

# THAW!

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## IN THIS ISSUE

Lyndon Hutcheson-Hounsell write an obituary for Madeline Elms, TSSF, who died recently. There is a brief reflection on S. Francis from the three volumes of early documents, ( Volume 2 "The Founder") and a contribution from Ty Ragan. There is not a critique of the Anglican Communion's first draft of an Anglican Covenant I have delayed this work because the matter will not be front and centre until Lambeth when a revised version will be considered and referred to the provinces for consideration. In the meantime, the issue of Anglican unity will focus on the request, or demand that the Episcopal Church determine that it will not authorize same sex marriages or unions, by September 30 of this year. Since this is the principle issue vexing the communion, everything else is on "hold" until the Episcopal Church and perhaps the Anglican Church of Canada have made their positions clear and until the rest of the Communion has done likewise. It goes on and on.

## LEX ORANDI—LEX CREDENDI: A REFLECTION

By Ty Ragan

Worship is not just for praise and supplication for God's people in Anglicanism, but also the main arena for our theology (Stevenson p. 187). This relationship is tackled in the Latin phrase *Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi* which literally translated means 'the law of praying is the law of belief' (Stevenson p. 187). What does this mean for the average pew setter who may not be aware of this concept? It means that while other churches have a confession or a Pope for final authority in theological matters, Anglicans are a beast all their own. This reflection will explore theology of Anglicans from what we are, or are not, to the Prayer Book, to symbolism and finally pragmatism. Within the reflection the good and bad will be explored on the Via Media of Anglican Theology where the law of praying is the law of belief or in the more mundane, from the symbol comes the thought.

Stevenson's article on this topic found in *The Study of Anglicanism* was an excellent and loaded word primer on this very notion. A good flow in from the discussion previously on Reason, Tradition and Scripture coupled with the Via Media and now exploring how theological thought is formed as an Anglican standard.

The church as a whole is known for taking the middle road of Protestantism and Catholicism (or in the ancient language, Popish). There is no defining theologian that is held to as a universal authority (like a Zwingli, Luther or Calvin) or ultimate authority. If there were an Anglican theologian in the past to read, it would be Richard Hooker, yet he is not universally held to as the standard. For the church it is the Book of Common Prayer where our theology is found, so one could say that it is Cramner who is our theologian, yet in the era of speciality he would be called a liturgist more than a theologian.

Does this mean as a church we seek out the lowest common denominators to appease everyone? No. That is a misinterpretation of our theological heritage, and just diving into the prayer book dispels that notion. It is a balancing act in history that made people tolerable yet some unhappy. Yet it brings about the idea of where certain parties in the Communion want to move the Anglican Church. Movements to move us to more of a confessional church that removes that backbone of what we are as a people, a people that take our theology from our prayer.

This idea of the Prayer book was both a field for Cramner of theological expression and experimentation (Stevenson p. 189). It is a basis of the liturgy that it explores symbols that impact the people, and brings an understanding of God into their daily lives.

It is why services were deemed to be held in the language of the people with the priest and people reading from the same Prayer Book. Nothing hidden in the liturgy, the

ability to experience theology right there. That is the ability to experience as a community and individual the spirit of God. It is why the binding act for the Anglican Church worldwide is the Eucharist. Not exactly transubstantiation and yet more than just a remembrance it is something in between, one of the great mysteries of the faith. Yet one common cup bonds us all, in our diversity of theology and belief.

It is what would be lost to the church if we moved towards a confession or to one central authority...the ability to be universal in our belief in God yet localized to a liturgy that impacts the walk and belief of the people in that location. For it is in the act of the liturgy that our theology comes alive in the community.

Now of course there is a down side to the way Anglicans do theology, because it can easily become rote. The Canadian church has been under a twenty-five year experiment with our Book of Alternative services, not wanting to alter the Book of Common Prayer from the 1600's. Yet in so doing we are negating the *Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi*. The liturgy itself can become frozen in time and an untouchable, which goes against the spirit of the Thirty-Nine Articles of Faith in regards to the liturgy as well as the theology experimentation Cramner began.

For if our theology is to stay fresh, and channelling God we not only need a liturgy that reflects where we have been and where we are at, but experimenting with the possibilities of where God is calling us to be as His people.

The concept of *Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi* also raises the question of church decoration. For you are laying out decorations for a worship service that will take in all a person's senses and the use of symbols become powerful and important. It is not a symbol like one would choose to adorn a hockey jersey with but rather a symbol that reflects what the ministry of the church is.

It takes the symbol selection out of the hands of just one person and what impacts them, but rather to a whole community of people and what to them is the symbol of the faith. The localized worship of God within the universal bond of the Eucharist.

The final part to be touched upon is a rather simple statement Anglicans are pragmatic theologians. The pragmatism found in the Church of England is because the theology is relevant to the socio-cultural factors of the day. It touches the people where they are at and let's them experience God there.

