SOME LOOSE LEGAL CANNONS
or A Tour of the 'Liturgy and Law' Aquarium

COLIN BUCHANAN
Bishop of Woolwich

I am delighted, and somewhat flattered, to be invited to address you. I have asked myself if there are major reforms of the law relating to liturgy that I can use this meeting to propound, and I have concluded that, subject to my well-known general desire to free the Church of England from state control, I have no proposals about which I might wax shrill. At the same time I detect that the title '*Laissez-faire* Liturgy', which is not one I have ever heard before, is calculated to give a value-judgment in advance of the papers being read—and I found this expectation increased when I discovered the ELS finishes its day with 1662 Evening Prayer. I get a strong hint that, whatever the involvement of the ecclesiastical law profession in the Church of England (Worship and Doctrine) Measure 1974, the rubric under which we meet is that the old was better—though whether better as law, or as liturgy, or as pastoral enabling of the people to take mature decisions themselves I cannot tell. For myself I can never regret the liberty given by the Worship and Doctrine Measure, and I will gloss that with two footnotes: firstly, I judge that full power over 1662 itself should have been attempted in the years 1971–74, and the Synod Standing Committee was craven in the face of advice that Parliament would not allow such devolution; and, secondly, I twice sat in the early 1980s in the gallery of the House of Lords when Prayer Book Protection Bills were being debated, and I was horrified as an observer not only at the terms of the Bills, and the unreal world in which the proponents of the Bills were living, but also at the speeches by the Lords Spiritual. The bishops were being assailed about how few parishes were using the 1662 Book, and were being accused of bad faith in relation to the promises they were themselves supposed to have given about the old Book continuing to be available when the Worship and Doctrine Measure was being introduced—and they replied in terms rather like this: 'Your Lordships should not derange your noble selves—1662 is alive and well—we can show you plenty of parishes which flourish under 1662 as well as those which are flourishing with modern-language services.' This in my judgment was an abandonment of spiritual responsibility for the members of the House of Lords (who are, I understand, on the whole both ageing and conservative): clearly, what the bishops should have said was 'You are probably right—1662 is fading fast—and if you yourselves intend to be contemporary Christians in the remaining years of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, you will read modern-language Bibles, address God as "you", and participate fully in modern worship. Sighing for the horse and carriage is OK for leisured antiquarians from privileged families, but it is of no use or relevance to commuters whatsoever.' So do not expect me to prop up any sentiment about the past—I hope I know our liturgical past; I am passionately interested in our history; I can respond with my own weapons out of the Prayer Book armoury with most who might wish to shiver a lance in that field; I have lectured and written on quite large parts of our liturgical heritage; and I have now lived through over thirty years of the more recent past as an adult involved in liturgical revision myself, though it is now ten years since I was a member of the Commission. So, although I have one or two fears about the direction texts may yet take, I can hardly appear here as a witness for the plaintiff in some private, indeed undeclared, prosecution of the modern worship of the Church of England.

I propose to take you instead on a tour round my legal memoires—and you will pardon me, I trust, as I am a guest, if I am slightly cavalier with the law in the

