

## *International Anglican Liturgical Consultations*

# **‘Liturgy and Anglican Identity’ – the Prague Report**

### ***A Statement by the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation Prague 2005***

We believe that Anglican identity is expressed and formed through our liturgical tradition of corporate worship and private prayer, holding in balance both word and sacramental celebration. Specifically, our tradition is located within the broad and largely western stream of Christian liturgical development but has been influenced by eastern liturgical forms as well.

The importance of the eucharist and the pattern of daily prayer were re-focused through the lens of the Reformation, making both accessible to the people of God through simplification of structure and text and the use of vernacular language. Through the exchanges and relationships between the Provinces of the Anglican Communion the legacy of these historic principles continues to inform the on-going revision of our rites and their enactment in the offering to God of our worship. Each Province of the Anglican Communion has its own story to tell, and although within the Communion we are bound together by a common history, what really unites us, as with all Christians, is our one-ness in Christ through baptism and the eucharist. Our unity in baptism and at the table of the Lord is both a gift and a task. We celebrate our unity in Christ and seek to realize that unity through the diversity of backgrounds and cultures within the compass of the world-wide Anglican Communion.

Recognizing the role of the bishop as a symbol of unity and the partnership of ordained and lay, clergy and people, we value a leadership which is competent and liturgically formed and seeks to engage local culture, language and custom within a vision of what holds us together as part of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. We value a view of leadership which sees the leader of worship as a servant who enables people to worship in a way that has integrity within their own experience, customs, and gifts.

We value and celebrate the ways in which we have been formed by and within our customs to attend to the grace of God, invoked and celebrated in our public prayer, and active in our lives and in the world around us.

#### **Ethos/Elements: we value**

- Worship that includes and honours the proclamation of the word and celebrates the sacraments of baptism and eucharist.
- An inherited tradition that holds together both catholic and reformed.
- The fact that we have texts which are authorized.
- Freedom for varieties of expression.
- The aesthetic potential of environment, music, art, and movement, offered as appropriate to the culture.
- The symbiotic relationship between corporate worship and individual piety.
- Worship in an ordered liturgical space.
- The liturgical ministry of bishops, priests and deacons.

#### **We value the following characteristics in our rites:**

- Shape (see the *Toronto Statement of the IALC*, “*Walk in Newness of Life*”, for its treatment of the structure of the baptismal rite, and the *Findings of the Fifth IALC, Dublin*, for descriptive notes on the structure of the eucharistic rite).
- Extensive reading of scripture.
- Lectionary.
- Rhythms of year, week, day.
- Regular celebration of Holy Communion.
- Baptism in public worship.
- Prayers which include thanksgiving, (general) confession, intercessions.
- Extensive intercessions - focusing on the world, those in authority and the world church before local concerns, and including concern for those who live as shadowed by poverty, sickness, rejection, war, and natural disaster.
- Use of the Lord's Prayer.
- Use of responsive texts..

- Knowing words, music, and actions by heart.
- Common prayers.
- Corporate and participatory worship.
- Use of Creeds in worship.
- The openness and accessibility of our worship.

### **Some Anglican emphases, trends and aspirations.**

In worship, we are drawn into a living relationship with the Triune God in patterns of prayer that are in themselves Trinitarian in form and content, and invite us to enter more deeply into God's life and love as those who are called to be "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1.4). In our coming before God in adoration and thanksgiving, penitence and prayer, we recognize that liturgical celebration is both our corporate action, our work, words and ritual gestures, and also an occasion when God, through the Holy Spirit, is active and at work making and re-making our lives.

Our worship is rooted in God's work of creation, incarnation and redemption and so needs to be embodied and enacted in ways that engage all the senses. Thus we honour the goodness of creation, pray for its healing, and come to delight in splendour as we celebrate both the beauty of holiness and the holiness of beauty.

We recognize that God's creation is often disfigured by sin, by human greed and violence and we seek that healing grace which flows from the cross of Christ. As we commemorate Christ's saving death and transfiguring resurrection in the celebration of the eucharist we are again made one in him and strengthened to witness to his reconciling love in our broken world.

We invoke the Holy Spirit, seeking to be open to God's future, and to orient ourselves to the fulfilling of God's purposes. Recognizing this essential eschatological dimension of Christian worship, we seek to attend to the various relationships that transcend both space and time: our sharing in the Communion of Saints, with our Anglican brothers and sisters around the globe, and with the whole oikoumene. Through our conversations and engagement with each other in the work of Christ we seek to realize more fully the unity that God has given us and to which Christ calls us.

