

News of Liturgy

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Editorial

The Archbishop of Canterbury has this month sent round all the incumbents of the Church of England a plea for increased numbers of men for the ordained ministry. More than 10000 letters must have gone out. I have argued elsewhere that the Church of England must be sure she will have senior posts further down the line for those she blithely tells at the point of selection or ordination that they have a lifetime's calling which she will enable them to pursue (at the time of writing this could well be a promise to provide employment right through to beyond 2020). There are *some* signs that the Standing Committee of General Synod has now started an enquiry about the long-term staffing needs, and perhaps that point will be met. It is not my concern here.

However, some sentences of the Archbishop did strike my eye. He writes to the existing clergy

'I am concerned that your future ministry should not be imperilled by any further overloading of responsibility through lack of manpower.' and later on

'Some are overwhelmed by the sheer size of the population to which they are expected to minister, without adequate help.'

These made me ask about the pre-suppositions which underlie the statements.

It emerges on inspection that the existing situation in which the Church of England clergy stand ready to conduct all weddings and funerals (if not all baptisms) of their parishioners has been projected indefinitely into the future. For experience shows that the clergy can cope with all possible forms of the demands made upon them by increasing congregations. The congregations themselves provide leaders, responsibilities are shared, and the pastors, far from being swallowed alive by their work, are often liberated to have a much wider ministry. It is the clergy of *thriving* parishes who write books, conduct university and parish missions, and circle the earth speaking at conventions, clergy conferences etc. etc. So who are the ones being overwhelmed by their parishes?

Paradoxically, it is the clergy of the struggling, fading, or self-evidently lost parishes who are overwhelmed. And often they are overwhelmed by their own ministrations to the secular world. Funerals in particular come to mind. An incumbent single-handed in a parish of 20000 persons may well be burying or cremating 6, 8 or 10 persons per week. If these involve a car-ride out of his parish, they may well involve 1½ to 2 hours each. This in turn means that his energies are consumed, his time is squeezed, and his ministry is at danger-point. Signs of these dangers are enough to prevent a colleague joining him, and the vicious downward spiral starts to operate. Make the parish 30000, and even a crematorium in the parish will swamp his

hours—one five miles away will have him more out of his parish than in! What then can be done? In some urban areas the deanery clergy club together and run 'crematorium duty'—say, a week each once every six months. This delivers the unlucky fellow over to a week of non-stop cremating duties, sometimes in a destruction-line process which operates so smoothly that the officiant gets virtually no chance even to meet the mourners, let alone learn anything about the background to the pastoral situation (which is part of the theory of being a 'persona' in a geographical parish). On the other hand, for all the other weeks he can be sure he will have virtually no 'un-churched' funerals or cremations to do, and he will know when the churched are dying, and will be glad to be involved in the funeral.

But for some time this system itself has been under strain. Various clergy find reasons why they should not do crematorium duty at all, and this then makes the others take more frequent turns. The question is now in the air as to whether the Church of England can always sustain the apparent expectation that a clergyman can be laid on whenever the local undertaker wants one. I knew an incumbent fifteen years ago who refused to do any committals if the corpse were not first taken to a service in the parish church, and perhaps that step may well be followed by others. This particular incumbent made it clear there would be no charge if the family did have a church service (and that may not be so easy to-day), for he feared lest the undertaker give him a bad press, suggesting that he made his restriction simply to get a larger fee.

Could baptismal discipline then be followed by funeral discipline? It seems to me to be the next logical step in treating England as a missionary country, and it would incidentally enable many of the overworked incumbents, to whom the earlier paragraphs referred, to break out of the vicious downward spiral. Where are the next steps being taken to this end?

Whilst it is clear that in rural areas, and in many suburban and urban ones too, this sort of 'discipline' is still far over the horizon, the very hypothesis raises the question of secular burials. It is only a few months since a Church of Scotland minister hit the press with a suggestion that presiding over funerals could be the responsibility of many different persons in society. In one case the chairman of the local golf-club might be appropriate, in another the publican would be the obvious choice. If these suggestions related to the secular uses of Sunday, then perhaps the television industry might also be involved in secular funerals. Who knows where we go from there? The columns of *NOL* are open.

