

News of Liturgy

Editor: Colin Buchanan

Issue no, 153

September 1987

Editorial

For various reasons which will emerge below, I have had to consider the role of applause in liturgy, and this seems a suitable silly season subject for investigation here. I am unaware of any discussion of the issue in any connected form, so, if there are any principles to follow, they have to be discovered from scratch.

The points at which I find myself grappling with applause include the following:

- (i) after the Welcome in baptism and confirmation;
- (ii) after ordination;
- (iii) at the enthronement of our new bishop;
- (iv) at an institution or licensing;
- v() occasionally during or after a sermon;
- (vi) occasionally also when giving awards, or congratulating choir-boys or others on specific achievements;
- (vii) after a dance or choir item in an informal context;
- (viii) occasionally also at the conclusion of a conference on a high note.

I ask myself what applause expresses, and begin with a negative. I assert as a starting-point that applause is not necessarily, does not have to be, and generally is not, simply adulatory back-scratching. I suspect that it has been feared in worship lest it be man-centred congratulations for matters of earthly merit, detracting from the worship of Almighty God and setting human merit far too near the focus of attention. And it would of course be rip-roaring institutionalized Pelagianism if baptismal candidates were thought to *deserve* applause – making church a cross between a TV quiz-game and the average Englishman's idea of an American political meeting. But, again I urge, this is a cartoon and not a reality. Applause can simply express warm endorsement of an event, some personal identification with what as been said or done, and, if I may spout it, it can amount to an untidy and slightly more exuberant form of 'Amen'! It releases feelings, enables each person to express the degree of identification more precisely and individually than does an 'Amen', and gives corporate liveliness to that particular central matter for endorsement within the rite.

This rationale does of course carry its own warning. Liturgy is not to be played like a political meeting as a quest for ever more and more applause, more and more endorsement, and the suspension of critical faculties, as a rising frenzy of ill-based enthusiasm lifts the participants into a kind of corporate euphoria. In liturgy, if applause has its place, then there must be some rationale for its occurrence *here* rather than *there*. And, although it may sometimes be spontaneous, it is at least worth arguing that some measure of predictability should attach to it. Indeed, in most liturgical events there will be no more than one place in the rite where it is appropriate – and there are probably still many worshippers around who would think less than one place would be more appropriate still.

One open question which the discussion leaves is whether there is a case for direct applause of God. Some of that may be found when at, say, Wimber meetings announcements of physical healings are made – the instinct is to clap, but it is not clapping of either healer or healed. It is praise to God, the true healer, And that gives us a further clue. If it is appropriate to applaud God for what he does in our lives today, then it is even more appropriate to applaud him for what he has already done in Christ. And thus we come to the Easter Vigil and Resurrection liturgy – those who already blow horns or clash cymbals as the Gloria in Excelsis comes with the switching on of lights in the Easter communion will be perfectly ready to applaud as well – and/or shout – if no instruments are to hand. Let congregations praise God by putting their hands together.

The final question is by no means open. Leadership is crucial to the use of such an uninhibited means of expression. It is sensitive leadership which permits worshippers (by word, or sign, or atmosphere, or vibe) to express themselves to the full. Something of the sheer propriety of being human in worship is affirmed by the careful use of applause, as well as a re-exposition of the nature of a church building. But when the time comes that even the most carefully prepared leadership is caught by surprise by applause at the wrong place, then I have no advice to offer . . .

Colin Buchanan

I now come to the big risk *NOL* is taking this year. I have accepted advice which I value to incorporate that notorious harrower of all I write, Kenneth Stevenson, in these columns. He has a monthly column for the next year, and total freedom from editorial censorship (though not, of course, from rebuttal). But he begins on a necessarily sober note . . .

C.O.B.

FROM THE WINGS

Guest column by Kenneth Stevenson

The editor of *NOL* has asked me to write a monthly column, on the understanding that we both behave ourselves. (Readers known to either of us may realize precisely what this means). The purpose of the column is to inform and reflect on current developments in liturgical scholarship. This first article in the series is occasioned by the sudden death on the 29 August this year of Niels Rasmussen at Notre Dame University at the age of 53.

