



Baptism and eucharist: challenges

ANDREW WALDO

Our church is currently engaged in a rapid movement toward open eucharist, meaning open access to communion regardless of one's baptismal status. This essay on the subject of open communion emerged from a spontaneous discussion at a clergy conference in the Diocese of Minnesota in the spring of 1998. It was presented at our fall 1998 clergy conference at the invitation of Bishop Jelinek. In the meantime, I have developed it further to take into account several newer insights and observations.

The wave of fervor to remove baptism as an "obstacle" to communion, as proponents identify the problem, has failed to articulate an adequate theology of what is for us a core theological, pastoral, and ecclesiological question: whether baptism should continue to precede communion. The question usually comes up in relation to printed and spoken announcements about who is welcome to come to the table and specifically whether the word "baptized" should be voiced in that invitation.

Parishes by the dozens have moved to adopt an open practice, so the practice is obviously in place. In my view, however, we have not considered the consequences to our identity, our baptismal theology, or our ecclesiology, except in a reactive way.

As I understand it, the rationale for communion being open to anyone, regardless of their baptismal status, has partly to do with hospitality and partly to do with the radical nature of Jesus' own

ministry to people on the outside of established religious practice. The rationale also appears as a reaction against thinking of baptism as a "ticket to communion," implying that maintaining our historic practice is mere legalism and rigidity.

We can indeed be effective at putting up barriers between our faith communities and those who are seeking to belong. In trying to get around such barriers, there is power in the possibility that someone from "off the street" might, in an unexpected moment of grace, be fed at a sacred table with believers. On the surface, it would seem this is precisely what Jesus did all the time.

Without denying the potential power of such an experience in a eucharistic setting, scripture does not uniformly support the idea. For though Jesus did indeed eat with tax collectors and sinners, the institution of the sacred meal, a meal to be eaten "in memory of" him, took place with his disciples alone.¹ The sixth chapter of the gospel according to John contains much upon which our eucharistic teaching is based. A close reading of the whole chapter suggests that there may be a difference between the Last Supper and the many other meals Jesus ate with people, however fundamental these other meals also are to our understanding of him. It is a difference that seems to have to do with the belief and commitment of his followers, or at least this may be how the disciple community interpreted eucharist by the time this gospel account was composed.

In the Johannine account, as Jesus begins to explain to the crowds that God provides the bread from heaven that gives life, many among them say, "Sir, give us this bread always." When Jesus proceeds to tell them that *he* is "the bread of life," they start to interrogate him. Since he was teaching this in the synagogue at Capernaum, the first objections were raised by those who we can assume were religious authorities. But the concerns are not limited to them. For some of his disciples were also bothered by the teaching. When they sought comfort from him about it, he came back again with the challenge that this particular teaching was "spirit and life." Offended, many who had been fol-

Inside

General Convention 2000, by Jean Campbell, OSH	5
Worship in Jubilee 2000, by Ron Miller	7
Liturgical perspectives on changes in North American hymnody in the past twenty-five years, by Karen B. Westerfield Tucker	9
Farewell ASB, welcome Common Worship, by Phillip Tovey	12
Music, by Mark Howe	14
Books, ed. Elizabeth Morris Downie	15
In memoriam: Samuel E. West	17
Promises, promises . . . , by John W. B. Hill	20

lowing him decided this was too much, and they abandoned the quest. At the end of this passage, only the twelve were left, and Jesus already suggests that one of them is “a devil,” as he puts it. It is worth noting that this moment immediately follows the feeding of the multitudes, an occasion some would claim supports indiscriminate eucharistic table fellowship. Jesus is already aware that following him will take a specific and radical commitment on the part of each disciple.

This passage at least is enough to raise the question about just what sort of meal we are serving on a Sunday morning around our altars. Is it primarily about *hospitality*—and thus more like Jesus’ meals with tax collectors, sinners and the multitudes—or is eucharist primarily about

What precise relationship open communion has to the formational process of baptism has not been made clear to me. Very little in the way of substantive theology has been written about it at all.

OPEN is published four times a year by the Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission. Copy deadlines are March 1, June 1, Sept. 1, and Dec. 1 for publication the following month. Editorial office: Ruth A. Meyers, OPEN Editor, Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, 2122 Sheridan Rd., Evanston, IL 60201, office (847) 328-9300, FAX (847) 328-9624, E-MAIL: r-meyers@seabury.edu

Editor Ruth A. Meyers

Editorial Committee
Ruth A. Meyers, Elizabeth Morris Downie, Ormonde Plater, Marilyn Haskel, and John W. B. Hill.

Manuscripts (preferably WordPerfect files on 3.5-inch disk), cartoons, letters, and other communications may be sent to the editor at the editorial office.

Book Review Editor
Please send book review copies to Elizabeth Morris Downie, 106 E. Elizabeth St., Fenton, MI 48430-2322 or edownie@voyager.net.

Production Manager Ormonde Plater
Proofreader Art Jenkins

The Associated Parishes, Inc., is a nonprofit organization. Office: PO Box 27141, Baltimore, MD 21230-0141, (410) 752-0877, call before faxing. Membership dues of \$30 per year (\$15 for students) include subscription to OPEN and all brochures.

Coordinator Ronald H. Miller

Web site www.associatedparishes.org

Copyright © 2000 by Associated Parishes, Inc. All rights reserved.

ISSN 1071-5614

community *memory and identification* with Jesus? It is certainly about belonging. But if it is about memory and identification *and* about hospitality, which has the prior claim? Or *is* one claim prior to the other? Neither this passage nor our desire to freely communicate the love of God are, I think, enough to answer this question. We have to dig also into the question of *how we form our identity as Christian disciples and the nature of baptism itself*.

There are two tacks I want to take here. One has to do with the work of social anthropologists and the other to do with what the Book of Common Prayer 1979 accomplished around baptism. On the latter, I can’t imagine that any of us are ungrateful for the revisions to the baptismal liturgy. The profound strengthening of the form and substance of our baptismal rite has begun to bear all sorts of fruit in our church. There is now a much more explicit standard for Christian living. The covenant is more solemn in its presentation, and more people take it seriously. Its honesty about the realities of human living—we *are* tempted, we *do* sin, we *do* fail—is coupled with a dramatic proclamation of the freedom from sin and death which trust and identification with Christ bring to us. The bar has been raised by this prayer book’s baptismal rite. And, indeed, I can think of little that has so helped to enliven us these past couple of decades than the Baptismal Covenant, its use in our liturgies, and its effect on our work in the world. As a result, I think we really have begun to have a better idea of who we are and to what purpose God is calling us.

Regarding social anthropologists, John Westerhoff, among others, has taught us much, especially with regard to catechesis and adolescent formation and rites of passage. Those teachings include the insight that over the millennia humanity has formed its most powerful loyalties and its most clearly defined communities through shared ordeals. In nearly all such communities, the ordeal is preceded and followed by ritual acknowledgement of the transition the ordeal is supposed to enact. Entry into the catechumenate at one stage followed some time later by baptism at the Easter Vigil have historically been our faith’s most analogous expression of this process.²

What precise relationship open communion has to the formational process of baptism has not been made clear to me. Very little in the way of substantive theology has been written about it at all. Richard Fabian, rector of St. Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church in San Francisco, wrote an article in *Open* in Fall 1994, which Leonel Mitchell cautiously challenged in the same issue.³ Sara Grant, a Catholic nun in India, has written an article.⁴ But there is little yet that communicates precisely *how* open communion contributes to the formational process. Fabian’s article almost shuns the idea of baptismal preparation. I have heard of another more recent publication, “Font to Rail or Rail to Font?” but I have not seen it and cannot comment. It must be said of the other examples that only Fabian argues for official change. What we need to know about his parish, however, is that by many, if not all, reports it is unique among Episcopal churches and that he and his associ-

ate have spent nearly thirty years developing this way of living the liturgy within their community.⁵ None of these articles provides a well-framed description of the relationship between open eucharist and the formation of Christian identity. Of them, only Fabian is talking about taking a new approach to Christian formation, and his description inadequately addresses baptismal issues.

Even so, we are justifiably suspicious of asking people simply to jump through hoops. Rigid legalism is no answer. Many of us work hard to break down barriers that seem to be set before people who may not be like us, or who simply don't believe—yet—and we have a deep discomfort with *being* such a barrier ourselves. We want to open doors, not close them.

I wonder, though, if we will in the end create the desired effect by opening eucharist up officially. And I want to be sure you understand that I'm talking about what we *put in print* and what we *say* to people, not what we *do* when the stranger comes to our altar, regardless of what we have said and printed. I, for one, have never turned away, nor would I turn away, anyone from the communion rail. The altar is not the place to address the issue. My main point here, though, is that churches everywhere are falling over each other to be the most accommodating, inclusive, accepting, welcoming place around. Sometimes the motives are deep and true; sometimes they have more to do with numbers and fear of offending others, or a subconscious lack of confidence in the institutional church as a locus of truth and love. I expect that sometimes both motives apply.

In light of the baptismal rite we now have, another question has to be asked if open eucharist is to become the norm. Are we willing to be as *rigorous and deep* in our baptismal preparation as we are *unconditional* in our eucharistic practice? We still have many parishes that practice private baptism. Even among those relatively few parishes that restrict baptisms to the principal Sunday service, preparation is usually limited to one or two sessions. Sometimes, a practice session before the service is the extent of the prep-

aration.

A few years ago, Roy Oswald led a clergy conference in our diocese and asked about our catechumenal practices. It was clear how very few of us have ever had a catechuminate of even six months for adults. If this cursory preparation is how we treat baptism, then what does this say about how powerfully we ourselves identify as leaders with Christ *in baptism*? And does open eucharist help us to avoid our teaching responsibilities around the baptismal covenant?⁶ Even the dismissive label describing baptism as a “ticket to communion” suggests that many have already moved into thinking that eucharist is the destination.

