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IS CONFIRMATION NECESSARY IN ANGLICAN
THEOLOGY?

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1. The current confusion illustrated

The Anglican chaplain of a university had arranged for the bishop to visit, to confirm a recently converted student. An older student, a regular communicant member of the chaplaincy for some time, inquired what this 'confirmation' might be. Surprised, the chaplain took time to explain the matter to him, and afterwards invited him to regularise his position by becoming a candidate. Which the man refused to do, arguing that to accept confirmation would deny the validity of his baptism, or his communicant status, or both. For what exactly did confirmation purport to add to these? This left the chaplain with a quandary: for does not the Prayer Book confirmation rite admit to communion only those who are 'confirmed, or ... ready and desirous to be confirmed'?

2. The question

By 'confirmation' is meant a post-baptismal rite generally associated with the gift or power of the Holy Spirit, through laying on of hands and/or consignation with the sign of the cross (with or without oil of chrism). It may take place immediately after baptism or at a distance of some years. In Anglican usage, this rite has traditionally been reserved to the bishop, though this is not the universal practice.

The Anglican Church retained in adapted form the two-fold model of initiation received from medieval Western practice. This two-fold form is widely perceived as being problematical today, liturgically, pastorally and theologically. It has been the subject of much debate and numerous official reports.¹ This paper can only touch on these discussions, with the aim of seeking to examine the doctrinal status of confirmation: is it necessary for all Christians (or at least all Anglican adults) to be confirmed?

¹ Among the reports may be noted particularly *Baptism and Confirmation: Report of the Commission on Doctrine appointed by the General Synod of the Church of England in Australia* (Sydney: 1972); Reardon, M., *Christian Initiation - a policy for the Church of England* (London: Church House Publishing 1991); 'Walk in Newness of Life: the findings of the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation, Toronto 1991', in Holeyton, D.R., *Growing in newness of Life: Christian initiation in Anglicanism today* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre 1993), pp.226-256; and most recently 'Christian initiation and holy communion - a statement from the Anglican Bishops in Australia' (*Church Scene*, Melbourne: May 26, 1995).

The sources for establishing an Anglican theological position will be taken to be firstly Scripture; secondly the witness of Anglican formularies, history and reflection, together with the practice and understanding of the Church as a whole (within which Anglican theology has always assigned special weight to the witness of the undivided church of the first five centuries); and thirdly reason, by which is meant not critical logic but discernment of the purposes of God in the created order.²

3. Anglican practice and tradition

One answer to the question 'Is confirmation necessary in Anglican theology?' can be given at once from the BCP Catechism:

How many sacraments hath Christ ordained in his Church? Two only, as generally necessary to salvation, that is to say Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

Article XXV distinguishes between these 'two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel' and 'those five commonly called Sacraments' (evidently including confirmation) which 'are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel'. It is a matter of dispute whether they are still, however, to be understood as 'sacraments', though of a lower order, and so also in their fashion 'certain sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace'. This, though a possible interpretation of the article, is not how it has commonly been understood. Thus, to Cosin in the 17th century, High Churchman though he was, confirmation, although a 'special means of grace', was not a sacrament but 'a sacred and solemn action of religion'.³

²See Hooker, R.: *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* I. viii *passim* (ed. Morris, C. (London: Dent 1965), Vol.I. pp.174-85; Sykes, S. and Booty, J., *The Study of Anglicanism* (London: SPCK 1988), pp.105-17.

³ Cosin, J., Proposed preamble to confirmation rite (1661). More, P.E. and Cross, F.L. (eds.), *Anglicanism* (London: SPCK 1935). But compare Cranmer's remark that 'the bishop in the name of the Church doth invoke the Holy Ghost ... so that the efficacy of the sacrament is of such value as is the prayer of the bishop made in the name of the Church.' Cited in Fisher, J.D.C., *Christian Initiation: the Reformation Period* (1970).

In practice, until the general revival of Church life and sacramental theology in the 19th century, and despite frequent complaints and admonitions, confirmation was as widely neglected by Anglican bishops as it had been in pre-Reformation times. In many parts of English society it was unsought, being reckoned a perquisite of the gentry; in the colonies, where before 1785 there were no bishops, it was unobtainable.⁴ This was the situation in Australia for nearly five decades, until the appointment of Bishop Broughton.⁵ Clearly, for most of Anglican history, neither confirmation nor a regular participation in the eucharist have in fact been thought necessary for all or even many. The higher value placed on confirmation in the 19th century owes as much to an increased interest in education (taking advantage of the BCP provisions for pre-confirmation catechetical instruction) as to a renewal of sacramental theology. Many would argue that this instrumental usefulness has passed with time, and the rite should now be dispensed with.

On the other hand it was a group of Anglican writers (the 'Mason-Dix line') who earlier this century maintained on scriptural, historical and theological grounds that baptism should be understood as a preliminary to the one necessary salvific act of confirmation in which the Holy Spirit is imparted.⁶ Their claims, though now generally abandoned, compel us to look beyond Anglican history for an answer.

4. The New Testament evidence

Though the significance and effects of Christian initiation are central to the New Testament, information about how it was actually practised among the earliest Christian communities has to be deduced from the documents with care. Do we find there evidence of the existence of anything corresponding to confirmation? If so, does it appear as a necessity?

⁴ Sykes, S. and Booty, J., *op.cit.*, p.266

⁵ Broughton's first confirmation took place at Parramatta in 1836 (Whittington, F.J., *William Grant Broughton* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson 1936), p.82). Prior to this, Broughton's practice, as Archdeacon, was to admit to holy communion 'any young persons, not under fourteen years of age, willing to take upon them the "vows and promises made for them in Baptism". . . receiving their promises according to the form directed by the "Order of Confirmation" omitting only the imposition of hands and the collect having reference to it', as authorised by the Bishop of Calcutta (Whittington, pp.40f).

⁶ Mason, A.J., *The Relation of Confirmation to Baptism* (London, 1893); Dix, G., *The Theology of Confirmation in relation to Baptism* (London: dacre, 1945). For a brief history of the rise and fall of this 'two-stage' theology of initiation, see Buchanan, C.: 'Confirmation' in Holeton, D.R., *Growing in newness of Life* . pp.104-26.

The New Testament rite of initiation into the saved community is baptism (Mk 16:15f; Jn 3:5; Acts 8:35-8; Rom 6:3-8; 1 Pet 3:21) in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38, 10:48) or possibly of the triune God (Matt 28:19). Through this symbolic washing or immersion, in the context of repentance and faith in Christ, the initiate is incorporated into Christ and empowered with the Holy Spirit. To this all major strands are witnesses. But there are other data to be taken into account.

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i) Some features appear to suggest the existence, alongside baptism, of an **additional rite** of initiation. The model for this is the event recounted in Acts 8:12-17, when a group of disciples who had 'only been baptized in the name of the Lord' by Philip, a member of the Seven (Acts 6:3-6), were subsequently given the gift of the Spirit through the laying on of hands by representatives of the Twelve. Similarly, in Acts 19:5-6 a baptism⁷ judged to be incomplete (~~the baptism of John~~) was supplemented by laying on of hands (by Paul) with imparting of the Holy Spirit. These events have been taken to signify the superiority of the second rite, and its connection with higher and specifically apostolic authority⁷. The existence of such a pattern may be supported by the fact that, when the Holy Spirit is mentioned in a baptismal context, it is usually named second, after the water (Mk 1: 9f; Jn 3:5; Acts 2: 38; 19:5f). However, there are exceptions to this rule (notably the 'Gentile Pentecost' of Acts 10:44-48, see also Acts 9:17-19), and it may be argued that the verbal connection of water and Holy Spirit indicates not so much a second rite as an accompanying action. In Heb 6: 2 the reference to 'instruction about baptisms and the laying on of hands' may imply two events, but suggests more strongly a single composite initiatory rite⁸.

⁷ St Cyprian remarked that 'Peter and John supplied what was lacking. . . . The same practice is observed among us now; those baptized in the church are brought to the officers of the church and by our prayer and imposition of the hand they obtain the Holy Spirit and are perfected by the seal of the Lord.' (Epistle lxxiii.9), Bettenson, H. *The Early Christian Fathers* (Oxford: OUP, 1956), p.269.

⁸ In view of the use of the connective *te* instead of the more normal *kai.*, it might be better translated 'baptism-with-laying-on-of-hands'. See Dunn, J.D.G., *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (London: SCM, 1970), p.207. See also Beasley-Murray, G.R., *Baptism in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), pp.242f.

ii) The imposition or **laying on of hands** has a variety of meanings in both the Old and New Testaments. Among these are: healing, blessing and consecrating or setting apart for specific functions (including ordination). Two motifs seem to be operating in these actions: a) the transmission or calling down of divine power (Gen 48:13-16; Mk 6:5; Acts 8: 19), and b) the identification of an individual person (or, in a sacrificial context, an animal) as a representative of the religious community (Lev 3:8, 16:21; Nb 8:10, 12; 27: 23; Acts 6:6, 13:3 1 Tim 4:14). Both blessing-with-power and the commissioning of representatives involve a change of status (and therefore, in some cases, of authority), but both presuppose membership of the community: on their own, they are not initiation rites in the sense in which the term applies to baptism. If used in connection with baptism, as argued above, this action should be understood as affirming the Spirit-empowering significance of baptism, not as adding a new element⁹

iii) It may be that baptism was accompanied by an actual **anointing with oil**, understood as symbolising the imparting of pneumatic power. This can be deduced from a passage which connects 'belonging to Christ (*eis Christon*)', being 'anointed (*chrisas*)' and being 'sealed with the Spirit' (2 Cor 1:21-2; see also Eph 1:13, 4:30; 1 Jn 2:20, 27). Anointing (also connected with healing, as in Jas 5:14) was a normal accompaniment of celebratory washing (Ruth 3:3) and more specifically of the consecration of priests (Ex 29:1-9). Either healing or consecration would be an appropriate connotation for entry into the 'priestly people' of the Anointed One (1 Sam 10:1). However, these verses most probably refer directly, not to a rite, but to the Spirit understood as a pledge or anticipation of salvation to come. They draw on the image of God's people as 'sealed on the forehead' (Rev 7:3, 9:4), marked as Christ's own (Gen 4:15; Rev 22:4), perhaps with a cross (see Ezek 9:4-6; Rev 22:4), and protected through the trials of the end-time.¹⁰ This eschatological motif too may have found liturgical expression at this early date, at least in some places, in the act of consignation (with or without anointing as such). Yet what is necessary in all this is not the performance of any rite but the inclusion of the believer under the Lordship of Christ.

