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In this issue

Liturgy; Gender; Language; Inclusivity	1
Worship matters	2-3
Events	4
Reports	5
Report	6
Books	6
TDS	6
About Praxis	7-8
Colin's Column	8

What is Praxis?

See 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?

Liturgy; Gender; Language; Inclusivity

A spotlight on the work of the Transformations Steering Group (TSG)

It all seems rather a long time ago now, but in 2010, in response to the slow progress of the women bishops legislation through General Synod, a group of women was invited by the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, to discuss the situation.

They were tasked with convening a conference, 'Transformations: Theology and Experience of Women's Ministry' at Lambeth Palace in September 2011 to celebrate and explore the experience of ordained women.

The conference was celebratory, but also acknowledged where the Church is failing its women. Over 60 people – women and men, lay and ordained – met to explore a range of issues, including synodical processes, liturgical language (of interest to Praxis of course), the deployment of women clergy and the interpretation of Scripture. Each group was invited to feed back suggestions for action. A detailed report, including group feedback and recommendations to the House of Bishops, was written and circulated.

The conference planning group emerged as the 'Transformations Steering Group', to take forward this agenda. This group now meets at Lambeth Palace three times a year and since 2014, not before time, it has included black and minority ethnic representatives. The TSG regularly reports back to the College of Bishops.

In October 2014 representatives of TSG held a productive meeting with the Liturgical Commission to discuss gender

in liturgy in terms of both language and liturgical role. It was suggested that work needed to be done to raise awareness of already existing and exemplary resources published in *Common Worship* that were less easy to locate. In addition it was agreed that new texts should, in future, be carefully examined as they are produced. It might be helpful to refer to a working checklist which would, amongst other aspects, address:

- language that employs metaphors of darkness, which might be misinterpreted as racist;
- the language of disability as a metaphor for sin;
- unnecessary gender-specific language;
- the language of power and control.

Now we have a new Liturgical Commission that is girding its loins for another five-year term. The TSG hopes to remain in contact with the Commission's current work, as well as with the National Liturgy and Worship Adviser, helping to maintain a raised awareness where liturgy, gender, language and inclusivity are concerned.

I think it would be fair to say that, currently, this is not necessarily a high priority for the House of Bishops, but so much has changed in the Church, hasn't it? There is no room for complacency though!

✉ Wendy Wilby is a Member of TSG and Chair of the National Association of Diocesan Advisers in Women's Ministry in the Church of England.

Worship Matters Two Keynote Addresses

Worship Matters: for the glory of God

What is the glory of God that we should give it so much attention? In Hebrew the word for 'glory' is 'KABOD', which has the sense of weight or substance. The glory belongs to God's nature; God is the source of all reality. God's glory filters through creation, yet is also the veil that hides God from our perception. Glory in hiddenness, light in darkness, darkness dazzling; that of which (to misquote Wittgenstein) we may not speak, but of which we may not remain entirely silent. A moment in which we do perceive the glory of God has a sense of disclosure, of otherness, of revelation, of an attractiveness which is startling.

Mysterium tremendum et fascinans

Rudolf Otto's 1917 anthropological study looked at *The Idea of the Holy*, which he saw as a fundamental aspect of religion, an element that was beyond rationality; a perception, as he put it of '*mysterium tremendum et fascinans*': the 'enormous and compelling mystery'; a basic human response to the divine otherness of things. It can be found in nature and in particular holy and awe-inspiring places. It is evoked in ritual – and of course it can be open to manipulation and exploitation. But at its most basic, it is the spark that leaves us having to say things like, 'We give thanks to thee for thy great glory'; either that, or a cry of wordless wonder.

Today people have largely lost the sense that gateways to this glory are available through church-going. They are more susceptible to glory through nature, through the random excesses of beauty and intricacy that have emerged through the process of natural selection. One of the reasons Richard Dawkins so despises belief in God is that the God he has encountered through public school and parish Christianity is just not glorious enough. The wildness and beauty that inspires is found for him in the extraordinary abundance that nature has produced by following its own inherent laws. This, for him, is miracle enough. And though I reject his wooden-headed anti-religious fundamentalism, I do hear behind the shrillness a genuine grief. We, the Church, have at times had access to the vision of glory, but we have lost it somewhere. Perhaps it is still available in

ancient places of worship – especially when worship is not going on.

