

# FROM ENGLAND TO UNDER AFRICAN SKIES: THE QUEST FOR AN AFRICAN ANGLICAN LITURGICAL VOICE

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## ABSTRACT

The prayer book of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa is currently being revised. The slogan “Under Southern Skies—In an African voice” is the rallying cry of this liturgical consultative process. It captures one of the core purposes of the revision project, namely to root Anglican liturgy in the context of Southern Africa. But this is not a new impetus. The previous revision of the prayer book, *1989 Anglican Prayer Book*, sought a similar objective and hoped for the continuing development of indigenous liturgy. This hope has a long history. The Anglican Church, formed in England in the midst of the Reformation, engaged significantly with the vernacular moment, crafting liturgy in English rather than Latin. The church also sought to hold together a diversity of theological voices in order to create a *via media* or middle road. This paper explores the liturgical turning point of the Reformation and the later expansion of colonial and theological tensions that have shaped and have been expressed through the history of the Anglican prayer book in Southern Africa. The authors conclude that giving substance to indigenous voices and finding theological middle ground remains important in the revision process to this day.

**Keywords:** Reformation; revision; language; *via media*; Anglican; prayer book

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## INTRODUCTION

The practice of the Eucharist and the use of prayer books in England varied widely until the English Reformation and the establishment of the Church of England. However, liturgical conformity had been sought from a much earlier time. The Synod of Clovesho in 747 affirmed that the Mass in England must be done according to the Roman Church, which was seeking ever greater uniformity in its missal or prayer book.<sup>3</sup> The following century, on the continent, Charlemagne was anxious to achieve liturgical uniformity and sought to promote a single Roman Mass.<sup>4</sup> Yet despite this converging and controlling liturgical trend in England, the local voice found expression in the *Sarum Use* several centuries later.

The *Sarum Use* may be traced back to St Osmund who became Bishop of Salisbury in 1078.<sup>5</sup> Kenneth Stevenson describes how the *Sarum Use* was different to the Roman Rite:

The elaborate splendour of Sarum ceremonial, as carried out in the cathedral church in the centuries immediately preceding the Reformation, contrasted vividly with the comparative simplicity of the practice of the Roman Church. Three, five or even seven deacons and subdeacons, two or more thurifers, and three crucifers figured on solemnities; while two or four priests in copes (“rectores chori”) acted as cantors. There was the censuring of many altars, and even during the lesson at matins vested priests offered incense at the high altar. Processions were frequent, and those before High Mass on Sundays were especially magnificent. On the altar itself there were rarely more than two lights, but on feasts there were many others, either standing on the ground or suspended from the roof.<sup>6</sup>

Although *Sarum Use* was an adaptation of the Roman Rite, it offered a distinctive English contribution to the development of Eucharistic liturgy. It created a local counter-narrative of liturgical expression amidst the dominant foreign narrative from Rome. Nevertheless, the *Sarum Use* was in the language of Rome, namely Latin.

Prior to the prayer books of King Edward VI, all Eucharistic liturgies were modelled after the Roman Rite in Latin. There were, therefore, no celebrations of the Eucharist in the local vernacular. On the back of the Reformation, the prayer books of the English Church would come to be written in the local language for the first time. Thomas Cranmer was instrumental in this major turning point. Two principles would emerge that shape the Anglican Church to this day—the embrace of vernacular moments<sup>7</sup> and

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3. *Catholic Encyclopedia*. “Sarum Rite”, New Advent. <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10354c.htm> (accessed 22 September 2011).
  4. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, edited by F.L. Cross. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, 322.
  5. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 1200.
  6. Archdale King, *Liturgies of the Past*. London: Longmans Green, 1959, 316.
  7. The particular, contextual moments in place and time that are unique to a specific culture (i.e. contextualisation).

the pursuit of the *via media*.<sup>8</sup> This paper explores the development of these ideas and the ongoing goal of developing an Anglican liturgy that is faithful to the many theological and linguistic voices of the southern Africa context.

## THE VERNACULAR MOMENT AND THE *VIA MEDIA*

The original *Book of Common Prayer* owes its character to one man: Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1533 to 1556.<sup>9</sup> Cranmer was an outstanding scholar who made contacts with those involved with reform on the continent. Consequently, his theology was significantly influenced by Reformation ideas.<sup>10</sup>

While King Henry VIII instigated the creation of the Church of England with the political and religious break from Rome, it was under his son, the boy-king Edward VI, who succeeded Henry VIII on 28 January 1546, that religious reforms championed by Cranmer gained momentum. Cranmer is presumed to be the key contributor to the prayer books of 1549 and 1552 during the time of King Edward VI. The Windsor Commission (consisting of Cranmer, six Bishops and six Divines) merely ratified the extant text authored by Cranmer.<sup>11</sup> There were three critical events that gave rise to the production of the first English prayer book in 1549. Beckwith lists them as follows:<sup>12</sup>

- i. The 22nd of Edward VI's Injunctions in 1547 required that the epistle and gospel be read at High Mass in the local vernacular, English.
- ii. The Act against Revilers and for Receiving in Both Kinds in 1547 restored the cup to the laity in contrast to the practice in the Roman Catholic Church.
- iii. Following on from the above Act, The Order of the Communion was published on royal authority in 1548. The work is in English, and consists of an exhortation to be read prior to the day of celebration, followed by a series of nine devotions to be inserted into the Latin Mass immediately after the communion of the priest, so as to provide an edifying vernacular setting for the communion of the people, now in both kinds.

From this point on it did not take long for the publication of the first English prayer book. The *Act of Uniformity* prescribed that the new prayer book be instituted in churches no

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8. The theological middle way between extremes, whatever those extremes are at the time (i.e. compromise).

9. Gordon Jeanes, "Cranmer and Common Prayer." In *The Oxford Guide to the Book of Common Prayer*, edited by Hefling and Shattuck. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, 21.

10. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 428.

11. Lowther Clarke, *Liturgy and Worship, A Companion to the Prayer Books of the Anglican Communion*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1959, 154–155.