It appears that, apart from the doubtful case of Heb 6:2, the Acts of the Apostles alone implies the possibility of a separate rite, for the imparting of the Holy Spirit: yet it is clear that the events it describes are special cases (Acts 8:12-17; cf. 19:1-7) from which no generalisation is possible. So we are left with no adequate evidence in the New Testament of the existence, from the beginning, of a separate 'confirmation' rite, nor of any special Spirit-empowering liturgy. Baptism, in a context of repentance and the confession of faith, is the key action.

⁹ See Beasley-Murray, *op. cit.* pp.123-5; Jones, C, Wainwright, G., Yarnold, E. and Bradshaw, P. (eds.), *The Study of Liturgy* (rev. ed., London: SPCK 1992), p.118

¹⁰ See Lampe, G.W.H., *The Seal of the Spirit* (London: Longmans 1951), chapter 1.

What the New Testament does show us clearly, however, is that the **meaning** of baptism was such as to demand expression in a variety of symbolic metaphors - purification (Heb 10:22, 1 Pet 1:18f), consecration and anointing (1 Pet 2:9f, 1 Jn 2:20), enlightenment (Eph 5:14, 1 Jn 2:20, 27), union with Christ (Rom 6:3-11, Gal 3:27), empowerment by the Spirit (1 Cor 12:13, 2 Cor 1:22), renewal of life (Eph 5:25-7, Tit 3:5f, Jn 3:5). This richness of significance also invited description in terms of traditional gestures, including reclotting (Gal 3:27, Col 3:9), signing, anointing and laying on hands (see above), and some of these actions, in some places, may have been part of baptism from the beginning. In time all of these came, like the washing, to be enacted in the liturgy, together with further symbolic actions, such as the gift of milk and honey, and systematic scrutinies, exorcisms and preparatory fastings and anointings.¹¹ All these elements together signify the fulness of life into which baptism is the entry. Yet, however complex it may have become, it is still **one rite**, effecting and signifying the salvation of those who are joined to Christ and inspired by God's Spirit.

5. Confirmation in Christendom

The baptismal liturgy of the Church in the 3rd - 5th centuries contained all these features hinted at in the New Testament records and more, given unity within the great paschal eucharist, so that baptism in water with consignation, chrismation and laying on of hands¹² (followed by first communion) became the normal mode of entry into the community of the new covenant. Theologians of the period, reflecting on these symbols, show varied understandings of where and how the action of the Holy Spirit was to be discerned, but within this total sacramental complex, questions of what is **necessary** were slow to arise, except in relation to emergency baptism of infants or the dying.

¹¹ See Jones et al., op. cit. pp.122f.

¹² It may be helpful to distinguish between the 'laying on of a **hand**' in the action of signing and anointing an individual, and the 'laying on of **hands**' in prayer to the Holy Spirit over one or more candidates. There are signs of a related distinction in the OT (compare Lev 1:4 with Nb 8:10). Although the distinction between the two gestures, with their associated meanings, is not entirely clear in the early period, in later rites it became part of the 'unvarying terminology of the Western church' (Whitaker, E.C., *The Baptismal Liturgy* (2 ed., London: SPCK, 1981), p.81) and is evidenced in BCP and APBA (see p. 11, n. 2, below).

The post-Nicene growth of the Church and the rising demand for infant baptism, however, made it impossible to restrict the administration of initiation to this unified rite taking place on one or two great annual festivals in the presence of the bishop. The traditional pattern was hardly compatible, in particular, with the influential Augustinian teaching that infants, while unbaptized, were in peril of eternal damnation¹³. In the East, the solution was to retain the single rite (baptism, chrismation and communion), though now normally administered by a priest, rather than by the bishop. In the West, presbyteral baptism became the norm, to be 'completed' by the bishop (by consignation/chrismation) in due course¹⁴. As this separation, often by years, came to be normal, the familiar two-stage pattern emerged, while the two rites found themselves in competition for a single theological rationale.

6. Theologies of confirmation

Four approaches to a theological understanding have been common (each of which has been loosely, though not wholly accurately, associated with one period of Christian history):

- i) Baptism is a preliminary rite but confirmation completes it through the sealing of the Spirit (the 'patristic' view);
- ii) Baptism confers salvation but confirmation effects a strengthening for adult temptations (the 'medieval' view);
- iii) Baptism confers salvation but confirmation is a ~~necessary~~ ^{an} act of ~~of~~ ^{expressing} a necessary ~~act~~ ^{act} of commitment to the faith, especially for those baptised as infants (the 'reformation' view);
- iv) Baptism confers salvation but confirmation is a 'lay-ordination' or commissioning for adult discipleship (a distinctively 'twentieth-century' view).

In the patristic period the combination of water-baptism with Spirit-rites ensured that, while there was much reflection on the nature and location of the Spirit's action, there was no distinct theology of 'confirmation'. It is misleading to speak of patristic views of confirmation before 350, as the thing itself (in separation from baptism) did not exist. But once the liturgical split had occurred the development towards the 'medieval' attitude was rapid, and both the word *confirmatio* and the theology of 'strengthening' appear in the West early in the fifth century.¹⁵ It was against the magical possibilities inherent in this idea of a gift of power (cf. Acts 8:17ff) that the protestant reformers asserted the understanding embodied in view (iii), with its emphasis on the believer's conscious and voluntary confession of faith.

¹³ Fisher, J.D.C., *Christian Initiation: Baptism in the Medieval West* (London: SPCK, 1965), pp.109-113.

¹⁴ Fisher, *ibid.*, pp.120-123, shows that as late as the fourteenth century infant confirmation was still regarded theologically as the norm, to be encouraged where possible; the current practice of setting a *minimum* age for confirmation, though first attested in 1280, did not become common until the sixteenth century.

¹⁵ Kelly, J.N.D., *Early Christian Doctrines* : (5th ed., London: Black 1977), pp.435f.

Through the medium of the Prayer Book and the Articles, the second and third views together became entrenched in Anglican practice and thinking. The 1552 Prayer Book incorporated into the baptism rite elements formerly associated with confirmation (e.g. the act of consignation, now performed 'in token that hereafter [the child] shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified'), and it seems that the intention was to create in this a single complete act of initiation. However, the Prayer Book also contains, under the name 'The Order of Confirmation', what is effectively a reaffirmation of baptismal vows ('ratifying and confirming the same in your own persons'), according to the pattern of the Continental reformers. **This is not strictly an initiation but a rite of maturity, for those who have 'come to years of discretion' and learned the creed, Lord's Prayer and catechism.** The bishop's prayers invoke the strengthening and increase and gifts (but not the gift) of the Holy Spirit, and the rite is clearly secondary and supplementary.

Now when placed alongside baptism such a secondary liturgical action can hardly be 'necessary', even if Holy Communion, to which it gives access, is itself said to be 'generally necessary to salvation'. It may nonetheless be a good, and an important one. This coheres with the consensus of classical Anglican authorities, as for example Jeremy Taylor, who believed it was conferred, 'not for a miraculous gift but for an ordinary grace'.¹⁶ It may be argued that people have sought to lend to this action extraordinary justifications for want of discernment to find grace in the regular or commonplace.

7. A Sign of development - completion or growth?

But should we therefore give up the attempt to find a coherent theology of confirmation? Liturgiologists often argue that it should be abandoned because it was an accidental and, by implication, illegitimate development out of the ancient rite, with no foundation in either scripture or the ancient church. But this is not so. Although confirmation has taken many forms, what is common to them all is **the motif of development**. This motif is found already in the New Testament: baptism is a beginning of the Christian life, and although complete in itself needs to be lived out (Rom 6:3-5). This does not mean that it is inadequate, but that it is a sign of beginning. It is that living out, the fulness of life into which the catechumen is inaugurated, that is symbolised by the laying on of hands, signing with the cross, anointing and the rest.

The Orthodox rite of the East is often held up as the liturgical ideal of comprehensiveness. However, this rite presents together all the elements of initiation only when it is adults that are being admitted to all the Church's mysteries at once, not, as is in fact usual, when administered to infants. It may be asserted that no rite of infant baptism can be wholly self-sufficient, detached as it must be from the personal confession of faith; and the Orthodox rite is no different in this respect.

¹⁶ Taylor, J., *Works*, (ed. Eden, C.P., London 1849), Vol.V, pp.27-8. Cited in Evans, G.R. and Wright, J.R., *The Anglican Tradition* (London: SPCK 1991), p.214.

