According to Thy Word:
An Interpretation of the Meaning of Traditional Liturgical Prose

Gordon Raymond Maitland

Doctor of Ministry

The University of Trinity College and the University of Toronto

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Abstract

The thesis question may be stated as follows: What meaning does the experience of traditional liturgical prose (TLP) provide to the worshippers in the congregation of St. George’s Anglican Church, Windsor, Ontario? The study begins with a narration of the personal background of the Rev’d Gordon Maitland, and the ministry setting and character of St. George’s Anglican Church. The paper then explicates the theological foundations that are behind the research being undertaken, which includes a discussion of the secular context of contemporary Canadian society, Gordon’s general adhesion to the ideas and principles to be found in the countercultural Radical Orthodoxy school of theology, and an understanding of Gordon’s personal theology of ministry. A general definition of liturgical prose is proposed by reference to the work of Gail Ramshaw, and then a more narrowly defined explication of traditional liturgical prose is made by reference to the work of Stella Brook. This is followed by a chapter in which there is a survey of English language liturgical texts over a wide variety of denominations in North America since the 1960’s so as to set the current study in an ecumenical and inter-church context, and to set the stage for a suggested re-appropriation of traditional liturgical prose within this context. The methodology of the Action-in-Ministry, an instrumental case study to construct the meaning or understanding of the
experience of traditional liturgical prose for those who worship at St. George’s Church, was then explained. The results of the research were coded and studied for recurring themes, and conclusions were drawn from this data. In the end, it was concluded that the worshippers at St. George’s Anglican Church have a positive meaning of traditional liturgical prose, and understand it to be a beautiful, evocative language that draws the worshipper apart from the ordinary realities of everyday life, and helps the worshipper enter into a prayerful and reverent setting or space for the contemplation of God. Traditional liturgical prose was also valued for the connection it seems to make to generations past who have used the same language and is a part of the worshipper’s self-identity as an Anglican Christian.
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Chapter One: Introduction

Personal Introduction

My ancestors on my father’s side of the family were, for the most part, fierce Presbyterians from Northern Ireland or the lowlands of Scotland, with the occasional Methodist or Anglican thrown into the mix. My ancestors on my mother’s side included French Huguenots who had fled from France during times of persecution, as well as Welsh and English Anglicans of a “low church” flavour. I was baptized into the Anglican Church in a congregation in Hamilton, Ontario, the city where I grew up. My parents stopped going to church when I was still quite young and so I only sporadically went to church, either with friends who were members of an evangelical church or to the local United Church where I was a member of the scout troop. Very little of this background prepared me for the kind of Christianity I was later to adopt, and I am quite certain that most of my ancestors would be horrified to see the kind of things I do on Sunday now. When I was 18 years old I made a conscious decision to return to my roots and was confirmed in the Anglican Church and became very involved in my parish church as a server, chorister, and member of parish council.

There were two transformative things that happened in my undergraduate years at university. They both had to do with a change of program. I started in engineering but changed to philosophy as I discerned a call to ordained ministry. Many of the professors in philosophy at McMaster University were of the “Continental” school of philosophy rather than the “Anglo-American” or analytic school of philosophy. They introduced me to a sustained critique of the presuppositions behind modernity and introduced me to elements of postmodernity. Some of these professors claimed that Modernity does not value the arts (whether visual or musical) because the arts are not amenable to empirical investigation or qualitative analysis and are thus considered to be merely expressions of subjective feeling. In postmodern schools of thought, they taught that all reality is interpreted through individual bias and inclination, and thus the arts are highly valued as being vehicles to suggest new
Since I was very involved in music as a singer and musician, I naturally tended to favour those schools of philosophy which valued the arts and critiqued the values of modernity. This change of philosophical orientation was the first transformative event and it has coloured my thinking ever since. More will be said about this below.

In the summer between changing programs from engineering to philosophy, I spent four months with the monks of the (Anglican) Order of the Holy Cross in Toronto where I discerned my future direction and vocation in life. The monks had just moved into a new home and I paid my room and board by helping with renovations to the building. This time spent in Toronto opened me up to several new experiences. The first was the start of a lifelong habit of saying the Divine Office. The second involved being a volunteer at a food bank on Bloor Street (Stop 103) which opened my eyes to the debilitating effects of poverty and substance abuse and began to shape within me the empathy and patience needed to work with people who suffered from these problems. The third was my involvement with a small congregation where one of the monks was the priest-in-charge. St. Matthias’ Church was a small and struggling congregation in the Anglo-Catholic stream of Anglicanism. I was an instant convert to this rather extreme expression of Catholic Anglicanism. For a painfully shy, uptight and anal-retentive white male the whole experience was profoundly liberating. I allowed myself to be soaked in a Eucharistic rite which was sung with plainchant from beginning to end and further adorned with beautiful vestments, many candles, statues and icons, constant bodily expressions of reverence, and an excessive use of incense. I have ever since identified myself with this minority culture within Anglicanism, and I received the training which made me competent to celebrate liturgical rites in accordance with this tradition.

When I was studying for my Master of Divinity degree at Trinity College, I made a lasting friendship with David Holeton who was then the Professor of Liturgy. His classes and subsequent personal conversations with him sparked a passionate interest in Liturgy and Christian worship which has never subsided. I was also a sacristan for the College during my second and third years there. One reason which made liturgy such an interesting subject at

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1 For a contemporary expression of this way of thinking, see: Bruce E. Benson, *Liturgy as a Way of Life: Embodying the Arts in Christian Worship* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 49-69.
that time had to do with the seminary battles which were still very much alive in the late 1980s over the merits of the older *Book of Common Prayer* (BCP) versus the newer *Book of Alternative Services* (BAS) (which was published in 1985 and partly composed by David Holeton). The differences between these two books are many and varied – not only is the liturgical language different, the structure of the services and their content are different as well. Although I have never considered myself to be liturgically narrow and have been willing to use both service books over the course of my ordained ministry, I have always had a soft spot for the liturgical language in the *Book of Common Prayer*. Part of the appeal of this book has to do with the sense of history the language invokes – for example, the sense of continuity I feel knowing that the words I am saying or singing are those that my great-grandfather used when he was a boy chorister at Ely cathedral in England. Another reason for the appeal of the Prayer Book has to do with the music which goes with the texts of that book. I have sung everything from plainchant, to the Renaissance music of Tudor composers, to the liturgical music of Canadian composer Healey Willan. The introduction of new liturgical texts threatened this musical heritage which I greatly treasure, in large part because the venerable language for which the music had been composed had changed. Because of this concern I joined the Prayer Book Society of Canada in the late 1980s and have been a member ever since. This quite disparate group of people are dedicated to seeing that the Prayer Book remains as a worship option in the Anglican Church of Canada. In 2011 I was elected to be the National Chairperson of the Prayer Book Society of Canada and thus I have some professional interest beyond my parish in liturgical language.

**Current Context of Ministry**

I have served in a number of congregations since my ordination to the diaconate in 1990 and my ordination to the priesthood in 1991, and I have been exposed to many different liturgical and theological contexts. I am not a liturgical or theological “fundamentalist” (so-called) and can thus adapt to doing ministry in a variety of settings. However, my current ministerial setting has very much taken me back to the experiences of my formative years at St. Matthias’ Church in Toronto. St. George’s Anglican Church in Windsor, Ontario, is a small, struggling congregation in the Anglo-Catholic tradition. It was the first congregation in the Diocese of Huron to adopt this tradition (in the 1920’s), and remains one of only two
congregations in the whole Diocese to maintain it. It should be mentioned that there is a reason that catholic Anglicanism has little presence in the Diocese of Huron. The first bishop of the Diocese (Benjamin Cronyn), and more than half the clergy at that time (the 1850s), were from the Church of Ireland (the Anglican Church in Ireland) rather than the Church of England and their upbringing as Irish Protestants left them with a deep and almost pathological fear and hatred of anything resembling Roman Catholicism. Although the “low church” Irish Protestant character of the Diocese of Huron has more or less faded away today, it meant historically that very few clergy attempted to go against the mainstream and lead their congregations to embrace a more catholic expression of Anglicanism. Thus, one could say that St. George’s church was and is at the margins of the diocese because of its adherence to a minority tradition in the context of Anglicanism as a whole.

St. George’s has remained traditional in the sense that it continues to use a traditional language (“Prayer Book” English) liturgy and plainchant as a large part of the musical repertoire. The Eucharistic rite from the Book of Common Prayer is enriched with additions from the English Missal. The celebrations are ad orientem, or eastward-facing, and the church is decorated with icons, crucifixes, and statues. The traditional eucharistic vestments are worn and on most Sundays at the main Mass incense is used. The church has a shrine to Our Lady of Walsingham with votive candles burning in front of it. There are occasional celebrations of Matins and Evensong from the Book of Common Prayer, and most baptisms and weddings have been celebrated using that book as well.

The priest-in-charge before I arrived was a retired priest who was perceived to be very reactionary and who distrusted the Diocesan authorities and kept the congregation considerably isolated from the wider life of the Church. He was also in failing health and had just been diagnosed with a recurrence of cancer when I first arrived in the Fall of 2007. He refused to resign his position and so I acted as his unpaid assistant while he grew increasingly frail and I increasingly took responsibility for celebrating the church’s rites. Less than a year after my arrival he died and I did his funeral. It was an interesting (and transformative learning) experience to walk with the congregation as they grieved for their loss. Most were convinced that the Diocese would close the church, and the congregation certainly lost a good number of people (including the dying priest’s wife and adult children
who went to a different church). However, the Bishop appointed me as the incumbent with the understanding that I would maintain their tradition, which I am happy to do since it is one that I enjoy and admire. I have worked hard at ending suspicion of the Diocesan authorities and have tried to reconnect the congregation to the wider life of the church. St. George’s is, in many ways, like the congregation of St. Matthias which I encountered in my 20s – it is a small, struggling congregation made up predominantly of singles: never-marrieds, widows, widowers, divorced people, and some gay folk.

Soon after I was appointed to St. George’s church on a half-time basis in 2008, I also started to work at Canterbury College (an Anglican College affiliated with the University of Windsor) as Director of Christian Studies. I did not have any ministerial functions at Canterbury as there is another person who is the Anglican Chaplain to the College and the wider university. My job was mostly administrative: arranging (non-credit) courses in theology for parish lay leaders and those discerning a call to the vocational diaconate, finding and hiring appropriate instructors for those courses, and doing the necessary advertising and financial planning which will make the courses a success. Some of the courses I have taught myself. I have since resigned that position (in May 2016) in order to concentrate on finishing my doctorate while maintaining my parish ministry.

Statement of the Research Problem

My research problem has evolved considerably over the course of my Doctor of Ministry studies. It began with interest in the new English language liturgical prose translation which was going to be used with the new edition (then unpublished) of the Roman Missal. This new translation, and the principles that informed it, was (and is) very controversial, as it apparently destroyed the linguistic consensus which Western Christian liturgical scholars had agreed on regarding the best translations of liturgical texts in English.

Furthermore, since it appears that many churches which would self-identify themselves as being catholic Anglican congregations in Canada use a traditional liturgical prose as

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2 The phrase “traditional liturgical prose” will be defined and explained in chapter three below. For now, it will be sufficient for me to say that by “traditional liturgical prose” I mean the English language prose of the Book of Common Prayer and the Authorized (King James) Version of the Bible. This is sometimes referred to as “Tudor” English. Among other things, what makes this language “traditional” is the use of archaic forms (e.g. pronouns like “thee” and “thou”), the use of complex sentence structures which incorporate subordinate
opposed to a contemporary liturgical prose, I also wondered if the use of traditional liturgical prose was a phenomenon of catholic Anglican identity in this country. However, it became apparent that this would be a thesis in its own right, and thus I would rather consider Anglo-Catholicism as one of the contexts of my study rather than seek to make any causal link between it and traditional liturgical prose. It must also be recognized that there are also some “low church” congregations that use traditional liturgical prose as well.

Finally, as mentioned above, questions regarding the challenges and possibilities of liturgical language in the context of contemporary modern/post-modern society became a part of my research interest. Does the use of a traditional liturgical prose represent (perhaps unconsciously) a countercultural challenge to the assumptions and prejudices of secular modernity, or does it merely represent a conservative clinging to familiar things? More will be said about the context of modernity in chapter two below. Suffice it to say for the moment that questions regarding the meaning and interpretation of certain kinds of liturgical prose have come to the fore in my research.

The central theme of this study regards the kind of language used in the worship of God. Having said this, the thesis question may be stated as follows:

**What meaning does the experience of traditional liturgical prose (TLP) provide to worshippers in the congregation of St. George’s Church, Windsor, Ontario?**

There are a number of related or sub-questions which can be asked in light of the research problem as stated above. Is traditional liturgical prose an essential component of the worshipper’s overall experience of the Divine? Does traditional liturgical prose represent for the worshipper a connection to a tradition much larger than that of the congregation itself? Does traditional liturgical language offer a counter-modern or post-modern vision of reality to the worshipper? What are the missional, or “evangelical”, implications for using a traditional liturgical prose?

Before any attempt is made to answer these questions, we need to look at the theoretical framework and theological assumptions at work in this study. Chapter two will focus on the
contextual framework in which the study is done, and the theological framework which informs my ministry. In chapter three we will define what liturgical prose is and, in particular, what is meant by “traditional liturgical prose.”
Chapter Two: Theological Foundations

A Prelude for Attunement

I want to begin this section with an extended meditation on a scriptural story. On the Feast of the Epiphany in the Church’s calendar (January 6) there are traditionally celebrated several different epiphanies or manifestations. There is the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles, in the persons of the magi; there is the manifestation of the Triune God at the Lord’s baptism in the Jordan; and there is yet another manifestation of the Lord in his first miracle, at Cana in Galilee.³

What is it that is revealed on this latter occasion? We are told explicitly - “This beginning of signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.”⁴ Why is his glory emphasized and not his power? Power was certainly revealed in this miracle - the transmutation of the element of water into the element of wine could only be done by the Creator of all things, and thus this miracle or sign is a revelation or manifestation of Christ’s Divine Nature. So why does it appear to be important to emphasize that it was Christ’s glory and not his power which moved the disciples to believe in him?

Before we can answer that last question, we need to ask what is meant by ‘glory’ in the passage under consideration. In our contemporary culture, we often use the word “glory” as a synonym for “fame”. We talk, for example, of an Olympic athlete “going for glory” by which we mean the adulation and fame which comes with winning. But the Gospel of John could not have been using the word “glory” in this sense because not everyone in the Gospel story knew what had taken place. We are told that the governor of the feast didn’t know where the new wine had come from and that he thinks the groom has cleverly been holding back on the good wine until late in the feast. Only the waiters and Jesus’ friends and family were in on the miracle which had taken place. Thus, Jesus was not effecting this sign for the

³ The triple nature of the Feast of the Epiphany can be seen in the traditional antiphons for the canticles Benedictus and Magnificat in the Divine Office for the Epiphany. They are quoted below in this paper.

⁴ John 2.11 from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version (ESV) (Wheaton, Illinois: Good News Publishers, 2001). My reason for using this version here is that I prefer the traditional word “manifested,” whereas the NRSV uses the word “revealed,” which, in my opinion, is a weaker verb in this context.
sake of his own self-aggrandizement. Jesus was not a megalomaniac, but performed miracles to point to the goodness and graciousness of God and to give signs that the kingdom of God was at hand.

So what was the nature of the glory that was revealed by the changing of water into wine? What I want to suggest is that as Christ’s Divine Nature was revealed in this miracle by the power of his word, the disciples caught a glimpse of the splendour and magnificence of God’s presence, the beauty of the uncreated energy and light of the Creator. This is the glory which is being referred to, and it is the beauty of this glory which moved the disciples to place their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus.

Three of the apostles - Peter, James and John - were to see this splendour more fully at the Transfiguration of the Lord on the Holy Mount in another gospel, but here at least, at Cana in Galilee, those who were privy to the sign of changing water into wine were given a foretaste of the beauty and graciousness of the Lord’s divinity, a foretaste of his supreme glory.

I believe that there are two reasons for stressing the Lord’s glory, as opposed to his power. The first is that power is often associated with coercion, and there is always something repulsive about religion when it is coerced. It is my opinion that threatening or guilting someone into believing the gospel does not work because love can never be forced and love is at the centre of the gospel. On the other hand, glory, beauty and splendour are attractive qualities which lead one to love, because we naturally love that which is beautiful. What is beautiful enchants us and arrests us in such a way that we want to look and listen and respond.

The second reason for stressing the importance of the Lord’s glory, as opposed to his power, is because when the Kingdom comes in its fullness we can expect, as Christ’s disciples, to share in his glory in a way that we cannot share in his power. As I understand the Gospel, the Lord Jesus can empower the believer to do many things but this empowerment is never a sharing of the fulness of his power; that is to say, omnipotence belongs to God and is not shared with his creatures. However, we can and will someday share in Christ’s glory. The Apostle Paul reinforces this in his second epistle to the Corinthians:
And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.  

In other words, if we are striving to live the Christian life we are being transformed into Christ’s glory by the power of the Holy Spirit - growing from one degree of glorious grace to another until it comes to its perfection in eternity. This is the promise of the Gospel and it was this that was manifested at the wedding in Cana. It is nothing less than the invitation to share in Christ’s splendour, to be made beautiful in a way that surpasses anything we might conceive of in this transitory existence.

This above passage from John’s Gospel is one of my favorites. Not only was the Miracle at Cana in Galilee passage read at my wedding more than twenty years ago, it has become a key passage in the self-understanding of my priestly ministry and in the work I want to do in the Doctor of Ministry degree. This Gospel functions paradigmatically within the study. In a sense, the theological foundations that follow could be seen as an extended working out of the context provided by John 2.11.

Contextual Theology

The first and foremost thing to say about contextual theology is that it constitutes an intelligent and sensitive concern for seeking God within the contingencies which form the reality which one inhabits. Contextual theology, as it is now practiced, appears to have arisen in the 1970s. Mika Vähäkangas informs us that the term “contextual theology” was created in 1972 by the World Council of Churches Theological Education Fund to cover the field of theologies which take context consciously into account. Thus, it was in the wake of the social and intellectual upheavals in the 1960s in Europe and North America that contextual theology came into its own. There were many and varied reasons for this: decolonization in the global south, a general dissatisfaction with “classical theology,” a growing sense that traditional theology had favoured the privileged, white males of middle class society, the overwhelming acceptance of the assumption that one’s understanding of

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5 2 Corinthians 3.18 (ESV).

culture is provided by empirical means in the contemporary social sciences, etc.\(^7\) The importance of contextual theology in the contemporary world has been clearly and forcefully articulated by Stephen Bevans, who writes:

Theology today, we can conclude, must be a contextual theology. Several important movements and currents in our times point out aspects in Christianity that make imperative a theology that takes seriously human experience, social location, particular cultures, and social changes in those cultures. Pluralism in theology, as well as on every level of Christian life, must not only be tolerated; it must be positively encouraged and cultivated. … Contextualization, therefore, is not something on the fringes of the theological enterprise. It is at the very center of what it means to do theology in today’s world. Contextualization, in other words, is a theological imperative.\(^8\)

In his book, *Models of Contextual Theology*, Bevans also provides a helpful taxonomy of contextual theologies by classifying different approaches (or models) which range from those approaches which are least open to culture to those which are most open to culture, and some which are in between. Altogether, Bevans lists six such models: the Translation Model, the Anthropological Model, the Praxis Model, the Synthetic Model, the Transcendental Model, and the Countercultural Model.\(^9\) Bevans states that each model is valid in its own way and each model has advantages and disadvantages. Bevans is also clear that these models are not meant to be mutually exclusive, but that in practice one may use several different approaches at once in order to do justice to the context in which one is working.\(^10\)

It is in the spirit of being awake and attentive to the signs of the times that I have chosen to see Bevans’ countercultural model as my primary approach to doing contextual theology. As has already been noted, Bevans is at pains to stress that there is no need to commit oneself to any one model of contextual theology to the exclusion of one or more of the others.


\(^9\) A concise description of each of these models can be found in Bevans, *Models*, 141-143.

\(^10\) Bevans, *Models*, 139.
Having said that, I believe it is helpful to be self-aware or intentional about one’s methods and presuppositions.

It is interesting to note that Bevans did not have the countercultural model of contextual theology in the first edition of his book. It was added later because, as Bevans put it, “I began to suspect that there was another way of doing contextual theology that took culture seriously, thoroughly engaged it, but also was thoroughly suspicious of it.” In his chapter dealing with the countercultural model, Bevans focussed to a large extent on the work of Leslie Newbigin with some passing references to Stanley Hauerwas. However, there was a name mentioned in a list of practitioners of the countercultural model of doing contextual theology which was stated once and never referred to again, almost as if were an embarrassment. That name was John S. Milbank.

John Milbank was one of the founders of a theological movement known as Radical Orthodoxy. Before saying more about this movement, I want to affirm my conviction that one of the strengths of the radical orthodox way of doing contextual theology is that it takes seriously an aspect of contemporary North American, including Canadian, culture that the other models do not seem to be able to cope with or to challenge, and that is the radical and pervasive pluralism and secularity of contemporary society. Thus, before saying anything more about Radical Orthodoxy, we will have to take a closer look at the concept of secularity. In doing so, we will only be following the advice given by Clemens Sedmak in his book Doing Local Theology. There Sedmak stresses the importance of being awake and attentive to the situation and reality which is one’s context in life and of seeking the presence of God in that particular context.

