***Executive Pastors, Sanctuary, Fellowship Hall, Worship Leader and Other New Imports***

One of the joys of Anglicanism is how many non-Anglicans have come into Communion with other Anglicans. For those who are new to Christianity there is often a crash course on simple basic ecclesiology and theology. The foremost statement must be “Jesus is Lord.” On the pilgrimage then comes the Apostles Creed, and then the Nicene Creed, and then maybe the Athanasian Creed. If good Catechetical work is being done, delving into the Holy Scriptures, and understanding how Faith has been lived since the Ascension of Jesus Christ, Our Lord and Savior, is obviously essential. This, of course, means learning about the Early Church, the Church Fathers, and the Saints throughout the ages. Reform movements like the Franciscans and Dominicans will naturally be a part of our Catechesis along with the influence of Benedictine Spirituality. Then, of course, will come later Church history beginning with 16th Century reforms, noting the differences and similarities between the Continental Reformation and the English Reformation. Finally, we deal with contemporary expressions. First and foremost, we must introduce neophytes to the Living Lord and His plan for us. The Church does not stand as an alternative to Christianity, of course, since she is clearly the Bride of Christ — the Body of Christ. She is not a humanly conceived concept introduced at a later time, but the Church and the meaning of Church leaps from the pages of Holy Scripture. On the other hand, there are some who are introduced to a type of “Churchianity” and then later discover that Jesus is the Lord of the Church!

I live in the status of a “mixed marriage.” My wife is clearly “PC” and I am clearly “Apple.” Our personalities could be a key to the “why” part, but it means at times that we have to learn different vocabularies and also the names of functions. I do my best to think PC when I am talking with her but then in my mind I am translating, much as I do when I am reading the Bible in Hebrew and in Greek.

Over my seventy-seven years as an Anglican, I have heard the standard titles describing who the clergy are, what the names of “things” are in the church building and what the names of those buildings at the church are called. However, in the last few decades, I often feel as if I am dealing with people who have brought along their old “names” and are now using them in a setting where names and titles were already established. The other tendency is to assume that a computer literate culture which must understand every conceivable name for computer functions suddenly becomes very dumb when they walk through a church door and they are not asked to learn terms that are quite venerable. Sometimes this is done assuming that the only target group they have has never been inside a liturgical church before. Not everyone comes from a Protestant oriented environment. Not everyone is in the “PC” world, so aren’t we wise enough to understand that some people have lived in an “Apple environment” or do we want everyone to become “PC?”

Let’s look at a few terms that have crept into Anglicanism in the last several decades:

Executive Pastor

Senior Pastor

Co-Rector

Congregation (referring to parish or mission)

Sanctuary (meaning the entire worship space)

Vestibule

Fellowship Hall

Pastor Fred

Worship Service

Worship Leader

Board of Elders

Turning back the clock in Anglicanism just a few decades these terms were rarely, if ever, used.

Of course, the question is, as I have moved around the country, when I need to establish something in the church, do I first check what has traditionally been used in Anglicanism or do I see either what the local churches use or what I formerly used when I was part of another Tradition? Now I still have some “punch outs” from computer cards that my Dad gave me from the large computer rooms in the 1960’s at U.S. Steel (nice confetti) but if I assume what I saw back then was the only computer, without discovering what led up to it and followed it, then I am focused on my own personal understanding without putting it into context. We can assume that the casual computer user doesn’t care — but those who work with computers need to know the history and discover why certain terms continue to be of value — even if the circumstances have changed.

Executive Pastor: When I worked in a working-class environment, workers avoid executives as best as they could. It may work in some environments — but not all and it can even be a “turn off” for some. I will look at the word “Pastor” a bit later. We Anglicans have had a pattern in the USA (a bit different in the State Church in England.) The term “Senior” is very confusing to some people, but I guess if it means getting a discount at some restaurants…!

Rector: the duly elected and instituted Priest of a Parish. A Parish is “self-sufficient” financially

Vicar: (in USA) - the duly appointed Priest of a Mission Church - a church dependent upon the Diocese for assistance and often appointed by the Bishop for the purpose of Mission strategy.

Curate: from “the Cure of Souls” - usually a full time “assistant” selected by the Rector

Assistants: Priests (and Bishops) can assist but their “Office” (Bishop, Priest, Deacon) has its own integrity, so that those other clergy may be “Assisting”) “Assisting Priest and Assisting Bishop.” Also given the nature of the status of “Rector” there cannot be an “Assistant Rector” but there can be an “Assistant to the Rector.”

Co-Rector: Once when I was the President of the Standing Committee the Rector of a Parish called me and asked if he could appoint a “Co-Rector.” Of course, canonically there is no such category; moreover, it creates a problem as it relates to “Instituting a Rector.” Sorry for the bad analogy, but that would be like crowning two kings to be co-kings. Being a Rector is more than being the primary priest of a parish; it has numerous legal ramifications and after centuries of having a system that has worked, the question remains - “why change it?” A pastor has particular pastoral oversight while a Rector has pastoral and legal oversight.