12. Roger Beckwith, "The Anglican Eucharist: From the Reformation to the Restoration." In *The Study of Liturgy: Revised Edition*, edited by Jones, Yarnold, Wainwright and Bradshaw. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1992, 310.

later than Whitsunday, 9 June 1549.<sup>13</sup> But the *1549 Prayer Book* was not well received by all. The process of liturgical revision continued and on 14 April 1552, parliament passed the second prayer book. The implementation of the *1552 Prayer Book* was delayed by an argument about kneeling to receive communion. Those from a Reformed perspective believed that kneeling could be construed as worshipping the sacrament. A rubric was inserted in the prayer book, which simply became known as “the black rubric”:

Whereas it is ordained in the *Book of Common Prayer*, in the administration of the Lord’s Supper, that communicants kneeling should receive the holy Communion: which thing being well meant, for a signification of the humble and grateful acknowledging of the benefits of Christ, given unto the worthy receiver, and to avoid the profanation and disorder, which about the holy Communion might else ensue: lest yet the same kneeling might be thought or taken otherwise, we do declare that it is not meant thereby, that any adoration is done, or ought to be done, either to the sacramental bread or wine there bodily received, or to any real and essential presence there being of Christ’s natural flesh and blood ...<sup>14</sup>

The black rubric makes clear how big an issue transubstantiation was at the time of Edward VI. Never again would the Reformed voice be heard so strongly in the liturgy of the Anglican prayer books. The prayer books of Edward VI brought radical changes to the status quo of liturgical practice, which Beckwith has summarised as follows:

Despite Cranmer’s conservative leanings and his policy of reform by stages, the Eucharist when it left his hands was extraordinarily different from the service as it still stood at the death of Henry VIII. In the five years between 1547 and 1552 he stamped his mind upon it. Following a programme planned in broad outline from the beginning, he reshaped the traditional material to give clear expression to his understanding of biblical teaching, and clothed this in a liturgical English that he both created and perfected. From then until the Restoration, and indeed until the twentieth century, the Anglican Eucharist was recognizably Cranmer’s service, and all revision took this as its starting-point.<sup>15</sup>

Perhaps the most radical and long-lasting change was the establishing of a prayer book in the local vernacular, in this instance, English. This conviction of worship in the language of the local people became and has remained a prominent principle down through the centuries.

Another important principle that arose was that of the *via media* or middle-way. The political struggles between the Roman papacy and the kings of England were not new, but the *Act of Supremacy* was to be a significant departure from previous struggles. Henry VIII was recognised as the supreme head of the Church of England in 1534. Henry VIII was succeeded by Edward VI in 1547, who continued to support the independence

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13. Clarke, *Liturgy and Worship*, 155.

14. *The Two Liturgies with other Documents set Forth by Authority in the Reign of King Edward VI*. Cambridge: The University Press, M.DCCC.XLIV, 283.

15. Beckwith, “The Anglican Eucharist”, 310.

of the Church of England. The period between 1534 and 1688 was marked by a series of religious and political upheavals in England. Mary I came to power after Edward VI and clamped down on the English Protestant movement. (Thomas Cranmer was burned at the stake in 1556.) She was succeeded by Elizabeth I in 1558. Elizabeth I, rather than adopting a singular Roman Catholic or Protestant position on the Eucharist, satisfied neither camp but allowed both those with Catholic and Protestant leanings to walk a much broader road together in the Church of England. This approach continued under James I and Charles I. Arising from the English Civil War (in which Charles I was executed in 1649), Oliver Cromwell presided over the significant persecution of Roman Catholics as Lord Protector of the English Commonwealth from 1653 to 1658. When the monarchy was restored in 1660, a religious *via media* was sought again to unite a nation. This form of liturgical unity was expressed in the *1662 Book of Common Prayer*, which remained largely unchanged until the twentieth century.

The year 1688 marked the year of the Glorious Revolution or Bloodless Revolution whereby James II, who had very strong papal sympathies, was removed from the throne and replaced by William of Orange and Mary II, the daughter of James II. The revolution permanently ended any hope for papal authority in England.

Yet in the midst of these turbulent years the principle of the *via media* gained ground. This principle ultimately guided the direction in which England, and then later, the global Anglican movement proceeded.

In conclusion, two key principles were formed in the turbulent beginnings of the Church of England and what became later known as the Anglican Church. First, the importance of liturgy being in the local vernacular, thus enabling people to worship in their local language. Second, church unity being maintained by holding together theological tensions in the *via media*.

“From England to under African skies, the Anglican Church in Southern Africa” had turbulent beginnings but the desire to remain true to these two principles remained intact.

## ENGLISH TIES UNDER AFRICAN SKIES

The story of the Anglican Church becomes increasingly more complex as the English Church took root in other contexts around the world with different languages and different cultures. In the province now called the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, the liturgy increasingly came to reflect the African context as liturgists engaged with vernacular moments and the *via media*.

1774 marks the first year in which a service was led from the *1662 Book of Common Prayer* in South Africa. The service was taken in a Dutch Reformed Church by a British chaplain for a handful of sailors. With the arrival of the 1820 settlers, the English-speaking population expanded dramatically and clergy were increasingly required to

care for the interests of English-speaking settlers.<sup>16</sup> Worship in accordance with the *1662 Book of Common Prayer* began in Natal as early as 1824 when the first English settlers established a trading post at the Bay of Natal.<sup>17</sup> The need for ministry in South Africa developed to the point where the appointment of a bishop became necessary. Therefore, in 1848, Robert Gray was consecrated the first Bishop of Cape Town. Gray wasted little time in consecrating bishops for Grahamstown (John Armstrong) and Natal (John William Colenso). The appointment of these two bishops ensured the development of a strong missionary emphasis among the indigenous people of South Africa, who had hitherto been mostly ignored by the English Church.

These early Anglicans seem to have taken very seriously article XXIV of the 39 Articles of Religion, which reads:

It is a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God, and the custom of the Primitive Church, to have public Prayer in the Church, or to minister the Sacraments in a tongue not understood of the people.<sup>18</sup>

To this end a committee began work on a Xhosa translation of the *1662 Book of Common Prayer* as early as 1861, which was published in 1864. This emphasis on translation included many of the other indigenous languages such as isiZulu on which Bishop Colenso did a great deal of work and issued his Zulu liturgy with Psalms and hymns in 1856 for use in the diocese of Natal.<sup>19</sup> Translation efforts were not limited to African languages alone. The first mission for Asians in the diocese of Maritzburg was opened in 1878 with a service in Tamil and later services were also conducted in Hindi.<sup>20</sup> The endeavour to translate liturgy into local languages was not a straightforward process and still remains a challenge in the revision process.