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11 Bevans, Models, xvi.

12 Bevans, Models, 124

13 Clemens Sedmak, Doing Local Theology: A Guide for Artisans of a New Humanity (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2002). That what Sedmak means by “Local Theology” is what others such as Stephen Bevans mean by “Contextual Theology” may be seen in Sedmak’s ‘Thesis 34’ on page 96: “Theology is always done within a concrete local social structure that provides rich resources for constructing local theologies and for developing a local identity as a theologian. The social, historical, cultural, and political context has an impact on the role of the theologian and his or her place in the context.”
Wake up! Waking up is not the privilege of scholars. In fact, being awake in a world full of wonders is the privilege of children. Doing theology in the spirit of children means seeking God in all things, being aware of God’s presence, listening to God’s voice, and being attentive to the signs of the times. We can do that only if we wake up.  

The Secular Context

One of the most succinct definitions of secular society can be found in Edward Norman’s book, *Secularisation*. There he writes: “Expressed in its greatest simplicity, this means that daily life is largely bereft of reference to religion.” In other words, every aspect of human existence – politics, economics, anthropology, art, linguistics, etc. – is usually discussed, in various media, without reference to God or to any idea of transcendence. People can shape every aspect of their lives without considering any element of the Divine. Public religious discourse is marginalized to such an extent that it is seen as the speech of a more or less eccentric minority.

One illustration of such radical and pervasive secularity is the current trend in which people are not given a funeral when they die. It is no longer unusual to see an obituary in the local newspaper which informs the world that a person has died and been cremated, perhaps at the deceased’s request, but there was no visitation, funeral, memorial, or (so far as can be ascertained) any burial. Anecdotal evidence from funeral directors confirms this trend as well. Consciously or unconsciously, the refusal to have any liturgical rites or ceremonies to mark the end of a life can be interpreted as an acknowledgement that there is no God to whom a person can be commended or to whom gratitude can be expressed for the life of the deceased. No hope is publicly expressed in an afterlife or some sort of continued existence after death. And it might be further inferred from the desire to have no funeral that there were no accomplishments worth celebrating in the deceased’s life, and no meaning to be attached to the deceased’s existence. This could be interpreted as an almost pure expression of nihilism: the lack of a funeral for a deceased person is an implicit acknowledgement that the life now extinguished amounted to absolutely nothing.

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14 Sedmak, *Doing Local Theology*, 3.

How human beings got to this place in 21st century Canadian society is a long and complex story. At least two authors locate the remote origins of secularity in an idea proposed by the 13th century philosopher John Duns Scotus. He was apparently the first to posit “univocity of being.” In the words of Brad Gregory:

Scotus agreed that God’s being does not differ from that of everything else that exists. This is Scotus’s univocal conception of being – “univocal” because it is predicated in conceptually equivalent terms of everything that exists, including God. By contrast, Christian theologians who continued to hold the inherited view, before and after Scotus, denied that God belonged to the same order or type of existence as his creation.

In other words, God and God’s creation were now both within the same conceptual framework and amenable to the same investigation by human reason. Again, in Gregory’s words:

This would prove to be the first step toward the eventual domestication of God’s transcendence, a process in which the seventeenth-century revolutions in philosophy and science would participate – not so much by way of dramatic departures as by improvising new parts on a stage that had been unexpectedly transformed by the doctrinal disagreements among Christians in the Reformation era.

One of the “doctrinal disagreements” which proved to be among the most intractable and violently contested during the Reformation was the doctrine of Christ’s “Real Presence” in the Holy Eucharist. What is the relationship between the elements of bread and wine and the Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus in this rite? How could Jesus be said to be present in the elements and at the same time be seated “on the right hand of the Father”? It is within this dispute that Gregory sees clearly the metaphysical problem which he is trying to explicate:

Whether it was explicitly recognized by its protagonists or not, the denial that Jesus could be really present in the Eucharist … is a logical corollary of metaphysical univocity. A “spiritual” presence that is contrasted with a real presence presupposes an either-or dichotomy between a crypto-spatial God and the natural world that precludes divine immanence in its desire to preserve divine transcendence. But in

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17 Gregory, The Unintended Reformation, 37.

18 Gregory, The Unintended Reformation, 37-38.
traditional Christian metaphysics the two attributes are correlative: it is precisely and only God’s radical otherness as nonspatial that makes his presence in and through creation possible, just as it had made the incarnation possible. … The denial of the possibility of Christ’s real presence in the Eucharist, by contrast, ironically implies that the “spiritual” presence of God is itself being conceived in spatial or quasi-spatial terms – which is why, in order to be kept pure, it must be kept separate from and uncontaminated by the materiality of the “mere bread.”

Secular people assume – and this assumption is rarely challenged – that a secular public space is a neutral space in which any and all ideas, religious commitments, and political thought can be tolerated and respected. This idea of a secular, religiously neutral kind of public space may have even been the ideal envisioned by the early pioneers of the Enlightenment way of thinking, but it can hardly be said to be true in practice. In actual fact, religious ideas are pushed out of the public square in order to keep the public square “neutral”; i.e, to keep it unpolluted by the irrational claims of religion. Post-modernists would challenge the whole notion of any neutral or ideologically free public forum, because there is no such thing as an objective reality free from some sort of bias.

It is with this critique of secularity in mind that we turn to a detailed discussion of Radical Orthodoxy.

The Countercultural Methodology: Radical Orthodoxy

Radical orthodoxy grew out of a group of scholars at Cambridge University in Britain during the 1990s, and counts Catherine Pickstock, Graham Ward, and John Milbank as its foremost advocates. What are the distinguishing features of the radical orthodoxy movement which bring out its countercultural stance? Since radical orthodoxy is not a clearly delineated “school” of theology with a list of approved doctrines, but rather a project or movement energized by common practices and commitments, it will be useful to borrow

19 Gregory, The Unintended Reformation, 42-43.

20 James Smith, in his book Introducing Radical Orthodoxy: Mapping a Post-secular Theology (Grand rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 33-34, contends that Radical Orthodoxy first came to the attention of the scholarly world through the publication of John Milbank’s book, Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), although the term was not used there.
James Smith’s description of radical orthodoxy as being a “symphony in five movements.”

The five movements are the five themes which characterize the radical orthodoxy program.

The first movement or theme is the critique of modernity. This means that Christian theologians should feel empowered to call into question the foundational metaphysical, epistemological, and anthropological assumptions – or faith commitments – that undergird modernity. This means calling into question the whole idea of truth based on an autonomous, universal human reason. It means questioning the dualisms – faith/reason, mind/body – which characterize modern ways of thinking. None of this means that radical orthodoxy is anti-modern or anti-cultural (which would prevent radical orthodoxy from being a contextual theology). One cannot ignore the fact that humanity has benefitted from both technological advancement and ideas such as religious toleration. In the example given below, Catherine Pickstock celebrates one of the aspects of modernity which has been positive:

Starting from well before 1300, and continuing through the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, human beings started to become more and more aware of their potential creatively to transform themselves and the world for human benefit and the greater beautification of life. Humanity as maker emerged, and the capacities of both art and science were vastly expanded.

Thus, while radical orthodoxy feels free to critically appropriate elements of the pre-modern into its theories, it is not anti-modern but rather concerned to present an alternative vision of the modern; a kind of counter-modernity. Of course, this project is not being done in isolation, but is a part of a larger current of post-modern critique which is being felt in other quarters as well. Kathryn Tanner, who is not a part of the radical orthodoxy movement, nevertheless writes:

The need to find theoretical justifications for the theological enterprise in particular has become less urgent given postmodern suspicions about all claims to universality, disinterestedness and culturally unmediated insight. Appeals to specifically Christian sources and norms of insight and the advocacy stance assumed by many theologians are less suspect than they used to be, now that the tradition-bound, culturally

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21 Smith, Introducing Radical Orthodoxy, 70-80.

influenced and politically invested character of even the “hard sciences” has become an intellectual commonplace.\textsuperscript{23}

The second movement or theme is that radical orthodoxy is post-secular. One of the key orthodoxies of modernity is the assertion that one can purportedly describe, by use of the sciences, an objective account of human life untainted by faith perspectives. Radical orthodoxy seeks to undo the very notion of secular reason by unmasking its pretentions. In James Smith’s words:

The hope is that, once the theoretical foundations of secularity are dismantled – and demonstrated as such – the spaces for public discourse (in both politics and the academy) will provide new opportunities for the expression of a properly theoretical or Christian account of reality.\textsuperscript{24}

The third movement or theme is that of participation and materiality. It is best to let Catherine Pickstock describe what this is about:

The watchword of radical orthodoxy, beyond postmodernism, is participation, a Platonic framework which was developed by Christianity as well as by Judaism and Islam. According to this framework, because everything derives from God, it derives traces of the divine reality. Everything shows us a little of what God is like. Although this means that matter points above itself to a spiritual realm, the view elevates and does not denigrate matter.\textsuperscript{25}

In other words, anything which has being does so insofar as it partakes of the Being of God; anything which is good is good because it participates in the Goodness which is Divine; anything which is beautiful is beautiful because it participates in the One who is Beauty itself. This is a direct challenge to the materialism which is characteristic of modernity:

When the world is so flattened that all we have is the immanent, the immanent implodes upon itself. In contrast to such nihilism and materialism, only a participatory ontology – in which the immanent and material is suspended from the transcendental and immaterial – can grant the world meaning.\textsuperscript{26}

It is just such a transcendence revealed in the material that is at the centre of the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation.


\textsuperscript{24} Smith, \textit{Introducing Radical Orthodoxy}, 74.

\textsuperscript{25} Pickstock, “Is Orthodoxy Radical?” 10.

\textsuperscript{26} Smith, \textit{Introducing Radical Orthodoxy}, 75.
The fourth movement or theme is that of sacramentality, liturgy, and aesthetics. This theme flows directly from the last one. If the creation is suspended from the transcendent then it becomes possible for created things to be revelatory of divine realities. Creation may be said to have a liturgical and doxological character which participates in the order, symmetry and beauty of the Creator. This too is a corollary of the incarnation. It is with this point in mind that we can more fully appreciate why I see John 2.11 as a central Biblical text for this paper – the Lord Jesus manifested forth, in the miracle at Cana in Galilee, those transcendent glories from which the created world is suspended and in which we hope to have our full participation, “from one degree of glory to another.”

Needless to say, this theme will have implications for liturgical language which will be explored more fully later in this paper.

The final theme or movement to consider is that of cultural critique and transformation. Stephen Bevans, in Models of Contextual Theology, was clearly concerned that the countercultural model of contextual theology would become the domain of an elite clique of theologians:

A third caution regarding the countercultural model is in regard to its relatively monocultural makeup, at least in terms of practitioners in the context of the contemporary West. With few exceptions, the practitioners are white and for the most part middle-class.

However, while most of those involved in the radical orthodoxy project have indeed been white, middle-class practitioners, this has not translated into a cerebral theology which is divorced from the problems of the world and keen to uphold and maintain the status quo. As James Smith expresses it:

Given its incarnational account of God’s revelation in the world, building on the participatory account of the relationship between creation and Creator, RO emphasizes both God’s revelation of himself in the material world (in art, for instance) and God’s concern for the redemption and transformation of this world (socially, politically, and economically) … Central to the project of RO, then, is a radical consideration of politics – and the political nature of the church and gospel – in a way that does not simply concede political expertise to the secular but rather

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27 2 Corinthians 3.18 (ESV)

28 Bevans, Models, 125.

29 Smith uses RO throughout his book as a short form for Radical Orthodoxy.
attempts to unfold a distinctively Christian politics, such that even this “socialism by grace” is not confused with its secular parodies.\textsuperscript{30}

One of the more provocative examples of this social concern within radical orthodoxy can be seen in the wonderfully entitled essay, “The World in a Wafer: A Geography of the Eucharist as Resistance to Globalization,” by William Cavanaugh.\textsuperscript{31} In this essay Cavanaugh critiques the globalization which has allowed transnational corporations to impose a universal culture which gives the illusion that all the people on earth are contemporaries, sharing the same space and time. By contrast, “The consumer of the Eucharist is no longer the schizophrenic subject of global capitalism, awash in a sea of unrelated presents, but walks into a story with a past, present, and future.”\textsuperscript{32}

The brief survey of the radical orthodoxy movement presented above has, I hope, given some sense of the countercultural contextuality which I will be assuming. While not basing this thesis on acceptance of all aspects of this movement, I nevertheless believe that it presents a good theological approach to the context in which I am working.

The Secular Context and the Possibility of Liturgical Language

Given the secular character of contemporary Canadian culture, it is intriguing to me that this fact is so little discussed in relation to Christian worship in church circles. One can encounter endless exhortations from church bureaucrats and self-proclaimed church growth experts as to the importance of having worship which is “relevant;” indeed, one can sometimes get the impression that “being relevant” is a description of the deity before whom we must bow and give our allegiance. But very rarely is it baldly stated that the culture to which we are supposed to be relevant has no perceived need for the worship of any sort of deity, never mind the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, if the Church is to be truly relevant to a secular context in which God is absent, one must conclude that the Church should be silent and not talk about God at all.

\textsuperscript{30} Smith, \textit{Introducing Radical Orthodoxy}, 79-80.


Why is so much contemporary talk of liturgical “renewal” never made with reference to the corrosive effects of secular culture? One of the few writers that I have seen who confronts this problem directly is the German scholar Angelus Häussling. He writes:

We live in the midst of atheists, not anti-theists, and we ourselves are also concerned that God remain a reality for us. One can read theological works today where there is no mention throughout either of God or Christ. Where these words still do appear they seem often to be understood only as ciphers … Where “God” becomes problematic in that way, worship, liturgy and prayer in general necessarily become meaningless. Social involvement becomes the more appropriate response, as being more in accord with the gospel. What then should be done with established symbols of salvation? What about sacraments? It no longer has any significance at all … I cannot imagine how out of such a theology there could emerge a liturgy that is anything more or other than a call to action to change society. Yet our situation reflects just such a theology: God as God is no longer the obvious and uncontested source of being. He is no longer the summit of the pyramid of all beings. He is simply no longer evident. And this is the case not only for a few philosophers, poets and apostles of sociology, but for the majority of those who determine the world.33

Given the reality articulated above, what meaning and purpose can liturgical prose – language and speech about God and our response to God – have for the worshipper today? Does it even make sense to continue to use liturgical prose in a secular context which neither understands nor appreciates what this speech is all about?

A response to secular modernity which attempts to be relevant to the culture is the non-theistic “worship” celebrated by the atheist United Church of Canada pastor Gretta Vosper in her congregation in Toronto. God is absent from their Sunday service – they instead talk about an idealized human community, and the political and social means by which such an idealized human community could be realized. In Greta Vosper’s own words: “When we pray in a non-theistic setting there is no “who” to whom we are praying.”34 In Vosper’s book, With or Without God, there is an appendix in which Vosper gives examples of worship in which God is absent. She gives several examples of non-theistic prayers,35 the lyrics of non-


35 Vosper, With or Without God, 331.
theistic hymns, and a sample of a non-theistic “Eucharistic Prayer” to be said over some bread and wine. While this kind of celebration can be said to be liturgical insofar as there are set prayers and communal responses, the texts can only express metaphors drawn from nature or common human experience lest they be seen to privilege religious metaphors drawn from one religious tradition to the exclusion of another. This is worship which is absolutely and completely relevant for a secular society for it is worship in which God is absent, just as God is absent from the rest of a secular person’s life.

Of course, one cannot help but think that this form of worship can be compared to an aspect of atheist philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach’s theory, proposed more than 150 years ago in his book, *The Essence of Christianity*, that God is nothing more than a projection of humanity itself as an object for admiration and adoration. Feuerbach wrote,

> Man – this is the mystery of religion – projects his being into objectivity, and then again makes himself an object to this projected image of himself thus converted into a subject …

Of course, traditional Monotheism would regard this as idolatry – the worship of something created rather than the Creator – but such concerns are tangential for the secular citizen of modernity.

Thus, to ask naïvely whether one’s church is relevant to the present Canadian culture or not, is the wrong question to ask unless one is prepared to go for the non-theistic approach encouraged by Greta Vosper. The real question, the pertinent question, is to ask how countercultural a given worshipping community is prepared to be, because to persist on using any sort of God language in public is to be countercultural.

So, to what extent are you willing to go against the grain of fashionable societal norms? Are you willing to be weakly countercultural, or strongly countercultural, and what would that look like?

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37 Vosper, *With or Without God*, 346-349.

These are important questions to which we shall return later in the paper, but before we can answer these questions we need to have a firm grip on our understanding of liturgical prose and what makes it a unique form of human discourse. We must also define what is meant by “traditional liturgical prose,” as this is a central concept to the study at hand. These matters will be dealt with in the following chapters.

A Theology of Ministry

Based on the theological framework articulated above, I would say that my theology of ministry is one of presence and manifestation. In being present to others I am called to manifest the glory, love, grace, mercy, compassion, and peace which are attributes of the Lord Jesus revealed in his faithful people. This may be in deed, action, or word, and it is sacramental, in the broad meaning of that word. If the universe is suspended from the transcendent and immaterial, then created things can mediate that transcendence. In the words of Lizette Larson-Miller,

Material mediation as a means to draw us toward and into the “power to effect change” that is transcendence, or to perceive the divine drawing near to human form and materiality, is then joined to a theology of symbolic signification or sacramental reality.39

Of course, I believe in the particularity of the Christian revelation and the uniqueness of the Christian sacraments, but I also believe the manifestation of Christ’s glory overflows the institutional structures of the Church in order to draw people into relationship with the Divine. Needless to say, this means that I believe it to be my duty to ensure that the liturgical worship of the church will be one that maximizes the opportunity for transcendental encounter: worship in which music, choreography, symbols, gestures, text, ritual, colour, sounds, and even olfactory stimulus, harmoniously create a rich and thick tapestry of sacramental encounter. Thus, my interest in liturgical language is but one aspect of this larger ministry of presence and manifestation. And yes, it is the revelatory power of the scenic apparatus of liturgical worship which is one of the reasons I am drawn to the Anglo-Catholic expression of Anglicanism. One of the reasons why I am doing this study is to see, among other things, whether the people of St. George’s church discern or interpret traditional

liturgical prose as having this revelatory power along with all the other aspects of the worship they engage in.
Chapter Three: Defining Traditional Liturgical Prose

Perhaps the best approach to defining liturgical prose in general is to be found in the writings of Gail Ramshaw. In her book, *Christ in Sacred Speech: The Meaning of Liturgical Language*, Ramshaw begins with an *apophatic* approach to liturgical prose before attempting to define positively what it is. She points out that liturgical speech is not primarily doctrinal speech.\(^{40}\) Not everyone would agree with this point, but I have opted to follow Ramshaw’s account because I think it is clear and because it is congruent with what other writers (introduced below) have to say about liturgical language. Ramshaw’s first assertion is that despite the fact that *lex orandi lex credendi*, liturgical prose is not the abstract language of a systematic theological treatise, but rather the “first-order” speech of human communication. Liturgical speech is also not poetic language, although poetic devices may be used in liturgical prose. Poetry tends to be subjective and self-referential, whereas liturgy refers to realities beyond itself.\(^{41}\) Liturgical speech is also not colloquial speech. As Ramshaw points out, “Not even in the secular world do we elect current conversational tone when the communal situation is socially significant.”\(^{42}\)

Ramshaw then asks, “If liturgical speech is not dogmatic prose, poetic monologue, or colloquial conversation, then what is it?”\(^{43}\) Here she draws on the ancient art of rhetoric as a category which is helpful in defining liturgical prose. Rhetoric is the art of speaking effectively, eloquently and persuasively. Again, to quote Ramshaw:

> Rhetoric is also the art of shaping syntax carefully … Syntax concerns itself with design, balance, and euphony; with the placement of words, the amount of tension in the lines, and the tone of phrase. Superb syntax approaches beauty … \(^{44}\)

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\(^{41}\) Ramshaw, Sacred Speech, 3.

\(^{42}\) Ramshaw, *Sacred Speech*, 3.

\(^{43}\) Ramshaw, Sacred Speech, 4.

\(^{44}\) Ramshaw, Sacred Speech, 5.
At this point it is worth interjecting that the rhetorical or declamatory aspect of liturgical prose is also touched upon by Stella Brook in her study of the language of the *Book of Common Prayer*:

Liturgical writing calls for a simultaneous and balanced use of the physical and intellectual aspects of language which has something in common with the use of language in verse drama. Since the whole purpose of liturgical composition is to be uttered and to be heard, many of its relationships are with spoken rather than with written style. It has to meet, simultaneously, the workaday but important requirements of ease of articulation and the need to create aural effects of sonority and dignity and rhythmic balance. But beautiful sounds are not enough. Liturgical writing has also to give clear expression to profound and subtle thought, ordered into formal shape and pattern.  

