

News of Liturgy

Editor: Colin Buchanan

Issue No. 31

July 1977

Editorial

I have in previous months noted that there was due on 1 July a book by T. G. A. Baker, the Dean of Worcester, entitled *Questioning Worship* (SCM, 88pp., 90p). It is largely a series of criticisms of Series 3 communion, and it deserves special mention here for that reason. It is the largest unfriendly work on Series 3 yet published, and it follows (and up to a point repeats) criticisms made by two successive editorial teams in *Theology* (each of them noted in these columns), and by Leslie Houlden in his last chapter in *The Eucharist To-Day* in November 1974. This is now an articulate strand of authors, who claim that a certain insensitivity to the work of modern theological scholars marks (and mars) the text of Series 3. Tom Baker made a great speech to this effect in the Synod debate on the 1980 Prayer Book in February this year, and one senses a slight sense of desperation lest the 1980 book pass into force without their criticisms being heard. I therefore attempt to summarize (with little evaluation) the thrust of the chapters of his new book.

Chapter 1 ('Worship To-Day') records that after the swift authorization and introduction of the new forms 'a sense of disappointment and dissatisfaction has followed just as rapidly.' (p.7). 'People do not enjoy going to church as much as once they did. Do I? Do you? Some magic seems to have departed.' (p.8).

Chapter 2 ('Gains and Losses') includes certain obvious gains, and they are ungrudgingly written. But they herald the four main items of 'the debit column', of which one only is expanded in this chapter and the others in the next three. He complains that we have become inward-turned, 'more bothered about the correct place for the "Pax" than about the plight of the homeless' (p.16). 'Liturgical revision has been for the most part a clerical preoccupation . . . a kind of self-indulgence.' (p.16).

Chapter 3 ('Worship and the Bible') indicts the Commission for 'insensitivity of treatment' of New Testament scholarship. He does not want the sermon to be grouped with the Bible readings, nor the Bible to be the exclusive source of readings, nor a 'pepper-pot' use of biblical texts, nor an over-identification of the bread and wine with the body and blood of Christ, nor (horror of horrors!) 'This is the word of the Lord', nor the traditional attributions of the comfortable words, nor (in Series 2 baptism) the bald insistence that Peter preached the sermon attributed to him in Acts 2. His criticisms are tempered by suggestions as to how, even with the existing text, the worst pitfalls above may be circumvented.

Chapter 4 ('Worship and Theology') picks up Houlden's desire to express God's acts not in the past tense but the present. The fall too—not exactly an act of God—must be wrenched from its historical thought-world and demythologized also. The second coming 'was something of an embarrassment even to some of the New Testament authors, let alone to us moderns;' (p.45). And the 1662 General Thanksgiving would be a good model for a

rewritten Great Thanksgiving. The language is too bald, and lacking in symbols (the rich first post-communion prayer is an honourable exception). Again some ways of correcting the impact, even without revision, are suggested.

Chapter 5 ('Worship and Mystery') leans heavily on the set-piece (carefully prepared) speech by the Dean of Guildford against the text of Series 3 in the November 1971 Synod. Baker admits there are two views on the power and vitality of the language, but urges that there is too much 'concern to satisfy all parties' (p.58). He knocks the ICET texts, complains that new texts do not fit old music, but 'the main reason for this loss [of the sense of mystery] lies not so much in the rites themselves as in the way they are commonly used and handled.' (p.62). He then again turns constructive and points out how to correct this.

Chapter 6 ('Creative Worship') sets two approaches to the problem of worship to-day in opposition to each other. 'One is the way of liturgical revision, undertaken centrally and imposed upon the people. The other is the way of liturgical creativity, in which new forms are thrown up from within the fellowship of local Christian (usually ecumenical) groups.' (p.73). The latter is, it seems, 'very much on the increase at present.' (p.75). One instance he commends is Grove Booklet no. 16 *Alternative Eucharistic Prayers* by Derek Billings, and he then goes on to John Gunstone's book *The Charismatic Prayer Group* (Hodder 1975). However, Gunstone is not writing texts—he is 'a loyal Anglican' (p.75). And freedom itself must be deplored—'To take an unofficial instead of an official form for regular use is hardly creative. It does not grow in any way from within the group itself.' (p.77). Worst of all, 'liturgical freedom seems so often to go hand in hand with rigidity in doctrine. Informality is allied with fundamentalism.' (p.77). So some creativity must be stopped? Furthermore the Liturgical Commission must not produce new alternative eucharistic prayers—a process which 'stifles creativity' (p.78). Near the end the St. Mark's-in-the-Bowerie rite gets a beta-question-plus, and at the end we go back to the suggestion that creative liturgy should be officially recognized and encouraged, and a set of rubrics to produce a structure would suffice for the official framework.

