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**“serving the people and their parishes”**

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*Front cover photograph*

The 5th century church of St Simon Stylites, north west of Aleppo, Syria, with the remains of his pillar, over which the cruciform church was erected, with a central dome.

*Back cover photograph*

*Noah’s Ark*, by Aurelio Luini (16th century). Fresco in a side chapel of the church of San Maurizio al Monastero Maggiore, Milan.

## EDITORIAL MUSINGS

The happy occasion of the Royal wedding on 29 April has now come and gone. The liturgy of the Church of England, in traditional form, played its part. There was something wonderfully paraliturgical in the cheers of the crowds when the archbishop pronounced “that they be man and wife together, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”. No-one seemed disturbed by “forasmuch”. One might stick one’s neck out and wonder whether certain aspects of modern language liturgy might detract from proper solemnity.

May one also say how well the address of the Bishop of London (our patron) touched the right notes of gladness and realism. He pointed out that at its best commitment to another means enhancement of life rather than limitation. “We are all incomplete: we all need the love which is secure rather than oppressive — we need mutual forgiveness — to thrive.” Altogether, the occasion was a wonderful opportunity to present in word, music and spectacle the joyfulness of Christian understanding of God’s gifts.

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Some will have watched the recent TV series *The Bible’s Buried Secrets* with interest but some astonishment. There was some superb photography. But there seems to be a market-driven need to suggest conspiracies or hidden secrets in order to make good telly.

Apparently there was no king David, because there is no archaeological record of him. However, absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. And when David was “invented” (was it in the seventh century?) it was very clever to provide both annalistic accounts (2 Samuel 23.8ff) and full blown hero stories (1 Samuel 17), not to mention the story of the lady bathing in the sight of the king (2 Kings 11) and its genealogical and harem consequences.

The location of the Garden of Eden in Jerusalem is interesting but somewhat problematic. The bible’s own mythical account puts it “away to the east” (Gen. 2.8), and the reference in the taunt of the king of Tyre (Ezekiel 28) is also mythical. To produce an “actual site” in a historical or archaeological context requires some discussion of a particular but controversial view of temple theology.

There are plenty of questions about the origins of monotheism; it can be associated with Moses, Abraham or second Isaiah (to put it in a somewhat oversimplified scenario). Others insist that the bible’s presentation of monotheism has emerged through the crucible of Canaanite and other pagan religions. But to say that “the God of the bible had a wife” is a little odd, and may be a category confusion; doubtless it is a catchy headline.


It is certainly the case that conspiracy theories and suggestions of hidden secrets, however poor their methodologies, do sell well. The pity of it is that the bible is so full of interest, and there are many who have no problem with these questions being explored and are glad to be presented with fresh discussion and new discoveries,

out of sheer interest or as a stimulus to faith (or both). The medium, however, may distort the message.

\*\*\*\*\*

One of the articles in this edition describes, from the Roman Catholic viewpoint, the Ordinariate established last year by the Apostolic Constitution *Anglicanorum Coetibus*. The article is published in line with the editorial policy of providing a variety of material for readers. There is also an editorial note which gives references to three articles, from Anglican sources, which consider ecumenical, legal and other implications.

*Peter Johnson*

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# The Disappearing Parson

Mervyn Wilson

In the 1980s it was reckoned that a country clergyman could look after a cure of three parishes with a population of say less than 3000 people, know and be known, take three services of a Sunday, not be overburdened by the occasionals, visit the sick and be the visible Christian person of the area of his cure (or as it is now called, with a significant change of emphasis, his benefice). There had been already larger groupings established, in such dioceses as Lincoln and Norfolk, but even there, at least in the '70s, it was rare for one clergyman to have charge of more than three parishes. There might be larger groupings, with team rector and assistant clergy, but the ratio of 3:1 was retained.

By the '90s, with less clergy, that had changed. Today a grouping of six or more parishes, with a rector and sometimes an NSM, is common. Parishes used to be grouped with sufficient geographical or social coherence so that working together and shared worship was a real possibility. At that time, some policy makers saw the benefice with one rector and assistants as replacing the parish. The Rural Theology Association, whose members spent many hours looking at these issues, upheld the parish as the basic unit, on the grounds of *Realpolitik*. Groupings often changed. People showed a deep-seated loyalty to their parish church. The parish church provided an ever-present opportunity for mission. The benefice or group or deanery might provide occasional stimulus and challenge, but the parishes had to do the donkey work.

With six or more parishes, the incumbent can no longer know his flock. And the authorities seem to have connived in the widespread assumption that clerical visiting is a thing of the past. Printed sheets, the computer, committees will do the job on their own. How can they so easily set aside a thousand years of history? One thinks of Chaucer's Poor Parson, George Herbert's *A Priest to the Temple*, Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*, the many Victorian and 20<sup>th</sup> century clergy, faithful to their calling, knowing all their parishioners, generally charitably minded, some more competent and caring than others, but there and known in one way or another, respected as the parson.

I find it sad that within one generation a way of proven worth for Christianity and the well being of local communities and people has been lost, sometimes even, it seems, happily abandoned. A few lay people and retired clergy have met together in my area to see how in the altered circumstances of today we might reclaim and build up some of what has been lost. Granted there is less money, granted that nationally the hold of Christianity has weakened, granted that to many the church seems an irrelevance (save for those personal occasions, chiefly marriages and funerals, when people like to use the church), granted the era of the modern has ended and the postmodern begun—must something so valuable as the parson's role be lost for ever?

We have observed locally a mixed scene. Some clergy find ways to know their flocks, though not so personally. They have the skill to work with others. They inspire by their own example a way in which responsibilities are shared, the necessary tasks

done, and all in a Christian spirit of mutual respect. There are others who seem to lack humanity and the skills that go with it. They seem caught up in a capsule of their own individuality; empowered, as it were, by God and ordination; they are also claimant for rights, rather in the secular mode, though they don't see it that way. Where such an extreme exists, the parochial ministry fails. Many operate between these poles.

There is one thing more—the burden of administration. It need not be heavy if others are trusted and the work is shared. But certain skills, if absent, are now more obvious and disabling. With diverse parishes, parish schools and other claims on time, qualities of mind and character are needed which the old parish priest could often do without. The situation is not helped when dioceses put inexperienced clergy in charge of newly formed (and often unwilling) groups.

Meanwhile some dioceses, Salisbury, Lichfield, Hereford, Oxford, Lincoln in particular, have set up schemes for locally ordained and non stipendiary priests to fill the gap and maintain the valuable elements of the traditional ministry. Many have not. Lichfield has done something to build up local lay responsibility, establishing small groups of laity in each parish to work closely with the ordained minister.

But worse is to come. As I write, authorities are planning for larger groupings, for less clergy, with more churches to look after. In this new round will the deeply valued relationship of priest and people finally disappear, and be replaced with what? Will parishes go their own way? Or no way? What will happen to the churches? These are large questions.

