

News of Liturgy

Editor: Colin Buchanan

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Editorial

I had no sooner written last month about the Partners in Mission consultation—the first ever for the Church of England—when, quite unexpectedly, unannounced and relatively unexpected, the report itself was published. I have more to say lower down about it being unexpected. Right now, I draw attention to what the Consultation has to say about the worship of the Church of England. It may be helpful to refer to the paragraphs from the report which are reprinted on page 2 overleaf here.

The report is entitled *To a Rebellious House?*—allusion to the reading from Ezekiel 2 which was the Bible reading on the first day of the Consultation. The question mark is not there in Ezekiel, but it may just save the day for the Church of England. We are not definitely under God's judgment—but we very well may be. And the implicit question is: will we wriggle and squirm and say the external partners have got us wrong and actually the Church of England just *has* to be just the way it is? Or will we see the report as a true mirror help up to us that we should take action swiftly and without prevarication.

Look at what the partners say about our worship. '... near empty Churches ...' (102), '... congregation ... watching a performance ...' (102), 'Liturgy must move people to deep Christian commitment and change in their lives ...' (102), 'There should also be scope for spontaneity, including open extempore prayer ...' (155). It is this last point which I wish to pick up.

The most obvious comment to make is to be amazed that it is there at all. It is a measure of advance across the whole spectrum of churchmanship and denominations that such a varied set of persons could agree on our need for this feature of worship. It has not always been so—twenty years ago the ability and willingness to pray extempore was a mark of extreme evangelicalism in the Church of England, and was found in virtually no other circles. Indeed it was treated as divisive and even arrogant when it was suggested in mixed company. It is marvellous that it should now be a point of agreement amongst these diverse partners (including Roman Catholic, all sorts of Anglicans, and a sprinkling of others from home and overseas).

On the other hand, it is far from clear that the Church of England is on tiptoe of expectancy waiting to respond to the call. How many diocesan staff meetings are comfortable praying extemporarily? How many deanery or diocesan synods make this part of their worship—or of their business agenda? How many parishes have worked praying in groups into their Sunday worship? How many individual Christians can readily speak to God directly aloud in the presence of others during casual times of fellowship and sharing? Indeed, how many clergy can pray extemporarily with the sick, or the housebound, or even open or close a meeting with such natural prayers?

The questions hang around us. Perhaps the Church of England is not quite rebellious, but merely embarrassed about believing in God. But it is certain that if individual Christians have nothing to say to God or about God in the presence of sympathetic fellow-Christians, they will certainly have nothing to say in the presence of an unbelieving or sceptical world. Training for mission begins with worship—possibly in the house groups to which the partners draw our attention (102, 153). But what sort of Church of England would we see emerging then?

Colin Buchanan

EXTRACTS FROM *TO A REBELLIOUS HOUSE?*

101. There is in this country, a great need and great hunger for spiritual renewal. Signs of this are the proliferation of cults, interest in transcendental meditation etc., people trying to find spiritual experience, whatever it may be. In the Churches themselves, we have seen evidence of this in, for example, the charismatic movement and in the increasing use of house-groups. This has increased the prayer-life of the Church as a whole and is a great sign of hope.

102. But we have also seen that the Church is often not responding to this desire for real spirituality. As we have gone round the dioceses, our overwhelming impression has been of near empty Churches. The liturgy does not speak to the people, it seems to be a formality, words, ceremony and music, and it is very sophisticated. The congregation feel a bit like a theatre audience, watching a performance.

103. We must try to change the congregations from audiences to participants, for example we want to ask to what extent a choir serves the congregation and leads it in song and worship and to what extent it performs. We welcome the ASB, since we feel it can speak directly to people. But words are just dry bones unless there is life in them. It is vitally important to help people realize that the message of the Gospel is relevant to life today. Liturgy must move people to deep Christian commitment and change their lives; it should touch them.

