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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?

The Way of Christ-Likeness

Being Transformed by the Liturgies of Lent, Holy Week and Easter

Very few will read Bishop Michael Perham's new book without being aware of the public statement he made some months ago about his own health, and they will be aware of the huge contribution he has made over the past forty years to the liturgical life of the Church of England through publications and teaching, especially his central role in the creation and re-modelling of the Church's liturgical texts. This certainly makes the personal introduction feel more poignant and it sets the substance of the book wonderfully in the context of the transforming power of these liturgies which Michael Perham has always been motivated to share with the Christian communities of which he has been part.

He re-visits material he published when *Lent, Holy Week and Easter* and *Common Worship* first appeared, working closely with Kenneth Stevenson in a series of chapters discussing Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Holy Week, the Triduum, Easter, the Great Fifty days and Pentecost by examining their origins, sometimes with an elegant summary of biblical material and always with an outline of how the rites developed. The lodestar of what motivates him is the transformation which entering imaginatively into Jesus's mind and 'as it were, even his body' (p.8) can make. Practical advice about how these liturgies may be most effective grows so obviously from this as to be moving in itself. Even if many lives are not marked by suffering and trauma, the rites let our own experience interact with that of Christ.

Bishop Michael reminds his readers of the fundamental reason for celebrating the rites with great care and attention to detail and nuance – reflected of course in the subtle differences of emphasis in the Gospels and in tradition later developed. Their compelling power to teach the message of Jesus resounds in every chapter. The joy and feast, as well as the fast of Lent, is beautifully enjoined. Lent is ultimately not a wilderness story but a journey. It is marked by growth more than penitence, even though penitence is

the precondition for growth (p.18). His reflections on the ashing and the conjunctions between mortality and penitence will greatly help anyone teaching or preaching that day.

He balances what he says about Holy Week and its demands with the conviction of all it has to give. The making present of a past event in the knowledge that a past event is a pin-pointing in time of an eternal truth – this is his summary of what truly happens (p.39). Therefore nothing is unimportant – even the presence or absence of a Palm Sunday donkey is discussed in the context of the visit of Egeria to Jerusalem, the nature of the palm branches we should use in England in 2017 and the interplay between re-memorative and representational liturgy!

Engagement with different moods, and the conviction that ritual is nearly always more fruitful for those who participate than for those who merely observe it, is key, and the chapters on Lent, Palm/Passion Sunday and Maundy Thursday show this particularly well. He has one or two critical comments about *Times and Seasons*, finds a splendid blooper in its section of receiving oils into Church, but lauds its emphasis on the Easter season – so that the great fifty days do not peter out into the everyday. At various turns he suggests modern and traditional hymnody and prayers which can enhance celebrations. The nine days of prayer for the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost after Ascension are carefully cast by *Common Worship* to see Pentecost as the culmination of Easter, not the beginning of a new season.

Every reader of this book will gain a great deal. It is a moving and substantial distillation of all that Michael Perham has given and received over many years, and which has transformed him as a worshipper too.

✉ James Garrard is Precentor of Ely Cathedral.

Michael Perham, *The Way of Christ-Likeness: Being Transformed by the Liturgies of Lent, Holy Week and Easter*, Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2016, x+155pp, ISBN 978-1-84825-901-0

Worship and Children

Spiritual Collective Worship

Since the Education Act of 1988, with its specification that worship in 'county schools' 'must be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character, though not distinctive of any particular Christian denomination', society has greatly changed; in schools, pupils with non-Christian faiths or no religious beliefs continue to increase in number. Yet over the same period, legislation requiring daily collective worship in schools has been untouched. Most who lead collective worship are teachers, lacking experience or training in worship, yet they are challenged to make it relevant and inclusive, remaining 'broadly Christian' but offering meaningful insight to all.

I faced this challenge teaching in a multicultural, multi-faith, Church of England primary school. My early attempts veered between the banal ('penguins huddle together to keep warm, we should work as a team too') to exploring global challenges or moral issues without any religious framework. I wasn't offering worship, or real opportunity for my pupils' spiritual development.

I therefore designed a form of class worship ('spiritual collective worship') that used a consistent liturgical structure, including Christian references, alongside a range of stories and an emphasis on pupils' personal response. I introduced this in two schools, training teachers and providing resources.

My subsequent research revealed that pupils valued having space 'to think', stating they had little time for reflection elsewhere and were grateful to have a distinctive time dedicated to this. They enjoyed being a community, discussing the importance of being together, hearing each other's views and considering what they themselves believed. Additionally, pupils valued hearing 'new stories', many requesting that stories from other faiths were included. Pupils wanted to learn and reflect, to ponder, to grow. They wanted to reflect on their own lives, but to do this as part of a community.

