

40th

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What is Praxis?

Praxis was formed in 1990, sponsored by the Liturgical Commission, the Group for the Renewal of Worship (GROW) and the Alcuin Club to provide and support liturgical education in the Church of England.

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Psalms - problems and possibilities

An incomparable treasury

For the first Christians, the gospel stories and the letters of the apostles had an immediate relevance. As Word and Sacrament were celebrated, the most valued texts were those which added meaning to worship. Here, the books of the New Testament were paramount.

A new ethic had gone beyond Leviticus. A new creation story asserted that 'In the beginning was the Word'. The incarnation and resurrection had transcended all the longings of God's people, and a new appreciation of God's love inspired the apostles and evangelists to outpourings of rich prose.

For those who embraced the new faith, the ancient scriptures were valued chiefly for the ways in which they pointed to the coming of the Messiah. It might have seemed unlikely that the 'Songs of Zion' would continue to be sung when the Temple and City they extolled were completely obliterated and Judaism and Christianity had parted company.

Amazingly, for those who sought words to be used in regular prayer, the entire Psalter was to provide an incomparable treasury. Individuals and communities reciting the psalms would be carried through wave after wave of different emotions; all of them experienced as elements of a relationship with God. Psalms would become the bedrock of a disciplined Christian prayer life. Here, above all, was the book which Christians might know by heart and recite.

The original language had been left far behind. Christians knew psalms only through the Greek of the Septuagint or the Latin of Jerome's Bible. But they found the

distinctive poetry and rich imagery of the original compositions could transcend any particular language.

The use of psalms might have been lost with the Reformation and the end of monasticism. There was a renewed emphasis on what Jesus commanded, and on what the apostles taught.

But in England, those who shared Latimer's regard for 'uncliostered virtue' (quoted in *Love's Redeeming Work* compiled by Rowell, Stevenson and Williams, OUP, 2001) ensured that vernacular scriptures and prayers would be made available to nurture the holiness of the wider Christian communities. The beauty of Coverdale's translation of the Psalms found its way to the hearts of believers. It is these words in the main which are still sung in our cathedrals, where the ancient verses still form the backbone of daily prayer and Sunday services. The community led by the Nicholas Ferrer had used psalms to help them live out the 'uncliostered virtue' commended by Latimer, and Herbert called his parishioners to participate in using these prayers. For centuries Morning and Evening Prayer outdid the Eucharist in popularity, as a real liturgy of the people.

Here, for those who pray, are verses to open the soul to God. And when, like Paul, 'we do not know how to pray as we ought' (Romans 8.26) these Spirit-filled words can still be our guide. For

'You are not here to verify,
Instruct yourself, or inform curiosity
Or carry report. You are here to
kneel.....'

And perhaps discover, as Eliot put it in 'Little Gidding', that 'the communication of the dead is tongued with fire beyond the language of the living'.

✠ *Tom Ambrose*

Using the Psalms

Should we give up on them?

AM I THE ONLY PARISH PRIEST whose churches are less than enthusiastic about the Psalms, both said and sung?

We face various difficulties:

- the length of the service;
- the ease, or not, of singing the psalms;
- the congregation doesn't like singing them
- the choir don't like saying them;
- what on earth do they mean and what relevance do they have now?

This is not to say that our three church communities are totally bereft of psalms; we say or sing one psalm at least once a month when the main service is Morning Prayer (2 BCP and 1 CW) and at our occasional BCP Choral Evensong services. In two churches, the psalm for Morning Prayer is that appointed by the lectionary (ancient or modern translation, depending on the service style). In the third church, the psalm used in the monthly BCP Morning Prayer is not from the lectionary, but one of eleven given me by the organist 'which the choir can sing'.

I asked representatives from the congregations to expand on their feelings about the psalms, and got a mixed response. 'I suppose they are important but...I don't understand the old fashioned language', or 'I don't like trying to sing it to Anglican chant' (but the choir does), and 'it depends on the psalm – I like Psalm 23 and 150 ...'. And yes, we do know that there are other ways of singing the psalms, but...

Are there other parishes in the same psalm-boat as we are? If so, is their psalmody sinking like ours, or have they experienced a psalmic resurrection which is appreciated by both choir and congregation?

≈ Anne Horton, Rector: Woodhouse, Woodhouse Eaves and Swithland.

A search for a solution

I REMEMBER AS A TEENAGER being dragged unwillingly to Morning Prayer in one of my father's temporary fits of insisting on family church going. I always felt a sense of outrage at having to sing the psalms to what I found then to be dirge-like Anglican chant. I could understand why we had Bible readings and hymns and a sermon, and the choir usually did rather appealing settings of the Matins canticles, but the psalms seemed so pointless with their endless complaints and hints of violence.