104. We want to speak here of the unique position the Church of England has in this country. It is the Church of the people—theoretically—and though the people seem to expend a great deal of effort in keeping away from the Church, they do come to be baptized, married, and buried. These are unique opportunities for evangelization and should be seen as such. This is the real testing ground for the liturgy. We see the Church of England as a mainly middle-class Church for children and for middle-aged and old people, those who are inactive in society. The implications are that at the moment worship does not touch the working-class or young people. If the Church of England is serious in wanting to be a church of the people, in wanting to involve those who are not at present within it, it must be open to a change in style.

153. It is now a false assumption that people know how to pray. They need more teaching about prayer, Christian meditation and the creative

use of silence. Not everyone can live in a religious community, but those who do, not only achieve a deeper prayer life but are able to share the fruits of that deeper spirituality with others. They are a resource for the whole Church. Retreats and parish week-ends and contact with religious communities should be encouraged. Spirituality can be deepened by the use of house groups, which help their members to be more articulate about their faith and which enables them to witness more effectively.

154. Christian commitment involves the giving of the whole self in free and spontaneous response to Christ's love. Thus the practice of Christian stewardship is essential to mission. The majority of church members have not yet perceived the need for generous giving, nor discovered the spiritual liberation and personal blessing which follows. The fullness of Christian commitment and giving is larger than the local scene. Individuals and local congregations must participate in the needs of mankind as a whole, not only in 'overseas missions' but also in world development needs, as outlined in the Brandt report. Every parish should give away a sum equivalent to at least 10 per cent of its total expenditure for domestic, parochial and diocesan purposes. We encourage all Church members to practise tithing.

155. The challenge of public worship is to combine reverence, vitality and joy. This can be achieved, using the ordinary liturgical forms with participatory singing and action. There should also be scope for spontaneity, including open extempore prayer. We would like to reemphasize the importance of teaching through the sermon in the context of worship. Restoring the balance between word and sacrament is vitally important. To meet the needs of our time the word must not be subordinated to the sacrament.

NOTES ON TWO REPORTS

To a Rebellious House? was published on 4 September by the Church Information Office, and is only available from Church House Bookshop in London (the printed price is £1.20, but they will charge postage also). As far as I can see so far, the policy in relation to this report smacks of unadulterated folly. The trade was never told the publication was coming, and in any case there was no trade discount to make it worthwhile stocking it. Thus on 4 September the Church press was headlining the contents and challenge of the document, and the readers of the press not only had not seen it, but when they went to their local Christian bookshops were met with ignorance and, worse, no copies. (This happened very strongly in our own bookshop here in Nottingham, and it seriously undermines the customers' confidence in the service they are getting—all through no fault of the bookshops at all). I went to see the C.I.O. sales manageress and was told that the Synod office had ordered it to be a 'Synod document' only (which precluded alerting the trade and arranging trade distribution), and to have an initial printing of only 3,000 copies (of which only 1000 would be on general sale). The lack of distribution has been wholly confirmed for me, for I have just been to a residential conference of Gloucester clergy and laity, and found that another speaker and I both wished to bring the challenge of the report to those present—and were completely hamstrung by the fact that no one had seen it. It was out of print after 14 days.

Lest there be any mistake, I wish to spell out *why* it should have been on the broadest possible release:

- (i) this purports to be a mirror for the Church of England—but we are being stopped from seeing it. Something has happened to prophecy when it gets imprisoned to a tiny print order and in a refusal to allow proper circulation (oh yes, the Church of England *might* have found no one would buy it and would have lost money—but what defeatist issued that policy-directive?). If the Synod was serious about the Consultation, ready to pay for partners to come from all ends of the earth to help us, and actually hoping to learn something that would help us, why are the members cut off from information at the crucial point of reading by a pinchpenny marketing policy?
- (ii) allied with this, is not the restricted circulation a standing (even a calculated) insult to the partners themselves? Come on, Standing Committee, get them out fast, they will certainly sell. And we need them.

The trials of the booksellers are small beer compared with these. But if some convincing explanation which I have missed is available, I will gladly print it, and apologize for speaking strongly. But an explanation is needed.

