

The calendar only recognizes red-letter days, but I suppose that black-letter days were never very important, but it would have been nice to have at least a hymn for these festivals. Likewise I would have expected Litany and Communion to have been automatically added to Morning Prayer on Ash Wednesday. You have to do that yourself.

There is useful biographical information on Cranmer and Ridley but I found the historical introduction to the editions of the BCP very debatable in its assertions of the growth and development of the book.

Alongside the BCP the full text of the Authorized Version of the Bible is included in the Churchill's own word-processing system. It is easy to import documents to other word-processing packages. There were some bugs in the system, but Churchill proved to be very helpful in their Technical Support. Well done Churchill and Prayer Book Society. Will we see other prayer book materials come out electronically? Perhaps some of the commentaries, Nelson on the feasts, and even Merbecke? The BCP was in fact supported by many other supplementary texts and books.

One beef is against the need to use the CD ROM just to load the hard disc. Please, programmers, be more imaginative with CD ROMs, and keep the text off the hard disc. Now someone has done some non-copyright hymns, how about a whole CD ROM full of them (perhaps with tunes)? Also it is about *time Lent Holy Week and Easter*, and *Promise of his Glory* were electronically published. This package also shows the possibility of an electronic *Patterns for Worship*. It is the irregular services that need to be electronically available, more so than the ordinary BCP Matins (or is that now an extra-ordinary service in some places!).

Phillip Tovey

The GROW Conference: this month there really should be copies of the brochure about the conference on worship at Swanwick next January included in your mailing. This is not, however, being distributed beyond Britain and Ireland, and, if there are readers further abroad who are interested, would they please write to COB. You have until the end of September to qualify for the lower fee—and there is a bonus for NOL subscribers. There is also available a more detailed programme of the Conference for those who write to COB or to Mrs. Judith Read, the Conference secretary.

This Month's Publication is . . .

. . . *Worship Series no. 137, Making Creation Visible*, by Andrew Pearson. This is a discussion-starter designed to make readers more aware of the need to integrate the truths of creation into Christian worship.

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News of Liturgy

Editor: Colin Buchanan

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EDITORIAL

HOLY COMMUNION RITES A & B REVISED

This report by the Liturgical Commission has been anticipated for some time, and it now comes to General Synod in July at York for 'General Approval' (Stage 7 in the chart we published in May which you have got stuck to your fridge door). It is a modest document, as most of the daring things the Commission has proposed in recent years have either not needed authorization (and instead are 'commended' in *Patterns* or *Promise*), or, being electronic products, have not received it (because, as in a certain Hardy novel, they perished 'becos we woz too many'—or possibly for some other reason, concerning which see our analysis when it comes). But a framework was needed, and it has now been duly circularized with the Synod papers. It only went through the House of Bishops in mid-June, so we were not ready to review it last month, and recognize that the Synod debate on it may be over before you have a chance to read this. We will report the debate on it next month and there will still be time to make submissions to the Revision Committee. The Report's Synod number is GS1211; it has 81 A5 pages; and it costs £4 (£5 by post) from the Church House Bookshop, Great Smith Street, and submissions must be received by the Secretary-General by 15 August.

The main changes to Rite A are: the coming of inclusive language (which is so much taken for granted by the Commission nowadays as a ground-rule of writing modern liturgical texts that they totally fail to mention it in the Introduction); the use of the latest version of the ELLC texts (with two exceptions, to which I shall come); the printing of the prayers of penitence only at the beginning of the rite; provision for the Kyries with scripture verses to be the penitence on weekdays; 'simplifying the procedures between the Peace and the Eucharistic prayer'; and moving Humble Access to its 1548-1549 position just before communion.

