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### What is Praxis?

See [www.praxisworship.org.uk](http://www.praxisworship.org.uk)  
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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### Affiliation

The work that Praxis does is supported mainly by affiliation. If you are not an affiliate, why not consider becoming one?

## Whither the next Liturgical Commission?

The Bishop of Exeter, new President of Praxis and Chair of the Liturgical Commission, looks forward.

In his Rule, St Benedict gives priority to incorporate prayer because in worship we meet God and are transformed by grace. Benedict calls it the 'the work of God'. Prayer is not about persuading God to do what we want: it is about making ourselves available to God. The liturgy is designed to facilitate this process and open us to the forgiving, healing, reconciling work of God, which is why we need to give worship our best energy.

Sadly, experience of church can be in sharp contrast to this ideal. People undervalue church if the readings from Scripture are inaudible, the sermon banal, intercessions poorly prepared, and the music group or organist embarrassing. Without warmth or welcome, the liturgy soon feels tired. Matters are made worse if those leading worship lose their way or lard the liturgy with inappropriate matiness. This is why *Praxis*, working in partnership with the RSCM and the Liturgical Commission, is so important. Together we seek to raise the quality of worship in our parishes, chaplaincies and schools. We are servants of a vision that seeks to connect up worship, mission and discipleship.

The reduction in resources available to the Commission and in particular the loss of a full-time National Worship Development Adviser means that it can no longer organise road-shows or undertake any 'hands on' work in worship development. Its future role will be more strategic, though it will still allocate some of its remaining budget to support or sponsor events, including the work of diocesan liturgical advisers.

The Commission is dependent on the General Synod and the House of Bishops commissioning liturgical material to be prepared for commendation or authorization. Thus, following the final approval of *Additional Texts in Accessible Language*, these will now be integrated into

the suite of *Christian Initiation* services and a new edition produced, incorporating the insights of the Christening Project. The current volume (2006) has a substantial section entitled 'Rites on the Way', containing excellent liturgical material on discipleship. Sadly this material has had minimal uptake because it is overlooked in such a large volume. It is proposed to update this section and to publish it separately, including electronically, alongside coaching material in order to enable its wider use.

In response to the motion of General Synod requesting resources 'to help the whole Church to live out our common discipleship' the Commission is proposing to produce a liturgical companion to *Pilgrim*. The famous 'average lay person' needs help to make prayerful connections between faith and the worlds of work, family and leisure. It is intended to produce a range of material to mark various life-stages including, for example, ways to support those living with dementia.

Looking further ahead, it is likely that the next Commission will also be asked to review the *Calendar*, including adding commemorations from among those who died between 1958 and 1968, and as martyrs between 2008 and 2018. Whom should we emulate in the life of discipleship? As Chair of the Commission, I am already in receipt of various pleas and petitions in response to that question!

As we enter the next quinquennium, there is a seam of cultural restlessness in our society, a desire for a more holistic way of living that we need to be alert to, and to capitalize upon in our work. So let's stop talking about worship as a life-enhancing activity and have the confidence to proclaim it as foundational and life-transforming.

✉ + Robert Exon

# Events

## Worship Matters: the importance of worship for the mission of the Church

**Saturday 17 October 2015, 10.30 - 3.30 followed by Evensong, Southwark Cathedral, SE1 9AD**

To mark the 25th anniversary of its founding, *Praxis* presents a major day event on worship as the heart of the life of the Church. Worship is the Church's shop window; it is what we offer to God in praise and sorrow and it is where Christian life can be at its most vibrant and inviting. The day will highlight good worship as the vital ingredient of mission and show how genuine, well-planned worship forms and transforms individuals and communities. As we give thanks for the work of *Praxis* over the past 25 years we look to the Church of England to prioritise excellence in worship to underpin the reform and renewal strategies that will lead to church growth in the future.

We warmly invite you – and strongly encourage you – to book for this important *Praxis* national day conference, and show your support for *Praxis* and its key role in inspiring the worship offered to God by the Church. We hope this event, as well as recognising the contribution *Praxis* has made over the past 25 years, will be forward-looking and include a wider call to excellence in worship to underpin the reform and renewal strategy and help the mission of the Church of England leading towards growth. Contributors include

- Mark Earey, former Praxis National Education Officer; currently Tutor in Liturgy and Worship at Queens, Birmingham: *Worship Matters for Mission and Discipleship*
- Angela Tilby, Canon of Christ Church Cathedral and CMD adviser for Oxford diocese: *Worship Matters for the glory of God*
- Gilly Myers, former Secretary of Praxis and former Editor of *Praxis News of Worship*; currently Precentor of Southwark will give the homily at the Eucharist