Colin Buchanan

BOOKS THIS MONTH

We hope in the next week or so to receive our first copies of the new American BCP. We shall be retailing this at £1.60 for the cheapest pew copies (postfree as usual).

Re secondhand books. It is little use yet writing in and asking for specific ones wanted. We shall list whatever we have. But it is some use to write in offering books. In such a case sheer pressure of time means we shall only reply if we actually want the books.

NEWS ON THE OFFICIAL FRONT

Liturgy figured on the General Synod agenda on Wednesday 16 February under three different heads:

- 1 Series 3 Marriage Service. Here the revision stage in full Synod was to be completed (having not quite reached the vows in November). There were five small amendments tabled, all of which were lost or withdrawn, except the alteration in section 17 of 'Before God, the judge of all men, and before' into 'In the presence of God and'. This was moved by the Bishop of Kingston, Bishop Hugh Montefiore, and was accepted as consequential upon the amendment in November which wrote the 'judge of all men' concept into the exhortation about whether the couple could lawfully be married.

However, the actual revision was the overture to the incident which was keenly awaited. Bishop Montefiore had asked for the permission of the Business sub-committee to move, with the consent of Synod,

- (1) 'That all decisions of the Synod at the November 1976 group of sessions in respect of section 6 [i.e. the Preface] of the draft Marriage Service (GS 228A) be rescinded.'
- (2) 'That section 6 of the Marriage Service be reconsidered for revision at the July 1977 group of sessions in accordance with Standing Order 78.'

The Business sub-committee gave permission, noting that the debate had been twice adjourned in November (and was therefore somewhat unsatisfactory) and also that the service could not be further revised before it was included in the 1980 Alternative Service Book. However, when the question of the General Consent of Synod was raised, on a split vote the Synod refused Bishop Montefiore leave to move his motions. Instead, the draft gained 'Provisional Approval' and stands referred to the House of Bishops. It will be recalled that this House can decide the form in which the text comes back for 'Final Approval' in July. It would therefore be possible for Bishop Montefiore to pursue his attempts to amend the new revised Preface to the House of Bishops. What will in fact happen remains to be seen.

The debate was enlivened at one point where the same Bishop wanted to alter 'proclaim' into 'pronounce' [that they are husband and wife]. Synod's leading wag, Brian Brindley, opposed 'pronounce' alleging that only sentences are 'pronounced'—and this is no sentence!

- 2 The Calendar and Lectionary (GS 292). This was at last given General Consideration. Various members made rude and polite noises about the principles and the details of the report. One speaker called the Sunday themes a 'rag-tag-bag' and another called the omission of King Charles the Martyr an insult, and the inclusion of George Fox an injury (which he sustained by a long history of the hostility of Fox's family to the C/E in general and their parish Church in particular. The Archdeacon of Durham thought the Venerable Bede ought to be on 27 May, and St Valentine found a champion (though St Nicholas,

St. Swithun and St. Vitus did not). Dr. Jasper in reply tut-tutted about any possibility of the list of saints being compiled by popular election in Synod (diocesan cultus being the proper basis). He also dropped broad hints that the action of the House of Bishops in November (commending the Roman Catholic daily eucharistic lectionary) did not make him ecstatic. Indeed, he argued that it was not at all certain the Roman Catholics themselves would stick with it. The report was approved for General Consideration, and is now referred to a revision committee.

