

# **Homo Eucharisticus: Dom Gregory Dix – Reshaped**

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## ABSTRACT

In his book *The Shape of the Liturgy* Dom Gregory Dix coined the phrase ‘Eucharistic man’. In a speech to clergy Archbishop Rowan Williams remarked that *Homo Eucharisticus*, his Latinised version of Dix’s words, was, ‘a new human species who makes sense of the world in the presence of the risen Jesus at his table’.

This thesis will seek to define what is specifically meant by the term *Homo Eucharisticus* and to indicate that, in a very real sense, Dix is *Homo Eucharisticus*, understood in his life, vocation, and his primary scholarship as it is centred on *The Shape of the Liturgy*. I shall demonstrate that Dix’s theology was Incarnational and that his Trinitarian understanding was based on the precept of a ‘Spiritual-Logos’. I shall examine these concepts in the context of Dix’s experience and personality. I shall assess the historical, intellectual and theological influences that helped to shape his life and vocation, and explore his Anglican identity as a priest, a scholar and a member of a religious community.

I shall explain Dix’s creative understanding of the Trinitarian nature of the Eucharist and determine that he was a noteworthy theologian of major significance. I shall include studies of his writings on the Ministry of the Church and his major liturgical works *The Apostolic Tradition of Saint Hippolytus* and *The Shape of the Liturgy*. I shall present a reassessment of his liturgical scholarship and review his continuing importance in the Church of the twenty-first century.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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My interest in Dom Gregory Dix had its origins in a series of lectures on Eucharistic liturgy given by the Rev'd Canon Geoffrey Williams, then Canon Chancellor of Blackburn Cathedral, to the altar servers in the 1980s. To my theological mentor for almost two decades, I owe much gratitude.

I would like to thank the staff of the University of Glasgow Library for their assistance in locating obscure materials and providing copies when appropriate. Members of staff of the National Library of Scotland and the Bodleian Library, Oxford, have also proved most helpful in obtaining relevant texts, often from remote sources. My thanks are also due to the many who replied to my letters and e-mail enquiries and who provided insightful suggestions, helpful information and answers to my questions. They include: The Rev'd Jeremy Brooks; Dr Rachel Cosgrave; The Rev'd Canon Jonathan Goodall; Fr Antony Green, CR; The Rt Rev'd Dr Richard Holloway; Mr Oliver House; The Rev'd Professor David Jasper; The Rev'd Dr Simon Jones; The Rev'd Canon Dr Michael Kitchener; Mr Julian Reid; Ms Elizabeth Wells and The Most Rev'd and Rt Hon Dr Rowan Williams. I offer particular thanks to Archbishop Williams for, indirectly, suggesting the main title for my thesis.

I am grateful to the Trustees of the Lorimer Bursary for financial assistance in helping to defray the costs of my studies.

My family has been a tower of strength throughout my years of research. My wife has become used to being a 'library widow' and has never ceased to support me in this work, ever ready to be ignored yet again as I struggled with textbook and web site, blissfully unaware of her needs, or sometimes even of her presence. Our children have encouraged me at every turn. Our daughter, a mature student, has shared with me many of her study and research techniques, for which I thank her. It is to my wife that I dedicate this thesis.

NB All Biblical quotations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version (1989) unless otherwise indicated.

**To Jan**

## AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this dissertation is the result of my own work. It has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

David John Fuller

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION	7
2 DIX AS PRIEST, MONK AND SCHOLAR	13
3 MAJOR TEXTS	27
3.1 Ministry in the Church	27
3.2 The Apostolic Tradition of Saint Hippolytus	42
3.3 The Shape of the Liturgy	69
4 THE IMPACT OF DIX'S IDEAS	142
5 CONCLUSION	165

# 1 INTRODUCTION

In an address to clergy in the Diocese of Chelmsford, Archbishop Rowan Williams remarked that Dom Gregory Dix had conjectured a new human species, *Homo Eucharisticus*, a being who emerges, ‘in this regular activity of making sense of the world in the presence of the risen Jesus at his table’.<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere Williams said:

The Church’s mission in God’s world is inseparably bound up with the reality of the common life around Christ’s table, the life of what a great Anglican scholar [Dix] called *Homo Eucharisticus*, the new ‘species’ of humanity that is created and sustained by the Eucharistic gathering and its food and drink.<sup>2</sup>

This thesis will argue that Williams was correct in his definition, and that Dix may meaningfully be referred to as *Homo Eucharisticus* because his life was utterly grounded in the central reality of Christian Eucharistic worship. As I shall determine, his principal writings, on Holy Orders, *The Apostolic Tradition of Saint Hippolytus* and *The Shape of the Liturgy*, have had special and continuing importance in liturgical studies across many decades, churches and continents.

Dix’s short life occupied the first half of the twentieth century. Commenting on his death his great friend Kenneth Kirk described Dix as, ‘my closest and oldest friend, and the most brilliant man in the Church of England’. In a Church and century that encompassed such imposing figures as Charles Gore – first Bishop of Birmingham and founder of the Community of the Resurrection; William Temple – Archbishop of Canterbury, inaugurator of the British Council of Churches and authority on Christianity and Society; J A T Robinson – Bishop of Woolwich, significant New Testament scholar and author of *Honest to God* (1963) and Eric Mascall – a Thomist and defender of Catholic orthodoxy; it seems perhaps a little bizarre that Bishop Kirk should single out Dix for this exceptional accolade. These four, who do not exclusively represent the erudition of the Church of England, have been selected for their eclecticism and for their considerable diversity in a Church hierarchy that had Dix as a contemporary. Bishop Kirk was, himself, a notable scholar, having been Regius Professor of Moral and Pastoral Theology at Oxford and

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<sup>1</sup> Rowan Williams, ‘The Church: God’s Pilot Project’, (Address to the Clergy Synod at Chelmsford, 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2006). Dix did not use the Latin phrase ‘*Homo Eucharisticus*’. He wrote, ‘Over against the dissatisfied ‘Acquisitive Man’ and his no less avid successor the dehumanised ‘Mass-Man’ of our economically focussed societies insecurely organised for time, Christianity sets the type of ‘Eucharistic Man’ – man giving thanks with the product of his labours upon the gifts of God, and daily rejoicing with his fellows in the worshipping society which is grounded in eternity.’ See: Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, (London: Dacre Press, 1945), xviii f.

<sup>2</sup> Rowan Williams, ‘Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread’, (Address at Lutheran World Federation Assembly, 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2010).

author of a number of important works. What, it could reasonably be asked, led to Dix receiving this great compliment? What did Kirk mean when he described Dix as ‘brilliant’, especially as ‘most brilliant’? Through his writings and his contacts with contemporary churchmen, Dix seemed to have made impacts on the Church of England far beyond his standing as an academic. Was he ‘the most brilliant man in the Church of England’ in 1952? He was, indeed, one of its most controversial, outspoken, disputational and combative members.

The principal aim of my research has been to show Dix in a new light; to see him as a continuation of the broad Romantic heritage of Christian writers and to demonstrate that, while his academic researches may have been flawed in some respects, he had a fundamental, Catholic view of the Christian Church that was at the centre of his studies. He saw it as a world-wide whole, not as a set of loosely connected, purely utilitarian or national organisations. The Anglican Church, his Church, was, for Dix, nothing less than *Corpus Christi*, the Body of Christ. It was the Church that he worshipped in, wrote for and served with unswerving loyalty. It will become clear that he remained a committed Anglican, despite leanings towards the Roman Catholic Church, to which, on a number of occasions, he came close to seceding. However, while steadfast in his dedication to Anglicanism, Dix was often critical of his Church, for which his private name was Jezebel. He was concerned about the Episcopal leadership of the Church and often showed his chagrin and annoyance when confronted by bureaucracy, red tape, rules and regulations.

Despite Dix’s importance within the Church of England for much of the first half of the twentieth century, as a writer, debater, lecturer, preacher and confessor, there is surprisingly little general commentary about him and no scholarly biography has been written, despite the obvious consequence of his studies of liturgy and worship. Simon Bailey wrote a book in 1995, entitled *A Tactful God*, in which he surveyed Dix’s life and times but which he claimed was not a biography.<sup>3</sup> It is known that Henry Chadwick collected together a number of papers with the intention of writing a biography of Dix, but this work never came to fruition.<sup>4</sup> Also, the Community at Nashdom collected various papers with the intention that a biography of Dix should be written, but nothing was

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<sup>3</sup> Simon Bailey, *A Tactful God*, (Leominster: Gracewing Books, 1995), 1. Bailey claimed that he lacked the necessary scholarship to provide an adequate critique of Dix’s liturgical erudition.

<sup>4</sup> Chadwick’s accumulated papers are lodged in the library of Lambeth Palace; Ref: MSS 4798-4802: Five volumes entitled: Gregory Dix, 1901-1952. I am indebted to the Rev’d Canon Jonathan Goodall for this information.



published.<sup>5</sup> This apparent disinterest is in itself peculiar. Yet, no-one has thought it important to continue the work begun by Chadwick, or at Nashdom. Maybe this was because Dix was so unconventional a character within the Church. His particularly controversial approach to scholarship made this paradoxical and multifaceted individual difficult to categorise and evaluate, such that no biographer with sufficient depth of understanding has thus far come forward to write meaningfully about him. Nevertheless, this thesis requires a relatively in-depth study and, although I shall make no attempt to write a biography, I shall address many of Dix's idiosyncrasies and his often unconventional scholarship, the better to understand why he has been so ignored.

Those many who have written about him in the preceding sixty or so years have mainly done so to comment on his most important written work, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, and, to a lesser extent, his translation of and commentary on *The Apostolic Tradition of Saint Hippolytus*. Much of this writing has been of an analytical nature wherein these various scholars have dissected Dix's works and have offered exacting criticisms interspersed with occasional elements of praise. Very few authors, if any, have studied Dix or tried to find answers to questions about his style of priesthood, his credentials as an academic scholar or the sort of monk he became. In this thesis I shall attempt to examine him as a complete persona and determine his importance as a theologian, and the significance of his written contributions to liturgical scholarship.

Dix may be considered to have followed in the footsteps of many Anglican writers, stemming back to the decades after the Protestant Reformation and continuing to present times. There was distinctiveness in Dix that caused him to shine out, making him stand head and shoulders above many of his contemporaries.

Dix was fundamentally a theologian but it is impossible to separate his theology from his liturgical scholarship. As I shall observe, his most important book, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, is a theologically driven work; it is Christological; it is Trinitarian; it may justifiably be considered to be a study of Benedictine spirituality. However, by contrast with many contemporary, liturgical works, it is not wholly historical. Some commentators have censured it for not being thoroughly academic and have criticised it for its lack of intellectual rigour. Where many academic researchers investigate ever smaller subject areas in ever more minute detail until the last, minuscule scintilla of knowledge has been

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<sup>5</sup> Letters from Robert Waterhouse to the Abbot at Nashdom, dated 1954, were part of this collection. This correspondence is now included in the Chadwick archive in Lambeth Palace Library. See, *inter alia*, MS 4799, ff 325-8.

processed, Dix was most definitely not of their ilk. However, like them, he inhabited the same theological universe that was located within the continuity of the Christian Church. His primary intellectual and spiritual focus was on the life, belief and worshipping practices of that Church, particularly in the first three, post-Apostolic centuries. If anything his horizons grew wider rather than narrower as he explored the many facets of the time and space of his sacramental world. Kenneth Stevenson explained that Dix, ‘spread his nets further than his data’.<sup>6</sup> One positive outcome of Dix’s unique approach to his studies and his writings can be seen in their readability. Stevenson quoted E C Ratcliff who was reported to have remarked that, ‘it’s an extraordinary thing to find a book [*The Shape of the Liturgy*] that reads like a novel, but is in fact a serious contribution to scholarship’. Stevenson added that, ‘the big names of his and our day can certainly examine evidence and write in detail, but none of them has Dix’s flair for putting the material across on paper’.<sup>7</sup> In the context of classical study this is a singularly important observation and one that Dix would have been proud to have heard. It is interesting to observe that Ratcliff, while he may not have planned to be patronising in his remark, had to accept that his own contributions to liturgical studies did not have Dix’s flair and flamboyance. Dix clearly employed a different type of scholarship.

There is a synchronicity in Dix’s written output which gives it a kind of contemporaneity with the authors of the post-Apostolic Church. Dix did not see Patristic literature as being ancient and only of historical interest; it was for him the very life blood of the Universal Church of God. He did not see the study of liturgy and worship as merely an analysis of archaeological documents; liturgy and worship were the very breath of the living Church. He would have understood that he entered into the organic life of the Church every time he presided at the Mass. Although he was in no sense Erastian, Dix would equally have acknowledged the synergy that exists in England between the Church and the State, a unique relationship within *Ecclesia Anglicana* that has its historical roots in the political actions of both Henry VIII and Thomas Cranmer, and which had an enormous impact on the theology and liturgy of the Church of England. There were indeed features of his Church that led Dix to adopt a disestablishmentarian position but he only envisaged a complete separation of Church and State as resulting from a future reintegration of the Anglican and Roman Churches.

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<sup>6</sup> Kenneth Stevenson, *Gregory Dix – Twenty-Five Years On*, (Bramcote: Grove Books, 1977), 38.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 38.

All too often emphasis is placed on an author's works with little attention paid to that person as an individual. I plan to show that it is important to study the character and background of Dix as well as his works; both have their respective parts to play in the life of this remarkable man.

Section 2 begins with an examination of Dix in relation to his family, in which I shall briefly survey his early life, the experiences that affected his adult personality, the intellectual and theological influences that impacted on his life and his writings, and explore his unique identity as an Anglican priest, monk and scholar, in order to establish the formation of his ideas and their genealogy. I shall examine his early years at Westminster School, and at Oxford, first as a student and later as a lecturer in Modern History. I shall investigate his eremitic life as a monk within an Anglican, Benedictine order and shed some light on the how he sat within what was essentially a contemplative Community. I shall then explore Dix as an academic, highlighting the many paradoxes that affected the style and character of his literary output.

Section 3 offers a broad and wide ranging enquiry into three of Dix's most important, academic works: his paper on *Ministry in the Early Church*; his translation of and commentary on *The Apostolic Tradition of Saint Hippolytus*; and his major, magisterial book, *The Shape of the Liturgy*. Dix held strong views on the nature of those who constitute the Royal Priesthood of that Church; those who had primal responsibility for its sacramental life. I examine the Apostolic foundation of that Priesthood and explore the grave problems that arose as a result of the Protestant Reformation, and the resultant antipathy between Roman and Anglican Orders.

I offer a general study of the seminal work on Hippolytus but I do not follow in the paths of earlier commentators by studying the minutiae of the ancient texts. Dix, unusually, altered the numbering of the various sections in his version of this work. I examine that decision and enquire if he may have done so in order to justify his particular understanding of the place of a 'Spiritual-Logos' in Christian initiation. I offer an in-depth survey of many aspects of baptism and confirmation and give detailed consideration to the views of a number of eminent writers on this subject.

This section concludes with an extensive study of *The Shape of the Liturgy*. After an introductory portion about the work in general and the broad tenor of the criticisms that it has attracted, I explore Dix's understanding of the Last Supper within Eucharistic theology and attempt to evaluate his assertion that this was a *Chûbarah* meal, contrary to

the thinking of many of his contemporaries. Dix had a profound sense of the vital importance of the Eucharist within the life of the Church and I offer an explanation of this in an in-depth study of the sacrificial nature of the Mass. This will provide an understanding of the particular theology exhibited in many of Dix's writings, which identified him clearly as an example of *Homo Eucharisticus* and determined his paradoxical, pre-Chalcedonian, Spiritual-Logos conception of the Trinity; theological attributes that impacted on much of his thinking and writing. Next, I provide a broad analysis of the Eucharistic Anaphora, in which I study its many and varied parts and examine how modern liturgists have reacted to Dix's views and opinions. Almost as an appendix in *The Shape of the Liturgy*, which is essentially a study of Eucharistic praxis in the first four centuries, Dix added (against, he said, his better judgement) a chapter concerning the significance of the Protestant Reformation. The final part of Section 3 begins with a brief study of a number of Protestant Reformers, paying particular attention to the writings of Thomas Cranmer. Dix was emphatic that Cranmer's Eucharistic theology was Zwinglian (or, at least, Bullingerian) and I offer an analysis of a number of reviewers who wrote substantially on this subject.

In Section 4, as a coda to the main work, I consider how liturgical reformers have reacted to Dix's writings and offer a short commentary on a number of Communion rites that were designed during the second half of the twentieth century and the early years of its successor, and determine the effect that Dix's theology and Eucharistic theories have had on them. I shall explore the impact of Dix's ideas on liturgical and reform and make an assessment of his continuing importance in the life of the Church.

Finally, a Conclusion will consider whether, in the light of the researches that I have carried out, Dix may fundamentally be considered to be an important and noteworthy, although, at times, paradoxical, theologian and not be seen merely as another writer on liturgy and worship.

## 2 DIX AS PRIEST, MONK AND SCHOLAR

### Preamble

George Eglington Alston Dix was born on the Feast of St Francis (4<sup>th</sup> October), 1901; he died from intestinal cancer on 12<sup>th</sup> May, 1952. He took the name Gregory on becoming a religious.

It is necessary to examine Dix's life and practice as a priest, a monk and a scholar and determine how this combination led him to be identified as an example of *Homo Eucharisticus*. Dix was an ordained priest in the Church of England, a Benedictine monk, based initially at Pershore but afterwards at Nashdom, and a well-published scholar. I plan to explore a number of aspects of Dix's life in their historical context, to throw some light on this remarkable individual and examine his background and the makings of his personality. I shall briefly survey his life at school and later at Oxford, as a student and as a lecturer. I shall try to determine the kind of priest that he was and explore his life in Community.

### Dix's early life

Dix was born to parents who held both Catholic and Protestant beliefs. His father (George Henry) was an Anglo-Catholic priest, teacher and confessor and his mother (Mary Jane) was a Wesleyan Methodist. His maternal grandfather (James Eteson Walker) was a lay preacher in Preston, Lancashire. Thus there were many influential, religious experiences in his early life. Simon Bailey reported that, from a very early age, Dix attended a nursery school or kindergarten at the Convent of Our Lady, at Saint Leonard's on Sea.<sup>8</sup>

Dix's first contact with the Order of Saint Benedict was as a student of Westminster School, to which he won a King's Scholarship, and where he was a pupil from 1915 to 1920. It seems not unreasonable to suppose that the ambience of the school, sited as it was (and is) adjacent to the Abbey and abutting the Great Cloister would have created a lasting impression on a teenager, especially one from a religious family and whose father was interested in restoring the religious life to the Church of England. Dix was clearly very gifted academically; he won the school's Senior Vincent Prize for Latin verse in 1919 and the Gumbleton Prize for English verse in 1920. Dix showed early signs of the religious rigour that would come to dominate his personality when he took his headmaster to task

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<sup>8</sup>Simon Bailey, *A Tactful God*, 7.

for not allowing him to attend church on Ascension Day. He threatened to tell his story to the newspapers under the headline, ‘Church boy expelled from church school for wanting to attend church’.<sup>9</sup> Of course, this may have been a demonstration of the rebellious characteristic that was to follow him throughout his life. While still at school, and surrounded by the Benedictine architecture of the Abbey, Dix wrote of the importance of monasticism and the critical place in history played by the successors to Saint Peter. He declared that he had no time for ‘the adulteries of an apostate monk and an apostate nun’ (meaning Martin Luther and his wife Catherine von Bora).<sup>10</sup> In this he was declaring an early yet deep theological concern for the Apostolic Succession and all that this meant for the authority of the priestly orders of his Church.

Dix was a keen member of his school’s Debating Society and often spoke to its various motions. The school magazine, *The Elizabethan*, reported that, in February, 1920, Dix, after displaying rather blatantly his unfamiliarity with economics and high finance, portentously declared that, ‘all Europe east of Dover was bankrupt, and all Europe east of the Danube was rife with typhus and spotted fever. Asia was crumbling into ruins’. This was perhaps an example of inaccurate overstatement that would colour some of his later writings. Dix showed early evidence of his latent showmanship when he acted in the school’s production of Terence’s *Adelphi* (1919). A critic gave him fulsome praise for his portrayal of Syrus, Micio’s trusted slave. He wrote that:

Mr G E A Dix deserves ... unstinted praise. He adopted a jesting rather than a crafty attitude, and you felt that he really did deceive Demea. Perhaps Mr Dix was a little too drunk, but his ‘*abit*’ was a triumph. Our heartiest congratulations go to him.<sup>11</sup>

Dix’s acting abilities were apparent from an early age. By the summer of 1908 Dix knew enough French to be given a small part in a play to be acted for the Golden Jubilee of the Reverend Mother of The Convent of Our Lady, Saint Leonards-on-Sea. Bishop Lemonnier of Bayeux, who was present for the occasion, congratulated the young actor.<sup>12</sup> Dix’s involvement in the theatre continued in later years. In November, 1913, he played the part of Dick Bultitude’s Body in *Vice Versa: A Lesson for Fathers*, at Temple Grove,

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>11</sup> I am indebted to Elizabeth Wells, Archivist and Record Keeper of Westminster School, for this and other information.

<sup>12</sup> Ref: Lambeth Palace Library, MS 4799, f 313.

Eastbourne.<sup>13</sup> This theatricality would later find expression in his forays into ecclesiastical politics as a Proctor in Convocation.

Dix's final school report showed that he studied Divinity, English and History. His English Tutor reported that Dix's 'essays are always interesting and good', and his History Master wrote, 'excellent ... he has worked with great concentration and determination this term'. His Form Master (who also taught him History and English) wrote, 'His success at Merton gave me very great pleasure and was a most satisfactory ending to an admirable term's work. It ought to encourage him and give him confidence in himself and his work'.<sup>14</sup>

## Dix at Oxford

After leaving school Dix won one of four Exhibitions of £80 per annum, to read Modern History at Merton College, Oxford (1920-23). As an Exhibitioner he would have had to sit an entrance examination, which he passed with sufficiently high marks to gain admission, but not as a Scholar. It seems likely that his Exhibition was from a bequest dedicated to the sons of clergy. He was also awarded his school's Triplett Prize, which amounted to £25 per year for three years.

It is the usual practice at both Oxford and Cambridge for students to apply to colleges that have the facilities and lecturing structure to fulfil their academic aspirations. Thus Dix would no doubt have sought the best college commensurate with his plans to read Modern History. However, Merton College did not have its own lecturer in history for the years that Dix was up. Consequently modern history students were sent out to the Rev'd Arthur Henry Johnson at All Souls College. In Dix's final year Robert Balmain Mowat was his history lecturer, albeit Mowat was a Fellow of Corpus Christi.<sup>15</sup> While a student Dix came under the influence of the Rev'd Frederick Wastie Green, the college chaplain and lecturer in theology. Merton had a Church Society, of which Green was the President, and Dix took part in its debates and was elected to its committee.<sup>16</sup> Frederick (Freddie) Green remained a lifelong friend and Dix maintained a correspondence with him throughout the years 1940-43, a period when he was preparing to write *The Shape of the*

<sup>13</sup> Ref: Lambeth Palace Library, MS 4799, f2.

<sup>14</sup> Ref: Lambeth Palace Library, MS 4799, f29.

<sup>15</sup> I am indebted to Julian Read, Archivist at Merton College, for these details. Interestingly, the Corpus Christi biographical register has no reference to Mowat serving as a lecturer at Merton.

<sup>16</sup> Simon Bailey, *A Tactful God*, 19.

*Liturgy*.<sup>17</sup> It is possible that Dix chose Merton College because of its historic links with the Tractarian Movement. Mark Everitt quoted Warden Brodrick of Merton who wrote in his *History of University of Oxford*, ‘From 1833 to the end of the century, Merton chapel provides an excellent instance of the fortunes of the Oxford Movement’.<sup>18</sup>

A letter of 1923 to *The Elizabethan*, possibly from Cecil Willoughby, who was in the same years as Dix at Westminster School, noted that, ‘Mr Dix is still hovering about the place, though we haven’t quite gathered in what capacity’, perhaps a measure of his detachment from the real world, later to be seen in his contemplative monasticism. These traits begin to show Dix’s paradoxical nature; volatile one minute, lackadaisical the next. Dix’s years at Merton were not without incident. The records of the University Proctors reveal that in November 1922 he was ‘gated’ for three weeks and fined five shillings for ‘ragging on Armistice night and removing a bus sign’.<sup>19</sup> At the end of his three years Dix was awarded an Upper Second Class Honours Degree, which was considered by his contemporaries as a modest achievement.<sup>20</sup> Bailey reported that Dix’s undergraduate notes displayed a methodical manner of working, and mentioned that his tutor was Garrod, but Heathcote William Garrod, who was a Fellow of Merton for over sixty years, was a classicist and Professor of Poetry from 1923-28, not a tutor in history.<sup>21</sup>

Dix may have learned some of his outspokenness from Arthur Johnson. Johnson was a fellow and chaplain of All Souls and he taught history, covering the period from the Fall of the Roman Empire, expounding everything in what Lawrence Goldman described as, ‘heartily un-academic style’.<sup>22</sup> He was described as ‘Old Oxford incarnate’ who had forthright views and uncomplicated opinions. He was free from the common academic habits’ including ‘the professorial way of speech and manner’ and that his lectures were ‘clear, methodical and solid’.<sup>23</sup> All of this sounds very Dixian!<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> See: National Church Institutions Database of Manuscripts and Archives.

<sup>18</sup> Everitt, Mark, ‘Merton Chapel in the Nineteenth Century’, *Oxoniensia*, Vol 42-3, 1978, 247f. Before the upheaval of the Oxford Movement, Merton chapel was a quiet and sober place. A restoration of the chapel took place in the 1840s under the aegis of John Hungerford Pollen. Dean Pollen was a man of considerable artistic gifts and great energy, and he turned Merton chapel from a decent classical shrine inside a gothic shell to one ‘furnished in a properly Catholic, Christian style by William Butterfield’.

<sup>19</sup> Further details of Dix’s exploits as an undergraduate student were reported by his friend Eric Mascall. See: Eric Mascall, *Saraband*, (Leominster: Gracewing Books, 1992), 151ff.

<sup>20</sup> The indolence described earlier may account in part for Dix’s ‘mediocre’ award.

<sup>21</sup> Simon Bailey, *A Tactful God*, 20.

<sup>22</sup> Lawrence Goldman, *Dons and Workers: Oxford and Adult Education since 1850*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 33.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, 33.



Dix spent one year at Wells Theological College (1923-4) and, after being made Deacon, was appointed to a lectureship in Modern History at Keble College, with the intention that, after ordination, he would assume the duties of Chaplain.<sup>25</sup> During his tenure he was ordained priest on his 24<sup>th</sup> birthday (1925). A final mention of Dix in *The Elizabethan* (1925) notes that, ‘Mr Dix continues to provide Keble with entertainment and instruction’ and ‘a dreadful rumour is going about that a recent decision of the City Council, by which the name of Alfred Street has been changed to Pusey Street, was not entirely unconnected with Mr Dix’s influence’.

An episode, more serious than being gated as a student, was recorded in the *Liber Niger* of the University Proctors when an incident of a sexual nature with a male student from University College resulted in Dix being expelled from the University (15<sup>th</sup> June, 1926).<sup>26</sup> Yet, despite his rustication, Dix was re-admitted at some later date because he graduated MA on 14<sup>th</sup> October, 1948, and BD and DD on 26<sup>th</sup> February, 1949. There appears to be no record of the procedures that were adopted to restore Dix’s status within the University. The author of a Golden Jubilee book about Nashdom stated that Dix’s book *The Shape of the Liturgy* was submitted for his doctoral degree.<sup>27</sup>

## Dix the monastic

Dix’s first contact with the Benedictine monks at Pershore, the Community that was eventually to become his home, occurred while he was still a student. In 1923 he spent most of the Long Vacation there. In 1926 he entered the novitiate, took the name Gregory, but transferred to priest oblate status.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Johnson was the author of: *Europe in the Sixteenth Century, 1494-1598*, (London: Rivingtons, 1914), which Dix may have found useful in Chapter XVI of *The Shape of the Liturgy*, the chapter on the Protestant Reformation.

<sup>25</sup> Ref: Lambeth Palace Library, MS 4799, f 34.

<sup>26</sup> I am indebted to Simon Bailey, Keeper of the Archives at the Bodleian Library, for these details.

<sup>27</sup> *The Jubilee Book of the Benedictines of Nashdom 1914-1964* (unattributed), (London: The Faith Press, 1964), 71.

<sup>28</sup> Pershore had been a Benedictine foundation from the tenth century but surrendered to the depredations of Henry VIII’s Commissioners in 1539. Following the establishment of religious houses at Cowley in 1866, in Oxford (then at Mirfield) in 1882 and at Kelham in 1893, a Benedictine community was re-founded at Pershore in 1914. Dix could have joined any one of these Anglican communities and it is interesting to reflect on how he made his decision to go to Pershore. David Jasper reminded me that The Society of Saint John the Evangelist (The Cowley Fathers) was established very much in the English tradition with the Daily Offices and Holy Eucharist said or sung in English, from the Book of Common Prayer. Bishop Richard Holloway provided me with information about his years at Kelham. The Society of the Sacred Mission was a full community but the members were not, strictly speaking, monks, because they were not contemplatives but were active in the world. As at Cowley all Offices and Eucharistic services were said or sung in English from the Prayer Book, enriched with Roman Propers (*The English*

The Rule of Benedict dates from the middle of the sixth century and was probably written at Monte Cassino, although there is some doubt about the authenticity of the present text. The Rule, the earliest for monastic communities, is comprehensive in its seventy-three chapters. While only thirteen refer to the regulation of worship, no fewer than twenty-nine are concerned with discipline and the associated penal codes. The Rule was written for Cenobites, for religious living within the confines of a monastic community under the discipline and authority of an Abbot. While the Rule, with its manifold chapters of instruction and regulation, might, at first sight, seem a daunting and forbidding document, it abounds with discretion, moderation and reasonableness, and shows a keen insight into both the capabilities and weaknesses of human nature. Where other monastic orders concentrated on missionary, teaching or medical works, the Benedictine Order was, and is, a worshipping order, concentrating primarily on the Hours and daily celebrations of the Mass. Benedictinism required its adherents to observe monastic piety. They were also expected to maintain the ideals and practice of true scholarship and maintain or restore the use of good art in their liturgical worship.<sup>29</sup> Dix would certainly have been attracted by these attributes. The scholastic milieu espoused by the Benedictines may have been the catalyst that caused Dix to begin his academic writings; Nashdom doubtless provided him with a stable environment in which his studies could be conducted.

Two images appear of Dix as a religious. The first is of a man-of-the-world; a peripatetic, lecturing fund-raiser for the Community's branch house at Three Rivers in the USA; a disputational Proctor in Convocation for the Diocese of Oxford; and an adversarial debater in the inner chambers of the Church of England. The other picture, told by Mark Tweedy, is of a priest-monk who often said that he asked for nothing better than to be left

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*Missal*). Liturgist Michael Kitchener told me that the Community of the Resurrection (founded at Pusey House, Oxford, in 1892) was held in tension between the contemplative aspirations of Charles Gore and issues of social concern expressed by Walter Frere. Mirfield was not a Benedictine order, its community made simple vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Kitchener averred that, from the beginning, Gore and Frere were united in believing in a restrained English (not Roman) liturgy, and they insisted on loyal obedience to the Church of England even when this was not congenial to brethren's own liturgical tastes. Mirfield Father, Alan Wilkinson, reported that a group of Russian monks toured a number of English monastic establishments in 1960. They thought that Nashdom and West Malling were the closest to those in Orthodox monasticism. For reasons known only to himself, Dix chose Pershore as perhaps the most Roman of those on offer, or the one that most fully followed the Rule of Benedict. It was, among Anglican Communities, the one where he could live the contemplative life most fully. Information obtained from Private Correspondence with: David Jasper, Richard Holloway and Michael Kitchener, August, 2011. See also: Alan Wilkinson, *Community of the Resurrection: A Centenary History*, (London: SCM Press, 1962), 335f.

<sup>29</sup> See: Cross, F L (ed), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), sv 'Benedictine Order'.

in peace at home, with his cell, and his books, and his stall in choir.<sup>30</sup> Like Dix, Anglican monasticism was, it might be said, highly paradoxical and had elements of humour, eccentricity and absurdity. In this vein, Alan Wilson cast the monastic life in an other-worldly light when he wrote:

Tightly disciplined monasticism was somehow suffused with the culture of a slightly racy country club, with occasional music around the piano from the London shows in the evenings. This was Barbara Pym's world of cassocks on the lawn, priests who called people 'my dear' with dry sherry in urbane huddles. Women's ordination was as unthinkable as moon landings.<sup>31</sup>

Despite his attachment to the Benedictine Order, and with his many outside activities, including writing, lecturing, fund-raising and membership of Convocation, it could be argued that Dix did not quite keep the Rule as its founder had intended. Simon Bailey reports that 1946 was the only year that Dix kept and preserved a detailed diary. It demonstrated that Dix's spirituality was very much in and of this world and shows that he was involved in many activities outside his Community. The diary is full of speaking engagements, preaching and retreats, Convocation meetings and committees, catholic pressure-group meetings, ecumenical gatherings, writing and publishing and organising other publications. This was hardly the contemplative life of a monastic, yet it was obviously the life that Dix chose to adopt. We have here another example of the paradox that is found in Dix whereby he elected to join a contemplative order and wherein he found the peace and quiet for his studies and his writing, yet he did not see the Church as divorced, detached or isolated. The Holy Eucharist, the sacrament of the Church that dominated his whole life as *Homo Eucharisticus*, was of critical importance not only within Community but throughout the whole world

The pugnacious determinism seen at various times in Dix's character was to have a singular and devastating effect on his lifespan. In 1949 the first Benedictine Community in the USA was resited to Three Rivers, Michigan and money was required for the building of a daughter house; Dix was sent to the USA to assess the matter. He returned in 1950-1 and made a significant contribution in raising funds, but at great personal cost. Petà Dunstan reported that in November, 1950, after seeking advice about feeling unwell, a surgeon in New York confirmed that he had intestinal cancer; but Dix decided not to inform his Abbot, who would undoubtedly have recalled him. This would have seriously reduced the

<sup>30</sup> Mark Tweedy CR, 'Dom Gregory Dix: An Appreciation', *Sobornost*, Series 3, No 12 (Winter 1952), 540.

<sup>31</sup> Alan Wilson, Bishop Alan's Blog, 7<sup>th</sup> May, 2008, <http://bishopalan.blogspot.com/2008/05/gregory-dix-till-we-dead-awaken.html> (Accessed 27/09/11).

money accruing from his lecture tour. Without seeking treatment, Dix sacrificially continued his itinerary and raised around \$130,000 by the end of it. He travelled home to consult with his doctors only after the dedication of the priory church on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 1951. However, six months had passed since the original diagnosis and it was too late to save his life. Operations and other treatments prolonged it, but he died on 12<sup>th</sup> May, 1952.<sup>32</sup> He is buried with other members of his Community in the grounds of Nashdom.

## Dix as a priest

Dix has been typically described as an Anglican priest, monk and scholar. What sort of priest was he? He was generally referred to as an ‘Anglo-Papalist’, and he hoped earnestly for a rapprochement between the Anglican and Roman branches of the Universal Church, perhaps leading ultimately to some sort of subsumption of the former Church within the latter. His Community used the Roman Tridentine Mass with all that that involved in terms of vesture and ceremonial. Had he been a secular priest he would have been labelled an Anglo-Catholic.

From small beginnings that followed the Tractarian revival in the mid-nineteenth century, a number of Churches, especially those in Dioceses in the south of England, began to return to what were perceived as the worshipping practices of pre-Reformation times. However, beyond the associated ritual, ornamental and vestimentary changes, many of which were condemned by Church and State authorities, a major change took place in the role of priesthood. Outside the sacerdotal routine of daily offices, Masses, confessions and Benedictions many Anglo-Catholic clergy made themselves busy in the slums and hovels of the inner cities, often concerned with inferior housing which had been hurriedly constructed to accommodate the urban workforce of the Industrial Revolution. There they cared for the sick and impoverished members of their flocks. As an example of this John Gunstone wrote of the appalling conditions encountered by Fr Basil Jellicoe in Somers Town, adjacent to Euston Station in London.<sup>33</sup> Ivan Clutterbuck explained that, for the Gospel to mean anything to people in the slums, it had to be effective in their material as well as their spiritual lives.<sup>34</sup> Many of these priests spent their human and limited financial

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<sup>32</sup> Petà Dunstan, *The Labour of Obedience: The Benedictines of Pershore, Nashdom and Elmore – A History*, (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2009), 145.

<sup>33</sup> John Gunstone, *Lift High the Cross*, (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2010), 229ff. See also: Cyril Garbett, *The Challenge of the Slums*, (London: SPCK, 1933).

<sup>34</sup> Ivan Clutterbuck, *Marginal Catholics*, (Leominster: Gracewing, 1993), 42.

resources in attempts to alleviate poverty and depravation, so much so that they became what today might be called ‘social workers’. Despite the urgency of the needs and the desperation of the plights of their parishioners, was this a proper use of clerical resources? As they became increasingly social did these priests become less religious? Did their work of care adversely affect their work of prayer, for example?

It is important to place Dix within this mundane versus religious dichotomy. He was clearly was not a priest with an overwhelming social conscience; he did not become a parish priest in a run-down part of an inner city. He clearly did not see such activities as the proper role of priesthood, and his physical constitution would have proved inadequate to his participation in that sort of social endeavour; in 1929 he had been invalided home from his teaching post in Africa because of illness. With the permission of his Abbot, Dix took responsibility for his brother’s parish, Saint Michael’s, in well-heeled Beaconsfield, for the first two years of the Second World War.<sup>35</sup> While serving at this Church, his responsibility would have been for the care of the souls of the parishioners, not their material needs. Dix did have duties and obligations to the wider Anglican Church. Much of this work concerned him in spiritual direction, retreat leadership and preaching, although none of this divorced him from his innate life of sanctity and spirituality. His secular endeavours involved him in the deliberations of Convocation, wherein he was a Proctor for the last six years of his life, which demonstrated, yet again, that his sacramental life had to be lived in the real world.

There is, of course, another side to the social/sacred coin. Gabriel Hebert made it clear that the Church is holy. He wrote:

The Church in obedience to its divine calling, must withdraw itself from the world, and live apart from the world its life of worship and devotions in the atmosphere of the Bible and of the Liturgy, setting its faith and hope on the things that are not seen and are eternal.<sup>36</sup>

This divorcement from the affairs of the world may be observed in, for example, the ordered, daily devotions of a priest or the separateness of a worshipping congregation from the exigencies of the surrounding world. It may be stated in the well-used aphorism; ‘The

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<sup>35</sup> Bailey reported that Dix ended his *locum* responsibility for this parish after a Confirmation service presided over by the Bishop of Buckingham on September 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941. Bailey then added a note that, ‘He [Dix] celebrated a Sung Mass of the [Nativity of] the Blessed Virgin Mary the next morning at 6.30 am and then he was gone’. Dix may have offered a Mass on that feast day but it seems very unlikely that this would, so early on a Monday morning, have been a Sung Mass. See: Simon Bailey, *A Tactful God*, 60.

<sup>36</sup> Gabriel Hebert, ‘The Church in Relation to the World’, in Hubert S Box (ed), *Priesthood*, (London: SPCK, 1937), 364f.

Church is in the world, but it is not of the world'. Engrossed, as he was, in the monastic life of the Community, and in his books and papers, he was acknowledging Hebert's 'obedience to [the Church's] divine calling'. Dix was not guilty of a lack of worldliness; he would doubtless have argued that his eremitic life was a direct answer to Christ's call. Furthermore, he would have added that his extra-Community duties and his writings were his reaction to the real world beyond the cloister. There is no simple answer to the conundrum; each priest must address the religious versus social issues of his own time and place. In his most famous 'purple passage' Dix made it clear that his spirituality was very much 'of this world'.<sup>37</sup> It must also be remembered that a separation of ecclesiastical matters from the mundane has earlier precedents. David Edwards reminded his readers that some of the Tractarians were more concerned about the survival of a few Irish bishoprics than the deaths of babies in slum housing owned by Oxford Colleges.<sup>38</sup>

Throughout his life Dix was in regular communication with a number of prominent churchmen, many of whom influenced him both intellectually and theologically. As well as Rev'd Green, mentioned above, Dix wrote regularly to: Frederick Percy Harton [1933-36], E C Ratcliff [1938-45] and A E J Rawlinson [1944], any of whom may have had an impact on Dix's Anglican identity.<sup>39</sup> Dix maintained a lengthy correspondence with the Bishop of Lincoln (Frederick Hicks, who had earlier been a Dean of Keble) about problems concerning a priest for whom Dix was a Confessor.<sup>40</sup>

## Dix – the academic

One question that should be addressed is; in what sense could Dix be properly described as an academic? He did not pursue an academic career as a post-graduate researcher at Oxford, although his degree grade would almost certainly have made him acceptable as a doctoral student. Despite not having learned the rigours of academic research, he obviously developed an autodidactic flair for study, exploration and enquiry. He was a catholic academic who saw the church itself as an academic body; as the seat of learning.

Dix's early theological writings were published in *Laudate*, his Community's house journal. Many of these comprised reviews of the works of other authors, in an extending

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<sup>37</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 744.

<sup>38</sup> David L Edwards, *Leaders of the Church of England, 1828-1978*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1978), 158.

<sup>39</sup> See: National Church Institutions Database of Manuscripts and Archives. The square bracketed dates refer to the years during which the correspondence took place.

<sup>40</sup> Simon Bailey, *A Tactful God*, 59.

pattern – three in 1927, four in 1928 and five in 1929. Dix's first original work consisted of four papers that he wrote for publication (again in *Laudate*) in 1931 and 1932, entitled *The Twelve Apostles and the Gentiles*. As the years passed his output increased and was published in such non-academic journals as: *Theology*, *The Journal of Theological Studies* and *The Church Union Gazette*. Dix's first venture into book writing occurred in 1935 when the *Church Literature Association* published his pamphlet of thirty-eight pages entitled *Mass of the Pre-Sanctified*, which had earlier that year appeared in *Laudate*. Further evidence of Dix's ability (or otherwise) as an historically correct and academically precise scholar will be presented under the headings of the various works that I shall study.

Dix was, at heart, and by academic training, an historian, but it is probably true to say that all liturgists are essentially historians. Their researches endeavour to uncover the origins of Christian worship, looking back to the Apostolic Church, and, in many cases, attempting to interpret Jewish Temple and synagogue practices. Dix argued that the ordinary canons of historical criticism are equally valid in liturgical study.<sup>41</sup>

Was there anything in Dix's background that perhaps led to his particular style of historical writing? As an Anglican author he did not have to yield to the conformity required by a magisterium, or a dogmatic catechism, or two millennia of well documented, and often single-minded, Church tradition. Anglicanism is sometimes seen as a Church that is 'all things to all men'. *Ecclesia Anglicana* does not subscribe to a papal head; it has no formal, agreed-by-all doctrine; its XXXIX Articles of Religion are, and always have been, interpreted individually by each subscriber. Yet there is clearly an Anglican tradition of discipline that is historical, liturgical and episcopal; it is not just about 'individualism'. Its liturgical historians may, if they so wish, explore avenues and derive conclusions that do not have to adhere to any party line. Dix clearly was such an historian. While he could have been a purist in his chosen field, he opted not to be. His interest in the Eucharistic liturgy was not uniquely that of an academic scholar confined to his libraries but as one of those of whom he himself wrote, one of the *plebs sancta Dei*. The liturgy was, in Dix's mind, the people of God celebrating their membership of the Kingdom of God. There is an inherent romanticism in his writings that shines through everywhere. Dix was a creative, liturgical theologian who wrote for the '*plebs sancta Dei*' and if small and, perhaps, inconsequential reinterpretations had to be made to make that story more meaningful and readable, then he would make them.

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<sup>41</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 73.

As well as complaints about the imprecision of Dix's scholarship there have been those who have criticised *The Shape of the Liturgy* because its findings led to liturgical changes in Eucharistic rites in the Church of England and elsewhere. This is a criticism that should not be levelled at Dix because the resultant liturgical reforms were not of his making; indeed, one particular order, which was created for the Church of South India (CSI), led him, indirectly, to suffer much personal grief. Dix was very concerned about the CSI proposals, arguing that the amalgam of churches put at risk the church's apostolicity and its essential place within the episcopate. That the CSI had a presiding bishop from the Anglican Diocese of Travancore and Cochin did nothing to ease Dix's qualms.

A wind of liturgical change was blowing in the second half of the twentieth century, but even when using new understandings of the early Church, as suggested by Dix and others, revisers found themselves confused about their theological aims. They knew that they did not want a liturgy within the conventional Prayer Book tradition, but they were not necessarily clear-minded as to what should replace it. New liturgies were developed in England, in Rome and in many other countries. Also in these decades a liberating Spirit was moving within the Roman Catholic Church, particularly after the Second Vatican Council. Revisers began to do what had previously been forbidden; they proposed a variety of novel ways of modernising and updating their liturgies.

Charles Evanson was less than positive in his assessment of Dix's scholarship. He wrote:

Dix writes to address what he believes to be an entirely new situation and to answer the question left unanswered by the theologians of the previous generation: Can the Church's Eucharist be claimed to have been instituted by Christ? and is it any longer possible, on the basis of the New Testament, to regard any one view of the Eucharist as the norm and standard by which later developments are to be judged? His approach is phenomenological. He sees the Eucharist as related to the Last Supper as source, but not model.<sup>42</sup>

In a further criticism, Paul Palmer wrote a review of Dix's book, *The Question of Anglican Orders*. In this short work (fewer than one hundred pages) Dix had sought to defend, on historical grounds, the Catholic faith of the Church of England and the validity of her orders. Palmer saw in Dix's rhetoric an advocate's case. He wrote:

His love for the Church of England, for what she was and to a certain extent for what she is – although his loyalty is conditioned by what she will be, should union come – is too passionate, too intertwined with the best things in his life, to expect complete impartiality. Such candour will not altogether excuse the glaring

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<sup>42</sup> Charles J Evanson, 'New Directions', *Logia, A Journal of Lutheran Theology*, Vol 4, No 1, Jan 1995, 6.



inaccuracies and half-truths that appear in his ‘advocate’s case’; it will, however, confirm the belief that it is not bitterness towards Rome, but love of Canterbury that has made him blind.<sup>43</sup>

It seems pertinent to the investigation to ask why Dix appeared to take such an apparently carefree and casual attitude in his liturgical research. He was obviously an intelligent man who could have aspired to the very heights of academic excellence; he clearly understood the concepts and requirements of good research. It was not as if Dix was breaking new ground in his study of the history of the Church’s liturgy, and could, perforce, take some liberties. Among authors who had written on liturgical matters, contemporaneously with him, were: William Oesterley, Romano Guardini, Louis Duchesne, Fernand Cabrol and Walter Frere.<sup>44</sup>

Dix’s writings had a characteristic erudition that reflected his particular theology. *The Shape of the Liturgy* is liberally scattered with footnote references, most of which are genuine although some have reputedly proved impossible to verify or authenticate. As *Homo Eucharisticus* he related the Apostolic Succession and the Eucharist to the practices of the Church in an imaginative reconstruction, in ways that more traditionalist historians would not be prepared to acknowledge. Was Dix, to quote a comment of Pierre-Marie Gy, a man of *haute vulgarisation*, a populariser, but not a real scholar? He certainly had the common touch.<sup>45</sup> Dix was, to quote Gy again, ‘a scholar, not with the thoroughness of documentation of Frere or Jungmann, nor with Botte’s accuracy of judgement, but with an exceptional wealth of insights’.<sup>46</sup> Bailey commented on a friend of Dix, who wrote to him after reading *The Shape of the Liturgy*, ‘You are clever to have made it so exciting for an ignorant layman’.<sup>47</sup> Bailey averred that:

Dix was a gifted scholar with the dedication, intellect and skill to contemplate an ancient text and begin to penetrate the layers of its meaning in its context. He was, at the same time, a teacher eager and able to communicate information, fill background, present nuances of context and go on to apply the information thus presented to life.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Paul F Palmer, Review of, ‘The Question of Anglican Orders: Letters to a Layman’, *Theological Studies*, Vol 6, No 4, 1945, 547.

<sup>44</sup> In *The Shape of the Liturgy*, Dix made five references to the works of Oesterley, eight to Frere and fourteen to Duchesne.

<sup>45</sup> Pierre-Marie Gy, ‘Re-Visiting Dom Gregory Dix After Fifty Years’, *Worship*, Vol 70, 1996, 7.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 7. It is claimed by some that Frere had certain Dixian eccentricities.

<sup>47</sup> Simon Bailey, *A Tactful God*, 145.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 145.

What, then, led to Dix's somewhat individual style of writing? As will be observed, he was known to have had very defined views on certain theological and doctrinal matters. Did these strong views cloud his judgement? Was he keen to tell his story, contemptuous of the more disciplined views of others? A clear distinction can be drawn between Dix's writing style and that of more modern liturgists. For these later authors, purity of historical research is of supreme importance; they have no interest in pursuing arcane theories or following personal paths. If the evidence is not to be found, then assertions are not made. If contradictory views are unearthed, then all are equally considered, compared and contrasted, but never ignored. Dix, by comparison, could be very selective and dismissive in his use of sources.

The fact that Dix was strongly cast in the Anglican mould may have had a bearing on his style of scholarship. As has been noted, the elasticity and openness of thought that he so strongly espoused would quickly have run into the buffers of the Prefect of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, had he been a Roman Catholic author. Anglicanism allows a degree of flexibility of thought that is not only tolerated but may be actively encouraged. Dix's work *The Shape of the Liturgy* is often summed up, by critics and enthusiasts alike, in the great 'purple passage' that begins, 'Was ever another command so obeyed?' and concludes with, 'the *plebs sancta Dei* – the holy common people of God'.<sup>49</sup> There is passionate poetry in Dix's works, contained within a prose style that has led to *The Shape of the Liturgy* being read and re-read by priest and people down the decades. What it lacks in academic precision it more than makes up in style and panache. Yet, despite its lack of scholarly meticulousness it suggests a romantic and deeply moving view of the Church at prayer; the *plebs sancta Dei* have the opportunity to read a history of their worshipping practices in words that they might be expected to understand. Despite this, it is still a work of a scholar and has been the source of inspiration, discussion and debate in the highest circles of academe.

