

A Recommended Revision of the Liturgy for Baptism and Replacement of the Liturgy for the Laying on of Hands for Confirmation and Renewal

INTRODUCTION

In 2014 the House of Bishops met to discuss concerns around the liturgies of *baptism* and *confirmation* in our church. Within that discussion agreement was reached that it would be helpful to separate the confirmation liturgy from baptism in the prayer book, with confirmation becoming a *pastoral office* and removed as a requirement for ordination.¹ It was also suggested that pastoral rites marking spiritual growth and the renewal of baptismal vows could be offered more widely,² and a new rite of reception from another church would be helpful.

The bishops comments were received by the Common Life Liturgical Commission (CLLC) in August 2014. CLLC agreed to establish a Small Working Group (SWG) convened by Bishop Jim White with membership of Bishop Victoria Matthews, Bishop George Connor, Dean Trevor James, Rev'd Brian Dawson, Rev'd Jacynthia Murphy, and a nominee from Polynesia by Archbishop Winston Halapua. In the end neither Bishop Victoria Matthews nor a nominee from Polynesia were involved in the working group.

The Terms of Reference for the group were:

A review of the initiation rites of Baptism (infant and adult)/ Confirmation/ Renewal, and any others to be suggested, seeking clarification of the Theology of Confirmation as a pastoral office separate from baptism, and thus not completion of baptism, and clarification of the Theology of Baptism, especially considering the place of grace over works, where faith is the fruit of the sacrament not the requirement before receiving baptism. To recommend any liturgical ways forward in light of this review and to report these to CLLC. To report back initially to next CLLC meeting in March 2015 and in fuller form by July 2015. The SWG to be resourced from CLLC budget for a couple of face-to-face meetings, as required.

In terms of meetings, the SWG met once via video conference and once for a two day gathering face to face. In between and following these meetings work was carried out by individuals and reported back to the wider group.

The results of our labours may at first seem somewhat radical. We are mindful that what we are recommending represents a significant departure from the current practice of our church, but, as we explain below, we believe these recommendations do not depart from our stated theological positions. While any change is challenging, we believe that the changes recommended here serve the purpose of *enhancing, clarifying, and making unambiguous* what we currently say and do. To that end, while there is a degree of revision involved, it is in the area of *practice* more than *belief*.

What follows is an introduction to the rationale behind our recommendations. While we have sought to provide a comprehensive introduction of our work, this is not an exhaustive overview. There is still work to be done in several areas, including around the use of oil. We are very aware there is also some conversation to be had, especially between the Tikanga. Recent decisions in Pasifika may have simplified this, but there is still talking to be done. We encourage that and trust that what follows will be of assistance.

¹ As things currently stand ordination is the *only* role in the life of our church requiring confirmation as a prerequisite.

² In line with General Synod Standing Resolution SRL4 4 b and c.

Reframing Baptism

“Baptism is the sacrament by which we are made children of God, members of Christ’s body the Church, and heirs of the Kingdom of God.”³

“Holy Baptism is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ’s Body the Church. The bond which God establishes in Baptism is indissoluble.”⁴

A number of principles undergird our approach to this reframing of the baptismal liturgy for our church.

1) We begin with baptism, and the position that baptism alone is full admission into the life of the church.

In any examination of Christian Initiation this point remains foundational. We acknowledge this in our baptism liturgy:

“From the beginning the Church has received believers by baptism.”⁵

Along with most of the Western Church we have debated from time to time just how complete initiation is by baptism alone and until the 1970s required confirmation as a completion of baptism prior to the reception of Holy Communion. In Anglican history, however, such an approach was not always automatically the case. In the mid-sixteenth century work, *The Kings Book*, the status of one baptised was described thus:

“... all such as had duly received the sacrament of baptism were by virtue and efficacy thereof perfectly regenerated in Christ, perfectly incorporated and made the very members of his body, and had received full remission of their sins, and were endued with graces and gifts of the Holy Ghost.”⁶

The significance of this statement is that the Archbishop of Canterbury was a chief contributor to this work and it is extremely unlikely that it would have been published without his approval and agreement. The Archbishop in question, of course, was none other than the chief architect of Anglican liturgy, Thomas Cranmer.