We believe that our worship conveys and carries the historic faith of the Church, and recognize that as we are blessed with reason, memory and skill we are called to use our gifts in crafting liturgy that honours our received and living faith in this time and context.

We believe that the rhythm of worship, our gathering and our being "sent out" mirrors the missio of God, of God's engagement with the world and the claims of God's Kingdom of justice, righteousness and peace. We therefore commend again the inseparable relation between worship and mission. (cf. the 'marks of mission' preamble IASCOME statement.)

### **Ways of Worship – four stories**

Here are four stories of Sunday mornings around the Anglican world. None of them is quite a documentary, and none is entirely imaginary. Each of them captures something of a local expression of Anglicanism. How do the people in the stories experience their Anglican identity in and around their liturgical celebrations? And how do we, when we read about these Anglican brothers and sisters, grow in our understanding of what it means for us to be part of the Anglican Communion?

#### **1 Bernard Mizeki Anglican Church**

Mary and Tsepo are going to Sunday church together. It's Bernard Mizeki Church, named after a local martyr, in the village where Mary lives and where Tsepo, her grandson, comes back to visit. (Tsepo works in the city, where he attends St. Francis' Anglican Church, Parkview).

The service starts at eight, but they arrive early because Mary helps to prepare the altar. The Churchwardens are there, unlocking everything. Mary collects the altar cloths and all the paraphernalia - candles, chalices and so on - and sets the altar. Tsepo is catching up on village news with one of the Churchwardens. People are trickling in. The priest hasn't arrived yet - he's on the road from somewhere else. This is the Sunday he comes to Bernard Mizeki.

There are no music books and no prayer books in the pews, but people who have books at home bring them along. As people arrive, singing starts: choruses, with bodies swaying. It won't be quiet, though, as people continue to arrive and greet each other. The men sit on the right hand side of the church, facing the altar, the women on the left. The Mothers' Union members are easily identified by their white tops and black skirts and Mothers' Union badges. Though Tsepo can sit with his girlfriend in the city church, he can't even sit with his grandmother in the village. The choir and the lay ministers are robing and heading for the room at the back. Hopefully by now the priest has arrived - they'd rather not start without him.

When the priest is robed and ready a signal is given and the chorus-singing stops. A hymn is announced from three different hymn books: English, isiXhosa and seTswana, all translations of "Ancient and Modern". The singing starts, unaccompanied, and the ministers and the choir process in from the main entrance.

The priest and lay ministers lead the service from "An Anglican Prayer Book" in seTswana, and most of the people respond in seTswana, though the page numbers are the same for the English and isiXhosa versions of the book. The bible readings are taken from the Lectionary for the day, and are read in seTswana. A chorus is sung as the priest prepares to read the gospel. Although the church is small, the priest still carries the bible closer to the people for the gospel reading. Just before the sermon, the children go outside for Sunday School, where they are taught by teenagers and a couple of older people. They will come back in for their blessing at Communion time. The sermon is in seTswana, but is translated into isiXhosa by someone from the congregation or one of the lay ministers, complete with gestures imitated from the preacher. It could be quite a long sermon - the preacher hasn't been there for a month, and this is his big opportunity to teach the people.

The prayers are chosen from one of the four forms the Prayer Book offers, with more singing before and after the prayers. There are lots of local community concerns in the prayers: Mama Rose who's not well, the school books that need to arrive in time, the bishop who's coming to do confirmations in a fortnight, and the confirmation candidates. Tsepo notices that it will be the same bishop who visited Parkview a month or so back.

After the prayers, the notices are given: about the confirmation and the bishop's visit and the special meal to be held on that day, about money needed for flowers, and a reminder about Thursday's Mothers' Union meeting. Then there is the greeting of peace, and people are moving around everywhere with handshakes and hugs.

At the offertory, one of the Churchwardens puts the collection plate at the front, and people come singing and dancing down the aisle to make their offerings. Mama Mary and Tsepo, because he is visiting, bring up the bread and wine for the eucharist.

The priest sings the eucharistic Great Thanksgiving, with lots of gestures and signs of the cross. People sing the responses and the Lord's Prayer. The women come up first for Communion, though Tsepo's cousin, Patience, stays back with her baby. The men follow, then all the children come up for a blessing at the end of Communion.

Then there is more singing, a blessing and the dismissal, and a procession of all the ministers out of the church door. When the priest has said a final prayer with the lay ministers and the choir, the choir members go back into the church, still singing, to disrobe, while the priest greets the members of the congregation. Of course everyone has tea: the mothers go into the vestry to boil the kettle, set up tables outside, and bring out the cakes they have brought to share. Everyone is busy, catching up on news, drinking tea, paying funeral dues, asking Tsepo what he has been up to in the city.

