

Liturgical Advisory Committee – Report 2009

LITURGICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

REPORT 2009

MEMBERSHIP ELECTED IN 2007

Rt Rev HC Miller (Chairman)	Rev PK McDowell
Rt Rev MAJ Burrows (Vice-Chairman)	Rev AJ Rufli
Rev GG Field (Honorary Secretary)	Dr R Marsh
Rev Canon MC Kennedy	Mrs A Cadden
Ven RB Rountree	Mrs J Wilkinson
Rev E Hanna	
Rev MP Jansson	

Co-opted members

Rev A Dorrian
Rev SA Pragnell
Rev P Thompson
Ms J Bell (2008)

Consultants

Rev Canon JAB Mayne
Rev Canon RE Turner
Dr D Davison
Lady B Sheil

Church of Ireland Theological College Observer

Mr R Ferris

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Liturgical Advisory Committee continues to work on behalf of the Church of Ireland in considering the diverse elements which are brought together when a community meets for worship. The sub-committees which have served the LAC so well during the past two years continue to be the focus of discussion, planning and action in the areas of Liturgical Education and Formation, Music, Art, Liturgical Space, Liturgical Resources and Electronic Liturgy.

The objectives for the forthcoming year will be the continuation of projects recently begun in the *PRISM Series*, *Singing Psalms*, Liturgical Space, the Worship Website and worship resources for Lent Holy Week and Easter. The Committee is also going to give consideration to a form of eucharistic prayer(s) where children comprise a large proportion of the congregation. The LAC will also represent the Church of Ireland at Anglican and interdenominational liturgical consultations.

REPORT

The change in the Marriage Regulations highlighted in last year's report has involved negotiations with the statutory authorities (RoI) for a re-wording of the Marriage Service Two, and has resulted in the bill to be brought to the General Synod this year.

The role of the Diocesan Liturgical Officer (DLO) continues to be an invaluable means of communication between the LAC, dioceses and parishes. The bi-annual Provincial meetings with DLOs have been important for publicising the LAC's work and plans, and for feedback to the Committee on what it can do to better facilitate those who hold responsibility for planning and delivering worship in the parishes and at diocesan services. To this end the DLOs are helping facilitate communication with parish and cathedral organists.

LITURGICAL EDUCATION AND FORMATION

Celebrating Communion, the first in a series of parish based liturgical education programmes was published by Columba Press, following its launch at last year's Synod. A number of parishes have reported a good response from those who had taken part in the course, with more parishes planning for its use as a Lenten programme for this year. Work is already underway on the second publication in the *PRISM* series, relating to Baptism and Confirmation.

It was reported last year that the MAULS (Music, Art and Use of Liturgical Space) Sub-committee had been replaced by three smaller sub-committees. This has proved to be a productive division of labour.

ART

This is being considered under three headings: building, liturgy and publicity. The LAC will consider the material presented relating to these areas during the coming year.

MUSIC

The sampler of Simple Chants produced for the season of Easter Year A, and the feedback from parishes which used it, formed the basis for the production of a complete set of lectionary-based psalms for Year B. The work of Mrs Alison Cadden and Rev Peter Thompson, "*Singing Psalms*" was published by Columba Press in time for use from Advent Sunday 2008, and launched by the composers in Dublin and Belfast. Those who attended the launches, and those who have used the psalms in parish worship, have given a very positive response. For some parishes the singing of the psalms has been revived, whilst for others the responsorial settings have proven to be favourable with congregations, as an alternative to Anglican Chant or simply saying the psalms. The settings for the Year C cycle of psalms are complete, and will be available in time for Advent Sunday 2009.

LITURGICAL SPACE

In last year's report the LAC sought to promote awareness of, and engagement with, the process by which we use and develop liturgical space within our church buildings. Since then considerable work has been undertaken by both the LAC and this sub-group, to prepare the proposed resolution which appears in Appendix A, and the Green Paper which accompanies this report in Appendix B. It is the hope of the Committee that this Paper will lead to a debate in synod and to a formal acknowledgement of the need for a Code of Good Practice concerning liturgical space. In keeping with last year's publicised 3-year plan, the work of the group for the coming year will be to formulate a Code of Practice which will be brought before Synod in 2010.

