

# News of Liturgy

Editor: Colin Buchanan

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## Editorial

This is *not* the Editorial I planned. But the Synod agenda for the next Session on 10-14 July, contains an amazing Private Member's Motion, only tabled apparently in February this year, and immediately at the top of the list by a margin of 70 votes. With 182 requesting it should be debated, I suspect it goes into the Guinness Book of Records for both speed, and the total number of supporters, and the margin ahead of competitors. Its mover is the Bishop of Bath and Wells, who will retire in the Autumn, and may therefore be at his last session as this comes up, probably at 8.30 p.m. on the Saturday.

Well, after all that build up, what a tragedy that it should be such an appalling motion. Here it is:

'That for the sake of unity among Christians in this country, this Synod is of the opinion that it would be appropriate, well before the Alternative Service Book revision in the year 2000, for the Church of England to abandon the Rite A (ICET) version of the Lord's Prayer in favour of the traditional one, which has continued in general use in the Roman Catholic and Free Churches, in most schools, on every public and State occasion, and indeed in all other authorized services other than Rite A and the occasional offices.'

How then have 182 members of Synod erred? Well, I will have a go at some marshalled refutation:

- 1 In 1979 the Synod looked very carefully at printing alternatives (as in the USA), or in printing just the traditional form, and settled for just the modern form. At the same time it restored the ninth line 'Lead us not into temptation' as being the best hope of carrying the lovers of the traditional into the use of the modern. If ever there were a text which lovers of ancient and modern could comfortably use together, it is the Rite A modern text.
- 2 The Synod was strongly motivated by consistency. When all the rest of the liturgical texts in a service address God as 'you', then there is an archaizing oddity in insisting the Lord's Prayer must be of a stained-glass window sort.
- 3 As a matter of fact, the modern text has already gone a long way. If 85% of the parishes use Rite A (and I reckon they do in Birmingham diocese) then it is not difficult to lead a church group (e.g. at a Church Council meeting) in the use of the modern text. What is needed is not an abandonment of the modern text, but more courage in helping people to use it naturally.
- 4 Part of the implicit assumption here is that the Church of England must never *lead* boldly. But that is not our view with respect to many other reforms.

- 5 A further assumption is that our boundaries are the British Isles only – whereas in many areas of liturgical usage we are concerned to find international agreement, and would-be reformers often press us about Transatlantic usage.
- 6 It is true that reforming the text of the Lord's Prayer has great difficulties in procedure. My own desire had always been that we should have a government decree, as when Sweden changed from driving on the left to driving on the right in the mid-60s. Then, all traffic stopped for 24 hours, then drove slowly across the roads, and set off slowly and very cautiously on the other side. If one of the Wilson governments had nationalized the Lord's Prayer, and then required as consistent a use as is needed in respect of driving on the left or driving on the right, and publicized it on TV and in the schools, very good results would have followed. Firstly, the church would have had fine press exposure. Secondly, there might well have been more prayer. And, thirdly, we should not be facing this retrograde demand ten or more years later. But, of course, no-one dreamt of coercing private prayers. The changeover was in turn bound to be slow – and we are now accused of the opposite, not of coercion, but of failure to win them all peaceably by a stated date. For the motion has no *criticism* of the modern text in it whatsoever – it is simply deemed by vote not to have scooped the permissive pool by a point fourteen years after such a text was first legal in the Church of England.
- 7 I therefore suggest another criterion – is its use still growing? If so, then, short of the synodical mayhem the Bishop of Bath and Wells is moving, the future lies with the modern form (as one would expect) and to forbid it is appalling.
- 8 Finally, it is worth noting that the Bishop's motion contains palpable inaccuracies in its last sentence. What of ASB Morning and Evening Prayer? Have they not yet reached the Palace at Wells?

182 is an impressive 33% of Synod. Will not the other 67% roll up and be counted, *please*.

Colin Buchanan

## OTHER GENERAL SYNOD BUSINESS

There is little that is strictly liturgical business at the coming session (apart from the matter in the Editorial above). The Church of England (Ecumenical Relations) Measure comes for final approval on Saturday 11 July, and it will be followed by final approval of the two Canons which derive from it (B43 and B44). The question as to when the Measure can come to Parliament was discussed last month. (Incidentally, our offer of a prayer for the right electoral result was frustrated by our lateness in distribution, and it is far from clear that the angels prevailed in the contest...).