Afternoon workshops:

- Gill Ambrose - *Worship matters for all ages*
- Helen Bent - *Worship matters for formation*
- Jo Spreadbury – *Worship matters for growth*

Cost £10. To book, download the booking form on the *Praxis* website: [www.praxisworship.org.uk](http://www.praxisworship.org.uk) or contact [peter@furber.me.uk](mailto:peter@furber.me.uk), 01202 296886

## Leading Worship Well: the art of liturgical presidency for worship leaders ordained and lay

**Wednesday 21 October 10.15 am – 4 pm St Stephen's, Exeter**

**Praxis Southwest**

Appropriately, in this Silver Jubilee year for *Praxis*, our speaker will be Bishop Michael Perham, our first Chairman. He has said, 'Worship is to reach up to grasp the heel of heaven...to be in touch with the Living God.' This day will explore how, as leaders, we can aspire to this.

Cost £20 including lunch

Contact [gillbehenna@me.com](mailto:gillbehenna@me.com)

## Liturgical Change: Fresh Perspectives

**Thursday 22 October 9.30 am - 3.30 pm William Temple Church, Wythenshawe, M22 OBU**

**Praxis Northwest**

Speakers: James Steven and Tim Harle Whatever your tradition, proposed changes to liturgy, whether forms of service or liturgical space, provoke strong reactions. Fresh insights from psychology enable us to understand how different people find security in times of uncertainty. This day uniquely brings together insights from two disciplines – liturgy and change management – to explore both what underlies such reactions and how these natural reactions can create new opportunities. Participants are encouraged to bring their own experiences of liturgical change, and to work together to encourage positive communal engagement with the agenda.

Contact Michael Gisbourne, [vicar@stpauls-scotforth.org](mailto:vicar@stpauls-scotforth.org), 01524 32106

## Make a splash! Jumping into the waters of Baptism

**Thursday 5 November 2015 10.30 am - 3.30 pm**

**St. Michael's, Cornhill, London, EC3V 9DS Praxis South**

Speakers: Sandra Millar and Anders Bergquist

What does a baptism mean to a family that brings a child to church to 'be done'? The Baptism Project followed on from the

highly successful Weddings Project, and Sandra Millar will talk about its progress. Anders Bergquist will describe the thinking behind the new baptismal texts and how they are designed to make the service more accessible.

Contact [peter@furber.me.uk](mailto:peter@furber.me.uk), 01202 296886

## Reader Ministry: 150 years of worship, theology, and mission

**Saturday 5 March 2016 10 am - 3 pm Bar Hill Church Centre, Cambridge Praxis East**

2016 marks 150 years of Reader ministry in the Church of England. To celebrate the anniversary, this day will offer an opportunity for Readers, and those who work with them, to consider and develop responses to the ever-changing needs of the contemporary Church in its worship and mission.

Contact [gill.ambrose@happyserver.co.uk](mailto:gill.ambrose@happyserver.co.uk), 07855513506

## Ministry in Hard Times

**Thursday 28 April 2016 9.30 am - 3.30 pm**

**William Temple Church, Wythenshawe, M22 ODU Praxis Northwest**

How do we provide spiritually-meaningful services and events for those for whom Mothering Sunday, Father's Day and Valentine's Day brings only a heightening of loss? How do we do memorial services at other times than All Soul's Day? How can we make the most of the *Common Worship* resources with people facing death and bereavement?

Further details from Michael Gisbourne, [vicar@stpauls-scotforth.org](mailto:vicar@stpauls-scotforth.org), 01524 32106

## Hitting the Right Note: a day on music and worship.

**Thursday 19 May 2016 10.30 am - 3.30 pm**

**Southwark Cathedral Praxis South**

Speaker: Helen Bent, Head of Ministerial Training for the RSCM and Praxis, and other facilitators to be announced.

This day will explore the changing role of music in worship.

Contact [peter@furber.me.uk](mailto:peter@furber.me.uk), 01202 296886

# Events

## ***Celtic Worship for Today***

*Thursday 10 November 2016 10.30 am - 3.30 pm*

*Southwark Cathedral*

*Praxis South*

A day exploring styles of Celtic worship and how they may enhance and deepen our worship today.

Contact peter@furber.me.uk, 01202 296886

## ***The Taizé Community: a Symposium at Sarum College***

*Friday 30 to Saturday 31 October 2015*

Sarum College is the venue for a major symposium that will explore the impact and significance of the Taizé Community, organised to mark the 75th year since the founding of the Taizé Community in 1940 and the centenary anniversary of the birth of its founder, Brother Roger.

