CHAPTER 7

The Proclamation

The people and presiding priest proclaim and respond to the Word of God

From Gathering to Listening

The sense of community that has been fostered in the Gathering of the Community needs to be maintained in the Proclamation of God's Word. If people follow the reading in personal copies or in pew Bibles, this may diminish this corporate attentiveness as we listen together to what the Spirit is saying to us as the Church.

Rather than following the text while it is being read in church, people can be encouraged to look at the readings beforehand. The next Sunday's readings can be printed in the weekly bulletin and form the focus of personal devotions or a Bible study group during the week.

In preparing ahead in this manner, a benefit of the Three Year Series is that it is used in New Zealand not only by the Anglican church, but (with slight variations) it is followed by all other denominations and communities that follow a lectionary (e.g. Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Methodist). The Three Year Series not only opens up a vast wealth of published resources, but, in preparation for Sunday services, ecumenical study groups may be formed, and ideas for sermons can be shared in ecumenical clergy associations.

Reading the Bible at the Eucharist

Scripture and liturgy are deeply intertwined. Bible and liturgy shape each other. There is a sense in which the scriptures were fashioned in liturgy. A lot of biblical stories were moulded in their telling at gatherings of the community for worship. The canon of scripture is composed of those books which have received the authority of the public reading at services. Liturgy also uses and interprets the

scriptures, scriptural allusions abound in liturgy, and biblical texts are used as liturgical prayers.

It is the latter realisation, the way our worship uses and interprets scripture, that is of practical consequence in the celebration of the Eucharist, and hence concerns us here.

There are at least four reasons why we read the scriptures at the Eucharist.

We read the scriptures publicly to teach. The educational role of reading and preaching is a Reformation emphasis. This stress may lead to a book of the Bible being read through "continuously" week by week, or "semi-continuously" (with some passages omitted, but still in order). Such a reading may be accompanied by a preaching series through this book of the Bible. The Three Year Series is an ideal lectionary for this approach. (Even better for this is the ecumenical revision of the Three Year Series, the "Revised Common Lectionary," used by some Anglican provinces as well as many parishes in New Zealand.)

We read the scriptures as part of our community remembering, our *anamnesis*. Particular readings are selected for great feasts and seasons of the Church Year. These interrupt any continuous (or semi-continuous) reading.

We read the scriptures that are pastorally appropriate. At a Eucharist for a wedding or funeral, for example, many readings are suggested in *A New Zealand Prayer Book* from which a suitable choice can be made.

We read the scriptures as part of our prayer and praise to God. There is a psalm appointed for each Eucharist, for example.

Interpreting the scriptures

Our choice of readings at the Eucharist is part of the way the community interprets the scriptures for itself. It is important to reflect on the relationship between the "liturgical Bible" - that part of the Bible we proclaim and expound in church - and the whole canonical Bible. The liturgical Bible shapes the way we perceive and interpret the scriptures as a whole. Hence, great care needs to be taken in our choices for readings.

The preacher needs to be aware of the effects of the choice of scripture readings. For example, when different passages are read together, one may act to interpret the other, sometimes completely contrary to the original message. Similarly, a reading may be interpreted by the feast for which it has been chosen.

Where to begin and end a reading, and which verses to omit are interpretive decisions. On Maundy Thursday, in not including the verses from 1 Corinthians 11 concerning factions (verses 17-22), for example, we may misinterpret Paul's intention as we proclaim the institution of the Lord's supper from that epistle.

Our use of the Old Testament is open to critique if it is always linked, often artificially, to the New, as if the Hebrew scriptures do not have an integrity and an original message of their own. Feminist critique of our lectionaries points out the inclusion of some texts which are oppressive to women while other texts showing women's leadership and authority and feminine images are neglected.