I have changed my mind since, and now find myself needing the psalms and feeding on them. For me they are the spine of the Daily Office whether said alone or in company, and they inspire my personal prayers as well. But because I once hated them so much I do recognize that they are, for many, a considerable obstacle. There simply is no perfect way of saying or singing them. Even at Christ Church, Oxford, where I join with the other canons and cathedral clergy to say them daily at Morning Prayer, we cannot find a common volume: one side tends to whisper while the other side tends to vocalise. At least we agree at the length of the gap where the diamond or asterisk falls!

Anglican chant is wonderful when sung well, but painful when not. Cantor-led psalms in the style originated by Gelineau are wrecked by their musically trivial refrains. Pure plainsong is best, but hardly appropriate for congregational worship.

I suspect that some kind of simple and flexible chant is the best way forward. Most people can manage a simple two- or three- note chant even without much prior experience. Chant or rhythmic speaking is important because it allows the mind to relax into a rhythm which sets the imagination free and is at the same time restful and refreshing.

I am reminded of why the psalms came to have such significance in the worship of the Christian Church. They were seen as both the Church's prayer to Christ and as Christ's prayer to the Father through the Church. In the psalms all human life and experience is gathered up in Christ's

prayer, and he takes on all the joys and griefs of creation. Evagrius, the 4th century hermit and master of prayer, is said to have recited a hundred psalms a day. For him they were a vehicle drawing the one who prayed them through the multiple layers of the created world and into a place of pure contemplation and peace. Perhaps it is not surprising that we are in danger of losing the psalms at a time when the Church seems so driven by anxiety and activism. The psalms need time and patience. If we could recover them perhaps we would find more time and become more patient.

≈ Angela Tilby is a Canon of Christ Church Cathedral, and CMD Officer in Oxford Diocese.

Worship with the psalms intentionally: lament as well as praise

WHAT KIND OF WORSHIP do we offer if we take the psalms as our model? And what do we lose if we don't intentionally include the psalms in our worship? These are key questions for worship in today's church.

Session 6 of the *Worship4Today* course is devoted to psalms. Why? Because we need to give our congregations time to 'stare at the poetry' – to enter in and fully appreciate the emotional depth and devotional theology contained there, and to help them to use psalms more regularly and creatively.

The psalms made up Israel's hymnbook, a collection of sacred songs to be sung corporately to musical accompaniment, including psalms for every occasion from boisterous praise (98) and grand royal occasions (72) to expressions of corporate struggle (137) and personal anguish (6). Luther wrote: 'Everyone, in whatever situation he may be, finds in that situation psalms and words that fit his case, that suit him as if they were put there just for his sake'. The Israelites included every facet of life, bringing them to God with a refreshing directness and honesty.

Luther, Cranmer, Bonhoeffer and many more have encouraged us to read the psalms daily, and indeed the psalms

Using the Psalms

themselves constantly encourage us to 'bless the Lord' for what he has already done and cry out to him for what he may yet do. For Bonhoeffer, the psalms reflected reality rather than theory about God with a constant assurance that God is listening in every situation and he is faithful.

During the *Worship4Today* psalm session, we give participants an opportunity to write a psalm themselves. Although initially daunting, this has proved a deeply moving exercise for everyone. Some 75% of psalms written can be categorised as psalms of lament. From the place of raw human emotion, we are encouraged towards an affirmation of confidence. In spite of the circumstances, we will still trust God. Sooner or later we come to a 'yet, even so, we will bless the Lord' and we come away from prayer and worship having found consolation and renewed strength. We all need the opportunity to cry out to God in honesty and vulnerability, without fear of rejection or further isolation, as well as the times to share our praise and thanksgiving.

So how can we use psalms today? Here are a few suggestions to get you started:

- Sing them as Israel did, but search out a wide variety of musical settings and styles from metrical to responsorial, chanted to contemporary worship songs.
- Read them aloud together corporately.
- Hear them from different translations to bring out nuances in the text. The original Hebrew words say so much more than any single English translation, including musical directions and movement.
- Listen to them being read by a single voice or by several voices perhaps positioned around the church.
- Read them over appropriate musical accompaniment or accompanied by sympathetic projected visual images.
- Ensure the full breadth of lament and praise.

Finally, whatever the form, ensure that psalms are restored as an essential within our regular congregational worship.

