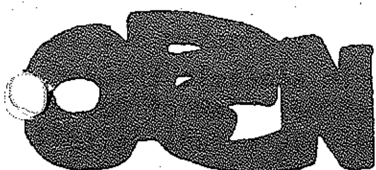

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New Images of God

by Leonel L. Mitchell

"The world to which we are sent to proclaim Christ is constantly changing, and the gospel needs to be translated into terms which the world can understand. This means more than translating the actual language of the proclamation... It means translating its thought into forms which our culture can comprehend, so that the original message shines through undistorted."[1]

When I wrote those words in 1975 the topic under discussion was the services then undergoing trial use which became the Book of Common Prayer 1979. The situation today is no different. Change is still the only constant factor in our history. At the present moment our concern is ongoing change in the English language and its effect on the way we pray.

Dr. Mitchell, a member of the AP Council, is professor of liturgics at Seabury-Western Theological Seminary. This paper, given at the recent annual Council meeting, is published with the permission of the Standing Liturgical Commission.

Anglicanism for over four centuries has been concerned that people pray in their own language. In the 1970s the Episcopal Church, like most English-speaking churches throughout the world, began to celebrate the liturgy in 20th century English. For 400 years the language of Cranmer and the King James Bible had been determinative for the way in which English-speaking people had framed their prayers. This is no longer true. All across the ecclesiastical spectrum God is regularly addressed in both public and private prayer in contemporary language. Liturgies, whether Anglican, Roman, Lutheran, or Reformed, use formal contemporary speech, and when the Scripture is read, even the RSV may sound quaint or antiquated.

One of the characteristics of a living language is that it grows and changes, adding new words to its vocabulary and changing the meanings of existing ones. Words such as "quick" meaning "living" or "prevent" meaning "precede" can no longer be used without them probably being misunderstood. Sometimes words do not change their actual denotation, but gain or lose social acceptability, or positive or nega-

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tive connotations. They are still understood, but the message they send is distorted. A good example is "stink," which is now always unpleasant and impolite. These changes, of course, have already taken place, but while change is actually happening, it is more difficult to appreciate and may actually be a source of misunderstanding or heated controversy. Proper names such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the United Negro College Fund bear witness to the changing ways in which African Americans in this century have referred to themselves. Praying in contemporary English, then, may involve us in a continuous updating of our language, not so that we may say new and different things, but so we may continue to say the same thing without our words distorting what we say.

Academic theology, by contrast, has generally operated by carefully defining technical terms to insure precision of meaning. All technical disciplines, including nuclear physics, computer programming, and football coaching, tend to operate this way. The words "strike" and "hit," which are synonyms in ordinary English, mean quite different things to a baseball fan. In academic writing technical terms are frequently imported from another language to avoid being subject to the varieties of meaning on which the living language thrives. We speak of *ecclesia* to escape the ambiguity of "church," or *anamnesis* to avoid "remembrance" or "memorial," and the eucharistic controversies of the sixteenth century. Scholars may use this language in their private prayers, but the liturgy must speak a language more accessible to all. This language often lacks the precision of trained technical jargon, and, like all natural language, is capable of many levels of understanding and meaning. It may be poetic and imaginative, but it must speak the truth.

Liturgical language is theological language, but it is not the language of academic theology. It is the language of primary theology, of address to God. It embodies the images and metaphors in which we think of and speak to our God. This language of prayer and hymn shapes our theological understanding much more surely than articles in theological journals. Anglican theology as much as Anglican piety has been shaped over the years by the liturgy of the Book of Common Prayer.

Whether in prayer or in academic theology the language in which we speak of God is necessarily metaphorical, or analogical. We cannot use human words to speak of God in the same sense in which we use them to speak of human beings. Even words like "good" and "powerful" mean something different when applied to God. These words are perhaps the best analogies we can find to the divine attributes, but they are not exact fits.

> *For my thoughts are not your thoughts**
> *nor your ways my ways, says the Lord.*
> *For as the heavens are higher than the earth**
> *so are my ways higher than your ways,*
> *and my thoughts than your thoughts.*[2]

Any image of God or theological construct we may have is too small, too narrow, and grossly inadequate. Some are more obviously inadequate than others, but when human reason and language have gone as far as they can, there is still further to go and more to comprehend. The Cappodocian Fathers understood this. The great scholastics of the Middle Ages understood this. The Reformers understood it. So did the Caroline divines, and so do contemporary theologians.

It is almost impossible for human beings to avoid using anthropomorphic terms in thinking about God, and even if we are able to avoid such terms in theological discourse, we do not pray to a "prime mover unmoved" or a "first cause uncaused." The more "real" and "personal" our notion of God is, the more anthropomorphic our language is likely to be. As Christians we properly justify the use of such language in terms of the incarnation and the *imago Dei*. Christ is "the image of the invisible God,"[3] and we are all, male and female, made in the divine image.[4]

The great problem of all the figures, images and metaphors used in the liturgy is that we begin to forget that they are used analogically, and to think of them as literal descriptions. We think of God as wearing a crown, or carrying a shepherd's crook, or seated on a throne. These mental pictures may be devotionally helpful to us, as long as we remember that they are *our*

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images, not pictures of God in the reality and fullness of the divine being. The more apt the metaphor, the more likely we are to forget that it is a metaphor. When Jesus says, "I am the vine," we all recognize that it is a figure of speech, but we are apt to forget that "I and the Father are one" is not literal description.

Many of the images of God we use in our worship are biblical. Others have their roots in the theological tradition of the early church. Some are medieval or modern. All are rooted in human understanding and tend to lose or change their meanings as the cultural matrices in which they are grounded change. Marianne Micks wrote, "Symbols slip. All symbols slip. The symbol breakers who have appeared regularly in the Christian community, smashing other men's efforts to figure forth the One whom they worship, have recognized this."[5] Throughout the centuries liturgies have been subject to this slippage.

