

SERMON FOR EVENING PRAYER The Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity¹

I. Lessons:²

The First Lesson: Here beginneth the first Chapter of Book of Nehemiah.³

“The words of Nehemiah [*knee-uh-MY-uh*] the son of Hachaliah [*hack-uh-LYE-uh*]. And it came to pass in the month Chisleu [*KISS-lew*], in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan [*SHOO-shan*] the palace, That Hanani [*huh-NAY-nye*], one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.

“And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven, And said, I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments: Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father’s house have sinned. We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses. Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations: But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there.

¹⁹ The Reformed Episcopal Church, an 1873 – and thus pre-St. Louis – secession from PECUSA that formed in opposition to the growing influence of the Oxford Movement.

²⁰ The Traditional Anglican Communion, which is the international arm of the ACA.

²¹ The United Episcopal Church of North America, a 1981 secession from the ACC which is therefore regarded as one of the three “St. Louis” Churches.

²² Cf. Judges 12: 5-6.

²³ Ephesians 4: 3-6 (RSV).

²⁴ Ephesians 1: 22-23; 5: 30; Colossians 1: 18.

²⁵ Society of the Holy Cross, 1990 (rev. ed. 1997).

²⁶ St. Matthew 28: 19.

²⁷ St. Matthew 3: 11; cf. St. John 1: 33, 3: 5, 6: 63, and Acts 11: 16; FRANCIS J. HALL AND FRANK HUDSON HALLOCK, THEOLOGICAL OUTLINES 3rd Ed. 217, 253 (Wipf & Stock Publishers 2004).

²⁸ HALL AND HALLOCK, *op. cit.* 252-53.

²⁹ St. Luke 12: 12; Acts 1: 5 & 8.

³⁰ St. John 14: 16-17, 14: 26, 15: 26.

³¹ HALL AND HALLOCK, *op. cit.* 218-20.

³² St. John 11: 25.

³³ St. John 6: 40.

³⁴ Acts 23: 6 & 26: 6-7; cf. Romans 5: 2 & 15: 4; Galatians 5: 5; Colossians 1: 5; Titus 1: 2.

³⁵ I Peter 3: 15 (RSV).

³⁶ St. Matthew 28: 18.

³⁷ St. Luke 1: 32-33.

³⁸ II Peter 1: 11.

³⁹ See Section IV.B. *supra*.

⁴⁰ HALL AND HALLOCK, *op. cit.* 252-53.

⁴¹ Cf. St. Matthew 5: 45, 7: 11, 10:20 & 10: 32; St. Mark 8: 38 & 11: 25; St. Luke 10: 21-22 & 23: 46; St. John 1: 14.

⁴² Ephesians 4: 1-3 (RSV).

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The Rev'd Canon John A. Hollister⁴³
May 13, 2010

Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand. O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer.

“And it came to pass in the month Nisan [NYE-san], in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes [arr-tuh-ZURK-seas] the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence. Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid, And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldst send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it. And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time. Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah; And a letter unto Asaph [AY-saff] the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.”

Or,

Here beginneth the first Chapter of the Book of Daniel.⁴

¹ Adapted from a sermon for Morning Prayer on Ascension Day, May 13, 2010 (1943 Lectionary).

² *An Alternative Table of Lessons (The Table of 1922, As Revised in 1928)*, THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER, WITH THE ADDITIONS AND DEVIATIONS PROPOSED IN 1928 42 (Canterbury Press 2008); *The Table of Lessons (The Table of 1922, As Revised In 1928)*, A BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER xxxvii (South Africa 1954); *A Table of Lessons (authorized by the Episcopal Synod)*, THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER xxxv (CIPBC 1963).

³ Nehemiah 1:1—2:8 (KJV).

⁴ Daniel 1:1-end (KJV).

⁵ Zephaniah 3:1-end (KJV).

⁶ Ephesians 4:1-24 (KJV).

⁷ Ephesians 4: 1-3 (RSV).

⁸ The Anglican Church in America, which is the U.S. representative of the TAC.

⁹ The Anglican Catholic Church, one of the original “St. Louis” or “Continuing Anglican” Churches of 1977-78.

¹⁰ The Anglican Church of North America, a name which was initially used by the ACC and is now used by North American aspirants to Lambeth Communion membership who organized themselves as a new Province in 2009.

¹¹ The Anglican Mission in America, a 2000 – *i.e.*, post-St. Louis – secession from PECUSA.

¹² The Anglican Province of America, a 1995 secession from the ACA.

