

# LITURGY COMMISSION

## Meetings & Membership

The Liturgy Commission has met on three occasions, totalling ten working days, since the 2004 meeting of General Synod, with one meeting immediately prior to that meeting:

September 2004 (Fremantle) – two days, plus one-day WELL

November 2005 (Melbourne) – two days, plus two-day WELL

*[August 2006 (Darwin) – three day visit by Chair and Secretary to Nungalinga, with Bp James Leftwich, including one-day WELL]*

November 2006 (Canberra) – three days

March 2007 (Melbourne) – three days

This schedule is a considerably limited one, restricted largely by budgetary considerations.

Archbishop Roger Herft continues to chair the Commission, with the Revd Canon Dr Charles Sherlock being its Executive Secretary. One vacancy in the membership of the Commission existed at the time of the Fremantle synod, since filled by the Revd Canon Gillian Varcoe. The Revd Scott Holmes was invited to participate in the 2006 and 2007 meetings as a consultant.

Three matters have dominated the work of the Commission: liturgical resources in relation to the environment, situations following the disclosure of abuse, and liturgy in a mission-shaped church. Other projects include the drafting of materials for use when children are present, and resources to support marriage (loaded on the General Synod website). The important decision was made to commence work on both supplementary and new texts for Holy Communion services, but this is still in its infancy. In addition to this 'text-based' work, members have continued to offer Workshops Encouraging Liturgical Life (WELLS) as noted above, and continued to develop relations with other parts of the Anglican and wider Church on matters pertinent to liturgy.

As regards printed publications, the annual Lectionary book continues to be issued, edited by Ms Pam Raff and the Secretary. Following an approach from Defence Force chaplains, a book containing Daily Morning & Evening Prayer, with a set psalm for each week-day, and the Thanksgivings, Prayers, Blessings and collects from APBA was issued in 2006. The APBA services of Ministry with the Sick, Ministry with the Dying and Reconciliation of a Penitent were brought together into a single booklet and issued in 2006.

## **1 LITURGICAL RESOURCES RELATED TO THE ENVIRONMENT**

### **1.1 General**

Work commenced at the September 2004 meeting following a request from the Bishops' conference. It began with a broad consideration of what exactly churches were requesting, or needed, in this area. The importance of not using prayer to support any particular ideology was affirmed, and a deeper appreciation was gained of the breadth of scripture related to the topic, as well as traditional resources such as Rogation, and resources developed more recently by other Christian traditions.

The 2006 meeting was held in Canberra so that the Commission could engage with Bp George Browning, noting the important paper 'Green by Grace', and the attention he gave to liturgical matters in his study leave report.

## **1.2 'Trial use' resources (2004-5 work)**

During 2004-5 the Commission issued the following resources for 'trial use', available through the Liturgy section of the General Synod website:

*Issues in praying about 'the environment', which notes existing APBA resources*

*A Thanksgiving for Wilderness*

*Confession & Absolution: Stewardship / Restoration of creation*

*A Thanksgiving for Gardens*

*Collect and Intercessions relating to the environment*

*Rogation, creation and living creatures: scripture readings*

## **1.3 Resources responding to particular situations**

The Indian Ocean tsunami following Christmas 2005 saw liturgical resources developed quickly by three members for use on the Day of Mourning, and released by the website and emails to diocesan bishops.

In 2006, as the drought worsened, the Commission issued a further prayer for rain to supplement the resources of APBA (see the Conclusion).

## **1.4 A season of creation?**

A 'season of creation' has been suggested as an addition to the Christian Year. After some detailed consideration, the Commission decided not to support such a proposal as a *permanent* change, noting that 'creation' is a basic theological truth recognized in every Sunday liturgy. On the other hand, greater emphasis on this element of Christian faith can appropriately be made at particular seasons, not least Rogation Days (cf APBA page 451), whose traditional association with 'harvest' could be broadened to reflect a less 'anthropocentric' perspective.

In order to respond to requests for seasonal material, the Commission is preparing resources for each main season which draw out ecological motifs related to each (eg judgment and new creation in Advent).

## **1.5 New resources**

Newly drafted materials available on the General Synod website include

*A Litany of Lament for the Environment*

*A form of Confession*

*A Meditation in times of Drought.*

This issue is expected to remain before the Commission for some years.

## **2 LITURGICAL RESOURCES FOR USE FOLLOWING THE DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE**

Initial materials were issued prior to the 2004 General Synod meeting: these were designed to give churches resources for public, corporate use following the disclosure of abuse, but *not* other situations (a point not appreciated in some responses). Resources issued by dioceses have also been monitored, most being local adaptations of the Commission's work

Work has continued since, including correspondence and engagement with others concerned with the issues involved. Additional resources have been drafted, suitable for use at a personal level – 'Companion prayers' – though the Commission emphasizes once more that what is needed in any particular situation calls for prayerful discernment more than set texts.

