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# AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF LITURGY

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# AUSTRALIAN JOURNAL OF LITURGY

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*AJL* is the journal of the Australian Academy of Liturgy and exists to further the study of liturgy at a scholarly level and to comment on and provide information concerning liturgical matters with special reference to Australia. *AJL* is published each May and October.

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## EDITORIAL

A range of topics is addressed in this issue of *AJL*. Dr Sherlock widens the discussion of liturgical language by an examination of military terminology and figures in liturgy. Dr Roberts addresses the three-year lectionary now so widely used in celebrations of the eucharist. Dr Harrison draws our attention to the ancient hymn *Te Deum laudamus*.

I have vivid memories of singing the *Te Deum*. For many years, until the advent of the Uniting Church in 1977, a congregation of some 1,500 gathered in the Lyceum Theatre in Sydney for the opening of the Annual Methodist Conference. On each occasion the *Te Deum* was sung to a setting by Jackson with a fervour typical of the Methodists. More recently, I shared on eight occasions in the end-of-year eucharist at St Barnabas' College in Adelaide. After the eucharist there was a Solemn *Te Deum*, sung to Anglican chant, with copes and banners and clouds of incense. I hope many will heed Dr Harrison's exhortation and use the *Te Deum* as a fitting way of rendering praise to God.

In this issue we conclude the series of articles on Worship in Australian Churches in 1900 (see *AJL* 1/4) with Mr McInnes' contribution on the Presbyterians. When someone else who had agreed to write on the Presbyterians failed to deliver, Mr McInnes stepped into the breach. For this we thank him.

A new feature in this issue appears under the heading 'Communications'. Without any collaboration three people have written letters to the editor for publication. We welcome this form of dialogue and invite further communications - whether in response to an article or review in *AJL* or on other matters. Please keep such letters relatively brief and there is more chance of their being included.

There is no Conference report in this issue - because there has been no Conference (and therefore no Annual General Meeting). The officers of the Academy remain unchanged for the time being and the only change in *AJL* addresses comes about because I have moved. Please note my new address which appears inside the back cover.

Beaumaris Vicarage  
St Francis' Day 1989

R.W.H.

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# FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT

Military Imagery in Public Liturgy

*Charles Sherlock*

How do you respond when asked to sing the following? (The tune is in rousing march time, with strong emphasis on 'arise!')

We live, we live, his breath is in us,

Arise, a mighty army, we arise!

It makes a neat switch from Ezekiel's vision to the congregation as an army. This 'army' is then invited to 'march upon the land' in a contemporary version of Joshua's conquests. Whatever you think or feel about such imagery, this hymn is not the first to employ it. Military language has been used in liturgy for a very long time. Miriam led Israel in singing to celebrate the Lord's victory over Egypt.

Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously!

Horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.

(Exodus 15:21, expanded in 1a-18).<sup>1</sup>

Such imagery expresses vividly the sense of deliverance which undergirded Israel's faith. The sense of freedom which this text proclaims permeates many biblical texts. Christians of every variety delight to celebrate the power of God, particularly in lifting up the downcast and rescuing those oppressed by sin, guilt or injustice. Military imagery is thus prevalent in baptismal rites, and prayers generally. In hymns especially, it is extensively employed to capture and express this celebration.

One might think that the peace movement would lead to a decline in such usage. It is, however, of growing importance, especially among revivalist and youth groups. It can be seen in the many choruses which sing of fighting the devil and evil. As exorcism has come back into fashion, so has language which speaks of 'spiritual warfare'.<sup>2</sup> Language for evangelism still includes terms such as 'soul-winning', 'crusades', and 'prayer warriors'. At the other end of the theological spectrum, liberation theologians (including many feminists) use the terms of revolutionary conflict: 'struggle', 'overcoming' for example. How should we regard this?

A growing number of Christians are cautious about the use of military imagery to express God's power in public liturgy.<sup>3</sup> The prospect of nuclear war, with the consequent impossibility of excluding non-combatants from the direct effects of war, has served to heighten sensitivity to such usage. The transfer of emotions from celebrating divine victory to feelings of pride at national might all too easily serves war-making ends. Brian Wren points out that the earliest Christians were a persecuted minority, and also pacifists.

For them to use battle imagery carried many less perils than it does for us. He asks,

Can we draw on the experience of World War Two, Korea, Vietnam, Iran's human waves, or the IRA's urban slayings, to describe the Christian life? And if so, how?<sup>4</sup>

Many have become sensitised to the power of language to shape and change our worlds through the debate over 'inclusive' language.<sup>5</sup> They would argue that there is considerable latent violence behind patriarchy, and that the use of military metaphors fosters this. Some contend that the use of any 'domination' language furthers the legitimisation of violence in domestic and social life.<sup>6</sup> Military imagery is clearly a case in point. What then do we make of it today?

This paper seeks to explore the use today of military imagery in public, corporate liturgy. It is not concerned directly with how individuals may use the imagery in private, nor with the rights and wrongs of the imagery per se. These uses cannot be cut off from the larger one, however. Before turning to the topic itself, therefore, some more general issues concerning language in spiritual life need to be clarified. After this, the biblical material is considered, leading to the tentative formulation of principles for the use of military imagery in liturgy. Finally, some actual examples are taken up. Since my ministry is in an Australian urban setting, the examples are drawn from there.

### **The Liturgical Context of Imagery**

It is an instructive exercise to tabulate the metaphors used by people in liturgy, especially in a setting where spiritual instruction is being given. All too often phrases such as 'overcome', 'put down', 'pin to the wall', 'power', 'go for the jugular' occur. These indicate a rather fierce adoption of the 'militaristic mind'. Metaphors, especially those used off the cuff, tell us a lot about one's psyche and attitudes.

A related perspective derives from sociology. Words which are unexceptional in themselves can function in a way which is in tension with their surface meaning. There is thus a 'dissonance' between their 'primary' and 'secondary' reference. Language can thus be 'socially dysfunctional'. The actual influence it has can conflict with its originally intended use.

Words in public liturgy (and life) are more than mere statements. Words in public liturgy express commitments, evoke emotions, and enact things: e.g. blessings, greetings, dismissals.<sup>7</sup> Powerful imagery builds further on this, giving voice to, and shaping, subconscious attitudes. Thus the image of 'shepherd', while having little relation to the everyday life of most moderns, is widely used of God, especially at funerals (via Psalm 23). More

controversial perhaps is the continued predominance of 'king' and 'lord' imagery, in both 'traditional' and 'revivalist' circles. In few Western societies today does either image occur, and where they do may carry negative connotations outside the churches. What sort of impact is made on one's social perspective when such imagery is used for what is central to Christian identity, Jesus?

This issue can be focussed another way by distinguishing two levels of theological reflection going on in liturgy. What has been called the 'primary' level happens in one's unconscious self, the 'godly ruts' formed through years of experience. This inchoate level includes emotional responses, the aesthetic senses, and subconscious taboos. It will contain elements of both light and darkness, ignorance and purity. It will probably include elements of deep commitment and love of God, some personal theological hobby-horses, bits of folk-religion, and semi-superstitious notions. It is at this level that most of us operate, unless we are jarred by something extraneous - which is generally necessary!

What may be termed the 'secondary' level is conscious reflection upon our experience in liturgy. This level involves the rational processes of reflection upon faith. Again, this will have both helpful and difficult sides. I am not trying to say one level is 'better' than another. Such reflection is necessary, lest we slip into mere formalism or superstition. Yet if all we do liturgically is at the 'secondary' level, then we may only be active as merely rational beings (or think we are). Ideally the processes of 'primary' theologising will be informed and corrected by 'secondary', and the latter will not consist of dry argumentation so much as concern for truth. The significance of this distinction will become apparent as we proceed.

In considering military imagery, this difference is often marked. Take for example the following well-known hymn:

Onward Christians soldiers, marching as to war,  
With the Cross of Jesus going on before.

The imagery here is not unscriptural (see below). It does not speak of Christians 'marching to war', but 'marching *as* to war'. It portrays the Cross, the ultimate Christian symbol of suffering love, as their banner. At the 'secondary' level, then, the words do not of themselves encourage military activity. They serve as a vehicle to express and encourage disciplined devotion. Yet the Cross 'going on before' could, for some people, pick up the Crusaders' custom of placing it upon their banners. And at the 'primary' level the imagery can evoke something quite different. The hymn has functioned to inspire congregations to give moral and spiritual support to war. More commonly, it functions to forward a triumphalist 'go get them' attitude to mission. This analysis may not be true for many, of course. But it serves as an illustration of the problems.<sup>8</sup>



The wider issue of meaning and context is also relevant. 'O God, our help in ages past' is a fine metrical version of Psalm 100. The allusions to military imagery are few, and passive at that ('guard', 'defence'). It is not a hymn one would think of as employing battle-imagery at all. Nevertheless, it has become identified with British nationalism. It can function to inspire racist attitudes when sung by Anglo-Saxons defensive about West Indians or Pakistanis or Greeks or Italians in 'their' suburb. The 'our help' takes on connotations of divine support for a particular racial group, rather than the people of God of all races and nationalities.

Likewise, the wonderful Advent hymn 'Mine eyes have seen the glory', has come to function as lending (civil) religious support for mindless American nationalism. The *tune* is called 'The Battle Hymn of the Republic'. Yet it should be noted that the reference here is to a very different 'battle' and 'republic' than what is commonly understood. Its origin lies in the slavery struggle. Even 'Abide with me', a hymn with no military imagery at all, has come to be associated with soccer violence. Hence the issue is a wider one than battle metaphors. It touches on the wider question of social reference. Today we are growing more and more aware that hymns which use gender-exclusive language can function to discriminate against some Christians. Thus liturgy can be used, deliberately or otherwise, to reinforce social, national or other corporate attitudes in ways which contradict the declared purposes of God. So caution must be exercised in using *any* imagery. Yet imagery which is easily adaptable to misuse or misunderstanding needs particular care. Such is clearly the case with military imagery today. We face the prospect of nuclear devastation. The technology of war has left little room for individual heroism, the area traditionally claimed as one of the positive aspects of war. The growing violence of our society lends further reason for caution about imagery which might encourage thoughtless use of force. What guidelines can be offered in this situation? The first step is to re-examine the use of military imagery in Scripture. I will argue that there is considerable subtlety in the use of such imagery in the Bible, from which tentative principles emerge.

### **Military Imagery in Scripture**

I have already noted the prominence of military imagery in Israel's liturgy, beginning at the Exodus. It continues in their victory songs, Judges 5 for example, and in many psalms. The imagery of war was then carried from the battle-field to the Tabernacle and Temple via the Ark. This latter was the symbol of God's presence in both guidance and war.

Whenever the ark set out, Moses said

'Arise, O Lord, let your enemies be scattered.

Let those who hate you flee before you!' (Numbers 10:35)

This shout, a fragment of early poetry, is taken up into Israel's cult, as seen in Psalm 68.<sup>9</sup> It is indicative of the manner in which war-traditions were taken up into the cult. The celebration of the victories of the Lord take a central place in the life of the Temple (see Psalms 93 and 98 for example).

These songs do not encourage war-making, however. Rather, they function primarily to encourage the Israelites to trust in the Lord for their deliverance. This was the key factor in the Exodus. Moses is recorded as commanding Israel, 'fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord ... the Lord will fight for you, and you only have to be still' (Exodus 14:13-14). Even in the conquest narratives, such as Joshua 6, it is this element of trust in the 'mighty arm' of the Lord which predominates. Such an emphasis continues in the monarchy period. 'Horses and chariots' become the symbol of not trusting the Lord in matters of foreign policy (cf Deut 17:16-17, 2 Sam 8:4, 1 Kings 4:16-28). Military victories there certainly were. Yet they are not seen as human achievements, lest faith be placed in force of arms (cf 1 Sam 14:6, 17:47, Ps 33:16-17).

The Lord did give Israel victory, but could also give them defeat (see Psalm 44). The story of Numbers 15 is instructive. The Israelites, having heard the report of the spies, fear to move into the land. That generation is condemned to wander in the wilderness. So the people then decide to go up, 'although neither the ark of the Lord, nor Moses, departed out of the camp' (Num 15:44). They were defeated. God was not a battle-deity, but the Lord of all, including warfare.<sup>10</sup>

This two-sidedness in the relationship between God and war became a dominant prophetic theme. On the one hand, for example, Isaiah encouraged Hezekiah to trust the Lord for Jerusalem's rescue (Isaiah 36-39). Yet it was also Isaiah who depicted Assyria coming as the rod of the Lord's anger, to conquer Israel (10:27b-34). The same prophet could look to a time when 'they shall beat their swords into pruning plowshares' (2:4) and 'they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain' (11:9). The age will arrive when the uniforms and implements of war will be burned as fuel: the time of the 'Prince of Peace' (9:5-6).

The ministry of Jesus is seen by Christians as the arrival of this 'new age'. In his teaching and life he speaks and enacts the 'peace' which God intends for all people (cf John 14:27). Jesus did not avoid conflict, either with the Pharisees or with the crowds. Yet he refused the use of violence (cleansing the Temple scarcely comes into the category of war). He turned the other cheek to those who insulted him, even to the point of accepting an unjust death. His words had the force of divine authority. But by the invincible silence Christ maintained at his trial he refused to use even this power to save himself.

This brief survey of a biblical theme has sought to show that military imagery is very much a part of the Christian heritage in scripture. It is never a simple affirmation of the glory of war, or even of the unqualified might of the Lord. It is rather a realistic demonstration of the cosmic sovereignty of God. This sovereignty has as its purpose the establishment of the age of peace. Ultimately this requires a renewed heaven and earth. Yet it is this purpose which sets the standard for our own endeavours in the present. Such an age dawned in Jesus, and has been the hope of Christians ever since. There is thus a strong bias towards the imagery of peace in the scriptural message, which comes through and transforms the imagery of war.

