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the **associated parishes**  
for liturgy and mission

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## Baptism, A Southern Baptist Dilemma

by E. Glenn Hinson

**B**aptists have been known since the seventeenth century for their insistence on "believers' baptism." Typically this has meant deferral of baptism for children born into Christian households until age sixteen or older. European Baptists, now representing a minority viewpoint, still hold the line at age sixteen or seventeen, for they are convinced that young people cannot know whether they will hold fast to their commitment until they reach at least that age.

In the United States, Southern Baptists, no longer a small sect but the "catholic church of the south," find themselves in a very different position vis-a-vis traditional Baptist practice. In this huge denomination, zealous to win members, the average age of baptism has plunged precipi-

tously downward in the past half century. Whereas in frontier times the average convert was about twenty years of age, today the average convert is eight years old. In 1981 Southern Baptist Churches reported the baptism of 2,519 children five years old or under, some as young as three. Although this is a small percentage of the total baptisms, it points to an important transition taking place in the Southern Baptist Convention. It highlights a dilemma that confronts Southern Baptists: as the established church of the south, can they hold on to the Baptist tradition with its focus on the individual and on the voluntariness of religious faith? Many forces seem to be urging them to opt more deliberately for a corporatist and intentionalist model which actually suits their situation better.

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### *Original Baptist perspectives*

Baptists originate from English Puritan Separatism with secondary influences from continental Anabaptism.<sup>1</sup> Like other Puri-



(Hinson - cont.)

tans, they were concerned for a further reformation of the church in England, considering the Elizabethan Settlement of 1563 altogether inadequate. Most of them wanted a reform more like Calvin's in Geneva. Like other Separatists, one of three major groups of Puritans, they saw little hope for reform in the established church, linked as it was so closely to the state. Speedy and effective reform would take place only by way of separate or independent congregations.

**I**nsistence on the baptism of believers emerged gradually out of lively debates about scripture and reform within various Separatists or Independent congregations. The scriptures provided clear evidence for believers' baptism, but not for infant baptism. Another factor of powerful insistence, however, was the issue of freedom. Separatists and Independents found themselves at loggerheads with the Uniformity Acts which were designed to enforce the Settlement, for they required worship in accordance with the *Book of Common Prayer*. Thomas Helwys, leader of the little band of Separatists who returned to England to assemble the first Baptist church on English soil, quickly found himself hauled off to prison. So did many other Baptists as they formed congregations not using the prayer book but worshiping in free style according to their interpretation of the scriptures.

These persecuted saints dug deeper to lay down as a foundational principle the voluntariness of faith. God alone can claim sovereignty over the individual conscience. Obedience to God, therefore, must be voluntary or it will not be obedience. Any form of coercion invalidates faith. To be authentic and responsible, faith must be free. From prison Thomas Helwys reminded King James I that he was only a mortal man and not God; therefore, he had no control over the immortal souls of his subjects. He should neither prevent Roman Catholics, Jews, Moslems, or non-Christians of any kind from worshiping according to the dictates of conscience, nor coerce them to participate in the prescribed worship of the state church.<sup>2</sup> In New England Roger Williams, founder of the first Baptist church in the American colonies, wrote with equal force in defense even of "anti-Christian consciences."<sup>3</sup> Though Williams did not retain for long his ties with Bap-

tists, he left a permanent Baptist legacy in the founding of Rhode Island, whose charter eliminated all religious tests for citizenship and mandated complete religious liberty.

**T**o appreciate fully the import of the voluntary principle on Baptist thinking, one must grasp the intensity of their insistence on voluntary prayer. Saying prayers according to the *Book of Common Prayer*, John Bunyan observed, is "only a little lip labour and bodily exercise," unworthy of sincere and heartfelt religion. Bunyan would not even permit the use of the Lord's Prayer, the "Our Father," because that would represent something other than the prayer the Spirit puts in one's heart.<sup>4</sup>

Applied to baptism, this principle clearly excludes baptism of infants. Indeed, their baptism could be regarded as a form of coercion, since infants cannot assent voluntarily to faith. Here, of course, Baptists had to adjust the covenant theology they inherited from John Calvin, which allowed for the baptism of infants. Whereas Calvin construed the covenant much more in Hebrew Bible terms and imagery, Baptists relied more heavily on the New Testament. When they recited the Hebrew Bible, they made a beeline for Jeremiah 31:31ff, which emphasizes heart religion and the individual. In the Baptist view, much more than in Calvin's, God effects the covenant through the individual rather than through the corporate body. Obedience to God's will results from the Spirit's work in the individual, not in any corporate reality.

#### *An emerging practice*

Seen against this background, the lowering of the average age for baptism in the Southern Baptist Convention is, therefore, symptomatic of something far wider and more critical for the future of the Baptist tradition in the Southern Baptist Convention. It evinces a shift in the foundational principle that underlies Baptist theology and practice, namely, voluntariness in religion. Whereas the earliest Baptists would have stood next to Quakers on the extreme voluntarist-individualist end of a scale extending from voluntarist-individualist to intentionalist-corporatist

(Hinson - cont.)

with Roman Catholics and Anglicans at the extreme intentionalist-corporatist end, now Southern Baptists are sliding across the scale toward the intentionalist-corporatist end.

