

## Interview with Ian Paton

IP=Ian Paton

DK=Drew Keane

DK: We invite you to simply begin by having you tell us the story of your involvement with liturgical revision in the Episcopal Church of Scotland.

IP: I came to serve in the Episcopal Church in 1990 from the Church of England. My family is Scottish, so I was coming home, basically. I was very quickly asked to join the liturgy committee, which is what we call our body that does liturgical revision. And I encountered people there like Gianfranco Tellini and Brian Hardy who had been involved for years and years in the revision of our liturgies. Oh, and Bishop Michael Hare Duke who was also very involved. And at that stage the main thing coming onto the agenda was Christian initiation. After the Toronto IALC meeting in I think 1992 or 3, I think. So as a result of that, that was the main thinking that was going on. The Eucharist had been revised and authorized, the 1982 liturgy, so that was no longer on the cards, but initiation was. So I began a fairly intensive involvement with that. Eventually, in 1994, I think, or 5, I became the convener, that's the chair of the commission. And I then steered our process of revision through with initiation and then into a new project on marriage liturgy, some inclusive language work, all the way through to 2015 when I ceased to be the chair. And I'm no longer even involved in the commission.

DK: Could you talk to us a little bit about the circumstances that necessitated liturgical change?

IP: I don't know whether people there will know much of the history of liturgy in this part of the Anglican Church, but Scotland has always had a slightly chaotic relationship with liturgy to do with our circumstances historically so that, for example, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the main liturgical use here would be the Church of England's Book of Common Prayer 1662. The Scottish liturgy and the heritage of all that from the 18<sup>th</sup> century having been a little bit buried and forgotten because of the Victorian fascination of being involved with all things English in Scotland. A fashion which of course is past its sell by date now. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century began the process of reviving interest in the Scottish liturgy and in all that heritage which culminated in the Scottish prayer book of 1912 and then 1929 and the story continues, is continuing now with the revisions that we're making to contemporary liturgies. So it's a long story, the history of revision in this church. It's over a hundred years old at least. If you go back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century it's arguably even longer than that. So in a sense, part of the reason was that we were just part of a stream of constant revisions to our liturgies. Another factor in that would be that, since 1929 when we produced the Scottish prayer book, there haven't been the resources to devote to creating another prayer book, so that we've focused on producing what we call wee booklets. A wee book is objects like this of which we now have a dozen or more with revised liturgies that have been produced since the 1960s. And we're still producing them. The latest is our pastoral offices for healing and reconciliation and so forth. And that process will continue. So we're constantly trying to keep up with ourselves, this church, and not having the time or the people in terms of full time support, for instance, to kind of devote to it. In any case, culturally we're not into an orderly approach to it. We tend to be rather creative and chaotic.

DK: So rather than a single prayer book you have a series of prayer books that are continuously being revised?

IP: We do, that's correct. So every few years the liturgy committee, instructed by the bishops and the General Synod works on another service to accompany the services in the Scottish prayer book 1929, which is the only prayer book we have. And so gradually working through those, and as I said, the latest one is pastoral offices which accompany those in the prayer book but in modern language. And indeed the theology is different, not just the language. So it's an ongoing project.

DK: Is the 1929—is that what you said?—prayer book in a sense still the authorized . . . ?

IP: Yes, the 1929 prayer book is authorized. But so are all the ones that have been authorized since then to accompany it. So we have not only the 1982 Scottish liturgy for the Eucharist, we also have the 1970, which was a kind of modest revision of the prayer book rite, and the 1929 Scottish prayer book rite. And indeed the 1662 English rite is also authorized here. So we have four forms.

DK: Which are readily available?

IP: They're all available and they're all free to use (enunciation unclear). Yeah.

DK: I wonder if you could talk to us about the process. How is liturgical revision managed, how is it funded, what kinds of authorization does it have to go through?

IP: Yeah. The General Synod and the bishops together are the key part of the process. When there is a perceived need for liturgical revision, the bishops and the General Synod through one of its boards, which is called the Faith and Order Board, so it's a large kind of committee of the General Synod, commission the liturgy committee to work on something, for instance, Christian initiation, which is where I came in. And the liturgy committee, which consists of people appointed by the General Synod because of their expertise then works on it. And the process of working on Christian initiation lasted about ten years. So that was doing basic theology, consulting with our provinces and other denominations and drafting material. It went through various experimental stages. So when the committees produced an experimental draft, the bishops have to authorize that form for experimental use, and that means use throughout the province. Any congregation can use them, any clergy can use these draft experimental rites. After a set period of time, usually four to five years as set by the bishops, the committee is tasked with gathering in responses to the experimental liturgy. And from those responses and their own thinking, producing a revised draft of the liturgy, which then goes to various . . . goes to the bishops, goes through the Faith and Order Board, maybe amended at those stages. And finally goes to the General Synod itself where we treat new liturgies as if they are canonical change, which means a new liturgical text must receive a majority support in the General Synod two years in succession and in between receive support in diocesan synods. So it's quite a high bar for liturgical change as you can imagine. And a long process. So as I said, initiation took ten years to get to the authorized services we now have for that.