Beyond translating the existing prayer book into local languages, the very idea of a substantial revision of the English prayer book was a contested process. The issue of a revision of the prayer book was first noted in 1870, where article X of the provincial synod recommended that all matters of revision be referred to the bishops.<sup>21</sup> That synod introduced some minor amendments, which most significantly included permission to omit the long exhortation at the Eucharist. Three years earlier the first Lambeth

16. Cynthia Botha, "Southern Africa." In *The Oxford Guide to the Book of Common Prayer: A Worldwide Survey*, edited by Charles Hefling and Cynthia Shattuck. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, 194–195.

17. Ian Douglas Darby, "Anglican Worship in Victorian Natal." (Unpublished MA Thesis, University of Natal, 1978), 5.

18. *Constitutions and Canons of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa, Together with other Acts and Resolutions of Provincial Synod up to 2002*. Marshalltown: The Publishing Committee, CPSA, 2004, 144.

19. Darby, "Anglican Worship in Victorian Natal", 317.

20. Darby, "Anglican Worship in Victorian Natal", 318–319.

21. Botha, Cynthia. "Southern Africa." In *The Oxford Guide to the Book of Common Prayer: A Worldwide Survey*, edited by Hefling, Charles and Shattuck, Cynthia. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, 197.

Conference had been held in September 1867 as a response to the threat of disunity in the Anglican Church.<sup>22</sup> The second Lambeth Conference was called in 1878 and the best mode of maintaining union among the various churches of the Anglican Communion was still on the agenda.<sup>23</sup> The next conference was held in 1897 to coincide with the twelfth centenary of Augustine's landing in Kent.<sup>24</sup> But it was the conference in 1908 that made an important contribution to the development of liturgy by accepting a proposal for a revision of the prayer book.<sup>25</sup> The revision process continued in earnest after Lambeth 1908. The method of revision involved bishops delegating to subcommittees, whose revisions needed to be approved and ratified by separate sessions of provincial synod, a process that is still followed to this day.

In southern Africa the most provocative suggested revision came from two priests, Bazely and Gould, from Grahamstown. They suggested altering the Prayer of Consecration to include a series of thanksgivings for God's redeeming work but this struck a nerve in the very conservative revision process.<sup>26</sup> The bishops ignored their suggestion. However, in 1915, Francis Robinson Phelps, who was familiar with the work of Bazely and Gould, became bishop of Grahamstown. Under the impetus of Phelps, an experimental document was published in 1918 called *Proposed Form of the South African Liturgy*. This contained a revision of the consecration prayer and a different order of service after the prayers of the church.<sup>27</sup> The next publication of a revised liturgy was approved by the Episcopal Synod of 1919, under the title; *The Alternate Form of the Order for the Administration of the Holy Communion*.<sup>28</sup>

The First World War delayed the following Lambeth Conference until 1920. In light of the war, there was a renewed motivation for seeking ways for nations and peoples to coexist. The general theme of the 1930 Lambeth Conference was the faith and witness of the church as well as the ongoing question of the unity of the Anglican Communion. Because of the Second World War, the next Lambeth conference was only held in 1948. It was noted that the prayer book "has been and is, so strong a bond of unity throughout the whole Anglican Communion that great care must be taken to ensure that revisions of the Book shall be in accordance with the doctrine and accepted liturgical worship of the Anglican Communion."<sup>29</sup>

By 1952, when the next Lambeth conference was called, there was a renewed emphasis on the Eucharist and of alternative liturgies being developed in various countries. But with provinces of the Anglican Communion each going their own way

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22. William M. Jacob, *The Making of the Anglican Church Worldwide*, London: SPCK, 1997, 158–159.

23. Jacob, *The Making of the Anglican Church Worldwide*, 238.

24. Jacob, *The Making of the Anglican Church Worldwide*, 243.

25. Jacob, *The Making of the Anglican Church Worldwide*, 249.

26. Botha, "Southern Africa", 198.

27. Botha, "Southern Africa", 199.

28. Botha, "Southern Africa", 199.

29. Jacob, *The Making of the Anglican Church Worldwide*, 280–281

with the revision of the prayer book, the weakening of unifying force of the original *1662 Book of Common Prayer* was raised as a concern:

Loyalty [to the prayer book] may easily be overstated ... Now it seems clear that no prayer book ... can be kept unchanged for ever, as a safeguard of established doctrine ... Our unity exists because we are a federation of Provinces and Dioceses of the One Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, each being served and governed by a Catholic and Apostolic Ministry, and each believing the Catholic faith. These are the fundamental reasons for our unity.<sup>30</sup>

Not long after this Lambeth conference the *1954 South African Prayer Book* was published. It was virtually identical to the *The Alternate Form of the Order for the Administration of the Holy Communion (1919)*. The Eucharistic liturgy remained largely unchanged, except for one of the changes to the Prayer of Consecration.<sup>31</sup> The *1954 South African Prayer Book* was the first significant local version of the prayer book to be produced. But it became an obstacle to united worship for both vernacular and theological reasons that will be discussed shortly. A revision was therefore sought and a series of trial liturgies were released: *1966 Liturgy for Africa*, then *1969 Alternate Forms*, then *Liturgy 1975* and finally, *1989 Anglican Prayer Book*.

Renewed support or impetus for this revision process came on the back of the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II). Vatican II was opened on 11 October 1962 by Pope John XXIII and was closed on 8 December 1966 by Pope Paul VI. Vatican II is considered a landmark event in the life of the universal church precisely because one of the stated purposes, and to a degree one of the outcomes, was a more unified Christendom. Joseph Ratzinger observed that there was a major shift in authority with the “decentralization of liturgical decision making.”<sup>32</sup> The Bishops’ conferences were given legislative power to institute a variety of liturgical expressions. Yet the debates over the language of the liturgy were the most contentious.<sup>33</sup> Latin supporters struggled to accept an expression of the liturgy in local vernaculars. Many of these issues reflected a belated acceptance of the liturgical course set by the Reformers.<sup>34</sup> The ecumenical nature of Vatican II meant that liturgical renewal gathered momentum in the universal Church and fed back into the Anglican church and into the southern African context of liturgical revision. For Anglicans especially, with their insistence on the local vernacular and national expressions of Christianity, many of these concerns had been debated and begun to be addressed in the preceding centuries.

