

# The Organizational Culture of Anglicanism

Anglicanism has its own personality, culture and ethos. This is a culture was rooted in English culture but has since adapted itself to a variety of countries, cultures and time periods. The question for congregational development practitioners is to what degree and with what transparency does the local congregation reflect this broader organizational culture and how does the local congregation adapt or respond to society (broader or more local) as it functions. The following is a shortened version of John Westerhoff's articulation of Anglican spirituality and temperament.

## Anglican Spirituality

**Liturgical/Biblical:** Anglican spirituality is rooted in communal daily prayer (Morning Prayer, Noonday Prayers, Evening Prayer, Compline) as laid out in *The Book of Common Prayer*. Thus, our way of praying tends to have more formality and structure and is shaped by the Scriptures, the divine reading of Scripture and the prayerful meditation on the psalms.

**Communal:** For Anglicans, communal prayer comes before and shapes personal prayer. Prayer is seen as an activity that connects us to God, to each other, to include the living to the dead. Communal prayer is a part of daily, weekly and yearly rhythms and both surrounds and informs community gatherings and meetings in which decisions are made.

**Pastoral:** Anglicans tend to see their relationship to God as lived out and "measured" by their relationships to their true selves, other people and the natural world.

**Sacramental:** Anglicans see the world, itself, as sacramental, that is, capable of mediating the grace of God. Anglicans also emphasize the two primary sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist as well as offer the other sacramental rites of confirmation, holy matrimony, reconciliation, unction, and ordination.

**Incarnational:** Anglicans emphasize the incarnation, God's entry into human life and history. Accordingly, Anglicans have an earthy spirituality that affirms the goodness of life and the created world and believes that the extraordinary is to be found in the ordinary.

**Mystical:** Anglicans experience union with God as happening over time, bit by bit through a journey aided by spiritual discipline and prayer. Such a belief is consistent with the description of spiritual progress found in the mystics.

## Anglican Temperament

**Comprehensive:** Anglicans believe the truth is to be found in the tension between counter-opposites. We affirm both sacred and secular, both the material and the non-material, both the mind and the heart, both the transcendence and the intimate closeness of God.

**Ambiguous:** Anglicans are not "black and white" thinkers, but instead affirm the ambiguity of experience and the value of learning to tolerate and embrace complexity and ambiguity in many aspects of human life and in the spiritual journey.

**Open-minded:** Anglicans are people of a questioning faith. We search for wisdom in many places and encourage people to listen to each other and to bring their honest questions to their spiritual life.

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**Intuitive:** Anglicans are at home in the world of image, symbol, myth, ritual, and the arts. Very few Anglicans write systematic theologies. Instead we are writers, poets, pastors, and musicians.

**Aesthetic:** Anglicans believe that beauty is the doorway to truth and goodness and that beauty is a doorway to God.

**Moderate:** Anglicans avoid extremes, believing that a godly life is one that is disciplined, balanced and temperate.

**Naturalistic:** Anglicans have a reverence for nature and its rhythms. Anglicans believe in working to protect the natural world and its creatures.

**Historical:** Anglicans value their historical roots and learn from a careful reflection on the past.

**Political:** Anglicans believe that Christian life has political implications and that civic life is both a legitimate and important place for Christian's apostolate to be expressed.