



Praxis News of Worship

Supporting and resourcing the liturgical life of the Church of England

What is Praxis?

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

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Mixed messages from Synod

Report of the Transforming Worship debate and the way forward.

IALC 2007 — report



David Kennedy writes

The eighth International Anglican Liturgical Consultation (IALC) was held in Palermo, Sicily, from 30 July to 4 August. The theme was 'Rites Surrounding Death', the first of a possible series of Consultations on pastoral rites. The lectures gave insight into diverse cultural and anthropological issues, with contributions from Ghana, Japan, Canada, the U.S.A. and Maori traditions from Aotearoa-New Zealand. The six working groups, through discussion and initial drafting towards a statement, covered areas such as how the findings of the Consultation might be used in the Communion, the social dimension of funeral rites, the diversity and variety of rites around dying and death, the relationship of culture to liturgy, the structure of liturgical rites, and liturgy and pastoral care. A drafting group has been charged with producing a polished statement of findings in due course.

Dana Delap writes

Much of the work of the Consultation was achieved in small groups, and the telling of stories was probably the most valuable aspect of ours. There were members from Sudan and Jamaica, South Africa and Japan, USA and New Zealand. Although there were strong similarities among the liturgies of the different Anglican contexts,

the cultural diversity meant that those liturgies met some very different needs.

We agreed that much of our Christian belief was encapsulated in our prayers, but in Japan for example, where up to 15 services may be held at one time in a crematorium, there was a significant need for the liturgy to preach the Gospel with clarity in a competitive religious culture. In New Zealand Maori experience, the funeral liturgy was spread over a number of days and months, as it was incorporated into the traditional customs of the community.

Our group worked particularly on the role of the church in speaking in the name of Christ within the community of both the gathered faithful and the wider context of community. In rural Sudan it would be impossible for the two not to be combined, whereas in other nations, it was entirely possible to conduct a funeral with few if any mourners, and for a death to have almost no impact on the wider community at all.

The work of this IALC was limited by time of course, and most delegates, having been surprised by the amount we had to learn from each other, agreed that it would be good to finish this work with some more theological input and reflection. For me, the chance to spend time with new and old friends from around the Anglican communion was a treasured gift, and something on which I will draw for a long time.

David Kennedy and Dana Delap are both members of the Church of England's Liturgical Commission.

Anaphora

Ben Gordon-Taylor introduces the new journal of the Society for Liturgical Study

The Society for Liturgical Study, founded over 40 years ago has, this year, launched a journal called *Anaphora*. To be published twice a year, it seeks to offer articles of a scholarly nature on all aspects of Christian Liturgy, and will appeal to researchers, academics and students, members of denominational liturgy commissions and committees, parish clergy, indeed anyone with an informed interest in liturgical studies.

The first issue appeared in June 2007, and includes a diverse series of articles by established scholars. Martin Stringer, a Senior Lecturer at Birmingham, leads off with a piece on 'Gadamer and Hermeneutics' in relation to meaning and truth in worship. One of the great figures of English liturgical scholarship in the early twentieth century, F.E. Brightman, is

examined by Bridget Nichols, lay chaplain to the Bishop of Ely, who points to the significance of his work in the area of liturgical revision in the heady days of the 1920s. Finally Nicholas Taylor, Research Fellow at the University of Zululand, considers 'Baptism and Death: Pastoral Liturgy at the Death of an Unbaptized Person'.

A regular feature of *Anaphora* will be book reviews, and here again a diverse selection of significant recent publications is assessed, including the second volume of Bryan Spinks' pair of books on *Rituals and Theologies of Baptism*, Eamon Duffy's *Marking the Hours: English People and their Prayers 1240-1570*, and Donald Gray's two-volume study of the 1920s Prayer Book Crisis in the Alcuin/GROW Joint Liturgical Studies series.

Anaphora is a welcome addition to the relatively small number of liturgical journals available in English, and will provide a rich diet of the latest scholarship. It may be obtained either by applying to join the Society for Liturgical Study, in which case members receive copies automatically - email the membership secretary, Dr James Steven (stevenj@trinity-bris.ac.uk) or by personal subscription at £18.00 per year in the UK by contacting the subscriptions manager, the Revd Darren McFarland (rector@paisley2.freeserve.co.uk) from whom details of institutional and overseas subscriptions may also be obtained.

