

News of Liturgy

Editor: Colin Buchanan Issue no. 108 December 1983

Editorial

Whether or not Advent has to be conceived of as the period of reflection on the 'four last things', as I write doom is in the air. The approach of 1984 is not irrelevant. The recent showing on British television of *The Day After* has also stoked up the feeling. The arrival of Cruise missiles (with the end of arms talks in Geneva) has not helped. And a bomb amongst pre-Christmas shoppers in London's West End is echoing around the press also (the English always want moderation to rule in Northern Ireland where such things are frequent, but are liable to become somewhat extreme themselves if one bomb goes off in London or Birmingham). The feeling of helplessness in the grip of events which seem to march with a momentum of their own is our common lot. It must be much worse in Beirut or San Salvador than it is in England—but we do have it here too. There are no political saviours around.

So Advent comes into its own. The Christian church looks forward—not only to the annual remembrance of the incarnation, but also to the winding up of this world's doings and the ushering in of the new heaven and new earth. In with the hopelessness (which should not paralyse the Christian) is Christian hope. And our liturgy looks forward—and also models our eschatology by its ridiculous frailty and humanity. How can bread and wine be a feast? How can our songs and hymns sufficiently praise God? How can our relationships be seen as those of the limbs of the body of Christ? If our minds were to terminate on the present character of such things, we would be of all men most laughable. It is only because we dare to discern within the liturgy the coming triumph of our God that we continue it. Our religious language is metaphor, our religious experience a will o' the wisp, our religious discipleship pathetic to behold, and our liturgical celebrations enough to make the angels weep. Through it all, by God's good grace, we keep the knowledge of Christ alive for the next generation to learn. At least so we hope. But we live and worship most of the time as though Christ were absent. So our liturgy is to be both a re-establishing of our confidence that he is present with us and in us, and a dismissal of all sense of his absence by our looking for his coming in glory.

The marriage stuff on pages 5 to 8 this time may seem excessive, but that is the nature of the regulation, and we do try to get texts on the record in *NOL*. Here I confess my own position—a non-parochial clergyman, representing parochial clergy in General Synod, I am not personally faced with much of the agony the parochial clergy have. I am not an indissolubilist (though very hesitant about any churchly steps which would seem to undermine couples who ought to be working hard at their existing marriages). I have earlier expressed my distaste for the Roman casuistry of 'extended nullity'. But principally therefore I am looking for the way through which will have most chance of enabling the parish clergy to work in harmony with each other, with a common practice in the land. Now read on on page 5.

December brings us to the end of yet another Grove Books year—and *NOL* usually indulges then in a line or two of navel-gazing. The first Ministry and Worship booklet was published on 31 December 1971, and the regular series began then, so we keep a twelfth anniversary. *NOL* itself has run nine years without a break, and still cheerfully invents enough news to appear each month. We have had some late appearances this year, partly through the perilously hand-to-mouth way in which the editor works, partly through the prolonged illness of a crucial member of our printers' team.

Readers will know of our trimming of the programme a little—*Theological Renewal* ceased in November, and there will be no Ethics booklets in the first half of 1984. But in general the programme runs on. The forming of the charitable company, Grove Books Limited, is still hovering on the brink, but we are hoping to announce it soon.

As I write it is a few days before Christmas, but I fear this will not reach you till after Christmas. There remains a 'family' atmosphere about Grove Books' relationships with its customers, so I can very genuinely wish you (*personally!*) a very happy Christmas. Colin Buchanan

A REPORT FROM THE LITURGICAL COMMISSION?

One of the tasks of the Liturgical Commission has been to report to General Synod on the merits of the Roman Catholic three-year Sunday lectionary. It looks now as though this report will be published shortly and come before the Synod in February. It would be improper to anticipate what the report will say, but we will try to keep up to date.

WHENCE CHRISTMAS?