30. Jacob, *The Making of the Anglican Church Worldwide*, 282.

31. Botha, “Southern Africa”, 199.

32. Joseph Ratzinger, *Theological Highlights of Vatican II*. New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1966, 16.

33. Ratzinger, *Theological Highlights of Vatican II*, 17.

34. Jaroslav Pelican, “A Response.” In *The Documents of Vatican II*, With Notes and Commentaries by Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox Authorities, edited by Walter Abbott. Baltimore: America Press, 1966, 181.



## TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS OF THE 1989 ANGLICAN PRAYER BOOK

While there was an historical precedent on giving voice to local languages, the adoption or development in the South African context has not been straightforward by any means. From the *1662 Book of Common Prayer* being translated into isiXhosa in 1864, it would take until the late twentieth century to have African voices begin to shape a revised liturgy resulting in the *1989 Anglican Prayer Book*, and then only in a limited way because of insufficient participation.

### An indigenous voice

The *1954 South African Prayer Book* was the first significant local version of the prayer book to be produced. A widespread demand for the use of contemporary English had arisen in the context of the Second World War, but the revision failed to respond to this need. It was composed, instead, in seventeenth century English like the *1662 Book of Common Prayer*.<sup>35</sup> The principle of embracing the vernacular moment had not been applied even to the English language. This was rectified in the production of the *1989 Anglican Prayer Book*.

Yet a truly indigenous voice struggled to come to the fore in the revision process. The First Eucharistic Prayer in the *1989 Anglican Prayer Book* is referred to as an “indigenous product.”<sup>36</sup> Although the prayer was written under African skies, the composers themselves cannot be described as indigenous. The prayer was modelled on a Church of England draft for a revised liturgy called *Series Two*, which was composed in seventeenth Century English.<sup>37</sup> In the drawing up of Liturgy 1975 it was put into contemporary language and revised again for the *1989 Anglican Prayer Book*. The supplications were written in the context of apartheid and invoked a longing for the coming of the fullness of the kingdom of God. So in this respect the prayer reflected dynamics that were pertinent to southern Africa at the time.

A better example of an indigenous product in an African context is the Kenyan prayer book, *Our Modern Services*. The style of the Kenyan Eucharist service is structured around short, fast-moving, rhythmic phrases which encourages a high level of congregational involvement.<sup>38</sup> There is a great love of rhyme and alliteration in African literature and the Kenyan liturgy includes plenty of both.<sup>39</sup> But the Kenyan

35. Ronald Taylor, *He Took, Blessed, Broke and Gave: Some Notes on the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist, According to the Order of An Anglican Prayer Book 1989*. Cape Town: Pretext, 2005, 7.

36. Michael Nuttall, “The Province of Southern Africa.” In *The Oxford Guide to the Book of Common Prayer*, edited by Hefling and Shattuck. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, 320.

37. Taylor, *He Took, Blessed, Broke and Gave*, 59–60.

38. Grant LeMarqand, “The Anglican Church of Kenya.” In *The Oxford Guide to the Book of Common Prayer: A worldwide survey*, edited by C. Hefling and C. Shattuck, 288.

39. LeMarqand, “The Anglican Church of Kenya,” 288.

prayer book does default to the language and style of the *1662 Book of Common Prayer*, which would seem to be a step backwards in that respect. The *Missel Romain pour les Dioceses du Zaire* is among the best examples of a thoroughly enculturated liturgy.<sup>40</sup>

This African conceptual approach is lacking in the liturgical style and construct of the *1989 Anglican Prayer Book*. But it was not for want of trying. As with the current process of revision, there were very clear guidelines that governed the revision process for the *1989 Anglican Prayer Book*, which included encouraging broad lay participation and avoiding gender specific language.<sup>41</sup> Contributions and comments were invited from the countries making up the then Church of the Province of Southern Africa (now Anglican Church of Southern Africa) and from all language groups within the province.

The only contribution originally from another language group other than English was Form C of The Prayers.<sup>42</sup> This litany was first composed in isiXhosa by a group set up to make an indigenous contribution to *Liturgy 1975*, which was then adapted for the 1989 version but avoided gender specific language.<sup>43</sup> Prayer C for the intercessions in the Eucharist therefore has strong African nuances. The provincial liturgical committee openly appealed on several occasions for more such work but it was not forthcoming.

One reason for this lack of participation may have been the broader socio-political context. The previous revision process unfolded at the height of apartheid in South Africa. South Africa as a nation was undergoing significant internal conflict that spilled over into neighbouring countries also part of the same Anglican province. The concerns of the provincial liturgical committee about a lack of widespread participation find an interesting parallel in the Church Unity Commission (CUC) and are illustrative in this regard.

CUC was established in 1968 by a group of mainline churches, namely the Church of the Province of Southern Africa (now, the Anglican Church of Southern Africa), the United Congregational Church of South Africa, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa, the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa and the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa.<sup>44</sup> Their primary goal was full organic unity, a goal which has long since been abandoned. Tangible steps were taken towards the practice of intercommunion— allowing ministers from CUC member churches to preside interchangeably in the Anglican Church and admitting communicants from other CUC churches. In 1973 the CUC produced the *Declaration of Intention* which undertook “to seek agreement on a common form of ministry of Word and Sacraments, with due regard to those patterns of ministry and

40. Nathan Chase. “A History and Analysis of the Missel Romain pour les Dioceses du Zaire.” *Obsculta*, 6 (1): Article 14, 2013: 28–36.

41. Taylor, *He Took, Blessed, Broke and Gave*, 8.

42. *An Anglican Prayer Book 1989*, 113–115.

