

News of Liturgy

Editor: Colin Buchanan Issue no. 180 December 1989

Editorial

Years ago, I used to complete editorials with the Elder Cato's postscript to his speeches to the senate (adapted a little) 'Ceterum censeo sedes rigidas esse delendas'. Re-ordering of buildings is crucial to contemporary use of contemporary materials – just think of *Patterns of Worship* in the wrong patterns of buildings . . .

But I have slowly over the years been made aware of the various other interested parties who often have a greater say than the liturgists. At intervals grumbles come in about either the operation or even the composition of Diocesan Advisory Committees (DACs). It does not appear that traditionally either archdeacons or (if matters came to consistory courts) chancellors have necessarily been enlightened modern liturgists – and although parishes may well have crazy ideas (instances will be faithfully published in these columns), they are usually concerned about what happens when the people meet for worship, whereas those who do not attend the place for worship but inspect it on other occasions may have all kinds of other issues affecting (or 'prioritizing', as they say nowadays) their mental agendas.

One slightly amusing instance of this came when an archdeacon wrote to me in 1988, and said that a parish was wishing to instal a baptismal tank, the DAC was minded to reject the application, and what advice could I offer? I directed him to the rubrics of the BCP for the baptism of those of riper years (and also the ASB rubrics), which (as with infants) make 'dipping' the first option in baptism, and pouring only a weak substitute – indeed in the BCP infants' rite dipping is prescribed, *unless* the parents certify that the child cannot stand it.

This would suggest that some fairly substantial provision is by law required . . . and certainly a parish that wished to provide for adults that which is the first and presumably preferable alternative in the BCP should have an absolute right to do so, and the onus of proof must be on anyone who would deny them that right. A DAC's advice cannot, by definition, go against the rubric – it can only cover issues as to tastefulness, functional matters (like drainage), or the appropriate location within a particular frame of architecture. I never discovered how that archdeacon disposed of that DAC, but I fervently hope that he did so . . .

This all came to my notice anew this last Summer when I was consulted by a Christian architect who had the task of drafting new terms of reference for his diocese's DAC (on which he does not sit). Firstly, I wonder if any such documents exist – or whether any DACs have official or

unofficial guidelines to which they work in respect of the liturgical criteria governing their advice. If so, please send them in to *NOL* – we are fairly uninstructed in this area. But then I also began to reflect further on the composition of DACs, and to start some passing enquiries.

Whilst I have not followed the Faculty Jurisdiction (Amendment) Rules 1989 closely (they are an 'Instrument' laid before Parliament before the last General Synod), they arise from the substantial report of the Faculty Jurisdiction Commission, *The Continuing Care of Churchse and Cathedrals* (CIO, 1984). This report has (I fear) never been the subject of comment in these columns over the last five years, nor, in the pressure of other business, has its synodical run-on been mentioned either. Now I hope to repair the omission by drawing attention to the relevant paragraph about the composition of a DAC, admitting that I do not know whether new rules have been made, and inviting synodical legal eagles, or ecclesiastically baffled churchwardens, or innocent aspiring church architects, to write in and give me a clearer picture of the state of play.

The 'Model Constitution' for a DAC (pages 213-216) provides for membership as follows:

3. Membership

- (a) The Committee shall consist of a Chairman and (not less than 14) other members.
- (b) The Chairman shall be appointed by the Bishop of the diocese after consultation with the Bishop's Council and the Council for the Care of Churches.
- (c) The other members of the Committee shall consist of:
 - (i) The archdeacons;
 - (ii) two members appointed by the Bishop's Council from among the elected members of the Diocesan Synod;
 - (iii) . . . persons appointed by the Bishop's Council after appropriate consultation, each being an expert in one or more specialized fields of work, having regard to the interests of the statutory amenity societies¹, and
 - (iv) not more than . . . persons co-opted by the Committee having due regard to the balance of expertise on the Committee as a whole, for such periods (not exceeding 3 years) as the Committee shall determine.'