In the 16th century a favorite metaphor for God was King. In 1547, the year of Henry VIII's death, a prayer still in the English Prayer Book addressed God as "high and mighty, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, the only ruler of Princes, who dost from thy throne behold all the dwellers upon earth."[6] In Tudor England this image of God as a monarch on a lofty throne with faithful subjects humbly presenting their petitions and supplications was one which came naturally to mind. It evoked the familiar image of a real royal court. The original metaphor of God as "King of Kings" is biblical, but it is fleshed out with the trappings of Tudor monarchy, and from our perspective it seems to suggest arrogance and unapproachability and thereby distorts the image of God.

In the present Prayer Book there has been a move away from royal imagery, not because we no longer believe the truth which is expressed in the metaphor of divine kingship, but because the image is not congenial or immediately available to us. For us kings and queens either bring to mind symbolic authority with little or no real power, as in most modern constitutional monarchies, tyranny, or a fairy-tale world of make-believe. It is not that we cannot remythologize the image into one which we do understand, but that we must run an image like "The Lord is King"[7] through a number of mental filters before it can have the same meaning to us it had to the psalmist. We have not altered the text of the psalms to remove the image, but it is not used in prayers as frequently as in previous Prayer Books, and it is balanced with other images.

One unquestionably biblical image is "Father." Jesus called God "Father" and taught his disciples to do the same. It is an image of God we do not find often in the Old Testament.[8] It represents a distinctive insight into Jesus' own relationship with God and the relationship into which he calls us, his brothers and sisters. It is not an image which Christians can easily abandon. But if this is the only image we use, we are apt not only to use it to name the unbegotten Source of Godhead in the other two persons of the Trinity, and to express the intensely personal relationship implied by the word "Abba" on the lips of Jesus, but also to invest the One who is "without body, parts, or passions"[9] with human characteristics like maleness, or a beard, or even the faults of human parents.

In a theological essay we are free to include a footnote to explain more precisely how God is properly addressed as "Father" and of what we must be wary in so doing, just as we can explain that the use of masculine pronouns to refer to One who has no sex is simply a grammatical convention and does not imply that the antecedent is male. Liturgy does not have this option. The words are spoken in all of their ambiguity and are not always understood in the sense that the original speaker intended. To introduce the simile of God as mother into our liturgical repetoire, not as a substitute for Father, but as a means of reminding ourselves that the attributes of divine fatherhood which we invoke are unrelated to gender or sex, is one way to attempt to manifest a fuller image of God in the liturgy. "As a mother cares for her children..." is certainly an image of the divine concern for us as God's children. It does not destroy the metaphor of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, but it gives us a fuller and more comprehensive picture, and one more intimate and personal than "Creator."

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In fact, many of the images used of God in the liturgy are "masculine," and have been historically conditioned by the patriarchal nature not only of Jewish society, but of much of Christian society. If we believe that this reflects cultural bias, and is not a part of the gospel, then the deliberate introduction of complementary "feminine" images into our worship is desirable.

This is certainly preferable to the removal of the "masculine" images, many of which are deeply embedded in both Scripture and Tradition. Often the effect of removing masculine images is the depersonalization of worship and theology and the substitution of abstractions which are not only gender-free but impersonal as well. What is needed is not the impoverishment but the enrichment of the language of prayer.

When the contemporary language Rite Two was added to the Cranmerian Rite One in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer, some worshipers mourned the loss of familiar language and the images and turns of phrase with which they had become familiar over the years and which had formed their devotional thought. To them Donald Parsons, then Bishop of Quincy, addressed *The Holy Eucharist, Rite Two* to "show that the new liturgy also has phrases which speak to our condition, (and) that it is possible to pray the Second Service too and not just suffer under it."[10] Many who considered the authorization of the new alternatives imperative in 1973 do not see the force of the same argument today. The liturgy does speak to their condition, and they see no reason to introduce new language. Yet Parsons' message is intended for them also.

One of the advantages of new liturgical texts, especially those which use different images, is that they disrupt our easy familiarity with traditional phrases and challenge us to think afresh about what we really mean by the words we use. They call us not to abandon traditional faith, but to look and see what new and enriching patterns of devotion which our present rite does not afford us are offered by the supplementary texts.

The way we pray really does shape the way we think. The images and metaphors and just plain words we use in our prayer, much more than our reading of Origen or Tillich or Ricoeur or Segundo, tend to shape our faith and our thought. And since all such images are to some degree inadequate, it is best to have a good collection of them.

The figure of Christ as the Divine Wisdom, the Hagia Sophia after whom Constantine named his great church in Constantinople, has a distinguished pedigree, but has not appeared often in liturgical prayer. A new canticle from Wisdom 10 uses this as its primary metaphor, and the joint work of Wisdom and Spirit in creation find a place in an alternative eucharistic prayer. The imagery from Hosea 11 of God teaching Israel to walk and leading them with "cords of compassion and bands of love" is another vivid biblical image showing a different aspect of God's care for us.

Some aspects of this recovery are problematical. "Creator" is not really a synonym for "Father" any more than "creature" is a synonym for "child." God is our creator, and the creator of the entire cosmos, but we are also God's children "by adoption and grace," and that is different and speaks of a different relationship, a relationship in the Christ who called God "Abba."

The naming of the persons of the Trinity as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit stands at the core of Christian theological tradition and the *Gloria Patri* was painfully fought out in the patristic church as the liturgical expression of praise of the Triune God. The frequently used alternative, naming the Trinity as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier appears to equate divine activities which are properly ascribed to the joint activity of the three persons with the persons themselves. The problem, if not its solution, has been well stated by Gail Ramshaw:

> *We can of course speak carefully and reverently of a God beyond sexuality, but the results of retaining masculine references for Christ is to admit a linguistic distinction which threatens the Nicean faith... Nicea sought to articulate the faith that God assumed humanity so that humanity might be*

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(Mitchell - cont.)