Are we going to trade substantive, attentive, and deep reflection on entering the Christian journey in exchange for a hope that being what some would call radically open (Fabian) will somehow accomplish the main point about what it means to be Christian?⁷ Can we be eucharistically accommodating and at the same time offer a meaningful ordeal (Westerhoff) that forms loyalties and strong faith communities? Is even *that* new ordering—having fully open communion *and* fully developed catechesis—the better way? Would it not be worth considering how we are concretely hospitable in *every way* that we encounter others—in our narthexes, worship services, parish halls, homes, outreach ministries and study groups—and to invite and walk *with* those who would learn of costly discipleship and seek Christ in the waters of baptism?

In this essay, I have used the word “open” and the word “accommodating” to describe various intentions. I need to emphasize that when I use the word “open,” I'm assuming that we all want at the deepest level to be open to others. However, when I use the word “accommodating,” I intend to convey a sense that we are losing something of our identity. My insight on this aspect came to me when reading a lecture Edwin Friedman gave in 1992, entitled “The Challenge of Change and the Spirit of Adventure,” and is affirmed in a video of Friedman speaking on leadership.⁸ In the course of his discussion, Friedman identifies two sig-

nificant emotional barriers that prevent decisive, differentiated and creative leadership from happening. It was the second of these that struck me concerning the baptism/eucharist issue. He states that the “contemporary fashion of valuing empathy over responsibility locks us into a pathological orientation.” This orientation creates imaginative gridlock, preventing us from being able to bring about substantive change. “. . . Somehow it became popular to believe that feeling *for* someone [compassion] was not enough; one had to feel *within* them. Far from being empowering,” he says, “valuing empathy over responsibility actually takes away strength as it transfers power to the most dependent. . . . Most important, the focus on empathy rather than responsibility keeps us from seeing that the essential nature of all pathology is relational in character.”⁹

I have cited Friedman here, because I found myself wondering whether our ways of including and accepting others are sometimes guided primarily by our *empathy* for them in the sense that Friedman uses the word empathy. Is it our desire to invite anyone to the sacred meal, regardless of whether or not they themselves have chosen a commitment to this eucharistic faith, because we have empathy for their situation? Is this desire based upon our fear of speaking openly about the cost of discipleship, or our fear of being clear and differentiated about who we are as people of a covenant, or our fear that they'll go away and not join us? Are we simply afraid that we'll hurt their feelings?

At Trinity Church in Excelsior, Minnesota, where I serve as rector, we have worked to integrate all generations into our worship in as unselfconscious a manner as possible. Young and old are actively involved in worship leadership every single Sunday—as cantors, lectors, dancers, lay eucharistic ministers, instrumentalists, and so forth. The effect, we have been told, is that visitors feel as if they've entered an *inclusive* community, even if they themselves have not come to communion that day, for reasons that may have nothing to do with the status of their

baptism. People say they feel drawn and welcomed because we seem to be practicing what we're preaching. Our verbal invitation to communion has also been commented upon as feeling inclusive: after welcoming visitors, we add, "but especially know that all baptized persons are welcome to receive communion, and all persons are welcome to be baptized, coming forward to the altar in the meantime with the community for a blessing during communion."

This all begs yet another question: if we have provided grace-filled hospitality in every other way, is it not okay for people to say they don't want to join us? Do we so lack confidence that we will be truly accepting in our day-to-day relationship with the stranger or outcast? By indiscriminately opening communion, are we offering a gesture, even our *best and most deeply precious* gesture, as an easy atonement for our own shortcomings? Or is it because we do not yet know who we ourselves are in Christ? Or, is it that we are unwilling or unable to be hospitable in other, material ways?

Or, indeed, *is* there instead a genuine, responsible voice here, calling us to a new relationship with the stranger and outcast? And if so, who has articulated for our whole church and not merely for a particular parish the structure within which that new relationship will take place? I would add to this a question about whether it is legitimate for us to *restrict* our articulation of a new baptismal/eucharistic theology—a bedrock concern of the *whole* Episcopal Church—to the particularities of a local environment. It would seem that without open discussion that applies to us all, local congregations can undermine the broader polity. If the broader polity is not of concern to the locality in which change is taking place, we encounter the ecclesiological dimension of this issue. At the very least, I would suggest that Episcopal clergy in particular who seek this change have an obligation to make a case for all of us. That way, the conversation is engaged at lay and ordained levels, and, above all, it is engaged

beyond the walls of a particular community.

As we seek to answer these questions, the stakes for our church are profound, for we live in a culture that is plagued in the most deadly sense of the word by undifferentiated inclusivity. And yet in baptism we have a rich opportunity to provide differentiated, strong leadership. The final questions then are basic: Who are we, *really*? To whom do we belong? And *how* are we going to communicate our faith to others hospitably?

A Possible Bulletin Notice For Communion

We invite all baptized persons, regardless of age or denomination, to share in Holy Communion. If you have not been baptized, we invite you to come forward with the community for a blessing. Indicate that you seek this blessing to the ministers of communion by crossing your arms across your chest. After the service, we invite you to speak to the clergy about the new work of faith begun in you and about the process of being baptized into the community of Christ's disciples and living out your faith. (*A spoken version of this is included in the body of the essay.*)

Andrew Waldo is Rector of Trinity Episcopal Church, Excelsior, Minnesota.

Notes

¹ I will be accused here of using the same argument others used to keep women out of ordained ministry and that some continue to use to exclude gays and lesbians from full life in the church. Be assured, I am not. I am, however, suggesting that there are in fact a few boundaries that strengthen our identity, boundaries that nonetheless have some porosity.

² My contact with Westerhoff's views on this came in the context of a series of discussions on confirmation and adolescent formation that took place in the Diocese of Atlanta between the diocesan Liturgy and Music and Education Commissions in 1993-4.

³ Richard Fabian, "Patterning the Sacraments after Christ," *Open* (Fall 1994), pp. 1-4; Leonel Mitchell, "Should the Unbaptized be Welcomed to the Lord's Table?" *Open* (Fall 1994), pp. 5-6.

⁴ "The Bread of Life," *The Tablet* (7 January 1989).

⁵ I must add that I find Fabian's description of St. Gregory's to be seductive. It is obviously a vibrant, creative community that has a powerful witness to hospitality and a liturgy that looks just plain fun even as it is evocative. I am not in the end, however, seduced. We have a responsibility to the larger church to probe and test, even as we seek to keep our eyes and ears open to St. Gregory's witness and, increasingly, to the witness of other parishes.

⁶ What to do about children, especially young children, is, I think, a different issue. My assumption, consonant with the practice of the early church, is normally to see children growing up in the Way in the context of a household of faith—family first, worshiping community second. This should perhaps be true *however* we perceive the baptism/eucharist question here. The implication of this understanding is that we need to be as intentional about encouraging and teaching parents *how* to do Christian formation in the *home* as we are about ongoing nurture of the individual children and adults within our faith communities.

⁷ Fabian's comments on catechesis ("Patterning the Sacraments after Christ," p. 2) give the impression that since catechesis for early Christians was an almost flagellatory ordeal of groveling and penance, modern catechesis is likely to take the same approach and have the same effect. It is reasonable to challenge his implication.

⁸ Edwin H. Friedman, *Reinventing Leadership* (video), Guilford Publications, Inc., 1996.

⁹ Edwin H. Friedman, "The Challenge of Change and the Spirit of Adventure" (Bethesda, MD: Center for Family Systems, 1992), p. 14.

General Convention 2000

JEAN CAMPBELL, OSH

Two major pieces of liturgical legislation were passed at General Convention. The first was a response to the 1997 General Convention's request that the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music (SCLM) develop a plan for the enrichment, renewal, and revision of the common worship of the Church. In an extensive report, the SCLM outlined four major areas of concern: 1) data collection to determine the liturgical needs of the church; 2) drafting and revising rites; 3) developing educational and catechetical materials to support the enrichment of our common worship; 4) the empowerment and development of worship at the congregational level that supports the multicultural nature of our church. While the convention affirmed the work of the commission and a plan for the renewal of the liturgy, the Program, Budget and Finance Committee reduced the funding from the requested \$750,000 to \$75,000. The SCLM will now have to determine what aspects can be carried out with the resources available. Liturgical renewal is happening at an amazing pace. The real question is when will we commit the energy and resources of the whole church on the one aspect of our life that forms and sustains in who we are as the people of God.

The second major legislation was the approval of new supplemental materials for *Ministry with the Sick or Dying and the Burial of a Child*. These were approved with minor changes and will be published by the Church Publishing Corporation as *Enriching our Worship II*. Of particular importance is a revised service of public healing including a new litany of healing, expanded suggestions for scripture readings, and suggestions for hymns. There is an extensive section of prayers for situations not covered in the BCP, such as prayers for use by a sick child, for an extended course of treatment, for sur-

vivors of abuse and violence as well as prayers for one who fears losing hope, for one suffering from mental distress, for those who are developmentally disabled and after the loss of a pregnancy. The prayers at the time of death include several new litanies and "A Form of Prayer when Life-Sustaining Treatment is Withheld or Discontinued." A new service for the burial of a child provides prayers, readings and suggested hymns. Additional prayers are included for a stillbirth or child who dies soon after birth, for children who die by violence or by suicide, for a miscarriage etc.

These texts are a new generation of prayers reflecting the desire to build and expand the images and metaphors for God as well as to respond to new situations in the context of our daily lives. One phrase, "God of infinite mercy, we thank you for Jesus our true Mother" generated some debate but was retained. On the whole, the texts were improved in committee and passed the convention on the consent calendar, which meant that they would not be debated on the floor of the House of Bishops or Deputies.