Collective worship in schools has been ignored for too long. At its best it can offer all pupils the space to reflect, to wonder, and to sense something beyond their everyday lives. Yet achieving this for all children, regardless of their faith, is a significant challenge. We must do more to

resource teachers, church leaders and others to deliver collective worship that is up to this task.

✉ *Elisabeth Sutcliffe is a primary school teacher. Her research was financially supported by the Church Schools of Cambridge Trust.*

The 'Curatorial' of the Eucharist with children

This article shares my research into the spiritual impact of co-curating the Eucharist with children, drawing on developments in the field of museum curation, and the fields of education research and children's spirituality. I used Participatory Action Research and Godly Play wondering questions as part of my methodology to discover the experiences of child and adult co-researchers. The participants discussed their experiences after being present at Eucharists not co-curated with children and after Eucharists where the child researchers helped to make the worship happen. Analysis of the data has identified that co-curating the Eucharist with children was a positive spiritual experience for the co-researchers.

The enquiry examines whether an adult-centric view of eucharistic worship works as a gate keeper to exclude those who don't fit the cultural norm by contrast with Jesus' teaching in Mark 10. Jesus' teaching evokes a parable of the kingdom of God, which we might see, for example, when, in the prayer at Taizé, children are invited to sit with the Prior and brothers in the very centre of the church and their presence is normative.

The curation of the Eucharist involves the mixing and blending of liturgical actions, a journey of discovery that may be likened to the curating of works of art. When striving to achieve the best possible liturgical worship, leaders use the same conceptual building blocks of heritage preservation, new work and tradition. Art co-curation involves the public from inception to final display, deepening engagement with artefacts. However, curation largely inhabits a world prior to the event. This led me to discover a distinction, described by Martinon and Rogof, between 'curation'

and 'the curatorial'. "Curating" takes place in a promise; it produces a moment of promise, of redemption to come. By contrast, "the Curatorial" is what disturbs this process; it breaks up this stage, yet produces a narrative which comes into being in the very moment in which an utterance takes place... "the Curatorial" is a disturbance, an utterance, a narrative.'

The Curatorial shifts the focus to those who experience. During the second phase of my research, child participants helped make the worship happen by partnering a member of the altar team. There was no rehearsal. Before the service the children were invited to choose who they would like to partner, for example, crucifer, server, thurifer or me, the president. They each carried an LED light, carrying their light whenever their partner did their job. The service was not adapted in any other way. Each child moved alongside their role partner throughout the service, and at the distribution of Holy Communion there were several children in the sanctuary. The president and chalice bearers distributed Holy Communion at the altar rail and to those in the congregation unable to make the journey to the rail, with the children alongside. One child said, 'It felt like you were part of a puzzle almost of a church, you know like a puzzle of a thing that's going to happen.' A congregation researcher said he realized he would have happily received communion from the child next to the priest. Another elderly congregation member revealed he had been considering whether he should stop coming to the altar rail and felt the presence of children opened the way for him, even with his disability, to continue. Adults felt the children's presence opened the way for them to be part of the worship. One said that it felt as though everyone was welcome.

Only two of the ten participants aged between 6 and 11 usually attended with their parents. None expressed feelings of boredom or incomprehension. The focus for their discussion centred upon doing real work, learning important things about God. When asked about the length of the service they thought the question irrelevant. This exploration has helped my churches gain confidence in bringing to light our preconceptions and assumptions. ✉ *Trudie Morris is Vicar of St Edmund's & St Osmund's, Derby.*

Worship and Children

All-age worship and Godly Play

In exploring all-age worship the time comes when we must ask, 'Why do we gather in worship?' At The Vine we are working from an understanding, reflected in the broad sweep of Scripture, that the heart of an act of corporate worship involves each of us bringing an offering to bless others and to bless God. This approach has guided our church's explorations over the last year. We have been well served by years of hard work from our Godly Play team, who have nurtured our young people (some through their whole lives), enabling them to grow in confidence to offer their theological reflections and to respond in creative worship, within a simple Eucharistic structure.

I have particular responsibility for a missional small group and here we have discovered that many families do not seek out separate activities for adults and children, but simply do everything together. So to model church that is accessible, our discipleship, eating together, Bible study and worship are intentionally all-age. This has been a relatively easy transition for us as a group. In our wider church family, the journey has required a more exploratory approach. Within our all-age monthly gatherings, we have applied the principle of inviting anyone, of any age, to bring an offering of worship. Our young people, thanks to their Godly Play experience, model a natural confidence in sharing, though they have been slightly hindered by adult expectations: for example, in order to foster an attitude of worship rather than performance, we, the adults, have had to squash our impetus to clap in response to something a young person has shared.

As adults, we are learning how to simplify our communication, our prayers and our liturgy. And we are discovering the value and importance of visual and physical contributions to worship. We know that there is still much to learn about how we enable young people to grow in confidence but we are also

recognising that this is often a challenge for us all.