Not only is liturgical speech rhetorical, it is also metaphorical; i.e, it makes use of metaphors to express meaning. To quote Ramshaw:

Metaphor, far from being merely a decorative figure of speech, is the fundamental unit of creative thought. In metaphor the mind expands in a fresh way, imagining the new and renovating the old. Metaphor is not merely an image, the look-alike, the reflection in the mirror. Rather, metaphor forms a comparison where none previously existed. Metaphor alters perception by superimposing disparate images.

The importance of metaphor for liturgical prose cannot be overstated, and we will certainly return to the use of metaphor throughout this essay.

When we put together the rhetorical structures and metaphorical images which make up liturgical prose we at last arrive at Ramshaw’s definition of liturgical speech: metaphoric rhetoric. In Ramshaw’s own words:

The liturgy is rhetoric, communal speech of formal eloquence. The liturgy is metaphoric, its words, phrases, and sentences functioning within a creative tradition as the symbols of our faith. Thus, to analyze the meaning of liturgical speech we must ask questions of rhetorical purpose and of metaphoric meaning.

It should be emphasized at this point that the metaphors used in liturgical speech are not arbitrary, but drawn from the Christian Tradition, i.e., the sacred scriptures primarily, but

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also to some degree ecclesiastical legends, the writings of the Fathers, creedal definitions, and canticles, hymns and songs. Generally speaking, it is assumed that the worshipper has at least some knowledge of this Tradition in order to make sense of the texts which are presented to him or her. Wade Wheelock, in an anthropological study of liturgical prose, has this to say:

Ritual language is frequently couched in metaphorical phrases and relies on an understanding of the symbolic connotations of objects in the ritual context to which it makes reference. Ritual language, then, does not generally function to give the most lucid possible expositions to an untutored audience, but, quite the reverse, often assumes detailed prior knowledge of the matter presented. As one example, the Christian liturgy of the Eucharist, with its highly symbolic declarations of the mysterious identity of the consecrated bread and wine with the body and blood of Christ, like the central rituals of many religious traditions, is meant for the responsible participation of initiates who have already been taught its essential meaning.48

The problem in our contemporary secular society, of course, is that people have lost all contact with the experiences and texts which gave rise to the metaphors and symbolic connections of traditional liturgical prose. What I have in mind here is the experience of traditional church worship using the Bible, hymn books, and service books, or even the experience of reading the Bible at home or the use of devotional literature in one’s prayer life.

Before moving on, I want to illustrate the possibilities of metaphoric rhetoric using a short piece of liturgical prose from the office of Lauds for the Epiphany, from the Breviary. As has already been mentioned, on the Feast of the Epiphany in the Church’s calendar there are traditionally celebrated several different epiphanies or manifestations. There is the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles, in the persons of the magi, there is the manifestation of the Triune God at the Lord’s baptism in the Jordan, and there is yet another manifestation of our Lord in his first miracle, at Cana in Galilee.49 While these events in our Lord’s life


49 The following is the traditional Antiphon at the Magnificat for the Second Vespers of the Epiphany: “We keep this day holy in honour of three miracles: this day a star led the Wise Men to the manger: this day water was turned into wine at the marriage feast: this day Christ willed to be baptized by John in the Jordan for our salvation, alleluia.” The Daily Missal and Liturgical Manual with Vespers for Sundays and Feasts: From the Editio Typica of the Roman Missal and Breviary, 1962, 2nd ed. (London: Baronius Press, 2007), 243.
have their own separate festivals in the Church calendar, they are nevertheless commemorated together in some of the antiphons on the Feast of the Epiphany itself. The most remarkable of these antiphons is the one which is sung before and after the canticle *Benedictus* at Lauds:

> Today to her heavenly Bridegroom is the Church espoused, forasmuch as in Jordan Christ hath washed away her iniquities; Sages with their offerings hasten to the royal marriage; and with water turned to wine the guests are regaled, alleluia.50

At first glance, this antiphon appears to be ridiculous nonsense. Three separate events in the life of Jesus have been conflated into one event which is not even related to those three: the consummation of Christ with his Bride the Church as related in the Book of Revelation 19.7-9 and Revelation 21.2. However, what is being included here is quite profound. This antiphon is conflating all the events of our Lord’s life into one eschatological continuum in which what took place finds its meaning and purpose in the sanctification of the Church and its members. The Epiphany events are salvific because they are intimations and foreshadowings of the fullness of human deification to be found at the end of time. In other words, this antiphon situates the Epiphany mysteries being celebrated into a new and eternal perspective which gives meaning and purpose to the liturgical rites which celebrate those eternal verities. It is a rich tapestry of mixed metaphors and striking images. This dense, rich, mysterious and multivalent piece of writing exemplifies the beautiful metaphoric rhetoric which constitutes that human discourse known as liturgical prose.

It was mentioned above that rhetoric involves the careful crafting of syntax and vocabulary. That the structure of the language itself is important was brought out in a remarkable essay by Catherine Pickstock entitled, “Asyndeton: Syntax and Insanity. A Study of the Revision of the Creed.”51 Asyndeton, as was noted in a previous chapter, is syntax characterized by the absence of explicit conjunctions. Pickstock argues in this essay and elsewhere52 that

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asyndetic syntax is a characteristic of modernity, because modernity, without the all-encompassing and unifying vision of a creation suspended from the transcendent, can only posit a world of fragmented and disjointed realities. Pickstock writes that asyndeton,

… enforces a sense that the world is composed entirely of discontinuous items without hierarchies of value, or continuities of tradition through time, but instead are the playthings of forces enshrined in nominalisations. … Thus small children will take an atomised view of the world for granted because already their life-world is constituted by asyndetic and nominalised rhythms.53

Asyndeton is characteristic of contemporary liturgical prose as well, and Pickstock contrasts the version of the Nicene Creed in the Book of Common Prayer with the International Consultation on English Texts (ICET) version of the Nicene Creed as found in the Alternative Services Book (ASB) and in the formerly used English translation of the Roman Missal.

Pickstock points out that in the traditional English version of the Creed (as in the original Greek and Latin) the doctrine of the Trinity as three persons united in one hypostatic union is not explicitly stated in the wording of the Creed but is implicitly expounded in the syntactical structure of the Creed. Here I quote Pickstock at some length:

The second section, pertaining to the Son, does not lexically repeat the ‘I believe’, but refers anaphorically to the opening clause, (indeed, the first eighteen lines of text depend upon the opening ‘I believe’, as the main verb) so setting it within the same frame: we cannot utter ‘I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ’ except by means of belief in God ‘the Father Almighty’, and belief in one or belief in the other is belief in one and the same thing. The third section, concerning the Holy Ghost, is structured almost entirely by means of embedded and aggregative ‘-who’ clauses, each referring back to the third object of belief, the Holy Ghost, which itself recalls the earlier assertions of belief. All three persons of the Trinity, as well as the Church and its rites, and the anticipation of the life of the world to come, are bound into the same act of belief. The complex layers of subordination mean that it is impossible to isolate a single portion of the text without in some sense summoning the entire Creed. Hypotaxis functions in the Creed to perform the hypostatic union, while the coordinating conjunctions express the co-equality of the three hypostases which constitute the single and simple ousia.54

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53 Ibid.

54 Pickstock, “Asyndeton” 324
However, in the ICET version of the Creed most of the conjunctions and many of the subordinated clauses have been eliminated in order to facilitate short and simple sentences. Thus, the first paragraph, referring to the Father, ends with a full stop. A new section begins with “We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ …” Thus, there is no syntactical connection between the first and second paragraphs which could imply that there is an ambiguous or even disconnected relationship between the Father and the Son. Those who use the ICET Creed with the Prayer Book Creed in the back of their minds might subconsciously supply the missing conjunctions and say the Creed with an orthodox intention, but for those who have no familiarity with the older version of the Creed, the ICET version presents a list of assertions with no obvious connection between the parts other than the fact they share the same block of text on the page. The Creed becomes an atomized list of assertions without organic connection. Pickstock brutally sums up the end result as follows:

The use asyndeton here [in the ICET text of the Creed] gives rise to a paradox, for it is at once a static bulk of immobile density, unable to flow [by] virtue of the absence of connections, and a jagged dance of clashing forms, contributing a disarray, and inducing the reader to abandon the passive role as recipient, or the syntactic role as participant, to engage in an individual re-establishment of order, reading the text neither doxologically nor engaging in doctrinal performance, but rather, in order to make sense of the random juxtaposition of elements. The lack of rational connection in the Creed presents the elements of salvation history and the relation between the Trinitarian persons as models of imbalance and incompleteness.55

The point of all this is to say that the structure and syntax of a language are not unimportant when it comes to considering a liturgical prose which is faithful to the Christian tradition and a challenge to modernity. It is worth noting that the English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC) version of creeds, a revision of the ICET version of the creeds, restored some of the relative clauses to the structure of the text. However, this may have been done to avoid repeating the masculine pronoun “he” rather than from any concerns around asyndeton.

Before going on, there is one other quality of liturgical prose that I want to bring into prominence, and that is joy. It is significant that Angelus Häussling, mentioned earlier in this essay, also narrows in on this important quality:

We can ask who the human being is that must be formed for a Church that celebrates the liturgy, and what are the conditions that foster his existence. We know that there is no worship, no liturgy without a stirring of joy. Joy occurs when a person experiences something freshly bestowed that is decisive to human existence. The task, then, would be to explicate how a human being can newly experience his existence in such a way that what was recently called “God,” the Holy One, the Source, becomes known and responded to.  

Thus, the metaphoric rhetoric of liturgical prose must be a *joyful* metaphoric rhetoric if it is to truly offer a compelling and attractive alternative reality to the worshipper. This quality is present in the liturgical antiphon for the Epiphany presented above. The Epiphany events celebrated on that occasion become metaphors which are mixed together and relate to one of the most joyful of human events: a wedding banquet. 

Joy is the antidote to despair and the ground of that faith which “is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

Joy is a sister to that “peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,” and it is the quality of joy which penetrates through the mysterious, rich and dense metaphorical images of liturgical prose to reveal by intuition the awesome and humbling beauty of the Creator of all things.

Traditional Liturgical Prose

Earlier in this paper a provisional definition was given to the phrase “traditional liturgical prose.” It was stated that this refers to the kind of English prose found in the *Book of Common Prayer* and the Authorized Version of the Bible. It is time to more clearly define the distinctive characteristics of this kind of English.

Perhaps the best place to start is to quote Stella Brook from her exhaustive study, *The Language of the Book of Common Prayer*. There she writes:

> One has to be careful to avoid speaking of ‘the’ prose style of any period as if it were a single, homogeneous entity. Nevertheless, there are features common to Tudor

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56 Häussling, “The Critical Function of Liturgiology” 72


58 Philippians 4.7 (NRSV)
prose which distinguish it from fourteenth-century or eighteenth-century or twentieth-century prose. The writers of a particular period have the same linguistic tools to hand, even though they use them for different purposes and to differing effect, and they are subject to the same general linguistic influences. Tudor prose as a whole is affected by the stretching of English to fit new uses. It shows the beginnings of the lively, experimental interest in language which continued throughout the sixteenth century and well into the seventeenth century. It has a kind of explosive volubility that, again, continued through the high Elizabethan and Jacobean periods. It also shows the effects of the enlarged Latin impact on English vocabulary.\footnote{Brook, The Language of the Book of Common Prayer, 208-209.}

The sixteenth century was a time when the transition from Middle English to Modern English was not entirely complete and there was much experimenting going on in the handling on English prose. The Old English period runs from the introduction of the Germanic language by the invading Angles, Saxons and Jutes in the fifth century to approximately the tenth century. The Norman Conquest in the eleventh century established a French-speaking ruling class and thus many French loan-words were absorbed into the vocabulary. This shaped the Middle English period which spans the eleventh to the late fifteenth century. The introduction of printing in the late 1400s and the effects of the Renaissance, with its revival of classical interests and studies, had an impact on the English language which started the transition from Middle to Modern English. Borrowing vocabulary from Latin had been going on since the introduction of Christianity to Britain in the Old English period because it was the language of the Church, but the borrowing of Latin derived words increased in the late Middle English period due to the Renaissance. Brooks emphasises the importance of this development:

Since the Book of Common Prayer was originally produced at a time when English was notably hospitable to Latin words, the Latinate element in its vocabulary has a special importance. Many of the difficulties which the Book of Common Prayer presents to the modern reader arise out of its use of words of Latin origin.\footnote{Brook, The Language, 40.}

One of the most obvious examples of this problem is to be found in the use of the word “prevent” in such collects as the fourth collect after the blessing in the Eucharistic rite: “Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings ….” In this and other instances, prevent carries its
etymological meaning of “go before.” Modern usage has narrowed the word to expressing a particular kind of precedence, a prior action or happening which stops or hinders some intended action.

Over the course of the centuries from Old English to Modern English there had also been simplifications of inflections. Old English was a highly inflected language, but much of this was smoothed out as the language developed. However, in the sixteenth century this simplification of inflection was still in the process of transition, and thus it was still normative for “thou” and “thee” to be used to address a singular individual and “ye” and “you” as the mode of address to more than one person.

Brook’s assessment of the prose of the Prayer Book is summed up well in the following passage:

> The language of the Book of Common Prayer is bound up with the background and genesis of the Book. The compilers were faced with the problem of creating an English formal liturgical prose for which, in the nature of things, there were no pre-existent models. At the same time, they were reformers, not revolutionaries. They worked in a new language, but they took over, with varying degrees of modification, the substance of much that had hitherto been expressed in the traditional liturgical language, Latin. Their achievement was impressive. To some extent, it was an achievement in translation; to some extent, it as an achievement in free translation; to some extent, it was an achievement in fresh composition, conditioned by the recollection of immemorial liturgical forms.²¹

It was political factors that ensured that the English prose of the Book of Common Prayer would remain unchanged. The BCP was hallowed by the death of its principal author, Archbishop Thomas Cranmer. Foxe’s Book of Martyrs ensured that Cranmer would be remembered as a heroic defender of the Reformation, even to his death, in the face of the tyranny of the Bishop of Rome; and the Prayer Book was associated with him, even if it is never mentioned in the account of his martyrdom. The Prayer Book was much criticized by Puritans during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and finally was outlawed in 1645 at the end of the English civil war. It continued to be illegal to use during the Commonwealth interregnum under Oliver Cromwell. At the Restoration, loyal monarchists regarded the Prayer Book as a link to the earlier Stuart Monarchy and as a symbol of all that King Charles the Martyr had

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²¹ Brook, The Language, 16-17.
died upholding. Although hundreds of minor changes were introduced into the *Book of Common Prayer* at the Restoration, the style of liturgical prose remained unchanged. Thus, the *Book of Common Prayer* became too hallowed by royalist political associations and basic traditionalism to be seriously challenged after the third quarter of the seventeenth century. Proposals to revise the BCP in 1689, in the wake of the Glorious Revolution, amounted to nothing and the BCP remained unchanged.

The fact that the English prose in the *Book of Common Prayer* remained in church use and unchanged over a long period of time meant that the prose itself began to take on particularly religious connotations. Brook describes very well this mostly unconscious process of sacralisation:

> The real danger arising out of changing grammatical habits between the sixteenth and the twentieth centuries is that grammatical features of the language of the Book of Common Prayer may not be recognized as such, and may be mistaken for features of style. Such characteristics as the retention of the second singular personal pronouns, *thou*, *thee*, and of the *-est* ending of verbs which accompanies its use, or the *-eth* ending of the third person singular present indicative of verbs, or the unfamiliar forms of some preterite tenses, such as *brake* or *spake*, are liable to be regarded as the mannerisms of a deliberately ‘poetic’, high-flown style, whereas they are really simply the survivals of normal, everyday grammatical forms which have since been discarded.  

It must be stressed that the production of a “sacralised” English was not a deliberately planned outcome in the mind of Archbishop Cranmer and those who assisted him in the compilation of the Prayer Book. Their foremost concern was to take liturgical forms “in a tongue not understanded of the people” and produce a liturgical prose that was intelligible to the average layman. The same is true of those to whom was entrusted the task of revising the English Bible in the time of King James. Alister McGrath, in his book, *In the Beginning: The Story of the King James Bible and How It Changed a Nation, a Language, and a Culture*, points out that those who were commissioned to produce a new translation of the Bible were not at all concerned about literary style but about the accuracy of their work:

> The central objective of the king’s translators was scholarly accuracy – the finding of proper English words and phrases to render the original Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic. Sense and meaning took priority over elegance. The achievement of prosaic and

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62 Brook, *The Language*, 53.
poetic elegance that resulted was, so to speak, a most happy accident of history. Yet this outcome must not divert us from the fact that the idea of “the Bible as literature” was unknown to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which saw accuracy as the supreme goal in translation.63

McGrath also points out an important restriction placed upon the translators that King James assembled for his work. They were to take the text of the Bishop’s Bible, published in 1568, as their starting point and alter as little as was deemed necessary. However, the divines who produced the Bishop’s Bible were instructed to use the Great Bible of 1539 as their starting text, and to alter it only where it did not accurately reflect the original texts. The Great Bible of 1539 in turn relied to a large extent on the translation work done by William Tyndale in the 1520s and 1530s. The sum of all this is that, “The King James translators simply did not believe that they had the authority to make changes reflecting developments in the English language, and so continued to reproduce the English of nearly three generations earlier.”64 Thus the Authorized Version of the Bible ended up using a form of English prose that was already becoming archaic in the first part of the seventeenth century. “By adopting these older forms, the King James Bible had the unintended effect of perpetuating ways of speaking that, strictly speaking, were dying out in everyday English speech.”65

Again, it must be mentioned that political factors helped ensure that the Authorized Version of the Bible would remain unchanged. When the Authorized Version of the Bible was published in 1611, it faced a losing battle against the Geneva Bible, which was the popular translation of the common folk. One of the factors that made the Geneva Bible a popular translation and favoured by the Puritans was that the version available before 1611 was in a portable size that made it easy to carry about. However, at the Restoration in 1660 the theologically Reformed or Calvinistic marginal notes printed in the Geneva Bible were considered seditious, and no one wanted to be seen with a Bible that was associated with the Puritans who had put King Charles to death. Thus, the Geneva Bible ceased to be published.

64 McGrath, In the Beginning, 271.
65 McGrath, In the Beginning, 265.
and the Authorized Version, which had actually incorporated some of the wording of the Geneva Bible, triumphed (even in Puritan Scotland) as the preferred translation of the Bible.

The long process that led to the sacralisation of the archaic grammatical features of the language of the Book of Common Prayer and the Authorized Version of the Bible contributed to what might be described as the formation of a hieratic form of English prose. Christine Mohrmann describes very well the process by which a language takes on hieratic qualities:

> Within the framework of a definite tradition, an artificial, often archaizing, style or linguistic form is created which, in its isolated position, reduces the element of comprehensibility to a greater or lesser degree in favor of other elements preferred for their artistic or spiritual potentialities, and lying more in the domain of expression than that of communication.\(^{66}\)

Mohrmann shows how this process can be found with the retention of archaic forms within Homeric Greek and then goes on to demonstrate how the earliest Christians sought to differentiate the language of prayer from the ordinary spoken language in both Koine Greek and the earliest Liturgical Latin.\(^{67}\) Of course, this process is not confined to the English language but is a universal process. The same kind of thing can be seen regarding the survival of West Canaanite as scriptural Hebrew, Old Slavonic in Russian Orthodoxy or the retention of classical Arabic as the language of the Qur’an. Mohrmann comments:

> We observe a form of stylization, usually archaizing or at least conservative, in “religious” languages. This phenomenon is based on a general human tendency, found among the most diverse peoples and cultures. Whenever man comes into contact with the divine, his language shows a tendency to disassociate itself from ordinary colloquial speech. It is as though contact with the divine draws man out of his ordinary life, and this is reflected in his language. But this is not confined to language: other elements also undergo an hieraticizing process. So, for example, we have the phenomenon of hieratic liturgical vestments, which must similarly be considered as a drawing apart from ordinary life.\(^{68}\)

Mohrmann considers the process of hieraticization of the language of prayer in particular:


In prayer considered as expression – in this case it makes no essential difference whether we speak of personal or collective prayer – the dialogue no longer lies on the human plane. We are here concerned with a transcendental contact between the praying individual and the divine being. For this reason the dominant element is no longer that of intelligibility, as in human dialogue. This is replaced, at least in part, by more subtle elements, partly spiritual, partly affective, which can be crystalized in the rhythm, the tone of delivery, or in the style. There often appears a certain hankering after archaism – essentially a traditional stylistic phenomenon, a preference for older modes of expression no longer current in everyday linguistic usage.\(^6^9\)

Of course, Mohrmann is not the only one to point out the importance of archaism in traditional liturgical prose. Peter Jeffery, a former professor of music history at Princeton University, asks an important question: “Why do some people want a more formal kind of language that looks back to literary classics and to Latin?”\(^7^0\) Jeffery, like Mohrmann, believes that the key to answering this question may be found in the concept of archaism – the deliberate use of “old fashioned” or poetic language. Jeffery writes:

> It is not by chance that archaic, formal, classical language is common in the human experience of worship, Christian and non-Christian. Since we live within the bounds of time, the experience of doing and saying ancient, ancestral things can be a powerful metaphor for eternity, a way to connect with emotions and desires so basic that they feel primeval … Thus modern people who deliberately invoke the archaic are not necessarily being dishonest, insincere or “phony.” They can also be seen as employing a kind of poetry, indeed a very accessible kind, which appears in a range of pop-culture guises …\(^7^1\)

From what has been said above, we can conclude that traditional English liturgical prose is a form of hieratic English that developed, more or less by accident, over the course of several centuries. This kind of English prose was already “old fashioned” by the 18\(^{\text{th}}\) century but was hallowed by long use in worship and thus continued to be used in that context. It is this kind of liturgical prose which is at the heart of this study.