process. I shall behave like an amateur guide taking you through an aquarium of rare legal swimming specimens—and these particular exhibits require very specialized conditions of light and heat and oxygenization and diet; but the rubbernecking tourists can come and look at them, whilst themselves innocent of all those conditions. At some points the guide may tell you the background and breeding of a particular exhibit, or expand upon the circumstances which particularly favour it—but he *is* an amateur and at others he is likely to leave you saying to yourselves that he has clearly not done his homework. And I recognize you are experts, and will easily catch your guide out. So be it—I am a student hired for a few days to help keep the aquarium open whilst someone else is on holiday; and, because I do not take the fishy exhibits too seriously, I may get some innocent fun in passing also. And, whilst innocent, I am not wholly without experience—and it is those marine creatures whom I have myself met 'in the wild' whom I shall introduce to you with a fraction more confidence. At the same time, I should add that I detect that you are interested in a *rara pisces* entitled 'uniformity'; and I have to disappoint you by admitting that not only do we have no such exhibit available for inspection in this aquarium, but also it is, at best, an extremely rare endangered species, and the best authorities indicate that it may well have been extinct for well over a century, and that, although occasional sightings were reported right up to 1966, not only was there no firm specimen in captivity, but at the times when we thought we were going to catch a specimen, it was as often as not a lawyer which frightened it away. And I do not complain, for I have little heart for such an exhibit myself, and do not mind very much if the species has perished from the earth, and have certainly believed that neither could lawyers fence it in, even if they wished to, nor could it be preserved by intensive care or artificial forced growth in an unreal world. I would rather on my one opportunity show you the specimens which I *have* been involved in catching or trying to catch myself. I am leading you through the chamber labelled 'oddities and eccentricities', some of them friends of uniformity, some of them enemies, all of them in some sort related to the law, some of which caused me much trouble in either catching them or identifying them.

I thought I might start with the oft-invoked episcopal *Ius Liturgicum*. As I read the matter, the bishop had few powers under the 1662 Act of Uniformity and has few still under the Worship and Doctrine Measure. I think that bishops knew until 1928 that they were there to appease doubts and to try to enforce discipline. The Public Worship Regulation Act of 1874 gave the bishops power to veto supposedly frivolous actions by outraged parishioners, and this, in a way quite unforeseen by the Lords and Commons, meant that they were damned in the public eye whatever they did—they were faced then with cries for discipline, and if they connived at ritual excesses by letting misdemeanours proceed they were denounced as false shepherds. Equally, however, if they did not veto proposed actions, they left unedifying cases to come before the secular courts, and, in places where that did happen, the results were unsatisfactory whether the case was successful or not. I suppose that was more a case of *ius litigium* than *ius liturgicum*; but the *liturgicum* was coming.

In the years before and after the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline, it was indeed discipline which occupied the minds. The bishops were engaged more in wars of persuasion than in persecution or prosecution; and they were more concerned with holding the line against illegal practices than they were with questions about authorizing new forms of service. So it was, up to and including the First World War, but, as is well documented, during the First War the bishops ran out of persuasion and the growth of illegal rites and illegal practices became a landslide. The 1927–28 'Deposited' Book was intended to make peace, by a broadening of the liturgical base of the Church of England to please the anglo-catholics and a setting of firm limits to this broadening to placate the evangelicals. In point

of fact, they both took umbrage at the feature that was designed to please the others—the evangelicals objected to the broadening, and the anglo-catholics objected to the setting limits. The interesting legal situation developed in the wake of this defeat. The bishops in 1929 in a public declaration defined the 'Church', and its right and duty to take its own action on behalf of its own worship, *as over against Parliament*—an action which the disestablishmentarian in me applauds. However, the use of the Deposited Book was generally rested upon a supposed *ius liturgicum* (operating in individual dioceses to give expression to the 1929 Declaration), and it appears that this in turn received weight from the recorded evidence of Archbishop Davidson before the Royal Commission in February 1905—in which it is recorded that he said that the changes in the form of Clerical Subscription provided by the Clerical Subscription Act 1865—and particularly the exceptive concluding clause, 'except so far as shall be ordered by lawful authority'—'as they stand part of the Act of Parliament are capable of giving to the Episcopate some larger authority than existed before'. As a matter of fact if you read the full text of his evidence he was only talking about what was embryonically in the phrase 'lawful authority' (I confess I am here writing from recollection); and he himself goes on to say that such a possibility of powers has since been cut off by the Act of Uniformity Amendment Act of 1872. But the famous quotation comes in Bell's biography of Davidson, which, being published in 1935, gave a cue to those who needed more *ius liturgicum* than they were currently thought to possess. What seems undoubted is that bishops claimed to be 'lawful authority' under the Declaration of Assent, and the claim that Davidson had given the definitive exposition of it many decades before reassured any scrupulous spirits. And in the years since 1928 the clergy have become accustomed to ringing up the bishop when they want to do something illegal, and the idea is around that bishops have powers without limit, an idea which runs on in both bishops and clergy to this day. As a matter of fact any suspicion that such disputable powers still exist was eliminated in the Prayer Book (Alternative and Other Services) Measure 1965 and confirmed in the Church of England (Worship and Doctrine) Measure 1974.

