

A Sermon on St. Augustine

In the Church Calendar that you can find at the beginning of your copy of the *Book of Common Prayer*, you will note that today is the feast day of Augustine of Hippo. I believe strongly in expository preaching, and it is my usual practice to preach on the lectionary readings for the day. However, I am now officially a member of the faculty here at Trinity, and, as one of the first exercises of the freedom and authority granted me by my new position, I am going to depart from the liturgically correct position, and preach a topical sermon. I have decided to disregard the lectionary readings entirely and preach on St. Augustine instead. Please do not try this in your homiletics class.

Augustine, as I'm sure you all know, is perhaps the most important theologian in the Western Church. He is claimed as an authority by both Catholics and Protestants – although both sides would claim that the other side had misunderstood him. Augustine has certainly been important for Anglicans. You may have noticed that his portrait is on the Trinity iconostasis on the wall outside the library. There's a gap of about a thousand years between Augustine's picture and Wycliffe's, but I have always assumed that was because Trinity ran out of money or space before they could finish adding the portraits on the left side of the wall.

Augustine was very important in my own theological development. I grew up in a free church Evangelical denomination, where it was more or less assumed that the Holy Spirit disappeared between the death of the apostle John (who died shortly after writing the book of Revelation) and the Reformation. If you look at the Trinity wall, you know better. The Spirit came back for Augustine. I read Augustine's *Confessions* as an undergraduate, and my eyes were opened. He led me into the world of theology and church history. I can safely say that I am standing here now because I read

Augustine as an undergraduate.

What can seminarians at Trinity School for Ministry learn from Augustine? I'd like to mention quickly just a few quick points, and I'd like to focus on points that usually don't appear in the standard Protestant readings.

I would like to look at what Augustine says about the relationship between salvation and what we might call spirituality. This has often not been noticed in the West because, since Anselm, we have focused on questions of forgiveness of sins as the heart of salvation, and have somewhat forgotten the earlier church's emphasis on salvation as participation in the divine life. For Augustine, salvation is about dwelling in God. The goal of life is to know and love God.²

First, there is desire. Augustine says that all human action is motivated by desire. We are born to want things, and everything we do is motivated by some desire for something we want.

Second, there is happiness. Augustine says what we want most is happiness. Augustine goes so far as to say that happiness is the one thing we cannot help but want. I could ask you why you had bought a new pair of running shoes, and you might respond: Because I'm taking up jogging. If I asked you why you were taking up jogging, you might respond, Because I need to lose ten pounds. If I asked why you wanted to lose ten pounds, you might respond that your doctor said you needed to lose weight for your health. If I asked why you wanted to be healthy, we would finally reach the answer that Augustine says lies behind every question: Because it would make me happy. If I were to ask you why you wanted to be happy, Augustine would say the only answer you could give is because you just do.

Then, there is the good. Augustine says that what makes us

happy is the good, and we cannot help desiring what we think is good, or at least what we think is good for us. That might sound paradoxical, because after all, Augustine is famous for believing in original sin. And sin is certainly not good. But Augustine responds that even when we sin, we're desiring something that we think is good (at least for us), and that we think will make us happy. Bank robbers rob banks because it is good to have money to buy good things. Even violence and murder are about having power or vengeance for hurt or wounded pride, and we perceive these as good things. The problem of sin is that some of the things we think are good for us, are not really good for us, or they're good in the wrong way. So, yes, it is good to have money to buy things. It is not good to rob banks to get the money.

