

Diocesan Liturgical Committee

(A report from a committee of the Standing Committee)

Introduction

1. The Standing Committee appointed a Diocesan Liturgical Committee with the following terms of reference -

- (a) *to consider the types of liturgical forms needed for the variety of churches in this Diocese;*
- (b) *to evaluate the draft services proposed by the General Synod Liturgical Commission for AAPB 2;*
- (c) *to encourage or arrange the writing or revision of suitable forms of service for submission to the General Synod Liturgical Commission, and for their trial use in Sydney as may be approved by the Archbishop;*
- (d) *to promote discussion on all the draft services and on the use of such services as may be approved by the Archbishop;*
- (e) *to receive the responses of parishes on the services which are used;*
- (f) *to make suggestions to the General Synod Liturgical Commission on forms of service which may be appropriate for the Diocese of Sydney; and*
- (g) *to report to each session of the Sydney Synod between now and the adoption of a future prayer book, and to the Standing Committee when appropriate.*

2. The members of the Committee are -

Miss R. Colman	The Rev D.G. Peterson
The Rev R.C. Forsyth	Mr K. Richards
Mrs L. Hicks	Archdeacon V.W. Roberts
The Very Rev B.A. Jobbins (Chairman)	Mr N. Turner
The Rev P.F. Perini	The Rev E.M. Vaughan

3. This is an interim report, produced to comply with the Committee's Terms of Reference.

The Diocese of Sydney

4. The fundamental question of the use of any prescribed liturgy at all in the many Sydney diocesan churches must be faced. The Committee believes that there has been a major and unprecedented shift away from confidence in and the use of existing liturgical forms of public worship in the Diocese in the last decade.

5. Preliminary impressions include -

- (a) There has been little effective positive or constructive thinking about the value of liturgy in the Diocese during this time. Rather the issue has been dealt with mostly in terms of legal obligations. This approach has by and large failed. The legal emphasis has not halted change, but only driven open discussion of new liturgical forms underground. The Committee is concerned about the long-term effects of this trend for Anglican identity and the preservation of the historic Christian faith in its fullness.
- (b) In the absence of guidelines and a grasp of the deeper principles of our liturgical tradition, those who abandon the Prayer Book seem to be on their own and find it difficult properly to construct and lead adequate services.
- (c) Notwithstanding the shift away from existing liturgical forms (2.1), the Committee recognises the great value of a measure of liturgical uniformity within the Diocese. Such uniformity is an important ingredient of our Anglican tradition; it helps maintain fellowship amongst congregations; it offers some protection to congregations against extreme individualism and constant change; and it assists in maintaining doctrinal orthodoxy. The Committee believes such a measure of uniformity will not be achieved by the imposition of a single prayer book such as *An Australian Prayer Book* (AAPB).
- (d) The issue must be considered more widely than the use of this or that prayer book. The Committee suggests that questions of liturgy are best thought of in terms of a continuum of "liturgical" use - from the use of customary basic outlines for services, through using some given forms of words in prayers and declarations, to following a fully written service. With regard to certain liturgical occasions, such as the Lord's Supper and Marriage, it may be necessary always to provide precise wording.

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- (e) A new approach to an Anglican prayer book is needed. Instead of a collection of set services to be used and none other, a "field" of authorised liturgical use for the guidance of churches must be agreed upon, a wide range of liturgical suggestions and resources for use in that "field" be provided, and the clergy and others responsible for liturgy be called upon to work within that "field".
- (f) The diverse nature of the Diocese means that a wide range of such resources and freedoms will be necessary to ensure that liturgical forms which are appropriate to the particular situation and faithful to historic Christian faith and practice are used.

6. The Committee believes that the day of a single prayer book with a long "shelf life" has passed, and that liturgical reform needs to be ongoing and constant to meet new demands: a way forward which gives due place to liturgy in our tradition is to establish a well-resourced and creative Board of Liturgical Use and Development -

- (a) to cultivate respect for the liturgical tradition of the Anglican Church;
- (b) to produce a range of liturgical forms suitable for regular services, evangelism, the Lord's Supper and the occasional services;
- (c) to produce a wide range of prayers of confession, thanksgiving, commitment, and petition, which could be used in services;
- (d) to make its productions available on computer disc, as well as in print and in a form appropriate for copying and for overhead transparencies;
- (e) to work with the bishops and parish clergy in teaching liturgy and assisting the effective use of the Board's resources.

The General Synod

7. The Liturgical Committee was established particularly with the need in mind for a vigorous and informed contribution from Sydney to the General Synod Liturgical Commission's production of *A Prayer Book for Australia 1995*. It is regrettable that the Commission has a target date of 1995: in recent years, the Church has been preoccupied with issues other than liturgical reform; the 1995 Prayer Book will not be the product of lengthy trial use, comment, revision; nor will it be the response to a widespread expectation of change, as was AAPB. The Committee fears the 1995 Book may be neither well received nor widely used.

8. Draft Services to be included in *A Prayer Book for Australia 1995* have been, and will be, produced. To date, the Commission has published -

- Holy Communion - Outline Order
- Holy Baptism with the Laying on of Hands
- Ministry with the Sick 1989
- A Service for Marriage 1992
- Funeral Services and resources 1993

9. The Committee invites comments on any of these services; it has invited its consultants to evaluate them, with a view to making responses to the Commission.

For and on behalf of the Committee

BOAK JOBBINS
Chairman

12 July 1993