1999): 96.

<sup>48</sup> Moorman, *The Anglican Spiritual Tradition*, 91.

<sup>49</sup> Cooper, *The Anglican Years*, 43.

<sup>50</sup> Philip Sheldrake, “Spiritual Stars of the Millennium: George Herbert”, *Tablet* (July 1, 2000): 910.

<sup>51</sup> Cooper, *The Anglican Years*, 43.

efficacy, or inspiring force, of God as Holy Spirit as an inspiration for a poet.<sup>52</sup> In his poem, “The Altar”, he realizes that the altar that matters to God is that of a broken and contrite heart, not a splendid monument.<sup>53</sup> In “Thanksgiving”, God the Christ is referred to in his momentary contemplation of what he will do to repay Christ for His passion.<sup>54</sup>

### Thomas Traherne (1637-1674)

Traherne, an English poet and clergyman,<sup>55</sup> assumed that the ordered life of the Church was the norm for Christian living.<sup>56</sup> Traherne’s personal liturgical meditations show the degree to which his devotion had been shaped by The Book of Common Prayer.<sup>57</sup>

Accordingly, he reflected a Trinitarian spirituality in his writings. First, for example, he saw everything (except sin) as the gift of God, and recognized that God’s glory is revealed in both people and nature.<sup>58</sup> Second, the cross of Christ both demonstrates God’s love and the means by which one enters into its bounty.<sup>59</sup> Also, prayers are addressed to Jesus.<sup>60</sup> Finally, there is the reality of the indwelling of Christ – that is, Christ enters into the soul which contemplates him.<sup>61</sup> And, on one occasion, he writes: ‘fill me with thy Holy Spirit, and make my Soul and Life Beautiful’.<sup>62</sup> In sum, Traherne realized that the Trinity is bound together by bonds of love,<sup>63</sup> and saw as the force behind all human activity.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Bruce Johnson, “To Love the Strife: George Herbert’s Struggle for his Poetry”, *Renascence* 46 (Winter, 1994): 106.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>55</sup> Cooper, *The Anglican Years*, 58.

<sup>56</sup> C. J. Stranks, “Centuries of Meditation”, in *Anglican Devotion* (London: SCM Press, 1961), 120.

<sup>57</sup> William J. Wolf, “The Spirituality of Thomas Traherne”, in *Anglican Spirituality* (Connecticut: Morehouse-Barlow, 1982), 57.

<sup>58</sup> Stranks, “Centuries of Meditation”, 100-104. He continually taught that the creation is good when seen as an example of the love of the Creator. God is infinite love and pure goodness; the visible world surrounds humanity with beauty.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>60</sup> Wolf, “The Spirituality of Thomas Traherne”, 63.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>62</sup> Wolf, “The Spirituality of Thomas Traherne”, 63.

<sup>63</sup> Stranks, “Centuries of Meditation”, 108.

<sup>64</sup> Wolf, “The Spirituality of Thomas Traherne”, 64. Wolf states that it is in ‘The Second Centurie’ that Traherne describes love in the Trinitarian terms of Augustine.

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889)

Hopkins, a representative of the Tractarians, had a sacramental spirituality which he inherited from the Oxford Movement.<sup>65</sup> As such, one may conclude that his spirituality was also Trinitarian in nature. Hopkins saw God as present beneath the surface of matter, events, and encounters, thus drawing him deeper into the mystery of the Triune God's Presence.<sup>66</sup> God reaches us through matter, through one another – in fact through all Creation.<sup>67</sup> Finally, all of nature is sacramental – being the visible sign of an invisible, creative energy that reveals the Triune Godhead.<sup>68</sup>

John Henry Newman (1801-1890)

The spirituality of Newman is most fully expressed in his *Parochial and Plain Sermons* (eight volumes) which were preached from 1834-1843<sup>69</sup> and reflect a Trinitarian basis. For example, according to Newman, the essential purpose of the spiritual life is the divine indwelling which “pervades us as light pervades a building, or as a sweet perfume the folds of some honourable robe”.<sup>70</sup> This divine indwelling is seen in the smallest details of daily life.<sup>71</sup> Newman remarks that the believer “will see Christ revealed to his soul amid the ordinary actions of the day, as by a sort of sacrament.”<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Cooper, *The Anglican Years*, 83.

