

Interview with the Rt. Rev. Dr. David Stancliffe of the Diocese of Salisbury

DS=Rt. Rev. Dr. David Stancliffe

DNK=Drew Nathaniel Keane

DNK: So what we had envisioned beginning with is simply you sharing the story of your involvement with recent liturgical revisions in the Church of England and then after that I can follow up with some questions. Does that sound all right?

DS: Yes, shall I just chatter at you?

DNK: That's perfect.

DS: Well, I was appointed to be a member of our liturgical commission in 1986 after I had been provost at Portsmouth, that is, the dean of our cathedral in Portsmouth for about four years, and I'd been, I think appointed to the commission because I was a hands-on person rather than an archaeologist. I had a reputation for putting stuff on, I'd done big kind of liturgies in public spaces and with moving from place to place with the West African bishops beginning, you know, with harps playing in the parish church in Portsmouth and going into the Civic Center and proclaiming the gospel to people and walking then to the cathedral and celebrating the Eucharist, that kind of thing. And I think it was known that I could do that and help people take part in it, so I got put on the commission.

Probably the first thing that I found myself doing for the commission was to write a piece on the diaconate, on the independent diaconate, and then I think probably the second thing I did for them was to edit. You may think that this is a joke. In the very early days of computers—or, not-computers on an old Amstrad with all those funny discs, I was editing up a book called *The Promise of His Glory* which was the kind of Christmas incarnation season equivalent of Lent, Holy Week, and Easter. I mean, that had been our services for Ash Wednesday and Lent and Holy Week and Eastertide that was I think published in 1986 or so, and then *The Promise of His Glory* as it was called the incarnation lot which was Advent, Christmas, Epiphany and Candlemas seasons with stuff about the baptism of the Lord as well came out in the late 1980s.

So that was what I got myself engaged in first, and second thing was that I drew together a group of people from different traditions in the church who wanted to do something about revising the Daily Office. I mean we hadn't had anything very much in England in the alternative services book of 1980. It was just a translation of Cranmer into sort of modern jargon and had done nothing about the structure of the Office or any exploration of what had gone on in the development of archaeological understanding and interest in the Daily Office, but people like George Guiver from the community of the resurrection had written stuff called *Company of Voices*. Do you know that? That's a book on the Daily Office and contrasting cathedral worship with the monastic tradition. I mean, by cathedral I don't mean, you know, what goes on in English cathedrals in the 20th century, I mean the early tradition of people assembling with their bishop in the 2nd, 3rd, 4th centuries, singing a lot of things they knew well by heart, not very much like the monastic thing of reciting the whole Psalter in a week, let alone in a month as Cranmer wanted, but only just choosing a few Psalms was suitable for the season of the year, you know,

in Lent you might do all the penitential Psalms round and round again. And in Advent there's the relating to the coming of the kingdom and in Ascensiontide psalms like 47.

So that was . . . it was a much more kind of repetitive pattern and I was interested by that but I was more interested by the fact that in England people were not obeying the injunction to the clergy, which is still a mandatory requirement for clergy here, to say morning and evening prayer every day. So why weren't they doing it and they thought it was boring or they came from a much more evangelical or Protestant tradition which read the Bible seriously but didn't actually do much praying out of it except, you know, this is me and my favorite bits that I like reading kind of way. So there's no sense of that being the prayer of the church. So I managed to convene a group of people together with brother Tristan, a Franciscan, who were themselves trying to revise an office book that would be loyal to the mainstream tradition but would give some more alternatives and things like that. So that's how we got going really with that. And I managed to draw a group of people from the quiet time tradition and the various evangelical patterns of Bible reading and we managed to come out with a common mind about, we should try and make the Daily Office in the Church of England something more seasonal, so that, you know, season emphases were respected, and that it would be Psalmody chosen largely by what was suitable for the season and that there should be canticles that were repeated daily in that season so that people might actually learn them off by heart. George Guiver had done a thing with a parish in where he's been a curate in Lancashire doing just a sheet with, you know, people reading things and people learning refrains and it was a parish in which people weren't very literate or, you know, given to large quantities of books with 43 different markers in and all that kind of stuff. So it was very different from the kind of Roman Office tradition.