I would be more confident of a good outcome if the authorities showed more trust in the people of the parishes, even when divergent from central and clerical policy makers, and if they placed a higher priority on Christian and humane values than on the practical and financial nitty-gritty without vision, conceived in the spirit of hanging on and self-defence.

I take as axiomatic:

1. That the relationship of priest and people, however experienced and expressed, is fundamental to the Christian way.
2. If the centralised financial arrangements of the church are unable to pay sufficient stipendiary clergy, then other modes of priesthood will have to be found, as of course has been happening, but on an insufficient scale.
3. There is an eternal tension between the centralisers and controllers and those who advocate letting go and encouraging the grass roots. The Christian way is greater than either.
4. There is a huge reservoir of sympathy for the Christian way which is touched too rarely by our present leadership.

*The Rev'd Mervyn Wilson retired in 2003 from a rural living in Peterborough Diocese. He has continued his involvement with groups concerned with rural ministry.*

# Multi-ethnic Anglicanism and the Role of Modern Ecclesiastical Parties in the Mode of Inclusion

*David Isiorho*

## Modern Ecclesiastical Parties

Anglicanism is often described as the local expression of Christian Church in a given place. Definitions along these lines focus upon universality embodied in the historical formularies of the Church of England. I examine some of the diverse, cultural, political and social influences emanating from the relationship between Church and State. My task is to consider the role of ecclesiastical parties in the life of the English nation and to ask questions about the position of Black and Asian communities within a multi-ethnic Anglicanism.

According to Jonathan Baker,<sup>1</sup> modern ecclesiastical parties can be divided into three main groupings that represent three separate traditions within the established Church. They are an Anglo-Catholic tradition, an Evangelical tradition and a liberal or broad Church tradition. Baker comments that this last is often perceived by society at large as *reasonable* and *temperate* and thus acting as a compromise to the other two traditions. There is an implied idea here that this sensible Church is the most English of the traditions available and that the others are somehow related to foreign influences. Thus the Anglo-Catholics can be associated with continental Catholicism and the Evangelicals, to a lesser extent, with continental Nonconformity. There is also the possibility of combinations of traditions such as a High Church liberal.

Whilst Anglicanism, as a whole, stresses the importance of Scripture, tradition and reason, each of the three main ecclesiastical parties has given different emphasis to one or more of these elements. Thus Anglo-Catholics have been concerned with early Church tradition, usually the first four centuries being considered the most important; Evangelicals have given greatest attention to Scripture, whilst Liberals have wanted an intellectual approach critically to evaluate the place of Scripture and Church tradition.

Baker argues that the key concept for Anglo-Catholics is the Incarnation. This doctrine, accepted and professed by all Christians, holds that God became a human being in Jesus Christ and added a human nature to his divine nature. This has important social and political implications for Anglo-Catholics, who see the world as essentially good and have historically worked in the cities and urban areas of deprivation to make the incarnation accessible. Thus they emphasise the importance of sacraments to show how God is present in Baptism and the Eucharist. Baker comments that Anglo-Catholicism can appear old-fashioned as members of this party look back to pre-Reformation days when bishops could interpret tradition without consultation with the laity.

The Evangelicals can trace their origin to the Protestant Reformation. Baker suggests that this party has mellowed over the years and has subsequently developed



a broader outlook. This grouping has also developed closer links with Anglican structures. The emphasis here is upon a more literal interpretation of the Bible at the expense of reason and tradition. The clergy are seen less as priestly icons representing Christ to the people than as evangelical leaders offering encouragement to the newly converted. The emphasis is upon redemption from sin and resurrection to new life in Christ as a personal Saviour.

For the Liberal broad Church tradition, faith has to involve human reason. It is an active faith in Christ Jesus that is open to critical evaluation and at the same time engages the world beyond the Church. The emphasis is upon service rather than mission. According to Baker, the liberal tradition has been responsible for initiating change within Church structures and in society. However, he thinks that opposition to racism and nuclear weaponry are controversial issues. He also feels that support for woman priests and tolerance of those who embrace homosexuality are also delicate subjects useful, nevertheless, to give a more liberal face to the established Church.

### **Diversity: Some Conclusions**

So, how diverse is the Church of England and to what extent is it willing to include Black Anglicans? According to Stephen Sykes<sup>2</sup> a prized characteristic of the Anglicanism to be found in the Church of England is its ability to encompass cultural diversity which is whole-heartedly embraced as a source of enrichment. However the inclusivity described by Sykes is narrowly confined by worship styles as reflected in the various ecclesiastical parties. Thus, the distinction between characteristics and distinctive features celebrated within the Anglican character is primarily a debate about the inclusiveness of a particular method of interpreting Scripture and not an examination of the ability of Anglicanism to include worshippers from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

In this article, I have tried to make some sense of the relationship between Englishness and Anglicanism within the contemporary context of the Church of England. The Protestant versus Catholic trajectory was a starting point that led us to consider the diversity of current ecclesiastical parties that seem to be held together by an establishment that tends to exclude Black and Asian contributions.

Clearly the Church hierarchy is prospective about the things it wants to change whilst the laity is retrospective in approach, understanding the past in its relationship to the present. Those in positions of power can be speculative when it is in their best interest to be so. However most congregations are reminiscent about their relationship with the past. So it was in this temporal context that Black and Asian Christians had to find their place. They inhabit the past equally with White congregations but also they are able offer a challenge that only the informed can bring.

The celebration of Anglicanism within the Church of England can be seen as an

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expression of Englishness. The rich variety of traditions is presented as a natural end-result of a successful process of Church evolution. Thus things are as they should be and, as such, they are also worth defending as part of the nation's heritage. Within this alignment, racial justice issues are marginalised and seen as controversial along with women priests and homosexuals. For the Church to take up racial justice issues can only detract from the iconography function, as a certain decency or fairness is assumed to be characteristic of its Englishness. However, as a conscience-solving exercise, a number of Church reports contain controversial recommendations to broaden its ethnic base. These appear only to exist as an idea that stands in critical challenge to current reality. This approach to cultural diversity, characteristic of the Runcie years, continues in the Church of England today.

*The Revd Dr David Isiorho is Vicar of St James Handsworth & Honorary Research Fellow at the Queens Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education.*

<sup>1</sup> Baker, Jonathan (1996) *Churchmanship*, in Bunting, Ian (ed.) *Celebrating the Anglican Way* (London, Hodder & Stoughton)

<sup>2</sup> Sykes, Stephen (1996) *The Anglican Character*, *ibid.*

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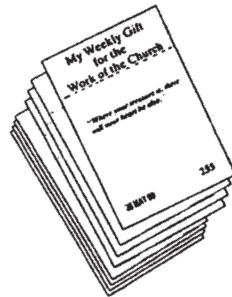
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## Hymns Ancient and Modern rejected: the great, but endangered, hymn tradition

At the church where I play the organ, I often get asked by young couples planning their wedding service for advice on the music and hymns (or “songs” as they invariably call them) they should choose. Very many of them have never been in a church before, have no particular interest in religion and absolutely no knowledge of the hymnody. To be frank, it’s the brides who usually insist on a “proper church do”. Ours is an impressive-looking building in a pretty location – and the girls want their “*Corrie*” moment, their *EastEnders* photo opportunity. The blokes generally just go along with it. Soap operas have a lot to answer for.

