

by Peter Toon and Louis R. Tarsitano

*Neither Archaic nor Obsolete:
the Language of Common Prayer and Public Worship*

COMMON WORSHIP CONSIDERED

A Liturgical Journey Examined

by

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Gracious Father, I humbly beseech Thee for Thy Holy Catholic Church. Fill it with all truth, in all truth, with peace. Where it is corrupt, purge it. Where it is in error, direct it. Where it is superstitious, rectify it. Where anything is amiss, reform it. Where it is right, strengthen and confirm it. Where it is in want, furnish it. Where it is divided and rent asunder, make up the breaches of it, O Thou Holy One of Israel.

William Laud, Works, Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology III, p. 67

Preface

In the period before I left the Church of England in 1990 to work in the Episcopal Church of the United States of America, I used both *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662)¹ and *The Alternative Service Book 1980*. When I returned to the Church of England in December 2001 it was to a parish which used the *Prayer Book* for Sunday services, and *Common Worship*, sometimes, for marriage and baptism. *Common Worship* is the set of forms of service, directories and pastoral aids, in progress, of which the main volume appeared in 2000.

On arrival in America I soon realised that the book with the title, *The Book of Common Prayer ... according to the use of The Episcopal Church* (1979) is not in fact the *Prayer Book* as I had known it in England. It is much more like *The Alternative Service Book 1980*. Within its covers most services are in “contemporary language” and a few in “traditional language”. The latter are based upon, but not identical with, services in the real American Prayer Book, *The Book of Common Prayer* (1789, 1891 & 1928). It soon became apparent to me that the General Convention of the Episcopal Church had in 1979 effectively changed the meaning of “Common Prayer”. While the Church of England in 1980 had carefully distinguished the *Prayer Book* from the new services, the Episcopal Church had in 1979 effectively laid the classical *Prayer Book* to rest and pirated its title and name for a new and different type of book. Since the 1970s the Prayer Book Society of the USA has been working hard to keep the 1928 *Prayer Book* in print and to support those parishes which still desire to use it.

In the decade or so that I worked in America, I watched the Episcopal Church produce, and the General Convention approve, a series of trial services which increasingly expressed as church doctrine the feminist agenda for the “non-exclusion” of women. What is referred to as “gender neutral language” was used both in referring to human beings and to God, even as the acceptance of the ordination of women was made part of the official “creed” of the Church. At the time that I returned to England, the Liturgical and Music Commission of the

¹ Unless otherwise stated the *Prayer Book* means the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*.

Episcopal Church was engaged in a major review of the liturgical needs of its membership in order to present a report to the General Convention in July 2003 as the basis for the production of a replacement for the 1979 Prayer Book by 2009. This is expected to be a multiple provision of services and outlines of services in various languages.

Having missed the English debates of the 1990s, in the General Synod and elsewhere, concerning new liturgy, I had to make up for lost time. Thus I began to study the provisions of *Common Worship*, and the books produced to explain this new liturgical phenomenon. There was much more to look at than I first expected! Happily, I found that my studies of new liturgy and my observation of change in the Episcopal Church of America were a great help to me in my evaluation of the texts of *Common Worship*. What began as a personal quest for understanding, is now offered to others for their perusal and examination.

The title, *Common Worship Considered*, accurately represents what I have been doing and what I believe are the contents of this book. The subtitle, which refers to a Journey, points to the image preferred by the Liturgical Commission to cover all their provisions from Baptism to Funeral.

The primary vantage point from which my consideration has been made is the high ground of the Formularies of the Church of England, since it is to them that the doctrine of all alternative services is to conform. My hope is that this small book helps others to engage in calm and rational consideration.

Perhaps I need to say that together with my friend, the Revd Dr Louis R. Tarsitano of Savannah, Georgia, I have written a short book which in many ways paves the way for this one. It concerns (a) the origins, nature, characteristics and use of the classic English idiom/dialect/language of public worship and common prayer; and (b) the efforts made from the 1960s to replace it with a new language of prayer, based upon the secular idiom of our day. Its full title is: *Neither Archaic nor Obsolete: The English Language of Common Prayer and Public Worship* (2003) and it is published by the same publisher as the present volume. I make some use of it in Chapter Ten. I hope that readers of this book will obtain and read the previous one.

I need to thank various persons for their help, particularly Ian Robinson, Louis Tarsitano, Roger Beckwith, Raymond Chapman, Prudence Dailey, Graham Eglinton, Arthur Capey, George Westhaver, Colin Podmore and my wife, Vita Toon.

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Easter 2003

CHAPTER ONE

The Preface of Common Worship

In most cases the Preface of a book is written last of all. When it is for an important publication, such as an official Report of a government or a Prayer Book for a National Church, it is usually most informative, providing information not only about the contents but also about the general philosophy supporting them.

The Preface to *The Book of the Common Prayer* (1549) was written by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer after the work of creating this new prayer book in English had been completed. It makes claims about the reading of Holy Scripture in the ancient Church, the duty to read through the Bible every year and to pray the Psalms daily and the whole Psalter monthly; and these are given practical embodiment in the 1549 *Prayer Book* itself. This Preface also explains the four principles which guided the reform of the complex medieval services and their rubrics to produce the new ones with simplified directions. The principles are the purgation of unsuitable material, employment of the vernacular language, simplification of ritual, and uniformity of use in the nation. Finally, where there are doubtful cases the power of interpretation is to be given to the bishops.

In *The Book of Common Prayer* of 1662 Cranmer's Preface is renamed "Concerning the Service of the Church" and a new Preface written by Dr Sanderson, Bishop of Lincoln, takes pride of place. It sets forth the principles which had guided the Church of England in revising the *Prayer Book* from time to time, the circumstances that led to the revision of 1661, and the reasons for the chief alterations then introduced.

When the *Prayer Book* of 1662 was adapted in 1789 for use in the newly organized Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America, it contained a Preface written by Dr William Smith. This not only constitutes one of the monuments of eighteenth-century prose but also provides an important introduction to this first official *Book of Common Prayer* for an independent America. It

summarizes the principles of worship as they are known in the Anglican way; it provides the reasons for the edition of an American *Prayer Book*; it describes the nature of the revised *Prayer Book* and ends with a warm commendation of this book to the membership of the Church.

In the case of Cranmer's, Sanderson's and Smith's prefaces, it would be possible to begin with the information supplied and the claims made and then test them by studying the contents of the 1549 & 1662 & 1789 Prayer Books. Here we shall perform a similar task and examine the Preface to *Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England* (2000), taking it paragraph by paragraph in order to be clear as to what is being claimed and affirmed. This careful examination will then point us into various forms of enquiry concerning the provision of services and prayers called *Common Worship*.

However, before we turn to the Preface it will be useful to have before us a bird's eye view of liturgical revision in the Church of England, which began about a century ago with the report of the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline in 1906. From this began the preparation of what eventually (after being halted by World War I) became the 1928 *Prayer Book*. Though approved by the Church Assembly this revision of *The Book of Common Prayer* of 1662 was rejected by the House of Commons, because it made too many concessions to Anglo-Catholics for Protestants to be happy with it. After World War II, the first services to be authorised by the Church Assembly in 1964 were called "Series 1" and were in essence certain services from the 1928 *Prayer Book*. "Series 2" followed and though retaining the traditional idiom of prayer and addressing the "Thou-God", it did not begin from the 1662 text but rather from patristic models. Also it adopted the position of "studied ambiguity" of doctrinal expression (e. g., of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist) and this approach has remained part of the liturgical scene. In 1973 "Series 3" appeared and for the first time in official Church of England liturgy a "contemporary" idiom was used and God was addressed as the "You-God". Then in 1980 *The Alternative Service Book 1980: Services authorized for use in the Church of England in conjunction with the The Book of Common Prayer* was published, containing primarily versions of the experimental "Series 3" services of the last decade or more. The full title of this Prayer Book is significant, for the Worship and Doctrine Measure of 1974 had insisted that the Formularies of the Church of England were unchanged and thus *The Book of Common Prayer* was both the primary manual of worship and also a standard of doctrine (with the Articles of Religion and the Ordinal) of the established Church.

In 2000 *Common Worship* replaced *The Alternative Service Book 1980*, but not all the parts of it were published immediately. They were to appear over a period of several years. The former Liturgical Publishing Group (which was chaired by the Bishop of Guildford) was responsible for the publication of the first and main volume, containing Sunday services and the Baptism Service, and for the Preface. The Preface, however, reflected the views of the Liturgical Commission (which is chaired by the Bishop of Salisbury). This knowledge that several hands had a part in the creation of the Preface may make the more difficult our aim to gain from it as much clarity as possible concerning the specific purpose of and claims for *Common Worship*. Further, the involvement of several parties probably explains why, as we shall see, it does not always have coherence and why it appears to jump about from topic to topic. Nevertheless, in a roundabout way, this imperfection of style does perhaps provide more insight into what is being claimed for *Common Worship* than a more polished style would have done, such as there was in the Preface to *The Alternative Service Book 1980*.

I Great Significance

The publication of Common Worship is an occasion of great significance in the life of the Church of England, because the worship of God is central to the life of his Church.

The appearance of the main volume with the sub-title, "Services and Prayers for the Church of England" in 2000, along with other volumes bearing the primary title of *Common Worship*, has certainly been a significant, open-ended event, which had a beginning but (at the time of writing in 2003) has not yet an end. The creation, approving, editing and publishing of such a great amount of material represent a major achievement. In comparison, the work involved in the making of the 1928 *Prayer Book*, Series 1, 2 and 3, and *The Alternative Service Book 1980*, seems minimal!

It is obvious (a) that the removal of *The Alternative Service Book* which had been in use since 1980 and the arrival of *Common Worship* have created a tremendous amount of work for individuals, commissions, committees, synods and the like, and (b) the adoption and reception in parishes have created great expense, disruption, opportunities and changes. We may admit that these facts alone merit the use of the adjective "great" as a descriptive term before "significance".

But the adjective "great" seems to be intended to point to a positive idea, for example, that of "the dawn of a new era" or "the

arrival of new opportunities with fresh resources". In fact, the clause "because the worship of God is central to the life of the Church" seems to be related to "great significance" and suggests the positive idea that with the arrival of *Common Worship* the Church of England is able to worship God better than ever before.

Certainly no Christian can disagree with the claim that "the worship of God is central to the life of the Church". Yet he may enthusiastically embrace this affirmation while also having serious doubts that the provisions of *Common Worship* are the best way to provide for, or to experience, the centrality of worship in the Church of England.

It is interesting, if not worrying, that at the beginning of the twenty-first century the Church of England is doing the very opposite to what it did in the middle of the sixteenth century. At that time, for the worship of the whole nation, it reduced multiple, medieval volumes to one compact, modern book, *The Book of the Common Prayer* (1549). Now it is creating as the replacement for one book, *The Alternative Service Book 1980* a small library of new volumes under the general heading of *Common Worship*. To keep track of these new large or small books/booklets, and the various commentaries produced to explain them, is not easy, except for the specialist or the enthusiast. Those who possess *The Church of England Year Book, 2003*, can consult a full list on pages 229 and 330, although it is now out of date. While it is comparatively easy to remember and recite the list of medieval liturgical volumes (from the Missal through the Breviary to the Pontifical and Processional), the list of authorized services alternative to *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662) is so long as to demand an excessively fine memory.

2 *Worship and Identity*

The forms of worship authorized in the Church of England express our faith and help to create our identity. The Declaration of Assent is placed at the beginning of this volume to remind us of this. When ministers make the Declaration, they affirm their loyalty to the Church of England's inheritance of faith and accept their share in the responsibility to proclaim the faith "afresh in each generation".

Certainly the way in which the congregations in the cathedrals and parish churches of the land engage in worship each Sunday is a public expression of the faith of those who attend. It is true also that it creates an Anglican identity, one that differs from that, say, of the Salvation Army or the Roman Catholic Church. This Anglican

identity was for centuries reasonably straightforward because intimately connected to *The Book of Common Prayer*, whether used and celebrated with little or much ceremonial. Since the arrival of trial services, Series 1, 2 and 3 and then *The Alternative Service Book 1980*, that identity has become less clear, if for no other reason than the general use in public worship of many different rites in two different idioms, "traditional" and "contemporary" language.

Obviously the clergy/ministers who lead the services of the Church of England have much to do with the public expression of faith and it is they (together with Readers and Lay Workers) who do much to establish an Anglican identity. With these persons most of this paragraph is specifically concerned.

The "Declaration of Assent" begins with a preface in which the Church of England is said to be a part of the one Church of God and to profess the Faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the Catholic Creeds. Her specific Formularies are *The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion* (1562), *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662) and *The Ordinal* (1662)—all of which are usually bound together. So it is presumed that the expression of worship, doctrine, morality and discipline in *Common Worship* is based on the Bible and in harmony with that which is received from the authoritative Scriptures, and witnessed to in the Creeds and Formularies. The one and the same Faith, it is rightly claimed, is to be proclaimed afresh in and to each generation, but it is to be anchored in the Bible, the Creeds and the Formularies.

In the light of this information why does not the title page, as did the title page of the 1980 liturgy, state, "Services authorized for use in the Church of England in conjunction with The Book of Common Prayer" or something similar? Further, why are not *The Articles of Religion* and the Athanasian Creed printed somewhere in the collection of texts that is *Common Worship*?

3 *Old and New together*

Common Worship draws together the rich inheritance of the past and the very best of our contemporary forms of worship. In this volume we bring together the services of The Book of Common Prayer as they are used today and newer liturgies in both traditional and contemporary style. The Book of Common Prayer remains the permanently authorized provision for public worship in the Church of England, whereas the newer liturgies are authorized until further resolution of the General Synod. This combination of old and new provides for the diverse worshipping needs of our communities, within an ordered structure which affirms our essential unity and common life.

In this paragraph, we are presented with certain facts and several claims. The facts are (a) the permanent position of *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662) in the Church of England, guaranteed by Act of Parliament as both the primary Prayer Book and also the standard of doctrine; and (b) the temporary authorization of *Common Worship*, for as long as the General Synod permits.

Inside *Common Worship* are services from *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662)—specifically, Morning and Evening Prayer, the Litany and The Order for Holy Communion. Yet these services are not identical with their originals since they are printed “as they are used”, that is, as they are used in general here and there in parishes of the Church of England. Further, “The Order for Holy Communion” is provided in this amended way without the Collects (Cranmer’s jewelled miniatures) and the ancient Eucharistic Lectionary of the *Prayer Book*. Also the Lectionary to be used at the *Prayer Book* forms of Morning and Evening Prayer on Sundays is not one of those (of 1662, 1871 or 1922) authorized for use with the *Prayer Book* services.

Thus the (edited) services of the *Prayer Book*, which in their natural habitat do not know any competition, are here placed as one option amongst many, so that the user can choose as he pleases. With them are made available services which are amended forms of some of those that were in *The Alternative Service Book 1980* and others that have been produced since then. These are available in both “traditional” and “contemporary” language so that a parish may have a modern rite in the old language or an old rite in contemporary language.

This diversity provides multiple options, and such could seem to be a recipe for chaos, the very opposite of unity in Church life and worship. However, it is claimed that “*This combination of old and new provides for the diverse worshipping needs of our communities, within an ordered structure which affirms our essential unity and common life.*” Apparently unity is preserved and common worship/prayer sustained because there is an “ordered structure”. It is not clear whether the ordered structure is the provision of a List of the Contents or Ingredients of each Liturgy (its Shape), or a List of all the Rites, Services and Liturgies, or the Synodical Legislation that permits it all. Whatever precisely is the “essential unity” and “common life” arising from *Common Worship* they are certainly different in essence and ethos from the earlier expressions of these when only *The Book of Common Prayer* was authorized and in use from 1549 through to the 1960s.

4 Engagement in Worship

The services provided here are rich and varied. This reflects the multiplicity of contexts in which worship is offered today. They encourage an imaginative engagement in worship, opening the way for people in the varied circumstances of their lives to experience the love of God in Jesus Christ in the life and power of the Holy Spirit. In the worship of God the full meaning and beauty of our humanity is consummated and our lives are opened to the promise God makes for all creation—to transform and renew it in love and goodness.

Here several claims are made and a theology of worship is briefly stated.

One claim is that the services are “rich and varied”. There can be no quarrel with the claim of “variety” for such is obvious even to a cursory glance at the provisions of services. Whether they are “rich” depends upon how one evaluates their individual ingredients and style as well as the total impact of their contents.

Another claim is that each and all of them, those in traditional and those in contemporary language “encourage an imaginative engagement in worship”. It is difficult to see why the imagination is particularly singled out, and not, say, human reason. Human beings are so different and thus some are drawn into worship through the kindling of their emotions and affections, some through their imagination, some through the contemplation of their minds and some through the determination of their wills. The Holy Ghost works in multiple ways to lead people into a relation with the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ.

The theology of worship expressed here seems at first sight to be pointing to the beatific vision of the age to come, but is in fact, on closer examination, referring to something less, some experience attainable in this life through the use of *Common Worship* services. It may be observed that for orthodox theology the “full meaning and beauty of our humanity” is only seen and known in the perfected humanity of the Incarnate Son of God, the Lord Jesus, through, by and in whom the faithful approach the Father of glory in adoration and praise. Thus only as sanctified and redeemed by him and in union with him can sinful human beings begin to see the beauty of our humanity as it is displayed in the One who is the new Adam, even Jesus the Christ. It would appear that here an attempt is being made to relate a theology of creation (which has been a popular theme in recent times) to a theology of worship, and because compressed into a few words, the meaning is not clear. It is certainly not an expression of the theology of the *Prayer Book* or of the Articles

of Religion. This is because it seems to be making positive assertions about the future of the present sinful world/creation which run contrary to the traditional doctrine of the judgement and the passing away of the present world and the arrival of “the new creation” of “the new heavens and the new earth”.

5 Jesus Christ and Challenge

The publication of these services is a challenge to us. It is a challenge to worship God better and to take the greatest care in preparing and celebrating worship. It is a challenge to draw the whole community of the people we serve into the worship of God. Central to our worship is the proclamation of the one, perfect self-offering of the Son to the Father. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is at the heart of Common Worship.

Here we learn that the arrival of *Common Worship* in the parish church presents two specific challenges, which may be called noble aims. The first is to improve the way in which parishes have engaged in worship—to worship God better; and the second is to make the services so attractive that they draw, as a magnet of grace, the local people into the worship of God. (The word “community” is not used in the *Prayer Book* or the King James Version but is much used in modern church talk. Here it seems to mean those outside the fellowship of the local church. Previously “communities”¹ may refer to the people within the geographical parish or to the people who actually attend worship. In paragraph 6 “the gathering of the community” is apparently the assembly of the church members for worship.)