Chapter 7 ('The Prospects for Worship') simply says the way forward is to have official prayer books in each church, and an encouragement of creativity. He has come to terms with the facts about 1980, and is prepared to let liturgical revision happen. And he is apparently ready to take the risk that creativity will be both biblical and fairly unmysterious. So at the end of the day we can all go on as we have been doing—discretion is the better part of the dean's valour, and he will not bring anyone to the point of confrontation.

He is not quite right in his historical stuff about the origins of Series 2, and he seems unaware of the existence of ICET texts dating from 1974.

At the end of it, there seems little actual programme, except for a more imaginative handling of new rites (which any Liturgical Commission member would cheerfully endorse). The book seems to roll several

frustrations together, and make a volume of them. But it is difficult to see what the Commission could do with the actual text, which it is currently revising, which would both be clearly commended by the dean, and would accord with the responses to the questionnaire. Is the dean frustrated as much by the state of the church as by the text of Series 3—and if so, is he frustrated more by lack of life in the church, or more by an addiction to biblical imagery and thought-forms? These latter will be the theme of our September 'Liturgical Study'.

Colin Buchanan

JULY SYNOD

Series 3 Marriage is now home and dry. It actually went through on the nod, the voting being: Bishops *for*, 21; *against*, 1; Clergy *for* 132; *against*, 7; Laity *for* 136; *against* 7; total 289 to 15.

The Ordination Services were given general approval, and aroused no general opposition on any point, even the disappearance of the 'imperative formula'. Some speakers wanted more allusion to co-operating with the laity, others more visual aids in the shape of chalice and paten or vesting. The archdeacons present were reluctant to allow anyone else to usurp their function of presenting the candidates. If all goes well, the services should be available for the Michaelmas ordinations in 1978. Incidentally, the situation has been slightly complicated by the appearance of the 'Common Ordinal' prepared by the Churches' Unity Council; but in structure and in most of its wording it is very similar to the services before the Synod, and will certainly be taken into consideration during the Revision Stage.

Liturgical items cropped up all over the place. The Editor's request for 'a re-examination of the conditions upon which infants are accepted for baptism' was met by a rather thin pamphlet written by Bishop Knapp Fisher, which was published as a Miscellaneous Paper. The Standing Committee considered that 'a further debate now would simply demonstrate the existence of differing views on this matter'. Michael Saward described this attitude as sweeping the issue under the carpet. A question about the continued availability of service booklets after the Service Book appears drew the answer that the Synod must decide. The Revised Catechism is unlikely to be included in the Service Book. Those bishops who use the 1662 service for the Ordering of Deacons to ordain deaconesses will doubtless use Series 3 in the same way, and no separate service is contemplated.

The Revision Committee on the Calendar and Lectionary, having reached amendment 349 at the end of its tenth meeting, adjourned until September.

Geoffrey Cuming

This month's booklet . . .

. . . is no. 52, *Inter-faith Worship?*, by Peter R. Akehurst and Dick Wootton. Peter Akehurst is well known in this series (see nos. 18, 30, 36 and 41), but Dick Wootton is a newcomer. He is the Churches' community and race relations officer in Leicester, having previously been a missionary in India and Pakistan (where he wrote on worship in the Indian 'Christian Students Library' series). The issue of multi-faith and inter-faith services is becoming livelier and livelier in England at the present moment, and the two authors tackle the problem both doctrinally and sensitively, attempting to find guidelines for different situations, with different theological implications. (This is the first booklet to be published at 35p).

