

Finding the Church: Dan Hardy. (SCM 2001)

Anglicanism ideally follows a distinctive pattern in which the gift of God in Jesus Christ is embodied in worship, wisdom and service in an historical continuity of contextually sensitive mission.

Holiness – occurs in sociality. It resists comprehension in the terms normally available: unlike ontology it has its being in itself; unlike the scientific is self-caused; unlike history is without external conditions.

In Judaeo-Christian tradition, is filled with perfection of wisdom & beauty. Holiness & God are mutually defining – infinitely humbling & satisfying. But not mystical ascent: more ‘relational’. So Psalmist praises laws & decrees because these speak of conferring holiness on society – establishing a ‘holy people’.

Holiness is intrinsically related to all else – not separate from world of things. God is not Platonic perfection is himself in maintaining consistency of his life in an ordered but energetic congruence with his world. – Trinity.

So it is a healing holiness, well beyond simply ‘religion’ since the key vehicles for its performance are social institutions. Civil Society & Law are provisional historical approximations to the Good - & must go through refinement of Holy

Worship as attraction of Holy God.

Real anticipation by historical human beings of eventual holiness of the Kingdom
A patterning so as to signify connection to inner dynamics of God’s holiness.
Bring historical, social, economic, political etc into the action and under the refining fire of the cross of Christ.

Not just one to one koinonia but societal – establishing holy trust between social actors. Eucharist forms a holy society – truest possibility for society.

Worship where the spread-out-ness of life *in situ* (extensity) is returned in thanks and finds its intensity.

2. Missionary Being of the Church

Church was not first an idea but a practice – Church triumphant and Church militant

Four marks are practical norms performed through worship, virtuous living, compassion, care of oppressed, etc. – its purpose being the fulfilment of all social life in anticipation of Kingdom. Apostles therefore established small signifying communities, later brought together through Canon (scripture etc)

Roman: church is perfect society (since VatII turned towards the world)

Eastern: mystical participation in eternal love of God

Reform: elected by God in the Word and received in faith.

Anglican: Church as history of God's activity always reforming.

But we learn to talk our own technical language & behaviour – not societally.

We should rather be building up infrastructure – not alternative *to* society!

Nor identifying needs so we can supply them.

3 Grace of God and Wisdom

Wisdom = Holiness = Truth + Good

(cf my Wisdom = Love + Knowledge)

Wisdom is within and beyond scope of human understanding but is the outcome of real encounter with God. It enables us to engage with the world from this godly perspective.

Wisdom is attained in struggle:

Pursuit of Wisdom to uncover interrelation – coherence, amid fragmentation, which post-modern culture glorifies. To find the balance – holy.

Wisdom has always seen coherence of humanity with nature.

Wisdom through the afflictions & sufferings – struggle of Cross of Christ.

In him all things hold together (Col 1:15-20) In creator the disruption cannot remain final.

Current academic world (incl theology) not multi-disciplinary and coherent and run to the answer rather engaging with the horror. The Church is a social entity which cannot pretend and cannot run away from need to engage.

Elsewhere Hardy mentions that Wisdom can be reduced to human Reason when spoken of in 'action-reflection' mode.?

Goodness in History

Suspicion of those representing inherited wisdom of our civilisation – in our institutions of law, church and government. Institutions then become self-protective and cautious or they go with the flow and 'bear the shape of whoever last sat on them'. Religion becomes system for maintaining church life.

English history of institutions is 'getting interplay of stability, change and the end they serve – human flourishing right or wrong.

History of goodness is borne by ideas made operative in institutions.

Christianity is manifested in the world as a society, social form – church. Spirituality finds its home here – it is an 'operating system' like theology.

7 Theology of Money:

Monetary exchange is one element of freedom, exclusion is un-freedom.

As transactions become more complex a tendency to measure all values in monetary and mathematical terms. The symbol becomes more important than that to which it refers.

