

# News of Liturgy

Editor: Colin Buchanan Issue no. 170 February 1989

## Editorial

Having ten days in Kerala in South India in the middle of this month inevitably leads me to report on the Mar Thoma Church. Probably readers of *NOL* just know the name without very much understanding of the character of this reformed Eastern Orthodox body. It is a vigorous and dynamic Church, speaking Malayalam as its native tongue, and counting its members worldwide (for there is a great diaspora) at around 700,000, with around 500 clergy. St. Thomas, it is claimed, landed in India in 52 A.D., and founded a Church which can certainly be traced during centuries following, and which existed in strength when Vasco da Gama reached India in 1498. It was briefly brought under the aegis of the Pope from 1599 to 1653, but the coming of the Dutch broke the secular forces imposing Roman Catholicism, and the large part of Orthodox Christians asserted their independence, and returned to the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Antioch – a connection which has been a highly emotive and even fissiparous factor in the history of Indian Orthodoxy ever since. When the first chaplains and CMS missionaries came to Kerala in the early nineteenth century, they attempted to work within this Syrian Church – and their seed suddenly sprouted through a reforming presbyter, Abraham Malpan, who in 1836 joined with eleven others in issuing a memorandum about reform, and then in his own parish of Maramon celebrated the liturgy in Malayalam (instead of Syriac) and altered the text where the invocation of saints or petitions for the departed occurred. The general structure of the Liturgy of St. James was retained, and the split was at first internal to the Orthodox Church. In time, however, the split became focussed on the persons of alternative Metropolitans, and the Mar Thoma people, retaining a handful of parish church buildings, in general were forced to leave and form their separate reformed Orthodox Church – called Mar Thoma. The liturgy remains relatively Eastern, but much of church life is centred on Bible study and evangelism, and there is great vitality. Further features of unreformed Orthodoxy which have been abolished include private confession (at least as an imposed discipline) and the devotional use of icons. I was there to speak at the Maramon Convention, an amazing gathering at which it is claimed 100,000 people are present at the final meetings – and, while I think this is a little exaggerated, it is a sight which nothing in England (or perhaps anywhere on earth) can rival. The people sit on a stony river-bed (exposed in the dry season) for upwards of two hours three times in the day. They are led in song by a choir, but remain seated throughout. They drink in biblical addresses with evident thirst – and they give enormous encouragement to a visitor from the (by comparison) somewhat tired and effete Church of England. So I have been greatly privileged – and readers of *NOL* are captive in effect to what the Bishop of Peterborough called at the Lambeth Conference (speaking about going back to his diocese after the Lambeth Conference) ‘other people’s holiday slides of places you do not know, and do not especially want to

know’. Well, it will not happen again in a decade or two, so please bear with me. (And I spared you some of the slides . . . and you will not get a separate diary).

The Church of England formally entered ‘full communion’ with the Mar Thoma Church in 1973, and the Churches of North and South India have a three-sided concordat with it. One of the ways this is expressed is in that each of the three Churches includes prayer for the leaders of the other two into its official liturgy – and the three eucharistic liturgies are published in English as a single booklet to give further impetus to the concordat. So it was very official that I was not only preaching at the liturgy but receiving communion also. One of the early effects of the reformation (as in all reformations) was the restoration of the cup to the laity. The bread is leavened, and the wine is (I would judge) not alcoholic, and is poured into the mouth from a spoon, separately from the bread.

