

advising that acknowledgement should be made to the specific altar where the eucharist is to be celebrated (rather than to a 'high' one, just because it is high), and, when I asked him about ordinations in Southwark cathedral, where (as in Wakefield) at the point of entry there is no table in sight in the place where the service is to be held, he reckoned bowing was then inappropriate. So much for the past ways. (An awful thought—ought we *all* to be bowing when the table is carried in during the Peace?)

But the future is dawning in Wakefield in that such acknowledgement is now made 'on the trot'. It is of course plain sense (observed at a thousand sites each Sunday) that processions which stop to bow on the way in bunch, and processions which stop to bow in, say, couples, fall apart on the way out. Some places do all such bowing simultaneously in choir-stalls etc, and that allows processions to be orderly. And a gathering of random clergy at a cathedral for the ordination probably does expose the many to being disrupted by the exaggerated or untimely reverence of the few. But the cathedral has come up with an answer that will stop all bunching or looking like Napoleon's retreat from Moscow. Clergy are to acknowledge without stopping. But can one bow reverently—or do more than nod perfunctorily—while moving in procession? Or should we seek other forms of acknowledgement? Or rethink the whole business?

AND A CALENDRIAL FOOTNOTE

The Rev William Howard of King's Lynn writes that the loss of eleven days in 1752 not only determines our present tax year (as reported in connection with John Wesley's birthday last month), but also still determines a 'Norfolk Michaelmas', duly kept on 10 October—for rent-paying purposes (he does not say how many parish Churches still keep the Julian Calendar (as amended by the Emperor Augustus), nor mention when Michaelmas ordinations come in Norwich cathedral).

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News of Liturgy

Editor: Colin Buchanan

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EDITORIAL

There has been some press publicity recently about 'the seal of the confessional', particularly in relation to child abuse issues. It is my own view that private confessions can hardly be ranked as part of public worship, and that the use of particular texts in such contexts cannot and should not be controlled by authority. It was on this point that I fought the imposition of a mandatory text for 'The Reconciliation of a Penitent' in General Synod twenty years ago. The then Registrar of Synod took the view that the private 'Confession and Absolution' was an 'alternative service', and alternative to the Visitation of the Sick in the BCP, because there a special confession was to be sought from the dying person, with an absolution, 'if he humbly and heartily desire it'. However, this was clearly related to a person *in articulo mortis* (anyone who recovered after being visited with the 1662 text for Visitation was in clear breach of contract); whereas my probing related, as a good test case, to the absolution of the physically well. Be that as it may, I now treat other people's view of the 'confessional' as bringing it within the liturgical (and indeed sacramental) field, and absolve myself on those grounds for discussing it further here.

In previous trips round this particular building-site, I have discussed the meaning of the warning exhortation in the 1552 communion service (and have pointed out the drastic changes from 1549, changes which virtually eliminated 'auricular confession', despite the claims often made re the 1552 text).

I have also treated of the rubrics in the Visitation of the Sick, and of the use of John 20.23 in the 1662 formula for the ordination of priests. But I don't think I have ever referred to that quaint (and largely unread) document, the 'proviso' to Canon 113 of 1604 (which you can find bound in the back of our current Canons, and identified in a footnoted cross-reference in our present Canon B29). It runs as follows:

'Provided always, that if any man confess his secret and hidden sins to the Minister, for the unburdening of his conscience, and to receive spiritual consolation and ease of mind from him; we do not any way bind the Minister by this our Constitution [ie about being sure they "present such enormities as are apparent in the parish" to their Ordinaries], but do straitly charge and adminish him, that he do not at any time reveal and make known to any person whatsoever any crime or offence so committed to his trust and secrecy, (except they be such crimes as by the laws of this realm his own life may be called into question for concealing the same,) under pain of irregularity.'

Much of Canon B29 consists of quotations from the 1662 Book (ie from the texts I have mentioned above), as, clearly, the Assembly members in the 1950s could not agree how to state modern regulations without deep division, and thus returned to 1662. Similarly, they clearly could not find a new text to agree concerning the 'seal', and thus kept this one part of one Canon from 1604 (not '1603' as our B29 describes it).