And, finally, there is God. God is the Good. Where other things are good because God created them, God simply is Good or Goodness himself. Because God is good, everything God creates is good. When we desire good things, we think we want the thing, but what we really want is the happiness that we can only get from the God, who alone is truly good, and who make all of the good things. They are, as it were, a kind of bait, to lead us to God. There is a famous section in Augustine's *Confessions* where he "questions the creatures" about what he is seeking. He questions the earth, the sea, the living creatures, and, finally, the whole world if they are what he is seeking. And creation responds: "No. We are not what you are seeking. But he made us."³

Another way of putting this is to say that Augustine's theology is about truth and love. The connecting link in all of Augustine's discussion about desire, and happiness, and goodness, and how they relate to God, is truth and love. Truth, is, as it were, the reality of all things. God, who creates all things, is the source of all truth, and so, God is Truth itself. The love by which we desire all things, and seek the good which makes us happy, eventually reaches back to God

himself, who, as Goodness itself is also Love itself. We see this in Augustine's doctrine of the Trinity, where the Word, who became flesh in Jesus, is God's Word of Truth, and, the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, is the Love with which the Father and the Son love each other for all eternity. Creatures are the expressions of God's Wisdom and Love, and in salvation, we return to our creator by learning to know and love him.

In one of Augustine's more famous prayers, he provides a nice summary:

Too late loved I You, Beauty so old and so new! Too late I loved you! And behold, you were within, and I abroad, and there I searched for you; Deformed I, plunged amid those fair forms which You had made. You were with me, but I was not with You. Things held me far from You, which, unless they were in You, were not at all. You called, and shouted, and burst my deafness. You flashed, shone, and scattered my blindness. You breathed fragrance, and I drew in breath and panted for You. I tasted, and hunger and thirst. You touched me, and I burned for Your peace.⁴

So that is Augustine's description of both our situation and our problem. On the one hand, God is absolute Love and absolute Goodness. God has made us for himself, and we cannot rest until we rest in him. God intends to draw us back to him by desire, and he has created a world of good things so that we might, through our desire for good things, be led to him, the source of all this goodness that draws our desire. The problem is, that we never get past the good things to learn to love the one who made them. We end up loving the things that God has made, and we forget about the God who made them. We hope that the good things can satisfy our desires, but they cannot. Only the God who has made us for himself can do that. So we keep seeking and we keep looking. We try to satisfy our desire for God with substitutes, and it just does not work.

And, even if we try to love God instead of things, we end up becoming proud of the good job we've done, and pride is a form of loving ourselves instead of God. So we're back where we began.

How do we solve our problem? Augustine understood that Jesus is the only solution for our problem. Augustine understood that if we are going to change, we have to change from the inside out, and we can not change ourselves. But Jesus can change us—from the inside out.⁵

The first thing that Jesus does is teach us. He teaches us a number of things. First, he reminds us that what we are seeking is not here. Second, Jesus shows us by his example how much God loves us, so that we do not despair that we can never escape the trap we've gotten ourselves into. Finally, Jesus shows us what kind of people we are. He shows us that we are weak, so that we do not become proud. Our strength is not enough, and we need his.⁶

The second thing that Jesus does is that he rescues us, and he rescues us not by power, but by righteousness. The devil loves power, and so do we. But the more we love power, the more we hate righteousness. Jesus delivered us from the power of the devil by the powerlessness of his death. By the shedding of his innocent blood, he paid for us debtors what he did not owe, and he put righteousness before power.⁷

Finally, in his resurrection, the Jesus who put righteousness before power by the powerlessness of his death, defeated the power of the devil by the power of a life that overcame death. So, Jesus conquered the devil, first by righteousness, and, second, by the kind of power that overcomes the powerlessness of death.⁸

Now, for Augustine's final step. How does all of this apply to us? How do Jesus' teaching, his crucifixion, and his

resurrection, rescue those of us who are trapped in a world of desire, who love the creatures rather than the Creator who made us for himself? How do we find rest for our restless hearts?