LITURGICAL RESOURCES

Whilst the BCP 2004 contains the resources for most of the liturgy of the Church of Ireland, there are occasions when supplementary resources for feast days may be required. Many of these supplementary resources can be found within the liturgies of the wider Anglican Communion. Whilst these resources are adequate, they do not always translate easily into a Church of Ireland context. The sub-committee has been looking at those resources in order to inform its work in producing material for use during Lent, Holy Week and Easter. In the coming year this work will continue, as well as consideration being given to the provision of a Eucharistic Prayer(s) where children comprise a significant part of the congregation.

It is acknowledged by the LAC that the work of this sub-committee is largely dependent upon the needs of parishes and worship coordinators being identified and communicated to it. To this end we would encourage those involved in planning worship to advise the Committee, through the Diocesan Liturgical Officers, of any resources they feel the LAC may be able to help provide.

ELECTRONIC LITURGY

In the past year work in this area was transferred from the sole responsibility of one person (Electronic Liturgy Officer) to a working sub-committee, of which the ELO is a member, and whose role within the LAC and the Church of Ireland is still a key factor. Much of this sub-committee's work over the past year has been focused upon the Worship Page of the Church of Ireland website. The copyright issues with scriptural texts mentioned in last year's report have been resolved, but this has meant that the Sunday lectionary readings have had to be sourced from outside the Church of Ireland website. Most of the material that was present on the old website is now accessible by navigating from the drop-down menus and Calendar on the opening page. Familiarity with the site should make for easier navigation of the Worship web pages as more material becomes available in the coming year from the Electronic Liturgy Group.

FUTURE PLANS

Our future plans include our intention to:

- continue to work to on the production of Psalm material for year C;
- look toward the development of future programmes in the *Prism* series;
- Liturgies for Lent, Holy Week and Easter;
- Liturgical Space;
- further develop the Worship section of the website;
- continue to represent the Church of Ireland in the wider national and international liturgical forums, so that resources and ideas which might be of value in the celebration of our liturgy are available for our use from the wider Church.

RESIGNATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

Following her resignation from the LAC last year, members wish to acknowledge the contribution of Judy Martin during her time as a member of the Committee, and express their thanks to her for all her work with the Committee. We are pleased to welcome Julie Bell onto the Committee, who was co-opted to succeed Judy Martin, and who also brings musical experience and expertise to the LAC. The Committee also wishes to acknowledge the contribution of Robert Ferris in the area of Electronic Liturgy, and in particular his work on the Worship Website. Robert Ferris is the CITI observer on the LAC, and we wish him every blessing in his ministry following his ordination later this year.

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APPENDIX A

Resolution to be brought by the LAC to General Synod 2009:

That this Synod welcomes the Green Paper on the use of Liturgical Space, commends it for study at diocesan level and requests the Liturgical Advisory Committee to bring a resolution to the General Synod of 2010 by which issues of good practice in this matter may be codified and published with the authority of the General Synod.

APPENDIX B

Section 1

LITURGICAL SPACE – a GREEN PAPER for discussion leading to action

Introduction

The BCP (2004), the texts of which were all ratified by this Synod, combines the traditional forms of worship from our past with contemporary modern language rites. Common Prayer was the vision of the compilers, who sought to “unify the worship of God’s people, while allowing reasonable scope for diversity within the essential unity of the Church’s prayer.”¹ It was the hope of the compilers that the texts of our worship, which “should properly articulate and embody the Church’s faith,” would “have the capacity to draw God’s people in our time to a fresh experience of the beauty of holiness.”² In their deliberations, the LAC and its Liturgical Space Working Group have been thinking theologically about liturgical space. Liturgy is a word which means the ‘work of the people.’ Put simply therefore, it has been our aim to see how the available space in our church buildings, together with their furniture and fittings, might best facilitate the expression of our Church’s faith, as well as enhance the worship experience of the people of God. We suggest that the texts within BCP (2004), with the emphasis on the balance of Word and Sacrament, should harness the visual, liturgical and architectural assets of each particular church as part of the whole act of worship, prayer and proclamation.

Throughout the Church of Ireland there is great diversity of worship: in addition to the choice of traditional or modern language orders of service, we recognise that styles of worship may be influenced by the age and style of the building, the size and age-range of the congregation, whether there are musicians available, the tradition of churchmanship, and many other factors. Yet despite this diversity, the commonality of the prayer enshrined in the BCP (2004) is an instrument of unity. The compilers of this paper therefore aspire to focus on the unity in diversity which enriches our communion as a church, while setting out some general guiding principles for parishes to consider for themselves. These are based on the various elements of our orders of service within the BCP (2004), and challenge us to look afresh at how our worship and faith within a particular location may most effectively engage with sacred space to the glory of God.