The result is a rite looking not much more detailed nor prescriptive than *A Service of the Word!* No form of intercessions is published in the main text; no introductory words to the Peace are there either; no Eucharistic Prayer exists (Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark?); and no text for the Lord's Prayer either (one of the two cases where ELLC does not appear). In both these last two instances there is a reference in the chairman's introduction, which forecasts the bringing of a separate text to Synod, and within the rite there is in each case a

pregnant note in square brackets [*Texts under discussion*]. In the 'Supplementary Texts' in the second half of the book there is a heading 'The Eucharistic Prayers of Rite A Revised [*Text to follow*]'—and here the impish reporter might be inclined to observe that it is slightly surprising to find 'The [emphasis mine] Eucharistic Prayers' of any rite listed as 'supplementary texts'—let alone *not* then find them there when the title has been printed. But perhaps the note and its '... to follow' is at least a whisker more encouraging than '... under discussion'.

However, that is not the end of the story. At the last minute the Commission (perhaps under pressure from the House of Bishops) has amended the two square-bracketed notes [*Texts under discussion*] in the main text, and notified the Synod on the yellow 'Third Notice Paper' Re. the Eucharistic Prayer, in place of the note is a rubric which reads 'Any authorized Eucharistic Prayer may be used'; and, for the Lord's Prayer, a similar rubric reads 'The Lord's Prayer is said'. These amendments go a long way, though perhaps, as will appear below, not quite all the way, to clearing up the oddities in the circularized text. As far as the two textual issues are concerned, there has been plenty of comment on both over recent months in NOL (and there is more in this issue). One further twist, which is slightly confusing in relation to the Eucharistic Prayer, is an appendix which provides for 'Alternative Acclamations' (page 65), when there are no visible original Acclamations to which these are alternatives.

An 'Explanatory Memorandum' on the same Notice Paper recognizes that, in its uncorrected form, the text exhibited a new (and destructive) point of principle built into such an incomplete draft rite going to Synod for 'General Approval'. Up until now, whatever private hopes members of the Commission or of the House of Bishops may have had of taking initiatives to improve a text during the revision processes, the starting material has been such that it was a full and sufficient text to be considered for authorization, whereas now we had a text which could not be authorized *unless* it were revised and actually completed. This would have had two knock-on effects of principle—one short-term, one long-term.

The short-term effect possibly still exists in that, unless something very extraordinary is promised during the July debate, a Revision Committee will be appointed and will duly meet, not knowing what would count as completing its task, and taking a full text to Synod for its revision stage (stage 13 on your fridge). Is it allowed, for instance, to work out a text of the Lord's Prayer from scratch? This would be contrary to the projected separate debating in Synod, which was indicated in the chairman's answer to my question in February (see NOL for March), and is repeated in the Introduction to these drafts. But, if there is to be a separate debate, are we to wait for Synod to run three stages in plenary Synod to agree a text of the Lord's Prayer before it is incorporated and published in the finally authorized text of Rite A Revised—or would that come even by the *fiat* of the House of Bishops (stage 17)? And in the meantime is the Synod to be asked to allow through at Revision stage a mere 'The Lord's Prayer is said'? If in

There is then a substantial itemization of 'dimensions' in believer's baptism put forward as those which no apologia for infant baptism can really match. It is a forceful statement, and worthy of confronting, though it does not seem to contemplate that the infant child of believers might be *treated as a believer*—a category which will go a long way to bringing adult and infant categories together.

The rest of the book is responsibly practical and largely ecumenical, asserting the priority of faith over baptism, wrestling with ways of forming LEPs, when different or opposed principles are embodied in the persons seeking to share with each other, re-exploring 'one baptism', and looking at the position of the child in the church.

COB

Lawrence J. Madden S.J. (editor), *The Awakening Church 25 Years of Liturgical Renewal* (The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1992. Price £8.50)

Reading this book exposes one to various concepts integral to the liturgy and raises a whole range of though provoking questions. It also covers the theology of grace and social concerns and their place in liturgical reform and renewal. It confronts its reader with the inadequacy of current definitions of active participation, enculturation and community. The book consists of ten presentations, by eminent leaders of their fields, which discuss and analyse the findings of a pilot survey of fifteen Roman Catholic parishes, and their liturgical practices, across the United States. The presentations point clearly towards the need for further research, particularly into the effect of liturgy (and its reform) upon the renewal of our hearts, both as individuals and as a community. The final presentation looks towards the future of liturgical reform and the ways in which it could go based upon the perceived hope present in current practice.

