

# News of Liturgy

Editor: Colin Buchanan

Issue No. 60

December 1979

## Editorial

Events have overtaken my good intentions of writing against the *PN Review 13* attacks upon modern services this month. The correspondence in the national press continued throughout November and only slowly died away. It was marked by the one or two memorable (or at least notable) contributions—against the 600 by Michael Saward, whose letter to *The Times* (17 November) asked whether the Church of England was to become a 'jewelled corpse or a living pilgrim', and against all lovers of the new by the Bishop of Peterborough (*The Times*, 16 November) who offered one of the heaviest overkills in Christian history with the phrase 'One or two of the speeches in the recent session of Synod might have come from the lost and unspeakable speeches of Attila the Hun.' Surely this was not a measured attack on Michael Saward's speech (see *NOL*, last month)? The problem is that, although a vague feeling exists that the Bishop's remark was not meant to be complimentary, in the absence of the speeches of the aforesaid Hun (whom I had always thought to be more noted for his actions than his speeches—and I was right, because apparently he lost his speeches) it is difficult to know how closely Michael Saward approached this interesting standard of comparison.

At any rate, I was asked by the editor of *The Times Higher Education Supplement* to contribute to a short series of three articles he ran on this issue in December. My article, published in *Supplement* on 21 December, is here reproduced by his kind permission.

As usual in December, we note at Grove Books that another year of monthly publications has duly passed, making an eight-year period in all so far. 1980 will see some new advances, particularly the division of 'Ministry and Worship' booklets into 'Worship' and 'Pastoral Ministry' booklets. We also have ambitious plans for the launching of the Alternative Service Book in November 1980.

What we will *not* do is make a fuss about a 'new decade' coming in. We remain obdurately old-fashioned and fussy. For anybody with any calendrical sense the next decade will start on 1 January 1981, and the next century (when Booklet on Worship no. 150 is due) on 1 January 2001. We invite our readers to strike a blow for calendrical purity also.

A greater practical calendrical problem is getting this material published and posted in time for Christmas. It looks impossible this year, so I must hope you have had a joyful and blessed Christmas. A Feast of the Incarnation seems to have particular point in our present world.

Colin Buchanan

## BACK TO THE STAINED-GLASS WINDOW ?

'We know the difficulties of the clergy as they live quietly sacrificial lives. We ask only that the traditional texts be restored to a central regular place of honour in the mainstream of worship.'

(Outside back cover of *PN Review 13*)

'I would strongly support whoever it was who said "If the Authorized Version was good enough for St. Paul, it should be good enough for anybody."'

(Michael Foot, quoted on p.10 of *PN Review 13*)

Michael Foot epitomizes the Petitioners—if God did not reveal himself uniquely in the literary rhythms of the seventeenth century, he ought to have done. But the first quotation above gives away more of the factual misunderstandings which have damaged the Petitioners' cause. I list three:

(i) The Church of England is neither running a museum nor opening a stately home. With liturgy we are not asking ourselves which *objet d'art* ought to have the central showcase. True, we do face this question with stained-glass windows, medieval architecture, and parish treasure chests. We cannot demolish these, nor let them decay, so we preserve them (at great cost and trouble) and risk becoming curators. But the church-buildings still cater for living Christians one day a week. Worshippers have an hour or two each Sunday, and they then ask themselves *not* 'How can we keep this valuable literary heritage alive?' but 'How can this congregation worship best in this particular year of grace?'—and the answers differ. Some parishes will use 1662 till past the year 2000, and it will always be available. Let there be no misunderstanding here—1662 can thrive wherever it is wanted. But many other parishes want modern-language services. Their reasons include the following:

(a) A living current language is proper for the worship of living Christians. If St. Paul is to be invoked, then let *his* language be scrutinized. It has no 'hieratic' address to God. It lacks the periods of classical Greek. It betrays a burning message rather than a beautiful style. Paul writes vernacular letters using similar language to praise God and to mention the sickness of a friend. The Gospels are the same. The incarnate Lord adapted himself to the culture of his place and time, and so his church must do today. Living as Christians from Monday to Saturday inhibits us from a flight into a cultural ghetto for worship on Sundays. A root-and-branch discontinuity of life and liturgy advertises worship as play-acting, an escape from reality into a dated ritual. It was to end this discontinuity that Cranmer abolished Latin and introduced the vernacular. Thus the *principle* which underlies the BCP is the very reason why the BCP is being superseded. Which should we honour—the spirit or the letter?