Well, we got an agreement on that and published that in about 1992 under the heading of Celebrating Common Prayer, and the publisher thought that she'd take a risk and run five thousand copies, and actually within a few months we sold forty thousand, so it was clear that there was an appetite for this kind of thing. And again I suppose I was getting some kind of reputation for being able to draw people from different traditions in the church together, help them find a material that they could use in common.

So those are two bits of background, and I find myself being asked then by the Archbishop of York in the beginning of 1993 if I'd chair the commission in its next period, and I said no, I can't do that, you must have somebody who's in the House of Bishops, because if we're to be serious about getting this stuff through, you know, I must have the to and fro with the bishops. We have a hugely complicated system of authorizing anything that's an alternative to what's in the Book of Common Prayer. If you want to begin again with something like Lent, Holy Week, and Easter that's not in the Book of Common Prayer, that's fine, you can go ahead and do it and get the House of Bishops to commend it but if it's in any sense an alternative, it has to go through a large number of stages being commissioned by the House of Bishops, being laid before the Synod for a general notice, whether they like it or not and then being committed to various revision processes being brought back to the Synod up to two or three times and then finally a much more detailed public revision stage that's not done by the liturgical commission of the House of Bishops but that's done by the whole Synod in a committee and anybody can do that and the person from the liturgical commission doesn't chair that, somebody else does. So I was always trying to find people who knew what they were doing enough to be able to chair that. A

bishop or a dean or something, and somebody who could keep the balance between the scholars and the archaeologists and the practical putters-on and the people who didn't think that liturgy was of any use anyway because it only got in the way of them saying their prayers or having a good sing-along or whatever they wanted next.

So there was the entertainment model on one side and there was the kind of archaeological model in the other extreme, and I was trying to navigate a way between these, so I said no, you can't do that unless you remember the House of Bishops. Oh, he said, I wouldn't worry about that, I expect we can make sure you have access to the House. And then in a couple of months of course I got the letter saying would I go and be the bishop of Salisbury from the prime minister. Landed on my desk on April the 1st which in England is celebrated as All Fools Day when people play these practical jokes, and I assumed that this was one of my colleagues who managed to get hold of the right note paper from 10 Downing Street and things and was spoofing the thing. So I wasn't disposed to take it very seriously, and I ran my finger through the signature of the then prime minister, and lo and behold the ink actually did run, so I thought, perhaps it is genuine, and rang up the prime minister's secretary for appointments and discovered, yes, indeed it was and would I please go and all the rest of it.

So I asked him when I went to see him, I said, so what have the diocese of Salisbury asked for? And they said, somebody steeped in rural ministry who wouldn't have too many bright ideas, so I said, oh that's splendid, I can say no straightaway. Oh no, you can't do that, he said. This was all going on in Holy Week, for Heaven's sake, and so I was persuaded to ring up the Archbishop of Canterbury down in Canterbury for the week, and in the end was persuaded to go and do it. I really wanted to go and do another cathedral, I think, you know, the kind of skills I have and interests I have as a musician and as an artist and so forth are better suited to doing that, so I found myself lumbering around this large area of rural southern England, which where having a bright idea and seeing if anybody else would share it took about a year and a half to get off the ground. Whereas in Portsmouth, which is a very compact diocese, I could have a bright idea in church, try it on my colleagues at the end of the Eucharist, if they agreed, ring up the bishop of course at nine and the letters were going out by half past nine from the diocesan office which was just next door to the cathedral.

So that's how I came to be kind of engaged in it and given the responsibility of chairing this process. So that's the way of making appointments in those days in the Church of England, and I don't think it's become like this these days. And I thought to myself, if there's going to be any chance of a revision getting underway, which is both more elegant than the kind of pioneering book of the 1980s, the first thing we must do is not present it as an alternative. You know, *The Alternative Service Book* was the 1980 title, and I thought, you know, that's bound to push people in a polarized direction, and indeed a number of the members of the commission of that stage had been very clear, that you know, modern was right and old was wrong. And as a result, with a lot of powerful and influential people rather liking a lot the old, you know, we headed into a collision really, and people took up polarized positions.