The practice of infant baptism can be justified (and will not be discussed here), but its popularity figures largely among the historical forces which split the Church's unified initiatory rite and caused it to generate the practices grouped under the heading of 'confirmation', each in its own way seeking to provide that which was perceived to be lacking. The contents (and therefore the liturgical forms) of these rites are culturally shaped - whether confirmation is held to symbolise completion of baptism, or attainment of mature age, or reception of spiritual gifts, or an understanding of the faith - but the family-resemblance between them argues for a general need finding (no doubt imperfectly) varied means of expression.

During much of Christian history this perceived need for development has been expressed by saying that confirmation, or its symbolic constituents, in some sense 'completes' or 'perfects' baptism. For obvious reasons this understanding has been most frequently voiced in the Western tradition, as a protest against the tendency for the second element to be dropped altogether. But, whether East or West, and whether confirmation is seen as baptism's complement or as the climax of initiation, there are dangers in this way of presenting the matter. It assumes that God's Holy Spirit works primarily, or even wholly, through the sacraments of the Church; it also implies that a process of transformation, begun in baptism, has now been finished. Of course, this view can be stated in a way which avoids both dangers. Yet the concept of **growth** is to be preferred, containing the idea that a process in which the Holy Spirit is involved is an open, guided but unpredictable path to enrichment.

8. Pastoral purposes

Any act of initiation should express that there is more to come, and although that 'more' is not primarily sacramental, it is appropriate that further rites should symbolise what God is effecting in that fulness, including the taking on of personal responsibility by the believer. It remains to be shown, however, whether that symbolic purpose requires - or is even well served by - a single event.

The New Testament evidence obliges us to conclude that baptism in the name of the Trinity after confession of faith is sufficient in itself as the dominical, biblical, foundational rite of initiation into the Body of Christ. To many in the Church there does not appear, therefore, to be any reason in theology why children (or, even more particularly, adults) should not be admitted to communion on the basis of baptism alone (subject to pastoral considerations). The widespread adoption of this practice, in recent decades, has seriously weakened the main peg on which, in Anglican pastoral practice, confirmation has been hung. Why, then retain it?

In this century, discussion about the role of confirmation has produced six broad approaches, based on pastoral, theological and liturgical principles:

- i) Variants on the existing Anglican pattern, that is, predominantly infant baptism, with confirmation at age 7 or 14 or 18-plus;
- ii) Reintroduction of the early church's unified rite of baptism (incorporating the elements of confirmation);
- iii) Abolition of confirmation in all forms, emphasising unmistakably that water-baptism alone is the Christian rite of initiation for infants and adults alike;
- iv) A combination of (i) and (iii) above, with baptism plus later confirmation for infants, and baptism alone for adults;
- v) Baptism plus a form of confirmation, sometimes redescribed as 'lay-ordination' or admission to table;
- vi) Baptism (with or without chrismation) plus repeatable reaffirmations or rites of passage, using vows and/or laying on of hands.

If the traditional link, in Anglican pastoral practice, between confirmation and communion, has been severely weakened in recent decades by the growing tendency to admit children to communion on the basis of baptism alone, so has the link between confirmation and instruction. The idea of a single standard package of Christian knowledge, institutionalised in the catechism, has given way to the provision of understandings and skills relevant for different ages (as child, teenager or adult) and different needs (for intelligent participation in the Eucharist, or for performing specific kinds of service).

The so-called 'traditional' pattern of confirmation at twelve or fourteen years must be abandoned. Though the tradition can hardly be substantiated before the 19th century, its 'naturalness' owes something to the influence of parallel puberty rites like *bar-mitzvah*. If the Church is the guardian of the great symbols of life and death it should not lightly dismiss the observable hunger for such a rite of passage. And yet it has to be recognized that the power of these parallels lies in enacting a customary initiation into adulthood with its responsibilities, which makes no allowance for the emergence, in our culture, of the intermediary and highly developed stage of adolescence, a stage characterised by a blend of quasi-adult self-consciousness and irresponsibility. It is rightly argued that for most children this is now the worst age to seek a stable acceptance and affirmation of vows.

Commitment to

An alternative strategy is to reintroduce the unified rite of the early church: baptism and consignation with chrismation and/or hand-laying, followed by communion. This would link us unmistakably to the practice of the early church and the unbroken tradition of the Orthodox East, and recombine the symbolic elements held together in the New Testament understanding of baptism. Such a rite is properly considered the normative model of Christian initiation, to be applied in the case of adults. However, it was argued above (Section 7) that the norm is only fully realized in the initiation of adults able to make profession of their faith for themselves. The practice of the unified rite in the case of children, though an ancient practice, is no less unsatisfactory than the Western split rite. In both, the theological ideal is compromised by pastoral necessities.

Bearing all these in mind, three factors combine to support the retention of a separate rite of confirmation in some form: the elements of **commitment**, of **growth in the power of the Spirit**, and of **universality**.

i) It is a rite of **commitment** so important for those baptised as infants - active and voluntary where baptism is (for the candidate in that case) passive and involuntary. As such its central features are penitence and conversion, the personal affirmation of the Church's creed and baptismal vows. Although the contrast with infant baptism might tend to make confirmation appear unnecessary and even undesirable in relation to the baptism of adult believers, yet through the symbol of the laying on of hands the candidate's act of commitment is characterised specifically as the taking of personal responsibility for participation in the mission of the Church. In such cases the ancient practice of immediately 'confirming' adult baptizands expresses most clearly the full meaning of the biblical pattern. However, this should not be treated as a separate action or (despite some important parallels) misleadingly termed 'lay-ordination'.

ii) It is a predominantly **Spirit-centred** rite, where the emphasis of baptism is predominantly Christological (the River Jordan, the sign of the cross, 'dying with Christ'). Both rites take place within a thoroughly trinitarian context, and this is not to be construed as a doctrinal argument about the efficacy of either: of course the Church teaches that the Spirit is active, and the Spirit's power imparted, in baptism. Nor is it ignoring the possibility of strengthening the pneumatological symbols in baptismal liturgies. But it points out that there is a difference, and a complementarity, between initiation and development, and between identification and empowerment, which these rites, taken as a pair, articulate. While a theology of 'completion' necessarily sets one action against the other; the theology of '**growth**' sketched in the previous section seeks to find in confirmation an effective symbol of the Spirit's work within the covenantal relationship inaugurated at the font.

iii) It is a rite of the **Church universal**, particularly in communions which have retained the role of the bishop, joining the local congregation and the family group (so important in the pastoral context of baptism) to the whole Church, both as a regional and national institution and (far more significant) as the vehicle of the world-wide and age-long mission of God¹⁷. In this the Anglican tradition has been sound. The rite should be affirmed as a central task performed for his or her flock by the bishop (and preferably that should not denote just anyone in episcopal orders), except where extreme conditions determine otherwise.

9. A necessary rite?

Theology is the attempt to understand the great stories and symbols of faith, and as such it deals in that which transcends understanding. The perceived need for confirmation, or something like it, testifies to its importance as part of the Christian symbol-system, even if no single satisfactory conceptualisation can be given to it. Confirmation points to movement in the Christian life. It is part of the Anglican pattern of growth in discipleship, which works with a logic of its own, not reducible to that of any other communion. Michael Ramsay, writing in 1945, argued that the practice of confirmation before communion had been: 'a disciplinary measure of great importance for the edification of the Church and the health of the souls of its members'.¹⁸ The question now is whether confirmation can retain any value when, in response to new situations, pastoral discipline and inventiveness have spawned so many alternative vehicles of edification.

This paper argues that confirmation, while subordinate to baptismal initiation, can retain a place in the changing circumstances of Anglican ecclesial life. It does so as a fully adult rite signifying the personal affirmation of a mature (which does not mean perfect) faith, and the recognition of this by the bishop as representative of the Church both local and universal, through the laying on of hands - the objective correlative provided by the tradition for that personal encounter with God known in some circles as 'conversion', in others as 'baptism in the Holy Spirit'.

For clarification it should be noted:

1. The retention of confirmation is not in competition with the significance of baptism as the complete act of initiation into the Christian covenant. This completeness is required by the biblical witness, as well as by ecumenical considerations¹⁹. It is presupposed whenever baptised children are admitted to communion.

¹⁷ Cf Stancliffe, D., 'Confirmation and its Future', in Perham, M. (ed.), *Liturgy for a New Century* (London: SPCK/ Alcuin Club, 1991) pp.76-80.

¹⁸ Ramsay, A.M., 'The doctrine of Confirmation', *Theology* 48 (1945), pp.194-201.

¹⁹ This is presumably the purpose expressed in many modern baptismal rites (including APBA) by providing for the (optional) use of chrism in the act of signing with the cross in baptism (APBA p.70, n.6) but not in confirmation.

2. Nor is confirmation in competition with the practice of admitting children to communion. Dioceses have freedom to decide, on pastoral grounds, whether communion should come before confirmation, or after it. Each has its own validity and pastoral value, so long as steps are taken to maintain the distinction between the two, for example by deferring confirmation for communicant children to a later age than has been customary.

