

# News of Liturgy

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## INITIATION—NO NEW ALTERNATIVE PATTERN

On 14 July General Synod rejected the motion which would have accepted the principle of child-communion. The motion ran:

'That this Synod, accepting that full sacramental participation within the Church may precede a mature Profession of Faith, supports the proposition that alternative provision should be made for the ordering of initiation practice within the Church of England, provided that any revised order is set within a continuing framework of training for the Christian life.'

The voting was:

	Ayes	Noes
House of Bishops	17	27
House of Clergy	83	132
House of Laity	86	112

Thus ends, it seems, a five-year period since the publication of the Ely report, in which the Church of England has tried to look this issue in the face, but has now at the end of the day walked away from it. For the only positive result we have to show from the five years is the motion (which was passed overwhelmingly—perhaps two hands being raised against it) asking that there should be a dry-run post-natal service of Thanksgiving for the Birth of a Child. Truly the mountains have laboured and produced a mouse.

Why did Synod turn the main change down? It may not be easy to establish this, but the debate suggested three factors which may have been at work:

1. There was a good number in Synod opposed to the whole principle. It is a commonplace that those who do not take part in a Parish Communion situation do not feel this question in their guts. Their children are rarely, if ever, present at communion services, and the whole pre-supposition of such parishes is that communion is for those who understand it and have been confirmed, or at least instructed. Such Synodsmen might well have been prepared to let the question go down to dioceses in 1974. It did not follow that they would vote in favour of the principle when the question came back to them.
2. There were also those who favoured the principle, but were daunted by the diocesan returns. Synod had before it, not only GS 291A (with the tabulated results from the dioceses), but also now GS 291 with

the recommendations of Standing Committee. The thrust of these was to allow two separate patterns of initiation to exist alongside each other. Dioceses were to decide first whether to permit an 'alternative pattern' within the diocese, and then parishes in turn were to decide whether to adopt the alternative pattern. Some, like the Bishop of Durham who drafted the original question which went to the dioceses (he claimed in a speech to have found the phraseology whilst in the bath at the Athenaeum), felt unable to proceed with new patterns whilst the diocesan returns so divided the Church.

3. There were also those who refused to assent to an 'alternative pattern' because they were confident they would get a particular alternative pattern—one they did not want! The alternative of adding anointing or laying on of hands to infant baptism was not well supported by the dioceses (only four in the Home Counties being in favour of it), and this drove some, who might otherwise have voted for admitting young children to communion, to oppose it. In fact there were also some who, like Canon J. D. C. Fisher, explained that unless the Bishop could be more closely associated with initiation (which even the 'two-staging' notion of infant baptism indicated above would not provide) they could not vote for any change at all.

These factors led to enough changing of sides to prevent the change going through. Perhaps we should be glad that it did not limp into force on a bare majority. But those of us who wanted the change keenly are feeling keenly disappointed. The Bishop of Newcastle's 'fall-back' motion, which invited diocesan Bishops to use their discretion under Canon B.27 (which does not appear to give them *much* discretion!) to confirm younger, hardly offered grains of comfort either. We would have been better saying nothing.

The main question will not go away. Already the mixed patterns run alongside each other at many points on the earth's surface. A poignant instance came to light recently, at no less than a place than Teheran in Iran. The minister of the English-speaking Church there, one Stephen Arpee, spent an evening in Nottingham recently, and explained the dilemma his congregation faces. Iran diocesan rules place expatriates under the discipline of the home dioceses—which means that Americans bring young children to communion, but English people may not! He was asking whether the General Synod would permit the English expatriates to fall into line with the Americans. I offered him *some* hope—but obviously events have falsified that hope.

The Christian world is still slowly moving in this direction. The Church of England will not get off the hook easily. Younger confirmations (if the Bishops really act this way), pressures from overseas, and some existing (no doubt improper) experiments, all conspire to keep the question painfully before us. The question then becomes one of how we can restart the synodical procedures.

## '1½' COMMUNION ALMOST GOES DOWN!

In the afternoon of 14 July the Synod debated a report from the House of Bishops prior to voting to give 'Final Approval' to 'Series 1 and Series 2 Revised Holy Communion' (commonly known here as '1½'). The House of Bishops has the right to smooth the text before Final Approval is given, and on this occasion submitted the service to Synod with six changes made since Provisional Approval was given in February. This constituted a precedent—the most the Bishops had ever done before was change one word in Series 3 Communion. Now they had turned themselves into a Revision Committee—a procedure not unlike that which happened prior to the final stages of the 1927-8 Prayer Book. Most of the changes made little difference—they were such as the moving of the provision for supplementary consecration from an appendix into the text of the service. But one stuck in the throat. The Bishops had tacked back onto the Prayer of Humble Access (as an option) the famous old ending—'. . . sinful bodies may be made clean . . . and our souls washed . . .'. The Bishop of Leicester explained that he had moved this, as he had been ill in February and unable to attend the Revision stage. Anyway, it had passed the House of Bishops by 19 votes to 18! And it attracted irritated comment.