<sup>66</sup> S. Cyprian's Clarence Gate, “Homily: Corpus Christi 2005”. <<http://www.stcyprians.org.uk/hom/homily-cc-2005.html>> (3 September 2010). Note: Saint Cyprian's is an Anglican Parish of the Church of England in the Diocese of London.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> John Coulson, “English Roman Catholics in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries”, in *The Study of Spirituality*, eds. Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright, and Eward Yarnold (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 426.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 427. Coulson is quoting from Newman's *Parochial and Plain Sermons* (London: Pickering, 1958), 224.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. Coulson is quoting from Newman's *Parochial and Plain Sermons* (London: Pickering, 1958), 165.

Oxford Movement (1833-1948)<sup>73</sup>

A Trinitarian spirituality is evident in the Oxford Movement, which included the Tractarians. Their doctrines included the mystery of transforming grace, the divine indwelling of the Trinity, and one's participation in the divine nature.<sup>74</sup> For Pusey, for example, a leading Tractarian, everything in harmony with these three doctrines was incorporated into his spirituality.<sup>75</sup>

Evelyn Underhill (1875-1941)

Underhill's writings reflect a Trinitarian perspective on the nature of the spiritual life and transformation.<sup>76</sup> Specifically, according to Ryan, "the Christian life as living in the Spirit, is a share in the life of the sacrifice, surrender and self-giving of Christ to God his Father."<sup>77</sup> In describing the presence and action of the Holy Spirit, there is a Trinitarian structure behind Underhill's theological anthropology:<sup>78</sup>

The *Father*, for the sense of peace and security in the presence of the transcendent; the *Son* for the immanent moment of communion and love; the *Spirit* as the creative energy leading individuals and groups to response by moving outwards in life-giving activity [emphasis mine].<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Kenneth C. Russell, "Anglo-Catholic Spirituality", in *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, ed. Michael Downey (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1993), 41-45. Two influential writers of this period were: John Keble (1792-1866) and Edward Bouverie Pusey (1800-1862).

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 42-43. Also important to the Tractarians were (1) the sense of the world as a quasi-sacramental place, graced by the incarnate presence of the Word itself in Jesus Christ – and where the world is a window to a deeper reality; and, (2) the Eucharist, with Christ's presence in the Sacrament.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>76</sup> Tom Ryan, "Evelyn Underhill on Spiritual Transformation: A Trinitarian Structure?", *Australian EJournal of Theology* 9 (March 2007), <[http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/research/theology/ejournal/aejt\\_9/index.html](http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/research/theology/ejournal/aejt_9/index.html)> (accessed 18 October 2010).

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

C. S. Lewis (1898-1963)

Lewis was a prolific writer, whose specifically Christian writings fall mainly into three classes: fiction, apologetic, and Christian living.<sup>80</sup> His was clearly a Trinitarian spirituality.

An apt illustration is his chapter, “The Three-Personal God”, in *Mere Christianity*:

You may ask, “If we cannot imagine a three-personal Being, what is the good of talking about Him?” Well, there isn’t any good talking about Him. The thing that matters is being actually drawn into that three-personal life . . . An ordinary Christian kneels down to say his prayers. He is trying to get into touch with God. But if he is a Christian he knows that what is prompting him to pray is also God: God, so to speak, inside him. But he also knows that all his real knowledge of God comes through Christ, the Man who was God – that Christ is standing beside him, helping him to pray, praying for him. You see what is happening. God is the thing to which he is praying – the goal he is trying to reach. God is also the thing inside him which is pushing him on – the motive power. God is also the road or bridge along which he is being pushed to that goal. So that the whole threefold life of the three-personal Being is actually going on in that ordinary little bedroom where an ordinary man is saying his prayers.<sup>81</sup>