The conventional answer is that in Rome a pagan festival of the feast of the unconquered sun (*'solis invicti'*) was taken over in the early period of Constantine, and made an incarnation festival. It is first traceable to 336, and it has been conventional also to link it with troubles about the nature of the incarnation—the Christological matters about which the Council of Nicea met in 325. However, just to keep the matter on the boil, Tom Talley of New York read a paper at the liturgical conference in Parish in 1981, which is now in print in *Studia Liturgica*, pointing out that Christmas may have pre-Nicene and pre-Constantinian origins—for it was kept by the *Donatists*. It must therefore antedate the schism in 310-312. And further speculation then runs, with Talley's approval, to a scheme whereby Jesus birth day was fixed by reference to his conception (instead of *vice versa* as the conventional story would have). Then the legend that he was conceived on the same date in the year as that on which he died comes into play . . .

THE ASB'S RIBS ARE SHOWING

The Collect of Advent 4 (in prospect as *NOL* goes to press) contains the odd phrase about Mary, that she was 'full of grace'. The Latin Vulgate Bible translates the original in Luke 1.28 as 'plena gratia'. This in turn looks like 'full of grace'. But the original is beyond all contradiction 'you who are highly favoured' (cf. AV and 'most highly favoured lady' in carolody). The 'full of grace' phraseology is at best ambiguous, and at

worst suggests she is a well or fountain of grace. The context in the Collect is not helpful—indeed if anything it suggests that Mary was *first* 'full of grace', and *then* (as a consequence?) 'chosen' by God . . . My recollection is that we took this to a tied vote on the Revision Committee (settled by the chairman's casting vote) and, as a member in charge of the whole package, I failed to fight it on the floor of Synod.

AND ITS SPINE IS NOT BREAKING

or at least not in Liverpool. Donald Gray, the Rector of Liverpool, writes as follows:

'At Liverpool Parish Church where many copies of this [the SPCK green pew] edition of the ASB are also in daily use, examination of the spine reveals no deterioration. Hard luck, Mark [i.e. Mark Tweedy who wrote last month], you must have got a Monday morning copy.'

Whether SPCK would be happy with this judgment remains to be seen.

LAUGHTER OUTSIDE LITURGY

Richard Inwood sends the following extract from the *Bath and West Evening Chronicle* of Friday, 2 December 1983:

CHRISTENING IS SPECIAL

Christening is a special occasion, Frome magistrates decided yesterday.

Mr. Withiel Cole asked the magistrates to consider whether an application by licensee Mr. Stephen Samuel, of the Bell Inn, Standerwick, for extended hours for a christening party was a special occasion.

Clerk Mr. John Allen said "entering the Christian church is the most special occasion for a Christian."

One just idly wonders whether last month's advertiser in Coventry finally got the required baptism in Standerwick—and thus had reason to celebrate?

IN MEMORIAM—JOHN ROBINSON

Bishop John Robinson died on Monday 5 December. Whilst his obituaries concentrated upon *Honest to God* in the first case, and his New Testament scholarship in the second, yet a liturgical journal must pay tribute to his popularizing work in relation to the liturgical movement. The great contribution he made was in *Liturgy coming to Life*, published by Mowbray in 1960, with a second edition in 1963. The book is simply 'the history and theology of an experiment', viz. what he did in Clare College chapel in his years as Dean from 1951 to 1959. It includes his addresses at communion, and a very slightly revamped 1662 BCP communion text, which was his use in the chapel. Yet behind it all is Gregory Dix. *His* book was new off the 1950s, and John Robinson clearly determined to give liturgical expression in action to the Dix' principles. What GND would have thought (or said) about doing it with the BCP text, which he so roundly berated, is anyone's guess—he himself died as the experiment began.

The Robinson emphasis was first to insist that liturgy is action as much as word, and, in particular, to go on to insist that the 'offertory' of the elements was the first of the four dominical actions, and was expressive of the offering of all our lives to God. 'Into that loaf of bread' he said 'goes the whole working life of the world—all the complicated processes of production, distribution, and exchange. And in the bottle of wine we have the symbol of all life's joy and leisure, everything given to make glad and free the heart of man.'