A number of other developments in Southern Baptist life confirm this observation. In recent years Southern Baptists have laid aside early strong opposition to the use of confessions of faith. Though still giving lip service to individual freedom, they have insisted on conformity of denominational employees to such confessions. Individuals may think as they please, but denominational employees must think as the corporation wants them to think. At New Orleans in 1982, deviating from centuries of rigorous opposition to state promotion of religion, messengers to the annual convention voted in favor of a resolution supporting President Reagan's proposed prayer amendment. They also offered substantial, though not majority, support for tuition tax credits—which are closely analogous to taxes for church schools, which earlier Baptists went to prison to oppose.

All of this signifies that Southern Baptists are, in some sense, a sect becoming "catholic." Much like the early church during the Constantinian era, they no longer perceive the Spirit to work exclusively, or perhaps even primarily, through the individual, but rather through the corporation. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that Southern Baptists are of divided mind about this. In some ways the Spirit works through the individual, perhaps especially in personal decisions about faith; in other ways it works through the corporation so that it can assure the right faith for those who make personal decisions. Applied to this matter of baptism, this suggests that while the individual must come to a decision freely, the corporation must do everything possible to encourage that decision—even to the point of near-coercion.

Here we must consider why the age of baptism has dropped so markedly in the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention. The drop is due in part to the nurturing program Southern Baptists have developed. During frontier days, people rarely attended church, and Sunday Schools did not be-

come effective in reaching the major part of the Baptist constituency in the South until the twentieth century. Intense evangelistic emphases with strong pressure on conversion usually came only once a year, during a Fall revival. The natural result was the delay of baptism and a high average age for baptism. Today, Southern Baptists nurture children toward a profession of faith from the cradle on, and they also strive to make missionaries of them in the process.

This, however, is only a partial explanation of the precipitous downward plunge in the age for baptism. Another factor, a less felicitous one, is the pressure exerted by the corporation itself. Nothing is more important in the modern corporate enterprise than measurable results, and in this Southern Baptist corporation that means reportable "decisions." To obtain such results, churches may take either a "watering down" or a "heating up" approach. In the former, they adulterate the message. "Do you love Jesus? If you do, come and give your heart to him." In the latter, they apply psychological pressures. In meetings of children or youth, evangelists resort to emotional stories and appeals, to crowd pressures, to fear of punishment for sin, or to gimmicks which can evoke expected responses. Decisions made under such circumstances often result in subsequent decisions in the form of rededications or genuine "conversions" followed by a second baptism.

To these two factors we could add the normal anxiety of parents, relatives, and peers in a context where so much emphasis falls on this particular decision, often labeled "being saved." Many children will go forward during an invitation because they know their parents want or expect them to do so. Others will follow the crowd, a trusted friend who makes such a commitment, or two or three older friends. Where baptismal statistics count so heavily as a standard for success, ministers and church leaders will think twice before they turn anyone back. And since few Southern Baptist churches have pre-baptismal instructional programs independent of Sunday school, little attention is given to evaluation of decisions. I have seen four year old twins dragged down the aisle to the front of a

(Hinson - cont.)

congregation by their mother and immediately taken to the baptistry to be immersed along with the others requesting baptism.

### *Pondering the dilemma*

In itself the shift in perspective described here poses a dilemma massive enough to create confusion about the identity of Southern Baptists. It is magnified, however, by the inheritance of a narrow ecclesiology which regards the local church as the only true expression of "church," the kingdom of God on earth. This theology sees baptism as the door to the local church but little more. In this view, called Landmarkism, the only true baptism is "Baptist baptism." Baptism in non-Baptist churches is unscriptural; thus Baptists cannot receive members baptized in other churches, even if in the same mode and on the basis of profession of faith. Nor can non-Baptists be allowed to take the Lord's Supper, preach from Baptist pulpits, or otherwise commune with Baptists.

Landmarkism, a "Baptist high churchism," would throttle open consideration of the problem Southern Baptists face, for the solution to the problem may bring us closer to other churches, particularly those of the "catholic" tradition. At the risk of picking up some darts from Landmarkists, however, I would suggest that Southern Baptists openly acknowledge what has been and is happening to them and attempt to conserve the essence of their own tradition even if not in its pure expression. On the voluntarist-individualist to intentionalist-corporatist scale alluded to above, we had better put on the brakes in our race to the other end. If I am not mistaken, we are now racing past Roman Catholics, who are headed toward the voluntarist-individualist end, in the direction of the extreme intentionalist-corporatist end. If we don't pull up fast, we will forfeit the precious insight about religion which our Baptist forebears bequeathed to world civilization. Though we should readily acknowledge that the Spirit works through the corporate body to effect the divine purpose, let us not go so far as to say, "The Spirit works only through the corporate." Faith, the essence of our concern, still has to be personal, voluntary and free of coercion, however well-intended.

Ultimately, the resolution of our dilemma concerning baptism will be connected with our handling of the much larger question of our identity as Baptists. Some observations directly apropos of the baptismal question, however, may be helpful. First, the purpose of baptism ought to be kept clearly in focus. Baptism does not stand in isolation from a total process by which human beings enter into a covenant relationship with God through Jesus Christ. The major concern should be, therefore, as it was for our forbears, the effecting of a genuine and heartfelt covenant. I am not as troubled as many European Baptists are about the lowering of the age for baptism—if genuine commitment results. Unfortunately, the evidence from the product is not encouraging. Serious scrutiny of the discipling process is warranted—even mandated. It is ironic that, as Southern Baptists take Christian initiation less and less seriously, other Christians who practice infant baptism have heightened their concern to the point of refusing baptism to children of non-Christian parents or of Christian parents who do not attend church regularly.