Our journey continues to be one of adventurous learning together, a journey on which we have experienced the beauty of diverse voices worshipping God and encouraging one another in our discipleship.

✠ *Lucy Bolster is the curate of The Vine, Netherthorpe, Sheffield.*

For the past ten years the church has been blessed through Godly Play, but it is only in the last few months that I, the Vicar, have been on a three-day accredited training course. I was increasingly seeing opportunities to use Godly Play in my ministry, and wanted to deepen my own understanding.

The course was both a blessing and an eye opener. Immediately I became aware of how our current church practice which requires our children's groups to 'down tools' in order to regather when the adults are ready, is less than respectful. In addition I was keen to explore more intentionally how our children's Godly Play experience could influence and shape the corporate worship of our congregational gathering. In particular, I wanted to find out what insights Godly Play might offer to help a worshipping community to gather intentionally and prepare to enter worship. So in December we used the Advent Godly Play material as a way of gathering. Old and young alike were encouraged to get ready to enter the mystery of Christmas, and even the very youngest were drawn in by the words and action.

This was not the first time we've used this material but its impact felt more profound, perhaps because rather than being an add-on to embellish the lighting of the Advent wreath, we shaped the entire service around the themes. Rather than becoming stale through repetition, the familiarity served to help us to enter more deeply into worship that prepared us to enter the mystery of Christmas. We hope it will be the first of many steps.

✠ *Phil Batchford is Vicar of The Vine.*

Infant liturgical formation

Children gather around the Communion table during the Eucharistic Prayer. They play with miniature chalices, patens, jugs, bread and grapes. A child solemnly mimes breaking the bread, saying 'break, bread, pray'. They watch, imitate gestures, repeat words and share play elements; they are engaged in active participation.

'The Ark' is a Service of Holy Communion for carers and pre-school children in Michaelhouse Chapel, Cambridge. We follow a shortened *Common Worship* rite using the 'Holy, holy, holy' Additional Eucharistic Prayer. The children are central to the worship space and free to move around, talk and play. They are facilitated in worship through 'liturgical play', using toys and symbols reflecting the liturgy, the Gospel, colours, seasons and festivals of the Christian year. For example, Pentecost uses a large red felt circle with doves, 'flames' and windmills.

Everyone can participate in the liturgy with wooden crosses, liturgically-coloured ribbon-rings and maracas. For the Gospel we use pictures, figures and objects. Children choose 'prayer pictures' and we sing and sign 'O Lord, hear our prayer.' We all share the Peace, offer a hand or say 'peace'. Children bring up the elements and vessels, lay the table and pour the water and wine. We have the Bishop's dispensation to communicate baptised infants with parental consent, children hold their hands out for the 'Jesus bread' with reverence; we experience awe, wonder and the presence of God.

The rich liturgical and symbolic landscape of 'The Ark' has been transformational in liturgical formation. When children are incorporated into the worshipping community they are 'appropriate liturgical participants even in infancy'¹. We as a Christian community 'have an awesome role in landscaping their religious imaginations'². Is the adult church ready for liturgy with children? Is the church ready for the 'sacred play of children'³?

✠ *Carolynn Pritchard is a lay Children's Minister at Great St Mary's, Cambridge.*

References are to 1&3 Appostolos-Cappadonna D, *The Sacred Play of Children* and 2 Bernstein E and Brooks-Leonard J, *Children in the Assembly of the Church*.

Diddy Disciples at St Peter's, Walworth

Diddy Disciples began when my wriggly children were aged 3, 3, and 2 and it felt impossible to go to church. We started with just five children. Now 30-40 under-sevens worship together during the Sunday service, from after the first hymn until the Peace, and we're still growing.

Worshipping with babies and toddlers began as a survival tactic, but it soon became a passion. The more we learned about the early years, the more important they seemed: during these first six years, our sense of who we are and where we belong is shaped. As a church, we realized that, if we aim to build up a People of God who take part fully in worship, who are willing to lead, and open to seeing how the stories we tell from the Bible are relevant to the way we live life, then this approach had to begin during these first six years. Over time we created what is essentially *Common Worship* for under-sixes, using lots of movement, imagination, symbols, streamers, our faces and bodies, creative activities, music, song and, of course, Bible storytelling. A book, *Diddy Disciples*, is due to be published by SPCK in June 2017.

Diddy Disciples represents an immersive approach to worship. Children are not expected to follow and understand every word, but they are included as a full part of the group, drawn into the experience that is taking place around them, and encouraged to participate and lead in their own ways (which usually involves using their bodies). We believe being actively included from the very beginning is in itself important. As part of God's family, these babies take part in that family's activities, just as at home they spend some time simply immersed in the melee of family life, and their parents and carers speak movingly of what their children gain from the experience of being included in worship. Their verbal understanding may be limited,

but they respond actively to the music, movement, actions, and the sense of being part of something important. Most of all they understand what it is to be included; for their contribution to be both expected and to make a difference.

