

Review of Arthur Middleton, *Restoring the Anglican Mind* (Herefordshire, England: Gracewing, 2008) posted on Amazon.ca/books.

The Rev. Canon Middleton has written elsewhere on the theology, doctrines and beliefs of the historic Church of England and its leading divines. In this book, he focusses on the church as an ecclesiastical institution and the current split between the traditionalist/conservative religious clergy and the newly-dominant liberal clergy who are imposing man-centred, 'modern liberal secularist values' upon the Church of England. What Canon Middleton seeks is a restoration, within the Church and society, of the Christian mind: Christian ethics, practices and spirituality. The book is a defence of Anglican orthodoxy.

Middleton places the Christian faith of Anglicans within the history of the Church, the writings of the Church Fathers and the 'classical theology' of the Anglican divines, and confirms the kinship of the Church of England with the 'One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church' -- in the sense of being patristic rather than papal. He reiterates that the Anglican faith is founded on the authority of Holy Scriptures, Church tradition, the Creeds, and the Book of Common Prayer, and a belief in the rationality, purpose, and unity of God's Creation. It is a faith in God's saving grace and the Atonement of Christ, and a faith that was delivered to man once, and for all time.

Middleton sets forth 'an Agenda' to strengthen the Church of England as a spiritual body. What he calls for is a revival of Tractarianism in focusing on the restoration of the doctrinal character of the Church, a renewed emphasis on the apostolic character of the clergy, a focus on the Atonement of Christ and the sanctity and spirituality of the Sacraments, and an adherence to the Anglican faith as conveyed in Holy Scriptures, the Creeds, and the Book of Common Prayer. Believers are encouraged to revive the practice of daily common prayer and to participate 'more frequently' in the Eucharist.

There is much to recommend in this book, but it is marred by an insistence that the Anglican Church ought not to accept "the innovation of women priests and woman bishops". However, that is a societal issue rather than a doctrinal issue. The ordination of women does not detract from or damage the spiritual essence of the Anglican faith. Doctrines are different from customs, no matter how time honoured.

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