¹ The following are examples of the fields of work in which persons appointed under 3 (c) (iii) above might be expert: architecture (especially care of ancient buildings), organs, bells, furnishings, heating, lighting, archives, archaeology, art, appropriate branches of history, liturgiology, building, surveying, town and country planning (from within local government) and museums (local or national).

So there we have it. The 'Function' section above this has virtually no constitutional drafting about the use of buildings *for worship*; and this section gives liturgy a place in the membership as one footnoted 'example' of a person in a 'more specialized' field. The footnote lacks any force, and the individual examples have clearly no standing whatsoever. But even if

they were taken seriously, the provision of living worship comes in the list after bells, archives, and archaeology (to name but three), and is then only to be considered under its 'appropriate branch', and then to be re-represented by presumably ONE person in the 15.

Now there comes a further flaw – what ONE person can represent the needs of living worship? The Director of Music in King's College Chapel in Cambridge will have one idea; the Prayer Book Society will have another; the Guild of the Servants of the Sanctuary will probably have another; the leaders of the extraordinary (and marvellous) youth service at Crookes will have yet another; and most people on the Liturgical Commission will have another again. The important task will be to discover what is authentic to the particular parish, not to come with ready-made notions of what *in vacuo* is best in worship. Just as we discovered on the Commission that English language experts would disagree with each other, so it is certain that any two worship 'experts' will disagree – but that but that is the best hope a DAC has of being delivered from either no liturgical advice, or unassailable 'expert' advice from a wholly wooden expert.

How, one wonders, could a good diocesan liturgical committee ensure that a consistent and sensible liturgical voice took its place on the DAC? And how could such participation be made *basic* to the composition of a DAC (e.g. 40% of the membership), rather than be a footnoted one-among-many auxiliary afterthought of a notion? And where is the 'Model' up to nowadays?

Well, I write, as you can see, in semi-ignorance. Please put me straight.

A new December reminds me of the anniversary I note at the end of each year. It is now eighteen years since Ministry and Worship Booklet no. 1 on the Anglican/RC Agreement on the Eucharist was published on New Year's Eve. It is fifteen years since *NOL* began on a monthly basis (at 6p and sometimes six pages). And all sorts of other new series have started – it being far easier it seems to begin a Series than to end it.

NOL itself had a vast plethora of news to report each month whilst the ASB was in the making. Since then the actual news has come more thinly spread, and *NOL* has had a corresponding duty to manufacture news, stretch it, expand it, and embellish it. We go on doing our best in this way.

Again, Christmas looks likely to have well gone before you read this. News from the world outside includes so much good news for peace on the earth's surface with the fast thaw in the frozen regimes of Eastern Europe. But may the peace with God's people about which the angels sang at Bethlehem, and we sing weekly (except in Lent), be yours.

Colin Buchanan

THE CONSECRATION OF THE MAR THOMA BISHOPS

Readers have not had to put up with too much of COB's liturgical diary since I ceased ministering in Birmingham diocese (though I have had some interesting outings, including dedicating a petrol station in Gillingham to become a church building – which I tried to persuade the locals should be re-dubbed the 'Heavenly Service Station' or 'The Church of the Holy Spirit', and encountering a Virginia priest who imitated Hippolytus (though sublimely unaware of him) and uttered a grand and elevated eucharistic prayer of his own . . .). But I simply *must* put out a line or two about the consecration of bishops in the Mar Thoma Church in Kerala in which I participated on behalf of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

In the last century there have been only around twelve occasions on which the consecration of Mar Thoma bishops has occurred – and in at least one of those the 'line' was being provided from an outside church (the Independent Syrian Church of Malabar!). So the event is very rare; it last occurred in 1980; and no bishop has ever previously gone out specially from England to participate. The Mar Thoma Church (a 'reformed' branch of the old Syrian Orthodox Church of India, which traces itself back to St. Thomas) is the only Eastern Orthodox Church with which the Church of England is in communion in such a way that an Anglican bishop *can* participate.