- 3 The Alternative Service Book. The Bishop of Durham introduced a progress report (GS 325). Standing Committee has left the nuts-and-bolts of getting the ASB ready in the hands of a working group of four, chaired by the Bishop of Durham. The report settles on All Saints Day 1980 (as indicated last month) for publication, and the Bishop said the actual production would take twelve months, so that November 1979 is the last possible date for adding or subtracting items to or from the contents. He drew attention to the tightly disciplined timetable which would be needed. The tasks to be done included standardization (by 'adaptation' not 'revision') of all services, a shortened procedure for revision of drafts which come from the Liturgical Commission in the next two years (but the tight treatment for the revision of Series 3 Communion), and the production procedure, which would leave all 'origination' with the Church, and publishing with the various publishers.

In debate there was some desire expressed for the ministry to the sick to be included, for '1½' to be excluded (for obvious reasons), for the timetable to be less rigid, and for a 'Preface' (as in 1662) to introduce the Book (and to say kind things about the 1662 Book!). The Bishop answered these happily.

There then came another 'rescission' request. Brian Brindley wanted to move a motion rescinding the decision of February 1976 to go ahead with the ASB. Like Bishop Montefiore before him, he got past a reluctant Business sub-committee (which agreed solely because this is the last time it would be possible to drop the project), only to fail to gain the 'general consent' of Synod itself.

The Ten Propositions were sent down to dioceses. The liturgical question is *how* to reconcile ministries.

SETTINGS FOR SERIES 3 MP/EP

Several correspondents have asked about settings for Series 3 Morning and Evening Prayer. Two 'home-made' productions have reached us. The first of these we have in stock at 30p (postage free as usual). It comes from the organist of Christ Church, Fulwood, Sheffield, David Pettinger, and our reviewer notes that 'it requires a choir to lead it' and that it is somewhat ordinary and traditional. He says that he would have liked to have seen a bit more melody as against harmony, but also says that it is 'very useful for a church which would like to sing the Series 3 offices.' Who wants to try it?

8p per copy (£1.90 for the whole year 1977, by post (£2.25 by air))

GROVE BOOKS
BRAMCOTE NOTTS. (0602 251114)

This month's booklet . . .

is no. 49, *Prophecy*, by David Atkinson. Is the 'prophecy' practised today 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 next month's

is Liturgical Study no. 9, *Lay Presidency at the Eucharist?*, edited by Trevor Lloyd, with contributions by Robin Nixon, Pat Dearnley, Douglas Davies and Colin Buchanan. Overall the intention is to theologize around the problems, shake it out and see its dimensions, and discuss both sides of the main question. It is not a tract in favour of either one solution.

. . . a reminder about Liturgical Studies—the new titles this year cost 75p each, and the old ones (nos. 1-8) all go up to 75p on 1 April. We are sorry about this, but the prices are still very comparable with other specialist studies in the religious field (e.g. you'll have difficulty getting anything like no. 8 for less than three times the price elsewhere). Anyway, if you want backnumbers, now is the time to order them. The ordinary Ministry and Worship (and Ethics) booklets will go up to 35p from July for new ones, but backnumbers will stay at 30p till the end of the year. There are rumours of postal increases soon, but we continue to absorb them.

A hectic despatch in January

We had planned to get the Anglican-Roman Catholic stuff into the post by Wednesday 19 January (it being published on the Thursday). But it all fell apart. Firstly, the *Irish Times* broke the embargo, so the rest of the press followed suit (but nobody told Grove Books) and the Statement was released on the Wednesday. Then we were so swamped with demand for the other stuff we were publishing in the few days after it (Ethics 15, *NOL*, Ethics 1 (reprint), the Southwell Report on Infant Baptism (25p) (see p.8 for more about this), along with requests for the new collects which were also published on 20 January (35p), that the system cracked. Shops were deluging us with demands for no. 48 (we sold around 3000 in the first eight days, compared with the usual 1000), and the Standing Order posting continues to expand. So instead of the two days we normally reckon for despatch, it took us nine. We do apologize if you were at the end of the line. [Incidentally, S.P.C.K., the official publishers of the Statement, were in no better case. On the Friday before publication they discovered that the printed copies had three lines in the wrong place, due to a minor inadvertence at the printers', which had not been noticed. They had to scrap the entire printing (as the displacement changed the theology!), and get it done again in a matter of hours.]