Taking babies and toddlers seriously has changed us as a church. For a start, we've grown, as families have felt welcomed and valued, and – most importantly – full members of our worshipping community. A seminal moment for us was when Bishop Christopher came to visit the church and led *Diddy Disciples* downstairs, returning upstairs with us during the Peace to continue presiding over the Eucharist for the whole church. For us, this represents what worship is all about: different ages meet in different spaces, but all of these are worship and fully part of the church. A recent report on research about church toddler groups conducted across five dioceses on behalf of the Church of England (www.going4growth.com/growth_in_faith_and_worship/early_years/church-based-toddler-groups) talks about how important it is to see toddlers as 'an integral part of the church community'. This is certainly our experience, and we've learned so much from them.

Father Andrew, Rector of St Peter's Walworth, writes, '*Diddy Disciples* has been a key part to our growth in depth of faith and worship, and our growth in numbers. It has helped us to provide high-quality worship for young members of St Peter's and their parents and carers, which means that people with younger children come more frequently, new people are more likely to stay, and word gets round that it's ok to bring very young children. They will be taken seriously and won't be expected to sit quietly.'

✉ Sharon Moughtin-Mumby is Assistant Priest at St Peter's, Walworth.

For details on *Diddy Disciples* training, contact @DiddyDisciples on Twitter or Facebook or email diddydisciples@gmail.com.

Parable and Paradox: Sonnets on the sayings of Jesus and other poems

Malcolm Guite, Canterbury Press, 2016

In his introduction to this collection, Malcolm Guite describes spending a year attending closely to the lectionary and responding 'as honestly as he could' to the way he had encountered Scripture read in church. The result is rich, original, and often searingly self-examining. Guite tackles many of the 'hard sayings' of the gospels, and does this without making them less hard. At the same time, he insists that there is no dilemma that Christ has not faced for us, no agony that he has not already endured, no despair so deep that he cannot find us. We encounter that conviction, in different forms, in poem after poem. Here is the imagined voice of Christ, in a sonnet on John 11.25, 'I am the Resurrection, and the Life', answering the hesitant questioner who wonders how he can 'be the final resurrection':

Begin in me and I will read your riddle
And teach you truths my Spirit will defend.
I am the end who meets you in the middle,
The new beginning hidden in the End.
I am the victory, the end of strife
I am the resurrection and the life. (p. 60)

Although these poems are first and foremost a dialogue with Scripture, they are also a dialogue with the tradition in which Guite is immersed. There are echoes of Herbert, Hopkins, Yeats, Donne, Shakespeare, and the *Book of Common Prayer*, and perhaps Auden and Milton, gracefully inviting the reader to share in the wealth that Guite draws from a community of voices who have also listened and responded to the biblical text. Just occasionally, there is a jarring self-consciousness, expressed in the need to identify a reference – Yeats in 'With All Your Heart' (p. 50), Hopkins in 'A Grain of Wheat' (p. 63). A similar anxiety lurks around the footnotes to 'Cuthbert's Gospel' (p. 9) and 'Bible Study' (p. 10). The play on cognate words (e.g. 'trapped' and 'trappings' in

Books

'He who has ears to hear let him hear' (p. 28), notable in Hopkins' poetry, sometimes produces an illuminating spark, and sometimes doesn't quite succeed.

These are small criticisms of features that are understandable in a poet who has internalised such a formidable literary heritage. Readers may hardly notice them, when confronted with Guite's ability to enter imaginatively into a narrated experience, as he does in 'Jacob Wrestles with the Angel' (p. 23). It is a brave writer who chooses a subject already treated by Charles Wesley and succeeds. 'Emmaus 1' and 'Emmaus 2' use the same device, putting the speaker in the role of the disciples who met Jesus on the road (Luke 24.17, pp. 76-77), and making Luke's conclusion immediate and personal:

Open your mind to Scripture and believe
He bore the curse for you to make you
whole.
The living God was numbered with the dead
That he might bring you Life in broken
bread.

Also striking is the handling of urgent topical and political questions, exemplified in 'Christ Among the Refugees' (p.26) and in 'Better to Enter Life Maimed' (p.41), which confronts the harmful obsession with 'the ideal body'.

Where *Sounding the Seasons* (Canterbury Press, 2012) began to show Guite's mastery of the sonnet form, this collection finds him experimenting more widely with different distributions of the standard 14 lines, using the freedom afforded by imperfect end rhymes, and creating a denser texture of association with internal rhymes. The final delight is to be introduced to the roundel form in the closing poem, 'Seven Whole Days' (pp. 79-82). Homage to Herbert is explicit in the title and epigraph, and with Herbert, Guite joyfully celebrates a God who creates, inhabits creation, redeems it when it falls away from its first calling, and shows to anyone attentive to its daily miracles the 'blessing and rest' that lie at its heart.