Both lectionaries in *A New Zealand Prayer Book* provide three readings and at least one psalm for each Eucharist. *Thanksgiving of the People of God* and *Thanksgiving and Praise* assume all will be used (page 409 and page 480). *Thanksgiving for Creation and Redemption* allows for "one or two appointed readings" as well as the Gospel to be used (pages 460-461). *A Form for Ordering the Eucharist* requires at least "a reading from the Gospel" at every Eucharist (page 511). This flexibility requires responsible planning by the community's leadership so that over a period of time regular worshippers receive a rich fare at the table of God's Word.

Some communities consistently neglect the Old Testament, following in the spirit of *The Book of Common Prayer* rather than *A New Zealand Prayer Book*. Others neglect the epistles. Decisions do not need to be made merely on the basis of time. Three readings take no more than four or five minutes to proclaim in total. Sometimes a celebration has a very cluttered Gathering of the Community in which many of the optional alternatives are used, followed by a very meager Ministry of the Word for which the Gathering is intended to prepare.

There is freedom to omit a reading on the basis of the particular congregation and on the relative importance of the celebration. The Easter vigil

could have five or more readings with psalms, Christmas similarly could have a vigil of lessons and carols. Sundays and greater feasts could have three readings with the psalm, while weekdays could have two readings and the psalm. At a special Eucharist with a lot of small children present, the Gospel, brought vividly alive, may be the most appropriate.

The readers are the primary ministers of the Word. They are important interpreters of the text in volume, intonation, pauses, pace and rhythm of the voice. Much creativity can be brought to bear on the way the readings are presented. There can be mime, dance, incense, or gentle background music to accompany a reading. A passage can be retold as a story. A brief introduction can set the context of a reading. A prophetic passage can be memorised and declaimed as if on a soap box. Because of the attraction of a story, sometimes a longer reading can hold people's attention better than the brief part of it set by the lectionary. There can be drama, or dramatic reading with, for example, the narrator at the lectern, Jesus by the table, and the disciples coming forward from the congregation.

The sermon is an integral part of proclaiming and interpreting the scriptures. I still remember vividly a Eucharist fifteen years ago celebrated informally with a small group. The presider began the Gospel reading of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32) and after the first verse, asked the next person in the group to continue the story from memory, and then the next person, a verse at a time. In his sermon this priest explained whenever he had done this he always found people forgot that the father "ran and put his arms around his son and kissed him." The God who runs to meet us was unforgettably experienced in the proclamation of the Word through this priest's "reading" and homily.

The Lectionaries

The Anglican church at the Reformation inherited the Western lectionary of readings at the Eucharist. This rarely read from the Old Testament, made a poor selection from the New Testament, and had no consistent rationale. In the eucharistic lectionary of *The Book of Common Prayer* there are some signs of semi-continuous reading, perhaps from a different canonical order. Other

readings appear to have been chosen because of their association with nearby feasts.

Cranmer's reform of the lectionary for the daily offices of Morning and Evening Prayer moderated the inadequacy of this eucharistic lectionary during the long period of Anglican history when these offices were the staple of Sunday worship. That era has gone. The public proclamation and exposition of a significant portion of the scriptures has required a revised system of reading for the Eucharist.

A New Zealand Prayer Book contains two lectionaries. The first, the Two Year Series (pages 550-690), was devised in New Zealand. A set of themes was developed, and ultimately two sets of readings chosen to fit those themes. This was begun before the work on the Three Year Series was completed. The Two Year Series was a fine effort for its time but there are limitations in its methodology. Because of the way it chooses readings, important texts are omitted. Furthermore, preachers often find that a text has little to do with the "theme" but is primarily about something else. Some have found that the Three Year Series works better with a regular week by week community. For a "once a month" Eucharist at a small rural congregation, for example, a service with a theme and readings that relate to that theme may be preferred, but not necessarily.

The Three Year Series

One of the most exciting developments in the renewal of worship has been the ecumenical agreement on a common lectionary pattern. The lectionary adopted by the Roman Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council became the basis of this ecumenical cooperation. Experimentation and revision have resulted in many denominations using lectionaries which are very similar, even though not totally identical. The Anglican church in New Zealand adopted one such version, the Three Year Series, in 1980 (primarily pages 691-723, also pages 645-678).

