

Interview with the Rt. Rev. Harold Miller, bishop of Down and Dromore in Northern Ireland

BHM=Bishop Harold Miller

DK=Drew Keane

BHM: Good morning, everyone.

SCLM: Good morning.

DK: Wonderful. And we can hear you very well. Everyone in the room can.

BHM: Good. Okay, now you tell me how you want to handle this. Do you want to go through the questions or just enter into general conversation first of all and then see which questions you want answered?

DK: Why don't we start with you just making a general statement and briefly sharing your story with us, and then we'll dive into the questions that you haven't addressed after that.

BHM: Yes. Okay. I think the first thing I'd want to tell you a little bit about is the . . . what the Church of Ireland is, the kind of essence of the kind of church that it is and therefore the kind of church for which we're providing worship materials. So the Church of Ireland was, at one time, part of the United Church of England and Ireland, and it was an established church, so therefore all the old, ancient buildings that go back to the time of Saint Patrick and his followers for example are all in the hands of the Church of Ireland, but it was an established church which never had the majority of the population. Perhaps the only one in the world, and there may be others but I can't think of them. Where it was only a minority church, but nevertheless the establishment. And it was disestablished from the Church of England, and separated from the Church of England in 1869 to 1870. So it then, from that point onwards, was able to run its own affairs, and it ran its own affairs really through the medium of a General Synod, and the General Synod would be a group of one-third clergy, two-thirds lay people on the House of Representatives, so there are two lay people for every clergy person at the House of Bishops, which functions to a degree separately but actually meets with the House of Representatives. Liturgical revision for the Church of Ireland was part of its early instinct because it was disestablished at the height of ritualism in the Church of England, and it did not wish to go in that direction, at least generally didn't wish to go in that direction, so it established itself very much as probably a low church to middle-of-the-road kind of Protestant church. Even now in the Republic of Ireland when you say "Protestant" people assume that what you're talking about is Church of Ireland. The others would have been called dissenters in the other churches. So the Church of Ireland now is a church which is only fifteen percent of the population in northern Ireland, which as you probably know is part of the United Kingdom, and about three percent or three and a half percent of the population in the Republic. Today, it would have a slightly different profile in the sense that quite a lot of the churches in the Republic would probably be more defined as kind of liberal or Catholic, and the largest proportion of the population which is in the north would probably be defined as low church evangelical. That's not true across the board, but it's the kind of context in which we're working. And tell me when you get tired of listening to me by the way, just wave and I'll stop. In 1870, one of the first tasks of the new General Synod was actually to revise the Book of Common Prayer. It had to be revised in a new context, but it was also revised

through many agreements and disagreements, some of which were to do with the traditional issues of, as it were, “high church” and “low church.” So there were many debates, for example, on things like baptismal regeneration and what that meant and how it should be expressed or not expressed liturgically. There were debates on prayers for the departed, eucharistic doctrine, and so forth. And the other thing that you probably need to know from a perspective of listening from the States is that the roots therefore of the Church of Ireland were in the tradition of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, not the 1637 Book of Common Prayer, which you inherited of course through Scotland. So those were the liturgical roots that were there, though interestingly, legally the 1552 Book of Common Prayer was never legal currency in Ireland, just through a political quirk, but our roots were 1662. The Church of England was not able to change the 1662 Book of Common Prayer because it was part of . . . it was law. And they still aren’t able to change the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, unless by an act of Parliament. But once the Church of Ireland was disestablished in 1869, 70, it was free to amend the Book of Common Prayer in any ways that it wished, and it only did in the most minor of ways, really, and created a new Book of Common Prayer in 1878. Now, what happened then was that another set of changes came in in 1926, and they came in because—largely because—of the political rearrangements in the country. So you couldn’t pray “oh God, save the king” anymore because they didn’t have the king anymore in the southern part of the country. You had to create rubrics and responses and prayers that were suitable for a new political environment. And that happened in, really in 1926. And then other services were added in the 1930s like compline and things like that. So really, we had a Book of Common Prayer that was incrementally changing, but in a very small kind of way through its history from 1878 onwards. So it wasn’t unusual for the General Synod to be dealing with prayer book revision. That had been part of its instinct and part of its job from the very beginning. Because the prayer book revision was so sensitive, with the prayer book being the carrier of doctrine, along with the 39 articles obviously, but because it was so sensitive, the legislation for prayer book revision in the Synod was more like doctrinal legislation. We have a General Synod every year. That’s a very different thing to your situation with the General Convention. So what has to happen in our context is that a resolution is brought to the Synod in the first year, which lays before the Synod the text, basically, that it’s intended to bring as a bill the next year, it’s a parliamentary procedure that we have. So the resolution goes one year and people can speak to that, comment on it, they can send in potential resolutions, they send them in through the liturgical advisory committee. It decides whether to back the resolution, the amendments rather, or not, and then comes back to the next year’s Synod with a bill, and then people go through stages of a bill or three stages of the bill. So it’s scrutinized in a lot of different ways before it actually becomes legislation. And that’s the process that had to happen with the revision of the Book of Common Prayer. For all the services it had to go as a resolution, with potential amendments, it had to go through three stages as a bill and it comes out the other end probably very highly scrutinized, though sometimes there are things that are missed as well. So that will probably be different to your legislation. Now, the other aspect of the revision that you had shown an interest in was hymnody and the church hymnal. Because the Episcopal Church and the Church of Ireland are similar in that they have authorized hymnody. The Church of England for example, does not have authorized hymnody. Everybody just creates their own hymn books for different strands in the church. Nor does I think the Episcopal Church in Scotland or the Church of Wales have