Monetary system evolved from metallic to managed; & from currency to credit.

Issue is not whether there should be markets, but what kind?

If the exchange is always to receive something of equal or greater worth, the labourers in vineyard experienced a social life in which much was given without expectation of equal return. Eschatological anticipation based on free generosity of the Giver.

Christian congregation can be the few who give praise and thanks on behalf of the many – ten were cured but only one Samaritan returns to thank?

Church therefore witnesses to world of unlimited generosity – ‘stewards of the mysteries’.

8. Churches’ Mission ~ ecumenical

Pentecost issues in deepening intensity of:

worship, righteousness, common life & learning.

issuing in turn to deepening extensity:

of social virtues of faith, hope and love

and social structures: unity, holiness, catholicity, apostolicity. (4marks)

9. Anglican Polity

Bp Mark Dyer & Robin Eames describe Anglicanism:

1. no legislative authority above Provincial
2. insists on this legislative authority
3. has a conciliar nature that reflects a web of interdependence.

Two Camps

1. Traditionalist:

Bible and apostolic tradition sequentially, with bible priority and mediated by central authority of bishops

2. revisionist:

Bible and apostolic tradition have meaning which is found by means of modern critical method and social exploration. Guidance with minimum of controls.

If position of bishop is personalised in personality or personal opinion that is Donatist.

Min Div utilised ‘consultative pluralism’ by which each college had to set out its bases which after acceptance it had to work out in accordance with locality and moderator.

16 Life in the Anglican Way:

Only recently that ‘I’ was separated in meaning from ‘us’.

Neither a sharp division between God and world. Deeply interwoven God.
If God were judgemental there would therefore be something to fear.
We find that closeness too much so externalise God and remove God from life.
Cannot hide from God's Spirit. It is exhausting us! 'This is me, given for you'
God is most with us when we are far from him.

The modern stands in the world waiting to be impressed by scripture or
worship – and fails to realise that we are read by Scripture and Spirit.
Naive stand in the bible un-interested in the world.
We need both these perspectives –intensity of God; extensity of experience

*'I cannot say, after all I have lived through, that my relation to God is
unchanged. But with absolute certainty I can say that my faith in Him has
not altered by a hairsbreadth...Here, then , are my last words to you, my
angry God: None of this will avail You in the least! You have done
everything to make me lose my faith in you, to make me cease to believe in
You. But I die as I have lived, an unshakeable believer in you.'* Warsaw Ghetto

Conclusion:

A society is meaning structured in social terms.
We assign tasks to some, weave networks, matrices of care.
*Church finds the meaning of society in God and seeks to bring society into
closer relation to the truth of God.*

Sacrament of Eucharist:

Eucharist is not instead of social involvement but an interval within.
Unites our experienced anticipation of Kngdom & Scriptural salvation history.

Begins with gathering and ends with sending, so is an interlude in the
scattered life of the church.

Enacts a drama: performance (but can become ritual narcissism)

Our extensity

Bring our experiences

God's intensity

Last Supper and all its referents, its 'deep focus' brought into juxtaposition.

This interaction becomes 'normative' meaning for the life we all lead.

[but RC & Orth = eucharist whole & given, whose principles are transferable]

#extensity and #intensity together create social meaning & motivation.

A God-involving social realism not found elsewhere.

'Being in church' (like trying to put sunshine into a bottle) but dispersed.

Building up the home team for inner social meaning – but can then only make sense of the Church on its own terms.

The 'inner side' is not the only thing – the 'outer side' is key too.

So we must interchange our leaders from inside and outside – mutual participative leadership.

Inclusive

'I will come again and take you to myself so that where I am you also may be.'

Kingdom of God includes differences – 'many mansions' – includes them in himself.

That Christian faith consists in statements of belief to choose or leave (ours is a world of knowledge management)

But Christians live within a tension of now and the Kingdom and Jesus stands with us in that rift as our 'companion'