The symposium will consist of papers given in full plenary sessions and shorter papers offered as optional seminars. As an alternative to 'keynote' speakers the symposium aims to create the opportunity to assemble a wide variety of contributors whose work and study relates to the unique phenomenon of the Taizé Community. The symposium is open to all and is designed as a forum for exchange, questioning and debate. Non-residential £75; Residential £135. A student concession is available to those delivering a paper as well as those in full or part-time education.

Contact Alison Ogden, aogden@sarum.ac.uk, 01722 424826

## ***Walter Tapper Lecture***

***Community of the Resurrection, Mirfield***

***Friday 2 October at 10.30 am – 12 noon***

This fourth year of the annual event, the guest lecturer will be Canon Christopher Irvine, Canon Librarian of Canterbury Cathedral and former Principal of the College of the Resurrection. Canon Irvine is the Chairman of the Alcuin Club, a member of the Church of England's Liturgical Commission, and the Cathedrals' Fabric Commission for England. He has a particular interest in the place of art in churches, and contributes to the teaching of the MA in Liturgical Studies at Sarum College, and at the Mirfield Liturgical Institute.

The lecture this year is entitled *The Worship Space as a Vestibule of Heaven* and will seek to explore the way in which the architectural language of our church buildings tells us something about our understanding of the kind of God we worship. In this lecture, Canon Irvine will invite us to reflect on how the architectural lines and ordering of some church buildings draws us towards the transcendent, and invites us to worship in the company of angels and archangels.

Although this is a free event, booking is essential, through the Mirfield Centre. Find details on the website, [www.mirfieldcentre.org.uk](http://www.mirfieldcentre.org.uk) or by calling Beth Harper on 01924 481920. Information about overnight accommodation is available from the Guest Department on 01924 483346 or by e-mail.

# Reports

## **Worship for an outward-facing Church**

### ***The consultation day for DLCs***

It must be a sign of the times that I can remember (vividly) the introduction of the *Alternative Service Book* in 1980. It felt like a revolution was about to break out at the time, yet 20 years later the publication of *Common Worship* heralded a new direction much more radical – moving worship from a given set of largely unchangeable texts to a set of resources from which liturgy may be constructed.

Now, 15 years later, the excitement and novelty of the various 2000 *Common Worship* books of texts has worn off. *Transforming Worship* was launched in 2007, and following that, the Liturgical Commission has continued to promote conferences and training events, the latest of which, the annual consultation day with dioceses, took place in Church House on 25 June 2015. Its title gives away the extent and radical nature of the changes in Church of England worship over a decade and a half. Texts in themselves, however accessible, cannot of themselves attract new worshippers, especially those with little or no background of churchgoing.

A significant difference from previous events was that keynote addresses were replaced by a dialogue between the headline speakers, Jonny Baker (pioneer leadership mission trainer and doyen of alternative worship) and Nicholas Henshall, Dean of Chelmsford. That two representatives of very different liturgical traditions and establishments were able to engage so fluidly (and fluently) in constructive dialogue through the day was in itself an indicator of old barriers breaking down.

Nicholas highlighted connecting with culture (using a Eucharist in a farmers' market as an example), making tradition live again in a new context: ritual is still important, and culture needs 're-ritualising'. Jonny referred to 'unbundling' and 'remixing' the Eucharist. Both referred to 'improvisation' based on a deep knowledge of liturgy: was I the only one startled to hear Nicholas mention Justin Martyr's reference to the qualification for being a bishop as 'the ability to improvise the Eucharistic Prayer'? However, I can't imagine anyone disagreed with their thesis that worship should be characterized by inclusiveness of welcome, simplicity of structure, and offering 'a place where people can bring their deepest needs'.

Discussion in smaller groupings after lunch enabled participants to share their own experiences and perceptions. The lack of liturgy specialists available in training contexts was identified as a problem, leading to inadequate tuition. The consequent low level of resources being put into worship in local contexts has led to poor confidence in planning liturgy, reducing its capacity to relate to contemporary culture. We did, though, celebrate Mark Earey's recent book, *Beyond Common Worship* which is a salutary reminder that *Common Worship* was never intended to become a new set of regulations, or a liturgical straitjacket.

A valuable and stimulating day left all participants asking how we can use our present resources in conjunction with our cultural engagement to form truly outward-facing worship.

✉ *Stuart Thomas is Rector of Frimley in the Diocese of Guildford.*

# Reports

## Baptism matters

Every week the Church of England has contact with an average of 2,200 families who bring a child under 12 for baptism. The congregations for these occasions are steadily getting larger, as families invite friends and family along to a special event. It's not unusual to have over 100 visitors in church that day – and for many of our churches that will mean the biggest congregation of the week. We guesstimate that baptism brings us into contact with around 200,000 people every week – which is an incredible opportunity to give people a positive encounter with the good news of God's love and the welcome of God's people.