✉ *Bridget Nichols is editor of Anaphora.*

We Welcome You: Baptism Preparation with Families

Jacqui Hyde, Church House Publishing, 2016

We Welcome You is a baptism preparation course complete with all the materials and handouts. The book starts with a look at recent research by the Church of England into baptisms and requests for christenings. It considers carefully why families ask for baptisms and their responses to the research questions. It gives some good starting theology on baptism and what the Church of England says it believes. After these first chapters, the book suggests a preparation course that can be run over three sessions or, if needs be, then one session with one family. The book is well-presented and easy to read.

Reflecting on the book and whether I would buy a copy and use it in my everyday parish life, there were a few things that came to mind. Firstly, the materials do make some assumptions. It is assumed that people can read and write: something that is not always the case in the three parishes in which I have worked.

Secondly, it assumes that families want to join a group and have experience of expressing their faith and thoughts in a group setting. This kind of small group training and learning is common in churches and some working settings, but again I have not found that many families are comfortable with this or want to do it. I can't be the only one to have tried and failed to get people talking.

There are also the age-old questions about what to do if families don't turn up to preparation sessions or how to make the service as accessible as possible, both of which I would like to have been chewed over in the book. The book doesn't consider what to do with children themselves as preparation even though it mentions in the research that children who come to be baptised are now often no longer babies.

However, bearing all this in mind I would recommend getting a copy of this book. The first few chapters would make a good starting point for further study and discussion for those who would like to go further, and it offers some good

suggestions for activities. But do remember that you need to know who you are working with and that no one preparation course will work for all.

✉ *Samantha Tredwell is Vicar of Long Eaton St John's in Derby Diocese.*

Alcuin/GROW Joint Liturgical Study 83 – Neil O'Donoghue,

Liturgical Orientation: the position of the president at the Eucharist. (Hymns Ancient & Modern, May 2017, £7.95)

Anglicans have for 30, 40 or 50 years regularly taken 'westward position' to preside at communion – that is, they have faced the congregation from behind the communion table. The change has been largely matched in the Church of Rome (though it is worth noting that for Anglicans the change from eastward to westward was already well started before Vatican II and is not to be attributed to Rome-watching). Here, however, is a learned Irish Roman Catholic wrestling with forces of history and the thrust of eucharistic theology to explore the values and emphases of both positions and their relative strength, largely as expressed within his own tradition, but also with reference to others.

Cost of Events

The Praxis Executive regrets that after a number of years at the same price, we have had to increase charges for our events in order to cover ever-increasing costs. The cost per person for an event will normally be £20.00; for Praxis affiliates £15.00. We continue to make no charge for those training for ministry, lay or ordained, but please do check for each event. We think that these charges still represent excellent value for those attending our events and we are also delighted that we are still able to give free entry to those in training.

Please use the enclosed revised Praxis leaflets wisely to help find us more potential members. Do ask if you need more. Peter Furber peter@furber.me.uk

Reflections of a hymn-writer

UP is expected to publish shortly Timothy Dudley-Smith's reflections on his experiences as a writer and lover of hymns over many decades. Bishop Timothy celebrated his ninetieth birthday on 26 December 2016 and has published around 400 hymn texts over the last fifty years or so. *A Functional Art* explores the study and singing of hymns as well as what is involved in writing them.

Tom Wright at Calvin Symposium

N.T. Wright, Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at the University of St Andrews, was a keynote speaker in January 2017 at the 30th annual Calvin Symposium on Christian Worship in Grand Rapids, attended by 1,600 scholars, students, musicians and worship leaders of various kinds. His title was 'Sign and Means of New Creation: Public Worship and the Creative Reading of Scripture' and the text of the lecture can be found on his website (<http://ntwrightpage.com>) under 'Articles'.

Professor Wright looked at ways in which public worship might better nurture a deeper understanding of Scripture as a whole. In a section on Colossians 1.15-20 he also spoke of singing as a way of understanding and embodying the big narratives of Scripture; in worship, 'singing brings your whole body into play so you, as a temple of the Spirit, are resonating with this act of praise.'

Getty project 'Sing!'

Keith and Kristyn Getty (from Ireland, but now based in the USA) have announced a two-year focus on congregational singing, beginning with a conference in September 2017 and a book entitled *SING! How and Why We Worship*. The project also ties in with the 500th anniversary of the Reformation; their website (www.gettymusic.com) describes Martin Luther's vision for congregational singing as 'utterly revolutionary in church history and more needed today than [at] any time since'.

Their aims are:

- To teach everyone why and how we sing.
- To build deep believers through what we sing.
- To strengthen and encourage families to sing together.