The convention Committee on Liturgy and Music postponed final approval of the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) by revising the resolution proposed by the SCLM to adopt the lectionary. There was concern that the RCL is not widely known or used in the church. The lectionary continues to be approved for trial use, and a resolution making some minor changes to the RCL was adopted. Adaptations include the addition of several canticles as alternatives to psalms, keeping the Transfiguration gospel on the Last Sunday after the Epiphany, and the prologue of John as the gospel for the First Sunday after Christmas. Bishops are encouraged to designate several congregations in their dioceses to use the lectionary beginning in Advent 2000, in order to enhance the effectiveness of trial use. The SCLM is to develop a means to assess the trial use. It

is hoped that congregations using the RCL will communicate their experience to the SCLM.

Three new names were added to the calendar: Enmegahbowh, priest and missionary who was the first Native American presbyter, on June 12th; Florence Nightingale, nurse and social reformer, to be kept on August 12th; and Philip the Deacon, deacon and evangelist, on October 11th. Several other names were submitted to the convention, including Philander Chase, Festo Kivengere, C. S. Lewis, Janani Luwum and William Temple. These have been referred back to the SCLM. Those submitting names were not aware of the guidelines included in *Lesser Feasts and Fasts* for submitting names for addition to the calendar. It is also very apparent that there is a great deal of confusion on what it means for a community to celebrate those who continue to bear witness to the gospel throughout the generations. One of the principal understandings of the guidelines is that a community can celebrate without the authorization of the national church and that congregations, dioceses, and provinces are encouraged to develop local calendars.

Article X of the constitution was amended to include the following sentence at the end of the second paragraph: "Provide for use of other forms for the renewal and enrichment of the common worship of this church for such periods of time and upon such terms and conditions as the General Convention may provide." For the past fifteen years, the General Convention has authorized liturgical texts for use as part of a process for drafting new materials for future "trial use." This amendment provides a constitutional basis for this process. As an amendment to the Constitution it will have a second reading in 2003.

There was an attempt to provide a

Continued on following page

more equitable and accessible process for the authorization of scripture translations to be used in public worship. Currently Canon II.2 provides for the authorization of versions of scripture to be read in church. The 1997 General Convention asked that a new canon be written with the intent that it would take into consideration needs of local communities especially for non-English versions of scriptures and, where needed, scriptures in an accessible level of English. Unfortunately, this resolution got entangled in committees. The end result is that the list of approved translations remains in the canons with the addition of *Dios Habla Hoy*. Unfortunately, versions in English will continue to be authorized by the General Convention and others by diocesan bishops.

The canons were also amended to provide for a term of office for nine years for the Custodian of the Book of Common Prayer. The Rev. Gregory Howe, retired rector of Christ Church in Dover, Delaware, now residing in Massachusetts, has been appointed as the new Custodian. He has extensive experience as a member of the House of Deputies Committee on Liturgy and Music as well as serving on the subcommittee on expansive language of the SCLM.

A paper produced by the Standing Commission on Ministry Development entitled "Toward a Theology of Baptized and Ordained Ministry" was proposed to provide the basis of continuing revisions to Title III of the canons. Richard F. Grein, Bishop of New York, circulated among bishops and deputies a second paper dealing with ministry entitled "House of Bishops Pastoral Study on Priesthood." Although no definitive action was taken on these papers it is clear that there will be a great deal of discussion around issues of ministry in the coming triennium. Another resolution called for "a study on the theology of confirmation and the relationship of confirmation to evangelism, baptism, adult membership, church leadership and eligibility for election to church office" by the Standing Commission on Ministry Development

(SCMD) and the House of Bishops Committee on Theology. A resolution to amend Canon I.17.1c to make explicit that persons who have made a mature public commitment in another church may be received, not confirmed, was referred to the SCMD. Other resolutions concerning the licensing of lay ministers and accountability of such ministers has also been referred to that commission. Hopefully Archdeacon Ormonde Plater, a member of the SCMD, will keep us informed concerning developments over the next three years.

Several matters were referred to the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music. New additions were requested to the *Book of Occasional Services* for commissioning a core group of church planters and for inaugurating a newly planted congregation. There was also a resolution to publish alternate prayers of the people as well as material from *A New Zealand Prayer Book*. The Committee on Liturgy and Music noted that the prayers did not fulfill the 1979 BCP rubrics for prayers of the people or for a eucharistic prayer, and the resolution was referred to the SCLM in hopes that there would be communication with the Episcopal Network for Evangelism who proposed the resolution.

Two resolutions that have their roots in the liturgical revision of the 1960s and 1970s were adopted. One resolution was an apology to any persons who were "offended or alienated by inappropriate or uncharitable behavior during the time of transition to the 1979 BCP." The second affirmed a resolution of the 66th General Convention that "for pastoral reasons, the texts of the Daily Offices and Holy Communion contained in the 1928 edition of the BCP remain available for occasional use under the ecclesiastical authority subject to the guidelines for supplemental liturgical materials." Published reports of this resolution do not seem to understand that it is not the 1928 rite but the texts that are for use. The structure of the rite is to be that of 1979 BCP.

I have attempted to report on the actions of the General Convention concerning the liturgy. But this reflection would

not be complete unless I mentioned something about the experience of convention. I was gratified by the number of members of Associated Parishes who were members of the Committee on Liturgy and Music. I am also grateful for the ministry of our Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold, Clay Morris, and all who shaped the liturgies at General Convention. I am convinced that the clarity and authenticity of our worship together has changed the tenor of conventions over the years. We are indeed learning to be a community of reconciliation, nourished in Christ and sent out to be the witnesses of justice and peace.

The convention affirmed the "Leadership Program for Musicians serving in Small Congregations" and provided support for this program for the next triennium. This project trains diocesan leaders to develop a diocesan program for musicians serving in the church who have had no formal education as church musicians.

[The Blue Book, including the report on the enrichment, renewal and revision of the common worship of the church and the texts of *Ministry with the Sick or Dying* and *Burial of a Child*, can be found at www.churchpublishing.org. Resolutions are also available at this site, but one note of caution: this site gives the resolutions but does not state what specific action the convention took on each. The full summary of actions of the convention should be available from the convention office in the near future.]

Jean Campbell, OSH, is vicar of St. Mark's Church, Chelsea, NY, a member of the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, and vice president of Associated Parishes Council.

Worship in Jubilee 2000

RON MILLER

As a longtime member of AP and reader of *OPEN*, I remember critical reviews of worship at General Conventions, although a quick search did not uncover such reviews for 1997 or 1994. When the editor asked me to review General Convention worship this year, it was clear that as a first-time convention-goer it would be a challenge. Planning worship for ordinations and diocesan conventions has been a frequent responsibility, but the question of scale and the related issues of distance and immediacy were in striking contrast to my diocesan experience. Most of us don't have the opportunity to plan daily worship for two to three thousand people; it is good that someone has learned, and I hope that Associated Parishes Council member, Clay Morris, who was responsible for the overall design and the detailed planning, is writing a handbook for those who eventually will come after him.

Beginning with Wednesday, July 5th, the first full day of the convention, and continuing until the last legislative day, Friday, July 14th, there were celebrations of the Holy Eucharist at which Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold preached, various bishops presided, and deacons and lay persons exercised the liturgical ministries of their orders. Members of the convention community were seated at some three hundred circular tables of ten, so that there might be some sense of intimacy and an opportunity for sharing in the large convention hall set aside for worship.

As one entered from the lobby passing under a huge banner of the face of Christ (which closer examination revealed as composed of small photographs of many individuals), there were large glass bowls of water, presumably blessed, which recalled our baptism and which were for many an occasion for blessing oneself. The large hall itself was used in its plain

... the planning committee has sought to keep the worship of Convention simple, appropriate to the gathering and the space, and to provide symbols that are visual and tactile reminders of who we are and to whom we belong.

state rather than decorated to look like "church." Centered at the far end was a large raised platform with the altar, pulpit, several tall candles, and seats for the chancel party. Attention was focused on this sanctuary by a number of banners which proclaimed "Jubilee" and showed more faces. A large cross commissioned for this occasion was carried by two acolytes in processions and placed in a stand on the platform during worship. On each table were found a daily service book with the music and texts for the day's service, as well as a smaller leaflet with additional information about the day or about the remaining daily services. Each of the leaflets contained the following statement of explanation:

When we gather in corporate worship, we unite ourselves with others to acknowledge the holiness of God, to hear God's Word, to offer prayer, and to celebrate the sacraments.

Book of Common Prayer, page 857

It is with that thought in mind that the worship for the 73rd General Convention of the Episcopal Church has been planned. The liturgies that mark these days seek to embrace the richness of our heritage as they explore the directions in which the Holy Spirit is calling the church to move in the future. Several fundamen-

tal assumptions have guided the design of our common worship—

- *a commitment to the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer and the challenge of the Baptismal Covenant,*
- *an acknowledgment that extraordinary gatherings should not attempt to replicate the worship of a local faith community,*
- *an awareness that essentials should not be overwhelmed by non-essentials.*

With these fundamental points in mind, the planning committee has sought to keep the worship of Convention simple, appropriate to the gathering and the space, and to provide symbols that are visual and tactile reminders of who we are and to whom we belong.

This parish priest found this statement and convention worship in consonance with each other and setting a standard which all liturgical believers might hope to emulate in their local assemblies. For all its dated character, the 1979 Book of Common Prayer gives a rubrical pattern which could transform our worship. It is my observation that few parishes or clergy have fully applied that pattern, but where they have, worship is indeed rich and enriching.

In Denver this simple structure was fleshed out with a wide variety of liturgi-

cal and musical sources. A variety of musical groups and styles were balanced with appropriate congregational music. The electronic organ was of an appropriate scale and used with sensitivity.