As we begin our green paper and contemplate our heritage, we recognise that over the centuries church buildings have been erected with definite theological assumptions motivating their designers, however much such people were actually aware of this. Modern reordering can jar if it is done without awareness of the original theological premise associated with the construction of the church, and it can also be done in a purely pragmatic or functional way, without much sense of spiritual continuity or real consideration of the theological statement we would wish to have the building make today. As we address the issue of reordering, we are raising questions about what we

¹ BCP 2004 Preface, 7.

² Ibid.

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wish to say to the world about the vocation of the church in our time – this we need to do in a manner that is not the slave of contemporary aesthetic/liturgical fashion on the one hand or is timidly conservative on the other. The choices we make in our time in relation to our buildings, especially when considerable capital expenditure is involved, must not be confined to cautious maintenance but also should involve enrichments that we judge – in so far as is humanly possible – to have enduring value and staying power.

Contextual Questions

Liturgy and its practice demand a context and that context is affected by and in turn affects the delivery and experience of the act of worship. We must always remember that the Church is essentially the people rather than the building. Therefore the needs of the people and their worship must have priority. There is a need for a balance to be struck between respect for the heritage and tradition of the church building and the current requirements of its worshipping congregation. Often a congregation is torn between seeking to continue to worship in a building which they have inherited and using a liturgy which seems to demand a change of shape and furnishing in the building.

‘Common’ prayer means the full participation of the whole people of God, and the shape of the liturgical space should allow the full participation of the whole assembly. Many worship spaces were created in a context where there was a clear demarcation between those who led the worship and those who ‘attended’. Today’s liturgy presupposes a celebration by the whole people of God, the worship leaders’ role being to facilitate that celebration.

How does the liturgical space in your church building measure up to that demand?

GATHERING:

- Does the building allow members of the congregation to gather and identify with one another as the people of God?
- Is there space for assembly prior to settling down?
- How do the number and shape of the seats facilitate or restrict the gathering?
- Is there any flexibility in the seating arrangements?
- From where is the gathering part of the liturgy conducted?

PROCLAMATION AND RECEIVING OF THE WORD

- How many *foci* of the Word exist in your church? What genuine justification is there for having more than one?
- Is there a necessity to retain Reading Desk, Lectern and Pulpit?
- Is there a balance in the visual presentation of Word and Sacrament?
- If not, how could that be achieved in your context?
- Is there furnishing in the chancel/sanctuary which is never used?
- Are the scriptures always read from the same place?
- How good are the sound system and the lighting?

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PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

- From where are the Prayers of the People conducted?
- Does the position where the prayers are conducted help to underline the fact there these are the 'Prayers of the People'?

CELEBRATING AT THE LORD'S TABLE

- How central is the Lord's Table to the worship assembly?
- Is there a visual balance between Lord's Table and the furniture used for the Word?
- Can a more central impact be created for the Lord's Table without significant reordering of the sanctuary, communion rails etc?
- If significant changes are necessary what implications are there for the rest of the sanctuary and chancel furnishings and even the body of the nave?

THE PLACE OF BAPTISM

- Is the font and surrounding area best suited for contemporary public baptismal liturgy?
- Does the position of the font denote entry into the Christian way?
- Could the font be a focus for the penitential section of the liturgy on occasion?
- Is there sufficient room for the assembly to gather around the font?
- Can a visual link be discerned between the positioning of the font, the lectern/pulpit and the holy table?
- Is care taken to avoid obscuring the purpose of the font by its manner of placing and decoration?

When seeking to answer any of the above questions there is a need to strike a balance between what might ideally suit the needs of Church of Ireland worship in the context of the BCP (2004) and the respect that it is necessary to have for the inherited shape and contents of the liturgical space together with the local traditions of the worshipping congregation.

APPLICATION

In applying the basic principles of the reordering of churches and the most effective use of liturgical space it is recognized that churches differ in their layout and furnishings and that "one size" does not necessarily "fit all". This implies that there needs to be a sympathetic appreciation of the architecture of each church building and of the kind of liturgical celebrations for which it was originally designed. There may be a need to adapt the liturgy to the building as well as reordering the building for requirements of the liturgy. It also needs to be borne in mind that the 2004 edition of the *Book of Common Prayer* contains both traditional and modern orders of service and that these may need different presentations and that a single way of ordering the fittings and furnishings may not be equally applicable to both. There will always be, in any case, an element of the ideal - what one would like to see to enable the liturgy to be presented in the best possible

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manner - and the practical - it may not even be physically possible to do everything that will facilitate "best practice" with regard to the manner in which the church is internally ordered.