Regardless of Cranmer’s theological opinions, however, for Anglicans confirmation became the gateway to the Eucharist and by default therefore a *completion* of baptism. This approach was seriously challenged in the second half of the twentieth century and in 1968 the Lambeth Conference of bishops recommended that:

“... each province or regional Church be asked to explore the theology of baptism and confirmation in relation to the need to commission the laity for their task in the world, and to experiment in this regard.”⁷

³ *A New Zealand Prayer Book He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa*, p. 933

⁴ *The Book of Common Prayer* (The Episcopal Church, USA), p. 298

⁵ *A New Zealand Prayer Book He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa*, p. 384

⁶ From *The Kings Book*, 1543. Quoted in Bryan D. Spinks, *Reformation and Modern Rituals and Theologies of Baptism: From Luther to Contemporary Practices*. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 65.

⁷ *The Lambeth Conference – Resolutions Archive from 1968*, Resolution 25, p. 11

In this province that led to experiments with direct admission to Holy Communion from baptism and Introduction to Communion programmes. In 1980 General Synod formalised these arrangements, removing the requirement of confirmation prior to Holy Communion.

In 1992 General Synod Te Hinota Whanui commended to the Church the recommendations of the previous year's International Anglican Liturgical Consultation, and asked each tikanga to discuss in particular part g of those recommendations:

Principles of Christian Initiation

- a. The renewal of baptismal practice is an integral part of mission and evangelism. Liturgical texts must point beyond the life of the church to God's mission in the world.
- b. Baptism is for people of all ages, both adults and infants. Baptism is administered after preparation and instruction of the candidates, or where they are unable to answer for themselves, of their parent(s) or guardian(s).
- c. Baptism is complete sacramental initiation and leads to participation in the eucharist. Confirmation and other rites of affirmation have a continuing pastoral role in the renewal of faith among the baptized but are in no way to be seen as a completion of baptism or as necessary for admission to communion.
- d. The catechumenate is a model for preparation and formation for baptism. We recognize that its constituent liturgical rites may vary indifferent cultural contexts.
- e. Whatever language is used in the rest of the baptismal rite, both the profession of faith and the baptismal formula should continue to name God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- f. Baptism once received is unrepeatable and any rites of renewal must avoid being misconstrued as rebaptism.
- g. The pastoral rite of confirmation may be delegated by the bishop to a presbyter.⁸

While our Church, like others, refused to accept the final recommendation, the remainder of the Toronto Consultations initiation principals were accepted and form the basis for our formal theology of baptism today. That understanding is contained in the Standing Resolutions of General Synod Te Hinota Whanui:

*"The sacramental means of entry and incorporation into the Body of Christ occurs through Baptism. The Eucharist is the sacramental means by which members of the Body are sustained and nurtured in that community and is the central act of worship in the Christian Church. Baptism confers full membership of the Church, and therefore provides the ground for admission to the holy communion. All may therefore receive communion from the time of their Baptism irrespective of age."*⁹

While this seems fairly unequivocal, the strength of the resolution is weakened considerably in the next sentence, which states *"Variations in pastoral practice in relation to admission to communion may be found"* and goes on to note that these may include confirmation.¹⁰ This Standing Resolution

⁸ David R. Holeton (Editor), *Christian Initiation in the Anglican Communion: The Toronto Statement 'Walk in Newness of Life'*, p. 5; see also Proceedings of General Synod 1992 pp.68-9

⁹ Standing Resolutions of General Synod Te Hinota Whanui SRL4 3

¹⁰ Standing Resolutions of General Synod Te Hinota Whanui 4.3

has now been in place for twenty-five years and it is increasingly clear the *variations* section is unnecessary. Tikanga Pasifika, where confirmation has widely remained as a gateway to the Eucharist, has now shifted its theology and is moving to change its practice, to recognise also that:

“... baptism is complete in itself, that is, one is made a member of Christ’s church and the gift of the Holy Spirit is bestowed upon that person at baptism. The baptised can therefore partake of Holy Communion because he or she has now been admitted into the body of Christ, the church.”¹¹

With this significant shift in practice in Pasifika the time is now right to remove the ambiguity we have lived with since 1968 and be clear that in our church the normative practice is that baptism is the sole and complete rite of initiation.

2) The bishop is the principal presider at baptism.

