

News of Liturgy

Editor: Colin Buchanan

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Editorial

ORDINATION OF WOMEN IN SYNOD AGAIN

I fear this will only get to readers after the General Synod debates are over, but loyalty to the sheer event requires a record and a comment at the end of June 1988 about the state of the question in the Church of England and at its July Synod (4-6 July).

The ordination of women was 'seen off' in July 1975, and again in November 1978, and again, by implication, in the defeat of the 'Covenanting' proposals in July 1982 – actually once in the life of each of the three quinquennia of General Synod since it was formed in 1970. The issue has not gone away – and indeed it seems to be part of the internal logic of the matter that it will never go away until the ordination of women to first the presbyterate and then the episcopate is approved and implemented. No amount of 'no' votes by General Synod can make any difference, as I read the situation, to this inevitability. And if there are those who would point out that the Church of England is on the one hand only discussing the presbyterate, and on the other cannot take final decisions on that for nearly five years – yet the reply is obvious and instantaneous: the Lambeth Conference convenes on 16 July, with women presbyters as an accomplished fact in many parts of the world, with women candidates for the episcopate already having been nominated (though not so far elected) in ECUSA dioceses, and with New Zealand (for instance) having recently clarified the appointability of a woman bishop through vote of General Synod. The issue thus becomes a potentially divisive one – divisive in the opinion of some even to the point of rending in twain the whole Anglican Communion. For to those who have doubts about women bishops these doubts would extend directly to those whom they ordained (whether men or women), and that would cut mutual recognition of orders away from any sense of corporateness of Churches, and fork it off into a question about the individual pedigree of orders of each person claiming to be in holy orders – and that would be intolerable. So Lambeth faces the biggest question of all (pray for us), and the Church of England's smaller question stands against that looming backcloth.

So where is the C/E up to? Well, the diocese of Southwark brought a diocesan motion to General Synod in *November 1984* (!) asking for women to be ordained to the presbyterate, And now in July 1988 – nearly four years later – the first round of voting on draft legislation is to come. So at what documents is the Synod looking.

Firstly, there is a massive and anodyne document from the House of Bishops, *The Ordination of Women to the Priesthood – Second Report* (Church House Publishing, £4.50). This identifies five major issues and

then sets out, in an unreconciled way, at least two views on each of them. They are:

- 1 Priesthood, and the representation of God in Christ
- 2 Priesthood, headship and the exercise of authority
- 3 Priesthood, the unity of the church and the authority of the ordained ministry
- 4 The church's sources of authority for discernment and their use
- 5 The process of decision-making when there is division in the universal church

Only the first three of these are directly about the ordination of women – the last two are about procedures in indirect relation to the theological question. And in the first three, there are few points strictly liturgical, the most sustained discussion being five pages under 'the significance of sacramental symbols' (pp. 36-40). The most that can be said about those few paragraphs is that the opponents are actually taking ground which would preclude their going along with Rome, if that Church ever changed its mind – the indirect questions on the other hand are so angled that if Rome changed its mind, we also could – and painlessly!

One side-effect to the report is its total non-use of that pathetic FOAG document, *The Priesthood of the Ordained Ministry*, which, it may be recalled, was deliberately commissioned by the General Synod to give a theological undergirding to handling questions like the ordination of women. The House of Bishops obviously accepts the verdict of a split Synod, that the report is in fact no use whatsoever for the purpose for which it was compiled. We should now never see it again . . .

Then we turn to the legislation. There are two draft Measures – one enabling the Synod to pass Canons to provide for the ordination of women to the presbyterate, the other called, significantly, 'The Ordination of Women (Financial Provisions) Measure'. The former includes carefully drafted provision for bishops who do not wish to ordain women, and for parishes which do not wish to receive them, so the clauses look more complex than one might expect. But the latter draft Measure is the one which has stolen the headlines – for in it enormous labour has been spent on a scheme for paying compensation to clergy whose conscience will not allow them to continue.

Space and time prohibit further reporting. The outcome of the debate will be known round the world before *NOL* arrives, so I can only promise to report further next month about the implications and likely future timetable on the basis of the Synod voting.

