

News of Liturgy

Editor: Colin Buchanan

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Editorial

Among the papers circulated to General Synod members in June this year was a report entitled, *The Priesthood of the Ordained Ministry* (GS 694), compiled by 'FOAG' (the Faith and Order Advisory Group, very loosely attached to the Board of Mission and Unity of the General Synod) and published by the BMU (through Church House Bookshop) at a retail cost of £3.25. In the event the timetable of General Synod was so squeezed in July that this report was not reached. It may well come in November.

In order to get the issue well into the mind's eye, perhaps I could recall what the Catholic liturgical theologian Robert Taft said to me at the Congress of *Societas Liturgica* at Boston last year (the Congress at which he was elected president of Societas): 'I was made a priest at my baptism: I was made a presbyter at my ordination'. Well, it might be thought that a Catholic scholar and liturgist ought to know – but he would have quite a bit of unravelling and dialoguing to do if he wished to approach this FOAG report on the basis of that naked assertion!

Chapter 1 notes that the word 'priest', whilst not attaching to the ministers of the Church in the New Testament, nevertheless was retained in the Anglican formularies at the Reformation to indicate the same person as 'presbyter'. One of the 'questions which will demand attention', listed at the end of the chapter, is 'is it proper to apply as normative to such a ministry a term (priest) which is not thus used in the New Testament?'

Chapter 2 works at synthesizing scripture and tradition, and then opens the issue of the 'emergence' (p.16) of both the ordained ministry and the understanding of priesthood as pertaining to it.

Chapter 3 concerns the origins of ordained ministry. A 'distinctive' ministry is established, but the word 'priest' and its cognates do not appear as terms belonging to the ministry in the first two centuries. The only use of the term in the whole chapter is to acknowledge that the whole people of God is 'priestly' (p.18).

Chapter 4 advertises itself as addressing the issue: 'Priesthood and the Ordained Ministry: The New Testament Evidence'. At an early stage it says 'Nor is there any dispute that *hiereus* is never used in the New Testament of an appointed Christian minister' (p.23), and at a late stage it says 'No priesthood is attributed to the distinctive ministry' (p.28). So one is left to wonder whether the chapter does not defy its own title.

Chapter 5 is 'The development of Priesthood in the Age of the Fathers'. Here it all happens. In particular Hippolytus illustrates everything at once (at least as far as bishops are concerned – there is little hint of priesthood in his presbyterate). By the 'high-priestly' spirit the bishop is to have

authority 'to forgive sins, to ordain clergy, to loose every bond in accordance with the authority entrusted to the apostles, and to offer an acceptable sacrifice . . .' (p.32). Our report thereafter tends to reason on the basis of these activities as the characteristic functions of 'priesthood'. Thus, when it comes to Augustine (pp.36-37), it finds it wholly relevant to cite 'the bishop's prime tasks' as though by so citing, the chapter were further establishing the priesthood of the bishop. This it patently is not doing. And there are *no* patristic footnote references whatsoever, so that discussions of how Augustine understood priestliness are desperately difficult to check out.

Chapter 6 is about 'The Medieval Clericalization of the Church'. This is more about the widening gulf between clergy and laity than about the 'priesthood' of the clergy, though, obviously, an argument that the priesthood of the clergy is really (in some hidden but substantial way) the priesthood of the whole church is much harder to sustain when the clerical priesthood seems to be at a distance from any understanding of the whole church – or even that the latter is dependent upon the former. The tasks of priesthood are now seen as 'sacrifice and reconciliation' (p.44).

Chapter 7 is about 'The Development of the Anglican Tradition'. This picks up the tasks delineated in chapter 6 (see above), treats them as the test of priesthood, and thus launches into a quite irrelevant (and somewhat misleading) discussion of auricular confession in the post-Reformation Church of England. The sole linkage of this with 'priesthood' is that the ordinal kept both the term 'priest' and the commission to forgive sins. But it did *not* suggest that the commission was integral to 'priesthood'. The section on the eucharist shows (what is not in doubt) that the Anglicans insisted on a presbyter to officiate at a communion service – but it has, of course, difficulty in showing that this rite was a 'sacrifice' which the 'priest' was offering. And that it is the major thing which such a chapter would have had to demonstrate if it were to have any connection with New Testament 'priesthood'.

Chapter 8 is 'The seventeenth Century and After', and it has trenchant quotations from Hooker (pp.62-63) demonstrating that the term 'priest' as used in his time was not thought to connect with biblical models of priesthood at all – and Hooker would prefer 'presbyter'. There is an indication of 'higher' concepts of the eucharist in the Carolines. There is a straying into byways of discussing theologies of atonement. There is an opening up of the Oxford Movement (and perhaps a slightly forced exculpation of the *Tracts* from an interest in historical succession), and a summary statement of how the Tractarians saw priesthood and sacrifice. Goode and Dimock are pressed into service as somehow sustaining the same notions (which I very much doubt if they do), and we are blithely told 'both the Church and the ordained ministry continued to be spoken of as priestly by Anglicans of all traditions' (p.73). May Goode and Dimock haunt FOAG until all its members have read all their works – they are, I believe, being badly abused here.