Elizabeth Theobald

Churchill Systems with the Prayer Book Society, *Book of Common Prayer*, £89.

This is a useful programme for those who need to create custom-made BCP services. The full text of the service is provided and the various options are simply set out so to enable you to select the version of the collect for the Queen, verse or whatever. The calendar automatically includes the preface or Athanasian creed on the requisite days. By including hymns that have run out of their copyright restrictions hymns are included and selected for the liturgical year and thus can be included in the text where you will. It was clever to draw on these hymns, which are naturally traditional in nature. It is possible to tidy up the service before printing, and you can consign to a bin any elements of the service that you do not want (even those that are mandatory—I might have expected a drop down warning here).

Doctrine and Worship Committee of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, *Believing and Being Baptized: Baptism, so-called re-baptism, and children in the church* (Baptist Union, 1996, 52 pages, np)

Keith Jones, the Deputy General Secretary of the Baptist Union, spoke out at the CCBI Assembly in February this year to say that, from a Baptist standpoint, there is no 'common baptism', and it is hypocritical to talk and act as though there were. Now the Baptist Union has published the Committee report which puts that more officially. It is an irenic document, struggling to be loyal to the distinct Baptist tradition, whilst also conscious of both some theological force in a pedobaptist standpoint, and a general ecumenical duty to be holding out hands to others, and, as far as possible, actually to be recognizing their 'one baptism'.

John Briggs, the chairman of the Committee, contributes an interesting 'Historical Introduction'. This at least shows us that most tricky issues have had an airing in the past, and demonstrates that the upshot is a division between Baptists as to how they should view those who have been baptized as infants and value their baptism. John Bunyan in the seventeenth century and Robert Hall in the early nineteenth stated baldly that differences on this issue should not be a ground for debarring 'those whom the Lord of the Church received' from communion. Robert Hall in particular reached that point by denying that the baptism of believers had 'sacramental significance' (p.5), and this almost pulls out the rug from beneath the Baptist Churches. The opposite view was taken by Joseph Kinghorn, who debated vigorously with Hall on the secure and logical basis that baptism had to precede communion (would not most Anglicans say the same?), and that only 'believer's baptism' is baptism, and that the table must be closed against all the rest. I find myself responding to this with some immediacy, as I have as friendly neighbours a 'closed' Baptist congregation with whom I have been having semi-official talks about a joint church plant on a new housing area—and the plant would have had an extremely open polity and an even more open membership. (But, for other reasons (which are to do with resources not ideology) I fear they are not going to join in.)

There is a substantial chapter on the meaning of baptism ('[it] is normally to be received near the beginning of entrance upon Christian discipleship'—which does not quite say it is the entrance). There is then a chapter to stretch consciences as well as minds: 'Can Baptists recognize an initiation rite for infants as a "baptism"?' The committee split in answering their own question—a majority answering 'no', and a minority saying 'yes', though it was usually 'yes, but . . .'—for even for the minority there is a great need for personal faith (which, by one apologia offered by these Baptists for us pedobaptists, would make infant baptism *retrospectively* valid and recognizable, when testable visible faith and discipleship had come to pass; and I have to admire and welcome the efforts of minority to stretch out a loving hand to a dyed-in-the-wool pedobaptist, even whilst I am not ready to issue provisional pencilled in certificates of baptism for later, inked-in-certain, validation).

fact Synod is later simply to be asked to agree the ELLC text (see my editorial last month), why should we not just print it now, and warn the Synod that we want it to remain unaltered and to go into all future texts? (And then Bishop Gavin will have sure ground from which to beckon his ecumenical partners to get it together for the millennium.) As to Eucharistic Prayers, I assume all members of Synod will still be free to submit proposals to the Revision Committee—which either by sheer quantity could block the work of the Committee, or could lead to high-handed action somewhere, in order to ensure that a reasonably simple and uncontroversial solution is brought to the Synod (yes, and perhaps the existing last-minute rubric will suffice).