I met Niels in 1975 at my first meeting of the Societas Liturgicae. Niels was coming to the end of his Doctoral Studies at the Liturgical Institute in Paris, where he had been for some years a pupil of Pierre-Marie Gy, its director. The subject of his dissertation was on the Pontificals of the early Middle Ages, with special reference to their evolution. It was a magnificent piece of work, because Niels was an able medievalist who was at home in all the kind of documents needed to understand how medieval liturgical books developed, as well as how they were put into practice. I count myself lucky to be in possession of a copy of this 3-volume privately printed

work, never published. He chose to work on eight pontificals of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries, an era of considerable development in church building and inliturgy, insofar as both pertain to the office of a bishop. Annexed to the thesis is a copy of the article Rasmussen had written for the Botte *Festschrift* on the paschal prefaces in the Ninth Century 'Pontifical of Poitiers'. In this article, he showed how lapidary creative liturgy can become when it consists of mere quotation of sources that do not match happily with the language of prayer. Here is a lesson for liturgists today.

Niels was at home in the Middle Ages, but he had a critical eye on present developments, and here two examples can be given. In 1969, he wrote an article which was published in *La Maison-Dieu*, on the new offertory rites of the reformed missal of Paul VI. First of all he outlines the sources and tries to discern the drift of meaning within the sequence of actions and prayers at that point in the Eucharist. But there is a strong air of disappointment in his observations, perhaps looking back to the 1965 'Missa Normativa', whose offertory rites were considerably simpler. Secondly, in 1979 he wrote an article in an American Catholic publication on the life and work of liturgy in cathedrals, concerning the Maundy Thursday Chrism Mass. Once again Niels showed his awareness of the long tradition of blessing the oils on the Thursday before Easter, but he also made strong criticisms of the main innovation in the new missal for that day, namely the renewal of priestly vows in the presence of the bishop. He had the courage to say what many of us still feel, that such a rite draws a very sharp distinction between the ordained and the unordained, and that such renewals are an example of the self-conscious character of much contemporary Christianity.

Niels had travelled widely in his life, in more ways than one. He was brought up a Danish Lutheran, and converted to Catholicism whilst a student. He then joined the Dominicans, and trained in Paris, where his liturgical interests were quickly identified. After a spell teaching at Arhus University in the Department of Church History, he was made a visiting professor at the Catholic University of America in Washington in 1978, and this was followed by his job at Notre Dame in 1979, where he stayed ever since. He had strong ecumenical interests, and a particular love of Anglicanism. He had several fine medievalists among his students, and developed links between theologians and medievalists at Notre Dame itself. Both as teacher and researcher, he realized the difficulties English-speaking students find when trying to plot a reasonable chart through the maze of material for this period. It was a particular joy for him to collaborate with a colleague Bill Storey in making an English translation and revision of Cyrille Vogel's major work in French as an introduction to medieval liturgy. This book *Medieval Liturgy; an Introduction to Sources* was published last year by the Pastoral Press in Washington. I have presented the Teacher in Liturgy at St. John's College, Nottingham with a copy of this important work!

The world of liturgists will clearly be much the poorer from being robbed of Neils's verve and industry.

Kenneth Stevenson
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This month's publication . . .

is Joint Liturgical Study no. 3, *Modern Anglican Ordination Rites*, edited by Colin Buchanan (64 pages, £2.50). This brings together the ordination prayers (for all three orders) from a dozen modern rites, and shows their interrelatedness. It has an eye towards both the Lambeth Conference and imminent ARCIC discussions.

. . . and next month's

is Worship Series no. 101, *Anglicans and Worship in Local Ecumenical Projects*, also by Colin Buchanan. This Booklet is a Manual for use in LEPs particularly, with a framework of the new law involved, and an exploration of possible lines for policy-making about worship in the united congregation.