On the fringe of liturgy is the new report *Freemasonry and Christianity: Are they Compatible?* (Church House Publishing, £2.25). In brief this report insists that prayers that exclude Jesus Christ are a *prima facie* denial of Christianity, and a cult which claims firstly that it has the truth of the universe, and secondly that its adherents are *forbidden* to reveal what is for every man's salvation is anti-Christian in mode as well as content. It lies beyond our brief here to touch on discussion of Masonic morality, and the question of ritual and symbolism is very slippery indeed. Perhaps a personal observation may assist – it is my discernment that congregations laced

with Masonry have a low spiritual 'ceiling', there is a cramping of their spirituality from within. This means that the question 'Can a Christian be a Mason?' is something like the question 'Can an athlete be a smoker?' – for the answer is not exactly 'no', but more 'what kind of athlete does he then expect to be?'

## IN MEMORIAM—BASIL MINCHIN

Basil Minchin died in the last week of April. His main contribution to liturgical studies had been the milestone work *The Celebration of the Eucharist facing the People* (first edition, duplicated (1), 1954, third edition DLT, 1961). My recollection is that the third edition was virtually the first book on liturgy I ever reviewed. Certainly, in its date it represents a kind of transition from stiff Ultramontane ways to a more relaxed and more pastoral approach. Basil Minchin himself had always a touch of the antiquarian about him, as his larger works, *Worship in the Body of Christ* and *Outward and Visible* indicated, and he was concerned with what was 'pure' as well as about what was useful or pastoral. But he was also a bit ahead of his times at times, and I suppose that I, coming from a strictly rubricist North Side provenance, moved more easily to face the people almost immediately after my priesting just because I had reviewed his book. He is one of the lesser names, one for which we thank God, in the great upheaval of Anglican worship in the last forty years.

C.O.B.

## A TRIPLET TRIPLE WEDDING

One Tim Herbert, the vicar of Winsford in Cheshire, writes to describe a wedding at which he officiated on Easter Eve at which three triplet sisters all married at one service – in neighbouring St. Chad's, Over, as the guests would have exceeded Winsford's capacity...

'In order to get all three brides up the aisle and to avoid father going up and down like a yo-yo, I surrounded him by his three daughters and all the bridesmaids and pages followed in the wake of their glory. When they reached the front father then handed each bride to the respective groom...

'The service order was 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9 & 10 (x 3), 11a, 12b, 11a, 13, 14, 16, 13, 14, 15, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19 (x 3), 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30.'

This reads as though bride no. 2 wanted to say 'obey' and did not want to give a reciprocal ring. Apparently the event got some TV airing – not that watching TV was easy for some of us that day. Has any cleric got a quadruplet wedding in view?

## IN MEMORIAM – 'JOCK' COBHAM

Immediately after Basil Minchin's death came that of J.O. ('Jock') Cobham at the age of 88. Whilst he had been influenced by Maria Laach as far back as 1924 when at Cambridge, it is his years at the Queen's College here in Birmingham which made his place in history. He must have been one of the last survivors of Hebert's team which wrote *The Parish Communion* in 1937. He duly built the present chapel at the Queen's College – in 1939 a very *avant garde* though also archaizing basilican job, which then became the setting for those 'Westward' experiments to which Minchin bore witness. (One idly wonders if 'blessing the children at communion' came in

with Cobham also – does anyone know?) In later years he became Archdeacon of Durham and was a founder-member of the Archbishops' Liturgical Commission in 1955 (and indeed few survivors of *that* moment in history remain). I would be glad to add a supplement from anyone's personal memories of him.

C.O.B.

## This month's publication . . .

is the second 'Joint Liturgical Study' of the Alcuin Club and the Group for Renewal of Worship (£2.50). It is *The Canons of Hippolytus* with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary by Paul Bradshaw and Carol Bebawi. Astonishingly, it is the first time this document has ever been published in full in English.

## . . . and next month's

marks a centenary with Worship Series no. 100, *The Future of Anglican Worship*, by Trevor Lloyd and the whole Group for The Renewal of Worship. Readers will find this both imaginative and yet realistic, and it should provide good parish stimulus.

