

News of Liturgy

Editor: Colin Buchanan

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Editorial

The most relevant news at the outset of 1976 is the publication on 5 January of 'Ten Propositions' (printed here on page 3) from the Churches' Unity Commission. The Commission was set up in October 1974, and includes representatives of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, the Churches of Christ in Great Britain and Ireland, the Church of England, the Congregational Federation, the Methodist Church, the Moravian Church, the Roman Catholic Church, and the United Reformed Church. The 'Ten Propositions' are put out with explanatory notes, for discussion by the Churches, and do not necessarily command the full assent of the Commission members. One can only assume that the Commission views the 'Propositions' as litmus paper to discover the spiritual chemistry of the various Churches.

Most of the 'Propositions' add up to a somewhat platitudinous 'covenant' by which all the Churches will accept each other's members and ministers as from a stated date, within a framework still distinct for each Church, but with, apparently, the Historic Episcopate accepted into the pattern of each Church's life. There is not a scheme of actual union in view, and it is arguable that the wheel has turned full circle and delivered us back to Lord Fisher's original 'Cambridge Sermon' of November 1946. He urged that schemes as such should be postponed, whilst instead the various free Churches should each 'take episcopacy into its system' and develop new relationships with the Church of England on that basis. Since then schemes have come and gone (or, to be accurate, one has) and now, behold, we are back with Lord Fisher. That may be gain—it should at any rate be recognized.

At the heart of the 'Propositions' lie three liturgical rites which will attract the interest of ecumenists and liturgists alike. The three are 'mutually acceptable rites' of initiation (Prop. 5), 'mutual recognition of ministries' which 'would need to be celebrated in a common act of worship' (the Commission's notes on Prop. 6), and 'a Common Ordinal which will properly incorporate the episcopal, presbyteral and lay roles in ordination' (Prop. 6).

The first of these rites is to be common as between those who are 'one-staging' and those who are 'two-staging'—and as between pedobaptists and anti-pedobaptists. The notes disingenuously state that 'the total process of Christian initiation includes the washing with water and the sharing of the bread and wine'—but they do *not* say whether or not 'Confirmation' is also included, or should be. Those who deny that infant baptism *is* baptism would either have to cease 'baptizing' in adulthood those previously baptized in infancy (and thus deny their own position), or have to continue their practice and call in question a large part of the meaning of 'mutually acceptable rites'. All this seems to be implicit, not spelled out.

The second rite is the one for 'mutual recognition'. This *could* well be a new coy version of the old Service of Reconciliation. Certainly its content and form could well be crucial to the prospects of success of the 'covenant'. It is to this point all will turn who have had experience of the drawn-out Anglican-Methodist courtship in England in the past. But the need of a rite is bypassed in the Proposition, and is merely mentioned in the notes. We must hope that it is *not* a quasi-ordination—and, to be fair, the silence of the Commission in the main Proposition makes it hard to believe that the notes really contain such a rite.

The third rite is the 'Common Ordinal'. This will incorporate the 'episcopal, presbyteral and lay roles in ordination'. Thus, again by a sidewind, we are told that the 'covenanting' Churches will have to have episcopacy in their systems after the agreed date. To use the 'Common Ordinal' they will have to adopt episcopacy (whereas the presbyteral and lay roles might well be thought to be fairly trivial items controversially, being already found in some measure in all Ordinals). Once granted that the Churches are episcopalian, then the Common Ordinal may not be so difficult to agree. But the wording of Proposition 6 seems to be a linguistic Wooden Horse.

The greatest problem the 'Propositions' set in connection with these liturgical rites is that the Churches are invited to agree now that they will *later* agree matters which under examination they probably could not agree now. This has enabled the Commission to avoid spelling out the nature of the issues involved. We are invited to agree that we *will* have a common practice, even if we agree it with mutually opposed expectations of what that will be. There's something cockeyed somewhere. And it is something awfully reminiscent of the fudged character of the late unlamented Scheme.

The Christmas Spirit . . .

We failed to wish readers a happy Christmas in the December issue, judging at the production stages that the booklets and *NOL* might not reach customers until New Year's Eve or so. In fact the bulk went out well before Christmas, so we offer our apologies for failing to mention the season. We advertized it in various other disreputable ways, the printers by a jovial mood requiring you to read from right to left and the publishers in a grasping mood demanding money even from those who had already paid for the 1976 issues. Both parties regret their excesses and join in wishing readers a joyful New Year.

Colin Buchanan

NEWS ON THE OFFICIAL FRONT

It will be impossible to comment sensibly on the reports of the Revision Committees on '1½' Communion and Collects for Series 3 in this issue, and by the end of February the Revision Stages of General Synod will have come and gone. As Synod meets so near the end of February (20-23 February) it will almost certainly be impossible to report its debates either in our next issue. We hope to give fuller consideration to these in March. Meanwhile we are using this issue to bring the whole process of reporting liturgical revision up-to-date by giving up over three whole pages to the basic data about recent revision.