. . . and a reprint

is Pastoral Series no. 23, *Groups – Asking the Right Questions*, by John Finney.

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FURTHER TO INTER-ANGLICAN AGENCIES ON LITURGY

A most extraordinary event has occurred which reflects heavily upon the 'Brixen Consultation' held in August, and reported in *NOL* last month, along with the text of the 'Brixen Submission' to the ACC Standing Committee. The Report of the meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council, which was held in Singapore at the end of April this year, has now been published (*Many Gifts One Spirit – Report of ACC-7: Singapore 1987* (Church House Publishing for ACC, 167pp. £4.50)). It is within this Report that the proposal for an 'Anglican Communion Liturgical Commission' is to be found (pp.74-76). It is this proposal to which the Brixen Submission responded, and in some respects responded negatively. We now find, on reading the Report, that there are over two pages of reasoning behind the proposal – and ACC sent to Brixen the ACC's 'recognition' of the Brixen Consultation (p.73), and the proposal about a Liturgical Commission (p.76) – *but wholly failed to send any of the argumentation which lay behind the proposal!* It is not that the argumentation is very strong – it is not. It includes material like: '[The influence of the Old Prayer Book] is waning, though a recongizably Anglican worshipping character persists. Yet this needs to be consciously sustained, expressed, renewed and re-expressed' (p.75). No, the point here is that, however weak the support for

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)

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the proposal, a central Consultation, dignified in various ways by the ACC itself as at least semi-official, was by that same ACC deprived of the reasoning which had led the ACC to the conclusion to which the Consultation was being asked to respond. The members of the Consultation could properly now, if they thought fit, withdraw their advice. Not that the argumentation is overwhelming or would of itself have had that effect.

[More about ACC-7 on page 7 below].

Correspondence

Dear Colin,
The authors of books, pamphlets etc. reviewed usually quietly take their medicine, but I am encouraged by your reviewer of my *Offering of the People* to 'let the debate continue'.

I am not a liturgical scholar (which may be no excuse) and no doubt should have included reference to the anti-Jewish hostility to 'sacrifice' of the Apologists, but I would want to contend that there is no 'normative' assumption: as the author of *The End of the Offertory – An Anglican Study* (Grove Books!) says 'If we ask what sacrifice it was, then each of the second century writers has his own answer' (p.5). I would agree with the author of that Study that the Offertory is not one of the divinely instituted acts but then the eucharist is not a slavish imitation of the Last Supper. I would gratefully agree with R. P. C. Hanson *Eucharist icOffering in the Early Church* (Grove Books!) that 'It is originally the simple idea that in the Eucharist the elements of bread and wine are offered to God by those who take part in the rite . . .' I also agree with him, and said so at some length, that what is offered, unworthily, is the person of the worshipper; that primarily. If that gets overgrown by extension of the argument I am sorry.

However, my major contention is that the Eucharist is the primary means by which the worshipper 'appropriates' the Paschal Mystery. There are therefore two poles in liturgical scholarship, one of which is my present existence. The Saving Mystery is, at one level, a past event. How does it relate to me? Is my relationship entirely passive or not? Yes, indeed, it is a question of Pelagianism which your readers would not have thought, from the review, was dealt with. Moreover, Michael Ramsey, to be fair is not an enemy of the Offertory; the sentence quoted begins '*By itself*, however, this sort of teaching about sacrifice *can be* a shallow and romantic sort of Pelagianism . . .' (my italics). May I also quote from the Calvinist scholar, Max Thurian, in case none of your readers thinks it worthwhile to buy the pamphlet: 'this sacrifice is primarily a human act which cannot itself please God . . . Christ himself . . . makes up what is lacking in the poverty-stricken offering of the Church. He substitutes himself for the Church's miserable sacrifice.'

Finally, my major criticism of much modern liturgical scholarship is that it does not take the contemporary world seriously. Revising the liturgy is not just about searching for authenticity and bringing the language up to date: it is also about how I (tewntieth century human) relate to my Lord's Death and Resurrection, through the Eucharist. This is something that Reformed Christians have been fairly bad at. Hence the undervaluing of the Eucharist in that tradition until recent years.