A different note is needed on *The Charismatic Movement in the Church of England*, which was published with a real flourish by the C.I.O. on 11 September for £1.95. A review of this appears elsewhere in this issue. The note on this must be a personal one—for my name appears as the drafter of the report. I hasten to make clear that this was revealed solely because the working party which pressed me into drafting it also knew that my style could hardly be concealed, and that they might as well confess it. Needless to say, there is much in that report about worship, but I am precluded from quoting it here as though it were some independent source of wisdom. But it was nice to see that *Church Times* on 11 September thought that this report might have some element in it of an answer to the *Rebellious House?* report.

I have been asked often why the report handles 'the charismatic movement'—can we not get away from labels? But a Synod motion asking for an enquiry has to terminate on some indefinable something or no enquiry can be held. Had the original motion asked for a report on 'renewal', it would certainly have been opposed on the grounds that the term was so vague and formless that no enquiry was possible—and rightly so.

C.O.B.

LAUGHTER IN LITURGY

From Giles Godber: 'At Westcott House the lesson reader concluded a section of Job by uttering majestically "This is the Word of the Lord" only to add after a moment "Oh no, it isn't. there's a bit more."'

12p per copy (£2.70 by post for the year 1981, £3 for 1982)

GROVE BOOKS
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Book Review

The Charismatic Movement in the Church of England (C.I.O., £1.95.)

For the proposer of a motion carried by General Synod to be asked to draft the very report for which his motion called is a rare occurrence. Perhaps even rarer is the synodical report which can be described as compulsive reading. Such rarities become realities in the recently produced report *The Charismatic Movement in the Church of England*.

In 1978 the General Synod by resolution called for a report on the significance of the Charismatic Movement within the Church of England. The Standing Committee of Synod convened a consultation on Charismatic Renewal in the C. of E. at Ely in 1979 following which a small working group was commissioned to produce 'a popular report to promote discussion in the Church at large'. Colin Buchanan, who proposed the original motion in 1978, was prevailed upon by his colleagues on the working group to produce the draft report though he freely acknowledges their liberal editing of his contribution!

It is a crisp and lively report and likely to succeed in its desired aim. Within the compass of its 65 pages it deals with an outline history of the Charismatic Movement; its distinctive phenomena and the causes of its rise within the Church of England. An interesting feature is the inclusion of 'self-descriptions' of personal and corporate experiences of the movement within certain parishes and institutions. The report is completely fair and extremely balanced. This is particularly in evidence in the final chapters which seek to offer an evaluation of the movement and some pointers to 'dialogue' in which charismatic and non-charismatic churches can learn to live and grow together. There are most interesting appendices which include notes on some of the phenomena of the Charismatic Movement together with questions for discussion and suggestions for further study. The report is relatively brief but never superficial. Its analyses are accurate; its questions pertinent and its controversial issues handled with a sensitivity which, if matched by those of its readers, will result in a greater understanding and acceptance across the 'charismatic divide'. It brought my own feelings concerning the Charismatic Movement into sharper focus, removing some of my prejudices, and highlighting some of my anxieties in such a way as to make me less concerned with 'definition' and more concerned with 'recognition'.

He would be a brave man who would try and forecast what the reaction of General Synod will be to this report when it is discussed at the November session. As a relative newcomer to Synod I am sufficiently free from cynicism to believe that its members may reach the same conclusion as the signatories to the report . . . 'that the institution we serve *NEEDS* to assimilate (albeit critically) many of the insights of this movement that we have examined, if it is to fulfil its part in the mission of the universal church of Jesus Christ with maximum effectiveness; but also that the exponents of this movement need the ordering and disciplining of their enthusiasm which the institution can and does provide, and which alone will preserve for the good of all, and to the glory of God, the benefits of every new outpouring of his spirit'.

Whatever happens at General Synod the report is well worth study at personal, parochial or Deanery Synod level.