But it is arguable that it does not provide what is wanted, or, at least, does not do so for those (including ecclesiastical lawyers) who believe there is a clear boundary around the 'seal of the confessional'. For, be it noted, in this extract from 1604, there is no 'confessional' at all. All there is is people unburdening themselves to the clergy (those were the days, when 'Minister' was a standard term for 'priest', or even for 'deacon or priest' . . .). The position is exactly comparable to anyone coming for counselling, with a contract of confidentiality. There is not assumed by this proviso that which seems to be implied in much talk nowadays, that there are chats with the clergy and there is the confessional, and the boundary between them is enormous and both sides have to be aware when they are crossing it. This text merely says (as any secular counsellor today might say) that the clergy need to know when they are being told anything in strict confidence, and *that* is the liminal point.

Am I making a distinction without a difference? I think not. Partly of course, having sat through various discussions, I am concerned lest the lawyers themselves believe the Church of England has somehow recreated the Roman 'seal of the confessional'. Partly, quite naturally, I am concerned lest the notion that there is a privileged interchange known as the confessional, and that confidentiality does not apply in quite the same way outside of it. Partly, in the 1604 text the interview does not appear to need anyone's permission for the minister to engage in it (how could it?). But partly, I have a suspicion that there is an extremely practical point of application.

As I understand it, the Roman Catholic priest has to handle what he learns in the confessional *as though he himself had thereafter forgotten it*. The test case is this—suppose a man confesses to, say, an addiction to child pornography, and the next day the priest sees him walking hand-in-hand with an eight-year-old going into some woods. A minister bound by normal confidentiality would not be stopped from approaching the man and remonstrating with him or even blocking his way—but what would be the position of a priest bound by the 'seal'?

Finally, the 1604 proviso does not use that semi-technical term 'absolution'—it refers to 'spiritual consolation and ease of mind', which, though they may include the same 'benefit', are much more informal language, for all that they come in a formal text.

Colin Buchanan

DIOCESAN REPORT (2003 CYCLE)—3 DURHAM

We are, as ever, servants of the Church; the publication of 'Communion by Extension' and our previous Bishop's approach to it has resulted in a huge demand for training from prospective officiants of the rite. That, and training lay ministers of Holy Communion to the Sick, is now taking much of the time and energy which we used to give to more exciting pursuits in the heady days of Common Worship draft texts!

However, the DLC is also continuing to pursue a proactive agenda, not least on the music side—a workshop by John Bell last year was a great treat, and the new Diocesan Music Certificate has been a resounding success. Last year's training evening on aspects of the Eucharistic Prayer (including some of the practicalities of praying it, said or sung) is to be followed up this year with an evening on 'Worship and Evangelism', put on jointly by ourselves and the Diocesan Mission Advisor. We aim to support the launch of 'Visual Liturgy 4' with a hands-on training day in the autumn.

Some of our work is now done collaboratively with Newcastle and Carlisle under the auspices of 'Praxis North'. This reaches a different clientele, and it is good to bring in expertise and teaching from outside the region.

One of the stranger requests to come our way was from a couple of parishes needing to re-inter human remains which had been unearthed accidentally, both in rather different traditions. In the meantime we *haven't* had to revise the Institutions and Inductions material—hurray!—having recently produced two outline orders (one with eucharist and one without) and a pack of accompanying resources. We then produced a similar package for commissioning Shared Ministry teams. Both packages are (of course) available electronically

Revd Dr Gareth Lloyd
Secretary of Durham Diocesan Liturgical Committee

BOWING IN VIA

I had reason to be at a June ordination in Wakefield cathedral. The front page of instructions to robed clergy included the following 'rubric':

'As you arrive at the nave sanctuary, please make any acknowledgement of the (high) altar without stopping—i.e. keep the procession moving!'

Here is the ceremonial of the past in league with the ceremonial of the future. I should explain that the 'nave sanctuary' is the front of the nave where the ordination itself is to be conducted and where the eucharistic table for use will appear during the Peace, but is not in place when the procession comes in. Thus any clergy wishing to make 'acknowledgement' there will have to make it towards the '(high) altar'—though that is not where the eucharist is to be celebrated. That feels remarkably like the past. Close readers of NOL will recall Michael Perham

through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom with you and your Holy Spirit,
belong glory and honour, worship and praise,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

No-one can now accuse the Church of Ireland of being stuck in a 1662 rut . . .

TAIL-PIECE—THE BISHOP OF LINCOLN AND NOL ON EUROSTAR

The Bishop of Lincoln told me this story recently. Assiduous readers of NOL will recall that in the March issue I told a short story which John Saxbee, Bishop of Lincoln, had told from his personal experience (perhaps not entirely *ad rem*) in the Synod debate on new collects in February. If you can recall—or find in your archives—the story, then read on.

