

News of Liturgy

Editor: Colin Buchanan

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Editorial

As noted in previous months, the new liturgical psalter is published by Collins almost as this issue goes into the post. It is called *The Psalms: A New Translation for Worship* and it is published in a 'text only' edition (hardback £2.50, paper £1.25) as well as a pointed version (cased £1.95, limp £1.35). It is a product of the Cambridge school, headed by David Frost (whose field is English) and Andrew Macintosh and Professor Emerton (who represented the Hebrew interest, along with a larger panel). It has already become part of the new Australian Prayer Book, and was first released in Australia. As recorded elsewhere in this issue, that Prayer Book has now been authorized in Australia, and the Frost version would have bid fair to get its first full use in the country of David Frost's adoption (he is now Professor of English at the University of New South Wales). However, the Australian Book is to take several months to be published, and this means an official English use might overtake it.

In England the new psalter is due to be authorized for Anglican use under the Versions of the Bible Measure by two readings in November 1977 and February 1978 (see the chart in August *NOL*). But it looks as though the book may well pass into widespread use long before that. Certainly, there is no reason to expect Synod to reject it, and many will anticipate the decision ('Versions of the Bible' has always seemed rather bureaucratic and has tended to lag behind actual use of versions—e.g. the TEV is to undergo authorization at the same time!). Synod perhaps gave a very small hostage to fortune when it cheerfully voted the psalter (then still unseen) into the 1980 Prayer Book, but it is unlikely that the hostage will come to any harm, and the authorization of it which is now scheduled will determine the form of a large part of the 1980 Book. It is of course another question entirely whether those who buy the well-publicized text between now and 1980 will want to buy it all over again in the monster 1980 Book, and the sale of it now should increase pressure later on for a slimmer Prayer Book than the powers-that-be have so far promised us.

There remain two further large open questions. The first is whether parishes want to sing psalms to traditional chants at all (and whether where they do want to they actually *can*), and what alternatives can be provided. Or should the new psalter be used, but said not sung?

The other question is whether this is a good job done within its own framework. My colleague John Goldingay, whose judgment in most things Old Testament I warmly respect, is not convinced and has said so below. But through the kindness of another colleague, the editor of *The Churchman*, *NOL* is able to print alongside the less-than-enthusiastic review by John Goldingay a briefer but more congratulatory review by Derek Kidner, the warden of Tyndale House, Cambridge, and the author of the Tyndale Old Testament Commentary on the Psalms. Paradoxically and

coincidentally, it is the same features of the collection which dismay the one and delight the other. Perhaps it is very much a matter of taste. I was the more stimulated to see it this way when John Goldingay told me he had written his review this way 'because "a very present help in trouble" means *nothing to anybody nowadays*' (my italics). I have a nagging suspicion that it still means *everything* to a large number of people. So where do we go from here?

We will be very glad to have comments based upon use of the text over the next few months.

Colin Buchanan

Two Reviews of the new Psalter (for details see Editorial above)

(i) By John Goldingay

'Well, you know what I thought of *Twenty-Five Psalms*' (the 'trailer' to *The Psalms: A New Translation for Worship*), I said when COB asked me if I would like to review the new psalter for *NOL*. 'Yes, but surely you can say some positive things about it, can't you?'

Yes, indeed. It is a significant step forward in that it provides us with a psalter in language much closer to English as she is now spoken. It is in fact slightly post-RSV: while the phrases and approach resemble the RSV (and thus the AV of which the RSV was ultimately a revision), words such as 'habitation', 'abides', and 'sorely' tend to disappear, as do 'thee' and 'thou' in accordance with Series 3 practice. There are some happy new phrases, such as the paraphrase 'where godhead truly dwells' for Zaphon (48.3). Good use is sometimes made of typographical variation (e.g. to indicate refrains) and of paragraphing (e.g. in 119). Short lines are sometimes gently expanded to facilitate chanting. Those for whom the psalter at present broadly 'works' will find it easy to adapt to this new version.