The long-term effect has just been averted, but I am tempted to digress just the same. If it were ever to be allowed that unfinished rites can be brought to Synod for General Approval, with the expectation that finishing steps will be taken later, then any amount of shrinking of actual texts could take place at the point of first proposing to Synod. If that sounds over-dramatic, let it be very clear that never in the past would it have been either credible or possible to publish a eucharistic rite without a Eucharistic Prayer—yet here we had exactly that until the last-minute change arrived.

(The parallel scenario which came to mind was if the Commission were to come to Synod with a draft for General Approval of ordination services; and suppose that the whole draft laid before Synod said:

ORDINATION SERVICES

These are usually held within the context of the eucharist with proper provision of collect and readings.

[Texts for ordination rites for up to three separate orders are under discussion.]

That would have been the thick end of a wedge of which we briefly glimpsed the thin end.)

The Rite B Revised text is necessarily conservative, as it is almost impossible to change its language, but its structure has now been conformed to the Rite A Revised one. It does, of course have texts for the Eucharistic Prayer and for the Lord's Prayer.

What then follows is the material which apparently justifies treating the 'A' and the 'B' as Siamese twins—as all the supplementary material (exactly half the 81-page report) is provided for either rite or for both (except where it isn't and is for only one . . .). The contents of the Common material (some of which are noted above) are; penitential material (invitation to confession, summary of law, decalogue, beatitudes, confessions), creeds (Apostles' trad and ELLC, and an ELLC Nicene without the *Filioque*), forms of intercession (ancient and modern), 'collects and other endings for intercession', introductions to the Peace, 'Prayers when the Table has been prepared' (which are worth further mention below). 'The Eucharistic Prayers of Rite A Revised [*Text to follow*]', alternative acclamations in the (not-yet-visible) Eucharistic Prayer, words at the distribution, supplementary consecration (I do not want to press my luck, but Rite A Revised

must be the first text in history drafted with provision for supplementary consecration without earlier provision for initial consecration . . .), and alternative blessings.

The other departure from ELLC texts is in the Nicene Creed, where the Commission have not proposed the controversial ELLC 'and became truly human'. Instead they have stuck with 'and was made man'; and the alternative text amid the Supplementaries (page 51), the one which omits *Filioque*, is as unbending on this point as the one in the main text is.

I referred above to the supplementary 'Prayers when the Table has been prepared. There are eleven texts provided here. They include a variant on the Roman offertory prayers ('. . . we have this bread to set before you'), the famous 1 Chronicles 29 text, the last relic of Rite C eucharistic prayers ('We celebrate the gifts and grace of God. **We take this bread**', etc.), the so-called Mozarabic use adopted by CSI 'Be present, be present', and a few less well-known ones.

The last fourteen pages are Seasonal Provision, which is material (such as Proper Prefaces) which belongs to seasons rather than to particular Sundays. The Commission has receded slightly from its own principles which we saw in *The Promise of His Glory*, and the final season of the ecclesiastical year is entitled 'From the Day after All Saints' Day until the Day before the First Sunday of Advent'—so clearly the 'Kingdom' season has gone (in the Revised text of the Calendar, Lectionary and Collects there are 'Fourth', 'Third', and 'Second' Sundays before Advent, followed by 'Christ the King: The Sunday next before Advent'). I do not wish to over-labour my point, but the provision of a detailed text for Proper Prefaces for Rite A Revised Eucharistic Prayers, that is, to fit into prayers which do not yet exist, reads extremely oddly. It is as though we had designed a kitchen for a future airliner, which was itself not yet designed—either the kitchen would itself then dictate many of the major design features of the airliner when the work reached the drawing board, or the major design of the airliner would demonstrate that the kitchen as already designed would not fit the project.

My own judgment would be that, although some supplementary and some seasonal bits will do for both Rite A and Rite B, as, for instance, the words of distribution, a clean Rite A Revised, and, if really necessary, a similarly separate clean Rite B Revised, would be a better way of going about it. There may well be a case for treating them as a single venture at this stage, so as to provide a single Revision Committee which will enable them to march in step with each other under revision, but the outcome for Final Approval would much better be two rites. I fear lest we are being treated to some ideology (contained in Synod motions in 1994) about the need for blending old and new.

