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ANGLICAN BAPTISM AS CULTURAL PHENOMENON: HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL ASPECT

The paper addresses the issue of Anglican Church. In the main focus of investigation is the religious ritual of baptism. Furthermore, the article includes the description of the theological and historical grounds for Anglican baptism as the entrance ritual to Anglican Church. The aspects of historical and theological development and structure of Anglican Church are highlighted and its modern position in British society is discussed. Church of England is studied in respect to its occurrence, developmental conditions and modern functioning. The establishment of Church of England is given the great importance hence its historically preconditioned democratic treatment of the members of two religious branches: Protestantism and Catholicism. The article offers cross-disciplinary treatment of the ritual of baptism in Anglican Church. The aspect of worldview formation is presented as one of the most significant while deciding for baptism. Moreover, the ritual is analysed through its religious and secular components. Religious aspect of baptism ritual in Anglican Church is described via sequential steps taken and procedures followed during performance of the ritual. Also, the work offers the structuring elements of the ritual and explains their incorporation into culture. The secular aspect is researched via social and cultural events connected with baptism such as preparing for the ritual and post-ritual celebration. The latter includes the description of the participants of the ritual: parents, priest, godparents, sponsors, guests, the roles and function performed by them. The phenomenon of baptism is elicited as a life-long process not limited by the ritual and as one leaving the definite reflection in the culture of Anglicans.

Key words: *Anglican Church, baptism, godparents, worldview, ritual.*

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ХРЕЩЕННЯ ДИТИНИ ЯК КУЛЬТУРНИЙ ФЕНОМЕН: ІСТОРИЧНО-ТЕОЛОГІЙНИЙ АСПЕКТ

Робота охоплює поняття, пов'язані з Англіканською церквою. Окрім того, стаття вміщує опис теологічних та історичних засад хрещення в англіканстві як «вхідного» ритуалу до Англіканської церкви. У роботі висвітлені та обговорені аспекти історико-теологічного розвитку та структури Англіканської церкви, її сучасної позиції у Британському суспільстві. Англіканська церква описується зважаючи на її заснування, умови розвитку і сучасного функціонування. Становленню Англіканської церкви надане важливе значення з огляду на її історично-зумовлене демократичне ставлення до членів двох релігійних гілок: протестантизму та католицизму. У статті

запропоновано міждисциплінарний підхід до вивчення ритуалу хрещення в Англiканській церкві. Аспект формування картини світу постає одним із найважливіших чинників прийняття рішення стосовно хрещення. Окрім того, ритуал проаналізовано за допомогою його релігійного та світського складників. Релігійний аспект ритуалу хрещення в Англiканській церкві описано шляхом почергових дій та процедур, звершених під час проведення ритуалу. Також у роботі зазначено структурні елементи та можливості для їх подальших крос-дисциплінарних досліджень. Світський аспект розкрито шляхом залучення соціальних та культурних подій, пов'язаних із хрещенням, а саме підготовки до ритуалу та післяритуального святкування. Останні включають опис учасників хрещення: батьків, священика, хрещених батьків, спонсорів, гостей, їхньої ролі та ними виконаних функцій. Феномен хрещення трактується як подія, яка триває протягом усього життя, не обмежується ритуалом хрещення і залишає чітке відображення в культурі кожного британця англiканської конфесії.

Ключові слова: Англiканська церква, хрещення, хрещені батьки, картина світу, ритуал.

Historically the development of humanity has always been greatly influenced by cultural and religious factors. As the result cultural and social components are incorporated into worldview of a society member and thus are reflected through following the traditions, abiding the laws, performing the rites / rituals, listening to sermons, repeating celebrations. All of these actions are historically preconditioned, embodied in the definite situations and objectivized through verbal and non-verbal media. Anglican baptism holds the title of a English “national” phenomenon being one of the obligatory measures taken to represent the true member of English Community, where Church of England possesses great significance in the life of the whole English society since: all Royal Family Members compulsory belong to Anglican Confession and church bishops participate in lawmaking processes due to the fact that 26 of them make part in House of Lords – “Lords Spiritual” and sit in British parliament. This tradition tells about Church of England as one participating in political agenda and influencing the formation, development and well-being of the whole state. The research on Anglican Church phenomenon can be described as rather scarce and poorly represented in Ukraine. Among such researches are works of O. Ya. Vinnichenko that preferaly give a broad interpretation of Anglican church in general outlining Anglicanism through its history and contemporary transformations comparing traditional and modern paradigms of its interpretation (Vinnichenko, 2010) leaving the vast scope open for cross-disciplinary researches. The paper addresses the mixture of historical, theological, cultural loads of an introductory process to Anglican Church – baptism. The **main** aim of the research is to outline the cross-disciplinarian status and significance of Anglican baptism. To reach the latter the following **objectives** have to be fulfilled: 1) to review the historical and theological grounds of Anglican Church phenomenon; 2) to research the cultural aspect of Anglican baptism as the introductory issue to becoming a member of congregation; 3) to analyse the implicit loads of Anglican baptism.