Chapter 9 handles 'Apostolicae Curae' (and that was probed a bit in the editorial here in March). It contains the blinding information 'the Edwardine Ordinal contains no denial of the power to consecrate and offer' (it also contains no denial of power to assist souls in purgatory – or of power to touch for the King's Evil, come to that – but really what are omissions of

denials in liturgy worth?). The discussion then does more or less admit that Cranmer's 1552 eucharistic liturgy has neither specific consecration nor Godward offering of the elements. And it has an interesting reflection upon reactions to the Papal Bull, whilst showing that we are now in a different kind of encounter.

Space forbids much further discussion here (the ecumenical texts considered in chapter 10 and chapter 11 on the ordination of women do not touch on the central issues). The final chapter summarizes the ground covered. But it reveals a highly elusive concept of 'priesthood' for the ordained ministry. By various slippery slopes (some of which the argument goes *up* rather than down) we reach the conclusion 'the common priesthood of the community and the special priesthood of the ordained ministry are both derived from the priesthood of Christ' (p.99). Yet if this summary were related to the first four chapters it would be almost impossible to set up this conclusion. Something has happened in church history which, for reasons of prudence, or special insight, or muddle, or sheer invincible ignorance, the Church of England, if we follow FOAG, is treating as foundational to an ordained ministry. Whilst it may sound as though we are debating a word only, that word contains within itself a wooden-horse-load of substantial theology. I have quoted above a question from chapter 1 – someone ought to press it in the Synod debate. Alternatively, the question ought to be pressed, and pressed hard, 'what would we have *lost* if from now on we called our presbyters simply presbyters?' If the wooden horse is ditched, what concealed belly-load of substantial theology will end up in the ditch also? Or is it possible that the wooden horse is really carrying an emperor with no clothes on? I do not believe this sleight-of-hand report helps us to agreement, and hope the Synod in its turn will not treat it as though it does.

Colin Buchanan

PETERTIDE ORDINATIONS

One of our ruthless team of investigative observers reports:

'At Salisbury on 28 June, when ordaining deacons and deaconesses (there were no presbyters), the bishop (not the diocesan) had the candidates come to him one at a time for the central petition of the ordination prayer. Each candidate was then immediately presented with the New Testament (with accompanying formula) and returned to the rail where the stole was tied on. No sooner had the last candidate received the New Testament than the bishop announced the Peace, without completing the ordination prayer. Is this a valid ordination?'

Books

The book by Gerard Austen which we reviewed last month – *The Rite of Confirmation* – is priced in England by the importers, T. Shand, at £9.50. They also import the further Pueblo title, *The Origins of the Liturgical Year*, by Thomas Talley, and its sterling price is £14. We hope to review this latter book shortly – it is very far-reaching.

The Canons of the Church of England, having been so long out of print that it is difficult to know how any new deacon could conscientiously offer 'canonical obedience' to his ordaining bishop, are now at last available again – from Church House Publishing at £4.50 the set.

This month's Booklet . . .

is Pastoral Series no. 28, *Preparing Couples for Marriage*, by Margaret Stevens. This is a highly practical handbook from a long-experienced practitioner. Perhaps it leads on well to the Spirituality Booklet also due, no. 18, *Christians in Retirement*, by Michael Botting.

. . . and next month's

is Liturgical Study no. 47, *The Medieval Development of Liturgical Symbolism*, by Paul Rorem.

Review

Leslie J. Francis and Others, *Making Contact* (Collins, 1986) 160pp., £4.95.

This book, which is subtitled '*Christian Nurture, Family Worship and Church Growth*', contains a series of interesting descriptions of attempts to make worship and teaching more attractive. In each chapter the circumstances are carefully explained, followed by a description of a particular event or method of approach. There are chapters on family services, small churches, dance, schools, to name a few. Much of the material seems to be children-orientated but adults are certainly not left out.

Leslie Francis has written the major part of the book including the opening chapters which provide some of the rationale. The other contributors give breadth to the book but there seems a lack of cohesion. Having read some of Leslie's earlier works, I was expecting incisive analysis and provocative argument. I don't think I got this. Instead he hopes that 'others will recognize something of their own situation . . . and be inspired'. If a mixed metaphor is allowed I would say that having passed the recognition test I fell at the inspiration hurdle.

