

News of Liturgy

Editor: Colin Buchanan

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May 1987

Editorial

We in Britain have a General Election. This was a 'prospect' last month – it is an imminent reality this month. I checked back to see how *NOL* had responded to the 1983 election, and found simply a two-line piece of 'non-liturgical advice' – to vote for those who had an interest in justice in representation. I re-echo my prejudiced Electoral Reform advice now, but, with half an eye to this journal's respectability as a serious liturgical monthly, now touch on some other implications.

There could of course, if there were a change of Prime Minister, be an impact on the appointment of bishops. However, the latest opinion polls (in mid-May) indicate that rather over 80% (sic!) expect no change in Prime Minister, and amidst that gloomy prediction of even the PM's opponents, who are we, under a liturgical hat, to speculate further on temporary occupants of the tied cottage in Downing Street, or on their episcopal predilections, or on the implications for liturgy? The relevance is difficult to demonstrate. Perhaps the nearest to liturgical advice we can get is to urge our readers to *pray* – and, for those sending 18p in stamps, we will gladly send the text of a prayer calculated (if used widely enough) to have the right result.

There are, however, serious church legislative issues still to come before Parliament, and they are gravely at risk of ridiculous delay in this election. Last month I touched on the Ecumenical Canons, which, following on the Measure, are due to go for Final Approval in the General Synod in July. We may add the Canon on ordination, which gives the diocesan bishop a route (via the Archbishop) by which he may seek lawfully to ordain a candidate who has been married for the second time or whose wife or husband has been. This would particularly help the 'continuing deaconesses' left stranded this year by their canonical disqualification from being ordained into holy orders. And in addition the Final Approval of the separation of £1 million per annum from the Church Commissioners for the Church Urban Fund is due in Synod in July, but may never get authorization from Parliament till half-way through 1988. And that would be a dreadful delay.

The point is that church legislation is introduced into Parliament by the Ecclesiastical Committee, composed jointly of Church-conscious members of both Commons and Lords, of all political parties, and of both Synod and Parliamentary persons. This Committee deems particular draft Measures which have gone through General Synod as 'expedient' or not (if not it goes back to the Standing Committee of General Synod). It is this Committee which then bids for Parliamentary time, and slips ecclesiastical legislation into the night watches, or Fridays, or wherever. It was this Committee which was so notably 'ambushed' in the Commons in Summer 1984 when the Appointment of Bishops Measure reached there

(and it was that defeat which leaves us now in Birmingham about to go through the process of conge *dé*lire at the behest of those 31 members of the Commons led by Enoch Powell in July 1984). And a new Committee will be appointed by a new Government.

However, once again we come up against the time factor. A new Government (by which I do not necessarily mean a change of faces, only the particular group in power which emerges from a new election), will have to appoint a new Ecclesiastical Committee. Past experience suggests they will not treat this as an urgent matter. So it might be months before there were such a Committee in existence. Then it in turn must examine each draft Measure from Synod, to see if it is 'expedient'. Then it must seek Parliamentary time for it – whether obscure or prime time. And, of course, finally someone in each House has to persuade that House to vote for the Measure.

Anglicans beyond Offa's Dyke, or the Irish Sea, or the great Oceans, must rub their eyes in astonishment. Is the Church of England still caught at Henry VIII's shirt-tails? Yes, it is. Only the powers of the monarch now rest with Parliament: the timetable of Parliament is wholly uninterested in the needs of the Church of England; the most avowedly religious members of Parliament come from a Celtic region where not only does the established Church not exist, but the vagaries of religion-with-a-political-face (or vice versa) lead to a wholly maverick approach to the C/E: with all other Parliamentarians the secular political process crowds out theology at every stage: and the poor Church of England is left beggar-like to be kicked away from the front door, and to stand cap in hand for some tiny Parliamentary favour at the back door. This is no partnership of Church and State – it is an overt humiliation.

I fear this is not helping any reader with his or her voting. You may, I regret to say, have to settle that on other moral grounds, and let Erastianism yes and liturgy too, both take their chance when the nation has gone through its distorted 'first-past-the-post' voting. And God bless us, every one.