authorized hymnody, but we do. It doesn't mean we're tied to that, but it provides a base point. And since the, really since the middle of the 19th century when hymnody was taking off in churches, we have had church hymnals, and the one that we have at the moment is the fifth edition of the church hymnal, and the general process through which, or the stages through which that goes usually is that you have a church hymnal in use for a number of years. In the case of the present one, it was thirty years, it was written in . . . and there's one before the last one rather written in 1960. In 1990 a supplement was brought out that was only intended to be for a short period to test the waters, and that supplement made people aware of the large amount of new hymn writing that had taken place since the 1970s, and people began to say, "well, our hymn book has become a bit dated, it's a bit kind of classical rather than popular, as it were, and we need to look at that and change it." So in the year 2000 by a separate process through a hymn book committee . . . but in the year 2000 the fifth edition of the church hymnal came out, and now just this past year a supplement to that called *Thanks & Praise*, in 2015, was brought out with two hundred and seventeen, I think it is, 2 to 27 items, and to supplement it, and it's already feeling as though we're going through the same general process. Again, a hymn book that provides the foundation, other new writing trying to guess which of those things will become classics, and which are only temporary. And where we needed to supplement the material in the church hymnal. And then that probably will lead to another process in ten or so years' time where people will say, "Well, let's update it all again." So those are the two strands. The liturgical material has been very, very much checked and supervised because of its doctrinal component and its doctrinal role in Anglicanism of the Book of Common Prayer. The hymn book material this time was not as much scrutinized, people were given a list of hymns and printouts, as it were, to look at to keep in check. It was anything . . . nothing untoward in it, or whatever, they were happy with it. It's not as highly scrutinized as the liturgical material. Are you bored listening to me, or do you want me to continue?

SCLM: Not at all.

DK: Not at all. I want you to keep going.

Okay. Okay, I'll keep on then and you can ask questions. Okay, so, I've been involved in both these processes. The church hymnal was developed by a hymnal committee set up by the General Synod in the year 1993 I think it is, and came in to be in the year 2000. It was a separate strand. And you ask why did it come first, just because it came to people's attention first, that it was necessary, it wasn't really planned, and came out in the year 2000. The prayer book process, that was not done through the liturgical advisory committee, but the supplement was, because it was remitted to the liturgical advisory committee by the Synod, the role of keeping an eye on the development of hymnody as well, rather than keeping in place the hymn book committee. So this hymn book took about seven years to come to fruition. I don't know how long it takes in the States, but that's the length of time it took here and the Book of Common Prayer, 2004, also took about seven years to come to fruition. And I would plan to tell you about the background of it, if that would be okay. Is that okay? Yeah? Okay, so the liturgical advisory committee was set up I think in 1965 at the time of liturgical renewal. Up to 1965 in my own experience in the Church of Ireland, and I think it was a ubiquitous experience. You didn't have anything used in worship and churches except what was in the Book of Common Prayer which is essentially the revised version of 1662. Nobody really thought of doing anything different to that. The liturgical