Military metaphors are not abandoned in the early church, but used carefully. Only in two texts is the work of Christ described using such imagery (Col 2:14-15, Heb 2:14-15). In both cases no triumphalist overtones are present: they are about Christ's victory through suffering. The 'victory' obtained by Christ is over death and sin, not humans (1 Cor 15:54-57). Christ in the New Testament is certainly portrayed as the Judge, but never as the Conqueror, of those opposed to him. The ascended Son of Humanity is portrayed in terms close to that of a warrior in Revelation (1:12-16). Yet the typical picture of Jesus in this book is as the slain Lamb (5:5-6, 12:11, 13:9 etc). There is thus little use of military imagery in relation to Christ or salvation.<sup>11</sup>

The commonest use of military metaphors in the New Testament is to describe the Christian life as like that of a soldier (so Eph 6:10-20, 2 Cor 6:7, 10:4, 1 Tim 1:18, 6:12). Yet each of these texts is primarily about the need for protection, or the right and fair use of the gospel message (the 'sword of the Spirit' - and note 2 Cor 2:14). The imagery is mixed with that of the athlete (1 Cor 9:25-26), emphasising the importance of self-discipline. (Note that the early Christians took no part in either the games nor the army, since both involved homage to pagan deities. Neither were 'innocent' metaphors for them.) It is also associated with suffering rather than triumph (Phil 1:30, Rom 8:36-37). God's power is known in weakness. The resulting ethic is not merely a stoic virtue, but expresses concretely the cross-centred ministry of Christ (2 Cor 12:9; cf 1 Cor 2:5). The 'one who conquers' is the one who is 'faithful to death' (Rev 2:10-11), overcoming in the same way as did Christ, and whose robe is washed in the Lamb's blood.<sup>12</sup>

Thus there is a fair amount of use of military imagery in the Scriptures. It does not function to encourage a warlike spirit, even in a 'spiritual' sense. Rather, it encourages the people of God to look to the Lord, not force of human arms, for safety. Christians are called by this imagery to an active sense of purposeful self-discipline, not a passive fatalist acceptance. They are to be always ready to communicate the gospel of peace. Such imagery is also used to celebrate the victory of Christ, through suffering, over sin and

death. And it is employed to prepare Christians for the suffering involved in discipleship.

### **Military Imagery in Liturgy**

We now turn to seek to formulate preliminary principles concerning military imagery in liturgy. In doing so, let me sketch some distinctive features of Australian culture as regards war. All societies have their heroes, and celebrate occasions of deliverance. Christian liturgy needs to take the ethos or myth of these into account, so as to transform or utilise them in accord with the scriptures. Each nation will have its own story which can only be taken up by Christians from within. The Australian experience which follows should be seen as my own attempt to begin to do this. It is not trying to set out a definitive response for others. Such responses will not stay still, either. Contexts and times change. So must our response.

The distinctive feature of the Australian military myth is that war is commemorated largely in terms of defeats.<sup>13</sup> Anzac Day is the obvious example, but not the only one. I wrote the initial draft of this article on the first National Vietnam Veterans' Day. It commemorates the date of the Australian *defeat* at Long Tan. It should be possible so to harness the power of this myth as to transmit the Bible's paradoxical use of military imagery. In this way war-imagery can be employed (I nearly wrote 'exploited') to further peace-making. It is a possibility enhanced by noting that the prime value associated with Anzac is self-sacrifice. 'Greater love hath no man than this' occurs on countless Australian war memorials.

On the other hand, religion is often perceived as 'the woman's business' by many Australian males (especially among Anglo-Celtic Protestants). This seems to go along with the image of maleness as strong, forceful, defined by brawn more than brain. Our society is markedly 'masculine' in its public style. Domestic violence is not only prevalent, but actually accepted as normal in many circles. The attitudes we have shown in turn to aboriginals, convicts, small farmers, Chinese, migrants, Asian immigrants, Pacific refugees and so on are dominated by the desire to suppress those who differ, or make them conform. The debates over 'multi-culturalism' in recent years bear tragic witness to this. Religion is seen as to do with the private, female world. Its only public function is to focus ethnic identity, whether English, German or Scottish in the past, or Greek, Turkish or whatever in the present.

Thus we find considerable tensions in the potential use of military imagery in Australian liturgy. Hymns which evoke memories of the World Wars all too easily reinforce anti-German, anti-Italian and anti-Japanese feelings. Yet the prospects of using war-imagery to convey the idea of victory through suffering are real. Even the Vietnam experience, the most recent national war experience, can be so explored. Such imagery, however, can easily

'dysfunction', further confirming assumptions or stereotypes about others which promote racism, envy, verbal or psychological assault, or physical violence. How do we respond?

Several principles are tentatively suggested here. They are by no means either a fully-rationalised nor complete set. Responses and suggestions are welcome.

### **Some Tentative Principles**

1. Military imagery should be watched, but not wholly abandoned.

A good case is made by Brian Wren for calling a moratorium on the use of all battle imagery until the militaristic spirit of our times alters. There are many situations where I would support such a call, for example in charismatic meetings! Yet I cannot support it whole-heartedly. To do so is to hand over military imagery to those who use it to foster unhelpful attitudes. This may be deliberate, as in much media propaganda, or accidental. In Christian circles excluding all military imagery could mean making mainstream faith look pale and wan to enthusiasts looking for certainties and definite programmes. Yet it is precisely because its use flourishes amongst those who seem to have little sensitivity to its effects that it needs to be watched.

More importantly, abandonment means cutting the people of God off from a rich lode of biblical ore. I have sought to argue that this can be mined with confidence, since the biblical message has far more finesse than is often perceived. Without the psalms of triumph, the songs of Miriam and Deborah, the stories of Jael and Esther, or David's victory over Goliath, let alone the proclamation of Christ's Paschal victory, we are denying people the need for *godly* vehicles which celebrate triumphs in life. We are also making it far harder to deal adequately with the realities of violence. Such realities are not what most of us in Western societies experience on a daily basis, with the tragic exception of domestic violence. For most of us violence impinges unexpectedly, suddenly, abruptly, on life, for example in a car accident. If Christian pastors have not laid foundations which relate the tragedy of evil and the power of God, we have left a dangerous vacuum.

Yet having decided to retain some military imagery, how is it to be used? The following points seek to supply tentative answers. Let me begin with a negative principle which encapsulates the greatest dangers.

2. Military imagery must not be used against an (implied) enemy.

The vast preponderance of biblical military imagery is not primarily directed *against* someone or something, but *for* some cause. This comes out in the stress on trust in the Lord, rather than human force, noted above. The prime example is Jesus' own struggle. It was not so much *against* sin, humans,

Satan, death or demons as *for* the will of God. Christ could cast out demons, raise the dead, rebuke soldiers and religious leaders 'with a word'. Plentiful resources of power was not the issue. The thing which was hard was taking steps to the cross, refusing the way of power. Yet he did so, employing all the divine might to identify with us even to death, a cursed death on a cross.

One problem with the use of military imagery, however, is that its 'natural' meaning implies having an enemy. It is all too easy to whip up enthusiasm, or promote commitment, by identifying a common enemy to unite against. On a theological level, I have read many books urging Christians concerned about the devil to 'know your enemy', or 'attack the powers of Satan' and so on. I can think of no worse spiritual advice! Certainly we are to 'renounce the world, the flesh and the devil'. However, we are to do so as a consequence of 'turning to Christ' and seeking to 'walk in God's holy will and commandments' (Baptism liturgies).

Yet all too often military imagery functions to encourage identifying and assaulting an enemy. Brian Wren comments on this by writing

the shift from 'Christ v. the Devil' to 'us v. devilish people' is, and has been, and will remain too easy for comfort.<sup>14</sup>

This is most dangerous when such an enemy is only implied, not openly identified. In this case powerful emotional energies can be released which promote hatred of humans not 'like us'. When seeking to use a hymn with military imagery, therefore, we need to ask this question. Will this hymn function to encourage those who sing it on this occasion to 'attack' a particular group? Or will it help them get about doing God's will? The latter need not always mean positive action, note. It may from time to time involve prophetic repudiation of evil.

To take a particular example, consider again 'Onward Christian soldiers'. It could well function to inspire a congregation to disciplined, Christ-dependent action in a godly cause: before embarking on a programme to fight poverty, for example. In other situations it could function to encourage them to hate those with whom they disagree. In an election campaign in which immigration policy were an issue, for example, it could foster racism. Inevitably there will be some who see immigration in racist terms. They may not 'name' the enemy openly as 'the foe'.<sup>15</sup> Yet they may raise 'theological' objections, such as the possibility that it may increase the numbers of 'pagans' in 'our Christian society'. It is the non-specific nature of the opposition which underscores the racist function of 'Onward Christian soldiers' in such a situation. (I should note that this examples is drawn from my own experience in Australia.)

Lest I be understood as one-sided, consider more current military imagery: terms such as 'struggle', 'subversives', 'freedom-fighters' for example. Such are often used by liberation theologians to further commitment to releasing

those trapped by poverty, injustice, prejudice or sin. Such imagery may be acceptable to 'leftists', though 'rightists' may accuse it of being 'marxist propaganda'. Whatever the case, it is still military imagery, open to misuse. Again the problem of aiming it against an unnamed enemy is dangerous. If such imagery is accepted, however, why not continue to adopt directly biblical military imagery? Children can surely be told the story of David and Goliath from either a liberationist or conservative political perspective. In both cases it is possible to use the story to encourage aggression. In both cases it is equally possible to tell the story so as to portray the importance of practical trust in the Lord's strength.

This 'implied enemy' problem I regard as the chief danger. Now let me turn to more positive possibilities, already implied in the last paragraph.

3. Use of military imagery to encourage committed, disciplined, godly obedience.

The actual use of military imagery in Scripture brings out these emphases. Any involvement in war clearly requires *commitment*. Military imagery can be used to encourage support of this (cf Deut 20:1-9). War imagery needs to be employed carefully, particularly in relation to the object to which commitment is to be directed. Such texts as 'fight the good fight of faith' (1 Tim 6:12) give this. It has been provided in the preceding verse: 'aim at righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness' (6:11). This is an interestingly 'pacifist' list in this context! Ultimately such allegiance should be directed to Christ. Even so, we must take care not to project commitment to Christ unthinkingly onto other commitments of transient political or cultural nature.

*Discipline* is another virtue related to being 'soldiers of Christ' in the Bible. It is sorely needed in every age, particularly to maintain long-term commitments to the hard tasks. Such tasks include pastoral care of the 'unlikable', ongoing social concern when public interest in the issue has waned, loving patience with the difficult and so on. There are still dangers. We can encourage an unloving 'hard edge' to discipleship, or a sense of spiritual elitism, or a single-mindedness which is blind to other aspects of truth. But the picture of 'disciples' is inseparable from 'discipline'.

Both these aspects - commitment and discipline - are twin reflections of a basic dimension of faith, *godly obedience*. By this is not meant the blind obedience of the trained soldier, but the discriminating, gracious commitment of Christians to seeking to forward the purposes of God. Indeed, 'godly obedience' is what the New Testament means by that faded word, 'spirituality'. The sheer earthiness of military imagery certainly does have the danger of translating Christian goals into worldly ones. Yet it also and thereby has the virtue of encouraging an earthy spirituality.

4. Consider the 'primary' meanings which may be encouraged. In the earlier part of this paper I pointed out that what appears to be going on in liturgy need not correspond with what is actually going on in the minds and hearts of participants. In considering military imagery it is vital to be aware of this. Hymns in particular are potent reservoirs of religious and nostalgic sentiments, with very long lives. 80 year olds wanting to sing the songs of their teen years is a common occurrence in pastoral care, for example. Awareness of the context in which people will hear or use military imagery is very important if we are to seek to promote positive peace-making.

Hymns which carry associations with wars are particularly difficult in this area. I have already cited 'O God our help in ages past' as possibly evoking unhelpful attitudes (for example, hatred of Japanese). This can be so even though direct military imagery is very sparse in it. Other songs may have strong peace associations, but can encourage unproductive mere nostalgia among some age-groups. 'We shall overcome' is an example from my own teen years. What it means to the comfortable ex-60s radicals now in their forties is quite different to the women of Greenham Common.

Liturgical texts are usually less of a problem, because their constant use over long periods of time means that they do not develop particular associations as easily. Preachers can all too easily reflect their own formative experiences in damaging use of imagery. They can also direct it to furthering realistic faith, of course. Yet the long-term influence of war-experience should not be under-estimated.

A problem for more recent generations is the growing technology of war. Weapons seem to evoke almost an addictive fascination for some in their twenties: consider the number of magazines aiming at this group. Sadly, this attitude seems to carry over into an equal fascination with 'spiritual weapon' techniques for many. 'How to' sessions on various aspects of spiritual life abound, especially focussing on attacking the devil. 'Renewal' groups seem to me often to reflect a fascination with technology (tapes, TV, OHPs, keyboards, and especially amplification) which discloses a technological approach to spirituality. It is these same groups which are keen on 'spiritual warfare' imagery.

What these various trends mean for the 'primary' theology of such Christians as the decades roll on is hard to say. I may be reflecting my own upbringing here, but they are not trends I wax enthusiastic about! Yet used with sensitivity military imagery can tap the powerful roots of 'primary' theologising, to direct it towards Christ-like ends. It is important to remember that the fervour of religious commitment will be directed somewhere. Failing to acknowledge this encourages the enthusiastic Christian to gravitate towards churches and circles where sensitivity to wider



perspectives is at a minimum. The 'insider' mentality of such circles easily furthers an aggressive spirituality in which military imagery becomes downright dangerous.

The dangers of military imagery can also be seen as its greatest potential. The need for powerful commitments to peace-making is great. Committed discipline is important in bringing reconciliation and building community - 'shalom'. We need to employ the power of God to resist evil, and free people from sin and deprivation. Military imagery is a potent tool to further these ends. Its very blatantness can guard against promoting violent attitudes.<sup>16</sup> This particularly applies to pastorally effective use of the psalter, discussed below.

### **Some examples from recent liturgies**

I have taken the following examples from *An Australian Prayer Book*, as representing contemporary liturgical texts. The comments on the Sanctus apply equally to the most contemporary eucharistic texts. Since culture, including that of Australia, is not homogeneous, these are numerous. The remarks made reflect very much my own experience and observations.

#### **1. Baptism Rites**

The Baptism rites in AAPB contain a number of uses of military imagery. The Exodus is adduced as a basic water-related act of God's salvation at several points. Its meaning is translated (spiritualised?) into being 'delivered from the slavery of sin'. It is seen as a type of Christ's being 'raised to life in triumph'. The world, flesh and devil are 'renounced' (not a military picture), but prayer is offered that the candidate 'may have strength to triumph over' them. Discipleship is pictured as 'allegiance' (a military term) to Christ. All of these are indirect usages, however, and are rarely seen as problems.

The most controversial use of military imagery comes in the post-baptismal rites. In the First Order, close to the 1662 BCP, the priest signs the baptised person with the sign of the cross,

to show that you will not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and to fight bravely under his banner against sin, the world and the devil, and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant to your life's end.

Here the military imagery is in the indicative, a statement heard by the congregation. The Second Order is theologically identical to the First, but is much more commonly used because of higher congregational participation. In it the last two clauses quoted above are said by the congregation. They are cast in the imperative, not indicative. *Everyone* thus commands the newly baptised, 'Fight bravely ... life's end'. Such a change certainly makes for more congregational participation in the baptism. Yet it also means that

military imagery, in a direct form, will be instilled in many more people's memory. It is noteworthy that militarism is avoided by the pairing/opposition of 'soldier' and 'servant', going back to Cranmer.

