

# News of Liturgy

Editor: Colin Buchanan

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## Editorial

I failed last month to say much about the main report of the two documents published from the last Liturgical Commission—*Services for the Sick* (GS 471) and *The Blessing of Oils and the Reconciliation of a Penitent* (GS 472). The *Services for the Sick* report has four sections of liturgical provision:

1. Communion with the sick. We have provided for a separate celebration of communion in the sickroom, as in 1662, and have set out again the eucharistic prayer already printed in the appendix to Rite A. This of course is unresponsive—good for occasions where people are very ill, or unable to respond. Where a hospital ward is full of casualties with legs in plaster but minds and voices in good health, and a knowledge of Rite A on their lips, then a responsive eucharistic prayer would be better. Pastoral awareness decides this sort of issue.

The Commission have also provided for 'communion by extension', which involves the taking of the elements from a celebration in one place to a distribution in another. This in turn involves some minimal form of 'reservation', and, it may be argued, opens the door to some maximal forms! My own view is that the minimal is not only allowable, it is pastorally desirable, and I have advocated communion by extension for many years—it was a theme of Grove Booklet on Ministry and Worship no. 4, right back in April 1972. And I do not see how the 'maximal' use of reservation can be prohibited—rather we have to look for good liturgical practice to drive out bad (extra-) liturgical practice . . .

The crucial phrase linking the satellite distribution to the main celebration runs as follows:

'The Church of God, of which we are members, has taken this bread and wine and given thanks according to the Lord's command. We now share together in the communion of his body and blood.'

2. There is provision for laying on of hands and anointing. At communion this is linked with the penitential section, and comes in the second place for penitence in Rite A—following the sermon and intercessions.

3. There is a collection of prayers for use with the sick.

4. There is a commendation at the time of death.

After these sections comes an appendix of suggested psalms and readings to be used with the sick.

Hugh Craig, an evangelical layman on the old Commission, has dissented from the whole provision. It is clear that reservation is central to his dissent, but he has not been specific about what he could or could not accept.

The report is on the Synod agenda for July 1981, when it will start its three-stage journey through the synodical pipeline. I will keep you posted.

Colin Buchanan

## THE FEBRUARY SYNOD

Surprisingly, the February session of General Synod proved to have more to do with liturgy than *NOL* anticipated last month. The following areas are of note for the record:

### Questions

As usual many questions had a liturgical twist. Two are worth noting here. Brian Brindley asked how many 'true errors' had been spotted in the ASB, and the secretary-general said that a certain liturgical journal had so far printed 47 which were agreed to be errors. The editor of the journal asked as a supplementary how many of those printed in the journal were reckoned *not* to be errors, but the secretary-general was unable to say off the cuff. The same editor had asked his own question:

'Is it permissible for a priest of the Church of England to minister absolution to a penitent privately with any form of words he chooses under Canon B.5(2) ?'

To this there came the astonishing reply:

'Canon B.5(2) relates to occasions for which no provision is made in the Book of Common Prayer, I do not think that the priest is free to use any form of words he chooses under Canon B.5(2), but is caught by Canon B.1.'

This reply, if taken seriously, would imply that all ministry of forgiveness to people given privately would have to follow some statutory wording—and this in turn would mean that vast numbers of the clergy of the Church of England are acting illegally. However, although the questioner was nearly stunned with astonishment at the answer, he recovered himself in time to ask as a supplementary:

'Where in the Book of Common Prayer is there provision for the private absolution of the healthy penitent?'

To this there came the reply (and the record is not yet available so it is not verbatim), that the secretary-general knew of nothing in the text to confine it to the sick!

*NOL* would now like to assume the questioner's mantle, and therefore asks:

'Assuming that the secretary-general's further reply is referring the questioner to the absolution in the Visitation of the Sick, has he read the accompanying rubrics (which, for instance, require the minister to admonish the penitent to make his will), let alone the *title* of the whole service which clearly confines its provision to the sick?'

Because *NOL* has espoused the questioner's cause, our readers (let alone the secretary-general) have not heard the last of this . . .

### The marriage debate

The debate on Tuesday 24 February was on marriage. The day began on a motion about preparation for marriage, and was enlivened by the intervention at 11 a.m. by the Archbishop of Canterbury who said that part of his task was to 'cheer up' the Synod, and therefore he was delighted to tell us that the Prince of Wales was announcing his engagement to one Lady Diana Spencer. The Archbishop followed up the loyal applause which greeted this by saying that as an Archbishop he did not often get the chance to do a wedding, so he was glad to keep his hand in, and would indeed (in line with the debate) be doing some preparation of the couple also. All this was well received.