✠ *Helen Bent is Bishop's Adviser in Music and Worship, Sheffield Diocese and co-author of Worship4Today.*

Session 6 can be found in Worship4Today Part 2, published by CHP.

Praying the psalms in person

'**O**SING TO THE LORD a new song' (149). But how do you sing the Lord's praises if you have no voice?

Worshippers with learning difficulties who have little or no speech often experience exclusion from our over-wordy worship, but the psalms offer a wonderful opportunity for truly communal worship. They lend themselves beautifully to sign language because we often use a single verse as a refrain. This verse can be signed relatively easily, by everyone present, and used to give a rhythm to the prayer of the psalm, which all can pray equally and repeatedly. Those with learning difficulties often base their signing on the Makaton system of signing which picks out just the key words in a sentence. It is possible to pick out the key words in a psalm verse and sign them with just 3 or 4 clear signs. For example, the refrain 'The voice of the Lord is upon the waters' from Psalm 29 could be signed as 'The voice' (index finger moves out from lips), 'the Lord' (both index fingers point up), 'waters' (flat hand, palm down, makes wavy movement). Signs very often relate directly to their meaning so the physical expression of a word can help to reinforce its meaning, which can be a deep and rich addition to prayer and worship for us all. Signing in worship means that the whole body is engaged in prayer; the liberation (for some, it is a form of 'permission') of using physical movement stimulates the body and brain in ways which spoken words alone cannot and enables the whole person, mental and physical, 'to "sing" to the Lord a new song' with a 'voice' as strong and clear as any other.

✠ *Alexandra Clarke is a priest in the Papworth Team. She offers a signed psalm response on the ROOTS website each week.*

Useful advice about singing the psalms is available in

Grove Worship Series W198, Recovering the Lord's Song: Getting Sung Scripture Back into Worship by Anne Harrison (2009)

New Secretary



THE NEW SECRETARY to the Liturgical Commission and Worship Development Officer will be Timothy Hone, currently Liturgy and Music Administrator at Salisbury Cathedral. He will take up the part-time appointment early in the New Year.

Tim read Music at Cambridge, where he was Organ Scholar at Peterhouse. After a short time working at Leeds Parish Church, he went to Coventry Cathedral as Sub-Organist. This time was particularly important to him in showing the ways in which space, text, music, movement, light, colour and confident presidency help to make the liturgy come alive. He was Director of Music at Newcastle Cathedral during the period when the Cathedral was making provision for *Common Worship* and helped to shape the liturgical life to make full use of the new resources.

He was awarded the Leeds MA in Liturgy and Music in 2001. The course allowed him to work in more depth on liturgical inculturation and the theology of music. In 2002 he moved to Salisbury to work in the Department of Liturgy and Music. He is also Secretary of the Cathedrals' Liturgy and Music Group, which provides an inter-disciplinary forum for the discussion of liturgical and musical matters.

Tim hopes to use his combination of administrative, liturgical and musical skills to help resource the wider church and to build networks, particularly through Praxis, to help people, both ordained and lay, to value liturgy and engage with it more fully.

The Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology

A NEW ONLINE RESOURCE to delight the heart and mind of anyone interested in hymns was launched at a two-day conference hosted by the University of Bristol in October. *The Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology* has been in preparation for more than ten years and was originally planned as a printed publication, but as the project grew it became clear that many hefty volumes would be required, which would be enormously expensive. A further advantage of publishing it online (with access by subscription) is the ability to update it and to correct any errors which may have crept in, almost inevitable with an undertaking of this magnitude.

The editors are Professor JR Watson and Dr Emma Hornby, with Professor Jeremy Dibble acting as Music Editor and regional editors from Australasia, Canada and the USA. With over 4,000 entries, some relating to writers and composers, some to individual hymns or collections and some to more general topics, it will surely be the standard work of reference for scholars and enthusiasts alike.

Visitors to the website (www.hymnology.co.uk) can view three sample articles, changed daily. A twelve-month individual subscription costs £59. Professor Watson received a standing ovation at the July conference of the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland in acknowledgement of his dedication and hard work in bringing this project to fruition.

Leading a music group

TRAINING EVENTS from the Royal School of Church Music during 2014 include a day course for instrumental group leaders in Coventry on Saturday 7 June (applications must be received by Friday 28 March). Paul Leddington Wright is the director, and there will be a small ensemble of instrumentalists to help demonstrate issues such as making arrangements, rehearsal techniques, and ways of using

instruments (predominantly acoustic) in worship. Find out more from the RSCM website (www.rscm.com).