Then came the vote by Houses (two-thirds in each House being required at Final Approval for authorization). The count turned out as follows:

	Ayes	Noes
House of Bishops	29	0
House of Clergy	105	52
House of Laity	115	35

The count in the House of Clergy provided a two-thirds majority which would have been lacking if the 'noes' had mustered 53! I was myself sitting hard on my hands, though tempted to vote against. (I reckoned that as a member of the Revision Committee and a 'member in charge' of the particular service in Synod, I needed more provocation before voting against.) I also discovered one member who voted 'yes' by mistake, and a member of the Liturgical Commission who did not fancy ascending the steps to the door of either lobby, and abstained for that reason. So the ifs and buts are legion . . .

Synod also extended the life of Series 2 Communion till 31 December 1979. Thus anyone who wants Series 1 or Series 2 can get it in its own right (and in its own rite). SPCK and the Privileged Presses will publish a glossy booklet on '1½' on 21 October, and it is authorized from 1 November.

But who will want to spend money (it will be 25p a copy) on this complicated rite? And if there is so little heart for it, what does that imply for its supposed role in the future 'Alternative Service Book'?

Colin Buchanan

## OTHER NEWS ON THE OFFICIAL FRONT

Synod also took the following action (or, in some cases, inaction):

1. Provisional Approval was given for the extension of Series 3 Communion and Series 3 Funerals to 31 December 1979. Final Approval should follow in November 1976.
2. The Collects reached Revision Stage, were slightly amended (once or twice back to the original form), and were then Provisionally Approved. They go now to the House of Bishops, ready for Final Approval in November 1976.
3. The Calendar and Lectionary material was not reached on the agenda.
4. In the initiation debate further resolutions on Infant Baptism were not reached on the agenda. This includes the Southwell request for a re-examination of the conditions upon which infants are to be accepted for baptism, and Peter Dawes' request for a revision of Canon law to make it the explicit normal practice of the Church of England to baptize at a main service.
5. In answer to questions:
  - A. The Archbishop of Canterbury said he would be 'interested to explore whether it would be possible for the other Churches [i.e. not the Orthodox] to agree to go ahead with a fixed Easter from next year in the hope that the Orthodox will in due course follow suit.'
  - B. The Archbishop also said 'By Her Majesty's command, arrangements are being made for a Service of Thanksgiving [for her Jubilee] in St. Paul's Cathedral on 7 June 1977. It is hoped that there will be local services of thanksgiving in churches throughout the country on Sunday 5 June.'
  - C. The Archbishop said he could not yet state a price for the 'Alternative Service Book'.
6. It was also revealed in Synod in other debates (e.g. on the 'Ten Propositions' on Church Unity) that the ecumenical eucharistic prayer of the Joint Liturgical Group should be available by November, that the Bishops were consulting with other denominations about the draft Series 3 Ordinal, before bringing it to Synod, and that the Liturgical Commission is engaged upon constructing questionnaires about Series 3 Communion, with a view to its revision before it is included in the 'Alternative Service Book'.

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

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## Review

*Source of Life* by Rene Voillaume (D.L.T. 58pp. 80p)

What is the place of the Eucharist in the life of the Christian? In the opinion of Rene Voillaume, one of the Little Brothers of Jesus, an order founded by Charles de Foucauld, the Eucharistic Christ is of the greatest possible significance. Jesus' statement, that 'this is my body' should be taken simply and at face value. Yes, this is scandalous to modern people but, the writer appeals, no more scandalous than the scandal of Jesus himself. Belief in his presence in the Eucharist is no more difficult than the belief that for 30 years God lived a truly human life. Perhaps not. The difference is that, whereas the New Testament cannot be understood apart from the incarnation, that same literature hardly supports the idea that Christ is *in* the elements of the Eucharist.

Yet, in spite of the weak and sometimes naive treatment of scripture, Fr. Voillaume's book can be read with much profit simply because the warm spirituality of the man comes across with his evident love for the Lord he worships. How sad it is, then, that the book is a witness to the fact that a fundamental difference of interpretation concerning the sacraments still separates the Protestant from the Catholic. Dialogue with one another, honest grappling with the text of scripture together with a common love of the Christ who transcends the Eucharist are the only ways forward I know.