Dorothy Leigh Sayers (1893-1957)

Sayers’ theology was traditionally Anglican (she was the only child of an Anglican clergyman) with an emphasis on doctrine.<sup>82</sup> Her theological essays promoted a basic understanding of historic orthodoxy<sup>83</sup> and one may conclude that she endorsed Trinitarian spirituality. As an illustration, her play for Canterbury Cathedral, *The Zeal of Thy House*,

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<sup>80</sup> R. L. Sturch, “Lewis, Clive Staples”, in *New Dictionary of Theology*, eds. Sinclair B. Ferguson and David F. Wright (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 383.

<sup>81</sup> C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (London: Fontana Books, 1970), 138.

<sup>82</sup> Cooper, *The Anglican Years*, 150-151.

<sup>83</sup> M. A. Noll, “Sayers, Dorothy Leigh”, in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2d ed., ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2001), 1059.

dealt with several topics, including the doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, commenting on *Mind of the Maker*, Noll writes of Sayer's work:

The creative process, she [Sayers] argued, can be regarded profitably as an analogy to the way in which the *triune God* governs the world. If we think of God as an author of a drama, in which humans are the actors, we can learn much about human freedom, divine sovereignty, and the history of salvation . . . God may govern the destiny of his "characters" even as they take on a life of their own in fulfilling the Divine Author's sublime and harmonious plot [emphasis mine].<sup>85</sup>

#### Ronald A. Knox (1888-1957)

One can detect a Trinitarian pulse in Knox's writing. He produced an elegant modern rendering of the Holy Bible and had been an ordained clergyman in the Church of England before he entered the Catholic Church (1917).<sup>86</sup> For him, Christianity was clearly more than a doctrinal system: above all it involved a personal relationship with Christ that entailed romance, struggle, and loyalty.<sup>87</sup> The story of his conversion to the Roman Church was published in *A Spiritual Aeneid*.<sup>88</sup> Knox knew that the Christian faith rested on sound reason and that it met the deepest longings of humans – however, he also knew that the Triune God is a mystery, as is the human heart.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Cooper, *The Anglican Years*, 151.

<sup>85</sup> Noll, "Sayers, 1059.

<sup>86</sup> Cooper, *The Anglican Years*, 160.

<sup>87</sup> Milton Walsh, "Second Friends: C. S. Lewis and Ronald Knox in Conversation", <<http://www.ronaldknoxsociety.com/>> (19 October 2010).

<sup>88</sup> Cooper, *The Anglican Years*, 161.

<sup>89</sup> Walsh, "Second Friends".

Michael Ramsey (1904-1988)

Ramsey, a noted scholar and former archbishop of Canterbury, clearly shows an awareness of Trinitarian spirituality in his works. Williams, for example, notes:

Already in *The Gospel and the Catholic Church* [1931], Ramsey had emphasised that in the New Testament the distinctive sense of 'glory' was given by its association with 'self-giving' (p.92), with a self having 'its centre in Another' (p.25), so that the disciples are summoned to share in the divine unity by sharing in the divine 'self-negation' . . . Ramsey insists, in *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*, on the Johannine linkage between unity and death: the Trinitarian communion into which believers are introduced is a life in which all believers have relinquished their own centre in themselves so as to be centred in Christ and in the human other (pp.24-7). Thus the truthful vision of Jesus which is given to the believer is a vision from somewhere other than the natural centre of the ego; it is the truth given by the Paraclete. As the believer begins to be free of self-absorption, s/he begins to see a little of what might be thinkable about a God wholly free of self-interest.<sup>90</sup>