Music at Lee Abbey

NOEL TREDINNICK, Director of Music at All Souls' Church, Langham Place, London, will be bringing some orchestral musicians with him to help lead a weekend at Lee Abbey, Devon, from Friday 14 to Sunday 16 March 2014. For details of the event, 'Merrily we sing along! Good times singing good news in good faith', visit the Lee Abbey website (<http://leeabbey.org.uk/devon>).

Jubilate Big Sing

NOEL TREDINNICK will also be leading a second Big Sing for the Jubilate Group in London on Saturday 1 March 2014. This will take place at St Paul's Church, Robert Adam Street, W1U 3HW. Singers from around the UK with reasonable sight-reading skills or the ability to pick up a new tune quickly are welcome to join singers from All Souls' Church to record some new hymns and songs for the Jubilate website (www.jubilate.co.uk).

Further details are available from Roger Peach (roger@jubilate.co.uk). Roger is the Editorial Co-ordinator for Jubilate Hymns Ltd and has compiled some helpful seasonal resource collections for the website. Words and music covered by Jubilate copyright can be reproduced in worship by churches holding the relevant CCL licences.

Engage Worship Day

ON 15 FEBRUARY 2014 at Stopsley Baptist Church, Luton, a multi-workshop day is being arranged by Sam and Sara Hargreaves of engageworship.org. Book by 9 February to reserve a place (engageworship.org/events/Luton2014). Sessions include Band skills, Orchestral instruments in worship, Creative worship to engage everyone, Junk drumming, Choosing and using a range of songs, and Celebrate God (for children aged 5-11).

A home-made Communion setting

AT ST MARY'S WOODFORD, our new Saturday service is at 5pm, intended mainly for families who are unable to get to church on Sunday. One week in three we celebrate Holy Communion; on the other Saturdays we have a Service of the Word. The church has a choral tradition, with a weekly Sung Eucharist, so I wondered whether we could have a 'setting' for use on Saturdays. To be child-friendly I thought we should use the same tune for *Gloria*, *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei*, with words in English, not Latin!

Twice we used variations on 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord' (*Mission Praise* 239) but then came a Saturday which fell in the local arts festival, and we held a Service of the Word which focussed on the diversity of Christian music through the ages and around the world. One of the songs we sang was the Argentinian '*Santo, santo, santo*' with a text in both Spanish and English (*Many and Great* p14; *Lambeth Praise* 207; and other compilations). We had a workshop time with three groups doing different activities. One group was challenged to write a *Gloria* and an *Agnus Dei* using the Argentinian tune. Amazingly they came up with these words, which we have used alongside the original 'Holy, holy, holy' in our Saturday Eucharists ever since.

Gloria

Glory, glory, glory!
The angels sing your glory;
from the heights of heaven they sing:
glory to the Lord.

Agnus Dei

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus,
you are the Lamb, our Saviour.
You take away the sin of the world:
Jesus, Lamb of God.

If you like these words, feel free to use them, acknowledging St Mary's Church, Woodford. If you don't, can you write something better, to this or another simple tune? Share it with us via *Praxis News of Worship*.

✉ Ian Tarrant, Rector of St Mary's Woodford

The Pastoral Ministry Companion, emergency response, young death

A PRAXIS EAST Day on 25 September explored areas of pastoral ministry for which resources are thin on the ground: emergency response to disasters and dealing with the death of babies and children.

Simon Jones, introducing the new *Pastoral Ministry Companion*, explored the links between liturgy and pastoral ministry. Pastoral services are worship: *Pastoral Ministry* has a strong emphasis on journey as a community and liturgy must be about the way text is enacted in the community. *The Pastoral Ministry Companion* is intended as a reference and guide, drawing together liturgy and pastoral care, so that we don't fall into the trap of over-compartmentalising our ministry.

John Williams and Mike Burns explored emergency response, using as a case study the Potters Bar train crash of 2002. It is clear that dioceses now have more extensive emergency response protocols as a result of this and other emergencies. In addition to major incidents (as designated by the emergency services), response is required for events that would be considered emergencies by local communities (such as local shootings). Church buildings can be a resource for emergency response and clergy a resource to help emergency teams unfamiliar with an area. We were advised not to go to the incident site, but to remain near a phone – where diocesan emergency response co-ordinators can make sure we are deployed appropriately. Attention was drawn to diocesan emergency response plans – St Albans Diocese has an exemplary version.