Augustine's answer is that God leads us back to himself through Christ. Because Christ is the second person of the Trinity, he is the Wisdom of God. Change comes from within as we come to know and love the Christ who is the wisdom of God. And, as we come to know Christ, we come to enjoy God.⁹ It is interesting to contrast Augustine's approach with Pelagius, his great adversary. Pelagius believed that we could change ourselves through changing ourselves.¹⁰ Through sheer effort, through power of the will, and self-discipline, we can change ourselves to be the kind of people we would like to be. Augustine realized that self-discipline would not enable us to become the kind of people we would like to be because ultimately our desires are backwards. Because we enjoy the things God has made rather than the God who made them, all the will-power in the world will not change us. What we need to do is to first is to enjoy God, and when we enjoy God, we can then love God's justice and goodness. As we come to know the God who has loved us in Christ, we come to know him as the one who loves us, and the one gives us all things in love. And that realization leads to enjoyment. Our restless hearts then rest in God.

For Augustine, however, this is not a simple overnight process. It is not a once-for-all moment of being knocked off your horse on the Damascus road—although Augustine himself had experienced such a radical conversion. Learning to enjoy God takes time. It takes place through a process of what we might call here at Trinity School for Ministry, “spiritual formation.” Augustine's writings assume that there are several steps that are part of this process – and I'm going to list some of them quickly.

Living in Christian community was one of them. Augustine started his own monastic community right after his conversion. Later he became a bishop, where he spent his days preaching to and living with his fellow Christians.

Getting to know the story of the Scriptures, and learning to see one's own story in the Scriptures was another. Many of Augustine's writings are sermons on the Scriptures, and his other writings are filled with Scriptural quotations. Augustine's emphasis on reading Scripture became the foundation of the monastic practice of *Lectio Divina*, or divine reading.

Prayer was a third—both private prayer and corporate prayer. Augustine's *Confessions* is one long prayer. The monastic tradition of the Daily Office grew out of Augustine's focus on corporate prayer.

And, of course, finally, there is worship, or the liturgy. Augustine speaks in the *Confessions* of how his life began to change when he began attending the liturgy to hear St. Ambrose preach.

If this sounds even vaguely familiar, it should. You are at Trinity School for Ministry, and a great deal of what will you will be doing and learning in the next few years will be an exercise in spiritual formation that, in much of its basic outlines, goes back to Augustine. When you go to chapel and pray Morning Prayer every morning, think of Augustine. When you study biblical theology in your Scripture courses, remember Augustine! When you pray with your fellow seminarians, or receive the eucharist, you are engaging in Augustinian spiritual formation. Augustine's picture may be way over on the left side of the wall outside the library, but he has a long shadow.

In your time here at Trinity, may you learn to enjoy God. May your restless hearts find rest as they rest in him. And when

you pass by that picture on the library wall, pray a short prayer of thanksgiving.

1 The kind of reading of Augustine I am talking about can be found in Ellen T. Charry, "Dwelling in the Dignity of God: Augustine of Hippo," *By The Renewing of Your Minds: The Pastoral Function of Christian Doctrine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 120-152; Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Augustinian Alternative," *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 146-163 and "The Augustinian Conception of Moral Enquiry," *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 82-104.

2 The following is my paraphrase of material found in *Augustine Confessions*, Bk. 10.

3 Again, this is a paraphrase of Augustine's discussion in *Confessions* 6.9.

4 *Confessions* 10.27.

5 See particularly the discussion in Charry, pp. 137 ff.

6 *De Trinitate* 4.1.2.

7 *De Trinitate* 13.13.17-14.18.

8 *De Trinitate* 13.14.18-15.19.

9 *De Trinitate* 7.3.4. Charry summarizes: "[T]he self is formed by creation, deformed by sin, and reformed by Christ." Charry, 131.

10 Charry nicely summarizes Pelagius: "Change comes from changing, not from thinking about changing." Charry, 136.

Using Caesar's Sword to Promote Christian Marriage

There has been a discussion at TitusOneNine about the movement among Christians and other groups in California – including Hindus and Muslims – to organization in opposition to same-sex marriage. At least one individual who claims to be an orthodox Christian is opposed to this because it means Christians are "manipulating Caesar to force Christian sacraments on the empire. . . . Conservative christianity cannot be salt and light by means of Caesar's sword."

This is my response.