DK: Excellent. Can you talk to us about how you navigated disagreements? I'm sure you ran into some disagreements on occasion.

IP: Oh, my heavens. Well, in some instances the liturgy committee would come up with a sort of theologically based critique or suggestion, a draft, maybe. What I think of is that in a very early version of initiation following some of the reformed thinking, because we are in a reformed church country, so we're influenced by that. The thinking was to put the rite of baptism before the profession of faith in the rite of baptism. Now, there's an argument about that, but that was the kind of proposal. To see whether that be acceptable, as a, at least as an option. To emphasize of course the grace, unconditional grace of God. But the bishops at that time completely dug their heels in and said, no, no way that's going to happen. And of course, that meant the committee had to simply accept that verdict. So that was one way of handling dissent. We just gave in. Perhaps a more creative example would be the whole business of admitting children and unconfirmed adults to Holy Communion, which was pretty well a result of the Lambeth conference of '68 and the Toronto IALC statement of the 1990s which had been, as a practice, been gathering pace in our province for, you know, twenty years before the 1990s. But there was and there still remains considerable dissent about it, but it is built into the Christian initiation rites. That this is a rite, baptism is a rite of initiation to communion. And gradually, since the 1990s and since 2006 when the rite was finally authorized in its present form, there have been lots of people, I suppose, beginning to agree with the practice. Partly because of pastoral experience of children and families and congregations, partly because of ecumenical reality and unconfirmed adults in other churches worshipping with us, and partly because things like the anomaly of our canons saying things like, in order to be a church warden or a member of a vestry you had to be confirmed, which ran completely counter to the theology that baptism is complete sacramental initiation. That has now been changed, so that our canon has now been brought into line with initiation rites. A little example of *lex orandi lex credendi*, how the rites led the way, and then gradually people would come round to that thinking. So that's another way of handling dissent, you just kind of wait patiently and allow pastoral and liturgical reality to have its effect. Now, do you mean dissent within the committee itself as well?

DK: We would be interested in that too, yes.

IP: Okay. My experience of that was that it was a totally healthy and respectful process of, you know, as I say, people who were nearly experts in their own right. Because of pastoral experience or because of scholarly experience, or both. Just trying out ideas I remember when we began to work on the marriage liturgy, for instance, we spent three days in conference, in residential conference, thinking about the theology of marriage. And even at that stage, of course, there was some discussion of same-sex marriage and what would be the implication for that. Though that wasn't even on the political horizon at that stage. Now, of course, it's been made legal throughout the United Kingdom, apart from Northern Ireland. And so we had a long theological discussion, I would say a lot of that kind of dissent could be kept kind of discussed, unpacked, looked at carefully, and compromises could be made at that stage and I remember it being a very positive process. One of the problems though is that, our liturgy committee, because we're such a small province, we tend to be not representative of the diversity of opinion. If you get a group of liturgists together and if you got like eight people who are qualified to help you create liturgies in the province like this, then the chances are that they are going to be of a certain kind of theological bend. So our liturgy committee is not intended to be representative, it's just

intended to be a working group. Where you get more dissent would be when it gets in the Faith and Order Board stage or amongst the bishops and of course in the General Synod stage. Then you get people dissenting from the kind of theology being expression or the shape of the liturgy because they're working from different theological backgrounds or different backgrounds of tradition. And those traditions are a result, I suppose, through the process I outlined. The whole process of reception of drafts, work revising drafts and coming to a kind of common mind. I have to say that the 1982 Eucharistic liturgy has never been used by evangelicals, very warmly, in this province. We have a few evangelicals here who are very strong of course in numbers, but they are few in congregations. And they don't like it because it doesn't focus on the atonement sufficiently. So they prefer to use English liturgies because they are often more based on the 1662 version of the atonement. So in that sense dissent has not been resolved at all. People simply opt out. They vote with their feet as we say here. That's a rather rambling answer to your question, but . . .

DK: So would a congregation be able to use, for instance, Common Worship from the Church of England in their service?