Back in 2013 the Archbishops' Council decided to undertake some research around the baptism of children so that we could find new ways to make the most of the opportunities that arise. Research was done with clergy, readers and then, working with a professional research company, with 1000 families who identified as non- or fringe- church goers. The results have been fascinating, and have informed the development of key messages and resources now being made available across the Church of England.

The first thing that we discovered is that to the public this service is a 'christening'; so now in all our public-facing materials that is the word we use. However, almost immediately we introduce the word 'baptism', helping parents to begin the journey to a new understanding of what is happening.

The research also found that parents are more serious in their motivation than we may realise, although the language they use will be different from our language. Parents want the best for their children, they want them to make good choices in life, and they want them to explore and discover more about faith. People are also very important. When a child is baptised at a christening, connecting with family and friends is very significant. They may be those they know in the family's present life circumstances, but it might also be people who have shaped the family's history – so going back to the church they were married in can mean a great deal. But by far the most important people on the day are the godparents that are chosen: 93% of respondents gave having godparents as one of the reasons for having a child baptised. So making more of them in the service, trying to make contact, and

appreciating their role is important.

We also discovered that families experience baptism preparation as being well-rehearsed for the service. However, they are sometimes disappointed that the preparation offered didn't seem to relate to the realities of parenting, or even talk about praying for their baby, or advice about Bible stories to read. In the coming months, two new resources will be available from Church House Publishing to help parents go beyond the service. In October *Starting Rite*, by Jenny Paddison, will be available: it is an unusual approach to parent and baby spirituality. And in the spring, a new baptism preparation course, which can be run over one, three or more sessions will also be published.

The research showed that on the day of the baptism itself the most important, memorable and significant things for the families are the symbols we use and the smiles we offer. Holding a baby or child, praying for them by name, giving a lighted candle are the moments that impact parents. Those who choose to use the new additional texts may feel able to relax more and focus on the drama of water, oil and candles, and to offer a warm welcome that makes families feel that they are special and communicates God's grace and love.

The new resources that have been developed as a result of the research all pick up the idea that baptism is the start of an amazing journey. There is a new website for parents, godparents and guests: [www.churchofenglandchristenings.org](http://www.churchofenglandchristenings.org) and there are new printed cards that can be given out before and after the service. Baptism is the start of something, and the research clearly showed that the more we help families understand that, the more we give them information about what we offer as a church, and above all, the more they are introduced to the church and those who go there, the more likely it is that they will continue on that journey and become actively involved.

Over the past year we have been testing these resources and key messages in 150 benefices across four dioceses. The results have been exciting. Two thirds of those who have actively taken part report an increase in families attending church after a baptism, and over 90% say that they think families are now receiving a better understanding of baptism as the start of a journey.

It may be that the approval and publication of the additional texts will provide an opportunity for your church

to review baptism ministry. You can read more about the research and access the resources at [www.churchsupporthub.org](http://www.churchsupporthub.org). Several dioceses have booked one day presentations over the next few months, and in spring 2016 there will be series of one day conferences: 22 February in Solihull; 8 March near Taunton; 15 March in Bracknell, 14 April in Harrogate and 26 April near Cambridge. Full details for booking will be available shortly. If your diocese is interested in a presentation contact Projects and Developments directly, and if you can, come along to the Praxis South training day in London on 5th November.

✉ *Sandra Millar is Head of Projects and Developments for the Archbishops' Council.*  
[sandra.millar@churchofengland.org](mailto:sandra.millar@churchofengland.org)

## Making Way: Labyrinths and Sacred Moments

Wakefield Cathedral offered a sacred space for Praxis Yorkshire's event on 25 April at which six enablers worked with fifty participants. Some of them reflected on what they remembered best:

- the joy of sharing bread and wine in an experimental Eucharist on and around the Wakefield Labyrinth;
- a talk on labyrinths, their history and how through the ages people have walked them for spiritual refreshment and growth;
- slides on the development of the Cathedral building and its renewed use for worship and community events, as a meeting place and as sacred space;
- a reflection on sacred moments, how to teach the heart and mind to recognise them in the ordinary and the surprising, and how to create them for ourselves and others to share again and again;
- the invitation 'to do' and 'to be' ourselves, walking the labyrinth, planting seeds, writing poems and prayers;
- learning to create a labyrinth out of seed or string or stones in spaces large and small outside and within;
- enjoying the beauty of the Cathedral, the pool of peace and quiet in the bustle of a busy precinct;
- the opportunities to chat and share, of being with and before God;
- a pleasure and privilege to host and share, a refreshment for body, mind and soul.