I was only in Kerala for two Sundays, and I worshipped in the two parish churches near the Convention – two that were retained by the reforming party when the split came. At each I had an English text to follow, though it was difficult to know where I was some of the time. At the second one bishop was officiating, but the Metropolitan was also present – and showed me what is expected of a bishop in the ‘sanctuary’. There is quite a bit of facing East – and in India that is *not* facing Jerusalem! But the special benefit I had was in observing the Metropolitan admitting about a dozen 14 year-olds to Communion. When they are baptized in infancy they receive the anointing (the *muron*) which is viewed by the Mar Thoma Church as the sign of the Spirit, and in some ways equivalent to Western confirmation, but they do not receive communion. So the rite I observed is not reckoned by them as confirmation, has no sacramental status whatsoever, can in the absence of a bishop be administered by a presbyter (but rarely is) – and yet is remarkably like Anglican confirmation. The Metropolitan asked them to renew their baptismal profession, as they stood at the communion rail, boys on the North, girls on the South. He then went along the row laying his hand on each, making the sign of the cross with his thumb, and saying a prayer of blessing. He then stood in the middle and gave a Bible to each, as they turned inwards and filed past him. They later received communion first with their families accompanying them.

There is only one centre in England – in South London. So readers may find that the occasional Mar Thoma Christian in England finds his or her way into a Church of England congregation. Do receive these gracious Christians warmly – they have much in their zeal and faithfulness to convey to us.

Colin Buchanan

## GENERAL SYNOD, JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1989

General Synod from Monday 30 January to Friday 3 February. The following more-or-less liturgical items are reported:

1. The Ecumenical Canons B43 and B44 were at last promulgated on 30 January.

2. The Private Members Motion on indiscriminate baptism by Roger Godin had been moved in November, and debate was resumed. Two amendments were carried, and finally the Synod accepted it on a show of hands in the following form:

‘This Synod calls attention both to the concern over apparent indiscriminate Baptism, as expressed in “Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry” documents, and increasingly shared by many people of differing Theological persuasions in The Church of England, and also to the concern felt by others over the Theological implications of rigorous Baptismal policies, calls upon the Standing Committee to initiate within the lifetime of this Synod a debate based upon a suitable discussion document concerning current theological, pastoral, evangelistic and ecumenical issues.

Roger Godin contributes his own account below.

3. The debate on *Making Women Visible* was deferred until the July Group of Sessions.
4. The Private Member’s Motion on inclusive language (see *NOL* of last October) was reached, but was not moved and therefore lapsed.

One tiny side-bit of Synodical business was the introduction of a new clergy representative of Salisbury diocese, a certain Michael Perham.

## HOUSE OF BISHOPS 16 JANUARY 1989

The Minutes of this meeting reveal all kinds of liturgical business, which clearly *was* completed, despite our report last month. It must have been rushed however.

### The Revised English Bible

5. Lord Coggan, as Chairman of the Joint Committee on the Revised English Bible, addressed the House on the background to the preparation of the REB and the arrangements for its publication.

### Reports from the Liturgical Commission

6. i) **Reaffirmation of Baptism**  
The House considered a paper – HB (88) 25 – and asked that the Commission should report further to the House at its next meeting.
- ii) **Funeral Service for a Child Dying near the Time of Birth**  
The House considered a paper – HB (89) 3 – reporting on the amendments made to the service in the light of the discussion at its previous meeting. The House agreed that the revised text of the service should be published as one commended by the House for use.

- iii) **Ministry and the Time of Death**

The House considered a paper – HB (89) 2 – reporting on the amendments made to the rite in the light of discussion at its previous meeting. The House agreed that the rite (with one further amendment) should be published as one commended by the House for use.

- iv) **Proposals for Liturgy in UPA’s and for Family Services**  
The House gave preliminary consideration to a late stage draft – HB (89) 4 – of a Report from the Commission. The Commission was asked to take account of the comments made in its preparation of a further draft which the House could consider at its next meeting.

8. **Ecumenical Relations Measure and Canons: Code of Practice**

The House considered a paper – HB (89) 1 – to which was attached a draft of a Code of Practice. The House agreed a Code, subject to a number of small amendments, and that it should be published as soon as possible.

