

News of Liturgy

Editor: Colin Buchanan

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Editorial

I have had my attention drawn in two different ways to the question of 'post-natal' services for infants. One way is simply that as the working party on baptismal policies in Southwell diocese drew up the report which is now available from Grove Books, we included in what is called the 'Discriminate Code' (I) the provision of a 'Service of Thanksgiving for the Birth of a Child'. It is put in those terms because it was in those terms that General Synod accepted the proposal last July—it avoided a motion to have a service of 'Blessing' of a child, and resolved to have the 'Thanksgiving' service only. But that service does not yet exist. So what is a parish (acting perhaps within the proposed Southwell 'Discriminate Code') to use for the moment?

The obvious answer, at least to anyone involved in Grove Booklets, is that the offprint from booklet no. 5 should be used. This is entitled 'A Service of Thanksgiving and Blessing', and it has gone into four separate printings. It is argued that it is legal for a parish to use such a service off its own bat, at least until official provision supersedes it. And the booklet cogently argues, in line with the original report of the Doctrinal Commission, that 'Blessing' in such a context need entail neither a confusion with baptism, nor an improper pretence that God's blessings run beyond the supposed limits of his people—i.e. the baptized.

The question has been in my mind because the Liturgical Commission has now to draft the official service. What is perfectly clear is that the use of the pericope about Jesus and the children can well lead the innocent into references to 'blessing'—compare the versions. And attempts to write services soon start to have a forward look to them. No-one can *just* thank God for the birth of a baby. He is bound to have some hopes and intentions about the future of the child. And to 'bless' the infant is to ask God to provide the riches of his grace for that future. So it is probable that *any* post-natal service, be it thanksgiving, blessing, or baptism, will inevitably include *some* element of 'blessing' in this sense. There may prove to be very little which has been excluded by General Synod's decisions (backed by the dioceses)—except of course that the *title* 'The Blessing . . . etc.' will not now be used.

The official service will take some time yet to be authorized. It will probably be attached to the initiation services which are due some time in 1977. It will then have to run the gamut of Synod, and will be ready in good time for the 1980 Alternative Service Book.

Meanwhile, the question of liturgical blessings raises its own problems independently of the question of unbaptized infants, and I shall hope to return to it.

Colin Buchanan

NEWS ON THE OFFICIAL FRONT

Synod in February (meeting 14-18 February) will apparently have a report from the Standing Committee about progress towards the *Alternative Service Book 1980*. The secretary-general of General Synod, Mr. Derek Pattinson, visited the Liturgical Commission at its meeting in December, and outlined both the timetable, and other logistical problems, which lie before us. The book is to be ready for All Saints Day 1980 (no prizes for recalling when last a new BCP was introduced on All Saints Day); the copyright and masters of the type are to be held by the Central Board of Finance of the Church of England, and other publishers will therefore pay royalties for the use of the material. Anything not ready for the press will be simply lost en route, as the timetable will not be discarded. On the other hand, the procedures for revising Series 3 communion (and 1½?) will be radically revised to produce a sort of 'guillotine' effect. So Synod will have plenty to debate in February. The 'Frost-McIntosh' Psalter will now be published this Autumn—David Frost himself has emigrated to Australia.

Also before the February session will be the final stages of the revision of Series 3 Marriage service, which will then (presumably) gain provisional approval, and come back for final approval in July. The calendar and lectionary proposals (GS292) are due to start their run, and the House of Bishops proves indeed to have turned down the Liturgical Commission's proposals for readings for a daily eucharist (which, the keen-memored will recall, were the very reason why GS 292 was delayed from the agenda in November). The House of Bishops apparently prefers the Roman Catholic sequence, but this is not based on the GS 292 calendar! One thing is certain—we have not yet heard the last of all this.

The Liturgical Commission has worked on at complete initiation proposals, and these will swallow up the infant baptism text already published in May 1975 (GS 225). The 'Thanksgiving for the Birth of a Child' and kindred liturgical material is being attached to these proposals. The expressed desires of the chosen respondents for the revision of Series 3 communion will presumably have gone through the computer for the Commission to consider when it meets in May.

BITS AND PIECES

'Two-thirds phoney'—So says Tom Smail about the exercise of spiritual gifts in the Autumn 1976 issue of *Renewal*. He thus repeats in print in public what he has previously said at smaller meetings. One cannot but applaud the honesty and integrity of such a statement from the Director of the Fountain Trust. At the same time, he goes on to say 'But one-third is still a tremendous amount . . .' The question then arises how the community can discern the genuine amongst the phoney. Is there a *community* role in discernment?

Do you want to manage a Christian bookshop? The Christian Unity Bookshop in Nottingham, catering for all Christians from Brethren and Pentecostals to Roman Catholics, but especially for Anglicans, needs a new manager or manageress for May or June this year. The shop is a sister venture of Grove Books. Write to Colin Buchanan for details.