Having stated the challenges or noble aims of contemporary worship, the Preface makes another statement of a theology of worship. It is affirmed that central to worship is “the proclamation of the one, perfect self-offering of the Son to the Father”, and this is then equated with “the Gospel of Jesus Christ”. By this is presumably meant the total life, ministry, death on the Cross, burial and descent into Hades, the Resurrection and Exaltation, and the Session at the Father’s right hand of Jesus, the Messiah and Lord. It is the self-offering of the Incarnate Son to the Father in the eternal Spirit and is made in his capacity as the new Adam, the Messiah, the Mediator, the Prophet, Priest and King. Without this self-offering there is no salvation for Jew or Gentile. Whether in fact this Gospel is at the heart of all the services of *Common Worship*, as claimed here, can only be known through a most careful examination of the content of the many, varied services, rites and prayers, some of which have yet to appear.

¹ Paragraph 3

6 The Worship of Pilgrims

Those who make the Declaration of Assent are charged with bringing the grace and truth of Christ to this generation and making him known to those in their care. Worship not only strengthens Christians for witness and service, but is itself a forum in which Christ is made known. Worship is for the whole people of God, who are fellow pilgrims on a journey of faith, and those who attend services are all at different stages of that journey. Indeed worship itself is a pilgrimage—a journey into the heart of the love of God. A number of the services themselves—particularly that of Holy Baptism—are celebrated in stages. In each case the journey through the liturgy has a clear structure with signposts for those less familiar with the way. It moves from the gathering of the community through the liturgy of the Word to an opportunity of transformation, sacramental or non-sacramental, after which those present are sent out to put their faith into practice.

Once again a reference is made to the duty of the clergy, readers and lay-workers to proclaim the Gospel and to explain the Christian Faith in appropriate ways. After this there is a return to a theology of worship in which activity the ministers obviously have a special part. Two points are made which few Christians will contest.

First, when ministers and people engage in worship, this both strengthens them for witness and service and is a forum in which Christ is made known. This probably means that in the listening to the reading of the Scriptures, especially of the Gospel, as well as to the Sermon and to the Eucharistic Prayer, there can be heard the Good News of the Father concerning his Incarnate Son and of the salvation available through and in him.

Secondly, worship is for all the people of God, ministers and others, and in this activity all are fellow pilgrims, journeying into “the heart of the love of God”. The latter phrase is, however, not the best that could have been used to represent the goal and the end of the journey of pilgrims. As the hymn puts it, “We’re marching upward to Zion / The beautiful City of God!”

Further, it is claimed that, as pilgrims, Christian people are at different stages of their journey to God. If by this is meant that baptized Christians are at different stages of maturity in the life of faith, hope and love then there can be no disagreement. However, in the rest of the paragraph the theme of pilgrimage appears to be closely connected to the presentation in certain services (especially Holy Baptism) of the Christian life in terms of stages, each of which is given liturgical symbolism. And the final stage seems to be “an opportunity of transformation”. Outside the reference to Baptism, it

probably is intended to convey the idea that liturgical worship is dynamic rather than static, unfolds in stages, and moves from gathering or assembling through transformation to sending out (*missio*). Obviously we have something here that seems to be very different in content and theme from the Services of Holy Baptism as well as the general ethos of worship in *The Book of Common Prayer*. Not only is the theme of “journeying” prominent in *Common Worship: Initiation Services* it is also the dominating image in the presentation of such services as visitation of the sick, marriage and burial of the dead in *Common Worship: Pastoral Services*.

7 Diversity in Variety

Common Worship is marked by diversity, not only in its content and in those who will use it, but also in the manner of its publication. It is not a single book. This volume contains all that is needed for worship on Sundays and on Principal Feasts and Holy Days; the *Common Worship Initiation Services*, *Pastoral Services*, *Daily Office* book and seasonal material are being published separately. Moreover, these volumes are not published solely in book form. *Common Worship* is not a series of books, but a collection of services and other liturgical material published on the World Wide Web and through other electronic media as well as in print.

All editions, printings and publishing of *The Book of Common Prayer* from 1549 to the 1970s were only in book form. Now it is available in electronic form at various websites and on CDs; but, it has always been *The Book of Common Prayer* for it is a Book devoted to Public and Common Prayer and the digital versions are versions of a book. Also *The Alternative Service Book 1980* was intended to be a book, given the title that belongs only to a book, and was a book throughout its twenty-year use.

What has been produced by the Church of England between 2000 and 2003 is deliberately not called *The Book of Common Worship*. Rather it is called *Common Worship* so that its actual content can be available in a variety of means of communication—book, booklet, card, CD, web site and so on. Yet everything within *Common Worship* is available in printed form of one kind or another (book, booklet and card), and from this base it is then available on CDs and at the Church of England Web Site. Apparently, however, the Preface, which is being quoted and examined here, is found only in the printed version of the main volume, the Sunday Service Book, as also is the Declaration of Assent cited above. Because of the digital and electronic revolution it is now relatively easy for parishes to produce their own services for all occasions by mechanical means

and to tailor each service to their own requirements and devices. Thus what is common to all in this new era is the minimum and it relates to the use of common ingredients and common structures from a common store.

As noted above, the long list of authorized or commended Alternative Services (almost all of them *Common Worship* services) other than those of *The Book of Common Prayer* are listed on pp. 229–230 of the *Church of England Year Book 2003* as are the various volumes in which they are published. Together they constitute a veritable small library!

The principal Sunday-service volume of *Common Worship* is well printed on good opaque paper, and for the most part well-designed. At one critical point, however, the editors and designers demonstrate that they do not expect the book to be much read. The designer (appointed after “interviews conducted in Westminster Abbey’s historic Jerusalem Chamber”) “felt that the typeface for the Church of England’s new worship book should be an English one,”¹ not a foreign creation, despite the ecumenical commitment of the same Church. Will the Church in Wales demand a Welsh-designed typeface? Does anyone feel culturally threatened by the use of Garamond or Bembo? There are, nevertheless, plenty of good English-designed fonts, including the one chosen, Gill Sans; but it is quite unsuitable for this job. A book with long passages of text to be read year in year out should not be set in a sans-serif face.² The *Companion* answers this objection by telling us that “The supposed greater legibility of serif over sans is not important because most of the prayers are lined out and there is not therefore much continuous text.”³ So lines of verse need not be as legible as prose? The greater legibility of serif is just a demonstrable fact. The *Companion* itself, for instance, could not have been set in sans, though it does use Gill Sans effectively for titling and running heads. Novels are never set in sans, and books of poetry, though “lined out”, very rarely. A sans-serif Bible is unimaginable. Some sections of *Common Worship* have to be in bold, and “almost every serif bold is disappointing,” the *Companion* tells us. This is not serious. What about Times New Roman Bold, an English face well used in current editions of the *Prayer Book*? Caslon

¹ “The Design of Common Worship”, *Companion to Common Worship*, vol. I, ed. Paul Bradshaw, 2001, pp. 255–6

² The serifs, the little tags at the tops and bottoms of ascenders and descenders of letters, are found in all book-faces and aid legibility in smaller sizes. Sans-serif comes into its own with display sizes and posters.

³ *Companion*, p. 256. This was published before *Common Worship: Daily Prayer*, the 816-page volume which includes long passages of “lined-out” prose as well as ordinary prose and is intended for use “by an individual, a small group, a parish at prayer or a religious community” (p. viii). All 816 pages are set in Gill Sans.

Semibold (also an English design) is very good, though it is true that Eric Gill's own beautiful serif typeface, Perpetua, does not go well into bold. *Common Worship* would have been much better set in (the very English) Stanley Morison's Times New Roman, or Bell, or Baskerville. The choice of Gill Sans and the remark about "lining out" show how much continuous reading of the book its makers expect.

This "lining out" is another matter of concern. "Lining out" originally meant the repetition of phrases by the congregation after the priest, but is now used to refer to the practice of printing prose as verse, with the aim of helping people to read it meaningfully. (Even the tabloid papers still expect their vast audiences to be able to read prose, but not the Church of England Liturgical Commission.) Liturgical prayers in the Western tradition have always commonly been in prose not verse, and the setting of them in this ultra-modern way as if they were poetry not only confuses the reader's expectations and invites verse reading, but also means that a tremendous amount of paper is wasted. If the prayers were set as prose in an appropriate typeface the whole of *Common Worship* would fit into not much more than half the space that it now occupies, about 700 pages rather than more than 1300, and would be much easier to read! The price could also be substantially reduced.

The *Book of Common Prayer* was meant for daily worship and also for private devotion, and was and is printed accordingly. Any frequenter of second-hand bookshops will testify to the frequency of well-worn copies. *Common Worship* is likely to remain in a much more pristine condition.

8 *The Poetry of Praise and the Passion of Prayer*

Just as Common Worship is more than a book, so worship is more than what is said; it is also what is done and how it is done. Common Worship provides texts, contemporary as well as traditional, which are resonant and memorable, so that they will enter and remain in the Church of England's corporate memory—especially if they are sung. It is when the framework of worship is clear and familiar and the texts are known by heart that the poetry of praise and the passion of prayer can transcend the printed word. Then worship can take wing and become the living sacrifice of ourselves to the God whose majesty is beyond compare and whose truth is from everlasting.

Worship uses not only words (in rites) but also symbolic actions (ceremonial). This paragraph makes this point and then leaves it behind to focus only on the words, the texts. It claims for them that they are "resonant and memorable" and as such will remain in the "corporate memory" of the Church of England. This is surely to

exaggerate, for while one can immediately see that this claim can be, or is true, of the traditional texts from *The Book of Common Prayer*, one cannot likewise posit it to be true—at least at this early stage—of those texts which are of more recent vintage. Very little from *The Alternative Service Book 1980* has been judged to be resonant and memorable and so there is small likelihood of any improvement on this score with the texts of *Common Worship*. Time will tell.

The last two sentences of the paragraph, where we read of worship transcending the printed word and taking wing in ascent to the all-glorious and majestic God, are moving and contain profound practical truths. Yet the question arises as to whether these truths can be seen as applying to *Common Worship* which is all about variety, choice and sampling new possibilities, and where a fixed text to learn seems to be against the grain. In contrast, if one uses *The Book of Common Prayer* with its fixed texts then one can learn these by heart so that "the poetry of praise and the passion of prayer" can really begin (by God's grace) to transcend the printed page.

Summary

Before asking what further consideration of the themes of this Preface is necessary, it will be useful to recall the Preface to *The Alternative Service Book 1980* to see how it compares with the one written twenty years later.

The Preface of 1980 begins by explaining the status of the new Service Book. It is a supplement to *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662) of which it states: "It is a remarkable fact that for over three hundred years ... the Book of Common Prayer has remained the acknowledged norm for public worship in the Church of England." However, we are also informed that new conditions make it desirable that new understandings of worship should find expression in new forms and styles. Thus the provision of alternative services, created during a process of fifteen years of liturgical experiment, is (we are told) to be welcomed as an enrichment of the Church's life rather than a threat to its integrity. The services conform, it is claimed, to the doctrinal standard which is grounded in the Scriptures, expressed in the Creeds and expounded in the Anglican Formularies.

The 1980 Preface ends in this humble and promising way:

But words, even agreed words, are only the beginning of worship. Those who use them do well to recognize their transience and imperfection; to treat them as a ladder, not a goal; to acknowledge their power in shaping faith and kindling devotion, without claiming that they are fully adequate to the task. Only the grace of God can make up what is lacking in the faltering words of

men. It is in reliance on such grace that this book is offered to the Church, in the hope that God's people may find in it a means in our day to worship him with honest minds and thankful hearts.

Comparing the two Prefaces, that of 1980 gives the impression of greater coherence of content and argument. Further, it makes humbler claims about what it is and can achieve. Yet, it only lasted twenty years.

Now we must return to the Preface of 2000 to ask what major themes and topics arise from its content which merit further detailed consideration. First of all, the title "Common Worship" which is similar to but different from "Common Prayer" calls for attention. We shall need to look at the use and meaning of both words, "Common" and "Worship". As certain themes of a theology of worship are proclaimed in the Preface, we shall bear these in mind as we look at the meaning of "worship". Especially we shall have to ask whether the Lord Jesus Christ and his relation to the Father in life, death, resurrection and exaltation is truly central.

In the second place, since "The Declaration of Assent" is referred to on two occasions, and by it ministers commit themselves to the official doctrines of the Church in public worship, the question arises as to whether the new services are in fact of the same doctrine as that contained in the authoritative Formularies, to which "The Declaration of Assent" points.

Then, thirdly, since a variety of claims is made about the quality of the language used in the Services, we shall need to examine whether the new "contemporary" language is as efficient and appropriate as the "traditional" language has been in creating the right medium for addressing and speaking of God, the Holy Trinity. Further, there is the related question as to whether a Prayer Book should mix the two styles of the language of prayer.

As much is made of Christians as pilgrims and of the relation of the journey to such services as Holy Communion (the Eucharist) and Holy Baptism, it will be necessary for us to look at both Eucharistic theology and also what is often these days called "the theology/liturgy of initiation". Also, as the journey takes all to an ending, we need to look at the Funeral service, and as the journey often goes *via* matrimony we need to look at the Marriage service.

Finally, by this Preface we are challenged to consider whether a Church with a long tradition of Common Prayer has gone to great lengths, and using a variety of means of communication, to make it nearly impossible for there to be Common Prayer in the Church of England in the future. That is, is "Common Worship" merely a Name provided to make us feel good about the demise and disappearance of Common Prayer?

CHAPTER TWO

An Examination of "Common"

We have noted that in 2000 the Church of England replaced her *Alternative Service Book 1980* with *Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England*. Further we have also noted that this title refers not to one book but to several books and booklets; it is not found on one CD but on two or three; it is not a fixed or final text but an evolutionary one, created for possible change when needs arise as the years go by. The official reason given in the introductory pamphlet for the new publication was that "our world is constantly changing and our understanding of God is always developing. God may not change, but in every generation we find new ways of expressing ourselves to one another and to God."¹

Yet despite changing human ideas of God's identity, and maybe change in God as God in relation to the cosmos (if it be that process theology is in mind here), the Church of England also confirmed in 2000 that the "ancient" English Prayer Book, *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662), remained in place as the first Prayer Book and primary Formulary of the Church.² No Synod of the Church has any authority to change or remove it, and, conversely, no parish is required to use it, although many do so, as also do virtually all Cathedrals.

Thus at the beginning of the third millennium the Church of England offers to her members choice of which book to use, and in the new book, which service amongst several to choose. The publicity that surrounded the launch of *Common Worship* appeared to suggest that public worship using a rite from either this book or *The Book of Common Prayer* fits under the umbrella of "Common Public Worship" or belongs to the genre of "Common Prayer". In fact, "common prayer" is defined as "shared forms of worship".

The full title of the new rites probably provides the basic definition of what is officially understood today as "common worship". The colon separating "Common Worship" from "Services

¹ *Common Worship: Planning for Change*, The Liturgical Publishing Group, 2000, Part I

² *Ibid.*

and Prayers for the Church of England” is perhaps to be seen as a sign of equality and equivalency. Therefore, whatever are the officially approved services and prayers, whenever and however they appear, these are what we are to take as common worship and even common prayer. One could perhaps say in a moment of cynicism that “Common” is now being used as a conjuring word, rather than as a specific word with a specific meaning. To render liturgical documents valid, they must have the word “common” pronounced over them, much like a magician’s “abracadabra,” without any sense of the word’s original meaning.

What is meant by “Common”?

Since we are referring to the worship of Almighty God, we can dismiss quickly the popular meaning of “common” as that which is ordinary or undistinguished or even of inferior quality. The texts of the services and rites are intended to be of high not low quality. The basic meaning of “common” as used in religious English appears to be “that in which the people unite”. Thus Common Worship or Common Prayer is public worship/prayer in which people unite in the public place for worship using an approved form of service.

Before and at the publishing of *The Book of the Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and other rites and ceremonies of the Church: after the use of the Church of England* (1549) “common prayer” referred to the Daily Offices said by the clergy and some laity in the chancel of the church. Since this was not the private office of the clergy but the public gathering of the people of the parish, it was “common prayer”, offered to God in Latin until 1549 and in English thereafter. The long title of the English Prayer Book was necessary, for it replaced the multiple service books (Breviary, Missal, Manual etc.) of the late medieval period, books which provided what is known as “the Sarum Use”.

We may note that the title, *The Book of the Common Prayer ... after the use of the Church of England*, presupposes that there is a form of prayer “common” (both because necessary and the actual historical case under the Providence of God) to the whole Christian Church. What Archbishop Cranmer offered in English was the presentation of that “common” (taken as “universal”) prayer of the Christian Church after the use of a particular national church, the Church of England.

In 1552, the second definite article was removed so that the title began, *The Book of Common Prayer* and from this time forwards the expression “Common Prayer” gradually came to mean all the public services in which the people united, including the public celebration

of the sacraments. Further, the expression “Common Prayer” also came to mean the actual book that contained the services. Thus the expression “Common Prayer” in everyday conversation came to mean both a specific text containing services or rites and the assembling and uniting of the clergy and people to use these services to pray and worship publicly.

In the official *Book of Homilies* (1562) of the Church of England, there are several sermons which deal with prayer. One of these is entitled, “An Homily wherein is declared that Common Prayer and Sacraments ought to be administered in a tongue that is understood of the hearers”. After explaining two kinds of prayer, the silent prayer of the heart and the vocal, private prayer, we are told:

The third sort of Prayer is Public or Common. Of this Prayer speaketh our Saviour Christ when he saith, *If two of you shall agree upon earth upon any thing, whatsoever ye shall ask, my Father which is in heaven shall do it for you; for, wheresoever two or three be gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. ...* By the histories of the Bible it appeareth that Public and Common Prayer is most available before God; and therefore it is much to be lamented that it is no better esteemed among us, which profess to be but one body in Christ. ... Let us join ourselves together in the place of Common Prayer, and with one voice and one heart beg of our heavenly Father all those things which he knoweth to be necessary for us. I forbid you not private prayer, but I exhort you to esteem Common Prayer as it is worthy.¹

Here Common Prayer is that praise and supplication offered to God the Father with one heart and voice by the one body of Christ in the place appointed for worship.