Congregation: Indeed, we find that word in our Books of Common Prayer, but much of its intention is to note those who “congregate.” That is, of a parish has three Eucharists on a Sunday, it has three congregations. The term was originally not meant to be synonymous with “parish” or “mission” although it could be, perhaps, a collective term, just as “Minister” in Anglicanism means “Bishops, Priests, Deacons” as a collective term and not a reference to just the second Order.”

Sanctuary: This is a very odd phenomenon to refer to the entire “worship space” as a Sanctuary. Clearly from our Canons and Books of Common Prayer, we have two or three “levels.” The people are in the Nave, the Choir is in the Chancel, and the Clergy are in the Sanctuary. The concept of having a Choir Loft above a Narthex is historically defensible thus leaving us with a Sanctuary - behind the rails - and a Nave on the other side of the rails. Many generations of Anglicans have been brought up learning of the relationship in terms of the “Whole State of Christ’s Church” as it relates to these building divisions:

Nave-Church Militant, Chancel-Church Expectant and Sanctuary-Church Triumphant. Great teaching material!

Vestibule: I suppose this is a great name for a movie theatre where we hang our coats, but in the church, we have traditionally referred to that “gathering area” where occasionally one can see the Baptistry, as the

Narthex. Many traditional liturgies have occurred in the Narthex, and in that regard, has a historicity and a difference from a “cloak room.”

Fellowship Hall: Once again, more recently we have seen this term slip into Anglican Churches. Apart from the reality of Parish Halls having a history of engaging the entire community - more than “fellowship” takes place: education, meetings, etc. A Parish Hall is usually somehow attached to the church building, and if it is a separate building then it is usually called a Parish House. A “Parish House” by the way is not a Rectory or Vicarage - where the Rector or Vicar lives. There may be within a Parish House a Parish Hall, a Kitchen, and a Library, for example. A hall in the basement of the church is called an undercroft.

Pastor Fred: A very, very recent reality is referring to a priest in Anglicanism as “Pastor N. N” Priests are simply more than Pastors which is why we do not do as certain traditions in referring to their “one Office ordained ministry” as ‘Pastor.’” This refers to a particular function and is a bit like calling an ordained person “Preacher Fred.” They do more than preach. In the American Church we had a period when one could tell (in the old days) “Low Church” and “High Church.” Low Church called their priests “Mister Jones” - formally “The Reverend Mister Jones” and the High Churchman called their priest “Father Jones.” Every now and then one might find that someone would say “Reverend Jones” or even “The Reverend Jones” but even Emily Post pointed out that this was incorrect. Example: The Honorable John Jones, is not called “Honorable Jones.” It is very simple: The Reverend John Jones: Father Jones or Mister Jones. Of course, when I was a boy (sorry) we would never presume to call our priest by his first name and NEVER was the bishop called by his first name unless liturgically praying for “John our Bishop.” Some would argue that Anglicans “borrowed” calling their priests “Father” from the Roman Catholics. I guess, given that principle when an Anglican priest is called “Pastor Fred” we borrowed that from some other Church, too.

Worship Service: Not too many years ago in Anglicanism we could figure out which Liturgy was being offered in an Anglican Church: Morning Prayer/Matins or Eucharist/Holy Communion/Mass. It was the usual pattern in “Low-Church” parishes to celebrate the Eucharist on the First Sunday of the month (maybe even an 8:00 AM every Sunday) and Morning Prayer the rest of the month. The fifth Sunday was sometimes: “Morning Prayer, Litany and Ante Communion.” As the Church became more Eucharistically centered since Liturgical Renewal, there are times when the traveling worshiper cannot figure out what is being offered in an Anglican Church — “10 AM Worship Service.” So, what is it? Should I prepare to make my Communion or not? It really isn’t terribly difficult to let people know what they should expect on a Sunday morning.

Worship Leader: I suppose it depends upon one’s definition of “worship” as to whether this works or not. Nonetheless it is a new term in Anglicanism. Our Canons say that the Rector is the Worship Leader, but he may delegate elements of that to Musicians. Singing hymns and other music is “worship” but suffice it to say that traditionally Anglicans have had “Cantors” who usually lead quite a bit of the music in cooperation with other musicians such as the organist, the bell choir, etc.

Board of Elders: Not much to say on this one! We translate the Greek word “Presbuteros” as Presbyter or Priest, but it can also be translated as “Elder.” Therefore, if there is a “priest” in the parish, then how can a lay person be an elder unless we have borrowed that from traditions who do not have Priests/Presbyters? It is good to have Lay Leaders, obviously, but Anglicans have dealt with this matter for centuries — and we already have a system in place.

At another time I will share other terms that are “creeping” in, but in the end, I must say — these are good people, and we are thrilled when people come into Anglicanism and when they discover the wealth that we have. A new enthusiasm, a new joy, a new insight is invigorating to us, but not everything that has been used for generations in terms of time-honored names needs to be rewritten and changed. However, we must always ask: where did I learn these new terms, and why must they replace the ones that have been used for generations?