How does this imagery work today? The following comments apply to most Australian situations, but probably extend to England and elsewhere. In my opinion, the danger in the 'folk-religious' attitude to baptism is not the understandable desire of people to celebrate birth. It is the linking of baptism with pretty babies all in white. This makes it a 'nice' rite, for women and children. Theologically, baptism is not about 'niceness' at all. It is a life and death, blood and fire issue. In earlier societies these images were central to child-birth (hence the 'Thanksgiving for Women after Childbirth'). Yet the pain and blood of birth is not prominent in contemporary imagery. The coming of modern medical techniques, births being in hospitals, anaesthetics and so on has changed our perceptions. I do not want to be read as implying that birth is 'nice' for women. All too often its fierceness comes as a shock. Nevertheless, it seems to me, it has come to be perceived as 'soft' by men. How does all this relate to military imagery? Such imagery is relatively infrequent in the baptism rite, only being prominent in the post-baptismal crossing and response. That this is now congregational is in my opinion a good thing, and the imagery is nicely balanced, at the 'secondary' level at least. But 'fight' is now in the imperative, said by all. The language continues to be cast in negative terms: the military imagery is applied directly to an enemy. Separately, each could be justified in some situations. Their combination, in my opinion, does raise problems. (I should note that this whole section has been recast in the current draft of a new, unified rite. The task of working on this in part prompted this paper.[16])

## 2. Holy, Holy, Holy Lord ...

The most prominent example of military imagery in the Offices, and Holy Communion, is the Sanctus. The Hebrew of Isaiah 6:3 is 'Holy holy holy is the Lord of Hosts'. This last phrase is rooted in the war-tradition, centred in the Ark and Davidic traditions (cf 1 Sam 4:4, 17:45, 2 Sam 6:2). What 'hosts' (Hebrew *saba'ot*) means is debated. Since it is the plural of 'host', meaning army, and is closely linked with the Ark and David's victories, it clearly has a military background. The Greek text of the Old Testament generally transliterates the phrase, as 'Lord of Sabaoth', leaving the precise meaning undetermined. In some places, however, it is translated, as 'Lord Almighty' (*pantocrator*). This carries the general idea of divine power. Revelation 4:8 uses this form.

What should we do with this phrase in liturgical texts? In the Book of Common Prayer, the Te Deum retains the transliterated 'Lord God of Sabaoth', but uses 'Lord God of Hosts' in the Holy Communion Sanctus.

What these phrases mean to worshippers is far from easy to ascertain. Yet they leave a sense of mystery about the divine might. In AAPB First Order Holy Communion the phrase is as in BCP: 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts'. In both cases it is said or sung while kneeling. Though it is the climax of the prayer of Thanksgiving, it is immediately followed by prayers whose tone is that of humility.

In AAPB Second Order Holy Communion, and in the Te Deum, however, the phrase is translated, as 'Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might'. This is also that given in most other modern books, following ICET. It is said or sung in the Second Order while standing, in the midst of prayers with a tone of unqualified thanksgiving. This phrase is much more direct in its use of imagery with military overtones. It focuses upon the power of God without any qualifications, either from the surrounding words and images, or the liturgical context. (The cross is still central in the eucharistic prayer, but not the focus. It is one theme amongst others, not dominant as in BCP.)

It is common-place today to prefer the 'classic' or 'dramatic' theory of atonement to the 'penal' one in eucharist prayers. I do not have any great quarrel with that, provided an 'objective' theory of atonement is maintained. My problem is that the classic view is expressed in this liturgy without any of the cautions which surround the fourth century fathers' use of it. The modern translation of the Sanctus does, in my opinion, lend support to the growing triumphalism amongst many Christians. And it does so at a central point in the commonest Sunday service used by Australian Anglicans.

### 3. Popular choruses.

I have already commented on several 'traditional' hymns. Most I am prepared to defend for public use in an appropriate context. Many popular choruses, however, are unashamedly militaristic (and often patriarchal as well).<sup>17</sup> A mild example is as follows.

The body of Christ is an army,  
fighting powers unseen,  
bringing the captives to freedom  
in the name of Jesus our king.

Chorus: Lift high the banner of love, Hallelujah!

Sound the trumpets of war.

Christ has gotten us the victory, Hallelujah!

Jericho must fall.

Brothers are you sure of your calling,  
will you fight for Jesus the king?  
Are you prepared in this battle  
to lay down your life for your friends?

And so on for three more verses and five more choruses. Here the use of military imagery goes beyond what is safe under any circumstances. Although there are some qualifications ('lay down your life'), the thrust is to 'get the enemy'. I hate to think of what 'Jericho' could be taken to stand for by those who sing it. Whatever it is, it gets drummed into the subconscious after six or seven repeats. One biblical note arises from this chorus. The church is never described as an 'army' in the New Testament. Certainly individual Christians are referred to as soldiers. Yet military language is not used for the corporate Christian life. Thus to sing 'the body of Christ is an army' may be justifiable poetic hyperbole, which goes even beyond the simile 'like a mighty army'. Yet it is important to realise that neither has direct scriptural basis. A great deal of the problem arises because people assume too readily that military metaphors can be applied corporately.<sup>18</sup>

Worse examples can be found. Consider the following ditty.

It is God who trains my hands for battle,  
my arms can bend a bow of bronze.

(repeat these lines)

He gives me his shield of victory,  
my enemies fall at my feet.

Praise be to my rock!

He is the Lord of Hosts.

The sad thing is that this chorus is based on Psalm 18:36-40 (although 'Lord of Hosts' does not occur therein). Yet no thought has been given to the effect of having Christians sing such a song today. (Presumably the author believes that singing such songs is desirable.) The real problem about the way this chorus functions at the primary level is that it is not 'his (God's) enemies' who are to fall at 'his' feet, but mine at my feet. The gate is wide open to have the singer (or song-leader) identify the 'enemy'. Such attitude-formation works to distort the singer's perceptions of non-Christians. An 'us/them' mentality is promoted on *negative* lines, perhaps reinforcing prejudices and hindering Christian witness and service.

This example raises the need for care in using the Psalter. I am one who believes (unlike John Wesley) that the whole psalter is useful for Christian worship, especially for the daily office. Yet the latter is largely 'private'. The public occasions for which particular psalms are chosen, and the context in which they are set, bears careful reflection. The more military psalms can be of great help to Christians under pressure or oppression. The more self-satisfied ones can lift those with low self-esteem. The more lamenting ones can be a counter-balance to the confident and outward-looking. And so we could go on through the variety of human types personalities. However, military psalms can be dangerous for the confident, the laments disastrous for those with damaged self-esteem. The question again is of the right use

and context of all imagery, including military metaphors, bearing in mind the way in which it may function at the sub-conscious level, and as a former of social perspectives.

One final example, not from a chorus but AAPB. BCP Morning and Evening Prayer contain a versicle and response as follows:

V Give peace in our time, O Lord,

R Because there is none other that fighteth for us,  
but only thou, O God.

The response has been replaced in AAPB by

R For you are our help and strength.<sup>19</sup>

This is a case where I strongly prefer the old. It has strong pacifist tendencies, and picks up the biblical emphasis upon trust. The modern form invokes God's help a little too easily.

### Conclusion

I have argued that military imagery may be retained in liturgy, but with care. In its Australian setting, there is a useable tradition of strong self-sacrifice in war which can be tapped. There is also the need to deal with the 'wimp' image the faith has come to be associated with. Sensitive use of military imagery may be of help. In particular, any such use must avoid implied identification of an enemy in ways that further 'us/them' attitudes. The explicit language of peace-making should be made far more visible than it is at the same time.

On the other hand, the aggressiveness of many males does not need encouraging. Nor does our tendency to be prejudiced towards others require any support. The 'success' and 'demonic' mentalities (sometimes seen together!) which have appeared in recent years need correction, not support.

Yet military imagery as used in the scriptures already has within it the seeds from which such correction, and a positive role for such imagery, can emerge. I would argue that the use of military imagery in Scripture can and should be the model for our own use of such imagery.

### NOTES

1. This text is regarded as the earliest written Israelite tradition by many. It is interesting that war-songs are often sung by women in Israel (cf Judges 5, 1 Sam 18:7 etc). Patriarchy and militarism need not always go together.

2. See my booklet, *The Overcoming of Satan* (Grove Spirituality series 17, 1987). I am not aware of any writing on this subject which shows real awareness of the 'militaristic' problem. The vast number of popular works on this subject has not in my opinion led to increase in wisdom. Such books assume quite happily that might is right when it comes to our attitude to demonic powers.

3. I have looked for literature on this topic, but apart from a few asides in works on inclusive language (eg the Introduction in *Out of Darkness* (Aust Council of Churches), I know of very few articles. The only directly pertinent one I have been able to track down is 'Onward

Christian Rambos?' The Case against Battle Symbolism in Hymns, by Brian Wren (*Journal of the Hymn Society of America*, 1987) 13-15.

I would like to acknowledge help received from Mr Wren in correspondence. I have seen pre-publication sections from his work *What Language shall I Borrow* (SCM, 1989). Although this concentrates on gendered language the issue of dominance brings it close to the concerns of this paper.

I would also like to acknowledge the promptings of Michael Klein and Philip Newman, of the Melbourne (Anglican) Diocese Liturgical Committee. Further help has come from comments by Cassandra Nixon, Jonathan Sherlock and Peter Sherlock.

4. Wren, 14.5.

5. I have written on this in 'Gendered language in Corporate Worship', *Australian Journal of Liturgy* 1/3 (1988) 84-95. Several of the ideas used in this present paper build on this earlier paper, in particular the notions of 'primary' and 'secondary' theological reflection.

6. I am not considering the use of titles for God such as 'Lord' and 'King'. Although they have close connections with military imagery, the prime objection to them is their male orientation, exacerbated by feudal connotations.

7. See further A. Thistleton, *Language, Liturgy and Meaning* (Grove Liturgical Series 2) passim, and J. Lebon, *How to Understand the Liturgy* (SCM, 1986) chapters 11, 14, 15, 23.

8. Other traditional hymns where similar problems can arise include 'Stand up, stand up for Jesus', 'Fight the good fight' and even 'A mighty fortress'. They are all good hymns, however, and remain favourites of mine (after slight adjustments are made for some exclusive language). Even so, there are times when their use is pastorally wrong.

Brian Wren has written a telling paraphrase of 'Onward Christian Soldiers'. Here is the third verse.

Feel the thrill of bloodshed,  
guns, and holy wars.  
We don't really mean it,  
it's all metaphors.  
Nuke the Devil's Empire,  
for in God we trust.  
Yes, we'll love our enemies,  
when they bite the dust.

Onward Christian Rambos,  
spoiling for a fight!  
Wave the flag for Jesus,  
knowing that we're right.

9. This fragment is interesting because it is set canonically in the pre-conquest period, is accepted as early by scholars, yet is taken up in the psalter. The phrase 'Arise, O Lord' occurs in many other places in the psalms, probably with reference to the ark.

10. The ideas which follow are more fully developed in my doctoral thesis, *The God who Fights* (Australian College of Theology, 1981).

11. Some may want to hold that the 'Christus Victor' motif is more important than this: so G. Aulen's book of that title (SPCK 1931, 1978). But I am not convinced. Court metaphors seem to me to predominate in the New Testament, emphasising innocence and justice rather than victory. I would argue that even when the Victor motif did become prominent, in the third and fourth centuries, considerable care was taken to see that 'right is might' is

emphasised in salvation, not 'might is right'. This is evident, for example, in Gregory of Nyssa, *Catechetical Instruction*, despite the reputation he has gained to the contrary.

12. G.B. Caird, *Commentary on the Revelation of St John the Divine* (Black) has an incisive discussion of these passages, and the war-theme in Revelation.

13. I owe a debt to George Crombie for this next section, whose thesis 'Faith and Fate' (M.Th., A.C.T. 1988) I supervised. Part of his work is published in *Colloquium* 1987. A British example of reflecting upon the interaction of the Church and nationalism can be found in the Grove Pastoral series booklet *Jesus or Britannia*.

14. Brian Wren, personal correspondence, September 1988.

15. I note that the version printed in *Hymns for Today's Church* now reads 'Christ ... leads his armies on' rather than 'leads against the foe'. The book gives no reason for the change, but I am pleased to see it there. It helps remove one problem of the hymn, at the 'secondary' level at least.

16. The purpose of liturgy is not to manipulate participants' attitudes, but focus the Christian assembly in its receiving and responding to the grace of God, time after time. Yet it does function to shape people's social perspectives, to form their 'myth', via 'ritual'. See W. Willimon, *The Service of God* (Abingdon, 1979).

17. Post-baptismal Crossing rite in new rite:

*The president makes a cross on each candidate's forehead, saying*

President: N, I sign you with the sign of the cross

to show that you are marked as Christ's own forever.

*The president then addresses all the candidates*

Continue his faithful disciple, soldier and servant

*and the congregation responds, saying*

All: **Confess the faith of Christ crucified,  
proclaim his resurrection,  
and look for his coming again.**

In this rite the 'fight' phrase is replaced by a formula which is more Christocentric, and deliberately parallels the second acclamation in the Holy Communion. The 'identity' phrase has been returned to the minister, and expanded to include all three New Testament images of a Christian - 'disciple, soldier and servant'. This retains military imagery, but reduces it from half to a third. I am glad to say that the rite has now been approved for trial use in the Anglican Church of Australia. My hope is that it will form the basis for a single in the next edition of AAPB (1993?). There are currently nine initiation rites available: not the best way to image 'one baptism' liturgically!

18. These two songs are from *Covenant Songs*, 9 and 165. There are a few modern songs in which military imagery is used responsibly (see 28, though it has 'male' overtones), and a few more concerned with peace (13, 14, 47).

19. The English ASB changes BCP to the following.

V Give your people the blessing of peace

R **and let your glory be over all the world.**

My reaction to the versicle is to wonder how self-centred can liturgy get. The response is nice, and though it is taken from Psalm 57, the context is quite different. Here it just seems vague to me.

# TE DEUM

## NO LONGER A SONG OF GOD'S PEOPLE?

Helen Harrison

The hymn *Te Deum laudamus* has been used since the sixth century as part of the office of Matins and as a thanksgiving at extraliturgical ceremonies.<sup>1</sup> It remains part of one of the morning offices in several Christian traditions but is no longer known by most of our Sunday congregations.

