

# News of Liturgy

Editor: Colin Buchanan

Issue no. 91

July 1982

## Editorial

### THE COVENANT GOES DOWN

7 July 1982 saw the end of the Covenant for Unity for which the Churches in England have laboured virtually since the end of the old Anglican-Methodist Scheme in May 1972. To my mind it was a better, because a 'straighter' and more honest, plan than the old one, and I share the general grief that those who desire the convergence of the Churches in England are currently feeling. The end was dramatically signalled by the death of the Bishop of Guildford on 13 July, as he was the leader of the Church of England contingent on the Churches' Council for Covenanting, and he died as that Council met for the last time to wind itself up.

The actual voting in Synod that Wednesday afternoon was as follows:

	Yes	No
Bishops	38	11
Clergy	148	91
Laity	154	71
Total	340	173

It will be noted that the House of Clergy was well short of the necessary two-thirds majority—and that meant the Covenant was defeated. But those who, like the secretary of the Methodist Conference, think that it is wrong to vote by Houses and that the House of Clergy was blocking the other two Houses, should note there was not an overall two-thirds majority if all three Houses are added together—so that on this occasion at least the Synod acted very fairly, if still excruciatingly near to the figure it set itself.

One's first reaction is that it is no time for recriminations—nor for 'if only . . . wistfulnesses. To my mind the Church of England's establishment has been as big a block as anything (for it is that which has prevented anyone mooting true *union*). And I was saddened by the number of voices in Synod who could not get beyond guarding a heritage and a tradition. But I also know that to vote 'no' was a sadness to many who thought that a little more sensitivity, a little more time, a little more clarity, would have produced a Covenant, on very much the same lines as the one they were voting down, which they could have accepted. I think some responsibility lies upon the 'no' voters (especially those who said they were voting 'no' in order to *improve* the Covenant, not to sink it) now to indicate how church unity conversations get back on track in England.

I stood all day in my place and never got called in the debate. So the speech which I had up my sleeve which would have changed enough minds to

get the Covenant through is now just waste paper! So I can do no more than comment that in such a debate to bid up the decibels in favour of unity (or of no unity) is wholly useless. Actual room for manoeuvre, actual hearing of the other person's sticking-points of conscience, actual *meeting* of minds is needed. This is almost impossible when the matter has reached a final 'take-it-or-leave-it' form. But this Covenant had *not* reached that point (although it was called 'final approval'). There were documents still unreleased by the Churches' Council for Covenanting. There lay ahead the various Anglican stages of legislation. And both these factors meant that the issue would have had to be rejoined if Synod had voted 'yes'. Well, it never got said . . .

What gain is there from the Covenant proposals? The major positive one is that we shall never go back to the mutual laying on of hands for integrating ministries. And the minor gain is that some liturgical shape for such a Covenant has been thought through. On the negative side, we have perhaps learned that setting time limits on the operation (which the Church of England's General Synod did in 1978) is dangerous, and that trying to push a scheme through when a 'party' in the Church of England is dissenting is both painful and likely to be unsuccessful. I hope we have *not* put ourselves in the position where the Church of England is thought to have turned its back on the non-episcopal Churches in order to talk more seriously with the Church of Rome. Certainly the Archbishop of Canterbury made it plain, in his otherwise rather halting speech in favour of the Covenant, that he would not see the defeat of it in that way. Rome is certainly on the agenda—and a new International Commission is about to be appointed. But the Roman dialogue is both international on the one hand, and engaged on trying to clear doctrinal ground on the other. This contrasts with an English church situation on the ground where practical steps forward are needed with the other Churches (and sometimes, it is also true, with the Roman Catholics also). So it is both at once.

But for healthy reunion, where the people of God who are his ambassadors meet as one round his table week by week in 'each place', and then go out on his mission, that seems further off than ever. Can the vision be gained?  
Colin Buchanan

### SERVICES FOR USE WITH THE SICK

These services had their 'Revision Stage' and gained Provisional Approval on Tuesday 6 July. Virtually nothing occurred in the way of substantial amendments, though an attempt was made to delete the optional extra invitation to communion 'Jesus is the Lamb of God . . .'. The provision for communion 'at arm's length' and for laying on hands and anointing remained without any proposals for alteration at all. A little fun was imported into proceedings when it emerged that the text in GS 471A in effect provided prayers for the dead person to say *post mortem*, when the clear intention had been that the survivors should say them. A friendly helping hand from the backbenches delivered the platform from some embarrassment. . .

