

the **associated parishes**
for liturgy and mission

july, 1983

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A RESPONSE TO HENRY BREUL

by Massey H. Shepherd, Jr.

In his editorial in the April 1983 issue of *OPEN*, Henry Breul invited dialogue and "responsible replies." I believe I am qualified to make one, since I have been a member of AP since its founding and of the Standing Liturgical Commission throughout its preparation for a revision of the Prayer Book, including the decade of trial use from 1967 to 1976.

I agree with Henry that the AP — or for that matter any other group in the Church — should not canonize any particular revision of the Prayer Book. None of them, beginning with the 1549 Book, have been perfect or incapable of improvement "according to the various exigency of times and occasions." All revisions of the Prayer Book were made for a varying mixture of theological, political, and pastoral reasons.

Both of the American revisions of 1892 and 1928 were aware of the great advances in historical and liturgical scholarship of their times; and they also had in mind some response to the rapidly changing social and economic conditions in our nation that followed the Civil War and World War I, respectively. Bishop Parsons used to say that the 1928 revision was basically the unfinished business of the one in 1892.

Our 1979 Book has continued this trend, with an acknowledgement of the massive changes both in our nation and in the world consequent to World War II. In addition, it has been sensitive to the issues raised by the modern Liturgical Movement. The impact of the liturgical reforms in the Roman Catholic Church, consequent to Vatican II, made all the non-Roman litur-

(Shepherd - cont.)

gical churches "shift gears," so to speak, in their plans and courses of liturgical revision. In particular, this raised the question of use of modern English vernacular in Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist, and other Christian Communions. No one expected the Roman Catholic Church to borrow from the Prayer Book its Tudor English, with which none of its people were familiar in their liturgy except perhaps their devotional use of the Lord's Prayer.

The AP was founded several years before the Standing Liturgical Commission published its first *Prayer Book Studies* in 1950. Through the initiative of the Rev. John O. Patterson, it began with twelve priests (none of whom knew personally all of the other members), and an episcopal sponsor, the late Bishop Noble C. Powell of Maryland. These members were chosen from a wide range of pastoral experience, age, and "churchmanship" orientation from their seminary training. It was agreed from the beginning that we would all be faithful in using only the 1928 Book in our parishes and explore its possibilities for liturgical renewal and its implications for mission. For this reason, the AP could not be accused of a particular partisan position, which was still rife at that time. Soon efforts to label us became fruitless.

We were not insensitive to the need of Prayer Book revision; and some of us soon became active individually in the cause, as *Prayer Book Studies* brought to a wider audience in the Church this need. I was personally never present at an AP meeting when use of the 1928 Book became "progressively more rancorous"; but this may have happened after I became less active in AP. And I doubt that anyone in AP, according to Henry's rhetoric, ever believed that by "obeying the text and rubrics of the 1928 Book, we would usher in the Kingdom."

The decision of the Standing Liturgical Commission to include certain services of Rite One was the result of the questionnaires filled out by thousands of Episcopalians, clergy and lay, concerning trial use of *The Liturgy of the Lord's Supper* (1967). The English of this rite followed

the "Thou-you" usage of the RSV Bible. The results were that about fifty percent felt that we had gone too far, and the other half that we had not gone far enough. The responses had no relation to age. Many young people were negative in their reaction; and many of the elderly were enthusiastic. As trial use continued with *Services for Trial Use* (1970), differences of opinion were evident, particularly as many people were led to believe that they had to choose between Rites One and Two. Some people even had the notion that the "Green Book" was a complete Prayer Book, which thereafter would be a poorly bound paperback.

The Standing Liturgical Commission was never able to allay these fears and misapprehensions. It had no monies to launch an extensive educational program, other than *Prayer Book Studies* with their titles only in communications to the clergy from the Church Pension Fund. At that time, the national church press was not sympathetic, and the newly-formed Society for the Preservation of the Book of Common Prayer was continually enlarging its negative and misguided propaganda to more and more of the laity. On the positive side, the majority of bishops supported trial use and brought many to explain the new services to their clergy conferences, so that a large number of clergy were enabled to explain the rationale of revision to their congregations.

