

Issue 51 Sept 2016
£2.50

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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?

PILGRIMAGE

Worship and Pilgrimage

Each RSCM *Strengthen for Service* course has included an act of worship on a pilgrimage theme put together by course participants. These have proved deeply moving and two, in particular, stand out.

Gathering for a pilgrimage service in Salisbury, we found ourselves locked out of the designated church. Faced with several choices, participants decided to conduct the service along the route back to the College. Our walk through the streets was interspersed by singing verses of 'Lord for the years', the first outside the locked church. No one could have foreseen the powerful re-enactment of passing through the waters of baptism, as we walked through a subway under the dual carriageway being steam cleaned by council workers. The Gospel was proclaimed to the city where passers-by could hear it, and intercessions, 'for our land in this our generation...for young and old,' were prayed within sight not only of the ancient cathedral but also domestic dwellings, grand half-timbered buildings, modest terraced houses and a cluster of recently-built town houses, squeezed in between older properties, reminders of the generations who had gone before as well as the present population. A candle was lit and held aloft courtesy of an iPhone. The service proved a powerful witness, initiating interesting conversations along the way with people intrigued by a prayerful group.

More recently, I shared an equally poignant service with participants in Dunblane Cathedral, a building full of references to journey and pilgrimage in its architecture and furnishings. We began outside the south door with a greeting and an invitation to enter and travel together. Again we used the verses of a hymn, this time 'Be Thou my vision', to accompany movement around the building. The sound and visual effect of pouring water into the font was accompanied by words from the *Prayer over the Water* from the Scottish Episcopal Church, offering freshness as well



The walk to Emmaus, Silos Monastery, Spain

as familiarity, followed by an invitation to sprinkle ourselves with water as a reminder of our baptism. A pause in the small room under the tower perfectly illustrated and brought alive references from Psalms and the hymn to God as 'our strong tower'. At the crossing, we were able to reflect on the past, the present and the future, as we listened to Matt Redman's 'God of our yesterdays', thanks again to an iPhone. Finally, we were invited to contemplate the stained glass of the chancel, a glorious and colourful depiction of the *Benedicite*, including creation, humanity, chaos and allegory, framed by the archangels. The journey concluded in the sanctuary, focusing on the 'High King of heaven', and reminding us of our eternal destiny with words of invitation from Revelation.

✠ *The Rev'd Helen Bent is Head of Ministerial Training, RSCM in partnership with Praxis.*

Pilgrimage

Pilgrimage begins at home

Few words in the Christian lexicon have changed their meaning as dramatically as the word 'pilgrim' over the centuries. Today the term might seem to describe the most unambiguous of ritual activities: visiting a holy site and returning home spiritually recharged. In its original incarnation, however, it meant neither of those two things.

I visited all of Britain's traditional pilgrimage destinations (around 700) for a book called *Britain's Holiest Places*. This was no great achievement, other than demonstrating what being single-minded can accomplish, but it set me thinking about the nature of sacred sites. As I travelled endless miles of motorway, I could not help but wonder why we Christians elevate those who travel compared to those who stop and dwell. I'd rather spend 10 days in one holy place than visit 10 of them in a day.

In early British and Irish Christianity, *peregrinatio* was specifically a journey without any sort of holy destination in mind. It was rather a rootless and restless activity, a sort of spiritual nomadism that was more akin with exile. Calvin Kendall in *On Genesis* writes about the world of the Venerable Bede in the 8th century: 'Men and women were exiles, wayfarers, pilgrims, wandering on the road of life, a road beset with dangers and temptations. The vocabulary is rich and interchangeable: *peregrini, alieni, extorres, hospites, profugi*. They thought of life as a journey in search of their "eternal fatherland in heaven", their "heavenly home".'

In other words, the first 'pilgrims' were driven by the same impulse that drove monks and nuns to live in the desert in Egypt. It was an escape, not a return trip. Bede only ever uses *peregrinus* and *peregrinatio* for people who travel away from Britain, never for anyone heading to a specific shrine – let alone travelling back home again laden with trinkets from the cathedral gift shop or its early medieval equivalent.

The Christian's sense of belonging has been inexorably turned away from earthly connections towards a distant, impending world. This impetus perfectly elided with a rejection of paganism: the pagan is connected to the land, the pilgrim is detached from it. But maybe we lost

something on the way.

That is not to say there were no 'pilgrims' in the sense we would understand the term in the earliest Church: visiting the Holy Land became safe and commendable after Helena, mother of Constantine, retrieved the true cross from Jerusalem in 326 AD. But even then this sort of pilgrimage in the sense we understand it today had its critics. One vociferous opponent was Gregory of Nyssa (d. c.395) who returned less than impressed from the Holy Land; he claimed to be entirely unmoved by seeing sites associated with the life of Jesus, and developed a theological argument against travel as a spiritual aid in his treatise *On Pilgrimage*, which warned of the dangers of practising worship for a place rather than for the divine events that took place there.