In the light of these issues above, I can only add briefly that we noted the millenium of the Russian Orthodox Church, which marvellously came at the very moment when *glasnost* is allowing religion on television and freedom of thought (at least in part) to the citizens of the USSR. So there is a case for our prayers. And, despite the agonies of the major matter above for the Lambeth Conference, the sub-group on liturgy, which I mentioned last month, also needs your prayers.

Colin Buchanan

THE NEW NEW ZEALAND BOOK

The Church of the Province of New Zealand held its General Synod in May, and gave final approval to the proposed new Prayer Book, which has been previously reviewed in these columns. We gather the Book had a 'smooth and warmly approved progress' through the Synod, with some small and perhaps unexpected exceptions:

- 1 The Maori-language eucharistic rite, 'Na te Iwi Maori', was deleted from pages 121-6, at the request of Maori representatives on the Synod, because it used a pre-Christian term for God – 'Io'.
- 2 Carl Silvius Volkner was removed from the Calendar on what is in the English midlands St. Chad's Day. *NOL* does not know why he was previously included, but our reporter informs us that 'many Maoris would see him as a military informant, killed for this reason, rather than as a minister of the gospel, martyred for his faith'.
- 3 A move has been started to ensure that lay people may anoint the sick.
- 4 At the same time, the New Zealand Psalter ran into the really big trouble – mostly over the reduction in references to 'Zion' and 'Israel'. This question apparently took five hours of debate, but the Psalter finally got majorities of between 70% and 80% in each house.

Whilst the Book is finally approved, it is not authorized for immediate use. The Provincial constitution requires now that a twelve-month moratorium be observed, during which objectors can take any doctrinal questions to an Appellate Tribunal. We are advised that a 'likely date of introduction . . . is Advent Sunday 1989'. If there is no hitch, production, publication, and distribution will start presumably long before that date, and we will try to keep *NOL* readers informed.

THE JULY SYNOD

The July session of Synod runs from 4 to 6 July, and it will be difficult to get this *NOL* distributed prior to those days. The main issue of liturgical (let alone canonical, disciplinary, ecclesiological, political, and sex-discriminatory) interest is the ordination of women to the presbyterate (see Editorial). There is, however, something worthy of note in the leading Private Member's Motion, in the name of Mrs. Shirley-Ann Williams of the Exeter diocese:

'This Synod, acknowledging the increasing awareness of the eclusivity of the word "men" in our Liturgy, asks the Standing Committee to initiate a debate on "inclusive language" with a view to providing a set of alternative phrases to be used in the Alternative Service Book'.

The fifth in the list expresses concern about indiscriminate infant baptism, and the sixth asks for a chance to consider the 'Lima Liturgy'. Further down there is one on the elusive catechuminate for infants (!) which comes up once every ten years. But it is absurd to look at more than the first one or two, so these motions are left to be reported before later sessions of Synod.

IRISH RITES

We mentioned last month three Church of Ireland booklets of rites supplementary to the APB of 1984. We omitted the price, and now inform readers that they each cost £1.50 (sterling), being published by Collins Liturgical. In addition to those rites, we now hear that Canon Edgar Turner successfully proposed in the recent General Synod further forms for Renewal of Baptismal Vows, and for Baptism-confirmation-communion – both, as he points out in a letter to us, being items to which *NOL* drew attention as *not* provided in the first round of booklets. These new forms have not yet reached us, and are not yet available in commercial form – but will come soon.

THE LITURGICAL FUNCTIONS OF DEACONS

The Evangelical Group in General Synod are eager to canvass opinions from readers of *News of Liturgy* – whatever their liturgical stance or churchmanship – in order to inform a coming discussion between EGGS members and members of the Liturgical Commission on this issue. Brief comments in writing would be gladly received by Michael Perry, Eversley Rectory, Hampshire RG27 0LX.