Yours sincerely, Roger Arguile

Book Reviews

Edited by John Richards: *The Church's Healing Ministry: The Report of the 1958 Archbishops' Commission* (Published by Marshall Pickering/Renewal Servicing, 1987) £1.95.

This book is a synopsis of the Report of the 1958 Commission. There are some basic changes in the ordering of the material although it covers all the original sections on the meaning of terms; healing in the New Testament; some common misconceptions; sick visiting; healing services; evidence and healing; and co-operation between clergy and medical/nursing professions.

The synopsis reveals the value of what the Commission said. It was written in apparent frustration at the Report now being out of print, and with a desire to reintroduce it so that its wisdom is not lost. A desire supported by Lord Coggan in his foreword.

John Richards captures much of its wisdom and in places clarifies the text to advantage. However the original report was not a verbose document and the summarizing process, together with paragraph rearrangement, leads to a staccato presentation, and loss of some valuable material and depth. In the tailoring of explanatory sections the point being made is sometimes obscured or reduced to an unhelpful degree. The editing is most drastic in the section on co-operation between clergy and medical/nursing professions and the appendices. The report is edited to about one half of its original length.

This book is to be commended as a record of the content of the Report of the 1958 Archbishops' Commission. It is also a call to value it both historically, in the story of the rediscovery of the importance of the healing ministry in the Church of England, and in the learned and comprehensive nature of its teaching. In addition to doing much to hold on to the value of the original, this book will also serve as a useful guide to those aspects of the healing ministry that need to be considered in depth as much now as in 1958. It may also whet the readers appetite to seek out the original and share John Richards frustration at its withdrawal. In the sea of anecdotal literature on the healing ministry the Report still has a place as a sound and concise basis for considering the Church's healing ministry.

Carolyn Headley

Edward Pratt *Thinking about Marriage* (8pp., folder, free sample from author at 22 St. Helen's Parade, Southsea, Hants PO4 0QJ).

This pamphlet follows up the author's *Thinking about Baptism*, of which over 100,000 copies have been sold. The author's blurb states the following:

Can be used

- to give to couples who come to arrange their wedding or banns (especially those living together);
- as a discussion paper in a young people's/or engaged couples group;
- to give to those who are living together, including those enquiring about Baptism for their children! (A page is given to encouraging couples to wait for marriage);
- on a Church bookstall.

Write to him for a sample.

C.O.B.

FURTHER TO THE ACC REPORT

Many Gifts One Spirit (of which details are to be found on page 3) has also a discussion of 'Christian Initiation' (pages 68-72). Section 1 of this is entitled 'Admission to Holy Communion prior to Confirmation', and it reports generally on the Boston Consultation of 1985, and hopes that all Provinces will have in reports by early 1988. The Section is curiously illustrated by a photo of a chasubled priest patting a young (and perhaps slightly reluctant) child on the head, with the caption 'Children and Communion', which, it would appear, would have been better labelled 'Children and no communion'. The Section ends with a set of 'unresolved questions' – though these largely beg other questions or are already amply answered in the Boston papers and Statement (see Grove Liturgical Study no. 44). There is then a short Section 2, entitled 'Confirmation as Commissioning for Ministry and Service', and this looks from its title like our old (and unacceptable) friend 'confirmation is the ordination of the laity for their ministry'. The Section is less errant than that reading of the title would suggest – and almost gives a good mark to the practice of confirmation in Provinces where children are admitted to communion before confirmation.

There follow recommendations: asking the Secretary-General to step up communications on the matter, commending Lima and Boston for study, emphasizing what educational goodies are around if the Secretary-General would do his bit, and asking that the Lambeth Conference should see the Report (i.e. presumably these four pages and the picture from ACC-7).