The 'Blessing of Oils' proved unattractive to evangelicals, and serious further alarms were raised when an opening Note was added which said

'The hymn *O Redeemer* may be sung as the oils are brought to the bishop.' Many members of Synod did not appear to know this hymn (*NOL* among them), but a version used at Westminster Cathedral on Maundy Thursday was hurriedly read by one Peter Dixon who happened to have one in his pocket. The text ran as follows:

Oh, hear our hymn, Redeemer, Lord,  
as you we praise with one accord;  
and as to you our gifts we bring  
your paschal victory we sing.

Blest was the sun and blest the tree  
that brought the olives forth to birth,  
whose ripeness humbly we present  
to you, the Ransomer of earth.

Then bless it also, heavenly King,  
this olive's fullness offered here,  
that it may trace the sacred sign  
which all the powers of darkness fear.

So shall our wounded nature, Lord,  
by your anointing hand be healed;  
and in mankind and womankind  
God's glorious image stand revealed.

As, at the sacred water's touch,  
the soul in us is washed in sin,  
so, when this oil makes bright the brow,  
the Spirit pours his gifts within.

We pray you, Lord, the Father's Son,  
the Maiden's Child for human eyes:  
enlighten and defend from death  
those whom this unction sanctifies.

Henceforth within us may the feast  
at which on earth such grace was given  
live unforgotten and revered;  
and guide us to the feast of heaven.

This amendment was passed by a very narrow majority, and it was passed whilst COB was on his feet trying to catch the chair's eye! The Steering Committee is now faced with a problem:

- 1 Is it appropriate to make reference to particular hymns at all? It is almost unparalleled in the ASB.
- 2 Is it clear to which hymn the title *O Redeemer* would apply (these words are not the first words of the version printed above)?
- 3 If a version is to be printed out, which version should be used?
- 4 Granted the text printed above, is such a hymn, once seen, truly acceptable to the Synod? It overthrows (particularly in verse 5) much careful work over many years to keep initiation doctrine of the Church of England from tumbling into obvious traps.

The Steering Committee will be advising the House of Bishops, who have exclusive rights in relation to the text to be proposed for final approval.

### THE RECONCILIATION OF A PENITENT

The second of the two optional absolutions in this rite was controversial, and had been the subject of my dissent (see previous *NOLs ad nauseam*). Jim Duxbury proposed to sweep away both the options printed and substitute the absolution from the ASB services. I supported this, as it came before my own amendments, but it was torpedoed by the advocacy of the Bishop of Derby and Christian Howard, both of whom conveyed the impression that the 'I absolve you' text was desired across a range of churchmanships, and not just by partisan anglo-catholics. The voting was:

For 59                      Against 249                      Abstaining 22

I followed with my own two amendments—the first to delete the second option, and the second to alter 'I absolve you' to 'You are absolved' within it. Provisional Approval was not reached on that Tuesday, but was held over until the last business on Friday 9 July. Then Michael Saward made a brave speech, regretting the split that had come into Synod with a majority running a 'steamroller' over a minority, in a way unknown in liturgical revision in all the years of synodical government. The Bishop of Durham offered as an irenic interpretation the suggestion that 'absolve' was different in meaning from 'forgive' because it included elements of judgment and discernment not included in 'forgive'.

The notice paper on Friday carried mention of my resignation from the Steering Committee (in respect of this one rite), and I do now oppose the whole text. I voted against its getting provisional approval, but with probably no more than 20–25% of the Synod supporting me. It goes to the House of Bishops to be brought for final approval in November.

### WOMEN ORDAINED ABROAD

Thursday 8 July saw the debate on giving limited permission to women ordained in other Provinces of the Anglican Communion to minister in England when visiting—and this would include presiding at communion. The vote on this motion was:

	Yes	No
Bishops	24	4
Clergy	106	68
Laity	103	60

The motion was carried, but, as it too will presumably need a two-thirds majority in each House at the final stage of legislation, it is not at all clear from the above figures that the Synod will be able to act upon its decision.

### A HISTORY OF ANGLICAN LITURGY

The Cumming book is now being published on 20 August and we shall review it next month.

