

The Making of the Church of Ireland *Book of Common Prayer* 2004

HAROLD MILLER

In the 2004 Church of Ireland *Book of Common Prayer* the Preface describes the work of compilation in the following words:

- We sought to unify the worship of God's people, while allowing reasonable scope for diversity within the essential unity of the Church's prayer.
- We were determined to produce a book which would have equal capacity to enrich private as well as corporate devotion.
- We desired that this book, like previous editions of it, should properly articulate and embody the Church's faith.
- We hoped that the book would strengthen our bonds of unity with sister churches who share our approach to common prayer, and we were therefore fully attentive to the reports of successive meetings of the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation.

These sentences capture, in a brief and simple form, some of the key elements that have been distinguishing features of Irish Anglican worship and ethos over the centuries, and that are of great importance to our self-understanding in the Church of Ireland. To put them in other words: the commonality of prayer; the relationship between public and private worship; *lex orandi, lex credendi*; and a sense of worldwide catholicity. In this lecture, I will take these four areas one by one, and use them as windows into the making of the new Church of Ireland *Book of Common Prayer*.

Unity in Diversity: The Commonality of Prayer

We sought to unify the worship of God's people, while allowing reasonable scope for diversity within the essential unity of the Church's prayer.

A quick review of prayer books in the Anglican Communion would show many liturgical volumes that are more flexible, more inculturated, more imaginative, and more "on the edge" theologically than the liturgies of the Church of Ireland. For example, apart from a list of Celtic saints and their dates, and one or two Irish propers, some Irish hymns in the hymnal, and the fact that there is an Irish edition of the new BCP, there are very few signs of Celtic spirituality in the formal worship books of the Church of Ireland. While characteristics such as flexibility, inculturation, and imagination are not in any sense absent from the 2004 *Book of Common Prayer*, the book is nevertheless characterized above all else by a desire for unity in the worship of God's people—something greatly treasured in the Church of Ireland, not least because of our other political, cultural, and theological divisions on the island of Ireland. This desire is, therefore, part of our own inculturation in a varied and sometimes divided community. The theme song of the 1878 Preface to the *Book of Common Prayer* is very much part of the psyche of the Church of Ireland when it states: "What is imperfect with peace is often better than what is otherwise more excellent without it."

It might not immediately be noticed by those outside Ireland that the Church of Ireland functions in two different political jurisdictions. The vast majority of members of the Church of

Ireland are in Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom; they generally see their primary identity as being British, and are Unionist by political persuasion. However, the church is administratively centered in Dublin, in the Republic of Ireland, where most of our ordinands are trained, and where our General Synod has normally been held. Our members in the Republic would almost all be Nationalist in political persuasion. And many of our dioceses straddle the border. It is in this context that the *Book of Common Prayer* needs to have an intentionally unifying role.

To help you understand this I will take you back for a moment to the experience of the Church of Ireland when the 1984 *Alternative Prayer Book* was introduced. This made the Church of Ireland, for the first time, a church of two books. The model was, of course, the Church of England, with its 1980 *Alternative Service Book* alongside the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*. (Interestingly, you will notice that both the 1984 APB and the 2004 BCP were published, in each case, precisely four years after the Church of England produced their key liturgical works, the *Alternative Service Book* and *Common Worship*. This is, I think, a symbol of an instinctive dependence of the Church of Ireland on England in liturgical revision, which has sometimes displayed itself in the past as fearfulness that we, as a small church, might do the wrong thing! In the revisions of services in the 1980s and 1990s, the resultant Church of Ireland liturgies were often very similar to those of the Church of England, but usually with less variety, less novelty, and less theological “risk.”)

However, even with this carefulness, when the APB was introduced in 1984 it was not by any means universally welcomed. For many parishes—those which had used the experimental “booklets” produced between 1967 and 1984—the transition was smooth, and the desire to have a book again for Sunday worship was great. However, many of the new booklets were firmly resisted in more conservative parishes, and sections of the Orange Order condemned some of the new liturgies (especially the eucharistic liturgies) as Romish. This meant that they were firmly resisted by Select Vestries (who had no actual constitutional role in deciding forms of worship, but had great “moral” power in the parishes) in large sections especially of rural Ulster. Stories are still told of clergy who attempted to introduce the APB only to have Select Vestries refuse to pay for it, and people refuse to take the book, or to worship when it was being used. The 1926 *Book of Common Prayer* then became the symbol of all things “protestant” in these areas, and was held on to by some for grim death.