Colin Buchanan

As we go to press, we learn that James Jones, the Bishop of Hull, has been added to the Commission.

up prophets and wise men and women to point the way to you'; and the anamnesis has a blunt 'in remembrance of him we set apart this bread and this cup'. The Series 3 point of departure is deliciously clear in the location of the Lord's Prayer after the fraction, and it is almost certainly responsible for the *text* of the Lord's Prayer, for the ninth line reads 'Do not bring us to the time of trial'. Despite the acknowledgements of ICET 1970 and 1971 at the front of the Book, this line is Series 3 alone. Does it survive because, once a particular modern English text was in use in the booklet in the 1970s, it was impossible to change it? Or does it survive because English is not actually the language of worship in North India, and a source for vernacular translations must be above suspicion of being volatile itself?

There is a brief outline of an 'Alternative Order' for the Lord's Supper, and a further provision for 'The Lord's Supper with Feet-Washing and Love-Feast'. This latter provides not for ministers to wash lay feet, but for all to wash their neighbour's, passing the bowl on down two lines, one of men, one of women. The Love-Feast is prescribed with very minimal directions.

The three-year common Sunday lectionary is incorporated in the Book after the eucharistic rites, and the Major festivals (largely apostles' days) include Indian Independence Day (15 August—how fortunate) and Inauguration of CNI (29 November).

As with other United Churches, the (Methodist) Covenant Service appears, still wholly disconnected from baptism or renewal of baptismal vows. It is followed by baptismal rites which include: Receiving a Candidate for Baptism, Believers' Baptism, Thanksgiving of Parents after the Birth of a Child, the Baptism of Children, Baptism in an Emergency, Public Reception of Persons Baptized outside Public Worship, Conditional Baptism, Blessing of Children, and The Order of Confirmation. There is a similar cluster of nuptial rites, and ministry to the sick and burial provision follow these, just as in most Anglican Books. The ordination rites again are like ours, but invariably call the second order of ministry 'presbyters' (when shall we get there?), and are followed by other rites for Induction to a Pastoral Charge and for the Dedication of Members of a Pastorate Committee (which is, I think, a local Church Council).

Prior knowledge of the Church of North India made me go looking for two items which I understand to be part of the terms of the original union. One was the provision for when someone baptized as an infant later comes to doubt whether that was true baptism, and seeks 'Believer's baptism'. The other was the rite for unifying ministries, which is supposed to be used for all ministers arriving from outside the North India jurisdiction. It is this rite which was adjudged by our General Synod in 1972 to be episcopal ordination (despite all Indian disclaimers). I failed to find either. While the baptismal lack might be due to the matter being pastoral or even disciplinary, it is odd not to find the 'unifical' in a comprehensive set of liturgies. Has it perhaps dropped out of use?

COB

BOOK REVIEWS

Church of North India, *The Book of Worship* (ISPCK, Box 1585, Kashmere Gate, Delhi-110006, 1995, xvi/669pp (hardback), sterling price £9.95)

The Church of North India was formed in November 1970, by a union of Anglican and non-episcopal Churches, matching the South Indian union of 1947, but including a wider range of Churches, particularly Baptists and Lutherans, than the earlier union had done. Now it has decided to celebrate its silver jubilee by publishing its first handbook of its forms of worship in hardback form. The new Book was authorized for use by the Synod Executive in March 1995, and in recent months has been making its way into Christian bookshops in Britain. And a very handsome Book it is, and by current standards a very reasonably priced one.

The Preface makes clear that the original principles of union included a 'Pledge' that existing forms of worship would continue to be lawful, and that no unwanted forms would be imposed on congregations. Those principles still stand, so the Book cannot be a report of what is happening across the vast area of North India, Sunday by Sunday, in every congregation; great local liberty still exists, and many congregations will follow pre-union patterns (including wholly extemporary uses, such as the hymn-sandwich) or be content with earlier draft rites published in booklet form. The Preface makes reference to inclusive language, and this is exemplified in the Psalter also, as the ECUSA text has been adopted for it (there are no use-of-copyright charges with the ECUSA translation . . .).