So the first thing to do was to . . . how to devise a strategy not for that lot to happen. And that's when we hit upon the title of *Common Worship*, borrowing "common" from the Book of Common Prayer and "worship" because it was going to be more about how you did things or at

least that was going to be as much important about which words you use. I mean, I myself am one of those who think that the crucial heart of worship is what you do and the way in which you do it, not what words you say and whether they're authorized or, you know, can bear all the different theological quirks of people who believe wildly different things but yet have to worship off the same order. So although I spent a good deal of my time doing the wordsmith kind of stuff, I think a lot of what I was doing in the 1990s and 2000s was trying to hold together people of very different theological and linguistic habits by taking them both to something deeper below that, which is about what the worship of the church is for, what it does, and how it might be celebrated.

So I mean, my own formation in the whole business of worship was to think that I didn't really notice very much all the time, I wasn't asking theological questions, saying, you know, is this the right way of expressing the doctrine of the atonement in this particular relative clause in the Eucharistic prayer number 42. It was much more about, you know, how do we do this in a way that feels like the worship of the Church in England. And you know, I'd been very much at home in Benedictine abbeys in France, with a rather kind of restrained but elegant way of doing the things. I'd been seeing the Gregorian chant in those kind of places for some time, but I'd also been part of English Cathedral tradition, I'd been in the Cathedral of England since 1977, and admired the literary and musical and linguistic kind of tradition that we stood in. But then, you know, the celebrating the Eucharist or celebrating a baptism or whatever, it was very important it seemed to me to engage the communities that were there and not just put on something that they looked at but they weren't drawn into. And if as a priest in that community were presiding at the celebration, it needed to be clear to them that they were the celebrants and that you won't be the one that presided but that they would be standing with you around the altar or whatever.

So how you do these things was as much a concern of mine as I think just what the words said. Though, you know, our system when people of the General Synod in the church are looking for any possible reason to think that you might be, you know, wildly off key in some extreme theological way or another, you know, is that a dangerous Calvinistic looking bit creeping in or you know, what is something that quotes one of the Orthodox traditions got to do with us, and you know, a bit of George Herbert with an elusive line with ringing some bells with George Herbert. Well, I mean that's much too highbrow, isn't it, you know, that's not what they speak in Sunderland.

So we've got all that kind of stuff. And probably more so than you, you know, with the way that the Episcopal Church in the States has become, you know, a much more kind of generic sort of body of worshippers. You know, it's not kind of like the parish church in the locality here, where you have to cope with all sorts of people. The Episcopal churches that I know well in the United States have got people driving in their motor cars to them. Well, many parishes in England, people like that don't come to church, don't have motor cars. So you know, that's not the kind of income bracket class way of education, and I think probably in that sense, you know, the Roman Catholic church in America is much more in my experience akin to what the Church of England is doing here, it's kind of operating in all sorts of places. So some of these things won't be applying to you in kind of the way that they were to us.

I think second what I was really concerned to do was to make sure that, because there are no kind of doctrinal formularies in the Church of England, except for very kind of sketchy things referred to when you install a priest, you know, according to the formulas of the Church of England, the doctrines of the church are expressed in the Book of Common Prayer in the order of the bishops, priests, and deacons, and in the scriptures. So you know, there aren't kind of articles which actually laid out how the doctrine's expressed, and if you want to know what somebody in the Church of England believes, we would say, well, come to church with us. Because it is the liturgical formula that hold the thing. So the theology of baptism that's expressed in the baptism rites tell you what you need to know about how the Church of England believes people belong and are embedded in the divine life and how do they continue in it and are fed by it, that's what the theology of the Eucharist will tell you. How do they relate what they believe to what they do, those sort of missional aspects, all that is or should be there in the *missio* parts of the rites and in what we do, what about, what we believe about Holy Orders, that should be there in the ordination rites.

So I took on the job really because I was concerned that the Church of England, at a time when people were pulling in wildly different directions and some in no liturgical directions all, wouldn't be left with any doctrinal basis for what we believed or how we believed it, so that's a prime concern, I think, of mine to ensure. So it's the question about how you do things, it's the question about the doctrinal basis for it all, because that's what's expressed in the worship, and even it's a concern for unity in the church and how you hold very different points of view together. And it was those kind of rather more theological questions that persuaded me to say yes to charring the commission. Which I did, and which we then got all this stuff through the Synod and it's what is now authorized synodiae without any kind of end term to it unless anybody wants to go through this huge great thing all over again. I think that's it for at least my lifetime. At least, I hope. That doesn't mean that people don't find that some of the ways in which we did things for a total of 15 or 20 years ago don't want some revision or some supplementary material or what, that's certainly all there.