Did Dix have this dual role in mind during the fourteen long years he spent in his preliminary studies? Did he perhaps know that he could use his superb command of the English language to conclude his book with a paragraph that would step outside the confines of space and time and sum up that command 'Do this' in such poetic terms?

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<sup>49</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 744.

## 3 MAJOR TEXTS

### 3.1 Ministry in the Church

As *Homo Eucharisticus*, Dix had a profound understanding of the structure and nature of the Church and the importance of its Holy Orders in allowing it to fulfil its uniquely sacramental role, and he wrote prolifically on this subject.<sup>50</sup> As a consummate, yet, in his way, radical, theologian he had a high ecclesiology and saw the Church as ‘the depository of a final and complete self-revelation of God to man’.<sup>51</sup> He wrote:

The authority of Holy Church is, or should be, a spiritual authority, and not a kingdom of this world. One of the things we mean by this is that the Church is, as it were, an ambassador of eternity, who sojourns in time only to serve the interests of eternity and its exiled citizens.<sup>52</sup>

In a typical example of both his poetic eloquence and his theological thinking he explained that the Church’s credentials were many, and included:

her life; her power, not only of survival but of revival; her agelessness, that is of all ages, races and conditions, because it is of none; her ready meeting of all human needs; and most of all, her endless flow of Saints, the proven truth of her claim to contain the supernatural life of souls.<sup>53</sup>

Dix questioned the nature of the ministry within the Christian Church. He asked, ‘whence did they arise, how did they function, and how were they regarded by the earliest generations of Christian believers?’<sup>54</sup> He added:

It is now generally conceded that [these] have remained substantially the same at least since the times of St Irenaeus ... in whose writings the doctrine of the Apostolic Succession of bishops plays a prominent part.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> In addition to his essay for Kenneth Kirk on ‘Ministry in the Early Church’ his works included: ‘The Primitive Church’, *Laudate*, Vol 7, No 27, 1929; ‘The Revealing Church’, *Laudate*, Vol 8, No 29, 1930; ‘Church: State and Study’ *Laudate*, Vol 9, No 36, 1931; ‘The Council of Trent and Anglican Formularies’, *Laudate*, Vol 13, No 49, 1935; ‘The Ideas of ‘The Church’ in Primitive Liturgies’, in A G Hebert (ed), *The Parish Communion*, (London: SPCK, 1937); *Jurisdiction in the Early Church*, (London: Church Literature Association, 1975) – based on papers published in *Laudate* in 1937; *A Question of Anglican Orders: Letters to a Layman*; ‘and ‘Correspondence on ‘The Ministry’ with Mascall’, *Theology*, Vol 52, No 347, 1949.

<sup>51</sup> Gregory Dix, ‘The Revealed Church’, *Laudate*, 1930, Vol 8, No 30, 27

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, 26.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, 40.

<sup>54</sup> Gregory Dix, ‘The Ministry in the Early Church c 90-410’ in Kenneth Kirk (ed), *The Apostolic Ministry*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1946), 185.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, 185.

While referring to the orders of ministry Dix, using his training as an historian, made it clear that, ‘in the study of institutions there is need for a constant reference to the contemporary situation and actual functioning, as well as to the past history of the office or institution under consideration’.<sup>56</sup> In the post-Apostolic centuries he saw three periods that defined the Orders within the Church: the transfer of Judeo-Christian institutions to an Hellenistic environment and the needs of Gentile Churches; the creation of a three-fold ministry of bishop, presbyter and deacon; and the first experiments in state control of the Church with the post-Constantinian Councils of Arles and Nicaea.

Dix maintained that an understanding of the Orders within the Church depended upon a clear grasp of the wholeness of the Church; ‘as the corporate priest of a divinely ordained worship’.<sup>57</sup> The hierarchy of Orders within the Church is in the Church, not over the Church; it is a product of the Church. In Dix’s view, members of the three-fold Orders of bishop, presbyter and deacon must each be a nominee of a genuine election of the whole Church, and this is necessary for the lawful exercise of the sacramental authority of those Orders. He would have seen the priesthood as iconic, not merely a coterie of individuals who were qualified to perform certain functions and duties. He would have disagreed vehemently with Paul Evdokimov, who wrote, ‘The ministry of the priest is *functional*; there is *no ontological* difference between clerics and laypeople’.<sup>58</sup> The principal function of the bishop was to offer sacrifice to God. Dix saw the pre-Nicene bishop as, ‘the man of his own Church’. He wrote:

[He is] its priest, offering its corporate sacrifice ... and the minister ... of all sacraments to all of its members. He is also, by his liturgical sermon, the guardian and spokesman ... of his own Church’s doctrinal tradition. He is the creator of its lesser ministries; its representative to other Churches; the administrator of its charity; the officer of its discipline; the centre of its unity; the hub of its many-sided life, spiritual and temporal, inward and outward.<sup>59</sup>

Dix added:

The bishop is *alter Christus* and *alter apostolus* for his own Church. His functions are ... in addition to his Eucharistic high-priesthood ... the specifically ‘high-priestly’ functions of absolution, ordination and exorcism, all ascribed to the apostles by a direct Dominical commission.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 189.

<sup>57</sup> Gregory Dix, ‘The Idea of ‘The Church’ in the Primitive Liturgies’, in A G Hebert (ed), *The Parish Communion*, (London: SPCK, 1957), 130. This paper was originally published as a pamphlet by SPCK in 1937.

<sup>58</sup> Paul Evdokimov, *The Sacrament of Love*, (New York, NY: Saint Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1985), 86.

<sup>59</sup> Gregory Dix, ‘The Ministry in the Early Church’, 198f.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 200.

The concept of an Apostolic Succession was not identified before c175-200. Dix suggested that:

As it first enunciated, the whole emphasis was placed on the bishop's *official* 'succession' to his own dead predecessor in the same see, and back through that immediate predecessor to his predecessor in that see; and so on, back to the original apostolic founder of that Church. There was no emphasis on sacramental 'succession' of a bishop to those bishops from other Churches who had consecrated him to the episcopate (Dix's emphasis).<sup>61</sup>

However, Dix claimed that the Apostolic Succession had its roots in, and took its form from, the Jewish *shaliach*, of which word, he argued, *apostolos* was a direct translation. The importance of the *shaliach* was in its plenipotentiary nature. It implied that the person sent went with the full authority of the sender: 'the envoy's action unalterably committed the principal'.<sup>62</sup> Dix saw the apostolate as descending directly from Christ, and carrying Christ's authority. The Apostles were not officers of the Christian Church but were envoys of God.<sup>63</sup> Dix raised the question of the procedures to be adopted to continue the Church into the future. He asked:

Who could appoint a *shaliach* of our Lord himself? Could his *shelihim* acting in his Person transmit to others the personal commission received from him? If this were impossible, what was to become of the 'apostolic' office in the Church? Who in future was to give their *katastasis* [accountability] to the local *episkopoi*, which had until now been a function of the 'apostolate'?<sup>64</sup>

Dix admitted that, 'we do not know what happened to the office of the *shaliach* in the next generation, during the first half of the second century, at the end of the apostolic age'.<sup>65</sup> It seems clear from Hippolytus' prayer of episcopal consecration that two elements could be discerned: one derived from first-century *shaliach* and the other from the first-century local *episkopos*.<sup>66</sup> The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews made it clear that a special sort of synchronicity exists between the ministry of the priesthood and that of Christ. Dix would have agreed with Alexander Nairne who, in his commentary on this Epistle, wrote:

Had the author [of Hebrews] been asked what was the relationship of the priesthood of the ministry to the priesthood of the Lord, he would no doubt have

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 202.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 228f.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 230.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 261.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 267.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 268.

answered that they were all one; the ministers exercised their functions as part of the Lord's priesthood.<sup>67</sup>

Despite maintaining that Holy Orders were the result of 'a general election of the whole Church' Dix claimed that 'No second-century source states ... that the choice of presbyters and deacons, like that of the bishop, was the subject of a general vote of the Church'. However, Hippolytus maintained that, by the third century (c 230), 'Let the bishop be ordained ... chosen by all the people'.<sup>68</sup>

The bishop probably sought formal ratification from the Church for his choice of personal assistants.<sup>69</sup> Dix added that, 'it was not always easy to distinguish the special liturgical functions of the presbyter from those of the bishop on the one hand and the deacon on the other in the pre-Nicene Church because most of the evidence assumes that all of these orders were present together'.<sup>70</sup> By AD 200 it was argued that the bishop and deacons (who were very much assistants to the bishops) represented the action of divine providence while the presbyters were the expression of the Church's human self-government and administration in day-to-day affairs. Dix suggested that a presbyter could perform almost all of the sacramental functions that were the bishop's special prerogative (even to taking part in ordinations), yet the bishop ruled and taught the Church. He identified a likelihood that the bishops and their deacons were often the only full-time ministers, paid for from the monetary offerings of the faithful, while the presbyters earned their livings from trade or within the professions.<sup>71</sup>

Dix explained that the bishop of the later second century held a composite office. He wrote:

He derives his special liturgical functions in his own Church from the primitive *episkopos*, his pastoral and disciplinary authority came from his presidency of his local Christian sanhedrin ... His special responsibility for the orthodoxy of doctrine in his Church ... and his power of ordination ... are his inheritance from the 'successors of the apostles'.<sup>72</sup>

Once elected and consecrated the pre-Nicene bishop was 'the man' of his own Church. Other bishops might renounce him or ignore him but, within his own Church, even though

<sup>67</sup> Alexander Nairne, *The Epistle of Priesthood: Studies in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1913), 157.

<sup>68</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Apostolic Tradition*, 2.

<sup>69</sup> Gregory Dix, 'The Ministry in the Early Church', 216.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 220.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 226.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 273.

his teaching was found to be heretical, he could not be removed from office. Thus Churches clung to the right of choosing their own bishops with great tenacity, this despite constant attempts by emperors and episcopal synods to interfere and depose.

Dix also made it clear that, before the second half of the fourth century, Holy Orders were not considered to be a succession of grades. If a man was chosen to be a bishop, then he was consecrated a bishop, regardless of whether he was an acolyte, a presbyter or a simple layman. Even if he was a deacon, he was consecrated without having to pass through the stage of being a presbyter. Dix wrote:

The idea that the various ‘orders’ were a series of ‘promotions’, each ‘order’ containing within itself, so to speak, the powers of all those ‘below’ it, begins to come in only in the second half of the fourth century. ... This introduction of the principle of ‘hierarchy’ in place of that of an ‘organism’ is important in its effects. Not only does it incidentally finally place the deacon below the presbyter, as an inferior, not a complementary minister, but it completes the destruction of the idea of the ministry of each local Church as an organic whole, in which parts are not interchangeable but have each their own function. It opens the possibility of a clerical ‘career’, by a regular succession of ‘promotions’ leading naturally to the presbyterate as the standard full sacramental minister, with the bishopric (as the administrative superior of a number of other such full ministers) as a prize for the most able or fortunate.<sup>73</sup>

As an example of a later ecclesial structure, Dix quoted the case of Saint Ambrose (c339-97) who, when elected as a catechumen to be Bishop of Milan, received, baptism, confirmation and the minor orders to the diaconate and the presbyterate on successive days, before his consecration to the episcopate.<sup>74</sup> Dix himself showed no expectation of clerical preferment to the episcopate, although he did accept election to be Prior of his Order.

William Barden observed that, while it is common practice to regard the bishop as a glorified presbyter, it would be more accurate, according to the views of the pre-Nicene Church, to see the presbyter as a reduced bishop; ‘It is not that the bishop is given something that the presbyter has not got, and just that; he is rather given the whole fullness of which the presbyter receives a share’.<sup>75</sup> Barden made it clear that little ceremonial attended the consecration of bishops in the second century. He wrote:

The rite is of the simplest, merely the imposition of hands and prayer; there is no anointing of the head or hands, no handing over of any instruments, no clothing

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 284f.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 284.

<sup>75</sup> William Barden, ‘Holy Orders’, *The Furrow*, Vol 7, No 6, 1956, 363.

with or special apparel, no investiture with ring and crosier. The whole thing is almost puritan in its sobriety.<sup>76</sup>

Several years before Dix composed his essay for inclusion in Kenneth Kirk's book *The Apostolic Ministry*, he wrote a review of B H Streeter's volume, *The Primitive Church: Studied with Special Reference to the Origins of the Christian Ministry*.<sup>77</sup> Streeter's book comprised seven lectures that he delivered for the Hewitt Foundation in 1928. Streeter had argued that the Early Church possessed not one but a diversity of forms of Church Order. The Jerusalem Church had a monarchical form of governance in the person of James, 'the Lord's brother'. This condition uniquely obtained for about thirty years until the Jewish war of 66-70. The Church at Antioch had a superior ministry of Apostles, Prophets and Teachers (Acts 13: 1); the Pauline Churches of Macedonia had a system of Elders, Prophets and Teachers, and Rome had Prophets, then Teachers, then a board of Presbyter-Bishops, leading eventually to a monarchical episcopate. Dix copiously analysed Streeter's arguments, quoting from the post-Apostolic Fathers of the Church, all of which were academically precise, as would be expected, knowing of Dix's background as an historian. However, his principal criticism of Streeter's work was to be found at the end of the review. Dix wrote:

... there is a characteristic of this book of which we have as yet said nothing, though to us it is significant of more than any other. On no page have we found mention of Him whom the Apostles knew as 'the Spirit of Jesus'. There is never a hint that in the primitive Church there was anywhere at work any force greater than those which may fairly be represented by the endurance of Paul, the vacillations of Peter, the conservatism of James, and the fits of Ignatius. Yet it was the deep conviction of all the strangely diverse multitude of actors in that heroic history, that behind and through and beyond all the human weaknesses and heroisms of those who wrought it, there was at work in the history of the Church, guiding, penetrating, quickening, and conditioning every stage of its development, the Personality Who is the serene and loving Wisdom from outside all time, the Spirit Who is the vital meaning of that Word Whom they preached. This belief was of the very substance of their lives. For it they suffered, by it they endured, on it they acted, and of it they believed their deaths by martyrdom to be triumphant proof.<sup>78</sup>

Here may be observed another example of the central importance of the Spiritual Logos in Dix's writing and thinking. He concluded:

It was by the witnessings of the Spirit in every city that the cool courage of St Paul was steeled at last for those long final years of testimony 'before the gentiles and

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 363f.

<sup>77</sup> Gregory Dix, 'The Primitive Church', 154-74.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 172.



kings and the children of Israel'. And of all this there is no mention, and the omission marks the real disqualification of this book to be considered in any true sense as a 'history' of the primitive Church. For that Church believed that though there is in all human history a revelation of God, the history of the Church was written by the finger of God after an unique and more tremendous fashion. We happen to share that belief.<sup>79</sup>

For Dix, a bishop was a high-priest when celebrating the Eucharist and a representative of the Father while fulfilling his pastoral and teaching roles.<sup>80</sup> However, with the passing of time and the growth of the Church the role of the bishop changed. Kenneth Kirk observed that:

As the congregations under his charge multiplied, the burden of government increasingly fell on the bishop's shoulders; and the presbyters came to be occupied more with liturgical and pastoral duties alone ... It was in this way that the bishops gradually became 'diocesan officials', with ever-growing administrative responsibilities, and the curious reversal of the respective duties of bishop and presbyter took place.<sup>81</sup>

Gabriel Hebert commented that:

Previously, the presbyters had a positive right to be consulted on all the affairs of the Church. Now they had become a number of individual deputies of the bishop, with authority to perform a limited number of functions in a particular district.<sup>82</sup>

Dix was scathing in his comments about the effects that politicisation of the episcopacy had. He wrote:

The presbyters of our dioceses are no longer the corporate organ and guardian of an intense corporate local life of this kind. They have no corporate status at all or means of corporate expression as the presbyters of a particular bishop's *sanhedrin*. Instead they are congeries of individuals collected from without as well as within the diocesan boundaries; each has an individual right, dependent on the personal possession of holy orders but acquired from all sorts of different sources (by presentation), to perform in a particular locality certain liturgical and pastoral functions which in the pre-Nicene Church were the special responsibility of the bishop and deacons. What else does this mean but that in our system what the pre-Nicene Church called *episkopē* and *diakonia* have largely been transferred to the 'parish priest' (and his assistants, who are not encouraged to remain deacons longer than they can help).<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 173.

<sup>80</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 32.

<sup>81</sup> Kenneth E Kirk, 'The Apostolic Ministry', in Kenneth E Kirk (ed), *The Apostolic Ministry*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1946), 11.

<sup>82</sup> A Gabriel Hebert, *Apostle and Bishop: A Study of the Gospel, the Ministry and the Church-community*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1963), 67.

<sup>83</sup> Gregory Dix, 'The Ministry in the Early Church', 294f.

## Dix and Anglican orders

The Church of England has always maintained that its bishops are within the Apostolic Succession.<sup>84</sup> However, there is much debate as to whether the services contained in the Ordinal (including the Consecration of Bishops) may be regarded as sacramental. The Evangelical wing of the Church maintains, along with most Protestant denominations, that the sacraments comprise only those directly ordained by Christ, the Dominical Sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Holy Eucharist. Despite her assertion to have Apostolic order and succession, there have been allegations from Rome that, since the Reformation, priestly orders in the Church of England have been invalid. These assertions culminated in the Papal Bull *Apostolicae Curae* in which Pope Leo XIII declared, ‘*ordinationes ritu anglicano actas, irritas prorsus fuisse et esse, omninoque nulla*’, (‘ordinations performed according to the Anglican rite to have been and to be null and wholly void’).

Dix was convinced that the orders of the Church of England were historically grounded in the immediate post-Apostolic Church. Despite the parting of East from West in the eleventh century and the disruptions of the sixteenth that led to the Protestant Reformation a unity had been maintained wherein all of the bishops of the Church could trace their ancestry back to the apostles, each of whom had been given Christ’s authority. He saw in the sacramental endorsement of bishops by the Church as the fundamental underpinning of Eucharistic praxis, for which they were ultimately responsible. Dix saw a continuum existing, whereby the Eucharistic action of a particular Church at a particular time was accumulated into and connected to the depth of meaning attached to the Eucharistic praxis of the universal Church at every celebration. He wrote:

prayer said by the bishop or his authorised deputy takes up the corporate official act of his Church into corporate act of the whole Body of Christ, head and members together as the Son of Man’ (= ‘the people of the saints of the Most High’) ‘comes’ from time to the Father.<sup>85</sup>

In correspondence with an individual simply named as Harry, Dix spent much time debating the validity or otherwise of Anglican orders.<sup>86</sup> While supposed by Harry merely to tolerate his membership of the Church of England, Dix was clear that he believed in it,

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<sup>84</sup> See, *inter alia*, in: Stephen Sykes, *Unashamed Anglicanism*, (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1995), 142; Paul Avis, *Church, State and Establishment*, (London: SPCK, 2001), 2; Stephen Neill, *Anglicanism*, (London: Penguin Books, 1963), 150.

<sup>85</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 271.

<sup>86</sup> This was really only half a correspondence because the letters from Harry to Dix are not revealed to the reader. Harry may have been a figment of Dix’s imagination.

and believed in it sincerely, and, ‘I hope, for intelligent reasons, but at bottom probably rather passionately’.<sup>87</sup> However, he accepted that defending Anglican orders had little to do with the worshipping life of the Christian.

Dix suggested that the fundamental misunderstanding between Anglican orders and the Christian life was to be found in the single word ‘Justification’. Dix saw justification as a technical term to define the essential processes in the religious life of any Christian man or woman in their relation to the Church.<sup>88</sup> Man is born in a state of alienation from God and therefore prone to sin. The theology of the Reformers declared that, despite this propensity to sin, man is brought into union with an infinitely holy God through redemption by Christ. Justification of a sinner through Christ happened through man’s total surrender to one idea and to the emotion it evoked. It happened completely within a man’s mind, without any involvement of the Church or her sacraments in the operation of redemption and sanctification. In a reversal of the traditional, Catholic theology of the sacraments, the Reformers believed that these do not cause grace in those who receive them, but are only tokens that the receivers have obtained grace in another, wholly individual, way. The sacraments can no longer be conceived of as actions of Christ through his Body the Church exercising his redemptive work on their receivers. They are actions of the receivers themselves.

For Protestants and Evangelicals the gift of the Holy Spirit is not regarded as something definitively imparted by an external sacramental act by Christ’s human representatives acting in his Name and Person, but as an inspiration which any man receives in answer to his own interior desires, which is guaranteed to him by his own emotional and volitional response.

Justification, for Dix, concerned the very heart of the Christian religion and was the root cause of the violent differences between Catholics and Protestants in the sixteenth century. He wrote:

Where the doctrine of ‘Justification by faith alone’ is held, no question of Church order can be anything but entirely secondary, even meaningless. No external institution of any kind can ever be regarded as in itself necessary for the living of the redeemed life. The commission of the *shaliach* could no more be looked upon as necessary to the corporate life of Christians than baptism could be supposed ‘generally necessary for salvation’ for Christian individuals.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Question of Anglican Orders*, 10.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*, 21.

<sup>89</sup> Gregory Dix, ‘Ministry in the Early Church’, 301.

Dix further explained:

True, Protestants could not help seeing that the New Testament represents our Lord as having instituted the Church and appointed his Apostles to act in the Church in his Name and Person. It also records that he deliberately ordered and instituted certain external actions and signs for his followers as having a vital relation to their *being* his. Neither of these facts was easily reconcilable with the doctrine of ‘Justification by faith alone’, which insisted not only that a man needed nothing more but actually could do nothing more than *know* the story of redemption in the first century AD and put his entire trust in that. Yet the New Testament made it impossible not to retain the Church and the Sacraments in some sense. Protestants therefore kept them both, but they were forced to empty them of much of their Scriptural meaning (Dix’s emphases).<sup>90</sup>

Protestantism retained the concept of Church, despite its incompatibility with solifidian thought, but the idea of the Church as the Body of Christ, with all that that entailed, was seriously impoverished. Protestants had every reason to see the Church as a voluntary organisation with which the justified individual could dispense if it appeared not to support his purpose; otherwise it could be refashioned if, by so doing, it better proclaimed the interpretation of the gospel that the individual had perceived in the scriptures. Such a Church had no claims on Christian obedience. Dix believed that such thinking led directly to an untrammelled religious individualism and insensitivity to schism. It led to the repudiation of authoritative standards of doctrine other than the Scriptures, and those only as individually interpreted. Dix explained that, in the Protestant mind, the Church’s sacraments were emptied of their scriptural and spiritual significance. A few, like the Society of Friends (Quakers) and the Salvation Army, abandoned sacraments completely; others accepted only the Dominical sacraments. These latter comprise what are often called Sacraments of the Gospel, or, as Article XXV defines them, ‘Sacraments ordained of Christ’. Article XXV also makes reference to, ‘Those five commonly called Sacraments ... Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony and extreme Unction’, which, it declares, ‘are not to be counted as Sacraments of the Gospel’.

Protestant teaching thus had a dramatic effect on the Church, its sacraments and, thereby, its orders. The sacraments do not cause grace in those who receive them, they are merely tokens that the recipient has obtained grace, albeit in a wholly individual way. A corollary of this argument, according to Dix, was that there was no need for a priesthood of men to act in the name of Christ or to perform the corporate actions of the Church in

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<sup>90</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Question of Anglican Orders*, 23.

relation to its individual members.<sup>91</sup> Dix saw the Protestant concept of ministry as, ‘men set apart to fulfil the function of proclaiming the fact of the Redemption accomplished in the first century AD which challenges individuals to make the saving act of faith’.<sup>92</sup> This ministry was essentially for preaching. Dix quoted Luther who argued that, ‘Ordination is a solemn ceremony for the appointment of public preachers in the Church’.<sup>93</sup> Dix saw in the Protestant usage of baptismal and Eucharistic liturgies procedures for preaching with symbolic actions. Thus it was fitting that these services should be conducted by those to whom preaching licences had been given. In conducting this public worship the preachers exercised no supernatural power or authority derived from Christ. Such worship was ‘performed’ by ordained ministers merely to maintain good order in a Christian society. Dix admitted that it was more in the Calvinist tradition for disciplinary authority to lie in the hands of the preaching ministry, but allowed that some Presbyterians, especially those in Scotland, derive their ministerial authority from ordination at the hands of other ministers, not only through congregational choice and selection.

While Cranmer and his co-authors were able to affect the liturgical forms in the *Book of Common Prayer* very considerably, especially in editions subsequent to 1549, Dix made it clear that they did their work opposed by the vast majority of clergy and laity. While they lamented that they were unable to take their revisions as far as they thought they should, they never risked any submission of these to the Church for discussion and acceptance (or otherwise). They were thrust upon the Church by the direct authority of Acts of Parliament, aided through the legislative processes by members of a Privy Council which exercised a semi-despotic mandate under the regency of the boy-king Edward VI. Other revisions were forced on an unsuspecting Church by Royal Proclamations, very much in the mode and manner of Henry VIII.

Dix believed that the Church authorities were not involved in, or had any sanction over, ordination liturgies. By Act of Parliament (31<sup>st</sup> January, 1550) Edward VI nominated twelve commissioners to produce an English Ordinal. Five weeks later it was published under a Royal Proclamation. The Church was never asked for an opinion and no proposals for its adoption were laid before Parliament. Members of the Privy Council were not consulted. The speed of its delivery gives every indication that it was *de facto* largely written, and possibly even printed, before the Commissioners met. A revised Ordinal was

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, 29.

published in 1552. The 1550 order retained the mediaeval tradition of the reception of a chalice (representing the sacramental nature of the work of a priest) and the presentation of a Bible was added. In 1552 receipt of the Bible was retained but the giving of a chalice was removed.

The Elizabethan Prayer Book (1559) contained six changes to the Ordinal and, again, these were never considered by or consulted on by Church authorities. Dix stressed the significance of this non-ecclesial involvement.<sup>94</sup> Cranmer and his close advisors had composed services in the Ordinal (and elsewhere in the Prayer Book) which the government, albeit without Parliamentary debate or vote, compelled the clergy to use. There were no doctrinal pronouncements and no debate ever took place inside the Church. The only method employed by Reformers under Edward VI was *fait accompli*. The one exception to this absence of ecclesial oversight was thought to be the introduction of Cranmer's XLII Articles of Religion (1552). These were published as having been agreed upon by the Synod of London, and with the authority of Convocation. However, at his trial Cranmer admitted that they had never been submitted to those bodies, or any others.

The theological consequences of this absence of ecclesial sanction to new rites and service orders were profound. They could be used by the Church willingly or unwillingly, but the Church could not declare the intention with which they were employed. As Dix commented:

It is a commonplace of all theology, Roman or Anglican, that no public formulary of the Church be or ought to be interpreted by the private sense attached to it by the compilers. Its own contents and any official authoritative comment made upon it by the Church corporately are alone what determine its meaning.<sup>95</sup>

Cranmer was not seen by the Church of England as an authoritative source of doctrine, as Luther was to Lutheran Churches, and as Calvin was to Calvinism: the Church was Anglican, not Cranmerian. The Church of England could only be committed to what it corporately and authoritatively agreed was officially its policy. It could never, in Dix's opinion, be obligated to any rites forced upon it by the state.

A new Article (XXXVI) defended the Edwardine Ordinal against Protestant claims of superstition. It stated that any who had received Holy Orders using Cranmer's liturgies had been, 'rightly, orderly and lawfully consecrated and ordained'. Such doctrinal affirmations make it clear that it is entirely the intention of the Church that gives validity

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 32.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, 33.

and authority to what it does; it does not matter what was the theological thinking behind the construction of the service orders. In making comparisons between orthodox and heterodox persons and rites, Dix explained that:

[rites] compiled by [for example] Nestorian and Monophysite heretics are in themselves quite valid and Rome therefore accepts the orders of those ordained by them in these heretical Churches as valid orders. Because Cranmer never received from the Church of England any confirmation whatever of his personal opinions about ordination, his personal opinions are entirely irrelevant.<sup>96</sup>

In questioning the validity of Anglican orders, Dix asked whether the Anglican rite, viewed simply as a rite, was a possible Catholic ordination rite?

It is against this background of liturgical revision and re-ordering of the Church's sacraments that the post-Reformation Ordinal was viewed by the Roman Catholic Church. Dix accepted that *Apostolicae Curae* was a ruling by a weighty authority, and was promulgated only after due deliberation. Yet, despite this pontifical ruling, and given the ecclesiastical politics of the Church, which he often denounced, Dix continued to believe in the Catholicity of his Church and the validity of its Holy Orders. Those in the sacred ministry of the Anglican Church have always received episcopal ordination, enabling them to celebrate the Eucharist at the Church's altars, thus allowing all who would to participate in that sacrament in the full reality of being part of the Catholic Church. Dix argued that, if Pope Leo was correct in his Bull, then the Anglican Church must disband until its senior clergy could obtain valid orders, wherever these may be obtained. The Eucharistic worship of the Church must cease because it is not valid unless celebrated and consecrated by a valid priesthood.

Dix commented that the principal change in the 1662 Prayer Book Ordinal was to the wording of the form; in the change of, 'Receive the Holy Ghost; whose sins you remit ...' to, 'Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands; whose sins you remit ...'<sup>97</sup> He argued that Pope Leo's contention was that, in the years between 1550 and 1662, episcopal validity had been lost to Anglicanism, and that even if the latter rite was more in keeping with Catholic doctrine, there were no valid bishops to effect ordinations or consecrations.<sup>98</sup> He reduced the grounds for *Apostolicae Curae* to just two: defective in Intention and defective in Form in the 1550 and 1552 Ordinals. In Dix's opinion the Papal Bull

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid, 35.

<sup>97</sup> A similar change was made to the Order for the Consecration of Bishops.

<sup>98</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Question of Anglican Orders*, 68f.

insinuated that the Anglican Church intended to institute a different type of ministry while retaining the titles of bishop, priest and deacon.<sup>99</sup> In refuting this assertion he claimed that the Preface to the Ordinal (in both versions) contained a statement of unambiguous clarity of the Intention of the rite. Dix quoted from this:

It is evident unto all men diligently reading holy Scripture and ancient Authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church; Bishops, Priests, and Deacons: which Offices were evermore had in such reverend estimation, that no man might presume to execute any of them, except he were first called, tried, examined, and known to have such qualities as are requisite for the same; and also by public *Prayer, with Imposition of Hands*, were approved and admitted thereunto by lawful Authority. And therefore, *to the intent that these Orders may be continued*, and reverently used and esteemed in the Church of England, no man (*not being at this present Bishop, Priest, or Deacon*) shall not execute any of them except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted according to the Form hereafter following (Dix's emphases).<sup>100</sup>

Dix thought it unbelievable that *Apostolicae Curae* made no reference to the existence of this Preface. Whatever had been the Intention in the past (before the Henrician schism) it was undoubtedly the same Intention that continued. The Preface makes it clear that such conditions had obtained, 'from the Apostles' time'. He was similarly scathing about the supposed grounds for condemnation under the aegis of Form. *Apostolicae Curae* argued that the rite did not state the order of priesthood being conferred and failed to mention the 'grace and power' of the Order; that of, 'consecrating and offering the true Body and Blood of Our Lord in the Eucharistic sacrifice'. Dix argued that it was not necessary to quote the title of the Order conferred, although it was named sufficiently in the two versions of the Ordinal under consideration (nine times in the case of Priesthood). He quoted a wide range of early ordination rites that made no overt reference to power being bestowed on the ordinand, including several Western sacramentaries and a number of Greek and Mozarabic liturgies.<sup>101</sup> In conclusion Dix explained that:

for three centuries the Church of England taught the essentials of the Catholic Faith and ministered the essential Catholic Sacraments to the ordinary English people when no one else could or would have been allowed by the State to do it. That is her title to exist and I think a man could and should love her for that.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid, 81f.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, 82.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid 83f.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 91.



Theologians and ecclesiologists may disagree over the validity of Holy Orders; indeed they may debate interminably the meaning and significance of the word ‘validity’. Dix had a clear contribution to make. He wrote:

The provision [of ordination] turns on the status of the ordaining bishop, not at all on the rite which he used. If he was himself *rite et recte ordinatus* then the Orders he conferred are in all cases to stand.<sup>103</sup>

The debate revolves around Form and Intention or Ordination on the one hand, and belief in the Apostolic Succession on the other. The arguments about the sacramental validity of Holy Orders in the various churches have many ramifications and have caused much heartache. From long standing the Roman Catholic Church has forbidden access to its altar rails to any who are not formally members of that Church, a view that many consider to be theologically and sacramentally divisive. By contrast the Anglican Church welcomes to Communion any and all who are members of Trinitarian Churches, who are in ‘good standing’ with their churches, and wish to receive the sacrament. These decisions are based purely on each church’s understanding of the nature of the orders of the consecrating priest and have little or nothing to do with the faith or belief of the communicant. Dix was aware of the pain and suffering caused by these sorts of debates; he wrote to his correspondent (Harry) of, ‘this desperate unhappiness that only an Anglican can feel’.<sup>104</sup>

The Eucharistic sacrament should not be proprietorial, and the Roman Catholic Church should not withhold Christ’s Body and Blood from any true believer. In so doing it indicates that it believes that there are degrees of faith among church members, often in relation to matters of dogma. Profound differences between churches on these matters are surely an indication that there is more to the debate on the structure and validity of Holy Orders than is immediately obvious.

Dix made it clear that, in his opinion, Anglican Orders have an authority that is firmly and historically rooted in the Apostolic Succession. Despite some leanings towards the Church of Rome, he, like his father and brother, remained within those orders. Matters of form and intention in the wording of the Ordinal were not important to him; the three-fold orders of bishop, priest and deacon had continued within the Universal Church since the time of the Apostles, and for Dix that alone gave validity to Anglican orders.

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid, 74.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, 92.

## 3.2 The Apostolic Tradition of Saint Hippolytus

### Preamble

Dix's first foray into the world of extended academic writing was his edition of *The Apostolic Tradition of Saint Hippolytus*.<sup>105</sup> It was dedicated to Bishop Walter (Howard) Frere. Frere had been Dix's mentor and was himself a pre-eminent, Anglican liturgist. In his Preface, Dix describes Hippolytus' work as, 'the most illuminating single source of evidence extant on the inner life and religious polity of the early Christian Church'.<sup>106</sup>

In earlier studies, students of Hippolytus had endeavoured to provide accurate translations of the ancient manuscripts of *The Apostolic Tradition*. Dix saw these as living, liturgical texts that were part of, and very much associated with, his own Eucharistic life. In this context, Dix, as an example of *Homo Eucharisticus*, may be seen as a 'modern-day Hippolytus'

Dix was not particularly interested in providing a 'critical text', despite seeing himself as a scholar contributing to the on-going debate, but more of delivering a 'living text'; part of an organic, Eucharistic tradition. He saw his resulting book as a product of devotion to Benedictine spirituality, as well as a work of erudition. Dix was thereby actively engaging in the Apostolic tradition, of which he saw himself a continuing part. All study of liturgy, in Dix's eyes, and of many others, was not a dry, historical, critical exercise, but an intelligent incorporation of the Apostolic tradition, from its inception, into the living life of the Church.

Dix's work was anticipated in *The So-Called Egyptian Church Order and Derived Documents* of Dom R H Connolly, published in 1916 and in a translation by B S Easton (1877-1950), which appeared in 1934. Compared with Dix's translation, and that later written by Dom Bernard Botte (in 1963), Henry Chadwick suggested that Easton omitted several well attested passages and took some risks in translation. In contrast to this assertion, Dix claimed to have written his version in 1932 and, on reading Easton's translation, only had to alter his work in only two particulars.<sup>107</sup> Easton separated his edition into chapter divisions and sub-divisions, a practice that Dix continued, although Chadwick suggests that this was against his better judgement.

<sup>105</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Treatise on The Apostolic Tradition of Saint Hippolytus of Rome*, (London: SPCK, 1937); 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, edited by Henry Chadwick, (London: SPCK, 1968).

<sup>106</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Apostolic Tradition* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed), ix.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid, Preface to the First Edition, un-numbered page.

In a review of Dix's book Frederick Schilling wrote that he, 'had produced a master-piece of reconstruction, historical and textual, in one of the most difficult problems of source study in Church history'.<sup>108</sup> He suggested that with exemplary attention to detail Dix had produced an edition of *The Apostolic Tradition of Saint Hippolytus* that would probably be the standard handbook for years to come. Schilling appreciated that Dix's churchmanship was instrumental in developing what he called, 'a stream of living Christianity', which flowed through the Roman Catholic Church rather than by way of assorted heretics and schismatics; those who made the mistake of trying to bend the will of the Church because of some issue of the moment.

In Hippolytus, Dix saw evidence that the Catholic Church's liturgical practice had had continuity from the Apostolic age through to the second century. Schilling commented, in this regard, on Dix's incorrect dating of the *Didache* to AD190.<sup>109</sup> He drew a number of comparisons with Easton's version and suggested that, while Dix endeavoured to be more literal in his translations, this led at times to ponderous and, indeed, humorous results. He wrote that Dix showed a degree of inconsistency, as, for example, in his translation of *ekklesia*, now as 'assembly', then as 'church'. As I indicated earlier, he was not writing for the consideration of academics but for those readers whose enquiring minds led them to explore the living history of the liturgy of their Church, although it must be stated that, with Dix, these two ends cannot easily be separated. In 1976 Geoffrey Cuming prepared a new edition. In his Preface he suggested that Dix's version, while indispensable for scholars, was not suitable for beginners, who were often bewildered by, 'the very fullness of the textual apparatus and the complicated typography of the translation, with its four types of brackets'.<sup>110</sup> This complex structure makes it difficult for the work to be understood by non-specialist readers, but only by those readers who are well used to a full *apparatus criticus*.

Alistair Stewart-Sykes acknowledged that anyone prepared to translate or commentate on an ancient document such as *The Apostolic Tradition of Saint Hippolytus* must not only be an expert in liturgiology but should have an expertise in textual criticism,

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<sup>108</sup> Frederick A Schilling, 'The Apostolic Tradition of St Hippolytus of Rome', *Church History*, Vol 7, No 4, Dec 1938, 382ff.

<sup>109</sup> It is generally thought that this work was in circulation before the end of the first century. See, *inter alia*, Bart D Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus: The Story behind who Changed the Bible and Why*, (New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers, 2005), 26.

<sup>110</sup> Geoffrey Cuming, *Hippolytus: A Text for Students*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, (Nottingham: Grove Books, 1987), 2.

the social and legal history of third century Rome and be expert in six ancient languages.<sup>111</sup> Dix spared no effort in his examinations of texts and translations and the difficulties facing scholars, even in the minor differences between pairs of words, as for example in the second verse of Chapter five, ‘Of the Offering of Oil,’ where *hagiasma* (*sanctitatem* = holiness) is confused with *hygiasma* (*sanitatem* = health) and *chriomenois* (= anointed) with *chromenois* (= using or consuming). Like other translators, Dix had to decide which rendering was the most likely or made the best sense. Perhaps, unlike many who studied ancient texts, he felt the need to be flexible and creative. The meanings of words change, over the passage of time, and in the context in which they are used. Thus it is difficult for the translator to be exact, even when the words are not obscured by illegibility.

Maxwell Johnson believed that Dix (among others) was essentially incorrect in accepting that *The Apostolic Tradition* was an early third century document written by Hippolytus.<sup>112</sup> He noted that neither Eusebius (c260-c340) nor Jerome (c342-420) ever associated Bishop Hippolytus the author with Hippolytus of Rome. Johnson wrote:

Not only are we not sure as to which ‘Hippolytus’ is supposed to be identified with either the corpus of Patristic writings bearing his name or with this document, there is little evidence in the first few centuries to associate much of anything with this Hippolytus in Rome.<sup>113</sup>

Dix certainly knew of the works of both Eusebius and Jerome; he quoted copiously from both of them in *The Shape of the Liturgy* and should have known of this misattribution; it was another example of his imprecise research. Johnson also castigated Dix over his assertion that in Chapter 21 (Of the Conferring of Holy Baptism) the Verona palimpsest was so corrupt that he had to resort to Oriental versions. This led him to create a separate section (Chapter 22 in his edition) entitled ‘Confirmation’ (about which, see more below). By contrast, Geoffrey Lampe observed that there were no grammatical problems with the Verona text and that it could be translated quite clearly.<sup>114</sup> Dix had clear ideas about what constituted initiation into the Christian Church, especially about the distinction between the washing away of sin in baptism and the invocation of the Holy Spirit in confirmation and he wished those views to be recognised and accepted. Yet, despite his desire to emphasise

<sup>111</sup> Alistair Stewart-Sykes, *On the Apostolic Tradition*, (New York, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001), 9. Clearly Dix did not fulfil most of these criteria.

<sup>112</sup> Maxwell E Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation: Their Evolution and Interpretation*, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007), 103.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, 103.

<sup>114</sup> Geoffrey Lampe, *The Seal of the Spirit*, (London: SPCK, 1967), 138ff.

his opinions, Dix had no guaranteed or absolute knowledge; he believed that what he taught was the truth, garnered from his early sources, but others would doubtless disagree.

David Kennedy explained that, in contrast to his difficulties with the Latin Verona text of Hippolytus, Dix had used it to explain his understanding of the epiclesis, thereby suggesting some ambiguity in his thinking.<sup>115</sup> What was important, Dix argued, was the utterly Christological emphasis in Hippolytus, and that the primitive universal tradition of Christendom viewed the Eucharist as an operation of a Spiritual Logos, often (mistakenly) designated as the Holy Spirit. Dix suggested that the Verona text was a later interpolation of an earlier text in *Testamentum Domini* (a late fourth/early fifth century Church order) which developed into what became the Eastern liturgical tradition.<sup>116</sup> Using references to the writings of Irenaeus (c130-c200), Tertullian (c160-c225) and Cyprian (c200-58), as well as Hippolytus, Dix contended that in the Eucharistic consecration the whole emphasis is placed on the unseen action of the heavenly High Priest, the Word (Logos), the Second Person of the Trinity. Thus, the theological heart of the primitive Eucharist is the action of Christ in offering himself through the Eucharistic memorial. The emphasis is not so much on a real presence of Christ in the elements but a making present of the real sacrifice in which the Church participates through faith. Dix was obviously being disingenuous in disregarding the Verona text in one circumstance and accepting it in another, in pursuit, it seems of verification for personally held theories.

In a searching review of Dix's writings, Kenneth Stevenson commented on the 'more than usually racy prose' that he used in the General Introduction to *The Apostolic Tradition*.<sup>117</sup> Was it fair for Stevenson to refer to Dix's prose as 'racy'? It can reasonably be allowed that Dix had a particular style of writing, one that, as I have observed, made his works eminently readable. The word 'racy' conjures up connections of a lewd, indelicate, lascivious nature and I am sure that was not what Stevenson meant; perhaps 'unsuitable' or 'unfitting' would have been more appropriate.

Stevenson criticised Dix for relying too heavily on the fifth century Verona text which, he argued, cannot be certain to reflect second or third century practice. Also, Stevenson censured Dix for 'having too active a mind to leave texts alone'.<sup>118</sup> The result

<sup>115</sup> David Kennedy, *Eucharistic Sacramentality in an Ecumenical Context: The Anglican Epiclesis*, (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), 133. Scholars generally accept that the *Testamentum Domini* originated in the fifth century.

<sup>116</sup> Gregory Dix, 'Origins of the Epiclesis', *Theology*, Vol 27, Mar 1934, 125ff.

<sup>117</sup> Kenneth W Stevenson, *Gregory Dix: Twenty-five Years on*, 9.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid*, 9.

of this was that he took liberties which other more sober minds have severely criticised. His presentation of the text led him to insert captions which are not authentic, even though obviously correct. Most important for Stevenson were the occasions when Dix allowed his preconceptions to influence him strongly. He quoted two important examples, referred to above by Kennedy and Maxwell. Stevenson wrote:

We give two examples. One is in the prayer by the bishop during the hand-laying; here Dix simply follows the version in the *Testamentum Domini*, and disregards the Verona Latin version, which, he dismisses in a footnote, ‘is corrupt here’. To add to, or subtract from, the Latin on the authority of the other witnesses is always a risky adventure. This kind of correction can only be assigned the value of conjecture. The other example is in the Eucharistic epiclesis. Dix, who was no friend of the epiclesis, particularly in a third century document which (according to him) reflects second century practice, writes, ‘the epiclesis ... seems to be derived from another source’. Dix’s willingness to cut about liturgical texts to suit his own notions does not seem to be a very happy method of dealing with them, even if his analyses are sometimes illuminating. More examples of such tampering can be found.<sup>119</sup>

Despite Stevenson’s assertion, Dix was not writing only to suit his own notions but was exploring highly problematic manuscripts, documents that were difficult if not impossible to reconstruct. Yet, in trying to understand and explain how these ancient texts worked in practice, he was at all times sensitive to his own Eucharistic discernments, displaying again the life of the *Homo Eucharisticus*. Like many other commentators on Dix’s works, Stevenson misunderstood the point that Dix was making. Although they may have been technically correct, they failed to appreciate that Dix was not specifically interested in historical precision as much as in liturgical and sacramental praxis, in which he saw himself in absolute, Apostolic continuity.

Despite his many criticisms, Stevenson accepted that Dix’s edition was one of his most important studies. He acknowledged that Dix had made the material easily available and claimed that it was still a standard work. He concluded by allowing that Bernard Botte, whom he described as a Roman omniscient, was both candid and respectful when paying tribute to Dix’s work.<sup>120</sup>

Hippolytus is thought by many to have been the most important, third century writer and theologian in the Roman Church.<sup>121</sup> Despite this apparent prominence,

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, 10. Botte, a competent Orientalist, produced a definitive edition of *The Apostolic Tradition* in 1963. Ref: Bernard Botte, *La Tradition Apostolique du Saint Hippolyte*, (Münster: Aschendorff, 1963).

<sup>121</sup> See, *inter alia*, F L Cross (ed), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), sv ‘Hippolytus’, 641.

Lawrence Johnson argued that little is known of the life of Hippolytus.<sup>122</sup> His dates are generally given as c170-c236. Photius (820-891), Patriarch of Constantinople (858-67 and 877-86), intimated that Hippolytus was a disciple of Irenaeus, but Cross suggested that this was incorrect. Johnson asserted that Eusebius knew of him and called him a bishop and included a short list of his writings in his *Church History* (Vol 4). Other evidence speaks of a presbyter named Hippolytus being exiled to Sardinia in 235. Johnson accepted that Hippolytus was eventually reconciled to the Church. He quoted from a burial inscription dedicated to Hippolytus composed by Pope Damasus (c305-384).

Dix presented a clear and confident biographical account of Hippolytus, although he admitted that, ‘we are not abundantly informed about the author’s life’.<sup>123</sup> He identified Hippolytus’ character quite clearly from his writings, obviously making the assumption that all that was written and said about Hippolytus referred only to one individual (which may not have been the case). Dix’s clarity may be observed in his description of Hippolytus as:

A wide rather than a deep or accurate scholar, an exegete and commentator rather than an original thinker, with a mind awake to theological difficulties but not sufficiently balanced or profound to contribute adequate solutions, proud of his own learning and bitterly resentful that his real gifts were not generally appreciated at his own valuation, passionately sincere and high-minded in his own personal life, he was clearly narrow, obstinate and quite unsympathetic in his dealings with others.<sup>124</sup>

Paul Bradshaw and his co-authors believed that serious doubts may be raised about the identity of Hippolytus.<sup>125</sup> They accepted that the historical data were very confused. They quoted from the writings of Eusebius and Jerome who both described Hippolytus as a bishop while giving no indication of his diocese. He has been associated with both Rome and Arabia. These authors preferred to keep an open mind on many of the presumed historical references and argued that, without a sure certainty that Hippolytus was responsible for the series of exegetical works normally attributed to him, no biographical information may be assumed and there is little evidence to connect *The Apostolic Tradition* with him.

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<sup>122</sup> Lawrence J Johnson, *Worship in the Early Church, Volume I: An Anthology of Historical Sources*, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009), 192.

<sup>123</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Apostolic Tradition*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed), xii – xxxv.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid, xv. Many of these attributes could, of course, be applied to Dix himself.

<sup>125</sup> Paul E Bradshaw, Maxwell E Johnson and L Edward Phillips, *The Apostolic Tradition*, (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2002), 5.

## A difference according to Dix

It is not my intention to investigate the intricate details of Latin, Greek and Oriental documents and compare and contrast different translations and interpretations. There is, however, one important feature that differentiates Dix's edition from others. All versions have, at Section 21, a portion entitled, 'On the conferring of Holy Baptism' (Cuming and Dix); or, 'Concerning the Tradition of Holy Baptism' (Bradshaw). In all renderings except Dix's this is followed by Section 22, 'Of Administering the Communion' (Cuming), 'Concerning Communion' (Bradshaw). Uniquely, Dix included two extra sections, thus causing a re-numbering of the remainder of his work.<sup>126</sup> These comprised: Section 22, 'Confirmation', and Section 23, 'The Paschal Mass'. Dix was clear in his ideas on what constituted Christian initiation and he adjusted the structure of his version of *The Apostolic Tradition* to accommodate those views. I shall attempt to examine Dix's thinking in this regard and compare and contrast him with modern commentators. First, though, it is necessary to review the whole matter of Christian initiation, examining rites, liturgies and procedures.

## Christian initiation

With the possible exception of the Eucharist the subject of Christian initiation has, within scriptural studies, probably received the most attention and yielded the greatest number of written contributions. As I shall observe, Dix saw the basic elements of initiation to be baptism and confirmation, both co-equal with reception of First Communion. It is important to set his opinion firmly in the history of initiation and I offer a brief summary (very brief in relation to the vast literature on the subject) of New Testament and post-Apostolic thinking and teaching. Despite the fact that Dix's theology was essentially rooted in the post-Apostolic period and less based on the words of Holy Scripture, his texts are full of Biblical references, particularly in his footnotes.<sup>127</sup> He was obviously and profoundly interested in the opinions of the Evangelists, all of whom ante-dated Hippolytus.