“Have you chosen what hymns you would like?” I ask. A depressing amount of times, the answer is “Well, we don’t really know any. What do you suggest?” There are several, I tell them, which you should avoid: *Fight the good fight, O Jesus, I have promised to serve you till the end*, and *Dear Lord and Father of mankind, forgive our foolish ways*. A poor joke and one which means nothing to most of the couples as, more often than not, they haven’t heard these hymns.

The first rule, I advise, is to pick something everyone knows. *Jerusalem* and *I vow to thee my country* are popular choices, though some vicars have banned these from weddings for being either secular, nationalistic, inappropriate or all three.

*Praise, my soul, the King of heaven* (surely one of the great hymn tunes with one of the great last verse descants), *Lord of all hopefulness* and *Love divine, all loves excelling* are firm favourites, though the last one causes trouble as it can be sung to either Stainer or Blaenwern, depending on how the lyrics are printed (“Which tune would you like?” “Don’t know. You choose.”). *Give me oil in my lamp, keep me burning is often selected* (my friend the Archdeacon still winces at the memory of it being sung at a cremation he conducted) as are *Morning has broken* and *Lord of the Dance*, the last a singularly odd choice for a wedding, in my view, with its final two verses dwelling on the torture of the Crucifixion. I do try and steer them away from *All things bright and beautiful*. Much as I admire its author, Mrs C F Alexander (see also *Once in royal David’s city, There is a green hill far away*), I really don’t want to sing or play it ever again. Still, as I always say to the happy couples, “It’s your wedding. You have what you want”.

This scenario would not have taken place 20 years ago—and certainly not 40. In England, at least, every school day started with assembly or chapel where you sang at least one hymn: one hymn a day for every day of your school life. It was a shared, formative experience. No wonder that by the time you left, you had unwittingly learnt a vast number of unforgettable melodies, if not some of the words. It was taken for granted. Hymns were absorbed as readily as nursery rhymes and folk-songs, and like them, those we sang were simply part of growing up, part of the fabric and thus embedded deep in the national psyche.

Probably the first I ever heard was on a 78rpm disc, *There’s a friend for little*

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children sung by Barbara Mullen (later Janet the housekeeper in TV's *Dr Finlay's Casebook*), a grown up actress who, pre-war, specialised in doing children's voices on the radio. The first one I learnt to play myself was *Ye holy angels bright* (tune: Darwall's 148th); the first I played in public (at a school assembly) was *When morning gilds the skies* (tune: Laudes Domini). Both were happily in C major. The three flats of Bunyan's *To be a pilgrim* were a challenge; the five flats of *Jerusalem the golden* (Ewing) were way too scary.

At my senior school in the early 1960s there were about a dozen hymns which even the most delinquent among us could not resist, when the sniggering on the back rows stopped and 400 voices were raised in unison: *Jerusalem*, of course, *Praise, my soul*, and *I vow to thee, Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord* (to Vision, the Walford Davies tune, not the Battle Hymn), *Eternal Father, strong to save, Guide me O thou Great Redeemer* (Cwm Rhondda), *Lift up your hearts* (to Woodlands), *All hail the power of Jesu's name* (to Diademata or, sometimes, to Miles Lane), *O praise ye the Lord* (Laudate Dominum, Parry's robust melody), *Hail, gladdening light* (Sebaste) and, a Methodist speciality, *There's a light upon the mountain*—rarely sung these days, perhaps because of a line in the second verse: “And the hearts of men are stirring with the throbs of deep desire” (cue for the back row sniggerers). And I'm not the only one among my former school chums who, 50 years later, can recite, without looking them up, the numbers of all these hymns as they appeared in the *Methodist Hymn Book* that we used — still, to my mind, a superior collection to *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, *The (New) English Hymnal* or *Mission Praise*.

I write as a typical Anglican agnostic. Why have these hymns stayed with me and millions of others over the years? How have they stood the test of time, wormed their way into our affections and become “indissolubly joined” (*Soldiers of Christ, arise*) to our collective subconscious? Of the countless thousands of hymns ever composed, only the strongest have survived. Most hymnals have their fair share of duff tunes and mediocre words. The best of them have melodies which, even though they may be unfamiliar, take you where you hope they will go. Four—or three—square tunes sung in even and/or dotted crotchets and/or minims with only occasional use of syncopation make it easy for the average person to pick up. Memorable after a couple of verses, they have a life of their own, the words supporting the melody and vice-versa. *O Jesus, I have promised* — with at least four alternative tunes — *All things B&B*, *The King of Love my Shepherd is* are but three of the many exceptions, but the majority of hymns and their lyrics are inseparable, joined at the hip as much as an Ira Gershwin lyric is wedded to a George Gershwin melody.

Strangely, proportionately few Great Composers have contributed popular successes to the Anglican hymnody: Gibbons, Tallis, Purcell, Bach and Handel stand out; Haydn (one, thanks to a string quartet), Beethoven (one, thanks to the Ninth Symphony), but what of Mozart, Schubert, Schumann, Liszt and Brahms? Nearer our own time, more took up the challenge: Stainer, Sullivan, Parry, Stanford, Vaughan Williams,

Holst and Ireland. But the greatest writers of the best known hymn tunes are not, by and large, well known. Who can put a face to Barnby, Dykes, Gauntlett, Goss, Monk or Shaw, to say nothing of the prolific Ira Sankey? Who can name any of the hymns for which they wrote their immortal music? Lesser composers they may have been, but it takes a kind of genius to write a classic hymn tune that goes round the world and survives for centuries.

It did not matter when we first sang some hymns that the allusions in some of the lyrics were not immediately apparent. “This is the famous stone / That turneth all to gold” (George Herbert’s *Teach me, my God and King*); “Who is this with garments gory, / Triumphant from Bozrah’s way...” (sung to the sturdy Welsh tune *Ton-y-botel*). What do they mean exactly? Like some passages from Shakespeare and the Book of Common Prayer, we got the gist of the mystical, metaphysical or biblical references and they were oddly reassuring. Hidden meanings have a deeper resonance than the immediately accessible. The canon of the traditional Anglican hymnody tells the whole story. Indeed, you could say that several—*The Church’s one foundation*, for example, and *Praise to the holiest*—rehearse the whole Christian doctrine in a handful of verses, unlike the pop pap that characterises many modern hymns. These are notable for the paucity of their musical and lyrical invention with their three-chord tricks for guitar and the cheap sentiments of a greetings card. *Make me a channel of your peace* with its scrambled, ungainly word-setting, is a particular horror. Even worse are the embarrassing “I’m-in-love-with-Jesus ditties”, some of which verge on the homoerotic. Dignity and nobility are in short supply.