### Origin

Several people have been credited with its authorship, particularly Bishop Nicetas of Remesiana, in what is now Yugoslavia. However parts of its text and melody have been found in much earlier sources.<sup>2</sup> Huglo summarises current thinking which suggests that it was composed at the beginning of the 5th century and is of Latin composition rather than being a Latin translation from the Greek. Its liturgical use was first noted in south-east Gaul, Milan, and central Italy.<sup>3</sup>

### Use

Since the end of the sixth century the *Te Deum* has been used at the end of Matins on those days when the *Gloria* is used at mass. Its extraliturgical use has been after consecrations (of kings, abbots, and virgins), after ordinations, and military victories, to welcome distinguished visitors<sup>4</sup> and on other special occasions as for example in 1554 in England on the announcement of Queen Mary's 'quickening'. Stow recalls

Item the xxviii. day of the same monyth was a sermon in the qwere of Powlles, and *Te Deum* songe, with a generall procession and the byshoppe in hys myter and dyvers other byshoppes in their abbettes; the mayer (and) aldermene in their scarlett with their clokys, and alle the craftes in their best aparelle; and the nexte day was procession in every parich in Londone with *Te Deum*.<sup>5</sup>

Medieval mystery plays, usually performed between Matins and Mass, were concluded with the *Te Deum*.

### Structure

Very clearly the *Te Deum* has three distinct sections. God the Father is praised in the first thirteen verses.<sup>6</sup> Included in this section is the Sanctus of vv 5-7 which is thought to be related to that of an old Easter Vigil mass. This first part concludes with a Trinitarian doxology in vv 14-16. The second section is Christological beginning with *Tu Rex gloriae, Christe* (v 17) and



concluding with the prayer *Aeterna fac*.... of v 24. Verse 25, *Salvum fac populi* is a reference to Ps 28,10 and begins the *capitellum* or group of versicles and responses which form the third section of the hymn. Musically the final response, *In te Domine speravi* (v 32) is an elaborate form of v 25.

### **The *Te Deum* in the 16th century English Office**

Few *Te Deum* settings remain from before the 16th century. The seventeenth century brought the Baroque era from which time most settings have been large-scale extralitururgical works. So the importance of the *Te Deum* in public worship can be illustrated by a consideration of its use in the first part of the sixteenth century, in particular pre-reformation England.

In the Sarum rite the office *Te Deum* was immediately followed by the Sunday mass. After the ninth responsory of matins the priest, wearing his coloured cope, began this hymn then censed the high altar but not the other altars.

Finito, nono responsorio, sacerdos in capa serica, loco non mutato, incipiat *Te Deum laudamus*. Postea cum suo secundario sacerdote, thure ipsius thuribuli ab ipso principali sacerdote ante gradum chori imposito, altare thurificet predicto modo.... Finito *Te Deum laudamus*, statim canitur missa; qua finita, principalis sacerdos versiculum dicat ante laudes.<sup>7</sup>

Because the *Te Deum* preceded the Sunday or feast-day mass a supply of musicians would have been assured. Composers were then able to make use of two musical fashions of the time; *alternatim* and *faburden*.

**Alternatim** use involved the verse by verse alternation of contrasting sounds. Plainsong and polyphony or plainsong and organ music were used. In the latter case this involved the omission of half of the words of the text. There may have been other possibilities, eg, choir and organ alternation or ornamented plainsong alternating with organ or choir. The English *alternatim* practice was more consistent than that on the continent, as in England always the odd numbered verses were set for organ and/or the even numbered ones for the choir. So established was this practice that Tallis' choral settings of the office hymns were named according to the Latin words of the first line of the **second** verses of the hymns. eg, Tallis' *Adesto nunc propitius* is in fact the Sarum office hymn for Compline, *Salvator mundi Domine*.

**Faburden** was an improvisatory practice which provided two extra lines of music, each parallel to the chant, except at cadences. English *faburden*, as distinct from continental *fauxbourdon*, provided the added voices at intervals of a third below and a fourth (or a fourth and an octave) above the plainsong. It is often taken for granted that the original chant would have

been sung with the faburden. There is however no indication of the plainsong in many of the organ pieces and choral works that are based on the faburden.

16th century English choral and organ settings of the *Te Deum* used the Sarum version of the plainsong. Extant settings for voices are by Taverner and Sheppard while there is an anonymous work in the Gyffard part books. Aston set a textual variant *Te matrem Dei laudamus*. Four organ settings remain - two by Redford and one each by Avery Burton and William Blitheman. The choral works are stately in style and for four and more voices while the organ versets are sometimes in three parts, but in many cases only in two parts, one moving feverishly against the other. This disparity in styles is peculiarly English and may well be related to the type of organ on which the versets were played. Intricacies of vocal counterpoint would not be necessary if the organ sounded like one large 'mixture' stop. Unfortunately the ravages of time and the reformation have not left us any examples of organs of this period. We do know that some buildings had several organs. From 'A Description or Briefe Declaration of all the Ancient Monuments, Rites, and Customes belonging or beinge within the Monastical Church of Durham before the Suppression written in 1593' there were three 'paires' of organs near the choir door.<sup>8</sup> The chief organ was over the choir door and was only used on principal feasts. Another organ at the north side of the choir was for days when readings were from the four doctors of the church; Augustine, Ambrose, Gregory, and Jerome. A third pair was for daily services. A loft on the north side of the Jesus Altar housed yet another organ for the Jesus mass on Fridays. In the Galilee was an organ at the Lady Altar for the Lady mass. Because the *Te Deum* was sung on the principal feasts it would have been accompanied by the large organ over the choir door.

A large sound would have been needed at Exeter. According to the Exeter Ordinal there was a *classicum* or a ringing of all the bells together, on major doubles, from the verse *per singulos dies*.<sup>9</sup> The bell ringing at York differed slightly, at least on Easter Day. There the *Te Deum* followed the ringing of the bells *ad classicum* and the singing of the responsory *Christus resurgens* but preceded the singing of *Vidi aquam* and *Salve festa dies* before mass.<sup>10</sup> In the original chant, the mode of the plainsong changes from the words *Salvum fac*. In the organ settings faburden is abandoned here for plainsong suggesting perhaps that this capitellum is a new beginning and so needs introducing. We know from recent and current practices that this part of the hymn has often been omitted. However provision for it was certainly made in Tudor England.

The similarity in style between Sarum organ versets for office hymns and organ versets for the *Te Deum* indicates that the latter were intended for use within the office.

### **The Extraliturgical *Te Deum***

Extraliturgical *Te Deum* settings are documented from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. One record from York in 1486 tells

The Archbishop standing in his Throne beganne *Te Deum* etc., which by them of the Qwere was right melodiously songen with Organ as accustomed.<sup>11</sup>

Later, cornetts joined the voices. When Elizabeth I entered Oxford in 1566 with a canopy over her carried by four Senior Doctors, she entered into the church, and there abode while the quyer sang and played with cornetts, *Te Deum*.<sup>12</sup>

The extraliturgical *Te Deum* has never disappeared from the 'special occasion' repertoire. Because it has been used on important occasions or in royal chapels the instrumental requirements and voice writing have taken it from the church to the concert hall. Charpentier and Berlioz and the many between them who set this text were not writing for a parish church. Between the extremes of concert and office *Te Deums* were the choral and organ cathedral-style settings for the Anglican Morning Prayer. Stanford's, perhaps one of the best known, can be managed by a competent parish choir but in no way could ever become music to be sung by the people. Ornate as the choral and organ versets were, the fact that they were for alternatim use would have permitted the singing of about half the chant. Consequently they remained to a certain extent the people's music - at least known by and perhaps also sung by the people.

### **The Importance of the *Te Deum* and its Future**

Undoubtedly the *Te Deum* has been highly regarded and regularly sung for centuries. As WS Rockstro noted in the 1940 edition of Grove's Music Dictionary, the relatively few polyphonic settings that have come from Italy are an indication of the plainsong's immense popularity.

Every peasant knew it by heart; and from time immemorial it was sung in the crowded Roman churches at every solemn thanksgiving service by the people of the city and the wild inhabitants of the Campagna, with a fervour which would have set polyphony at defiance.<sup>13</sup>

Vernacular settings have been used since the reformation but not with the original form of the chant. Merbecke's *Book of Common Praier* noted of 1550 kept a simplified version of the melody which suffered from Cranmer's directum of only one note of music per syllable. This setting was short-lived due to the brevity of the reign of Edward VI and the consequent religious upheavals in England. Luther's paraphrase *Herr Gott dich loben wir* gained more popularity and, in English, is still part of the Lutheran Matins. However one of the most successful adaptations has been the setting to Anglican chant of the translation from the *Book of Common Prayer*.

Up until the 1960s the *Te Deum* was known in this way to most Anglicans through the chants sung at Morning Prayer on Sundays. The same translation was also set to Anglican chants in *The Methodist Hymn Book* (1933) and was sung at various meetings of Methodists prior to the formation of the Uniting Church in Australia. With the liturgical movement's reaffirmation of the importance of the Sunday Eucharist and with new translations of the *Te Deum*, this hymn has been almost removed from the repertoire of most Anglicans and former Methodists. It has long ceased to be a part of popular Roman Catholic devotion.

Several metrical hymn paraphrases have appeared. These include

*We praise, we worship thee, O God* - ed Gell

*We praise you, God, confessing you as Lord* - J Quinn

*Holy God, we praise thy name* - C Walworth

*God of gods, we sound his praises* - T Dudley-Smith.

However a paraphrase is not the same thing as a translation. As those who have learnt to love the Easter and Pentecost sequences appreciate, no metrical rhymed verse can ever replace the marriage of original (or translated) text and original tune. A repeated tune can so easily dominate the words, directing the singer's and listener's attention from them. With this in mind there have been attempts to combine chant formulas and unmeasured texts for the *Te Deum*.

JH Arnold's *An Easy Modal Te Deum* used the text as in the *Book of Common Prayer*.<sup>14</sup> A recent ICET setting is that of Theodore Marier. Adapting the Old Roman version of the chant he has set the translation *You are God; we praise you*.<sup>15</sup> Both settings provide for optional four-part choral superimpositions; Arnold's sparingly and Marier's more consistently. Ralph Vaughan Williams used a succession of metrical psalm tunes for his *Te Deum*.<sup>16</sup>

Unless some attention is given to the reintroduction of this hymn into public worship and to the establishment of a repertoire of suitable tunes and arrangements, there is a danger that this masterpiece will be totally lost to the non-office-saying public. When people really know texts or musical settings of devotional or liturgical works they can use them as prayer during the course of the day. One can visualise the Anglican housewife of a few decades ago hanging out the washing to the mentally sung strains of *We praise thee O God* (complete with what Leonard Ellinwood calls the 'Anglican thump' of Anglican chant<sup>17</sup>). Her Roman Catholic counterpart may well have been singing *Salve Regina, Mater misericordiae*. These and a few other acts of praise are potential casualties of liturgical reform unless we take steps to retain them.

Perhaps the *Te Deum* could become part of the people's repertoire again if a sung evening office were re-established in parishes (of any

denomination) at least on special occasions. The Saturday night before a major feast or the Sunday afternoon after a parish luncheon could provide opportunities both for introducing the office and the *Te Deum* to the people. By appending the *Te Deum* to the office it would take on the nature of an extraliturgical hymn rather than being seen as a case of liturgical piracy - the taking of a hymn from the morning office for the evening one. Such occasions could well tempt choirs to put on a performance of a concert-like setting. One would hope that such moves could be resisted and that congregational settings could be found. It is difficult today to have any uniformity in repertoire and it is probably undesirable for the end result is often the lowest common musical denominator. However the possibility of combining the plainsong melody with an English translation is certainly worth investigating. It would be a wonderful achievement when, like those Italian peasants, whole congregations will somehow be able to sing enthusiastically and from memory *We praise you, O God.....*

## NOTES

1. For convenience the use here of 'liturgical' is confined to official rites of the church. The 'extraliturgical' *Te Deum* is that used outside Matins.
2. Winifred Douglas, *Church Music in History and Practice*, Faber, 1962, 129.
3. M Huglo, 'Te Deum laudamus' in *New Catholic Encyclopaedia* Vol 13, 954.
4. For example when Mary and Philip of Spain arrived in England after their wedding. J Stow, *The Annales of England faithfully Collected out of the most autenticall Authors, Records, and other Monuments of Antiquities, lately corrected, encreased, and continued, from the first inhabitation Untill this present yeare 1601*, London, 1601.
5. JG Nichols ed, *Chronicle of the Grey Friars of London*. Printed for the Camden Society, London 1852, 93.
6. Verse numbering as in John Caldwell ed, *Early Tudor Organ Music I. Music for the Office*, Stainer and Bell, London, 1965, 151.
7. WH Frere (ed) *The Use of Sarum Vol I, The Sarum Customs as set forth in the Consuetudinary and Customary* CUP 1898 (Gregg reprint 1969), 121. Vol 1, 278 suggests that the altar was censed during the *Te Deum* on about 12 feasts including Easter Day.
8. *The Publications of the Surtees Society* (1842) Vol 15, 14, 29-30, 37.
9. *Ordinale Exon* Vol II ed, JN Dalton, Henry Bradshaw Society, 1909, 535.
10. *Manuale et Processionale as usum insignis ecclesiae Eboracensis*. The Publications of the Surtees Society, 63 (1875), p 170 quotes rubrics for this from a Manual of 1405.
11. AB Scott, 'The Beginnings of Fauxbourdon: A New Interpretation', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 26 (1971), p 356 quoting W Say, 'Liber regie capelle; A Manuscript in the Biblioteca Publica, Evova' ed Walter Ullman, *Henry Bradshaw Society, Publications* 92 (1961), 71.

12. NC Carpenter, *Music in the Medieval and Renaissance Universities*, Oklahoma 1958, 175.
13. *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* Vol 8, 1940, 354.
14. Oxford Choral Music, OUP, No 457.
15. *Hymns, Psalms and Spiritual Canticles*, BACS, Belmont MA 1984, No 361.
16. This is found only in those editions of *The Oxford Easy Anthem Book* which contain the appendix.
17. Article 'Anglican Chant' in *Harvard Dictionary of Music*. Second edition, Revised and Enlarged ed., Willi Apel, Heinemann, London, 1970.

# AN EVALUATION OF THE THREE YEAR LECTIONARY IN AN AUSTRALIAN PRAYER BOOK (AAPB)

*Victor Roberts*

This article evaluates the Three Year lectionary by means of the following five steps. First, by providing a brief outline of its historical development; second, by examining its basic theological presuppositions; third, by listing the principles governing its use in the liturgy; fourth, by detailing not only its widespread acceptance but also its frequent revision and adaptation by those denominations which adopted it; and finally, an assessment of its strengths and weaknesses as a lectionary.