43. Taylor, *He Took, Blessed, Broke and Gave*, 31.

44. Graham Duncan, “The Church Unity Commission: South African Ecumenical Perspectives on Ministry (1986–1983).” *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, 37 (1) May 2011, (<http://uir.unisa.ac.za/handle/10500/4630>)

oversight to which God has already led us.” This was followed in 1974 with the *Declaration of Intention to Seek Unity*, in which it was agreed “to admit to the Lord’s table communicant members of all our churches as an immediate and visible sign of our common quest.” The Third Eucharist Prayer in the *1989 Anglican Prayer Book*—from the Roman Catholic Mass—was incorporated by the CUC for ecumenical use.<sup>45</sup>

Yet the ecumenical concerns of the CUC were received like the revision concerns of the provincial liturgical committee. A common charge heard at regional CUC conferences was: “There is no unity between black and white in the existing Churches. Unity between the races in the existing Churches is more important in the South African context than the union of separated denominations.”<sup>46</sup> Liturgical as well as ecumenical processes paled in significance against this geo-political backdrop and may well have resulted in non-participation and lack of ownership by indigenous peoples.

### The *via media* and political middle ground

At the start of the twentieth century there were intense ritual controversies in the Church of England that resulted in the appointment of a Royal Commission and a report that the provisions for worship were too narrow.<sup>47</sup> Liturgical scholars and ecclesiastical factions each argued their own agenda, which resulted in revisions of the English prayer book that were not Catholic enough for Anglo-Catholics and too Catholic for many Evangelicals.<sup>48</sup> The situation in southern Africa was little different.

The *1954 South African Prayer Book* quickly became controversial when it was published. There had been a reversal of Cranmer’s influence with, for example, the “anamnesis” being reintroduced to the Eucharistic prayers. This reflected the Anglican liturgical thinking that arose in the early 1900s that had traces of medieval “Western” ideas, sometimes resulting in the hardening of divisions between Catholic and Protestant thinking.<sup>49</sup> But this was notably not the way of the *via media*. Consequently, many evangelical congregations in southern Africa were unable to use it for doctrinal reasons. The prayer book became a theological obstacle to united worship. There were other shortcomings, not least, as discussed previously, that it had been composed in seventeenth century English like the *1662 Book of Common Prayer*.

*Alternative Forms* (1969) was authorised as an interim measure by the synod of bishops.<sup>50</sup> This revision reflected the renewed ecumenical outlook post-Vatican II and

45. Taylor, *He Took, Blessed, Broke and Gave*, 60.

46. CUC 1976. In Touch II (no. 8, September), in Duncan, “The Church Unity Commission”, 3.

47. Brian Spinks, “Anglicans and Dissenters.” In *The Oxford History of Christian Worship*, edited by G. Wainwright and K.B. Westerfield Tucker, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, 525.

48. Spinks, “Anglicans and Dissenters”, 525.

49. Taylor, *He Took, Blessed, Broke, and Gave*, 7.

50. *Proposed Alternative Forms of the Daily Offices of Morning and Evening Prayer and the Holy Communion*. Cape Town: The Liturgical Committee of South Africa, 1969. See Preface and Introduction.

a move away from the individualism of the Middle Ages.<sup>51</sup> The provincial liturgical committee that developed *Alternative Forms* (1969) was expanded to include bishops, priests, academics and laypeople, a much broader base of participation than before. However, it is important to note that black clergy and laypeople were very poorly represented on the provincial liturgical committee.<sup>52</sup>

The liturgical developments of *Alternative Forms* (1969) were refined in the production of *Liturgy 1975*. The mixture of archaic and contemporary English was replaced by contemporary (yet formal) English. The trend of using bold type for corporate parts of the liturgy was continued and carried over into the *1989 Anglican Prayer Book*.<sup>53</sup> Thus *Liturgy 1975* was an intentional prototype and forerunner to the *1989 Anglican Prayer Book*. A key decision was taken to hold true to the principle of the *via media*. Provision was therefore made in the *1989 Anglican Prayer Book* to accommodate differing theological positions, something that Michael Nuttall specifically comments on:

Particular care was taken to meet evangelical concerns in a province that is historically “high church” rather than “low church” in its main emphasis. Theological breadth—catholic, evangelical, charismatic and liberal—was aimed at in order to achieve balance and to accommodate these various convictions within the CPSA.<sup>54</sup>

A goal of the revision process was to produce a prayer book for Southern Africa that had theological breadth and could hold diverse theologies in tension. A conciliatory approach was demonstrated to the various ecclesiastical factions. These sensitivities and influences are most evident in the options given for Eucharistic prayers in the *1989 Anglican Prayer Book*.

Four Eucharistic prayers were given to accommodate a broad range of theological preferences. The First Eucharistic prayer, as was previously discussed, was considered an indigenous product. The Second Eucharistic prayer was taken directly from the Church of England’s Series III and was intended to represent the contribution of the historical mother church. The Third Eucharistic prayer was adapted from the modern Roman Catholic Mass. One subtle but very significant difference to the original Roman Catholic Mass were the words of institution said over the cup. The Roman prayer speaks of Christ’s blood being poured out for many. The Anglican prayer speaks of Christ’s blood being shed for all, the latter being a far more inclusive perspective. The Fourth Eucharist prayer was a reconstruction of the Hippolytan Mass used by the Anglican Church of Canada. The respective wording of the Hippolytan liturgy—“we offer you”

51. Leonard Kelly, “*Liturgy 1975*”—*A Critical Appraisal of the new Liturgical form used in the Church of the Province of South Africa*. University of South Africa, 1984, 44.

