



exploring worship today

Supporting and resourcing the liturgical life of the Church of England

Praxis News

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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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Alternative Collects get the green light from General Synod

It makes a liturgist's heart sing – General Synod liked the new set of draft Alternative Collects!

General Synod asked in 2001 for a set of short, clear, memorable collects in a 'worthy contemporary idiom'. Revd Dr Paul Roberts, chair of the Collects Group and now of the Steering Committee, introduced the debate, with arguments mustered ready for the opposition that never came. According to one speaker, they 'meet the aims, are nicely shaped and provoke reflection'. Mild concerns were raised that the Collects told God what God already knew, apparent in one third of the prayers; that some of the imagery was too complex for children (although whether or not that complexity was good or bad was a source of some debate); and that creation/environmental issues did not receive much attention. There was a suggestion that we might indicate seasonal 'signal prayers' which would bear more frequent use, thereby becoming known.

The draft Additional Collects can be found at

www.cofe.anglican.org/synod/collecttexts.

Other General Synod News

The Preliminary Edition of Daily Prayer, published in Epiphany 2002, was also received with pleasure by General Synod. One speaker had noticed someone at the front of their bus using it that morning, and it was commended for its flexibility and appropriateness. Bishop David Stanciffe, when summarising the debate, said he was delighted by the extensive use of Daily Prayer as a tool for aligning oneself with Christ. Reflections and comments about the Preliminary Edition of Daily Prayer are welcome, as soon as possible please, to the Secretary of the Liturgical Commission, Colin Podmore, at Church House.

Series One Marriage and Funerals remain 'legal tender' for the foreseeable future – until further resolution of Synod.

This report is by Dana Delap. To find out more about the alternative collects, turn to Paul Roberts' article on page 2.

Merger of two key liturgical journals later this year

Praxis News and *News of Liturgy* announce their engagement this Spring, and will be married at the end of the year with a new title.

After almost 350 issues, the inimitable editor of *News of Liturgy* (NOL), Bishop Colin Buchanan, will be putting his blue pencil to rest. Much of the monthly news-sheet has depended on his idiosyncratic editorial style and nobody, it transpires, has considered themselves eligible to step into his shoes to take NOL forward as an independent journal.

Praxis News will take on the NOL mantle—at least by wearing it over one shoulder. The new name indicates that the publication will be wearing a new outfit. However, accessibility to worship leaders and worshippers alike remains

a key feature of the new journal, bringing up to date news of liturgical ideas and developments and giving practical hints and tips to enhance our worship.

The new journal will be published quarterly and also aims to expand in size in due course. Each issue will include a new 'Music and Worship' feature, edited by Anne Harrison, with more book reviews, reports, comment, correspondence, reports from the Liturgical Commission and Diocesan Liturgical Committees and an element of theological reflection on liturgical issues.

The question of subscription bases and the overlap will be tackled over the coming months. Gilly Myers will be the first editor of the new publication.

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What lies behind the Alternative Collects?

An inside view, by the Chair of the Collects Sub-Group, Paul Roberts

After the General Synod had passed a motion calling for 'additional collects for each Sunday and feast day in the liturgical year in a worthy contemporary idiom' the Liturgical Commission realised it had its work cut out. Legal advice following the debate made it clear that any such collects would have to go through the '22 stages' of the authorisation, yet it was clear, to anyone with their ears to the ground, as well as from the debate, that the call for collects was an urgent one. The Commission realised that if there were to be a chance of getting additional collects by 2005, then a draft would need to be before the Synod by February 2002. The official request to do the draft came in November 2001, but before that time we had already put out a consultation questionnaire to DLCs, who in turn were asked to consult as widely as possible within their dioceses. The responses confirmed what everyone had known – that there was widespread dissatisfaction with the *Common Worship* collects - but it also helped clarify the reasons behind this. The most common criticisms were:

- Their syntax is too complicated and archaic.
- They are too long.
- They are bland in the themes, imagery and choice of language which they use ('they end up saying very little, and take a long time to say it, in an unnecessarily complicated way').
- The closing doxology adds to their complexity and length.
- Their language is frequently inaccessible for certain contexts; for example, where children are present in significant numbers, in 'non-book' contexts, and among missionary congregations where there is no background experience of the language of *The Book of Common Prayer*.