I think the next thing that we decided at a very early stage in it all was that we would . . . this wasn't going to go into a single book. The idea that you know, Cranmer had, that out of all the medieval books you could just put one simple book down, and everything you really needed was going to be there. Not all, I mean that we were already aware by the early 1990s of the difference that stuff online and on the web was going to make. But people like me who really wouldn't have minded two hoots if we hadn't published a single book but had just published a series of references to what was held essentially, and of course that's turned out in a way to be the case and that's what lots of people do. They quarry around amongst the authorized material and make up for the Eucharist on Sundays, you know, series of little pamphlets with options for different seasons of the year, though it was not everybody who does that among the parish priests of the Church of England has the slightest clue about what they might put into any bit. So you know, I remember having to explain to people why on the whole it was better not to sing the Gloria in Lent or you know, might it be nice to save it for Eastertide. Oh, that's a very novel idea, you know, so all this kind of stuff is part of course how people get an education. And actually the people who design the software and help people to make choices needed to be

pretty savvy in producing tunes to help educate people and not just say, you know, there's a complete open table of anything, you can have anything.

It's like people who go to a buffet supper, you know, and put a little bit of absolutely everything on their plate together. And because they can't bear to miss out on anything, and that of course is the way in which the liturgies, when you prune them and order them and cut them into different shapes, and alternatives and perhaps for seasonal shapes, people mess them up in the General Synod, because they add back in all the bits that they like, regardless of whether they fit or not with that strand. But the hope is of doing the liturgy publicly in the Synod was of course my major chance to educate the Church of England in how to do it. And not just in, you know, all right so we'll publish 40,000 of everything and you can pick your own and it doesn't matter, you know, if you wear orange socks with a pea green suit, and under a black shirt and think that you're beautifully dressed. Because all these kind of ways of helping people make choices and helping material develop in response to people's commonly expressed needs does require a big educational exercise, and I mean, I'm not skilled in doing that at all, I've got what the technique says [enunciation unclear], and you all know perfectly well how I make this machinery work. And there are people who can do that, but working with them was clearly going to be very important. I mean, now the Daily Office is published every day on an online feed, you know, and you can press the thing that just says Wednesday the 13th of September, or whatever today is, Wednesday the 15th of March, and up come all the things with occasional options but essential, correct, you know, all the right things that we all wanted them to do is steered in that direction. Well, that's a great advance.

Another great advance of course was working with other churches on a common calendar and lectionary. I mean other Western churches, you know, the Eastern churches clearly had a completely different scheme of doing things. But the Western churches now almost entirely use the same lectionary. And the same Gospels, and you know, the revised common lectionary basis which was . . . which is drawn up with the Roman Catholic three-year lectionary, and allows us at any rate to be reading the same Gospels in church pretty well all round the world in the English-speaking world without . . . and that's whether you're a Methodist or an Episcopalian or whether you're a Catholic or whether you're the Churches of Christ or a Lutheran or whatnot, I mean it's pretty common. And there was a lot of behind the scenes work to try and make that happen. And for example in the last three years I published three volumes of, you now, a picture, a track of music on streamed and a poem or piece of prose and a little thing with the Gospel of the day for each of the years A, B, and C, which is used by Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Anglicans alike and one of things that's I think been oddest to me about watching the Episcopal Church in the States is the way that, you know, for so long you have gone on with the lectionary that virtually nobody else in the world is using, so one of things that I do hope that you will do is not just because I want to sell you my book, which is only available as an e-book, you know, you can't do it, you can't put all those pictures and music and things into an actual beautiful bound volume where there would be 500 pounds a volume. If you did because of the costs of, you know, buying the tracks from the records, but streaming it does make it all possible.

So you know, you can put things together, and that's all about of course how you enlarge people's imagination rather than just get them to understand the correct things all the time.