The most astonishing feature of the event at first sight is that *no printed liturgical books exist for ordination rites* in the Mar Thoma vernacular, Malayalam. The tradition has been that each new bishop received a manuscript 'pontifical' carefully copied by hand from some other bishop's copy – and this applies to the ordination of deacons and presbyters as much as to the ordination of bishops. There is no 1300-page ASB containing *all* the services, and thus there has been no point in printing the order of consecration in general terms. And at the actual consecrations, the people have traditionally not had a text to follow. This time history was made – on 9 December over 10,000 duplicated texts of the consecration part of the rite were in people's hands in Malayalam, and I was almost alone in being unable to follow.

However, with the help of my organizer and liturgically enthusiastic aide, John Fenwick from the Archbishop's staff, and the further help of a bilingual Mar Thoma presbyter, I have now got clear outlines, and I offer them as a collector's piece. I describe the actions more than the words, of which I have at the time of writing only a rough idea (I am hopeful that a full translation into English, which for obvious reasons has never previously existed, is now being prepared).

The equivalent of the interrogation in our rites was that each candidate had the previous day written out in a prescribed text in his own hand his agreement to the constitution of the Church and his loyal acceptance of the Metropolitan's authority—and each now reads his manuscript text aloud (which took about eight minutes each), and then handed it in (so that the Church has the written submission of each in the archives), and was blessed by the Metropolitan.

The Qurbana (communion) proceeded under the presidency of the Metropolitan until after the anaphora and fraction. Then the veil (a very transparent lace) was taken from the vessels and instead laid over the three heads of the candidates, who were kneeling in a triangle and facing inwards with their heads touching, with prayer. Then they were consecrated separately with only the Metropolitan laying hands on them – though, interestingly, he recited the ordination prayer over the first candidate, and two other bishops, standing back, read the ordination prayer for the other two candidates. So the whole prayer was used three times, and twice it was uttered by bishops who were not laying hands on the candidates. The big moment was when each rose from consecration, as then his new name was given – in this case – 'Mar Athanasius', 'Mar Theodosius', and 'Mar Koorillose' – and the congregation, which had been speculating on this for days, then buzzed happily as each told his or her neighbour 'I told you so'.

Then came further ceremonies. The curtains of the *Madbaha* were drawn, and the new bishops climbed from their black (monastic) garb into golden robes, received ring, and 'blessing cross' (a small 'hand-held' accoutrement), and were, by the opening of the curtains, then revealed to the congregation in full glory. Each in turn then sat in the 'Malankara Chair' (probably several centuries old), and the Chair was lifted up by four strong men for the new bishop to read part of John 10 to the congregation. (In one case one of the bearers started to lose his grip and the reading stopped suddenly as the bishop slipped . . . but all was quickly restored). Finally, the Chair was lowered but now facing East, and the new bishop had a (Latin) mitre put on him and stepped off with his back to the congregation, whilst the next bishop was elevated.

When all three had been up, and were down in a line, kneeling and facing East, then there was prayer for them, and at the end the Metropolitan shook hands with each and gave him a blessing. Then each received the pastor's staff, which was where the assisting bishops did participate. The Metropolitan held the staff near the top whilst the new bishop grasped it with one hand near ground-level, and all the other bishops then arranged their hands downwards down the staff in order of seniority, until my hand was just above the new bishop's. Thus we all held the staff for a minute, then all hands broke away save the newly consecrated man's – and, behold, he was now holding his staff.

Last of all, the bishops and clergy greeted the new bishops with the kiss of peace, and the senior new bishop (as in Hippolytus!) took over the presidency of the eucharist. The communicants were in the hundreds rather than thousands.

The whole event lasted around four hours. For most of that time I stood – more or less on one spot – in bare feet on rough matting. This, I reassure myself, was very good for the sole. When bishops are consecrated in India, there are few concessions to the flesh.