In a sense, that may be the trouble. I am not sure about the philosophy of the translation. I do not quarrel with its principle of keeping close to the way Hebrew expresses itself so that 'the Psalms in Christian worship should be recognised to be from ancient Israel—a quite defensible alternative to the TEV's 'dynamic fidelity'. My problem is rather that this principle is apparently also reckoned to point to an archaizing approach to translation into English. But there is no need to be archaic in order to be clearly foreign! The Gelineau translation (based on the Jerusalem Bible), for instance, lets the foreignness of the psalms receive explicit expression in its use of *Yahweh* instead of the reverential substitute *the LORD*. The new psalter, however, eschews such foreignness, and by holding on to archaic English expressions, far from letting the psalms stand in their distinctive Hebrewness, leaves them domesticated, anaesthetized.

For instance, God is still 'a very present help in trouble' (46.1). This was a good translation in the sixteenth century; it was meaningful (and not an archaism) because 'present' meant 'ready at hand; esp. ready with assistance, "favourably attentive, not neglectful, propitious"' (*Shorter Oxford*

Dictionary: this verse is the example quoted). That is exactly the meaning of the Hebrew expression (cf. TEV, JB). It is not now conveyed by 'very present'. Again, at the end of the same psalm, we are still exhorted to 'be still and know that I am God'. This beloved devotional phrase has very little to do with the meaning of the line in the psalm, which is more accurately expressed by the TEV's 'stop fighting and know that I am God'.

In my parish church, and in our college, there are few alterations made more frequently to Morning and Evening Service than the omission of the set psalm. If we are lucky, this may be replaced by a metrical hymn, a Psalm-praise or Gelineau version, or by one of the charismatic-derived settings. In places where I do hear and take part in the chanting of psalms, this has ceased to be (if it ever was) a meaningful congregational exercise. So both for its general approach to translation, and for its commitment to perpetuating Anglican chant, I find *The Psalms: a New Translation for Worship* an unsatisfying volume. If the regular, systematic use of psalms is not to disappear from living worship, something different is needed.

(ii) By Derek Kidner

This is an admirable piece of work. At first sight it resembles the Revised Psalter, in that it preserves to a very great extent the feel and style of Coverdale's much-loved version; but in fact it is a fresh translation by a panel of Hebraists headed by Professor J. A. Emerton, who entrusted the English expression of it to Professor David Frost, and the pointing (for Anglican chant) to three church musicians. The result is judicious in interpretation and graceful in form, for it avoids both needless archaisms (thee's and thou's) and needless semantic and textual conjectures.

Many users of it will be grateful to find again the assurance in Psalm 23 about 'the valley of the shadow of death' (second thoughts prevailed here over the projected translation in *Twenty-Five Psalms*) and for the expectation of Psalm 73.24 that 'afterwards you will lead me to glory' (where the Revised Psalter had ventured no more than the clause, 'and leadest me along the path of honour'). There is flexibility over certain many-sided words for which there is no single satisfactory equivalent. For example, 'SV's rather ponderous 'steadfast love' is used sparingly (I found it at 17.7; there may be other instances) as one of many synonyms: 'goodness', 'mercy', 'merciful goodness', 'unchanging goodness', 'enduring kindness', 'loving-kindness', 'love'. Happily, too, 'righteousness' is seldom reduced to 'vindication', or 'salvation' to mere 'victory' (legitimate as these are at times).

In this psalter, Psalm 87 has fewer glorious things to say about Zion than one might reasonably expect; but it is admittedly a very cryptic poem. A small blemish in intelligibility (or perhaps in this reviewer's intelligence) appears in Psalm 127.3,b where there is a somewhat puzzling 'and'. But throughout this translation the tone is one of eloquence, clarity and depth. No one will have cause to mourn the replacement of Coverdale by such a version; and there could be no higher praise than that.