Shortly after the issue of NOL was published, the Bishop and his wife were travelling *incognito* on Eurostar to the continent. As they sat in their seats, more or less minding their own business, he could not help but notice when a man, sitting across the aisle a little in front of them, drew from his pocket the March edition of *News of Liturgy*, and proceeded to read from it to his wife, with no little enjoyment, and he was reading aloud the story of what the Bishop of Lincoln had recently told the Synod. On the train, the Saxbees sat still, heard it through, smiled secretively to each other, and did not declare themselves

Now, to be fair, this was not quite such an astounding coincidence as Bishop John obviously thought. He clearly does not travel enough on Eurostar, and so he has not seen the clamouring throngs who pay over the odds at Waterloo to ensure they get their prized copy of *News of Liturgy* each month. He obviously had no idea of how the ladies with the coffee-trolleys going up and down the train are sustaining a brisk alternative market in secondhand copies for desperate travellers. He has not seen—perhaps has not even imagined—the look of a whole compartment where every traveller is scanning his or her copy of NOL. He was not aware of how, behind a cupped hand, passengers in every coach were whispering to each other ‘Have you seen the one about the Bishop and the boy-pretender?’ He has no idea of how every journey of Eurostar is enlivened by these columns. The Bishop’s astonishment comes simply from his innocence.

Nevertheless, it *was* perhaps a slight coincidence that the Bishop heard his own story being read, instead of the learned exposition of anamnesis which he obviously expected when he saw the journal emerge from the pocket. And, as the Bishop remained *incognito* at the time, we think at NOL that we should effect an introduction. If among the hundreds who were reading the March NOL on Eurostar that day, there is the one who can confidently claim he read the story about the Bishop of Lincoln aloud to his wife, then we will put him in touch with the Bishop and send him a fiver as well. If he does not declare himself, then we may have reluctantly to conclude that it was not his wife who was going to Paris with him that day—and perhaps we ought to put him in touch with his own bishop.

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Colin

I wonder, in your editorial of May 2003, have you overlooked the distinction between ‘making’ and ‘recognizing’ saints? Surely there is early precedent for the latter, as in the *Martyrium Polycarpi* (2nd century),

‘We afterwards took up his bones which are more valuable than precious stones and finer than refined gold, and laid them in a suitable place; where the Lord will permit us to gather ourselves together, as we are able, in gladness and joy, and to celebrate the birthday of his martyrdom for the commemoration of those that have already fought in the contest, and for the training and preparation of those that shall do so hereafter.’

This was, as I am sure you remember, cited in *The Commemoration of Saints and Heroes of the Faith in the Anglican Communion* (SPCK, 1958) p.15 (one of the preparatory documents for Lambeth 1958).

Michael Kennedy.
Church of Ireland

[I thank you for that, Michael; and, no, I am well aware of the martyrdom of Polycarp, but I have to respond that recognizing a martyr—even venerating his remains (though I doubt if that is implied)—still leaves a logical gap to be crossed before you come to ‘creating a saint’. If Michael’s distinction is that you cannot ‘create’, only ‘recognize’, a saint, well, the gap is still there in respect of Polycarp; and, as far as modern saints are concerned, if the Pope is only ‘recognizing’ what is self-evident to others, we have to remember that only the Pope is so recognizing them, that every now and again one comes up who surprises us (Pius IX, for instance), and that the Pope’s recognition and listing has come as near to ‘creating’ as is imaginable on this earth. And I would still like to know whether there are saints-in-waiting in the world to come, who will become saints for our purposes when the Pope recognizes them - or whether they do not already know they are saints, in which case again the Pope is very near to ‘creating’ them. And, yes, I have perused the 1958 report, but I confess I do not possess one, and I will pay good money for any offered me. COB]

THIS MONTH’S ANNIVERSARIES

John Wesley got his innings in in May. The Queen comes next in the list, with the fiftieth anniversary of her coronation on 2 June. I confess—or boast—I was there. Well, I was not exactly there in the Abbey, I was getting wet and tired on the Mall. At midnight the newspaper salesmen came round saying ‘*Daily Mail!* Everest climbed!’; but as the rain came on, they changed their tune to ‘*Daily Mail—waterproof!*’ At 6 in the morning a dustcart came along with a man bowing graciously out of the passenger’s window in the cab, and being cheered all the way. And in due course along came HMQ and entourage.