Some of the old favourites are deemed non-PC in many churches where the incumbent is too dim or unimaginative to realise that not every hymn lyric is meant to be taken literally. *Onward, Christian soldiers* (to Sullivan’s splendid St Gertrude) is viewed by some as an invitation to join the army and kill people, forgetting that it was intended as an image of the Christian “soldier” facing a daily personal battle with evil and temptation. *Stand up, stand up for Jesus* has been banned in some churches for fear of upsetting people in wheelchairs. *Through the night of doubt and sorrow* offends some feminists because of the penultimate line of the second verse: “Brother clasps the hand of brother”. True, *God of our fathers, known of old* (Kipling’s words) is a relic of Empire, as is the unsingable second verse of *From Greenland’s icy mountains*: “In vain with lavish kindness / The gifts of God are strown, / The heathen in his blindness / Bows down to wood and stone.”

But banned or not, my point is that the entire Anglican hymnody is in danger of extinction. Why? Because we live in an increasingly secular society. Because many schools no longer have any formal service of worship and youngsters have no other opportunity to sing hymns (unless their parents drag them to church and away from their mobile phones). Because increasingly people listen to music in isolation on headphones, and singing with other people is completely foreign to them—unless they’re at a rock concert or a sporting fixture and have had a few beers to loosen

inhibitions. Paradoxically, it is our country's liberal multi-faith multi-cultural agenda that has led to the virtual elimination of one of our country's seminal cultural reference points. Rather than offend or be seen as non-inclusive, we have put our hands up and surrendered. A tradition at the heart of the nation's identity stretching back at least 500 years has been all but eradicated in the space of two decades.

My generation was one of the last to sing hymns on a regular daily basis. If things continue as they are, there will be few people who know any of them by the end of my lifetime. Talking of which, my own favourite (since you ask) is down to be sung at my funeral: *God be with you till we meet again* (tune: Randolph by Vaughan Williams). It's uplifting and consoling. 914 in *The Methodist Hymn Book*; 524 in *The English Hymnal*. It says everything so much better than *Angels* (Robbie Williams) and *My Way* (Frank Sinatra). The funeral will be many years hence, God willing, but I do hope you'll be there, join in and sing it at the top of your voices.

Jeremy Nicholas

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# Personal Ordinariates for Anglicans seeking Full Communion with the Catholic Church

*Jonathan Redvers Harris*

Interest among members of the English Clergy Association in the forthcoming Ordinatee for our country may not, perhaps, seem great. However, as the Apostolic Constitution providing for the establishment of Personal Ordinariates (published in November 2009) makes explicit, part of the purpose of this ecumenical venture is to maintain Anglican “pastoral traditions” within the Catholic Church as “treasure to be shared”. And, given our Association’s commitment to support and cherish the distinctive pastoral ministry of the English parochial clergy in our land, maybe the connection between the ECA and the Anglican Ordinatee could prove stronger than at first sight supposed.

To help clarify matters this article attempts to address some questions often asked about the Ordinatee provision.

## **Why has the Pope made this offer?**

It’s important to be clear that this is not, strictly, an offer at all. Far from being an initiative, it is a *response* — to groups of Anglicans from around the world, including from within the Church of England, who have petitioned for entry into full communion with the Catholic Church in a *corporate* manner. (Individuals can continue, as they have for years, to become Roman Catholics, but this response is not about personal submission or individual conversion.) And it is not a proposal; it is a *provision*, coming in the highest form of papal legislation — an Apostolic Constitution called “on Groups of Anglicans” (*Anglicanorum Coetibus*). Those who belong to an Ordinatee will be completely reunited with Catholic Christendom, but will not be completely absorbed, and will maintain an Anglican cultural ethos. In his recent visit to the United Kingdom, the Holy Father spoke of the need to see it as a “prophetic gesture”, positively contributing “to the developing relations between Anglicans and Catholics” and helping “us to set our sights on the ultimate goal of all ecumenical activity.”

## **But isn’t the timing all wrong, given the synodical process for women bishops?**

Just as some in the Church of England consider that they have a duty to engage in the synodical struggle to secure provision for “traditionalists” upon the advent of women bishops, so others perceive that there is a duty, ecumenically, to consider this provision from the Holy See. There may not be anything necessarily significant in its timing, which is, after all, for Anglicans worldwide. In any event, it is not presented as “Plan B” for Church of England people – those to whom the media often refer as “disaffected Anglicans” – who simply want to escape once the historic episcopate is changed. Anyone contemplating reunion with Rome, whether as part of a group of Anglicans or as an individual, must do so because of a desire to be in full communion with the See of Peter, and genuinely wishing to sign up to the fullness of the Catholic faith, as taught and guarded by the Successor of Peter.



### **All right then, so what is a “Personal Ordinariate”?**

An Ordinariate is a grouping made up of part of the People of God (laity, clergy and religious) who have come originally from the Anglican Communion, or have come to the Catholic faith through the Ordinariate, and it includes individuals married to members of the Ordinariate. It is a similar arrangement to Military Ordinariates in which personal jurisdiction provides for the pastoral care of members of the armed forces. Yet there is also a difference, because the jurisdiction in a Military Ordinariate is exercised jointly with that of the local diocesan Bishop, while an Anglican Ordinariate would have exclusive jurisdiction over its members — making it more like a non-territorial (ie personal) Diocese. Laity and religious would become members of the Ordinariate by entry in a register, and priests and deacons would be directly incardinated (affiliated) into the Ordinariate.

### **Who sets up an Ordinariate?**

Personal Ordinariates are erected by Decree of the Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in consultation with the Conference of the Bishops of the territorial area concerned. So here it would be an Ordinariate for Anglicans in England and Wales, or perhaps extending to the whole of our nation (although, theoretically, there could be more than one, “as needed”). The Decree establishing each Ordinariate sets out the See and, if appropriate, the principal church.

### **How will an Ordinariate be governed?**

Each Ordinariate is subject to the Congregation, and any other relevant Vatican departments, and is governed by “Complementary Norms” (rather like a statutory instrument, accompanying the Apostolic Constitution itself) and any other specific provisions for each Ordinariate. It is difficult, of course, to describe something that does not yet exist, at least as at the time of writing, but the Constitution provides for a Governing Council of six priests, presided over by the Ordinary (see below). This Council’s consent is needed for the admission of candidates for ordination, and for other matters. Each Ordinariate will also have a Finance Council and a Pastoral Council for consultation with the laity.