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<sup>126</sup> Cuming refers to Dix's alternative numbering system in his section headings.

<sup>127</sup> As examples: Dix included six Biblical references on the first page of *The Shape of the Liturgy* and sixteen on page four.



Maxwell Johnson wrote that the study of the rites of Christian initiation in the first five centuries of the Church's existence has been rightly called 'a study in diversity'.<sup>128</sup> New Testament texts provide:

a rich mosaic of baptismal images: forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2: 38); new birth through water and the Holy Spirit (John 3: 5; Titus 3: 5-7); putting off the 'old nature' and 'putting on the new' that is, 'being clothed in the righteousness of Christ' (Gal 3: 27; Col 3: 9-10); initiation into the 'one body' of the Christian community (1 Cor 12: 13; see also Acts 2: 42); washing, sanctification, and justification in Christ and the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6: 11); enlightenment (Heb 6: 4; 10: 32; 1 Pet 2: 9); being 'anointed' and/or 'sealed' by the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 1: 21-22; 1 John 2: 20, 27) being 'sealed' or 'marked' as belonging to God and God's people (2 Cor 1: 21-22; Eph 1: 13-14; 4: 30; Rev 7: 3); and of course being joined to Christ through participation in his death, burial, and resurrection (Rom 6: 3-11; Col 2: 12-15). Two of these stand out with particular emphasis: Christian initiation as new birth through water and the Holy Spirit (John 3: 5-8) and Christian initiation as being united with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection (Rom 6: 3-11). Around these, several of the other New Testament images will eventually cluster as specific baptismal 'ceremonies'.<sup>129</sup>

From earliest Christian times, certainly from the events that unfolded at the first Pentecost, holy baptism has been regarded by the Church as a sacrament. The word baptism does not appear in the pages of the Old Testament. Its etymology began with Jesus' second-cousin, John the Baptist, so called because he foreshadowed Christ with his calls for a baptism of repentance. John accepted that his form of baptism was, to say the least, inferior to that enacted by Christ. John acknowledged this in his acceptance that there was one, 'who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.' (Jn 1: 27). Although there is no specific reference to a religious rite called baptism in the Old Testament, there was a long history of the use of water for purification purposes in the religion of Israel.<sup>130</sup> G R Beasley-Murray argued that John the Baptist probably had links with the Qumran community for whom ritual lustrations (often completed several times a day) were of great

<sup>128</sup> Maxwell E Johnson, 'Christian Initiation', in Sarah Ashbrook Harvey and David G Hunter (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 695. The phrase 'a study in diversity' is a chapter sub-heading in: Paul F Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship*, (London: SPCK, 2002), 144.

<sup>129</sup> Maxwell E Johnson, 'Christian Initiation', 696.

<sup>130</sup> See: K W Noakes, 'From New Testament times until St Cyprian', in Cheslyn Jones, *et al* (eds), *The Study of Liturgy*, (London: SPCK, 1992), 112f. The Pentateuchal book of Leviticus contains a number of references to the use of water in purification and the avoidance of uncleanness. See: *inter alia*, Lev 15: 5; 16: 24-26 and 17: 15.

importance, both as a means of religious and moral cleansing and for penitential purposes.<sup>131</sup>

The baptism of Jesus by John is one of the best attested details of the Gospels and marked the beginning of his public ministry.<sup>132</sup> From the years immediately after the resurrection water baptism seems to have been the process of admittance into the nascent, Christian community. Yet, unlike John's baptism, which was for repentance and the remission of sins, the liturgical content of later initiation was seen as a means of sharing in the resurrection power of Christ; of symbolically dying with him and becoming a member of his body, the Church. K W Noakes explained that, while the New Testament has a wealth of information about Christian baptism, it contains little liturgical detail.<sup>133</sup> However, like the Eucharist, Baptism was an early and fundamental practice of the Church and thus had its place in its worshipping life long before scriptural texts were written. Thus it does not seem unreasonable that detailed descriptions of well-established methods and procedures do not appear in New Testament documents; the associated liturgical procedures would be well known to readers.

Kenan Osborne reminded us that it is solemn Church teaching that the sacrament of baptism was initiated by Christ, but he argued that a definition of exactly when Jesus instituted this sacrament was more difficult to ascertain.<sup>134</sup> At least five occasions have been identified: the time of Jesus' own baptism; the time when Nicodemus visited Jesus by night; sometime between these two events; at the Last Supper (especially in relation to the washings recorded by Saint John) and at the Ascension (associated with the Great Commission – Mt 28: 19f).

There is no indication in the synoptic gospels of any instances where Jesus baptised. Evidence from the fourth gospel is unclear. John claimed at one point that Jesus did baptise (Jn 3: 22f) and in another that he did not, although his disciples did (Jn 4: 2). Kavanagh argued that a certain degree of tension probably arose between the disciples of John the Baptist and those of Jesus. The baptism of John was purely penitential whereas that of Jesus had messianic overtones.<sup>135</sup> As his journeying took him from the wilderness

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<sup>131</sup> G R Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1973), Ch 1.

<sup>132</sup> See: Mt 3: 13-16; Mk 1: 8-9; Lk 3: 16-26 and, by allusion, Jn 1: 32.

<sup>133</sup> K W Noakes, *From New Testament times*, 113.

<sup>134</sup> Kenan B Osborne, *The Christian Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist*, (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1987), 13.

<sup>135</sup> Aidan Kavanagh, *The Shape of Baptism*, 14.

to the cities and on towards Jerusalem the stress on baptism was overtaken by messianic proclamations and an anticipation of messianic deliverance.

The only post-resurrection reference to water baptism in the New Testament reports the occasion when Philip met the Ethiopian eunuch on the road between Jerusalem and Gaza (Acts 8: 26-39). However, even without water baptism membership of the nascent Church grew. Earlier in Acts, immediately after the Pentecostal appearance of the Spirit as wind and fire, and after Peter had preached his long sermon justifying the disciples' behaviour, members of the listening crowd asked, 'what should we do?' Peter told them to repent and be baptised. Luke reported that about three thousand persons were added to the company (Acts 2: 14-41). It seems highly unlikely that this number could have been baptised with water in the middle of Jerusalem, especially during a great religious festival. Is it not more likely that these converts were welcomed with a hand shake, or a simple greeting, or through prayer, or some spiritual means? Luke continued his account of this event by suggesting that the newcomers took part in the breaking of bread (Acts 2: 42). If this accurately reported the happenings of that day then it clearly showed that full membership of the disciples' company was achieved more simply than in later centuries when catechumens were given lengthy courses of instruction, often for the six weeks' duration of Lent.

Despite the paucity of information about water based baptism in New Testament writings, it seems clear that the concept was maintained because the post-Apostolic Church shows many instances of its use. In the *Didache*, which may pre-date the so-called Apostolic literature, there is a clear reference to the use of water in baptism.<sup>136</sup> Section seven contains the lines:

7:1 But concerning baptism, thus shall ye baptise.

7:2 Having first recited all these things, baptise (in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit) in living (running) water;<sup>137</sup>

7:3 But if thou hast not living water, then baptise in other water;

7:4 and if thou art not able in cold, then in warm.

7:5 But if thou hast neither, then pour water on the head thrice in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>136</sup> Professor Jonathan Draper suggests that most scholars accept a date for the *Didache* in the middle of the second century; few date it later than the end of that period. See: Jonathan Alfred Draper, 'The *Didache*' in Paul Foster (ed), *The Writings of the Apostolic Fathers*, (London: T & T Clark, 2007), 15. Elsewhere Draper accepts that a new consensus is emerging that dates the *Didache* around AD100. See: Jonathon Draper, *The Didache in Modern Research*, (Leiden: Brill Publishing, 1996), 73, fn 6.

<sup>137</sup> This Trinitarian formula was probably unknown until the fifth century and the writings of the Cappadocian Fathers, Augustine and Athanasius. It seems unlikely that it would have been incorporated, in this form, by the author(s) of the *Didache*.

The *Didache* also makes it clear that admission to the Eucharist was entirely dependent on baptismal initiation. Included in Section 9 are the words, ‘But let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist but such as have been baptised in the name of the Lord’.

In about AD160 Justin Martyr (c100-c165) defended the Christian faith in a submission to the Roman Emperor Antonius Pius (86-161), which included an account of baptism. According to Justin, converts to the faith were led to a place where there was water where they were washed (or washed themselves) in the name of the Holy Trinity. The possible translation as ‘wash themselves’ is of interest because Justin maintained that the Name is only to be called upon by the person who did the washing; no one else could call upon the name of God. Anyone who might boldly do so was considered to be mad.<sup>138</sup>

In more recent times Arthur Mason posed the question of whether any new direct action of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus’ sacred soul was set up by his baptism at the hands of John. He confirmed that John’s baptism was only a baptism of repentance, not a sacrament of grace. Mason claimed that:

whatever the act of baptism itself was or was not to our Lord, it was by a distinct, though connected, movement, that he received the abiding unction of the Holy Ghost.<sup>139</sup>

He observed in Christian initiation a two-fold gift of the Spirit: he saw a clear distinction between being born of the Spirit and being fed of the Spirit, and drew a clear parallel between being born of the flesh, by which a mother gives birth to a child, and fed of the flesh, which is when she gives it to suck. The child receives the support of life from the same source whence it received birth.<sup>140</sup>

Mason explored Jerome’s dilemma concerning the different operations of the Spirit in baptism and confirmation. On the one hand, the power of bestowing the gift of the Spirit rested with the bishop, and the safety of the Church depended on the bishop being endowed with unique powers. Despite this, the gift must be bestowed when deacons and presbyters baptise, if this is not so, then such baptism is null and void. Mason resolved the question by reference to Saint Paul’s teaching on the diversity of the gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor 12: 4). On the evening of the day of resurrection the disciples received a gift of the

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<sup>138</sup> For further details, see: E C Whittaker, *Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy*, (London: SPCK, 1960), 2.

<sup>139</sup> Arthur James Mason, *The Relation of Confirmation to Baptism*, (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1891), 16.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid*, 107.

Spirit, whereby they could remit (or retain) sins, but on the day of Pentecost they were imbued with a different gift; to preach the gospel and work miracles.<sup>141</sup>

## Dix's view of Christian initiation

Dix published a pamphlet in 1937 in which he set out his view of the clear parallels between Christian initiation (in its entirety, as he saw it) and events in the life of the Chosen People, the Jews. He wrote:

Christians habitually saw themselves as a 'race', though with them the phrase was consciously a metaphor. What was not a metaphor was that by baptism and confirmation a man became a 'laic', one of 'The People' (*λαος*) in the strictest Old Testament sense. As with the old 'People' so with the new. Its very existence was the result of a Divine action. It was, again, a fresh creation, the result of a spontaneous intervention of God in His world – of that supreme intervention dimly foreseen by Jewish apocalypse as a vague but tremendous 'Messianic crisis', ushering in the age to come. That crisis, in the Christian view, was the rejection of the Messiah by God's own chosen instrument in the world, the 'People of God', followed by the sacrificial death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, who commuted in Himself the transformed Israel which the Messianic crisis was to bring about. He 'being by the right hand of God exalted hath shed forth' from the throne of heaven the 'new Spirit' prophetically foretold as the mark of the 'age to come' upon all who accept him as 'Lord and Messiah'. By that acceptance they are members of the 'new Israel'. Baptised into his death and resurrection, in which and in the consequences of which they share sacramentally (ie really, but by grace not by racial descent), and being made partakers by confirmation of his very 'Spirit' (ie of that which *constituted* him Messiah), the new 'People' has passed with him into the Messianic Kingdom. The Church is an *eschatological* fact. The darkness and terrors of Calvary were the new plagues of Egypt, the Resurrection and Ascension the new Exodus, the waters of the Paschal baptism the new Red Sea, confirmation the new Sinai (where the Law is given no more on tables of stone but written by the 'new Spirit' in the 'new heart'), the Paschal Mass with the draught of milk and honey the entrance into the new Canaan. And the Paschal Lamb, whose death brought liberty, whose Blood avails for a token against 'the destroyer', of which no stranger and none without the 'seal of the covenant' in circumcision may eat, and whose flesh may not be borne outside the one household – this is 'the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world', whereof no heathen and none without the 'seal of the covenant' in the Spirit (confirmation) may eat, whose Flesh can never be distributed outside the one household of the holy Church (Dix's emphases).<sup>142</sup>

This long quotation from Dix may be seen as a culmination of my preceding texts about the history of baptism. In a way it gives Dix's answer to the place of Christian initiation

<sup>141</sup> Ibid, 171f. It must be presumed that, after Pentecost, the disciples (or some of them) would have been 'celebrants' at Eucharistic worship.

<sup>142</sup> Gregory Dix, 'The Idea of 'The Church' in Primitive Liturgies', 128f.

within the life of the Church. It shows his theological, Apostolic vision of the Church in the welcome it gives to new members. It provides a clear picture, such as only Dix could paint, of the eschatological nature of membership of the church, where every aspect of ancient Christian practice is a reflection of the historical events of the Passover and the Exodus. Where none except the circumcised could eat the Passover lamb, so none but the properly initiated may consume the Paschal lamb: as in ancient Canaan, so in Rome, Constantinople and elsewhere. Dix defended this typological position of the universality of initiation and the Eucharist, even in ancient Canaan, against counter arguments from a number of protagonists. In this he clearly followed the theology found in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

On 22 January, 1946, Dix gave a public lecture, at the invitation of Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity (then F L Cross), at the University of Oxford.<sup>143</sup> In this he responded to a paper that had been published two years earlier by the Board of the Church Assembly, entitled *Confirmation Today*. With characteristic acerbity he criticised the participants, especially the bishops in the southern province, because only one seventh of their report was given over to a survey of ‘confirmation in History and Doctrine’.<sup>144</sup> Even within this relatively minor section Dix suggested that the authors had virtually ignored recent movements in thought on the subject of confirmation, and added that they were probably expedient to do so. By ‘recent’ Dix meant from the middle of the nineteenth century; he added, ‘[the report] would not have been very different in substance if it had been written about the year 1885’.<sup>145</sup> It is interesting to reflect that Dix did not mention in his lecture the seminal work of Arthur Mason, an author with whom his name would be linked.

Dix agreed with the view expressed by Thornton that Christian initiation was a two-part process, within which the person baptised was at once and immediately a son or daughter of God but had to become so by subsequent human living.<sup>146</sup> Thornton had argued that there were two stages of initiation, as indicated in Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians (Gal 4: 6).<sup>147</sup> In a further defence of his stance Dix mentioned the writings of some distinguished theologians whose views that the importance of baptism of the Spirit

<sup>143</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Theology of Confirmation in Relation to Baptism*. This was published as a pamphlet by Dacre Press in 1946.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid, 7. Dix remarked that of fourteen speeches by bishops, twelve were devoted to details of administration of the sacrament or to an exchange of reminiscences.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>146</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Theology of Confirmation in Relation to Baptism*, 6.

<sup>147</sup> L S Thornton, *Confirmation*, 12.

was greater than for baptism in water were more in accord with his own.<sup>148</sup> He also quoted from an essay by H V Martin, a Congregationalist missionary in South India, who defended the thesis that there was not one shred of evidence in the New Testament that water baptism was essential for joining the Apostolic Church.<sup>149</sup> Dix was gracious enough to point out that that Martin's understanding of the phrase 'baptism in the Spirit' might differ from his own.

Dix also explored the importance of the episcopate in the Church's initiatory practices. He stated that in the decades before Hippolytus wrote *The Apostolic Tradition* Tertullian had asserted that, 'the giving of baptism is the right of the High Priest, who is the Bishop'. However, Tertullian had added that, 'others have it only as his delegates'.<sup>150</sup> Tertullian also saw initiation as a two part process. He wrote, 'I do not mean to say that we obtain the Holy Spirit in the water, but having been cleansed in the water, we are being prepared under the angel for the Holy Spirit'.<sup>151</sup>

Bearing all of this in mind, Dix considered the case of the Ethiopian eunuch. He explained a Western Church interpolation into the text of Acts, a verse that read, 'when they were come up out of the water the Holy Spirit fell upon the eunuch and the Angel of the Lord caught away Philip to Azotus'. This has been edited to read, 'when they came up out of the water the spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus' (Acts 8: 39f). Richard Dillon suggested that the former, rejected textual variant was provided by Irenaeus and added the baptismal dialogue from the then current liturgical practice.<sup>152</sup> Dix saw in the latter rendering of this passage a possibility that the gift of the Spirit could, on occasion, be given through water baptism alone. This provided an isolated and puzzling exception.<sup>153</sup> It was not only the implied absence of the Spirit that was unusual; the eunuch presumably went on his journey with little chance of receiving any further Christian instruction, no possibility of entering into any form of community (Dix included the word *κοινωνία*) and no way of participating in the life of the Church through acceptance of its sacraments. This report so poorly represented the initiation of a typical catechumen, and, Dix

<sup>148</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Theology of Confirmation in Relation to Baptism*, 8.

<sup>149</sup> H V Martin was a member of the South India United Church, which in 1946 formed part of the Church of South India.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>151</sup> Tertullian, *de Baptismo*, Ch 6.

<sup>152</sup> Richard J Dillon, 'Acts of the Apostles', in Raymond E Brown, *et al* (eds), *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc, 1990), 743.

<sup>153</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Theology of Confirmation in Relation to Baptism*, 16.

suggested, bore no relation to the baptismal practice of the Church at the time when Acts was written, that it was clearly no blue-print for future baptisms. Dix assured the listeners to his lecture that nowhere in *The Apostolic Tradition* (for example) was there any suggestion that baptism in water alone, conducted by anyone other than a bishop, can avail for salvation.

In a kind of parallel to the Eucharistic doctrine of concomitance, Dix attempted to develop an elaboration, which he called a Theory of Baptismal Concomitance. In this he saw all the effects of both baptism in water and baptism in the Spirit come to be ascribed to the reception of baptism in water alone.<sup>154</sup> His poor opinion of the English episcopate in general and some of its members in particular, led him to launch into an entertaining glance at the baptismal theory of Jerome (c342-420). Dix wrote:

In his Dialogue of a Luciferian with an Orthodox he agrees with his opponent that there can be no saving ‘baptism’ by water alone. Baptism is still ‘of water’ and ‘of the Spirit’. But when the Luciferian replies, ‘What then of the present practice of the Church in administering them separately?’ Saint Jerome is in a difficulty. His reply is remarkable. ‘I do not deny’, he says, ‘that this is the custom of the Church, that the Bishop should rush about (*excurrat*) to those who have been baptised by Presbyters or Deacons far from the larger cities, to call down the Holy Spirit by the laying on of his hands. This is done in many places, yet it is done rather for the glory of the Bishop, than from any pressure of necessity. If the Holy Ghost only descends at the mighty imprecation of a Bishop, they are most unfortunate who live in farms and villages, or who happen to die in remote spots after being baptised by Presbyters or Deacons before the Bishop can discover them. The whole salvation of the Church hangs on the Bishop’s self-importance. Unless he is given some exceptional power which outshines everyone else, there will be as many schisms as there are Bishops.’ That is the only reason, he goes on to say, why no Presbyter or Deacon is now allowed to baptise without chrism episcopally blessed or the laying on of episcopal hands, though of course they have the right to do this really, like everyone else.<sup>155</sup>

Dix found it remarkable that Jerome then cited the interpolated account of the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch that water alone, even in the absence of a bishop, can convey baptism of the Spirit. Even more noteworthy was the fact that in his rendering of Acts in the Vulgate Bible, Jerome omitted this verse as not being a true part of the original.

Dix mentioned to the Oxford audience an anonymous French bishop, known by the alias Pseudo-Eusebius of Emesa, (4<sup>th</sup> century) who, in a Whitsuntide sermon claimed that:

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid, 18. If concomitance permits full initiation through water alone, then, presumably, it allows it through the Spirit alone. Yet, certainly in the Prayer Book Order of Confirmation, candidates are required to renew the promises made at baptism. Did Dix, I wonder, appreciate this anomaly?

<sup>155</sup> Ibid, 19. Dix cited *Dial adv Lucif*, vii for this passage.



The Holy Ghost bestows at the font absolutely all that is needed to restore innocence. In confirmation he provides an increase of grace (*augmentum praestat ad gratiam*) ... In baptism we are born to new life. After baptism we are confirmed for combat.<sup>156</sup>

Dix said that:

The doctrine of Pseudo-Eusebius that confirmation is an *augmentum ad gratiam* of baptism in water, and no more; of Pseudo-Melchiades that *post baptismum confirmamur ad pugnam*, but the necessities for salvation are all given in baptism; the doctrine of Rabanus that confirmation bestows only *robur ad praedicandum aliis* about the gift which itself was received in baptism – these furnish the outline of the only meaning which even the greatest mediaeval theologians saw in this sacrament.<sup>157</sup>

He wrote that

Debate on *Confirmation Today* in the Upper House of Canterbury in May, 1945 revealed that its members almost to a man still stand staunchly by the doctrine first promulgated in the *False Decretals*. Two Bishops succeeded in quoting them almost exactly. Though perhaps without a clear apprehension of the source from which they had drawn their teaching. At least, they did not cite it by name.<sup>158</sup>

Dix continued:

The most pressing aspect of the pastoral problem today lies precisely in those millions of English people of good-will who sincerely regard themselves as practising Christians, who are baptised and insist on the baptism of their children in infancy, but who regard the Christian life as something a man does for himself, individually and privately, making no more use than he finds convenient or helpful of the other entirely optional means of grace which ‘the Church’ as an official organisation exists to provide for the vast congeries of baptised individuals. Of the Church as organic, as the Body of Christ, of the Divine life within it, of their own responsibility to it and for it, these people know and acknowledge little or nothing. What they are clinging to is the remains of the mediaeval tradition diluted by four centuries of Protestant individualism.<sup>159</sup>

Dix would have known that the Church of England in its Articles of Religion doctrinally denies that confirmation is a Sacrament of the Gospel (Article XXV). However, it does clearly teach that baptism is a sign of regeneration and new birth and, ‘promises the forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, [and] are visibly signed and sealed’ (Article XXVII).

<sup>156</sup> Ibid, 21. Dix accepted that these statements, which were borrowed by the ninth century author of the *False Decretals*, were ascribed to Pope Melchiades (or Miltiades) †314.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid, 25.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid, 34.

## Reaction to Dix's Theology of Initiation

### Geoffrey Lampe

Geoffrey Lampe was one of the first to respond to Dix's views on Christian initiation. Just a few years after Dix's translation and commentary on *The Apostolic Tradition* and his lecture at Oxford, Lampe published his enormously influential work, *The Seal of the Spirit*. In this work he offered what was regarded by some as the definitive answer to baptism and confirmation, and demonstrated that, from the times of the post-Apostolic Church, the 'seal of the Spirit' was not an act subsequent to baptism but was a way of describing what baptism meant. He wrote:

The problem of the relation of confirmation to baptism cannot be solved by investigating the history of the baptismal liturgy. It must be approached by way of the theology of baptism itself. We have to ask, not simply what sacramental sign the Church of the Apostolic age or of the Fathers or of later centuries associated with the gift of the Spirit but rather what is meant by the 'gift of the Spirit'. To this question a sound Trinitarian theology based upon the teaching of the New Testament can give a clear answer. The work of the Spirit is to make the glorified Christ present to his people, to unite them with him through faith responding to grace, and so to assure them of son-ship to the Father through the Son. To receive the gift of the Spirit is to come to be, in the Pauline phrase, 'in Christ'. To be a Christian is to be indwelt by the Spirit: these are two ways of expressing one and the same reality.<sup>160</sup>

Lampe accused Dix of advancing 'a remarkable opinion' that, in the Apostolic age, confirmation was regularly administered before baptism.<sup>161</sup> He admitted that Dix's paradoxical thesis was argued with his usual brilliance and ingenuity, which compelled a fresh examination of both biblical and Patristic evidence.<sup>162</sup> Dix had introduced the idea of a 'seal' of initiation when he wrote:

The tendency throughout the Middle Ages is ... to leave less and less theological content of its own to confirmation and to make of it simply a 'strengthening' of graces already received adequately for salvation in baptism. How different all this is from the Scriptural teaching concerning the 'baptism of the Spirit' which 'seals'

<sup>160</sup> Geoffrey Lampe, *The Seal of the Spirit*, xxii. Lampe added a footnote to this passage in which he bemoaned the use of the word 'gift' in relation to the indwelling of the Spirit. This would be better expressed in terms of a believer's experience of the coming of the Spirit.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid, x. Dix did indeed make this observation, but only in relation to the Syrian Church, down to the year AD650. See: Gregory Dix, *The Apostolic Tradition*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed), xl, fn ‡.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid, x. Lampe considered that, 'from the point of view of academic study Dix's revolutionary theories had the healthy effect which a radical challenge to accepted opinions produces in any field of historical investigation'.

a man to eternity and for which ‘baptism in water’ is only a preliminary, needs no comment.<sup>163</sup>

Lampe explained that a document that needs sealing is not valid until the seal has been affixed. The confirmation of a document, though it may add to its authority, implies that it was already operative before it was confirmed.<sup>164</sup> Lampe also disagreed with Dix over the importance of the *False Decretals* of Pseudo-Eusebius of Emesa in the establishment of a mediaeval theory of confirmation. He condemned the adoption of these unproven and controversial assertions into the teaching of the Church of England, through its Joint Committee’s Report *Confirmation Today*. Lampe also decried Dix’s attempt to find a simple relationship between sealing and confirmation, and in his processes of trying to interpret the considerable number of usages of this word by the Fathers, among whose writings there are a bewildering number of meanings. He argued that there was no single, obvious denotation of the phrase ‘sealed in the Spirit’ even within the limited doctrine of baptism. Lampe believed that Dix, among a number of scholars, was unduly influenced by the practice of Jewish proselyte baptism, upon which John the Baptist may have founded his understanding.<sup>165</sup> He highlighted the possible confusion caused by John’s baptism of Jesus. On ascending from the waters of the River Jordan the Spirit of God came upon him in the image of a dove. This clearly associated reception of the Spirit with baptism, certainly in the minds of the Evangelists. However, other texts from these sources indicate a time interval between Jesus’ baptism and his reception of the Spirit and this has caused Dix and others to see this as the reason for the separation of baptism and confirmation. Particularly for Dix, these latter texts caused confirmation to follow baptism rather than precede it.

Lampe attempted to put a variety of ideas about baptism into perspective when he wrote:

When, for example, Mason distinguishes the effects of baptism (regeneration and cleansing from sin) from the bestowal of the indwelling Spirit which he holds to be the effect of confirmation, when J Behm and others distinguish water-baptism, as signifying something negative, from a positive baptism of the Spirit, when Dix maintains that ‘baptism into the death and Resurrection of Christ and the Pentecostal baptism of the Spirit are not one thing but two, both of them inseparably and necessarily connected, but not the same’, when L S Thornton will

<sup>163</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Theology of Confirmation in Relation to Baptism*, 27.

<sup>164</sup> Geoffrey Lampe, *The Seal of the Spirit*, xi.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid, 24. Lampe implied that by the end of the first century, certainly within the Hillelite school, there was debate on whether baptism or circumcision was the essential for entry into Judaism.

allow to water-baptism only the effect of blotting out sins and the preparation of a temple for the Spirit, and when, to take an extreme example of this type of thought, G C Richards expresses the astonishing opinion that New Testament baptism ‘does not carry with it full Church privileges, but is the intermediate stage between the catechumenate and full membership’, we can only infer that these writers have totally misunderstood the Christological heart of the Pauline teaching, which is simply that baptism effects incorporation into Christ.<sup>166</sup>

Lampe commented on the historical value of *The Apostolic Tradition*. He agreed that it was important as the earliest, full, liturgical text of the baptismal rite and supplemented information provided in Tertullian’s *de Baptismo*. However, he castigated Dix for accepting that it was an Apostolic tradition and illustrated the actual practices of the Church in the age of the Apostles. Lampe also thought it important not to exaggerate the links that Dix had made suggesting that post-Apostolic praxis had its roots in Judaism. While accepting that the early Church would naturally have retained some Jewish liturgical forms in its rituals, much as it retained some elements in its organisation and ministry, these rapidly gave way to independent structures, more reminiscent of the Old Testament than the contemporary synagogue.<sup>167</sup> Later Lampe criticised Dix for his misinterpretation of the Latin text of *The Apostolic Tradition*. He wrote:

If this were the authentic text of *The Apostolic Tradition* we should have to conclude that the treatise, so far from supporting the biblical conception of the gift of the Spirit in baptism, and foreshadowing the later doctrine of the grace of confirmation, actually affords early evidence of a divorce in orthodox circles of Spirit-baptism from water-baptism, and that the bad theology which we meet later had already come to be accepted as traditional – the theology which postulates a separation of the gift of the Spirit from regeneration, and dissociates the negative grace of remission of sins from the positive guilt of the Spirit which ought to accompany it as being only another aspect of the benefits which result from acceptance by Christ and incorporation into his Church.<sup>168</sup>

In *The Theology of Confirmation in Relation to Baptism* Dix simply quoted, as an English version of what Hippolytus wrote, the form of the text given in the *Testament* and the other Oriental versions. He offered no hint that the Latin text bore an entirely different sense. In his edition of *The Apostolic Tradition* his critical footnote on the passage that reads: ‘make

<sup>166</sup> Geoffrey Lampe, *The Seal of the Spirit*, 58. The references that Lampe makes are to: Arthur James Mason, *The Relation of Confirmation to Baptism*, 143; J Behm, *Die Handauflegung im Urchristentum nach Verwendung, Herkunft und Bedeutung in religions geschichtlichem Zusammenhang untersucht* (Leipzig, 1911), 166f. See also: *The Princeton Theological Review*, Vol 10, 1912, 330-4; Gregory Dix, *The Theology of Confirmation in Relation to Baptism*, 30; Church of England Joint Committee’s Report, *Confirmation Today*, 9; and G C Richards, *Baptism and Confirmation*, (London: SPCK, 1942), 14.

<sup>167</sup> Geoffrey Lampe, *The Seal of the Spirit*, 132f.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid*, 138f.

them worthy to be filled with thy Holy Spirit’, states, ‘L[atin], which is corrupt here’.<sup>169</sup> Lampe asked:

But is the Verona text really corrupt here? The question is worth investigation, for upon the answer we give to it will depend whether or not we admit *The Apostolic Tradition* as a witness for a separation of water – from Spirit – baptism. We must not overlook two important facts about the textual materials available for the reconstruction of this treatise.<sup>170</sup>

Lampe concluded, ‘To add to, or subtract from, the Latin on the authority of the other witnesses is always a risky adventure. This kind of correction can only be assigned the value of conjecture’.<sup>171</sup> For Lampe there was an urgent need for a full and impartial investigation of the real and actual teaching of the Fathers on baptism and the gift of the Spirit. This should, in Lampe’s opinion, take into account their respective, scriptural proof texts. It should refrain from previous practices of collecting to itself those particular passages that can be fitted into this or that modern theory of baptism. As an example, Lampe examined Dix’s reference to the Frankish Benedictine monk Rabanus Maurus (c780-856), whom, Dix suggested, represented a meeting point of the new and the old teaching. Lampe wrote:

We must therefore attempt, if only in a summary and incomplete fashion, a survey of these ideas; and we may take as our starting point the assertion of Dix that the statement of Rabanus Maurus that it is through the unction with chrism that the baptised receive the gift of the Spirit represents ‘the last time at which the teaching of the New Testament that baptism in the Spirit is not baptism in water, but something else which follows closely upon it, finds a clear echo in the West’. Apart from the question whether this definition of New Testament teaching is correct (and we affirm emphatically that it is not), this sentence suggests that the early Fathers ascribed the gift of the Spirit to confirmation and that it was only gradually that this view gave way to the ‘mediaeval’ doctrine of confirmation. It might lead the reader to suppose that until a relatively late period the Patristic teaching is both uniform and definite.<sup>172</sup>

Lampe concluded:

There is little convincing evidence in the New Testament for the view that baptism regularly involved or included any other rite than the baptism in water which was practised from the earliest days of the Church. There was no special sacrament of ‘Spirit-baptism’. Laying on of hands was certainly practised on certain special

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<sup>169</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Apostolic Tradition*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed), 38, fn.

<sup>170</sup> Geoffrey Lampe, *The Seal of the Spirit*, 138f.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid, 140.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid, 196.

occasions, and this ceremony, symbolizing fellowship, ‘solidarity’, and the incorporation into a single unit of those who performed it and those who received it, was regarded by Saint Luke as the means whereby special charismata of the Spirit, appropriate to the missionary enterprise, were bestowed upon certain converts, so that the Apostolic character of the missionary Church was transferred from the original Apostles to some recruits to its evangelistic task. Less certainly, the writer to the Hebrews suggests that in some quarters this rite may have been performed on all converts and associated closely with the regular practice of baptism. It is not, however, implied that this constituted a ‘Spirit-baptism’ for which the normal water-baptism was simply a preliminary purification.<sup>173</sup>

Dix did not insist that baptism and confirmation should be administered together but he did insist that they belonged together, and must be taught as belonging together, because together they constituting sacramental initiation. The impact of his teaching was seen in the studies of the Liturgical Commission and in its new draft services, of which *Common Worship* is a descendant. Revised orders for baptism and confirmation were the first Anglican services since the Reformation to provide for both water and the laying on of episcopal hands to come in the same rite.

## Lionel Thornton

Three years after Lampe published *The Seal of the Spirit*, Lionel Thornton wrote a book to counter Lampe’s thesis. A religious, (he was a member of the Community of the Resurrection) he dedicated it, ‘*In piam memoriam* Gregory Dix, OSB’. It is a less demanding study than Lampe’s; Thornton used almost no Greek or Latin texts and where he did include an occasional word from Greek he transliterated it into English.

Thornton agreed that Dix had surveyed the history of western Christendom, insofar as it related to the theology of Christian initiation, in a masterly fashion. He accepted the Lukan teaching, followed by Tertullian, that the Holy Spirit is not given in the water of baptism, but in the subsequent laying on of the bishop’s hands. He wrote that:

the new mediaeval doctrine affirmed that confirmation was merely the increase and strengthening of gifts already received in baptism coincided with a separation in time between infant baptism and the episcopal laying on of hands restored to the west in the Carolingian period. When once the process of separation had got under way in the administering of the two sacraments, it was doubtless inevitable that baptism with water should tend to be regarded as complete in itself. It would then seem to follow that there was nothing new to be added; and the more ancient conception of confirmation as the ‘completion’ of baptism would become less intelligible. It would even come to be supposed that such a notion of ‘completion’

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid, 307.

actually cast a slur upon Holy baptism. Certainly modern attempts to revive the more ancient doctrine have been regarded as paradoxical, or even as slightly shocking.<sup>174</sup>

In a footnote he concluded that, ‘the drawbacks attending separation of the two rites are not a sufficient reason for the drastic change in Anglican practice’.

Thornton suggested that the Pauline epistles demonstrated that initiation into the Christian life, and its subsequent consequences, were regarded from two perspectives. Sometimes the changes effected through baptism were described as once-and-for-all complete while in other passages the Apostle regards the process begun at the font as only gradually being completed in the course of the Christian life.<sup>175</sup> While both viewpoints were correct, neither conveyed the whole truth. The Holy Spirit may, Thornton opined, be thought of in two different ways, even within Paul’s writing. The Spirit is the Divine Person acting upon and through the water of baptism, grafting a new member on to the body of Christ, which is the Church. The Spirit is also identified with the water (1 Cor 12: 13). Thornton accepted that the thought processes in the world that Paul inhabited saw a clear distinction between the individual (the body corporal) and the social organisation (the body corporate). In this context baptism represented admission of a new member to a voluntary society, followed by processes within which that member gradually assimilates the ethos of the organisation. Thus 1 Cor 12: 13 identifies two distinct aspects of initiation: incorporation by the action of the Holy Spirit; and endowment with that Spirit for subsequent growth in to the distinctive life of the Christian.

Thornton clearly accepted Dix’s observation that it is difficult to avoid misreading ancient evidence when seen through modern eyes, and that an interpretation observed against a background of post-medieval ideas is dangerous. He opined that such misreading symbolised much of the modern discussion that separated the two initiatory rites. For Thornton, Christian initiation was a single baptismal mystery; and baptismal language belonged to the whole and not simply to one part of it. He criticised Lampe, who, he said, had given a very full list of ancient practices and usages that pertained to seal terminology, but which did not contain a single example of any form of inward experience.<sup>176</sup> Lampe had, he claimed, suggested that, in sealing, a person would receive an outward mark,

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<sup>174</sup> Lionel Thornton, *Confirmation: Its Place in the Baptismal Mystery*, (London: Dacre Press, 1954), 154.  
See also: Gregory Dix, *The Theology of Confirmation in Relation to Baptism*, 31f.

<sup>175</sup> Lionel Thornton, *Confirmation*, 13.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid*, 192.

synonymous with those practices mentioned by Ezekiel (Ezek 9: 4-6) and Saint John (Rev 7: 3). A corresponding connection with the water of baptism was by no means equally obvious. In almost poetic phraseology Thornton explained that, ‘The human vessel is first closed against the powers of evil, then baptised into Christ and made partaker in his messianic anointing, and finally sealed as though to enclose the precious gift just received’.<sup>177</sup>

Anthony Thiselton suggested that Thornton, in common with Dix, put too much emphasis on confirmation, by arguing that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit depended on the completion of the two rites. Confirmation would thereby become the principal sacrament while baptism would be reduced to the level of the baptism of John.<sup>178</sup>

## Other opinions

Bradshaw and his co-authors commented comprehensively on Sect 21 of the baptismal formulae of *The Apostolic Tradition*. There had been, they argued, a long scholarly debate about the possible corruption of the Latin manuscript and whether the explicit language about the bestowal of the Holy Spirit in the oriental versions is preferable. They wrote:

Dix, for example, was so convinced of the corrupt nature of the Latin at this point that, although normally following the Latin version throughout rest of his edition, he based his English translation of this prayer on the oriental versions and entitled the entire section as ‘confirmation’. The scholarly evaluation of the Latin text, however, has changed since the work of Dix. For example, Geoffrey W H Lampe noted that there are no grammatical problems with the Latin at this point and that the text as it stands translates quite clearly.<sup>179</sup>

Lampe was probably the first to refer to the Dix-Mason line in his analysis of the complexities of baptism and confirmation.<sup>180</sup> This parody on the Mason-Dixon Line of eighteenth century, North American, slave trading history, has also been used by other authors to embody the simplistic view that water baptism only represents a part of the procedure of Christian initiation, to be complemented by confirmation, within which sacrament the Holy Spirit is received (and, possibly, if Dix is to be believed, with First Communion). These commentators included Colin Buchanan, who wrote ‘On baptism he

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid, 193.

<sup>178</sup> Anthony C Thiselton, *The Holy Spirit – In Biblical Teaching, Through the Centuries, and Today*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 2013), 346.

<sup>179</sup> Paul Bradshaw, *et al*, *The Apostolic Tradition*, 127.

<sup>180</sup> Geoffrey Lampe, *The Seal of the Spirit*, xi.



[Dix] re-emphasised the ‘two-staging’ or ‘confirmationist’ advocacy of Arthur James Mason’.<sup>181</sup> Also using this reference, Ruth Meyers wrote:

The on-going debate was reflected in *Baptism and Confirmation Today*, (the final report of the Church of England Joint Committees on Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Communion). The majority report, following Lampe, found no distinction in the New Testament between water baptism and Spirit baptism. In contemporary practice confirmation imparts divine strength and additional gifts of the Spirit. Contrary to the interim report *Confirmation Today*, the final report, maintained that confirmation should not be called the ‘ordination of the laity’, since, ‘baptism makes us all partakers of the corporate priesthood of the Church, the *laos*’. The minority report ... closely followed the Mason/Dix line: the original Apostolic pattern of Christian initiation included the remission of sins through baptismal washing; the gift of the Spirit through imposition of hands, anointing, and consignation: and participation in communion.<sup>182</sup>

Everett Ferguson believed that the book of Acts contains three understandings of the relation of Holy Spirit to baptism: received before baptism, received after baptism, or not connected with baptism. He disagreed with Dix and suggested that the possible liturgical sequence of anointing, baptism, (or baptism, anointing) and Eucharist in the New Testament is doubtful, and quoted 1 Jn 5: 6-8 as the source of his opinion. He accepted that sealing was the commonest baptismal designation in the second century. For Christian usage in relation to baptism there are two lines of thought; eschatological and juristic. There was a close relation of seal and name in the second and third centuries so that seal and baptismal formula were spoken of together. Indeed, sealing was no separate baptismal rite but an interpretation of the baptismal font.<sup>183</sup>

## Commentary

The seemingly endless debate about Christian initiation continues in all Churches, with little possibility of any meaningful solutions. Views are essentially polarised between those espoused by Lampe and those that adhere to the so-called Mason-Dix line. The subject has been made more complicated, certainly since the sixteenth century, with arguments about regeneration. The *Book of Common Prayer* makes it clear that the Church of England teaches that, ‘None can enter the kingdom of God, except he be

<sup>181</sup> Colin Ogilvie Buchanan, *The A to Z of Anglicanism*, (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2009), 141.

<sup>182</sup> Ruth A Myers, *Continuing the Reformation: Re-Visioning Baptism in the Episcopal Church*, (New York, NY: Church Publishing Inc, 1997), 73.

<sup>183</sup> Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm Eerdmans Publishing, 2009), 30.

regenerate and born anew of Water and of the Holy Ghost'.<sup>184</sup> Some writers have argued that water baptism is, in itself, sufficient for regeneration, while others hold that initiation is a two part process, involving, at various times or together, water and the Spirit. Dix appears to be the only authority to see initiation as a three-part activity, incorporating First Communion to complete the process. The Church in recent times has developed a liturgy, often enacted on the evening of Holy Saturday, of accompanying the lighting of a Paschal Candle with baptism and confirmation. Confirmation candidates receive their First Communion on Easter Day, often at a celebration at sunrise. This practice clearly follows Dix's teaching that Christian initiation comprises these three important elements. This understanding was almost certainly the reason for his renumbering of the sections of Hippolytus' text.

For Dix, Christian initiation, like the Eucharist, was central to the life of the Church long before scriptural accounts were written; accounts that attempted to explain both theory and practice. Do these arguments strengthen or weaken Dix's position? Lampe, for example, was much more of an academic and impatient of the carelessness of the style of scholarship shown by Dix. Dix had the extraordinary theological capacity for getting the argument right while seeming to get it wrong. This says something interesting about the nature of theology and its practice. Lampe and other liturgical scholars criticised Dix, but in a curious way they missed the point of Dix's argument. Their combined writings misunderstood Dix's lateral thinking and his deeply held view of the absolute necessity of reception of the Eucharist for the fulfilment of life, in all its aspects.

It is pertinent to ask why Dix concluded that Christian initiation comprised the three components of baptism, confirmation and First Communion, against the weight of evidence provided by Lampe. He was primarily interested in the writings of the Early Fathers, particularly those from the first three centuries. As I have observed, Dix had a pre-Nicene view of the nature of the Holy Trinity, one that encompassed the concept of a Spiritual-Logos. He would have seen within Christian initiation the action of the Word in a way completely different from that envisaged for the Holy Spirit in Lampe's understanding.

Together with Mason, Thornton and others, Dix saw Christian initiation as a complex, multi-faceted procedure, involving the use of water and oil (chrism or unction),

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<sup>184</sup> The Ministration of Publick Baptism of Infants to be used in the Church, *Book of Common Prayer*.

one or more invocations of the Spirit, through the laying-on-of-hands, and culminating in the reception of a First Communion.

It is quite possible that a complex set of rituals may have evolved in the very early Church, where worshipping numbers were few, where bishops were entirely responsible for all of the activities within their domains and where neophytes were all adult. This may have lasted until (say) the end of the second century and was possibly the Church's practice when (and if!) Hippolytus wrote *The Apostolic Tradition*. With the introduction of paedobaptism the resulting stages of initiation would have spread over too many years to let it remain a single, if multi-layered, procedure. The only way that this practice could have been contained into one operation would have been if infant reception of the Eucharist was a common procedure but there seems to be no evidence for this. One element of Dix's make-up as *Homo Eucharisticus* was to observe that nothing of importance happened within the Church without a Eucharistic involvement. Christian initiation had to contain such an element to give it sacramental viability. Dix clearly believed that the tripartite initiation procedures that he described were the practice of the Church in the early centuries, and those were the times of which he wrote. His view may seem to be justified in some words included in the Joint Liturgical Group report entitled *Initiation and Eucharist*. Its authors wrote:

In traditional terms, the total rite of Christian initiation might be described as baptism, confirmation, and first communion.<sup>185</sup>

Other authors considered that confirmation became a divorced sacrament quite early in the life of the Church, and was so for a number of reasons. First, as Lampe suggested, baptismal initiation needed sealing with the Spirit, a practice he saw as divorced from water immersion. Secondly, the invocation of the Spirit at a later point in life equipped the Christian in his fight for the Church and for the right preaching of the gospel. This interpretation was doubtless of some significance in the persecutions that the faithful had to suffer until the Church became legitimised under Constantine. A third view maintained that the separation of confirmation from baptism took place as a result of information contained within the forged pages of the *False Decretals*, perhaps not for any mischievous reasons but from an ignorance of their history. It is also possible that the bishops of the Church may have wished to retain to themselves total control over all processes associated

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<sup>185</sup> Neville Clarke and Ronald C D Jasper (eds), *Initiation and Eucharist: Essays on their Structure*, (London: SPCK, 1972), 13.

with Church membership and reception of the Eucharist, and thereby confirmation become a separate, episcopally ordered sacrament.

Was Dix justified in his decision to incorporate two additional sections into his translation of *The Apostolic Tradition*? The answer must be that he was justified because his theological and eschatological vision of the church required him to think in those terms. In this context, Cuming stated that all chapter headings in the Latin manuscript of *The Apostolic Tradition* are illegible.<sup>186</sup> Cuming also wrote that in his version the chapter headings follow those of Botte, which were, ‘closely based on the versions’.<sup>187</sup>

The early scripts of *The Apostolic Tradition* may have been divided into sections but any specific headings for these are a modern invention. Uniquely Dix determined his own arrangement for that part of the document which is concerned with Christian initiation. His considered views on this subject agreed with earlier authors, notably Mason, and found favour with later scholars, not least with Thornton. Perhaps this did give him the right to stress his understanding of the places that baptism, confirmation and first Communion played in initiation and thus determined his choice of section headings.

Unless further evidence becomes available from the post-Apostolic Church the picture is unlikely to become clearer. In the modern Church there is still much debate on this subject. Some thought has been given to an abandonment of the traditional sacraments in favour of a procedure called simply ‘Christian initiation’. As in some modern liturgies this may result in diverse Churches, even disparate provinces and dioceses, defining their own texts and practices. Such processes will do little to harmonise agreement on the nature of the sacrament. The Church needs modern-day liturgists like Dix who will, as Thornton described, ‘have a flair for stating fresh problems in an attractively independent fashion, compelling one to give close attention to what he writes’.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> G J Cuming, *Hippolytus*, 8, fn 1.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>188</sup> L S Thornton, *Confirmation*, vii.

### 3.3 The Shape of the Liturgy

#### Preamble

For Maurice Bévenot, Dix's theology and monasticism were deeply rooted in Patristic studies and of fundamental importance in the creation of *The Shape of the Liturgy*. Bévenot wrote:

It is not very often that a fertile mind, patiently and diligently cultivated by years of careful Patristic reading, watered by prayer and sensitive to the relevance of every movement of the day, has both the courage and the ability to gather into one all-embracing synthesis the sum of its findings and judgments on the theme which has engaged it all these years. Such a rare achievement might be the proud boast of Dom Gregory Dix of the Anglican Abbey of Nashdom – if he were given to boasting: his monumental work on the Mass is so many-sided, so rich in information, so suggestive in historical intuition, that ordinary mortals like ourselves are left gasping at the amount of personal work that has gone to the making of it.<sup>189</sup>

In his Introduction to the 2005 reprint of *The Shape of the Liturgy*, Simon Jones remarked that the number of subsequent analyses, written on significant anniversaries of the original year of publication, bore eloquent witness to the unparalleled impact and long-lasting influence that the work has had upon liturgical scholarship in the previous sixty years.<sup>190</sup> Yet, despite these accolades, opinions changed with the passing of time. After twenty years Keith Watkins described Dix's work as a 'permanent contribution to our understanding of Christian worship'.<sup>191</sup> Five years later Kenneth Stevenson wrote that, '[it] will go down in history as the greatest piece of liturgical writing of an Anglican this century'.<sup>192</sup> However, by the time of the sixtieth anniversary some scholars had become less convinced by the conclusions that Dix had drawn from his evidence. Nevertheless, many of these critics still accepted that Dix's *magnum opus* was, 'one of the most influential books in the field'.<sup>193</sup> Pierre-Marie Gy recognised in Dix, 'one of the leaders of a generation of young Anglican and Roman Catholic liturgists'.<sup>194</sup>

Henry Govert drew a clear distinction between liturgists who make a meticulous study of historical evidence through comparison of manuscripts, sacramentaries and rituals (ordos) to chart the course of change, and those who examine the 'why' of liturgical

<sup>189</sup> Maurice Bévenot, 'The Last Supper and its Liturgical Shape in History', *The Month*, October, 1945, 317.

<sup>190</sup> Simon Jones, Introduction to, Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, (London: Continuum, 2005), x.

<sup>191</sup> Keith Watkins, 'The Shape of the Liturgy: A Twentieth Anniversary Review', *Encounter*, 26, (1965), 75.

<sup>192</sup> Kenneth Stevenson, *Gregory Dix; Twenty-Five Years On*, 23.

<sup>193</sup> See, *inter alia*: Paul Bradshaw, 'The Homogenization of Christian Liturgy - Ancient and Modern', *Studia Liturgica*, 26, (1996), 1.