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\(^7^1\) Jeffery, *Worship* 78.4, 325.
Chapter Four: The Ecumenical Context for Changes in Liturgical Prose

In this chapter, there will be made a survey of English language liturgical texts over a wide variety of denominations in North America since the 1960s, which will place the contemporary changes made to liturgical prose in an ecumenical context. This survey will be a comparative study in the tradition and spirit of Anton Baumstark.\textsuperscript{72}

If the landscape of liturgical prose was surveyed in 1960, it would be apparent among churches that used English language liturgical prose, that the field was dominated by the twin influences of the \textit{Book of Common Prayer} and the Authorized (King James) Version of the Scriptures. The Anglican Church of Canada (which had been the Church of England in the Dominion of Canada until 1955) was using a slightly revised and enriched version of the 1662 \textit{Book of Common Prayer}. The United Church of Canada used the \textit{Book of Common Order}\textsuperscript{73} which used texts borrowed from the \textit{Book of Common Prayer}, and the Presbyterian \textit{Book of Common Order} used similar texts. Lutherans were divided among many different groups and synods, and many of them at this date continued to worship in “old world” languages such as German and Swedish, but some of the precursor bodies which later came together to make the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (and its Canadian counterpart, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada) used the English language \textit{Service Book and Hymnal}.\textsuperscript{74} This worship book also used liturgical prose similar to (and in some cases directly borrowed from) the \textit{Book of Common Prayer}.

Up until the Second Vatican Council, the Roman Catholic Church used Latin almost exclusively for its liturgical rites.\textsuperscript{75} Even on the eve of the Second Vatican Council, Pope


\textsuperscript{73} \textit{The Book of Common Order of the United Church of Canada} (Toronto: The United Church Publishing House, 1932).

\textsuperscript{74} \textit{Service Book and Hymnal}, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1958).

\textsuperscript{75} One of the few exceptions was the Renewal of Baptismal Vows in the revised Easter Vigil rite, which had first been introduced in the vernacular in 1951.
John XXIII promulgated a document entitled *Veterum Sapientia* which solemnly reaffirmed the necessity of using Latin for the Church’s worship. It is worth noting, however, that in bilingual Latin/English missals published for the use of the laity, the translation of the Latin uses a traditional English consistent with the language of the *Book of Common Prayer*. The Scripture lections were taken from the Douai Rheims version of the Bible, which also was composed in traditional prose.

The situation within Eastern Orthodoxy ca. 1960 is consistent with what has been said above. Although the Orthodox, in principle, celebrate their rites according to the predominant vernacular used in the culture around them, the vast majority of Orthodox churches in North America would have been using the “old world” languages from the places from which they had emigrated: Greek, Slavonic, Russian, etc. However, an English translation was available for those who wished to use one, and it was the work of a remarkable Episcopalian lay woman named Isabel Hapgood. A multi-lingual woman who was interested in the Russian Orthodox/Episcopalian dialogues going on in the late 19th century, she obtained permission from the Russian hierarchs to translate the Russian service books from Old Church Slavonic into English. They were published in Boston in 1906. This translation is still published by the Antiochian Orthodox Church in North America. At this point it is only worth pointing out that, as a practicing Episcopalian, Hapgood’s translation used the English of the *Book of Common Prayer* and the Authorized Version of the Bible.

Although many of the above churches used liturgical texts which were very similar to one another, they were not absolutely uniform in language. Presbyterians, following the Authorized Version of the Bible, preferred to use the (more accurate) word “debts” instead of “trespasses” in the Lord’s Prayer, and the Lutheran version of the *Sanctus* had “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God ofSabaoth” instead of the BCP, “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts.” But

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76 This is true even of more recent missals which are reprints of the traditional Latin Mass. See, for example, *The Daily Missal and Liturgical Manual with Vespers for Sundays and Feasts from the Editio Typica of the Roman Missal and Breviary, 1962. Summorum Pontificum Edition* (London: Baronius Press, 2007).

overall, the kinds of liturgical texts represented in the various service books of different denominations was a clearly discernible family of prose texts, that all used traditional liturgical prose. In 1962, the Anglican Church of Canada brought out a new revision of the BCP which maintained the liturgical language which it had inherited.

After the Second Vatican Council

The event that changed everything in regards to traditional liturgical prose was the decision by the Roman Catholic Church to begin to use the vernacular in its worship world-wide, and to use a contemporary English style for that vernacular in English speaking countries, in the wake of the Second Vatican Council. In article 36 of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium), promulgated on December 4, 1963, allowance was made for the introduction of the vernacular into the administration of the sacraments. However, it was to be for “the competent territorial ecclesiastical authority . . . to decide whether, and to what extent, the vernacular language [was] to be used.” Furthermore, it was intended that bishops in neighbouring regions which employed the same language were to consult with one another to ensure consistency.

It was with this mandate in mind that a number of English speaking episcopal conferences set up the International Committee on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) in order to produce standardized English translations of the liturgical books of the Roman Rite, the originals of which were, of course, in Latin. The English translations of the Mass used before the 1970s were fairly literal, but there was not complete uniformity among the English language texts used. After the publication of the Novus Ordo in 1969, ICEL produced a standardized English translation of the new Missal which was published in 1973. This version of the translation of the Latin texts was to remain in use for the celebration of Mass until replaced in 2011.

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80 This and subsequent facts can be found in the Wikepedia entry at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Commission_on_English_in_the_Liturgy, Accessed November 22, 2017.
In 1969 the Vatican published an important document (in French) entitled, *Comme le prévoit*, which provided the guidelines and instructions as to how the Latin texts were to be translated. This document was critical for the English translations which were subsequently produced. It will be clear from the several quotations below that what the members of the *Concilium* had in mind in terms of translation technique was what is today known as the *dynamic equivalence* method of translation. It is not a literal word-for-word kind of translation but a more paraphrastic approach to translation:

…. it is not sufficient that a liturgical translation merely reproduce the expressions and ideas of the original text. Rather it must faithfully communicate to a given people, and in their own language, that which the Church by means of this given text originally intended to communicate to another people in another time.81

The translator must always keep in mind that the “unit of meaning” is not the individual word but the whole passage. The translator must therefore be careful that the translation is not so analytical that it exaggerates the importance of particular phrases while it obscures or weakens the meaning of the whole. …. Understatement in English is sometimes the more effective means of emphasis.82

It is not sufficient that a formula handed down from some other time or region be translated verbatim, even if accurately, for liturgical use. The formula translated must become the genuine prayer of the congregation and in it each of its members should be able to find and express himself or herself.83

In translation [the prayers] may need to be rendered somewhat more freely while conserving the original ideas. This can be done by moderately amplifying them or, if necessary, paraphrasing expressions in order to concretize them for the celebration and the needs of today. In every case pompous and superfluous language should be avoided.84

It was by following these translation principles that the response to the presider’ greeting – “The Lord be with you” (*Dominus vobiscum*) – was rendered “And also with you” which is not a literal translation of *Et cum spiritu tuo*. This response was supposed to convey the “true meaning” of the phrase “And with your spirit” and was considered more acceptable. Of course, with every translation there is some interpretation involved but one might ask how far


82 Ibid, 285.

83 Ibid, 287.

84 Ibid, 288.
such interpretation can go before what is translated becomes a distortion of the original. Who, for example, has the authority to decide what is “pompous and superfluous language” and what is not? It would also appear that the authors of *Comme le prévoit* did not have a full grasp of the nuances of the English language. To say that “Understatement in English is sometimes the more effective means of emphasis” is to miss the nuance that such understatement is often meant to be ironic with a view to being humorous. In the end, it is clear from the overall tone of *Comme le Prévoit* that the most important overarching principle of translation was clarity of communication. We shall return to this issue later.

Anglicans were somewhat slower to embrace the new reality of contemporary English in the liturgy. After the British Parliament passed the Prayer Book (Alternative and Other Services) Measure in 1965, the Church of England produced a number of revised services for the Offices and Holy Eucharist, but they were all in traditional language. However, after 1971 all new services were written in modern English. Similar experiments soon appeared in North America as well.

Ferment regarding the tension between the language of the Authorized Version of the Bible and the tradition liturgical prose of the *Book of Common Order* and more contemporary language for prayers was already being discussed in the United Church of Canada in 1962. In 1969 the United Church published a new *Service Book* which was “a curious combination of conservatism and innovation.” The Lord’s Prayer appeared in its traditional form and pronouns such as “thee” and “thou” were retained but most of the archaic verb forms were abandoned.

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85 For example, “…. no special literary training should be required of the people; liturgical texts should normally be intelligible to all, even the less educated.” *Documents on the Liturgy*, 286.


88 Thomas Harding and Bruce Harding, *Patterns of Worship in the United Church of Canada 1925-1987* (Toronto: Publisher unknown, 1996), 129.


90 Harding and Harding, *Patterns of Worship*, 164.
In 1969 a body known as the Consultation on Common Texts (CCT) was formed in North America. This organization emerged from ecumenical meetings of Roman Catholic and Protestant liturgical scholars held in the mid to late 1960s. Its mandate was to develop agreed versions of contemporary English language liturgical texts used in common by the churches involved in the consultation. A similar body called the Joint Liturgical Group (JLG) was set up in the United Kingdom, and other groups with complementary aims were set up in other English-speaking countries as well. With the assistance of ICEL, the Consultation on Common Texts and the Joint Liturgical Group set up an international body called the International Consultation on English Texts (ICET). The texts which this body worked on were the Lord’s Prayer, the Creeds (the Nicene and Apostles’ creeds), the unvarying texts of the Eucharist (the Kyrie, Gloria, Sursum Corda, Sanctus and Benedictus, and Agnus Dei), and the canticles used in the Offices (the Gloria Patri, Te Deum, Benedictus, Magnificat, and Nunc Dimittis). These texts were published as Prayers We Have in Common in three editions from 1971-1975. The texts were quickly adopted by the churches which were members of the consultation and appeared in the experimental rites produced throughout the 1970s. They were incorporated into the final, standard liturgical books which appeared around the beginning of the 1980s, such as the Church of England’s Alternative Service Book (ASB), the North American Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW), and the Anglican Church of Canada’s Book of Alternative Services (BAS).

Most of these churches also adopted the Revised Standard Version of the Bible as their book for Scripture citations and lection readings around this time, and thus it must have appeared to English speaking Roman Catholic and Protestant churches in the 1970s that a new ecumenical consensus had emerged around what was the appropriate English language to be used in liturgy, and that this would help the churches in their efforts towards reunion.

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93 Some examples of these rites using the ICET texts were the Anglican Church of Canada’s, The Holy Eucharist: An Alternative Canadian Use, published in 1974, and The Holy Eucharist: Third Canadian Order, published in 1981.
Indeed, a “Common Bible” version of the RSV text was published specifically for this purpose. However, there was another intellectual current at work in the 1970s that would begin to seriously impact liturgical texts in the 1980s, and that was the feminist movement and its concerns around the perceived sexism and patriarchal bias in the language of Biblical and liturgical texts. In the words of one author:

Inclusive language is born in the struggle of those who are linguistically invisible as they come to the recognition that their invisibility reflects and perpetuates the exclusivist bias of the institutions of their society.  

The application of inclusive language principles to liturgical texts were articulated in books such as Marjorie Procter-Smith’s, *In Her Own Rite: Constructing Feminist Liturgical Tradition*. In November 1980 the United Church of Canada created a Committee on Liturgy and the issue of inclusive language was raised almost immediately.  

Partly in response to these new intellectual currents, a successor body to ICET (which had ceased to function in 1975) was formed from ICEL, CCT, and several other smaller English-speaking groups. In 1985 the English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC – pronounced as “elk”) came into existence. In 1988 the ELLC published *Praying Together*, which was a revision of the ICET texts from *Prayers We Have in Common*. These versions of the Lord’s Prayer, Creeds, Eucharistic texts and Office canticles appeared in the revised service books of many denominations after this time. They appear, for example, in *Celebrate*


96 Harding and Harding, *Patterns of Worship*, 399.


98 For details of the formation of this group, see the “Historical Introduction” on the web site of ELLC. http://www.englishtexts.org/history.html, Accessed November 11, 2013.

99 This book is no longer in print but may be downloaded in its entirety from the ELLC website www.englishtexts.org.
Several years after the ELLC texts were published the Consultation sent out a questionnaire to all the churches involved in the project to get their feedback regarding the texts and to see how they were being used. The responses were summarized and published by the ELLC in 2001. The responses can be summarized in this paragraph:

There has been a very widespread adoption of the ELLC texts. Often this had been in response to the ecumenical imperative: a desire to see as wide a convergence on common texts as is possible for the sake of the universal church. At the same time there is considerable reservation about ELLC’s decision to avoid gender-exclusive language in reference to God. This is not an insensitivity to the language issue, but a concern about whether we can alter ancient texts to suit our own cultural inclinations.

In the 1990s the American Roman Catholic bishops attempted to get approval from the Vatican for inclusive language revisions of texts in the Roman Rite similar to what had been already developed by ELLC, but this was rejected by the Roman authorities. Partially in response to this initiative the Vatican department, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, issued in the Spring of 2001 a document entitled *Liturgiam Authenticam* which was meant to replace *Comme le prévoit* in giving principles to be followed in translating all liturgical texts into the vernacular languages. In the same year the Congregation for Divine worship set up a committee of English-speaking bishops entitled *Vox Clara* to advise the Congregation on matters of translation of liturgical texts into the vernacular languages.

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101 *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2006).

102 “The ELLC Texts: A Survey of Use and Variation” on the ELLC website http://www.englishtexts.org/survey.html, Accessed November 16, 2013. Please note that the emphases were found in the original.

English language. At this point it would be worth quoting some sections from *Liturgiam Authenticam* (LA) to get a sense of the principles being expressed:

Ever since the promulgation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, the work of the translation of the liturgical texts into vernacular languages, as promoted by the Apostolic See, has involved the publication of norms and the communication to the Bishops of advice on the matter. Nevertheless, it has been noted that translations of liturgical texts in various localities stand in need of improvement through correction or through a new draft. The omissions or errors which affect certain existing vernacular translations – especially in the case of certain languages – have impeded the progress of the inculturation that actually should have taken place.  

For these reasons, it now seems necessary to set forth anew, and in light of the maturing of experience, the principles of translation to be followed in future translations whether they be entirely new undertakings or emendations of texts already in use and to specify more clearly certain norms that have already been published, taking into account a number of questions and circumstances that have arisen in our own day. In order to take full advantage of the experience gained since the Council, it seems useful to express these norms from time to time in terms of tendencies that have been evident in past translations, but which are to be avoided in future ones.

The words of the Sacred Scriptures, as well as the other words spoken in liturgical celebrations, especially in the celebration of the Sacraments, are not intended primarily to be a sort of mirror of the interior dispositions of the faithful; rather, they express truths that transcend the limits of time and space. Indeed, by means of these words God speaks continually with the Spouse of his beloved Son, the Holy Spirit leads the Christian faithful into all truth and causes the word of Christ to dwell abundantly within them, and the Church perpetuates and transmits all that she herself is and all that she believes, even as she offers the prayers of all the faithful to God, through Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

.... it is to be kept in mind from the beginning that the translation of the liturgical texts of the Roman Liturgy is not so much a work of creative innovation as it is of rendering the original texts faithfully and accurately into the vernacular language. While it is permissible to arrange the wording, the syntax and the style in such a way as to prepare a flowing vernacular text suitable to the rhythm of popular prayer, the original text, insofar as possible, must be translated integrally and in the most exact manner, without omissions or additions in terms of their content, and without paraphrases or glosses.

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104 LA, 6.
105 LA, 7.
106 LA, 19.
107 LA, 20.
Even if expressions should be avoided which hinder comprehension because of their excessively unusual or awkward nature, the liturgical texts should be considered as the voice of the Church at prayer, rather than of only particular congregations or individuals; thus, they should be free of an overly servile adherence to prevailing modes of expression. If indeed, in the liturgical texts, words or expressions are sometimes employed which differ somewhat from usual and everyday speech, it is often enough by virtue of this very fact that the texts become truly memorable and capable of expressing heavenly realities.\textsuperscript{108}

In addition to enunciating certain principles for translating liturgical texts from Latin into the vernacular, the \textit{Liturgiam Authenticam} report also made some very specific recommendations such as the following:

- In referring to almighty God or the individual persons of the Most Holy Trinity, the truth of tradition as well as the established gender usage of each respective language are to be maintained.
- Insofar as possible in a given vernacular language, the use of the feminine pronoun, rather than the neuter, is to be maintained in referring to the Church.\textsuperscript{109}
- Certain expressions that belong to the heritage of the whole or of a great part of the ancient Church, as well as others that have become part of the general human patrimony, are to be respected by a translation that is as literal as possible, as for example the words of the people's response \textit{Et cum spiritu tuo}, or the expression \textit{mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa} in the Act of Penance of the Order of Mass.\textsuperscript{110}

It is quite evident from these quotes that the dynamic equivalence approach to translation was being down-played in favour of a reversion to formal equivalence principles of translation. Thus, any translation produced using the principles of \textit{Liturgiam Authenticam} would be a relatively literal and formal one. One can also discern in this document a considerable “pushback” to many of the concerns which gave rise to the revision of texts to accommodate inclusive language in other Christian traditions. However, there is more in \textit{Liturgiam Authenticam} than a reaction to current trends in liturgical revision. There is also an

\textsuperscript{108} LA, 27.

\textsuperscript{109} LA, 31.

\textsuperscript{110} LA, 56.
underlying rejection of some of the worldview shaped by modernity. This attitude is reflected in Peter Elliot’s critique of the old ICEL texts:

The didacticism of the current ICEL texts embodies a stage in history when communication was the key to everything – the era of Marshall McLuhan and the “global village,” when mankind reached for the stars and we could hear men talking from the moon. Clarity, comprehensibility, access to data and information, and the triumph of the Enlightenment were also marked by the jostling of ideologies, each claiming to carry the light and future whether of “modern man,” “secular man,” or “socialist man,” to use the language of the pre-feminist vocabulary of those times. ….

But there is little place for mystery if communication is based on being consciously modern and enlightened, hence in control of meaning. Mystery eludes human control.¹¹¹

Needless to say, the appearance of Liturgiam Authenticam was not warmly received by many scholars in the liturgical “establishment” who were now witnessing the undoing of all their work over the last forty years. In an address to the Societas Liturgica Conference in 2007, Dr. David Holeton lashed out at the style of the new English translation of the Roman Missal:

It seems very odd indeed to some of us to see proposed texts put into the manner of speech that is highly reminiscent of the language that Anglicans (and many English-speaking Protestants) once used before they finally realized that the language of the of the liturgy needed to be understood by the faithful of our time and not those of the sixteenth century. This reversion to archaic patterns of speech may work at some English universities but it is thoroughly classist and I cannot imagine it receiving a wildly warm welcome in the average pew …¹¹²

In other words, from the perspective of this thesis, one of the problems of the new translation of the Roman Missal is that it sounds too much like the liturgical prose of the Book of Common Prayer! This angry and bitter outburst by one of the principal architects of the Canadian Book of Alternative Services shows the depth of feeling which has accompanied the introduction of the new Roman texts.


A more nuanced criticism of the principles enunciated in LA comes from Peter Jeffery. He points out that while a more literal translation of the original languages may yield words which are more richly ambiguous than those which are resolved in one direction by resorting to paraphrase, this ambiguity may not always be helpful. Jeffery illustrates his point by making reference to the fact that LA insists that the greeting and response, *Dominus vobiscum. Et cum spiritu tuo*, be translated literally as “The Lord be with you. And with your spirit.” (as opposed to, “The Lord be with you. And also with you.”) Jeffery, who is personally more sympathetic to the literal translation,\(^{113}\) concedes that “spirit” invokes a wealth of rich scriptural themes, such as Paul’s use of the word in Romans 8.14-17. Thus, one could argue, the new, more literal, translation carries more “weight” insofar as it has more depth of meaning. On the other hand, Jeffery is also quick to critique that, …many people, both laity and priests, will miss all of these allusions. And where texts or practices are no longer understood, odd and misleading explanations, including non-Biblical concepts of “spirit,” will arise almost spontaneously to fill the vacuum. “And also with you,” on the other hand, lacks all pretense at poetry, and closes a door that some people, who have the potential to appreciate Biblical resonances, might otherwise have entered. But no one will have any doubt what it means.\(^{114}\)

Despite all the polemics against them, the principles enunciated in *Liturgiam Authenticam* led to a new English translation of the Roman Missal which came into effect on the First Sunday in Advent in 2011. *Liturgiam Authenticam* also proscribed ICEL members being involved in ecumenical bodies and thus they withdrew from participation in ELLC in 2001.\(^{115}\)

Up until now very little has been said about the English language liturgical texts used by the Byzantine and Oriental Orthodox churches. In fact, relatively little has appeared in scholarly journals about the translations used by Orthodox churches, which speaks to their relative isolation from Western Christian churches. As has already been noted above, those Orthodox who were not using the vernacular of the “old country” from which they were

\(^{113}\) Jeffery, *Worship* 78.4, 316.