In the end what this book lacks is sufficient theology (and perhaps insights from the social sciences) to persuade the reader that what is being offered will work in their own place. Too often I found myself wanting to ask questions, not so much about the mechanics of the idea, but more about why the author thought it worked. Most of all I longed for some deep thinking about common nurture for adults and children, especially where there are only a few children present.

I think the book is worth a look if only to stimulate a thought here and there which may grow into a fully inspired plan. At least Leslie has answered his critics who, following the publication of *Rural Evangelism*, said he could only write negatively!

David Cutts

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COB's LITURGICAL SCRAPBOOK

July: (16) midweek baptism and confirmation – I reach the spacious font to find it empty of water (the plug has leaked), and the jug standing by is also empty – so the curate has to march off for second helpings; (18) trip to Pebble Mill to answer questions about Royal Wedding for *Sunday* religious programme on sound radio this coming Sunday – ‘What do you think about their choice of ancient language service?’ (COB: ‘I defend their right to choose it – though I hardly recommend it’); ‘What do you think about their decision not to have a sermon?’ (COB: ‘There cannot have been such a decision – the officiating minister, in this case the Archbishop of Canterbury, decides about sermons – though obviously they may have asked him nicely not to preach’); ‘What do you think about the bride saying “obey”?’ (COB: ‘I had a hand in the bride’s right to say this being retained in the ASB – though it must never be on the insistence of groom or cleric – and what happens subsequently often bears little reference to what was preferred to be said’), and it all concluded with Bernard Jackson speculating that I might yet be sent to the Tower: (20) last confirmation of the Summer, at Hall Green – six candidates including two couples in middle age: (23) Royal Wedding (reported elsewhere in *NOL*) – leave desk for half an hour – then that evening begins ‘Acts 86’ also reported elsewhere; (25) St. James’ day, and anniversary of my consecration, and I have invited myself to preside at Patronal Festival eucharist of St. James the Great, Shirley (a parish with no Team Rector at the moment), and miss an evening at Acts 86 for it – but there is a barbecue following; (27) last morning of Acts 86 at National Exhibition Centre and I am presiding at a eucharist for 5000 plus persons, with similar problem to the biblical one about feeding them – though our loaves just last without multiplying – and there are various happy memories of it left (partly because it is not strictly an Anglican service, and, though there are about 200 of my old students present, and many representatives of Birmingham parishes, yet the congregation is only partly Anglican – so when I begin to say ‘Now we come to the Kiss of Peace’ I find they are all embracing each other before I have a chance to speak scripture to them, so I take the mike, tell them ‘stop’, lever them apart from each other, and then with scripture trigger their reuniting, all in the cause of liturgical good order – when we come to the (home-made) eucharistic prayer I find no-one on the piano when there are supposed to be responsive choruses (mental note to check harder on that next time there is an Acts 86) – but liveliest memory is of the 5000 people not just singing and waving their arms to heaven in the post-communion ‘How lovely on the mountains’, but also jumping, bouncing, exploding physically, and with troupes of dancers (both designated and self-appointed) on the stage beside me leaping and twirling more or less gracefully and tastefully, but with an élan which is quite breath-taking – well, we calmed them ultimately, cut off the praising of the Lord with every part of their beings, smoothed the platform party out for the decorum of journeys home, and returned the NEC to be prepared for the 1992 Olympics – we all hope God enjoyed it as much as we did, and it was quite a change from most Sunday mornings, and I forgot to sign the service register before going on holiday from liturgical up-front roles for the month of August. This column will resume in September unless dissuasives are received in writing.

ANDREW AND SARAH

What can be said from a strictly liturgical standpoint? The rite was more consistently ‘Series 1’ than when the Prince of Wales married five years ago – even the prayers were 1928, ‘thou’ form, and in most cases BCP-based (but with fewer first forefathers and polygamous patriarchs). Add in Sir Francis Drake, and a petition for the Royal Family, stir up between assorted ecumenical dignitaries, and you have it. The blessing of the whole congregation by the Archbishop had hints of ASB to it, but that was the only such sniff. One small touch, not in the service order published by *The Times*, was that the Duchess of York gave her husband a ring, though without comment. And, even if there was no homily, there was a scripture reading (which the BCP and Series 1 rites do not prescribe) – Eph. 3.14-end in AV (KJV). The hymns also had a half-hint of imagination not just ‘Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation’ and (oh, so inevitably) ‘Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us’, but also ‘Come down, O Love divine’.

One minor likely illegality crept into the rite. The Archbishop said ‘a prayer for the blessing of the ring’, but it was not that in Series 1 matrimony. Instead it ran:

‘In thy name, O Lord, we hallow and dedicate this ring, that by thy blessing he who gives it and she who wears it, keeping true faith the one to the other, may abide together in thy peace, continue together in thy favour, live together in thy love, and may finally dwell together in thy eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.’