<sup>194</sup> Pierre-Marie Gy, 'Re-Visiting Dom Gregory Dix after Fifty Years', 4.

development and analyse the social, theological, cultural and political forces that are brought to bear on the processes.<sup>195</sup> He placed Josef Jungmann, author of *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, in the first category and Dix in the second. The concept that liturgical expression comes from people, rather than being imposed by the fiat of pope or emperor, is basic to the views of authors like Dix. Govert suggested that Dix, with much evidence in *The Shape of the Liturgy*, contended that western liturgy owes its great vitality – at least until the time of the Councils of Trent – to its adaptability to the conditions and needs of worshipping congregations. In Dix's words, the history of the liturgy is not the study of liturgical forms, but 'the history of people praying'. Dix wrote:

It is true that [liturgical] practice was not formed and is not maintained by theories and scientific analyses at all, but by the needs and instinct of ordinary Christians living in the most direct contact with history and under its pressures.<sup>196</sup>

In many respects Dix and Jungmann were very similar in their theological and liturgical thinking and Govert's distinction was not as clear cut as he makes it out to be. A third liturgist should, perhaps, be added to this list, namely Louis Bouyer and his definitive book on the Mass.<sup>197</sup>

## The basis of Dix's 'Shape'

Dix accepted that the early Church had in place a liturgy and associated worshipping practices long before the epistles and gospels were written.<sup>198</sup> He argued that this Eucharistic worship was not based on any scriptural writings, whether from Old Testament or New, but was founded solely on a tradition. This tradition was uniquely based on Christ's authority through his actions at the Last Supper, as later cited by Saint Paul (1 Cor 11: 23f) and, before the end of the first century, attested by the synoptic evangelists. In the Gospels Dix found not only a solemn proclamation of the Lord's death but also a familiar promise of Jesus abiding in the soul, as a friend who enters in and sups with a friend.<sup>199</sup> He observed that these assertions fulfilled all history: as the true and secret manna; the

<sup>195</sup> Henry Govert, Review of Theodor Klauser and John Halliburton, 'A Short History of the Western Liturgy. An Account and Some Reflections', *The Catholic Historical Review*, Vol 58, No 3, Oct, 1972, 467f.

<sup>196</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, xxxiii.

<sup>197</sup> Louis Bouyer, *Eucharist: Theology and Spirituality of the Eucharistic Prayer*, Tr Charles Underhill Quinn, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968).

<sup>198</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 4.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid*, 4. Dix cited Rev 3: 20 for this text.

meaning of all sacrifices; the truth of all Passovers.<sup>200</sup> But they also looked forward to the future beyond the end of time, as a mysterious, eschatological anticipation of the final judgement of God; a foretaste of the eternal Messianic banquet of heaven; a ‘tasting of the powers of the world to come’.<sup>201</sup> They foreshadowed the exultant welcome of Christ for his own at that Second Coming, for which those who had first lost their hearts to him in Galilee longed so wistfully. These echoes of eschatological longings murmured on in the Eucharistic prayers of the Church for centuries. By the time the New Testament came to be written the Eucharist already illuminated everything concerning Jesus for his disciples: his person, his Messianic office, his miracles, his death and the redemption that he brought.<sup>202</sup> It was for the fledgling Church the perfect vehicle of the gift of his Spirit; the means of eternal life and the cause of the unity of his Church. Dix argued that, while these connections did not give an exhaustive analysis of New Testament teaching about the Eucharist, and that all these references were not necessarily intended to be directly about it, in all of them the experiences of the Eucharist had at least coloured and affected their respective author’s presentations. They showed that the Church had found in the Eucharist an entire epitome of the Gospel, some decades before the gospels were written.

Dix believed that the great variety of meanings found within the Eucharistic rite of the post-Apostolic Church had important consequences for the future of the liturgy. Earlier studies had concentrated on the idea that there had been one primitive model based around a central formula of the Eucharistic Prayer, which was often the only prayer contained within the rite. Dix demonstrated that by the end of the fourth century the outline of the rite, what he later referred to as ‘the shape of the liturgy’, was, everywhere, remarkably the same, even after three centuries of independent development in geographically dispersed churches. Also, the Eucharistic Prayer had great similarities across all churches, in many places containing identical phraseology. This led him to conclude that all rites, in both their respective outlines and their Eucharistic formulae, derived originally from a single Apostolic model.<sup>203</sup>

Based on Jesus’ actions at the Last Supper, and the description offered by Saint Paul, Dix, like others before him, first identified a seven-fold shape, in which Jesus took bread, gave thanks over it, broke it, and distributed it, saying certain words; and after the

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>202</sup> In this context, Dix suggested that the stories of the feedings of the multitudes were coloured by the Eucharist.

<sup>203</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 5.

meal took the cup, gave thanks over it, and distributed it, again saying certain words. This complex whole was seen to contain the elements of a meal, the *agape*, and when these were removed, as they were in the later Church to a separate occasion, the seven-action scheme was transformed into a four-fold shape. Dix wrote:

With absolute unanimity the liturgical tradition reproduces these seven actions as four: (1) the offertory; bread and wine are ‘taken’ and placed on the table together; (2) the prayer; the president gives thanks to God over bread and wine together; (3) the fraction; the bread is broken; and (4) the communion; the bread and wine are distributed together. In that form and in that order these four actions constituted the absolutely invariable nucleus of every Eucharistic rite known to us throughout antiquity from the Euphrates to Gaul.<sup>204</sup>

## Bones of contention

Dix’s identification of this universal and invariable template of early, Western Eucharistic practice provided the starting point for his criticism of the Prayer Book liturgy of the Church of England and his criteria for addressing its reform. However, his obdurate inflexibility led to his hypothesis attracting more comment and criticism than any of his other works. Despite this disparagement some authors accepted the principle that Dix offered. Among them William Haldeman argued that, while Dix’s specific conclusions have been questioned, his approach remains influential. Many liturgical scholars remain committed to the ideal of discovering and defining one shape of worship that reflected and fostered a shared identity among Christians.<sup>205</sup> Martin Stringer opined that two analytical, liturgical traditions developed: a theoretical approach as seen in the works of William Palmer and Anton Baumstark, and a narrative approach such as that developed by Louis Duchesne.<sup>206</sup>

In an early review of *The Shape of the Liturgy*, Scott Brenner thought the title that Dix gave his work was, ‘most unfortunate’.<sup>207</sup> He suggested that, ‘The Action of the Liturgy’, or, ‘The Movement of the Liturgy’, might be more appropriate, especially when

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<sup>204</sup> Ibid, 48.

<sup>205</sup> William Scott Haldeman, *Towards Liturgies that Reconcile: Race and Ritual among African-American and European-American Protestants*, (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd, 2007), 130.

<sup>206</sup> Martin D Stringer, *A Sociological History of Christian Worship*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 2. See also: William Palmer, *Origines Liturgicae, or Antiquities of the English Ritual, and A Dissertation on Primitive Liturgies*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1832); Anton Baumstark, *Comparative Liturgy*, (London: Mowbray, 1958); L. Duchesne, *Christian Worship: Its Origin and Evolution, A Study of the Latin Liturgy up to the Time of Charlemagne*, (London: SPCK, 1904).

<sup>207</sup> Scott Brenner, ‘Review of Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*’, *Theology Today*, Vol 5, 1948, 118.



considering that the chief point of the worship of the Church is its corporate action. Brenner reminded his readers that Dix's opening words were:

Liturgy is the name given ever since the days of the apostles to the act of taking part in the solemn corporate worship of God by the priestly society of Christians (sic), who are 'the Body of Christ, the church'.<sup>208</sup>

Brenner commented on Dix's opinion on the great Prayer of Thanksgiving, the Eucharistic Prayer. Dix had established that this was, at first, strictly a series of solemn thanksgivings and, later, when its Jewish origin and rationale were forgotten, this substratum of thanksgiving was overlaid, in the West, with the Institution Narrative, and, in the East, with a separate epiclesis. Brenner argued that Dix had concentrated too much on the Eastern development while a more radical change took place in the West with the centring of the liturgical action in '*Hoc est*': while the epiclesis did not have its origins in the immediate post-Apostolic era, prayer and thanksgiving did. Brenner thought that the fact that Protestantism emerged in the West and not in the East was significant.<sup>209</sup> He criticised Dix for maintaining that there is no difference between the Roman Catholic formula of consecration through the recitation of the words '*Hoc est*' and the rationale of consecration by: Prayers, Blessings, and Giving of Thanks.<sup>210</sup> Dix had used the phrase, 'adoration, thanksgiving, petition and propitiation'.<sup>211</sup> He had referred to the rubrics in the *Book of Common Prayer* governing a second consecration, where the relevant portion of the Institution Narrative becomes what Dix referred to as, 'a magic phrase with potency of its own'.<sup>212</sup> Brenner suggested that the moment of consecration has never become so painfully pronounced in the East as in the West. He wrote:

In connection with the Eucharistic prayer Dix appears to be driven hither and yon by the winds of conflicting motives. At one moment he glorifies it as the heart of all our worship; at another, he degrades it, making it little more than an announcement directed toward the congregation. Listen to him: 'That is the whole function of the prayer, to state the meaning of the action' (p 240). ... 'From the beginning the prayer had this double function of stating a meaning which is at once an offering and a blessing, sacrifice and consecration' (p 272).<sup>213</sup>

<sup>208</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 1.

<sup>209</sup> Scott Brenner, 'Review of Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*', 120.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid, 120.

<sup>211</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 238.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid, 238.

<sup>213</sup> Scott Brenner, 'Review of Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*', 120.

Brenner rightly asked how a prayer can be a prayer if its whole function is merely to state some meaning? Concentrating on the fourth action of Dix's four-fold shape, the Communion, he wrote:

The Communion is of great importance, but it is not that for which all that went before is merely preparatory. The blessing of God in the Sacrament is not confined to the Communion – it is not primarily in the elements: it is in the whole sacramental action. For a long time this primitive point of view was lost to the Church and there ensued no end of controversy concerning the relation of the sacramental elements to the Presence, with the terms 'transubstantiation,' 'consubstantiation,' 'receptionism' flying thick and fast. Yet Dix devoted only one significant passage to the whole matter, and then only in a footnote.<sup>214</sup>

Despite his criticism, Brenner's final words were in the form of an accolade: 'Whatever its limitations, this *Summa Liturgica* is an incomparable achievement and it will remain such for a long time to come'.

Hans Lietzmann and Robert Richardson maintained that Dix could and did alter his views on some aspects of his liturgical research.<sup>215</sup> In his translation of *The Apostolic Tradition* Dix had affirmed that:

Here, from the pen of a disciple of Irenaeus – Saint Hippolytus, the anti-Pope and martyr – is what claims to be an accurate and authoritative account of the rites and organisation of the Church as the men of the later second-century had received it from the sub-Apostolic age.<sup>216</sup>

Just a handful of years later Dix admitted that he was unhappily aware of having said such things as 'Hippolytus is the first writer to present us with the complete type of the universal primitive rite of Christendom'.<sup>217</sup> Lietzmann and Richardson deemed this change in Dix as impressive, coming as it did from what they called a recognised liturgical authority. However they acknowledged that Dix's admission of this change was promoted by none other than Walter Frere, Dix's much revered mentor. Dix's conflicting views led him to set aside all hope of establishing the existence of a primitive, universal Eucharistic liturgy. Instead, he concentrated instead on the absolute unanimity with which the liturgical tradition of antiquity, 'from the Euphrates to Gaul', witnessed to a standard shape, an invariable nucleus of four actions: offertory, prayer, fraction and communion.<sup>218</sup>

<sup>214</sup> Ibid. See: Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 630, fn.

<sup>215</sup> Hans Lietzmann and Robert Douglas Richardson, *Mass and Lord's Supper: A Study in the History of the Liturgy, Volume I*, (Leiden: E J Brill, 1979), 584f.

<sup>216</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Apostolic Tradition*, x.

<sup>217</sup> Gregory Dix, 'Primitive Consecration Prayers', *Theology*, Vol 37, 1938, 264.

<sup>218</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 48.

Lietzmann and Richardson argued that, despite its wealth of material, interest and value, *The Shape of the Liturgy* should not be classed in the strict genre of the scientific study of the history of liturgy.<sup>219</sup> They accepted Dix's own view that he had made a contribution and modestly trusted that others would find in his work, 'sufficient hints to enable [them] to push the whole problem back to the later fourth-century and perhaps carry it back from there'.<sup>220</sup>

Paul Bradshaw believed that Dix effectively drove the last coffin-nail into what had earlier been the dominant theory, that all Eucharistic prayers were ultimately descended from a single Apostolic archetype.<sup>221</sup> However, that has not stopped scholars since then from trying to find some common denominator to link together all later Eucharistic texts to their presumed Apostolic and/or Jewish roots. Dix himself, as the title of his book suggests, located the commonality in the structure of the whole rite and did not pursue connections between Eucharistic prayers beyond what he saw as their shared characteristic of thanksgiving, or, more precisely, a series of thanksgivings. Others, however, have gone further in seeking to discern a standard shape or pattern beneath their apparent diversity. Bradshaw agreed with the opinions of a number of scholars who have proposed a tripartite Eucharistic prayer, usually comprising two thanksgivings and a petition, a profile that mirrors the Jewish *Birkat ha-mazon*. Others, recognising the difficulties posed by this synthesis, have based their respective understandings on a reading of the Old Testament *Todah* prayer, which consisted of remembrance and supplication (anamnesis and epiclesis).

Elsewhere Bradshaw proposed the concept that primitive Christian worship was not as uniform as has been assumed by Dix's interpretations of earliest Christian sources. He intimated that the range of worshipping practices of the early Church throughout the world was diverse or pluriform. This pluriformity extended not only to theological variations within different traditions, but to the very structure of rites and rituals. He suggested that, in spite of moves toward uniformity of rite and ritual within major ecclesiastical traditions over the centuries, the Church seemed to be returning to liturgical variety once again. This was, however, different from the inconsistencies of the first centuries. During the early days of Christianity, contact between congregations was minimal, often within local

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<sup>219</sup> Hans Lietzmann and Robert Douglas Richardson, *Mass and Lord's Supper*, 586.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, 586.

<sup>221</sup> Paul F Bradshaw, 'Introduction: The Evolution of Early Anaphoras', in Paul F Bradshaw (ed), *Essays on early Eastern Eucharistic prayers* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1997), 9.

regions. While there is evidence that the worshipping practices of one group may have influenced others, the process of liturgical cohesiveness was very selective and slow.<sup>222</sup>

Bryan Spinks accepted that *The Shape of the Liturgy*, which he described as ‘readable and witty’, comprehensively covered a vast span of liturgical history and brought together in one book findings that were scattered in obscure journals.<sup>223</sup> Spinks’s quaint use of the adjective ‘witty’ in the context of Eucharistic writing seems a little misplaced. It is true that Dix’s prose often had a sharp, clever edge to it, never more so than when castigating what he saw were over-bearing rules and regulations, but he was never less than completely serious in all matters concerning the Eucharistic worship of the Church. Amplifying these comments, Spinks wrote: ‘If *The Shape* was the standard omnibus liturgical book for the 1950s and early 1960s, subsequent scholarship has rendered it obsolete, and even misleading’.<sup>224</sup> He claimed that Dix’s arithmetic, in which an original, scripturally inspired, seven-action structure was reduced to a universal four-action shape, left much to be desired.<sup>225</sup> Spinks argued that the original shape, based on Gospel evidence, comprised no fewer than nine elements. He also took issue with Dix over the equal significance of the four actions and questioned whether there were, in fact, four actions. Spinks concluded that the four-fold shape, with four equal actions, has little factual support. He wrote:

In fact, far from there having been a seven-action shape which developed to a four-action shape, there was a nine-action shape which became reduced to one action – the taking of the bread and wine as the body and blood of Christ, together with a prayer of thanksgiving, which rehearsed the saving work of God in the Old Covenant, and the New Covenant.<sup>226</sup>

Robert Slocum wrote that Dix was concerned primarily with how liturgical practice has developed, rather than with Eucharistic theology, and therefore he never brought his insights together in a unified contention.<sup>227</sup> He argued that, if they are to be taken seriously and followed through, certain limitations of *The Shape of the Liturgy* have to be addressed; two in particular. Dix restricted himself unduly to what is only a part of the Eucharistic liturgy as it is celebrated today, though undoubtedly the climactic part. Slocum suggested

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<sup>222</sup> Paul F Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship*, 54f.

<sup>223</sup> Bryan D Spinks, ‘Mis-Shapen: Gregory Dix and the Four-Action Shape of the Liturgy’, *The Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol 4, 1990, 161.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid*, 161.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid*, 167.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid*, 173.

<sup>227</sup> Robert Boak Slocum, *A Heart for the Future: Writings on the Christian Hope*, (New York, NY: Church Publishing Inc, 2004), 103ff.

that Dix's discussion of eschatological meaning had an unduly narrow focus on one symbolic phrase, though that one is undoubtedly central. He observed that there is more to the Eucharist than the four-action sequence. He wrote:

Dix was perfectly well aware that from very early times Eucharistic liturgy began with a synaxis consisting of scripture readings, psalmody, sermon, and corporate prayer. But his inclination is to regard the synaxis and the liturgical action that follows it not only as separate liturgies that gradually fused – a historical point that scholars are still debating – but also as theologically independent even after their fusion. Thus the eschatological meaning of the rite belongs entirely to its latter half, irrespective of what we now call the liturgy of the word. I would suggest, on the contrary, that this meaning, which Dix rightly says is the meaning of Christ's advent or coming or Parousia, belongs to the whole two-part rite; more especially, it is precisely because it follows the synaxis that 'the Eucharist' (in Dix's sense) is the eschatological event that it is.<sup>228</sup>

Slocum also believed that there was more to Christian eschatology than Daniel's image of one like a Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven to the Ancient of Days, though he considers that Dix is right to stress its centrality.<sup>229</sup> He cited Geoffrey Wainwright who developed a classical study of eschatological symbolism in Christian liturgy.<sup>230</sup> Wainwright had argued that Eucharistic worship anticipated and enacted the eschatological reign of God; that is the divine purpose for human living. The kingdom of God, however conceived, is not finally established without the separation of the sheep from the goats. The eschaton begins with judgment; then, for those who have passed through this judgment, comes the banquet. Thus in the creeds, which adopt the imagery of Daniel, the Christ who comes in glory comes to judge.<sup>231</sup> Slocum believed that Dix was not unaware that judgment precedes feasting in Christianity's belief in the last things, any more than he was unaware that a Liturgy of the Word normally precedes communion in the Christian Eucharist. However, Dix did not build either of these facts into his conception of Eucharistic eschatology, and much less did he appear to see any parallel between them.<sup>232</sup>

Slocum averred that the Eucharist depended on the synaxis for its meaning. It is not performed for the anamnesis of just anyone, and Dix's four-action shape is not intelligible apart from a context that makes this explicit. The opening Liturgy of the Word functions in relation to the whole rite by identifying Jesus Christ – specifying who is being remembered, before whose Father, in whose Spirit – it is at the same time an event in

<sup>228</sup> Ibid, 103.

<sup>229</sup> Dix made this point in *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 261.

<sup>230</sup> Geoffrey Wainwright, *Eucharist and Eschatology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, (London: Epworth Press, 1978), Ch 2.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid, 58.

<sup>232</sup> Robert Slocum, *A Heart for the Future*, 104.

which those who take part in it are judged: the process of doing the synaxis is the process of rendering judgement. Slocum insisted that the agency is Christ the Word, mediated in words, made present in and as proclamation. Within this context judgment consists in being presented with that Word and welcoming it – or not.<sup>233</sup> For Slocum, a four-fold liturgical formula is not, in itself, enough. The Eucharistic synaxis must contain, and must always have contained, a ‘pattern of humiliation and exaltation, pivoting on the Paschal mystery of Christ’s death and resurrection’.<sup>234</sup> The psalms and the lessons that precede the liturgical gospel weave into these patterns the narratives of Israel and the Church. All this and a great deal more contribute to the weekly representation of the identity of Christ – what it is to be divinely human, what it means to come to God.

Francis Read reviewed the actions of the American Episcopal Church in its revision of its liturgy in its 1979 *Book of Common Prayer*. He quoted from H Boone Porter, who argued that the commonly held truism of law and worship (generally expressed as *lex orandi, lex credendi*) had been employed to alter seriously the Church’s theological stance through the revision of its Prayer Book. Porter had expressed his dissatisfaction and disappointment with what Dix had to say in *The Shape of the Liturgy*. He impugned Dix’s scholarship and discounted his contribution to liturgiology. He wrote:

I remember as a young, enthusiastic Churchman eagerly awaiting the publication of this *magnum opus*. Dom Gregory Dix was the Anglo Catholic liturgical scholar, we thought, whose erudition would make inevitable of fulfilment the longings of the liturgical movement. The result was both impressive and disappointing. Dix wrote movingly, sometimes with no relation to the facts, occasionally drawing from sources which, as far as other scholars could tell, did not exist. His principal substantive contribution was the identification of the fourfold shape of the Eucharistic action. His book met a reading public ready for solid liturgical fare. ... Dix was to be more an inspiration than a resource for liturgical renewal.<sup>235</sup>

William Tighe considered that Dix’s scholarship was, ‘near the mark but not always on it’.<sup>236</sup> Dix had argued, Tighe claimed, that the Eucharistic Prayer grew out of a solemn three-part Jewish prayer, the *Birkat ha-Mazon*, or blessing after a meal, and, in particular, out of its second paragraph of thanksgivings. He suggested that recent liturgical scholarship had sought its origin in all three paragraphs of this ancient prayer, but concluded that they did not harden into prescribed forms among the Jews until the end of

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<sup>233</sup> Ibid, 105.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid, 106.

<sup>235</sup> Read, Francis W, ‘How Episcopalians were Deceived’, *New Oxford Review*, Jul-Aug 1981.

<sup>236</sup> William J Tighe, ‘The Shape of the Liturgy: Dom Gregory Dix’s Imperfect Work Remains an Edifying Modern Classic’, *Touchstone*, November 2008.

the first Christian millennium. To be fair to Dix, he did not use the term *Birkat ha-Mazon* in *The Shape of the Liturgy*; he referred to the *Berakoth* (= blessings) at the conclusion of the *Chabûrah* supper (See: Dix and The Last Supper, below).

Tighe also criticised Dix for his assertion that in the early Church the celebrant of the Eucharist faced the congregation across the altar, a direction which, Tighe claimed, followed late nineteenth and early twentieth century, German teaching.<sup>237</sup> He further stated that the practice of facing the people has long been viewed as a primitive practice and he quoted *The Catholic Encyclopaedia* of 1913 as his source. Careful study of this document shows quite clearly, however, that the custom of praying with faces turned towards the east is probably as old as Christianity. Despite this misunderstanding, Tighe acknowledged that Dix was mistaken and allowed that the universal early Christian practice of facing east for prayer applied ... especially during the celebration of the Eucharist. Despite his minor criticisms of Dix, Tighe was generous in his conclusion. He wrote:

Despite its occasional errors and, in some respects, its ambiguous legacy – the question of whether Dix would have advocated or even approved of the changes that others later justified by his book – *The Shape of the Liturgy* remains well worth reading, and that in a leisurely and meditative manner. It is a book that can, and has, shaped souls.<sup>238</sup>

Robert Taft examined Dix's chapter '*The Sanctification of Time*' (Ch XI).<sup>239</sup> He suggested that Dix clearly saw the Divine Office, the worshipping hours of the Church, as quite separate from the Eucharist. This differentiation became more pronounced as the developing monastic movement of the fourth century brought a new emphasis on individual spirituality and personal edification. Dix wrote that Hippolytus' *The Apostolic Tradition* presented a regime of prayer, recognisably semi-monastic in character, which, represented the purely personal aspect of devotion, and stood quite apart from the corporate worship of the *ecclesia*.<sup>240</sup> Private, devotional meetings existed, such as *agape* meals, but the pre-Nicene Church's official and organised worship was contained within the Eucharistic synaxis, with its acceptance of baptismal membership only. The Eucharist was, Dix affirmed, 'a world-renouncing cultus, which deliberately and rigidly rejected the whole idea of sanctifying and expressing towards God the life of human society in

<sup>237</sup> Ibid. Dix made this claim in *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 31f.

<sup>238</sup> William J Tighe, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, loc cit.

<sup>239</sup> Robert F Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West: The Origins of the Divine Office and its Meaning for Today*, (Collegeville, MI: Liturgical Press, 1986), 331ff.

<sup>240</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 324.

general'.<sup>241</sup> The system of private prayer, which developed within monasticism, led inevitably to the introduction of services of praise into the public worship of secular Churches. The older, liturgical rites stressed the corporate action of the Church, while the new offices, though congregationally offered, were intended chiefly to express and evoke the devotion of the individual worshiper. For Dix the introduction of the Cathedral Office was a direct result of the monastic-ascetic movement. He wrote:

The monk and his imitators gave the church the divine office and the conception of the *whole* life of man as consummated in worship, instead of regarding worship as a department of life like paganism, or the contradiction of daily life, like the pre-Nicene church (Dix's emphasis).<sup>242</sup>

Such worship was, unlike the Eucharist, open to all, except that catechumens were dismissed before the final Prayers for the Faithful.<sup>243</sup> As Dix confirmed, 'the element of prayer in the secular office was never large, and the bulk of the office ... was always open to all'.<sup>244</sup> Taft disagreed with Dix's analysis. He wrote:

I trust that the historical sources already adduced suffice to show how totally wrong Dix is in almost every aspect of this interpretation. The prayer we saw, for example, in *The Apostolic Tradition* is not 'semi-monastic' but in direct continuity with a tradition of daily Christian private prayer that goes back to the beginnings of the Church. All later development is simply an expansion and formalizing of this earlier tradition. What happened in the fourth century was but one more step in the process. The monks prayed at the same hours as in the earlier system. If they were cenobites they did this in common because *koinobion* means common life: they did *everything* together. And when the secular Churches came above ground they developed some of the private prayer times into public services because to 'assemble' was what it meant to be 'Church' (Taft's emphasis).<sup>245</sup>

Hippolytus had expected Christians to join in prayer and study within a secular building, on week-day mornings, as a possible substitute for Eucharistic attendance.<sup>246</sup> However, Dix explained that, while this rule was meant to apply to 'clergy and laity, married or single, without exception', few of the humble slaves, freedmen and artisans who made up the great bulk of the third century Church possessed books or could read them if they had them. Most Christians, with masters to serve and livings to earn, could not attend the daily worship or give themselves to a complete life of prayer. Taft quoted from the *Apostolic*

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<sup>241</sup> Ibid, 326.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid, 332.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid, 331.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid, 331.

<sup>245</sup> Robert F Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West*, 332.

<sup>246</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Apostolic Tradition*, xxxvi.



*Constitutions* to show that there was no basis for distinguishing indiscriminately between Eucharistic worship, which is the corporate action of the Church, and monastically developed offices of prayer and devotion. He continued:

In the first place, moves in the direction of non-Eucharistic morning and evening assemblies are seen well before the post-Nicene, Constantinian era. Furthermore, to look upon the pre-Nicene *agape* and other non-Eucharistic Christian assemblies as ‘private’ is to introduce anachronistic categories and distinctions that find no support whatever in the sources of this early period. The same can be said for the notion that the new offices were ‘inclusive’ whereas the Eucharist was ‘exclusive’. Catechumens and others were dismissed from fourth-century cathedral offices in exactly the same way and for exactly the same reason and at exactly the same point in the prayers as they were at the Liturgy of the Word.<sup>247</sup>

Wendy Porter expressed some concern about Dix’s understanding of the implication of music within his reconstruction of the Eucharistic synaxis.<sup>248</sup> Dix had written that the basic structure of the liturgy was, ‘simply a continuation of the jewish (sic) synagogue service of our Lord’s time, which was carried straight over into the christian (sic) church by its jewish (sic) nucleus in the decade after the passion’.<sup>249</sup> Dix later referred to its ‘original unchanging outline’ as it was found ‘everywhere’.<sup>250</sup> Porter claimed that:

recent study from musicological, liturgical and Jewish historical perspectives has not only called into question the thought that the early Church simply took over the music of the synagogue, but also raises questions about whether there was an established synagogue liturgy existing in such a precise form before the destruction of the Temple in AD70. This research has cast some doubt, for instance, on whether there was established and formal psalmody in the synagogue at this point. There seems to be no documentary evidence for believing that psalmody existed in any kind of structured form in the synagogue that Jesus would have known. This does not mean that the early Christian Church in no way carried on Jewish patterns of singing psalmody as it was practised in the Temple, but it does leave the much larger question of what is meant by the statement that the music of the early Church was taken over from the synagogue.<sup>251</sup>

There has clearly been much censure of Dix’s major publication and it seems likely, as continuing research uncovers more evidence of the worshipping history of the Church, that that criticism will continue, notwithstanding the overall importance of the work.

<sup>247</sup> Robert F Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West*, 333.

<sup>248</sup> Wendy J Porter, ‘Sacred Music at the Turn of the Millennium’, in Stanley E Porter *et al*, (eds), *Faith in the Millennium*, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 426f.

<sup>249</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 36.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid*, 38.

<sup>251</sup> Wendy J Porter, ‘Sacred Music at the Turn of the Millennium’, 427.

## Dix and the Last Supper

### Preamble

As I have explained, Dix was not generally interested in Biblical evidence, being more concerned for Patristic writings, which, in many cases, pre-dated the New Testament canon. However, it is important to consider how opponents to Dix's hypothesis on the Last Supper used scriptural testimony to discuss their respective arguments.

Early in *The Shape of the Liturgy*, Dix made it clear that he did not believe that the Last Supper was a Passover meal.<sup>252</sup> The chronology surrounding this event has always been in doubt because the accounts offered by the synoptic authors disagree fundamentally with that in the fourth gospel. These former writers put the event on the eve of the Passover (Nisan 14), while Saint John sets it one day before this. In John's version Jesus met his sacrificial death at the same time as the Passover lambs were being slaughtered. While accepting that there is a scriptural incongruity, Dix made it clear that he believed John's account to be correct.<sup>253</sup> Dix maintained that, if it was not a Passover meal, then it was a Jewish religious meal of some sort. With no reference to other types of formal meals, he stated that it conformed best to a *Chabûrah*. It is interesting to explore the thinking that drew him to that conclusion and the fact that, unusually, he employed Biblical sources. Apart from the *Chabûrah*, Dix could have considered that the Last Supper was: a *Kiddûsh*, a common, Jewish evening meal; a *Todah*, a thanksgiving meal; the Passover *Seder* or, possibly, a unique meal, designed by Christ for his particular (Eucharistic?) purpose.

E C Ratcliff argued that Dix overworked the *Chabûrah* theory which, Ratcliff suggested, was a scheme popularised by W O E Oesterley.<sup>254</sup> Ratcliff accepted that there was a certain analogy between the Lord with his disciples and a *Chabûrah*; but that they constituted a formal *Chabûrah*, pledged to all the usages of such associations, is less likely in the light of Mk 7: 2-13 and Mt 23: 23. He added:

The Lord created his own fellowship; and general Jewish usage, as later codified in such a tractate as *Berakoth*, is enough to account for the procedure at the Last Supper and at the primitive Eucharist, as we learn of these from Saint Paul. The case for the accuracy of Saint Paul's account of the Supper is persuasively stated by Dom Gregory Dix. He is equally persuasive in his argument that the point of the

<sup>252</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 50.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid, 50. Dix qualified this assertion by quoting the work of W O E Oesterley, who argued that John's account was corroborated by Paul and the second century Church. Dix admitted that more recent scholarship, particularly from Germany, left the question unsettled.

<sup>254</sup> E C Ratcliff, Review of Gregory Dix, 'The Shape of the Liturgy', *Theology*, Vol 48, 1948, 128.

Lord's command lay, not in *Touto poieite* (for [Jesus] knew that customary Jewish procedure would be observed whenever his followers met at table), but in the phrase *eis ton emin anamnesin*, which imparted a new meaning to the old pattern.<sup>255</sup>

William Maxwell suggested that the Last Supper was a *Kiddûsh* meal.<sup>256</sup> The *Kiddûsh* (or *Quiddush*) comprised a simple, weekly repast; a meal that was shared by small groups of Jews, very often a Rabbi and his disciples. It usually took place on the eve of the Sabbath or a religious festival and consisted of an unpretentious refectation of bread, and wine mixed with water. This common cup was passed from one member to another and prayer was offered. Maxwell opined that Jesus and his disciples would have been accustomed to partake of this fellowship meal, on the eve of every Sabbath. With other scholars, Maxwell believed that the Last Supper could not have taken place on the night on which Jesus was betrayed (1 Cor 11: 23). Had it been, then it was against the law for the trial and execution to be held on the Sabbath. This argument holds little water because it was equally unlawful for the Chief Priests and the Council to meet during the hours of darkness and for a guilty verdict to be obtained from a confession without corroborative evidence, yet the various trial narratives confirm these blatant illegalities (Mt 26: 62-66 and pars).<sup>257</sup> Maxwell considered that the Last Supper was significantly different in character and content from a Passover meal. The most important ingredient in a Passover was and is the sacrificial lamb. Edward Symonds agreed with Maxwell that the Last Supper was a *Kiddûsh*.<sup>258</sup> Elimelech Hai-Levi wrote that the modern, Jewish Passover meal did not become fully developed into its ritualised structure of fifteen steps until about the third century.<sup>259</sup> However, a first century meal would certainly have included: roasted lamb, unleavened bread and bitter herbs (Ex 12: 8). Although the Lord, through Moses, did not decree it, wine would almost certainly have been consumed. Since none of the scriptural texts mention lamb, unleavened bread or bitter herbs, it seems unlikely that the Last Supper was a Passover *Seder*, all of which may have helped to confirm Dix's assertion.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid, 128. The definitive discussion of this is in: Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, (London: SCM, 1970).

<sup>256</sup> William Maxwell, *An Outline of Christian Worship: Its Development and Forms*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936), 5f.

<sup>257</sup> These irregularities are comprehensively analysed in: Steven W Allen, *The Illegal Trial of Christ*, (Phoenix, AZ: Legal Awareness Series, LLC, 2005).

<sup>258</sup> H Edward Symonds, 'Priesthood in the New Testament', in Box, Hubert S (ed), *Priesthood*, (London: SPCK, 1937), 40.

<sup>259</sup> Elimelech David Hai-Levi, *Jewish Passover Seder*, Ref: <http://the-jewish-passover.tripod.com/seder.html> (Accessed 16/02/10).

Hai-Levi believed that there were Passover connotations in John the Baptist's words, 'Behold the Lamb of God' (Jn 1: 29, 36).<sup>260</sup> Similarly, it can be argued that the bread and wine that Jesus offered were part of the *Seder* and that he was the Passover lamb. Where the Passover lamb represents the Jewish first-born sons being saved from physical death (Ex 12: 23) Jesus was the sacrificial lamb whose death and resurrection betokened salvation and liberation from sin. There are other, more tenuous links to bitter herbs in the passion narratives. On the cross Jesus was offered wine mingled with myrrh (Mk 15: 23) and at his burial Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh mixed with aloes (Jn 19: 39). Maxwell also made the point that the Passover meal was always a family affair.<sup>261</sup> Jesus seems to have had no close family in Jerusalem at that time, although his mother was obviously there, as she and other women observed the crucifixion (Jn 19: 25). It is possible that the disciple John had family connections in the city; the High Priest certainly knew him (Jn 18: 15). If that was the case, would John have not been with his own family, keeping the Passover, rather than with Jesus' group?

By contrast, the *Kiddûsh* was always observed by a group of male friends who did not necessarily have family links. While unleavened bread was required for the Passover meal, the passion narratives make no mention of this type of bread being in use at the Last Supper. In the Passover *Seder* four cups of wine were consumed; each cup is used at a particular part of the ceremonial.<sup>262</sup> In the *Kiddûsh* meal only one cup of wine was consumed. While eating the unleavened bread at a *Seder*, the participants recall and retell the story of the release from slavery in Egypt; there is no scriptural evidence that this took place at the Last Supper. Maxwell made a further connection to develop his contention that the Last Supper was a *Kiddûsh* meal. He argued that, from the earliest times, the Lord's Supper (as it was probably then known) was frequently celebrated, possibly every Lord's Day. If the Apostles had thought that the Last Supper was a revised version of the Passover *Seder*, then, presumably, they would have continued with an annual observance. Rather erroneously, Maxwell offered his view that at a *Kiddûsh* meal water was mixed

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<sup>260</sup> Ibid.

<sup>261</sup> William Maxwell, *An Outline of Christian Worship: Its Development and Forms*, 6.

<sup>262</sup> Various sources give different reasons for the use of four cups. They may represent the four expressions of delivery promised by God to Moses – 'I will free you', 'I will deliver you from slavery', 'I will redeem you with an outstretched arm', and 'I will take you as my people' (Ex 6: 6-7). The Portuguese scholar, Isaac ben Judah Abrabanel (1437-1508) linked the four cups to the four redemptions of the ancient Jews: God's choosing of Abraham, the Exodus from Egypt, the survival during the Babylonian exile and a fourth, unspecified, that will happen at the end of time. Yehuda Loew of Prague, also known as the 'Maharal' (1525-1609), connected the four cups with four early Jewish matriarchs, Sarah, Rebekah, Leah and Rachel. The Rabbi Vilna Gaon (1720-1797) linked the four cups to four worlds: this world, the Messianic age, the world of the resurrection of the dead, and the final world to come.

with wine, although he does not state that this practice did not take place at a *Seder*. A number of scholars have suggested that Jesus used a mixed cup at the Last Supper, although there is no scriptural evidence to substantiate this theory.<sup>263</sup> W K Lowther Clarke was equally clear that the Last Supper was not a Passover *Seder*. He added an extra detail that the Greek word used in the meal narrative is *arton*, which translates as bread; not *azuma*, which means unleavened bread.<sup>264</sup>

Some scholars, no doubt accepting the words of Jesus that he wished to hold a Passover meal with his disciples, argue that the Last Supper was a Passover *Seder*.<sup>265</sup> Aidan Kavanagh contended that Jesus did not bid farewell to his friends at an ordinary meal to which some extra liturgical elements had been added.<sup>266</sup> He believed that Christ used the traditional Passover *Seder* to give concrete form to the new covenant that he had come to establish. Kavanagh maintained that the Christian Church came into existence within that liturgical event of some friends meeting round a table in a formal, Jewish environment.<sup>267</sup>

Tim Gray explained that there must be some reason why the Passover, an annual event for Jews, became, over a relatively short period of time, the Holy Eucharist, celebrated weekly, or even daily.<sup>268</sup> He suggested that the answer is in the ancient Israelite sacrifice, the *Todah*. This was one of the most important sacrifices for the Jews. The *Pesiqta* (a collection of *Aggadic Midrash*, containing Pentateuchal lessons for special Sabbaths) states that, ‘In the coming Messianic age all sacrifices will cease, but the thank offering [*Todah*] will never cease’.<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>263</sup> The tradition of mixing water into the chalice at the Eucharist may stem from the report of the soldier who pierced Christ’s side with a spear after his crucifixion. Saint John reported that, ‘at once blood and water came out’ (Jn 19: 34). The ritual of ad-mixing is very early and was mentioned as necessary by Justin Martyr. The Council of Trent determined that water should never be omitted from the chalice and went so far as to excommunicate any who denied the practice (Session XXII, Canon 9).

<sup>264</sup> W K Lowther Clarke, *Liturgy and Worship*, (London: SPCK, 1950), 85.

<sup>265</sup> Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, ‘Go and prepare the Passover meal for us that we may eat it,’ (Lk 22: 8). In Matthew and Mark the suggestion for the meal comes from the disciples (Mt 26: 17 and Mk 14: 12).

<sup>266</sup> Aidan Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology: Hale Memorial Lectures of Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, 1981*, (Liturgical Press, 1992), 97.

<sup>267</sup> In offering this view, Kavanagh seems to be amplifying Dix’s belief that the Eucharistic praxis that followed from the Last Supper was at the very heart of the Christian church.

<sup>268</sup> Tim Gray, ‘From Jewish Passover to Christian Eucharist: The *Todah* Sacrifice as Backdrop for the Last Supper’, in Scott Hahn and Regis J Flaherty (eds), *Catholic for a Reason III: Scripture and the Mystery of the Mass*, (Emmaus Road Publishing, 2004), 68.

<sup>269</sup> Quoted in: Hartmut Gese, *Essays On Biblical Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1981), 133.

Stephen Pimentel, reviewing the work of Hartmut Gese, wrote that the *Todah* offering was an important subcategory of the Jewish peace offering (Lev 7: 13-15).<sup>270</sup> The synoptic gospels clearly affirm that the Last Supper took place during a celebration of Passover. Pimentel argued that Christ reconfigured the Passover meal around his own self-sacrifice in a manner that more perfectly expressed the nature of the *Todah*. The Jewish *Todah* was a peace offering, not a sin offering, thus it did not include any element of atonement. Yet, the all-sufficient atonement of Christ's death for all mankind seems always to have been an integral part of Eucharistic worship. Pimentel accepted that few scriptural scholars had accepted Gese's theory of the *Todah* being the basis of the Last Supper. However, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (later Pope Benedict XVI) was clearly in favour of Gese's argument. He wrote:

The close connection made, in the New Testament tradition, between the *Todah* psalms and Christology, the structural unity between these psalms and the content of the Eucharist – these things are so obvious that, on the basis of the New Testament texts, they cannot be disputed.<sup>271</sup>

Tim Gray opined that:

The importance of the *Todah* as a backdrop for Jesus and the Last Supper comes into sharp focus when we realize that in Jesus' day the Greek word that would best translate the Hebrew *Todah* was *eucharistia*, which also means thanksgiving.<sup>272</sup>

Gray agreed that there was a distinct connection between the *Todah* of ancient Israel and the thank-offering of the Greek Eucharist, but pointed out other links that rely on the Psalms for evidence. There is an incongruity in Gray's assertions. The Last Supper was not, *per se*, a thanksgiving meal. Christ was still alive and there must have been an opposite sense of foreboding in the company in anticipation of the events of the morrow.<sup>273</sup> Elements of thanksgiving associated with the Eucharist came from post-Resurrection rejoicings.

Both Matthew and Mark mention that the disciples sang the Passover hymn after they left the supper and before moving to the Mount of Olives (Mt 26: 30 and Mk 14: 26). Many scholars have referred to the Hallel, comprising Psalms 113-118, which were

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<sup>270</sup> Stephen Pimentel, *The Todah Sacrifice as Pattern for the Eucharist*, Ref: <http://stephenpimentel.tripod.com/papers/eucharist1.html> (Accessed 19/02/10).

<sup>271</sup> Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *The Feast of Faith: Approaches to a Theology of the Liturgy* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1986), 60.

<sup>272</sup> Tim Gray, 'From Jewish Passover to Christian Eucharist', 73.

<sup>273</sup> Even if the disciples had little understanding of what was to happen during the following day, Jesus certainly knew.

believed to have been sung in ancient Egypt (they are sometimes called the Egyptian Hallel). Scott Hahn wrote that the *Todah* included the singing of Psalm 69, which begins with the words, ‘Save me, O God,’ and is a prayer for deliverance from persecution.<sup>274</sup> Such sentiments would have agreed with the mind of Jesus as he moved to the Garden of Gethsemane for his prayer to his Father ‘if it is possible, let this cup pass from me’ (Mt 26: 39). Hahn added further evidence. A classic example of a *Todah* psalm is Psalm 22, quoted by Jesus as he hung, dying on the cross (according to Mt 27: 46; Mk 15: 34).

In contrast to this argument, Anthony Wachs believed that Eucharistic worship developed out of several Jewish ritualistic ceremonies. He mentioned: the *Chabûrah*, The *Berakoth*, The *Todah* and The Passover *Seder*.<sup>275</sup> Mike Aquilina accepted that the *Chabûrah*, *Berakoth* and *Todah* were all important elements in Jesus’ life.<sup>276</sup> If the Johannine dating of events is to be believed, then the Last Supper could not have been a Passover *Seder*. Also, the complex conventions of a *Seder* are nowhere reported in scripture, so it seems unlikely that this was the meal held in the upper room on the eve of crucifixion. However, the *Chabûrah* meal was normally held on the eve of Sabbaths or holy days, and the night of the Last Supper may not have been one such. Andrew McGowan wrote that Dix made the assumption that the significance of the Eucharistic meals that he identified and discussed was to be found largely in the alleged type of meal from which any later example is said to proceed.<sup>277</sup> Dix employed a generic approach in which the formal issues of shape and order, which were more of interest to him as an historian and scholar, took the place of the problematic question of the actions or intentions of the historical Jesus or of the role of the successors to the Apostles. He found his Jewish model for the Eucharist in the *Chabûrah*. Chapter six of the Tractate *Berakoth* of the Babylonian Talmud contains details of this meal. Hebrew scholar Jonathan Went was concerned that by discounting the Last Supper as a Passover meal the Church lost the sense of salvation and deliverance.<sup>278</sup> However, the *Chabûrah* may be seen as the first meal of a new community of faith, a fellowship meal of a few men committed to each other and this concept had serious, theological overtones. For Dix, therefore, the *Chabûrah* was a

<sup>274</sup> Scott Hahn, *The Lamb’s Supper: The Mass as Heaven on Earth*, (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1999), 32f.

<sup>275</sup> Anthony Wachs, ‘The Rhetoric of Aesthetics: The Beauty of the Traditional Roman Rite of the Mass’, MA Thesis, Kansas State University, 2001.

<sup>276</sup> Mike Aquilina, *The Mass of the Early Christians*, (Fort Wayne, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing, 2001), 29.

<sup>277</sup> Andrew Brian McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists: Food and Drink in Early Christian Ritual Meals*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 30.

<sup>278</sup> Jonathan Went, *Passover, Last Supper and Eucharist*, Ref: <http://www.leaderu.com/theology/passover.html> (Accessed 19/02/10).

precursor of the Eucharist and this conclusion amplified his understanding of that sacrament. His theological and soteriological vision overrode the particularities of historical and textual criticism. It can be argued that Jesus came to bring a new and final covenant between God and man. In this, all the rules and regulations concerning the old covenants would cease, and this included animal and avian sacrifice. On this pretext it would seem logical for Jesus to have celebrated a *Todah* meal with his close acquaintance, since, with the coming of Israel's anointed deliverer, 'all sacrifices will cease except the *Todah* sacrifice; this will never cease in all eternity'.<sup>279</sup> However, in *The Shape of the Liturgy*, Dix made no reference to the *Todah* meal and his only references to *Kiddûsh* were to the *Kiddûsh* cup, used in a grace before meals.<sup>280</sup>

## The Sacrifice of the Mass

Dix had a very distinct and concise understanding of the sacrifice of the Mass and he based this on the writings of the pre-Nicene, Patristic authors, particularly from the first four centuries of the Church's life. As *Homo Eucharisticus* he had a precise and unambiguous, deeply theological conception of the salvific nature of the Eucharist. Dix, as an accomplished Patristic scholar, saw the Church Universal of God comprising priesthood, sacrifice and Eucharist. Dix wrote, 'The Eucharist is ... the vital expression towards God of what the church fundamentally is, a corporate 'holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ''.<sup>281</sup>

It is clear from *The Shape of the Liturgy* that Dix's primary interests were not in Biblical evidence for he firmly believed that, in many instances, the texts of the Evangelists were dependent, if only partly, on earlier, post-Apostolic writings. He wrote:

The Eucharist had already been at the heart of the religion of Christians for twenty years before the first of these New Testament documents was written. It had trained and sanctified apostles and martyrs and scores of thousands of unknown saints for more than a century before the New Testament was collected and canonised as authoritative 'scripture', beside and above the old Jewish scriptures. Christians of the first two or three generations naturally tended to see their own worship in the light of their bible, ie of these Jewish scriptures of the Old Testament, which had formed the only bible of Jesus and the apostolic church, for

<sup>279</sup> *Pesiqta*, I, 159. Quoted in: Scott Hahn, *The Lamb's Supper*, 33.

<sup>280</sup> Gregory Dix, *Shape of the Liturgy*, 54 and 88f

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid*, 2. Dix added a footnote in which he explained that in the early church the laity was an 'order', no less than the 'holy orders' of the clergy.



which the altar of sacrifice on Mt Moriah was the centre of all human life, the link between the world and God.<sup>282</sup>

Dix wrote little about the various disputes and debates that surrounded Eucharistic doctrine and the Church's teaching on the subject, in the Middle Ages.<sup>283</sup> In *The Shape of the Liturgy* he commented on and criticised the writings of a number of Protestant Reformers of the sixteenth century, particularly Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556).<sup>284</sup> He made only two oblique references to the Council of Trent.<sup>285</sup> Dix had little to say about the controversies that surrounded the subject of the Real Presence and only made passing allusions to it in his chapter on the Protestant Reformation.<sup>286</sup> His historical and liturgical interests were centred on the Patristic writers, particularly those of the early centuries.

J N D Kelly wrote that:

the Eucharist was regarded as the distinctively Christian sacrifice from the closing decade of the first century, if not earlier. Malachi's prediction (1: 10f) that the Lord would reject the Jewish sacrifices and instead would have 'a pure offering' made to him by the Gentiles in every place was early seized upon by Christians as a prophecy of the Eucharist.<sup>287</sup>

In this standard work on early Christian theology Kelly clearly based his doctrine of the sacrifice of the Mass on the more normal Biblical sources of Christian theology, whereas Dix, unusually, had a different sense of the origins of theology and believed that, in many respects, the writings, described as post-Apostolic, often pre-dated those books that eventually appeared in the Scriptural Canon.

Dix anticipated Kelly and, in his own understanding of the sacrificial nature of the Mass, had quoted from the *Didache*. This early Church Order, written before the end of the first century, but possibly as early as AD70, made it clear that the Eucharist was a sacrifice: '... on the Lord's own day ... break bread and give thanks ... that your sacrifice

<sup>282</sup> Ibid, 3. Dix was clearly a proficient Biblical scholar and demonstrated this in his comprehensive review of a paper on the importance of some second century papyri, generally known as 'The Fifth Gospel'. See: Gregory Dix, 'Gospels in the Second Century', *Laudate*, Vol 13, No 50, 1935, 97-120. Dix had reviewed: H I Bell and T C Skeat (eds), *Fragments of an Unknown Gospel and other Early Christian Papyri*, (London: British Museum, 1935).

