

# News of Liturgy

Editor: Colin Buchanan

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## Editorial

### NEAC

I write on the day after the National Evangelical Anglican Congress has finished, still reeling from a surfeit of talk, organization, bookselling, celebrating, agonizing, worshipping, meeting old friends, making new ones, and laughing not only with my natural cynicism, but also with a reverent sense of the sheer divine comedy of these 2000 people all bringing their own humanities, personalities, nationalities and prejudices into a glorious interaction with each other. There was of course no surfeit of sleep . . . I write without even having the final Congress Statement in front of me, nor have I yet seen Trevor Lloyd's commentary which is being finished elsewhere as I write. But I write with last month's editorial as my guide. I wrote then that there were three areas where worship would be a crucial issue at the Congress, and I now reflect on how those areas 'fell out'.

1. *Worship at the Congress.* By Saturday night I noticed that the observers were enthusiastic, but the members of the Congress were in many cases not. By the long arm of coincidence the rather cerebral sectional sessions had been complemented not by informal worship, but by slightly traditional (if hearty) singing of hymns to order, and a large amount of watching and listening to presentations (and chairman's remarks) and speakers 'up front'. I take some share of the responsibility for this total impact, but each session was planned in itself, was fine in itself, but was *not* sufficiently different from the others to enable at least the more joyful members of the Congress to feel 'released'. This came through on Sunday.

We started Sunday with a 'Sunrise Service' at 7 a.m. The weather was glorious, the sun was climbing behind the central hill of the grassy slopes of the University campus, and the guitars and woodwind led us in singing, Derek Pattinson (secretary-general of General Synod) read the Bible, Bishop David Pytches (erstwhile of Chile) gave a short word, and then we turned to each other and worshipped in groups of ten or twelve (perhaps 1000 people in all). The groups prayed, then at intervals broke into song. Sometimes the song was taken up elsewhere, sometimes other songs were arising from other groups. There was a reverent, restrained, wonder about it all. David Pytches commented that this is what God must see every Sunday—different groups singing different songs to him all at once!

The 'release' had started. When at 9.15 our St. John's (amateur) Dance Drama group presented a skit on the frozenness of most congregations, and their need to come alive and be themselves (gifts and all—warts and all), the warm response suggested that the Congress members not only saw their home churches as in such need, but also the Congress itself! They then prayed in groups of six (yes, all 2000 at once), and really *felt* participant.

By the Sunday evening there was real expectation and keen anticipation for the communion service. We sang the 'King of Glory' (Pulkingham/Celebration) setting of Series 3 (though oddly being told to *sit* to sing the gloria in excelsis); the Archbishop of Canterbury preached on Romans 8.29 and Hebrews 12.14; we broke into the groups of six again for the prayers; hands were lifted up to sing 'I am the Bread of Life'; the Kiss of Peace was a further moving experience; and the communion itself seems to have been even more so.

After the communion, the All Soul's orchestra—to whom the Congress owes a great debt—played songs and hymns with 500 or more people standing around, singing and praising gladly, and with a sense which could be *felt* that the 'release' had truly come. It may have been late—but it did seem to be widespread.

2. *Worship as a Congress theme.* This was handled specifically by Trevor Lloyd, and a separate report on his section is to be found elsewhere in this issue. But the theme of initiation kept recurring in other sections—notably George Carey's (under 'Christian beginning' on the first day from the first of the pre-NEAC books), and Ian Cundy's (under 'Church as Community' in the 'People of God' book). It was not much discussed in my own 'Unity of the Church' section.

The problem here arose from the fact that George Carey in his chapter of the book, and in his draft statement for the Congress to revise, had taken the view that confirmation should precede admission to communion (as at present), and that the age for this ought not to be lowered from the present one. Trevor Lloyd, on the other hand, held that where infant baptism was proper then infant and child communion should follow. What happened to the drafts in the congress can be seen from the extracts on pp.7-8 here.

The same extracts will indicate how the revision of Series 3 and other such issues were handled.

3. *The merging of 'evangelicals' and 'charismatics'.* I can only report in brief that it has, I think, duly happened. The worship factors mentioned above were important, and the extracts from the statement quoted below were also so.

Beyond this, I should report that we had hoped for an Anglo-Catholic response to the worship at the congress, but both Mark Santer and David Hope, the two whom I approached, had to leave early and therefore did not feel competent (though they were enthusiastic about the Congress when I last saw them). Whom else shall I ask? Is there someone of an such ilk who *was* there throughout who can report to us in May? For the rest—simply *Laus Deo.*

Colin Buchanan

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**Quote of the Congress**—greeted by wholehearted laughter and applause—Archbishop Stuart Blanch said: 'The Prayer Book now has to me the charm of total unfamiliarity.'