Mary Sokanovic explored pastoral response to the death of babies and children. Official resources for dealing with this are slim, but a number of good books have been written on the subject. The context is key to an appropriate pastoral response. We reflected on how, in worship, we hold space, and that in any response after such a death we must take time with the mourners. Often it is just our presence, rather than any words, which are of support to the family. There may be tension and anger and all this must be honestly held by the minister in attendance. It is important to encourage the sharing of memories and, if appropriate, to encourage people to hold the small child who has died, or an item of significance to the child, as people share memories. It is important to offer to bring shared memories together in prayer. Vocabulary is significant: never avoid using the word 'dead' but beware of language that encourages avoidance of the reality of death, e.g. 'they've passed'. It is important for ministers to be comfortable with a theology of death, in order to respond to questions, but it is also okay not to have all the answers. We ended by exploring ways in which children's funerals might be conducted, especially if other children are present. The use of symbols is key in this regard e.g. candles and the release of balloons.

✉ *Berkeley Zych, Curate in the Grimshoe Benefice*

Commemorating World War 1

P RAXIS SOUTH offered a day in Southwark Cathedral on 30 October to explore how the First World War might be commemorated, as the centenary of the beginning of the War approaches.

Using a series of photographs, Simon Robbins, of the Imperial War Museum, presented a short history, highlighting developments in strategy and weaponry which resulted from WW1. Focusing on the Battle of the Somme (July 1916) he used photographs to show the destruction wrought by machine guns. The war became global as empires fought: the resulting political realignments relate closely to the world we know today. Powerful nationalist influences ensured that individual soldiers fighting on both sides were keen to 'do their bit' for their country.

June Osborne, Dean of Salisbury, outlined the challenges facing the church in preparing liturgy for community commemorative events. She spoke of the emotional connectedness that the nation would feel in commemorating WW1, but warned against too much emphasis on Remembrance Sunday-style services, suggesting that it would be possible to create different events, like a Ragtime Vespers, reflecting life during the war period. Using family stories, the qualities shown by soldiers and their regiments might be honoured: courage, dignity, friendship, and humour have the capacity to channel emotional reactions to the sacrifices that were made. But it is important, too, to reflect on other impacts of the War. The magnitude of the conflict resulted in rapid social change: the changed situation of women affected returning soldiers, expecting to resume their previous lives. Such experiences resonate with present-day circumstances, where service personnel return from life-changing conflict situations and need huge support from their families and local communities. Today, soldiers from a variety of faith backgrounds have experienced wider faith contexts in the places they have served. Guy Wilkinson, Interfaith Adviser for the Archbishops' Council, pointed out that this must be honoured while retaining Christian integrity at commemorative events.

Jeremy Fletcher, Vicar of Beverley, offered suggestions for events using regional, local and historical associations and taking a long-term approach. Local opportunities might encourage churches to look at commemorations in diverse venues: for example, players from Hull Kingston Rovers Rugby Club fought as soldiers and died together.

This event offered a wide variety of challenging material, moving from historical information to liturgical possibilities and offering food for thought to support planning throughout the forthcoming twelve months.

✉ *Rhona McEune is a Reader in Chelmsford Diocese.*

Book reviews

Beyond Common Worship: Anglican Identity and Liturgical Diversity,

Mark Earey, SCM Press, 2013, pp. 164, ISBN 978-0334047391, £17.28.

I am often asked questions about what is legal in a *Common Worship* service. At times this stumps even me, and I wonder if it is the wrong question; should it be about appropriateness and edification rather than legality. Mark Earey in this book identifies the problem as resting on the fact that approach to canon law for the worship of the Church of England is now really out of date. Allegedly we were once able to take clergy to court for not obeying rubrics of the *Book of Common Prayer*. What happens when the rubrics allow a vast choice, or indeed seem, at points, to encourage free creative writing, as in some of the instructions in *New Patterns for Worship*? It feels as though canon law has not caught up with liturgical reality. *Common Worship* is often quite confusing as various important points are made in different places. Mark Earey clearly points this out with regard to the notion of a principal service and how the definition of this stretches across a number of volumes, making it almost impossible to understand the exact nuances of the term even for an expert. Mark's solution is to use mathematical set theory to propose an alternative approach. This is an interesting suggestion, and one that may well find some acceptance in some circles, and be questioned by others. This is a thought-provoking book. It needs to be read by many in the Church.