> *saved. Our task is to find language which is both orthodox — which affirms "Yes we accept the Christian faith" — and kerygmatic — which suggests "This is how we say that faith in our tongue." ...the most difficult question remains virtually unaddressed: is there a way to speak of the Trinity with more inclusive yet still orthodox terms.*[11]

Considering the problems involved and the time and effort expended in arriving at the first formulation, it is not surprising that there has been no readily acceptable alternative discovered. Ramshaw's own suggestion was "Abba, Servant, Paraclete," which, like the alternative presented here, speaks the truth without necessarily commending itself to everyone.

A most difficult problem, hinted at earlier, is the use of masculine pronouns to refer to God. To the extent that this traditional use of English grammar causes worshipers to think of God as male or causes women to feel that their creation in God's image is being denied, it is a serious distortion of the meaning of what is being proclaimed. Fortunately, the liturgy normally addresses God directly, and second personal pronouns are not gender specific in English, but the psalms, canticles, and biblical readings frequently call God "he." English, unlike many other ancient and modern languages, does not readily distinguish between grammatical gender and the sex of the antecedent. French has no difficulty with the idea that "army" and "beard" are grammatically feminine, nor German with the notion that "girl" is neuter. But English does not really have grammatical gender, and in contemporary usage, "he" is increasingly used exclusively to refer to male persons and "she" to female, while "it" implies an inanimate object. Sexual identification is so much a part of the way we experience other persons that we lack the vocabulary to speak of someone in nonsexual but personal terms. To some extent the problem can be avoided by rephrasing sentences, but eliminating the use of pronouns altogether interrupts the flow of language.

In short, these new alternatives make a beginning at providing a fuller feast of images which may help us to rehabilitate some that have been worn out with overuse, or distorted through standing alone. Their use can be a real opportunity for spiritual growth. The Holy and Undivided Trinity whom we worship as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is the same God to whom all of the other metaphors are applied. They do not diminish, but expand our approach to the source of all being, who is revealed to us in the vastness of interstellar space, in the compexity of sub-atomic particles, and in the warmeth of human love, yet took flesh in the womb of Mary and became one of us, the divine-human person Jesus, who died for us upon the Cross and was raised again that we might share in the divine life. +++

FOOTNOTES

1. Leonel L. Mitchell, *Liturgical Change: How Much Do We Need?* New York. Seabury Press. 1975. pp.9f.
2. Isaiah 55:8-9 (Canticle 10, BCP 86)
3. Colossians 1:15
4. Genesis 1:26
5. Marianne Micks, *The Future Present.* New York. Seabury Press. 1970. p. 159.
6. "A Prayer for the King's Majesty" at the end of Mattins in the 1662 Prayer Book.
7. Psalm 97:1, 99:1
8. It occurs in Psalm 89:26, Isaiah 63:16 and 64:8, Jeremiah 3:19, and a few other places. It is also found in prayers of the synagogue. See *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament,* edited by Gerhard Freedrich, Grand Rapids. Eerdmans. 1967. vol. 5, p. 978.
9. Article 1, *The Articles of Religion,* BCP p. 867
10. New York. Seabury, 1976. p. 2
11. Gail Ramshaw-Schmidt, "Naming the Trinity: Orthodoxy and Inclusivity." *Worship* 60. 1986. pp. 491ff.

A Rector's Charge

by Edgar F. Wells

This charge was delivered at the annual meeting of the free Church of St. Mary the Virgin, New York City, March 5, 1989, by the rector, Fr. Wells, and is reprinted from AVE, the parish newsletter. It represents an important statement for many Anglo-Catholics who have been struggling with the ordination of women. Ed.

In the Eighth Article of the Constitution of the General Convention of the Episcopal Church, it is required, before being ordered deacon, ordained to the priesthood, or ordained and consecrated to the episcopate, that the candidate subscribe and make the following declaration in the presence of the ordaining Bishop or Bishops:

I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God, and to contain all things necessary to salvation; and do solemnly engage to conform to the Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship of the Episcopal Church.

And to this let me add words of our Lord as they are recorded for us by St. John, and as they appear in the gospel reading appointed for use at the consecration of a bishop (John 20:21b-22).

'As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.' And when (Jesus) had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'

Today marks the eleventh occasion on which I have presided as Rector over the Annual Parish Meeting of the Society of the Free Church of St. Mary the Virgin, but it is only the first such occasion on which I have used this pulpit for the purpose of delivering my annual charge to the parish, and therefore from within the context of our Sunday liturgy. Essentially I am doing this for two reasons. In the first place, I believe that there are things needing to be said which must be voiced with authority and from this pulpit this morning. And they deserve to be heard in this holy place, and in the presence of Almighty God. And in the second place, and devolving from the first, I want what I am saying here to be heard by all our guests this morning, and I intend that it shall find its way by means of our parish publication, *AVE*, into the homes of our many friends in this country and beyond.

In the year 1868 when Father Thomas McKee Brown, guided and encouraged by Bishop Horatio Potter of New York, erected our first church building on the other side of Broadway, on land donated to us by John Jacob Astor, the kind of worship that you and I enjoy this morning on these premises was practically unknown in the Episcopal Church at large. The completion in 1895 of the edifice in which we find ourselves this morning marked the beginning of a liturgical renewal that found its first fruition in this parish and in parishes similar to it, and what it meant was the recovering of the Mass as the central act of Christian worship Sunday by Sunday throughout the year, and done always with the rich liturgical splendor of the Catholic ages; and, along with this, the daily corporate offering of the Divine Office and the eucahristic liturgy as the normal pattern and the first business of Anglican parish life.

And our renewal was not limited to the majesty of corporate worship. It issued also in a call to personal holiness that was exemplified by a renewal of Catholic devotion at every level of life, and which found its strength in the disciplines of rules of life, of frequent use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and of careful preparation before, and thanksgiving after, Holy Communion. It was a renewal marked by parish retreats and quiet days, by the offering by men and women of their lives in the burgeoning monastic orders that had again found their place within our Anglican life. And beyond our parish boundaries this renewal expressed itself in congresses and days of Catholic witness which attracted hundreds and sometimes thousands of people to these occasions, and which was of such incredible strength and proportions that it literally redefined the Church to which we belong. In our cor-

porate memory this morning what all this represented was a way of life that now seems a distant dream. But it was a dream that was real for many of us who are sitting here this morning, and not least for priests and laypeople of my generation — men and women who were the offspring of this renewal and for whom the Catholic revival within the Episcopal Church provided the spiritual foundation for everything we believed.