✉ *Tracey Yates is the Community Learning Manager and Andi Hofbauer is Precentor of Wakefield Cathedral.*

# Books

## **The Sound of Liturgy: How Words Work in Worship**

Cally Hammond, SPCK, 2015, ISBN 978-0281069545, Paperback £25

I found *The Sound of Liturgy* a fascinating book, full both of scholarship and of practical insight. Dr Hammond's purpose is 'aimed at practical progress in doing liturgy,' and, for readers willing to engage with the apparent textual density, her book fulfils this aim. I read *The Sound of Liturgy* from the perspective of a 'retired' leader of worship who now spends more time in a pew than once I did. From both perspectives, I found the book mind- and heart-blowing in many ways, not least because it informed and often challenged some of my likes, dislikes and prejudices. Dr Hammond informs and honours best practice across all our traditions, wanting words to 'work in worship' whatever her reader's liturgical preferences.

The first chapter shows how *Posture* matters in prayer. Hammond explores kneeling, eye-gazing, standing, orientation, crouching, personal sacred space and touch. She reminds the reader of biblical and liturgical texts that encourage specific postures, explores how rubrics can enforce uniformity or explain theological truths, and even how gender differences affect inter-personal communication. 'Men speak more loudly, take up more space; women smile more and adopt more closed postures'. The chapter ends with some wonderful illustrations from a twelfth century prayer manual which portrays seven modes of positioning the body in prayer, 'devotional instructions for the illiterate to follow'. These resonate surprisingly strongly with worship practices today.

Hammond then addresses *Repetition*. 'In church, repetition is the key to absorbing the fact of God.' She recalls words of a rabbi who had preached at Evensong in an Oxford college chapel: 'You do say *Glory be* a lot' and reflects that 'Christianization-by-Gloria-Patri was almost inevitable. The spiritual effect is to ingrain in the worshipper and worship-leader the doctrine that the heart of the Christian faith is not

only Jesus, but the full Godhead of the holy and undivided Trinity.' There is so much in this chapter which informed and deepened my understanding of how experiencing repetition in worship and Scripture effects change in worshippers. Far from being 'vain,' repetition 'allows the words of and symbolic actions within both worship and Scripture to inspire and nurture our spiritual growth and to strengthen our corporate identity as Body of Christ'. I was also struck by the author's perception of the phenomenon of 'mind-slip' (not boredom) in repetitive praying. 'The mind lets go its grip and leaves room for the eternal Word to speak instead.'

Hammond's objective in the third chapter is to put *Rhythm* higher up the liturgical agenda. 'It is arguably the single most important factor in making liturgical texts memorable.' Her analysis of rhythm helps the reader understand why some liturgical phrases have real impact and others fall flat. The relationship between spoken and sung words in worship is compared with singing at football matches which 'replicates that sense of (literal) ec-stasy (from the Greek for "standing outside of oneself") which comes through well-conducted worship. Like birds, both football fans and worshippers sing "to mark out their own identity and territory".'

'When a word is written down, it becomes a sign to the eyes, by which anything that reaches a person's ears enters into their mind.' (Augustine). I thought I might find Hammond's chapter on *Punctuation* less relevant to worship leaders and worshippers than her earlier chapters. Not so. The way in which words are set out in liturgical texts is no longer the sole preserve of the Church's official liturgists, publishers and the General Synod. It has become relevant also to the many of us who create our own worship booklets and overheads and are occasionally tempted to 'adjust' the authorised and printed forms.

Hammond's conclusion led me to reflect on the importance of the way we do worship to the Church's mission. 'In a situation where first impressions count

(the new Christian coming to church for the first time), there will not be a second chance to make that first impression.' Cally Hammond's wisdom should help us make that 'first impression' count.

✉ Anne Horton is a priest in the diocese of Leicester and a member of Praxis Council.

## **What Makes Churches Grow?**

Bob Jackson, Church House Publishing, 2015, ISBN 978-715144749 £19.99

At the beginning of this century evidence appeared to say that the Church of England was in serious decline. In an effort to discover what was happening and encourage the Church to adopt a strategy of growth, Bob Jackson wrote *Hope for the Church* (2002) and *The Road to Growth* (2005). The first part of this present book reviews how the project is progressing; the second part reflects on what the evidence suggests is likely to stimulate and maintain new growth. Part 3 looks at the spiritualities behind growth. All three sections contain many statistics from a variety of sources, including Robert Warren, Christian Schwarz, Robin Gamble, Peter Brierley and the Church Commissioners.