It is interesting to note that many congregations were accepting the revision of the baptismal rites, without noticing its contemporary English, because it gave them more participation in the service. The 1928 Book had allowed them only to say the Lord's Prayer. Also the new Marriage service became acceptable to many young couples, who in that period were insisting on writing their own forms; for they said that the new rite expressed what they would like to have. No one on the Commission ever felt that we should not provide both Rites One and Two for the Daily Offices, the Eucharist, and the Burial Office, for we believed that we were responsible to the whole Church and not just a segment of it or a pressure group within it.

(Shepherd - cont.)

In my judgment, the Church must always provide in any future revision of the Prayer Book these Rite One services. Our Prayer Book should never remove our people from their heritage — or, as we say now, their "roots." These go back to the Benedictine monks, sent by Pope Gregory the Great to convert the English people. This tradition was not broken at the Reformation. Anglican liturgical spirituality must preserve, as no other Christian tradition does, this great heritage. Every parish should give their people experience of this. Thankfully, many of them do so.

As to Henry's comments on other aspects of the Eucharist, I should like to add a few. Of the "Great Thanksgivings", prayer "A" has worn very well since its slightly earlier form in the "Green Book." Its usefulness on many Sundays, weekdays and other occasions has been proved. Prayer "B" is a classic and there is no need to deny its proper popularity, any more than the fine Eucharistic Prayer II in Rite One. The latter not only retained the substance of the older Eucharistic Prayer I, but enriched its theology. I always use it in Rite One, partly because it has eliminated the debatable doctrine of the Atonement as one of "satisfaction," supposedly based on Romans 3:25.

Henry has given a local objection to prayer "C" that has much wider implications. For a time it was very popular but it did not wear well with frequent use. It has many beautiful passages that speak to our own age. But its use soon shows its structural defects. The ever-changing responses of the people in the first part tend to tie them to the book. In the last section, the solemn address, "Lord God," etc., is ponderous and out of keeping with the style of the earlier part; and the petition, "Deliver us," etc., seems to me rather pejorative about the congregation present. I am surprised that Henry would prefer prayer "D" for the "standard consecration prayer." It is certainly magnificent and a wonderful enrichment from the Eastern tradition. It is as long as the canon in the old Prayer Book (now Eucharistic Prayer I) and has only one other relief from the celebrant's voice. I am always moved by the use of John 13:1 as an introduction

to the Words of Institution and the petition for "Those whose faith is known to you alone" (also found in the Prayers of the People, Form VI).

As for Henry's distress about the "Seasonal Blessings" in the *Book of Occasional Services*, why does he not have his altar guild place it on the altar before the service marked at the place he desired? This is no big deal. But the longer forms of these blessings are as long as the *Gloria in excelsis* of the old Book. One, not the only, reason for moving it to the beginning was to lighten the length of the post-communion rites. The climax of communion is communion. It is a drag to have it prolonged. The greatest blessing is to receive communion from our Lord's Body and Blood. What an episcopal or priestly blessing can add to this I fail to see. So the rubric is a "may" one.

The excessive use of typological exegesis in the Old Testament lessons has long been criticized, even by Roman Catholic biblical scholars. As a consequence, several years ago the Consultation on Common Texts (CCT) appointed an ecumenical committee to review them. Their work has been completed; and the General Convention in 1982 authorized their revision for trial use in selected parishes in each diocese for the current triennium. If Henry would like to try it, he should get in touch with his bishop and the liturgical commission of his diocese.