### **Who would be the bishop/s?**

The Ordinariates around the world will each be headed up by an Ordinary. We are familiar with the idea of an Anglican diocesan bishop as the “Ordinary” for his or her diocese, meaning that authority derives directly from the office, although, in the case of the Ordinary of each Ordinariate, he exercises it in the name of the Pope. The Ordinary may be a bishop or a priest (a married former Anglican bishop cannot be consecrated a bishop, out of deference to the tradition of clerical celibacy and to the Eastern Orthodox whose bishops are unmarried), appointed by the Roman Pontiff, and once an Ordinariate is up and running then subsequent Ordinaries will be appointed from three names submitted to the Holy See, voted on by the Governing Council. Former Anglican bishops may assist the Ordinary and dress as bishops, whether married or not.



**Would the Ordinariate have parishes?**

Yes, but “personal parishes”— not geographical ones, so there is no “overlap” with the local parishes of the territorial Catholic dioceses. Personal parishes will be served by a pastor, who can be assisted by a parochial vicar, and supported by pastoral and finance councils. A number of personal parishes can be put within a deanery, supervised by a delegate of the Ordinary.

**Would members of the Ordinariate still be Anglicans?**

Although the provision is stated to be “for Anglicans” and to maintain the “traditions of the Anglican Communion”, the Apostolic Constitution speaks also of those who were “*originally* belonging to the Anglican Communion and *now* in full communion with the Catholic Church”, and those “who ministered as Anglicans”, while the Complementary Norms refer to “*former* Anglicans”. So, in the sense of continuing to be in communion with the See of Canterbury then obviously Ordinariate members would not still be Anglicans. But they would remain Anglican in the sense that formation in aspects of “Anglican patrimony” (in harmony with Catholic tradition) would be important parts of theological training and of their ethos. “Anglican patrimony” is difficult to define, but would include our spiritual inheritance, our prayers and hymnody, our pastoral way of doing things, and the call to matrimony in the case of some priests (and the prospect of married clergy is specifically recognised in the Constitution), while accepting the norm of clerical celibacy.

**Would those in the Ordinariate have to do all things that Roman Catholics do?**

Not necessarily culturally, but in terms of faith then, yes, those in the Ordinariate must accept the faith and the moral teaching of the Church as expressed in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

**What liturgy would the Ordinariate have?**

In addition to the Roman Rite (including the Extraordinary Form — the Tridentine Mass, in Latin), liturgical books of the Anglican tradition approved by the Holy See. It seems likely that a suitable rite will be put together for Anglican Ordinariates across the world.

**What about finance and buildings?**

The Ordinary is under a duty, according to the Complementary Norms, to “ensure that adequate remuneration be provided to the clergy... and must provide for their needs in the event of sickness, disability and old age”, and to do this he “will enter into discussion with the Episcopal Conference about resources and funds for the care of clergy”. The Pope has asked the Catholic bishops of England and Wales to be “generous in implementing the provisions” of *Anglicanorum Coetibus* – and he has recently reminded them of this at the end of his visit to our country – and this generosity, one must assume, will include more than generosity of spirit. It remains to be seen whether the Church of England and Church in Wales will be prepared to offload some of their burdensome buildings and make any financial provision.

### **Would Ordinariate members be as much Catholic as those in local Roman Catholic parish churches? And how would they relate to each other?**

Yes, priests and people of the Ordinariate will be as fully Catholic as those of the territorial Catholic Church. The Ordinary is a member of the national Episcopal Conference, and is required to keep close ties of communion with the local Diocesan Bishops. The clergy for their part are able to be members of the local Diocese's Presbyteral and Pastoral Councils, and should be available to assist the local Diocese, just as diocesan clergy would be able to share in the pastoral care of the Ordinariate. The Constitution speaks of Ordinariate pastors working "in mutual pastoral assistance" with the pastors of the local territorial Diocese. Members of the Ordinariate would be able to attend and receive the Sacrament at any local Catholic church, just as local territorial Catholics could come to an Ordinariate church, although they would not be registered members.

### **What about being (re-)confirmed and (re-)ordained?**

Those entering the Ordinariate would need to make a profession of faith and receive the sacraments of Initiation, which would mean confirmation but not baptism, but there would be no question of having to deny the validity of the sacramental aspects of an Anglican pilgrimage hitherto. Similarly priests would have to be ordained (absolutely), but again, no "re-canting" of earlier sacramental actions would be required. Interestingly, the Constitution speaks of "those who ministered as Anglican *priests*" rather than simply as "ministers".

The Ordinariate, certainly in this land, is likely to have small, yet perhaps significant, beginnings. It will, it is to be hoped, serve ecumenically as a bridge between Catholic-minded Church of England people and those who are, by birth or by conversion, already across the Tiber. Above all, it could serve in the evangelisation of our country by helping break down some of the residual fears held by some about Catholicism, and by reassuring the nation that the Christian Faith can be authentically, naturally and confidently lived out in a very English way – and, indeed, in a recognisably Anglican way – as part of the Catholic Church.

*The Rev'd Jonathan Redvers Harris was formerly Vice-Chairman of the Association.*

*Editor's note:* Readers may be interested in three articles from Anglican sources on this question (no doubt there are many more):

1. Christopher Hill, *What is the Personal Ordinariate? Canonical and Liturgical Observations* in *Ecclesiastical Law Journal* **12**, 2 (May 2010), 202.
2. Norman Doe, *The Apostolic Constitution Anglicanorum Coetibus: an Anglican Juridical Perspective* in *Ecclesiastical Law Journal* **12**, 3 (September 2010), 304.
3. John Rees, Lionel Lennox, Stephen Slack, Alexander McGregor (Legal Officers and Provincial Registrars), *The Roman Catholic Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham. Some Questions and Answers on the Legal Implications for the Church of England*. GS MISC 79.

# BOOK REVIEWS

## **The Reluctant Revolutionary: Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Collision with Prusso-German History**

John A. Moses

Berghahn Books, New York and Oxford, 2009

The author of this book, Professor John Moses, is an Anglican priest ordained in the Diocese of Brisbane, formerly Head of the History Department at the University of Queensland but now at St Mark's National Theological Centre, Canberra. For many years he has been one of the foremost Australian historians working in the field of modern German history, as well as also publishing valuable work on the Anzac Day tradition and the role of the Brisbane Anglican priest, Canon David Garland, in establishing and promoting it.

This book, on the brilliant Lutheran theologian martyr, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, is a fine piece of historical work. In it, Professor Moses seeks to answer the question of how, and in what ways, Bonhoeffer came to not only turn against a tradition of abstention from political action by Lutherans but also to repudiate the leanings of his own class, the sophisticated German intellectual elite (the *Bildungsbürgertum*), and to become totally opposed to Nazism. This was first at a theological level and finally by active participation in a plot to rid Germany of Adolf Hitler. It was a revolutionary progression, and so Professor Moses sees Bonhoeffer as “a reluctant revolutionary”: he became a revolutionary both against the traditions which formed him as well as against the corrupt Nazi German state for the sake of the Gospel.