THE NEW YORK ADVERT

The full advert from last month runs as follows:

The General Theological Seminary of the Episcopal Church is searching for a Professor of Liturgics. A doctorate and demonstrated competence in liturgics, especially Anglican liturgy, is expected. Housing provided, salary and rank commensurate with experience. Position open January 1, 1990. General Seminary is an equal opportunity employer. For further information write: The Dean, 175 Ninth Avenue, New York, NY 10011, U.S.A.

This month's publication . . .

. . . is Joint Liturgical Study no. 6, *The Bishop in Liturgy*, edited by Colin Buchanan, and published in time for the Lambeth Conference. Contributors are: John Halliburton, David Stancliffe, Bishops David Hope and Colin James, David Holeton and Michael Perham. There is a strong questioning of some of the 'received' Anglican traditions re episcopal ceremonial – and should be helpful in any parish where a bishop may come.

. . . and next month's

is Worship Series no. 104, *The Laying on of hands in the Parish Healing Ministry*, by Carolyn Headley. This is based on a very careful study of the scriptural material, and is carried through into an equally thorough application in parish ministry to-day.

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THE STEVENSON COLUMN

Liturgical Language

There has been a great deal of debate, some of it fruitful, on the nature of liturgical language in recent years. One of the recurring conundra is the way that liturgists have been accused of ignoring developments in other branches of theology. One of the scholars who has kept this view alive is Leslie Houlden, who wrote the famous essay, 'Liturgy and her Companions', in the collection edited by Ronald Jasper, *The Eucharist Today* (1974). Until recently, this line has gone – at least as far as the theological public is concerned – a little dead. But Leslie has come back to the fray, perhaps unintentionally, with some sharp and perceptive writing about the way in which doctrine is shaped in the New Testament. I think some of what he has written has liturgical implications. But first his exposition. (They are to be gleaned from two publications: 'Trying to be a New Testament Theologian' in AE Harvey (ed.) *Alternative Approaches to New Testament Study* (1985), pp. 122ff., and in more extended book *Connections* (1986), pp.62ff.) Houlden works out a fourfold development that moves from 1. Impact, to 2. Experience, to 3. Expression, to 4. Formulation.

Impact means the impact of the Christ-event, touching people's lives in all sorts of ways. We read of this in the New Testament and it is also a fact (we hope!) in the life of the Church as it spreads the good news. *Experience* is less immediate, for it happens when groups become corporately aware of the impact having taken place, and of the fact that nothing can be the same again. *Expression* is further on still. Here impact has led into experience, but it has to be put down into some form of communication, both for those outside (evangelism) and for those inside (teaching and worship). *Formulation* is the final stage; the expression of the experience of the impact has to be agreed upon by diverse groups, so that they can come to a common mind in a way that can make sense to a wider community, including posterity.

Houlden maintains that at each stage, the edges are blunted – in particular in that last part of the journey, from Expression to Formulation. It is here that the liturgical historian has to appear. Often the language of our worship suffers today from two things. First of all, it has been brought to birth too fast, in the rush to get agreement, when perhaps more leisure would not have gone amiss, either in thrashing out the doctrinal problems that we all know exist, or in bringing to birth a resonant and symbolic mode of liturgical address. In short, we may have lezpt from Expression to Formulation too fast.

Secondly, the language of our worship may lack the ambiguity to include and envelop the kinds of Christian experience (or – impacts!) that ordinary women and men have had either before they come to worship or in the service itself. By this I do not mean that liturgical language is supposed to mean anything and that we are supposed to enter an era of theological obfuscation. But I *do* think that there is a tendency in some of the prayers we use (but more frequently in the way parts of the services are introduced by well-intentioned but not over-subtle presidents) to predetermine what everyone is to experience. Many modern services have the habit of preaching at the congregation.

It is a truism to say that we are all different, and the fact that we live in a pluriform society means that people are going to reach stages of faith in a sufficiently complex way that reflects the society we live in. In many of our congregations there are young children who are spiritually more mature than some of the supposed adults. For that fact we should rejoice. It's a sign of health. The Church is alive and kicking.

But how do we relate to the liturgy in that sort of scene? I think that we should become more aware of a number of issues.