I remember Canon Bernard Iddings Bell preaching in my parish when I was a kid (do any of you know who he was?), and I remember serving Mass for a monk whose name turned out to be Dom Gregory Dix. I I remember being told that I had sat next to Lord Halifax at early Mass one Sunday in my parish, and I remember seeing so many people, now dead and in the Church Expectant, who were the glory of our Church during the first half of this century. All of this is what I came from, and it has defined and made me what I am today.

As indeed it has defined the parish church within whose walls we find ourselves this morning. These walls breathe the faith of the Catholic ages. This church building stands as perhaps the greatest witness in stone that our Church has to offer to everything of which I am speaking. In 1868, when our parish was founded, Father Thomas McKee Brown was part of a vision that would sweep and seemingly convert the Episcopal Church throughout this country. He represented the winds of change, and as recently as the 1940's and the 1950's, the life of the Episcopal Church possessed an exuberance that was at least in part reflective of the renewal that Catholic Anglicanism had brought about within our Church's life. The liturgical flowering of that renewal would continue into the 1960's and the 1970's as the Prayer Book that you now find in your pews came into being, and as scholars like my predecessor, Father Donald Garfield, labored to give the Episcopal Church a volume of common worship that would make our Church a eucharistic community once again.

The measure of their success is the centrality and the frequency of eucharistic worship within the Episcopal Church today. In the Book of Common Prayer of 1979, Catholic Anglicans achieved more for the Episcopal Church than we ever dared hope could be won. Today I believe that it was the last victory to come our way. Indeed, by 1979 events had already passed us by.

What I mean to say is simply this: you and I as Catholic Anglicans live in a Church today that in many ways is unrecognizable as the community of faith in which many of us received our spiritual formation. Our vulnerability as a Church has always been to the world, because we Episcopalians have always seen the world as the setting of the Incarnation, and Anglican theology has always been predisposed to serve and embrace the world in Christ's Name. That we have done so with recklessness will be argued by some. That we have done so with compassion will, I believe, be argued by many more. In either case, it is out of the maelstrom of American society during the past generation that there have emerged the great movements that today are at the heart of our Church's life. These are the movements that seem to have passed us by, and which by their own power are changing the Church of our day. Their root appeal lies in various causes of natural justice and human liberation, and I think there is probably hardly a person in this church this morning who has not at some level identified with at least one of them. The pluralism of American society as we stand at the threshold of the 1990's is in my opinion the single most important factor in defining the inner life of the Episcopal Church today, and though you and I may dismiss it simplistically as the spirit of the age, it has done its work thoroughly and in such a way as to go beyond facile answers or easy interpretation. All of this means that we live in a present existence that many of us do not understand, an existence that in the Church found its focus during the past month in the diminutive figure of a woman who for many Episcopalians has become the first female bishop in the history of Catholic Christendom. For them, her consecration has been the religious event of the century. For others among us, it is as if it had never occurred.

It is therefore within the complexity of American life that Christian experience in our time is seeking to define itself, and I just want to say right here that if you think the Episcopal Church is the only religious body being influenced by

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(Wells - cont.)

this confusion then you have another guess coming. Every major Christian community in this country, and not least the Roman Catholic Church itself, is feeling the effects of the various movements to which I am alluding. To speak simplistically about what our response to them ought to be is to miss the depth of the impact that they have made on the world in which we live. And that world includes the Episcopal Church, and it even includes the Church of St. Mary the Virgin.

It is because of all this that I am speaking to you as I am this morning. And what I believe deeply is that it is precisely within the confusion that exists around us that you and I are called to define, and to live as members of, a deeply Christian community in this parish. The place for the Church of St. Mary the Virgin is in the City and in the Diocese of New York. It is within these parameters that we must live the Christian life, not in the Church as we wish it idealistically might be, but as in fact it really is. And let me add to this that it is as a constituent part of the Diocese of New York that the Church of St. Mary the Virgin is called to be a Christian community within the Episcopal Church. Parishes have never defined themselves as the basic units of the Catholic Church. Dioceses always have. Let me make this point forcefully and clearly. And let me say as well that I do not myself have the final answer to the currents and movements that are presently reshaping our Episcopal Church. I have my opinions about them, opinions that are very often mixed where my sentiments are concerned, and I also have my conscientiously held convictions where matters of first principle are involved, and these convictions will continue to guide me as long as I am the rector and pastor of this congregation.

Above everything else I am a Churchman, and what this means is that I am not sectarian, and my sense of loyalty to the Catholic religion contains within it a loyalty to the Episcopal Church — not for its own sake, but for the sake of the Catholic Church, of which I believe it still to be a part. Were that not the case, I would have no moral right to stand here before you this morning. And let me say, despite what some of you may think, that at no time during these years of inner turmoil has the Episcopal Church formally abjured its fidelity to its title deeds. No matter what side we have found ourselves on in our various matters of disagreement, the protagonists of our various points of view have never intended that our Catholic understanding of the nature of the Church, and the meaning of Holy Orders within it, be any different than it always has been.

As most of you know, it is true to say that, as a result of the consecration in Massachusetts two weeks ago, there now exists a situation of impaired communion between our own Church and much of the rest of the Anglican Communion, and not least between ourselves and the Church of England. The Archbishop of Canterbury has reiterated the urging of the Lambeth Conference last summer that respect be maintained "between Provinces of the Anglican Communion which come to different decisions about women bishops, while making clear that such respect and courtesy did not necessarily indicate acceptance of the principle involved in the issue." What this means for us here is that similar respect must be maintained within our own Church, within our own diocese, and indeed within our own parish. We are called to live in charity with people with whom we disagree, and I hope in this context that you are as aware as I am that people at St. Mary's are no more monochromatic in their opinions about the issues at hand than are Episcopalians within our Church at large. The problem is, most of what we hear in this regard involves personal opinions and private points of view. In the face of this, we must remember that theology is not based on the private opinions of any of us here, my own included.