As a liturgical guide for interacting with pilgrimage sites, it has some validity, and certain aspects of his argument were echoed at the Reformation, though Gregory's opposition to pilgrimage was rather more of a proxy for his arguments with Cyril of Jerusalem, an attempt to undermine any special status for this city and its bishop. One can imagine him stamping around the Holy Land with a look of studied indifference on his face, like a teenager on a family outing to a museum, in order to outdo his great rival.

Nevertheless Gregory saw fit to extol the virtues of numerous sacred sites in his native Cappadocia region of modern-day Turkey. The local connection to place is easy to overlook in a Church that remains fascinated by pilgrimage, but in fact the ontology of holy places is far closer to Gregory's conception: these are places where local people first discerned and shaped a sense of the sacred. Just about every pilgrimage place in medieval Britain was established by local people to commemorate a local event or experience. Pilgrimage, in this scheme, is actually only incidental to the operation of a holy place, even though the concept of pilgrimage now dominates discussion and research about holy places entirely.

Becket's shrine in Canterbury redrew the British map in terms of mass pilgrimage, but the shrine itself had nothing to do with pilgrimage at the moment of its conception. This is not a Protestant argument against the promotion and development of a saint's cult, but rather an attempt to understand the intimacy and the small-scale devotions that lead on to greater consequences and

fame, an ontology of holy places and their connection to a specific part of the landscape. The determination to see all of human spiritual experience as a pilgrimage, as an exile, misses the point that religion also helps to bind people to place.

✍ *Nick Mayhew-Smith is a journalist currently engaged in PhD research on early British church rituals and liturgies with specific regard to the natural world.*

Shrines of the saints – yesterday and today

We often associate shrines with destruction. Of all the havoc wrought at the Reformation, shrines seems to have come off worst of all. Cathedrals survived, church order (bishops, priests and deacons) survived, church music survived, but the shrines were so often viciously destroyed. They represented all that was bad about the medieval church – indulgences, prayers of the saints and a deity hedged in by lesser beings. In fact, a surprising number of shrines survived. Despite the best efforts of Reformers, pilgrims still flocked to St Winifrede's Well in North Wales. Because of its royal associations, the shrine of St Edward in Westminster Abbey survived. The shrine base of St Werbergh at Chester found a new use as the base of the bishop's throne and the exquisite stone base of the shrine of St Thomas of Hereford became an 'antiquarian oddity', admired for its historical associations, if not its cultic past. Stories of such survivals can be found throughout England and Wales.

With the restoration of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in the nineteenth century, shrines, with relics of the saints, achieved a new prominence and several Roman Catholic churches (Canterbury, Ely) were set up in the shadow of the medieval cathedral, to continue the celebration of the saints. Most significant of all, the new Roman Catholic Cathedral of St Chad, in Birmingham, enshrined the relics of its patron saint and, as it were, 'took over' the celebrations more properly associated with Lichfield.

The Oxford Movement found a new use for the celebration of saints as exemplars for Christian living, rather than a focus for prayer at a shrine. At the same time, cathedrals were rediscovering their role and the celebration of their own saints often played a part. In the 1870s, with the rediscovery and reassembling of the shrine

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of St Alban, pilgrims began to rediscover the riches of devotion to indigenous saints – prayers which now gained greater authenticity, through the re-establishing of the saint's shrine. The Anglican church was still cautious, however, and when a major attempt was made, 1929 – 31, to re-build the shrine of Thomas Becket at Canterbury Cathedral, it was ultimately dismissed as too divisive. As the 20th century progressed, cathedrals found a new ministry to visitors, pilgrims and tourists – avenues for commercial development opened, and from being places of rather 'middle of the road' churchmanship, cathedrals began to use ceremonial and colour more confidently. And so, increasingly, cathedrals have restored their shrines – St Davids, St Albans, Hereford, Oxford, Durham. These restorations are a revival of a romantic medieval past but rekindle real opportunities for prayer and devotion. If it is true, that we are becoming a nation 'believing but not belonging' as Professor Grace Davie puts it, then shrines are increasingly important for giving opportunities for this kind of spirituality – associated with the lighting of candles and the leaving of intercessions. A recent survey, conducted at Hereford, Durham and St Albans, revealed that by far the greatest number of prayer cards were 'to the departed' or 'for the departed'. This shouldn't really be a surprise – people come to the shrines with the same worries and anxieties as their medieval forbears – life, death, pain, darkness – and somehow, the action of lighting a candle and associating it with the shrine gives comfort and a sense of God. At Hereford, the prayers left at the shrine are read daily at Evensong – and they are very moving. One, however, amused and encouraged me. It read simply, 'Whatever happened to the Reformation?' It may have been a criticism, but I took it as quite the opposite – perhaps a realisation that practices which had been thrown out at the Reformation were, once again, being rehabilitated. Perhaps we're beginning to realise that practices and devotions, even though associated with a particular tradition, aren't anchored with that tradition for ever. We can, perfectly well, use a devotion because it is good in itself and leads us to prayer and to God – whatever its original stable!