(b) No-one pretends that modern services will fill the churches. But adult converts ought to be able to step naturally into being worshippers. How absurd that a convert should be warned to undergo cultural orientation before he comes to church—but it has been known for undergraduates as well as dustmen. To what worshipping tradition should newcomers come?

(c) Modern services also incorporate flexibility, congregational participation, and opportunity for informality, which enables the liturgy to be domesticated in particular congregations. Oxford may say the BCP in Latin (do they still?). Cathedrals may keep their choral evensongs. But parish churches, affirming the same faith, may well need a liturgy which is authentic to the life of the congregation.

(ii) The second misunderstanding is to think that General Synod can make services 'central' or 'regular' in parish life. Yes, some parishes do provide the once-a-month 1662 which David Martin says (*PNR 13*, p.5) would make the Petition unnecessary. But the *parish* decides, not the Synod. And a parish *may* decide that this practice would polarize its congregation, or irritate people by constant oscillation of texts. The parish is trying to foster the congregational life of its worshippers. And although modern services do not *cause* growth in church life, they certainly march in step with growth where that is found. And the parish decides.

(iii) The third misunderstanding concerns the clergy, who are held responsible for the choice of services. In fact the incumbent and PCC together decide. The *Daily Mail* wrote: 'The priests . . . stand accused of cheating the faithful of their inheritance and giving them a mess of pottage instead.' (Editorial, 6 November 1979). But it is not so—in thousands of parishes regular worshippers have cried out for modern services, and have now taken to them like ducks to water. The redress is open to the 600 (as Richard Harries wrote in *The Guardian* (correspondence 8 November 1979)). Let them be elected to their PCCs, and use persuasion there. They cannot alter us from the outside, and they should not complain if others make changes during their own long (and, in some cases, permanent) absence from worship. Regular worshippers have a declining interest in running linguistic museums.

*PN Review 13* bristles with other misunderstandings and factual error. Synod brushed it aside. The modern services go in 1980 into a new Services Book. Parishes retain the right to decide. They are unlikely to bow to the 'cultural heritage' lobby. For we need true continuity, not ossification—and they are trumpeting regression. Of course we could return to travelling by stage-coach, lighting by candles, heating by log-fires, and sleeping in night-caps. But we will only so regress when there is functional necessity (like lack of energy-sources?), not when romantics sigh for our vanishing cultural heritage. Stained-glass windows may stay, but liturgy is *functional*, and for driving a car I need a transparent windscreen, not a stained-glass one. 'Great renderings of epic and wisdom, prophecy and poetry, epistle and gospel' (*PNR 13*, p.51) may stay, but in what rendering will worshippers most likely *hear* them? Where is the transparency of medium through which we see God?

David Martin concedes 'A modern rite could have been devised which was taut, powerful, hard-wearing and invoked the spirit of poetry.' (*PNR 13*,

p.1). Let the search go on. Let David Martin himself produce what he says is to hand. I would humbly submit that series 3 services have more literary merits than the Petitioners allow. But whether they are right or I am, we must be allowed to amend and improve, whereas the Petition would seem to require us to entrench 1662 in use in every parish *forever*. Beautiful language is the theme of the beautifully written diatribe. But what of the knowledge of God across all classes and places in England to-day?

Colin Buchanan

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## This month's booklet . . .