As for the confusion in the Confirmation rite, I can say that the Standing Liturgical Commission did not "flinch" right up to the 1976 General Convention in its insistence that sacramental Confirmation belonged to the rite of Baptism. It was the House of Bishops that was confused and still is confused, so that the ambiguities still remain with us. I have had no experience with the use of Rite II in the Burial Office. On reading it, I do find the Prayers of the People somewhat precious; but the rubric allows alternatives.

Again, I was not present at the celebrations of the Eucharist at the New Orleans General Convention or the Episcopal-Lutheran Eucharist in Washington Cathedral. But before we blast their use of pre-conse-

(Shepherd - cont.)

ted elements, we should study the logistics of communicating thousands of people, so as to keep the timing of the service in proper proportion.

When the General Convention met in Boston in 1952, the chairman of the diocesan altar guild was a member of my parish. She asked my advice about this problem; and I suggested that she should have a large coffee urn, covered by an appropriate cloth. Bishop Sherrill was horrified at the thought of pouring the consecrated wine out of a spigot. Hence he borrowed patens and chalices from his parishes, which were displayed all along the altar. At the several Words of Institution he moved up and down the altar laying his hands on each vessel. It prolonged the service unduly and over-emphasized these Words at the moment of consecration — although

this would have appalled him.

Again, Bishop Lichtenberger (at the Convention in 1961 at Detroit, I believe) had a number of con-celebrant priests behind a curtain consecrate many patens and chalices while he was celebrating at the altar. This did not seem to me at the time a happy solution. At such large services, it might be possible for the Presiding Bishop's con-celebrants to have before them large ciboria for the breads and flagons for the wine, which they consecrate with the chief celebrant. But possibly this is not practical either. The AP might give some thought to these problems.

As the Fathers at Vatican II finished their speeches, I now say, *Ipse dixi*.

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Editor's note: Two responses to my editorial in the April, 1983 issue of OPEN have been received. You have read Dr. Shepherd's, and the other, from the Rev. Gregory M. Howe, follows. Both letters contradict and question some of the things presented in my article. Personally, I welcome this and was quite conscious of overstating my case so as to produce appropriate responses. I hope that this process will continue as other members feel moved to get into the action.

Henry H. Breul

Dear Henry:

Your challenging, helpful and provocative editorial in the April *OPEN* invited responsible replies, so here goes. I leave it up to you to decide whether what follows is responsible or not.

About Rite I: Both as the rector of a fairly conservative parish, which never had more members of the Society for the Preservation than you could count on the fingers of one hand, and as a member of the House of Deputies Committee on Prayer Book and Liturgy during the crucial period in question, I am uncomfortable with some of the flinching that you ascribe to the SLC. From both perspectives I would presume to suggest that the presentation of an all-Rite II BCP in 1976 would have been

a major error which might not have been accepted at all, and most certainly would not have gained the overwhelming acceptance that our Prayer Book did receive in 1976 and 1979, in part for reasons you suggest. At best, we might have ended up with an alternative service book, a posture of no great improvement and much greater frustration and financial burden.

Some of what you ascribe to the SLC was actually the product of the House of Deputies Committee on the Prayer Book in 1976. Being very proud of what we did, especially after subsequent experience of both the Australian and Church of England alternative books, I would submit that what you call flinching may well have been something rather different.

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(Howe - cont.)

Yes, I do remember some six hours of sitting in the pit in Minneapolis, somewhat awed by the stomping and shouting — it gave me a new appreciation for the early witnesses in the Circus Maximus. However, what I think also happened was that a relatively courageous group of men and women called together to represent the Church, under great pressure from both private groups and the national hierarchy, resisted both to a significant degree and spoke for those whom they represented in a way that has proven to be both legitimate and useful.

I do know that we managed to disappoint the Society, the SLC, and the Presiding Bishop at various points. If you want to talk about flinching, please remember the final Conference Committee forced on a reluctant House of Bishops by a House of Deputies Committee which had determined that it would stand its ground, and had won support from its own House. Perhaps this talk of flinching explains why we have not seen any subsequent Prayer Book legislation since 1976 until the bishops have finished with it.