Second, here may lie a clue for solving the critical issue of receiving persons baptized in other denominations, whether as believers or not. As I have suggested elsewhere,<sup>5</sup> if we thought of the whole initiation process as a covenant-making one, we could consider either faith followed by baptism or baptism followed by faith a completing of the covenant. The key concern of Baptists has been the element of personal commitment, which could be expressed in a rite of confirmation or something similar.

Third, something must be done to alleviate pressures that amount to a coercion of faith and result in all kinds of unfortunate consequences. Some Baptist churches, few of them Southern Baptist, have constructed an escape valve in the form of infant blessing or infant dedication services. But this eases only the parental pressures. Whether Southern Baptists can install an outlet for the huge pressures built up by the evangelistic enterprise they have undertaken with increasing fervor is another matter. The mentality of some is frighteningly analogous to that of the medieval Church—inquisitors, crusaders, and all. No excess is too much if

(Hinson - cont.)

it stokes the fires of evangelism. Anything which would dampen them is abhorrent.

To turn the tide here, I suspect, we must recover or create a sounder theology based on God's sovereignty. In revising the Westminster Confession of Faith in 1677, Particular Baptists in London articulated the cardinal doctrine standing behind all affirmations of religious liberty.

*God alone is Lord of Conscience, and hath left it free from the Doctrines and Commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his Word, or not contained in it. So that to Believe such Doctrines, or obey such Commandments out of Conscience, is to betray true liberty of Conscience; and the requiring of an implicit Faith, and absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy Liberty of Conscience, and Reason also.*  
(Art. XXI.2).<sup>6</sup>

There is something idolatrous in the excess of zeal that has gripped many Southern Baptists, just as it did many medieval Christians. Human beings presume to

play God, usurping the role of the Holy Spirit in pouring out grace, effecting faith, and transforming life. The early English Baptists spoke to this point also. They underlined, in a new chapter on "the Gospel, and the extent of the Grace thereof," the necessity of "an effectual, insuperable work of the Holy Spirit, upon the whole Soul, for the producing in them a new spiritual life; without which no other means will effect their Conversion unto God" (Chap. 20.4).<sup>7</sup>

Here a lot of history has to be reexamined to get proper perspective on this excess. Baptist Hyper-Calvinists went too far in repudiating "means" for conversion, thus undercutting the Christian mission entirely. William Carey and Andrew Fuller had to break the stranglehold of such thinking by arguing the appropriateness of using "means." Two centuries later, however, we need to ask whether we have not let the successes of the evangelistic enterprise lure us down the path toward an ecclesiastical Adamism. We have now "become as God," not only in "knowing good and evil" but in "doing the work of God in conversion and transformation of life." +++

#### NOTES:

1. Historians disagree here. Some give greater weight to Anabaptists origins than I do. I would note in reply that the earliest Baptist congregations in England and in the American colonies were Puritan Separatist or Independent churches which later opted for baptism of believers. See Robert Torbet, *A History of the Baptists* (rev. ed.; Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1963), pp.17-57.

2. *A Short Declaration of the Mystery of Iniquity*, 1612 (London: Kingsgate Press, 1935), p.69.

3. *The Bloody Tenent of Persecution, 1644*, ed. Edward Bean Underhill (London: G. Haddon, 1848), p.2; cf. *The Bloody Tenent Yet More Bloody*, 1652.

4. *I Will Pray with the Spirit*, ed. Richard Greaves (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), pp. 268ff.

5. E. Glenn Hinson, "Baptism and Christian Unity: A Baptist Perspective," in *Baptism: An Ecumenical Starting Point*, ed. George Kilcourse (Lexington: Kentucky Council of Churches, 1982), pp. 20-31.

6. In *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, ed. William L. Lumpkin (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1959), p. 279f.

7. Ibid, p. 279.

# Diocesan Guidelines for Christian Initiation and Confirmation

*These guidelines have been developed by one diocese of the Episcopal Church for use in its parishes. They are reprinted here with permission. Since some of the language used in the guidelines has already appeared in *The Baptizing Community: Christian Initiation and the Local Congregation*, by A. Theodore Eastman (Seabury Press, New York), copyright 1982 by the author, his permission has also been obtained.*

## I. GENERAL NORMS

1. Baptism is to be celebrated within the eucharist on one of the following occasions:

- The bishop's visit.
- The Great Vigil of Easter.
- The Day of Pentecost.
- All Saints' Day or the Sunday after All Saints' Day.
- The feast of the Baptism of our Lord.

Baptism is especially appropriate when the bishop's visit coincides with one of the feasts listed above. Insofar as possible, baptism should be reserved for the bishop's visit or the Easter Vigil.

2. As in the early centuries of the Church, baptism takes place as a unified rite of Christian Initiation with three main parts: water baptism, signation or chrismation, and first communion. It is desirable to reserve baptisms for those occasions when the bishop can be present to preside and seal the initiate. The bishop's role in baptism helps us to understand Christian Initiation as one unrepeatable experience in which the initiate is made a full member of the family of God in the one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. It is especially desirable that the bishop preside at adult baptism since the service of confirmation in the 1979 Prayer Book is redundant for one baptized as an adult.

3. All baptisms will be celebrated according to the 1979 Prayer Book. The bishop will use oil of chrism for the signation, as the full sacramental sign "that those who are sealed with it may share in the royal priesthood of Jesus Christ" (BCP 307) and priests celebrating the rite alone should also use chrism blessed by the bishop, as a sign of unity with the bishop. Baptisms, even of infants, should also include first communion.