. . . is Liturgical Study no. 20, *The Development of the New Eucharistic Prayers of the Church of England*, by Colin Buchanan. This is largely a set of pull-out charts showing how the text of the five prayers has been developed over the various stages during the last fourteen years (or, in one case, from Hippolytus). It will be a permanent point of reference for anyone who is concerned about what is said at the heart of the eucharist.

## . . . and next month's

is Grove Booklet on Worship no. 71, *A Hymn-Book Survey 1962-1980*, by Robin Leaver. As the author puts it, 'It is not just a book-list and it is more than an annotated bibliography: it is rather like a series of reviews . . .'. This should greatly help churches and individuals to see what is available.

## . . . and reprints

thus far are nos. 44, *Exorcism, Deliverance, and Healing*, by John Richards, and 64, *Grow through Groups*, by Eddie Gibbs.

## . . . and prices

from 1 January 1980 are £1 for Liturgical Studies and 50p for other booklets.

## . . . and renewing *NOL*

should be done immediately (and there should be a form enclosed for those who take *NOL* by itself—those who take it with booklets pay in arrears). Prices are: £2.25 for 1980 by post, £2.75 by air overseas (\$6 in U.S.A. and Canada). If no renewal (or cancellation) is made, the January issue will be sent with a reminder. If there is still no news from a subscriber, the subscription will lapse.

## . . . and booklets on Pastoral Ministry

will start in February. We are assuming that all those who take booklets on Ministry and Worship now will take separate booklets on Pastoral Ministry and on Worship in the future.

9p per copy (£2.25 for the year 1980, (£2.75 by air))

GROVE BOOKS

BRAMCOTE NOTTS. (0602 251114)

## GENERAL SYNOD—LOOSE ENDS

Last month we recorded the extension of authorization for existing services until the time of the publication of the Book. These were:

Series 1: Baptism, Marriage, Litany, Quicunque Vult, Funerals, Holy Communion

Series 2: Baptism with Confirmation, Infant Baptism, Confirmation, Adult Baptism without Confirmation, Morning and Evening Prayer Revised with Lessons ('2½'), Holy Communion, Series 1 and 2 Revised Holy Communion ('1½')

Series 3: Holy Communion, Funerals, Morning and Evening Prayer, Collects, Marriage, Ordination, Initiation (which is already authorized till 31 October 1980).

It should also be noted that an unease arose in question-time as to whether the Book would be the 'Alternative Service Book' or the 'Alternative Services Book'. The former would suggest that a Book was being authorized, the latter that authorized services were being gathered into a Book. The former has been in regular use—the latter seems to be correct! We await publication to see which has it.

The Church Press gave some attention to the blocking vote by more than one-third in the House of Clergy which prevented the passing of the new rules for representation. This was a complete nonsense. The rules were alleged to provide for multiple church membership, which shocked these clergy into opposition. But it is very clear that a layman can already have membership of the Church of England and other Churches at the same time under the existing rules which were adopted in 1974. So defeating the new proposals changed nothing, and got them a bad press . . .

## SCANDAL AT THE PEACE

The Synod shorthand writers excelled themselves with a gem in the *Report of Proceedings* for the July session. COB was holding forth, in the closing moments of the debate on the communion service, on how any actual celebration only included about ten minutes' worth of official text—the rest of the time being composed of hymns, sermon, *ad hoc* intercessions, etc. In the course of this list he included 'the time taken for the kiss of peace, which is fairly extensive in some places'. But the *Report* records:

... the time taken to kiss a priest, which is fairly extensive . . .  
COB disavows any responsibility for the wording or substance of this *Report*.

## THE BCC AND CHRISTIAN INITIATION

The Assembly of the British Council of Churches on 19 November voted that it receives the report *Christian Initiation* and

- (i) asks the Churches to consider how far the two classic patterns of Christian initiation described in paragraph 8 can be seen as acceptable alternatives;
- (ii) welcomes the practice of dual and multiple church membership within inter-church families and local ecumenical projects and invites the Churches to consider the implications of this and whether it can be applied elsewhere;

(iii) recommends to those Churches who have entered or are considering entering into a Covenant for Unity, to consider the possibility of preparing a Certificate of Common Membership for use from the inauguration of the Covenant;

(iv) asks the DEA Board to review examples, from this country and from elsewhere, of services for the renewal of baptismal vows and to report;

(v) invites the Churches to consider the questions raised in paragraph 18 and to inform each other through the DEA of ways in which they are responding to these questions in practice.

