

# News of Liturgy

Editor: Colin Buchanan

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## Editorial

The *Church Times* of 13 January announces that the Bishop of Manchester has 'taken a lenient course' over Deaconess Phoebe Willetts who on 8 January 'concelebrated' communion with her husband, the Rev. Alfred Willetts. The issue was considerably complicated by the fact that the deaconess is said to be dying of cancer, and this was her 'dying wish'. The Bishop obviously wished to temper the disciplinary wind to a dying woman, but even so he apparently said 'Mr. and Mrs. Willetts are well aware that their action was unlawful . . .'. It is exactly that judgment which it seems appropriate to challenge here.

The truth is that the Church of England knows nothing of concelebration! In the Act of Uniformity of 1662 (now superseded), in the Book of Common Prayer, in Canon B 12, and in the alternative services, in every case the rubrics or provision refer only to one person, sometimes called the 'priest', sometimes the 'president'. The term 'president' was drawn into use in Series 3 in 1971 because popular theology had started to say that the whole congregation 'celebrated' the communion, and there was a need to find again (what 'celebrant' had previously been) a word which clearly indicated the *one* person under whose authority and at whose direction the service of holy communion was held.

It is true that the Church of Rome, which had always had a form of concelebration used by the newly ordained priests joining with the bishop at ordination services, has since Vatican II popularized 'concelebration' as a way of preventing several priests in any one place saying a series of atomized masses, bringing them instead, by this device, into one service in which they can all still exercise their priesthood by celebrating. But the Church of England has never given any form of official consent to such an enterprise—which seems to be intended far more to treat holy communion as instituted for the benefit of the priests than for all the worshippers. It is true that in the 'sixties there were some contrived attempts at 'concelebrations' by Anglican and, say, Methodist ministers jointly, but these were intended as a cover-up for the Church's inability to evaluate Methodist orders, and were not sanctioned in any more official way than individual bishops' say-sos. In the report form of Series 3 (the 'White Book' of 1971) the Liturgical Commission, drafted an opening Note which read 'The Thanksgiving. *During the Thanksgiving the president may be joined by any other priests who are present.*' but this was (I think wisely) excised on revision in Synod, and again failed to enter the official texts. Similarly, the recent revision committee on the Series 3 Ordination services was asked to provide for something like the Roman form for the newly ordained priests, but turned down the request.

This means, if we return to the Manchester case, that Deaconess Willetts either helped her husband 'celebrate' communion in the trivial sense that

all the worshippers present 'celebrate' jointly, or, as far as the Anglican formularies are concerned, she did not invade or share his presidency at all—not because she was not qualified to, but because even if she had been a male priest she could not *by definition* share that presidency. If there was only one priest present, and if he said the eucharistic prayer (even if one or more other persons present said it with him—which is not unknown in other places, however unnecessary and unhelpful, which might be debated), then he, and he alone, was the president. So the Deaconess did nothing unlawful, even if she hoped she were doing so.

Of course, if she had presided at a communion service without her husband being there, then she *would* have achieved the unquestionably unlawful. But, it has to be added, it would also have been self-defeating for her and her husband. For they had previously asked the American Alison Palmer to preside at a communion service in their church. They had apparently been involved (and here they *were* unlawful, or probably were) in trying to demonstrate that you do not have to be a man to be a priest. But the idea of a deaconess presiding conveys a different message entirely—one which complicates or even nullifies this one. If a deaconess presides it seems to demonstrate *not* 'You do not have to be a man to be a priest' but rather 'You do not have to be a priest to preside at communion'—and that, however desirable, is a vast change in the agenda.