## WELCOME TO ST. BODIKIN'S-IN-THE-BALLROOM

'There is stimulating and different worship at NEAC, not what is to be expected in our churches'. Did Trevor Lloyd really mean either half of that sentence in his session on 'The Life of the Local Church', held in the Portland Ballroom of the University at NEAC? The comment came during a plea for more awe, reverence, and silence in evangelical worship. The silence of the several hundred delegates at that session was significant when the Chairman offered specialist discussion groups; there were few takers for the interaction of small and large groups in church life, nor for the relation of involvement in, and prophetic ministry to, the local community from whose culture church leaders should be taken. Both of these were key areas in Trevor Lloyd's thesis.

Contributions from the floor that produced the biggest response included a plea that the Church Family Sunday should not destroy the human family Sunday, especially in homes where only some were Christians. A sympathetic but unrepentant Lloyd insisted that the nuclear family should not take precedence over the Church Family. Another delegate wanted attention paid to the elderly, often handicapped, who could not cope with change. Spontaneous applause greeted this, as also the plea that 'inner, inner (*sic*) city churches should not denude inner and outer city churches of members.' Chairman John Stott fielded this one first! The age of admission to communion also raised some sparks in general discussion and it was left to the groups to relate the theological argument for child, even infant, communion to the pastoral and practical outworking. In the event, the sub-plenary split 50/50 on it. [see page 7 below—Ed.]

Trevor Lloyd's handling of problems and objections appeared a model for the sensitive handling of those unable to accept new ideas; he gave little impression of being a subversive revolutionary and those who know his parish will also know he is far from yet implementing all that St. Bodikin's might be. Asked how to move your church from being St. Stuck's to St. Bodikin's he spoke of looking to the Lord, of prayer and love, not manipulation; an inner group to study issues and plan prayerfully for the wider fellowship; regular teaching and the use of group discussion, informal communions in various places, making and receiving visits with other churches; one should allow time, have a plan over five or ten years, have a model rather than a blueprint, and set specific targets. At NEAC 1987 we can let each other know how it's getting on.

Gordon Ogilvie

## The catalogue

We are also including in this distribution the new catalogue, and for this reason we had an extra 1000 copies of the congress catalogue printed. Thus the catalogue enclosed is that to which we added two pages on books available at the congress, and by sending this now we save the 'BOOKS THIS MONTH' space in this issue. We welcome Collins Liturgical Publications as advertisers this month.

## This month's booklet . . .

is no 50, *Evangelicals, Obedience and Change*, by Trevor. This is the commentary on NEAC which is designed to come out with the statement itself. The statement grew to 20000 words during the congress and thus to 48p in cost . . . But we are including it to all private standing order customers with the commentary, and distribution will be held until both are available to be sent. If anyone who was not warned last month does not want to pay 48p he may return the statement to us. Those who take *NOL* without the monthly booklets should send 78p to have both together sent to them. The statement is published by Falcon/CPAS.

## . . . and next month's booklet

is no. 51, *Encountering Charismatic Worship*, by Colin Buchanan. The treatment is phenomenal (not in being sensational, but rather in describing and evaluating the phenomena of such worship), and it is also psychological in helping the cautious to adjust to the changing times.

## . . . and last month's Liturgical Study on 'Lay Presidency' . . .

we were very sorry to be so late with it—just occasionally this happens.

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### SERIES THREE AND ST. JOHN'S

'From those to whom much is given, much will be required', and as St. John's College has experienced an almost unmitigated diet of Series 3 communion service since its inception, it's only right that unofficial copies of that famous 'Series 3 Questionnaire' should find their way into the college. The returns provided an interesting contrast with the Southwell Diocesan official copies, which also passed briefly through the hands of our processing team, in that they were noticeably fuller in comment—both practical and theological.

There were surprisingly little of the traditional evangelical concerns showed; a couple of protests that prayers for the dead were still included, and some distrust of the (deliberately?—surely not!) ambiguously phrased offertory section. The language came in for criticism, but largely not for its irreverence, but rather for its obscurity! Words such as 'penitence', 'hallowed', and that most ancient of liturgical exclamations, 'Hosanna' were all queried as being unreal to modern man.

However, the most predominant feature was a call for far more variety, ranging from more seasonal sentences throughout, through requests for alternative shorter forms of the creed and confession/absolution (à la CPAS family service?) down to the thanksgiving prayer, which some would have fully congregational, many wanted at least partially responsorial, and not a few thought was in any case too long! There was strong approval for the prayer of humble access, and even a request for a modern version of Cranmer's shorter exhortation to be made available.