renewal movement had not really permeated here, or indeed England either, until that time. And at the same kind of time in England and Ireland there became particular interest in liturgical renewal. And I suppose most of that initially was related to eucharistic renewal. The structure of the eucharistic rite and Dom Gregory Dix and all the rest of it in the shape of the liturgy and realizing that the rite that we had in 1662 was, let's put it like this, slightly quirky in comparison to ecumenical rites. So in 1965, the liturgical advisory committee was set up. It was set up with a careful balance of different views and churchmanships and things like that. And the first thing that it issued was in 1969, a new rite for holy communion, which was in a booklet. I think this happened in many places. And the rite for communion at that time was what I would call a revised standard version rite, because God was still called "thee" and "thou," and people were called "you." And the shape of it changed and the peace was introduced into it, but it was introduced as a kind of Cheshire cat piece, if you know what I mean by that. You didn't shake anybody's hands, you just said the words, "the peace of the Lord be always with you," and then went on with things as though nobody else was there, really. And so, that was in 1969. Then in 1972, another eucharistic rite came out which was all "you" form liturgy and developed things like sharing the peace, things like that. And then there was another important development in 1969, actually, it was the first service in "you" language in relation to God in the Church of Ireland was a service for baptism. And at that time that meant infant baptism largely, and that was issued as the first service that ever had God addressed as "you." It became extremely popular. In fact, the old baptismal service was hardly seen from that point onwards because the new one was so much more accessible for people. And then, out of all of that came eventually in 1984, the alternative prayer book. I don't know if you have a copy of that there, but the alternative prayer book was modeled to some degree on the Church of England *Alternative Services Book*, which had come out four years earlier. And I think if I'm being honest about the division in the Church of Ireland, what we have generally done is taken liturgical revision in the Church of England just across the water and slightly conservatized it. That has been the model we have had for most of our liturgical revision. To take the hard work that's done by the much larger kind of, you know, mother church almost, even though we go back longer with Saint Patrick, don't forget that. But that we've taken the work done by the larger church with all its expert liturgists and theologians and modified it and simplified it generally, and that was what happened in the alternative prayer book. And the alternative prayer book was essentially a Sunday service book. It didn't really provide for things like marriages and ordinations and occasional services and things like that, funerals. It was essentially a Sunday service book which had within it a rather strange lectionary that came from the joint liturgical group in England with themes in it at that time and it was received in a variety of different ways. It was very popular where it was popular and very unpopular where they didn't like it. So that you had the alternative service book, a prayer book with "you" form services, everything new structures and so forth for Sunday services, but there would have been people for example in this part of the country which would have seen it as a kind of Romanizing trend and did not accept it very warmly at all. In fact, the Orange Order would have denounced it and all sorts of things as being absolutely the wrong direction. So what the alternative prayer book did in 1984 was created a certain amount of division in the Church. You became known as a church that used the Book of Common Prayer or the alternative prayer book. And the move then, well, and an alternative, occasional services book was brought out as well to cover the other liturgies, and the move in

the middle of the 1990s was to coordinate these things. To bring them together under one cover so that they would be, in the kind of way in the way that you have in your church, so that there would be one book with traditional and contemporary language services. That was the move. There were very interesting times in the Synod. We, the idea was mooted first of all of a Sunday service book, and the Sunday service book failed to get through the Synod, I think, because people wanted everything together under one cover. So that the direction we began to take in 1997 when the liturgical advisory committee was asked to progress towards a revised book of common prayer, the direction we took then was really a direction of unifying things, so our idea was really that everything in the book should be useable by everybody. We didn't want contentious things that were going to divide the church in the book, we wanted a unifying Book of Common Prayer, and we also chose the model, again, as you have chosen up to this point, we also chose the model of a book that wasn't just there for Sundays, but a book that was there to form people's spirituality and to form their lives in the way in which the old Book of Common Prayer hopefully did by taking the key things, the key points in life, and providing lectionaries for every day of the year and so forth. It was meant to be a book that was there, that held together the devotional, the public, the private and so forth, under one cover in a simple kind of way. The Church of England at that point went entirely in the opposite direction and produced *Common Worship*, which has got so many books that you'd be hard-pressed to find what you're looking for. And they said at the time of the Reformation at the time of Cranmer with the old pie, that it sometimes took people longer to find the service than actually to pray it, and the Church of England has generally gone in that direction, and we have generally gone in the other direction and that probably is one of the questions that you'll be asking yourselves. So is that, do you want to fire some other questions just to stop me talking for a little while?