Colin Buchanan

## NEWS ON THE OFFICIAL FRONT

Liturgy figures heavily on the agenda for the February session of General Synod (actually beginning on 31 January, in order to be complete in the week before Lent starts). The following items occur:

- (a) **Ordination Services—Revision Stage** (and Provisional Approval). The report of the Revision Committee (GS 327Y) reveals that over 150 proposals for amendment were received, and many of these have been adopted. The most controversial (or at least divisive) were the proposals to entrench the 'vesting' of ordinands and the possibility of giving paten and chalice to the new priests. These were both ultimately located in low-key opening Notes. The word 'ordination' was kept for the service for bishops (and not 'consecration'), and the alternative 'or presbyters' was added to the title of the service for priests. The formula of prayer at the laying on of hands was restored to the form desired by the Liturgical Commission before the House of Bishops doctored it! And a vaguely bizarre touch was revealed when we were asked to change 'Receive this book as a token . . .' on the grounds that to juxtapose 'book' and 'token' was to give the wrong idea . . . The proposed text (GS 327A) is printed for Synod members only.
- (b) **Calendar, Rules to Order the Service and Lectionary.** The report from this Revision Committee mentions over 350 proposals, and fifteen days of meetings (say, three five-day weeks end-to-end!). A quick glance shows that the junior league table ('Lesser Festivals and Commemorations') now includes 'Charles I, King and Martyr (1649)' on 30 January, but has shed George Fox—and Latimer and Ridley—

from the Commission's original proposals. Amongst 'Special Days' there appears the 'Thursday after Trinity Sunday' for thanksgiving for the institution of holy communion (a delicately phrased cover for Corpus Christi!). But the 'deal' on 'St. Mary's Day' has stood: August 15 remains in the senior league ('Festivals and Greater Holy Days') as 'The Blessed Virgin Mary' and her conception and birth have not entered the junior league. It remains to be seen what amendments will come here in Synod.

- (c) **Use of Roman Texts.** The private member's motion which Brian Brindley moved in November about considering the use of the Roman Lectionary and the Roman Missal was adjourned at that group of sessions, and now re-appears under 'Liturgical Business'. Canon Paul Welsby has moved an amendment to that asking the Liturgical Commission to prepare a daily eucharistic lectionary, and the debate will resume at a point where the closure has been moved on the amendment. There is a certain amount of cloak-and-dagger background to this debate, and next month's *NOL* will give a fuller report.
- (d) **Liturgical Psalter and Good News Bible.** The Synod is to be asked to approve these versions of the Bible for liturgical use.
- (e) My own private member's motion on the **Charismatic Movement** has now reached the head of the Private Members' agenda (and will come on the Friday afternoon—synodsmen reading this, please don't go home before my motion comes up). It reads:

'That this Synod, noting the rise in recent years of the Charismatic Movement within the Church of England and being concerned to conserve the new life it has brought into many parishes, asks the Standing Committee to bring before the Synod a report which will explore the reasons for this upsurge, pinpoint the particular distinctive features of spirituality and ethos which the movement presents, and indicate both the points of tension which exist with traditional Anglicanism and also how the riches of the movement may be conserved for the good of the Church.'

- (f) **Discussions with the Orthodox Church:** The Moscow Statement. The Board of Mission and Unity is presenting a report (GS 357) which includes the whole of the Moscow Statement, and warmly supports the removal of the *Filioque* clause from the Nicene Creed.

We are at the same time publishing a version of the 'table of progress' in liturgical revision, which brings the picture up to date. Precise dates are precise, imprecise ones are imprecise, and italicized ones are future and very precarious. See pages 5 and 6 overleaf.

## BOOKS THIS MONTH

We have had letters from Methodists pointing out that *The Methodist Service Book* does not cost £2.50 (as last month's editorial said), but only £1 (going up to £1.30 when reprinted in the immediate future). In fact the editorial was quoting an answer to a question in Synod, and was not purporting to give accurate information itself! Reflection suggests that it was a de luxe model of *MSB* which was being described, not the ordinary (but very well produced) workhorse variety. There is in fact little comparison in contents between this book and the proposed 1980 C/E product.