## . . . and Alcuin Club members (and others taking Liturgical Studies)

may like to note that the changeover of addresses and subscriptions has been proceeding as follows:

- (i) In December a blurb went to all subscribers on both Alcuin Club and Grove lists, pointing out that persons who were on both lists would be liable for payment on both. As a result of this a few subscribers cancelled Grove subscriptions – some failed to cancel, and probably received duplicates.
- (ii) During January to April, Alcuin Club had only the sketchiest of administrative organization, and subscriptions received were often not paid into the bank.
- (iii) At the same time, Grove Books temporarily (and no doubt inexcusably) lost the existing Alcuin Club mailing-list, so that the despatch of Joint Liturgical Study no. 1 was delayed for most Alcuin Club members.
- (iv) At the same time again, an error was made in the despatching from Nottingham to known Alcuin Club members, and, when this was discovered, the opposite error was sometimes made, duplicating despatch. (And the combination of (i) and (iv) *could* mean that the odd subscriber received *three* copies...).
- (v) We hesitate to say that all is now well, as there is yet many a slip. But the address-lists are recovered, there is a new subscription secretary for Alcuin (the Rev. Timothy Barker, Norton Vicarage, Windmill Hill, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 6QE), and information is coming onto the address system at Nottingham.
- (vi) In theory, if you cancelled your Grove subscription before April, then you would have no despatch of Liturgical Studies on a Grove invoicing basis, and would have it on an Alcuin basis as soon as the information reached Nottingham. If you did not simultaneously cancel

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your Grove subscription, then you might well receive two of each – and be financially liable for them. If you preferred not to renew your Alcuin subscription, then you would have had a duplication of the March Liturgical Study, but would only be invoiced by Grove Books for the one copy, and Alcuin Club would stand the cost of the other (so it is best not to send it back – you could send it to Alcuin Club though). (But we say 'in theory', because a kind of madness seems to have seized the system – but please check this minimal account above, and be sure the distributors were in the wrong before complaining . . .).

### A NEW PRAYER BOOK IN NEW ZEALAND

We gave advance notice of proposals for a new Prayer Book for the Church of the Province of New Zealand. The proposals were duly accepted at a special session of the Provincial General Synod in May. Brian Carrell, a member of the Commission, writes as follows:

#### Origins

The first fruits of the Provincial Commission on Prayer Book Revision were The Liturgy or Eucharist authorized by the 1966 General Synod, and Orders of Service (Sunday Worship, Daily Worship and Family Prayer) authorized in 1968. A further major revision of the Liturgy occurred in 1970, and over the next fifteen years a variety of services, and eventually an almost complete psalter of Psalms for Worship, were produced and authorized.

Although other Provinces of the Anglican Communion produced their definitive prayer books a decade ago, we believe that only now is the right time for us to publish A New Zealand Prayer Book. We have been determined to reach such a level of consensus in the quality of the services offered, their bi-cultural (and in some cases multi-cultural) nature, language sensitivities, and the range of worship resources provided, that the church will accept the new prayer book with pride, enthusiasm and confidence. Early indications are that this will be so.

#### Contents

A new *Calendar* provides for the commemoration of a wide range of New Zealand Christians, Maori and pakeha, associated with the coming of the Gospel to this country, as well as a representation of Christian saints and servants down the centuries from other parts of the world.

The 1987 proposals provide a number of *Liturgies of the Eucharist*. These differ from the 1984 booklet principally by way of addition – Fijian and Tongan translations of portions of the first rite, a new introduction to rite two (Thanksgiving and Praise) together with a complete diglot translation into Maori, and two Maori Eucharists not translated into English.

A greatly expanded set of *Liturgies of the Word* is provided. The 1982 Orders of Service material has only been lightly revised, but over 100 pages of full material for Daily Services (morning and evening), Daily Devotions (freer and briefer, more personal acts of worship and reflection), Midday Prayer, and Night Prayer (an updated version of Compline) is also included in this section. It is this material which has the greatest potential for shaping the spirituality of Anglican Christians over the next generation.

One service covers *Baptism* (infant and adult) and *The Laying on of hands for Confirmation or Renewal*. This is a largely rewritten service, setting out a celebration of the prevenient grace of God and our human response to it. The *Marriage Liturgies* are only mildly changed in substance, but more noticeably in format, from those authorized in 1976. Much more simplified and yet also more comprehensive will be the *Pastoral Liturgies* in the new prayer book. Three are revisions of earlier work (Holy Communion in situations of special pastoral need e.g. sickness; Ministry of Healing; and Reconciliation of a Penitent). One is a recovery in rewritten form of an earlier service turned down by the church (Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child). One is a completely new service (The Blessing of a Home).