We cannot go with all this today (though, surprisingly, it seems to have affected the modern Roman offertory prayers), but we can acknowledge how Robinson handled Dix both faithfully and yet creatively. He *almost* seduced the whole parish communion movement by his silver-tongued romanticism. I have myself had a crack against the 'offertory procession' in *The End of the Offertory* (Liturgical Study 14), but the highpoint was by then already past, and it runs on now only through acquired momentum. John Robinson can have the credit for the momentum it acquired!

There were later attempts by Robinson to relate *Honest to God* theology to liturgy—notably in *But that I can't believe* (1967), where he gave the home-made Liturgy of St. Mark's-in-the-Bowery from New York a boost. But the *Liturgy coming to Life* material seems to have made a deeper impact. At the very least it gives a point of reference for opponents.

This month's booklet . . .

. . . is Liturgical Study no. 36, *Liturgical Presidency in the Early Church*, by Paul Bradshaw, the vice-principal of Ripon College, Cuddesdon, and a member of the Liturgical Commission—and a well-known author on liturgy. The Study is an amplification of a paper to the Society for Liturgical Study in April—the best of a series of contributions on liturgical presidency.

. . . and next month's

is Worship Series no. 87, *Introducing Liturgical Change*, by Trevor Lloyd. It is no good having pastoral ideals for liturgy, if the actual changes needed to introduce pastoral liturgy are so un pastorally handled that the right starting-points cannot be attained. Trevor Lloyd, a well-practised exponent of liturgical renewal in his own parish, gives guidelines in this sensitive area.

. . . and prices in 1984

are 80p for ordinary booklets, £1.60 for Liturgical Studies. *NOL* and *NOH* will cost 16p when sent with booklets, or £3.45 by post inland for *NOL* on its own, £4 with *NOH* once a quarter. By air overseas it costs £4.50 (US \$8.25) on its own, or £5.25 (US \$9.50) with *NOH*. *Please make sure you renew*. A renewal slip should have reached you with last month's despatch. If not, please write in without it.

ISSN 0263-7170

(£3.45 by inland post for the year 1984—£4 with *News of Hymnody* added)

GROVE BOOKS
BRAMCOTE NOTTS. NG9 3DS (0602 251114)

15p

DIVORCE AND MARRIAGE

The saga of the new regulation in the Church of England runs on. It is only tangentially a liturgical subject, but reflection shows that any question about the candidates for a liturgical event is liturgical in the proper sense. (There have also been questions about doctoring the service slightly for those married after a divorce, but these questions do not arise from the particular regulation in view, only from private alternative suggestions.)

So *NOL* is first of all printing out in the next three pages the actual text of the draft regulation first amended and then approved in Synod in November. It will be receiving the vote on final approval in February, when it will be impossible for the floor to amend it again, and the text will be subject to a single substantive vote in each House. It will then come into force, if accepted. Meanwhile the bishops of the Church of England are sounding out their diocesan synods, or sometimes houses of clergy, in order to have guidance for the General Synod members in February. There is little to report this minute from these diocesan activities.

A last-minute note last month announced that one Philip 'Grove' (actually 'Crowe', but our printers are used to scribbled notes being 'Grove') had produced a broadsheet against Option G (i.e. that procedure in the regulation). This is obtainable from him at Breadsall Rectory, Derby, for 25p and a 9in x 6in SAE. It is more than a broadsheet—it is a booklet entitled *Divorce and Marriage in the Church of England: A Way Through?* Part of it is an attempt to demonstrate how the proposed procedure would work (and it looks more or less fair as a presentation—and very very daunting), and part of it is an attempt to work out positively a local alternative, which would both spread the work, and mean that the couple had access to those who were deciding their eligibility for a church wedding. *NOL* is circulating customers in England a summary of the Crowe alternative.