We have seen his glory

'We have seen his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth'. With the coming of Christ the glory focuses on Jesus Christ as God's word and image. 'The glory of God is a living man', as Irenaeus said. In different ways, New Testament writers testify to the glory of God in Jesus Christ. The glory is attractive, though shocking and even frightening: Paul's vision of Jesus on the road to Damascus; the angels breaking in with 'Glory to God' on a hillside near Bethlehem; the vision on the mountain when the glory shone explicitly through Jesus to the terror of Peter, James and John; the manifestations of glory in John's Gospel, at the wedding of Cana, in the healing miracles, and most significantly for John, in the cross. Think, too, of when Jesus, on the road to Jerusalem, sets his face and walks ahead of the disciples, suddenly remote, unapproachable, majestic. Or the shiver, panic and ecstasy of resurrection morning. The glory of God is humanity fully alive, this living man. We forget, I think, what strange, stark testimonies the letters and gospels of the New Testament are. We forget the attraction, the magic of the figure they reveal and conceal. How other he is, and yet how human. It is our fault that we have so often made Jesus boring, a moralistic fellow traveller to all our good causes rather than the one who calls out of us that stumbling confession of faith, 'My Lord and My God'. Hidden godhead, veiled majesty.

We won't understand what we are doing in worship unless we re-engage with the mystery at the heart of it, until we are attracted once again by the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* in nature, in history, in buildings, in ritual – in all that is shaped by the memory and sacramental presence of Jesus Christ. To do that properly we need to understand the importance of metaphor. I think that the Protestant strand of the Church of England ran into the sand in the middle of the 19th century when some of the most prophetic minds of the Church realised that we were stuck between biblical fundamentalism and a bloodless and moralistic liberalism which would in the end erode the faith. Their answer was to try to return to the sources of the faith. They went back to the early Christian habit of seeing Scripture whole, allowing symbol and

story and image and replication the space and play that Reformation teaching denied. They rediscovered metaphor and found mystery hanging in the wings.

Here, to conclude, are a few examples of where the attraction I have tried to speak about is most explicit and obvious, not only to regular worshippers but to those outside. Think of the attraction of light in darkness: carol services, vigils, the lights of All Souls, the baptismal candle, Compline. What is truly attractive does not need to cry out, or draw attention to itself. Darkness is an opportunity of freedom, of resting in that great space which God has cleared for the creation to be itself. Think of symbol and image: the Christmas Crib, the Easter Garden; bread broken, wine shared; oil poured out; the sign of the cross in baptism; the wedding ring or rings. Material things becoming vehicles of grace, not in an automatic idolatrous way, but because the word of blessing has freed them to become so. This is good magic, transformation. Think of the best of hymns and worship songs. I am afraid the improving Victorian ditties don't cut the mustard for most people any more, but there are hymns and songs that convey a kind of theological density which can open up a vision of glory: some of Stuart Townend and Timothy Dudley-Smith and others when they are not too self-conscious.

Think about Scripture. The demand goes on for shorter Scripture passages, less conformity to lectionaries, for more editing, usually in the interests of the preacher rather than the edification of the faithful. The result is that we have no capacity to play with Scripture, to let Scripture comment on Scripture, to allow old and new resonances to surface, to enlighten, to transform our perceptions. Charles Wesley was amazingly bold in the way he used Scripture. If you take just one of his hymns, the famous 'And can it be' you will find it full of shocking and inspiring juxtapositions. Think of that amazing verse: 'Long my imprisoned spirit lay, fast bound in sin and nature's night... I discerned a quickening ray, I woke, the dungeon flamed with light. My chains fell off, my heart was free, I rose, went forth and followed thee.' Allusions there to psalms, Second Isaiah, 1 Peter, the imprisonment of Peter in Acts, the gospel accounts of the call of the disciples.

You will think of other things: of where the glory breaks in in your experience; where you stop dividing those you encounter into insiders and outsiders and

given in Southwark Cathedral on Oct 17th

see all as being receptive to the glory of God, no matter where they stand. That is not easy but it may liberate us from some of the false dichotomies between worship and mission to which we are subject in Church thinking and agendas at the present time.

✦ *Angela Tilby is CMD Officer and Canon Residentiary of Christ Church, Oxford.*

Worship Matters: for Mission and Discipleship

Mark Earey began by discussing the contrast that is often made between a worship-focused view of the Church and one that is rooted in mission and discipleship. He felt that this is a false contrast; the Church must be engaged in both. If we are to give ourselves wholly to God's purposes we cannot divide mission from worship or worship from mission. Worship is never merely instrumental, but it does have a part to play in forming disciples. Both worship and mission are pleasing to God and so belong together. Worship ought to support mission, and mission should be an expression of worship. Both are part of the *Missio Dei* – God's movement in love towards the world. For the sake of understanding how worship and mission might relate, he also invented a complementary phrase, '*Liturgio Dei*'.