In the history of Christian social thought, there have been at least the following models of the relation between church and state:

1) Separatist—the model of radical Anabaptism. The most vivid contemporary example might be the Amish, who, as much as possible, live separately from the rest of the culture, do not participate in politics, do not bear arms, live in their own communities.

2) Government as corrective of sin—Augustinian/Lutheran. In a fallen world, the primary responsibility of government is to punish evildoers and provide a safe space for the Church to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments. Luther's "two swords" analogy illustrates the distinction. There are some things the state does that the church does not do, and vice versa. The state enforces law and executes punishment on criminals; the church does not.

3) Promotion of the Common Good—Thomist/Aristotelian/Hooker's

Anglicanism. "It is not good for the man to be alone." God created human beings to be social animals. For humans to live together, there needs to be government to enable cooperation to promote human flourishing. The state not only punishes wrong-doers, but also takes positive steps to enhance human community and preserve the orders of creation. For example, anyone who uses the internet or drives an automobile on public streets is benefiting from a state that takes positive measures to promote the common good.

4) Transformationist-Calvinist. Inasmuch as possible, the state should work to transform society to promote Christian values, and anticipate the Kingdom of God. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I have a dream" speech is a prime example. As I was watching the speeches at the Democratic convention last night, and I heard Ted Kennedy preach "Health care is a right, not a privilege!," I was aware of just how much this Calvinist vision is alive in American culture.

5) Catholic subsidiarity/Reformed sphere sovereignty. (David Koyzis discusses this in his *Political Visions and Illusions* (InterVarsity, 2003)). There are numerous groups and cultures within a given society—churches, government, businesses, voluntary organizations, clubs, guilds, schools, etc. Each has its own realm of integrity and problems happen when groups trespass their bounds. The realms of the family or the schools, for example, are not the realms of either the state or the church; they have a genuine integrity of their own that both state and church need to respect.

6) Secularist separatism. Religion is a private matter of individuals and voluntary organizations. The realm of government is the realm of the public. The government should respect the right of religions to keep their own rules within their private environs, but the churches have no right to impose their private morality on the state or culture as a whole, and, if necessary, the state can pass laws that affect

public matters that private voluntary organizations like churches must respect. So, for example, a Christian wedding photographer can be fined for refusing to photograph same-sex blessings. Catholic adoption agencies cannot discriminate against unmarried or gay couples.

There are, of course, other models.

Of the above six models, only 1) and 6) would suggest that the church has no business pushing against same-sex marriage. In any society of which Christians are citizens, Christians have the same privilege and duty to act in the public square as do other citizens. My own leanings are toward models 3) and 5). I would argue that heterosexual marriage is neither a creation of the state nor of the church, but is an ordinance of creation that pre-existed both. From a theological view, Genesis 1 and 2 is decisive. From an anthropological and historical view, it is clear that the heterosexual family predates not only government, but also cities and cultures. It was the heterosexual family that enabled cities, cultures, and eventually governments to be formed.

If the purpose of the government is to promote the common good, then the government has a moral obligation to promote the prospering of the heterosexual family, and to discourage cultural movements that would harm it. At the same time, because the family is a separate sphere, the government has to respect its freedom in that sphere. The government, for example, has no right to create a new definition of family by blessing same-sex unions. That is a violation of the family's sphere of sovereignty. Because there needs to be some kind of coordination for human cooperation to take place, and there needs to both positive and negative enforcement of activities that benefit or harm the family, the government (by default) can establish laws to regulate such things as legal age of marriage, regulations of divorce, whether or not polygamy is permitted, compulsory childhood education, specific penalties

for such specific violations of marital good as incest, domestic abuse, sexual predation, etc.

Similarly, the church also has the right to decide within its own sphere what are the requirements of Christian marriage, but the church neither creates marriage, nor has the right to change it. The church can forbid divorce to its members, specify who can or cannot be married within a church, but cannot bless things that would violate the very definition of marriage, e.g., same-sex unions.