## **2 St Mary's Anglican Church**

Chris and Sophie arrive in plenty of time for High Mass, as it says on the notice board outside, at 11.00 am. On entering the church they notice the familiar smell of charcoal being lit for the incense. The notice board beside the door has posters advertising a big event at the Cathedral, and the forthcoming parish Pentecost pilgrimage.

Two congregation members are giving out hymn books and service booklets and a single sheet of paper with music and notices. The visitors take theirs and sit down at the back between a man in casual clothes and a woman with two young children. She is kneeling, holding a rosary in her hand, and the children are making sure they have all the same books as the adults, along with photocopied sheets with illustrations about the

day's bible readings. Just to the side is a beautiful chapel with a statue of Mary holding the child Jesus, and several people are lighting candles on the stand in front of it. At the front of the church, three people in red cassocks and white cottas are setting up the chalices and lighting the candles in a highly ritualised way, bowing to the altar whenever they pass it.

At 11.00 am a bell sounds from the back and everyone stands as the organ plays the introduction to the hymn and everyone starts to sing as the choir and clergy process in, led by people carrying incense, cross and candles. People bow as the cross and priest pass. It all seems very dignified and formal. So far no announcement has been made, no words have been spoken, yet everyone seems to know what to expect and what to do. There are three clergy wearing matching vestment, and the priest presiding is a woman.

The words of the service are very familiar "Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open...." People are very comfortable with making gestures, standing and kneeling, and Chris and Sophie take their cues from the rest. They sit for the first reading, and a woman makes her way to the lectern carrying her own Bible. When she announces the reading and that she is using the Moffat translation, people smile as if they recognize a familiar eccentricity of hers. There is a splendid procession for the reading of the gospel. The priest preaches from the pulpit for 10 minutes, a challenging and humorous message based on the Gospel reading. After the Creed, which is sung, prayers of intercession are led by members of the congregation from the back of the church. There is plenty of silence, which Sophie and Chris use to add their own thoughts; and the prayers finish with the Hail Mary.

Then they stand up for the Peace, which the priest leads from the front. People turn only to their immediate neighbour with a handshake, and the children solemnly greet the visitors with just the right words. Another hymn starts without announcement and the sidespeople come round and take up the collection. Then a group of people process up to the altar carrying the wafer bread and wine. More incense is used, and the congregation is censured as well as the priest. All the servers seemed to know exactly what they are doing. The priest sings the first part of the Eucharistic Prayer and everyone responds. As the prayer progresses, bells are rung and there is an atmosphere of reverence and attentiveness in the church.

After the Lord's Prayer, which everyone sings, the sidespeople make sure the visitors know they are invited to the sanctuary for Communion. People genuflect, bow and cross themselves very unselfconsciously. The children receive communion too, carefully making the sign of the cross as they kneel. After Communion, back in their seats, there is quite a long silence and everyone seems very comfortable with it. Before the blessing, the priest invites everyone to a 'Refreshment Sunday Party' in the vicarage after the service, with canapés and pink champagne. Everyone stands to sing 'Guide me, O thou great Redeemer', which Chris thinks a bit rousing for Lent, and the choir and clergy process out again during a lively voluntary on the organ. The woman with the children escorts Sophie and Chris across to the vicarage for the party.

### **3 St Mark's Anglican Church**

At 10.30 on Sunday morning, a crowd of university students have arrived at St Mark's for the main morning service. The notice board outside the building shows that there has already been an early morning service of Holy Communion here, according to the Book of Common Prayer of 1662, and there will be a youth service at 8.00. There are little black books on shelves at the back of the church that have clearly been in use earlier in the day. The floor is carpeted and there are banners with scripture texts on them adorning the walls. Helpers are busy moving the chairs into a semi-circle from the earlier rows, so that everyone will be able to see the screen at the front. As people arrive they are given a leaflet with the week's coming events and prayer points, but for this service, no books are needed.

Before the service, images of inner-city streetscapes and close-ups of children's faces are projected on the large screen, which soon comes into use for the words of the songs and some of the prayers. Towards the front of the building is a communion table that's not the centre of attention at present, as the music stands of the band are in front of it. The music will be provided by this group of very talented people who spent most of Saturday afternoon rehearsing. The music is loud, and while the words praise God, the musical idiom ranges from heavy rock to ballad style.