In the Fifth Book of *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, written towards the end of the Elizabethan era, Richard Hooker, the distinguished apologist for the Church of England against Puritanism, defended and commended the official English version of “Common Prayer” as found in *The Book of Common Prayer* (edition of 1559) against the criticisms of the Puritans. For him, as for the homilist, “Common Prayer” is the worship of Almighty God with one heart and voice by the one body in the one place, using a language that all understand as that is found in the English *Prayer Book*. The preaching services of the Puritans and Presbyterians are not “common prayer” even though Christian people genuinely hear the Word of God and give assent to prayer offered to heaven by the preacher.

In reference to the consecrated church building and its association with common prayer, Hooker wrote:

¹ *Certain Sermons or Homilies*, repr. 1899, pp. 375–6

And concerning the place of assembly, although it serve for other uses as well as this ... the principal cause thereof must needs be in regard of Common Prayer ... that there we stand, we pray, we sound forth hymns unto God, having his angels intermingled as our associates But of all helps for due performance of this service the greatest is that very set and standing order itself, which framed with common advice, hath both for matter and form prescribed whatever is herein publicly done. No doubt from God it hath proceeded, and by us it must be acknowledged a work of his singular care and providence, that the Church hath evermore held a prescript form of common prayer, although not in all things everywhere the same, yet for the most part retaining still the same analogy.¹

For Hooker "that very set and standing order itself" is Common Prayer, *The Book of Common Prayer* (1559) authorized by Queen Elizabeth I.

One of the basic characteristics of the traditional English Common Prayer has been that one only rite is provided for each of the public services and there is no provision for extempore prayer by the minister. While the readings from the Holy Scripture change daily, the actual service itself is virtually identical daily and weekly. There is no optional rite for Holy Communion or Baptism or the Daily Services of Morning and Evening Prayer. Thus Common Prayer also developed the meaning of the use of a common text not only in the one parish church but in all the churches of the one nation. And this of course was what the various Acts of Uniformity meant and required.

It is important to recognize the ordinary English sense of the identity of Common Prayer with the book of the same name.

Common Prayer belongs to the nation; it was created for us out of, and taking theological exception to, various departmental service-books and other documents; it was recovered for us, in defiance of the Presbyterian Directory, in 1662; it was retained for us, in defiance of William III's desired "comprehension" (a sort of "home-centres" ecumenical venture ...) [in 1689]; it comfortably resisted Unitarian depredations in the 18th century; it was the linch-pin of the Tractarian movement; it was only cautiously modified in 1928, in an attempt to keep the Anglo-Catholics away from the lure of the English Missal. The book belongs to us all, even if only a tiny proportion of the tiny proportion that attends church today actually prays it²

Common Prayer ordinarily means the public worship of the

¹ *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Book V, Chapter 25, paras. 2, 4

² A. C. Capey, "Common Prayer and the Pirates" in *The Real Common Worship*, ed. Peter Mullen, Denton, 2000, pp. 68-9

assembled Christian congregations within churches and cathedrals using services taken from *The Book of Common Prayer*. Common Prayer does not refer to any kind of public prayer but only to that which is according to the form provided by this prayer book. This important principle has been enforced and underlined by the practice, which began in 1552, of printing the Act for the Uniformity of Common Prayer inside *The Book of Common Prayer*. The 1662 Act may be read in many editions of the *Prayer Book*, and explanations of it are offered in the twenty or more annotated editions that appeared in the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century.¹

Our reasons for emphasizing the identity of Common Prayer and *The Book of Common Prayer* will become clearer later in this chapter.

A Godly Way of Life

It is important to grasp that the contents of *The Book of the Common Prayer* were more than a translation, adaptation, and renewal of the medieval services of prayer and worship. They reached behind the Middle Ages and witnessed to the recovery of a godly ordering of the whole of life on earth from birth to death, 365 days a year, within the discipline and rhythms of the Church Year with its weekly Lord's Day and its Feasts and Fasts. The Common Prayer of the universal Church, as given structure and form in the offices and services of *The Book of the Common Prayer*, became the Anglican Way of relating to God, in a national Church with her dioceses, colleges, schools, families, and baptized members. The Common Prayer became the model of an entire life lived in communion with God, the Father, through his Son our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

In Mattins and Evensong the medieval daily offices (Mattins, Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Compline) were compressed into two. What had previously been seen as primarily the business of clergy, monks, and nuns was now available in English and recommended for all. At their local church or in their homes, all people could now be joined by the Holy Ghost to the communion of saints, together with the angels and archangels, in offering daily worship to God on behalf of the whole created order. United to Jesus Christ the Head of the Body, they could pray the Psalter morning and evening as the intelligent members of the Body of Christ. And on Wednesdays and Fridays, as well as on Sundays, they could intercede for one another by joining in the Litany.

¹ E. g., see *The Prayer Book Interleaved* with notes by W. M. Campion & W. J. Beaumont, 1866 and later editions.

On Sundays and Feasts, as well as on other days of solemn obligation, all could hear the liturgy in English, including a sermon or homily. Parish priests not competent to prepare a sermon themselves were required to read a homily from the *Certain Sermons or Homilies* (1547 & 1562). If duly prepared, the people could receive the Holy Communion in both kinds, just as their priest did.

At each of the Daily Offices were readings from both the Old and the New Testaments. At the Holy Communion there were the Epistle and Gospel, together with a Psalm for each Sunday and Feast. Great emphasis was therefore placed upon the Christian duty of hearing and reading the Holy Scripture, followed by meditating upon the same, to be completed by obeying it as the Word of God in daily living.

Thus the Common Prayer is a biblical, traditional, and godly way for the congregation, Christian family, and individual baptized believer to relate to God the Holy Trinity as the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the fellowship of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church within God's world, 365 days a year and every year of the present age.

The basis of the Common Prayer is the daily offering of praise through the daily offices wherein the Psalms (the prayers of Jesus Christ) are central, as is the meditative reading of all the Holy Scriptures. Linked to this is the petitionary and intercessory prayer of the Litany, along with the celebration of the symbolic meal of the new covenant in the Eucharist on each Lord's Day and on the other holy days. In the Holy Communion the Church is fed and strengthened by heavenly manna as she communes with her Bridegroom.

Then Common Prayer makes provision for thanking God for the entry of a child into the world (the churching of women); for the entry of that child into the church of God (holy baptism and confirmation); and for that child's grown-up entry into the holy state of matrimony. Add to this the provisions for the visitation of the sick and the burial of the dead, and here is a total way of life for the faithful people of God on this earth.

This Common Prayer is common because it is the norm for *all* people wherever they are and whatever their status in life. There can be a minimal participation or a maximal participation by persons, families and congregations. The basic structure and uniformity are necessary in order to train us in good habits and right discipline; they are also necessary to help us know what is freedom and how it is to be exercised within our duty to God and our neighbour.

So the Common Prayer is a godly order for the people of the Anglican Way, and it is expressed and set forth in a series of editions

of *The Book of Common Prayer* in English (1549 through to [Canada] 1962), as well as in many editions in many languages around the world. In most of these editions the basis is the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*, to which local prayers and forms are added by the various national churches.

The Book of Common Prayer has been always a Formulary of the Anglican Way since it expresses the doctrinal commitment of the Church of England and of the Anglican Communion of Churches to the worship and service of the Father almighty, through his only begotten Son, and with the Holy Ghost. *Lex orandi, lex credendi* (the law of praying is the law of believing, and the law of believing is the law of praying) is a principle that is fundamental to the Anglican Way.

Modifications of *The Book of Common Prayer* through its several editions in English and in many other languages (beginning with Latin in the early days of Elizabeth I, when that was the common tongue of the universities and schools) are to be expected as the Common Prayer is adapted to changing cultures and societies and times. These local modifications (e. g., praying for a President and not a Monarch and incorporating local, national holidays) do not take away from the traditional commitment of the Anglican churches to a single godly order for all. The Church welcomes everyone into this order, whether an archbishop or a new member; a king, a queen, a president, or a commoner; a man or a woman; a teenager or a grandparent.

The expansion of the meaning of "Common"

In the light of the long history and use of the Common Prayer, it is not surprising that in England in the 1970s when new types and shapes of services using "contemporary" language were collected together into a new prayer book, the decision was taken to call the collection *The Alternative Service Book*. In Canada much the same type of book was called *The Book of Alternative Services* (1985). These books contained multiple options so that the idea of "a common text" and "common rite" had disappeared from them. From now on, it seemed that the only way that "common" could be used of public worship was in the sense of an act of worship in which people freely unite together.

But before 1980 a new approach to "common" had already been pioneered and had triumphed in the Episcopal Church of the USA. Here in 1979 had appeared the revision of the 1928 *American Prayer Book*, and, although this 1979 book was very much like the English *Alternative Service Book*, and contained variety not uniformity, it was nevertheless given the title, *The Book of Common Prayer*. From the

richest and possibly most influential province of the Anglican Communion apart from England, a powerful message was being sent to all the Anglican Family. It was this: "Common" has changed its meaning. At this early stage American and British English were not in step with each other but the Brits were soon to catch up!

Liturgists and bishops did not apparently want to let the use of the word "common" go from their liturgical revisions and innovations. So emphasis began to be placed upon "a common structure" meaning the "Shape of the Liturgy" (the title of an influential book by Gregory Dix first published in 1945) into which agreed structure differing forms of words could be inserted, so that there could be multiple choice of content, e. g., of the prayer of consecration in the Eucharist. Further, emphasis was also placed upon "common texts" referring to the use of such basic items as the Lord's Prayer, the Sanctus, the Sursum Corda, the Gloria and so on which should be a part of all Eucharistic Liturgy. Thus it became acceptable in the 1980s to refer to the increasing provision of varied rites and services as belonging to "common worship" and even to "common prayer". What was happening was that "common" was being loosed from its connection with uniformity, and thus with the fixed texts of *The Book of Common Prayer*, in order to function as a kind of catch-all for new liturgies that had the approved right shape and the appropriate basic content of common texts within that shape.

So efforts began to be made to make "common" mean "that which has been issued by common authority in a specific place". This alteration of meaning makes thinking people, even among enthusiasts for revision, nervous. The vague substitute of "a common shape" is a Band-Aid for this nervousness—it's not a cure, but it does cover it up a bit. The problem is, what does "a common shape" mean? One might think that "form" and "shape" are synonyms, but how can they be, if they mean different things?

And they do mean different things, since we are expected to believe that "a common shape" exists apart from a common form defined by its common content, common vocabulary, common syntax, common order, and common intention to say the same things. What's left may be "a shape common to human worship", but it isn't necessarily a form of worship common to Christianity. One could, no doubt, take the minimal shape of "An Order for Celebrating the Holy Eucharist" and use it to construct a service for the worship of Krishna or Baal. A "shape" of worship may look similar to Christian worship without being Christian worship.

No doubt, the influence of Gregory Dix, with his antipathy towards the *Book of Common Prayer*, has been important here. He used the idea of a "shape" as a way to justify the abandonment of the English

Common Prayer tradition, and others have since applied it in even more extreme ways. Dix's original training was as a lawyer, and one could argue that his idea of "shape" has more in common with a lawyer's pleading, in which he attempts to find a construction of the evidence or a conceptual basis to win his case, than with impartial scholarship.¹

In England we can trace the attempt by the Liturgical Commission and others to follow the initial American lead and to remove "Common Prayer" as the sole property of *The Book of Common Prayer*. Let us begin in 1989 with the publication *Patterns of Worship*. Under the heading of "Common Prayer?" we are told that

"Common Prayer" does not in fact exist, in the sense of being able to walk into any church in the land and find exactly the same words to follow. Nor should we pretend that it would be either right or good to return to a position—well over a century ago—when that might have been the case. Rather, "common prayer" exists in the Church of England in the sense of recognizing, as one does when visiting members of the same family, some common features, some shared experiences, languages and patterns of tradition.²

Then we are provided with a list of "the marks which should be safeguarded" by those who wish to stand in any recognizable continuity with historical Anglican tradition. These are

- 1 A recognizable structure for worship;
- 2 An emphasis on reading the word and on using psalms;
- 3 Liturgical words used by the congregation, some of which, like the creed, would be known by heart;
- 4 The use of a collect, the Lord's Prayer, and some responsive form in prayer;
- 5 A recognition of the centrality of the Eucharist, and
- 6 A concern for form, dignity and economy of words.

(Moving on to *Common Worship* we note that the first Service in the whole collection is "A Service of the Word [with a Celebration of Holy Communion]" which is provided only as an outline or shape rather than as a full liturgy.)

*The Worship of the Church*³ makes a conscious attempt to draw together the new tradition of variety as in *The Alternative Service Book 1980* and the old tradition of uniformity as in *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662). There is a plea for "a unitive doctrinal

¹ See further Louis Bouyer, *Liturgical Piety* [French, 1954; English, 1955], pp. 275-6 for early, if polite, doubt about Dix's hypothetical constructions.

² *Patterns of Worship*, p. 5. Note the two floating participial clauses from authors charged with composing the liturgy of the Church of England.

³ GS Misc. 364, 1991

sensitivity” and a “sense of Common Prayer” which would require the use of the *Prayer Book* alongside the new liturgies. “Common Prayer” is seen as including both new and old, and this Report clearly distinguishes “Common Prayer” from *The Book of Common Prayer* in order to make the new services belong to it.

In 1993 there was published *The Renewal of Common Prayer: Unity and Diversity in Church of England Worship*, which is a collection of essays by the members of the 1991–6 Commission and edited by Michael Perham. Here an attempt is made to define for the century soon to dawn what “common prayer” might mean. A “proper balance” between commonality of text on the one hand, and variety, diversity and spontaneity on the other is discussed. There is talk of a common core, a common shape, a common structure, and common contents but in it all a rejection of the traditional and classic understanding and meaning of “Common Prayer” as that which is inside the covers of the *Prayer Book*. Nevertheless the *Prayer Book* itself continued to be treated with respect.

This respect is reflected in the publication of *Model and Inspiration* (1993), which contains the major contributions to a symposium held on 5 November 1992 in London. Two of these were made by two prominent members of the Prayer Book Society, Professor David Martin, the sociologist, and Baroness James of Holland Park, the novelist. Apparently it was at this conference that the idea that the replacement to *The Alternative Service Book 1980* should include both a variety of new liturgies and, importantly, the major texts from the *Prayer Book*, gained wide acceptance.

A further, major influence on the changing or expanding of the meaning of “Common Prayer” came from 1992 onwards with the availability of *Celebrating Common Prayer*. Two members of the Commission, Bishop David Stancliffe and Brother Tristram SSF, had worked with members of religious communities, especially the Society of St Francis, to produce this daily office book wherein is great variety of usage for different days and seasons. At the Lambeth Conference of Bishops held at the University of Canterbury in 1998, the Archbishop of Canterbury gave to all the 900 or so bishops a copy of this book for which he (George Carey) had written a Foreword. In this he claimed that Morning and Evening Prayer from *The Book of Common Prayer* were not widely used and Anglicans therefore needed a pattern of daily prayer, which the Franciscan provision would adequately satisfy. Thus this book could provide them with real or celebratory “common prayer” which the *Book* of that name could not do.

Thus it is not at all surprising to find that when we get to the publicity material for *Common Worship* (2000) we are told that this

collection of services and resources “emphasizes the important part that worship plays in expressing our unity. It is something that we have in ‘common’.” Here “common” seems to mean “worship in the Church of England based upon one or another of the services, or using the provided resources, of the collection known as *Common Worship*”.¹ Thus “common” now has a Congregationalist meaning, referring to the particular liturgy that is devised locally for use locally in a parish—and the very first outline of a service in the main volume of *Common Worship* entitled “A Service of the Word” is intended for this Congregationalist purpose.

From the Liturgical Commission in 2002 came *New Patterns for Worship*, a book containing material from *Common Worship* together with other texts and advice on the construction of services. This publication updated the earlier *Patterns for Worship* of 1989. Under the heading, “Common Prayer in the Church of England” three aspects of “the Anglican understanding of common prayer are stated”:

1 The valuing of patterns of worship which are recognized as the common possession of the people of God. This does not mean that nothing can change nor that every popular practice must prevail. It does not rule out any local variation. It does mean that worship must not simply be governed by the whim of the minister or the congregation. Corporate patterns of worship must exist and be developed which are recognized by worshippers as their corporate worship. It is therefore appropriate that these are approved and regulated by the Church.

2 The patterns and forms of worship must not be determined purely at the level of the local congregation but must bear witness to participation in the wider common life of the Church. For this reason it is right that common forms such as creeds, collects, confessions and eucharistic prayers should be followed, as well as common approaches to the shape and content of Christian worship.

3 Patterns of common prayer play an important part in maintaining the unity of the Church in its confession of the Christian faith.²

This usefully summarizes the doctrine of the Liturgical Commission concerning common prayer and clearly reveals the substantial change of meaning that has occurred in a period of twenty-five years or so. Interestingly, the new meaning of “common prayer” is made more explicit in the section giving guidance for discussion groups.³ They are to work under two headings, “Structures and Texts” and the marks which should be safeguarded to preserve Anglican common

¹ *Common Worship: Planning for Change*, Part I

² *New Patterns for Worship*, p.51 3 p. 53

prayer are still said to be much as *Patterns for Worship* reported them fourteen years earlier¹—a recognizable structure for worship; an emphasis on reading the word and on using the psalms; liturgical words repeated by the congregation, some of which like the creed, would be known by heart; using a collect, the Lord's Prayer, and some responsive forms in prayer; a recognition of the centrality of the Eucharist; a concern for form, dignity and economy of words.

We noted above that in 1979 the Episcopal Church of the USA chose to call its book of alternative services, containing both traditional and contemporary language rites, *The Book of Common Prayer, according to the use of the Episcopal Church*, and the Church in the West Indies did the same thing in 1995, calling its modern language edition of alternative services, *The Book of Common Prayer, according to the use of the Church of the West Indies*; but the General Synod of the Church of England, knowing that *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662) refers to a specific text that cannot be removed as a Formulary, came as near as it could, within the law, to using the old title for its new collection. It may be noted that *Common Worship* is as near to *Common Prayer* as you can get! However, it is not *The Book of Common Worship* but *Common Worship*, for it is available in a variety of forms, printed and digital, and is open-ended.

A Wrong Path

The advent of new prayer books and the changing use of the word "common" have affected worldwide Anglicanism in the international Anglican Communion of Churches. Wherever one went in the world up to the 1970s, one could find an Anglican church and recognize, even if the language was not English and whatever the churchmanship, the use of *The Book of Common Prayer*. One may claim that the glue that united the Anglican Communion was the use of an edition of the *Prayer Book*, even though that book was used in over 150 languages and dialects, apart from English. Now, in contrast to the period up to 1970, we find that the Anglican Communion is no longer seen as united through the Common Formulary of the *Prayer Book* and a commonly recognized Ministry. World travellers in the new millennium do not know what to expect at an Anglican church, not only in different countries but even in one's own country! There has been a most noticeable move away from both the liturgy and the doctrine of the *Prayer Book*.