52. Leonard. “*Liturgy 1975*”, 48–58.

53. Kelly, “*Liturgy 1975*”, 43.

54. Nuttall, “The Province of Southern Africa”, 318.

and “we bring before you” in the Fourth Eucharistic Prayer superbly illustrates the *via media* approach. Nuttall explains that:

... the optional use of “bring before” avoids any notion of the sacramental offering of Christ in the Eucharist and makes it easier for people of evangelical persuasion to use this Eucharistic prayer.<sup>55</sup>

Evangelical congregations could choose not to use of the Third Eucharistic prayer to avoid Anglo-Catholic leanings. A fifth prayer, An Alternative Order for Celebrating the Eucharist, was a nod to charismatics and accommodated a freer form of worship that could include readings, music, dance and other art forms, comment, discussion and silence. The rubrics allow for hymns and, most significantly for charismatics, “acts of praise” to be included at the discretion of the priest. Accommodating minority evangelicals in a majority Anglo-Catholic province perhaps foreshadowed the conciliatory context of South African politics in the early 1990s in regard to political factions and political change. As South Africa transitioned from a white minority-ruled apartheid state to a black majority-ruled democratic state, the rights of all were carefully enshrined in the South African Constitution, whether a minority or majority group, and a *via media* sought in politics. The revision process of the *1989 Anglican Prayer Book*, while not entirely successful with respect to the principle of the vernacular, sought a more indigenous product and held true to the Anglican principle of the *via media*.

## TOWARDS AN AFRICAN DREAM

The *1989 Anglican Prayer Book* is now undergoing a revision again and the context has changed significantly. The iconic and first black archbishop, Desmond Tutu, who celebrated the production of the *1989 Anglican Prayer Book*, has since been succeeded by Njongonkulu Ndugane in 1996, who in turn was succeeded by Thabo Makgoba in 2007. The countries that make up the Anglican Church of Southern Africa are in a very different place to 30 years ago.

Consequently, a proposal was set before the Synod of Bishops in March 2013, outlining a proposed revision process that will take at least a decade to complete. The mandate was given for the process to be engaging and collaborative of clergy and laity, being as inclusive and representative as possible. The recent revision processes in the sister churches of the Anglican Communion would be referenced, while also noting lessons learnt from the revision processes of *Liturgy 75* and *1989 Anglican Prayer Book*.<sup>56</sup>

With its acceptance by the bishops, a new journey of revision was thus embarked upon. “Under Southern Skies—In an African voice” has become a rallying cry in the

55. Nuttall, “The Province of Southern Africa”, 319.

56. *Proposed Revision of the Anglican Prayer Book 1989*, Liturgical Committee, Synod of Bishops, March 2013.

approved liturgical consultative process. This slogan expresses the idea of liturgical inculturation—the integration of culture into worship.

## The challenge of liturgical inculturation

The writings of Anscar Chupungco have been used in articles circulated, and workshops run, throughout the Anglican Church of Southern Africa to explain the need in the current revision process for liturgical inculturation. Chupungco defines liturgical enculturation as “the process whereby pertinent elements of local culture are integrated into the worship of a local church.”<sup>57</sup> The purpose of liturgical inculturation is to enrich the local congregation’s spirituality by revealing Christ in their own language, rites, arts, and symbols.<sup>58</sup> This is not a new impetus since the General Preface of *An 1989 Anglican Prayer Book* hoped for the “continuing development of indigenous liturgy.”<sup>59</sup> Indeed, the Anglican insistence on worship in the local vernacular from the English Reformation laid the groundwork for liturgical inculturation.

Liturgical inculturation can be approached through creative assimilation and dynamic equivalence. Creative assimilation starts from what already exists in culture, while dynamic equivalence begins with what is already present in the liturgy. Creative assimilation is inclined to add new elements to Christian worship while dynamic equivalence attempts to communicate the message of an existing liturgical rite in a local cultural expression.<sup>60</sup>

A good example of creative assimilation can be identified in the baptismal rite of the Apostolic Tradition.<sup>61</sup> The author of the Apostolic Tradition invokes the ancient Roman practice of feeding an infant with milk and honey to ward off evil spirits and reinterprets it in light of God’s promise to lead the chosen people into a land flowing with milk and honey (Exodus 3:17).

Dynamic equivalence is a more complex approach and demands the interrogation of the underlying composites of a liturgical rite or *ordo*. The *ordo* of the Eucharist involves aspects of leadership, gathering, community, hospitality and leave taking. A good example of inculturation on the level of the *ordo* is a Filipino assembly who asked how the hospitality of the Eucharist might be expressed by their culture. Filipino hospitality dictates that the host eats last. Therefore, the common Western Anglican practice of the priest receiving communion first was subverted and the pattern developed of the priest receiving only after distributing communion to the assembly.<sup>62</sup> The community

57. Anscar Chupungco, *Liturgical Inculturation, The Future That Awaits Us*, [www.valpo.edu/ils/assets/](http://www.valpo.edu/ils/assets/)

58. Chupungco, *Liturgical Inculturation*, [www.valpo.edu/ils/assets/](http://www.valpo.edu/ils/assets/)

59. *An Anglican Prayer Book 1989*, 9–11.

60. Chupungco, *Liturgical Inculturation*, [www.valpo.edu/ils/assets/](http://www.valpo.edu/ils/assets/)

61. *The Apostolic Tradition*, translated by Burton Scott Easton, [www.rore-sanctifica.org](http://www.rore-sanctifica.org)

62. Anscar Chupungco, *Inculturation of Worship, Forty Years of Progress and Tradition*, [www.valpo.edu/ils/assets/pdfs/chupungco1.pdf](http://www.valpo.edu/ils/assets/pdfs/chupungco1.pdf)

reinforced this practice by referring to the saying of Christ that the first should be last and the servant of all (Matthew 20:26–28).

The temptation with the current revision process can be to simply exchange the Eurocentric images of Jesus for African artistic depictions, replacing ornate embroidered stoles with vibrant beaded vestments, substituting Imphepho for traditional incense or simply choosing iconic African images. Each of these ideas may be a good start to the process of inculturation but inculturation must explore the underlying patterns of the *ordo* in the liturgical rites. However, inculturation is not the only challenge and several others have already emerged that are shaping the revision process.

## The challenge of participation

The first phase of the revision was envisaged as data collection and was undertaken by means of consultations and a survey to help provide a “snap-shot” of the liturgical life and how congregations use the *1989 Anglican Prayer Book*. The desired outcome was to identify strengths and weaknesses of the existing prayer book. Each diocesan bishop was asked by the provincial liturgical committee to put forward the names of five diocesan link persons to complete a survey on behalf of their parishes. The idea was that these link persons would consist of both laity and clergy and represent the wide range of cultural and theological contexts within the Anglican province.