Mark considered the Five Marks of Mission as a template for understanding the place of worship. A Church that lives by the marks of mission will:

1. Proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2. Teach, baptize and nurture new believers
3. Respond to human need by loving service
4. Transform unjust structures of society
5. Safeguard the integrity of creation.

These can be put into single word form as:

1. Proclamation
2. Nurture
3. Service
4. Injustice
5. Creation

We are challenged to make connections between *Missio Dei* (the mission of God) and what (for the purposes of this talk) Mark was calling '*Liturgio Dei*' (the worship of God).

Next Mark reflected on the nature of the Liturgical Movement of the

mid-20th century. This was very much focused theologically on creation and the incarnation. It invited participation in God's work through liturgy and the building up of communities that could transform wider society.

'In the worship of God the full meaning and beauty of our humanity is consummated and our lives are opened to the promise God makes for all creation – to transform and renew it in love and goodness.' (Preface to *Common Worship, Main Volume*)

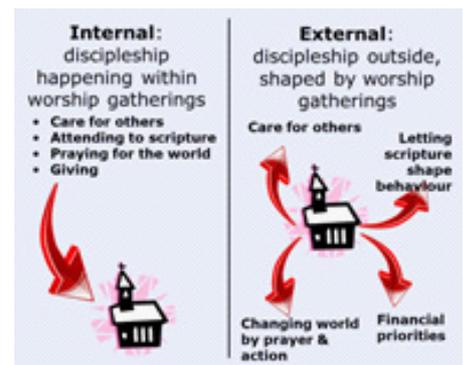
The fallacy was to assume that if the liturgy was performed properly, people would flock to church. But its emphasis on participation, community and incarnation and creation can be mapped on to the Five Marks of Mission.



There is an internal and an external dimension to both mission and worship and it is important to do justice to both. Just as mission 'happens' in the context of gatherings for worship, so gatherings for worship 'shape' mission in terms of forming people to work for justice and peace, for the care of creation, for loving service and for evangelism and nurture.



The same parallels can be traced between worship and discipleship. The internal dimension of discipleship is encouraged within gatherings for worship in terms of caring for others, attending to Scripture, praying for the world, and charitable giving – and this expresses itself externally by the way disciples live out their Christian commitment in the world.



So we are always looking at mission in worship and worship in mission. They are intimately bound together.

In thinking through what this means for local churches we could apply a 'strategy grid'. There are short and long term considerations. There are also applications to those in church and those outside. In the short term worship builds up community. There is for those who come a 'wow' factor. A second short-term aspect of worship is its function as a shop window that might (or might not) attract outsiders.

Mark's advice here was not to attempt to construct worship for non-worshippers. The best strategy is for each local church to do the best it can as well as it can. There is no point in dumbing down, worship should be enriching. If people enjoy worship they are more likely to invite others.



However much we accept the need for mission and discipleship to be key we should not let it turn our thinking about worship into a short-term strategy in which we try to develop only what might attract outsiders. We need to have a long-term strategy about worship which puts the emphasis on nurture and formation. Worship forms worshippers. And of course, not all worshippers will be formed in the same way or by the same experiences. Diverse offerings are important.

✦ *Mark Earey is Tutor in Liturgy and Worship, the Queen's Foundation, Birmingham. This account of his address was compiled by Angela Tilby.*

Events

Sounding God's Praise: music, mission and ministry

Saturday 23 April 10.30 am - 3.45 pm
Praxis Yorkshire
Oxford Place Methodist Church, Leeds, LS1 3AU

Speakers: Helen Bent, Head of Ministerial Training, RSCM in partnership with Praxis, together with Robb Sutherland, Vicar of Mixenden and Illingworth and founder member of the Rock Mass, and Rachel Firth, Vicar of Lindley, stage singer and pianist

Praxis Yorkshire offers a day exploring the interface between music and mission in the worship, ministry and outreach of the church. Workshops will give a breadth of opportunity to explore new ways of using music in worship, especially in churches with limited resources.

Contact helen@thebents.co.uk, hbent@rscm.com

Worship in Changing Times: freedom and tradition in conversation

Saturday 23 April 2016 10 am - 4 pm
Cullompton Community Centre, Devon
Praxis Southwest

Speaker: Tim Lomax

This day will offer time to explore how the contemporary and traditional can work together to create transforming and engaging worship.