DK: That was very helpful, thank you. I'm looking through our questions now . . . let's see the ones we haven't touched on yet . . . we do have some questions about the process in terms of managing the work and actually managing liturgies, drafting the work and revising drafts and all of that.

BHM: Yes. Yes, okay. Well, let me come at it again slightly taking a step back. Two of the things that were givens for us were essentially the work of the International Anglican Liturgical Commission which had been working on the Lima document, BEM, on baptism, Eucharist, and ministry, and indeed maybe I've met some of you at some of those liturgical commissions. And those commissions set out, essentially, a shape for liturgy, a shape for the baptismal liturgy, a shape for the Eucharistic liturgy, a shape for ordination liturgies. So from a very early stage, we took the essential principles of the liturgical commissions, for example it meant that the Eucharistic liturgy was essentially the gathering of God's people, followed by the proclaiming and receiving of the Word, followed by the prayers of the people, followed by celebrating at the Lord's table, followed by going out to serve the Lord and so forth. So we took those as starting points for the key liturgies, and people would have gone away, different groups of people would have gone away and done a first draft, and the first draft was then mulled over. I did the first draft of the ordination liturgies, and I think it would be true to say, unless anyone can correct me, that the Church of Ireland was the first church in the communion to take the IALC structure and apply it in a reasonably thoroughgoing way to ordination liturgy. So, and again with baptismal liturgy, we tried to ensure that baptism is baptism is baptism, and that there is not one doctrine for infant baptism and another doctrine for adult baptism or whatever. So that was one starting point that

was a given. The second starting point that was a given was the ELC texts. So that the liturgical advisory committee made a call that the English Language Consultation texts, liturgical consultation texts, that were at that stage had become more ecumenically agreed, though that has all fallen apart since, that we would basically use, in what is an ecumenical environment, we would use the same words for the Sanctus as the Catholic Church was using at that time and so forth which were the ecumenically agreed texts. And in most cases that was applied in a thoroughgoing way. In one case it wasn't, in at least one case, and the one case was the Lord's Prayer, where the Synod of the Church of Ireland could not cope with being saved from the time of trial and were concerned to be, like the Church of England, led into temptation or not, so that was voted down at the General Synod, even with all the best theological arguments in the world they wanted to keep with the Church of England on that one and did. So those were two starting points and then obviously the list of services that had to go into the book were gathered together. The Psalter was taken from the new Church of England, the common worship Psalter. Before that we had been using the David Frost Psalter and it was not very popular, so we decided on one Psalter for both traditional and contemporary services, though people can still, if they wish, use the old one. But this was so resonant of the words in the old one anyway that people probably haven't noticed a great deal of difference and it seems to have worked well. And then the other decision that had been made in the 1990s was to run with the revised common lectionary. So those things were all in place. Groups went away, devised services, and we had lots of overnight meetings and so forth, and then we kind of worked on them and presented them as resolutions and bills to the Synod and they were, you know, some battles and things like that, but not major ones. With the hymn book—I don't know, are you interested in the hymn book as well?

DK: Yes.