Much emphasis is laid today upon the Instruments of Unity—the See of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conference every ten years, the annual Primates' Meeting and the regular meeting of the Anglican

¹ See above, p. 31.

Consultative Council. One reason for this great emphasis upon instruments is that of compensating, at least in part, for the loss of unity in how Anglicans worship together, caused by the relegation of the historic *Prayer Book* to one option amongst many. Further, the commonly recognized Ministry is no longer emphasised because not all Provinces recognize women bishops (or even women presbyters) and because the original Common Text for Ordinations (= the Ordinal in *The Book of Common Prayer*) is rarely used. Yet, as we have already noted with respect to England, the Anglican Communion also seems to want to hang on to the word "Common" and look for anything that has the potential for uniting as coming within the definition of "common".

But let us consider the possibility that it would have been far better, and basically more honest, if the word "common" (as a prominent and dominant adjective) had been retained for use solely and only with the authentic *Book of Common Prayer* and the public worship using the rites from this book. Certainly, not to have used this adjective of the expanding new rites and services, or of certain fixed parts of them, would have helped to make clear the major differences between the shape, language and content of the services within *The Book of Common Prayer* and the shape, language and content of the services found in the vast collection of prayer books published since the 1970s. After all, the modern rites are virtually all in so-called "contemporary language" in contrast to "traditional language", and as we shall see, their structure, or shape, is different, as is also the doctrinal emphasis therein, from that of the classical *Prayer Book*.

The decision by liturgists, bishops and synods to retain the word "common" (as in *Common Worship* and *Celebrating Common Prayer*) for that which in practical terms are not single common texts and services but the very opposite—multiple choice texts and services adapted to local needs—means that "common" in the sense long used in the idiom of religious English is in danger of being lost. Some may think that this is a good thing, or a normal thing in that language develops. Others may think that since *The Book of Common Prayer* is still the official Prayer Book of the Church of England there was a duty laid upon bishops especially to retain the word "common" for use with this classic Book and to choose other appropriate words for descriptions of the new services.

In 1980 when *The Alternative Service Book* was published in England, no claims were made in England that here was common prayer or common worship. Yet, as we noted above, at about the same time, across the Atlantic ocean, the Episcopal Church of the USA published its collection of services, in traditional and

contemporary language, and for it used the historic title, *The Book of Common Prayer*. In so doing the same Church declared that the authentic Anglican form of common prayer, found in its own *Book of Common Prayer* (1928) was no longer to be used. Thus we have from 1979 the move, which later caught on in the rest of the Anglican Churches of the West/North, to change or enlarge the meaning of "common" so that its meaning as understood for long centuries has been pushed into the background. Now it seems anything can be common prayer or common worship if it is a service that loosely follows guidelines produced by any diocese or province in the Anglican Communion of Churches.

But why should the retention for public use of the word "common" in reference to liturgy be so important to the leadership of the modern Anglican churches? Since 1979 they have gone to great lengths to retain it, even when they must have known they were not being faithful to the Anglican tradition of usage. It would seem that they have a deep desire to believe and to claim that what they are producing, commending and authorizing is somehow, or ought to be in reality, a genuine continuation of the English public prayer and worship that has gone before. That is, they are claiming that their modern forms of worship are the true successors of what Archbishop Cranmer had in mind when he spearheaded the revolution to render the Latin rites in multiple books into English rites in one book. What Cranmer and his co-operators did in 1548–52 for their time and generation, modern liturgists believe or at least claim that they are doing for theirs. They like him claim that they are ministering to the needs of the time. Thus they can attempt to justify their use of the adjective that was chosen in 1549 to appear in the first edition of the first ever authorized Prayer Book in English. It may be the case, however, that modern liturgists and bishops instinctively felt that their relation to and ties with the history of English Liturgy were at best so tenuous that it was desirable to retain this word for their innovations, to divert public attention from the weakness of this link. In this connection they have been not altogether unreasonably called "pirates" by some people.¹

In that there are such great differences between *The Book of Common Prayer* and the books of Alternative Services in "contemporary" English, it would have been far better had the borrowing of this important word not occurred. The presence of the word "common" in the title of very different collections of liturgy—from the American 1979 *Prayer Book* to *Common Worship*—is one of those factors that bring confusion and uncertainty into the modern Church, to the detriment of spiritual edification and general understanding.

¹ E. g. A. C. Capey, *op. cit.*

In fact, the decision by the General Synod of the Church of England to include within its *Common Worship* certain services from *The Book of Common Prayer* (which remains permanently authorized as the primary Prayer Book of the Church in its own independent right by the Act of Uniformity) seems at first sight a strange decision. And on second sight a bad and wrong decision, even an outrageous one.

One can ask, If these services are so easily available why print them (howbeit in edited form) all over again, and add to the size of the already over-size *Common Worship*? The easy answer is that by placing versions of the most used services of the *Prayer Book* in *Common Worship* there became available in one source at one place all the major services currently authorized for use in the Church. One consequence could be (as perhaps some liturgists and bishops hope) that the *Prayer Book* itself will fall into disuse and die a natural death—despite its place as a Formulary of the Church. Another answer could be the desire to present a comprehensive assortment of choice of services. After all, as long as there is in public view and use a prayer book which has the title, *The Book of Common Prayer*, a basic question mark is likely to be placed after the title, *Common Worship*, at least by some people. Better to get parishes to put into dark cupboards their old copies of the *Prayer Book*, or better still, recycle their pages, as with the recently departed *Alternative Service Book*. From another perspective, the presence of the ancient texts along with the modern texts in one book or on one CD reinforces the modern attempt to change the meaning of the expression "Common Prayer".

But from the standpoint of the *Prayer Book* itself, as has been explained above, its content is a unified whole and belongs together. It contains a godly order for family, parish, and nation, an order that covers and provides for the whole of life and the whole of the Christian Year. To divide the contents of the *Prayer Book* and place some in another book is to cut apart this godly order. Those who use *The Book of Common Prayer* faithfully with understanding and piety believe that they are by God's grace participating in this godly order for life here on earth in preparation for life above in the age to come. They believe that by the mercy and providence of God they are in the genuine English tradition of Common Prayer.

CHAPTER THREE

An Examination of "Worship"

True Christian worship is the consecration and use of all our faculties to the glory of the Holy Trinity and in his service. It is the joyous abasement of the people of God before the Divine Mystery, who is the Triune God. While it can be claimed that worship like prayer is to be unceasing, the Church has always had fixed times on the Lord's Day and during the week for what it has presented as Common Prayer or Public Worship.

The adoration, praise, thanksgiving, confession, intercession, petition, consecration and dedication offered by the Church as a united Body and her members individually to God the Father through and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and with the Holy Ghost are what we call "the worship of God". This holy activity involves Word and Sacrament, Ritual and Ceremonial.

A Liturgical Revolution

The story of the Liturgical Movement in the Roman Catholic Church and then in the Protestant Churches, including the Anglican Communion of Churches, during the twentieth century, has often been told. For the purpose of understanding changing definitions of and approaches to Christian worship in the Church of England in the twentieth century, we cannot avoid taking note of what happened from the late 1960s onwards including such things as the publication of *The Alternative Service Book 1980* and a variety of official worship booklets afterwards, the entry of the pentecostalist or charismatic movement into the mainline churches, the major changes in styles of worship in the Roman Catholic Church, the influence of feminism on the way in which the churches make use of women and also speak of and address Deity, and the emergence of new forms of theology producing novel types of theism (such as process theology and pantheism) which have affected the way many people think of the relation of God to the world and to people.

In general, what this has meant is that clergy and congregations have become more vitally concerned with the God who is immanent and less conscious of the God who is transcendent. That is, the God who is immediate and friendly is more sought and recognized than the God who is holy and majestic. Thus acts of worship have become more informal and participatory and less clergy-dominated and led. There is also a much greater variety between parishes as each chooses its own text, rite and style. Further, the ways participants dress and their manner of addressing God have moved from the formal to the informal. The language used on the streets and in the media is now the language of worship, in contrast to the traditional sacred language of worship and prayer. That is, God is now the "You-God" not the "Thou-God" in accordance with the belief that the familiar language makes God more real.

Major themes that have influenced, and to some degree, have been incorporated into public worship and religious language include an emphasis upon relevance, accessibility, simplicity; the need for variety; a keen interest in community (cf. the oft-used "community of faith"); celebration as being a communal experience and thus with more standing and less kneeling; adaptation of early church practices (e. g. the kiss of peace) to encourage mutuality and togetherness; the self-esteem movement and psychotherapy (the importance of feeling good about oneself and about worship); a making of women visible (in ministry and in the use of words for God); inclusivity of all types of persons so that there are no outcasts; freedom and liberation; peace and justice movements;¹ ecumenical agreements and common texts; concern for the environment and creation; use of modern music with the move from organ to more popular instruments; creating "a personal relationship with God", and so on.

In the liturgical and synodical preparation for the replacement of *The Alternative Service Book* by what came to be called *Common Worship* what were seen as the gains since the 1960s were taken for granted and allowed to flow into the context, structure and content of the new collection of rites, services, creeds and prayers for the Church of England. That is, the approach to worship in *Common Worship* cannot be understood and appreciated unless the liturgical, doctrinal and ethical achievements of the second half of the twentieth century are taken into account. So it is not surprising that *A Companion to Common Worship*, Volume 1 (2001) has been published and Volume 2 is promised.

To express the matter in a more technical way one can say that after the secular reductionism of the 1960s, liturgical scholars have tended since the 1970s to maintain a stress on the humanity of

¹ See the "baptismal covenant", below, Chapter Six.

worship but have tried to balance this through a regaining of the sense of rites and signs as vehicles of transcendence from and towards God. To this end they have sought and continue to seek useful tools in phenomenology, cultural anthropology, and semiotics while at the same time not forgetting or recognizing the divine component in the system, structure or pattern of "communication" which is Christian liturgy.

In the Foreword to Volume 1 of the *Companion to Common Worship* the Bishop of Salisbury, who is the "chair" of the Liturgical Commission, states:

The text of *Common Worship* with its rubrics provides a template for the Church's worship. But this template needs an interpretative guidebook. All those who are responsible for designing and leading any part of the Church's worship need to understand the theological, historical and liturgical background to the texts that have been painstakingly crafted and carefully scrutinized on the way to formal authorization.

Here the Bishop tells us that the contents of *Common Worship* are not sufficiently clear in and of themselves to stand on their own but need an interpretative guidebook. Thus even the local parish reader or "praise leader" must study (this book) before they exercise their local ministries. And since not all of us may be familiar with a template or templet, it is an instrument used as a gauge or guide in bringing any piece of work to the desired shape. Thus *Common Worship* is the means of bringing the thoughts and deeds of the people of God to the proper shape of the worship of God. Yet to use this template aright we need the instructional manual, as it were, and the amount of books we need grows. One significant recent manual is *New Patterns For Worship*, an expanded and revised edition of *Patterns of Worship* of 1989. This "how to do it" book is filled with instruction on every conceivable aspect of producing from scratch a "family service" or an "all-age service" or a thematic Eucharist or whatever.

Worship and Common Worship

It is much more difficult to ascertain and understand the nature and content of worship in the varied collection of *Common Worship* than in *The Book of Common Prayer*. This is because the former has a much vaster range of services, prayers, creeds and bits and pieces to survey; and within the services what is required and what is not required has also to be taken in account. Then this collection comes from a variety of sources, has known a variety of editorial hands, is relatively new and is still growing.

In the Preface we noticed that several claims are made concerning the theology of worship. Perhaps the most important of these is this: "Central to our worship is the proclamation of the one, perfect, self-offering of the Son to the Father. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is at the heart of Christian worship." It is not clear whether "the Gospel of Jesus Christ" is meant to be the same as "the proclamation of the one, perfect self-offering ..." or whether they are related but distinct things.

Certainly the good news from God the Father concerning his Incarnate Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who lived, died, rose again and ascended into heaven for us and for our salvation is presupposed and declared in the services.

Certainly also the self-offering of the Incarnate Son to the Father through his consecration to Messianic ministry, his obedience to the Father's will even unto the sentence of crucifixion, and his suffering and death for sinners are also presented in the services.

Having said this, one must also proceed to note that nowhere in the services of *Common Worship* that do not come from, or are not based directly upon, *The Book of Common Prayer*, is the active and passive suffering of Christ as the Mediator, Messiah, New Adam and Saviour presented as powerfully, fully and clearly as it is in the Communion Service of the same *Prayer Book*. A careful examination of the eight Eucharistic Prayers in Order One in "contemporary language" reveals that only one, Prayer C, which is based on the *Prayer Book*, possesses the same profound coverage of the saving work of Jesus Christ as that in *The Book of Common Prayer*. And of the Eucharistic Prayers of Order One in traditional language, again only Prayer C truly covers and celebrates the full mediatorial work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In fact in those services that belong to the period from 1980 we see a deliberate toning down of the emphasis upon the Cross and upon the "full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction" there offered, even as there is also a reduction of the emphasis upon sin as meriting the wrath of God. This is in part probably because of the desire to make services intelligible, accessible, simple and acceptable. Some would think that an element of "dumbing down" is involved here.¹

A related question is whether or not the "gender inclusive" translation of the Psalter, which is part of the primary volume of *Common Worship*, actually has the effect of reducing the Christological commitment and content of the Psalms as used in Christian worship. That is, if "Man" is removed then a traditional reference to the new Man, the new Adam, has disappeared. We shall address this matter in Chapter Six.

¹ For this modern practice see Marva J. Dawn, *Reaching Out without Dumbing Down: A Theology of Worship for the Turn-of-the-Century Worship*, Grand Rapids, 1995.

Closely related to the expression of a full doctrine of the Atonement of Jesus Christ is a full doctrine of the human condition before God, the Judge of all men. The recognition by man of his sin before God is an important element of prayer and worship, for by this recognition, and the accompanying penitence, repentance, faith and receiving of absolution, he praises the justice and the mercy of God. This is an emphasis that is rare today but it is one that those who pray the Psalms regularly are very conscious of. If one compares the statements of human sin in the texts for Morning and Evening Prayer, the Litany and Holy Communion, in *The Book of Common Prayer*, with those in *Common Worship*, one sees very clearly in the latter a definite contracting or minimizing of this doctrine of human sinfulness. For example, in the opening of the Litany of *Common Worship*, the congregation prays for the Persons of the Holy Trinity to “have mercy upon us” whereas in the *Prayer Book* it is to “have mercy upon us” as specifically “miserable sinners”. Christians only see themselves as “miserable” (needy, poor in spirit) when they also see the pure holiness of God and the precious blood of Christ, shed for them. In the opening of the Confession in Holy Communion the difference is even more clear for the wording in the *Prayer Book* conveys very clearly that sin is hated by God and extremely offensive to him and therefore there needs to be in man full acknowledgement and rejection of sin, earnest repentance, hearty sorrow, and trusting faith.

Now let us move on to another claim made in the Preface: that “worship itself is a pilgrimage—a journey into the heart of the love of God.” The beginning of this journey is specifically related to the Service of Baptism, from which rite we learn: “Baptism marks the beginning of a journey with God which continues for the rest of our lives” and we are “journeying into the fullness of God’s love”. As we reflect upon this idea of worship as a pilgrimage we recall how many thousands of Christians through history have made visits to holy sites—but ususally to worship when they got there, not to treat the journey itself as worship. That is, the journey, though it was seen as an act of consecration to God, was a preliminary activity directed towards worship as an end.

The reference to pilgrimage also makes us recall those two well-known texts in the New Testament where baptized Christians, who are walking in the way of Christ, are called pilgrims:

These [Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob] all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. (Hebrews 11:13)

Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul. (1 Peter 2:11)

Here again, worship does not seem to be specifically connected to pilgrimage, except in the sense that the patriarchs as they travelled built altars here and there in order to worship at them, and New Testament Christians met together each Lord’s Day, and in some cases daily, for worship.

If we positively link the theme of pilgrimage with worship, the definition of worship is no longer reasonably restricted to public or private acts of praise, thanksgiving, intercession and petition, but is applied to the whole of the Christian life, which is seen as an ongoing journey “with God” and “into the fullness of God’s love”. In the Service of Baptism parents and godparents of children are told that “in baptism these children begin their journey of faith” and the newly baptized are told that “in Baptism God invites you on a life-long journey.”

Obviously there can be a practical gain in making use of the image of pilgrimage as long as it is made clear that there is a goal to the pilgrimage and that this goal includes the perfect worshipping of the Father through the Son with the Holy Ghost when pilgrims take their rest in the fullness of the kingdom of heaven of the age to come.

It is easy to discern why the image of pilgrimage is made so prominent and is so closely integrated with worship if one looks at the volume with the title *Common Worship: Initiation Services*. Here, as we shall in Chapter Nine, baptism is related to “faith and process” and we are told that “there needs to be a healthy interaction between three aspects of the Christian life: journey, story and pattern.” The traditional themes and ceremonies of the service of Baptism contain other images that are perhaps more prominent than pilgrimage. The thought of Christians as disciples and soldiers of Christ comes into focus when the sign of the cross is made on the forehead of the candidates: “Do not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified. Fight valiantly as a disciple of Christ against sin, the world and the devil, and remain faithful to Christ to the end of your life.” The model of union with Christ and thus adoption as children of God arises in the dramatic association of baptism with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. The giving of a lighted candle points to the baptized shining as lights for Christ in the world of darkness. And so on.¹

One possible reason for the elevation of the model of pilgrimage and of its being associated with worship may be that the theme of pilgrimage is very popular in modern “spirituality” where there is much emphasis upon what it is to be a pilgrim but, regrettably,

¹ On the over-use of the image of *journeying* see also above, pp. 17–18 and below, pp. 86–7 and 98–9.

virtually nothing on where the pilgrim is going and what is the goal of all the effort! Another may be the notion popular with some liturgists (as we noted in chapter one) that liturgical worship is dynamic rather than static, unfolds in stages, and moves from gathering or assembly through transformation (by Word and Sacrament) to sending out (*missio*).