This lectionary reads a substantial part of the Old Testament and almost all of the New Testament over the three year period.

Except during Easter, the first lesson is from the Old Testament. It is

generally related to the Gospel reading. In the Easter season this lectionary follows the old tradition of reading from the Acts of the Apostles. The psalm appointed is usually linked to the Old Testament lesson. The second reading is normally from the epistles read in course, with the Catholic Epistles or Revelation in the Easter season. The focus of this lectionary is the reading from the Gospels. The Gospel according to John is read during the seasons of Lent and Easter and on certain other occasions. Each of the Synoptic Gospels is read semi-continuously for the rest of the time in a three year cycle.

The Three Year Series continues to grow in popularity particularly as Anglicans experience not only the way it powerfully nurtures Christian unity, but also its potential for enriching Christian experience through the abundance of its associated commentaries, teaching resources, and aids and suggestions for worship. In New Zealand, Christians from Anglican, Methodist, Roman Catholic and Presbyterian churches meet together and discuss and pray about their common Sunday readings! Because once again Anglicans from Aotearoa to Zambia read mostly identical readings Sunday by Sunday, Lambeth Conferences have urged a more widespread adoption of this lectionary as a means of fostering unity within the Anglican Communion as well.

Using the Three Year Series

The two lectionaries in *A New Zealand Prayer Book* (the Two Year Series and the Three Year Series) are based on quite different principles. Although both are of equal status, the supporting material in the Prayer Book usually applies to the Two Year Series. For example, it would make no sense to use the Themes for the Church's Year (pages 522-524) with the Three Year Series. The Prayer Book's seeming bias towards the Two Year Series has discouraged some from using the treasures of the Three Year Series. What follows, therefore, outlines the rationale behind the Three Year Series and provides a few suggestions to bear in mind when planning worship.

Most of the Church Year is "normal" or "ordinary time" with all Sundays being feasts of our Lord Jesus Christ. Some communities are used to an unrelenting progression of didactic mini-seasons, feasts, and other "themed"

Sundays. For them it may take time to appreciate the style of the Three Year Series which Sunday by Sunday reads through a Synoptic Gospel in a nearly-continuous pattern. The Epistles are similarly proclaimed. In Year A, for example, there is systematic reflection on the Gospel of Matthew, and on 1 Corinthians, Romans, Philippians, and 1 Thessalonians. The Old Testament, of which a substantial amount is read, is often related to the Gospel, and the psalm is usually linked to the Old Testament lesson. As much as possible, the Bible is allowed to speak for itself, without the imposition of form or theme.

Titles such as "The Twenty-Seventh Sunday after Pentecost" have little relevance in the Three Year Series (or to the average worshipper for that matter!) "The Thirty-First Ordinary Sunday" may be just as bewildering (particularly as two Sundays after Pentecost one may suddenly be confronted with "The twelfth Sunday of the Year"!) What is wrong with, in "ordinary time," using the date on pew sheets, e.g. "Sunday the 21st of June"? Or occasionally using a more imaginative note, e.g. "The First Sunday in Spring"! Furthermore, particularly in "ordinary time," it is unnecessary to announce the title of the Sunday at the beginning of the service.

The Collect does not have to relate to the readings which follow. It may simply conclude the Gathering of the Community. On the other hand it may relate to the readings or allude to something else which will follow. The Collect may be selected from any source, including writing one's own (page 691). Alternatively, with the readings of the Three Year Series (pages 691-723), suitable Collects are suggested from the Two Year Series. It is highly inappropriate to use the theme from the Two Year Series found by this cross-referencing, and clearly nonsensical to announce the title of the Sunday in the Two Year Series from which the Collect is being taken!

The Sunday Collect can be used on the weekdays which follow. When the Sunday celebrates a feast day such as the Transfiguration (or Pentecost, Trinity, All Saints, etc.) then the Collect for the Transfiguration (or Pentecost, Trinity etc.) is obviously only used on that Sunday and not on the following weekdays. The Collect for the weekdays following is that of the Sunday that was replaced. During any week, the Sunday readings from an alternative year may be used at a weekday Eucharist.