The initial proposal put to the bishops envisaged that all the diocesan link persons would be quickly put in place and come together at a first provincial liturgical consultation, scheduled for July 2014, to discuss the way forward and what would be expected from the delegates. However, the appointment of these representatives was delayed in some dioceses and the consultation was therefore postponed until June 2015. The scope of the consultation was also reduced because of budget constraints, so only one person from each diocese was involved at a provincial level instead of five. Cluster consultations—made up of representatives of several dioceses—were therefore arranged after the first provincial consultation.

This first phase of data collection has already brought to the fore some pertinent issues. The revision process needs more than mere episcopal consent to take place. Without being actively championed, or engaged with, by bishops to see that the process is constructively engaged with to the utmost in each diocese, the process can take on a life of its own. Bishops, by appointing certain people, have influenced the process from the outset. Given that one of the stated aims is broad participation, most of the names that the liturgical committee have received are clergy and very few are laity. Budget constraints are coming to the fore as a major limitation and also shape participation. (This will be discussed below.) But in an era of technology, there are creative ways to engage people, which did not exist when the prayer book was last revised, for example, using online surveys.

An online survey was conducted to engage parishes remotely. The survey consisted of 39 questions, many of which the respondents would find hard to answer if they were not the rector of a parish. The questions to establish demographics (profile of ages, gender, disabilities, unemployment, etc.) were complex, requiring access to a detailed parish data base that does not exist in many instances and an extensive use of percentage breakdowns in a society where mathematical literacy is a very real problem. Many of the answers, therefore, can only be a crude estimate. Even a seemingly straightforward question to establish whether the context of a parish is urban, suburban, RDP housing or rural could, given the size of many Anglican parishes, consist of at least two of these options. The survey has been completed but the results have not yet been fed back into the process and are not open to general scrutiny.

With the initial delay of the provincial consultation and the reality check of budget constraints, the process agreed to by the Synod of Bishops in 2013 is evolving somewhat differently. A second round of cluster consultations was initiated in 2017, with the intent to explore critiques on the experimental liturgy of *Celebrating Sunday* with an online survey planned to gauge how the new liturgy had been received. A second provincial consultation is set for mid-year 2018. Further cluster and provincial consultations will be considered further down the line.

The sensitive and significant issue of the availability of the revised prayer book in a multi-lingual province and the perceived dominance of English is already requiring careful thought. The tentative timeline would see a new revised prayer book developed and published (in all official languages of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa) by 2023. Until that day, considerable challenges are being faced by the provincial liturgical committee and all those drawn into the process of revision to realise a Southern African dream.

## The challenge of the budget constraints

Budget constraints are another major challenge to the revision process. Consultations at every level require clergy and laity to regularly travel to a central point by land, sea and air from all over Southern Africa. This is a costly exercise and the Anglican Church does not have adequate resources to host many high-level provincial consultations that would get a broad cross-section of bishops, clergy and laity in the same place to debate, discuss and discern the necessary revisions to the prayer book.

The expense of participation has been devolved to a diocesan level where many poorer dioceses simply cannot afford to send delegates to a cluster consultation, thus ruling themselves out of the process. The real agency of the revision process is, therefore, the provincial liturgical committee and within that a hands-on secretariat, who meet face-to-face to write the liturgy. This small body of people therefore has tremendous influence and risks undermining the participatory nature of the revision that was set as an explicit goal.



It is only natural that the revision of the prayer book must be set alongside other initiatives in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, for example, the re-visioning of church schools or social concerns (HIV/AIDS, poverty, orphans and vulnerable children) or environmental activism or the Growing the Church movement. On the education front, the Anglican Board of Education of Southern Africa (ABED) was constituted in early 2014 by Archbishop Thabo Makgoba to promote quality Christian education in southern Africa by supporting Anglican Church schools and facilitating the founding of new Anglican schools. This is not a new priority. Makgoba's predecessor, Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane, championed the Historic Schools Restoration Project that aims to transform historically significant and under-resourced schools in South Africa into sustainable and aspirational centres of cultural and educational excellence. It is worth noting though that the ABED initiative has emerged at a similar time to the revision process. Along with championing better schools, another high profile concern of the current archbishop is the environment. Makgoba appointed the Rev. Canon Rachel Mash as the Environmental Coordinator for the Anglican Church of Southern Africa on 2 November 2011. She is working to develop the Anglican Church's response to climate change and eco-justice as well as strengthening existing partnerships with the Southern African Faith Communities Environment Institute and the Anglican Communion's Environmental Network. Makgoba is also the patron of Hope Africa, the flagship social development programme of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa. Another movement gaining momentum is Growing the Church. Ndungane introduced "Growing the Church" as a new portfolio to the Synod of Bishops in 2003. He recognised the need for those involved in primary evangelism, church planting and other church growth initiatives to work synergistically together. Makgoba has continued to support this initiative. This snapshot shows the diverse initiatives the archbishop is championing at a provincial level, each of which requires resourcing. Given all this, meeting the challenge of budget constraints requires the Anglican church to know if, and motivate why, the prayer book is still of fundamental importance to the Anglican way. The risk is that if insufficient resources are set aside to revise the prayer book according to its stated aims, the process will be hampered, frustrated and possibly jeopardised. Nowhere is this more evident than with the question of language.

## The challenge of translation

Drafting and releasing liturgy in the English language is a sensitive matter. There is a long history and association of English dominance, of priority being given to an English voice in what was quite literally called the English Church. As was previously noted, translations into isiXhosa and isiZulu and even some Indian languages were quickly sought. However, this was done for and on behalf of these receiving peoples so that the missionary endeavour could be executed more effectively, rather than as an affirmation of the equality of these other voices. Local people were acted upon in a paternal manner.

