

News of Liturgy

Editor: Colin Buchanan

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Editorial

LAMBETH HIGHLIGHTS

The question of women becoming bishops (which constitutionally could happen any minute in USA, Canada, or New Zealand) was the big pre-Lambeth point of interest, and the focus of press attention. It generated its won secondary agenda—issues concerning authority for decision-taking in the Anglican Communion, and related issues concerning ‘instruments’ for holding us all together (an outcome which proved to be much desired by bishops who were clearly enjoying each other’s company so much). The cumulative effect of the primary and secondary issues was such as to produce irritation—and the glee of the British press in working up these issues was matched mirror-image-wise by the general run of participants who wanted to do other things. However, there were ultimately two plenary motions on the primary issue. The first (splendidly introduced by Bishop John Neill of the Church of Ireland) affirmed that we would respect each other’s decisions, whether they were for or against the ordination of women as bishops, and would do our utmost to minimize the ‘impairment’ of communion that might result. An amendment, narrowly accepted, made it clear that to ‘respect’ someone else’s decision was only to respect his or her right to make it—it did not bind those voting for the motion to approve the principle of such ordinations, and left them free to denounce them. So in substance there was little advance—we simply voted that, if our separate agenda pulled us apart, we would at least part still facing each other.

The other motion was that of the Archbishop of Sydney. It simply called upon all Provinces not to consecrate a woman to the episcopate. Members however thought that this was wholly unrealistic, and it was rejected by a 63%-37% majority.

After it was all over, the Bishop of London, quite consistently with his support of the first motion, let the press know that he might well be giving conditional confirmation and ordination to those previously ‘confirmed’ or ‘ordained’ by a woman bishop. He may of course not get the chance—retirement might catch him before such a dubious Christian appears in London diocese and bids for recognition of confirmation or ordination. (Incidentally, at a late stage, and without mentioning names, the Conference passed, with only one or two ‘noes’ noted, a motion that deplored bishops wandering into the jurisdiction of others to perform episcopal acts, but there may be no connection with the Bishop of London . . .)

So what were the rest of us up to? Why, writing section ‘statements’. And, sure enough, the section on ‘Mission and Ministry’ included four groups on the renewal of the church for its mission—and these four (with a slight interchange of persons) settled down to write on ‘Charismatic Renewal’,

‘Renewal through the Liturgy’, ‘Renewal in Theology’, and ‘Transformation’. I was duly part of the second group, and the nine of us working on liturgy produced a lengthy, and I think substantial, statement on liturgy which, whilst it has no vast authority (nothing from Lambeth has), does at least light some beacons. The statement is approved in principle by the section of about 130 bishops, and has not so far been seen by any of the others. It is anticipated that the Conference Report will be available by 1 November, and it is my intention, subject to the Lambeth authorities, to publish the same day the liturgy statement with an introduction and commentary, as an extra Grove Worship Booklet entitled *Lambeth and Liturgy 1988*. Watch out for it.

There are some plenary resolutions which bore upon liturgy also. I mention one now: the one which called for further study of the issue of admitting the unconfirmed to communion on the basis of their baptism. The section would not support sufficiently a slightly stronger call for action arising from study, so the plenary resolution came from Archbishop Brian Davis of New Zealand, and it went through without dissent. It should be of interest in England, as there is some reason to think the House of Bishops has delayed action on the Knaresborough report until Lambeth was over. I is doubtful what they could have expected to happen, as the issue was not highlighted for treatment by the (unsatisfactory) preparatory document. The motion does now call upon them to consider the ACC-7 report, which itself refers back strongly to the Boston Statement. But now, surely, they can delay no longer? Lambeth has given them a very tiny shove towards the right answer, and one hopes they will accept it. Perhaps someone could dream up the right synodical question to draw out the answer.