The Introductory Notes give some brief coaching, particularly on the setting of worship, and on the conduct and leadership of it. My eye was caught by a warning about long extemporary praying. The paragraph suggests that God may already be well informed on any particular matter, and ends 'As a Quaker once said, Why waste time telling God what he already knows? (Matthew 6.7-8)'. This, I judge, goes beyond the point at issue, firstly because great prayers in the Old Testament (as, e.g. in Jeremiah 32) *do* rehearse at great length God's deeds—as we may do in a eucharistic prayer—and secondly because a warning about repetitions in the Sermon on the Mount may not be precisely aimed at mere length without repetition. Indeed, our riposte might well be that it is the asserted principle of the quondam Quaker that has led to a dearth of words in prayer in Quaker Assemblies.

Whilst daily services are placed at the beginning, the centrepiece of any such Book as this is the eucharist ('Lord's Supper' here). The family resemblance to our own Series 3, visible in the 1974, rites is still there. The major difference from Anglican rites remains the optional provision for reading the 'Scripture Warrant' from 1 Corinthians 11.23-26 before the Peace, as a prelude and charter for the whole sacramental action (and the narrative of institution can then be omitted). The 'ferial' Preface makes mention of 'from age to age you have raised

GENERAL SYNOD IN JULY

There are indeed two main items of liturgical business in the General Synod meeting at York in July. These are:

- (a) The second round ('First Revision Stage'—stage 12 on the chart) of 'Calendar, Lectionary and Collects', to be debated at 4 p.m. on Sunday, 14 July. We hear that some motions for reconsideration are to be moved, and these, if successful, would be the first ever testing of the revision procedures devised over ten years ago to avoid revision in full Synod as happened in 1979. As is well known, a year ago, when six eucharistic prayers came before Synod, *no motions of any sort* for reconsideration were put in, which meant that the texts were officially viewed as receiving 'Provisional Approval' (as it used to be called), though nowadays no-one has to vote on such texts; and they are then automatically referred to the House of Bishops, deemed to be unanimously approved! So the Calendar and Lectionary will provide an opening view of how such procedures will work when motions *are* considered.
- (b) On Tuesday morning, 16 July, comes the first round ('General Approval') of 'Rite A and Rite B Revised' (stage 7 on the chart). At this stage, a general debate is followed by a vote on 'General Approval', and the text cannot be revised until it goes to the Revision Committee. There is further information in the Editorial on pages 1-4 above.

There have been great hopes round the country that the House of Bishops would bring forward proposals for admission of the unconfirmed to communion. But the Standing Committee state (in their Report on the Business on the Agenda):

'[The Worcester diocesan motion on this subject is being held over]. This is because the House of Bishops is expected to produce a report on Christian initiation following its meeting in June. In order to allow proper time for advance reflection on that report, the Standing Committee does not propose to consider providing for a Synod debate before November 1996, when [the Worcester motion] and other diocesan synod motions on this issue will also be swept up.'

The other main debates include the report on Anglican-Moravian talks (little progress), and a Sunday afternoon look at *The Mystery of Salvation* from the Doctrine Commission. This latter has several pages on the eucharist, to which NOL hopes to return in another edition. The Private Members' Motions include as second on the list a call for legislation to enable women to be bishops, and as fifth a call to abolish banns of marriage. The Diocesan Motions include one on children in communion which is delayed until the House of Bishops has reported in November, and (third on the list) one inviting the House of Bishops to provide a rite for extended communion for use 'in multiple benefices and in multi church areas which cannot have the ministry of a priest every Sunday.'

THE LORD'S PRAYER AND THE MILLENNIUM

On 17 June *The Times* carried the following report by Ruth Gledhill:

Lord's Prayer change fails to attract MPs' amen

by Ruth Gledhill, religious correspondent

Christian MP's pledged last night to fight attempts by the mainstream churches to drop 'temptation' from The Lord's Prayer.

