Biblical References in the Proposed Book of Common Prayer's "An Outline of the Faith"

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The rubrics preceding the *Proposed Book of Common Prayer's* "An Outline of the Faith" suggest that the Outline "is not meant to be a complete statement of belief and practice." It is to be seen "as a point of departure for the teacher" and "a brief summary of the Church's teaching for an inquiring stranger" (PBCP, p. 844).

For a fuller statement of the faith, a teacher is to supplement the Outline with material from other resources. Certainly, the most important of these resources must be the *bible*. The Outline makes strong use of biblical reference and allusion; indeed, it is difficult to understand without knowledge of biblical material.

The intention of this article is to suggest biblical passages alluded to in the Outline, so that teachers and catechists may have at their disposal a partial listing of references.

Human Nature

The Genesis stories of creation (Genesis 1-3) are important in understanding this initial section. The phrase "the image of God" is a reference to Genesis 1:26-7, and the explanation of what it means to be made in God's image is reminiscent of God's words to man in 1:28-30.

The phrase "rebel against God" is found often in the Old Testament (e.g., Joshua 22:16-19, Psalm 107:11); it is a useful synonym for "to sin." The affirmation that God is the source of our help is to be found in the Psalms. See, for example, Psalm 121:2 and 124:8.

For a summary of the ways God "helped us by revealing himself and his will through nature and history" and a rather pessimistic estimation of Israel's ability to heed that revelation, see the speech of Stephen in Acts 7.

God the Father

Genesis continues to be an important reference in this section. The creation stories provide a picture of God the Father as Creator. The characterization of the created universe as good forms a refrain to the Genesis 1 creation story.

The affirmation that God created both the seen and the unseen is found in the New Testament in Colossians 1:16. The image of God as the sustainer of creation is found in Psalm 55:22 (Prayer Book Psalter—55:24).

The question and answer on our place in the universe recall a similar question in the initial section, with its reliance on Genesis 1:26-30. Leviticus 19: 1-18, the passage which culminates in the injunction to love neighbor as self, is an example in the Law of Israel of the respect and honor due all creation as the work of God.

The Old Covenant

Here, the term convenant is used as a general term for the relationship between God and his people. The specific moments in which the covenant is established and renewed are not mentioned. Important among these are the events recorded in Genesis 15 and 17, Exodus 19:5 and 34:27, Joshua 24:25, and 2 Samuel 23:5.

The promise that the peoples of the world would be brought by Israel to God recalls the promise to the returning exiles in Isaiah 42:6. The response of the chosen people is taken from Micah 6:8.

The Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments are found in two places in the Old Testament: Exodus 20:2-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-21. The two passages are the same, except for the rationale given for the fourth commandment.

The practice of reflecting on the commandments in a broader social context (e.g., commandment five, which states "honor your father and mother," is taken to refer to all those in authority) dates from the Reformation. Martin Luther's Catechisms were examples of this practice.

The final question and answer follow Paul's understanding of the Law. The Law shows us that we are sinful. See Romans 3:20ff.

Sin and Redemption

The writings of John and the Epistle to the Romans are important documents for a New Testament understanding of sin; they are reference points in this set of questions and responses.

1 John 2 suggests that sinning distorts our knowledge of Christ. Romans 6:16-18 speaks of the relationship between sin, redemption and freedom. John's gospel (8:34-36) also suggests that the sinner is a slave to his sin; only in Christ are we set free.

The final words are those of Peter's confession that Jesus of Nazareth is Lord (Mark 8:27-33; Matthew 16:13-23; and Luke 9:18-22).

God the Son

The idea of Jesus showing us the Father is Johanine (1:18), as is the affirmation that God is love (1 John 4:16).

The virgin birth is recorded in Matthew 1:18 and Luke 1:35. Paul uses the image of our adoption as children of God in Romans 8:16. Christ's obedience to death is emphasized in Philippians 2:8. Jesus is called the offering for sin in the *Proposed Book of Common Prayer* translation of 1 John 2:2 (p. 332).

The answer concerning the resurrection recalls 1 Corinthians 15:20ff, and Christ's descending to the dead is suggested in Peter's sermon in Acts 2:24-30. The same sermon affirms Jesus' ascending to the right hand of God (Acts 2:33).