*NOL* thinks it appropriate to remind the Archbishop (lest he is actually rusty) of the Canonical procedure on such occasions—which is that 'the decision as to which form of service is to be used shall be made by the minister who is to conduct the service, but if any of the persons concerned objects beforehand to the use of the service selected by the minister and he and the minister cannot agree as to which form is to be used, the matter shall be referred to the bishop of the diocese for his decision' (Canon B.3(4), which concerns the 'occasional offices'). This in turn would seem to affect *where* the service should be held—most likely places in London are in the London diocese, and the appeal would then lie (even from an Archbishop) to the Bishop of London. However, one possible site is Westminster Abbey which is a royal peculiar, and subject to no bishop. There the appeal would presumably lie to the crown. But the situation may not be too difficult if the diocese of London proves to be vacant in July (which is when the wedding is likely to be). In that case the appeal would go to the archbishop of the province—i.e. to Canterbury himself. We therefore advise the officiant at this auspicious occasion: firstly, be sure you yourself choose the form of service in the first instance (and we commend the ASB rite to your attention); secondly, point out to the couple their right to object in favour of some other authorized form; thirdly, if there is any danger of an appeal because of disagreement, be sure you are expecting to perform the rite in the diocese of London, not in a royal peculiar. And if you do feel a bit rusty we will gladly put you in touch with some regular officiants—especially those used to the ASB (or you could read the relevant chapter in *Anglican Worship Today* or perhaps in *Getting Married 1981*).

After all this fun, the Synod, when it was about to commend public services of prayer and dedication after civil marriages suddenly remembered that the very Convocation regulations which call upon the clergy not to marry divorced persons in church also forbid such post-marital services. So the Synod amended the relevant motion so as only to commend *private* services of this sort—but still asked that the Liturgical Commission should draw up forms for use. The Bishop of Durham so defined 'private' as to be virtually public in any case . . .

Synod also started a process which would give bishops discretion whether or not to ordain and/or institute those who had themselves been divorced and remarried or had wives who had been. But we still were not able to handle the main question about the remarriage in church of divorcees.

### The Covenant

On the Wednesday came the 'Covenant'. The Board of Mission and Unity's report told the Synod of the likelihood of the offending eucharistic prayer being rewritten [and, as a member of the liturgical sub-committee concerned, I can confirm this—COB]. Apart from that the main features of the 'Covenant' were treated as very nearly non-negotiable. On the three separate issues raised by the Standing Committee the votes were as follows:

On the non-bishoping of URC Moderators

	Yes	No
Bishops	39	11
Clergy	161	76
Laity	173	61

On the form of 'recognition' of ministers

Bishops	40	9
Clergy	152	85
Laity	172	61

On the acceptance of women ministers

Bishops	37	9
Clergy	144	89
Laity	166	66

After this the Synod gave provisional approval and agreed to send the scheme down to the dioceses on shows of hands. However, when it comes back it needs two-thirds majorities in each house—and it lacks that in the house of Clergy at the moment. Can any room for adjustment or flexibility to help the more catholic folk be found?

### This month's booklet . . .

. . . is Pastoral Series no. 5, *The Wisdom to Listen*, by Michael Mitton. Illustrated on the cover by an owl ('the less he spoke the more he heard') the booklet opens up areas of pastoral ministry most sensitively.

### . . . and next month's

is Liturgical Study no. 25, *Making the Liturgical Psalter*, by David Frost. David Frost not only wrote some of the most interesting prayers in Rite A (in the post-communion, and in two of the appendixes), but he was also the one-man 'team' of English scholars which worked with the larger panel of Hebraists to produce the Liturgical Psalter. He gave two public lectures in Australia recently on the task of translating the Psalter for liturgical use. As he has been on the Liturgical Commissions of both the Church of England and the Church of England in Australia, and as his Psalter has been included in both the ASB and *An Australian Prayer Book*, it is appropriate that his learned but typically entertaining lectures should be published at the instigation of his diocese and University in Newcastle in Australia, but by a well-known publishing house in England.

### . . . and a correction

which we ask you to note: in Ministry and Worship booklet no. 35, *Drama in Worship*, there is an address given at the back of the booklet for obtaining drama scripts. The new place to which to write is: Domini Theatre Group, 45 Waldeck Road, Dartford, Kent DA1 1AU (Tel. Dartford 25285).