. . . and the Ethics titles

At New Year's Eve, Ethics nos. 1, 4, 5, 8 and 9 were all out of print simultaneously. 1 and 8 are now reprinted, and 9 will be next. (Meanwhile Ministry and Worship nos. 13 and 19 have sold out completely.)

. . . and changes of address

. . . we may slip up sometimes by mistake when you have told us, but we are bound to slip up if you do not . . .

BAPTISM BY SUBMERSION

So much correspondence on baptism by submersion has now followed, that one might almost think it to be the standard Anglican practice . . . A few extracts fill out the picture.

(a) 'On the question of the importance of the witness of the young woman mentioned by Clarry Hendrickse, I can think of no text of scripture that says baptism is a witness. Philip didn't look for a crowd when he baptized the Ethiopian eunuch, but water.

'I am curious why there is so much concern over total submersion, which seems to me to have very doubtful biblical justification. Pouring water over the candidate seems to me to have a double symbolism—

(i) of cleansing

(ii) the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

'However, as the Church of England does permit submersion I have performed it myself in the Wharfe at Bolton Abbey, to which about 40 of my congregation came. . . . I went into the water with the candidates though only they were submerged. The event took place in June. Another candidate requested similar baptism for a date in November, but cried off at the last moment (to my considerable relief), and subsequently left the Church!' [Michael Botting, St. George's, Leeds]

(b) 'In an area where the Baptists are a great majority we occasionally have adults request baptism by immersion. Twice in the last three years we have baptized adults (4) in the presence of our bishop by immersion. Wishing to do this at the main Sunday gatherings of the congregation we obtained from an "agricultural supplies" a galvanized horse watering trough. It is easily moveable by two men (empty—we siphon as you did). It looks just like a coffin, so the going down into death symbolism is clear. The person sits in the trough and the priest kneeling beside it has the person lean back under water. (We submerge them three times). . . . Despite much talk before the first time (were we becoming Baptists etc.) once witnessed there has been no other talk.' [Henry I. Louttit, Jr., Christ Episcopal Church, Valoosta, Georgia, U.S.A.]

(c) 'I simply want to report we did an adult baptism by total immersion last year. It was held in the Baptist Church as their normal morning service for that day. I preached and presented Helen for baptism. The baptism itself was performed by the Baptist Minister . . . who was in the water with the person being baptized. I have three older teenagers who are going to be baptized in the same manner on Sunday April 17th.' [John Tonkin, Oadby, Leicester].

(d) Alan Winstanley, the curate of St. Mary and St. Paul, Great Sankey, Liverpool (and a former student of St. John's Nottingham) has sent me four successive issues of his parish magazine. In July 1976 he

records that on a parish weekend at the end of June 'Eleven people felt it right to go through the waters of Baptism (full immersion in the swimming pool) and Gordon [the vicar] and I were very happy to share in this ministry . . . what I propose to do, is to ask some of those who felt it right to be baptized to write their reasons . . . in next month's magazine'. The August issue then had two testimonies (one by a relative of the vicar) about why the two persons had sought baptism. Both of them lay great emphasis upon the witnessing element in adult baptism. In the September issue a local Baptist minister commends 'believers' baptism' ('I believe that Infant Baptism is the biggest single hindrance to conversion'—shades of Spurgeon saying it sends more people to hell than anything else does!) and also commends total immersion. In the October issue Alan Winstanley himself summarizes in 'So where are we up to on baptism?'. Subtitles to the article include 'So how did children get in on the act?' and 'Is infant baptism valid?' This last is answered by 'I would say very definitely "yes", provided that the parents are born again, and that it is accompanied at a later date by a mature profession of faith.' This last seems to one innocent armchair theologian a good way of saying that we cannot tell at all at the time of the baptism whether it was a baptism or not. I hope Great Sankey has arranged to keep its baptismal registers in pencil and to issue its certificates in invisible ink. Infant baptism there is a precarious sacrament, always liable to *post factum* invalidation . . .