<sup>283</sup> Dix did write a review of a paper by Mgr H K Mann, entitled, 'Lives of the Popes in the Middle Ages'. See: *Laudate*, Vol 6, No 24, 1928.

<sup>284</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 613.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid, 275, 627. Dix had reviewed of a paper by B J Kidd, entitled, 'The Counter-Reformation 1550-1660'. See: *Laudate*, Vol 11, No 44, 1933.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid, 322, 647, 627. In a review of *The Fullness of Sacrifice* Dix made it clear that Eucharistic theology must start from the notion of 'Sacrifice' and not that of 'Presence'. He argued that sacrifice necessitates a victim, hence a presence; not Christ is present, hence there is a sacrifice. Dix had reviewed: F C N Hicks, *The Fullness of Sacrifice*, (London: Macmillan and Co, 1930).

<sup>287</sup> J N D Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1977), 196.

may be pure' [14: 1]. This section makes a direct reference to Malachi's prophecy. However, the *Didache* never directly links any part of the Eucharistic liturgy to the crucifixion. Chapters 9 and 10 of this document, which contains details of an early Anaphora, make no mention of Christ's passion, although there are eschatological overtones.<sup>288</sup> Kelly made it clear that the Eucharist had derived from the scriptural, Apostolic period, while Dix obtained his parallel evidence from the *Didache*, which was post-Apostolic. It was in recognition of the influence and importance of post-Apostolic sources that Dix went to the *Didache* for his authority on the sacrificial nature of the Mass, not to the various commentaries on the Last Supper, as portrayed in the Synoptic sources.

It is important to explore the exact nature of the idea of 'the Mass as sacrifice'. In this regard Dix clearly expressed his interest in the *Didache* and the Patristic writers of the first four centuries such as: Clement (c150-215), Irenaeus, Justin and Hippolytus, not from the Bible. From these sources he concluded that, 'the terminology, practice and general conception concerning the Eucharist had varied in no important respect between the last quarter of the first century and the first quarter of the third'.<sup>289</sup> Dix's theology was soundly based on these authors and sources, and less on the texts of the Evangelists. These latter may be considered to have a more biographical emphasis, as is evidenced by, for example, Michael White, who observed that, 'the simpler *chreiai* [pronouncement stories] in the Gospels have often been called biographical apothegms because the occasion for the saying carries some putative biographical information'.<sup>290</sup> White observed that the Gospel writers, unlike Patristic authors, were performers who honed their material to push their theological agendas. In his ambivalence towards Biblical authority Dix may have concurred with the writings of Walter Lock, who suggested that the Church, which had taken over the Old Testament from Judaism, had created the New Testament out of its own tradition. Thus the true authority behind Christian teaching is the authority of the Church rather than the Bible.<sup>291</sup>

Dix made it clear that all the earliest, liturgical traditions revealed the same general comprehension of the Eucharist as something offered to God, and that the substance of the

<sup>288</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 91.

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid*, 112.

<sup>290</sup> L Michael White, *Scripting Jesus: The Gospels in Rewrite*, (London: Harper Collins, 2010), 203.

<sup>291</sup> Walter Lock, 'The Church', in Charles Gore (ed), *Lux Mundi: A Series of Studies in the Religion of the Incarnation*, (London: John Murray, 1891), 396f. See also: Peter Hinchliff, 'The Church', in Robert Morgan (ed), *The Religion of the Incarnation: Anglican Essays in Commemoration of Lux Mundi*, (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1989), 136.

sacrifice was, in every case and in some sense, the bread and the cup.<sup>292</sup> In this context he explained that one significant feature of verse 14: 1 of the *Didache* was the inclusion of the word *θυσια*. This word, which appears nearly thirty times in the New Testament, may be translated in a variety of ways. Saint Matthew used it twice (Mt 9: 13; 12: 7) to differentiate between mercy and sacrifice, echoing Isaiah 43: 22ff. Saint Mark (Mk 9: 49; 12: 33) employed the word in a similar Old Testament context. Saint Paul (Phil 2: 17) used *θυσια* to mean an offering of faith to God; similar to a libation poured out before an earthly deity. The Epistles to the Hebrews, which includes the word *θυσια* twelve times, generally refers to it in the milieu of atonement for sin (Heb 5:1; 7: 27; 8: 3; 9: 9, 23, 26; 10: 1,5, 8, 11, 12, 26). The word *θυσια* may also be translated in the context of the slaying or killing of that which is sacrificed.

The Greek word *προσφορά* is often found in association with *θυσια*. In Heb 10: 5, for example, both words are seen, translated as ‘sacrifice and offering’. This latter word for an expiatory offering is not found in the Gospels, but it is included twice in Acts, on both occasions when referring to the offering of Temple sacrifices. Saint Paul used *προσφορά* twice (Rom 15: 16; Eph 5: 2) in the context of offering sweet-smelling savours to God. Only in the Epistle to the Hebrews is there a clear link between that which was offered and its use for sacrifice: *προσφορά* can also be used to mean a gift, something offered to God.

The words *θυσια* and *προσφορά* are conflated in New Testament thinking and they are important in an understanding of the nature of *ekklesia*. They may be interpreted as a giving of self in combination with the giving of the Church. Christ offers himself as the gift; that is the true nature of the sacrifice. Without this divine gift there is no salvation.

Dix had little to say about the Biblical significance of the words ‘offering’ and ‘sacrifice’. He explained that there was a general understanding that the Eucharist was, ‘an ‘oblation’ (*prosphora*) or ‘sacrifice’ (*thusia*)’.<sup>293</sup> Hence he did not see ‘oblation’ and ‘sacrifice’ as two separate and identifiable activities within the celebration of the Mass; indeed, they could be considered as alternate definitions of the same process – the offering was the sacrifice; there was no indication that any blood-letting was involved. In Eucharistic terms, sacrifice did not relate solely to Christ’s crucifixion but to the whole of

<sup>292</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 112.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid, 112.

his Incarnate life. In this context it is important to differentiate between Christ's sacrificial death on a cross and the processes of blood-letting. The sacrifice referred to by Dix was clearly not a blood-letting sacrifice, whereas the crucifixion, *per se*, was.

Early writers soon began to consider the Incarnation as well as the death of Christ from a soteriological perspective. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews adopted this view when he wrote that, 'Christ, [was] offered once to bear the sins of many' (Heb 9: 27). It is interesting the note that, in *The Shape of the Liturgy*, despite his radical theology, Dix avoided the use of technical words, such as: kenotic, salvific and soteriological, perhaps to make his writings more easily readable. While he only made three direct references to the saving work of Christ he had a profound, soteriological appreciation of the Eucharist.<sup>294</sup> A constant theme in the early Church was that, by participating in the Eucharistic liturgy, all become one with Christ and therefore all were already saved in Christ. Salvation was not determined by some future event; in a realised eschatology all were and are, in a real sense, already saved. Dix wrote:

The Messianic, redeeming, sacrificial significance which the whole primitive Jewish church unhesitatingly saw, first in his death, and then in his Person and whole action towards God, is the proof that this meaning was grasped by that church primarily through the Eucharist, which arose directly out of what he had said and done at the Last Supper. There, and there alone, he had explicitly attached that particular meaning to his own death and office.<sup>295</sup>

John McIntyre explained that, in this passage, Dix was echoing, almost exactly, the words of A E J Rawlinson, who wrote:

It was not the death upon Calvary *per se*, but the death upon Calvary as the Last Supper interprets it and gives the clue to its meaning, which constitutes our Lord's sacrifice. The doctrine of sacrifice (and of atonement) was not read into the Last Supper; it was read out of it.<sup>296</sup>

Dix had another view of the efficacy of the Eucharist, one that had more eschatological overtones. He quoted from Hippolytus and the Eucharistic rite of *Addai and Mari* to justify his eschatological thinking. He wrote:

<sup>294</sup> References to the saving work of Christ may be found, *inter alia*, at: Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 282, 288, 542.

<sup>295</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 77.

<sup>296</sup> John McIntyre, *Shape of Soteriology: Studies in the Doctrine of the Death of Christ*, (London: Continuum Publishing Group, 1995), 9f. See also: A E J Rawlinson, 'Corpus Christi', in G K A Bell and D Adolf Deissmann (eds), *Mysterium Christi*, (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1930), 241.

Hippolytus opens by recalling that, ‘in the last times’ ... God sent the Word ‘to be the Redeemer and the Messenger of thy plan’ or purpose ... and *Addai and Mari* ends with communion ‘for new life in the kingdom of heaven’.<sup>297</sup>

C H Dodd agreed that in the Eucharist we not only look back and remember but also look forward. He wrote, ‘We are at the moment of his coming, with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump’.<sup>298</sup> Dodd defined a difference between Jewish and Christian expectation wherein the eschaton had moved from a sphere of expectation into that of realised experience. He believed that this theory of a present eschaton was substantiated by reference to the early Church, which lived in the belief that a new age had come.<sup>299</sup> Dix added:

In the primitive conception there is but one *eschaton*, one ‘coming’, the ‘coming to the Father’ of redeemed mankind which is the realisation of the Kingdom of God. That Kingdom is realised in its fullness in the sacrifice of Christ and its acceptance – ‘his death and resurrection’ – of which the Eucharist is the *anamnesis*. ‘In him’ the redeemed enter into that Kingdom (Dix’s italics).<sup>300</sup>

In their understanding of the Eucharist, other authors did not necessarily agree wholeheartedly with Dix’s eschatological emphasis. Alexander Schmemmann, for example, pointed out that Dix, in stressing his ‘world renouncing’ theology of the primitive Church, de-emphasised the Church’s sensitivity to the Eucharist’s power to sanctify time in the present. Schmemmann wrote:

In other words the eschatology of the Eucharist is not ‘world renouncing’, not a turning away from time, but above all the affirmation of the reality, the certainty and presence of the Kingdom of Christ which is ‘within’, and which is already here within the Church, but which will be manifest in all glory only at the end of ‘this world’.<sup>301</sup>

It seems clear that Schmemmann had misread Dix, who could not be described as a world-renouncing figure: Dix’s theology was very much based on the presence of Christ in the world.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid, 263. Despite Dix’s assertion that Hippolytus opened by recalling ‘the last times’, these words do not appear in the opening sections of: *The Apostolic Tradition*, *Apostolic Constitutions*, the *Canons of Hippolytus* nor *Testamentum Domini*. This is a small example of Dix overstating his case and misquoting from his sources, a criticism often levelled against him. The *Addai and Mari* quotation can be verified.

<sup>298</sup> C H Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments: Three Lectures with an Appendix on Eschatology and History*, (London: Harper and Row, 1964), 94.

<sup>299</sup> C H Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 447.

<sup>300</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 265.

<sup>301</sup> Alexander Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, (New York: Saint Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1996), 73. Schmemmann was referring to: Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 265, 326.

From the earliest times Christians were taught that every part of their lives, their prayers and their acts of worship, should be seen as sacrificial offerings to God. Saint Paul adjured Christians in Rome to, ‘present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship’. (Rom 12: 1). The Epistle to the Hebrews entreated its readers, ‘Through him, then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God’ (Heb 13: 15f). In their disputes with Jews, Christians claimed that their sacrifices of prayer and praise were directly in fulfilment of Malachi’s prophecy that offering shall be made in every place; Jewish sacrifices were restricted to the Temple in Jerusalem. Justin Martyr confirmed this understanding in his *Dialogue with Trypho*. Justin wrote, ‘He then speaks of those Gentiles, namely us, who in every place offer sacrifices to him ... the bread of the Eucharist, and also the cup of the Eucharist, affirming both that we glorify his name’.<sup>302</sup> He further amplified this comprehension of the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist when he wrote:

... God, anticipating all the sacrifices which we offer through this name, and which Jesus the Christ enjoined us to offer ... in the Eucharist of the bread and the cup, and which are presented by Christians in all places throughout the world, bears witness that they are well-pleasing to him.<sup>303</sup>

A few decades later Irenaeus of Lyons wrote similarly:

The oblation of the Church, therefore, which the Lord gave instructions to be offered throughout all the world, is accounted with God a pure sacrifice, and is acceptable to Him; not that He stands in need of a sacrifice from us, but that he who offers is himself glorified in what he does offer, if his gift be accepted.<sup>304</sup>

Dix referred to the ‘living sacrifice’ as an un-bloody oblation.<sup>305</sup> Therein lay his insight into the separation of the Eucharist from the events of Calvary. For Dix, the Eucharist was more concerned with the event of Christ’s whole Incarnate life and Passion; less specifically with the particular process of his crucifixion alone.

Dix made it clear that, in his view, ‘It does not appear that the question as to how the Eucharist is a sacrifice was ever treated of fully and scientifically by any author in the

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<sup>302</sup> Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, Chap XLI.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid, Chap CXVII.

<sup>304</sup> Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adv haer*, Book IV, Chap 18: 1.

<sup>305</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 166.

first five centuries, and their incidental statements about it vary to some extent'.<sup>306</sup> Yet, despite this unsatisfactory summary, he added:

But an enormous preponderance of writers can be quoted both from the East and West, in all periods both before and after Nicaea down to about the year AD 1000, for the view accepted by most of them without discussion, that the Eucharist is constituted both sacrament and sacrifice by the single fact of 'consecration'. On this view the offertory is not the vital sacrificial action but its basis and pledge; the communion is not that action but its necessary consequence.<sup>307</sup>

Dix did not accept that there was, within the Eucharistic synaxis, a 'moment of consecration'; any suggestions that there was such a moment did not surface until the fourth century.<sup>308</sup> For Dix the entire Eucharist was 'consecration' and was not in any way represented by a 'moment of consecration'. It was a making sacred of all things, since all things were and are represented within the Eucharist; the Eucharist was the realising of the sacrality of all things. The whole Eucharistic action is the central consecrating act of the Church's life. However, there was contained within the Anaphora as a whole some process whereby the Eucharistic elements were transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ. This was put simply by Dix as 'the single fact of consecration'. Consecration, for Dix, was at the centre of the Christian life.

Dix's construction of a distinct view of the 'Trinitarian' nature of the Eucharist and the basic structure of the Eucharistic liturgy was found in the writings of the earliest Christian centuries. However, it was outside this time frame that the early Church developed its full understanding of a doctrine of the Holy Trinity; a doctrine which was not given final articulation until the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451). Formulated principally on the writings of the Cappadocian Fathers, this was essentially an Eastern understanding and it led to the inclusion of an epiclesis within the Eucharistic liturgy of the Eastern Church, wherein the Holy Spirit was uniquely invoked to 'consecrate' the sacred species. Dix was concerned about differences in the theology of consecration between churches of the East and West. He allowed that there had been, in the post-Nicene Church, much confusion about the roles of the Son and the Holy Spirit within the Eucharist. He wrote, 'Writers like St John Chrysostom and St Ambrose ascribe consecration now to the Son and now to the Spirit, now to the Words of Institution and now to the Invocation of the

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<sup>306</sup> Ibid, 241.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid, 299.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid, 299.

Spirit’.<sup>309</sup> The dominant Eastern theology of consecration was by the illapse of the Spirit, whereas in the West the consecrating priesthood of the Son was the overriding consideration. Dix was ambivalent about the role of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity within Eucharistic consecration because this tended to reduce the part played by the Son to one of passivity. He compared and contrasted the Eucharistic theologies of Hippolytus, Cyril of Jerusalem and Sarapion († c360) in their respective understandings of the part played by the Second Person of the Trinity. Dix used Sarapion’s opinion to substantiate his own Spiritual-Logos theology, but accepted that Hippolytus, in his own Eucharistic Prayer, also expressed a particular, Trinitarian theology. He suggested that opponents of this theological stance, even though they may have incorporated prayers of this type within their own rites, would not have used Hippolytus’ particular expressions.<sup>310</sup> Dix argued that the Eucharistic prayers of Sarapion, a century after Hippolytus, did reflect the Logos-theology of the earlier century, but that they also reflected a fourth century, explicitly anti-Arian perspective. Dix wrote:

Sarapion follows the universal tradition in making the Eucharist emphatically an action of Christ, the Word, the Second Person of the Trinity. But from end to end of Cyril’s account of the liturgy and throughout his Eucharistic teaching, Christ plays only a passive part in the Eucharist. He is simply the divine victim whose Body and Blood are ‘made’ by the action of the Holy Ghost, that the earthly church may offer him to the Father ‘in propitiation for our sins’.<sup>311</sup>

Dix added:

The older tradition was that he [Christ] is the active agent in the Eucharist, who offers the church as found ‘in him’. Though Cyril is well acquainted with the conception of the heavenly High-priesthood of Christ as a general idea, it is noticeable that he never applies this to the Eucharist.<sup>312</sup>

Dix reiterated his Spiritual-Logos theology when he wrote:

Without entering on the very remarkable topics touched on in this passage, it is at least clear that Hippolytus’ general theory is that one partakes of the ‘Body’ in order to receive of the ‘Spirit’ of Christ; and that by ‘Spirit’ in this context he means the Word of God, the Second Person of the Trinity rather than the Third. It is the energising of the heavenly and ascended Christ in his members on earth through his ‘Spirit’ thought of almost impersonally, which is ... conceived as the ‘effect’ of Holy Communion.<sup>313</sup>

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<sup>309</sup> Gregory Dix, ‘The Origins of the Epiclesis’, *Theology*, Vol 27, March, 1934, 127.

<sup>310</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 7, fn 1.

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid*, 278.

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid*, 278.

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid*, 138.



Dix suggested that further evidence to substantiate the Spiritual-Logos theology of the pre-Chalcedonian Church could be found in the writings of Athanasius, who wrote, ‘when the great prayers and supplications have been sent up the Word comes upon the bread and the cup and they become his Body’.<sup>314</sup> Some sixty years after Athanasius, Jerome spoke of bishops, who, at the Eucharist, ‘pray for the Advent of the Lord’. Dix wrote:

This introduction of a prayer for ‘the coming of the Lord’, the Son, the Second Person of the Trinity, is a straightforward conception, which only makes explicit the ideas originally involved in the reference to the Incarnation and in the Institution Narrative in earlier versions of the prayer.<sup>315</sup>

Despite attaching a great deal of weight to Hippolytus’ claim that he was setting down Eucharistic customs that were traditional in Rome in his lifetime, Dix made it clear that:

there are a number of phrases in the prayer which are distinctive of his own peculiar theology of the Trinity, and which the rest of the Roman church in his own lifetime might very well have refused to use. Yet the general form and structure of the prayer are very unlikely to have been unusual at Rome in his day.<sup>316</sup>

Did this ambivalence towards the importance of the Holy Spirit within Eucharistic theology mean that Dix’s understanding of the Mass was not wholly Trinitarian? No. Dix maintained a Trinitarian theology which saw within the Eucharist the idea of sacrifice (expressed soteriologically), with the Father and the Son, and the Church as the locus of the Spirit. Since the Eucharist is the offering of the church then this supposes a Trinitarian shape to his theology, a theology which, albeit, minimises any overt emphasis on the epiclesis as the direct work of the Spirit. Dix’s theological focus was firmly pre-Chalcedonian; it antedated Basil, Athanasius and Augustine by a number of centuries; his profoundly Trinitarian and orthodox theology was firmly rooted in Patristic spirituality. Dix made it clear that the pre-Nicene Church had identified a Spiritual Logos and he gave as an example the fundamentally different interpretation that was taken about the conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Where post-Chalcedonian theology saw Mary ‘overshadowed’ by the Holy Ghost, the pre-Nicene belief was that her conception was accomplished by the Logos, the Word, the Second Person of the Trinity. Admitting to the somewhat irrational nature of his thinking, Dix wrote:

However perverse it may seem to us, ‘the Spirit’ which came upon Mary and ‘the Power of the ‘Most High’ which overshadowed her (Luke i. 35) were unanimously

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<sup>314</sup> Dix cited: *Fragment vii as Baptizandos*, P G, 26, 1935. See: Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 168.

<sup>315</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 168.

<sup>316</sup> *Ibid*, 235.

interpreted by the second century Christian writers as meaning the Second not the Third Person of the Holy Trinity. And this interpretation, general in the pre-Nicene church, lasted on in many quarters during the fourth century.<sup>317</sup>

In a review of a work by N P Williams, Dix made clear his opinion that the members of the Holy Trinity were seen differently by the early Church before the Council of Chalcedon. He explained that all of the second century writers ascribed to the Logos those attributes that would later be assigned to the Holy Ghost, including: being the giver of life, the fount of grace and prophetic inspiration, and the effectual agent of the Incarnation. He added the rider that, scripturally founded as it was, post-Apostolic writers most carefully avoided using the word Logos for fear of it giving credence to Arianism and Ditheism.<sup>318</sup>

Dix constructed a theology of the Eucharist based on his understanding of the Mass as sacrifice. As an example of *Homo Eucharisticus* Dix was thus a profoundly theological man and his theology was intensified by his historical understanding of the early Patristic Fathers. He incorporated Eucharistic concepts in the pre-Nicene church into a theological envelope of his own construction. In order to do this he had at times to promote different ways of presenting arguments because every facet of liturgical history did not necessarily fit neatly into his framework. Dix was a very demonstrative writer, but his discipline sometimes differed from that of his contemporaries. For this, among other things, he suffered the criticisms of other, more orthodox researchers. Dix's sources were relatively narrow, being the writings of the early Fathers. *The Shape of the Liturgy* is his attempt to perceive a theology from the mosaic of evidence that he obtained from those authors and their presentations of their respective liturgical praxes.

For Dix, Christ's sacrifice began with his Incarnation, continued with his humanity and ended with his Passion; it was not concerned solely with his death at Calvary. This provided further evidence of his unique, systematic 'Logos theology' of the Eucharist. The presence of the Spirit for Dix was defined within the Logos, the Word of the fourth gospel. His Logos theology was closely identified with the need for an established three-fold priesthood, in which the chief pastor (the bishop) offered the Eucharist as sacrifice to God for the salvation of the Church, thus for Dix the notion of priesthood was fundamental. Dix, as *Homo Eucharisticus*, was a member of the priestly vocation of the Church.

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<sup>317</sup> Ibid, 276.

<sup>318</sup> Gregory Dix, 'Northern Catholicism', *Laudate*, Vol 11, No 44, 1933, 219. Dix had reviewed: N P Williams, 'The Theology of the Catholic Revival', in N P Williams and Charles Harris (eds), *Northern Catholicism: Centenary Studies in the Oxford and Parallel Movements*, (London: SPCK, 1933).

Solely from his readings of the Patristic fathers Dix established a fundamental and historically defined, soteriological and eschatological theology of the Eucharist from which emerged the importance of his Trinitarian comprehension. He acknowledged their perversity but he recognised that this theology was pre-Nicene and could only be made known within a Eucharistic context. Dix did not depend on philosophical, metaphysical or intellectual arguments – his theology can only be known and understood within the sacrificial framework of the Mass.

The principal feature of Dix's writing was his insistence that the Eucharistic praxis of the early Church was defined by the four-fold actions of taking, blessing, breaking and giving.<sup>319</sup> Although many liturgists have since suggested that he was incorrect in his assessment of the significance of the 'shape', or inaccurate in his numbering of its associated actions, Dix maintained that these were of paramount importance and outweighed the authority of Holy Scripture, especially the writings of the Synoptic Evangelists. For Dix, the word 'shape' was a theological word which was only fully realised with the action of the Eucharist. Indeed, his most significant written work, in its title, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, proclaims that very detail. This notwithstanding, Dix's sacramental theology was founded on the Eucharist in all of its content, ritual and ceremonial. If, indeed, the early Church's foundational worship consisted of a simple repetition of Dix's four actions, with no surrounding and undergirding structure, it soon accrued to itself a plenitude of prayers, sermons, readings and possibly hymns and psalms. At the very heart of the Mass is the single, unified, yet complex, sacrificial action of giving; the offering of the whole life of Christ, his Body and Blood, from his Incarnation to his Passion, to the Father, as sacrifice; the *προσφορά* and *θυσία* of which Dix wrote. Dix's four-fold, Trinitarian theology was based on this premise; the number and variety of Eucharistic actions is of secondary importance.

The Mass is indeed a sacrifice: at once a continuation of the soteriological action of Christ, celebrated across all of time and space and an eschatological expectation of the Kingdom of God.

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<sup>319</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 48.

## Dix and the Anaphora

It is important to consider the separate elements that together constitute the liturgy of the Mass, to examine Dix's understanding of these and compare them with the opinions of other authors who in some ways disagreed with him.

The Anaphora is at the very heart of the Mass; it comprises the Liturgy of the Sacrament, which normally follows on from the Liturgy of the Word. Dix spent much time explaining its various elements and the ways in which they had developed from and within early Eucharistic worship. As will be observed, many liturgists disagreed with his findings.

The Anaphora traditionally comprises: the Sursum Corda, the Preface, the Anamnesis, the Oblation, Christ's Words of Institution, the Epiclesis and a Doxological Conclusion. Some definitions include the administration of Communion to the faithful; in this context it differs from the Canon of the Mass.<sup>320</sup> Jasper and Cuming, in their book *Prayers of the Eucharist*, widened the list to include: Pre-Sanctus, Sanctus and Post-Sanctus.<sup>321</sup> This pattern is usually referred to as West Syrian, Antiochene or Syro-Antiochene.

In Old Testament and Apocryphal writings ἀναφέρω was used in the context of the offering of sacrifices (Lev 17: 5; Is 57: 6; 2 Macc 1: 18). New Testament references to Anaphora are found in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where its author wrote, 'Unlike the other high priests, he has no need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for those of the people; this he did once for all when he offered (ἀναφέρειν) himself' (Heb 7: 27) and, 'Through him, then, let us continually offer (ἀναφέρωμεν) a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name' (Heb 13: 15).

## Sursum Corda

In *The Shape of the Liturgy* Dix did not include the words Sursum Corda, but he did make five references to the phrase 'Lift up your hearts', which he claimed were of purely Christian origin. He added his view that the Versicle is more idiomatic in Greek, whereas the Response owes more to Latin.<sup>322</sup> He may have been of the opinion that the Eucharistic

<sup>320</sup> The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church offers this interpretation. See: F L Cross (ed), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), sv 'Anaphora'.

<sup>321</sup> R C D Jasper and G J Cuming, *Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed*, 3rd edition (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 6.

<sup>322</sup> Gregory Dix. *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 126.

Prayer more properly began with words from ancient rites, typically ‘*Dominus vobis cum : Et cum Spiritu tuo*’, words included as ‘The Lord be with you : And with thy Spirit’, but perhaps better translated as, ‘The Lord is here : His Spirit is with us’. The former interpretation was included in the 1549 *Book of Common Prayer* but removed in all subsequent editions. Thus the Sursum Corda originally contained a statement concerning the Real Presence and that was, in previous times, fundamental to the meaning of the Mass.<sup>323</sup>

## Preface

J H Srawley, suggested that the Preface, or introduction to the Eucharistic Prayer, was a central feature of the liturgy in both Eastern and Western Churches.<sup>324</sup> The dialogue with which the Preface is introduced is one of the oldest parts of the rite, and, furthermore, is essentially the same in all of them. It is to be found in both *The Apostolic Tradition* and in Cyprian’s *De Dominica Oratione* (c220). Josef Jungmann suggested that the Latin word *præfatio* in this context is more correctly translated as proclamation rather than preliminary.<sup>325</sup> Jardine Grisbrooke argued that, in the ancient Gallican liturgy, the word *præfatio* was used differently, as a descriptive invitation, or bidding, to a prayer.<sup>326</sup> Edward Yarnold suggested that parts of the Preface were included in Jewish table blessings.<sup>327</sup>

Dix explained that a peculiarity of the Eucharist, compared with rites for other sacraments, was the variability of the prayer content of the liturgy, depending upon the day or season.<sup>328</sup> He accepted that this was a post-Nicene innovation, whose effects have been considerable. The Eastern Church expressed this variability in a unique way. In the Byzantine rite, for example, there are two different liturgies; those of Saint Basil and of Saint John, Chrysostom.<sup>329</sup> Individual Eucharistic presidents have strict rules about the

<sup>323</sup> Dix may have been happier to have seen the following ancient words returned to the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer: ‘The Lord is here – God’s Spirit is with us’. These have been re-introduced into some modern rites, for example in the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, where the title is ‘A Eucharistic Prayer in the Wesleyan Spirit’.

<sup>324</sup> J H Srawley, ‘The Holy Communion Service’, 335.

<sup>325</sup> Josef A Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origins and Development*, Vol II, 115.

<sup>326</sup> W Jardine Grisbrooke, ‘Preface’, in J G Davies (ed), *The Westminster Dictionary of Worship*, 322.

<sup>327</sup> E J Yarnold, ‘The Liturgy of the Faithful in the Fourth and Early Fifth Centuries’, in, Cheslyn Jones *et al* (eds), *The Study of Liturgy* (Rev Ed), (London: SPCK, 1992), 231. Yarnold provided scriptural references for much of the dialogue.

<sup>328</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 527. Dix claimed that, in other sacraments, the outline of the rite and actual wording of the prayers is identical.

<sup>329</sup> The Byzantine Church also has a Lenten Liturgy of the Presanctified.

usages of these rites. There is little actual difference between them, except minor variations in the wording of the prayers recited by the celebrant. It can be argued that even this limited variability allows greater freedom than in some Western rites. In the East the whole Eucharistic Prayer, as well as other prayers said by the celebrant, varies, but the choice is always limited to one of two sets of prayers. By comparison, in the early Latin Church, especially in the Roman rite, the content of the Eucharistic Prayer never varied, with the exception of minor additions to the Preface.<sup>330</sup> It is significant to note that in the East there is no reference in the text of the prayers for the day in the liturgical calendar, although that calendar has caused the decision as to which Mass to celebrate. In the modern Western Church the liturgy contains sets of additional or alternative prayers which are specific to the day or occasion.

The Sarum Rite, the principal precursor of Cranmer's Communion Service of 1548/9, had a fixed Preface followed by the Sanctus and Benedictus, which led directly to the Canon of the Mass. This was:

It is meet and right, true and just that we should always and everywhere give thanks to thee, O holy Lord, Father Almighty, Eternal God, through Christ our Lord. Through whom angels praise thy Majesty, Principalities adore, Powers tremble. The heavens, and heavenly virtues, and blessed seraphim with united exultation praise thee. With whom we pray that we may be admitted to join our humble voices, in suppliant confession, saying ...

Cranmer severely truncated this to, 'It is very meet, right and our bounden duty that we should at all times, and in all places give thanks to thee, O Lord, holy Father, Almighty everlasting God'. However, Cranmer did add five Proper Prefaces, to be inserted after this sentence; for Christmas Day, Easter Day, Ascension Day, Pentecost and Trinity Sunday. This pattern of Proper Prefaces was maintained in the 1928 Prayer Book but, in an extension of this practice, the Scottish Prayer Book of 1929 contained no fewer than eighteen, including: The Feast of the Purification, Ash Wednesday, Passiontide, Maundy Thursday, the Feast of the Transfiguration; and for Apostles and Evangelists, Consecrations and Ordinations and the Dedication of a Church.

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<sup>330</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 530.

## Anamnesis

The Greek word anamnesis may be translated as memorial or remembrance.<sup>331</sup> Its first appearance in the New Testament is in Paul's first letter to the Christian Church in Corinth, where he gave Christ's Words of Institution, 'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me' and similarly, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me' (1 Cor 11: 24-25). Luke included a parallel passage in his gospel, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me' (Lk 22: 19). The word also appears in the Epistle to the Hebrews, 'But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sin year after year' (Heb 10: 3). Grisbrooke suggested that anamnesis is a Greek word expressing a Semitic concept.<sup>332</sup> He added that it is all but untranslatable into English. The words memorial, commemoration and remembrance all suggest that the person or deed commemorated is in the past. In fact anamnesis is an objective act, in which the person or event commemorated is actually made present and is brought into the realm of the here and now.

Dix emphasised his particular insight that the Eucharist is an action, not merely a series of words.<sup>333</sup> He accepted that this action had a particular meaning, imparted to it by Jesus, himself. Dix used the phrase, 'for the anamnesis of Me'.<sup>334</sup> He argued that the offering of the bread and cup, the priestly action of the Church, is a sacrifice because it is the anamnesis of Christ's death and resurrection. He quoted Justin Martyr, 'What Jesus Christ our Lord commanded to be done for an anamnesis of his passion, which he suffered on behalf of men whose souls have (thereby) been cleansed from all iniquity'.<sup>335</sup> Dix accepted that a lot depended on what the word anamnesis meant and how it was to be translated. He spent much time explaining the scriptural connotations of the idea of 'remembrance' and that it did not represent something that was absent and that was only mentally recollected. He wrote:

<sup>331</sup> William Arndt & F Wilbur Gingrich (eds), *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), sv 'αναμνησις'.

<sup>332</sup> W Jardine Grisbrooke, 'Anaphora', in J G Davies (ed), *The Westminster Dictionary of Worship*, (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1972), 15.

<sup>333</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 238. The notion of a 'series of words' being of fixed form was a much later addition. In the post-Apostolic Church the words said at the Eucharist were almost certainly extempore in nature, where the celebrant probably used an *aide memoire* to make sure that all necessary portions of the service were covered.

<sup>334</sup> *Ibid*, 243.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid*, 161. Dix added the word (*sup.*) after his reference to Justin. It has proved impossible to determine what this means. I have not found the words that Dix quoted in any of the common translations of Justin's works; in fact I have not found the word 'anamnesis' in any translated text from Justin. Is this, I wonder, another of Dix's 'invented' references?

But in the scriptures both of the Old and New Testaments anamnesis and the cognate verb have the sense of ‘re-calling’ or ‘representing’ before God an event in the past, so that it becomes here and now operative by its effects.<sup>336</sup>

Dix observed that early writers such as Justin and Hippolytus spoke vividly of the Eucharist being in the present. The sacrament thereby bestowed soteriological benefits on the communicants, such as redemption and immortality, which were more usually attributed directly to Christ’s sacrifice when viewed as an historical event, an event from the past. He explained that Christians have to examine what may be unfamiliar language and linguistic concepts to identify how completely they must identify the offering of the Eucharist by the Church with Christ’s sacrificial offering, not as repetition, but as representation, as anamnesis. Dix commented that in the early Roman Eucharistic Prayer, ‘[T]he whole rite ‘recalls’ or ‘represents’ before God not the Last Supper, but the sacrifice of his death and resurrection; and it makes this ‘present’ and operative by its effects in the communicants’.<sup>337</sup> This clearly contrasted with Dix’s own view that sacrifice concerned the whole of the Incarnation, not merely Christ’s death and resurrection.

Aelred Arnesen noted that none of the pre-Nicene writers put forward any theories as to what was supposed to happen within the Eucharist.<sup>338</sup> He argued that they were writing in response to challenges from Gnostics and pagans and were simply concerned to remind their readers that the Christian Eucharist was really about worship with the crucified and living Lord. The Christian concept of anamnesis coincides with the Jewish understanding of *zikkaron*, which may be translated as memorial or re-enactment. When applied to the Passover celebration, *zikkaron* refers to the fact that God’s saving deed is not only recalled but actually relived through and in the ritual meal.<sup>339</sup>

Dix added further evidence from Sarapion, who used the word ‘likeness’ to compare the bread with the Body and the wine with the Blood. After the first part of the Institution Narrative (the bread), the Prayer continued, ‘Therefore we also making the likeness of the death, have offered the bread and we beseech you through this sacrifice ...’<sup>340</sup> Dix added:

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<sup>336</sup> Ibid, 161.

<sup>337</sup> Ibid, 162.

<sup>338</sup> Aelred Arnesen, *Anamnesis*, Ref: <http://arnesen.co.uk/anam.pdf> (Accessed 03/05/10).

<sup>339</sup> In this context, it should be recognised that the Jewish Temple traditions that were amalgamated into Christian worship must be distinguished from the understanding found in Greek traditions and seen in philosophers such as Plato.

<sup>340</sup> R J S Barrett-Lennard, *The Sacramentary of Sarapion of Thmuis: A Text for Students, with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*, (Nottingham: Grove Books Ltd, 1993), 26.



the pivotal importance of the narrative of the institution in the prayers as the ground of the Eucharist's effective 're-calling' before God of the sacrifice of Christ, does not in any way obscure the fact that it is Calvary and not the Upper Room which is thus recalled.<sup>341</sup>

In this regard, he made it clear that it was Christ's body which was given supremely at Calvary. This was the body given through kenosis in the Incarnation, the body, the flesh (σάρξ) referred to in Jn 1: 14, which alone was subjected to the agony of crucifixion.

Dix used three scriptural texts to support his theory on anamnesis: Num 5: 15; 1 Kgs 17: 18 and Heb 10: 3-4.<sup>342</sup> The Greek text (LXX) of Dix's reference to Num 5: 15 does not contain the word ἀναμνησις. It does include a cognate word ἀναμνησκουσα, which means, more simply, to remind someone of something. It seems that there may have been some confusion in the minds of the translators of the LXX over the word ἀναμνησις. Dix used these texts to argue that the concept of anamnesis should be translated from the Hebrew as 'recall'.

Contained within the concept of an Institution Narrative is the requirement for an Institution Action. In the Last Supper Christ's 'anamnesis of Me' included the instruction, ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀναμνησιν (do this in remembrance of me). This instruction is clearly given twice by Paul (1 Cor 11: 24-25) and is included in some Lukan manuscripts (as an extension to Lk 22: 19). Luke only included these words in relation to the cup, and Dix suggested that they may have been added in deliberate imitation of Paul's letter.<sup>343</sup> These words of action are not included in the Matthean or Markan accounts. Dix argued that these gospels, written a generation or more after the events of the Last Supper, and during a time when the Eucharist was at the very centre of Christian life, would have had no need to incorporate them.<sup>344</sup> He supposed that Paul had included the action words in his letter for no other purpose than to report exactly what Jesus said and did at that supper; he did maintain that the tradition, which he had handed on to the Christians in Corinth, came from Christ himself (1 Cor 11: 23).

Dix also reflected on the work of the Reformers who, he argued, had perpetuated a mediaeval insistence that, since the Passion of Christ was wholly in the past, then it could only be entered into mentally, by remembering and imagining oneself into it.<sup>345</sup> For those

<sup>341</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 172.

<sup>342</sup> Ibid, 161.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid, 68.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid, 68.

<sup>345</sup> Ibid, 623.

Reformers there was no sacrifice, and the phrases ‘eat the Body’ and ‘drink the Blood’ only had figurative meanings. Communicants have communion with their Lord when they eat the bread and drink the wine because, and only because, obedience stimulates emotions and aspirations, and thus deepens a purely mental union, that they have by conscious faith. Any real Eucharistic action only takes place mentally, within the secrecy of the individual mind; there is no corporate significance. Dix concluded, ‘The external action must be done by each man for himself; the real Eucharistic action goes on separately even if simultaneously within each man’s mind.’<sup>346</sup> Yet, it is not true to say, as Dix inferred, that all Reformation teaching could be subsumed into a heading of mere memorialism. John Jewel (1522-71), who was an alumnus of Dix’s College, Merton and a strong supporter of *Ecclesia Anglicana*, wrote:

We affirm that bread and wine are holy and heavenly mysteries of the body and blood of Christ, and that by them Christ Himself, being the true bread of eternal life, is so presently given unto us as that by faith we verily receive his body and his blood.<sup>347</sup>

Richard Hooker (1554-1600), author of the eight volume work *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, defended Anglicanism from both Rome and the Puritans. He defined Eucharistic theology and experience as, ‘the real participation of Christ and of life in his body and blood by means of this sacrament’.<sup>348</sup>

Contrary to Dix’s teaching there have been and are still a number of dissenting voices on the meaning of anamnesis. Darwell Stone wrote:

The word ‘memorial’ naturally suggests, without actually necessitating, the sense of a sacrificial memorial before God; and that in the case of the institution of the Eucharist the probability of a sacrificial meaning is greatly strengthened by the use of the word ‘covenant’ just before and by the sacrificial surroundings when our Lord spoke (Matt 26: 28; Mark 14: 24).<sup>349</sup>

Stephen Bedale, after making studies of the Septuagint, confirmed that each use of the word anamnesis was exclusively a God-ward reference, although, as has been demonstrated, this may not always be obvious.<sup>350</sup> D R Jones concluded, after studying this

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<sup>346</sup> Ibid, 624.

<sup>347</sup> John Jewel, *The Apology for the Church of England*, Part II, Kindle edition, 2012. Jewel’s book was originally published in Latin as *Apologia Ecclesiae Anglicanae* in 1562. This edition was transcribed from Cassells’ 1888 edition, which used the first 1564 English translation. It is unpaginated.

<sup>348</sup> Richard Hooker, *On the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Vol II, Book V, 1597, 81.

<sup>349</sup> Darwell Stone, *A History of the Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist*, (London: Longman, Green & Co, 1909), 11.

<sup>350</sup> Stephen Bedale, ‘The Eucharist Sacrifice’, *Theology*, Vol 56 (1953).

and other sources, that, ‘the use of the word anamnesis in the LXX involves too many ambiguities to prove authority for any interpretation of New Testament passages’.<sup>351</sup> C F Evans commented that the words, *εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν* in Lk 22: 19 may be simply translated as, ‘have me in mind’.<sup>352</sup>

Arnesen opined that Dix’s theory and understanding of anamnesis was not supported by the Biblical references or the second century writers that he quoted. He observed that Dix was writing in the times of the so-called Biblical Theology Movement when there was nothing strange about constructing a whole theory on a single word which was said to have a special meaning for the biblical commentators. Arnesen believed that Dix’s advocacy of the anamnesis theory was not unconnected with his view that the Protestant Eucharist was only a personal, mental remembrance of the redeeming work of Christ.

Anamnesis has much later philosophical and theological connotations, albeit it has Biblical precedents.<sup>353</sup> It is a problematic word because it diverges from the Platonic tradition, which was different from but related to it. Anamnesis refers to a key concept in the liturgical theology and is not simply a passive process but one by which the Christian can actually enter into the Paschal mystery. Anamnesis is rooted in the Jewish, liturgical tradition, bringing the past into the present, and Dix understood this.

## Oblation

The part of the Anaphora called the Oblation concerns itself with the offering of the bread and wine. These offerings may also have included: grapes, oil, cheese and fish, and possibly other gifts from the Church members for the use of the clergy, the poor, the sick or the Church in general.<sup>354</sup> Duchesne mentioned that, in the Eastern liturgy, after the scriptural readings and the prayers for the faithful, oblations were brought to the altar, accompanied by great pomp.<sup>355</sup> The procession of the oblations constituted the most impressive ceremonial of the entire Mass. In Byzantine Churches the procession was associated with the singing of a hymn called the *Cherubikon*. This hymn symbolically

<sup>351</sup> D R Jones, ‘Anamnesis in the LXX and the Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11: 25’, *Journal of Theological Studies*, Vol 6 (1955), 183.

<sup>352</sup> C F Evans, *Luke*, (London: SCM Press, 1945), 790.

<sup>353</sup> See: Lk 22: 19; 1 Cor 11: 24-5 and Heb 10: 3.

<sup>354</sup> See: F L Cross (ed), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, sv ‘Oblations’.

<sup>355</sup> L Duchesne, *Christian Worship: Its Origin and Evolution*, 84.

incorporated the congregational members into the presence of the angels. It may be translated:

We who mystically represent the Cherubim, and who sing to the Life-Giving Trinity the thrice-holy hymn, let us now lay aside all earthly cares that we may receive the King of all, escorted invisibly by the angelic orders. Alleluia.

This text gives some indication of the importance and significance of the Oblations within the Eastern liturgy. The link made with the angelic hosts in the *Cherubikon* may account for similar words in Western rites, where, in the closing words of the Preface, and before the Sanctus, the words, ‘Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven...’ are included.

Srawley believed that Clement of Rome (late first century) saw it as an important function of Church leaders to offer the gifts of the people, and that Cyprian reproved those who attended Church without a sacrifice.<sup>356</sup> This concept of providing gifts, both of a Eucharistic nature and for the relief of the needy and the support of the clergy, underlined the Church’s thank-offering for God’s blessings in Creation and Redemption. Srawley asserted that in the prayers of the Middle Ages, many of which were said privately by the priest, there was some confusion between the gifted oblations (the offerings) and the final oblation in which the Sacrifice of the Cross was commemorated.

Dix made it clear that, in his view, there was an important distinction between the offertory and the oblation. He wrote:

The offertory is not of course the Eucharistic oblation itself, any more than the Last Supper was itself the sacrifice of Christ. It is directed to that oblation as its pledge and starting-point, just as the Last Supper looks forward to the offering on Calvary. The offering of themselves by the members of Christ could not be acceptable to God unless taken up into the offering of himself by Christ in consecration and communion.<sup>357</sup>

Dix’s reason for his distinction was clearly a theological one. He always had a mystical and devotional understanding of all aspects of Eucharistic praxis and would have seen in the oblation a ritual presentation of the Body and Blood of Christ, which was not to be confused with the offerings of bread and wine.

Dix rather muddled the waters of the oblation versus offering debate by quoting a rubric from Hippolytus that the bishop (as celebrant?), the deacons and presbyters all lay

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<sup>356</sup> J H Srawley, ‘The Holy Communion Service’, 318.

<sup>357</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 118

their hands on the oblation, before proceeding to the Eucharist dialogue.<sup>358</sup> He compared this procedure with that portrayed in the Old Testament, where, in the case of a sin-offering, the whole congregation of Israel, ‘shall lay their hands on the head of the bull before the Lord, and the bull shall be slaughtered before the Lord’ (Lev 4: 15). While accepting that nowhere else in Hippolytus is there any parallel blessings of things – a practice that Dix admitted probably had third century origins – he saw the Eucharistic oblation in some ways representing those who had made the offerings. He explained the continuation of this con-celebratory blessing, in which the presbyters joined in with their bishop, as a confirmation that the Church later saw in the offertory, a religious act with a significance all of its own. It has ceased to be merely a preliminary to the formal consecration and communion.

## Institution Narrative

The Institution Narrative, or Words of Institution, or Words of Consecration, are included in almost all Eucharistic rites in both Eastern and Western Churches. One exception is the *Holy Qurbana of Addai and Mari*, which is an ancient East Syrian rite, dating back to third century Edessa. While this rite does not contain the Institution Narrative in a recognisable way, *per se*, it has been argued that the *verba* are present euchologically in the Anaphora, integrated within the prayers of praise, thanksgiving and intercession. Daniel Costellano made it clear that the words of the Institution Narrative in the Addai and Mari rite, though dispersed within the Anaphora, contain the same essential verbal elements of the valid rite of Pope Sixtus II († 258).<sup>359</sup>

None of the Narratives in any of the Church’s rites can comprise an exact statement of Christ’s words from the Last Supper, because neither the gospel accounts of this event nor Paul’s version exactly agree. Yet it is, confusingly, a condition of membership of the Anglican Communion that churches, in their celebrations of the Holy Eucharist, minister, ‘with unfailing use of Christ’s words of institution and of the elements ordained by him’.<sup>360</sup> There has been much debate on the textual differences in the scriptural passages that give Christ’s Eucharistic words. Hence the demands of the Lambeth Quadrilateral to use his words ‘unfailingly’ have to be treated with a degree of circumspection.

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<sup>358</sup> Ibid, 125f.

<sup>359</sup> Daniel J Costellano, *Consecration in the Anaphora of Addai and Mari*, Ref: <http://www.arcaneknowledge.org/catholic/addai.htm> (Accessed 28/10/12).

<sup>360</sup> Words extracted from Clause IV of the Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1888.

Dix simplified matters by representing the various texts as a seven-action scheme.<sup>361</sup> However, variants of Luke's account yield: a seven-fold action; a ten-fold action, if the second cup is included; a different seven-fold plan if there was a single cup before the bread; or a four-fold action if there was no cup. Despite these various readings Dix claimed that, 'with absolute unanimity, the liturgical tradition reproduces these seven actions as four'.<sup>362</sup> Paul Bradshaw suggested that Dix thought that this change, from a seven-fold action to a four-fold shape, took place after Paul wrote his first epistle to the Christian Church in Corinth (thought to be c56) and before the first gospel (Mark, in c65).<sup>363</sup> Dix saw an early misunderstanding in the nature of the Eucharist when it was still integrated within a corporate meal, presumably the *agape*. In contrast Mark, followed by Matthew, showed almost no interest in any relationship between the actions involving the bread and cup, and the meal. They have no reference to, 'after supper', words found in the Pauline letter. Dix wrote that the evangelists did not state where or when in the meal the words and actions associated with the bread and wine occurred, or whether together, or at an interval.<sup>364</sup> Dix added:

No one would gather from either account that anything occurred in between. They were writing primarily for Gentile readers, to whom the details of Jewish custom would be unfamiliar and perhaps not particularly interesting. But they were also writing for Christian readers, and it rather looks as though the interrelation of Eucharist and supper to one another was no longer familiar or interesting to Christians.<sup>365</sup>

Bradshaw suggested that there is no basis for a so-called seven-fold Eucharistic pattern or that this could imply a four-fold shape, as proposed by Dix. The text in Exodus 12, which has been used by some scholars to substantiate the format of a Passover meal, did not, in the first century, have a direct connection with what took place at the Last Supper. Bradshaw believed that, even if there was an early correlation, Eucharistic praxis changed materially in subsequent centuries.

Here Bradshaw is correct in his assertion. Jesus did not, as some commentators have asserted, preside at the First Mass of the Last Supper. There was no need for him to offer any other form of himself to the disciples at that time; he was still with them in the

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<sup>361</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 48.

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid*, 48.

<sup>363</sup> Paul F Bradshaw, *Eucharistic Origins*, (London: SPCK, 2004), 12. See also: Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 101.

<sup>364</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 98.