The principal focal points in any Anglican Church will comprise the arrangements for Christian Initiation, specifically the placing and use of the font, the facilitation of the ministry of the Word and that of the Sacrament involving the lectern, pulpit and reading-desk, and the Holy Table. While items of furniture are themselves important, it is worth stating that their primary purpose is to draw appropriate attention to the items they carry or contain, notably Scripture, bread, wine and water.

With regard to the font, this should normally be situated at a single designated and visible place of baptism. Whether within the Church itself (as is the normal practice in the Church of Ireland) or in a separate annex to the main building, this place should have sufficient space to allow as many as possible of the congregation to gather with the candidates and sponsors around the font and to facilitate an orderly and reverend administration of the sacrament. Some sort of visual connection between the two Gospel sacraments, baptism and holycommunion is helpful, the traditional arrangement being that the font is at or near the entrance to the church symbolizing admission to the Christian life, and the altar/table as representing the goal to which we aspire. Although some churches have the font in the vicinity of the altar/table this is not recommended, as a visual confusion rather than a true relationship tends to occur. The font, be it stone basin, pool or fountain, should normally be a permanent structure and may embody fundamental pieces of Christian symbolism. It should facilitate the use of appropriately abundant quantities of water.

The ministry of the Word currently tends to be divided between three visual centres - the lectern, from which the scriptures are read, the pulpit from which the sermon is preached, and the reading desk (a distinctive feature of Anglican worship) which is more suited to the "Office" of Morning or Evening Prayer (Matins and Evensong) than to the celebration of the Eucharist. Conducting the first part of the Eucharist from the reading desk and the second part at the Holy Table, tends to detract from the unity of Word and Sacrament. Some thought could be given to a revival of the ancient ambo to serve as a single place from which the scriptures may be read and preached and the ministry of the Word conducted. One possible arrangement is for the Word to be read and preached from a lectern/ambo at the West end of the Church facing East where there the seating faces inwards and the people are gathered in an elliptical formation encompassing the area between the lectern/ambo and the altar/table (an example of this may be seen in the chapel of the Theological Institute). A variety of practice exists including the reading of the epistle and Gospel from the steps of the altar/table when the Rite One Eucharist is used - appropriate if the table of traditional epistles and Gospels is used, less so if the normal First Service readings are selected, including Old Testament and Psalm and well as Epistle, (Acclamations) and Gospel. There is also the custom in some places of a Gospel procession to where the people are in the nave - which does not require any particular arrangement of furniture.

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The place from which the Word is read and proclaimed, and where the Holy Bible is normally placed, should be a significant and permanent piece of liturgical furniture, and should not if at all practicable be used for other purposes. It is not satisfactory to have a prominent and permanent altar/table but only a temporary lectern/pulpit, for example of the folding and removable kind. Both Word and Sacrament have equal authority within Anglicanism and should have, so far as this can be ensured, equal status within Church of Ireland churches, as visually represented.

When the Prayers of the People are offered this can be done, depending on the layout of the church, in some instances using the existing furniture but it may also be done from the chancel step, from the aisle or in the midst of the people, or from some other convenient place (the reading desk being traditional for Morning and Evening Prayer). Where the seating arrangements are flexible it is possible for people, including lay people, to lead the intercessions from where they are, for example from within a circle or ellipse of chairs. Litanies were originally designed to be sung or said in procession, and if this is to be done, there needs to be space in the aisles for this movement not only of officiating clergy and choir but also of members of the congregation.

The Holy Table should be free-standing to enable the presiding bishop or priest to stand behind it, and where practical to allow the whole community to gather with him or her around it. This implies bringing the table out from the wall, and, in some instances either into the middle of the chancel or even into the nave. There should not, however be more than one main altar/table. It almost goes without saying that this item of furniture should be clearly and unmistakably a table as opposed to other forms of elevated surfaces.

Ideally, the presiding minister should have a chair from which the liturgy is conducted visible to all and facing west behind the Holy Table. Although this is an important piece of liturgical furniture it should not be throne-like, but should be of a kind to indicate the significance of the office of the liturgical president. It needs to be so designed and placed that it is not only of significance in relation to the Eucharistic table itself, but also in the context of various other forms of liturgical event.