There is quite a bit of literature about Coronations, and the Alcuin/GROW Joint Liturgical Studies always kept this up our sleeves for when we should run out of topics. That duly occurred in September 1997, and the title of no 38 was *Coronations: Past, Present and Future*, edited by Paul Bradshaw. On reflection, we perhaps advertised more than we could deliver as, as far as I am aware, there were no ‘present’

coronations that year. What there was was the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, at the very point where the page-proofs were being delivered to me—and, knowing that our perspective was too close to the event, we sat on the proofs for a fortnight, and then changed Prince Charles from ‘divorcee’ to ‘widower’, and sent it out.

The 1953 coronation involved certain liminality questions which differ from those of today. One was whether the Moderator of the Church of Scotland could be administered communion (he wasn’t); and another was whether the TV cameras could or should fasten on people receiving communion. I actually cannot remember the answer to this latter question, but the watershed which was crossed was a TV one, not a liturgical one—for TV was the luxury of the well-off before June 1953, and was the possession (or least ambition) of every home in the land after it. No doubt ‘Zadok the priest’ will live on. And, even for a 77-year-old monarch whose mother lived to 101, every day brings it nearer.

We should round off the anniversaries by recalling we are 75 years from the second defeat of the 1927-28 Prayer Book in the House of Commons. In June 1928 the margin was larger than in December 1927 (266-220 as against 238-205); but the emotional level was lower. On the other hand the end had come. They could not revise the Book and send it back a third time. Archbishop Davidson resigned (at the age of 80), and Cosmo Gordon Lang came in to lead the Bishops (and the Assembly) onto a different track.

There was a big thanksgiving for the first of these two anniversaries. I doubt if there was much of the same for the second—though there were many evangelicals and old-fashioned ‘central’ churchpeople giving thanks in 1928, and they were to be found all over the world. Even Frere was found in the opposition. I took the opportunity in General Synod in July 1978, when introducing what became Rite A for its first canter through Synod, to contrast the procedure followed in 1978 with that employed in 1928. Sadly, for all that the record number of proposed amendments to Rite A did reduce to a virtually unanimously agreed text, the Synod repented of its procedures and changed them again. It always does.

COB

BOOK REVIEWS

Paul Gardner, Chris Green, Chris Wright (eds), *Fanning the Flame: Bible, Cross and Mission—Resource Materials for NEAC4, 2003* (Zondervan, 2003, 336 pp, pb, £12.99)

There is much history behind this book. There were National Evangelical Anglican Congresses in 1967 at Keele, in 1977 at Nottingham, and in 1988 at Caister (though this last was called a ‘Celebration’, not a Congress, and it did not produce a Statement as the other two had). Each of them in various ways bore upon the worship practice of the Church of England, perhaps the first most of all, as 1000 evangelicals rallied into welcoming the whole principle of liturgical revision, when it had been

a royal priesthood, a universal Church.

Glory to you, Lord.

We praise and glorify you because you have given us your only Son Jesus Christ, the image of your eternal and invisible glory, the firstborn of all creation and head of the Church.

Glory to you, Lord.

We praise and glorify you that by his death he has overcome death and having ascended into heaven, he has poured out his gifts abundantly, to equip your people for the work of ministry and the building up of his body.

Glory to you, Lord.

And now we give you thanks that you have called these your servants, whom we ordain in your name, to share in the sacred ministry of the Gospel of Christ, the Apostle and High Priest of our faith and the Shepherd of our souls.

Glory to you, Lord.

Here the bishop and priests lay their hands on the head of each candidate as the bishop says

Pour out your Holy Spirit upon . . .

for the office and work of a priest in your Church.

Fill them with grace and power that they may fulfil your call

to be a messenger and steward of the Lord,

to watch over and care for those committed to their charge,

and to join with them in a common witness to the world

Pour out your Spirit, Lord.

Set them among your people to proclaim boldly the word of salvation, and to share in Christ’s work of reconciliation.

Together with them may they offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable in your sight, and celebrate the sacraments of the new covenant.

Pour out your Spirit, Lord.

Grant them wisdom and discipline to work faithfully with all their fellow-servants in Christ,

to search for God’s children in the wilderness of this world’s temptations, and to guide them through its confusions,

so that they may be saved through Christ for ever.

Pour out your Spirit, Lord.

Accept our prayers, most merciful Father,

liturgical programme which made the parishioners of some parishes die earlier than they should have, without being replaced.

But the above do not constitute a review—they are instead a trailer. But let me know if you get it.