Contact gillbehenna@me.com

Empowering Children as Ministers

Thursday 12 May 2016 10 am - 3 pm
Bar Hill Church Centre, Cambridge
Praxis East

Facilitators: Ally Barrett and Gill Ambrose
From 1 October it has been possible to include children among those authorized to administer the chalice at Holy Communion. But children have had a place as ministers in worship for centuries, as musicians, for example. This day provides an opportunity to reflect on the value of the ministry of children for congregations and for the children themselves, and to think about building on good practice to empower children in a variety of ministries.
Contact gill.ambrose@happyserver.co.uk, 07855 513506

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

Thursday 19 May 10.30 am - 3.30 pm
Southwark Cathedral
Praxis South

Speaker: Helen Bent

A day with the new Head of Ministerial Training for RSCM and Praxis, together with other facilitators to be announced, exploring the changing role of music in worship.

Contact peter@furber.me.uk, 01202 296886

Inspiration

Tuesday 7 June 10.30 am - 3.30 pm
Birmingham Cathedral
Praxis Midlands

Speaker: Michael Perham

A day about the inspiration of worship which will inspire and enthuse those who strive to create and lead inspiring worship. Our speaker, Bishop Michael Perham, author of many liturgical books including *New Handbook of Pastoral Liturgy*, was one of that inspired group of people who founded Praxis 25 years ago. Our venue is the newly-refurbished St Philip's Cathedral. We meet on a Tuesday in June, both a new month for us and a new day of the week. Those who arrive by train will walk through the inspiring halls of the re-vamped New Street Station. Come and join the inspiration!

Contact jayne.crooks@blueyonder.co.uk

Celtic Worship for Today

Thursday 10 November
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 National Network of Pastoral Musicians Summer Conference

Nurturing a new generation of liturgical musicians 29 - 31 July 2016

Keynote speakers: Tom Daggett - The elephant in the room: Churches, music and young people; Chris Walker - Young and Old: Singing One Church
Residential £220; Non-residential with meals £120; Saturday only £45. Group rates and concessions available.
Contact Jennifer Burridge, 01792 775598, jburridge@mac.com

RSCM summer school

One Church, One Faith, One Lord: Towards harmony in the post-Reformation church
8 - 14 August 2016

Liverpool is to be the venue for this year's international summer school organised by the Royal School of Church Music. Delegates will have opportunities to participate in workshops and worship at the Anglican and Roman Catholic cathedrals in the city, to hear lectures, listen to choirs, improve their skills and discuss the future of church music.

Among those offering training, presenting seminars and leading worship will be songwriter Graham Kendrick and Adrian Lucas, based at Worcester Cathedral for many years and recently appointed the RSCM's Head of Choral Studies. Rosemary Field will offer organ tuition and guidance, while Miles Quick (Head of Congregational and Instrumental Music for the RSCM), and Helen Bent (Head of Ministerial Training) will also take part. Workshop topics are to include music typesetting with Sibelius software, contemporary worship developments and musician/minister collaboration. Some sessions will be open to the public.

For more information, see the RSCM website: www.rscm.com.

Reports

Talking Jesus: Worshipping God

A day for members of Diocesan Liturgical Committees considering opportunities and resources

Ordinary worship is crucial in the growth of the Church – so doing ordinary worship well matters, and matters enormously. As a liturgical Church, ‘organised informality’ – warm, welcoming and accessible without being trivial – is what we might aspire to, while all too often we may end up with disorganised formality!

So began the Rt Revd Robert Atwell, opening up a theme that ran through the whole day on March 1st. Is the worship that takes place Sunday by Sunday something to which ordinary members of the congregation will feel able to invite their friends and neighbours? Bishop Robert went on to draw attention to the startling statistic that 90% of adult Christians came to faith before the age of 25. This became the second prevailing theme of the day: the challenges and opportunities for churches and cathedrals as they seek to engage, through worship, with people of all ages, and especially with children, families and young people.

With people of all ages

This was the specific topic addressed by Ally Barrett (Tutor at Westcott House in Cambridge and adviser in all-age worship) in a presentation that charted the journey of one particular parish church as it sought to become more all-age friendly, from making children’s activities more worshipful and liturgical to the deepening of sacramental experience for the whole congregation, to the use of visual and play-based resources in parallel with liturgical texts to enable a range of ways to encounter God in worship. The process was one of enabling adults and children alike to be truly ‘worship-ready’, doing theology together and connecting what takes place in church with the rest of life. A knock-on effect was that many of those in the church who had previously not had a voice – including children – were

empowered as leaders.

A similar theme continued in the presentation by Andrew Reid, the new director of the RSCM, focusing on the ministry undertaken with and by children and young people through music in worship, and the benefits of these activities for the children themselves as well as for the Church. Children and young people who have a sense of agency in the church through specific roles and ministries are much more likely to grow as disciples of Christ, and to make significant and long-term, even lifelong, commitment as members of the church community.