Rite I may well pass away, but I think it may prove more tenacious than some of the prophets of doom among both the Society and its antagonists would have us believe. There are several good reasons for this. First, the SLC expended significant money, energy, and blue books for almost two decades, suggesting how the 1928 BCP should be revised. Should we be all that surprised that someone out there was listening? Second, for many clergy and lay people, Rite I presents a happy coming together of familiar texts and ceremonial, both of which still have real power, even if we would not agree. That is, after all, the basis of successful popular liturgy. Finally, one thing that has hampered Rite II services in many places is the continuing music problem. Granted, many parishes have solved the music problems inherent in the odd division between BCP 1979 and the Hymnal 1940. It should also be granted that many parishes have not, and probably will not until some time *after* the arrival of a new hymnal. The musicians tried to warn us about this as far back as 1973, but no one started to listen seriously until after 1976.

Also, there is the matter of presentation. It is possible to do Rite I in a way which transcends its apparent limitations, and to do Rite II with an aura of Victoriana which would floor its designers.

About Rite II: You raise what may be one of the significant problems with your comments about the Burial Office. I, too, find some of the material less than helpful. I also remember that at an AP conference almost a decade ago, the late U.T. Holmes gave shape to one of the major points at issue. In Rite II the text is not designed to carry the rite, as is more generally true in Rite I. Rather, it tends to presume a filling of gaps with verbal and especially non-verbal action. As the April letter on ceremonial by Mr. Mercado suggests, we still have a long way to go in that regard and are getting both uncertain leadership and very tepid response where leadership initiatives are extended. My own diocese has tried several times to make help available, and the response has been underwhelming. At the same time, we have a constant flow of disheartening models, from the General Convention services down through diocesan rites and bishops' visitations. Some of our bishops seem never to have read the rubrics of BCP 1979, or if they have, to have presumed that an apparently more permissive atmosphere allows adherence only to those which seem convenient or comfortable.

Particularly in terms of the initiation rites, but also with a rather broader application than you seem to imply, we have some intriguing theological problems. We keep promoting the principle, *lex orandi, lex credendi*: but it breaks down with the initiation rites, and I would suggest that the same is true in less dramatic fashion elsewhere as well. In the initiation rites, we both know that the problem for some bishops is not just the question of a theology of initiation but also of order and their place in the life of the Church. The fact that we may think that their answer to the latter issue is wrong has not helped the apparent disinterest in engaging in serious dialogue on the subject. Moreover, the chance for serious dialogue is not helped by the fact that there is still no H.D. equivalent to the

(Howe - cont.)

H.B. Committee on Theology, nor do I think that significant relief is obtainable until this increasingly absurd anachronism finds some useful remedy.

While the initiatory rites suffer most obviously from compounded theological confusion, the same holds true elsewhere. Least surprisingly, it does surface in the burial rites. Many Anglicans outside the Scottish-U.S. tradition have severe reservations about the appropriate solution for rites for the dead and dying. Some of our own people also share these reservations. You and I may rejoice at a Burial Office which in either case is obviously a pro-anaphoral rite which suggests, if not presumes, the celebration of the Eucharist. Even before we get to fine points of textual criticism, this is a major unresolved issue which is seldom discussed.

We may get the majority of Episcopalians to eventually accept that the Holy Eucharist is the most appropriate major service for the Lord's Day. However, whether the same conclusion is also necessarily true for the other sacraments and rites of the Church is very much another question, and not necessarily congruent. Moreover, even while we present rites as though this presumptive congruence were a given, there is an unhappy and less than useful diversity of form. For example, the initiation rites begin with the presumption of a pro-anaphoral form, but do not include a convenient, relatively clear, non-eucharistic ending. In contrast, there is no such clear alternative conclusion for either the marriage or burial rites. Whether any of the above is necessary or desirable is a matter of debate — the fact of the inconsistency cannot help our present confusion.