Colin Buchanan

A LAMBETH LITURGICAL DIARY (continued)

23 July (Saturday): The New Zealanders take their turn—and use their new Book, with parts duplicated for us. So we have a Maori song, and other Pacific variants—it felt much better than previous days, and one can sense that other countries are getting the message that the materials provided are there to be evaded rather than followed (to be fair to Alistair Haggart, he tells me he asked the meeting of Primates a year or so ago what he should do, and they declined to supply their own materials and asked him for a standard hand-out—but, oh, A & M should *never* have been accepted from the publishers, but rather a determined effort at a Conference song-book should have been made). In the afternoon we go to Canterbury Cathedral to Russian Orthodox Vespers, to celebrate (on the day of St. Anthony of Kiev) the millennium of the Russian Orthodox Church. Archbishop Kyril of Smolensk is present, representing Patriarch Pimen, and he drops big hints about a much rosier future for his Church. The Vespers are sung, mostly in Russian, with all chairs removed from the nave and for nearly two hours with no concession to the flesh. The presiding celebrant (Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh) tells us after ‘I often say that learning of Orthodoxy begins in the legs’—and we all agree. A young man says to me on the way out ‘Well, you could not do that with women priests’. I mildly point out that I do not think the Orthodox are expecting to have women priests. He continues that true liturgy requires men’s voices and plainsong. I say that the demands of a gospel outreach in Birmingham might often require a quite different liturgical starting-point. He persists

‘Liturgy has been ruined by bringing in secular things like guitars and women’. I suggest, still mildly, in return that his conclusions are so written into his premises that conversation is becoming impossible. He does not persist further . . .

24 July (Sunday): ‘Family Eucharist’ with the Archbishop presiding, and Janet Wesonga from Uganda preaching—she begins with teaching us a Ugandan chorus, later leads the African bishops in singing a Swahili Revival theme-song, and pitches in with an evangelistic call to bishops and wives present, only stopping short of asking penitents to come forward at that point. At the end we just manage to clap rhythmically to the Zimbabwean Alleluia which is at the back of the worship book. So we have progressed an inch—perhaps at the end of three weeks we shall be fairly free. The draft my Group has been putting together on liturgy is more or less at odds with what our worship has been like, but one can sense some expectations growing. I certainly hope we are truly taken to the many other countries here.

26 July (Tuesday): St. Paul’s Cathedral outing, with more robing and processing as a visible spectacle—liturgy unspectacular, save that we have a ‘president’ (the Archbishop of Canterbury) and a ‘principal celebrant’ (the Primate of Australia) who actually drives the bus. I thought we had got away from such ideas of presidency.

28 July (Thursday): Fast and Vigil—no lunch, soup and roll for supper, and all-night vigil beginning at 8.30 p.m., and going on till morning eucharist at 7.15 a.m. ‘Service of light’ (rather attenuated from Easter Vigil) begins it, and there are meditations led by Archbishop Desmond Tutu (much treasured), and intercessions begun on the hour all through the night, led by bishops of different Provinces.

1 August (Monday) to 5 August (Friday): The Conference has now settled for the pattern of daily worship, though I still encounter restiveness about it being flat, predictable, and uninspiring. Some more negative adjectives still are on offer . . . The Canadians give us native languages for parts (and a chief’s ‘blanket’ wrapped cope-wise round the Primate), whilst the Japanese put together enough Japanese speakers (like the translator) to run a small choir and give us a song.

Meanwhile the more pneumatic brethren (and sisters) finally get their act together and an ‘East Africa Revival meeting’ is convened at 6.30 a.m. on Thursday, and 6 a.m. on Friday and Saturday—twenty minutes of prayer, twenty minutes of testimony (some of it confession of resentment about the plenary business . . . but perhaps folk do well to be angry), and twenty minutes of bringing scripture to each other—punctuated by the Swahili Revival song.

6 August (Saturday): Feast of Transfiguration and ‘Hiroshima Day’. We conclude plenary worship on campus by Evening Prayer in the Sports Hall, followed by the ‘Service of Light’ which is in the service book (see 28 July above), followed by the Japanese and Burmese bishops leading us to a spot in the University grounds where, with a little prayer, a tree is planted

by the Japanese in memory of Hiroshima. We sing a song before the Service of Light (unattributed and probably therefore in breach of copyright):

“Across the generations, the Lord who made us all has summoned us into his peace. Can we obey that call? Our wealth, our pride divide us; fear splits the black from white; locked in the rivalry of death, the nations arm for fight. Yet still the world is waiting for the promise that was made of lambs and lions reconciled and no one left afraid.

‘The barriers were broken, a whole new world began when, born the son of Mary, hope’s dream became a man. Yet Christians march with banners and bless each fierce crusade nor heed the tears of Christ who mourns the wounds their swords have made.

