

News of Liturgy

Editor: Colin Buchanan

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Editorial

When are we to have the 'People's Service Book'? The question is written in blissful ignorance of any official answer, but it is prompted by something which the Secretary-General of Synod is reported as saying to the March meeting of representatives of Diocesan Liturgical Committees. The 'Notes' on the meeting contain the following:

'Synod asked for a People's Service Book to be considered. There is a question of what sort of book this should be. Some want a Sunday Service Book and others want an Alternative Services Book. An interim book could be produced soon. A larger book would take until 1980 to produce. Whichever option we choose, it is unlikely to have a long life. We must expect, say, a 1980 edition and a 1990 edition.'

Whilst this is only a 'note' of what Mr. Derek Pattinson said at the meeting, it is a most revealing statement. To see this we need to go back in time and retrace some history. In the Introduction to the Liturgical Commission's *A Commentary on Holy Communion Series 3* (on p.3) in 1971 Canon Jasper, as he then was, wrote '... we hope ... that we shall be able to incorporate nearly all of this new rite with other new services in a Prayer Book by about 1975-76'.

My own view, when asked about 'getting back to having a single Prayer Book', has always been somewhat cautious, even slightly cynical. My usual reply is that it is always five years off, and the quotation from Canon Jasper above represented that figure of five years, though I had been using it long before that. Certainly the length of time taken in authorizing Series 3 Communion seemed to justify the 'always five years off' view—as the single book was obviously no nearer in early 1973 than it had been Summer 1971.

Then the Synod held its debate on 'The Future Course of Liturgical Revision' (for details of which see the *Report of Proceedings* for 3 July 1973, or the summary in Grove Booklet 14a). One of the motions before the Synod then was:

'That the House of Bishops and the Standing Committee be asked to set up a working party to draw up detailed plans for the issue of a People's Service Book, and to report its proposals in due course to the General Synod.'

An amendment was tabled to this to replace the words 'a People's Service Book' by 'A Book of Common Prayer 1980'. Dr. Ramsey in replying to the debate then said, 'I do not like the suggestion about the year 1980. The pastoral need is far more urgent than that. It is really urgent, as a number of speakers have pointed out, to have the book in the hands of the people really soon—I would hope within two years from now, not more

than that ...'. The 1980 suggestion was duly negated, and presumably Synod was endorsing the Archbishop's hopes in so doing.

Well, 1975 has now come—two years on from the 1973 debate. And it looks from the 'note' of Mr. Pattinson's statement quoted above that 1980 is the most realistic available current guess after all. So it is still 'five years off'. We have to ask why. Three reasons come to mind.

1. The working party is still disagreed about its task, and has difficulty forming a unanimous judgment. So one might well read between the lines of the report that there is a 'question', and some want one thing and some another. Nothing can be put in hand until the working party can reach a common mind and report. Obviously some want to put into the Service Book *all* authorized alternatives, whereas others want to keep the size and cost down by omitting all (or some) midweek provision and occasional services. The latter persons could also well be split among themselves as to what should still be included for Sunday use—e.g. would adult baptism and/or confirmation so qualify?
2. The Church of England is also still being very slow about handling its liturgical revision synodically. Thus in our April issue we noted 'The Logjam builds up'. This is nothing less than the sober truth. The services reviewed in this issue *could* take up to two years to be authorized. And when they are it will still be difficult to sort out whether '1½' communion ought to be included or not. If the Service Book is an avowedly 'Series 3 type' compilation then '1½' might be a stranger in its contents. On the other hand, those who like '1½' are currently very avid, if one hears aright, to secure it a place in the sun in the future. But if it were present, then would the Prayer Book Collects (and Epistles and Gospels) also have to figure? And what would be the reaction of those who want a lightweight Series 3 collection? In any case, when will '1½' be authorized? For no decision about it can be made till then. And if authorized, and if to be included, do its advocates want it included with its full alternative provisions, or only with their own particular pet 'route' through it?
3. Behind and above and before these considerations, there lurks the gloomy spectre of rising costs. At the Liturgical Conference in 1969 one speaker said that a simple 80-page collection of services could be published easily for as little as 2s. (10p) a copy. To-day such a book would be certain to cost 75p, and at 20% per annum inflation it would cost nearly £2 in 1980. Of course giving should rise equally with inflation also, but the prospect is daunting. And it also looks doubtful if 80 pages would be enough ...

So, at the end of the day, the best advice to P.C.C.s would seem still to be to settle for little booklets, and to make a virtue out of that necessity. It may be that the booklets are appropriate luggage for pilgrims, and are symbolic of travelling light. They reflect a moving situation, and they still allow us to keep our options open if 'five years from now' should after all ever come.

