

AN ANGLICAN ANALYSIS OF NON-ANGLICAN INITIATORY RITES 1960-71

When an Anglican Liturgical Commission is engaged in the revision of the rites of baptism and confirmation it normally considers what are regarded as the 'important elements of the rites'. Recent Anglican revisions of the fragmented parts of the initiatory process indicate, however, that there is no common agreement or policy as to the liturgical expression of these 'important elements'. For many, this variation in liturgical expression within the Anglican Communion, offers ecumenical encouragement.

The object of this paper is to compare and analyse, from an Anglican position, a number of non-Anglican initiatory rites used in the British Isles. In spite of the brevity of this analysis we hope that it is of sufficient length and detail to prove a fruitful and beneficial addition to the ongoing debate in the field of Christian Initiation.

During the period to be considered, viz. 1960-71, eight non-Anglican churches in this country produced new rites of baptism and confirmation¹ these were:

The Baptist Church 1960

The Baptism of Believers

The Laying on of Hands with Prayer upon those who have been baptized

The Moravian Church 1960

The Baptism of Infants

The Baptism of Adults and the Confirmation of such as have been baptized in Infancy

The Lutheran Church 1962

Order for the Baptism of Infants

Order for Confirmation

The Methodist Church 1967

The Baptism of Infants

Public Reception into Full Membership

The Presbyterian Church 1968

Order for the Administration of the Sacrament of Baptism Act of Confirmation

The Church of Scotland 1968

Order for the Administration of Holy Baptism
Confirmation and Admission to the Lord's Supper

The Congregational Church 1969

The Baptism of Children
The Reception of Church Members on Profession of Faith

The Roman Catholic Church

Rite of Baptism 1969
The Rite of Confirmation 1971

As in the Anglican Communion some of these rites are still in their experimental stage, even so, all are in 'official use' in this country. In some cases the use is optional and other alternatives are available, nevertheless, they do give a fairly full and true picture of the present situation. Unless otherwise stated reference in the first part of this paper will be to the rite of Baptism, and in the second part to the rite of 'Confirmation'.

While all these rites are grouped together for the sake of comparison and assimilation they are not of equal ecumenical significance or value. For example the new Roman Catholic rites are likely to have a far greater influence upon initiatory revision, at least in certain parts of the Anglican Communion, than some of those produced in the Protestant world. But, at the same time, because of the present ecumenical situation, there is bound to be a certain amount of cross-fertilization at all levels, in all places and between all branches of the Church.

The headings used in this analysis serve to illustrate the Anglican approach to initiation and at the same time indicate what Anglicans consider the 'important elements of the rites' of baptism and confirmation.

Specific references to Church of England rites are to the rites contained in *Alternative Services, Second Series: Baptism and Confirmation*, 1968.

1. BAPTISM

1. The Theological and Liturgical Norm

Apart from those of the Baptist Church, the candidates for baptism generally anticipated in all the churches, including the Church of England, are infants/children. While all the churches make at least some provision for adult baptism, only the Baptists look upon adults as the norm. It should be noted, however, that due to a general

increase in the number of adults offering themselves for Baptism a number of the churches have produced complete initiatory rites intended for adult candidates.

2. The Setting of the Rite

The Anglican position is stated in the opening rubric of the 1662 Prayer Book rite of baptism: 'It is most convenient that Baptism should not be administered but upon Sundays, and other Holy-days, when the most number of people come together.' Thus baptisms in the Church of England generally take place at the main Sunday Service, often at the Parish Eucharist.