14p per copy (£3 by post for the year 1982)

GROVE BOOKS  
BRAMCOTE NOTTS. (0602 251114)

## COLLECTS TO ACCOMPANY RITE B

1 August	Pentecost 9	'The Whole Armour of God'	BCP Lent 2
8 August	Pentecost 10	'The Mind of Christ'	Translate ASB backwards
15 August	Pentecost 11	'The Serving Community'	
		Almighty God, who through thy Son Jesus Christ hast taught us that whatever is done to the least of our brethren is done also to him; make us willing to minister to the needs of others, as he came to minister to others and to give his life as a ransom for many; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.	
22 August	Pentecost 12	'The Witnessing Community'	Translate ASB backwards
29 August	Pentecost 13	'The Suffering Community'	
		Lord God, whose blessed Son, our Saviour, gave his back to the smiters and hid not his face from shame; grant us to accept the sufferings of the present time, in full assurance of the glory that shall be revealed; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord.	
		(PECESA 1928 BCP Tuesday in Holy Week (altd.))	

## THAT ROYAL BAPTISM

... is to be in the drawing room of Buck House after all. We regret this.

## COELACANTHS

Why turn East for the creed? All sorts of suggestions flow in. William Lang writes as follows:

'I note that in the Sarum Missal the choir are directed to "incline towards the altar" four times during the singing of the Nicene Creed; the previous written instruction to the choir is one which directs them to turn towards the altar and sign themselves with the sign of the cross, which is given at the beginning of the Gospel. While this leaves open the exact orientation of the choir between these gestures, might I suggest that perhaps they remained facing the altar throughout, in order to cut down excessive movement?'

Leslie Price on the other hand writes:

'G. H. Pember, a severely Protestant writer best known for *Earth's Earliest Ages*, ... tackled turning East and numerous corruptions in *The Church The Churches and the Mysteries* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1901). Turning to the East in prayer is one of several traditional practices repudiated by Pember which were commended as traditions even then by Basil in *On the Holy Spirit* (p.478f). Pember devotes a whole chapter to "The West and the East" in which he argues that turning East derives from pagans, especially sunworshippers. This of course does not trace the evolution of the custom to the precise point of the saying of the creed in an Anglican Church.'

No, it does not. And have the Romans done so? Any more help?

## ASB ORDINATIONS

At the risk of turning boring every July we once again have reports from ordinations around the country. Without mentioning places (or reporters) we record the following matters for concern:

- 1 The laying on of hands.** This should be done with the bishop *standing* (see rubrics). Several bishops still sit.
- 2 The Delivery of the Bible.** This should come after the end of the ordination prayer (during which hands have been laid on each candidate). It is a separate event from the ordination, and should not be intruded into the ordination prayer.
- 3 Vesting.** We have drawn attention before to the provision to vest earlier in the rite than the point of ordination, and we strongly commend that, if vesting is to occur at all. We also hear of vesting of priests in chasubles. This would seem to be a divisive move, and throws considerable responsibility on those who do not wish to receive the chasuble to resist it. Our own strong view is that, in a period when clerical liturgical vesture is in transition, it is inappropriate to act as though some particular garb were wholly distinctive of a particular order (except possibly the chimere for a bishop).
- 4 'Concelebration'.** Readers of *NOL* will know of our suspicion that this is a title tied on thin air. But various dioceses do, it seems, expect new priests to stand around the communion table with the bishop, to join in 'special bits' of the eucharistic prayer with him, to stretch out a hand towards the elements or in other ways do a shadow play imitating his presidency. We repeat that this is a distortion of both the ordination rite and the eucharistic rite—and again it bears heavily upon the ordinand who twigs the folly of it but cannot easily protest or dissociate himself from it. (Incidentally, was not the old Roman concelebration at ordination a rite where each new priest had his own bread and wine and celebrated his own private mass in parallel with the pontifical celebration? If so, our latter-day innovation is *sheer* innovation ...)
- 5 Communion.** We simply note that in some cathedrals the administration is quite unnecessarily protracted. It should be possible to communicate upwards of 1000 people, without any sense of rush, in around ten minutes by the proper use of space and assistants. And we should add that this assistance would be very properly given by the newly ordained ministers—which would be genuinely functional and often quite moving.

Who plans these services? Will someone hand on to them our criticisms?