It may well be that a particular SLC drafting committee was weak. It might also be described as one which was pushed out into most significantly uncharted territory. I think we owe all of the drafting committees profound gratitude for moving as gracefully as they did through a series of largely uncharted and generally unacknowledged theological mine-fields.

As Dr. Smith suggested, BCP 1979 is a good start toward a seriously American Book of Common Prayer. Yes, it may be

only *good* rather than perfect, but that was no small achievement given the confused state of our version of the English language and our unacknowledged and unresolved theological problems. Certainly there is room for improvement, and the circumstances of the BCP 1979 will probably result in a shorter life-span and less enthusiastic devotion than was true for 1789 or 1928. It is a transitional book — but I don't think we can yet tell what the end of the transition will look like. As you know, some matters are already being addressed. As a participant in the trial of the Lectionary revision, I just hope that we do not succeed in trading a narrow, if convenient, typology of supra-national significance for a vaguer, broader typology of national limitations as that which is so lamented in the United Kingdom now.

One other item which sits uncomfortably on my conscience concerns the Psalter. In 1976 I was rash enough to suggest that if we really meant to use and sing the Psalter as BCP 1979 seems to indicate, then it would seem useful to point it. At the time, foremost authority told me rather icily that such was just not done. Then, of course, U.S. Lutherans, not to mention British and Australian Anglicans, managed to do it. My suggestion that we at least study the possibility in 1982 got buried somewhere in the House of Bishops. Given the happy amount of white space thoughtfully left in the Psalter by the designers, I think it could be done, perhaps even without raising uncomfortable constitutional questions in the process.

I am much amused by your ambivalent attitude to bishops, partly because it is very close to my own — on the one hand you chide them for being unable to make up their minds — maybe that is a function or reflection of the wider confusion mentioned above. On the other hand, when the Presiding Bishop makes up his mind, as he did with the Great Thanksgiving of Rite I, we both wish that he hadn't. (Although I would only have it change places with Eucharistic Prayer II.) As Boone Porter pointed out, liturgical change implies theological change. I only wish he took his predicate more seriously — such change should be examined and acknowledged at least as seriously as the verbal expression and rubrics in which

(Howe - cont.)

we frame it.

Some final thoughts for the future, out of the experience of the past. Since the heady times of 1976, two patterns have come into focus that should concern all friends of good liturgy as we look to Anaheim in 1985. First, with a drastic cut-back in support, the SLC has increasingly asked for pro-forma approval of its work ahead of final publication, pleading press of time. This was given in 1979 and then withheld, to apparent surprise, in 1982, in response to reasonable criticism. We probably need a Liturgy Office at 815 to help relieve the pressure, but a broadened base and a less detached attitude to the legislative process on the part of the SLC would probably help too. Also in 1979 and 1982, the bishops, charged with initiating Prayer Book legislation, acted slower and slower in reporting out legislation. In 1982 the House of Deputies committee had about 48 hours, minus sleep and duplication time, to do its work. In light of an even shorter legislative schedule in 1985, this trend must be reversed or we face the possibility of no legislation at all. This may be flinching; it might also be simple inaction. In either case, the developing pattern does not bode well for the future progress which you anticipate in your editorial.

In an ultimate sense, there is a profound and urgent reason why AP and its friends need to think very carefully about the future. We are a Church which includes a large number of small congregations for whom the current blizzard of ever-new, ever-revised prayer and song books is an increasingly critical financial burden. I think we need to seek early closure on one level so that we can finally begin to go forward together for a while, living with what we have, even while keeping careful notes for the next edition of whatever. Otherwise, if we must have a new fourth edition of this and a third edition of that every five years or so, then we need to rethink provisions for helping the unfashionable have-nots to keep up with the more fashionable haves. The alternative is an ever more profoundly divided Church. Nothing in our world is perfect, certainly not our attempts to write good liturgy for our confused times. Sometime soon we have got to stop fiddling and tampering and get on with it, or risk boring and irritating our people beyond the limits of charity and reason.