## 1. **Historical Background - a Brief Outline**

The Three Year lectionary had its genesis at the Second Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church held in 1962. By the time that Vatican II had been convened, an enormous amount of scholarly and dedicated work had been done with regard to the reform of the Catholic liturgy. The first document promulgated by the Council was the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*. It is clear that the writers of this report had in mind the compilation of a new lectionary right from the outset.

A post-conciliar commission of 18 members was given the task of compiling the new lectionary and it began its work in 1964. In 1965 the commission asked 30 renowned biblical scholars to submit lists of biblical books and passages they believed should be read publicly on Sundays (and special days) in the liturgical services of the Church. These were then conflated into a common list which was referred to another group of scholars who specialised in pastoral theology. Following their comments, the Vatican II commission agreed upon its general principles of lectionary compilation, selected the lections to be included, and finally arranged them in order. The work was consummated on 30 November 1969 when the Three Year lectionary in its final form was made mandatory in the Catholic Church.

The lectionary in *An Australian Prayer Book* (published in 1978) is in essence the Roman Catholic Three Year lectionary.

No one can question the thoroughness with which the Vatican II lectionary was prepared. However, as theological pre-suppositions ultimately determine principles of lectionary compilation, it is important that some examination be made of those which lie behind the Three Year lectionary.

## 2. Theological pre-suppositions

To use this lectionary intelligently and in harmony with the mind and purpose of its compilers, it should always be kept in mind that its unifying theological theme is the paschal mystery. This unifying theme emerged from the theological pre-suppositions adopted in the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* and promulgated by Vatican II on 4 December 1963 as *Sactosanctum Concilium*. It also had a great deal to say about the place of the lectionary in the liturgy. When this document was adopted by Vatican II its underlying theological pre-suppositions were endorsed. One of the most important of these was stated in these words: in Christ "there came forth a perfect satisfaction needed for our reconciliation, and we received the means of giving worthy worship to God".<sup>1</sup> Christ accomplished this perfect satisfaction through "the paschal mystery of His blessed passion, resurrection from the dead, and glorious ascension."<sup>2</sup>

When this theological statement was joined to Vatican II's understanding of the centrality of Christ in the Church, and in all liturgical celebrations of the Church, it had a profound effect on the compilation of the Three Year lectionary. These theological pre-suppositions are summed up in these words:

It is the one mystery of Christ which is in question whether it is the Old or the New Testament which is being proclaimed by the Church in the liturgy.

The New Testament lies hidden in the Old and in the New Testament the Old is made manifest.

Christ is the centre and completion of all of Scripture as of all liturgical celebration. Therefore those who seek salvation and life must drink from its fountains.<sup>3</sup>

Few would argue with this theological pre-supposition. Problems arose, however, when the step was made from theological pre-supposition to principles of lectionary compilation. The compilers of the Three Year lectionary moved from their theological base to adopt two basic principles of compilation:

- a) that the Gospel lection must be primary; and
- b) that the selection of lections from the Old Testament was to be based on the typological or prophecy-fulfilment theme.

Such a use of the Scriptures tended to see the Old Testament merely as a preparation for the New Testament, especially the Gospels, rather than as being complete in itself. Scholars and liturgiologists criticised this principle of lectionary compilation as being "hermeneutically indefensible and



limiting" and "because of the typological choice of the first reading it has been impossible to read the Old Testament in a semi-continuous fashion".<sup>4</sup>

William Skudlarek sums up in an admirably succinct manner the unifying theme of the Three Year lectionary in these words:

The Fundamental principle guiding the work of the lectionary commission was that the lectionary would find its thematic unity in the paschal mystery, which had been completed in Christ and is to be completed in us.

The lectionary was not to be ordered around a 'history of salvation' motif (understood as a line running from the creation to the second coming), or around a systematic presentation of the theological teachings of the church, or according to a literary analysis of the parts of the Bible that were to be used. Nor were the readings to be chosen and ordered for the primary purpose of exhorting and encouraging people to lead more Christian lives. The lectionary was there to proclaim the passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, fully realised in him and being realised in us who, through faith and baptism, have been joined to him.<sup>5</sup>

### **3. Principles governing the use of the lectionary**

Obviously one could write at great length on these principles as they relate to the use of the Three Year lectionary in the liturgy. For the purposes of brevity and clarity I have summarised them as follows:

1. The Gospel reading was regarded as the high point of the liturgy; the Old Testament reading was chosen so that it related thematically to the Gospel, and was to prepare the congregation for it.
2. In the traditional sequence from Old Testament to New, the readings were in the order: Old Testament, New Testament (non-gospel), Gospel.
3. The biblical readings were not to be omitted or shortened, nor replaced by non-biblical material.
4. Readings were to be delivered from the ambo. (In Protestant terminology this refers to the pulpit or the lectern.)
5. Each reading was to be introduced in a short and suitable manner. The literary style of such introductions was to be carefully considered and prepared. They were to be short, clear, simple and faithful to the text.
6. The voice and delivery of the readers must be audible, clear and intelligible.
7. The salutation and termination of each reading may be sung to emphasise the importance of the word of God in the minds of the listeners.

8. The readings should be delivered in a way that favours meditation after the hearing of God's Word. Haste must be avoided for it impedes recollection.
9. Qualified lay persons should be trained for the ministry of reading, and their ministry be held in esteem by the congregation.
10. It is better to have different readers rather than assign all readings to one person. This brings variety into the liturgy and stimulates interest and attention.
11. The pastoral advantage of having a single Order of Readings for each Sunday or Holyday is that it enables worshippers, who might not always worship at the same service, to hear the same readings and to meditate on their relevance to their own situations.
12. The Three Year lectionary contains the more important passages of the word of God thus ensuring they are covered within an appropriate time-span.
13. The lections are governed by the principles of harmonious composition and semi-continuous reading. "Harmonious composition" means the assembling of readings from both Old and New Testaments around a given theme, so that lessons harmonise with each other. "Semi-continuous reading" means that a whole section of a book or epistle will be read over a set period of Sundays. One or other of these principles is applied depending on the liturgical season of the year.
14. The seasons which have a particular importance, such as Advent, Lent, and Paschal-time, have readings of harmonious composition. Those Sundays which do not have a distinctive character of their own have readings of semi-continuous sequence.
15. The Old Testament reading was always chosen to harmonise with the Gospel; the apostolic passage may or may not harmonise in the same intimate fashion. It is important to grasp this principle so as to avoid unnatural or forced thematic harmonisation.
16. The years of the Three Year lectionary are called A, B, and C respectively. Each year coincides with the liturgical year, and begins on the first Sunday in Advent of the previous civil year. To discover which year is A or B or C, simply remember that the letter C always designates a year which is a multiple of three.
17. Each year a different synoptic gospel is read, and it is the particular gospel which gives the distinctive character to each yearly cycle. Year A is the year for reading Matthew; Year B for reading Mark; and Year C for reading Luke.

#### 4. **Widespread acceptance and adaptation**

The almost universal acceptance of the Vatican II Three Year lectionary has been a remarkable phenomenon. Indeed, it is probably the most remarkable ecumenical achievement of the twentieth century.<sup>6</sup> Since its publication it has been adopted for use in many denominations. This widespread ecumenical acceptance led also to extensive revision of the lectionary as one after another of the various adopting denominations discovered not only its strengths but also its obvious weaknesses. The phenomena of widespread acceptance and extensive revision have been remarkable liturgical and ecumenical occurrences.

One of the factors that led to the Three Year lectionary being adopted for use in so many denominations was that those involved in its compilation saw their task not only as an historical one but also as a pastoral one. The result was a lectionary which had a relevance and appeal probably unmatched by those which preceded it. So, although the Three Year lectionary has been accepted and adopted on an astonishingly broad scale by denominations of widely differing historical and theological origins, it has also been severely criticised, modified and revised by many of the denominations which adopted it. Some of the denominations which adopted and then revised the lectionary are: the Episcopal Church (USA); the Presbyterian Church (USA), (this revision was in turn adopted by others, for example, the United Church of Christ, the Disciples of Christ, and Armed Forces Chaplains Board); the Lutheran Churches of North America; the Uniting Church in Australia; and the Anglican Church of Australia.

The Consultation on Church Union (COCU) Commission on Worship met in 1972 in Washington, DC, and "began work on a lectionary both as a means of contributing to Church Unity and as a service to those churches which did not have a recent lectionary".<sup>7</sup> This revision in its basic form was approved at the COCU Commission on Worship meeting in Louisville in October 1973. Further changes have been made as a result of trial use.

Widespread adoption was most gratifying but it also led to problems. However, there was a strong ecumenical desire to solve these in a positive manner and to move towards consensus in lectionary compilation and use. Lewis A. Briner comments: "In rapid succession most of the major protestant denominations moved to adopt or adapt their basic pattern of readings to the now familiar three-year cycle."<sup>8</sup> He goes on to point out that "most criticisms have been reassuringly cordial and friendly". One of the most cogent critiques is contained in a series of articles in *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology*. In an excellent article, "A History of Lectionaries: From the Synagogue at Nazareth to Post-Vatican II" John Reumann concludes:

What is clearly desirable is a conference of churches employing the three-year lectionary with others of differing viewpoints to compare experiences since 1969. It may be hoped that an even more uniform plan for public reading of Scripture can emerge, which for that traditionally large percentage of Christendom which follows pericopes will be important for future use and interpretation of the Bible.<sup>9</sup>

Reumann's observation became reality in March 1978 when the Consultation on Common Texts (CCT) convened an ecumenical conference on the lectionary in Washington, DC. This conference asked the North American Committee on Calendar and Lectionary (NACCL) to examine in detail the problem areas of the Three Year lectionary. This committee, chaired by Lewis A. Briner, met over a period of four years and then submitted its report to CCT. CCT received and approved the report of NACCL and published it in 1983 under the title: *Common Lectionary*. The Forward states: "This lectionary represents a conservative harmonisation of the major variants of the three-year lectionary used at this time in North America."<sup>10</sup>

The trial period of the *Common Lectionary* ended on 1 December 1986. "At the conclusion of this trial period the CCT will consider recommendations received from the Churches and will make revisions as appropriate in the lectionary. The final version of 'Common Lectionary' will then be released to the Churches....."<sup>11</sup> The *Common Lectionary* is the most recent and ecumenically authoritative version of the Vatican II original.

In 1985 the Liturgical Commission of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia, mindful of the criticisms and weaknesses of the Three Year lectionary, made a modest revision of the AAPB lectionary on the following basis.

1. The choice of the Gospel lection is either unaltered or extended. (In other words, the "thematic unity" principle of the composition of the lectionary based upon the Gospel lection has not been altered.)
2. Major changes have been made to the Old Testament readings to reflect the theme of the Gospel more adequately, and to provide a more substantial coverage from the Old Testament. (This was to try to overcome some of those problems which led to the greatest criticisms of the Three Year lectionary.)
3. The provision of some "in course" readings from the epistles. (This was to provide at least some use of the principle of *lectio continua* within the lectionary.)

The principles are set out in greater detail in the Preface to the *Alternative Tables of Lessons*.<sup>12</sup>

## 5. **Strengths and weaknesses**

Anyone who has done any work on lectionary compilation will know what an extraordinarily difficult task it is. Any criticisms must be evaluated in the light of that maxim. Some of the Three Year lectionary's strengths and weaknesses are discussed in the following paragraphs.

### **A. Strengths**

#### 1. *Its thematic unity*

The Three Year lectionary was compiled around the theme of God's wonderful works in the history of salvation. To accomplish this goal, it follows the Church Calendar. Each year the lectionary teaches the Paschal mystery: the incarnation, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ. The lectionary uses the Scriptures quite deliberately in a typological/prophesy-fulfilment manner in order to accomplish its stated goal and purpose.

#### 2. *Its objective presentation*

The lectionary claims to proclaim the Word of God to the Church in an ordered and systematic way around the theme adopted. This safeguards a congregation from being subjected to the idiosyncratic tendencies and personal vagaries of a particular Minister.

#### 3. *Its pastoral sensitivity*

The lessons are so ordered as to fulfil a pastoral as well as a liturgical function. Because of the diversity of backgrounds of God's people who are participating in the liturgy, the readings have been kept short so as to remain within everyone's level of comprehension and understanding.

### **B. Weaknesses**

#### 1. *Its use of the Old Testament*

The Three Year lectionary adopts the Gospel lection as the primary one from which the overall theme of the readings is then determined. The Old Testament lection is, as a consequence, chosen on a typological/prophesy-fulfilment basis. The lectionary's most extensive criticism (from both Catholic and Protestant scholars) has been in the area of its use of the Old Testament. It should be kept firmly in mind that it is the principle of maintaining the Gospel lection as the primary, theme-setting one, which has in turn led to the way in which the Old Testament is used. The Old Testament books are broken up into short readings from here and there to suit the Gospel lection, and this robs them of their full force and may even bend or distort the meaning they have in their own historical context.

2. *Its non-adoption of "lectio continua"*

Because *lectio continua* was not adopted as a principle of composition, two major problems arose: it became almost impossible to use the lectionary as a basis for expository preaching; and no complete book (or major passage) was read to the congregation in its entirety. This weakness is quite disastrous as far as use of the Old Testament is concerned; it is a little better, though far from satisfactory, when the epistles are read. Some in course readings are provided, but far more revision is needed to overcome this area of weakness.

3. *Its "mini" and "disjointed" lections*

The Vatican II lectionary based its versification on the Jerusalem Bible. When that same versification was carried over and used in the Revised Standard Version (or other modern versions widely used in other denominations), some serious anomalies occurred: lections started or finished in the wrong place, no proper subject was provided, and "edited" passages made it almost impossible for the reader's eye to synchronise with mind and speech unless the whole edited lesson was typed out in full. Some lections are far too short. They have too little substance and are therefore unsatisfactory liturgically.

4. *Its lack of integration with the Anglican Two Year lectionary*

The Three Year lectionary was compiled by the Vatican II commission for use primarily at one service on Sunday, and that being the Mass. The original commission therefore had no intention of compiling a lectionary that could be integrated harmoniously with any other lectionary used at any other service in any other denomination. Such a purpose was never in their minds.

6. **Conclusion**

The Three Year lectionary is undoubtedly a major, even monumental achievement. It is thorough in preparation, based on sound scholarship and permeated by a deep spirituality and pastoral concern. There is not the slightest doubt that these qualities have commended it to Catholics and Protestants alike.

The fact that lectionary compilation is such a demanding and difficult task has been another factor in the Three Year lectionary's remarkable success. Denominations have found it far wiser (and easier!) to adopt the Three Year lectionary than to produce one of their own.