Insofar as Christians are citizens, they certainly have not only the right, but the obligation to promote legislation that helps the family to flourish, and to resist legislation that harms it.

To complain that such legislation is coercive is to miss the point that all legislation is coercive. If the government passes a law that says I must drive on the right side of the street, I am interfering with the freedom of those of British ancestry who might prefer to drive on the left side of the street, but I am also preventing the deaths that would inevitably result if everyone was allowed the freedom to simply drive on whatever side of the street they preferred. Those who cannot have their sexual relationships blessed by the church or the state certainly have restrictions on their freedom to do what they wish, but this is true not only of same-sex couples, but of all whose sexual activity falls outside the norms of what it properly means to be family—certain consanguinous relationships, underage relationships, polygamy, etc.

On the Development of Doctrine

On a blog post awhile back entitled “Some Basic Theological Principles (to be discussed later)” I had stated:

On the question of doctrinal development, the fundamental choice is between Newman’s and Barth’s understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity. The issue of continuity between (1) God’s revelation in the history of Israel, Christ, the apostolic Church; (2) the canonical Scriptures; and (3) the post-apostolic Church, must be decided theologically, in terms of the inherent intelligibility of the subject matter of revelation, not by alien philosophical criteria rooted in such historical conundrums as the relation between the one and the many, or problems of epistemological scepticism.

There have been a few inquires about what I meant by the “fundamental choice . . . between Newman’s and Barth’s understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity.” I haven’t answered that question yet. (My life has changed considerably since becoming a theology professor. Ironically, I have less time to do theology blogging.) However, I got an email today from someone (a Roman Catholic) who had read my post on “Why Not Leave?,” and asked me if I had changed my mind. This is my answer, and it relates to the question of development of doctrine:

Dear xxxxxx,

Thanks for writing. I do need to take some time and update my website with contact information.

No, nothing in the last couple of years or so has caused me to change my mind about my commitment to Anglicanism. I have been blessed to be able to fulfill my lifelong dream of teaching in

an Anglican seminary for the last year, where I find myself surrounded by wonderful colleagues and students. I just finished teaching a June term course this spring on the *Anglican Way of Theology*, which was a refresher course for me on the Reformed Catholic tradition that I appreciate in Anglicanism.

I love and admire the (Roman) Catholic Church. I did all of my graduate studies in Catholic settings, and I am grateful for the generous scholarship that was provided me at the University of Notre Dame. If I were going to become Catholic, I would have done it during my years studying in Catholic institutions.

It is not my intention to encourage anyone to leave the faith tradition he or she is in. I would especially not encourage someone to leave Rome or Orthodoxy now to become Anglican, given the battle we are in the midst of. At the same time, I am rather encouraged by the events of the last several years. I have been convinced for at least a decade that the Anglican Communion would split over the issue of homosexuality. Whether that would be a split between the whole of the Communion and the handful of Western churches that have embraced the liberal agenda, or whether that would be a split between North and South would depend largely on the direction taken by the Archbishop of Canterbury. This summer the two alternative conferences of GAFCON in Jerusalem, and Lambeth in England, made clear that the future will involve a North/South split. (Whether the Global South technically withdraws from the Communion is a matter of definition, since it is clear that they now consider Canterbury to be an irrelevance, if not an obstacle to orthodoxy.) The vast majority of the Global South will go with GAFCON and a new orthodox Anglican province will be formed in the US. I have cast my lot with GAFCON and the Global South.