BOOKS THIS MONTH

The new psalter is mentioned elsewhere. Mowbray's have brought out a children's picture-book version of Series '1½' and of Series 3—the same pictures in each book, but with the different texts. Each costs 50p. Although the pictures are in many cases attractively done, the text is handled in an excerptive way—e.g. there is an apparent assumption that our Lord's Summary of the Law will be used, and that the second post-communion prayer will be used. The 'Offertory' exceeds all possible expectations—the whole congregation appears to be processing to the communion-table armed with a whole Harvest Festival of offerings. There is a wealth of money, a marrow or two, and a potted plant . . .

The 1977 Alcuin Club volume is *The Liturgy of Christian Burial* by Geoffrey Rowell, to be published by S.P.C.K. (yes, the Alcuin Club are back with them) at £3.75 on 13 October. This is the same date as the release of the Series 3 Marriage service at 25p.

The next book on NEAC is out—'77 *Notts. Untied* by Eddie Neale, Michael Smout, Colin Bedford and Dick Williams (Lakeland, £1.25).

Finally we have had stocks again of the American Prayer Book, but the price is now £2.40. The Australian Prayer Book will not be available in Australia till April, but we will keep readers posted. It looks like July here.

This month's booklet . . .

. . . is Liturgical Study no. 11, *Using the Bible in Worship*, edited by Christopher Byworth. This is a symposium which responds to the Houlden/*Theology*/Baker attacks upon biblical language in Series 3, and then suggests the positive part the Word of God should play in worship. The contributors are Christopher Byworth himself, Tony Thiselton, David Frost (yes, 'psalter' Frost), John Tiller and Ian Bunting.

. . . and next month's

is no. 54, *Celebrating Christmas*, by Richard More. A good slice of historical introduction to the season of Christmas is combined with a measure of contemporary suggestions about *how* (and even *when*) to celebrate the festival to-day.

. . . and a non-liturgical production

is *Born under a Lucky Star: the Memoirs of Hugh Jordan*, published in early October at £1.75. Hugh Jordan was principal of the old LCD from 1956 to 1969, following Dr. Donald Coggan and leading on to the decision to move the College to Nottingham. But Hugh Jordan's earlier life, whether in rural Ireland before the troubles, or in Dublin before the Second War, or in St. Helen's during that war, or later in Wolverhampton and Bristol, is illuminating and full of interest to those who know him. The autobiography is partly underwritten by past and present members of St. John's College Council.

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

GROVE BOOKS
BRAMCOTE NOTTS. (0602 251114)

'AN AUSTRALIAN PRAYER BOOK'

A report from the Australian General Synod

by Bishop Donald Robinson

A Canon authorizing *An Australian Prayer Book* 'for use together with the Book of Common Prayer 1662' was passed unanimously by the General Synod on 31 August. No opposition was expressed at the second reading of the bill, and even the crucial motion that the bill be treated as an ordinary, and not a special, bill (thus eliminating the procedure of referral to the 24 diocesan synods for further report and recommendation) was passed with only one dissident (and no abstentions) in a vote by houses in which all votes were counted.

The book itself, though not technically a schedule to the bill, was treated for the purposes of debate as if it were, and was considered in a committee of the whole Synod section by section—all 717 pages of it. The Liturgical Commission presented a number of final amendments which were accepted as part of the text to be considered, but amendments from the floor required a 50% vote of the committee in order to be considered at all. A reasonable number of amendments were brought forward, about half of which the committee agreed to consider, although only a handful, and none of any great significance, were adopted.

The whole debate on the second reading and in committee occupied only one full day of the General Synod. The smooth flow of the procedure, and the decisive acceptance of the book, were plainly due to the exhaustive method of publicising and testing the successive drafts of various services followed throughout the period of revision, and to the consultations with General Synod members held in the various States during the year or two prior to this General Synod. (The Synod meets only once every four years). The Canon now goes to each diocesan synod for adoption in that diocese, with or without particular regulations which that diocese may wish to make. It is expected that most if not all diocesan synods will adopt the Canon, and that the book will be available about next Easter.