Ben Gordon-Taylor
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Social Implications of Liturgy

Christopher Irvine reflects on the red liturgical diamond and mutual interdependence

We have recently said farewell to the Canterbury scholars, thirty-six seminarians and recently ordained clergy from around the Anglican Communion, from Sri Lanka to Jamaica, from Canada to New Zealand, who were with us for over two weeks, living and eating together at the International Study Centre and sharing the daily round of worship in the Cathedral. No one had previously met any one else in the group, and it was quite wonderful to see how quickly this diverse group became a community. Remarking on how a group of people from so many different countries and cultures, bonded together so quickly, the Dean suggested that in part this was the effect of the red diamond. What he referred to was the red diamond indicating the line breaks in the canticles and psalmody printed in *Daily Prayer*.

For the first couple of days when this diverse group gathered for Morning Prayer, the officiant rehearsed the fact that we observed a pause at the red diamond. Afterwards the group soon caught the rhythm and pace of the psalms, and the pause enabled each of us to catch up and to keep our voices together. We were a diverse 'company of voices', in which no single voice dominated or raced ahead (a common fault with some clergy who cannot resist the urge to lead!); the recitation was at a measured pace and the diverse voices blended to produce a single voice of prayer and praise. (Cf. Romans 15.6)

All this reminds us that when we have a feel for the forms of corporate prayer, and allow their cadences to set the pace in our recitation, it will have its effect. Individual voices find themselves speaking in unison, as each person listens to the person on either side of them and blends his or her voice with theirs. No longer a disparate group of individuals, but a *social* body, breathing the one Spirit, and speaking with a unified voice sounding not just 'my' prayer, but the Church's prayer and praise. The point is often made that the model of Christian prayer, the Lord's Prayer, begins in the third person plural, not 'my God' but *Our Father*.

A deeper sense of the Church

A recently published series of essays entitled *Remembering Our Future*, arising from papers delivered to the 'Deep Church' network of those seeking to chart the way ahead following the recent decades of Charismatic renewal, appeals for the recovery of a deeper sense of the Church.

The consensus is that we now need to look beyond the highly individualised locus of renewal, and retrieve a sense of belonging not only to a global network, but a historic Church, and discern the deeper structures which can sustain and direct our lives. The authors describe how our own times have seen the commodification of worship, where different communities, whether catholic or evangelical, progressive or conservative, brand a particular style and experience of worship.

In such a religious market-place how are we able to retrieve a sense of 'public worship', worship that is both *of* the people and *for* the people, rather than offering a particular religious brand and seeking to satisfy a particular niche in the diverse religious marketplace? For this reason a clarion call is made in *Remembering our Future* for the recovery of *liturgical* worship. There are various answers from a range of differing perspectives to the question of why worship needs to be liturgical, but the one which I want to underline is the one that is described in my opening paragraph, that is, the social implications of the practice of liturgy.

Worship and our social context: they belong together

One of the most influential books in church circles in the late 1930s, 40s and 50s was called *Liturgy and Society*. How might we, in the conditions of post-modernity, correlate the worlds of worship and the social contexts in which we live? Or are they to remain separate domains, the one essentially private and the other public? We can worship in our own ways, but the liturgy insists that the two belong together as we pray with one voice, 'your kingdom come on *earth*, as it is in heaven.'

Margaret Thatcher once famously declared that there is no such thing as society. But there is nothing more inimical to living out the Gospel than the kind of individualism endorsed by such a political creed. In the 80s the ideology of the free-market took precedence over public welfare, the acquisitive individual was on the make; today the equally aggressive individuals demand their individual rights, but both attitudes are corrosive of public life. In such a political climate how can a sense of the *common good* be recovered, a sense of public life flourish? A Lutheran ethicist, Bernd Wannewetsch, has recently argued in *Political Worship: Ethics for Christian Citizens* (OUP, 2004) that a 'public' social sense can increasingly dawn upon us as

we gather to practise the repeated liturgical forms of Christian worship. The fact that liturgical life can shade out into a more conscious social and public awareness seems to be confirmed by even a cursory look at three of the basic building blocks of the liturgy.