\(^{114}\) Jeffery, *Worship* 78.4, 315.

derived tended to use translations which used traditional liturgical prose. The Orthodox persisted in using traditional liturgical prose in North America long after Western churches began to change to contemporary English for their rites. For example, when Dr. Fayek M. Ishak translated the Coptic Liturgy of St. Basil into English for the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of North America in the early 1970s he used traditional liturgical prose. In 1981 the Orthodox Syrian Church of the East published a service book for the use of the laity and this book used, for the most part, traditional liturgical prose. Also in 1981, Fr. G. Papadeas, one of the translators of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese in America, was defending the use of traditional liturgical prose for use in the Divine Liturgy. However, things began to change in the 1990s and the most recent booklet for use by the laity published by the Greek Orthodox Church in Canada uses contemporary English. The most recent prayer book published by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church also used a contemporary English prose for its translation of the Divine Liturgy and other rites. However, the latter two books are not uniform in their texts. Although the translation of the prayers is very similar, there are nevertheless small discrepancies in wording and punctuation between them, even in the Nicene Creed! It would appear that each Orthodox jurisdiction has made translations of their rites into English without consulting with each other.

The Orthodox have never been a part of ICEL, CCT, ELLC, or any of the other ecumenical organization attempting to standardize the English version of liturgical texts. It is worth noting that when ELLC sent out its questionnaire to the churches to obtain feedback regarding the texts in Praying Together, the Joint Liturgical Group of Great Britain reported:

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117 The Service Book of the Holy Qurbana, 3rd Ed. (Kottayam, Kerala: CMS Press, 1981). Although published in India, this book was used by English speaking congregations in Canada, including one which used to worship in Trinity College Chapel in Toronto.


119 The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom (Toronto: Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto, 2002).

One dissenting voice should particularly be noted: The Orthodox churches, who will not follow ELLC texts in any revision they make. ¹²¹

The English style used in the Orthodox liturgical rites is a relatively literal and formal one. In other words, the Orthodox appear to be using the same kinds of principles in their translations as were enunciated in the Roman Catholic document *Liturgiam Authenticam*. Perhaps the attitude of the Orthodox towards the task of translation can best be summarized by this quote from Bishop Kallistos Ware:

> Let us also recognize that liturgical translation is a ministry within the Church to be understood and undertaken with fear of God, with fear and trembling, with a sense of profound unworthiness. We who are translators should show at all times the utmost awe for the holiness of God. Let us always be on our guard against frivolity in this context. … Let us who are translators never lose our sense of wonder before the subtle, many-sided, endlessly sensitive power of human language. Words have iconic value, they have sacramental force, and they live. ¹²²

The issue of inclusive language has been controversial within Orthodox circles, and this quotation by John Chryssavgis perhaps sums it up best:

> One of the sensitive issues in liturgical translations involves the question of “inclusive language” or, as it is unfortunately and pejoratively referred to, “politically correct language.” This issue has proven to be not only controversial, but also almost apologetic and certainly divisive. ¹²³

However, for Chryssavgis at least, this is an issue which must be faced honestly and without rancour:

> The use of inclusive language may constitute a challenge, not an error, and it reveals a sensitivity for linguistic developments, not always a perverse attempt to placate the feminist lobby. ¹²⁴

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¹²⁴ Ibid, 104.
Before leaving this discussion of Eastern Orthodox translations, it is worth noting that the Western Rite within Orthodoxy uses traditional liturgical prose exclusively for its services. While this is not surprising in the case of The Liturgy of St. Tikhon, which is an adaptation of the 1928 American Book of Common Prayer, it is also true of the Liturgy of St. Gregory which is an adaptation of the pre-Vatican II Roman Mass. There appears to be no desire whatsoever on the part of Western Rite Orthodox to adopt contemporary liturgical prose for their liturgical rites.

Even the brief survey of English language liturgical texts in this paper reveals that there is less uniformity in texts across the various churches in North America than at any other time in history. The Roman Catholic Church has produced English translations of ritual texts without reference to any other church. Likewise, the Eastern Orthodox churches have produced translations which not only differ from those used in the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches, they differ across different jurisdictions within Orthodoxy. While many of the Protestant churches in North America have adopted the ELLC texts, there are many others who continue to use the ICET texts or some other translation. The Episcopal Church in the USA and the Anglican Church of Canada continue to use the ICET texts in the Book of Common Prayer and the Book of Alternative Services respectively, although both churches have authorized the use of ELLC texts in various supplementary rites. Some of the more conservative churches, such as the Lutheran Church – Canada and its American sister the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod continue to use the ICET texts but have not authorized the ELLC texts. The Anglican Church in North America, a dissenting body of Anglicans from The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada, have just published a set of provisional worship texts for the Eucharist and Offices entitled Texts for Common Prayer. These services use a combination of the ICET texts, modernized versions of Cranmerian texts and some of the new Roman texts. For example, the Gloria in Excelsis is the ICET

125 For examples of these rites see The Saint Ambrose Prayer Book: A Devotional Manuel for Orthodox Christians of the Western Rite, ed. John G. Winfrey. (Glendale: Lancelot Andrewes Press, 2008). See also The Book of Common Prayer and the Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church in the English Parochial Tradition, According to Orthodox Catholic Usage (Glendale: Lancelot Andrewes Press, 2009).

text, but the response to “The Lord be with you” is “And with your spirit” as it is in the new Roman Mass.

Thus, it would appear that the broad consensus that prevailed in the North American churches in the use of traditional English liturgical prose in the years previous to 1960, and that appeared again briefly with the ICET texts in the 1970s, has given way now to a cacophony of voices within the churches using many, and in some cases radically dissimilar, texts for their worship.

On August 16, 2011, the English Language Liturgical Consultation sponsored a colloquium in Reims, France, on common liturgical texts and the Revised Common Lectionary. This colloquium produced an agreed paper entitled, *The Reims Statement: Praying with One Voice*, which was signed by many of the participants, including a large number of Roman Catholics. The statement had this to say about common texts:

> For the first time in history, Christians in the English speaking world are using common liturgical texts. In the process of coming to agreed common texts, scholars from different Christian traditions agreed on principles for the translation from the earliest sources. This in itself has been a gift. Despite only having been in existence for a relatively short time, these texts [the ELLC texts] have been adopted freely by an ever increasing number of churches. … They are being experienced as a gift, a sign and a way to Christian unity in our diversity. As the churches continue to discover the riches of these shared texts, we believe further revision is inappropriate at the present time. We invite all who have not yet explored these texts, and those who have departed from their use, to join us in prayerful reflection on the value of common texts and careful consideration of the texts themselves.127

As this statement was produced less than four months before the mandatory use of the new Roman Missal came into effect, it is hard not to see this paper as a final poignant plea for the Roman Catholic authorities to change their minds about introducing new English texts which are in many cases very different than the texts produced in the 1970s. Of course, the Reims statement was not entirely honest in its assessment of the landscape of English language liturgical texts. The Orthodox churches had never been a part of the ICET/ELLC process and thus the texts those bodies produced were never ecumenical in that sense. Why Western Christians believe that their Eastern Orthodox brothers and sisters don’t count when ecumenical agreement is invoked appears to point to a subtle and perhaps unconscious

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prejudice against them. The existence of *Liturgiam Authenticam* means that “scholars from different Christian traditions” *do not* agree on “principles for the translation from the earliest sources.” If there are ever to be common English language liturgical texts the effort will have to be genuinely ecumenical and based on a broad consensus regarding the principles of translation to be used.

A New Opening

Since there is no consensus among various liturgical scholars and between different churches regarding the principles of translating ancient languages, to what extent inclusive/expansive language is appropriate, and even the grammatical structure and wording of liturgical texts, one can surmise that the Church will be living with a wide variety of English language liturgical prose for some time to come. One might even question whether the search for agreed upon liturgical texts is even desirable. Contemporary Canadian culture – in addition to being very secular – is also very pluralistic and highly values diversity. Thus, there is little incentive from the cultural context to push for uniformity in liturgical language.

Does this present situation mean that there is an opening for a critical re-appropriation of traditional liturgical prose in the life of the churches? After all, if there is no consensus as to what constitutes the most appropriate language for the worship of God, it stands to reason that traditional liturgical prose is as acceptable as any other liturgical style of language. It may well be that there is a constituency in the Church which would value the continued use of traditional liturgical prose, even if it is no longer the predominant mode of liturgical prayer in North American churches. The only way to test this is to find out what traditional liturgical prose means to those who continue to use it. The research contained in the next few chapters is an attempt to explore this very question.
Chapter Five: The Methodology of the Action-in-Ministry Component

The central theme of this study concerns the kind of language used in the worship of God. In the previous chapter there was a survey of contemporary English language liturgical prose that suggested there is, at present, no consensus among different English speaking churches as to what constitutes the single most appropriate style of liturgical prose to be used in worship. It was also suggested that this lack of consensus was an opening for a critical re-appropriation of traditional liturgical prose for worship.

However, before such a proposal can be considered, one must ask what meaning traditional liturgical prose holds for those who use it in their worship. The theoretical proposal made above must be grounded in the reality of the experience people have of such language. In other words, I want to understand and reflect on how the people of St. George’s church experience the language with which they worship. As was stated in the first chapter of this paper, the thesis question may be stated as follows:

What meaning does the experience of traditional liturgical prose (TLP) provide to worshippers in the congregation of St. George’s Church, Windsor, Ontario?

The ministry-in-action component of this thesis consisted of collecting data in order to discern and construct the meaning and understanding of the phenomenon of traditional liturgical prose. Needless to say, this means a qualitative study of the phenomenon, since a quantitative study would not be as fruitful in the search for meaning. I used an approach that John Creswell calls an instrumental case study. Creswell defines this as

a type of case study with the focus on a specific issue rather than on the case itself. The case then becomes a vehicle to better understand the issue.\textsuperscript{128}

In other words, I will be looking at the phenomenon of traditional liturgical language as it is understood in one particular congregation rather than a generalized study of hieratic English prose. In theory, given enough time, energy, and funding, I could explore the meaning that traditional liturgical prose has for individuals in many different congregations in many

different settings. I could then see if any sort of generalizations could be made. However, in order to make the study possible given the limited time, energy, and funding available, it makes sense to concentrate on my own congregation.

One of the advantages of using a case study approach is that multiple sources of data can be introduced into the study: questionnaires, interviews, observations, etc.\textsuperscript{129} Thus, for example, the Anglo-Catholic “style” in which worship occurs at St. George’s can be taken into consideration as part of the overall context of the research. The end result, I hope, is a mutual process of constructing a collective understanding or meaning of the traditional liturgical prose used in the St. George’s congregation.

The methodology used was that of a Case Study with a Hermeneutical Phenomenological “slant.” The approach is hermeneutical because it involved an interpretation of the qualitative data collected. Having a hermeneutical phenomenological approach also meant that I did not have to bracket myself out of the research, but could be an active participant in the search for meaning.

The questions in the questionnaire and in the interviews were meant to generate themes which explain and give meaning to the understanding, impact, feelings and emotions which traditional liturgical prose has on the worshipper. For example, does this particular prose provoke stupefying boredom or create a deep sense of awe and mystery? Does it push people away from an encounter with the Divine or does it draw people into a deeper apprehension of the mystery of God? Is the language ugly and repulsive, or elegant and beautiful? What images does it evoke about God? How does the language make one feel about being a part of the worshipping community? Does this language connect the worshipper to the larger Christian tradition? The hope was that a person would be able to discern from the data collected how important traditional liturgical prose is for the worshipper, how he or she felt about the prose itself, what impact it had on his or her relationship with God, and whether this language was a part of their self-identity as an Anglican Christian.

With all of the above in mind, I did the research in three stages. The first stage was a questionnaire that was submitted to as many members of the St. George’s congregation as

\textsuperscript{129} Creswell, \textit{Qualitative Inquiry}, 79.
The second stage involved personal interviews with six people. The final stage was a focus group of those who had taken part in the personal interviews. The research had originally been conceived of as a two-stage process: the congregational surveys followed by several focus groups, and this is what was submitted in the thesis proposal. However, in consultation with the then director of the Doctor of Ministry program, Dr. Joseph Schner, after the results of the congregational survey were known, it was decided to expand the process to three stages instead of two. It was felt that this triangulation would better confirm the veracity of the qualitative data being assembled. The stages are explained below.

The questionnaire was designed in consultation with several professors from my Thesis Design Committee. The first questions were meant to be simple questions in order to give the person doing the survey a sense that he or she could have the confidence to complete it. The questionnaire then moved to more difficult or involved questions for the person to answer. This initial questionnaire was included in the ethics protocol that was submitted to the Ethics Review Board (ERB) in order to fulfil the requirements of an ethics review for research with human subjects. The research could not be started until approval from the REB was given. The letter of approval from the ERB can be found in Appendix J.

For three Sundays in June 2016, prior to the questionnaire being distributed, there was a notice in the announcements section of the Sunday bulletin that a questionnaire was going to be distributed and I was thus able to explain during the announcements what the research was all about and why the questionnaire was being distributed. The bulletin announcement can be found in Appendix A. It was also explained that people did not have to take part in the survey if they did not want to, and that the process would be anonymous so that people could be as honest as possible. The questionnaire, in a self-addressed envelope that people could mail to me anonymously, was handed out to people with the Sunday bulletin by ushers as people came for worship. There were several reasons for starting with a questionnaire. The first was that it guaranteed a level of anonymity for those who are shy and would not want to take part in an interview or a focus group. Secondly, filling out a questionnaire does not have the time restraints and pressures that an individual interview has and this could allow people to reflect and ponder what they wanted to say before answering. St. George’s is a small congregation whose average Sunday attendance is about 25. Thus, I thought that if I could
get 20 - 25 responses, it would be generally representative of the congregation. In the end, I got 20 questionnaires returned to me. The point of the questionnaire was to generate themes which could be used in subsequent interviews. A Copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix B of this thesis.

The results from the questionnaires were entered into a software program called *Survey Monkey*, which is available online. This allowed for the results of the surveys to be tabulated and significant words coded. When this work was done the overall results and finding were placed in a pamphlet entitled, “Results of the Congregational Survey for St. George’s Church, Windsor” so that people could see what had been revealed by this stage of the research. Some of the results as tabulated by the *Survey Monkey* software can be found in Appendix C. A summary of these results are found in the next chapter of the thesis.

The second stage of the research involved selecting six people to take part in personal interviews. The six people were chosen by myself so as to get a range of ages and backgrounds, and to get a balance of men and women. The questions formulated for this stage of the research were designed with input from Dr. Jesse Billet and Dr. Joe Schner. It was felt that these questions should be as open-ended as possible so as to leave room for the person being interviewed to expand upon any answer he or she chose to give. Three of the interviews took place in the St. George’s Parish Hall, and three took part in a room or office at the place of work of the participant. I would have preferred that all the interviews take place at the church, but it was easier and more convenient for three of them to take place at the person’s place of employment. Those who took part signed an informed consent form indicating that their participation was voluntary and that they were under no obligation to answer any questions they chose not to answer. A copy of the consent form can be found in Appendix D. The original consent form given to the participants (and that found in Appendix G) were on TST letterhead in accordance with ERB guidelines. A copy of the questions put to the participants can be found in Appendix E. The interviews were recorded on my laptop computer using a software program entitled “Audacity.” The Audacity files were converted to MP3 files and stored on an encrypted memory stick. Using a contact at St Clair College in Windsor, I was able to find a person willing to transcribe the interviews for me. This person
did not know me or any of the people interviewed so as to maintain anonymity. The transcriptions can be found in Appendix F of the thesis.

The third stage of the research was a focus group consisting of five of the six people who had taken part in the personal interviews in stage two of the research. Using both the data from the questionnaires and what was said in the personal interviews, I was able to narrow the scope of the questions for the focus group so as to confirm the direction the research had been taking up to that point. Again, those who took part in the focus group signed an informed consent form indicating that their participation was voluntary and that they were under no obligation to answer any questions they chose not to answer. A copy of the consent form can be found in Appendix G. A copy of the questions put to the participants can be found in Appendix H of this thesis. Again, the interview was recorded using the Audacity software on my laptop and the file converted to an MP3 file. The same person who transcribed the personal interviews also transcribed the focus group interview. This transcription can be found in Appendix I.

Please note that when the thesis was completed, passed, and submitted for online publication, the original data (written and electronic) was destroyed.
Chapter Six: The Results of the Research

Results of the Congregational Survey

Thirty congregational surveys were handed out and twenty were returned: a two-thirds or 67% response rate. Please note that the questionnaire can be found in Appendix B in this paper.

Numbers 1 to 7, 9-10, 12, and 20 are descriptive data, that is to say, they are description of the participants. The respondents were from a wide range of people in regards to length of time attending St. George’s congregation: everything from a year or two up to 90 years. An equal number of men and women responded. These responses would suggest that this survey represents a fairly good cross-section of the regular parishioners of St. George’s church. The data given below was gleaned from the tabulation of the results as given by the Survey Monkey software. Some of these tabulations can be found in Appendix C. Direct quotations were taken from the original surveys that were returned to me. These were not included with this thesis.

85% of respondents (a large majority) have been exposed to Traditional Liturgical Prose (TLP) for the whole of their lives. 70% of respondents (again, a large majority) are weekly attenders of Divine Worship. Of the 12 people (65%) who said they had a favourite Bible translation, one half selected the Authorized Version (“King James”) as their favourite. More will be said about this result below. Of the 11 people (58%) who said they had favourite text in the BCP, the majority were from the service of Holy Communion. Two respondents selected texts from Compline, one chose the “Great Thanksgiving” (BCP p.14) which is common to Morning and Evening Prayer, and one chose the Lord’s Prayer, which is a part of every rite in the Book of Common Prayer. The only prayers common to more than one respondent are the Prayer of Humble Access in the Eucharistic rite, and a part of the Post-Communion Prayer (p.85) of the Eucharistic rite. It should be noted that the last half of the Post-Communion Prayer (Beginning at, “And here we offer and present unto thee …”) is said by the congregation with the priest. I was surprised and delighted by the range of texts represented in this section. It should be noted that most of texts selected were not
translations of Latin originals, but original compositions by Thomas Cranmer himself (The General Thanksgiving, The Prayer of Humble Access, the Prayer of Consecration, the Post-Communion Prayer).

The majority of respondents said they have been exposed to other forms of liturgical prose or language (whether in the Anglican Church or outside of it) in addition to the TLP used at St. George’s church. Some liked more contemporary language forms, some preferred TLP to contemporary language without expressing negative feelings towards the contemporary prose, while some other respondents clearly expressed negative attitudes towards contemporary liturgical prose. There was also some confusion for several people between the overall worship experience in a non-Anglican church and the language used in the services of that church, although one could argue that the two are not wholly separable.

As to the question how important it was for each individual that the worship experience used TLP, the weighted average of responses was 6.4 out of 7. This is a remarkably high number considering some of the other responses given above. For example, only six respondents indicated that the Authorized Version of the Bible was the translation they favoured. Later in this chapter I will try to give an explanation to this phenomenon. However, human beings are seldom rigorously consistent when it comes to things they find important. The responses given below shed some light on why so many respondents gave a high weight to this question.

Not surprisingly, some people said they preferred TLP because it was familiar or comfortable. I don’t want to jump to the conclusion that this is a negative indicator (i.e. as an indication of complacency, like the way in which Pierre Berton used the phrase “comfortable pew” in a condescending way); it could merely indicate that human beings, as creatures of habit, unconsciously prefer the stability of what is known to the uncertainty of what is unknown. Several respondents indicated that using traditional liturgical prose connects them with a larger reality: the wider Anglican Communion or the generations which have preceded them. Some people indicated that TLP sets a certain tone or mood for worship which is important to them. One respondent apparently pointed to the structure of TLP as being significant: “I like how the sentences flow – not short sounding or stunted.” This comment might appear to give some credence to the idea that we should be concerned as to the effect
that asyndeton has on the English language, but more was revealed about this in one of the individual interviews that will be commented on below.

As to words to describe TLP, it would appear that the word “beautiful” (indicated by 80% of respondents) was the most significant. Other significant descriptor words were “elegant,” “joyful,” “solemn,” “traditional,” and “wonderful.” I was pleased that being solemn and traditional were not seen as being antithetical to a sense of joy. It does not appear that any negative words were chosen to describe TLP, unless one wants to regard “archaic” and “challenging” as being entirely negative descriptors. This is especially true in light of the fact that “ancient” was used in a positive sense in answer to the next question. Other words chosen for question 15 – “comfortable,” “relaxing,” “calming” – would appear to reinforce the assertion given above that familiarity with TLP is seen by the respondents as something positive.