The campaign comes as a leading ecumenical group has proposed that the millennium be marked by substituting the line 'Save us from the time of trial' for 'Lead us not into temptation'.

Already, some nonconformist churches are using the modern version and the Roman Catholic bishops of England and Wales have agreed to adopt it.

The battle is likely to be fiercest in the Church of England, where the *Alternative Service Book*, which came into use in 1980 alongside the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*, is currently being revised.

Traditionalists oppose the new line because, although closer to the original Greek, it is such a long way from the familiar rendering of the world's best-known Christian prayer that they fear such a radical change will further alienate the many millions for whom the 'Our Father' is the one remaining link with their baptismal faith.

The Labour MP Frank Field said: 'This is the dottiness one expects from these groups. The Lord's Prayer is about the last thing everyone knows. They are now going to go about making sure that most people's last hold, their last touch with Christianity, is destroyed.'

Harry Greenway, MP for Ealing North and convenor of Conservative Christians in Parliament, said: 'This is the prayer of Our Lord Himself and in my view it should not be violated by trendies or busybodies or anybody else.'

'The Lord's Prayer has stood for 2,000 years. The language is beautiful and clear. The word "temptation" is specific and understandable to all.'

'The expression "time of trial" is fuzzy and the reverse of that. There is no case for people, well-meaning or otherwise, to meddle with this exquisite and sacred prayer.'

The Church of England last attempted to remove 'temptation' from The Lord's Prayer when revising the liturgy in the 1970s. The widely detested Series Two and Series Three used substitute lines comparable to that now being proposed again, but a rebellion by traditionalists in the General Synod saved the prayer.

However, the Prayer and Millennium Group, part of the ecumenical group of Churches Together in England, believes the millennium is an ideal opportunity to 'encourage the teaching of a modern version'.

In relation to the above report, we note with pleasure that the ructions arose because (or possibly, because) the Bishop of Maidstone's Group took our June editorial seriously.

COB wrote to *The Times* by fax on 18 June; but the letter was not published, so we carry it here.

The Editor

The Times

Dear Sir,

I read with some astonishment Ruth Gledhill's report of the attempts to find a modern version of the Lord's Prayer which all the churches could adopt and use together to mark the millennium, and unite them thereafter.

I suppose one should not waste too much time on an MP who says (presumably in defence of the traditional text of the Lord's Prayer in English) 'this is the prayer of our Lord himself . . . the Lord's Prayer has stood for 2000 years . . .'. I recall a child telling me twenty years ago that we ought to keep the prayer the way that Jesus had taught us, but my confidence in MPs is not increased if they think it was taught to us in English originally.

I am, however, more surprised to see Ruth Gledhill describing Series 2 and Series 3 as 'the widely detested' texts. There are other ways of describing services which the Church of England took to like a duck to water, and 'widely detested' suggests a very partisan view indeed.

This view is not assisted by the citing of Series 2 itself within her report. Series 2 was a 'thou' form liturgy, and used a traditional Lord's Prayer. The tendency to sweep up all liturgical revision into a general protest, without reference to the actual facts, does somewhat undermine this way of stating one side of an argument. I was also amused to see her refer to 'a rebellion by traditionalists in the General Synod'—I was myself the person who put down the amendment 'lead us not into temptation' when the General Synod was deciding the text of the prayer in 1979, and I did so from the platform, and did so as a fall-back when no other member of Synod *had thought to put that amendment* in.

I would be prepared to argue that 'time of trial' is a better translation than 'temptation', though I recognize that it is often not accuracy of translation, but familiarity and internal sense of rhythm, which determine such matters. My own chief concern, however, would be that the Christian churches in England should find ways of praying *together*, where no doctrinal issues are at stake, where nothing exists to keep them separate, where nowadays vast numbers of people in the country do not know any form of the Lord's Prayer in any case, and where uniting round a common modern text will not only help unite the churches, but give them something they can confidently give to the schools and to the many persons who might yet like to know something of Christianity. To mark the millennium with new publicity for an agreed form of the Lord's Prayer would be a great gain for Christianity in this country.

Yours sincerely,

Colin Buchanan