The normal or "ordinary time," then, becomes the horizon or stage which lets the church's seasons shine with a renewed brightness. There are four seasons. (1) Easter is not just a day but, as it was in the early church, it is the fifty days from Easter Day to Pentecost. These days are celebrated as one feast. What Sunday is to the week, this Easter Season is to the Church Year. Hence many churches more appropriately call these Sundays "*of*" rather than "*after* Easter" (e.g. "The Third Sunday after Easter" would be "The Fourth Sunday of Easter," "the Sunday after the Ascension" then is "The Seventh Sunday of Easter.") Pentecost ends this season, it does not begin a "Pentecost season." (2) Lent is the season of preparation for Easter. There is no "gesima season" (of Septuagesima etc.) (3) The Christmas season runs from Evening Prayer on 24 December until the Sunday between 7 and 13 January. There is no "Epiphany season." (4) Advent is the season of preparation for Christmas.

During these four seasons the three readings each Sunday are more closely linked and usually focus on telling the story of a God who acts. John's Gospel, the Catholic Epistles, Revelation, and the Acts of the Apostles are some of the books of scripture that are highlighted.

In the Two Year Series each Sunday has a separate theme, and little is lost when a particular feast or celebration replaces the Sunday readings. In the Three Year Series it is quite contrary to its spirit to interrupt the week by week reading of scripture with the thematic readings for the Conversion of St. Paul, for example. Only a few key feasts will take precedence over a Sunday. Of the feasts appointed on fixed days in the Calendar, the following normally take precedence over a Sunday:

The Naming of Jesus, 1 January.

The Epiphany of our Lord Jesus Christ, 6 January. This may be observed on the Sunday on or before 6 January (in which case, if that is 1 January, either it or the Naming of Jesus is observed).

The Transfiguration of the Beloved Son, 6 August.

All Saints' Day, 1 November. This may be observed on the first Sunday in November, in addition to its observance on the fixed date.

The Feast of the Consecration or Dedication of a church and the Feast of the Patron or Title of a church may be observed on, or transferred to, a Sunday,

except in the seasons of Advent, Lent, and Easter.

When desired, some other Feasts and Holy Days (pages 7-8) may be substituted for Sundays in ordinary time. Care needs to be taken, however, not to loose the overall thrust of the Three Year Series and its systematic Sunday-by-Sunday proclamation of the scriptures.

The Readings

Readers exercise a very important ministry. Training and continuing support needs to be provided for them. Clergy need to be careful not to deprive the laity of their right to the ministry of reading. If the readers robe or are seated in the sanctuary this may give the impression of clericalisation. Lay persons proclaim the Word as part of their ministry as laity. For the first and second readings each reader most naturally comes up from the congregation dressed in ordinary clothes, reads, and returns to their place.

Historically, reading the Gospel is the prerogative of a deacon. It is still the case that at any ordination service it is required that the Gospel be read by a deacon (pages 892, 903, 915). At their ordination deacons receive "the Gospels of Christ" and are enjoined to "read from them and proclaim the good news" (page 897). Hence, when a deacon participates in the liturgy, he or she appropriately reads the Gospel.

In the absence of a deacon, the Gospel may be read by a concelebrating presbyter, if one is assisting, or by the presider.

"Hear what the Spirit
is saying to the Church."

Furthermore, in the Anglican church here, the Gospel may be read by a lay person. This also follows from the school of thought which maintains that a bishop or presbyter is no more a deacon than a lay person is.

The reading should be allowed to speak for itself. It is not the reader's task to explain the reading to the community and so it is generally not appropriate for them to give a summary of the text before reading it. (Such a practice can at the very least cause embarrassment if this precis conflicts with the interpretation expounded in the sermon!) Similarly, some versions of the Bible contain section headings which are not part of the text and hence are not to be read. If the passage needs its context in order to make sense, that could be given briefly before the reading is announced. Such a brief introduction needs to be prepared in consultation with the preacher.