This month's booklet . . .

is no. 48, *Agreement on Authority: The Anglican-Roman Catholic Statement with Commentary* by Julian W. Charley. This third statement from the Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission is perhaps not quite 'ministry' or 'worship', but it seemed to belong with the other two statements, on which Julian Charley had in 1971 and 1973 produced commentaries. (These are booklets 1 and 22 in the Ministry and Worship series). The new statement also differs from the other two in registering an explicit point of disagreement. But it covers a lot of ground, establishes at least some common principles which Anglicans and Roman Catholics may be surprised to find they share, and narrows the one point of disagreement to an easily measurable compass.

STOP PRESS—A very happy personal footnote to the above announcement. Julian Charley has become engaged in the same week as his booklet has been published. We do not normally carry personal news of this sort, but his many friends will be delighted to hear of this decision. Our warm congratulations—Julian Charley has a very special place in Grove Books' affections, as his first booklet launched the whole series, and was indeed the budgetary basis for the planning of the first six titles.

. . . and next month's

is no. 49, *Prophecy*, by David Atkinson. Is the 'prophecy' practised to-day identifiably continuous with the 'prophecy' of the New Testament—or the Old? The author has worked over the whole ground, and provides a theological interpretation of the New Testament evidence, also with pastoral guidelines for to-day.

and NOL

If you have not paid for the 1977 numbers of *NOL* (though there is no need to pay in advance for those who take any of the series of booklets) you should receive an invoice with this copy. The February *NOL* will not be sent until we have your instructions and payment.

. . . and the stocktake for 1976 . . .

revealed that over 21000 booklets on Ministry and Worship were sold in 1976, over 13000 on Ethics (nearly double the 1975 figure), over 5500 Liturgical Studies, and over 5000 *Series 3 for the Family* and 3000 *Series 3 for Children*. So we continue to expand.

and a very acceptable review . . .

for no. 47, *Liturgy for Marriage*. The CEN nowadays gives regular reviews to Grove Booklets (usually by John King, and usually the same as each other!), but the *Church Times* is less frequent with notices. On 14 January Phillip Cecil reviewed Charles Hutchins' latest booklet, and completed a complimentary review by saying ' . . . the book as it stands is certainly one of the most useful that this series has yet given us.' One is left to speculate idly as to whether Canon Cecil has in fact been sent the whole series in turn by the *Church Times*, and that fat packet lies behind his comparison. And, of course, we are spurred on by that 'yet'!

BOOKS THIS MONTH

In the course of stocktaking we have discovered copies of the original 'White Book' report of Series 3 Communion—the Commission's 1971 text at 25p. We have for a long time had spare copies of the Commentary on this, reduced to 10p, and we also have copies of *The Presentation of the Eucharist*, which came out the same year, as a sort of companion to the rite (though less official than it looked). It is 35p. Readers may care to compare it with Booklet no. 40 *Freedom in a Framework*, which was an attempt to do the job better.

By a duplication we have 100 spare copies of the words edition of *The English Hymnal* (75p). Before we return these to the publishers, we wonder whether they are of any use somewhere.

Mayhew-McCrimmon have sent the attractive-looking *Bidding Prayers for the Church's Year* edited by David Konstant (£2). The actual prayers are related to the Roman Catholic calendar and lectionary, and are founded upon the themes of the readings. The reviewer in the *Church Times* on 14 January wrote '... it shows the way for anyone feeling moved to provide something similar for use at Anglican celebrations of the Eucharist.'

We mentioned the pre-NEAC papers last month. The three books are due to be published on 31 January 1977, but can be obtained at the East Midlands Regional pre-NEAC Conference at Nottingham on 29 January. Copies ordered by post will be sent (postfree, like all the other books) to arrive by Monday 31 January. They are 65p each, as indicated last month.

The subject of worship has, for such a contemporary issue, been somewhat short-changed in the apportioning of topics. However, it figures in Trevor Lloyd's paper in the second book (*The Obedient Church*) on the life of the local church. In the course of this he goes crystal-ball-gazing to 1982, giving us fascinating (and no doubt controversial) glimpses of the church life at a certain St. Bodikins, a parish apparently flourishing in that decade.

It is not exactly a worship topic, but it is worth noting what acclaim has been accorded to the BCC publication *The Child in the Church* (60p). Certainly it sells well...

There is a small sprinkling of secondhand liturgical books collecting on our shelves (some of which we hope to mention here shortly). Possibly some readers have books they want to sell. If so, please write. Letters will not necessarily be acknowledged unless the offers are being taken up. We already have requests for that (OUP-pulped) book, *Modern Anglican Liturgies 1958-1968*. Any offers?