- To build churches by singing together and to each other.
- To witness to the wider community by singing.

Among the speakers at the conference in Nashville will be D.A. Carson, talking about 'Singing and the Christian Mind', Joni Eareckson Tada on 'Singing and the Journeys of Life' and Keith Getty on 'A Vision for a Singing Church'. This last session will close the conference, as Keith 'shares his desire for renewed participation and transformation in congregational worship as well as an expanded view of theology, artistry and congregationality and the building [of] radical singing communities.'

Song & Hymn Writers Foundation

A new charity has been launched, growing from the work of Jubilate Hymns and Resound Worship. It exists to promote excellence in the writing and publication of hymns and songs for worship. More information about the aims can be found by following the link in the 'About' section of the Jubilate website (www.jubilate.co.uk). The patron is Noël Tredinnick and trustees include Jeremy Begbie and Peter Moger.

Two events have been arranged to give direct practical support to those writing words and music for the church. The first is a Hymn Writer's Workshop, described as 'a day of insight, practical training and fellowship for composers and lyricists alike'. There will be workshops for composers, led by Noël Tredinnick and Roger Peach, and for wordsmiths, led by Martin Leckebusch and Joel Payne. The event takes place at St Paul's, Robert Adam Street, London W1U 3HW, on Saturday 6 May 2017, from 10 am to 4 pm. Further details can be found online (www.jubilate.co.uk/events/hymn-writers-workshop).

The second event is a Worship Songwriting Retreat aiming to be 'a four-day oasis for worship songwriters in the beautiful surroundings of Wydale Hall in North Yorkshire'. Led by Geraldine Luce, Joel Payne and Matt Osgood, the retreat takes place from Sunday 25 to Wednesday 28 June 2017 and the programme includes core teaching and group critique sessions, along with plenty of private writing time. To find out more and to book, visit the Resound Worship website (www.resoundworship.org/events/worship-songwriting-retreat).

Academic study

Mark Porter's book *Contemporary Worship Music and Everyday Musical Lives* has been published by Routledge as part of the Ashgate Congregational Music Studies Series. His introduction describes how his own experiences as a classically-trained musician becoming involved in contemporary worship music, and his conversations with members of congregations, shaped his desire to research what it was that made congregational music productive or problematic for people.

This study is based partly on interviews Mark conducted at St Aldate's, Oxford as part of his doctoral research. There is basic information about the book on the Routledge website (www.routledge.com) and extracts can be found via Google Books. Mark is one of the organisers of this year's conference 'Christian Congregational Music: Local and Global Perspectives' which will take place in July at Ripon College Cuddesdon, near Oxford.

Lee Abbey

A week with the title 'Sound Healing' is on offer at Lee Abbey in Devon from Saturday 21 to Friday 27 October 2017. Led by Simeon Wood, it promises to 'delve into the relationship we have between music, healing, life and faith'. Further details can be found online (<https://leeabbey.org.uk/devon>).

Hymn Society conference

Members and friends of the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland will be gathering in Carmarthen from Tuesday 18 to Friday 21 July this year. At least one of the conference lectures they hear will have a Welsh flavour: William Williams of Pantycelyn, author of 'Guide me, O thou great Jehovah' (among hundreds more hymns in Welsh and English), was born 300 years ago this year and will be celebrated in an address by Wyn James, Professor in the School of Welsh at Cardiff University and an authority on hymns as well as on the literature of evangelicalism. There will also be an outing to the home of William Williams and a Festival of Hymns in Christ Church, Carmarthen, to which all are welcome. For further information contact the Secretary of the Hymn Society via the website (<http://hymnsocietygbi.org.uk/contact-us>).

Music News

Also on the website are more 'Treasures' from the archives of the Society's quarterly Bulletin, including an article by Rowan Williams. 'What are we saying by singing?' is the transcript of a lecture given to the Society's conference in 2006 while Lord Williams was Archbishop of Canterbury.

Music at Scargill House

At Scargill House, in the Yorkshire Dales, Steven Faux and Friends will be leading a five-day break on 'The Vivid World of the Psalms' (Monday 15 to Friday 19 May 2017). Steven is a professional musician who has composed TV and film scores; he also serves as Associate Vicar of Redland Parish Church, Bristol.

There is an opportunity to sing gospel music from Friday 21 to Sunday 23 July 2017 as Anna Weister Andersson leads a 'Sing for joy' weekend. Those who book will be sent mp3 files so that they can start learning the songs.

Roger Jones and his team will be helping singers and instrumentalists of all ages to learn his musical *Angel Voices* during a holiday week at Scargill House from Saturday 26 August to Saturday 2 September 2017. The musical's themes of worship, warfare and wholeness are taken from the book of Revelation. Roger has written over twenty Christian cantatas and has collaborated with others on books including *Worship Works: A Workbook for Groups, Choirs and Congregations* (Christian Music Ministries 2013).