[N.B. The two classic patterns are, broadly, traditional Anglican and Baptist ones.]

[The review below appears in the latest issue of *Music in Worship*. This setting has still a long way to go to reach into parish Churches. We are preparing a cassette recording of it for 1980, and will in time correct the errant line in the Lord's Prayer.]

## The St. John's Setting of Series 3 by David Butterfield

(Grove Books, Bramcote, 1978) full edition: 60p, congregation only part: 15p)

The composer specifies in his notes that this setting is aimed somewhere between what he refers to as 'the finest choral music' where the congregation merely joins in with their hearts and minds and ears but not with their voices, and the music specifically for those with little or no musical training which often meets the charge of being too trite or simplistic. I feel that David Butterfield has succeeded here in that there is enough of musical substance to offer to both those whose culture spills over into the English choral heritage and those who merely enjoy a good tune and who respond to an interesting melody line.

A charming organ *obbligato* part opens the *Gloria* adding colour and drive to the music; the same idea is borrowed later in the congregational part to the *Blessing and Honour*. All the melodies are well and naturally set to the words and contain considerable rhythmic variety, and I would expect them to be quite easily memorable. For those in the pew who prefer to have the music in front of them there is a 'congregation only' part available on strong card. The harmonic content is fairly adventurous, even to the extent of skipping quickly from G to F sharp minor in the *Sanctus*. There are a few optional parts written out for the choir's use in the main items, but with a setting of this musical stature one might have hoped for more. Perhaps local organists will get to work on this for themselves. The final two pieces, *Blessed is He* and *Jesus, Lamb of God* are indeed conceived in a four-part medium, being those items which are often sung by the choir only.

This is undoubtedly a setting of the Series Three Communion service which is worth serious consideration by the increasing number of churches who are adopting this newer fabric for worship. It is in no way trite since it is written by one who knows from experience what actually works, both musically and liturgically.

R.T.S.

## THE CALENDAR AND LECTIONARY

We said in October that we hoped to publish extracts from the two brief essays at the front of *The Ministry of the Word*, edited by Geoffrey Cuming (OUP and Bible Reading Fellowship, 1979). We now have permission from the copyright holders, for which we are grateful, and print here part of Canon Charles Whitaker's essay on the Calendar and Lectionary.

### The Calendar

The most important new feature is that the presentation of the Church's year is shown to begin with a series of 'Sundays before Christmas', followed by the traditional Sundays of Advent. One small consequence of this arrangement is that the long series of Sundays after Trinity is correspondingly shorter, but the real reason for the new order is to provide a longer season of preparation for Christmas than the four Sundays of Advent. An explanation of this change is set out more fully below in our discussion of the lectionary. For the rest, the new features of the calendar are related to the names which we give to certain Sundays. Septuagesima and the two Sundays following are now called the Ninth, Eighth, and Seventh Sundays before Easter. To many people the old Latin names have been a source of confusion. The name Quinquagesima signifies to those skilled in Latin that this Sunday falls fifty days before Easter, and this is correct. But Septuagesima tells us that this Sunday is seventy days before Easter, which is plainly incorrect. The new designation of 'Sundays before Easter' performs the same function as the old Latin names in terms which everyone can understand, and with greater accuracy; it tells us that we now stop looking back to Christmas and begin to look forward to Easter. The Sunday after Ascension Day may now be called 'the Sixth Sunday after Easter'. This makes it more clear that the Great Fifty Days of the Easter season continue right up to Pentecost. These fifty days originated in the Jewish observance of the season from Passover to Pentecost, and are one of the earliest observances of the Church's calendar. Finally, Pentecost is the new designation of Whitsunday and, what perhaps is more important, the Sundays after Trinity are now renumbered as 'Sundays after Pentecost'. Trinity Sunday remains unaltered as a witness to the Church's faith in the Trinity. By calling the following Sundays 'Sundays after Pentecost' we remind ourselves that we live in the post-Pentecost era, the age of the only Spirit.