And I suppose that would be a particularly Anglican contribution to want to make. You know, can Germans read and understand the poetry of George Herbert? Well, of course, a lot of them can on one level, but I mean, can Americans understand George Herbert because of that extraordinary sense of it belonging in, you know, English countryside and English social life and having that kind of elusive quality where an image rings a lot of bells in a rather oblique way. And you know, how local in that sense is local for the way we do our worship and how does that play into the questions of universality, which are very important for us to hold together because you need to be able to recognize each other and be in communion with each other across the world and not in any, you know, within denominational areas too, but increasingly of course across all those boundaries. So the lectionary and how we understand it, and how we are prepared to be oblique in our references and explanations about the lectionary seems to me to be a really important thing that revisers need to be aware of these days.

And then there's the question of performance. And I think most interestingly in that I'm interested in questions like, you know, why don't people sing any longer. I mean they do in certain traditions sing. Indeed, they don't do much else but sing. But mostly those are the traditions that sing the successors of the kind of folk song stuff, and there are some very good exponents of this in people like John Bell from the Iona community, and there have been people in the sort of post folk idiom in the States in particular produce some good songwriting. When I was working a lot with the church in Sudan, they had some wonderful hymn writers, but they still wanted really to use the music from hymns, ancient to modern, completely unrevised. You know, there's a curious kind of culture clash because that's where the religion we know they've learnt it from, from CMS missionaries in the 1890s who are very conservative and were very, very strict about what you should and shouldn't do, and so they all know that you know, you must go to communion fasting and things like that, but it hadn't made much impact on the culture where you know, having more than one wife was part of the indigenous culture. So whereas the people make a whole lot of fuss in that culture about same-sex relations, they are quite happy to go on having three or four wives.

Well, these are the kind of cultural clashes that go across the boundaries in our own communities and indeed worldwide as well, and I think you know, at least being aware of that and of the fact that we have to try and work with chloroform communities because they don't all exist now safely in Africa or in, you know, other parts of the distant British Empire, but are actually happening in our own communities and around now. And so the questions about enculturation and the pace at which enculturation moves seem to me to be very important. I mean, my mate in the Roman Catholic Church, the liturgist Keith Pecklers in Rome, has written very interesting things on--he's an East Coast Jesuit, but he's been teaching liturgy at the Greg for thirty years or so--and he's written very interestingly on enculturation, I think, and they're probably ahead of us, I think, in those kind of worlds and understanding what it means, even though of course the English is every now and then even further bowdlerized by some ex-Anglicans in Rome who are trying to turn back all those particular clocks. I mean, that's what happened to the hijacking of the last set of the Roman Missal translations, but I think they show it [enunciation unclear] besides being impatient with those after only five or six years, so that may get sorted.

So what about the register of language, and the questions then about, you know, the inclusiveness of language when you have to say God and God's self instead of himself all the time because, you know, otherwise somebody's going to be offended. Well, you are going to offend people in this because it will not be far enough for some and too far for others. I think all the languages can only go as far as most people have got at the time. I don't think you can do something that's going to work for all time. We may want to change our language entirely. I mean, like the Jewish tradition of writing G-d because you're not allowed to pronounce the divine name. Well, I mean, we may be in one of those bizarre things where we have a . . . you know, a little spoof in the machinery when we come to pronouncing the divine name because nobody quite likes to say it or indeed spell it or write it because somebody will always say, but it's not feminine enough, or others, it's too feminine, and all the rest of it. So there are areas I think that are proper to explore in the future in this kind of way. And one can't expect to get it right forever. But yet you don't need to have to revise the whole of the liturgical work just because you want to, you know, go a step further in terms of inclusive language.

That was an issue for us, but not a major one I think because we were doing our best to be sensible, you know, and take the right step forward. I don't know what you use as your major biblical texts, but although, I mean, we use the new RSV, the NRSV, as our basic text in the Anglicized rather than the Americanized form. When I'm, for example, making a text of a Gospel, of a canticle, from the Old Testament, from Isaiah or somewhere, I very often go back to the RSV, simply because it sounds to most people used to hearing the authorized version, the King James Version, for certain lections at well-known feasts like the prologue of the Gospel of John or the resurrection appearances to Mary Magdalene in the garden or something, or the passion narratives, you know, these are still the language of resonance for them, even though if they try and read some Paul from the King James Version they haven't the faintest idea what's going on as nor indeed often do I. I mean, that terrible business wasn't Paul arguing with himself all the time that makes him so difficult to follow. Because he says one thing and so corrects it to himself and then shifts it around, which sometimes means that the best way of reading some Paul is to put the whole thing into dialogue voices and add two voices reading it. I mean, that kind of thing is always worth putting in an appendix, showing people how to do a few things like that.