The Series 1 prayer runs:

‘Bless, O Lord, this ring, and grant that he who gives it and she who shall wear it may remain faithful to each other, and abide in thy peace and favour, and live together in love until their lives’ end. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.’

So, the investigative hunt is on. Who made the substitution? Was it perhaps by Royal Warrant? Or was some liturgical gnome – or mole – at work? But who then wrote the Royal text? Or has it (as one might guess) some respectable liturgical ancestry somewhere? And did the Archbishop know it was not in Series 1 (or did somebody con him)? Or is our source of Series 1 wrong? *NOL* offers a £2 Book Token for a full, convincing, and preferably true, account.

WORSHIP AT ACTS 86

It would be easy to report that between 5000 and 7000 persons (the numbers varied daily) crowded into the ‘Arena’ at the Birmingham National Exhibition Centre (NEC) from 23 to 27 July, for a pan-European ‘Festival of Praise’, including strong representation from various countries (not least from Eastern Europe), and a backbone of Anglicans. Jeanne Harper’s new song-book *SongGifts* had a good outing; Nigel Swinford’s New English Orchestra raised us to the heavens; ‘Riding Lights’ and various dancers added drama and movement on the stage; and a host of famous names harangued us (whilst hundreds of only-just-less-famous were to be found in the seating-blocks . . .).

Most notable (in the PR sense) was John Wimber. He and his team led each of the three afternoons from 2.30 to 5.00 p.m. The emphasis was

upon Matt. 28.19-20 – Jesus, we were told, was commanding his followers to make disciples by teaching others to observe all that he had commanded to the followers themselves; and this, it was pointed out forcefully, included instructions to heal the sick, and to cast out demons (cf. Matt. 10.1). And, in accordance with this, John Wimber and his team would show us how to do it. So on the first two afternoons there were specific appeals for people to come up on the platform and receive a ministry of healing – the first day the emphasis was upon people with aesophagus trouble, and on the second those with legs of unequal length (‘well’ said John Wimber ‘I think now we will have a leg-lengthening session’ – said cool as you please). There were claims made at the microphone of instant healing. On the third day we were all to be filled with the power of the Spirit (‘Come, Holy Spirit . . . it is coming . . . let it come’) – and there were cries from oppressed people and a ministry of casting out of demons (Wimber does not like the word ‘exorcise’) followed.

What were we to make of all this? I have three immediate observations:

- John Wimber is *not* promising healing to all and sundry and indeed only claims that healing will occur where the Father is moving in that way.
- Nevertheless he is stoking up expectations enormously – and would himself tell us to have great expectations.
- The healing ministry is conducted in the most ‘laid back’ style, with platform jokes accompanying the calling upon God to lengthen legs – and with the sense in the congregation that you could pray for your neighbour one minute, and catch up with gossip with an old friend the next, and move very freely from one to another (top marks to Wimber style here!).

So what probing should we offer? Well, again I have three comments:

- I found no indication from the platform (Wimber or organizers) that anybody wanted to monitor what was happening in the healing ministry, and after the first session I pressed the Committee (I do not think I was alone in this) to take steps to find out who reckoned they had been healed, and to open records on them so that medical evidence could be obtained. The Committee accepted this point, and issued small questionnaires to those who claimed to be healed. Any statistics of healing must await their own analysis of these written returns – and, I would hope, of later letters to each of those who signed the forms, so that their own judgment some weeks after Acts 86 can be incorporated.
- Although the Wimber message has been that ‘signs and wonders’ accompany the preaching of the gospel (‘power evangelism’), and although the organizers thought they were promoting evangelism throughout the festival, yet the purpose of the healings in the Wimber sessions seemed to terminate on the recipients of healing. No doubt it was all done to God’s glory (though just occasionally it sounded as though God had become our servant instead of we his), but its relationship to ministering the gospel was little more than the theoretical position of Matt. 28.19-20.
- The status of the ‘word of knowledge’ or of ‘the gift of discernment’ was a bit unclear. These perceptions were not, it seemed, with a view to discovering those whom God was certainly going to heal, but was an ‘identification’ process which surprised the people with

the stated complaints, and helped them reveal themselves. This is not to deny that many such may have been healed. It seems uncaring to put Acts 86 down to experience – and much of it was very rich experience – but it does seem to me that the appeal of the immediate was far outstripping any actual guiding of the church or individuals for the future.

ASB EUCHARISTIC LESSONS INDEX

We apologize for omitting this in July, but now carry on again where we left off in June.

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* In the 1980 edition Col. 3. 12-17 is incorrectly printed on p.955. See 1984 edition p.978.