4. The bishop's visit may also include:  
Confirmations.  
Receptions.  
Reaffirmations.

Confirmation, a sacramental rite of "mature public affirmation" of faith, is to be administered only to those of sufficient maturity who are ready and prepared to make such a commitment. Confirmation will not be administered on the basis of age or grade-level. Those baptized as adults "with laying on of hands by a bishop" (that is, signation or chrismation) are considered to be already confirmed. In parallel rites, those already confirmed or chrismated in other catholic traditions who are coming to the Anglican Communion are received by the bishop, and those Anglicans already confirmed or chrismated who have reached a new stage of commitment may reaffirm their faith to the bishop.

5. If the bishop's visit includes both bap-

(Guidelines - cont.)

tisms and confirmations, baptisms must be emphasized as the foundation sacrament of the faith. Confirmation and other pastoral rites, while important to those concerned and to the parish, are subordinate to the two great sacraments of baptism and the eucharist.

## II. PREPARATION FOR BAPTISM

6. If the baptismal vows of renunciation of evil and commitment to Christ (BCP 302-303) are to have any meaning, candidates or those who speak for them must be ready to take the vows. Even in the baptism of infants and younger children, the Prayer Book expects parents and godparents "to be instructed in the meaning of baptism, in their duties to help the new Christian grow in the knowledge and love of God, and in their responsibilities as members of his Church" (298). In the baptism of adults and older children, the candidates themselves must prepare to receive the illumination of faith.

7. The complex act which the Prayer Book describes as "full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit" has frequently in Christian tradition been preceded and followed by other rites, theologically dependent on baptism and deriving their meaning from it. At various times and places these rites have been important parts of the ongoing process of Christian Initiation.

8. One such rite is confirmation, "in which we express a mature commitment to Christ and receive strength from the Holy Spirit through prayer and the laying on of hands by a bishop." Confirmation so defined is especially appropriate when those baptized at an early age are ready and prepared to make a mature public commitment.

9. When baptism is administered to adults, however, a period of preparation should precede their baptismal profession of faith. The Episcopal Church, like several other Christian bodies, has restored the ancient catechumenate as "a period of training and instruction in Christian understandings about God, human relationships, and the meaning of life, which culminates in the reception of the Sacraments of Christian Initiation." As outlined in The Book of

Occasional Services (pages 112-125), the catechumenate is marked by three stages:

Stage 1. *The Pre-catechumenal period.*  
The stage includes classes which help inquirers decide whether they want to become Christians.

Stage 2. *The Catechumenate*  
The stage begins with a rite of admission of catechumens, in the midst of the Sunday liturgy, in which the sponsors mark a cross on the foreheads of their catechumens. The stage includes regular worship and prayer, living the Christian life, and basic instruction in scripture, for a period that varies according to individual needs.

Stage 3. *Candidacy for Baptism*  
The stage normally coincides with Lent, with baptism at the Easter Vigil. (It may also occur in the incarnational cycle, with baptism on the feast of our Lord's Baptism.) In addition to "private disciplines of fasting, examination of conscience, and prayer," the stage includes a rite of enrollment of candidates, which takes place after the creed on the First Sunday in Lent. On several Sundays during the stage the candidates continue to come before the celebrant for special prayers and blessings and the laying on of hands.

The period after baptism, commonly called *mystagogia* (initiation into mysteries), extends through the fifty days of Easter. Less strictly defined than the catechumenate, this period involves integration into the life and worship of the Church, in which the instructor and sponsors continue to help the neophyte.

10. The catechumenate offers each congregation and the diocese opportunity to witness transformation of life. This witness enhances the significance of baptism and can be a leaven for the transformation of the diocese and the whole Church.

## III. THE BISHOP'S VISIT

11. Candidates for baptism sit in a group, with their sponsors, parents, and godparents. Candidates for confirmation, reception, and reaffirmation sit in a separate group. The bishop sits in the middle in full view of the congregation. If a

(Guidelines - cont.)

portable chair is needed, it should be light and capable of being moved easily (but not a metal folding chair).

12. After the sermon by the bishop, all sit except the candidates for baptism and their sponsors. The baptismal candidates and sponsors come before the bishop for the presentation and examination. Candidates for confirmation, reception, and reaffirmation then stand in their pews for their own presentation. After the vows, the rest of the congregation stands for their question (page 303).

13. Before or during the prayers for the baptismal candidates (page 305), the bishop, other ministers, baptismal candidates, and sponsors go to the font. A deacon or other person may carry the lighted paschal candle. Someone should bring either the altar book or a Prayer Book to hold for the bishop. The parish should provide a mixture for oil of chrism (pure olive oil with a little oil of balsam or some other aromatic scent) for the bishop to bless at the font. Although the bishop blesses the water, it is appropriate for a priest or deacon with close pastoral ties to immerse or pour water on a candidate. Whenever possible, immersion should be used as the richer sign of death and resurrection.

14. Immediately after each baptism, the newly baptized may be given a candle lit from the paschal candle. If it is the custom to clothe the initiate in a white garment, that ceremony should also take place at this point.

15. After the baptisms, all return to the chancel for prayer and chrismations (page 308). Each initiate should have a name tag or card with only the first or preferred name for the bishop to read for the chrismation. Each initiate is brought to the bishop one at a time. Adults and older children kneel. It is desirable for the bishop to pour the chrism from a cruet or bottle over the head of each initiate and then to sign the initiate on the forehead. Someone holds the oil of chrism for the bishop to use, and at the end of the chrismations someone provides him with water and a towel.