From the discussion of the pilgrim nature of worship, let us move on to reflect upon that which occurs in worship. Certainly, as the last sentence of the Preface puts the matter, the ideal situation is when worship can “become the living sacrifice of ourselves to the God whose majesty is beyond compare and whose truth is from everlasting”. Earlier in the Preface it is claimed (with somewhat less clarity) that “in the worship of God the full meaning and beauty of our humanity is consummated and our lives are opened to the promise God makes for all creation—to transform and renew it in love and goodness.” This certainly sounds great, but what does it mean and where can one see this happening before our eyes? If the basic reference “to transform and renew” creation points to the *eschaton*, the end of this world and the arrival and entrance of the kingdom of God of the age to come, then possibly what is here being claimed is that in the Eucharist a vision is afforded and a taste provided of this new heaven and earth, this new epoch and age of the everlasting kingdom of love and goodness. Perhaps, however, such an interpretation is too traditional for *Common Worship*. It seems more likely that what is here being affirmed in an imprecise way is a theology of ecology and the right use of God’s good world, both of which are focused in a true Eucharist.

It is possible that the answer to our problem is found in *New Patterns for Worship* (2002) from the Liturgical Commission in the special provisions with the title “God in creation”.¹ However, it seems that nothing here actually expresses in prayers and services “the full meaning and beauty of humanity ...”. In fact, after an examination of all the contents of all the published volumes of *Common Worship*, no text has been discovered which expands and illustrates the meaning clearly.

Now, in our search for clarity as to what is worship we turn to the first service in *Common Worship* entitled, “A Service of the Word”, which is not a Liturgy or Rite as such but is rather the outline for one (in fact for innumerable ones), based upon “a common structure”. In the instructions as to how to create this “Service of the Word” there are comments and observations made about worship

¹ G25, G61, G62, G 63, G.66, Harvest [16] and All Creation worships [22]—see also B42 and F47, 48, 49.

which we need to examine for they possibly include vital clues not found in the Preface as to what worship is.

“It is important,” we are told,

that those who prepare for and take part in A Service of the Word should have a clear understanding of the nature of worship and of how the component parts of this service work together. Leading people in worship is leading people into mystery, into the unknown and yet the familiar. ... The primary object in the careful planning and leading of the service is the spiritual direction which enables the whole congregation to come into the presence of God to give him glory.

Leaders are required to have both a “clear understanding of the nature of worship” (the essence or true being of worship) and the interrelation of the component parts (the content within the structure). But as yet we have not been told precisely what is the nature of worship, and apparently nowhere in *Common Worship* is there a succinct definition of worship. Hints are dropped here and there but in the main it seems to be assumed that those using these services will have an idea of what worship is that needs no clarification. It is interesting to recall that when *The Alternative Service Book 1980* appeared, one of the guides to it, *Anglican Worship Today* (edited by Colin Buchanan *et al.*), began with two chapters on the nature of worship. In 1980 it was deemed necessary to tell us what worship is. Perhaps we are to assume that what we were told in 1980 applies in 2000 and afterwards?

In relation to *Common Worship* one of the hints made is the claim that leading people into worship is actually “leading people into mystery, into the unknown and yet the familiar”. Then we are told that worship is or includes “the whole congregation coming into the presence of God to give him glory”. We may affirm that the Holy Trinity is a Mystery at least in the sense that the Triune God, who creates in us a profound sense of awe, dread and wonder, is beyond our comprehension. He draws us towards himself magnetically and yet we are simultaneously repelled by his glorious and pure holiness. He is like a tremendous fire the sight of which causes us to want to get close and observe; but, at the same time the powerful heat and light drive us back. Thus at times we experience “the sense of the Numinous” as Rudolph Otto described it in his influential book, *The Idea of the Holy*.

But perhaps what is intended here in “A Service of the Word”, which can also become “A Service of the Word with a Celebration of Holy Communion”, is that by the use of the familiar (e. g., bread and wine and water, incense and candles, chanting and singing) a congregation is led into a mystical and sacramental union with God

the Father through Jesus Christ and by the activity of the Holy Spirit. However, in contrast to the *Prayer Book*, where the fear of God, holy reverence and dread before him are highly emphasized and prized as ingredients of spiritual worship, in most texts of *Common Worship* this emphasis is not obvious. Rather, God's welcome and our feeling relaxed and comfortable in the divine presence seem to be suggested. And to "give glory to God", while being obviously related to such things as the Gloria, is also practically speaking often associated with hearty singing and a strong communal feeling of togetherness.

In the chapter on "A Service of the Word" in *A Companion to Common Worship* we are given a further hint as to what worship is:

So the choice of which words and texts are used is only part of the required preparation. Equally important are the vision of what worship is, the use of the worship space, colour and symbol, and the structure, shape, flow and action in the service.¹

Here we are told that our vision of what is worship, how we use and decorate the holy place for worship and the overall structure/shape and movement of the service, are all together just as important as is the verbal content in texts used. All this is reasonably clear except perhaps the clause "the vision of what worship is". This suggests that there are several or many possible visions and that having one of these in mind will affect the way that the service is planned and executed and the holy place organized and decorated. One vision could be that of people in togetherness drawing near to God and in unison singing and speaking before him. The "worship space" would be organized to symbolize this with, for example, the chairs set in the round and the walls covered with posters indicating cooperation, community, fellowship and togetherness. Another rather different vision could be that of the church as a hospital for sick sinners thanking God for his healing power and asking for his forgiveness for the sins that have caused the sickness. Here the emphasis would be on the "vertical" relation with God and thus signs of his transcendence and of his mercy, together with manifestations of human penitence and thankfulness, would be prominent.

The Church as a whole can accept a "vision of worship" and from this produce a common text with common ritual and ceremonial to be used everywhere (allowing of course for some local adaptation and input) and such is what is found in *The Book of Common Prayer* and the Service Books of the Orthodox Churches. Or the Church can allow all her individual parishes to develop a local "vision of worship" and adapt publicly available prayers, praises, creeds and

structures to express the local vision. Unless all the local parishes are very well instructed in the Catholic Faith the method of following the local vision (which in practice usually means the vision of one or two dominant personalities) runs the real danger of both excessive dumbing down and allowing into the churches, perhaps unwittingly and sincerely, all the ancient heresies along with new ones, dressed in the respectable clothing of "common worship".

In *New Patterns for Worship* (2002) the Liturgical Commission recommends that before services are constructed there be local discussion as to what is worship¹ and to get the talking started provides some definitions which seem to have the approval of their writers. They are:

Worship is a door open in heaven. We lift up our hearts, listen to what God is saying, join the angels and archangels and all the saints in heaven in praising God's eternal holiness. We are there and he is here.

Worship is a door open to the inner depths of life. Suddenly, as we worship, wholeness, shalom, peace, come to us as all the fragmented bits of our being are put into God's perspective. Things make sense, and there is something to hold on to which has hitherto seemed just beyond the grasp of our mind.

Worship is a door open to the rhythms of life. Through festivals, simple rituals, a weekly rhythm, worship marking morning and evening, the whole of life, time and space is claimed for God and given back to him. In the worship he gives it to us again, to use for him, and we know he is concerned with our hopes and fears, politics and problems, families and finance.

Worship is a door to our hearts open in obedience to God. He commands us to worship in spirit and in truth. We respond to the overwhelming majesty of his beauty revealed in creation, to his overwhelming love and grace revealed in his word and in his Son. And as we worship, we are changed.¹

In this thought-provoking presentation, worship is presented as a door that is open in heaven, to the inner depths of our lives, to the rhythms of life, and to obedience of God. But the use of the picture or image of the door is not immediately helpful since whatever worship is, it is activity (spiritual, moral, mental, physical, individual and communal) by certain human beings addressed to another unique Being, the Lord God, who is beyond infinity and eternity. Though a door swings open, it hardly represents the total personal action of a human being or of an assembly of human beings. Possibly what is meant is that worship occurs when these various doors are opened by the Holy Spirit or our preparation or both.

Now let us move on to consider the actual content of prayers, and in particular some collects. It must be acknowledged that what we referred to above as a “dumbing down” is widespread in modern popular services of worship in the West, as we descend to the lowest possible common denominator to ensure that all present can follow what is going on. This phenomenon is to be seen in much of the results of “the church growth movement” in various parts of the world, America and Korea for example. At the same time it must also be stated that “dumbing down” is not a necessary consequence of using new liturgy and so-called “contemporary language”. This agreed, it probably can be fairly adduced against the Church of England that her very latest collection of *Additional Collects*,¹ which was first brought to the General Synod in February 2003 and as I write awaits final approval, is susceptible to the charge of “dumbing down”. It is intended as a supplement and thus an alternative to the collection already in use and entitled, “Collects and Post-Communions for Sundays, Principal Holy Days and Festivals”.

This primary collection of Collects in *Common Worship*, which are provided in both contemporary and traditional language, is not perfect; and later on in this book we shall have reason to offer some critical comments of content and style. However, this criticism will not be primarily about “dumbing down”, which applies specifically to the 2003 collection. The consultation exercise undertaken by the Liturgical Commission before the writing of the new simplified prayers produced a wide range of criticisms of the present collects in *Common Worship* and some of these criticisms we shall notice in chapter nine.

It is appropriate to examine several of the results of this process of simplification. Here are three in a row of the new collects:

Christmas Eve

Almighty God,
as we prepare with joy
to celebrate the gift of the Christ-child,
embrace the earth with your glory
and be for us a living hope
in Jesus Christ our Lord

Christmas Night

Eternal God,
in the stillness of this night
your almighty Word leapt down from heaven:
pierce the world’s darkness with the light of salvation
and give to the earth the peace that we long for
through our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Christmas Day

Lord Jesus Christ,
your birth at Bethlehem
draws us to kneel in wonder at heaven here on earth:
accept our heartfelt praise,
as we worship you,
our Saviour and our eternal God.

They are certainly brief; each is one sentence, though two of them make use of the colon to separate the giving of information from the petition.

The first one uses the popular but hardly biblical expression “Christ-child”. Further, unless previously told or in the know one would not necessarily associate “the Christ-child” of line 3 with “Jesus Christ our Lord” of the last line. The former could be the offspring of the latter! Then, what “embrace the earth with your glory” means is far from clear, even though it may sound good.

In the second, the “Eternal God” is informed that his almighty Word leapt down from heaven. Whatever be the aptness of this dramatic metaphorical picture, it cannot point to any basic biblical truth because the Word had already taken to himself in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary his humanity as from 25 March and was thus already present as One Person with two natures in the womb of Mary, ready to come forth into the world in his own right as the Incarnate Son, Emmanuel.

The third, which is addressed to Jesus, tells him that we are drawn to kneel in wonder at heaven as we exist on earth. Why do we not kneel specifically before the same Lord Jesus for whom heaven exists?

They appear to be written in order primarily to sound good in their brevity when spoken rather than to convey accurate doctrine and clear petition for genuine worshippers.

Ordinary people over the centuries have learned off by heart the Collects from *The Book of Common Prayer* and, whether or not they fully understood the totality of truth within their one sentence, often with a relative clause and a doxology, they appear to have found them meaningful prayers in time of trial and temptation, difficulty and distress, as parish priests who visit their flock have long known. Why we need to simplify them, even for mission congregations, in this day and age remains a puzzle, especially when we can end up not with genuine simplicity but with semi-meaningless expressions.

¹ *Common Worship: Additional Collects* GS 1495, 2003

Worship and the Prayer Book

According to *The Book of Common Prayer*, worship as a public, corporate activity is specifically offered in the Sacrament of Baptism (followed by Confirmation), in the daily Morning and Evening Prayer, and by Morning Prayer, Litany, Holy Communion with sermon and Evening Prayer on the Lord's Day (with similar arrangements for Feast Days). For many parishes which use the *Prayer Book* in the third millennium it must be admitted that for them this is an ideal rather than a norm, for they seem only to be able or ready to manage one or two services on Sundays and an occasional one mid-week. Nevertheless, to understand the meaning and content of worship in the *Prayer Book* one must examine what it presupposes and expects.

The purpose of both Morning and Evening Prayer is contained in the address to the assembled congregation that begins, "Dearly beloved brethren . . ." We hear these words:

... when we assemble and meet together to render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at his [God's] hands, to set forth his most worthy praise, to hear his most holy Word, and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul.

So, thanking, praising and petitioning God, as well as hearing what he has to say to us, are all basic ingredients of this service. But so also is the confession of sins, which is seen not only as a necessary preparation for approaching God—"with a pure heart and humble voice unto the throne of the heavenly grace"—but also as a necessary part of the praise and worship of God. We are to confess our sins "with an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart; to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same, by his infinite goodness and mercy". Therefore a General Confession said by all, followed by an Absolution, immediately occurs after this address. It is important to observe that the confession of and the turning away from sins is not presented as something we need to get over quickly so as to move on to the more important activity of "celebration" but as a necessary part of the praise of God. This is because our humble and sincere confessing of sin is also our celebrating his radiant holiness and his merciful forgiveness.

Worship may be described as a primary ingredient of our duty to God. Thus in the Catechism in response to the Question, "What is thy duty towards God?", the answer provided is:

My duty towards God is to believe in him, to fear him, and to love him, with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul,

and with all my strength; to worship him, to give him thanks, to put my whole trust in him, to call upon him, to honour his holy Name and his Word, and to serve him truly all the days of my life.

The spiritual heights of Christian worship are there to be attained in what the Early Church called The Eucharist, entitled "The Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion" in the *Prayer Book*. Here the centrality of Jesus Christ as the only Mediator between God and man, the necessity of his unique Atonement, the glory of his bodily Resurrection and Exaltation, and the union of the Church to him by faith through the Holy Ghost are made abundantly clear. "We in him and he in us" is the relation established by God through this Sacrament as the assembly of Christ's flock eat the bread and drink the wine in penitence and faith, in thanksgiving and praise, in the presence of the same exalted Lord Jesus Christ.

Once again in this *Prayer Book* service, the praise of God and union with Christ include the confession of sin and turning away from it. What has been called justification by faith—trusting wholly in the merits of the Christ the Redeemer and repudiating any claims of one's own for peace with God—is certainly a prominent theme, but it is clearly linked to the doctrine of union with Christ. The heavy emphasis on sin (so resented by some modern people) is there to make clear both how abominable it is in God's sight and so to be confessed in humility and penitence, and how great is the mercy of the Holy Trinity which provides for the complete forgiveness, cleansing and removal of sin.

Certainly the Service in the *Prayer Book* of 1662, unlike that in the first *Prayer Book* of 1549, does not conform to the shape or content of the medieval Mass in the Sarum Use. Neither does it conform to the shape or content recommended by Gregory Dix in his influential book *The Shape of the Liturgy*. However, neither of these facts takes away from this Service its profoundly biblical character and shape, together with its ability in the presence of the Holy Ghost to lead those who use it in sincerity and truth from earth to heaven into fruitful union with the Lord Jesus Christ. Testimonies to its fruitful godliness abound from the seventeenth to the twentieth century.

It is the presumption of the *Prayer Book*, and something which Richard Hooker, the Anglican apologist, makes explicit, that common public prayer/worship is superior to private prayer for spiritual and moral efficacy. In Book V of his *Ecclesiastical Polity* Hooker waxes eloquent concerning the beauty, orderliness and efficacy of common prayer in the public place (church). Private prayer should be energised and inspired from the central spring of prayer, public

worship, rather than being that from which common prayer has its origin. Finally, much spiritual benefit comes from the discipline of using constantly a fixed text which is theologically sound and memorable.

Summary

One difference between *The Book of Common Prayer* and *Common Worship* is clear to all, that of size. Because of the vast choice built into the latter, it is probably ten times the size of the former! In fact the provision of *Common Worship* is so immense that the only way for a small parish to benefit from it is for there to be a choice made from the variety and for that to become the locally fixed or semi-fixed regular liturgy for Sundays and principal Feasts. However, to make this choice and to be confident that it is a wise one is far from easy. It requires above-average understanding and skill in those who do the choosing. The point is that for there to be right habits of worship present in a parish, there has to be stability and there has to be a liturgy that contains all the basic ingredients of true public worship, even if only a minimal number of options are built into that local liturgy. Then a question will always remain as to whether this understanding and skill is both present and used.

Another question will also be there in the larger parish (but perhaps not often asked) where an attempt is made to make use of the variety in an "imaginative" way, with different options present each Lord's Day and even on weekdays. It is this: Is it spiritually good for their personal sanctification for some Christian people to have so much power to choose how a congregation worships the Lord our God each Sunday? The wisdom of the centuries points to the great danger of mistaking true freedom in Christ, wherein we submit to his way to find his freedom in us, with a worldly type of freedom where we choose this or that way to serve him and our freedom is in our will. Is not a fairly fixed liturgy better for the sanctification of the people of God and their experience of Christ's service, which is perfect freedom, than a situation where they are choosing something different all the time?

If the result of the Church of England's *Common Worship* as the availability of an ever expanding collection of texts is that each small (even large) parish creates its own "common prayer" through its own fixed and familiar liturgy and thereby uses only a very small part of that which is on offer and available, then the further question arises why was such a massive production necessary in the first place? It seems that the only commonality of worship envisaged in the national Church is that all parishes and cathedrals should use a

structure and contents which are wholly available for all in, as it were, the same liturgical supermarket. Further, as there appears to be no consistent doctrine of the nature or essence of worship in the provisions of *Common Worship*, but only hints as to what it may be, it is more than likely that the services in use, and the local ceremonial and music, will provide a veritable assortment of views as to who is God, what is celebration, and how God is worshipped. As time goes by it may well be increasingly difficult to have meaningful diocesan, deanery and joint services because of the diversity of experiences of worship in a given region.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Eucharist

Already in the chapter on Worship we have taken a preliminary look at the varied and detailed provisions for the celebration of the Eucharist in *Common Worship*. Here we shall consider in more detail the shape, content and doctrine of the variety of texts for the Holy Communion presented within Order One and Order Two. There will be no detailed consideration of the idiom of public prayer used since the subject of appropriate language for public worship will be taken up later, in Chapter Ten.

Shape

In the Church of England the example of the Early Church has always been of great importance for determining not only the doctrine of the Eucharist but also the ingredients of the service. Further, the more ancient the source providing the structure, ingredients and doctrine of this service, the more attention it is given by scholars. At the same time, as the dogma of the First Four Ecumenical Councils was always taken most seriously, liturgy produced in the light of this doctrinal development was treated as special. This great respect for ancient teaching and practice provided the context for the excessive influence of Dom Gregory Dix (1901–52) who had no time for, or patience with, the *Prayer Book*, for he regarded Anglican liturgy as parenthetical in the history of liturgy. He described a fourfold “shape” of the Eucharist largely derived from *The Apostolic Tradition*, a third-century work attributed to Hippolytus of Rome. In Dix’s book *The Shape of the Liturgy* (1945) is set forth a structure made from the four actions of the taking of the bread and wine; the thanksgiving; the breaking of bread; and the giving to the communicants. This shape, with minor refinements, can be seen in the eucharistic prayers of *The Alternative Service Book 1980* and particularly the third, which is modelled on it; this influence is acknowledged, even celebrated, in *A Commentary on The Alternative*

Service Book 1980, page 57, as providing a totally different path from the liturgical revisions of the 1920s.