1 Penitence

The confession of sin and the declaration of God's forgiveness in the absolution should undoubtedly bring home to us both our individual faults and failings, and our need for liberation. Yet, despite the tendency to over-individualise the sense of sin and salvation, confession is not an exercise in individual introspection. As the catalogue of sins in Galatians 5.19-21 indicates, much of what counts as sin is literally anti-social distorting our relationships and attitudes towards others. For sin is not only what we do, but also what society is, and as the absolution sets the individual free to face his or her neighbour, so we may find ourselves standing in solidarity with those countless people who need to be freed from prejudice, oppression and exploitation.

2 Intercession

In our Intercessions, we are called to pray not only for the Church but also for the world. From the earliest of times, Christian prayer of Intercession has rippled out beyond the immediate household of faith and stretched the concern of worshippers towards wider social horizons and structures. (see 1 Timothy 2.1)

3 The Peace

At the Peace, the sharing of a sign of Christ's peace is the explicit expression of our standing together in Christ, and a sign of how we are to recognise in one another the dignity of those who are being called to share the divine nature, and are drawn into community one with another.

The pioneers of the early 20th liturgical movement on the Continent and in the USA were fired by the vision of the social implications of our participation in the Eucharist, and prophetically called for the renewal of the liturgy as the basis for the regeneration of a just social order. The American Catholic monk Virgil Michel (1888-1938) saw the Eucharistic community as a model of that just social order towards which every Christian should actively strive. For in the Eucharist we become again what we are called to be, the Body of Christ; a

(Continued on page 6)



Musical News



A regular feature of articles and the latest news of music and worship

edited by Anne Harrison

Stainer & Bell's centenary

Celebrations were held in June 2007 to mark the one hundredth birthday of publishing company Stainer & Bell. An account of the company's history available online (www.stainer.co.uk) describes their involvement with a number of significant hymn writers, including Fred Pratt Green and Sydney Carter. They have also published books of songs for children, such as *Big Blue Planet* (1995), used in many schools and churches. The company's continuing interest in hymns is demonstrated by the collection of texts for particular occasions which is made available online for use by churches in the UK (accessed via the hymns section of their main website), and by their involvement with the invaluable CD-Rom database *HymnQuest* – a project of the Pratt Green Trust – as well as by more traditional publishing.

For example, a recent book of worship resources, *Eagles' Wings and Lesser Things*, includes a number of hymns. Some of this material first appeared in print in *Worship Live*, a slim A4 resource published three times a year by Stainer & Bell with an editorial team led by Janet Wootton, whose work is featured in this new collection. *Worship Live* is available by subscription and seeks to encourage those who create words and music for worship, providing a forum for the exchange of ideas and texts, prompting exploration and experiment and helping with evaluation.

Eagles' Wings and Lesser Things demonstrates its author's strong concern for justice and peace, her awareness of the global nature of the church and her debt to the non-Conformist tradition in which she was raised. One hymn – which, while interesting historically, is unlikely to be widely used – commemorates the trial and execution in 1593 of three men regarded as founding martyrs by Congregationalists: *For freedom in worship recall Henry Barrow* is set to a folk melody known to date from the late sixteenth century. Some of the hymns in the book are given new music, while existing tunes are suggested for others.

The subtitle of the collection is 'Hymns, prayers, drama and other resources for worship', and it may be of particular use to those planning services on particular themes, such as homelessness, disability, church unity, and the role of women – you will even find a hymn beginning 'In the powerful name of God, we dedicate this office space' (headed, mischievously, 'Office Hymn'). There are several short sung prayer responses, suitable for a variety of occasions. One of the musical surprises which intersperse the book is a miniature piece of music by seventeenth century composer Henry Purcell, its original text replaced with words for three characters from the parable of the Good Samaritan. Janet Wootton's academic background in classical languages is also evident in some new translations of ancient hymns (such as *Vexilla regis*) for congregational singing.

Songs from Taizé

A new collection of Taizé chants has recently become available: *Christe Lux Mundi* (published by GIA) contains 39 new songs with texts which can be sung in English.