The second part of Andrew’s presentation encouraged us to look beyond the difficulty of finding church organists, instead demonstrating the potential for unaccompanied singing to be led by congregation members (of all ages). Helen Bent (also RSCM) drew attention to the treasure trove of liturgical, cultural and musical heritage to which the church has access: if those now in their final years have a residual memory of traditional hymns and liturgical texts, what resources will younger generations still know by heart in years to come?

90% of adult Christians came to faith before the age of 25

And how do we balance the need for common liturgical expressions that can nourish a lifetime of discipleship with the acknowledgement that ‘God speaks in local dialect’ and that every community, every context, has unique needs? These are live questions, being asked of both fresh expressions of church, and more traditional congregations.

Training

It was also good to hear about training opportunities and priorities – from Helen Bent, from Bishop Robert, and from Matthew Salisbury (representing the Liturgical Commission): *Worship4Today* originated in Sheffield Diocese but is now widely used in the training of lay worship and music ministers; video demonstrations of good practice in *BCP* worship have been produced by the Prayer Book Society; and closer liaison with the theological education institutions has been made a

priority. All of these, along with a whole host of other forthcoming initiatives, will help to ensure that the next generation of church leaders are well equipped not only to lead worship but to develop and shape the agenda in years to come and in response to the changing context and needs of the Church.

While Michael Gisbourne reflected on how, as chaplain to General Synod, he works to ensure that the central decision-making body of the Church of England meets in the context of prayer and worship, Matthew Salisbury drew attention to the church-wide Pentecost focus on prayer ‘Thy Kingdom Come’. Matthew was able to share some of the highlights from the Liturgical Commission’s priorities over the next few years, including the welcome news that Lucy Moore (Messy Church) has been appointed, raising the profile of ministry among children and young families in matters liturgical.

Joined-up thinking

From the plans to bring the Transforming Worship resources into the main Church of England online presence, to the work being done by Sandra Millar around the occasional offices to the repackaging of *Rites on the Way* to dovetail more closely with the hugely popular *Pilgrim* discipleship course, and the forthcoming *Pilgrim’s Prayer Book* for connecting Christian faith and life, there is a real sense of joined up thinking between worship, discipleship and mission. This is really good to see.

As always, a day such as this is as much about the conversations and networking that take place ‘in the spaces between’ presentations as it is about the presentations themselves: sharing ways in which the national strategies and the work being done by Praxis, the RSCM and other organisations are all coming to life in local parishes, in cathedrals, and across the dioceses. The mood of the day suggested that delegates would be returning to their dioceses and contexts with renewed enthusiasm, especially for the opportunities that regular worship affords for formation of disciples of all ages, and for the nurture of the next generation of church leaders.

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

How can we respond to the ever-changing needs of the contemporary Church in its worship and mission? How can the Bible enliven our ministry? Saturday 5 March 2016 saw a gathering of Readers and those who work with them, meeting together to consider these and other questions in celebration of this year's 150th anniversary of Reader Ministry in the Church of England. As keynote speaker, the Revd Dr Arnold Browne, writer, teacher and prison chaplain in the Diocese of Norwich, gave an inspiring talk encouraging engagement with the conversations taking place within Scripture. He examined some of the conversations between the old and new traditions represented in the Bible, between the ways in which people experienced Jesus and the ways they passed this on, and between the various books of the New Testament. He demonstrated, as he did so, how understanding passages in the light of each other can enable us to hear new messages and to see again how God brings transformation.

Gill Ambrose, editor of *Praxis News of Worship* and *Together for a Season*, challenged us to consider the needs to be addressed when facilitating worship for people of all ages. Reflecting on why people might attend an act of worship, what might engage them and how they might wish to express their worship, she led the group in a useful introduction to David Csinos' work on spiritual styles, demonstrating the need to provide a variety of opportunities in worship, for adults as well as children.

In a consideration of the connections between worship and pastoral care the Revd Charles Read, from the Diocese of Norwich and the Eastern Region Training Partnership, spoke of the need for worship to be accurate and sensitive in its reflection of the concerns brought by worshippers, providing both acknowledgement and respite, as well as giving a vision of the kingdom which disturbs and inspires.

This was a valuable and much-appreciated relaunching of events in the Praxis East region.