Baptists and Congregationalists have the same opening rubric that baptism: 'Should be administered in the presence of the Congregation during public worship.' Less emphatic is the Moravian rite: 'The service may open with a hymn, or come at a suitable point in another service.' Lutherans allow private administration of baptism, but the opening rubric of their order states the ideal: 'Baptism shall ordinarily be administered in the Church at any time of the stated services, or at a specially appointed service. At Matins or Vespers, the Order here given may follow the Lessons or the Sermon; at the Service it may follow the Sermon.' In the General Direction attached to the Methodist rite a number of possibilities are given: 'It should normally be administered at a main service of public worship . . . It may be publicly administered, for good reason, at a service other than the main service of public worship; . . . If the main service is the Holy Communion . . .' Within the Presbyterian church: 'The Sacrament shall be administered . . . at a public service of the Church, a congregation being present to witness and participate in the reception of the baptized into the fellowship of the Church. In special circumstances, should it be expedient to hold the service privately, two or three witnesses . . . should be present.' The Church of Scotland gives no definite direction on the matter, but, in a note attached to the rite, states: 'It is assumed that administration of Holy Baptism normally follows the preaching of the Word', which implies that it is generally administered at a public service. While it may be assumed that all the rites intend baptism to be administered on a Sunday, the Roman Catholic rite leaves no doubt on this matter: 'If possible, baptism should take place on Sunday, the day on which the Church celebrates the paschal mystery. It should be conferred in a communal celebration for all the recently born children, and in the presence of the faithful, or at least of the relatives, friends and neighbours, who are all to take an active part in the rite.'

Baptism at a public service (in some cases the Holy Communion

is suggested or implied), and in the presence of a congregation (thus signifying that baptism is admission into the visible community of Christ's people), is the general practice of all these churches.

3. Sponsors and Parents

The Church of England Canon B.23.1 states the Anglican position: 'For every child to be baptized there shall be not fewer than three godparents, of whom at least two shall be of the same sex as the child and of whom at least one shall be of the opposite sex; save that when three cannot conveniently be had, one godfather and godmother shall suffice. Parents may be godparents for their own children provided that the child have at least one other godparent.' Godparents must be persons who will faithfully fulfil their responsibilities and must be baptized and if possible, confirmed; see Canon B.23.2 and B.23.4. In the new Church of England rite of Baptism godparents are called 'sponsors', and are always mentioned following the parents, thus indicating their supporting role in the Christian upbringing of those whom they are sponsoring. Parents and sponsors are to help the newly baptized: 'To be regular in public worship and in private prayer, not only by their teaching, but also by their example and their prayers.' They also promise to: 'Encourage him in due time to come to Confirmation and Communion.'

The possible use of sponsors/godparents is mentioned in all but the Baptist and Congregational rites; but in none of the rites is there any stipulation as to the number or gender of sponsors.

For the Moravians, sponsors are optional, with the parents they are to make confession of the faith 'wherein this child is to be baptized' and to promise to teach the faith. In the Lutheran Church, only members of the Church are accepted as sponsors and they must be 'instructed as to their spiritual responsibility to the Child'. Those who present the child for baptism (there is no indication as to whether this should be the parents or sponsors) are to 'teach him the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer'. The Methodist Church states: 'Two sponsors may be appointed to assist the parents in carrying out their promises: one chosen by the parents and the other, who shall normally be a member of the Society in which the Baptism takes place, by the Minister. It is the privilege and responsibility of the sponsors to support the parents in the Christian upbringing of the children; to help them to carry out the promises and so act as a link between the family and the larger family of the Church; and regularly to pray for the children.' Parents must promise to provide a Christian home, help their child by words, prayers and examples to renounce evil and to put their

trust in Jesus Christ and encourage him to enter into the full membership of the Church, and to serve Christ in the world. Following the promises of the parents we have the only reference to the sponsors: 'Will you, who have come to support these parents, help them in the Christian upbringing of these children?'

Sponsors are optional in the Presbyterian rite: 'If parents or guardians so wish, others may be associated with them in undertaking a responsibility for the Christian upbringing of their child, but this is not essential. Such godparents, having responsibility to share in the Christian upbringing of the child, should for the fulfilment of their vows be communicant members of the Christian Church.' The faith of the parents is essential: 'In the sacrament of Baptism, Christ receives believers and their children into his Church. . . .' In Infant Baptism the same grace is given and promised to the child of believing parents. 'Parents are to provide a Christian home, and bring him up in the worship and teaching of the Church . . . and encourage him in due time to make his own profession of faith . . .' If there are godparents they are to: 'Undertake to help these parents in every way you can to bring up this child in the faith of the gospel and in the ways of the Church . . .'

The Church of Scotland mentions parents or other sponsors who, in presenting their child for baptism, must: 'Confess the faith wherein they are to be baptized, and promise to bring them up in that faith, and in the way of Christ and his Church . . . to teach him the truth and duties of the Christian faith; and by prayer and example to bring him up in the life and worship of the Church.'

We have already stated that sponsors find no place in the Congregational rite and the parents 'promises and responsibilities are summed up in a brief paragraph: 'Do you confess your faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord; and do you promise, depending on divine help, to teach this child the truths and duties that belong to the Christian life, and to bring him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and in the fellowship of the Church?'

Godparents are essential in the Roman Catholic Church: 'It is the role of the father and mother, accompanied by the godparents, to present the child at the church for baptism.' Addressing the parents the celebrant says: 'You have asked to have your children baptized. In doing so you are accepting the responsibility of training them in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring them up to keep God's commandments . . .' To the godparents he says: 'Are you ready to help these parents in their duty as Christian mothers and fathers?' One of the purposes of the baptismal homily is to 'encourage the parents and godparents to a ready acceptance of their responsibilities which arise from the sacrament'. Before the renunciation and profession of faith, parents and godparents are

reminded 'you must make it your constant care to bring them up in the practice of the faith'. Of the eight churches being considered only the Roman Catholic Church requires from the parents and godparents a threefold renunciation of Satan, his works, his empty promises; or of sin, evil and Satan. Immediately following the renunciation is the threefold profession of belief in God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, to which the congregation give their assent: 'This is our faith. This the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it, in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

We have seen that while all but two of the churches allow godparents/sponsors, only in the Roman rite are they seen to be essential. There is a considerable agreement on the duties of the parents and sponsors. Parents are mentioned first in all the rites and it is their duty to provide the child with a Christian home and to teach him the faith. In all cases the duty of the sponsors is to support the parents in their task.

4. Vicarious Faith

Having reminded those presenting the child for baptism of their solemn duties, the Minister in the Lutheran rite says: 'I therefore call upon you to answer in his stead . . . Do you renounce the devil, and all his works, and all his ways? I renounce them.' He then puts to them the threefold profession of faith.

In none of the other rites is there even the slightest indication that parents or sponsors act in a vicarious capacity; this is also true of the Church of England rite. Even the new Roman Catholic rite makes it explicit that the parents and godparents are professing their own faith: 'If your faith makes you ready to accept this responsibility, renew now the vows of your own baptism. Reject sin; profess your faith in Christ Jesus. This is the faith of the Church. This is the faith in which these children are about to be baptized.' As the parents and godparents present the child for baptism the celebrant says: 'Is it your will that N. should be baptized in the faith of the Church which we have all professed with you?'

5. The Renunciations and Profession of Faith

In the Church of England rite parents and sponsors join together in a threefold 'renunciation' (called the Decision) and a threefold profession of faith.

As we would expect, the Baptist Church demands of its candidates a personal profession of faith, but there are no renunciations.

Only two churches include the renunciations, viz. the Lutheran and the Roman Catholic. The Lutheran renunciation 'Do you

renounce the devil, and all his works, and all his ways?' contains all that is in the threefold Roman renunciation. Immediately after these renunciations both these rites include a threefold profession of faith in God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Simple professions of faith are contained in the Moravian and Congregationalist rites, while the Methodist, Presbyterian and Church of Scotland rites all direct that the whole congregation join together in the Apostles' Creed as their profession of faith. As an alternative to the Creed the Presbyterian rite has a simple profession of faith in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, made by the parents. A similar brief profession made by parents and godparents is placed before the Creed in the Church of Scotland.

