

# News of Liturgy

Editor: Colin Buchanan

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## Editorial

Anniversaries are in the news—200 years since the American UDI, 150 years since the foundation of the London Zoo, 50 years since the General Strike, and 25 years since the opening of the Royal Festival Hall. Well, this seems to chime in well with the tenth anniversary of 1 May 1966, which although as an anniversary it went by no more noticed than the original date did, yet is of significance.

May 1966 was the date (it was a Sunday) when the Alternative Services Measure came into force. So we have now had exactly ten years of the experimental era. To some it has been as painful as the decade from 1549 to 1559, to others it has been the gradual opening up in a natural progression of new opportunities in corporate worship—and others again seem still unaware the era has happened at all, or are determinedly ignoring the new services in the hope they may yet go away.

I remember the beginning very clearly myself. In Autumn 1965 I went to a clergy gathering in the Lichfield diocese to speak on 'The Service of Holy Communion'—and this theme meant 1662, and that alone. I was lecturing in liturgy then, and the syllabus was 1662, with background to it, but little since it. And I was taking my turn at celebrating communion in College chapel, and the rite was 1662 and that alone. Even as I was trying to put salt on the tails of various folk on the Liturgical Commission re the draft of Series 2 Communion, it was still difficult to believe it would or could really *happen*. The air that the BCP alone was the Church of England's worship, and would never be rivalled, was very strong.

There was then the rush from the publication of the 'interim draft' of Series 2 in the *Second Series* collection in December 1965, followed by the Liturgical Conference in February 1966; and when this Conference seemed to be calling for the new communion service to be completed quickly, then the Liturgical Commission was asked to polish up the text and finish it in the last three days of March 1966 (it was signed on 1 April 1966). All the stops were pulled out to get the text published by 29 April (just before the epoch-inaugurating May Day), in order that the Convocations should be able to debate it on 10 May. I personally was in a bigger scramble still—writing almost my first ever public piece on liturgy, I was falling over myself to produce an explanation for my dissent from the petition for the departed and the oblation of the elements in the anamnesis, and these were published in *The New Communion Service—Reasons for Dissent* by the Church Book Room Press also on 29 April. And in time both my points were at least partially met.

Probably most parishes were unaware of any special significance to 1 May 1966 (apart of course from St. Philip and St. James). But it was important in that the supposed episcopal *ius liturgicum* (which had underwritten the use of 1928 services and the 'Interim Rite') lapsed almost

entirely. All powers polarized to the Convocations and House of Laity at the centre and to the P.C.C. in the other direction. Theoretically 1 May 1966 ought to have been observed with the strictest possible use of the 1662 BCP. In fact Bishops advised parishes they need make no change for a week or two, until the *First Series* services, embodying the 1928 etc. material, should be authorized. This duly happened and a different cloak of legality was thrown over these services—with the sole exception of the 1928 Confirmation service, which the House of Laity threw out. And this was, by a precise historical justice, the very point to test how serious the bishops were about letting go their *ius*—for confirmation services are only used at bishops' behests. They mumbled and grumbled about the House of Laity (and its theological ignorance and pastoral insensitivity etc.) in the diocesan leaflets—but they conformed. The 1928 little booklets perished from the dioceses, and 1662 was used faithfully, even woodenly, for over a year till Series 2 came along. And thus the bishops saved the credibility of the whole new exercise—if they had insisted they had power to authorize the 1928 rite in their own dioceses, they would have brought the experimental era into contempt right from the start.

I am doubly reminded of the beginning of the new era not only by the crop of anniversaries which the TV keeps keeping, but also by the editorial in the May edition of *Theology* (which as readers may know is now a bi-monthly still published by the SPCK, but edited by a three-man team of John Drury, David Jenkins and James Mark). In this third number of the new-style journal John Drury uses the editorial to praise the pluralist report from the Doctrine Commission (*Christian Believing*, SPCK, 1976 £2.50), and to deprecate Series 3 communion by comparison:

... Series 3 has ... a striking fondness for dogmatic pronouncements which may cheer the exclusive brethren as it disconcerts the half, and even the three-quarter, believer. Its sincere celebration either requires a firm belief in the Second Coming (untouched even by Dodd's "realized eschatology") and a simplistic one in the authority of scripture ... or assent to a symbolic haze.'

