

REVIEWS

A Bed's Eye View: Prayers for those who are unwell at home or in hospital,
Andrew Wylie, The Wellrose Press, Peat Inn, Fife. 2012. ISBN 978 0 9565894
1 5 pp. v + 28. £5.99

The Author's introduction appears outside the book cover and he explains that these brief prayers are the result of a few weeks in hospital. Hospitalisation was a new experience for him and in retrospect 'a source of much enrichment and personal growth.'

The word 'for' in the subtitle is used in two ways. Most of the prayers are intended to help those at home or in hospital to articulate prayers relevant to various stages in their illness. Thus the first prayer is for a Testing Time and the last a prayer 'On Going Home'. On the other hand, there are prayers for others, the one at home, fellow patients, for those in charge, the Doctors, the Nurses, new arrivals. There are also prayers for use by helpers, a Doctor and the Sister.

This little book is a light weight but only in the physical sense. It is not a burden for a sick patient. The left hand pages are left blank for the user's own notes. There is a verse from Scripture at the foot of each prayer. The wording of the prayers is simple and direct but evokes profound reflection.

There is an affectionate biographical introduction 'About Andrew' by his friend of twenty-five years, Gerald Stranraer Mull, Dean emeritus of Aberdeen and Orkney. I heartily concur with his commendation of this book of prayers.

Henry R.. Sefton
Aberdeen

Note: Information about purchasing this book may be found at www.bedseyeview.co.uk or by writing to the Wellrose Press, Wellrose Cottage, Peat Inn, Cupar KY15 5LH.

Race Shall Thy Works Praise Unto Race: the Development of Metrical Psalmody in Scotland An occasional paper by Graham D.S. Deans, Hymn Society of Great Britain. Third Series No 5, £3.50

This paper, by the minister of Queen Street Church, Aberdeen, is based on a lecture given at the International Hymn Society Conference at Halifax, Nova Scotia, in 2003, which no doubt explains the entertaining section on the Scots tongue with which it begins! Graham Deans traces the path leading to the compilation of the Reformation psalters, the later move towards reform to which King James VI lent his pen, the 1650 psalter which survived (after extended Scottish revision) until recent days, and the less well known period when attempts at modernisation largely failed, concluding with a survey of how psalms have been treated in recent hymn books.

I read this booklet with interest having been a child brought up (in a Congregational Church) on the Revised Church Hymnary, singing a metrical Psalm every Sunday, and being used, in the church choir, to the split words and music pages. I recall that not only was the Psalm number announced, but also the tune. I was interested to read his comment that the Psalter has all but disappeared from the life and worship of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, yet the full Irish Psalter is bound (with split pages for the choice of tunes) in my own edition of The Irish Presbyterian Hymnbook (Canterbury Press 2004).

Graham Deans feels strongly about the metrical psalms' place in modern worship and deplores the lack of use in many churches. My reaction to his comment that 'the tradition of singing psalms in metre is surely worth passing on' is that if we wish to reach out to those outside the church, singing archaic language of a past age will not help our missional cause. Would a 21st century adult really comprehend 'because I'm holy let my soul by Thee preservèd be'?

He notes that CH3 restored concluding doxologies to the psalms. Interestingly such doxologies do not appear in CH4. I have always found this a strange Christianisation or Trinitarianism of originally Hebrew texts written long before Christ. I would have been interested to learn more about the use of psalms in the early Church and how this manifested itself in Scotland. Deans

does agree that psalms are pre-Christian and therefore take no cognisance of the Gospel.

Dr Deans concludes that, sadly, metrical psalmody seems destined to remain a minority interest and a minority taste in Scottish Church life. His objective is to bring his enthusiasm for the metrical psalms into their return and to a wider audience. I am not sure that he will succeed, but happily there is every evidence, in the many new reworkings in fresh contemporary language in *CH4* – whether close to the original texts or in freer paraphrase – that writers are no less likely to turn to the psalms as documents for today.

The booklet contains a three-page Bibliography and four pages of end-notes. It also contains appraisals of the work of John Bell, and a discussion of the recent new Free Church Psalter, *Sing Psalms*, to which Deans himself contributed a version. I did wonder, though, if there was any need for the author to include examples of his own arrangements of psalm tunes; apart from writing in minims and crotchets rather than crotchets and quavers, and occasionally in a different key, there were only one or two instances of note changes within the standard harmonies.