We trumpet forth his kingdom: with war-cries claim “God rules”, and forget his chosen servants are the meek, the poor, the fools.

‘Yet, Father, give your children the peace that’s from above.

Transform our dark suspicions into the light of love.

Help us to find in conflict a reconciling word,

and proclaim by our example the Crucified as Lord, till the rainbow of your justice shall arch across the earth and the people of the Servant King share in his world’s new birth.’

7 August (Saturday): It all concludes with a closing eucharist in Canterbury Cathedral. All is planned as poker-faced, unimaginative, and straight as the opening service—including, for instance; a choir rendering of Te Deum with us all standing silently; the ever-present *Scottish* eucharistic prayer; ‘O Thou, who at thy eucharist did pray’ during communion; and an unknown hymn (‘Go forth for God’) to conclude! The only worship variant is the dedication by the Archbishop of a compass rose (the symbol of the Anglican Communion) after the sermon. But even then, not being able to see, I learn from neither the programme nor the event *what* is being dedicated nor exactly where—but I think it is a floor-patterning on or around the nave platform for the communion table. Well, there is an advance mood of restiveness among the participants, and one Bishop Jim Thompson puts us up to applauding the moment the Archbishop has given the final dismissal. At this point the programme has printed:

‘*Organ:* Prelude and Fugue in E flat, BWV 552 *J. S. Bach*’

Well, we break into furious applause. The organist sticks to *his* programme, and for a short time applauding bishops contend with Bach. We lose with honour, but do line the choir stalls and applaud again as each country before us leaves the cathedral—and find when the Church of England bishops process out that others are applauding too as we pass through them, shaking the occasional hand, and generally coming out more like rugby players coming off the field, than the standard pious episcopal procession. It never quite reaches whoopee, but at least the apparently timeless divine was invaded by a whisker of the temporal human and emotional—for we really have enjoyed each other enormously, and some of that needed to be seen. Perhaps we have dropped a hint re 1998 . . .

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'I ABSOLVE YOU' REVISITED

Dear Colin,

In recent years proposals from the Liturgical Commission to provide an order for the reconciliation of a penitent have been defeated in the General Synod, and a subsequent report prepared by Professor John Macquarrie on the issues underlying this rejection has been somewhat cavalierly dismissed by those for whom sacramental confession is not part of their spiritual discipline. I am concerned that the church should provide for sacramental confession and would like to urge those who seem opposed to such proposals to consider the following points.

1. The discipline of sacramental confession was retained in the Church of England at the Reformation (as it was among the Lutheran churches). Although the provision made was exiguous, and, according to the first exhortation in the Prayer Book Communion Service, was for the quieting of troubled consciences and 'avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness' of God's forgiveness, it was nonetheless part of Anglican practice. The canons of 1603 enjoin the secrecy of the confessional on the priest.

2. Anglican discussion of sacramental confession was critical of any suggestion of compulsion but in general recognized that the Prayer Book provided three different kinds of absolution variously described as precatory, declaratory and authoritative. The latter form (in the order for the Visitation of the Sick) reproduced the *ego te absolvo* formula. It was this formula which was characteristically employed in the revival of sacramental confession as a regular discipline of the spiritual life from the time of the Oxford Movement onwards.

3. Putting aside the kind of 'no-popery' polemic which has often surrounded sacramental confession, and recognizing that the discipline of sacramental confession is valued on a regular basis by many Anglicans and on an occasional basis by more, it is surely appropriate that provision should be made for a contemporary rite for the Reconciliation of a Penitent.

4. Although the history of sacramental confession makes it clear that the *ego te absolvo* formula is not an integral part of absolution in this context (it is only found in the Eastern Churches, for instance, at a late period and arising from Western influence), nonetheless there is no doubt (a) that this is the traditional and valued formula by which God's forgiveness has been mediated to those seeking it through sacramental confession and (b) that this form of words is recognized and authorized by the Prayer Book and therefore cannot be denied to be part of Anglican doctrine. It should therefore appear as one of the options within any order for the Reconciliation of a Penitent, at the very least on the same principle as the ASB included a version of Rite A which followed the order of the Book of Common Prayer, even though many on the Liturgical Commission, for instance, would want to say that the shape of the Prayer Book canon left much to be desired.