### TWO FOOTNOTES

We apologize to readers of *Theological Renewal* that our first ever issue (no. 17, February 1981) included a number of 'rogue' copies with the pages wrongly bound—Abbey Press apologize also. We are glad to replace these and refund postage, if you will send them back. We also now have backnumbers of virtually all the previous issues (cost 50p a copy).

The other footnote is a whisper on the grapevine that the new Liturgical Commission is being chosen as you read this. We hope to carry news (and even profiles) next month.

**12p** per copy (£2.70 by post for the year 1981)

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

## ERRORS IN THE ASB—LATEST ADDITIONS

Here is our fifth successive list of new 'true errors' unearthed in the text of the ASB, along with the names of 50p prizewinners.

- Page 52: pointing of second line of Benedictus v.1 varies from that on page 77 (Peter Taylor)
- Page 254: 'THE GOSPEL' should be in blue as well as the rubric (David Lee—supplementing error in December from Peter Taylor).
- Page 323: Section 39 should have colon in line 4 of prayer as nearly stated in *NOL* in November and December (Peter Taylor).
- Page 670: In line 15 'ecstasy' should read 'ecstasy' (Edward Watson).
- Page 741: In the Gospel the first line of the second paragraph should read 'to' for 'so' (COB—derived from reading this Gospel out of season).
- Page 1073: For Lent 3 Tuesday read 'The Song of the Three' not 'Dan . . . (Apocrypha), (Bro. Tristram S.S.F.).
- Page 1112: In verse 21 read 'out into' not 'into' (David Frost).
- Page 1132: In verse 12 read 'that nation' not 'the nation' (David Frost).
- Page 1143: In verse 6 read 'man lives' not 'live' (David Frost).
- Page 1177: In verse 29 read 'the command' not 'command' (David Frost).
- Page 1201: In the last line read 'all' not 'and' (David Frost).
- Page 1209: In verse 10 in the one-colour Hodder edition the final full stop is omitted (Raymond George).
- Page 1222: In verse 7 read 'kept to' not 'kept' (David Frost).
- Page 1238: In verse 17 the pointing is lacking in what should be 'afflicted' (Peter Taylor).
- Page 1260: In verse 130 read 'word' not 'words' (David Frost).
- Page 1279: In verse 6 read 'You' not 'you' (David Frost).
- David Frost's contributions are strictly from an outsider—he was not sent the proofs to inspect and correct. Peter Taylor adds a *tour de force*—he has detected differences between the passages set out *in extenso* and those set out in the tables. He cites pages 400, 489, 674, 805, 909, 920, 938, 949, 955 (Psalm—the big error was listed last month), 968, 970. His other inconsistencies we hold over, and will print with other doubtful matters in future months. No more prizes will be awarded now.

## LAUGHTER IN LITURGY

Nick Bell from St. Luke's Bricket Wood writes:

During the morning Family Communion of the Sunday of last year's Spring Bank holiday weekend, a member of our congregation used the 'commemoration of the departed' section of the intercessions, to list at least two dozen or so from the church who were away on holiday for that weekend!

Is this the only way that the departed can be prayed for in an evangelical church?

## FURTHER TO COB'S DISSENT . . .

A word or two about that famous text 'Whose sins you forgive they are forgiven; whose sins you retain they are retained' (John 20.23). There is great difficulty in seeing this charge as a specific instruction to what are now the clergy to use forms of words like 'I forgive you your sins' in the 'reconciliation of a penitent'. The following points are worth noting as bearing upon it:

1. The equivalent charge recorded in Luke 24.47 is about the proclamation of the gospel—exactly fulfilled in Acts 2 (and thereafter) when Peter says 'Repent . . . and you shall receive the forgiveness of your sins'. It is evangelistic ministry firstly in view in John 20 also ('as the Father has sent me, so send I you').
2. The biblical figure of speech accords to a man's person what is in fact effected by this message—as in James 5.20, where the traditional translation says that we 'convert' sinners. So we do through our message and God's grace—but not by saying 'I convert you'. The objective description ('he is converting sinners') does not well turn into a subjective performative ('I convert you').
3. It would be incorrect to see the Johannine passage as solely concerned with embryonic presbyters—quite the reverse, it is the whole infant church which is present, including Cleopas (Luke 24) and (??) his wife.
4. The words 'I forgive you all your sins' became a liturgical formula not, as far as we can see, in the early church, but much more in the middle ages.
5. For the ministering of forgiveness to a penitent believer a better parallel is afforded with 'blessing' people or objects. The form for the latter is either to 'bless God' in respect of the object, or to pray for God's 'blessing' on the person (often in the second person singular). The sentence 'I bless you', whilst capable no doubt of orthodox interpretation, is not in use and would not well qualify for inclusion in official liturgy.

