

# The Pan-Anglican Document

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THE REPRINTING OF *The Pan-Anglican Document* (properly entitled 'The Structure and Contents of the Eucharistic Liturgy') in the Dublin report of the Anglican Consultative Council,<sup>1</sup> makes this an opportune time to reflect upon the significance of the document, and to see what lessons can be drawn from the episode in liturgical history which produced it.

*The Pan-Anglican Document* was first drawn up in 1964. It arose out of a request made by the 1958 Lambeth Conference on the advice of its sub-committee on the Book of Common Prayer. The document was the work of Archbishop L. W. Brown of Uganda (now Bishop L. W. Brown of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich), who was working concurrently on the so-called *Liturgy for Africa*, also completed in 1964. It was designed to guide liturgical commissions throughout the Anglican Communion in revising the Holy Communion service. The text of this first version of the document was included in *Modern Anglican Liturgies 1958-1968*, edited by C. O. Buchanan (London, OUP, 1968), where it was accompanied with a full discussion by the present writer.

Since *Modern Anglican Liturgies* appeared, a revised edition of the document has been produced. This is the version printed in the ACC report. The revision carries no date, but it was actually first issued in duplicated form by the Church Information Office, London, in May 1970, and reissued in printed form the same year in *Prayer Book Studies 21: the Holy Eucharist* (New York, Church Hymnal Corporation) by the PECUSA Standing Liturgical Commission. The preface is this time signed both by Bishop Brown (now a member of the Church of England Liturgical Commission) and by Canon R. C. D. Jasper (the chairman of that body), and explains that the revision was requested by the Liturgical Consultation following the 1968 Lambeth Conference.

In the revised edition, the words 'and the Daily Office' have been added to the title of the document, though all it contains on this subject is a few suggestions at the end of para. 3 about the possible use of the ante-communion as one of the daily offices. The other main changes from the first edition are as follows. In para. 1(a), the opening greeting is a new feature. In para. 1(b) and (c), the order of the act of praise

and the act of penitence is reversed. In para. 1(c), reference to the Commandments and *Kyries* is omitted, and permission is given for the penitential material to be placed at the end of the ante-communion, if preferred, rather than in the Preparation to the service. In para. 2(a), reference to the collect is omitted (the collect is only mentioned, oddly enough, in para 1(a)), and permission is given for all three lessons to be used on the same occasion. In para. 2(c), the creed is made wholly optional. In para. 3(a), thanksgivings are added to the intercession, and the possibility of extempore prayer with congregational participation at this point is mentioned. Reference to the *pax* is added in para. 3(c). In paras. 4-7, the four acts of Dix's 'fourfold shape' are picked out and given separate numbered paragraphs. In para. 4 and para. 5(d), doctrinal points are added: 'care should be taken not to give any impression that the Offertory is an act of oblation in itself', and 'whatever language is adopted [in the *anamnesis*] should, however, avoid any idea of a propitiatory sacrifice or a repetition of Christ's sacrifice. The "once for all" character of His work must not be obscured'. In para. 5(e), the Lord's Prayer no longer appears as the conclusion of the consecration prayer, being transferred to para 7(a), after the fraction. In para. 8, 'as a concession to people's traditional expectation at this point, or for the benefit of non-communicants who are present', the prohibition of a final blessing is withdrawn.

These changes have been made, the preface explains, 'in the light of the considerable experience of liturgical revision since 1958'. This suggests that the document is not so much a set of abstract principles as it appears to be. The principles are apt to vary as practice varies. The first edition was based on the *Liturgy for Africa*. The second edition is based on *Series 3*. But just as the first edition agreed far less with other liturgies being produced elsewhere in the Anglican Communion than with the *Liturgy for Africa*, so the second edition agrees far less with other liturgies of the Anglican world than with *Series 3*. Does this make other liturgies wrong? Surely not. The situation is not unlike that which one observes in Aristotle's *Poetics*. There a set of principles for drama are propounded, as if they are absolute norms, when many of them are in fact conditioned and limited by existing practice as Aristotle knew it. Similarly, in the document before us, local practice at the time of writing has been erected into liturgical law, though other patterns of practice are often equally defensible.

Since the 1970 edition appeared, another attempt at drawing up a structure for Communion services has been made, in which Canon Jasper has likewise had a large hand. This is *Initiation and Eucharist: Essays on their Structure*, by the Joint Liturgical Group (ed. N. Clark and R. C. D. Jasper, London, SPCK, 1972). The Joint Liturgical Group is a British interdenominational committee, having as its chairman and secretary the vice-chairman (D. E. W. Harrison) and chairman

(R. C. D. Jasper) of the Church of England Liturgical Commission. The influence of the 1970 *Pan-Anglican Document* and of *Series 3* is naturally still strong in this publication, but even so changes are perceptible. Thinking cannot stand still on 'principles' which vary with time and place.