THE 'TEN PROPOSITIONS'

The Churches' Unity Commission has discussed the development of Church relations in England in the common search for visible unity. In the Commission itself varying opinions have been expressed, but there is agreement that no real progress can be made until the Churches have faced and responded to certain challenges.

These issues are set out in the form of ten propositions on which Member Churches are asked to comment, and to which, wherever possible, they are called to give their assent.

1. We reaffirm our belief that the visible unity in life and mission of all Christ's people is the will of God.
2. We therefore declare our willingness to join in a covenant actively to seek that visible unity.
3. We believe that this search requires action both locally and nationally.
4. We agree to recognize, as from an accepted date, the communicant members in good standing of the other covenanting Churches as true members of the Body of Christ and welcome them to Holy Communion without condition.
5. We agree that, as from an accepted date, initiation in the covenanting Churches shall be by mutually acceptable rites.
6. We agree to recognize, as from an accepted date, the ordained ministries of the other covenanting Churches, as true ministries of word and sacraments in the Holy Catholic Church, and we agree that all subsequent ordinations to the ministries of the covenanting Churches shall be according to a Common Ordinal which will properly incorporate the episcopal, presbyteral and lay roles in ordination.
7. We agree within the fellowship of the covenanting Churches, to respect the rights of conscience, and to continue to accord to all our members, such freedom of thought and action as is consistent with the visible unity of the Church.
8. We agree to continue to give every possible encouragement to local ecumenical projects and to develop methods of decision making in common.
9. We agree to explore such further steps as will be necessary to make more clearly visible the unity of all Christ's people.
10. We agree to remain in close fellowship and consultation with all the Churches represented on the Churches' Unity Commission.

(NB. 'an accepted date', refers to a time agreed by those who accept the covenant, to implement consequent actions).

This month's booklet . . .

is no. 41, *Keeping Holy Week*, by Peter Akehurst. The evangelical tradition has a somewhat poor record in 'keeping' Holy Week, and the temptation has always been to approach the week either opportunistically or at best fragmentarily. Here Peter Akehurst re-explores the possibilities, and brings his own fresh and haunting insights to bear. It is Grove Books' and the author's hope that this will be *just* in time to influence the 'keeping' of Holy Week in 1976. ('Keeping' is a *double entendre* . . .)

. . . and next month's

is no. 42, *Christian Healing in the Parish*, by Michael Botting. Michael Botting examines some features of the theology of healing, and applies it to parochial practice to-day—whether in the private ministry by the bedside or the 'healing service' in church.

Some previous titles . . .

To our surprise we have limited quantities to hand of certain Grove Booklets we had announced as out-of-print—nos. 4, 11, 17 and 24. These have been returned unexpectedly by an overstocked shop, and will be supplied to those who apply quickly.

Other early numbers are still available from S.P.C.K. bookshops at 20p. Nos. 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12-12, 15, 16, 19-23, 25-28 are all in stock in good quantities in their Religious Book Warehouse (which supplies their shops) at the old price, and customers who want quantities are encouraged to ask their local S.P.C.K. bookshop for them. They may also have copies of *Further Anglican Liturgies* at £9.75. We ourselves have to charge the increased price of 25p and £10.75 respectively.

NOL . . .

One price we have not quoted is for two or more copies. For two, three or four copies per month add 84p per annum to the subscription price for each copy after the first one (£1.25 to airmail price). For five or more copies the total subscription is 84p per annum per copy (£1.25 airmail).

. . . and a non-Liturgical publication

Our catalogue announces a study by Colin Buchanan entitled *Inflation, Development and the Job Prospects of the Clergy* to be published on 5 February at 30p. We confirm that this booklet is at the printers, but publication is delayed slightly till 19 February.

A NEW AUSTRALIAN AGENT

Our good friends and agents, Kerygma, in New South Wales, have now ceased business, and our new Australian agents (apart from West Australia) are Norton Bailey & Company Pty. Ltd., P.O. Box 508, Toowong, QLD 4066. They should have good stocks by early February.

BOOKS THIS MONTH

The Methodist Service Book (Methodist Book Room, 1975, £1) and the separate services.

We also have copies of the four 'Learn to Live' publications of the General Synod Board of Education which were supposed to accompany the debate on initiation: *Coming In, Communion, Commitment* and *Continuation*—(12p each).

7p per copy. £1.60 per annum by post.
(£2.30 by air)

GROVE BOOKS
BRAMCOTE NOTTS. (0602 251114)

SOME EXPERIENCE OF 'THE PEACE'

It would be sensible at some future point to discuss both the psychology and the mechanics of the Peace in Series 3, but it occurred to me that some recent experiences might stimulate others.