✉ *Ruth Dennigan is the Discipleship and Ministry Development Officer for the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, and a Reader in the Diocese of Ely.*

Creating Missional Worship: fusing context and tradition

Tim Lomax, Church House Publishing, 2015, ISBN 9780715144640

Worship and mission are often intimately intertwined. Worship has rightly been described as the 'shop window' of our church communities, and if we offer a bad service, in all senses of the word, people won't come back. Tim Lomax suggests that tradition is not enough to draw people into the heart of God's love.

So how do we honour our Anglican tradition and liturgy while also offering worship that is creative, accessible and transformative? When inculturated worship is added to the riches of a liturgical framework, it will not only be engaging and build community, but it will allow us to change our culture too.

Tim offers a book rich with practical examples and stories. He helpfully defines culture, and the tension in worship between revelation and tradition, arguing that when worship is not contextual, it can be, at best, unintelligible, and at worst, irrelevant. He then offers lots of creative ideas that can be easily incorporated in Sunday services and occasional offices, encouraging openness and generous hospitality to those who we want to join us on the Way. Using *Common Worship* texts, sample services fill out the theory, in something of the style of *Patterns for Worship*.

Working in myriad diverse communities, urban, rural, among the very young and the very old, in chaplaincy and in every flavour of church tradition, we know that worship must be missional if the Church is to thrive.

This book is a welcome encouragement to think out of the box, to see liturgy as the scaffolding on which the worship of God and the growth of the Church can be built.

✉ *Dana Delap is Team Vicar in the Benefice of Vale and Cotswold Edge.*

Grove Worship booklet

How to plan your own funeral service. W225, Ian Tarrant

This booklet is designed to be given away to church members, and those on the edges of the church community, to encourage them to plan the details of their own funerals with space for details to be recorded. This is similar to the booklet prepared by the Church of England Funerals Project with the title *Ideas for my funeral service*, but it goes into greater depth and offers more options.

Hymn writer at work

Later this year Timothy Dudley-Smith will celebrate his 90th birthday. He continues to write hymns and to be a perceptive and illuminating commentator on the art of hymn-writing: one illustration of this is the latest Occasional Paper from the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland, based on a lecture entitled 'Faith, Hymns and Poetry' given by Bishop Timothy at the Society's 2013 conference.

Other discussions of the hymn writer's task can be found in the various introductions to printed editions of his work. In 2015 Oxford University Press published a collection of Dudley-Smith hymn texts written between 2002 and 2013, entitled *A House of Praise, Part Two* (in recognition of the book's continuity with his 2003 publication with the same title). Some of the material had already been published in *A Door for the Word* (2006), *Praise to the Name* (2009) and *Beyond our Dreaming* (2012), three small OUP volumes each with 36 hymns accompanied by detailed background notes and suggestions for tunes. The author's Foreword to *Beyond our Dreaming* is particularly interesting in its reflections on why Bishop Timothy carries on writing hymns, aware that of his 400 or more texts already published, roughly 20% seem to be sung 'vastly more often' than the remaining 80%.

Another source for those wishing to explore Dudley-Smith's work, in this case with accompanying tunes, is the series published by Canterbury Press (*Beneath a Travelling Star, A Calendar of Praise, High Days and Holy Days, The Voice of Faith, Above Every Name, Draw Near to God*) and the RSCM (*A Mirror to the Soul*). William Llewellyn has been the music editor for all except the first of these. 41 of Bishop Timothy's hymns, some familiar, some less so, are in *Ancient and Modern: Hymns and songs for refreshing worship*. One example which may be useful at Pentecost is 'Be present, Spirit of the Lord', which can be sung to the familiar tune REPTON ('Dear Lord and Father of mankind'). There is plenty to discover and celebrate as this octogenarian hymn writer continues his work.

✉ *Anne Harrison*

About Praxis

Sponsors of Praxis

P Praxis was created and is sponsored by the Church of England's Liturgical Commission, GROW and The Alcuin Club.

The Liturgical Commission 2015-2020

Membership of the Liturgical Commission for the next five years has been announced.

Chair: The Bishop of Exeter

Vice-Chair: The Bishop of Sodor and Man

General Synod members: Ms Shayne Ardrone, The Revd Dr Andrew Atherstone, Ms Kashmir Garton, Mrs Lucy Moore

Other members: The Revd Philip Barnes, The Revd Mark Earey, The Revd Canon Dr Christopher Irvine, The Revd Canon Dr Simon Jones, Mr Simon Kershaw, The Revd George Lane, Dr Bridget Nichols, The Revd Canon Dr Jo Spreadbury, The Revd Canon Dr Samuel Wells.