In other parts of the country, for example in the Diocese of Cork where I ministered for many years, the old *Book of Common Prayer* (1926) services were rarely used after 1984, and the APB became ubiquitous.

Churches therefore became either “BCP” parishes or “APB” parishes, and some, trying to steer a middle course with an emphasis on the word “Alternative” in the APB, tried to ride two horses at the same time. This led to a great deal of confusion about whether this was an “And also with you” Sunday or a “And with thy spirit” Sunday!

Alongside this, as the 1990s progressed, it became clear that several aspects of the revised services were wearing thin quite quickly. There was the obvious question of non-inclusive language in relation to people—oddly more pervasive in the “contemporary” liturgies—and a list of suitable amendments had to be issued by the Liturgical Advisory Committee to make the language more inclusive. Then there was the lectionary, which was thematic and based on the work of the Joint Liturgical Group in Britain. Unfortunately the APB had overly highlighted the

theme of each Sunday by placing it as a heading to the readings. The themes, in use since the early seventies, were becoming tired and worn and were providing a very limited diet, and indeed interpretation, of scripture. Also, the JLG lectionary, with its “quirky” beginning of the Christian year on the “Ninth Sunday before Christmas,” was not proving popular. Since the lectionary readings, printed in full as they were, took up about half the pages in the APB, the introduction of the *Revised Common Lectionary* into the Church of Ireland in 1996 made the APB, in effect, a “dead duck” as a book for the future. These and other issues (for example the lack of poetry in much of the liturgical writing of the seventies, and the lack of flexibility in many of the services) meant that things were straining at the edges; and (although I remember a boo or two when I made a speech suggesting this to the General Synod) there was a general recognition that changes would have to take place in the more contemporary forms of worship.

In 1995 the Liturgical Advisory Committee, recognizing these emerging issues, and also noting that both of the present prayer books were rapidly going out of print, made the following observation in its report to the General Synod:

With the promised publication of a new edition of the hymnbook in 2000 . . . [Like ECUSA, the Church of Ireland has an official hymnbook, and the fifth edition of the *Church Hymnal* was being compiled at the time] . . . , the LAC believes that the time has come for a “Sunday Services Book” to complement the new hymnbook. It envisages such a book as a unifying book (there’s the theme again), containing the materials required for normal congregational worship drawn from the *Book of Common Prayer* [i.e., of 1926] and alternative services in the *Alternative Prayer Book*.

It then listed the possible contents of such a Sunday Services Book, which are relatively obvious.

One of the ways the Church of Ireland seeks to achieve unity and general agreement in its worship is by filtering it through a thoroughgoing and sometimes tedious two-year synodical process. (The General Synod meets annually.) It is vital at any stage to determine the mood of the synod, to gain its confidence, and to respond to its concerns. In this case the Synod of 1995 left the liturgical committee with an interesting quandary. It was clear from the voting that the “Sunday Services Book” way forward had not received the requisite two-thirds majority which a liturgical resolution requires in both houses. Two-thirds had not been achieved in the lay vote. However, on the last day of the Synod a new resolution was placed before the whole synod in an attempt to rescue the situation “encouraging the Liturgical Advisory Committee to proceed in producing a future book along the lines outlined . . . ” As the committee reflected on this over the succeeding year, it decided to present what was in fact a much more radical model. Instead of a Sunday services book that would have made three Church of Ireland worship books (BCP, *Alternative Occasional Services*, and the new publication), the General Synod was presented with a possible proposal for a thorough revision of the *Book of Common Prayer* itself, “such revision to include services in traditional language and also in contemporary language and liturgical style.”

This was a major change because, although there had been revisions of the *Book of Common Prayer* over the previous 125 years, most of these, even the major ones in 1878 and 1926, were essentially tinkering with the text. Now there was the possibility of the most major transformation of the BCP in its 450 years of history. The final go-ahead was given in 1998, and a

timetable provided, leading to the launching of the 2004 *Book of Common Prayer* six years later at a General Synod service at which Archbishop Rowan Williams preached. This was the first General Synod ever to be held in the primatial city of Armagh.

There is no doubt in my mind that the 2004 *Book of Common Prayer* is proving to be a unifying book. From Advent Sunday 2005 it has become the only legal prayer book of the Church of Ireland; its sales have been absolutely enormous; it has been made available in electronic form in a special Irish version of *Visual Liturgy*; and although it is not perfect (and of course people are great at letting you know what they perceive its faults to be), it does appear to have enabled the church to leave behind much of the divisiveness symbolized by whether a church was a “blue book church” or a “black book church,” and to move forward together, united, into the future.

