

GENERAL SYNOD 2004

Report of the Liturgical Advisory Committee

Seconded by Canon R B Rountree

Archbishop,

The past year has seen the completion of the 2004 edition of the Book of Common Prayer. The LAC now finds itself redefining its role and looking back to its original points of reference. Its original remit called for the committee to both produce revised material and also to be involved in ongoing liturgical formation and education. Up to that point its activity was largely in the revision area, now it can concentrate far more in the area of formation and education. Last year a decision was made to appoint a Central Liturgical Officer to both assist in the introduction of the new BCP and also to help establish an ongoing structure for liturgical formation and education. I was honoured to accept that post.

I have found the role, while extremely stretching in trying to incorporate it with a full time parish, a most stimulating and rewarding experience so far. It has been a great joy to witness the enthusiasm and welcome which the new book has received throughout the length and breadth of the land, even in places where revised liturgy did not receive such a welcome in the past. This book is proving to be not only a beautiful production but a unifying force which honours both integrities of language within one cover. We no longer have BCP parishes and APB parishes; We now all belong to BCP parishes, some may tend more towards the One and some towards the Two. The advent of the 2004 book has also provided us again with a very usable private devotional manual with far more resources for personal use than has ever been the case in any earlier prayer book. I hope we will all encourage the people of the church to discover its riches in that area.

My appointment as CLO began last August and since then I have visited every diocese, some on a number of occasions. My work has been largely with clergy, lay readers and leaders of worship. For the period up to March work in preparation for the book was undertaken, with an emphasis on the church fully adopting the Revised Common Lectionary. Some resourcing, with the help of the Royal School of Church Music has been given for new ways of celebrating the liturgy in music. This has been especially important as we prepared for the introduction of the Common Worship Psalter. Understanding that Anglican liturgy is characterised by that which has a definite shape and structure but with enormous scope for freedom and flexibility and creativity within that structure is a constant theme characterised most fully the creative use of *A Service of the Word*.

Since March of this year when the book began to be available my work has been largely in helping to make worship leaders familiar with its shape and content and how best it may be used. I have also had the opportunity of visiting a number of parishes throughout the land on two Sundays of each month.

It is true that some dioceses have been much more engaged than others in this process, but all have been involved to some degree and the large majority very fully indeed. Every diocese has now appointed either one or two Diocesan Liturgical Officers. Their role is to continue this work of formation and education and the resourcing of worship leaders. They are now gradually forming into a team resourced by me as CLO and the Liturgical Advisory Committee. They will be the continuing liturgical resource for the future in the Church of Ireland. My role as CLO will come to an end at Easter 2005. Between now and then the team of Diocesan Liturgical Officers in conjunction with me as Central Liturgical Officer and the LAC will begin to put in place a practical structure which will ensure that good liturgical resources are available to all worship leaders and constant opportunities are made available for creative use of those resources to bring the liturgy of the Book of Common Prayer to life and help it speak more clearly to the people of our time and place.

I commend this process to you and ask all members to ensure that now we have the book in our hands we do not fall into the trap of thinking that the book can do the work for us. The words on the page are only the beginning of worship. It is the people of God sensitively led and enabled who bring life to those words as they bring prayer and praise to God.

I have much pleasure in seconding the report of the Liturgical Advisory Committee.