My next innocent stop on my guided tour of the aquarium brings me to a murky-looking tank labelled 'Reservation and communion of the sick'. It is so murky that it is difficult to demonstrate whether there exists much of substance within the murk. But the story goes something like this:

If we leave aside whatever may have been possible under the 1549 Prayer Book, the 1552 Book (which, unlike 1549, had no doctrine of consecration) made provision for the communion of the sick solely by a separate celebration at the bedside; and the elements could not be 'reserved' after a main celebration in any meaningful way, for the remains were to go home with the cleric for his breakfast, as being simply ordinary bread. In 1662 a doctrine of consecration was imposed by rubrical requirements, but the liturgical provision for the sick was hardly affected—now there were deemed to be 'consecrated' remains, but they all had to be consumed at the close of the service, so, obviously, none could be reserved, and the provision for a separate celebration for the sick was unchanged and unchallenged. And this remained the sole measure of *law* until 1966 when the Alternative Services Measure came into force.

Let me take you back a bit. Despite this my confident affirmation about the law in respect of 'reservation', aumbries, tabernacles and pyxes had as a matter of history re-appeared before the end of the nineteenth century; conferences on reservation had been held; the ritual accompaniments to reservation flourished up and down the land; the bogus *apologia* spread that reservation was done for the purposes of communion (though, it was added *sotto voce*, once done for the sake of the sick, the reserved elements might then be employed for other devotional pur-

poses—special pleading if ever I heard any); and, when the 1927–28 rubrics and regulations were under debate, the priests at one end of the church claimed they had the right, simply *qua* priests, to reserve at their own discretion and subject to no episcopal licence. But the 1662 rubrics and sole provision for the communion of the sick remained undisturbed in place—and surely capable of only one legal exposition? Indeed I understand that in the years before 1966 one could simultaneously get diocesan chancellors in some dioceses ruling reservation illegal, whilst other chancellors granted faculties for tabernacles and aumbries as though reservation were legal. I can only suppose these to have been at root judgments of policy rather than law, though obviously learned legal argument is always brought in to sustain such judgments.