16. Confirmations, receptions, and reaffir-

mations may then take place (page 309). The confirmands are brought to the bishop one at a time, kneel before him for the laying on of hands, then return to the pew. Those being received or reaffirmed stand before the bishop and are blessed. All should have name tags or cards. If the service is confirmation without baptism (pages 413-419), the procedure is similar but simpler. The prayers for the baptismal candidates mentioned on page 417 (referring to pages 305-306) are not to be used.

17. Baptism (and confirmation) ends with the peace, which the bishop exchanges first with the newly baptized.

18. As an option, the prayers of the people may follow the peace. (One exception is the Easter Vigil, which requires the prayers, followed by the peace.) If there are large numbers of confirmands, it may be wise to omit the prayers. It is a valuable tradition, however, to include the prayers after baptism as the first occasion on which initiates can intercede as Christians.

19. The completion of baptism in the eucharist is a solemn and important occasion and should not be hurried. The newly baptized should receive their first communion before others, in full sight of the congregation. Parents should assist in giving communion to infants and young children. The mother of an infant not yet weaned may find it natural to dip a finger into the wine and let the child suck on it.

20. A sung liturgy is normative. It is desirable, however, to keep the bishop's visit from extending to wearisome length through the addition of music seldom heard by the congregation. The liturgy should begin only with an entrance hymn. Hymns or announcements before or after the sermon should be omitted. Choir anthems are suitable during the offertory and communion. The bishop will sing the Sursum corda, preface, and other chants if the congregation can sing the responses, and if the music is furnished for him at the altar.

21. The bishop should be assisted by one or two deacons, if available, or by an acolyte to help as needed. He will carry his own crozier.

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# AP AT NOTRE DAME

## The Recovery of Despair

by Henry H. Breul

Associated Parishes was founded in 1946 by a group of clergy who were in despair over eleven o'clock Sunday morning. The reign of *Solemn Morning Prayer* was in place, but a titanic war had shuffled peoples' value structures so that static-intellectual worship no longer carried the faith along. The Liturgical Movement had come to fruition in the publishing of Dix's *The Shape of the Liturgy* in 1945 and dramatic changes were in the wind. AP's despair led to years of effort culminating in the Book of Common Prayer 1979, but now, five years later, after a pleasant but debilitating "high", AP has found its despair again and seems ready to go back to work. The following letter was sent out by the editor of *OPEN* to the Council membership before this year's meeting at the University of Notre Dame:

"It would appear to me that Bill Petersen hit the nail on the head when, at the last meeting at Nashotah, he asked for a look at ecclesiology. We have been nudging at this for some years, and certainly the ecclesiology implicit in the new BCP is *different* and its implications Church-shaking. I have been trying in the last few issues of *OPEN* to explore how the recent discoveries about the post-Apostolic Church could affect our future survival, and I suggest we might set some time aside at our Notre Dame meeting to deal with the medieval accretions yet to be exorcised.

"I propose that *the basic unit* of the Church is the local gathering containing all the sacramental and biblical powers for its life. I propose that the present system does not work, no matter how much we sentimentalize it. The bishop still arrives and departs as a stranger. I propose that the shedding of the late medieval bureaucracy would free the local

church for mission and that local synodical action should replace diocesan and general conventions. I am suggesting that there is no functional or spiritual difference between the priest and the bishop, indeed the development of the priesthood, as separate from the episcopate, was a historical error when the Church slouched into the fourth century. I am clear that a priest-bishop is only a priest-bishop when related directly to a local community whatever it be called and that, when the relationship is broken, so too is the 'character' lost.

"Some pertinent occasions from the BCP: the Easter Vigil requires a bishop in each parish...the myth is that the priest becomes a bishop at that point only to relapse into priesthood again when it is over. The Baptismal Office requires the presence of a bishop and tries to secure that presence by pointing to the Holy Oils. 'Look hard at this vial of olive oil and you'll see the bishop lurking inside.' Well, the genie just ain't in the bottle. If the local community wants to ordain, it must go through a process which *de-localizes the ordination totally*. After committees, internships, seminaries, and distance intervene, the local parish might as well have called for the ordination of a person from Samarkand or Tahiti. Somebody has to look at this mess, and I propose we are the group to do it. It is in keeping with our mission to be 'a burr under the saddle of the Church.'"

The response by mail was enthusiastic except for one member who wondered whether the writer was lapsing into Presbyterianism or Congregationalism, but then went on to recognize that the situation is serious. There were several regional meetings of AP members at which the gathered nodded their heads in agreement when the letter was read.

(Breul - cont.)

AP president Peter Moore asked the Very Rev. Durstan R. McDonald of the Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest to sit in on our Council meeting as a resource for a discussion of structure and ministry as the Council struggled with the whole can of worms known as "ecclesiology."

The first night at South Bend was taken up, as usual, with "unloading baggage." This had originally been designed some years ago to leech off the anger of one cantankerous member (no longer living) who, if he was not vented early, would burst out in the middle of something important and blow it out of the ball park. Now it is used as a moment to bring each other up to date on the year past. At Notre Dame the amount of gloom coming forth was remarkable as one after another told of terrible things that had happened to them and demonstrating through their stories the almost demonic quality of the present structures of authority and pastoral responsibilities in the Church. This was all capped by a description by one of the members of the Council of an inconceivably awful service of worship that he attended in a diocese that shall not be mentioned.

We then proceeded to "brainstorm" the *Church after the bomb*...what would it be like...what liturgy would it have...what scripture would it remember...what would be its authority structure? Nothing was resolved or agreed upon, but the exercise of that kind of imagination under those circumstances left us with the kind of internal and external space to plunge into the discussion of what came to be the final form of the statement which follows.