Anglicanism stems from XVI century since Henry VIII (1509–1547) proclaimed himself the head of newly established Anglican Church (Elbakian, 2007: 27). The latter belongs to Anglican Communion and unites thirty seven churches worldwide among which are the ones of Wales, the USA, Canada, Australia, Western India, Uganda, Sudan etc. Anglicanism embraces catholic teaching of saving mission of the church and protestant doctrine of saving with one’s own faith (Kolodny, 1996: 20; Duffy, 1992). Thus, Anglicanism can be characterised as a compromised entity creating the environment for coexistence of elements of Catholicism and Protestantism regarding the situation of primarily catholic state slipping the Rome supremacy and choosing for religious independency. Catholic issues enclose sacral character of the church, apostolic succession, presence of church hierarchy, confession of baptism and Eucharist. Protestant component includes preaching of Salvation by Faith, accepting the Bible as the sole source of Faith, Calvinists treatment of a sin, denial of: veneration of Saints, iconolatry, statues, rejection of monastic orders and pilgrimage. Owing to the fact that the period of Anglicanism was accompanied by flourishing of monarchy and golden times for religious democracy (Palmer, 1846: 458), the importance of the church for the state and vice versa was undoubtedly obvious and must be taken into account when doing a research concerning worldview of an Anglican. The Church concerns coexistence of three ceremonial and dogmatic branches: High Church, Low Church, Broad Church. High Church (Anglo-Catholics) oriented towards pro-catholic items (such as Roman theology, ritual, mass, veneration of The Virgin and Saints) to be incorporated into the ceremony (Roegen 1998). Whereas Low Church, a protestant wing or “evangelical” branch awards little or no importance to sacraments, rituals / rites and clergy. Finally, the term “Broad Church” encompasses modernized character of Anglican Church democratically lending elements of both previously mentioned entities (Duffy, 1992). The administration of Anglican Church is executed

by General Synod (Tretiakov, 1992: 330); includes episcopate, priests (from 1998 of both genders); has provinces of York and Canterbury (Roegen, 1998). The absolute supremacy of the Crown accepted by Anglican Church makes it “national and personal” simultaneously. Both monarchs and commoners share the same values, laws, rites and enter the congregation through the same ritual of baptism, thus are equal in face of God. Consequently, Anglican baptism commemorates the ritual performed regardless of the social status of an individual and all the events connected to those undergoing the rite remain the part of a private and national history, that makes the phenomenon a unique “container” of values, tradition, and culture incorporated in worldview of a member of Anglican Church. As the result Anglican Church in respect to its historical and theological tradition is a unique “reservoir” created by the democratic environment of tolerance and equal respect towards protestant and catholic wings of British society secured by Royal Power for centuries. Firstly, the existence of three wings in Anglican Church tends to unite those remaining in sympathy with ideas of Protestantism, Catholicism, and modern perception of religion. In this way the church meets the requirements of on one hand custom-bound, and on the other hand, ever changing society and enables the church to address the needs and interests of every member of congregation. Secondly, its historically preconditioned supremacy of the Crown and participation of the church in the lawmaking processes uncovers the fact of its national, political, state, and thus cultural significance. As the result religious rituals performed in Church provide the valuable data on the worldview and culture the British share.

The culture formation is influenced by different factors and religion is among the strongest since religious ritual is considered to be one of three core elements of worldview of an individual (Bell, 1992). Thus ritual genetically predetermines the perception of the outer world, the religious ritual as one of its oldest versions contains the understanding of spiritual issues (McCauley, Lawson, 2007) shared by all the members of congregation. In respect to this the phenomenon Anglican Church, as the translator of Anglicanism professed by British society, gains quite a unique cultural importance and the ritual of baptism being one of the two rituals accepted by the church (the second one is Eucharist) provides the platform for cultural issues research. Judging by the fact of national, state, cultural, and political significance Church of England gains in British society, the ritual of Anglican baptism enjoys the status of an important event. The latter develops through

sequential stages and is predetermined by the following parameters:

PLACE & TIME: baptism ritual is traditionally performed on Sunday morning in the church, when all members of congregation are present at the service (Christian Initiation: 100–101). Hence the fact that the ritual symbolizes official joining the Anglican communion baptism must take place in front of it (Tretiakov 199: 318–323). Only scarce cases allow the priest or deacon to perform the ritual in the house of a candidate for baptism or in other places. The participation of the community allows the congregation to come through the most important moment of spiritual life together as one family.