The service moves from a block of energetic and repetitive opening songs and choruses into a quieter mode, with prayers from a leader calling the congregation to be aware of God's presence and to prepare to hear God's word. It's all moving towards the centrepiece of the service: a substantial sermon. A good number of the congregation are checking references in their pew Bibles as the minister preaches. Some of the congregation seem to be taking notes. Key points and relevant scripture texts, and the occasional video clip,

appear on the big screen as the sermon progresses. The sermon is part of a series looking at St Paul's letter to the Romans. After the sermon, there is plenty of time for unscripted prayer and testimony from a range of young adults. The shifts in focus are managed by another leader who may well be ordained, but who is wearing casual clothes like all the others present.

The prayers mention the local bishop, and the imminent visit of an African bishop who is being sponsored by the diocese to lead a local mission. In the notices, there is an appeal for additional prayer support for the family the parish has sent to run a children's home in Romania, and for accommodation that needs to be found locally for students from out of town.

After the service, there is excellent coffee, and an offer of pizza for those who want to stay and work on planning next week's service. There is a bookstall and Fair Trade craft stall, and someone is collecting signatures for a petition to cancel debt in the developing world.

#### **4 St John's Anglican Church**

In Japanese society, the Christian population is very small. Many Japanese people pay homage at a Shinto shrine, but only once a year, on New Year's Day. In such a society, it is not easy for many people to visit a Christian Church. For many, the distinction between Roman Catholic and Protestant churches is not clear. Still fewer people know about the Anglican Church. When people hear the name 'Nippon Sei Ko Kai - Anglican Church?' they wonder whether it is Roman Catholic or Protestant. So an Anglican pastor or church member can only answer by saying, "We are catholic, but not Roman Catholic. Please come and see. If you attend the Sunday service, you can find out."

Akiko is a junior high school student. Her first impression is of the church building, and she is also attracted by the beautiful resonance of hymns and organ music. She has been standing outside the small country church, near the window, listening to the music flowing from inside. When she decides to enter the church and attend the Sunday 10.30 a.m. service, everything is a new experience for her. As she enters, she is impressed by the solemn, quiet atmosphere inside.

A church member who also stands near the door greets her. "Hello, welcome. Is this your first time in a church?" An old man hands her three books, the Book of Common Prayer, a Hymnal, and the Lectionary for Year A, as well as a leaflet headed "today's programme." Akiko is a bit confused, but the old man kindly leads her to a seat and says, "Please relax! People stand when they are singing, and sit to listen. They sometimes kneel when they pray. But please feel free to do as you wish."

At 10.30, when the worship begins, people around her suddenly stand up and begin to sing. Ministers wearing unusual dress come in, and process to the front. During the service, everything is completely new to her. Sometimes she feels strange, because the ministers and people say prayers together, and act corporately.

After the service, the pastor introduces her to the congregation and says, "Welcome to this church." One lady - not so old - approaches Akiko, asks her impressions, and says, "If you have time, please join us. We'll have lunch, it's Japanese noodles today." Two or three young women, almost the same age as Akiko, also come up and welcome her and invite her to come along with them.

A few months have passed since Akiko's first visit. Now she participates in the church's Sunday service almost every week. Sometimes she can sit inside the church, very quietly. Little by little, she learns the pray, not only for herself, but for her family and friends and for people in distress. She has seen how, every Sunday, people pray for others who are ill and in trouble, and for peace for the world.

At the beginning, Akiko thought that religious faith was a very private matter, just for her personal rest and relief. But now she is gradually realizing that the Christian faith is not only an individual matter. Through the worship, and through encounters with members of the church, she now feels that she is accepted as a member of a family, the family of God. Akiko is beginning to think of being baptized, and belonging to the church formally. She thinks that she wants to share the bread and wine like the other members. She feels a kind of mystery is there. It is not easy to express, but she feels her life is strengthened by the mysterious power of God.

#### **Suggestions for Study**

Read the story. In a group, have someone read slowly aloud. Try to let your imagination visualize the events described. Take a few minutes to reflect on the story, letting it play in your mind. As you reflect on each story you might ask yourself the following questions, taking time to form your reply. In a group, members may first reflect in silence and then share their responses with each other, in smaller groups of five or six if there are many participants.

1. How much of the story reflects your own experience of worship?
2. Would you feel comfortable in this worship setting? If not, why not?
3. What elements in the story would you recognize as being particularly Anglican? What elements would be foreign to you as an Anglican?
4. Do the styles of worship reflected in these stories contribute to or detract from Anglican unity?
5. In the light of these stories what would you seek to change in your own pattern of worship?
6. The four vignettes were intended to illustrate the diversity of worship in the Anglican Communion. Please write a description of Anglican worship which would express the hope of our calling to be one in Christ.