In the Western Church this has been the norm in *most* places from the earliest of points. While this role has normally been delegated to priests in the Anglican tradition, we believe it is important to note that this should be considered appropriate only in the absence of the bishop with pastoral responsibilities for the worshipping community in question.

In some provinces in the Anglican Communion special emphasis is placed on bishop’s visitations. In the early church and the beginnings of the medieval church these were often accompanied by baptisms, a practice we believe this Church should encourage again.

3) Baptism should normally take place at the main worship service of the week, although other festivals are also appropriate.

“Holy Baptism is appropriately administered within the Eucharist as the chief service on a Sunday or other feast.”¹²

Baptism is about admission to the body of Christ, so the body should be present. *‘Private baptism’¹³* is to be strongly discouraged. We would equally strongly recommend and encourage that baptism take place within the principle service of the day and not as a separate liturgical event, noting that this has been the official Anglican practice since 1549.

Along with encouraging the public nature of baptism, we recommend that this Church should be keen to invite a rediscovery of the special links between baptism and certain feasts. In particular Easter Eve in the Great Vigil is one of the most ancient times for baptisms, as is the Eve or Day of Pentecost. Other obvious liturgical dates are the Baptism of Christ, All Saints Day, and the Feast of Title/ Patronal Festival. In line with historical practice we suggest that Lent is not the season for baptism, but rather the season for intentional preparation – for baptism and for Easter.

4) Sponsors / Godparents are appropriate

Anglican understanding is that Godparents (or sponsors) carry a responsibility for ensuring a child is instructed in the faith and encouraged *“to take her/his place in the eucharistic community”¹⁴*

¹¹ Diocese of Polynesia Synod Resolution, 2015.

¹² *The Book of Common Prayer* (The Episcopal Church, USA), p. 298; see also the first rubric in 1662 BCP Publick Baptism of Infants

¹³ By which we mean a baptism carried out in a separate liturgical event.

¹⁴ *A New Zealand Prayer Book He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa*, p. 382

Along with the Episcopal Church, we recommend that this Church should clearly state that, “*It is fitting that parents be included among the godparents of their own children.*”¹⁵

We would note that, contrary to some common understandings and interpretations, in our contemporary baptism liturgies the Godparents (or sponsors) make no promises on behalf of the child at baptism. Thus, there are no vows to “confirm” at any future point in life.

5) Preparation is important

A more rigorous approach to preparing parents, godparents/sponsors, or, in the case of adults, baptismal candidates themselves is essential. We note that the catechetical process remains a helpful approach for teen and adult candidates, and recommend the use of similar programmes for preparation for an infant baptism.

6) We love because God first loves us¹⁶

Part of our brief as a working group has been to consider “*considering the place of grace over works, where faith is the fruit of the sacrament not the requirement before receiving baptism.*”¹⁷ In doing this we have reiterated our belief that the place of grace in baptism is fundamental, but it is also not the sole factor at play. From the earliest of times baptism liturgies have included both a statement of faith and commitment to Christian service. As our baptismal liturgy declares, “*In baptism God declares that love, in Christ God calls us to respond.*”¹⁸ In putting forward a reordered baptismal liturgy we have sought to carefully balance the place of grace and faith and strengthen both.

The Revised Liturgy

For opening words we have retained *God’s Call* from our existing liturgy. This places the genesis of our baptism squarely with God. Before any declaration of faith, before any commitment to Christian service, before anything else, God loves us.

We have retained the existing *Presentation* and the three questions, but we have followed this section with a *Baptismal Covenant* that incorporates the responsive creed used in our current liturgy with a greatly enhanced set of questions on Christian life to which the whole congregation responds. We have called for congregational responses rather than just the candidates because this section is about the call of us all, individually and collectively, to live out our baptisms.