### ECUMENICAL CANONS – CODE OF PRACTICE

The ‘Code of Practice’ is to be published following the meeting of the House of Bishops (see page 2 above). A re-touched draft was made available to a conference of diocesan ecumenical officers and similar persons on 6 February. The final form of the Code is, we gather, to be agreed between the Bishop of Winchester and the Board of Mission and Unity, and it is that which will be published. Some *re-touching* arose from discussion on 6 February.

Whilst a large amount of the Code is concerned with procedures, there are lengthy sections on the eucharist and on baptism and confirmation. We will review these fully when the printed edition is ready. Of some interest may be the following extract:

‘Recent liturgical revision in the Church of England has not described the preparation of the bread and wine as The Offertory, nor has this action been identified with the dominical act of taking. Also the rites do not speak of the bread and wine as being offered to God in the eucharistic action in a way that asserts that the gifts are being offered in sacrifice.’

An appendix gives extracts from the Lima Statement, and others touch on the practices of other Churches. My own main problem – that of getting legal help *re* the form of ‘Instruments’ under Canon B44 – is not mentioned. But at the Conference on 6 February we were *nearly* told to go and do our own thing.

Oh yes, and another tin-tack: I do not think the Code takes aboard the provisions of Para. 6 (i) (e) about ‘joint services’, on which see my Booklet . . .

C.O.B.

### STILL TROUBLED WATERS?

(Contributed by the Mover of the Private Members’ motion in the General Synod – for the text of the motion see page 3).

What a lot of words and struggle for a motion that does not even guarantee Canon Law revision nor uniform baptismal practice nor even a proper response to BEM and Lambeth! But what was sought – a commitment within the next two years for an informed action debate – has been

achieved despite the vagaries of Synodical machinations. I had to move the motion a day earlier than expected, which then suffered an adjournment for three months then another for a day, seven amendments of varying degrees of friendliness, a procedural motion to junk the lot, and a heavy intervention from the Eborian Hobby stables (sadly the jockey departed before several apparently successful unseating attempts).

I learned a lot too.

- (a) ‘rigorist’ and ‘indiscriminate’ are now banned words (unless preceded with the apparently disarming ‘apparent’ adjective);
- (b) folk religion still reigns – obstinately hindering those who try to lead with their theologically ecumenically sharpened pastoral chins;
- (c) there even remains a vestige of ‘BCP baptism is British and good’;
- (d) theologians can be painful (when did we EVER get our theology right before taking action ‘I don’t recall that call before ASB was published’)? Nice idea though!

Whither now? Much depends on how the Standing Committee go about organizing the discussion document. Most speakers begged for it not to be a monograph – so this time we hope we won’t be caught ‘Knapping’. I have tried to build a bridge over hot troubled waters. Let’s hope that the Standing Committee produce some cooling oil.

Roger Godin

### Book Review

Donald Gray (Edited on behalf of the Joint Liturgical Group) *The Word in Season: the Use of the Bible in Liturgy* (Canterbury Press, Norwich, 1988) 141 pp., \$5.95.

‘JLG’ come up with a symposium about every third or fourth year, and it was probably time for another. This one consists of sixteen shortish chapters, contributed by thirteen authors – almost a clean sweep of the JLG members of around 1985. The central chapters are about calendar and lectionary, and it is clear that the mainspring provocation for the production of this particular material is the existence on the British scene of the Roman Catholic provision and the JLG’s own two-year alternative pattern, followed quite largely by the main non-Roman Churches. Indeed it must have taken the greatest restraint on the part of Raymond George, to name but one, simply to expound the principles of the JLG system in the longest chapter in the book, and never once to draw a contrast unfavourable to the all-devouring three-year monster waiting in the wings to swallow up JLG’s frail offspring. Indeed he is even prepared to acknowledge that a three-year ground-plan ‘has certain advantages’ (p.99) – though this is balanced by a cumulative set of ‘advantages’ listed as we go for the JLG provision, and it is of course implicit that these are advantages over the Roman Catholic scheme. As the JLG pattern appears in peril on the world scene, it is commendable that he plays it with a cool nerve and judicious under-statement. It will be interesting to see how the balances look ten years from now.