Churches should be uncluttered, and an important part of any reordering must be for congregations to ask whether they need every conceivable space to be filled with pews! In larger churches, the possibility of having free space for people to assemble and also to associate after acts of worship, and to have room for processions, dramatized readings of the scriptures and the like is of obvious value. An apparently empty space can itself be a symbol of the infinite majesty of God, and can also facilitate a feeling of peace and serenity in the midst of a very busy and cluttered world. It follows that the manner of the ordering of a church also encourages moments of daily personal devotion and reminds us that liturgical space is not only crafted to address Sunday needs.

Wider Considerations

It would be prudent to acknowledge that parishes often give consideration to the re-ordering or adapting of liturgical space primarily in the context of other major work on the fabric of the building concerned. Often the desire to provide a kitchen and toilets, or an activity area for children, leads to a reduction in the area available for worship and a consequent interest in re-shaping it. While other considerations may serve as the catalyst which leads to re-ordering for worship, the work done on the space retained for worship should not be ill-considered or compromised as to quality. There are examples in the Church of quite adventurous changes being executed in relation to the multi-purpose use of buildings, yet the worship space is left rather drearily unaltered in a building which now has had its essential proportions transformed.

If liturgical reordering is part of an overall scheme to adapt the interior of a church building, it should be noted that certain principles of good practice apply both to the liturgical work and to the more general scheme as well:

- In the case of heritage buildings, the work should be in theory reversible;
- A historic building will always include layers of evidence of the involvement of that building with a local community, and when changes are being made this should be done in such a way as to avoid the permanent destruction of the legacy and work of another generation. In this context the appropriate storage of valuable items no longer required in situ will need to be considered;
- Those contemplating reordering need to identify the special features of design and furnishing that are site-specific to that particular place, so that, over and above more general considerations, a special effort is made to cherish and conserve them;
- Most worthwhile contemporary contributions to an older building will be made in the authentic idiom of today rather than in a manner that imitates the styles of the past;
- It is therefore important that consideration is also given to the incorporation into both the fabric and the contents of the building of evidence of artistic excellence from our own time as well as from previous generations;
- Careful consideration needs to be given to the conservation of existing fixed items, eg stained glass and significant monuments, which find themselves within a multi-purpose area;
- In any project, the brief given to the architect should include clear liturgical objectives so that they may be assisted in gauging the appropriate level of intervention to achieve such objectives. It is acknowledged that in buildings deemed to be of national importance that this intervention will need to be minimal but in such cases it is actually quite possible to be liturgically radical with minimal permanent impact on the fabric;

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- There is a moral imperative on the church to ensure that all adaptations to buildings, particularly in relation to matters such as heating and where possible choice of materials, are executed in the most environmentally sensitive manner.

One often hears it said that adaptations to church buildings, whether for liturgical or other practical reasons, cannot easily be made because the planners or the conservation authorities will not permit it. In many cases this is more an excuse to justify timid conservatism amongst parishioners than an accurate reflection of the views of the statutory authorities themselves. Our consultations with those authorities have made us aware that it remains quite possible to make radical alterations to heritage and protected structures, provided that these alterations are carried out according to due process in the appropriate jurisdiction with sensitivity and wisdom. Heritage authorities will be aware that churches are living places which of necessity change through the years, and that if those who use them and maintain them for their original and essential purpose are not permitted to alter them reasonably to meet the needs of the times, they may simply walk away from them and build new multi-purpose buildings from scratch. Such a scenario would result in the original church passing into new ownership and being in the possession of persons who would make far more radical and insensitive requests to planning authorities than the previous ecclesiastical owners.

The other factor, over and above congenital caution, which makes congregations disinclined to contemplate radical work on church buildings is a not ill-founded view concerning spiralling costs – materials of a very high standard have to be used and the requirements of to-day's fire regulations in such contexts are very demanding indeed. Having admitted this, however, the arguments for enriching often old structures to meet the needs of the People of God in our time are very strong indeed. Sites with long continuity of worship and witness have obvious significance in our communities. Our predecessors of past centuries, usually with the best of motives, spent vast sums on the construction and adornment of our notable buildings. Those who will follow us will deserve to find evidence that ours too was an era of generosity, creativity and excellence as well as maintenance – an era in which the self-understanding of God's People was clearly articulated through their worship and in which the dialogue between beauty and holiness remained constant.

Proposed Motion:

'That this Synod welcomes the Green Paper on the use of Liturgical Space, commends it for study at diocesan level and requests the LAC to bring a resolution to the General Synod of 2010 by which issues of good practice in this matter may be codified and published with the authority of the General Synod'