And I think anybody who says we must have it all out at one Gospel translation, you know, you can understand why somebody who's going to use a Gospel book, for example, or just a series of lectionary passages will do that. But I think people have to use the sense about where the congregations are comfortable and find the resonance is going on. Certainly, in this part of the world you can't trust any longer the people who come to church to have heard any of the Bible before. Certainly, they won't know it at school and therefore have questions about versions. Probably are going to be less complicated in the future than they were in the past, but still there are iconic bits where people will, you know, like the chariot wheels, so they drove them heavily. I mean, we don't talk about it in those kind of registers these days but I read that bit out of Exodus 14 the other day in the NRSV, and so they didn't even say so that they got bogged down, which is what the vernacular for it is these days. It had something rather curiously artificial sounding that wasn't anything you know, any kind of language, but it was a kind of, you know, fit for use in church bit of language. Well, I think that's a bit peculiar, really.

So those are some of the things behind what we did and why we did it. The doctrinal holding of things in the church and that's particularly why I spent a lot of time on baptism and ordination. I mean, in baptism because in the 1980s there had been a great move to say, you know, what we need to do in baptizing is to make sure that, we will baptize infants, but only really on sufferance, but the real thing is baptizing adults. And now if we baptize infants we must make sure that the parents are all signed up and believing and all the rest of it. I mean, you have to ask the parents all these questions, which is a classic way in for a parish priest of a very particular evangelical persuasion who didn't believe in infant baptism to say, but the parents don't understand what they're doing, therefore I can't baptize the child. And we got a lot of people doing that and, you know, it came to be a thought in the Church of England that if you asked if you could have your baby baptized or if you could be married or whatever in church, the answer, you didn't bother to ask after it because you knew the answer would be no. So the idea that, you know, that the answer should always be yes because you trusted God to look after it rather than you to make the right decision, had to be undone really in baptism rites because what had happened was that the Church of England was becoming more and more of a kind of closed sect, I mean, with very high walls and a very firm doctrinal kind of core. And if you weren't signing up to it you should stay out. Which wasn't historically at any rate where the church would have been, and certainly wasn't where the baptismal formularies were originally.

So I had to undo quite a lot of what was done in the 1980s without saying I don't want people to believe and without saying I don't want to take adult converts to the faith very seriously on their own terms. But certainly what had happened meant that the ecclesiology had shifted, really. The Church of England, instead of being a church with a firm center and very fluid boundaries had become a church with very rigid boundaries. And what does that do for the mission of the church? You know, it made it very hard for people to step towards the church and be accompanied in a journey, you know, all the time we were being asked to make, usually before any rite started, a decision. So rites didn't any longer rehearse a kind of pathway with a moment of decision towards the end maybe rather than the very start, but have become narrow, more narrow and exclusive. And you can see why that happened and it went with a kind of Pauline theology of Romans 6, you know, if you're going to die with Christ and also rise with him, well that means death to the old and so you've stepped from darkness to light and the things are very sharp and you know whether you are in the dark or the light and you can make a decision and step out of the boundaries.

And I remember a debate on the catechumenate, really in ways of people coming to faith in the General Synod. And I suppose sort of 1989, 1990 when Gavin Reid was in charge of the London mission, and him following me in a debate in the General Synod and saying, I entirely agree with Bishop Stancliffe, because my experience of people coming to faith is that it takes on average about four years. And that was very different from the, you know, 1980s ASB picture of people coming to faith and then preferably at, you know, dawn on Easter day, you put them under the water and they popped out again and they were all bright and shiny and new and never looked back again. Well, it's not like that. And that won't do for people who are growing in the faith, and it's as bad as all that stuff uncovered by Dominic Serra. Do you know Dominic? Dominic has an article in . . . it's a very good article, about 1993, I thought, in the journal of worship, which is a shortened version of his thesis. Dominic explored the new Roman Catholic rites of Holy Week