The texts of the service and music were drawn from a variety of sources. There was no discernible lectionary used for the readings; they had apparently been selected in consultation with the preacher as appropriate to the occasion. The eucharistic prayers used from Rite II and from the supplemental texts moved from one to another on subsequent days with ease and comfort. This reviewer was struck by the way they all seemed to be “of a piece” with different emphases and images, but all clearly thanking God for life, love, redemption, and the hope which moves us into the future. The attention given in recent years to enriching Episcopal worship has clearly been of value.

Four areas around the edge of the hall were designated as communion stations. The loaves of substantial whole wheat bread and flagons of wine were at the stations on tables as the service began. During the offertory they were carried to the altar and placed on tables flanking the main altar where the celebrant was able to visually include them in the offering of the eucharistic prayer. During the fraction anthems, which were suitable hymns which varied from day to day, the ministers of communion went to the platform, retrieved the consecrated elements, and arranged themselves in a spacious fashion at the stations. (Communion for roughly 3000 people took about ten minutes.)

It is hard to fault the worship of convention. A few voices were raised in protest of the limited amount of ethnic variety in texts and music, as well as the liturgical ministers. There is some validity to the criticism, but one can also observe that the worship accurately expressed the overwhelming Anglo character of those at the convention.

Sunday, July 9th, was the United Thank Offering Ingathering in an adjoining large hall, with the Rt. Rev. Simon Chiwanga as preacher. There were no tables or discus-

The major learning was perhaps that we've come a long way with how we worship, and that when convention is ready to fund substantial revision and enrichment of the Book of Common Prayer there is a new consensus of what worship can be like. I'm finding it hard to wait.

sion, but with these exceptions the service was much as the weekdays. A massive choir, a very large contingent of young people, and Episcopalians from local congregations swelled the throng to near 10,000, but one was not aware of being overwhelmed, except by processions of bishops and UTO representatives which could not be seen by most of the congregation.

Perhaps readers would like a sidebar or two describing other opportunities for worship. One evening a large crowd jammed St. John's Cathedral for the Integrity Eucharist. Where the convention worship was low-key and, with the table conversations, somewhat discursive, this service was full-blown, no holds barred, exuberant high mass. Huge processions with incense pots swinging, familiar hymns sung with full voice, a stimulating sermon by Bishop Steven Charleston, and a massive concelebration made no secret of the fact that Integrity, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people and their friends were ready to fly.

At the other extreme were the daily masses celebrated in a nearby hotel at the same time as the Convention Eucharist and discussion. The one service I attended was in a hotel meeting room arranged and arrayed like a 1950s parish church. A Rite I celebration of the “Vigil of the Holy Angels” featured hymns clearly photocopied from the *Hymnal 1940*, three male ministers, and a congregation of some 75 people. If folk really felt it necessary to

worship by themselves, the way the service was done clearly said more about them than it did about convention worship.

The convention worship was clearly and carefully planned to set the tone of the convention, and may well have gone a long way to help the business move as it did. Although there were no blinding insights about different ways to do things on the local scene, this was not intended as “show and tell.” The major learning was perhaps that we've come a long way with how we worship, and that when convention is ready to fund substantial revision and enrichment of the Book of Common Prayer there is a new consensus of what worship can be like. I'm finding it hard to wait.

Ron Miller is Coordinator of Associated Parishes.

VISIT OUR WEB SITE
WWW.
associatedparishes.
org

Liturgical perspectives on changes in North American hymnody in the past twenty-five years

KAREN B. WESTERFIELD TUCKER

This paper was given at the 1998 meeting of the Hymn Society of the United States and Canada.

In describing the different ministries of the Christian community, Reformed theologian Karl Barth mentions foremost “our office to praise God,” in which speech and action coalesce in the “highest form of human expression”—singing. The vitality and fitness of the Church’s song in its doxology, says Barth, is a register of the Church’s overall health:

What we can and must say quite confidently is that the community which does not sing is not the community. And where it cannot sing in living speech, or only archaically in repetition of the modes and texts of the past; where it does not really sing but sighs and mumbles spasmodically, shamefacedly and with an ill grace, it can be at best only a troubled community which is not sure of its cause and of whose ministry and witness there can be no great expectation.¹

Change in congregational song is thus both inevitable and necessary as the Church in every age renews its commitment to the proclamation of the timeless and timely Gospel message, and strives to worship God authentically.

If Barth is correct, then we should not be surprised that congregational song has undergone a transformation in the last quarter century and, in fact, we should welcome it as a sign of the Church’s liveliness. But, as in every generation, more is at issue here than simply the singing of a new song in a new day. Certain costs may be involved. In order to analyze the implications of this transformation, two basic questions will be posed.

First, have recent writers of Christian song been affected by more general changes in worship patterns wrought by efforts toward liturgical renewal? And second, has a church’s worship been significantly altered by new musical idioms? These two rubrics—the hymnological implications of liturgical change, and the liturgical implications of hymnological change—will shape our liturgical perspectives on changes in North American hymnody during the past twenty-five years.

I. The Hymnological Implications of Liturgical Change

The Centrality of the Paschal Mystery in Christian Worship

Perhaps the principal focus of liturgical renewal for many churches in the years since the reforms of Vatican II has been the recovery of the paschal mystery’s central place in Christian worship. Worship celebrates, proclaims and offers thanks for the death, resurrection and eternal reign of Jesus Christ as the core of God’s salvific work for humanity, but there is more. Worship itself—and even the worshipers—is to be shaped by this mystery through the power of the Holy Spirit. This has meant affirming Sunday as the day of resurrection, and, ideally, experiencing Sunday worship as a dynamic occasion where, as it was for the disciples on the road to Emmaus, the risen Lord is known through the hearing of the scriptures and the breaking of the bread. The meaning of the Easter event is now perceived as governing the interpretation of sacraments and sacramentals and uniting them together as variant expressions of the single mystery, such as, for example, the motif of dying and rising present in both baptism and funeral rites. The annual Christian calendar, of various

complexities according to church traditions, has been reinterpreted in light of the Triduum of Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Day, though many American Protestants in particular have been reluctant to give up the “primacy” of Christmas.

In the past generation, Sunday, the sacraments, occasional services and the liturgical year have all received new attention in the structuring of worship and the formulation of prayers. Such reemphasis has required hymnic expression as well, for theological and pastoral reasons. The community of hymn writers, for the most part, has met the challenge in the production of new hymns that now may be found in official church hymnals and hymnal supplements. Many new hymns for the Lord’s Supper have appeared, though often without the doctrinal nuancing evident in their predecessors—which have sometimes, unfortunately, been abandoned in favor of the newer texts. Surprisingly, not as many new hymns dealing with baptism have been produced, especially in light of the attention given by many churches toward a revitalized adult catechumenate, and there still remains a great need for hymns elucidating marriage, ordination, sickness, death and, for those churches that practice it, confirmation.

By far the greatest effort has been given to writing hymns for the church year, allowing some denominations and their congregations to experience for the first time festal song for days other than Christmas, Easter and Pentecost (e.g., Brian Wren’s Baptism of the Lord hymn “Lord, When You Came to Jordan”). It is important in these new hymns to focus upon the theological and liturgical meaning of the christological day or season without reliance upon climatic metaphor,

Continued on following page

as New Zealander Shirley Murray reminds us:

*Carol our Christmas, an upside down Christmas:
snow is not falling and trees are not bare.
Carol the summer, and welcome the Christ Child,
warm in our sunshine and sweetness of air.*

*Sing of the gold and the green and the sparkle,
water and river and lure of the beach.
Sing in the happiness of open spaces,
sing a nativity summer can reach!*

*Shepherds and musterers move over hill-side,
finding, not angels, but sheep to be shorn;
wise ones make journeys, whatever the season,
searching for signs of the truth to be born.*

*Right side up Christmas belongs to the universe,
made in the moment a woman gives birth;
hope is the Jesus gift, love is the offering,
everywhere, anywhere, here on the earth.²*

The centrality of the paschal mystery has also influenced the organizational structure of numerous recent hymnals that have employed a dogmatic or systematic plan attuned to the history of salvation. According to this creedal chronology, hymns praising the character and work of God are followed by hymns on Christ and the Holy Spirit, which are in turn succeeded by hymns on the Church and its ministry.

Vernacular Texts

The approval of the liturgy and its hymns in the mother tongue of a particular community was for many Protestants a hallmark of the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation, and it has been for Roman Catholics one of the outcomes of the twentieth-century reformation in both liturgy and missiolo-

gy. The first stage of vernacular hymnody has typically constituted a translation from Latin or Greek—or Hebrew, to consider the case of psalmody; the second stage has been a translation in turn of those versions, as sung praise quickly transcended language group and geographical locale. Vernacular hymns have also required translation as they crossed linguistic boundaries, and some of those translations themselves have been fine works of poetry in the new language, as with the contributions made to English-language hymnody by Catherine Winkworth and her publication of *Lyra Germanica* in 1855. New Winkworths and John Mason Neales have emerged in the past twenty-five years, retranslating familiar texts and placing into English (or other tongues) texts both ancient and modern. The effort of Gracia Grindal to introduce, into English, hymns indigenous to Germany and Scandinavia has been a significant contribution in this period. But unfortunately many of the old and widely sung translations have been lost in order to make room for the new.

A discussion of vernacular texts must also take into account changes that occur over time within one particular language. English speakers concerned with liturgical renewal in the last two or three decades have had to address two linguistic issues which are equally theological concerns: what second-person pronoun to use in addressing God and what third-person singular pronouns to refer to God and to human beings. On the first matter, there has been a noticeable shift away from “thou” to “you,” with Episcopalians in the United States compromising in their 1979 prayer book by printing their collects in each form. Though the change from “thou” to “you” in a familiar prayer may pain the ear and raise questions about the relationship between creature and Creator, in hymnody there are the additional problems of rhyme and maintenance of the author’s intention—with or without the restrictions of copyright. Comparable concerns arise regarding the use of the third person in what is commonly referred to as “inclusive language.” Some

hymn-book editors and authors of collections have opted to alter the pronouns or rework lines in older hymns to avoid so-called problem spots. Rather than adulterate extant texts, others have elected to drop entirely unsalvageable hymns, as did the hymnal committee of the Presbyterian Church (USA) with the notorious “Rise Up, O Men of God.” The result has been hymns that challenge the memories of older parishioners or are questionable literature, and a decline in the number of older English hymns included in hymn books.