As with previous collections, it is possible to buy a vocal edition (full music including solo verses for cantors, along with keyboard accompaniment and guitar

chords), an instrumental version (parts for assorted woodwind, string and brass instruments) and a 'People's Edition' (words and music in four-part harmony for congregations). Usefully for keyboard and guitar players who want their music to stay open on a music stand, there is a spiral-bound version of the Vocal Edition.

New music from Stephen Dean

OCP Publications, based in Portland, Oregon, has seen into print a number of volumes of music by British Roman Catholic composers linked with what is now called the 'St Thomas More Group'. These books include collections by individual musicians, such as Bernadette Farrell and Christopher Walker, as well as compilations from several members of the group. The music usually includes psalm-based pieces and liturgical settings, for various combinations of voices and instruments. While it is available in some bookshops, the simplest way to obtain this repertoire in the UK may be by mail order from Decani Music, set up by Stephen and Sue Dean and based in Suffolk (www.decanimusic.co.uk).

A collection of 16 pieces written over the last ten years by Stephen himself (who has also edited a number of valuable music resources including *Cantate, Laudate and Resurrexit*) has been published by OCP this year: *Holy Gifts* includes two settings of words from Psalm 119, each with chanted verses for a cantor and a lyrical refrain for congregation (with optional choral parts for soprano, alto and baritone). There is also a lively Gospel acclamation in triple time with three verses to choose from, two of them suitable for Advent.

Other pieces include a hymn for Night Prayer ('Now the day has drawn to ending'), two settings of verses by Brian Foley and one of a hymn by Timothy Dudley-Smith based on 1 Corinthians 13: 'Not for tongues of heaven's angels'. Written in 1984, this text has become much more widely known in the US than in Britain; in this collection the composer has used as a title the refrain which ends each verse, 'May love be ours'. A descant is provided as well as four-part harmony, and by visiting the OCP website (www.ocp.org) it is possible to download a solo instrumental part for a small charge.

A CD of *Holy Gifts* – 15 tracks recorded in the USA – is also available (OCP 20377, 2007).

Hymnody—a miscellany...

Choosing hymns

One of several substantial hymn books published since the turn of the century is the Church of Ireland's *Church Hymnal: Fifth Edition* (OUP, 2000). Bishop Edward Darling (elected this summer as the new President of the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland) put an enormous amount of work not only into the preparation of the hymnal itself, but also into both a companion volume and a resource to help those using the Revised Common Lectionary to choose appropriate hymns.

The latter is now available as a CD-Rom, produced by the Recorded Church Music Committee of the Church of Ireland, with the title *Sing to the Word*. There is considerable overlap between the RCL and the *Common Worship* lectionary, and since this electronic resource also includes a list of scripture readings and where they occur in the RCL this may be a helpful tool for anyone needing guidance in the selection of hymns.

Copies can be purchased from the Good Book Shop, Church of Ireland House, 61-67 Donegall Street, Belfast, Northern Ireland, BT1 2QH (e-mail sales@goodbookshop.com) or from the Resource Centre Bookshop, Holy Trinity Church, Church Avenue, Rathmines, Dublin 6 (e-mail info@sundayschool.ie). The price is £15 (Belfast) or €22.50 (Dublin).

Learning about hymns

The first of a new series of information booklets was launched by the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland this summer. *Finding out about Hymns* (by Bernard Massey and Gillian Warson) will be followed by *Understanding Hymns* (Edward Darling), *Understanding Hymn Tunes* (John Barnard) and *Writing a New Hymn* (Martin Leckebusch). Bernard Massey has written about books which provide resources for those interested in the origin and background of hymns, including 'hymn-book companions' as well as more general works available in libraries and/or bookshops. The second section, by Gillian Warson, gives a brief introduction to what can be found on the Internet and in other electronic resources.

Each guide costs £4 – or £3 for Members of the Hymn Society – and can be purchased (post free) from The Lydia Press, 164 Ravenscroft, Bicester, OX26 6YF. See Gillian Warson's website (www.lydiapress.co.uk) for details of buying online. The Society hopes that these publications will help in the fulfilment of its aims, which include the encouragement of 'study and research in the field of hymnody' and of 'the discerning use of hymns in worship'.

Understanding Hymns is due for publication in October 2007 and the next two booklets in January and March 2008.

