

News of Liturgy

Editor: Colin Buchanan

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Editorial

I am writing this in Kenya, on my way home from a visit to Uganda, but by the time you read it, I expect to be in Australia or in New Zealand, I reach New Zealand on 4 June, and shall hope to write about affairs liturgical 'down under' in the June *NOL*.

However, what of Uganda? I wrote nine years ago in *Further Anglican Liturgies* that anyone still wanting to use the 1662 Book of Common Prayer in the year 2000 would be most likely to find it in Uganda, particularly in a vernacular use. Now at last I have been to see if this prediction from far off was in fact well-based or not. But there are bigger questions than the BCP in Uganda.

I have at intervals claimed that any news I wished to call liturgical I could do so. I now claim that for the political situation in Uganda. There is still considerable insecurity, and thus little incentive to invest or strive for the future. Economically, things seem to be far worse than at independence twenty-two years ago. So, the liturgical point is this—please include the land and the church of Uganda in your prayers.

That done, how is 1662—or any other use—doing? Well, Uganda is trying to preserve somewhat old-fashioned English ways of doing things. The cassock and surplice reign supreme even in great heat, and at great financial cost. Choirs solemnly turn East for the Creed. The Lord's Prayer in English is always in its traditional form. Clericalism seems to run pretty deep. *A & M* (unrevised) is sung in vernacular languages at half speed. Because it is 1662 which is used for communion there is no kiss of peace in most cases, though Ugandans never cease shaking hands with relative strangers for most of the rest of life. And, joy of joys to the editor of *NOL*, the wine is truly and vigorously watered at communion, simply for reasons of economy! That is self-evident good sense. Outside of usual service-time, I went to a Revival meeting. It was not unlike what charismatics nowadays call a 'Prayer and Praise' meeting, though I think a little more direct testimony of being cleansed and renewed was *de rigueur* as the opening part of the meeting than would be true in the English counterpart. Then the visitors were welcomed, and encouraged to say a word. Various folk struck up with well-known choruses (not well known by me—they were in Luganda), and three or four brothers gave a word—each of them building with insight and sensitivity upon COB's word which opened this part of the proceedings. Translation to and from English was provided too. Here was a spiritual gathering for more or less extemporary worship, which was truly indigenous.

I was left to reflect, as I have often reflected in England, upon how the joyous and genuine in the Revival meeting could be assimilated into the liturgy on Sunday. But the Ugandan Prayer Book services are so correct in their intentions (if not always in their executions). The leadership is so often confined

to reading from the Book. There seems a deep desire, even an instinct, to stand solid with the traditions received from the early missionaries. And new books are of course an inordinate luxury in a country with barely more than a subsistence economy. Certainly no one from outside can bring the freedom in worship which is surely needed? Where, I wonder, is the Ugandan leadership to break through the tradition—and break through whilst numbers at worship are very high—and bring a sense of the contemporary and the indigenous into the worship of this church which has so often been faithful to death, and is founded upon the blood of martyrs?

And are not many other Anglican Provinces elsewhere in Africa and other parts of the earth in the same predicament? Oh, for some real liturgical pioneering amongst them.

A footnote: there are women deacons in Uganda, and they are well received. There are also three women priests. Bishop Festo Kivengere of Kigezi diocese acted more or less unilaterally in priesting these, and thus authority questions are mixed up with the matter of substance. In doing this, he followed the precedent of Bishop Henry Okullu in Kenya. But it is not clear that either of them had provincial authorization so to ordain.

Colin Buchanan

CHURCH HOUSE AGAPE

A eucharist-with-agape at Church House, Westminster, on 10 May was for diocesan liturgical secretaries an optional extension of their day with the Liturgical Commission, for the Commission a means of testing out one of their draft Holy Week Services. The Convocation Hall, laid out for a dinner and strikingly lit, with live music assailing the ears, had atmosphere from the moment one entered it. A seasoning of Church House staff brought the number of diners to thirty-four. Drinks were there from the start. The main course (ham salad, for the record) was *in situ* by the reading of the gospel and could be eaten in company with the last two points of the sermon. Free conversation led into the intercessions (informal within a Maundy Thursday framework). The movement sparked off by the peace was the signal for collecting a fruit course. More conversation till, after a hymn, we moved into the eucharistic prayer. We gave Communion to each other as bread and cup were passed from hand to hand. Running time to the dismissal, which seemed abrupt in the circumstances, was comfortably less than an hour and a half. Coffee provided the cue for a post-prandial sharing of impressions.

Archbishop Lang's portrait looked down with what was judged to be benevolent neutrality. Impressions: The OT roots of the Eucharist were powerfully exhibited. The passover slant and historical recollection appealed to the extent we take Maundy Thursday as normative. For some the overall impact was less Maundy Thursday than Emmaus. Certainly for me the success in terms of togetherness and shared religious emotion put a blanket over the horror of the saving act. Words about eating his flesh and drinking his blood seemed to belong somewhere else. Trevor Lloyd's presidency was modest and laical (no special vesture here) but it is to him and to the folk of Holy Trinity, Wealdstone, that the credit for this reinstatement of the Christian love-feast must overwhelmingly go.

Robin Brookes

LAUGHTER IN LITURGY

There is a deacon in the diocese of Chelmsford, who was at St. John's till June 1983. He wrote recently to COB to say he was being priested on 1 July 1984, and could COB come to preach at his 'First Presidency' of the eucharist on 3 July. COB said yes.

Then a further letter came:

'Just a brief note to let you know that the date of the priestings in Chelmsford is to be 24 June . . . Would you be able therefore to come and preach on 26 or 27 June? If this is not possible I may decide to leave the communion until 3 July as arranged. Though if I do that, I have visions of myself being bloated with grace like an un milked cow left too long . . .'

COB wrote and said he could not change the date, but that the thought of the priest-to-be being 'bloated with grace' made him suggest that another preacher should be found for the occasion, so that the man would not have to endure ten days of agony.

Back came the reply:

'[We stick to 3 July and] I will gratefully endure an expanded existence for a few extra days after the priesting. After all I will still be able to alleviate some of the agony by "expressing" the odd blessing here and there . . .'

So there we have it—a biological (indeed zoological) model for understanding priesthood. Perhaps there is a theological breakthrough in view.

THE ROYAL MAUNDY

The Royal Maundy came to Southwell Minster this year, and Her Majesty came to dish out the 58 purses to 58 pensioners of each sex on Maundy Thursday morning. Apparently it is policy to have the distribution in London one year and the provinces the next—so with there being 42 mainland dioceses (and also odd other 'Minsters' to which she occasionally goes) once every hundred years seems right, and this was Southwell's centenary year.

The upshot was a close-up view for *NOL*, and I find myself torn between proper respect for royalty (and there is no doubt the Queen does her duties magnificently); and a sense of wonder at the whole Gilbert and Sullivan feel to the royal ceremonial (a neighbour said to me 'we have everything but the Lord High Executioner'). The Yeoman of the Guard play a fuller part than I think I had imagined—and the bearers of the 'Dishes' (i.e. the dishes with the 116 purses on them) carry them in procession the dishes being *on their heads* (like pictures of ancient safaris into central Africa with porters). In addition there were two 'pikemen' (amongst the other Gilbert and Sullivan characters), and these stalked in with their pikes on their left shoulders—and thus clanged them into a low-slung chandelier up the choir of Southwell Minster. (When I was doing my national service, armed soldiers had to leave their arms outside at church parades, but perhaps guarding the Queen is different).

We also had that joy of my heart—totally obsolete ceremonial. It is over two hundred years since a monarch washed a parishioner's feet (which is what the 'maundy' is all about), but the Lord High Almoner (the Bishop of Rochester) and various others still wear ceremonial towels over their other vesture, and the Queen and others in her company carry beautifully arranged posies of flowers, which were once used as a form of aerosol or whatever to help the royal nose cope with the aroma of the pensioners' dirty feet. I once wrote in these columns about the man who was discovered in Royal Artillery gun drill in the 1950s to be standing around with nothing to do, and it proved he was the fellow who had once held the horses' heads . . . And of course the chasuble (or ecclesiastical poncho) is outdoor dress of a Roman nobleman of the fourth century (so I am told). The towels and posies have the same gloriously fossilized character.

This month's booklet . . .

. . . is Pastoral Series no. 18, *What? Me a A House Group Leader?* by Patsy Evans. Groups have figured in Ministry and Worship no. 64 and in Pastoral no. 3, but this is the first booklet dealing with specific selection, briefing, and training, of leaders of house groups.

. . . and the Spirituality booklet

is no. 9, *Approaches to Spiritual Direction*, by Anne Long—and is a real grappling from the standpoint of a more evangelical spirituality (Anne Long teaches spirituality at St. John's) with the riches in this area of the more 'catholic' parts of the church.

. . . and a catalogue

should be enclosed with this, and it in turn announces the starting again of the Ethics series of booklets from July.

. . . and dare we make a suggestion?

Very many people express considerable appreciation of Grove Booklets and take them regularly, but do *not* seem to think of them as useful to the average layman. Yet in all the series many titles are intended for people who wish to stretch their minds a fraction further. Take one instance only, the Spirituality series is written for layfolk as a general rule—yet 75% of the purchasers must, it seems, be clergy, pastors, or ordinands. Is there no way we can get past this barrier? Will no-one reckon three or four times a year to get a dozen copies of this or that title and have a PCC or a house group or an adult discussion group or any group grapple with it? We think that is what they are for. It is sad to see the clergy hail the booklets, swear they could never do without them (though a diminishing few still do), and not yet stretch their minds into how they could be useful booklets, swear they could never do without them (though a diminishing few still do), and not yet stretch their minds into how they could be useful in a congregation . . .

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GROVE BOOKS

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WOMEN ORDAINED ABROAD AND THE SYNOD

There are reports that the proposed Measure allowing women ordained as presbyters out of England to minister (under tight restrictions) in England is *not* after all going to be 'Article 8' business. Apparently the full Standing Committee recently overthrew the relevant committee's previous decision to label it 'Article 8' (i.e. a change touching the doctrine of the Church of England). Thus it will *not* now need to be sent down to diocesan synods, and will not need a two-thirds majority in each House at final approval in General Synod. At least, not until the times do alter again . . .

Its next round—Revision Stage—is due at the meeting of the General Synod in York 7-11 July.

ONE WILL O' THE WISP?—OR TWO?

NOL's stance on 'concelebration' remains basically sceptical—sceptical that is as to whether there is any definable activity which can be dubbed 'concelebration' and convey clear meaning to the hearers. This scepticism (which precedes, and does not preclude, our theological scepticism) is neatly enhanced by two contrary items in one day's post:

(a) The Bishop of Llandaff has circulated his clergy as follows:

'It appears that the instructions for Concelebration in the Diocese are out of step with modern practice.

As from Maundy Thursday 1984 we will do as follows:

The President alone says the first paragraph . . .

The Concelebrants join him with appropriate actions for the Eucharist and Anamnesis . . .

The penultimate paragraph . . . may be said by one, or two of the Concelebrants. If the latter, the paragraph is divided . . . In this case the President and other Concelebrants remain silent.

The President alone leads into the doxology . . . and all join with him thereafter.

(b) The Church Union has apparently circulated its members (and here I quote from a letter from a recipient of the circular):

'pointing out, among other things, that parts of the Eucharistic Prayer should not be handed out to other solo voices (as the A.C.S. booklet copying Roman practice . . . has suggested hitherto) . . .

So what is the loyal concelebrationist to do? Or, to put it more bluntly, where does authority lie? In the ACS booklet? Or the Bishop of Llandaff's 'modern practice'? Or the latest circular from the Church Union? Or could it conceivably lie in the rubrics of Rite A . . . ?

PRAYER BOOK SOCIETY QUESTIONNAIRE

We learn that the Prayer Book Society is sending a questionnaire about the 1662 Book to all students at Theological Colleges. We hope to keep readers posted about the form used and the response obtained.

CHILDREN AT COMMUNION

It seems that this issue is rolling in Australia—indeed, rolling faster than the constitutional processes of the Anglican Church there provide. One of the more recent additions to those dioceses which are jumping the gun is that of Bendigo in Victoria. The bishop told his clergy conference in February of his new policy, which includes seven 'regulations' governing the admission of children to communion. These include preparation (and registration), but do not seem to have any minimum age in view.

Meanwhile in England, after *NOL's* publication of the Birmingham form for admitting such, *NOL* has received the following letter from a member of the Knaresborough working party:

'What is Birmingham doing in the "communion for children before confirmation" regulations [*NOL* February 1984]? Having banished the inappropriate wresting of total commitment vows out of youngsters at the worst possible age for making such promises, they slip in promises—seven years in advance?!—about willingness to be confirmed. Surely we ought to realize by now that such demands are unrealistic humbug, not to say immoral for us to demand. Besides, what has happened to the very basis for communion before confirmation—baptism? If baptism is not enough to open the door, no trumped-up rite of commitment is going to do the trick. And what divine authority is there for requiring membership in a "Fellowship/Guild of . . ." if baptism is the door?'

John Frederick, Blechingley'

CARRYING OIL TO THE GULF?

Anglican Information, the journal of the Anglican Consultative Council, contains a tiny note on the back page of its March issue. The exile of Bishop Dehqani-Tafti from Iran has led inevitably to no confirmations being conducted in the diocese of Iran for the last four years. Apparently the Primates at their October meeting heard a suggestion (we are not told they all liked it) that the bishop should bless oils, and these should then be taken to Iran for the local presbyters to anoint confirmation candidates, who would then be viewed as confirmed by the bishop. *NOL* would not want to intrude tiresomely upon a suffering and sensitive scene, but surely the Anglican way of handling this is for clergy to admit candidates to communion on the grounds that they are 'ready and desirous' of being confirmed? This clause was drafted to meet exactly the situation which has occurred—that is, that no bishop was available to give confirmation when it was desired (as in 1662 the new bishops were only just getting into gear, so to speak, and confirmation tours were few and far between). The solution above was consistently practised in the American Colonies before 1784, in the Channel Islands till the 1820s, in all new mission areas where presbyters arrived before bishops, and, of course, more recently in all Provinces and Churches which admit to communion prior to the age of confirmation. The alternative 'suggestion' is a serious departure from Anglican usage and needs very careful study before implementation. The Eastern Orthodox model which lies behind it is not so self-evidently enviable as many in the Western Churches think, and Anglicans

should be hesitant about this 'link with the bishop' which his consecration of oil is supposed to convey. Anglican confirmation is *not* done by anointing (though it is sometimes accompanied by oiling) and *is* done by bishops.

And what will the oil-carriers say at the customs on entry into Iran?

AND THE CARD FOR THE SICK HAS ITS PROBLEMS

I recently had to lead a conference about the *Ministry to the Sick* (ASB 70) texts. Previously, I had always done this from the full text in ASB 70, and have reckoned to know my way around in it. But on this occasion there was a shortage of the full text and the conference used the card (ASB 71). The result was not chaos, but it was irritation. The president of a demonstration of anointing, who had the full text, used the collect not printed in ASB 71 (ought *official*, as opposed to parish, printings to omit official alternatives?), but the difficulty was compounded when we went on to readings from scripture which were other than the text printed on the card 'Our Lord Jesus Christ went about preaching . . .'. Very close inspection shows that the cross-headings on the card 'READINGS FROM SCRIPTURE' are not true cross-headings (i.e. simply giving a title to the section following) but are instead rubrics. A similar problem follows at 'INTERCESSIONS'; the card is not easy to follow here.

On the other side of the card is the provision for distribution of communion to the sick. Here it looks as though a very careful provision of the official text has been overlooked in the editing. In ASB 70 great trouble was taken over the text at section 10 (page 21). This is the explanation of the ministry given when the distribution is being made to those absent from a celebration. It uses these, or other suitable words: 'The Church of God, of which we are members has taken bread and wine and given thanks over them according to our Lord's command. I bring these holy gifts . . . etc.' In ASB 71, where the card attempts to provide both for a celebration and for a distribution without a celebration, the communicants are told after the Prayer of Humble Access 'The Eucharistic Prayer is said here if the elements have not been previously consecrated'—but they are not told anything will happen at all if consecrated elements have been brought to them, and the implication is that nothing will be said. Thus the card takes away by implication a cardinal feature of the official provision.

At the very least the card ought to be clearly labelled that it is for use by communicants, not by presidents or other ministers, and that it omits many important liturgical items which the president or ministers may say. A better solution would be re-editing. I do not think the Registrar of Synod would have been happy if this card had come through on a parish submission for private printing, and it is worse that it is in the public arena on commercial sale, and looking as though it *is* the official text.

[Since I wrote the above I have been present at a parish anointing where the incumbent, using the card, was unsure where in the rite of communion (which is *not mentioned* on the card, though it is a matter of major principle in the text) the anointing should properly come . . .]

RELAXATION OF VOWS

One of the suggestions that comes our way at intervals points out a parallel between marriage vows and monastic vows—the parallel being particularly attractive because the 'catholic' end of the Church of England, which is most likely to think marriage vows indissoluble, is ready under certain circumstances to give release from monastic vows. Nor is there any nonsense about retrospectively nullifying the original vows—no, they *did* bind, but they are now loosed. The parallel has not only a moral appropriateness (at least *prima facie*), but also pastorally 'frees' a believer in conscience over and above the *de facto* sundering given by the divorce court.

A form for such 'loosing' has reached us via *Church Scene* of Australia. It runs as follows:

A FORM OF SERVICE FOR RELEASE FROM MARRIAGE VOWS

Priest: In the name of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**
Grant to us, Lord, we beseech you, the spirit to think and do always such things as are right; That we, who cannot do anything that is good without you, may be enabled to live in your will; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**
A: what is your request?

Candidate: Reverend Father, I ask to be released from vows of marriage, made and given before God in the congregation of Christ's holy catholic and apostolic Church. I testify to you that all the due processes of the Laws [of the Commonwealth of Australia] have been fulfilled; that, after due examination there is no ecclesiastical or canonical inhibition impeding, and the [Arch]bishop has consented to my request.

Priest: Is it your intention to live a godly and Christian life in the fellowship of Christ's holy catholic and apostolic church?

Candidate: That is certainly my intention.

Priest: O God, whose nature and property is ever to have mercy and to forgive; Receive our humble petitions; and though we be tied and bound with the chain of our sins, yet let the pitifulness of your great mercy loose us; for the honour of Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Redeemer. **Amen.**

Almighty and everlasting God, who through your most dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ give your holy church power both to bind and to loose, release this your servant from his/her former vow, and endue him/her with the grace of your Holy Spirit truly to live according to your will, through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

I do solemnly release you from your former vows, and pray to Almighty God, through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit that henceforth he will grant to you rightly to discern his will and in peace to walk therein. **Amen.**

The priest gives a blessing.

NOL's reflection on this is that it ought to look the part more squarely in the face (e.g. with expression of sorrow or penitence), and ought to be clearer that the candidate is now free to marry with the church's blessing. In other words, the text above is all slightly formal and thus coy.