The Foreword by the Secretary of the Church Service Society gives an interesting historical note of the place of Psalms at moments in Scotland's history to set the scene for this interesting and readable booklet.

Marjory J.B. Williamson
Cumbernauld
*formerly Secretary to the Music Committee of the Panel on Worship
and member of the Church Hymnary Trust*

The following notices come from the reading list of the group currently studying the issue of training for the leadership of worship and are supplied by members of the group.

Worship-shaped Life: Liturgical Formation and the People of God, Ed. Ruth Meyers and Paul Gibson, Canterbury Press 2010.

This book, with a foreword by Archbishop Rowan Williams, is one of a series

entitled *Canterbury Studies in Anglicanism*. It contains essays from different parts of the world – England, Nigeria, USA, Canada, the Philippines – and in this alone it bears impressive witness to the identification that each part of the Anglican Communion still feels with all the others, in spite of the strains so frequently reported in the press. The anxieties highlighted in this book have nothing to do with women bishops or sexuality, much to do with falling attendances worldwide, and a sense that neither leaders nor congregations are sufficiently trained for meaningful worship. From the States comes the interesting statistic that young adults between 18 and 35 make up 23% of the population but only 12% of Episcopal Church membership. Clearly there are problems that cross oceans and denominations, and the contributors to this book make suggestions that have often been voiced within the Kirk: re-assessing our liturgical heritage, not being bound by past custom, demonstrating ‘contextual sensitivity’, offering ordinands more musical instruction, giving children tasks like welcoming people at the door and taking up the offering. But if all this is consolingly familiar, there is a notable difference in the routes by which we approach the problems which baffle both communions. This difference is that the Anglicans know where they are coming from. They assume a Prayer Book heritage, and in every case ‘The Liturgy’ is the Eucharist, so there is strangely little emphasis on preaching. Although there is a hugely wide range of churchmanship and cultural context between provinces and between congregations, insofar as they have all been thirled to some version of Common Prayer Anglicans have been used to marching in step; so calls for innovation, imagination, experimentation and originality have perhaps less alarming implications than when they are issued to Presbyterian leaders who know all too well how to improvise but have never learned to play the tune.

David Beckett
Edinburgh

Approaching God, Christopher J. Ellis, Canterbury Press 2009.

In an age when the general trend often seems to be towards worship which has neither shape nor form, Christopher Ellis’s book should be a welcome tool to put into the hands of those being trained to lead worship. Ellis’s experience both as a pastor and an academic (he was Principal of Bristol Baptist College and lectured in Nottingham University’s Department of Theology) is clear from his approach to this important subject and his opening chapters set

the scene, focusing on the purpose, meaning, and place of worship in the life of the Church. Although he writes from an unapologetic 'free' church perspective, he offers a useful analysis of the different shapes which a service of worship might take, and pleads the cause, indeed states the case, for a structured, ordered, reasoned approach to whatever shape is chosen. His use of the imagery of 'journey' throughout is helpful.

Each element of a service – prayer, praise, use of scripture, sermon preparation – is dealt with systematically but in a way which acknowledges where personal preferences should give way to what is liturgically appropriate. Under praise, there is a useful section on the place of singing, and on the difference between hymns and songs. Most preachers will develop over the years, the approach to sermon preparation which suits them best, and the chapters on preaching explore a number of strategies. There are also references to drama, movement, multi-sensory worship, and use of space.

For those taking the book seriously, perhaps in conjunction with a prescribed course of training, every chapter has a number of helpful exercises devised by Anthony Clark, which would help put theory into practice.

Lastly, a comment on the sub-title '*A Guide For Worship Leaders And Worshippers*'. Given that there is such a lack of understanding in the Church at large of the general shape and form of an act of worship and the reasons behind what we do, the book could usefully inform a much wider readership, namely the people in the pews.

Rachel J.W. Dobie
Biggar

At Heaven's Gate: Reflections on Leading Worship, Richard Giles, Canterbury Press, Norwich, 2010

In this concise and well-structured book, Richard Giles challenges the reader to recognise that we have come to believe worship is an add-on which he describes as the Christian way put back to front. Yet we need not despair; anything is possible by making full and creative use of everything at our disposal. This simply means taking time to consider the setting, the number

of participants, the occasion, the season and the resources available (especially music). The pastor is key. He/she can be a life-changing force, yet the writer's experience with ordinands is that they have no inkling that they might be called upon to change anything. In the first seven chapters Giles describes the 'Building Blocks of Good Worship' which he identifies as leadership, building community, creating assembly; including children, turning to the Sun, making space and going counter-cultural.