✉ *Michael Taviner is Dean of Hereford. His book Shrines of the Saints in England and Wales is published by Canterbury Press.*

Pilgrimages: a poop of a pop-gun against 'em

I have been picked as devil's advocate to make a Christian case against pilgrimages. I no sooner get to my desk to write it than in comes *Church Times*, full of an exotic full-colour account of the 'National Pilgrimage to the Shrine of our Lady of Walsingham', with a lesser feature on another page of the travels and then repose of relics of St Thomas Becket (who may certainly have been a martyr, but surely lost his sainthood to Henry VIII). The Southwark diocesan journal has also just come – with pages about a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. And I have to confess that in my Birmingham days I went by train on a diocesan pilgrimage to Canterbury; and in my Southwark days I went by plane and car to the annual festivities in Zimbabwe at the shrine where Bernard Mizeki was martyred in 1896. Clearly 'pilgrimage' nowadays is not defined so much by the method of travel as it was in the Middle Ages, though walking part or all of the way enhances the experience and adds to its verisimilitude. We may therefore look for the distinguishing feature of a pilgrimage to lie more in the status of the place to which it leads. When Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem to register at the census, however hard the journey, that was no pilgrimage; when they went to Jerusalem to observe the Passover, that was a pilgrimage – and the concept of 'pilgrim feasts', each of them in Jerusalem, runs from the Pentateuch right through into Jewish practice in New Testament times. 'Pilgrim feasts', however, drew their character from two features: (a) they were bound for the holy city, the site of Solomon's temple, and (b) they were corporate – the participants were not travelling out of some personal quest for holiness in an individualistic way; they were going at the time of set feasts, to share in community celebration. Perhaps the individual pilgrimage can be traced in Christian times to Helena's journey to the Holy Land in the early fourth century. She was followed by Egeria, who later in the century observed the ceremonies carried out at the sites in Jerusalem associated with Jesus' passion, resurrection and ascension. From the point of view of the standpoint I have been asked to adopt, these women are also an important witness to a new interest in places. The eschatological character of the community had been severely weakened

as, with the end of persecution, Christians found their roots going ever deeper into the ground of this world.

So much for how we got to today. I recognize the momentum of the pilgrimage constituency, and am accordingly ready to be swept away by a buffalo charge of pro-pilgrimage romantic devotion, and fully expect such to be my fate. But the case itself is simply this – that God, who in so many ways vested his presence and power in the Old Testament in the Jerusalem temple, has abolished all such associations with particular places in the spread of the gospel of Christ, so that 'neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, will you worship the Father' (John 4.21). Jesus, in this reply to the Samaritan woman, virtually contrasts worshipping in a specially-allocated place with worshipping 'in spirit and in truth'. There is no hint in the New Testament of divinely 'hallowed' places, or 'thin places', or places of Christian pilgrimage. There are not even designated buildings where believers meet; no 'churches' in our degenerate use of the word. And there is no evident interest in 'sacred' sites – after the shepherds went to Bethlehem, no-one else ever went later to see the manger. When Peter proposed to establish some kind of lasting memorial on the mount of Transfiguration, Jesus rebuked him. After the disciples were convinced Jesus was raised from the dead, we learn nothing of them ever going back to Joseph of Arimathea's tomb. When Paul goes to Jerusalem, it is partly to observe Jewish feasts, but primarily to meet with the leading apostles; and we find no hint of him visiting the Garden of Gethsemane, or the place of the crucifixion. He is passionately interested in places, but his passion is to minister to the people of each place, not to give an upgraded status to buildings or to locations with historic associations with his gospel.

In the New Testament there is a dwelling place of God on earth: it is in the hearts of his people; and there is a 'holy city', but it is the new eschatological Jerusalem. And we are 'strangers and pilgrims on earth' (see 1 Peter 2.11), because our citizenship is in heaven, and our pilgrim path through life keeps the vision of our true homeland ever before our eyes. And whereas those who approached the holy of holies under the Old Covenant did so on their feet (Heb.10.2), those who would seek the holy of holies under the New Covenant approach (the same Greek verb) the 'sanctuary' with

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a 'true heart and full assurance of faith' (Heb.10.19-25) – this is the 'draw near with faith' of the 1662 communion service; it never did mean 'come up to the rail', but always meant approaching the throne of God.