. . . and next month's

is no. 53, *Penance*, by David Gregg. The very term is a surprising one from an evangelical provenance, but some suggestions in Nicholas Sagovsky's booklet 43, which treats of the new Roman Catholic order of Penance, have sparked off further thought and work, which David Gregg has turned into a thought-provoking booklet.

. . . and reprints . . .

Reprints are now available of no. 38 (at 35p) and Ethics no 4 (at 30p). There are also one or two copies available (brought back from Australia!) of nos. 19 and 35 (still at 30p of course). Nos. 13 and 42 will be available shortly. (We apologize for stating in the June *NOL* that no. 13 and Ethics no. 4 were already available).

BITS AND PIECES

We apologize for further delays in supplying American Prayer Books. The Church Hymnal Corporation has informed us that reprints should be ready by mid-July, in which case they might reach us by the end of August. In the meantime we are recording orders.

The Lectionary 1978 (SPCK/Mowbrays) will be available on 18 August, price 22p and 35p. There will be no hanging edition of the *Lectionary Calendar* for 1978.

The Churchman's Pocket Book and Diary 1978 will also be available on 18 August, price £1.99.

Series 3 Marriage Service (AS 350) will be published on 13 October (SPCK, 25p).

Filofax users who get supplies from us may care to note that 1978 diaries (one week to a page) are now available. They cost 26p each when sent with monthly booklets—otherwise please send SAE.

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

GROVE BOOKS
BRAMCOTE NOTTS. (0602 251114)

FLEETING GLIMPSES OF AUSTRALIA

I spent two and a half weeks in Australia in June, and write now from New Zealand (on which I shall report in full in the August *NOL*). In Australia I spent a few days in each of Perth, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Rockhampton and Townsville—under the sponsorship and planning of *Church Scene*, the Anglican national journal of Australia. I had various opportunities to experience *Australia '73* and *Australia '77* and met different members of the Liturgical Commission. From their point of view the immediate hot item on the agenda was the draft prayer book (of which more in a separate article). But I decided at an early stage that not only would comment on the book be improper, but it would also be to miss the main need to which I could minister.

I therefore did quite a lot of speaking about 'domesticating' the liturgy—now to adapt and use the textual, musical and other materials to hand in order to build up the people of God. I was also able to meet more specifically evangelical groups, and interpret to them a little of where the Nottingham Congress had led evangelicals. And I also found a little interest lurking around in the 'Catholic Renewal' press release which was reported in the June *NOL*. I had written a not unsympathetic article about the implications and possibilities of this in *Church Scene*, and found a warm response to my article.

I note some of my happiest (liturgical) memories of the trip: in Perth I preached at a Mothers' Union Festival in the cathedral (which I would never be asked to do in England); in Melbourne we had a Saturday half-day conference at Toorak on making worship live, and when groups prepared the sections of the liturgy themselves (it was *Australia '77*) those working at the ministry of the word not only dramatized one of the readings, but also had ten different people read the Ten Commandments, as we stood in a large circle, and they also produced (under 'evangelical fellowship' auspices) some charismatic nuns; in Sydney I found that the old habit of staff preaching at the morning office at Moore Theological College continues, and I duly preached for 20 minutes before nine on an empty stomach; in Townsville the most memorable occurrences of all were chalked up—on the first evening there I lectured in the cathedral, and the Bishop (John Lewis, S.S.M., Bishop of Northern Queensland) led the singing of choruses on his guitar (I am hoping he will get the job at the Lambeth Conference next year)—on the second evening there was an informal (and very Australian) ecumenical agape, led by the charismatic archdeacon (George by name)—on the next morning there was an open-air, and somewhat 'high', celebration of the eucharist to mark the birth of John the Baptist (in the grounds of a girls' school, in front of a lake which has been free of an infestation of weed ever since the precursor of Sydney cathedral came up and cursed the weed . . .); in Brisbane I missed a day conference due to an airline strike, and the Archbishop stood in for me—very acceptably I am told—but I did have the chance to preach at a very happy Sunday eucharist in the cathedral and pay a quick visit to St. Francis' college; at Rockhampton I met Bishop John Grindrod, the chairman of the Australian Liturgical Commission, and spoke to an ecumenical

clergy gathering in his tropical lodge. Whilst I was there the Methodist, Congregationalist and Presbyterian Churches (or to be accurate, part of the Presbyterian Church) formed themselves into one 'Uniting Church'. The ordination of women lurked in the offing on the Anglican scene, and interest in having children receive communion was just beginning to surface.

