

# News of Liturgy

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## Editorial

### SACRAMENTAL INITIATION COMPLETE IN BAPTISM

Headlines are relatively rare in these columns, but important events occasionally lead to them. I said in August that I hoped to write further on the principles underlying baptismal liturgy, and as the new initiation services are to be debated in General Synod in November, now seems to be the time. At the same time, I have been invited onto the Revision Committee for these services, and to that extent feel unable to make the points below in the General Synod debate. This editorial is perhaps my last chance to do so whilst decisions regarding the nature of the initiation provision in the 1980 Book are still open.

In many ways I believe that the Series 2 and Series 3 provisions for initiation are an improvement on the Prayer Book provision, and I have said so elsewhere. The problem is stated by the Liturgical Commission on pages 6 and 7 of their report *Initiation Services* (GS 343):

'As far as confirmation for those who have been baptized in infancy is concerned, a case can certainly be made for keeping it. But problems do arise when attempting to justify the confirmation of adults who have just been baptized . . .'

That expresses my concerns exactly. Confirmation at age of discretion for those baptized as infants is not strictly initiatory at all, and should not be the absolutely requisite minimum qualification for admission to communion (as is more and more recognized to-day all round the world—and it has never for a thousand years or more been so indispensable a qualification for communion in the Church of Rome!). Nothing said here is meant to undermine the role of later confirmation for those baptized as infants.

But what is the justification for insisting on confirming those baptized as adults? And what is the justification for producing a single 'integrated rite' to give baptism and confirmation at one go? I have myself prepared candidates for this 'two-in-one' rite, and I often get letters from those who are doing so. And it is *virtually impossible* to discern or teach what the confirmation is for. Thus the church rationalizes, or invents. And this is good for neither the Christian understanding of the new disciple nor the integrity of the church as a whole. It is peculiarly ironic that it is the bishop who is exposed to the opprobrium of administering a dark or incomprehensible ceremony. Let us look at the evidence.

#### (i) The New Testament

John the Baptist relates baptism to the coming of the Spirit. He has no second *ceremony* in view, only an inner fulfilment of that which is outwardly symbolized in his baptism. At Pentecost the gift of the Spirit is associated by Peter with repentance and baptism. The Acts of the Apostles has at least eight further separate occasions when baptisms are reported (Acts 8 (twice), 9, 10, 16 (twice), 18, 19—though obviously baptism was given

everywhere else also, wherever people were converted). Of these eight instances a laying on of hands follows in only *two* cases—one in 8.14-17, where it is clearly used in a semi-emergency way because the Samaritans were not displaying the *baptismal* gift, which they might have been expected to—and the other in Acts 19, where it is so casually mentioned in passing that its purpose is not clear at all. The other six instances are not only silent about such a ceremony, in some cases they virtually exclude it (as when Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch in 8.36-39). Then in the Pauline letters there are constant references to baptism, and *none* to a subsequent ceremony of laying on of hands. Baptism is related to the Spirit, to membership of the church, to being buried with Christ and raised with him. The whole of inward initiation is referred to outward water-baptism in one way or another. And there is no theological dividing up, to hold back some of the meaning of baptism to be located in the laying on of hands. It is notable that Michael Ramsey in his recent book, *Holy Spirit*, frequently relates the coming of the Spirit to water-baptism, but, like Paul, he nowhere connects it intimately with the laying on of hands.

There is one reference in the letter to the Hebrews (6.2) which mentions doctrines of 'baptisms' (sic) and 'the laying on of hands' but this is at best cryptic and arguably not about baptism (singular) at all. The references in the Pastorals (where laying on of hands seems to be for something like ordination), and in the Catholic Epistles, whilst few and far between, bear out the 'one-stage' ceremony we have seen in St. Paul.

#### (ii) The early church

By the time of Tertullian (around 200) and Hippolytus (215), it is clear that there is a practice in the West of the bishop laying hands upon the newly baptized and the accounts suggest that this was seen as the conferring of the Spirit. This has led so very many in this century to talk of the 'primitive integrated rite'. But it is *not traceable earlier*. In Justin Martyr's very detailed account (around 150) of worship in Rome there is baptism, and the bringing into the assembly to share in the kiss of peace and the communion, but no laying on of hands. Furthermore, even when the complex rite does start in the West, it is still not practised in East until the fourth century. Lampe has suggested that the post-baptismal laying on of hands came into the West when, after the time of Marcion, the Western church had to start defining its canon of scripture, and thus gave serious (but unsystematic!) attention to the Acts of the Apostles for the first time (for previously the still-existing principle of reading 'epistles' and 'gospels' had meant that Luke's two-part history had been broken up, in order to group 'Luke' with the gospels—and with the result that Acts fell into a limbo). The practice finally spread to the East after the Constantinian decree made communications between West and East so much easier.