Sincerely yours,

(The Rev.) Gregory M. Howe
Christ Church
Dover, Delaware

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THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING

reported by Henry Breul

It was particularly fitting that the AP Council meet at Nashotah House in the sesquicentennial year of the "Catholic Revival." Whether the revival is dated from Keble's "Christian Year" or Pusey's Assizes sermon or John Henry Hobart's sermons at Oxford, the fact is that Nashotah House was the early child of the movement in America. There is still a Benedictine aura around the beautiful grounds, especially in the chapel which is set up in a tight monastic formation. Despite all this, the House is very up-to-date with married students and women, together with a commitment to good liturgy.

This year's meeting was one day shorter than usual because of rising costs. The usual speaker was dispensed with so that the three days were pretty much filled with work. Professor Louis Weil of the House gave a talk on his experiences with children's liturgies in the little "Red Chapel" at the seminary. It obviously takes a lot of patience and flexibility to involve children as full participants in liturgy, but the results are impressive when it is done. The use of dance, drama, and mime as components of liturgical catechesis was part of the whole picture. Fr. Weil described the kind of preaching that developed over the years as he learned through experience what could and could not be absorbed by children seated on the floor around the preacher. Following his talk some of us went to look at the "Red Chapel" and were amazed at the idea of eighty or so children and parents packed into a space somewhat smaller than the old one-room schoolhouse.

There was an ecumenical visitation by two Lutherans representing what was once the Roman Catholic *Liturgical Conference* which has now gone thoroughly ecumenical in the make-up of its board. Gail Ramshaw Schmidt and Gordon Lathrop were in the area and came to feel out AP on forming some kind of relationship. They were amazed at the large size of our gathering (30) and seemed quite delighted when they found out more about us. Pastor Lathrop has been invited to become an ecumenical member of the Council.

As usual, the opening session on Monday evening was given over to "de-briefing" or "show and tell." This past year seems to have been rather traumatic for many of our members, so the session was rather long. In an age of anxiety and change we have found that this sort of "group maintenance" is not only healthy and loving but almost necessary if the entire meeting is to be successful.

There was much discussion of the Anglican-Lutheran co-con-joint celebration of the Eucharist. It had been hoped by some members that AP would offer a guide to the proper method of conducting these celebrations, but careful exploration of the documents from the New Orleans General Convention showed them to be quite confusing and even self-contradictory. Aside from all that, our Lutheran visitors explained to us that there was a good deal of disagreement on the Lutheran side as to the very possibility of joint celebration what with many Lutherans adhering to a "functional model" of ministry which



(Breul - cont.)

allows only for one presbyter-one congregation celebrations. What with all this confusion, the Council decided to leave the matter alone and hope for the best.

The Canadian members reported on the forthcoming publication of an "Alternative Service" for the Canadian Church. It would appear that the evangelical party has given some strong objections to the idea of epiclesis. Council member Dean Joe Fricker, who had to be absent from the meeting, is scheduled to report on the new Book is a future issue of *OPEN*.

A surprising consensus was arrived at following Bill Crews' presentation on the matter of re-writing *A Parish Program for Liturgy and Mission*. The group decided that it was not worth the time to attempt such a revision, especially in the light of the fact that the Book of Common Prayer spells out very carefully much of what the old brochure was pushing for. Instead, a letter was prepared to invite AP members into local groupings for discussion and suggestions for the Council. Each Council member will be responsible for calling such a group in

his/her area in the near future.

The big issue of the meeting, which came up over and over, was the need for an adequate ecclesiology in the Church. Again and again, in the matter of Baptism/Confirmation, ordination to the diaconate, and the Lutheran situation, it was found that individual bishops and dioceses were operating out of vague or even wrong-headed concepts of the Church. This subject was therefore put high on the priority list for publications.