3. Nor is confirmation in competition with the provision, in many revised liturgies, of forms for the laying on of hands at other times, perhaps of specific personal commitment or need. However, these voluntary and repeatable acts, though quasi-confirmational, are to be distinguished from the traditional provision of an unrepeatable event in which we recognize what more our baptism (though it lacks nothing) requires us to enter into. They complement, but cannot replace it.²⁰

As argued above, the confirmation of an adult baptizand should not be understood as undermining the significance of baptism itself, but as affirming its full meaning, in accordance with the three factors outlined in section 8. The candidate has made baptismal promises for himself or herself, but laying on of hands signifies the commissioning of this person, now already initiated, for active responsibility in the community (see section 4 (ii) above); the symbolism of growth in the Holy Spirit points forward beyond the ceremony to 'living in newness of life'; the presence of the bishop indicates that Christian life is lived in consciousness of more than the local congregation. The unity of all these elements is itself highly important, demanding expression in one event, such that only an emergency situation would justify the fragmenting of an adult's catechumenal process into two stages, 'baptism plus confirmation'.

To the adult who has already entered into the communicant life of the Church (whether by a formal admission to communion, or irregularly, as in the example given at the start of this paper), it is desirable that confirmation should not be presented as a legal requirement for continuing in communion, nor as a further stage in initiation, but as an opportunity for public confession and integration into the active mission of the Church. While the rite itself cannot be a precondition for adult Christian living, the understandings that it incapsulates are not optional extras, and should not be permitted to fall away.

²⁰ This distinction is observed in APBA by the form of the prescribed gestures. For confirmation, the bishop 'lays a hand upon each' (p.61, as in BCP; and compare the preface, p.52: 'to receive the laying on of the bishop's hand with prayer'), while on those who are being received into communicant membership 'the bishop lays hands' (p.97; and so likewise for reaffirmation, p. 62). However, APBA follows BCP in elsewhere referring to confirmation more loosely as 'the laying on of hands' ('after all...have received the laying on of hands', p.61; compare the longer title of the BCP rite: 'The Order of Confirmation/ or Laying on of Hands upon those that are Baptized and come to Years of Discretion'). The form of the preface and prayers is a more obvious mark that a distinction is intended.

There can be no question that in Anglican theology it is baptism which is the 'effectual sign' of our union with Christ; yet the Christian life has to develop. To be confirmed is not a further requirement but a privilege, the grace of receiving an affirmation of the Spirit's power in union with the whole Church as expressed in the episcopal office. It has been wisely called 'a distinctly celebratory rite'.²¹ Just as public baptisms serve to remind the people of God what they have been saved from and for, the fact of confirmation continually reminds us of the fulness into which we are called to be moving, and the unrestrained generosity of the outpouring of God's Spirit. Confirmation, therefore, although not necessary for every individual Christian, is the 'solemn, ancient and laudable custom'²² through which our tradition witnesses to that indispensable dimension of life in the New Covenant.

21 'Christian initiation and holy communion'. See p.1, n.1.

22 Canon LX of 1604, cited in Evans and Wright, *op. cit.* p.200.

IS CONFIRMATION NECESSARY IN ANGLICAN THEOLOGY?

JOHN DUNNILL

1. The current confusion illustrated

The Anglican chaplain of a university had arranged for the bishop to visit, to confirm a recently converted student. An older student, a regular communicant member of the chaplaincy for some time, inquired what this 'confirmation' might be. Surprised, the chaplain took time to explain the matter to him, and afterwards invited him to regularise his position by becoming a candidate. Which the man refused to do, arguing that to accept confirmation would deny the validity of his baptism, or his communicant status, or both. For what exactly did confirmation purport to add to these? This left the chaplain with a quandary: for does not the Prayer Book confirmation rite admit to communion only those who are 'confirmed, or ... ready and desirous to be confirmed'?

2. The question

By 'confirmation' is meant a post-baptismal rite generally associated with the gift or power of the Holy Spirit, through laying on of hands and/or consignation with the sign of the cross (with or without oil of chrism). In Anglican usage, this rite has always been reserved to the bishop, though this is not the universal practice. It may take place immediately after baptism or at a distance of some years.

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The Anglican Church retained in adapted form the two-fold model of initiation received from medieval Western practice. This two-fold form is widely perceived as being problematical today, liturgically, pastorally and theologically. It has been the subject of much debate and numerous official reports.¹ This paper can only touch on these discussions, with the aim of seeking to examine the doctrinal status of confirmation: is it necessary for all Christians (or at least all Anglican adults) to be confirmed?

The sources for establishing an Anglican theological position will be taken to be firstly Scripture; secondly the witness of Anglican formularies, history and reflection, together with the practice and understanding of the Church as a whole (within which Anglican theology has always assigned special weight

¹ Among the reports may be noted particularly *Baptism and Confirmation: Report of the Commission on Doctrine appointed by the General Synod of the Church of England in Australia* (Sydney: 1972); Reardon, M.: *Christian Initiation - a policy for the Church of England*, (London: Church House Publishing 1991); 'Walk in Newness of Life: the findings of the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation, Toronto 1991', in Holeyton, D.R.: *Growing in newness of Life: Christian initiation in Anglicanism today* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre 1993), pp.226-256; and most recently 'Christian initiation and holy communion - a statement from the Anglican Bishops in Australia'. (*Church Scene*, Melbourne: May 26, 1995).

to the witness of the undivided church of the first five centuries); and thirdly reason, by which is meant not critical logic but discernment of the purposes of God in the created order.

3. Anglican practice and tradition

One answer to the question 'Is confirmation necessary in Anglican theology?' can be given at once from the BCP Catechism:

How many sacraments hath Christ ordained in his Church? Two only, as generally necessary to salvation, that is to say Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

Article XXV distinguishes between these 'two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel' and 'those five commonly called Sacraments' (evidently including confirmation) which 'are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel'. It is a matter of dispute whether they are still, however, to be understood as 'sacraments', though of a lower order, and so also in their fashion 'certain sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace'. This, though a ~~fair~~ interpretation of the article, is not how it has commonly been understood. Thus, to Cosin in the 17th century, High Churchman though he was, confirmation, although a 'special means of grace', was not a sacrament but 'a sacred and solemn action of religion'.¹

In practice, until the general revival of Church life and sacramental theology in the 19th century, and despite frequent complaints and admonitions, confirmation was as widely neglected by Anglican bishops as it had been in pre-Reformation times. In many parts of English society it was unsought, being reckoned a perquisite of the gentry; in the colonies, where before 1785 there were no bishops, it was unobtainable.² This was the situation in Australia for nearly five decades, until the appointment of Bishop Broughton.³ Clearly, for most of Anglican history, neither confirmation nor a regular participation in the eucharist have in fact been thought necessary for all or even many. The higher value placed on confirmation in the 19th century owes as much to an increased interest in education (taking advantage of the BCP provisions for pre-confirmation catechetical instruction) as to a renewal of sacramental theology. Many would argue that this instrumental usefulness has passed with time, and the rite should now be dispensed with.

On the other hand it was a group of Anglican writers (the 'Mason-Dix line') who earlier this century maintained on scriptural, historical and theological

¹ Cosin, J., Proposed preamble to confirmation rite (1661). More, P.E. and Cross, F.L. (eds.): *Anglicanism* (London: SPCK 1935).

² Sykes, S. and Booty, J.: *The Study of Anglicanism* (London: SPCK 1988), p.266

³ Broughton's first confirmation took place at Parramatta in 1836 (Whittington, F.J. *William Grant Broughton* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson 1936), p.82). Prior to this, Broughton's practice, as Archdeacon, was to admit to holy communion 'any young persons, not under fourteen years of age, willing to take upon them the "vows and promises made for them in Baptism". . . receiving their promises according to the form directed by the "Order of Confirmation" omitting only the imposition of hands and the collect having reference to it', as authorised by the Bishop of Calcutta (Whittington, pp.40f).

grounds that baptism should be understood as a preliminary to the one necessary salvific act of confirmation in which the Holy Spirit is imparted.¹ Their claims, though now generally abandoned, compel us to look beyond Anglican history for an answer.

4. The New Testament evidence

Though the significance and effects of Christian initiation are central to the New Testament, information about how it was actually practised among the earliest Christian communities has to be deduced from the documents with care. Do we find there evidence of the existence of anything corresponding to confirmation? If so, does it appear as a necessity?

The New Testament rite of initiation into the saved community is baptism (Mk 16:15f; Jn 3:5; Acts 8:35-8; Rom 6:3-8; 1 Pet 3:21) in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38, 10:48) or possibly of the triune God (Matt 28:19). Through this symbolic washing or immersion, in the context of repentance and faith in Christ, the initiate is incorporated into Christ and empowered with the Holy Spirit. To this all major strands are witnesses. But there are other data to be taken into account.

i) Some features suggest the existence, alongside baptism, of an **additional rite of initiation**, second in time and reserved to apostolic authority. For example, Heb 6: 2 refers to 'instruction about baptisms and the laying on of hands'. Also, when mentioned in a baptismal context, the Holy Spirit is usually named second, after the water (Mk 1: 9f; Jn 3:5; Acts 2: 38; but compare Acts 9:17-19). The major exception to this rule is the 'Gentile Pentecost' of Acts 10:44-48, clearly an extraordinary event which does not disconfirm the general pattern. On two occasions, both in Acts (8:12-17, ~~19-21~~ ~~7~~), groups of disciples who had 'only been baptized in the name of the Lord' (8:16). were subsequently given the gift of the Spirit through the laying on of hands by other leaders who were able to claim apostolic authority: this has been taken to signify the superiority of the second rite.

ii) The imposition or **laying on of hands** has a variety of meanings in both the Old and New Testaments . Among these are: healing, blessing, consecrating and setting apart for specific functions (including ordination). Two motifs seem to be operating in these actions: a) the transmission of spiritual power (Gen 48:13-16; Mk 6:5; Acts 8: 19), and b) the identification of an individual person (or, in a sacrificial context, an animal) as a representative of the religious community (Nb 8:10, 12; Lev 3:8, 16:21; Acts 6:6, 13:3). Both blessing-with-power and the commissioning of representatives involve a change of status and authority, but both presuppose membership of the community . They are not initiation rites in the sense in which the term applies to baptism. Where sickness and healing are not in question, imposition serves to connect one disciple with the tasks and authority of another (Nb 27: 23, 1 Tim 4:14) . It is not elsewhere connected with baptism.

