

BOOK REVIEW

Patterns for Worship.

Church House Publishing £15

In the equivalent in liturgical circles of cocktail party chatter, we have often heard the phrase 'Convergence of rites'. It is true that liturgical study and practice over a generation has revealed much in common to the traditions, particularly with regard to the shape and the content of the eucharistic rite. "*Patterns for Worship*" is a fascinating demonstration of convergence upon a field familiar to the Reformed Churches, namely The Service of the Word.

Here is a working manual for clergy and leaders of worship in the Church of England which is one of a series produced by the Liturgical Commission in preparation for the successor to ASB. It encourages the reader to see the elements of a service as the bricks with which an act of worship is built, to consider thoughtfully how each element is to be articulated and to determine where, within the service, the item may best find its place.

"A Service of the Word" was authorised in 1993 as a service distinct from Morning and Evening Prayer and, of course, from the Eucharist. The order is virtually that given in the Church of Scotland *BCO*(1979) for 'the main Sunday service when the Lord's Supper is not celebrated'. The Church of England have arrived at this authorised service without any of our rather fretful need to justify it as a *missa sicca*. For those of us who have long since recognised that the notion of every Sunday's worship being eucharistic is like the Jacobite toast to the King o'er the water, "*Patterns for Worship*" is useful and relevant.

The first part of the book introduces the basic outline of the service, explaining its elements with notes and guidelines. Any Church of Scotland's worship committee would be helped greatly by the sets of guidelines and checklists.

The Resources Sections of the book reproduce texts for worship, all of which are either authorised or commended for use in the Church of

England. There are introductions, confessions and absolutions, affirmations of faith, responses and endings to prayers, introductions to the Lord's Prayer, intercessions and responsive litanies, concluding prayers, acclamations, responsive scripture passages, proper prefaces, thanksgivings, canticles, blessings. The section offers what in the Church of Scotland we have often termed a "quarry of material"; and a good one at that.

The major section called "The Commentary" examines each component of the service and suggests ways in which each might be used. The compilers have used the happy and imaginative device of inventing four parishes, each in a different setting, and suggesting how each deals with the sermon, the intercessions etc. St David's makes a mess of everything and it is worth the price of the book to read of their chaotic, ill-prepared worship. Throughout this 50 page section there are little essays and sets of guidelines on such matters as use of the building, language, symbol, when to give the notices, copyright, producing service sheets and many more.

The Church Service Society member may raise an eyebrow occasionally. Some rather strange ways of 'doing' the Sermon are suggested. It is possible to depart from the lectionary for large parts of the year in the Service of the Word. There is a reticence when it comes to the Clerical Proclamation of the Word (declaratory absolution and blessing) which may reflect the scruples of Evangelicals on the Commission.

There is not a lot of poetry in the texts themselves and some of the litany material is tedious, but at least we are too far south for mock celtic and we can be thankful for that.

Some of the suggestions for articulating the elements of worship reminded the reviewer of our own *New Ways to Worship* which began life 20 years ago. With *Patterns for Worship* we find clergy and leaders of worship who have been used to the set patterns of the "book" being encouraged to think out what is to happen on Sunday morning in much the same way as we have been doing since our ordination.

Here is someone else's workbook produced at a point in someone else's schedule of development which happens to coincide with matters relevant to our liturgical practice. It is a book worth having. **CRW**