So to respond to this, we needed a set of collects which fulfilled the criteria of being:

- 1) Short;
- 2) simple in their syntax;
- 3) vivid and interesting in their themes and imagery;
- 4) accessible in the kind of language they use;
- 5) end up by saying something which is clear and distinct.

In addition, the drafting group were also limited by another constraint. We couldn't use any of the existing contempo-

rary Anglican collects based on a Cranmerian original, as most of these had already found their way into the *Common Worship* collection. In the end it was clear that we'd have to compose our collection largely from scratch. The result – the draft which is before the February Synod – is mostly new composition. The new collects are a lot shorter in length, and we hope do not sacrifice beauty or theological depth for simplicity. Here are three examples:

Lent 1

Heavenly Father
your Son battled with the powers of darkness,
and grew closer to you in the desert:
help us to use these days
to grow in wisdom and prayer
that we may witness to your saving love,
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Easter Day

God of glory
by the raising of your Son
you have broken the chains of death and hell:
fill your Church with faith and hope;
for a new day has dawned
creation is restored
and the way to life stands open
in our saviour Jesus Christ.

Trinity 7

Generous God,
you give us gifts and make them grow:
though our faith is small as mustard-seed
make it grow to your glory
and the flourishing of your kingdom
through Jesus Christ our Lord

...and there are plenty more where those came from! The next stage is when these pass to the Revision Committee, who will report back to the General Synod in July. There is a hope that the final text will be fully authorised by the end of 2004.

Brother Tristram SSF

Many readers of *Praxis News* will already have heard of Brother Tristram's death after a prolonged illness in the autumn of 2002.

Some will have encountered him at *Praxis Days* on the Daily Office and many more will have made use of 'Exciting Holiness', his compilation of the *Common Worship* material for Saints' Festivals and Commemorations with brief and practical biographical information for each occasion. Those who used the Franciscan 'Celebrating

Common Prayer' will have noted (from the acknowledgements at the end) that he was the Co-ordinating Editor of that work for the Franciscans, drawing on the advice and ideas of a group of people mostly identified with membership of the Liturgical Commission in the late 80s and early 90s.

His influence and input into emerging patterns of Daily Prayer in the Church of England were notable and he will be greatly missed. Appointed as Consultant to the Liturgical Commission in 1990, and a full member from 1995, he brought distinctive insights from the

ethos of religious communities to the Commission's discussions and friendship and support to its members, not least its Secretary. Service to his Order and the wider Church extended well beyond liturgical matters but all was grounded in an unshakable and infectious conviction that regular and ordered prayer is the engine which drives all Christian endeavour. *Praxis* joins in the tributes to his memory.

David Hebblethwaite, OBE

Have you seen...?

Book reviews



New Patterns for Worship

Church House Publishing, 2002. £22.50

Last November the long awaited successor to the Church of England's popular liturgical source book, '*Patterns for Worship*', was published. Much more innovation and imagination is to be found inside than the plain cover simply bearing the title, '*New Patterns for Worship*', would suggest.

There are three strands to the contents of *New Patterns*:

1. Coaching notes, including notes and introductions for each of the main sections in the book. These are not primarily intended as top-down instructions but as hints and training tools for a wide range of worship leaders;
2. Resources providing authorized and approved liturgical source material divided into ten sections according to genre e.g. Penitence, or Prayers. This approach will appeal most when the controlling factor for a service is its structure, but there is help for those who want to tap into the resources along seasonal or thematic lines;
3. Twenty-one Sample Services divided into four sections (Standard Non-Eucharistic Services, Communion Services, Seasonal Services of the Word, Special Days and Occasions).

The most obvious of the new features in *New Patterns* is the attention it gives to planning worship. An Introduction and Commentary have been printed right at the front of the book (not tucked away at the back).