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↳ or casting down

iii)) It may be that baptism was accompanied by an actual **anointing with**

¹ For a brief history of the rise and fall of this 'two-stage' theology of initiation, see Buchanan, C.: 'Confirmation' in Holeton, D.R.: *Growing in newness of Life* , pp.104-26.

symbolising the

oil, understood as ^{of} imparting pneumatic power. This can be deduced from a passage which connects 'belonging to Christ (*eis Christon*)', being 'anointed (*chrisas*)' and being 'sealed with the Spirit' (2 Cor 1:21-2; see also Eph 1:13, 4:30; 1 Jn 2:20, 27). Anointing (also connected with healing, as in Jas 5:14) was a normal accompaniment of celebratory washing (Ruth 3:3) and more specifically of the consecration of priests (Ex 29:1-9). Either healing or consecration would be an appropriate connotation for entry into the 'priestly people' of the Anointed One (1 Sam 10:1). However, these verses most probably refer directly, not to a rite, but to the Spirit understood as a pledge or anticipation of salvation to come. They draw on the image of God's people as 'sealed on the forehead' (Rev 7:3, 9:4), marked as Christ's own (Gen 4:15; Rev 22:4), perhaps with a cross (see Ezek 9:4-6; Rev 22:4), and protected through the trials of the end-time..¹ This eschatological motif too may have found liturgical expression at this early date, at least in some places, in the act of consignation (with or without anointing as such). Yet what is necessary in all this is not the performance of any rite but the inclusion of the believer under the Lordship of Christ.

It appears that, apart from Heb 6:2, Acts alone implies the possibility of a separate rite, relevant only where the Holy Spirit has not been imparted in baptism: yet it is clear that these are to be seen as special cases (8:12-17/19:1-7) from which no generalisation is possible. So we are left with no adequate evidence in the New Testament of the existence, from the beginning, of a separate 'confirmation' rite, nor of any special Spirit-empowering liturgy. Baptism, in a context of repentance and the confession of faith, is the key action. What the New Testament does show us, however, is that the meaning of baptism was such as to demand expression in a variety of symbolic metaphors - purification (Heb 10:22, 1 Pet 1:18f), consecration and anointing (1 Pet 2:9f, 1 Jn 2:20), enlightenment (Eph 5:14, 1 Jn 2:20, 27), union with Christ (Rom 6:3-11, Gal 3:27), empowerment by the Spirit (1 Cor 12:13, 2 Cor 1:22), renewal of life (Eph 5:25-7, Tit 3:5f, Jn 3:5) - and invited description in terms of traditional gestures - including reclathing (Gal 3:27, Col 3:9), as well as signing, anointing and laying on hands - all of which came in time, like the washing, to be enacted in the liturgy, together with further symbolic actions, such as the gift of milk and honey, and systematic scrutinies, exorcisms and preparatory fastings and anointings.² All these together signify the fullness of life into which baptism is the entry. Yet, however complex it may have become, it is still one rite, effecting and signifying the salvation of those who are joined to Christ and inspired by God's Spirit.

5. Confirmation in Christendom

The baptismal liturgy of the Church in the 3rd - 5th centuries contained all these features hinted at in the New Testament records and more, given unity within the great paschal eucharist, so that baptism in water and consignation with laying on of hands (followed by first communion) became the normal mode of entry into the community of the new covenant. Theologians of the period, reflecting on these symbols, show varied understandings of where and

¹ See Lampe, G.W.H.: *The Seal of the Spirit* (London: Longmans 1951), ch. 1.

² See Jones, C., Wainwright, G., Yarnold, E. and Bradshaw, P. (eds.) *The Study of Liturgy* (rev. ed., London: SPCK 1992), pp.122f.

how the action of the Holy Spirit was to be discerned (the East favouring chrismation, the West the laying on of hands), but within this total sacramental complex, questions of what is necessary were slow to arise, except in relation to emergency baptism of infants or the dying.

The post-Nicene growth of the Church and the rising demand for infant baptism, however, made it impossible to restrict the administration of initiation to this unified rite taking place on one or two great annual festivals in the presence of the bishop. In the East, the solution was to retain the single rite (baptism, chrismation and communion), though now normally administered by a priest, rather than by the bishop. In the West, presbyteral baptism became the norm, to be ratified or confirmed by the bishop (by the laying on of hands) in due course. As this separation, often by years, came to be normal, the familiar two-stage pattern emerged, while the two rites found themselves in competition for a single theological rationale.

6. Theologies of confirmation

Four approaches to a theological understanding have been common (each of which has been loosely, though not wholly accurately, associated with one period of Christian history):

- i) Baptism is a preliminary rite but confirmation is the sealing with the Spirit (the 'patristic' view);
- ii) Baptism confers salvation but confirmation effects a strengthening for adult temptations (the 'medieval' view);
- iii) Baptism confers salvation but confirmation is a necessary ^{act of signing commitment to the} self-affirmation of faith especially for those baptised as infants (the 'reformation' view);
- iv) Baptism confers salvation but confirmation is a 'lay-ordination' or commissioning for adult discipleship (a distinctively 'twentieth-century' view).

In the patristic period the combination of baptism with Spirit-rites ensured that, while there was much reflection on the nature and location of the Spirit's action, there was no distinct theology of 'confirmation'. It is misleading to speak of patristic views of confirmation before 350, as the thing itself (in separation from baptism) did not exist. But once the liturgical split had occurred the development towards the 'medieval' attitude was rapid, and both the word *confirmatio* and the theology of 'strengthening' appear in the West early in the fifth century.¹ It was against the magical possibilities inherent in this idea of a gift of power (cf. Acts 8:17ff) that the protestant reformers asserted the understanding embodied in view (iii), with its emphasis on the believer's conscious and voluntary confession of faith,

Through the medium of the Prayer Book and the Articles, the second and third views together became entrenched in Anglican practice and thinking. The 1552 Prayer Book incorporated into the baptism rite elements formerly associated with confirmation (e.g. the act of consignation, now performed 'in token that hereafter [the child] shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified'). It seems that the intention was to create in this a single complete act of initiation. However, the Prayer Book also contains, under the

¹ Kelly, J.N.D., *Early Christian Doctrines* (5th ed., London: Black 1977), pp.435f.

name 'The Order of Confirmation', what is effectively a reaffirmation of baptismal vows ('ratifying and confirming the same in your own persons'), according to the pattern of the Continental reformers. This is not strictly an initiation but a rite of maturity, for those who have 'come to years of discretion' and learned the creed, Lord's Prayer and catechism. The bishop's prayers invoke the strengthening and increase and gifts (but not the gift) of the Holy Spirit, and the rite is clearly secondary and supplementary.

Now when placed alongside baptism such a secondary liturgical action can hardly be 'necessary', even if Holy Communion, to which it gives access, is itself said to be 'generally necessary to salvation'. It may nonetheless be a good, and an important one. This coheres with the consensus of classical Anglican authorities, as for example Jeremy Taylor, for whom it was conferred, 'not for a miraculous gift but for an ordinary grace'.¹ It may be argued that people have sought to lend to this action extraordinary justifications for want of discernment to find grace in the regular or commonplace.

7. A Sign of ~~fulfilment~~ ^{development}

But should we therefore give up the attempt to find a coherent theology of confirmation? Liturgiologists often argue that it should be abandoned because it was an accidental and, by implication, illegitimate development out of the ancient rite, with no foundation in either scripture or the ancient church. But this is not so. Although confirmation has taken many forms, what is common to them all is **the motif of development**. ~~This is true even of the~~ New Testament and the ancient Church: baptism is a beginning of the Christian life, and although complete in itself needs to be lived out (Rom 6:3-5). This does not mean that it is inadequate, but that it is a sign of beginning. It is that living out, the fulness of life into which the catechumen is inaugurated, that is symbolised by the laying on of hands, signing with the cross, anointing and the rest.

These motifs of development found in the

The Orthodox rite of the East is often held up as the liturgical ideal of comprehensiveness. However, this rite presents together all the elements of initiation only when it is adults that are being admitted to all the Church's mysteries at once, not, as is in fact usual, when administered to infants. It may be asserted that no rite of infant baptism can be wholly self-sufficient, detached as it must be from the personal confession of faith, and the Orthodox rite is no different in this respect.

The practice of infant baptism can be justified (and will not be discussed here), but its popularity figures largely among the historical forces which split the Church's unified initiatory rite and caused it to generate the practices grouped under the heading of 'confirmation', each in its own way seeking to provide that which was perceived to be lacking. The contents (and therefore the liturgical forms) of these rites are culturally ~~determined~~ ^{shaped} - whether confirmation is held to symbolise attainment of mature age, or reception of spiritual gifts, or an understanding of the faith - but the family-resemblance between them argues for a general need finding (no doubt imperfectly) varied

¹ Taylor, J. : *Works*, (ed. Eden, C.P., London 1849), Vol.V, pp.27-8. Cited in Evans, G.R. and Wright, J.R., *The Anglican Tradition* (London: SPCK 1991), p.214.

