

News of Liturgy

Editor: Colin Buchanan

Issue no. 147

March 1987

Editorial

Readers will know I spent two weeks in Canada at the beginning of March. It was an interesting time to be there, as the *Book of Alternative Services* (BAS) is just coming into wide use. 18 months since it was published. There is suspicion in many quarters, as parishes of every hue have ignored the fourteen years of run-up to the publication of the BAS, and have complained that it was wished upon them without warning and without preparation. Interestingly, it is only 'provisional', and is subject to review in 1989 at the General Synod, and remains strictly 'alternative' to the 1959 BCP which is the legal book, and is still in use in places (see my scrapbook). However, there are some problems in believing it could be changed in 1989, not least the weighty hard-back form of it – and there are even presentation leather-bound volumes, disseminating the message that it is here to stay for decades. So, for those who are doubtful about it, they must stress the avowal of the producers that it really is up for correction. But actual corrections may be hard to secure.

The chief complaints I heard were twofold:

- (i) 'they have altered our much-loved BCP' (a deputation of the Canadian Prayer Book Society was visiting the Primate the very day I called in at 600 Jarvis Street, Toronto).
- (ii) 'they have brought in eucharistic oblation and an epiclesis on the elements' – things unknown in previous forms in this Church, and now in every one of the alternatives (it would be possible to say that is an evangelical kind of objection, but the Canadian Church is so worried by the thought of division, that it does not want to hear about differing schools within it). I had my own experiences of being more-or-less held responsible for the Book myself . . . I got an impression from the compilers that they thought that objectors had only arisen since the BAS was published, or at a very late stage of its going to press, whereas they really should have responded to the *Third Canadian Order* in 1981 – but I think myself the time for that responding was short, that (possibly – though of this I am not sure) the constituency was not well warned to make their criticisms swiftly and pointedly – and that also critics failed to express their points well, or simply appeared as opposed to the whole project. It does look a bit as though Hippolytus was a member of the Doctrine and Worship Committee, though in fact the American sources of the BAS are the channels down which his influence has flowed.

On more happy matters, I checked out whether the Canadian Anglicans really meant what they said when they lifted the requirement of confirmation for those baptized as adults. It looks as though there might still be uncertainties among the bishops, and, because the provision is still only

'alternative', there is still a set of canonical requirements in which confirmation is more entrenched than in the BAS – so the Canadian Anglicans have a further task to do, if they are both to establish such baptized adults as in full standing (e.g. for ordination!), and also to persuade Anglicans in, say, England to accept them as the equivalent of confirmed locals – and that would require quite a bit of tidying up.

Copies of the BAS came back with me and cost £6.50 postfree, and I also brought back a few copies of a companion book, *Rites for a New Age* (Anglican Book Society, Toronto, 1986 – 199pp, £4.50) by Michael Ingham, a rector in Vancouver. His 'new age' (a secular, and even 'lotus-eating' one) is more evident in Vancouver than in Halifax, and he handles themes in the BAS, rather than doing a line-by-line commentary – so his chapter headings include 'Community', 'Spirituality', 'Ministry', and even 'Play'! It is engagingly and interestingly done, with considerable illustration from the BAS text, though the author might touch some sensibilities when he denies the virgin birth . . .

The ordination of women is taken almost wholly for granted, though the diocese of British Columbia (which is Vancouver Island) was only about to have its first woman priested when I was there. The giving of communion to young children has only just been approved in Montreal, and is a forthcoming matter in Nova Scotia. The bi-centennial celebrations of Charles Inglis (first bishop of Nova Scotia, whose territory must have stretched to the Pacific . . .) are due this year, and there has been a deadlock as to what eucharistic rite – and eucharistic prayer – to use. The answer appears to be that unthinkable hybrid – the 1959 rite, as it appears in its 'thou' form in the BAS (as Rite B appears in the ASB), with its wording duly turned into 'you' form. The whole House of Bishops goes to Halifax for the celebrations in the Autumn, and this is the liturgical text produced for the occasion.