BHM: Yeah? With the hymn book, we did first of all, we surveyed the church to find out which hymns in the old book were being used and which hymns were not being used. That was a starting point for us, it wasn't an end point, because some of the ones that weren't being used we might have considered classical hymns that needed to be in any good hymnody even if they're only rarely used. And then we surveyed people for hymns that they would like to see in the hymn book, and very interestingly the two top ones, if I remember correctly, were, symbolized the Gulf that grown up. The first, the most popular one was "The Old Rugged Cross." And the second most popular one was "Because He Lives I Can Face Tomorrow." I think what it said was that we had had a very classic kind of hymnody, which people liked but it didn't always have the hymns that really were in people's memories or touched their hearts, and the church had somehow, a distinction had grown up. So we looked at those, and we eventually worked through a process of whittling things down and agreeing what other new text would go in. We had an issue which you have had as well in North America, and it's the issue of whether to use in hymnody and in liturgy what would have been called inclusive language. And our decision in the hymn book was that if a hymn was very fixed in people's memory, we would generally not change it. But if it wasn't, if it was in the second category of well-known but not absolutely fixed—can you hear me? I'm not moving on the screen all of a sudden, but it's okay.

DK: We can still hear you fine.

BHM: If it wasn't—that's okay—so if it was well-known but not fixed and we could easily and seamlessly change to inclusive language about people, we would do that, but we decided both in the hymnody and in the liturgy not to change language about God unless it was an ELC text, basically. And in that case, we did. And I have to say that still 15, 16 years after the hymn book coming out, we are still getting many complaints about the hymns that we tinkered with, like "Be Thou My Vision," for example is a very popular one, the hymn I'm most sick of singing to be quite honest with you, but "thou my true air" instead of some, you know, and that really great with some people after 16 years, it hasn't even, hasn't died down, and Christmas carols with words changed great with people after 16 years as well, so in *Thanks & Praise* in the new one and the supplement we decided not to tinker with old hymns in terms of making them inclusive again unless it was very easily done, almost not noticed. Now I don't know, keep firing questions, Drew.

DK: We have—we were curious if you did any surveying with regards to the prayer book revision like you did with the hymnal revision.

BHM: Yes. No, I don't think we, I've no memory of us doing that kind of surveying with the prayer book because in a sense from 1969 when the first service was issued in a booklet form, to 1993 when alternative occasional services were issued, those were all part of testing the water. But there's another side to it as well. We have the possibility of experimental liturgical material which is agreed by the House of Bishops, usually for a period of seven years, with the intention of people experimenting to see how it goes and then gathering information about it so that one of the things we're doing that with at the moment reviewing is to do with Holy Communion by extension, so the bishops can issue services with experimental legislation for a period of time where everyone is free to experiment with those services. I mean, one of the things we're doing at this moment in time is creating what we're calling morning prayer three, which would be a kind of, largely based actually on *Common Worship*, it would be a morning prayer for Sunday mornings, because most of our churches do not have a weekly Eucharist, so the general service is either morning prayer or a service of the Word, so what we're doing is creating kind of benedictions, responsories, things like that, enriched with more poetic language, probably seasonal material for morning prayer and that may well be the case that would be, the bishop would say, "well, we will issue that as an experimental service," but it can only be issued with the agreement that it comes to the Synod, usually after seven years.

DK: We're curious about navigating disagreements, in particular where there are discussions about doctrinal disagreements.

BHM: Yes. Well, it's very difficult to navigate doctrinal disagreements. I mean, when you read the Church of Ireland Book of Common Prayer, from the perspective of a church that was rooted in 1637, you will probably say, "well, there isn't really an epiclesis on the bread and wine." That's true, there isn't. The epiclesis is on the people through the receiving of the bread and wine. With language, I mean, the doctrinal disagreements in our context would be largely the traditional ones that are kind of Catholic, evangelical disagreements, but we did find a way through it in the sense that everyone seems happy to use what we've got. The question is whether you're trying to create a liturgy that's a unifying thing or whether you're trying to create different liturgies for different groups of people. And we found that that wasn't, even

though it was . . . we didn't intend it, that was what happened in the period, and it wasn't a very healthy place to be, really.

DK: Do you have a sense for how many of your parishes use the 1662 style rite one and the contemporary language services?