and in particular the blessing of the waters at the Easter Vigil and found it in 1952 when they were revising it, you know, they had to prune away a lot of the gothic excesses and all the rest of it and had gone back to the basic, basic text which was the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Except that it wasn't. You know, when he actually did the homework on the stuff, that wasn't actually the lowest level archaeologically of the prayer. The basic level of the prayer was a Johannine new creation. Old creation, new creation, and a rebirth out of the . . . from the old to the new, and onto which the Romans 6 stuff had been grafted at a later stage. So actually, the Romans had gone into it with a preconceived notion of what must be old, because we all know that this is Easter and therefore darkness to light is the great thing, but it isn't. Not in the early tradition. And this business about how you reinvent and superimpose on what you're listening to or discovering your own pre-convictions without making sure they are properly founded is wonderfully exposed by Dominic in this thing. Look—I ought to send you a link to the article because it's great fun to read. And he's an East Coast, what is he, a Cistercian or something, I can't remember what it was, he belongs to one of those complicated Roman Catholic orders with lots of initials after it. But he's a great character. But that's just about baptism, you know, how do you uncover beneath baptism what the modern trends are doing and we all want people to believe more, and therefore in the 1980s it was thought that one good way to do a bit to really put the screws on parents and godparents at a baptism service. It had exactly the reverse effect that was desired. The result being that you know, lots of people stopped coming to church to ask for baptism because they knew that the answer they were going to get was no, you're not good enough, which is how people would have heard it, to be baptized.

The Christians are the people who think that they're good you know, and everybody else isn't, so what are the ecclesiological implications of any text to revise of any prayer you write de novo, you know, how do you stop it not only being wet and all sweet Jesus stuff, and all that kind of, you know, mindless gaff. And at the same time, make sure that it does do the right ecclesiological theological things that you're needing it to do at that stage in the liturgy. Because you know, liturgies take people, or ought to take people, through various stages of theological development if people are to feel welcomed, comfortable, and accompanied, challenged by Scripture, reshaped, given an idea of what things could be in a homily and intercession, and then given an opportunity of jumping across like the spark in the Eucharistic action. Do we expect people who come to church to actually go away from it different? You know, how do we get those two great fundamental things that the church is always trying to do for people in Christ to actually work in the liturgy.

God in Christ does two things for his people: first, he shares their life, then he changes it. That's the pattern that God gives to his church and asks them to embody in their life and continue. First, God shares our life, for which the long, grand Latin word is incarnation, but beware of long, grand Latin words, you know, because you think that, because you've got a word for it, it exists. But of course, what it is is a pattern of changing and developing relationships and you can't pin it down like the marriage, you know, the marriage was invented by lawyers in order to find a moment when property changed hands or the woman changed hands and belonged to different man than the one she belonged to before. That's why you have a thing called the marriage, but actually you and I know that there's no such thing. There are only people in a degree of relationship with one another, and unless the relationship is nurtured, continues,

strengthened, goes through its periods of risk and challenge and growth and where is there going to be growth without development and change, you know. How does the marriage as a nice, neat square box with an abstract word in Latin form, which makes you think that there's something that actually exists, when of course it isn't, it's only a question of how the people are relating. So the adverbs are the important thing and not the substantives. Well, that's probably enough. If your lot want to digest any more than that I'd be very surprised.

DNK: Your last observation about Latin words reminded me of a quick story. One of my teachers was Julia Griffin whose father is Jasper Griffin at Oxford, and she went to the dentist once as a young girl, and the dentist said well, the problem is you have edentia. And her parents responded, well, that's not an answer, that doesn't tell us what's wrong or what caused it, you know, that's just the Latin way of saying that she lacks a tooth. That's exactly what you're talking about there.