Canadians are generally too unfamiliar yet with the implications of the new text, in terms of freedom to domesticate the liturgy and to handle it creatively and imaginatively. I had the chance to use not only the confirmation rite (see scrapbook), but also the shorter form for the Reconciliation of a Penitent. I took my fill of 'inclusive language', and am a little fearful of the drift into our changing terminology about God whilst we are declaring war on inadvertently 'sexist' language about men. But whether there is a 'new age' or not, there is certainly a new liturgical one for a country on which the previous one dawned less than thirty years ago.

My grateful thanks to my many hosts.

Colin Buchanan

ORDINATION OF DEACONESSES AS DEACONS

A word of thanks to all those who have sent in copies of the ordination rites in their dioceses – Birmingham will be reported in next month's scrapbook. The first reported marriage at which a woman deacon officiated occurred on 11 March in the York diocese.

. . . and a conundrum arises. There have existed in this country for some time women in deacon's and presbyter's orders but only viewed by the

Church of England as 'lay'. The conundrum is this: when, and by what triggering, did they become recognized by the Church of England as ordained? Was it whilst they were asleep? Or when the Canon was promulgated in Synod? Were there any who held lay seats in Synods who were extruded by a synodical *fiat* without lifting a finger one way or the other themselves . . .?

THAT COLLAPSE OF RITE B IN SYNOD

Archdeacon Peter Dawes writes as follows about the failure of the rite to be considered:

'The House of Bishops asked for the Rite B amendments to be introduced by the "shorter" procedure, i.e. a debate in the Synod confined to these particular amendments. The Standing Committee decided (one against) to go for the longer procedure, which meant *anything* in Rite B could be revised.

The Synod having heard arguments against the motion, such as

- (a) Against the Synod resolution only fifteen months before saying that no such revision should take place until 1990
- (b) Expense
- (c) Could be contentious
- (d) The amendments were so trifling they could come under Canon B.5.

agreed to pass to next business.

The Bishop of Winchester, moving the motion, did not resist this procedure and offered a sop to some in saying the House of Bishops still had under consideration alternatives to the Prayer Book.'

We asked Peter Dawes for this report on the assumption he would disclose his own hand. It seems not unreasonable to assume that his was the one vote in Standing Committee against the 'long procedure', and it also seems that those who went for the full revision procedure overreached themselves. Of course, if they had got it, then the Revision Committee might have had the 1000-plus amendments tabled which Rite A collected on its first time through.

This month's publication . . .

. . . is the first 'Alcuin/GROW Joint Liturgical Study', *Daily and Weekly Worship – from Jewish to Christian*, by Roger Beckwith. The contents are drawn from two articles published three years ago, and they are here joined and bound in a format with a spine and a number on it. The price is £2.50 for those who are not members of the Alcuin Club. A special leaflet was distributed in December with the last Grove Liturgical Study, setting out titles for the whole of 1987.

. . . and next month's

is Worship Series no. 99, *Remembrance Sunday*, by Andrew Jones. He discusses the issues of war and peace, and the theological implications of our remembrance of the dead, along with some consideration of the 'national' aspects of such services.

. . . and the April Ethical Study

is no. 65, *Ethical Tensions in the Welfare State*, by Roy McLoughry, dealing with the conflicting rights, duties, and responsibilities, arising within this and alternative systems.

. . . and reprints include

Pastoral Series no. 6, *A Place in the Family: The Single Person in the Local Church*, by Anne Long, David Gillett, and Ruth Fowke; Ethical Study no. 64, *AIDS: A Christian Response*, by Roy McLoughry and Carol Bebawi (which sold out in six weeks); and (probably in May) Spirituality Series no. 8, *Finding a Personal Rule of Life*, by Harold Miller.

. . . and another 'extra' distributed by Grove Books Ltd.

is *Bishop Hugh – with Affection*, a 'Retirement Tribute by Some of his Friends' (including the Archbishop of Canterbury) edited by Colin Buchanan (£2). This is like *Episcopal Care in the West Midlands* (£2.50) in being distributed by Grove Books Ltd. whilst published elsewhere.

. . . and an availability

is that the Canadian *Book of Alternative Services* (referred to in Editorial) is in stock again at £6.50.

. . . and some backnumbers otherwise out of print

(including complete sets of NOL and Ethics booklets, and nearly complete ones of Ministry and Worship and of Liturgical Studies) are available from N. Fisher, All Hallows School, Ditchingham, Bungay, Suffolk NR35 2DU. Try your wants on him – and we have a few out of print titles in at Nottingham also (though at usual full prices).