R. K. WILLIAMSON

We have also been sent the latest Alcuin Club Manual no. 3 *Family Services* (S.P.C.K., 45pp., £1.95) by Kenneth Stevenson. At first sight this looks like very good sense, and we recommend the author to write no. 4 also—*Episcopal Family Services*. We also have Lionel Dakers and Cyril Taylor (editors) *ASB Psalter and Canticles* (Collins Liturgical Publications, 205pp. hardback, £5.95). This employs more than 250 chants 'from a wealth of Anglican Psalmody' set out for choir use. Also from S.P.C.K. is *Grow or Die* edited by A. G. Wedderspoon (141pp., £3.95), with a rich variety of contributors including the Archbishop of Canterbury. Some of this inevitably touches on worship. And the same is true of the autobiographical book by Leslie Brown *Three Worlds: One Word* (Rex Collings, 267pp. hardback, £10.50). Leslie Brown was a key architect of the Liturgy of South India, and of the *Liturgy for Africa*, and his reminiscences often stray into these liturgical areas. He also (as *NOL* recorded about three years ago) was a pioneer of the Westward position of the president at Communion, and that is set out happily in his book.

A review of the new Alcuin Club book, Paul Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer in the Early Church* (S.P.C.K., £6.95) is held over until next month.

O Gladsome Light

Suggestions received include English Hymnal 269 Mark Tweedy), Ian Cooper, and Canon S. Landreth) and, from the last-named only, *English Hymnal Service Book* 272, *Hymns for Church and School* 331, *Songs of Syon* 185, *Songs of Praise* 50, and *With One Voice* 121. Many thanks. Readers are reminded that from now on requests and suggestions about hymnody should go to the Rev. Robin Leaver The Priory, Cogges, Witney, Oxon., for inclusion in *News of Hymnody* which will be first published in January 1982.

VACANCY FOR A SECRETARY OR NEAR-SECRETARY

Grove Books needs a full-time assistant. At the moment the distribution is done by Miss Sue Wrighton working from St. John's College's General Office, and doing some receptionist and telephone duties on behalf of St. John's. Some secretarial ability and general efficiency and personability are important, though it is not essential that the assistant has secretarial training. The job involves some autonomy and responsibility, but also great acres of very routine work. The job ought to be filled, if at all possible, by 25 October. The College provides a Christian context for working, and the College secretarial staff are the natural colleagues of the Grove Books assistant. Applicants should be motivated about the usefulness of Grove Books publications and ready to promote them. On the other hand intelligence, commonsense, and a readiness to handle figures are more important than particular training and experience. Perhaps clergy readers of *NOL* might have the appropriate person (even currently unemployed?) in their congregations. Enquirers should write urgently to Colin Buchanan with names of referees, and fuller details will be supplied. Help may be available in finding accommodation.

STOP PRESS: After the report the action—the newly formed 'Anglican Renewal Ministries' (ARM) carried through the conference of Anglican charismatic leaders with verve and blessing at Swanwick from 21 to 24 September. It all ended with a 3½ hour eucharist which broke off for a time around the middle for a debate on the compatibility of freemasonry with Christianity. More next month.

THE SOCIETY SEASON

Societas Liturgica met in Paris near the end of August to consider the liturgical implications of time—especially in relationship to the calendar and lectionary. The British Churches took a certain amount of criticism from other countries for not following the Roman Catholic three-year lectionary, but there were vigorous responses on behalf of the ASB scheme (which is generally in use in the non-Roman churches in Britain) from John Gunstone and Geoffrey Cuming. The high point of the congress was a paper from Professor Tom Talley of New York on the latest state of studies in liturgical time—and this was fascinatingly enriched not only by his spicely humour, but also by his own tentative suggestions that the origins of Christmas relate to an early scheme whereby John the Baptist was conceived at the Autumn Equinox and born on the Summer Solstice and Jesus was conceived at the Spring Equinox and born on the Winter Solstice. The scheme might be over-rigid and even mechanical—but it would have the odd and interesting effect that the keeping of Christmas is rooted not in pagan festivals but in a genuinely Christian, and even historical, instinct. Christmas for the Christians from now on.