¹³ The Anglican Province of Christ the King, one of the three “St. Louis” Churches of 1977-78.

¹⁴ The Convocation of Anglicans in North America, a 2006 – *i.e.*, another post-St. Louis – secession from PECUSA.

¹⁵ The Diocese of the Holy Cross, a secession *ca.* 2005 from the APCK.

¹⁶ The Episcopal Missionary Church, a 1992 – *i.e.*, post-St. Louis – secession from PECUSA.

¹⁷ The Federation of Anglican Churches in the Americas, a para-church fellowship.

¹⁸ Forward in Faith, a para-church fellowship which has two branches, FiF-NA or Forward in Faith – North America, and FiF-UK. Despite its not being an actual church jurisdiction, it has “elected” and obtained consecration for at least two bishops who were identified as being consecrated for FiF, just as though it possessed both jurisdiction and mission.

Where all Christians thus share this one unmistakable rite of entrance into our Faith, we also share unity on this essential point.

G. We Christians acknowledge the sovereignty of one God and Father of us all.

Scripture attests to the Fatherhood of the First Person of the Trinity, God the Father and Creator.⁴¹ Furthermore, as is the case with the other two Persons of the Trinity, we acknowledge God the Father each time we recite one of the three historic Creeds of the Church.

And where all Christians acknowledge that they are the children of the same Father, they are necessarily united in one divine family.

V. Conclusion:

Thus, whether we are considering the larger issue of the apparent fragmentation of Christendom or the nearer one of the apparent fragmentation of traditional Anglicanism, we would do well to reflect on the seven essential aspects of unity that St. Paul set before the Ephesians in today's Second Lesson. When we do so, we must see that we are already far more unified than is otherwise suggested by our disagreements or disparities in practice.

Once we realize that we already have important forms of unity, we may be in a better frame of mind to continue to abide by, and to seek ever increasingly to exemplify, Paul's urgent injunction: "I, therefore, ... beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."⁴²

"In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim [**dgeh-HOY-uh-kim**] king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar [**neb-you-cad-NEZZ-urr**] king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim [**dgeh-HOY-uh-kim**] king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar [**SHY-narr**] to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.

"And the king spake unto Ashpenaz [**ASH-peh-nozz**] the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king's seed, and of the princes; Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king. Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah [**hann-uh-NYE-uh**], Mishael [**MISH-eh-ull**], and Azariah [**azz-uh-RYE-uh**]: Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Beltshazzar [**bell-teh-SHAZZ-urr**]; and to Hannah [**hann-uh-NYE-uh**], of Shadrach [**SHAD-rack**]; and to Mishael [**MISH-eh-ull**], of Meshach [**MEE-shack**]; and to Azariah [**azz-uh-RYE-uh**], of Abednego [**uh-BED-nih-go**].

"But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs. And the prince of the eunuchs said unto Daniel, I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed your meat and your drink: for why should he see your faces worse liking than the children which are of your sort? then shall ye make me endanger my head to the king. Then said

Daniel to Melzar [MELL-zarr], whom the prince of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah [hann-uh-NYE-uh], Mishael [MISH-eh-ull], and Azariah [azz-uh-RYE-uh], Prove thy servants, I beseech thee, ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink. Then let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the king's meat: and as thou seest, deal with thy servants. So he consented to them in this matter, and proved them ten days. And at the end of ten days their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat. Thus Melzar [MELL-zarr] took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse.

“As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar [neb-you-cad-NEZZ-urr]. And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah [hann-uh-NYE-uh], Mishael [MISH-eh-ull], and Azariah [azz-uh-RYE-uh]: therefore stood they before the king. And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king enquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm. And Daniel continued even unto the first year of king Cyrus [SYE-russ].”

Or,

Here beginneth the third Chapter of Zephaniah.⁵

“Woe to her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing city! She obeyed not the voice; she received not correction; she trusted not in the LORD; she drew not near to her God. Her princes within her are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves; they gnaw not the bones till the morrow. Her prophets are light and treacherous persons: her priests

And where all Christians acknowledge that they are the subjects of the same Lord, who can reasonably deny that they are united in that allegiance?

E. We Christians adhere to the basic principles of one Faith.

We have already mentioned the three historic statements of the Faith of the Church, the Nicene, Apostles', and Athanasian Creeds. Historically, the entire Church, both East and West, adhered to the Nicene Creed and the entire Western Church adhered to the Apostles' and Athanasian Creeds as well. The entire Household of the Faith – the Catholic Church to which those Creeds refer – has always deemed them to be sufficient statements of the minimal beliefs that a faithful Christian must hold.