The *Funeral Liturgies* are very similar in shape and substance to those authorized in 1980.

The *Ordination Liturgies* on the other hand are almost completely new services, particularly in the way they handle the acts of ordination.

*Psalms for Worship* are still substantially the work of Archdeacon D. S. Millar, one of the original members of the Prayer Book Commission, but they have been greatly reworked to meet inclusive language needs.

There is also provided a complete set of *Sentences, Prayers and readings for the Church's Year*. This includes readings according to the three year cycle.

Finally, a *Catechism* has been approved which captures the essence of the old but brings up firmly into the modern world and the life of a Christian today in a series of 71 questions and answers.

#### Assessment

How people receive this new prayer book will depend greatly on their personal preferences. Those still attached to the Book of Common Prayer will find it too radical and contemporary. Those committed to evangelism and church growth or to social action in the inner city will find it too erudite and complicated. Traditionalists will miss much of the familiar male imagery of God. Feminists will wince at the frequency with which God is still addressed as Father or Jesus as Lord. Literalists will be unhappy with some of the adapted uses of favourite scripture texts. Modernists will be uncomfortable with the weight of bible reading and references in the services.

But for most people A New Zealand Prayer Book will be received as a draught of fresh spiritual refreshment, unmistakably our own book while preserving all the favoured links with liturgy of the past. There is every prospect that it will stand out like a kauri among the more rapidly matured prayer books of the Anglican Communion. It will be the first such book to take seriously and completely the issue of inclusive language, and to provide a baptism rite that takes account of current ecumenical understandings of this sacrament.

Twenty years ago the theological issues centred on the communion service. They were issues such as the eucharistic sacrifice, praying for the departed, an epiclesis and the role of the Holy Spirit in the sacrament, the cross and the atonement as the heart of our commemoration. These are no longer the debating points in producing liturgies of the eucharist. Theological partisanship over those twenty years has been replaced by a consensus view on each of these matters, so the new services should be a unifying influence in the Church of the Province.

Those with a love for the scriptures will be encouraged by the degree to which these services not only include bible reading but also are soaked in the words of scripture in their prayers and praises. They show that it is possible to combine sensitivity to the human situation with loyalty to the written word of God.

Widely accepted and widely used, A New Zealand Prayer Book could provide our church with the soul it seems lately to have lost. Advent 1989 will reveal whether or not this is so.

### COB'S LITURGICAL SCRAPBOOK

**May:** (17) a real runabout – beginning at 9.30 with St. Bede's, Greet, a tin-tabernacle daughter church where no bishop has previously been – then to the cathedral for their parish communion – than a 3.15 centenary service for one of our great hospitals (it began as the 'Workhouse Infirmary') – at 6 I put my head round the door and say a welcome to the Birmingham-wide 'Claiming the Inheritance' service of black Christians – and at 6.30 a glorious climax with a confirmation at St. Stephen's Selly Park, where a packed congregation stands whilst several people lead in simple extemporaneous prayer for the candidates before I proceed with the given liturgical provision: (21) a deanery confirmation at Kingsbury and a strange, but splendid, happening – after the confirmation I announce (wrongly, but in accordance with a bad memory) that two persons will now renew their baptismal vows, and only one appears – I duly rehearse her, and am about to lead into Peace when a man in his thirties appears up the aisle and says to me 'I think I must be the second person', and so I lead him in renewing his baptismal vows too – and at the end of this ask if there is anyone else – it proves after the service that he is a Roman Catholic, and when I said 'two persons' and only one came forward he became strongly convinced that in God's providence he was himself the other – and so he presented himself; (23) I 'walk for the world' from West Bromwich to Birmingham – the world does not appear greatly helped, and I am left to reflect again on symbolic gestures (see re 3 May in last issue): (24) (Bank Holiday and little demand for confirmations) preaching at Keele University Chapel on prisoners of conscience – and the Chapel team present an imaginative service in which for the first ten minutes none of us has a hymn-book (though we are singing the 23rd psalm which does not help) – to remind us of those who do without when they meet – the eucharist follows an ecumenical text and has some kind of troika of presidents (I am invited to stand centrally but say virtually nothing) – the eucharistic prayer ends with the Sanctus, shades of Ratcliff and Couratin (and Keele are waiting for the day when their duplicated copies fall to pieces . . .): (26) first meeting of group to draft Enthronement rite for incoming of our new diocesan – how can we make it distinctively Brummie? (27) half-deanery confirmation at Bounds Green – the hymns being duplicated in a little booklet which has on the outside back-cover 'I want to be confirmed because . . .' and then follow 19 one-liners from candidates from a range of the parishes (e.g. 'because I want to be fully accepted into the church's family' 'because God has found me, and I want to be in his family'), and it emerges they were given bits of paper at the rehearsal and each told to write a one-liner, and these are it . . . (25) Ascension Day and I begin the evening with great celebrations at the College of the Ascension – African dances in the open-air leading us into a multi-lingual (including Danish, Ibo, and Thai!), multi-coloured, multimedia eucharist in chapel with the Pakistani, Bishop Michael Nazir Ali, as president and preacher, and I sneak out at the Peace and go off to Balsall