GROW

GROW stands for 'Group for Renewal of Worship', and for over fifty years that has been the group's aim. We do this primarily (though not solely) by producing or commissioning booklets in the Worship series of Grove Booklets. We are a working group, with a membership of around twenty people, though through our booklets we reach an audience in the wider church. Because we are primarily interested in good practice in worship, it made good sense for us to join the Alcuin Club and the Liturgical Commission in being a sponsor of Praxis.

Coming from the evangelical part of the Church of England spectrum, GROW seeks to encourage evangelicals not just to work for good quality worship at the parish or chaplaincy level, but to engage with the wider agenda of liturgical revision in the Church of England. This has meant producing commentary and 'coaching' material on all the alternative services, right through to *Common Worship*. Our recent publications include material about the new eucharistic prayers for use with children and the alternative baptism texts

in 'accessible' language. But we also keep an eye on wider trends and try to address them – so we have also produced material on contemporary sung worship, on the growth of funeral 'civil celebrants', and the growth of All Saints-tide memorial services. The group includes those from across the evangelical spectrum, which means that we don't always agree about everything, but we have some cracking discussions along the way.

✉ *Mark Earey is Chair of GROW.*

The Alcuin Club

Founded in 1897, the Alcuin Club played an important part in the debate in the Church of England about the proposed revision to the *Book of Common Prayer*. More recently, its aims have been broadened to include the study of the liturgy of other denominations, but with special reference to the liturgical life of the Anglican Communion. Members of the Club's committee continue to be involved with the work of the Liturgical Commission of the Church of England and with international societies for liturgical study.

Membership is open to any individual, institution or library paying the annual subscription. There are currently some 450 members: over half live in the UK, with the majority of the rest in North America; there are members from all parts of the world. Members receive free copies of the Club's Collections, Liturgy Guides and Joint Liturgical Studies published during that calendar year. The Club is currently publishing one Collection and two Liturgical Studies each year and a Liturgy Guide in alternate years.

Grants from Hymns A & M

In 2014, Praxis was awarded a grant by the trustees of Hymns Ancient and Modern for a project to offer a free training day for clergy or lay people to each diocese. This opportunity has been taken up already by Guildford, Oxford, Norwich and Derby, and the topics requested ranged from commemorating World War I to all-age eucharists to responding well in emergency situations. The guest speakers included Canon Alan Wilkinson, Dr Bridget Nichols, Canon Angela Tilby and Canon David Wilbraham, the national Police Chaplain.

The vision of Hymns Ancient and Modern began when two Victorian clerics on a train journey decided that the Church of England needed a single corporate hymn book. The 150th anniversary of the publication of its first hymn book was celebrated in 2011. Today, however, the range of Hymns Ancient and Modern activities is very wide, with the broad objective of the charity being 'to promote the advancement of religion' especially in relation to the Church of England.

Many publications are produced by Hymns Ancient and Modern, including the Church Times, Third Way, Concilium and Joint Liturgical Studies. HA&M also manages Church House Publishing and the Church House Bookshop, in addition to SCM Press, Canterbury Press, and St Andrew Press. Hymn book grants for schools and churches are still made by HA&M, and the charity sponsors many institutions and awards grants out of the surplus funds from its businesses.

We still have some of the grant money to make use of. If you think your diocese would like to take advantage of our Hymns Ancient and Modern grant and the offer of a free Praxis training day, please let us know by contacting the Chair of Praxis, Canon Jo Spreadbury (canonprecentor@portsmouthcathedral.org.uk).

Promoting Praxis

A number of members were asked how they would respond to someone asking them why they should join Praxis. The replies included the following:

- Ordering worship in the best possible way is at the centre of ministry. Praxis offers a way for me to continue to develop; to keep ideas fresh and to make sure the worship I lead helps people to draw near with faith.
- It keeps me abreast of new liturgical ideas, because it encourages good practice and opens us to fresh ways of doing things.
- To hear engaging speakers and be challenged by stimulating conversations at Praxis events.
- Joining Praxis offers access to some of the tools you need to lead the spiritually-hungry into the presence of God, through sharing best practice, mutual support, and the dissemination of new resources as they become available.
- Worship is a primary task of the church – yet often the most neglected. Praxis addresses this by providing information and courses focused on worship,

About Praxis

challenging and enabling me, and the church I lead, to offer relevant and high quality worship in a variety of situations.

- To de-bunk myths on liturgy and liturgical practice.
- It keeps on giving me reasons for being excited about worshipping and leading worship; it inspires me, and keeps me bang up to date.