Devotion: The Relationship between Public and Private Worship

We were determined to produce a book which would have equal capacity to enrich private as well as corporate devotion.

There is always an underlying philosophy which influences the creation of a prayer book. This is often sub-conscious, not least in terms of the relationship between public and private prayer.

The question of how a prayer book is seen is also focussed by the development of new ways of presenting liturgy. The question is asked, and certainly was asked in the Irish context, about how much longer we would be using worship books as such. It is clearly possible to make liturgies available by electronic means (and the Irish edition of *Visual Liturgy* does this very effectively, even asking corrective questions of a worship leader such as “Are you sure you want to use the *Gloria* during Lent?”). For many churches the worship sheet or bulletin is the order of the day each Sunday, and it is possible to print out the whole liturgy with variable elements such as hymns, songs, readings, and propers, in course. For other churches, including some in my own diocese, Powerpoint™ has made it possible to more or less dispense with paper altogether, and to put everything on a big screen, or even thin plasma monitors carefully placed around the church.

So why do we still need books?

The question is answered in a variety of ways. For some, the *raison d'être* for the book itself has changed. This is true of the Church of England's *Common Worship*. *Common Worship*, it is claimed, is not a book, but a series of books. The basic book is one that contains liturgical material for Sundays, principal feasts, and holy days, but there is also a *Pastoral Services* book, a *Daily Office* book, and a *Times and Seasons* book. Alongside these are many materials for Services of the Word in *New Patterns for Worship*. The situation can sometimes be like the old pre-reformation “Pie” with its many directions for worship—taking longer to find the right materials for the services than actually to conduct them! In this model of liturgy, of course, the books do not necessarily need to be owned by the ordinary worshipper—they may well be too complex and expensive for that. Instead, nowadays, as I have mentioned and we have experienced, the Sunday worshipper will often have a sheet, or a booklet, or the liturgy compiled from resources available electronically. This model allows for a richness of liturgical material and options to be available, but distances accessibility to much of the material from the ordinary worshipper, and may well, over a period of time, have an effect on how much

memorable material is stored in worshippers' minds.

Others may answer the question "Why do we still need books?" by declaring that the whole idea of having or even owning a prayer book is part of the genius of Anglicanism—at least since printing became relatively inexpensive. It has often been declared that the *Book of Common Prayer* held the Anglican Communion together over many centuries, usually without the realization that there has never solely been one *Book of Common Prayer*. This can be illustrated simply by asking how many of you here in the United States know instinctively the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*, which of course provides the roots of the traditional services used in Ireland? The answer is probably very few indeed, because your roots are in the 1637 *Book of Common Prayer*, and your traditional liturgies have developed from there. We will come back to this in a later section of the lecture.

It is, however, undoubtedly true that the whole idea of a prayer book has been central in Anglican thinking. I remember very powerfully a visit from Robert Runcie, Archbishop of Canterbury at the time, to the International Anglican Youth Congress held in Belfast in 1988. There he shared the view that instead of exporting the idea of liturgical worship to Africa, the Church of England had managed to export the precise book itself, with all the English accoutrements of hymnody, vesture, etc., duly attached. What perhaps needs to be remembered is that the Reformation took place in England just at the point when printing was taking off, so the association between the dissemination of Reformed doctrine in liturgy and printing was particularly close. Perhaps today's Cranmer would be more inclined to use electronic dissemination of material!

However, there is another view, which lies at the heart of the decision of the Church of Ireland to produce a new prayer book on what is essentially the old model—that is, that all the material for the chief acts of worship, Office, Eucharist, initiation, pastoral services, ordination, etc., would be available in one volume for the whole people of God. It is summed up in these points:

- With all the new forms of publishing, people still like to have a book. In fact sales of books are higher than ever, and this has proved to be the case with the new Book of Common Prayer.
- People also like to have a book that looks and "feels" like a book of personal devotion. So, in our Irish revision we have paid attention to layout, to a classical print style, to red rubrics, to size, weight, markers, and paper. As one reviewer said: "It feels like a book of devotion."
- It is important, if a Book of Common Prayer is to bring about commonality, that everyone should have easy access to it. Of course this was not possible in Cranmer's day when books were large and printing costly, but it became the norm in the Church of Ireland that every person, or at least family, should have their own prayer book. The Book of Common Prayer must be seen as one of those books you have to own, to be presented in attractive ways for gifts, etc.
- It must be useable for daily prayers (and you will notice that the book begins with a structure for simple daily prayer in the inside cover, and structured daily intercessions), with actual memorable prayers in it, with an easily usable Psalter and Canticles, and with the lectionary laid out in such a way that people can prepare for Sunday worship. It

must also be possible for those who come to baptism, confirmation, marriage, and funerals to know that they can go to the book and prepare by knowing and understanding the liturgy, and for those who are sick to find spiritual comfort in it.

All of this is brought home to a pastor most powerfully when visiting someone who is ill at home or in hospital, and finding beside the bed a Bible and Prayer Book. This brings the realization that, for many, these have been the books which have structured and sustained their walk with God, and we have the duty and privilege of enabling that to continue. The creative juices of liturgists, with their endless pursuit of new liturgies—many of which only they themselves are seeking—need to be restrained when developing what is the common private and public prayer of the people of God.

Faith: Lex orandi, lex credendi

We desired that this book, like previous editions of it, should properly articulate and embody the Church's faith.

Geoffrey Wainwright, in his magisterial book *Doxology*, rightly notes that the Latin tag *Lex orandi, lex credendi* may be construed in two ways. He says: "The more usual way makes the rule of prayer a norm for belief; what is prayed indicates what may and must be believed. But from the grammatical point of view it is equally possible to reverse subject and predicate and so take the tag as meaning that the rule of faith is the norm for prayer: what must be believed governs what may and should be prayed."

The 2004 *Book of Common Prayer* acts as though the tag really does work both ways. There has been a carefulness about the wording of worship because of the fact that it is a vehicle for the expression and teaching of doctrine, and the teaching of pure doctrine is important. This has always been the case. So, when the revision of the *Book of Common Prayer* was taking place in the 1870s after the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, there were many contentious arguments about doctrinal issues such as prayers for the departed, baptismal regeneration, the nature of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, and the priest's "Ego te absolvo" in the ministry to the sick. When the Church of Ireland argues about doctrine, it often argues from the Prayer Book first and from the scriptures second! This in itself is a recognition of the vital importance of the words that are used in worship.

What we have to realize, of course, is that on this front many of the contemporary liturgies of the 2004 *Book of Common Prayer* are categorically different to the traditional liturgies, and, although they are not intended to reject any former doctrine or indeed teach new doctrine, they approach the matter from a different angle. In general, the implicit agreement that the Liturgical Advisory Committee made with the General Synod was that the traditional "thee-form" liturgies from the 1926 *Book of Common Prayer* would remain the same as they had always been. Congregations should notice no difference. This was both because of the desire on the part of some to worship in the well-worn, familiar ways, and also because of the realization that the Prayer Book embodies our theology. The only changes were intended to be small verbal ones, such as "Ghost" being changed to "Spirit," and a clearer and more easily followed layout. In terms of the latter, it soon became clear to the Liturgical Advisory Committee that even the most minor rubrical changes can imply a change in doctrine and open up a can of worms. Let me offer two examples:

- In Morning and Evening Prayer, the rubric before the absolution in 1926 said: *The Absolution or Remission of sins, to be pronounced by the Priest alone, standing; the people still kneeling*. This has been simplified in 2004 to say: *The Absolution or Remission of sins is pronounced by the priest alone*. The question is, does the change imply that only the priest can say it (whereas it could be argued that Cranmer used priest and minister interchangeably), rather than that the priest alone is standing?
- In Holy Communion, the rubric before the first Lord's Prayer in 1926 was simply, *The minister shall say the service following in a distinct and audible voice*. A rubric was suggested stating that the priest alone say the first Lord's Prayer, following on from a romantic Victorian custom that this was the last part of the priest's private devotion. That rubric might have been true to custom in most places, but would have been a particular interpretation of the doctrine of the Prayer Book.

I am aware that those examples are a bit like the Pharisees straining at gnats, but they do nevertheless provide examples of how even apparently harmless rubrical changes in a very carefully considered and dense text can provide the basis for a change in teaching and understanding. It is also important to note that some services have been included in the new prayer book which will rarely, and in some cases possibly never, be used (e.g., the traditional forms of baptism, confirmation, and ordination). They are present, as much as anything, because they have a role in establishing foundational doctrine.