This month's booklet . . .

. . . is Joint Liturgical Study no. 12, *Calvin and Bullinger on the Lord's Supper*, by Paul Rorem – a detailed examination of the issues surrounding the *Consensus Tigurinus*, reprinted from two essays in *The Lutheran Quarterly* in the U.S.A.

. . . and next month's

is *Worship Series* no. 111, *Introducing Patterns for Worship*, by Trevor Lloyd, Jane Sinclair, and Michael Vasey. These three are the three members of the Group for Renewal of Worship who are on the Liturgical Commission – and one guesses they had much to do with the production of that exciting *Patterns of Worship* (on which see last month's editorial). Certainly they are ready to serve up the introduction and commentary with which GROW has greeted all Liturgical Commission publications. We shall do our best to have it ready before the end of January to help make it available for General Synod members when the February debate on *Patterns* comes up.

. . . and Joint Liturgical Study no. 11

which was supposed to come in September, *'The Missing Oblation' – the Contents of the Early Antiochene Anaphora* by John Fenwick, is now coming off the press and is distributed with the December one.

. . . and Riot

by John Hall is Pastoral Series no. 40 – a very compelling handling of the issues in public riots, and a review of possible Christian responses.

. . . and reprints

are headed by MW61, *One Baptism Once*, by COB (already published), but others are forming a queue behind it something like this:
MW20 *A Case for Infant Baptism* by COB
E64 *AIDS – A Christian Response* by Roy McCloughry
MW62 *Preaching at Funerals* by Ian Bunting
P28 *Preparing Couples for Marriage* by Margaret Stevens
P5 *The Wisdom to Listen* by Michael Mitton

. . . and renewing your subscription

is due or overdue.

. . . and Prince Charles' attack on the ASB

came too late to be printed or refuted this month. Watch out for it in January.

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A NEW ZEALAND PRAYER BOOK – HE KARAKIA MIHINARE O AOTEAROA

A New Zealand Prayer Book duly came into use in New Zealand on Advent Sunday, but, sadly, no copies were available in England despite our valiant efforts to provide them. It proves that, although it is published by Collins (another scoop for them amongst Anglicans) they have given the production to a Singapore firm, and copies come off the press and from the binders there – and go straight to New Zealand where the first edition was greatly over-subscribed. It is a beautifully done job – but we cannot show it to you till around March, which is when copies will be available for sale in England. Collins have kindly let us have one for review, and we hope to publish that next month.

There are two footnoteable titbits to accompany its publication: one is that the row which once happened in their General Synod about the elimination of 'Zion' and 'Israel' from the Psalms has now erupted again with Jewish attacks on the Book (even quoted it seems in *The Jerusalem Post*); the other is that the provision of a woman ('she'/'her') as the first alternative in the rite for the consecration of a bishop has come literally true with the election of Dr. Penny Jamieson to be bishop of Dunedin, and presumably to be the first bishop consecrated after the publication of the Book.

(And a footnote to *that* is that there is, of course, only one bishop at a time in the Dunedin diocese, and before long Penny Jamieson's ordinations, confirmations etc. are going to be for vulgar judgment elsewhere).

SYNODICAL TAILPIECE

We did not record last month the House of Bishops' Declaration at its meeting on 24 October:

'In the course of its consideration of the revised draft legislation for the Ordination of Women to the Priesthood, the House of Bishops fully recognized the profound differences of conviction which exist within the Church, differences which are reflected within the membership of the House of Bishops.

'The House believes it may be helpful to the Synod (and, if the legislation is remitted to the dioceses, to them also) to declare that, whether the legislation is eventually passed or not, we as members of this House of Bishops

- are determined to remain committed to one another in communion, collegiality and mutual recognition of each other's ministry and jurisdiction, and
- desire to minister fully as pastors and fathers-in-God to all within our dioceses.