There are also new pages with advice and notes at the beginning of each of the major sections containing the book's liturgical resources. So, for instance, in the section that includes 46 new Lectionary modules there is also clear advice as to how and when these (and any other patterns of readings designed locally) can be used legally (p.104). Whilst users of the book might dive straight into the 'Resources' and decide to overlook the new introductions and notes, it is here that some of the more adventurous possibilities are described. For instance, the notes to the 'Praise & Thanksgiving' section say:

Thanksgivings .. may also be used as a proper preface in the Eucharistic Prayer. (p.222)

This increases the Eucharistic provision of Common Worship considerably. Seventy-six 'Thanksgivings' are included in *New Patterns*. But there is more! These notes go on to include advice on writing your own Eucharistic Preface (also p.222).

It is probably easiest to see in the sample services some of the liturgical and missiological principles that underlie *New Patterns*. It begins with the assumption that the 'best' sort of worship is sensitive to the context in which it takes place and for which it is designed. Context is understood as always particular. So, no two gatherings are the same. There may be strong common strands but the church is seen as at its strongest when it can truly relate to the here and now in each locality. The context for any given service of worship will be affected by things such as: purpose; age range of worshippers; geographic and cultural factors; the season or moment, whether disaster or celebration; the worship place, whether High Street, school hall or church building. And it is among the Sample Services that some of the strategies for handling this are best seen.

Whilst this is a book that doesn't quite look the same as the other *Common Worship* publications it shouldn't be dismissed as being an aside. It is the most complete and authoritative source for much of the CW authorized and approved material. It also provides a definitive guide to liturgical good practice and the law in a way that encourages spiritual growth and mission. For some this will be an essential source book for regular Sunday worship. For many more it will be the first place to look when particular pastoral opportunities or crises present themselves, whatever day of the week they fall.

Tim Stratford

Tim Stratford is the author of *Using Common Worship: A Service of the Word*

From Shore to Shore

Liturgies from around the world
SPCK/USPG, 2003. £5.99

This excellent little book of services, litanies and prayers gathered from churches

all around the world is a gem. Not only does it shed insight into some cleverly contextualised worship, there is plenty of refreshing material in here to be used by worshippers in these Isles, too. Ed

Worship in the Spirit: Charismatic Worship in the Church of England.

James H S Steven. Paternoster
Press, 2002.

There are very few rigorous studies of the phenomenology, liturgical form and theology of charismatic worship. James Steven, Tutor in Liturgy and Doctrine at Trinity Bristol has set out into these relatively uncharted waters and looks at charismatic Anglican worship with a liturgist's eye, a sociologist's tools and a theologian's sharpness, all from a position of critical friendship. The result repays careful reading.

This is a lightly reworked PhD thesis and this causes some weaknesses. After a magisterial overview of the development of charismatic worship, Steven focuses on six case study churches. Chapters are taken up with the detail of the observation techniques employed, and there is quite a lot of reportage. The visits were also made in 1993 and 1994, and many would argue that charismatic worship has changed again in the decade that has followed.

However, I was intrigued to see how six churches could provide such a variety of material. The theological reflection on the inadequacy of the Trinitarian theology of the worship he observed is all the more devastating coming from a professed charismatic. And I will remain thankful for a distinction Steven draws between the language of a 'time' of worship and an 'act' of worship. Not all charismatic worship is happy to be put even into the most liberated of liturgical frameworks.

No one interested in the phenomenology and theology of charismatic worship should ignore this book. It will not change your life, nor tell you how to worship better, but it throws existing charismatic worship into sharp relief. Steven's next book should be fascinating, especially if he puts down the analysts tools and starts giving some prescriptions for better worshipping health.

Jeremy Fletcher

The Common Worship Psalter ...with chants

RSCM Press 2001,2002. £11.95

The RSCM pointed version of the Psalter and Canticles (on the web for some time) is now out in hardback with a full set of chants, selected for their suitability for congregational singing.

...and without £8.95

for those who want to sing along with the aid of pointing but don't need the music, there is a corresponding hardback version without the chants, too. The books are well presented, easy to handle and in Common Worship format.

The Society for Liturgical Study

Think that liturgical scholars are of no practical use to anyone?

Read Chris Irvine's report and consider again ...