Colin Buchanan

THE ANGLICAN CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL

The ACC had its seventh meeting in Singapore in the first week of May. It looks as though the major newsworthy questions it handled were those of women presbyters, and, yes, of women bishops. This does involve some ordination questions which in the last analysis are liturgical.

However, a smaller news item is that, many years after such an idea was first mooted, there is to be an Anglican Communion Liturgical Commission.

NOL hopes to reflect in future months on the scope of such a Commission – as well as on its answerability and usefulness. We also cheerfully offer *NOL*'s own sales network as a basis for pan-Anglican communication. Or shall all our aces be trumped by some officially-subsidized bureaucratic monster? If so, then it is a war to the death such as Fortress Wapping has never yet seen. Will all right-minded men and women stand up and be counted? We may need you.

Correspondence

Dear Colin,

EUCCHARIST AND OFFERING

Thank you for the compliment of such a lengthy review of my book in *NOL*, which arrived with the Good Friday post. Permit me, please, some space to make a few choice remarks by way of response.

First, eucharistic sacrifice is a *varied* theme in the mainstream liturgies of the Church, both East and West. This, in my view, is the most important thesis of the book, picked up by Mark Santer in his Foreword (p.vii). Yet you do not even mention this.

Second, at the political level, you fear that my desire to widen views of sacrifice might result in abuse by those whose Catholicism goes beyond my own. Yet I come out strongly against votive masses (pp.114ff, p.127); and I am openly sceptical about the offertory (p.235); and I question the 'eucharist and chips' syndrome in the contemporary church (p.232).

Third, it is easy to attempt to marginalize ideas that are central to many but unpalatable to yourself (your reference to 'medievalists or Gothic Revivalists', the Catholic Apostolics, and W. E. Orchard). Yet I would have thought that within my own Church, I am continuing along in tradition of Reformed Catholicism that goes back to the 17th century, and which Richard Buxton (among others) has helped to elucidate in *Eucharist and Institution Narrative*.

Fourth, there is the problem of how we interpret and use the past. You talk of 'lost innocence' (referring to sacrifice after Martin Luther). Yet I wonder whether you are much less Scriptural than you think, and more set in a 19th century anti-Tractarian attitude?

... Fifth, you express unease with William Bright's 'And now, O Father, mindful of the love'. Ironically, this is one of my *errata*. For Bright's sequence of ideas in that hymn is straight from Wesley's 'With solemn faith we offer up'. I have no doubt that this, too, is over the top for you. But, then, the label 'Evangelical', in this century no less than the 18th, becomes a much more negotiable epithet when set in the threateningly wider context of how different people have regarded the Lord's Supper.

There is much else that I could say! And, again, let me say how grateful I am to you for your continuing participation in this debate. But let me end on a personal note. I began serious study of this topic after a successful PhD *viva* on another subject, in the course of which I became quite incensed with an obdurate eternal examiner. The further I got into eucharistic sacrifice, the more strongly I felt that the problem is one of Christology and spirituality. For me 'spiritual sacrifices' (1 Peter 2.5) *has* to include the eucharist, as a dynamic activity of Christ in his Church; to let it become anything less is to time-lock the sacrament of unity into the psychological reflex of the individual believer. This is what the old Syriac prayers are feeling after – and they've got something we've somehow missed put on.

All good wishes,

Yours ever, Kenneth Stevenson

N.B. Editorial comment next month.

CHEEKY CHURCH TIMES

The Portugal Street Diary in *Church Times*, which seems unduly pre-occupied with tracing the endangered species of gaiters, cited on 15 May an account of a fire for redundant vestments, accompanied by liturgy and ceremonial, reported in the USA, and then added '(I hope the Bishop of Aston is following all this for his *News of Liturgy*)'. The answer to that, for all our proffered pan-Anglican role, the destructive doings of the Diocesan Altar Guild of Western Louisiana are not in the forefront of our news service. We do not intend to add to all our activities and reports the tag '(I hope the editor of *Church Times* is watching all this for his columns)' – we know that that journal only borrows our stuff in relation to its own supply-and-demand of jokes, and not on the merits of any case. We are more careful and selective.

This month's booklet . . .