Heath where there are Ascension Day confirmations: (31) 9.15 at King's Heath (confirming Kings Heathens!) gives me scope to sneak into the Birmingham Civic Service at St. Martin-in-the-Bullring before noon and appear in time to give the blessing to the Mayor and some of the Corporation – and in the evening an 'extra' for the inner city parish which without warning or much precedent is presenting several candidates, so I have fitted them in.

**June:** (2) a passenger seat (next to the Roman Catholic Archbishop) as the new Free Church President of the Birmingham Council of Christian Churches is inducted by his predecessor and Bishop Leslie Newbigin preaches; (3) baptism and confirmation for an enormous throng from three parishes at Hay Mill – at the West End there is a seated graven angel, holding across her chest what looks from a distance like a tray held by a cinema usherette, but proves on inspection to be an enormous graven shell, containing within it a small dish-font itself provided with a further smaller shell for administering water; (4) Farewell at Queen's College to Gordon Wakefield at a fine ecumenical eucharist, with Gordon again proving himself (as Donald Gray describes him) 'the best Anglican we haven't got' – then I depart hastily to a mission in the suburbs where I share a kind of evangelistic worship service with singers and dancers from St. John's Harborne; (5) back to planning that 'Enthronement' rite with Bishop Mark Santer – and, yes, it will be 'enthronement', but also the inauguration of his episcopal ministry here (and no knocking on the door with a crosier . . .); (7) Pentecost – and no confirmations: after presiding and preaching at Curdworth (who are spread some embarrassment through the similar provision of the ASB and the Church of Rome on this particular feast), I find myself on the green outside the church, where a minibus draws up from St. Cuthbert's Castle Vale – pilgrims on the way to Holy Island, that seat of St. Cuthbert – and I open their back doors, pray for them, and cast in some water with an aspergillum – and then go on their way, rejoicing I hope – in the afternoon at Coventry cathedral a centenary thanksgiving for St. John Ambulance: (10) cathedral Eucharist to conclude the year of the diocesan Lay Foundation Course: (11) St. Barnabas' day – and a Patronal Festival at a St. Barnabas' where loudspeaker vans trying to draw up the votes before the polls close compete with my efforts inside church (13) a Saturday conference on worship with St. Martin-in-the-Bullring folk, leading up to their presenting a 'Shoppers' service' to which folk in the Bullring come in: (14) in the morning an ecumenical confirmation at Monkspath – the first ever in this two-year-old LEP; with an ecumenical innovation of 'catching up' on those from elsewhere to confer multiple membership – i.e. the founder members now have their denominational membership multiplied . . . at 4.30 a plunging of four baptismal candidates and one for renewal of baptismal vows (this last having been referred by a bishop elsewhere lest his plunge make waves where he lives – so he remains semi-anonymous) – then on to evening confirmation service.

### TAILPIECE FROM PORTSMOUTH

Portsmouth cathedral, never slow to make known their ways (usually very good ways), provide a printed baptism and confirmation booklet. All is well done in this rite – though in confirmation the bishop says at the laying on of hands 'N., God has called you by name and made you his own: Confirm, O Lord, your servant . . .', which might be thought to stretch the approved text some way beyond what has been approved.