<sup>365</sup> *Ibid*, 98.

flesh. The Last Supper was a rehearsal of words and actions that the post-Ascension, post-Pentecost Church should use in order to have its Saviour spiritually and corporeally available to its members.<sup>366</sup> Perhaps there is some evidence for this view in the future tense used by Hippolytus in his version of, ‘Take, eat; this is my body, which shall be broken for you’.<sup>367</sup> Dix accepted that this stance pointed to an early recognition of the fact that the Last Supper was not, properly speaking, a Eucharist, because the crucifixion was not then an accomplished fact.<sup>368</sup> The Church has, from the thirteenth century, made a clear distinction between its Commemoration of the Institution of the Holy Eucharist, which it does on the evening of Maundy Thursday (not to be confused with the now quite common Episcopally celebrated (or con-celebrated) Chrism Mass at midday) and the Celebration of the Eucharist on the Feast of Corpus Christi (always held on the Thursday following Trinity Sunday).

Dix saw the Institution Narrative as pivotal to the Eucharist. As I have noted, membership of the Anglican Communion requires member Churches to celebrate this Dominical sacrament, ‘with unfailing use of Christ’s words’. Referring specifically to the Eucharistic Prayer used by the Roman Church, Dix enumerates three points that mandate the singular importance of the Institution Narrative:

These three points may be said to stand out from our cursory examination of the Roman Eucharistic prayer: (1) The centrality in its construction of the narrative of the institution as the authority for what the Church does in the Eucharist. Its importance in this respect is greatly emphasised by being placed out of its historical orders after the thanksgiving for the passion. (2) What is understood to be ‘done’ in the Eucharist is *the Church’s offering and reception of the bread and the cup* identified with the Lord’s Body and Blood by the institution. This ‘doing’ of the Eucharist is our Lord’s command and a ‘priestly’ act of the Church. (3) The whole rite ‘recalls’ or ‘re-presents’ before God not the Last Supper but the sacrifice of Christ in his death and resurrection; and it makes this ‘present’ and operative by its effects in the communicants (Dix’s emphasis).<sup>369</sup>

As I have observed, Dix saw the Institution Narrative as pivotal to the Western Rite, but it seems unclear whether he saw it uniquely as the consecrating element. He wrote that it was possible to find in some Patristic writings statements attributing a consecratory force to the words themselves, particularly as they constituted a repetition of Christ’s words (as

<sup>366</sup> Or actually and physically available to them, depending on the development of doctrines such as the Real Presence, consubstantiation and transubstantiation.

<sup>367</sup> See *inter alia*, R C D Jasper and G J Cuming, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, 35. There is, of course, some ambiguity as to whether the brokenness refers to the crucifixion or future Eucharistic celebrations.

<sup>368</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 133.

<sup>369</sup> *Ibid*, 162.

far as was known). Although Dix did not say so it may be assumed that the consecratory actions were of equal importance.<sup>370</sup> As in the Liturgy of Addai and Mari, some pre-Nicene rites may have excluded the Institution Narrative; indeed Robert Taft argued that in Apostolic times it was possible that no rite contained these words.<sup>371</sup> However, once the Narrative had become established, it was inevitable that, sooner or later, it would become of central importance, if only because it did contain words purported to have been Christ's own.

## Epiclesis

The word *epiclesis* was originally used in Christian writings to mean, 'an invocation to a named individual'. Subsequently it simply implied a prayer that is specifically employed as a petition, invoking the Father to send the Holy Spirit upon the Eucharistic bread and wine to 'transform' them into the Body and Blood of the Son.<sup>372</sup> Much controversy surrounds, and has always surrounded, the theological significance of this form of petition. The concept dates from the fourth century and is thought to have originated in the *Catechetical Lectures* of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem. The Latin text of Hippolytus' *The Apostolic Tradition* contains a petition for the illapse of the Holy Spirit upon the Eucharistic elements – that the Spirit may dwell or rest upon them – not so much to consecrate them as to separate them from the mundane. It is believed that, by this process, the communicants would become Spirit filled. This is a position very similar to that taken in the Zwinglian Church in Zurich. There is some evidence that the *epiclesis* has been understood to invoke the presence of the Holy Spirit in the communicants such that they might enjoy the soteriological benefits of reception of the Eucharistic elements.

There is no scriptural evidence for an *epiclesis* in the accounts of the Last Supper. That notwithstanding, questions by the Fathers led to the emergence of the idea of a moment of consecration; that point in the Eucharist when the bread and wine become, or are converted into, the Body and Blood of Christ. Dix suggested that individual Churches and theologians settled the placement of this point in strict accordance with the particular tradition of the prayer with which they were familiar. They all placed the moment and

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<sup>370</sup> Ibid, 239. Dix quoted from John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyssa and Ambrose in this context.

<sup>371</sup> Robert F Taft, *Mass without the Consecration?* (South Holland, IL: American Catholic Press, 2001), 1.

<sup>372</sup> See: F L Cross (ed), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, sv 'Epiclesis'.



therefore the formula of consecration at the most obvious point indicated by the actual language of their prayer.<sup>373</sup> He argued that:

[the] fourth century was a period of continual liturgical revision ... we find Churches and even individual writers identifying consecration and therefore the 'formula' and the theology of consecration now with one and now with another clause of the prayers in a way which seems to us very confusing.<sup>374</sup>

Echoes of this fourth century confusion lasted for a long time. Even in modern times there persists, especially in the Byzantine, Eastern Church, a doctrine that states that the consecration cannot be completed, or effected in any part, until the Institution Narrative has been supplemented by a petition to the Holy Spirit to make, show or transform the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ.<sup>375</sup> Dix accepted that the explanation of this tradition was more historical than theological and arose from the amalgamation and fusion of two separate liturgies. Such a stance begs the question of whether consecration can be satisfactorily concluded if the Institution Narrative is excluded from the rite.

By contrast, the Western Church was less concerned about exact moments or points of consecration.<sup>376</sup> Catholic Christians were required to kneel in adoration after the Words of Institution; the earlier idea of an invocation was not included in the Canon of the Mass. Perhaps the nearest link to the Godhead in the Tridentine Mass was found in the words of the prayer *Supplices te rogamus*, translated as:

Humbly we beseech Thee, almighty God, to command that these our offerings be carried by the hands of Thy holy Angel to Thine Altar on high, in the sight of Thy divine Majesty, so that those of us who shall receive the most sacred Body ✠ and Blood ✠ of Thy Son by partaking thereof from this Altar may be filled with every grace and heavenly blessing: Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Protestant Reformation theologians debated the importance (or otherwise) and place of the epiclesis within Eucharistic worship. To take the Church of England as an example: in Cranmer's first *Book of Common Prayer* (1549) the extension to the Prayer of Consecration contains the words, 'that he may dwell in them, and they in him'. It has to be admitted that these words lack any direct invocation to the Holy Spirit, yet they carry the indication of divine interaction with the elements. This prayer also includes the words, 'and command these our prayers and supplications, by the ministry of thy holy angels, to

<sup>373</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 240.

<sup>374</sup> Ibid, 240.

<sup>375</sup> Ibid, 241.

<sup>376</sup> Dix argued that the 'essential' or 'operative section' of the prayer seems to have come in suddenly in the fourth century: See: Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 299.

be brought up into thy holy tabernacle before the sight of thy divine majesty'. These words closely parallel *Supplices te rogamus* from the Roman Mass.<sup>377</sup> Under pressure from more Protestant reformers from the continent, particularly Martin Bucer (1491-1551) and Peter Martyr Vermigli (1499-1562), Cranmer made sweeping changes in his revised Eucharistic rite of 1552. The Prayer of Consecration was seriously truncated and concluded with the words, 'Do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me'.<sup>378</sup> A rubric then followed for the administration of the sacrament. The second half of the prayer, after serious rewriting, was moved to a position after the Lord's Prayer. It now contained no evidence of an epiclesis. J Wickham Legg suggested that the extensions that Cranmer made to the words of administration in 1552, which continued in all subsequent revisions, took the place of *Quam oblationem* from the Roman rite.<sup>379</sup> These were, 'Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving'.

Alexis Doval contemplated the positioning of the epiclesis within the framework of the Anaphora.<sup>380</sup> He argued that Dix did not consider the possibility that the Institution Narrative could have followed the epiclesis rather than preceded it; as in Preface → Sanctus → epiclesis → Institution Narrative → intercessions. Geoffrey Cuming had shown that this would be expected if the *Mystagogic Catecheses* of Cyril of Jerusalem were not representative solely of the Syrian tradition, as Dix believed, but not if they had some links with the early forms in the Egyptian traditions, as he himself argued.<sup>381</sup> Doval further contended that the transition from the epiclesis to the intercessions was not as obvious as Dix suggested. Dix wrote that, 'after the completion of the spiritual sacrifice, the service without blood, we entreat God over the sacrifice of propitiation for the common peace of the Church'.<sup>382</sup> If there was no Institution Narrative, Doval argued, the opening phrases 'the completion of the spiritual sacrifice' and 'the service without blood' would have to refer to the preceding epiclesis. However, these phrases seem more aptly to

<sup>377</sup> It is important to remember that Cranmer's title for this service was, 'The Supper of the Lorde and the Holy Communion commonly called the Masse'.

<sup>378</sup> Cranmer removed the usual 'Amen' from the end of the prayer so that there would be no congregational participation or opportunity for adoration before reception of the sacrament.

<sup>379</sup> J Wickham Legg, *Some Vindications of the Book of Common Prayer appearing in Unexpected Quarters*, (London: SPCK, 1916).

<sup>380</sup> Alexis James Doval, *Cyril of Jerusalem, Mystagogue: The Authorship of the Mystagogic Catecheses*, (Washington DC: CUA Press, 2001), 156.

<sup>381</sup> G J Cuming, 'The Shape of the Anaphora', *Studia Patristica*, Vol 20, 1989, 333-45.

<sup>382</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 197.

describe an Institution Narrative. Scott Brenner further commented on Dix's interpretation of the Fraction. He wrote:

Dix observed: 'The bread was originally . . . broken simply for distribution and not for symbolic purposes, immediately after it had been blessed. . . . Though there is nothing in the record of the last supper to suggest that our Lord made any point of the broken bread representing his own Body 'broken' on the cross . . . the symbolism was bound to suggest itself'.<sup>383</sup>

Brenner considered that, from the earliest times, the Fraction established itself not only as an essential but as a dramatic act in the liturgy. He thought that the Church had wisely continued in this course to the present time, the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches making the most of it. Perhaps it is unfortunate that in a large part of the Church the symbolic significance of the fraction is partially obscured by its integration into the Eucharistic prayer as an accompanying manual act.<sup>384</sup>

Dix clearly saw the epiclesis as the invocation of the Holy Spirit, but for him, consecration was the work of the Spiritual Logos; this was the theological position taken by the Fathers. For Dix, the epiclesis was a 'modern', Eastern invention.

## Doxological conclusion

Dix suggested that, from as early as the fourth century, the Eucharistic Prayer ended with a solemn doxology.<sup>385</sup> In *The Apostolic Tradition*, as a conclusion to the epiclesis, Hippolytus referred to the words:

that we may praise and glorify you through your child Jesus Christ; through whom be glory and honour to you, to the Father and the Son, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, both now and to the ages of ages. Amen.<sup>386</sup>

Srawley wrote that the doxological ending to the Eucharistic Prayer was only an interim conclusion. It was followed by further blessings of oil, cheeses and olives (although cheese and olives were not included in the Ethiopic version).<sup>387</sup> In later writings, in the *Canons of Hippolytus* (c340), there were prayers for the blessing of oil and first-fruits, each followed by the *Gloria Patri*. It is nowhere suggested that these latter blessings compared

<sup>383</sup> Scott Brenner, 'Review of Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*', 120, Brenner quoted: Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 81.

<sup>384</sup> Scott Brenner, 'Review of Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*', 121.

<sup>385</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 105.

<sup>386</sup> Quoted in: R C D Jasper and G J Cuming, *Prayers for the Eucharist: Early and Reformed*, 35.

<sup>387</sup> J H Srawley, *The Early History of the Liturgy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1947), 71.

with the consecration of the Eucharistic elements. In the liturgy of Addai and Mari, the rite ends with:

And because of all your wonderful dispensation towards us, with open mouths and uncovered faces we give you thanks and glorify you without ceasing in your Church, which has been redeemed by the precious blood of your Christ, offering up (praise, honour, thanksgiving and adoration to your living and life-giving name, now and at all times forever and ever).<sup>388</sup>

Dix made it clear that, in his mind, there was a difference between the epiclesis, which invoked the presence of the Holy Spirit to complete the consecration of the elements, and a prayer for the benefits of the communion, for the salvific efficacy of the sacrament for the communicants. He saw the doxological ending of the various prayers as a thanksgiving for the latter.<sup>389</sup>

## Sanctus

The Sanctus (or Tersanctus) has its roots in a number of scriptural references. The first words come directly from Isaiah; ‘And one called to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory’ (Is 6: 3). There is a parallel reference in Revelation; ‘Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God the Almighty, who was and is and is to come’ (Rev 4: 8). Bradshaw reflected, quoting from research carried out by Gabriele Winkler, that the Sanctus first appeared in Syrian initiatory rites, where it formed part of the prayer (together with a form of epiclesis) for the consecration of oil and water. From that beginning it migrated to be part of the Eucharistic Prayer.<sup>390</sup> Bradshaw accepted that, in other writings, Winkler had claimed that, rather than being a late interpolation into an already pre-existing Eucharistic Prayer, it may have been a core part of that prayer.<sup>391</sup>

There is a reference to the principal words of the Sanctus in Clement’s Epistle to the Corinthians; ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Sabaoth; all creation is full of his glory’ (1 Clem 34: 6). The reference to ‘thrice holy’ is, of course, no indication that the words formed any part of early Eucharistic worship.

Dix, ever the man of prayer, made a clear theological statement and looked at the origins of Eucharistic worship in the praise of God. He made the observation that the Latin word *sanctus* and the Greek word ἅγιος do not necessarily refer to what is, in itself, good;

<sup>388</sup> R C D Jasper and G J Cuming, *Prayers for the Eucharist: Early and Reformed*, 44f.

<sup>389</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 183.

<sup>390</sup> Paul F Bradshaw, *Eucharistic Origins*, 127.

<sup>391</sup> *Ibid*, 128.

rather they represent that which belongs to God.<sup>392</sup> He believed that the Sanctus, preceded by an account of the angels' worship (Isaiah 6) could be traced back to Origen (c230) and probably had its roots even earlier in the Alexandrian use.<sup>393</sup> Dix attempted to demonstrate that the Western usage developed from the Syrian liturgy because it uniquely included the word God in 'Lord God of Sabaoth'.<sup>394</sup> All Western rites include this Syrian interpolation.

Geoffrey Cuming questioned Dix's assertion that the introduction of the Sanctus into the Anaphora was of Egyptian origin.<sup>395</sup> Dix had stated that, 'Origen provides the earliest certain evidence of the use of the Sanctus in the liturgy'.<sup>396</sup> On examination, his case rests on two references in Origen's *De Principiis*, which both quote the interpretation of the two seraphim of the Sanctus given to Origen by his Hebrew teacher. However, the first of these two references does not quote Isaiah's words at all, while the second gives them, not in their liturgical form, 'heaven and earth', but in their Biblical form, 'the whole earth', so that Origen almost certainly had Isaiah in mind, rather than the liturgy. Nor, suggested Cuming, was there anything liturgical in their context. He concluded that, despite Dix's analysis, current scholarship has converged towards a view that the Sanctus had its origins in Syria (Cappadocia). Dix had concluded that the Sanctus and its introduction were interpolated into the local liturgy of Thmuis from Alexandria where they were already used within the Eucharistic liturgy in the first half of the third century. From Alexandria its use spread to the rest of Egypt, and ultimately all over Christendom. It was thus Dix's opinion that the universal use of the Sanctus in the Anaphora had an Alexandrian origin.<sup>397</sup>

Bryan Spinks has written at length on the subject of the placement of the Sanctus within the Eucharistic Prayer.<sup>398</sup> As already premised, Dix had given his reasoning that the simplest explanation was that the inclusion of the Preface and Sanctus within the Eucharistic prayer began in the Alexandrian Church at some time before AD 230, and from there it spread, first to other Egyptian Churches, and ultimately all over Christendom.<sup>399</sup> Later Dix cautiously added:

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<sup>392</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 134f.

<sup>393</sup> Ibid, 538.

<sup>394</sup> See: Rom 9: 29 and James, 5: 4.

<sup>395</sup> Geoffrey J Cuming, 'The Anaphora of Saint Mark: A Study in Development', in Paul F Bradshaw (ed), *Essays on early Eastern Eucharistic prayers* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1997), 65f.

<sup>396</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 165.

<sup>397</sup> Ibid, 276.

<sup>398</sup> Bryan D Spinks, *The Sanctus in the Eucharistic Prayer*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002), 83ff.

<sup>399</sup> Gregory Dix, 'Primitive Consecration Prayers', 273

It begins to look as though Sarapion represents, for all its anti-Arian editing, a traditional Egyptian arrangement of the introduction to the Sanctus, which was also in the mind of Origen when he wrote this passage about the Sanctus before AD 225.<sup>400</sup>

Spinks believed that there was little justification in drawing the same conclusion as that proposed by Dix. He argued from evidence presented by Cuming and others that the *Strasbourg Papyrus* comprised a complete Eucharistic Prayer.<sup>401</sup> This gave an example of an Anaphora with the following structure: thanksgiving or blessing for creation; oblation (Malachi 1: 11); intercessions; and a concluding short doxology.

Maxwell Johnson reported that Spinks, a few years later, nuanced his position on the Sanctus by suggesting that the position adopted by Dix, and generally agreed by Georg Kretschmar and by Robert Taft, was suggestive and plausible.<sup>402</sup> Spinks claimed that:

Sarapion's petition (ie 'let the Lord Jesus speak in us and let the Holy Spirit also hymn you through us') is to be, 'interpreted more naturally as simply reflecting the indwelling of the Son and Spirit'. . . . We cannot join the heavenly worship unless Christ and the Holy Spirit make their dwelling in us.<sup>403</sup>

R M M Tuschling suggested that the key factor separating these opinions was the presence or absence of the Benedictus: in the Egyptian tradition this is absent and the Sanctus is closely linked to the following text. This had, thought Tuschling, to have represented the earliest tradition.<sup>404</sup>

E C Ratcliff hesitated to subscribe to Dix's derivation of the Jerusalem Preface and Sanctus from Alexandria for the reason which he proposed.<sup>405</sup> Dix had written:

We have seen that the Sanctus, preceded by an account of the angels worship, is to be traced at Alexandria in the works of Origen (c230) and probably goes back in the Alexandrian use to a period well before that date.<sup>406</sup>

<sup>400</sup> Ibid, 274.

<sup>401</sup> The *Strasbourg Papyrus* was probably written in the fourth or fifth century, but it may present an older text, resulting in it being one of the earliest Eucharistic Prayer known. For further details, see: Lucien Deiss, *Springtime of the Liturgy: Liturgical Texts of the First Four Centuries*, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1979), esp Chap 13, 209ff.

<sup>402</sup> Maxwell E Johnson, *Issues in Eucharistic Praying in East and West: Essays in Liturgical and Theological Analysis*, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2011), 165. See also: Georg Kretschmar, *Studien zum frühchristlichen Trinitäts theologie*, (Tübingen: Mohr, 1956); and Robert Taft, 'The Interpolation of the Sanctus into the Anaphora: When and Where? A Review of the Dossier' *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, Vol 57, 1991.

<sup>403</sup> Bryan D Spinks, 'The Integrity of the Anaphora of Sarapion of Thmuis and Liturgical Methodology', *Journal of Theological Studies*, Vol 49, 1998, 141.

<sup>404</sup> R M M Tuschling, *Angels and Orthodoxy: A Study in their Development in Syria and Palestine from the Qumran texts to Ephrem the Syrian*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 189.

<sup>405</sup> E C Ratcliff, 'Review of Gregory Dix, 'The Shape of the Liturgy'', *Theology*, Vol 48, 1948, 129.

<sup>406</sup> Gregory Dix *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 537f.

Dix had found in Cyril of Jerusalem's *Catechesis XXIII* an acceptance of Origen's interpretation of Isaiah 6: 3, according to which the Sanctus-singing seraphim covered, not their own faces, but the face of God. Ratcliff believed that there was no certainty that Cyril accepted this view, because his phrasing is restricted to that of the Septuagint. He added:

we do know, however, that at least ten years previously Origen's interpretation had been condemned by that eminent Palestinian, Eusebius of Caesarea, ... The early Syriac tradition, as represented by Aphraates, is at one with Eusebius. It is possible that the Jerusalem 'Preface and Sanctus' have a different history from that suggested by Dom Gregory Dix, and, indeed, that the 'Preface' is strictly not a preface at all.<sup>407</sup>

Ratcliff did not share Dix's hesitation in rejecting the epiclesis, or prayer for communion, as an interpolation into this Anaphora of Addai and Mari. He commented that in so isolated and conservative a Church as that of the Euphrates Valley, the Eucharistic prayer might reasonably be supposed to have retained its ancient hymnic form for a longer period than elsewhere.

## Commentary

Much research has been undertaken, over many decades, on the Anaphorae in Christian Eucharistic liturgies in both East and West. Among many liturgists, Dix attempted to return primarily to early Patristic, and, indeed, Apostolic and early Jewish, sources for his understanding of modern Eucharistic rites, although he was not averse to using scriptural evidence. That notwithstanding, more recent scholars, using a wide range of new discoveries in, for example, history, archaeology, palaeography and epigraphy, have determined that very little substantial evidence may be obtained from ancient, liturgical sources. Paul Bradshaw argued that a reconstruction of Christian worship:

is not simply a matter of joining up the dots on a sheet of otherwise plain paper, but rather of finding the dots in the first place, buried as they are among countless others of different shades and hues, and of doing so with a blindfold over one's eyes.<sup>408</sup>

He continued:

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<sup>407</sup> E C Ratcliff, 'Review of Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*', 129. See also: Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 179, fn 1.

<sup>408</sup> Paul Bradshaw, *The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship*, 20.

while we cannot hope to learn everything we would like to know about the Church's early worship, it is not impossible to say, even if only in a provisional way, a certain amount about how that worship began and developed in the first few centuries of the Christian tradition. When the dots are carefully joined, a faint picture can indeed emerge.<sup>409</sup>

It seems unlikely that trustworthy and reliable evidence of early Christian worship will ever be found, since new discoveries only seem to prove the ever increasing unreliability of previous evidence. Yet, since liturgical theory and praxis, certainly in modern times, are meant to reflect the age in which that worship takes place, there will forever be scholars who wish to update, upgrade and otherwise transform Eucharistic worship. There will always be a dichotomy between those who demand ever more relevant and up-to-date liturgies and those who still yearn for and love the Latin of the Tridentine Mass and the poetic, Tudor prose of Cranmer.

Dix claimed to understand the history of Eucharistic worship in both East and West, he attempted to present his evidence in a popular format and he explored and catalogued liturgical changes across the centuries. His objections to the Anglican worship of his time lay more in the theology it prescribed, rather than the language in which it was presented. He had seen the, albeit abortive, attempts at liturgical reform in the Prayer Book of 1928 and made great capital out of the embarrassment that ensued among the Church's hierarchy. Yet, he must have known that experiments in liturgical reform would not stop and that further revision was inevitable.

## Dix and the Protestant Reformation: A Postlude to *The Shape* Preamble

Dix admitted that he had added Chapter XVI to *The Shape of the Liturgy* (*The Reformation and the Anglican Liturgy*) only after prolonged hesitation and in deference to the advice of others.<sup>410</sup> He did not wish to give the impression that Cranmer's work was to be seen as some sort of climax and conclusion of Christian liturgical development. He saw the work of Cranmer as nothing more than a singular incident, and of no central interest to the subject as a whole. Dix was certain that a liturgical study of the development of worship from Apostolic and Patristic times was far more important than the replacement of the later

<sup>409</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>410</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 613ff. Despite his hesitation in adding this extra chapter to his book, it comprised over 120 pages (some 60,000 words)!



derived rites of Sarum, Hereford, Bangor and elsewhere. Dix added a second reason for his reticence about including this chapter. He wrote:

Ever since the sixteenth century we Anglicans have been so divided over Eucharistic doctrine, and are today so conscious of our divisions, that there is scarcely any statement that could be made about either the Eucharist or our own rite which would not seem to some of one's fellow Churchmen to call for immediate contradiction on conscientious grounds.<sup>411</sup>

In one of its passages of purple prose, with which *The Shape of the Liturgy* is well stocked, Dix added:

It is quite understandable. These things go deep behind us. Two Archbishops of Canterbury have lost their lives and a third his see in these quarrels. One king has been beheaded and another dethroned; many lesser men have suffered all manner of penalties from martyrdom downwards on one side and another. These things have left their traces, tangling and confusing our own approach to the Master in all sorts of irrelevant ways ... to spring the word 'transubstantiation' on a company without preparation in certain circles (or the names 'Tyburn' or 'Barnes' in others) is to invite a reaction which springs much more from emotion than from reason.<sup>412</sup>

Dix acknowledged that these feelings gathered most strongly around the person of Cranmer and the liturgical changes that he introduced and even if Cranmer did not precipitate these divisions, they are the direct result of his works. It is difficult for historians to be sure that they have the facts, without any of the prejudice with which those facts may have become associated. He asserted that the background to sixteenth century, liturgical controversies was not the meanings and understandings applied to isolated New Testament texts, nor yet the debates that surrounded the (almost unknown) practices of the primitive Church. He saw the principal cause as the static and unchanging nature of the mediaeval, Eucharistic liturgy, *vis-à-vis* the post-mediaeval world that had developed around it. He wrote:

it is an incident in the general post-mediaeval liturgical crisis provoked in the West by what the mediaeval liturgical practice itself had come to be, or perhaps it is truer to say, had come to mean to those who worshipped by it.<sup>413</sup>

Very much in the Dixian mode, Eamon Duffy, wrote:

Within the liturgy, birth, copulation, and death, journeying and homecoming, guilt and forgiveness, the blessing of homely things and the call to pass beyond them were all located, tested, and sanctioned. In the liturgy and in the sacramental

<sup>411</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 613.

<sup>412</sup> Ibid, 614.

<sup>413</sup> Ibid, 615.

celebrations which were its central moments, medieval people found the key to the meaning and purpose of their lives.<sup>414</sup>

The Church's liturgical praxis and its attendant ceremonies offered spectacle, religious instruction and a communal context in which lives were ordered. Ecclesiastical law, vigilantly enforced by bishop, archdeacon and parish priest ensured that the laity maintained regular and sober Church attendance at Matins, Mass and Evensong each Sunday and on Feast days. Auricular confession and reception of the Blessed Sacrament at Easter was the norm. Duffy made it clear that catechetical teaching through visual media was an essential part of the Christian life. In this context he mentioned the iconography associated with, for example, seven-sacrament, baptismal fonts, many of which are still extant in East Anglian Churches.<sup>415</sup>

I propose to analyse Dix's reaction to Thomas Cranmer, the principal architect of the Reformation in the Church of England, because Cranmer, a Church politician of the Reformation period, had at his disposal much of the same evidence that was available to Dix. In preparation for this investigation I offer a short study of three sixteenth century, European campaigners whose Eucharistic theories impacted heavily on the Protestant Reformation.

## Eucharistic theories of the Protestant Reformation

Martin Luther (1483-1546) based his conception of the Eucharist on his understanding of Holy Scripture, particularly the gospels. While often seen as polemical in his opinions on the sacraments, his Eucharistic doctrine encompassed the fundamental principles of the Protestant Reformation; *viz*, the sole sufficiency of grace; the primacy of the Word of God and justification solely by faith. Jeffrey Bingham believed that Luther had a strong conviction about the unity between the physical and the spiritual; the corporeal and the presence of God in Christ.<sup>416</sup> Luther's clear acceptance of the ecclesial interpretation of the Eucharist as exemplified by Paul and Augustine is demonstrated in this intimate relationship between sacramental signs and faith in the Word of God. In his first, extended statement of his views on the Eucharist, entitled *A treatise concerning the Blessed*

<sup>414</sup> Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, (Yale, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 11.

<sup>415</sup> *Ibid*, 65f. Duffy also made reference to church iconography in painting, carving, glass and the contents of religious commonplace collections. *Ibid*, 7; 156; 257.

<sup>416</sup> D Jeffrey Bingham, 'Eucharist and Incarnation: The Second Century and Luther', in Roch A Kereszty, *Rediscovering the Eucharist: Ecumenical Conversations*, (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2003), 134.

*Sacrament of the Holy and True Body of Christ and concerning the Brotherhoods* (1519)

Luther wrote:

Like the sacrament of Holy Baptism, the holy sacrament of the altar, or of the holy and true body of Christ, has three parts which it is necessary for us to know. The first is the sacrament, or sign, the second is the significance of this sacrament, the third is the faith required by both of these; the three parts which must be found in every sacrament. The sacrament must be external and visible, and have some material form; the significance must be internal and spiritual, within the spirit of man; faith must both of them together operative and useful.<sup>417</sup>

When the Mass ceased to be a testament responded to in faith, it became a work. This is the heart of Luther's attack on the sacrifice of the Mass that he first makes in his treatise on the *New Testament and the Mass* and amplifies in *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*. For Luther the Mass is not a good work that we offer to God, it is a gift that we receive from God.

In *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* Luther also attacked the Church's policy of only administering the sacrament in one kind, and its practice of offering the Mass for the souls of the departed on the presumption that this would lessen the time that those souls spent in Purgatory (especially when those Masses were privately financed).

Uldrych Zwingli (1484-1531), like Luther, was opposed to the way that Masses could be purchased, thereby providing wealth for an already well-endowed Church and diverting money from the needs of the poor. More important for him was the fact that, in his opinion, the Church's teaching on the Blessed Sacrament imperilled the salvation of men's souls, encouraging them to trust in something other than God. W P Stephens asserted that Zwingli drew heavily on the Epistle to the Hebrews for his Eucharistic thinking.<sup>418</sup> Zwingli believed that:

Christ, having sacrificed himself once, is to eternity a certain and valid sacrifice for the sins of all faithful, wherefrom it follows that the Mass is not a sacrifice, but is a remembrance of the sacrifice and assurance of salvation which Christ has given us.<sup>419</sup>

Using the author of Hebrews' theology of priesthood and the sacrifice of Christ he argued that the sacrament was, 'a memorial of the suffering of Christ and not a sacrifice'.<sup>420</sup> He

<sup>417</sup> Timothy F Lull and William Ritchie Russell (eds), *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings*, (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2012), unpaginated.

<sup>418</sup> W P Stephens, *Zwingli: An Introduction to his Thought*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 95.

<sup>419</sup> Quoted in: W P Stevens, *Zwingli*, 95.

<sup>420</sup> Quoted by: Alister E McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction*, (New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, 2012), 176

held that Christ's intention was clear in his saying, 'Do this in remembrance of me'; Christ did not say, 'Offer this up to me'. Where Luther referred to the sacrament as a testament, Zwingli preferred the word, memorial. He suggested that remembering or memorialising is something that worshippers do, not something that God does.

Leopold von Ranke drew one significant contrast between Luther and Zwingli. He showed that the former desired to retain everything that was not at variance with the express teaching of scripture while the latter determined to abolish everything which could not be supported by scripture.<sup>421</sup>

John Calvin (1509-64) was a second-generation reformer. Nathan Mitchell observed that the Eucharistic theology and reforms of Calvin were complex.<sup>422</sup> Like Luther, Calvin believed that the Eucharist was a real participation in Christ's Body and Blood. However, Calvin arrived at this conclusion from a different direction. His principal contention was the unconditional sovereignty of God; any sacramental theory that would limit God's absolute dominion must therefore be idolatrous. For this reason Calvin's outlines of Church and sacrament did not begin with a theology of Christ's Incarnation (with, for example, Christ as sacrament of God, or the Church as sacrament of Christ, or sacraments as actions of God-in-Christ acting through the efficacious ministry of the Church) but with an emphasis on God's sovereign, unconditional power of election and predestination. Calvin believed in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist and held that reception of the Communion brought real benefits to the believer. However, he could not allow the sacraments to diminish God's freedom or to make the Holy Spirit captive or confine Christ locally within the consecrated species. In Calvin's view, Christ sat in heaven at God's right hand; he had no conception of him having any ubiquitous nature.<sup>423</sup>

Lee Wandel believed that Calvin, unlike Luther, Zwingli and those who participated in the Fourth Lateran Council, did not try to define the physics of the Last Supper; he held it to be a secret, a mystery, the work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>424</sup> Christ's flesh is the food for the soul of the faithful, his blood the drink, presented through complex

<sup>421</sup> Quoted by: Herbert M Lubbock (1833-1909), Dean of Lichfield (1892-1909), *Studies in the Book of Common Prayer*, (Kindle edition, 2010).

<sup>422</sup> Nathan D Mitchell, 'Reforms, Protestant and Catholic', in *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*, 320.

<sup>423</sup> It is perhaps a pity that Calvin, and other Reformation theologians, all of whom subscribed to a doctrine of *sola scriptura*, did not heed God's words given to Jeremiah (Jer 23: 23-4).

<sup>424</sup> Lee Palmer Wandel, *The Eucharist in the Reformation: Incarnation and Liturgy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 162f.

symbols of bread and wine, through which Christ becomes one with the recipient. Calvin believed that those whom he called unworthy could not receive Christ in the Supper.<sup>425</sup>

## Thomas Cranmer

Luther had already set the scene for the introduction of liturgical change across much of Continental Europe from as early as 1517, thirty years before the death of Henry VIII. Although England had no individual, determined Reformer, directly comparable with Luther and Calvin, changes to the Church had been suggested in the writings of various Humanists, such as Erasmus (1469-1536) (*Praise of Folly*) and the devout Catholic, Thomas More (1478-1535) (*Utopia*). The principal transformations observed in England were far more political than either liturgical or doctrinal. The development of the choir offices of Morning and Evening Prayer were, for example, very much a result of the dissolution of the monasteries and the secularisation of the Church. In this process the possessions of the monastic establishments, be they large or small, became the property of the crown. Thus the liturgy had to be adapted to a completely new set of political circumstances. Despite these changes Dix was happy to accept that these choir or Cathedral offices, as they came to be called, were still ‘monastic’ in essence in that they were amalgams of elements of the monastic Hours.

When Archbishop of Canterbury William Wareham (1450-1532) died, Henry VIII appointed Thomas Cranmer to replace him. It is likely that Cranmer’s placement was highly influenced by the Boleyns, but, despite the fact that he had married Osiander’s niece, Margaret, in 1532, and was living in Austria at the time, Henry was very keen not to offend Anne’s father.

Perhaps under the influence of his second wife, Henry began to see the need for changes in the Church, to sweep away what were seen as Papist excesses. In the year after his marriage to Anne Boleyn (1534) unprecedented restrictions were placed on all preachers. Old licences were withdrawn and new ones were issued, but only to those that the bishops knew to be reliable. Cranmer urged that these preachers:

should in no wise touch or intermeddle themselves to preach ... any such thing that ... might bring in doubt ... the Catholic ... doctrine of Christ’s Church, or speak on such matters as touch the Prince, his laws or succession.

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<sup>425</sup> Calvin used an analogy of a germinating seed. He wrote, ‘Besides, to say that Christ may be received without faith is as inappropriate as to say that a seed may germinate in fire’ (*Institutes*, Book IV, Ch 17, Sect 33). It is now well known that some seeds, particularly those of conifers, especially the giant sequoia, do require fire to germinate.

By November of 1547 real attempts were being made to transform England into a Protestant country by overthrowing the Catholic religion. Under the leadership of Protector Somerset (1506-1552) Cranmer abolished the three traditional abuses which featured in his discussions with Lutherans in 1538: *viz*, the denial of the chalice to the laity, clerical celibacy and private Masses.<sup>426</sup> Little action was ultimately taken on the subject of private Masses because Cranmer argued that, since no one benefitted from the Sacrament of the Altar except the communicants, little was to be gained from continuing the practice where priests alone received. Cranmer's understanding on the Eucharist seems very ambiguous at this time. William Crockett made it clear that Cranmer did not accept the ubiquity of Christ; the body of Christ was present in heaven and could not, therefore, be present in the Eucharistic elements.<sup>427</sup>

It is known that in 1550 Cranmer believed in the doctrine which he expressed in his books on the Sacrament, a policy that fell short of any extreme sacramentarian position.<sup>428</sup> His policy complemented that of Zwingli but it may even have fallen short of the modified Zwinglianism of Johann Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1573), Zwingli's successor at Zurich, and John Hooper (1495-1555) and their followers. However, it coincided with the principles of Peter Martyr, went farther than those of Martin Bucer, and far beyond Lutheranism.<sup>429</sup> In contrast, Nicholas Ridley (c1500-55) confirmed that the men who drafted the 1549 Rite did not believe in the Real Presence; but they used other words which indicated exactly the opposite.

## Dix versus Cranmer

While accepting that there had been some differences of opinion between the realism of Ambrose and the symbolism of Augustine, Dix put the theological seeds of the Reformation firmly in the ninth century with the theology of the Real Presence and the

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<sup>426</sup> In January 1548 the use of candles at Candlemass, the Imposition of Ashes on Ash Wednesday and the Distribution of Palms on Palm Sunday were all abolished. In February Cranmer ordered all remaining religious images to be removed.

<sup>427</sup> William R Crockett, *Eucharist: Symbol of Transformation*, (New York, NY: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1989), 167.

<sup>428</sup> Principal among Cranmer's writings was: *A Defence of the True and Catholic Doctrine of the Sacrament*, (1550).

<sup>429</sup> Jasper Ridley, *Thomas Cranmer*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 279. Cranmer's vacillation was equally apparent in his reactions to chantries. He opposed the second Chantries Bill, which would have continued Henry's acts of seizure for financial gain, but five years later he argued that the sale of chantries should be postponed so that these assets could be available to Edward VI when he came of age.

landmark contribution of Paschasius Radbertus in his *de Corpore et Sanguine Domini*.<sup>430</sup> Dix asked why, with the welter of controversy surrounding the Eucharist, was there no division in the Church in earlier centuries. He speculated that it was purely the introduction of the concept of justification through faith alone (*sola fides*) that precipitated the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. Dix added that the introduction of substantially altered liturgies (for example, as translated into the vernacular language) stirred up partisanship within the laity, which had more effect than mere theological disputation. He drew the important conclusion that the conflict only questioned the doctrines associated with the Real Presence; there had been no earlier discussion or debate about the sacrificial elements in celebrations of the Mass. Also, the separation of the Western and Eastern Churches had engendered significantly different attitudes to the visibility of the Eucharistic actions at the altar. In the East all was hidden from the congregation by the construction of a veil across the sanctuary, which, over time, became the reinforced screen of the *iconostasis*. In the West, as reception of the elements declined, the focus of the congregation was on the Elevation of the Host, an action that accreted to itself a panoply of torches, censings and the ringing of bells. By contrast, in the East, despite a parallel decline in reception, there was no demand to see the sacramental elements.

In part of Chapter XVI of *The Shape of the Liturgy* Dix examined the changes that had occurred in the periods leading up to the sixteenth century. He explained the difficulties of separating these, one from the other, but listed five for his readers' consideration.<sup>431</sup> First, he observed that the Eucharist had ceased to be a corporate action. In his view, the praxis had been a combined activity, where the ancient Church spoke of 'doing' the Eucharist. Earlier in his book he wrote:

We all find it easy and natural to use such phrases as, of the clergy, 'saying Mass', and of the laity, 'hearing Mass'; or in other circles, 'Will you say the Eight?' or 'attending the early Service'. The ancients on the contrary habitually spoke of 'doing the Eucharist', 'performing the mysteries', 'making the synaxis' and 'doing the oblation'. And there is the further contrast, that while our language implies a certain difference between the functions of the clergy and the laity, as between active and passive ('taking the service' and 'attending the service'; 'saying' and 'hearing' Mass), the ancients used all their active language about 'doing' the liturgy quite indifferently of laity and clergy alike. The irreplaceable function of the celebrant, his 'special liturgy', was to 'make' the prayer; just as the irreplaceable

<sup>430</sup> Gregory Dix, 'Consecration', in Kenneth Mackenzie (ed) *The Liturgy*, (London: SPCK, 1938), 101. Dix referred to Radbertus as Radbert.

<sup>431</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 615-622.

function of the deacon or the people was to do something else which the celebrant did not do. There was difference of function but no distinction in kind between the activities of the various orders in the worship of the whole Church.<sup>432</sup>

Dix argued that, for example, in the post-Apostolic Church the Fraction was performed by the Deacon and Concelebrants; this activity has been transferred to the priest alone; in a sense it may be supposed that the individual priest offers the Eucharist. Secondly, Dix referred to the Intention of the Mass. In each individual offering, the priest could attach a separate efficacy, a value of its own. Dix explained that, while these values may have had an association with the sacrifice of Calvary, each offering was the celebrant's own offering. Masses thereby accrued a worth, whereby ten Masses said for a particular intention were worth more than five. Dix argued that these changes away from the post-Apostolic understanding of the sacrament were arrived at by slow and gradual stages, but would prove of considerable importance in Reformation thinking. Thirdly, Dix turned his attention to the changes to the language of the Mass. He suggested, that, although the laity had little or no understanding of the Latin text, and were reduced to being passive viewers and listeners, yet the music, ritual and ceremonial stimulated religious emotions. Dix reminded his readers that worship conducted in languages that the worshippers did not comprehend was not a new phenomenon. In first century Palestine, synagogue and Temple worship was conducted in liturgical Hebrew, not the vernacular Aramaic of the populace. Similarly, the New Testament was not written in the language that Jesus spoke and the Jews of the Diaspora were happy to read the Septuagint, but, at key moments significant phrases, such as Christ's last words from the cross, were included in a language that was essentially incomprehensible, *viz* Aramaic. By the fourth century, when Greek generally ceased to be used as a common language in the West, Latin became the *lingua franca*. Dix reflected that all public notices, 'from Northumberland to Casablanca, from Lisbon to the Danube', were posted in Latin.<sup>433</sup> It was quite natural for Christian rites to retain Latin as their universal language. In later centuries, with the growth of new nation states and the associated cross-fertilisation of cultures, the Church stood for stability and civilisation. It could only do this from behind the defensive wall of a common language. The maintenance of the *status quo* in the face of the development of printing presses and improvements in standards of literacy was, Dix asserted, indefensible and by the sixteenth

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<sup>432</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>433</sup> Ibid, 617.



century the Church was showing signs of staleness and decay. Dix's fourth contention was based on another human sense, that of seeing. In the *Ordo Romanus Primus*, the Roman Rite dating back to the mid-eighth century, the congregation was subjected to a plenitude of dramatic action, from Gospel and Offertory processions, the *fermentum* carried in or out by acolytes and the involvement of Deacons in the Fraction. The administration of the Communion was a corporate event for most of those present. The excitement of this form of worship had been replaced over time with the Low Mass, in which the ceremonial had been reduced to its simplest elements and in which one lone priest muttered his way through the liturgy in silence or in a low, almost unheard, voice. The only activity that attracted the attention of the laity was the only one that they could observe, the Elevation. Seeing what they had been taught was the Body of their Saviour, they worshiped and adored. Dix believed that the change of emphasis of the Consecration for the purpose of adoration was also fundamental to the cause of the Reformation. Fifthly, and finally, Dix thought that the eschatological concept of the primitive rites had disappeared from view. The Eucharistic worship, often observed by the laity through a rood screen, emphasised the links between the action and the Passion. The words of Paul that the Church should, 'proclaim the Lord's death', became detached in the minds of clergy and laity from what followed, 'till he come'. Dix wrote:

It was just here that the practical confining of the redeeming action of Christ (into which the Eucharist enters) to Calvary led to serious and unnecessary difficulties. Being wholly within history and time, the passion is wholly in the past – the only moment of redemption which is so wholly confined to the past. The Church at the Eucharist can only be conceived to enter into a wholly past action in one of two ways, either purely mentally by remembering and imagining it; or else, if the entering into it is to have any objective reality outside the mind, by way of some sort of repetition or iteration of the redeeming act of Christ. Thus the way was not so much laid open as forced upon the Church to that general late mediaeval notion of some fresh sacrifice of Christ, and his immolation again at every Eucharist. There was no other way by which the reality of the Eucharistic action could be preserved on the mediaeval understanding of it; yet the unbroken tradition of liturgy and theology alike insisted on this reality. And since the Eucharistic action was now viewed as the act of the priest alone – though the liturgy itself continued to state a different view ('We Thy servants together with Thy holy people offer unto Thee ...'), there was no escaping the idea that the priest sacrifices Christ afresh at every Mass. However hard they tried to conciliate this view of the matter with the doctrine of the Epistle to the Hebrews of the one oblation for sins, perfect and complete (so far as history and time are concerned) on Calvary, the mediaeval theologians, and the party of the old religion at the English Reformation, never quite got away from the necessity of defending the reality of the Eucharistic

sacrifice as in some sense an iteration of the sacrifice of Christ at the hands of the priest, even though they insisted that it was not a new sacrifice.<sup>434</sup>

In his proposals for a return to the liturgy of the post-Apostolic church Dix, in more or less every respect, paved the way for the principles underlying most liturgical revisions after Vatican II; the sense of the corporate nature of worship, the roles of laity and clergy, the eschatological understanding of the Eucharist, etc. Thus the Protestant Reformation can be curiously seen as blocking liturgical reform and its concomitant return to ancient principles precisely because of Luther's individualism in his theology, and the political imperatives behind the English Reformation.

The judges at Cranmer's trial (which began on 13<sup>th</sup> November, 1553) charged him with having had three different Eucharistic doctrines at various times: Papist, Lutheran and Zwinglian. In his lengthy analysis of Cranmer's Eucharistic theology, Dix explored a number of features: his doctrine concerning eating the Flesh and drinking the Blood of Christ; concerning the true use of the Last Supper; concerning Consecration; concerning the Ministry; and his esteem for the Eucharist. He concluded that, while Cranmer made use of a number of Lutheran features, and, 'clothed his negations with the comparative warmth of the Calvinist's idea of Eucharist devotion', he (Dix) was quite unable to distinguish the substance of Cranmer's doctrine from that of Zwingli. Dix quoted from a letter by John Hooper to Johann Bullinger (dated 27<sup>th</sup> December, 1549) in which he wrote:

The Archbishop of Canterbury entertains right views as to the nature of Christ's presence in the supper ... He has some articles of religion to which all preachers and lecturers in divinity are required to subscriber or else a license for teaching is not granted them; and in these his sentiments respecting the Eucharist are pure and religious and similar to yours in Switzerland.<sup>435</sup>

Dix asserted that in his second Prayer Book (1552) Cranmer forsook the traditional four-fold shape of the liturgy and made radical changes that drastically altered the doctrinal implications. Rearranged in this way the new rite more fully expressed Zwinglian doctrine, vindicating Cranmer's claim that this had been his real meaning all along.<sup>436</sup> Dix added the rider that none of Cranmer's rites, of 1549 and 1552, or subsequently that of 1559, included a rubric for a second consecration, should either element prove insufficient

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<sup>434</sup> Ibid, 623.

<sup>435</sup> Ibid, 656, fn 1.

<sup>436</sup> Ibid, 659.

for its administration. Once again this enforced his Zwinglian view of consecration.<sup>437</sup> Dix saw in Cranmer an extremism (perhaps only paralleled by Ridley, Hooper and Bucer) without which the small and short-sighted Zwinglian party in England would have suffered annihilation. In subsequent centuries, certainly by the eighteenth, the Church of England had become a branch of the state. The state had, in Dix's words, 'ordered its liturgy and removed it altogether from the Church's control by freezing it rigidly down to the last comma in the form of a secular statute'.<sup>438</sup> Thomas Herring (1693-1757) referred to, 'the incomparable liturgy with which the wisdom of our legislature has endowed us'.<sup>439</sup> Dix remarked that Cranmer's liturgy, left to be self-interpreting (that is, outside the control of the Church), had its natural consequence in the neo-Zwinglian movement in Anglicanism.<sup>440</sup> Louis Bouyer claimed that Dix had established irrefutably that the interpretation long given by catholicising Anglicans of the difference between Cranmer's Eucharist of 1549 and the one he produced in 1552 was untenable. He wrote:

Far from being still Catholic or, at the most, 'Lutheranized', the first Eucharist is only Catholic in appearance and simply disguises under a veil of ambiguities the same doctrine which is so frankly stated in the second, a doctrine which is not only 'reformed' but properly Zwinglian.<sup>441</sup>

## Timms refuted Dix

In the year after Dix published *The Shape of the Liturgy*, the Alcuin Club produced a paper entitled '*Dixit Cranmer*', written by the Rev'd G B Timms.<sup>442</sup> Timms argued that Chapter XVI of Dix's work would be of most interest to readers, because it dealt with relatively contemporary Anglican issues. However, he suggested that, in dealing with the liturgy of the Church of England, Dix had shown signs that he had not fully appreciated the implications of the principles worked out in his preceding chapters. The crux of Timms's argument was that Dix's decision that Cranmer, and the Eucharistic rites that he devised, were Zwinglian was based more on his reading of Cranmer's work *Defence of the True and Catholic Doctrine of the Sacrament* than the content of the actual rites themselves. Referring to the *Defence*, and Cranmer's doctrine concerning eating the Flesh and drinking the Blood, Dix had written that, 'we must understand that he means by this, 'thinking with

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<sup>437</sup> Ibid, 676.

<sup>438</sup> Ibid, 695.

<sup>439</sup> Quoted by: Dix, Ibid, 695.

<sup>440</sup> Ibid, 695.

<sup>441</sup> Louis Bouyer, *Eucharist*, 408.