This is of course comparable to Leslie Houlden's criticism of Series 3 contained in *The Eucharist To-Day* (though it differs in that Houlden was signatory to the text). We may respond at various levels:

- (i) This is only the same problem as is presented by the Creeds.
- (ii) For what it is worth the actual text 'we look for his coming in glory' did not stem from the Liturgical Commission at all. The Commission wrote 'we look for the fulness of his coming in glory', and it was the Synod which removed 'the fullness of', because a report of the *House of Bishops* asked for it. And in the Acclamations the Liturgical Commission wrote 'In Christ shall all be made alive' and the alteration to 'Christ shall come again' was made on the motion of the present *Archbishop of Canterbury* on behalf of the House of Bishops. So even if the editor of *Theology* cannot belabour the Nicene Fathers in

person for their belief in the second coming, yet he *can* go to the latter-day Fathers of the Church if he wants to scold anybody for Series 3's overt eschatology.

- (iii) There is also a great problem about what *alternative* texts can credibly be provided. The scepticism of some biblical critics does not come up with a uniform alternative set of beliefs to be incorporated into liturgy (witness *Christian Believing*). So whom are we to please? What particular form of reduced Christianity is 'Jones' to be invited to swallow in liturgical form to move him on from half to full belief? We doubt if one clear answer is obtainable. So if we cleansed our house as prescribed, we might find we got seven alternative texts of doubtful provenance to replenish it.

But even then, if one clear answer were available, would it really make anything we could call liturgy? Can we say 'Hear also what pseudo-Paul says' (for Drury dislikes the ascriptions to the Comfortable Words)? Can we say in the anamnesis 'with our eyes open to the future' (and even that includes some concrete and obviously non-factual imagery)? And what use would it be if we could?

- (iv) Is there not a misunderstanding about the whole nature of liturgy in the Drury attack? It is not itself Bible, it is true. But it *is* the conservation in the milieu of history of biblical teaching. It is *not* commentary so much as reproduction. It is *not* explanation so much as rearrangement. It does not preclude any mental gymnastics the readers of the Bible may wish to undergo when they read old-fashioned passages of the canonical Scriptures. It is quite open to that. But it should ensure that the same discipline is required to read the liturgy as to read the Bible. Actual lections from the Scriptures, Creeds, Confessions, the Eucharistic Prayer, and indeed Hymns and Psalms also—all turn the biblical material into worship without attempting to brainwash it in the process. No doubt the task of the preacher will be to explain difficult passages in the readings—but interestingly the pulpit itself seems often to be used for fairly conservative presentations of the faith. The hymnbooks (and the seasons of Ascension, Advent etc.) are unrepentantly committed to the thought-world of the Bible. Dare one wonder therefore whether the complaint of Mr. Drury is not only improperly concentrated on Series 3 Communion, but in fact amounts to regret that the Christian tradition continues to be believed by so many in so traditionalist a way?

Colin Buchanan

## BOOKS THIS MONTH

The following are mentioned elsewhere in this issue: *The Charismatic Prayer Group* (review), books on exorcism ('this month's booklet'), *The Calendar, Lectionary and Rules to order the Service* ('news on the official front'). In addition we still have a very small number of draft American Prayer Books left at £2.50, and a good stock of Michael Botting's *Reaching the Families* (jointly with John Tigwell, Falcon, £1.50). We also have the odd copy of the Synod reports mentioned in previous *NOLs* and *Christian Believing* mentioned in the editorial.