IP: Common Worship is not authorized for use here. But there's a pair of let-out clauses in our canons (enunciation unclear), which says that the bishop, the diocesan bishop can authorize things for particular use at a particular congregation at a particular time. So in a sense it could still be canonical if the bishop authorized it. In practice of course, a lot of clergy come to this province from England. Their training and their initial ministry has been in England and they are used to Common Worship. And they don't really understand that we are not simply part of the Church of England and have our own liturgies. Gradually they come to know that. But, so that's one reason why they use Common Worship. Another is that they prefer the style, as I said the theology that is reflected in it. Common Worship and our own liturgies are quite different in character. Kind of language employed, sometimes the theology employed are quite different, and that's deliberate. I mean, that's because Scotland's a different country so we have to have a different contextual theology.

DK: We're also curious about cultural concerns, cultural sensitivity and cultural differences and how those factor into your conversation.

IP: In one way, Scotland's not a very culturally diverse country. We don't have very large immigrant communities, for example. We have, a number of people have made their home here over the last few generations, but not in very large numbers. So there's not that kind of diversity, really. I suppose the diversity would be an intra-British diversity in the sense that there are many English people who have made Scotland their home, Irish people, Welsh people. And some European people, but not many. So the cultural diversity has to be things that go with that intra-British diversity. So Common Worship would be one, as we discussed it, one way that comes in. But another way is this whole business of Celtic spirituality. Now, all the scholarship on so-called Celtic spirituality, especially in the area of liturgy, you know, is very critical of that sort of move. I used to say to my students, if you want to experience Celtic liturgy, just let's go to a Wee Free congregation in the outer isles where everything is ultra-reformed and very severely protestant. That will be more effective of the Celtic spirit than nice, touchy feely nature based poetry. But nevertheless, there is a kind of sense of a Celtic heritage in our liturgies and some of the

language and some of the kind of poetic style of the liturgies does reflect that. One could be critical of it as a modern version of so-called Celtic spirituality, but there is some of it there. I suppose a more . . . another dimension of the cultural diversity is the rural-urban tension. In Scotland, as in all countries with rural-urban realities, I mean in the United States it's the same. Our rural areas are vast in size, geographically vast in size, very sparsely populated, with communities very distant from each other. Different kind of lifestyle, different kind of pressures on everyday life, so different context. And then of course, the urban, what we call the central belt, the Edinburgh Glasgow central belt, which is very heavily populated, very urban, very metropolitan, has completely different needs. And as no doubt you've discovered also in North America with it, serving both of those contexts is pretty hard. So there's . . . the cultural diversity there is very real. I can't think of any more to say on that. We're not a very culturally diverse country, and that's . . . yeah.

DK: This might not be as much of a factor for your province, but we're also curious about translation of liturgies and how that's handled and the difficulties involved in that.

IP: Okay. I think early all our liturgies, from the Scottish prayer book 1929 through to the, certainly the 1982 liturgy, probably, maybe the initiation rites by now, are translated into Gaelic. And that's done by a number of individuals, you know, who have that facility, who are fluent in Gaelic, in the Gaelic language. You may know that there are very, very few communities in Scotland where Gaelic is the first language. Very few. And that's one of the cultural problems of the western part of the country and the islands is the disappearance of Gaelic. And there are attempts of course by the government and others to kind of protect the Gaelic culture. And I suppose our translation into Gaelic is an attempt to support that move to protect Gaelic culture. But the reality is that most of our congregations in that part of the country where Gaelic has in the past been the first language, such as the western isles, are not native to those parts and then there are people who have come to live there from maybe England or America or the lowlands of Scotland. Not very many of them are native. So there are, I don't think, I could be wrong about this, but I don't think there are many native Gaelic speakers within our church. Most of them belong to the Wee Free, the free Presbyterian tradition, which is one of the protestant traditions, which has been a majority tradition in that part of the country for a long time.

DK: And is that the only—

IP: We do have Gaelic, what we don't have, as far as I know, is a version of our liturgies in the Scots language. And the Scots language has also undergone a revival culturally, that's more of a lowlands language. There's a debate of whether it's more of a dialect of English or whether it's a language, so it's a very respectable scholarly debate that goes on. In fact, we have not joined by providing translations of our liturgies so far.

DK: So is Gaelic the only language then that your liturgies are translated into?

IP: Yes, that's right. Though a few years ago—this is an interesting fact you might want as a footnote—a few years ago there was a reprint of the Scottish prayer book 1929. A number of congregations wanted to use it and we had to reprint it, and I think over fifty percent of the copies that were printed were sold in Japan. I don't quite know what on earth was going on there.

DK: Sounds like an interesting research project.

IP: Yeah.