He then goes on to say something about the 'Characteristics of Good Worship': expectancy, presiding, engagement, timelessness, silence, newness, spirit-filled, journey, preaching, music, dignity, order, authenticity, structures and formation.

He offers a worship checklist and concludes with a call to radical thinking and action. 'Good worship', he asserts, 'is worship which is conscious of its impact, aware of its potential for changing lives, mindful at every stage of the spiritual significance of every word and action.' Both worship and the space in which we worship needs to be stripped back to the bare essentials and the re-furbished and re-equipped to reflect who we are and where we are going.

Despite his unashamedly Anglican viewpoint, Richard Giles has created a very readable tool for all Christian denominations who value liturgical structure. It should find a place in the libraries of new ministers seeking to make worship effective and pastors who feel they no longer lead a community of transformation.

*I. Scott McCarthy
Langholm*

The Worshipping Body: The Art of Leading Worship, Kimberly Bracken Long, Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009

Long, a minister of the Presbyterian Church USA and a teacher at Columbia Theological Seminary, directs our attention away from the carefully-wrought prayer and searching preaching of the Reformed tradition to the physical presence of the 'presider', a role brought into focus in the writings of Justin

Martyr who first uses the term. However aware we may be of the importance of gesture, and the effect of appropriate words well delivered, what lies at the heart of the matter is not so much correctness as passion. 'If we realize that we bring not only our minds and spirits, and our words, but also our *bodies* to worship – that is, if we cultivate our physical engagement along with our intellectual and spiritual engagement – we open up a greater space for meeting God.' A lack of awareness of 'who we are' as worship leaders can often correlate with worship which lacks a dimension of mystery or where a depth of joy remains elusive. More important than skills and techniques is spirituality.

Long addresses not just ordained ministers but musicians, elders, deacons, lectors, dancers, and artists – indeed, all who have a part in leading worship. Finding ample evidence in Scripture of the embodied nature of worship, she avoids intellectualising her subject by exploring in turn each of the bodily organs: eyes and ears, mouth, hands, and feet. Her language is challengingly physical: 'A good presider is one who draws her congregation into the ancient dance with a new song', and her practice-oriented narrative is laced with illuminating and often moving stories. The whole is written with the grace that the subject of created bodies implies.

Douglas Galbraith
Markinch

The Drama of the Rite: Worship, Liturgy and Theatre Performance, Roger Grainger, Eastbourne: Sussex University Press, 2009

This is the third part of a trilogy whose focus is on liturgical ritual. This is not a book about inserting drama into worship. To 'use drama' to make worship more exciting is to miss the point, appealing to the least important aspect of theatre – to amuse and titillate. The book is about 'the drama *which is* liturgy' (my italics). Liturgy in its identity as drama offers a space for change to happen, expanding reality to make room for transformation, allowing us to live imaginatively in two worlds simultaneously. By learning to engage with our own stories we contribute to the living out of the divine story.

As the book progresses, readers become participants in a process which offers to take them below the level of the surface text to the emotional and personal substrata from which it arises. After the introductory chapters which develop the theoretical component of the book, consideration of story, of rites of passage, of transformation, each shape workshop activities intended to help towards the formation of liturgical events (rather than liturgical texts). These are not 'closed' at either end of the process – in that they have first taken shape in the experience of a particular group and are not complete until another group continues the process in its own context.

The book, which comes weighted with a foreword by a former Archbishop of York and a commendation by Rowan Williams, is challenging in more ways than one. There are several points where one has to wrestle with the sense, yet this is not so much because of the writing as because the author is attempting to lead us into understandings of liturgy beyond the one-dimensional to see it as operating at a level of the intimate and the personal, divine as well as human, and as potentially remaking our relationship with, and our stance in relation to, others, to the world, and to God.

DDG

The Worship Architect: A Blueprint for Designing Culturally Relevant and Biblically Faithful Services Constance M. Cherry, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010

This, by an American liberal Baptist teaching at a Wesleyan seminary, uses the architecture metaphor to explain the four 'building blocks' or 'rooms' of the Sunday service (Approach, Word etc.). It is a bold attempt to persuade those who consider structure less important than fervour but where the experience of the people may lack a fullness of encounter or of outcome. The architectural metaphor is used convincingly to show the true nature of the familiar, while at the same time leading the reluctant believer in 'free' worship to see the greater effect of a better structured event. While thoroughly Reformed (the author frequently cites such authorities as James Torrance and Larry Hurtado), the whole is lodged in a firm grasp of the nature of catholic worship.