While there is no unanimity on the inclusion of the renunciations all the rites include a profession of faith and these, while varying in expression and length, all profess the same thing, viz. belief in the Holy Trinity.

6. Blessing the Water

Three out of the eight churches include a blessing of the water in their revised rite. The Presbyterian minister is directed to pray: 'Send down thy Holy Spirit to sanctify this water to the spiritual use to which thou hast ordained it.' The Church of Scotland contains a similar invocation: 'Send forth Thy Holy Spirit, O God, to sanctify us all and to bless this water . . .' The Roman rite contains three forms for the blessing of the water.²

The Blessing of the Water is both a central and an essential part of the Anglican rite, in which the priest prays: 'Bless, we pray thee, this water, that all who are baptized in it may be born again in Christ.'

7. The Administration of the Sacrament

Water is the *Matter of Baptism* and only the Moravian rite fails to make any mention of this fact. The *Application of the Matter*; triple application is directed in the Lutheran, Roman Catholic and Methodist rites (the Methodist rite states that it is sufficient that it be done once). Baptist baptism is by immersion, though triple immersion is not mentioned. Three of the rites do not stipulate triple application, although this is no doubt intended: Presbyterian 'sprinkle'; Church of Scotland 'pour or sprinkle'; Congregationalist 'sprinkles'. No method of application is mentioned by the Moravians. All the rites use the Trinitarian Formula.³

A rubric in the Church of England rite states: 'The Priest shall then take each child, and having asked *his* name, shall dip *him* in the

water, or pour water upon *him*.' The Trinitarian formula then follows.

8. The Signing with the Cross

Signing with the Cross is included in three rites. There is a pre-baptismal signing in the Lutheran rite: 'Receive the sign of the holy Cross, in token that henceforth thou shalt know the Lord, and the power of his Resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings.' The Methodist rite has a signing immediately after the baptism: 'The Minister, making the sign of the cross on the forehead of the child shall say: By Baptism we receive this child into the congregation of Christ's flock . . .' Two signings are included in the Roman rite: a pre-baptismal signing: 'I claim you for Christ our Saviour by the sign of his cross. I now trace the cross on your foreheads, and invite your parents (and godparents) to do the same.' Following the baptism the candidate's forehead is signed with the Cross with chrism.

By means of a bold heading 'The Signing with the Cross', the Church of England rite clearly separates the signing from the actual baptism and thus avoids confusion at this point of the service.

9. The Lighted Candle

The Roman Catholic rite stands alone in its inclusion of the giving of the lighted candle, which immediately follows the clothing with the white garment, which is also contained only in the Roman rite.

Following the signing with the Cross the Church of England rite contains the rubric: 'The Priest may give to the parents or sponsors of each child a lighted candle . . .' The use of this optional ceremony has widely increased within the Church of England since the introduction of the new baptismal rite.

2. CONFIRMATION

1. The Relation of Confirmation to Baptism

None of the churches seem to have been as troubled as the Anglican Communion over the relation between these two parts of the fragmented initiatory rite. Nevertheless, they have had to face the problem and it is important that we examine how these churches have related confirmation, as entrance into 'Full Membership', with what has already taken place in baptism.

The Baptismal Vows

Renewal of the baptismal vows, in the Anglican sense, is not to be found in any of these rites apart from the new Roman Catholic rite.

However, they all contain some form of renunciation and profession of faith which links the rite with what has taken place in baptism.

Candidates in the Moravian rite profess belief in Christ, a denial of ungodliness and worldly lusts, an intention to live a godly life following and serving Christ, and an earnest wish to continue steadfastly in the teaching and fellowship of the Church.