#### (iii) The Church of England's formularies

In the sixteenth century there was no rite for baptizing adults and so the question did not arise, though the reformers were very clear that there are only two sacraments, and the confirmation rite was carefully revised to exclude reference to the initial coming of the Spirit. In 1662 a service of baptism for those 'of riper years' was needed, in order to catch up on the

Commonwealth period when anabaptism flourished. At the end of this service there was a rubric requiring those baptized in riper years then to be confirmed, and it is from that rubric that the present practice stems. But it is very unlikely that the drafters of the 1662 Book viewed this as *sacramentally necessary*—far more likely that they saw it as *politically* desirable. Anabaptists of all people were the very people who ought to be made to kneel before a bishop and accept his ministrations! In other words, the 1662 provision, which the sixteenth century reformers might well have had difficulty understanding, was historically conditioned by the politics of the post-restoration situation—a theologically vindictive situation—in England. That is *no* justification for having it to-day.

Furthermore, even when the restorers were making this provision, they did not change the actual confirmation service to take account of it. The 1662 confirmation service functions *entirely* on the supposition that the candidates were baptized in infancy, and there is thus no theological rationale available for the confirmation of those baptized in 'riper years'. If we are providing an 'alternative' service, for an 'Alternative Service Book', then there is *nothing* in the 1662 services to which the confirmation built into an adult baptism service is an alternative at all. The Church of England has no theology and no mind on the subject in its formularies at all.

#### (iv) The twentieth century

The early Tractarians seem to have been 'one-stagers', but from 1880 to 1970 a 'two-stage' view seemed to reign supreme, finding its outworkings in the 1958 drafts by the Liturgical Commission, and the much-softened form of that in the Series 2 services. (I expressed in the introduction to those services my desire that I 'would have desired the services more clearly to express that the work of the Spirit in sacramental initiation is complete in baptism').

But since 1970 the 'two-staging' theology has been on the decline. In that year J. D. G. Dunn published *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (S.C.M.) which on scriptural grounds showed the sheer impossibility of holding what he called the 'confirmationists' position. The same year E. C. Whitaker produced a second edition of his *Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy* (S.P.C.K.), and in a new introductory essay showed how the early church only slowly and uncertainly became two-staging. The next year the 'Ely' report was published, holding strongly that sacramental initiation is complete in baptism, and recommending the abolition of confirmation for those baptized as adults. Overseas other Anglican reports have hesitatingly concluded that confirmation is more-or-less redundant in such cases, though they have not usually had the courage to recommend acting on the principle. And, in our own series of publications, first, Booklet on Ministry and Worship no. 8 *Communion Confirmation and Commitment* by Christopher Byworth, and secondly, Liturgical Study No. 1 *Sacramental Initiation Complete in Baptism* by E. C. Whitaker, have argued the same case strongly.

#### (v) The Defence of the Two-Stagers

The great names amongst the 'two-stagers'—Mason, Dix, Thornton, Ratcliff—these have gone. There remains little head of steam, and the

pattern is running on acquired momentum and slowing down visibly. But J. D. C. Fisher still bears a standard aloft for the view. He writes in *Baptism Confirmation and Commitment* (C. L. A., 1976) '... confirmation was the title of a rite at first combined with baptism, and later separated from it in time, which effected the giving of the Holy Spirit.' (p.11). The 'at first' begs a big question, and we can see that the idea of uniting the water and laying on of hands into a single rite still, on this view, leaves the laying on of hands as the sacrament of the giving of the Spirit. What justification is there for such a view?

The answer is to say that the Hippolytan pattern must have been followed from the start, and that the two instances of a laying on of hands after baptism in Acts illustrate this. But this is to assert that something was *universally* followed, when at best the evidence only shows it was occasional. There is a tendency then to affirm that references to 'baptism' in the New Testament mean *both water and the laying on of hands*—but this they cannot mean, or there would never be *any* mention of 'baptism' followed by the laying on of hands! When the 'matter' of the sacrament is mentioned it is water only which occurs (Acts 8.36, 10.47). The argument is one which exposes the lack of evidence for the case.

Finally J. D. C. Fisher has tended to say that evangelicals apparently believe that infant baptism was practised from the days of the apostles on what he views as fairly flimsy evidence, and that the case for the laying on of hands after baptism is based on similar premises. But this is to mistake the nature of the case entirely. The paedobaptist is pleading that it is *allowable* to baptize infants—and part of the case is that there are strong hints of this occurring at times in New Testament times and soon after. But the 'two-stager' is pleading that *all* baptisms in *all* cases were 'two-staging' and that the evidence *demand*s a *universal* insistence on the laying on of hands as part of sacramental initiation. So the two cases are in no way comparable.