Reclamation of Ancient Texts and Musical Forms

Concurrent with the Roman Catholic reclamation of vernacular liturgy and hymnody has been the rediscovery of classical prayers, poetry and plainsong by many Reformed and Free Church Protestants. Early Christian and historic Protestant liturgies, newly designated as paradigms for twentieth-century Christian worship, have contributed to this interest, as has ecumenical conversation and worship. For congregational singing, this has meant the presentation of original-language or vernacular components of earlier liturgies such as the *Phos hilaron*, the *Kyrie eleison* and even the biblical canticles. Many of these pieces have been made accessible by the simple yet engaging music of Jacques Berthier and the community of Taizé. The Taizé Magnificat, in Latin or in translation, may be found in some interesting places—including the Christian Reformed Church’s 1987 *Psalter Hymnal*.

Besides the music of Berthier, Byzantine chant, Anglican chant and “Gregorian” chant may now grace Free Church denominational and non-denominational hymnals as musical settings. The welcome reception that many of these musical forms have received may not stem from any desire for ecclesiastical unity or for the reappropriation of elements from the Christian tradition, but rather from their popularity in the wider culture as “music that *sounds* spiritual”; the mean-

ing of the *texts* is largely regarded as peripheral. Who would have thought that recordings of “chant” by Spanish monks would generate such enthusiasm and make the charts? In an interesting twist on the worship and culture question, it is possible that some skeptical Protestants may receive plainsong into worship precisely because it is deemed to sound generically “spiritual” and not necessarily Christian. Indeed, a rural United Methodist church choir I directed readily approved of singing *Conditor alme siderum* translated as “Creator of the Stars of Night” and sung as plainchant because it was now in vogue to “sound like monks.”

The Quality and Quantity of Participation in Worship

The content of Roman Catholic promulgations on the liturgy dramatically changed during the course of the twentieth century, from the motu proprio *Tra le sollecitudini* issued by Pope Pius X in 1903, to Vatican II’s *Sacrosanctum concilium* (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*) and the rites it birthed. A constant throughout the century has been the fundamental understanding that liturgy, which is simultaneously doxological and formative, requires the full, conscious and active participation of the faithful. In practice this has meant for Catholics, among other things, a greater role given in worship to the person in the pew, and in many parishes this increased involvement has taken the form of congregational song.

Non-Catholics have also heeded this clarion call for more participation and have likewise regarded the singing of hymns, songs and choruses as an appropriate remedy for both clericalism and congregational passivity. Some congregations have even adopted what might be labeled a “parachurch” style of worship borrowed from InterVarsity, Navigators or Campus Crusade in which long stretches of congregational singing is broken up with prayer, readings, and a message—what Methodists historically have identified as a “hymn sandwich.” Because North

Americans no longer gather around the piano, worship also has the distinction of being one of the few places left where corporate singing routinely takes place.

In contrast to this encouragement of congregational singing (and sometimes it takes a lot of encouragement to get congregations to sing!) is what is taking place in some churches concerned with providing so-called “contemporary” worship. I say so-called, because the only things “contemporary” are the musical styles and the instrumentation; the liturgical structure is a throw back to the nineteenth-century revival. In the way some of these services are constructed, participation is redefined to mean entertainment. Music is taken out of the voices of the people and given to soloists and ensembles; if there is participation, it is no longer vocal but kinetic. Many in attendance don’t miss corporate singing since they’ve never known it. This change in liturgical style may have negative implications for the future of hymnody as a genre: the concession to consumerist, market-driven culture may reduce the capacity of congregations to master more demanding texts and music that the best in the traditional hymnic modes provides.

Reconfiguring Orders of Worship

A consequence of the liturgical ferment since the 1960s has been for many Protestants the reconfiguring of worship orders and the introduction of new elements into the service. Previously discarded or entirely new components have found their way into services, which have subsequently crowded out others in the efforts of worship leaders to limit the corporate gathering to an hour or less. Places for hymn singing have been lost in some services; in others, hymns or praise songs have substituted for prayer or the creed.

Because new ways have been put forward to conceive the shape of the liturgy, the practice in some churches of structuring worship according to the placement of hymns is quickly being lost, though such an organizing principle may now be

found (with a different purpose) in the musically-driven “contemporary service.” British Methodists, for example, have since the beginning of the twentieth century typically used five hymns in the course of the standard Sunday morning preaching service. Their newly published Sunday order continues the five-hymn custom, but it also allows for other acts of praise to substitute for hymns, and it is clear that the hymns themselves are no longer the underlying principle of organization.

Liturgical changes in the second half of the twentieth century have influenced the conception, the construction and the performance of hymns for every ecclesiastical tradition. Some church bodies have been more intentional and articulate than others in addressing the relationship between liturgical change and the congregation’s song. The Roman Catholic Church in the United States has taken the lead in this area with the publication of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops’ *Music in Catholic Worship* (1972, 1983) and *Liturgical Music Today* (1982). Catholics have also organized consultations with ecumenical participants which have produced the *Milwaukee Symposia for Church Composers* (1992) and “The Snowbird Statement on Catholic Liturgical Music” (1995). Deliberate decisions *should* be taken as to how hymns fit into the overall liturgical scheme rather than relegate them to little more than window dressing, as sometimes happens in poorly conceived and implemented worship in local congregations.

To be continued in the next issue.

Karen B. Westerfield Tucker is Assistant Professor of Liturgical Studies at the Divinity School, Duke University.

Notes

¹ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. 4, pt. 3/2, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1962) p. 867.

² In *Sound the Bamboo* (Manila: Joint Publication of the Christian Conference of Asia and the Asian Institute for Liturgy and Music, 1990) #143.

Farewell *ASB*, welcome *Common Worship*

PHILLIP TOVEY

November 2000 sees the demise of the *Alternative Service Book (ASB)* in the Church of England. Parishes and dioceses have been putting much effort into facilitating this change. The new Sunday book is to be called *Common Worship*, which will be supplemented by further volumes. This article gives an indication of the scope of *Common Worship* and some idea of what else is to be expected in the future.

These are contents of *Common Worship* as it will be published:

The Calendar
 A Service of the Word
 Morning and Evening Prayer on Sunday
 Morning and Evening Prayer from *The Book of Common Prayer*
 Night Prayer (Compline)
 Night Prayer (Compline) in Traditional Language
 Prayers for Various Occasions
 The Litany
 The Litany from *The Book of Common Prayer*
 Authorized Forms of Confession and Absolution
 Creeds and Authorized Affirmations of Faith
 Holy Communion
 Contents
 A Form of Preparation
 Order One
 Order One in Traditional Language
 Order Two
 Order Two in Contemporary Language
 Supplementary Texts
 Seasonal Provisions
 Notes
 Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child
 Holy Baptism
 Collects and Post Communions
 Collects and Post Communions in Traditional Language
 Rules
 Lectionary

The Psalter
 Canticles

From this list it is important to note what is different from the *ASB*. What is not included is an ordinal, confirmation service, a daily office, or the texts of the readings. This shows one major difference, in that the *ASB* was designed to be a complete book. This is not so with *Common Worship*, for it is intended that there be a series of books, another being published in November, *Pastoral Rites*, and further volumes to follow. Also, there are differences in what is included, not least various services from the *Book of Common Prayer* (1662), which still is authorized in the Church of England and remains in use in parishes (mostly for 8 a.m. Holy Communion and Evensong). The inclusion of these services is in part a political sop to the Prayer Book Society, and it is arguable that most of that constituency will not want to buy a book with a mixture of modern and traditional-language services. Further, *Common Worship* will not include a traditional-language Psalter, which will limit its use for Evensong. Perhaps at this point some more detailed comment on sections of the book will be helpful.

Material for Morning and Evening Prayer is included for Sunday use. As indicated above, Evensong BCP is commonly used in parishes while modern offices on Sunday are rare. What is more often used is the Service of the Word in family worship (or "All Age Worship"). This latter service governs *Common Worship*'s modern-language Sunday provision, and will be the only modern-language office provision in the Church of England from November. What of *Celebrating Common Prayer (CCP)*? Well, this was never an official publication of the Church of England. The new rubrics of the Service of the Word for daily prayer will bring *CCP* within the definition of legal daily prayer, but it will also

allow the *Durham Office* and arguably the Roman office. It is intended that there be a further volume for daily prayer which will hopefully make the position more clear.

Holy Communion comes in two orders, both with a modern-language and traditional-language alternative. This is perhaps the most important section of the book. Order One follows the structure of the modern eucharist (or Rite A and Rite B in *ASB* speak). This will be one of the major engagements that parishes will have with *Common Worship*, and they will not find it radically different.

Order One modern language now has eight eucharistic prayers (one of which has already been the subject of an article in *OPEN*; see Winter/Spring 2000, pp. 17-18). Unlike the *ASB*, they follow a variety of shapes with both eastern and western structures. The first three prayers are new editions of the *ASB* eucharistic prayers, the next five are new. There is now flexibility based on a common structure rather than freedom based on a fixed rite. In this order the Church of England has seen fit not to follow ICEL (International Consultation on English in the Liturgy) texts, so if you visit England stay awake for the Creed (hours were spent discussing how to translate the Greek *ek*) and the Lord's Prayer. Island-nation mentality rules in the General Synod of the Church of England, even if not with the three other provinces in Great Britain and Ireland.

Order One in Traditional Language replaces Rite B in the *ASB*. This is quite commonly used in places that wanted to move on from 1662 but wanted to keep traditional language. This is very common in country parishes. There are two eucharistic prayers from the modern-language order linguistically recast.