Whilst my theological reflexes would always have been on the no-reservation side of this argument, and to that extent I have no doubt a vested interest in the outcome myself, I report the next stage with astonishment. In Series 2 Communion, authorized from September 1967, there was a closing rubric which said '*Any consecrated bread and wine which is not required for purposes of communion is consumed at the end of the distribution or after the service*'. Chancellor Garth Moore, who had previously ruled in favour of a tabernacle with only the Prayer Book text before him, now swapped horses and said that this rubric permitted, or even encouraged, reservation. If you are to communicate the sick from the consecrated surplus left at the end of a liturgical celebration, then clearly those elements *are* required '*for purposes of communion*', and would not be required to be consumed in accordance with the rubric. So ran his argument—and it astonished the members of the Liturgical Commission who had drafted the rubric (unless of course I am being over-innocent, and the cloak-and-dagger drafting of Arthur Couratin had in fact deliberately left us, if I may mix the metaphor, with an unsuspected wooden horse of a rubric). The members of the Commission were clear that they had put their hands to the rubric as a convenient way of saying 'Consecrated bread and wine which has not been received during the distribution should be finished up after it'. We had no intention of drafting a wooden horse—I am confident of that. But we also believed that, even on the Garth Moore view of the meaning of the rubric, that meaning could not of itself make reservation lawful. Why not? Why, because the only lawful way of *distributing* communion to the sick remained that in 1662, a separate celebration at the bedside. And if there were no lawful way of distributing 'reserved' elements to the sick, then it was impossible to say that they were or could be reserved 'for the purposes of communion'—there being no lawful way of receiving them, they could not be reserved for that purpose. Of course the Garth Moore judgment simply stated his determined view and, as far as I know, he brought in the Series 2 rubric himself in giving the judgment, and so he was not probed or cross-examined about its coherence in law. It looked again like a judgment of policy and others followed him in it. The Commission were so sure their drafting could not be misunderstood save out of perversity that through the 1970s, in drafting Series 3 Communion and in due course Rite A, they had no hesitation in repeating exactly the same rubric, still insisting it could not be twisted into solving an issue which they themselves believed to be complex and sensitive, and to which they intended to give later further careful thought. This further thought duly happened a decade later with the 1983 services entitled *Ministry to the Sick*, and there was now provision for elements to be taken from a main celebration to be distributed to the sick elsewhere. I should perhaps add that evangelicals in Synod, who threw out from the same package of services both the blessing of oils and the reconciliation of a penitent, accepted this pattern of communicating the sick. That brought the wider interpretation of the closing rubric of Rite A validly into play; and in turn, whilst neither the name nor the practice of 'reservation' was mentioned in the notes and

rubrics of the services, the provision clearly did not now exclude reservation and some modest way of reserving was presumably by those means made lawful. The situation has of course moved on again since then, with secret guidelines of the House of Bishops and each diocese having guidelines which are supposed to conserve the force of the House's guidelines—and whole congregations receiving reserved consecrated elements, whether at a distance from the main celebration spatially or at a distance temporally, or both. And when the House of Bishops brought a report to the General Synod in November 1993, all the early speakers in the debate, including a speaker here to-day, insisted on discussing lay presidency as a better solution and thus completely skewed a debate which was supposed to be about extended communion!

The next legal issue to cross my path came in the early seventies. Because of a locked-horns problem as between the House of Clergy and the House of Laity of the old Church Assembly, there never was a lawful Series 2 Funeral service. The small joint group which had met to devise some sort of compromise about petitions for the departed functioned on the principle (and here I quote Hugh Craig, a redoubtable protestant who was on the group) 'Of course Oswald Clark may pray for the dead if he wishes, so long as I can write the prayers he does it with'. This project within the Assembly never came to authorization of a text, and the issue returned to the Liturgical Commission itself when we were to provide a 'Series 3' text. At this point I highlighted the vastly different pastoral situations the clergy face when officiating at funerals—a genuine indicator that we needed much flexibility in our provision of prayers, and I was, of course, keen that we should allow scope for clergy to bring in their own prayers, pastoral or partisan as they might be. No-one sharing in authorizing would know or knowingly connive at some of the bizarre uses that might occur, but that was up to the officiants concerned, and the Synod would not authorize nor be thought to be authorizing partisan texts. I therefore suggested that in the section of prayers in the funeral rite, we might draft a rubric to read '*Here shall follow suitable prayers*' or such-like. Well, the lawyers with whom Ronald Jasper consulted (and I confess I do not know who they were) told us we could not do it. There was, so they said, an unbreakable necessity of the full text of official services, i.e. everything that might need to be said in such a service, being in print there and visible when the service itself was authorized. This seemed to me plain daft, and inconsistent with the existing liberty we had given congregations (with no legal objection as far as I knew) when we had got Series 2 communion authorized with vast scope in it to add extemporary elements into the intercessions in the various sections 'For the Church and for the world'. So I emboldened the Commission, saying 'Look, as I understand it, the lawyers are there to serve us not to control us—if the Synod will authorize something as a service within the meaning of the Measure, then an authorized service it is—and the task of the lawyers is not to tell us we cannot do it, or should not have done it, but to advise on issues like copyright on the one hand, and legal duties in relation to churchyards and burial on the other.' We heard no more of the objections, and the Series 3 funeral service became an official alternative service, and the acquired characteristic was, contrary to nature, passed into the genetic inheritance so that that single-line rubric is an ancestor of the liberty available to-day in *A Service of the Word* and in many places elsewhere.