Colin Buchanan

Reviews

You He Made Alive by Peter Hocken (Darton, Longman and Todd. 1974, 126pp. £1)

What is it that is so good about this book? It takes the best of the experience of charismatic prayer groups, and applies it to prayer as a whole. Prayer itself is the prior reality, the reality which is being rediscovered through small prayer groups. Peter Hocken is not partisan: he is a student of prayer as a whole. Prayer to him is an experience, not a duty.

This experience of prayer pervades the book, and gives it a distinctive quality. The writing is consistently Biblical, using Biblical texts as living yardsticks for current experience. It is also consistently practical: acute insights keep on popping up. Peter Hocken also refers to the Roman Liturgy frequently—again, not in a partisan sense, but because the tradition of worship is known to him in this form.

So the book is one that feeds back into the mainstream of Christian prayer the particular insights of the charismatic movement. At last books have begun to appear that recognize the charismatic experience as something that takes place within a broad stream of Christian experience and doctrine, not a sharp divide between those who are living before 'Nine o'clock in the Morning' and those who have emerged into the noonday of the particular pentecostal experience.

Hocken treats prayer as the very essence of the Christian life. It must always be Trinitarian, or it becomes unbalanced and topples into the exclusively quietest (before the Father alone) or the gushingly verbal (to the Son alone). We have concentrated too much on individual prayer, and the growth of prayer groups has reminded us that prayer is an activity of the community—not just me and my God. This is where we come into the field of liturgy.

Liturgical prayer complements private prayer. 'Through the prayer of the liturgy, we enter into a history of praise and worship, and realize our historical moment as given within a greater whole; the liturgy gives context and structure. It shows Christian prayer as within a trinitarian framework, as within an eschatological setting, and as combining praise, thanksgiving, intercession and contrition.' The liturgy can educate us for private prayer; private prayer should be poured into the living stream of the liturgy.

The subtitle of the book is: 'A total Christian view of prayer, communal, individual and with special reference to the work of the Spirit in prayer groups.' This brief is followed exactly. Such wisdom and maturity are themselves works of the Spirit.

Nicholas Sagovsky

Variations on a Theme by Michael Taylor (Galliard, 1973, 122pp. £1)

The 'theme' of the title is the Eucharist and, pursuing the musical analogy, this is a work in three longish movements. The first chapter states the basic melody, tracing out lines of historical and theological origin. Chapter two

proceeds to the variations, some of which have been historical, some theological and some temperamental. The final chapter (counterpoint) attempts a restatement of the theme for the present day, (under three sub-sections: All-join-in, Multi-Media, and Down-to-earth), and this occupies more than half the book. There is an index, and some useful cross-references in the text.

Deeply influenced by Dix and Company (and which of us is not these days?), the writer is providing here an everyman's guide to the origin and nature of the liturgical movement, and the dominant chords are the centrality of the Eucharist as 'the Liturgy', the fourfold action, the proclamation of 'the Story', and the involvement of the whole Body. The fact that the author is a Baptist teaching ordinands at the Northern Baptist College, of which he is Principal, is surely a sign of the times. His occasional comments on Anglican liturgical practice I found particularly valuable.

There is throughout a lively blend of historical and theological survey with personal commentary. In the former he reveals a grasp of the wide range of material and a good sense of perspective, although no one is likely to agree with every generalized summary. In the latter, he gives us many shrewd and intelligent insights, expressed in a concise and punchy style.

Doctrinal points are sensibly kept in a low key, although the author seems to have a strictly cautious attitude to metaphysics which cannot always be hidden. The charismatic contribution to the celebration of the Eucharist rates just two or three paragraphs under the sub-section 'Multi-Media'!—I feel it warrants more serious treatment than that nowadays. But, small criticisms apart, this is a thoroughly useful and stimulating book, and I can think of nothing comparable to recommend to the student or interested layman which covers so much ground so concisely and gives such relevant food for thought.

Robert Crossley

Small Points

The Worship and Doctrine Measure will not now come into force till well after 1 August 1975 (as previously forecast). 1 December 1975 looks more likely.

All Grove Booklets which currently cost 20p will go up to 25p on 1 July 1975. So order quickly ...

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BAPTISM AND WEDDING SERVICES—New Reports from the Liturgical Commission

I am delighted that at last two very real pastoral needs have been supplied by the liturgical commission. I only hope that they will not be hindered (and perhaps ruined?) by the fiddlings of the bishops and the synods. I am often very discouraged by the synodical process which means that the recommendations of acknowledged experts are not only hindered unnecessarily but considerably altered by people who have never actually used the services regularly. Most alterations are much more appropriate after a period of actual parochial use.