(e) 'My daughter . . . tells me that she has heard that each diocese is supposed to have a baptistry (one in the diocese). (The Ely one is at Hemingford Grey). True or false? Any light will be welcome.' [Norman Hillyer, Avebury, Wilts.]

What are we to make of this lot? Well, the following questions strike me:

- (i) How plausible is the 'public witness' motif?
- (ii) Does symbolism involve *enactment*? (How far does it in holy communion?)
- (iii) Is a baptism by a Baptist minister in a Baptist Church an Anglican baptism in any recognizable form? (The new canon B43 had the provision that free church ministers could do Anglican baptisms deleted! Or is it not possible to call *any* baptisms 'Anglican'?)
- (iv) Is a baptism in a river (such as the Wharfe many miles from Leeds), or in a swimming pool at a houseparty, to be recorded in some other parish's register, and not that in which it happened?
- (v) How far can Anglican parishes go towards the brink of anabaptism (see the Preface to the 1662 B.C.P. for hard words about the anabaptists) without actually falling off?
- (vi) Where are the 43 baptistries in Anglican Churches (there is one in the now-closed Church beside Lambeth Palace (Southwark) and one in the Church of St. Mary-by-the-Castle (I think) in Hastings (Chichester))? And where is the expectation that there will be 43 such recorded?

For myself I feel swamped, if not submerged, by all this.

. . . AND SOME INFANT BAPTISMAL POINTS

Cecil Parker, the vicar of St. Andrew's Walthamstow, writes about how he has entirely abandoned infant baptism (one only in seven years)—a true 'Wanseycite' indeed. He has also pulled down his church building, and uses his hall for services. And he was at that demo' celebration of communion by a lady priest in December. A consistent iconoclast—and a dynamic one.

The Southwell report on infant baptism, mentioned in *NOL* in December and January, was duly published by Grove Books at the end of January (it costs 25p). The report sets out two parish 'Codes' for baptismal practice—one called 'General Baptism' and the other 'Discriminate Baptism'—and calls on all parishes in the diocese to adopt one or the other, with the diocese to monitor the development and to review the practice in three years' time. The report was presented to Southwell Diocesan Synod on 12 February for a reference to the Deaneries. In the debate there was some fear expressed that there is a 'middle ground' somewhere between the two policies, which is not covered. The working party's view was that there is no middle ground, but that the moment any policy the slightest degree more discriminate than the very inclusive 'General Baptism' is desired, it will be found to fall under the 'Discriminate' code. At any rate, the report was referred to the Deanery Synods, who are to report by 31 August (rather than the 30 April date proposed by the report). There has been a slow growth of interest in the report in other dioceses.

Meanwhile an answer is now available to the question as to what action the Standing Committee will take about the Southwell motion calling for a re-examination of the conditions upon which infants are accepted for baptism. They have asked Bishop Knapp-Fisher, a canon-residentiary of Westminster Abbey, to write a one-man report. Those who have evidence they wish him to consider might well submit it to him direct.

And Grove Books has another 'aid' to baptismal practice to offer. It will be recalled that we have asked in these columns in the past for help for the Rev. Ted Pratt of Mackworth, near Derby, in producing a folding leaflet to be given to parents asking for baptism. Available in March, it has eight pages, and is a glossy, illustrated folder, with space for the parish to put its own stamp on the front. Cost 7p—or £1.25 for 20. Please send SAE for orders under £1, or let it come with next month's standing order.

FOOTNOTE

One more from the *Church Times*. Their 'centenary' column has been busy in recent weeks following the course of events at St. James's Hatcham in January 1877, when the Rev. Arthur Tooth was harassed by Protestants for ceremonial illegalities. Contrary to almost all tides of history, when 1977 is compared with 1877, St. James's Hatcham now exhibits an evangelical simplicity in ceremonial. But what evangelical would nowadays want to be a party to the *style* of the harassment?