T. S. Eliot (1888-1965)

In reflecting on the life of Eliot, one can suggest that he would have had a Trinitarian awareness due to the powerful influence of Lancelot Andrewes. Timmerman notes that Eliot had made a careful and prolonged study of Andrewes' sermons and private devotions.<sup>91</sup> Eliot's poem, "Journey of the Magi", represents a testimony to his own spiritual quest and odyssey toward personal faith.<sup>92</sup> It is the poem of a convert with the theme of the painful necessity of rebirth.<sup>93</sup> Eliot had moved from agnosticism to scepticism to affirmation of the Christian belief.<sup>94</sup> Accounts of personal encounters with Eliot

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<sup>90</sup> Rowan Williams, "Addresses Given to Celebrate the Centenary of the Birth of Archbishop Michael Ramsey: I. Theology in the Face of Christ", 2004, <<http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/1057>> (19 October 2010). This is the official website of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams.

<sup>91</sup> John Timmerman, "Lancelot Andrewes and T. S. Eliot: The Making of Histories", *American Benedictine Review* 44-1 (March 1993): 76.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 97-98.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 97. Timmerman is quoting Peter Ackroyd's work, *T. S. Eliot: A Life* (New York: Simon, 1984).

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

describe his deep humility and the sincerity of his faith.<sup>95</sup> Notwithstanding, scholars have been puzzled by Eliot's spirituality in his late poetry and in such works as the *Four Quartets*, *Murder in the Cathedral*, and *The Rock*.<sup>96</sup>

### R. S. Thomas (1913-2000)

Having received theological training in Cardiff and later ordained (1936)<sup>97</sup>, one can suggest that Thomas had a Trinitarian perspective. To observe the beauty of the natural world (especially landscapes and bird life), was for him a spiritual exercise and a reminder that God has provided all that is needed for a fulfilled life.<sup>98</sup> Thomas was a deeply serious man who struggled to find God to the end of his life, which was also his search to find a meaning for existence.<sup>99</sup> He lamented that humankind had forgotten how to live because it had worshipped physical comfort and wealth, and consequently turned its back on God.<sup>100</sup> In fact, underlying all of Thomas's poems is an examining of humanity's existential needs, and a fear that they have been utterly misunderstood.<sup>101</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Having defined the ideal of spirituality as "being human in the fullest sense"<sup>102</sup> in terms of representing a *Trinitarian spirituality*, the paper affirms that such a spirituality has indeed been extant in the Anglican tradition between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries – from the period of The Book of Common Prayer to R. S. Thomas.

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<sup>95</sup> J. Bottum, "What T.S. Eliot Almost Believed", *First Things* 55 (August/September 1995): 25-30, <<http://www.leaderu.com/ftissues/ft9508/bottum.html>> (19 October 2010).

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Cooper, *The Anglican Years*, 206.

<sup>98</sup> Theodore Dalrymple, "A Man Out of Time: A Review" (6 November 2006), <<http://www.city-journal.org/html/rev2006-11-06td.html>> (19 October 2010).

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Macquarrie, *Paths in Spirituality*, 40.