✉ *Phillip Tovey is Diocesan Training Officer and Warden of Readers in Oxford Diocese*

Prayer & Prayer Activities for Worship with adults, children and all ages, Years A, B and C,

A ROOTS resource, Canterbury Press, 2013, pp.186, ISBN 978-1848252639, £24.99

My first impression with this *Roots* resource was that it was rather limited. What if you didn't link in with the one quotation from the gospel each week? It turns out to be quite the opposite. I found the steer of the quotation really helpful and there is a wonderful range of prayer material on offer, the extensive list of contributors illustrating the creative

pool that has been drawn upon. The two categories that I found most helpful were 'Prayer Activity' and 'Prayer of Reflection'. Those individuals and groups that sit down to plan all-age worship will find time-saving ideas galore and material to enhance their worship experience. Each of the prayer activities is clear and straightforward. You are never given too much to digest; it never becomes boring.

The ecumenical approach adds a breadth and freshness that some handbooks of a similar nature lack. It will be easy to pick up some real gems; a striking prayer of confession, a prayer for stillness or a sending out prayer. My secretary will soon be discovering my new favourites from the useful CD rom.

✉ *Geoff Pearson is the Bishop of Lancaster*

Crafting Prayers for Public Worship: the art of intercession,

Samuel Wells, Canterbury Press, 2013, x+123pp, ISBN 978-1848254602, £12.99

The Vicar of St Martin-in-the-Fields offers us a helpful book on leading intercessions, saying, 'Here is one way, and this is why I have pursued it, and this is how to go about it, and here are some examples of how it has been carried out.' So unlike John Pritchard in *The Intercessions Handbook* (SPCK), or Anna de Lange and Liz Simpson in *How to lead the prayers* (Grove), Sam Wells offers only one approach – probably the most common form of intercession heard up and down the country on Sunday morning. Nevertheless he helps his readers to understand what they are doing, and coaches them to use the shape of a traditional collect in each section of the intercessions. He encourages boldness in prayer, navigating between being too specific or too general, and using sufficiently open language that the hearers can link their own concerns with the prayer offered, linking to the Scriptures read and sermon preached earlier in the service, but his suggestion that a preacher make their sermon available to the intercessor a few days beforehand will not go down well with many last-minute sermon-writers.

Almost half the book comprises worked examples, most with brief commentary explaining the rationale behind the prayer, or pointing out key features. Some might want to use these examples 'off the peg' but I find the majority too long and cumbersome – and some verge on preaching through the prayer, a trap he

urges us to avoid. Nevertheless this book will sit on my shelf and will be useful both when I am training others to intercede, and when I want to review my own interceding.

✉ *Ian Tarrant, Rector of St Mary's Woodford*

The Preaching Life, Living out your Vocation,

Barbara Brown Taylor, Canterbury Press, 2013, pp xii + 180, ISBN 978-1848253186, £12.99

This is an updated edition of a previously published book. Barbara Brown Taylor is a priest of ECUSA, well known for preaching, and now in academia. The book can be divided into two parts. The first is an account of the author's journey of faith. It is predicated on the view that in the 1970s the church was in ruins; secular events had caused a loss of faith in God resulting in a search for new spiritualities (e.g. Bahai and Transcendental Meditation). She relates how her vocation to ordination was nurtured, reminding us that the baptized have a vocation to show the gospel in their lives. All too often people have a longing for God which they do not know how to articulate because we have lost the capacity to imagine. Worship is seen as a fundamental duty and joy of Christians, where we both experience and practise faith. She sees the sacraments as '...our road maps home'. In worship all the truths of our faith are present. Preachers must speak out of their own experience; mediating between the congregation and God. She expounds her sermon preparation process as hunting the text for '...the God in it, God for me and the congregation at this particular moment...'

A collection of thirteen sermons follows, mainly Gospel based, on a variety of topics. They mix light exposition of a text with mild exhortation, a style that many might try to copy. This book is a call to find God's presence so as to activate us. Not everybody will agree with its premise but it is thought provoking and should be widely read.

✉ *John Chamberlin is Secretary to Praxis North*

When God is Silent,

Barbara Brown Taylor, Canterbury Press, 2013, ISBN 978-1848254541, £9.99

I was attracted to this little book because God for me does often feel silent. Barbara Brown Taylor wrote it as she waited for her next job to begin. There was time to think

Events

about silence, to sit in silence and she wrote the book she 'most needed to read'. How often do we write the sermons we need to hear ourselves?

The book reminds us that in the beginning God owns the monopoly on speech; God gives this to humankind, and gradually withdraws from direct communication. Divine features that were initially distinct grow blurry as God withdraws, stepping back so that human beings have room to step forward. After the delivery of the commandments God never spoke directly to the people again, but in Jesus, God was once again made audible and visible. Even then, however, many people were unaware. In Jesus, the voice of God was not a shout but a whisper. 'In order to catch it, we must hush, lean forward, and trust that what we hear is the voice of God.'