The reader may need to slightly adapt the Bible translation for reading. Pronouns may need clarifying the first time they occur, (reading "Jesus said to Pilate" rather than "He said to him"). The speaker or writer may need to be identified, (e.g. it may be necessary to begin with "Jesus said ..."). Some distracting beginnings, which add nothing to the reading, might be removed, (e.g. "After this Jesus immediately got into the boat and ..." could become "Jesus got into the boat and ..."). The language may need to be made inclusive.

The book used for the readings is an important liturgical sign of the place of the scriptures within the community. The scriptures are the possession of the whole community, not of particular individuals. The size and dignity of the book should image that it is from this book that we hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church. A community's careful choice of the translation will minimise the need for adaptation of the text especially to make language inclusive. Readers may then have small copies of the lectern Bible for practice. The New Revised Standard Version, for example, is available in lectern and personal editions with identical page formats. To prevent awkward fumbling, the lectern Bible must be clearly marked for each reading before the service. Some communities carry the Bible in during the entrance procession, others carry in a book of the Gospels. This can be placed on the lectern, or on the altar until needed.

The lectern from which the scriptures are read is one of the three architectural foci for the Eucharist (presider's chair, lectern, altar). During the

1950s Anglicans began to read the Gospel in the midst of the congregation (a custom going back twelve hundred years) rather than from the altar as had been prevalent previously. Surprisingly, there was no movement to use the lectern for the Gospel at this time, perhaps because that was associated with Morning and Evening Prayer.

A "Gospel procession" may move to the lectern or to the midst of the congregation. The former practice emphasises the unity of the scriptures, the latter may emphasise the Gospel as the climax of the readings and the primary way in which Christ speaks to us. It is worth checking if the Gospel can be reasonably heard when it is read in the midst of the congregation, and also if most (particularly children) are able to see the reader. If this way of reading the Gospel is seen as the "solution" to a long, neo-gothic nave, this invites attention to how the other readings are proclaimed and may indicate the need to reorder the liturgical space.

The Readings before the Gospel

After the Collect of the Day the congregation sits and a reader goes to the lectern and announces the first reading. The reading of the Old Testament at the Eucharist is one of the ecumenical restorations of this century.

A reading is announced "A reading from ..." If different readers use different styles of announcing (e.g. "The Old Testament lesson is found in/ is written in" or "... the fourteenth verse of the seventh chapter of ...") this can get ragged. The title of the book can be given as simply as possible. Chapter and verse are not required to be given. They can form a distraction particularly where the reading is from more than one chapter, or when the reader gives a detailed listing of which verses are included and which are omitted. A community needs to make a decision whether it will consistently include chapter and verse or not, so that when it comes to the Gospel the assembly knows which is the cue for the response "Praise and glory to God." A brief pause can separate the announcement, from the text of the scriptures itself.

After the reading there is another brief but distinct pause. The reader looks up at the assembly and addresses it, "Hear what the Spirit is saying to the

Church." (A community may use another phrase, however "Here ends the lesson. **Thanks be to God**." is hardly appropriate!) This is a dialogue between reader and assembly and hence the reader should make no motion to leave the lectern until it is completed. Silence in the liturgy is corporate. If silence follows a reading, readers needs to remain at the lectern until the end of the silence rather than return to their place during the silence.

Both readings before the Gospel may be read by the same person, or a second reader could come forward after the psalm. Only when no competent lay persons are present to fulfil this ministry of the Word do ordained persons read the lessons that precede the Gospel.

The Psalm

Christian liturgy generally and Anglican worship in particular has deep roots in the Psalms. Worship leaders need to consider carefully, if they regularly omit the psalm appointed in the lectionary, how this rich heritage can be preserved now that the Eucharist is the normal Anglican service.

The psalm appointed (sometimes called the "gradual" or "meditation psalm") usually reflects on the first reading and provides the worshippers with opportunity to respond to it. It acts as a bridge to the second reading. The psalm (or psalm portion) is not concluded with the Glory to the Father.