The Society for Liturgical Study travelled north and held its biennial Conference at the College of the Resurrection, Mirfield, from the 27 to the 29 August last year. It seemed appropriate that a gathering of liturgical scholars should meet in a place whose very life revolves around the liturgy.

Dry and dull?

The major aim of the Society is to encourage and support those who are engaged in liturgical scholarship, teaching, research and writing. But there is nothing dry or dull about its membership or its proceedings. Indeed, the Conference is a convivial gathering, and this year there was a real sense of a community of scholars, and the good humour evenly matched the carefully crafted and serious discussion.

One important feature of the Society is its ecumenical character, and a broad range of churches and Christian traditions were represented in this gathering of nearly forty members. Membership extends throughout the UK and the wide geographical spread is matched by the range of interests which are brought to the Conference.

More than words

This year our theme was 'The Place of Worship' and three major papers focussed on the setting and celebration of worship. Again, we were reminded that liturgy is more than texts, and at a time in which the liturgical revision and the writing of new and authorisation of new forms of service has been prolific, it was good to be reminded of the importance that liturgy consists in more than words. But words do matter and in our final Paper, Dr. Antony Gelston aptly steered us through the options and alternatives offered in the proposed Daily Prayer provision for *Common Worship*. Again, it was good to

hear the responses of our ecumenical partners, and all felt that Dr. Gelston had provided an important and detailed critique.

Being formed

I had the unenviable task of presenting the first paper immediately after people had arrived, travel worn and feeling a little disorientated. I attempted to sketch out a theology of worship which focussed on worship as the context in which Christians are 'formed in the likeness of Christ' by the work of the Holy Spirit. I attempted to counter a worryingly prevalent view of worship as something we construct, and which is measured and accounted for in terms of our own (subjective) worshipping experience. And so, I tried to emphasise the Godward side of worship, the occasion when we open ourselves to the presence and work of God and are shaped in the likeness of Christ.

A widening perspective

Graham Woolfenden in the second paper reminded us of the importance of the eloquent 'body language' of worship, and gave a masterly account of postures of prayer and embodied rituals in the Church's ceremonial. Robin Gibbons gave a very engaging paper which helped us all to see the importance of space, especially the space in which we worship. Shorter papers widened our perspective, with Stefan Scott illustrating how apparently moribund forms of worship can be resource the Church and provide engaging and imaginative acts of worship. Adrian Burdon demonstrated how worship was integral to the *missio dei*, of God's reaching out to the world. As a good Methodist, Adrian reminded us that the Eucharist was a 'converting ordinance' which neatly brought us back to the topic of formation. The Conference was a happy and stimulating gathering.

Two new Liturgy Guides from the Alcuin Club: *Art and worship* by Anne Dawtry and Christopher Irvine and *Memorial Services* by Donald Gray. Both are published by SPCK, 2002.

Notice board



The International Anglican Liturgical Consultation (IALC)

meets this year from 4-9th August at Ripon College, Cuddeston. The subject under discussion is 'Liturgical Education and Formation'. Since the Liturgical Commission sees this as one of its principal tasks, we look forward to sharing the wisdom and experience of Churches from around the world.

Apologies...

...from the *Praxis* Council for the mammoth muddle with the last mailing. We thought that we had sorted out the database, but clearly we had not. An expert has been employed to find the gremlins and we now hope to provide a glitch-free service.

Seasonal Common Worship

People frequently ask if *Lent-Holy Week-Easter* and *Promise of his Glory* are going to come out in a Common Worship form. The answer is that the Liturgical Commission is working on a compilation of seasonal material for the Church's year, popularly known as *Times and Seasons*. However, although much work has already been done, we are not likely to see this publication before 2005. So hang on to those old books!

The Michael Vasey Memorial

Lecture this year will be given by Bridget Nichol with the title 'Heaven our Homeland'. It's at 7.30 pm at St John's College, Durham on Wednesday 7 May 2003. All are welcome.

The most recent booklet in the Grove Worship Series is No. 174: *Common Worship in Church Schools* by Ian Dewar. It is available from Grove Books at www.grovebooks.co.uk or telephone 01223 464748.

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