Australia is a country of enormous distances—my host in Perth, Gordon Thomas, had previously been rector of a parish the size of Ireland—and the clustered centres of population tend to grow their own style of church life, rather independently of each other. There does seem to be a Perth outlook ('the most isolated city on earth!'), perhaps also an Adelaide one (where conservative Anglo-Catholicism is, by all accounts, strong—I did not get there), certainly a cerebral evangelical Sydney one, and arguably a Brisbane reforming catholicism, and a North Queensland offbeat attractive semi-charismatic catholicism. I found in some places a slight inferiority complex ('we should not have tried to do our own rites—you do them so much better'), which I attempted to dispel. And of course the sales of Grove booklets improved marginally in the country. I enjoyed myself enormously.

Latest from COB in New Zealand—I have preached at the famous high church charismatic parish in Auckland, St. Paul's Simonds Street, and also at the 'Anglican Charismatic Eucharist' in Hutt Valley, by Wellington, which again has high church overtones (and included more of singing 'His Banner over me is Love' (see no. 51, p.17, footnote 3!)). I am also enjoying a particular NZ phenomenon in architecture 'Wood Gothic' (!)—nineteenth century churches built entirely on Gothic Revival lines, but entirely in wood!

THE NEW 'AN AUSTRALIAN PRAYER BOOK'

The new full alternative Prayer Book of the Anglican Church in Australia was published in draft form whilst I was on my rounds, and a copy was kindly given to me three days before I left. The Synod had ruled that the Prayer Book should be presented to them in exactly the format it would ultimately appear, so the draft is in fact a prestige production, though in paper covers for the time being. It is printed in two colours (rubrics in genuine red), is 7" x 5" in size, and contains 716 pages. The title page of each service is embellished with a drawing of Australian flowers, such that I heard suggestions it should be called the 'Gum-nut book' or the 'Bottle-brush book'.

What then of the contents? The Sunday MP/EP are followed by a shorter daily provision, with a weekly round of canticles as with Series 3 in England. The modernized 1662 communion service from *Sunday Services Revised* is the 'First Order' of holy communion, whilst a revised *Australia '77* is the 'Second Order'. The main changes are that Humble Access precedes confession, and in the fourth form of the Thanksgiving the ending has been cut right down so that only three short lines follow the acclamations ('We offer our prayer and praise, Father, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Lord: Blessing and honour . . .'). I discovered that the acclamations had been moved back to follow the narrative of institution (as noted in *NOL* last year) not for strictly textual or logical reasons (which I still suspect are lacking), but in order to provide people's

responses at reasonably evenly-spaced intervals—it is a psychological point. The calendar and readings are arranged on a three-year cycle, and the Psalter is the 'Frost-MacIntosh' modern liturgical psalter which is to be published in England soon by Collins. Australia thus becomes the first place to take the wraps off the full psalter (appropriately, as David Frost is now Professor of English at Newcastle University, NSW). The 'occasional services' also have a modernized 1662 form as 'first order' (and a fairly conservative 'second order') whilst the ordinal is solidly 1662-based. The original 1662 still stands of course, and the canonical provision that a bishop may authorize other forms desired within his diocese also still stands. But the weight of hopes and expectations is placed on the new book.

The book comes before the General Synod in August. It is intended to implement it by the passing of a Canon, the central line of which is '*The use of the Australian Prayer Book* [an earlier clause shows why it is here called '*the*'] *by this Church is hereby authorised*'. General Synod in Australia, for distance reasons, meets but rarely, and the Anglican Church is really a federation, like the Commonwealth itself. Thus the Canon would normally need to be a 'special bill', which had to go to each of 25 diocesan synods before being implemented. But the proposal is to make it an 'ordinary bill', by which it is implemented immediately by General Synod. This requires a 75% vote in its favour in General Synod, and that is the aim of the Commission members I met. Diocesan Synods could still then 'regulate' the use of the book in their own dioceses, but the official status of the book would be inviolable. If the Canon is approved, then the book will go to the printers for a first printing of 100000 copies. Parishes have been asked to bid in advance for the numbers of copies they will want, and the price has been fixed at \$6 (£3.60) per copy.