The Lutheran rite states: 'In Holy Baptism you were received by our Lord Jesus Christ and made members of his holy Church . . . you now desire to make public profession of your faith, and to be confirmed. I therefore ask each of you . . .' Then follows a renunciation of the devil, his works and ways and a threefold profession of faith in God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

The promises and profession of faith are given an important place in the Methodist Church. Candidates are asked: 'Do you repent of your sins and renounce all evil?' 'Do you trust in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour?' 'Will you obey Christ and serve him in the world?' Following these promises, all join in professing the faith of the Church in the Apostles Creed.

A personal profession of faith before God and his people is demanded in the Presbyterian Church. This includes a profession of faith in the Trinity; a repentance of sin and a promise to be faithful in Christian life, witness and service.

The Church of Scotland directs that, when the Kirk Session is satisfied as to the suitability of candidates seeking participation in the Lord's Supper (this is normally done through a report from the minister), 'They will profess publicly the faith into which they were baptized.' Profession of faith is made in the form of the 'Vows of Church Membership' and includes belief in the Trinity, a promise to be regular in worship, Bible study, prayer, Christian giving and service. A profession of faith similar in content is made by those received as members of the Congregational Church.

The Roman rite has introduced a completely new section into its rite, 'Renewal of Baptismal Promises'. Candidates are to reject Satan and all his works and then go on to make a fourfold profession of belief in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and in the holy Catholic Church. This new section brings it very much in line with both the Anglican and the non-Anglican rites.

Considerable agreement is found in what is required by way of profession of faith, and promises about future Christian living and practice, and there is also much agreement with the Anglican rites.

The Gift of the Spirit

In the Baptist Church the gift of the Spirit is very much the gift bestowed at baptism, while at the laying on of hands, which follows baptism, if possible, or takes place as soon afterwards as convenient,

the minister prays: 'Strengthen, we beseech thee, these thy servants with the Holy Spirit.' And over the individual he prays: 'Strengthen him by the Holy Spirit.'

The Moravian rite sees the work of the Spirit as beginning at baptism and the only invocation of the Spirit at the confirmation is that God will: 'Daily increase in them the Holy Spirit . . .'

It is not too clear what the Holy Spirit has accomplished in the baptism of Lutherans. However, the minister does pray: 'Strengthen them, we beseech thee with the Holy Ghost', and at the laying on of hands he prays: 'The Father of heaven, for Jesus' sake renew and increase in thee the gift of the Holy Ghost, to thy strengthening in faith, to thy growth in grace.' Strengthening by the Spirit is the theme of the Methodist 'Public Reception into Full Membership'. The minister prays for the candidates: 'Establish them in faith, we pray thee, by the Holy Spirit, and daily increase in them thy manifold gifts of grace.'

An increase of the Spirit is the note of the Presbyterian rite: 'Defend, O Lord, these thy servants . . . and daily increase in the Holy Spirit.' However, the main stress of the rite is upon admission into communicant membership of the Church.

Addressing the candidates, the minister, in the Church of Scotland service, reminds them that they have come: 'To receive the gifts and strengthening power of the Holy Spirit.' After they have made their vows he prays that God will confirm them with the Holy Spirit and that they will daily increase in the Holy Spirit.

Congregationalist emphasis is upon reception into membership. Receiving the new members the minister asks that they may 'be strengthened with the might of his Spirit in the inner man'. The final prayer, which can be replaced by an extempore prayer, prays: 'Send down upon them the gift of thy Holy Spirit.'

The Roman Catholic rite stresses throughout that it is through Confirmation that the Holy Spirit is given. So emphatic is this stress that the impression is given that before Confirmation the baptized have been living a life completely devoid of any indwelling of the Spirit. In the course of the Homily, the Bishop says to those about to be confirmed: 'You are about to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit . . .' 'You . . . will now receive the power of his Spirit . . .' 'And now, before you receive the Spirit . . .' Anointing the candidates with chrism on the forehead, the bishop says: 'Receive the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit.' There is also the theme of strengthening: 'May they be strengthened with the fulness of his gifts and by his anointing.' In the Bidding Prayer we have: 'May those who have been strengthened by the gift of the Holy Spirit . . .'