This past January it was our Bishop Coadjutor, Richard Grein, who in the course of remarks made at his installation contrasted for us the confusion of our present world with the situation faced by St. Augustine of Hippo as he watched a whole civilization collapse around him. St. Augustine's response was to take pen in hand, and from that pen flowed the thoughts and concepts that found their expression in that incredible volume, *The City of God*. Similarly, the bishop said, we find ourselves poised between two worlds, and what we are experi-

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(Wells - cont.)

encing is a Church — and I suspect he meant more than the Episcopal Church in these United States — that is itself in transition.

I liked what our Bishop Coadjutor had to say, and I know that for me, and I am sure it is true of you as well, that transition is a frightening concept. It is frightening because it involves change. On the one side of Catholic witness today are those among us who see within our own Church's turmoil, and particularly in the Massachusetts consecration two weeks ago, a disaster of such dimensions that they are referring to it in writing as "the final crisis of the Episcopal Church." Their goal is somehow to become the Church within the Church, and they are convoking a synod this spring for the purpose of bringing to realization the principles to which they are committed. They will be very much in our prayers in this parish this June. I must admit that there is a part of me that longs for that purer Church that the convenors of the synod hope to preserve. There is another part of me that believes that such a Church has never existed in human terms. But beyond this, and as I said a moment ago, I am a Churchman.

Thirteen years ago I was a signer of the covenant that inaugurated the Evangelical and Catholic Mission at a great Mass at the Church of the Ascension , Chicago. I was convinced that only persons who shared my belief in the necessity of a male priesthood could legitimately call themselves Catholic in the Episcopal Church. I no longer hold this point of view. I realize that even among ourselves we are in disagreement on this issue. My argument is for mutual toleration and, indeed, for charity among ourselves, and I say this even as I tell you in the same sentence that my doubts about the theological possibility of the presence of women in the ministerial priesthood and in the episcopate have not gone away. But what I will also say is that the spirit of fractiousness and the temper of rebellion that pervade what remains of the Catholic Movement today are a spirit and temper that are alien to everything in which I believe.

Behind the theological maneuverings of many of our traditionalist Catholic brethren there is a misogyny at work today that is unworthy of the Church in any age, Certainly my responsibility, and that of this parish, is to accept and obey the godly counsel of the Bishop under whose jurisdiction we live, up to and as far as our consciences allow us. For you and me that means living in the Diocese of New York and in communion with the Bishops of New York. In saying this I do not mean to paint a false picture of the relationship under which we live. John Henry Newman, you may remember, once said that his bishop was his pope. Later, disappointed and betrayed by the Bishop of Oxford, he made his submission to the Holy See. It was as a Roman Catholic that he achieved final greatness, not only for Roman Catholics but for Anglicans as well. By contrast, Edward Bouverie Pusey was far less sanguine about his feelings for the episcopate. "I never trusted any bishop," he said. Let me simply say that my task, and the task of all of us at the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, is first of all to accept the fact that, apart from our presence in the Diocese of New York, there is absolutely no reason for existence where this parish is concerned. I believe that we are Episcopalians. I believe that our loyalty is to the Episcopal Church, and I will tell you, on the day when I can no longer live conscientiously in this Church, that I will leave it, but I will do so discreetly and alone, without coercing or influencing the consciences of people for whom by my bishop's authority I have served as a pastor.

Let us get something absolutely clear, and this is a lesson that St. Mary's has been in the process of learning for many years: this parish does not live to itself. Both we and our diocese, and the Episcopal Church, must recapture something of what it means to have a purpose and a mission. That purpose is to proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord. That mission is to convert the world in his Name. Our beginning place is in New York with our fellow Episcopalians in the Anglican community here. If we can make this beginning then we will live; if we fail to do this, then I am afraid we are going to die.

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The Annual Council Meeting

reported by Nigel Renton

Nineteen members of the Council of Associated Parishes gathered in Seattle, Washington, on April 27. With them were one associate Council member and one honorary Council member., plus the infant son (Benjamin) of Canadian member Barbara Mitchell (and of her husband, deacon Alan). Attending as guests were Charles Winters from Seabury-Western and Clay Morris, priest/musician from St. Mark's, Palo Alto.

Our gathering place was Peter Moore's parish church, St. Paul's, Seattle. It is located to the northwest of downtown, not far from the Space Needle, at the edge of a somewhat decaying inner city neighborhood, but also close to a pleasant, hilly residential area.

We began with a well-prepared Solemn Vespers, with appropriate seasonal emphasis. The parish hall, in the crypt, then became a place of outstanding hospitality. A delicious barbecued salmon dinner, accompanied by excellent local wine, put us all in a pleasant mood for the drive to the diocesan conference center, Camp Huston, an hour or so away to the northeast. Peter and Mary Moore had arranged for volunteer drivers, and soon we were in beautiful wooded country near the town of Gold Bar on the lower slopes of the Cascade Mountains.

On Thursday, after Morning Prayer using the draft inclusive language form, we began our meeting with two outstanding papers. Since these papers are to be reproduced in *OPEN*, and perhaps elsewhere, no attempt is made here to summarize them other than to state that Lee Mitchell's paper was on liturgical change (the lead article in this issue) and Charles Winters' paper was largely about "root metaphor", with particular reference to the proposed inclusive language liturgies.

We also received an interesting paper by Boone Porter on the Hispanic origins of parts of the BCP. This was particularly effective in describing the origins and influence of Mozarabic rites. In addition, we heard a helpful report from Standing Liturgical Commission member Michael Merriman concerning the status of inclusive language liturgies.