Some of the flanking discussion looks lightweight, and possibly even only included to give the whole JLG a role. The opening three chapters, two by Colin Thompson and one by Neville Clark, take too determined a

view that ‘the Church produced the Bible’ (I would be happy to demonstrate the opposite); there is then some vintage Gordon Wakefield on ‘which version of the Bible?’ in which the poor old TEV gets its come-uppance. The NIV gets a beta-plus where Gordon Wakefield discusses the form-book prior to the race, but once the competition is on, this short-odds contender is never mentioned again, and its sire, the RSV, romps home against a poor field. Astonishingly, the NEB, which is written off by form-book, bookies, and punters alike before the race, comes through to take second place without anyone having noticed that it had recovered from the bad recorded form earlier. Tips on reading the Bible aloud, or on liturgical preaching, or on responding to the word which come in other chapters are necessarily rather lightweight. The fundamental principles come in discussion of the desirability of calendar and of lectionary, and it is *there* that the collection is focussed.

COB

#### This month’s booklet . . .

. . . is Evangelism Series no. 5, *A Strategy for Rural Evangelism*, by Chris Edmundson, diocesan missionary for Carlisle diocese.

#### . . . and next month’s

is Joint Liturgical Study no. 9, *Liturgy in Ancient Jerusalem*, by John Baldovin.

#### . . . and last month’s undeliberate error

was the printing of Ethical Study no. 72, *Brain Grafts*, with the last four pages missing. The printers are replacing these with new copies. Defective ones are not wanted back, but please mark your copy on the outside *as* defective – or scrap it.

#### Correspondence

Dear Colin,

*News of Liturgy and ‘Bread’*

I can solve all your problems regarding *‘Bread’*.

It is filmed at my church, St. Mary the Virgin, West Derby in Liverpool. Normally they do ask my advice when filming a service. When they filmed a baptism, for example. I was able to advise them that they had the service entirely the wrong way round: they were giving the light before they had baptized the child! I was able to re-write the service at that point and, to show them how a Vicar baptizes a baby!

With regard to the wedding, they asked my advice about movement, etc., but not about the words. I suspect that they saw the yellow book lying at the back of church and handed them out to the ‘extras’ without realizing exactly what they were doing.

I have advised them as to their *faux pas*!

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We are about to be used by ‘Brookside’ for another wedding. When their researcher called to discuss this I think I persuaded him to use the ASB Wedding Service. If they do, will this be the first time it appears on a ‘soap’?

Incidentally, I receive no fees for my advice!

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Roger, Wikeley, West Derby Team Ministry

Dear Colin,

#### *Liturgy of a Grecian Urn*

I am intrigued that the Bishop of Aston can find an actual event unbelievable. As a staff member at Queen’s College who presided at a celebration of the Eucharist according to the Prayer Book of 1549 (To what green altar, O mysterious Priest), I cannot forbear to respond to such account. One of our customs is for each group of students and their tutor to put on one major service a year. A lot of things can go, though it is rarer for chandeliers to be swung from, or even simply swung. This group chose to use Cranmer’s First Rite, and I rejoiced in the opportunity to use it.

This was not to be a mock-up, an archaeological reconstruction, but the week’s main eucharist. The idea was therefore to try and find out what it would be like if 1549 had not been replaced by Cranmer’s Second Book or any other successor, but where the tradition to which 1980 had provided an alternative. Inclusive language was used because historical pedantry (not changing three words) is no justification for offensiveness; the Peace was warm because that is how it could be recognised as the Peace (the Priest exchanged it with Deacon and sub-Deacon only, which was historically correct).

For the Priest the experience was a powerful one; the prose the flowing stream, its current smoother than that of later versions. And one was very aware of how in 1549 it must have felt to hear all this suddenly in English. O Attic shape!