"The Council of The Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission calls upon the Episcopal Church to re-examine and clarify its ecclesiology with special attention to the respective roles of the Orders of Ministry.

"In particular, we are painfully aware of two sources of frustration in the Church's mission:

"1. The contemporary understanding of the role of the presbyter is seriously distorted by the demand for one-to-one relationships, as in counseling, at the expense of shepherding a congregation in

formation and nurture of the People of God.

"2. Our existing polity limits the effective ministry of all orders by setting diocesan structures against parochial units in competition over matters of planning, program, and finance.

"We therefore call upon the Church to consider the implications of this confusion upon the Paschal imagery of the Gospel message and upon those responsible for the Church's liturgy and its mission, as defined in the Baptismal Covenant."

It needs to be pointed out here that there was great discomfort in the group with the psychological model for ministry that has been the dominant influence in the Church for many years. As Freudianism disappears into the mists of the past, the Episcopal Church seems to be left with a pastoral ideal which leads non-leaders, non-preachers, and non-liturgical leaders to seek the ministry only to disappear into their offices for one-to-one counseling. The biblical imagery of the shepherd is blurred as each shepherd seems driven to hunker down in the pasture to speak to each lamb as the rest of the flock wanders off into brambles and gullies. At the same time we throw stones at our bishops for not being "pastoral" when we have placed them in a managerial role far removed from the pasture, let alone the flock.

During the meeting several brochures were started on the road to publication, and plans for translating some of the existing brochures into Spanish were brought closer to realization.

Plans for AP's presence at the 1985 General Convention in Anaheim were set up, and the site of next year's Council meeting was chosen (Santa Fe, NM).

This year our Council meeting overlapped the Conference on the Diaconate, and many of our members stayed on for those sessions. It is interesting to reflect that AP's interest in the revival of a real diaconate has led to a reassessment of the other orders, just as AP's original thrust on the centrality of the Eucharist led to the re-discovery of Baptism and the Great Vigil of Easter..."the thighbone is connected to the hipbone, praise the name of the Lord!" +++

# Hymnals and Musicians Renewed for the Eighties

by Carol Doran

The rector's voice leapt up and billowed down the hall. "Tell Lee! The truck just pulled in. The hymnals have arrived!" The musician could hear the excitement above the sound of the organ. Ignoring the ritual changing of shoes, the organist sprinted across the chancel and nearly collided with the secretary opening the heavy door leading to the church.

This is the ideal hymnal delivery scene, of course. The entire staff is delighted to welcome the moment for which all had been planning for nearly two years. The season's education programs had been designed to explore this enriched worship resource. Pacing of choir presentations of new hymn materials had been worked out in staff meetings. The parish dinner scheduled for three weeks from that delivery day had been planned as an introductory festivity for the handsome new books. All that collaboration had involved major staff time, of course, but plans had developed and taken on real sparkle as the expertise of each staff member had enriched the discussions.

Idealized narrative this may be, but it is not outside the possibility of happening in the life of the real church. A recent inquiry into the professional experience of members of the Association of Anglican Musicians has brought to print information about many such positive working situations within parishes. Old jokes about smoldering conflicts among church staff continue to make the rounds, of course, but musicians have stopped laughing. There is a growing sense of serious intention about approaching our role in the liturgy and recognition of the tragedy of staff relationships within the church which do not reflect the Gospel preached within those liturgies.

Many have come to view as essential the establishment of healthy working relations

ships with clergy whose style of staff coordination bears no relation to that described in the old stories. One member wrote the following:

"During the past 20 years' association with the Anglican Communion I can only see each year having increased my own enthusiasm. I have been and am very fortunate in that I work in a parish which only encourages imagination and creativity. The music department has a very long history of parish support... and there is a wonderful stubbornness about not wanting to lose 'their choirs.' I have not heard of many rectors who would put a note on the console asking if we might have Cantata 140 by Bach, with orchestra, please, in place of the sermon on the Sunday coinciding with the Gospel for that day."

The study has been titled, "A Summary of Significant Professional Experiences." It grew out of a work of the Association in "fostering a relationship of mutual respect and trust between clergy and musicians," (one of the stated goals of A.A.M.). Members of the Association gather annually for continuing education in their work as church musicians, for exchange of ideas, for support of their shared goal of excellence in church music and for merrymaking. The issues of current concern in the music of the Episcopal Church are our central focus, but the conversations at meals and long after the daily schedule of meetings has closed often have even deeper importance for our professional lives. At these times, stories and ideas shared become sources of new approaches to the challenges we face in common. Very often they give hope to someone desperate for a solution to a deteriorating situation.

Our primary intention in publishing this summary was to benefit our own members who could not attend the annual meeting by



*(Doran - cont.)*

making available in printed form these collected bits of professional wisdom. Church musicians of other denominations or Episcopal musicians who are not members of the Association will find these compiled responses by our members of much interest also.

But this year-long inquiry was undertaken with a second very clear intention. Several years ago, conversations among us began to reflect genuine surprise and disappointment at discovering how little is known about the ways we musicians function in the parish or about the hours which are spent preparing the music and working pastorally with people involved in the music program. One memorable story involved the person who was asked to serve as page-turner for the organist at a Sunday morning liturgy. The draftee did not do well with the pages because he became distracted by all the activities taking place in the organ loft. By his own description, he was "amazed" at what happens at the console. "I can't believe that you manage to play the organ, direct the choir, open the book for the next selection, prepare the registration and follow the liturgy at the same time," he said. And from henceforth that man functioned as an energetic and enthusiastic supporter of the musician's efforts in that parish.