Book Review

Kenneth Stevenson *Eucharist and Offering* (Pueblo, New York, 1986, imported by T. Shand Publications, The Annexe, St. Mary's, The Ridgeway, Mill Hill, London NW7) 327pp, £17.50.

Kenneth Stevenson has been promising us this massive book for some time, and it fulfils his promise in many ways. In particular it provides a fairly exhaustive survey of patristic texts, insofar as they bear upon his division of the eucharistic prayer. He suggests that there are three true components, which he calls 'story', 'gift', and 'response'. The 'story' is our 'telling out' the mighty acts of God: the 'gift' is our reference to the bread and wine (without prior decision as to whether they are God's gift to us or ours to God): the 'response' is 'the way in which the Church describes what it is doing in the eucharist' (p.6). This is succinctly set out

ISSN 0263-7170

(£3.90 by inland post for the year 1987 – £4.60 with *News of Hymnody* added)
Editorial address: 60 Handsworth Wood Road, Birmingham B20 2DT (021-554-5129)

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

on page 7: 'Story . . . provides the *context* of the eucharist. Gift describes the *material* of the eucharist. Response expresses the *action* of the eucharist.' However, the more I read the book, the less clear I found the categories. Indeed the difficulty lies in exactly the definitions above – for Stevenson describes the Hippolytan anamnesis as 'gift', though the verbal shape of that paragraph suggests strongly that it is 'the way the Church describes what it is doing' – in other words, we *respond* to 'Do this in remembrance of me' by 'Remembering therefore . . . we offer the bread and the cup'. Once the anamnesis is *not* a description of what the Church is doing, then we are hard put to make the rest of the eucharistic prayer describe what we are doing, and find it to be more what we want God to do (which would be fairly clear as a concept – but is odd as an out-working of a category of 'response'). So I was left with an admiration for the grand design, with an uncertainty about its application.

Of course, what Kenneth Stevenson is concerned to do is to safeguard the concept of 'offering', and to demonstrate that the church rightly views the eucharist as in some sense a sacrifice. This is done by asserting that the church has always described the eucharist as a sacrifice, and then listing each author or source as conformable to the principle. There are even Bishop Mark Santer's opening words in the Foreword to back him up 'During the first 1500 years of the Church's history nobody doubted that the eucharist was a sacrifice'. This seems to assert a knowledge of the beliefs of each Christian that ever was far beyond the available evidence – and it is open to anyone reading the New Testament to counter assert that Paul, Peter, and the writer of the Hebrews not only had no idea that the eucharist was a sacrifice, but in the Greek terms available to them would have denied it!

Whilst there is no reason to think that our author wishes to be classified with the medievalists or Gothic Revivalists, one is left to wonder what he is actually seeking. As with 'priesthood' in that wretched Faith and Order Advisory Group report, so with 'sacrifice' here – the authors argue mildly that there is a minimal sense which everybody can agree should be put upon the word, even though in so asserting they both go far beyond the text of scripture and give a footing to those who wish to put some maximal sense upon the word. This even leaves the suspicion that the minimal sense is promoted in order that the maximal may be covertly achieved – and that in turn makes one ask whether the minimal is worth having, however consistent the nomenclature may have been from 100 to 1500 A.D. Kenneth Stevenson is certainly not after the maximal, but he may serve the interests of those who are. His minimal includes a somewhat 'spread' notion of 'sacrifice', so that even the 'story' is sacrificial, because it 'highlights the congregation's commitment to certain activities and spiritual insights' (p.5). This sounds like rescuing a word at the expense of all content – and so it proves to be.

His treatment of the New Testament acknowledges that there are no sacrificial terms about the eucharist there (p.12), but, by verbal sleight of hand, gets us two pages later to 'As the anamnesis of Christ, the eucharist is a spiritual sacrifice, but no reenactment', and we must be clear that this is Stevenson speaking, not the New Testament. He acknowledges that there is a 'tunnel' from the New Testament to the post-apostolic authors,

but he clearly wants to treat the latter as normative, and to peer through the tunnel from that end. That predetermines how he will then view the New Testament.