5. The many of us who have, over many years, known the value of sacramental confession both for ourselves and others as a discipline very near the heart of our Christian discipleship, would want to ask of those

who have opposed a new order for the Reconciliation of a Penitent which includes the *ego te absolvo* formula, to justify their denial of such a rite to those who wish to use it, when such a rite is not an innovation but rooted in the Anglican tradition both here and in the churches of the Anglican Communion.

Yours sincerely,

Geoffrey Rowell

[Michael Vasey will reply to this next month—Editor]

THE (FINAL) KENNETH STEVENSON COLUMN Is the Eucharist an Offering?

Alas, the temptation towards indiscretion which is well-known to be resisted in this particular organ of communication finally explodes! I am actually going to say something about eucharistic sacrifice, even though Colin Buchanan is the editor. Since I have known him for many years and enjoy a good school-playtime 'rag' with him at the best of times, here goes.

I first developed an interest in the subject when, as a child, the priest who prepared me for confirmation showed me a copy of the Scottish Liturgy of 1764, in which the words 'which we now offer unto thee' are printed in capital letters. I have no doubt that the motivations behind the eighteenth century Anglican trends north of the border were not just theological. As we know well today, there are many provinces of worldwide Anglicanism that are (not to put too fine a point on it) mildly 'anglo-phobic'—they love to be different from England.

But at root, the eighteenth century development, which involved USA as well as Scotland, was trying to reappropriate some of the things ditched at the reformation . . . in much the same way that much Roman Catholic practice in the past 20 years has been trying to do so with the Primitive Church. But how?

One route, espoused by the High Calvinists, is to assert that the eucharist only happens as a result of the heavenly intercession of Christ. Such a view is also to be found in some of the old Syrian liturgies (those related to the ancient Semitic tradition, not the Greek). On this view, to nail Christ too firmly to the cross runs the risk of 'immobilizing' him. I don't think I did full justice to this viewpoint in my book, *Eucharistic and Offering*. I kept calling it a 'back-door' into eucharistic sacrifice. I now realize that it is, from a dogmatic standpoint, the *front* door.

Another route, espoused by what might be called the 'Reformed Patristic' view, is to reappropriate the liturgical tradition of 'offering' (or 'presenting') the gifts in the eucharistic anamnesis, not to add anything to Calvary, but to bring the gifts before God in order that they may be consecrated, that the eucharist may be ratified, that the intentions of the church in gathering to make Holy Communion may be brought into reality. The agent of this consecration, ratification, realization is the same as the life-blood of the Church—the Holy Spirit. I don't think I stressed this sufficiently in my book either. I may have appeared to be following tradition for tradition's sake.

Yet another route might be called the 'kingdom-theology' view, which (like all systematic approaches to sacramental theology) runs the risk of logic at the expense of the whole terrain being reduced somewhat. On the basis of this approach, the eucharist is a partial realization of the kingdom of God, glimpsed at the Last Supper as much as when Jesus sat down to eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners . . . Sacrifice on this basis implies *cost*, and therefore the very act of making eucharist (not just the human response after communion) is sacrificial (Rom. 12.1 and all that).

The trouble is that for many people today, the 'offertory' is the only point where offering actually means anything, hence its popularity—and (in turn) the nervousness with which evangelicals approach it. I share their misgivings. (My Lutheran forebears, with their traditional fear of Pelagianism and the 'good-chaps-for-Christ-syndrome', have taught me a thing or two). Moreover, to use the presentation of the gifts as a 'mini-sacrifice' goes right back through Anglican reinterpretation in the seventeenth century, to the Medieval mass, with its offertory prayers. That's why many modern offertory prayers, optional or mandatory, speak in paradoxical terms—the gifts are there, but they're already God's. For me, it is a pity that some Catholics look askance at alleged inadequacies in the eucharistic prayers of ASB, and use the optional provisions of the offertory as a substitute (here is the back-door, if ever there was one!) But this is nothing new, as my book tries to show.