SIMBOLIZATION & SIGNIFICATION: baptism in Church of England symbolizes entrance to the congregation, beginning of new life and spiritual purification (Rayner, 1962: 3–20). The main symbols of baptism are: the cross (commemorates the sign of Christ’s road and His crucifixion), water – a symbol of new life, white gown – a symbol of purification in front of God, chrism – a symbol of Wholly Spirit (Christian Initiation: 100). The significance of baptism in Anglican Church lays in the fact that the ritual encloses the moment of death of baptism candidate for sin and all evil, the birth of newly baptized for God and light. Also the ritual gains its importance as the moment of a counteraction between the members of the church, candidate for baptism, a priest, and Wholly Trinity (The Father, The Son and The Wholly Spirit).

PARTICIPANTS: The presence of the godparents (of both genders) and one or two sponsors (a person who aids the preparation for the ritual preferably in cases with adult candidates) is compulsory during the ritual of baptism, because of their prime role during a ritual (Christian Initiation: 60–61). The godparents and sponsors speak on behalf of the candidate for baptism during baptism ritual and make promises to support and raise the newly baptized godchild in strong faith and love (Palmer, 1986: 29–33). Another participants are members of congregation who support the decision of candidate for baptism to die for evil / sin and witness the ritual. In terms of culture the religious unity compiled during the ritual of baptism accompanies each newly baptized member of congregation as “one of” Christian family, where its members are supporting the newly baptized through all their life-long journey.

Referring the other cultural components there exists the definite sequence of events connected to baptism that make pre-, during-, and post-ritual stages. The research of each of them offers the implicit cultural side of the phenomenon.

Due to its significance baptism gets thoroughly planned, prepared, and articulated by different participants of the events, who in their turn play various roles in it. In terms of hidden cultural issues all events connected with baptism can be divided into religious and secular ones. Religious events concern the performance of the ritual itself and the secular part of baptism presupposes the preparation and post-ritual celebration. In their turn religious part is further subdivided into The Collect (special prayer before baptism), Presentation of the Candidate, The Decision, Prayer over Water, Process of Baptism, and Signing with the Cross (Book of Common Prayer: 300–311). Every previously mentioned issue has its own significance in chain of baptism ritual that impose the subject for deeper cross-disciplinary studies. Secular component splits into preparation and post-ritual celebration. The preparation determines the cultural components PARENTS here belong: selection of the godparents (the members of the same confession who provide the true examples of Christian life), selection of the guests, and arrangements (choosing the time and place for the celebration); GODPARENTS who have to make the decision to become a godparent, take responsibility to assist their godchildren, teach them in faith, and prepare the first present for a newly baptized; GUESTS: these are the family members and close friends, who prepare presents, speeches, and greetings for the newly baptized, their parents, and godparents. Anglican baptism signifies the end-

less continuation of events connected to it mounting the industry of popular things for presenting during baptism, postcards for greeting godchildren and godparents, booklets for godparents etc. Moreover baptism is not limited by the ritual under the same name and presupposes a rather long counteraction of its participants in form of Christian teaching, mentorship, assistance, and support of godparents, parents, and other members of congregation.

Conclusions. To sum it up hence the fact that Church of England plays an important role in political, national, legal, spiritual and other aspects of British society it is a unique formation which aims to address the needs of every Anglican. The phenomenon of baptism in Church of England is of vital importance because it signifies joining the Anglican congregation and becoming equal member of the society. It embraces the range of sequentially connected explicit and implicit issues with religious and secular features. As the cultural phenomenon baptism creates the network of events, participants, actions, symbols, signs where each item has its special cultural load and significance. In this way the ritual encompasses cross-disciplinary status. The religious aspect of baptism serves the subject for theological research; the social aspect can be viewed from the prospective of becoming the society member and be analysed in terms of sociology; cultural aspect refers to the network of events, participants, their roles and functions which gain special significance and sacral policy in Anglican society.

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