So where did the Christian church go astray, if I am allowed to use the word 'astray'? Was it the understandable interest in the death-place of martyrs? Or was it the Church commemorating Jesus' passion, resurrection and ascension, by walking in the steps of Jesus in annual celebration of the relevant dates, as recorded by Egeria? What part did the crusades play in the concern for 'sacred places'? And was it an over-luxuriant growth that the Reformers pruned – or was it actually at root a mild heresy in any case? So when Tyndale stated his aim that the ploughboy should be able to read the Scriptures, and thus know God at first hand, was he subtly undermining the earthly pilgrimage (which the ploughboy might never have been able to accomplish), and replacing it with a heavenly one to be fulfilled within the confines of the man's home village?

I do have a little more up my sleeve, but, envisaging the charge of the buffaloes, I am at this point fleeing the field.

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

Posada pilgrimage

Imagine an Advent initiative that is relatively simple to implement, can be tailored to each context and takes Mary and Joseph and their unborn child out of church into the public space. Churches all over the country are using the Mexican tradition of posada as gentle, but effective, outreach each December. It can be used to enhance the worship life of a church in Advent, as well as draw people together to engage those outside the church community.

Churches sometimes use knitted figures in a basket that travel around the wider church congregation and community. In Wymondham, we have used large two-dimensional figures of Mary and Joseph to make an impact in public spaces – asking schools, care homes, shops, pubs and cafes to host the biblical figures for a day. For the first time last year, they went to a funeral directors and a warehouse, as well as meeting Santa Claus in a garden centre!

Some of this is obviously great fun and people always enjoy being involved. But some of it is also profound, as hosts, and

others, think about the original Mary and Joseph and what they went through. The figures can also be used pastorally and many an elderly or bereaved person has been comforted, encouraged, and affected spiritually by having Mary and Joseph in their home overnight. The knitted, wooden, plastic or cardboard figures take on a sacramental quality as they represent the peace, love and power of our incarnational God.

The latest Grove booklet in the Evangelism series (Ev114) offers practical advice and biblical reflection as well as resources for worship and prayer. My website, www.jacquisresources.co.uk, hosts my own material as well as the best of the photos of the five-year journey in Wymondham.

✠ *Jacque Horton is the minister of Wymondham Methodist Church.*

Holy Places

Although Jesus went to Jerusalem for festivals, the New Testament appears to be set against the idea of celebrating holy places. After Jesus' resurrection the new focus, for those who are 'belonging to the Way', (Acts 9.2; 18.25, 26 etc.) is a spiritual journey. We might describe it as 'following Jesus' or 'going the Way of the Cross'. Perhaps we are travelling with him, like the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24.13). Their unknown companion, the 'stranger in Jerusalem' (Luke 24.18), was, in the Latin Bible and in modern Spanish, a 'peregrino', a pilgrim. In the illustration on page one of *PNOW*, Jesus carries the pilgrim badge, a scallop shell. But their destination was no holy site. If anything, the story tells us that we and those disciples might feel closest to Jesus not in a particular place, but in the stories shared together on the way and at any place where bread is broken.

Michael Ramsey's book, *Canterbury Pilgrim*, made up of sermons he published just after he retired, has one, commemorating Thomas Becket. It addresses pilgrimage very directly, for with Becket's martyrdom, Canterbury became one of the great pilgrimage places of Europe. Ramsey opens with the text Becket had used when he knew his death was inevitable: 'Here we have no continuing city, for we seek one to come.' (Hebrews 13.14)

Christian faith is not tied to an idea of any physical holy place such as Mecca or Jerusalem. Jesus had announced the end

of the cult of the Temple, (Luke 21.5) and of Jerusalem (Luke 21.20-24). The Temple authorities were aware of the threat which his teachings posed. They said 'If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both our holy place and our nation.' (John 11.48). The early Christians no doubt echoed Jesus' words in Matthew 23.37, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it!"

The gospel writers emphasise the end of the cult of the holy place in the tearing apart of the curtain of the Temple (Luke 23.45) at the death of Jesus. The empty tomb and the appearances of the risen Jesus in different places meant that his followers had no reason to venerate the place of his temporary burial. He was in the upper room, beside Galilee, and on the Damascus Road.

The Romans in 70 AD brought an end to Temple worship. After a later Jewish rebellion was crushed in 135 AD the city was destroyed and both Jews and Christians were forbidden to live in the new Roman city of Aelia Capitolina. The Upper Room and the Way of the Cross were obliterated. But then, for the Christians of Rome, Corinth, or Damascus, this wasn't important. The New Testament foretold the end of the ancient holy places, and Jesus' prophecy had come true.

Two centuries later, Constantine made Christianity the religion of the Roman Empire, a new priority emerged. Churches were built in locations known from the gospels; Jerusalem, Nazareth and Bethlehem. Marking these was an essential part of demonstrating to the Christians of the Empire that God's Son was a real historical figure, and that the gospels were about real places, not mythological ones. But the building of churches provided the 'religious tourist trade', once centred on Delphi or Ephesus, with a new focus.