**W**e have realized only gradually that people tend to assume that church musicians are a generic class resembling the organist of whatever church they attended as a child. The Association of Anglican Musicians, however, was formed, in part, to assist musicians in the transition from that former state to one of full competence in terms of contemporary churches. The difference often is measured in increased hours of organ practice and study time, attendance at staff meetings, telephone and personal visiting with parishioners and a great deal of study of new musical and liturgical materials. We now know for certain that it is we—the musicians—who must take the initiative to interpret ourselves and our work to the churches. For it is from the churches that we must seek support as we prepare for the future.

The Summary tells:

What members of the Association of Anglican Musicians value about their work.

How they maintain continuous growth in their professional skills.

Principles they have found effective in dealing with conflict.

Methods for encouraging spiritual and faith development of parishioners

Processes by which positive relationship with church staff colleagues have been developed.

Direct and third party intervention methods helpful in closing a rift among staff members.

And ways of bringing about an equitable salary scale for musicians on staff.

The seventy A.A.M. members who contributed to the study ranged from 26 to 74 years of age. They serve churches with enrollments between 100 and 3600 members. Respondents have served their present churches anywhere from four months through 32 years. They have given information regarding the academic degrees they hold and what benefits they receive in addition to their salaries. They listed the professional periodicals they read on a regular basis and told the ways they combat "burnout."

**M**embers were asked to provide answers to specific questions which had been worked out at a two-day consultation in Washington, D.C. in the summer of 1982. The A.A.M. Board of Directors and the musicians and clergy who joined them for this meeting struggled to find words and phrases to describe properly the role of the musician in today's Episcopal Church. We could list the tasks for which we have staff responsibility and the ways in which we presently serve the Church, but we realized only gradually that we seldom name the name of this gradually transformed role and could not, therefore, ask others to respect it nor, for that matter, to make proper financial compensation for it.

(Doran - cont.)

Our own inclinations were corroborated by those A.A.M. members who responded to the question regarding job titles. Each of the five choices we suggested was preferred by at least three respondents, and many additional titles were suggested by them. Members of A.A.M. see themselves as:

Directors of Music  
Organist-Choirmaster  
Director of Music and Fine Arts  
Minister of Music  
Pastoral Assistant for Music  
Parish Musician

And a number of thoughtfully conceived variations on all of these.

When the study asked members to indicate areas in which they are involved in the course of their work in the church, the following roles were mentioned: musician, accompanist, soloist, conductor, teacher, pastoral assistant, administrator, liturgist, composer, Christian education consultant, precentor, spiritual leader, youth worker, publicity manager, telephone operator, word processor, preacher, retreat coordinator and leader, secretary and clerk-typist, organ and piano tuner and technician, motivator, arranger, fund raiser, wedding coordinator, writer of articles on liturgy and music, workshop leader, computer operator, coordinator of special worship services, lay reader, librarian, teacher of confirmation class, and janitor.

Of vital interest to those who had originated the plan for this "Summary," however, was the clear message from the Association members regarding a self-recognition of their ministry as musicians. Although many of this country's leading church musicians have constructed outstanding programs built squarely on clear theological principles, the authority of the musician to speak directly of these matters was unclear. Often it was thought to be intrusion into the province reserved for those who have been ordained.

Many of the members of the Association of Anglican Musicians have studied the Bible formally and informally and have taken courses in theology, either in seminary or by extension course. In most cases they are well-informed about historical principles and contemporary thinking about liturgical practice. They are serious students of the ways in which people function in groups and they have spent large numbers of

hours listening to people individually and counseling with them. Among our work's greatest satisfactions, this Summary indicates, is the integration of own own faith with our musical tasks in God's service. One member wrote:

*"Opportunities for counseling constantly present themselves to the conscientious and sensitive organist-choirmaster. I receive much satisfaction from knowing that I have helped choristers (and others) in their pilgrimage toward God."*

In taking stock of our professional competence, our diverse skills and the growing clarity of our call to ministry through music, we had hoped to gather solutions to some of the challenges which face all who serve as musicians in the Episcopal Church today. Indeed, this has been done, but in addition we have had revealed to us—often with great eloquence—the commitment to God's service which many musicians hold. "Music is a ministry to the people of God, just as is preaching or counseling," one musician has said, "because it reaches into their deeper selves to reveal God."

The exciting challenge of introducing and helping our people use the Hymnal 1982 is materializing at this moment. We musicians are eager to learn how the Church will recognize the newly formed and well prepared musicians in its midst and use us in fresh new ways for this important work.       +++

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*Carol Doran is Associate Professor of Church Music and Director of Community Worship and Music at Colgate Rochester/Bexley Hall/ Crozier Theological Seminary in Rochester, New York. Dr. Doran is immediate past president of the Association of Anglican Musicians, She is co-author with Thomas H. Troeger of OPEN TO GLORY: Renewing Worship in the Congregation (Judson Press, 1983) and is currently writing a collection of new hymns to be published by Oxford University Press in Fall, 1984.*

*The 84-page document, A Summary of Significant Professional Experiences, is available from the Association of Anglican Musicians, 19 Woodcrest Drive, Rochester, NY J4625, for five dollars, postage paid.*

# SPOON-FED LITURGY

by Martha Meno Mosso

I don't know how it started, or who, if anyone can be made specifically responsible for it, but I ask you, since when did we get to the point that we need someone to direct our every move in worship? I mean, who was it decided we needed someone calling plays from the sanctuary as if we were engaged in intramural sports?!?!? Well, I say *NUTS* to it!!!!