It is this experience of the silence of God that the author encourages us to enter. She wants us to teach it rather than explain it away. We might show that silence is a sign of God's presence; that divine silence is not a vacuum to be filled but a mystery to be entered into. This is a book for encouragement and for those days when you wonder what preaching is for!

✠ *Christine Hall is a non-stipendiary minister at St John on Bethnal Green*

Events

The Celebration of the Eucharist, ancient and modern

Thursday 23 January 2014

Praxis South West

Kentisbeare Parish Hall, EX15 2AB

Speakers: Paul Bradshaw and Tom Clammer

Recent research has affected the way in which the origins and early development of the Eucharist are understood. In the morning Paul Bradshaw, Professor of Liturgy at the University of Notre Dame, will explore the research and take us more deeply into our understanding of the Eucharistic tradition. In the afternoon, Tom Clammer, Precentor of Salisbury, will reflect on how a changed understanding might be incorporated into the ways that we celebrate the Eucharist today.

Contact: gillbehenna@me.com

Interpreted by love: leading worship well

Praxis North Newcastle Cathedral

Saturday 1 February 2014

9.30 am - 3 pm.

Speakers: Bishop David Stancliffe and Revd Jeremy Fletcher in dialogue
Workshops:

- Interpreted by love
- Worship for those in later life
- Liturgies in emergencies
- Civic services
- *Book of Common Prayer* services
- Public speaking

Contact: johnchamberlin@btinternet.com

Church, State and Establishment, comparisons, contrasts – and some challenges

Midlands Praxis Birmingham Cathedral

Thursday 6 March 2014

Speakers: Martyn Percy, Principal of Ripon College, Cuddesdon.

Other speakers to be arranged

Contact: jayne.crooks@blueyonder.co.uk,
0121 4593733

Commemorating the First World War

Wednesday 12 March Praxis East

Bar Hill Church Centre CB23 8EH

10.30am – 3.30pm

Speakers: The Revd Dr Jeremy Morris, Ally Barrett and Jo Spreadbury

A practical day exploring the issues and the implications of the anniversary, noting the national events and liturgical provision being planned, and helping parishes to plan ahead and look at their key local dates and events, and ways to involve the local community as widely as possible over this four year period.

Contact: elizabeth.gregory@me.com

Baptising the Unchurched?

Saturday 15th March Praxis/Oxford

DLC 10am – 4pm

Dorchester Abbey OX10 7HH

Speakers: Sandra Millar, Head of Projects and Development for the Archbishops' Council and Anders Bergquist from the Liturgical Commission.

A training day on the development of new baptismal texts and the practical and theological challenges of baptizing babies of 'unchurched' families.

Contact: carolyn.main@oxford.anglican.org

Commemorating the First World War

Thursday 20 March 10 am - 4 pm.

Praxis North West

William Temple Church, Wythenshaw M22 0BU

Speakers: Professor Sir Edmund Burton will give us a military perspective; Gilly Myers will lead us in thinking of practical ways in which we can prepare for the commemorations in our own parishes and areas; Andrew Wickens will lead us in thinking about 'What it means to remember'. There will be two workshops in the afternoon, one of which will be on interfaith issues led by Philip Lewis from Manchester Diocese. We are planning to have another on all-age aspects.

Contact: colinrandall@mac.com

All-age worship

Friday 4 April 2014 10 am - 4 pm.

Praxis South Southwark Cathedral

Speakers: Martyn Payne - Messy Church
Gill Ambrose - ROOTS

Mary Hawes - Going for Growth Adviser
All-age worship exists in many forms, from Messy Church, to a Service of the Word, where children may or may not always be present, from lay-led worship in village churches to parade services in suburbia. How can all-age worship begin to engage with all those that might attend? How can we ensure it works on many levels and is genuinely worship of God, drawing all into a real experience of who God is?

Contact: peter@furber.me.uk

Funerals

Tuesday 20 May 2014

Praxis South West

Exeter Cathedral

Topics covered will include: preaching, music, liturgy and culture

Worship for Occasions and Occasional Worship

Wednesday 4 June Praxis East

Bar Hill Church Centre CB23 8EH

10.00am – 3.30pm

Speakers: Paul Bayes and Jessica Martin
Many people come to church occasionally – once or twice a year perhaps for a special service or event. Drawing on the Back to Church team's new initiative of "A Season of Invitation", this practical day will look at how we can make the most of these occasions for worship and welcome.