Our *Prayer over the Water* is as our current liturgy, as is the water-bath that follows. Following this we have incorporated a prayer for the Holy Spirit:

*Gracious God,
we thank you that by water and the Holy Spirit
you have bestowed upon these your servants the forgiveness of sin,
and have raised them to the new life of grace.
Sustain them, O Lord, in your Holy Spirit.*

¹⁵ *The Book of Common Prayer* (The Episcopal Church, USA), p. 298

¹⁶ 1 John 4: 19

¹⁷ SWG Terms of Reference

¹⁸ *A New Zealand Prayer Book He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa*, p. 383

*Give them an inquiring and discerning heart,
the courage to will and to persevere,
a spirit to know and to love you,
and the gift of joy and wonder in all your works. Amen.*¹⁹

We follow this with a revised prayer during the *signing* – or *sealing* – with the sign of the cross on the head:

*N., you are sealed by the Holy Spirit in Baptism and marked as Christ's own for ever.
Amen.*

In our current liturgy this signing “*may be made with oil set apart for this purpose*”²⁰ We want to encourage the use of oil, and particularly the use of Chrism oil, as part of a greater encouragement to use oil more often.

This prayer and the signing make a clear statement that it is in *baptism*, not *confirmation* that the Holy Spirit is bestowed, with no ‘topping up’ required. Where the bishop is presiding oil for anointing can be blessed ‘on the spot’. Where a priest is presiding the oil should be chrism set aside for the purpose by the bishop, preferably at a Chrism Mass in Holy Week.

The *Welcome to the Baptised* is followed by the giving of a lighted candle as in our current liturgy, however we are also encouraging the alternative practice of giving this candle at the end of the liturgy, as a symbol of baptism propelling us outwards into Christ's service in the world.

The baptism in the reordered liturgy flows from a revised version of the prayers and statements from our current liturgy (p. 389) to the Peace (if a eucharist) or the Blessing in a service of the Word, with the actual conclusion to the baptism being at the Dismissal where the lighted candle is presented.

Baptism – the Beginning, and the End

This baptismal liturgy, in line with our stated theology, is meant to be the full and final act of initiation into complete life and membership of the church. We have thus disentwined it from any other liturgical action. That is not to say that we should not be mindful of our baptisms at other times. Indeed, every baptism should be an opportunity to remember and renew our own, along with various other feast days (as noted above). As far as initiation goes, however, this is it. With nothing further required.

Of course there may be a desire, and even a *need*, for some way to take particular ownership of our faith and place in the *missio Dei*. Our other liturgical recommendation seeks to fill that request.

¹⁹ This prayer (taken from both the United States and Canadian baptismal liturgies) has the option of being replaced with the prayer found in our prayer book on page 392. In our current liturgies this alternative prayer is part of the confirmation rite, however given our contemporary theology of baptism it more rightly belongs at baptism. This prayer will be placed as an alternate in the appendix to the liturgy.

²⁰ *A New Zealand Prayer Book He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa*, p. 382

A Liturgy for the Laying on of Hands for Affirmation, Renewal and Reception

“Perhaps the biggest problem in the theological debate is the seemingly irreconcilable conflict between two positions on the meaning of confirmation.”²¹

Probably the most significant of our recommendations is the removal of the rite of confirmation from our authorised liturgies. It is not a position we have reached lightly. *Confirmation*, in one form or another, has been a distinct ritual of the church since at least the 6th century.²² To do away with it, therefore, requires careful reflection.

For Anglicans our approach to confirmation lies in several different streams. Much has been written about the subject in the past fifty years, but it has in general tended to be from a clearly Roman Catholic perspective,²³ or a distinctly Protestant one.²⁴ There are Anglican scholars who have written on confirmation,²⁵ but, not surprisingly, these often tend to disagree with one another’s positions.

One area of significant disagreement surrounds Thomas Cranmer’s attitudes to confirmation. Some have argued that Cranmer was so heavily influenced by his connections to the Continental Reformers that his personal desire was to do away with any inference that confirmation was a required addition to, or completion of, baptism. Led by the work of Massey Shepherd in the mid-20th century, proponents of this theory even suggest that Cranmer deliberately attempted to shift key elements of the medieval confirmation rite into his baptismal liturgy in order to ‘reclaim’ a single, unified initiation rite.²⁶ Others, however, have dismissed these claims, arguing that the available evidence provides nothing to back them up, but rather confirms Cranmer’s belief that confirmation remained essential, even if not in terms of initiation.²⁷

A further approach to the question of where Cranmer stood on confirmation suggests a pragmatic straddling of the middle line in an attempt to pull together divergent forces:

“In 1552 Cranmer produced a book worthy of the term ‘reformed’, but despite clear shifts away from the inherited past, there remained in its liturgies a traditionalist vein. In the 1552 confirmation

²¹ Kieran Sawyer cited in Craig Cox, “Rethinking Confirmation: Possible Ways Forward” in *Confirming the Faith of Adolescents: An Alternative Future for Confirmation* ed. Arthur J. Kubick (New York: Paulist, 1991), 165.