Hymns on creation themes

In his column in Issue 12, Colin Buchanan wrote about the mismatch he'd observed between our contemporary environmental concerns and the hymns we traditionally sing at harvest thanksgivings. For help – at any time of year – in finding hymns which engage with our stewardship of creation, try visiting the One World Week website (www.oneworldweek.org). The title of the week this year (21-28 October 2007) is 'All Together Now'. Resources available include an extensive list of hymns and songs which engage with care for the created order.

The list consists of first lines only, leaving it to the user to search for sources. Two books which include a good number of the relevant hymns are *Church Hymnary: Fourth Edition* and *Complete Anglican Hymns Old and New*. It may also be helpful to visit the RSCM's website (www.rscm.com) and view, among the liturgy resources which can be downloaded from the *Sunday by Sunday* section, a list of hymns for harvest thanksgivings selected from over a dozen books. There are plenty of contemporary hymns which touch on environmental themes to be discovered here. And in Timothy Dudley-Smith's 2003 collection of texts *A House of Praise* is a fine hymn on the subject of caring for creation ('The God who set the stars in space') which can be sung to a number of well-known tunes.

MWF and all-age worship

Among the regional events being planned at present by the Music and Worship Foundation are a series of workshops on preparing and leading all-age worship. These will be happening on Saturdays later this year and in 2008, and will be led by Chris and John Leach; the first three are due to take place in November 2007, in Glasgow, Ipswich and Frodsham (Cheshire). The target group includes musicians but also other lay and ordained leaders of worship, plus any adults and young people who work with children in a church context.

Further information about these and other events (featuring a range of leaders including Peter Moger, Geraldine Latty, Andrew Maries and David Peacock) can be found on the MWF website (www.mwf.org).

Wild Goose for choirs

This year's 'Worship Resources' catalogue from the Iona Community's Wild Goose Resource Group lists individual items composed or arranged by John L. Bell which may be of particular interest to choral groups of various sizes. Many items also have a part for a solo instrument such as flute or cello.

Most of these anthems cost £1.20 per copy, with a discount for those buying 10 or more. The repertoire includes music for funerals (from the collection *The Last Journey*), settings of psalms, and familiar Iona Community hymns such as *Will you come and follow me?* and *A Touching Place* in choral arrangements. Also available are several pieces by Bernadette Farrell and Marty Haugen. To request a catalogue, ring 0141 332 6343 or send an e-mail to the WGRG office (wgrg@iona.org.uk).

John Bell was made a Fellow of the Hymn Society in the United States and Canada at the Society's 2007 conference, held in Ottawa in July.

Hymn Society Series

This July the Hymn Society launched a new series under the general heading of *A Hymn Society guide to...*

The second of these is about to be published, and the series may be of interest to readers:

Finding out about hymns

Bernard Massey and Gillian Warson
(already published)

Understanding Hymns

Edward Darling
(October 2007)

Understanding Hymn Tunes

John Barnard
(January 2008)

Writing a New Hymn

Martin Leckebusch
(March 2008)

They cost £15 for all four, or £4 each and can be ordered from The Lydia Press, 164 Ravenscroft, Bicester, Oxon OX2 6YF or online (www.lydiapress.co.uk).

Have you seen...?

Book reviews



The Singing Thing Too: Enabling Congregations to Sing

John L. Bell

Wild Goose Publications, Glasgow, 2007

£10.99

John Bell's sequel to *The Singing Thing* – a case for congregational song strikes a humorous note from the beginning. *The Singing Thing too* – enabling congregations to sing opens with a joke and continues with chapter titles like 'Nailbitingly important issues for loose-fitting denture wearers'. Those who know John will picture the familiar twinkle in his eye as he sets out on what he confesses to be a difficult task – how to describe the process of enabling congregational song when it defies verbalisation? Where the first volume was more an apologetic, this second is meant to be a practical 'how to' exercise. In some ways it is an expansion of those inspiring 'Ten Golden Rules' which we found at the back of the first Wild Goose Songbook. In clear and digestible sections John outlines a whole range of relevant and practical issues. For example:

The fundamental difference between facilitating music for choirs and congregations – choirs 'know they can sing', congregations 'know they can't!' The music leader must encourage and enable and come down to meet them where they are.