We do not yet know when copies will be available in England, but we are placing an order and can take orders now for copies. We do not know whether trade discount will be available such as to enable us to absorb postage costs, so for the moment orders must come on an 'open-cheque' basis. We will try to supply in order, and we will do our best to keep the price down.

BOOKS

We have in stock copies of the IVP book about baptism (carefully holding the balances and stating the issues as between pedobaptism and anti-pedobaptism), *The Waters that Divide* by Bridge and Phipers (£1.60): we have advance copies of the 'Modern Liturgical Psalter' which is already in the Australian Prayer Book draft (see above)—it is *The Psalms: A New Translation for Worship* to be published by Collins on 26 September (text only, hardback £2.50 paper £1.25; text pointed for singing to Anglican chant, boards cased £1.95 limp £1.35): it is unclear whether the General Synod document on *Infant Baptism* (GS Misc. 59), to which Geoffrey Cuming refers in his report on the July Synod, is available for commercial distribution or not (it is solely in photostat form with no price marked).

NOTE: last month we distributed a leaflet by the S.P.C.K. called 'Books for Evangelicals' which had been prepared for NEAC, but culpably overlooked by us at the time of NEAC. This was *not* sent last month to those who get *NOL* only, and is enclosed this month. We commend these books to our readers, and apologize to the S.P.C.K. for our oversight.

BLESSING OF A CIVIL MARRIAGE

The first question that has to be asked is whether such a service is necessary, and the second is related to the content. Despite the fact that for some no service is necessary—either because they would resist any service in church, or that the re-marriage should be there anyway—there will always be those who desire to use, or provide, such a service. And into my hand have come four examples, including one Diocesan (Chelmsford) of services following a Civil Marriage.

As to the content, should it be as near to the 'true marriage service' as possible?—and that is the line adopted by Chelmsford (Series 3) and two of the other samples: or should it be quite different, offering a distinctive note of penitence with prayer for blessing, as that of St. Peter's Ipsley?

One (Barrow) offers a rite with the use of Psalm 150 as a basis for praise and two 'blessing' prayers commending them to God's care and protection as the one who keeps us from falling in a way which at least to me, seems a little incongruous. This rite also introduces the novel 'instrument' of handing the couple a Bible (only elsewhere given in the Ordination to the Priesthood)—perhaps on the grounds that after divorce a Bible is more necessary the second time.

Another of the review rites includes the prayer that God will assist with his blessing 'these two persons, that if it be according to thy will they may live together so long in godly love and honesty that may see their children christianly . . . "brought up".' One wonders if the qualifying clause is an insurance policy for realism!

For myself, if, (and the demand is sure to grow with increasing marital breakdown, unless re-marriage in church is authorized by Synod), we are to have a Service of Blessing on a Civil Marriage, we ought to have *one* authorized service throughout the church, which is not pale (or otherwise imitation of the Marriage Service, but a distinctive service. For me, of those under review the Ipsley one gives me the greater satisfaction, not only with the content, but also the clear rules—no bridesmaids, best man, white bridal dress, bells or choir, or bridal or wedding march, with the charging of the appropriate fees—no cut price service!

C. H. Hutchins

THINKING ABOUT BAPTISM, CONFIRMATION, MARRIAGE, DEATH . . .

Ted Pratt writes: 'I would be most grateful to hear how "Thinking about Baptism" is being received by parents in parishes, because I gather it will soon have to be re-printed, and also because I am thinking about further leaflets in the same format as hand-outs to prospective confirmees, wedding couples, O.A.P.s and perhaps godparents. So please send a postcard to me (the Rev. E. A. Pratt, Mackworth Vicarage, Derby DE3 4NG) if you have any comments about "Thinking about Baptism" and/or you feel you could use something similar entitled "Thinking about Confirmation", ". . . Marriage", ". . . Death" (or ". . . Life after Life")', "Becoming a God-parent". The one on "Death" would not be a leaflet for the dying, but to break the ice on this taboo subject with the elderly.'