However, even when the pilgrimage fashion was at its height in the Middle Ages, holy places were not the only reason for travel. Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* tell us nothing of the place of Becket's martyrdom. The stories are those shared by the pilgrims on their journey. It was still 'The Way' as early Christians described themselves, which was central to Christian life. The real focus, even for those who went to Santiago de Compostela, was not just the reputed shrine of James (his head is still claimed by

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Armenians to be in Jerusalem). Rather it was the wild ocean shore at the end of the earth, *Finis Terra*, where pilgrims picked up a scallop shell to display on their return journey as evidence of their achievement.

It's something which today's 'pilgrim' can all too easily miss in an age of almost instantaneous and secure air travel, in contrast with the arduous journeys of a lifetime of pilgrims of old. Today, it is still 'The Way' that matters, and its goal is 'no continuing city, for we seek one which is to come'.

✠ Tom Ambrose is a priest in the Parish of the Ascension, Cambridge

Events

Celtic Worship for Today

Thursday 10 November 2016

10.30 am - 3.30 pm

Southwark Cathedral

Praxis South

Speakers: Aled Edwards and Emily Walker

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

Contact norman.boakes@btinternet.com

Standing on Holy Ground: Exploring creative worship as mission

Tuesday 11 October 2016 10 am – 4 pm

Cullompton Community Centre

EX15 1JX

Praxis South West

Speakers: Anna Norman-Walker, Simon Rundell and Andrew Maries

Holy Ground takes place on the second Sunday evening of every month in Exeter Cathedral. It combines creative approaches to spirituality with stimulating and open-minded discussions about Christianity.

A major feature of *Holy Ground* is its worship – a service of Holy Communion which takes place in the first part of the evening and combines a variety of creative expression whether liturgy, visual image, music, movement, symbolic action or film. The service is planned collaboratively and led as a team and there are many features that could be beneficial for local churches to incorporate, particularly in *Holy Ground's* ability to attract and engage a wide age-group in culturally appropriate ways.

Contact gillbehenna@me.com.

Evaluating Worship

How do we know it is any good?

Offering the best to God in worship is important: important because worship changes us and important because offering worship worthy of God is a primary task for churches everywhere. Even if we do not have our sights set on 'excellence', good, or good enough, worship can transform the response of those who come, and the reach of the church within the community. All this begs two questions. What is good worship and how do we do it?

Mark Earey's timely Grove booklet, *Evaluating Worship*, published in the 40th year of the Group for the Renewal of Worship, raises questions that are helpful, encouraging and challenging in equal measure. At both a national and a local level, these questions need to be asked and it is suggested that congregations might assess a church's worship and their own contribution to it, as well as church leaders.

The insights offered begin to tease out what models of worship are around and what assumptions, often unspoken, we bring to worship. This work is critical if unstructured feedback, or even structured evaluation, is to rest on more than personal preference. Any attempt at evaluation needs to explore the theology underlying our approach to worship, and a critique like Amos 5.21-24 reminds us that God may have other priorities.

Earey's suggested models of worship include intimate encounter; edification; duty and service; ongoing offering; and there are different styles of worship in which the models can be expressed. A church might use different styles, say at an 8 o'clock service, a main morning service and an evening service, to express the same model of worship. Or different models may, in fact, underlie each service. Worship as evangelism and worship as therapy are also touched on as possible models. I was interested myself to reflect whether sacramental encounter would, in this sort of analysis, count as a model in its own right or as a style, perhaps, effective for different models.

Other criteria for assessing worship, alongside the various models, include historicity, doctrinal correctness and contextual appropriateness. And it is important to ensure that worship is

accessible while avoiding a consumerist approach. If worship is formational it will challenge and change us; and, perhaps our understanding of worship may change as we are transformed by worshipping and the encounter with God this effects.

When the theology and implicit models of worship are identified, evaluation with greater insight is a real possibility. A worship audit can provide the means for deliberate and corporate assessment, grounded in careful theological work with a congregation and, perhaps, an outside perspective from the wider church or denomination. This makes effective change more likely and notions of right/wrong or good/bad are avoided (although the idea of 'stronger' or 'weaker' worship is mentioned).

The weight of this booklet far exceeds its size. It raises fundamental questions and prompts churches to begin the work needed to answer them. The national church is asking deep questions about the role of worship within mission: perhaps some deeper questions need to be asked about the Anglican models of worship we now assume, and what theology of worship the Church of England stands for.

✠ Jo Spreadbury is the Precentor of Portsmouth and Chair of Praxis.

Lee Abbey

Stuart Townend will be leading parts of the New Year programme at Lee Abbey in Devon. From Tuesday 27 December 2016 to Monday 2 January 2017 there will be worship, workshops and other activities for all ages, and a New Year party. For details see the Lee Abbey website (<https://leeabbey.org.uk/devon>). Looking further ahead in 2017 Lee Abbey offers musical programmes led by Adrian Snell (13-17 February), Noel Tredinnick (10-12 March) and Roger Jones (31 March-2 April).