One major distinction within the more liturgical style service is that it is not necessarily seeker sensitive or geared towards a salvatory altar call as one will find in the more mainline Evangelical service (although there are strong evangelical Anglican churches that probably do practice these). Rather the Eucharist (our Mass) is geared towards a servicing of the Saints. What is going to allow the saints of God to rest in Him and experience Him within Sunday morning worship so that they are equipped to

live out the Great Commission Monday to Saturday within their school, workplace, community and nation?

It is a service designed to bring the Body of Christ to the foot of the Cross—at the altar rail each week around the world to share in the renewal that His Cup and Bread bring to us so that we may be filled with His Spirit, Love and Grace for another week.

It is in our prayer that our theology is formed, there are amazing things that can happen because of that, and amazing drawbacks, yet in the end if it equips the Body to answer God's call to change this world, then so be it.

## **MADÉLINE ELMS**

**March 11, 1924 – February 22, 2007**

### To Search and Rescue

Madeline Elms made her official Life Profession in the TSSF on December 12th, 1998, but it is clear that she was a humble, loving and joy-filled soul her whole life.

Madeline died on February 22nd after living with Alzheimer's Disease for almost 6 years.

Madeline Maidwell Mabel Puzy was born on March 11th, 1924 in Delhi, Ontario, Canada. Her father was vice president of Caswell Construction and worked on mining projects in Northern Ontario, as well as supervising the building of 65 Kilometres (40 Miles) of the Alaska Highway in 1942. With this lifestyle Madeline traveled constantly with her family and attended 11 schools in 12 years. Making friends became easy for Madeline.

Madeline led a life of adventure at a young age. She was alleged to have been the youngest female bush pilot in training in Canada, practicing spins, stalls, and water landings with bush planes at the age of 15. Her training was cut short in 1939 due to the storm clouds of World War II when her instructor had to go off to train fighter pilots for the Royal Canadian Air Force and the Royal Air Force. Madeline was destined at a very early age to aspire to a profession of care giving. Her own mother used to tell stories of Madeline routinely bandaging, nursing and comforting her dolls and teddy bears back to health. Madeline began to study and practice nursing in 1944 at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Barrie, Ontario, Canada. As the war progressed she also trained at Canadian Forces Base Borden near Barrie and then finally graduated as a nurse in 1947. After graduation Madeline returned to Kirkland Lake and Fort Francis, two of her childhood hometowns.

Madeline met Peter Elms in 1953 and was married that same year. They moved to London, Ontario where their first child was born and then on to Caledon, Ontario where her second child was born. Madeline lived in Caledon for the rest of her 48

years. Madeline continued her nursing career at a nursing home in a nearby community. She always had a need to give of herself to those who were less fortunate and always extended a hand of hope to those in need. Madeline had a great love of animals and plants. Her house became the safe haven of numerous stray dogs, cats, and birds. She had a way with them as if they knew that she was their guardian. Many animals were nursed back to health at her house and set free. Madeline was known at the local supermarket as the "flower lady" where she tended flowers and dispensed horticultural advice in her later years. Roses were her passion and she spent a great deal of quiet time converting her backyard into a traditional English rose garden. The garden boasted many exotic and hybrid roses from around the world. The fragrance in full bloom was tremendous.

Madeline's house became a safe haven and a beacon of hope for her children's friends as well. She welcomed the teenagers into her home whenever they needed a place to stay, with one staying as long as two years. Many were given a bed to sleep in, a hot meal and clean clothes with no questions asked while they were finding their way through troubling times. She was a mother to many in the community.

Madeline had a strong faith, founding a "Just Friends" support group in her parish. She had a thirst for knowledge and spiritual growth, which brought into the Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis. To the end of her life she cared for people and cherished times of retreat and connection with the people and places around her. Madeline lived in humility through sharing God's love and bringing joy to the lives of many in need. As we remember Madeline, may the risen Christ watch over us and renew us as He renews the whole of creation. And, following the example of Madeline, may our hearts and lives echo God's love throughout the world.

#### **HOW FRANCIS WANTED THE BROTHERS TO STUDY**

from Francis of Assisi, The Founder, Early Documents

It grieved him when the brothers sought learning while neglecting virtue, especially if they did not remain in that calling in which they were first called. He said: "Those brothers of mine who are led by curiosity for knowledge will find themselves empty handed on the day of reckoning. I wish they would grow stronger in virtue, so that when the times of tribulation arrive they may have the Lord with them in their distress. For," he said, "a tribulation is approaching when books, useful for nothing, shall be thrown into cupboards and into closets!" He did not say these things out of dislike for the study of the Scriptures, but to draw all of them back from excessive concern for learning, because he preferred that they be good through charity, than dilettantes through curiosity.

Besides, he could smell in the air that a time was coming and not too far away, when he knew learning would be an occasion of ruin, while dedication to spiritual things would serve as a support to the spirit.

A lay brother who wanted to have a psalter asked him for permission; he offered him ashes instead of a psalter.

After his death he appeared in a vision to one of the companions who was once tending toward preaching, and he forbade it, commanding him to walk on the way of simplicity. As God is his witness, he felt such a sweetness after this vision that for many days it seemed the dew of the father's words was still dropping into his ears."