Those who produced the final form of the eucharistic prayers in *Common Worship* were obviously much concerned with the shape of the whole rite. Indeed the concept of “the shape of the service/rite/liturgy” seems to be too prominent. A page each of a contents list called “Structure” precedes the two distinct Orders;¹ within the services themselves the various parts have headings printed in large type and, for major divisions, in red italics. However, what the Liturgical Commission did not do, and for this they are to be warmly complimented, was to force the Content of the Service from *The Book of Common Prayer* into the new Shape pioneered in Series 2 and 3 and *The Alternative Service Book 1980* and continued in *Common Worship*.² In the USA, the Episcopal Church used the basic content of the classic *Prayer Book* (1928 edition) service but forced it into the shape of the new services (called Rite II) to produce what was called Rite I in the official 1979 *Prayer Book*. The shape of the Eucharist in this 1979 book is basically the same as that in the 1980 English book where the passing of the peace lies in between the ministry of the word and the ministry of the sacrament, and this is so whether it be the traditional language rite or the modern language one.

In the *Common Worship* Order One Eucharist the adherence to the Dix theory of the supposed four-fold action is identified in or around the text itself in both the contemporary or traditional-language versions. We find the “Taking of the Bread and Wine”, “The Eucharistic Prayer” [= the Thanksgiving], the “Breaking of the Bread” and the “Giving of Communion”.³ However, in Order Two in either traditional or contemporary language it is the structure of the *Prayer Book* from the *Sursum Corda* onwards that is followed and in this there is no four-fold action.

Whether this fourfold action is really as obvious or prominent in the ancient rites as Dix claimed is debated, as is also whether or not the action is better described as twofold or threefold. Thus the question arises as to the wisdom of so clearly identifying the fourfold by sub-headings in the texts of the service. Further, we need to face the possibility that “shape” may be a spin-word which sometimes means no more than the inclusion of certain ingredients. It is not clear that the inclusion of the right parts will always make the right shape, if *shape* (as Dix thought) means something with the wholeness of a drama.

There is another use of the word “shape” with regard to the Eucharistic Prayers in *Common Worship*. It relates to the whole Prayer, its content of Praise and Petition. What is called the Western shape is essentially that of the medieval western Church, which was continued

1 See pages 166 and 228. 2 pp. 166ff. 3 pp. 175, 176, 179, 180

in *The Book of Common Prayer*, not only in 1549 but also from 1552, but in a distributed or truncated form. This shape is continued in Order One, Prayers A, B, C and E, where the Thanksgiving ends at the Sanctus and the remainder is petitionary, with the Institution narrative set within this. In contrast Prayers D, F, G and H are said to be

largely patterned after the classic Eastern "Antiochene" shape, in which the praise has a more extended narrative character, telling the story of salvation history to a greater or lesser degree, and the *Sanctus* and institution narrative are both incorporated within that part of the prayer.

To demonstrate the difference between the Western and Eastern shapes, a diagram is provided showing how the Eastern shape has supposedly a greater content of praise.¹

Reflecting upon this distinction between praise and petition, it is possible to claim that the so-called "petitionary" element actually praises and thanks God just as much as does the narration of God's mighty acts of salvation of the Old and New Testaments. The humble acknowledgement before God, the Father, of what his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, has done for the salvation of man, is the basis of the petition and the recital of the Institution by the same Jesus Christ. The Western shape, as found in *The Book of Common Prayer*, presupposes thankful, humbled and praising hearts in the powerful and evocative relative clauses,

who of thy tender mercy didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the Cross for our redemption; who made there ... a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world ...

Here the purpose of the skilful use of the *Deus qui* (God, who) in the relative clause is with appropriate reverence and godly fear to remember before God aspects of his nature, character, attributes or mighty deeds, in order to be in the right frame of mind and piety of heart to make petition of him.

Shape, we must note, is foundational for "A Service of the Word with a Celebration of Holy Communion",² since there is *nothing but* "shape" in the presentation of this "service". The content of the listed ingredients is supplied by material from elsewhere, whether from *Common Worship* or composed for the occasion. It is interesting to note that a similar provision is found in the American Prayer Book of 1979.³ This has commonly been described in recent days as "the hermeneutical key" to the whole Prayer Book, for, it is claimed, it makes clear that liturgy is more than a text and emphasises that it is

¹ *Companion to Common Worship*, pp. 138, 139

² *Common Worship*, p. 25

³ pp. 400-1

communal action. This kind of claim is important for various reasons and of these the ecumenical is perhaps the most obvious. The Episcopal Church is now in full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the claim that the shape is primary makes inter-communion that much easier, for Lutherans have never had the equivalent of *The Book of Common Prayer* as both Text and Formulary. They have never had Liturgical Formularies to unite them as a jurisdiction of the Church of God. Rather they have been a Confessional Church ("We believe, teach and confess ...") based upon the Augsburg Confession, and the structure of their worship has been guided in principle not by a common text but by common structures. Their Liturgical Books are not primarily collections of texts but essays on how to lead liturgy and teach the Faith. Many Lutheran parishes have used common services, but for them common prayer means not a common text but a common (and minimal) structure for Word and Sacrament. Perhaps this provision of shape only in *Common Worship* will be hailed also as "the hermeneutical key" to the Eucharist, especially since the Church of England has various agreements with Lutheran State Churches in Europe.

In *New Patterns for Worship*, the Liturgical Commission provides a set of rules and an abundance of advice concerning "planning and preparing Holy Communion".¹ Various examples of A Service of Holy Communion, constructed within the terms of reference provided in *Common Worship*² are supplied, including a special one on "All Creation Worships".³ Those who embark on this exercise have so much to bear in mind and so many choices to make that to produce something satisfactory as a means of worshipping the Holy, Blessed and Undivided Trinity is to say the least very difficult, and the most, virtually impossible.

The Gathering

In Order One, the first part is called "The Gathering", followed by "the Liturgy of the Word". The parts which make up "the Gathering" are: Greeting, Prayer of Preparation, Prayers of Penitence, Summary of the Law, Invitation to Confession, Confession, Kyries, Absolution, Gloria in Excelsis and the Collect. While "the Gathering" may include most of these parts, the only required ones appear to be the opening "Greeting" and the Collect of the Day. Confession seems to be optional. It is important to observe two things here. First, that this is the only place in Order One where it is possible to make confession of sins and hear the divine word of forgiveness, unless one reckons that this is achieved by the Lord's Prayer. Secondly, that

¹ pp. 21ff. ² p. 25 ³ pp. 458ff.

because confession of sins is placed in what is often termed “the preparation” it is not linked distinctly and directly, as it is in Scripture and in the *Prayer Book*, with the praise of God and true worship of him. It has been the tendency in modern times to treat the confession of sins as that which we need to get out of the way as efficiently as possible in order to get to the real business of celebration. In contrast in *The Book of Common Prayer* the Collect for Purity and the recital of the Ten Commandments are compulsory and the confession and absolution, which come later in the service, are also a necessary part of the spirituality and doctrine of the service.

In some modern Anglican high church traditions it is the custom to have no public confession or absolution in the Liturgy in “the great fifty days of Easter” and also the period from Christmas to Epiphany. This kind of thing seems to be permitted by the rubrics of Order One. Again in contrast to this, the *Prayer Book* reckons us to be sinners for 365 days a year and in high and low seasons and thus we are always in need of divine cleansing, and as such, we need to praise the justice of God which condemns our sins and the mercy of God that forgives us as we appear before him in penitence and humility seeking remission and forgiveness.

“The Greeting” in Order One contains as an option: “The Lord be with you” from the minister with the response “And also with you” from the whole congregation. In the *Prayer Book* (and in Order Two, following the *Prayer Book*) the response made by the whole congregation is “And with thy spirit.” Thus one would have expected, “And with your spirit,” in modern renderings. However, this ancient exchange has been made to sound like, and is now called, a Greeting. It was rendered into a modern paraphrase (initially by the International Consultation on English Texts, 1970) and has appeared in prayer books/liturgy, e. g., the ECUSA 1979 *Prayer Book*, in this “greeting” form for thirty years or so now. But, as used in church, this exchange is not a simple greeting as if to friends in the street or at the club. It is a profound dialogue wherein the presence of the Lord Jesus by his Spirit is being humbly claimed, affirmed and accepted in general terms and also being asked for in specific terms.

The traditional English form is a direct, literal translation of the original Latin, long used in the Church in western Europe:

Priest: *Dominus vobiscum.*

People: *Et cum spiritu tuo.*

Here the first line has the second person plural—*you*, i.e., the members of the congregation, while the second line has the second person singular—*thou/thy*, the Minister/Priest.

And this Latin form of the exchange and dialogue was/is used in both the Daily Services of the Church and the Mass. The rubrics allowed this exchange to be only between Bishop or Priest and congregation in the Mass and between Bishop, Priest or Deacon and congregation (if any) in the Daily Offices. That is, the congregation were not to say, *et cum spiritu tuo*, to a subdeacon or to a lay reader.

The meaning of “The Lord be with you” is reasonably straightforward. The Minister addresses the people and claims the promises of the Lord Jesus, which he made to his disciples, for example, “Where two or three are gathered together in my Name there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20) and “I am with you always even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:20). Christ is with them especially when as the Body of Christ and Household of God they meet at his Table on his Day to celebrate his Resurrection and to feast at his Banquet. Though the Lord Jesus has ascended into heaven, he is present with his people in and through the Holy Ghost, who is called by St Paul, the Spirit of Christ.

The meaning of “and with thy spirit” is also reasonably straightforward—or at least it used to be. It is addressed by the congregation to the Minister and is first of all the recognition that he has been ordained to serve the Lord in his Church and to minister amongst and to this gathered people. At ordination a spiritual gift from the Lord Christ was given unto him and it is in direct reference to this that the congregation says, “and with thy spirit”. It is thus a confident prayer that the ordained Minister will conduct the service as one who is inspired by and guided by the Spirit of the Lord according to the spiritual gift, a gift from the Lord Christ through the Holy Ghost, bestowed upon him at ordination. Thus “spirit” here refers both to the Holy Ghost and to the human spirit to which is grafted or united the spiritual gift of ordination. It is an expression of humble confidence by the congregation that the divine worship will be an encounter with the Lord Jesus in spirit and in truth through the ministrations of his ordained servant. The decision to replace *et cum spiritu tuo* with “And also with you” removes this reference to the particular status, role and calling of the ordained Minister and his place and purpose at the Eucharist. It makes him merely the leader of the group (or presider at the assembly). We may thus claim that the use of “And also with you” is a great loss to the full, historic and traditional meaning of worship and of ordination in the Catholic Church.

We recall that the modern translation has been justified on the basis that the original expression was a Semitism—that it was used in Palestine in Aramaic as a greeting. Now, even if this is true, the fact remains that it took on a specific theological and liturgical meaning in the Early Church when they gathered for the Eucharist with their

bishop. And that meaning became the true meaning for Christians. In other words, “and with thy spirit” may have begun its journey as an everyday greeting outside the Church, but it is transformed by its use in divine service and in its use at a meal that is unlike any other meal, the Eucharist. We do no service to the cause of truth by avoiding the meaning that it has in all the texts and teaching of the Early Church with respect to the Eucharist. Happily, the Vatican is now—at last—requiring those who produce English texts for the Church to translate, “And with your spirit”. We may consider that this is good and right, for it was the misplaced zeal of RC translators in the 1960s/1970s that introduced us all to the strange expression (hardly modern English) “And also with you,” and thereby cut us off from a sound tradition of doctrine.

Perhaps this is a good place to make a comment on the name given to the bishop or priest or minister in this service, the name of “the president”. There are obvious attractions to the use of this word, since it can refer to both female and male clergy. However, it is somewhat dated, for the right title now seems to be “the presider” to convey a sense of action and drama in the service. The claim that this name is an ancient, pre-Constantinian title for the bishop or priest who celebrated the Eucharist is not based on such a sure foundation as often supposed. In *The Apology* of Justin Martyr, the bishop or head of the college of presbyters is called “the president of the brethren” and then later this is shortened to “the president.” But the meaning of *president* is to be gained not from its standing alone but with “of the brethren”. It would seem a better practice to use the title of “Celebrant” or “Minister”. Further, “president” will soon become “presider” as in much of the recent provision of the American Episcopal Church.

Liturgy of the Word

In this section are three Bible readings, a Creed and Prayers of Intercession. We shall only examine the Creed here, leaving reflections upon the Bible and Prayer to Chapters Eight and Nine.

The Nicene Creed is to be used on Sundays and Holy Days. In the Church of England there are two authorized translations, that in *Common Worship* and that in *The Book of Common Prayer*. These are obviously different. Here are some of the issues raised when the two are compared.

The first question is whether to begin “I believe” or “We believe”. The claim made by those who first provided the plural form in the 1970s was that in the documents of the Ecumenical Councils of the Church from 325 to 451 the text begins in the plural in both the Greek and the Latin versions. The Bishops there assembled said in

unison, “We believe” So far they are entirely right. Next, they said, we should therefore follow the Councils and use the plural, for that form is the most authentic and original. Here they began to go wrong. Why? Because the Creed we know as the Nicene Creed was taken by the bishops to their churches and used as the baptismal Creed (especially in the East) and as such they changed it to the first person singular, *I believe*. When eventually the Nicene Creed entered the Liturgy it entered as the baptismal Creed and thus in the first person singular. In the ancient Liturgies of the East and the West it is always and only in the singular. Thus the widespread use of the word, *Credo* (Latin for “I believe”). All the musical settings for the Creed through the centuries are for “I believe” and apparently there are very few examples over the centuries of the plural form of the Creed used in worship, that is until we arrive at the 1970s. It is obvious that “I believe” is the correct form for not only is it the confession of faith of each member of the Body of Christ, it is also the whole Body, the one Body, saying to its Head and Master, “I believe”.

In the second place, the question arises of how to refer to the created order. The modern has “all that is, seen and unseen”; the *Prayer Book* “all things visible and invisible”. We usually use the word “unseen” to refer to something that is hidden from our eyes or covered so as not to be seen. In contrast we usually use the word “invisible” to refer to something that by its nature cannot be seen—e. g., the wind and the human spirit and mind. The words in the original Greek of the Creed are taken from the New Testament, Colossians 1: 16, “For in Christ all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible [Gk, *ta horata* and *ta aorata*]”; and it is of great interest that the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, favoured by the Liturgical Commission, translates the Greek as “visible and invisible”. Since the reference in the Creed is to God’s heaven where are the angels, the better word is “invisible” for we cannot by our mortal eyes see this realm and sphere.

Thirdly, the expression “eternally begotten of the Father” is misleading, for it seems to suggest that the Son of God is perpetually and continually being begotten by the Father. The truth being conveyed by the Creed in both its Latin and Greek originals is that the begetting occurred before ages and worlds, that is, out of time. The *Prayer Book* has “begotten of his Father before all worlds”, which translates the Latin, “ex patre natum ante omnia saecula”. The Greek is “ton ex tou patros gennethenta pro panton ton aionon” which is best translated “begotten from the Father before all ages”. Thus the *Prayer Book* version is to be preferred for though it will always need explanation it is nearer to the originals than the modern version. The concept of eternally begetting, being brought into being all the time, is hardly intelligible.

In the fourth place, the phrase “of one Being with the Father” is intended to be a better translation than “being of one substance with the Father”. The original Greek contains the famous *homoousios* which had traditionally been translated in English as “the same [= identical] substance”, pointing to the divinity of the Son being exactly and wholly the same divinity as the Father. The danger of the new translation in rendering *ousia* as “Being” and thus *homoousios* as “one Being” is that Being may be understood as *a* Being, a Something that is Someone, and thus God is seen as One Being with three primary Names, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It would have been far better to retain the traditional translation and then explain it to catechumens and confirmands.

Fifthly, the statement “for us and for our salvation he [the Son] came down from heaven, was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man” differs from the *Prayer Book* where *Common Worship*’s “for us” is rendered “for us men”. This is better, because the idea is that the Incarnation is for the whole human race and not merely and only for the church members of any one time. The reason for the omitting of “men” (Greek original, *anthropos*; Latin, *homo*) is of course the desire to be gender inclusive. Yet here submission to a modern ideology has created false doctrine, serious false doctrine, by changing the purpose of the Incarnation and saving work of the Son of God in restricting it only to “us”, which will ordinarily be understood as “church members”, rather than as “human beings”. Moving on to the second half of this statement we note that in the *Prayer Book* it is rendered “was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary”. This old translation follows the Latin text in making a distinction by the use of different prepositions, “by” and “of”, between the different roles of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary in the act whereby Jesus was conceived. The modern translation follows the Greek text by using twice the same preposition, but in so doing blurs the distinctive role of God and Mary in the assumption by the eternal Son of our human nature in her womb.

Two comments bring this section to a close. First, the Order Two in contemporary language, which is intended to be the *Prayer Book* service rendered into modern English, does not present the Creed in the “I believe” form. Rather it uses the modern form of “We believe” from Order One! Secondly, while the Creed printed in the Liturgy of the Word contains the *filioque* (“and from the Son”) and thus rightly presents the official doctrine of the Church of England concerning the procession of the Holy Ghost, a version of the Creed on page 140 which “may be used on suitable ecumenical occasions” is without the *filioque*. Thus it seems the Church of England is of two minds on this

doctrine which has divided East and West for a long time. What do we believe? On some occasions one thing and on others another. The suggestion must be that precision in credal formulations is not very important.

The Eucharistic Prayer

After the Gathering or the Preparation comes the Liturgy of the Word, and this is followed by the Liturgy of the Sacrament. The latter may begin with “The Peace”.

The source of this activity is said to be the Early Church, which developed it from the “kiss of peace” in the New Testament. A variety of explanations is offered by liturgists as to what was its purpose in the third century and an even greater variety as to what it is meant to achieve in the modern age.

Whatever be its real meaning and purpose, the effect of “the passing of the peace” in some, perhaps too many, churches is to create a major activity between the ministry of the Word and the ministry of the Sacrament, and in some cases, where it is pursued with enthusiasm and major congregational involvement, to make it seem the most important thing in the whole service—the divine sandwich-filling. Thus the the all-important Shape of the service has the feel and the appearance of a sandwich. In fact the Peace has been dubbed “the sacrament of pantheism” in situations where its nature, noise and activity seem excessive.