How do you teach songs to people in the pew? Do what they're doing. Sing to them without instruments getting their full attention and inspiring their confidence. Use a simple method of signing melodies as outlined.

Use a little practical psychology in

getting the congregation on side. Don't hand out sheets of music, use humming to cement the melody in the mind, don't teach too many things at once....

Could we get our congregation to sing in harmony? Here are some exciting ideas which will transform its musical role.

Could we identify more appropriate and creative ways of presenting hymns and songs which respect their musical integrity? Twelve different examples are given ranging from *Veni Creator* to *Shine Jesus shine*.

Examine the nature of a text to find the best way of presenting it musically. The music shouldn't fight against it.

Understand something of the cultural background of the music we use, especially from the World Church so that it expands our horizons and enables us to identify more deeply with other Christians.

I have personally found John's approach to facilitating congregational song a revelation and a thrill as I've begun to emulate him and see the results. The way it directly engages the people and creates a sense of confidence and community has got to be one really effective answer to so much of the passive disconnectedness of congregational worship we experience these days.

Andrew Maries

Consultant for Music and Worship for the Diocese of Exeter

(Continued from page 3)

social body in which we realise, again in Paul's words, that we are 'members one of another', responsible to and for each other, and find ourselves bound together in a relationship of mutual interdependence; for we being many, are one bread, one body.

So, finally, the gift of Communion becomes a task, in that what we are enabled to be in Christ is what we are to strive for in the diverse communities in which our lives are lived. As we pray in one of the Eucharistic Prayers in Order One of *Common Worship*: 'Lord of all life, help us to work together for that day when your kingdom comes and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.' (Eucharistic Prayer E.)

The Lord who took the loaf, blessed, broke and gave the bread, is the same Lord who challenged the first disciples to take responsibility for the hungry, 'You give them something to eat' he said. What we pray for and commit ourselves to in the sharing of the one bread is not some social blueprint, or a single political programme, but the recovery of a sense of the common good and the realization of the social implications of the liturgy, in what is an increasingly fragmented and highly individualised world.

Christopher Irvine is a residentiary canon of Canterbury Cathedral, and has recently edited *The Use of Symbols in Worship* (SPCK, 2007).

Introducing Times and Seasons 2: The Easter Cycle

Philip Tovey (ed), Patrick Angier, Andrew Atherstone,

Colin Buchanan

Grove Worship Series 190; 2007

£2.95 ISBN 978 1 85174 648 4

Grove Booklets are well-placed to offer short but helpful introductions to *Common Worship* services to readers across the ecclesiastical spectrum. I came to this booklet as a non-Evangelical, who makes a lot of use of the *Times and Seasons* Easter Cycle material, hoping to find a balanced perspective and fresh ideas for celebration. On the whole, I think that's what I got!

Tovey's introduction focuses attention on approaches to liturgical time, making the important point that to progress from Palm Sunday to Easter Day without celebrating any of the intervening story impoverishes our participation in the paschal mystery: 'Remembrance entails doing things that are inconvenient, because in that way we encounter the work of Christ.'

In the first chapter - Lent - Atherstone helpfully introduces the Ash Wednesday liturgy and the Way of the Cross, with useful suggestions for local presentation and use. Buchanan tackles Passiontide and Holy Week. He has interesting reservations about the order and emphases of the Chrism Service (it would be interesting to compare different diocesan practices here) and I found his brief reflections on Good Friday practice thought-provoking. For me the most stimulating and imaginative chapter was Angier's on the Easter Liturgy; his creative reflections didn't just cover the main service, but introduced me to pages of potential in *Times and Seasons* I hadn't yet discovered! (A final paragraph floats his own ideas about Easter eggs – at the altar rail? - and alleluias). In the last chapter, Tovey addresses the important new material for Ascension and Pentecost (found to be spiritually very helpful in my own churches); I would like him to have expanded a little more on how we might use 'prayer for personal renewal' at Pentecost – as he says, this has a different feel from the healing and reconciliation prayers usually offered at the altar rail.