²² It is unclear when the act of sealing a baptism became separated from the water-bath event itself. Varying opinions abound, but most scholars suggest there is a clearly separate rite of ‘confirmation’ in some areas by the mid-6th century at least.

²³ For example, the work of Aidan Kavanagh, Gerard Austin and (largely) Maxwell Johnson (Johnson is in fact a Lutheran, but has worked and researched at the University of Notre Dame for many years, thus his work tends to take on a Roman Catholic focus).

²⁴ See James White, Gordon Lathrop and Arthur Repp.

²⁵ Beginning with important figures like J. D. C. Fisher and Geoffrey Cummings, and including more contemporary scholars such as Bryan Spinks and David Holeton.

²⁶ See Marion J. Hatchett, ‘Prayer Books’, in S. Sykes and J. Booty (eds), *The Study of Anglicanism*, (London: SPCK, 1988), 354f. This theory was crucial in the formation of the initiation rites in the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer* in the Episcopal Church, and extremely influential on the later work of the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation at Boston in 1985 and Toronto in 1991. See David R. Holeton (ed), *Christian Initiation in the Anglican Communion: The Toronto Statement ‘Walk in Newness of Life’*. (Nottingham: Grove, 1991)

²⁷ See Gordon P. Jeanes, *Signs of God’s Promise: Thomas Cranmer’s Sacramental Theology and the Book of Common Prayer* (London: T & T Clark, 2008), 354f. Also Bryan D. Spinks, *Reformation and Modern Rituals and Theologies of Baptism: From Luther to Contemporary Practices* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 70f.

rite Anglicanism moved mostly into the Lutheran / Reformed model of catechesis and profession, inherited and adapted from the Jednota, but there remained just enough of the medieval sacrament of the Holy Spirit to provide grist for the traditionalist mill and ensure future Anglicans would never have a single, clear view of what confirmation meant and did."²⁸

If this approach is true then anyone trying to adopt Cranmer's version of confirmation must blend both a Roman Catholic *and* Protestant approach to the rite, which along with being particularly difficult comes with inherent risk to the primacy of baptism.

"Cranmer then deliberately, and in a most Anglican fashion, opted for the middle way, albeit with a distinct lean in the reformers direction. Thus any approach to Anglican confirmation that fails to take into account both its sacramental and reformed origins cannot be considered to be in sync with sixteenth century Anglican thought. Equally, however, any approach to confirmation that includes a hint of its sacramental background must then contend cautiously with the questions raised about baptism."

Irrespective of which view better portrays Cranmer's personal perspective, the reality remains that the foundational Anglican liturgies of the 16th and 17th century served to not only maintain confirmation, but actually enshrine it as an ongoing necessity.

*"And there shall none be admitted to the holy communion: until suche tyme as he can saye the Catechisme and be confirmed."*²⁹

The so-called *confirmation rubric* first used in the 1559 prayer book and carried over into 1662 served to both explain Cranmer's focus for the rite and, paradoxically, give it what was largely regarded as its true meaning and purpose. While for Cranmer what mattered, in line with the priorities of the Reformers, was the education and formation of those baptised in infancy, for generations of Anglicans confirmation was really about being admitted to the eucharist. When this gateway to communion began to be pushed open in the 1970s its meaning diminished even more quickly than the numbers availing themselves of it did.