Perhaps there are some places and services wherein the Peace does achieve what the word suggests, peace and reconciliation between those at enmity and thus peace with God and one another before approaching the altar (see Matthew 5:23–4). But bearing in mind how open this activity is to abuse (e. g., men searching out pretty females) there is much to be said for using the rubrical provision¹ and either leaving out the Peace altogether or saying the Peace at another place, where there cannot be a general walk-about and hugging. Too much external greeting, as if meeting loved ones at the gate in the airport after a long absence, can also distort the sense of the doctrine of God, making him to be as it were only the God of the horizontal and of feeling, and not the God of transcendence and contemplation.

The Eucharistic Prayer begins with the *Sursum Corda*, where we immediately note the “and also with you” instead of “and with your spirit”. If ever the right translation, “thy/your spirit”, is needed, it is here at the beginning of the important address to the Father in the name of his Son and with the Holy Ghost. Further, another example of the commitment to gender inclusiveness occurs when the

¹ See page 333.

congregation responds to the Celebrant by saying, "It is right to give thanks and praise". Yes it is, but to whom? *The Alternative Service Book 1980* had "to give him thanks and praise". Is not Jesus the Christ a male and thus is it not right to use "him" with reference to this unique Man?

When we read through the provision of ten versions of "the Eucharistic Prayer" in Order One and two in Order Two and compare them one with another, it is difficult to understand why so many were thought necessary, even though there was a desire to make use of the western and eastern shapes of the Prayer. It is like sitting down for breakfast and having the table in front of you filled with boxes of different cereals which, however, have a basic similarity, so that choice is hard to make! It seems that the variety that characterizes the affluent West in terms of what may be purchased in shopping mall and supermarket has so become part of our general expectations that we need not only the provision of multiple prayers for the Eucharist but also a structure or shape that can be used to create our own local eucharistic prayer. Thus the diversity is in principle extremely great and wide.

In practice, it appears that many parishes choose one of the options, print it as a leaflet, and effectively forget about all the other possibilities, until they get a new vicar or until the Bishop comes along and tells them to try another one. The desire for some standard or regular form at the parish level (where there are usually no liturgists who are excited by all the different possibilities) is wholly understandable. In order to settle down and concentrate and know what is coming next the average worshipper needs to be reasonably familiar with a rite. At best, he needs to be able to learn it by heart.

We recall that the early Church fairly quickly standardized its central liturgical texts (according to rite) as soon as it reasonably could after the Council of Nicea (325). Thus the eucharistic canons became standard, two in the Byzantine rite, one in the Roman rite, a number, but still set, in the Coptic rite, and so on. Like the standardization of the creed and of doctrinal statements, this was a natural and necessary part of the development of doctrine, both to safeguard orthodoxy and also to ensure the continuity of Holy Tradition.

However, in the *Companion to Common Worship* we are told that

It is now common in many churches to have more than one eucharistic prayer available for use, each of which has its own distinct emphasis. Rather than trying to say everything in one prayer, they offer a diversity of expressions and scriptural allusions.

So "experiencing and praying at least some of their diversity is generally to be encouraged for all congregations, although certain prayers will be more appropriate for some occasions and situations than others."¹ Perhaps the idea is that there should be the use of at least one in the western shape with one in the eastern shape.

Where are the reasonably simple and clear criteria, whether stated or available, by which a parish priest with the lay leadership can determine which of the options are right for their situation? This need appears not to be addressed in the *Companion*. Indeed in the Foreword the Bishop of Salisbury suggests that we all need to read the book (or the long chapter on the Eucharist) in order to understand sufficiently to make a right choice. Yet practically speaking, decisions seem to be taken—at least in small parishes—on such principles as, what is closest to the use of one of the options from *The Alternative Service Book 1980* with which we are familiar, or which one is like the *Prayer Book* service. The alternatives to the Order for Holy Communion in the *Prayer Book* could have been limited to no more than two Eucharistic Prayers, one Western and one Eastern in shape. And the Outline of the Shape,² leaving the content open to local initiatives should not have been made so prominent. By encouraging such an approach to liturgy the Church of England is in danger of losing all sense not only of "Common Prayer" but also of "common doctrine".

In comparing the content of the one, and only one, Prayer of Consecration in the *Prayer Book*, with those of the Eucharistic Prayers in *Common Worship* that are not based on the *Prayer Book*, we shall here note two characteristics of the latter—a studied ambiguity about the presence of Christ in the Sacrament and a weak doctrine of the saving work of the Lord Jesus at Calvary.

It is well known and generally accepted that on matters which were controversial in the sixteenth century *The Book of Common Prayer*, like The Articles of Religion, was clear—e. g., the completeness and sufficiency of the atoning work of Jesus Christ on the Cross, the crucial role of faith in salvation, and the spirituality of sacramental grace. Examples of studied ambiguity occur in seven of the eight Prayers of Order One. The celebrant asks that the bread and wine may "be to us" or "be for us" the body and blood of Christ. This is a return to the phraseology of the *Prayer Book* of 1549 asking that the elements may be in some way or another (though the way is not specified) identified with the Lord's body and blood. In 1549 the use of such wording represented a move away from the medieval, physical doctrine of transubstantiation (that the whole bread

¹ pp. 122, 123 ² *Common Worship*, p. 25

becomes truly the whole body of Christ) towards the more spiritual doctrine later expressed in the *Prayer Books* of 1552, 1559, 1604 and 1662. Here the petition is that by receiving the consecrated bread and wine in faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we may “be partakers” of his body and blood. Of the eight prayers only one retains the classic *Prayer Book* language.

Perhaps it is not unreasonable to note here that *Common Worship* is the first public Liturgy of the Church of England since the sixteenth century to provide by name for the celebration of the medieval festival of transubstantiation, despite the rejection of transubstantiation in Article 28. Corpus Christi is listed in red on page four as “The Day of Thanksgiving for the Institution of Holy Communion” (kept on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday).¹ The Collects provided add to the studied ambiguity, for the Celebrant prays, “Grant us so to reverence the sacred mysteries of your body and blood that we may know within ourselves and show forth in our lives the fruits of your redemption.” Here the treatment of the bread and wine with reverence as sacred mysteries suggests some doctrine of a real presence located in, with or around the physical elements, but the suggestion seems intended not to be clear enough to provoke challenge from those who resist the doctrine of transubstantiation.

The Church of England is a reformed Catholic Church, and one characteristic of such a Church is a very clear and full presentation of the reconciling, atoning, saving, redeeming and sanctifying work of the Lord Jesus Christ, particularly in his passion, crucifixion, descent into hades/hell, and exaltation in a resurrection body of glory to heaven at the Father’s right hand. This proclamation and teaching is of course closely related to a full doctrine of human sin and a full doctrine of justification by faith. All three doctrines are most clearly set forth in The Order for Holy Communion in the *Prayer Book*. It takes a truly complete Saviour to save man from the totally devastating nature and effects of sin and evil, and the only way that a man can possibly please God is by believing in and trusting wholly the Lord Jesus Christ, the new Adam.

In *Common Worship* the saving work of Jesus Christ is not so much denied as stated with minimum force and power, and often in what is near to a sentimental style. The minimalism is well illustrated by the Acclamation shared by the modern Roman Catholic Rite (because taken from the same source):

Christ has died:
Christ is risen:
Christ will come again.

¹ Collects and Post-Communion Prayers are provided on pages 407 and 479, and further notes are found on pages 529, 534 and 563.

So far so good. But, why did he die?—*for our sins*; and why was he raised from the dead?—*for our justification*; and why will he come again—*for our final and full redemption*! This is left unstated.

When we examine the eight Prayers of Order One that are not related to the *Prayer Book* the weak nature of the declaration of the saving work of Jesus Christ is seen. Again it must be emphasised that it is not denied, but by comparison with the *Prayer Book* minimally stated. The death on the Cross is not connected as fully and clearly as it is in the New Testament and *Prayer Book* with the atonement for and expiation of human sin. For example, in Prayer B the Celebrant prays:

By the power of the Holy Spirit he took flesh;
as your Son, born of the blessed Virgin,
he lived on earth and went about among us;
he opened wide his arms for us on the cross;
he put an end to death by dying for us;
and revealed the resurrection by rising to new life;
so he fulfilled your will and won for you a holy people.

Here we find that the Father is being told what, as the omniscient Father, he well knows and, we may add, knows more accurately than the race of man! Then what God is being told is as much sentimental as doctrinal. It was the soldiers doing their duty who opened his arms wide and nailed them to the wood. Death was not ended at the Cross but will be so after the Last Judgement, where Christ will be Judge. He did not merely reveal the resurrection but he is the Resurrection. In fact “revealed the resurrection by rising to new life” is tautologous and hardly attractive prose. What needs to be said is that he was really and truly raised in bodily form from the dead, as St Paul declares in 1 Corinthians 15.

If we examine those Prayers which belong to the Eastern “Antiochene” shape the situation is the same. In Prayer F, at the end of the short narrative of the relation of God to man, and after the Sanctus, the Celebrant says: “Lord God ... in the coming of your Son Jesus Christ / you reveal the power of your love / made perfect in our human weakness,” and then continues:

Embracing our humanity,
Jesus showed us the way of salvation;
loving us to the end,
he gave himself to death for us;
dying for his own,
he set us free from the bonds of sin,
that we might rise and reign with him in glory.

What we have here is imprecision and carelessness leading to unclear doctrine. Let us note that the power of the love of God was not made

perfect in our human weakness, but in the voluntary humiliation and weakness of the Incarnate Son who suffered for us. Then the expression “embracing our humanity” is far from clear. It sounds as though he wrapped his arms around it. The Nicene Creed and then the Christological Statement of the Council of Chalcedon (451) provide the orthodox doctrine of the Incarnation in precise terms and this wording should provide the norm for liturgists to follow. The only begotten Son of the Father took to himself human nature in its male expression, and made it his very own, and in that assumed humanity brought us salvation. Then this same Jesus, the Son, did not merely show us the way of salvation, he provided the only way of salvation, for he is the way, the truth and the life. While he certainly died for us, specifically he died for our sins according to the Scriptures, said St Paul.

Conclusion

The emphasis on shape as being all-important and the further emphasis that within the shape there can be a choice from a variety of different ingredients has not been good for Eucharistic worship or for those who engage in it. The provision of ten, and in principle hundreds, of different services of Holy Communion, based on a common structure, is excessive. If an alternative is really needed to the service in *The Book of Common Prayer* then why cannot two texts suffice, one in Western and one in Eastern shape? Surely the supermarket of possibilities should not be introduced into the worship of God, especially into the Eucharist, the Sacrament of Unity.

Further, to place an amended version of the *Prayer Book* “Order for Holy Communion” in *Common Worship* as an alternative alongside the other alternatives is seriously to undermine the status of the *Prayer Book* as the primary doctrinal formulary of the Church of England. One understands that to include the text from the *Prayer Book* in its own idiom and in an attempted modern idiom adds to the range and comprehensiveness of *Common Worship*, but at the same time it treats this text as if it were merely like any other text. Over the centuries, small adjustments have been made to the text of the *Prayer Book* (e. g., using the shortened form of the Commandments and adding some catholic devotions) in parish worship and these are so well known that there was no need to create a new service incorporating some of them. *Common Worship* is an alternative to *The Book of Common Prayer* and should not be offered as the all-inclusive collection that embraces everything, including the *Prayer Book* itself.

CHAPTER FIVE

Daily Prayer

From the Jerusalem Chamber of Westminster Abbey in 1645 came *The Directory for the Publick Worship of God, agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, with the assistance of Commissioners from the Church of Scotland*. From Church House, Westminster in 2000, by the authority of the General Synod of the Church of England, came *Common Worship*, in whose first and main volume the first item is in effect a brief Directory for producing “A Service of the Word” and “A Service of the Word with a Celebration of Communion”. This provision was followed in 2002 by what in effect is a full-scale Directory for producing non-sacramental and sacramental services, the book entitled *New Patterns for Worship*, made by the Liturgical Commission of the Church of England.

The provision of a Directory, much favoured by the Puritan Presbyterians of Britain as part of the godly ordering of the Church of God, was received by the Church of Scotland in 1645 but rejected by the Church of England when Charles II was restored to the throne in 1660. In the 1980s, as the new concept of “common prayer” as “shape and ingredients” rather than common text gained favour, so the old Presbyterian idea of a “Directory” was taken up again, not this time by Puritans but by Bishops! In the Introduction to *Lent, Holy Week, Easter* (1984) the Liturgical Commission wrote: “We are providing a directory from which choices may be made. We think of this book as a manual to be used with selectivity, sensitivity and imagination.” A year later the General Synod Paper entitled, *The Worship of the Church*¹ called for a

directory with a wealth of resource material including supplementary material for each of the main points in the service where there is room for the individual’s own words. The directory would need to set boundaries to the proposed freedom, and points which might be theologically divisive would have to be watched.

(Whether this watching has been possible must be doubted.) In 2000

in *Common Worship* the proposed directory, allowing for diversity within an authorized skeleton structure, was provided in all but name, and was then developed in great detail in *New Patterns of Worship* a couple of years later.

Unlike the modern post-1980 directories, which are addressed to both the parish clergy and lay leaders and presume no theological education, that of 1645 was addressed specifically to clergy, who were assumed to be “godly and learned” men, but still men in need of practical help in the framing and conducting of Divine Worship—e. g., on how to assemble the congregation, to read the Holy Scriptures, to offer public prayer, to preach the Word, to administer the Sacraments, to observe the Lord’s Day, to conduct marriages, to bury the dead, to sing Psalms, and so on. In the final paragraph of “the Preface” we read of the need for (in modern terms) “common prayer” or “common worship”:

the general heads [headings], the sense and scope of the prayers, and other parts of publick worship, being known to all, there may be a consent of all the churches in those things that contain the substance of the service and worship of God.

In the *Directory* there is “some help and furniture” to place under the “general heads” so that each minister

by meditation, by taking heed to himself and the flock of God committed to him, and by wise observing the ways of Divine Providence, may be careful to furnish his heart and tongue with further or other materials of prayer and exhortation, as shall be needful on all occasions.

There is no indication that before committing itself to the provision of a modern Directory, the Liturgical Commission engaged in a careful study of the *The Directory for the Publick Worship* of 1645 and, for example, took its advice on the absolute importance in public worship of persuading a congregation to see its sin and sinfulness before God, and confess the same with a humble, penitent heart, as an essential ingredient of that worship. Then, one has to ask whether all modern clergy, who are not so well versed in the content of the Bible and the Doctrines of the Church as were those of earlier times, and all lay leaders—likewise not so well versed in Scripture as were heads of families in Puritan times!—in all parishes, are truly able, in terms of knowledge, piety, ability and time, to construct services that are worthy to be used for the public worship of God and replace the services of *The Book of Common Prayer* in the parish church.

We recall that the *Directory* was produced as a substitute for *The Book of Common Prayer* because the Presbyterians believed that only that which is commanded or allowed by Holy Scripture should be a

part of a service of Divine Worship. It took the position against which Richard Hooker had so eloquently argued in his eight-volume *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, at the end of the Elizabethan period. Modern Anglican directories are being produced not because the Church of England is adopting and following the profound scripturalism of the English seventeenth-century Puritans but because of the influence of modern culture, wherein is multiple choice in many areas of life, of which the supermarket is the common symbol. It is believed that provision, within certain constraints and limits, must be made for all ages, all tastes and all educational levels, and so the liturgical books—unlike the Presbyterian *Directory*—grow in size and number.

A Service of the Word

It is extremely significant that the first provision of the main volume of *Common Worship* (2000) is “A Service of the Word”.¹ This could have been placed after the texts for Morning and Evening Prayer for Sunday and thereby made less prominent but it was deliberately placed first in order to make absolutely clear that Common Prayer is to be understood in terms not of a common text but of a common structure, shape and ingredients. Twenty years earlier, in *The Alternative Service Book 1980*, there was no hint of this dramatic shift. However, in 1989 appeared *Patterns for Worship* from the Liturgical Commission, in order to provide some indication of different ways of doing liturgy and some suggestions to provide greater freedom to enrich or shorten services. The door had now opened to regularize what had been going on in “Family Services” and “All-Age Services” and other forms of experimental liturgy for a long time. It is of interest to note that the title *Patterns for Worship* was only chosen at the last minute. The title was to have been *A Directory of Resources*. In the view of most liturgists,

this publication represented a major step in the concept [*sic*] of Anglican worship, seeing it as based upon the idea of a recognizable shape in which some elements are mandatory and others optional, rather than upon any necessary and slavish following of set texts.²

When authorized in 1999 by the General Synod, “A Service of the Word” was unique as a Church of England service since apart from the basic menu it consists almost entirely of notes and directions. Further, it allows for much local choice and variation within a

¹ pp. 21–8. Of these pages three are Introduction and two Notes; “A Service of the Word” and “A Service of the Word with a Celebration of Holy Communion” themselves take a page each.

² *Companion*, p. 60

common structure. The thinking behind this strategy was that the needs of parishes would be met not by a group of experts in London producing services but by a new generation of worship leaders capable of “generating liturgy which is both local and culturally relevant while still objectively part of the liturgy of the Church as a whole”.¹ So that we may be clear here is a definition of “A Service of the Word”:

A Service of the Word is an authorized structure, rather than a set text, and allows for the development of locally relevant, participatory services which are in tune with the culture, society and spiritual life of the local church community. It permits considerable flexibility and freedom while maintaining the principle of Church of England worship being “that which is authorized or allowed by Canon”.²

The five hundred pages of *New Patterns for Worship* (2002), which is an update of the pioneering *Patterns for Worship* (1989), are devoted to helping these local worship leaders prepare both “A Service of the Word” and “A Service of the Word with a Celebration of Holy Communion”. In the section “How to put a service together” we are provided with the following instructions:

The first thing to do is to read the authorized introduction to A Service of the Word. ... From this you will see that there are three main sections, like three tubs into which you are going to put the different items in the service; Preparation, The Liturgy of the Word, Prayers. Into these tubs you put the ingredients, the different items in the service. Add to these a beginning and an ending and you have the main outline.

...

There are four different kinds of ingredients and it is important that there is a balance in the way these are used: Word/Prayer/Praise/Action. It is a bit like preparing a meal with three courses, plus an appetizer at the beginning and coffee at the end. Each course has a number of different ingredients, which can be used more than once in different combinations in different courses. It is worth noting that for the principal service on a Sunday certain ingredients, which are otherwise optional, are required: an authorized confession and absolution, an authorized creed or affirmation of faith, and a sermon.³

In communication, especially with respect to divine things, a great responsibility is placed upon Christian leaders to use illustrations that heighten rather than lessen reverence and awe before God and holy things. The danger in this advice is that the very familiarity of

¹ *Companion*, p. 61 ² *Ibid.* The Canon is B2.