First of all, liturgy has an impact – but we should let it have its own subtlety and not be surprised that people are going to get an impact from things other than what we expect. (Preachers all know the stock case of the pious person who seems to want to discuss a supposedly deep point in the sermon but is actually concerned that the little throwaway spoke direct, and it wasn't the original script.)

Secondly, liturgy is an experience – it shakes down from a collection of individual impacts to a collective experience. But not everyone is capable of responding in the same way. Here is what might be called an 'ambiguity' – and a very rich one.

Thirdly, liturgy is about expression, because it seeks to express the inexpressible. But it cannot define it, otherwise there would be no point in coming to worship.

Finally, liturgy is formulation, but it can only be a *successful* formulation if what is agreed upon and approved blunts as few edges as possible on the way. One fine prayer in ASB survived this whole process – the memorable Post-Communion Prayer. 'Father of all, we give you thanks and praise . . .'. There are other examples. But there's further to go before we get it a bit better than it is now.

COB's LITURGICAL DIARY

Two months of COB again this month – a guest again next.

May: (1-2) NEAC3 reported last month; (7) another golden jubilee of church built by Barnes, enlivened by video screening of Barnes on film (in colour!) doing the opening – hitting staff on door, and wearing Convocation robes with Canterbury cap; (8) all-night youth vigil at cathedral with dawn eucharist – cancelled: so I simply have a Rite B 11 a.m. with no oddities; (12) Ascension day – and baptism and confirmation at St. Alphege Solihull, with five baptisms and 65 other confirmation candidates duly marched to the West end of a packed church for the baptismal profession, as Birmingham is now following the ASB order for this, and there is a great Western font. . . (13) UPA Church School Assembly with simple choruses (with Moslem and Hindu participants); (15) out in Warwickshire countryside for morning confirmation with coffee after on vicarage lawn, and in evening confirmation in a parish which uses a school as its parish church is (rightly) doomed – very free, joyful, and uplifting;

(18) enthronement of Peter Dawes as Bishop of Derby – must be another Provost-and-Chapter job, for the choir sings '*Ecce magnus sacerdos*' at his entry (after he has struck the door thrice), which his friends would never have expected – the novel (and by no means unwelcome) ceremonial is that all the diocesan persons, with Rural Deans, lay chairman of Deanery Synods, youths reps., and Uncle Tom Cobley ally themselves with the new bishop, and march in figure eight all round the cathedral and back to express their celebration of shared ministry – the result is we sing *four* hymns almost without a break by the time the conclusion is all over – and, oh yes, he did take the Evening Prayer reading of the day, which marvelously says 'Are you he who should come, or do we look for another?'; (21) I get out my liturgical cycle and go by train to Shrewsbury for the AGM of MORIB (Movement for the Reform of Infant Baptism) where I am selling books and giving address (in part trying to get the Movement to focus on 'reforming' not 'abolishing') to a distinguished gathering (including Christopher Wansey, David Pawson, Gordon Kuhrt, etc.), and find myself presiding at a eucharist which is clearly of a charismatic cast (not my fault – just the participants); (22) Pentecost, and LEP eucharist, picnic and rounders in the morning, confirmation at St. Martin-in-the-Bullring in the evening with candidates presented by sponsors each with a hand on the shoulder – I recall two years ago as I discover myself pursued by *three* cups at the administration – I had determined to preach on John Wesley (see 24 May coming) and in my re-reading his journal discovered that in 1738 also 24 May had fallen in Pentecost week, and that some of the nudging of Wesley towards the 'strange warming' of his heart came from a sermon preached on Pentecost itself on 'They were filled with the Holy Spirit'; (24) Wesley 250th – but no great central Methodist celebration in Birmingham although I have kept time for it – so I go to Queen's College, where our Chairman of District, Donald Eadie, is presiding at the Methodist rite, preaching (good but not much fererence to JW) and a non-stop and lovely diet of Charles Wesley's hymns; (28) yet another golden jubilee of a Barnes church – this one at Marston Green, with dramatic presentation in it; (29) St. Mark's Londonderry (which is Smethwick!), where a green frontal has been presented in memory of a local Mum who died a little while back – and so (as Trinity Sunday is last day of Pentecost octave and last day in white) after communion we remove the white frontal, and display and dedicate the green one at just the point in the Christian year where green re-appears.