One of the great gains in the provisions of the Alternative Services Measure and the Worship and Doctrine Measure was the permission for the officiant to make changes 'of no substantial importance' in the conduct of public worship at his or her own discretion. This permission has taken the sharp edge off the limits of permitted or enforced liturgy, has enabled us to have a greater sense that we are functioning by grace rather than by law, and has probably covered most clergy against possibly litigious complainants. It has, however, developed its own small list of

sub-questions and its own slowly growing corpus of both theoretical discussion and, I suspect but cannot prove, case-law.

The most obvious questions it spawns relates to the issue 'Quis iudicet?'. Of course the Measure and Canon give no hint. But in February 1983 in General Synod a question was asked of the Chairman of the House of Bishops whether this or that change in a text was 'not of substantial importance'. Archbishop Robert Runcie replied that he 'agreed' that the particular changes outlined were 'not of substantial importance'. I saw an amber light—if a precedent were created that the Archbishop's judgments became normative interpretations, then not only would hosts of such minor points get brought into Question-time in General Synod for an *ex cathedra* ruling, but officiants might hesitate to make accustomed insubstantial changes *without* the Archbishop's ruling. I asked as a supplementary 'Is it not a bad precedent that the Archbishop of Canterbury, in his capacity as Chairman of the House of Bishops, should be asked to rule on what is or is not of substantial importance?' The Archbishop had clearly not thought about this aspect, and I thus elicited the absolutely charming reply: 'All sorts of questions are put and I try to answer them, and not dodge them'.

The next stage was when the Liturgical Commission themselves took upon themselves to recommend the use of inclusive language in ASB services, which are, of course, printed in pre-inclusive forms. The report *Making Women Visible* (1988) has a systematic working over the text of every service and a set of recommended adaptations in order to eliminate exclusive forms—and the suggestion is that these particular changes might be adopted by the local officiant as of 'no substantial importance', and that is legally how such changes are made. I hug myself a little at the comic legal catch-22 dilemma concealed within this practice—for I suspect that, in the march of English language, the scruple of the Church of England on behalf of women and the tuning of English ears has now reached the point where the change is in reality of great substantial importance. But the catch-22 is this, that you are only allowed by law to make this very substantially important change if you declare it to yourself, your congregation, and perhaps the Archbishop of Canterbury, to be of no substantial importance.

I have my own *ballon-d'essai* I wish to fly under this heading. I suggest to you that the wearing of robes may be abandoned as of no substantial importance. Even in the severe days of the Tudors and Stuarts, the wearing or omission of robes was agreed to be of little importance in itself—but in those days if the Church authorities were commanding a small thing, then disobedience in a small thing was itself a big thing. Now we are exempt from *that* catch, for the Canon is encouraging us to take our own decisions in small things; and in all sorts of circumstances robes are being laid aside and abandoned—and I would submit that, whether the disrobed clerics have thought of it or not, they are in fact making a change of no substantial importance in the conduct of public worship. It would certainly be absurd for diocesan authorities to start to lean on them.

On the other hand I wonder how the lawyers reflect on the existence of this provision in Canon Law. It seems to me to be OK for the phrase *De minimis non curat lex* to be a principle of interpretation and application of the law, but that, almost by definition, means it is not quite *embodied* in the law. It would be surprising, I take it, if the law said 'thou shalt not steal' but added 'thefts of items up to £1.99 in value are of no substantial importance and no penalties or sanctions shall attach thereto'.