³ *New Patterns for Worship*, p. 15

the illustrations—tubs, menus, ingredients, three-course meals, appetizers and coffee—tends to make the work and the content of divine worship seem ordinary instead of very special, even unique. In simplifying, we must not engage in dumbing down.

It is also rather worrying that there can be services on the Lord’s Day, the only ones to which some people come, that (not being the principal service of the day) do not have a proper call to penitence, a confession of sins and an absolution as well as a creed. As we have previously emphasized, the genuine confession of sin(s) to God the Father through Jesus Christ our Saviour is also the praising of God, the Just and Merciful One. Further, the saying of one of the three ancient Creeds of the Church of England is an act wherein the whole congregation responds to God’s revelation by telling him that it has received his word, has summarized its central themes, and is now lovingly repeating it before him, as well as to each other, and to any part of the world that is listening in.

The Liturgical Commission recognizes that “leading people in worship is leading people into mystery, into the unknown and yet the familiar.” Thus under the heading of “Theme and Direction” it offers this advice:

Care should be taken to ensure that there is some overall direction, some sense of cohesion, of going somewhere, some development in the congregation’s relationship with God, reflected in the service structure. Sometimes this is provided by a clear theme ...

and sometimes not. The leaders are further urged to ask such questions as

What do we expect to happen to people in this service? What will be the outcomes for Christian growth, education, deepening appreciation of God, experience of him in worship and praise, and in obedience to his word?¹

If leading people in worship is leading them into mystery, then it is perhaps going too far to give the impression of needing to have everything as programmed as possible both as to choice of content and evaluation of what is achieved. If it is difficult to choose the right theme and ingredients to make the right content, and to get them in order within the right shape or structure, that difficulty is much increased when it is also a requirement to make psychological, educational and devotional judgements about the people who are being catered for. In fact many people, when they realize the great responsibility placed upon them, will probably want to return to the use of a well-used and tried text of a service and then pray that the Holy Ghost will make that familiar service into a gateway to heaven.

¹ *New Patterns for Worship*, pp. 15–16

Daily Prayer

The volume entitled *Common Worship: Daily Prayer* (2002) is in fact a preliminary edition and can only be used by the Church until 2004. Then it will be revised in the light of the experience of its use as its users make their views known. However, the Questionnaire printed in this edition has to be returned no later than June 2003, which means that only one year's use will be the basis for revision in the light of experience. A definitive edition—with whatever finality such things can have—is unlikely before 2005. Likewise the *Common Worship: Daily Lectionary* is only authorized until 2004, and to use the content of *Daily Prayer* one needs the *Daily Lectionary*, which is also to be revised in the light of experience.

What is of tremendous importance for us to grasp is that the canonical legitimacy of the multiple provisions of *Daily Prayer* is conferred by their compliance with the provisions of “A Service of the Word”, authorised under Canon B2 as an alternative to the Services of Morning and Evening Prayer in *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662).¹ This in part explains why the first service, or rather structure and ingredients for a service, in the whole of the provision of *Common Worship* is “A Service of the Word”. It provides the basis for a vast range of possible forms of service.

The strategy behind *Daily Prayer* is in certain ways comprehensive. It is to collect into one volume, and under the general provision and supervision of the General Synod and its *Common Worship*, what previously was (and still is in reality) found in four sources. First, in *The Book of Common Prayer* (Daily Services, Psalter, Occasional Prayers etc.); secondly, in books used for “The Quiet Time” or daily, private devotions; thirdly, in books of family prayers; and fourthly in forms of the traditional catholic Daily Offices for laity. So there are in *Daily Prayer* outlines of services with some required and many suggested ingredients for private, family and church use and for the major seasons of the year. And before these are provided there are all kinds of practical advice on how to use this varied provision. Therefore, anyone using it to its full potential will need to have (as the definitive edition of the future will have) a set of ribbons or markers in order to go from page to page to make use of what has been chosen from what is available and recommended. It is, of course, possible, and will be so in the future, that a parish or group, intimidated or overwhelmed by the sheer volume of choice, can choose its own shape and ingredients and then print them as a booklet for regular Monday to Saturday use.

¹ See further the main volume of *Common Worship*, pp. 26 and 816.

Since at the time of the writing of this chapter it is the season of Lent, it makes sense to examine the provisions for Penitence and Lenten Daily Prayer in this volume. First of all, let us look at the “Forms of Penitence” and “Other Penitential Material” on pages 19 to 25 which may be used at virtually any time, though it is recommended that the third form (which contains no absolution) is not to be used at a Principal Service on a Sunday, Festival or Holy Day. There are in all four responsive forms of penitence, of which three contain absolutions; then there are three prayers of confession of sins and two absolutions. It is only in the Confession adapted from the *Prayer Book* and in “contemporary English” beginning, “Almighty and most merciful Father ...”, that there is a clear and obvious recognition before God the Father of both forms of human sinfulness before God. That is, of daily sins of omission (“have left undone”) and of commission (“have done”) and that which theologians call original sin (“there is no health in us”). In contrast, some of the other Confessions seem to make very light of the enormous offence to God of human sin both by their brevity and by their lack of a vital sense in their wording of the seriousness of human sin as both a spiritual and moral disease and as a practical failure to love God and man perfectly.

For example, one form of confession is supposedly based on Hosea 6, which is an exhortation by the prophet to the people for repentance:

Lord our God,
in our sin we have avoided your call.
Our love for you is like a morning cloud,
like the dew that goes away early.
have mercy on us;
deliver us from judgement;
bind up our wounds and revive us;
in Jesus Christ our Lord.¹

This begins by admitting one failure within our sin, but it is very vague, for it is not clear what call has been avoided. Is it the two great commandments? Then comes the suggestion that our love of God may be short-lived, but the image of the morning cloud and dew makes it more beautiful than alarming. What we then tell God to do for us is disproportionately greater than what we have confessed, for we request four things—mercy, deliverance, binding up and reviving. Perhaps Hosea 6 has to be studied first to appreciate the content and meaning of this confession of sin. But there it is the going forth of the Lord himself that is compared to the arrival of the morning and the latter and former rain.

¹ *Daily Prayer*, p. 21

Then also the wording of the five different absolutions in this section presents the forgiveness of sins in what may be described as a weak and tentative form. Each one begins with the word, "May"; for example, "May the God of love and power forgive you and free you from your sins" This approach is to be contrasted with the absolutions in the *Prayer Book*. For example, "Almighty God, our heavenly Father ... have mercy upon you; pardon and deliver you from all your sins ... ,"¹ "He pardoneth and absolveth,"² and "By his authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins"³

Common Worship is littered with the verbal form, "may", not only because of its plentiful use in what used to be called "rubrics"—e. g., "silence may be kept" and "the following may be used"—but also in forms of absolution as we have seen. Now of course *may* is used differently when it expresses a possible state of affairs and when it expresses a wish, but the two uses have *uncertainty* in common. There is a diminution of meaning and spiritual effect in the modern form of Absolution when compared with that of the *Prayer Book*. If we believe that the Holy Ghost is present and active, if we believe that the bishop or priest is ordained by God, and his spokesman, and if we believe that words are intended to have meaning and convey power, then the Absolution is God speaking graciously and directly to the penitent soul the word and the blessing of pardon. And the same is true of Blessings.

From practical experience we all know that "God bless you" is a stronger form than "May God bless you". The Blessing given at the end of Holy Communion in the *Prayer Book* is not "May Almighty God ... bless you" but rather "The Blessing of God Almighty ... be amongst you and remain with you always." In the latter case, a linguistic deed is being performed, and the deed is a heavenly action upon earth. While "May" seems to hanker after a blessing, the form, "The Lord bless ... ", comes with illocutionary force!⁴

It is sometimes asked: Why is the jussive subjunctive translated with such a decided preference for the English auxiliary "may" form in the new liturgies—both Roman and Anglican? Here are four possible reasons that need not be mutually exclusive. The first is a sense of humility and a wish not to show presumption towards the Almighty (even though this form of words makes the forgiveness being heard by the people sound less certain). The second is the general ignorance and awkwardness of the committees of liturgists who are not usually specialists in language or remarkable for good judgement about style. For some, it appears, the *may* sounds more elegant. The third is the possible egalitarianism of members of these

¹ Order for Holy Communion ² Morning & Evening Prayer ³ Visitation of the Sick

⁴ The implications of the liturgical use of "may" are elucidated in "The Question of Style" by Ian Robinson in *The Real Common Worship*, edited by Peter Mullen, 2000, pp. 108ff. For "illocutionary" see J. L. Austin, *How to do Things with Words*, Oxford, 1962.

liturgical committees who wish to avoid giving any impression that the priestly office carries with it any special authority or power of absolution not inherent in "the whole people of God". Finally, the fourth possibility is that with the generally lowered sense of consciousness of guilt and sin in church people today, the desire for an absolution which is certain and clear is not so intense as it was in earlier times.

The specific provision for Lent in *Daily Prayer* is "Prayer During the Day in Lent",¹ "Morning Prayer Lent"² "Evening Prayer Lent"³ and Prayers "For Seasonal Use—Lent".⁴ In the first of these, to be used at any time of day, the only provision that is traditionally Lenten in content is the requirement to use one of the short readings from the Bible, all of which rightly include calls to what are known as Lenten disciplines, repentance and fasting, for example. The Collect is either to be that of the day or one based on a prayer of Ignatius Loyola. This means that the traditional Anglican Lenten Collect, which is to be said on each day of Lent, and includes the petition, "Create and make in us new and contrite hearts" is not required.

In *Common Worship*, both Morning and Evening Prayer have the same threefold structure—Preparation, The Word of God and Prayers. Within this basic shape there is much freedom with respect to ingredients with abundant use of "may" to indicate choice. Actually required, and not to be omitted, are the first part of the Preparation (Versicles and a form of Blessing of God), a psalm, a Bible reading, the Gospel Canticle (Benedictus), Intercessions, the Collect of the Day or the Lenten Collect, the Lord's Prayer, and the very brief Conclusion. It is difficult to understand why both the Collect of the Day and the Lenten Collect are not required, as in the *Prayer Book*. Of course, within the permitted options, it is possible to use such an appropriate psalm as Psalm 51 and to have Bible readings that speak of penitence, contrition and fasting, but they are not a necessary part of this particular provision for the Forty Days.

It is difficult to ascertain why within the Preparation the Blessing of God (beginning, "Blessed are you ... ") which comes after the familiar versicles ("O Lord, open our lips" etc.) is required and not optional both in the Morning and Evening. Perhaps the answer is that its general structure and content are based on what is provided as a required part of "Daily Prayer" in *Celebrating Common Prayer*, to which *Daily Prayer* is much indebted. Another possibility is that this form of Blessing is a creation of a prominent member of the Liturgical Commission and she or he wanted to see it actually used and so it is so required. One cannot in justice speak of it as a great example of liturgical writing, even though the claim for it is probably

¹ *Daily Prayer*, pp. 59–61 ² pp. 209–14 ³ pp. 215–20 ⁴ pp. 338–9

that as a form it was used in the ancient Church in the non-monastic morning and evening services. This Blessing comes with a differing content and theological emphases for different times of the Christian Year as well as for Morning and Evening Prayer. Of the two forms of Blessing provided for Lent, it has to be said that they do not have any particularly special or traditional Lenten flavour. The one for Morning Prayer is the shorter and the weaker of the two:

Blessed are you, God of compassion and mercy,
to you be praise and glory for ever.
In the darkness of our sin,
your light breaks forth like the dawn
and your healing springs up for deliverance.
As we rejoice in the gift of your saving help,
sustain us with your bountiful Spirit
and open our lips to sing your praise.
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

All **Blessed be God for ever.**¹

This Blessing of God begins and ends in the same format as do many others in *Daily Prayer* and as the originals in *Celebrating Common Prayer*. Yet this beginning and ending seem to be theologically incompatible. The first “you” and “God” are apparently referring to the Father whose “bountiful Spirit” is referred to later in the text. The ending (at “sing your praise”) contains no “through your Son” or the like, but ends abruptly without the equivalent of the classic Latin “per eundem ...”. But then comes what appears to be a Blessing not of the Father alone but of the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. We say “appears to be” because the formula used is a novel one where a colon separates what are meant to be two statements of intended identical or similar meaning. The sense and the effect of this attempt at a Trinitarian statement would be far better and more in line with patristic orthodoxy if the first Blessing ended with a reference to Jesus Christ, the Son and Mediator, as indicated above, and then if the second Blessing were separated from the earlier one by a line and made to read, “Blessed be God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit” with the response in a new sentence and line, “Blessed be God the Holy Trinity for ever” or even “Blessed be God for ever.” As it now stands the presentation of the fundamental dogma of the Christian Faith is imprecise; which is worrying, for this formula is used often in *Daily Prayer*. (We shall return to the subject of orthodoxy of expression in Chapter Nine.)

We have to observe that the verbal content of the first Blessing is disappointing in its lack of reference to clear biblical teaching and central Lenten themes. While it speaks of “the darkness of our sin”,

¹ *Daily Prayer*, p. 209

this form of speech lacks the appropriate, Lenten, touch of personal guilt and accountability before God. Likewise, the references to the light of dawn and the healing springs, though perhaps imaginatively attractive, are vague, and while perhaps making us feel good, do little to create penitence, contrition and faith in our souls. Then, we ask, what precisely is “the gift of your saving help”? Is the gift a specific thing or it is a continuing daily donation of grace? And whatever it is, what is its Lenten association?

Now to a final comment about the two Prayers for Lent.¹ The first one is numbered eleven and begins “In penitence and faith let us make our prayer to the Father ...”. However, it is not clear what is the relation between “penitence” and the list of topics for prayer and intercession that follow the introduction. There is no expression of penitence and no prayer for the right keeping of Lent in preparation for the celebration of Easter. The second one, numbered twelve, is a very brief thanksgiving for Jesus Christ and his saving work but makes no reference to his forty days and nights of fasting in the wilderness.

Finally, it will be useful to look at the collects provided for “An Order of Night Prayer” or Compline,¹ a service not provided in the 1662 *Prayer Book* but found in the 1928 English and the 1962 Canadian (1662 revised) *Prayer Books*. There is one collect printed in the service (a traditional prayer in modern language) and further collects are provided as alternatives for each day of the week and for the seasons of the Christian year. A few of these are familiar prayers such as “Lighten our darkness” but several appear to be composed for this volume. So it is not surprising that some are of poor quality, such as that for Lent:

Almighty God,
may we, by the prayer and discipline of Lent,
enter into the mystery of Christ’s sufferings;
that by following in the Way,
we may come to share in the glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.²

This, in poor English style, conveys a view of Lenten discipline similar to that which is found in the stylish Latin Collect for the First Sunday in Lent in the Sarum Missal, and which the English Reformers rejected as not biblical. In translation that Collect begins, “O God who purifiest thy Church by the yearly observance of Lent” and proceeds to assume that if we offer the good work of abstinence to God, he will cause there to be rewards. The point is that in a reformed Catholic Church genuine good works flow from faith working by love and that even the holiest abstinence, physical and spiritual, cannot earn for us anything at all from God. Further, we

¹ *Daily Prayer*, pp. 302ff. ² p. 317

cannot enter into the fellowship or mystery of Christ's sufferings through our prayers and disciplines, since union with Christ Jesus is a distinct work of the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier.

The Collect for Passiontide appears to be both imperfectly conceived and poorly written:

Almighty God,
as we stand at the foot of the cross of your Son,
help us to see and know your love for us,
so that in humility, love and joy
we may place at his feet
all that we have and all that we are;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.¹

Before the Cross it is surely appropriate to kneel or to lie prostrate in both grief and adoration. If we are to stand during "the great fifty days of Easter" (as modern liturgists insist) we should certainly kneel on Good Friday. Then if we are to place ourselves as offerings at his sacred feet, the order is "all that we are" and then "all that we have". The problem with this composition is that it neither feels like nor reads like a prayer that anyone would pray if present on Mount Calvary on Good Friday.

Conclusion

The Church of God, and the jurisdiction of it called the Church of England, is most certainly called by God to daily prayer, to unceasing prayer. To this end her members in the parishes of the land do need help, and for centuries that help in England has been primarily the fixed pattern and content of the Morning and Evening Prayer of the *Prayer Book*, which includes, importantly, the substantial readings from the Old and New Testaments, and the daily use of several psalms to make a monthly praying of the whole Psalter. To these basic services clergy and people have added as desired, or as possible, the ancient service of Compline (translated from the Latin) and sometimes a short service at noon. For none of these services has any special preparation has been needed apart from finding the appointed readings from the Bible and psalms set for the day. In the new world of *Common Worship* the times of prayer remain but the means of utilising them has changed, becoming more complicated and at times less obviously orthodox.

After working through the contents of *Common Worship: Daily Prayer* and comparing it with its literary parent, *Celebrating Common Prayer*, one is left with the very clear sense that the liturgists believe that the day of fixed texts for daily prayer is over and gone, and that

the provision of such in *The Book of Common Prayer* is obsolete, except perhaps for Sunday and for those who will not enter into the new age of enlightened liturgy. The new way of prayer for Anglicans is apparently a way that revels in identifying a good shape or structure, searching for appropriate ingredients, and bringing all together to produce something which is relevant, satisfying or exciting for different times and places, occasions and types of users. The day of the large-scale *Directory* has arrived. If such an approach can ever be efficacious and successful in truly drawing people into the contemplation and adoration of the Holy and Righteous God and into the joyful service of Jesus Christ as Lord, then not only a tremendous amount of time but also great knowledge, skill and sensitivity are required to make it work. And, we must add, the use of many ribbons or alternatively much use of the laser printer.

Then also this complex task needs theological learning, for a duty is laid upon liturgists, whether national or local, to conform their productions to the teaching of sacred Scripture, the basic doctrine in the Anglican Formularies and the ecumenical dogma in the Three Creeds. The evidence of both *Celebrating Common Prayer* and *Daily Prayer* as well as *New Patterns for Worship* is that the liturgists are still in the learning curve in terms of the maturing of idea and expression. On too many occasions they have gone into print with rather poor ingredients. Further, to expect local worship leaders to have the necessary knowledge, wisdom and skill to create services that can truly merit the description of services of public worship is to expect far too much. In her desire to be relevant, open to all, intelligible and wide ranging in her provisions, the Church of England has flooded the market with too many goods and is unrealistically expecting inexperienced liturgical shoppers to choose wisely.