### The Lectionary

The new series of 'Sundays before Christmas' prepares us for the celebration of the Incarnation at Christmas. We begin with creation, because the Incarnation inaugurated a new creation; we continue with the fall, because the Incarnation provided the remedy for the fall; the promise of redemption, the doctrine of the remnant, the progressive revelation of God, and the prophecies, all begin to find their fulfilment in the Incarnation. These matters sum up the Old Testament story. They provide us with the themes of the Ninth to the Fifth Sundays before Christmas, and are the context in which we understand the event which we celebrate at Christmas.

The first and second Sundays of Advent preserve the themes which are familiar to us from the Prayer Book. With the third and fourth Sundays of

Advent we begin a series of readings of which the structure is determined by the life of Christ. It begins with the Forerunner (John the Baptist: this is logically if not chronologically correct), followed by the Annunciation. After Christmas it continues with the Baptism of Jesus and the call of the first disciples, and then through the ministry of Jesus to the Lent series which looks forward to the Passion and the Resurrection.

It may be seen that the Old Testament readings in Lent follow a course which in some respects is similar to the course of readings for the Sundays before Christmas. At both seasons the readings include the creation, the fall, the promises to faithful Abraham, and the Exodus. The tradition by which these readings were read to prepare for the celebration of redemption at Easter is a very ancient one, and they have therefore been preserved in this context. This tradition dates from a stage in the Church's life before there was any festival to celebrate the Incarnation. But since now we have the festivals of Christmas and the Epiphany, it seems appropriate to employ the same preparatory course at the beginning of the year also. It thus forms an introduction to the whole work of Christ, both in his Incarnation and in redemption.

In the past, such events as the Annunciation, the visit of the Magi, the Presentation, and the Transfiguration, have been celebrated on 'red-letter' days, which fall on Sunday only occasionally. It is therefore a useful consequence of the structure which follows the life of Christ that our attention is drawn to these events, not only on their appointed days but on Sundays as well. Thus for example the Annunciation is the theme of Advent 4, the Presentation of Christmas 1, the visit of the Magi of Christmas 2, and the Transfiguration of the Fourth Sunday in Lent.

After the celebration of the Resurrection, the Ascension, and the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Sundays after Pentecost focus our attention on the life of the Spirit-filled Church in the world. If 'Sundays after Trinity' are now replaced by 'Sundays after Pentecost', the Church's witness to its faith in the Trinity is not thereby diminished. On the contrary, the structure of the calendar and the lectionary is designed to testify to the Trinity, for the nine Sundays before Christmas direct our attention to God the Father and the world before the Incarnation, from Christmas onwards we celebrate the life of the incarnate Son, and the Sundays after Pentecost are concerned with the life of the Church in the Holy Spirit.

### PET HATES

I feel that the use of Christian names when distributing the elements at Communion is inappropriate, because it focuses attention upon the relationship between the person administering and the communicant at a moment when the communicant's attention should be focused on Christ. The peace is surely the time for using Christian names.

[Do others agree?—Editor] Ted Pratt

### BOOKS THIS MONTH

We have ordered copies of *PN Review 13* for the connoisseurs of curios—should be £2, but if we do not reply we did not get them. We also have copies of J. D. Crichton, H. E. Winstone and J. R. Ainslie *English Catholic Worship: Liturgical Renewal in England since 1900* (Chapman, £8.50), and of William H. Willimon *Worship as Pastoral Care* (Abingdon/S.P.C.K., £5.95). Also just to hand is the 1979 Alcuin Club book—H. Boone Porter *Jeremy Taylor: Liturgist* (S.P.C.K. £6.95).