

The Lord's Prayer: Which Version?

It is not many years ago that it was possible for a worship leader to announce, simply, "The Lord's Prayer", and a congregation could repeat it in unison, without any book or screen in front of them. There might have been discrepancies between "Our Father who art" and "Our Father which art", and between "those who trespass" and "them that trespass", but otherwise there was agreement.

This is no longer so. The multitude of modern translations of the Bible has given us a wide choice of possible wordings. Various books of worship in the English-speaking world now print a variety of versions.

There are obvious advantages, both for ecumenical occasions and within one congregation, in coming to agreement on a modern version. The only serious candidate is the English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC) version (1988) which has the endorsement of ecumenical liturgical bodies in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the USA, South Africa and the United Kingdom.

It is this version which is printed in [Uniting in Worship](#) and it is the same as the one published throughout the UCA since 1980, except for one word in Line 9: "Save us from the time of trial" replaces "Save us in the time of trial". The change, proposed by ELLC after much discussion, is closer to the New Testament meaning. In the Greek there is a negative, giving a literal rendering something like "Do not bring us to the time of hard testing". The line is not dealing with-everyday temptations but with the crucial test when we might deny the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.

These and other points are discussed, briefly but clearly, in the publication [Praying Together](#) (1988) which is the successor to the earlier collection of texts called [Prayers We Have in Common](#) (1969 and 1975). The new book is published by The Canterbury Press, Norwich.

The Assembly Commission on Liturgy recognises that on some occasions, such as weddings and funerals, the older version, "Our Father who art in heaven", may be appropriate, so this is printed in several places in [Uniting in Worship](#). But the Commission hopes, as do other denominations, that congregations will

move toward a single, common modern version which all regular worshippers can say by heart. For this reason, the Commission will recommend to the 1991 Assembly of the UCA that, where a modern version is used, congregations and councils of the Church be encouraged to use the ELLC version.

[Uniting in Worship](#) also uses ELLC texts for other prayers, creeds and canticles which we share with other Churches, e.g. Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed, Gloria in Excelsis, Te Deum, Magnificat (Song of Mary). Only in the Nicene Creed is there a slight departure from the ELLC version, on the recommendation of the Commission on Doctrine.

The commentary in [Praying Together](#) is highly recommended for further reading. An Australian scholar, The Revd Dr Evan Burge of Melbourne, played a large part in compiling the commentary.

D'Arcy Wood 12/10/90

Acknowledgment:

The English translation of The Lord's Prayer was originally prepared by the International Consultation on English Texts (ICET) and revised in 1987 by the English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC).