

# News of Liturgy

Editor: Colin Buchanan

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## Editorial

The only possible plausible candidate for prime treatment this month is that blessed set of initials 'ACUPA'. If anyone in England or abroad does not know what this means, then he or she can learn it here—'The Archbishop's Commission on Urban Priority Areas', and its report is entitled *Faith in the City: A Call for Action by Church and Nation* (Church House Publicity, 400pp. £7.50).

The report was due for release from embargo at 9 p.m. on Tuesday 3 December, and a press conference was scheduled in the afternoon of the same day. In the event, a second story (this has little to do with liturgy, but there we are) started to develop. Someone in the government leaked the contents of the report on the previous Saturday, or, to be accurate, leaked just enough to allow Tory ministers to make rude remarks (the new transitive verb is to 'rubbish') about the report—including the interesting accusation of incorporating a good dose of 'Marxist theology'—and, even more fiercely, about the authors of the report (who were easier to attack, as knowledge of the contents of the report was not necessary for these purposes). One entertaining aside came when Tony Benn asked in question time why the Prime Minister continues to appoint Marxists as diocesan bishops...

All that said, and any personal reservations about any parts of the report aside, *Faith in the City* does stand as a formidable indictment of the state of our urban scene (and not least the estates on the outskirts of towns). The only point at which liturgy is in view is a short section from page 134 to page 137, which, by permission, we reprint in its entirety in this issue. In the 'Summary of Main Recommendations' (page 362) there appears a two-liner about liturgy:

'19 The Liturgical Commission should pay close attention to the liturgical needs of Churches in the urban priority areas (paragraph 6.110).'

Whether the requirements can or will be met by Liturgical Commission action remains to be seen. What is of interest to this middle-class commentator in this particular field is the proposal that we should 'be prepared to communicate through feeling rather than the mind, through non-verbal communication rather than verbal' (6.102). This does look paradoxical—or at least as though it is straining a point to breaking-point. As the report goes on immediately to speak of the church being 'more informal and flexible in its use of urban language, vocabulary, etc.', it is likely that verbal communication has not been dismissed entirely from the projected scenario. I suppose that 'urban language' could still be body-language or other non-verbal communication—but 'vocabulary' does seem to be

irreducible (except by violent metaphor; that is, it does betoken some 'vocables' or verbalization. So perhaps the back-door has let back in what the front had rejected. And if so, one slight middle-class sigh of relief goes up. For amid so much about which I wish to enthuse, I do have a small hesitation that is worth a mention here.

For we are surely committed to communicating verbally? Christianity is about the 'Word' who became flesh, and told his disciples to take the 'kerygma', the 'ev-angel' (or good *news*) to the world. As Professor Henry Chadwick said in an ecumenical context, so we can re-endorse here that neither the preaching of the gospel, nor the articulation of our worship, can be done solely by a 'series of loving grunts'. Drama, of course, will normally include verbalization. Mime and dance depend on earlier (or simultaneous) verbalization for their message to communicate. The 'verbal' should not be tossed out of the window too quickly. (There is a little difficulty here, in that the reference number which follows the quote in the text of the report (i.e. no. '21' in chapter 6) is in fact wrong, and thus refers to the wrong footnote. It should be '22', and then the footnote shows that the quotation is part of evidence submitted by—wait for it—the diocese of Birmingham.)

What the report is surely seeking to say is not that the verbal must be suppressed, nor even simply that it must be richly supplemented. Somewhere in the offing lurks the very proper concern that worship must not be too dependent upon exhaustive printed books, nor overdoses of concentrated *reading*. There are various ways in which this reform can be sought, and the attempts must be made. It is just that the report (which, as we have seen, shows signs of haste in this area) has not expressed it quite right. Nor, for what it is worth, should we lightly abandon the task of involving people's *minds*, and it could be argued that there is a gross paternalism in assuming that minds should be sidetracked whilst we seek to engage the emotions. Emotions—even that awful word 'feeling'—yes. But not at the expense of God-given minds. Human beings must be accorded their full dignity here, and both they and the gospel will suffer if we duck the question. The question *how* to communicate with particular kinds of minds, which is exactly the right question, should not be confused with *whether* to communicate with them, which is not a proper question to raise.

The report is right, of course, to use the word 'through'. We are wanting ultimately to engage people's *wills*, but the only valid route to the will open to us is through the mind. Emotions and feelings may have a strong place in this—but *not* as alternatives to the mind! And we would not want to overlabour the point—many good things in the ACUPA text must speak for themselves.

The Group for Renewal of Worship have commissioned as the April 1986 Worship Booklet (i.e. no. 95) one on worship in 'UPAs' by John Bentham, and this will reflect further on the recommendations of the report. It is also likely that the February Pastoral Booklet will offer a broader response to the report.

It has become my custom to note the end of each year of publication with some Christmas wishes (which usually reach customers after Christmas) and a brief exercise in self-congratulatory journalistic navel-gazing. As to the first of these, I find myself more sure than ever that God became incarnate through a virgin conception, and even find myself gently speculating in a most positive way about how this conviction is contiguous to other great matters of the faith, and is integral to the principle of incarnation.

On the second matter, you will find from the number of this issue that *NOL* has now survived for no less than eleven calendar years. Its early issues already begin to look like the marginal notes in a 1549 Prayer Book (which, as a matter of fact, we sadly do not possess). What the end of the matter will be we do not know yet. But 1985 has seen security come to the finances of the publishing (thank you to all who contributed), and highly enjoyable perils of every kind befall the editor (as you well know). A truly Christian Christmas and a happy secular New Year to you all.

Colin Buchanan

P.S. One urgent reminder—New Year's Eve is an important liturgical day this year. It is doomsday for Series 2 and Series 3 communion services, and for Series 2 (Revised) Morning and Evening Prayer. *A fortiori* this is curtains for 'the time of trial'. Funny to think it was only yesterday we were stumping the country telling people to try it. Anyway, make sure you now burn these offending booklets, or send them to a museum.

## AND FAREWELL TO THE LITURGICAL COMMISSION

Following the press conference on *Lent, Holy Week, Easter* the dying Liturgical Commission held its last meeting for routine business (which its friends will not be over-surprised to hear consisted of editing 'thou'-form texts), and adjourned to a celebration dinner to which the secretary-general had kindly invited them. At the heart of this was a special farewell to Douglas Jones, the chairman since 1981, and his departure on the eve of the publication of the new big book was a bit comparable to Ronald Jasper's departure on the eve of the publication of the ASB in 1980. The Commission gave Douglas Jones a large glass goblet engraved with lamb and flag, and a speaker indicated that he would have liked to have given a nicely bound copy of 1662 adapted to the use of Durham Cathedral, but we were unable as it is illegal.

The next Liturgical Commission will be chaired, as is already known, by Bishop Colin James of Winchester. Its membership is appointed by the Archbishops after they have consulted with the Standing Committee of Synod. As the latter body is only just being elected at the time of going to press, that consultation cannot happen for a few weeks. In 1981 the names were announced around Easter, and that is perhaps what ought to be expected this time.

## Book Notices

Collins Liturgical Publications are busy compassing the world. We have simultaneously from them a *Catholic Worship Book* approved for the dioceses in Australia (704 pages), two booklets of revised services of the Church of the province of Southern Africa (*Birth and Growth in Christ* and *Marriage in Christ*), and one booklet from the Church of Ireland (*The Ministry to the Sick*). We do not have prices to hand, and we delay full notices. This mention is more like a slight taking of breath in the face of Collins' omnipresence. Mind you, they are a great firm.

## This month's booklet . . .

. . . is Liturgical Study no. 44, *Nurturing Children in Communion*, edited by Colin Buchanan. This Study is 48 pages in length, and presents in edited form the substance of the Boston papers, along with the text of the Boston Statement (already published as a separate pamphlet at 30p). Notable contributions come from Bishop Brian Davis of New Zealand, who was the practical pioneer in the field of getting admission to communion detached from confirmation, and David Holeyton, of Vancouver Canada, who was the academic enthusiast whose scholarship has been instrumental in helping the Anglican Communion change direction. Perhaps this time, when the Knarborough proposals are turned into recommendations to Synod, there will be opportunity for the Synod to learn about developments elsewhere, and take note that others have benefited rather than suffered in the process.

## . . . and next month's

is Worship Series no. 94, *Reading the Word in Liturgy*, by Michael Vasey. The only fair introduction to this we can give is to say that it arose from a short paper Michael Vasey read at the Society for Liturgical Study in 1984, that it is wholly radical in its handling of the inherited tradition. Michael Vasey was the moving force behind the planning of *Anglican Worship Today*, and the author of the notable Worship no. 77, *Intercessions in Worship*, shortly to be reprinted.

## . . . and prices and subscriptions

go up (slightly) in 1986. Booklets will be 90p, Liturgical Studies £1.80, and *NOL* will be 18p per copy. Inland postal subscriptions to *NOL* on its own are £3.55, or £4.20 with *NOH*. Those who have not yet paid should have received reminders.

## . . . and in 1986

We shall be printing each month a scripture index for the ASB. One page each month will be printed in a size which will enable a photo-copy to fit the back of a pew edition of the ASB. Start collecting next month.

## . . . and *NOH*

Starts its fifth year in January, with Chris Idle succeeding Robin Leaver as editor.

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## LENT, HOLY WEEK, EASTER

These services are published on 9 January at £2.95 for the paperback, and £12.50 for the large-print hardback. They are 300 pages long and now contain nothing that is actually secret! Still, loyal to the odd system, we shall stick to the rules and not review the book till next month (when Lent will be upon us).

The system is at its oddest from the publicity angle. The Liturgical Commission was assured in September that the services could not be marketed in the weeks preceding Christmas, and that would be quite the wrong time for publicity launching the services. So what happened? The decision was taken to publish on 9 January (though this is dangerously near to the beginning of Lent), but to hold a press conference on 10 December. The press conference was marginally dented by Basil Hume's return from the Synod of Bishops in Rome as he had a swiftly-convened press conference of his own which diverted the ecclesiastical journalists. But those who came received a press release which was embargoed not till 9 January but to lunch-time on 10 December! So Clifford Longley had a column in *The Times* on 11 December (mostly about softening the 'Reproaches' so as not to indict the Jews). And the total picture is that the publicity has been launched immediately (though that was apparently what the market could not stand in December), whilst the appetite that might have been created for the book thereby cannot be satisfied until 9 January. I have never approved of booksellers breaking embargoes, but publishers ought to synchronize publicity with supplies of the book, or enormous unfair pressures come upon the booksellers.

Incidentally, not for the first time *NOL* was not invited to the press conference. It is astonishing that our good friends at the CIO do not recognize liturgical journals when they are trying to sweep in the dailies to review liturgical works.

## CONFERENCES ON THE LENT HOLY WEEK MATERIAL

COB is travelling to three dioceses for conferences on the new material in January. The conferences are usually shared with other speakers—and I would be pleased to meet readers of *NOL* at them:

14 January: Liverpool (St. Annes, Stanley), 10.30–4. (Apply the Rev. R. Wikeley, Rectory, Meadow Lane, West Derby, Liverpool L12 5EA).

25 January (a Saturday): Wakefield (Treacy Hall, by the Cathedral), 10.15–? (arranged by the Bishop of Wakefield).

31 January: Wolverhampton (St. Matthew, East Park) 10.30–4 (apply the Rev. David Austerberry, The Rectory, 2 Church Hill, Brierley Hill, Dudley DY5 3PX).

Lichfield diocese are having other members of the Commission to workshops on 22 January in Newcastle (Donald Gray), on 30 January in Shrewsbury (David Silk), and on 8 February (Trevor Lloyd). All applications to same organizer.

## EXTRACT FROM ACUPA REPORT

### WORSHIP

(Reproduced by kind permission of the Central Board of Finance of the Church of England from *Faith in the City* (Church House Publishers))

6.99 At the heart of our vision, as it has emerged over the last two years, is a commitment to God and his call, and the faithful response of his Church in the UPAs. We believe that such a Church will be locally-rooted and outward-looking, and that its worship will properly reflect this.

6.100 For the local UPA Church to respond to God by commending his gospel, it must talk people's language, so that they have a chance of hearing and understanding. What is sometimes called the 'incarnational' side of the Christian religion is an indispensable characteristic of a worshipping community. The Church in the UPA has to live in and be part of the local world. The roots of liturgy must be found in the ground of society.

6.101 Worship in the UPAs must emerge out of and reflect local cultures: it will always be the worship of Him who is totally Other and yet is to be found, worshipped and served through the realities of UPA life. The worship of the Church that is part of the UPA will be the worship of a Church that is present in celebration, confession, compassion and judgement.

6.102 To understand worship in this way means that certain aspects of UPA life will necessarily greatly affect the formation of the worshipping life of the UPA Church. The main contribution of the Church to our cities is to be itself, and true to its vocation. It will gather up and inform local life. It must 'accept the positive aspects and validity of working class culture, particularly to build on the strong sense of family and community which is often found, and be prepared to communicate through feeling rather than the mind, through non-verbal communication rather than verbal'. It will be more informal and flexible in its use of urban language, vocabulary, style and content. It will therefore reflect a universality of form with local variations, allowing significant space for worship which is genuinely local, expressed in and through local cultures, and reflecting the local context.

6.103 It will promote a greater *involvement* of the congregations in worship. Some clergy and lay people seem to have the idea that anyone with a Cockney or West Indian accent could not possibly read a lesson or lead the intercessions. Their voices may therefore never be heard throughout the service in the heart of the East End of London, Toxteth or Moss Side.

6.104 It will reflect the concern of local UPA people for things to be more concrete and tangible rather than abstract and theoretical. This finds expression in the use of religious objects like banners designed and made locally, as well as more traditional symbols like crucifixes. Worship and study may therefore lay more emphasis on the history, the story,

the narrative. Local UPA people often love to tell the stories of their lives, how God changed them, of problems overcome, and of great events and disasters.

6.105 People should be encouraged to come and go—to come into Church when they want to or need to. Many Churches convey an attitude of spirituality which makes prayer and worship available only to those who turn up in the right place at the right time and go through the correct motions corporately from start to finish.

6.106 The worship offered by the local Churches is also important as a means of evangelism. The stranger who comes into services will make a judgment about Christianity on the basis of what he encounters there. Is the worship lively and participatory? Does it evoke a sense of the presence of God while showing a concern for the real things in people's lives? Much of this will depend on how the local congregation order their services.

6.107 Worship is about good dreams: it needs to hold them alongside what is sometimes a very harsh reality. UPA Christians want a beautiful service, but they may have to go home to domestic violence or a leaking roof. A Church life which has nothing to say about these things simply leaves people feeling inferior. They feel they must hide from the clergy and the local Church their debts, their court cases, their sufferings at the hands of their husbands. Reality must be faced. There must be something to understand about God's will for a wife terrified of her husband, for a husband terrified of his gambling debts, for parents who dread that their son is out beating up Bangladeshis.

6.108 Worship will put the harsh realities in a new light. It may enable people to withdraw for a time from the pressures, but it will be 'withdrawal with intent to return', not evasion.

6.109 Running through all the aspects of UPA life as they need to affect worship is the firm and hopeful recognition of 'the importance of the ordinary'. It is that which is so often missing from Church life and witness in UPAs. It can only be properly accepted by a truly local Church.

6.110 Many submissions included suggestions about books, services and groups. As we noted in Chapter 3 to give people a 1300 page Alternative Service Book is a symptom of the gulf between the Church and ordinary people in the UPAs. We have heard calls for short, functional service booklets or cards, prepared by people who will always ask 'if all the words are really necessary'. The work of reforming the liturgy has really only just begun for the UPA Church, and we *recommend* that the Liturgical Commission pays close attention to the needs of Churches in the UPAs.

6.111 There has also been a clear plea that the formal liturgies so beloved of the wider Church must be complemented in UPAs by more informal and spontaneous acts of worship and witness. Vivid and concrete manifestations of spirituality have proven track records in many UPAs—like, for example, the Way of the Cross acted out through the streets of the East End, Armley, Euston, Notting Hill, Cardiff and Bradford.

6.112 Worship which encourages informality and spontaneity will not dispense with care and preparation. The local UPA Church will be as concerned with the beauty of worship and its excellence as are often the local schools with their productions.

6.113 We have already affirmed the importance of small groups in the local Church, in its mission and in its worship. Yet they need to be supplemented by the glorious occasions and celebrations in the local parish Church.

## WOMEN AND HEADSHIP (ii)

(running on from last month)

Anglo-catholics do not usually reckon that 'headship' resides in the incumbent, *qua* incumbent, at all. As I hear them, their concept of the local church is the diocesan unit. On this basis, the only 'headship' post to which a woman could not properly aspire within the 'diocesan family' would be that of diocesan bishop—she could even be a suffragan bishop and not have impaired the 'headship' principle. Another way into the issue by an anglo-catholic would be to affirm that any president of the eucharist is, by the sheer fulfilling of that liturgical role, exercising headship. This would virtually prevent any woman being ordained to the presbyterate, whether she were to be incumbent or perpetual assistant curate. (If I have misunderstood the anglo-catholic noises I hear on the atmosphere, then some reader must put me right.)

Thus the Stott principle has two applications, as suggested above, which are different from his. But let us now try out his application. I believe it to be subject to the death of a thousand qualifications! And to point this up, I pose some curly questions. Is a woman presbyter exercising 'headship' when she

- is chief pastor of a daughter church?
- is in charge of an interregnum?
- runs the parish during the incumbent's sickness or sabbatical?
- is a hospital chaplain?
- presides at communion with the incumbent present—or absent?
- preaches with authority?
- chairs a committee which has powers?
- 'governs' a community of women?

I fear that the possible clashes of the various answers to these questions mean that no-one should be entering the coming debates about the ordination of women relying in any measure upon the 'headship' principle as in some way defining or limiting the scope of the ministry of ordained women—unless of course he or she can set it out in legalistic small print in such a way that the total package of application can be seen all at once. Otherwise the principle stated is incapable of application to the present Church of England scene. How would the small print package appear?