. . . is Pastoral Series no. 31, *Staying Sane under Stress*, by Patsy Kettle. Insofar as it relates to the sustaining of a pastoral ministry, this title is indeed a pastoral one – but it runs close to the Spirituality field. Meanwhile

. . . the Spirituality one

is no. 21, *Inner City Spirituality*, by John Pearce, recently moved after more than twenty years in Hackney in London's East End. There is here a whole series of starting-points for the Quiet Time, for devotion for non-literate Christians, for taking the right moral stand in adverse circumstances, and generally relating being Christian to living in inner Urban Priority Areas.

. . . and next month's

is Alcuin/GROW Joint Liturgical Study no. 2, *The Canons of Hippolytus*, edited by Paul Bradshaw (£2.50). This is actually the first full English text to appear of this ancient and intriguing text – dated by Paul Bradshaw to the early fourth century.

. . . and Ethics titles

All past numbers go up to £1.50 on 1 July, order fast to catch current prices of £1.00 each.

A PRAYER FOR 'HANDS ACROSS BRITAIN'

Apparently George Timms was asked to write a prayer for this event of Sunday 3 May (see also COB's 'Liturgical Scrapbook' in this issue). He wrote as follows:

O God of love and Father of all mankind: grant that, as the hands of your Son Jesus Christ brought new life and healing to the afflicted and were nailed to the cross for our salvation, so now the hands of your people, joined in a chain of love and of service, may be used to bring hope of employment to empty hands, and new courage to the weary and forlorn; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Correspondence

Dear Colin,

Recent photographs in the Church press of two or more bishops simultaneously laying hands on (female) candidates for the diaconate illustrate neatly how little clear thinking goes into many Anglican ordinations these days. In quite a number of cathedrals it is now the practice of all the bishops present to lay hands on the new deacons or presbyters. This relatively new practice seems to me highly undesirable, and to raise several issues.

As far as I am aware, the traditional Anglican practice of presbyters laying hands on a new presbyter, but the deacon receiving only the bishop's hands, has no rationale other than that given in Hippolytus' *Apostolic Tradition*, namely that the presbyters welcome the new man to their order, while the deacon is ordained primarily to the personal service of the bishop and is therefore ordained by him alone.

The practice and rationale as regards presbyters seems to be unobjectionable (though I am aware that the ghost of ordination by presbyters may lie behind the Hippolytan practice). Modern Anglican deacons, however, are not ordained exclusively for the bishop's service, but, like presbyters, form part of parish-based ministry teams. Now that we have a permanent diaconate again, would it not be appropriate for existing deacons to join in the laying on of hands on new deacons to welcome them to their order? It would surely enhance the status of the diaconate – and to see the senior deacon(ess) of a diocese present the diaconal candidates and then have to stand back while the bishop lays on hands, seems wrong even to one not noted for his feminist views! It would of course be silly at joint ordinations of presbyters and deacons for those about to leave the diaconate to join in such laying on of hands, but even to put the matter in those terms exposes the subliminal denigration of the diaconate which inevitably takes place at such joint ordinations.

If it be argued that there is no precedent for deacons joining in the laying on of hands, then the reply is that there is no precedent for more than one bishop laying on hands. The rationale is surely that a bishop is in effect creating his ministry team when he ordains: in other words there is a *relational* element. This healthy dimension is undermined if several bishops join in, since the visual impression is much more that of the bestowal of a 'power' and we are back into medievalism again.

If we are going to abandon the Hippolytan practice and rationale, then could we please substitute something seemly and with a coherent theological basis?

As ever, John Fenwick

Editorial Comment

I personally far prefer the traditional side of the dilemma on which John is trying to impale us – I cannot understand why two or more bishops need to lay hands on deacons being ordained. I suspect it was a Southwark practice, and was intended (by one Mervyn) to make suffragans feel like bishops. I have never been very patient of it, and therefore acknowledge no leverage towards the proposed Fenwick pattern (which I suspect is actually a concealed argument against con-ordination . . .).

