

LITURGICAL CONVERGENCES

This coming week I will be in Melbourne to attend a gathering which will reflect upon 50 years of Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission dialogue, which has affirmed in many areas, including the understanding of the Eucharist, a greater agreement in recent years than many in our pews seem to realise.

So I rise with a certain amount of sadness at the polemical nature of this motion, as well as a wonderment that over half a century of ecumenical dialogue with our sister church of Rome still results in what I detect as the language of fear, and lack of awareness of an overall ecumenical convergence liturgically – and this is across **all** western liturgical traditions – due to shared study, and returning to the shared origins of our worship and looking beyond Reformation battles!

1

Issue of understanding where modern prayer books in the Anglican communion are heading! – including the APBA i.e. becoming more `permissive` rather than `prescriptive` in how they function. What do I mean? – just consider the wording on the title page – a book of liturgical resources! And, when we get inside – e.g. looking at the Eucharistic sections – we see this `permissiveness` reinforced! – by looking at the Rubrics (the red text giving instructions) – The joke amongst liturgists used to be – liturgy is the study of rubrics! Obviously liturgy is more than the instructions in red! Liturgy is the whole act of worship – words, movement, music and sounds, etc.

But for our purposes they do alert us to a different sort of prayer book, They are about possibility, rather than being prescriptive - We have the use of phrases such as – use of `may` `these or similar words`, etc. I.e., there is the potential to use more than is given, and what is given may be put aside in some cases and other wordings used.

So, the `words of the prayer book` actually undermine the sentiments of our mover`s motion.

2

For many Anglicans, esp. those still with echoes of the BCP in their consciousness, there was minimal variation – the BCPs were very `minimalist` in what it required, which meant seasonal variations, and other options were few or non-existent.

- Too often Anglicans are still functioning with this minimalist approach and not aware of developments and changes which have occurred since the 60s, 70s, etc

What has happened has been the shared convergence due to the liturgical movement and its scholarship – this has influenced ALL denominations in the western tradition – Anglican, RC, reformed – esp. those which use set liturgies

This has resulted in more variety, sensitivity to seasons, as well as other pastoral and liturgical needs.

3

No liturgical tradition exists in isolation – Anglican worship is part of the Western liturgical family, so influences from that family flow across to us – e.g. Jesus is the Lamb of God.... – variations on this wording have been around for many years, but only now in the APBA are we given words to us.

Even influences from the Eastern Church are present – e.g. the invitation to Communion which says – God`s holy gifts for God`s Holy People: Jesus Christ is holy, – but are you aware of these? Do you use them?

Even in the Euch Prayers – the Acclamations we take for granted are an `innovation` for the West – e.g. Christ has died, Christ has...; Dying, you destroyed our death..., etc.

- These all come from the Eastern tradition of the Church. They have only `become Anglican and Roman Catholic and Lutheran and Uniting Church` because of shared use!

This back and forth is illustrated across the Anglican Communion – Canada and the US, use an ecumenical form of the Eucharistic Prayer of St Basil – it comes from the Eastern Church. A variation of this prayer is also found in the RC Missal

The Sth African Church uses a Eucharistic Prayer from the Roman Missal, adapted. But you will find a version of this same prayer in the English Common Worship offerings.

England, Sth Africa, Canada, make use of what is termed the Hippolytan Canon – a `model` early church prayer. Also found in the RC Missal. And a version has been issued separately here in Australia for use, but not in the APBA.

Current prayer books – describe themselves as `resources` - eg our APBA, and if you look at the Church of England, there are miles more variation and possibilities provided, as well as the material to choose from, unlike the lack of liturgical resourcing of the Australian Church! While we all share in a common shape of liturgical worship still, esp for the Eucharist, the clothes which can be put on the shape are now more varied!

Summary:

One thing we are enabled to do nowadays is rejoice in some of the options available to us – to supplement seasons, liturgical rites, etc. The APBA doesn`t provide everything in the Red

Brick! – e.g. the liturgies for the Three Holy Days of Easter – yet there is a separate publication for that, as for other supplemental material! The APBA provides some material, and also points to possibilities and models material, but doesn't provide everything.

The motion has an unfortunate starting point – not aware of the variety and possibility liturgically available to faithful Anglicans, with the guidance of the Bishop. Indeed, Liturgy and what might be permitted is ultimately the responsibility of the bishop, and to some degree this motion should not even be here to be voted upon!

Is there a fear at work? Of the nasty Roman Catholic Church? Why fear them alone if we also have liturgies – official ones – influenced by the Eastern Churches?

The Bishop has an authority under the Constitution of the Church in Australia, to allow deviations, as long as they do not contravene the principles and doctrines of the BCP, etc * so he has permitted the use of Eucharistic Prayers from sister Anglican Churches – England, Scotland, Canada & Sth. Africa. BECAUSE of the convergence of liturgical understanding, of course some of these are similar to Roman Catholic EPs, but likewise, their EPs are similar to ours. And likewise, we have insights and usages from our Eastern brothers and sisters as well.

No liturgical community exists in isolation. Even since the time of the first Books of Common Prayer, there has been a looking to see how worship and liturgy might be supplemented from the Western Tradition and the Eastern Tradition. And I believe we are enriched by the opportunity to have a broader usage within the diocese, and where better to participate in that richness than at a Diocesan event?

I will be voting against this motion!

* Provided further that until other order be taken by canon made in accordance with this Constitution, a bishop of a diocese may, at his discretion, permit such deviations from the existing order of service, not contravening any principle of doctrine or worship as aforesaid, ...(II:4)

quote from the APBA Preface

Prepared by
The Reverend David Patterson
For Synod, May 2017