George L. Carey

## BOOKS THIS MONTH

We have no more copies of *The Fourth Lesson* at reduced price—we were swamped with demand . . .

We get many requests for information about the expected *Modern Liturgical Psalter* (i.e. the 'Frost-Macintosh' version). Collins now hope to publish it in early 1977. What may not be recognized is that in principle all the information about this is already available—a good selection of the psalms being published in *Twenty-Five Psalms from a Modern Liturgical Psalter* (C.I.O., 1973, 55p). We still have some of these in stock.

The draft PECUSA Prayer Book (named the 'Groundhog Book' in June *NOL*) is available again, and at the time of writing we have confirmation they are on their way across the Atlantic. Write quickly if you want one (at £2.50). Incidentally, the American observer on the Liturgical Commission tells me 20,000 persons are expected at the General Convention this Autumn—but perhaps they are mostly embattled about the ordination of women question.

We also have in stock the new 1977 Mowbray's/S.P.C.K. Almanack (at 18p and 30p) and the first supplement to the Canons (at 22p—the main set is £3.24).

*Collects to Accompany the Lectionary for Holy Communion Series 3.*

Although the collects have been revised in Synod the S.P.C.K. have reprinted the original report—now 70p. (The Grove pirate Collects are still only 30p . . .).

Canadian Anglican Liturgical Series No. 5 *The Burial of the Dead*. We mentioned this some months ago, and now have it at 50p.

*Guidelines for Baptismal Discipline* in the Diocese of Toronto. This document, reports about which we have printed previously, is now published at 45p—a very thorough bit of work.

## This month's booklet . . .

is no. 14B, *Supplement for 1974-6 to Recent Liturgical Revision in the Church of England*, by Colin Buchanan. Booklet 14 was published in April 1973 covering in broad outline the history of revision from 1928 to March 1973. Booklet 14A was a supplement published in September 1974, taking the story down the next eighteen months, and including the full text of the Church of England (Worship and Doctrine) Measure. It was soon after that that *NOL* began publication (January 1975), so that most news has been charted in bits and pieces (often with comment) in these columns since then. Nevertheless, there seemed to be a need to keep the booklet-format history going, and 14B includes the revision of the Canons, the actual new services (with dates etc.), the debate on the 'Alternative Service Book', the last stage of the initiation debate, etc.

## . . . and next month's . . .

is no. 45, *Equipping God's People: Present and Future Parish Training Schemes*, by Peter Lee. The author did a survey of the types of parish training schemes which were in operation, and here digests together some of the best and most interesting of them. He draws out lessons for other parishes, giving pointers into the future.

## . . . and other bits of news from Grove Books publications . . .

The service sheet for *A Service of Thanksgiving and Blessing* has now been reprinted at the old price of 5p per copy (45p per dozen). All booklets priced at 25p go up to 30p on 1 September 1976 (though some shops may still have them at the old price). This increase includes ethics booklets.

## THEOLOGY AND LITURGY

*Theology* for July 1976 keeps up the pressure upon Series 3 services. The Rev. Richard Harries, vicar of All Saints Fulham, contributes a lengthy article reviewing all the services, whether in draft or final form. Some sample extracts show his view: 'With use [Series 3 Communion] develops a wooden quality that is very difficult to counteract.' 'Unfortunately the part . . . that is least able to stand constant repetition is the Eucharistic Prayer.' On the language of the Preface 'This is terrible stuff'. On the collects 'Another set, in a simple, direct, modern style must also be provided.' The Wedding and Infant Baptism draft services get a more neutral reception whilst the Funeral 'seems acceptable enough'. Morning and Evening Prayer . . . in our experience . . . do not seem to work.' On the proposed Alternative Service Book 'To produce a book now, with the alternative services at present available, without a far wider range of alternatives and without much more freedom guaranteed would be disastrous.' The Funeral services also take a knock from Gerald Priestland in the reviews, though he acknowledges gains also. He concludes 'Take my advice, see your spiritual practitioner "pre-need" (as American morticians say) and work out an agreeable service. If possible get copies printed and stored away in advance. And send your friends home with a glass of sherry and something rousing like "Let saints on earth" sung to *Dundee*.'

In addition to this, the editors indicate in a footnote to Mr. Harries' article that a further treatment of the language of Series 3 is expected from Dame Helen Gardiner, and one of them, Mr. Drury, has written privately and very courteously about the editorial reply in the May *NOL* to the attack on Series 3 in the May *Theology*. We hope to include this next month.