From this analysis we see that there is little reference to what has been accomplished by the Holy Spirit in baptism, the first part of

the initiatory rite. Like the rites of the Anglican Communion there are different ideas as to the work of the Spirit at the laying on of hands: there are prayers for the sending of the Spirit, for an increase of the Spirit, for a strengthening by the Spirit, and for a renewal by the Spirit. The Roman rite is the most emphatic in stressing the giving of the Spirit.

Born Again and Forgiven in Baptism

With outstretched hands the Bishop in the new Church of England rite of Confirmation prays: 'Almighty and everliving God, who in Baptism hast caused thy *servants* to be born again by water and the Spirit, and hast given unto *them* forgiveness of all their sins . . .' These words help to link the laying on of hands with the first part of the initiatory process.

Immediately prior to Confirmation, the Lutheran rite has a prayer which begins with a form very similar to that of the Sarum rite, and the Anglican rite: 'Almighty and everlasting God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by Water and the Spirit, and hast forgiven them all their sins: Strengthen them we beseech thee, with the Holy Ghost.' At the imposition of hands the bishop, in the Roman Catholic rite, says: 'Let us ask God . . . to pour out his Holy Spirit on these his adopted children who have already been renewed by the baptism of everlasting life.' He then goes on to pray: 'Almighty God . . . you have given new life to these children of yours by water and the Holy Spirit freeing them from sins . . .' These are the only rites to mention that those being confirmed are already regenerate (or have received new life) and forgiven through baptism.

By Baptism Members of the Church

All these churches agree with the Anglican Communion that we are made members of the Church by baptism and this fact finds expression in all the rites of confirmation. There are, however, slightly different concepts of the meaning of 'confirmation' and Church membership.

While the Baptist, Moravian and Congregational rites imply that candidates are received into the privileges and responsibilities of communicant membership, the main emphasis is upon their reception into the fellowship or membership of the local church. Reception into the local congregation also finds expression in the Methodist, Presbyterian and Church of Scotland rites, but this is only after clearly stating that candidates have been received into full communicant membership of the Church, to share in all its privileges and responsibilities.

A more sacramental approach is taken by the Lutheran rite; here the main stress is on the strengthening by the Spirit and not on the

theme of reception into 'full membership'. However, following the confirmation, the minister does say: 'I do now . . . admit you to the fellowship of the Lord's Table, and to participation in all the spiritual privileges of the Church.'

Perfection of Baptismal Membership of the Church is one of the points in the bishop's homily, in the new Roman rite: 'Dearly beloved, you are about to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit which is for you a spiritual marking, uniting you more closely with Christ and making you more perfect members of his Church. . . . With the Holy Spirit as your guide you are then to be living members of this Church.' Through confirmation the candidates are to 'be strengthened with the fulness of his gifts, and by his anointing'.

All the Protestant rites tend to stress the human side of this rite, viz. what the candidates have done and are expected to do, rather than what God is doing in response to the prayers of the celebrant and the Church.

2. The Setting and Liturgical Structure of the Rite

Ideally the laying on of hands in the Baptist Church is part of the baptismal service and is followed by administration of the Lord's Supper.

Confirmation in the Lutheran Church is to be administered 'at a public service of the Congregation' or at Holy Communion.

The Methodist 'Public Reception into Full Membership' is meant to be a complete service in itself and must include the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

'Normally the Service of Confirmation', in the Presbyterian Church, 'should take place in the presence of the congregation at a Sunday diet of worship.' It can take place in a service of Holy Communion but this is not essential.