Whilst on the subject of Prayer Books we should point out that, of the three overseas Anglican ones mentioned last month, we are out of stock of the American one (an order got lost en route for New York, but we *hope* to have them in in February), 'South American' was an unpardonable misdescription of the *South African* book, and the Australian book will not be in our hands till the end of March! The Pre-Lambeth book *Today's Church and Today's World* (published on 4 January, CIO, £3.50) turns out to have little reference to worship at all (it is mostly about episcopacy with a strong dash of problems about the ordination of women). Stephen Neill, in his essay on 'Anglican Christianity' writes that in modern Anglican eucharistic liturgies 'variety is more evident than unity of theological understanding or of liturgical principle' (p.280). He is of course known to be a lover of Cranmer, but he concedes 'This liturgical freedom was inevitable, and on the whole desirable' (*ibid.*). And he adds that there is here no 'central point of reference' for 'the special Anglican ethos'. In the previous chapter the Archbishop of Adelaide discusses the liturgy for the consecration of a bishop. But overall there is much less to interest the liturgically minded than might have been expected. *A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy* by Nicholas Cabasilas (S.P.C.K., £1.95) is reviewed next month by the author of Grove Booklet 56 (with which it neatly coincides): the Lefebvrist Augustine Press have sent us J. P. M. van der Ploeg's *Sacrifice and Priesthood in the Catholic Church* (25p), which is largely aimed at the 'protestantizing' of the Roman Church; and we now have copies of *Bread of Life* (Mirfield Publications, 50p), which is a young children's picture book to use with Series 3—it is beautifully produced, and would hardly shock an evangelical!

### This month's booklet . . .

. . . is no. 56, *The Eastern Orthodox Liturgy*, by John Fenwick (who also reviews a commentary on that Liturgy elsewhere in this *NOL*). He spent nine months in a seminary at Thessalonika two Winters ago, and now writes out of his firsthand experience of worshipping all that time with the Liturgy of St. Chrysostom. We are continuing the new idea of putting on a cover picture.