Details of all the above are on the Scargill House website (<https://scargillmovement.org>).

RSCM resource

The latest Festival Service book from the Royal School of Church Music is called *Reform and Renewal*. It provides words and music 'to celebrate the renewal of the church over the centuries' and was devised and compiled by Michael Hampel, Andrew Reid and Tim Ruffer. As well as forming the basis of festival services in splendid buildings for large or small numbers of singers, the book aims to provide resources which can serve churches of all sizes and choirs of varying abilities more generally.

Sample pages can be viewed on the RSCM's Music Direct website (www.rscmshop.com). The opening hymn is John Rutter's arrangement of Martin Luther's 'A mighty fortress is our God', while later hymns include an arrangement by Andrew Reid of Keith Getty and Stuart Townend's 'Holy Spirit, living breath of God'. Three musical options are offered during the Prayers of Penitence, and there are settings by Thomas Weelkes, Charles Villiers Stanford and William Mathias of the canticle *Jubilate Deo*. Well-known anthems such as John Ireland's 'Greater love' are placed alongside recent compositions, including Richard Shephard's setting of words from Colossians 3 and verses by George Wither, 'Let the word of Christ' (specially written for this festival service).

Copies of *Reform and Renewal* cost £6.50 each; RSCM affiliates are entitled to their usual discount, and in addition members may buy ten copies of any of the RSCM's festival service books at a further 10% discount.

The RSCM Head of Choral Studies, Adrian Lucas, is reported in December 2016's *Church Music Quarterly* to be initiating a series of 'Saturday Schools' this year. The aim is 'to offer advice at local venues for choir and trainer together. No choir too small!'

Events

Worshipping where people are: How do we transform lives?

Thursday 18 May 2017, 10.30am - 3.30pm

Southwark Cathedral

Praxis South

Speakers: The Rev'd Dr Steve Summers and The Rev'd John Leach
Talk titles: 'The Eucharist, a Meal with Friends' and 'Encountering God in Worship' Contact peter@furber.me.uk

Evaluating Worship

Tuesday 6 June 10am - 4.00pm

Cullompton Community Centre

Praxis Southwest

Speaker: The Rev'd Mark Earey

4 short talks on current issues in worship and liturgy

Thursday 20 June 2017, 7.30pm - 9.30pm

Church House, 5500 Daresbury Park, Daresbury, Warrington WA4 4GE

Praxis North West

This is a new-style event for us in the North West. The evening will comprise four TED style talks on a variety of topics around worship designed to encourage discussion and creativity. The talks will be filmed for uploading to the internet.

Speakers to be confirmed: please keep your eyes on the website.

Contact andy.stinson@chester.anglican.org

Bless your enemies; pray for those who persecute you: Worship to mend and reconcile.

Wednesday 1 November 2017, 10.30am - 3.30pm

St Luke's, Sydney Street, Chelsea, London SW3 6NH Praxis South

Speakers: Bishop Christopher Cocksworth and Bishop Brian Castle

Easy to say; difficult to do: a day exploring how we can help to mend damaged relationships between people and communities in our worship. Contact peter@furber.me.uk

Alcuin Club 2017 Festival: What churches are for?

Thursday 18 May 2017

St James's Church, Sussex Gardens, Paddington, W2 3UD

Following the recent publication of the Church Buildings Review and the Festival Churches proposal, the Alcuin Lecture will take a different format with a Conversation led by the Rt Rev'd Dr John Inge (Bishop of Worcester and the lead Bishop for Church-Care who wrote the introduction to the recent Buildings Review) and Professor Robin Gill (Emeritus Professor of Applied Theology at the University of Kent and author of *The Myth of the Empty Church*). The Conversation will take place at 2pm. Lunch will be available beforehand, at a cost of £10.00 payable in advance by 31 March 2017. For further details please e-mail: alcuinclub@gmail.com.

Accessible worship for those living with dementia: resources and opportunities for DLCs

Thursday 6 April 2017, 11.00am - 4.00pm

Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3AZ

Liturgical Commission event

Speaker: The Rev'd Canon James Woodward. Workshops led by Julia Burton-Jones and David Richardson

With a particular focus on enabling those living with dementia—whether as sufferers or carers—to continue to engage with the Church, we will discuss how to make the most of practical options and how to provide sensitive liturgical support.

Contact sue.moore@churchofengland.org

Hitting the Right Note

‘Hitting the ground running’ might have described the way Helen Bent opened this Praxis East event. She led the 60 participants at St Luke’s Cambridge in unaccompanied song which began the opening worship. The programme had said ‘How to lead by singing’ and her example gave great encouragement to prospective cantors.

Richard Hubbard began by presenting results of his diocese-wide survey of church music around St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, revealing the large number of small, inadequately-resourced congregations in rural parishes. His findings could equally have represented the rural parts of all our dioceses. He had brought a number of singers who helped to introduce new music resources.