Council member Bill Petersen, who is the new dean of Bexley Hall, invited the Council to Rochester for its next meeting, where the whole matter of ecclesiology is sure to be discussed further.

The Council re-elected all its officers for another term (see page 13). The Rev. Bill Crews of Topeka, Kan.; Deacon Jerry Meachen of Riverside, Conn.; and Nigel Renton of Berkeley, Calif., who were attending as visitors, were invited to become regular members of the Council, thus filling all vacant Council positions.

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SUMMARY OF TREASURER'S REPORT / 1982 36

RECEIPTS

Membership dues	\$13,451.03
Sale of brochures (incl. shipping reimbursement)	4,194.05
Contributions to General Convention expense	1,712.01
Council meeting (travel and expense reimbursement)	1,814.20
General Convention (reimburs. for shared facilities)	300.60
Credit operating accounts	10.67
Transfer from savings	1,500.00

Subtotal \$22,982.56

Checking account balance, January 1 \$ 4,355.05

PROOF TOTAL \$27,337.61

DISBURSEMENTS

Membership expense	\$ 737.69
OPEN (printing, mailing)	3,694.87
Brochures (printing, mailing, expense)	5,150.48
Headquarters office (rent, staff, expense, postage, telephone, equipment)	7,128.36
Council meeting (travel, facilities, expense)	5,272.66
General Convention (travel, facilities, expense)	2,001.07
Contributions	600.00
Transfer to savings	500.00

Subtotal \$25,085.13

Checking account balance, December 31 \$ 2,252.48

PROOF TOTAL \$27,337.61

Liturgy and Its Social Implications

by Louis Weil

The following is an abridged version (abridged by the author) of an address given to the National Forum of Episcopal Social Service Agencies and Special Ministries at St. Paul's Church, Kansas City, Missouri, on August 20, 1982. The Rev. Louis Weil is professor of liturgics and church music at Nashotah House.

There is a central problem. I believe that the Church is victim on a very large scale of an inherited and defective liturgical mentality. The nature of this defect, which I shall explore with you here today, is directly related to a general unawareness of the social implications of liturgical worship. Its effect is insidious because it operates at an often unconscious level, the level of views which are taken for granted because they are so common. In this area they are the views which shape what we may call a person's piety — piety is that marvelous fusion of religious attitudes which each one of us has, but which it is very difficult to sort out.

The central problem is that most of the members of the Church do not know what the liturgical act is. Even if the reformed rites of the new Prayer Book reflect significant changes in understanding of the liturgical act, the rites continue to be celebrated by laity and clergy who approach the rites through the filter of a set of attitudes which are really quite alien to authentic liturgical worship. The social implications of the liturgy are often unrecognized because the liturgical act in its integrity has not been experienced, nor even expected.

The liturgy is often spoken of in terms of its formative power. This is true; — but it also shapes our expectations of what the liturgical act is to be. If over the years we have had a type of liturgical experience which had little connection with the other aspects of our lives, it cannot surprise us that the liturgy is not generally thought to have any social implications.

Religious practice was viewed in the 19th century as very much an individual, inward matter, which had external expression in the authorized public liturgy. In this view, however, the true meaning of liturgy is lost. It is easy to find evidence among 19th century writers that the liturgy was viewed as a private act surrounded by public ceremonial; the coinciding of private acts of piety by the number of people gathered. Ceremonial, rites and other external matters were viewed as secondary to the private prayer of the individuals gathered. The authentic liturgical act turns that piety upside down. It is the action of all united in what is essentially a single self-offering of the Church. Private prayer is important as a complement to that corporate act, but the two are not the same thing and should not be expected to coincide. The authentic

(Weil - cont.)