#### (vi) Conclusion

The Liturgical Commission was in effect asked to compile a successor to Series 2, although there is no guidance anywhere as to what to put into the laying on of hands section of liturgy. What is it for? For what are we to pray? To what in scripture can we refer? The Commission's own introduction to the report regrets that 'this *structure* still suggests that baptism is a preliminary to be dealt with so that the service can proceed to confirmation—the real climax.' (p.7). This surely needs reconsideration in Synod?

Colin Buchanan

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

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### This month's booklet . . .

. . . is no. 54, *Celebrating Christmas*, by Richard More (who previously wrote no. 40, *Freedom in a Framework: Some Possibilities with Series 3*). He is a chaplain at the Lee Abbey Community. The booklet is enlivened with serious handling of historical questions, with occasional bits of fun (including extracts from diarists in earlier centuries), and with thoughtful (but generally realistic) suggestions for the reform of the current (mostly recent) English 'traditions'.

### . . . and next month's

is no. 55, *Urban Church Growth: Lessons from South America and Britain*, by Eddie Gibbs. Eddie was for many years on the staff of the South American Missionary Society, and is now with the Bible Society. The booklet lays great weight on the quality of church life (including most notably the liturgical and fellowship factors) as the key to church growth. At the time of writing it looks as though serious damage will be done by this booklet to an unvarying tradition of the Ministry and Worship booklets—no. 55 bids fair to have an illustrated cover.

### . . . and a surprising review

was given by John King in *The Church of England Newspaper* of 7 October to booklet no. 53, *Penance*, by David Gregg. John King usually mutters a few identical lines about the booklets every third month, saying how nice they are, and how they keep on coming. But this time he gave a whole page to this one, and presses as a fundamental question raised by David Gregg 'whether we Evangelicals are Reformed Catholics or whether our principle of churchmanship must be sought elsewhere' and 'If the Church of England does not stand for Reformed Catholicism, it is difficult to see what it does stand for.'

### Overseas Agents

Through consultations during my trip to New Zealand there has been a change in importing arrangements for that country. Latimer House in Christchurch no longer handle all trade imports. Instead four main shops (at St. John's College Auckland, Anglican Bookroom Wellington, Anglican Book Centre Christchurch, and Otago Church Bookstore Dunedin) are all taking the booklets on standing order, and should keep stocks. The Christchurch shop is designated as the main importers and should keep stocks of all backnumbers to hand.

At the same time the address of our U.S.A. agent, J. B. Haug, has changed to 20 Winchester Avenue, Auburn, Mass. 01501. He keeps good stocks for both trade and private customers.

### Prices in 1978

We are working on an airmail edition of *NOL* which will enable us to keep down costs, but whether we produce this or not we are in the happy position of promising that prices for *NOL* in 1978 will not go up at all—£1.90 for a postal subscription in England £2.25 (or \$4.50 USA or Canada) for an airmail subscription abroad. Booklets will also remain unchanged in price for the first half of 1978, except that backnumbers will go up to 35p early in the year.

## SERIES 3 MARRIAGE SERVICE

### Bringing the record up to date in October 1977

In booklet no. 47, published in November 1976, we promised that a slip would be available when the service was authorized, bringing the story of its development up to date from the point where the booklet left off in November 1976. This has been reported month by month in *News of Liturgy* but is now collated into a single account.

11 November 1976: The Revision Stage was adjourned after the passing of an amendment to add at the end of section 8 'For the vows you are about to take are to be made in the name of God, who is judge of all and who knows all the secrets of our hearts.' (See booklet no. 47, p.3 footnote 1).

16 February 1977: The Revision Stage was concluded, after several proposed amendments had been rejected, and one only accepted (and that one consequent upon the one mentioned above): to delete in section 17 (the priest's proclamation that they are man and wife) the words 'Before God, the judge of all men, and before' and to substitute 'In the presence of God and'. The Bishop of Kingston was given the consent of the Business Sub-Committee to bring forward motions to reopen consideration of the Preface, but the requisite general consent of the whole Synod was refused, and the possibility ceased. Prior to this—though logically it should have been subsequent to it, one suspects—the Synod voted without a count that the service as amended be provisionally approved. The service then stood referred to the House of Bishops to determine its final form.

5 July 1977: The House of Bishops brought the text back to Synod unaltered and the Bishop of Jarrow moved that it be authorized from 1 November 1977 to 31 December 1979. The service then gained its final approval by the following vote:

	<i>Aye</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Bishops</i>	21	1
<i>Clergy</i>	132	7
<i>Laity</i>	136	7

This gave the requisite two-thirds majority in each house without difficulty. The service was then printed, and was published by the S.P.C.K. and the Privileged Presses as a glossy blue booklet (AS 350) with 24 pages on 13 October 1977 at 25p.

At the time of writing the service will be due to be 'adapted' in 1979 in order to take its place in the *1980 Alternative Service Book*.