'We further declare that, if this legislation is passed, the bishops corporately will conscientiously administer it with flexibility and sensitivity, as is consistent with our pastoral office'.

Book Review

Kenneth Stevenson *First Rites: Worship in the Early Church* (Marshall Pickering, 1989, 118pp., £4.99).

We gave this a mention but nothing more in August, and since then my copy has sat accusingly on the desk waiting for comment (actually there is a pile or queue . . .). The tireless Kenneth Stevenson shapes his early church material here for a modern thematic treatment – a shape thrust upon him by his presenting three BBC TV programmes on early church worship for, of necessity, modern viewers. That has led on to the book – and the basis is a dialogue between what the reader encounters Sunday by Sunday in the present and what the sources tell us was done in the post-apostolic age. Kenneth Stevenson goes to great pains to ensure that from the modern we can enter sympathetically into the ancient, understanding that which is different, and identifying that which is in continuity with the old. The themes are 'daily prayer', baptism, eucharist (including the word), orders, marriage, death, and 'time'. A particular skill which emerges is the ability to depend upon the sources but without drawing over-heavy attention to them. Thus the book would instruct an enquiring layperson (or even house group), whilst it will simultaneously open up a whole world to the ordinand. I shall be recommending it as a first post-Bible curtain-raiser.

C.O.B.

. . . finally

we commend our contributor below, Martin Dudley, for getting *NOL* more publicity (through the chance conversation of a friend we gather) by his own walk-out on a piece of bread (see October *NOL*). Now read on . . .

DIocese TO DIocese

Editors: Martin Dudley and John Corbyn

Liturgical Justice

Arriving rather late for the Alcuin Club's committee meeting, I could see at once where I was to sit. In my place there was a bread roll! The meeting came at the end of a week in which the Daily Telegraph, the Daily Mail, Radio Oxford, Radio Belfast, Ned Sherrin and the News Quiz had all taken an interest in my article in October's *NOL*. I have also had a steady stream of casual comments from clergy and parishioners, as well as numerous letters and calls. In the light of some of these I think I need to clarify the reasons why I wrote the report.

DLCs cannot be expected to produce fascinating new material all the time and nothing much has dropped through my letter box recently. However, I do welcome the opportunity to participate in liturgical study days and workshops and to write them up. You will remember my report on the excellent Winchester family service day. I went to the Oxford day for the same purpose, both to participate and to report. It was almost incidental that it is the diocese to which I belong as I had not previously encountered any of the diocesan staff involved in the day and knew nothing about them. My report arises from my experience on the day and not from any prejudice. Though my interpretation of what happened has been criticized by some who also participated, no one has challenged the veracity of my report. I believe that the basic facts speak for themselves.

Some have criticized the inclusion of the names of the organizers, but I am not clear how you criticize an event without also criticizing those who organized it.

Certain psychological and experiential methods can be of use in the development of our spirituality. I am not denying their value. For example, a Myers-Briggs workshop that I attended in November proved to be very stimulating and useful. I was fascinated to discover that my reported type (INTJ, for the initiated) is susceptible to mystical experience but can also be logical and analytical in prayer. We are individualistic, rather than attracted to group prayer, and may favour traditional and liturgical prayer modes! (Both basic Myers-Briggs workshops and those geared particularly to spirituality are run by Sr Ann O' Sullivan at Emmaus House, Clifton Hill, Clifton, Bristol BS8 4PD). Such insights can help a person identify and develop strengths and cope with weaknesses. It can also stop them following a pattern of prayer manifestly unsuitable to their type.