The significant decrease in demand for confirmation over the past fifty years has led to numerous efforts to reinvigorate the rite. A report commissioned for Tikanga Pakeha in 2009 found that the numbers of confirmations between 1985 and roughly 2007 had dropped by 87%, with four dioceses recording declines of more than 90%. The same report noted significant confusion surrounding confirmation's meaning and purpose, a widespread lack of adequate preparation and a number of previous reports and exploratory documents that had been largely ignored or forgotten.³⁰ A variety of studies from other provinces and churches have followed a common course of calling for confirmation to be more widely encouraged, more specifically focussed, or reframed as a 'rite of

²⁸ Brian R. Dawson, *Crossing the Streams: Sources of Anglican Confirmation*, unpublished thesis, 2014, 166f. The 'Jednota' referred to are the *Jednota Bratska*, or Bohemian Brethren, a Czech sect that incorporated a rite called *confirmation* into their practices which appears to have little or no connection to the medieval sacrament of the same name in Roman Catholicism. Dawson develops the work of David Holeton to suggest that the Jednota rite is the true source of reformed, or Protestant, confirmation. See David Holeton, "The Fifteenth Century Bohemian Origins of Reformed Confirmation." In *With Ever Joyful Hearts: Essays on Liturgy and Music Honoring Marion J. Hatchett*, ed. J. Neil Alexander 82-102. New York: Church Publishing, 1999.

²⁹ From the 1559 *Book of Common Prayer*.

³⁰ See B & K Dawson, *Here & Now: Confirmation in Tikanga Pakeha*, <http://anglican.org.nz/content/download/3769/20395/file/Here%20and%20Now%20-%20Confirmation%20in%20Tikanga%20Pakeha.pdf>

passage' or 'commissioning', in essence seeking to overlay yet more possible meanings on to a rite already burdened with too many.

There is also the matter of our prayer book to contend with. The decision to include an integrated liturgy of both *baptism* and *the laying on of hands for confirmation and renewal* was in line with a significant strand of liturgical scholarship at the time. The result, however, has often been seen as less than helpful, both in a practical (multiple page turning requirements in the midst of a service) and liturgical sense. While our church has clearly identified *baptism* as the full and final rite of Christian initiation, the placement of the confirmation liturgy within / alongside the baptism rite risks suggesting that something akin to the Mason-Dix two-stage initiation practice is still at play. As noted in the aforementioned report for Tikanga Pakeha, "*To clarify what we mean, and bring our liturgies into line with our theologies, the only logical way forward is to physically separate the confirmation rite out from the initiation liturgy.*"³¹ However, we would go further and question whether simply relocating the confirmation liturgy (for example into the *Pastoral Liturgies* section of the prayer book) would suffice.

Despite myriad attempts to revive and reframe confirmation, the confusion and malaise described above continues. It is in the light of this that we suggest the time has come to acknowledge that confirmation is now so encumbered with accretions of a former understanding as to be no longer helpful, which is *not* to say that some of the themes and purposes of confirmation don't remain significant and useful. In particular we have identified the following five themes as having ongoing importance:

- *Affirmation* of faith and taking personal ownership of the commitments made by others at baptism.
- *Strengthening* for the life of Christian mission.³²
- *Renewal* of faith and commitment.
- *Reception* into the Anglican communion.³³
- *Episcopal* action and responsibility.

Thus, setting aside *confirmation* but wishing to retain these focal points, we offer a liturgy for the *Laying of on Hands for Affirmation, Renewal and Reception (LHARR)*. In doing so we make the following points:

This is NOT confirmation by another name

As noted above, we believe confirmation has become unhelpful as a rite for the church, and not just in name only. While some of the elements of this new liturgy mirror some of the themes commonly associated with confirmation it is not our intention simply to re-label an old rite. We would also note that other elements of this liturgy firmly separate it from our current approach to confirmation.

³¹ K Dawson, *Here & Now*, 33.

³² This theme of *strengthening* is foremost in the medieval confirmation liturgies and an explicit theme in our current prayer book rite. In both cases, however, it is linked to the giving of the Holy Spirit, which we would argue belongs in baptism.

³³ This has often become a de facto use of confirmation

This is a Pastoral Office

Debates over whether *confirmation* should be listed as a *pastoral office*, a liturgy of *Christian initiation* or as an *episcopal rite* have often served to sidetrack the conversation concerning the significance of hand-laying and the true nature of the rite. In contrast we believe *LHARR* is clearly a pastoral office, focused as it is on times of specific, if not unique, need in a person's life.

This is a repeatable rite

Unlike confirmation, *LHARR* is designed to be of use at various stages in a person's faith journey. While *Renewal* and *Reception* may only be of use rarely, one might choose to repeat *Affirmation* on a regular – perhaps annual – basis. We see this as a specific and intentional act of affirmation that sits alongside but separate to the regular reaffirmation of baptismal vows that we encourage elsewhere.