My own reasons for not becoming Roman Catholic have not changed. It was precisely the problem of doctrinal development

that I found unsatisfactory. I believe that J. B. Mozley's *The Theory of Development* provides the decisive critique of [John Henry] Newman on development of doctrine. Mozley argues that Newman commits a logical fallacy of ambiguity by not distinguishing between two different kinds of development. Newman is correct that there is genuine development in the early church. For example, Nicea's doctrine of the *homoousios*, or the Trinity as formulated by the Cappadocians, or the Chalcedonian formula of the incarnation as one person and two natures is not found explicitly in the New Testament. At the same time, however, what is in the New Testament is all the data that make the *homoousios*, the Trinitarian formula of three persons and one substance, and the Chalcedonian formula necessary conclusions. So, for example, the New Testament is clear that Jesus Christ is not only human, but fully divine. He is the Word who was "with God" and "was God" and was "made flesh" (John 1:1,14). Passages that apply to YHWH in the Old Testament are quoted as referring to Jesus in the New Testament (Phil. 2:10-11; Heb. 1:8). Jesus is the One through whom the Father created the world (Col. 1:16). He is God's wisdom (Col. 2:3), and the "fullness of deity dwells bodily" in him (Col. 2:9).

To the question whether the New Testament teaches that Jesus is fully God, the answer must be "yes."

Similarly, to the question whether there is one God, and yet three who are identified as God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—the answer is also "yes."

So the "development" of incarnational and Trinitarian doctrine that takes place at Nicea, Chalcedon, etc., is really simply the necessary logical unfolding of what is already clearly present in the New Testament. If Jesus is fully God, then he must "of the same substance" as God. If the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are equally God, and yet there is only one God, then God must be three persons in one nature.

Karl Barth began the contemporary revival of Trinitarian theology in his *Church Dogmatics* 1/1 by articulating the principle that God must be in himself who he is in his revelation. If God has revealed himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the history of revelation, then God must be Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in himself. The economic Trinity necessarily implies the immanent Trinity.

In Bernard Lonergan's *The Way to Nicea*, he makes a similar point by distinguishing between common sense realism and critical realism. The genre of the New Testament writings is that of common sense realism. The New Testament uses the language of symbol and narrative to tell of how God relates to us in Jesus. The language of Nicea is the language of critical realism. Nicea speaks of who the Son of God must be in himself if he is going to be God for us.

Mozley speaks of this kind of development in terms of what I will call "Development 1." Development 1 adds nothing to the original content of faith, but rather brings out its necessary implications. Mozley says that Aquinas is doing precisely this kind of development in his discussion of the incarnation in the *Summa Theologiae*.

There is another kind of development, however, which I will call "Development 2." Development 2 is genuinely new development that is not simply the necessary articulation of what is said explicitly in the Scriptures.

Classic examples of Development 2 would include the differences between the doctrine of the *theotokos* and the dogmas of the immaculate conception or the assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the former, Marian dogma is not actually saying something about Mary, but rather something about Christ. If Jesus Christ is truly God, and Mary is his mother, then Mary is truly the Mother of God (*theotokos*). She gives birth, however, to Jesus' humanity, not his eternal person, which has always existed and is generated eternally by

the Father. The doctrine of the *theotokos* is a necessary implication of the incarnation of God in Christ, which is clearly taught in the New Testament. However, the dogmas of the immaculate conception and the assumption are not taught in Scripture, either implicitly or explicitly. They are entirely new developments.

The same would be true, of course, for the doctrine of the papacy. The New Testament says much about the role of Simon Peter as a leader of the apostles. It does not say anything explicit, however, about the bishop of Rome being the successor to Peter. The Eastern fathers, e.g., Cyprian, interpret the Petrine passages that Rome has applied to the papacy as applying to all bishops.

Other examples of Development 2 would include purgatory and indulgences.

Newman presents his argument for development as a dilemma. Anglicans (and Protestants in general) accept the dogmas of Nicea, of the Trinity, of Chalcedon, etc., but these are not taught explicitly in Scripture. They are developments. But Anglicans do not accept the doctrines of the papacy, the Marian dogmas, etc., which are also developments. Anglicans are accordingly inconsistent. To accept one development is logically to accept the others as well.