Is such a broadsheet a wrecking manœuvre? Not really, is our answer. Partly, the regulation does need testing from all sides, and if this particular tester concludes it is wanting, it is not because he started with ill-will towards the project. But partly the broadsheet may be looked at as a positive help. For already the draft procedure was in some trouble, and it might be defeated in February. If so, then we shall all need all the positive help we can get. And partly also, it is fully possible that the regulation may get approval in February and prove unworkable in practice. Then we may turn with relief to the Crowe plan.

At any rate, the assiduous reader will first try to master the regulation which follows.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND GENERAL SYNOD REGULATION approved under Article 6 (iv) of the Constitution

1. Canon B 30 affirms 'according to our Lord's teaching, that marriage is in its nature a union permanent and life-long, for better for worse, till death them do part, of one man with one woman, to the exclusion of all others on either side, for the procreation and nurture of children, for the hallowing and right direction of the natural instincts and affections, and for the mutual society, help and comfort which the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity'. In view of our Lord's teaching as set out in Canon B30 it is not normally the practice of the Church of England to solemnise the marriage of anyone who has been divorced and has a former spouse still living.
2. However, where a couple, one or both of whom has had a previous marriage dissolved and whose former spouse is still living, desire to marry and seek that such marriage be solemnised according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England, and there are good pastoral reasons why in that case this dispensation may be granted, such couple may apply to their incumbent for a dispensation from the normal practice of the Church.
3. Such application shall be made to the incumbent of the parish in which either of them is resident or is on the church electoral roll. The dispensation may only be granted by the bishop of the diocese to which such parish belongs in accordance with the following procedure.
 4. (i) The incumbent shall enquire into the application and shall notify the incumbent of every other parish where either of the applicants is resident or on the church electoral roll that an application has been made and invite his comments.
 - (ii) Having concluded his enquiries the incumbent shall complete the application form prescribed from time to time by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York which shall include provision for:
 - (a) the incumbent to state his considered view as to each of the following:
 - (A) whether the previous union did or did not constitute marriage as it is defined and affirmed in Canon B 30 of the Canons of the Church of England;
 - (B) whether despite the fact that the previous marriage or marriages having in fact broken down irretrievably and been terminated by due process of law, it is the intention, following the proposed marriage in church in the circumstances detailed in the particular application, to build this union on the basis of our Lord's teaching set out in Canon B30; and
 - (C) whether the intended marriage is or is not in the highest pastoral interests of the parties to the application.
 - (b) the couple to sign a declaration that they understand and accept the teaching of the Church of England relating to marriage as set out in the Canon Law of the Church and accept that it is not the normal practice of the Church to solemnise the marriage of anyone who has been divorced and has a former spouse still living.
 - (c) the incumbent to state:
 - (A) whether he recommends that the dispensation sought should be granted; and
 - (B) whether, if the dispensation is granted, he would be willing to solemnise the marriage
 and
 - to allow it to be solemnised in any church of which he is incumbent.

- (iii) the incumbent shall send the completed application form to the bishop who shall, if the applicants reside in and/or, are on the church electoral roll of parishes in other dioceses notify the bishops of such other dioceses that he has received an application.
- (iv) Every application shall be sent by the bishop together with any comments he may wish to make upon it to a Regional Moderator appointed in accordance with paragraph 6 of this Regulation.
5. (i) The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of York shall each appoint an Archbishop's Moderator who shall have general responsibility to the Archbishop for the establishment and operation of Panels within his Province.
 - (ii) Each Archbishop shall appoint Regional Moderators with authority to act for the purposes of this Regulation under the direction of the Archbishop's Moderator.
 - (iii) Archbishops' and Regional Moderators shall be appointed for a term not exceeding five years which term may be terminated, extended or renewed by the Archbishop concerned.
 - (iv) Each Regional Moderator shall have authority for such groups of dioceses as the Archbishops severally may determine having consulted with the bishops concerned.
6. (i) The Regional Moderator shall arrange for every application received from a bishop to be considered by a panel of advisers which may make such further enquiries as it thinks fit and which shall advise the bishop with regard to the granting or otherwise of each dispensation.
 - (ii) Each panel shall consist of not more than five and not less than three persons nominated by the Regional Moderator from a list of persons appointed for the purpose by the bishops of the group of dioceses concerned (after consultation with their respective Bishops' Councils) for a period of three years, which period may be terminated, extended or renewed, provided always that no application shall be considered by a panel consisting exclusively of persons appointed by the bishop who has forwarded the application to the Regional Moderator.
 - (iii) From among the members of the panel the Regional Moderator shall nominate a chairman who shall regulate the proceedings of that panel in accordance with such directions as shall from time to time be issued under the joint authority of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York.
7. The panel shall advise the bishop of its recommendations in writing in the following terms:

'After full and judicious enquiry we conclude that these two persons . . . and . . . should/should not be permitted to marry in church according to the rights and ceremonies of the Church of England and we so recommend for the following reasons . . .'

The panel shall set out any minority views.
8. (i) In the light of the panel's advice the bishop shall make the final decision. He shall give written notification of his decision and his reasons therefor to the Regional Moderator, to the chairman of the panel, to any bishop referred to in paragraph 4(iii) of this Regulation and to the incumbent who submitted the application form to him. The incumbent shall advise the couple and any other incumbent referred to in paragraph 4(i) of this Regulation of the decision.

- (ii) Where a bishop decides to grant a dispensation he shall sign a declaration in respect of each applicant who has been divorced in the following terms:

'For the quieting of your conscience, I declare you to have been released from those effects and obligations of the vows of marriage which you have previously made which are now incapable of fulfilment.'

Such declaration shall not impugn such obligations as have been or may be imposed by civil law.
- (iii) Where the bishop decides not to grant a dispensation there shall be no appeal and no bishop shall consider an application by that couple for a period of three years.
9. (i) Where a couple has received dispensation from the bishop to marry according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England:
 - (a) if marriage is to take place after banns, when the banns are published it shall be stated that dispensation has been granted by the bishop in accordance with this Regulation; or
 - (b) if marriage is to take place by licence or superintendent registrar's certificate, such statement shall be read to the assembled congregation before the marriage service begins.
- (ii) In such cases the ceremony shall be conducted according to one of the authorised marriage services without diminution, amendment or addition.
10. (i) Where there is no incumbent or where the incumbent is unable or unwilling to deal with an application under this Regulation the couple shall apply to the bishop who shall invite some other priest to act in the place of the incumbent for the purpose of this Regulation.
 - (ii) Where an incumbent has submitted an application form to the bishop and has indicated either that he is unwilling to solemnise the marriage or that he is unwilling to allow the marriage to be solemnised in any church of which he is incumbent and the bishop grants the dispensation sought, then the bishop shall make such other arrangements for the marriage to take place as are necessary.
11. The fee payable on the making of an application for dispensation shall be that agreed from time to time by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and shall be paid by the couple when the incumbent forwards the completed application form to the bishop, provided that the bishop may, on the advice of the incumbent, reduce or waive the fee in any particular case.
12. In this Regulation:
 - (i) 'incumbent' means:
 - (a) the incumbent of a benefice;
 - (b) a priest acting as priest-in-charge of a parish in respect of which rights of presentation are suspended; and
 - (c) a vicar in a team ministry to the extent that the duties of an incumbent are assigned to him by a scheme under the Pastoral Measure 1983 or his licence from the bishop.
 - (ii) 'bishop' means the bishop of the diocese concerned.
13. The Marriage Resolutions of the Convocation of York adopted in June 1938 and of the Convocation of Canterbury adopted in October 1957 are hereby revoked.
14. (i) This Regulation may be cited as the Marriage Regulation 198—
(ii) This Regulation shall come into operation on the first day of 198—