In their different ways, all these remarks acknowledge the importance of public worship and the need for good liturgy enacted well. Worship is vital to the reform and renewal agenda in both fresh and traditional expressions of church. So should members be more evangelistic about what we offer, promoting membership and its benefits? Pragmatically, Praxis only survives through its membership, but more altruistically our concern is to stimulate and support development. Could you suggest membership to friends and colleagues? Equally good would be to ensure that diocesan ministry and training departments are aware that Praxis offers training for all in ministry. Could you check that they are receiving publicity for our events in your region? Praxis can organise training events for individual dioceses and provide speakers for diocesan CME/CMD programmes.

In addition to the basic subscription of £15 per annum, there are other membership options: couples join for £20; large groups, such as a parish, for £40, receiving 5 copies of *PNoW*; while those requiring 10 copies of *PNoW*, such as DLCs and their equivalent can do so for £75. These broader forms of affiliation allow for any of their members to attend Praxis events at the members' rate. Ordinands and all in training for an authorised ministry are entitled to attend our events at no charge (yes, free) on top of reduced membership rates during training. Although it is members who receive copies of Praxis News of Worship, our website (www.praxisworship.org.uk) is available to all. Here people can keep up-to-date with Praxis events around the regions, as well as other training events. There is an ever-expanding resources page, for which we are always looking for contributions. This might be a way of getting a friend to become involved with Praxis.

✉ *Peter Furber is Treasurer and Administrator of Praxis.*

Praxis on Facebook

Where do I find ideas about liturgy for a 'Pet Service'? Has anyone got resources to mark the anniversary of Ypres? I am new to the parish and have no idea what to do about the annual mayoral service! We all come up against new liturgical challenges from time to time and wonder where to go for help. A recently established Praxis Facebook page has been set up to provide a place where those questions and others could be asked as well as providing a forum to enable us all to share good news and good practice; and of course to share the latest news from the Liturgical Commission and a variety of other sources.

Praxis exists to 'enrich worship today'! The Facebook page has been set up as a new way of helping us to achieve that. Please search for the Praxis Worship page on Facebook and join to help us create an online community of support.

✉ *Michael Gisbourne administers the Praxis Facebook page and is Chaplain to the General Synod.*

Colin's Column

I find myself supervising a post-grad student who is doing a dissertation on a eucharistic theme. He has opted to study how far the average worshipper understands the language of the eucharistic prayer, an area of research which in my experience is not often encountered. And it stretches me beyond my longstanding comfort zone of seeking the purity and orthodoxy of the actual texts.

I guess most would agree that in general this is the hardest bit of liturgy to take aboard (though perhaps occasionally outstripped by impenetrable sermons, incomprehensible choral items or exotic hymnody). It is, however, for the clergy their set piece, which they alone do, and problems the texts give the hearers are rarely at the forefront of their agenda. I'll try to open up those problems a little.

We begin by recognizing that eucharistic prayers are dense, doctrinal, and demanding. They are dense because, unlike most effective communication by the spoken word, they have a new theme (sometimes more than one) in each sentence. In quick succession they lay the creeds under contribution, they work in sacramental theology far beyond the creeds, they then orientate it to be a prayer, but at intervals break off to cue a congregational response, and they aim to have everything said in three-and-a-quarter minutes. Such is their density. I hardly need labour the doctrinal point further: here is no ordinary prose, but a highly-specialized address to God deploying almost every feature of Christian faith within it, and half-concealing in its paucity of words highly sensitive issues: the meaning of consecration, the significance of remembrance, and so on. To wrestle with any one of the sentences entails missing the following ones. And thus it is that the prayers are demanding of the worshippers – and, subject to the results of the enquiry, I wonder whether the words are not in danger of providing a kind of rhythmic sound, even a tune, which is not really apprehended as words. The worshippers go along with the rhythms, can even know where they are for the sake of responding at the right points, but are not following (or prayerfully echoing) what the president is actually saying.

But there are two further elements which may come into play in the quest for true understanding. One is the sheer presence or absence of a written text. There is a philosophy behind *Common Worship* that expects worshippers to participate simply by hearing. I am sceptical, and doubly so with a eucharistic prayer which is only spoken, where hearers may simply await their cue. A written text enables the eye to precede the ear, and also to go back and recover anything that was missed; and following such a text provides a good chance of actual phrases lingering after the president has finished.

But a major further element is supplied by serious teaching about the Eucharist, by, say, an annual celebration with running commentary, and by opening up individual sentences and phrases at intervals within sermons. And, dare I suggest, what about home groups sometimes working on their own commentary on a prayer, or, having grasped the flow of language and theme within one, working then on what they would like the prayer to contain?

But, if the research gets results (and I expect it to), then I hope to get something into a further edition.

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