Sing gospel at Scargill House

At Scargill House in the Yorkshire Dales the programme offers two opportunities to sing gospel music,

- *Sing for joy* from Friday 11 to Sunday 13 November 2016,
- *Life as worship – worship as life* from Friday 17 to Sunday 19 February 2017.

Christian Congregational Music

The fourth international conference on Christian Congregational Music: Local and Global Perspectives will be held at Ripon College Cuddesdon, near Oxford, from Tuesday 18 to Thursday 21 July 2017. A call for papers has gone out, with suggested categories including 'Soundscapes and Resonant Spaces', 'Congregational Music in and as Prayer' and 'Music and Reformation'. Full details can be found on the conference website (<http://congregationalmusic.org>) and proposals must be submitted by 15 December 2016. Sadly, this academic event clashes with the conference of the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland, to be held in Carmarthen in 2017.

Anniversary reminder

A celebration is being held to mark fifty years since the publication and launch of *Youth Praise* in 1966. This will be at All Souls, Langham Place, on Saturday 15 October 2016 from 10 until 4, with contributions from Noel Tredinnick, Michael Baughen, Timothy Dudley-Smith (who will celebrate his 90th birthday

on 26 December), Sam Hargreaves, Joel Payne and others. As well as looking back with thanksgiving, *Jubilate* will be also be looking forward to the next 50 years. There will be plenty of opportunities to sing. Book tickets online (www.jubilate.co.uk).

New hymnal supplement

The Church of Ireland has just launched its new hymnal supplement, *Thanks & Praise*, with an event in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. The collection of over 200 hymns, songs, short chants and liturgical settings has been two years in preparation and is published by Hymns Ancient & Modern. A number of texts and tunes are by Irish writers, including Peter Thompson's PERSHORE ABBEY set to Brian Wren's hymn 'Let all creation dance', and Douglas Hyde's Irish version of 'Silent night'.

Those looking for a new congregational setting of the *Gloria* might like to look at Alison Cadden's 'Glory to God in the highest' (186), from her St Columba Setting. Other movements from the setting are also included. A full list of first lines can be found via the worship pages of the Church of Ireland's website (<http://ireland.anglican.org/worship/69>). Also available in slim hardback format is a 'companion' to *Thanks & Praise*, edited by Peter Thompson and published by Church of Ireland Publishing.

Let us give thanks: a Eucharist for Christian Aid

Michael Brooks writes:

I had noted that many churches, with various musical traditions, no longer sang the words of the eucharistic liturgy. Many of the currently available settings require an accomplished organist and also a choir that can sing in four-part harmony to lead the congregation, whilst other settings appeared to be musically complex.

Let us give thanks is a new setting of the Eucharist in which unison singing can be accompanied by a guitarist, or a keyboard player using a 'lead chart'. The music for the setting is in the key of D

and the relative minor. The crotchet pulse of 140 per minute is maintained, with the exception of two parts in the slower related tempo of 70 minims per minute. The music is original with the exception of part of 'Glory be to God' that includes the music of CWM RHONDDA. The words are from *Common Worship* with the exception of 'Glory be to God' that have been adapted into verse form. The sections are not referred to by their Latin and Greek names to ensure that the text is accessible to all.

Let us give thanks is dedicated to Christian Aid, and the royalties (including the *CW* words), will be donated to Christian Aid. The setting was first used in worship on 27 September 2015 at St Michael and All Angels, Lower Sydenham, London SE26 in which a band called *song!* led the music.

Let us give thanks is freely downloadable from the *song!* website (<http://michael5187.wix.com/song#!events/c1yi7>).

✉ *Michael Brooks is Assistant Priest at Holy Trinity, Sydenham.*

Strengthen for Service: Manage and maintain your music

Led by the RSCM's Head of Ministerial Training, the Rev'd Helen Bent, *Strengthen for Service* provides practical information on how to manage your parish music. The course is designed for Anglican clergy (especially those at the early stages of their ministry), Readers and Lay Leaders.

- Tuesday 7 – Thursday 9 February 2017, Hinsley Hall, Leeds, LS6 2BX
- Tuesday 16 – Thursday 18 May 2017, Mill House, Tiverton, Devon, EX16 7ES

Book online at www.rscm.com/courses. Prices and booking deadlines vary, please visit the website www.rscm.com.

Strengthen for service Lite, a one-day course, is also available.