Early on, Bonhoeffer viewed the rise of both Nazism and the *Führerprinzip* (leadership principle) as works of evil opposed to Christian faith and a true German understanding of political order. These did not attract opposition from within the Lutheran fold because of the prevailing views within the Lutheranism of his day. They stemmed from a perversion of the two kingdoms view—separation of the realm of state and its power from the concern of the church—of Martin Luther, based on Romans 13.1 (“the powers that be are ordained of God”), and an understanding within Germany of the supremacy of the state and its role in history, as well as the role of war, derived from the philosopher Hegel. This was combined with a particularly Prussian view of the power state and the role of the military. Thus Hegelian views and the two kingdoms view of Lutheran theology made the educated elite of Germany ready, for the most part, to endorse the German state under Nazism. For Bonhoeffer conscience could never be subject to the state and its law. The state could not express the will of God, simply because it was the product of a fallen world; the ultimate authority could only be Christ himself.

In the early 1930s Bonhoeffer had already been exposed to liberal Christian views concerning theologically based social action during a period at Union Theological Seminary in New York. From this, and later ecumenical experiences in such meetings as the Life and Work Conference, where he began a friendship with Bishop George Bell

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of Chichester, as well as his time as a pastor in London, he came to new understandings of the social and political implications of Christianity and their relevance for action in the contemporary world. During the war Bishop Bell, to whom Bonhoeffer sent greetings as he was about to be executed, sought to act as go-between for German resistance groups with the British government, which spurned their advances, advances which had been partly mediated by Bonhoeffer.

Bonhoeffer had already been exposed while a theological student to the theology of Karl Barth, had accepted a totally Christocentric theology and, in particular, had begun to develop his own theology based on an idea of human solidarity and the suffering of Jesus in the crucifixion. However, Bonhoeffer went further than others at this time in seeing the Jewishness of Jesus as having profound implications for both anti-judaism and anti-semitism within Germany at theological and social levels. Anti-semitism, Bonhoeffer concluded, was a work of the anti-Christ which in its agent, Adolf Hitler, must be opposed. Many educated patriotic Germans caught up with false nationalism had for a long time rejected the legitimacy of those of any Jewish ancestry, or indeed of any persons not of pure German (Aryan) descent, as being properly German and able to participate fully in civic, intellectual and cultural life. Even baptised Jewish persons were somehow regarded with suspicion by other German Christians.

Bonhoeffer was not only concerned with the lot of German Jewish Christians and their persecution, but the treatment of all Jews within Germany. His repeated use of the text from Proverbs 31.8f (“Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy”) represented his underlying stance. Relatively few of Bonhoeffer’s contemporaries, in any of the German Churches, joined him in this. The prevailing view amongst German Christians was that Christianity had superseded Judaism and without baptism no Jew could be saved. So it was this which in part, says Professor Moses, also prevented the educated, liberal, religiously minded middle class from developing a critical stance towards the criminal Nazi racial policy. They, along with many of the professional class, enthusiastically welcomed “the New Order” of the Nazi regime. Chapters six and seven of the book are particularly illuminating on the matter.

In 1939 Bonhoeffer forsook an academic appointment in the United States, to return to Germany to be alongside his fellow Germans. Earlier, he had been head of the Finkenwalde seminary of the Confessing Church which had been formed by those Lutherans opposed to the State Church and its subservience to the Nazi regime. The seminary was suppressed but Bonhoeffer continued with theological education as an itinerant underground teacher when he returned, despite the risks it posed.

Bonhoeffer was executed because of his connections to, and role in, the plot to overthrow Hitler of July 1944 which involved both members of his family and of the German military intelligence, the Abwehr, centred around its head, Admiral Canaris. They were also executed. Bonhoeffer was imprisoned for over 18 months, first in Tegel prison then finally at Flossenbürg concentration camp. During this time he wrote

much of his work which has since been published, especially *Letters and Papers from Prison* and other pieces which were smuggled out. He was hanged on the direct orders of Hitler in April 1945, just a week before Flossenbürg was liberated.

He is rightly seen as a 20<sup>th</sup> century Christian martyr, not just because of being part of an anti-Hitler plot, despite his own pacifism, but because of his total moral clarity and theologically based opposition to the multiple evils of which Nazism was constituted and embodied in Hitler. He is one of the ten 20<sup>th</sup> century Christian martyrs whose statues have been added to the facade of Westminster Abbey. Significantly, Bonhoeffer's martyrdom is also commemorated in the Anglican calendar on 9<sup>th</sup> April

After the war, many Lutherans were slow to be enthusiastic about Bonhoeffer's theology because of the challenge it posed to secular authority and the Lutheran tradition and because he stood apart from the traditional Church-State theology of his church. Eventually, though, the various Evangelical synods in Germany came in time to embrace his position of seeing the need for action in the world based on Christian faith. There was no public commemoration service for him in Germany until 1950 and that was not without controversy. Indeed, Bonhoeffer was more highly regarded outside Germany on the whole in the early post war phase. In looking at his legacy, Moses shows how Bonhoeffer's theology later came to be influential amongst Christians caught under the Marxist tyranny of East Germany, despite misguided attempts by some pro-Marxist theologians to harmonise aspects of Bonhoeffer's theology with Marxism-Leninism.

Bonhoeffer's rejection of "cheap grace", his seeing Jesus as "the man/the one for others", the notion of "religionless Christianity" as a protest against mere pietism—all of these phrases and ideas which have entered theological parlance owe their origins to Bonhoeffer, as do aspects of liberation theology. He has greatly affected much of western theology since the 1950s, especially the pursuit of justice informed by Christian faith and theological insights.

John Moses' work is a formidable piece of research and writing. It is not a biography: Eberhard Bethge, Bonhoeffer's friend, has already done that admirably and at length. Rather, it is a sustained, insightful, and painstakingly documented historical study of Bonhoeffer's development within the German Lutheran tradition as one who is portrayed as "a uniquely German Lutheran revolutionary". The book is a challenging read but it is a rewarding one, and Professor Moses is to be congratulated on it. It is a fine addition to Bonhoeffer studies by one of the few Australians who has made the study of German history his life's work.

Let Dietrich Bonhoeffer have the last say. It is taken from a 1934 sermon he preached in London on a text from 2 Corinthinans 12.9: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

The sermon extract is printed as a sort of theological frontispiece to Professor Moses' book:

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Christianity stands or falls with its revolutionary protest against the violence, arbitrariness and pride of power and with its apologia for the weak. I feel that Christianity has adjusted itself to the worship of power. It should give much more offence, more shock to the world, than it is doing. Christianity should take a much more definite stand for the weak than to consider the moral right of the strong.