This is a rite of return

In offering *Renewal* as an option in this liturgy we are recognising that there are points in people's lives when a return to faith and church demands marking. Our recommendation is that this liturgy be placed *after* the *Reconciliation of a Penitent* in the prayer book to enhance both liturgies and the opportunities they offer.

This is a welcoming rite

This Church has not adopted a formal rite of reception into the church since 1950.³⁴ While we in no way wish to suggest that a formal rite of entry is required for membership of the Anglican church, we do recognise that such is occasionally requested and commend this as a helpful resource in such cases.

This is not a rite of education.

We believe the formality of this rite advises some form of intentional preparation, but would not want to see such become mandatory. While attention needs to be paid to Christian formation and education in our church, in this case we believe the emphasis should lie on the pastoral needs of the person rather than the educational desires of the church.

This is a rite of hand-laying and, optionally, anointing

Anointing with oil and the laying on of hands are ancient and significant rites of the church. It is our desire that both be used more widely than they are now, and become seen in a wider sense than just *initiation, ordination* and *healing*. More work is required on the question of anointing, and specifically which oil should be used. It is *not* appropriate that this be chrism (used at baptism) but the oil of healing may be an option, or perhaps a third, more general, oil.

This is an Episcopal rite

While we recognise some danger in making *LHARR* a liturgy to be presided over solely by a bishop, we believe the benefits of doing so outweigh the risk of continuing confusion with confirmation. We hope that bishops and their faith communities will see this as an opportunity to make more use of Episcopal visitations and to heighten the diocesan connections with a particular place. Bishops should approach this as part of their normal pastoral responsibility, taking care not to equate it with what they once did at confirmations.

³⁴ The 1950 'Blue Book' rite was actually a reprint of the reception liturgy of 1915.

FINAL WORDS

As stated in the beginning, in offering this revised baptism liturgy and a new rite the Liturgy for the Laying on of Hands for Affirmation, Renewal and Reception (replacing confirmation), we are mindful of the significant departure we are recommending from the current practice of our church. Equally, however, we are mindful that our current practice of praying does not convey what we believe. Thus, while liturgically different, we believe our work to be entirely consistent with the stated theology of this Church.

*Enabling an ongoing life of conversion is the desired outcome for all people of faith.*³⁵

This, ultimately, is our goal; to provide liturgical opportunities that mirror our theological positions, to offer pastoral responses to the requests of our communities, and to encourage “*an ongoing conversion of life*” to all who call our church their own. We believe that our recommendations further this endeavour.

³⁵ Karen S. Cook, ‘Conversion to Kingdom Living: Catechumenate as Confirmation Process’. *Liturgy*, 22 (2007): 6.

A summary History of the Issues around Baptism/Confirmation (2009-2016) through CLLC and House of Bishops

(Aug 2009 CLLC)

A request from TPMC for a need to articulate the underlying theology of:

The nature of Baptism and Confirmation and the relationships between each.

How does Confirmation relate to rites of Christian Initiation?

What does Confirmation allow/ signify?

Are we inconsistent when we say that Baptism is complete initiation and allows anyone to be admitted to Communion? (We say that every child should come to Confirmation but we allow people to hold office without Confirmation?)

(Originally CLLC suggested a Doctrine Commission be called to clarify these matters, but later agreed to put them to the House of Bishops)

(Dec 2009 CLLC)

(March 2010 CLLC)

No progress from Bishops.

(October 2010 CLLC)

The key question is to clarify the nature of our understanding of Confirmation – is it part of initiation or a commissioning? A pastoral rite or a sacramental action? What do we mean by sacramental action vs. sacrament?

Ask the Bishops meeting to discuss their current understanding and advise this Commission, or if unclear then call for a Doctrine Commission to consider and clarify for us all. It would be ideal to have an agreed position/understanding as a church, which acknowledged how Confirmation has changed over time in both understanding and practice. In addition, to consider the related question about why it is still required for ordination? Are there international concerns here that restrict us?

(March 2011 CLLC)

Not addressed at Nov 2010 Bishops meeting

(October 2011)

Still not addressed by Bishops meeting.