The Oxford workshop's publicity neither revealed its psychological/experiential nature nor said that a celebration of the Eucharist would be part of it. Even one of my harshest critics has agreed that it did not fulfil the purpose explained in the leaflet. If the organizers believe that it did and that they used the liturgy in a way that is fully justifiable then the problem we face is more serious than I first thought and requires careful analysis. It is another illustration of the statement made by Harvey Cox in 1966: 'The real ecumenical crisis today is not between Catholics and Protestants, but between traditional and experimental forms of Church life'. It is one thing to introduce and evaluate experimental forms, and another to claim some form of normative status for them when they have been introduced without wide agreement and resist critical evaluation. Most of my correspondents are not so much amazed by the methods used in the workshop, but by the fact that they were employed by two diocesan officers responsible for parish development and that their approach was so different from that common in and acceptable to the parishes.

One reporter asked me whether the style of the workshop was indicative of a general trend in the Church of England, a trend that includes *Patterns for Worship*. It seems to me that the Commission works out of the Anglican tradition of worship and that its proposed forms have liturgical continuity with what has already been done. They emerge from the worshipping life of parishes and communities. By contrast, the Lamdin-Doubtfire approach seems discontinuous, introducing an alien factor, and refusing the very given-ness of liturgy. If, however, their approach can be shown to be a valid or significant one – which I personally doubt – we will only make progress if it comes into a real encounter with the tradition-continuous approach. I have had a brief discussion with Kenneth Stevenson about the possibility of just such an encounter but I do wonder if the two approaches can find a common language.

The Liberal Ascendancy?

Was it, I was also asked, another example of the so-called 'liberal ascendancy', a phrase in vogue since Gareth Bennett's Crockford's Preface? The American theologian George Lindbeck, who looks optimistically to a post liberal age, identified the *primacy of experience* as a vital component

in liberalism. Liberalism interprets doctrines as 'noninformative and non-discursive symbols of inner feelings, attitudes, or existential orientations', says Lindbeck, and he acknowledges the ascendancy of experiential-expressive understandings of religion. If that is a meaning of the liberal ascendancy then the workshop was an example of it. Extended into styles of leadership and preaching, this approach becomes, as Dr Bennett said, deeply unwelcome to the traditional laity. (He was referring, in this instance, to the American Church). Extended into liturgy more generally it places an over-emphasis on the subjective elements. Common worship disintegrates because there is a loss of common meanings. With the stress on feelings as the essence of religion and the loss of objective meaning in doctrine, common values tend to be secular concrete issues rather than matters of faith. Questions are answered not by the interrogation of Scripture and Tradition and the application of reason, but by asking 'How does it feel?'

But it was not liberalism ascendant or triumphant that I encountered at the workshop. Rather it revealed itself as hackneyed, exhausted, and, I suspect, spiritually bankrupt. Its methods are *passee*, the vogue of the 60 and 70s. The insights it first brought to us – insights we certainly needed – have been assimilated. And yet this liberalism clings tenaciously to the place it created for itself, especially in various types of training, and where it remains dominant it seems that anything goes as long as it feels good. The liberals object that conservatives and post-liberals are not willing to listen to them rather than acknowledging that we heard them long since and have moved on. *Patterns for Worship* reveals a liturgical vigour which owes nothing to liberalism and all to the living tradition of worship.

Post-liberal Liturgy

The post-liberal liturgists work with the insights of psychology, knowing that different types of people need to hear and to speak, require silence, action, song, sign and symbol. The word alone is not enough. The worshipping community also requires common signs and common meanings that are not dependent on feeling. But the wealth of liturgical historical scholarship has shown that traditional forms and structures already contain significant psychological insights or rather that these forms and structures embody and represent the relation in worship of the creation to the Creator whose image it bears. The most fundamental features of our humanity and our creatureliness are present in worship. This is the most basic meaning of its givenness. Liturgy is not applied psychology. Its starting point is God's revelation of himself in creation and redemption. It orchestrates the human response. In 1522, Ignatius Loyola wrote of man as being created to praise, reverence and serve our Lord God. In 1647 the Westminster Longer Catechism spoke of man's chief end as being to glorify God and to fully enjoy him forever. Liturgy fulfils an essential part of the purpose and end of creation. It only comes right when, without disregarding human needs, it focuses on him who is its beginning and its end.

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