Books

Dean Dwelly of Liverpool: Liturgical Genius,

Peter Kennerley, *Alcuin Club* 2016

What makes someone a liturgical genius, and was Frederick Dwelly, the first Dean of Liverpool, in that category? This book explores the minutiae of liturgical planning in a twentieth century cathedral and gives insights into the requests made to cathedral chapters and how they responded. The development and planning of 'special services' occupies a large part of the text, and copious detail is given. There is a long chapter on the consecration events for Liverpool Cathedral and the contents of the service are described in detail. Dwelly did seem to have an ability to capture the spirit of the moment and to express it liturgically. A good example is the service for the RAF in 1943 which is based around a modernised *Benedicite* and a series of Benedictions. 'Blessed the call of duty in the air, and blessed the need therefore of fine human qualities,' may sound stilted now but at its time it was appropriate and even *avant garde*. Making a mark on a building as vast as Liverpool Cathedral was a significant achievement, though the sadness about this book is the lack of personal detail about Dwelly, who left few personal papers and remained a private person throughout his life.

✍ David Brindley is the Dean of Portsmouth.

Accessible Baptisms

Tim Stratford, *Grove Worship series W226*

Not everyone fell in love with it at first sight, but in the 16 years since *Common Worship* was published it has become the accepted standard Church of England liturgical text. For sure, minor-key gripes over a piece of text here or a rubric there are inevitable, but over that period *Initiation Services* have taken much of the criticism, parts of the baptism text proving as inaccessible to ministers as they are incomprehensible to worshippers.

Tim Stratford's new Grove Worship booklet, *Accessible Baptisms*, is a commentary on the new alternative texts authorized from December 2015 for use at Church of England baptisms. The texts originated in response to a Liverpool Diocesan Synod motion to General Synod, requesting a more accessible

and user-friendly baptism liturgy, and highlighting specifically the *Decision*, *Prayer over the Water* and *Commission*. The Liturgical Commission added to this list the *Presentation of Candidates* and *Signing with the Cross*, and the resulting alternative texts, together with guidance on using them and an exemplar service can be found both on the Church of England website and in a booklet with a striking green cover.

Like many clergy I struggled for years with both specific wording and the overall wordiness of the original CW rites. Colleagues in Liverpool evidently felt the same way, conscious that despite using the alternatives offered in the original service, the impact of the words was limited. Middle-class Surrey being no different, the prospect of a more accessible liturgical alternative was rather appealing to me.

Tim Stratford's latest Grove Worship book makes very clear the reality of the need expressed by Liverpool diocese and the case for the new alternative texts. He first highlights the shortcomings of the original texts, not least the wordiness, the complex sentences and use of religious language and concepts that fly over the heads of most families (personal and anecdotal experience suggest the *Decision* 'interrogation' was a particular concern). He suggests that 'the...response is to find another way of speaking the same truths'.

He then tackles the case against producing alternative texts, focusing on integrity and accessibility, and the accusation of dumbing down – acknowledging the real concerns that lay behind the reservations. Finally, the last few pages explain the new alternative texts, the thinking behind them, and the strong case for introducing and using them. Although Tim is now Archdeacon of Leicester, his substantial parish experience means his work for the Liturgical Commission has an 'earthed' feel, and he writes with the needs of a typical parish always in mind. My own parish started using the new texts almost immediately, but this new Grove Book is a very helpful introduction and explanation of them – warmly recommended to anyone who conducts baptisms or prepares candidates and their families.

✍ Stuart Thomas is the Rector of Frimley.

Reports

Annual Conference of the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland

The Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland encourages study and research, promoting good standards of hymn-singing, the discerning use of hymns in worship, and various relevant publications. Its Annual Conference, held in St Andrew's University, July 26-28, was attended by musicologists, theologians, authors and composers of hymns, and others with an interest in hymnody. Worship, led by Janet Wootton, began and ended each session, and an impressive Hymn Festival was held in St Salvator's Chapel.

Benjamin Brody's lecture *Recent Hymn Tune and Text Collections from the USA* introduced some inspiring hymns that address current issues. Of particular relevance is Carl Daw's 'When sacred spaces are defiled' (www.hopepublishing.com). An informative insight was given by the editor, Peter Thompson, of working on the new hymn book supplement *Thanks and Praise*. The history of hymn translations was explored by Elsabe Kloppers, who noted that John Bell's hymns are translated into most languages, mostly with disappointing results. 'Iona plays such an important role in worship; why allow such bad translations?' Christine Purcell had researched Father Quinn, a prolific hymn writer, who saw hymns as prayers. 'When we use words in prayers and in hymns there should be a rhythm, an ebb and flow between our daily life and our formal prayer life'.

Ian Bradley spoke of his work with theological students: choosing hymns and hymn books; ensuring a tune is appropriate for the mood of the words; importance of liturgy and literature; history of hymnody; acceptance of contemporary hymns; therapeutic use of hymns in pastoral care. He ended with a convincing look at musical theatre, stating that songs from musicals are now widely used at funerals and weddings. Many of the songs are 'packed with theology or ideas about God' and are providing words and music for congregational hymns. Is the song 'Do you hear the people sing', with its desperation but also hope, the 'hymn' which is appropriate for today?