People interested in mission in the Church will be familiar with much of the material and many of the trends, for example the rise of Messy Church, and the growth in cathedral congregations. Both have fostered growth in weekday worship. Although the book does not focus a great deal on worship, there is enough to suggest that it has a significant place in the work and exploration that has been done.

Liturgists will be pleased to note that the research shows that cathedrals especially attract people because of the quality of their music and the preaching, and the ability to put things on well. But perhaps the paragraph on sacramentalism is one of the most thought-provoking:

'Sacramentalism, it is said, has done evangelism no favours through its emphasis on the insider service that is Holy Communion to the exclusion of more accessible styles. But we now need a new sacramentalism driven by people passionate about baptizing new believers. Baptism is the primary sacrament. The Eucharist feeds members of the body of Christ, but Baptism creates them.

Repetition of the eucharistic feeding of the people of God is the easy bit. The baptism of infants is not difficult either... But the baptism of the newly believing is the primary sacramental challenge to the priestly calling of the Church' (p.275).

✦ *Christine McMullen is a Reader in the Diocese of Derby and a member of the Liturgical Commission.*

## Forthcoming Publications

### ***Creating Missional Worship – Fusing Context and Tradition***

by Tim Lomax, will be published by Church House Publishing at the end of September £14.99. He writes

What if we were to worship as if we were participating in the missionary life of God? This is the question that sparked the idea for my new book, *Creating Missional Worship*. I look at 'church' and I see that in many ways worship and mission have been kept apart. We've perhaps lost sight of the idea that worship needs mission and mission needs worship, because worship is seen by many to hold mission back.

In some ways worship has become associated with 'church-the club', 'the in-crowd' – on our terms on our turf. We can fall into the trap of worshipping to please ourselves and to feed our own needs. If we were truly honest I believe we would see that we have worshipped in ways that have become more and more out of touch with the contexts in which it is offered: out of touch with the local people, places, needs and cultures. I see how mission has become an add-on programmed activity in addition to the worship of those who are already members of the Church. But what if we were to repair the relationship between mission and worship? What if worship that reaches out to those who haven't yet experienced God's love at work in their lives, is more truly honourable to God?

*Creating Missional Worship* highlights something of my passion for missional worship. I'm not just thinking here of Fresh Expressions or pioneering church plants, I am including churches of all traditions, shapes, conditions and sizes.

I hope to encourage anyone who may have a part to play in leadership to help their church community reimagine or rediscover their part in God's mission through their worshipping life. I hope, too, that those who engage with the text will be better equipped to facilitate worship that engages with the context, serves, offers hospitality and enables a genuine encounter with the Triune God.

But how? How can we bring worship and mission together into a fruitful relationship? In my view, we need an approach that enables the worshipping life of the church to remain faithful to its heritage while reaching out into its context. I hope to encourage local churches to fuse attentiveness to context and the stuff of everyday life, with the rich resources of Anglican liturgy, ritual and tradition in order to create worship that is engaging, transformative and outward-reaching. I explore why context and tradition are essential to worship that is an expression of the dynamic relationship of the Trinity. Using the patterns of *Common Worship*, I highlight a contextual approach to creating worship that explores freedom within a structured framework. As a source of inspiration, a variety of ways of using inherited texts and traditions are suggested and numerous practical examples, sample services and stories of those faithfully trying to create missional worship are included. If you have a desire to help enable your church to explore how worship might develop missionally where you are, then I hope this book will be of help.

✦ *Tim Lomax is the Vicar of Bayston Hill in Shewsbury and a member of the Liturgical Commission.*

### ***Ancient Church Orders***

*Alcuin/GROW Joint Liturgical Study 80, Paul Bradshaw, SCM-Canterbury, £7.95*

This will be published in October.

Paul Bradshaw writes: 'Among the extant literature from the first few Christian centuries are a number of manuscripts that have come to be known collectively as church orders and purport to offer authoritative "apostolic" prescriptions on Christian life and ecclesiastical practice.' The 'church orders' provide much of the evidence on which are based our modern descriptions of early church worship, and Paul Bradshaw's study as far as possible sets each one in its original context, spells out what it most significantly conveys, and explores with charts the mutual relationships of the extant 'orders'.

✦ *Colin Buchanan*

# Fresh or Traditional: Identity and Worship

The word 'common' would seem to be important to the worship of the Church of England. Our two official liturgical books both have it in their title. Yet the era of *Common Worship* is also the era of the Fresh Expression, which, in turn, has brought with it a patchwork of worship expressions. We might think of everything from the worship offerings of Messy Church, through Café Church, Forest Church, to various forms of Youth- and Young-Adult-orientated gatherings and even to the more traditional offerings of Sung Eucharist and Choral Evensong. From reading the stories which are being gathered on the Fresh Expressions website ([www.freshexpressions.org.uk](http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk)), it is clear that worship persists as a key defining component of the activity of most groups. In other words, worship is an important part of the self-identity of a Fresh Expression and closely-related to its understanding of its mission. Also clear is that within the Fresh Expressions scene, clear 'brands' have emerged. This is more than just taxonomy. Each tag has a matching website, literature and even 'how-to' courses. There is, after all, a limit on everyone's time and creativity.