SOME BITS AND PIECES

We have a circular from the Chaplain Missioner of the Church of England Children's Society, John Bradford, who suggests a prayer to be used at the second marriage of a previously divorced person, who has children – children whom almost by definition the liturgy ignores. The same would, no doubt, also apply (with some variation) at the marriage of a widow or widower with children. We hope to print a text soon.

The Installation of the new Archdeacon of Salop in St. Chad's Shrewsbury, George Frost, has brought in a couple of letters. Along with those well known 'Symbols of Ministry', there was a presentation of 'Symbols of Salop', including a rubric '*The Lay Chairman of Ellesmere will present some products from rural Salop*'. This apparently aroused expectations which were fully met by the triumphal entry of a huge Shropshire Blue cheese, and an aside by the Bishop about smell . . .

We note as we go to press that 27 September was the fortieth anniversary of the formation of the Church of South India. We send our modest con-gratulations, and propose to review the influence of CSI innovations world Anglican liturgy in a future edition.

We also note that in October comes the two hundredth anniversary of Charles Inglis landing in what is now Canada as the first Bishop of Nova Scotia. Would any reader send us an account of the projected liturgical events in Halifax to mark this duo-centenary?

COB'S LITURGICAL SCRAPBOOK

August: (28) back from Italy, first thing is to confirm a dying woman – unseeing and nearly unconscious, she yet receives the bread and wine of her first communion, and knows why I have come: (29) wedding of a god-son – he sends me up by opting for 1662 (almost straight); (30) confirmations in morning, baptisms and eight renewals of baptismal vows with submersion in the evening – these latter in a deep-sided inflatable paddling pool placed between choir-stalls.

September: (1) Swanwick chapel part of the week, but this evening I am instituting a new Team Rector of Solihull – the service includes a re-commissioning of the team ministers, ten presbyters in matching chasubles shadowing my words and actions, and a Rite A eucharist with home-made Probers; (4) Hospital Chapel to launch a full-time Chaplain's Assistant; (6) ministry of healing in Amington – leads by odd logic to a rite with sacrament first, preaching second, and laying on of hands at a rail third – in the evening 'Let there be light' as we switch on the newly re-done lighting system of All Saints Kings' Heath (and it comes up beautifully); (9) Institution in our (rare) countryside, distinguished by my dropping the Deed on the way out of the house, and thus inventing the legal language to masquerade as the Deed's contents when I come to the point of Institution – it is all still legal, I think; (10) Institution of David MacInnes at St. Aldate's Oxford – I go as a member of the Oxford Pastorate Council, and go looking forward to comparing another diocese's Institution service with our Birmingham one, but what do I find? – David MacInnes has persuaded the new Bishop of Oxford to use the *Birmingham* institution rite, so I have wasted my journey, at least for research purposes; (12) I slip out of a conference on building a black and white church, and go for an hour or so to the Methodist Synod which is welcoming its new Chairman of District at a eucharist – singing is unaccompanied, and perhaps the most notable oddity of 'feel' to an Anglican is saying the Creed after the Peace; (13) an odd Sunday – in the morning a family service and I grab my *Church Family Worship* and it serves me well (and I give out Sunday School prizes . . .), and in the evening I am preaching at a flourishing Elim congregation, where choruses on the OHP go with a great rhythm at the beginning and, after two sermons (mine was subsidiary) there is a healing ministry for people who stand in their places and the leader prays for them, and finally there is 'singing in tongues'; (16) almost the only straightforward confirmation of the month; (18) another Institution out of Birmingham – Julian Charley (of ARCIC) going into Malvern Priory – Worcester begin with sermon and go on to ceremonies (and I miss the sermon being stuck in a motorway jam); (19) a Saturday morning with a black and white fellowship gathering of Handsworth Churches, led by Shiloh Singers, and an evening launching the West Midlands Training Course for the coming year at a eucharist – my first presidency of the Eucharist in the Queen's Chapel, to which I referred in respect of Jock Cobham's death earlier this year; (20) another rare Sunday without eucharist – in the morning a harvest festival, and in the evening a non-denominational free-for-all in a daughter church beginning to grow in a community centre.