*The reviewer, the Rev'd Canon Professor John Morgan, is Warden of St John's College Brisbane.*

### **Crossover City: Resources for Urban Mission and Transformation**

Andrew Davey (ed.)

Continuum (2010, 176pp) ISBN 978-1-441138644

*God has prepared a city for us (Hebrews 11.16)*

When the Protestant Reformation made our praying friends in Heaven redundant, the megalithic individualism of the modern era began. No longer would man raise his eyes Heavenward and see a community of the redeemed united in their purpose of praising the Lamb. What hope was there for cities thereafter? And so the pain that can strike at the heart of city life today: places organised for interdependent relationships become places of acute loneliness and mutual suspicion. Such a crisis in urban contexts “calls us to go deeper in our faith and witness,” observes John Kuhrt in one of his two chapters in *Crossover City*. He writes compassionately from his experience of mission in London to define appropriately what salvation might mean here (chapter 6).

Mr Kuhrt is concerned in both his contributions that divisions within the Church are hampering the clarity of vision needed to save souls. In defining what salvation is, he fears liberals will see purely the social need, evangelicals the individual regeneration. He is rare among those who speak of mission in seeing the necessity of unity (cf John 17.21) – timely reading for the Church of England! His distaste for ecclesial division is apparent (throughout!) and bears the hallmark of one who has worked in the city where denominational barriers are much less watertight.

The Rev'd Mandy Ford, in chapter 10, finds the disunity caused by celebrations of the Eucharist disturbing (“our Eucharistic practice is not all-inclusive”) and compares this to the urban phenomenon of ‘Bring and Share’ lunches, which are such a feature of the parish I serve. Yet she finds the Mass the distinctively Christian proclamatory witness in the city, where neighbourliness and communion with God are ardently espoused by other faiths too.

Proclamation through word and action beyond sacrament are examined convincingly by the Archdeacon of Lindisfarne in his two chapters (4 and 5). He quite brilliantly observes that evangelism in the city must be embedded in urban processes and structures: high mobility makes the faith's rootedness in individual souls insufficient for kingdom values to conquer. Hence he redefines evangelism as traditionally understood and then proceeds to offer some helpful thoughts on how to

engage in this great act. The Venerable Peter Robinson offers ‘resistance’ (as opposed to ‘transformation’) as a key word in the metropolis preacher’s tool box and desires that the kerygmatic art should be thought of as a two-way learning process where context is paramount.

‘Location, location, location,’ they say. Thus the Rev’d Andrew Davey finds Christ in the city (chapter 8) even though, as Fr Davey notes, there was much criticism that Our Lord was noticeably absent from *Faith in the City* and (even more so, I think) *Faithful Cities*. Crucially, he reminds the reader not to think that Christ needs us to take Him into the city (a mistake I fear some of the case studies at the end of the book have fallen into). In bodies broken by fear and victimisation, we see the Crucified Lord. So also in the hardened “truth-tellers” of the city, Bishop Laurie Green finds the gifts of the Holy Spirit (chapter 9).

Throughout this compendium of essays there is an unease about the moral standing of city life. Mandy Ford draws these thoughts together in chapter 6. Here, she rightly alerts the Church to the need to challenge individual and corporate depravity, just as Christ both forgave sins of individuals and restored them to health of body to end the concomitant inequality they endured. Ms Ford prophetically calls those who live in non-urban areas to repentance for their part in the chains that bind the unseen poor, just as *Faith in the City* did some years ago.

But if the fate of humanity is interconnected, can mission be said to be different in an urban context? Resourcing such evangelism is the aim of the book and the Archbishop of York commends it as revitalizing city practitioners. Andrew Davey, the book’s editor, addresses this issue in chapter 3 and produces the imaginative phrase of “vibrant, kaleidoscopic urbanity.” The fun-filled challenges of city mission are, he argues, experiences that will challenge the institutional Church too.

The joys of this ministry are keenly felt by the Bishop of Bradwell. He speaks (chapter 1) of a “new reluctance” among the clergy to go to the inner cities, and blames the unwillingness of folk to move out of their “silo” (a word frustratingly used *ad nauseam* in this chapter). At a time when so many are formed for ordained ministry non-residentially – never mind nowhere near an Urban Priority Area – is there any wonder at this?

I take objection to Bishop Green’s analysis of the problems on the urban scene for the “more traditional Church” which he characterises as (i) “antiquated forms of committee decision making” (ii) “middle-class, literate culture” and (iii) “committing free time weekly on a regular basis.” The first two have nothing to do with ‘traditional Church’ and the third, surely, has something to do with being the Church – every kind of Church (though inculcating this is undoubtedly difficult)? But, perhaps I just cannot see outside of my silo.

*Crossover City* was a good read and some of the writing and the examples very engaging. I struggle to see what “resources” it provides. This is especially so because the four case studies at the end of the book don’t quite communicate the passion



and thrill that I am sure is central to the ministry of those who wrote them. Nor did they quite inspire the response, ‘Yes, I could do that!’ Even here though, there are some useful reflections by David Nixon on how his life as a Parish Priest and a Faith and Quality of Life Board Member related to each other. I think that, to resource comprehensively, the book would need more of this sort of experience-based narrative and reflection. Its capacity to stir up the issues surrounding urban mission means it’s worth buying – especially if you can get a little discount on the RRP. It stands as a valuable provocateur for those who long for that day when the bridal Heavenly City appears and our preparation for it is complete.

*The reviewer, the Rev’d Simon Morris, is Assistant Priest in the Churches of S. Mary the Virgin and the Good Shepherd, Tottenham.*

### **Finding God in a Holy Place**

Chris Cook

Continuum (2010, 176pp) ISBN 978-1-906286200

I find it difficult to classify this book. Is it a spiritual pilgrimage? Is it a guidebook? Is it the record of an enthusiastic academic’s appreciation of the architecture of one of our best-loved northern buildings, Durham Cathedral — given in rather too intimate detail?

I still find it slightly odd to gaze into the soul of a psychiatrist and theologian who has been so overwhelmed and humbled by his local cathedral. Professor Cook appears to stamp his own personal spirituality on these ancient stones. Unfortunately it is not my particular spirituality and I wonder if others would react exactly as he does in the overwhelming magnificence of this holy place. He makes connections that other people would not make, even though they might find the building very useful in other ways. This is where one person’s spiritual meat could become another’s spiritual poison. I think it is an intellectual’s handbook and a particular personal spiritual guide to Durham Cathedral. I don’t think it can lay claim to much greater application than its own locality.

Does this book become a slight self-indulgence? I hope not, given the undoubtedly sincere pilgrimage of the author. He will touch many who know the building well; nevertheless the overall purpose of this discursive book is still slightly elusive. He advocates actively searching for God in a holy place, but I tend to think that God himself finds people and converts them in what can become for them a holy place — and Durham could be such a place.