However, the fact that numerous revisions of the Three Year lectionary have already been made reveals with undeniable clarity that it has some basic and fundamental weaknesses. The new *Common Lectionary* may solve the problem, but only time will tell. It is my conviction that the Three Year

lectionary is probably marred irretrievably by flaws in its foundational principles of compilation.

## NOTES

1. C. Mohlberg, ed. *Sacramentum Veronense* (Leonianum). Rome 1956, n.1265. Quoted in W.M. Abbott, ed. *The Documents of Vatican II* (London - Dublin: Geoffrey Chapman, 1966), 139.

2. W.M. Abbott, ed. *The Documents of Vatican II* (London-Dublin: Geoffrey Chapman, 1966), 139.

3. A. Flannery, ed. *Vatican II - More Postconciliar Documents*. Vols I and II (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1981), 2:120

4. H.T. Allen, Jr. *Common Lectionary: The Lectionary proposed by the Consultation on Common Texts*. (New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1983), "Introduction" 18.

5. W. Skudlarek, *The Word in Worship* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981), 33-34

6. It is not possible to arrive at an exact figure for what percentage of world-wide Christian churches now use the OLM lectionary. However, we can arrive at an approximate figure. The World Christian Encyclopedia gives the following figures for total world Christian population:

Roman Catholic	809 million	63%
Eastern Orthodox	124 million	10%
Protestant	345 million	27%
<u>Total</u>	<u>1278 million</u>	<u>100%</u>

From this we know that the pattern of Scripture use followed by 63% of world Christians (all the Roman Catholics) is found in the OLM lectionary. Based on church membership figures in the 1981 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, the total population of the Protestant denominations in the United States and Canada listed above which are committed to the OLM lectionary is 26 million, or another 2% of world Christian population. This with 65% of world Christian population known to be using the OLM lectionary, plus those Protestant groups in Europe, Canada, Australia, and the Third World who are already using it or are soon to embrace it, we can safely estimate that fully two-thirds of Christendom follows the OLM lectionary to establish its pattern of Scripture use.

Simons, "The Lectionary Approach to Scripture Translation", *The Bible Translator* (Practical Papers) 35 (April 1984): 216-223. (He uses the abbreviation OLM for Ordo Lectionum Missae to describe the Three Year lectionary.)

7. J.F. White, *A Lectionary* (Commission on Worship of the Consultation on Church Union: USA 1974), Preface.

8. L.A. Briner, "A Look at New Proposals for the Lectionary", (North American Committee on Calendar and Lectionary: reprint), *Reformed Liturgy and Music* 27 (Summer 1983): 126-129.

9. J. Reumann, "A History of Lectionaries: From the Synagogue in Nazareth to Post Vatican II", *Interpretation* 31 (April 1977): 116-130.

10. *Common Lectionary: The Lectionary Proposed by the Consultation on Common Texts* (New York: The Church Hymnal Corporation 1983), 5.

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Liturgical Commission Texts*. The General Synod Liturgical Commission. Sydney: 1985.

# THE WAY WE WERE - WORSHIP IN AUSTRALIAN CHURCHES IN 1900

## 7. THE PRESBYTERIANS

*Lachlan McInnes*

### **Introduction**

The worship within a particular branch of the Church is determined by:

1. the theology of that church concerning the nature of God;
2. the forms and orders accepted as its traditions and practice; and
3. the contemporary social pressures.

In particular congregations modifications will be produced by the personal qualities and ideas of the minister and by the concepts held by the members of the congregation, particularly by those who are the accepted leaders.

At the close of the nineteenth century, the Presbyterian Church in NSW mirrored its Scottish origins in its adherence to the Westminster Confession of Faith as its subordinate standard of doctrine, and to the Directory of Publick Worship of the Westminster Assembly of 1645 as the basic form of its worship. While some of the ministers were Australian trained by 1900, or came from the Presbyterian Church in England or Ireland, most were Scottish by birth and training. Members of their congregations included a large proportion of people who regarded Scotland as their mother country and 'home'.

The divisions within the Scottish Church were obvious in the Australian situation. A majority of ministers had Free Presbyterian connections. They brought with them into the Australian Church their strict Calvinist doctrines and their own forms of worship. There was also a diversity due to the fact that many ministers came from other traditions, from the Presbyterian Churches of England and Ireland and from the Methodist and Congregational churches. Those who were not Presbyterian-trained were given extra training in both Presbyterian principles and polity, but, naturally, continued to be influenced by the forms and attitudes of their previous denominations. The Presbyterian Church in NSW therefore presented a diversity resulting from the origins of the ministers.

The peculiar nature of Australian society and the isolation experienced in the country areas also caused diversity in practices. Local congregations made their own traditions within the framework of the accepted order. However, in spite of local variations, the basic structures of worship were similar.



## **Theological Basis**

The subordinate standard of the Presbyterian Church was the Westminster Confession of faith of 1647 which set forth the majesty of almighty God. He was the infinite and eternal, the omnipotent and omniscient, before whom man bowed in humble adoration. Worship was the acknowledgment of the transcendent nature of the deity, and of the unworthiness of the worshipper, who was utterly dependent upon the Grace of God mediated through Jesus Christ.

The supreme standard of the Church was the 'word of God contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament'. While the Bible was accepted as the literal Word of God by many, particularly those with Free Church background, there were those who believed that the written word was the vehicle through which God spoke to his people.

The conflict between these two interpretations was to become much more divisive in the early part of the twentieth century. However, by 1900, the divergent biblical stance was shown in the style of preaching that was a major part of the church's worship. Nevertheless, the basic doctrine of 'salvation by faith and faith alone' was universally accepted within the church.

Thus, material 'aids to worship' had no place within the church, as they had no place in the churches of Scotland or the non-conformist churches of England. In so far as worship was an act of the soul, naked before the majesty of its Maker, so written prayers and books of worship, traditionally, had no place.

## **The Directory of Worship**

The form of worship set out by the Westminster Divines in 1645 and accepted by the Church of Scotland in the same year condemned 'the Liturgy used in the Church of England (notwithstanding all the pains and religious intentions of the Compilers of it) because of its read prayers and its many unprofitable and burdensome ceremonies'. Similarly, the book of 'the Papists' was condemned. The use of such books 'confirmed people in their superstition and idolatry'. Liturgical forms, it was claimed, made 'an idle and unedifying ministry which contented itself with set forms made to their hands by others'.

The Directory of 1645, like that of John Knox's Book of Common Order of 1556, was not a prayer book. While it set out in minute and tedious detail what the various prayers should contain, it only directed ministers in the structure of their worship and the spirit of their prayers, not to the words they were to use. Thus there was a need for educated ministers, theologically sound and able to express themselves in words. From its beginning in Australia, the Presbyterian Church was proud of the standard of education in its ministry.

The Directory gave directions as follows:

- a) The congregation should assemble 'in a grave and seemly manner'. People were required to take their seats 'without adoration or bowing themselves to one place or another'. The minister then solemnly called the people to worship 'in all reverence and humility'.
- b) The scriptures were read, a chapter from each of the Old Testament and the New and the minister, when judged to be necessary, might expound upon any part that was read.
- c) A prayer followed, first of confession, seeking forgiveness and new life; then intercessions for the church, those in authority, the King and rulers, and for the right proclamation and the hearing of the word that was to be preached.
- d) The sermon then followed, the subject to be some text of scripture faithfully expounded in which the preacher was to use 'his skill in the original languages and in such arts and sciences as are handmaid unto divinity'. The sermon was a medium for expounding the scriptures, teaching the doctrines of the church unto the salvation of the hearers and directing their moral conduct.
- e) Prayer followed the sermon, turning the 'chief and most useful heads into some few petitions'.
- f) Should there be no administration of the sacraments, a Psalm might be sung and the congregation dismissed with 'a solemn blessing'.

This form and order for the normal Sunday act of worship was standard for the Presbyterian Church in NSW with minor and local modifications.

The celebration of Holy Communion in Scotland was not to be undertaken without due preparation of mind and soul. Thus it was administered infrequently in most Scottish parishes, in spite of the requirement of the Directory that it was to be observed frequently. A quarterly celebration was considered to be sufficient in most places, in some less frequently and in a few rare cases more frequently. However, when it was observed, the celebration of Sacrament was a 'high' occasion with much exhortation and warning beforehand.

The renaissance of worship that occurred in the nineteenth century helped to revitalise worship in Scotland and to save it from deadly moralistic boredom. The United Presbyterian Church in Scotland and then the Free Church both produced manuals that contained prayers that could be used in corporate worship as a guide to the minister. These appeared about the turn of the century and slowly influenced the church in Australia.

### **The Shape of the Ministry**

A cursory survey of the list of ministers entering the service of the Presbyterian Church in NSW in the twenty years prior to 1900 shows that by

far the majority were Scottish and either Free Church or United Presbyterian Church trained. We may wonder why it was that they came to this outpost of empire - was it because there was no place for them in their home land, was it because of their missionary and evangelical zeal believing that God was leading them to this place, or was it the spirit of adventure? Some had gifts above the ordinary and were able to make a tremendous contribution to the life of the colony. Some exerted little apparent influence. But all made their contribution to the life of the church, and in varying degrees to the manner of its worship, according to their training, heritage and zeal.

Records are somewhat unreliable, but the following may be taken as an indication of the relative strength of the different backgrounds within the ministry. The figures are for the newly inducted ministers from 1880 to 1900 in NSW.

Scottish origin:

Established church	15
Free Church	43
United Presbyterian	34 - 92

Other Presbyterian Churches:

Ireland	16
England	15
Wales	5
Canada, USA	7 - 43

Trained in NSW	33
Other Colonies (and States)	26 - 59
Received from other branches of the Church	12 - 12 - 206

The predomination of Free Presbyterian and United Presbyterian Churchmen as against those of the Established Church of Scotland must have had a tremendous influence in setting the standards of the church in NSW. They brought an evangelical fervour, the practices of the Free Kirk, and, often, a narrowness in their biblical interpretation and outlook.

For those who came from overseas, particularly from the Established Church of Scotland, the atmosphere in the colony of NSW must have been shockingly egalitarian. The gold rush had produced a materialistic society. A considerable proportion of those who had been convicts had established themselves on the social ladder. The movement for federation and a distinctly Australian commonwealth all helped to create a sense of freedom. Power was exercised by a new gentry. The old system of patronage, which

caused so much disruption in Scotland, was different in the new land. In many parishes the minister held more power than he would have held in Scotland. In other places the leading members of the congregation held the power. In many places conflict was inevitable.

### **The Form of the Worship**

Naturally, there was a variety in the forms of worship from place to place. However, the general atmosphere of the worship was austere. The general demand that 'all things be done decently and in order', with dignity befitting the nature of the transcendent God, produced an air of solemnity that pervaded all the worship.

Strict rules applied to what was permissible on a Sunday. The puritan sabbath allowed no laughter or secular music. People were expected to devote the day to the worship of God which included self examination and devotional reading. Games, even whistling, were sinful on Sunday. There is no doubt that in many of the country areas the sabbath rules were relaxed, but never to the extent of allowing organised games. Families might gather or visit, engaging in social chatter, but in the strict congregations this was frowned upon.

The Free Church, which would have no singing but that of the Metrical Psalter, and no music except that of the human voice raised in praise, greatly influenced the colonial church. An old, oft-told, story concerns the man who left the Presbyterian Church because an organ was installed and went to the Methodist Church instead. When asked about his change and reminded that the Methodist Church contained an organ, he replied 'But that's not the House of God'. The story may be apocryphal, but it none the less illustrates both the prevalent attitude to music and reverence for the Presbyterian Church and its building.

The Metrical Psalter played a major part in the order of each service within the Presbyterian Church as a whole, and on the Sunday when the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper (most eschewed the term 'Holy Communion') no hymns were used, all the singing was from the Psalter.

As in puritan fashion, the interior of the church buildings was bare. Crosses were never used as these were regarded as popish. The only symbol that might be used was the emblem of the burning bush. Often across the front above the communion table was the elaborately printed text, 'Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness', and the worship might begin with the words 'I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord'. However, while the exterior of the building might be quite pretentious, there was little beauty in its interior, and little joy in its worship.

Lacking religious symbols, two decorations came to be used. One was the stained glass window depicting some biblical scene, usually given as a

memorial to some deceased member. The other was the memorial tablet. The use of the latter was often carried to the extreme and the building, being the spiritual home for the family, also became the memorial place for departed family members. One example of the latter was particularly memorable - it commemorated an elder and contained the text 'he being dead, yet speaketh'. This tablet was placed where it could always be seen. Much to the despair of many ministers, it was directly above the pulpit!

In spite of this, dignity was the standard. Frequently the act of worship commenced with the church officer or an elder bringing in the bible and placing it on the pulpit. Lecterns were rare and, when present, rarely used. The entrance of the bible signified the entrance of the Word. The minister then entered, preceded by the elders. When an organ was used the organist would then give the chord for all to stand and the doxology 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow' was sung. The present writer recalls how, fifty years ago, he was reprimanded for not using the doxology. He was informed that no Presbyterian service could begin without its being sung. That was the distinctive item in Presbyterian worship, according to his self-appointed instructor.

The Call to Worship and introductory prayer of adoration followed by a Psalm or hymn opened the act of worship. The first prayer was one of confession and supplication. The readings from scripture, Old and New Testaments, with or without a Gospel lesson, came next.

The order of worship usually followed was:

Call to worship, scriptural.

Prayer of adoration.

Praise, a hymn or psalm.

Prayer, confession, repentance, request for grace to live according to Christ's way.

The Old Testament reading.

Praise, a Metrical psalm.

The New Testament reading, not necessarily from the gospels.

The Pastoral Prayer - thanksgiving and intercession.

Intimations and Offering.

Praise, a hymn or psalm.

The Sermon.

Prayer, gathering the sermon points.

Praise, a hymn or psalm.

The Benediction.

In the Free Church people sat to sing and stood to pray, but, as in the Church of Scotland, the reverse was the case in most churches in Australia.

In the larger churches which had choirs anthems were sung as items within the service.

The main feature of the normal Sunday worship was the sermon. All else, frequently, was determined by its theme. In Free Churches there was usually a lengthy exegesis of each bible reading as well as the hour long sermon, so that the service could take up to three hours.

The quality of the sermon largely depended on the ability of the preacher and, while there was a variety, there were many powerful and able preachers who exerted a tremendous influence on both their own congregation and the community around them. Following the example of that fiery Scot, Dunmore Lang, many were not afraid to speak on political and social issues.