Order Two follows the structure of Holy Communion 1662. The *ASB* enabled a modern-language version of the BCP. While this is used in only a few

parishes, there was large support for this provision continuing. Many parishes have local adaptations of the 1662 text, which can be confusing if you are a visitor. Order Two thus provides a version of 1662 Holy Communion "as commonly used." This of course is virtually a revision of the 1662, but it is not legally so because it has not been done by parliament. As such it shows the nonsense of parliament hanging on to powers that should have been abandoned two centuries ago. The effect is to legalize the customary ways of using 1662, and thus this order will be in common use.

Baptismal material is only an extract from a previously published volume on baptism. Likewise the collects have already been published (and are not proving to be very popular). The Psalter is a new work based on the American BCP Psalter. This indeed is a very good piece of work that tried first to capture in modern language the Coverdale Psalter, which it does successfully.

Parishes are either buying the new volume and sending the *ASBs* to a recycling bin, or customizing their own edition. It is in part due to the advent of word-processing that many churches now produce their own booklets with their local choice of variations.¹ One strategy that is growing in popularity is to produce three different eucharist booklets for white, green and purple seasons of the liturgical year. Each booklet then includes two different eucharistic prayers and seasonal responses. Prayer H is tending to be put into a separate booklet for "family communions" (you have to remember that the Church of England still refuses communion to many of her baptized members, i.e., children). To aid this new electronic era the services are being made available on the internet.²

The introduction of *Common Worship* is only a part of a longer-term process of second-generation liturgical revision in the Church of England. Already published are *Calendar, Lectionary and Collects*,³ and *Common Worship: Initiation Services*.⁴ In November there will be *Common Worship* and *Pastoral Rites*.

Future publications will look at daily prayer, seasonal services and the ordinal. Worship leaders will be required to leave space on their bookshelves for future volumes, while the rest of the Anglican Communion may be interested to see the developments in a sister province, some of which represent the quirks of the Church of England.

Phillip Tovey is Training Officer in the Diocese of Oxford.

Notes

¹ See Mark Earey, *Producing your own Orders of Service* (London: Church House Publishing, 2000).

² www.cofe.anglican.org/commonworship.

³ Church of England, *Calendar, Lectionary and Collects* (London: Church House Publishing, 1997).

⁴ Church of England, *Common Worship: Initiation Services* (London: Church House Publishing, 1998).

Rest in peace, Peter Moore

Peter Campbell Moore, 76, presbyter of the Episcopal Church and honorary member of the Council of Associated Parishes, died on Friday, August 25, in Seattle, Washington. From 1982 to 1992 he was rector of St. Paul's in Seattle. Following his retirement, Peter was serving as chaplain of the Anglican Church of St. Barnabas in Limassol, Cyprus, in 1994, when he suffered the first of a series of increasingly disabling strokes.

Peter's requiem mass was celebrated on Saturday, September 2, at St. Paul's. There was a vigil in church Friday night with the body present and sharing of stories about him. After the requiem he was cremated, and the ashes are to be buried later in Lynchburg, Virginia, his family home.

He is survived by his widow, Mary Vail Moore, four children, and five grandchildren. The fall issue of OPEN will include a fuller account of his life and work.

Italian Book of Common Prayer (*Il Libro della Preghiera Comune*)

After a visit to Roccamondolfi, Italy, to visit the home village of my grandparents, our two sons and I spent some time in Florence. Among the great treasures of art and the beauty of that city, we were pleased to come to know St. James Episcopal Church located there. We were much impressed with their worship schedule and the many exciting ministries reaching out into the community from that beautiful parish church.

I was thrilled to discover that St. James Church has recently published an Italian translation of selected liturgies from the 1979 Book of Common Prayer. I am pleased to have a copy which I use daily for praying the office of Evening Prayer.

Il Libro della Preghiera Comune is a bilingual (English/Italian) edition of selected liturgies from our BCP. It is formatted and paginated to correspond with the standard 1979 book and includes the following liturgies: Daily Evening Prayer; Rite Two; Holy Baptism; Holy Eucharist: Rite Two, including Eucharistic Prayers A, B, C and D and Prayers of the People Forms I-IV and VI; The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage; The Reconciliation of a Penitent; Ministration to the Sick; and Burial of the Dead: Rite Two.

Just reading aloud the prayers in the Italian language is truly a musical experience!

For those interested in procuring a copy, please contact:

St. James Church
Via Bernardo Rucellai, 9
50123 Florence, Italy
e-mail: stjames@dinonet.it
Re: bilingual BCP

Individual copies are available for US \$20, personal check. If paying with an international money order, add \$5 to cover bank fees.

ROBERT BIZZARO
dean-emeritus
Cathedral of St. James
South Bend, Indiana

Music

by Mark A. DeW. Howe

St. Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church, San Francisco. *Music for Liturgy*, 2nd ed. San Francisco, 1999. Available from the parish (888-746-6442).

A couple of weeks ago, I went to a concert of music from favorite Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, performed by people who really enjoyed G&S and who did a good job. Before each number, the conductor summarized each piece's context; this was necessary, since the audience wasn't gathered to see a single complete staged operetta.



Yanking music from whatever larger setting it might inhabit most naturally is a normal part of the teaching process. The "re-contextualizing" of knowledge completes the circle of learning, whether it happens immediately (like the saxes practicing their part before they play it with the full band) or much later (like going to Russia twenty-five years after reading a Dostoevsky novel).

The second edition of *Music for Liturgy*, from the parish of St. Gregory of Nyssa in San Francisco, is rather like this. The book is a large collection of music variously composed and adapted by St. Gregory's resident composers, and drawn from a wide range of traditions. Some of it will be recognizable by Anglicans outside the St. Gregory's context, and some of it may mystify those same Anglicans. The antidote to that befuddlement may be to visit the place and see what the music's all about in its liturgical context and why it works; alternatively, an "explanatory publication" titled *Liturgy at St. Gregory's* and a videotape of a Sunday morning liturgy are available.

The contents of *Music for Liturgy* include over 150 items: settings of *Trisa-*

gion; canticles and acclamations for the liturgy of the Word; a three-voice setting of a passage from the Gospel of John; settings of the Lord's Prayer with formulas for intercessory prayer interpolated; musical settings for the Great Thanksgiving as practiced at St. Gregory's; and hymns, songs, and "carols" to be sung during and after the communion meal, the collection of offerings, and the danced transition between the Word and Table liturgies. Much of the music may be reproduced for local use.

Helping to explain the context for this book and to illustrate some of the book's content is a recording of two complete musical settings of the St. Gregory's-style rite. The largely unaccompanied singing is vigorous, well tuned, and well blended, and a pleasure to listen to. It has some roughness to it, which is a strong and welcome witness to the reality of the congregation's sound: nothing has been dubbed in or carefully combed out.

I visited St. Gregory's in January 1999, and as many others have been, I was fascinated and inspired by what I experienced of the community's vibrant ritual life. The building, including the interior physical environment of the liturgy, helped to reinforce the shape of the liturgy. The acoustics supported the singing well. Large numbers of people in the congregation afforded plenty of energy. The singing was introduced and practiced at the beginning of the liturgy. It was all very impressive.

One of the striking features of the musical repertoire of St. Gregory's is the broad range of traditions from which it comes. For example, the collection of Easter Troparion settings includes music from Greek, Russian, Ukrainian, Serbian, and Arab sources, as well as a locally composed setting and a free adaptation of an early-nineteenth-century Vermont piece, "When converts first begin to sing." It's a patchwork quilt, or a salad, or perhaps a collage, but what sung and prayed

tradition isn't? Tradition is clearly embraced in a big way in this parish, including the liberal use of old music in new ways. Here, tradition is at its best, where it grows organically and is practiced and sustained vibrantly.

How will music from this collection work in a community that doesn't understand the St. Gregory's context? I'd bet that it will work as well as it is adapted, introduced and led. I suspect it could flop in communities that seek to ape St. Gregory's without making it theirs. I think this book and CD would be great resources from which to start; and I think the parishes that will do best with it are those that can use it as an example, creating their own such anthologies of music they've collected, composed, sung and made their own.

MARK A. DEW. HOWE

Book Review Editor

With this issue we welcome Elizabeth Morris Downie as Book Review Editor. She is the rector of St. Jude's Church, Fenton, Michigan, and a new member of AP Council. She has served as chair of the Liturgy and Music Commission of the Diocese of Michigan, and has been active in the Association of Diocesan Liturgy and Music Commissions (recently renamed Transforming Common Worship) since 1976, editing its newsletter for a number of years. She was a member of the former Standing Commission on Church Music during the creation of *The Hymnal 1982*. Elizabeth has two married daughters and two grandchildren, and lives with her two deluded cats (they believe they are dogs); she's still searching for one of those mugs that reads, "So many books, so little time."

Books

edited by Elizabeth Morris Downie

Lord, Open Our Lips: Musical Help for Leaders of the Liturgy. Marilyn L. Haskel and Frank Tedeschi, executive producers. New York: Church Publishing Incorporated, 1999. 112 pp. + 3 CDs. \$37.95 (paper).

There is indeed a great deal of musical help for leaders of the liturgy in this resource. Described on the cover as “designed to teach by demonstration,” the booklet gives text and notation while the CDs let the learner/leader hear the aural realization of what she is looking at. Virtually all of the prayer book texts that are supplied with music for a presider or officiant to sing are included. Most of the music in *Enriching Our Worship* is also included, though two fraction anthems are missing.