As is any other organization involved in the publication business, we are affected by the rising costs of paper and printing. After discussion, it was agreed that the future price for individual brochures should be $3.00, with the price per copy reduced to $2.50 for orders between 20 and 29, and $2.00 for orders of 50 or more. We also asked Gayland Pool to report on the feasibility of increasing income by advertising our brochures.

Our Canadian representatives (Joe Fricker, Barbara Mitchell, and John Hill) reported on liturgical issues before the Anglican Church of Canada. We learned that some revision is planned for the Calendar, which has been in operation since the publication of the Book of Alternative Services. Progress in the use of that book was reported, although the pace of change is slower than was the case with the 1979 BCP, because of the former book's status as an authorized alternative. Acceptance of the diaconate as a distinctive order of ministry remains somewhat spotty. Work is beginning on the development of a new hymnal, publication of which is probably between five and ten years away.

In order that we might have the opportunity of varied experience in the inclusive-language rites, we worshipped more frequently than has been typical in recent years. Our first celebration of the Eucharist →

took place on Thursday afternoon, with Michael Merriman presiding and preaching. We had Evensong after dinner, followed by some reflections on the new text.

On Friday morning, after Morning Prayer, we were divided into three work groups. The task of one group was to make a response the the SLC in respect of the inclusive language liturgies we had been experiencing. For the most part, our responses related to the Eucharist, and in particular to the proposed Eucharistic Prayers (prayers E and F, as they will be known).

A second group was engaged in discussion of ways in which increased use might be made of the various rites and other materials found in the BCP and the BAS. A third group discussed and responded to the paper delivered by Charles Winters.

Another part of our work involved consideration of several possible changes in the lectionary. Boone Porter led a discussion in which some of the points he raised were as follows:

1. To emphasize the fourth Sunday of Advent as "Mary Sunday".
2. Treat the second Sunday of Epiphany as an occasion for giving special recognition to Holy Matrimony, using the story of the marriage at Cana for the Gospel every year.
3. On that occasion, and elsewhere, to include some Old Testament lessons emphasizing the role of women.
4. To stress the Jerusalem theme on the fourth Sunday of Lent, and perhaps recover the tradition, still honored in England, of that day as "Mothering Sunday".

We heard reports on arrangements being made for our 1990 conference on the episcopate. Many bishops have given positive responses to the idea of such a meeting, which is to be held at the Kanuga Conference Center in the woods of North Carolina. We then broke again into groups to "brainstorm" ideas for the conference.

A celebration of the Eucharist followed, with Barbara Mitchell in the presiding role. Both her preaching and her singing were very well received. We then made our way to the nearby town of Index for our "evening out" at a local restaurant.

Saturday morning's work after worship began with consideration of the reports of the working groups. Thereafter, the emphasis of our work turned to liturgical space. Fritz Frurip had organized a comprehensive slide show to illustrate a list of concerns: hospitality, mystery, symbols, personal/communal, quality, appropriateness, assembly, and beauty.

In our next working session, Fritz and Tom Babbitt (the Council's practicing architect) continued the program on liturgical space. Your scribe mentioned a recent work on adapting existing churches for contemporary liturgical practices, and Tom immediately produced a well-thumbed copy of *New Wine in Old Skins*, by Arthur Pierce Middleton, published by Morehouse-Barlow. Tom recommends this highly and suggested that in church architecture it is essential to have:

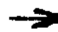
1. a concern for honesty of materials;
2. clear and agreed-to written goals; and
3. truth in symbolism — the table, space for gathering, the cross, the book, a font of ample size, perhaps a fountain.

With our minds attuned to space considerations, Fritz gave us a great project to work on after dinner. The Presiding Bishop is considering a remodeling of the chapel on the ground floor of the Episcopal Churbh Center. Once again, working in teams, we produced suggestions for the space.

On Sunday morning, outgoing president Joe Morris Doss presided and preached, using Eucharistic Prayer D. We then heard reports from the various "design teams" on their ideas for the ECC chapel, some of which may in fact be considered for this project.

No new members of the Council were elected this year. There are currently two vacancies in the regular membership. It is expected that some potential members will be invited to the 1990 Council meeting. In addition, we considered additonal Canadian membership on the Council, and several names were proposed.

In alternate years the Council elects officers. A nominating committee suggests



a slate, with an opportunity being given for nominations from the floor. Our Coordinator, Art Jenkins, was re-elected treasurer, and the remaining officers for the next two years are: Henry Louttit, president; Winnie Crapson, vice-president; and Ormonde Plater, secretary. These officers, with a member-at-large, comprise the executive committee. Betty Gray was elected member-at-large.

In the remaining hours of his presidency, Joe Morris kept us hard at work. We discussed our ideas for the conference on the episcopate. We discussed Boone Porter's paper, described earlier, and recommended that (with minor revisions) it be published in *OPEN*. We reported from small groups on ideas for future revision of the 1979 BCP. The "Gold Bar Statement", as drafted by a committee headed by Ormonde Plater, was then discussed. After a few "friendly amendments", it was enthusiastically passed (see below).

Warm thanks to Peter Moore and the people of his parish and to the staff of the Huston Conference Center for their excellent arrangements, down to the efficient bus which whisked us back to "Sea-Tac" for our flights home on Monday morning.

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THE GOLD BAR STATEMENT

The Council of the Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission met on April 26 through May 1, 1989, at the conference center of the Diocese of Olympia in Gold Bar, Wash., a place where the majesty of God's creation is revealed in the splendor of the Cascade Mountains. We have worshiped in this beauty and reflected on it. Anglican tradition has long encouraged worship in the beauty of holiness. The 1979 Book of Common Prayer and the Canadian Book of Alternative Services offer worshipers the opportunity to continue in this tradition.

Appropriate art and architecture are powerful factors in the creating and nurturing of the community of faith. In planning new churches and remodeling old ones, every effort should be made to create spaces which invite the assembly to focus on and become open to the principal symbols of the faith — bread and wine, water, the Word, and most important, the gathered people. In doing do, such spaces convey both the immanence and the transcendence of God.