The preface to the 1970 *Pan-Anglican Document* fully concedes what was demonstrated in *Modern Anglican Liturgies*, that the previous edition 'was not studied or used widely'. But in the event, this seems to be even more true of the 1970 revision. Enquiry has revealed only one liturgical commission throughout the Anglican Communion which has given attention to it. The commission in question is the Irish, which in any case depended heavily on *Series 3* for its revised Communion service.<sup>3</sup> The influence of the document itself has thus been negligible.

This being so, the conclusion follows inevitably that the policy advocated by the famous subcommittee on the Book of Common Prayer at the 1958 Lambeth Conference has proved unsuccessful. The main points of their policy were to abandon the 1662 Prayer Book as the norm of doctrine and worship for the Anglican Communion, and to seek a new bond of unity for the Anglican world in a new common structure to be drawn up for Communion services, i.e. *The Pan-Anglican Document (The Lambeth Conference 1958, SPCK and Seabury, 1958, 2:78-83)*. The reasons for the failure of this policy appear to be as follows:

(i) The Book of Common Prayer, and especially its Communion service, have unexpectedly refused simply to die in favour of alternative services.

(ii) The Book of Common Prayer is acknowledged to be a work of liturgical genius, and its hold on the Anglican Communion cannot be explained apart from this fact. But a mere structure for Communion services, even if closely followed, cannot guarantee that the services based upon it will be anything of the kind.

(iii) The Book of Common Prayer has a rich doctrinal and devotional content. But hardly anything of this sort can be included in a service-structure, which in the nature of the case is only a skeleton. It can hardly be denied that many of the new liturgies are weak in doctrine, and many of them in devotion also; and closer adherence to a prescribed service-structure would have done nothing to remedy these deficiencies.

(iv) The 1958 Lambeth Conference took place in the period when Dix's *Shape of the Liturgy* completely dominated liturgical thinking, and when it was generally accepted that biblical and patristic scholarship required that liturgies conform to his 'fourfold shape'. But this can no longer be maintained, as the report *Initiation and Eucharist*, mentioned above, freely concedes (p. 24f.). Much more variety is possible on the basis of biblical teaching; the binding links which Dix attempted to establish between biblical teaching and patristic practice

have proved faulty; and patristic practice alone, even if it were uniform, could not be regarded as an absolute norm.<sup>1</sup>

(v) The drafters of *The Pan-Anglican Document* seem to have assumed that those points of structure which are not settled by the 'fourfold shape' can be settled by common sense. They therefore include hardly any argumentation in support of their recommendations, though in fact nearly all of them are disputable, which is why liturgical commissions have treated them in so cavalier a fashion.

The failure of *The Pan-Anglican Document* raises larger issues than can be satisfactorily discussed in such an article as this. If the unity of the Anglican Communion is not to consist in a common structure for Communion services, in what is it to consist? Or is its unity something which it ought not to try to preserve? The latter alternative looked more attractive when reunion everywhere appeared to be round the corner than it does now. But in any case, the special bonds which the Anglican churches have with each other, owing to their common origins and common heritage, do not need to be artificially fostered: they will look after themselves, so long as those origins are remembered and that heritage respected. Since 1958 especially, Anglican unity has tended to be defined simply in terms of the Lambeth Quadrilateral—the Scriptures and sacraments, which all Christian bodies have in common, and the creeds and episcopate, which many Christian bodies have in common, on both sides of the Reformation divide. But there is more to the Anglican tradition than this. Anglicanism is also characterised by reformed doctrine and liturgical worship, and these are no less significant as bonds between Anglicans or as points of contact with other Christians than are the creeds and the episcopate. Now, reformed doctrine and liturgical worship cannot truly be respected, as important elements in the Anglican heritage, if the documents which chiefly embody them, the 39 Articles and the Book of Common Prayer, are despised. It is time for a reassessment. And the results of that reassessment, so far as liturgical worship are concerned, may well be that the new and diverse liturgies of the Anglican Communion will come to be seen, not as adequate substitutes for the Book of Common Prayer, but (more modestly) as permissible alternatives to it. This is what they often profess to be, and this—if the quality and importance of Cranmer's work are truly appreciated—seems to be their proper status.

<sup>1</sup> *Partners in Mission* (London, SPCK, 1973), pp. 70-73.

<sup>2</sup> The PECUSA Commission, which first printed the document in *Prayer Book Studies 21*, had of course seen it, but the introduction to which they append it shows that their service was finished before they saw it.

<sup>3</sup> On these issues see J. Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (London, SCM, 1966), pp. 108-111, 174-178; B. A. Mastin, 'Jesus said Grace' (*Scottish Journal of Theology*, vol. 24, no. 4, November 1971); R. T. Beckwith and J. E. Tiller, *The Service of Holy Communion and its Revision* (Abingdon, Marcham Manor Press, 1972), chs. 2, 3.