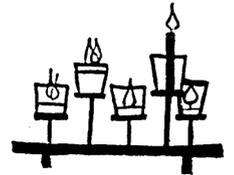
A good read! My creativity has been stimulated.

R Anne Horton Rector, Woodhouse, Woodhouse Eaves, and Swithland, Leicestershire.



Resources for Advent

Anne Horton reviews a seasonal selection



Introducing Times and Seasons, 1: The Christmas Cycle

M Earey, T. Lloyd, P. Moger, T. Stratford
Grove Worship Series W189, October 2006
ISBN 1 85174 636 6; £2.95

Introducing *Times and Seasons: the Christmas Cycle* provides a short commentary on the *Times and Seasons* resources for the period in the church's year from All Saints to Candlemas.

For me, it was the reflective rather than the descriptive passages in the booklet that were the more stimulating. The introduction attempts to convince readers of the

'excitement of the interplay between liturgical time and our own time'. In other chapters there are interesting reflections on some important kingdom and Advent themes, morality, justice, judgement and death, as well as challenges to some of the commercial and child-centred distortions that can be presented as Christmas.

I also appreciated discussion about the symbolism of the crib, the covenant prayer and the 'mission-shaped sandwich' that is the season of Epiphany. Read the *Times and Seasons* texts for yourself first, and then turn to the Grove booklets for some challenging thinking to run alongside your own about bringing the texts to life.

Together for a Season: all-age seasonal resources for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany

G Ambrose, P Craig-Wild, D Craven, M Hawes
Church House Publishing 2006
ISBN 10 0 7151 4062 0; £22.50

I turned to *Together for a Season* with a real sense of expectation and was not disappointed. This is a quite different resource to the Grove booklet, and focuses more on the lighter rather than the darker symbolism of the Christmas cycle.

There are some good 'stand alone' liturgies for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany, but the main development of the book relates

to the three symbols of wreath, crib and Jesse tree, offering the opportunity, in church, in groups and at home, to 'follow a particular symbolic pathway through the three seasons.' For me, a big challenge of this huge wealth of resources is 'how can I make these work for us given that we already have well established and popular patterns of Christmas worship?' Despite such challenges, it is worth persisting with

this book – the answers may be surprising: –make the Jesse tree a feature of your church website; turn the side chapel into a stable; use the wreath as a focus for four bible study sessions. There are so many good ideas within these pages that readers will need to start planning very early if they are going to make best use of them!

Candles and Conifers: Resources for All Saints' and Advent,

Ruth Burgess
Wild Goose Publications 2005
ISBN 1 901557 96 0; £14.99

Hay and Stardust: Resources for Christmas to Candlemas,

Ruth Burgess
Wild Goose Publications 2005
ISBN 1 905010 001; £14.99

And now for something completely different! *Candles and Conifers* and *Hay and Stardust* are two books from the Iona Community packed full of prayers, readings, biblical reflections, liturgy, responses, songs, stories, sermons and drama for All Saints and Advent, and Christmas to Candlemas. Ruth Burgess, who has assembled both collections, says that 'most of the material in (these books) consists of the stuff that liturgies are made of.'

As a good Anglican, my liturgical obligation for congregational worship has to be found within the authorised and commended texts of *Common Worship*, but that doesn't stop

me rejoicing in the richness and inspiration of these wonderful texts. Enjoy them in the context of personal devotion, sermon preparation, school and college assemblies and ecumenical worship, as well as in study and worship groups. And of course there are all those wonderful Church of England liturgical moments known as 'these or other words'! As well as all the occasions for which we don't have authorised liturgical prayers. There are words for Advent, Christmas and Epiphany, as well as material for World Aids Day, 'the longest night', New Year, Christian Unity and Homelessness Sunday.

I find in these books words that open new and surprising doorways into heaven – through, for example, a cat's Advent calendar, an Advent candle song set to 'Frère Jacques', a story from a nursing home, a prayer for sealing a coffin and a 'chopped fruit and sticky fingers' prayer. 'Help us to pass on, through chopped fruit and sticky fingers, the story of your love and sweetness in the living of our lives. Amen.'

R Anne Horton is the Rector of Woodhouse, Woodhouse Eaves and Swithland, Leicestershire



Colin's Column

Not the first word, but the last -
Colin Buchanan writes...

