

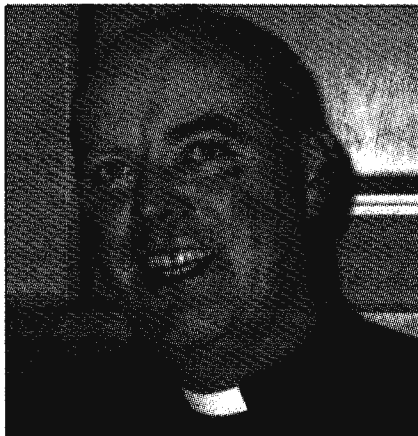
Looking forward to BCP 2004

By Canon Ricky Rountree

The General Synod last May marked the completion of the legislation needed to secure the contents of the new edition of the Book of Common Prayer. The forthcoming Book of Common Prayer will replace the BCP of 1926, the Alternative Prayer Book of 1984 and the Alternative Occasional Services of 1993, and will comprise the main services of the Church of Ireland in both traditional and contemporary language. The traditional services will be almost identical to the services in BCP 1926, save for the substitution of "Holy Spirit" for "Holy Ghost", the "who" form of the Lord's Prayer and some simplification of the rubrics. The contemporary services see a mild revision of the provision in the Alternative Prayer Book and the Occasional Services Book in the light of the experience and use of the last 30 years. More radical is the provision of the Initiation material and the Ordinal which reflects much international attention on these liturgies since the earlier publications.

Since the meeting of the General Synod in May, I have been seconded on a part-time basis for 18 months to oversee the introduction of the new BCP. My role as Central Liturgical Officer will also be to develop a structure for on-going liturgical formation and education for the Church of Ireland, which will continue after the period of the appointment. As CLO, I began work on 1st August and I see the period of office as having three phases.

Phase 1 is the current period up to the appearance of the book from the publishers, which is believed to be in March, 2004. During that time background training conferences will be held throughout the dioceses for worship leaders to prepare for the book. These will be facilitated at local level by the appointment of Area Liturgical Officers who will work closely with me as CLO. Later on, two provincial training teams will be recruited for more detailed work and as a resource to the ALOs. It is important that we approach the new BCP in an enlightened manner. This should mean that every parish is using the Revised Common Lectionary so that it is easy to use both traditional



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and contemporary liturgies with a continuity of approach to the Ministry of the Word. The Psalter in the new book is the Common Worship Psalter and some preparation work in familiarisation and possible musical celebration in a variety of styles suitable for accomplished and not so accomplished choirs and congregations needs to be done. It is important to remember that Anglican worship is characterised by a definite structure, which allows great freedom and creativity within that structure. Not always have we grasped that opportunity in the past and our period of preparation for the new BCP should help make us aware of many new possibilities to make our worship more alive and relevant.

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Phase 2 of the CLO's appointment will be the period from the appearance of the book in print and its authorisation as the Book of Common Prayer for the Church of Ireland on Trinity Sunday, 6th June, 2004. This will be a period of familiarisation with the book itself and its possibilities. There will also be the need to explore the best ways for producing locally printed service sheets

which aid good practice in the use of the book. There are many 'do's' and 'don'ts' when it comes to locally printed material, not least in the area of copyright.

General Synod 2004 will be an important landmark in the introduction of the new book with strong focus on the book itself during the General Synod at its times of prayer and at the main Synod Eucharist. Ascension Day occurs the following week and there will be a cathedral launch in every diocese on that day. Then on 6th June, Trinity Sunday, marking the authorisation of the new book as the official Book of Common Prayer, every parish church will be expected to celebrate its official launch.

Phase 3 of the introductory period will be from September, 2004 to Easter, 2005 and will concentrate on resources for the flexible and creative areas of the liturgy. This will include the publication of a resources manual for worship leaders. The material in the manual will also appear on the worldwide web, but in paper form it will be arranged in a binder, which can be added to as new resources appear and given permission for use by the bishops.

The BCP 2004 is being printed in three editions, a pew edition, a desk edition and a large print edition for the partially sighted. The pew edition will also appear in a presentation format suitable for personal and gift use. Details of cost and design and the opportunity for 'bulk-by' discounts will soon be available from the publishers. The design 'dummies' already supplied by the publishers show a beautifully finished binding with high quality paper, clear print and a book thickness which is only half that of the melody edition of the new hymnal.

It is being published by Columba Press in Ireland who have shown great sensitivity to our particular needs.

Canon Ricky Rountree is the Central Liturgical Officer. This is the first in a series of monthly articles introducing the new Book of Common Prayer. Next month's article will be by Canon Brian Mayne, Editor of BCP 2004.