Was this tea in a Grecian Urn? Why not champagne in Venetian glass? If the Bishop would like a booklet on principles, I can supply a couplet instead:

‘Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty’, – that is all  
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

David Parker, The Queen’s College

#### SMALL ITEMS

Barbara Harris was duly consecrated suffragan bishop of Massachusetts on 11 February 1989 – and a report is due for *NOL*, but has not yet arrived. The Bishop of London has formally stated that he renounces communion with her and all bishops who participated in the event. Once again, the exact implications of this are not clear (we have received letters about what ‘cannot accept’ (the ordination of women) meant in the statement of 1500 English clergy before Christmas, and we hope to comment on that soon).

The Code of Practice agreed by the House of Bishops for implementation of the Ecumenical Canons is now more public than last month, and printed copies are awaited soon – and we hope to comment next month. Meanwhile, Michael Vasey (of St. John’s College, South Bailey, Durham) would like to see any samples of ‘joint confirmation’ (as would *NOL*).

MORIB, on which we have reported at intervals (and COB is the president) is running regional meetings about the need for baptismal reform at six centres this year. The London one is on Saturday 6 May, from 10.30 to 3.45, at the American Church, 79 Tottenham Court Road. Speakers are Gordon Kuhrt, Roger Godin (see elsewhere in this *NOL*), and COB. Booking form from 94 Clive Road, London SE1 8BU.

## DIocese TO DIocese

Editors: Martin Dudley and John Corbyn

#### Winchester in action!

The Winchester DLC, as befits its Bishop’s significant role in liturgy, has an enviable reputation for translating theory into practice. This they have done most successfully with their Family Service days. Two have already been done and oversubscribed, and at least fifty people would like another one.

There is always a danger when a day features an ‘expert’ that it will become a one-man-show, the expert telling everyone else what to do. The desire for it to be like that comes from the participants, they want to go home with a set of instructions to follow and a collection of texts and ideas to use. Canon Roger Job, chairman of Winchester DLC, made it quite clear that it would not be like that. Whilst Trevor had much to share, so had other participants, and the end-result could not be a diocesan order for family services.

The most important thing for other DLCs is how Winchester did it rather than what the day was about. First of all, the location was perfect. The church centre at Chandlers Ford provided a large and comfortable meeting room together with plenty of places to go in groups. There was a sound amplification system and provision for an overhead projector. The OHP was used to great effect by Trevor. (Will evangelicals please teach us catholics how to use them?). The main hall also had a useful bookstall.

Second, the day was well-balanced. The usual registration and coffee, with allocation to groups, followed by an act of worship, using some of the Commission’s new material. We were welcomed by Canon Job and then the day and the task were introduced by the Committee’s Secretary, Charles Taylor. This was followed by 45 minutes in groups in which we shared our own experience of family services. (I wondered why some people were there as they already had extremely successful and fruitful services. Yet no one really seems convinced that they have the right formula and they search for the philosopher’s stone, genuinely expecting to find it). Half the groups reported back, in a brisk and business-like way, for which I was very grateful.

Then Trevor gave his major input, which was clear, entertaining and to the point. He came across as a pioneer in the field who had identified many problems and asked others for help in solving them. No one felt that here was wisdom from on high, rather they felt drawn into the task with an increasing recognition of the value of their own experience. The lunch break was, deliberately, not a hiatus but a continuation of the discussion as Trevor’s material was digested with packed lunches.

I couldn’t be present for the afternoon, but it was devoted to the practical application of the morning’s method and material in planning a family service in small groups. I left after lunch wishing that I could stay. Winchester have gone a long way towards meeting a need felt in many parishes. As a catholic, I was particularly encouraged by the willingness to work on eucharistic family services and impressed by Trevor’s own two-hour arrangement at Harrow. Other dioceses, who have not yet tried anything like this, could usefully take up this lead.

