

# News of Liturgy

Editor: Colin Buchanan Issue no. 185 May 1990

## Editorial

I found myself in a totally different world of liturgy the other day, when I was visited with serious questions by our local Chaplain to the Deaf. The questions were how liturgy could be constructed now for the deaf, and how such liturgy could be related to the Church of England's norms.

Deaf people include great varieties of deafness. But the greatest difference of all is between those who once heard (and thus spoke), and those who have never heard sounds and thus have never really spoken them either. To the former group, English is reasonably natural: to the latter it is often wholly inaccessible. The former group need only the kind of transliteration involved in 'Sign Supported English' (SSE); but the latter work wholly within their own (quite separate) language, British Sign Language (BSL). To the former, who know, and can still speak and read, English, BSL is an unnecessary foreign language; but to the latter, to whom English is not even a foreign language, but an alien abstract concept, BSL *is* their language, their only natural form of communication.

I have ministered in the past in the Deaf Centre in Birmingham, and conducted a confirmation service where singing (and saying – as in, e.g., the Lord's Prayer) was shared between: (a) hearing people (i.e. visitors or friends of the deaf); (b) deaf people who were trying to make the right sounds; and (c) deaf people who were simply signing. That was very memorable, and gave me a first entry into the issue. But my visitor the other day was asking for something much more – English-based liturgy involves a linguistic colonization of the deaf (just as it does of the Welsh!) which it is unfair to perpetuate as the only policy. How can BSL have its own liturgical base?

So I asked whether *anything* creative in BSL is being produced by the deaf for themselves. Are there poets or authors or dramatists or storytellers who can use BSL as a medium for their creativity? Yes, I was told, some such persons are beginning to emerge. Believers? Yes, there are such persons. Well, can they express in BSL – in rhythmic and memorable ways that others can learn – their devotion to God? And, yes, there is little history of this – and little ideology – but it can be done.

Why not just translate? Well, not all liturgy (and certainly not all hymnody) translates well and easily into BSL. This may be simply a matter of rhythm ('with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven' is smooth in English but is bumpy in BSL!), but it may well go deeper than that. Spoken English is a language that describes from the outside, but BSL is *inside* that which it expresses. So mere 'verbal' equivalence will not do. Of course the Lord's Prayer, and, say, the narrative of institution, must be retained. But the liturgy as a whole does not have to follow such texts, and offers enormous scope for originality.

That raised the other question. How *Anglican* would a BSL liturgy be? Well, the times are all in favour of pushing the boat out. 'Rubrics' (and leadership in congregational parts) can nowadays be done by video, which so recently would have been impossible. Does not the coming of *Patterns for Worship* encourage just that creativity (and legal elasticity) which the deaf so clearly need?

One tailpiece poser arose. Are the elements consecrated at communion if no words have been *uttered*? Apparently alarms have been issued on this front. From an ASB (or Rite C) point of view we can only respond:

- there are no specific 'words of consecration' anyway, and
- those who think that there are have forgotten that in the old Roman rite the canon of the mass was 'said' *silently* (though helped by sign language!) – but apparently achieved transubstantiation!

Anyway, these columns are open, and any experience in this (largely unexplored) field will be welcomed.

Colin Buchanan

## THE PROMISE OF HIS GLORY

by Michael Perham

Colin Buchanan has kindly allowed a member of the Liturgical Commission to share something of his enthusiasm for *The Promise of His Glory* before *NOL* begins its microscopic approach to the various chapters. My own enthusiasm centres around four things.

First, it does seem to me to be a highly imaginative document. I was privileged to have a part in the writing of *Lent, Holy Week Easter* and I think that that earlier book turned out to be a real blessing to the Church. Yet *Promise* is, in the end, a much more creative book. As far as Holy Week was concerned, we not only had a firm and ancient tradition to follow, but Roman, JLG and overseas revisions to draw on. We did not compose many texts. But when it comes to the pre- and post-Christmas period, not only are we first in the field – ahead of Rome, JLG, Anglicans *abroad* – but we are dealing with a much more diverse and tricky tradition, owing as much to Northern Europe as to the Mediterranean, much more affected by folk culture, and with very little sense of the cohesion of the whole liturgical season. To have reached a point where we could offer proposals that are not only a series of good ideas, but give shape and unity to the whole three-month period through November, December and January, has been a source of real satisfaction.

Secondly, we have been able to move one stage further in the development of the ASB. Though so many in the Church have been slow to take it up, we have been given in the ASB, and especially in the Rite A eucharist, the pattern of strong clear shape and structure giving the security and familiarity where variety can flourish. In *Lent, Holy Week Easter* we developed that, but very cautiously. In *Promise* the approach is bolder and perhaps paves the way for 2000. At a few points we have not so much developed from an ASB base, as suggested a different approach (in our

treatment of the Sundays before Advent, for instance), and it is clear that the Commission should have the chance to try some of these alternatives during the decade before ASB revision.

My third area of particular enthusiasm is in the way we have developed the pre-Christmas period. The ASB recognized that the traditional Advent was not holding its own against early Christmas celebrations, and moved some way in the direction of extending it back into the Autumn. But the problem is that November has themes of its own – All Saints', All Souls' (for some), Remembrance Day, and even, for a few and unofficially, Christ the King. What we wanted to do was to find an approach that would draw those in, rather than leave them cutting across a developing theme, as they have done with the ASB's nine Sundays before Christmas. What we have found is that the traditional Advent eschatological concern – the concern with judgement, heaven, hell and the coming of the kingdom – is, or ought to be, a large measure of what we are thinking about on 1 and 2 November, on Remembrance Sunday, and indeed when we reflect on the kingship of Christ. And so we have made All Saints' Day the turning point into a kind of extended Advent where these rhemes can be properly treated. This argument is fully set out on pages 81-2 of *Promise*.

For me the great last discovery has been of the rationale of The Presentation of Christ, Candlemas, as the natural and proper end of the Christmas cycle. It has enabled us to build on the ASB's hint in the direction of an Epiphany season that was 'incarnation time', rather than 'ordinary time', and to bring it to an end on a day that has rich potential, not only to end the Christmas cycle well, but to make a subtle but quite dramatic mood change that points people to Lent and to Holy Week. I find the Candlemas Eucharist, with its final procession and responsory (see page 256), one of the most powerful moments in the book, and I'm glad to see 2 February rescued from being the private preserve of the esoteric and the high church. The whole bitter-sweet nature of its gospel story, and of the ways it has been celebrated in the tradition, gives it such possibility as a pivotal point in the annual cycle. I hope it catches on!

Michael Perham

## KEEPING INFANT BAPTISM OUT OF SIGHT

I heard the other day a talk by John Hartley, the curate of St. Peter's, Bexleyheath, about the baptismal policy of St. Peter's. It proved to run far beyond anything in any MORIB literature or publicity, and yet, as a policy, it stays *just* on the pedobaptist side of the line, and is thus compatible with Anglicanism. But only just . . .

There have been no infant baptisms in the parish for four years. In that time there has been practically no refusal of infant baptism to anyone, but rather a bare-faced assumption that anyone asking for post-natal rites actually wanted a thanksgiving service! There is no question at St. Peter's of even-handed options. If any bold spirit says something like 'but it is *baptism* I wanted', then the persons visiting their home say 'but you must have this service first and then we can discuss baptism if you still want it'. And St. Peter's is not prepared to give any hint that the thanksgiving service is anything like a second-class production.

John Hartley was able to illustrate his policy with some careful statistics (the central one of which, mentioned above, is zero). But the story goes like this:

Since June 1988 there have been 53 requests for post-natal services (which to parents often means the name baptism, but to the visitor means a thanksgiving rite). No baptisms have been administered. 42 of the 53 have had a thanksgiving service. 3 more are to come in the near future to a thanksgiving service. 1 more has not yet reached a successful end to pregnancy. 1 has been re-directed to a home parish. 6, and only 6, have not arranged a thanksgiving service (and of these 6, 2 have been acrimonious).

Of the 42 who have already received the rite, a small number have been touched by the Spirit, and have continued worshipping at St. Paul's.

St. Peter's staff would claim that the apparent high rate of striking of happiness (45 out of 53) is because:

- this* service is usual, and is not a second-class fob-off.
- the parish manages to play down the importance of receiving actual infant baptism (even to the point where the curate and others have not had their own children baptized).
- every part of the presentation of the programme, and the preparation for it, says in effect that this is better than the old baptismal event.
- when parents say 'we want our children to make up their minds for themselves' (which means they do not want to bring their children to church each week), then this service admirably avoids loading the children's minds or hearts at too early a stage!

Of course, there are complications. When parishioners go elsewhere looking for baptism, and neighbouring incumbents enquire of St. Peter's whether the vicar will give his 'goodwill' (in accordance with the Canons), that 'goodwill' is refused. And infant baptism is kept well out of sight. It remains, however, a theoretical possibility, and thus the propriety of baptizing infants is kept alive in Bexleyheath in case some cast-iron qualifier for it appears. I guess he or she would have had to have been visibly touched by the Holy Spirit before or at the moment of birth to get through these defences. But it *could* still happen.

## CHURCH OF IRELAND ENDORSES WOMEN PRESBYTERS (and BISHOPS)

The Church of Ireland General Synod meeting in Dublin this month approved the ordination of women to both the presbyterate and the episcopate. Voting on the bill at second reading (on Tuesday 15 May) was: Clergy 129-59; and Laity 242-61 (bishops simply being registered as in favour). This only just reached the two-thirds needed in the House of Clergy, but at third (and legislative) reading the voting was: Clergy 126-55 and Laity 172-29. So it can now happen in Ireland . . .

## Correspondence

Dear Colin,

Re: Hymnody for The Future – a thought related to 'Praise Marches'.

While 'working' in St. Kitts, Nevis and Montserrat recently I noticed that when children stood to sing they didn't have any hymn books. In many areas a hymn book is one of the first things a first wage buys and the children aren't able to come to church and find them there!

The standard hymn book for Anglicans is the *Hymns Ancient and Modern* (not revised). This is the blue bound one that I suspect many readers have gathered mould in vestry cupboards. While we are proclaiming justice on our streets with our modern 'Make Way. style, I wonder if we could liberate these hymn books.

Churches with members working for airlines etc. might send them to Archdeacon R. Smithers, St. George's Rectory, St. Kitts, W. Indies (P.O. Box 55 – Phone 809-465-2167). Otherwise let me have them and we'll find a way, but . . . we are a UPA congregation who don't always have much to spare!

Lots of thanks

David Horn

St. James' Vicarage, 215 Albert Road, Aston, Birmingham B6 5NA.

## PORTSMOUTH DIOCESE VOTES FOR CHILDREN AT COMMUNION

We learn that a recent Portsmouth Diocesan Synod passed the following motion:

'That this Diocesan Synod

- believes that those baptized are eligible for admission to the Sacrament of Holy Communion and therefore
- requests the Bishop to allow baptized children to be admitted to Holy Communion at the discretion of the incumbent, and
- requests the Bishop to bring forth proposals for the future practice and administration of Confirmation.'

It appears that the Bishop of Portsmouth is now working on the requisite guidelines. *NOL* piously hopes that this also increases pressure on the House of Bishops to bring the Knaresborough proposals back before the General Synod . . .

Meanwhile *NOL* has been picketed by Manchester diocese, where over the last five years up to 10% of the parishes have, by 'permission', begun to admit unconfirmed children to communion. And this was not mentioned in the April Booklet *Children in Communion*.

## GENERAL SYNOD 1990

The last session of the five years of the present General Synod arrives in July. There can hardly be vast amounts of liturgical business, but the assumption is that *The Promise of His Glory* (described in *NOL's* editorial last month, and recommended even more strongly by Michael Perham in this issue) will have its one synodical outing, before being touched up by the Commission and 'commended' by the House of Bishops. So if you have improvements to offer, or solecisms to avoid, be in touch with your synodical representative *now*. (Incidentally, we learn that the Liturgical Commission is sponsoring a residential conference in September at York (comparable to the Keble one in 1985) to help the diocesan liturgical committee members absorb *Promise* and start to promote it).

But Synod is also due to debate *Living Faith in the City*, of which *NOL* published the parts about worship in January. This would be a good opportunity for reference to those parts of *Living Faith* in debate, and to linking the report to the rich provision made in *Patterns*.

## This month's Booklet . . .

is Evangelism no. 10, *Evangelism through Small Groups*, by Paul Berg. This centres round a course in 'Christian Basics' by which people come (in small groups) to full faith. There is also this month Spirituality no. 33, *Who Am I?*, by 'The Walkington Group' (the booklet being compiled by a parish group of clergy and laity).

## . . . and next month's

is Joint Liturgical Study no. 15, *Liturgical Inculturation in the Anglican Communion*, a symposium from round the Communion worldwide, edited by David Holeton, from Trinity College, Toronto, the chairman of the steering group for the international Anglican Liturgical Consultations. The symposium sets out the York inculturation statement ('Down to Earth Worship') and illustrates and applies it through the varied experience and change of different parts of the Communion.

## . . . and reprints

include Pastoral no. 9, *Good News down the Street* (again), and, shortly, Pastoral no. 5, *The Wisdom to Listen*, by Mike Mitton. We are also producing the Course Material from *Good News down the Street* in separate packs at 75p each, or a reduction for a parish quantity.

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## CONSECRATION BY THE BISHOP OF ELY – BACK TO 1662

### The Sykes Consecration 2 May, 1990

When I got to my stall in the choir of Southwark Cathedral and picked up my order of service for Stephen Sykes' consecration as bishop, it came as no surprise that the Prayer Book rite was to be used. Individual wishes are often heeded in a church that listens more to minorities than most others – in spite of what the papers say. The pundits told me afterwards that it was about twenty minutes longer than ASB. But it didn't feel like a 'reversion'. Stephen frequently reminds us that we should 'conserve riches', just as the Byzantine Church obstinately conserves the Liturgy of St. Basil on certain occasions, even though it's longer; and refuses to go lock-stock-and-barrel for the trendy and later liturgy attributed to St. John Chrysostom. The Southwark performance, rich in the traditional panache Peter Penwarden ringmasters so effortlessly, felt to this consumer like a gentle but powerful assertion that traditions are worth keeping. The Church's academe were making a mild protest to innovators, and were refusing to be marginalised in a divided Church that wants to 'do' things before thinking about them. Rowan Williams' strong sermon which stressed the role of the bishop as one who should seek out the powerless mixed more easily with the allusions to helping the poor in the Prayer Book litany and ordination questions than with some of the corresponding phrases of the ASB.

Stephen is enough of an historian to know that the twentieth century church is light-years away from the Elizabethan polity of the sixteenth. The Ely diocese were lucky to have him. Their liturgists may have to argue their case for change, but they will find that he listens, and respects their trade. I work with him every two years on the Anglo-Scandinavian Theological Conference, which he chairs and to which I act as Secretary. He leaves me to organize the worship, and happily writes modern prayers, as he did for a Swedish Lutheran eucharist last summer in Visby (Gotland). It was a happy coincidence that the Swedish biblical scholar, Bishop Krister Stendahl, was able to be present in Southwark and take part in the laying on of hands, as a sign of the wider ecumenical progress needful on an international scale.

Meanwhile, the consecration service took place at the nave-altar of Southwark Cathedral, not at the high altar, with modern choreography, not the traditional; and the quest for a rich and resonant language for contemporary worship has not quite been achieved.

Kenneth Stevenson

(**Editorial question:** we hear that the vesting of the new bishop was done at two stages in the rite. Was this so? And if so, why? And was it done in the olden times before 1980? – COB).

## TAILPIECE TO THAT BCP CONSECRATION

The *Church Times* in the editor's column on 11 May records as follows:

'(Whilst robing for the service at Southwark Cathedral) one bishop says to another . . . "I didn't know there was a consecration service in the Book of Common Prayer".'

Perhaps we should therefore note:

- Technically the Ordinal was not part of the BCP until the 'Alternative Services Measure' in 1965. In the title to the BCP, and in the Thirty-Nine Articles of Assent etc., the Ordinal is a separate Book. So our ignorant bishop (would the *Church Times* reveal his name, please) was actually correct in Elizabethan terms . . .
- The Archbishop of Canterbury tells us that this was his second use of the 1662 rite for the consecration of bishops.
- Nevertheless he was the first Archbishop of Canterbury to use the ASB rite, and he used it for his first consecration of a bishop – indeed for his own successor at St. Albans, John D. Taylor, just ten years and one day before the consecration of the new Bishop of Ely, i.e. on 1 May, 1980.

## Book Review

John Bunyan, *Circle of the South Land: People, Passages, and Prayers for the Australian Year* (published by the author, 1989).

This is another glossy A4 coloured-cover book by a creative writer from Sydney who is convinced that the whole Anglican world either will or should return to a 1662-based pattern of worship, and he is providing an enriched version of it, this one with a Calendar which includes Wattle Day, Vigil, Aristotle, and Mozart (a random result of a first glance). The Australian Year is one with upside down seasons (as every Pom knows), and that is provided for here. The main feature of the book is its carefully crafted prayers for the eucharist. But don't ask what market there is, whether in Sydney or elsewhere. Clearly this Bunyan publishes at his own expense for his own satisfaction, and equally clearly gains it.

COB

## DIocese TO DIocese

Editors: Martin Dudley and John Corbyn

### Durham Diocese

In the January issue of *NOL* I reported the creation of a new post in Durham combining the Chaplaincy of St. Chad's College, a teaching role in the faculty and the secretaryship of the (yet to be constituted) Diocesan Liturgical Committee. The Rev. Gordon Jeanes has been appointed to this post. Mr. Jeanes' B.D. concerned the Paschal sermons of Zeno of Verona. His published articles include work in *JTS*, *Theology* and he has had two articles accepted for *Studia Patristica*.

We wish him well in his new appointment and await with interest news of Durham's new committee.

### Leicester Diocese

On 3 March the Leicester Committee put on a day entitled 'Freedom within a Framework'. This was led by the Ven. Trevor Lloyd and looked at issues surrounding 'Family Worship' and the contribution to this by *Patterns of Worship*.

The Leicester Committee has presented a number of day conferences now and built up a clientele within the diocese, even a sense of expectation. The conference was fully subscribed with 250 attending, others having to be turned away. The clergy were well represented, perhaps up to a quarter of the stipendiary clergy of the diocese being present.

Trevor Lloyd addressed the issue of how to go about devising appropriate worship, including the involvement of lay people in this.

There were two group sessions. In the first session groups looked at different aspects of worship including; parade services, services of infant baptism, drama in worship, children at communion and the physical setting of worship. The second group session involved giving the groups a scenario and the task of drawing up an appropriate service.

No doubt the Leicester Committee will continue to build on record of success.

### Manchester Diocese

'I know many clergy . . . who on being asked to give the best solution for their building's inherent problems, would reply "a small can of petrol and a box of matches".' So writes Hilary Nelson in the editorial to the latest edition of *Rubrics* the Manchester committee's journal which takes the theme of 'Buildings'.

Nigel Hawley in his article 'Re-ordering: a means to an end', makes a plea for an end to be made to the often confrontational experience of re-ordering involving a 'progressive incumbent and . . . a laity worried by a tendency to press ahead regardless of their feelings'.

He sees the process of deciding on a re-ordering as providing an opportunity for a deepening of congregational life. He concludes his article, 'if all has been done well, the means will not only justify the ends; the means will have been in themselves quite as valuable.'

Arthur Nelson contributes a book review of *Patterns for Worship*. He comments,

'It is difficult to see how any of the content can be evaluated apart from actual use, and an initial reaction is that, once used, places will either commend themselves or, which may be better still for the church's worshipping future, begin to serve as a pattern for future creative work. Undoubtedly, this will lead to a lot of rubbish being written, and, one hopes, eventually jettisoned . . .

'This is a liberating document which, as is always the danger with the species, could turn into an idiot's charter. Nevertheless, any parish which uses it without benefit will have only itself to blame.'

John Corbyn

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