More than a text, the book is set out as a learning experience. Each main section begins with 'Explore', where the reader is enabled to draw from his/her own self something of the insights which are explored in what follows, and ends with 'Engage', where very practical and useful suggestions are made as to how to carry the theme of the chapter forward, together with a section 'To learn more' where further sources are listed. Indeed, the whole is full of very practical advice to the leader of worship, both in terms of the whole task and the detail. The very accessible writing is laced with well-turned phrases to drive the point home: for example, '... it is less a matter of our *doing* worship – of the capabilities we think we bring to the event; rather, it is more a matter of our *yielding* to the actions of Christ who facilitates our worship to God'; '(t)he measure of a worshipping heart is the active disciple'; '(t)here is no biblical evidence that the Holy Spirit is especially available as an antidote for inadequate worship planning'; '(t)here is freedom in order – freedom to place something in motion and then let God lead you as you lead others through the service.'

DDG

Worship: A Practical Guide Jeffrey Truscott, Singapore: Genesis Books, 2011

This very approachable and practical book by an American Lutheran has been prepared as a teaching tool for a seminary in Singapore. Each chapter begins with a key idea and ends with a section summarising the key points of the chapter, with questions for reflection. The whole is in three parts: the meaning / the elements / the practice of worship, the middle part exploring ritual, culture, music, and time, while the last named isolates each step in worship for detailed treatment. At the end, a service outline with commentary seeks to put into practice the teaching of the book. Its immediate destination may have contributed to the admirable clarity of the writing, which nevertheless draws fully upon contemporary liturgical scholarship.

DDG

God's Transforming Work: Celebrating Ten Years of Common Worship,
ed Nicholas Papadopoulos, London: SPCK, 2011

Some ten contributors have been assembled to assess and learn from the first decade of the Church of England's ground-breaking liturgical provision, notable for the breadth of its resources and its means of delivery. The contributors between them offer both reflection on the specific project and its material but also range widely over issues in the practice of worship today. Our own Liturgical Formation Group's attention was particularly caught by the call by Peter Moger, formerly the Church's National Worship Development Officer and now Canon Precentor of York Minster, for a more thorough formation process for those training for public ministry. From three directions – the variegated material electronically available challenging the former simpler use of printed authorised liturgies, the variety of worship contexts in a 'mixed-economy' church, the reduction of specialist tuition in liturgy and worship – there is need to revisit the quality and scope of training for presiding in worship.

The volume is dedicated to David Stancliffe, until recently Bishop of Salisbury, who was Convener of the Liturgical Commission during a long and crucial period. In one of his own books, *God's Pattern: Shaping our Worship, Ministry and Life*, he wrote: 'I mind a lot about worship, and wonder at the quality of what is offered in many places in this most important area of the Church's life. In an age when the standards of public performance are so high, how do worshippers manage to keep on going to church faithfully when the way worship is prepared and offered is often so dire; when it is frequently confused with entertainment, and when it is led by those who apparently have no idea about what they are doing or professional competence in doing it?'

This has helped the Society's study group to focus its aims, but what also contributed to the setting of the scope of the work was a striking introductory essay to *God's Transforming Work* by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, in which he reminds readers that leading worship is more than knowing the texts (and the supporting information, theological and historical) and the correct ritual movements. 'Learning liturgical behaviour is learning to use your body significantly. A great many people emerge from our training institutions with very little sense of what that might mean, or of how the use of the celebrant's body enables or disables the whole community's worship.'

How we conduct ourselves has to 'say something about the new humanity within the new creation'.

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Strong, Loving and Wise: Presiding in Liturgy, Robert Hovda, Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1976

This volume, now 'old' in terms of today's publishing patterns, could be said to remain the classic text on presiding at worship. Written by an American Roman Catholic, it challenges the 'nerveless automaton' understanding of priesthood and calls for the full personality of the president to be restored. From one corner, the book speaks across the whole Church. 'The problems confronted in this guidebook are ecumenical, so our intent is ecumenical'. It begins, startlingly, from the premise, running counter to most contemporary assessments, 'We are in the early stages of a profound church renewal'. However, observes Hovda, in church renewal, questions begin at a fairly superficial and manageable level. At first things look easy, and then almost imperceptibly each problem and question invites us deeper and deeper into the heart of ecclesial faith, where all their roots are intertwined. The solution is not clever techniques and new programmes; nothing less than conversion and total commitment is required. The book tackles the renewal of worship and the role of the presider in the same radical way, remarking that 'it has been widely assumed that whoever is ordained must be ready' and that the function of presiding in liturgy, now in that Church with a restored emphasis on the local assembly, requires a new approach to formation, one that begins with spirit, consciousness, awareness.