In addressing the diverse nature of present British society, the 'common' element of Anglican worship within the Fresh Expressions of the Church of England might seem to be pressed beyond breaking-point. Those with an interest in the formative power of common worship and the outward quality of worship may raise understandable concerns in this era of constant re-invention and re-imagining.

There is nothing new to this dilemma. The rise in popularity of 'Family Services', which marked a burst of liturgical freedom and creativity in the 1960s and 1970s were met, in 1989, with the wise, yet corrective guidance and resources of *Patterns for Worship*, which replaced old-fashioned formal liturgical censure with liturgical education. Alongside *Patterns* (which was initially a church report) came a good deal of thinking about how the 'Anglican identity' of parish worship could be preserved, led – chiefly – by Stephen Sykes, then Bishop of Ely. Yet

the continued diversification of British society and the advance of technology has brought ever-growing challenges to the historical ways 'church' and its worship is happening in parishes. In the 1990s, the issue was the power of editing and printing brought about by word processors and photocopiers. Today, printed texts are no longer necessary for corporate worship; neither is a church building.

Technology has shaped our sense of identity, particularly in the way we 'self-identify'. In this sense, the Church has been trying to catch up with what manufacturing and marketing have been grappling with since the 19th century's invention of mass-production. We might talk about the 'commodification' of forms of 'church' implicit in the whole Fresh Expressions movement, but to opt out of some form of social commodification is merely to make yet another lifestyle choice. ('Stale expression', 'Tidy Church', 'Stone Church'). In terms of church life, this means that all forms of 'church' are now commodified – even when the range of choice on offer is extremely limited (as, for example, in isolated rural areas). To do mission in the Church of England includes engaging with a choice of what kind of worship to offer and, thereby, to present yet another liturgical option. This approach has lots to commend it, in a culture where people do ask 'Is this for me?', not in the sense of 'Do I agree with this?' but 'Is this really "me"?' Furthermore, the answer to that question will change with personal circumstances and experience, raising the prospect of the need to change product as one senses change in oneself. So, when viewed from the individual perspective, all forms of 'church' have a sell-by date on them, and another choice, later on, will need to be made again. What is true for 'church' is also true for 'worship'.

The sense of needing some 'common' worship in this setting is facing the same set of challenges as the broader issue of Christian tradition itself. How can anything as stable-sounding as 'tradition' flourish, or even exist, in such a commodified and fast-changing society?

A look at the various Fresh Expressions and stories on offer (and the web has thousands) suggests that the emphasis, at the moment, seems to be on 'accessibility' rather than 'tradition'. Many of the stories talk of people who joined or evolved a particular form of 'church', because the traditional form was either experienced as alienating, or perceived to be so. There appears to be an innocence among many over the ability of the Bible alone to guarantee traditional orthodoxy. In other groups, their context or intention in being 'church' seems to have eclipsed those key Christian themes (such as Christ, Kingdom, sin and salvation) usually found in more traditional worship.

Yet Fresh Expressions abound and many are thriving. More liturgically-minded Anglicans may wish to challenge them over the implications of surrendering the last shreds of common liturgical identity. But Fresh Expressions, with their various approaches to worship, also counter-challenge those who are still doing things the old way about how 'accessible' their church life and worship is to commodified people from a commodified culture. And – like it or not – in this setting all forms of church gathering, with their attendant liturgy, must take their stand as an 'expression' – fresh or otherwise. Perhaps supreme among the Church of England's Fresh Expressions success stories must be the English Cathedrals, who – by maintaining an essentially stable, well-presented liturgy, with high-quality musical resources – have captured a growing market for those who, through personal inclination or stage in life, are looking for something to which to go along and in which to just 'be', relatively unencumbered by dated or stale understandings of 'active participation'.