[N.B. This same Synod approved in principle the ordination of women, but by a very divided vote—Editor]

SUBMERSION TAIL-ENDERS

The latest reports to reach us include news of a full-blown tank in St. George's Cathedral, Jerusalem, and information from one Rev. Geoffrey Turner in Boronia, Victoria, Australia, who has used submersion in the sea, in a private swimming-pool, and in St. Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne. He wears white shorts, open-necked shirt—and stole.

Liturgists of the world unite . . .

It has been suggested that clergy are like manure: spread thinly across the country they do a great deal of good, but all together in one place—phew! If that is true—what do you reckon about a gathering of 130 liturgists?

Yes, this number of liturgical scholars from 22 different countries met in Christ Church College, Canterbury at the end of August for the sixth congress of Societas Liturgica, the international society for liturgical study and renewal. This was the first time that the Societas had met in England and the subject chosen for discussion was Christian Initiation in the different churches.

Dr. Geoffrey Wainwright of Queen's College, Birmingham set the scene with a paper which reported on the reactions of the churches to the discussions which have arisen from the statement on Baptism which came out of the meeting of the Faith and Order Commission meeting in Accra . . . 1974.

During the next few sessions the current situation over their initiation rites was described by representatives of the denominations. The Dean of York read an interesting paper on the Anglican position and Fr. Aidan Kavanagh of the Divinity School described the post-conciliar R.C. situation. Many members were perhaps surprised that he was as questioning and as critical of traditional positions as any of us. One Kavanagh *bon mot*: 'I consider infant baptism as an abnormality—a benign one—but nevertheless an abnormality'.

Dr. Georg Kretschmar of Munich gave an account of recent research into the origins of Christian initiation making it clear that there was never a single uniform 'apostolic' pattern after which came diversity—there has just always been a multiplicity of custom. Someone (I won't say who) summed it up by saying, 'It doesn't matter what you do as long as you do a lot—but in any order you like'.

Would you believe that liturgists also themselves worship? Each day the Eucharist was celebrated—R.C. Mass in the College Chapel and the Anglican Service (according to a number of regional variations) in the Cathedral. We can join in *talk* about worship but not *do* it together!

Donald Gray

[Not all present took the view 'It doesn't matter what you do . . . '—Editor]

And an even more exclusive society . . .

THE HENRY BRADSHAW SOCIETY

This Society, founded in 1890, prints rare liturgical texts from various Christian traditions and from different historical periods for the benefit of liturgical study, research and revision.

Information from the Honorary Secretary, The Rev. David H. Tripp, 34 St. Mary's Hall Road, Manchester M8 6DZ, England.

A ROMAN CATHOLIC ORDINATION

I suspect that many readers of *NOL* have never attended a Roman Catholic ordination. Having recently attended a double priesting in Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral, I thought a note about it might be of interest—particularly as the Anglican ordinal is being discussed at the moment.

Readers who know the Cathedral will be able to imagine the splendour of the setting. Services take place in the round under a canopy of multi-coloured light. Incense, candles, colour and movement heightened the sense of occasion in a packed Cathedral. The Archbishop had made every effort to ensure that this was a diocesan celebration, and he presided with warmth and, at times, a certain informality.

The family atmosphere prevailed throughout. Members of families read the lessons; the deacon who read the Gospel was a College friend; the ordinands were presented by priests who had been involved with their training; we were all included as we showed our consent to their ordination in the words, 'Thanks be to God'.

In such a large building it was difficult to see all that took place, but all saw something. The ordinands lay prostrate on their faces for the Litany of the Saints. They were vested with stoles and chasubles, their hands were anointed and each was given a paten and a chalice. The peace was exchanged with each of the many priests individually, but the most dramatic and moving gesture came at the end, when the Archbishop knelt before the new priests to receive a blessing, just as they had knelt before him. It was unforgettable.