#### Beginning a new ministry?

Canon Paul Norman of the Derby Committee has kindly sent me their impressive work ‘Celebrating a New Ministry’. This has not yet been authorized. The outgoing Diocesan rejected it on the grounds that it was his successor’s concern; the new Bishop has not yet caught up with it. Is it any wonder that some DLCs despair? Perhaps they need to seek an agreement, and a timetable, before embarking on a major project. It is good to see, on the other hand, the Bishops of Bristol and Gloucester, to name but two, actively involved with their committees.

Derby offer some useful background thinking. They see the service as having a twofold function:

1. the new minister is publicly given authority by the bishop, which entails certain legal actions.
2. the bishops’ new representative is publicly accepted by everyone present.

A consequence of this is that the service is for the local congregation and priority in seating is to be given to them. Visitors from other parishes or from the new minister’s previous parishes ‘should be seated at the back or in the side aisles’. This returns us to John Corbyn’s point last month. The ending of a ministry can be as important as the beginning. Not only are two local communities in transition but the minister is as well. If we are going to shift the emphasis in new beginnings, we must deal with endings as well.

The order of the procession is a deliberate focus for Derby. The new minister is not in the entry procession. He is brought in afterwards, escorted by the Patron or another officer, and presented to the Bishop. When they leave at the end, the minister’s place is after the Churchwardens and before the Rural Dean and the Archdeacon. (It might be helpful to compare this with the Gloucester order which I reported in October 1988. My criticism of the Chaplain following the Bishop still applies, even though Michael Watts from Oxford Diocese has kindly shown me that the practice of following comes from the way a bishop’s household followed him. The liturgical chaplain should, in my view, prepare the way, if he is to be of any use at all). But the ‘visiting clergy’ are still undivided and my point about

the deanery clergy grouped with the rural dean goes unmet. Would it be better to have the Churchwardens right at the front leading the way into the Church whose life and ministry have been largely their responsibility during the interregnum, the deanery clergy together including the new minister, and then the episcopal/diocesan party?

I cannot comment on the whole structure, but it goes like this:

Entry, Sentence and Collect for Purity  
Presentation of New Minister & Legal Business  
Collect with short responsory  
Epistle (1 Cor. 12:4-7, 11) read by the Archdeacon who leads the Rededication for Christian Service  
Institution or Licensing  
Gospel (John 15:11-17)  
Sermon  
Induction and Installation (key presented, no trip to door; bellringers ring the bells!)  
Greetings, general and specific  
Intercessions, led by the new minister (a welcome addition)  
The Eucharist continues at the Peace.

#### Odium liturgicum

I hesitate to disagree with my colleague in these pages, especially when I have not read Fr. Lowe’s article on ‘ASB and Catholic usage’ noted here last month. Clearly Fr. Lowe is very ingenious and more adventurous than I am. I have certainly worked out, by judicious combination of canon and rubric, what can be done, inserted or removed, where. Lent – Holy Week – Easter has already offered many interesting possibilities which do not slavishly follow the less-than-perfect Roman Rite, and I do not mind where I borrow from. The real question is not ‘When is the Rite A not Rite A?’ (for the Roman Mass celebrated straight, as I have used it on occasion, is to be preferred to a tampered-with Rite A) but does ‘the Church of England have an official eucharistic theology?’

The heart of this issue is the question of consecration. Given the existence of the much-despised Rite B and the freedom allowed in Rite A it cannot be simply assumed that the *whole* eucharistic prayer rather than the words of institution *in the context* of the eucharistic prayer consecrates. The latter view would be consonant with historic Anglican doctrine rather than the former. I often feel like a lone voice when I say this, but the Dix thesis in the form that many modern liturgists employ it is *not proven*. One result of this, a tendency I see even in Grove Books, is a tacit agreement to have parallel rites representing different eucharistic theologies. John Corbyn looks for a common Anglican-RC rite; I would like a common Anglican one!

Which brings me to one last question: Is the use of eucharistic prayers from other Anglican provinces a substantial change or not?

Martin Dudley

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