## LAUGHTER IN LITURGY

That incident in the North-East, where an earnest young man was hit over the head by his mum with her handbag for joining in the Peace over-embarrassingly, has continued to bounce around. It even reached the *Sunday Mirror* on 27 June (following a quotation from *NOL* in *Church Times*). Our coat-trailing suggestion that Michael Vasey could no more name the place and time than Nicholas Frayling could actually produce such details re 'And also with you' is indignantly repudiated by our correspondents. The parish concerned was St. Stephens, Willington, in Co. Durham. The incumbent was the Rev. David Heron. The 'flamboyant school-teacher' who bid up the 'level' of the Peace was one Valerie Sheddon, now training at Cranmer Hall to be a deaconess. The date has not been fixed precisely, nor is the name of the family involved in the mother-and-son scrummage revealed—but the eye-witnesses abound, and we confess its truth.

We do not advise readers lightly to decamp to Co. Durham for exciting incidents at the Peace. This seems to have been the exception rather than the rule—and is indeed a lesson in introducing change more gradually ...

## ROMAN CONCELEBRATION

The practice on which we remarked last month is fully in accord with the General Instructions of the Church of Rome, and invites further reflection.

## CHANGES OF ADDRESS

Our importers in USA have changed their address again:

Institute for Christian Renewal  
26 Washington Street  
Malden  
Mass. 02148

They were previously in Auburn, Mass.

In Australia Norton Bailey can be found not only in the improbable region of Tennant Creek (but it can be found there), but also at P.O. Box 508, Toowong, QLD 4066.

## WHAT CAN WE SAY TO GOD ABOUT THE FALKLANDS ISLANDS?

As we go to press there is agitation in the columns of the nationals about the character of the 'Falklands Islands service' to be held in St. Paul's cathedral on Monday 26 July at 11 a.m. Unfortunately, holidays and our printing programme preclude our reporting it this month, but we hope to do so in August. But the theological tensions will be obvious, even to our readers in Japan or Uganda. Do we simply assume that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is on the side of Mrs. T., and say 'thank you' to him? Or are there more complex matters on which we have to address ourselves to him? *This* is the point where the establishment of the Church of England is at its most embarrassing. And Mrs. T. poured scorn on the notion of saying the Lord's Prayer in Spanish ...

## This month's booklet ...

... is Worship series no. 81, *Hymns in To-Day's Language?*, by Chris Idle. The author is one of the team of editors producing the new *Hymns for To-Day's Church* to be published by Hodder & Stoughton on 8 November. The booklet is a kind of forerunner to the hymnbook itself, and in it Chris Idle discusses the general principle of 'touching up' hymnody (a process which is already far more widespread than most hymnsingers realize—who sings 'Hark how all the welkin rings ...' etc.?). He follows this through with an indication of *how* hymnody can be updated without loss of poetry or power, and in the process leads into the actual steps taken for this new hymnbook. Robin Leaver contributes a foreword—and Hodder & Stoughton an advert!

## ... and next month's is

Pastoral Series no. 11, *Sunday Learning for All Ages*, by Judith Rose erstwhile on the staff of St. George's, Leeds (about which she here writes), now at Bradford cathedral. The Sunday education programme at St. George's was a feature of the Ministry and Worship booklet no. 31, edited by Charles Hutchins in 1974. But events have moved on, the programme has developed, and the Pastoral Series gives opportunity for a whole booklet to be given to this pattern. There is much here about leadership as well as about education. The principles involved would be valuable for talking through in any forward-looking parish.

## ... and the two Anglican/Roman Catholic Booklets are:

- 1 Evangelical Anglicans and the ARCIC Final Report: A Critique and Assessment* drafted by John Stott for CEEC (16 pages, 40p). This was published in early July.
- 2 Rome, Canterbury, and the Future* by Julian Charley (24 pages 70p). Julian Charley was the only person known as an evangelical Anglican on the International Commission which worked from 1969 to 1981 and has recently produced its *Final Report*. He wrote commentaries on the three previous Statements as they came out, but all three booklets are now out of print. Now he stands back and reviews both the ground covered, and the tasks of the next Commission. This should be ready in mid-August.

Neither of these booklets is being sent automatically to every customer (however tempting it is to us to do that). So please write in, sending the cost, and, for orders under £2, a 9" x 6" SAE also — or they can be added to your standing order.

## ... and News of Hymnody

reaches issue no. 3 this month. It is beginning to sell in America as well as here, and is slowly justifying SPCK's confidence in the project, the editor, and, yes, even the publisher.

## ... and running out of print

are Worship Booklets nos. 5, 9, 14, 42, and 58, along with Liturgical Study no. 12. We *may* be able to find the odd copy for folk in great need. And Liturgical Study no. 7 will be reprinted in early September.