

A Guided Conversation on the D078 Expansive Language Liturgies for Trial Use

courtesy of the Revd John Drymon, Trinity Church, Findlay

The liturgy provides an option for the opening acclamation for non-penitential/non-paschal seasons which refers to the Holy Trinity without naming the persons of the Trinity. Considering the fact that the priestly blessing is optional and may, rubrically, take any of a number of forms, this is the only point at which the persons of the Trinity are named in succession unless there is a Baptism or it happens to be Trinity Sunday, in which it remains present in the Preface of the Eucharist. Is “most holy, glorious, and undivided Trinity” a sufficiently Trinitarian formulation if used exclusively regularly and without the persons being explicitly named at other points in the liturgy at which it remains an option?

The response to non-Gospel readings gives two options in addition to “The Word of the Lord”: “Hear what the Spirit is Saying to God's People” and “Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Churches.” While both are given as an option for either non-gospel lesson, the order in which they are presented and the manner in which they have been used by some congregations have suggested that the former refers exclusively to Israel and the latter exclusively to the Christian Church. Does this imply a docetic or anti-semitic view of the relative worth of the Old versus the New Testament? If so, should it be made clear that the conclusion to non-Gospel reading should be consistent, whichever form is chosen?

Throughout the trial-use liturgies, the word “Savior” often replaces the word “Lord.” It should be noted that the latter term is not entirely excised, though some have noted that it is no longer to be found on the lips of the Celebrant or Deacon of the Celebration. “Jesus is Lord” being unquestionably the earliest Creed of the Church, and “Savior” and “Lord” having different meanings—the former a soteriological meaning and the latter a hierarchical meaning—does the proposed liturgy properly re-balance both titles/roles Jesus plays for the Church or does it unbalance them? Considering that the proposition “Jesus is Lord” and its implication (Caesar/the current President of the United States/ my slave master is not Lord) has historically meant a great deal to oppressed and marginalized people, should the revision process spend more time gathering feedback from these groups? Does the preference for “Savior” over “Lord” suggest a preference for justice in the next world being sufficient to ignore a lack of justice in this world?

The version of the Nicene Creed in the trial-use liturgy is that of the ELLC, the successor body to ICET, many of whose translations found their way into the *BCP 1979*. Thus, a great deal of hand-wringing might be avoided by pointing out that this is an ecumenically accepted translation rather than an individual or small group “changing the Creed” which has stood for nearly 1,700 years. Even so, some issues are worth discussing. While the ELLC translation retains the option of the “filioque”, placing it in brackets as do our own EOW liturgies, the trial-use liturgy removes the option entirely. Is this wise in an era in which the original rationale for its inclusion (*viz.*- doubt as to Christ's full divinity) is, as in the era of its inclusion, a more likely stumbling-block than the rejection of Christ's humanity? Conversely, some Lutheran and Uniting Churches around the world have taken issue with the text of

the “Incarnatio” for the reason of its apparent inadequacy in recognizing Jesus' incarnation as a particular human being (something presumably more specific than the vague “truly human”), being consubstantial *with* the Father, incarnate *by* the Spirit and born *of* the Virgin Mary, not conflating the roles of the latter two. Does the ELLC translation “thread the needle” here, or is the translation found in the *1979 BCP* more trustworthy?

The Eucharistic Prayers generally refer to the second person of the Trinity without the third person, masculine pronoun, opting instead for “Christ” or (in the case of the “*Benedictus qui venit*”) “the one.” Considering the fact that the second person of the Trinity became Incarnate as and rose from the dead as a human male, is this choice justified? To what degree could this make God the Son more relatable to those who are less comfortable with the masculine pronoun being applied to a person of the Godhead and to what degree might it make God seem less personal?