- (1) At St. John's College we have started to group insertions in the service near to the Peace as often as not—e.g. at Michael Green's Farewell in March the Bishop gave a special charge to him and Rosemary immediately prior to the Peace, then the chapel broke up in greetings exchanged by all, but especially meaningfully directed towards Michael and Rosemary. On a more recent occasion a dance of praise was planned by a small number of students to be included in our main weekly Communion, and on reflection this was presented immediately *following* the Peace, prior to starting the sacramental action.
- (2) I was at the British Council of Churches' communion service in Lambeth Palace chapel in October, and the Archbishop clearly did not intend the worshippers to stop and greet each other when he had spoken the versicle and had the response. Nevertheless the congregation was not to be so hustled on, and spontaneously neighbours turned and greeted each other.
- (3) In November I went to speak at a Carlisle clergy conference on liturgy for a morning. The conference was to end with a eucharist, and it was announced in advance that the clergy planning it had omitted the Peace. This proved to be a subtle way of hiding a secret: when the Peace was due, after the versicle and response one of the clergy stepped forward and made a little speech of thanks to the Bishop of Carlisle for being present throughout and for his evident care for his clergy. This was then met with a warm round of applause—and that constituted the Peace! In older times it would have been said at a final meal of the conference, but how much more appropriate to have it in the final eucharist and at the Peace!

C.O.B.

LITURGICAL REVISION IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

The chart on page 7 is reproduced (with the addition of a '20') from *NOL* for March 1975, and sets out the process under current Standing Orders whereby General Synod authorizes particular services or liturgical texts. On page 8 the bold numbers (from the chart on page 7) are used as the key showing the actual process taken to authorization by each of the Series 3 services along with '1½' Communion. The dates in the various columns are set out to come exactly opposite the bold numbers in the chart on page 7. The following further explanatory notes may be helpful:

- (1) Holy Communion Series 3 (in the left-hand column) was authorized under standing orders now rescinded. The Liturgical Steering Committee acted as a Revision Committee, but without power to bring an altered text before Synod, only to bring proposed amendments. There were *two* Revision Stages in full Synod, of which the first was

held on 10 Nov 1971, 9 Feb 1972 and 11 Feb 1972, and the second (after which Synod gave Provisional Approval) on 10 Jul 1972. The details are set out in Grove Booklet 14 pp.21-2 and 27-30. On page 8 three asterisks (***) cover the points at which the categories from page 7 do not apply.

- (2) Numbers 8-11 and 14-15 on page 7 cover activities which are not easily separable after the event, and the dates of which are now relatively insignificant. 8-11 have been covered by a single period in the dates (and the reports were often duplicated only), and 14-15 have been ignored on page 8.
- (3) Precise dates are accurate and have been checked. Imprecise dates are not, and have not.
- (4) Forward dates are printed in *italics*. There is obviously considerable guesswork attached to them.

These charts might well be kept to hand, as the numbers will be used as the key for further description of events in future issues of *NOL*. A complete updating of page 8 will be contained in Booklet 14B, *Supplement for 1974-6 to Recent Liturgical Revision in the Church of England*, to be published in August 1976.

Whatever happened to . . . Series 3 Infant Baptism?

The list on page 8 shows that Series 3 Infant Baptism does not now appear on the General Synod agenda for February. Two successive Press releases by the Church Information Office in January have nicely muddled the situation. The first announced it as though the service were newly published (which it is not—see page 8), and drew attention to all the features of it which repeated Series 2 Infant Baptism, and highlighted *these* as new. We gather someone was gently reproved for this (or so we hope), but it was sad to hear Douglas Brown reading such a fatuous release on BBC's early morning Sunday programme. The second Press release said the service would *not* now come on the agenda, as that would be to anticipate the initiation debate. The muddle with the initiation debate is of course not news—it was wholly predictable when the Liturgical Commission was told to finish the Infant Baptism service on its own in haste last Spring. It was equally clear when the service was put on the agenda for Synod in July 1975 and again in November 1975, and a Revision Committee was chosen. *NOL* has featured protests about this—as did Booklet no. 37 in July 1975. And at last the Standing Committee has got the message.

Meanwhile the dioceses have apparently submitted such complicated returns to the questions referred to them on initiation that those data cannot be prepared in time for the February Synod. So *that* debate is held over till July at the earliest. Series 3 Infant Baptism will hardly then get its first run till November 1976. Its Revision Committee will in turn not be able to report till probably July 1977. Final Approval in November 1977 *could* lead to printed copies in January 1978! Such is the hurry for the service.

CHART OF PROGRESS IN LITURGICAL REVISION