When we sent round details of the day with information that there were to be two pairs of workshops running side by side several people immediately asked ‘Why can’t we go to all of them?’ So it was full marks to the priest who came with a team of eight from her parish to ensure that what was learned reached as many people as possible.

Jan Payne ran a much-appreciated workshop on new music and other resources. Rachel Blanchflower introduced ‘Singing with tiny children’ which she had recently introduced to her own parish. Several people felt it gave them the confidence to try in their own church.

In the feedback afterwards several people wished the day had been longer, and there was enthusiasm for more music days, particularly focussing on groups with limited resources. Maybe our invitation needs to say ‘Bring everyone who would like to contribute to music in church’.

✉ *Tom Ambrose is an assistant priest in the Parish of the Ascension, Cambridge.*

I wonder whether and to what extent readers of this *Column* encounter the workings of their Diocesan Advisory Committee. I write on the anniversary of having been dropped from the DAC of the great new diocese of Leeds (aka West Yorkshire and the Dales), as the interim DAC simply brought together three pre-existing ones, and the permanent arrangement obviously needed far fewer persons than our swollen membership represented. I had in fact done almost exactly ten years on the Bradford DAC, or latterly on the interim one. None of my contemporaries could ever understand how a bishop in retirement should opt to be appointed to a DAC, but in my life it made very good sense and provided very good experience.

The background was this: I had spent much of my ordained life – both as College staff and as bishop – visiting parishes where the moan went up, ‘We were proposing [this, that or the other change to the building], and the DAC visited us last week, but they didn’t seem to understand.’ To be fair, I probably did not have my ear twisted in the same way for happy parishes to tell me how helpful the DAC had been. But I retained the question: ‘Is it possible for a DAC to be helpful to parishes rather than idea-extinguishers?’ It is, of course, within the constitutional guidelines that DACs have to include someone with liturgical knowledge (though that can be perilous – the actual programme for the use of a building will vary enormously from one so-called liturgist to another). At any rate I was glad in this case to be the one. There proved to be other benefits – for a newcomer on retirement to go round the various parishes, looking at the buildings and meeting clergy and wardens, was a great way of finding a place in the diocese, and getting known to a cross-section.

The actual experience of dealing with parishes’ proposals (and occasional idiocies) also taught me of an advantage the archdeacons and I had over all the (delightful, expert and kindly) lay specialists in architecture, town planning, archaeology, organs, bells and heating systems, let alone the vigilante Victorian Society, etc. It was simply this – we also visited the various church buildings to take part in their main Sunday services and we saw the buildings in use – and in use for the very purpose they were built to serve.

This was strongly in my mind when the chancellor of Coventry diocese raised headlines last summer by ruling against a parish application for a faculty to put ‘wine-coloured upholstery’ on the chairs which

they wanted to replace the existing pews. He invoked the support of the guidelines produced by the central Churches Building Council (CBC), and a key sentence in his ruling was that an ‘overly-casual appearance can be incompatible with a house of God’. Inspection of the submission suggests that the DAC had not advised the parish very wisely, and their application had not therefore anticipated the objection properly, but in the cold light of reflection I note:

- (i) The CBC’s note said that ‘some colours have associations with other types of buildings such as offices’ – but no discussion occurred as to why the ‘wine-coloured’ (i.e. burgundy) upholstery fell into this ‘wrong associations’ category.
- (ii) The phrase an ‘overly-casual appearance’ (of neatly-laid matching cushioning) seems to me to be a highly subjective piece of imagination – and one dreads what would happen if a Chancellor had to rule upon whether a particular congregation did or did not present an ‘overly casual appearance’.
- (iii) I submit it is quite improper to call the building ‘a house of God’ – see my booklet on the Letter to the Hebrews! I think Anglican worshippers have largely rid themselves of this delusion, but it is sad to see it in the Consistory Court ruling.
- (iv) But the key thing I had learned from my own DAC days was this – the objections of the Victorian Society (yes, they were in on it) and the ruling of the Chancellor all relate to the building when empty (though, paradoxically, he had said the ‘casual appearance’ can be ‘unattractive to the newcomer’ (again a somewhat subjective leap of imagination)). But the colour of the upholstery is virtually out of sight when an actual congregation is sitting on the cushions or standing looking up. The cushions were not required for sightseers – they were sought for the congregation. But only the actual users visualize a building in use – the rest think of it as a work of art, complete in itself when standing empty.

The ruling said the ‘overly-casual appearance *can* be incompatible with a house of God’ (my *italic*). Was any attempt made to show the actual colour proposed is incompatible – and what divine colour guidance do we have for a house of God?

Anyway, gird up your worshipping experience and see whether there is not a place for you on the DAC.

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