DK: What about music and hymnal issues and the relationship between those and liturgical revision more generally?

IP: The question of music is one that hasn't been addressed very greatly. There is local creativity, of people producing, you know, settings for the Eucharist, for example. One of them we've been using—by a local composer in the west of Scotland—has been used at our General Synod liturgies now for some time, but there's no officially authorized or, you know, commended music. We don't have a hymnal of our own. Our congregations use the ones that they choose. Some of the English hymnals are popular because they're easy to obtain. So is the Church of Scotland's hymnal—the Presbyterian Church of Scotland's hymnal. But we don't have one of our own. There is of course in Scotland, as well as internationally, the Wild Goose worship tradition which comes from the Iona community. They call themselves the Wild Goose Worship Group. And they produce a lot of music including hymnody, modern lyrics to go with traditional folk tunes and these are fairly popular. And so the publications of the Wild Goose Group will be used fairly widely, I think, around the country. But they have a very distinctive kind of folksy, sometimes rather Celtic style. Which people like, some people like.

DK: My next questions are slightly more open-ended. In the ten years that you were involved with revising liturgy for Christian initiation, what were some of the big lessons or takeaways that really stick out for you?

IP: I spent a lot of time on theology. At every stage, I would say. As I said, we spent a lot of time thinking about not only the theology of our marriage, but we had done the same with initiation. And of course we participated in the broader discussions in IALC and WCC contacts, is all . . . but then also trying to do that as experimental drafts proceed through our process. So the bishops tried to do a lot off theological education, trying to encourage them to have a lot of space to read and discuss and think and argue, and engage with other people. And then likewise members of the Faith and Order Board or the General Synod itself and the congregations. So I suppose, what I'm saying is, liturgical formation, you can't spend too much time on liturgical formation. Before you get anyone new, draft texts, I think. So that people know where these texts come from, so they can think of better questions to ask, better critiques to make of what you're writing, of getting them to experiment with. That's the lesson I would certainly take away.

DK: When you have a liturgy in its experimental phase, how does liturgical formation accompany the distribution of that liturgy? Does it come with discussion guide essays, that sort of thing?

IP: Yeah. Christian initiation, both baptism and affirmation, as we called it—we called it Affirmation of Holy Baptism, commonly called confirmation. We produced a commentary in 1998 to go with the first experimental version of those services. The committee produced a commentary, a fairly extensive one, the 1982 Eucharistic liturgy had a commentary written by Gianfranco Tellini, who is a great liturgical scholar, of course, who is one of the authors of that, which is still widely used. So the first thing was, we wrote commentaries to try and encourage individuals and congregations to kind of study the text and understand where they were coming from, so that

was one thing. With initiation and marriage, with which I was closely involved, we set up a series of what we call road shows. So we invited dioceses to set up days in which clergy and lay people to opt to come and, if you like, look at, unpack, rehearse, critique the draft liturgies as they were being presented to them. And then hopefully that they would go back to their congregations and do the same thing within their congregations, that was our intention. I think there was some reasonable take-up of that process. Again because, we're a small enough country we could send four or five people from the committee to the north of Scotland and it would only take a couple of days, I mean, you know. I think those are the main ways in which we try to engage with that, with more or less success, I would say. Yeah.

DK: One of the other issues that we're concerned about, thinking about, is the question of physical books versus digital texts, and I wonder if that's factored into some of your conversations.

IP: I believe it is now. But when I was more closely involved it wasn't yet . . . hadn't become a factor. We had already set up a system whereby all our liturgies were available online, downloadable PDFs for everything. Freely available, that was a decision that was taken before my time, I think. But gradually, you know, as technology's improving, the website is now more interactive, it's easier to use, I think. But we haven't gone down the kind of pathway of what—there's a program in England called visual liturgy, which is a package, a software package that allows people to plan liturgy very easily using Common Worship liturgies, but you know, it's very easy for incumbent for example, to, with a few clicks create liturgy papers for a particular feast or something. We haven't gone down that pathway. There was an option, I think the publisher of that gave us an option to work, to produce one for our liturgical texts, but the expense outweighed the potential value, I think, with our small size. So, so far all we've done is put them online and encourage people to go download them, create their own liturgical sheets and so on. With that of course comes the risk that people change them to suit their . . . what they want to do. So, but I think I indicated at the beginning what is more chaotic about our liturgies. So I think our bishops would be quite tolerant of people making changes, but I wish they were less tolerant sometimes because some of the changes really are horrendous, but . . . even heretical, it might be, but there it is.

DK: Would you say then the norm is for a full service leaflet to be produced for every individual service?