June: (3) Irina Ratushinskaya at the Bullring again – launching her book – I interview her and Igor, and it is another amazing evening, if slightly less so than last year, and perhaps little is worship; (8) preach at a 1662 Evening Prayer which is Deanery MU Festival – rare experience; (9) Licensing of a Chaplain for the Children's and Maternity Hospitals – of great significance as the Birmingham Children's Hospital has stolen many headlines this Winter, and this is first full-time chaplain to be appointed; (17) Graham Kendrick and the 'Pray for Birmingham' team stage a three-hour worship event at the Aston Leisure Centre, including working over the 'Make Way' music programme (ready for a march to-morrow) – over 1000 present (mostly young) – one interesting worship feature was to turn outwards to the Centre's walls in order to pray for the city just outside – there was also much singing, no little dancing, praying in twos and threes, an address – and Graham Kendrick; (19) two services in the morning and

in the evening a 'celebration' at the LEP on a housing estate which meets in a school – over 200 present, including House Church persons, and I run my sermon by taking questions about Church unity (yes, and the questions do come) and first answering, then exhorting; (26) Ss. Peter and Paul for Patronal and Flower Festival at Coleshill in the morning, ending with banner-carrying march through street (weather cleared just in time) and conclusion (with versicles and responses I have written for the occasion) in the church field – in the evening we have a Group Ministry Confirmation, and take the Birth of John the Baptist, transferred from Friday, for the theme – and in the event go at 5 p.m. to baptize three West Indian adults candidate in one church, and then take them to next-door parish for confirmation.

(The following will come as a monthly serial for three months).

DRAFT CANON B 43: OF RELATIONS WITH OTHER CHURCHES

1. (1) A minister or lay person who is a member in good standing of a Church to which this Canon applies and is a baptised person may, subject to the provisions of this Canon, be invited to perform all or any of the following duties –

- (a) to say or sing Morning or Evening Prayer or the Litany;
- (b) to read the Holy Scriptures at any service;
- (c) to preach at any service;
- (d) to lead the Intercessions at the Holy Communion and to lead prayers at other services;
- (e) to assist at Baptism or the Solemnisation of Matrimony or conduct a Funeral Service;
- (f) to assist in the distribution of the holy sacrament of the Lord's Supper to the people at the Holy Communion;

if the minister or lay person is authorised to perform a similar duty in his or her own Church.

(2) An invitation to perform in a parish church or other place of worship in the parish any of the duties mentioned in sub-paragraph (1) above, other than duties in connection with a service of ordination or confirmation, may be given only by the incumbent and may be given only if

- (a) any duty mentioned in sub-paragraph (1) (f) above or, in the case of –
 - (i) any duty mentioned in sub-paragraph (1) (f) above or,
 - (ii) any duty mentioned in sub-paragraph (1) (a), (c) or (e) above, which is to be performed on a regular basis,the approval of the bishop has been obtained; and
- (b) in the case of any duty mentioned in sub-paragraph (i) (e) above, the persons concerned have requested the incumbent to give the invitation; and
- (c) in the case of any duty mentioned in sub-paragraph (1) (a), (c) or (f) above, the approval of the parochial church council has been obtained.

(3) An invitation to perform in a parish church or other place of worship in the parish any duty in connection with a service of ordination or confirmation may be given only by the bishop and may be given only if the approval of the incumbent and the parochial church council has been obtained.

(4) Sub-paragraphs (2) and (3) above shall apply in relation to an invitation to perform in a cathedral church any of the duties mentioned in sub-paragraph (1) above subject to the following modifications –

- (a) for any reference to the incumbent there shall be substituted –
 - (i) in the case of a dean and chapter cathedral, the dean and chapter, and
 - (ii) in the case of a parish church cathedral, the cathedral chapter; and
- (b) the provisions relating to the approval of the parochial church council shall not apply.