Of course, one can acknowledge that at the patristic end of the tunnel everyone called the eucharist a 'sacrifice' (as they also called good works, money, water, and many other things). One can see that, once someone had innocently described the eucharist this way, someone else discerned (what the New Testament writers had not, as they had not called the eucharist a sacrifice) that the famous quotation from Malachi 1.11 nicely fitted behind the eucharist *especially if one wanted to distinguish oneself from Judaism*. Then the quotation both became common currency, even in circles unbothered by rival claims of judaism, and also helped fix the terminology which called the eucharist a sacrifice and employed the language of oblation within the text. All this is well charted by Stevenson – but is treated as autonomous and not subjected to any critique.

The post-reformation writers come in for slightly different treatment. Here the problem is not that of describing their sacrificial bent, but rather of accounting for their lack of it. One way is to pick on sacrificial terminology which they do use about praises and prayers and self-offering (such as *are* found in the New Testament writers) and interpret them as somehow implying eucharistic sacrifice (see, for instance, his example from Jewel on p.156). But the crucial point, which is not well focussed by the attempt to demonstrate continuity, is that the language of eucharistic oblation came into sharp controversy at the Reformation, and since then we have to be careful about our words. (The same principle applies to the language about the Trinity – no-one would go behind Nicaea to find unitive language or seminal understanding – the controversy destroyed the innocence of earlier formulations, and we cannot return 'behind' that).

This is less than a review, but an attempt at responding to the central thesis of a well-documented and satisfyingly full book. There are tiny errors here and there, but they appear to be few. There is a predictable interest in the Catholic Apostolic Church, There is firsthand knowledge of a whole range of continental uses. Even W. E. Orchard gets a look in. There is an over-happy reliance upon W. Bright's hymn 'And now, O Father, mindful of the love'. And so one could go on. I have sparred enough enough with a scholarship in Stevenson which considerably outstrips my own – I read this book with a curious sense it was trying to change my mind, and a growing certainty that methodologically it could not but fail to do so. No liturgical tradition, even a second century one, is autonomous, and displaying it in even greater colour and fulness does not create an autonomy for it.

C.Q.B.

COB'S LITURGICAL SCRAPBOOK

February: (15) A rarity – Series 2 confirmation with Rite B eucharist; (18) brief interview with BBC to discuss the new baptismal reform movement – being broadcast next Sunday; (22) one of the most amazing events of my life generally, let alone of my liturgical life – I mentioned a year ago how I got Dick Rodgers out of his imprisonment cell in St.-Martin-in-the-Bull-ring to wash his feet, and Di and I had been looking for an occasion

to have him and his family to lunch, so we invited them for to-day – to which they said 'yes', and that seemed all there was to it, but then, a few days after we asked them, they rang up to say that it was the one day that Irina Ratushinskaya herself, on whose behalf Dick had done his prison vigil, could come to Birmingham, and could she and her husband, Igor, come too (!) ? – and thus I found myself in the middle of planning a special service for Irina's coming to Birmingham; and in the event I find myself chairing or steering the event (Irina herself proves to be a most delightful person, with some English and a puckish sense of humour), but the service is amazing – St. Martin's is packed from wall to wall, there is singing by a group from St. John's Harborne, and also by some Serbian Christians from Bath, and there is a build-up as Dick tells something of Irina's story, and Dick and I with Irina and Igor walk down the nave to pray beside Dick's cell (which has been reconstructed for the occasion), and as Irina herself speaks – even at these stages many are near tears, and all are saying to themselves 'Can this be true? Is this woman standing before us the one for whom we have prayed without perhaps ever really believing she would be released, let alone come to see us?' – but then on the order of the service it says '*Presentation of flowers to Irina*', so I get up, and say 'Who here has brought flowers or greetings?' (thinking it might be 15 or 20 folk representing particular groups of concerned supporters), but instead half the congregation rise from their seats, so I swallow quickly and say 'Then you had better come and make your presentations' – and they crowd the aisles for upwards of twenty minutes bringing flowers and other gifts and simply pressing her hand, or giving her a hug, or passing a simple word of Christian greeting to her, whilst the St. John's Harborne singers sing songs and choruses, which those not crowding the aisles join and sing – it is overwhelming, and afterwards I can only reflect how wonderfully authentic it has been, that so much pent-up emotion has been genuinely released in the service and channelled towards its true recipient (she is mobbed at the door after, and almost has to be rescued – and the traders in the Bull-ring market have never sold so many flowers before . . .); (22) morning baptism (with anointing) followed by confirmation (with anointing) at St. Barnabas Erdington, and then off for lunch with diocesan stewardship committee and the lay-people being trained as honorary stewardship advisers, all at a local conference centre, where, after lunch, I preside at communion and commission these advisers for their work in the diocese with some home-made *ad hoc* liturgical provisions; (24) first evening of rehearsing of our 'Farewell Choir' by its Director Roger Jones, at Christ Church Burney Lane, which is his own parish – the church is full, with perhaps 300-350 volunteers joining to form this Choir, and they learn the 'Christ Church Gloria' and a Jones' Magnificat (which is an extract from his forthcoming biblical musical 'While Shepherds watched') – but the event is stirring, very musical, and spiritually uplifting, and offers great promise for the Farewell itself; (26) putting in a new Rural Dean – we follow a diocesan form in the context of the eucharist in his own parish church, and with the archdeacon preaching; (28) not exactly a service, but certainly including worship, I have breakfast with a hundred other Handsworth Christians from 20 or so congregations, as part of the slow attempt to get the believers of the area to know each other and to function together – quite a bit of building relationships happens, and also singing and praying, which is how the event got in here.