IN MEMORIAM—CANON HAROLD WINSTONE

The unexpected death of Harold Winstone at Easter of this year has deprived the Roman Catholic community in this country of a notable liturgist who was both a scholar and a pastor. Many years before Vatican II he was active in the liturgical movement and understandably he welcomed the reforms of the Council with understanding and enthusiasm. His quality and scholarship soon became known and he was an early member of the International Committee for English in the Liturgy and for many years he was chairman of its Advisory Committee. He was also a member of the Joint Liturgical Committee for with his enthusiasm for the liturgy he combined a deep conviction about the importance of ecumenism. He was also chairman of the Society of St. Gregory and through it and through his lectures and writings he did much to spread a right understanding of the liturgical reforms.

But perhaps his chief work was the foundation of the St. Thomas More Pastoral Centre in North Finchley which he established in a run-down district with no church. Gradually he got a large complex built which includes a church and meeting rooms. It has become the most important centre in this country for the diffusion of right liturgical ideas and for the provision of resources for good celebration.

All this and his international commitments took their toll and some three years ago he asked to be released and went to a country parish in Hertfordshire where he put into practice in a very different context what he believed to be the right way of going about things in that very different place.

Harold Winstone was a quiet man and apparently a calm man but always underneath there was a fire of conviction and a deep love of the Lord who it was his whole life's work to serve. Many, not only Roman Catholics, mourn his passing.

J. D. Crichton

COB'S LITURGICAL SCRAPBOOK

April: (16) Maundy Thursday, and first comes the Oiling Service, with a text more or less fixed last year, and I stand in in the absence of a diocesan, and preach also – on James 5; women deacons present two of the three oils, but I later discover this is viewed as irritating by a handful who think them incapable or at least inopportune at being deacons – in the afternoon I go to a hospice where a man with cancer has come to faith in his last days (still trembling and fearful of death), and I confirm him, anoint him, and give him communion, wondering if he will have Easter on earth or in heaven – I thus become the first in the diocese, I guess, to use the new oil – in the evening I wash feet at an inner-ring parish, but it is fairly 'low' and there is no 'Watch': (17) Good Friday, and something different, and I preach at an 'ecumenical' non-sacramental service at Winson Green prison to over 200, mostly young, men (they may well have come because chapel is more diverting than one's cell) – they do not all see that there is

a music group from a local Christian grouping present to lead some songs, and so when the group stands up, and the men catch the first sight in the chapel of three very presentable young women, there is cheering and greeting to deafen even the noisiest congregation – when I then say, on coming on to preach, that I know I cannot expect such warmth, they generously offer me something of the same! (18) Easter Eve, and the full treatment from the red book is on – at St. Mary's Moseley – save that we keep the eucharist itself for 9.30 in the morning; we arrange the Old Testament material to begin at 7.30 p.m., though it is still light, and five readings, with psalms and collects, take us through to semi-darkness – then we begin the service of light, only slightly delayed by an obstinate paschal candle which declines to light, and go on to six baptisms (including four from one family, one 'of age', three not), more confirmations, and a renewal of baptismal vows by the whole congregation – then home after all but two hours (if we had had the eucharist it would have been another half an hour or so) . . . (19) Easter Day, beginning with the Moseley eucharist to complete the liturgy started last night, then rushing to the cathedral for the 11 a.m. rite where the diocesan usually preaches – the Provost goes up the front, whilst the Canon in Residence tells me (in reply to my query) that the Provost will give sufficient coaching in the Easter Greeting – well, the Provost gives out the notices, then says 'The Bishop of Aston will lead us with the Easter greeting', and I duly pipe up from the back 'Alleluia! Christ is Risen' – but hardly a ripple of response disturbs the silence; so I pitch in 'We had better have another go "Alleluia! Christ is risen" ' and this time they come out of their Lenten shells and meekly respond 'He is risen indeed. Alleluia!', and the service proceeds; in the evening I am in Lozells (just opposite where the fires were eighteen months ago), and there are ten adults for confirmation, equalling all the last ten years put together – I reflect I have preached seven sermons since Thursday morning, and presided over about seven hours of liturgy, been preaching at two hours or more with others presiding, and in general have been going non-stop (even so it is easy compared with catching a Three Hours) – and this year I have not attempted to teach congregations to greet each other at the Peace with the Easter Greeting . . . I ring up the hospice chaplain in the late evening and Tony had been alive and received communion again, so on Tuesday (21) I write him a letter to encourage him about death, but then learn that he had died – in Christ – on Easter Monday; (24-25) overnight Youth event 'In-spire' in Salisbury cathedral, leading from nocturnal seminars for six hundred youngsters (of whom I draw few) to Garth Hewitt around 6 a.m.; and a highly festive eucharist in the nave of the cathedral with the diocesan bishop more or less presiding, at 9.30 a.m. – the chairs have been removed, carpets cover the floor, and under bright lights the communion table is half-way down one side, backing on to the fourth or fifth pillar, whilst stages each end are used for music and drama – the 'floor' is sufficiently free to form a conga and dance in writhing circles whilst singing 'Thanks be to God' after communion, and that famed theologian, Bishop John Austin Baker, is wreathed in smiles, raising his arms like a thoroughgoing charismatic and generally displaying the less cerebral side of him . . . I think God must have enjoyed it too; (26) post-Easter Sunday off in a Devon village, and echoes of Nottingham as the congregation uses the *St. John's Setting*