I remember well the practice of announcing hymns and page numbers at Tremble Methodist Church where I once served many years ago, but I also remember the reason for it. In that particular church, worship was *EXTREMELY* informal, and no order of service was ever followed week to week or year to year. A great deal depended on the mood of the minister at the moment, and spontaneity played a great part in the process of worship. Such is not the case in the Episcopal Church. We have our beautiful Prayer Book, a guide and vehicle that I hope we are all using regardless of the variety and diversity of our individual parishes, and we have a lectionary from which most of us plan our services, choose hymns and prepare sermons.

I was once told that if announcements of hymns, psalms and the prayers of the people were not made, that no one at all would participate in the service. *BULL TWEEED!* I am firmly of the opinion that if a pew-sitter can't open his/her eyes to ascertain where they are in the service, then he/she isn't likely to bother to read the psalm, sing the hymn, or engage in any other portion of the liturgy. The real danger here is that we encourage people to be lazy. I cannot for the life of me figure out where anyone got the idea that the Episcopal liturgy was a passive pursuit! By definition it is, literally "the *WORK* of the people." Well, for God's sake and for their own, *MAKE THE PEOPLE WORK!!!!*

Most churches these days have service bulletins for the distinct purpose of laying out the order of service and its various components along with important announcements. In churches where bulletins are not printed, hymn boards usually do the trick. Why, I've even been in a church that projects hymns and page numbers up on a wall with one of those transparency doo-hickeys. Now I wouldn't want you to think that Martha is encouraging you to go out and recruit somebody's carousel projector, but really, even that would be preferable to someone interrupting every single quiet moment with a direction.

Good liturgy flows, hopefully without interruptions of any kind. The best liturgists enfuse the service with an almost theatrical sense of timing, and this effect can be greatly heightened by a sensitive and observant organist/pianist. To break the momentum of liturgy with an announcement or directive is usually to send the whole process crashing down. Services that are constantly filled with spoken directions and reminders never have a chance to get off the ground.

Very recently I attended a beautiful service of Evensong that had obviously been well prepared and was being conducted beautifully. I was marvelling at the beauty of the choir, the ability of the lector, and was truly being lifted by this rarely scheduled office when suddenly a man came out of nowhere to announce that we could all remain seated for the second canticle. Well, that was it—I spent the remainder of the afternoon trying to raise myself above the now-present concern of "what should I be doing next." The aura of that particular experience had been shattered.

I could go on about this at some length, but have long known the benefits of brevity. Let me close by reflecting on the fact that

(Martha - cont.)

one of the things that drew me to my church in the first place was the fact that it *REQUIRED* something of me. The fact that I am called upon to make a real contribution —to own the liturgy, as it were, will always be a prime motivating factor in my church attendance. Our role as ministers of the liturgy is to help our people *DO THE LITURGY*, not to do it for them. +++

*Reprinted, with the author's permission from NAMELESS WONDER, a publication of the Commission on Liturgy and Music of the Diocese of Minnesota. The author describes herself as "an out-dated and out-of-place Anglo-Catholic." She is a long-termed organist/choirmaster whose schooling included Mount Holyoke and the Conservatory of Chicago and who is active in several performance guilds and the Association of Anglican Musicians.*



## From the Coordinator:

At the back of this issue of *OPEN* you will find a "catalog" of our brochures together with an order blank. It's not too early to think about ordering what you need for your parish or diocesan worship committees. A couple of caveats:

1. Note that, on January 1, 1984, the prices of brochures were increased. This was announced in *OPEN* for November, 1983. If you use the old order cards with the old prices, there will be a delay while I write you to confirm the order at the new prices. Please check your current supply

of brochures and discard the old order cards they contain.

2. If you will show a street address instead of a Post Office box number, I can send your order via UPS and thus get it to you more quickly (and more cheaply).

Have a good summer!

Art Jenkins  
Coordinator

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FOR LITURGY AND MISSION

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58  
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PUBLICATIONS - JANUARY, 1984

Parish Eucharist. A redoing of AP's first brochure (1955) to reflect the present Prayer Book, emphasizing the primacy of the Eucharist as the central act of worship every Sunday in the life of the Church

The Holy Eucharist, Rite Two: A Commentary. An explanation of the shape and rationale of Rite Two together with suggestions for its proper use.

Ministry I - Holy Baptism.

Ministry II - Laity, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. Two linked brochures which express the Prayer Book understanding of ministry as being that of all baptized persons and holy orders as an articulation of the gifts of the Spirit at baptism.

The Great Vigil of Easter: A Commentary. The Great Vigil is explained step by step and attention is given to details which might otherwise be passed over.

Celebrating Redemption: The Liturgies of Lent, Holy Week, and the Great Fifty Days. This brochure puts the liturgies of these seasons into perspective by explaining the reasons behind each liturgical celebration.

The Daily Office: A Guide for Individual and Group Recitation. Besides taking the reader through the offices of Morning and Evening Prayer, this brochure also provides short discussions on the nature of prayer and the historical background of the Daily Office.

The Burial of the Dead: A Commentary. A guide for burial using the insights of the Prayer Book to redeem Christian dying from its captivity by the funeral industry.

Christian Initiation: A Theological and Pastoral Commentary on the Proposed Rites. A reprint of a paper by the Rev. Louis Weil, professor of liturgics, Nashotah House.

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