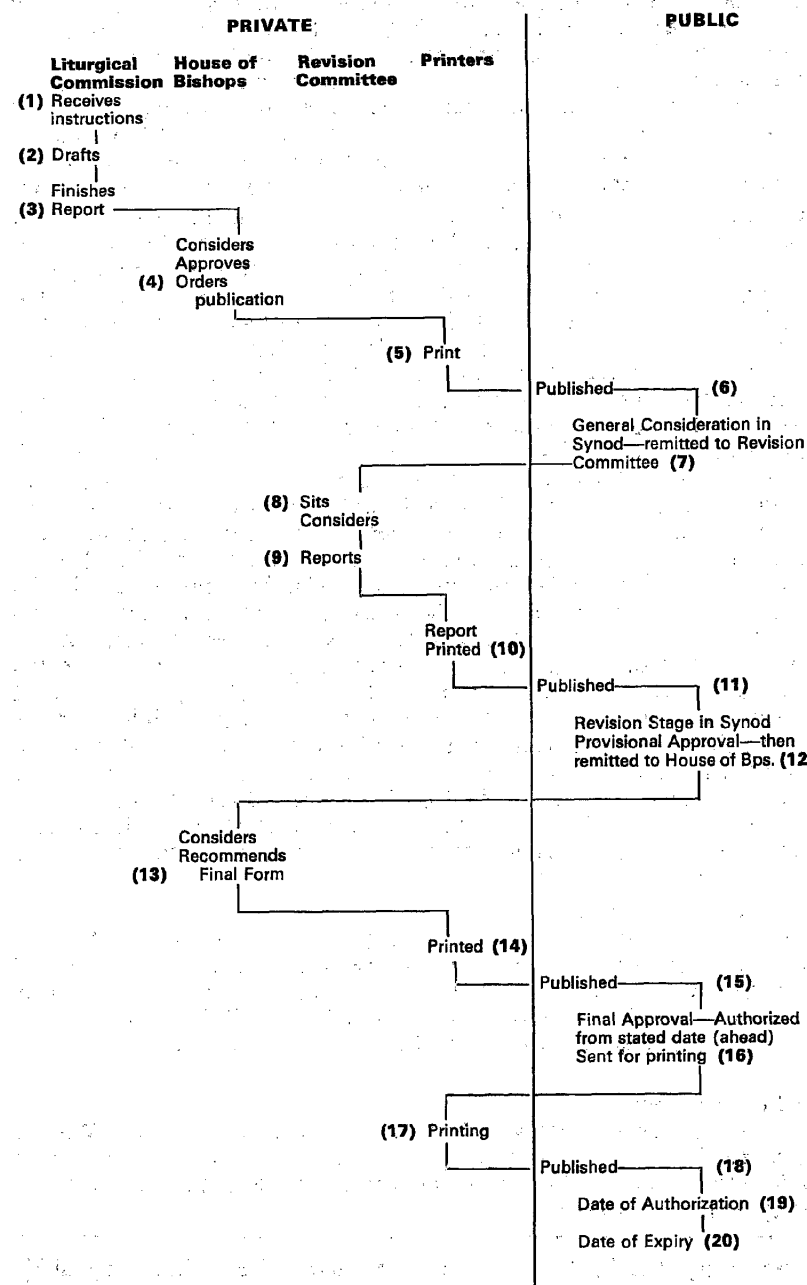
### . . . and next month's

is no. 57, *Parish Leadership and Shared Responsibility*, by Tom Walker. His *Open to God* (no. 38) is now in its third printing, and he here goes further into the question of the ministerial structures and pastoral oversight of a congregation in renewal.

**8p** per copy (£1.90 by post for the year 1978, (£2.25 by air))

**GROVE BOOKS**  
**BRAMCOTE NOTTS. (0602 251114)**

**CHART OF PROGRESS IN LITURGICAL REVISION**



**PROGRESS WITH ACTUAL SERVICES**

	HC '1 1/2'	Collects 3	Marriage 3	Calendar/Lectionary 3	Ordination 3	Initiation 3	HC 3 (Rev)
1	1973	1972	1972	1973	1974	1972	1975
2	1972-4	1972-4	1972-4	1973-6	1974-6	1972-7	1975-8
3	Jun 1974	Dec 1974	Dec 1974	May 1976	Dec 1976	May 1977	Mar 1978
4	Summer 1974	Jan 1975	Jan 1975	May 1976	Mar 1977	Jun 1977	Mar 1978
5	Oct/Dec 1974	Feb/Mar 1975	Feb/Apr 1975	May/Jun 1976	Mar/Apr 1977	Jun/Jul 1977	Apr 1978
6	2 Jan 1975	10 Apr 1975	29 May 1975	3 Jun 1976	18 May 1977	18 Aug 1977	May 1978
7	1 Jul 1975	4 Jul 1975	13 Nov 1975	16 Feb 1977	6 Jul 1977	9 Nov 1977	Jul 1978
8							
9							
10	Oct 1975/Jan 1976	Oct 1975-Mar 1976	Jan/Sep 1976	Mar/Sep 1977	Sep/Oct 1977	Dec 1977/Mar 1978	Sep/Nov 1978
11							
12	25 Feb 1976	14 Jul 1976	10, 11-Nov 1976 & 16 Feb 1977	Feb 1978	Feb 1978	Jul 1978	Feb 1979
13	May 1976	Oct 1976	May 1977	May 1978	May 1978	Sep 1978	May 1979
14-15							
16	14 Jul 1976	10 Nov 1976	5 Jul 1977	Jul 1978	Jul 1978	Nov 1978	Jul 1979
17	Aug/Sep 1976	Dec 1976/Jan 1977	Aug/Sep 1977	Aug/Sep 1978	Jul/Aug 1978	Dec 1978/Jan 1979	Aug/Sep 1979
18	21 Oct 1976	20 Jan 1977	13 Oct 1977	Oct 1978	Sep 1978	Jan 1979	Oct 1979?
19	1 Nov 1976	1 Feb 1977	1 Nov 1977	Nov 1978	Sep 1978	Feb 1979	?
20	31 Dec 1979	31 Dec 1979	31 Dec 1979	31 Dec 1979	31 Dec 1979	31 Dec 1979	?

**BITS AND PIECES**

Support for the 1980 Prayer Book: we have so far received three letters from readers who say they are looking forward to the Alternative Service Book—and only one of those was from an incumbent who was expecting to buy quantities for the pew. It would be quite improper to infer that the other readers are *not* looking forward to it, but it will be clear that we have not been deluged with letters of support for the idea yet.