My next curio is Absolutions. When the Liturgical Commission proposed forms entitled 'The Reconciliation of a Penitent' in late 1980 I dissented from the recommendation that the absolution formula for private confession should repeat in substance the form 'I absolve you from all your sins', provided in 1662 in the Visitation of the Sick, particularly for those *in articulo mortis*, but not otherwise

part of the public or private ministry of the Church. I followed up my dissent (which I could easily explain) by posing questions in Synod to the Secretary-General, and he, to my mounting infuriation, insisted that the provision for the sick in this desperate state was normative in law for the absolution of a healthy penitent. I could not and cannot see that a private ministry to the physically healthy is a service in the category of a lawful alternative to the Visitation of the Sick in the BCP—and I began to suspect I was up against a judgment of policy not law. I submit that a careful comparison of the warning exhortations preceding holy communion in the 1549 and 1552 Books will show the shift in the Church of England's position about how absolution should be ministered in private to those with sensitive or doubting consciences who have 'opened their grief' to a learned and godly minister of God's word. In 1552 it was clear that the learned minister had privately to provide 'the ministry of God's word' to convey the 'benefit of absolution', and there was no text given for this, and the cross-reference to auricular confession which had followed the absolution in the Visitation of the Sick in 1549 was now abandoned. As I understand it, the expectation since 1552 has been that two people would, so to speak, sit beside each other with an open Bible in front of them, and the discreet and learned minister would point the scrupulous person to this or that scripture, which, when believed and applied to the person's own sins, would convey 'the benefit of absolution'. Such ministry was to be private, personal, and particularly related to the sins on the particular conscience of the particular person. It is not surprising that no text was provided for such personal ministry, and I contend that private ministry is unrelated to the provisions for public worship anyway. (If I were to push this point further, I would say that the use of the indicative ministerial absolution which is in the 1662 Book—in the Visitation of the Sick—is not even private, as there may be many round the bedside, and the whole rite has a 'public' character to it, and this is only very indirectly related to the warning exhortation at holy communion.)

At any rate, when the new text came to Final Approval in Synod in February 1983 we were all treated in Synod to a document on our seats entitled 'Legal Aspects concerning "A Form for the Reconciliation of a Penitent"' (GS Misc 169), an opinion which attempted to insist that the passing answers I had received to my earlier synodical questions were in fact the unquestionable state of the law. I believe that document to have had a certain end in view and then to have argued in order to get it; and I further believe that it was a judgment of policy rather than strictly of law which led somebody in authority somewhere to get the document put on our seats. For my own part, when the previous night we had the separate reference to the Convocations, I had moved in the Lower House of York a motion to declare that the Convocation did not believe it was legally necessary to authorize a particular text in order to allow ministers to engage in a private ministry of absolution. I lost that motion by one vote, but I really was trying to *help* those who wanted to use words like 'I absolve you from all your sins' in a modern-language rite of reconciliation of a penitent—though, as is obvious, I was also trying to save the Synod from authorizing as an 'alternative service' such a disputed text, to be used officially now in a far far wider set of contexts than the 1662 *in articulo mortis*. Of course, getting the motion through a Convocation would hardly settle the matter—the opinion of the lawyers, a loaded opinion in my view, would decide what was to be done.

But suppose the law or the legal opinion became inconvenient. For, of course, the proposed service for the reconciliation of a penitent was *not* agreed at final Approval but was duly and devastatingly defeated in the House of Laity. A group in the Church had insisted the rite must be authorized by full legal process, and those who took it to the law had now had it defeated in law. What then? Ah, you might well smile, and you might well guess the answer. Sure enough, as the

Liturgial Commission went about preparing services for *Lent, Holy Week, Easter*, we slipped in on page 56 'A Form of Absolution which may be used for the quieting of the individual conscience', and this actually put into acceptable words the placebo explanation of *ego absolvo te*, the very explanation which in the heated debates up to February 1983 objectors had been told was quite unacceptable, namely 'I declare that you are absolved from your sins'. *Ego absolvo te*, on the anodyne *apologia*, actually means this, but, for reasons of logic which entirely escape me, had never been able to be converted into it, though that would have carried all the opposition to it!