IP: No, that's not all around the country, no. People do try and produce a piece of paper that has, I don't know, that week's headings, hymn numbers, the psalm for the week, references for the readings and so on. I think that's done pretty . . . fairly commonly, even in small congregations. But no, not print out the entire liturgy. No.

DK: So people are still using books in the pew?

IP: Yeah. People use these booklets quite commonly in congregations or they produce their own version of it with their local information, you know, included in the booklet. That happens. And they use of course a hymnal along with that. So it's quite common experience in an Episcopal Church here to be given as a worshipper, kind of a handful of books and bits of paper when you arrive. Some of the larger congregations, the cathedrals for example, will produce a single print off for each week with everything in it.

DK: That's pretty much the norm in the United States now, is the complete booklet.

IP: Okay. That wouldn't be the norm here. No. Partly because of expense, partly because of ecological concerns. Also, I suppose some congregations, particularly the more evangelicals, go for projection. They will project their texts onto screens. Although I'm not an evangelical, I'm quite in favor of that because I'm . . . I think screens have quite an advantage, but I think I'm a lone voice in the non-evangelical world about that.

DK: My last question is, is there any advice you would like to offer us or any questions you think we ought to have asked that we haven't asked?

IP: I suppose . . . I suspect we are quite an interesting province because we're so small. I mean, there are other small provinces in the communion, or provinces with few resources to devote to liturgical revision, or few material resources to devote to it. And that would be interesting to, when you've done your researches, find out what they say. But we're certainly interesting from the point of view that we're small and don't have many material resources for this. But whenever we kind of look at ourselves in various moments at synods and when the Primus writes his reflections, in the provincial nakazeen or something like that, we are aware that the liturgy in our liturgical traditions are really one of our huge strengths for mission. And in a country which is largely Presbyterian and Roman Catholic, we obviously have a great deal to offer from our liturgical tradition, our creative liturgical tradition, which is pastoral and scholarly at the same time and has all those Anglican dimensions. And I think we're increasingly aware of that. And even our evangelical congregations are becoming more liturgical in the sense that they are doing things like Holy Week and that kind of stuff is gaining in popularity. So that makes us interesting again because we're in this kind of reformed context where liturgy is being picked up by everybody now and seen as a tool for mission. And I'll be interested to see what we can contribute to that from our rather creative, chaotic past with this subject. And I know that, in terms of American religion, you are also a small denomination. You're not a . . . you're bigger than us in terms of proportion, I think. But not much bigger if I'm right.

DK: We're small, but we have the memory of having been one of the biggest and it's difficult to get over that memory.

IP: Oh, yeah, and the position of religion's changing in America anyway, I know that. So that's a really interesting time for you to be thinking about mission and liturgical renewal. But I think small is good and chaotic can be quite good as well. And you've had such a strong loyalty to your 1979 prayer book as you consider, you know, what to lay alongside it or instead of it. Perhaps I'd encourage a bit of creative chaos to see where you go.

DK: I've noticed, sort of, a number of parallels between my conversation with you and my conversation with Harold Miller of the Irish Church who also discussed the unique challenges of dealing in a small province with limited resources, with the issues of liturgical revision. And that interview is available if you want to watch it, it's online.

IP: Oh, I know Harold from IALC, and that's an interesting point. I think we're all dealing with it, aren't we? One of the liturgies that's come out of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century or maybe late 20<sup>th</sup> century, which I think we've all had to work on are something called the Service of the Word. Do you

have a version of that in North America? The Service of the Word, that's to say a non-Eucharistic liturgy.

DK: Like a non-Eucharistic prayer?

IP: Well, a non-Eucharistic liturgy that actually is a celebration and can be used as a main Sunday liturgy when there's no priest or no sacramental minister available that Sunday. We've had to produce that. Ireland had to produce it. But in Ireland and England, they realized that what they need to produce were very clearly authorized texts, you know, which could be built into a different shape service. And the creativity was about using the building blocks. Whereas in our case, we just want to create a very clear structure. People have a real sense of structure and could use suggested texts but also be very creative within the structure. Because we have a sense that's where our church really is. It's creative about structure. And needs guidelines in terms of text rather than anything fixed. So that's an interesting contrast, I think, with us and the others.

DK: That dynamic between framework and freedom is a very tricky one.

IP: Absolutely.

DK: Well, I appreciate very much your willingness to talk with us and all that you've shared and I know that you have another appointment to get to very soon, so that will be all.

IP: Okay. Thank you very much. I wish you all very well, please say hello to everyone in the American Commission.

DK: Well, Happy Easter to you and thank you again.

IP: Okay, good bye.

DK: Bye.