### NEWS ON THE OFFICIAL FRONT

*The Calendar, Lectionary and Rules to Order the Service: A Report by the Liturgical Commission of the General Synod of the Church of England* (GS 292) is to be published by the S.P.C.K. on 3 June (85pp., £1.95). Last month we were given to understand it would be later, but it is now nearly upon us (and as usual we shall be ready to send copies postfree to arrive on or just after publication day). We are forbidden to publish any of its contents here, but can state that it is comprehensive, and reflects very close work on the Commission by Canon Charles Whitaker (who has a tremendous gift for intense application, not only to the dividing up of Scripture, but also to avoiding duplications in the different series of readings, and to providing for the most unlikely calendrical difficulties). We can drop two small hints about the calendar—readers will *not* find we have followed the Pope, when he recently attempted to upstage the Communist festivities on May Day by reallocating it to 'St. Joseph the Worker'—May Day is to be a public holiday in England in the future we hear, but it will remain St. Philip and St. James. In addition our treatment of the Blessed Virgin Mary may be of interest . . .

At the time of writing there is still no announcement of the new Liturgical Commission. I have been asked to keep the dates of the June meeting in my diary, but without prejudice to the choice of members. A deafening silence still comes from the powers-that-be. Perhaps the editors of *Theology* are being considered for inclusion . . .

### NEWS FROM ENGLAND

Correspondence to hand tells us of Gaelic services in Scotland, and the 'wee grey bookie' was published in translation into Gaelic in Inverness last year (but this must *not* in the present climate be dubbed 'news from England' (sic)). We have also been sent a copy of the report on Cornish language services. Apparently the Prayer Book as such was never translated into the language (this had some bearing upon the 1549 rebellion of course), but the Creed, Lord's Prayer and Ten Commandments were regularly said in Cornish, and Cornish words of administration are traced into the seventeenth century. Cornish preaching was also used. But it all lapsed in the seventeenth century. The 'Advisory Group' notes about ten Cornish services (some in connection with Celtic Congresses etc) held during 1975. Several of these were in Methodist Churches. We have no more news to report on the Archers, though an irrelevant letter we received describing the problems of the producers in ensuring the vicar does not too easily condone moral offences. As these were not in the liturgical field, we let them pass.

### Review

*The Charismatic Prayer Group: A Handbook for Leaders, Members and Clergy.* John Gunstone. (Hodder, 1975, 159pp.) 60p.  
This review is long over-due and must start with apologies—to the editor, to the author and publisher, and to readers. I came to it with immense expectation; wanting not merely to review it in clerical isolation, we tried it in a praying group and got stuck. This is no judgment on the book—merely an explanation of a hang-up.

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

GROVE BOOKS  
BRAMCOTE NOTTS. (0602 251114)

In the introduction the author explains 'charismatic' in the title as dictated by publishing economics, not theology—'every Christian is a charismatic and every congregation a charismatic group'. Elsewhere he points out that 'baptism in the Spirit is a continuous process . . . what we call baptism in the Spirit is a moment when we accept more fully what God promised through Christ when the Lord said, 'You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you''. The way the Spirit manifests himself in gifts and ministries through individuals in the group is described and how these gifts can issue in counselling and ministering to one another. Guidance, prophecy, 'inspired pictures', healing and speaking in tongues as exercised in the group are discussed. Of tongues he says 'there is nothing in Scripture that leads us to suppose that the gift of tongues always accompanies the anointing of the Spirit'.

The prayer group is seen in the widest possible context of renewal and corporate life—' . . . we are not renewed in order to have exciting experiences of the Spirit; we are renewed in order that the Church may participate more faithfully in the ministry and mission of Christ in society . . . the gift of the Spirit to the individual Christian is not that individual's affair. The Spirit is given him for others'. Bible study is a priority and the prayer of the group is seen as their response to God in the Scriptures. There is a deeply corporate understanding throughout and wise words about integrating the group with sympathetic or 'distant' leadership, both PCC and clerical.

The chapter on 'Breaking Bread Together' will specially concern readers of *NOL*. It discusses informal eucharists and agape meals, setting this aspect of prayer group life firmly within traditional church structures.