A final feature, perhaps not surprisingly, meeting with approval and comment was the Peace. This is a feature St. John's has always majored on, and comments reflected local practice in asking for rubrical authority to have the Peace optionally elsewhere in the service, and generally to 'make more of it'. But the somewhat stilted wording was criticised as being neither good liturgy nor natural greeting.

All in all one thing was overwhelmingly clear, namely that students at St John's are very happy with the service as the basic pattern for the future. One even went so far as to call it 'the best written ever (including the Book of Common Prayer)! For tomorrow's clergy, it seems, tomorrow's liturgy is here.

A. Peter Hobson

### SILVER JUBILEE SERVICE

*A Form of Prayer and of Thanksgiving to Almighty God on the Occasion of The Silver Jubilee of the Accession of Our Sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth The Second.*

Clergy will by now have received copies of this service which is to be used on Sunday 5 June. This is a service which stands complete in itself including an Introduction, selected hymns with alternatives, a collect in old and new style language, a Litany and a final Act of Dedication. It is designed for use in churches of all denominations.

The first impression given by the service is that the compilers have forgotten most of the lessons learnt so painfully by the churches over the last generation. The language is woodenly pompous. The Litany is full of high-sounding generalities and vacuous abstractions. Any note of joy in the service is severely restrained. Participation is entirely formal. Freedom and spontaneity are excluded. It is dull in the extreme.

There is also one serious omission, one oddity and one dubious new hymn. There is no note of penitence in the entire service. Not even the beautiful prayer for unity, added to the Prayer Book in 1715, finds a place in its solemn petition, 'Give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions'—surely a timely note to strike! The oddity is the inclusion of the Lord's Prayer using 'thy' and 'thine' following immediately upon a Litany using 'you' and 'you'. The choice of hymns, and psalm 121, is good if predictable. One new hymn finds a place. It is written by F. Pratt Green and expresses fully-fledged folk religion. 'In the discipline of freedom we shall know his saving power' is one line which, if it means anything, is not the Christian faith.

In the event let us hope that sentiment, not to be despised, and rousing well sung hymns, will save the day. I cannot help hoping, however, that many churches will find other ways as well to thank God for Her Majesty's reign.

Ian D. Bunting

### BITS AND PIECES

The next Series 3 services are due from the Liturgical Commission on 19 May when *Ordination Services* will be published (S.P.C.K. £1.25). These will be obtainable from us as usual, and *NOL* will comment next month. The draft series will have to be submitted to the Synod's revision procedures, and may well not be authorized till 1979. There will also be an open question as to whether or not they should be mere 'alternatives' to the 1662 Ordinal, or whether they should actually replace it. There may also be a question soon about the relationship between this new ordinal, and the projected 'Common Ordinal' which forms part of the Ten Propositions on Unity.

We apologize for further delays in sending American Prayer Books, but we think the delay is now over. We also have to hand a long article by an American reader on the use of it, but have had to hold it over till the May *NOL*.

We have had enquiries about the future of clerical liturgical dress ('can evangelicals make a break-through in this area?') and about new titles for 'altar servers'. Any ideas?

Was John the Baptist a Baptist? Not on ITV's *Jesus of Nazareth* on Palm Sunday (he cupped his hands and poured water on the candidates). But the BBC's Baptist in *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (Good Friday) was a Baptist indeed . . .

### SELECT NEAC STATEMENT EXTRACTS

#### Initiation

'Baptism is the sacrament of God's grace in Christ, signifying entrance into the Christian church'. (*Christian Beginning*, Introduction).

'We reaffirm our loyalty to the Church's practice of baptizing the infant children of professing Christian parents, although we recognize that there are some Anglican Christians who would prefer believer's baptism to be the norm and infant baptism the exception. We express strong concern over the laxity with which infant baptism is often administered and regret that the call of the first NEAC at Keele ten years ago for a national policy of baptismal discipline has not been heeded.

Indiscriminate baptism is a scandal to the Christian gospel and does not help those parents outside the church who bring their children to baptism. We acknowledge that evangelicals in the church have not always practised what they preached about initiation and we call upon them and the whole church to give greater attention to the preparation of parents and the continuing care of the baptized.

We believe that baptism represents complete initiation into Christ and his church. We wish to stress however the need for thorough instruction and careful nurture of the child in both the church and the home. Baptism is given in the expectation that the child will grow in the faith in which he has been baptized and profess it. The necessity for a personal response of faith should be made clear in any future amendment to the form of service.' (*Ibid*, Para 3).