The New Covenant

The hope of the granting of a new covenant is a prophetic idea from the Old Testament. The prophet Jeremiah spoke of his hope of the granting of a new covenant, a covenant God would write within the hearts of the people (Jeremiah 31:31. We as Christians believe that the new covenant is granted to us in Christ Jesus (see Hebrews 8:7ff, which quotes Jeremiah).

The description here of the new covenant in Christ relies upon a number of New Testament sources. John 10:10 speaks of life in its fullness. The great commission of Matthew 28:19 instructs us to keep Christ's commandments.

The summary of the law (itself dependent on Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18) is found in Matthew 22:37, Mark 12:28, and Luke 10:25. The new commandment is from John 13:34.

The Creeds

This section introduces the historical background to the creeds. It is hoped that the entire Outline will be seen as dealing with the content of the creeds.

The affirmation that closes the section cannot be found in the bible. However, the three persons of the Trinity are mentioned together in two places: Matthew 28:19 and 2 Corinthians 13:14.

The Holy Spirit

The King James' Bible and Revised Standard Version texts of Genesis 1:1 record that the Spirit of God moved over the face of the waters as God prepared for the six days of creation. The Nicene Creed declares that the Spirit is "the Giver of Life," the agent of creation.

The affirmation that the Spirit inspires the prophets is well stated in the book of the prophet Isaiah. See, for example, 42:1, 59:21 and 61:1. Our Lord himself quotes the final of these passages as evidence of the presence of the Spirit in his ministry (Luke 4:18-19).

Paul, in Corinthians, comments upon the Exodus story of the meeting of the Lord and Moses at the giving of the law. Paul stresses the spiritual, rather than physical nature of our God: "Now the Lord of whom this passage speaks is the Spirit." (2 Corinthians 3:17)

In John 14:7 Jesus describes the Spirit as "the Spirit of Truth." Ephesians 4:1-16 speaks of the Spirit and the need to grow in the likeness of Christ.

Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:3 suggests that the confession of faith in Christ as Lord is a sign of the presence of the Spirit. 2 Timothy 3:16 commends the scriptures for "its use in the teaching of the truth and refuting of error."

The Holy Scriptures

This section is complementary to the preceding questions and answers on the Spirit. Scripture is held to be the judge of the truth of the Spirit. The Spirit, in turn, is seen as the instrument which assists us in the understanding of scripture. One does not make sense without the other.

Two of the passages cited in the previous section, John 14:7 and 2 Timothy 3:16, pertain also to this discussion.

The Church

The definition of the Church which opens this section alludes to earlier sections on the covenant and the new covenant.

The descriptions of the Church are taken from a variety of New Testament sources:

Body of Christ	(Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12)
Body of which Christ is the head	(Ephesians 1:22; Colossians 1:18)
People of God	(1 Peter 2:10)
The (New) Israel	(Galations 6:16)
A Holy Nation, a Royal Priesthood	(1 Peter 2:9)
The Pillar and Ground of Truth	(1 Timothy 3:15)

The explanations of the creedal descriptions of the Church also recall certain biblical passages. The oneness of the Church is explained in terms of the image of the body found in Ephesians 1:22 and Colossians 1:18. The

explanation of the use of the adjective *holy* recalls the image of the Church in Ephesians 2:22. The answer on the words Catholic and Apostolic recall the great commission of Matthew 28:16ff.

The mission of the Church is defined in terms of the need to restore the unity of the people and their God. Ephesians 2:16 defines the ministry of Christ in this way.

The Ministry

Here, in keeping with current care over the use of the term ministry, ministry is ascribed as an activity of lay as well as clerical members of the Church. One is impressed by the similarity in the charges given to laity, bishops, priests and deacons. In all cases the responsibility is fourfold: representing Christ and his Church; bearing witness to him; engaging in his work of reconciliation; and taking a place in the life of the Church.

Bishops are mentioned in 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:7. The story of the first seven deacons is told in Acts 7, and the qualifications for the office are listed in 1 Titus 3:8.

The word *priest* is never used in the New Testament of a Christian mininster; it is reserved for the Jewish priests, or, in the book of Hebrews, for Christ. The New Testament term *presbyter* (Greek for elder) is used in this section along with the commonly used word *priest.* See the use of the term *elder* or *presbyter* in Acts 15, the story of the Council of Jerusalem. The elders are listed as leaders of the Church along with the apostles.

1 Peter 5:1ff is an injunction to the elders.

Prayer and Worship

The Lord's Prayer is found in Matthew 6:9ff and Luke 11:2ff. The division of prayer into categories found here is not taken directly from the New Testament, though Paul in Timothy 2:1 does make a partial listing of types of prayer.

The book of Revelation contains some examples of prayer of adoration. See, for example, Revelation 4.

Praise in Christian worship is particularly important in Luke and Acts. See, for example, Luke 24:53. Thanksgiving, along with intercession and petition, are listed by Paul as important in 1 Timothy 2:1; two of the three are also mentioned in Philippians 4:6.

In James 5:16 we are urged to approach prayer with an attitude of penitence. Oblation is used in the Old Testament. The Hebrew word is used in regard to the sacrifices in 1 Kings 18:29 and 36, the contest at Mount Carmel.

The Sacraments

Paul's treatment of grace in Romans is an important source for discussing this section. See Romans 5:12-21.

Baptism and the Eucharist are the great sacraments of the Church. They were instituted by our Lord. The great commission (Matthew 28:19) commands us to baptize, and the earliest account of the Last Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23ff) enjoins us to do likewise.

Holy Baptism

In working with this section, it would be useful to review the lessons suggested for use with baptismal services (*PBCP,* p. 928):

Ezekiel 36:24-28 (I will sprinkle clean water over you . . .)
Romans 6:3-5 (By Baptism we were buried with him . . .)
Romans 8:14-17 (All who are moved by the Spirit of God are sons . . .)
2 Corinthians 5:17-20 (When anyone is united to Christ, there is a new world.)
Mark 1:9-11 (Jesus . . . was baptized in the Jordan by John.)
Mark 10:13-16 (Let the children come to me.)
John 3:1-6,(Unless a man has been born over again . . .)

Matthew 28:19, the great commission, calls on us to baptize all nations "in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit."

The Holy Eucharist

There are four biblical accounts of the institution of the Eucharist (Matthew 26:17ff; Mark 14:2ff; Luke 22:7ff; and 1 Corinthians 11:23ff) and one long Eucharistic discourse (John 6:22-71). The important injunction "do this as a memorial of me," which lies at the heart of our Eucharistic prayers, is found in the Corinthians account, as is the most explicit reminder that we shall continue the Eucharist "until his coming again."

The Anglican Church has traditionally sought to avoid any single understanding of the way in which Christ becomes present to us in the celebration of the Eucharist. The question and answer on the use of the term sacrifice is intended to discourage any literal view of a repetition of Christ's sacrifice.

Paul's comments in 1 Corinthians 11:17-22, 27-34 provide some useful thoughts on the importance of approaching the Holy Communion with reverence. The injunction on self-examination is found in Matthew's sermon on the mount (5:23-24).

Other Sacramental Rites

In the sense in which we understand them today, there are no ordinations or confirmations in the New Testament. The Church was young and no uniform understanding of either the appointment of Church leaders or the effecting of a maturing in faith among lay persons had been agreed upon. It is possible, however, to see events which were important in leading to later understandings.

In Acts 8:14-17 and 19:17, disciples lay hands upon persons who had been baptized in an attempt to bring them to a mature faith in Christ. Today in the office of confirmation, the Bishop lays hands upon the heads of individual Christians.

In Acts 1:15-21 the disciples meet together to choose a replacement for Judas. In Acts 6, seven deacons are set aside. One can see a developing understanding of ministry and ordination.

In Mark 10:6-12 Jesus talks about the importance of marriage; Matthew reports a slightly different tradition in 19:3-6. In regard to the reconciliation of a pentitent, see John 20:22. In discussing unction, look at James 5:13-14.

The Christian Hope

Newness of life is a term Paul uses in Romans 6:4 to describe the life of a person in Christ. Fullness is a term found in John's writings. See John 1:6. The words "coming of Christ in glory" are from Matthew 25:31. Ephesians 1:11 talks of God's purpose.

Revelation 21:5 contains a vision of the coming of the kingdom of God, when all things will be made new.

In regard to our hope for the resurrection of the body and our concern for those who have died, see 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 and 1 Corinthians 15. The question and answer on judgment refers to 2 Timothy 4:1.

The book of Revelation contains several images of the court of God, with the gathering of the saints. See 7:9-17.

The familiar words which close the Outline are from Romans 8:39.

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