'The Kirk Session shall resolve to receive them publicly into the fellowship of the Lord's Table' is the only rubrical direction given on this matter in the Church of Scotland rite. The implication seems to be that it should take place at a public service, probably that of the Lord's Supper, but this is not explicit. [Normally at the diet of worship on the previous Sunday.—Ed.]

The Congregationalist rite states that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper follows the service of reception.

There is no doubt as to the ideal setting of the Roman rite, which is covered in some detail in the Introduction to the service: 'Confirmation should normally take place within the Mass. In this way will clearly be seen the essential connection between this Sacrament and the whole course of Christian initiation which culminates in the reception of the Body and Blood of Christ. For this reason, those

confirmed should receive Holy Communion in order to complete their Christian initiation.' When this ideal setting cannot be procured and confirmation has to take place outside the Mass 'it is to be preceded by a liturgy of the Word'.

The Moravian rite stands alone in giving no indication as to the anticipated setting of the rite.

The possible Eucharistic setting of seven of these rites compares more than favourably with the Anglican practice and recommendations.

Because of the wide range in the contents and the length of the rites a brief analysis of their structure is impossible.

3. The Minister of Confirmation

Apart from the Roman Catholic rite, all direct that the minister, presumably the local minister, is the minister of 'confirmation' or the one who receives candidates into the 'Full Membership of the Church'. The Roman rite looks upon the bishop as the normal minister of the rite, although exceptions to the rule are possible.

The Church of England (and the Anglican Communion) stands alone in its insistence that the only minister of Confirmation is the bishop and, at the present time, allows no exception to this rule, whatever the circumstances.

4. The Matter and Form of Confirmation

The laying on of hands is the form in the Baptist, Moravian, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian and Church of Scotland, although there is considerable variation in the accompanying words. An alternative is offered in the Presbyterian Church and the Church of Scotland in that 'the minister may raise his hand in blessing'. To the laying on of hands the Moravian, Methodist, Presbyterian and Church of Scotland, add the offering of the Right Hand of Fellowship. Members are received into the Congregational Church by the Right Hand of Fellowship, alone. On the 15th of August 1971 Pope Paul VI declared: 'For the future the following is to be held in the Latin Church:

'The sacrament of Confirmation is conferred by the anointing with chrism on the forehead, which is done by imposition of the hand, and by the words: *Accipe signaculum doni Spiritus Sancti.* (Receive the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit.)'

Because of the non-sacramental nature of Protestant Confirmation, or Reception into Membership, there is really little parallel between their laying on of hands and Anglican Episcopal laying on of hands, with prayer.

5. The Subject of Confirmation

He must be baptized

Baptism is the pre-requisite of all eight churches, and of the Church of England.

Instructed in the Christian Faith

Instruction in the Christian Faith, as a pre-requisite to Confirmation, is essential in the Church of England. Such instruction is not explicitly mentioned in the Baptist, Moravian and Congregationalist rites.

The remaining rites give specific details as to what instruction is required. Lutherans demand: 'Candidates for confirmation shall be instructed in the Christian Faith as it is set forth in the small Catechism.' Clear direction as to what preparation is required is given in the General Directions of the Methodist rite, children are to receive regular instruction in the Bible and the Faith, as 'Members in training'. Before being admitted into full membership, the classes in which they have been meeting shall take the form of, or be supplemented by, a Preparation Class. In the Preparation Classes, the Catechism should be used. The local Session of the Presbyterian Church must be assured that candidates for confirmation must 'have been sufficiently instructed in the Gospel and in the duties of the Christian life'. The Church of Scotland lays down: 'The Kirk Session shall be constituted prior to this Service and the Minister shall submit the names of those who have been instructed in the Faith and prepared for their first communion. Being satisfied of their knowledge and character the Kirk Session shall resolve to receive them publicly into the Fellowship of the Lord's Table.' Careful preparation is demanded by the Roman Catholic Church, which lays down in the introduction to the rite that: 'The duty of preparing the baptised to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, rests upon the whole people of God. Their pastors must take steps to ensure that all the baptised achieve full Christian initiation and therefore that they are prepared most carefully for Confirmation.' For adults it lays down: 'Above all else, adequate instruction must be provided for them.'