March (1) quite a day for baptisms – at 9 a.m. four adults enter the tank at Tile Cross (hardly used previously by Anglicans) – and two other candidates have water poured over them – and after changing, welcome, and renewal of baptismal vows by the congregation, it is time to go off to the next parish, Garretts Green, for confirmation; in the afternoon there is a service at Balsall Heath for three Aston students – one for baptism and confirmation, one for confirmation alone – and one for renewal of baptismal vows *in water* – and this last person is in effect taking me at my word – as I have written that it should be possible to renew baptismal vows with a plunge, and now, after many moons the chance has come to me to provide the precedent which my correspondents at intervals seek before administering the plunge themselves – so I have gone back to my Worship Series no. 91 and checked out my own advice – in part I ignore it, as, on reflection, I reckon that the non-baptismal plunge should follow the baptismal one, so I doctor the introductions to the interrogations, stand the renewing candidate in the water with the baptismal one for the affirmations of faith, submerge the baptismal candidate, and give him his candle, then return for the remaining one (and am assisted by the Baptist chaplain), and address him in the words I did put in the booklet:

'Mark, as you have been baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, so now I dip you in this water in commemoration and renewal of that baptism, in the name of the same God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.'

The two of us give him a triple dipping at the last few words; I request the proper documentation to be made; and that evening has its own important liturgical event too, as our diocesan 'Adviser on Black Ministries' is being licensed at Holy Trinity Birchfield – with a very representative congregation (and we sing 'Rescue the Perishing' – the first time in my life, I think). Then off to London to fly to Canada to-morrow; (4) Ash Wednesday, and by now I am in Halifax, and attend a BCP (1959) eucharist (the president wears a maniple – a rare sight), then a lecture by me on children at communion, as Nova Scotia has not yet moved on that issue; (7) a day conference at which I am present for first time at BAS eucharist and on (8) I find myself confirming, and presiding at communion, in St. Augustine's parish – BAS has several twists here, but mostly interesting ones, such as providing intercessions, and also having a 'presenter' of each confirmation candidate (in the event, the presenter and candidate were due to reflect together on the experience of the rite on the Wednesday following) – foolishly, when it came to the distribution of communion, I let myself be eased out instead of giving the elements, as three-year-old children were amongst those receiving, quite unlike the English situation: (11-13) my first major exposure to BAS offices at a clergy Retreat in the Vancouver area – much range of choice of canticles and intercessions: (15) preaching twice at different parishes in Victoria on Vancouver Island, at the first (St. John's) preaching *after* communion (which must be nearly unique in the world) – this relates to giving children communion (yes, I did get my hand in this time, and revelled in it) and then dismissing them to separate classes – but I also experienced a full church for a (1959) BCP rite at St. Matthias, my second port of call. Then off back to England . . .