DS: Yeah, it is. And I mean, I think that the questions about the language you do your thinking in are really much more important than we give people credit. I mean, all my conversations with my Roman Catholic brothers and sisters, many of them are bedeviled by the fact that they were brought up, if not consciously, but to think in Latin. Which is a wonderful language for precision in temporal affairs. When I was a schoolboy I used to have to write a Latin version of an English bit of prose every week for years and years and years. And in Greek and verses and all the rest of it, too. But Latin prose is that they would give you a great chunk of Gibbon and old speak by Winston Churchill or whatever it was and turn it into Latin prose. And the art was to turn this great paragraph into just one sentence with everything being made . . . you had to decide after reading through several times what was going to be the main verb and then everything else was going to be a subordinate clause, either a temporal one, when something had happened, or an ordinate, something should happen, or conditions, if the conditions were right, if the sun had been shining, or if it's not been, you know. So you put in all the conditional things and you put in all the consequential things, and you try and link all these things together in a logical order with the right kind of clause substructures, and in the end, right at the end of the sentence you put your main verb and it locks the whole thing into place, likely. And that's of course the language and the discipline that trains (A) lawyers, I mean attorneys, because they get paid their megabucks for asking an innocent question to somebody. Can you remember, Mrs. Jones, when you came in on that Wednesday night with your shoes all wet? And she doesn't realize where it's going, but 43 points down the line, he knows that that admission that the shoes were wet will have led her to say this and that and the other will have pinned her to the one whose galosh's imprint was found on the doorstep of the newly laid concrete. So, you know, that's how an attorney makes their money, but so is of course the people who write detective stories, you know, the Agatha Christies of this world, they haven't got that all worked out too, and that's what they use in order to give us a good read.

So it's deeply embedded in the kind of consciousness of the Western world that we should treat our kind of records of what goes on and happened like that. But of course, it's deeply damaging to the much more kind of, I mean, in Russian or in Greek you can't do it like that because there are different shades of words for, you know, how events take place, and the way in which, and not just the logical time order in which it plays, but the sort of things they wear. They kept on being like this and the different ways you can look at the future. The sun will shine tomorrow,

the sun bloody well will shine tomorrow. I would awfully like it if the sun were to shine tomorrow. I do hope that it might, it might just might shine. You know, there are hundreds of different shades of ways of saying that, but in Greek or Russian that's all contained in the verb. And so, much more weight is put on the verbs and adverbs there for the way in which things happen, the way in which life progresses. Enough, enough, enough.

DNK: Well, I have about four minutes for one last question, and you really did cover everything in my list as we went down, so I know you must have studied it before our conversation. Do you have any piece of advice that you would like to give us in four minutes?

DS: Advice? I don't have any advice for you at all. I mean, well, I do have one bit of advice.

DNK: I know you do.

DS: And that is always, always to try singing the texts. You know, sing along stuff. I tried to get an evangelical church who was very polite but bored when I did the liturgy with them, and then we got to it where they all sang and they all came alive. I said, for Heaven's sake, you know, I'll do the actions, you turn these words into one of those songs. You sing them and get engaged in it, and I'll make the sign of a cross over the font or what, pour oil around or something like that, you know. Let's get these things locked into each other. But I never persuaded them to do it. It's very interesting. I mean, I always sing the Eucharistic prayer completely, simply because you need a register to heighten the thing. Some people will be happier speaking it with, you know, gong beats and things like that in it. But I think whatever you do you have to think, how do we get this bit of prose, this bit of text, to work. And it's not just about lining it out, it's about seeing where the lines and stresses go. I'd give all that you write to, you know, a real top-notch poet and say, you know, what doesn't work. Just write something for us that does. So I hope that, you know, it's not left just earnest past us [enunciation unclear] worthy theologians and good archaeologists to write.

DNK: Include the poets. Very good advice.

DS: The poets. But sing it! You know, because that'll give . . . you don't have to have lots of poets at every meeting. You can send the stuff to them in the mean time, but you have to go and say, come on, let's speak this together, will it work? You know. Does it feel like, the Cranmer things about that Mrs. Cranmer always added in, you know, peace and justice. You know the duplicates things, because so much of what we write, we read. And we think, oh, this makes sense. But actually in church, you hear it, and if it all goes too quick, people don't take it in. So that's one little bit of advice, I think. What else?

DNK: I think that'll do us, I said I would keep you for an hour and we've taken an hour of your time now and we're very grateful to you for speaking with us and for sharing your story.

DS: Yes, well that's good. Okay.

DNK: All right. It was a pleasure to meet you and chat with you.

DS: Nice to see you. Farewell, you two!

DNK: Thank you very much. Bye.

DS: Bye.