Communion Sunday was the occasion for much preparation. Communion cards or tokens were distributed to all members in good standing. Then, during the week prior to communion, preparatory services were held. Members were exhorted to examine their conscience and seek forgiveness lest they 'eat and drink unworthily'. On the great day the elders came, if possible, in morning dress complete with top hats. They were dressed to appear before the Divine Majesty, and yet prepared humbly to serve. In the poorer areas the elders at least wore their best with white shirts and black ties. In all churches the pews were 'dressed' with white cloths to represent tables, and the elements were served by the elders to the people in the pews. By the turn of the century many of the congregations had come to use the individual glasses which had first appeared in the 1880's, though some still used the common cup. In many congregations a whole loaf of specially baked bread was used, sometimes with the centre specially cut and reassembled so that it could be easily broken and distributed.

## **Conclusion**

Presbyterian worship at the turn of the century in NSW possessed a dignity that was not dependent upon outward form. It was led by a scholarly ministry in which divergent views were held. It was true to its Scottish heritage and was beginning to feel the ferment in liturgical studies that was taking place there. It also contained influences that came from other branches of the Church, influences which many claimed weakened its standards.

Solemnity had the danger of becoming sombre and tedious and, unfortunately, this did happen. However, the Presbyterian Church held its people, gave them spiritual nourishment and moral direction. It made a witness for righteousness in the Australian society.

## NEWS AND INFORMATION

### SOCIETAS LITURGICA: THE 1989 CONGRESS

Societas Liturgica is an international and ecumenical society for liturgical study and renewal. The 1989 Congress of the Society was held in York during the week 14-19 August. There were about 200 participants drawn from 31 countries, including six participants from Australia. The setting for the Congress close to York Minster (where the splendid Congress Eucharist was celebrated), together with an excursion to Durham for one day, stimulated reflection and added to the enjoyment.

The work of the Congress proceeded by means of major addresses (by Donald Gray from England, Pierre-Marie Gy OP from France, Adrian Hastings from England, William Crockett from Canada, DS Amalorpavadass from India, and Aidan Kavanagh OSB from USA), a series of seminars (led by scholars from England, Hungary, the Philippines, USA, and West Germany), short papers by members (including papers by Tom Elich and Charles Sherlock), and discussion in language groups. Common prayer formed the context in which the work was done.

The Congress theme was 'The Inculturation of the Liturgy'. Early in the proceedings we were warned of the danger of 'inculturation' being done to death by over-use. The warning became a sort of prediction! Inculturation was dealt with from the perspectives of theology, history, and sociology. The seminars on contemporary issues in inculturation addressed: the women's movement; language; the urban deprived and youth as liturgically alienated groups; music; church architecture; and popular religion.

The historical analysis showed us that inculturation had been happening from the beginning, but not always as much as it should. Sociology was used to show ways in which inculturation was taking place but not always as well as it might. From the theological perspective inculturation was seen to be quite definitely a good thing. The almost universal seal of approval to inculturation was tempered, however, by some who feared for the purity of the gospel message in the face of syncretism and others who hoped that the *magisterium* would curb excesses.

In the final paper of the Congress Aidan Kavanagh remarked 'the fundamental issue seems to be not merely liturgical inculturation but, far more complexly, a valid set of inculturations for Christianity itself. This expands the issue quite beyond matters liturgical alone and raises anew the perennial matter of what the Church itself is. It is a question of fundamental, even radical, ecclesiology'. Herein lies a dilemma. Ecclesiology as a topic was beyond the scope of the Congress, but ecclesiology and inculturation of the liturgy go hand in hand. Even so, some thought-provoking and action-

stimulating matters were aired and there were encouraging reports of inculturation taking place.

For me, perhaps the most significant feature of the Congress was the opportunity to meet and converse with other liturgists from around the world and from a wide variety of ecclesiastical and cultural traditions. Faces which had previously only stared from the dust-covers of books now smiled and spoke - and the faces of ordinary working liturgists which have not featured on dust-covers are now recognised as friends and partners in the liturgical enterprise.

R. Wesley Hartley.

## BOOK REVIEWS

FAITH LOOKING FORWARD : the Hymns and Songs of Brian Wren, with many Tunes by Peter Cutts. (*Hope, USA, 1983, Price unlisted*)  
PRAISING A MYSTERY : 30 New Hymns by Brian Wren. (*Hope, USA, 1986, Price \$4.80*)  
*Both limp-back editions.*

In his introduction to *Praising a Mystery*, Brian Wren writes, "The writing of hymn texts is a kind of exploration.....They [the thirty new hymns] try to clear away entanglements, gain new vantage points on familiar valleys and roads, or climb what for me is an unexplored hill-top and enjoy the view."

The sincerity of Brian Wren's attempts at helping to create a new hymnody is obvious in every text. It is refreshing to find two collections of new material which present the Christian message - and our response to it - in contemporary terms. However, I found the end result variable in quality.

Some texts contain great beauty. 'I Have No Bucket and the Well is Dry' (No 13, 2nd Vol) is dignified, rich in imagery, rhythmical and strongly symbolic (though not once does the name of God or Jesus appear. I find this a common fault in much contemporary hymnody.) Another example of a strong text is 'Lord Jesus if I Serve my Neighbour' (No 40, 1st Vol). 'Holy Spirit hear us as we pray' (No 22, 1st Vol) and 'Look Back' (No 18, 2nd Vol) are likewise verbally satisfying. On the other hand, the text of 'A Woman in the Crowd' (No 27, 2nd Vol) appears rather awkward and banal. It doesn't



quite 'come off'. 'When Joy is Drowned' (No 33, 1st Vol) offers the following:

When joy is drowned  
in heartbreak or dejection  
that gives no guarantee  
of resurrection.....

and also

If we must scour  
the depths of desolation  
and make of grey despair  
a blood relation.

The mixed imagery feels uncomfortable. One is torn between the supermarket (no guarantee on this product), the kitchen (scour), and the local swimming hole (drowned) all in the space of eight lines.

However, on balance, I found the words of most of the hymns quite presentable, and sometimes inspired. 'Lord God, your love has called us here, as we, by love, for love were made.' There is also a refreshing lack of cliché, sentimentality, or archaic language together with a distinctly contemporary 'feel' to the words.

The 'tunes' are less homogenous than the words, being by different composers. There are obvious differences in quality from one composer to another. Many of the hymn tunes are by Peter Cutts. In general, his melodic lines are singable and attractive, but his grasp of harmony is less sure. While grammatically, Cutts' writing is respectable, his modulations seem, to this reviewer, sometimes arbitrary, and his harmonies at times remind one of 'South Pacific'. ('Too many sevenths, my dear Mozart.') Cutts' vocal ranges are admirable for congregational use, and some melodies show originality, eg, the attractive syncopations of No 20, 1st volume.

Together with Peter Cutts there appear well-respected composers such as Erik Routley, Ralph Vaughan Williams, and Malcolm Williamson, as well as lesser known writers of varying plumage. Jane Marshall provides a strong tune in 'Christ Loves the Church' (No 16, 2nd Vol). Hal Hopson in 'I have no Bucket' writes a beautiful melody that is modal in character.

On the other hand, there are too many examples of badly written hymn tunes and harmonies (Nos 12 and 23, 2nd Vol). Such musically incompetent material should never be given permanent enshrinement in a printed hymn book. The hymn tunes in the earlier volume are generally of a better quality than those in the second.

An interesting feature in many of the hymns is the absence of a time signature. This is particularly sensible in the case of hymns with a shifting time signature.

The layout in both volumes is attractive, easy to read, and clear. The books are a comfortable size to hold and, with the soft binding, should stay open on an organ (or piano) stand - a vital quality for demented organists.

The two volumes contain some work of merit. My final recommendation - Use, but handle with care.

Juliet Hoey.

### WORSHIP: EXPLORING THE SACRED

*James Empeur SJ, Washington DC, The Pastoral Press, 1987.*

*Pp 238 +ix. Paper \$A18.95 (\$US11.95)*

James (or 'Jake' as he is more familiarly known) Empeur is a teacher in the Jesuit School of Theology, Berkeley, California, where he is also Chair of the Doctoral Programme in Proclamation and Worship within the Graduate Theological Union. He has been a visitor to this country on a number of occasions and has the reputation of someone who thinks deeply and strenuously about worship as well as being a highly creative liturgical designer. His friends also know him as a man of cultural distinction and charm.

While each of these attributes is reflected in this substantial book, it is the first which is most sustained. *Worship: Exploring the Sacred* is given over to the question 'how is the liturgy the place of sacrality' for modern, secularised Westerners. The book is not written as a systematic treatise. It is more nearly the collection of a number of essays and addresses which Empeur has been developing over a number of years. But these are shaped into a series of three connected topics: an exploration of the places and possibilities of a contemporary experience of the holy; an addressing of questions as to how this might be worked out in planning worship (there are several essays on different 'models' of worship); and finally a section on liturgical possibilities for the future (new ideas for a more workable calendar, liberation and imagination, and the meaning of 'creativity').

Rather more important even than this organisational cohesiveness are the sustained thematic threads which run throughout the essays. Chief among these is the principle that for modern people, 'The holy is not located somewhere in the supernatural but in the everyday.....the sacred is that which moves us, touches us, makes us tremble, in the ordinary rather than the extraordinary, in the immediate rather than the distant'(p 10). Thus the task for liturgists, as for other theologians, is now 'to see the secular and the holy in continuity rather than opposition to each other' (p 9).

But Empeur is no 'secular theologian' out of the 1960's ('the now dated....theology of Harvey Cox's *Secular City* in which liturgy had no

place'). Which means that the notion of 'transcendence', - the 'questioning process in which we climb up and over [our] limits' (p 22), - is just as central for him as are his convictions about 'the extraordinary contained in the everyday'. Empeureur approaches this from a number of different angles in the early chapters of the book, but one sustained development is in the essay, 'The Search for Meaning in the Liturgical Experience'. Here he sees 'transcendence' as taking form in (1) 'new consciousness' ('a matter of openness to ourselves.....not to settle for the comfort of well-being, a fixed and settled framework for our existence'); (2) 'redemptive time' ('the time we get lost in.....the time we surrender to the sunny beach, cool mint julep, the celebrative meal, the nude body of a lover, and hopefully to Christian liturgy'); (3) 'existential freedom'; and (4) 'hope' (which is not necessarily to be predicated as an optimistic reading of the future, since this, as much as a pessimistic view, is to prejudge it. Rather it is an attitude which celebrates that there *is* a future into which we live, 'really, a matter of self-acceptance').

This leads, then, to the most far-reaching aspect of Empeureur's theology - namely his steady insistence that 'God is no thing' (p 23). Rather, God is like 'a horizon against which reality is seen in a new way'.....'the perspective which gives meaning and tone to what is seen' (p 24). 'God is in my knowing, but is not the object of my knowledge, is present in every act of loving, but is not to be imaged as a lover facing me' (p 87). The process of self-transcendence, then, means the 'progressive elimination of any objectifiable God in our lives' (p 23).

But, finally, this ongoing discernment of God as the very structure and context and dynamic of our self-transcendence is not something done in isolation. Transcendence means, by definition, encounter and engagement with others. So Empeureur comes to a sustained critique of the individualistic, privatising tendencies of North American (and our) culture. Liturgy means the sharing of the vision of God which we have in Christ, in order to lead us out of ourselves, into a listening and giving (to others and to ourselves) (p 91), and then 'an incarnation of justice' (p 107) in the world.

Because, for Empeureur, 'the glory of God is the human person fully alive' (quoting Irenaeus), the 'humanisation process is the history of salvation' (pp 86, 109, and often). It is its capacity to promote this process which gives liturgy its purpose and validity.

These themes are developed and explored from numerous different directions, giving a fullness to which my brief representation here does scant justice. For myself the approach is both theologically convincing and rich in liturgical suggestiveness.

I could see two points at which I think the approach contains some sort of 'problem': one of these is felt by Jake Empeureur himself (pp 90f) - it is how

we shall conceptualise *prayer*, given his insistence on the non-objectifiability of God. Prayer, in most conventional understanding is a speaking *to* God, not just a sense of God's presence as 'horizon'. I was less than sure that this question had been met, let alone resolved, in the assertion that 'when men and women.....are in touch with the deepest dimensions of their lives they are in contact with the divine presence in them.....they are relating to God' (ibid). Another point at which the same sort of question arises is with 'covenant' imagery. When he says 'This covenant is made concrete in [people's] commitment to God which must permeate all levels of their lives', it seems difficult not to think we are imagining here some *one* to whom we are committed.

More puzzling, both because it is said many times over, and because then other sentences follow it which seem strongly to offer a qualification, is the assertion that 'liturgy presupposes community' (p 45 and thereafter frequently). One can sympathise with the wish to undercut any naive supposition that 'getting it right' liturgically will automatically bring a community into being. The recollection of deeply significant worship experiences which have arisen out of week-end camps or retreats confirm this. But I think that the liturgical moment is also critical in letting the community's awareness of itself *as* community comes to expression. And if, as Empeureur says, 'The community's relationship with God, its spirituality, is created in the very symbolic realisation of it' (p 56), or again, 'in that exchange of vision and faith-sharing, Christ rises to visibility and we have that ecclesial reality we call the church' (p 63), then I think one may say that liturgy is instrumental in *effecting* community as well as bringing to expression such sense of community as already exists. Protestants are wont to recall John Wesley's words at points like this: 'The eucharist is a converting ordinance'.

I have given no attention to Jake Empeureur's seminal suggestions about the necessity for an inculturation of the liturgy for established Western churches no less than for churches in Africa and Asia, nor to his suggestions for a calendar which would fit these cultures rather better than the traditional one.

As I hope I have made clear, this collection of essays from one who thinks hard and feels deeply about the place of the Christian rituals in our contemporary society seems to me to offer a powerful stimulus and encouragement in our own pursuit of these issues. I did regret that the book is as sparsely footnoted and referenced as it is; to know where there are other, or similar, discussions of the same issues would serve to make it a more useful text. On the other hand, Empeureur's own style is beautifully lucid and every essay is meticulously constructed. I have been very glad to see these essays in print.

Graham Hughes.

## PREACHING: THE ART AND THE CRAFT

Walter J Burghardt SJ, New York, Paulist Press 1987 Pp.250, \$US11.95

## PREACHING AS A SOCIAL ACT: THEOLOGY AND PRACTICE

edited by Arthur van Seters, Nashville, Abingdon Press 1988, Pp.267

In an earlier review for this journal (*AJL* Volume 1, No 4, October 1988) I noted the rising tide, already at flood proportions, of new books on preaching; and I expressed the hope that before too much longer I would find in the midst of all this the, or a, definitive book which would bring together the several factors which are contributing to this resurgent interest in the sermon - new perceptions of language and the way it works; a new professionalism among teachers of homiletics, in the United States especially; and, not least, the recovery of the bible's place in worship, particularly of course in post-conciliar Catholicism.