Further work is taking place in the light of comments received.

The resources issued by the Commission in this area are available on the Liturgy page of the General Synod website.

### **3 NATSIAC AND LITURGY**

In the lead-up to APBA a number of indigenous Anglicans offered resources for the book, and General Synod in 1998 asked the Liturgy Commission and NATSIAC to be in contact: a meeting took place at the 2001 General Synod.

The Chair and Secretary of the Commission, with Bp James Leftwich, were able to visit Darwin for three days in August 2005 to learn about how the Commission might support indigenous Anglicans. They were also able to offer a one-day WELL during this visit.

NATSIAC has since written to the Liturgy Commission asking for the inclusion of NAIDOC day in the Calendar, and the provision of prayers for Survival, Sorry, Mabo and Reconciliation days. The Commission is willing to take up these requests, and sought authorization from the Standing Committee to begin work, with a view to publishing a book (through Broughton) including prayers and stories from indigenous Anglicans, with texts in language as well as English, plus resources offered by the Commission for these and other days. Such work would require specialist assistance, for which funds would be needed.

Alongside this contact, correspondence has been undertaken for some time regarding the description of James Noble (November 26). The Commission is in consultation with NATSIAC re its recommendation to General Synod that this be changed to 'pioneer Aboriginal deacon'.

### **4 LITURGY FOR A MISSION-SHAPED CHURCH**

How the church remains faithful to the apostolic faith, while seeking to ensure that its public worship is open to those who are 'outsiders', is a major question for western churches today. The Commission remains committed to the scriptural principle that the purpose of worship is the building up of believers, and bringing glory to God. It also recognises that a wide range of resources attentive to liturgy for a mission-shaped church is available on the web.

In the Anglican Communion, the *International Anglican Liturgical Commission* at its Prague meeting in 2005 considered these matters, and prepared a statement on 'Liturgy and Anglican Identity', with examples from particular churches.

The Commission considered the Report at its November 2006 meeting, and commended it to the Bishops' Conference in 2007. It is now offered to members of the Australian Church as a positive contribution to the life and witness of the Anglican Church of Australia.

The main part of the Report is included as an Appendix.

### **5 MARRIAGE RITES**

#### **5.1 Changed contexts**

The changing contexts related to marriage in Australian include an increase in the number of persons whose weddings (for a variety of reasons) are not conducted in a Christian ceremony.

Discussion of this matter disclosed a number of deeper issues regarding the nature of marriage, its relationship to a wedding ceremony, 'serial monogamy' in the West, the different resonance of 'til death do us part' when the average marriage span has risen from 20-25 years at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to 55-60 years by its end, and suchlike questions, which may need to be considered by the Doctrine Commission.

## **5.2 Blessing of a Civil Marriage**

Where a couple married in a civil ceremony wishes to have their marriage blessed, to this point clergy have taken up informal resources, or borrowed from other Christian traditions.

The Commission believes that a full service of Blessing of a Civil Marriage is now called for, and has drafted a rite which is available in the General Synod website.

## **5.3 Blessing of a marriage in another Christian tradition**

In addition, there are sometimes requests for the blessing of a marriage celebrated in a Christian tradition other than Anglican. A draft rite for use following an Orthodox wedding has also been drafted, and placed in the General Synod website.

## **5.4 Renewal of wedding vows**

Finally, the Commission notes that a rite for celebrating the renewal of wedding vows has been published in *A Pastoral Handbook for Anglicans* (Canberra: Acorn, 2001) and is considering this as a draft rite for such a purpose.

# **6 KEEPING IN CONTACT**

The Commission has kept in regular contact with a number of bodies relating to liturgy:

- As noted above, the Chair and Secretary, together with Bp James Leftwich, were able to spend three days in Darwin in 2006, meeting at Nungalinga College with Anglicans engaged in indigenous worship, and offering a WELL for Darwin clergy and people.
- The Commission maintains a close relationship with Broughton Publishing through the Secretary, and invited Katherine Blythe (Manager of Broughton) to its 2007 meeting.
- Three members represent the Anglican church on the *Australian Consultation on Liturgy* (ACOL) an ecumenical body which meets each year to share what is happening in Australian churches. ACOL is the Australian contact for the *English Language Liturgical Consultation*, which sponsors the *Revised Common Lectionary* project, and issues agreed texts for prayers used across the Christian traditions.
- Several members participate in the *International Anglican Liturgical Consultation* which meets for a week each two years. IALC has produced guidelines for the Anglican Communion on Christian initiation (1991), eucharist (1995) – both of which influenced APBA – Ordination (2003) and Anglican identity (2005 – see above). IALC 2007 took place in August (Palermo, Italy) with four members participating (largely at their own expense), the area of study being funerals.