Although there is a very systematic tour of Durham Cathedral there is not an overtly and systematically expressed theology of place such as in John Inge’s book from 2003 on *A Christian Theology of Place* — again emanating from a cathedral context. Surprisingly Bishop Inge’s volume, in a series of explorations in practical, pastoral and empirical theology, is not even mentioned in the bibliography.

How might you use Professor Cook’s book? It could be advantageous to read it before a visit to Durham Cathedral and then, like him, have time set aside to pray. As



he suggests, it is often difficult to find this kind of time, but I am also not sure that I would want to have the book constantly in my hand as I prayed. On the other hand it could be read over several visits or put into a briefer pamphlet form in a dispenser at each of the points covered, around the Cathedral – rather like the free leaflets set out at the entrance to B & Q – but this time for spiritual guidance in the context of the building rather than instructions about how to lay a laminated floor. These Durham pamphlets could perhaps even usefully be laminated themselves!

I would not wish to decry the spiritual effort that has gone into the writing of this Durham guide. Professor Cook has managed to give the reader a great deal of rewarding background to the spiritual life, architecture and history of the building. However, in the end, I believe it to be too discursive, despite being an adventurous book. If it encourages you to visit Durham Cathedral on a spiritual pilgrimage it will have done an excellent job.

*The reviewer, the Rev'd Canon David Knight, sometime Canon Precentor of Chelmsford Cathedral, is Chairman of the Oxford Diocese Branch of the Retired Clergy Association.*

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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

*From the Rev'd Edmund Haviland*

I acknowledge with thanks No. 170 of *Parson and Parish*, and the Chairman's letter and the notice of the AGM of the ECA next May which I hope to be able to come to.

I realise that the bias of ECA is towards the BCP and against any changes. It is good that it "seeks to monitor" these (in particular in reference to freehold by the Quibbler). But there are so many admirable things (and better than BCP) offered in CW that I wish we could have a good CW celebration of the Eucharist at our AGM.

The articles are stimulating, if may say so.

a) "The Plight of the Laity" is helpful and clear as to the historical background and the puzzle for the future. A factor, not mentioned, which has force for me could be called the proof of the pudding in relation to women's ordination. At Institutions of parish priests and similar occasions about half the clergy are female. What would be the state of the C of E if women were not being ordained? Our Cathedral, for instance, has had two successive female residentiary Canons for many years and I have never heard a word of worry—only admiration and gratitude for their ministry. There are even of course women Deans and Archdeacons. And the show goes on. Could it be that the Holy Spirit is in some way overruling the bits of hIstory that might seem to exclude women priests, and is even encouraging their becoming bishops?

b) I much appreciated the argument and the tone of *Chairpiece*, perhaps particularly because I was a grateful pupil of John Robinson.

*With kind regards and good wishes, &c*

## CHAIRPIECE

Patrons of parochial benefices have been integral, in partnership with bishops generally, for around a thousand years in the life of the Church of England.

Sponsors today are a common commercial and charitable, let alone sporting, phenomenon.

Patrons and Sponsors have something in common. It should be developed.

This is the old picture, so long enduring, the very stuff of the diaries and novels of the last two hundred years, almost until our own day. Patrons would appoint clergy, and even today often do so, and occasionally they give financial or comparable assistance – a case of sherry at Christmas, rarely a motor car, even a private house when a Parson retires. This support is well worth having, and so far as I know remarkably little appreciated by Church members to whom the commandment “Go, and do thou likewise” might apply. Patronage has been too frequently marginalised by diocesan indifference, or worse, not least in the present inevitable amalgamation of Livings. Sometimes a Patron is left with (say) one turn in sixteen, or, worse, instead of Joint Patronage (where he could have a veto, if he chose), he is reduced to a mere vote, maybe on a large Board, dominated by diocesan figures used to every trick in the book. The Church has forgotten to be gracious, and to remember who built the Church, and often the Rectory, in the first place – so long ago, often, but sometimes very recently indeed.

Sponsors, in the commercial world, by contrast, make sure they get their pound of flesh out of the deal into which they have entered. Sports grounds and stadia can look almost grotesque as they advertise some Bank which we all think we own!

Sponsors for the Parishes? I’m not suggesting anything so demeaning as the word “Persil” on surplices. But Sponsorship could work, if – and it’s a big “if”. Recent decades have seen crepuscular confiscation of parochial assets – endowment, glebe, investment proceeds from sale of surplus parsonage lands, the parsonages themselves, many trusts, and, this year, incumbents’ fees. Some other trusts that exist to benefit parishes, and fund their work rather than their Parson, have found covetous eyes upon them.

Sponsors are not likely to give money to parishes for needs beyond the immediate if they think that legislative means will be devised to take that money into the care and use of the diocese. Investment for the future, and even giving for a little beyond the immediate, are effectively rather discounted by the shadow hanging over all our futures.

At times one observes something of the same dishonesty as that which the Left nurtures in its comments on the Royal Family and the Civil List. The Civil List monies granted to her Majesty, and other funds from government sources, are still very substantially less than the income the government receives from the surrendered Crown Estates. Lies are uttered, often with Republican malice, against a Family that works for nothing, and suffers much from the embittered and hostile. It cannot be a

perfect family. Nor is anyone else's, usually. But the Royal Family's contribution to tourism and the well-being of the United Kingdom is outstanding. A President Blair would not be able to do that, and might well not be cheaper.

The largesse with which a diocese makes up the stipends of the parochial clergy is derived from many sources, few of them diocesan in origin, although without such sources of income parochial "Share" or "Quota" would in some parishes be higher. In others, where the incumbent's income restored – his fees, glebe and endowment, trusts &c. – the diocese would need to add little to make up stipend. There were years when the diocese had to contribute nothing to my income, of which earned Fees were the largest part. In 1951 the Benefice (Stabilisation of Incomes) Measure ended the old system of investment of the individual benefice endowments, allowed a small, fixed and steadily-eroded percentage to incumbents, and pooled the rest for the Church Commissioners' General Purposes – so grants made by the Commissioners to "poorer" dioceses are in part derived from investment surpluses, deriving from good management of funds taken from incumbents in 1951. We took it; but we've made a bit to give you back. Who does that encourage? Not a Patron, or Sponsor.

Sponsors would have to look before they leapt, of course: a safeguarding framework to attract new money into parish life is, I believe, more likely to work than appeals to fund the diocese, with its plethora of Advisers and Officers – all very useful at times, no doubt it will be said, under a very well-meaning bishop; yet tending to absorb not only money from the Parishes but the time and energy of incumbents, drawing them away from the work they were ordained to do, in the place where they were instituted and inducted to do it.

Some small yet important hope in this direction is offered by the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011, building on the recent arrangements for Bishop's Mission Orders, and where new money, with sponsorship, might most easily be attracted. Look all that up. Let's make it work. Sixty years on, the Church needs such new support, funds, and Sponsors.

*John Masding*

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