While only symbols are involved
moment & personal responsibility.

means of expression.

During much of Christian history this perceived need for development has been expressed by saying that confirmation, or its symbolic constituents, in some sense 'completes' or 'perfects' baptism. For obvious reasons this understanding has been most frequently voiced in the Western tradition, as a protest against the tendency for the second element to be dropped altogether. But, whether East or West, and whether confirmation is seen as baptism's complement or as the climax of initiation, there are dangers in that way of presenting the matter. It assumes that God's Holy Spirit works primarily, or even wholly, through the sacraments of the Church; it also implies that a process of transformation, begun in baptism, has now been finished. Of course, this view can be stated in a way which avoids both dangers. Still, the concept of **growth** is to be preferred, containing the idea that a process in which the Holy Spirit is involved is an open, guided, but unpredictable path to enrichment.

thus

Yes

8. Pastoral purposes

Any act of initiation should express that there is more to come, and although that 'more' is not primarily sacramental, it is appropriate that further rites should symbolise what God is effecting in that fulness. It remains to be shown, however, whether that symbolic purpose requires - or is even well served by - a single event.

(appropriately though not necessarily)

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personal
responsibility

The New Testament evidence obliges us to conclude that baptism in the name of the Trinity after confession of faith and followed by signing with the cross (appropriately though not necessarily using chrism to signify the joyful offering of a life to God and entry into the priestly people) is sufficient in itself as the dominical, biblical, foundational rite of initiation into the Body of Christ. To many in the Church there does not appear, therefore, to be any reason in theology why children (or adults) should not be admitted to communion on the basis of baptism alone (subject to pastoral considerations). The adoption of this practice has seriously weakened the main peg on which, in Anglican pastoral practice, confirmation has been hung. Why, then retain it?

In this century, discussion about the role of confirmation has produced five broad approaches, based on pastoral, theological and liturgical principles:

- i) Variants on the existing Anglican pattern, that is, predominantly infant baptism, with confirmation at age 7 or 14 or 18-plus;
- ii) Abolition of confirmation in all forms, emphasising unmistakably that baptism alone is the Christian rite of initiation for infants and adults alike;
- iii) A combination of the above, with baptism plus later confirmation for infants, and baptism alone for adults;
- iv) Baptism plus a form of confirmation, sometimes redescribed as 'lay-ordination' or admission to table;
- v) Baptism plus repeatable reaffirmations or rites of passage, using vows and/or laying on of hands.

If the traditional link, in Anglican pastoral practice, between confirmation and communion, has been severely weakened in recent decades by the growing tendency to admit children to communion on the basis of baptism, so has the link between confirmation and instruction. The idea of a single standard

package of Christian knowledge, institutionalised in the catechism, has given way to the provision of understandings and skills relevant for different ages (as child, teenager or adult) and different needs (for intelligent participation in the Eucharist, or for performing specific kinds of service).

The so-called 'traditional' pattern of confirmation at twelve or fourteen years must be abandoned. Though the tradition can hardly be substantiated before the 19th century, its 'naturalness' owes something to the influence of parallel puberty rites like *bar-mitzvah*. If the Church is the guardian of the great symbols of life and death it should not lightly dismiss the observable hunger for such a rite of passage. And yet it has to be recognized that the power of these parallels lies in enacting a customary initiation into adulthood with its responsibilities, which makes no allowance for the emergence, in our culture, of the intermediary and highly developed stage of adolescence, a stage characterised by a blend of quasi-adult self-consciousness and irresponsibility. It is rightly argued that for most children this is now the worst age to seek a stable acceptance and affirmation of vows.

Three factors combine to support the retention of confirmation in some form, however:

baptism
i) It is a rite of ~~commitment~~ ^{commitment} so important for those baptised as infants - active where ~~that~~ is passive. As such its central features are penitence and conversion, the personal affirmation of the Church's creed and baptismal vows. Although the contrast with infant baptism would tend to make confirmation appear otiose and undesirable in relation to the baptism of adult believers, yet through the symbol of the laying on of hands the candidate's act of commitment is characterised ~~specifically as becoming united with the mission of the Church (see section 4 above)~~. In such cases the ancient practice of immediately confirming adult baptizands ~~should~~ ^{need} not be dispensed with. However, despite some important parallels, this should not be misleadingly termed 'lay-ordination'. *by taking personal responsibility for genuine baptismal mission of the church*

ii) It is a predominantly Spirit-centred rite, where the emphasis of baptism is predominantly Christological (the River Jordan, the sign of the cross, 'dying with Christ'). Both rites take place within a thoroughly trinitarian context, and this is not to be construed as a doctrinal argument about the efficacy of either: of course the Church teaches that the Spirit is active, and the Spirit's power imparted, in baptism. Nor is it ignoring the possibility of strengthening the pneumatological symbols in baptismal liturgies. But it points out that there is a difference, and a complementarity, between initiation and development, and between identification and empowerment, which these rites, taken as a pair, articulate. While a theology of 'completion' necessarily sets one action against the other; the theology of 'growth' sketched in the previous section seeks to find in confirmation an effective symbol of the Spirit's work within the covenantal relationship inaugurated at the font.

iii) It is a rite ~~of the Church universal, at least~~ ^{which signifies the relationship with} in communions which have retained the role of the bishop, joining the local congregation and the family group (so important in the pastoral context of baptism) to the whole Church, both as a regional and national institution, and (far more significant) as the vehicle of the world-wide and age-long mission of God. In this the Anglican tradition has been sound. The rite should be affirmed as a central task *L'parrish*

performed for his or her flock by the bishop (and preferably that should not denote just anyone in episcopal orders), except where extreme conditions determine otherwise.

9. A necessary rite?

Theology is the attempt to understand the great stories and symbols of faith, and as such it deals in that which transcends understanding. The perceived need for confirmation, or something like it, testifies to its importance as part of the Christian symbol-system, even if no single satisfactory conceptualisation can be given to it. Confirmation points to movement in the Christian life. It is part of the Anglican pattern of growth in discipleship, which works with a logic of its own, not reducible to that of any other communion. Michael Ramsay, writing in 1945, argued that the practice of confirmation before communion had been: 'a disciplinary measure of great importance for the edification of the Church and the health of the souls of its members'.¹ The question now is whether confirmation can retain any value when pastoral discipline and inventiveness have spawned so many alternative vehicles of edification.

Subordinate to baptism

In line with the three factors outlined above, this paper argues that confirmation, while a clearly secondary element in initiation, can retain a place in the changing circumstances of Anglican ecclesial life. It does so as a fully adult rite signifying the self-affirmation of a mature (which does not mean perfect) faith, and the recognition of this by the bishop as representative of the Church both local and universal, through the laying on of hands. Though not rightly described as 'lay-ordination', it does signify the integration of the candidate into the mission of the Church, and it is therefore appropriate that the baptism of an adult should be completed with such an act of recognition and welcoming - the objective correlative provided by the tradition for that personal encounter with God known in some circles as 'conversion', in others as 'baptism in the Holy Spirit'.

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personal

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The retention of confirmation is not in competition with the admission of baptised children to communion, so long as steps are taken to maintain the distinction between the two. Nor is it in competition with the provision, in many revised liturgies, of forms for the laying on of hands at other times, perhaps of specific personal commitment or need. However, these voluntary and repeatable acts, though quasi-confirmational, are to be distinguished from the traditional provision of an unrepeatable event in which we recognize what more our baptism (though it lacks nothing) requires us to enter into. They complement, but cannot replace it.

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There can be no question that in Anglican theology it is baptism which is the 'effectual sign' of our union with Christ; yet the Christian life has to develop. To be confirmed is not a further requirement but a privilege, the grace of receiving an affirmation of the Spirit's power in union with the whole Church as expressed in the episcopal office. It has been wisely called 'a distinctly

¹ Ramsay, A.M.: 'The doctrine of Confirmation', *Theology* 48 (1945), pp.194-201.

celebratory rite'.¹ Just as public baptisms serve to remind the people of God what they have been saved from and for, the fact of confirmation continually reminds us of the fullness into which we are called to be moving, and the unrestrained generosity of the outpouring of God's Spirit. Confirmation, therefore, although not necessary for every individual Christian, is the 'solemn, ancient and laudable custom'² through which our tradition witnesses to that indispensable dimension of life in the New Covenant.

¹ 'Christian initiation and holy communion'. See above, p.1, n.1.

² Canon LX of 1604, cited in Evans and Wright, p.200.

DRAFT

(1994)

GENERAL SYNOD DOCTRINE COMMISSION

IS CONFIRMATION NECESSARY IN ANGLICAN THEOLOGY?

JOHN DUNNILL

1. The current confusion illustrated

The Anglican chaplain of a university had arranged for the bishop to visit, to confirm a recently converted student. An older student, a regular communicant member of the chaplaincy for some time, inquired what this 'confirmation' might be. Surprised, the chaplain took time to explain the matter to him, and afterwards invited him to regularise his position by becoming a candidate. Which the man refused to do, arguing that to accept confirmation would deny the validity of his baptism, or his communicant status, or both. For what exactly did confirmation purport to add to these? This left the chaplain with a quandary: for does not the Prayer Book admit to communion only those who are 'confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed'?

2. The question

By confirmation is meant a post-baptismal rite associated with the gift or power of the Holy Spirit, through laying on of hands and/or consignation with the sign of the cross (with or without oil of chrism). In Anglican usage, this rite has always been reserved to the Bishop, though this is not the universal practice. It may take place immediately after baptism or at a distance of some years.