But if all Christians must believe, at bottom, the same essential things, then we are already united in the bases of our Faith and beliefs, however much we may differ on some of the minor details of that Faith or in our practices.

F. We Christians are incorporated into Our Lord's Body through one Baptism.

Previously, we mentioned that the Holy Spirit is the One who acts in the Sacrament of Baptism.³⁹ There is only one valid form of Baptism, that where either the baptizand is immersed in water or water is poured over the baptizand, while the celebrant pronounces that the subject is being baptized in the Name—again, *Name* singular--of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost – or Holy Spirit.⁴⁰

While some Christians have departed from the traditional understanding of what Baptism means, or of how essential it is to the Christian life, no one reasonably disputes that this, and this alone, is what the Church has always recognized as this Sacrament.

rates and watches over, already share among themselves a very essential form of unity.

C. We Christians hold fast to one hope of eternal salvation.

Several noticeable characteristics mark Christians off as different from the rest of humanity. Of these, one of the principal ones is their hope that, with the Lord's help, they will surmount death³² and be resurrected³³ in their bodies.³⁴ Pagans and unbelievers have no such hope, or any other defense against the pains and disappointments of this uncertain physical life.

Thus it is that the two most ethical and admirable of the pagan philosophical systems, Stoicism and Epicureanism, could offer their adherents nothing better than the advice to avoid pain and disappointment, essentially by withdrawing themselves from most forms of social and political engagement. Thus, too, it is that St. Peter exhorts us to "Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you..."³⁵

In contrast, as Christians, we share the sure and certain hope of the resurrection, something that distinguishes us from the non-Christian world so sharply that it effectively unifies all who possess it.

D. We Christians acknowledge one Lord over us and over His Church.

Scripture attests to the Lordship of the Second Person of the Trinity, God the Son, Jesus Christ, over the world,³⁶ over His Church,³⁷ and, therefore, over us who are the members of that Church.³⁸ Furthermore, we acknowledge that Lordship each time we recite one of the three historic Creeds of the Church.

have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law. The just LORD is in the midst thereof; he will not do iniquity: every morning doth he bring his judgment to light, he faileth not; but the unjust knoweth no shame. I have cut off the nations: their towers are desolate; I made their streets waste, that none passeth by: their cities are destroyed, so that there is no man, that there is none inhabitant. I said, Surely thou wilt fear me, thou wilt receive instruction; so their dwelling should not be cut off, howsoever I punished them: but they rose early, and corrupted all their doings.

"Therefore wait ye upon me, saith [SETH] the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy. For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering. In that day shalt thou not be ashamed for all thy doings, wherein thou hast transgressed against me: for then I will take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride, and thou shalt no more be haughty because of my holy mountain. I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD. The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.

"Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The LORD hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, even the LORD, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing. I will

gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, who are of thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burden. Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame. At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith [SETH] the LORD.”

Here endeth the First Lesson.

The Second Lesson: Here beginneth the fourth Chapter of the Epistle of Blessed Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians.⁶

“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith [SETH], When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we hen-

To borrow a phrase that is often used by some with whom we do not agree upon the basics of the Faith, this passage sets forth seven “instruments of unity” among Christians:

A. We, who are dedicated to Christ in Baptism, are all one Body.

This profound truth, which has been taught by mainstream Christianity ever since it was first enunciated by St. Paul,²⁴ is emphasized by the title of a wonderful old introductory text on the Catholic faith: YE ARE THE BODY²⁵ by Bonnell Spencer. But if we Christians all form what is in God’s eyes one body, then we already share a very real unity, despite any institutional or administrative diversity.

B. We, as Christians, are enlivened and guided by one Holy Spirit.

All orthodox Christians – that is “orthodox” with a lower case “o” – are baptized into the Church in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.²⁶ And notice that familiar phrase is in the *Name*, singular, of the Persons of the Trinity, not in their *Names*, plural.

In this Sacrament, it is the Third Person of the Trinity, God the Holy Spirit, Who acts in that Sacrament and makes us members of Christ,²⁷ even when the celebrant of that Baptism does not accurately understand what the Church has always done in that Sacrament.²⁸ Further, Our Lord promised us, and the Church has always believed, that it is the Holy Spirit Who enlivens²⁹ and guides³⁰ the Church³¹ so as to keep it from all essential error.

Thus, as St. Paul reminds the Ephesians, all who have received the Holy Spirit in Baptism, and who are thereby incorporated into that Church which the Holy Spirit invigo-

Christian organizations, many of which are usually squabbling with some of the others or even with almost all of the others.

Of course, those who marvel and despair at this apparent Christian confusion conveniently forget the uneasy and often hostile relations between the four or five major movements within Islam, the two or three distinct streams of Buddhism, the several factions within Hinduism, or the four principal parties and numerous minor sects within Judaism.

The result of this myopic perspective is, all too often, an ill-considered call for “unity”, at any price and upon any terms, whether that unity be conceived on the macro scale as the merger of disparate Christian groups, as in the Churches of South India and of North India, or on the micro scale as the merger of disparate Anglican groups. In either case, these proposals are floated without adequate provision for the real historic reasons that have led to those prospective merger partners’ separate existences.

Equally, such conceptualized mergers, whether macro-scale pan-Christian ones or micro-scale pan-Anglican ones, also overlook the very real and substantive degree of unity that already exists despite the formal distinctions between church corporations or juridical entities.

As St. Paul reminded the Ephesians in today’s Second Lesson, they were, and we are, called to be “[E]ager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all, and through all, and in all.”²³ Baptism, of course, incorporates each of us into the body of Christ, thus uniting us in a fundamental way with all Christians, even with those who do not themselves believe that Baptism is anything more than a simple sign or mere memorial.

ceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

Here endeth the Second Lesson.

II. Text:

From the Second Lesson: “I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”⁷ In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

III. Introduction and Theme:

Because you are sitting here, listening to this sermon, we all know that you are people who regularly worship according to the 1928 American edition of the traditional Book of Common Prayer that, for more than 460 years, has been such a defining characteristic of Anglicanism.

And if you regularly worship according to the authentic Book of Common Prayer, then by the rule of *lex credendi, lex orandi* – that is, “What you pray becomes what you believe” -- you are almost certainly committed to the maintenance of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Faith – the Faith of the three historic Creeds and of the ancient universal, undivided Church of the Apostles – in its distinctively Anglican expression.

But if you are the sort of classic Catholic with an Anglican orientation that I have just described, and you pay any attention to the Internet or other publications that cover the traditional Anglican scene, then you are likely confused and concerned by the multiplicity of self-described “traditional” or “conservative” communions, jurisdictions, denominations, and bodies that present such a patchwork appearance to any interested observer. You may even be one of those who has, on occasion, been heard to lament, “Why cannot all those, who believe and practice the same things, unify themselves, so as to witness more effectively to the world?”

IV. Development:

Nearly everyone who is concerned with this issue has encountered the host of initials and acronyms for the various Anglican, neo-Anglican, or quasi-Anglican church and parachurch bodies and associations. A typical string of such initials and acronyms includes ACA,⁸ ACC,⁹ ACNA,¹⁰ AMiA,¹¹ APA,¹² APCK,¹³ CANA,¹⁴ DHC,¹⁵ EMC,¹⁶ FA-CA,¹⁷ FiF,¹⁸ REC,¹⁹ TAC,²⁰ or UECNA²¹ – all of which

stand for current names and not even the many past labels or groups which have disappeared. Further, all of these are relatively mainstream rather than just some of the horde of fringe groups.

Such a list speedily shows why some complain of an “alphabet soup” of church entities, both within and without the Archbishop of Canterbury’s old Lambeth association of churches. (That Lambeth association is what we used to call “the Anglican Communion”, until some of its most prominent members began jettisoning essentials that have always marked Anglicanism as Catholic in the ancient sense.)

In contemplating this seemingly chaotic Anglican scene, we can try to make some sense out of the apparent disunity and disorder among those who call themselves “Anglicans”, especially if we recognize is that all of those who assume the label “Anglican”, even all those whose worship uses some traditional version of the Book of Common Prayer, do *not* in fact share the same beliefs and practices.

If you doubt that, ask the members of any such group just two questions and tabulate for yourself the answers given you by members of these different groups. The first of these shibboleths²² is, “What authority do the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion have within your jurisdiction?” The second key question is, “What does your group teach about the nature and operation of the Sacraments? How many are there, and are they subjective or objective channels of Grace?”

Then, too, it is also important to remember that this seemingly hopeless confusion in the “Continuing Anglican” and larger “Anglican” scenes is just a subset of the larger mixture, seemingly a random olio, of communions, jurisdictions, denominations, and groups that litter the field of Christianity in general. Non-Christians – and many Christians, too – are constantly amazed at the number and variety of