Psalms are intended to be sung. As well as Anglican Chant and Plainsong, there are a growing number of settings suitable for Psalms for Worship. There are also a number of other good modern translations with musical settings. Psalms may be recited in unison or antiphonally (either between two "sides" or between cantor and assembly). Alternatively, a congregational refrain (e.g. a brief line paraphrased from the psalm) can be used to respond to a cantor in the style of Taizé. Using the refrain after approximately every two verses works best. Another option is for a reader, or group of readers to read the verses, with the assembly singing the refrain. Where singing is not possible, it would be preferable to adapt one of the above ways to read the psalm rather than neglect the psalm altogether. Whatever method is used, the psalm needs to be experienced as a prayerful response by the assembly to the first reading rather

than as another reading.

It is preferable that the psalm not be led by the presider as this diverts the attention of the assembly from the lectern to the presider's chair. Hence, it is better for the reader of the first lesson to begin the psalm or for a cantor to move to the lectern for this. If the psalm is announced, verse numbers are preferably omitted (unless they are needed for reciting in unison or antiphonally). Because of its meditative quality, remaining seated for the psalm is an appropriate posture for the assembly.

Preparation for the Gospel

Any music between the second reading and the Gospel needs to be such as to prepare the community to hear the Gospel. From at least the third century the singing of "Alleluia" welcomed the Gospel. After the tenth century a sequence hymn was introduced as well. If a hymn is chosen, dividing the hymn in two (part before and part after the Gospel) not only violates the integrity of the hymn, but focuses on the hymn and places an unsuitable division between Gospel and Sermon. Placing the hymn before the "Alleluia" allows the latter its original function.

Many communities find particularly appropriate this tradition of preparing for the Gospel by singing an "Alleluia verse." The Sentence of the Day can be used as a text for the Alleluia. (The Sentence is a ghost of Matins that has continued to haunt the first part of the Eucharist - it can helpfully be laid to rest here!) The cantor can sing Alleluia with the assembly repeating it, the cantor then chants the text, and then all sing Alleluia again. Taizé provides a variety of Alleluia chants which are easy to learn. Alleluias to well known hymn tunes (e.g. *Lasst Uns Erfreuen, Vulpius*, or *Victory*) can similarly be used. During Lent, when Alleluia is not used at the liturgy, a verse or verses of a psalm (or the Sentence of the Day) replaces the Alleluia.

The Gospel

The Gospel is a principal way in which Christ is present at the Eucharist. Hence

it is attended by marks of special honour. All stand. The deacon or other reader may be blessed by the presider. Alternatively the presider may bow low before the altar praying to proclaim the Gospel worthily. There may be a procession (preferably during the Alleluia verse). The tradition of the Gospel reader greeting the congregation with "The Lord be with you," arose in the days when this was the first time in the service that the deacon addressed the people.

If incense is used during the Gospel, the presider puts incense in the thurible after the second reading. The thurifer leads the Gospel procession. The reader censes the Gospel book after announcing the Gospel.

The sign of the cross made with the thumb on forehead, lips, and breast may accompany the announcement of the Gospel (the reader may also mark the book with a cross first). Singing the Gospel may be a way of increasing the solemnity of major festivals. The book may be raised at "This is the Gospel of Christ" (and kissed where this is the custom).

Any music which follows should not become a musical interlude but simply cover the return of the Gospel procession. Nor should the character of this music overshadow the Gospel.

The Sermon

Each of the Liturgies of the Eucharist presupposes that a sermon is a normal part of every Eucharist. Even where it has been the custom not to preach at "early" or "weekday" services a short sermon can be appropriate. A sermon is an integral part of the Sunday Eucharist (page 517). There needs to be a balance between Word and Sacrament at the Eucharist (so that the Eucharist becomes neither a Bible study with communion "tacked on," nor a long communion rite briefly interrupted by a couple of readings and a thought for the day).