<sup>442</sup> G B Timms, *Dixit Cranmer: A Reply to Dom Gregory*, (London: Mowbray & Co, 1946).

faith that Christ died for my sins on Calvary', and nothing else'.<sup>443</sup> On the basis of this, Timms accepted that Cranmer's Eucharistic doctrine was pure Zwinglianism. However, Timms took his arguments further and referred to Cranmer's Prayer Book and his later work *Answer unto a Crafty and Sophisticall Cavillation devised by Stephen Gardiner* (1551), to which Dix makes only one reference, and that, more or less, in passing.<sup>444</sup> Timms began his analysis by examining the Exhortations that Cranmer had carefully composed for inclusion in both Edwardine Prayer Books. In these he revealed his Eucharistic beliefs: first, that the Eucharist is a solemn and thankful remembrance of Christ's passion; and secondly, that it is a holy mystery whereby the faithful are spiritually fed with the Body and Blood of Christ, if, that is, they approach the altar with the right intention. Timms suggested that Dix had been selective in his quotations from the Exhortations. The second 1549 Exhortation contains the words:

Wherefore our duetie is, to come to these holy misteries, with moste heartie thanks to bee geven to almightie GOD, for his infinite mercie and benefites geven and bestowed upon us his unworthye servauntes, for whom he hath not onely geven his body to death, and shed his bloude, but also doothe vouchesave in a Sacrament and Mistery, to geve us his sayed bodye and bloud to feede upon spiritually.

These words were not quoted by Dix but confirmed Cranmer's viewpoint. Three further passages from the 1552 Exhortations amplified Cranmer's position:

he hath left in those holy Misteries, as a pledge of his love, and a continuall remembraunce of the same his owne blessed body, and precious bloud, for us to fede upon spiritually, to our endles comfort and consolacion (1st Exhortation – 1549); my duetie is to exhort you to consider the dignitie of the holy mistery, and the greate perel of the unworthy receiving thereof, and so to searche and examine your own consciences, as you should come holy and cleane to a moste Godly and heavenly feaste: so that in no wise you come but in the mariage garment, required of god in holy scripture; and so come and be received, as worthy partakers of suche a heavenly table. The way and meanes thereto is: First to examine your lives and conversacion by the rule of goddes commaundements, and whereinsoever ye shall perceive your selves to have offended, either by wil, word, or dede, there beewaile your owne sinful lives, confess your selves to almightie god with ful purpose of amendment of life. And yf ye shal perceive your offences to be such, as be not only against god, but also againste your neighbours: then ye shal reconcile your selves unto them, ready to make restitution and satisfaccion, accordyng to the uttermost of your powers, for all injuries and wronges done by you to any other: and likewise beeyng ready to forgeve other that have offended you; as you would have forgevenesse of your offences at gods hande: for otherwyse the receiving of the holy Communion doth nothyng els, but encrease your damnacion (2nd

<sup>443</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 649.

<sup>444</sup> Ibid, 647. Dix argued that this latter work was no more than a tortuous form of reply to a reply to the *Defence*, in which he defended his earlier thinking, sentence by sentence.

Exhortation – 1552); and the benefite is great, if with a truly penitent heart and lively fayth, we receive that holy Sacrament (for then we spirituallye eate the fleshe of Christ, and drynke hys bloud, then we dwel in Christ and Christ in us, we be one with Christ, and Christ with us (3rd Exhortation – 1552).

Timms opined that these Exhortations (none of which was mentioned by Dix) contain extravagant language for one whom Dix claimed:

by a somewhat forced use of the phrase, ‘to eat the Body and drink the Blood of Christ’... meant, ‘to remember the passion with confidence in the merits of Christ’.<sup>445</sup>

He closely examined Cranmer’s precepts that: the true Body and Blood of Christ are not really, naturally, corporally or carnally under the forms of bread and wine; evil men do not eat the very Body and Blood of Christ; and Christ is not offered in the Eucharist by the priest as a sacrifice propitiatory for sin. He considered the first of these as saying, in effect, ‘that transubstantiation is false’, and, ‘there is no presence of Christ in the sacrament at all, apart from its use in administration’, therefore, ‘to worship Christ in the sacrament is idolatry’.<sup>446</sup> Cranmer’s Eucharistic doctrine refused to accept that anything further was required to perfect the work of Christ in man’s redemption. The changes he made in the 1552 Rite only amplified this position; changes that Dix believed were significant in his Zwinglianism. Timms added the comment:

These alterations, as is well known, follow closely the recommendations of Martin Bucer’s *Censura* or criticism of the rite of 1549, written at the invitation of Thomas Goodrich, Bishop of Ely, and finished on January 5, 1551. But it is significant that they also answer the ‘sophisticall cavillations’ of Gardiner, who claimed to find in the 1549 rite the doctrine of (a) transubstantiation, and (b) a propitiatory offering of Christ in the Mass.<sup>447</sup>

In conclusion, Timms accepted that the real point of controversy between Dix and Cranmer (as discussed in Chapter XVI of *The Shape of the Liturgy*) was: is the spiritual gift which is received in Holy Communion essentially different from that which is received in spiritual communion? Cranmer thought that it was not, while Dix understood that it was. Timms stated that Cranmer had the better arguments and believed that, given a place for debate, Dix would have fared no better than Gardiner. Timms’s ultimate point was to observe that,

<sup>445</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 656. Dix went on to suggest that Cranmer had used this flowery phraseology in order to preserve a great deal of conventional Catholic language. However, this language is not understood today in anything like its original sense.

<sup>446</sup> G B Timms, *Dixit Cranmer: A Reply to Dom Gregory*, 19.

<sup>447</sup> Ibid, 28.

while Dix understood that the Son of God did say, ‘Take, eat, this is my Body’, he steered well clear of a serious discussion on transubstantiation. Throughout *The Shape of the Liturgy*, Dix had relegated it to footnotes, as necessary. Timms ended his thesis with a piece of prose, which, if not exactly purple, was a deep shade of mauve:

But if we try to find the significance of the Eucharist in ‘what is given in the feeding’ we get hopelessly bogged, as the Cranmer versus Gardiner disputation clearly shows: both Protestant and Catholic raise a great amount of dust, and appear to reach diametrically opposed conclusions, but on analysis, so I believe, we find that they are both saying the same thing, though saying it differently and quarrelling violently in the process. It is a great merit in Dom Gregory’s book that for the greater part of it he refuses to be drawn into the bog – until he comes to Cranmer. Then he arrives so near home that those emotions which he has for the most part kept admirably under control surge up within him, and in spite of himself he is drawn into the vain and endless argument: Dom Gregory is the catholic knight-errant, Cranmer the protestant dragon, the Church of England the maiden victim, and her liturgy her chains.

Dix had argued that Cranmer’s Eucharistic thought was indistinguishable in substance from that of Zwingli and it can be argued that Cranmer framed an Anglican Eucharistic rite that few in the Church of England have ever held. Timms suggested that Cranmer’s use of key terms and phrases separated him from Zwingli and linked him with Bucer, Calvin and other ‘dynamic receptionists’. This disagreement is unlikely to end since ambiguities undeniably appear in Cranmer’s Holy Communion rites, even though he believed that their wording was simple enough for a child to understand.

## Dix’s response to Timms

In 1948 Dix responded to Timms’s criticism in a paper entitled, *Dixit Cranmer et Non Timuit*, which may be translated as, ‘Cranmer said, and feared not’.<sup>448</sup> Dix observed that while both he and Timms, despite starting from different ecclesiastical standpoints and purposes, reached identical conclusions on some essential questions. With typical tongue-in-cheek effrontery, Dix commented that the circulation of Timms’s pamphlet among members of the Alcuin Club (for whom it was written) could not help but overcome their prejudices and prepare them to recognise the truth about the Prayer Book. Timms had commented that Cranmer had, in the heat of argument, taken a more extreme standpoint

<sup>448</sup> Gregory Dix, ‘Dixit Cranmer et Non Timuit’, *The Church Quarterly Review*, Vol CXLV, March 1948, and Vol CXLVI, June 1948. Dix’s papers were subsequently published by Dacre Press (undated). This title shows a clever play on the words Dix and Timms. It is possible to read it as ‘Cranmer has spoken, but not Timms’, or, by implication, ‘Dix knows Cranmer, but Timms does not!’

than he, in fact, actually held. Dix alleged that Cranmer had uttered his statements in passion and cold-blood.<sup>449</sup> They were issued in his capacity of Archbishop of Canterbury after months of careful preparation and he explained them ably and lucidly in a series of statements of his Eucharistic doctrine, which eventually cost him his life.<sup>450</sup> To Timms's suggestion that Cranmer, 'as a theologian was competent but unimpressive', Dix reminded his readers of the occasion when, on the day after he had been convicted of heresy, Cranmer attended the doctoral awarding congregation at Oxford, in which his suppleness and argument shone out, and in which he single-handedly demolished the Eucharistic arguments of England's leading, professional theologians.<sup>451</sup>

Dix examined many of the passages from *A Defence*, cited by Timms, and added several of his own from other sixteenth century writers. The crux of the matter lay between Cranmer's Zwinglianism and his Receptionism. Dix concluded:

There is not much doubt about the meaning of such statements as these. It would appear, therefore, that Cranmer was not the only contemporary author who could set side by side in the same work about the Eucharist what Mr Timms calls 'passages which have a strong Zwinglian flavour' and others which might at first sight appear to be patient of a 'Receptionist' interpretation. But that it would be tedious, it would be easy to show that this is true not only of Cranmer, Hooper, Bullinger and Zwingli, but also of Oecolampadius, Vadianus, Pellican, Megander, Gualter, à Lasco and others, about whose doctrinal allegiance no one pretends there is any ambiguity. It cannot in all these cases be set down to the effects of inadvertence, controversial hastiness or self-misrepresentation, or even theological incompetence, unless we are to postulate these things almost on an epidemic scale among theologians who played a notable part in European controversy for a whole generation.<sup>452</sup>

Dix argued that it was impossible to understand Cranmer and the Anglican formularies in their original sense unless they are compared in detail with contemporary writers and set against the passionate, Eucharistic controversies among Protestants of those days. He drew the conclusion that Cranmer was a Zwinglian, not of the left wing, like Caspar Megander (1484-1545), or of the right, like Calvin, but of the centre, like Bullinger (who succeeded Zwingli in Zurich in 1531). Dix wrote:

Timms had misunderstood what Cranmer meant by the word 'spiritually'. He pointed out quite rightly that Cranmer took 'real' as the equivalent of 'physical' or 'material'. But he omitted to note that Cranmer occasionally equated 'spiritual'

<sup>449</sup> A curious juxtaposition of terms; passion is normally associated with hot-blood.

<sup>450</sup> G B Timms, *Dixit Cranmer*, 12. Gregory Dix, *Dixit Cranmer et Non Timuit*, (London: Dacre Press), 7.

<sup>451</sup> G B Timms, *Dixit Cranmer*, 34. Gregory Dix, *Dixit Cranmer et Non Timuit*, 7f. Reported by: John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, 1583, 1462.

<sup>452</sup> Gregory Dix, *Dixit Cranmer et Non Timuit*, 15.

with ‘figurative’. He meant by ‘spiritual’ that which is ‘abstract’ or ‘only to be grasped by the mind’.<sup>453</sup>

In the second part of his thesis Dix examined Cranmer’s alliances; alliances that placed him on the Zwinglian faction of Protestantism, as opposed to (say) Lutheranism and Receptionism. Dix concentrated particularly on Cranmer’s supposed friendship with Bucer who had been a resident at Lambeth Palace for half of 1549. Timms had quoted from a letter from Hooper to Bullinger that, ‘Bucer is with the Archbishop of Canterbury like another Scipio and an inseparable companion’.<sup>454</sup> Dix believed that Timms was right to make this reference but suggested that he should have looked much more closely at the remainder of Hooper’s correspondence. In the next eighteen months, up to Bucer’s death, his only communication with Cranmer concerned the Vestment Controversy. It has been accepted in some quarters that Bucer’s work entitled *Censura*, to which Timms had referred, had greatly influenced Cranmer’s mind in his revision of the first Prayer Book, making its successor Receptionist in character and form. Dix tore these arguments to shreds through a careful examination of eight of its chapters (chaps ii to ix); a study that occupies five pages of his paper. Bucer’s life-long witness against Zwinglianism was failing and, in the ensuing storm, he was advised by his friend from Strasbourg, Vallérard Poullain (1509-57), ‘not to raise any controversy in the matter of the Eucharist’. Bucer remained silent but wrote *Confessio de Eucharistia* in his dying months; this was only published *post-mortem*. In one final act, aimed at getting a Receptionist interpretation into the Prayer Book revision, Bucer side-lined Cranmer and wrote directly to the King and the Council. Dix commented, ‘The phrases which he had so strenuously defended in the interests of Receptionism were all deleted from the Anglican liturgy in 1552, and have never since been reinserted’.<sup>455</sup>

The Black Rubric, which John Knox (1514-72) insisted that Cranmer should include in the 1552 Prayer Book revision, contained all that needed to be said. It included the words:

Leste yet the same kneelyng myght be thought or taken otherwyse, we dooe declare that it is not ment thereby, that any adoracion is doone, or oughte to bee doone, eyther unto the Sacramentall bread or wyne there bodily receyved, or unto anye reall and essencial presence there beeyng of Christ's naturall fleshe and bloude. For as concernynge the Sacramentall bread and wyne, they remayne styll in theyr verye

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<sup>453</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>454</sup> G B Timms, *Dixit Cranmer*, 33.

<sup>455</sup> Gregory Dix, *Dixit Cranmer et Non Timuit*, 44.



naturall substaunces, and therefore may not be adored, for that were Idolatrye to be abhorred of all faythfull Christians. And as concernynge the naturall body and blood of our saviour Christ, they are in heaven and not here. For it is agaynst the trueth of Christes true natural bodye, to be in more places then in one, at one tyme.<sup>456</sup>

Dix admitted that the Black Rubric was not of Cranmer's devising, but that he (Cranmer) had accepted its inclusion when pressed by King and Council. Dix argued that, in what he called, 'its lawyer-drawn theology', the 1552 Rite retained one loophole from being declared entirely Zwinglian and that was closed by the wording of Article XXIX of the XLII Articles of 1553. This said:

Forasmuch as the truth of man's nature requireth that the body of one and the self-same man cannot be at one time in divers places but must needs be in some one certain place: therefore the body of Christ cannot be present at one time in many and divers places. And because (as Holy Scripture doth teach) Christ was taken up into heaven and shall there continue unto the end of the world: faithful man ought not to believe or openly to confess the real and bodily presence (as they term it) of Christ's flesh and blood in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.<sup>457</sup>

Dix commented that only Cranmer could have penned such stately English – the perfect summary of the 'Zwinglian belief in the Real Absence'.<sup>458</sup> Not only did the Eucharist now exclude any sacramental presence of Christ in the bread and wine, it denied any such presence in those to whom the sacrament was administered. The Son of God was now segregated in 'one certain place', detached from all contact with the communicants, whether by the sacrament or its celebration. In typically florid style, Dix added that, 'The full Zwinglian denial had at length been officially proclaimed as the only teaching of the English Church'.

## Richardson entered the debate

In 1949 Cyril Richardson wrote a work subtitled, *Dixit Cranmer et Contradixit*, in which he analysed the earlier commentaries of Timms and Dix.<sup>459</sup> He performed this important work, not as might be expected, by comparing and contrasting the writings of the two protagonists, but by returning to Cranmerian source material. In fact, both Dix and Timms

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<sup>456</sup> The 'Black Rubric', or the Declaration on Kneeling was inserted into the 1552 Book at the last minute, and, as a result, its wording varies among different printings. The version shown above is not atypical.

<sup>457</sup> Quoted by: Gregory Dix, *Dixit Cranmer et Non Timuit*, 47.

<sup>458</sup> Ibid.

<sup>459</sup> Cyril C Richardson, *Zwingli and Cranmer on the Eucharist: Cranmer Dixit et Contradixit*, (Evanston IL: Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, 1949).

were only mentioned in this work (which ran to nearly 20,000 words) a handful of times. Richardson began by accepting that Cranmer's thoughts were not always consistent and, it could be argued, the Exhortations in the 1549 Rite contained some ambiguities. He contended that Cranmer, 'esteemed the Lord's Supper more highly than did Zwingli'.<sup>460</sup> But, it was also clear that the major part of Cranmer's explanation of the Last Supper was heavily dependent on themes derived from the Swiss reformer. Richardson somewhat muddied the waters by quoting from Alexander Barclay, who suggested that Zwingli was not himself a Zwinglian, but admitted that his writings had singular clarity, which left no reason for failing to grasp exactly what he meant.<sup>461</sup> Richardson reasoned, with some justification, that Dix had not fully grasped Zwingli's thoughts. He wrote:

In seeking to disentangle it, Dom Gregory seems to have gone to exaggerated limits, presenting a view that Zwingli himself was at pains to rebut. Indeed, Dom Gregory's understanding of Zwingli is perhaps at times as unjust as the construction that Cranmer, in the *Answer*, puts upon many of Gardiner's words. Where Cranmer can only understand a crass and 'Capernaical' doctrine in the orthodox view of the substance of the Body of Christ in the Eucharist, Dom Gregory can only see a 'purely mental and psychological' attitude in Zwingli's conception of faith.<sup>462</sup>

Did Dix misunderstand Zwingli's Eucharistic theology? Dix had written:

His [Zwingli's] doctrine of the sacraments ... leaves them no force or efficacy of their own whatsoever. They are bare signs or ceremonies by which a man assures *other people* rather than himself of his saving faith in Christ's redemption. In the eucharist there is but plain bread and wine, a reminder of the salvation achieved long ago at Calvary (Dix's emphasis).<sup>463</sup>

Zwingli had argued that the bread and wine possess no inherent spiritual meaning, but the religious significance of the elements is determined by those elements being placed within the community of the Christian faith. It would seem that Dix did not exaggerate Zwingli's Eucharistic theology.

Of Timms, Richardson wrote:

Mr Timms is far from bringing the needed clarity into this vexed issue of Cranmer's opinions. He is not rigorous enough in treatment of the leading ideas; and, in consequence, Dom Gregory's rebuttal is at times most telling, though I believe it is misguided on one central issue. By showing that Cranmer did not

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<sup>460</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>461</sup> Alexander Barclay, *The Protestant Doctrine of the Lord's Supper: A Study of the Eucharistic Teaching of Luther, Zwingli and Calvin*, (London: Jackson, Wylie & Co, 1927). See also: Elmer S Freeman, *The Lord's Supper in Protestantism*, (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1945), 62.

<sup>462</sup> Cyril C Richardson, *Zwingli and Cranmer on the Eucharist*, 3.

<sup>463</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 632.

believe the Lord's Supper to be a 'mere mental remembrance', Mr Timms shows something that, *pace* Dom Gregory, is really obvious. But he proceeds from this to defend something that is really impossible, *viz* that Cranmer was a 'dynamic receptionist'. Mr Timms might have been better advised to state Zwingli's opinions and then compare them with Cranmer's.<sup>464</sup>

After reading hundreds of pages of Cranmer's and Zwingli's words, Richardson accepted that there was a difference of temper between them. Cranmer held the Eucharist in higher esteem than did Zwingli, but Richardson was conscious of other differences between the two authors. He saw in Cranmer's writings a major contradiction of thought and found a particular emphasis on God's operation within the sacrament.<sup>465</sup>

William Tighe suggested that Richardson awarded the victory to Dix.<sup>466</sup> However, he thought that all Anglican scholars, save for those on the highest and lowest extremities of Anglican Churchmanship, continued to resist Dix's characterisation of Cranmer's views, for decades after his death. In recent years they have effectively, if tacitly, received the support of Diarmaid MacCulloch.<sup>467</sup>

In a review of Richardson's paper, E R Hardy wrote that he had not only enquired into what each writer had said, but gave consideration to their presuppositions.<sup>468</sup> He concluded that Richardson had made an important contribution to the study of this topic, which should help to raise it, out of the controversies with which Anglicans cannot help associating it, into its proper place in the history of Reformation thought and of Eucharistic faith and practice generally.

## Commentary

In a less antagonistic vein, Dix wrote of Cranmer's Rite that:

As a piece of liturgical craftsmanship it is in the first rank – once its intention is understood. It is *not* a disordered attempt at a catholic rite, but the only effective attempt ever made to give liturgical expression to the doctrine of 'justification by faith alone'. If in the end the attempt does not succeed – if we are left with a sense of the total disconnection of token communion in bread and wine with that mental 'eating and drinking of Christ's Flesh and Blood', ie remembering of the passion,

<sup>464</sup> Cyril C Richardson, *Zwingli and Cranmer on the Eucharist*, 4.

<sup>465</sup> *Ibid*, 33. It is impossible within the confines of this thesis to analyse these in full – Richardson's work should be consulted for more information.

<sup>466</sup> William J Tighe, 'The Shape of the Liturgy', loc cit.

<sup>467</sup> William J Tighe, 'The Shape of the Liturgy', loc cit; and Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995).

<sup>468</sup> E R Hardy, 'Zwingli and Cranmer on the Eucharist (Cranmer Dixit et Contradixit)', M Dwight Johnson Memorial Lectureship in Church History', Cyril C. Richardson, Evanston: Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, 1949, *Church History*, Vol 20, Issue 02, 2007, 88-9.

which is for Cranmer the essential Eucharistic action – that must be set down to the impossible nature of the task, not to the manner of its performance. Cranmer was in the end baffled like all the Reformers by the impossibility of reconciling the external rite of the Eucharist and the scriptural evidence of the Last Supper with the idea that ‘we spiritually and ghostly with our faith eat Christ, being carnally absent from us in heavens *in such wise* as Abraham and other holy fathers did eat him many years before he was incarnated and born’ (Dix’s emphases).<sup>469</sup>

The whole debate about the nature of the Eucharist and its liturgy seems to depend on establishing answers to the following questions:

- ❖ What is meant by faith to a Christian?
- ❖ Is the Eucharist a sacrament?
- ❖ Is the Eucharist a sacrifice? If it is a sacrifice, is it a continuation of Calvary or entirely separate?
- ❖ Are the Eucharistic elements materially changed through the words **and actions** of an ordained priest?
- ❖ Is it necessary to include the Institution Narrative and/or an epiclesis within the Anaphora?
- ❖ Does the phrase ‘Body of Christ’ imply the Eucharistic species or the *corpus fidelium* or both?
- ❖ Is reception of the elements a sacramental or a physical action?

It is unlikely that Anglicans will ever agree on their answers to any of these questions. Unless and until the Anglican Communion establishes some sort of monarchical archiepiscopacy with a willingness to rule absolutely (which would almost certainly destroy it!), then these contentious issues will remain unresolved. It should be added that, even within the Roman Catholic Church there are fundamental differences of opinion on these and many other matters. Perhaps this wide diversity of Eucharistic opinion is one of the gems of Anglicanism.

In a history of the Benedictine Community at Pershore, Nashdom and (later) Elmore, Petà Dunstan suggested that the most famous contribution to the scholarship that emerged was undoubtedly *The Shape of the Liturgy*. She wrote:

Written with style and lucidity it captured not only the attention of the academic community but also many clergy and laity in the Church. Subsequent critiques of aspects of the book’s thesis cannot detract from observation that for more than a generation this book came to dominate liturgical debate and reform.<sup>470</sup>

Among Dix’s theological writings, his contributions on Holy Orders, Christian initiation and the sacred Eucharistic liturgy were of paramount importance and have led to much

<sup>469</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 672.

<sup>470</sup> Petà Dunstan, *The Labour of Obedience*, 133.

debate, discussion, and not a little criticism. They will most assuredly provide an foundational underpinning for all future debates wherever these subject areas are discussed.

## 4 THE IMPACT OF DIX'S IDEAS

### Preamble

Dix's perceptiveness was deeply theological and he may be regarded principally as a theologian, and perhaps less as an historian or even a liturgist. Liturgists, it may be suggested, are essentially historians but Dix was never in search of purely historical evidence in his studies. Instead he was interested in the underlying structures of worship from the earliest days of the Christian Church. It is his deeply theological understanding of the liturgy that defines him as *Homo Eucharisticus*.

Dix's research and subsequent writing took place in the first half of the twentieth century and it is perhaps inevitable that the harvest of his ideas was seen in the second half of the century, with revisions to the Roman Eucharistic rites occasioned by the Second Vatican Council, throughout the Anglican Communion, and in many other Churches. Dix's most important contribution to these studies, however, had less to do with his assertion of the historical and fundamental four-fold shape of Eucharistic worship than his understanding of the sacramental theology of the Church. That notwithstanding, his most significant written achievement was *The Shape of the Liturgy*, in which he asserted that the common root of the various forms of the Eucharist was to be found in its underlying actions, rather than in an original rite or set of words. His book proved to be popular and well-read, as well as being a lasting memorial to its author, and its impact has been widely felt by all scholars who were studying liturgy or who were considering, or were engaged upon, revisions to Eucharistic rites. Paul Bradshaw, while ready to criticise Dix's liturgical scholarship, observed that, 'Dom Gregory Dix, of all Anglican liturgical scholars, is unquestionably the one who has exercised the greatest influence not only within the Anglican Communion but also outside it'.<sup>471</sup> Indeed, while many have written of the importance of Dix's liturgical scholarship and the reforms to Eucharistic rites that followed from it, not all of them have been complimentary. Colin Buchanan wrote of Dix:

I read him as a kind of combination of Denis Skinner and Tony Benn, with the love of outraging of the former, and the unshaken confidence in his findings of the latter, and the holding to a sweepingly extreme position with the tenacity, humour and a flair for propaganda of both. His scholarship in his own field may have outstripped these worthies in theirs, and certainly he won (and keeps going today) a worldwide army of scholars and students of liturgy to wrestle with his writings.<sup>472</sup>

<sup>471</sup> Paul Bradshaw, 'Gregory Dix', in Christopher Irvine (ed), *They Shaped our Worship: Essays on Anglican Liturgists*, (London: SPCK, 1998), 111.

<sup>472</sup> Colin Buchanan, 'Gregory Dix – The Liturgical Bequest', *Churchman*, Vol 114, 2000, 262

Buchanan argued that Dix showed some of the traits which were exemplified in his own tutor at Oxford, whose dictum was, ‘make your sources work for you’. By this he meant the strictly unethical process of positing a conclusion first, then organising the necessary evidence to substantiate it.<sup>473</sup> Stephen Neill suggested that Dix should have been ‘scrupulous in making the distinction between what is certain, what is probable and what is conjectural’. According to Neill, all of Dix’s writings revealed a tendency of ‘mistaking inference for evidence and possibility for certainty’.<sup>474</sup>

As an Anglo-Papalist, Dix believed that the Roman Catholic Church was the only true Church and that all of her defined doctrines (including papal infallibility) are rightful and binding on the Christian faithful.<sup>475</sup> Yet, despite the call of Rome and his bouts of ‘Roman fever’ his steadfast belief in the innate sacramental theology of the Church of England drove him to remain within it. Without demonstrating any overt Erastianism Dix would have characterised himself clearly as a member of the Church whose identity was uniquely linked with the nation of England. He stated that it would be his life’s work, as an Anglican, a priest, and a monk, to pursue a programme of four important developments, viz:

- ❖ arresting the anthropocentric, liberal drift in Anglican theology, reversing it and replacing it with the classic tradition out of which Anglicanism grew;
- ❖ disentangling the Anglican Church from the State (disestablishment);
- ❖ getting over (or round) the hurdle of Anglican orders in relation to *Apostolicae Curae*; and
- ❖ convincing the Roman Church that an Anglicanism thus renewed would be fit for reintegration within the Catholic Communion and, in parallel, convincing the Anglican Church that it needed to be part of the Catholic Church.<sup>476</sup>

The God-centeredness of Dix’s agenda is immediately apparent. In these four phrases he stressed his discernment of the importance, respectively, of theology, ecclesiology, holy orders and ecumenism within his Church and this again emphasised the theological nature of all of his thinking.

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<sup>473</sup> Ibid, 262.

<sup>474</sup> Stephen Neill, ‘A General Survey’, in S C Neill *et al*, *The Ministry of the Church*, (London: Canterbury Press, 1982), 156.

<sup>475</sup> Anglo-Papalists may be distinguished from Anglo-Catholics by their use of the Roman Mass instead of the *Book of Common Prayer*, or the *English Missal*.

<sup>476</sup> Dix listed these responsibilities in a letter to Maurice Bévenot SJ, dated 27 January, 1940. Quoted in: James G Leachman, ‘An Interesting Letter in 1940: Individual or Corporate Reunion’, *Sewanee Theological Review*, Vol 53, No 1, 2009, 30.





## Revisions to Eucharistic rites

Dix was passionately opposed to what he saw as the destructive effects of the theology of the Protestant Reformation on the Eucharistic understanding of the early Church. In a short survey of Protestant theology he wrote:

The new conception is of a strictly *personal* mental reflection upon his [Christ's] action in the past. We cannot enter into it, since as a matter of history the passion is unique and finished.... The partaking of the Eucharist has always been a social act.... Since the real Eucharistic action consists in the individual's own personal mental remembrance of the passion, and is not an act of the universal Body of Christ throughout time and space, there is no more need for a priest commissioned to act for the whole Body, or indeed possibility of such a priesthood. There is no possibility of pleading the Eucharist for another, or for the dead in Christ; though we may pray together *at* it (not *by* it) as we intercede at other times. And since the action is purely mental, the external means to the action – the bread and wine – need only be a 'token'. There is no need to suppose that 'the Eucharist is the Flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ', as the primitive church had held. In strict necessity there is no need even of the taking of the bread and wine, which is only a Christ-ordained stimulus to the real Eucharistic action, the devout remembering of his passion by the justified and believing soul dwelling upon the thought that he saved it (Dix's emphases).<sup>477</sup>

Despite this opposition it was never Dix's intention to revise the liturgy; he merely commented upon it and explained its ancient roots. In the heat of debate about the introduction into the Church of England of certain Roman practices by Anglo-Catholics, its hierarchy decided to propose a new Prayer Book, to complement that of 1662. This exercise culminated in the Prayer Book of 1927/8 and the complex legal ramifications that led to its eventual rejection by Parliament are well documented.<sup>478</sup> Dix seemed to cherish the embarrassment felt by the episcopal bench when the revised Prayer Book was disowned by the House of Commons (twice!). He wrote:

When that hope failed [the attempts to get the 1927 Prayer Book accepted] they spent two years in something rather like sulking, and in ignoring the whole problem. Finally they have reverted to trying to enforce the legal liturgy of 1662, not by the courts and the secular law, but by their own 'spiritual authority' (exerted by methods not entirely divorced from financial pressure and the distribution of patronage) with 1928 used almost as a threat for those who will not conform to 1662. The unfortunate result of this series of somersaults of policy unaccompanied by any clear development of principle has been at each stage to prevent the Church

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<sup>477</sup> Ibid, 624.

<sup>478</sup> See *inter alia*: Bryan Spinks, 'The Prayer Book 'Crisis'', 239-243; William Syndor, *The Prayer Book through the Ages*, (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1997), esp Chap VIII, and Oscar Hardman, *A Companion to the 1928 Prayer Book*, (London: SPCK, 1929).

from beginning to come to any common mind on the matter at all, or from setting out to gather fruits of the experience gained by the experiments in the parishes.<sup>479</sup>

In his observations about the discomfiture felt by the church's hierarchy, caused by the failure of the Deposited Book of 1927/8 to receive Parliamentary assent, Dix explained that this conclusion, 'really altered nothing ... except the bishops' own respect for the law of the land'.<sup>480</sup> Various bishops allowed parts of the book to be used in their respective dioceses but, in general, the Holy Communion service was excluded from these authorisations because it was still considered to be too controversial. However, those clergy (mainly Anglo-Catholic but some Evangelical) who were still dissatisfied with the theology of the 1662 rite began (or continued) to make their own adjustments to the service order. These priests would, for example, place the Prayer of Humble Access before the Sursum Corda, so as not to interrupt the flow of the Anaphora, and set the Prayer of Oblation and the Lord's Prayer immediately after the Prayer of Consecration (perhaps to allow some time for adoration of the sacrament for those worshippers so disposed). This arrangement came to be called the Interim Rite.

Dix was never enthusiastic about the *Book of Common Prayer* and it can be allowed that one of his purposes in writing *The Shape of the Liturgy*, particularly Chapter XVI, was to discredit the theology of Cranmer's Holy Communion order in the eyes of Catholic minded Anglicans. He saw Cranmer's rite as an attempt to give liturgical expression to the doctrine of *sola fides*. In his time, many English Anglo-Catholics were content with rearranging the order of some of the prayers in the 1662 Holy Communion service to give it a more traditionally Catholic appearance, but for Dix, they were dealing with the symptoms rather than the disease. Dix would have preferred an on-going, long-term period of controlled liturgical experimentation within the Church of England, under the loose supervision of a few of its bishops, but without according them any real authority to regulate it, in the hope that by doing so, not only would it have a liturgical expression more faithful to the Christian tradition, but also it would come to a clearer sense of its own identity.<sup>481</sup> Dix was conscious of the inadequacy of the individual human mind to determine the contents of the liturgy and he made the significant comment that, 'good liturgies are not written; they grow'.<sup>482</sup> The processes that led to eventual revision of the

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<sup>479</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 709.

<sup>480</sup> Ibid, 701.

<sup>481</sup> Ibid, 726.

<sup>482</sup> Ibid, 719. Dix may have had Cranmer in mind when he wrote this.

Prayer Book were far more episcopally organised than those that Dix proposed. There was an inevitability about this because of the very hierarchical structure of the Church of England and its tightly controlled relationship with the apparatus of the State. In 1969, by means of the Synodical Government Measure, the Church Assembly was renamed and reconstituted as the General Synod of the Church of England. This newly structured, Church handed liturgical matters over to a newly formed Liturgical Commission, which spent much time exploring a large number of ideas and suggestions for reform, testing these within the worshipping community and feeding back comment and criticism via diocesan synods and deanery meetings. Albeit overseen by a formally constituted body, these processes of revision were not unlike those that Dix proposed. While Dix may have disliked the eventual Eucharistic rites defined by the Commission its conclusions were, paradoxically, a direct result of his writings.

While, as has been stated, Dix had no interest in liturgical revision, others in the Church of England became increasingly aware of the restriction placed upon its worship by the *Book of Common Prayer*. Evidence came from some unexpected quarters. Military chaplains in the First World War had described the difficulties and deficiencies in the religion and religious life of servicemen and had emphasised the need for a simpler Prayer Book. They stated that Matins and Evensong were difficult and dull and that Holy Communion should be treated as the principal service on Sundays.<sup>483</sup>

Ronald Jasper and Paul Bradshaw reported that, following the 1928 debacle, the movement towards liturgical revision was taken a stage further in an Archbishops' Commission appointed in 1939, under Cyril Garbett of York, to consider the revision and modification of canon law.<sup>484</sup> One result of this debate was the Commissioners' opinion that the phrase 'lawful authority' had no precise meaning in law! The Commission was persuaded to give it meaning within a new Canon 13 and to use that interpretation to allow liturgical revision. In future any alternative or additional uses to the Prayer Book, as sanctioned by Convocation, would be deemed to have been ordered by lawful authority. Protracted discussions and negotiations were eventually embodied in the Prayer Book (Alternative and Other Services) Measure. This was presented to Parliament, which passed it without objection; it received Royal Assent in March, 1965, and became operative on 1<sup>st</sup>

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<sup>483</sup> Michael Francis Snape, *The Royal Army Chaplains' Department, 1796-1953: Clergy Under Fire*, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008), 253

<sup>484</sup> R C D Jasper and Paul Bradshaw, *A Companion to the Alternative Service Book*, (London: SPCK, 1986), 23.

May, 1966.<sup>485</sup> Under the terms of this Measure substitute services could be devised and used experimentally for periods of seven years, with the option of a further seven years. Thus the Measure was effective until 1980, when other arrangements would have to be made. Parliamentary impediment to free and unfettered liturgical revision was maintained until the Church of England attained independence in 1969. Thereafter it became responsible for its own doctrinal and liturgical autonomy and could not be hampered by the apparatus of the State.

Although Dix had written a fully comprehensive study of all aspects of the Holy Eucharist and Eucharistic worship his work was, in part, paralleled by Henry de Candole and Arthur Couratin. These eminent Churchmen wrote a series of much simpler essays in which they explained the various parts of the Holy Communion service. These were made available for parish discussion, and in them they asked their readers to address certain fundamental issues.<sup>486</sup> The authors posed a number of questions. What are the essential parts of the service? Does the language need altering? Should there be a sermon as a normal part of every celebration? Where is the best place for the intercessions? Is an absolution required? Is a form of dismissal needed? Is a blessing necessary? Their book envisaged a fresh start, settling structure and basic principles before proceeding to a text, rather than simply tinkering with material from 1662 and 1928.<sup>487</sup> This compact volume also included a glossary of some liturgical terms. In a foreword, Archbishop Donald Coggan made the observation that, while previous generations had spoken of having an incomparable liturgy, there had, in fact, been few if any others with which to compare it.<sup>488</sup>

A sceptic might ask about the purpose of this liturgical questionnaire. Many among the laity and not a few of the clergy had little if any experience of liturgical studies and would only be marginally helped by the explanations of various elements of the Eucharist. How were bodies of opinion to be amassed and analysed? How could these views be incorporated into any new or revised liturgy? How would the positions of traditionalists, those who objected to any liturgical change, be incorporated? What proportion of the worshipping congregation needed to subscribe to a change before it could be implemented? Would revisers necessarily agree on any future rite? How would the success, or otherwise,

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<sup>485</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>486</sup> Henry de Candole, and Arthur Couratin, *Re-Shaping the Liturgy: Invitation to a Parish Enquiry*, (London: Church Information Office, 1964).

<sup>487</sup> R C D Jasper and Paul Bradshaw, *A Companion to the Alternative Service Book*, 172.

<sup>488</sup> Henry de Candole, and Arthur Couratin, *Re-Shaping the Liturgy*, iv.

of the changes be identified? Would future revision be abandoned if the first experiments proved to be a failure? Few if any answers to these and other questions were forthcoming.

The first version of a Holy Communion rite after enactment of the Prayer Book Measure was the introduction of Series 1, which scarcely differed from the 1928 rite. It included an Old Testament reading but did not reproduce the Eucharistic Prayer in its original form. Instead, it allowed three options: to conclude the Prayer of Consecration after the Institution Narrative (as in 1662); to continue into the Prayer of Oblation (as in the Interim Rite) or to add the Prayer of Oblation but to exclude the element of self-oblation. The Prayer of Intercession included a prayer for the dead and for this and other reasons the Order was only narrowly endorsed; it came into effect in November, 1966.

Series 1 was followed, almost immediately, in July, 1967, by Series 2, which was authorised for experimental use for a period of four years. This comprised an ante-Communion, with Bible readings, a sermon, the creed and prayers, followed by a Eucharistic rite. This latter portion contained the four, clearly defined procedures of taking, blessing, breaking and giving that Dix had proposed as the essential actions.<sup>489</sup> Its authors were conscious of the need to produce a form of words that were capable of various doctrinal interpretations. At the same time Series 2 afforded the celebrant a number of options. The *Gloria in Excelsis*, returned to the beginning of the order, could be said or sung, or replaced by a hymn or song of praise (said or sung) or the Kyries or the paraphrase, ‘Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One : Have mercy upon us’. One or two lessons could be read; there was a choice of two Eucharistic Prayers and two version of the Lord’s Prayer were included. Before the Dismissal the rite contained a rubric, *The Bishop, when present, or the Priest, may bless the people*; but the words of the Blessing were not printed. The response to ‘The Lord be with you’ was changed to ‘And also with you’; and ‘I believe’ was changed to ‘We believe’. For the first time the Fraction was divorced from the Anaphora, making it a distinct and separate action, much as Dix suggested that it should be in his four-fold shape. Jasper and Bradshaw made it clear that the Liturgy of the Sacrament had:

four clearly defined actions – the preparation of the bread and wine, thanksgiving over bread and wine, the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the bread and wine – a structure which owed much to the researches of Gregory Dix.<sup>490</sup>

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<sup>489</sup> See: R C D Jasper and Paul F Bradshaw, *A Companion to the Alternative Service Book*, 172.

<sup>490</sup> *Ibid*, 172.

## The Alternative Service Book 1980

The creation of *The Alternative Service Book* (ASB) marked the first occasion when the Church of England in the twentieth century had a new, completely separate, self-contained volume, ostensibly sufficient for all of her needs. That it was experimental is indicated in the Authorisation, which allowed its use until 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1990. Despite this limited usage a table for the Date of Easter, in the introductory pages, listed all the years up to 2025. The first thirty pages contained The Calendar and Rules to Order the Service. As in the *Book of Common Prayer* these were followed by a section of Choir Offices and by Prayers for Various Occasions. After these came two Orders of Holy Communion, designated Rites A and B. The former of these contained four Eucharistic Prayers while the latter was cast very much in the 1662 Prayer Book mould. The next seventy pages were occupied with Initiatory Rites, followed by The Marriage Service and Funeral Services. The book concluded with an Ordinal. Unlike the Prayer Book it did not contain: the Athanasian Creed, a Litany, a Catechism, a Communion, an Order for the Visitation of the Sick or an Accession Service. The authors of the ASB were conscious of the ephemeral nature of worshipping texts. They wrote:

But words, even agreed words, are only the beginning of worship. Those who use them do well to recognize their transience and imperfection; to treat them as a ladder, not a goal; to acknowledge their power in kindling devotion, without claiming that they are fully adequate to the task.<sup>491</sup>

Dix, in terms of *The Shape of the Liturgy*, would have agreed that the authors of the ASB had produced a satisfactory, liturgical structure. The ASB was written in the 1960s and 70s when discussion of language was becoming a matter of more serious debate. Should this be modernised, how far, and by what rules? The ASB ante-dated the serious debates about gender inclusiveness and political correctness. Language was not an issue for Dix but he probably would have responded positively about the ASB because it adopted the ‘shape’ of which he wrote. The ASB was very Dixian, in one sense, albeit it was from a different era: it was a very Catholic book. Buchanan posed a hypothetical question about the composition of the ASB. He asked, ‘Just suppose that Gregory Dix had lived. Suppose his mischievous, maverick, learned perversity had been charming, beguiling and

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<sup>491</sup> *The Alternative Service Book 1980*, Preface, 11.

bewitching the liturgical commission and all its works. How then would the course of revision have gone?<sup>492</sup>

## Common Worship 2000

The ASB, originally planned to be experimental for a decade, was kept in use until almost the end of the century. It was replaced in the year 2000 by *Common Worship*. Like the ASB this comprised a complete Prayer Book and its contents very much paralleled its predecessor. Again, it contained two Orders of Holy Communion, designated Order One and Order Two. Order One had no fewer than eight different Eucharistic Prayers, prayers that Bradshaw suggested were, ‘recognisably distinct from one another in their overall style, imagery, language and length’.<sup>493</sup> Order Two was almost a copy of Series 1, the Interim Rite, but was also made available in a modern language version. In keeping with the technical developments of the age, *Common Worship* was and is available on the Internet, by which means individual worship leaders may select those elements that they wish to include in their respective service orders. In this respect perhaps the title *Common Worship* is a misnomer.

## Rites in other Churches

Although, as I have observed, Dix’s synthesis of the four-fold shape was instrumental in the design of several modern Eucharistic rites, he never planned a revised Eucharistic liturgy for Anglican worship. He was happy to give his explanations on all the facets of the Church’s worship, to the structure of the Christian year and, finally, to an appraisal of the effects that had resulted from the Protestant Reformation. By steering well clear of liturgical innovation he carefully avoided the many problems associated with these endeavours. Perhaps his knowledge of the disastrous events of 1927/8 and the rejection of the first attempt at a revised Prayer Book led him to remain clear of the many arguments involved in such undertakings. He would happily leave the actual work of liturgical revision, if such was deemed necessary, to others.

The first Church to introduce Dix’s ‘shape’ to its liturgy was the Church of South India, inaugurated in 1947. A separated Offertory was made clear by the inclusion of

<sup>492</sup> Colin O Buchannan, ‘Revision in the Church of England in Retrospect’, in Kenneth Stevenson (ed), *The Liturgy Reshaped*, (London: SPCK, 1982), 156.

<sup>493</sup> Paul Bradshaw (ed), *A Companion to Common Worship, Vol 1*, (London: SPCK, 2001), 122.

Psalm 27: 7 (Therefore will I offer in his dwelling an oblation with great gladness : I will sing, and speak praises unto the Lord) and a rubric which read, ‘*The bread and wine for the communion, together with the alms of the people, are brought forward and placed on the communion table*’. Between The Prayer of Humble Access (a slightly modified version of that in the *Book of Common Prayer*) and the *Agnus Dei* was a rubric – *The presbyter rises, and breaks the bread, saying: The bread which we break, is it not a communion in the body of Christ?* (words from 1 Cor 10: 16).

By remaining uninvolved in liturgical revision, including that for the CSI, Dix avoided accusations of making the sorts of doctrinal and theological changes to the Eucharist that were introduced by other reformers. Francis Read expressed concern about the ways that revisers had subtly and deviously altered the fundamentals of Anglican doctrine in the USA. Read wrote:

When the 1979 Book of Common Prayer was undergoing trial use in the Episcopal Church, its theological implications were seriously questioned by a large number of devout Churchmen. It was charged that the basis of traditional Anglicanism was threatened thereby and would be eroded and finally undermined if the new book were to be adopted. The Standing Liturgical Commission (SLC) and the champions of the new book craftily refused to meet these charges head on, but by ignoring them (or when this was not possible, by evasion and deliberately ambiguous rhetoric) lulled General Convention and the whole Episcopal Church into thinking that merely liturgical reform and updating were intended, and so obtained final adoption of the book as the Church’s one and only authorized liturgy. But now, it has finally been revealed that the new book was actually intended by its framers to alter radically the whole theological basis of Episcopalian worship. The silence, crafty evasions, and ambiguous rhetoric that met charges that theological change was implicit in the new rites are now justified as strategic ploys to secure parliamentary victory.<sup>494</sup>

Yet, despite his detachment from such controversies, Dix’s studies had a direct impact on the new American rite. Lesley Northup asserted that the 1979 American Book relied heavily on the work of Dix and other liturgical researchers.<sup>495</sup> Anthony Burton evaluated the importance of Dix’s four-fold Eucharistic shape and suggested that *The Shape of the Liturgy* had, in large part, shaped the thinking of two generations of Anglican clergy.<sup>496</sup>

Other creators of Eucharistic liturgies have not necessarily followed Dix’s guidance in the shaping of their respective rites and in recent years new liturgical revisions have

<sup>494</sup> Francis W Read, *How Episcopalians were Deceived*, loc cit.

<sup>495</sup> Lesley A Northup, ‘The Episcopal Church in the USA’, in Charles Hefling and Cynthia Shattuck (eds), *The Oxford Guide to the Book of Common Prayer*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 360f.

<sup>496</sup> Anthony Burton, *The End of the Liturgical Movement and the Recovery of Biblical Worship: An Anglican Perspective*, Ref: <http://www.prayerbook.ca/crisis/crisis04.htm> (Accessed 07/07/12).



appeared. Some of these appear to lack structure or stature and are sometimes referred to, somewhat humorously, as diminished rites. An example is the 2009 Holy Communion Order of the Australian Anglican Church. It occupies only six pages of text and comprises just 1,250 words. It contains no provision for an Offertory, not even a collection of alms. It has one Eucharistic Prayer and offers no suggestions for seasonal variations. The Fraction, which is separated from the Institution Narrative, is combined with the Communion in a section entitled, ‘The Breaking of Bread and The Communion’.

## A Roman Catholic perspective

At the time when Dix was writing *The Shape of the Liturgy* and shortly after it was published, two important encyclicals concerning the worshipping praxis of the Roman Catholic Church were promulgated by the Vatican: *Mystici Corporis* (1943) and *Mediator Dei* (1947). Keith Pecklers explained that *Mystici Corporis* represented a significant step because the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ offered the theological underpinnings for the Roman liturgical movement. *Mediator Dei* was especially important because it was the first papal promulgation ever to be devoted entirely to liturgy, and since it affirmed the work of the liturgical movement (albeit with a few caveats) it soon became known as the movement’s Magna Carta.<sup>497</sup> Subsequent to these encyclicals, a number of international liturgical congresses were held in the 1950s. The last of these, in Assisi in 1956, was attended by over 1,400 participants from five continents, including over eighty bishops and six cardinals, and it signified a certain maturing of the liturgical movement. Three years later Pope John XXIII announced (on 25<sup>th</sup> January, 1959) that there would be a Second Vatican Council.

In the same sense that Dix had stressed the important place that the laity should play in the Eucharistic worship of the Church, so Pope Paul VI, in his promulgation of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* made this concept equally clear to the Roman Church. Sect II, Chapter 14 stated:

Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people’ (1 Pet. 2:9; cf. 2:4-5), is their right and duty by reason of their baptism. In the restoration and

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<sup>497</sup> Keith F Pecklers, *Vatican II and the Liturgical Renewal: An Unfinished Agenda*, Ref: [http://www.fdlc.org/Liturgy\\_Resources/LITURGICAL\\_MOVEMENT-Pecklers.htm](http://www.fdlc.org/Liturgy_Resources/LITURGICAL_MOVEMENT-Pecklers.htm) (Accessed 20/07/12).

promotion of the sacred liturgy, this full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else.

This noteworthy document allowed liturgical reforms based on theological, historical and pastoral investigations with the stipulation that they were genuinely required good for the Church and that they grow organically from forms already existing.<sup>498</sup> Dix would certainly have championed such a formula. The principal change was a move from the universal order of the Latin Tridentine Mass to a plethora in vernacular languages; many of them followed Dix's four-fold pattern, with the Offertory and the Fraction separated from the Anaphora. Dix's insights into the liturgy were fundamental to the thinking of the Second Vatican Council as well as to revisions of Eucharistic rites within his own Church.

In the aftermath of Vatican II, Pope Paul VI invited a number of outside (non-Roman) theologians, from a view variety of Churches, to attend meetings of the Commission for the Implementation of the Liturgy Constitution (now the Congregation for Divine Worship). Two influential Anglicans, Ronald Jasper, a member of the Church of England's Liturgical Commission, and Massey Shepherd, a major architect of the revised American Prayer Book, were included in this invitation. Throughout the 1970s and the early 1980s ecumenical dialogue was dominated by the work of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commissions (ARCIC 1 and 2), especially through discussions on Eucharistic doctrine.