COB

THE CHURCH OF IRELAND BOOK

We had a report from Brian Mayne about the new C/I book going through their Synod. We lift the curtain a little, in advance of publication, and offer you the ordination prayer (for priests/presbyters), not only because it is coming soon in England, but also because it claims to be the first text in the world to act upon the IALC findings from the Berkeley Consultation in August 2001. See what you make of it,

The Ordination Prayer with the Laying on of Hands

The bishop stands with the assisting priests beside him; the congregation stands

The candidates kneel before the bishop, who says

Praise God who made heaven and earth.

Who keeps his promise for ever.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

We praise and glorify you, almighty Father,
because in your infinite love,

you have formed throughout the world
a holy people for your own possession,
a royal priesthood, a universal Church.

We praise and glorify you

because you have given us your only Son, Jesus Christ,
the image of your eternal and invisible glory,
the firstborn of all creation, and head of the Church.

We praise and glorify you

that by his death he has overcome death;
and that, having ascended into heaven,

he has poured out gifts abundantly
to equip your people for the work of ministry
and the building up of his body.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

We praise and glorify you, almighty Father,

because in your infinite love you have formed throughout the world
a holy people for your own possession,

confidently reported (not least on the Liturgical Commission) that evangelicals only wanted 1662 and could be ignored for the purposes of liturgical revision. Much could be said to have flowed from that reversal of expectations, far over the horizon of sunset though the Keele Congress may now seem to be.

This year, fifteen years on from Caister, 'NEAC4' is due to convene in Blackpool from 19 to 23 September. The three main Congress 'themes' are highlighted in the sub-title of this book, and the book itself, commissioned by the executive committee of the Congress, is meant to be preparatory to the Congress. (My original brochure promised me a copy within my Congress fee, and the book would later be in the shops—but I bought this at the beginning of May at the Church House Bookshop, and no complimentary copy has reached me yet: I was not, it seems, uniquely unlucky, for no Congress participant has yet received his or her copy—a bungle by the publishers.)

So what says the book about worship (which is my excuse for introducing it here)? The answer is odd—with the exception of one whole chapter and three pages in another, to which I return below, there is virtually no mention at all of worship in the whole book. There are six chapters on the Bible, five on the Cross, and six again on mission. While clearly worship is not a 'theme' of the Congress as such, it does appear to be incredibly distant from the treatment of the chosen themes. Wonderfully, I do not think the words 'Common Worship' appear anywhere in the book; and I see no sign that anyone thinks any efforts (eg to secure the right statements about the cross in worship) by members of the Liturgical Commission or the General Synod are worth recording. This seems a far cry indeed from the readiness for battle and defiance in the past over every jot and tittle of 'by his one oblation of himself once offered, a full, perfect and sufficient, sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world'. There is not even a rallying to 1662—for, although Cranmer gets more than a passing mention in Peter Ackroyd's chapter on 'Anglican Evangelicals and the Cross', the quotations are from the Homilies and Articles, and deal with the doctrine of the cross in total separation from Cranmer's liturgical reforms. And, as far as I can see, 1662 itself never gets mentioned, whether for its virtues or its shortcomings. The brochure about the Congress also suggests the marginalization of worship as a subject for discussion and/or teaching, though, obviously, major acts of worship are planned as part of the Congress programme—and it may be that the balance in the book reflects the balance at the Congress (which I shall be reporting in due course).

So what are the two places I have spotted? Well, I start with the three pages of Andrew Cornes, vicar of Crowborough, writing on 'The Revolution and Reconciliation of the Cross'. He makes 'worship' one of the three topics in which he is demonstrating that 'the cross was, is, and must be specially revolutionary' (p.171). His concern (one I must applaud) is to make the eucharist central to the parish church's worshipping life (and he slightly deprecates family services in order to do so). He gladly quotes from Michael Green's essay in *Guidelines* (the preparatory papers for the Keele Congress), though he fails to mention that which has become

more famous, and is often cited by the very Conservative as the outstanding folly of Keele—the actual pledge by the thousand participants there to work for the celebration of holy communion as the central act of each Sunday’s worship. He deals with practical matters (like how to ensure adequate preaching—which they certainly get in Crowborough), and expounds with conviction his readiness for unbelievers, enquirers and doubters to be present, on the very grounds that the eucharist is the place of proclaiming the Lord’s death, a ‘converting ordinance’ indeed. It is a timely word, counter-cultural for many evangelical parishes, but without any hint of the contents of the liturgy whatsoever.