✍ Christine Medd is the organist of St. Paul's, Scotforth, Lancaster

Royal School of Church Music International Summer School 8-14 August 2016

The RSCM gathered church musicians from all over the world for a summer week of worship, encouragement, challenge and fellowship. The week was based at Liverpool University and the Anglican and Metropolitan Cathedrals, which proved stimulating and exciting venues. Services were sung in both cathedrals, including a BBC Radio 3 broadcast of Choral Vespers from the Metropolitan Cathedral. Although Anglican Choral Evensong did feature strongly, we went well beyond this – also following forms of worship from the Church of Scotland, Iona, Methodist, Lutheran and Roman Catholic traditions, as befits our ecumenical calling. Speakers ranged from Peter Moger to Graham Kendrick.

Consideration of the birth of the Reformation (the week's theme) proved a fruitful springboard for all sorts of lively debate about the power of music in worship and our callings as Christian musicians. Congregational and instrumental music also featured in the workshop programme, so that the needs of churches without four-part choirs and experienced organists were considered, and the area of ministerial training in music was also an important part of the provision.

✉ *Miles Quick is Head of Congregational & Instrumental Music for RSCM.*

Society for Liturgical Study Conference 23-25 August 2016

The biennial conference of the Society for Liturgical Study (SLS) took place at The College of the Resurrection, Mirfield, at the end of August. The conference theme of *Role and Ritual in Worship* was excellently supported by the venue. Participants enjoyed the double privilege of Vespers with the Community in their beautifully re-ordered Upper Church, and conference worship in the College's Lower Church. Among the 60 or so delegates, it was good to see several new faces. Papers were generally of a high standard and the fact that some of them were given by recent graduates of the Liturgy MA programmes at Sarum College and The Mirfield Liturgical Institute was a welcome sign that one of the Society's founding objectives – to encourage and foster younger liturgists – is being honoured.

Bishop Michael Perham's keynote address on 'The Bishop in Liturgy' brought new perspectives and a wealth of pastoral and liturgical experience to the subject. It will be published in the Society's journal, *Anaphora*, in December. Professor Bryan Spinks inducted his audience expertly into the intriguing matter of the fraction in the Syrian Orthodox Rite. His paper, too, will be published in December. Other papers tackled topics that took us from Egypt to Taizé, and from the fourth century to the digital age, represented in a splendid presentation on computer modelling of liturgical events.

Anyone interested in joining SLS should visit <http://www.studyofliturgy.org.uk/>. Membership includes a subscription to *Anaphora*.

✉ *Bridget Nicholls is Lay Chaplain to the Bishop of Ely and the editor of Anaphora.*

Readers will find I have been pressed into service about pilgrimages on another page, and, by sheer coincidence, I ought to be writing up on a further page the next Grove Worship Booklet, as I wrote it. Instead I shamelessly do my advertising here and save the editor from appearing to have surrendered the whole edition to me. The Grove Booklet concerned is the November one, W228, *Worship in the Epistle to the Hebrews*. In recent years I have usually started lecture courses on worship with a thumbnail sketch of the broad sweep of this fascinating letter – of the high priest who suffered for his people 'outside the veil', and then entered within, there to appear in the presence of God for us. While much of Christian teaching is that our Lord is always with us here, is present 'in our midst' when we meet etc., the Letter to the Hebrews has a wholly different emphasis – we are 'there' with him, at the throne of God.

A fear which has strongly motivated me is the suspicion that this Letter is not well known, not much read, not always understood. Part of the problem, no doubt, is that readings in Sunday services give short extracts, but inevitably do not give a whole sweep. In the lectionary this last summer, Hebrews provided the set epistle for the principal service on the four Sundays in August, but in how many congregations was there any rounded teaching about the thrust of the Epistle (the Gospel passage was from well-known chapters of Luke, summer holidays affected continuity of both ministering and attending, and in some places they omit the epistle anyway)? And part of my contention is that you need to know the whole sweep of the Letter to benefit from reading or hearing the set passages.

So – here is the Grove Booklet that first asks what apostolic precedent and precept we have for our corporate worship (have you checked out the application today of the New Testament words translated 'worship?'), and then, within the frame of the priesthood and heavenly ministry of Christ, discovers how this particular Letter guides or steers the worship of our assembly today. There are, of course, some negative implications – particularly that the Old Testament cultus was fulfilled in Christ, and it is dangerous to transpose its detail, not least the whole concept of an authorized 'priesthood' within the community, into New Testament worship. But the positive side is that not only do we offer through Christ the sacrifice of praise with our lips, but we share our earthly goods with each other 'for with such sacrifices God is well pleased' (Heb.13.15-16). So – draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.

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