Mozley's response is that Newman conflates two quite distinct kinds of development. Development 1 adds nothing new to the content of faith. Development 2 does. Accepting Development 1 is a necessary consequence of taking seriously what the New Testament actually says. Development 2, however, adds something genuinely new to the content of faith. Nicea is an example of Development 1, not Development 2. The infallibility of the papacy is an example of Development 2, not Development 1. Accepting Development 1 does not logically entail accepting Development 2. By not distinguishing between the two kinds of development, Newman commits a logical fallacy, and his

argument collapses.

I do think Mozley's critique of Newman is correct.

I hope that helps. Again, I wish you the best in your current situation. It is not at all my intention to convince Roman Catholics to leave their church or become Anglicans. I've just told something of why I cannot become a Catholic myself.

Grace and Peace,

William Witt

Questions to Make Pastors Squirm

A friend of mine who is on the search committee for a new rector asked me for a list of questions that might help sort out a potential candidate's theology, what was their churchmanship, whether they were Calvinist, Arminian, Evangelical or Anglo-Catholic. I thought the following might be interesting questions to address to interviewees. I wish my parish had asked some of these of a couple of "stealth" candidates who surprised the congregation with their real theology only after they had been called.

1. Who is Jesus? What does it mean to say "Jesus saves"? How do you interpret John 14:6?
2. Why is it important to believe in the doctrine of the Trinity? Why is it important that Jesus rose from the dead? If the bones of Jesus were found in a grave in Palestine, would that make any difference to Christian faith?

3. What is the central message of the gospel?
4. What is justification? Sanctification? How are they related?
5. What does God contribute to salvation, and what do we contribute? How are they related?
6. How do you understand divine sovereignty and providence? Can anything happen outside God's will? Can human beings thwart God's will?
7. Why do Christians pray if God already knows everything that will happen and exercises divine providence over the world?
8. For whom did Jesus die? If Jesus died for everyone, why isn't everyone saved? Why do you think some people believe in Christ, and some don't?
9. If someone told you that they had done something so sinful that God could never forgive them, what would you tell them? If a parishioner continued to commit the same sin over and over, and told you that no matter how hard they tried, they just couldn't stop, what would you say? If someone said that Christians are "just a bunch of hypocrites," how would you respond?
10. How would you respond to someone who said they could not believe in God because of all the suffering and evil in the world? Why is there evil? What does God do about evil?
11. What are the sacraments, and why are they important? What kind of liturgical or sacramental practices do you think are important, or would you like to see in the church? Should the church baptize infants? Why or why not? What is your understanding of eucharistic theology? Should the sacrament be reserved? Why or why not?
12. What is your churchmanship? Would you describe yourself as Evangelical or Anglo-Catholic? Arminian or Calvinist? Low

church or high church? Do you find these distinctions helpful? Why or why not?

13. Anglicanism is sometimes described as the Via Media, and sometimes as Reformed Catholicism? Are you happy with these descriptions? Why or why not?

14. Why are you an Anglican? If there were no such thing as Anglicanism, which denomination or church tradition would you find most attractive?

15. Was the Reformation mostly a good thing or mostly a bad thing, or a little of both?

16. What is the relation between Scripture and tradition? Anglicans and Episcopalians have sometimes talked about Hooker's "three-legged" stool? Do you think this is an accurate or helpful illustration of the Anglican understanding of authority? Why or why not?

17. What you believe about the Creeds and Ecumenical Councils of the Church? Which are most important and why? How do Creeds and Councils relate to the the authority of Scripture?

18. Outside the modern era, which area of church history has most influenced your theology? Patristic? Medieval? Reformation? Which (non-modern) theologians do you admire? Which contemporary theologians?

19. Which theologians have most influenced your theology? Whom do you still read?

20. What role does the lectionary play in your preaching? Would you describe your preaching as expository or topical, or in some other way? How do you go about writing a sermon?

21. Do you believe in the ordination of women? Why or why not?

22. Aside from the Bible, the Prayer Book, hymnal, and

standard reference works like Bible commentaries or church histories, which five books would you want to have in your office library if you and your congregation were stranded on a desert island?