BHM: Yes, I would, yes. The use of rite, of the traditional rite, Morning Prayer One, would be very limited. Very limited, and Holy Communion One very limited. Usually in the case of Morning or Evening Prayer One, churches that have a choral tradition, and they want to do choral evensong or choral matins or whatever it may be, but I mean in my own diocese I was got rather sad for an old man in his 90s who told me that his church had stopped using it and where could he find it. And I thought . . . was really stretched to think of anywhere that he could find it. Now, there are one or two places, but really it would be very, very uncommon. Holy Communion One would not be as uncommon because it would often be the preferred rite for early communions or mid-week communions where most of the people are older people who are present. So you get Holy Communion One more often than you'd get Morning or Evening Prayer One, and you would hardly ever get Holy Baptism One, and you would never find Ordination One. So they are there in the book, and they are there probably for largely doctrinal reasons and historical and missionary reasons, but they are not actually really very widely used.

DK: I think we just have another question about doctrine again, were there any significant changes in doctrine in the shift from the old to the new books, and if so, how did that happen?

BHM: Well, that depends on how you look at it. I think it would be true to say that any change in liturgy is automatically to some degree a change in doctrine in the sense that, for example, if you take Cranmer's communion service. Cranmer's communion service is really essentially focused in a rather individualistic kind of way, but a very helpful way, on being an exposition probably of the doctrine of justification by grace through faith. It's not a very corporate kind of service, whereas the new communion service invites you to see holy communion as a more corporate kind of union, and that's where things like the peace come in, and also a more eucharistic kind of event rather than as penitential a communion service as Cranmer's one is. So you do change maybe the weighting of different aspects of doctrine unwittingly when you move away from the old general confession, you actually can mix and seem formulistic rather than emotional or rather than something that you, when you speak out the old general confession, you're aware of the depth of sin and how you, maybe, you should be feeling about it. In the new services, you go through it as a kind of formulistic kind of way, and maybe lacking in poetry in some cases and therefore the weight can be different, but it was . . . when the prayer book was a book of doctrine and a book used to show improvement as well, there would have been concern that we didn't move away from any essential doctrinal understanding.

DK: We're interested also about translation issues and multiculturalism, especially with regards to the English language.

BHM: Yes, yes. Sorry you're having to look at just a frozen picture of myself, but talk away. Okay, there are--

DK: It's a good picture, a good picture.

BHM: Mm? It's a good picture, yes. There is, there's a group in Ireland called—you don't have to write this down—common Gaelic “no hog lisha,” which is the Irish, an Irish church group promoting the use of the Irish language in liturgy, so there is an Irish language version of the Book of Common Prayer. And there are Irish language hymns in the hymn book and in the supplement as well. Now, as you may know, Irish is not a very commonly spoken language in Ireland in the way that Welsh is in Wales. But nevertheless, especially in the Republic, there are a lot of people who learn Irish from childhood and who like to be able to say certain prayers in Irish, or occasionally go to . . . go to a service in Irish, and therefore the essential services, not the whole book, but the essential services, have been translated into the English language as well. In Northern Ireland that wouldn't be used very often, though the Irish language book was actually launched in my own cathedral, which is Down Cathedral where Saint Patrick is buried.

DK: Was the translation handled by the standing liturgical commission, or was it done by another group?

BHM: No. No, we wouldn't have been capable of handling a translation into Irish. But . . . no, it was handled by a particular group of Irish speakers and one or two key people. And we've always had one or two Archbishops who have been fluent in Irish up until now. So George Simms who the Archbishop of Armagh was fluent in Irish in his day, Donald Caird who was the Archbishop of Dublin was fluent in Irish, so we do have some fluent Irish speakers, but no, the actual translation was handled by others. And it was really in all honesty essentially a translation from the English language into the Irish language, whereas some of the hymns in the church hymnal are not like that, they're specifically Irish hymns written in the Irish language and in their own rite, as it were.

DK: We have a question here. Can you word it . . . ?

BHM: If you're asking it, Drew, can I just say, you are asking a different kind of question when you ask about enculturation and one of the issues that—you okay?

DK: I'm trying to get clarification on how to ask a question.

BHM: Okay. One of the issues that we have—okay. Well, that may not have answered everything about enculturation. I would observe in the states that most worship forms are quite similar, quite rigidly following liturgical form. In England and Ireland we have a much wider range of practice than would be evident from looking at the prayer book. So there is in the Book of Common Prayer for example a service of the Word, and the service of the Word is simply a structure for worship and into which different things can be slotted in an imaginative, creative kind of way, and in some working-class areas, for example, of my own diocese, the worship would be much more like that, less bookish. Because you need worship here anyway for people who do not read very many books, you know? And I often say to them, when Cranmer was developing the Book of Common Prayer, never forget that printing had just been invented. And he was at the cutting edge of technology when he was creating a prayer book. But nowadays if Cranmer was here, he'd be using PowerPoint or something like that, so I think we have to, you know, get deep into our culture as well, you know?