The more I think about this theme, the more essential I believe it to be in eucharistic discourse no less than in piety. But we do not serve it well by slavishly following Western Medieval tradition (on the one hand) and swallowing the rhetoric of Protestant Pietism (on the other). We need a fresh—and a wider—approach. To combat the 'eucharist-and-chips' trends of the contemporary Church, we actually need to get the sacrificial metaphor back. If we had better texts, it would help. But Anglican theology and piety are such slippery things anyway, that it is quite possible for prayers written with one express intention to be reinterpreted in a totally different direction! If we began to see the offering of spiritual sacrifices in other acts of worship than just when we celebrate the Lord's Supper, then we might be taking that one step.

Kenneth Stevenson

P.S. This Newsletter has been full of self-advertisement from the start! Readers might like to know that I've written a 'pop' version of *Eucharist and Offering*, which will be published next March by SPCK, entitled *Accept This Offering*. Thematic in scope, it looks at the eucharist in its unfolding ingredients as celebrated today (approach, word, prayer, preparation, eucharistic prayer, communion, conclusion). Also, I've written an article entitled 'Eucharistic Sacrifice—an Insoluble Liturgical Problem?' which will be appearing in *Scottish Journal of Theology* (that noted bastion of Tridentine and Anglo-Catholic orthodoxy).

HOUSE OF BISHOPS IN MAY

The Minutes of the meeting of the House of Bishops on 23 May escaped us last month. They record briefly that the Liturgical Commission expects to bring a report on the question of the Reconciliation of a Penitent to the October House of Bishops meeting, and also record that the House saw an outline of a report, also due in October, on 'Inclusive Language in Liturgy'.

This month's booklet . . .

. . . is Evangelism Series no. 3 (and sounds like a Worship one in a way), *Exclusive Language—A Hindrance to Evangelism*, by Church Army Captain Barbara Temple. She is very clear that women who are put down by society cannot easily feel welcome in a church where the language does the same. She herself has been working among prostitutes and writes with a warmth that springs from that experience.

. . . and next month's

is Joint Liturgical Study no 7, *Inculturation of the Liturgy: The Eucharist in Africa*, by Phillip Tovey. This study displays the fruits both of the author's experience of teaching liturgy in Africa and of his research since returning to England.

THOSE ECUMENICAL CANONS PASS AT LAST

Whilst the exact date escapes us still, we are reliably informed that the Church of England (Ecumenical Relations) Measure 1988 finally was approved in the Commons in the second half of July, and that the two Canons which are ushered in by that Measure will indeed be promulgated at Synod in November. Now is the time for all Local Ecumenical Projects and diocesan ecumenical officers to study again Canon B44, the text of which (with explanation) appears in Worship Booklet no. 101, *Anglicans and Worship in Local Ecumenical Projects*. The less interesting 'general' Canon B43, which does radical things like allowing Methodist ministers to administer the elements at an Anglican communion service, we are attempting to publish bit by bit. The first instalment came in June *NOL*, and the second follows here.

2. Notwithstanding any provision of any Canon, a bishop who receives from a person authorized by a Church to which this Canon applies an invitation to take part in a service may in the course of that service perform any duty assigned to him if—

- (a) the duty assigned to him is or is similar to a duty which he is authorized to perform in the Church of England; and
- (b) he has before accepting the invitation obtained—
 - (i) the approval of the incumbent of the parish in which the service is to take place, and
 - (ii) in the case of an invitation to take part in a service in another diocese, the approval of the bishop of that diocese, and
 - (iii) in the case of an invitation to take part in the ordination or consecration of a minister of a Church to which this Canon applies, to take part in a service of confirmation or to preside at the Holy Communion, the approval of the archbishop of the province.

3. Notwithstanding any provision of any Canon, a priest or deacon of the Church of England who receives from a person authorized by a Church to which this Canon applies an invitation to take part in a service may in the course of that service perform any duty assigned to him if—

- (a) the duty assigned to him is or is similar to a duty which he is authorized to perform in the Church of England, and
- (b) he has before accepting the invitation obtained—
 - (i) the approval of the incumbent of the parish in which the service is to take place, and
 - (ii) in the case of an invitation to take part in the ordination or consecration of a minister of a Church to which this Canon applies or to preside at the Holy Communion, the approval of the bishop of the diocese in which the service is to take place, and
 - (iii) in the case of an invitation to take part in any service on a regular basis, the approval of both the bishop of the diocese and the parochial church council of the parish in which the service is to take place.

In this paragraph any reference to a male deacon includes a female deacon.