The debate at a diocesan conference held in the diocese of Natal in April 1858 to decide on the composition of their first synod, is illustrative of this attitude. Archdeacon Charles Mackenzie, who had recently started a Zulu mission at Umhlali, was clearly a minority voice when he insisted on the equality of all people in Christ. A contemporary of Mackenzie's and author of his memoirs, Harvey Goodwin, wrote: "Did the equality in Christ of members of His church imply equal rights in all matters of church membership?"<sup>63</sup> Mackenzie held that the same privileges were "conferred on all men, whether black or white, by vital union with the Redeemer."<sup>64</sup> Mackenzie walked out from the conference when he perceived "his own presence at the Conference as useless, and indeed impossible, when that view appeared to be negated by the opinion of the majority."<sup>65</sup> The majority view is evident when Goodwin writes;

It seems to me that in the infancy of such mixed churches, the more advanced and more civilized portion must assume to some extent the guardianship of the weaker and less intelligent, looking forward to a time when such guardianship shall be no longer necessary, and can be safely abandoned. Yet even here, if he was in error, as I think he was, the error was a noble one.<sup>66</sup>

The question of governance is pertinent to the revision process, since church synods, and especially the endorsement of bishops, is always envisaged. For much of the history of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, bishops were supplied by England. During the apartheid years the balance of origins changed with more bishops having been born and raised in southern Africa. However, when the *1989 Anglican Prayer Book* was revised, most diocesan bishops were still mother-tongue English speakers, with a few notable exceptions such as Desmond Tutu, Alphaeus Zulu and Dinis Sengulane. Post-1994 has seen the complete transformation of the episcopate such that this new revision process takes place with diocesan bishops representing different southern African nations, many different cultures and different vernaculars. Mother-tongue English speakers are in the minority, yet sensitivity remains around the dominance of the English language. The dominance of English is hard to change even with the best of intentions, lessons learned from the previous process and the stated aims of the new process. A lack of people resources to voluntarily translate the experimental liturgy into multiple languages and a lack of financial resources to outsource and pay for translations into different languages have frustrated the provincial revision committee. Consequently, the release of an experimental liturgy arising from the revision process, *Celebrating Sunday*, was only in English and unfortunately, continues to reinforce the perceived dominance of the English language over other local vernaculars.

Another concern is not simply about the dominance of the English, but also the dominance of South Africa in the larger Anglican province. The weighting of dioceses

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63. Harvey Goodwin, *Memoir of Bishop Mackenzie*, Cambridge: Deighton, Bell and Co, 1864, 181.

64. Goodwin, *Memoir of Bishop Mackenzie*, 181.

65. Goodwin, *Memoir of Bishop Mackenzie*, 181.

66. Goodwin, *Memoir of Bishop Mackenzie*, 182.

and provincial structures still results in a strong bias towards South African voices being heard in comparison to those from Angola, Namibia, Lesotho, Swaziland and Mozambique. Lack of resources and the challenge of travel, impair participation. This has been an ongoing issue and one that remains to be taken seriously.

On one level, the conciliatory approach of the *1989 Anglican Prayer Book* was an important response to what was unfolding in the historical context of the 1970s and 1980s. Today, with increasing political polarisation, isolation of communities and xenophobic violence in South Africa, a continual liturgical reminder of our connectedness and interdependence as the Anglican Church of Southern Africa is needed. If brought to the fore of the liturgical story, it will be the touchstone of these times: a reminder that Eucharistic community transcends all boundaries, even nation state boundaries. This heightened sense of Eucharistic community is a form of non-violent resistance to the corrupted power-hierarchies of this world and a practice that anticipates a heavenly banquet where divisions have been finally overcome.<sup>67</sup> It stands as a regular reminder that those who are many are gathered into one body (1 Corinthians 10:16–17). The challenge, then, in this latest revision, is to emphasise being a Eucharistic community first, before being individual consumers of the divine and to express this in an African way.

## CONCLUSION

“Under Southern Skies—In an African voice” is the noble ideal at the heart of the present revision process in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa. This ideal has long been looked to throughout history. From the conflict arising from the English Reformation, the two principles of the vernacular moment and the *via media* remain pertinent and no less of a challenge.

Regarding the vernacular moment, although the Anglican Church of Southern Africa is no longer an English church, the dominance of English remains a contentious issue. Even before the revision process officially began, multiple languages and translations were flagged as an urgent matter for early and thoughtful discussion. But like the revision process before that produced the *1989 Anglican Prayer Book*, translation remains a frustratingly difficult issue and consequently the first experimental liturgy, *Celebrating Sunday*, was only made available in English. The intent remains that the final prayer book will be translated into all the major languages of South Africa, Namibia, Angola, Swaziland, Lesotho and Mozambique, but participation in the meantime is hampered by being largely in the English language.

Another linguistic concern, using language that is gender sensitive, is however being taken seriously. For example, the response to the greeting “The Lord is here”,

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67. Patrick McCormick, *A Banqueter's Guide to the All Night Soup Kitchen of the Kingdom of God*, Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2004, 64.

where previously “His Spirit is with us” is likely to become “God’s Spirit is with us.” These changes will be worked throughout future liturgies.

Regarding the *via media*, the construction and language of the experimental liturgy may resurrect theological conflicts arising from pre-1989 *Anglican Prayer Book* formulations of liturgies. A common universal or catholic theological voice and liturgical expression is being sought, shaped by liturgical trends in Europe and the United States of America, as well as through dialogue with the Anglican Church in New Zealand and Canada who are also revising their prayer books and face similar post-colonial challenges. The feel of the liturgy is, therefore, more Western rather than dynamically African, except where reference is made to African images. Pursuing a common catholic voice, rather than expressing a diversity of voices, has proved to be disastrous in the past, leading to the deepening of theological divisions around worship in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa. The theologically-loaded language of “offering” is again evident but unlike in the 1989 *Anglican Prayer Book*, no alternate wording is provided. One evangelical parish known to the authors had even blackened out any reference to offering in the 1989 *Anglican Prayer Book*. It remains to be seen if the theological concerns of a previous generation are the concerns of today and whether a single voice is sufficient in a church with multiple theological, cultural and linguistic voices.

So there is still a long way to go in the revision process. Consultation and feedback at many different levels are being sought. The new, revised prayer book remains to be finalised, hopefully standing as a grand testament to being birthed under southern skies and giving expression to a multiplicity of African Anglican voices. Anscar Chupungco has a final caution on changes brought about through the process of liturgical inculturation—does the local congregation accept them as an authentic contribution of culture to the enrichment of Christian worship?<sup>68</sup> This question is unanswered for now.

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