Contact: elizabeth.gregory@talk21.com

Colin's column

I WAS THE OTHER DAY with a fairly senior cathedral person discussing whether or not this or that is requisite in Anglican worship. I came away asking myself what conventions of text or behaviour regularly found in the Church of England are in fact without any warrant in our services, rubrics, Canons, or other official formulae. Some have crept in, in an optional kind of way, to the extra liturgical material in *Common Worship* listed as 'commended by the House of Bishops'; but it is with officially authorized services I am concerned. I list here some examples (not in order of the relative merits or demerits of the practices), and they simply relate to 'general practice' – behaviour specific to the Eucharist may come another time.

- Processions (let alone precedence and protocols within processions, or any role of cross or candles – let alone banners or other impedimenta)
- The furniture or the place in the building from which to lead a service or part of a service
- The use of the pulpit, ambo, lectern or any other furniture for preaching or teaching
- The use or disuse of an organ or any other particular musical instrument to accompany worship (Canon B20 refers to musicians, but not to their instruments)
- Robing choirs or liturgical assistants, lay or ordained
- Turning East for reciting a creed (or for Gloria in Excelsis or Gloria Patri)
- Bowing in any particular direction, or towards any object or person (Canon B10 requires worshippers 'to give due reverence to the name of the Lord Jesus', and that has been interpreted by many as meaning they should bow when Jesus is named, but it has no implications for bowing in any direction or towards any object or person)
- Making the sign of the cross (either in signing oneself or making the sign in the air in connection with giving a blessing or any ministrations towards others; the only place such

signing is stated is, as in 1552 and since, in baptism – and, a fortiori, where signing with the cross is not mentioned, neither is there direction as to which hand to use, nor how to deploy one's fingers, nor other intricacies)

- The use of candles, whether in procession or on the holy table (they do appear in the 'commended' Advent and Easter services and in the authorized service at baptisms)
- The use of incense

The Implications

Cranmer headed an introductory section 'Of Ceremonies – why some be abolished and some retained' – meaning that, if a ceremony previously existing were not specifically ordered, it was now specifically forbidden. Nowadays the normal view, perhaps forged through the innovations of the anglo-catholic movement, tends to be 'If there is no guidance given, you are free to fashion ceremonies as suits you' – and so all manner of practice has slipped into our services, and received conventions are often treated as integral to being Anglican or even as Church Law.

I am not attempting to say 'this or that practice should be banned'. Rather I say, 'Don't believe too quickly that this or that is the Anglican way of doing things in liturgy; and, if you find yourself doing it, do ask yourself why.' There may, of course, be a thoroughly good reason. Happy are you if you know why you are doing what you are doing in worship. Or let me know what is still puzzling you.

✉ *Colin Buchanan is a former Bishop of Woolwich.*

Enclosures

With this copy of *Praxis News of Worship* are two copies of the Events Card. Please give one away.

Commission

THE LITURGICAL COMMISSION met at Sarum College in Salisbury in October. Members enjoyed the venue, worship at the Cathedral, and a wonderful late-evening guided walk around the building (during which some were unable to refrain from practising their *Exsultets*). The main drafting issue was to return to the additional texts for use at Baptism. The House of Bishops particularly asked for more work on the Decision. It looks as if the response 'I do' will not feature in the new texts when they eventually emerge from the House.

Work continues in the wider C of E – especially in Ministry Division – towards the creation of a suite of common awards for all those preparing for ordained (and certain other) ministries, under the aegis of the University of Durham. The Commission has from the beginning worked strenuously to encourage a proper place for liturgical formation in the emerging curriculum. Ann Dawtry brought us up to date on the latest twists and turns in a long-running story.

Thomas Allain-Chapman from CHP came for a thoroughly interesting discussion of publishing issues, especially of the relation between print publications and electronic publication. *Visual Liturgy* will be updated at Advent 2013, but a successor platform, wholly web-based, is in planning. CHP is clearly pursuing apps and eBooks with energy, but there continues to be a place for the existing print volumes. The new *VL* will be integrated with the new *Transforming Worship* website.

I was deputed to join Paul Thomas in helping Missions to Seafarers draw together some worship resources that could be used in the Merchant Navy.

The Archbishop of Cape Town is keen to promote a 'creation season' in the church's liturgical year, throughout the Anglican Communion. The Commission was warm in support of using the Church's liturgical resources to the full to emphasise our responsibility for the stewardship of creation, and in enriching those resources where necessary.

Finally, Christopher Woods left his new parish to come to the end of the meeting, so that he could be thanked and applauded for all he had done as the Commission's Secretary.

✉ *Anders Bergquist is the Vicar of St John's Wood and a member of the Liturgical Commission.*