The English Society for Liturgical Study in September included among its presentations a paper from Bryan Spinks about a eucharistic prayer devised in India by Roman Catholics in the 1970s, but never approved for use. Apart from its many features which attempt to include links with India's past Christian history it also includes an attempt to come to terms with other religions in India today:

'God of the nations,
you are the desire and hope
of all who search for you with a sincere heart.
You are the power almighty
adored as presence hidden in nature.
You reveal yourself
to the seers in their quest for knowledge,
to devout who seek you through sacrifice and detachment,
to every man approaching you by the path of love.
You enlighten the hearts that long for release
by conquest of desire and universal kindness.
You show mercy to those who submit
to your inscrutable decrees.'

It is not difficult to pick out Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam in turn as subject to a favourable interpretation and leading all to the true God. But it has never been approved.

FROM DOWN UNDER

The General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia (its new title) met in August for its once-in-four-years session, and both took the first steps towards the removing of barriers against the ordination of women and also towards allowing young children to receive communion before confirmation. In each case the diocesan synods have to approve the proposal in all three houses of three-quarters of the synods, and then the matter has to return to General Synod in 1985. So it is only very cautious first steps which have been taken.

This month's booklet . . .

. . . is Liturgical Study no. 27, *Infant Communion Then and Now*, by David Holeton. This is the 1980 Alcuin Club lecture, the first one to be turned into a Grove Liturgical Study instead of being printed as an Alcuin Club extra. David Holeton sets out the patristic material in very brief compass and then concentrates on two periods of church history which particularly interest him—the fifteenth century Hussites in Bohemia and the seventeenth century Puritans in England. It all then returns from detail to principle in a final chapter about the church today. COB has added an appendix about the position in the Church of England itself.

. . . and next month's

is Worship Series no. 78, *Preaching at Communion (i)*, by Ian Bunting. The *Preaching at . . .* titles have now come every Autumn for four years, and now move on from occasional offices to main Sunday Parish Communion. The minister needs to preserve a delicate balance between word and sacrament and the author aims to provide foundations for an effective preaching ministry within a testing context.

. . . and a new catalogue

should also come with this—including details of *News of Hymnody* and the Spirituality Series, both beginning in 1982, and also the Indian 'Partnership Booklets' (modelled on Grove Booklets) which we are importing on behalf of the publishers, Partnership-in-Mission Asia. These will not be available on standing order as they are not being published at standard intervals of time as Grove Booklets are, but they can be obtained postfree with your booklets on your account by writing in. There should also be (to subscribers in Britain) a blurb about Latimer House publications enclosed.

LAST FOOTNOTES FROM THAT WEDDING

Quite culpably, we omitted the real liturgical change issuing from the Royal Wedding on 29 July. Half an hour after our press started to roll on the morning of 30 July we learned that a Royal Warrant had altered the relevant state prayers—and then we simply forgot in August. The Royal Warrant indicates that Her Majesty's pleasure is that we pray no longer for 'Charles Prince of Wales' but for 'The Prince and Princess of Wales'. The state prayers are of course mandatory in 1662 Morning and Evening Prayer, and in the ASB the alteration affects section 3 on page 103. There was a desultory correspondence in *The Times* for a while as to whether the names 'Charles' and 'Di' should not have been included in the new form—apparently all precedent (which of course is from before 1910) would suggest the names should have been included. But royalty is sovereign, and not bound by precedent.

Michael Saward writes in as a hawk-eyed journalist to draw attention to a misprint in the official text. Lord Coggan was apparently being asked to say

'Heavenly Father,
we thank you that in our *early* lives
you speak to us of our eternal life . . .' (*italics ours*).

The Times ignored Michael Saward's correction, so we print it for the record, and Lord Coggan improvised with 'earthly' when the time came. But future historians ought to be warned that we do not actually subscribe officially in the Church of England to the theory that you can only catch true religion when under 21—which would certainly exclude one of the royal pair.