The new *Infant Baptism* service is structurally the same as Series 2, and many of the improvements have arisen, not just out of the modernization of the language, but out of practical experience.

I am particularly pleased to see that the Duties of Parents and Godparents are now specifically included in the service itself. Even if, as one hopes, the family have been prepared in advance, it is important to stress the conditions under which infants are baptized to the congregation as a whole, which often includes a large proportion of 'outsiders'.

I am also pleased that the Series 2 questions have been kept in their original form. They have been widely accepted by clergy and people as being satisfactory. I still regret the watering down of the Devil to mere impersonal evil, but he still gets a look in at the Signing with the Cross. I note with pleasure that the sponsors now reply to the questions in *both* their own persons *and* that of the candidate.

I still find that the wording of the final prayers is difficult. I can understand very clearly why the Commission says that you must assume that Baptism effects what it symbolizes, and that is why you must use the words that these children have been born again into a new life. I am at a complete loss as to how to explain this to the majority of people who bring their children to baptism. They either object to the language on the grounds that the child is not born again by the act of baptism, or assume that all is now well by virtue of the ceremony. The symbolism in the Baptism prayer has been greatly deepened. One advantage I find over the series 2 services is that series 3 frequently gives those of us who know the service backwards something new to think about.

As for the *Wedding service* there are many things that I find very attractive in this new service, but I believe we have suffered in some way through not having a series 2 in which to make mistakes.

Particularly important I find the emphasis that the couple are to 'grow together in their new life'. So many seem to think, with all the dangers that arise, that marriage is supposed to be a permanent honeymoon, so it is part of the minister's responsibility to prepare people for the changes and difficulties which they have to face together.

I rejoice also that the compilers of the service recognize the very obvious fact that many couples who come for marriage are not regular churchgoers.

Which then makes me wonder why there is no mandatory scripture reading, except for those who have Holy Communion as well. Surely those who have little or no Christian commitment need to hear the Word of God and have it expounded. People often say to me that the sermon 'personalizes' what can sometimes be a priestly gabble. I am also puzzled by two 'technical' words which will obviously mean very little to the 'outsider', namely *mystery* and *pro-creation*. Although to be honest I am at a loss to suggest alternatives.

The matter that does distress me acutely is the removal (except at the explicit request of the bride) of the word *obey* from the promises. I am aware that this service is at pains to emphasize that the marriage partnership is one of mutual responsibility and sharing, but I do believe we need to stress the different roles of husband and wife. The New Testament (which we dare not rewrite to suit sociological circumstances) does emphasize in the passage which the compilers have removed (Eph. 5) that the wife to be subject to her husband and provided we take the further step of saying that it is in the context of husbands loving their wives as Christ loved the church I honestly do not see the problem. In fact I have discovered, through pastoral experience (I am told by those who disagree with me that it is a statistical coincidence) that many marriages that do break up do so because no one is prepared to bear the responsibility for taking decisions—a responsibility which according to scripture belongs to the man.

The practical point that does worry me is the number of words that now have to be recited (or just read out of the service book) by bride and groom. For some, who are very nervous, it is as much as they can do to stumble through the words after me—what will happen when they are confronted by even more I dread to think. The idea is undoubtedly right, and it does go a long way to emphasizing the importance of their own consent, but I shall have to be convinced of its practicality. That can only happen through use.

J. J. Hamilton-Brown

(The Infant Baptism report is published by S.P.C.K. at 20p, and the Wedding one by S.P.C.K. at 25p. Both are published on 29 May 1975—though released to the press a fortnight earlier. We hope this procedure will not be repeated—it whets appetites whilst forbidding the actual materials to them.)

At the same time the final congregational text of Series 3 Funeral has also become available—AS 360 at 16p (AS 362 at 35p will be available later). In June *NOL* will have reviews of it by Trevor Lloyd and Jimmy Hamilton-Brown. An S.A.E. with 61p will bring a copy of each of the reports above and the Funeral Service also. Or they can come postfree with next month's booklet.

Advertisement

alcuin

The Alcuin Club, founded 1897, is an Anglican liturgical society. In recent years Mayhew-McCrimmon have published the following for us, at £4.50 each:
THE LITURGY OF COMPREHENSION 1689, Timothy Fawcett
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E. C. Whitaker
THE MINISTRY OF HEALING IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND,
Charles Gusmer

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EUCCHARIST AND HOLY SPIRIT: A STUDY IN THE EPICLESIS,
J. McKenna

All these, and other minor works, are included in the annual subscription of £3 (membership open to non-Anglicans). Full details, and list of publications in print, some at reduced price for members, from the Assistant Secretary.