## Discussion

The influence of the Roman shape of the liturgy has been considerable among most liturgical churches of the West, including all the member churches of the Anglican Communion, the Methodist Church in England and, less formally, churches such as the United Methodist Church of the United States. One result of these changes has been the criticism that has been heaped on the Roman Catholic Church, particularly for a loss of mystery and a reduction in the sacrificial element of the Mass. Patrick McClosky remarked that liturgical changes (certainly since the Second Vatican Council) have meant that the sense of mystery in the Mass has disappeared: the tabernacle has been hidden; the altar has been replaced by a nave table; consecration bells have been silenced and the previously quiet preparation to receive the sacrament has been interrupted by a handshake

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<sup>498</sup> The Liturgy Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* was approved on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 1963, by an astonishing vote of 2,147 in favour and four against.

of peace.<sup>499</sup> Yet the fact that Dix and other Anglicans influenced reform within Rome, which stimulated the impact that Rome had on many other churches, should not be neglected.

Dix almost single-handedly put an end to the search for a primitive Eucharistic prayer, or Anaphora. He argued that the central question about the Eucharist was not related to the texts of the prayers, but rather to its universal shape, a shape that defined its theology and consequent actions. Yet those who argue about the number of elements that should be included in the ‘shape’ of the Eucharist really miss Dix’s point; for him the ‘shape’ was a theological statement and was related to his understanding of the nature of salvation. The Eucharist is fundamentally constituted in the actions of taking (offertory), blessing (Eucharistic prayer), breaking (fraction), and giving (communion). Eucharistic praxes that have rearranged this shape (as in the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*) or have omitted parts of it have, Dix argued, betrayed the universal tradition of the Church. Even though individual elements of the argument have been questioned (like the nature and centrality of the Offertory), it seems generally agreed that Dix’s fourfold shape has affected many subsequent liturgical reforms of Eucharistic liturgy.<sup>500</sup> In his weblog Patrick Comerford wrote:

The pattern is clear, for example, in the second order for Holy Communion in *A Prayer Book for Australia* (1995) and Order One of the Church of England’s *Common Worship*. It could even be argued that the clarity with which the four-action shape can be observed in the post-Vatican II Mass of Paul VI may be attributed to the consensus that Dix created.<sup>501</sup>

Dix was a fierce critic of Cranmer’s insistence on *sola scriptura* and the resultant liturgical reforms, especially in the 1552 *Book of Common Prayer*, and of what he believed was the Zwinglian theology behind them. He argued that the origins of the Eucharistic meal lay not in the Passover *Seder* but rather in the Jewish fellowship-meal, the *Chabûrah*. Dix also emphasised the length of time it took for the Liturgy of the Word to become an integral part of the Eucharistic rite.

Anglo-Catholics are sometimes seen as more critical of their Prayer Book inheritance than they should be. The ‘Cranmer was a Zwinglian’ theme was formulated by

<sup>499</sup> Patrick McCloskey, *Is the Mass Still a Sacrifice?*, Ref:

<http://www.americancatholic.org/Newsletters/CU/ac0479.asp> (Accessed 19/12/10).

<sup>500</sup> John F Baldovin, ‘The Liturgical Movement and its Consequences’, in Charles Hefling and Cynthia Shattuck (eds), *The Oxford Guide to the Book of Common Prayer*, (Oxford: OUP, 2006), 252f.

<sup>501</sup> Patrick Comerford, ‘Dom Gregory Dix (1901-1952)’, 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2011, [http://revpatrickcomerford.blogspot.co.uk/2011\\_11\\_21\\_archive.html](http://revpatrickcomerford.blogspot.co.uk/2011_11_21_archive.html) (Accessed 19/12/10).

Dix, and it has been suggested that Dix was wrong. Recent studies of Cranmer's Eucharistic doctrine put him more squarely in the camp of Calvin (true presence) rather than of Zwingli (memorialism).<sup>502</sup> Other scholars argued that Cranmer's views were very similar, if not identical, to those of Heinrich Bullinger.<sup>503</sup> However, most Anglo-Catholics are equally unhappy with Calvin's theology, which was based soundly on *sola scriptura*. Cranmer's Eucharistic rite has been disparaged because it is seen to teach a doctrine that Cranmer himself did not hold. Cranmer's Eucharistic rite was open to misinterpretation, not because it was deliberately ambiguous, but because its language was limited to the translations of Holy Scripture that were then available.

Andrew Lunn has analysed the concept of tradition within the Church and the ways that individual Church traditions are often qualified, as, for example: Methodist, Anglican, catholic, evangelical, etc. He reasoned that much more is meant by 'tradition' than is implied within a simple definition. He argued that there is 'deep tradition', those things which are implicit, often deeply embedded in the subconscious, but often not stated. Secondly, there is 'local tradition': people and communities who may be obscure to the wider world but whose faith – for good and ill – has left an enduring impression in the place where they reside and worship. Finally there are 'contemporary traditions' of more recent thinkers like Dix.<sup>504</sup> Dix argued that every local Church had received the rite of the Eucharist, its way of performing it – its tradition – from the time of its evangelisation. For Dix this meant that there was a living tradition of the liturgy at the heart of its corporate life that stemmed from the roots of every Apostolic Church.<sup>505</sup>

Many traditions become so embedded that substantial periods of time pass before changes to them are considered, even when these become allowable. When, for example, the Church in Wales became an autonomous province in 1920, it continued to use the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*; a revision was not authorised for experimental use until 1966. In further liturgical consultations the compilers of the 2004 Eucharistic rite in the Church in Wales acknowledged that, 'The fourfold shape of taking, blessing, breaking and giving was certainly present in the 1662 Service of Holy Communion, though in a manner that left

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<sup>502</sup> See *inter alia*: Diarmaid McCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer*, 616.

<sup>503</sup> It should be noted that when Calvin and Bullinger came to an agreement about the Eucharist in 1549 known as the *Consensus Tigurinus* (the Zurich Accord), it was Calvin who made (as he later privately acknowledged) all the concessions, while Bullinger made none, or none of any importance. Nor is there any positive evidence for substantial contact between Cranmer and Calvin, let alone for any influence upon Cranmer by Calvin.

<sup>504</sup> Andrew Lunn, *Ministerial Practice Handbook, 2012-13*, Wesley Study Centre, Durham, 6.

<sup>505</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 6.

much to be desired. The first three actions were all associated with one short section of the prayer of consecration'.<sup>506</sup> The compilers wrote:

This order (HE66, The Blue Book) gave much clearer expression than 1662 had done to the fourfold shape of the liturgical action. The definitive version of the 1966 order appears in Volume I of the 1984 Prayer Book (HE84, The Green Book). As far as liturgical shape is concerned, there is no difference at all between HE66 and HE84. Both are typical early Dixian products. This was to be expected in the case of HE66, of course, but it was more than slightly surprising 18 years later. By 1984, a number of important questions were being widely asked about Dix's thesis. The first question concerned the taking of the bread and the cup. While Dix's own comments on the matter had been somewhat opaque, Anglican liturgical revisers working under his influence had tended to equate the action of taking the bread and cup with the liturgical offertory. An important indirect influence in this respect, by no means least in Wales, will have been the ceremonial practice associated with the Parish Communion. (The Parish Communion Movement had 'rediscovered' the ancient offertory procession and laid enormous emphasis upon it.)<sup>507</sup>

J A T Robinson informed his readers that the 'shape' of the Eucharistic rite is constructed around the actions of Christ at the Last Supper, not around any pattern of words, such as in Matins and Evensong.<sup>508</sup> Robinson stressed the importance of Dix's comprehension of the *Totus Christus*, Christ in his Body, in the action of the Mass. He stressed Dix's Patristic understanding in relation to that later accepted in the mediaeval Church; the difference between a model of the Eucharist as a celebration of the whole Body of Christ and the conception of the Eucharist as something done by the priest for the people. Robinson wrote:

The presbyter or Bishop was never called 'the celebrant' in the primitive Church, but 'the president'. And in that distinction there is a world of difference. It is the difference between the two worlds of the early Church and the mediaeval Church, between the conception of the Eucharist as a celebration of the whole Body of Christ and the conception of the Eucharist as something done by the priest for the people. And, as Dix showed in his earlier and fascinating account in the volume of essays entitled *The Parish Communion*, this mediaeval development has been with us all, Catholic and Protestant, ever since. In practice, if not in theory, most of what the Reformers achieved was that, whereas previously the priest's duty was to say Mass for the people, it was now his function to provide Communion for the people.<sup>509</sup>

<sup>506</sup> The Church in Wales, *Introducing Holy Eucharist 2004*.

<sup>507</sup> Ibid. The Parish Communion Movement dates back to the closing years of the nineteenth century but it was given momentum by the Parish and people Movement in the middle of the twentieth century.

<sup>508</sup> J A T Robinson, *Liturgy Coming to Life*, (London: Mowbrays, 1960), 21.

<sup>509</sup> Ibid, 26f. Dix's theology may be found in: Gregory Dix, 'The Idea of 'The Church' in the Primitive Liturgies', in A G Hebert (ed), *The Parish Communion*, (London: SPCK, 1957), 97-143.

John Worgul, in a review of *The Shape of the Liturgy*, wrote of the forces of subjectivism that have been at work in Western culture as early as the Middle Ages. The resultant Modern and Post-modern existentialism rejected the objective nature of theology and sacramental action. He believed that the West could not, by its nature, appreciate the radical, objective element in the biblical and early Church sacramental world view. Worgul argued that Dix's Eucharistic writing created enough of a spiritual and intellectual resource to shake the Church out of its subjective slumbers and the interior world of itself.<sup>510</sup> He wrote:

We may not agree with all that Dom Dix has to say about the liturgy. Moreover, he is an Anglo-Catholic who is addressing the specific issues of his Anglican Church. Still, what he has to say carries the weight of intense scholarship. He with splendid lucidity describes the historical development of Western attitudes towards the liturgy.... Those who are on a journey out of themselves and into the radical objectivity of Christ's Table will want to consider the scholarly data Dix and others like him have provided... Dix had argued that much of the historical material necessary for the interpretation of the primitive Eucharist was unknown or not understood as late as the year AD 1900.<sup>511</sup>

Worgul concluded:

Should Christians re-evaluate their own understanding of the Eucharist in light of these findings, the outcome may very well be a greater unity among Christians. If such unity will happen, it will happen around the Eucharist, the very means our Lord instituted to draw us together in him.<sup>512</sup>

It is interesting to reflect that, since the 1960s, many ecumenical endeavours have led to this very conclusion.

In a completely different vein, the lasting impact of Dix's Eucharistic theology in his reinforcement of the concept that the Church is a corporate body was explored by William Cavanaugh. In his book *Torture and Eucharist*, which described social conditions in Chile, he drew on the writings of Dix and Henri de Lubac to stress the dire effects of an overly individualised concept of Eucharist. This had, wrote Cavanaugh, the effect of isolating individuals and rendering the Church ineffective in dealing with oppression until an understanding of the 'true' body of Christ became present in the community. Only

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<sup>510</sup> John Worgul, *A Synopsis of Dom Gregory Dix's The Shape of the Liturgy*, Ref: <http://www.ancienthopes.com/content/A%20Synopsis%20of%20Dom%20Gregory%20Dix.pdf> (Accessed 07/07/13).

<sup>511</sup> Ibid.

<sup>512</sup> Ibid.

when this presence was lived in the community would the Church find the courage to stand up to oppression and torture.<sup>513</sup>

Dix made it clear that he considered the laity to be an order within the Church. On the opening pages of *The Shape of the Liturgy*, Dix explained the significance of the laity, within a priesthood of all believers. In a footnote Dix explained that the laity are an ‘order’ in the Church no less than the ‘holy orders’ of the clergy. He added that they were anciently required to undergo a three year period of training and preparation before they were allowed to enter it by baptism and confirmation. He wrote:

The Eucharist is here the vital expression towards God of what the Church fundamentally is, a corporate ‘holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ’.<sup>514</sup>

He stressed their importance as a constituent part of *ekklesia*. He wrote:

The primitive ideal of corporate worship was not the assimilation of the ‘order’ of laity to those of the other orders, but the combination of all the radically distinct ‘liturgies’ of all the orders in a single complete action of the organic Body of Christ.<sup>515</sup>

This profound teaching of Dix found favour with those who oversaw liturgical reform in the Roman Catholic Church. In 1948 Pope Pius XII had appointed Annibale Bugnini as Secretary of the Commission for Liturgical Reform and in 1959 Pope John XXIII, in his announcement of plans to convene a Second Vatican Council, selected him as Secretary of the Pontifical Preparatory Commission on the Liturgy. In 1964 Pope Paul VI chose Bugnini, now elevated to the status of Titular Archbishop of Diocletiana, as *peritus* of the *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the Council’s Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. Bugnini wrote:

The participation and active involvement of the people of God in the liturgical celebration is the ultimate goal of the reform.... This involvement and participation is not limited to externals but reaches to the very root of things: to the mystery being celebrated, to Christ himself who is present.<sup>516</sup>

As an ardent Anglo-Papalist, Dix would have greatly pleased to hear words of John Paul II, ‘The restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the

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<sup>513</sup> William T Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 205-7; 229-234; 252 ff. As well as *The Shape of the Liturgy*, Cavanaugh referred to: Henri de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticism: L'Eucharistie et L'Eglise au moyen age*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, (Paris: Aubier, 1949).

<sup>514</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 2.

<sup>515</sup> *Ibid*, 129.

<sup>516</sup> Annibale Bugnini, *The Reform of the Liturgy 1948-1975*, (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 5.

Second Vatican Council’.<sup>517</sup> Massey Shepherd maintained that this unity was not only to be among Catholics themselves, but a unity among separated Christians who serve one common Lord. This was to be, ‘unity in esteem and respect between Christians and those who follow non-Christian religions; and finally among all men’.<sup>518</sup>

Following from the deliberations of the Second Vatican Council, as these filtered through the many Christian Churches that were essentially antipathetic to Rome, the basic forms of Eucharistic synaxes became more unified than at any earlier time in the history of the Western Church. In this context David Jasper has observed that:

It was clear that the debates of centuries were being overcome by a scholarly, theological, practical and actual return to the practice of the Early Church, and above all as we find it in the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus as used in the Church in Rome as early as 215 CE. One of the most widely used textbooks on the history of the Eucharist, Jasper and Cuming’s *Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed* (Third Edition, 1987) cites most frequently as its sources two books, one Roman Catholic and the other Anglican: the first is Louis Bouyer’s great work of 1970, *Eucharist*, and the other a work which, though it predates the Vatican Council, remains one of the standard texts of liturgical scholarship in the twentieth century, the Anglican Dom Gregory Dix’s *The Shape of the Liturgy* (1945), a work which firmly connects the church’s worship and its theology with the forms and practices of the early, apostolic Church, and anticipates the Council in many remarkable ways.<sup>519</sup>

John Richardson considered the legitimate sociological pressure being felt by the Church in the 1960s. He wrote:

In Christian circles, things which now seem ‘cringe-worthy’ were perceived as a breath of fresh air blowing through the dust of centuries. [It] evidenced a genuinely populist demand for a modern-language liturgy which went beyond the provisions of the Family Service. In this respect, Series 3 was arguably as culturally necessary as had been Luther’s ‘German Mass’.<sup>520</sup>

In a study of one of Dix’s ‘shapes’ the difference between ‘the offertory’ and ‘the taking’ came under fierce attack from Colin Buchanan. He pointed out that the bringing of the bread and wine to the altar was simply not the same as the (priestly) taking of the bread and cup. The offertory is no more or less than a necessary preliminary to the four-fold

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<sup>517</sup> Quoted by: Dennis Rudd, *Vatican II -The Voice of the Church: Restoring Unity*, Ref: [http://vatican2voice.org/6unity/restore\\_unity.htm](http://vatican2voice.org/6unity/restore_unity.htm) (Accessed 23/07/13).

<sup>518</sup> Massey Shepherd, ‘The Liturgy’, in Bernard C Pawley (ed), *The Second Vatican Council: Studies by Eight Anglican Observers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 152. Pope John XXIII’s actual words in his opening speech to the Council (when translated into English) were, ‘esteem and respect for the Catholic Church which animates those who follow non-Christian religions’.

<sup>519</sup> David Jasper, *Vatican II and New Directions in Ecumenical Liturgy: The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 2013, to be published in: *Theology*, 2014.

<sup>520</sup> John Richardson,, ‘Liturgicalism Triumphant’, *New Directions*, June 2000.



action of the Eucharist. The revised *Roman Missal* of 1970 abandoned the term ‘Offertory’ in favour of the much clearer title ‘Preparation of the Gifts’. The influence of Buchanan’s arguments and the changes in the *Roman Missal* are reflected in an early Church of England’s revised Holy Communion Order (known as Series 1, or the Interim Rite). Most subsequent Anglican rites separate the preparation of the gifts from the taking of the bread and cup. This preparation of the bread and wine makes no reference to the need for an Offertory procession, or any direct involvement of the laity. Dix had written that, ‘from before the end of the first century the offertory was understood to have a meaning of its own, without which the primitive significance of the whole Eucharist would be not incomplete but actually destroyed’.<sup>521</sup> Buchanan suggested that Dix was, ‘a beacon which consciously or unconsciously led the whole fleet astray’.<sup>522</sup>

Dix made it clear that, in his opinion, although, significantly, he offered no direct or citable evidence for his claim, the early Church had a practice where members of the congregation brought their *prosphora*, their offerings of bread and wine, to Church with them and gave these to the Deacon who presented them on the altar.<sup>523</sup> Donald Gray equally recognised the importance of an Offertory within a processional form. He saw it as a procedure:

in which representatives of the People of God placed on the altar the bread and wine, together with their gifts of money, represented for them the totality of their life and the life of the society from which they came.<sup>524</sup>

By contrast, Buchanan argued that the preparation of the elements is not an ‘instituted act’; the word ‘Offertory’ is inappropriate in relation to these elements and the collection of alms bears no relation to the preparation of the elements. He added that he saw no need for a procession to encourage more lay participation.<sup>525</sup> Likewise, Michael Ramsey warned against a ‘shallow and romantic sort of Pelagianism’ which the Offertory seemed to betoken.<sup>526</sup>

Instead of the emphasis on the lay Offertory, *Common Worship* stresses the earlier ASB rubric, frequently overlooked at present, that required the priest momentarily (but in Dix’s view, of necessity) to ‘take’ the bread and wine and place them on the table.

<sup>521</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 110.

<sup>522</sup> Colin Buchanan, *The End of the Offertory*, 29.

<sup>523</sup> Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, 120.

<sup>524</sup> Donald Gray, *Earth and Altar*, (Norwich: Canterbury Press for the Alcuin Club, 1986), 227.

<sup>525</sup> Colin Buchanan, *The End of the Offertory: An Anglican Study*, (Bramcote: Grove Books, 1978), 38ff. Buchanan is a member of the Evangelical wing of the Church and might see processions as a Popish practice, hence his comments.

<sup>526</sup> Michael Ramsey, *Durham Essays and Addresses*, (London: SPCK, 1956), 18.

However, this instruction to ‘take’ has led to several interpretations. In one respect there is a sense that ‘taken’ means placing bread and wine on the altar as at an offertory procession, but this is not universally accepted as a primitive, liturgical position. Others have accepted the view that ‘taken’ means that the president of the Eucharist takes the elements in his or her hands to say the thanksgiving prayer over them, rather than the placing of the elements on the altar. Still others have argued that Dix’s insistence of a four-action shape of the Eucharist is not appropriate since two of the actions (taking and breaking) are subordinate to the other two (thanking and sharing).

William Tighe suggested that the principal importance of *The Shape of the Liturgy* was to be found in the ways that it has affected the course of liturgical reform in the Anglican Communion and the Roman Rite of the Catholic Church, in ways, he added, of which its author would not necessarily have approved.<sup>527</sup> Furthermore, Tighe argued that one of Dix’s effects on the liturgy was regrettable; the practice of the celebrant facing the people. This is now an almost universal custom in the Roman Rite of the Mass and is a feature of much Eucharistic worship within the Anglican Church and elsewhere. Dix suggested that this was a primitive tradition, but it is now generally accepted as being historically inaccurate; the ancient custom was for the celebrant and congregation to face eastwards. The modern form has been justly criticised by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, among others, that, in following Dix’s advice at the Eucharist, the ‘community is celebrating itself’.<sup>528</sup> Elsewhere Tighe argued that, had Dix been able to keep up with the latest German scholarship on early Church matters, he would have found that this view was being undermined by the time he began to write *The Shape of the Liturgy*. But one might reasonably question whether this would have been possible in wartime conditions. His life was cut short before he could revise the book more thoroughly, as was his intention. Dix had mastered the French and German languages, as well as Greek and Latin, as many of his footnotes indicate.<sup>529</sup>

Not only did *The Shape of the Liturgy* have a lasting and abiding impact on late twentieth and twenty-first century Eucharistic theology but Dix’s other theological insights have also been shown to be important, none more so than his contribution to the debate about baptism and confirmation. Jasper and Bradshaw explained that various reports from the Convocations of the Church of England not only endorsed the need for new procedures

<sup>527</sup> William J Tighe, ‘The Museum Piece called ‘Anglo-Papalism’, *New Oxford Review*, Vol 64, No 10, 1997.

<sup>528</sup> Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2000), Chap 3.

<sup>529</sup> William J Tighe, ‘The Shape of the Liturgy’, *Touchstone*, November 2008.

for initiation but drew attention to the lively debate provoked by Dix in his essay, *The Theology of Conformation in Relation to Baptism*.<sup>530</sup> As I have explained, Dix pleaded that one necessary reform was the reintegration of Baptism, Confirmation and First Communion into a single rite. Radical proposals from the Church's Liturgical Commission, in a report entitled *Baptism and Confirmation*, set out an archetypal rite from which others have been derived. In this, the authority for baptising was based on the baptism of Christ; for confirmation there was a preference for the Dixian argument, rather than the counter proposals of Lampe.

It is generally agreed by a wide variety of authorities that what Dix had to say about Eucharistic liturgy and Christian initiation carried the weight of intense scholarship. Moreover, he was an Anglo-Catholic who addressed the specific issues of his Anglican Church. With splendid lucidity he described the historical development of Western attitudes towards the liturgy. Should Christians determine to re-evaluate their own understanding of the Eucharist in light of Dix's theology, the outcome may very well be a greater unity among them.

## Commentary

Dix's principal objective was to return to the Eucharistic theology of the post-Apostolic Church and examine the writings of the Fathers as they sought to understand and explain how the early Church developed her liturgical traditions and worshipping praxis. As I have explained, he had no particular interest in anyone's opinion after the turn of the fifth century. He was not involved in the one important Prayer Book revision that took place during his lifetime and was scathing in his criticism of the Church's hierarchy that got it all so badly wrong.

Dix's theology was a recovery of a profound understanding of the nature of *Corpus Christi*, which, for him, comprised the Church, the body of worshipping Christians, and the Blessed Sacrament, through which their souls were nourished. It is interesting to note that this differentiation impacted upon the thinking of the Second Vatican Council as well as the Church in general. Dix would surely have warmed to those liturgical scholars who rigorously debated various aspects of his teaching. He would have had doubts about those who subsequently endeavoured to produce new rites, even those who following his advice in their designs. For him the Latin Tridentine Mass was all-sufficient. Regrettably he did

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<sup>530</sup> R C D Jasper and Paul F Bradshaw, *A Companion to the Alternate Service Book*, 341.

not live to see the fruits of those who laboured to create the revised rites of the second half of the twentieth century. Would he have been enthusiastic about their endeavours? What would he have thought of liturgies in the vernacular tongue being introduced in the Roman Catholic Church? Would he have been dismissive of some of the relatively compact rites that have been devised in the twenty-first century, rites that appear to contain no poetry of words to support the *ποιεῖτε* of action? We shall never know.

## 5 CONCLUSION

After Dix's death many thought it appropriate to offer obituaries and comments. It seems relevant to include a few of these, for they sum up, in a variety of guises, the priest, the monk and the scholar. Simon Bailey described Dix as: complex, romantic, imaginative, shrewd, mature, charming, mischievous and tenacious.<sup>531</sup> Eric Mascall, Dix's long term friend, commented that, 'he never forgot or wasted an acquired fact, but he could not always let facts master him'.<sup>532</sup> Benedict Green remembered Dix as a wit and lover of paradox, as a superb (and irrepressible) raconteur, and as a deliverer of devastating put-downs to tendentious scholarship or episcopal self-importance.<sup>533</sup> William Davage, in a talk given to a Supper Club in 2010, spoke of Dix as a gadfly, raconteur, liturgist, teacher, lecturer, administrator and ecclesiastical politician.<sup>534</sup>

In 1954, Robert Waterhouse wrote to the Abbot of Nashdom, sending him copies of correspondence with Dix, preparatory to a biography being planned within the Community. Waterhouse commented that he had been:

turning over Dix's letters in a sort of trance ... always deeply impressed, at times deeply moved, at others highly entertained. How naughty he was sometimes! But what a magnificent narrative style and what lucidity of exposition: I haven't a clue to what more than half the stuff is about, but one can't stop reading. And he just can't be dull.<sup>535</sup>

However, in a later letter Waterhouse was less praiseworthy about Dix's character and personality. He wrote:

In the autumn of 1936 there was a fearful but obscure row with the B[ishop] of Winchester ... The trouble is ... that it is very difficult to disentangle his serious differences with the prelate from the occasions when he [Dix] feels the urge to be bitter or funny. His attitude to the Upper House is in fact rather juvenile, arousing the speculation whether in certain directions his development had been somewhat arrested. His humour is more often savage than subtle, bludgeon than rapier. 'Impish' is the expression often used ... but I think 'waspy' is nearer the mark.<sup>536</sup>

Waterhouse added:

I deduce that much of his savagery was due to the impatience of the first-class brain with the second- and third- raters; particularly when hierarchically they were set

<sup>531</sup> Simon Bailey, *A Tactful God*, 258.

<sup>532</sup> Eric L Mascall, *Saraband*, (Leominster: Gracewing Books, 1992), 161.

<sup>533</sup> H Benedict Green, 'Gregory Dix' in, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (on-line edition).

<sup>534</sup> William Davage, *Dom Gregory Dix, OSB*, Ref:

<http://www.puseyhouse.org.uk/chapel/lectures/downloads/Tractarians%20of%20the%20Twentieth%20Century%20-%20Dom%20Gregory%20Dix.pdf> (Accessed 20/07/12).

<sup>535</sup> Ref: Lambeth Palace Library, MS 4799, f 325.

<sup>536</sup> Ref: Lambeth Palace Library, MS 4799, f 328.

above him ... At times he gave unmistakable evidence of intellectual arrogance, but not ... when dealing with his cultural or intellectual equals.<sup>537</sup>

After such a parade of mixed praise and condemnation, in, it might seem, similar measures, what can be added to the picture that makes up Dix's persona? Paradoxically, these obituarists and commentators, while concentrating on those factors that defined Dix's distinctive personality, failed to distinguish his unique theology. No mention was made of his pre-Chalcedonian Trinitarianism or the particularities of his understanding of the sacrificial nature of the Mass. He was a man of his own time, yet, paradoxically again, as an instantiation of *Homo Eucharisticus* he also stood in the continuation of a long line of Anglican scholars, thinkers and writers who preceded him. Despite some of his more intemperate qualities, which did him no favours, he could have sat comfortably in the presence of Hooker, Laud, Andrewes, Keble, Newman and many others, and continued the rounds of debate on *Ecclesia Anglicana*. I feel sure that, severally, they would have been fascinated by his opinions, captivated by his originality, inspired by his scholarship and mesmerised by his individual personality.

As *Homo Eucharisticus*, Dix observed that the Holy Eucharist comprised the whole of Christian thinking; the whole of Christian living; the whole of Christian existence. Keith Pecklers endorsed this reasoning when he wrote:

worship [is] to reach out widely to embrace all of God's world. Liturgy, then, [is] necessarily concerned about life outside of the sanctuary walls: human liberation, justice, and mercy for the poor and oppressed, dialogue with other Christians and with believers who are not Christian. It [is] also about the Church's relationship to non-believers and to the secular cultures in which it dwells.<sup>538</sup>

For Dix, in comparison to the rich tapestry of his all-too-short life, only one thing really mattered. For him, Christian initiation and the Holy Eucharist, the Mass, held within themselves the whole of life's sacramental journey. He clearly saw the strong, and necessarily theological, relationship between the Trinity and the Holy Eucharist and his particular understanding of the Trinity embraced, as has been observed, his conception of a Spiritual-Logos. In his Trinitarianism Dix clearly paralleled the thinking of Leonard Hodgson. In a seminal work, *The Doctrine of the Trinity* (1943), Hodgson wrote of the New Testament revelation of a new life in an adopted son-ship of God made possible to

<sup>537</sup> Ref: Lambeth Palace Library, MS 4799, f 328.

<sup>538</sup> Keith F Pecklers, *Vatican II and the Liturgical Revival: An Unfinished Agenda*, Ref: [http://www.fdlc.org/Liturgy\\_Resources/LITURGICAL\\_MOVEMENT-Pecklers.htm](http://www.fdlc.org/Liturgy_Resources/LITURGICAL_MOVEMENT-Pecklers.htm) (Accessed 20/07/12).

members of the Church through communion with God in Christ.<sup>539</sup> This equated exactly with Dix's understanding of 'communion with God in Christ' through bodily reception of the consecrated, Eucharistic species.

Dix emphasised that Christians, be they Catholic or Protestant, needed to recover both a soteriological and an eschatological vision of the Church. For Dix, every action within every celebration of the Eucharist was a component part of that journey of which Archbishop Williams later wrote. He was entirely convinced that this journey was undertaken by all who participated in the Mass: the celebrant, other Eucharistic ministers, sanctuary assistants and the congregation of lay folk, be they many or few. The action of the Mass was the action of the whole people of God. Dix could not have summed up his teaching any better than to have employed the words that June Proctor used for the title of her short book explaining and reflecting on the Mass – 'We are Eucharist'.<sup>540</sup>

Dix was a complex and, at times, a controversial figure. From the sheer volume of his writings it could be thought that he spent his short life in the groves of academe, poring over ancient and abstract tomes, studying the archaic and sometimes obscure writings of the Fathers of the Church, all to add to the sum total of theological and liturgical knowledge. Yet, in a real sense, this would be an erroneous observation. Yes, Dix was deeply theological and he cared enormously about the worship of the Church and its liturgical praxis and he did study long and hard in the well-stocked library at Nashdom. Yet, despite his years of study, Dix could never be considered to be a theoretical historian, nor an outright scholar. His *raison d'être* was not to create accurate, precise and disciplined, academic texts, but to show that there was within Christianity a learned, living tradition which, it may be argued, began with Saint Paul and quickly blossomed in the early, post-Apostolic Church which he so loved. It was, rather, to tell his story of the Eucharist, the sacrament that was and is (and ever will be this side of the eschaton) the *bene esse* of Christian existence.

Dix was often pilloried and castigated for holding passionate, and often eccentric, theological views; for misquoting from his sources; for writing engagingly on deep liturgical matters and for his lack of scholastic scrupulousness. But his thoughts were on a higher plane; he had a different agenda and was driven by a distinct vision. He could aptly be described as a creative or innovative theologian. More than thirty years after the publication of Dix's *magnum opus*, Urban Holmes concluded that, 'Dix wrote movingly,

<sup>539</sup> Leonard Hodgson, *The Doctrine of the Trinity*, (Hitchin: James Nesbit & Co Ltd, 1960), 55.

<sup>540</sup> June Proctor, *We are Eucharist*, (Slough: St Paul's Press, 1996).

sometime with no relation to the facts, occasionally drawing from sources which, as far as other scholars could tell, did not exist'.<sup>541</sup> Colin Buchanan described his tremendously able Anglo-Catholic mind which was combined with an 'instinct for robust propaganda, a memorable writing style and a readiness to shock'. He wrote that Dix, in modern parlance, thought 'outside the box'.<sup>542</sup> Thomas Falls thought that Dix's deductions were sometimes constructed on flawed reasoning. He wrote: 'he depended too much upon his imagination in drawing many of his conclusions; conclusions which lacked the convincing power of more soundly proven statements'.<sup>543</sup> In a review of Dix's work Pierre-Marie Gy argued that, unlike Louis Duchesne, who, in his *Les origines du culte chrétien*, confined himself to historical science, Dix was not always historically reliable. However, Duchesne had accepted that it would be necessary to take the greatest account of [Dix's] book ... 'even if none of its particular affirmations should be accepted without any change'.<sup>544</sup> Gy also quoted some words from Dom Bernard Botte: '*The Shape of the Liturgy*, an essay on the genesis of the Eucharistic liturgy, had an enormous success, and I acknowledge that it contains new ideas and deep insights', but he went on to say that he was 'very reticent' on what he called 'some hazardous hypotheses'.<sup>545</sup> Yet, in a very real sense, these critics misunderstood Dix.

All too many modern researchers have made it their business to check Dix's commodious texts for correctness; to see that he had dotted every liturgical 'i' and crossed every theological 't'. In this thesis I have studied many of their works, because it has been important to enumerate Dix's errors (textual as well as judgemental – errors of which he was unashamedly guilty) and, more crucially, to assess their significance. Theology and liturgiology are legitimate, academic disciplines, but it has become clear that Dix fell short of the highest ideals of analysis, evaluation and criticism that those subjects demand. He had a different agenda, one that was far removed from purity of polemic and absoluteness of argument. Without resorting to verse forms, iambs, trochees or rhyming couplets, Dix had much of the Romantic poet in him. This manifestly separated him from the world of

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<sup>541</sup> Urban T Holmes III, 'Education for Liturgy: An Unfinished Symphony in Four Movements', in Massey Hamilton Shepherd (ed), *Worship points the way: a celebration of the life and work of Massey Hamilton Shepherd, Jr.* (New York, NY: The Seabury Press, 1981), 122.

<sup>542</sup> Colin Buchanan, 'The Winds of Change', in Charles Hefling and Cynthia Shattuck (eds), *The Oxford Guide to the Book of Common Prayer: A Worldwide Survey*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 233.

<sup>543</sup> Thomas B Falls, 'Jew and Greek by Gregory Dix', *Catholic Historical Review*, Vol 40, January 1955, 449.

<sup>544</sup> Pierre-Marie Gy, 'Re-Visiting Dom Gregory Dix After Fifty Years', *Worship*, Vol 70, 1996, 5

<sup>545</sup> *Ibid*, 5.



The Enlightenment, an exacting philosophy in which much of academia had clothed itself since the middle of the eighteenth century. Many academics could and did study theological and liturgical matters with dispassionate detachment, and their works sometimes reflected the dryness and aridity of their thinking. By contrast, Dix was first and foremost an Anglican Churchman and he wrote so as to be read by other Churchmen, ordained or lay. Louis Bouyer clearly differentiated between liturgists, like Dix, who discovered the Eucharist as ‘a being overflowing with life of incomparable innerness, depth and unity’, and others, whom he referred to as ‘merely scholars, not to say common pedants or commonplace hobbyists’.<sup>546</sup>

Dix had a deep-seated, underlying sense of the nature of revelation and would have understood that revelatory developments still continued, thus he refused to accept that his writings must only reflect on, react to and remain in line with, the thoughts and opinions of others, even when those others had been Apostles, Evangelists, or Fathers or Doctors of the Church. God’s Holy Spirit had not completed the processes of giving the Church a knowledge of all things (as Christ promised that he would – Jn 14: 26) by the end of the first century (nor, incidentally, by the end of the twentieth).

As I have stated, Dix’s principle concern, as a good Anglican, was for the Dominical sacraments of the Church, particularly for the Mass, which as a priest he would have celebrated every day, whenever and wherever possible. He clearly understood that every Mass was an action, a repetition of Christ’s word *ποιεῖτε* – do this. Furthermore, ‘doing this’ was an action of the whole people of God, those whom he referred to as ‘*plebs sancta Dei*’.<sup>547</sup> Every action, in every celebration, was profoundly Trinitarian and this brought an understanding to all present, priest and lay alike, that, within this Divine Liturgy, they were brought to the Father through the promise of the Son in the power of the Spirit. More importantly, that is what he wrote about; and, that is the principle reason why his *magnum opus* has stood the test of time. Dix’s message was not concerned with the exacting contents of academic tomes; it did not overly concern itself with deep, theological constructs, such as a full understanding of the presence (or absence) of Christ in the consecrated elements; it was not about whether Cranmer’s thinking was precisely Zwinglian or Bullingerian: it was the message of the fundamental importance of the

<sup>546</sup> Louis Bouyer, *Eucharist*, 2.

<sup>547</sup> The phrase *plebs sancta Dei* may not have originated with Dix. Earlier, Edmund Bishop had described the Christian multitudes as the servants of God, but also as the holy people of God: *Unde et memores, Domine, nos servi tui, sed et plebs tua sancta..* See: Edmund Bishop, *Liturgica Historica: Papers on the Liturgy and Religious Life of the Western Church*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1918), 87.

Eucharist in the whole of Christian living, the whole of Christian being, the whole of Christian life.

Well-known for his Anglo-Papalist, Catholic leanings, Dix located the Church of England firmly within the one, Universal Church of God. His Church had its very roots in the Church that Jesus Christ had come to found and which had continued for two millennia as his sacred body on earth.<sup>548</sup> As well as being politically a Protestant, Dix, like many of his forebears, was also paradoxically a Catholic. While he had an earnest desire to be a full member of the Church of Rome, he could not and would not secede to it unless it was as a member of the Church of England. He prayed earnestly for reintegration, but on his terms. He was too young to take part in the Malines Conversations (1921-5) but would surely have followed their every deliberation with great interest. As a priest of the post-Reformation Church he must have wondered whether *Apostolicae Curae* would ever be repealed.<sup>549</sup>

For Dix, every Mass enacted the *ποιεῖτε*, a tradition that went back to the foundation of the Church; a tradition that pre-dated scripture; a tradition that was at the heart of the liturgy. In this he was a clear disciple of the founders of the Oxford Movement, men who gained their understanding from the Caroline Divines, who, in turn, took their learning from the Fathers and the Apostles. This logic explains why Dix did not have to arrive at a conclusion in *The Shape of the Liturgy* that the foundation of the Mass was a four-fold shape – it had, in his opinion, always been so. In essence *The Shape of the Liturgy* contains a circular argument and it could just as easily have commenced with the famous ‘purple passage’ with which it closed; the Holy Eucharist is and always has been at the very heart of Christian being and living. Liturgiology has been called the Cinderella of theological studies, yet Dix raised it, single handedly and single minded, to a more fitting place in the study of the worship of God.<sup>550</sup>

<sup>548</sup> It seems clear from Matt 16: 18 that this was Christ’s intention although he may have had no preconceptions about how the structure of that Church would develop.

<sup>549</sup> In his autobiography, Hugh Ross Williamson suggested that *Apostolicae Curae* was an historical mistake made in good faith by the Holy Office. It was based on a misunderstanding of the request in 1688 by James Gordon, Bishop of Galloway, to have his Anglican orders declared null and void so that he might receive Roman Catholic ordination. Gordon had not been ordained or consecrated according to Cranmer’s Ordinal of 1552 but in accordance with the Church of Scotland Prayer Book of 1620. This had been condemned by Archbishop Laud as defective in both form and intention. Williamson also averred that, through a delay in its announcement after the Cardinalate had approved it, Pope Leo’s Bull was not irreformable and that there was nothing to prevent the whole question from being re-opened. See: Hugh Ross Williamson, *The Walled Garden*, 207 ff.

<sup>550</sup> This Cinderella depiction of liturgy is perhaps best illustrated in Dean William Inge’s reported comment when asked if he was interested in liturgy: ‘No. Neither do I collect postage stamps’. Quoted by: Rowan Williams, *Anglican Identities*, 141, en 4.

The Greek word *ποιεῖτε* is the root of the English word ‘poetry’. Poetry is the process of making new, of innovating, of creating something original, of doing things differently, of *creatio ex nihilo*. When Christ gave the instruction ‘do this’ to his close band of followers at the Last Supper, he intended that, after his resurrection, and after being empowered by the Paraclete at Pentecost, his disciples would do something new. There is, I believe, a direct link between Christ’s words, ‘do this’ and the self-same command given to him by the Father to create the Universe and, if some modern cosmologists are to be believed, the multiverse of universes. The Father commanded the Son to create all matter from nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*) and the Son expects the priests of his Church to create each Eucharist from nothing. They have the authority and the power, standing before the altar *in loco Christi*, ‘to do’ just that.

Dix caught the mood of this ‘doing something new’ when he determined that the heart of the Eucharistic liturgy was a series of actions, the four of taking, blessing, breaking and giving. In the same way that poets are inspired by revelation to see the world anew, so Dix was doubtless moved by the Spirit to reveal his understanding of the basic nature of the Eucharist. As I earlier remarked, other scholars have determined that the number of actions in Eucharistic praxis varies from one to nine. Dix might argue that his perception was a matter of revelation, not of scientific study. This doubtless explains why his conclusion appeared so early in his book.

Although Dix stood in the direct line of earlier writers and reformers, liturgists such as Dom Prosper Guéranger, Pierre Batiffol, Ferdinand Probst, Odo Casel and others, he made few references to them or their works and when he did it was generally only in his footnotes. He was clearly of the opinion that proper liturgical study had its roots in the writers of the post-Apostolic Church. In Dix’s opinion the basic worshipping praxis of the Church ante-dated any Christian writing; it comprised the very liturgical action that was the essence of the praying Church. Long before Apostles and Evangelists put pen to papyrus to write to nascent, Christian communities, or to document the parables, the miracles and the ‘theology’ of Jesus of Nazareth, the basic Eucharistic form of worship of the Church was already in place. In Dix’s view earlier liturgists were only tinkering at the edges of their subject. Dix went back to the basics, hence his insistence on the ultimate, historical importance of the four-fold shape.

Is there, however, a sense in which this well-defined and historically founded, Eucharistic shape, as advocated by Dix, showed an element of sterility? Does its fixity

over two millennia ground it in a traditional and stylised routine? Louis Bouyer wondered whether a long and established history made liturgy, ‘something virtually dead?’<sup>551</sup> By contrast, he also posed a counter-question: can rash modernisation, whereby so-called living liturgy springs ever new from the minds of contemporary revisers, fully satisfy the needs of modern worshippers, with their penchant for innovative fashions? How was this dichotomy to be resolved? Bouyer observed that if the Church was to acquiesce to modern, avant-garde, liturgical practices she would abandon her most sacred duty; a duty for which she was conceived by her divine author.<sup>552</sup> Such a conclusion gave credence to Dix’s historical assertions and his insistence on the ancient pedigree of the *Shape*. The Eucharist was not dead but very much alive!

As an indication of his independence of mind, Dix made no reference to any of several important contributions to liturgical scholarship that had been published in the first half of the twentieth century. Horton Davies listed: Charles Gore’s *The Body of Christ* (1901); Peter Forsyth’s *The Church and the Sacraments* (1917); Oliver Quick’s *The Christian Sacraments* (1927); Alfred Lilley’s *The Sacraments* (1928); Fredrick Hicks’s *The Fullness of Sacrifice* (1930) and John Mozley’s *The Gospel Sacraments* (1933).<sup>553</sup> Dix also made no reference to Edmund Knox’s *Sacrifice or Sacrament* (1914), albeit this work was heavily slanted towards the Evangelical wing of the Church.

Rowan Williams suggested that there may be links between Dix’s studies and earlier Jewish, scriptural research and he intimated that the Mishnaic work of Herbert Danby may warrant some examination.<sup>554</sup> While it is almost certain that Dix knew of Danby’s monumental work<sup>555</sup> (although the two men were never at Oxford together) it is perhaps noteworthy that he made no mention of it; *The Shape of the Liturgy* contains just four brief references to the Mishnah, none of any significance.<sup>556</sup> Similarly, Dix would almost certainly have known of Sigmund Mowinckel’s substantial work of eschatology, *He that Cometh*.<sup>557</sup> Based on a series of lectures at the beginning of the Second World War, this work very much paralleled Dix’s views on the eschatological nature of the Eucharist.

<sup>551</sup> Louis Bouyer, *Liturgical Piety*, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1954), 70.

<sup>552</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>553</sup> Horton Davies, *Worship and Theology in England: The Ecumenical Century, 1900-1965*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965), 310. In *The Shape of the Liturgy*, Dix mentioned Gore twice but not in the context of this work.

<sup>554</sup> Rowan Williams, Private correspondence with author, 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2012.

<sup>555</sup> Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah: Translated from the Hebrew with Introduction and Brief Explanatory Notes*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933).

<sup>556</sup> It is surprising that the *Chabûrah*, the meal that Dix insisted was the Jewish basis of the Last Supper, is not mentioned in Danby’s epic work.

<sup>557</sup> Sigmund Olaf Plytt Mowinckel, *He that Cometh*, Tr G W Anderson, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1959).

Again, he offered no suggestion that he had studied this work. It is pertinent to ask why this considerable body of knowledge, knowledge that had distinct connections with his own research, was so ignored.

One explanation seems to stem from Dix's individuality of thought. As far as he was concerned the roots of liturgical study began and ended with the writings of the Fathers. He was able to study Patristic manuscripts and draw his own conclusions from them; he had no wish to allow the thoughts and opinions of more recent historians to colour his assessments. He may well have studied their works but he left no record of having done so. Even if he agreed (or, indeed, disagreed) with their respective findings, he would not let this prejudice his own judgements. Dix was, in this respect, a better researcher than he was sometimes given credit for being. It is perhaps a fault in many academics that they trawl the library shelves for contemporary opinions that justify their views and quote from these liberally. Alternatively, they locate dissenting sources and argue against them. Dix did neither of these things; he seemed not to care that other writers had opinions, often in his subject area; his sources had lived in the first centuries and that is where he searched for them, he had no wish to be up-to-date or fashionable. Dix did much of his research in the well-stocked library at Nashdom. It is also possible that, unlike the larger libraries at Oxford, which he would have known, the Community simply did not have the works of more modern authors, hence Dix did not read them.<sup>558</sup> Being a solitary researcher at Nashdom, rather than a companionable scholar in Oxford, doubtless made a substantial impact on his work, but it did not cause him to be an irrelevant anomaly.

It is important to explore where Dix sat in the overall compass of liturgical scholarship in the first half of the twentieth century. As has been observed, he was not a great exponent of scientific correctness or rigorous exactitude. Yet, despite this supposed (by some) imprecision and inattention to detail, he developed a legitimate, theological scholarship that was not based solely on logic and reason. His studies were founded on practice, not rooted in theories; he often ignored evidence and provided few proofs. Dix could well have been described in some words of Samuel Taylor Coleridge:

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<sup>558</sup> It must also be remembered that the last six years of Dix's research for *The Shape of the Liturgy* were conducted during wartime, a condition that would have adversely affected the availability of source materials and hampered his travels to other libraries.

I speak not of those who inquire for the gratification of curiosity, and still less for those who labour as students only to shine as disputants; but of one who seeks the truth, *because he feels the want of it* (my emphasis).<sup>559</sup>

Dix could not corroborate many of his theories, he offered no formal proof of his principal postulate about the four-fold shape of the liturgy (as academic excellence might expect), but in adopting a quasi-logical methodology he gave a singular degree of legitimacy to his researches. While this form of unsystematic study will never be fashionable, or accepted by exacting and rigorous technicians, I believe that it has a definite place within academia.

Dix also showed, through his studies of the early Church, and Temple and synagogue worship of pre-Christian times, that there has been a fundamental, worshipping unity of all Christians down the ages of the last two millennia. In this portrayal he has proved to be a useful antidote to those who are obsessed with contemporary relevance. Dix's theological and liturgical works display a depth, a rootedness, in the created order. He offered his readers an enlightened view of the whole of creation and the vital place of the Eucharist within it. It is perhaps this depth of thinking that makes Dix important as a person as well as in his writings.

In my Introduction I offered a dictionary definition of cleverness as, 'an adroitness to devise, learn, understand, and apply ideas, often in an abstract environment'. Dix clearly fulfilled these criteria and perhaps, after all, he was, at the time of his death, 'the cleverest man in the Church of England'; if he was not then he most certainly occupied the unique role of *Homo Eucharisticus*.

In 2009, on the recommendation of the Church of England Liturgical Commission, Dix's name was added to those who are commemorated in the Common Worship Calendar; a unique honour for a modern liturgist. The citation read:

12 May        **Gregory Dix, Priest, Monk, Scholar, 1952**

Born in 1901, George Dix was educated at Westminster School and Merton College, Oxford. After ordination to a Fellowship at Keble College, Oxford, he taught history before entering the novitiate of the Benedictine community at Pershore, taking the name Gregory. Shortly afterwards the community moved to

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<sup>559</sup> Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection*, (Burlington, VT: Chauncey Goodrich, 1840), 239.

Nashdom in Buckinghamshire, where Dix eventually made his life profession and was appointed Prior. Dix was one of the most influential figures of a generation of Anglo-Catholics who worked enthusiastically towards reunion with Rome. A gifted and popular preacher and spiritual director, Dix is best remembered as a liturgical scholar whose monumental work, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, has had an unparalleled influence over liturgical study and revision since it was first published in 1945. He died on this day in 1952.

At the end of his short life Dix could have gone happily to his grave and his Maker reciting some words of the prophet Nehemiah; ‘Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and do not wipe out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God and for his service’ (Neh 13: 14). His Saviour would surely have replied; ‘Well done, thou good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord (Mt 25: 21, 23 – AV).

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### Bibliography note

The bibliography is divided into two main sections: the first contains publications of Gregory Dix that were relevant to this research and works that are essentially based on his writings; the second holds references to the secondary sources that were studied, although these may not necessarily be cited in the footnotes. This latter section is further subdivided into academic references (mostly books and pamphlets), papers and articles in journals and newspapers, and titled Internet references. This final, small section contains details of works that do not, as far as can be established, exist in any other format. The bibliography concludes with a body of other, more general, reference material, such as: lexicons, dictionaries, encyclopaedias, prayer books, private correspondence and reports. All citations conform to the *Chicago Manual of Style* and the *MHRA Style Guide*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 2008.

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