Then, we come to the one chapter which is overtly about worship, Gerald Bray’s on ‘The Cross in Contemporary Evangelical Worship’ (pp 203-218). I turned there, when I found the chapter title in the table of contents. And this is what I found—a chapter devoted entirely to evangelical hymn-writing of recent years, or, to be more accurate, one hymn-collection of recent years. This boils down to around four pages of actual description of the contents of *Songs of Fellowship*, and they are not unappreciative (especially of Kendrick). But I found myself saying ‘Is an analysis of this one book really a proper treatment of the subject-matter of the chapter’s title?’ For, once Gerald Bray has written that ‘from the above evidence, it would appear that all is well in the evangelical world’ (p 210), he then goes on to tell us it is not and devotes the remaining six pages to ‘Influences Diminishing the Centrality of the Cross’. These deal with alleged reasons why through both theology and psychology there are these baleful ‘Influences’. He claims he is chasing ‘*how often*’ (italics his) evangelicals say what they have to say about the cross. He notes how few books about the atonement are in the shops, how liable to resurrection triumphalism the ‘contemporary style’ in worship tends to be, how Moltmann has caused a reaction away from the cross, how involved in ethics and/or in good works evangelicals may have become at the expense of the theological rationale for them, and the effects of dealing with guilt by therapy without recourse to the cross. This does seem to be cobbling together a list of possible distractions to account for what he has merely asserted on little or no evidence—his suspicion that, although the one modern hymn-collection he has consulted has good provision about the cross, yet somehow evangelicals are forgetting all about that when they actually meet for worship. But what would count as evidence? Or will his suspicion do?

COB

Digby Anderson and Peter Mullen (eds), *Called to Account: The Case for an Audit of the State of the Failing Church of England* (The Social Affairs Unit, 62pp, £6)

I should have slipped this one in with the *Prayer Book Society Journal* and the Toon book last month. However, the book is not easy to obtain—it got quite a bit of publicity for a week or two before Easter, but, when I asked Church House Bookshop about it, I was told that retail outlets cannot get it, but customers have to buy direct from

the Social Affairs Unit. I don’t think it counts as a theological press, for its main business appears to be reactionary politics. It advertises itself with a quotation from *The Times*: ‘The Social Affairs Unit is famous for driving its coach and horses through the liberal consensus, scattering intellectual picket lines as it goes.’ Clearly it has hired two well-known reactionary Anglicans to stake out the decline in this national institution, the Church of England. ‘Decline’ is the key-word—and it comes in six out of the ten chapter headings. But pessimism is the key mood, modern liturgy the chief *fons et origo mali*, and accusation the sustained literary style.

Here then is the core of the accusation:

‘In the late 1960s and 1970s it [the C/E] jettisoned its central sacred text, The Book of Common Prayer, a book hallowed by time and use...for a series of experimental booklets in more accessible language. These were followed by the imposition of a standard worship text of incredible banality. Having enforced its use, the Church suddenly banned it in order to produce yet another. The reasons for this contempt for the past, tradition and beauty were not primarily theological but political. Banal language was said to be necessary in order to speak to ordinary people, to be modern, to avoid being elitist, to be up with the latest secular obsession with minority “rights”. The experiment has not worked. “Ordinary” people have not flocked in. Even by the end of the 70s it was obvious that the experiment had failed so, as with all bureaucracies, efforts towards the goal were not abandoned but redoubled.’ (Digby Anderson in chapter 1 ‘The overall decline of the Church of England: An introduction’ on pp18-19)

This is backed by two tired old bits of evidence:

‘... in a longitudinal study of parishes in the archdeaconry of Chichester for the period 1975 to 1980, it was found that parishes changing to the modern Series 3 suffered membership losses of 14.9 per cent, whereas those sticking with the traditional Series 2 enjoyed 19.4 per cent growth.’ (Roger Homan on p 28)

[The Gallup poll put out questions when the ASB appeared:]

Do you prefer the traditional Lord’s Prayer or a modernized one?

What kind of a service do you prefer for a wedding—the traditional or a modern language alternative?

Gallup revealed a much higher level of preference for traditional forms among the lower socio-economic groups...’ (Homan on pp 29-30)

I think the instinctive answer of nonchurchgoers from their ‘folk religion’ position is bound to be cautious, and (I am clear I reflected at the time) if you have any idea what a church service should be like, and you are asked if you would prefer the one you think you know to an unknown one ‘they’ have recently invented, your answer is very likely to be ‘the old is better’. The archdeaconry of Chichester is perhaps losing its persuasive character nearly thirty years after Series 3 emerged, and most of us would have liked to ask some supplementary questions (as, eg, about the clergy competence at organizing change) before we knew it was the changed