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This month's Booklet

is *Praying Aloud TOGETHER*, by Peter Akehurst (the author of booklets 18 and 30—*Community, Prayer and the Individual* and *Liturgy and Creation* respectively). The new booklet discusses prayer groups as growing points in Christian experience. Often seen as 'production units' for getting supplies, a new understanding is suggested, as 'servicing units' for developing mutual ministry. After considering language as a 'model' for prayer, attention is given to the practicalities of life in a prayer group, covering content, 'shape', dynamics, and some of the problems to be encountered.

. . . . and next Month's

is 'Grove Liturgical Study no. 2' (as mentioned in our April *NOL*). It is *Liturgy, Language and Meaning* by A. C. Thiselton. The Study asks what kind of problem the problem of meaning is. Important as they are, questions about vocabulary, grammar, and style, only scratch the surface of the problem. Fundamental insights can be gained from the philosophy of language, and the author applies these to questions about liturgy, (with special reference to the work of Wittgenstein and Austin). He includes discussions of myth, metaphor, and symbol, performative utterances, and the liturgical role of the Bible and of Biblical allusions.

. . . and July's

is *The Liturgy for Infant Baptism (Series 3)* by Colin Buchanan. This booklet forms a trilogy with no. 3 *Baptismal Discipline* and no. 20 *A Case for Infant Baptism*. In it Colin Buchanan tackles basic questions of structure, theology, language and use of an infant baptism rite, and shows the lessons the Commission has learned from the use of Series 2 since 1968.

THE OPEN LETTER ON EXORCISM

At the last stage before printing we have received the full text of the Open Letter on Exorcism (which was not reprinted in full in the nationals or the Church Press). We still do not know who all the 65 are. Next month we will give their names, and will comment on the letter in the Editorial.

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE ARCHBISHOPS, THE BISHOPS, AND THE MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

We address this letter to you because we believe that the Church of England is in danger of making a serious error of judgment. For some years now the practice of exorcism has been growing, with some encouragement from the authorities, in many English dioceses. Recent events have brought this fact to public notice, and the Church is at a disadvantage because it has not yet openly debated the subject. Our fear is that, since exorcism has already come to be so widely practised, a compromise will be worked out. To control its excesses, exorcism will be regulated; but the effect of this will be to give it a more nearly official status in the Church than it has had since the old baptismal exorcism was abolished in 1552. We believe that exorcism should have no official status in the Church at all, and offer the following reasons:

(i) It is at variance with the entire history and tradition of the Church of England. From the Elizabethan settlement until about 15 years ago it is most difficult to discover any instance at all of exorcism being authorized by a bishop, recommended by a theologian, or practised. Exorcism is in fact alien to the whole tradition of our Church. And it fell into disuse for good reasons.

(ii) For history shows that it is very dangerous to give encouragement to the belief that there are occult evil powers which may possess men and deprive them of their wits and their normal moral responsibility. The Church (in the person of Innocent VIII) made this mistake in the attitude it took up towards witchcraft. We do not say that exorcism is like witchcraft, but simply that the performance of it by implication endorses a belief whose wide dissemination would be a great evil.

(iii) The liberation of mankind from demonological and similar beliefs, since the Reformation and the rise of modern science, has been a great blessing. The Christian concept of the supernatural is quite distinct from that implied in occultist beliefs, and it would be wrong for the Church to suggest that her beliefs are in any way on the same level as those.

(iv) The evil that is in man is indeed dreadful, but we hold that the proper way to cast it out is by repentance, faith, prayer and sacraments. Christ's victory over evil is freely available to all. We do not think the theology of redemption implied by the practice of exorcism to be compatible with our Church's understanding of the Gospel.

(v) On the evidence of the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus performed exorcisms. It seems that he shared the beliefs of his own time. But, whatever view be taken of this, the Church has never expected that her members must necessarily share all Jesus' beliefs—in the field of eschatology, for example. The fact of cultural change is recognized in Scripture, which itself shows how a universal faith takes different forms in different cultural settings.

With regard to exorcism the Church's practice has varied. Historically, the Eastern Churches have exorcised by prayer to God, not by commanding demons; the Protestant Churches have not practised it; and the use of exorcism in the Roman Catholic Church has long been declining. It is, we think, mistaken to suppose that loyalty to Christ requires the Church to try to recreate, in late twentieth-century Europe, the outlook and practices of first-century Palestine. Such an attempt invites ridicule, not to mention the harm that may be done.

We urge all who hold high office in the Church to ensure that the practice of exorcism receives no official encouragement, and gains no official status in the Church.