## BITS AND PIECES

Further to vesture: Bob Hyatt, from Kowloon, Hong Kong, writes that he has notified his bishop that he will cease to wear distinctive vesture for any service as from the beginning of September (8 a.m. communion for an elderly and traditionalist congregation excepted). Are there similar revolutionaries at work in England?

Further to children at communion: Reg Priestnall, from Stamford, writes that he has come across the suggestion from 'a well-known priest' that

the children of Christian parents should receive the bread but not the cup. The distinction was apparently not that children should not have wine, but rather that they can receive Jesus as the true bread, but cannot yet take to themselves his cup, which implies cost and suffering. Is there any mileage in this suggestion?

Silly season stuff (last month's provoked some response): Martin Culverwell, from Ashford, Middlesex, writes that he recently heard on radio 4 of a clergyman (in Nottinghamshire of all places) who conducts funerals for pets. Our correspondent lives next door to a vet, and wonders when the request will come his way. Have any readers reflections upon (let alone experience of!) such theological frontiersmanship?

We have also heard from one Frank Eustace Pickard, who figured in these columns last Autumn, who writes as follows:

'Slabink's "leo" ecumenical alb and broad stole (=coloured scarf) . . . is de rigueur for the avant-garde. Recently I was asked by a visiting priest, covering for me mid-week, whether I would put out for him the traditional vestments: he said he was "not high-church enough to have stopped wearing the chasuble"!'

*NOL* would never of its own wits keep abreast of these factors without such helpful correspondents . . .

## BOOKS THIS MONTH

Holy Communion '1½' is now available in the large format 'President's' edition 'with music for the Thanksgiving' (S.P.C.K., £3). Series 3 Marriage is 25p. Mirfield Publications have produced *Bread of Life*, an illustrated manual for holy communion based on Series 3 (no evaluation here, as we have not yet seen one). The latest Alcuin Club Book, *The Liturgy of Christian Burial*, by Geoffrey Rowell (S.P.C.K. £3.75) was published on 13 October, and its 138 pages contain a fascinating survey of everything from early pagan influences on the Christian rites to a comparative table juxtaposing the Series 3 rite (1975) with the new American rite (1977).

We mentioned last month the unofficial book about the Nottingham Congress ('77 *Notts Untied*) which we note calls me [COB] a 'whizz-kid' (what? even in advanced middle age?). It is tempting to want to correct the account in this of the NEAC main communion service . . . But there is now also available the semi-official account by John Capon (*Evangelicals To-Morrow*, Fount, 95p) which looks to be a more detailed, more accurate, more judicious, and more lasting an account.

Michael Ramsey's *Holy Spirit* (S.P.C.K. 95p) is already a best-seller.

Just published: *Anglican-Orthodox Dialogue* (S.P.C.K., £1.95). We hope to comment on this next month.

## NEWS ON THE OFFICIAL FRONT

In the November session of General Synod the following liturgical items will occur:

- (i) The working party on the Alternative Service Book will present recommendations for the procedure for 'adaptations'.
- (ii) The question as to whether the Lord's Prayer should appear in only one form will be taken.
- (iii) The Series 3 Initiation services will be given General Consideration.
- (iv) The new psalter will *not* be debated, contrary to the forecast of the Standing Committee given in August *NOL*—nor will the Calendar and Lectionary Revision Stage be taken.

Meanwhile the Revision Committee on the Ordination services has completed no less than six days of meeting in the space of exactly four weeks, and has its report ready for the February session of Synod. On the other hand, the Liturgical Commission and the House of Bishops did not complete the preparation of Series 3 Holy Communion (Revised) in time for it to be published and debated at the February session, and it will not therefore receive General Consideration till July 1978.

## 'SING THE PSALMS'

We learn from Collins Liturgical Publications that they are running a series of presentations for parish musicians to awaken interest and stimulate the use of the new psalter (you do not *have* to be a musician to come—Lionel Dakers of the Royal School of Church Music, who will conduct affairs, is great fun and well able to teach *anybody!*). Meetings have been arranged as follows:

21	November	Manchester
7	December	Bristol
23	January	Norwich
24	January	Newcastle (that's quick moving)
31	January	Birmingham
8	February	Leeds
14	February	Winchester

Details of place and time from RSCM or Collins Liturgical Publications, 187 Piccadilly, London W.1. (01-734-8582).

## CAPITAL LOANS

Two years ago we borrowed some capital in order to continue and expand the service. Some of this money is now due for repayment, and we are keen if possible to borrow from private supporters (at a fair-to-generous rate of interest) rather than from the bank. If any reader would like to be associated in this way with Grove Books then please write in. We are particularly wanting offers of £500 to £1000.

HELD OVER: Due to the extended editorial this month, we are holding over a further report on the American split and the text of the South African form for the remarriage of a divorced person.