The discerning will already see that I would have preferred that the 1662 BCP had not used the words 'I absolve you from all your sins'. It may be defensible (we will look at that question next month), but the defence is bound to be tortuous, and will not easily establish the need to seek wider authorization for its use today.

N.B. The above was written prior to the Synodical question being answered (see page 2 above).

## SOME BITS AND PIECES

David Attwood sends us a suggestion about bookmarks for the ASB: 'The spine . . . opens very cleanly, allowing the following procedure:

- A. Obtain 9 inch coloured ribbons, about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch wide (I reckon about six ribbons are useful).
- B. Find a piece of stiffish fabric, cut to roughly 2 inches x  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches.
- C. Glue the ribbons to the piece of fabric leaving about 8 inches free, using a glue such as Copydex.
- D. Spread the glue over the fabric and attached ribbons and slide into the spine of the open book, to glue to the binding of the book. Close book and allow glue to dry.

P.S. The ribbons also greatly improve the book's appearance.'

One further ultimate last look back to the launching of the ASB: are we correct in noting that *Theology*, that journal of Anglican theology, published by S.P.C.K. who are central to the whole ASB publishing enterprise, managed to produce a November 1980 edition which *completely ignored* the 'greatest Anglican publishing event for three hundred years'? What will the Church historians say fifty years from now?

## Book reviews

Michael Perry *Sharing in One Bread: Holy Communion Rite A* (S.P.C.K., 90pp., £1.50).

Michael Perry wrote an earlier book on Series 3 called by the same title. The new production is a bigger presentation altogether. The format is simple—the text is printed out in blocks at intervals, and these chunks are separated by a plain and straightforward 'middle church' sort of commentary. He has a pastoral approach, and often a neat gift with words. His pre-suppositions were largely formed in the days when Dix ruled O.K., but he is not entirely immune from more recent influences. On the whole he gets 'inside' the rite usefully, and his book would be of use in, say, a parish study group.

Jock Anderson *Worship the Lord* (IVP, 1980, 160pp., £17.5).

This entirely concerns our state of heart in worship—very right and commendable, but very infuriating if you happen to think (with *NOL*) that 'worship' involves outward congregational *actions* and *words*, and that these interplay with our hearts. The upshot is 160 pages about serving God in all parts of our lives—which is fine and worthy, but leaves 'worship' somewhat undifferentiated. Buy it for its value as a sermon, but do not be misled by its title. It is, by its lacunae, an anti-ritual book.

## GROVE LITURGICAL STUDY no. 24—errata

- Page 4. Note 1. For 'Bott' read 'Botte'  
Note 3. For 'OCP 31' read 'OCP 32'
- Page 7. Line 25. For 'l'exemple' read 'l'exemple'
- Page 9. Note 3. For 'Altibanesishe' read 'Altibanesische'
- Page 12. Line 30. For 'philosophical' read 'philological'
- Page 15. Notes B. After 3 for  
'Add: after Cr. Mb. Mn.'  
read  
'ADD of your glorious Trinity n. (la manu) p.s.u. . . . y. Tr. Cm. e.'
- Page 17. Line 8. For '3 Times' read '3 times'
- Page 18. Line 7. For 'Repeat' read '(Repeat)'
- Page 19. Line 28. For 'We remember you' read 'We worship you'  
Line 29. For 'proptitory' read 'propitiatory'  
Line 34. For 'holines' read 'holiness'
- Page 20. Line 9. For '—3 Times—' read '—3 times—'
- Page 21. Note 4. For 'Transplante' read 'Transp. ante'
- Page 26. Note 1. For 'Kingdem' read 'Kingdom'
- Page 27. Line 8. For 'have been' read 'has been'
- Page 29. Note 1. For '197' read '1974'
- Page 30. Line 3. For 'this Commentaries' read 'the Commentaries'
- Page 31. Note 2. For 'Eusebuss' read 'Eusebius'
- Page 32. Line 29. For 'Qanonas' read 'Qanons'

## AN INDEX TO ASB PROPER

The index below is Geoffrey Cuming's own simple compilation. If photocopied, or chopped out, it will nicely fit into the ASB page format.

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