The two books noticed here encompass some of these interests, but they are not yet definitive works by far. They tend in fact to offset each other's strengths and weaknesses.

Walter Burghardt will be a name well known to the Catholic readers of *AJL*. He has been teaching preaching for nearly four decades, is presently Theologian in Residence at Georgetown University, and has published several volumes of his sermons. He writes out of this wealth of experience, but also with the freshness and fervour of new convictions: about the centrality of the bible in Christian faith; about the organic connections in worship of scripture, the homily and the liturgy; and a post-Cartesian awareness of the importance of imagination.

The most attractive aspect of his book for both Catholic and Protestant readers, I should think, is the second of these insights, ie, the fact that the sermon (or homily, in Burghardt's terminology) is a constituent part of the liturgy. His first chapter is given over to the question of language, spoken language particularly. But this has not progressed four pages before Burghardt is saying: 'Here is not just any word, it is a *liturgical* word (p.6, my emphasis). There follows a detailed analysis of how the liturgical context must shape the nature of the utterance which is a sermon. He follows a now familiar Catholic line in understanding the liturgy in terms of prayer and therefore finds that, within this comprehensive act of prayer, the preparation of the preacher, the forms of the language chosen, the attitude of the preacher to and with the people, and the content of the utterance, will all be affected accordingly. This which is introduced under a chapter heading on language, is taken further in a later chapter specifically given to the relationship between the sermon and the liturgy. 'A liturgy without a homily is kin to a man or woman with one arm or one leg or one eye: essentially

woman or man, but not the complete being the God of nature designed' (p.109). (From a Protestant perspective one is impelled to say: 'Just so; and so too of a (Sunday) liturgy which does not include the sacrament of Holy Communion.')

Following Yves Congar, Burghardt sees that it is the Word which makes the liturgy local and particular.

Burghardt, as I noted above, is conscious of the new importance being given to phenomenological studies of language and also of the importance which imagination and non-discursive forms of expression generally are attracting to themselves in the (so-called) 'post-modern' or 'post-Cartesian' world. But one has to say that such perceptions are those of an old, wise practitioner rather than of a zealous and thorough researcher. It is a matter for great appreciation that this experienced campaigner senses clearly the direction in which we must go. But the subject-matter needs a much closer attention than has been given it here.

Much of the remainder of the book is taken up with practical suggestions as to how to preach on specific (and sometimes 'awkward') subjects or lections.

What Burghardt does best is astonishingly absent from the book edited by van Seters. That is, in this entire collection of essays there is scarcely *any* serious awareness of the sermon as a liturgical utterance, or of the liturgy as the indispensable context of every sermon. The essays stem from the work of the Research Group on the Social Dimensions of Preaching of the American Academy of Homiletics. It must therefore seem lamentable in the extreme that a group of writers who are as eminent as these among North American teachers of homiletics should be as insensitive as they are to the liturgical dimensions of the sermon, a fact which is sadly underlined by the almost complete absence of communication between the Academy of Homiletics and the American Academy of Liturgy. (in defence the authors could point to marginal references in the essays to worship as the context of preaching, but there *are* marginal references, not thought through methodically as to how this affects the sermon, and the unmistakable presumption throughout the volume is that preaching alone must do all the healing and converting work.)

On the other hand, the strength of the book is, as its sub-title makes clear, its attention to the sociological setting in which preaching takes place and how an awareness of this must leave its marks on the sermon at each level of its formation. For some time now, biblical scholarship (in both Old and New Testaments) has been attentive to the social contexts in which the documents took their shape. It is accordingly appropriate and helpful that sociological disciplines should now be brought to bear on this, the 'near' end of the hermeneutical passage from text to sermon. Interestingly enough, it is the contribution of the biblical scholar, that of Walter Brueggemann, which stands out in the collection. The others, while helpful and relevant (and with

the exception of an essay by Thomas Troeger on the way in which the language of the sermon must, through its imagistic qualities, speak to 'the landscape of the heart' for any given cultural grouping of people) do not overly convince the reader that their authors are deeply conversant with contemporary sociological theory or research. Justo and Catherine Gonzalez write from the perspective of liberation theologians on the global setting of social and economic imbalance in which authentic preaching must be set; Don M Wardlaw writes about the two social worlds between which preaching must move, the world of the texts and the world of the listeners; Edwina Hunter depicts through two case studies the impact on the preacher of his or her own social formation; Brueggemann, as already noted, draws attention to the influence of sociological studies on biblical research and what a corresponding attention to the social setting of the hearers of the sermon might suggest; Ronald J Allen and Thomas Troeger attend to language as a social construction and to how the preacher must be attentive to this in finding the medium for a contemporary Word of God.

What emerges again and again is the authors' clear conviction (also shared by Burghardt) that the single most powerful social factor to be taken into account in any reflection on the contemporary setting of preaching is the privatising, individualistic determination of present-day North American (and scarcely less true for us) Anglo-Celtic culture. It is the merit of these essays therefore, an aspect not considered by Burghardt, that they stress in numerous ways the need for the sermon not to be conceived, nurtured and brought forth in the splendid isolation of the preacher's study, but that this (at certain critical points, at any rate) is a congregational and collaborative task.

Thus there is something of important contemporary worth in both these recent books on the preaching dimension of worship. The fact that each complements the other's deficiencies, however, says that we are still waiting for a work which can fuse both Catholic and Protestant emphases.

Graham Hughes.

# COMMUNICATIONS

The Editor, AJL

Dear Sir,

I read with interest the article of Dr. Charles Sherlock [AJL, 2 (May 1989) 43-51] 'Rites of Reconciliation - the Anglican Tradition'. As usual, with Charles' writing I was stimulated, frustrated, and informed.

My frustration on this occasion arises from what I believe to be an error of fact, and a notable omission, and the two are closely related.

At the heart of the 'Ordering of Priests' at the moment of ordination, the Bishop says, 'Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained'. This is the first of two statements of the central points of priestly ministry; to make the other point the Bishop continues, 'Be thou a faithful dispenser of the Word of God, and of his holy Sacraments'.

To enter into any discussion of the Anglican tradition of reconciliation which omits a mention of the Ordination Charge to the priest is bound to leave something of a gap.

This leads to his statement of error, where Charles writes, 'The Church of England of the Reformation.....did reject the *exclusive* spiritual authority of a priest to absolve sins'. However, there is no occasion in the Book of Common Prayer where absolution is in the hands of any other than the priest, and this tradition continues through the 1928 revision.

There is a move among a small section of the Anglican Church in Melbourne, of which Charles is a leading proponent, to advocate lay presidency of the Holy Communion service. Clearly one obstacle to that is the pronouncement of absolution by the priest alone, and while custom has grown up, enshrined in some services in An Australian Prayer Book, for lay people to give an assurance of forgiveness (never termed 'absolution'), this is not envisaged to be used regularly at the major service on a Sunday. Thus to omit any reference to a priest's ordination in relation to absolution is clearly an important part of the advocacy of this new, unecumenical movement whose ability to divide the church will certainly exceed that of the Ordination of Women and will, in addition, be in contravention of Anglican tradition.

Philip Newman (Archdeacon)



The Editor, AJL

Dear Sir,

Some of the points made by the Reverend Edmund Randall in his review of 'Towards An Australian Prayer Book: Part 1' [AJL, 2 (May 1989) 64-5] I should accept but I do think there is more to be said.

The book does *not* include Greek forms but transliterations taken from the English Missal, 'eleison hymas' and one which I incorrectly copied - 'ischryos' instead of 'ischyros'. [The Greek forms were not in Fr. Randall's manuscript but were put in by the Editor. RWH] Mr.



Randall does not mention another, perhaps amusing, misprint for which I again am responsible - 'Credo in unam Deum' instead of 'Credo in unum Deum'!

By 'choral singing' was simply meant singing by a choir as distinct from singing by a congregation or choral prose recitation. The Latin of the Sanctus in the book is in fact the translation of the *Prayer Book's* Sanctus (as in Bright and Medd and in Bagster) though the 1560 Latin Prayer Book had the Roman form.

The Preface makes it clear that the work is just a private revision of the Book of Common Prayer (BCP): it notes there have been many such revisions. To some extent, therefore, I suppose it is 'an anthology of favourite forms' though I do not think that is really an adequate description. The book includes familiar material from the 1928 revision in particular, but it also includes original suggestions and original writing - eg much of the alternative 'Form of Thanksgiving and Consecration'.

In general, the forms are not so much 'favourite' ones but ones which seek, as the Preface says, 'to take into account new Biblical and theological learning' and to 'more fully reflect the diversity-in-unity of the Bible itself and of the Catholic tradition'.

In most modern liturgy, orthodox 'Biblical Theology' is expressed in 'contemporary' language. This book, by contrast, retains the more evocative 'traditional' language which is less likely to encourage fundamentalist, literal interpretation, but on the other hand it seeks to allow for the diversity of Christian thought and understanding that exists in the New Testament and in the continuing history of the Church.

There are many older revisions of the BCP, from Lindsey's onward often Unitarian, which *excluded*, for instance, the rich traditional conciliar symbols of our Catholic faith. This book does not exclude them but it does put alongside them simpler forms which I think can be justified on Biblical and theological grounds. Thus it allows alternatives to the Gloria Patri and the Apostles' Creed at Morning and Evening Prayer, the Apostles' Creed as an alternative to the 'Nicene' at Communion, and the omission of any creed when that is thought appropriate. The work is 'Broad Church' (but not partisan) in seeking to comprehend what I should argue is a legitimate diversity. It does exclude, however, at the end of readings those most misleading words, 'This is the Word of the Lord', about which John Barton has written so wisely in 'People of the Book?' (1988 Bampton Lectures).

Again, following the older classical Western pattern, in general the prayers of the liturgy are addressed to God, as is seen notably in the revision of Cranmer's Litany. Words addressed to our Lord in a service, of course, have some New Testament warrant (and they are common in Christian hymns) but here, eg in the Te Deum and Gloria in excelsis, their use is not obligatory.

I am sorry the review did not criticise these aspects of the book nor the Communion liturgies (really four eucharistic orders) that it contains. One of those, for example, replaces Ante-Communion with a flexible Morning Prayer (as indeed some modern Anglican prayer books permit). Among other things, if desired, this allows one to avoid the excessive emphasis placed on the reading of the Gospel in conventional liturgy. (Here again, we can learn much from John Barton when he writes in his final chapter about the Christian gospel.) In that same service, the Communion proper is perhaps a little more Protestant than Cranmer but Cranmer's work is revised to bring it into line with the common 'four-fold pattern'. Another of the orders reflects the more traditional pattern of the Nonjurors and Scottish Episcopalians.

The book even *as it stands* I find of use, even now, especially in its provision of varied forms for one's own following of the daily services of Morning and Evening Prayer. Of course, it is not very convenient, as it stands, for congregational use in church. However, the idea of clearly differentiated alternative forms on one side of the page, I think, is worth considering for books printed in a smaller size for congregational use, and if implemented,

could remove some of the difficulties at present faced by anyone trying to follow, say the 2nd Order Communion in An Australian Prayer Book. Well aware that fewer read, and fewer read easily, these days, and a Rector of a working class parish for over 10 years, I do agree with Cranmer and Mr. Randall that a liturgy should be easy to follow!

John Bunyan, Rector of Chester Hill with Sefton.



The Editor, AJL

Lawrence Bartlett's careful review of the Leader's Book of the *Uniting in Worship* (AJL 2/1, p 61f) was much appreciated, and probably not least by the members of the Assembly Commission on Liturgy. We would have enjoyed joining Canon Bartlett's proffered round-table discussion!

Obviously the book must stand on its own merits. In discussion, the context of some of the decisions might have been explained, but (at least until the publication of a *Guide to Uniting in Worship* later this year, which will partly fill the gap), readers are free to make their judgments.

To take one example, for which Canon Bartlett reserves strong criticism (p 63), the Assembly Commission on Liturgy decided to use the original form of Professor David Frost's post-communion prayer 'Father of all/we give you thanks and praise/that when we were still far off/you met us in your Son and brought us home' (UIW LB p 129). The relevant line now reads 'Anchor us in this hope' (cf ASB/AAPB 'Keep us'), and the metaphor, in Christian symbolism, is entirely appropriate. The General Synod of the Church of England authorises liturgical forms literally word by word and they, like Canon Bartlett, thought the word 'infelicitous' and altered it. The Assembly Commission did not. But we were only partially guilty of 'changing one word'.

To continue with this theme, I want to add a note to my article (AJL 1/4, pp 134-146) on the new Great Prayer of Thanksgiving for the Service of the Lord's Day in *Uniting in Worship*. Late in its production there was a scribal error of a kind familiar to students of the transmission of the New Testament, a (quite unintentional) alteration of a word in the direction of perceived logic. Because I believe the error has considerable theological and liturgical implications I want at least to point it out.

The (standard) preface as printed in the first edition of the Leader's Book (p 93) reads

In time beyond our dreaming  
you brought forth light out of darkness,  
and in the love of Christ your Son  
you set man and woman at the heart of your creation.

The original second line, as argued in the Assembly Commissions of Liturgy and Doctrine, was 'brought forth *life*'. This is how it was printed in AJL. True, if you begin at the end of the line, it *is* logically *light* which comes out of darkness; but the metaphor as it begins is primarily that of birth, 'brought forth life'. The later change of metaphor is deliberate for two reasons: first, because S. John is playing the same game in his Prologue (see especially 1,4 RSV), and, secondly, because the acknowledged principle of writing liturgical prayers (David Frost's) is that the breaking of metaphors is precisely what makes a prayer memorable and repeatable, the subject of thought and contemplation. His post-communion prayer is a notable example of the genre.

I see the losses of this minus error as four-fold: the loss of a biblical use of metaphor; the smoothing-out of a deliberate and creative angularity, intended precisely to make the prayer

open and less predictable; the consequent removal of feminine imagery at a point where (in the section of the prayer dealing with creation) the use of an image of God other than paternity naturally came to hand; and, finally, the perpetuation of the negative contrast of light and darkness which, however unlikely it may seem to (white) Australians, is elsewhere in the world understood as racist. Certainly it is a biblical problem, but we have built an entire mythology of darkness/light, black/white, in which one side is evil and the other side is good, one demonic, the other divine. Applied to human beings, and christology, the consequences are truly horrifying. This latter point was pointed out to me by a reader overseas.

The Assembly Commission on Liturgy was not convinced that it should make the change for the second printing. Any presider whom I have convinced may like to make the alteration to restore a carefully considered original.

Robert Gribben.

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