When asked what they think about or feel when using TLP, many respondents again wrote about a sense of continuity with the tradition and a sense of transcendence or humility before God. Others tried to focus on the meaning of the words they were praying.

When the respondents were asked what vision or picture of God comes to mind when using TLP, it would appear that the image of a transcendent, powerful and loving Being is what predominates. It is interesting to note that there were no “negative” images of God: God as vindictive, angry, capricious, impersonal and unsympathetic.

When asked in what ways TLP might help the individual draw closer to God, the responses were somewhat vague and varied, but there seems to be a sense that for some, at least, TLP helps to set the mood or tone of a worship which is transcendent, uplifting and inspiring.

When asked as to how TLP might be a personal challenge to worshipping God, it is interesting how many people insisted that it presented no challenge at all! A small number of respondents certainly pointed to the difficulty of comprehending the meaning of some of the traditional language, but some saw this difficulty as a worthwhile challenge to be overcome rather than a barrier as such. It is interesting to note that one respondent used the word “subservient” which could be the one negative descriptor of TLP in this survey.
When asked whether TLP might be a challenge for others to worshipping God, a majority (69%) said “yes.” Thus, while many insisted that TLP presented no challenge for themselves, they appear to have recognized that it could be for others.

In the answers to the final question we see some of the themes which emerged above in relation to TLP reiterated. Some spoke of the powerful sense of being in unity with their ancestors who had used the same language in generations past. Some stated how the language was a part of their Anglican identity. Some mentioned the comfort of using language which was familiar. And finally, some mentioned the “feeling of holiness and the sacred” which elevated the tone or mood of the worship experience.

The Individual Interviews

The individual interviews were meant to expand upon and elucidate the kinds of answers given in the written surveys. The questions used during the interviews can be found in Appendix E, and the transcribed interviews can be found in Appendix F. There were six participants in this part of the research, three men and three women. The youngest was a university student in his twenties, and the oldest was a woman in her eighties.

The people who were interviewed were all familiar with traditional liturgical prose and all had positive things to say about it. This positive response is not just because TLP is the only kind of English language liturgical prose they had encountered. The person in Interview No. 1 had an experience of contemporary Roman catholic worship. The person in Interview No. 2 had experience of “more contemporary language” and the people in Interviews No. 4, 5, and 6 had all experienced the contemporary prose of Book of Alternative Services. More will be said about the nature of the positive responses in a moment but has to be pointed out that positive feelings in regards to TLP does not necessarily correspond to which translation of the Bible a person prefers. We saw above that only half of those who responded to the question in the written survey as to which Bible translation they preferred chose the Authorised Version as their favourite. In Interview No. 1 the participant said:

We have now gone to the Revised Standard Version of our readings, and that has helped me immensely. I found that the readings in the Book of Common Prayer, with
the more archaic language, I would go to my little Bible at home, the Good News Bible, and read a few of those passages, just to clarify things for me.130

The rest of what is said in interview No. 1 shows that this individual highly values the TLP found in the liturgy. So why the apparent discrepancy between the preferred language for liturgy and the preferred language for the Bible? I can only suggest at this point that it may be that the context or function of the language is key. The TLP in the liturgical rites is used for the worship of God while the Bible is a source for information about God. The greater ease of understanding contemporary English is important when searching the scriptures for religious knowledge, but not helpful when articulating the worshipper’s feelings about the God whom he or she is adoring. This question will be raised in the conclusions of this essay.

Much of what was said in the personal interviews reinforced information that was revealed in the written questionnaires. Some of the participants mentioned, in different ways, that familiarity with TLP was important to them. Thus, the subject in Interview No. 1 could say, “I come from an Orthodox background, so when I became a member of the Anglican Church – was received into the Anglican church – I felt at home.” The person in Interview No. 4 said something similar: “I just feel more at home, and it’s probably my conservative nature and the fact that I’ve done it for so long.” The importance of familiarity with TLP was revealed especially in Interview No. 6. In this interview, the person reported several times that TLP “flows.” For example, she said, “I think it [TLP] flows along. It’s not stunted. It makes you feel quiet, I think;” “I like this kind of language because I think it does flow rather than the other books where it ends … the sentences end more sharply;” “I just like the way the prayers come out, you know, they just flow along.” When this person talked about the “flow” of the language, was she referring to the structure of the prayers, or to the composition of the sentences in the prose, or to something else? I asked this person to clarify her use of the word “flow” after the interview had been transcribed, and in a written note she said that her use of the word was “because our prayers are familiar to us and glide from one to another and become easy to memorize.” It was this clarification that led me to believe that she was talking about the comfortable familiarity of the prayers rather than the structure of the prayers themselves.

130 See page 100 of this thesis.
Some of those interviewed said that traditional liturgical prose connected them to a larger Anglican tradition. For example, the third participant reported: “I think it’s a part of our history and our tradition that needs to be maintained … I think it’s important that there be continuity in our history and our expression of the faith.” The person in Interview No. 4 said similar things: “The fact that people have been reciting these same prayers and responses for hundreds of years is a real connection to the past and to the church back then.”

It is when we look at how traditional liturgical prose is described and what effect it has on the worshipper that we get the most fulsome answers to the questions. Subject No. 1 reports: “I find the language beautiful. It makes me have a feeling of reverence when I hear the words and when I say the words. There is a feeling of awe.” The same subject also reported; “One of the passages I was looking at this morning was the “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts.” Just all of these magnificent, beautiful words helps to put me in the frame of mind for worship. So yes, it draws me closer to God.”

The participant in Interview No. 5 had similar feelings: “Traditional liturgical prose and language is … beautiful; it’s elegant. It allows the mind to focus.” The subject in Interview No. 3 reported: “I think because it does draw you upward, it does speak to me about the omnipotence of God and the omnipotent presence of God in a way that I … personally, I need.” The participant in Interview No. 6 reflected that traditional liturgical prose, “makes you feel quiet, I think. Serious.” The person in Interview No. 2, in a somewhat more convoluted way, expressed similar feelings:

Although any style of language can convey meaning – syntactical meaning – the use of this prose, because it is dedicated and now in our experience to a religious experience, is that it is, and because it is bound up in that experience, it does help with setting it apart as a sort of experience of what we would call the numinous, contacting the numinous or the religious experience. And so, in that way, it identifies my feelings of reverence for God …

Some subjects articulated their sense that TLP sets a tone or mood for worship by creating a space apart from the experiences of the everyday world. Thus, the person in Interview No. 2 related: “My experience with this language [TLP] is kind of bound up with my experience of the style of worship that we have. And that is that it sets the experience apart. It sets the

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131 See page 102 of this thesis.
experience apart from the normal, everyday experiences that we have.” The person interviewed in the third interview had similar sentiments about traditional liturgical prose: “It draws me up out of myself, I think, for one thing, simply because we don’t use that kind of language in normal conversation today. And there’s something almost sanctifying about it.”

The subject of Interview No. 4 expressed the opinion that, “traditional prose is a way to ground us and just kind of shut out the rest of the world, which is what you try to do on Sundays.” In a somewhat earthy way, the person in Interview No. 5 explained:

> There’s huge passages in the New Testament by Paul about being dead to the world, and using a dead style of language helps speak to that and separate this from when I’m hanging out drinking beers or whiskey with my buddies, as opposed to when I’m speaking to my God.\(^{132}\)

Given the positive view of traditional liturgical prose held by the subjects being interviewed, it should come as no surprise that the picture or vision of God revealed by that language is positive as well. The subject of Interview No. 1 relates:

> Well, we call him our Father, and when I think of God today, I don’t think of a punishing God. I think of my Father with arms around me, surrounding me with love. And I just find that comforts me in church and when I read prayers and when I meditate. So, the vision of God is someone with his arms around me, comforting me.\(^{133}\)

The person in Interview No. 5 felt that the vision of God presented to his imagination was, “A God of beauty, a God of elegance. A God that desires to see people stretch and work and choose to follow him.”

In chapter two of this essay, where the “movements” or themes of Radical Orthodoxy were being discussed, it was mentioned that most of the theologians who are associated with Radical Orthodoxy posit a participatory ontology, that is to say, a Platonic framework in which all that is derived from God carries traces of the divine reality. It followed from that premise that the creation is suspended from the transcendent thus becomes possible for created things to be revelatory of divine realities. It is interesting to note that in a kind of inchoate manner such sentiments were expressed by two of the people being interviewed.

\(^{132}\) See page 107 of this thesis.

\(^{133}\) See page 100 of this thesis.
The person in Interview No. 3, responding to the question as to how traditional liturgical prose could help that person draw close to God, expressed the opinion that, “There’s a beauty about it [TLP] that goes beyond even the words themselves. I’m not sure how I can describe that to you, but it’s a beauty that exists, which I think is what God draws us to.” These sentiments were even more clearly articulated by the subject in Interview No. 5:

Also, when we look at … when you look at nature, when you look at the beautiful universe that God created, it has an elegance, from a mathematical elegance to a pure artistic elegance and beauty to it, that I think our liturgy should reflect what God gave us.

These ideas will be more fully discussed in the conclusions.

Finally, it should be noted that some of the subjects in the interviews placed their opinions about liturgical language in the broader context of their worship experience at St. George’s Church as a whole. The participant in Interview No. 2 stated that:

My experience with this kind of language is bound up with the point of contact that is most common for me, and that is our worship service. And the two of them together identify each other as an experience which is apart from our normal, regular experience.

In a negative kind of way, in her rejection of contemporary liturgical prose, the participant in Interview No. 4 could not help but reflect on what she perceived to be some of the negative aspects of a contemporary worship experience:

So, it’s not the same; it just isn’t the same. And you know, the vernacular that we use, and the “clappy-happy” responses to some things … I’m one of the people that’s not even really comfortable interrupting a service, and you know, “peace be with you” with everybody and everybody roaming all over the church.

This theme will come up again in the focus group interview that follows and is discussed more fully in the conclusions to this essay.

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134 See page 108 of this thesis.

135 See page 101 of this thesis.

136 See page 105 of this thesis.
The Focus Group Interview

The final group interview was meant to be a way of validating or confirming the data that had been collected in the written questionnaires and in the individual interviews. The questions used for this part of the research can be found in Appendix H and the transcribed interview can be found in Appendix I. Three men and two women took part in this group exercise.

Some of the themes that already surfaced in the congregational questionnaire and the personal interviews are repeated again. For example, the idea that traditional liturgical prose is a bridge to larger historical reality to which the worshipper is linked finds expression again. The person identified as Female 1 reported in regards to traditional liturgical prose: “I think it’s wonderful to have that connection to the past that has endured and kept Anglicans going for centuries …” Another theme that is repeated is that traditional liturgical prose is part and parcel of the whole worship experience at St. George’s church. Thus, the person identified as “Female 2” spoke of, “the processions and the genuflecting, and the crossing … and all the glorious candles that are lit for the Mass.” The participant identified as “Female 1” also talked about her various experiences of different worship services at St. Thomas’ Anglican Church on Huron Street in Toronto.

But the theme that predominated in the focus group was the idea of traditional liturgical prose as a language that is different from usual secular discourse, an elevated form of speech that draws the worshipper into a sacred space for worship. The person identified as “Male 3” articulated these sentiments: “It could be argued that the fact that the language is not the language that we use every day, when we encounter it … it has a kind of shock value, taking us out of our everyday interchanges with each other and what we encounter from the media. It takes us to some place that’s different.” The person identified as “Male 1” expressed similar feelings: “I think the language centers us … it brings into a … holy space, a sanctified space, psychologically and emotionally. It’s different than the secular world, and we’re not part of the secular world at those moments of worship. And I don’t want to be.” However, it is the participant identified as “Male 2” who most clearly articulates how traditional liturgical
prose is a form of sacralised English language that functions as hieratic speech in the way that Christine Mohrmann defined hieratic speech. “Male 2” said:

I think what was said earlier about the language being separate from our vernacular language and setting a separate idiom for godly things definitely sets a special mood for worship and addressing God, and I do believe that’s very important. If you look at every other religion and culture on the planet, whether it be Far Eastern religions or even native North American religions, there were special languages or special idioms used in the worship of whatever Being they happened to be worshipping at the time.\textsuperscript{137}

It is these sentiments and thoughts that bring us to the conclusions found in the final chapter.

\textsuperscript{137} See page 118 of this thesis.
Chapter Seven: Conclusions

The following conclusions are generalizations which arise from the data presented in the previous chapter. It would appear from the results of the research that traditional liturgical prose has strong and important meaning for those who worship at St. George’s Anglican Church in Windsor, Ontario. Traditional liturgical prose is considered by the worshipper to be “beautiful” and “elegant.” As an aside, this latter finding accords with my personal theology of ministry which sees beauty as partaking in the One who is Beauty itself, and this enhances the sense that the language itself can draw the worshipper towards God.

Traditional liturgical prose is valued by St. George’s people for the connection it provides to the larger Anglican Communion, historically speaking, and is thus treasured as a mark of Anglican identity. Although traditional liturgical prose was sometimes found difficult in terms of comprehension, this was seen more as a worthwhile challenge to overcome rather than a barrier to worship. The familiarity with this language, over long use, was considered a comfort or solace to the worshipper. No-one appeared to have a negative vision, image, or understanding of God as a result of using traditional liturgical prose. The use of such language suggested both abstract understandings of the Divine (“the numinous”, and a “God of beauty, a God of elegance”) as well as more personable images of God, such as the person who described her experience as “the vision of God is someone with his arms around me, comforting me.”

People in the study were generally critical of contemporary liturgical prose, a feeling that was sometimes associated with a badly executed liturgical celebrations. While no-one considered it impossible to worship using contemporary liturgical prose, it would appear that the association of this prose with disruptions in the course of the service, such as chaotic exchanges of the peace and other liturgical practices, made it hard for some people to consider contemporary liturgical prose on its own merits or shortcomings. On the other hand, it was clear that traditional liturgical prose was positively coupled to the reverence and decency of the more traditional liturgical practices celebrated at St. George’s church. Of course, none of this is really surprising. Others have also pointed out that in liturgical
celebrations a range of nonverbal communication is also traditionally a part of the celebration. For example, Peter Jeffery writes,

There is the language of kinesics or movement: gestures and positions of the hands and the eyes, graded degrees of bowing and genuflecting, turning to the people and turning east. There is a language of proxemics, or the use of space, as the ministers stand, kneel, and sit in a sequence of positions, expressing both their hierarchical relationships to each other and their reverence for the altar, the relics, the crucifix, the Gospels, the Eucharistic vessels, and above all the consecrated bread and wine. And there is a paralanguage of non-verbal sound, with the trembling of bells at the approach of the tremendum, wooden clappers suggesting the dryness of the Lenten fast, three levels of speech volume, longer and shorter silences, music that aims to be meditative more than emotive.138

These types of non-verbal communication operate at a subconscious level to enhance and supplement the verbal communication, and they are just as important a part of the overall worship experience as texts of the rite itself.

By way of summarizing some of what is said above, I would say that the St. George’s worshipper, generally speaking, interprets traditional liturgical prose as a hieratic or sacral form of the English language that creates an elevated mood and sacred space for worshipping the Almighty. As we saw at the end of the last chapter, one person considered that traditional liturgical prose “being separate from our vernacular language and setting a separate idiom for godly things definitely sets a special mood for worship and addressing God.”

It would certainly appear that people at St. George’s church would be supportive of continued use of traditional liturgical prose in the texts of the rites used, even if some would prefer the Bible readings to be from a more contemporary version. Although most of the other Anglican churches in Windsor use a contemporary language liturgical prose for the main celebration on Sunday morning, the results of this study would suggest that there is still a place for churches who wish to use traditional liturgical prose. As explained in chapter four of this thesis, there does not appear to be an overall ecumenical consensus as to what constitutes an appropriate English language liturgical prose for worship. There are disagreements as to what translation principles to use when translating and adapting ancient liturgical texts, and disagreements as to whether the prose should be characterized by

asyndeton or a more complex syntax. There is also disagreement as to whether there should be a different “registers” of liturgical prose or whether it should reflect the usage of the home and market-place. In the face of such diversity, there is surely a place for those who wish to use a traditional English language liturgical prose whose character reflects the long human tradition of using hieratic speech when communicating with the Deity. As such, this study is a useful defence for the people of St. George’s to continue to use traditional liturgical prose.

This study has been very helpful to me on a personal level. Being challenged to consider the theological stance or viewpoint of my work has sharpened my sense of theological identity with the Radical Orthodoxy school of theology and confirmed my not always articulated sympathy with neo-Platonic philosophical thinking. I have already put these ideas to work in seminars and talks that I have given to different church groups. The historical and ecumenical survey of the kind of liturgical language used in different churches was both interesting and sobering. I have tremendous sympathy for those liturgists who have sought to find a common liturgical prose that would be acceptable to all the churches, but this task appears to be too difficult and challenging at the present time. On the other hand, my personal love for the traditional liturgical prose found in Book of Common Prayer has been enhanced by the research done for this paper, and I am now better able to articulate why this liturgical prose can be valued and appreciated, even if it is not the only liturgical prose I use.

Could this paper be of use to the Anglican Church of Canada or the wider Anglican Communion? Caution must be exercised when generalizing from one particular congregation to the wider Church, but there does seem to be anecdotal evidence to suggest that traditional liturgical prose is finding a resurgence among a certain youthful demographic. In a March 2016 online article in the Telegraph newspaper in the United Kingdom, reporter John Bingham commented on the apparent upswing in attendance at choral Evensong in the Oxbridge colleges:

> College chaplains have seen a steady but noticeable increase in attendances at the early evening services which combine contemplative music with the 16th Century language of the Book of Common Prayer. … Chaplains say the mix of music, silence and centuries-old language appears to have taken on a new appeal for a generation
more used to instant and constant communications, often conducted in 140 characters rather than the phrases of Cranmer.\textsuperscript{139}

While it is difficult to discern whether this kind of phenomenon is a long-lasting trend or a passing phase, the very fact that choral Evensong can appeal to a younger generation suggests that traditional liturgical prose can indeed find a place among the liturgical offerings of Anglican churches in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century.

Related to the above anecdote about young people going to Evensong is the question as to whether using traditional liturgical prose could be used as a countercultural hook to draw people into relationship with God. In other words, can the use of traditional liturgical prose be a form of evangelism, especially in a secular environment? Based on the research for this paper, I want to make some tentative suggestions as to how this may be true.

Traditional liturgical prose could be one of the critical elements in a kind of worship which is a challenge to the secular, an interruption in the flow of modern living, such that a person is moved to consider an alternative to modernity; a universe which is suspended from the transcendent and finds its desires fulfilled in the embrace of the God who created all things. Everything about this worship – the architectural setting, the music, the promiscuous use of signs and symbols, the language used to communicate its ideas – would hopefully point to a countercultural reality which is more compelling, more interesting, and more beautiful than the one proposed by modernity. Such worship would not only be an invitation to personal transformation, but a call to change and reform the political, economic, and societal patterns of living which have been shaped and distorted by modernity.

I hope a reader can perceive what I am talking about by way of analogy to a secular man or woman’s response to icons and to Gregorian Chant. Eastern Christian icons are readily identified, even by secular people, as being something “spiritual” or removed from the secular realm, even if their subjects and symbolism are unknown to the observer. They have no secular equivalent with which to compare them and thus they are disturbing in the sense that they are strange and mysterious and non-commensurate with modernity. But they also have a compelling beauty which draws people in and compels them to consider and

contemplate, if even for a moment, that there may be something which lies beyond the empirically verifiable “facts” presented by the senses. Gregorian chant also has no secular equivalent and is thus readily identified by secular people as something “spiritual” and not commensurate with every day existence, even if the words are unintelligible.

Is it possible that there is a form of language or sacred speech which would also have the same effect upon a secular person as icons do visually and Gregorian Chant does audibly? It would be a form of prose which would add to the already arresting elements of architecture, vesture, and decoration in the church building to present a vision more compelling than the functionalist existence posited by modernity. Such a language would have to be more than what it communicates; that is to say, it would be more than a utilitarian method of conveying knowledge. Ideally, even the form, structure, style, and vocabulary of such a language would shape the speech such that it could manifest forth God’s glory. By now it must be obvious that I want to suggest that a critical re-appropriation of the sacral language of traditional liturgical prose could fulfill this role. I say a critical re-appropriation because we are not talking about a nostalgic retrieval of archaic texts, but the judicious use of older forms of liturgical prose. Thus, archaic forms which are completely unintelligible or words which have so altered their meaning over the past few hundred years so as to say something different now than they did in their original context could be modified or avoided. An elegant and intelligent modification of certain words to make the texts “gender-inclusive” (at least in regards to human beings) could also be considered as part of the re-appropriation. What is of central importance is that such liturgical prose, with its archaic pronouns and complex sentence structures, could open a window into eternity and offer a vision of a glorious and beautiful reality which is an alternative to the reductionist and nihilistic vision offered by modernity. I am not suggesting that this is the only kind of liturgical prose which might accomplish this goal or which any given community might use, but the results of this paper suggest that traditional liturgical prose would certainly be up to the evangelistic purpose that I am suggesting.