With the more contemporary liturgies almost the opposite is the case. These liturgies have carefully been "opened up" to allow for a much wider flexibility. In *Holy Communion Two* (*One* is used for traditional liturgies, *Two* for contemporary), the opening prayer is "up for grabs," penitence can be conducted in different ways, the intercessions can be the creation of the person praying, and many parts of the service can be omitted on various occasions. In *A Late Evening Office* there is provision for open prayer, where it is in reality impossible to control the orthodoxy or heterodoxy of the prayers.

A Service of the Word is basically a structure in which nearly anything can happen. While it is true to say that at least no heresy which may be uttered is in print, we do need to be aware that people's doctrine can and will be formed by what they hear in public worship, for the better or for the worse.

The 2004 *Book of Common Prayer* also provides doctrinal statements that are controls on teaching in the church. It is important at this point to note that the Thirty-nine Articles are not included in the new prayer book simply as an historic document. In fact such a heading was rejected by the Liturgical Advisory Committee. They are included within the context of the Preamble and Declaration adopted by the General Convention of the Church of Ireland at disestablishment in 1870 which states: "The Church of Ireland doth receive and approve the Book of the Articles of Religion, commonly called the Thirty-nine articles." All clergypersons are required, at key points in their ministry, to make the Declarations that state: "I assent to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, and to the *Book of Common Prayer* and of the Ordering of Bishops, Priests and Deacons. I believe the doctrine of the Church of Ireland, as therein set forth . . ."

Having said that, the Church of Ireland, in General Synod, did make a statement about the kind of language used in some of the Articles in relation to other Christian churches, while discussing

the issues of sectarianism in our society. While affirming the Articles, it was stated: "Negative statements towards other Christians should not be seen as representing the spirit of this church today," and it continues: "The Church of Ireland regrets that words written in another age and in a different context, should be used in a manner hurtful to or antagonistic towards, other Christians."

The other doctrinal statements of the 2004 *Book of Common Prayer* are the Athanasian Creed (which has not been required in public worship since 1878, but is still accepted as one of the three historic creeds), and the 1878 Catechism.

You have asked me to lecture today specifically on the Church of Ireland's 2004 *Book of Common Prayer*, and it may be useful, under this doctrinal section, to return to some of the issues that have traditionally been contentious in what was historically a very "protestant" church. You will find in this prayer book, for example, a restraint in terms of prayers for the departed, which are limited mostly to remembrance and thanksgiving; you will find a carefulness about explicating doctrine with regard to the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. For example, the Church of England prayer: "Almighty God, we thank you for feeding us with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ . . ." is amended to read: "the spiritual food of the body and blood . . ." You will also discover a reticence about sacrificial language in the Eucharist other than the one sacrifice of Christ once and for all, as distinguished from the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving and our responsive sacrifice of "ourselves, our souls and bodies." And you will find a care taken about how the epiclesis is expressed in the eucharistic prayers. It is not seen as an epiclesis on the bread and wine but rather as being on the whole event and body of worshippers.

The use of language of regeneration in baptism has been slightly mellowed, allowing in one of the services for the omission of a prayer after baptism claiming regeneration. You will find also no reference to August 15; and this prayer book contains perhaps the only modern Ash Wednesday Service in Anglicanism with no ashes! Reference to such a custom might divide.

All of this will give you some insight into the Church of Ireland, its context, its background, and the way it will seek to stay united across theological differences generally by finding a restrained way forward, and the continuing important use of the prayer book in passing on the teaching of the church to future generations, and in protecting against wrong teaching.

Communion: Worldwide Catholicity

We hoped that the book would strengthen the bonds of unity with sister churches who share our approach to common prayer, and we were therefore fully attentive to the reports of the successive meetings of the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation.

The Preface to the 2004 Church of Ireland *Book of Common Prayer* is probably the first in the Anglican Communion to mention the International Anglican Liturgical Consultations. I probably do not need to go into the history of these consultations because Bryan Spinks has been very involved over the years, and will no doubt have kept you up-to-date. At this point I will simply say that they began in 1987 when a group of Anglicans who were members of *Societas Liturgica* met to discuss the issue of children and communion, and issued the Boston Statement. The Church of Ireland discussed the issue and did not go down the line of the Boston Statement. In fact, the only change on this front liturgically was the agreement of General Synod to open up

slightly the possibility of children receiving communion by changing the confirmation rubric from: "Every person ought to present himself for Confirmation (unless prevented by some urgent reason) before he partakes of the Lord's Supper" to what was in fact the older English wording of 1662: "And there shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion, until such time as *he* be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed." The reason for this change was to open the door slightly by using traditional wording and without dividing the synod, which was a real possibility on this issue.