There are many things to cheer about in this production. As one who has maintained for years that comparison with the perfection possible in professionally performed and edited recordings is a major inhibiting factor when congregations sing, I’m delighted that the singers are not super-trained recording stars. They are actual liturgical leaders, female and male, recorded in the sympathetic acoustic of St. Andrew’s Cathedral, Jackson, Mississippi. Like the rest of us who don’t earn our living singing classical music, they occasionally have minor pitch, support, and breathing problems. Diction and vowels are sometimes less than ideal. Never severe enough to interfere with the teaching value, these tiny real-life flaws communicate, I believe, a very supportive atmosphere to a neophyte: see, you *can* do this also!



Finding what you are looking for is easy. The selections are presented in the order in which the rites appear in the prayer book, and a sturdy index card in the booklet tells exactly what is on each of the CD tracks. And those tracks are short—there are 52 on the first disc, 69 on the second, and 61 on the third. You won’t have to sit around and wait to hear the excerpt you want to learn. Items from the Service Music section of *The Hymnal 1982* and the Appendix in Volume I of the *Accompaniment Edition* are identified by the appropriate “S” number. It would have been helpful if items from *The Altar Book* were identified as such; many clergy don’t seem to be aware of the musical materials for Proper Liturgies and the Musical Appendix in *The Altar Book*.

Demonstration abounds here; what is conspicuously missing in this time of liturgical renewal, enrichment, and creativity is any teaching of principles for singing liturgical texts. The tones, instructions, and examples for singing the Gospel are reproduced from *The Altar Book*, but the tone for lessons preceding the Gospel is simply printed above the text from Colossians which is sung on the CD. The instructions are omitted. Neither the printed page nor the CDs give any guidance for singing new texts, or any reassuring words about the formulaic and somewhat improvisatory nature of liturgical tones. Something for leaders along the line of the chant teaching session Carol Doran recorded in *When in Our Music God Is Glorified* would have made this resource even more useful now and in the future.

ELIZABETH MORRIS DOWNIE

Timothy F. Sedgwick. *The Christian Moral Life: Practices of Piety.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999. xiii + 161 pages. \$15 (paper)

Sedgwick, professor of Christian ethics at Virginia Theological Seminary, states his intention in this volume is to give a unified account of the Christian moral life, which is “first of all a matter of understanding the story of Christian faith as making sense of our life in the world.” In an appendix he seeks to place his account in the larger context of contemporary Christian theology and ethics, but the volume itself is written for the non-specialist as a guide to answering the questions, “What is good, right and holy?” and “How do we come to know and how to we participate in this life?”

“Christian faith,” he writes, “is a life lived in the presence of God,” and “Christian ethics is a description of that life.” For Anglicans, and Sedgwick writes self-consciously as an Anglican, this description is a practical piety, “an identity given in a life lived in the community of faith,” not a theoretical description. To “do theology” for Anglicans is “to seek to bring people into relationship with God.” He offers the life and ministry of Archbishop Desmond Tutu as example. “Christian faith,” he says, “is a practical piety that is corporate, incarnate and sacramental,” or again, it is “a moral life in which the love of neighbor is grounded in the worship of God.” This love of neighbor he describes as a covenant of hospitality, which brings us into relationship with God.

From this theological perspective he goes on to discuss the traditional elements of Christian moral life: the ten commandments, sex and marriage, idolatry and moralism, love and justice, the disciplines of faith, the nature of forgiveness, and vocation. “Sacramental acts,” he tells us, “are those actions undertaken beyond what is done narrowly as a matter of social role,” such as “welcoming the stranger, feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, visiting those in prison, forgiving those who have acted against us, and . . . sharing meals together in table fellowship,” for in these actions Christians ex-

perience “the full presence of God in a way that orients or reorients, forms or transforms the roles and relationships of everyday life.”

In his earlier work *Sacramental Ethics*, Sedgwick bases his ethics on the sacramental, incarnational, corporate life of the Church centered in our participation in the paschal mystery of the death and resurrection of Christ. In this book we find the same ecclesially based, eucharistically centered ethic. Building on that foundation and drawing on the classical Anglican divines, Richard Hooker, Jeremy Taylor, Joseph Butler, Frederick Denison Maurice, and William Temple, he draws out practical applications for living and making sense of the Christian life at the dawn of the twenty-first century.

I have known Dr. Sedgwick for over twenty years. We have been faculty colleagues and have taught courses together. I have always found his work interesting but often too dense for many readers. I found this book both clear and compelling. I wholeheartedly recommend it not only to ethicists, but also to all serious minded Christians trying to live their faith.

LEONEL L. MITCHELL

‘Unbound!’ conference papers available

Papers from “Unbound! Anglican Worship beyond the Prayer Book,” a conference held at Church Divinity School of the Pacific in January 1999 (see *OPEN*, Spring 1999, p. 4), have been published in the January 2000 issue of *Anglican Theological Review*. Contributors include Frank T. Griswold, Richard D. McCall, David Stancliffe, Jaci Maraschin, John F. Baldovin, S.J., Michael B. Aune, David R. Holeton, Elizabeth J. Smith, and Louis Weil. Also included in the issue is Timothy Sedgwick’s keynote address, “Vision and Collaboration: Roland Allen, Liturgical Renewal, and Ministry Development,” given at the “Living the Covenant” consultation sponsored by Associated Parishes and the North American Association for the Diaconate, June 9-13, 1999, at St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota (see *OPEN*, Summer 1999, pp. 1-3).

Copies of the issue can be ordered from the ATR Business Office, 600 Haven Street, Evanston, IL 60201 (847-864-6024; fax: 847-328-9624; e-mail: atr@nwu.edu). Cost for a single copy is \$15.

Members of the Council of Associated Parishes

Officers

Juan M. C. Oliver, *president*
Jean Campbell, OSH, *vice president*
Clayton D. Crawley, *secretary*
Carlos H. Mercado, Jr., *treasurer*
Robert J. Brooks, *at-large member of executive committee*

Council Members

Valerie Ambrose, Salem, OR
John Baldwin, SJ, Cambridge, MA
Robert J. Brooks, Washington, DC
Jean Campbell, OSH, Wappinger Falls, NY
Clayton D. Crawley, New York, NY
Joe Morris Doss, Mandeville, LA
Elizabeth Morris Downie, Fenton, MI
Marilyn Haskell, New York, NY
John W. B. Hill, Toronto, ON
Mark A. DeW. Howe, Poughkeepsie, NY
Jeffrey D. Lee, River Hills, WI
Katherine M. Lehman, Menlo Park, CA
Barbara Liotskos, Toronto, ON
Henry I. Louttit, Jr., Savannah, GA
A. Maylanne Maybee, Toronto, ON
Carlos Mercado, Jr., Rochester, NY
Ruth A. Meyers, Evanston, IL
Barbara A. Mitchell, Victoria, BC
Clayton L. Morris, New York, NY
Juan M. C. Oliver, Garden City, NY
Jennifer M. Phillips, Kingston, NY
Ormonde Plater, New Orleans, LA
Juan C. Reed, Chicago, IL
Nigel A. Renton, Berkeley, CA
Donald Schell, San Francisco, CA
Susan M. Smith, Berkeley, CA
Paul E. Strid, El Cerrito, CA

Associate Members

Otis Charles, San Francisco, CA
Joachim C. Fricker, Burlington, ON
Paul Gibson, Toronto, ON
Richard F. Grein, New York, NY
Frank T. Griswold III, New York, NY
Marion Hatchett, Sewanee, TN
Mark L. MacDonald, Fairbanks, AK
Leonel L. Mitchell, South Bend, IN
William H. Petersen, Rochester, NY
Neff Powell, Roanoke, VA
Thomas K. Ray, Marquette, MI
Orris G. Walker, Jr., Garden City, NY
Louis Weil, Berkeley, CA

Honorary Members

Vivian Kingsley, Holland, MI
Michael W. Merriman, Townsville, Queensland, Australia
Borden C. Purcell, Athens, ON
Frederick W. Putnam, Edina, MN

We’d hate to see you go!

We regret that for a number of members this will be their last copy of *OPEN*. Please take a minute to check the address block on the back cover. The top line gives the month and year of your membership expiration. For a number of readers it says “LAST COPY”.

Given the part-time nature of the Coordinator position and the press of other business, renewal notices are mailed in the anniversary month, and there is no other follow-up. Please don’t lose your membership by inadvertence or mail error. Please check the address with each issue and renew in a timely fashion.

There are important issues facing the Church on which you will find *OPEN* of use and interest.

In memoriam: Samuel E. West

Associated Parishes founder Samuel E. West died in Virginia on June 25, 2000. The following reminiscence was submitted to OPEN by Alan Osborn Dann.

. . . the last survivor of the original AP members.

On November 9, 1946, Samuel West co-founded Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission, and he continued to be active as an honorary member of AP Council. Sam was the last survivor of the original AP members. I first knew him as Chaplain at Kent School (Kent, Connecticut) a half century ago. The life of this good man deserves our attention, our affection and our thanks.

He was born in Buffalo, Wyoming, on December 6, 1915, received his B.A. degree from the University of Wichita in 1938 and his B.D. (M.Div.) from Seabury-Western Theological Seminary in 1941, where he later served as trustee. In the fall of 1941, he was ordained to the priesthood on the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels (celebrated as Founder's Day at Kent School). His honorary doctorate from Seabury-Western in 1968 acknowledged his seminal liturgical work with John Patterson and their colleagues on prayer book revision. This work contributed significantly to the 1979 Book of Common Prayer.

AP grew out of John Patterson's conviction that the eucharist was absolutely central to our total lives. John Keene of Teaneck, New Jersey, and Massey Shepherd of ETS (EDS), Cambridge, Massachusetts, were the other two in the group of four priests who developed a plan for AP during an unstructured meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio. In Sam's recorded recollection, AP emphasized parishes, not priests, because all ministry begins with baptism and the laity needs to be included in the worship and work of the church. The co-founders of AP committed themselves to making the eucharist central in their various domains and to reporting progress at each subsequent AP council meeting. AP also stressed use of the Daily

Office and a coordinated lectionary. As long as they could, Sam and his wife Mary continued their faithful use of the Daily Office.