These are to be respected in love if clashes of loyalty develop. Apart from a suggested use of PECUSA Eucharistic Prayer B, and a reference to Eucharistic Prayer II in the Roman Catholic Church's missa normativa, and a consideration of chorus singing, no ground can be said to have been covered not already touched in Trevor Lloyd's *Agapes and Informal Eucharists* (and more recently in Richard More's *Freedom in a Framework*).

It is a fact of experience that some Christians find a degree of spiritual fellowship and brotherly support in a prayer group which they have not been able to discover or respond to in the church at large. For them the smaller group is 'it' and the official church something external, alien and inadequate. Neither reaction, nor penitence, nor accepting love on their own can avoid this problem of how to be 'the church' in the larger liturgical assembly and life of a parish in such a way that the small close prayer group fellowship does not in practice take over and become for its members, practically and spiritually, 'the church'.

This is a handbook, not a blueprint. It contains many helpful suggestions and the sharing of practical experience. It faces honestly real dangers and pitfalls. My mistake was to hope it would do the job. It won't do anyone's 'job' but it could help us to be open to allowing God to do his sovereign 'job' in and through us.

Peter R. Akehurst

(Peter Akehurst is himself author of *Praying Aloud Together*, Grove Booklet 36, published at much the same time as the Gunstone book).

### This month's booklet . . .

is no. 44, *Exorcism, Deliverance and Healing: Some Pastoral Guidelines* by John Richards. The author was secretary of the Bishop of Exeter's Study Group on exorcism for ten years, and was thus involved in the report *Exorcism* (S.P.C.K., 1972, 60p), to which he makes frequent reference in this booklet. He then put together a large amount of material in the course of a research fellowship at Birmingham, and this was published as *But Deliver Us From Evil* (D.L.T., 1974—currently available as Seabury hard-back £2.85). His new booklet draws extensively on another source—the 'York' report *The Ministry of Deliverance and Healing* (Diocese of York, 4 Minster Court, York, 1975, 35p). In particular he reprints the rubrics, directions and liturgical provisions from the York report. Thus Grove Books finds itself for the first time publishing rubrics concerning violet stoles, texts containing the sign of the cross, and provisions for blessing holy water! No doubt some of our readers may want to simplify some us slightly . . . What is *not* reprinted from the York report is the New Testament Commentary which deals with the nature of evil in Jesus' handling of those with 'demons'. For the sake of conciseness in a Grove Booklet John Richards has taken for granted both this York material, and his analysis of the actual phenomena of to-day which he gave in *But Deliver Us From Evil*. The new booklet is strictly 'pastoral guidelines' (along with an extended bibliography bringing the one in his big book up to date). It may also be noted that he handles a very serious subject not only reverently and sensitively, but also with extreme good humour. (The other titles mentioned above are also obtainable from Grove Books).

### . . . and next month's

is Liturgical Study no. 6, *The Liturgy and Music: A Study of the Use of the Hymn in two Liturgical Traditions*, by Robin A. Leaver. The author has done special research on both Bach and Marbeck (not Merbecke, for which see this 'Study'). His examination of the origins of the Anglican and Lutheran traditions is completed by a survey of convergence and inter-dependence traceable to-day, along with some practical implications for the best use of music with the contemporary liturgies of both traditions.

### . . . and an odd time-scale

Those who get the booklets on standing order may have been bothered to see copies of booklet 44 on sale elsewhere before their *NOL* arrived. We did give warning of this last month, i.e. that we were making special efforts to get no. 44 ready for a series of speaking engagements John Richards himself was undertaking. But we usually aim for the end of the month. Some have asked us to publish in the first week of the month, but we would have difficulty functioning against the same deadline as publishing by the end of the month gives us (in other words editor and printers alike have a clear picture of when everything must happen—the first week of the month would inevitably creep into being the second, etc.). It is also useful to report the July Synod in the July *NOL*. We were foxed on this point for the first time in February, when Synod met in the last week of the month. This would be very rare, and it arose from the late Easter—Synod has to meet before Lent starts, and that usually makes it mid- or early February.