(March 2012 CLLC)

Still to be raised at Bishops meeting. Draw attention to PB page 382 and to SRL4 on Christian Initiation which is the current stated position of this Church. To ask how Bishops understand Confirmation today, and if this differs from SRL4 then what changes could be proposed, and how is this related to the Church?

(October 2012 CLLC)

Bishops Pikaahu and Mathews as CLLC Bishops not at last Bishops meeting so still to raise there. Known to be a range of views/practices amongst the Bishops. Ask to be on next Bishops meeting agenda.

(March 2013 CLLC)

Didn't make it onto Bishops Oct 2012 agenda. To write again for April 2013 meeting. To also raise the question about 'laying on of hands' physically at Confirmation and Ordination.

April 2013 Bishop meeting

Above summary of CLLC Questions put to the Bishops over Christian initiation, Confirmation and Baptism.

Oct 2013 CLLC

The history of this issue was summarised and discussed by Bishops meeting in Tonga, April 2013. No action/ response eventuated. CLLC asked that Bishops meeting make this a priority and advise CLLC on future direction.

Feb 2014 CLLC

CLLC asked that this matter be a major topic at the next Bishops meeting.

March 2014 Bishops meeting:

The Bishops met and gave some considerable time to this matter.

Now *Confirmation* is not attached to *Admission to Communion* they explored what the role of Confirmation was.

The Bishops agreed that the matter would be helped by a separation of the *Liturgy of Confirmation* from that of *Baptism* in our Prayer Book.

They suggested *Confirmation* could be moved to a pastoral office (which was a sacramental action). They asked the question as to if *Confirmation* could be changed to no longer be necessary for Ordination.

And they suggested that the preparation pages (379-382) could be developed into a teaching resource, both for clergy and for candidates.

The Bishops reviewed the Guidelines in SRL4 and suggested pastoral rites (4b) marking spiritual growth, and (4c) marking renewal of baptismal vows, could be offered more widely, and especially to schools who wish to mark spiritual growth and currently use confirmation to achieve that end. They also noted that a rite for (4d) reception from another church is needed.

August 2014 CLLC

The Liturgical Commission met and received the report back from the Bishops Meeting discussion regarding Confirmation.

In light of the Bishops requests/ suggestions the CLLC wish to establish a small group to do some focussed work on this matter and make recommendations as to change.

The Terms of Reference to include:

a review of the initiation rites of Baptism (infant and adult)/ Confirmation/ Renewal, and any others to be suggested,

seeking clarification of the Theology of Confirmation as a pastoral office separate from baptism, and thus not completion of baptism,

and clarification of the Theology of Baptism, especially considering the place of grace over works, where faith is the fruit of the sacrament not the requirement before receiving baptism.

To recommend any liturgical ways forward in light of this review and to report these to CLLC.

To report back initially to next CLLC meeting in March 2015 and in fuller form by July 2015.

The SWG to be resourced from CLLC budget for a couple of face-to-face meetings, as required.

Discussion ensued:

Noting that the Adult Baptism rite in the PB is inadequate as key questions are left for the Confirmation Service under 'Commitment to Christian Service.' The proposal that the Confirmation be separated from the Baptism liturgies was supported, and the need for pastoral rites for renewal and reception

were noted. The need for a separate Adult Baptism rite was acknowledged and it was suggested that a small working group could progress these matters.

It was agreed that a SWG be established, inviting Bishop Jim White to convene, with membership of Bishop Victoria Matthews, Bishop George Connor, Dean Trevor James, Rev'd Brian Dawson, Rev'd Jacynthia Murphy, and a nominee from Polynesia by Archbishop Winston Halapua. **Carried.**

The General Secretary to provide admin support.

2014 - 2015 SWG met

July 2015 CLLC

Received SWG report and proposals positively, affirmed its general direction, commended it to the church and House of Bishops for consideration.

Sept 2015 Bishops Meeting Fiji

Received SWG report and proposals positively, and recommend it be progressed to GSTHW.

Sept 2015 CLLC

Received Bishops Mtg response and agreed to take it to GSTHW 2016.

May 2016 GSTHW

Received the report and proposals, and asked that they lie on the table until GSTHW 2018 and discussion be encouraged throughout Tikanga.