Spaces for worship should be open and uncluttered. The symbols which inform the lives of the people should be experienced in their fullness. Specifically, we urge that the bread should smell, look, and taste like bread, and that the water for baptism be copious.

The furnishings, objects, and vestments used in worship should be appropriate to their use, of good quality, and of honest materials. Specifically, we urge that altars look like tables and be completely free-standing, and that fonts provide for immersion or total affusion.

As we renew the spaces in which we worship, we renew the church and its mission and service in the world. This is especially important as the Anglican Communion prepares for a Decade of Evangelism.

Recovering Our Tradition: The 1979 Lectionary

by Howard E. Galley, Jr.

Reprinted from AMEN!, a publication of the liturgical commission of the Diocese of New York. Howard Galley is a member of the commission and of the Council of AP.

Those of us who grew up with the 1928 Book of Common Prayer were the inheritors of a lectionary for Holy Communion that was some 1400 years old. Every Sunday and every Holy Day had its appointed Epistle and Gospel. It was, moreover, a lectionary that — with minor differences — we shared with the Roman Catholics and the Lutherans. To its users, it was a venerable part of the tradition of Western liturgy; it was something to be taken seriously.

It was, of course, almost a thousand years old at the time of the Protestant Reformation, and believed to be even older than that, being ascribed (erroneously) to no less an authority on Holy Scripture than St. Jerome.[1]

That it was less than representative of the whole teaching of Scripture was obvious; and John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli seem to have had little hesitancy about abolishing it completely. To more conservative minds, however, continuity with the past was important. Lutherans continued to use the versions of it generally in use in Germany and Scandinavia. Archbishop Cranmer made some adjustments in length and some outright substitutions in the inherited English Sarum version, and trusted his new lectionary for the daily office to make up any lacks. The Roman Catholic Council of Trent received a plea for extending the system by providing three unused Epistles and Gospels for each week for use at ferial masses;[2] but nothing was done, apart from some minor changes here and there in the existing system.

It was not until our own century, with its diligent research and critical evaluation and editing of ancient manuscripts, that a clear historical perspective on "St. Jerome's Lectionary" became possible. The material is indeed very old, with roots in the usage of the Church in Rome in the 5th, 6th, and 7th centuries. But it is also, as we shall see, a rather drastic medieval abbreviation of an older and much more comprehensive tradition of the public reading of Scripture. (The Reformation, moreover, abbreviated it still further by dropping the proper for the weekdays of Easter Week, except for Monday and Tuesday.)

The Epistles and Gospels

Let us look at our 1928 version from the perspective of the older tradition beginning with Easter Season.

1. On Monday and Tuesday of Easter Week the Gospels are accounts of our Lord's resurrection. This is all that remains of the early tradition of reading the resurrection accounts from the four Evangelists on the successive weekdays of the week, culminating in the account of the appearance to Thomas on "the eighth day" — the following Sunday.

2. The "Epistles" on these two days are accounts of the apostolic preaching of the resurrection, drawn from the Acts of the Apostles. The Roman Rite preserved two more of these, on the Wednesday and Thursday. Yet even this is a far cry, indeed only a relic, of the widely attested practice, common to both East and West, of reading the Acts of the Apostles during the Great Fifty Days.

3. The Sunday Epistles from the Sunday

after Easter through Trinity Sunday, and spilling over onto Trinity 1, 2, 3, and 5, are all drawn from the Catholic Epistles of 1 Peter, 1 John, and James. They are not in biblical order, but all are Epistles suited to the post-baptismal instruction which, in the Patristic period, was regularly given to those who had been baptized at the Easter Vigil.

4. The Sunday Gospels from Easter Day through Trinity Sunday (which at an earlier time was the Octave of Pentecost) are all taken from the Gospel according to John. Even the three major saints' days that normally occur in Easter Season (St.Mark, SS. Philip and James, and St. Barnabas) are assigned Gospel readings from John.

Outside of Easter Season (that is, during the whole of the rest of the year) the situation is rather different. Again, let us look at our 1928 assignments.

1. In Advent, Pre-Lent, Lent, and on Holy Days, the Epistles and Gospels are selected for their suitability to the season or occasion. It is important to note, however, that none of the Sunday propers of the three seasons mentioned is assigned a passage from the Catholic Epistles. In fact, apart from the Easter series of ten passages mentioned above, the only passage from a Catholic Epistle that occurs anywhere on a Sunday is on Epiphany 6 — a passage added by the Prayer Book revisers of 1662.

2. In the 1928 Prayer Book, the Epistles for the 6th through the 24th Sundays after Trinity are always a selection from the letters of St. Paul. With only one exception, moreover, they are in strict biblical order: Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, etc. Here we have an obvious relic of the systematic course reading of the Pauline Epistles during the "green" seasons of the year.

In this case we even have evidence of how the series of readings was arrived at. A medieval document known as the *Comes of Wurtzburg*, after listing the ten selections from the Catholic Epistles suitable for Easter Season, gives a list of 42 pasaages from St. Paul for use *ad libitum* from then until the end of the year. Every one of the Prayer Book selections, except the one that is not in biblical order, is extracted from that longer and much more comprehensive list.

Another example of a relic of course reading occurs on the first four Sundays after the Epiphany, where the letter to the Romans is read sequentially from Sunday to Sunday beginning at chapter 12, verse 1.

3. Outside of the Easter Season, a Sunday Gospel from John is rare. The emphasis is clearly on the synoptic Gospels and, as someone has remarked, St. Matthew clearly wins. Our inherited Parayer Book assignments are, however, only a part of a much more ambitious scheme that originally included the weekdays of Lent, the Wednesdays and Fridays of the other seasons of the year, and a number of Holy Days abolished at the Reformation.

Unlike the Epistles, the Gospels for the "green" seasons show no signs of course reading. The reason they occur in the order they do remains, with a few exceptions, wholly unknown. The idea that they were selected to match the Epistles, though widely believed, is an opinion which does not stand up well under serious scrutiny.