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## Appendix I

### Principles of Contemporary Trinitarian Spirituality

1. God comes to be known and loved in the course of a saving history. *God's initiative* toward all creation establishes the basis for any relationship between human beings and God. Consequently, prayer, religious discipline, celebration in word and sacrament, spiritual growth and maturation all rest on the prior initiative of God for us.
2. Christian spirituality, to be Christian, must be firmly rooted in the Christian economy of salvation where *God is revealed to be the God of Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit*. The symbols, images, and concepts appropriate to a Christian spirituality emerge from the record of this saving history and ordinarily will be drawn from the Scriptures and from other spiritual writers.
3. Christian spirituality concerns the *invitation to participate in the very life of God* through communion with the incarnate Word by the power of the Holy Spirit who is love. Such participation brings the believer into the heart of the mystery of God's triune life. The call to ever-deeper communion with God is at the same time the call to ever-deeper communion with others.
4. Christian spirituality develops through the *life of prayer*, which is the ongoing cultivation of relationship with God rooted in the divine initiative.
5. *Christian holiness* involves growth in conformity to our true natures as human beings created for union with the triune God. Deification, or being made divine, according to the Greek Fathers, arises out of conformity to our true humanity.
6. Spirituality rooted in a renewed understanding of the triune God involves attention to the many dimensions of the human person and of the God-world relation, not just the "interior" dimension or the "inner life" of the human person. It is inclusive of the social, political, and economic realms; in a word, *every dimension of personal and communal life* is altogether involved in a Trinitarian Christian spirituality.
7. Because the mystery of the triune God grounds the communion among all persons, the spirituality to which it gives rise is singularly attentive to the quality of relationship between and among human persons, as well as their relationship to various other creatures and goods of the earth. Everything that exists originates from a relational God, and exists in relation to the whole and its various parts, so that *relational interdependence* is a hallmark of this spirituality.
8. The *triune God is the paradigm of all human relationships*. The divine Persons exist in a relationship of diversity, equality, mutuality, uniqueness, and interdependence. Theological reflection on the mystery of the triune God, in the form of the doctrine of the Trinity, is critical of modes of relationship built on domination/submission, power/powerlessness, or activity/passivity. Since the relational pattern of divine life is the norm of human life, relationships that respect difference, nurture reciprocity, and cultivate authentic complementarity are iconic of divine life. By virtue of their participation in the very life of God, human persons are theonomous, that is, each every person possesses a dignity that goes beyond social standing or function.

9. Trinitarian spirituality is one of *solidarity between and among persons*. It is a way of living the gospel attentive to the requirements of justice, understood as rightly ordered relationships between and among persons. This entails working to overcome obstacles to full human flourishing posed by evil and sin. Sin may be understood as the failure to discern and build a community of rightly ordered relationships, the inability or unwillingness to respect the interdependence of all human and nonhuman life, and as the divisiveness that ruptures the harmony between God and human beings.
10. A Christian spirituality informed by a proper understanding of the Trinity is *wholly oriented to the God who is its source and end*. It is a way of living through participation in the very life of God by communion with the Word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit, and communion with all creatures. Prayer, ascetical discipline, study, apostolic activity, the rigors of marriage and family life, the works of mercy, and especially the celebration of the paschal mystery in word and sacrament – all increase participation in divine life.
11. The traditional contrast between active and contemplative forms of spirituality can no longer be sustained. *Contemplation of God should lead to loving action* on the behalf of others, and Christian action should be rooted in the insights of contemplative life.
12. The God who “dwells in light inaccessible” is, strictly speaking, unknowable and incomprehensible. Apophasis and the *via negativa* are important means of recognizing the ineffability of divine mystery. Even so, *the God of salvation history is a self-revealing God* who desires communion with all creatures. Thus, even though the mystery of God is in some sense unspoken and unspeakable, what we do know or say of God rests on how God exists for us, how God manifests and shares divine life in human history, personality, and society.
13. *The mystery of God cannot be controlled or dissected by Christian theology* nor fully grasped within a Christian spirituality. The mystery of God is the magnet for a contemplative gaze and the prayer of quiet repose rather than the object of analysis, systematic scrutiny, or theological assertion.
14. Similarly, *the mystery of God cannot be controlled or thoroughly analysed within any one religious tradition*. Hence the importance of recognizing the insights of various religious traditions in order to come to a fuller understanding of the mystery of God.
15. A Trinitarian theology of God applied to the order of creation gives rise to a lively sense of *stewardship for the goods of creation*. A Trinitarian Christian spirituality provides fertile ground for exploring the relationship between human and nonhuman life in such a way as to throw light on current ecological themes such as the interdependence of various forms of life.

Source: Adapted from Catherine Mowry LaCugna and Michael Downey, “Trinitarian Spirituality”, in *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, ed. Michael Downey (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1993), 979-982.