Similarly, it is worth reflecting on the balance between readings and sermon. Does the Spirit speak to us primarily through the proclamation of the readings? Or are the readings seen merely as illustrations for the sermon? It is the conviction that the primary encounter with God's Word occurs in the readings from the scriptures that should be enhanced rather than obscured by the preacher. Furthermore, in order to keep the attention of the assembly,

careful consideration needs to be given to the length of the sermon.

The sermon is the living voice of the Gospel today. Preaching relates the readings and/or the feast or liturgical season to this particular assembly. Preaching applies the scriptural message to the present context and community. It leads the community to offer thanks and praise for what God has done and is doing in their lives and in the world. In this way the sermon is part of the movement from the Ministry of the Word to the Ministry of the Sacrament.

Although the presider may delegate the ministry of preaching, it is desirable that the presider normally be the preacher. This underscores the intimate relationship between "breaking the bread" of God's written Word for the assembly's nourishment and "breaking the bread" for communion.

The practices of praying a prayer before the sermon and of concluding with an ascription of praise appear to come from the period when sermons were often not an integral part of a service. As the sermon described here is grounded in a service of worship, there is nothing to prevent the preacher from simply inviting all to be seated. If desired, silence for reflection appropriately follows the sermon.

The Jewish custom of sitting in a chair to preach (cf. Luke 4:20-21) was continued in the early church. Some clergy today are effectively recovering this tradition. Giving the sermon at the presider's chair, either standing or sitting, emphasizes that delivery of a sermon is part of the office of presiding. Consciousness of the type of service, length and style of the sermon, architecture of the building, and visibility and audibility of the preacher, will influence whether one preaches from the pulpit, standing at the chancel steps, from the chair, or elsewhere.

The Affirmation of Faith

The use of the Nicene Creed at the Eucharist is a comparatively late development. A creed is an integral part of a baptism service and is used more naturally there. Within the Eucharist, however, the early church regarded the eucharistic prayer as adequately professing the church's faith. The eucharistic prayer abounds in credal affirmations. It does not seem coincidental that the

people's proclamation of the creed entered the liturgy when the eucharistic prayer ceased to be a vocal proclamation and began to be quietly said far removed from the congregation. Now that the eucharistic prayers are once again strong proclamations of the church's belief it can be seen that the creed is not an indispensable part of the eucharistic service. The creed may in fact interrupt the flow of the service. When the rubric instructs that the creed "may be said or sung" this means it may also be omitted. The Nicene Creed might be reserved for use on more solemn or festive occasions. It is particularly appropriate on Trinity Sunday.

There are four days of the year especially recommended for the administration of baptism - the Baptism of the Lord (the first Sunday after Epiphany), Easter Day, Pentecost, and the feast of All Saints (which may be celebrated on the first Sunday in November). On these days, if there is no baptism, the Affirmation of Faith appropriately takes the form of the corporate renewal of baptism. This includes the Apostle's Creed (particularly in the form on page 394) and the Commitment to Christian Service (page 390). The presider can lead the renewal from the font or from the chancel, and subsequently may sprinkle the assembly with water.

Turning eastward for the creed originates from the period when the Eucharist was celebrated facing east. When the presider faces the assembly for the Eucharist it seems an inappropriate gesture for presider, choir, servers or others to suddenly change the direction they are facing in order to recite the creed.

If the creed is sung, a simple congregational setting should be used so that the creed does not take on disproportionate weight within the liturgy as a whole.

If a creed other than those provided in *A New Zealand Prayer Book* is introduced, care needs to be taken that the words embody the broad spectrum of belief acceptable within the Anglican Church.

Some Questions

There is a suggestion that the Bible reading is most effective when it is a corporate activity rather than individual following of the text in "pew

Bibles." What is your view on this and the case presented by the author?
Given the importance of the role of the reader, what ways can you think of that would help the readers in your situation explore the possibilities of proclaiming the meaning of the text with insight as they read?
What is your view of the case for the presider being normally the preacher?