8p per copy (see page 3 for prices in 1977)

GROVE BOOKS

BRAMCOTE NOTTS. (0602 251114)

BAPTISM BY SUBMERSION

My article last month on initiation at St. John's College has led to a continuing come-back. There have been one or two to question the use of the word 'submersion', as the Baptists always say 'immersion'. I simply use 'submersion' as more clearly indicating that the candidate went under. Here are extracts from letters.

- (1) '... A recent highlight was the conversion and baptism of a young woman who asked that she should be totally immersed. We had to borrow a portable baptistry from the local tabernacle and assemble it at Christ Church, but it was all worthwhile. Her witness... spoke, volumes...' (Clarry Hendrickse, Christ Church, Netherley, Liverpool, in a Christmas circular letter which coincided with the stuff in *NOL*, and arrived the day after *NOL* went out!).
- (2) 'The actual service took place on Sunday 18 May 1969 during Morning Prayer. The candidate was a sixteen year old girl, who wore a bathing costume under her blue chorister's robe. We used a circular plastic tank, borrowed from Rolls-Royce..., and draped it with a red plush curtain which completely hid the tank—to this day most of the congregation do not know what the water was in!... I remained outside and Ruth knelt in the water, and had her head ducked under face-first!...' (Roy Upton, St. Chad's, Derby).
- (3) '... partly due to water shortage, partly due to impracticability and partly encouraged by the advice of a Baptist minister, whose brother I was baptizing, we opted for the learner tank at the local Primary School. The morning congregation 'processed' in a very unecclesiastical, let alone unmilitary, style, to stand round the pool (everyone could see—to the delight of the Baptist minister), we both entered the water in ordinary clothes (very cowardly to stand on dry ground!), the candidate knelt and was immersed forwards. There were two inadvertent incidents. I held his hand for him to kneel and forgot to immerse it and was awarded only 95%, and apparently I gave three downward pushes to ensure he was really immersed and the liturgical significance was questioned...' (Andy Barker, Deanshanger, Milton Keynes).
- (4) 'I have conducted an immersion baptism recently—in the Summer, in fact. We used the trainer pool of the local infant school, just across the road from the church. The candidate was an adult, who had been brought up in the Salvation Army, and has come to a personal knowledge of Christ fairly recently. She had (after being lent a booklet—a Baptist booklet—by me) asked for baptism, and I had suggested immersion, to which, after consideration, and with considerable trepidation, she agreed. I had had my attention drawn to the existence of the new pool in the school... We had a normal morning service—Series 3 MP, shortened, and with a sermon;... After the sermon, the whole congregation went out (I forgot to mention that the candidate had given a testimony in the service),

across the road, and gathered round the pool. While the candidate donned her robe (borrowed from a Baptist friend), choruses were sung to guitars, and then after the Series 2 questions, we both stood in the pool—about 2 feet deep. I baptized her in the Baptist manner, from standing (I had been coached by the local Baptist minister), and we all sang a hymn. The blessing ended the service—the candidate did not want to disappear to change before the end of the service, so she stood with her husband, who had draped her with a large towel...' (Chris Jenkin, Emmanuel, Tolworth, Surbiton).

From the correspondence various kindred questions arise. One or two asked how the 'baptistry' in St. John's chapel was filled and emptied. Answer, it was half-filled during the afternoon with a hose from the vestry tap, then great urns of boiling water were carried through from the kitchen and added shortly before the service started. It was emptied by siphoning—the chapel is on the first floor, so a hose leading out through the fire exit, and hanging below first-floor level, duly removed most of the water.

Most of the clergy who report seem to have preached on Romans 6. This tallies with a question raised by Charles Whitaker, who has been urging that Grove Books should publish a series of outlines for baptismal sermons. Is there a demand for these? First ideas are to hand. Then there is the question of single or triple administration. Those who take the Liturgical Studies will have seen in the 'Hippolytus' edition (p.19) that it is actually said there that the candidate is 'baptized' three times! It seems the primitive method in the West was to stand the candidates in the water, and interrogate them there, pushing them under once after each response to the threefold questions. Should the baptizer be in the water too? And should baptism be done with the candidate prone or supine—or how?

Finally, *where* should such services be held? None of those reporting borrowed a Baptist building. The options of the normal building or a local pool (or river etc.?) seem the desirable ones. More reports of this sort would be very welcome.

Our apologies to anybody who got a slightly bedraggled looking envelope (or even no delivery at all) for the December booklets. A post-box attached to St. John's College was raided between 10 and 11 on Christmas Eve in the morning, and the envelopes removed were discovered by the police (mostly still sealed) lying out in the open half a mile away on 27 December. They were retrieved, and in most cases reposted as they were. We have still not discovered whether any were lost in the process. Please let us know urgently if nothing arrived.

Incidentally, that raises the matter of change of address. *Please* let us know when you move house (in advance of the move if possible). We have a sprinkling of envelopes returned most months because change of address was not notified.