SCLM: (formulating a question about cultural and racial needs)

BHM: Can you repeat it, Drew?

DK: Were there cultural groups or racial groups that were part of the process in terms of considering their experiences and their culture when you were designing the new prayer book that might not be as much part of your context?

BHM: Yes, well it is now, but it wasn't then. It is now but it wasn't then, and in truth just like the Church of England before us, we have not been very good at relating in any kind of meaningful way into new people from new cultures coming to live among us, so at that particular time in the 1990s, that was . . . just didn't exist very much in Ireland, but it's becoming much more the case now and I think it would need to be part of any future work.

DK: Thank you. We have a question here about evangelism and what your experience is of the new prayer book as an evangelistic tool. Do you think that it draws people to the church?

BHM: Oh dear, you're getting me on a pet subject when you ask that question. And, excuse me just a moment, somebody's got—somebody's left their phone here. I just met—the technician has left his phone, that's . . . just let that ring off for a moment. It's getting worse. Okay. Oh? It's gone. In terms of evangelism, you could say "preach it, brother," you know, I don't—I'm not sure that it really matters whether a church is highly liturgical, not highly liturgical, high church, low church, middle church or whatever in terms of evangelism, so long as the worship is first of all real for the people who are there. I think to me that's the key thing in evangelism. And also so long as it is to some degree accessible. It doesn't have to be all accessible I don't think, but I think it does have to be to a degree accessible, so using a lot of very complex liturgical language with no accessibility I don't think is very helpful in evangelism, though people will work through it, if there's a reality of faith and experience of God in the community. So I kind of . . . I'm not sure how much liturgical shape relates to evangelism, but I can tell you this: that our experience would be that the places where there are most young people or young adults are probably the least liturgical of places, though I find it hard to say. I always tell them that they are liturgical—may not be good liturgy, but there's liturgy there. We don't really get a lot of young people that are tickled by traditional Anglican liturgy. And the ones who are are unkindly older than their years or slightly odd.

DK: That was very diplomatic.

BHM: I can sense that you're agreeing. You know, let's be honest, most of our traditional churches are in decline. Thankfully—we'll discover this year whether we're in decline or not—but most of them are in decline, and most of us have the capability of creating older congregations who have always known the liturgy and like the liturgy and wonder why everybody else hasn't come to their way of doing it. You know, and they don't see themselves as having become clubs for old people, but that's actually what's happening. And I'm just talking about in our context, so we're having to create experimental liturgies alongside the traditional ones if we're going to win a new generation.

SCLM: (inaudible question posed)

DK: Were you able to hear that or do you want me to repeat it?

BHM: Yes, I know, I heard that. I heard that. Okay, I mean you know, we're beginning to get anecdotal at the moment, but we have some very interesting fresh expressions of church in the diocese and

that's probably what I can easiest—most easily—talk about. The diocese I'm in is half of the city of Belfast and the surrounding county basically of Down. It has got about eighty parochial units and now has about five new church plants and several fresh expressions of church. One of the fresh expressions is in an area called the Titanic Quarter, where the Titanic was built, where we have an honesty box café in a building with a . . . what's called a mean wide lease. It meant that nobody really wanted the building when it was built, and it's given free to a charity. We have a café there and today or any other day of the week, 500 people will go through that café with a prayer garden in it. It's all very low key. It's not pushy evangelism or anything like that. But I also did a confirmation two weeks ago in an area which is very much inner-city, Protestant, loyalist, working-class Belfast. And it was in a church which I had deconsecrated. See, do you understand what I mean by that? Taken away the consecration. And it was the best thing that I ever did, because the community has taken over the church under new leadership and owned the church, and I confirmed nine people in that little place where they're meeting, and they have to pretend they're not being church, you know, but there are more people there than when the church was the church, you understand? And in that confirmation, our Republican paramilitary was presented for confirmation by a loyalist paramilitary. That's the kind of thing that's happening in fresh expressions. So church planting, fresh expressions, are not multitudinous, but actually working quite well in the context of my own diocese. Can I just tell you Drew, can I do a bit of liturgy with you? At this confirmation, what happened was, on the screen at the front, everybody said why they wanted to be confirmed, and they'd recorded that. And then, they stood at the front beside the fire, they gathered around the fire, and the person presenting them for confirmation, their prayer partner, said to them where they saw God at work in their lives, right? So the liturgy was on one level very informal, but on another level actually much purer and better than a lot of the formal stuff, you know? It was real.