Sam was a Fellow at the College of Preachers when he met John Patterson. At that time he was a parish priest in Atchison, Kansas. Patterson, a onetime MIT architecture student, asked Sam to join him on his staff at Grace Church, Madison, Wisconsin.

I first met Sam in 1949. At the invitation of Kent School's new Rector and Headmaster, John Oliver Patterson, Sam came to Kent School with his wife Mary and their three children during the 1949-1950 school year. (Their fourth child and third son, James Newell, was born in 1951, and we greeted the event with great joy.)

At Kent he was Assistant to the Headmaster, Master of Sacred Studies and School Chaplain. He was an exemplary priest and family man. He counseled many of us who were students and became a good friend. We knew him especially for his closeness with the Headmaster, his Bob Hope look-alike ski-nose, and his good humor, sincerity and directness. In 1995, he became an honorary member of the Alumni Association of Kent School and of the Kent Class of 1951.

David Johnson was Chapel Verger our Sixth Form year. It was his job to keep the chapel clean. David began to talk tentatively about ordained ministry, timidly at first, almost as if the ministry was not highly valued in the Johnson family. Later, when Sam preached and celebrated at St. Boniface, Siesta Key, in Sarasota, with David's huge congregation, he told them that he was "down here just to check up on the boy." Still later, David

wanted Sam to help present him to the Presiding Bishop for his ordination as bishop in Boston, but at the time Sam was undergoing a three-way bypass, and he had to pass it up. In our common effort during the winter of 1995 to deal with the tragic death of our classmate, Sam became our chaplain all over again. It was as if time had stood still. Sam personally felt he had almost lost a son.

He was confessor at Kent to the school's founder, Frederick Herbert Sifi, and he gave "Pater" the last rites before his death in 1952. Together they had recited Vespers and Compline using the monastic diurnal, a book with which Sam was hitherto unfamiliar.

At this time, Sam also became a member of the Kemper Academy Board of Trustees. Kemper was a proprietary military school in Boonville, Missouri. Sam had attended Kemper his senior year as a candidate for the Christian ministry. There he'd become cadet chaplain, read prayers and scripture, and helped youngsters who were homesick or in difficulty. He had stayed on for two years of junior college and had been a member of the scholastic, military and general honor societies. He'd been named honor cadet and been asked to become cadet commander.

When Sam was selected Headmaster at Kemper in 1959, the Board asked him which uniform he would wear. He said he already had one, courtesy of Seabury Western, and he set about removing the Kentucky colonel outfits used by some faculty members. When he found the school had actually advertised, "when segregation ends, send your boy" here, he proceeded to halt the denigration of black employees and to desegregate the school as fast as he could. He resigned the head-

mastership in 1962 to go back into the parish ministry, and he served in several places before his retirement from Western Michigan in 1978.

By the time Sam reached Trinity Church, Marshall, Michigan, he was ready to devote sixteen years to installing AP practices. Moving the altar forward was perhaps the greatest challenge, one not achieved during his tenure. (In fairness, he did give the calling committee copies of all existing AP brochures!)

Sam's mentor, John Patterson, died at the age of 80 on November 12, 1988. Sam preached at the Kent memorial service. His theme was Philippians 3:12-16:

I press on to make [the goal] my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.... Only let us hold fast to what we have attained.

Sam told us that John Patterson was a "notorious paper-shredder." When something was done, he left it and went on, like the physiological process of sloughing off and renewal. He felt that ideas without practical and meaningful consequences were foolish. At Kent he said it was our duty to offer up every aspect of our lives to Jesus Christ and that from the altar God's grace reaches out to us, to our community and to the world.

A decade or so later it was Sam's turn. Suffering from Parkinson's disease, congestive heart failure, and irritable bowel syndrome, he asked on Saturday, June 24, 2000, "What's holding things up? Let's get going!" A grandchild said, "Go where?" "Home!" Sam replied. And so he did, at 6:35 the next evening, the Second Sunday after Pentecost.

Bishop Peter James Lee (Virginia) celebrated the Resurrection Eucharist at Westminster Canterbury Chapel on Friday, June 30. Kent Headmaster and Rector Dick Schell attended the funeral. The Rev. Malcolm Turnbull read a letter from

Bishop Edward Lee (see below for text). Malcolm also recalled his own comment when Sam re-retired as an assisting priest at his parish: "Life is just not going to be the same without Samuel Earnest West," to which Sam replied, "Oh, poppycock! That's false sentimentality." The ashes were interred in the Memorial Garden at St. Bartholomew's, Richmond, where Sam and Mary used to go to church.

Survivors include his wife Mary and his children Michael, Lynn Mullen, Sarah Oatley, and the 1951 class baby, James N. West.

References:

Michael Moriarty, *The Liturgical Revolution: Prayer Book Revision and Associated Parishes: A Generation of Change in the Episcopal Church* (Church Hymnal Corporation, 1996).

Michael Moriarty, *Associated Parishes and the Making of the 1979 Prayer Book* (AP brochure).

Samuel E. West, "Episodes Towards a Recorded History of Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission" (Richmond, VA, 1998); personal discussion and correspondence.

The following letter was read at the burial Eucharist.

Dear Family and Friends of Samuel E. West:

With this letter, I join you today recalling and celebrating the life and ministry of this good man and priest whom we entrust to the compassionate love of Jesus Christ whom he served faithfully during his lifetime of 84 years. By canonical residence, I am his bishop, although he retired many years before I came to Western Michigan. Nevertheless, the parish he led and served from 1962 to 1978, Trinity Church in Marshall, has remembered him with the affection and respect that is rightfully accorded an effective and pastoral rector.

Sam's ordained ministry in the Episcopal Church was equally outstanding before and after his tenure at Trinity,

Marshall. He served parishes in the dioceses of Kansas, Milwaukee, Connecticut, Missouri and, in retirement, Georgia. In Connecticut and in Missouri, his ministries were exercised at church preparatory schools, Kent School and Kemper School, respectively. His time at Kent School was especially important and significant for him.

In matters of worship and liturgical reform, Sam West was a creative pioneer. He was co-founder of the Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission which long before the revision of our current Prayer Book was advocating and modeling the kind of changes which are now normative in the liturgical life of the Episcopal Church. It was a deep and abiding interest bordering on a passion for Sam.

Until his health started declining in recent years, I regularly had correspondence from Sam in which he opined caringly and pastorally on many subjects dear to his heart. He cared mightily for the Episcopal Church. He served it with an integrity and tenacity that understood its struggles and dilemmas, which in turn he felt were essential in always helping the Church clarify its mission as manifested in its worship, education, and parish ministry. That Church, our Church, says thank you to Sam West as it remembers him with affection and gratitude today.

THE RT. REV. EDWARD L. LEE, JR.
Bishop of Western Michigan

Publication schedule

After the delay in publication earlier this year, *OPEN* is slowly moving back to its customary quarterly publication schedule. Copy deadline for the fall 2000 issue is October 1, with publication expected in November, and for winter 2001, December 1, for publication in January. The Editor appreciates your patience and understanding.

Promises, promises . . .

JOHN W. B. HILL

One of the consequences of the reform of the baptismal rite for the 1979 Book of Common Prayer (and the 1985 *Book of Alternative Services*) is the greater prominence given to baptismal promises. There are more of them; and they come closer to naming the character of the Christian discipleship we begin in baptism.

But many people have observed that we are now tempted, in our re-emerging baptismal piety, into yet another form of Pelagianism: we sometimes make it sound as if the essence of discipleship is keeping the promises. Indeed, one often hears references to “the Baptismal Covenant” only to discover later that the speaker had nothing more in mind than the five questions at the conclusion of the Baptismal Covenant. In fact, the substance of the covenant is first of all of the story of salvation, expressed as an act of trust in the God of our salvation; only after this comprehensive act of faith do we proceed to articulate what it will mean to participate in this story.

Another consequence of this greater prominence given to “promises” is the discomfort of congregations who grow weary of hearing people make promises they will not keep. Baptismal preparation often entails rubbing people’s noses in these promises, in order to ensure their awareness of our expectations. Behind this lies the assumption that people all too glibly undertake such promises, without any thought to their accountability. Perhaps. What seems just as likely is that some at least must approach such promise-making with trepidation, wondering what vengeful power they may be invoking, should the fulfillment of these promises prove more than they can manage.

Perhaps we should be rethinking the place of human promise-making in God’s great work of salvation. Do we actually promise anything more than to accept God’s call, participate in God’s saving work in Christ, and rely on God’s Spirit who binds us together in the covenant of grace? The world’s salvation will be accomplished by God’s own power; our call and privilege is to become part of the agency of God, a sacrament of Christ’s saving presence. Thus our answers to the five great questions at the end of the Baptismal Covenant are invariably, “I will, *with God’s help*.” These are not things we promise to do in order to be worthy of salvation; these are things we acknowledge as the shape of the salvation in which we are accepting a part. It is only by God’s grace that these things can take shape in us, although we must consent to them and perpetually open our hearts to them.

And so, when we are trying to help candidates for baptism (or their parents) come to terms with the Baptismal Covenant—both the Creed and the promises—we need to recognize what is at stake: nothing less than recognition of the true nature of God’s grace at work in their lives. When it comes to the promises, perhaps the question we need to be asking them is not, Do you really intend to keep these promises? but rather, Can you recognize in the God of this Creed the One before whom it would be safe to undertake such awesome commitments?

John W. B. Hill is a priest of the Anglican Church of Canada and a member of Associated Parishes Council.

OPEN

Associated Parishes
PO Box 27141
Baltimore, MD 21230-0141
(410) 752-0877

Address service requested

Non-Profit Organization U.S. Postage Paid Permit No. 1040 Leesburg, FL 34748