Weddings in Sunday services: in booklet nos. 9 (p.17) and 47 (p.19) we have raised the question as to whether the day will not come when believers get married in the context of, say, Parish Communion (possibly with a church lunch after the rite). We now have the following report from Roy Catchpole, curate of St. Paul's Hyson Green, here in Nottingham:

*'Series 3 Communion with Marriage: this was our morning service on 11 December. The bride entered in the first hymn—the marriage took place—registers were signed in the vestry whilst a hymn was sung and the notices read—during the next hymn the bride and groom were led to the communion rail step for the prayers—then readings, sermon, creed and Peace—right through to the communion—the couple exited to the final music—the event retained the dignity of the marriage occasion, and also fulfilled the expectations of Christian communion—in short, we all enjoyed ourselves.'*

In fact, we understand the couple had been befriended by the church, had come to belief, had no other friends, and did have a church 'wedding breakfast' amongst their friends. Any other such events?

Silly season stuff: after the Royal baptism, the media have been agitating about Scottish television's broadcasting of a non-quite-a-communion service in which people at home were invited to eat and drink and remember Christ, but were told it was not a communion in the technical sense. John Capon of *Crusade*, who was writing a column for *The Sunday Telegraph*, rang and asked my opinion of a supposedly forthcoming Southern TV event when the viewers at home would be told that they could eat and drink, and it *would* be a communion. I suggested that there were three responses an Anglican clergyman could make to that:

- (i) Consecration must surely have a definite and measurable quantity of bread and wine in view for it to be a meaningful concept (and even then it has problems...)
- (ii) Once the whole sacramental life is available by TV, then the English heresy that you can be Christian on your own without *belonging* to anybody else in fellowship and love will be much more deeply entrenched. At the moment the command 'do this' can only be fulfilled in company!
- (iii) The parish system may be in disarray, but the Church of England must still take a dim view of people ministering without leave in each other's parishes...

I wonder whether we are going to have this bright idea harrassing us from the wings for a while ahead.

**CHRISTMAS IN NEW ZEALAND**

The Christchurch diocesan newspaper which reported the motion on moving Christmas to 25 June only reached us just before we went to press in December, and so was only briefly reported here. We can now squeeze some more juice out of it: the mover ('This motion may be novel...') urged that daylight saving seemed equally revolutionary when first proposed, but is now taken for granted. An opponent (of Maori descent) said he had already been forced to give up cannibalism through the forcible Europeanization of New Zealand—and the new motion which 'wants me to exchange my Christmas surfing... for a ski-ing holiday' was the last straw. A seeker of truth posed the following questions:

- (i) 'Would it be... possible to break off the Southern hemisphere... then turn it the other way round...?'
- (ii) 'Could we make Christmas Day the first wintry day in December... [and have more choice]?'
- (iii) 'Would it be a potentially subversive act if Mr. Muldoon were to arrange a resiting of the sun and moon to ensure the same Christmas Day weather all over the world?'

Another correspondent who was present has written and said that he thinks the synod passed the motion without a vote because the opposition were so helpless with laughter that they failed to oppose! The diocesan journal adds 'our thoughts and prayers must now be extended to the Diocesan representatives on General Synod whose duty it is to introduce the appropriate motion seeking the support of the rest of the Anglican Church in New Zealand'. Perhaps there is a fear that humour alone will not carry the day next time. *NOL* will tell it all.

**... oh yes, and last month's booklet**

had two last-minute mistakes. The title (*'Worship in the New Testament'*) should have read '*... Testament (i)*'. It was only the first half of the reprint of the original Lutterworth book, and we would not want anyone to think it was the whole work. The other misprint was the wrong ISBN on the back-cover (compare it with the correct figure on p.2).

**... and the catalogue**

is here at last, sent out with this *NOL*.

**... and the reprint**

of the certificate of a service of Thanksgiving for the Birth of a child is now available (at 5p).

**... and the stocktake for 1977**

revealed sales during the year of 29139 Booklets on Ministry and Worship in the year (21000 in 1976); 16859 Ethics Booklets (13000 in 1976); 7,499 Liturgical Studies (5,500 in 1976); 4677 *Series 3 for the Family*; and 9083 folding leaflets *Thinking about Baptism*.