DK: So, a final question. What lessons did you learn through this process and what specific advice would you like to offer us as we consider entering into a possible process of revision?

BHM: Yes. Yes, the first lesson that you learn in a church of our size—now you have a larger church—but the first lesson you learn is that it's an awful lot of very, very hard work. It's incredibly difficult work for a small group of people to do, especially, we have no employees or anything like that in relation to it. I think I would say that our call to create one book and a book where everything could be owned by everybody has been a call that has paid off. I think it's...the prayer book is a popular book. You'll notice in it that morning and evening prayer are one service. It's a very interesting thing, most people don't know the back stories to these things. When the hymn book was created in the year 2000 and published by Oxford University Press, they said they were going to publish it in Bible paper, which would have made it quite a slim and tidy volume. But they didn't publish it in Bible paper, it appeared in other, thicker, heavier paper, which was a great disappointment to us and made the selling of the hymn book quite difficult, because people find it very heavy. The reason why we have morning and evening prayer as one service is we were so exercised by the heaviness of the hymn book that we didn't want the prayer book to be heavy, and we trimmed it at every possible point, but I don't think we would create morning and evening prayer as one service. Now, if we were doing it I think the other thing that is clear about it is that any prayer book or any liturgy, without the power of the Holy Spirit and the centrality of Christ and the Gospel of Christ, it's a bare-bones thing, you know, it doesn't . . . it

will not create evangelism, it will not create vibrant churches in and of itself, and sometimes I think we thought if we change things to “you” form or if you modernize it a little bit it’ll make a lot of difference. I don’t think that the creation of a new prayer book has made, in that sense, a great deal of difference in terms of growing churches or vitalizing churches or revitalizing churches, but I think it has provided an anchor point for the Church of Ireland, and I think the new hymnody, again, hymnody . . . hymn books do not really affect churches that are very go-ahead, because they will have whatever hymns they want on bulletins or in screens or whatever it is and they will be up to date, but the value of the hymn books to us has been really getting a wider and more creative repertoire of music into the more traditional type churches, who, once they see that something is an official hymn book of the church, they engage with it. I’m going to say something that you probably can just go on to disagree with, but I observe that in most of the hymn books that have been created in North America, and that doesn’t include yours because yours is around for a while. The, most of the hymn books that have been created of late in North America take and mangle hymns that were perfectly good. If you look at the Canadian ones, both the Anglican one and the United Church of Canada one, they mangle hymns that were perfectly good and kind of ruin the resonances and the memories of them. And then a certain number of authors arise, some of which are good but most of which are not, who create things that sound like hymns to fit the metrical tunes that people associate with hymns, but it becomes like moving wallpaper. There is not the link between the tune and the words that touch people’s hearts.

DK: Thank you for that explanation, I didn’t quite understand, but I was going to agree with you anyway.

BHM: Is that a good starter for ten? Sorry, that’s what they say in a quiz show here, a starter for ten. Ten points, right?

DK: Well, we thank you very much for the time that you’ve given us this morning. Thank you for talking with us and sharing your insights.

BHM: Divided by a common language.

DK: We’re very grateful to you for speaking with us today.

BHM: It’s a pleasure. I’ve lost you, yes? Oh, yes. Well, I thank you for ending a little bit early, for having this earlier than expected by some. Kevin has an art exhibition in the Royal Hibernian Academy in Dublin, so I have to set off for Dublin for his art exhibition now, so thank you and God bless you in your work. Good bye!

DK: Thank you, thank you very much.