The Anglican Church retained in adapted form the two-fold model of initiation received from medieval Western practice. This two-fold form is widely perceived as being problematical today, liturgically, pastorally and theologically. It has been the subject of much debate and numerous official reports.¹ This paper can only touch on these discussions, with the aim of seeking to examine the doctrinal status of confirmation: is it necessary for all Christians (or at least all Anglican adults) to be confirmed?.

The sources for establishing an Anglican theological position will be taken to be firstly Scripture; secondly the witness of Anglican formularies, history and reflection, together with the practice and understanding of the Church as a whole (within which Anglican theology has always assigned special weight to the witness of the undivided church of the first five centuries); and thirdly reason, by which is meant not critical logic but discernment of the purposes of God in the created order.

3. Anglican practice and tradition

One answer to the question 'Is confirmation necessary in Anglican theology?' can be given at once from the BCP Catechism:

How many sacraments hath Christ ordained in his Church? Two only, as generally necessary to salvation, that is to say Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

Article XXV distinguishes between these 'two Sacraments ordained of Christ

our Lord in the Gospel' and 'those five commonly called Sacraments' (evidently including confirmation) which 'are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel'. It is a matter of dispute whether they are still, however, to be understood as sacraments, though of a lower order, and so also in their fashion 'certain sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace'. This, though a fair interpretation of the article, is not how it has commonly been understood. Thus, to Cosin in the 17th century, High Churchman though he was, confirmation, although a 'special means of grace', was not a sacrament but 'a sacred and solemn action of religion'.²

In practice, until the general revival of Church life and sacramental theology in the 19th century, and despite frequent complaints and admonitions, confirmation was as widely neglected by Anglican bishops as it had been in pre-Reformation times. In many parts of English society it was unsought, being reckoned a perquisite of the gentry; in the colonies, where before 1785 there were no bishops, it was unobtainable.³ Clearly, for most of Anglican history, neither confirmation nor a regular participation in the eucharist have in fact been thought necessary for all or even many. The higher value placed on confirmation in the 19th century owes as much to an increased interest in education (taking advantage of the BCP provisions for pre-confirmation catechetical instruction) as to a renewal of sacramental theology. Many would argue that this instrumental usefulness has passed with time, and the rite should now be dispensed with.

On the other hand it was a group of Anglican writers (the 'Mason-Dix line') who earlier this century maintained on scriptural, historical and theological grounds that baptism should be understood as a preliminary to the one necessary salvific act of confirmation in which the Holy Spirit is imparted.⁴ Their claims, though now generally abandoned, compel us to look beyond Anglican history for an answer.

4. The New Testament evidence

No New Testament book is concerned to give information about how initiation was practised. But do we find there evidence of the existence among the earliest Christian communities of anything corresponding to confirmation? If so, does it appear as a necessity?

The New Testament rite of initiation into the saved community is baptism (Mk 16:15f; Jn 3:5; Acts 8:35-8, 9:17-19; Rom 6:3-8; 1 Pet 3:21) in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38, 10:48) or possibly of the triune God (Matt 28:19). In this rite of symbolic washing or immersion, accompanied by repentance and faith in Christ, the initiate is incorporated into Christ and empowered with the Holy Spirit. To this all major strands are witnesses. But there are other patterns to be taken into account.

i) When the Holy Spirit is mentioned in a context of baptism, it is usually named second (Mk 1: 9f; Jn 3:5; Acts 2: 38). The major exception to this rule, the 'Gentile Pentecost' of Acts 10:44-48, is clearly an extraordinary event which confirms the general pattern. Also, on two occasions, both in Acts (8:12-17, 19:1-7), a separate Spirit-rite of laying on of hands is administered by apostles to disciples who had 'only been baptized' (8:16). These accounts, taken together with the reference in Heb 6: 2 to 'instruction about baptisms and the

in the context of
when the apostles laid hands - they received the spirit²

laying on of hands', are taken by some to depict the existence of an additional rite of initiation, second in time and reserved to apostolic authority.

ii) The imposition or **laying on of hands** has a variety of meanings in Jewish and Christian religious life. Among these are: healing, blessing, consecrating and setting apart for specific functions (including ordination). Two motifs seem to be operating in these actions: a) **the transmission of spiritual power** (Nb 8:10; Mk 6:5; Acts 8: 19), and b) the identification of an individual person (or, in a sacrificial context, an animal: Lev 3:8, 16:21) as a representative of the religious community (Nb 8:12; Acts 6:6, 13:3). Both blessing-with-power and the commissioning of representatives involve a change of status and authority, but both presuppose membership of the community . They are not initiation rites in the sense in which the term applies to baptism. Where sickness and healing are not in question, imposition serves to connect one disciple with the tasks and authority of another (Nb 27: 23, 1 Tim 4:14) . It is not otherwise connected with baptism.

iii) The presence in the New Testament of three references to the 'seal of the Spirit' (Eph 1:13, 4:30, 2 Cor 1:21) may imply that baptism was accompanied by **anointing with oil** and that this was understood as imparting pneumatic power. Anointing (also connected with healing (Jas 5:14)) was a normal accompaniment of celebratory washing (Ruth 3:3) and more specifically of the consecration of priests (Ex 29:1-9). Either healing or consecration would be an appropriate connotation for entry into the 'priestly people' of the Anointed One. However, these verses most probably refer directly, not to a rite, but to the Spirit understood as a pledge or anticipation of salvation to come, drawing on the image of God's people as **marked with a cross** and protected through the trials of the end-time (Ezek 9:4-6, Rev 7:2, 9:4).⁵ This eschatological motif too probably found liturgical expression, at least in some places, in the act of consignation (with or without anointing as such). Yet what is necessary in all this is not performance of any rite but identification with God.

It appears that Acts alone implies the possibility of a separate rite, and its view, though not necessarily idiosyncratic, is expressed in special cases (8:12-17, 19:1-7) from which no generalisation is possible. **So there is no adequate evidence in the New Testament of the existence, from the beginning, of a separate 'confirmation' rite, nor of any special Spirit-empowering liturgy.** Baptism, accompanied by penitence and the confession of faith, is the key action. What the New Testament does show us, however, is that the **meaning of baptism** was such as to demand expression in a variety of symbolic ways - purification, consecration, anointing, commissioning, empowering, blessing, **healing** - and attracted to itself a range of actions including re-clothing, signing, anointing, laying on hands, and in time further symbolic actions, such as the gift of milk and honey, and systematic scrutinies, exorcisms and preparatory anointings. All these together signify the fullness of life into which baptism is the entry. Yet, however complex it may have become, it is still one rite, effecting and signifying the salvation of those who are joined to Christ and inspired by God's Spirit.

5. Confirmation in Christendom

The baptismal liturgy of the Church in the 3rd - 5th centuries contained all these features hinted at in the New Testament records and more, given unity

within the great paschal eucharist, so that baptism in water and consignation with laying on of hands (followed by first communion) became the normal mode of entry into the community of the new covenant. Theologians of the period, reflecting on these symbols, show varied understandings of where and how the action of the Holy Spirit was to be discerned (the East favouring chrismation, the West the laying on of hands), but within this total sacramental complex, questions of what is necessary are slow to arise (except for emergency baptism of infants or the dying).

The post-Nicene growth of the Church and the rising demand for infant baptism, however, made it impossible to restrict initiation to this unified rite taking place on one or two great annual festivals in the presence of the bishop. In the East, the solution was to retain the single rite (baptism, chrismation and communion), though now normally administered by a priest, rather than by the bishop. In the West, presbyteral baptism became the norm, to be ratified or confirmed by the bishop (by the laying on of hands) in due course. As this separation, often by years, came to be normal, the familiar two-stage pattern emerged, while the two rites found themselves in competition for a single theological rationale.

6. Theologies of confirmation

Four approaches to a theological understanding have been common:

- i) Baptism is a preliminary rite but confirmation is the sealing with the Spirit (the so-called patristic view);
- ii) Baptism confers salvation but confirmation effects a strengthening for adult temptations (the medieval view);
- iii) Baptism confers salvation but confirmation is a necessary self-affirmation of faith especially for those baptised as infants (the Reformers' view);
- iv) Baptism confers salvation but confirmation is a lay-ordination or commissioning for adult discipleship (the twentieth-century view).

In the patristic period the combination of baptism with Spirit-rites ensured that, while there was much reflection on the nature and location of the Spirit's action, there was no distinct theology of 'confirmation'. It is misleading to speak of patristic views of confirmation before 350, as the thing itself (in separation from baptism) did not exist. But once the liturgical split had occurred the development towards the 'medieval' attitude was rapid, and both the word *confirmatio* and the theology of 'strengthening' appear in the West early in the fifth century.⁶ It was against the magical possibilities of this idea of a gift of power (cf. Acts 7:17ff) that view (iii), with its emphasis on conscious and voluntary confession of faith, was a rationalist reaction.

Through the medium of the Prayer Book and the Articles, the second and third views together became entrenched in Anglican practice and thinking. The 1552 Prayer Book incorporated into the baptism rite elements formerly associated with confirmation (e.g. the act of consignation, now performed 'in token that hereafter [the child] shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified'). It seems that the intention was to create in this a single complete act of initiation. However, the Prayer Book also contains, under the name 'Confirmation', what is effectively a reaffirmation of baptismal vows ('ratifying and confirming the same in your own persons'), according to the pattern of the Continental reformers. This is not strictly an initiation but a rite

of maturity, for those who have 'come to years of discretion' and learned the creed, Lord's Prayer and catechism. The bishop's prayers invoke the strengthening and increase and gifts (but not the gift) of the Holy Spirit, and the rite is clearly secondary and supplementary.