'We are divided on the advisability of admitting children to communion. Some welcome the resolution of General Synod that "diocesan bishops, in consultation with their synods, be invited to make wider use of the discretion already allowed under Canon B.27 so as to admit younger children to confirmation when requested", but urge that this discretion should be exercised with the utmost care, and with very carefully controlled safeguards, and they are not convinced that it is wise to make confirmation available to children below secondary school age. Others advocate a variation of the traditional order and the admission to Holy Communion of baptized children of communicant parents after due preparation. They believe that the rite of Confirmation is best left as an act of commitment to adult discipleship.' (*Ibid*, Para 4).

'The church on earth is marked out by baptism, which is complete sacramental initiation into Christ and his body.' (*Church as Community*, Para 3).

'The church on earth is marked out by baptism, which is complete sacramental initiation into Christ and his body. We emphasize that both the outward sign and the inward work of grace are essential to the full benefit of the sacrament. The children of Christian parents are rightly included as recipients of baptism and are to be brought up as members of the community. We safeguard the font in a parallel way to the way in which we safeguard the Lord's table. If parents refuse to participate in reasonable educational preparation for baptism they must be deemed to have ruled themselves out. In the final assessment of those who complete the course, we urge the utmost charity. The next stage after baptism is to come to the Lord's Supper. But it is clear in Scripture that an element of discernment is involved in participating. We urge that the church look again at the Ely report, and would like to see:

- (i) the separation of confirmation from admission to communion,
- (ii) the admission to communion of baptized Christians able to repent and believe, though some of us would be unhappy to allow young children to receive communion, and
- (iii) abolition of confirmation for those baptized as adults, including those transferring communicant membership from another church.' (*The Life of the Local Church*, Para 3(f)).

### Series 3

'On the revision of Series 3 holy communion in particular, we are concerned lest any revision should give greater weight to the concepts of petition for the departed, eucharistic sacrifice or permanent reservation of the elements. We are also concerned because a number of our brethren believe that these concepts are already emphasized too greatly, so much so that they feel conscientiously unable to use the service without grave misgivings. We would urge that the death of Christ be the main focus of the anamnesis, as it is of the whole 1662 service, and as it was in the original text of this part of the Liturgical Commission's Series 3 service, without in any sense wanting to lose the broad doctrinal sweep of the mighty acts of God, and of the present realities of baptism, the Spirit, the church, and the future hope of Christ's coming back again. We reaffirm that intentional verbal ambiguity to bring together mutually contradictory doctrinal positions should not be a principle of liturgical revision.' (*Ibid*, Para 3(e)).

#### Presidency of the Eucharist

[The *Mission and Ministry* statement, in a diffused way, calls for the ordination of a plurality of local leaders (non-stipendiary) to ensure, among other things, that a supply of presidents of the eucharist is always available.]

'We urge that . . . leaders, duly authorized by the bishop and accountable to the Parochial Church Council, should be able to preside at communion services where there is no ordained person present.' (*The Life of the Local Church* Para 1(d)).

#### The Charismatic Movement

'We see a particular ecumenical significance in the Charismatic Movement, especially in its strong witness to the primacy of God and of the knowledge of God in all Christian enterprises. We rejoice at every point where this witness has enabled Christians to keep denominational loyalties and aims as necessarily and only derivative from these prime concerns. In various ways we are indebted to the Charismatic Movement in our spiritual insights and priorities (just as in various ways many of us also have question-marks to place over some of the teaching and emphases associated with it). We welcome the publication of the recent agreement between "charismatic" and other Anglican evangelicals", and wish to live and work together from now on without any sense of the "them and us" to which both sets have been accustomed.' (*The Unity of the Church*, para 5).

\* *Gospel and Spirit* (Fountain Trust).

The Congress also adopted, not just in subplenaries, but in full plenary, twelve

### DECLARATIONS OF INTENT

These included . . .

4. Rejoicing in the grace and gifts of God which 'charismatic' and 'non-charismatic' evangelicals find in each other, we pledge ourselves to work with and learn from each other, in mutual trust and common dependence on the Holy Spirit.
5. We recognize that all members of the body of Christ depend upon each other's ministry, and we pledge ourselves to seek ways of making this fellowship more effective in all our churches.
12. We admit that we have often tolerated low standards in our worship, and apathy in our spiritual life, and we pledge ourselves by prayer and action to seek renewal in our local churches.

### TAIL-PIECE—BAPTISTRIES

We hear that full-blown submersion is intended in the new church of St. Philemon, Toxteth, Liverpool, and in a church in building in Thamesmead, Southwark diocese. Is there such a baptistry at some church in Torquay too? If so, where?