

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY

Liturgical Advisory Committee

Seconding of Report at General Synod 2003

The Revd Dr. Maurice Elliott

In seconding this report I should like to warmly endorse the words of gratitude already expressed by my colleague, the Bishop of Meath.

In particular, as one whose service on the LAC extends to no more than a 10th of that of Canon Turner, I would point out that his ‘fatherly correction’ at times extends beyond the limits of the meetings themselves and will often continue as some of us journey north together on the Enterprise rail service. I’m sure Edgar won’t mind me saying but on one occasion I’m sure I asked him a question as we were leaving Connolly Station in Dublin, and he was still answering it as we pulled into Central in Belfast!

To be perfectly serious, however, his contribution has been immense, and as a Committee it is very much our prayer that the impact of the new BCP 2004 to the life of our churches will be similarly immense. After all the rigours of Bills and Amendments through Synod, an exciting moment of opportunity now lies before us, and the Bishop has rightly spoken of our liturgy as **a weapon of mission**. What we do on a Sunday morning or a Sunday evening is the church’s shop-window. It will either appal or it will appeal; it will either drive people further away or it has the potential to draw them in in their search for meaning, for relationship and for community. And this new book is, I believe, both fresh and creative in its approach to the vital matter of worship.

Going with that, therefore, I simply wish to add my hope that the new book will somehow also be able to take its place as **a vehicle for unity**. By nature we are a

liturgical church, but in reality we are an exceedingly diverse church, and within limits that diversity is something which the new BCP seeks to encourage. The very essence of the book is that it enshrines both the traditional and the contemporary, and a blend of both must surely somehow cater for everyone. The reason why in the report (p.352) mention is made of the 1926 Psalter is precisely in order to highlight the fact that it will be still be both authorised and available alongside other forms. One the underlying principles behind the entire project of liturgical revision, which has consumed so much of our time and energy, is that there should be an incentive to creativity. Perhaps I might quote from the General Direction for Worship #3, ‘The notes incorporated into the services...have deliberately been kept to a minimum and simplified to facilitate an acceptable flexibility’. If we are to continue to search in any meaningful way for proper unity with Christians of other traditions, I am convinced that we ought first to address the state of our own house. As Bishop Richard has said, the publication of the new BCP heralds a new era. And my hope is that as the offering of our worship attains towards new standards of excellence and inspiration, so we can also learn to work together and to appreciate the insights and emphases of one another.

It gives me great pleasure to second the adoption of this report of the LAC.