One way liturgists can engage with the phenomenon of Fresh Expressions is by doing the background work as to the ways 'tradition' and 'theology' act as a servants as well as correctives to the mission of the Church in the present age. For example, there is a need for published research on the way liturgical theology operates in the worship of Fresh Expressions (and, by way of comparison,

in not-so-fresh ones). This liturgical theology needs articulation and publication in order to subject it to the critique of the wider Christian tradition. Some excellent work has already been done by Bryan Spinks in the American context (*The Worship Mall: Contemporary Responses to Contemporary Culture*. London: SPCK, 2010) but British studies among Fresh Expressions are also needed. Secondly, the emphasis within Fresh Expressions upon mission and outreach argues the need for a more up-to-date articulation of the relationship between worship and mission from the liturgical point of view, not least in those 'expressions' of church activity which would not define themselves as 'Fresh'. Lastly, there is also need for a mature, cross-disciplinary debate between Church of England agencies advocating the mission approach of *Fresh Expressions* and those concerned about worship and doctrine. The Church has the structures to do this work, and Fresh Expressions as a phenomenon is now established enough to engage without becoming politically concerned with the implications for its survival. This interaction would be the most responsible way for the Church to deepen and enrich its worship through a growing understanding of what the Spirit is saying through this creative form of mission.

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## Proof reader

We are looking for someone to help with proof reading *Praxis News of Worship*. There are four issues a year. The pdf pages are sent electronically and may be marked up either in hard copy or electronically within a 48 hour time window. If you think you could help, contact the Editor, Gill Ambrose, at the email address on the front panel. This is an 'honorary' position!

I wrote in a *Column* a few issues ago about quasi-ceremonial practices which have wound their way into Anglican liturgical usage without any official rubrical, canonical or other textual sanction. Once I started listing them, I found myself overwhelmed by the sheer weight of them – so I quickly divided them into 'general' points and 'eucharistic' ones.

The 'general' I listed in that issue's *Column*. The 'eucharistic' I offer you here, broadly drawn from what is not directed in canons or in Order One in *Common Worship*. You will recall that by my listing I offer no value-judgments – you might find items here I like as well as (I confess it) one or two I do not like. The common thread is that none of them has any such official backing or warrant as to justify calling them 'Anglican'. Ergo no-one can be accused of being un-Anglican for omitting any of them. They are local arbitrary usages. But, yes, they might still be deeply entrenched; and, yes, they might still be useful. So here goes on the listing, roughly in the order they might come in an actual celebration (and the list takes for granted the 'general' list I set out nearly two years ago – including processing, bowing to the furniture, turning east for the Creed, etc.).

- Vesting anyone apart from the president; and for the president there is an option of 'other customary vestments' (the Church of England has never specified which garments these are (and, of course, at the point where they were introduced they were not 'customary'...) – but most people guess
- The existence and role of servers is not mentioned anywhere – nor are deacons ('The deacon of the rite' occurs in ordination services)
- Censing the communion table – and kissing it
- Gospel processions, censing and/or kissing the Gospel book, and the congregation turning to face the reading of the Gospel
- Confining the reading of the Gospel to an ordained minister and/or to the preacher
- Any specific way of sharing 'a sign of peace'
- Any mention in the *Common Worship* rites of the term 'offertory' (and in 1662 it meant giving money and belonged severely to the ante-communion)
- Selected lay people carrying bread and wine and/or sacramental vessels from the back of the church to the front.

- Credence tables
- Ceremonial washing of president's hands ('lavabo')
- Adding water ceremonially to wine before beginning the Eucharist ('mixed cup')
- 'Taking the bread and wine' is ordered (in *Order One*) to begin the eucharistic action on p.175, but Note 17 (p. 333) allows this inexplicably 'during the Eucharistic Prayer'. Any other manipulation of the elements or of the vessels holding them during the Eucharistic Prayer is without sanction
- Bowing or genuflecting towards the sacramental elements
- Making the sign of the cross over the elements at any point
- Moving covers off and onto the eucharistic vessels during the Eucharistic Prayer (Can anyone explain this? Is it just a protection from wasps getting into the cup?)
- Elevating the vessels at the end of the Eucharistic Prayer
- Putting some piece of bread into the cup ('commixture')
- The people 'coming up' to receive communion
- Any posture in which they are to receive (*BCP* ordered kneeling)
- Purificators
- Distribution in one kind only
- Distribution by 'intinction'
- Confining the distribution of the bread to an ordained minister
- Giving a 'blessing' to non-communicants
- Ceremonial cleansing of vessels ('ablutions') – the rubric requires 'consumption' of remains, not washing of vessels, which would properly be done by wardens or other helpers in the vestry
- Using permanent reservation
- Having a hymn after the *Dismissal* (see on p.183 that the last hymn comes before the blessing and the 'departing')

Ah, but perhaps I write from innocence. What other practices do you have over and above what *Common Worship* requires of you, or at least explicitly allows? The freedom is intoxicating. But the crucial question I was asking on the first time round was: do you know why you do what you do? And does it add up to enriching the liturgy and helping it to change people's lives?

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