Such as are come to years of Discretion

Only the Roman Catholic Church gives any stipulation as to a minimum or desirable age for confirmation. 'In the Latin Church the confirmation of children is usually put off until about the age of seven. . . . But . . . Episcopal Conferences may decide upon some more suitable age and so confer this Sacrament upon those of more mature years, after adequate instruction.' The Church of England

Canon B.27.4 states: 'The minister shall present none to the bishop but such as are come to years of discretion . . .'; but in practice there is no fixed age for confirmation.

Sponsors

The Roman Catholic Church stands alone in mentioning godparents in the rite; indeed it has much to say on this issue. 'There should usually be a godparent to take each candidate to receive the Sacrament and present him to the Minister of Confirmation. Afterwards the godparent will encourage the confirmed with the help of the Holy Spirit, to live faithfully up to the promises made at baptism. Bearing in mind modern pastoral needs, it is fitting that where possible, the godparent at baptism be also the sponsor at Confirmation. In this way the link between Baptism and Confirmation is more clearly demonstrated, while the position and duty of the godparent may be more effectively fulfilled.' At the confirmation 'The Sponsor places the right hand on the confirmand's shoulder and tells the Bishop the name to be taken.'

Neither the revised Canons nor the new rite of Confirmation in the Church of England make any mention of sponsors at Confirmation.

6. Growth in the Christian Life

Confirmation in the Church of England is seen as an entrance into the Eucharistic Life of the Church and an act of full and conscious commitment to Christ and the Christian way of life. Following the laying on of hands the bishop in the new rite prays: 'Let thy Holy Spirit ever be with *them*; strengthen *them* evermore with the Body and Blood of thy Son; and so lead *them* in the knowledge and obedience of thy word, that in the end *they* may obtain everlasting life . . .'

The Eucharist is generally believed to be the sacrament essential for growth and sustenance in the Christian life. Six of the rites, viz. the Baptist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Church of Scotland, Congregationalist and Roman Catholic, specifically mention that those confirmed have entered into the Eucharistic Fellowship of the Church and are expected to receive Holy Communion regularly. No explicit mention of this is made in the Moravian or Methodist rites, although it may be said to be implicit in these rites.

Conscious commitment to Christ, a promise to live out the Christian life, to serve in Christ's name and to fulfil the duties of full membership, most of these ideas find some expression, albeit in various ways, in all the rites under analysis.

Our analysis has revealed that although there is a fundamental difference between the non-Anglican (Protestant) approach to Confirmation, and that of the Anglican Communion, in that Anglican

Confirmation (and Roman Catholic) is believed to be a Sacrament, nevertheless, there is considerable agreement in many aspects of the rite. A careful study, on an ecumenical level, of the aspects of the rite where there is already much in common, could ultimately lead to a common agreement as to the fundamental meaning of the rite, its place within the initiatory process, and its purpose in the scheme of salvation.

NOTES

1. The full texts of all these rites can be found in Peter J. Jagger, *Christian Initiation 1552-1969: Rites of Baptism and Confirmation Since the Reformation Period* (S.P.C.K., 1970), pp. 205-88.
2. A comparison of the Roman Catholic and Anglican Blessings of the Water with details of their content is to be found in P. J. Jagger, 'Baptism: the Ecumenical Sacrament', *Life and Worship*, Vol. XL, No. 1, January 1971.
3. A full investigation of the administration of baptism in the member churches of the British Council of Churches, and the whole question as to what constitutes valid baptism is to be found in P. J. Jagger, 'Christian Unity and Valid Baptism', *Theology*, Vol. LXXIV, No. 615, September 1971, pp. 404-13.

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