However, my purpose in citing it is not to stop with the *minutiae* of wording. It is to point out that the *Lent, Holy Week, Easter* provision broke new ground legally—ground which I had a hand in digging over myself. We were now being advised by the lawyers that the material in this book was *not* 'alternative' to rites in the BCP, and was therefore in the category of services which could be authorized under Canon B.4. in one way or another. I urged that the parish minister ought to have the discretion under B.5, and so we came up with the category of 'commended' ('commended', that is, by the House of Bishops), which actually gives the rites in the book no particular legal standing at all, but enables the book to be published by the official press, and to look like official Church of England services. But you will see the implications for the form of Absolution there—it is declared legally to lie outside the range of alternative services, and thus to need no official authorization, but any forms can be used by the local minister at his or her discretion. Within about two years of the 'Legal Aspects' document thudding so heavily onto our seats in Synod, the House of Bishops was now receiving the opposite advice—that there was no official control of forms for private absolution whatsoever—and that appears to remain the present position.

That is not to say that there has been no concern about public absolutions. There is a notion around in the Church of England that there exists an identifiable presbyteral absolution, the grammar of which is so distinctive that it can be carefully confined to the presbyterate, and the risk of deacons saying even the Morning and Evening Prayer absolution in the BCP was so great that in 1968 a rubric was added to the BCP under a Miscellaneous Provisions Measure to make sure deacons and Readers did not attempt the absolution there. Ever since then the Church of England has cheerfully vacillated between two more or less mutually exclusive positions—one of which says that the only absolution is the one the presbyter says (so the new liturgical Canons insist that the deacon and Reader are not to say the absolution at Morning or Evening Prayer); whilst the other says that they can and should say the absolution but in an 'us' form instead of a 'you' one. But to be told by the Notes in the ASB how to say the absolution and to be told by the 1993 Canons not to say it at all is absurd. And mixed in with this we had a further wonderful fuss about whether *A Service of the Word* could function without all lawful forms of absolution being attached to it—at least in public worship ministers were not to make up their own or use 'commended' ones, but must have a fully authorized text.

I have had a curious little run-in in relation to the printing of the text of the Lord's Prayer in two columns in the ASB. The story goes something like this. In 1979, when I was steering Rite A through Synod, we put into Rite A a careful rubric which read '*The Lord's Prayer is said either as follows or in its traditional form*', and this was followed by a modern text without printed alternatives. In 1987 a Private Member's Motion in Synod was amended to ask the House of Bishops to introduce into Synod for authorization proposed 'revisions of the ASB services which would include the Lord's Prayer in its Rite B form in parallel with the Rite A form, wherever it occurs.' The amended motion was passed, and the House of Bishops should then have brought such proposals to Synod for the three usual

stages of revision, including a Revision Committee process. Certainly it was a small change—but it had been considered in 1978–79 and rejected—and in those days everyone knew the procedure. Now something went badly wrong: the Standing Committee of the House of Bishops took the view that, as the rubric already permitted the use of a 'traditional' text of the Lord's Prayer, it was perfectly in order just to desire the publishers to print the two versions here in parallel columns. The full House endorsed this view, and the change has been made ever since. I wrote in my Grove Booklet that I believe that bypassing of the synodical process to have been a procedural offence, a typographical blunder, a tactical error, and a strategic mistake. It becomes one of the oddest—indeed one of the least likeable—specimens in my aquarium of legal monstrosities.

There I finish. An amateur guide can hardly finish on a high note of principle. I nudge towards some amateur home-spun missionary wisdom—I would rather have a growing maturing joyfully evangelizing congregation following a slightly extra-legal pattern of worship than have poker-faced uses which, while technically fully legal, in fact turned the congregation off.

(This is the text of an address given at the Society's Conference in London in March 1996.)