However, any exploration of these matters is lodged firmly in practice. In discussing the need for thorough familiarity with the structure and individual parts of worship, he warns against the lure of the complex, the irrelevant gimmicks, the superficial remedies, the preoccupation with the word which leaves no room for other media. One must develop a care with words, striving for paucity of verbal expression, making the words really count. If we are aware that our words are poetic and symbolic, we may learn to be less heavy handed and more delicate, modest, humble. But also needed is confidence

in oneself, pastoral respect and reverence for the people. The presider must be visible, show *how to* participate. Here, there is relation between careful preparation and spontaneity, often thought to be mutually exclusive. To assume that the Holy Spirit assists only the totally unprepared is to give insufficient glory to God!

At the heart of Father Hovda's argument, however, is the physical presence of the presider. The modern trend of playing down the ministerial role, the 'refusal to preside', is not a contribution to the reformation of ministries. Liturgy is the action of a community of persons and requires a person to hold it together, a person who is in touch with the assembly at all times. This is not a question of self assertion but of leadership. To abdicate is to fail to serve the community. Conversely, one cannot be an ecclesiastical prince, a status seeker. There is no room for a pulpit tone, a sacred alias. Presence is expressed in 'style', an ease with the physicality of being present in the face of the people and a readiness to express this in an appropriate way. Neutrality is an illusion. Good style is honest; it means we like ourselves and others, and comes from an understanding of the way means and ends flow in and out of each other and that every step along the way is as important as the goal. Liturgy heightens the importance of style because of its uniqueness as a human activity. In liturgy we are striving to be at the height of God-consciousness and therefore at the height of human-consciousness, facing the mystery of the Other and the mystery of ourselves.

For a reviewer from the Reformed perspective, to read this book is to have the uncanny feeling of meeting someone who knows us better than we know ourselves. Partly this is because of the insight of the author, but partly also it arises out of the experience of a post-Vatican II Church whose more recent rediscoveries offer to cast new light on developments at the Reformation. A case in point is the matter of word versus ritual and symbol, Hovda remarking that in 'opening up the symbols' Catholics and Reformed have the same problem. For the former, a nominal adherence had been frozen at a given time, shrivelled and dessicated. For the latter, they were abandoned on the shrine of the printed word. Both branches of the Church were thus symbolically impoverished. For his own Church, he suggests that one of most ill-considered pastoral reflex actions during the decade after Vatican II was when many (petrified) symbols and symbolic gestures were abandoned and new vernacular texts asked to bear the whole burden of the celebration.

However, his principal message remains that of the need for a renewed focus on the presider and a renewal of the processes of formation, one that is far more than head knowledge, for behind the physical, spatial presence that he calls for must lie 'an extraordinary conviction about the centrality of worship in the life of faith'. It is a role, he says, that is built, among other things, upon the peace that comes from facing doubts and reaching resolution.

DDG

SECRETARIAL NOTES

The two mainstays of the Society's year are the Annual Meeting, Dinner, and Address held during the Assembly and the Study Day in the autumn. In 2013 we are to welcome **Jonny Baker**, author of *Curating Worship*. This striking book focuses on 'alternative worship' but unusually approaches it through the metaphor of 'curating' (as in exhibitions and installations). The back cover explains: 'Rather than focusing on the role of presiding over liturgy or fronting a band, curation involves working off stage, negotiating between institutions and artists to create something brilliant. The hope is that moments of epiphany will be experienced as God is invited to "be" and "breathe" in the space, and as participants make connections with their own lives and stories'. The book largely consists of interviews Baker has conducted with a number of practitioners and has as much to say about 'traditional' public worship as experimental forms of worship.

We are working on a proposal at the moment for **Study Day 2013** to be at Rhu, to consider the controversies surrounding the name of 19th century theologian John McLeod Campbell and his work on the doctrine of Atonement. We will take the opportunity to focus on the liturgical acts of confession and absolution and consider their adequacy in current worship practice. The date is to be confirmed.

The **Annual Meeting** in 2012 benefited from its retiring President's wide experience in education, including in the committees of the Church, when she