

**PRINCIPLES FOR THE LANGUAGE OF THE LITURGY**

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- 1 Divine worship is created and governed by the word of God, and so the language of the liturgy will be derived from the holy Scriptures and echo it by the use of quotation and allusion, as well as in the choice of vocabulary and imagery.
- 2 Liturgical language needs to present the church's theology tersely and succinctly, and so it will contain some necessary technical terms, which may require elucidation.
- 3 The Triune God communicates verbally with his people in worship, and so the language of the liturgy needs to be simple and clear, rather than complicated and obscure, so that it speaks directly to God's people in terms that they can understand.
- 4 Yet worship also centres on the mystery of God's gracious heavenly presence here on earth with forgiven sinners, and so liturgical language needs to avoid becoming trite, prosaic, and secular. Instead, it needs to be rich in expression, poetic, and elevated, without becoming pompous, to suggest that in worship God offers us something better than the best things here on earth.
- 5 The church glorifies the Triune God in its worship, where he reveals his hidden glory through the means of grace, and so the language of the liturgy needs to be suitably dignified, beautiful, and awe-inspiring, without becoming artificial or contrived.
- 6 The public worship of the church is meant to sustain people in all stages of life from infancy to old age, and so the language of the liturgy needs to be conservative and durable enough to provide something constant for all generations, without becoming either archaic or innovative, so as to cause alienation.
- 7 The Triune God seeks to gain a hearing for the gospel in worship and to evoke an appropriate response from those who hear it, and so the language of worship needs to avoid being dull and repetitious, dissonant and awkward, monotonous and forgettable, but instead needs to be vivid and varied, pleasing to the ear and easy to say, interesting and memorable.
- 8 The worship of the church is a corporate activity, and so the language used needs to be clear and direct in its oral form. It needs to flow well when spoken aloud, and have good speech rhythm. At the same time, it needs to be carefully constructed so as to bear repeated use.