There is no space in this paper to consider such a proposal further. I only want to suggest that the research done for this thesis was not related to an antiquarian desire to preserve museum specimens of archaic English, nor was it an attempt to cater to pedantic quibbling
over the aesthetic style of certain forms of language, but to open up new possibilities for traditional liturgical prose and to at least consider the missional possibilities of such language in the midst of a secular society which has no imagination for transcendent realities and no need to remember its Creator. The hope is that there may be a way for secular people to come to faith and to believe in Jesus Christ as Lord because the worship of that Lord “manifested forth his glory.”
Bibliography


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http://www.englishtexts.org/survey.html, ELLC Website.


Appendix A
The Invitation to Participate in the Study

A Request for Assistance

Dear People of St. George’s,

As many of you know, I have been working for some years now on a Doctor of Ministry Degree (D.Min.) as a part of my commitment to continuing education. I am now at the research part of this degree and need your help and participation. An envelope is going to be distributed to every member of the congregation who is 18 years of age and older as part of the research. In the envelope being distributed there are three items: A consent form which explains the purpose and meaning of the study, the questionnaire itself, and a stamped, self-addressed envelope in which to return the completed questionnaire. In order to preserve anonymity, please do not sign your name anywhere on the questionnaire, and do not put a return address on the envelope.

**Your participation in the study is completely voluntary.**

Please complete the questionnaire by Sunday, July 3, so that the results can be compiled in a timely manner. If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact me using the email address or phone number on the front of the bulletin. Thank you in advance for your participation.
Appendix B
Research Questionnaire

This questionnaire is about the meaning that traditional liturgical prose (TLP) holds for the worshippers at St. George’s Anglican Church. By traditional liturgical prose I mean the kind of language used in the Book of Common Prayer and the Authorized Version (King James Version) of the Bible. Please print your answers so they are legible to the reader.

Note: This questionnaire is not intended to be a tool to change the TLP presently being used for worship, but to understand the meaning it has for the respondent.

Please also note: You may decline to answer any question you do not wish to answer.

1. How long have you attended St. George’s Anglican Church?

2. Male or female? (please circle one)

3. How long have you been exposed to TLP? (please circle one)  
   Less than one year, a few years, all my life

4. What is your frequency of church attendance? (please circle one)  
   Weekly, Several times a month, Several times a year

5. Do you have a preferred Bible translation when reading the Bible on your own? (Yes or no)

6. If you have a preferred Bible translation, which one is it?

7. Do you have a favorite text or prayer in the Book of Common Prayer? (Yes or No)
8. If you answered yes to the previous question, please give the page number from the BCP and the first few words of the prayer below.

9. Have you been exposed to other kinds of liturgical prose within the Anglican Church, e.g., the language used in the Book of Alternative Services? (Yes or no)

10. Have you been exposed to other kinds of liturgical prose outside of the Anglican Church, e.g., the liturgical prose used in the Roman Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Church, the Lutheran Church? (Yes or no)

11. If you have answered “yes” to questions 4 or 5, please tell me about that experience in your own words.

12. Is it important to your worship experience to use TLP? (please place a mark on the scale)

   1(Not important) …2…3…4…5…6…7 (Extremely important)

13. Why did you rate the level of importance that you circled?

14. How would you describe TLP? (circle any of the descriptor words below, which are listed alphabetically)

   Archaic, awesome, backward, beautiful, boring, challenging, counter-cultural, difficult, edgy, elegant, evocative, jarring, joyful, mysterious, opaque, oppressive, repulsive, solemn, stately, strange, substantive, traditional, transcendent, wonderful

15. What other words might you use which are not listed above?

16. What is your experience of TLP, that is, what do you feel or think about when you pray with TLP?
17. What picture or vision of God does TLP reveal to your imagination?

18. In what ways does the use of TLP help you draw closer to God?

19. In what ways does the use of TLP become a challenge for you to worshipping God?

20. Do you think TLP might be a challenge for others to worshipping God? (Yes or no)

21. How else would you describe what TLP means for you?
Appendix C

Results of the Questionnaire

Q1  How long have you attended St. George's Anglican Church?

Answered: 20  Skipped: 0
Q2 Male or female?

Answered: 20  Skipped: 0
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Q3 How long have you been exposed to TLP?

Answered: 20  Skipped: 0
### Q4 What is your frequency of church attendance?

**Answered:** 20  **Skipped:** 0

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### Q5 Do you have a preferred Bible translation when reading the Bible on your own?

**Answered:** 20  **Skipped:** 0

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Q6  If you have a preferred Bible translation, which one is it?

Answered: 12     Skipped: 8

Q7 Do you have a favorite text or prayer in the Book of Common Prayer?

Answered: 19     Skipped: 1

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Total Respondents: 19

Q8 If you answered yes to the previous question, please give the page number from the BCP and the first few words of the prayer below.

Answered: 11     Skipped: 9

Q9 Have you been exposed to other kinds of liturgical prose within the Anglican Church of Canada, e.g., the language used in the Book of Alternative Services?

Answered: 20     Skipped: 0

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Total Respondents: 20
Have you been exposed to other kinds of liturgical prose outside of the Anglican Church, e.g., the liturgical prose used in the Roman Catholic Church, the eastern Orthodox Church, the Lutheran Church?

Answered: 20     Skipped: 0

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Total Respondents: 20
Q11 If you answered "yes" to question 9 or 10, please tell me about that experience in your own words.

Answered: 17    Skipped: 3

Q12 Is it important to your worship experience to use TLP? (Please place a mark on the scale)

Answered: 20    Skipped: 0

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|               | 55.00%                   | 11        | 20.00%                         |       |                  |


Q13 Why did you rate the level of importance that you circled?
Answered: 18     Skipped: 2

Q14 How would you describe TLP?
Answered: 20     Skipped: 0

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Answered: 13  Skipped: 7

Q16 What is your experience of TLP, that is, what do you feel or think about when you pray with TLP?
Answered: 15  Skipped: 5

Q17 What picture or vision of God does TLP reveal to your imagination?
Answered: 16  Skipped: 4

Q18 In what ways does the use of TLP help you draw closer to God?
Answered: 19  Skipped: 1

Q19 In what ways does the use of TLP become a challenge for you to worshipping God?
Answered: 17  Skipped: 3

Q20 Do you think TLP might be a challenge for others to worshipping God?
Answered: 19  Skipped: 1

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Total Respondents: 19

Q21 How else would you describe what TLP means for you?
Answered: 18  Skipped: 2
Appendix D

Informed Consent to Participate in Research Involving Minimal Risk

You are being asked to take part in a research study. This study is a part of the doctoral thesis of the Rev’d Gordon R. Maitland. Research studies include only people who choose to take part. This document is called an informed consent form. Please read this information carefully and take your time making your decision. Ask the researcher to discuss this consent form with you, please ask him to explain any words or information you do not clearly understand. The nature of the study, risks, inconveniences, discomforts, and other important information about the study are listed below.

We are asking you to take part in a research study called:

According to Thy Word: An Interpretation of the Meaning of Traditional Liturgical Prose

The person who is in charge of this research study is the Rev’d Gordon R. Maitland. This person is called the Principal Investigator. However, other research staff may be involved and can act on behalf of the person in charge.

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What meaning does the experience of traditional liturgical prose (TLP) provide to worshippers in the congregation of St. George’s Church, Windsor, Ontario?

By “traditional liturgical prose” I mean the liturgical language of the Book of Common Prayer or “Tudor” English. Among other things, what makes this language “traditional” is the use of archaic forms (e.g. pronouns like “thee” and “thou”), the use of complex sentence structures which incorporate subordinate clauses, and a relatively close adherence to the original Latin, Greek, or Hebrew originals when the prose is a translation of these ancient languages. “Contemporary liturgical prose,” by way of contrast to the traditional forms, does
not use archaic forms of English, uses short sentences without subordinate clauses, avoids conjunctions, and is more free in its translation of ancient language originals.

**Why are you being asked to take part?**

We are asking you to take part in this research study because you are a parishioner of St. George’s Anglican Church, and it is your understanding of the language used in worship in this church which is what is under investigation.

**Study Procedures:**

If you take part in this study, you will be asked to engage in answering questions related to the language of worship. The conversation will be electronically recorded, and a transcript produced, so that what is said can be studied later.

**The interview will be arranged for the most convenient time for the participant.**

**Alternatives / Voluntary Participation / Withdrawal**

You do not have to participate in this research study. I understand that people have busy lives and that you may not be available when the interview is scheduled. You should only take part in this study if you want to volunteer. You should not feel that there is any pressure to take part in the study. You are free to participate in this research or withdraw at any time. There will be no retribution, penalty or loss of status in the congregation if you stop taking part in this study.

**Benefits**

You will receive no financial benefit or material compensation by participating in this research study. However, a potential benefit of participating in this research study may be that you gain a deeper appreciation and knowledge of the kind of worship which is celebrated at St. George’s Church.

**Risks or Discomfort**

This research is considered to be minimal risk. That means that the risks associated with this study are the same as what you face every day. There are no known additional risks to those who take part in this study.
Compensation
You will receive no payment or other compensation for taking part in this study.

Costs
It will not cost you anything to take part in the study.

Privacy and Confidentiality
The discussion will be electronically recorded, and a transcript produced, for research purposes only. No individuals (other than the researcher) will be identified in the transcript. We will keep your study participation private and confidential. All data recorded in this study will be kept in a locked filing cabinet to which only the researcher has access. We may publish what we learn from this study. If we do, we will not include your name. We will not publish anything that would let people know who you are.

All participants will be asked not to discuss the content of the discussion to others.

Consent to Take Part in this Research Study
I freely give my consent to take part in this study. I understand that by signing this form I am agreeing to take part in research. I have received a copy of this form to take with me.

_____________________________________________  ____________
Signature of Person Taking Part in Study Date    Date

_____________________________________________
Printed Name of Person Taking Part in Study
Statement of Person Obtaining Informed Consent

I have carefully explained to the person taking part in the study what he or she can expect from their participation. I confirm that this research subject speaks the language that was used to explain this research and is receiving an informed consent form in their primary language. This research subject has provided legally effective informed consent.

_______________________________________________  __________
Signature of Person obtaining Informed Consent      Date

_______________________________________________
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent
Appendix E
Questions for Personal Interviews

The questions that are going to asked are in regards to the kind of liturgical language used in the *Book of Common Prayer*, which is at the core of the liturgy we use here at St. George’s Church. I call this sort of language Traditional Liturgical Prose (TLP) as a shorthand.

1. Using your own words, how would you describe this kind of language or prose?

2. What is your experience of TLP, that is, what do you feel or think about using this kind of language?

3. Do the same feelings come to mind when using a more contemporary sort of liturgical prose?

4. Do you feel that the use of TLP helps you draw closer to God?

5. If so, in what ways?

6. Do you feel that the use of a more contemporary liturgical prose would help you draw closer to God?

7. If so, in what ways?

8. What picture or vision of God does TLP reveal to your imagination?

9. Is there anything else you would like to say about TLP?
Appendix F

Transcript of Personal Interviews

Note: Italic words in square brackets are places where the transcriber was unsure of what was said.

Personal Interview No. 1

Subject #1. Using your own words, how would you describe the kind of language or prose?

I find the language beautiful. It makes me have a feeling of reverence when I hear the words and when I say the words. There is a feeling of awe.

What is your experience of Traditional Liturgical Prose, that is, what do you feel or think about using this kind of language?

I feel that it puts me in the proper frame of mind to worship our loving God. Again, the language, through the prayer book, is one of sacredness and reverence, and I feel that that is very important for me. Also, going back to the word “experience,” I come from an Orthodox background, so when I became a member of the Anglican church—was received into the Anglican church—I felt at home.

Do the same feelings come to mind when using a more contemporary sort of liturgical prose, or modern language?

Absolutely not. I have had the experience of being in a Roman Catholic church, actually, years ago and in the not far distant past, and I’m finding I am not comfortable, and that’s probably just my experience and my background, but I think it loses something in the mass. It just loses that…again, I’m going to go back to that reverence. I’m just not comfortable with contemporary language.

Do you feel that the use of Traditional Liturgical Prose helps you draw closer to God?
Yes. And one of the passages I was looking at this morning was the “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts.” Just all of these magnificent, beautiful words helps to put me in the frame of mind for worship. So yes, it draws me closer to God.

Well, you’ve already gone to the next question; that’s okay. Do you feel that the use of more contemporary liturgical prose would help you draw closer to God? And if so, in what ways?

Well, we have now gone to the Revised Standard Version of our readings, and that has helped me immensely. I found that the readings in the Book of Common Prayer, with the more archaic language, I would go to my little Bible at home, the Good News Bible, and read a few of those passages, just to clarify things for me. So now with the more contemporary language of the prayers that we are reading, sorry, of the passages that we are reading each Sunday, it makes me understand much better those readings. And yes, I think I come closer to God because I have a deeper understanding. I don’t feel like I’m out there and not understanding the more archaic prose. I always, always tripped on it, too, when I read it, if I hadn’t practiced it enough. I was always tripping on it, and this is much easier to understand and to read.

Now, what picture or vision of God does Traditional Liturgical Prose reveal to your imagination?

Well, we call Him our Father, and when I think of God today, I don’t think of a punishing God. I think of my father with arms around me, surrounding me with love. And I just find that that comforts me in church and when I read prayers and when I meditate. So, the vision of God is someone with his arms around me, comforting me. It doesn’t necessarily have to be Him, but a higher power just comforting me.

Is there anything else you would like to say about Traditional Liturgical Prose?

It’s just...again, I’m going to go back to some of the words I’ve already used. It’s kind of the awe of the power of God and His love for us, and the words are...they have so much reverence to them. It just makes the hour of worship a very sacred experience for me.

Thank you very much.

You’re welcome. I’ve used over and over and over again the same words, but that’s how I feel about it.
Using your own words, how would you describe this kind of language or prose?

Okay, my response is actually in the form of another question, and that is, is this description a kind of identifying description or a qualifying description?

I would say both.

I see.

What is your subjective impression of this?

What is normally referred to, this, the *Book of Common Prayer*, BCP, and so that is where we most commonly encounter this sort of language. That, and also when reading the King James Version of the Bible. Those are my two contact points with this style of prose. And, so it’s one that I feel comfortable with, even if I’m not skilled at recognizing all the nuances of the language, which, because it has passed out of common usage, I may not be familiar with.

What is your experience of Traditional Liturgical Prose, that is, what do you feel or think about using this kind of language?

Well, that is because I encounter this language most commonly in our worship services, my experience with this language is kind of bound up with my experience of the style of worship that we have. And that is that it sets the experience apart. It sets the experience apart from the normal, everyday experiences that we have.

Okay.

Were we on before?

Okay, it’s made no difference, so I assume it was on.

Oh, it was on. Alright. Did you catch that, or…?
No, maybe start that question again. What is your experience of Traditional Liturgical Prose, that is, what do you feel or think about using this kind of language?

My experience with this kind of language is bound up with the point of contact that is most common for me, and that is our worship service. And the two of them together identify each other as an experience which is apart from our normal, regular experience. So, it is impacting kind of how we make the experience.

Now, do you have the same feelings, or do the same feelings come to mind when you use a more contemporary sort of liturgical prose or language?

What I find happening when the more contemporary language is used, for the most part, is that I have to do a sort of translation in my head to re-establish the encounter of the religious experience.

Now, 4 and 5 together: do you feel that the use of Traditional Liturgical Prose helps you draw closer to God? And if so, in what ways?

Again, for the most part, although any style of language can convey meaning—syntactical meaning—the use of this prose, because it is dedicated and now in our experience to a religious experience, is that it is, and because it is bound up in that experience, it does help with setting it apart as a sort of experience of what we would call [the numinous, contacting the numinous] or the religious experience. And so, in that way, it identifies my feelings of reverence for God, and I just won’t…we don’t need to explore that aspect more than…ah, I’ll leave it there.

Do you feel that the use of a more contemporary liturgical prose would help you draw closer to God? And if so, in what ways?

I think that is, it probably would, in the sense that it is…it would be part of an experience which is, again, set apart from daily life and dedicated to our exploring and experiencing our worship with God. It would be something, I think, which would be perhaps rather less than what we have now, but it would be… contemporary prose would not provide a serious barrier, I don’t think.
Now, what picture or vision of God does Traditional Liturgical Prose reveal to your imagination?

Oh boy, that could be a bit of a dangerous question. I don’t feel like…I don’t have a particular graphic picture of God, but I do have a feeling. It’s the sort of feeling that is very hard to describe, but it is a very real one nonetheless. And again, the Traditional Liturgical Prose is itself bound up in the acts that we encounter and that we participate in.

Now, is there anything else you would like to say about Traditional Liturgical Prose?

I’m trying to…I’m trying to think of ways in which this might be answered. Except that my…I understand that the use of this language as it currently exists is bound up in formal prayers and means of expression which identify a certain relationship with God. Some people might describe it as a more formal type of relationship, but I think it’s a personal one, a deeply personal one nonetheless. And I, for one, would very much regret not having this contact with it.

Thank you.

I don’t know if that’s any useful or not, but…

Oh, yeah.

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Personal Interview No. 3

There we go, now we’re going. Using your own words, how would you describe the kind of language, Traditional Liturgical Prose?

The language is, I think, uplifting. It has a majesty and a glory about it, which is somewhat lacking in more contemporary language.

Now, what is your experience of Traditional Liturgical Prose, that is, what do you feel or think about using this kind of language?
I think it comes to God-centered. It draws me up out of myself, I think, for one thing, simply because we don’t use that kind of language in normal conversation today. And there’s something almost sanctifying about it. I think that’s the best way to express it.

Now, do the same feelings come to mind when using a more contemporary sort of liturgical prose?

Not as much, and I won’t say that it doesn’t exist. It’s just not as [much of rich or full] in my experience.

Now, do you feel that the use of Traditional Liturgical Prose helps you to draw closer to God? If so, in what ways?

Absolutely. I think I really did say that earlier. [Yes, it does stay God centered], and I think it’s like having stained glass windows in a church, if I can make that analogy. There’s something that draws you towards it. There’s a beauty about it that goes even beyond even the words themselves. I’m not sure how I can describe that to you, but it’s a beauty that exists, which I think is what God draws us to.

Now, do you feel that the use of a more contemporary liturgical prose would also help you draw closer to God? And if so, in what ways?

Well, I think that answer to that is, again, yes. I can moderate that a little bit. Certainly, understanding is a little clearer in contemporary language, perhaps, than in traditional language. Although, I was schooled in traditional language, so I understand it. I think it would; it’s just not as majestic. I think that’s the only way I can describe it.

Now, what picture or vision of God does Traditional Liturgical Prose reveal to your imagination?

I think because it does draw you upward, it does speak to me about the omnipotence of God and the omnipotent presence of God in a way that I…personally, I need. That’s really my summary.

Now, is there anything else you would like to say about Traditional Liturgical Prose that we haven’t done so far?

Yeah, I hope that we will school people in Traditional Liturgical Prose, in literature, because of the way I feel about it, obviously, but also because I think it’s a part of our history and our tradition that needs to be maintained. We can’t give everything away just to be contemporary, just to be sort of, you know as they used to say, “with it.” I think it’s more important that there be continuity in our history and our expression of the faith.
Using your own words, how would you describe Traditional Liturgical Prose?

Now, the traditional language in the prayer book is based on Old English, and I think that’s part of its beauty. The fact that people have been reciting these same prayers and responses for hundreds of years is a real connection to the past and to the church back then. So, I just find it very uplifting to use that as opposed to modern vernacular.

So, what is your experience of Traditional Liturgical Prose? What do you feel or think about using this kind of language?

Well, that’s been the language in the service that I’ve been using for my entire life, starting when I first began attending the Anglican church as a child, and then, you know, attending St. Thomas in Toronto and then coming to Windsor and finding St. George’s. And I’ve experienced the Book of Alternative Services at St. John’s, and we typically use the more traditional service for the most part. But I just feel more at home, and it’s probably my conservative nature and the fact that I’ve done it for so long.

So that leads right to the next question: do the same feelings come to mind when using a more contemporary sort of liturgical prose?

No, and I’ve probably been somewhat awful about that. Poor Christopher Pratt, who used the Star Wars service one day out of the Book of Alternative Services, and he used to say greetings after every service, and I said, “Interstellar greetings to you, too.” He did say we’ll talk, but he never did it again. So, it’s not the same; it just isn’t the same. And you know, the vernacular that we use, and the “clappy-happy” responses to some things…I’m one of the people that’s not even really comfortable interrupting a service, and you know, “peace be with you” with everybody and everybody roaming all over the church. You just… you go through the service, you can talk to people afterwards, and that’s great.

Now, do you feel that the use of Traditional Liturgical Prose helps you draw closer to God? If so, in what ways?