Theologically, the most heartening stresses were on the presence and authority of Christ in the Church. The problem of the priesthood is central for a Protestant. The Archbishop's charge includes the words: 'By consecration they will be made true priests of the New Testament who will preach the gospel, sustain the people of God, and celebrate sacred rites, especially the Lord's sacrifice.' He goes on, disastrously, 'My sons, you are about to be promoted to the order of priests'. In speaking of the Eucharist, Archbishop Worlock interpolated his own words, 'Model your lives on the one you are to handle.'

We can hardly be unaware of the theological problems to be sorted out in any acceptable common ordinal. But what we can learn is the sense of drama and occasion. Here was a joyful assembly of the family of God in a great city, setting apart two of its members for work that was to edify the whole body. The message conveyed by the action was: the unanimity of the people, the dedication of the men set apart, the equipping by the Holy Spirit, the priority and support of the Church as a whole, the challenge and privilege of mission. How many Anglican ordinations truly enact and convey this message?

Incidentally, the names of the new priests were Peter and Paul!

Nicholas Sagovsky

BITS AND PIECES

Archbishop Lefebvre has been in the news again—the Pope refused to meet him, and again forbade him to ordain his own students from Ecône. The outsider may detect a war of attrition here. The Pope will apparently only go so far in reproving and penalizing the Archbishop. He will not excommunicate him. Why not? Because, the observer may think, if he did, then the situation would be wholly polarized, the Archbishop would consecrate bishops to succeed him, and a full-blown alternative church would be in existence. If the Pope plays him along, who knows, the Archbishop may die (he is well into his seventies). But the reverse is also true. The Archbishop may view *his* great hope to be the possible coming of a more conservative heir to the throne of Peter. And the present occupant is 80! What price the old mass then?

Speaking of schisms—as we go to press *The Times* carries news of the actual formation of a separating Anglican Church in America. The point of separation seems to be the ordination of women, but the entrenching of the 1928 American Prayer is a foundational feature of the new church. It is not yet clear whether it will have a bishop . . . And it apparently claims it will be in communion with Canterbury . . .

Having written last month that the New Zealand texts must be unique in responding 'The Lord bless you' to 'The Lord be with you', this column is as usual proved wrong. The Precentor of Coventry Cathedral writes that the Archdeacon of Ripon, Paul Burbridge, once proposed this text in his (the Precentor's) hearing, and he in turn duly incorporated it into *The Communion in Coventry Cathedral*. This text had not come *NOL's* way before (it is a mixture of 1662, Series 1, Series 2 and a dose of originality—but is apparently 'authorized by the Lord Bishop of Coventry', under some unknown Canon). One casually wonders what is happening to priestly blessings when whole congregations start 'blessing' the priest?

'Guidelines' for admitting children to communion in the dioceses of Niagara and Montreal have also come to hand. Like New Zealand (see August *NOL*) these dioceses give parishes liberty to experiment, and diverse uses can grow up in next-door congregations.

Silly season stuff: after the enquiry about submersions (for which some readers have rebuked us for becoming bizarre, and others for flogging the obvious!), we would now like to know if and where what was once called 'mangled matins with ante-communion' still persists. Any information? Or where did it last cease? It was still a going option in the North-West fifteen years ago.

Footnote re New Zealand: two concerns of these columns came to my attention during my trip (reported last month). In Christchurch a committee of the diocesan synod is working on 'alternative clerical dress', and in Dunedin I discovered that St. Matthew's Church is getting engineer's reports (about weight and stress) prior to installing a full baptismal tank. Further footnote: outdoor clerical dress in the tropical parts I visited was an open-neck shirt with a small cross on each lapel—I found the Bishop of Polynesia thus clad across the aisle from me when flying from Auckland to Suva.