Over the last thirty years I have become accustomed to recommending, and sometimes personally offering, the submersion of at least some persons wishing to renew their baptismal vows meets a particular category of what is really pastoral need. There are always adult converts who, having been baptized as infants, but only having come a live relationship with Jesus Christ years later, may have grave doubts about the standing of their infant baptism, and are asking for 'real' baptism.

Anglicans have to strive to convince such people that their baptism in infancy (even if with ungodly parents) was baptism, and so they cannot now seek baptism. However, just as we enable them to make their own profession of faith at a later stage, so, I have always argued, we give them a non-baptismal dunking experience at a later age. I have written up these various stages in the argument in my Grove Worship Booklets: no.20, *A Case for Infant Baptism*, no.61, *One Baptism Once*, and no.124, *The Renewal of Baptismal Vows*. Over the years the C/E's management has hesitated, but with episcopal encouragement I have administered such submersions in five dioceses, often in conjunction with actual baptisms and confirmation.

However, we have a grudging half-way provision in the 'Affirmation of Baptismal Faith' on pages 197-210 of the 2006 *Common Worship: Christian Initiation*. Here (see page 203) the candidates may 'sign themselves with water' or 'the president may sprinkle them'. A senior authority wrote to me in 2006 to point out that the coaching notes (page 350) say this is a response 'to requests for more vivid recognition of post-baptismal experiences...' So what do we get? 'If candidates use significant amounts of water with which to sign themselves (or even dip themselves)...' So candidates can bump up *their* self-signing to submersion. But can presidents bump up their 'sprinkling'? Not a sniff given. If we followed the rite, and wanted submersion, the president must look the other way, while the candidates (all at once, or in an unguided sequence?) submerge themselves. What is the limit of water a president may apply under this coaching? Indeed, do we need a president at all?

I see a way through. Although the 'Affirmation' rite is apparently 'prescribed' and is a legal 'alternative service' under Canon B.2, no rite is entitled 'Individual renewal of baptismal vows'. With no service with *this* title in the BCP, and none prescribed under B.2, then the officiating minister has liberty under B.5 to provide a service at his or her own discretion. Submersions of the sort I describe (and practice) do need distinctive actual liturgical text, including a formula at dunking. It is there in my booklet, and I will cheerfully add further coaching for any who get in touch.

The Rt Revd Colin Buchanan is the former Bishop of Woolwich, and former editor of *News of Liturgy*.

Notice board



Midlands Praxis Website

Midlands *Praxis* has launched a new website recently and encourages all readers in the Midlands area to take a look (www.midlands-praxis.org.uk).

Two extra publications from GROW

September sees two publications over and above the normal Worship series of Booklets from GROW. Both are group productions, in the sense that ten or more members have been involved in the drafting.

First is Mark Earey, Trevor Lloyd, Ian Tarrant (eds), *Connecting with Baptism: A practical guide to Christian initiation today* (xii/224 pp. large paperback, CHP, £14.99). This gives the most practical guidance imaginable in every area of parish baptismal (and confirmation) practice, very much in the style of Grove Booklets, but with an extra eye to clarity and pastoral effectiveness at each point, and including the text of the Canons.

Second is the long-awaited updated *Common Worship Today*. Much further *Common Worship* provision has been added since the first edition of this came out in 2001. It is now brought up to date in a slightly less luxurious format (hence being cheaper – it is £14.50), but re-touched to provide a set book for the St John's College, Nottingham, Extension Studies module on Common Worship, and it is published by St John's College. Members of GROW can provide copies postfree. This is called a 'student edition'.

DLC reps day in London

This year's day conference for Diocesan Liturgical Committees will be on Monday 29 October from 10.30 to 4.00 at the Wren Suite, The Crypt, St Paul's Cathedral.

In addition to the usual input (Liturgical Commission, *Praxis*, Church House Publishing, RSCM) the programme will be focussing on issues of Sacred Space. The Deans of St Paul's and Canterbury will be there, as well as staff members of the Council for the Care of Churches. (DLC members who are also involved in work for their Diocesan Advisory Committee, are particularly encouraged to attend.)

DLC members should contact their DLC Chair or Secretary for more details and bookings.

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