4. One series of Gospel readings in our historic lectionary is known to be a replacement for an older one. Prior to the 6th century, in most Western churches, the Gospels for the 2nd (or 3rd) through the 5th Sundays in Lent were drawn from the great Johannine signs: the woman at the well, the healing of the paralytic, the man born blind, and the raising of Lazarus. With the decline of adult baptisms at Easter, these passages, selected for their baptismal overtones, were transferred to weekdays and replaced with the passages we grew up with.

At this point it may be helpful to summarize the traditions we have identified as lying behind medieval Western lectionaries, some of which apply to Eastern lectionaries as well.

a. The reading of the resurrection accounts from the four Evangelists in Easter Week.

b. The reading of Acts in Easter Season.

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c. The reading of the Catholic Epistles in Easter Season, and the Pauline Epistles at other times.

d. The reading of John's Gospel in Easter Season, in Lent, and on a few other occasions, and the reading of the synoptic Gospels at other times.

Old Testament Lessons and Psalms

Scholars are generally agreed that the Roman liturgy, from which our historic lectionary is derived, at one time had three lessons on Sunday and at least some other occasions. Except in a few instances, however, we do not know what these lessons were, or how they were selected. We do, however, have service books and descriptions of other Western rites — some from Italy, some from France, and some from Spain — which present us with the following arrangement of readings:

1. Old Testament, except in Easter Season when the Acts of the Apostles is read instead.
2. A selected Psalm
3. Epistle.
4. An Alleluia or other chant.
5. Gospel.

A Gallican practice which should also be noted is the reading of the Book of Revelation in Easter Season in place of an Epistle.[3]

When the Roman Rite reduced the number of readings at most services to two, it was ordinarily the Old Testament lesson that was dropped. Occasionally, however, it was the Epistle that was dropped, and in our 1928 Prayer Book there are still six occasions in the year when an Old Testament lesson replaces an Epistle. The one place that the Roman Rite consistently retained the Old Testament lesson was on the weekdays of Lent, and on most of the Ember Days.

The Present Prayer Book Lectionary

The Lectionary in our 1979 Book of Common Prayer is an adapted form of the Roman Catholic *Ordo Lectionum Missae*, prepared in consultation with scholars of other Christian churches, including our own, and issued in 1969. The basic principles on which it is constructed are scarcely new. It is, rather, a conscious attempt to recover, and to adapt to modern conditions, something of the fullness of the more ancient tradition.

1. For all Sundays and Major Holy Days, three lessons are provided.
2. The use of psalmody has been recovered.
3. Outside of Lent and Easter Season, the synoptic Gospels are the main feature, each one being assigned a year of its own: A, B, and C.
4. Similarly, outside of Easter Season, the Pauline Epistles, James, and Hebrews are read over a three-year period, usually "semi-continuously" from Sunday to Sunday.
5. Old Testament lessons are appointed, chosen ordinarily to match the Gospel or Epistle.

Most importantly — in keeping with the Church's reappropriation of the concept of the Paschal Mystery, and of the primary importance of Baptism in the life and vocation of the Church — Lent and Easter are restored to their former glory.

In Lent:

1. In Year A, the ancient series of lessons from the Gospel of John — the Johannine signs — have been recovered. (This restoration, by the way, was urged by our own Standing Liturgical Commission back in 1958.[4]) Year B provides other readings from John, including the Sign of the Feeding of the Multitude. Year C presents a series of Lenten readings from Luke.
2. The Old Testament lessons for each year are a series — a synopsis of the Old Testament history of salvation, which will be recapitulated in the Easter Vigil.
3. The Epistles, for the most part, are deliberately related to the Old Testament readings.

Lent, to put it briefly, is seen not only as a time of penitence, but as a time of final preparation for Baptism, and (for those already baptized) of preparation for the Renewal of the Baptismal Covenant.

In Easter Season:

1. The full series of Easter Week resurrection Gospels has been restored. In addition, because most people do not, in fact, attend

(Galley — cont.)

weekday services, three of them — each one about the risen Christ eating and drinking with his disciples — have been assigned to the 3rd Sunday.

2. The account of the appearance to Thomas on the 8th day — deleted at the Reformation — has been restored to the second Sunday.

3. The remainder of the Sundays take their Gospels from John, first with a Good Shepherd passage, then a series from the farewell discourses.

4. The Epistles in Year A are from 1 Peter, one of the Catholic Epistles, which is believed by many scholars to incorporate an address to the newly-baptized. Year B features the first Letter of John, another traditional resource in the catechesis of the newly baptized. Year C brings into our tradition the Gallican practice of reading passages from the Book of Revelation, especially those which speak of the heavenly worship in which, in the Eucharist, we participate even now.

5. And, finally, Acts is back. In all three years. For this is the story of our beginnings, the story of the early years of the community into which we are baptized — with its successes, its failures, its bickerings and fights, and its continuance, under the providence of God, "in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers."[5] +++

References

1. Blunt, J.H. *The Annotated Book of Common Prayer*. Pott, Young & Co., New York. 1876. p.211.
2. Jungmann, J.A. *The Mass of the Roman Rite*. Benziger Brothers. New York. 1951. Vol. 1, p.403.
3. Hatchett, M.J. *Commentary on the American Prayer Book*. The Seabury Press. New York. 1981. p.324f.
4. *Prayer Book Studies XII*. The Church Pension Fund. New York. 1958. p.104ff.
5. Acts 2:42.

NOTICE NOTICE NOTICE

As noted in the report of the annual Council meeting (page 10), brochure prices have been raised as follows, *effective Sept. 1, 1989*:

1-19 copies - $3.00 each
20-49 copies - $2.50 each
50+ copies - $2.00 each

The bookstore/library price will be $2.00 per copy, a 33% discount from the single copy price.

As in the past, if you send a check with your order, we'll pay the shipping cost. If we bill you, the shipping cost will be added on.

Orders postmarked September 1, 1989, or later will be filled at the new price.

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