I do think so. I think it’s part of the history of the Church and the language that’s used in the readings. I actually prefer the readings out of the Book of Common Prayer as opposed to the more modern ones. I understand the reason why we want to go through the three-year process and we get different lessons; however, I was so happy to get away from that when we came to St. George’s and just, we knew what was coming every Sunday. Sorry, Father; however, you didn’t ask. (laughs) However, I can be flexible. And I also think it’s the other services
that are a part of the Traditional Prose and the *Book of Common Prayer*, so that when you get to Holy Week, and you’ve got things like Tenebrae; the Good Friday services; the Holy Saturday services that we really don’t do anymore, but when we used to be able to do that; and light the first fire of Easter, right? Vespers is another service that’s just wonderful to do, and I used to go to Evensong every week when I was in Toronto just because it was a great way to end the week.

**Now, do you feel that the use of a more contemporary liturgical prose would help you draw closer to God? And if so, in what ways?**

No, no. I mean, I’m sorry. (laughs) I mean, I live the contemporary prose every day. I think that’s just a way to, sort of…the traditional prose is a way to ground us and just kind of shut out the rest of the world, which is what you try to do on Sundays.

**What picture or vision of God does Traditional Liturgical Prose reveal to your imagination?**

Ooh…I don’t know that I really have a vision, but I suppose if there’s one that comes to mind, it’s the statues and the Michelangelo paintings and the other things that are out there. [*It’s not bloody Jesus.*]

**And finally, is there anything else you would like to say about Traditional Liturgical Prose, its character, its structure, anything like that?**

Well, I think people need to experience so that they understand where we’ve come from, right? Because it provides a history and a context for whatever service you’re attending, and I think if we lose it, then that’s a big chunk of the past that’s gone.

**Thank you.**

I don’t know if any of that’s helpful. (laughs)
Personal Interview No. 5

Okay. Using your own words, how would you describe Traditional Liturgical Language or Prose?

Traditional Liturgical Prose and Language is a…is beautiful; it’s elegant. It allows the mind to focus. It creates an environment that allows the mind to focus on God and separates the liturgy from the world and what we use on the street every day.

Now, what is your experience of Traditional Liturgical Prose? That is, what do you think or feel about using this kind of language?

My experience is quite extensive. I grew up in a parish that both used modern language as well as traditional language in its liturgy back and forth every week, and even as a child, I always found the traditional service with the Book of Common Prayer to be far more gratifying and beautiful.

Now, do the same feelings come to mind when using a more contemporary liturgical prose as opposed to the Traditional Liturgical Prose?

Not even remotely. Most of my…99.9 percent of my experience with modern liturgical prose has been utter shit.

Do you feel that the use of Traditional Liturgical Prose helps you draw closer to God? And if so, in what ways?

Absolutely. It definitely helps you grow closer to God. It allows you to separate those moments of prayer—liturgical prayer or private prayer—and it allows one to separate that from what’s going on in regular life and the world. There’s huge passages in the New Testament by Paul about being dead to the world, and using a dead style of language helps speak to that and separate this from when I’m hanging out drinking beers or whiskey with my buddies, as opposed to when I’m speaking to my God.

Now, do you feel that the use of a more contemporary liturgical prose would help you draw closer to God as well? And if so, in what ways?

No.
What picture or vision of God does Traditional Liturgical Prose reveal to your imagination?

A God of beauty, a God of elegance. A God that desires to see people stretch and work and choose to follow Him, as opposed to somebody who can just…as opposed to being able to just half-ass it. The language, as much as it can be difficult sometimes, requires study and intelligence and work, as opposed to just being able to fall into it. Also, when we look at…when you look at nature, when you look at the beautiful universe that God created, it has an elegance, from a mathematical elegance to a pure artistic elegance and beauty to it, that I think our liturgy should reflect what God gave us.

Now, is there anything else you would like to say about Traditional Liturgical Prose, its character, its structure, anything like that?

The structure of Traditional Liturgical Prose, both from like a purely English standpoint with [Cranmer’s], obviously, prose being so elegant and beautiful, but just the structure of the liturgy as a whole is something that’s absolutely beautiful. One of the best ways it’s ever been described by a renowned theologian from King’s College, Halifax, is that it circles up, like in the prayer books there, it circles up like incense towards God, which is absolutely just beautiful symbolism there.

Thank you.

Personal Interview No. 6

Using your own words, how would you describe this kind of language or prose, that is, Traditional Liturgical Prose?

I think it flows along. It’s not stunted. It makes you feel quiet, I think. Serious.

Now, what is your experience of Traditional Liturgical Prose? That is, what do you feel or think about using this kind of language?

I like this kind of language because I think it does flow rather than the other books where it ends…the sentences end more sharply, [if that’s correct]. It just flows along, and I guess I’m so used to using it, I just think it’s natural for me to do it rather than using another book.
Now, do the same feelings come to mind when you use a more contemporary sort of liturgical prose, like the *Book of Alternative Services*?

No. No. Do the same feelings come to mind when using a more contemporary sort of liturgical prose? No.

**Do you feel that the use of Traditional Liturgical Prose helps you draw closer to God? And if so, in what ways?**

I think it has a calming effect when we use the TLP book. I want to describe something to you. When I have been to a funeral, once the mass starts, I think it kind of calms you down, and…

**So you mean, it helps you enter into worship?**

Yes, but *maybe people are being upset*; sorry. Once the mass starts, you’re…I’m sorry.

It’s okay.

Now, do you feel the use of more contemporary liturgical prose would help you draw closer to God? And if so, in what ways?

No. I don’t think so. I think this type of question you have is similar.

**Right, it’s just contrasting the older and the newer language.**

Because I stayed in Port Burwell. We did go to church there, and they were using the new book, so I know the differences.

**What picture or vision of God does Traditional Liturgical Prose reveal to your imagination?**

That God is present in the sanctuary while the service is going on.

**Finally, is there anything else you would like to say about Traditional Liturgical Prose that hasn’t been covered or said so far?**

That we keep it, which probably won’t be…which won’t happen maybe in the future, but I just like the way the prayers come out, you know, they just flow along. It just reads nicely, if that makes sense to you.
It does very much.
Okay.
Okay, thank you.
Appendix G
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The purpose of this study is to understand the meaning of an experience of a certain kind of liturgical prose for an identifiable subgroup of Christians. How this meaning is tied up with worshipper’s experience of worship is important. The ministry-in-action will consist of collecting data in order to discern and construct the meaning and understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. The central question is as follows:

What meaning does the experience of traditional liturgical prose (TLP) provide to worshippers in the congregation of St. George’s Church, Windsor, Ontario?

By “traditional liturgical prose” I mean the liturgical language of the Book of Common Prayer or “Tudor” English. Among other things, what makes this language “traditional” is the use of archaic forms (e.g. pronouns like “thee” and “thou”), the use of complex sentence structures which incorporate subordinate clauses, and a relatively close adherence to the original Latin, Greek, or Hebrew originals when the prose is a translation of these ancient languages. “Contemporary liturgical prose,” by way of contrast to the traditional forms, does
not use archaic forms of English, uses short sentences without subordinate clauses, avoids conjunctions, and is more free in its translation of ancient language originals.

**Why are you being asked to take part?**

We are asking you to take part in this research study because you are a parishioner of St. George’s Anglican Church, and it is your understanding of the language used in worship in this church which is what is under investigation.

**Study Procedures:**

If you take part in this study, you will be asked to engage in answering questions related to the language of worship. The conversation will be electronically recorded, and a transcript produced, so that what is said can be studied later.

**The interview will be arranged for the most convenient time for the participant.**

**Alternatives / Voluntary Participation / Withdrawal**

You do not have to participate in this research study. I understand that people have busy lives and that you may not be available when the interview is scheduled. You should only take part in this study if you want to volunteer. You should not feel that there is any pressure to take part in the study. You are free to participate in this research or withdraw at any time. There will be no retribution, penalty or loss of status in the congregation if you stop taking part in this study.

**Benefits**

You will receive no financial benefit or material compensation by participating in this research study. However, a potential benefit of participating in this research study may be that you gain a deeper appreciation and knowledge of the kind of worship which is celebrated at St. George’s Church.

**Risks or Discomfort**

This research is considered to be minimal risk. That means that the risks associated with this study are the same as what you face every day. There are no known additional risks to those who take part in this study.
Compensation
You will receive no payment or other compensation for taking part in this study.

Costs
It will not cost you anything to take part in the study.

Privacy and Confidentiality
The discussion will be electronically recorded, and a transcript produced, for research purposes only. No individuals (other than the researcher) will be identified in the transcript. We will keep your study participation private and confidential. All data recorded in this study will be kept in a locked filing cabinet to which only the researcher has access. We may publish what we learn from this study. If we do, we will not include your name. We will not publish anything that would let people know who you are.

All participants will be asked not to discuss the content of the discussion to others.

Consent to Take Part in this Research Study
I freely give my consent to take part in this study. I understand that by signing this form I am agreeing to take part in research. I have received a copy of this form to take with me.

_____________________________________________  __________________________
Signature of Person Taking Part in Study  Date

______________________________  __________________________
Printed Name of Person Taking Part in Study  Date
Statement of Person Obtaining Informed Consent

I have carefully explained to the person taking part in the study what he or she can expect from their participation. I confirm that this research subject speaks the language that was used to explain this research and is receiving an informed consent form in their primary language. This research subject has provided legally effective informed consent.

__________________________________________
Signature of Person obtaining Informed Consent

__________________
Date

__________________________________________
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent
Appendix H

Questions for the Focus Group

In the written questionnaire, the question as to how important it was to each individual that the worship experience uses TLP, the weighted average of responses was 6.4 out of 7. This obviously indicates that TLP is important to people. When asked why it was so significant, the respondents’ answers appeared to fall into three broad categories.

The first is that such language is familiar and comfortable. The second is that the use of such language reinforced a feeling of being connected to a larger reality: i.e., to a tradition that preceded them or to the wider Anglican Communion. The third reason is that such language sets a tone or mood for worship which helped them engage in a deeper way with the worship experience.

The responses to some of the other questions appeared to reinforce these three broad categories, and the answers to the individual interviews also appeared to fall into these categories. Thus, I want to explore each of these divisions in turn.

1. When people say that TLP is familiar or comfortable, do you think that means that the language has a stability over time that reinforces a positive sense of wellbeing, or do you think that means that the language lulls us into a complacency which dulls our critical faculties?

2. People said they like to feel that they are connected to a reality larger than their own parish community. This entails the feeling of being connected to their ancestors in the faith, and the sense of being connected to the wider Anglican Communion. Do you think these wider connections are important for you?

3. Do you agree that the use of TLP sets a tone or mood for the worship experience? Why do you think such a mood is important or significant?

4. Finally, question in the questionnaire as to what words could be used to describe TLP, the most often chosen word was the noun “beautiful” (indicated by 80% of respondents). Other chosen words, such as “elegant” and “wonderful,” would appear to reinforce the sense that TLP has a desirable quality which could be described as “beautiful.” These words were also reflected in the responses in the individual interviews. How strongly would you agree with this characterization of the language? Of what significance to you is this beautiful character?
Appendix I
Focus Group Transcription

Note: Italic words in square brackets are places where the transcriber was unsure of what was said.

When people say that Traditional Liturgical Prose is familiar or comfortable, do you think that means the language has a stability over time that reinforces a positive sense of wellbeing, or do you think this means that the language lulls us into a complacency which dulls our critical faculties?

Female 1: Well, I certainly don’t think that it’s dulling our critical faculties at all. I think the stability over time comes historically. It’s the idea of being connected to something that have been used for hundreds and hundreds of years; and the service we use, the Book of Common Prayer, has been maintained over all that time, and obviously, people have found value and beauty in the prose that is in that book and in those services. And, quite frankly, I think they’re timeless. I wouldn’t be attending a service that, you know, used common vernacular and wanted people yelling, you know, “Alright!” from the pews or something. That’s just not…not who I am.

Male 1: I think there’s something about the Book of Common Prayer that gives us a distinction as Anglicans [can’t understand the words—too quiet], that makes us identifiable. I think we’ll get into it afterwards as well. It just becomes so much… modern language, it doesn’t hold me particularly to our past.

Male 2: I think it definitely reinforces a sense of positive well-being that the Traditional Liturgical Prose, when used year after year by someone who’s been attending the church for a long time, allows them to, over a long period of time, find the depth of meaning that has been inserted into those prose, as opposed to the very shallow modern liturgies.

Female 2: I’m just going to concur with that. I do have a very positive sense of well-being in the mass, and it’s being comfortable. So, I look forward to going to mass because I get that sense of well-being when I’m there, and it does reinforce all of that within me.

In other words, you don’t want a shocking surprise when you…?

Female 2: Not really. (laughs)

Male 3: It could be argued that the fact that the language is not the language that we use every day, when we encounter it, and you part from having a familiarity which lulls us into complacency, it has a kind of shock value, taking us out of our everyday interchanges with each other and what we encounter from the media. It takes us to some place that’s different.

So, in that sense, in a positive sense, counter-cultural.
Male 3: Yes, yep.

Female 1: The *Book of Alternative Services*, even though it’s got a service similar to the *Book of Common Prayer*, isn’t the same, because the language is different. I mean, it has modernized the same language, and it’s taken out the thee’s and the thou’s and, you know. I think it’s wonderful to have that connection to the past that has just endured and kept Anglicans going for centuries, old fossils that we are.

Well, actually, this has all been leading into the second theme, so to speak, which is, as it says here, people said they like to feel they are connected to a larger reality than their own parish community. This entails the feeling of being connected to their ancestors in the faith, and the sense of being connected to the wider Anglican Communion. So are these—and I’m hearing this, you’re saying these connections are important for you.

Male 2: Absolutely.

Female 1: Yes.

Male 1: When I came into the Anglican Church, I came from the United Church of Canada, where there wasn’t liturgy, although they would deny that. There was certainly liturgy there. Why I came to the Anglican Church was because of the beauty of the service, which is what kept me. That and because I love the sacraments. Those two things kept me. And so, I so enjoy the language of the *Book of Common Prayer*. It’s held me for years, and I intentionally sought out parishes where it was the dominant book used.

Female 2: I was received into the Anglican Church from Orthodoxy, so this speaks to me greatly. When I go to an Orthodox service, I have no huge surprises, and I fit in beautifully. Even if it’s a different language, I know what’s happening in the mass. I feel the reverence, and when I became an Anglican, just before I was married (I was received in 1969), I felt right at home. I didn’t lose any of the traditions, especially high Anglican mass, with the processions and the genuflecting, and the crossing (however, it’s opposite in the Orthodox Church), and all the glorious candles that are lit for the mass. So, I felt right at home.

Good. Well, we’ve already, again, been sort of moving to the next one, which is, do you agree that the use of Traditional Liturgical Prose sets a tone or mood for the worship experience? Why do you think such a mood is important or significant?

Female 1: Well, I think, you know, it’s in part because we just don’t have one service. Like, many churches if you go, and even some Anglican churches, you are either going to get Morning Prayer or you’re going to get a variation of a hymn service. You probably won’t, and they don’t necessarily call it a “mass,” but I mean, we have Compline. We’ve got Evensong, which, when it’s done, it’s absolutely gorgeous. You know, the reserving of the
sacrament during Evensong from my time at St. Thomas in Toronto. I mean, some churches do Morning Prayer before they do the communion service and then all the special services, Easter, you know. I think if you put all of that together… I mean, the first time I ever went to Tenebrae, it scared the heck out of me. (laughs) But it’s all very meaningful, you know. I think people need to experience that, and if they do, they’d be following us in droves.

**Male 2:** I think what was said earlier about the language being separate from our vernacular language and setting a separate idiom for godly things definitely sets a special mood for worship and addressing God, and I do believe that’s very important. If you look at every other religion and culture on the planet, whether it be Far Eastern religions or even Native North American religions, there were special languages or special idioms used in the worship of whatever being they happened to be worshipping at the time.

**Male 3:** That’s important that our language of the service is set aside as being something special and something which is repeated. It seems to me that some of the more modern liturgies have a short shelf life and that they seem to become dated.

**That’s, I think, especially true—it’s a standing joke—the Eucharistic Prayer No. 4 in the Book of Alternative Services is the Star Trek or Star Wars Prayer that everyone mocks now because it seems so dated now. Although, I remember an elderly priest who is now deceased who thought that was the best thing ever, but he was of a generation that thought that was groovy.**

**Female 1:** Well, the reality is there are churches out there that have no liturgy, and I’ve gone to some weddings and funerals and services in these buildings, and you would be hard-pressed to determine any liturgy was happening because it just seemed to be a free-for-all. I would not attend that on a regular basis.

**Male 1:** I think the language centers us, and I think this is what Alex was hitting on, and [Philip, actually]. It centers us; it brings us into a… I shouldn’t say holy, but it is a holy space, a sanctified space, psychologically and emotionally. It’s different than the secular world, and we’re not part of the secular world at those moments of worship. And I don’t want to be.

**Well, finally, there’s a question here. It came out of the questionnaire that the most often chosen word to describe the language is “beautiful.” Other words, like “elegant” and “wonderful,” were close behind, and in the personal interviews, those words were used again. So, honestly, how strongly would you agree with this characterization of the language?**

**Male 3:** It’s interesting that, although I’m not aware of the extent of which the liturgy was written and constructed by one person, I know that—I’ve been told that seventy-five percent of the Eucharistic Liturgy is found in the Bible—the way in which language was used and the importance of language in the time at which this was written seems to me rather different from what it signifies now. And when I compare the language of the traditional service to the
more contemporary liturgies, one thing that strikes me is the kind of mundane nature of the writing of those more modern services.

In ancient cultures, and someone mentioned this already, when you had special occasions, religious or civic, you would use what was called an elevated speech. So, it was a language that was different than the prosaic. But [unknown word/name] denies that, because we’re all the same. There is a kind of leveling that says elevated language is elitist or whatever; and therefore, there’s no such thing as an elevated language. But that was the expectation of our ancestors, was special occasions demanded an elevated speech.

Male 1: Interesting enough, with the language of the prayer book today, you see exactly what you’re describing. But it would have been the vernacular when it was written by Cranmer and company.

Male 2: Actually, it wasn’t.

Male 1: Was it not?

Male 2: No. The language in the Book of Common Prayer, while closer to the vernacular of Cranmer’s time, would have been a far more formal language used for legal decrees, in the same way that lawyers use a very specialized language now, and governments, when releasing important documents, use specialized language now. Cranmer’s language would have been closer to royal decrees or things like that than it would have been to anything people heard on the street.

Male 1: Well, fair enough. I’ll take that.

Is there any other comment anyone wishes to make regarding…?

Female 2: I liken the beauty of the words in the language of the Book of Common Prayer to Mozart and his music and his time. That’s [can’t understand the words—too quiet].

Male 3: Well, I think it’s only fair—it’s only appropriate that the language that we use to address God in that service should represent something other than everyday. Otherwise, it doesn’t represent the best of what we have to give, which is what we should be giving.

The liturgical thinking in the 1960s—and this comes out of my research—was that, and this is very presumptuous, was that the laity, in order to understand what’s going on, that you never use subordinate clauses in a sentence, and you use as many monosyllabic words as possible. That was the feeling. And that comes out, right? The sentences are very short, they do not use long, complicated words or phrases, and that was a deliberate kind of approach. Now, that’s been obviously called into question, but that was certainly the kind of thinking that was going on at the time.
Female 1: The other thing that nobody brought up tonight, too, is it’s not just the language of the service, although maybe that’s my interpretation in making that narrow. But it’s the readings, it’s the hymns, it’s the canticles.

Absolutely. Oh, it’s all part of the…

Female 1: It’s all part.

Male 2: Good point.

That does get a mention in the thesis, too, that language is only one part of the whole worship experience, certainly.

Female 1: And then you mentioned, you know, the language in the Bible. I mean, if you knew our service well enough, and you go and hear something like The Messiah… There it is, because those are pieces that Handel took out to set. So, I mean, it just goes so far back.

Male 3: And even expressions that have found their way into the secular speech, when they echo something either from liturgy or from the Bible, they have special significance because people identify with them.

All agree? Well, thank you, everyone. If there’s no other comment, thank you for your contribution.
Appendix J

Ethics Approval Letter
Dear Dr. Neelands and Rev'd Gordon R. Maitland,

Re: Your research protocol entitled, "According to thy word: An interpretation of the meaning of traditional liturgical prose"

ETHICS APPROVAL

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<th>Original Approval Date: May 30, 2016</th>
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We are writing to advise you that the Social Sciences, Humanities, and Education Research Ethics Board (REB) has granted approval to the above-named research protocol under the REB's delegated review process. Your protocol has been approved for a period of **one year** and ongoing research under this protocol must be renewed prior to the expiry date.

Any changes to the approved protocol or consent materials must be reviewed and approved through the amendment process prior to its implementation. Any adverse or unanticipated events in the research should be reported to the Office of Research Ethics as soon as possible.

Please ensure that you submit an Annual Renewal Form or a Study Completion Report 15 to 30 days prior to the expiry date of your current ethics approval. Note that annual renewals for studies cannot be accepted more than 30 days prior to the date of expiry.

If your research is funded by a third party, please contact the assigned Research Funding Officer in Research Services to ensure that your funds are released.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research.

Yours sincerely,

Matthew Brower, Ph.D.
REB Chair