liturgical act is not a luxury. It is an act which reveals the nature of the Church. What lies behind the now familiar liturgical changes is an awareness of the relation of worship to the Church's identity. The involvement of a diversity of lay ministers, for example, is really a matter of the mutuality of ministries within the Body of Christ. It must correspond to what is going on in the life of the congregation in the complementarity of ministries. The inner sense must be revealed as the outward sign. The authentic liturgical act is a truly communal act, an integration of all the gathered people into a single action, as members of one Body. The liturgy should call each one of us back to a sense of membership in the People of God. This is not the liturgical piety which has formed most of us. I believe that an individualized piety still dominates even in places where a more corporate liturgical experience is celebrated each Sunday. Piety works out of our subconscious. The filter of an individualized piety "interprets" the new rites in terms of the old mentality. Thus, the rites of the new BCP often indicate an external shift of piety which often has not taken place deep within the individual worshipper.

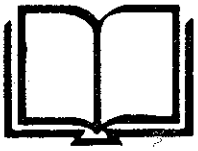
If we want to understand the social consequences of the Eucharist, what is required is a radical conversion, a cleansing of the inherited liturgical mentality of which I have spoken. We must ask our-

selves why, with our rediscovery of the centrality of the communal act of Christian identity, the Eucharist, we fail by and large to recognize the judgment it brings upon us as a community of witness to Jesus Christ in the world. How is it that a people who proclaim our unity in bread broken and shared remain uncritical of a socio-economic system which deprives the poor of bread and of most other needs for human life and dignity?

The Eucharist is a symbolic action with significant social implications. The Bible speaks of social and economic justice, of the effects of prejudice and hatred. If we will hear what it says, it impels us to action and overflows into all the choices of our daily lives. Just as the word is proclaimed to all who will listen, without regard to status, so the eucharistic gifts are offered to all who have been baptized, without distinction. If we take this sign seriously, its social implications are awesome. It offers a model for a genuinely Christian society. The liturgy places us in a new context; it opens up for us a new kind of existence in which we are, quite simply, the people of God. Does this awareness permit us to see the radical social consequences of the liturgy as an expression of God's perpetual work of transformation? Does it enable us to see ourselves as God's instruments for this work?

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BOOKS



Hymnal Studies Three. The Church Hymnal Corporation, 800 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 52 pages with three appendices. Paper.

The vast majority of churches today are small and face the challenge of worshipping God with limited resources. This book addresses the musical challenge of worship in a small church by sharing some of the experiences its author has had as Music Consultant for the Diocese of Western North Carolina. Within 52 pages are specific examples of music for congregation, choir, liturgy, and even special occasions, as well as some ideas for presenting this music to the people who will use it.

The general outlook of this book is straightforward with an eye for practicality. The first sentence proclaims the author's belief that "music is for people." Some church musicians would point out that music is for God (and we probably all know musicians who use that idea to emphasize liturgy as spectator sport rather than participatory worship). But if your church is small, or has little musical tradition or participation, this book has some practical, helpful ideas for improving the situation.

The primary way of introducing music to a congregation, as done by the author, is hymnsings, usually apart from regular wor-

ship. Unless your congregation is relaxed and easy-going, the author has found people prefer that setting for learning new music, since they seem uptight and inhibited just before services. The author includes techniques for teaching melodies and rhythms which most trained musicians are familiar with, but which would be quite helpful to those less adept at introducing music.

The section on choirs provides ideas for anthems (there is also an appendix which lists enough anthems for a year or more, all practical for small choirs). This section also discusses the choir as teacher and ways to encourage and nurture local parish choirs. The book concludes with a story about children's importance for the future of church music and one of the author's experiences in helping children compose a piece for a music camp's concluding service.

Generally, this book contains nothing spectacular or new. Many of its ideas are familiar to trained, professional church musicians, yet for the small church, with limited resources or participation, this book could be just the resource with solutions to the problems it faces.

Hilton Baxter
St. Thomas' Parish
Washington, D.C.



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