# **7 OTHER AREAS**

Correspondence has been maintained with Australian Anglicans on a number of topics, including the relationship of Holy Baptism for an infant to Thanksgiving for a Child, lectionary principles, calendar provision, the Lord's Prayer, choreography in the Ordinal and matters of liturgical minutiae.

The Commission has taken up the following matters not noted above:

## **7.1 Services where children are present, including lectionaries**

Work has commenced on supplementary materials for use with Holy Communion services – resources for when children are present, and a model service, following a Good Shepherd motif, has been loaded on the General Synod website.

The question of whether a children's lectionary should be prepared has been considered, but declined. A lectionary presupposes that those present are attending regularly, and it is hard to see why children should be offered a different diet of

readings from the holy scriptures than other Christians. However it is acknowledged that the choice of readings may be affected where it is known that children will be present, as will the translation used. In this latter respect, the Contemporary English Version is commended.

In discussing this matter, the Commission noted that an ordered, public reading of the holy scriptures in their fullness is a fundamental principle of doctrine and worship in the Anglican tradition, the dilution of which should not be contemplated.

### **7.2 Musical settings for the eucharist**

The Commission has been in contact with the National Ecumenical Church Music Committee to explore what musical settings of the Holy Communion are available, with a view to supplementing these. This work is ongoing.

### **7.3 Anglican-Lutheran dialogue and confirmation**

The Primate asked three members of the Commission for their advice on a proposal regarding Anglican-Lutheran confirmation. This was offered in some fullness, and referred to the Anglican-Lutheran dialogue group.

### **7.4 Times & Seasons**

Requests have come to the Commission for an updated version of Gilbert Sinden's *Times & Seasons*, which gave information on each person in the Calendar in *An Australian Prayer Book* (1977). This has now been scanned electronically with a view to a major revision.

Commission members have been gathering material from a range of sources, both internationally and in Australia, and it is hoped that this project will be able to be carried through (in association with Broughton Publications) over the next two years.

## **CONCLUSION**

To close, we offer this prayer for rain, reflecting current needs in our nation.

○ God, the earth is thirsty for rain  
and we wait for you  
to refresh the land and all its creatures,  
the rivers and lakes, the crops and gardens.  
Send abundant rain, we pray,  
and teach us to be better stewards  
of all the blessings you provide,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## APPENDICES

### **A Functions of the Liturgy Commission (Canon 19, 1998 section 11):**

- (c) To examine questions of liturgy referred to it by the Primate, the Standing Committee or the General Synod, and to report thereon to the referring party and Standing Committee.
- (d) To advise the Primate, the Standing Committee or the General Synod, on matters relating to the creative nurture and renewal of the liturgical life of this church.

### **B Members of the Liturgy Commission**

Chair: Archbishop Roger Herft (Newcastle, then Perth)

Secretary: The Revd Canon Dr Charles Sherlock (Melbourne, then Bendigo)

Members: The Revd Christopher Chataway (Adelaide)  
The Revd Dr Ron Dowling (Adelaide)  
Mr Robin Grove (Melbourne)  
The Revd Boak Jobbins (Sydney)  
The Very Revd David Richardson (Melbourne)  
The Revd Dr Elizabeth Smith (Melbourne)  
The Revd Canon Gillian Varcoe (Canberra, from 2006)

Consultant The Revd Scott Holmes (Melbourne, from 2006)

### **C The Prague Report, 'Liturgy and Anglican Identity'**

*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**

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

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

1. 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).
2. Extensive reading of scripture.
3. Lectionary.
4. Rhythms of year, week, day.
5. Regular celebration of Holy Communion.
6. Baptism in public worship.
7. Prayers which include thanksgiving, (general) confession, intercessions.
8. Extensive intercessions - focusing on the world, those in authority and the world church before local concerns, and including concern for those who lives as shadowed by poverty, sickness, rejection, war, and natural disaster.
9. Use of the Lord's Prayer.
10. Use of responsive texts..
11. Knowing words, music, and actions by heart.
12. Common prayers.
13. Corporate and participatory worship.
14. Use of Creeds in worship.
15. 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?

*[Four stories, plus study questions, make up the substance of the Report, the full version of which is available at [www.anglican.org/](http://www.anglican.org/)*