of Rite A – one of the best going, I prejudicedly add; (27) St. Mark's Day (transferred) in my Filofax, but it is St. George's Day, further transferred, in St. George's Minworth, and I preside for their Patronal Festival – has anyone a useful (uni-nationalistic) sermon on St. George? (29) Licensing a Team Vicar in Solihull – I have taken up with the Registrar whether the oath of Canonical Obedience ought to be amended (e.g. to be made to the Metropolitan) during the Vacancy in See, but he is clear that it is made only to the diocesan bishop – I am forced to conclude that there is no canonical obedience to which the clergy are bound whilst the see is vacant, and hope total anarchy will not erupt . . . (30) the Spring 'Renewal Eucharist' at Birmingham Cathedral, and again we have above 700 people praising the Lord uninhibitedly, and a healing ministry being exercised unobtrusively during both the prayers and the communion – I take the chance just before the Peace to say a 'thank you' to David McInnes (whose baby this eucharist has been), and they cheer and clap him for what seems like five minutes, and when we have the Peace we lose him entirely as he is swamped by well-wishers; and I have to ask over the mike if we can have him back, please, before we sing the next hymn and begin the eucharist itself . . .)

May: (1) putting in another vicar, at a St. Mark's, where St. Mark himself, already delayed till last Monday (see April 27 above) has now 'played through' Ss. Philip and James which we keep to-night, and has landed on next Sunday, so as to have a patronal festival as the new incumbent's first Sunday – for the Institution we have one of those eucharists where other clergy stand round me and repeat bits with me – I do not resist this; (3) and the morning is another 50th anniversary of a Barnes' church (at Hodge Hill), and, as there is no provision in the liturgy for it, I use the sermon to establish the history, asking who remembers which phases of it – there are folk present who can recount the original opening, actually on Ss. Philip and James which is the dedication – in the afternoon is 'Hands across Britain' masterminded in central Birmingham (otherwise empty of all human faces) by our diocesan adviser on industry, so we meet in St. Martin's-in-the-Bullring, have prayers inside, go out to the entrance for speeches over the loudspeaker, sing 'We shall overcome' slightly unconvincingly, and (about 200 strong) edge off down the Coventry Road hoping to find the next staging post, and to be found by those coming through the Bullring for mustering at the cathedral – at about 3.10, unable to know whether our linking hands has covered 800 miles or 800 metres, but unanimous in loathing unemployment, we loose hands, and wonder what comes next (the answer is 'nothing', so we need to put the conclusion out for choreography next year, I would expect) and finally depart sheepishly – I go on to various calls, ending with a confirmation in Elmdon, and high praise from an Easter standpoint: (7) confirmation at Perry Barr, where a daily eucharist is the pattern – so I retain the daily eucharistic readings and they are Acts 8.26-end and John 6.44-51 – a splendid sacramental pair to draw by lot: (10) theoretically three confirmations in a day (including an Independent School in mid-afternoon), but in the morning there are no candidates at Barnt Green, so I run a kind of lecture on the Church of England, with questions and answers over after-worship coffee, but with the confirmation of a shut-in woman in her eighties at the end of the morning, with ten or so to come and witness and to sing.