Having said that, the Church of Ireland has, however, been profoundly influenced by IALCs since then, at most of which I have had the privilege of being present. The major work of the IALCs in the nineties and early part of this decade has been to respond to the three key areas of the Lima Statement: baptism, Eucharist and ministry. This led to a statement on baptism (Toronto, 1991), on the Eucharist (Dublin, 1995), and on ordination (Berkeley, 2001). Each of these statements developed an understanding of the liturgies concerned, and also a suggested structure for those services; these are generally adopted as the starting-points for the revision of the Church of Ireland in each of these three areas. The contemporary services in the 2004 *Book of Common Prayer* which relate to these areas are, therefore, the places of most change and creativity. In using the suggested structure of the IALC it is hoped that we will have liturgies that are essentially in line with other revised liturgies in the communion, at least in terms of shape and ethos. Whether, of course, shape and ethos will prove to be enough to hold us together liturgically in communion at times of stormy waters remains to be seen.

To take these three key areas one by one, and make some brief comments:

Baptism. One of the key themes of the statement on initiation is quite simply that baptism is baptism. The one liturgy, therefore, should cover baptism, whether it is for infants, children, or adults. Yet another emphasis is that there should be a baptismal quality about the whole service. Another is that additional symbolic actions associated with baptism (in Ireland, the signing with the cross and the giving of a candle) should not be placed in such a way, or given such a weight, as to detract from the water of baptism, which should be administered in quantities large enough to have an impact, with a preference for submersion.

Eucharist. The key structure for the Eucharist was seen as being a fivefold structure with specific headings given. These are: The Gathering of God's People; Proclaiming and Receiving the Word; The Prayers of the People; Celebrating at the Lord's Table; Going out as God's People.

The Word and Table were to be given the major weight, but the priestly ministry of the people of God in prayer was to be seen as of greater importance than hitherto. It might be noticed also that the Church of Ireland's rite two allows for three eucharistic prayers, widening the variety with a new responsive prayer, developed on a Trinitarian model from the English *Common Worship* Prayer H. It needs to be remembered that the Church of Ireland norm is still weekly communion early Sunday morning, communion once a month at the main morning service, and once a month at the main evening service, so a wider variety of eucharistic prayers, as commonly available in other parts of the communion, is not felt necessary at the moment.

Ministry. In the early stages of revision, when the Ordinal was being revised to be placed in *Alternative Occasional Services* (a volume of occasional services in the *Alternative Prayer Book* mode published in 1993), the House of Bishops of the Church of Ireland kept holding up the development of the Ordinal. They seemed to fear the omission of the imperative formula in

ordination (“Receive the Holy Ghost . . .”; “Take thou authority . . .”). So, the Church of Ireland, which had become the first church in the British Isles to ordain women to the priesthood in the early 1990s, was in fact ordaining them according to what was essentially Cranmer’s ordinal (to which inclusive language had to be added!). We were the last of the Anglican churches in the British Isles to have a new ordinal.

I am glad to say that the reverse happened ten years later. Simply because of the timing of the IALC statement we became the first part of the communion to revise our ordinal in the light of Berkeley 2001, perhaps for the first time without looking over our shoulder at the Church of England! You can see the results in the prayer book, and I hope you will be pleased by them.

At this point, it is also worth noting other key factors that tie the 2004 *Book of Common Prayer* into the wider communion and worldwide church, and in which we have greatly benefited from work done here in the United States:

- First is the work of ELLC (The English Language Liturgical Consultation). Sadly, the Roman Catholic Church has been disentangling itself from this consultation, and looks as though it will be doing its own thing in the English translation of the Mass. At an early stage the Liturgical Advisory Committee decided that it would present to the General Synod the ELLC texts, even if we did not altogether like them, for the sake of commonality throughout the world. The 2004 *Book of Common Prayer* has therefore adopted those texts, with variations in only two (these came as amendments from the floor of General Synod). They are the Nicene Creed (in the line: “Was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary and was made man”) and the Lord’s Prayer (“Lead us not into temptation”). The Church of Ireland texts are, therefore, closer to ELLC than those of the Church of England, especially in relation to inclusive language.
- Second, the *Revised Common Lectionary*. As you will probably be aware, the RCL is essentially the work of the Consultation on Common Texts, which originated in the 1960s as a forum for consultation on the renewal of worship among many Christian churches in North America. The roots of this lectionary, are, of course the Roman *Lectionary for Mass* of 1969. It has, however, developed through several stages, all since your last Prayer Book in ECUSA, which of course has the same roots. The main developments were published as the *Common Lectionary* of 1983, and then further as the *Revised Common Lectionary* of 1992. Its main new contribution is to provide an alternative series of semicontinuous readings for Sundays in ordinary time, so that the Old Testament is not read simply as a type of the Gospel. The RCL has been receiving pretty universal support in the English-speaking world. However, sadly, it has not been adopted by Rome. It might also be worth noting that the 2004 *Book of Common Prayer* does not contain a weekday lectionary. The reason is simple: there are a variety of models around, including the new RCL Weekday Lectionary, which is a Thursday to Wednesday lectionary, preparing for and developing from each Sunday’s readings. These are too much “up in the air” at the moment, and are produced separately for each year.
- Third, the Psalter. You will notice, if you look carefully at the 2004 Church of Ireland Prayer Book, that there is only one Psalter. At first that may not seem unusual. Your Prayer Book is the same. But when the plans were drawn up for the 2004 BCP, the General Synod was promised two Psalters, one the Coverdale Psalter adapted as in the

1926 book, and the other a contemporary Psalter. The way that plan changed is a reminder of the very ordinary factors that can influence liturgical revision. In the year 2000 the fifth edition of the *Church Hymnal* was produced by Oxford University Press. It is an excellent compilation of hymns, even if I say it myself as someone who was involved in its production. When it was produced the paper weight was much thicker and heavier than anyone had expected, and the church press was full of complaints about “the weight of the new hymnbook”—so much so that no one seemed to notice the contents! In the light of this controversy the Liturgical Advisory Committee thought it wise to re-visit the idea of two Psalters, which could have made the Prayer Book quite bulky. The Synod was given the original two-fold option, or the option of an “in-between” Psalter, that is, with a traditional feel but a little more contemporary. They went for the latter, and the Psalter chosen was the Church of England *Common Worship* Psalter. You will recognize much of it because its roots are in your own Psalter in the ECUSA Prayer Book.

I’ve spoken of the commonality of prayer, of the relationship between public and private worship, of *lex orandi, lex credendi*, of worldwide catholicity, and given you some keys to understanding the 2004 *Book of Common Prayer* of the Church of Ireland. To finish, I will read just one further section from the 2004 Preface:

We must always remind ourselves that words, however memorable, beautiful or useful, are never to be confused with worship itself. The words set out on these pages are but the beginning of worship. They need to be appropriated with care and devotion by the People of God so that, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, men and women may bring glory to the Father and grow in the knowledge and likeness of Jesus Christ.

When I was a rector of a parish in Cork, we once had a worship sub-committee. It had only one question to ask and answer, and the question was this: “What one thing about worship must we get right?” In other words, what matters most? Is it the preaching, the music, the ritual, the centrality of the Eucharist, inculturation, atmosphere, a sense of the numinous, or what? Well, after three meetings the committee answered in one word: *integrity*. The word was defined like this: The inside and the outside must be the same. How we look should be how we are. The wholeheartedness of our worship should be expressed wholeheartedly; words should have meaning and the meaning should be seen in our lives, so that we are the same people from Monday to Saturday as we are on Sunday. When the words and rituals of our liturgies express and form the worship of our hearts, then we are truly blessed. When the words of a Prayer Book are incarnated in the life of a Christian community, then we are dangerous in a godly way. When the written word draws us to the living Word, and changes our lives, we are on to a winner—because true worship in the scriptures is never just liturgical actions, but the whole of what it means to love God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength, and our neighbors as ourselves.

Harold Miller is Bishop of Down and Dromore in Northern Ireland. He has been involved in liturgy for several decades, being the first member of the Church of Ireland to be involved in the International Anglican Liturgical Consultations. At the moment he chairs the Liturgical Advisory

Committee of the Church of Ireland. He has written several books and booklets on liturgical matters, the most recent being The Desire of Our Soul (Columbia, 2004), and has contributed to the Oxford Guide to the Book of Common Prayer, published in 2006. He is married to Liz and has four children.