Now when placed alongside baptism such a secondary liturgical action can hardly be 'necessary', even if Holy Communion, to which it gives access, is said to be 'generally necessary to salvation'. It may nonetheless be a good, and an important one. This coheres with the consensus of classical Anglican authorities, as for Jeremy Taylor, for whom it was conferred, 'not for a miraculous gift but for an ordinary grace'.⁷ It may be argued that people have sought to lend to this action extraordinary justifications for want of discernment to find grace in the regular or commonplace.

7. A Sign of fulfilment

But should we therefore give up the attempt to find a coherent theology of confirmation? Liturgiologists often argue that it should be abandoned because it was an accidental and, by implication, illegitimate development out of the ancient rite, with no foundation in either scripture or the ancient church. But this is not so. Although confirmation has taken many forms, what is common to them all is **the motif of completion**. This is true even of the New Testament and the ancient Church: baptism is a beginning of the Christian life ~~and therefore necessarily incomplete~~, needing to be lived out (Rom 6:3-5). This does not mean that it is inadequate, but that it is a sign of beginning. It is that living out, the fulness of life into which the catechumen is inaugurated, that is symbolised by the laying on of hands, signing with the cross, anointing and the rest.

Infant baptism is most obviously incomplete. That practice can be justified (and will not be discussed here), but its popularity figures largely among the historical forces which split the Church's initiatory rite and caused it to generate the practices grouped under the heading of 'confirmation', each in its own way seeking to provide the necessary completion. The contents (and therefore the liturgical forms) of these rites are culturally determined - whether confirmation symbolises attainment of mature age, or reception of spiritual gifts, or an understanding of the faith - but the family-resemblance between them argues for a general need finding (no doubt imperfectly) varied means of expression.

The Orthodox rite of the East is often held up as the liturgical ideal of comprehensiveness. However, this rite presents together all the elements of initiation only when adults are being admitted to all the Church's mysteries at once, not, as is in fact usual, when administered to infants. It may be asserted that no rite of infant baptism can be complete, detached as it must be from the personal confession of faith. Any act of initiation should express that there is more to come, and although that 'more' is not primarily sacramental, it is appropriate that further rites should symbolise what God is effecting in that fulness. It remains to be shown, however, whether that symbolic purpose requires - or is even well served by - a single event.

8. Pastoral purposes

The New Testament evidence obliges us to conclude that baptism in the name

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Lord's Supper

of the Trinity after confession of faith and followed by signing with the cross (appropriately though not necessarily using chrism to signify the joyful offering of a life to God and entry into the priestly people) is sufficient in itself as the dominical, biblical, foundational rite of initiation into the Body of Christ. There does not appear, therefore, to be any reason in theology why baptised children should not be admitted to communion at any age (subject to pastoral considerations). That removes at a stroke the main peg on which, in Anglican pastoral practice, confirmation has been hung. Why, then retain it?

In this century, discussion about the role of confirmation has produced five broad approaches, based on pastoral, theological and liturgical principles:

- i) Variants on the existing Anglican pattern, that is predominantly infant baptism, with confirmation at age 7 or 14 or 18-plus;
- ii) Abolition of confirmation in all forms, emphasising unmistakably that baptism alone is the Christian rite of initiation for infants and adults alike;
- iii) A combination of the above, with baptism plus confirmation for infants, and baptism alone for adults;
- iv) Baptism plus a form of confirmation, redescribed as lay-ordination or admission to table;
- v) Baptism plus repeatable reaffirmations, using vows and /or laying on of hands.

If the traditional link, in Anglican pastoral practice, between confirmation and admission to communion, has been severely weakened in recent decades by the growing tendency to admit children on the basis of baptism, so has the link between confirmation and instruction. The idea of a single standard package of Christian knowledge, institutionalised in the catechism, has given way to the provision of understandings and skills relevant for different ages (as child, teenager or adult) and different needs (for intelligent participation in the Eucharist, or for assisting with baptismal preparation).

The so-called 'traditional' pattern of confirmation at twelve or fourteen years must be abandoned. Though the tradition can hardly be substantiated before the 19th century, its 'naturalness' owes something to parallel puberty rites like *bar-mitzvah*. If the Church is the guardian of the great symbols of life and death it should not lightly dismiss the observable hunger for such a rite of passage. And yet it has to be recognized that the power of these parallels lies in enacting an initiation into adulthood with its responsibilities, which makes no allowance for the emergence, in our culture, of an intermediary and highly developed stage of adolescence, characterised by a blend of quasi-adult self-consciousness and irresponsibility. It is rightly argued that for most children this is now the worst age to seek a stable acceptance and affirmation of vows.

Three factors combine to support the retention of confirmation in some form, however:

- i) It is a Spirit-centred rite, where baptism is predominantly Christological (the River Jordan, the sign of the cross, 'dying with Christ') within a trinitarian context. This is not to be construed as a doctrinal argument about efficacy (of course the Spirit is active, and the Spirit's power imparted, in baptism), nor is it ignoring the possibility of strengthening the pneumatological symbols in our liturgies, but it points out that there is a difference, and a complementarity, between initiation and development, which these sacraments, taken as a pair,

affirm

ii) It is a rite of **commitment** so important for those baptised as infants - active where that is passive. Although that contrast, by itself, would tend to make confirmation otiose and undesirable in relation to the baptism of adult believers, yet through the symbol of the laying on of hands the candidate's act of commitment is characterised specifically as becoming united with the mission of the Church (see section 4 above). In such cases the ancient practice of immediately confirming adult baptizands should not be dispensed with.

iii) It is a rite of the **Church universal**, at least in communions which have retained the role of the Bishop, joining the local congregation and the family group (so important in baptism) to the whole Church, both as a regional and national institution and (far more significant) as the vehicle of the world-wide and age-long mission of God. In this the Anglican tradition has been sound. The rite should be affirmed as a central task performed for his or her flock by the bishop (and preferably that should not denote just anyone in episcopal orders), except where extreme conditions determine otherwise.

9. A necessary rite?

Theology is the attempt to understand the great stories and symbols of faith, and as such it deals in that which transcends understanding. The need for confirmation, or something like it, testifies to its importance as part of the Christian symbol-system, even if no satisfactory rationalisation can be given to it. Confirmation points to movement in the Christian life. It is part of the Anglican pattern of growth in discipleship, which works with its own logic whether or not it is understood by those who receive it or administer it.

The provision, in many revised liturgies, of forms for the laying on of hands at other times, perhaps of specific commitment, is good. However, these repeatable acts, though quasi-confirmational, are to be distinguished from the unrepeatable sacrament in which we recognize what more our baptism (though it lacks nothing) requires us to enter into. They complement, but cannot replace it.

Confirmation can retain its place as a fully adult rite signifying the self-affirmation of a mature (which does not mean perfect) faith; and the recognition of this by the representative of the Church both local and universal, the bishop, through the laying on of hands. It signifies, not 'lay-ordination' but the integration of the candidate into the mission of the Church, and it is therefore appropriate that the baptism of an adult should be completed with such an act of recognition and welcoming - the objective correlative provided by the tradition for that personal encounter with God known in some circles as 'baptism in the Holy Spirit'.

There can be no question that in Anglican theology it is baptism which is the 'effectual sign' of our union with Christ; yet the Christian life has to develop. To be confirmed is not a further requirement but a privilege, the grace of receiving an effectual sign of the Spirit's power in union with the whole Church as expressed in the episcopal office. Just as public baptisms serve to remind the People of God what they have been saved from and for, the fact of confirmation continually reminds us of the fullness into which we are called to

confirmation continually reminds us of the fullness into which we are called to be moving. Confirmation, therefore, although not necessary for every individual Christian, is necessary for the Church.

¹ Among the reports may be noted particularly *Baptism and Confirmation: Report of the Commission on Doctrine appointed by the General Synod of the Church of England in Australia* (Sydney 1972), Reardon, M.: *Christian Initiation - a policy for the Church of England*, (Church House Publishing: London 1991), and *Walk in Newness of Life: the findings of the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation, Toronto 1991*, in Holeton, D.R.: *Growing in newness of Life: Christian initiation in Anglicanism today* (Anglican Book Centre: Toronto 1993), pp.226-256.

² Cosin, J., Proposed preamble to confirmation rite (1661). More, P.E. and Cross, F.L. (eds.): *Anglicanism* (SPCK : London 1935), pp.443-5.

³ Sykes, S. and Booty, J.: *The Study of Anglicanism* (SPCK: London 1988), p.

⁴ For a brief history of the rise and fall of this 'two-stage' theology of initiation, see Buchanan, C.: 'Confirmation' in Holeton, D.R.: *Growing in newness of Life*, pp.104-26.

⁵ See Lampe, G.W.H.: *The Seal of the Spirit* (Longmans Green: London 1951), chapter 1.

⁶ Kelly, J.N.D., *Early Christian Doctrines* (A.& C. Black: 5th ed. London 1977), pp.435f.

⁷ Taylor, J. : *Works*, (ed. Eden, C.P., London 1849), Vol.V, pp.27-8. Cited in Evans, G.R. and Wright, J.R., *The Anglican Tradition* (SPCK: London 1991), p.214.

Lucinda Thibautin, Confirmation & its place in the baptismal mystery